

Released by the Minister of Conservation

TE MANA O TE TAI AO

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND
BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY 2020

SUMMARY

When nature is in trouble, so are we

Papatūānuku (Earth mother), Ranginui (Sky father) and their offspring are in serious trouble, and we urgently need to do a better job at looking after them. The state of nature is a legacy that we leave for future generations.

Nature benefits our lives and society in a huge number of ways. Clean air and water, the food we farm, catch, or hunt, and our tourism and primary industry-based economy all depend on nature. We are connected to nature through our many different cultures, the places where we live and spend our time, and it is part of our identity.

Essential to thriving nature is thriving biodiversity. Having environments that are rich in biodiversity means that nature can better provide the benefits we rely on. Nature in Aotearoa New Zealand is unique in the world and makes a significant contribution to global biodiversity - we are internationally recognised as a biodiversity 'hotspot'.

We have a duty of care to make sure that the unique animals, plants, fungi and microbes found in our country are healthy and thriving, and that natural resources are used sustainably.

However, nature in Aotearoa New Zealand is in trouble. Biodiversity is declining in the face of pressures such as invasive species, land and sea use, direct exploitation of species, climate change, and pollution. Indirect pressures are causing and contributing to these direct pressures. These include not having the right systems in place in terms of policy, legislation and leadership, people not having enough knowledge or resources to act, and a disconnect between people and nature.

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including land, marine and freshwater ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

When nature is thriving, so are we

What can we do to help nature?

Here in Aotearoa New Zealand we are already successfully taking action to protect and restore nature. There is an opportunity now to further invest in our successes and firmly place nature at the heart of all we do, which will benefit both nature and our livelihoods. Te Mana o te Taiao sets out how we can expand and build on the strong foundation we have already built to allow our natural world, and the people in it, to thrive.

Aotearoa New Zealand, along with the rest of the world, will be on a pathway to economic and social recovery for many years to come following the Covid-19 crisis. Recognising that nature is at the heart of our economy and the way we do business will be key to our successful recovery.

Te Mana o te Taiao explained

Te Mana o te Taiao sets a strategic direction for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity, particularly indigenous biodiversity, in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As a national strategy, Te Mana o te Taiao provides the overall strategic direction for biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand for the next 30 years. It is closely connected to and guides local and regional biodiversity action.

Te Mana o te Taiao also provides strategic direction for sectors and groups to implement independently. For example, an industry body can align their environmental or biodiversity strategy to Te Mana o te Taiao, and community organisations can use both Te Mana o te Taiao and their regional strategy to guide their activities.

Te Mana o te Taiao is for all of us living in Aotearoa New Zealand to own and implement. There is a place for everyone to be involved, no matter how big or small their contribution. By working together towards common goals, we can achieve much more than we would alone.

It is important to recognise that Te Mana o te Taiao gives us all a shared destination to head for, but there will be different pathways for us to get there. The causes of biodiversity loss vary from place to place, depending on the natural environment and how natural resources are managed and used. Different solutions are needed based on situation, location and context. Even though our collective actions as Aotearoa New Zealand are contributing to the same vision and outcomes, how this is achieved can look different across places and regions – and this will be one of the keys to success.

Biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand the companion report

To enable the country's unique biodiversity and taonga (treasures) to be protected and restored, it is important to understand the state they are in, the trends occurring and the many pressures they face, all of which can be informed by the complementary perspectives, histories and worldviews of mātauranga Māori and science. The companion report to Te Mana o Te Taiao, Biodiversity in Aotearoa, provides the evidence base for Te Mana o te Taiao by summarising the present state, trends and pressures of Aotearoa New Zealand's plants, animals and ecosystems on land, in fresh water and at sea.

Te Mana o te Taiao - The Mana of the Environment - Aotearoa New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy 2020

The vision

Te Mauri Hikahika o te Taiao

The mauri of nature is vibrant and vigorous

Why this is important

People are part of nature and nature supports life and human activity. All aspects of our wellbeing, physical, cultural, social and economic, are dependent on nature and the services that it provides. Natural wellbeing underpins our lives, lifestyles and livelihoods. Nature is valuable for its own sake (intrinsic value) and is linked to our identity as New Zealanders. Our vision for a future with nature that has thriving, vibrant, vigorous mauri will result in thriving wellbeing for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The problem

We are in a biodiversity crisis - Papatūānuku, Ranginui and their offspring are in serious trouble, and we urgently need to do a better job at looking after them. Nature in New Zealand Aotearoa, and across the rest of the world, is declining, and directly under threat from pressures, including changes in land, freshwater and sea use, introduced species, exploitation for food and resources, pollution, and the increasing threat of climate change. Indirect pressures, such as not having the right 'systems' in place, people not having enough knowledge or resources to act, and a disconnect between people and nature, are causing and contributing to these direct pressures. Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are already successfully taking action to protect and restore nature, and this strategy sets out how we can expand and build on the strong foundation we have already built to allow our natural world, and the people in it, to thrive.

What we are aiming to achieve by 2050

Outcome 1

Ecosystems, from mountain tops to ocean depths, are thriving

- › The mauri of ecosystems is thriving
- › A full range of indigenous ecosystems are protected and secured for future generations
- › The health, integrity and connectivity of ecosystems have been maintained and/or restored, including in human-dominated areas

Outcome 2

Indigenous species and their habitats across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond are thriving

- › The mana of taonga species is restored
- › All indigenous species are protected and secure, and none are at risk of extinction due to human activities
- › Species' populations are healthy, genetically diverse and have increased resilience to future threats including climate change
- › Migratory species and their habitats are secured across international boundaries

Outcome 3

People's lives are enriched through their connection with nature

- › Everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand is connected with nature, and supports and actively contributes to its protection and restoration
- › Connection with nature is improving people's physical, spiritual and mental health and quality of life
- › Future generations inherit restored, thriving nature

Outcome 4

Treaty partners, whānau, hapū and iwi are exercising their full role as rangatira and kaitiaki

- › Resilient biodiversity enables cultural practices and mahinga kai, contributing to the regeneration of mātauranga Māori
- › Restored nature uplifts mana
- › Treaty partners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations are central to the biodiversity system and recognised as leaders

Outcome 5

Prosperity is intrinsically linked with a thriving biodiversity

- › Thriving biodiversity provides the services that underpin our prosperity
- › Biodiversity resources are managed sustainably to provide ongoing economic benefits
- › Economic activity has neutral or beneficial impacts on biodiversity
- › Thriving biodiversity plays a central role in our approach to mitigating climate change

Central to our work between now and 2050 are three pou (pillars) which provide direction and focus to guide us towards the transformational change needed to achieve the strategy outcomes. Objectives are identified within each pou.

TŪĀPAPA Getting the system right

We need the right systems in place to tackle the biodiversity crisis. These cross-cutting objectives set out how we will ensure this.

What our 2050 objectives are:

1. Governance, legislation and funding systems are in place and enable delivery of the strategy outcomes
2. Treaty partners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations are rangatira and kaitiaki
3. Biodiversity protection is at the heart of economic activity
4. Improved systems for knowledge, science, data and innovation inform our work
5. Mātauranga Māori is an integral part of biodiversity research and management
6. Aotearoa New Zealand is making a meaningful contribution to biodiversity globally

WHAKAHAU Empowering action

We need all New Zealanders to help to protect and restore our biodiversity. These cross-cutting objectives set out how we will ensure that everyone is empowered to act.

What our 2050 objectives are:

7. All New Zealanders have the skills, knowledge and capability to be effective
8. Resourcing and support are enabling connected, active guardians of nature
9. Collaboration, co-design and partnership are delivering better outcomes

TIAKI ME TE WHAKAHAUMANU Protecting and restoring

We need to address the direct pressures causing a decline in biodiversity, ensure the sustainable use of biodiversity, and restore biodiversity in areas where it has been lost. These objectives set out what we will do to ensure biodiversity is resilient and secure.

What our 2050 objectives are:

10. Ecosystems and species are protected, restored, resilient and connected from mountain tops to ocean depths
11. Management ensures that Biological threats and pressures are reduced through management
12. Natural resources are managed sustainably
13. Biodiversity provides nature-based solutions to climate change and is resilient to its effects

Implementation

Each of the objectives has measurable and time-bound goals. The goals are set at 2025 for Tūāpapa and Whakahau and at 2025, 2030 and 2050 for Tiaki me te whakahaumanu.

The cross-cutting goals in these first two priority areas will enable us to achieve the longer-term goals detailed in Tiaki me te whakahaumanu. Implementation planning will set actions for achieving the goals for the shorter term. Progress on actions and goals will be evaluated, and the actions and goals will be reviewed and revised to ensure we are on track to achieving the outcomes.

Measuring success:

Progress towards the strategy outcomes will be regularly assessed. Progress reporting will focus on both the delivery of implementation actions (output monitoring) and progress towards the outcomes (outcome monitoring). A progress review will take place every 5 years, and this will be followed by a review and update of the strategy and the development of the next 5-yearly implementation plan. A full set of indicators to measure progress will be developed as part of the initial phase of implementation. A table of potential indicators for the five outcomes is provided in Appendix 5.

How we work together:

We all have roles to play in protecting and restoring the mauri of nature. The strategy has a set of underlying values and principles to guide how we work together to make decisions and deliver action. These will form the basis of implementation planning.

He Awa Whiria / approach

He Awa Whiria refers to braided rivers, which are made up of multiple and interconnecting channels of water. The size and shape of a braided river is continually changing as channels shift and the water finds new paths.

Each river braid can be thought of as a unique worldview, value or perspective. River braids can also represent the roles different people, groups and sectors have in biodiversity protection and restoration.

He Awa Whiria can shine a light on the areas where the river braids meet – for example, joining mātauranga Māori with other scientific knowledge systems and ways of understanding the world to support actions and innovations that result in thriving biodiversity.

We will use this approach to implement and understand Te Mana o te Taiao as a way to be inclusive of all knowledges and peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, while ensuring that the Treaty partnership is honoured and mātauranga Māori is elevated to equal standing with other forms of knowing.

How we will work together to achieve Te Mana o te Taiao

Actions to address biodiversity loss need to involve everyone in the biodiversity system – whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), central and local government, businesses, organisations, industry and every individual. This means people working alongside each other to actively manage threats to nature, and taking proactive and positive measures to protect and restore nature.

A range of tools will be needed to achieve the strategy, including systems for coordination, governance and funding, legislation and other regulatory tools, and support and incentives.

Upholding the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi is an essential part of Te Mana o te Taiao. Working together in partnership towards a shared vision for nature ensures that rangatira and kaitiaki obligations, as well as mātauranga Māori, are actively protected.

Biodiversity is just one part of the environment, and the causes of biodiversity loss are multiple and complex. There are many related pieces of work in biosecurity, urban planning, primary production, climate change planning, energy and resources, education and many more. Te Mana o te Taiao will enable connections and collaboration across these.

How Te Mana o te Taiao will be implemented

The release of Te Mana o te Taiao is just the first step towards achieving ways of better working together to look after nature. A broad range of perspectives and expertise are needed to plan and implement the next steps including iwi, hapū and whanau, central and local government, industry, science, NGOs and communities.

As well as setting aspiration and direction, a strategy also needs to set out a pathway for how we meet the goals and objectives, and who will be working on them. Now that Te Mana o te Taiao is in place, the next phase of strategy development will be to collaboratively design an implementation plan for 2021 - 2022. Together, Te Mana o te Taiao and the implementation plan form the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.

The first implementation plan will focus on establishing the systems and processes needed to support effective delivery of Te Mana o te Taiao, as well as making progress on actions that can begin immediately. Implementation planning will run on a 5-yearly cycle from 2025 onwards for the life of the strategy.

Progress against the strategy and implementation plan will be regularly assessed and publicly reported on. Regular reviews will ensure that the strategy remains fresh, relevant and influential, and that we are measuring and accountable for our progress.



Example caption. Photo: Photographer

Te Mana o te Taiao will need to be implemented at national, regional and local levels. Some actions are required to be implemented nationally – these will often be led by agencies or national organisations. Much of the regional and local implementation will be led through regional strategies, and will be implemented by those who know their region best – the councils, iwi/hapū, landowners and users, communities and local people on the ground.

Development of Te Mana o te Taiao was led by the Department of Conservation on behalf of Aotearoa New Zealand. It was built on the advice and ideas of Treaty partners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations, communities, individuals, stakeholders, NGOs, industry organisations, and central and local government – those who will be vital to its success.

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