

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 4 April 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6964140

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Contents

1	Standing and Priority Items	4
1.1	Jobs for Nature	4
1.2	RMA advocacy	4
1.3	9(2)(f)(iv)	5
1.4	Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.....	5
1.5	9(2)(g)(i)	5
1.6	Milford Opportunities.....	5
2	Updates	6
2.1	9(2)(g)(i)	6
2.2	Recent Hector’s Dolphin deaths - update	6
2.3	9(2)(h)	7
2.4	Refund of International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) fees paid by certain temporary visa applicants.....	7
2.5	Support for Wildlife Institutions Impacted by COVID-19 Response	8
2.6	International Oceans Conferences - 2022.....	9
2.7	9(2)(g)(i)	9
2.8	Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response.....	10
3	Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities	11
3.1	Western South Island Region: West Coast Business Awards Ceremony	11
4	Director-General Engagements.....	11
1	Appendices.....	11

Attachments

1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

- We continue the processing of project milestone payments as required.
- Work with MartinJenkins to develop an approach for assessing sustainability of JFN outcomes is ongoing.
- 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
- The Jobs for Nature Advisory group met last week. Among a range of topics and updates, they received a briefing from MBIE about Regional Skills Leadership Groups and discussed a draft framework in development focused on designing a sustainable system for funding environmental enhancement. The group intends to test their thinking with agency CEs and subsequently with Ministers later in the year.

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

- We are awaiting instructions on your preference for the project visits to 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]. This is an opportunity for you to announce outstanding projects in both areas.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

Kaiwaikawe Windfarm Resource Consent Granted

- On 24 March 2022 the Kaipara District Council released its decision to grant resource consents for Kaiwaikawe Wind Farm, subject to agreed conditions.
- The proposal is for up to 19 turbines on Pāmu Farms (Landcorp) near Dargaville, slightly inland from the coast.
- Part of the hearing took place in August 2021 but was postponed due to the COVID lockdown and resumed for two further days in January 2022.
- We originally submitted in opposition to the consent application, citing significant concerns about the effect of the wind farm on indigenous species, specifically the critically endangered matuku (Australasian bittern).
- We presented legal submissions and expert ecological and planning evidence, asserting that the windfarm could be potentially catastrophic for the Northland matuku population if rates of displacement and collisions are high, and that population loss in Northland could be irreversible based on rates of decline in other parts of the country.
- Prior to the resumption of the hearing, DOC and Mercury Energy entered discussions, with a view to resolving our concerns through an enhanced package of mitigation and compensation (including additional funding for matuku habitat management) and consent conditions. Negotiations concluded with an agreement being reached, and this was announced to the Council decision-making panel with Mercury's closing submissions.

Contact: Natasha Ryburn, Director Planning, Permissions and Land: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

1.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

9(2)(a)

1.4 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

Monthly item – no update this week.

1.5 9(2)(g)(i)

No update this week.

1.6 Milford Opportunities

No update this week.

2 Updates

2.1 9(2)(g)(i)

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9(2)(a)

2.2 Recent Hector's Dolphin deaths - update

- Following on from the advice provided in Status Report 61, we are still awaiting necropsy results for the male Hector's dolphin discovered on New Brighton beach on 19 March.
- No further deceased Hector's or Maui dolphins have been reported, but one common dolphin washed ashore at Red Beach, near Orewa.
- Clusters of deaths raise questions about whether they might be connected and a sign of something else going on in the dolphins' environment. While the death of a protected species is always unfortunate, it isn't entirely unexpected and could equally be a coincidence, or a function of our outreach programme and people making more of an effort to report what

they've seen. It may also simply be a year in which the number of deaths is at the high end of 'normal' mortality for the population.

- Necropsy results are expected over the coming months and we will provide you with a further update when the results have been reviewed.

Contact: Elizabeth Heeg, Director Aquatic: 9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(h)

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- █ [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

2.4 9(2)(f)(iv)

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- █ [REDACTED]

- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
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- 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]
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- [redacted]

Contact: Kayla Kingdon-Bebb, Director Policy: 9(2)(a) [redacted]

2.5 Support for Wildlife Institutions Impacted by COVID-19 Response

- The Wildlife Institutions Relief Fund (WIRF) was established in 2020 to support zoos, aquariums, sanctuaries, and wildlife hospitals impacted by the COVID-19 response. \$14.89m was provided by Treasury for us to administer.
- WIRF funded 34 institutions (\$10.616m total) during 2020/21, and 16 institutions (\$3.427m total) during 2021/22. There is \$846k remaining, which must be used by end of June 2022 or it will be retained by the Crown.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
[redacted]
- Closure of, or reduction of conservation work by, these institutions carries risks for our recovery programmes, other conservation management efforts, and our ability to seek care for sick or injured wildlife. It may also lead to an increase in demand on DOC to temporarily support and guide closure of captive facilities, and on a longer-term basis, to pick up the ongoing essential work for conservation.
- Given the risks to conservation, we will start a targeted EOI process from 11 April to support wildlife institutions in 2022/23, using the remaining WIRF funding.
- EOIs received will be subject to assessment criteria, including the institution's contribution to conservation, risk of closure, demonstrable impact of COVID-19 response, long-term viability, and confirmation of support from local Operations Directors.
- We will inform you of the outcome of this process once complete, expected by early June.
- Officials are available to meet with you or provide a memo should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: Ash Murphy, Terrestrial Science Manager: 9(2)(a) [redacted]

2.6 International Oceans Conferences - 2022

- Following two years of disruption to the international meeting schedule, 2022 is shaping up to be a busy year of international oceans meetings. There are two upcoming oceans conferences:
 - The seventh Our Ocean Conference is scheduled to take place in Koror, Palau, from 13-14 April. The invitation-only Conference is themed 'Our Ocean, Our People, Our Prosperity'. Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Aupito William Sio plans to travel to Palau for the Conference. The visit is an opportunity to reinforce New Zealand's positive reputation on ocean issues, and to amplify the Pacific region's voice on these issues.
 - The high-level 2022 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the UN Oceans Conference) will be co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal in Lisbon from 27 June – 1 July 2022. This will be the second iteration of the UN Oceans Conference. It was originally scheduled to take place in Lisbon in 2020 but was postponed due to the effects of COVID-19.
- There will be three outcomes from the UN Oceans Conference: a political declaration; a report containing the co-chairs' summaries of the interactive dialogues; and a list of voluntary commitments announced at the Conference. The Conference will focus on increasing action in relation to science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals. New Zealand has confirmed an interest in taking up a Co-Chair role for one of the eight Interactive Dialogues at the Conference.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials have recently sought advice from Minister Mahuta's office on how to determine Ministerial attendance to the UN Oceans Conference.
- We will update your office when we have more information on this issue.

Contact: Geoff Ensor, Director Business and International: 9(2)(a)

2.7 9(2)(g)(i)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.8 Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Omicron

- To date (from 1 March) 150 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. A further 125 staff have advised that they have had to isolate as Household Contacts.
- Business remains largely 'as normal', and no services have been disrupted over the last week.

Vaccine Mandates

- Subsequent to the 23 March announcements of Cabinet decisions on the future of vaccine pass and mandate systems, we are undertaking a review of our risk assessments for staff, contractors and volunteers, and for Visitor Accommodation.
- Decisions will be made on the future of these mandates over the week of 4 April and communicated to staff and the public.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a)

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Western South Island Region: West Coast Business Awards Ceremony

- The West Coast 'Leading Lights Awards Ceremony' is planned for Friday 20 May 2022 (dinner and award session), with an opportunity for you to present the DOC-sponsored 'Sustainability Award'. We will engage with your Office to confirm your interest and availability.
- The Sustainability Award recognises a West Coast business or organisation that has introduced products, services, strategies, or initiatives helping to reduce the organisation's impacts on the environment and improve its long-term sustainability.
- The Awards celebrate business excellence in the West Coast region and acknowledges the valuable contribution West Coast businesses are making to the local economy. The Awards are an annual event that is organised by Development West Coast, the region's economic development agency. It is a well-attended event.
- Other categories of award are Large, Medium and Small Enterprise, Workplace Wellbeing, COVID Hero, Rising Star and a Supreme Award
- DOC joins other prominent organisations as a sponsor, including Air New Zealand, Crombie Lockwood Gallagher Company, Duncan Cotterill, NZME, Isaac Construction, ANZ and Brannigans.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Western South Island, 9(2)(a)

4 Director-General Engagements

April

04-05 April	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists, Wellington
21 April	Northland Regional Council, MS Teams
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May

19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
26-27 May	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough

June

16-17 June	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
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5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 11 April 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6969025

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1.5	9(2)(g)(i)	6
1.6	Milford Opportunities.....	7
2	Updates	8
2.1	Avian malaria detected in Westland petrels.....	8
2.2	9(2)(g)(i)	8
2.1	Trade in Endangered Species Bill – PCO drafting issues and timeline impacts	8
2.2	Royal Honours process change.....	10
2.3	Southern South Island: Kākāpō Breeding Season Update	10
2.4	Health, Safety & Wellbeing	11
3	Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities	12
3.1	Western South Island: Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP), Punakaiki event	12
4	Director-General Engagements.....	13
5	Appendices	13

Attachments

1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard
3. Summary of active legal matters
4. Civil litigation in the senior Courts

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- Some projects are reporting that inflation and rising costs are now having an impact on the delivery of their projects. We have advised that we will consider adjustments to project deliverables due to rising costs on a case-by-case basis. Projects are also reporting that recruitment is taking longer than expected due to the current labour market.
- Processing of assurance checks and milestone payments continue, for projects with milestone payments due in December, January, and February. Quarterly reporting for the period 1 Jan – 31 March, is open for projects to submit reports.
- We have notified projects about the stop on monthly employment reporting from 1 April. This has been instigated to reduce the reporting burden on projects and recognise the current labour market conditions (low unemployment). The employment data will be picked up through the regular quarterly reporting.
- We have included more comprehensive questions regarding impact from Covid-19 in quarterly reporting from 1 April, to get a better understanding of how projects are being impacted.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA advocacy

Appeals:

Joining appeals on the Rangitikei District Council plan change for the Marton Rail Hub (Lower North Island)

- In August 2020, Rangitikei District Council approved a plan change to rezone 40 hectares of land adjacent to the North Island Main Trunk line, near Makirikiri Road, from Rural zoning to Industrial zoning. The Plan Change is currently under appeal. We were not a party to this appeal.
- The location and area, and therefore potential effects, of the plan change proposal have been modified during the appeal process to the extent that the Environment Court has directed that a Section 293 (direct changes to a plan) process be followed. This provides an opportunity to be involved, if necessary.
- New ecological information for the revised and expanded proposal indicates that critically endangered long-tailed bats are present in, or near, the site.
- We became a party to the appeal to ensure appropriate protection of long-tailed bats and their habitat on 7 April 2022.

Aupouri Groundwater Consents Appeal update (Northern North Island)

- We filed expert evidence on groundwater and surface water hydrology, wetlands, planning, and DOC operations, with the Environment Court on 15 and 18 March 2022, to support the Director-General's current appeal. We included a revised set of draft consent conditions.
- Further expert caucusing on hydrology occurred during the week beginning 28 March, and planning expert caucusing occurred on 4 April. The purpose

of this is to refine the parts of the appeal still in contention and to provide focus for the hearing.

- The Environment Court hearing is scheduled to begin the second week of May.

Contact: Natasha Ryburn, Director Planning, Permissions and Land, 9(2)(a)

1.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

1.4 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

- Planning is progressing to schedule for your launch of the first ANZBS Implementation Plan, on Mana Island, on 20 April. We will provide speech

notes, FAQs, etc to your office. If there is bad weather on the day that prevents the visit to the island, the launch will go ahead at Queen Elizabeth Park, Paraparaumu. The related Cabinet paper will be proactively released on the DOC website at the same time as the launch.

- The Interim Oversight Group (IOG) met again on 30 March and agreed to a principles-based approach to recommendations on long-term ANZBS governance. Principles cover: advancing the Treaty partnership; accountability; funding; regulatory, policy and international roles; local government; and risk management.
- The IOG is in general agreement that the new entity would have monitoring, reporting and advisory powers, but not necessarily any compliance, enforcement, or regulatory powers. The entity would require secure funding commensurate with carrying out these responsibilities adequately and would want any reports to be released to the New Zealand public promptly. The IOG sees the entity having an international role, such as having an assured place on New Zealand's delegations to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The way the Crown-Māori partnership approach could be implemented is complex and requires further discussion, which may be informed through the government response to the ODG recommendations.
- The IOG next meets on 5 May, but a sub-group will meet on 19 April to progress this work ahead of a discussion with the Director-General at the 5 May meeting. The IOG is on track to deliver its recommendations to the Director-General by the end of June.
- DOC subject matter experts met online with agencies and regional councils on 5 April, to further test existing thinking on the ANZBS monitoring and reporting system. A North Island wānanga will be held in Rotorua on 5-6 May to engage with an expert group of Māori kaitiaki and hapū/iwi representatives to grow iwi-led conservation initiatives and build a collective te ao Māori approach to monitoring and reporting. A corresponding South Island wānanga will follow later this calendar year.

Contact: Mark Fitzpatrick, Director Te Mana o te Taiao Implementation:
9(2)(a)

1.5 9(2)(g)(i)

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- [Redacted]
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- 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
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- [redacted]
- [redacted]

[redacted] 9(2)(a)

1.6 Milford Opportunities

MOP is finalising appointment of its director

- A candidate for the MOP Director role, hosted by DOC, has been approved by the MOP Board.
- There are some technical details that need to be addressed in the contractual arrangements. We anticipate these being resolved imminently.
- We expect to confirm the candidate to start in April 2022.

Remuneration for the MOP Chair

- We are awaiting feedback from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (PSC). PSC informed us that they received your letter, seeking the Minister for Public Service's support for an exemption to the Cabinet Fees Framework.

DOC MOP workstreams

- We have begun recruiting the key DOC roles to support the progression of MOP and are actively engaged with the MOP Chair and Board.
- DOC is meeting with the MOP Chair and Board on 12 April, to discuss immediate-term priorities. We will update you after the meeting.
- As an early indication, the business model for how the MOP Masterplan would be implemented has been identified as a critical piece of early work. This is likely to feature in early advice to Ministers.

Contact: Claire Spencer, Manager Regional Visitor Planning, 9(2)(a) [redacted]

2 Updates

2.1 Avian malaria detected in Westland petrels

- The Westland Petrel is an endangered seabird species, endemic to the South Island of New Zealand.
- On 15 February, Otago University researchers advised DOC that avian malaria had been detected in preserved heart tissue from this species. Samples from eight birds were tested and one returned a positive result. This is the first-time avian malaria has been detected in any petrel species in New Zealand.
- The samples were taken from specimens that had died of unrelated causes. No petrels are known to have died from contracting avian malaria.
- DOC set up an expert panel consisting of veterinarians and seabird science advisors to discuss the potential for avian malaria as an emerging risk, and to develop an appropriate conservation management response.
- Following panel discussion, we have decided to take a watching brief and, as a first step, test all remaining samples held in storage (approximately 50) for both avian malaria and toxoplasmosis. Samples from the closely related black petrels will also be included. Results will guide next steps.
- We will provide you with an update once the additional samples have been analysed and results known.

Contact: Elizabeth Heeg, Director, Aquatic Contact: 9(2)(a)

2.2 9(2)(g)(i)

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2.1 9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

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- 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

2.2 Royal Honours process change

- DOC is changing its approach to Royal Honours.
- We will no longer lead a formal DOC nomination process and instead will encourage the conservation community to make their own nominations.
- In advance of each Honours round we will inform the conservation community of nomination deadlines via regional offices and provide support letters where appropriate.
- The Royal Honours process change brings DOC into alignment with other government agencies and is also driven by the need to focus resources on our new Integrated Strategy.

Contact: Toni Giacon, Director Community Engagement Unit, Partnerships and Engagement, Phone: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.3 Southern South Island: Kākāpō Breeding Season Update

- The 2022 kākāpō breeding season is in full swing at three Southern sites - Whenua Hou, Pukenui, and Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea.
- Sixty chicks have hatched to date – 36 from Pukenui, where breeding commenced earlier and 24 from Whenua Hou (none of the eggs laid on Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea were fertile). Three of the chicks have subsequently died (one from a bacterial infection at eight days old, one was euthanised immediately after an assisted hatch due to a severe deformity and another due to causes unknown). This leaves 57 chicks across the three islands.
- We lost two adult female kākāpō during the season. One nesting female on Pukenui, Jemma, has died due to severe aspergillosis and another, Ra, died of acute liver failure.
- Eight chicks were removed from Pukenui and CT scanned at Auckland Zoo in attempt to gauge the extent of the aspergillosis outbreak. So far, all but one of these chicks has been given the all-clear with one potentially requiring further treatment/diagnosis. More chicks were sent to Auckland (and the healthy chicks returned) in the week beginning 4 April, to gain as complete a picture as possible of the outbreak.
- Three members of the team (including one volunteer) have tested positive for COVID, with another staff member isolating as the pandemic continues to impact our capacity to support the breeding season. Additional staff have been recruited to support this work.
- Should an opportunity arise for you to visit Whenua Hou during the breeding season, we would be happy to liaise with your office to facilitate a visit and we can work with Ngāi Tahu to firm up arrangements.

Contact: Aaron Fleming, Director Operations Southern South Island:
9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.4 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Vaccine Mandates

- After reviewing the risk assessment associated with our visitor and accommodation policy, SLT decided to suspend the requirement for people to be fully vaccinated to use DOC accommodation in-line with updated public health guidance. This came into effect on 11.59pm on 4 April.
- On 4 April, SLT considered the staff vaccination policy and decided to consult with staff about changes. Consultation will conclude on 12 April, we will update your office once decisions are made.

Omicron

- To date (from 1 March) 204 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. A further 150 staff have advised that they have had to isolate as Household Contacts.
- Business remains largely 'as normal'. No services have been disrupted over the last week.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety: 9(2)(a)

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Western South Island: Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP), Punakaiki event

- On 21 March, we provided an update regarding the award of the main construction contract to Naylor Love Limited.
- The latest proposed date for the event is 28 May at Punakaiki.
- Ngāti Waewae, DOC, and the Naylor Love Executive Team will be present.
- The event will be an opportunity for the local community to participate in this significant milestone for the West Coast. Fifty to 100 people from the community will be invited.
- We will work with your office to confirm if event logistics can be accommodated in your diary.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Western South Island: 9(2)(a)

4 Director-General Engagements

April

20 April	Allen & Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists	Wellington
20 April	ANZBS Implementation Plan	Mana Island
21 April	Northland Regional Council	MS Teams
28 April	Cave Creek Anniversary	West Coast

May

03 May	SLT Retreat	TBC
19 May	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting	DOC Wellington
24 May	Senior Leaders Hui	TBC Wellington
26-27 May	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat Brackenridge	Martinborough

June

16-17 June	NZ Conservation Authority	TBC
22 June	Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project handover	TBC
23 June	Environment Committee 2022/23 Estimates Hearing	TBC

5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)
- Appendix 4 – Summary table of Civil Litigation in Senior Courts
- Appendix 5 – Summary of active legal matters

IN-CONFIDENCE

Minister of Conservation, Minister of Conservation's Office, and Department of Conservation Eyes Only.

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 18 April 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6981844

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2	Updates	8
2.1	9(2)(h)	8
2.2	9(2)(h)	8
2.3	9(2)(g)(i)	9
2.4	Western South Island Region: Pike River Families Committee meeting.....	10
2.5	Western South Island Region: Reconsideration decision on an application from Precision Helicopters Limited (PHL) for snow landings Hokitika District West Coast	10
2.6	National Operations – Update on Wild Animals projects.....	11
2.7	Update on Myrtle Rust.....	12
2.8	National Pest Management Plan for Kauri	12
2.9	Queen’s Platinum Jubilee – Native Tree planting project.....	13
2.10	Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response.....	13
3	Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities	14
4	Appendices.....	14

Attachments

1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

- We will be implementing a level two assurance review meeting to strengthen the assurance system. This will improve visibility over the level one assurance process, whilst helping to identify regional risks and critical issues. The review meeting will likely occur every six weeks.
- Deep Dive Learning Review site visits are scheduled for four projects in Canterbury in the week of 26 April. Further visits are planned for West Coast and Queenstown projects in the week of 30 May.
- We are also proposing a Chief Advisor visit to Tairāwhiti to meet with the Raukūmara Pae Maunga team and representatives of the recently approved Whaia Titirangi project, once the funding agreement and announcement dates are finalised.
- We are continuing work on the forecast overhead costs of the Unit across future years of the programme as outlined in the memo 22-B-0234.
- The JFN Advisory Group has requested feedback from the Director-General and other agency CEs by 29 April on a paper they have prepared, setting out a proposed framework for a cross agency 'sustainable system for environmental enhancement'. The Advisory Group then plan to present the paper to SLU Ministers.
- We have connected with the JFN Secretariat to discuss flexibility of FTE targets for individual projects, following SLU Minister approval. Any adjustments will be based on projects demonstrating a clear benefit to long-term environmental or employment outcomes. 9(2)(g)(i)

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

- We are preparing a media release and factsheets for you to announce the Māori Land Fund projects.
- We will be announcing two Wellington projects (AL12.1 The Hem of Remutaka coastal wetland restoration and AL12.2 Ngā pari e rua), as discussed with your office. We invited a journalist from Stuff to visit the projects on 21 April.

Contact: Christine Officer, Acting Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: 9(2)(a)

1.2 RMA Advocacy Update

Appeals:

Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan Appeal (pMEP) – Position of New Zealand King Salmon

- In June 2020 we lodged appeals on behalf of the Minister of Conservation on the pMEP. One appeal point sought to have an area of mapped Outstanding Natural Character (**ONC**) in Cook Strait removed, to correctly reflect evidence presented at the council hearing. We had worked closely with Council staff to map natural character in the Coastal Plan. The appeal was agreed to by relevant parties in mediation in 2021 but has not yet been put into a Consent Order for the Environment Court to consider.
- Since mediation, part of the area agreed in the mediation has been the subject of a consent application by the New Zealand King Salmon Company

Ltd (NZKS) for an offshore salmon farm (called Blue Endeavour). At the hearing for that application, more detailed evidence was presented indicating that some of the area proposed and agreed in mediation for ONC removal may in fact have ONC values. This includes part of the proposed salmon farm footprint. The hearing is yet to be completed.

- Given that new evidence, we are seeking to re-open mediation on the pMEP ONC mapping. While the Marlborough District Council has agreed with this, NZKS has expressed concern that we are 'resiling' from the earlier agreement. We are seeking to meet NZKS to discuss. NZKS may approach you directly or raise the matter in the media. We have prepared background context, key messages and options for you, should that happen.

Contact: Natasha Ryburn, Director Planning Permissions and Land:

9(2)(a) [redacted]

1.3 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted]

- [redacted]

- [redacted]

- [redacted]

9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

1.4 Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

Monthly item – no update this week.

1.5 9(2)(g)(i)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

1.6 Milford Opportunities

- On Tuesday 12 April we attended the first meeting of the Milford Opportunities Project Board (**MOP Board**).
- The meeting focussed on inducting the MOP Board into the intent of the Masterplan and understanding the forward work programme and priorities.
- As noted last week, the preferred candidate for the MOP Director role has been approved by the MOP Board.
- The preferred candidate, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] was selected through an open application process. 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- We expect the appointment to be finalised shortly, with the Director expected to start in the role this month.

Contact: Claire Spencer, Manager Regional Visitor Planning, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 9(2)(h)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.2 9(2)(h)

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

2.4 Western South Island Region: Pike River Families Committee meeting

- The next monthly meeting between DOC and the Pike River Families Committee is planned for 27 April at 5.30pm in Greymouth, presenting an opportunity for you to attend via Zoom if you are available.
- Penny Nelson and Mike Slater will be on the West Coast for other matters and will be able to attend the meeting in person.
- The meeting would be a good opportunity for you to cement the relationship with the Pike River Families, helping to focus the families on the future work with DOC in the reconfiguration of the Pike Valley into a visitor experience and storytelling site.
- We will engage with your office to confirm details, and your availability.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Western South Island: 9(2)(a)

2.5 Western South Island Region: Reconsideration decision on an application from Precision Helicopters Limited (PHL) for snow landings Hokitika District West Coast

- Our reconsideration decision on a concession granted to PHL for helicopter landings within the Hokitika Backcountry-Remote zone on the West Coast will be released to PHL in the week of 18 April. There is a risk Federated Mountain Clubs Inc. may challenge the decision or process.
- We approved the original concession application in December 2021, with strict limits on timing and frequency of landings. PHL sought a reconsideration, as they did not believe their business would be viable under the tight conditions.
- Regular helicopter landings in these locations are not inconsistent with the Tai Poutini West Coast Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) 2010. We sought advice from the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board on the reconsideration application.
- Our reconsidered decision approves additional landing limits to one (Mount Beaumont) of the five approved landing sites previously granted. It also increases the previous maximum of two landings on this site per day to three landings and extends the season from the previous period of May to September, to year-round. The new concession includes additional conditions to ensure any potential adverse effects are mitigated.
- The effects of regular helicopter landings in the Hokitika Backcountry-Remote zone are generally not well understood. For this reason, we publicly notified the original application in mid-2020, to seek feedback. Hearings were carried out in late 2020.
- A reasonably short term of five years was approved (to December 2026), to allow us to monitor the concession, better understand possible effects, and the effectiveness of mitigation.
- Submitters were advised of the decision and reconsideration request, but we did not re-engage with them through the reconsideration process. We consider that their interests were well canvassed in the original public notification and hearings process.
- In anticipation of receiving Official Information Act requests on this matter, the original and reconsideration decision documents are being added to the consultation webpage on the DOC website.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations Western South Island, 9(2)(a)

2.6 National Operations – Update on Wild Animals projects

Wild Animal Recovery Operators (WARO)

- We are currently inviting submissions on draft changes to the proposed WARO land access recommendations.
- Submissions close on 27 April 2022 and will be considered by a review panel made up of legal and technical DOC staff.
- Once the land recommendations are finalised, we will review permit conditions and complete the process with the WARO operators to approve wild animal recovery operations under a national concession.

Update on deer management partnership initiatives

- The Raukūmara Pae Maunga Restoration Project has now completed Stage 1 (27 December 2021 to 22 March 2022), with results of control of 1947 Deer and 192 Goats. Aerial ungulate control for the project has now ceased for the Roar, with Stage 2 commencing in May 2022.
- We are working on a project with the NZ Game Animal Council and the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation to manage the deer population in Fiordland. Monitoring data indicates that to protect Fiordland ecosystems in the project area, approximately 555 deer need to be removed. From 14 hours of flying time, 336 deer have been shot. The project has paused for the Roar and will recommence in May.
- We expect wild animal recovery operations will remove approximately 100 animals. This is significantly less than normally harvested, but as the DOC-led work is progressing ahead of its target, the combined harvest is on track.
- The Jobs for Nature Sika Foundation project on adaptive deer management and who protection has recruited a project manager who started on 11 April. We are working closely with the Sika Foundation to plan the work ahead, including deer control for May/June this year in remote areas of Kaimanawa Forest Park.

Building wild animal management capacity and capability

- Work is progressing to assess DOC's optimal delivery method for Wild Animal control, as we plan to increase our delivery. This work includes assessments of both market capacity, and the structure of DOC's current internal delivery.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

Upcoming engagement opportunities with the hunting sector

- The Sika Show has been rescheduled for 29 and 30 October 2022; updated advice on your attendance will be provided closer to the date.
- We understand you will receive an invitation to the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association's National Conference to be held on 29-31 July 2022 in Hamilton.
- Work is also underway to develop an opportunity for the Sika Foundation to host you and engage regarding their Jobs for Nature project and upcoming deer control work.

Contact: Ben Reddiex, Director Operations Issues and Programmes:

9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.7 Update on Myrtle Rust

- MPI, DOC and MBIE established an interagency group in 2021 to co-ordinate central government activities on myrtle rust. The group has focussed on the development of surveillance and monitoring protocols, ensuring consistent communication on myrtle rust for engagement with key stakeholders, and establishing a clear set of agency roles and responsibilities for managing myrtle rust.
- MPI has funded operational research to develop effective fungicide treatments for nurseries, improve communications and launch Plant Pass. Plant Pass is a voluntary accreditation scheme for plant producers that aims to improve biosecurity practices in nurseries and reduce the likelihood of high-risk organisms, such as kauri dieback or myrtle rust, establishing in a nursery and being spread.
- During 2021/22 we developed a national framework for monitoring and surveillance activities to understand the impact of myrtle rust on native species and ecosystems on public conservation land.
- Targeted surveillance for myrtle rust is underway across the majority of the North Island and the top of the South Island. This year's focus is to determine the extent and severity of myrtle rust spread on highly susceptible populations of maire tawake (*Syzygium maire*), ramarama and rōhutu (*Lophomyrtus bullata* and *Lophomyrtus obcordata*).
- In addition to this surveillance programme, nine at-risk species have been prioritised for ongoing monitoring, which will be critical to understanding the long-term impacts on susceptible species.
- We are partnering with hapū from Ngāti Wai and Auckland Council to co-deliver a program to keep Aotea free of myrtle rust.
- We continue to support surveillance and monitoring activities being developed in the myrtle rust-focused Jobs for Nature programmes (Myrtle Rust Jobs for Resistance and Te Whakapae Ururoa- Community Myrtle Rust Surveillance) in the Bay of Plenty and East Coast regions.

Contact: Ben Reddiex, Director Operations Issues and Programmes:
9(2)(a)

2.8 National Pest Management Plan for Kauri

- MPI has advised that the National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) for kauri is likely to come into force in late July 2022. We continue to work with the kauri protection team (Tiakina Kauri) on the details of the NPMP. Tiakina Kauri will lead the implementation of the NPMP.
- In addition to our substantive kauri programme of work, Tiakina Kauri is supporting DOC this year to both develop a pig management strategy for public conservation land in the kauri lands and undertake a number of kauri protection activities, including maintenance of the bespoke hygiene station at Tāne Mahuta in Waipoua Forest.
- We are in year two of our four-year soil sampling plan to determine the impact of mitigation measures on the spread of the kauri dieback pathogen. We are also supporting Tiakina Kauri in the development of an aerial surveillance initiative designed to map the presence of kauri and dieback across public conservation land.

Contact: Ben Reddiex, Director Operations Issues and Programmes:
9(2)(a)

2.9 Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Native Tree planting project

- The Prime Minister recently committed \$1 million from her Emerging Priorities Fund for Project Crimson to run a national native tree planting programme to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- This project will be delivered nationally under the Project Crimson umbrella by Trees that Count.
- We have engaged with Project Crimson and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (**DPMC**) to develop a national native tree planting project that can be delivered within the 2022 planting season.
- 100,000 native trees will be planted nationally at fifteen locations between May and September 2022. The planting sites represent a range of tenure types, some of which are in iconic locations and have a national profile.

Delivery Partner – Project Crimson

- Project Crimson are an environmental charity founded in 1990 and are involved in large-scale native tree restoration projects around New Zealand.
- Trees that Count is a marketplace charity managed by Project Crimson which aims to plant more native trees in New Zealand by linking funders to groups wishing to plant through its marketplace
- Project Crimson has previously been the recipient of funding from the DOC Community Fund.
- We will work with your office and DPMC on media and site visit opportunities for you, the Prime Minister, and the Governor General.

Contact: David Talbot, Director National Support, Partnerships and Engagement: 9(2)(a)

2.10 Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Omicron

- Between 1 March and 11 April, 230 DOC staff have advised that they have tested positive for COVID-19. In the last 7-day period only 15 new positive cases were reported, down from 34 in the previous 7-day period and well down on the 51 new cases reported at the peak of the Omicron surge in mid-March.
- Business remains largely 'as normal', and no services have been disrupted over the last week.

Vaccine Mandates

- Subsequent to the 23 March announcements of Cabinet decisions on the future of vaccine pass and mandate systems, we have undertaken a review of our risk assessments for staff, contractors and volunteers, and for Visitor Accommodation.
- The DDG Policy & Visitors, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, approved a recommendation to suspend the vaccine mandate for Visitor Accommodation and this was implemented effective 11.59pm on Monday 4 April.
- SLT agreed in principle to suspend the vaccine mandate for staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to our workplace buildings and premises, subject to staff consultation exercise (via a survey).
- Staff Consultation closed on Tuesday 12 April. 756 staff completed the survey (about 25% of our workforce). 72% of respondents support the

proposal to suspend the Vaccination Policy, although a quarter of these thought it was too early and should be future dated. The majority also supported shifting to localised management but raised concerns about how we support site leads and leaders to implement and reinforce public health measures, including proper masking and support to stay home when unwell.

- Based on this, we will suspend our staff policy effective 4 May. This will give us time to complete the HR processes for those people who were not able to produce a My Vaccine Pass and to work with managers and site leads on preparations for reconnecting.
- In addition, we will be working to increase the occupancy in our workplaces and ensuring all flexible work arrangements are agreed and documented.

Contact: Harry Maher, Director Health & Safety, 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

No items this week.

4 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support this status report:

- Appendix 1 – Cabinet Paper Report (regular item)
- Appendix 2 – Forthcoming items (regular item)
- Appendix 3 – Jobs for Nature dashboard (regular item)