

Department of Conservation Status Report

for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 7 February 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6907826

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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:

- The 'Enquire' funds management tool was successfully launched on 10 December for DOC staff, delivery managers and partners. A new dashboard has been created to align with Enquire and will be provided to you on a weekly basis. Some redundant indicators have been replaced with more employment-focused metrics. Data for milestone payments, and the paid funding total, are still works in progress as prior payments get loaded into Enquire.
- Delivery Managers and JFN staff have focused on the implementation of Enquire over January – confirming migrated data and migrating some remaining information. There has been high engagement from staff in using the tool to monitor projects, and we are already seeing efficiencies. We are continuing work on reconciling payments made in Enquire. This is expected to take a further 2-4 weeks.
- We have updated our COVID-19 guidance for projects operating under the red status of the COVID-19 Protection Framework. Guidance includes encouraging project partners to adhere to public health guidelines and to seek financial support through MSD's COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme if employees need to self-isolate. Communications were sent to project partners on 1 February, and a copy was provided to your office. We have updated the JFN section of the DOC website to reflect the new advice.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- The JFN Select Committee Sectoral hearing is scheduled to take place on 17 February, directly after the DOC Annual Review hearing. The Unit is preparing material to brief the Director-General.
- The Jobs for Nature Secretariat is proposing a one-off survey to both employees and employers in February 2022 to gather demographic and social information. The Secretariat is currently seeking cross-agency feedback on two draft social surveys proposed as part of the benefits framework.

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

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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

continue to identify and progress the DOC components of work; we anticipate the Milford Opportunities Project will experience minor delays initiating the work programme while securing resources.

- [REDACTED]
9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
- We will provide you with advice in the coming weeks relating to two requests: Environment Southland's request to be appointed to Governance and one from a collective including Queenstown Airport and Air New Zealand regarding the proposed airport closure.

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

2.4 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.5 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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

[Redacted] 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.6 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

- [Redacted]
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[Redacted] 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.7 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.8 Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) report on wellbeing budgets and the environment

- On 14 December 2021, the PCE, Simon Upton, publicly released a report titled “Wellbeing budgets and the environment: A promised land?”.
- The report examines how the Government’s budget decision-making process considers environmental impacts and the state of the environment. This includes the wellbeing budget approach.
- The report argues that the current budget process is not well suited for considering the complexity of environmental outcomes – such as thresholds and tipping points. It also suggests that the way environmental information is presented and analysed in budget documents does not support decision-makers to properly understand and compare the impacts of initiatives, especially over the longer term.
- The report includes four high-level recommendations for improvements to the budget process. These are:
 - Ensure that investment decisions accurately reflect the value we derive from the environment. This would involve updating the budget wellbeing analysis template and adding new environmental values for cost-benefit analysis.
 - Provide decision-makers with information on key risks to wellbeing posed by the condition of the natural environment. This would involve using environmental indicators and forecasts to highlight future environmental risks, uncertainty, and tipping points.
 - Give greater weight to longer-term outcomes. This includes reviewing the use of ‘discount rates’ (which give greater weight to near-term

outcomes) so that long-term environmental impacts are adequately considered.

- Improve the information provided to decision-makers on environmental impacts and their associated effects on wellbeing. This includes developing new metrics and a new multicriteria analysis tool to score the impacts of initiatives.
- The report assigns responsibility for implementation of these recommendations largely to the Treasury and MfE. DOC would have a role in providing enhanced information into the budget process.
- 9(2) [REDACTED]
(g)(i) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- In early 2022, the PCE will prepare a follow-up report with more specific recommendations on how to formally link environmental reporting and the budget system. DOC has indicated our interest in contributing to the preparation of this report.

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

2.9 South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation Commission Meeting

- The 2022 SPRFMO Commission met virtually between 18 and 28 January.
- SPRFMO bottom fishing measures were due for review by the Commission in January 2022. The Commission agreed that substantive issues related to the review instead be considered intersessionally over 2022. This will enable the necessary analysis and consultation to occur, ensure alignment with the 2022 United Nations General Assembly bottom fishing review, and enable face to face review of the bottom fishing measures by the Commission in 2023. DOC supported this approach, as did Te Ohu Kai Moana, ENGOs and industry representatives.
- We will continue to actively engage with MPI to advocate for a more precautionary approach to protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems from the impacts of bottom fishing, consistent with international law and best practice, as MPI develops a position for New Zealand's participation in the intersessional process.
- On compliance action for potential illegal fishing of alfonsino by Russian and EU vessels, New Zealand supported the EU's action against the offending vessel as effective, which involved a significant financial penalty and demerit points under EU domestic legislation. New Zealand is working with other Members to press Russia for timely data to substantiate its claim that its vessel was not offending.
- New Zealand's exploratory toothfish fishery was supported by Members and successfully extended for a further three years.
- Proposals by Ecuador to increase observer coverage and China to introduce an effort limit in the Jumbo Flying Squid Fishery were not adopted.

New Zealand will continue to keep working to improve seabird bycatch monitoring and mitigation within the Jumbo Flying Squid Fisheries.

- We will update you on SPRFMO issues as they arise, in particular on the intersessional review process for the bottom fishing conservation measures later this year.

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

2.10 Processing of Vertebrate Toxic Agents permissions

- There has been good progress with the Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection Authority (**EPA**) to resolve the delays experienced last year in issuing of Public Health Unit permissions for use of Vertebrate Toxic Agents (**VTA**).
- The Director-General of Health has approved specific criteria to appoint health protection officers or medical officers of health as HSNO enforcement officers to issue VTA permissions (only).
- Just prior to Christmas, the Acting Director-General of Health appointed a HSNO enforcement officer to issue VTA permissions. This enables suitable staff employed or contracted by Assur Ora Ltd to process and approve permissions under the current EPA delegation. Assur Ora have taken on additional staff to ensure they have sufficient capacity to process the volume of permissions expected over the coming six months. We will continue to liaise closely with all parties to ensure this process is working well and to provide input into the review of the VTA permission system being initiated by EPA.

Contact: Hilary Aikman, Director Operations Issues and Programmes: 9(2)(a)

2.11 Lower North Island – Vesting of Taia Bush Historic Reserve, Rēkohu/Wharekauri Chatham Islands

- Hearings under the Reserves Act 1977 for the vesting of the Taia Historic Reserve are scheduled to be held on 9 and 10 February 2022.
- You have been previously briefed on this matter in February 2021 [Briefing 20-B-0811].
- The first hearing will be in Wellington on Wednesday, 9 February 2022.
- The second hearing will be held at Taia Historic Reserve on Rēkohu / Wharekauri Chatham Islands on 10 February 2022.

Contact: Jack Mace, Director Operations Lower North Island: 9(2)(a)

2.12 Eastern South Island: Waitaki Hydro Scheme Reconsenting

- Meridian Energy and Genesis Energy have initiated pre-application discussions with DOC to re-consent their Waitaki hydro scheme.
- Both hold existing resource consents from Canterbury Regional Council to operate the Waitaki hydro scheme, including taking, damming, diversion,

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and discharge of water from Lakes Tekapo, Pukāki, and Ōhau, and discharging through power stations into Lake Benmore and the lower Waitaki River. The consents expire on 30 April 2025.

- Under the current consents, an environmental mitigation and compensation package was agreed. The companies fund a work programme known as Project River Recovery, which includes weed and predator control, wetland construction, and research and monitoring programmes. The programme was established in 1990.
- The companies wish to commence the process to replace these consents ahead of the expiry date, initiating discussions with DOC, Ngāi Tahu rūnanga, Fish and Game, and other key stakeholders. Part of this process will include negotiating a mitigation and compensation package. We are committed to engaging with them constructively through this process and have had several preliminary meetings with both companies.
- DOC has recently provided an overview of our current thinking and expectations. We have scheduled a meeting for mid-February to explore what outcomes could be achieved and work towards securing an appropriate level of resources based on the effects of the scheme and to achieve outcomes consistent with Te Mana o te Taiao vision.
- To date, the companies have engaged with DOC, Ngāi Tahu rūnanga, and other stakeholders separately. We have communicated our willingness to work with Ngāi Tahu rūnanga on matters of mutual interest. Initially they were looking to engage independently but at least one has recently indicated a willingness to discuss approaches/desired outcomes.
- We will continue to update you on progress with this re consenting process at key milestones.

Contact: Nicola Toki, Director Operations, Eastern South Island: 9(2)(a)

2.13 Morning Star Beach Recreation Reserve Vesting Proposal

- On 18 September 2020, we received an application from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (**TRONT**) to become the administering body for part of Morning Star Beach Recreation Reserve (the Vesting Area) in Queenstown.
- The Vesting Area is currently administered by DOC and leased to Shotover Jet Ltd, a Ngāi Tahu Tourism-owned company. The rent for this lease has been under dispute for some time.
- TRONT has additionally requested the transfer of delegations from you in relation to the management of the Vesting Area, like those given to Territorial Authorities. This would remove the requirement for you to consent to them carrying out their functions in administering the Vesting Area.
- The matters of the delegations and the vesting are closely interlinked. A decision on delegations can only be made by you. We, therefore, consider that a decision on both the vesting and allocation of delegations should be made by you.
- Prior to decision-making on the vesting and delegations, you will need to decide whether to publicly notify the proposal. We will provide a background memo initially, followed by a briefing seeking this decision in March 2022.

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

2.14 Update on collaborative deer management projects

Fiordland National Park

- DOC has initiated a deer control programme in Fiordland National Park. We have been working with the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation (**FWF**) and the Game Animal Council (**GAC**) to design and implement this programme. Control will commence in early February and will run over the next few months.
- Depressed wild venison prices in recent years have meant a reduction in the number of animals taken by wild animal recovery operations (**WARO**) in Fiordland. Monitoring in these areas indicates that work is consequently needed to reduce deer numbers and protect sensitive alpine species.
- The programme is designed to supplement existing management programmes undertaken by DOC and by the FWF and will specifically target around 300 females – the breeding animals. The project will also support the local helicopter industry that has been heavily hit by both the downturn in tourism and wild venison prices.
- A press release was issued by the FWF and GAC on 24 January 2022. The release included quotes from FWF President Roy Sloan: "The buffer control work, which will also protect the Wapiti area from incursion by red deer, is being partially funded by the FWF and it is hoped that some of the deer close to the Wapiti boundaries will be recovered", and from GAC General Manager Tim Gale: "The development of this programme and the ongoing collaboration between the hunting sector and DOC in Fiordland is a model for progressive game animal management in New Zealand". The story was picked up by several print and radio media outlets, with positive commentary on the initiative.

Sika Foundation and Kaimanawa Forest Park deer management

- Jobs for Nature has approved an initiative by the Sika Foundation focused on improving forest health in the Kaweka and Kaimanawa Forest Parks. DOC is actively supporting the Sika Foundation with this work. The Sika Foundation has recently advertised for a Project Manager.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

Raukūmara Pae Maunga Restoration Project

- The Raukūmara Pae Maunga restoration project is enabling a deer and goat control programme to be undertaken across 91,000ha, through a combination of ground and aerial control operations.
- 9(2)(g) [REDACTED]
(i) [REDACTED]

Contact: Ben Reddiex, Director Operations – Issues & Programmes,
9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.15 Southern South Island: Kākāpō breeding season update

- The kākāpō population currently stands at 201 with this breeding season being important in the recovery of the species.
- Kākāpō started to mate on 24 December 2021, and the breeding programme is currently well underway across Anchor Island, Whenua Hou, and Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea.

Anchor Island

- All 21 breeding aged females have mated. Twenty nests have so far been located and set up with remote monitoring systems.
- At least 58 eggs have been laid so far. We have been able to assess fertility in 41 of these eggs to date with 22 fertile (54%), 19 infertile. First hatches are due anytime soon.

Whenua Hou

- 23 of 27 breeding aged females have mated so far. Ten nests have been located and set up with remote monitoring systems.
- At least 27 eggs have been laid so far. Fertility assessments have been made on 17 eggs. Six are fertile (35%). First hatches are due anytime.

Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea:

- Two of nine breeding aged females have mated. This island is not staffed, so these birds are not supplementary fed. This may impact numbers and timing of breeding here.
- Our remote monitoring system tells us at least one of the two birds are nesting.

Impact of COVID-19:

- Covid-19 is impacting on our ability to manage the season. With the present Omicron threat, we have decided to not do any double clutching. This will mean a reduced number of potential chicks from the season but increase our chances of being able to support the breeding effort appropriately.
- While in Phase One of the Omicron response, any travelers to Whenua Hou must not have taken a domestic flight or long-distance public transport in the 10 days prior to their trip. Therefore, we have had to temporarily stand-down our Auckland Zoo vet and hand rearing supporters and our North Island based incubation supporters. We are also planning for reduced staffing through isolation requirements.
- We have prioritised nests according to genetic value and will continue to provide more support to our higher value nests.

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

2.16 Post-graduate scholarships for conservation research – 2022 round of scholarship awards

- We have awarded scholarships to nine Masters' thesis research students under the Te Papa Atawhai Post-Graduate Scholarship Programme for 2022. The recipients were selected from 61 eligible applicants completing a conservation-related research thesis in natural and social sciences. Details of recipients and their research topics are in the table at the end of the document.

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- The scholarships were awarded to applicants whose research addresses current DOC research priorities. These cover biodiversity as well as visitor and heritage related responsibilities of DOC, from a multitude of perspectives including Te Ao Māori (encompassing of course Mātauranga Māori).

Background to the scholarship:

- Objectives of the scholarship are to encourage quality conservation research that informs critical policy work, strategic and operational decision making, as well as to build capability and capacity in conservation related science in New Zealand.
- The scholarship is now in its second year, and we expect to see results from the inaugural year within the next few months. We will monitor the outcomes of the scholarship programme to ensure the scholarship is delivering value to New Zealand.
- From this year, the newly established Tiakina Kauri - Kauri Protection Agency within Biosecurity New Zealand is partnering with DOC to support specific applications towards the protection of Kauri.
- Each scholarship is worth \$15,000. DOC is funding eight of the scholarships, while Tiakina Kauri is funding the remaining one which relates to Kauri health.
- Both the scholarship recipients and the high-quality unsuccessful applicants benefit from advice and feedback from DOC experts in their relevant field of research.
- A media release announcing the scholarship winners will be sent in late February to relevant media - Radio NZ, Science NZ, Science Media Centre and posted on the DOC website.

Scholarship recipients

Name	University	Topic	Research domain
Reason, Aiden	VUW	Invasive Paper Wasp Biology and Invertebrate Conservation on Farewell Spit	Terrestrial
Ward, Cailie	Otago	Resolving phylogeographic structure and taxonomy of Paryphanta land snails in Northland, New Zealand	Terrestrial
O'Malley, Emma	VUW	Influence of nocturnal illumination on the early Life history traits and behaviour of inanga	Mātauranga Māori/aquatic
Fenton, Katie	Otago	The influence of human-induced stressors on Austrovenus stutchburyi (tuangi/tuaki/NZ cockle) population structure	Mātauranga Māori/aquatic
Stone, Jessica	Canterbury	The Demographics of early life histories of marine taonga species in Kaikoura, New Zealand	Mātauranga Māori/aquatic
Harcombe, Elysia	Canterbury	Early warning signs of community collapse in drying streams	Aquatic
Lip, Marrick	Auckland	Chordata: an open platform to accelerate the adoption of	Social Science/ Mātauranga Māori

		machine learning for conservation	
Kann, Johanna	Otago	Conservation genomics of the mohua (yellowhead/bird)	Terrestrial
McElvein, Ann	Auckland	Landscape level framework visualizing the linkages between kauri tree health and soil conditions	MPI funded candidate for kauri protection research

Contact: Ken Hughey, Chief Science Advisor: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

No items this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

February

- 10 February PF2050 Interim Collective Leadership Group, DOC Wellington
- 11 February Public Service Leadership Team meet with Prime Minister and Cabinet, Parliament
- 17 February Select Committee Hearing – Annual Review, TBC
- 17 February Northland Regional Council – introductory meeting, MS Teams
- 17-18 Feb NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
- 22 February Fonterra Chief Operating Officer Leadership Team, MS Teams
- 25 February Toyota/DOC relationship, MS Teams
- 28 February Ngāi Tahu – powhiri, Christchurch

March

- 03-04 March Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Wairarapa
- 16 March DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
- 22 March Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, DOC Wellington
- 31 March Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April

- 04-05 April NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga

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

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Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

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2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- The Minister for the Environment and DOC will be appearing at the JFN Sectoral Hearing on 17 February, with MfE as the lead agency. The Director-General and the Chief Advisor JFN are attending on behalf of DOC. We are currently working on comprehensive material covering background and data on the programme, including potential questions that may be asked.
- Responses to your questions on Māori Land Fund Briefing 21-B-0963 were sent to your office on 9 February. The Secretariat has proposed an out-of-cycle SLU Minister paper for mid-end February, and we expect we will need to submit the paper by 14 February to make this deadline.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
[redacted] Remaining payments for the September and October periods are being worked through. Many of these projects reported that the establishment phase and the recruitment of staff took longer than expected and requested a variation to their Funding Agreement. This is being worked through on a case-by-case basis.
- Quarterly programme reporting will be submitted to the Secretariat on 14 February, and an updated high-level dashboard will be supplied by the Secretariat on 16 February. The full dashboard is expected to be available late February.
- 9(2) [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] (g) [redacted] (i) [redacted]
- We are continuing to work on integrating the JFN programme into wider organisational systems, such as the Operations Strategic Support System, business planning, and the Biodiversity Group.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

- We are preparing a media release for you to announce the Sika Foundation's Kaimanawa and Kaweka Forest Parks Indigenous Biodiversity Recovery Project.
- We are working with your office to support the announcement of Te Papa Paorooro (The Echoing Wetlands) project during your upcoming visit to Northland.
- We advised your office that Te Pewhairangi Marine Kaitiaki Training project has invited you to a Powhiri on 7 March, to mark the start of the training course. The project was announced in July last year and is led by [redacted] 9(2)(a) [redacted]

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

No items this week

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

Monthly item – no update this week.

1.4 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2 Updates

2.1 United Nations Treaty on Marine Biodiversity

- In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly launched a formal process to negotiate an international legally-binding agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (**UNCLOS**) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (often referred to as **BBNJ**).
- The fourth round of negotiations, postponed since 2020, is scheduled for 7–18 March in New York. New Zealand intends to have a delegation participate in the meeting.
- MFAT is New Zealand's lead agency. DOC is a key supporting agency, along with MPI, and MoE.
- In mid-February you will receive two briefings from the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for your concurrence, as follows:
 - (i) Ministerial briefing seeking approval of the approach to be taken by the New Zealand delegation to the fourth round of negotiations on the treaty; and
 - (ii) Ministerial briefing seeking approval for New Zealand to join the European Union-led 'High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction'.
- DOC has contributed to the drafting of both briefings and is comfortable with the content. DOC has not identified any risks associated with the briefings.

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

2.2 9(2)(f)(iv)

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- [Redacted]

[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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

: 9(2)(a)

2.4 North Island Forests

Kaimai Mamaku

- As at the end of January 2022, the Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project is delivering pest plant, animal control, and kauri protection. 9(2)(g)(i)
[Redacted]
- Eight agreements are in place across the Kaimai Mamaku Ranges (organised in six clusters/hubs):
 - Northern Kaimai - Hub 1: Ngāti Rahiri Tumutumu – Field staff undertaking surveillance of pest plants. Ngāti Hako – planning underway.
 - Aongatete – Hub 2: Ngāi Tamawhariua – Planning underway with a 500-hectare block extending existing community project. Will be operational from April. Kaimai Kauri – the proposal with the Jobs for Nature team for signoff. Kauri protection work includes track maintenance and ambassador work promoting hygiene practices and messaging about protecting Kauri stands.
 - Whakamarama – Hub 3: Ngāti Hinerangi – All staff training towards a Rural Pest Management Qualification. Linking with the Predator Free Matamata project will expand the project further. Initial traplines around the base of Wairere Falls with more to be established.
 - Opuiaki – Hub 4: Ngamanawa – Four kaimahi roles in place and working with Te Papa Atawhai on existing infrastructure (pest animal control, track maintenance).
 - Otanewainuku-Otawa – Hub 5: Project for Waitaha in final stages of development. The project will cover a 500-hectare block with pest animal control as the priority.
 - Mokaihaha – Hub 6: Kaimai Kaponga – All staff training, who will also receive the Rural Pest Management Qualification. The project is focused on just under 8000 hectares of pest control of possums, rats, and stoats and good linkages with Primary Industries, Bay of Plenty

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Regional Council and Waikato Regional Council Wallaby programme. Ngāti Kea Ngāti Tuara – funding agreement with Jobs for Nature team. Ngāti Kea to focus on 1200 hectares of pest animal control on Horohoro Bluffs.

- All projects have wrap-around support provided by technical experts and DOC local operations teams.
- The project was originally intended to be delivered by the Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust (the Trust) but they underwent some change, so we have led in the interim. The Trust has made good changes and recruited good expertise to support the Kaimai Mamaku project. By March it is expected that the Trust will begin administering the Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project via an over-arching funding agreement, with DOC taking a monitoring role.
- The Trust is beginning to identify partners for projects across the Kaimai and beyond the Jobs for Nature funding.

Raukūmara Pae Maunga

- The Raukūmara has not had large scale operational plans with resourcing allocation for a very long time. A 4-year operational plan with the ability to go beyond the life cycle of the Jobs for Nature funding has been developed.
- Deer & Goat - over the Christmas period to end of January. The aerial control programme added to the total cull, which is now 929 deer and 78 goats for 2021/22, bringing overall total for the project to 1,532 deer culled. Work is undertaken by five local Heli companies: three from Gisborne and two from Opotiki, with five local shooters in addition to ground hunters. Updated data is due end of March. This is the largest Deer and Goat Project in the country, therefore, Pae Maunga has worked closely with DOC developing implementing systems and processes. An audit and verification process was undertaken, to ensure the project embeds high standards. Approximately \$1.5million from this financial year is dedicated to deer control.
- Three manager roles, who whakapapa to Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau ā Apanui, have been recruited starting 14 March. The project is recruiting supervisor and team lead roles for operational delivery. To date there are 14 FTE all of whom are Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau ā Apanui and 19 contractors who are all local and whakapapa. The focus of the project is to restore Raukūmara through the hands of local capacity.
- Another milestone for the project was the development of applications in support of data management developed by a local Ngāti Porou GIS specialist specifically built for Raukūmara Pae Maunga.
- An Aerial Operation is planned to go ahead between July and September weather dependent, covering 79,000ha of the park along with the potential to expand to privately owned Māori land contiguous to the Raukūmara. This will be a \$5million project. Extra care is taken to review critical matters at each step of the process.
- In February, 10 FTEs will be employed to deliver the operational monitoring programme prior to the aerial operation, as well as measuring the outcomes of deer control underway. Four sites for ground-based predator control will be set up through contracting opportunities.
- Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau ā Apanui are considering the establishment of a partnership entity. Until that work is completed, iwi are supportive of the current arrangements.

Contact Kaimai Mamaku: Lucas McDonald, Project Manager: 9(2)(a)

Contact Raukūmara Pae Maunga: Jade King-Hazel, Director Operations Bay of Plenty: 9(2)(a)

percentage of revenue that a concessionaire would pay to DOC. The current PRF is widely seen as too complex.

- We are about to publicly advise the outcome of the review.
- The PRF is one of several methods that is currently used. The review sought to provide a standard percentage that could be applied consistently.
- DOC set up an industry Reference Group that included Māori businesses and both large and small tourism businesses. The review also engaged with iwi and other stakeholders. The Reference Group, iwi, and stakeholders appreciated being involved and they all contributed to identifying options, testing different approaches, and fleshing out potential solutions.
- As the review progressed, the complexities involved meant that confirming a simple, fair, and transparent solution that would be acceptable to all parties, has not been possible. This reflects the range of circumstances faced by different concessionaires including the level of capital expenditure invested by concessionaires e.g. a ski field versus a simple guiding operation and the level of profitability of different concessionaires.
- The conclusion reached was that the current formula approach was neither helpful nor realistic. We are, therefore, proposing to remove the current formula for calculating new concession fees. Instead, we will continue to provide guidance for bespoke arrangements.

Contact: Laura White, Commercial and Pricing Strategy Director: 9(2)(a)

2.7 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.8 Vandalism on Te Maiki Flagstaff, Russell

- The historic Te Maiki flagstaff in Russell was vandalised during the early hours of 31 January. This included an attempt to cut through the flagpole, cutting of two of the flagpole stays, and graffiti over the flagpole and signs on the reserve.
- The area around the flagstaff has been cordoned off and the flagstaff stays re-rigged, to ensure public safety while a full assessment is undertaken. DOC is working closely with the Kororareka Marae Society, hapū representatives, and Heritage NZ to develop a plan for the remedial work required to restore this significant historic site. A meeting was held on 10 February, to start the planning process.
- The Kororareka Marae Society and associated hapū, who manage the flag raising events, are understandably upset at the vandalism, and have expressed this in the media.

Contact: Sue Reed Thomas, Director Northern North Island: 9(2)(a)

2.9 Pewhairangi Marine Mammal Sanctuary, Summer Update

- Marine Mammal Sanctuary patrols occurred throughout the summer period with daily on the water presence (where weather allowed). There were no marine mammals in the Bay of Islands between 24 December and 5 January, meaning compliance work focussed on the 5 knot safe zones.
- Advocacy, warning, and infringement work was carried out with several compliance cases pending.
- The public response has overall been positive to the rules and compliance with the new rules has been observed from a variety of maritime users (e.g. recreational and commercial vessels).
- Advocacy is ongoing with signage in place at all major access points to the Bay of Islands, radio advertising, Maritime radio broadcasts, paid social media, and magazine articles

Contact: Sue Reed Thomas, Northern North Island Director, 9(2)(a)

2.10 Termination of Blue Orb Charitable Trust (BOCT) Concession - Northland

- BOCT have held a concession with DOC over a reserve at Admirals Bay (Whangaruru Harbour), to build and run an educational facility since 2012. There have been ongoing breaches of the concession conditions and lack of progress in developing the site as an educational facility. DOC, following 9(2)(g)(i) and endorsement from the Ngātiwai Trust Board, terminated the concession on 23 November 2021.
- BOCT have challenged the termination and wish to instigate the dispute process outlined in the concession agreement. 9(2)(h)

BOCT have since submitted a significant OIA request related to this and other concessions nationally. BOCT have also expressed an intention to take their case to the Disputes Tribunal and to involve media, and local and national politicians. We are confident that the documentation of evidence and the procedures followed are sound.

- To date the educational facility has not been established so there is limited negative impact on other stakeholders and the public.

Contact: Sue Reed Thomas, Northern North Island Director, 9(2)(a)

2.11 Tiritiri Matangi Wharf – outcome of Request for Proposals process

- The Tiritiri Matangi Island Wharf is owned and maintained by DOC under section 33W of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 and section 59A of the Reserves Act 1977.
- Fullers Group Limited (Fullers) hold an existing licence to use Tiritiri Matangi wharf, permitted under section 33W of the Maritime Transport Act 1994, which expires on 31 March 2022.
- DOC has just completed a Request for Proposals opportunity, to seek potential applicants for future commercial use of the wharf. The process drew proposals from two applicants – Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki/Explore Group Limited and Fullers.
- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki/Explore Group Limited were successful in obtaining the opportunity and have been invited to apply for the commercial use for the wharf to land vessels and passengers.
- Fullers are disappointed in the outcome. They have operated a ferry service to Tiritiri Matangi since 1999. Fullers have advised they are considering the viability of the ferry service given the impacts of Covid-19 on reduced passenger levels and may look to cancel services very quickly. The Auckland Operations team are in regular communication with Fullers to manage the risk of services ceasing.
- There is a risk that Fullers may contact media or your office due to their perception of a lengthy time taken for a decision to be made on the allocation opportunity.
- In due course you will be asked to make a decision under section 33W of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 in relation to the permit authorising the commercial use of the wharf. This is expected to be in late March and a full briefing will be provided at this time.

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

2.12 Request for consent of a Fish Farm Licence in Taupo – Turangi District

- Fisheries New Zealand is processing a renewal for fish farm licence (FW019), applied for by New Zealand Prawns Limited. The renewal requires your consent.
- Regulation 3 of the Freshwater Fish Farming Regulations 1983 requires the Minister of Conservation's consent prior to permitting any fish farm within the Taupo District or in the County of Rotorua.
- The New Zealand Prawns fish farm licence (FW019) was first granted in September 1988 by the Minister of Fisheries, on a man-made lake adjoining the Waikato River at Wairakei, Taupo. The Minister of Conservation (Helen Clark) provided consent to this licence, subject to the inclusion of specific conditions relating to the management and biosecurity of the prawns.

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- DOC has provided input into the conditions of this renewal application and supports the draft licence.
- A briefing and draft letter is being drafted for your consideration of consent for the licence.

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

2.13 February weather event – West Coast South Island

- The 2–4 February weather event had the most impact on the north and south of the West Coast.
- A full assessment of the effects began on 8 February. We provide an initial assessment of damage to PCL and infrastructure below.
- Further heavy rain was forecast for the period 9-13 February clearing 14 February. We will update you if there is further damage.

Buller District:

- An Emergency Management Centre (**EOC**) was set up on 2 February.
- The Heaphy Track was closed. Hut Wardens remained in the huts, they held 11 trampers at Mackay Hut, then walked them down to Heaphy Hut and out to Kohaihai on 6 February. Wardens confirmed significant damage, including loss of a bridge, damage to the track and water supply, as well as a large slip.
- Pororari track (one branch of the Paparoa Great Walk) had a massive slip containing tree debris.
- Ōpārara Road and tracks were closed.
- Several campsites, all roads and many of the tracks in the district were closed as a precaution.
- The offices in Westport and Karamea were closed during the event. The Paparoa Visitor Centre remained open.
- DOC Ranger Staff assisted the Civil Defence efforts over three days by sandbagging and undertaking evacuations in the Westport Township Area.

South Westland District

- An EOC was set up on 2 February - Emergency Management Advisors, river engineers and DOC staff manned the EOC and monitored the heavy rain/flood event.
- The Franz Josef and Haast Visitor Centres remained open.
- The Paringa Campsite and Otto's MacDonalds were closed. The Glacier roads/car parks were closed.
- The Copland/Welcome Flat hut wardens and five trampers were held there until 5 February. Two staff walked the track on 5 February and found two areas washed out by the Karangarua. The track will remain closed until re-routes can be put in place. One of the re-routes will need a more permanent solution (away from the Karangarua River). We will use JFN to help with this work (Fox Guides).
- A couple of trampers were stuck at Cassel Flat hut and they were airlifted out on 3 February.
- The Franz Josef Glacier Valley reopened on the afternoon of 4 February, along with Paringa and Otto's Campsites. Fox Glacier Valley reopened on Saturday morning, as did MacDonalds campsite.

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- There has been some localised damage to the Callery Walk, Canavan's Knob, HariHari Coastal Walk, and Galway Beach walk. All have had reported washouts or slips, and we are yet to ascertain the scale of work required to fix/make passable.
- Many of the more remote tracks will not be checked for some time and we will rely on tramper feedback. Our focus will be on the Copland and Local Tracks.

Middle of the region

- Hokitika Gorge Track was closed as a precaution.
- Pike Great Walk was closed as the Paparoa Tops had wind gusts up to 200 km per hr - there is likely to be wind damage.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Tai Poutini/Western South Island: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

There are no events this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

February

17 February	Select Committee Hearing – Annual Review, Zoom
17 February	Northland Regional Council – introductory meeting, MS Teams
17-18 February	NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
22 February	Fonterra Chief Operating Officer Leadership Team, MS Teams
25 February	Toyota/DOC relationship, MS Teams
28 February	Ngāi Tahu – pōwhiri, Christchurch

March

03-04 March	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat Brackenridge, Wairarapa
16 March	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington
22 March	Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, DOC Wellington
31 March	Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April

04-05 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga
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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 21 February 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6921200

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Attachments

1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary

- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- We are continuing work on integrating the JfN Programme into DOC's wider organisational systems, such as the Operations Strategic Support System, Business Planning, and the Biodiversity Group's work.
- We have provided further information on recommended projects within Māori Land Fund Briefing 21-B-0963. We will follow up with your office prior to the deadline for SLU Minister papers on 21 February 2022.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities:

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

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

No items this week.

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

- Edward Ellison is confirmed as the new chair of Interim Oversight Group (IOG) and replaces Maxine Shortland, who resigned to take up another government appointment.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
- 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

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- We have finalised the print and web versions of the first implementation plan, ready for its public release. We continue to work with your office to arrange a suitable opportunity to release the document.

Contact: Julie Knauf, Director Te Mana o te Taiao Implementation: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

1.4 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

No update this week.

2 Updates

2.1 Game Animal Council

- The Game Animal Council's (**the Council**) Statement of Performance Expectations (**SPE**) states that it will provide advice on the expected timing on the introduction of the Game Trophy Export Levy by November 2021. The Council is yet to provide this advice.

- The Council commissioned MartinJenkins to provide advice to support the progression towards implementation of a sustainable funding strategy.

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Contact: Ngaire Best, Director Governance: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.2 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.5 Update on Long-term Insights Briefing

Topic confirmed for the Long-Term Insights Briefing

- DOC and LINZ are working on a joint Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB) (21-B-0691 refers). This update informs you of progress on the LTIB. A similar update is being sent to the Minister for Land Information, Hon Damien O'Connor.
- The first phase of public consultation on the proposed LTIB topic ran from 18 October to 14 November 2021. On 14 February leadership teams at DOC and LINZ decided to proceed with the topic: *How can we help biodiversity thrive through the innovative use of information and emerging technologies?*
- We are finalising a submissions report and will send your office a copy before it is released.
- Submitters were broadly supportive of the proposed topic. Some submitters were opposed the use of biotechnology, but most did not object to exploring the topic. Concerns were raised about the 'genie out of the bottle' risks of biotechnology. These risks will be explored in the LTIB.

- We are undertaking workshops with selected submitters from the first consultation round.
- The workshops' purpose is to develop futures scenarios as a method of applying futures thinking. The workshops' content will inform the policy options we develop for inclusion in the LTIB.
- Our next steps are:
 - running workshops with external stakeholders to inform the briefing
 - researching and writing the draft briefing
 - consulting on the draft briefing in March and April and
 - tabling the final briefing in Parliament by July.
- We will keep you updated on our progress.

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

2.6 9(2)(f)(iv)

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Contact: Shona Bradley, Legal Services Manager: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.8 Auckland region – suspected Māui dolphin entanglement

- On Monday 7 February, a member of the public reported a sighting of a pod of 3-4 Māui dolphins off Whites Beach near Piha. On 8 February the same member of the public reported that the smallest dolphin in the group had a rope and buoy/float attached around its tail.
- Following this report, a response was initiated, with searches undertaken along Auckland's west coast by DOC staff, Auckland Council rangers and lifeguards. Lifeguards at Bethells Beach also searched their area of coast by boat. Coastguard started broadcasting messages to boaties on the west coast to keep a look out for any Māui dolphins and report any sightings to DOCHot.
- On 9 February, DOC's Disentanglement Team and Māui Dolphin Survey Team travelled to Auckland to be available if required. Volunteers undertook land searches at Muriwai.
- On 10 February, the Navy put up a helicopter and surveyed the coast between Kaipara and Port Waikato for approximately 2 hours up to 1000m offshore. A media release was also sent out, encouraging any sightings of the dolphin to be reported to DOC's emergency hotline.
- With a cyclone forecast to hit Auckland over the weekend, on 11 February the Disentanglement Team and Māui Dolphin Survey Team were stood down.

- To date we have received no further sightings of the dolphin or any further leads from the public. We have resumed our search for the dolphin this week now that weather conditions have settled, and the DOC Māui Dolphin Survey Team will be out in the area to survey and try to locate the dolphin, with the Disentanglement Team on standby and ready to respond.

Contact: Andrew Baucke Operations Director, Auckland 9(2)(a)

2.9 Auckland region - Dead Kiwi on Kawau Island

- On 21 January, DOC was notified of the death of a kiwi on Kawau Island, which we are investigating.
- The cause of death is a suspected dog attack. A number of local residents have been interviewed as part of the investigation.
- The bird has been sent for a necropsy, which should provide us with information about the bird's age and sex and the cause of death.
- The kiwi was not banded and we currently do not have an accurate estimate of kiwi numbers on the island.
- Signage is in place across Kawau reminding people about the presence of kiwi on the island and the risk that untrained dogs pose to wildlife. We organise kiwi aversion training sessions for Kawau island residents with dogs and regularly monitor reserves for dogs.

Contact: Andrew Baucke Operations Director, Auckland, 9(2)(a)

2.10 Auckland region - Final necropsy results of kororā found at Kennedy Point, Waiheke, 11 November 2021

- On 11 November 2021, an injured kororā was recovered from the water at Kennedy Point by Waiheke Bird Rescue. The kororā was taken to the Waiheke Bird Rescue Centre, where it died that night.
- The body of the kororā was delivered to DOC the following day, and subsequently sent for necropsy at Massey University's wildlife pathology facility in Palmerston North.
- Preliminary post-mortem results indicated an injury to the kororā was consistent with a dog bite.
- We have now received the final results from the necropsy which confirmed the presence of canine DNA on the bird, however, it is unlikely that it could be matched to an individual sample due to the trace amount. The compliance investigation file has, therefore, been closed.
- The findings will be shared at an upcoming community hui on kororā care on Waiheke and will be available on request.

Contact: Andrew Baucke Operations Director, Auckland: 9(2)(a)

2.11 Lower North Island – Review of Te Angiangi Marine Reserve

- The Marine Reserves Act 1971 requires reserves to be reviewed 25 years after establishment. The 446ha Te Angiangi Marine Reserve (located near Pourerere in central Hawkes Bay), was established in 1997 and is therefore due. The review will be the first of its kind to be undertaken under this legislation.
- Te Angiangi Marine Reserve Advisory Committee was disestablished in 2010. Since then, there has been inconsistent engagement with the local community and Ngāti Kere about the reserve and they have been vocal about DOC not adequately attending to marine reserve management.
- The local community and Ngāti Kere want to see the review undertaken in 2022.
- DOC has an established Marine Monitoring and Reporting Framework and a National Marine Protection Programme to deliver on our obligations. We are undertaking preparatory planning to review this marine reserve.
- We are preparing a separate memo to brief you on the complexities of the situation and review process.

Contact: Jack Mace, Operations Director, Lower North Island: 9(2)(a)

2.12 Lower North Island – Orongorongo Valley Private Huts

- There are 52 private huts located in the Orongorongo Valley, Remutaka Forest Park. All have been authorised by way of a concession issued under the Conservation Act 1987, expiring on the death of the licence holder, or on 31 December 2050 (whichever comes first).
- The Wellington Conservation Management Strategy 2019 gives effect to the requirement of the Conservation General Policy that there be no private accommodation on public conservation land and outlines a process for enabling public use of these huts upon expiry of the concession.
- Expressions of interest proposals to obtain a licence for the management of a hut (or huts) will be opened to the public once a hut licence has expired. Proposals will be assessed against selection criteria, which will include requirements that the huts comply with DOC's basic hut standard and that they are able to be booked by the public.
- We have been working closely with the Orongorongo Club Incorporated (the stakeholder group representing most of the hut licence holders and users) and have jointly developed information recently sent out to hut owners, users and other interested parties outlining the process to enable public use. This information has also been made publicly available on the DOC website and a proactive media release is being prepared, in anticipation of public interest.
- Most licence holders and users are supportive of the approach we have taken, as it represents an opportunity for the huts to remain in the valley in perpetuity.

Contact: Jack Mace, Operations Director, Lower North Island: 9(2)(a)

2.13 No backlog of Vertebrate Toxic Agent public health permissions

- In early February we provided you with an update on our work with the Ministry of Health (**MOH**) and Environmental Protection Authority to resolve the delays experienced last year in the issuing of Public Health Unit permissions for use of Vertebrate Toxic Agents.
- We reported that there has been good progress amending delegations to enable Assur Ora to process permissions and with the recruitment of suitably qualified staff to assess and approve permissions.
- MPI and DOC are working together to ensure there is good visibility of upcoming work from across the predator control sector.
- There is currently no backlog of applications. Applications are being assessed as they come in and MOH have informed us that Assur Ora have sufficient capacity to process applications in a timely way.
- We will continue to monitor the situation.

Contact: Hilary Aikman, Director Operations Issues and Programmes:
9(2)(a)

2.14 Western South Island: Further update February severe weather events in the Buller District

Buller District / Heaphy Track

- The decision has been made to keep the Heaphy Great Walk closed as a 'through walk' from one end to the other.
- This 'through closure' is likely to remain until October 2022. This time is needed to rebuild the two key swing bridges (Heaphy and Gunner Rivers) to give safe crossings of these rivers for trampers.
- The estimated cost to repair and reinstate visitor facilities on the Heaphy Track is in the order of \$1.5m plus or minus, depending on final inspection and condition of anchors and bridge foundations.
- Full reinstatement is likely to be in the order of eight months plus, with work being completed by a mix of contractors and DOC staff.
- Our target is the Labour Weekend opening of the 22/23 summer season.
- We are currently working on options to have partial access to either ends of the Heaphy Track as an alternative in the meantime. This would be to go in and return to the same point.

Other facilities impacted include:

- Oparara Road Karamea is still closed as a result of a series of windfalls across the road. Repair work started on 15 February.
- The second heavy rain event generated new slips on Charming Creek Great Short Walk. The track is currently closed and will remain closed for the foreseeable future. These slips are very active and pose a serious visitor safety risk from rock fall. Geotechnical advice is currently being sought on these slips.
- The Denniston Road (Buller District Council owned and maintained) is closed due to slips, so the DOC tracks at Denniston have not yet been able to be inspected and assessed for damage.
- Conns Creek Road (DOC owned and maintained) has been washed away in-part and damage has occurred to the Buller District Council's (**BDC**) Waimangaroa Water Supply. BDC are working on this with our support.

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- Bullock Creek Road, Paparoa National Park (DOC owned and maintained and leads to the Cave Creek Track) is closed due to a slip. Repair work started on 15 February.
- Damage to the Paparoa Great Walk is not as severe as to the Heaphy Track, however the following damage has been confirmed –
 - Pororari Track Lower Gorge section has a 40-metre slip. Repair work started on 15 February.
 - The Inland Pack Track section also has a slip. Repair work started on 15 February.
 - There are numerous drainage and slumping related cracks on the upper Escarpment section to the track at multiple points. These will be filled and closely monitored for future movement.
- There is storm damage to the Pike Memorial Track, which is closed as it's still in its construction phase.
- In South Westland there is washout and slip damage to many local walks and to the Copland Track. Repair work started on 15 February
- We will update you further when works are completed, and facilities are able to be reopened.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations, Tai Poutini/Western South Island
9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.15 Western South Island: Handover of Pike River Mine to DOC

- The Pike River Recovery Agency (PRRA) has advised that they are now likely to finish their physical work in the Pike Valley earlier than previously advised. This is now scheduled for the end of March.
- The legal arrangements around the surrender of the Access Arrangement and Mining Permit and the disestablishment of the PRRA will continue to be progressed post March and finalised on or about 30 June.
- The PRRA 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] has proposed a "low key handover event" to DOC at the mine site on 30 March.
- It is intended that participants will be PRRA, Pike Families Committee, Families Refence Group, DOC, and the Police.
- You as Minister of Conservation and the Ministers of Pike River Re-entry, and Police will be invited by the PRRA.
- Director-General Penny Nelson, Deputy Director-General Operations Mike Slater and Deputy Director-General Policy and Visitors Bruce Parkes will also be invited.
- This is a significant step and opportunity for DOC in the next phase of the Pike River Mine Project.
- The event will be capped at 50 attendees and no media will be on site. The DOC communication team will provide prepared statements and photographs to the media.
- We will submit an Event Evaluation Memo to your office shortly, for you to decide if you will attend this event.
- We have been advised by the PRRA that they are currently preparing a paper for Minister Little advising him on the transition of the mine management from PRRA to DOC and recommending that the family liaison responsibilities transfer from Minister Little to you as Minister of Conservation. This is scheduled to be with Minister Little mid-March.

Contact: Mark Davies, Director Operations, Tai Poutini/Western South Island
9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

2.16 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response:

Omicron

- DOC transitioned to Phase 2 from midnight 14 February. Guidance from PSC is being followed and communication to staff to support the transition has been sent out. It is not expected that there will be any significant change to business delivery.
- Supplies of N95 type masks have been secured and are being progressively distributed to staff who qualify for supply under the new mask policy. Guidance on mask wearing and maintenance is being provided to staff.
- The numbers of staff who are in self-isolation at home as Close Contacts is growing but our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and flexible working systems are coping well and there is no serious disruption to business at present.
- The Senior Leadership Team is reviewing its own BCP to update it to recent changes.

Vaccine Mandates

- From 1 February, all DOC staff must have a valid My Vaccine Pass to enter DOC workplaces. As of 14 February, 72 staff remain unvaccinated and all are engaged in a process run by the Human Resources team to develop options for their future employment.
- This process will run through to 28 February, at which point individuals will be advised of their future employment status.

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

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

No events or announcements this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

February

22 February	Fonterra Chief Operating Officer Leadership Team, MS Teams
25 February	Toyota/DOC relationship, MS Teams
28 February	Ngāi Tahu – pōwhiri, MS Teams

March

03–04 March	Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Wairarapa
16 March	DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC, Wellington
22 March	Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, DOC, Wellington
31 March	Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April

04-05 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga
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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 28 February 2022

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6929663

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Attachments

1. Cabinet Paper Report
2. Jobs for Nature dashboard

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- As of 23 February, there are five projects complete, and a further 11 projects are in the process of closing.
- The Māori Land Fund projects will now be tabled at the upcoming SLU Ministers meeting, following your decision on 22 February.
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- We are working to provide responses to the post hearing questions, following both the DOC and JFN Sectoral Hearing on 17 February.

Relationship Scan:

- DOC has input into a survey developed by the Secretariat to measure some of the social and human benefits of the programme. The survey will be sent by the Secretariat directly to all employers and employees.
- We understand the Secretariat will provide a copy of the survey to Ministers on 28 February. We believe the survey content will help to tell the story of the wider benefits. One matter of note is that the results will not be agency specific – therefore many of the human and social outcomes will be at a programme-wide level only.

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

1.2 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA submissions are as follows:

McCullum Bros Ltd – Sand Extraction at Pakiri Beach, Mangawhai

- McCullum Bros Ltd have lodged two applications to extract sand offshore from Pakiri Beach, near Warkworth. The two areas are between 5 and 10 metres deep (the inshore application), and between 15 and 25 metres deep (mid-shore). We submitted on these applications in December 2021 due to the potential for shoreline erosion to occur and damage the breeding habitat of the critically endangered tara-iti, NZ fairy tern.
- A third application in the same area, in water greater than 25 metres deep is currently being considered by a hearing panel (the offshore application). We submitted on this application in June 2020 and are presently negotiating suitable consent conditions with the applicant.

Pare Hauraki Kaimoana Limited application to farm kingfish near Coromandel

- Pare Hauraki Kaimoana Ltd (PHK) has applied to farm kingfish, mussels, sea cucumbers, sponges, kelp, algae and seaweeds, including *Undaria pinnatifida*, in the 300-hectare Coromandel Marine Farming Zoning in the Inner Hauraki Gulf. PHK is an asset holding company of the Hauraki Māori Trust Board and Pare Hauraki Fishing Trust.

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- The Zone was created by the Resource Management Amendment Act (No 2) 2011, after a Ministerial Advisory Committee chaired by Hon Sir Doug Kidd recommended its creation. The purpose of the Zone is to promote growth and diversification of the aquaculture industry. If approved, this will be the first fish farm in the North Island.
- We have lodged a submission seeking improved environmental performance through better baseline monitoring of marine mammal activity, preparation of marine mammal and seabird management plans, and measurable performance indicators.
- We do not oppose the development of the Zone for aquaculture but do oppose the proposal to farm *Undaria pinnatifida*. It is an invasive pest species currently found on marine farms around the Coromandel Peninsula but not yet widespread throughout the Hauraki Gulf.
- We have contacted PHK to discuss our concerns directly. We expect to be able to reach agreement before the Council hearing.

Willowbank Quarry, Judgeford, Porirua

- This quarry was originally opened for a limited 3-year period to supply the Transmission Gully roading project. Fulton Hogan now wish to continue operation for general commercial purposes for 35 years.
- The quarry site itself has some conservation values (vegetation, wetland, and tuna), and more importantly is part of the catchment of Pauatahanui Inlet which has outstanding wetland biodiversity values and significant cultural, bird, and coastal values. The application includes a reasonable assessment of the ecological values however conditions and management plans to protect those values require improvement.
- To ensure effects are adequately addressed, we lodged a submission. Pre-hearing discussions are underway to seek agreement on conditions and term if possible.

South Port New Zealand – capital dredging

- South Port has current coastal permits for maintenance dredging at Bluff Harbour, but now wishes to undertake a capital dredging programme.
- The application includes a comprehensive assessment of environmental effects. If the works and consent conditions are as proposed, it is unlikely there would be significant adverse effects on priority conservation values, however there could still be some adverse effects during construction based on the present application. We lodged a submission to ensure conservation values are adequately protected during construction. Pre-hearing discussions are proposed with the aim of seeking agreement on conditions and term if possible.

Birchfield Mines Limited

- Birchfield Mines Ltd has applied for resource consents to establish Strongman East opencast coal mine, in the Southern Paparoa Range north of Greymouth.
- We lodged a submission in opposition to the mine development, with key concerns being further loss of specialized coal measure plant communities, and further loss of habitat of indigenous land snails and great spotted kiwi.

Appeals:

Tatua Dairy Co-operative discharge of treated wastewater to the Waitoa River

- Tatua Dairy Co-operative applied to discharge up to 10,500 m³ per day of treated wastewater to Waitoa River from the Tatua dairy factory at Tatuanui. We submitted in opposition due to the poor water quality of the river and a lack of information on the effects of the discharge on the downstream

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Kopuatai Wetland Management Reserve and the Firth of Thames (both Ramsar sites).

- Following direct negotiations, our concerns were addressed by improved conditions that achieved a net reduction in nutrient discharges compared to the current situation.
- Consent was granted in December 2021. We have not appealed the decision.

Bay of Plenty Integrated Catchment Management Group

- In February 2021, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council applied for consent to carry out erosion and flood protection works throughout most of the region.
- We submitted that the works should avoid critical habitats of threatened species including inanga spawning sites, and sensitive breeding and migration times of birds and fish.
- Following direct negotiations, our concerns were addressed by improved conditions.
- Consent was granted in January 2022. We have not appealed the decision.

Aupōuri Groundwater, Northland

- We appealed the 24 groundwater-take consents granted by Northland Regional Council in September 2021.
- Groundwater and ecology witness statements for the Environment Court were finalised last week, following Court mediation in December.
- The applicant's evidence is due mid-February, with a Court hearing set down for mid-May.

Marlborough Environment Plan Environment Court Mediation - Update

- On 8 May 2020 we lodged an appeal on your behalf on the Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP). The appeal included six appeal points for instances where the Council decision did not accept your original submissions and where the decision leads to a sub-optimal outcome. This was in relation to the biodiversity offsetting policy, providing for indigenous fish passage in the permitted activity rule for instream structures, inaccuracies in the mapping of ecologically significant marine sites and marine natural character, and the criteria for determining the significance of indigenous biodiversity, particularly in the marine area.
- Mediation has progressed through Group 1 topics. To date, mediation has occurred on the natural character, landscape, indigenous biodiversity and cultural matters topics. Some matters have been successfully resolved and others are being discussed outside mediation and will likely be resolved.
- Further mediations are set down for the coming months. Group 2 and 3 topics have been scheduled for February to May 2022. It is likely some matters will still proceed to hearing.

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

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

No item this week.

1.4 9(2)(f)(iv)

- [Redacted]
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2 Updates

2.1 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.3 9(2)(f)(iv)

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[REDACTED] 9(2)(a)

2.4 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.5 9(2)(f)(iv)

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2.6 9(2)(f)(iv)

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9(2)(a)

2.7 Southern South Island: Kākāpō Breeding Season

- The 2022 kākāpō breeding season is in full swing at three Southern sites - Whenua Hou, Pukenui, and Te Kākahu-o-Tamatea.
- This is the first breeding season in three years and a significant opportunity for population growth of the critically endangered kākāpō, which numbered 201 individuals at the start of 2022.
- 30 chicks have hatched to date: 26 from Pukenui, where breeding commenced earlier, and 4 from Whenua Hou. Another 35 eggs remain viable (13 on Pukenui, 22 on Whenua Hou) and the team will monitor their progress, and that of any chicks, over the coming months.
- Rimu fruit, the super food that fuels kākāpō breeding, is ripening well on Pukenui, which is an encouraging sign that female kākāpō will have a good chance of raising their young in the wild.

- This is the first year that nesting has occurred on Te Kāhahu-o-Tamatea, after breeding birds were established there in 2020 as part of an International Visitor Levy-funded Kākāpō Expansion Project. While only two infertile nests have been discovered at this site to date, given the birds here are all first-time breeders, it bodes well for the island's potential in future seasons.
- The season is expected to wind down in July after chicks fledge from their nests. Until then, the kākāpō team is working hard to minimise the potential impact of Covid on the outcome of the breeding season but expects reduced breeding success as a result of likely reduced management ability.
- We are working with Ngāi Tahu on an opportunity for you to visit Whenua Hou during the breeding season, best timed for April 2022 at this stage. We will liaise with your office to confirm if a visit is of interest and we can work with Ngāi Tahu to firm up arrangements.

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

2.8 Southern South Island region: Rodent incursion response – Ulva Island /Te Wharawhara Sanctuary

- Staff on Rakiura are undertaking a rodent incursion response on pest free Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara sanctuary in response to the initial discovery of a rat on 13 February 2022.
- This is ongoing with no set end date. The response will end following technical advice to do so.
- Between 13 and 21 February, 10 rodents have been caught in kill traps.
- Ground-based poison operations may be required as an additional control method if the rat population grows despite ongoing daily biosecurity surveillance and kill trapping.
- If ground-based control methods are insufficient and the rodent population becomes widespread over the island it is likely that aerial poison operations would be necessary to re-eradicate rats.

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

2.9 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

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

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[Redacted] 9(2)(a)

2.10 Differential pricing for non-Great Walk facilities

- In 2021, we explored whether differential pricing for international visitors could be applied to non-Great Walk huts and campsites, the Backcountry Hut Pass, and Campsite Pass.
- Analysis involved external stakeholder engagement (noting that Federated Mountain Clubs was the only organisation that did not support it).
- We are about to advise stakeholders of the outcome of the work.
- The analysis concluded that:
 - Differential pricing could be applied under specific circumstances (for example where there is strong international demand, the facility is bookable, and payments can be validated).
 - We identified only 5 huts, 9 campsites, the Backcountry Hut Pass, and the Campsite Pass that meet the required circumstances.
 - Additional revenue generation is likely to be minimal.
 - Upgrading the booking system is required to enable differential pricing to be implemented beyond Great Walks (to be cost effective this needs to be part of a planned upgrade timed for later this year).
 - Accordingly, we are not yet in a position to extend differential pricing beyond Great Walks.
- We will revisit how to best implement differential pricing once significant numbers of international visitors return. The earliest this functionality could be in place is for the 2023/24 season.

Contact: Laura White, Director Commercial and Pricing Strategy: 9(2)(a) [Redacted]

2.11 Whitebait update

- Key findings from a review of the 2021 whitebait season are:
 - Regulation changes were received well by most whitebaiters, with most concerns over spacing between fishers and the length of screens.
 - Fishing methods and structures varied by district and river but without engaging with fishers we were unable to distinguish whether whitebaiters fished for commercial or recreational purposes.
 - Compared to ground counts, aerial counts via light aircraft more accurately assessed fishing method and usually recorded more fishers.
 - Fisher numbers on all rivers we counted were lower than available historic records but the rivers most popular for whitebaiting historically continued to be the busiest.
 - An online social survey of nearly 600 whitebaiters found most respondents sought better enforcement of regulations and habitat enhancement but did not favour licensing or more closed fishing areas.
 - 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- We have begun preparations for the 2022 season, including recruiting for new staff, preparing to engage directly with fishers to gather more information, 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
- 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]

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

2.12 Update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Omicron

- DOC made the transition to Phase 2 from midnight 14 February without any significant impact on business delivery.
- The numbers of staff who are in self-isolation at home as Close or Household contacts is growing but our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and flexible working systems are coping well and there is no serious disruption to business at present.
- To date the Omicron outbreak has had a limited impact on our people, but we continue to monitor.

Vaccine Mandates

- DOC has updated its COVID-19 Risk Assessment (for staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors to DOC workplaces) to reflect the Omicron variant. There has been no change to the associated vaccine mandate policy.
- From 1 February 2022, all DOC staff must have a valid My Vaccine Pass to enter DOC workplaces. All staff who remain unvaccinated are engaged in a process run by Human Resources team to develop options for their future employment.
- This process will run through to 28 February 2022 at which point individuals will be advised of their future employment status.

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

3 Director-General Engagements

February

28 February Ngāi Tahu – pōwhiri, MS Teams

March

3–4 March Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Wairarapa

16 March DOC Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting, DOC Wellington

22 March Forest and Bird/DOC half day hui, DOC Wellington

31 March Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards, Auckland

April

4–5 April NZ Conservation Authority, Tauranga

28 April Cave Creek Anniversary, West Coast

May

26 May Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, TBC

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)