



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 5 August 2019**

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Proactively released

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri dieback

- We are committed to working with MPI on progressing funding options for the National Pest Management Plan.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

- DOC's work to preserve the germplasm of our Myrtaceae species has finished for the season, with 70% of the total 394 collections preserved.
- We are now in the process of reviewing and consolidating our collections, including checking the viability of the seed collected, and that adequate viable seed has been stored. Seed viability rates can change between plants, regions and seasons or seed ripeness.
- Registrations have opened for the myrtle rust science symposium to be held in Auckland on 9-10 September. The symposium will discuss the latest research progress and its applicability. It will also allow people to find out what is happening on the ground, and what organisations managing myrtle rust want from science.

Contact: [REDACTED]

# 2 Updates

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## 2.1 DOC Community Fund (DOCCF) update



Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.2 Changes to CSP Annual Plan cost recovery amount

- The Conservation Services Programme (CSP) Annual Plan for 2019/20 was published on the DOC website and released to our stakeholders on 10 July.
- The following week, DOC officials were contacted by Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) to advise us that the percentage of inshore days levied as quoted in the CSP had changed from 50% to 80%.
- This change has resulted in an increased upfront cost to industry of approximately \$250,000.
- Industry was aware of this impending change, as it was incorporated into the FNZ cost-recovery consultation. It was, however, only confirmed by MPI after publication.
- We have made the changes in the CSP Annual Plan 2019/20 and the amended document is now available online.
- Officials are available to discuss this with you should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.3 Rainbow lorikeet illegal release – response in West Auckland

- DOC is responding to the illegal release of rainbow lorikeets in Titirangi, West Auckland. We understand the birds were released by a private breeder who is known to both DOC and MPI.
- DOC is contracted by MPI to lead the response to capture and destroy these avian pests. Members of the public are being asked to report sightings to DOC, including the birds' location and behaviours.
- The local media team has prepared a communications strategy for the operation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 Rat incursion – camera detection on Motuihe

- On 21 July, the Motuihe Trust advised us that a rat had been detected on a camera used by the trust for kiwi monitoring.
- DOC rangers took swift action to deploy traps near the camera's location, and on 26 July, a rat was successfully trapped.
- Follow-up monitoring with conservation dogs will be conducted to determine no other rats are present on the island.
- Iwi with an interest in Motuihe have been advised.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 Forthcoming publication on segmenting urban residents for greater conservation gains

- We expect a paper titled “Segmenting urban populations for greater conservation gains: a new approach targeting co-benefits is required” to be published in *Conservation Science and Policy* shortly.
- With one exception, all the authors are from DOC’s social science and partnerships teams.
- A copy of the abstract of this publication has been supplied to your office.
- The research segmented Aucklanders into four clusters and identified motivations and barriers to increased conservation action.
- Results have been shared with Auckland Council and various NGOs, e.g. North-West Wildlink.
- An insights report, written for a more general audience, will be available on the DOC website shortly.

Contact:

## 3 Director-General Engagements

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### August

7 August	Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
7 August	MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington
9 August	Seafood NZ Conference, Queenstown
14–15 August	EDS Conference “Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa”, Auckland
18 August	Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington
19 August	NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington
22 August	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm
28 August	Meeting with Hon Shane Jones, Beehive
28 August	Corporate Career Board event, DOC Wellington

### September

3 Sept	DOC/Ngai Tahu Governance hui, Dunedin
4–10 Sept	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa
17 Sept	Conservation Week function, Christchurch
18 Sept	Conservation Week function, Invercargill
19 Sept	Zoological Society of Auckland, Auckland

### October

2–4 October	SLT Retreat, Pounui
7 October	NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC
9 October	Aotearoa Circle, Auckland

## 4 Addendum

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None this week.

### Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

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None this week.

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 12 August 2019**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

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# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri dieback

- Two tracks were reopened on 29 July following the completion of kauri dieback mitigation. They were the Pukatea Ridge Track in Puketi and the Lower Waipapa River Track in Omahuta.
- The reopening of these tracks has re-established the route of the Te Araroa trail through Puketi and Omahuta.
- There is currently no evidence of kauri dieback in Puketi Forest, although one positive site has been identified in Omahuta.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

There are no updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None this week.

### Submissions

- On 26 July, we lodged a submission on a publicly notified consent from the Ministry of Transport to construct five new helicopter pads, including earthworks and indigenous vegetation clearance, outside of the Airport Activity Area (AAA) identified in the Fiordland National Park Management Plan (FNPMP).
- We submitted opposing the application as: the proposed activities are inconsistent with the FNPMP; the proposed activities will occur outside of the AAA, an area set aside in the FNPMP for airport activities; the applicant has not proposed any mitigation beyond short-term erosion and sediment control during works; and the proposed activities are inconsistent with policies in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, Southland Regional Policy Statement and Southland District Plan.

### Appeals

- On 8 July, we lodged a section 274 notice joining a Yachting New Zealand (YNZ) appeal to the Northland Regional Council's Proposed Regional Plan. We joined this appeal to defend the biofouling cleaning provisions that we submitted on, to ensure they are not weakened by YNZ's appeal. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has also joined YNZ's appeal. NZDF engaged Crown Law to represent them. The Crown agencies that have appealed or joined appeals to this plan are now being represented as one by Crown Law. This includes the Ministry for Primary Industries, but only from a fisheries interest.
- On 30 July to 2 August, DOC staff attended the third round of Environment Court Mediation for the West Coast Regional Policy Statement (WCRPS). Chapters 2 (Summary of Resource Management Issues), 3 (Resource Management Issues of Significance to Poutini Ngāi Tahu), 5 (Use and Development of Resources),

6 (Regionally Significant Infrastructure), 7A (Natural Character), 7B (Natural Features and Landscapes), and 8 (Land and Water) have now been agreed to by parties. Outstanding chapters are 9 (Coastal Environment) and 7 (Indigenous Biodiversity). A fourth round of mediation has been set for September / October 2019 to address these outstanding chapters. Following this mediation, any unresolved issues will likely proceed to Environment Court.

**Designations**

- None this week.

**Water Conservation Orders**

- None this week.

**Other**

- None this week.

Contact: 

Proactively released

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Ramsar proposal in Golden Bay (Whanganui, Mangarakau, Lake Otuihe)

- Public consultation is taking place on a Ramsar proposal for significant wetlands in Golden Bay (Whanganui Inlet, Mangarakau wetland and Lake Otuihe).
- The land subject to the proposal is mostly public land (including marine reserve and wildlife management area) with a small area of private land which is within a QEII covenant.
- Some adjacent landowners have expressed concern about the implications of Ramsar status and a public meeting called by one of the landowners attracted around 100 interested people. The meeting was advertised on social media and attracted numerous comments, including anti-1080 sentiments.
- Three senior DOC staff attended and reassured landowners that Ramsar status did not grant DOC or the local authority additional regulatory powers. It was explained that Ramsar status means the site is added to Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act which means there are land access restrictions for mining.
- A DOC freshwater scientist was interviewed on Fresh FM radio following the public meeting.
- The benefits of international recognition of the area's values through Ramsar status were highlighted. These include creating an increased sense of pride in the area as well as making it easier to leverage funding for conservation-related projects.
- Overall there appears to be support for the proposal in Golden Bay, although, some people in the community have reservations.
- The opportunity for people to provide comments has been extended to the end of October. After this, we will prepare our internal reports and recommendations.
- You can expect to be briefed on this proposal within the next six months.

Contact:

### 2.2 Update on process to nominate Wairarapa Moana as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance

- In May, you sent letters to Ministerial colleagues and local MPs notifying them of your intention to nominate the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Complex as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, and seeking their endorsement of the nomination.
- Letters of support have since been received from Hon Dr Megan Woods, Minister for Energy and Resources; Hon Andrew Little, Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations; Hon David Parker, Minister for the Environment; Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for the Environment; and Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister for Rural Communities. Minister Peters' Ministerial advisor has also informed us that both Hon Ron Mark and Jenny Marcroft, MP, NZ First Conservation Spokesperson, are happy to provide their endorsement of this community-driven initiative.
- No responses were received from: Hon. Stuart Nash, Minister of Fisheries; Hon Meka Whaitiri, Member of Parliament for Ikaroa-Rāwhiti; or Alistair Scott, Member of Parliament for Wairarapa. However, no outstanding concerns with the proposed nomination have been raised by any agencies.
- The next stage in the process is for DOC to finalise a detailed technical dossier on the Wairarapa Moana site, in accordance with Ramsar Convention Secretariat specifications for nomination. We will then seek your approval to submit the dossier to the Governor-General, who will approve its submission on

behalf of New Zealand through a parliamentary Order in Council (expected to be in Aug-Sept 2019). DOC will then submit the nomination to the Ramsar secretariat.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes water quality issues

- In March 2019, DOC technical advisors presented a report to the Ashburton Water Zone Committee on water quality of several Ashburton lakes (within the Ō tū Wharekai intensive management area). Prior to presenting the report, DOC met with ECAN to discuss the issues within the report.
- The report noted that several sample sites showed declining water quality values throughout the basin. The report has generated some low-level push back from the farming community in the Ashburton basin.
- The Zone Committee asked ECAN to seek ways to address the issues.
- ECAN have met with landowners and other statutory agencies to discuss potential actions, though there is no indication as to what actions may be taken yet.
- [REDACTED]
- Separately, Ngāi Tahu has invited relevant statutory agencies (DOC, ECAN, Ashburton District Council and LINZ) to a hui with the purpose of developing an urgent action plan to reverse the water quality decline.
- Ngāi Tahu has stated they want a response plan implemented within 18 months.
- Ngāi Tahu has indicated that they will be pushing this action plan politically at both local and central government levels.
- We have accepted the invite to attend the hui and will provide a report to you following that. This hui has been tentatively set for 30 August.
- Our position is to strongly support Ngāi Tahu's action, advocate for the water quality goals to be based on conservation benefit (rather than accepting the status quo or similar partially degraded state as acceptable) and to support other agencies/landowners to achieve these outcomes.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### 2.4 Public consultation on whitebait management

- We are continuing to prepare the discussion document to support public consultation on improving whitebait management.
- We will keep you updated on our progress via the status report.
- The whitebait fishing season commences on 15 August around New Zealand (excluding the West Coast of the South Island). We will release a media statement prior to this, clarifying that there are no regulation changes for the 2019 season. It will also mention the public consultation process coming up later this year, and that further information on that process can be found on our website.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 New publication

A recently published article has named five new species of skinks:

**Lost and Found: Taxonomic revision of the speckled skink (*Oligosoma infrapunctatum*; Reptilia; Scincidae) species complex from New Zealand reveals a potential cryptic extinction, resurrection of two species, and the description of three new species.**

Zootaxa 4623 (3): 441–484

Sabine Melzer, **Rod A. Hitchmough**, Trent Bell, David Chapple, Geoff B. Patterson

- A group of authors, including DOC's Science Advisor Threats, has just published a paper which formally recognises three new species of New Zealand skinks, plus another two which were previously not considered distinct. These two species are more common – one is widespread on the West Coast and is also present on Stephens Island, and the other is widespread in the King Country – Waikato – Bay of Plenty area. They all belong to a group of closely related skink species known as the "speckled skink complex".
- Two of the newly described species are among New Zealand's most threatened animals, listed as Nationally Critical. Both are found at single localities on the West Coast. The Alborn skink, now *Oligosoma albornense*, is known from fewer than 20 individuals. Renewed search effort from 2015, led by the Greymouth District Office and supported by the Lizard Technical Advisory Group, has resulted in seven confirmed sightings. This survey programme is ongoing and supplemented by Biodiversity 2018 funding.
- The Chesterfield skink, now *Oligosoma salmo*, has been the subject of a research programme led by the Terrestrial Science Unit who estimated the population size at about 200 in 2018, prior to Cyclone Fehi (February 2018). The cyclone removed a third of the coastal habitat buffer and washed over the entire known range of the species. At this point emergency management, led by the Hokitika District Office and supported by the Lizard Technical Advisory Group, involved creating a secure population at Auckland Zoo and working on management options. This work is ongoing.
- The third new species *Oligosoma auroraensis* is from Hawkes Bay and is ranked Nationally Vulnerable.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### August

- 14–15 August EDS Conference “Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa”, Auckland
- 18 August Conservation Board Chairs meeting, West Plaza Wellington
- 19 August NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington
- 22 August State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm
- 28 August Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Beehive
- 28 August Corporate Career Board event, DOC Wellington

#### September

- 3 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, TBC
- 4–6 September Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Apia, Samoa
- 16 September Conservation Week Function, Auckland
- 17 September Conservation Week function, Antarctic Centre, Christchurch
- 18 September Conservation Week function, Transport World, Invercargill
- 20 September Mackenzie CE Forum, Timaru TBC
- 25 September Tūhoe Board meeting, Taneatua

#### October

- 1 October DOC ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 2–4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui
- 7 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC
- 9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington

### 4 Addendum

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None this week.

#### Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

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None this week.



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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 19 August 2019**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

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# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None

### Submissions

- None

### Appeals

- We advised last week that Crown Law is representing DOC on the proposed Northland Regional Plan appeal as it relates to biofouling. We apologise for this, but that statement was incorrect. We are in discussions with Crown Law, who are representing NZ Defence Force, to try to reach an all-of-Crown position. At this stage agreement has not been met so our Legal team is still representing DOC for the appeal we joined on biofouling.

### Designations

- None

### Water Conservation Orders

- None

### Other

- None

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

### National Pest Management Plan

- We are working with MPI on the further advice requested by yourself and the Minister for Biosecurity, Minister O'Connor.
- MPI staff met with DOC Predator Free staff on 14 August to gain further understanding of the Predator Free model.

### Keep Kauri Standing Campaign

- Northland Rugby has joined the cause and has launched a three-year partnership with Northland Regional Council, Mitre 10, DOC and MPI.
- The partnership launched on 15 August, during the Northland vs Auckland game. DOC staff supported the event.

### Mitigation progress

- Six DOC hygiene stations are currently being installed by New Zealand Track Works in the Tauranga region.
- Materials to be shipped to Great Barrier Island for track mitigation work starting in September are currently going through biosecurity checks.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.3 Myrtle rust

- The Myrtle Rust Science Symposium is being held 9–10 September. We are working with MPI and other stakeholders on content and presentations.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Southern blue whiting fishery and NZ sea lion interactions

- New Zealand sea lions are managed through the New Zealand sea lion Threat Management Plan jointly with DOC, Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) and our Treaty partner, Ngāi Tahu.
- On 9 August 2019, FNZ informed DOC that the annual fishing season for the southern blue whiting fishery on the Campbell Plateau (SBW61) would open at the end of August/start of September.
- The interaction of the fishery with NZ sea lions is managed via a fisheries operation plan, administered by FNZ. On average, three sea lions have been caught per year over the last five years. Ninety-seven percent of sea lions caught in the fishery are male.
- The operational plan for the coming season specifies that all vessels in the fishery must utilise sea lion exclusion devices and specifies an annual bycatch limit of 12 female or 25 (total) sea lions. The fishery will close if this limit is reached. The operational plan also requires 100% observer coverage of the fleet.
- All sea lion bycatch will be reported in real-time and you will be informed of any captures and updates from the fishery.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Motutapu Request for Proposals Decision

- In 2018, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Tribal Trust won a Supreme Court case against the Minister of Conservation.
- The consideration of the Motutapu Request for Proposals (RFP) process is the first critical concession decision post the Supreme Court decision.
- On 9 August 2019, Mike Slater, Deputy Director-General Operations, made a decision on the Motutapu Island grazing/farming RFP process.
- The decision was made to offer this opportunity to Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki based on the strength of their proposal across all criteria.
- The two other submitters to this process were Auckland Council and the Marutūāhu Collective.
- We decided to use the RFP process as it was the best mechanism available to us to assess multiple applications for this opportunity in a fair and transparent way.
- The RFP criteria were designed to assess the competency of each applicant in terms of managing farming and grazing, and how the application would support and enhance the connection of Iwi to the Motu.
- The successful and unsuccessful applicants were notified of the outcome on 14 August.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Update on Heritage and Visitor Strategy

- The updated draft of the new Heritage and Visitor Strategy has now been circulated to stakeholders, including Tourism Industry Aotearoa and Federated Mountain Clubs, for their feedback. We have provided a copy of this draft to your office.
- The updated draft is a close-to-final version that reflects feedback from Treaty partners and stakeholders on the draft signed off by the Minister of Finance and yourself last year.
- The strategic direction, framework and *'Protect-Connect-Thrive'* goals of the Strategy are unchanged, but there have been some refinements. The most significant include:
  - splitting the work into two documents – a more streamlined strategic document and an accompanying contextual document;
  - more focus on sustainability and climate change;
  - connection to the new New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy;
  - emphasis on strengthening the connection New Zealanders feel with public conservation land;
  - an increased focus on the role of iwi; and
  - reference to DOC's response to the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki decision.
- We have requested feedback by 6 September and intend to reengage with iwi as part of the regular Policy Hui being held through August and early September. The NZCA and Conservation Board chairs will also receive the draft for their consideration and feedback.
- Once feedback has been considered, we plan to provide a near-final version of the Strategy for your feedback by the end of October.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 Zero Invasive Pests (ZIP) Perth Whataroa Research and Development Project

- DOC, in partnership with Predator Free 2050 Limited and the NEXT Foundation, is supporting Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) to carry out a programme of research and development across a 12,000 ha area within the Perth River valley, South Westland.
- The aim of the work is to develop an approach to completely remove possums, and potentially rats, and to enable sustained protection of the area without the ongoing use of aerial toxins at landscape scales.
- ZIP has recently completed an aerial predator removal operation to completely remove possums, and potentially rats from the valley, and to reduce stoats to very low numbers. The operation was carried out in two phases, using a modified aerial application of 1080. The first phase was completed in April and significantly 'knocked-down' numbers of possums, rats and stoats. On 23 July, ZIP completed the second phase of the operation.

Note: this information was correct at the time of writing but is now out of date. Current details can be found at [ZIP.org.nz](http://ZIP.org.nz)

- Kea and tahr were monitored through the predator removal operation using radio-tags. No tahr died during either phase of the operation.
- Thirteen radio-tagged kea were in the research area during the first phase of the operation, two died after consuming baits. Twelve radio-tagged kea were present during the second phase, all survived. Importantly, all six of the adult female kea in the radio-tagged population survived both phases of the operation.
- Since the operation, sufficient rain has fallen to remove any remaining toxicity from baits on the ground. Visual surveys of whio and pīwauwau (rock wren) will be conducted as weather and snow conditions allow access to sites.
- The ZIP team is undertaking intensive detection work in the area to determine the success of the predator removal operation. This will continue for several months.
- We will update you with the results of monitoring as they become available.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_



## 2.6 Air New Zealand – Support for Conservation Week (TVC)

- Air New Zealand has been working with DOC to support Conservation Week with a 30 second TV commercial, to be aired between 9–23 September.
- It will showcase the transfer of threatened species including takahē, pāteke and Conservation Dogs; and carry the Conservation Week theme ‘Nature needs us’.
- There will also be a 1min 30sec video that will be shown through Air New Zealand digital and social media channels.
- Air New Zealand are also providing extensive space in Kia Ora magazine (two full page ads, one feature article) to raise awareness for the partnership and Conservation Week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) meeting, Apia 2–6 September 2019

- The Director General and one member of DOC’s International Team will participate in the upcoming *Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme* (SPREP) meeting in Apia, 2–6 September. The meeting is for members to be updated on SPREP’s work programme and budget for 2020-2021 and on the implementation of SPREP’s Strategic Plan.
- New Zealand’s High Commissioner to Samoa, His Excellency Dr Trevor Matheson, will head the New Zealand delegation. MFAT are coordinating the briefing for the meeting, which will also include a ministerial segment based on the theme ‘Resilient Blue Pacific’.
- The Minister for Pacific Peoples, Aupito Tofae Su’a William Sio, will represent New Zealand at the ministerial segment, including participating in a panel discussion on ocean acidification (6 September). Minister Sio will also participate in the official opening ceremony for the Pacific Climate Change Centre (5 September), which New Zealand has supported.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### August

- 19 August NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington
- 22 August State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm
- 28 August Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Beehive
- 28 August Corporate Career Board event, DOC Wellington

#### September

- 4–6 September Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Apia, Samoa
- 16 September Conservation Week Function, Auckland
- 17 September Conservation Week function, Antarctic Centre, Christchurch
- 17 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch TBC
- 18 September Conservation Week function, Transport World, Invercargill
- 20 September Mackenzie CE Forum, Timaru TBC
- 25 September Tūhoe Board meeting, Taneatua

#### October

- 1 October DOC ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 2-4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui
- 7-8 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC
- 9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
- 31 October The Aotearoa Circle Partners Hui, Auckland

#### November

- 28-29 Nov. State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Martinborough

#### December

- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 17 December DOC Wellington Christmas party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Wildlife Act authorisations
- Land exchange and concession matter
- Tourism Attraction Project (TAP)

### **Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities**

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None this week

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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 26 August 2019**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage  
**Minister of Conservation**

Productively released

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA advocacy update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Submissions

Bendigo Station subdivision

- We lodged a submission on 15 August on a resource consent application notified by Central Otago District Council, opposing the subdivision and land use resource consents sought by Bendigo Station Ltd for a 14-lot subdivision at Bendigo, Central Otago.
- The proposal contains approximately 120 hectares of nationally threatened plants, including kanuka (Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable), matagouri (At Risk – Declining) and *Olearia lineata* (At Risk – Declining). These species are significant to the Dunstan district in an ecological context.
- This area also provides a riparian function for maintaining water quality, and supports geckos, skinks, and bird habitat.
- The submission seeks that large areas are protected by a consent notice requiring a landscape plan utilising eco-sourced vegetation.

### Other

McLaughlin's Quarry Private Plan Change

- An upcoming proposed private plan change in Auckland involves re-zoning approximately 25ha of land to heavy industrial, removing an Outstanding Natural Feature Overlay, and reducing an ecological overlay to provide for an industrial park.
- The location is directly adjacent to the Matukuturua Stonefields Historic Heritage Reserve, a site with significant cultural and geological values. The site of the plan change itself has archaeological features, including evidence of Maori occupation, and iwi have expressed opposition due to the area's significance.
- A recent proposal to develop land adjacent to the nearby Ōtuataua Stonefield has been protested widely by the SOUL movement, at Ihumātou. Considering the significance and similarities, there is a risk that the McLaughlin's Quarry proposal will be subject to similar interest from the public, tangata whenua, and media.
- DOC has undertaken a technical review of the application and has met with the applicant on-site. We will also write to the applicant, highlighting our numerous concerns with the proposal.

Contact: 

## 1.2 Kauri dieback update

### Great Barrier Island Biosecurity Plan

- We have been working with stakeholders on the development of a biosecurity plan for the shipment of materials to Great Barrier Island, including bulk bags of bark and aggregate material.
- This plan is to provide confidence that no skinks or argentine ants are contained within the materials. Screening includes use of a skink dog for some materials and fumigation at an approved facility for higher risk materials.
- Development of the plan has had input from Auckland Council, coming from its work for a wider Hauraki Gulf Biosecurity Plan.

### Tracks reopening in Tauranga

- We will reopen 10 Tauranga tracks on 26 August after successful upgrade work to help prevent the spread of kauri dieback disease.
- The tracks were closed in November 2018 while work was under way to ensure the safety of the public, contractors and the kauri.
- The reopening follows significant track upgrade work, additional safety checks and the installation of brand-new hygiene stations.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.2 Waiheke Island marine protection

- A public hui was held on Waiheke Island on 15 August to discuss the island's marine environment.
- The hui was regarded as an inclusive call to action for iwi and the Waiheke community to take constructive action to protect their Ahu Moana.
- DOC's Auckland Partnerships Manager co-facilitated the hui at the request of the Waiheke Collective marine subgroup.
- The hui attracted over 100 people, with a diversity of interests including youth, Māori, fishers, scientists, conservationists, local politicians and residents.
- Next step for the marine subgroup of the Waiheke Collective is to progress three streams of work towards a set of agreed proposals to present to the Sea Change Ministerial Advisory Committee in February 2020.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.3 Public consultation on whitebait management

- We continue to prepare the discussion document to support public consultation on improving whitebait management. We will provide you with a draft of this document in early September, prior to meeting with you on 10 September.
- We are working with regional office staff to support your upcoming visit to the West Coast.
- The whitebait season (excluding the West Coast) has begun. DOC's pre-season media release emphasised that there are no changes to whitebait fishing regulations this season. Media coverage of the start of the season included five articles in the mainstream press. The season is progressing normally to date, with no fishing-related issues arising.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 Potential phishing attack on Taupo licencing system

- On 16 August, we were notified of a potential phishing attack on the Taupo Trout Fishery Licencing system in the form of an email using email addresses possibly captured from the fishery licensing system itself.
- While licence volumes are not high, this represents significant risk to DOC. On 20 August, we made the decision to suspend public access to the fishing licence sales portal to allow for an investigation, and to protect customers from any potential risk.
- Investigations revealed there was no apparent compromise of either DOC's systems or those of our vendor. It is more likely that this is an email scam generated from a Spark account that has managed to reach some Taupo Fishery Licence holders.
- The sales portal was reopened on the evening of 21 August.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 Tahr control programme

- Tahr control by DOC staff, aerially-assisted trophy hunting (AATH) concessionaires, and a contractor has been undertaken across all tahr management units throughout July and August.
- Approximately 10 percent of the 9,500 tahr controlled since October 2018 have been recovered.
- Information on recent control activity has been posted on the 'Tahr control operations' page of the DOC website.
- On 20 August, we presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority, including an update on this year's Tahr Control Operational Plan (TCOP) and highlighted key elements of the TCOP for 2019-2020.

### 2019-2020 Tahr Control Operational Plan

- We have worked with Ngāi Tahu to develop a draft TCOP for 1 September 2019 to 30 June 2020.
- The plan was presented to the Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group meeting on 6 August, hosted by Ngāi Tahu.
- The key elements of the new operational plan are:
  - A suite of contributors, including recreational and guided hunting, Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO), AATH offsets, contract and DOC staff may deliver tahr control.

- DOC control will focus on buffers at the northern and southern boundaries of the feral range and in Aoraki/Mount Cook and Westland/Tai Poutini National Parks, between 1 September and 15 November 2019.
- Bull tahr will not be targeted during WARO, AATH offsets, contract and DOC control.
- We will continue control outside the feral range throughout the period.
- We expect to release the new operational plan in the week of 26 August.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 2.6 Antipodean albatross – New Zealand listing proposal under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species

- In March this year, you agreed to propose the listing of the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) on Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). DOC has finalised a draft proposal, which includes a CMS “Concerted Action” plan.
- We have been working closely with the Ministry for Primary Industries and Ngāi Tahu in this process, and stakeholders have been kept well informed.
- The draft documents have now been sent out for comment domestically (government agencies, NGOs, fishing industry), and internationally (Range States, NGOs, Inter-Governmental Organisations).
- We will submit the final listing proposal and action plan to the CMS Secretariat by 19 September, for a decision at the 13th CMS Conference of Parties in February 2020.
- Australia has indicated a willingness to co-sponsor the proposal. Chile is also considering co-sponsoring.
- We will keep you informed as this work progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 2.7 International negotiations on the new global biodiversity goals, Nairobi, 27-30 August 2019

- The first formal negotiations on the new global biodiversity goals will take place in Nairobi, 27-30 August.
- DOC will be attending the First Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG1) as part of a four-person NZ Government delegation.
- No final decisions on new global targets will be made at the conference. Its purpose is to begin Parties’ consideration of the scope, architecture and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and to agree the workplan leading up to the Conference of the Parties in October 2020.
- The conference may attract some media interest overseas or amongst NGOs at home, but we do not expect significant media coverage in New Zealand. We will liaise with your office regarding media queries.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Media request re: RAL Transport Concessions

- You have received a media request from a journalist regarding Ruapehu Alpine Lifts' (RAL) transport concessions for Tongariro National Park and Whakapapa Village, indicating replies will be published in the *Sunday Star Times*. We have also received the questions and prepared a response.
- The questions are generally around RAL's use of shuttles to transport customers between Whakapapa Ski Field and Whakapapa Village, and are in response to an OIA to DOC earlier this year. The journalist is investigating to see if RAL has breached its concessions and has operated without the appropriate permits, and if DOC is likely to investigate these alleged breaches.
- It appears that we made an error in not ensuring concessions were in place for transport services on the Bruce Road. This will be acknowledged in our reply to the journalist.
- The journalist has also sent RAL several questions regarding the new Sky Waka gondola and visitor numbers on the ski field.
- We expect a story will run on the journalist's findings on Sunday, 25 August, and this may trigger some correspondence around visitor pressures at peak times at Whakapapa Ski Field.
- We will keep your office up to date with our response to the journalist and any further enquiries on this issue.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.9 DOC brand campaign

- We will be releasing the first of four videos featuring DOC staff on 27 August.
- This is part of a wider marketing campaign intended to bolster DOC's brand and social licence within targeted audience groups.
- The tagline of this campaign is 'In it for good', and it is all about DOC's people and the work they do.
- This campaign will run from 27 August through to mid-October, and will be broadcast through paid social media and other digital channels.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### August

- 28 August Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Beehive
- 28 August Corporate Career Board event, DOC Wellington

#### September

- 4–6 September Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Apia, Samoa
- 16 September Conservation Week Function, Auckland
- 17 September Conservation Week function, Christchurch
- 17 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch TBC
- 18 September Conservation Week function, Invercargill
- 20 September Mackenzie CE Forum, Timaru TBC
- 25 September Tūhoe Board meeting, Taneatua

#### October

- 1 October DOC ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 2-4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui
- 7-8 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC
- 9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
- 31 October The Aotearoa Circle Partners Hui, Auckland

#### November

- 28-29 Nov State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Martinborough

#### December

- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Wellington
- 17 December DOC Wellington Christmas party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

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This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Oparara Basin Provincial Growth Funded project
- Nuhiti Q fence payment
- NHF update: potential celebration for protecting an area containing significant conservation values
- IUCN: Proposed motion on climate and biodiversity from France

### Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week.

Proactively released