



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 1 June 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Covid-19 status update

- The Covid-19 Task Force, which started on 28 April, stood down on 22 May after completing DOC Guidance documents for managing Covid-19 at Alert Level 2.
- The Deputy Director-General Covid-19 also stood down on 22 May, with responsibility for DOC Covid-19 going to DOC's Deputy Director-General People.
- The Covid-19 Overview and Issues Team is currently managing the All of Government relationship, internal DOC Communications, the Covid-19 Mailbox (19 emails for the previous week 18-22 May) and Covid-19 OIA's.
- This week the team has been actively supporting the preparation of:
 - Health order for Cabinet approved 27 May regarding changes to accommodation. DOC will keep to 50% capacity at bookable huts for Level 2, apart from 16 bed huts where the limit is 10. The message to visitors will be that they should bring and use a tent.
 - The Cabinet paper on Alert Level 1 controls to be released on 29 May.

Contact: Ginny Baddeley, Deputy Director-General People: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Bathurst Coal Ltd application to Canterbury Regional Council and Selwyn District Council

- Canterbury Regional Council and Selwyn District Council publicly notified a bundled resource consent application to continue operating, and expand, an open cast coal mine (known as Canterbury Coal Mine), including retrospective and future operation, at Bush Gully Road, Malvern Hills.
- We **lodged a submission opposing** the proposal on 18 May. The proposal does not include appropriate mitigation measures or compensation/offsets to adequately address effects on threatened indigenous species (Canterbury mudfish) or significant wetlands.

Appeals

Amberfield Subdivision Environment Court Appeal

- The Amberfield subdivision (Applicant - Weston Lea Limited) is the first development in the Peacocke structure plan area, in southwest Hamilton. Hamilton City Council was loaned \$290m from the Government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund for infrastructure and urban development within the wider Peacocke area.
- Within the Amberfield site is a population of nationally critical pekapeka (NZ long-tailed bat). The population is one of only three peri-urban long-tailed bat populations nationally, and is in decline due to ongoing development and other pressures.
- In November 2019, DOC **lodged an appeal** with the Environment Court seeking improved conditions to protect the bat population. Forest and Bird and a local environmental advocacy group joined our appeal. Weston Lea Limited also lodged an appeal.
- The Court directed parties to Court-assisted mediation, but this was cancelled due to the COVID lockdown.

- Weston Lea Limited is now seeking that the application be treated with urgency by the Court. Weston Lea has also contacted the DOC senior executive, implying that our case is “holding up” a priority government infrastructure project.
- Our case seeks refinements to the conditions of consent; it does not seek outright decline. DOC has recently approached Weston Lea with a bottom-line position, based on key matters of contention. We anticipate that issues can be resolved, either through direct discussion with Weston Lea, or via Court-assisted mediation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Release of seabird capture information

- In February and March, you were informed of two significant seabird bycatch incidences in the surface longline fishery via Status Reports 113 and 119.
 - One vessel captured nine seabirds over seven longline fishing events. An observer was onboard and identified five black petrels, all of which were dead, and four flesh-footed shearwaters, all of which were released alive and uninjured.
 - The other vessel captured four Antipodean albatrosses and two southern royal albatrosses over two longline fishing events. An observer was also aboard this vessel, and identifications have now been confirmed by necropsy.
 - On both occasions the vessels were following seabird bycatch mitigation regulations but not best practice (one vessel was using a tori line and night setting but not using line weighting, and the other was using a tori line and line weighting but setting by day).
- Fisheries New Zealand has received an OIA request from Forest and Bird for information on the Antipodean albatross captures which is due to be provided on 9 June. Forest and Bird have confirmed they are planning a press release around these captures once the information is provided.
- We are planning to release this information in an update on the Protected Species Liaison programme in a report due out on 4 June.
- The report will include DOC’s response to both capture events including deployment of Hookpods to these vessels.
- The report will also highlight the improved mitigation standards set by the National Plan of Action – Seabirds 2020. These standards now require vessels to use either hook-shielding devices or the combined use of night setting, line weighting and tori line, with improved specification of line weighting.
- Officials are drafting material in support of a response to any media interest in these bycatch incidents.
- A copy of the report will be provided to your office in the first week of June.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Motuora Island kiwi translocation due to drought conditions

- The prolonged dry weather on Motuora Island in the Hauraki Gulf is contributing to a decline in the health of Northland brown kiwi on the island.

- Since December 2019, nine adult and five juvenile kiwi have died as a result of conditions on Motuora. There are daily sightings of kiwi out during the daytime on tracks, campground and beaches.
- DOC has implemented a programme of supplementary feeding and additional water points across the island, and the campsite is closed to the public.
- DOC cannot provide intensive care for emaciated kiwi on Motuora, and we believe the birds face better long-term prospects at another wild site.
- We transferred one kiwi from the island on 26 May to the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre for treatment.
- The kiwi is descended from the southern Northland population. If it makes a full recovery, we will likely release it into a wetland area within the Whangarei Heads Landcare management area.
- The Kiwi Recovery Team and Kiwis for Kiwi are working with DOC's Inner Islands Operations team to mitigate kiwi deaths on Motuora, such as possible further translocations to Whangarei or additional feeding measures.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Reassessment of the conservation status of New Zealand hornworts and liverworts now completed

- International and national experts (including two DOC staff) have assessed New Zealand hornwort and liverwort taxa using the NZ Threat Classification System (NZTCS).
- We intend publishing *Conservation status of New Zealand hornworts and liverworts, 2020* on the DOC website, and the assessment data at www.nztc.org.nz during the week beginning 1 June. We have provided your office with a copy of the report. The DOC communications team can arrange media coverage with your office, should you wish to announce its release.
- Assessments of 770 hornwort and liverwort taxa are reported: 13 are hornworts and 757 are liverworts. Hornworts and liverworts play an important role in nutrient cycling in ecosystems by breaking down rock and decomposing organic matter. They also help to retain water in ecosystems.
- Sixteen hornwort and liverwort taxa are assessed as being in decline. Ten of these are Threatened (of which five are Nationally Critical) and six are At Risk.
- The plight of *Frullania wairua* is of particular concern. This diminutive liverwort lives on branchlets of only one species of tree, rātā moehau. Rātā moehau is itself highly threatened – it has declined to a very small population at Te Pahi. It has low genetic diversity and is at risk from myrtle rust.
- *Radula marginata* has been assessed as At Risk – Declining because of illegal collecting that has caused local declines and loss of some populations.
- A significant area of concern is the 173 Data Deficient hornwort and liverwort taxa that are so poorly known that they could not be assessed. Eighteen of the 32 taxa assessed for the first time in this report are Data Deficient.
- One of the species assessed as Data Deficient, *Seppeltia succuba*, was previously assessed as Threatened – Nationally Critical. However, its known New Zealand habitat in the Eyre Mountains of Fiordland is seldom visited by liverwort specialists, so the state of the population is now unknown. Surveys of similar habitat in the Remarkables Range have not revealed any specimens. This lack of knowledge reflects the limited number of researchers working on hornworts and liverworts.
- The New Zealand Threat Classification System (NZTCS) is used to assess the conservation status of species in New Zealand. DOC administers the NZTCS on the country's behalf and convenes expert panels from within the scientific and conservation community to conduct assessments of groups of species (e.g., bats, birds, mosses) approximately every five years.

- Assessments of spiders and marine invertebrates are presently under way, and experts are preparing to assess moths, butterflies and reptiles. We will advise you prior to each assessment being published.

Contact:

3 Director-General Engagements

We are not including the locations of the below engagements at present, as they will be dependent on the COVID-19 Alert Level at the time of the event.

June

4 June	Tourism CE quarterly meeting
4 June	Gulf Island Trust Leaders hui
11 June	The Fenwick Forum
17 June	Corporate Career Board
18 June	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat
18-19 June	NZ Conservation Authority
24-25 June	SLT Retreat
25 June	Environment Select Committee – Estimates Hearing
25 June	Ngai Tahu/DOC Kahui Governance Group
26 June	Mackenzie Agency Alignment CE Forum

July

7 July	Senior Leaders hui
23 July	Environment NGO Forum

August

4 August	Forest & Bird/DOC hui
5 August	Chief Executives Economic and Environment Forum
14 August	Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board – Waters – CE's Forum
21 August	NZ Conservation Authority
27 August	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat

4 Addendum

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:

- NZ-IUCN to give feedback on proposed cycle trail in Tongariro National Park

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Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 8 June 2020

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 COVID-19

- The COVID-19 Overview and Issues Team is currently managing the All-of-Government relationship, internal communications, the COVID-19 Mailbox (12 emails received in the previous week 25–29 May) and COVID-19 OIA's (2).
- This week the team has been actively supporting the preparation of key messages for the Department and external organisations in its work on COVID-19 Alert Level 1.
- All ordered PPE, apart from 2 deliveries of 400 masks and a small delivery of bleach, has arrived and been distributed across DOC.
- Next week the team will start on a learning review of our IMT COVID response as part of the closure activities.

Contact: Ginny Baddeley, Deputy Director-General People: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Waste Management New Zealand applications to Auckland Council

- Auckland Council publicly notified a bundled resource consent application to create and operate a new regional landfill in 'Wayby Valley' between Warkworth and Wellsford.
- Auckland Council also publicly notified a private plan change to create a landfill precinct for the landfill and surrounding area owned by Waste Management NZ.
- The Director-General lodged submissions opposing both proposals on 26 May 2020. The consent proposal would have significant adverse effects on a range of conservation values and the plan change would reduce the requirements to protect indigenous biodiversity on the site.

Oceania Gold Ltd (OGL) applications to Otago Regional Council (ORC) and Waitaki District Council (WDC) gold mine at Deepdell North III

- The Director-General lodged a submission opposing the OGL consent applications to ORC and WDC for a new hard rock gold mine (Deepdell North III) on 29 May 2020 on land owned by Oceania Gold Ltd at Macraes Flat, North Otago. The project as notified will remove approximately 55 ha of indigenous vegetation, and will impact on:
 - An area of critically endangered ephemeral wetland
 - Three threatened land environments of New Zealand
 - 13 rare plant populations
 - Three rare lizard populations
 - An indeterminate number of invertebrates
- The application proposes the establishment of two permanently protected biodiversity offset sites within the ecological district to offset and/or compensate for the loss of natural values, based on two Ecological Enhancement Area Management Plans, which were not part of the notified application and AEE. The submission seeks more details on these management plans, protection mechanisms, and associated conditions to ensure the effects on threatened indigenous species and ecosystems are adequately addressed so that there is, as a minimum, a 'net gain' in indigenous biodiversity values.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Partial reviews of the Conservation General Policy and General Policy for National Parks

- On 12 May 2020, we provided the NZCA the draft background document to inform the partial reviews. It was accompanied by the draft letters to Treaty partners and Conservation Board Chairs requesting nominations for people to work together with us on collaborative Options Development Groups to develop recommendations (or options) in line with your agreed Terms of Reference. A copy of these papers (which had been revised to reflect your earlier feedback) was resubmitted to your office at the same time.
- The NZCA feedback is that the papers are well crafted. They propose no changes to the background document and have suggested only a few minor stylistic revisions to the letters.
- In light of this, we have forwarded the background document to others assisting us with the publication process, including a te reo Māori translator. We are working to address the minor feedback points on the letters. Our publication timeframe entails the background document and letters should be ready for release at the end of this month.
- We expect the Director-General will issue the call for nominations on 30 June 2020. Following a 6-week nominations period and subsequent appointment process, we expect to convene the first meeting of the Options Development Groups by the end of September. The groups will work over the following 6 months to develop the recommendations (or options) that, after being tested through a process of flax roots consultation, ultimately will be put to you and the NZCA for consideration.
- Our last briefing to you (20-B-0013 refers) proposed the Options Development Groups would begin their work in earnest in August 2020, and work intensively over 3 months. The 6-week extension in the timeframe to launch the Option Development Groups is a result of the difficulties we experienced in engaging other agencies in the development of the background paper during Alerts Level 4 and 3. The additional provision of 3-months' working time for the Options Development Groups is in recognition that, going forward, some of the collaborative policy development work will need to be executed remotely – and that this will take additional time.
- We have consulted Te Arawhiti on these revised timeframes. In light of the implications of the Covid-19 response for Māori, they strongly support the proposed adjustments.
- We will provide an oral update to NZCA on these matters at their next meeting on 18-19 June 2020.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Forthcoming paper regarding public opinion on novel pest control technologies

- An article entitled “Underlying beliefs linked to public opinion about gene drive and pest-specific toxin for pest control” will be published shortly in the Journal of Wildlife Research. It reports findings from research led by staff from the Department’s Biodiversity Group as part of the New Zealand’s Biological Heritage National Science Challenge.
- 1200 New Zealanders were surveyed to investigate underlying beliefs linked to levels of support for two novel technologies for rat eradication – gene drive and aerial distribution of a new pest-specific toxin. Findings suggest support for both

technologies is primarily influenced by attitudes toward the tools, with some effect from underlying beliefs.

- For gene drive, general attitudes (e.g. gene drive is good/bad, risky/safe) and two normative beliefs (people like me / people in my household would support the use of gene drive to control rats) were key contributors to levels of support. Behavioural beliefs relating to support from scientific evidence to prove gene drive works, concern for unknown consequences, gene drive being a humane way to rid New Zealand of rats, and the technology going against the natural way of life were also significant.
- The same attitudes and normative beliefs contributed significantly to support for aerial distribution of a new pest-specific toxin. Four different behavioural beliefs were also significant. These related to the ability to eradicate rats over a large area, potential for effects outside the targeted zone, scientific evidence to support use of the technology and the ability to avoid harming other wildlife. The study also found a strong relationship between levels of support for 1080 and those for aerial distribution of a new pest-specific toxin.
- The impact the novel technologies could have on biodiversity conservation was not strongly linked to support for either method. The novelty of the tool also did not appear to impact the underlying beliefs influencing levels of support.
- The identification of underlying beliefs linked to support or opposition to new technologies will allow policy makers to have a better understanding of public concerns. This in turn will foster more meaningful discussion with the public on whether these technologies should be introduced, and how they should be used.
- A copy of the paper has been supplied to your office.

Contact:

2.3 ***Te ara ki mua* – The path ahead – Developing a response to increasing deer abundance**

A project update has been prepared for the Conservation Authority, to be tabled at their next meeting in June 2020. The key points of the update are:

- The first stage of this project is now nearing completion and has been focused on understanding the nature of the problem and gaining the different perspectives through broad engagement across stakeholders involved with wild deer.
- A report of the findings will be made available at the end of June, and this will form the basis for the next stage of the project to develop the preferred response. Establishing the preferred approach is due to be completed by the end of the year.
- In the recent budget announcement, \$53m has been allocated to forest restoration initiatives in the central North Island. This will be used to urgently address the forest health issues in the Raukumara Ranges and support the Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Forum (including regional councils) to facilitate the ecological restoration of the Kaimai Mamaku Ranges. While both these projects are covering the range of threats on these ecosystems a considerable component will be focussed on management of ungulates.
- We are working with Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui to co-design the project in the Raukumara
- We plan to learn from the approaches being taken through the Raukumara project and Kaimai Mamaku forum to potentially address issues in other forests, including the Ruahine, Kaweka and Kaimanawa, in later years. Further planning on these other forests can only occur after engagement with Ngāti Porou and Te Whanau-a-Apanui as the Raukumara Forest remains the first priority.
- Given that the distribution of deer and their impacts are not uniform across the country, a multi-tiered, regional-based approach working with Treaty Partners,

Councils, landowners, local recreational and commercial hunters and other stakeholders will be required.

- There are two main themes which will likely require different approaches in developing the plans forward:
 - The front country: the build-up of wild deer herds on farm/forest margins in lowlands and front country around bush remnants, covenants and reserves has been consistently identified as a key issue. Landlocked small reserves and private forest remnants are considered to have become safe havens for deer breeding, with ready access to adjacent pasture.
 - The back country: on public conservation land in the large National and Forest Parks, monitoring of both deer populations and their ecosystem impacts has not been prioritised in recent years. This absence of data on population trends, size and ecological impacts reduces the quality of discussions between stakeholders, and hampers good decision making around solutions in many parts of the country. Developing cost-effective techniques to assess changes in ungulate abundance and ecosystem health will be a priority for stage two of the project.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Update on kiwi translocation on Motuora Island due to drought

- Kiwi on Motuora Island, in the Hauraki Gulf, continue to experience food shortage, weight loss and mortality due to the drought affecting Auckland and Northland.
- Actions to date included providing supplementary food and water, limited on-island care of starving birds and the removal of one adult on 26 May for release at another wild location near Whangarei.
- The Kiwi Recovery Programme facilitated the emergency transfer of more kiwi from Motuora.
- On 3 June, a team caught 17 kiwi from Motuora Island and transferred them to Pukenui Forest (11), and Marunui Landcare (6). A vet from Auckland Zoo assessed them on the island to ensure they were fit for transfer.
- All were microchipped and their body condition was assessed. They will be monitored weekly for the first month, after which they will be recaptured, and health-checked. Some will be fitted with six-month transmitters, and community groups will continue to monitor their movements and progress.
- The aims of the transfer are to improve welfare of transferred birds by moving them to areas with better conditions and lower kiwi population density, and to reduce competition for resources amongst kiwi remaining on Motuora.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Kapiti Gateway Provincial Growth Fund bid

- Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) is leading a \$4.5m project to build the 'Kapiti Gateway', a combined visitor/biosecurity facility at Paraparaumu Beach to service visitors to Kapiti Island. The proposal is for council to fund 50%, with an application to the PGF for the remaining share.
- On 28 May, KCDC councillors voted to approve the concept and to submit a bid to the PGF. If this bid is successful, the council will proceed to detailed design and construction.

- The drivers for Council are economic development and tourism. KCDC prepared a business case which indicated the current economic benefit of Kapiti Island tourism to the local economy is \$6m per annum, with capacity for further growth based on current visitor limits.
- We have supported the proposal by providing technical advice and through a role on project governance. We are not proposing to contribute directly to the construction of the facility, although there may be an expectation that we contribute to the ongoing operational costs either directly or through a levy on visitors.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Proactively Released

3 Director-General Engagements

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26 June	Mackenzie Agency Alignment CE Forum Environment Canterbury

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4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Aerial control of wilding pines, Catchpool Valley, Wellington
- Cycle Trails Trust Requests Review of Wellington CMS

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Department of
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Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 15 June 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

- DOC and MPI have prepared a draft Kauri Dieback Programme Operational Plan for 2020/21 for discussion with Programme Partners at a meeting on 19 June 2020.
 - The plan will focus on aligning our collective leadership and effort and will provide a framework for prioritisation of prior programme work and outputs.
 - A focus on developing forest health plans with mana whenua is proposed, as is aligning with Jobs for Nature.
- [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Water quality appeal on proposed Regional Plan for Northland

- The Chief Executive Officer (CE) of Northland Regional Council (NRC) recently wrote to the Director-General requesting that he withdraw your appeal on the proposed Regional Plan for Northland in relation to water quality. The reason the appeal was under your name was the appeal in its entirety included matters in the coastal marine area. The appeal seeks that the Plan include comprehensive interim freshwater quality limits, prior to the full process as required under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM). The CE's request was on the basis that NRC intend to initiate a plan change in 2021 to implement the water quality elements of the NPSFM, therefore NRC believes appealing the present provisions is not a good use of resources.
- The Director-General declined to withdraw the appeal. His response was that water quality is a key component in protection of habitat for freshwater fish, and that the Department advocates for such values in freshwater planning processes nationally. Given the uncertainties around the timing and adequacy of freshwater limits contained in the 2021 plan change, it is prudent to pursue interim water quality limits to stop further degradation while that process is being resolved.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 COVID-19 update

- The COVID-19 Overview and Issues Team is currently managing the All-of-Government relationship, internal DOC Communications, the COVID-19 Mailbox (5 emails for the previous week 1–5 June) and COVID-19 OIA's (2 in progress). The Taskforce will be wound down from 18 June.
- This week the team has completed the preparation of:
 - Key messages for the Department and external organisations in its work on COVID-19 Alert Level 1
 - Prepared a response to the Cabinet paper regarding management of COVID-19 under AL1. The Department must have an operational plan for management of local incidents and changes in alert levels. The following was provided and included in the appendix of the paper:

The Department of Conservation has developed detailed guidance for management of its operations at Alert Levels 2, 3 and 4. These are being reviewed to ensure they align with the national approach being put in place, including to ensure DOC's response will fit with that of other agencies if there are local outbreaks of the disease. Systems are in place to ensure that operational work can be adjusted at a local or regional level in response to any outbreaks. DOC has processes in place for localised closure of facilities and can activate this process if the need arises. Some responses would only be possible if health or emergency response law provided powers for that. Others can be done using conservation legislation powers.

Contact: Ginny Baddeley, Deputy Director-General People: [REDACTED]

2.2 Jobs for Nature Unit

- The Jobs for Nature Unit, while still in a set-up phase, is making good progress in building the organisational system to support Jobs for Nature, and is making strong internal connections across the various streams of investment.
- DOC is contributing to the development of the interagency system with MPI, MfE, LINZ, PDU and others, including advice to Ministers on the establishment of the governance group and secretariat.
- A Jobs for Nature email address is now operating and being promoted internally and externally as a tool to capture incoming interest including enquiries, business interest and opportunities - jobsfornature@doc.govt.nz.
- The DOC/MSD partnership MOU has been signed by MSD and is now due to be signed by the Director-General. We are working through specifics (e.g. funding, milestones, obligations) for the employment programme agreement, and subsequent regional agreement with Greater Wellington Regional Council for delivery in the Wairarapa.
- Discussions with Te Arawa Lakes Trust as a prospective delivery partner in Rotorua for the DOC/MSD employment programme are ongoing, as we work through constraints for each of the three organisations involved.
- The Jobs for Nature Unit has identified three quick-start projects: Ngāti Awa restoration project (Whakaari/White Island); Queenstown workforce hub; and the Te Arawa Lakes Trust – Sustainable Employment pathway proposal.
- The 'Partnering to Plant Aotearoa' proposal submitted by the Sustainable Business Network is being discussed as a possible opportunity for cross-

agency collaboration together with MfE and others, as a programme that can create impact at scale quickly.

- We are now progressing the next tranche of quick-start projects, including proposals submitted by the Backcountry Trust and Predator Free NZ Trust.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Motutapu Island shore plover potential temporary translocation

- Critically endangered, captively bred shore plover were first released on Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf in 2012.
- On 20 May, a stoat was detected on Motutapu and a trapping response is underway.
- Since the stoat detection, seventeen known shore plover are being monitored daily and to date, all are accounted for.
- Shore plover are considered very susceptible to extinction on an island if attacked by a predator.
- Our Shore Plover Recovery Group has made contingency plans to capture all surviving shore plover on Motutapu for transfer to temporary captivity at the Isaac Wildlife Trust in Christchurch (a current captive breeding facility for shore plover).
- The Recovery Group has DOC Operations approval for an emergency capture and transfer and is finalising the necessary logistical arrangements.
- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki are being kept updated by the local Operations team.
- The Recovery Group has so far decided not to implement the plan but are convening regularly to review this decision based on developments in the stoat incursion response, and the relative risk to the birds of capture and transfer versus predation by the stoat.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Kahurangi National Park takahē and 1080 predator control

- An aerial 1080 operation is scheduled for late June in Kahurangi as part of the Tiakina Ngā Manu programme. This may expose takahē to 1080 for the first time and the toxicity of 1080 to takahē remains unknown.
- Takahē were released to form a new population at Goulard Downs in Kahurangi National Park in 2018. Returning takahē to large wild sites is the overarching goal of the Takahē Recovery Programme and the Kahurangi takahē release is a key part of achieving this.
- Trapping, rather than 1080, is used for predator control in the Murchison Mountains takahē site. Murchison Mountains takahē data indicates that trapping alone is insufficient to protect wild takahē populations from stoat irruptions, so 1080 may be of benefit to takahē populations.
- Kahurangi's 1080 protection is crucial for other endemic species present in the park such as whio, *Powelliphanta spp.*, kea and kiwi. 1080 protection is highly likely to be a crucial predator control tool in any future large takahē site, so exposing takahē to 1080 is an essential step in returning takahē to large areas of their former range.
- While the upcoming 1080 exposure carries negligible risk to the security of the takahē population, which is growing at over 10% per year, there is the potential for significant risk to the public's perception of DOC's 1080 use.
- In captive trials some takahē consumed a non-toxic version of the baits used in 1080 operations. However, wild takahē involved in recent non-toxic trials did not

consume baits and showed lower interest in the baits than captive takahē - although this sample size is small.

- Despite extensive research, no effective repellents have been identified to mitigate the risk of 1080 exposure to takahē, so other risk mitigation measures will be implemented to protect the takahē population during this operation.
- These mitigation measures include a ~500 ha area of Goulard Downs to be excluded from 1080 treatment. About 80% of the takahē population will be within this area. The extent of the exclusion zone is being minimised so as not to impact on benefits to other threatened species present.
- Takahē outside this exclusion area will be captured where possible and temporarily held in on-site enclosures for up to four weeks.
- It is likely that some takahē won't be able to be caught due to logistics and bird welfare reasons, and so up to 20% (5–6 birds) of the Kahurangi population could be exposed to 1080. This is the proportion that would be expected to die due to stoat predation if 1080 were not used.
- Any takahē exposed to 1080 will be monitored to gain critical knowledge around the risk to takahē from an aerial 1080 operation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Grazing guidance on lands administered by DOC that could form the core of the Tu Te Rakiwhanoa Drylands protected area

- You have asked for advice on the potential for livestock grazing on lands administered by DOC that could form the core of Tu Te Rakiwhanoa Drylands protected area. We have taken the General Policy, Grazing and farming (Policies 11.2) as a starting point and Part III B of the Conservation Act 1987, and asked our biodiversity experts to consider it in the context of Te Manahuna / Mackenzie. We have also consulted mana whenua, who have provided their advice.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Te Manahuna context

- The Mackenzie Basin is of international and national significance due to its unique landforms, iconic landscape, and rare and threatened ecosystems.
- Grazing is a strong modifier of native flora.
- Fertility inputs from grazing animals enhance the growth of exotic plants at the expense of native flora.
- Removal of grazing animals alongside work to remove invasive herbivores (rabbits and hares) and invasive plant pests (wilding conifers) has been shown to help restore dryland ecosystems within the Mackenzie Basin.
- Recovery of native plant biomass is slow in the Mackenzie basin environment and can take multiple generations to recover.

Biodiversity principles for considering grazing

- Any grazing on public conservation land within the Mackenzie Basin needs to show that it can enhance ecological values and benefit ecological restoration.
- No wetlands, including ephemeral wetlands, waterways or riparian ecosystems are to be considered for grazing.
- Sheep-only grazing would be considered (no cattle, deer, or goats).
- A precautionary approach to grazing needs to be applied.

Mana whenua advice for considering grazing

- Grazing is not desirable on Mackenzie Basin floor lands that will be restored as part of the Tu Te Rakiwhanoa Drylands protected area network.
- When land is acquired for protection that a restoration plan be developed.
- Rather than allow grazing, a practise of “cut and carry” is applied and the revenue from this is put back into the land for restoration. A “cut and carry” practise means that no effluent is going onto the land.

- In summary, applications for grazing will be considered on a case by case basis. Mana whenua advice would need to be sought.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

June

17 June	Corporate Career Board, via MS Teams
18 June	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Silverstream Retreat
18-19 June	NZ Conservation Authority, West Plaza Wellington
23-24 June	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa
25 June	Environment Select Committee – Estimates Hearing
26 June	Mackenzie Agency Alignment CE Forum Environment, Canterbury/via MS Teams

July

2–3 July	Southern South Island visit / Otago Conservation Board, SSI Region
16 July	Matariki Stakeholder Event, DOC Wellington
23 July	Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington

August

4 August	Forest and Bird/DOC Hui, F&B Wellington
5 August	Chief Executives Economic and Environment Forum, TBC Wellington
14 August	Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board – Waters – CE’s Forum, Te Puni Kōkiri Wellington
21 August	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
27 August	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm Wellington

4 Addendum

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:

- Cape Kidnappers Qualitative Risk Assessment received

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 22 June 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust

- DOC and MPI are planning on inviting bids for kauri protection under the Jobs for Nature programme.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Proactively Released

2 Updates

2.1 Whakapapa Village Parking changes for winter 2020

- The Whakapapa Village parking restrictions that were initiated in 2017 will be applied and enforced this winter. These restrictions allow people to park from 15 minutes up to a maximum of three hours.
- Given the increased pressure in the village over recent years, especially during the ski season where visitor numbers have exceeded limits, parking restrictions are extended across the whole village to reduce traffic congestion, improve traffic flow and mitigate public safety risks.
- Given the impacts of COVID-19, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) are providing a reduced ski field offering.
- The restrictions will help DOC and RAL manage the agreed reduction in visitor capacity.
- With skiers to Whakapapa being mostly domestic, these changes will likely increase the skier experience but may reduce business for transport operators.
- With parking limits in place, Park and Ride operations will move to a purpose-built Park and Ride facilities at nearby National Park Village except for customers being collected directly from accommodation.
- We have met with stakeholders to discuss the measures in place this winter in order to manage expectations.
- These restrictions support directing services and growth outside Tongariro National Park which is consistent with regional planning objectives and the Tongariro National Park Management Plan.
- The restrictions benefit the values of the Park while keeping visitors safe and supporting the growth of local facilities and businesses in nearby communities.

Contact: 

2.2 Jobs for Nature Unit

- DOC staff continue to work with other officials across agencies on the Reference Oversight group and associated secretariat.
- There is ongoing discussion regarding the role of the secretariat in providing Programme Management support.
- There will be a joint briefing to Ministers on progress including 'quick start' projects followed by a Cabinet paper.
- The Jobs for Nature Monitoring, Reporting & Assign Teams are:
 - Recruiting team members.
 - Liaising with various agencies across government to understand our reporting needs.
 - Building the process to turn the approved quick start projects into announcements and subsequently deliverable projects including key legal requirements.
 - Building a pipeline for future bids to be phased and considered.
 - Considering how to provide quick start projects given the lag time created by the requirement for joint ministerial sign off process.
- Most recent enquiries to the Jobs for Nature email address are from new jobseekers seeking nature-based employment. Twenty-two jobseeker emails have been received so far. We are developing an appropriate response and other external communications for jobseekers to ensure they can connect to opportunities quickly.

- We will work with your office and the regions on your visits to Whakatane and Rotorua to announce the quick start projects and update the public on jobs for nature.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Covid-19 Overview and Issues Team

- The Covid-19 Overview & Issues Team was stood down on 18 June.
- Ongoing COVID-19 management will be through the COVID-19 mailbox and All of Government (AoG) relationship.
- The COVID-19 Overview and Issues Team has been managing:
 - the AoG relationship,
 - internal DOC Communications,
 - the COVID-19 mailbox (7 emails for the previous week 8-12 June and 4 from 15-17 June. These emails were predominantly FYI [from AoG] and some queries about managing visitors), and
 - continuing to support work on the 2 current COVID-19 OIA's.
- This week the team has:
 - Prepared communications related to the Key messages for the Department and external organisations in its work on Covid-19 Alert Level 1
 - Updated the Risk Management for COVID-19
 - Prepared a closeout plan for the Overview and Issues Team
 - Informed AoG of the DOC plan to manage COVID-19 in case there is a change up in Alert Levels
 - Requested further guidance from AoG on how recreation would be handled (especially hunting) if alert levels changed or there was a local outbreak.
- The Department has a plan to manage any change in Alert Levels if needed.

Contact: Ginny Baddeley, Deputy Director-General People: [REDACTED]

2.4 Stoat incursion on Motutapu-Rangitoto Islands, Hauraki Gulf

- Stoat tracks were found on a Motutapu beach on 20 May, resulting in an ongoing incursion response by the department's Auckland Inner Islands District.
- Fresh stoat tracks were also detected on the 29 May and 16 June.
- A dead kakariki found on Rangitoto Island has tested positive for stoat DNA.
- A stoat-detecting dog suggested the stoat spent several days around the original detection area, moved to Rangitoto and then returned to Motutapu. It may be expected to range widely over and between both islands.
- The trapping effort is based on the existing Motutapu-Rangitoto network, with over 350 traps set over both islands. Extra traps have also been deployed in certain areas known to have been visited by the stoat. The response is using a range of lures and baits across the network and has also included an attempt at live-trapping by a stoat scientist.

- This stoat is likely to be the same one detected on nearby Motukorea Island in March, and to have swum from there to Motutapu. Motukorea is administered by Auckland Council, who undertook the stoat response there.
- Vulnerable shore plover (17 on Motutapu at the start of the incursion) are being checked almost daily with no mortalities detected so far. A contingency plan is in place to remove them from Motutapu if necessary.
- Three other stoats are known to have reached Rangitoto-Motutapu since the 2009 eradication. These were discovered when found dead in traps.

Contact: [REDACTED].

2.5 Whoio populations in the Kahurangi National Park

- DOC has been conducting research on whoio populations in the Kahurangi National Park since 2016.
- Whoio were monitored through two aerial predator control operations as part of our response to last year's mega beech mast event.
- A total of 68 birds were colour banded and monitored through the 2019 Cobb block and the 2020 Wangapeka treatment block, over 28 km of unbuffered (not excluded from treatment) waterway.
- All 68 birds were monitored throughout the aerial predator control operation, and all survived the post-operation period.
- We know that at least 2 birds consumed 1080 from lab sampling results of faeces collected within 48 hours of the operations, and these birds are confirmed alive more than 4 months post predator control.
- We are now winding down this research project in order to focus on other priorities for our landscape predator control research programme.
- We will close the study with a Kahurangi National Park-wide survey of whoio populations to compare total population levels since the last park-wide survey which was conducted more than 20 years ago.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 North Island Forests

- An internal Te Papa Atawhai Steering Group has been established to ensure members of the Biodiversity, Operations and support services are up to date and can contribute to the project.
- Business Cases are underway to draw down Budget 2020 commitments and to ensure we are modelling expectations and standards for the *Kaimahi for Nature* package.

Raukumara

- Weekly sessions are held with Rikirangi Gage (Te Whanau a Apanui) and Rei Kohere and Mataanuku Mahuika (Ngati Porou) and Michelle Hippolite. This is a proxy governance group, providing guidance for the project.
- A working establishment group comprising of iwi members and Te Papa Atawhai Operations staff has been convened to consider what skills and knowledge are required for the establishment phase of the project. The group is also considering what work can commence, such as Deer and Goat culling, while the wider project is developed.

- We have made connections with the Chair of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board and the Chair and Chief Executive of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council who were very appreciative and offering support for the Raukumara project.
- Contact has also been made with the Chair of the East Coast Conservation Board to update them on the project.
- Some tentative dates to more formally announce the Raukumara project is being considered and will be provided to your Office for consideration.
-

Kaimai - Mamaku

- The Kaimai-Mamaku Forum has been in place for at least 10 years, doing very good work for the Forest.
- Introductory meetings have been held with the Kaimai-Mamaku Forum, the Waikato Regional Council member and the Bay of Plenty Council member to continue the relationships supported by our Operations team in Tauranga.
- Contact has also been made with the Forest and Bird representative on the Kaimai-Mamaku Forum.
- Like the Raukumara, a discussion with the Chair of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board has been held.
- The bones of a business case has been developed and further work is required to deepen the approach.
- A meeting with the iwi is scheduled for next week to talk about their role and aspirations for the project.
Some tentative dates to more formally announce the Raukumara project is being considered.

Contact: Michelle Hippolite Deputy Director-General, Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai
[REDACTED]

Proactively Released

3 Director-General Engagements

June

23-24 June	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead Wairarapa
24 June	Dinner with Kevin Prime and Minister, Bellamy's
25 June	Environment Select Committee – Estimates Hearing
26 June	Mackenzie Agency Alignment CE Forum, via MS Teams

July

01 July	Public Service Leaders Summit, Online
02-03 July	Southern South Island visit / Otago Conservation Board, SSI Region
08 July	Treaty Partners, via MS Teams
16 July	Matariki Stakeholder Event, DOC Wellington
23 July	Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington

August

04 August	Forest and Bird/DOC Hui, Forest and Bird Wellington
05 August	Chief Executives Economic and Environment Forum, Location TBC
14 August	Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board – Waters – CE's Forum, Te Puni Kōkiri Wellington
21 August	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
27 August	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm Wellington

Proactively Released

4 Addendum

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:

- Update on relationship with Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu
- Conservation Week 2020

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 29 June 2020

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA Advocacy

Submissions

South Taranaki District Council water take application

- Taranaki Regional Council notified a resource consent for a surface water take (renewal) from the Kapuni Stream.
- The Kapuni Stream contains threatened species. Monitoring of the existing consent and flow levels indicates that the take has had adverse effects and has contributed to fish mortality during low flows.
- The application does not propose a cut off for the take or any measures to reduce demand during periods of low flow.
- The Director-General lodged a submission opposing the take unless appropriate conditions are attached to the consent to protect biodiversity values during periods of low flow.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.1 Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust

Myrtle Rust

- New signage to inform the public about the risk and presence of myrtle rust and what to do if they find it has been developed by DOC in collaboration with SCION.
- The signs will be placed at DOC track entrances, carparks, and reserves where land users are at risk of inadvertently touching myrtle rust and spreading it to new locations. They are available to any land managers who wish to use them and two hapu from Rotorua have already expressed interest.

Kauri Dieback

- Northland district offices along with a contractor and hapu have been conducting kauri dieback soil sampling of identified priority 1 and priority 2 sites.
- Results take up to six weeks to return from the labs, however once received this will provide valuable information needed to progress with effective management of these areas.
- Mana whenua accompanying the contactors commented that they have found this work increased their understanding of the disease and the value of sampling.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Jobs for Nature Unit

- Thirty-two jobseeker emails have been received in the Jobs for Nature email address so far. This is less than anticipated.
- We are developing an appropriate response and external communications for jobseekers to ensure they can connect to opportunities quickly.
- Proposals seeking funding are being captured for subsequent triage and assessment.
- Directors responsible for 'quick start' projects have been informed of approval-in-principle and are working with partners to determine next steps for each project.
- A partnering agreement is expected for each quick start project within a month, to confirm job numbers, work to be undertaken, measurement and reporting requirements.
- We are confirming business processes for quick start project partners, to enable planning and development to begin while partnering agreements are in development.
- Work is progressing to identify key metrics we need to define and capture, liaising with the teams that can assist with this within DOC, and across Government agencies.
- The first Reference Group meeting occurred on Thursday 25 June with the supporting interagency secretariat being set up.
- Planning is underway with your office for the announcement on Ngāti Awa. The Jobs for Nature team will work with your office and LINZ on the announcement for the Te Arawa bid.
- The Action Plan for Enhancing Biodiversity on Private and Public Land must be approved by Ministers of Finance and Conservation before the funding can be accessed. The approval process:
 - Draft Departmental Briefing for Action Plan to the Minister of Conservation by Monday 29 June 2020.
 - Feedback from Minister and Treasury incorporated, and Action Plan approved through Jobs for Nature Jobs Chief and Taskforce.
 - Week commencing 6 July 2020 – Departmental Briefings for Action Plan to Minister of Conservation and Minister of Finance for drawdown approval.

Bids in progress

- Backcountry Trust
- Predator Free NZ Trust
- Sustainable Business Network
- Pest Free Banks Peninsula Initiative
- Tairāwhiti Agroecology Recovery Project
- Sustainable Business Network

Approved bids

- Ngāti Awa restoration proposal
- Te Arawa Lakes Trust
- Extension of forestry redeployment package
- South Westland – Conservation and tourism support
- Queenstown/Fiordland employment hub

2.2 Kawau Island phoenix palm trees poisoned

- The iconic phoenix palms on the Mansion House Bay waterfront in Kawau Island Historic Reserve are believed to have been deliberately poisoned after they were found with drill holes at their bases.
- The phoenix palms along the foreshore at Mansion House Bay were planted between 1950 and 1955.
- DOC staff noticed the palms showing signs of distress in early March, but were unable to undertake a full assessment until Alert Level 2.
- DOC has launched a joint investigation with Auckland Council, as the trees are subject to historic heritage overlay rules in the Auckland Council unitary plan.
- Phoenix palms are generally identified as pest plants in the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy and are banned from sale, propagation and distribution. However, this species is dioecious, so male palms do not produce seed, which can be spread by birds.
- Members of the public are being encouraged to report any information on the poisoning via the DOC Hotline.
- DOC will commence discussions to remove and replace the trees with a native alternative, in discussion with mana whenua and the local community.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Let Nature In

- The 'Let Nature In' programme of work, connecting people to nature close to home came to an end with the country entering Alert Level 1.
- Existing content was re-packaged and staff created new content from their own backyards. It was designed to support families and people living in urban settings.
- The content promoted positive mental health messaging on ways to connect with nature at the various COVID-19 alert levels.
- Learning from Home and 50 Things to Do were all adapted for the online promotion.
- DOC worked with New Zealand Geographic to produce the Backyard Birding Series, which featured Tim Lovegrove, fauna expert at Auckland Council.
- Our analytics show that the combined Let Nature In content appeared on more than 15 million screens using ads on Facebook and Google. This resulted in over 40,000 actions, mainly driving traffic to our website.
- Our organic content reached over 1 million people, with 43,000 actively engaging in the content.
- Zoom backgrounds, albatross cam, Backyard Camping and the Tui from the Backyard Bird Series were the most engaging content.
- The website pages received 31,000 views with people spending time exploring the content.
- 'Let Nature In', reflecting mental health benefits of engaging with nature, will become part of DOC's suite of messaging.
- The web pages will now be utilised to support people who have been engaging with the content during lockdown, to encourage them to venture further into nature.

Toyota Kiwi Guardians

- Let Nature In also incorporated Toyota Kiwi Guardians (TKG), which was pivoted to support NZ families at home.

- The DOC/Toyota partnership has a shared objective to connect New Zealand children and their whānau with nature, so they feel part of it and want to care for it in the future.
- The 8-week Backyard promotion was adapted to a Covid-19 context and focused on the TKG Action Medal experience that builds connections with the natural world and highlight nature-based activities kids can do at home.
- The TKG Backyard promotion achieved a reach over 1 million people. It resulted in 1,463 medal claims, an increase of over 400% on the same time period in 2019. 65% of medals claimed were from people new to the programme.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Pūkaha Board Chair retires

- Pūkaha Board Chair Bob Francis has retired after leading the organisation for 14 years.
- Mr Francis guided the board to deliver a vision where iwi and the community lead the way in restoring the 942ha Pūkaha Forest, with DOC supporting. Previously operations at Pūkaha were completely funded and staffed by DOC.
- During Mr Francis' term, sustainable populations of kākā and kokako were established in Pūkaha forest and kiwi were introduced.
- Mr Francis' fundraising helped the board build a new visitors' centre and a state of the art in flight aviary. He most recently helped secure funding for a bespoke education centre.
- Prior to becoming chair of Pūkaha, Mr Francis was the seven-term mayor of Masterton.
- The Director-General will write to Mr Francis to thank him for his contribution to conservation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

July

01 July	Public Service Leaders' Summit, Online
02 – 03 July	Southern South Island visit / Otago Conservation Board, SSI Region
02 July	Meet with Dunedin Mayor and CEO, Dunedin
08 July	Treaty Partners, Via MS Teams
16 July	Matariki Stakeholder Event, DOC Wellington
23 July	Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington

August

04 August	Forest and Bird/DOC Hui, F&B Wellington
05 August	Chief Executives Economic and Environment Forum, TBC Wellington
14 August	Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board – Waters – CE's Forum, Te Puni Kōkiri Wellington
21 August	NZ Conservation Authority, TBC
23 August	Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington
27 August	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm Wellington

September

22 September	Risk and Assurance Committee meeting, DOC Wellington
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