



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 2 March 2020

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust

- The Biological Heritage National Science Challenge (BHNSC) recently established two information sharing meetings for both kauri dieback and myrtle rust.
- The monthly meetings, which kicked off in February, have a large range of participants, including scientists, land managers, Biosecurity NZ, tangata whenua, councils and community and interest groups. These meetings will effectively
 - increase a shared understanding
 - ensure science is aligned
 - allow DOC to have best practice information in its planning.
- We are also engaged in scoping some of the BHNSC projects, for example “Control, Protect and cure: tools for detection and management” which is developing tools for detection and management for kaitiaki and land managers like DOC.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA Advocacy Update

Resin and Wax Limited consent application to extract peat in Northland

- Resin and Wax Ltd has lodged a new application to extract peat in Northland. The application covers 21 properties, totalling 600 hectares to be mined over 25 years. DOC has granted consent, despite some remaining concerns that we have.
- No extraction is proposed within wetlands or dune lakes, but a number of the proposed extraction areas are in close proximity to wetlands and peat lakes. This application does not include any land within the Kaimaumau wetland complex.
- Northland Regional Council (NRC) invited DOC to comment on the application and draft conditions. The conditions require no drainage within 50 metres of wetlands or lakes, more detailed assessment of the specific areas of proposed works, and council certification of a range of matters prior to work commencing. Additional requirements apply for any extraction within 200 metres of a significant wetland or dune lake, including expert hydrological assessment and DOC input.
- After investigating the proximity of the sites to wetlands and dune lakes, we recommended the removal of four properties from the application. NRC agreed to remove two properties.
- We also requested changes to many of the conditions, mainly focusing on monitoring of effects and stronger controls on any extraction within 200 metres of a significant wetland or a dune lake. NRC agreed to the majority of these changes.
- Forest and Bird was also invited to comment on the application and draft conditions. Forest and Bird attended a meeting with the parties in October 2019 but has not engaged further.
- DOC has some residual concerns relating to the assessment of groundwater connectivity with wetlands and dune lakes, and any excavation below the water level of adjacent wetlands and dune lakes.
- In spite of our remaining concerns, NRC decided to grant the consents on a non-notified basis on 14 February 2020. DOC is considering its position but is unlikely to challenge that decision. We have alerted the council to our

residual concerns and plan to meet with the council to discuss its expectations around the exercise of the consent.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Proactively Released

2 Updates

2.1 Environmental Defence Society work on oceans reform

- DOC and MfE have agreed to provide part funding to an Environmental Defence Society (EDS) research project on oceans management reform. The remainder of the funding for the project will be provided by the NZ Law Foundation and the Borrin Foundation.
- The work will take place between June 2020 and December 2021 and will examine the legal and institutional arrangements in New Zealand for oceans management (territorial sea, the Exclusive Economic Zone and the extended continental shelf) and explore the potential need and scope for reform to deliver more sustainable outcomes. It will look at the roles and mandates of DOC, MfE, EPA, MPI and regional councils; approaches to implement marine spatial planning; and ecosystem-based management in fisheries, amongst other themes. The project will involve key stakeholders throughout, including MPI and iwi.
- Providing financial support to EDS does not mean that DOC, MfE or Ministers are bound to accept any recommendations from the project. However, as its recent work on RMA reform shows, research projects on broad topics such as these by EDS can be useful in illuminating public debate.
- When the project scope and funding agreement is finalised, we will provide copies to your office.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Whio Awareness Month – March 2020

- Genesis, DOC's national partner for Whio Forever is funding a public awareness campaign over Whio Awareness Month in March, with our support.
- The purpose is to inform more New Zealanders about the plight of whio, and efforts to protect them.
- During Whio Awareness Month, the programme will raise awareness of the good work done through partnering with Genesis, iwi, community groups and other partners.
- Activities during March will include:
 - Messaging and competitions through social media
 - Community events
 - Media Releases and opportunities
 - Partner video to be shared across DOC and Genesis platforms. (We will provide you with updates on the above.)
- Genesis has worked with DOC to protect whio since 2011. Genesis funding has enabled over 5,000 additional traps across 1,586km of rivers protected.
- With support from Genesis and other partners, whio breeding pairs have increased by 143% to 725 pairs (2018/19 season).

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2.3 Tiakina Nga Manu Update - Our 2019 mast response campaign is more than two thirds complete

- We have carried out more than 700,000 hectares of predator control and expect to cover a further 900,000 hectares by completion of the campaign in June 2020.
- Extreme mast conditions in 2019 meant it was more difficult to control rodents. To deal with this we adopted slower, more intensive methods than in previous masts. This reduced the total area we could protect from 1,000,000 to 900,000 hectares.

Mixed results from 2019 operations

- Of the 21 operations that we have rat control results for, five operations did not reduce rats to levels we were seeking.
- Following the methodology change mentioned above, the remaining operations produced good results.
- Ten operations successfully reduced rats to very low levels (less than 2% post operational tracking) and six reduced rats to low levels (less than 5% post operational tracking).
- All 21 operations have maintained possums at very low levels.
- Following completion of monitoring, we will report on stoat control effectiveness in April.

Future direction

- The extreme conditions in 2019 pushed us to the limits of our current predator control methods and we will conduct a full review of the 2019 campaign.
- The significant investment that is now being made in predator control research, nationally coordinated under the Predator Free 2050 vision, is the key for us to improve our control methods for the future.

[REDACTED]

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

Early days to see results

- Monitoring needs to continue through 2020 to detect changes in the populations we are protecting. There are encouraging observations from some sites, including good whio breeding success, improved rock wren numbers in Kahurangi National Park and record numbers of kaka in the Eglinton Valley.
- However, rather than allowing a bumper breeding season at the sites we are protecting, the result of our 2019 effort meant catastrophic loss following an explosion in predator numbers was avoided.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Strong media coverage showcasing Himalayan tahr impacts

- National and international media have highlighted the impacts Himalayan tahr are having on New Zealand's alpine and sub-alpine native plant communities in the South Island.
- DOC's Tahr Control and media teams flew with 1News, Newshub, Radio New Zealand and Stuff to the Ben Ohau mountain range so journalists could see the damage Himalayan tahr are causing to native plants firsthand. We also took a camera operator, photographer and a journalist to the Zora Canyon to look at the changes to plant communities over time.

- The Guardian, NZ Herald, Otago Daily Times and other regional media have since published stories focusing on the impacts tahr are having on the environment. Newstalk ZB will run stories in its nation-wide radio bulletin next week.
- We used the media opportunity to signal DOC is working with LINZ to get a better understanding of the number of tahr on Crown land. This will help both agencies develop a plan to target areas where tahr numbers are high.
- We have footage and photos from the media trip and are planning a social media post focusing on the damage Himalayan tahr can cause to native vegetation.
- Our upcoming advertising in hunting magazines ahead of the tahr rut (breeding season) will focus on the environmental impacts and how hunters can help to protect native plants by hunting tahr.

Contact:

3 Director-General Engagements

March

03-04 March	SLT Retreat, Pounui
07/08 March	50 years Celebration of Manapouri – Te Anau Lakes Conservation Campaign, Te Anau
18 March	Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington
20 March	Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
30 March - 09 April	Raoul Island visit

April

16 April	NZ School of Forestry 50th Anniversary, Canterbury
17 April	NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim

May

06 May	Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington
14-15 May	State Sector Senior Leaders Retreat, Martinborough
21 May	TIA Stakeholder function, TRENZ Christchurch

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:

- New Zealand Fish and Game Council
- Waituna Creek Earthworks Damage
- PGF Application for a whitebait aquaculture facility in Westport
- Investor Confidence Rating (ICR) uplift from 'C' to 'B' rating
- Female kākāpō move to Te Kāhahu / Chalky Island
- Celebrating the completion of the new Iron Gate Hut built by DOC and the NZ Defence Force

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

Kauri dieback

- Biosecurity NZ are holding a Kauri Dieback Partners Workshop on 4 & 5 March to be attended by all programme partners.
- Biosecurity NZ will seek contributions on strategic direction, options for long term management, future governance or advisory roles and the process for developing a national plan.

Myrtle rust

- There were two further positive myrtle rust reports this week (not on PCL), both on ramarama, with one near Wrights Hill Reserve in Karori (Wellington), and the other on residential planting near Gordonton (Waikato).
- Auckland Regional Council is continuing surveillance and organism removal. They advise that removing infected material is successfully managing infections on Pōhutukawa.
- Scion scientists report impacts of myrtle rust infection continue to worsen for Lophomyrtus species at monitored sites in Rotorua and Taranaki. They are observing a lessening of spore production, likely due to less-than-optimal climatic conditions. They are also reporting 100% of fruit are infected at positive sites, and most infected fruits are prematurely dropping within a month of becoming infected (i.e. not developing to maturity/no viable seed being produced).

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Southern South Island recovery update

- On 4 March, DOC announced the partial re-opening of the Routeburn Track for the remainder of summer 2019/20.
- Concessionaires and day-walk independents will be able to access part of the track from Routeburn Shelter to Lake Mackenzie Hut as a part of the new Routeburn Return visitor experience.
- The 4 day/3 night experience opens 12 March and will temporarily replace the Great Walk for the remainder of the 2019/20 season.
- We will continue to provide you updates as we consider resilience and impact management issues, and develop short and medium-term re-opening plans for the Southern South Island.
- We will also work with your office to coordinate opportunities for you to make announcements as they become available.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Otago Regional Council: Water Quality Plan Change

- Our RMA Manager provided comment as part of pre-notification consultation on a set of plan changes (previously called the 'Omnibus plan change') intended to address various gaps in existing Otago Regional Plans. Areas covered include stormwater, wastewater, animal waste, sediment from residential development, farming activities, dust suppression and landfills.
- Notification is timetabled for the end of March, and DOC can then make a formal submission. Note that the Council has asked the Minister for the Environment to call in these plan changes and refer them either directly to the Environment Court or to a Board of Inquiry.

Hawkes Bay Regional Council: Plan Change 7 – Outstanding Water Bodies

- Hawkes Bay Regional Council notified Proposed Plan Change 7 to the Hawkes Bay Regional Resource Management Plan to include a list and framework around protecting the region's outstanding water bodies.
- The Director-General submitted on the plan change on 28 February 2020 after being involved throughout the drafting of the provisions and list of waterbodies.
- The submission was generally supportive of the intent of the proposed plan change, particularly as a mechanism to improve consistency with the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, however we requested wording changes and further clarification to ensure effectiveness.
- The submission also suggested that the plan change should run concurrently with the Tūtaekurī, Ahuriri, Ngaruroro and Karamū ('TANK') river catchments plan change, to ensure effective provisions to protect outstanding water bodies prior to any other provisional changes to the Regional Policy Statement.

Contact:

2 Updates

2.1 COVID-19 Coronavirus

- We have no DOC staff cases at present but have had staff members self-isolate or work from home as preventative measures due to travel from affected destinations, or potential remote contact with diagnosed cases.
- A DOC Incident Management Team has been established to coordinate DOC's response to this issue.
- We have circulated information and key messages for both staff and external audiences. These have been shared with your office.
- We have had a few social media inquiries asking about cancellations. We are advising it is business as usual on DOC's tramping tracks and National Parks.
- The messaging reinforces Ministry of Health and WHO advice on hygiene and potential risks. People should keep themselves well informed and make their own choices about tramping and staying in huts in the same way they currently do.
- We have updated DOC's cancellation policy for COVID-19. Refunds will apply where a customer cancels a booking for a hut, lodge, campsite or Great Walk for reasons relating to coronavirus:
 - 100% refund where the cancellation is 7 days or more from the date of arrival.
 - 100% refund where the cancellation is less than 7 days from the date of arrival will be considered either on receipt of a medical certificate or evidence of a cancelled tour or flights (N.B. this is at the discretion of DOC).

Contact:

2.2 New Zealand sea lion (NZSL) – sub-Antarctic field season update

- The 2020 NZSL sub-Antarctic field season has recently concluded, with work completed at three locations in the Auckland Islands (Enderby, Dundas and Figure-8 Islands) and two locations on Campbell Island (Davis and Shoal points).
- Field teams undertook pup counts and mark recaptures to understand population trends and demographic parameters, including pup production and mortality rates and causes.
- Pup counts at all sites were within expected range based on data from previous years.
- Of particular note, pup mortality rates at Davis Point were higher than in previous years with a preliminary estimate of 89% mortality at this site. Necropsies at site indicate that exposure was a significant cause of mortality. Potential mitigation interventions for this will be investigated for future seasons.
- We are analysing the data and will provide a detailed briefing in due course.
- We will discuss initial results from this field season with stakeholders and Treaty Partners at an upcoming working group meeting on 25 March.
- A proactive media item will also be released summarising the season's work.

Contact:

2.3 Set net capture of a Hector's dolphin

- On 3 March 2020 a Hector's dolphin was caught by a commercial set net vessel targeting school shark south of Banks Peninsula.
- The capture occurred approximately seven nautical miles offshore from the Rakaia River, an area that is proposed for closure to set netting under the revised Hector's and Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan.
- Pingers to deter dolphins were deployed on the net, and the capture was self-reported (there was no observer on-board).
- Fisheries officers have spoken to the vessel operator, who has met all reporting and other legal requirements.
- The dolphin was dead and was not retained (retention requires prior permission under legislation).
- The vessel has since returned to port at Lyttleton.
- The next quarterly Hector's dolphin online update, where information on Hector's incidents is made publicly available, is scheduled for early May.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 [REDACTED]

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

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

- Following your response to our briefing on the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (CCAAP, 20-B-0047), we are working to launch this as requested. We will provide your office with a draft media release for consideration for the week of 23 March.
- The end-of-March target date will allow time for the CCAAP to be published. The launch is also prior to socialising the CCAAP with the NZCA on 17 April.
- The Customer Engagement Unit has developed a climate change and biodiversity communications strategy (19-B-0852), following your earlier request. The unit has supported active engagement with the media in biodiversity-related climate change stories.
- Since December 2019, this advocacy has included: a DOC representative providing expert opinion and input into the recent news articles on drought-affected kiwi, an Op-Ed in the Guardian about climate change impacts on our native wildlife, and the announcement of the Waituna Lagoon climate change report.

- The Threatened Species Ambassador is developing a video series with the support of the Customer Engagement Unit called 'Life on the Edge', centred on the theme of how climate change is impacting biodiversity's decline.
- The 'Life on the Edge' series will consist of five-minute videos with a presenter interviewing experts and scientists for a number of climate change related case studies.
- We are also working with NIWA to explore opportunities to collaborate in advocacy and outreach, particularly to support the Ministry of Education climate change resource.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Infringements System Pilot commences in April

- During April and May, DOC will pilot new policy, systems, training and technology to support DOC's Compliance Officers and warranted rangers to issue infringement notices. The systems and policy improvements also extend to how warnings, and investigations with a view to prosecution, are managed.
- The six-week pilot will run in four locations: Tāmaki/Auckland; Taupō/Turangi, Motueka and Mahaanui. We will capture lessons and roll the system out nationally from June.
- A public awareness campaign using local media, Facebook and Instagram is being coordinated in the pilot areas to inform the public. Key messages are:
 - The rules remain the same, but the way DOC enforces conservation legislation is changing.
 - From Easter, some people will be fined for breaking rules on conservation land, in marine reserves and in relation to protected species.
 - Infringement fines are a new tool under the Conservation (Infringement Systems) Act. The tool gives DOC the option to use infringement notices for some offending, along with its existing tools of prosecution and warning letters.
 - This tool helps DOC raise awareness of and enforce compliance with the rules. It also means more time can be spent investigating serious offences and doing other conservation work.
 - An infringement fine sends a stronger deterrent message than a warning but does not result in a criminal conviction for the offender.
 - People who commit serious offences, or are repeat offenders, may still face prosecution.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Barton New Zealand Garnet Mine – withdrawal from project

- On 4 March 2020, Barton Minerals advised DOC that they would be withdrawing from their garnet mineral mining project on the West Coast.
- They confirmed the reason for withdrawing was strictly due to economic reasons and had nothing to do with the consenting process.
- Barton Minerals confirmed they will not be issuing a media release. Instead, they will be informing stakeholders they have been working with directly. Given that a media release will not be forthcoming, there is potential you and/or DOC will be asked to comment on this. If this eventuates, we will work with your office on a response.

- MBIE has already been informed directly by Barton Minerals as a \$10 million loan from the PGF was attached to this project.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Tongariro Alpine Crossing hiker steps in steaming vent

- A hiker sustained moderate injuries while walking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing (TAC) on 27 February when he went off track and stepped into a fumerole (steaming vent).
- The man was hiking the TAC with friends, who said he ventured off the marked track in search of a place to have lunch on the way to Emerald Lakes.
- When they noticed the vent, the man decided to get closer to it, and his leg pushed through the surface crust up to his knee, suffering moderate burns.
- Search and Rescue were alerted, and the hiker was taken to Waikato hospital for treatment.
- We are investigating to assess the risk and ensure future management actions are in place, including guidance and advice to remind hikers of the importance of staying on track.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Tour Aotearoa incidents on Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail

- The biennial Tour Aotearoa cycle event that sees 950 riders travelling from Cape Reinga to Bluff is underway, with the route including sections of the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail.
- Ahead of the event, the track was reported to be in a good condition. However, over the past week four accidents have occurred on the Kaiwhakauka section, and one on the Mangapurua section of the trail.
- Significant work to upgrade the track is scheduled to begin in two weeks' time, with this timing in place to not impact on Tour Aotearoa riders.
- Given the number of accidents during the Tour Aotearoa event, we will investigate, and have begun urgent vegetation clearance where required.
- Compulsory dismount signage has been installed for bluff sections, and on sections that will undergo widening during the upcoming upgrades.
- We will continue to work with New Zealand Cycle Trails and Tour Aotearoa organisers to ensure Tour Aotearoa participants, as well as other riders, can ride the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail as safely as possible.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA) update

- As we previously advised (18 November and 23 December 2019), the Business Partnerships Team (BPT) has developed an agreement between NZMCA, KiwiRail, Kea Conservation Trust and DOC for the support of Kea Recovery.
- Under the agreement KiwiRail and NZMCA are committing a minimum of \$25K per annum to the Trust over nine years.

- In recognition, NZMCA has awarded KiwiRail and DOC (jointly) the “Dick Waters Memorial Trophy”. The award recognises an NZMCA partner or supplier’s ‘excellence in the motorhome field’.
- The Trophy was awarded at the NZMCA AGM at Oamaru Racecourse on 6 March.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 Paparoa Great Walk dawn ceremony, Waharoa unveiling and track opening

- On 29 February Ngāti Waewae, Pike29 family members, track builders, community members and DOC staff came together to mark the unveilings and the full opening of the Paparoa track. The dawn ceremony and unveiling went very well.
- The three Waharoa (archways) that were unveiled were each different and unique, creating beautiful entranceways into the Paparoa Great Walk.
- The second and third unveilings later in the morning, at Croesus and Waikori Road, saw around 70 people.
- The opening day on 1 March was a perfect clear autumn day. The track was very busy with day riders and the huts were fully booked with trampers and bikers.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

March

- 18 March Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 18 March Launch of Koi Tu: The Centre for Informed Futures, National Library
- 20 March Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
- 23 March DOC-GNS Senior Leadership Teams meeting, DOC Wellington
- 25 March Signing event for Good to Grow Partnership with Corrections CEO, Rimutaka Prison
- 26 March Visit to Arowhenua Marae with Minister Sage to meet with Runanga, Arowhenua Marae
- 30 Mar–9 Apr. Raoul Island visit

April

- 14 April MfE/DOC Leadership Teams Meeting, MfE Wellington
- 16 April NZ School of Forestry 50th Anniversary, Canterbury
- 17 April NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim
- 24 April Chief Executives Environment and Economic Forum, Wellington
- 30 April Society of Local Govt Managers Forum , National Library

May

- 6 May Public Service Leaders’ Summit, TSB Arena
- 14–15 May State Sector Senior Leaders Retreat, Martinborough
- 21 May TIA Stakeholder function, TRENZ Christchurch

4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Tenure Review
- Oteake Conservation Park stock trespass
- Southland Aquaculture Space
- Otago Central Rail Trail 20th Anniversary

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Hawkdun Pastoral Ltd – Otago surface water take application

- The Director-General submitted on the deemed mining permit replacement application by Hawkdun Pastoral Ltd to take up to 58 L/s from Mata Creek, St Bathans, Central Otago for irrigation, stock water, and domestic use. The relief sought includes: reduced consent duration (35 years sought, with three other consents in the catchment expiring on 2023), lack of fisheries and hydrology information downstream of the take, very poor residual flow, lack of take record, quantum of allocation sought, the need for riverbed and diversion consents, fish screening provisions, and the need for a review clause to be consistent with a future NPS-FM compliant regional water plan.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

Kauri dieback – long-term management

- DOC staff attended the Kauri Dieback Partners Workshop on 4–5 March, which was led by Biosecurity NZ. Representatives from Te Roroa, Tangata Whenua Roopu (the representative body for iwi and hapū with an interest in kauri lands) and Councils attended.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Kauri dieback – new find

- On 10 March, we notified your office of confirmation of kauri dieback at a remote site in Puketi Forest, Bay of Islands.
- The Bay of Islands district office is informing key stakeholders and issued a media release on 12 March. We will undertake further surveillance work and work with our Treaty partners and stakeholders.
- This confirmation was made following ground truthing of sites identified during an aerial survey as part of the national programme.
- The site of infection is not near any open or closed tracks.

Myrtle rust – new find

- A positive myrtle rust infection was reported on the iNaturalist app from southern Canterbury.
- No prior reports of myrtle rust have been made in Canterbury, and much of this region was considered at low risk to infection based on climate prediction models.
- We are working with Biosecurity NZ to get more information given it is outside of the current known range for myrtle rust.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 COVID-19 Coronavirus

- We continue to have no DOC staff cases at present but have had further staff members self-isolate or work from home as preventative measures due to travel from affected destinations, or potential remote contact with diagnosed cases.
- A DOC Incident Management Team has been established to coordinate DOC's response and workstreams are working on:
 - Staff welfare, health & safety
 - Business Continuity Planning
 - Visitors to DOC destinations
 - Volunteers
 - Concessionaires, especially tourism operations
- Information and key messages for both staff and external audiences have been prepared and circulated.
- The messaging reinforces Ministry of Health and WHO advice on hygiene and potential risks.
- DOC staff have been deployed to the National Emergency Management Agency to assist in national CIMS work.

Contact:

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2 Updates

2.1 MBIE issue regarding minerals permits in World Heritage Areas

- MBIE are currently not processing applications for mineral permits in World Heritage Areas following an announcement by the previous government that no permits would be issued in WHAs.
- MBIE have about ten applications for permits in the Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area. One of the applicants is now asking for their permit application to be processed, and has communicated this to the Minister of Energy and Resources.
- The Minister of Energy and Resources has asked MBIE for further information. MBIE are drafting a briefing and have met with us to inform its content. The briefing will outline options, including using existing mechanisms under the Crown Minerals Act, to maintain the current practice or to restart processing applications.
- The Minister of Energy and Resources received an initial briefing on this topic from MBIE in December and we understand that the office will be forwarding you a copy. Once you have received and reviewed the December briefing, we can provide you with additional advice if required. We have been provided a copy of this briefing.

Contact:

2.2 Lead three Destination Management Plans (Milford/ Piopiotahi, Mackenzie/ Aoraki, Tongariro)

Milford / Piopiotahi:

- Stage 2 of the Milford Opportunities Project is now underway, with Southland District Council contracting consultants to develop the masterplan.
- The contract between Southland District Council and the consultants is subject to signing (they have yet to be named officially).
- We have started working with the consultants and delivering data sets that will inform an understanding of the current state at Milford.
- Options generation is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2020.
- We have initiated an internal project team for Stage 2 which will influence and inform the work from a DOC perspective.

Mackenzie / Aoraki:

- DOC and Ngā Rūnanga have agreed in-principle to initial engagement to explore how to work in Treaty Partnership for this project.
- DOC and Mackenzie District Council have agreed proactive steps to re-start our work together, including mapping out responsibilities and how to communicate.
- Mackenzie District Council had a constructive hui with the Rūnanga chairs, and they have indicated they will re-start a regular meeting schedule for 2020.
- We are improving our internal systems to align the suite of work we undertake across the Mackenzie Basin.
- We tested a pilot GIS tool for use within agencies to explore current state data and reviewed a draft analysis of transport to inform long-term planning.

Tongariro:

- At the November hui between DOC and Iwi the need was raised by Ngāti Rangi, Ngāti Hikaro, Uneuku, and Ngāti Hauā, for the four iwi to agree their values, aspirations and method of working together.

- It is understood that the inter-iwi alignment needs to be underway before a structure for Crown/Iwi decision-making and scope of the project can be fully developed.
- Given the ongoing pressures on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, we are currently discussing with our Treaty Partner bringing forward the rollout of solutions that address visitor pressure.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 MBIE Destination Planning Guidelines

- MBIE has now released its Destination Management Guidelines.
- The guidelines describe what Destination Management is and how to go about creating a plan.
- We have raised a concern with MBIE that this tool is likely to stimulate interest in creating collaborative plans requiring DOC input in locations that do not align with our current priorities or resource.
- We will continue to manage this risk.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Signing a new agreement with Corrections for the Good To Grow Partnership

- We will strengthen our partnership with the Department of Corrections this month by signing a refreshed agreement for the joint agency 'Good To Grow' partnership. The future work under the agreement will focus on a number of priorities identified in the joint strategy.
- The initial Good To Grow partnership agreement, established in 2015, expired this year. The new agreement has been updated and will be re-signed on 25 March 2020 by Lou Sanson and the Chief Executive of Corrections, Jeremy Lightfoot.
- The signing of the new partnership agreement will take place in Rimutaka Prison, where the two Chief Executives will view native seedlings being grown under the Good To Grow partnership for a wetland restoration project on Onoke Spit, Wairarapa. They will also view a variety of conservation products manufactured by offenders in prison industry workshops, such as Takahē translocation boxes, 'weta motels' and trap tunnels.
- So far, this financial year, prisoners participating in Good To Grow projects have contributed over 142,000 hours to conservation work within prison workshops, and prisoners on community correction programmes have contributed over 39,000 hours to conservation work.
- We will liaise with your office on potentially organising a joint announcement with the Minister of Corrections to celebrate the work that the partnership is delivering.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Investment in two community conservation hubs

- We are investing in two community conservation hubs to help progress two landscape scale restoration initiatives.
- The organisations receiving funding are the Tasman Environmental and the Pukaha to Palliser Trusts.
- Both organisations would welcome the opportunity for joint releases with you to announce these initiatives.
- Note that, for the current DOC Community Fund round, up to \$1m is available for established community conservation hubs and we will be seeking to evaluate the impact of this investment.

Tasman Environmental Trust

- Working with the Rātā Foundation, we are jointly investing in the further development of Tasman Environmental Trust as a regional community conservation hub to cover Nelson and Golden Bay.
- Tasman Environmental Trust will play a key role in implementing the strategy of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance within communities, by working directly with private landowners and community groups on the projects they most value and support.

Pukaha to Palliser

- In the Wairarapa, the Pukaha to Palliser (P2P) Trust met on 13 March to confirm its agreement to a DOC-funded start-up investment package, enabling the Trust to secure the necessary capacity and capability to operate as a hub across 600,000 hectares.
- P2P is a collaborative network of Wairarapa community organisations and iwi, working with local, regional and central government. Its vision is for thriving biodiversity and connected communities where land, water and people flourish across the entire Wairarapa landscape, ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea).
- The P2P Alliance will provide community leadership to initiate, promote, communicate and integrate activities which will improve biodiversity and freshwater water quality, and increase resilience for climate change to build prosperous, connected and resilient communities.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 One Billion Trees update – Te Waihora restoration progress report

- The Te Waihora One Billion Trees (1BT) project was funded \$1,059,332 by Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) to plant 68,000 plants in November 2018.
- 27,000 native eco-sourced plants have been planted as planned.
- Te Uru Rākau funding has allowed a landscape scale approach to occur at Te Waihora aligning with existing programmes of work. For example, combining with the Environment Canterbury funded Weed Strike Force.
- [REDACTED]
- This will see a greater footprint of lakeshore margin restored to native forest.
- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

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

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

March

- 18 March Environment NGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 18 March Launch of Koi Tu: The Centre for Informed Futures, National Library
- 20 March Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
- 23 March DOC-GNS Senior Leadership Teams meeting, DOC Wellington
- 25 March Signing event for Good to Grow Partnership with Corrections CEO, Rimutaka Prison
- 26 March Visit to Arowhenua Marae with Min Sage to meet with Rununga
- 30 Mar–9 Apr. Raoul Island visit

April

- 14 April MfE/DOC Leadership Teams Meeting, MfE Wellington
- 16 April NZ School of Forestry 50th Anniversary, Canterbury
- 17 April NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim
- 24 April Chief Executives Environment and Economic Forum, Wellington
- 30 April Society of Local Government Managers – Forum, National Library

May

- 6 May Public Service Leaders' Summit, TSB Arena
- 14–15 May State Sector Senior Leaders Retreat, Martinborough
- 21 May TIA Stakeholder function, TRENZ Christchurch

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 Ngāi Tahu

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 23 March 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 COVID-19 workstream update

Incident Management Team

- The COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) is transitioning this week from an initial design to a 'permanent' structure designed to be in place for the remainder of the pandemic and recovery phase.
- A tier-two incident coordinator has been put in place and the new long-term IMT will be operative from 20 March 2020.

Concessionaires (Mike Slater)

- Communication to concessionaires was sent on 16 March to 6,719 people. There has been a 43% open rate.
- As a team, Planning, Permissions & Land are also preparing leader-led communications from the PPL Director to other Directors about messaging and actions happening with concessionaires.

Business Continuity (Rachel Bruce)

- Business Continuity Plans have been received from a proportion of the organisation and are being reviewed.

Volunteers (Kay Booth)

- Teams are supporting the whole of government approach and following the Ministry of Health guidelines to ensure we do not contribute to the spread of COVID-19.
- The Community Engagement Unit has not taken any action directly with volunteers given the current phase of the infection spread.
- We will be ensuring any messages that go out to volunteers and volunteer organisations are aligned with messages to concessionaires and that appropriate organisations, such as Conservation Volunteers NZ and Predator Free Trust, are aware of our approach and messaging.

Visitors (Bruce Parkes)

- The focus has been on developing a policy of use of DOC huts, visitor accommodation and campgrounds for self-isolation purposes. This has been completed and was communicated to staff on 18 March.

Health & Safety (Karen Jones)

- Staff health, safety and wellbeing is being monitored and addressed through the COVID-19 IMT.

Contact:

1.2 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

Myrtle rust

- MPI has advised us the plants observed in Canterbury with myrtle rust were previously transported from a known infected region.
- MPI consider this is unlikely to be a natural incursion and more likely evidence the disease remained dormant until better climatic conditions occurred.
- Under this assessment, Canterbury will remain categorised as free of myrtle rust. This status will be reassessed if further infections are reported.
- The two infected plants and all others from the same consignment have been destroyed and checks will continue.

Kauri dieback survey on Aotea/Great Barrier Island

- DOC is initiating aerial surveying of forest on Aotea/Great Barrier Island this week, with the primary focus of identifying the presence of kauri dieback disease in kauri forest.
- Auckland Council initiated this work with the support from the Aotea/GBI DOC team.
- Once aerial survey work is complete, analysis of the data will identify areas for ground truthing. A collaboration between Auckland Council contractors, DOC staff members and Mana Whenua will conduct the ground truthing. This work is proposed to take place in late April/early May 2020.
- This updates previous survey work completed between 2012-2014 where we confirmed three sites to have kauri dieback disease.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Proactively Released

2 Updates

2.1 Seabird captures in the surface longline fishery

- On 10 March a surface longline vessel fishing off East Cape captured five seabirds, provisionally identified as Antipodean and/or Gibson's albatrosses.
- Under the New Zealand Threat Classification System, Antipodean albatrosses and Gibson's albatrosses are classified as 'nationally critical' (most severely threatened, facing an immediate high risk of extinction).
- There was an observer on board the vessel and the carcasses have been retained for identification.
- According to observer reports, the vessel was day setting while using tori lines and line weighting at the time, in accordance with current regulatory requirements.
- The DOC Protected Species Liaison Programme was contacted via satellite message at the time and was advised that the vessel would be moving area and switching to night setting.
- Supply of hook shielding devices to this vessel is due in the coming month.
- Both agencies publicly report protected species captures subsequent to the completion of the fishing year. Under current protocols these captures will be published towards the end of 2020.
- The mitigation standards in the draft National Plan of Action – Seabirds will require vessels to use improved mitigation, either hook-shielding devices or the combined use of night setting, line weighting and tori line, with improved specification of line weighting.
- We will provide a briefing on the revision of the NPOA Seabirds to you and to Minister Nash at the end of March.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Update on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB)

- The consultation period for the NPSIB closed on 14 March. We received over 7,000 submissions. 6,415 of these are form submissions from Forest and Bird, another approximately 700 are substantial submissions from councils, tangata whenua, community groups and industry.
- Minister Mahuta intends to release a public statement noting that the public consultation period is now closed, thanking people for their input into the consultation process and providing a short update on the next steps in the policy development process.
- The consultation phase has been very constructive, with Treaty Partner hui, council and stakeholder meetings held around the country. DOC officials on the project team have also engaged with wider DOC on the proposed policy and are starting to consider the impact for DOC's business, including our role in supporting implementation.

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

- We will now begin work in co-design with mana whenua to jointly determine the enduring classification to ensure conservation and cultural values are protected.
- Further lands will be transferred from LINZ to DOC over the next 18 months to be managed in the context of Tu Te Rakiwhanoa Drylands. LINZ, DOC and mana whenua will jointly establish an agreed protocol, based on our review of the Tasman Riverbed transfer, to ensure an improved process is embedded into future transfers.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 International protection for Antipodean albatross

- In February 2020, the 13th Conference of Parties (COP13) on the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) agreed to list Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) on Appendix I of CMS, as proposed by New Zealand, Australian and Chile.
- COP13 also approved a Concerted Action (action plan) which sets out actions for range states aimed at protecting this species, particularly in relation to fisheries bycatch in international waters.
- New Zealand led on the initiative throughout the meeting and received overwhelming support.
- The New Zealand delegation recognised the importance of toroa/Antipodean albatross to Ngāi Tahu in interventions during the meeting and this was picked up in the daily UN reporting by Earth Negotiations Bulletin.
- The next step is to work within DOC, with other agencies (e.g. MPI and MFAT) and with stakeholders to create opportunities to use the Appendix I listing as leverage for improved conservation outcomes for the species, including through regional fisheries management organisations.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Deferred Signing of the Good To Grow Partnership Agreement with the Department of Conservation

- In the Status Report for the week beginning 16 March, we highlighted the intended signing of an updated Good To Grow partnership agreement between the Department of Conservation and the Department of Corrections. The agreement was to be signed by the Chief Executives of each department on 25 March, following a tour of the nursery facilities at Rimutaka Prison.
- With the ongoing issues and concerns in respect of COVID 19 and the need to minimise unnecessary visitors to prison sites, the signing event has been postponed to later in the year.
- The postponement of signing does not impact on the conservation work programmes being undertaken by the Department of Corrections; these will continue as usual.
- We will update you on the rescheduled date for signing the agreement once it is determined.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Towards a Predator Free New Zealand campaign update

Since its media launch on 9 March, the *Towards a Predator Free New Zealand* campaign has generated the following results:

- More than 60 media stories - the majority of these stories were published or broadcast in the first days following the media launch.
- Thirty PF community groups posted videos on their social platforms during this period, with over 100 community posts using the hashtag #onestepcloserPF2050. Many groups posted several videos throughout the week. More groups have indicated they will be continuing to post their stories with the hashtag. PF community videos are shared by DOC across its social platforms and pulled through to the PF2050 Strategy web page.
- DOC PF2050 Strategy webpage received over 2,300 visits. The average time spent on the page was significant - 9mins and 47secs. 341 English language and 23 te reo versions of the strategy have been downloaded and 161 copies of the action plan. Traffic to the Strategy page also led to significant increases in visits to the other PF2050 pages on the web.
- DOC created seven blog posts on the Strategy pathways, nine community trapper profiles, five videos and one sounds of science podcast.
- PF2050 Hero video content reached over 120,000 people through unpaid social media.
- A story about the Strategy featured in DOC's e-newsletter, What's Up DOC, which has 31,000 subscribers.
- Together this content reached one million screens across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and achieved high engagement rates.
- The *Towards and Predator Free New Zealand* campaign runs to 17 April. It involves digital billboards in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, a digital advertising campaign, and a nationwide radio campaign.
- An internal campaign, largely via the intranet, included a new campaign page, three-part video series, and a series of Intranet stories published daily. A PF2050 campaign intranet banner, email signatures (approx. 500 downloaded) and screen savers were rolled out.
- PF Community stakeholders are planning to introduce the PF2050 tohu/symbol to key influencers within the national PF community starting approximately 30 March.

PF2050 campaign and COVID-19 Response

- The content created for the launch, together with existing content and new content and products, will be re-framed in coming weeks and months to form a new phase for PF2050. PF2050 is an ideal vehicle for engaging the public in nature and actions that support conservation, while giving them positive, practical and fun individual or family-based actions they can do at home or in their nearby natural environments.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

March

26 March Visit to Arowhenua Marae with Minister Sage to meet with Runanga, Commodore Hotel Christchurch

April

14 April MfE/DOC Leadership Teams Meeting, MfE Wellington

17 April NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim

23–24 April State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Peppers Martinborough

24 April Chief Executives Environment and Economic Forum, Wellington

30 April Institute of Directors – “Governance in Government” presentation, KPMG Wgtn

30 April Society of Local Govt Managers Forum, National Library

May

6 May Public Service Leaders’ Summit, TSB Arena

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:

- World Heritage: Progressing the Waitangi Treaty Grounds nomination
- Cave Creek 25th anniversary commemoration
- Tiakina Ngā Manu: communicating results and outcomes to the public

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 30 March 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

Status Report

The Status Report is light this week as DOC responds to the Covid 19 situation and establishes systems for working remotely.

We have not included a number of standing items this week including:

- The Cabinet Paper Report. Given the changes to Cabinet arrangements we will update you on Cabinet papers by Wednesday 8 April. This will include if there are any statutory decisions required of Cabinet before the end of April and the priority of each conservation paper intended to be submitted once Cabinet committees resume.
- The Select Committee update. With the adjournment of Parliamentary and the creation of the Epidemic Response Committee we are standing by for written questions for DOC and any requests from the new committee. We are processing the first tranche of 2020 Estimates questions from the Finance Committee and are monitoring for any changes in timeframes for these.
- The Director-General's diary as most commitments have been cancelled and it is changing rapidly with the response to Covid 19.

The D-G Direct from 23 March is attached at the end of the report as per usual practice. Please note that some of the information is dated as the D-G is continually keeping staff updated on the Covid situation through the DOC intranet.

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Departmental response to COVID-19

- Key work in the past seven days has been focused on setting up systems and policy to manage within the new context.
- DOC's formal response has been established with regional and national Incident Management Teams in place and functioning.
- We are incredibly impressed at how staff across the organisation have responded to the changed context. All staff are now working from home, other than those identified as essential services as per Government policy.
- Staff wellbeing and welfare is top of mind and is being monitored regularly at both local and national level. Work ahead will involve managing the implications of long-term isolation of staff.
- We are also exploring how the department can work with purpose to support communities and further determining the role we can play across government sector through this period and during the recovery phase.

Contact: Kevin O'Connor, Deputy Director-General, COVID-19 Response:
[REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

Submissions

New Plymouth District Council - Pathway of Ruhihiweratini application

- New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) lodged a resource consent application for the construction of a shared walk and cycle way connecting Pukeiti Gardens to the township of Ōākura.
- The proposal requires resource consent from Taranaki Regional Council for stormwater discharge and large-scale soil disturbance, along with an outline plan for works within the designated road reserve and a land use consent from NPDC for the removal of indigenous vegetation within a significant natural area. The application notified to DOC was the NPDC application.
- The Director-General lodged a submission in opposition to the proposal on the basis that inadequate information had been provided for the D-G to be satisfied that the effects upon indigenous terrestrial biodiversity have been sufficiently considered.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Paper to NZ Conservation Authority on marine protection

- The NZCA has requested information on marine protected areas (MPAs) for their consideration in April, specifically:
 - The processes of establishing marine reserves and protected areas and the issues that are encountered in doing so;
 - The interactions between the Crown, stakeholder and Treaty partners that occur in marine protection;
 - The increases in MPAs over the last 5-10 years and the plan for the next 10 years;
 - Targets, measurement of progress and anticipated issues;
 - Effectiveness of the current approach to MPAs and what can be improved on the MPA process.
- We have provided a response to these queries, in the context of improving New Zealand's approach to marine protection, as proposed in the draft Discussion Document on MPA reform currently under your consideration.
- The NZCA provided a submission on the Government's 2016 efforts on marine protection reform, but we have not yet formally engaged with the NZCA on the more recent reform work; our last update on marine protection reform was in April 2018.
- The NZCA is likely to take a strong interest in the reform work and is likely to seek further engagement or information on this initiative.
- We have stated in our paper to the NZCA, that we would welcome their feedback on key elements of the reform proposal.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 DOC Community Fund (DOCCF) update

- The DOCCF closed for applications on 24 March 2020.
- We accepted applications to the end of the day (were due at 1pm).
- Approximately 250 applications have been received (including for community conservation hub funding).
- The total amount of funding requested is not yet known, but the fund is again highly oversubscribed.
- We are aware that you have been contacted by at least two groups requesting an extension or an opportunity to apply outside the round.
- We decided not to allow further extensions given the ample time groups had to prepare applications and in fairness to other applicants.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Note, we are anticipating challenges with the assessment panel process and we may need to amend this process to allow the decision making to be completed in a timely manner.

Contact: [REDACTED]