



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 16 November 2020

Seen by Hon Kiri Allan
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

Note: this section focusses the items of Ministerial priority, provides more frequent items and presents them up front in the weekly Status Report. Non-priority items will appear in the 'Updates' section of the report. You may wish to consider what priority topics you would like included in future reports.

1.1 Jobs for Nature

We provided more information about Te Papa Atawhai's Jobs for Nature programme in Briefing 20-B-0799 on 11 November.

Media and communications

- As of 1 July, there have been 32 stories published nation-wide about the Te Papa Atawhai's Jobs for Nature programme.
- On 10 November, the *Gisborne Herald* published a story titled 'Breathing life into the land'. This story is a great example of our collaborative partnership approach and shows how we are putting our Treaty partnership at the heart of that approach. The Tairāwhiti Agroecology Recovery Project received a \$4.8 million investment towards catchment restoration in Tairāwhiti from the Jobs for Nature package.
- We have met with regional council communications advisors and are providing input into their special interest group comms plans.
- We are progressing a Jobs for Nature brand, with the Jobs for Nature Secretariat's and Ministry for Environment's involvement.

Kaimahi for Nature

- The purpose of the \$200 million Kaimahi for Nature fund is to work with businesses that are looking to make staff redundant. It funds work with councils, iwi and local businesses to provide nature-based jobs, both on and off public land, through a regional alliance model.
- Four regional alliances have been formally established (Kotahitanga mo te Taiao in Northern South Island, Kotahitanga ke te Uru in Western South Island, Chatham Islands, and Bay of Plenty Okurei Sub-Alliance), and an application from the Taranaki Alliances has been received and progressed this week.
- The Otago/Southern South Island Alliance has submitted two project applications, noting that their Alliance MOU/documentation will be presented to alliance members at the council meetings in late November. Any project funding agreed to will be subject to the alliance being formally recognised once documentation is received.
- We are working across the Central and Lower North Island to finalise the allocations to four smaller alliances. The alliances that have been proposed, based upon iwi boundaries, are Manawatu-Horowhenua, Rangitikei-Whangaehu, Central Plateau and Whanganui. Allocation recommendations are based on modelling created by PWC, applying a 50% weighting of population and 50% weighting of social deprivation index. The work is still being confirmed and communicated to Treaty partners, council and stakeholders in the rohe.
- The 'Iwi Collaboration for Kauri Action' project (\$3.5M; 50 FTE) is to be tabled for approval at the upcoming Sustainable Land Use Ministers meeting on 16 November. The collaboration is with Te Roroa, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Wai and Ngāti Kuri.

Restoring Nature

- As part of Te Papa Atawhai's \$501.751 million Jobs for Nature programme, funding was allocated to two contestable funds:
 - \$16M for the Jobs for Nature Community Conservation Fund - available for community groups to undertake restoration projects that create and/or retain jobs
 - \$18M for the Jobs for Nature Private Land Biodiversity Fund - available for restoration projects on private land that create jobs

- These funds will use established funding processes (similar to the DOC Community Fund).
- We are scheduled to open these two contestable funds for applications/Expressions of Interest on 23 November. We expect projects supported by this funding to result in approximately 425 jobs.
- There is an opportunity for you to announce this funding to coincide with the opening date for these funding rounds.
- If you agree, we will provide a draft press release and a memo to your office by 18 November.
- An agreement for the Nga Awa: Waikanae restoration project is in development with the Greater Wellington Regional Council, Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust and Kāpiti Coast District Council. This will create 92 FTE jobs over four years from \$8,505,000.
- The Detailed Business Case for the Te Waihora wetlands restoration project is now finalised. This is a Te Papa Atawhai-led project that will employ 31 FTE over four years, and increase the impact of previous investment by the One Billion Trees programme.

Protecting Nature

- Kiwis for kiwi have submitted their first Annual Plan for Jobs for Nature funding and feedback is being gathered from across Te Papa Atawhai this week.
- The business case for the Raukumara Pae Maunga Restoration Project is progressing well and discussion is under way on the framework for a partnership agreement for this project.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Waste Management New Zealand Private Plan Change – Wayby Valley

- DOC submitted in opposition to the Waste Management New Zealand Private Plan Change and resource consent application to the Auckland Council for proposed Regional Landfill in Wayby Valley (otherwise known as the Dome Valley Landfill).
- Our opposition to the proposed landfill precinct plan change and the resource consent application is in relation to the loss of wetland, streams and indigenous biodiversity (including habitat for threatened species).
- Auckland Council consultant planners have recommended to the panel of commissioners that the plan change could be approved on the basis that the location could be appropriate for a landfill precinct, and that the resource consent application for the landfill should be refused on the basis that the residual effects on the environment, including threatened species and freshwater, have not been adequately mitigated or offset.
- The hearing for both applications is being held concurrently and started on 9 November. DOC is due to appear at the hearing on 1 December.

Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC) Proposed Plan Change 9 to manage water quality and quantity for the Tūtaekurī, Ahuriri, Ngaruroro and Karamū (TANK) catchments

- DOC submitted on this Plan Change on 14 August. The submission commented on all parts of the proposed plan and, while DOC is supportive of improvements regarding the management of freshwater, there are concerns that the proposed plan change does not do enough to:
 - provide for the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
 - provide for Te Mana o te Wai
 - appropriately recognise iwi values and aspirations

- protect indigenous freshwater biodiversity.
- The HBRC has just released the summary of submissions, with further submissions due on 9 December.
- DOC is seeking significant changes before we would support the Proposed Plan Change.

Hearings

Northland Regional Council Resource Consent Application by Mangawhai Historic Wharf Trust

- The Mangawhai Historic Wharf Trust seeks resource consents for a proposed wharf facility in the coastal marine area of the Mangawhai Estuary at the end of Moir Street, Mangawhai. DOC submitted in opposition to this application on 14 August. Our opposition is based on (but not limited to) the following key points:
 - The Mangawhai Harbour is arguably the most important site in the country to New Zealand's rarest breeding bird, the fairy tern (*tara-iti*, *Sternula nereis davisae*). The NZ fairy tern is categorised in the NZ Threat Classification system as Nationally Critical.
 - The survival of NZ fairy tern is dependent on Mangawhai Harbour being suitable for its breeding, including providing enough food for egg production, and to ensure chicks are fed, post fledging, at defended sites around the harbour.
 - If recreation is encouraged in the middle harbour by providing infrastructure, this will then threaten the fairy tern population. The existing disturbance, currently of most concern to DOC, is people walking with unleashed dogs at low tide.
 - Our position is that the proposed wharf would result in significant effects on fairy terns.
- DOC technical and planning staff presented expert advice at the hearing for this application, held on 21 September.
- A decision is due to be released by 20 November.

Appeals

Weston Lea v Director General of Conservation – Environment Court Appeal (Amberfield)

- DOC appealed and provided expert evidence on an application by Weston Lea for a subdivision in South Hamilton (Amberfield). Our evidence centred around the need for additional consideration and protection for long-tailed bats.
- The Environment Court has issued an interim decision on the appeal.
- The interim decision asks Weston Lea to prepare a draft set of conditions for DOC and other parties, that follows directions from the court, including maintaining and improving bat habitat, providing for the safety of the bats (through mitigation of noise and lighting), protection from predators (including a cat ban) and protection of roosting sites.

Contact:

2 Updates

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2.2 Northern North Island – Te Hiku o Te Ika Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

- The Te Hiku o Te Ika Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) forms a significant component of the cultural redress in the Treaty Settlements of Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri, Ngāi Takoto and Te Rarawa, collectively referred to as Te Hiku o Te Ika iwi (hereafter Te Hiku iwi).
- The settlements require the CMS to be co-authored with Treaty partners. While it has taken some time to reach agreement on how this is achieved, an external contractor is currently engaged in drafting the CMS, aiming to have the draft ready for consultation by July 2021.
- Treaty partners have engaged in the process, apart from Ngāti Kuri who have given their support to this piece of work progressing without them.
- The area to which the Te Hiku CMS applies, defined in Treaty Settlements as the korowai area, extends from the Hokianga Harbour and Mangonui northwards. This area is currently covered by the Northland CMS until the Te Hiku CMS becomes operative.
- The main differences between the preparation process for the Te Hiku CMS and other CMSs include:
 - that the CMS will be co-authored by Te Hiku iwi and DOC
 - development of a preliminary agreement/plan to guide drafting and outline approval steps
 - that all parties have agreed to use an independent contractor to draft the Te Hiku CMS, so it is not considered a DOC-led process.
- The Te Hiku Conservation Board will shortly request a meeting to brief you on the Te Hiku CMS.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Hauraki/Waikato/Taranaki - Kaimai Mamaku Ranges

- Collaboration between Te Papa Atawhai and Bay of Plenty and Waikato regional councils is under way (it had started prior to the Budget 2020 announcement).
- There are some tensions in expectations across iwi and contact is being made with each iwi to get their position on issues of strategy and ideas for the Kaimai Ranges.
- The Kaimai-Mamaku Trust, an entity created to be a conduit for mahi in the Kaimai Ranges, met on 13 November to consider revisions to the Trust Deed. The trust is working on the right things, and now just needs the right people.
- A pest management plan is to be developed with interested parties. This work is a significant contribution to the overall project and a process is starting to engage all parties.

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

2.4 Central North Island – Potential new Great Walk at Tarawera

- DOC has been in discussions with Rotorua iwi Tuhourangi, Ngati Rangitihi, and Ngati Tarawhai, along with the Rotorua Lakes Council since 2008, about potential for a multi-day walk at Tarawera.
- Suggested routes have included existing tracks along the shores of Lake Tarawera, incorporating access over the summit of Mount Tarawera.
- The walk was put forward for consideration by DOC as a potential new Great Walk in 2017, but the concept was unable to be progressed as access to the maunga could not be confirmed with the whenua Maori landowner.
- Conversations have re-started in light of upcoming Treaty Settlements and the impact of COVID-19 on tourism in the local area. DOC met recently with the Rotorua Lakes Council and Ngati Rangitihi and Tuhourangi settlement entities to better understand their aspirations for a multi-day walk around Tarawera.
- Iwi are also having conversations with adjoining Maori landowners (including the Ruawahia 2B Trust, which manages whenua on Mount Tarawera) to work through what a proposal could look like.
- Conversations around how DOC can support this work are continuing, and it is possible that you may be contacted by various parties to these conversations to obtain your support. We will keep your office involved as we gather more information.

Contact: [Redacted]

2.5 [Redacted]

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Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Lower North Island (Chatham Islands) - Vesting of Taia Bush Historic Reserve to Moriori – public submissions closed

- The proposal to vest Taia Bush Historic Reserve on Rekohu/Wharekauri Chatham Island in Hokotehi Moriori Trust has been in progress since 2001.
- The then Minister's decision to purchase the reserve was made following an application by Te Kotahi Moriori (now Hokotehi Moriori Trust) and a recommendation from the Nature Heritage Fund that the land be purchased, protected as a historic reserve, and vested in Moriori under the Reserves Act.
- The proposed vesting has been, and remains, a source of tension between Hokotehi Moriori Trust and Ngati Mutunga o Wharekauri, and the iwi/imi relationship with DOC.
- The previous Minister of Conservation determined to re-notify for public comment the 2003 Ministerial Intention to Vest the Reserve in Hokotehi Moriori Trust.
- The submission period closed on 30 October.
- 211 submissions have been received, both in support and opposed to the proposed vesting.
- We will provide you with a full background briefing memo on this matter in the next couple of weeks.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Lower North Island - Raukumara Pae Maunga

- A wananga was held between Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngati Porou and Te Papa Atawhai for advisory streams relating to monitoring, pest-plan, deer/goat, aerial and predator land control. Feedback received was outstanding. An area needing more focus is Ngati Porou participation and that is being worked through.
- Karakia for the kaupapa will take place on 19 November, starting at Hikurangi. An invitation has been given to your office for your consideration. A number of DOC staff are attending, including the Deputy Director-General Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai.
- We are in the final stages of our internal business case process and will provide you with a briefing update by the end of this week.
- This kaupapa is predicated on a three-way partnership: Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngati Porou and Te Papa Atawhai. A skeleton draft has been provided to Te Papa Atawhai and we are due to provide feedback within the next seven working days.

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

2.8 Western South Island - Ōpārara Basin Karamea – Kahurangi National Park

- Ōpārara Basin is located within the Kahurangi National Park, 30 minutes from Karamea in the Buller District within Tai Poutini West Coast. This is the largest limestone river cave in Australasia and is renowned for its high biodiversity values.
- The Ōpārara Basin was identified as a strategic biodiversity and visitor experience opportunity within the Tourism West Coast Strategy (led by Development West Coast as the Regional Tourism Organisation) that could encourage visitors to stay longer on the West Coast, and to experience the special nature of this place.
- In late 2018, Ministers agreed to fund DOC to deliver a development project, the Ōpārara Visitor Experience Project, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in June 2019 between DOC and MBIE/PDU.
- The Ōpārara Visitor Experience Project aims to provide visitors with a well-managed and high-quality experience, while ensuring visitor safety and providing enduring protection for the Ōpārara environment.
- The project will tell the stories of Ngāti Waewae and its relationship with this place and mark the re-establishment of the iwi's cultural footprint with Pou whenua.
- The project's intention is to better protect the special and unique values of this place and by encouraging longer visitor engagement, deliver social and economic benefits to the communities of the Buller.
- Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Buller District Council, Development West Coast and the community of Karamea fully support the project.
- Federated Mountain Clubs, Forest and Bird, and the New Zealand Speleological Association, however, have concerns around the increasing number of visitors into the Ōpārara Basin and the potential risks that increased visitor numbers pose to the values of this place. They may raise these concerns with you directly, early in your term.

Funding

- Tourism West Coast sought funding from the Provincial Growth Fund and received \$5.7 million, with the Prime Minister announcing this funding approval late in 2018.
- Additionally, the Ōpārara Valley Trust secured two grants totalling \$331,835 to upgrade the Ōpārara Arch Track.
- Works are well under way and will be completed by the end of 2021.

Contact: _____

2.9 Western South Island - Update on Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP) – Paparoa National Park

- The Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP) is a \$25.6M project funded by the Provincial Growth Fund and located in Punakaiki on the South Island's West Coast, adjoining Paparoa National Park.
- The project's goal is to significantly improve the dated and unfit visitor infrastructure, facilities and experience at the site, which is an anchor for the West Coast visitor economy.
- It will do this by creating a new visitor Experience and Exhibition Centre, upgrading and/or creating new parking, toilets, walkways, viewing points, pedestrian/cycle access, potable water supply, and general safety improvements.
- DOC is the project lead and is partnering with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, which will own and operate the visitor Experience and Exhibition Centre. Francois Tumahai, Chairperson of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, has said "*The project heralds one of the deepest and most significant working partnerships with iwi on Tai Poutini West Coast*".

- The project is in the final design and statutory approvals stage. Early construction work will begin in late November 2020, focussing on the pedestrian/cycle path that will traverse the length of Punakaiki (approximately four kilometres long), connecting key visitor sites.
- Additional early construction works will follow in February/March 2021, with the main body of redevelopment construction work scheduled for mid-next year, to be concluded by the end of 2022.
- There are two early 'sod-turning' opportunities/events for you to consider:
 - An imminent sod-turning opportunity in mid-to-late November, with the commencement of construction of the 4km pedestrian/cycle path; and
 - A subsequent sod-turning opportunity in February-March 2021, with the commencement of work on a new nature walk and viewing platform at the rear of the redevelopment.
- You may like to consider sharing the above opportunities with the Minister for Economic and Regional Development, the Honourable Stuart Nash, and West Coast/Tasman MP, Hon Damien O'Connor.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Southern South Island: Toll road for the Remarkables ski area access

- NZSki (the company managing commercial ski fields at Coronet Peak and the Remarkables in Queenstown and Mt Hutt in Canterbury) has applied to extend the period during which it charges a \$10 fee for vehicle use of the Remarkables ski field access road.
- The company's current regime charges from 16 December to 30 April, and its proposed period spans from 1 October to 1 June, annually.
- The access road to the ski area and public conservation land is not a public road. The start of the road is a public right-of-way easement across private land owned by NZSki, and the middle and upper sections are easements held by NZSki across public conservation land.
- The easement terms allow NZSki to impose a toll/fee for vehicles, conditional upon DOC's approval that the proposed fee is reasonable.
- We have agreed that the fee of \$10 return is reasonable for the extended period. This is based on a thorough assessment of the financial information supplied by NZSki to our Pricing and Economics Team.
- The public will still have free foot access to The Remarkables Conservation Area and Rastus Burn Recreation Reserve.
- Search and Rescue, Police, Queenstown Lakes District Council and DOC will also continue to have free access when using the road on official business.
- It is likely that there will be significant public interest in the decision to extend the fee.
- We recognise potential tensions and concerns around the charge, but under the terms of the agreements with NZSki, DOC's role is to determine if the proposed fee can be considered reasonable. DOC does not have the ability to change previous decisions around whether a fee can be charged. That decision was made when the easements were first granted.
- We have asked that NZSki informs interested parties of the change, particularly the New Zealand Alpine Club, Federated Mountain Clubs and the Queenstown Climbing Club.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 Carbon Neutral Public Service

- The Prime Minister and the Minister for Climate Change have commissioned advice from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) on an initiative to make the public service carbon neutral by 2025. The aim is for a Cabinet paper to go to Cabinet Business Committee on 25 November, and then to Cabinet on 30 November. The current plan is for this initiative to be announced on 1 December.
- The initiative is still under development, but it will likely prioritise reporting and reducing carbon emissions across the public service. This will be followed by offsetting any remaining emissions with carbon sequestration from vegetation. Options for offsetting will be developed by June 2021.
- The proposed initiative is likely to require agencies to:
 - report their emissions from the 2021/22 financial year in annual reports
 - remove all coal boilers
 - build/lease energy efficient buildings
 - reduce the number of vehicles in their fleets and purchase electric vehicles unless there are no alternatives available
 - offset their emissions.
- DOC supports the public service reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, and we are currently developing a plan to report on and reduce our own emissions. Initial steps have already been taken to transition the DOC fleet to lower-carbon vehicles, and to reduce flying.
- DOC's position is that any offsetting through carbon sequestration to support this initiative should be through restoration and protection of indigenous ecosystems in Aotearoa, so that it supports the Government's wider environmental and biodiversity goals.
- There is the potential for investment in carbon sequestration to happen on public conservation land. DOC's approach to understanding sequestration options on its own land is still at its earliest stages. While it could help to fund ecosystem restoration that aligns with our biodiversity priorities, there is a risk that setting up such a programme could be resource intensive, particularly if the timeframes are tight. It would also require new funding.
- DOC will work with MfE on this initiative, particularly on offsetting issues and how they relate to public conservation land. We will keep you updated as this work progresses.

Contact: _____

3 Director-General Engagements

November

- 17 Nov Tourism Summit Aotearoa, Te Papa
- 18 Nov QE II Board meeting, Wellington
- 19 Nov Blake Awards, Auckland
- 19 Nov Seafood NZ: Sea into the Future, Te Papa
- 23 Nov MOU signing ceremony – Manaaki Whenua – Te Papa Atawhai, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
- 24 Nov Forest & Bird / DOC meeting, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington

December

- 10-11 Dec NZ Conservation Authority, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
- 15 December Te Papa Atawhai Christmas Party, 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:

- Northern North Island – Ruapekapeka Pā Commemorations
- Central North Island - Illegal track through Whanganui National Park
- Western South Island - Tai Poutini West Coast Conservation Board
- Southern South Island - Milford Opportunities update
- Western South Island - Pike River Mine Tragedy: 10-Year Anniversary Event – 19 November, Pike River Valley, Paparoa National Park

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Te Papa Atawhai

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Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

- DOC is engaging with other agencies to define options for better delivery of all Jobs for Nature freshwater programmes, which will be considered by agency Chief Executives. This largely affects the unallocated freshwater funding, which is mainly held by MfE, but includes some \$26M of unallocated funding from the DOC Nga Awa programme.
- Work has been carried out in response to matters you raised with the Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature, and a briefing has been sent to your office [20-B-0826].

Quick start projects

- We have a final deed agreed with the Tairāwhiti Environment Centre for the Jobs for Nature contribution to the Tairāwhiti Agroecology Project. All other quick start projects have now been contracted, with funding releases under way.
- The Predator Free NZ Trust project, the final quick-start project, is still to be publicly announced. We are talking to your office about opportunities to announce this, and a media release will be sent to your office on 23 November with the project factsheet.

National Initiatives

- We are processing the approval notification letters, seed funding and funding release documents to support the Iwi CoLab for Kauri project getting under way, as approved at the SLU Minister meeting on 17 November.
- We have executed a variation to the deed of funding for Sustainable Business Network and released funding to enable stage two of the Partnering to Plant project and extend contracts for a further 10 weeks for those employed with five community groups around the country.

Media and Communications

- On 13 November the *NZ Herald* featured an article 'Local Focus: Te Arawa strikes back on climate change' by Delilah Whaitiri. The article highlights the regional alliance establishment, "*An alliance currently being formed between Te Arawa Iwi, the Department of Conservation and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to access some of that Jobs For Nature funding locally, and then looking at what whānau, hapū and iwi projects we can get to help people to keep their jobs but also to do some of the biodiversity work that needs to be done locally.*"
- We provided a media release to your office to announce the \$8.5M Jobs for Nature investment in the Waikanae River Catchment. This funding will create 92 jobs over a four-year period.
- A media release from the Northern North Island Alliance was distributed on 17 November. We have been working with Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa to provide employment to people who lost work due to COVID-19.
- We are working with MfE on a video series to help tell the story of people who have gained employment through the Jobs for Nature programme.
- We are progressing a Jobs for Nature brand with the Jobs for Nature Secretariat and the Ministry for Environment's involvement.

Kaimahi for Nature

- The Taranaki Alliance and Chatham Islands Alliances have now been formally established. The first project for the Taranaki Alliance has been approved. It will create 11 FTE jobs through restoration work in the Waiwhakaiho catchment.
- The Southern South Island Alliance (incorporating Otago and Southland) is to finalise its Alliance MOU on 27 November. It has submitted two Fiordland-based projects for immediate job creation. The first project has been approved in principle and will create 12 FTE jobs through a weeds project.
- The Northern South Island - Kotahitanga mo te Taiao Alliance's first project is now contracted, with recruitment into roles near to being finalised.

- We are preparing a draft paper for the upcoming Reference Group and SLU Minister meeting on 3 December, and will send this to your office on or before the 24 November for your feedback. This paper will give oversight on several upcoming DOC projects across all funding streams, with projects under \$1M tabled for noting, and projects over \$1M tabled for approval.

Restoring Nature

- The Detailed Business Case for Te Waihora wetlands restoration project has been approved, and recruitment will begin as soon as possible. This is a DOC-led project.
- We have finalised the deed with Conservation Volunteers New Zealand for the Punakaiki restoration project, and signing and funding release is in process.
- Briefing 20-B-0826, sent to your office on 20 November, also outlines options for the contestable funds (Community Conservation Fund, Private Landowners Fund and Maori Land Fund).
- The Jobs for Nature system has received a proposal for the Nga Awa: Upper Rangitata catchment restoration. This will be assessed over the coming week.

Protecting Nature

- We have been working with the DOC Governance Team to confirm FTE targets for Predator Free 2050 Ltd and Kiwis for kiwi. There has been some ambiguity in the understanding of these figures across organisations and we are working to reset this.
- Jobs for Nature funding distributed to Predator Free 2050 Ltd is keeping people in roles where they would have otherwise become unemployed. We are working to validate these numbers and capture this into Jobs for Nature reporting.
- The Raukumara Pae Maunga project has a business case near to being finalised, and a draft partnership agreement is in development with Ngāti Porou and Te Whanau-a-Apanui. 17 FTE are already employed and involved in the planning and development of this project.
- We have given feedback to Kiwis for kiwi on its Jobs for Nature Annual Plan which details the 12 community groups it will work with to distribute Jobs for Nature funding for job creation.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Hauraki Waikato Taranaki: Southern Coromandel Forest Tiakina Nga Manu aerial 1080 operation

- The aerial 1080 operation for our Southern Coromandel Forest Tiakina Nga Manu was completed on 13 November.
- The operation – targeting rats, stoats and possums - covered 25,000ha of forest to the east of Thames, in DOC's Hauraki District.
- Native species of note in this area are Coromandel brown kiwi, and Archey's and Hochstetter's frogs.
- While historically aerial 1080 operations in the Coromandel have attracted high public interest, this latest operation was carried out without incident.
- The application of the toxin required the closure of a number of tracks, huts and campsites in the area. Following our post-operational checks, all have now been reopened.
- To avoid the risk of dogs ingesting the carcass of any poisoned predator, visitors will not be permitted to bring dogs into the forest for several months post-operation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Hauraki Waikato Taranaki: Whale calf stranding at Whaingaroa

- On 4 November, Waikato District staff received a call from a local vet about what appeared to be a stranded Māui dolphin at Whaingaroa.
- DOC staff travelled to the site and with the assistance of a marine mammal expert were able to identify this as a Cuvier's beaked whale neo-natal calf.
- The calf was severely emaciated and, as its mother was not present, all parties agreed that euthanasia was the only option.
While there was some risk of heightened public interference, and of potential iwi and public resistance/opposition to the euthanasia, having local hapu, Tainue Awhiro, on site, supporting DOC staff and managing the public, was invaluable.
- The calf was euthanised by a DOC Ranger. A karakia was performed and a waiata sung.
- Social media posts advising of the situation were very well received, with the public expressing genuine concern for both the whale calf and the people involved. Media responded with queries and reported the article on Stuff. Despite the sadness surrounding the occasion, it was a warm story.
- Massey University wanted to perform necropsy on the calf as is normal in marine mammal deaths, but iwi would not allow the necropsy to take place on the beach. Nor did they want the calf buried on the beach, which is a popular family recreation spot.
- Instead, parties agreed that the calf would be transported to Hamilton Zoo, where a Massey researcher performed the necropsy, assisted by the zoo's director and vets. The results showed mis-mothering as the cause of the calf's condition.
- The next day, we returned the calf to Whaingaroa, where we were met by iwi. The Harbour Master, with DOC staff and iwi on board, towed the calf out to sea. A taonga was put down with the calf, a waiata was sung and tears were shed as the calf was released.
- Although the stranding resulted in euthanasia, it was a swift, calm response, with empathy and collaboration from the whole community to resolve the

situation for the whale calf and overcome logistical difficulties and potential sources of conflict.

Contact: [REDACTED]
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2.3 Northern South Island: Ōmihi/Goose Bay campgrounds

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Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Western South Island: Te Tai o Poutini – Further update, Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project

- The Dolomite Point Redevelopment Project (DPRP), which has received media attention recently, is a \$25.6M project funded by the Provincial Growth Fund and located in Punakaiki. (For further detail see Status Report 001 for the week of 16 November 2020)
- Progress is on-track, with the original project schedule and commitments agreed with MBIE via the project's Funding Agreement.
- The goal of the DPRP is to significantly improve on dated and unfit visitor infrastructure, facilities and visitor experience at the site, which is considered an anchor of the West Coast economy. In addition, it will explore opportunities to achieve carbon neutrality (or positivity), in both the redevelopment phase and whole-of-life-operation.
- A key focus of the DPRP is re-establishing a cultural footprint for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, who will own and operate the new visitor Experience and

Exhibition Centre. DOC will share the centre with the rūnanga and continue its delivery of core visitor centre services.

- The DPRP involves an intimate working relationship between the Crown and iwi.
- Overall, it will:
 - enhance connectivity and access to the Paparoa National Park and other key local natural sites in a safe and pedestrian-focused manner
 - create opportunities and a compelling cultural footprint for Māori via the establishment of the new visitor Experience and Exhibition Centre and its associated offerings
 - secure and future-proof the visitor experience on this site, with subsequent economic benefits for the wider West Coast community
 - provide opportunities for environmental protection via the proactive management of visitor impacts
 - strengthen social/community outcomes via integration with the Greater Punakaiki Master Plan process and the creation of pedestrian/cycle lanes which link to key Punakaiki features.
- The DPRP has generated significant economic activity and employment, with as many as 60-70 people engaged in the project each month in design, site investigation, and project delivery.
- Should you wish to know more, we can provide further details on the project and process.



Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Eastern South Island Region: Canterbury knobbled weevil (*Hadramphus tuberculatus*) found again

- This has been a significant find for an insect previously thought to be extinct. A Canterbury knobbled weevil (*Hadramphus tuberculatus*) was found on 12 November and transferred to begin a captive rearing programme at AgResearch at Invermay.
- Until rediscovered in 2004, the Canterbury knobbled weevil was considered extinct as it hadn't been seen since 1922, despite once being relatively common in Canterbury grasslands according to the fossil record.
- Found in Burkes Pass Scenic Reserve (between Tekapo and Fairlie) this critically endangered insect is dependent on *Aciphylla aurea* (speargrass) for its survival. Adults feed on the leaves and flowers (pollen is a source of protein) and larvae spend development time underground feeding on the tap root.

- Since 2004, the population has been regularly monitored using live pitfall trapping and visual searches. The few weevils captured have been monitored using mark-recapture, although current monitoring methods have had limited success.
- The largest number of individuals caught was 49 in the 2009/10 season. Since 2013, only a very small number of weevils have been caught and none have been seen since 2017.
- Following the lack of sightings in the 2018/19 season, staff in DOC's Twizel office sought expert advice on how management techniques should proceed.
- For the monitoring in the 2019/20 season, several modifications to the live pitfall trap design were trialed. We also decided to place any Canterbury knobbed weevils found into a captive rearing programme, following experimental work with three different species of *Lyperobius* weevils as surrogates.
- While 2019/20 was a very poor year for *Aciphylla aurea* flowering in the reserve, it is flowering well this season and hopes of finding the weevil have been high. Monitoring for the 2020/21 season began on 9 November, and a weevil was found in a pitfall trap on 12 November.
- The weevil was transferred to begin a captive rearing programme at AgResearch at Invermay, under the care of Dr Barbara Barratt, a renowned beetle expert. Not yet positively sexed, the weevil is happily feeding on speargrass and carrot leaves.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Southern South Island: Response to lamprey reddening syndrome (LRS) in Southland

- Lamprey reddening syndrome (LRS) has re-appeared in Southland waters. It was detected by mana whenua in the Waikawa River catchment in early October, and later in the Mataura River.
- LRS affects lamprey/kanakana/piharau migrating into freshwater from the marine environment during Spring. It appears as red lesions along the length of the body. Affected kanakana/piharau usually die, resulting in mass mortality events.
- LRS was first detected in New Zealand in 2011 in the Mataura River. Since 2011, LRS has been detected in several Southland rivers and some Otago rivers. It has not been detected in the North Island.
- When LRS was first detected, MPI launched an investigation into the cause of the mass mortality event. Laboratory testing ruled out an infectious agent, and instead indicated reddening may be due to blunt trauma. To date, the cause of LRS is still unknown.
- Kanakana/piharau have a conservation status of 'Threatened – nationally vulnerable'. They are a taonga species and are important to Māori for mahinga kai. Important customary fisheries exist on several Southland rivers, including the rivers where LRS has been detected.
- MPI closed out its investigations in 2014 and identified DOC as the lead agency for LRS, since we are responsible for the management of threatened species. Key priorities for DOC have been to work in partnership with mana whenua on recovery strategies, and to develop a communications plan for future events. We have made little progress on these in the last few years, however, and have been subject to criticism from Te Wai Māori and mana whenua.
- In response to the recent finds of LRS, we have met both nationally with Te Wai Māori, and locally with mana whenua, to define an appropriate response.
- As a result of these discussions, we have committed to:
 - develop an LRS response plan that provides clear guidance for anyone who finds LRS

- continue working towards a national recovery plan
- support additional research into the cause of LRS
- support the recovery of kanakana in Waikawa River through the Ngā awa priority rivers programme (Waikawa River is a prioritised site)
- explore the opportunity to include kanakana/piharua in the migratory fish programme
- continue to work with Te Wai Māori and mana whenua on the long-term response to LRS.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Southern South Island: Hoiho

- Hoiho are a priority species for both Te Papa Atawhai and our Treaty partners. Hoiho face a range of threats, both marine and terrestrial. DOC has been working with Ngāi Tahu, the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust (YEPT) and Fisheries New Zealand to develop Te Kaweka mō Te Hoiho and Te Mahere Rima Tau (the Strategy and 5 Year Action plan) to coordinate addressing the plight of these birds. The Strategy and Action Plan were released in August this year.
- The current estimate for the number of breeding pairs for mainland South Island (from Oamaru to Curio Bay) is 177; an increase of 10 on last year.
- Data on breeding pairs on Rakiura has been scarce, however, and DOC has been working closely with the YEPT, Ngāi Tahu, contractors and researchers to address the information gap. This has included a broader hoiho nesting survey on Rakiura, led by the YEPT and supported by DOC and partners, designed to be comparable with one completed during the 2008/09 season.
- The preliminary results show that just 39 nests were found this year, compared with 153 in 2008/09 and 186 in 1999/00. We are in korero with Te Kaitiaki Rōpu o Murihiku about the survey results.
- We are working with Ngāi Tahu, Papatipu Rūnaka and other partners to understand and respond to the results, and to implement the actions in Te Mahere Rima Tau, and Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho.
- There are ongoing issues affecting chick survival on the mainland this year, with primary factors being diphtheria and an emerging unknown form of pneumonia. We continue to monitor and investigate these factors.
- We expect significant media interest in falling nest numbers as it represents a large decline. We are preparing a joint media release with Ngāi Tahu and the YEPT to provide a full summary of nest numbers for the season, and our response, in the coming week.
- We can provide a full briefing on the hoiho issues mentioned above, and the mahi that DOC and our partners are doing to address the issues, should you wish.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Success in our Science Investment

- The aim of the Principal Advisors Science Investment (PASI) network is to leverage and enhance a 'system' that delivers the cost-effective and robust science required to achieve New Zealand's conservation needs and desired outcomes (including in biodiversity, tourism and recreation).
- The PASI roles (unique to central government) were established in late 2019 to support DOC as a science-based organisation. We expect that the network of science investment advisors will help DOC connect with the science community,

leverage investment into conservation science, influence and shape the science system and provide strategic input into a range of key issues.

Recent successes include:

- Post-graduate Scholarship: this program was launched in October and first candidates will receive scholarships early in 2021. The aim of the programme is to support postgraduate research into strategic and high-priority questions around conservation-related science in Aotearoa. Conservation science in this context is interpreted broadly, encompassing DOC's biodiversity, visitor and heritage-related responsibilities and underpinning Te Ao Māori thinking, and the social and the biophysical sciences. The programme is managed by Universities NZ on behalf of DOC.
- University Relationship Lead: universities provide an important avenue for research that benefits DOC's core biodiversity, visitor and natural/historic heritage work. To address inconsistencies and gaps in the way we currently manage relationships with universities, the PASIs developed a three-level vertically integrated approach. This involves DOC's Chief Science Advisor as the overall relationship holder, an Individual Relationship Lead appointed to each university at the second level, and - at the third level - subject experts to engage with university staff regarding particular projects or supervisions. The system is currently being trialled with the University of Otago.
- Ngā Awa: through our continuous relationship management with NIWA we have secured [REDACTED] of NIWA's COVID recovery investment to be directly aligned to our priority rivers programme, using NIWA's expertise and resources to support our riparian buffer design and monitoring in the Hōteio catchment with our partners at place.
- Biological Heritage National Science Challenge (BHNSC): the BHNSC administers \$37.9M of research funding for strategic conservation science and is further tasked to administer \$34.5M of 'Surge' investment into myrtle rust and kauri dieback research via a 'Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF)'. Through our relationship work, we were able to insert some DOC staff into project development discussions and as project partners in specific themes. Alignment of DOC funds towards a myrtle rust project is delivering research specifically targeted to address our management questions [REDACTED]).
- We can provide you with regular updates, should you require further details on these or other matters relating to science investment.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2.9 Royal Honours

- The process to identify nominees for Royal Honours (Queens Birthday 2021) has commenced within a tight timeframe.
- Shortlisting of candidates for services to conservation has been completed, and we are now compiling comprehensive nominations and support letters.
- We are working to a submission deadline with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet of 22 December.
- The Royal Honours process occurs twice yearly, with the next round commencing in April 2021.
- We will seek your views in the new year on your engagement in future processes.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 PSA Pay Equity Claim for Clerical and Administrative Work

- A pay equity claim for clerical and administrative work across 41 public service agencies was raised by the Public Service Association (PSA) in October 2019. The PSA and all agencies agree there is a possibility this work could be underpaid due to predominantly being performed by women.
- This claim covers a large number of roles and is complex due to its scoping. The Public Service Commission (PSC) directed agencies to scope roles for this claim to identify employees who may be covered.
- DOC notified close to 250 employees that their role included work that is 'the same or substantially similar to' that by the PSA's claim. All notified employees are automatically covered by the PSA's claim, regardless of union membership.
- The Pay Equity Claim is likely to take years to resolve. DOC will continue to be work closely with the PSC to ensure consistent messaging and practice. The PSC also has a dedicated website for notified staff to refer to.

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

Proactively Released

3 Director-General Engagements

November

23 November MOU signing ceremony – Manaaki Whenua /Te Papa Atawhai, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington

December

10-11 December NZ Conservation Authority, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington

15 December Te Papa Atawhai Christmas Party, Wellington

January 2021

19 January Good to Grow MOU signing – DOC and Department of Corrections (TBC) Rimutaka Prison

19 January ENGO Forum (TBC) Te Papa Atawhai, WGTN

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:

- Nature Heritage Fund update

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 30 November 2020

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

- Subject to your approval, we will be implementing several changes to streamline processes for the assessment, approval and contracting stages of projects. These include a direct contracting model, streamlining agreement letters to include terms on seed funding and operational alliances, and only offering seed funding to projects if requested, to allow for deeds to be finalised more quickly.
- On 27 November, we submitted the latest tranche of projects for feedback to the Reference Group. These projects equal over \$25m in total and 327 FTE jobs. We are also assessing a further \$15m worth of projects, which will be submitted as an addendum to the Reference Group paper on 30 November, and sent to your office.

Quick start projects

- In the week of 23 November, we received the final signed copy of the Tairawhiti Agroecology Recovery (TARP) deed and funding release is now under way.

Media and Communications

- There has been good media coverage following your 18 November announcement of \$8.5m Jobs for Nature investment in the creation of 92 jobs over a four-year period.
- The One News (TVNZ) story about Jobs for Nature trap-making in the far north aired on 22 November.
- We provided two media releases (and Jobs for Nature project factsheets) to your office on 23 November to announce the following restoration projects:
 - Wainuioru
 - Punakaiki
 - Te Waihora
 - Predator Free Trust Apprenticeship scheme.
- We are working with MfE on a video series to tell the story of people who have found employment through the Jobs for Nature programme. Ministry of Health and the Health Promotion Agency are meeting with us to discuss the opportunity to collaborate.
- We are progressing a Jobs for Nature brand with the Jobs for Nature Secretariat's and the Ministry for the Environment's involvement.

Kaimahi for Nature

- The Taranaki Alliance has now been formally recognised.
- The Eastern South Island has indicated the formation of an alliance, and has submitted three projects.
- We have received project applications from several regions in the last week from groups who have not yet formed alliances, but that are now working with local partners to confirm the regional groups they will join with.

Restoring Nature

- Conservation Volunteers NZ has signed its deed for the Punakaiki restoration project, and funding release is now under way.
- A draft business case has been prepared for the Te Waipounamu Threatened Species Recovery project, with details included in the Reference Group project briefing sent to your office.
- The Ngā Awa: Upper Rangitata catchment project has been submitted in the Reference Group papers. We are also working through the Ngā Awa: Te Hoiere catchment project application, and this is expected to be inserted into the Reference Group addendum paper.

Protecting Nature

- Predator Free 2050 Ltd has confirmed it will have 11 FTE positions funded through Jobs for Nature by 13 December. We are working to confirm its full FTE targets, and its understanding of the inherent obligations.
- We have provided feedback to the Kiwis for kiwi Annual Plan and the group is now negotiating contracts with 12 community groups it will fund. Kiwis for kiwi is also confirming FTE targets and indicates it will deliver more than the agreed 100 FTEs over four years.

Contact: Reg Kemper, Chief Advisor Jobs for Nature: [REDACTED]

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2 Updates

2.1 Tāmaki Mākaurau/Auckland: Duvaucel's gecko release – success story

- Ninety native kawekaweau/Duvaucel's geckos were released on pest free Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf in the week of 23 November, marking the start of an ambitious ten-year monitoring programme by DOC, in collaboration with Massey University.
- Duvaucel's gecko were once widespread throughout Aotearoa but are now restricted to 36 offshore islands because of the impact of predators and humans.
- It is the first time the species has been released on Motutapu. As a result of the ongoing work carried out by DOC and our Treaty partner Ngāi Tai ki Tamaki to keep Motutapu a pest free sanctuary, the island is now a suitable habitat in which the gecko can thrive.
- The project is being led by Massey University as part of a research-focussed ten-year monitoring programme to gather long-term data on establishment success and the resilience of Duvaucel's gecko populations in different ecological settings.
- A second release of the geckos is planned for December at the nearby Otata Island.
- The two reintroductions are made possible by funding from the Motutapu Restoration Trust and the Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Tāmaki Mākaurau / Auckland: Environmental Defence Society case study report on the Waitākere Ranges

- The Environmental Defence Society (EDS) has released a report assessing the effectiveness of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 in protecting the nationally and regionally significant landscapes of the Waitākere Ranges in west Auckland.
- The report is one in a series of case studies being prepared by the EDS, which are eventually to be rolled into a synthesis report on heritage protection. The EDS report makes several recommendations for changing the focus of protection efforts in the Waitākere Ranges. The recommendations are primarily directed at the Auckland Council; however, one recommendation is that DOC should provide additional ecological technical support to planning, protection and management efforts.
- DOC administers relatively little land in the ranges. The bulk of the area is contained in a regional park managed by the Auckland Council, and much of the balance is in private ownership. DOC will continue to work closely with the Auckland Council on the protection of the Waitākere Ranges and implementation of the report's recommendations. We do not intend to release a statement in response to the report but will provide comment if approached by the media.
- Other reports in the EDS Heritage series include a Tourism report (released in April 2020), a Mackenzie Basin case study report (released in July 2020), a Banks Peninsula case study (in preparation), a Hauraki Gulf case study (in preparation), and the planned synthesis report.

- EDS's work is financially supported by Land Information New Zealand and DOC, as the former Minister of Conservation was interested in exploring options to improve protection of natural and cultural heritage values at a landscape scale.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Lower North Island: Published paper on lizard recovery following rat eradication on Kāpiti Island

- A research paper entitled "Twenty years on: changes in lizard encounter rates following eradication of rats from Kāpiti Island" has been published on the New Zealand Ecological Society website. It is co-authored by a DOC staff member and researchers affiliated with Massey University.
- The paper compares results of fieldwork conducted in 1994-96 (prior to kiore and Norway rat eradication in 1996) and again in 2014-15 to estimate changes in relative abundance of lizards on Kāpiti Island. Sampling was conducted in five different habitats, using pitfall trapping, spotlighting and daytime searches.
- Previous research on the response of NZ lizard communities to rodent eradication has taken place on much smaller islands, with relatively simple ecosystems.
- Pitfall capture rates for three skink species were found to have increased significantly in habitats where they were detected in 1994-96, and these species were also found in 2014-15 in habitats where they had not been detected previously. Spotlighting encounter rates for geckos were estimated to have increased 3.7-fold between the two time periods. Sparse observations of three species (ornate skink, forest gecko and Wellington green gecko) did not allow a measurable change in abundance.
- While populations of some lizards have clearly increased after the eradication of rats, others have not, which contrasts with previous work on smaller islands and fenced sanctuaries. The most likely reason for this, identified in the paper, is the presence of natural predators, in particular, weka.
- The lack of apparent recovery by some species, and discussion about the possible role of avian predators, may fuel debate on the presence of introduced weka on Kāpiti Island. Otherwise, this paper does not challenge any DOC practice, or other ongoing conservation work, highlighting instead the benefits of eradicating invasive species.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Lower North Island: pilot whale stranding - Rekohu/Wharekauri/Chatham Islands

- A mass stranding was reported to our Chatham Islands District Office at 12:30pm on 22 November.
- The report stated there were approximately 96 pilot whales stranded on Waitangi West Beach, some of which were still alive. It is likely that the whales first stranded in the morning. A witness told DOC that at about 11am there were about 50 whales on the beach and the rest could be seen offshore.
- Iwi/Imi were notified and joined DOC staff at the beach to assess the situation. Unfortunately, these animals were unable to be saved due to the large number of whales stranded and the safety risk to would-be rescuers. A karakia/karakii was performed before the remaining 26 living whales and three bottlenose dolphins were euthanised.

- On 23 November, Iwi/Imi were notified that DOC staff were going to measure and take genetic samples, and were invited to attend and assist. A further two whales, suspected overnight strandings, were also euthanised.
- The final count was 97 pilot whales and three bottlenose dolphins.
- We are engaging with local landowners and tourism operators and, at this point, it is likely that the whales will remain on the beach.
- Mass strandings of this nature occur from time to time on the Chatham Islands. The last mass stranding of pilot whales was December 2017 and there was another one earlier in the same year.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Eastern South Island, Western South Island and Southern South Island: Tahr Programme

- DOC has now completed its planned Himalayan tahr control operations within the tahr feral range for 2020. From mid-July to early November, we aeri ally controlled 7481 tahr on public conservation land (PCL) to protect alpine ecosystems from the impacts of high tahr densities
- Maps showing where tahr were controlled as part of the Tahr Control Operational Plan for 2020/21 have been uploaded to the DOC website. Sightings of identifiable males located outside of the national parks' management unit have also been mapped to help hunters.
- A Research and Monitoring Strategy to support the management of Himalayan Tahr in New Zealand has been developed and is informing the tahr Research and Monitoring plan for 2020/21.
- There are 133,000ha of non-PCL inside the tahr management units and there is currently limited data on tahr abundance across this tenure. Fixed-wing surveys of tahr populations on Crown Pastoral Leasehold land are now under way to provide information on tahr abundance on these lands.
- On 24 November, DOC updated the Game Animal Council on the current status of the tahr programme. We are meeting with the Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group (TPILG) on 15 December to begin engagement on a Tahr Control Operational Plan for 2021/22. Topics for this meeting will include the Research and Monitoring Plan for 2020/21 and a refresh of the TPILG's terms of reference.
- TPILG membership includes our Treaty partner, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, stakeholders from the hunting sector and environmental groups. DOC is working closely on the tahr programme with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Southern South Island: Milford Sound aircraft landing concessions

- Tourist flights landing at Piopiotahi/Milford Sound are a popular activity, with the average use of the aerodrome between 2016-19 being approximately 8500 landings, both helicopter and fixed wing, per year. The aerodrome is inside Fiordland National Park (FNP) and landings here are authorised by way of concessions issued by DOC. The aerodrome itself is managed by the Ministry of Transport. A total of 24 operators currently hold 34 concessions for landings at Piopiotahi/Milford. The current concessions were issued for 10 years in 2011 and expire in December 2021.

- A process to consider new concessions for landing aircraft at Piopiotahi/Milford Sound begins on 7 December in Queenstown, with a meeting of current concessionaires and DOC staff. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The purpose of the 7 December meeting is to share our respective initial context about the activity, and options to authorise the activities beyond December 2021. We aim to complete the process for new concessions for aircraft operators to land at the Milford Aerodrome by December 2021, when current concessions expire.
- Separately, the 'Milford Opportunities Project' (MOP) has also recently undertaken public engagement to develop a Masterplan for Piopiotahi/Milford Sound. The MOP is an interagency group investigating long-term management scenarios funded by the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy. Any MOP outcomes will require statutory authority, in this case, through the public process of a revised FNPMP.
- You will receive a briefing on the outcomes of the MOP process by 8 December.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 New system and campaign: driving behaviour change

- On-road driving is Te Papa Atawhai's top critical risk to staff and we have invested significant resource in an internal programme called Improving Driver Behaviour.
- Over the past 18 months, we have worked in partnership with the Public Service Association (PSA) to bring GPS tracking to all our vehicles, with an aim to positively influence safe driving behaviours.
- A Driver Authorisation and Authentication programme also provides mandatory online driver coaching and verifies driver licensing and skills. Practical driver training is provided as an additional support to those drivers identified as needing to build skills in a particular area.
- Now that we have more data, we have introduced GPS settings that focus on speed (particularly in built up areas), fatigue, and unsafe cornering and stopping.
- The Health and Safety team is socialising the system in the lead up to the Christmas driving season through a behaviour change campaign featuring a diverse range of our people. It encourages staff to join the rest of their Te Papa Atawhai whānau by thanking them for "Taking it easy" at the wheel, and modelling what taking it easy means in relation to things like speed, fatigue and hard cornering and stopping. The campaign is presented in both Te Reo and English.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 2020 Sustainable Business Network Awards

- The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) is New Zealand's largest and longest standing sustainable business organisation.
- The 2020 Sustainable Business Network Awards were held on 19 November, in Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin.
- This was the fourth year DOC has sponsored the Restoring Nature Award, which is presented to a business for taking a leadership role in restoring New Zealand's nature, and it supports the mainstreaming of restoration as a key pillar of business sustainability.
- The winner of the Restoring Nature award, Tahī New Zealand, was also the winner of the Supreme Award - Transforming New Zealand.
- Tahī is a nature sanctuary, eco-retreat, and global honey business where 100% of profits are reinvested into conservation and cultural projects.
- SBN CEO, Rachel Brown ONZM, describes Tahī as "an example of transformation, rejuvenation and commitment to long-term regenerative business." As Rachel Brown also says, "it is a great local business actively supporting its local community and creating employment there".

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Proactive release of submissions on southeast marine protection

- On 18 November 2020, we provided you with a briefing (20-B-0808) on the southeast marine protection (SEMP) process and sought your agreement to appoint an independent reviewer. The independent reviewer's report will be provided to you in April 2021.
- We will provide you with an initial assessment of the outcomes of the public consultation process, including a summary of submissions, before the end of the year, and more fulsome analysis in early 2021, to help inform ministerial decisions.
- We have been working with Fisheries New Zealand to prepare for the proactive release of all 4,056 submissions received during the joint agency public consultation on SEMP.
- We have followed the Ombudsman's 'good practice guidance' in considering whether to proactively release submissions. We believe it is important for a transparent and democratic process to release the information to the public. The Ombudsman has provided advice and a case note stating that public submissions may not be withheld using OIA s9(2)(f)(iv) (confidential advice).
- Preparing the submissions for release includes identifying information to withhold in order to protect submitters' identities (when requested) or other information (such as commercially sensitive information), where appropriate.
- Proactive release is partly in response to an Official Information Act (OIA) request to DOC on 21 September from Kate Hesson, Executive Officer of the Otago Rock Lobster Industry Association. Ms Hesson requested copies of the SEMP submissions. The OIA request was refused on the basis that the submissions will be made publicly available soon (under OIA s18(1)(d)).
- We intend to proactively release the submissions and a searchable index, on the DOC website in early December 2020.
- We will liaise with staff from your office on the communications plan closer to the proactive release date.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

December

10-11 December NZ Conservation Authority, Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington
15 December Te Papa Atawhai Christmas Party, Wellington

January 2021

19 January Good to Grow MOU signing – DOC and Department of
Corrections (TBC) Rimutaka Prison
19 January ENGO Forum (TBC) Te Papa Atawhai, WGTN

Proactively Released

4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Western South Island: Griffin Creek Run of the River hydro project
- Southern South Island: New Zealand Battery Proposal
- Update on Departmental Weather Forecast procurement
- PF2050 Tools to Market: GoodNature aerial micro-trap project announcement
- Central North Island: Te Tapatoru ā Toi interpretation unveiling opportunity
- Central North Island: Respect the Maunga - summer visitor campaign in Tongariro National Park
- Western South Island: announcement opportunity - Fox Glacier/Weheka new visitor facilities
- Western South Island: Tohu Whenua (Landmarks) Programme - Waiuta launch

Proactively Released