



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 5 October 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Marlborough District Council – New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS) application to increase feed discharges

- The Director-General lodged a submission on 23 September 2020 opposing the application by NZKS to increase feed discharges from 4,000 tonnes at the Waitata Salmon Farm.
- Under the current consent, NZKS are authorised to discharge up to 3,000 tonnes, and this can only be increased to 4,000 tonnes if NZKS meet various adaptive management conditions in the consent.
- The Director-General's submission raised concerns on whether NZKS would be able to comply with existing conditions regarding the Enrichment Scale Limits, and the lack of modelling provided by NZKS to predict actual or potential effects of the proposed feed increase.
- The changes to conditions will not alter the requirement for NZKS to stay within the Environmental Quality Standards or Enrichment Scale set in the existing consent.

Taupō District Council - Sky Play Adventures/Tauhara North No. 2 Trust application relating to zip lines near Huka Falls

- See further on this issue in item 2.2 in this report.
- The Director-General submitted in opposition to the application in part due to overlapping iwi interests and ecological enhancement, but DOC did not attend the hearing last week.

Other

Northland Regional Council – Various (23) Submitters – Aupouri Aquifer Water Takes – Hearing

- On 31 August, DOC presented at the Council hearing on the 23 proposed water takes from the Aupouri Aquifer in Northland. Evidence presented covered, hydrogeology, wetlands and planning. The key concerns we raised at the hearing focused on inadequate identification and assessment of effects on wetlands and other surface water bodies.
- The Commissioners directed that the applicant carry out further work in identifying and assessing effects on surface water bodies, and directed further conferencing and work between the applicant, Northland Regional Council and DOC to develop appropriate consent conditions for the applications.

Contact:

1.2 Jobs for Nature

- We are currently trialling the Rataka Taiao phone app which captures Jobs for Nature project data in real time. It shows number of people employed, FTEs and standard DOC conservation outputs.
- We have contacted those who have submitted proposals or ideas and provided them with information about the different available funds. Those who submitted regional-based ideas have also been contacted by regional DOC staff to inform them about their regional alliance and how they can apply for Kaimahi for Nature funding. Directors have been asked to consider well-formed bids through the Alliances.

- We have created a draft Jobs for Nature strategy on a page with an outcomes framework in development. The strategy aligns the Reference Group Investment Framework including the Investment Principles set by SLU Ministers, fund eligibility and DOC's Jobs for Nature assessment criteria.
- We are assessing five national bids. [REDACTED]

Quick Start projects

- We have finalised and processed the first milestone payment for the Te Arawa Lakes Trust quick start project. Their recruitment process is currently underway.
- The final agreements for [REDACTED], Backcountry Trust and [REDACTED] projects are being reviewed by partners. Following this, the funding release for first milestone payment will be actioned after signing.

Kaimahi for Nature

- The Chatham Island Alliance has applied for recognition as an alliance and assessment is underway.
- We have received one further project [REDACTED]. We are currently working with the Alliance relationship holder to understand their programme approach before progressing this project through to a recommendation for approval by the Chief Advisor, Jobs for Nature.
- Nelson City Council are reviewing the final draft deed for the Maitai Ecological Restoration Project. A joint deed with MfE was scoped for this project (MfE providing \$1.7M Jobs for Nature funding for this project), however it was determined that due to time constraints for getting the project underway, a joint deed in its existing form would not provide the benefits sought to any of the parties. We continue to work with MfE to develop alignment on our deeds and agreements for Jobs for Nature funding to support a joined-up central government approach.

Restoring Nature

- [REDACTED]
- The draft deed is being reviewed by Conservation [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] and Waikanae catchments) which have been scoped and submitted to the Jobs for Nature system for approval and development of deeds with partners.

Protecting Nature

- Kiwis for kiwi are currently running an EOI process and received 47 submissions. 13 projects have been invited to submit a full proposal. We are working with Kiwis for kiwi to facilitate connection with other agencies and regional alliances, to enable investing for impact at scale.
- We have received a final draft of the business case for the Raukumara ranges project and we are working together with relationship holders to input into agreements with Treaty Partners.

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

2 Updates

2.1 Climber Fatality on Mt Ruapehu

- A climber was fatally injured in a fall near Whangaehu Hut on Mt Ruapehu on the afternoon of Saturday, 26 September.
- The climber was one of a group of nine who were traversing an area known as Cathedral Rocks when the woman slipped and fell some distance. Members of the group managed to get to the woman and call for help but, due to poor weather, rescue helicopter services were unable to get to the site immediately.
- After much effort by Police and LandSAR the climber was brought off the mountain by foot in the early hours of Sunday morning, however she had already succumbed to her injuries by this time.
- Ngāti Hikairo blessed the site on Sunday morning.
- DOC will be involved in debriefing with key parties over the next fortnight.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Update on zip line proposal near Huka Falls

- Sky Play Adventures/Tauhara North No. 2 Trust submitted a concession application to DOC in September 2019 for a zip line proposal that would see five zip runs travel over the Waikato River, downstream of Huka Falls, near Taupo.
- The proposal is for a total of eight towers to be constructed on both sides of the river, with three towers located on public conservation land, two on Taupō District Council land and three on LINZ land.
- The application was publicly notified, with 58 submissions received – 51 in support, 6 in opposition and 1 neutral.
- Seven submitters requested to be heard at a hearing, which took place in Taupō in July.
- Submitters held differing views on the cultural impacts of the proposal. Due to this being a strong theme of the hearing, a cultural impact report has been requested in accordance with s7 of the Ngati Tuwharetoa Deed of Settlement Schedule.
- The Taupō District Council Resource Management hearing was held last week after 65 submissions were received though the notification period, with 53 in support, 3 neutral and 9 in opposition. We were opposed to the application in part due to overlapping iwi interests and ecological enhancement but will not attend the hearing.
- We will keep your office updated with any new information.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Cowan Haast River Grazing Concession: Reconsideration

- John Cowan, through his son-in-law George Ivey, has applied for a reconsideration of a grazing concession conditions over part of the Haast River between the Roaring Billy and the Landsborough confluence.
- The approved concession requires stock to be contained within the land. Conditions require fencing of the true left Mount Aspiring National Park boundary and the true right Cook River – Haast River Conservation Area boundary of the grazing licence. The reconsideration request relates to the fencing of the true right boundary only. Existing stands of *Coprosma wallii* and

ribbonwood within the licence are also required to be fenced. The design, location and methodology of fencing is to be approved by the Operations Manager prior to construction.

- The reconsideration process is broken into two decisions: to accept or reject the application for a reconsideration, and to then make a determination on the reconsideration.
- The Director-General has made the first decision and accepted the application for reconsideration.
- We will now prepare further documents to inform the second reconsideration decision. These will include obtaining input from an independent farming consultant on possible methods of containing the stock within the licence.
- There is public interest in the application and ongoing process. A copy of the reconsideration request has been released to David Williams of Newsroom under the Official Information Act.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Predator Free Rakiura funding announcement

- The Predator Free Rakiura Leadership Group is preparing to announce the recent funding commitment from DOC. The announcement will take place on 13 October 2020.
- The announcement will be shared in person at a community event on Stewart Island, followed by a press release. Television media will be invited to cover the story.
- DOC has committed \$1 million over 12 months, with up to \$5 million available over the next 5 years. This commitment will be supported by an indicative business case.
- We expect the governance entity to seek further support from entities such as the NEXT Foundation and PF2050 Ltd from year two onwards. The amount that partners commit will affect DOC's required investment.
- The Partnership group are leading this work, with strong support from Brent Beaven (Director PF2050 unit) and Ngaire Best (Director Governance).

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai Annual Report 2019-20

- Our Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2020 has been produced, audited and is being printed, in preparation for publication by 23 October 2020 and tabling in the House when Parliament resumes.
- In the Annual Report we report against the priority work programmes and 2019/20 Estimates of Appropriation.
- Despite the challenges of dealing with COVID-19, DOC delivered the largest-ever predator control campaign, covering 11% of PCL. We have also nearly doubled the number of threatened species being managed for persistence (from 219 to 430). Monitoring increased at 13 of the 44 marine reserves, and we engaged in co-design research through mātauranga Māori to address kauri dieback. Almost 400 contractors were redeployed across 60 conservation projects as part of the COVID-19 recovery plan.
- Unfortunately, extreme weather events meant that we did not meet our output performance target for rat and mustelid control. We also did not meet the targets for deer and weed control due to the re-evaluation of monitoring methods and treatment programmes. The target for island biosecurity was not met, as the

pest-free status of some islands has not been able to be reconfirmed yet following past pest incursions.

- We also did not meet the target for number of threatened species under active management to improve understanding. The variance reflects multi-year programmes with no specific activity in 2019/20.
- This year we implemented a standard, repeatable assessment process for performance indicator status and trend reporting. The process separated quantitative and qualitative assessments, but also highlighted some data gaps. Overall, four indicators relating to ecosystems and species were borderline or a cause for concern; four indicators were below an acceptable state; and another four were inconclusive.
- Two indicators showed an improving trend, and two indicators showed a stable trend. The remaining eight indicators did not have enough time-series data to establish a trend.
- The assessment of these status and trend indicators is consistent with the findings reported in Biodiversity in Aotearoa - an overview of state, trends and pressures (2020)
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/biodiversity/anzbs-biodiversity-report.pdf>
- The recreation and engagement performance indicators were all at an acceptable state, with visitor participation showing an increasing trend, and visitor satisfaction having a stable trend. The 'engagement with key associates' indicator does not have enough time-series data to establish a trend.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 DOC and MPI marine spatial mapping exercise

- MPI has asked DOC to work on a joint marine spatial mapping exercise of the territorial sea of the South Island's exposed east coast. The project is designed to inform MPI's open ocean aquaculture work, to ensure new open ocean aquaculture is developed and managed sustainably alongside other marine uses and protection values.
- The project presents an exciting opportunity to:
 - Test existing GIS information, mapping capability and improvements to support future marine spatial planning;
 - Identify the scale of potential spatial opportunities for sustainable open ocean aquaculture to inform advice on management options and Maori aquaculture settlement space;
 - Identify areas of ecological and biodiversity importance including for rare and endangered species; and
 - Identify potential opportunities, synergies and conflicts between uses and values to inform future spatial management approaches to marine space protection, use and allocation between uses.
- [REDACTED]
- DOC and MPI intend to approach local regional councils and Ngāi Tahu to take part in the mapping exercise, and will involve industry stakeholders, eNGOs and local communities in the work.
- It is a data-gathering exercise, but it has the potential to inform multiple work streams across government, including MPA reform (and informing our approach to national strategic planning), RMA reform (new strategic planning act) and sustainable open ocean aquaculture development.
- We intend to complete the project by June 2021, with deliverables over the course of the project. We will keep you informed as the work progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Science system review and key policy issues

- In July 2020 an independent panel commissioned by MBIE released a review report, Te Pae Kahurangi, into how Crown Research Institutes (CRIs) are positioned to meet New Zealand's current and future needs.
- The CRIs review report, chaired by David Smol, concluded that some aspects of the current science system are not working well and in the future will require an approach that is more integrated. The review panel recommended that CRIs, Central Government, and Māori co-design a process for prioritising and funding research areas, and that steps are taken to strengthen collaboration throughout the science system to address barriers and improve efficiency, capacity and capability.
- A response to this review provides an opportunity for DOC to help shape how the science system contributes to conservation.
- We consider that a successful system in the future would set clear priorities for biodiversity and natural heritage and take a strategic approach towards addressing them, provide flexibility in terms of funding, take into account our unique context in Aotearoa New Zealand and strongly support Mātauranga Māori research, strengthen operational capability and capacity, and align well with public interests.
- This work is highly relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS), which presents a great opportunity to drive priorities and direction for funding in the biodiversity space. A related goal of the ANZBS is:
 - By 2025: The research, science and innovation system is investing in and collaboratively delivering research and rangahau in alignment with an agreed integrated set of biodiversity science priorities that cover ecological, biophysical, social, cultural, economic and other areas.
- As part of implementing the above goal, engagement with Treaty Partners will take place to understand their aspirations for the future science system.
- We will engage with MBIE on the response to the review, and will keep you up to date with the outcomes.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

October

8 October	Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui hui, Whanganui
9 October	Murihiku Manawhenua & Regional Stakeholders wānanga, Murihiku Marae
13-14 October	Senior Leadership Team Retreat, Pounui
15-16 October	NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim
20 October	Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui hui, TBC Whanganui
23 October	Lake Daniel's Hut opening, Lewis Pass
24 October	Cave Creek 25-year Anniversary, West Coast

November

2 November	Public Service day awards, Wellington
3 November	Tūhoe Board hui, Tāneatua
4 November	Brook Sanctuary, Nelson
12 November	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Silverstream Retreat
17 November	Tourism Summit Aotearoa, Te Papa
19 November	Blake Awards, Auckland

December

10-11 December	NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington
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4 Addendum

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

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 the 2020 Sustainable Business Network Awards

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Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 12 October 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA Advocacy

- No update this week

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust

- No update this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 Jobs for Nature Unit

- We have been connecting with Regional Council communication managers to discuss communication opportunities in relation to the establishment of regional alliances.
- We are continuing to work with our DOC regional communication advisors to identify good news stories that can be shared and have pitched some of these to media outlets.
- We have drafted media releases for internal sign off before distribution mid-October. These include the Restoring Nature contestable funding and the three quick start projects.
- We have begun consultation on design concept for a brand for Jobs for Nature all of government and progressing the 'look and feel' branding for the new monitoring app which is currently being piloted.
- We have developed a fact sheet designed to provide a weekly update with stats and key messages for internal use.

Kaimahi for Nature

- We are expecting that the [REDACTED], Taranaki, [REDACTED] Regional Alliances will be stood up by end-October 2020. The Bay of Plenty have elected to form several sub-alliances in accordance with Maori Constituencies.
- We have received two projects from the Northland Regional Alliance and three projects from the Bay of Plenty Okurei Alliance.
- As these Alliances are not yet formally recognised by Jobs for Nature, we have begun assessing these projects but note that funding will not be released until the formal establishment of their respective alliances.

Restoring Nature

- Two projects within the Nga Awa programme (Lower Rangitata and Waikanae catchments) have been submitted to the Jobs for Nature system for approval and development of deeds with partners. They have received DOC internal endorsement and are proceeding to the Reference Group (8 Oct) and SLU Ministers (12 Oct) for approval-in-principle.

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

2 Updates

2.1 ANZBS Implementation Plan – Champions Group

- On August 10 you launched the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy - Te Mana o te Taiao (ANZBS).
- We are near the end of the project planning stage for the first ANZBS implementation plan (2021-22) and accompanying strategic finance package.
- Cabinet agreed that the Minister of Conservation will report back with the plan in the first quarter of 2021.
- We will be working collaboratively with Treaty partners, central and local government, stakeholders, and technical experts in the development of the plan.
- We will also establish an external Champions Group of no more than eight members to support in the development, socialisation and delivery.
- The group will not have any decision-making responsibilities and will work directly with the DDG-Biodiversity and Engagement.
- Officials will brief you further when the membership of the Group is confirmed.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 New DOC initiative – Post-graduate scholarships for conservation research from 2021

- We are launching a new DOC initiative, a post-graduate scholarship for conservation related research in natural and social sciences.
- The scholarship will help address the need for quality research both for DOC and New Zealand and will:
 - inform critical policy work as well as departmental strategic and operational decision making.
 - build capability and capacity in conservation related science in Aotearoa
 - encourage talented individuals into a career in conservation science
- In 2021, there will be 10 one-year scholarships worth up to \$15,000 each. These will be funded from reprioritised baseline investment and do not require new Crown funding.
- To qualify, applicants must be:
 - Masters or Honours students'
 - enrolled at a New Zealand university or NZQA accredited tertiary institution
 - undertaking research in a DOC research priority area in the 2021 academic year
- We intend to extend the scholarships to include PhD research in the next application round in 2022.
- We will monitor the outcomes of the scholarship programme to ensure the initiative is delivering value to Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Scholarship applications open on 20 October 2020 and close on 1 December 2020. This timeframe enables us to meet Semester 1 2021 timelines.
- A media release promoting the scholarship will be sent on 19 October to relevant media - Radio NZ, Science NZ, Science Media Centre and posted on the DOC website.

Contact: Ken Hughey, DDG Biodiversity: [REDACTED]

2.3 Rangitoto / Motutapu stoat

- A male stoat was trapped on pest-free Rangitoto Island on 25 September in a DOC250 trap, baited with a hen's egg and rabbit meat.
- This follows intensive trapping since 20 May, when stoat prints were found on the adjoining island of Motutapu.
- The trapping response has continued, to ensure no more stoats are present on either island, indicator dogs have assisted with this.
- Once the absence of stoats is confirmed, trapping will reduce to that required for normal surveillance.
- The operating costs of this response now exceed \$15,000.
- Prior to 20 May, a male stoat was on nearby Motukorea/Browns Island, and evaded capture by Auckland Council.
- It is suspected that the Motukorea stoat is the same animal detected on Motutapu, and possibly now trapped on Rangitoto.
- Trapping and associated activities on Rangitoto-Motutapu have been undertaken by DOC staff and our Treaty Partner Ngai Tai ki Tamaki.
- The incursion response has been guided by a technical advisory group comprising DOC staff and external experts. Auckland Council has provided support, particularly with use of stoat indicator dogs.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Te Tapahoro Campsite – Lake Tarawera

- Ngāti Rangitihī and Māori Investments Limited (MIL) have recently engaged with us to discuss the reopening of the campground.
- A focus of engagement has been on restoring the mana of this area and educating visitors on the significance of this site to iwi and landowners.
- Road access to the campground uses MIL's privately-owned roading network. In the past road access was never formally guaranteed and has relied on the generosity of MIL.
- DOC, Ngāti Rangitihī and MIL have agreed to pilot a new routine whereby road access is only given to day users. All vehicles, including motorhomes, must leave the campground before nightfall.
- Overnight stays will be permitted for boat users and people who have walked in and the campground will move to a bookable system via the DOC website.
- Operational details will be confirmed at a hui with Ngāti Rangitihī and landowners on 14 October 2020 and details of the pilot will then be publicised.
- Given the opening of the fishing season on Lake Tarawera and the popularity of this site at this time, the campground has been unofficially opened for boat users.
- Notifications of the temporary closure have been removed from boat ramps and the DOC website.
- Vehicle access remains off limits until the operational details have been confirmed with our Treaty partner and MIL.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Booking Services Results and Progress Report

- On 25 June we opened 99 bookable huts, campsites and lodges on the new Booking Service's platform. Since opening:
 - 12,000 customer accounts have been created (11,320 NZ and 680 international) and
 - \$1.7 M in bookings made
- Feedback from customers and front-line staff has been positive *"Nelson VC supports several bookable campsites in the region, including the ever-popular Totaranui campground, we have found the system to be very user friendly and the ability for customers to manage their own bookings has helped to reduce the level of admin support required."*
- Between 15 and 21 October, an additional 58 properties will become bookable facilities. This will:
 - Deliver an improved customer experience by giving assurance that they reserve a camping space in advance
 - Improve frontline staff safety by removing risks associated with cash handling / storage (often in remote locations)
 - Reduce the administrative efforts required to collect, transport, count and bank cash, freeing staff up to conduct higher value work
- DOC campground staff currently collect and manage \$3.5M in cash per annum, we are actively looking at strategies to reduce this figure
- Making more campgrounds bookable is one initiative, as is the introduction of a new Campsite Pass (scheduled for release in Feb 2021.)

Contact:

3 Director-General Engagements

October

13-14 October	Senior Leadership Team Retreat, Pounui
15-16 October	NZ Conservation Authority, Blenheim
20 October	Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui Hui, Whanganui
23 October	Lake Daniel's Hut opening, Lewis Pass
24 October	Cave Creek 25-year Anniversary, West Coast

November

02 November	Public Service day awards, Wellington
03 November	Tuhoe Board hui, Taneatua
04 November	Brook Sanctuary, Nelson
05 November	Rangers' Reunion, Nelson
11 November	Institute of Directors Breakfast meeting, KPMG Wellington
12 November	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Silverstream Retreat
17 November	Tourism Summit Aotearoa, Te Papa
19 November	Blake Awards, Auckland
24 November	Forest & Bird/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington

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4 Addendum

No items this week

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

No items this week

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA Advocacy

Further Submissions

Otago Regional Council Plan Changes 7 (Short Term Consents) and 8 (Discharge Management)

- The Director-General lodged seven further submissions on 2 May in support of Aukaha, Te O Marama, and Fish and Game on Plan Changes 7 and 8.
- Ngāi Tahu, Fish and Game, Royal Forest and Bird, and the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) were in general support of the D-Gs submission, whereas those with irrigation interests and hydro-generators were generally opposed.
- We are liaising closely with MfE on this case and sharing case management experience. We expect a hearing either later this year or early next year.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.1 Kauri Dieback and Myrtle Rust

- No update this week

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Jobs for Nature Unit

- You have asked that we provide the reference group investment framework to those who have submitted unsolicited proposals to the Jobs for Nature inbox.
- Once the criteria for the Restoring Nature Community and Landowner funds have been confirmed, we will announce these funds and provide information on the website and directly to submitters about the criteria, process and timeframes for these funds.
- We will include the investment framework with this information, so that submitters are aware of this framework in the context of the funds that they can access.

Kaimahi for Nature

- We have assessed three project applications from the Bay of Plenty Okurei sub-alliance this week and are progressing them through the Jobs for Nature approval process.
- We have assessed the first project from the [REDACTED]

This has been endorsed by the DDG Taskforce this week and is proceeding to approval by the Chief Advisor, Jobs for Nature.

Restoring Nature

- Approval for [REDACTED] and the partners have been notified.
- [REDACTED] and will be endorsed by DOC Finance, Project Management, and the Jobs for Nature team by early next week.

- We are finalising with partners the deed of funding [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Protecting Nature

- A forecasted cashflow and project status update has been received from [REDACTED], and the first Jobs for Nature funding payment has been made.

National Initiatives

- We are currently assessing iwi-collaboration proposals for the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and will look to support this from the limited National Initiatives funding pool.

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

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2 Updates

2.1 Oamaru red-billed gulls

- At the Yellow Eyed Penguin Conference in August, the Mayor of Waitaki District Gary Kircher, raised with you the purported nuisance caused by red-billed gulls, a protected species, to businesses in central Oamaru.
- You sought more information from him on the extent of the problem including an assessment of damage and costs, which the Waitaki District Council (the Council) is collating for you from businesses and building owners.
- The local DOC office has been working with the Council to:
 - provide practical advice on ways to reduce gulls nesting on buildings,
 - share technical and educational information to establish consistent public messaging,
 - understand the effects of street lighting on gull behaviour.
- Weaning gulls off anthropocentric food sources and limiting gull access to common nesting sites and material has been the ongoing focus but will take time. The Council is also investigating establishing a natural red-billed gull colony at Cape Wanbrow.
- DOC will continue to work closely with the Council on this matter.

Contact: _____

2.2 Otago CMS partial review: proposed cycle trails

- In February and July 2020, we briefed you about the partial review of the Otago CMS to consider proposed cycle trails initiatives, including Great Rides.
- Public notification of the draft Otago CMS will commence on Friday 23 October and will be open for submissions until Monday 21 December 2020.
- We are engaging with Ngāi Tahu, the relevant Rūnaka and Otago Conservation Board throughout the process.
- The partial review announced in late April asked for cycle trail proposals to be lodged by the end of May. We received 115 proposals from 22 proponents. In total 269 land parcels are affected.
- There are several existing trails which were not identified in the CMS when it was reviewed in 2016 and others that have come to DOC through tenure review. These are updated in the CMS.
- An assessment of all proposed trails and affected parcels of public conservation lands has been undertaken by staff to determine which parcels will be notified in the draft CMS. Staff considered: design, alignment with the strategy and the impact on the region's natural, historic, cultural and recreational values.
- In total 295 parcels of conservation land will be notified for inclusion.
- Mountain biking and e-biking policies have been reviewed and now outline matters to be considered when assessing proposals for mountain biking on conservation land, and criteria required to build a cycle track or trail. Criteria are more robust, taking into consideration all environmental impacts, climate change and consultation requirements.
- This approach is separate to exploratory work occurring to address mountain biking considerations nationally. The national approach will take longer than the

more immediate need for the Otago CMS, as funding for cycle trails in this region has been secured.

Contact: [REDACTED]

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- *No items this week*

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- *No items this week*

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature Unit

Media and communications

- Stuff featured a story on Kaimahi for Nature helping distressed businesses in South Westland (17 October). We have allocated \$13 million to the Kotahitanga ki te Uru (working together for the West) through the fund. This is the first of the regional alliances to be established in response to the impact of Covid-19.
- Skydive Franz and Fox Glacier tandem master and base manager Rob Stewart said the Jobs for Nature scheme has saved their business and allowed it to keep operating at a reduced capacity. This would, in turn, help draw visitors to the town. The skydivers, who have been affected by the lack of international tourists are now splitting their time between hosting domestic skydiving customers and track building. They are making good progress on upgrading the historic Alex Knob track.
- There was a full-page feature in the Dominion Post (17 October) and a video (on stuff.co.nz) over the weekend about the forestry redeployment - wilding pines and Jobs for Nature funding. It was encouraging to see women in 'boots on the ground' roles, as some commentators have been critical of 'shovel ready jobs' excluding women.

Kaimahi for Nature

- We have received the alliance application and three projects from [REDACTED]
- The Taranaki Alliance has also applied for formal recognition.
- The Northern North Island Alliance has received approval for their first project [REDACTED] and is now finalising their MOU and establishment document. Payment of funds for the project is dependent on Jobs for Nature receiving the alliance formal recognition application.
- We are working closely with the Southern South Island Alliance to support them in their establishment and first project proposals. We expect to receive their first project proposal soon.

Restoring Nature

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

Protecting Nature

- Jobs for Nature Acting Chief Advisor met with incoming Predator Free NZ Ltd CEO Abbie Reynolds this week to discuss the partnership approach and aims of the Jobs for Nature programme.

Contact: Neil Deans, Acting Chief Advisor, Jobs for Nature: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA Advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Whiritoa Wastewater Treatment Plant

- Hauraki District Council has applied to renew consents for its Whiritoa wastewater treatment plant. The discharge enters a stream and a coastal lagoon that contains threatened species.
- The submission seeks to ensure that appropriate conditions of consent are imposed to ensure water quality is enhanced.

Water Conservation Orders

Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order

- A Water Conservation Order has been applied for the upper and lower Ngaruroro River in the Hawkes Bay region. We joined the proceedings in early 2020 in support of the outstanding avifauna values the river provides.
- On 21 October our witnesses attended mediation. Mediation was unable to resolve the concerns of the parties and the matter will proceed to a hearing which is likely to be held in February 2021.

Other

Auckland Regional Landfill - Dome Valley

- Auckland Council has notified a plan change and resource consent application to establish a significant landfill in Dome Valley north of Auckland. The Director-General submitted in opposition to both proposals.
- The submission opposes the proposal on the basis that there are significant ecological values including Hochstetter's frogs, long-tailed bats, threatened birds, wetlands and streams present at the site.
- We have filed expert evidence with Council and will be heard by the panel on 1 December on planning, freshwater, bats, frogs and lizards, pest management, offsetting, and birds.

COVID 19 Fast Track Listed Project: Te Ara Tupua

- NZTA has lodged consent applications and notices of requirement for a 2.5km shared path between Ngauranga and Petone alongside State Highway 2 in Wellington Harbour. The proposal involves reclamation of a large area of marine habitat.
- We have been involved in pre-application engagement with the applicant regarding the offsetting and compensation of the effects on marine ecology and implementation of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.
- The Director-General will be provided the opportunity to review the application material and provide written comment to the Environmental Protection Authority likely next week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Predator Free Rakiura

- On October 13 the Predator Free Rakiura Leadership Group (PFRLG) announced it had received up to \$5M of DOC funding for the Design phase of the project. The announcement was made at a community evening event attended by 100 locals.
- This investment by us sees the PFR initiative move from a being a “Big idea” that has been championed by the PRFLG to a formal project that will be properly structured and funded. The PFRLG will be retained as the “Voice of the community”, supporting the Project.
- We are also working with the four southern papatipu runanga to come to agreement about how the Project will be governed. Currently there is a high degree of alignment between us and the Treaty Partner.
- We are keeping NEXT Foundation informed as a potential contributor and investor but will hold off formal discussions with them about their role in the Project until we have Treaty Partner support for our approach.
- We expect to have an agreed Project structure (including governance) by the end of November 2020.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Tahr programme

- The reconsidered Tahr Control Operational Plan for 2020/21 was released on 1 September.
- The plan included subsequent engagement with the Game Animal Council on operational detail which has been positive, and well received from tahr stakeholders.
- DOC has undertaken more than 200 of the 250 hours of planned control inside management units, including 110 hours in the national parks’ management unit controlling all tahr.
- The spring weather continues to be a pattern of north-westerly weather and fronts with brief settled periods (1-2 days) which makes for tight weather windows in which control can occur.
- A significant amount of control data is available on the DOC website and further data on recent control will be verified and published next week.
- We have commissioned a research and monitoring strategy and held a workshop on this matter last Thursday (15 October) with engagement from Ngāi Tahu and tahr stakeholders.
- Planning is underway for the development of the Tahr Control Operational Plan for 2021/22.
- Surveys of tahr on Crown Pastoral Lease lands are underway using fixed wing aircraft and aerial photographs. DOC is liaising with Land Information New Zealand on this work.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Lake Ōhau fire

- The investigation of the Lake Ōhau fire cause and origin is still underway. Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) are leading this investigation, with DOC providing support as required. No provisional findings have been provided to us.
- FENZ as the fire authority are accountable for the Lake Ōhau fire site. Monitoring of the fire is now occurring to ensure that there are no reignitions. The monitoring work is being undertaken by DOC staff from the Twizel District. It is anticipated that monitoring will continue for the next few weeks.
- This week leaders from DOC, FENZ, LINZ, ECAN, Te Uru Rākau, Mackenzie District Council and Waitaki District Council met to discuss the recent fires (Pukaki Downs and Lake Ōhau). A key focus of the meeting was to identify short and long-term actions associated with fire and land management in the Mackenzie Basin. Actions included FENZ leading communication to communities on property management and FENZ establishing a land management forum focused on fire risk and management.
- The recovery stage of the Lake Ōhau fire is underway, with FENZ looking to address some of the land damage that occurred as part of the fire suppression. As part of this DOC are considering using a fire track across PCL (created during fire suppression) to become part of its infrastructure to support improved site management.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Mainstream media permits

- We recently received several complaints from media including New Zealand Geographic magazine, and the Media Freedom Committee; an organisation representing TVNZ, RNZ, MediaWorks, NZME, Stuff, Newsroom and the Spinoff.
- The complaints centre around the media's perceived rights to access public conservation land to film news stories; including using drones without prior authorisation from DOC (journalistic freedom), perceived inconsistencies in our approach to commercial and recreational media and filming activities, and a sense that we are trying to "manage" stories.
- Following a complaint from a reporter in July 2018, we reviewed our guidelines for processing requests from media to access public conservation land in breaking news situations.
- The purpose of the review was to assess existing permit guidelines and processes for media, and to provide certainty for news media who wanted to film on public conservation land in breaking news situations.
- The review found there was no formal policy for media; that in some cases media were given ad hoc exceptions to a formal authorisation, while in other instances they were required to obtain a one-off filming concession.
- The review determined that section 17O of the Conservation Act 1987 creates a strong presumption in favour of concessions; and that authorisation for media was a requirement.
- At the end of March 2019, we rolled out the "mainstream media permission process"; a streamlined process attempting to reduce churn and provide a better, quicker (up to 48 hours) and free service to DOC's mainstream media customers to support breaking news situations.
- In the next two weeks we will be undertaking a fresh review of the mainstream media permission process to consider the issues raised by the media, and to ensure we are supporting them appropriately within the current legislation.

- Key staff within DOC (Kahui Kaupapa Atawhai, permissions, legal, media, operations and compliance) will be involved in the review, and there will be engagement with stakeholders (media and treaty partners).

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Fleet sustainability

- EECA have supported us in a joint funding bid as we upgrade to a low carbon road vehicle fleet
- The joint funding enables us to replace 30 road vehicles with 30 new electric vehicles including the charging infrastructure
- The new vehicles are Hyundai Kona Electric vehicles – they have a range of 449km on one charge
- These vehicles will arrive in late February or March 2021.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Cape Kidnappers walking track re-opening Labour Weekend

- The DOC managed walking track at Cape Kidnappers will be re-opened Saturday 24 October.
- In January 2019 a section of cliff face collapsed and seriously injured two walkers on the beach access to this track. The track has been closed since that time, pending analysis of visitor risk of further rockfall onto the beach access to the track.
- The Qualitative Risk Analysis shows that the hazards to visitors on the beach are greater than previously thought.
- DOC, in collaboration with Hastings District Council, installed additional signage at the beach entry on 22 October advising the public of the risk of walking on the beach.
- The closure of the beach by Council and the track administered by DOC has been of considerable community interest.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

November

02 November	Public Service Day Awards, Wellington
03 November	Tuhoe Board hui, Taneatua
04 November	Brook Sanctuary, Nelson
05 November	Rangers' Reunion, Nelson
09 November	Te Hāpai Hāpori Spirit of Service Awards, Te Papa
11 November	Institute of Directors Breakfast meeting, KPMG Wellington
12 November	State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Silverstream Retreat
12 November	25 years of Zealandia, Government House
17 November	Tourism Summit Aotearoa, Te Papa
19 November	Blake Awards, Auckland
24 November	Forest and Bird/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington

December

10-11 December	NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington
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Proactively Released

4 Addendum

- No items this week

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- No items this week

Proactively Released



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 02 November 2020

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Proactively Released

1 Updates

We are planning to provide the next Status Report for the week of 16 November 2020. We will ensure you are alerted on the basis of 'no surprises' should there be any issues arising in the interim.

1.1 Auckland Visitor Centre Closure

- The central Auckland Visitor Centre has been closed since the start of COVID Alert Level 4 in March and will not re-open as a staffed site.
- The Visitor Centre is co-located with the Auckland i-SITE at Princes Wharf in downtown Auckland. Both the Visitor Centre and the i-SITE have been temporarily closed since March.
- DOC sublets the site from AIS Tourism Limited, who operate the i-SITE office. AIS have indicated that they intend to hibernate the Princes Wharf premises for the foreseeable future.
- Approximately 90% of visitors to the DOC Visitor Centre were international tourists. The reduction in overseas tourism due to COVID, along with the increase in online bookings, falling numbers of visitors pre-COVID and a continued decrease in revenue have meant that it is not feasible to maintain a staffed Visitor Centre for the remainder of the current sublease period, which is up for renewal in May 2023.
- Should AIS decide to re-open the Auckland i-SITE office in the future, the co-located DOC section will provide printed material only (i.e. brochures) as an unstaffed kiosk.
- We will retain a part-time staff position which will be available to support management of local enquiries and booking requests. This position will be based in one of the Auckland DOC office locations.
- Two affected staff (one full-time and one part-time) are being supported in identifying alternative employment opportunities within DOC.

Contact:

1.2 Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance scorecard

- Kotahitanga mō te Taiao is an alliance formed in the Top of the South Island by all six Councils, eight iwi and the Department of Conservation. The Alliance's focus is landscape-scale conservation projects that have environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits.
- In 2018-19 the Alliance co-designed a Strategy to achieve high-level outcomes that no participating entity could achieve alone. You launched this Strategy during Matariki in 2019.
- To help prioritise delivery of the Strategy, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Kotahitanga Alliance is developing measures of ecosystem health, iwi cultural values, social and economic wellbeing, to inform a scorecard of current state against what 'good' would look like. Retired TNC Conservation Planner, Greg Low is leading this work using an international framework and software.
- Measures have been completed for all terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.

- A framework has been developed for measuring social and economic wellbeing.
- A pilot project has been completed for assessing iwi cultural health, as well as measures for marine and estuarine ecosystems.
- The draft scorecard will be received by the Alliance in November 2020 to decide whether to publicly release it. At the summary level it shows:
 - a graphical depiction of current state with ecosystem health tending to be good in higher elevation, steep upland areas and poor in lowlands and valley floors.
 - Forest ecosystems across the landscape are highly impaired.
 - Most valley floor forests are small, unconnected remnants.
 - Small lowland streams, which are often spring fed, overall are in poor health.
 - Of the twelve other terrestrial ecosystem types health scores varied widely. Alpine ecosystems overall are in good health, while dune ecosystems are very poor.
- The ecosystem health measures reinforce the strategies developed by the Alliance for the major ecosystems and can be used to target investment to achieve the greatest gains for the region.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 IUCN announces Important Marine Mammal Areas in New Zealand waters

- The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is working through a global process to identify Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), akin to Important Bird Areas identified by BirdLife International.
- IMMAs are not formal protected areas but are designed to be considered in spatial management of activities which might impact marine mammals.
- A workshop was held in February 2020 in Perth, covering Australia and New Zealand, and DOC provided sightings and stranding data and a marine mammal expert to help inform the work.
- On 29 October, the IUCN released the results of this workshop, including nine IMMAs in New Zealand waters.
- These areas are generally consistent with our understanding of areas in New Zealand waters which are important to marine mammals.
- The new IMMAs also broadly overlap with existing areas where marine mammals are given special protection in NZ waters, including marine mammal sanctuaries, marine reserves, and areas of ecological importance where special rules apply under the seismic surveying code of conduct.
- The Central West Coast, North Island IMMA covers the area north of Cape Egmont and out to the 100-metre depth contour, which is different to the area where protections were recently implemented to protect Māui dolphins
- This difference may generate some media attention but is not substantially different to similar views put forward by the IUCN and others in the past, which have been considered during the Threat Management Plan review.
- We are developing communications materials to support any media interest.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Director-General Engagements

November

- 02 November Te Rā Ratonga Tūmatanui/Public Service Day awards, Parliament Wellington
- 03 November Tuhoē Board hui, Taneatua
- 04 November Brook Sanctuary, Nelson
- 05 November Rangers' Reunion, Nelson
- 11 November Institute of Directors Breakfast meeting, KPMG Wellington
- 09 November Te Hāpai Hāpori | Spirit of Service Awards, Te Papa
- 11 November Signing of NIWA agreement, DOC Wellington
- 12 November State Sector Leadership Team Retreat, Silverstream Retreat
- 12 November 25 years of Zealandia, Government House Wellington
- 17 November Tourism Summit Aotearoa, Te Papa
- 19 November Blake Awards Auckland
- 23 November MOU signing ceremony – Manaaki Whenua – Te Papa Atawhai, DOC Wellington
- 24/11/20 Forest & Bird/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington

December

- 10-11/12/20 NZ Conservation Authority DOC Wellington

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3 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:

- Department Weather Forecasting

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- No items this week

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