



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 2 September 2019**

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

## 1.1 RMA advocacy update

### Submissions

Huia Water Treatment Plant application – Titirangi, Auckland

- We will be lodging a submission opposing a resource consent application notified by Auckland Council, for the construction and operation of a new water treatment plant in the Waitakere Ranges.
- The proposal involves the clearance of over 3.5ha of ecologically significant vegetation. This includes nationally threatened taxa e.g., kauri, pohutakawa, kanuka, manuka. The site is also potentially significant habitat for long tailed bats (Threatened – Nationally Critical), a variety of lizard species, and Hochstetter’s frog (At-Risk – Declining). We consider the ecological impacts of the proposal to be significant.
- We recently met with the Titirangi Protection Group, who spoke to you at a recent Forest and Bird event about the proposal, and the group has shared information with us about the proposal.
- We are concerned that the ecological assessments understate the values at place. We also consider that the proposed compensation package is inadequate and does not compensate for the significant ecological effects of the activity. The construction methodology does not adequately manage the risk of spreading kauri dieback disease, which is prevalent in the area and almost certainly present across the site.
- Our submission will seek for these concerns to be addressed. The submission will be lodged on 2 September.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

### National Pest Management Plan funding

- We are meeting weekly with the new MPI Kauri Dieback Programme Manager. There will be a planning meeting on 4 September to progress a project plan for this financial year. We agree with MPI that there is work that can continue while funding for the full plan remains uncertain.
- [REDACTED]
- We are preparing a briefing for your meeting with Rangatira on kauri dieback funding on 11 September.

### Track work

- Planning is under way for this season’s track construction to begin as soon as tracks are sufficiently dry.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 1.3 Myrtle rust

- We are sponsoring the Myrtle Rust Symposium, to be held on 9-10 September.
- DOC's chief scientist is helping lead the symposium, and is presenting on the "New science plan and how we can all take action on myrtle rust."
- Our project manager for myrtle rust will present on DOC's work and how the science results could be used to help with myrtle rust management, including monitoring and surveillance.
- DOC will see MPI's Phase One Science Research for the first time, when it is presented and released at the symposium.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### 1.4 Differential Pricing Trial 2019/20 Season – progress update

- Work is in hand to operate year two of the Differential Pricing Trial.
- We are also undertaking related work to provide support for your decision on the use of differential pricing as a visitor management tool (i.e. potential to implement it on other walks, or for other accommodation). The 2018/19 trial showed a need for a clear base price for the Great Walks and substitute walks; for reviewing alternative methods for increasing the number of New Zealanders experiencing the Great Walks; and for evaluating the most effective differential rate.
- We intend to provide you with the evaluation of the trial in April 2020, and will seek your feedback early in the New Year on the content of that briefing.
- During the first year of the trial, we have been careful to avoid speculation on the effectiveness of the differential pricing. We propose to continue with this approach.
- Staff are available to meet and discuss with you the planning and reporting on the trial.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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## 2.2 Proposal for the return of kākāpō to the New Zealand mainland

- We are currently assessing potential future sites for kākāpō. As the availability of suitable predator-free islands is limited, other options are also being explored.
- Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in central Waikato, at 3,400 ha, is the largest predator-proof fenced area in the world. This presents a unique opportunity to accommodate a viable kākāpō population on the New Zealand mainland.
- The Kākāpō Recovery Group has considered the potential of Maungatautari for many years and agrees that it holds some potential as a kākāpō breeding site. An initial proposal has been prepared and will soon be presented to the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust.
- This initiative would achieve several research and advocacy goals outlined in the Kākāpō Recovery Plan 2016-2026 (in draft) and would deliver the first readily accessible kākāpō site that is open to the public.
- It would also represent a symbolic return of kākāpō to the New Zealand mainland, lending support to other initiatives, such as Predator Free 2050.
- We propose trialling the suitability of Maungatautari as a kākāpō site by first sending a small number of males to see how successfully they live and 'boom' there. This trial may take ten years or more to provide a reliable indication of breeding potential.
- If this first stage is successful, female kākāpō could be transferred at a later point. Ngāi Tahu, as kaitiaki of the kākāpō, support this proposal in the interests of kākāpō recovery, with the understanding that DOC is seeking to establish further kākāpō sites in the Ngāi Tahu rohe.
- Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust works in partnership with local iwi, Ngāti Korokī. Full consideration has been given to the needs of local iwi, who would be fully involved in all aspects of this initiative.
- All kākāpō at Maungatautari would remain part of the national population and all management decisions relating to the birds would continue to be at the discretion of DOC, in partnership with Ngāi Tahu.
- One of the main constraints of this initiative is that the fence around Maungatautari is not designed to keep kākāpō in. DOC is keen to work with stakeholders to resolve this or explore alternatives to ensure the safety of the birds prior to transfers taking place.
- To allow adequate time to fully prepare for a transfer, it is unlikely the first transfer would be before 2021 or 2022.
- This proposal aligns with the kākāpō expansion project, funded by the International Visitor Levy.

Contact: 

### 2.3 Maukahuka – Pest-free Auckland Island winter trial update

- The Maukahuka project was part of the early investment project announcement for the International Visitor Levy (IVL), receiving a funding boost of \$800,000 in 2019/20 to enable transition from feasibility to detailed operational planning later in the year.
- Discussions with key potential partners is ongoing for future support for this ambitious project.
- A 12-person research team from DOC set sail for Auckland Island on 17 August.
- Research will be carried out between to build on findings from last summer and inform future planning for the eradication of pigs, mice and cats from the island.
- The objectives of the winter programme include:
  - Testing the palatability and degradation of non-toxic versions of four potential bait types for cats.
  - Recording interactions of cats with baits, using a grid of trail cameras spaced at 500 m across an area of 1300 ha.
  - Trapping and GPS tracking an additional sample of cats in Carnley Harbour, in preparation for a toxic bait trial in winter 2020.
  - Observing pig behaviour and the lead-in time required to attract pigs to a feed site in winter.
  - Monitoring the mouse population to better understand the response of mice to the large tussock mast at Auckland Island this year.
  - Assessing proposed sites for infrastructure for year-round suitability.
- Two Ngāi Tahu representatives will visit the island during the pickup voyage in late September.

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

### 2.4 NZ Defence Force, Iwi, Biomarine and DOC protecting fairy terns

- In partnership with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), iwi and Biomarine, we have created large shell patches to encourage tara iti/New Zealand fairy tern nesting at Papakanui Spit, at the mouth of the Kaipara Harbour.
- Tara iti are critically endangered, with a population totalling only 35 to 39 birds.
- They nest at four main breeding sites in Auckland and Northland, one of which is within the South Kaipara Air Weapons Range, which includes Papakanui Spit.
- 50 Tonnes of crushed oyster shell was supplied free of charge by Biomarine, and delivered to a remote breeding site by Royal New Zealand Air Force helicopters, with NZDF providing ground vehicles and crew to support the operation over two days.
- DOC rangers, NZDF personnel and kaitiaki of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara used the shells to build safer nesting sites for tara iti.
- This project has been a prime example of partners coming together to support DOC's threatened species work. A joint media release has been issued. The local office will liaise with your office on any future media opportunities.

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

### 2.5 Waste to Energy plant proposal - Hokitika

- A proposal to construct a "Waste to Energy" plant, or "energy recovery facility" on the West Coast has received considerable public attention over the last 24 plus months.

- Renew Energy Limited (REL) and its associated businesses have engaged with local and central government throughout much of 2018 and 2019 on the proposed plant's location, and Hokitika has now been settled on as the favoured location, should plans come to fruition.
- Funding has in the past been granted to REL by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to allow the commissioning of feasibility studies around the proposed plant. Development West Coast and local councils have contributed both funds and staff time towards the development of the concept.
- REL applied for funding from the Provincial Growth Fund to begin work on the waste to energy plant, and was successful, with a \$350,000 grant committed to the project. This grant was later withdrawn after a REL shareholder was referred to the Serious Fraud Office.
- In August, REL submitted another application to the Provincial Growth Fund for a loan of \$10m in order to construct waste 'bailing stations' at eight locations around the South Island - Nelson, Blenheim, Kaikoura, Christchurch (3) Ashburton and Timaru. These would serve as feeder infrastructure for the proposed facility on the West Coast.
- REL sees the building of the bailing stations as a critical step towards allowing the energy recovery facility to proceed, although the current application does not request funding towards the facility itself.
- The public has closely monitored progress of REL's plans, with heated and widely attended public meetings held on the West Coast in July and August to discuss various issues arising from the plans.
- DOC will maintain a watching brief as this proposal evolves, and will provide you with regular updates as more details become available.

Contact: 

## 2.7 Update on Predator Free Rakiura (Stewart Island)

- The Predator Free Rakiura (PFR) project received 12 months of funding from MBIE's Provincial Growth Fund, which has enabled a project manager to be employed through to 30 November 2019.
- PFR also applied to MBIE's Provincial Growth Fund for a further three years funding for community liaison support, ongoing project management and administration. The lead for the application was Southland District Council on behalf of the PFR Leadership Group.
- The three-year bid was not approved by MBIE because it was considered there are alternate, more closely aligned funding streams now available for Landscape scale projects, such as from DOC or PF2050. This information was communicated to the council in the week of 26 August.
- The PFR Leadership Group wishes to keep the work momentum going, post the successful Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing on Rakiura. DOC is looking to support funding to retain the project manager while a long-term funding solution is sought. Other organisations may also contribute.
- The focus of the project manager's work is to progress technical feasibility work to inform the preparation of a business case to access funding.
- Environment Southland is starting feasibility work on biosecurity aspects. Community engagement work is to continue.
- We will provide you with updates as the project progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Zealandia named as one of the world's greatest places by TIME magazine

- Zealandia has been named as one of the 2019 World's Greatest Places by TIME magazine.
- TIME's World's Greatest Places is an annual top 100 list, and is made up of places to visit, stay and eat.
- We work closely with Zealandia to support the sanctuary's conservation efforts. The urban pest-free sanctuary has assisted significantly in the reintroduction and recovery of several species for the Wellington region. A recent example was the translocation of a population of tītipounamu/rifleman in March.
- Zealandia is leading a Sanctuary to Sea initiative with local stakeholders, which aims to restore waterways and forest connectivity in the Kaiwharawhara water catchment. DOC also supports this initiative, as well as running a pilot to see how businesses might best engage with conservation work of this kind.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.9 Vandalism at Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge

- Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge track is a gateway destination, with approximately 70,000 visitors per year. Assets at Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge have been damaged recently, including an iron ranger and interpretation panel at the eastern end of the walking track.
- The assets were removed by DOC staff, and the site tidied. Work is now under way to plan appropriate remediation, which will include the opportunity to review and update the content of the interpretation panel, in consultation with tangata whenua and the Manawatu Gorge Governance Group.

- Vandalism is an ongoing problem at this site; stoat traps set near the walking track monitored by a community group have been repeatedly damaged, lost or stolen over the last six months. A Pou that was part of the Te Hononga Maunga carvings at the eastern entrance was also damaged earlier this year.
- We are supporting Rangitāne o Tamaki Nui a Rua, who are deeply aggrieved by the vandalism.
- Any decisions regarding security at the site will be made by the Manawatu Gorge Governance Group.

Contact:

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### September

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

#### October

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

#### November

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

#### December

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

### 4 Addendum

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

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Kākā release on Abel Tasman coast
- Te Hoiere Pelorus catchment restoration announcement



Department of  
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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 9 September 2019**

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

Date:        /        /

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions.

### Submissions

Rotorua Lakes Council Plan Change 3 Significant Natural Areas:

- On 28 August we lodged a submission on Plan Change 3 of the Rotorua Lakes Council – Significant Natural Areas.
- The plan change proposed changes to the mapping and scheduling of significant natural areas (SNAs) in the district. It did not propose any changes to the objectives, policies or rules relating to significant natural areas.
- Our submission identified concerns with some of the proposed changes, specifically where there was removal of SNAs where there is an existing covenant or other legal protection.
- The submission also supported, opposed or requested amendments to specific SNA mapping changes.

Newton property development, Alexandra, Central Otago:

- On 28 August we lodged a submission with Central Otago District Council opposing the placement of a house two metres from the boundary of the Otago Central Rail Trail Recreation Reserve – an iconic destination.
- Our submission identified that having a house so close to boundary resulted in the loss of the rural amenity experience of cyclists using this part of the rail trail and will compromise DOC's ability to spray weeds and undertake pest animal control.

### Further Submissions

Whangarei District Council Urban Services Plan Change:

- On 3 July we lodged a submission on the Whangarei District Council Plan Changes 881, 147 and 148 requesting the addition of provisions relating to the management of kauri dieback, particularly regarding earthworks.
- On 28 August we lodged a further submission on the proposed plan changes, opposing requests for inappropriately permissive policies for infrastructure and in support of better NZCPS implementation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

- DOC will be discussing preliminary results of a review of our germplasm work at the myrtle rust science symposium on 9–10 September.
- We have identified 37 native myrtle taxa that require germplasm storage. To date, 29 out of the 37 taxa have at least one collection in the New Zealand Indigenous Flora Seed Bank (NZIFSB).
- Approximately 60% of the required myrtle seed collections have been collected, equating to 213 collections out of the 356 required to represent genetic diversity.
- The next step is to review the quality of these collections to ensure the seed is viable and there is sufficient quantity as collections can vary with seed availability, time of collection and across regions and years.
- Following the myrtle rust symposium we will provide you with a more detailed briefing.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 1.3 Kauri dieback

- The latest kauri dieback update was provided at a meeting with you on 6 September.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Tiakina Ngā Manu

- After a frustrating month of weather delays throughout August, our 2019 mast response campaign is finally back in the air.
- In the week of 2 September, the Clinton-Eglinton aerial 1080 operation was completed, and Abbey Rocks were pre-fed.
- Both operations were flown using the more intensive method we adopted after earlier operations produced lower than desired rodent kill rates. We are now flying every area twice, to eliminate any gaps in bait coverage. This is slower and more expensive than the method used in previous masts but has proved necessary due to the extreme conditions occurring in 2019.
- At this point, threats to staff and contractors have been at manageable levels, although this risk could change at any time. Harassment and misinformation through social media remain widespread.
- Weather delays remain a very high risk for our 2019 mast response programme. Weather patterns are forecast to be unstable throughout spring, due to “sudden stratospheric warming”, an unusual phenomenon only recorded twice previously in New Zealand history.
- The current weather forecast suggests we will be able to continue flying operations in the southern South Island early next week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes water quality issues – follow up report

- A previous update on this issue was provided to you in the Status Report of 12 August.
- On 30 August we attended the hui for statutory agencies hosted by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT) and Arowhenua rūnaka.
- In attendance were representatives from Environment Canterbury, Ashburton District Council (including Mayor Donna Favel and Councillor Stuart Wilson), LINZ, TRoNT and Te Taumutu Rūnanga.
- Participants acknowledged that the hui was a first step and the current farmers need to be fully involved in the solution and the next steps.
- The hui identified some obvious work, such as water edge setbacks on farm areas, and set the challenge on what else can be done collectively to reach a better outcome.
- It was clear during discussions that, to achieve Arowhenua’s desired environmental outcomes, significant change may be required to current farming practices in the Ashburton Basin, either voluntarily or by regulation. This could include complete exclusion of farming from some areas, change of farming type, and de-intensification of currently utilised farmland.

- These changes may require some form of compensation packages for current leaseholders and freeholders.
- There remains some adverse publicity risk from the farming community if the outcome is seen to be 'anti farming' (noting that the water quality report has already generated some low-level push back from farmers in the Ashburton basin).
- To address a longer-term solution, TRoNT proposed a multi-agency (including DOC) working group to review all options and identify a recommended course of action. This would then enable all stakeholders to seek funding and/or undertake required work.
- We have committed staff and financial resource towards working together. At this time, we do not know what this will look like or what DOC's role will be.
- TRoNT's aim is to have a recommended proposal ready for implementation by December 2019.
- We will keep you informed as this progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Destination Framework plans (Milford, Mackenzie, Tongariro)

- Stage two of the Milford Opportunities Project has been approved for funding through the International Visitor Tourism and Conservation Levy.
- For the Mackenzie / Aoraki destination plan, we are engaging with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Waihao, and Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, to understand and agree how we could work best with our Treaty Partner.
- The project work on fundamental elements, such as development of vision and aspirations for Mackenzie / Aoraki, has been paused until we finalise how we undertake co-development with our Treaty Partner.
- The Tongariro long-term visitor plan is progressing steadily.
- Funding to undertake stage one of the Tongariro plan, including vision and aspirations, has been received from MBIE.
- A draft structure for Crown/iwi engagement has been co-created and is currently being circulated for feedback among hapū.
- DOC, at the request of iwi, are undertaking a cultural literature review to inform the development of vision and aspirations.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 Progressing the management of Piopiotahi through the development of the Milford Opportunities Project

- Following funding approval from the International Visitor Tourism and Conservation Levy, the Working Group are developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) documents.
- The RFP will cover procurement of programme management and planning specialists.
- In early September, the Working Group will provide the Request for Proposal documents to the Project Governance Group to approve.
- The programme management and planning specialists will guide and advise the Working Group and Governance Group across several research briefs in order to produce a coherent Masterplan document.

- The procurement process will be completed in early December, when a preferred supplier(s) will be approved by the Governance Group.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 DOC Principal Scientist announced as a finalist in the 2019 Women of Influence Awards

- In the 2019 Women of Influence awards 371 women were nominated across 10 categories, and 82 have now been announced as finalists. Entrants were judged on the impact of their actions and the influence they have exerted.
- Dr Elaine Murphy, a Principal Science Advisor in the Biodiversity Threats Unit has been announced as a finalist in the Science, Innovation & Health category of the Awards. The judges have said that Dr Murphy's nomination clearly demonstrated the breadth and the importance of her work.
- Dr Murphy has an extensive background in predator ecology and control, including involvement in developing new lures, deterrents, monitoring devices, toxins and delivery devices for predator control. In addition, Dr Murphy has also been involved in trialling movement-sensitive remote cameras to monitor both animal pests and birds before and after 1080 pest control operations.
- The Women of Influence 2019 winners will be announced at the Awards Dinner at SkyCity on 24 October.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Update on 9Wire innovation programme - first group of innovations selected

- 9Wire is the new environmental innovation programme led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) with DOC, Ministry of Primary Industries, the Ministry for the Environment, Auckland Council, Callaghan Institute and the Ākina Foundation as partners.
- From 240 applications, WWF and partners have now selected the top 10 innovations that show immediate promise. Three of the selected innovations, if they proceed, would have benefits for biodiversity.
- Formal public announcements will likely be made in October. We will liaise with your office about these announcements and any Ministerial opportunities as soon as dates are known.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 Update on National Plan of Action (NPOA) Seabirds

- You and Minister Nash met with the Seabird Advisory Group (SAG) on 28 August.
- You agreed that further input from SAG should be sought with a view to fine-tuning and improving the current draft NPOA Seabirds.
- DOC and Fisheries New Zealand have developed a new timeline to allow for further input from SAG, while minimising the flow-on delay to finalising the plan:
  - 17 Sept – SAG meeting to discuss refinements to draft NPOA Seabirds

- Early Oct – revised draft documents to Ministers for approval. The revised draft will include changes broadly agreed by SAG, and you will be notified of suggested changes where views differed between SAG members.
  - 24 Oct – Intention to publicly consult considered by Cabinet Environment Committee
  - early Nov-mid Dec – public consultation
  - mid Feb 2020 – final documents to Ministers for approval
  - March 2020 – public announcement
- This timeline has little room for flexibility due to the need to avoid public consultation over the Christmas-New Year period.

Contact: [REDACTED]

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

- We are finalising a draft New Zealand proposal to list Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) on Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and a CMS “Concerted Action” or action plan.
- The draft documents were sent out for consultation domestically (government agencies, Ngāi Tahu, NGOs, fishing industry) and internationally (Range States, NGOs, Inter-Governmental Organisations).
- We have received constructive feedback. In addition, both Chile and Australia have indicated a willingness to co-sponsor the proposal and action plan.
- We will submit the final listing proposal and action plan to the CMS Secretariat by 19 September 2019, for a decision at the 13th CMS Conference of Parties in February 2020.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.9 New Zealand National Report - Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species

- New Zealand is required to submit a national report on our implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) every three years.
- Last week DOC submitted the CMS New Zealand National Report, following wide engagement with other agencies. The report follows a set template, reporting on current work programmes.
- The report will be analysed by the CMS Secretariat and the results compiled into a report on implementation by all States Parties for consideration at the Conference of Parties in February 2020.
- This report is unlikely to reach media attention.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.10 Participation at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020

- We are beginning preparations for attendance at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, being held in Marseille, France, 11–19 June 2020. The Congress takes place every four years and is expected to bring together over 15,000 government and civil society conservation experts to influence global conservation policy and practice.
- In late July, DOC attended an IUCN Oceania regional preparatory meeting. In late August, we co-sponsored two draft IUCN motions, one proposed by France (Climate Change and Biodiversity) and one proposed by Australia (Health and Nature). We are also exploring options to promote our Predator Free 2050 programme at the Congress.
- There is an opportunity for you to attend the first part of the Congress, which would include the opening ceremony, Ministerial meeting and high-level dialogues. We will liaise with your office regarding your interest and availability.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.11 DOC Annual Report process

- The DOC Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2019 is in the final stages of production, which involves audit and publication. We expect the Independent Auditor's Report to be provided by 30 September 2019.
- The Annual Report will be published and tabled in the House. The final date for tabling the Annual Report is within 15 working days of the audit report being provided. The intended date for the tabling is therefore Tuesday 22 October.
- Your office is responsible for tabling the Annual Report in the House, but you are not responsible for approving the content, as this is a report from the Director-General.
- The Annual Report refers to supporting technical reports and a population-based survey, which will be made public on the DOC website at the same time as the Annual Report is released.
- The technical reports are part of the status and trend information for DOC's outcomes. This helps to tell the story about the factors impacting on conservation values, and whether the conservation activities being undertaken are making a difference.
- This will be the first year that the Annual Report will not be published in the bound format used to date, as a step towards reducing the environmental footprint created by professional printing.
- We can provide you with briefing information on the Annual Report content, the technical reports, and the DOC Survey of New Zealanders, as required.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.12 Conservation Week

- Conservation Week 2019 is approaching and staff are working to ensure that:
  - Conservation Week is highly visible across the country
  - We are connecting with our stakeholders and acknowledging the conservation work being done in our communities
  - There are a good range of events and activities to engage and inspire the public to take action.
- Visibility of Conservation Week will increase significantly in the next two weeks with billboards across nine different cities/towns, posters on the streets and at

bus stops in 14 cities/towns, advertisements in four major shopping malls, and artwork on the back of buses in Auckland. There will be radio advertising on The Breeze and More FM, as well as videos and still advertisements on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

- Work done by our communities will be acknowledged at events as well as through media, social media, and internal channels.
- More than 130 public events are listed on the website so far. We expect this to reach at least 150 events with an additional 100 activities by private groups such as schools, businesses, scout groups, etc. There will be events including plantings, tours, talks, aversion training, photo competitions, quiz nights, trapping workshops, and snorkel days.
- There are also art exhibitions in Dunedin, Whangarei, Tauranga and Wellington, and a science expo in Nelson.
- Air New Zealand has developed billboards, adshells and an airbridge decal. They are promoting the week in Kia Ora magazine, Green Team events in Auckland and Queenstown, a TV commercial and social media. Toyota has two new Kiwi Guardian medals and influencers on social media. It is also likely that the 50,000th Kiwi Guardian medal will be earned during Conservation Week. Kiwibank has a Zoo event, screensavers on staff computers, displays in four bank branches, and Fanimals episodes on TV.
- Your office will be supplied with a full list of events and activities immediately prior to Conservation Week.

### **Conservation Week stakeholder functions**

Final planning is underway for the nine stakeholder events being held across New Zealand. You have confirmed attendance at three of these events:

- Auckland – 16 September at SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's. This event has a focus on the Hauraki Gulf, and the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan. The event will also include speeches from Lou Sanson, Director-General of DOC, and Riley Hathaway, Young Ocean Explorer.
- Christchurch – 17 September at the International Antarctic Centre. This will include presentations focused around the interface between tourism and conservation, and this year's theme from Arapata Reuben of Ngāi Tūāhuriri. Three awards will also be presented at this event to Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust, Summit Road Society, and to Alison Evans to acknowledge her work on the Okuti River Project.
- Wellington – 18 September at Te Papa. Speakers include the CEO of Scouts New Zealand, in recognition that the Scouting Association started Conservation Week in 1969. Two young women will speak from a Te Ao Māori and younger generation perspective on conservation into the future. This event will include presentation of the Loder Cup, and a prize for the Scout who won a competition to design a new Conservation Week badge for active Scouts to earn by taking part in Conservation Week activities.
- Briefings for each of these events have been provided to your office.

Contact:

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### September

- 11 September Meeting with Min Jones, Bellamys
- 14 September Conservation Week function, New Plymouth
- 16 September Conservation Week Function, Auckland
- 17 September Conservation Week function, Antarctic Centre, Christchurch
- 17 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch, DOC
- 18 September Conservation Week function, Transport World, Invercargill
- 20 September Mackenzie CE Forum and hui, Timaru
- 28–29 Sept. Rakiura Maori land Settlement weekend hui, Rakiura

#### October

- 1 October DOC ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 2–4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui
- 8 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton
- 9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
- 12–13 October Copland Valley with Marc England, CE Genesis Energy, Copland Valley
- 14 October Joint NIWA/DOC SLT hui, DOC Wellington
- 31 October Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
- 31 October The Aotearoa Circle Partners Hui, Auckland TBC

#### November

- 11 November Joint FENZ/DOC SLT hui, Fire and Emergency, the Terrace, Wellington
- 19 November Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui, MfE, Wellington
- 23–14 Nov. Cropp River visit with NIWA, Cropp River
- 28–29 Nov. State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge Martinborough

#### December

- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

### 4 Addendum

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

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Whakapapa Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Announcement - the Waitaiki Historic Reserve Management Plan
- One Billion Trees Programme



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 16 September 2019**

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

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

Productively released

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri dieback

- We are continuing to engage with MPI to progress the work required to advance the National Pest Management Plan.
- We will provide further updates as information becomes available.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

- The Myrtle Rust Symposium was held in Auckland on 9-10 September.
- DOC's chief scientist, Ken Hughey, helped lead the symposium and presented on the new myrtle rust strategic science plan.
- MPI's Phase One Science Research was released highlighting the following:
  - Susceptibility to myrtle rust was shown in Manuka and Kanuka, with low levels of resistance across several regions.
  - Ramarama is showing severe susceptibility, similar to species in Australia that are now going locally extinct.
  - Under a moderate myrtle rust occupancy scenario all native myrtle species occur within the predicted myrtle rust zone. For example, Ramarama, swamp maire and northland white rātā have over 94% of their ranges in the predicted myrtle rust zone.
  - Germplasm collection, fungicide, endophyte biocontrol and resistance breeding were identified as potential management options.
  - Māori were identified as key players for any future monitoring, surveillance and germplasm programmes.
- We will use this research to inform how we will manage myrtle rust and myrtle species, and we will provide you an updated briefing in the next month.

Contact: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy

There are no RMA items to report this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Ngāti Hikairo crowding concerns on Mount Ruapehu

- Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro has formally written to DOC and Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa (the post settlement governance entity for Ngāti Tūwharetoa) to share the hapū's concerns about increasing crowding at Whakapapa Village and Whakapapa ski field. Their correspondence was also forwarded to Te Pae Maunga (the committee formed under the Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Ltd concession) chair Sir Michael Cullen.
- Ngāti Hikairo's concerns are related to overnight car parking by ski lodge users, the unsustainable number of people passing through Whakapapa Village, and the stress being placed on infrastructure such as the wastewater system and fuel storage.
- Ngāti Hikairo indicated the number of visitors at present levels belittles the mana and mauri of the maunga and is offensive to the cultural values of Ngāti Hikairo and Ngāti Tūwharetoa. They have requested a working group be established to help mitigate these issues and to manage numbers more sustainably on the maunga.
- DOC is currently exploring ways to address capacity and crowding issues in Tongariro National Park, including at Whakapapa Village and on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, taking into consideration what this impact means for whanau, hapū and iwi.
- We will work with Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa to ensure all hapū and iwi concerns can be heard and addressed and will keep your office updated as required.

Contact:

### 2.2 Mount Ruapehu – changes to Bruce Road Management over the winter season

- Icy conditions on the Bruce Road between Whakapapa Village and Whakapapa ski field led to several vehicles being abandoned on the road overnight on Friday, 6 September. Roading contractors and police were required to aid efforts to rescue occupants and assist in moving vehicles blocking the road on Saturday.
- We understand some ski club members have developed an expectation that the Bruce Road will remain open on Friday night, irrespective of conditions or safety risks. We recognise management of the road needs to be considered for people arriving at night, and we are undertaking work to change behaviour of ski club visitors around arrival times, especially when snow or bad weather is expected overnight.
- In the interim, the Bruce Road 'uphill' barrier will be closed on Friday nights when snow or bad weather is expected, and an appropriate safety message will be displayed on variable message signs in the village and at the barrier. We will also ensure this closure information is posted via the Ruapehu Alpine Lifts website/app before close of business on a Friday.
- We are working with ski clubs and Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association as we make these changes, but it is likely members will be displeased with this approach.
- We will keep your office informed of further work taking place to manage health and safety risks on the Bruce Road as it is completed.

Contact:

### 2.3 Outcome of international negotiations on the new global biodiversity goals, 27–30 August 2019

- The first formal international negotiations on the new global biodiversity goals, to be adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity next year, were held in Nairobi over 27-30 August. DOC attended as part of the New Zealand delegation, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Parties worked on the structure of the new global goals and the forward work program for the negotiations. [REDACTED]
- While at the meeting, New Zealand officials met with various non-government groups, and were presented with a hard-copy book of letters from Awaaz supporters to the Prime Minister, seeking her support for a 50% global protected areas target.
- The next formal negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity goals will take place in Kunming, China on 24-28 February 2020. There are a number of topic-specific consultations scheduled before then, including at the next major CBD scientific and technical conference (SBSTTA-23) in November 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 PRISMSS and SPREP meeting update

- DOC is now a partner of the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS). This presents a real opportunity to engage in the region where support is needed.
- We were invited to join PRISMSS because of our internationally recognised expertise in predator control, invasive species management and threatened species relocation and restoration. Our current secondee to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is developing the PRISMSS training programme for national invasive species coordinators, to be held later this year in Apia.
- The Director-General signed onto PRISMSS on behalf of DOC during the recent SPREP Meeting (3-6 September, Apia).
- This biennial meeting brought together Ministers, Chief Executives and officials from SPREP's 26 member countries and territories. The high-level segment saw the adoption of a Ministerial Communique (agreed by all those present except the US), and panellists acknowledged that climate change, ocean health and marine pollution are all interlinked and have profound impacts on the sustainable development of the Pacific region. Ministers recognised that the natural environment plays an important role in climate regulation and supports resilience of local communities. They also reaffirmed that the Pacific region's most important natural resource is the ocean and its marine resources and ecosystems.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

- The 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) took place from 17-28 August in Geneva. DOC is the lead agency for CITES, and New Zealand was represented by four officials (three from DOC and one from the Ministry of Fisheries). It was an extremely busy meeting with over 100 agenda items, 57 listing proposals and over 2500 participants.
- Overall, there were 26 successful new listings on the CITES Appendices (including the mako shark), seven existing listings were strengthened, and there were six down-listings (all Australian species that were listed early on but are not threatened by trade). New Zealand actively supported the successful listing of a number of the new species on the CITES Appendices including giraffes, reptiles, guitar fish, wedgefish, and sea cucumbers.
- A focus of the New Zealand delegation was to ensure decisions can be readily implemented in New Zealand and the region.
- Discussion on the regulation of domestic ivory markets resulted in new reporting requirements for Parties that have not closed their domestic ivory markets, rather than a requirement to regulate. Australia used the opportunity to announce that the Federal Government was committed to work with State Governments to regulate its domestic ivory market.
- The Oceania region had a very high profile at this CoP, with many excellent interventions from all Parties, active participation across working groups, and a series of very fruitful regional meetings chaired by New Zealand (as Oceania representative on the Standing Committee). We used the opportunity to identify priority actions for the region over the next three years.
- We are now preparing to update the Trade in Endangered Species Act Schedules in line with the amendments to the CITES Appendices, which come into force 90 days after the CoP. We will provide you with a briefing on this process.

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

## 2.6 Northern Coromandel campground upgrades

- Multiple northern Coromandel campgrounds are being upgraded to bring them in line with campground standards.
- This will result in some campground closures over the 2019/20 summer season.
- The part closure of the popular Waikawau Bay campground, the first to be upgraded, will have an impact on people expecting to stay over the summer holiday period, particularly those who return to the campground each year.
- We are providing recommendations for alternative accommodation options for these people.
- Campground revenue over this period will be impacted.

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

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### September

- 16 September Conservation Week Function, Auckland
- 17 September Conservation Week function, Antarctic Centre, Christchurch
- 17 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Christchurch, DOC
- 18 September Conservation Week function, Transport World, Invercargill
- 20 September Mackenzie CE Forum and hui, Timaru
- 28–29 Sept. Rakiura Maori land Settlement weekend hui, Rakiura

#### October

- 1 October DOC ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
- 2–4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui
- 8 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton
- 9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
- 12–13 October Copland Valley with Marc England, CE Genesis Energy, Copland Valley
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#### December

- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

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

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Wellington City Council World Heritage proposal for the Wellington Parliamentary Precinct
- Progressing the World Heritage portfolio
- Joint DOC/Environment Canterbury umbrella braided river funding agreement
- Te Hoiere Pelorus Landscape Restoration Project – announcement update
- Conservation Illumination

Proactively released



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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 23 September 2019**

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

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

Productively released

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri Dieback

### Track Work

- Materials have now been shipped to Aotea/Great Barrier Island and track upgrade works are under way where tracks are dry enough. Ten tracks are being upgraded to help prevent the spread of kauri dieback disease. The work is scheduled to be completed by December 2019.
- Three tracks in Whangarei have been closed for kauri dieback work and will reopen later this year.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Update on Mangapurua Track remediation works

- The Mangapurua section of the Mountain to Sea trail remains closed while we undertake works to ensure it is safe for both cyclists and walkers.
- Since the fatality in March, we have identified substantial work required to address significant landslip issues and fall hazards associated with six different bluff systems.
- An independent contractor is currently completing a full Geotech report assessing the stability of the track. We expect the report will identify additional work to further improve the safety of the track for users. We are also considering several new safety measures, including installation of barriers along bluff sections and improvements to signage.
- Given the complexity and remoteness of this work, the Mangapurua Track will remain closed until we can confirm it is completely safe for users, which is likely to be by 1 December at the earliest.
- We are keeping concessionaires and stakeholders informed on progress and met with them on 19 September to outline work to date, and the reasons for delays to opening the track.
- There is a chance that concessionaires will share concerns with you about the ramifications for their businesses due to the Mangapurua section of the Mountain to Sea trail remaining closed at the start of the summer season. We can provide key messages to your office, should you require them.
- Coronial and WorkSafe investigations are ongoing and we will inform your office once we know the outcome of these. We will also inform you once the Mangapurua is reopened.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 High-demand hut price review 2019

- This item updates you on DOC's price review for high-demand non-Great Walk huts for the 2019/20 season. This is the first time we have updated you on this topic.
- We identified bookable huts whose prices have not changed since 2010, but which have grown in demand, with similar summer occupancy rates to the huts on the Great Walks (60% - 100%).

- From 1 October this year, five serviced huts and all serviced alpine huts will increase in price. Children's prices will remain half the adult price and increase accordingly.
- With the current mix of huts available, DOC's hut network continues to cater for all budgets. Basic (free), Standard (\$5), non-bookable Serviced (\$15), and Great Walk huts (various prices) will remain unchanged this season.
- We have consulted with external stakeholders, including Federated Mountain Clubs and the NZ Alpine Club. A media release notifying the public will be released on the week of 23 September.
- The price increase is to better reflect the value of the experience and improve the cost recovery at these huts, without significantly reducing demand.

**New adult prices from 1st October 2019:**

Hut category	Hut	Location	Current Price	Price from 1 October 2019
High Demand Serviced Huts	Angelus Hut	Nelson Lakes	\$20	\$30
	Siberia Hut	Mt Aspiring	\$15	\$20
	Welcome Flat Hut	South Westland		
	Peach Cove Hut	Whangarei		
	Pinnacles Hut	Hauraki		
Serviced Alpine Huts	Mueller Hut	Aoraki	\$36	\$45
	Kelman Hut, Plateau Hut, Tasman Saddle Hut	Aoraki	\$30 - \$36	\$40
	Brewster Hut, Liverpool Hut / Barron Saddle Hut, Empress Hut / Almer Hut, Chancellor Hut	Mt Aspiring / Aoraki / South Westland	\$15 - \$20	\$20
Non-Bookable and Lower Demand Serviced Huts (83 huts)			\$15	No change
Standard Huts (431 huts)			\$5	No change
Basic Huts (355 huts)			Free	No change

- We are happy to meet you should you require further details.

Contact:

### 2.3 National Plan of Action Seabirds - update

- The Seabird Advisory Group met on 17 September to discuss proposed refinements to the draft 2019 NPOA Seabirds.
- The meeting was generally positive and discussed areas where more detail was desired.
- Agreement was reached on some refinements to the draft NPOA, but there remain areas of disagreement with some of the proposed text, some mitigation standards and some of the modelling inputs that will inform implementation (e.g. Vision, the Set Net Standard and the application of risk ratios).

- DOC and Fisheries New Zealand will provide you and Hon Nash, Minister of Fisheries, with revised draft documents on 3 October to allow for consideration by Cabinet ENV Committee on 24 October, with public consultation proposed to start shortly after. Any outstanding areas of disagreement will be identified in the cover briefing.
- This timeline would enable the release of a final NPOA Seabirds in the first half of 2020, after which work to refresh the NPOA Sharks would be initiated.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.4 Implementation of the Collaborative Community Education Model (CCEM)**

- You have requested further information on the implementation of the Collaborative Community Education Model (CCEM).
- CCEM is a tested framework for community-based conservation education. Based on the successful Kids Restore the Kepler programme in Te Anau, it was piloted and researched through Kids Greening Taupō, and re-tested in a larger urban environment with the Town Belt Kaitiaki initiative in Dunedin.
- CCEM projects use a shared vision to connect clusters of schools with partners who have common goals and values (e.g. councils, iwi, conservation groups, and local businesses). These partners then support young people to lead meaningful biodiversity projects within local communities. Wherever possible, Enviroschools facilitators are involved.
- We are working with local partners to establish new CCEM projects in five communities. When these projects launch, they will provide opportunities for you to see a CCEM project in action and to meet the young people, teachers and partners involved. We will liaise with your office as opportunities for you to attend such events arise.
- The Christchurch Otāutahi project is currently being established and the project has proposed a hui for late November. The shape and timing of this event will be determined by student leaders once a student leadership team is in place. We will keep you updated as this project progresses.
- CCEM programmes in Wairarapa, Porirua and Rotorua are in the design phase of their programmes. It is likely that local launch events will be held in term one, 2020. A Taranaki programme is currently in the scoping stage and will likely launch in term two, 2020.
- We are preparing a briefing to update you on all of DOC's education work in the final week of October.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## **2.5 Publication: The thirty-year conservation revolution in New Zealand: an introduction (David Towns, Charles Daugherty, Keith Broome, Susan Timmins and Mick Clout)**

- A special issue of the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* reviews changes in NZ biodiversity conservation over the last thirty years.
- The paper summarises the lead up to the establishment of the Department of Conservation in 1987. It traces the changes in how biodiversity conservation has been viewed over these decades and how DOC has approached its biodiversity management. It also refers to earlier independent reviews that were quite direct in describing some of the financial and capacity challenges DOC has faced.
- It reports progress in protecting native species and habitats, and in successfully eradicating pests from increasingly challenging large areas. It notes the quiet

revolution of Māori, as tangata whenua have become increasingly involved in the guardianship of biodiversity. The paper describes the shift towards species management within large habitats, and how in some cases this is being facilitated through substantial philanthropic investment.

- Subsequent papers in the special issue outline some of the successes and failures in biodiversity conservation over the past 30 years, how conservation is now conducted at landscape scales and in urban areas, and how attitudinal changes to the conservation of native biodiversity have spurred audacious new goals.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### September

28–29 Sept Rakiura Maori land Settlement weekend hui, Rakiura

#### October

1 October DOC ENGO Forum, Conservation House, Wellington  
2–4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui  
8 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton  
9 October Aotearoa Circle, Auckland  
12–13 October Copland Valley with Marc England, CE Genesis Energy, Copland Valley  
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19 November Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wellington  
23–24 Nov Cropp River visit with NIWA – John Morgan & Rob Murdoch, Cropp River  
28–29 Nov State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Martinborough

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3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club  
17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

## 4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Launch of the new Predator Trapping Guide, 14-15 October
- Invitation to attend Te Pukenga Atawhai 18 to 22 November, Te Araroa

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 30 September 2019**

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

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

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA Advocacy Update

### Appeals

Greater Wellington Natural Resources Regional Plan

- DOC has appealed parts of the decision on the proposed Greater Wellington Natural Resources Regional Plan, seeking to strengthen the proposed plan's objectives, policies and rules as they relate to water quality, freshwater fish habitat, coastal hazards and the coastal environment. Our overall concerns are:
  - The lack of suitably practical discharge rules for agrichemicals and vertebrate toxins to manage plant and pest animal threats.
  - The lack of objectives, policies and rules to protect freshwater ecosystems. The lack of detail in the freshwater quality objectives is of specific concern because, as they are currently proposed, they will not meet National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) bottom-line water quality standards. They also omit critical life-supporting water quality parameters.
  - Policies and rules for stream piping have been relaxed and do not give effect to the NPSFM.
  - Rules for stock in waterways have been relaxed and are too enabling.
  - The lack of critical objectives, policies, rules and methods does not adequately protect the coastal environment as required by the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS). This includes no of identification and scheduling of outstanding landscapes, natural character, natural features, and rare and endangered species and ecosystems. Additionally, coastal hazard risk has not been adequately addressed.
- We are currently assessing the appeals to consider whether the merits of any section 274 joining notices to other appeals are warranted. This has a deadline of 9 October.

### Water Conservation Orders

Ngaruroro and Clive Rivers WCO

- In 2017, an application for a WCO over the entire length of the Ngaruroro River, including its tributaries, hydraulically connected groundwater, the Kaweka Lakes, and 7 km of the Clive River was lodged by the New Zealand Fish and Game Council, Hawkes Bay Fish and Game Council, Pātiki Ngāti Hori Ki Kohupātiki, Forest and Bird, Whitewater NZ and Jet Boating New Zealand. DOC submitted in support of the proposal.
- The special tribunal has issued its report and recommendation to the Minister for the Environment for consideration, and submissions to the Environment Court on the recommendation closed on 20 September. The report recommended that a WCO be placed on the upper Ngaruroro River, but not the lower river, or the Clive River. While the special tribunal accepted that the lower river supports nationally outstanding avifauna habitat, it considered that threats to avifauna did not meet the 'threat test'. The tribunal based this 'threat test' on case law of whether the outstanding characteristics are threatened by the likes of potential changes to flow, water quality, and temperature. The special tribunal decided that the regional plan already provides for these matters and found that a WCO should not be made for the protection of avifauna habitat on the lower Ngaruroro River.
- While we have decided not to lodge a submission on the special tribunal's recommendation, we will be reviewing the submissions to determine whether we should join the proceedings, should another party submit on avifauna values on the lower river.

Contact:

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Peacocke Subdivision, Hamilton – Letter to Hon Phil Twyford

- Hamilton City Council (HCC) was granted \$290m by government through the Housing Infrastructure Fund for infrastructure and urban development within the Peacocke area of Hamilton, to support the development of 8,100 new houses.
- The first developer, Weston Lea Ltd, lodged a resource consent application with HCC for the Amberfield subdivision.
- DOC opposed the application, seeking better protection for long-tailed bats, which are classified as 'threatened – nationally critical'.
- While not opposed to the subdivision itself, our view was that the applicant needed to undertake further avoidance and mitigation measures to lower the risk to the bat population. We presented technical evidence at the council hearing in May and again in September. The hearing has not yet been formally closed.
- We have recently been provided with a copy of HCC's letter of 12 September to Minister Twyford, raising concerns about DOC's approach to this application. In particular, HCC is concerned that DOC's opposition to the Amberfield subdivision may have wider-reaching implications for future urban development in Hamilton.
- The council's concerns relate not only to DOC's submission on the RMA process, but also to potential repercussions for any developer, due to the implications of the PauaMAC5 decision on DOC's ability to approve Wildlife Act permits for certain activities.
- At this stage, we are unclear on what type of Wildlife Act permits may be required, but we are engaged in ongoing discussions with the applicant and its ecologists to better understand their needs.
- HCC is seeking support from Minister Twyford to obtain 'whole of government' backing for development in the city, and he may approach you on this matter.
- While DOC is not opposed to urban development within Hamilton city, we will continue to advocate for better conservation outcomes through RMA processes, as per our statutory requirement.
- We are actively working with Wildlife Act authority applicants to support them in navigating the process in light of the PauaMAC5 decision.

Contact:

### 2.2 Deer management – engagement with iwi

- We have begun engagement with iwi on deer management and forest health, with Top of the South iwi and whānau, and iwi from Ngāti Kahungungu and Rangitāne.
- These sessions were part of broader hui on conservation issues, including giving effect to Treaty principles in conservation management, the new Biodiversity Strategy, Marine Protected Areas and whitebait.
- Common issues raised at both hui included:
  - The limitation of national trend data for interpreting local issues
  - Agreement that deer have an adverse impact on forest health through browsing important palatable plant species
  - A preference for deer not to be the single species targeted for control. Other species, such as hare and goats, are also doing damage
  - Consideration of hunting as customary take – mahinga kai – providing food for whānau, as well as part of a broader hunting/fishing culture
  - That any national plan for deer management should enable locally developed solutions.

- Local differences related to whether there is an actual increase in deer numbers. In the top of the south, for example, there is a perception that the use of aerial 1080 baiting for predator control is reducing deer numbers.
- Hunters also expressed concerns around access to private land, where deer numbers may be at higher densities, and mentioned that they would welcome the use of social media for notification of upcoming predator control operations, so such areas can be hunted ahead of a planned operation.
- We will keep you updated as further engagements occur.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Temporary closure of small section of Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park

- New Talisman Gold Mine Limited has held an Access Arrangement (AA) since 2013, associated with its existing gold mining permit in Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park, near Mount Karangahake. The current two-year AA was authorised by DOC in December 2018, and allows New Talisman to complete waste rock crushing and associated activities, and to use Public Conservation Land to store machinery, explosives and infrastructure.
- Over recent years, these activities have attracted protest action at the site, directed at New Talisman staff and vehicles, including the blocking of roadways by protestors. This has put both protestors and New Talisman employees at risk and has resulted in media attention and the issuing of several police trespass notices.
- For the past year, closure of a 0.2526ha area near the mine has been authorised to support management of safety risks associated with protest activity. The most recent closure authorisation ended earlier in September, and New Talisman has requested another temporary closure to the same area for another year.
- The area has very low public use, is around 600 metres away from the closest public track and is not usually accessed by the general public. The public can still access the top of Mount Karangahake, which is the main destination for people visiting the area.
- Iwi in general have not been supportive of activities conducted by New Talisman under its mining permit, and have not been specifically consulted regarding any previous temporary closures. DOC's relationship with iwi has, however, strengthened significantly since the original temporary closure decision was made and we have chosen to consult with iwi on continued closure of the site.
- A decision to continue the temporary closure of the area is due to be made by the Rotorua/Tauranga Operations Manager and any closure will be publicly notified following discussions with iwi.
- We will keep your office updated on this issue.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 International Fisheries Strategy

- We are currently working with the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to update New Zealand's International Fisheries Strategy, which officially expired in 2015. The updated strategy is intended to provide a framework for New Zealand's international fisheries work and assist in the prioritisation of such work.
- The aim is to finalise a draft of the strategy for Ministerial approval in the early part of 2020. We anticipate that the strategy will be signed off by you, the Minister for Fisheries and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ministers may also want to consider seeking Cabinet approval.

- We will provide you with more information once the strategy has been drafted.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 Te Wiki Tiaki Ao Turoa/Conservation Week 14-22 September

Highlights from Conservation Week's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary include:

- Strong visibility of the week due to a multi-channel campaign targeting a range of audiences, including families and young people and those people living in urban areas. The campaign included digital content and media, outdoor advertising at high-profile sites (billboards, buses), radio, events and supporting media and comms.
- The website listed some 220 events and more than 356 were listed in the total event register, the highest number of recorded events in the history of Conservation Week. Of these, 150 were led by DOC and 206 by external parties. This compares with 109 and 153 respectively in 2018.
- We were pleased to see a broader range of initiatives than in previous years, including four quiz nights, nine art events, nine movie nights, six photography events, science talks, night walks and night sky watching, endangered species tattoos, and even a taxidermy workshop.
- The light show on Auckland Harbour bridge was well received and was a good profile-building exercise with a large urban audience (although we acknowledge there is more to do in this region).
- Media monitoring of the week indicates there were more than 150 media mentions of Conservation Week this year, compared to 87 last year.
- There was excellent television coverage throughout the week, including Nic Toki on the Project and Seven Sharp, and an item about Wellington Pest Feast.
- Conservation Week featured in a number of news stories and articles in lifestyle magazines (Women's Weekly, Sunday Magazine, Escape Magazine – Stuff).
- Successful stakeholder events were held across nine regions, all of them attended by representatives from DOC's Senior Leadership Team, and three attended by you.
- We will provide you with a full report on outcomes achieved through Conservation Week once further data and feedback has been received and analysed.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 DOC's "In it for Good" campaign update

- We have now released all four videos in our 'In it for Good' marketing campaign. These videos feature DOC staff as part of a wider campaign to bolster awareness of our work and strengthen our social licence to operate.
- The campaign will be in market until mid-October and broadcast through paid social media and other digital channels.
- The reception to date has been positive and the assets have fetched 1.9m impressions on a modest media spend. Within DOC, the associated intranet stories have had the highest readership of all stories over the past month.
- We will be sending links to the videos through to your office should you wish to share them through your own channels.

• [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### October

1 October	DOC ENGO Forum, Conservation House, Wellington
2–4 October	SLT Retreat, Pounui
8 October	NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton
9 October	Aotearoa Circle, Auckland
12–13 October	Copland Valley with Marc England, CE Genesis Energy, Copland Valley
14 October	Joint NIWA/DOC SLT hui, Conservation House, Wellington
16 October	Meeting with Min Jones, Bellamys
31 October	Chief Executive Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington

#### November

11 November	Joint FENZ/DOC SLT hui, Fire and Emergency, The Terrace Wellington
19 November	Joint MfE/DOC SLT hui MfE, Wellington
23–24 Nov	Cropp River visit with NIWA – John Morgan & Rob Murdoch, Cropp River
28–29 Nov	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Brackenridge, Martinborough

#### December

3 December	Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
17 December	DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

### 4 Addendum

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

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Campbell Island Marine Reserve
- Turoa Indicative Development Plan 2019-29 feedback