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Department of Conservation Status Report for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 6 September 2021

Date: ____/____/____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 67662816



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- As of 31 August, there are 143 projects in delivery and 60 projects currently in contract negotiations. Two projects are complete, and two projects are in assessment. Contracting for projects is slower than previous weeks with both staff and project partners, due to Covid Alert level 4 and the reduced capacity of the unit.
- Further communications are being sent to project partners with direction for Jobs for Nature funded projects during Alert Level 4 and Alert Level 3. At this stage we have advised partners to continue to pay staff. We will be providing you with a briefing this week to seek your direction on the approach to paying Jobs for Nature employees.
- The Jobs for Nature team is now receiving approximately 30 Written Parliamentary Questions per day, with 82 received in the last week. These are usually specific to approved projects, and preparing draft responses has significantly diverted staff resource from other prioritised work.

[REDACTED]

RG and SLU Minister Updates:

- The Jobs for Nature Reference Group will be known as the Advisory Group from now on, with the next meeting planned for early September. The group will be smaller and more focused, as the delegates confirmed at the last SLU meeting. The group will also be revisiting the Jobs for Nature Investment Framework to ensure that it is still fit-for-purpose.

[REDACTED]

Updates - Workstreams and projects:

Community and Landowner Fund

- Projects are progressing through the contracting phase, and regional delivery managers are being assigned once contracted.

Māori Land Grant Fund

- We have published on the DOC website that the fund is now open, with applicants directed to DOC district offices to discuss their applications first. Twelve direct applications have been received through various channels within DOC to date, and the majority of these are still in the triage process, with further information required before an assessment can begin. Two projects are currently in assessment. There will be a summary of the Māori Land Fund, and assessment framework presented to the upcoming Advisory Group meeting in early September. Ngā Whenua Rahui have advised that they are already oversubscribed with applications for allocation.

Other:

- The project to implement [REDACTED] Funds Management tool began on 23 August and is progressing rapidly. We met with MfE on 27 August to have a demonstration of how MfE is using the system for its funds programmes. Full implementation is expected by end November.
- Work to build the Jobs for Nature team following the management of change process has been a focus for the last week, with many team members now confirmed into roles. Establishing clear understanding of roles by team members will be a focus over the coming month as we shift into the new structure, focused on the delivery phase.

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

No items this week

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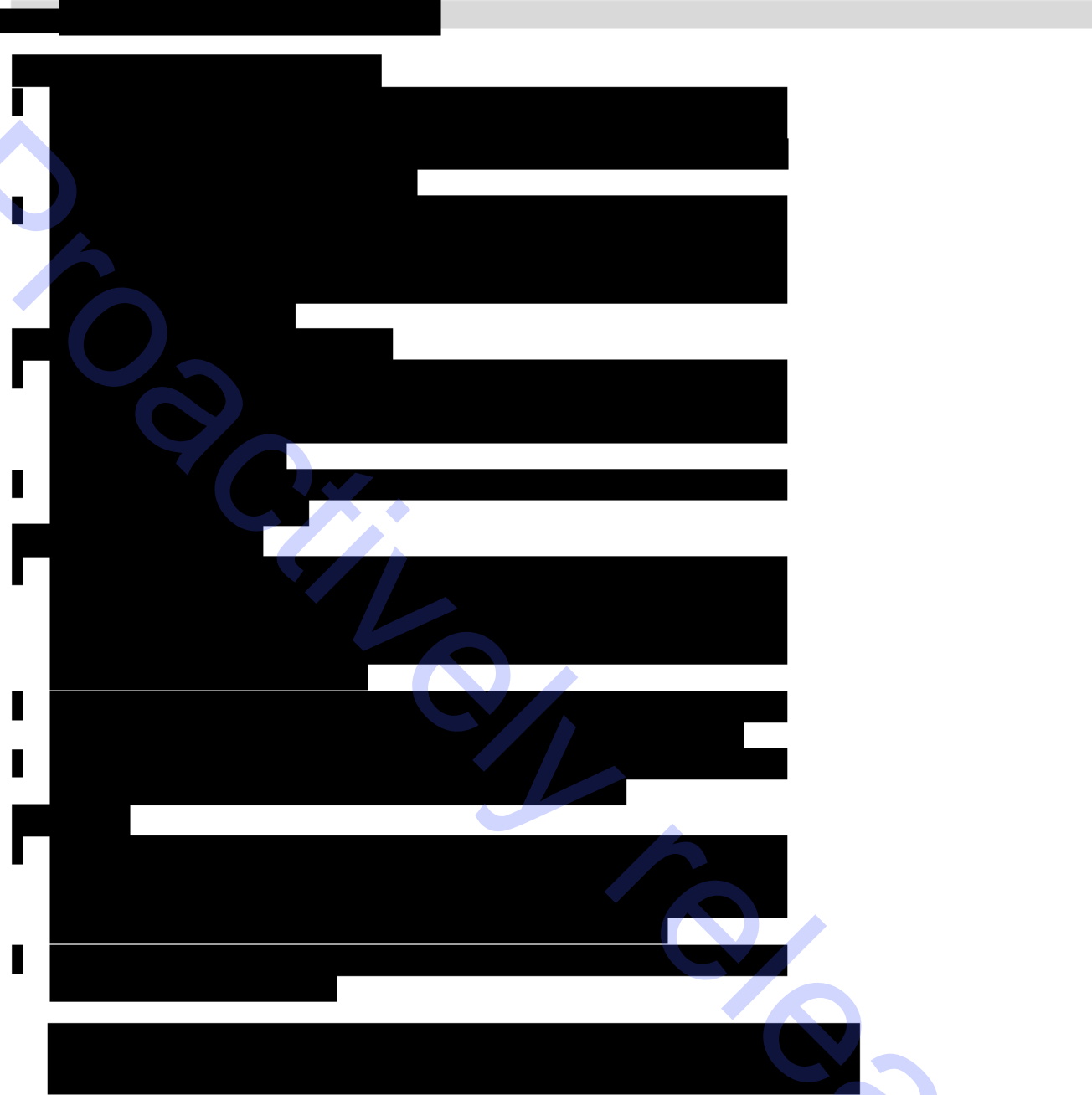
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Proactively Released

2 Updates

2.1 Conservation Week 2021

- This item is an update on Conservation Week 2021 (4 – 12 September) in light of COVID-19 and the alert level changes.
- The Director-General has made the following decisions regarding Conservation Week, in line with Government COVID guidelines:
 - No events will be held at COVID-19 Alert Levels 4 or 3
 - City stakeholder events (100+ pax) are to be cancelled or postponed in Auckland (postponed), Wellington (cancelled) and Christchurch (cancelled, TBC).
 - During Alert Level 2, regional events can go ahead, but only if the regional teams can meet all the Government Alert Level 2 requirements.
 - The campaign will shift tactics to primarily digital and radio channels to optimise exposure to the public.
- Conservation Week this year asks people to 'take a moment for nature', highlighting the value of connecting with nature for their wellbeing, and encouraging Alert Level appropriate action.
- The week also provides an opportunity to acknowledge and highlight the work of the conservation community across Aotearoa.
- You have signalled your interest in being a part of Conservation Week, and asked for updated options, given the COVID-19 situation.
- There is an opportunity for you to participate, either by attending events in person (if alert levels allow), attending and speaking at online gatherings, or supporting events and activities through social media.
- Below is a table of suggested activities. Please indicate if there are any of interest to you and we will provide more information.
- A full updated list of all Conservation Week events and activities that can go ahead at Alert Level 2 has been sent to your office.

WHAT	DESCRIPTION	OPPORTUNITY	WHERE	WHEN
Photo Competitions (multiple)	Various amateur photography competitions across the country. Regional based.	Option to choose the winner of one or more photography competitions.	Online	4/09/2021 – 12/09/2021 (ongoing)
Celebrating Success – Volunteer Celebration Online.	Casual gathering for Hamilton/Waikato volunteer groups online. To be held on MS Teams.	Option to attend and speak to volunteers.	Online (Hamilton/Waikato)	5/9/2021 10:00 – 11:30am
Ngā Kōrero Online	A seminar style night with four guest speakers, shedding light on conservation topics 'through new eyes'. To be held on MS Teams, details on request.	Option to attend and speak to attendees.	Online (Taupō)	7/9/2021 5:30pm
Design Competition	3 category design competition. Categories are bird feeder or bird box design, pest trap design or a conservation poster.	Option to judge this event.	Online (Rekohu/Wharekauri/Chatham Islands)	4/9/2021 – 12/9/2021
Recognition Event for Local Conservation Community	Digital event, thanking stakeholders. Lou Sanson will attend. To be held on MS Teams.	Option to attend and speak to attendees.	Online (Hokitika)	10/9/2021 3:30-4:40pm

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Planting Day with Conservation Week Volunteers (TBC on alert levels)	An afternoon planting event with DOC staff, volunteers, and Conservation Volunteers NZ (CVNZ) staff. The event will end with a tour of the CVNZ base and summary of the Jobs for Nature project.	Option to attend this event and speak to volunteers.	Bullock Creek, Punakaiki (In-person)	9/9/2021 10:00-2:00pm
Recognition Event for Queenstown	An online event to showcase the achievement of local conservation groups.	Option to attend and speak to attendees.	Online (Queenstown)	9/9/2021 5:00-8:00pm
Chai and Chat with DOC (TBC on alert levels)	A workshop to understand how DOC can work with multi-ethnic communities and vice versa.	Option to attend and speak to attendees.	Dunedin Community House (in-person)	28/9/2021 11:00-1:00pm
Community Weeding/ Picnic Day	Town Belt Kaitiaki's Student Leadership Team will be holding a weeding/picnic day at their role model site to help raise awareness around the Town Belt's current weed invasion problem.	Option to attend and speak to attendees.	Scarba Street Reserve, Dunedin (In-person)	5/9/2021 1:00-4:00pm

- In addition to the events, we have a range of activities this Conservation Week to encourage the public, particularly families, to take a moment for nature. Below are some options taken from our website that you may wish to participate in via social media.
 - Join in with the popular daily Conservation Week quiz. This will be released daily on our website and Instagram Stories. Share your score on your social media.
 - Become a citizen scientist. Get your whānau involved with fun, at-home conservation activities that feed important data back to scientists.
 - Get into your backyard with the whānau by doing one or more of our five things for spring, which includes hunting for critters, racing leaf boats and getting crafty in nature.
 - Thank teachers for their work over lockdown and point them to the pick-up-and-go tools for learning in nature. There is one activity for each day of the week.
 - Help the kids earn a Toyota Kiwi Guardian medal. Complete a home action, from planting a seed, creating a nature journal, build a lounge for lizards or a motel for wētā.
- If you do promote Conservation Week on your social media, please consider:
 - Using #ConservationWeek
 - Tagging @docgovtnz
 - Using the Conservation Week Instagram story GIF 'stickers'
- We can provide images, key messages and social copy on request to support the above.
- We also have a Conservation Week nature background that you can download for video calls during the week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Northern South Island - Kai Delivery to Whānau

- Since the start of this lockdown, DOC staff have been supporting the delivery of food boxes to whānau in Te Taihū.
- The eight iwi of Te Taihū (Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Te Ātiawa o te Waka-ā-Māui, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kūia, Ngāti Rārua, Rangitāne o Wairau, Ngāti Tama, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira ki Wairau) formed Te Kotahi o Te Taihū (a charitable trust) to help whānau thrive after the first Covid-19 lockdown in March last year.
- A key initiative was the launch of Te Pātaka (a food box scheme designed to ensure no whānau goes hungry) in July 2020. Te Pātaka now reaches across communities from Blenheim to Nelson, Motueka and Golden Bay.
- Te Pātaka requested help from DOC to transport food boxes across Te Taihū during the current lockdown.
- DOC staff who have been fully vaccinated and are confident in the use of PPE and social distancing make up the driving team. The team is coordinated and led by a DOC staff member who liaises with Te Pātaka, Tasman Police, Te Taihū marae and Nelson Tasman Civil Defence and Emergency Management.
- During the first two weeks of Lockdown, four deliveries have taken place using DOC vehicles – utes with canopies, a van, and trailer.
- The team expects to support two to three deliveries each week as long as we remain at alert levels 3 or 4.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Update on Endangered Species television series

Wellington – New Zealand's Most Endangered Species TV Series:

- DOC is partnering with World Wide Fund for Nature New Zealand (WWF) and Warner Brothers for a six-part TV series called "New Zealand's Most Endangered Species".
- WWF is leading the production. The Endangered Species Foundation is also a partner. DOC's role is to support by providing expertise, input and access to stories, species, and locations.
- The co-hosted series has received NZ On Air funding and airs on TVNZ2 starting in November 2022.
- It will feature, and seek to engage new audiences with, New Zealand's threatened species, their stories and their plight.
- Each episode will profile a different region and a quest for the co-hosts to find a designated endangered species.
- Pre-production has recently started and will determine the exact stories, species, and locations used.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Strengthening how we work with the Backcountry Trust (BCT)

- BCT is a charitable organisation established in 2017 as a collaboration between Federated Mountain Clubs, New Zealand Deerstalkers Association and Trail Fund NZ. The Trust supports the maintenance and enhancement of backcountry huts, tracks, mountain bike tracks and other outdoor recreation facilities through collaboration with clubs, communities, and volunteers across New Zealand.
- DOC funds BCT to the value of \$450k per year plus in-kind support. In addition, Jobs for Nature has provided ~\$2m over two years for the Trust to employ those businesses or individuals who are impacted by Covid to progress work.
- We have focused on identifying and implementing efficiencies to streamline how we work. This includes exploring a four-year planning approach to better plan and align delivery between BCT and DOC.
- At a workshop on 9 August, we agreed a joint vision: "A collaboration to inspire and connect all people to places and assist them to preserve and enhance their backcountry network" and the actions to achieve it.
- We can provide a further update as this work progresses.

Contact: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

3.1 Tai Poutini - Western South Island – Virtual Event 10 September

- Tai Poutini's Regional Event that you were planning to attend before lockdown, will now be a virtual session, held on 10 September between 3 – 5pm.
- Participants will be collaborative parties whom we work with to achieve conservation outcomes, as well as invited members of the public.
- We would love you to join the session, which will be approximately 50min in length.
- Our team will be in touch with your office to provide a link and confirm a specific time.

Contact: [REDACTED]

4 Director-General Engagements

No update this week.

5 Appendices

The Following appendices are provided to support the Status Report

Appendix 1. Cabinet Paper Report

Appendix 2. Forthcoming Items

Appendix 3. Jobs for Nature Dashboard

Appendix 4. DG Direct

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Department of Conservation Status Report for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 13 September 2021

Date: ____/____/____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6772555



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Te Papa Atawhai

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- As of 7 September, there are 149 projects in delivery and 54 in contract negotiations. Two projects are complete, and two are in assessment.
- The number of Written Parliamentary Questions assigned to JfN continue to be very high, with staff being redirected to complete this work. As a result, contracting is expected to be slow and we have identified a medium-level risk that this could cause delays to the processing of payments.
- There are two projects in assessment for the Māori Land Fund, with more being triaged. You will receive a briefing on these for feedback prior to the upcoming SLU Ministers meeting on 30 September.



RG and SLU Minister updates:

- The next Advisory Group meeting is scheduled for 20 September. We have been advised by the Secretariat that the new focus of the Advisory Group means that project approvals will not be presented for feedback. This will apply to the Māori Land Fund, DOC's only remaining Jobs for Nature funding still to be allocated.
- The next SLU Ministers meeting is scheduled for 30 September.

Updates - Workstreams and projects

Community Conservation and Private Land Funds

- Projects are progressing through the contracting phase, and regional delivery managers are being assigned once contracted.

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- We are supporting your office in planning announcement events, following the shift in alert levels. Potential announcement events could be on the West Coast and in Otago.
- A video about Project Mahitahi in Nelson, produced by MfE, was launched on social media in the week of 6 September. A media release, prepared by Nelson City Council, will be issued to media to promote the video.
- A story about Lou Sanson's reflections on Jobs for Nature was published on the DOC website the week of 6 September and was further promoted through social media.

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Appeals

Aupōuri Aquifer Water User Group

- A resource consent hearing for 24 new and additional groundwater takes from the Aupōuri Aquifer was held in early September 2020 and was adjourned to allow for further negotiation. The hearing was closed on 2 July 2021 and the decision to grant all 24 takes was released 31 August.
- Submitters have until 21 September to lodge an appeal on the decision with the Environment Court. We are reviewing the decision and conditions to determine whether to do so. Our key concerns are:
 - Potential impact on wetlands and waterways from water table lowering
 - The appropriateness of adaptive management for these consents
 - The number, location and technique of monitoring stations
 - Ensuring the conditions are robust and do not overly defer responsibility to management plans.

Submissions

[REDACTED]

Proposed Regional Policy Statement – Otago

- We have lodged a submission on the proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021 (RPS). The new RPS is part of the Otago Regional Council's process to develop a 'fit for purpose' planning framework, as directed by the Minister for the Environment in 2019. The proposed RPS is a substantial improvement on previous versions, but there are still areas of significant concern – particularly regarding the coast and biodiversity, and inadequate provision for ki uta ki tai and integrated management. Further submissions are likely to occur later this year, with a hearing early 2022.

Contact: [REDACTED]

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2 Updates

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Contact: [Redacted]

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Contact: [Redacted]

2.3

- [Redacted]
- █ [Redacted]

[REDACTED]

- [Redacted]

Contact: [Redacted]

2.4 [Redacted]

- [Redacted]

Contact: [Redacted]

2.5 Southern South Island region – Mount Ida Conservation Area grazing licence

- In September 2020 we received an application from Mt Ida Syndicate to continue to graze 9,000 ewes for 12 weeks each Summer/Autumn on Mt Ida Conservation Area, for a 10-year term.
- A decision on the concession (grazing licence) has been made to grant Mt Ida Syndicate a four-year term subject to special conditions. This will be communicated to the applicant this week.
- From 2026 onwards Mt Ida Syndicate will no longer be authorised to graze their stock on this land.

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- Grazing of Mt Ida Conservation Area is considered inconsistent with the long-term management of the Hawkdun Range Ecological Management Unit, of which Mt Ida is a part.
- The four-year term allows Mt Ida Syndicate to plan their transition from grazing the area, aligns with the Canterbury (Waitaha) Conservation Management Strategy, and is consistent with our ecological advice.
- One condition allows for exclusive occupation of two public huts by Mt Ida Syndicate while they are mustering.
- The 8600ha Mount Ida Conservation Area, adjacent to Oteake Conservation Park, was under pastoral occupation licence until 2008. The Mt Ida Syndicate has been farming there for over 100 years.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Milford Opportunities Project – progress update

- As a member of the Ministerial Group overseeing the Milford Opportunities Project you approved regular meetings with the Establishment Board Chair, Dr Keith Turner and key unit staff (21-B-0561 refers).
- We recommend that the first meeting for the Ministerial Group is held in early October. We will work with your office to identify an appropriate date.
- A briefing will be provided to support the meeting. The paper will update you on establishment of the Board and Unit with the proposed meeting with the Board Chair.
- The timing of the briefing will enable important discussions to be held with key stakeholders on the scope, roles and responsibilities and structure of the Board and Unit.
- The process for appointing the Establishment Board is also ongoing. The Board nomination process will be outlined in the briefing to the Ministerial Group meeting.
- We continue to collaborate with partner agencies to develop an agreed work programme to progress Stage 3 of the Milford Opportunities Project.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

No update this week.

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5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support the Status Report:

Appendix 1. Cabinet Paper Report

Appendix 2. Jobs for Nature Dashboard

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Department of Conservation Status Report for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 20 September 2021

Date: ____/____/____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6779221



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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary

- As of 14 September, there are 151 projects in delivery and 52 projects currently in contract negotiations. Reporting shows a total of 1515 employment starts, undertaking 510,698 hours of work, equalling to 327 FTE. \$78.5 million has now been paid out to delivery projects in communities.
- We continue to receive Written Parliamentary Questions in high numbers. While a good system is now in place and contracting is progressing, this work continues to have a significant impact on staff resource.
- Assessments are underway for the Māori Land Fund, and work with the Ngā Whenua Rāhui team to understand the current approval practice for this Ministerial fund. We will provide you with a briefing on projects that are proposed for approval within the Māori Land Fund, prior to the upcoming SLU Ministers meeting scheduled on 30 September.

Advisory Group (formerly Reference Group) and SLU Minister updates

- The next Advisory Group meeting is scheduled for 20 September and SLU Minister meeting is scheduled for 30 September.

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- Nine projects in Otago and Southland were announced on 16 September as an exclusive story to the Otago Daily Times. This was issued through a media release only.
- You are scheduled to announce four projects on the West Coast during an event in Hokitika on 24 September.
- To showcase the impact of Jobs for Nature, the Secretariat has commissioned a seven-video campaign across the government agencies involved in the programme. DOC is preparing two videos demonstrating the biodiversity benefits of Jobs for Nature. These will feature the Kauri Ora project in the Waipoua forest, and the orange-fronted kākārīki project in Canterbury. The new videos will complement the three videos we produced earlier this year.

Other

- [REDACTED]
- Staff are now confirmed into roles within the new Jobs for Nature unit structure, and work on establishing the Leadership Team, operating model and focus areas for the new team is underway.
- We are collaborating with DOC's Biodiversity and Partnership groups to integrate the Jobs for Nature programme into the work of the Te Mana o te Taiao/ANZBS and the Working with Others system.

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Matangi Mountain Bike Park – Alexandra

- The Director-General submitted against an application to develop a mountain bike park on Crown Pastoral Lease land adjacent to Alexandra. We believe the application does not address potential impacts on biodiversity (threatened plants and lizards) and heritage (mining relics and water races). There are also potential effects on users of the adjacent Otago Central Rail Trail. We will seek to negotiate a solution with the applicants prior to any hearing.

Decisions

Kuku Holdings Limited – Marlborough

- We opposed a resource consent application to expand mussel farming in Tawhitinui Bay, Pelorus Sound, Marlborough through a submission lodged in 2020. Expert evidence and legal submissions were presented at the Marlborough District Council hearing in July 2021. Our key concerns were the adverse effects of the development on landscape and natural character values of the bay and the adjacent DOC-managed Scenic Reserve. The Council has released its decision to decline resource consent for the proposal based on these adverse effects as well as the potential for adverse effects on threatened king shag, which has a colony within the reserve.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response:
 - Our current focus is supporting staff in the Auckland region. A specific wellbeing package is being rolled out to staff based in Auckland to support them through the AL4 and AL3 periods ahead of them.
 - We have successfully transitioned the rest of the organisation to the current AL2 regime.
 - Outside of Auckland, all DOC workplaces have opened under AL2 with some restrictions, including physical distancing, use of face coverings and record keeping. Part of the management of these workplaces to the applicable AL2 conditions includes alternative arrangements such as working from home.
 - DOC huts, camps and visitor centres have re-opened subject to the AL2 conditions that apply.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Sea Lion Capture in Southern Blue Whiting Fishery

- DOC officials have been notified of two captures of New Zealand sea lion / pakake / whakahau in the Southern Blue Whiting Fishery around Campbell Island (SBW61).
- The first was an adult female captured (dead), which occurred 120 kilometres north-east of Campbell Island at 5am Thursday 9 September 2021.
- The observer onboard reported the first vessel deployed a compliant Sea Lion Exclusion Devices (SLEDs) at the time of the capture. No gear failure or any unusual conditions or events around this particular tow were identified that may have caused this capture.
- The second (sex unknown) was captured in the net and released live on deck 100km north of Campbell Island at 315am Tuesday 14 September 2021.
- The observer onboard reported the second vessel deployed a compliant SLED, but that sea conditions were rough at the time of the haul and might have prevented the sea lion being able to escape the SLED. The crew used approved methods to release the sea lion safely.
- New Zealand sea lions are Nationally Vulnerable and predominantly breed in the subantarctic islands, with 30% of the population breeding on Campbell Island.
- DOC works with the Ministry for Primary Industries and whānau, hapū and iwi to mitigate the range of potential threats to the sea lions, including fisheries impacts.
- Fisheries bycatch is primarily managed through the use of SLEDs and Operational Plans for the SQU6T and SBW61 fisheries.
- After high levels of bycatch in 2013, an Operational Plan was put into place in 2014 for the SBW61 fishery around Campbell Island and is reviewed annually.

- The plan stipulates 100% observer coverage, information collection, reporting requirements and SLED use specifications. It includes a non-regulatory Fisheries Related Mortality Limit which if reached can result in a decision to close the fishery. The limit is currently set at 12 females or 25 of either sex in one season.
- Female captures in this fishery are rare, 97% since 2001/02 have been male. There have now been five captures (three dead, two released alive) since 2018.
- While it is unfortunate the first capture is of a female, it does not trigger any actions. Therefore, vessels are still fishing in the area and will continue to do so until the fishery closes on 30 September 2021.
- MPI will continue to monitor the fishery and will notify DOC officials of any changes or new information.
- DOC officials will keep you updated of any changes in this or other fisheries which impact sea lions.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 [REDACTED]

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2.4 Update to the conservation status of New Zealand reptiles

- Experts have assessed New Zealand reptile species using the NZ Threat Classification System (NZTCS).
- We propose to publish *Conservation status of New Zealand reptiles, 2021* on the DOC website and the assessment data at www.nztcs.org.nz during the week beginning 27 September. We have provided your office with a

copy of the report. The DOC communications team can arrange media coverage with your office if you would like to announce this report.

- Assessments of 135 known New Zealand reptile species are reported. This assessment includes 18 newly listed species. This report replaces all previous NZTCS assessments reports for reptiles.
- Of the assessed species, 49 are Threatened, 67 are At Risk, five are Not Threatened and four are Data Deficient. Eight species are Non-resident Native – Vagrant, and one is Introduced and Naturalised.
- The threat status of nine species has improved since last assessment in 2015 because new knowledge provided a better and more optimistic understanding of the state of their populations. An example is the Burgan skink from central Otago, which was previously assessed as Threatened – Nationally Critical, and is assessed as Threatened – Nationally Endangered in this assessment. The Burgan skink had declined precipitously at the handful of known sites because of habitat degradation as livestock and drought damaged the damp low native shrublands it prefers. Surveys have found previously unknown healthy populations at higher altitudes. The threat status of ten species has worsened since 2015, due to their population declining.
 - Six species previously assessed as Not Threatened are assessed At Risk – Declining in this assessment. These species have experienced habitat loss following the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake, increased pressure from weeds and invasive predators (e.g. mice and vespulid wasps), and/or vegetation clearance from fire and changes in land use.
 - Two species had their status changed to Threatened – Nationally Critical. The category Threatened – Nationally Critical is the highest threat level and comprises species with a very small population (<250 mature individuals) or a very high ongoing or predicted level of decline (>70%).
 - The Kupe skink, previously assessed as Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable has moved to Threatened – Nationally Critical. The status has changed as it was taxonomically split from the Hawkes Bay skink, which is now understood to be a separate species. The Kupe skink has less than 5 known subpopulations as well as being in worrying decline.
 - The other species which has moved to Threatened – Nationally Critical is the green skink which was previously assessed as At Risk – Declining. Again, taxonomic splitting supported by genetic study and the appearance of the different skinks has reduced the number of known populations. However, most importantly, extremely severe decline has been observed and it is possibly extinct in some parts of its range.
 - The two species which recently moved to Threatened – Nationally Critical do not have recovery programmes. Once this report is released, recovery programmes for these two species will be prioritised against other species work.
- This information is of interest to anyone involved in the protection of reptile species. It is unlikely to result in issues being raised with you.
- Assessments considered the increasing impacts of climate change in the future, which will increase pressures from invasive predators (particularly in the alpine zone) and increased coastal erosion.
- The report raises concern about the decline of NZ reptiles. The Lizard Technical Advisory Group will be able to provide actions for emergency management (e.g. captivity, predator-proof fenced sanctuary).
- The New Zealand Threat Classification System (NZTCS) is used to assess the conservation status of species in New Zealand. DOC administers the NZTCS on behalf of New Zealand and convenes expert panels from within

the scientific and conservation community to conduct assessments of groups of species (e.g., bats, birds, spiders) approximately every five years.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Māui dolphin abundance estimate and Sea Shepherd Case in US Court of International Trade

- The new 2020-21 Māui dolphin abundance results are now available. The research was presented to a joint DOC Conservation Services Programme/Fisheries New Zealand Aquatic Environment Working Group (the Working Group) meeting for scientific peer review on 30 August 2021. The scientific report will be published at the end of September.
- The Working Group endorsed the survey results, and the updated abundance estimate as previously reported to you remain unchanged. For 2020-21, we have 95% confidence that there are between 48 and 66 individual Māui dolphins aged 1 year or more present within the survey area, with a best estimate of 54. This new estimate overlaps with the two previous abundance estimates reported in our last update.
- Just prior to the Working Group, on 28 August, the media incorrectly reported a 14% decline in numbers of Māui dolphins based on their misinterpretation of a leaked report. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand are disappointed that the results were made public in this way but note that this did not affect the robust science review process undertaken.
- The true number of dolphins (in the survey area) could be anywhere within the range of each census estimate, so it is not meaningful to compare the best estimate across censuses and conclude the population has increased or decreased. Because the range of estimates overlap significantly, it is equally possible that the population is decreasing, stable, or increasing. Furthermore, we know that a portion of the population occurs much more widely than the survey area. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand are in the process of contracting some further analysis on the likely population trend and expect to have this work complete in early 2022.

- We will provide further information to you about the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Threat Management Plan and managing toxoplasmosis, in a memo due 28 September (21-B-0715).

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO): 9th meeting of the Scientific Committee

- DOC, alongside lead agency colleagues at Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), will be attending the 9th meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) Scientific Committee (SC), which is being held virtually from 27 September – 2 October.
- SPRFMO is the principal international organisation governing non-tuna fisheries in the South Pacific. New Zealand's interests are bottom fishing for deepwater species such as orange roughy and preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems (such as corals) and protected species (such as seabirds).
- We have led or co-authored a number of technical papers for the meeting that are intended to inform and improve SPRFMO fisheries management.
- The decision-making body for SPRFMO is the Commission, which the Russian Federation is hosting on 22 – 27 January 2022 in St Petersburg. MPI is the lead agency for the Commission, with officials from DOC, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade and stakeholder delegates participating.
- New Zealand is the primary bottom fishing country in SPRFMO. Between nine and eleven New Zealand vessels fish annually in SPRFMO, using bottom longline and trawl gear, and catch around 1,800 tonnes per year. Four to six vessels bottom trawl, accounting for around \$5 to 10 million of catch which is primarily composed of orange roughy and alfonosinos.
- One of the key issues for consideration by the Commission will be reviewing the bottom fishing conservation measure. There is increasing pressure from environmental NGOs to ban bottom fishing internationally because of its impacts on conservation values. (Refer to Joint Evidence Presented by MPI and the Department at the Environment Committee in response to the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC) petition to the Environment Committee "Save Deep Sea Corals – Ban Bottom Trawling on Seamounts".)

[Redacted content]

Contact: [Redacted]

2.7 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Ministerial Meeting

- The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) hosted its biennial meeting of Ministers and officials from 7-10 September (virtually).
- The Minister for Pacific Peoples, Hon Aupito William Sio, led New Zealand's engagement in the high level Talanoa and participated as a panellist on 'Oceans and Climate Change'. Other focus areas for the Talanoa were 'Ocean and Pollution' and 'Ocean and Deep-Sea Mining'.
- The Communique arising from these high-level discussions called for action to address marine plastic pollution and more broadly for cooperation to address the global drivers of environmental change and to build a resilient Blue Pacific (the Communique will be provided to your office once finalised).
- DOC's International Team was represented on the official New Zealand (MFAT-led) delegation. DOC led New Zealand's input to several agenda items focussed on Island and Ocean Ecosystems. These included a report of the 10th Nature Conservation Conference (10NC) and its Vemore Declaration (you provided a press release in late November 2020); adoption of the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021-2025, the Coral Reef Action Plan, and the sobering State of Environment and Conservation report.
- We continue to strengthen our Pacific engagement including most recently through work with SPREP supporting invasive species management and developing marine species action plans.
- As a metropolitan member and major funding partner of SPREP, these biennial meetings provide an important opportunity for New Zealand to engage in SPREP's governance and discuss key regional environmental issues.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 IUCN World Conservation Congress Report

- The IUCN World Conservation Congress was held from 3-11 September virtually and in person in Marseille, France.
- New Zealand was represented in person by an official from our Embassy in Paris during the Member Assembly, supported virtually by Teall Crossen, DOC's International Manager.
- A new and urgent motion was proposed to defer voting on motions at the Congress to an online vote, to enable greater participation from members that were unable to travel to Marseille to participate in person because of COVID restrictions. France was strongly against the motion as they supported concluding all voting in person at the Congress in order to send a clear IUCN message before the upcoming climate and biodiversity meetings. In contrast, Fiji spoke strongly in support of the motion to facilitate online voting to enable the Pacific to participate more fully. New Zealand voted in support of the motion to support a more inclusive process, recognising the views of our Pacific neighbours.
- On the amendments to the IUCN statutes, New Zealand changed our vote from opposing to abstaining on Motion A, which provides for the inclusion of subnational governments into the IUCN membership. The concerns identified had been resolved through revisions agreed at the Congress. The amendments to the IUCN statutes will allow district and regional authorities

in New Zealand to join the IUCN but will not dilute the voting rights of State Party members. We did not support the motion given the time constraints to consult domestically.

- On the remaining amendments to the IUCN statutes and member motions, New Zealand voted in accordance with briefing 21-B-0637 IUCN World Conservation Congress: New Zealand Recommended Voting Positions for Member Assembly and briefing 21-B-0689 IUCN World Conservation Congress Motion on One Health Approach as there were no substantive changes to the motions proposed during the Congress.
- Additionally, a number of new and urgent member motions were proposed during the Member Assembly. New Zealand abstained from voting on those motions as logistical constraints prevented coordination of agency analysis, meaningful engagement in contact groups and securing Ministerial decisions in a timely manner.
- Finally, New Zealand voted in support of a decision of the IUCN to develop a gender strategy to be considered by Members.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 [REDACTED]

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

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Central North Island: North Egmont Visitor Centre redevelopment

- In July 2021 DOC received \$2.8925 million from the Provincial Growth fund to develop an enhanced visitor centre at North Egmont, as stage two of the Taranaki Crossing project.
- The Project is a partnership between DOC, Te Atiawa and MBIE to develop a visitor centre which reflects an authentic cultural narrative, either by renovation or rebuild.
- DOC has a governance structure to guide project implementation and is committed to iwi engagement and co-design.
- All parties recognise that there are several elements to be worked through that will take time before a visitor centre is delivered. These include resolving the scope, costs and location of the centre.
- Iwi see this as an important opportunity for co-design, and early attention needs to be given to providing opportunities for effective participation and

leadership. It includes consideration of future ownership and management of the facility by Te Atiawa.

- There are cost pressures involved with meeting the range of options for redevelopment of the site, likely to exceed the PGF funding.
- We are now seeking to appoint a Project Manager, who will work with partners to develop options for a business case by April 2022.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 Northern South Island: 1080 operation in Kahurangi National Park and takahē

- Vector Free is expected to undertake the Heaphy Lowland 1080 operation on our behalf in the last two weeks of September.
- The Heaphy Lowland receives regular 1080 operations as part of DOC's Tiakina Nga Manu programme, protecting multiple vulnerable native species.
- Takahē are vulnerable to stoat predation. There is a population of twenty-eight takahē residing in the general Goulard Downs area of Kahurangi National Park.
- The operation is not in the immediate vicinity of the Kahurangi takahē population, but suppression of stoats in the wider landscape will be of benefit to the species.
- Takahē have proven susceptible to 1080, with three individuals dying due to ingestion of 1080 during the August 2020 Aorere operation. The risk to takahē of this operation is considered low.
- Although part of the Lower Heaphy 1080 operational area boundary is near Goulard Downs, it is highly unlikely any of the 28 monitored takahē will venture within the operational area, as the area is densely forested and not preferred takahē habitat. They have not been observed there since initial release in 2018.
- Knowledge of current and historical takahē locations is highly reliable, through regular transmitter and GPS tag enabled tracking.
- Despite the risk being low due to the above, measures will be put in place to further minimise chance of any impact.
- We will attempt to capture, where possible, takahē that are within 1km of the operational boundary and temporarily hold them in enclosures until the baits are deemed to not pose a risk.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.12 Western South Island: Pike River Recovery Agency (PRRA) withdrawal from the Pike River Mine, Paparoa National Park

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The COVID-19 work restrictions have further impacted on the agency's total costs and timeline to achieve this outstanding work.
- The CEO Dave Gawn has moved on recently to a new role as CEO of the National Emergency Management Agency. Michelle Wessing is now Acting CEO of PRRA. Michelle has been the Chief of Staff for the agency for the last three years, and has a good working relationship with DOC.
- [REDACTED]
- We have a work plan in place to support PRRA through this last phase of work. The Acting CEO has seen this work plan and is happy with the tasks and sequencing and the work the agency is required to complete before surrender and transfer of the assets.
- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.13 Southern South Island: Ecological management of water levels in Waituna Lagoon

- Waituna Lagoon is one of the best remaining examples of a natural coastal lagoon in New Zealand. The lagoon is recognised internationally (as a Ramsar Site), nationally (through Scientific Reserve status) and culturally (Statutory Acknowledgement with the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998).
- In August 2021, DOC and Awarua Rūnaka jointly applied for a resource consent (requesting public notification) to open Waituna Lagoon to the sea for the main purpose of managing its ecological and cultural health. This joint application intends to replace an existing consent (held by a group of landowners) that is focused primarily on land drainage. The existing consent was only ever intended to be a short-term approach.
- Faced with deteriorating lagoon health, in 2018 Environment Southland was granted significant funding on behalf of the Whakamana Te Waituna Trust (representing DOC, Fonterra, Environment Southland, Awarua Rūnaka and Southland District Council) through the Freshwater Improvement Fund to purchase land affected by high water levels, prone to inundation.
- The intent of the WTW Trust and the funding it received, was to shift the primary focus of lagoon management from drainage activities occurring under the landowners' consent (which at certain times are more detrimental to lagoon health), and to enable a long-term management approach focused on ecological restoration. Trigger levels for opening the lagoon are proposed at a higher level of 2.5m (compared to 2m–2.2m under current consent), to allow the lagoon to remain closed over critical seasons.

- Despite the WTW Trust facilitating the purchase of most land affected by high water levels, some landowners in the catchment still perceive the impact of inundation on their remaining properties to be significant. This is not consistent with the impact assessments undertaken by technical experts. The media may pick up on this difference of opinion.
- There is a risk that the consent Awarua and DOC have lodged will not be processed if the existing consent holders apply to renew their consent between now and 15 November. Consultation with existing consent holders is continuing, supported by Environment Southland.
- On 2 September 2021, the consented landowners opened the lagoon to the sea, as triggers were met for land drainage purposes. DOC and Awarua Rūnaka unsuccessfully asked the landowners to keep the lagoon closed at this time due to the current poor state of the keystone species (a native plant) that regulates lagoon health. There is now a risk to the stability of the lagoon with it being opened for land drainage over the spring/summer period.
- We will keep you informed of progress with landowners and the consent as we work with the key players involved.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.14 Southern South Island: Manuherehia River Minimum Flow

- DOC is part of a technical advisory group (TAG) assisting the Otago Regional Council to determine a minimum flow for the mainstem of the Manuherehia River, to be included in the 2023 draft RMA Land and Water Plan.
- Council staff recently recommended a preferred minimum flow and transition timeline. The Council voted to delay 'noting' this recommendation, instead seeking further supporting science. This vote has proved to be controversial – perceived by environmental groups and some on the Council to be symptomatic of a lack of desire amongst some councillors to implement change and environmental gain. This decision has contributed to a petition, led by a local environmental group, seeking the Minister for the Environment to appoint commissioners to replace the Council.
- DOC's position is neutral on the vote decision.
- Conservation values are found in the mainstem of the river but are more significant in the tributaries (nationally critical and nationally endangered galaxiids). Mainstem minimum flow at one point is only one of several measures that make up a catchment wide flow regime. DOC supports further work by the Council and their consultants, while acknowledging there is other priority catchment hydrology and habitat modelling work for the region, such as in the Taieri. The TAG has yet to endorse the hydrological model.
- Although a staged transition to a new mainstem minimum flow in the Manuherehia has merit, our priority remains to advocate for freshwater habitat to secure threatened fish populations in the tributaries right now, through both our RMA advocacy and our integrated operational work with Council staff, Otago Fish and Game, and landowners.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

October

6 October Environment NGOs, via MS Teams

14-15 October NZ Conservation Authority Board meeting, Tauranga

5 Appendices

The Following appendices are provided to support this Status Report

Appendix 1. Cabinet Paper Report

Appendix 2. D-G Direct

Appendix 3. Jobs for Nature dashboard

IN-CONFIDENCE

Minister of Conservation, Minister of Conservation's Office, and Department of Conservation Eyes Only.

Department of Conservation Status Report for the Minister of Conservation

Week beginning 27 September 2021

Date: ____/____/____

Seen by Hon Kiritapu Allan
Minister of Conservation

DOCCM - 6784320



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Jobs for Nature

Jobs for Nature Summary:

- As of 21 September, there are 155 projects in delivery and 49 projects currently in contract negotiations. We will receive the next monthly reporting employment data (for the month of August), at the end of September.
- We have now received 650 Written Parliamentary Questions since 20 August, with the majority aimed at specific projects within the programme.
- We are currently reviewing some key components of the Jobs for Nature data landscape and reporting system to ensure integration when the [REDACTED] Funds Management Tool is fully implemented. This includes the uptake and use of the Rataka Taiao reporting app through year one, and the Wellbeing Survey. [REDACTED]
- We have confirmed with project delivery partners and delivery managers the continuation of payments to workers in regions at Alert Levels 3 and 4. Of the three projects in delivery in Auckland, one has been able to continue with staff training, while the other two have been doing no, or limited work over the Alert Level 4 period. Following the recent change in Alert Levels in Auckland and Northern Waikato, we have provided Project Delivery Partners with further advice on the approach. Certain low-risk activities in Auckland can now proceed under Alert Level 3.

AG (formerly RG) and SLU Minister Updates:

- [REDACTED]
- We await your feedback on Briefing 21-B-0729 on the Māori Land Fund, ahead of the Sustainable Land Use Ministers' meeting on 30 September.

Relationship Scan

- [REDACTED]

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

- The extension of the Predator Free Apprenticeship Programme was announced by your office on 22 September via regional media.
- Following your West Coast Jobs for Nature announcement in Hokitika on 24 September, a story will be published on the DOC Intranet on 28 September.

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

1.2 RMA Advocacy

Submission

Jens Schumann – suction dredging, Pomahaka River

- We have lodged a submission opposing this consent application. The dredging could affect heritage values and freshwater habitat, potentially including for the Pomahaka galaxias (Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable). We will seek further assessment of galaxias presence and heritage artefacts, and then consider whether effects can be adequately addressed by conditions.

Appeal

Te Aupōuri Aquifer water take decision

- Northland Regional Council granted 24 resource consent applications to take an annual volume of 4.6 million litres of water from the Aupōuri Aquifer on 31 August. We are appealing this decision.
- The applications rely upon a groundwater model to predict effects of abstraction drawdown on the shallow aquifer system and, by inference, the extent to which adverse effects may occur on wetlands, lakes, springs and streams.
- DOC completed an intensive analysis of options, ranging from not appealing, appealing conditions, or an appeal in full. An appeal in full was lodged on 21 September. Should the appeal be satisfactorily addressed through conditions, it requests mediation and expert conferencing so that conditions can be further refined, in preference to a full Environment Court Hearing.
- Three of the applicants are commercial companies owned by post settlement governance groups for Te Rarawa, Ngai Takoto and Te Aūpouri. DOC is communicating the decision to appeal to iwi through the Director Operations (Northern North Island) and will capture their feedback.
- There will be media and public interest in this matter, which we will be monitoring and responding to on a case-by-case basis.

Concerns

- Our primary concern relates to the actual or potential effects (including cumulative) on significant waterbodies that are fully or partially administered by DOC such as Kaimaumau-Motutangi Wetland, Lake Rotokawau, Lake Ngakapua, Lake Ngāti, Lake Rotoroa, and the Sweetwater dune lakes.
- A concern raised in our original submission was that there was insufficient information. This concern remains, as the granted consents rely on an adaptive management regime and allow activities to occur without sufficient information being captured to understand the potential for adverse effects.
- Many key decisions such as cut-off limits have not been made and the management plans are not framed in a sufficiently precautionary way to ensure adverse effects will be avoided.
- The consents also effectively impose ongoing costs on DOC.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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1.4

[Redacted]

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[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proactively released

2 Updates

2.1

[REDACTED]

2.2 Two additional sea lion captures in the Southern Blue Whiting fishery

- Last week you were updated about two New Zealand sea lion / pakake / whakahao captures in the Southern Blue Whiting fishery off Campbell Island (SBW6I). One female captured dead on 9 September, and one sex unknown released alive on 14 September (Status Report 41, item 2.2 refers).
- DOC officials have been notified of two additional captures in this same fishery.
- The first was an adult male caught alive, 110 kilometres from Campbell Island at 2132hrs (NZST) Thursday 16 September 2021.
- The sea lion was caught in front of the sea lion exclusion device (SLED) and appeared uninjured and was released alive by the crew. The observer reported that the vessel was adhering to the Vessel Management Plan at the time of capture. A video was taken of the capture and release.
- The second sea lion, also a male, was captured 116 kilometres from Campbell Island at 1013hrs (NZST) on Sunday 19 September 2021.
- The second sea lion was found dead in the SLED, laying across the direction of the tow. This observer reported that the vessel was not discharging during shooting, hauling or turning at the time of capture and was operating in compliance with the Vessel Management Plan. Data was collected from this sea lion before returning it to the sea as per standard procedures.
- While it is concerning that there have been four captures in this fishery which traditionally does not see many captures, it does not yet trigger any action. The limit which would trigger an early close is currently set at 12 females or 25 of either sex in one season. The fishery closes on 30 September 2021.
- This brings the total captures in this fishery since 2018 to seven (four dead, three released alive).
- MPI will hold a debrief with observers on their return, to gather more information about the captures and to determine if there were any factors

that may have contributed to the number of captures observed this season (e.g. weather, sea conditions, sea lion behaviour).

- Minister Parker has been advised of these captures through standard MPI processes.
- DOC officials will keep you updated of any new information and results of the debrief with observers.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 [REDACTED]

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

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 United Nations to report New Zealand's contribution to global Aichi Target 11 on protected areas

- The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) are to publish a dossier (likely by 4 October) on each country's contribution to the global Aichi Biodiversity 'Target 11' that sought 17% terrestrial and 10% marine protection globally by 2020.

- The country dossiers include an estimate of each country's total terrestrial and marine protected area percentage coverage, derived from information in each country's 6th National Reports to the CBD, and global datasets such as the IUCN's World Database on Protected Areas.
- DOC reviewed the draft dossier for New Zealand and provided technical comments in consultation with other agencies. The dossier reports that, as of May 2021, the total terrestrial protected area coverage in New Zealand is 33.4%, and the total marine protected area coverage is 30.4%.
- The marine area coverage reflects the sum of a subset of all marine protection tools reported by New Zealand to the CBD in its 6th National Report. New Zealand chose to report on individual marine protection tools, rather than a total figure, owing to differing interpretations on whether the tools met international criteria for marine protection.
- The total marine protected area figure of 30.4% may attract media attention. Environmental non-governmental organisations have expressed concerns about the inclusion of benthic protection areas in New Zealand's total (accounting for 27.4%), given, in their view, that they do not offer sufficient protection to qualify as a marine protected area.
- The country dossiers are being prepared in advance of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in October to help set an accurate baseline for future global targets on area-based conservation being considered under the CBD negotiations. Any issues of substance, however, will not be discussed until Parties meet in person next year.
- Owing to the potential for media interest, DOC will provide you with media messages prior to the publication of the CBD-UNDP report in October.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Meeting

- The 40th annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) will take place, online, from 18-29 October.
- The Commission is the decision-making body responsible for the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources and is made up of 25 member countries, including New Zealand, and the European Union.
- MFAT leads New Zealand's CCAMLR work, with input from DOC, MPI, and other agencies as required.
- DOC's key focus areas in CCAMLR are marine protected areas, environmental impacts of fisheries, and climate change.
- In early October, officials from MFAT, DOC and MPI will seek approval from Ministers of New Zealand's objectives for this year's CCAMLR meeting.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Draft Department of Conservation Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2021

- DOC's draft Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2021 has been produced, and is now being audited, in preparation for publication and tabling by 22 October.

- This is a DOC document, signed out by the Chief Executive, and we are providing you a near-final draft for your information, on a "no surprises" basis in the week beginning 27 September.
- Until the Annual Report has been published, the contents are embargoed.
- The Annual Report contents are subject to Select Committee scrutiny. Any performance anomalies or points of fact that may be incorrect may become the subject of questions. The risk of anomalies or factual mistakes is low, however, because the content is being audited by KPMG and we have background material to support the information provided.
- In the Annual Report we report against the past year's priority work programmes and 2020/21 Estimates of Appropriation. Any recent changes in strategic direction will only start to be visible in the 2022 Annual Report.
- Once auditing and design has been completed, the Annual Report will proceed to publication. This year the Annual Report document will also include the Statement of Intent as a separate section. This will enable us to meet our statutory obligation to publish the Statement of Intent.
- Closer to the date of publication, we will also provide you with a briefing about tabling the Report and provide reactive messaging to accompany the final Annual Report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Central North Island: Kaimanawa Horse muster update

- We had been planning a small muster of Kaimanawa Horses for August / September, to trial use of contraception as an alternative means of population control.
- Planning for this trial with horse protection groups has been underway for two years, and we received animal ethics approval in 2020.
- The trial was originally to take place with the annual April muster, but this was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. It was rescheduled for August / September, as the next available time when range access could be obtained in the Waiouru military training area.
- Further COVID-19 restrictions mean, however, that we have now missed the operational window this calendar year, as many mares are already with foals (which creates animal welfare risks for the muster). The decision has therefore been made (in agreement with horse protection groups and veterinarians) to defer the operation until April 2022.
- The implication of not administering the contraception is a possible increase from 380 horses (estimate for 2021) to around 500 (estimate for 2022). The current management plan recommends the population is maintained to 300, although the herd has been managed at 500 in the past.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Lower North Island: Te Tairāwhiti Rau Tipu Rau Ora Taiao Group

- DOC has employed a Programme Coordinator for six months to help Rau Tipu Rau Ora (RTRO) establish a Taiao Group to grow alignment and collaboration across the Natural Resource Sector in Tairāwhiti.
- Tangata whenua, industry and local government established RTRO in 2020 as a response to the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and health effects of COVID-19 for Te Tairāwhiti.
- More recently, the RTRO governance agreed to develop a Taiao group to better deliver priority environmental outcomes within the region.
- The Taiao Group has had its first (virtual) hui and is working on a shared purpose and vision. It intends to inform a Te Tairāwhiti-wide view of environmental priorities and opportunities, mandated by its members.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Milford Opportunities Project (MOP) – Save Milford Airport group formation

- A Save Milford Airport (SMA) group has been formed to contest the recommendation in the Milford Opportunities Master Plan to close the fixed wing runway and repurpose the land.
- SMA is a group of general aviation operators and wider stakeholders that utilise the Milford Sound Airport.

- It is requesting consultation with responsible Ministers to make their case for retention of the fixed wing runway. Note, no decision has been made by Ministers to remove the runway in response to the MOP recommendation to date. [REDACTED]
- Prior to notification of the formation of this group MOP had started scoping further feasibility of the Master Plan recommendation to close the fixed wing runway. [REDACTED]
- An engagement plan is in development for working with the SMA group. The Chairperson of MOP will be the MOP spokesperson.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Weekly update on the COVID-19 pandemic response

- Staff in the Auckland region are transitioning to Alert Level 3. The transition guidance used by the rest of the country has proven to be fit-for-purpose and we do not expect any major issues. A specific wellbeing package is being rolled out to staff based in Auckland to support them through the next few weeks under Alert Level 3, as most staff will still be working from home.
- The rest of DOC is operating to the current Alert Level 2 regime.
- DOC staff in small rural settlements have been assisting local DHBs to roll out vaccination clinics at place. For example, on the West Coast a DOC staffer was seconded to the DHB to support the local roll-out, especially to the more remote locations such as Haast and Karamea. Many small settlements have now passed through the DHB vaccine roll-out process.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

October

- 06 October Environment NGOs, via MS Teams
- 07 October Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Wellington
- 14-15 Oct NZCA meeting, Tauranga

November

- 08 November Lou Sanson – Farewell event, Banquet Hall Parliament
- 18-19 Nov Public Service Leadership Team Retreat, Martinborough
- 24 November Te hāpai hāpori/ Spirit of Service Awards, Dominion Museum Wellington

December

- 09-10 Dec NZCA Meeting, Wellington

5 Appendices

The following appendices are provided to support the Status Report:

Appendix 1. Cabinet Paper Report

Appendix 2. Jobs for Nature dashboard