



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**In-Confidence**

# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 1 July 2019**

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

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

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# 1 Standing and Priority Items

## 1.1 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

None this week.

### Submissions

- On 14 June, we lodged a submission on the Oceania Gold Limited (OGL) mine application for land use consents from the Dunedin City Council and the Waitaki District Council.
- The application seeks an approximate 50 ha extension to OGL's Coronation North Mine, at Macrae's Flat, North Otago.
- DOC's submission addresses loss of indigenous vegetation, effects on wetlands, threatened plants, lizards, and invertebrates. It also addresses the lack of permanent legal protection by OGL for a proposed "set aside area" of 52.5 ha.

### Appeals

- On 17 June, we lodged an appeal on the Northland Regional Council's Proposed Regional Plan for Northland. The appeal focuses mainly on freshwater issues and policies relating to the protection of indigenous biodiversity.

### Designations

None this week.

### Water Conservation Orders

None this week.

### Other

None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Kauri Dieback

- On 5 July, DOC and the Bay of Plenty community, including the Mayor of Katikati, will gather in Katikati to unveil a new two-story mural displaying the diverse history of the Kaimai Kauri.
- DOC created the mural with the support of Shane Walker Artworks and Open Air Arts.
- The mural, called "Te Wao Tapunui a Tāne (The sacred domain of Tane)" evokes a call to action through storytelling, including how humans contribute to the spread of kauri dieback and in doing so, pose the biggest threat to kauri extinction.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 Myrtle Rust

- Biosecurity NZ is reducing its capacity for myrtle rust long-term management and is now focussing on communication and science.
- We are working with Biosecurity NZ on the implications of this and will provide you with an updated briefing following the Governance Group Meeting on 29 June.
- As of 1 July, MPI's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline number will no longer be taking reports on myrtle rust findings.

- If the public suspects myrtle rust, MPI and DOC now advise that symptoms can be reported to the 'inaturalist' website (<https://www.inaturalist.org>), and that the myrtle rust website can be visited for more information ([www.myrtlerust.org.nz/how-you-can-help](http://www.myrtlerust.org.nz/how-you-can-help)).
- DOC and MPI have established steps to communicate this change to both redirect the information and reduce any potential impact of the change to the hotline.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 43<sup>rd</sup> World Heritage Committee Meeting: possible new World Heritage Site in China

- The 43rd World Heritage Committee meeting is taking place 30 June-10 July in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- DOC is New Zealand's State Party for the World Heritage Convention and the Director Operations Southern South Island will represent New Zealand at the meeting.
- The Committee will discuss China's nomination of the Yellow Sea site as a World Heritage site. We have an interest in this: parts of the Yellow Sea are important stopover sites for New Zealand's godwits and red knots during their migrations to and from the Arctic breeding grounds.
- The IUCN identified further work was needed on China's Yellow Sea nomination. We understand that China has submitted further information for consideration by the Committee.
- If the site is not inscribed as a World Heritage site at this meeting, we will encourage China to address the matters raised by the IUCN and the Committee, and resubmit the nomination.
- If the Yellow Sea nomination is confirmed/inscribed as a World Heritage site, you may wish to put out a media announcement welcoming the confirmation.
- DOC will prepare comms messaging.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Collaboration to assess mainland southern right whale population

- DOC and scientists from the University of Auckland (UofA), and Otago University have made a call for the public to report sightings of southern right whales around New Zealand.
- We will use this information in an attempt to obtain photos and genetic samples of the whales, which will allow us to identify individuals and match them to existing catalogues.
- The sightings will contribute to a project led by UofA to investigate genetics of the species and determine the whales' movements between the sub-Antarctic islands and the mainland.
- The work is funded under a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship from the Royal Society of New Zealand that was awarded to Dr Emma Carroll at UofA, with DOC providing in-kind support to the project.
- Southern right whales are primarily found around the sub-Antarctic islands over winter, where the population is steadily recovering, but they are being seen more frequently around the mainland.

- This project will provide us with information about how frequently southern right whales are visiting our coast, and where, which will help us manage threats to them as their numbers grow.
- As communicated with your office, we can arrange for the content of the media release on the DOC website to be incorporated into your speech to the NZ Marine Sciences Society Conference at the University of Otago on 3 July, if you wish.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### **2.3 Deed of Agreement for kākāpō donations administration with DOC and Ngai Tahu's Mauri Ora Kākāpō Trust**

- At DOC's Senior Leaders Hui on 18 June, the Director-General and Tane Davis (Conservation Coordinator, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu), signed a Deed of Agreement for the newly established Mauri Ora Kākāpō Trust (set up by Ngai Tahu) to receive and administer donations for the Kākāpō Recovery Programme.
- The Agreement with the Mauri ora Kākāpō Trust provides an opportunity to enhance the working relationship between Ngai Tahu, DOC and Meridian to support kākāpō recovery together.
- Our National Partnership with Meridian (established in 2016) supports the Kākāpō Recovery Programme. The partnership has driven a significant increase in public awareness and growing donations for kākāpō.
- The signing event created an opportunity to acknowledge Tane Davis's Queens Honour for his services to conservation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### **2.4 Kākāpō Artificial Insemination success**

- Artificial Insemination (AI) is used on kākāpō to increase egg fertility and minimise loss of genetic diversity.
- The Kākāpō Recovery Team has worked on kākāpō semen collection and AI for over 20 years, and in 2009 achieved the first ever successful AI for a wild bird species, with three kākāpō chicks produced.
- The team has now learnt that some of this year's attempts were successful, after receiving DNA parentage results. Three successful fertilisations with AI resulted in two early embryo deaths and two living chicks. This is the first time in a decade that kākāpō AI has proven successful and is a significant achievement.
- Successful AI mothers, Margaret-Maree, Nora and Cyndy, were three of twelve females who were artificially inseminated following natural matings. One of the AI fathers is Sinbad, a Fiordland male who had not yet passed on his rare genes. His very special chick is unfortunately one of the thirteen birds currently being treated for aspergillosis.
- These results demonstrate that years of refinement have improved our understanding of this technique. AI is likely to be a crucial tool for the future genetic management for the species.
- This work was funded by DOC and Meridian, with experienced AI practitioners from Germany joining the kākāpō team on Whenua Hou in February and March.
- The results will be announced to the public late in the week beginning 1 July. Local DOC staff will liaise with your office, should you wish to make the announcement.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 PF2050 Community Rangers

### South Island

- The Marlborough Biodiversity Forum steering group (made up of members of community groups, the Marlborough District Council and DOC) held its first meeting on 23 June, attended by around 65 people.
- In the week of 24 June, Friends of Flora began deployment of 670 (DOC-funded) stainless steel double-set traps in Kahurangi National Park, to replace the older single traps.
- Students from Project Moturoa, a Kaitiaki Whenua programme, recently undertook the two-day NMIT Predator Trapping Methods course. The students will use their training to establish a trapping project on Moturoa (Rabbit) Island.
- Over the last four months, Buller and Grey District rangers and volunteers have been building 400 x DOC200 double set wooden box traps as part of the biodiversity project funded by Air New Zealand. The traps are to be placed on both sides of the Punakaiki and Pororari rivers.
- Franz Josef school recently built DOC150 trap boxes and installed them on various tracks as part of their Trap Network Launch event. The town aspires to PF2050 goals, and hopes to produce a 'PF Franz' in the coming years.
- The South West New Zealand Endangered Species Charitable Trust is continuing work on Coal Island to replace some outdated traps with new DOC150 traps.
- Wanaka, Alexandra and Queenstown communities are leading a scoping study for landscape scale predator control, funded in part by DOC and the Wakatipu Wildlife Trust. The draft is complete, and feedback is being sought.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 PF2050 Tools to Market

- Tools to Market is a product development fund administered by DOC. One of its projects is the development of an aerial PAPP bait to control stoats at a landscape level.
- In a recent trial, over a period of three days, eight captive stoats were given non-toxic test baits, which were all consumed.
- We have asked [REDACTED] to add some encapsulated PAPP to the test baits to trial effectiveness on captive stoats. If the method is effective, we can go ahead with field trials in July.
- An intermediate step in the project is to register a ready-made bait for bait station use before going to aerial trials.
- The field trial will pre-feed with non-toxic baits to check that the baits are being eaten by stoats, before placing PAPP baits in the bait stations. It is likely that the PAPP baits will be put out in September for four weeks, and will be checked weekly.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 1080 operations in the Turangi and Tongariro districts

- OSPRI/TBfree NZ have recently asked DOC for permission to complete aerial 1080 operations on the northern boundary of Tongariro National Park.
- This operation was initially part of a larger section which got divided into two, the first having been completed in 2018. The second was due to be completed over the winter (pre-feed was administered in May).
- Subsequent to DOC providing approval for the second phase of the operation, hapu raised additional concerns which triggered the need for further consultation.

- DOC has, therefore, put the public conservation land (Tongariro National Park) areas of the operation on hold, although private landholders within the operational area, including Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust, have approved their sections of the operation which has now been completed.

Contact: [REDACTED]



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## 2.10 Lake Karapiro koi carp incursion

- We recently briefed you about a potential koi carp incursion in Lake Karapiro, Waikato (Status Report 78, item 2.4 refers).
- The DOC-led multi-agency response to the incursion has continued, with daily surveillance on the lake from 19 to 27 June.
- Surveillance, using boat, drone, electric fishing and netting activities have been used and, since our last report, no further koi have been seen or caught.
- Waikato University is conducting isotope analysis of the fish caught and killed in the week of 17 June to help determine if it is a long-term resident or new arrival.
- The initial response team was stood down as of 28 June.
- DOC has invited key stakeholders and technical advisors to meet early in the week beginning 1 July to review information and develop an ongoing response plan.
- We have had good support and technical advice from Mercury Energy, Waikato Regional Council, Ngaati Koroki Kahukura, Ngaati Raukawa, Ngaati Haua, Waikato-Tainui, the University of Waikato, Auckland/ Waikato Fish & Game and MPI.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### July

3 July	2019 Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington
4–5 July	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa
9 July	The Aotearoa Circle Trust Partnership Workshop, Government House
11 July	ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
12 July	Whenua Hau book launch, Bluff
13 July	Predator Free Rakiura MOU signing, Rakiura
14 July	Hump Ridge Track announcement, Tuatapere
20–27 July	Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University
31 July	Senior Leaders hui, Wellington

#### August

1 August	Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa, Wellington
7 August	Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
7 August	MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington
14-15 August	EDS Conference "Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa", Auckland
18 August	Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington
20 August	Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti Meeting, Turangi
22 August	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm

#### September

3 September	DOC/Ngai Tahu Governance hui, TBC Dunedin
4-9 September	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa
19 September	Zoological Society of Auckland, Auckland

#### October

2-4 October	SLT Retreat, Pounui
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## 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:

- NZ Cycleways in Otago and the Otago CMS

### **Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities**

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- Loder Cup presentation 2019

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# Department of Conservation Status Report

**Week beginning: 8 July 2019**

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

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

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# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None

### Submissions

- None

### Appeals

- We are appealing NZTA's decision to accept in part the recommendation to confirm the Notice of Requirement that provides for construction and operation of the Manawatu-Tararua highway project.
- The reasons for the appeal are:
  - The alignment will traverse areas of high conservation values, but there is insufficient information to assess potential adverse ecological effects.
  - Conditions on the designation do not address all the concerns raised in our submission around potentially significant adverse effects on biodiversity values.
  - The application as granted fails to prioritise measures to avoid, remedy, mitigate and then offset ecological effects.
  - The lack of information means that effects are not well understood, and as "offset" locations have not been identified there is limited ability to understand the ecological values to be gained through any "offset". Ecological compensation ratios provided for in conditions are therefore based on limited information, do not align with best practice for offsetting and should not be relied upon.
  - We are seeking further information so that the significance and extent of effects can be assessed. We are also requesting that conditions are amended to ensure adverse effects on biodiversity values are managed through the hierarchy of avoid, remedy, mitigate, and then for residual effects offset to achieve a net biodiversity gain.

### Designations

- None

### Water Conservation Orders

- None

### Other

- None

Contact: 

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

- The Environment Select Committee released its report on kauri dieback on 28 June supporting the need for a new approach. The Committee requested careful thought be given to any agency design, and noted the need for adequate funding from both central and local government.
- Both the Tangata Whenua Roopu Executive and the Independent Panel for Kauri Dieback have promoted the need for funding of the National Pest Management Plan (NPMP).

- DOC and other Programme Partners are continuing with their respective operational work while awaiting clarity from Biosecurity NZ for both the kauri dieback programme and the NPMP.
- Te Roroa held a community meeting in Dargaville on 2 July to update the community on the Tāne Mahuta Response Plan, the pig control programme and sampling results, including –
  - PA positive tree 30 metres from Te Mātua Ngahere
  - PA positive tree 75 metres from Yakas
  - PA positive sample from the Four Sisters
- We will provide an updated briefing prior to your meeting with Minister O'Connor on 30 July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 1.3 Myrtle rust

- On 28 June the myrtle rust governance group endorsed the myrtle rust strategic science plan. We understand this will be going to the Minister for Biosecurity in mid-July. You will receive a copy as well.
- DOC was notified by a member of the public on a suspected myrtle rust find on Greater Barrier Island. An investigation by trained DOC staff showed that it was not myrtle rust. DOC continues to encourage staff to report suspected finds to our myrtle rust team.
- We have commissioned SCION to look at the impacts of myrtle rust on seed germination after it was observed that myrtle rust was occurring on the inside of ramarama (*Lophomyrtus* spp) fruits.
- Results show that while germination of seeds can still occur with heavy myrtle rust infection, the germination levels were significantly lower compared to uninfected seeds.
- This is the first evidence of the seeds of NZ species being impacted by myrtle rust. These results along with observation of dieback of foliage and death of seedlings, show that myrtle rust impacts all life stages of NZ species (*Lophomyrtus* spp.). This increases the potential of the extinction of these species in the wild.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Secondary poisoning of tuatara at Natureland, Nelson

- In May we were made aware that four of the eight tuatara at Natureland Zoo have died over the last two years. We have been working with Natureland staff and Ngāti Koata to investigate the causes of the deaths.
- Natureland is a small zoo/wildlife park at Tahunanui in Nelson, operated by the Natureland Wildlife Trust with support from Nelson City Council.
- Natureland is authorised to hold and display eight tuatara under a Wildlife Act authority issued by DOC.
- We have been providing technical advice to Natureland to assist with the investigation and to ensure they are meeting the requirements of their DOC permits for holding tuatara at the zoo.
- Tissue samples from three of the dead tuatara showed they tested positive for brodifacoum. Brodifacoum is the active ingredient in several widely available rodenticides, including one that has been used at Natureland. The tuatara are thought to have been exposed to the toxin by eating insects that had consumed toxic bait placed outside the tuatara enclosures.
- We are preparing a memo for you with further details on this matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 New Zealand sea lion, SLED and cryptic mortality research

- *The Operational Plan to Manage the Incidental capture of NZ Sea Lions in the Southern Squid Trawl Fishery (SQU6T)* is currently being reviewed as an action under the New Zealand Sea lion/Rāpoka Threat Management Plan (TMP).
- The current Operational Plan combines regulatory measures to manage interactions between the SQU6T fisheries and sea lions, such as the 'Fisheries-Related Mortality Limit' (FRML), and non-regulatory measures. The Sea Lion Exclusion Devices (SLEDs) are one of the non-regulatory measures, but all vessels in the SQU6T fishery have used them since 2007. SLEDs allow sea lions to exit the trawl net, but an unknown proportion of them will not survive. The unobservable sea lion mortality is termed 'cryptic mortality'.
- Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) propose changes in the 2019 Operation Plan after discussions at the SQU6T Operational Plan Technical Advisory Group (TAG). FNZ led a number of contracts in 2018/19 to estimate the parameters that will contribute to the new FRML.
- A 'Desktop estimation of sea lion cryptic mortality in trawl fisheries employing SLEDs' was developed by Abacus-Bio; and NIWA has completed a 'Spatially explicit risk modelling of Auckland Islands sea lions in deepwater trawl fisheries' (SEFRA model); and an 'Update of Auckland Islands NZ sea lion population model for Population Sustainability Threshold (PST) estimation'.
- The results of these research projects have been presented and discussed in the Aquatic Environmental Working Group (AEWG) and the TAG. FNZ is currently working on the options discussed to be included in a consultation document for the review of the Operational Plan.
- We will provide a memo to you within the next 2 weeks about this consultation document and the preferred option to be included in the Operational Plan. The Minister of Fisheries sets the FRML after public consultation and consultation with you, according to the section 15 of the Fisheries Act.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 QEII Letter of Expectation and MOU FY2019/20

- In June we received QEII's draft MOU for assessment [REDACTED]. We withheld progressing the MOU and sought governance advice. This advice indicates that we need to refresh the MOU and Letter of Expectation (LoE) process with the QEII Board.
- We are in contact with the QEII Chair to work through the proposed process.
- Through the impending arrival of the new Chief Executive, yet to be announced, there is an opportunity to refresh QEII strategy and our operational relationship through redeveloping the MOU.
- The impact of delaying having a signed MOU is minimal. QEII monthly payments will continue to be made and QEII operations will proceed as normal while the refresh process is undertaken.
- We will provide a briefing to you detailing the proposed approach.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 Update on Ngāi Tahu's request for improved ownership of uplifted land and reserves on the Kaikoura coast

- In September 2018 you asked DOC and LINZ to investigate improved ownership of reserves vested in Ngāi Tahu along the Kaikoura coast, and the adjacent uplifted land.
- The Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands decided in early 2019 that the uplifted land was likely to be held by LINZ under the Lands Act 1948.
- DOC met with Ngāi Tahu on 27 February 2019 and provided an update about our review of options for this work. We noted that bespoke legislation is the only clear option to give effect to land ownership of both the uplifted land and existing reserves.
- As all the uplifted land has now been confirmed as being held under the Land Act 1948, we have agreed with LINZ that they should lead a more substantive briefing to you (with DOC support).

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.5 New areas under consideration for reclassification work

- We are currently rolling out our stewardship land reclassification work programme and are assessing three new areas to start this work in.
- The new places where we are engaging, or planning to engage, with Treaty Partners to develop a reclassification framework are Bay of Plenty, Kawarau / Remarkables, and the Northern South Island.
- [REDACTED]
- In Kawarau / Remarkables, we have engaged Treaty partners on the reclassification work, and will look to co-design a bespoke process for the area.
- In the Bay of Plenty and Northern South Island we have begun the process of identifying priority areas and will then engage with the relevant Treaty partners.
- We have outlined our approach to the Conservation Boards in Bay of Plenty, Nelson/Marlborough, and Otago.

- We will provide you with a full briefing on the work planned for Bay of Plenty, Kāwharau, and Northern South Island by the end of August.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Great Walks bookings open for 2019/20 season

- Great Walks opened from 11 June for the 2019/2020 season.
- Over 10,000 bookings have been made since opening (first two weeks). This represents a 13% increase in bookings compared to the same period last year.
- The new Paparoa Track also opened for bookings, and more than 800 bookings were made, of which 90% were made by New Zealanders.
- Domestic bookings account for 70% of bookings and are up 10% on last year.
- The new booking service managed the demand very well and delivered a great customer experience.
- Officials are available to meet with you if you require further details.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) visual identity update

- DOC's Creative Services and Brand teams presented options for the visual identity for the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) to you and Hon Kelvin Davis, Minister of Tourism in April (briefing 19-B-0306).
- The visual identity is a core part of communicating the value of the IVL to those paying it and those benefiting from it.
- We worked closely with MBIE and Tourism New Zealand to develop and refine the options presented to you in April.
- MBIE has decided to develop additional design options for the IVL visual identity based on Minister Davis' request to explore aligning it with the tiaki brand.
- MBIE has engaged an external creative agency, Designworks, for this work. Designworks are the agency responsible for the creation of the tiaki brand.
- The budget is \$25k, which is being funded by MBIE. DOC is contributing staff time to the project.
- The work done on the visual identity to date is being used as a starting point for Designworks. The projected completion date for the work is early August.
- The marketing and communications of the IVL is being managed by MBIE with approval and sign off on the public-facing brand sitting with both MBIE and DOC.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy launch

- Following the launch of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy, the Alliance met to discuss the required steps to implement our Strategy.
- Tasman and Marlborough District Councils offered to lead work to understand each Alliance entity's funding round process and legislative drivers, and how these link back to the Strategy to further drive our collaboration.

- The Alliance confirmed its collaborative focus on Te Hoiere / Pelorus catchment restoration and water quality project as a pilot to learn and understand how we can achieve significant conservation outcomes by working together.
- We are also scoping an opportunity to explore an extensive One Billion Trees programme working at scale across the Top of the South under the Strategy and identifying where groups like the Tasman Environmental Trust could deliver the outcomes over multiple years.
- We continue to be impressed by Alliance entities' significant commitment to implement the Strategy collaboratively.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### July

9 July	The Aotearoa Circle Trust Partnership Workshop, Government House
11 July	ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
12 July	Whenua Hou Book Launch, Bluff
13 July	Predator Free Rakiura MOU signing, Rakiura
14 July	Hump Ridge Track announcement, Tuatapere
20-27 July	Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University
31 July	Senior Leaders Hui, Basin Reserve Wellington

#### August

1 August	Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa Wellington
7 August	Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
7 August	MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington
14-15 August	EDS Conference "Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa", Auckland
18 August	Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington
20 August	Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti Meeting, Turangi
22 August	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm

#### September

3 Sept.	DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, Tbc Dunedin
4-10 Sept.	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa
19 Sept.	Zoological Society of Auckland, Auckland

#### October

2-4 October	SLT Retreat, Pounui
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## 4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Attorney General v the Trustees of the Motiti Rohe Moana Trust (MRMT) - Court of Appeal – update
- Barton New Zealand Limited (BNZL) Garnet Mine RMA application update
- Kahurangi National Park takahē and predator control

### Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

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- Whakapapa 'Sky Waka' gondola update
- Conservation Week

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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 15 July 2019**

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

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

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# 1 Standing and Priority Items

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## 1.1 Kauri dieback

- Biosecurity NZ is preparing a Cabinet Paper for Cabinet Economic Development Committee (date to be lodged not yet known). The paper will note that funding for the National Pest Management Plan is needed and advise that options for securing funding will be provided in a follow-up paper. We are working with Biosecurity NZ on a joint briefing to you and Minister O'Connor for your meeting on 30 July.
- We continue to plan for the next round of track mitigation work, to occur when tracks are drier. This will include Great Barrier Island and Auckland/Whangarei.

### Bay of Islands track closures

- We are permanently closing 10 tracks to prevent the spread of kauri dieback.
- Our decision took into account nearby recreational opportunities, and followed consultation with our Treaty partner.
- The local office is managing the communications strategy and notifying stakeholders.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

- None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy update

### Submissions

- On 3 July, DOC lodged a submission on the proposed Whangarei District Council's Urban and Services plan changes; specifically, PC88I Living Zones, PC115 Open Space Zones, and PC147 Earthworks.
  - We are asking for the plan changes to include a policy and rule framework which will regulate earthworks and vegetation clearance activities to help control the spread of kauri dieback.

### Appeals

- On 8 July, we joined 12 appeals on the Northland Regional Council's Proposed Regional Plan for Northland. This is in addition to DOC's own appeal on the plan, which focused on freshwater issues and policies relating to the protection of indigenous biodiversity.
  - There were 23 appeals in total. DOC has generally joined appeals relating to the coastal marine area, wetlands and the implementation of the NZCPS.
  - We are opposing appeals by: Transpower, Northpower, Top Energy Limited, NZ Refining Company, Mangawhai Harbour Protection Society, Federated Farmers, Horticulture NZ, and Yachting NZ.
  - We are supporting appeals by: Forest and Bird, Bay of Islands Maritime Park, Northland Fish and Game, and CEP Services Matauwhi.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Māui Dolphin: US rejection of Sea Shepherd petition

- The US has formally rejected the petition from Sea Shepherd which called on it to block imports of NZ fisheries products associated with the bycatch of Māui dolphins.
- The US published a Federal Register Notice (FRN) on 10 July (Washington time) rejecting the petition on the basis of the draft Threat Management Plan (TMP) published by NZ for consultation on 17 June.
- The FRN notes that the rejection is based on the assumption that additional bycatch mitigation measures outlined in the TMP will be implemented, and adds that the US will continue to monitor NZ's implementation of set net and trawl measures to ensure comparability with US bycatch management.
- Implementation of the TMP therefore remains necessary to ensure an import ban is not applied by the US, either at its own initiative or in response to another ENGO petition.
- MPI will respond to media enquiries on this issue.
- Public meetings on the TMP review will be held for two weeks from 15 July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Shore plover - Motutapu

- The shore plover has the conservation status of Threatened – Nationally Critical, with an estimated total population of 145 mature birds.
- Motutapu Island has one of the three remaining shore plover populations in New Zealand.
- The Motutapu population was established by translocation in 2012, and since then 127 captive-reared birds have been released.
- At the start of 2018/19 breeding season, 19 adult shore plovers were on the island.
- During the breeding season, six pairs produced 24 eggs, 19 of which hatched, with four juveniles reaching fledging stage.
- A further 36 captive-reared juvenile shore plovers were released on the island over the season.
- At the end of season census, only 18 shore plovers were present, including one juvenile.
- Avian predation (harriers, magpies, gulls and ruru) is most likely to be the cause of chick and adult loss, and is also a factor in juvenile dispersal.
- Population modelling indicates that, without the implementation of avian predator control and further releases, local extinction of shore plover on Motutapu is likely to occur within two years.
- The local DOC office is working with the Shore Plover Recovery Team to develop an implementation plan for avian predator control combined with further releases.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Discussing deer management

- Deer management has been added to the agenda for the Biodiversity Strategy hui to be held over August – October 2019. It is an optional item, with iwi being asked in advance if they wish to discuss the issue. This will give us adequate notice of which hui should be attended by DOC staff with deer expertise.

- While the invitations to the hui are timed ahead of when we planned to initiate engagement on deer management, this presents an opportunity to raise deer management as an issue with our Treaty partner.
- We are advising the Game Animal Council that we will want to engage with the council and other key stakeholders in the near future.
- We will send you a memo, *Developing a response to increasing deer abundance* in the coming week (by 19 July). This will include a proposed approach to our Treaty partner and stakeholder engagement over the longer term.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### July

20-27 July Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University  
 31 July Senior Leaders Hui, Wellington

#### August

1 August Holiday Parks Conference, Wellington  
 7 August Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington  
 7 August MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington  
 9 August Seafood NZ Conference  
 14-15 August EDS Conference “Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa”, Auckland  
 18 August Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington  
 22 August State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm  
 28 August Meeting with Minister Shane Jones  
 28 August Corporate Career Board event, Wellington

#### September

3 September DOC/Ngāi Tahu Governance hui, TBC Dunedin  
 4-10 Sept. Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa  
 17 September Conservation Week Function, Christchurch  
 18 September Conservation Week function, Invercargill  
 19 September Zoological Society of Auckland, Auckland

#### October

2 -4 October SLT Retreat, Pounui  
 7 October NZ Conservation Authority, TBC Hamilton

## 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:

- Unauthorised mountain bike track construction in Croydon Bush Scenic Reserve, Gore
- Ngati Raukawa correspondence

### **Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities**

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None this week.

Proactively released



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

**Week beginning: 22 July 2019**

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

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

Productively released

# 1 Standing and Priority Items

## 1.1 Tahr control programme

- Tahr control over the period 4–8 July was undertaken across three tahr management units by DOC staff, aerially assisted trophy hunting concessionaires and by a contractor. Approximately 2,300 tahr were controlled over this time period.
- Information on recent control activity has been posted on the 'Tahr control operations' page of the DOC website.
- A total of c. 3,300 tahr have now been controlled towards the target of 10,000 in the Tahr Control Operational Plan: 15 October 2018 to 31 August 2019.
- Weather conditions since 9 July have prevented further tahr control being undertaken. Contractors, concessionaires and DOC will all recommence at the next available weather window.

### 2019-2020 Tahr Control Operational Plan

- We worked with Ngāi Tahu to create a process for the development of a Tahr Control Operational Plan for 1 September 2019 to 30 June 2020.
- A key element of the process was ensuring that the plan was developed with a good understanding of stakeholder needs and perspectives as well as the best available technical information. To that end, Ngāi Tahu and DOC have held one on one workshops with tahr stakeholders over the last fortnight.
- After the workshops, we will develop a draft Tahr Operational Plan for 1 September 2019 to 30 June 2020. The draft will be tested at the Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group meeting on 6 August. The meeting is being hosted by Ngāi Tahu in Christchurch.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Kauri dieback

### Possible detection on Hauturu (Little Barrier Island)

- On 10 June 2019 Auckland Council's aerial surveillance work programme detected the possible presence of the kauri dieback pathogen in three isolated locations on Hauturu (Little Barrier Island).
- In 2014 helicopter monitoring also detected potential sites, but prior assessments of two sites near tracks did not cause concern (kauri dieback pathogen was not detected in the test sample received).
- We have visited three sites identified in the recent survey and detected several dead trees and noted some gummosis is present. Kauri trees naturally bleed for many reasons and two trees show some, but not definitive, dieback symptoms.
- Trained DOC rangers have undertaken soil sampling and we expect the results in 4-6 weeks.
- High hygiene practices remain in place and planning has commenced on the actions that would need to be taken if dieback is confirmed.

### Waiotemarama Track reopening

- The Waiotemarama Track along the Kauri Coast will be reopening on 25 July. The track had been closed for track mitigation work.
- A reopening ceremony for the community will be hosted by the DOC Kauri Coast team and Te Roroa. Local media have been invited to attend.

## National Pest Management Plan

- We are working on a joint briefing with Biosecurity NZ for your meeting with Minister O'Connor on 30 July 2019.

Contacts: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

### Declarations

- None

### Submissions

- On 10 July we lodged a submission on a publicly notified consent for gravel extraction from the Ohau River, Levin. We are seeking that the consent is declined as the applicant has not provided adequate information to assess the effects of the activity on freshwater biodiversity, riparian vegetation and avifauna values.
- On 15 July we lodged another submission on the Proposed Waikato District Plan. We further submitted in support and opposition on a number of submissions, including removal and amendment of Significant Natural Areas, earthworks and indigenous vegetation clearance provisions.
- On 15 July we lodged a submission on a limited notified application for discharge of the herbicide haloxyfop to the Te Harakeke Wetlands for the control of Manchurian Wild Rice. Although supportive of the activity in principle, we had concerns about the lack of information provided in the application and potential effects of the discharge on indigenous species, particularly juvenile fish and aquatic invertebrates.

### Appeals

- None

### Designations

- None

### Water Conservation Orders

- None

### Other

- None

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.4 Myrtle rust

- No myrtle rust updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2 Updates

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### 2.1 Public consultation on whitebait management

- We are currently undertaking pre-consultation engagement with Treaty partners to develop the list of management options taken forward to public consultation.
- We made direct contact via email with 495 Treaty partners, iwi organisations and Māori who have previously been in touch with us about whitebait. This initial contact outlined our progression to public consultation on whitebait management. We sought feedback from those interested in further engagement, asking when and how they would like to be involved.
- We advised DOC Operations of our pre-consultation engagement plan and have worked with them as engagement has progressed.
- We have received 19 responses and have followed up with all respondents. Staff have participated in three hui (Christchurch, Karitane, Bluff) and four more are scheduled (Tauranga, Rotorua, Palmerston North, Christchurch).
- We are also meeting with Te Wai Māori on an ongoing basis.
- Feedback has included recognition of the complexity of whitebait management, given the diverse threats, pressures, and interests in these species (e.g. diverse views within iwi groups on fishing and conservation values).
- We will update you at our meeting on 22 July and on an ongoing basis via the status report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.2 Lake Karapiro koi incursion

- We briefed you on 24 June (Status Report 78) on a potential koi carp incursion in Lake Karapiro, Waikato.
- We met with key stakeholders and technical advisors on 3 July to review available information and to advise on an ongoing response plan.
- The DOC-led, multi-agency initial response ceased on 27 July and key stakeholders have been notified.
- A single koi was caught in the lake. Initial tests to determine if it was a long-term resident or a new arrival were inconclusive and more recent samples from other neighbouring koi are required for stable isotope analysis to confirm. Further tests will be undertaken by Waikato and Otago Universities.
- DOC staff will meet on 5 August to discuss next steps for the management of koi and of the lake given this potential incursion.
- While there has not been media involved in the incident to date, a communications strategy will be developed proactively around possible koi control methods, given the recent publicity about some controversial methods.
- We will continue to liaise with Mercury Energy, Waikato Regional Council, Ngāti Koroki Kahukura, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Hāua, Waikato-Tainui, University of Waikato, Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game and MPI.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.3 Hauraki Gulf shellfish restoration

- MPI has signed a contract to contribute funding to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) work on shellfish restoration. Their contribution will support the research component of the three-year plan that is being developed.
- DOC and MPI are drafting a joint press release that will announce that the government is joining the shellfish restoration efforts underway in the Gulf.
- The Government Response Strategy to the Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari Plan will further assess and consolidate the government's role in shellfish restoration in the Gulf.
- TNC is currently recruiting for a Shellfish Restoration Coordinator and are planning several workshops timed around the Hauraki Gulf Forum conference in August.
- A shellfish drop is planned in Mahurangi for 19 July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.4 Year One review of the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF)

- The NES-PF is currently being implemented by foresters and councils across New Zealand. These regulations were published on 3 August 2017 and came into force on 1 May 2018.
- Te Uru Rākau (along with MfE and DOC) are currently in the process of completing a Year One review of the NES-PF to consider issues that have arisen within the first year of implementation. This review is being completed with advice from a Stakeholder Implementation Working Group that includes councils, eNGOs and foresters.
- The NES-PF was enacted within the context of the Government seeking ways to reduce the same environmental effects across New Zealand's landscape, through a range of national direction planning tools, as well as trying to incentivise additional afforestation through the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and the One Billion Trees (1BT) programme.
- There are key pieces of national direction in development now that have implications for the Year One review, particularly the proposed Essential Freshwater package, the proposed NPS for Indigenous Biodiversity and the proposed Highly Productive Land NPS .
- Agencies are considering the interactions of these instruments and looking to align them where possible to provide consistency and create a cohesive national direction system.
- We are meeting with the NES-PF Stakeholder Implementation Working Group on 31 July to discuss forestry implementation issues and our approach to alignment with other proposed national direction. This may include a phased alignment of the NES-PF, starting in the Year One review with some alignment subsequently planned for the Year Three review, in order to give stakeholders certainty about policy settings.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 2.5 Renew Energy waste to energy plant proposal

- In April 2019, plans from Renew Energy to build a waste to energy plant in the Buller District were abandoned for several reasons, including a lack of support from local community.

- Since then, the Westland and Greymouth District Mayors have been in discussions with Renew Energy to identify possible plant site options in their respective districts.
- Renew Energy has selected Hokitika as their first-priority site for a \$260million waste to energy recycling plant and are expected to announce their project partner next week.
- The two Mayors see the potential for the West Coast to be self-sufficient in power, that a number of jobs will be created, and the reduction of landfill use as key benefits of the project.
- A public meeting will be held in Hokitika on 25 July 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Antipodean Albatross Working Group Meeting 23 July 2019

- DOC and Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) are engaging with tangata whenua and stakeholders on the issue of the declining population of the Antipodean albatross through the Antipodean Albatross Working Group. FNZ convenes the group, and the next meeting will be on 23 July. There continues to be strong interest, particularly from eNGOs, on New Zealand's actions to recover this species.
- A key item on the agenda will be developing a concerted action plan for Antipodean albatrosses. This is part of the proposal DOC is leading to list the species on Appendix I of Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species. The agenda also includes identifying research needs.
- Members of the group include officials from DOC, FNZ, MFAT; representatives from Forest and Bird, the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust, and industry; and scientists from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 An update on the Te Araroa Trust – current issues, risks and next steps

- You have previously met with the Te Araroa Trust (TAT) to hear their concerns regarding funding shortfalls of the trust.
- TAT's main issue is operational funding. They rely on grants to function, and don't have a reliable stream of cash to fund expenses. [REDACTED]
- On 14 June, TAT submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) seeking at least another 8 months of funding. We provided considerable resource to TAT in completing this EOI. The PGF EOI was declined on 11 July.
- The International Visitor Levy and Tourism Infrastructure Fund have been considered by TAT and DOC, and we decided that it is unlikely a bid by TAT would be successful.
- TAT has recently applied for funding to Charity Gaming, Southern Trust, and NZ Community Trust. If successful, these will provide about 3 to 5 months in total of additional operational funding.
- There is a reputational risk to DOC if TAT runs out of operational funding, and the sections of the Trail not on public conservation land are not able to be supported by DOC.

- There are a number of potential options for the future of TAT, however these will require discussions with Walking Access Commission and MBIE.
- We are continuing discussions with those groups, but are conscious of the increased risk to TAT's viability.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Financial management information and performance information systems and controls

- This is an update to our memo (18-B-1426) and verbal update (10 June 2019) about the management control environment, financial information systems and controls, and the financial management information system.
- The memo explained the background to the downgrade in the ESCO (Environment Systems and Control Ratings) by DOC's external auditors; and how we intended to address the deficiencies. As advised by the auditors, KPMG, in your meeting with them, the rating "Needs improvement" in the performance information and associated systems and controls was as a result of the audit point being raised consistently since 2012.
- We have added additional oversight to ensure that the operational managers were submitting evidence-based performance information. We expect that the quality of the performance information will be greatly improved and meet audit standards for year-end external financial reporting. However, the rating will not improve for the 2018/19 year as the underlying systems and controls must be in operation over the whole year to fairly reflect the performance of the department over the whole financial year.
- The financial information systems and controls were also downgraded from very good to good. We have primarily addressed the audit points which we are able to address in the short term. However, there are significant IT system gaps, e.g., procure to pay, contract management modules and financial management information systems, which will be necessary to lift the controls in this area. A gap and needs analysis will be undertaken by an external provider. Discussions of the most suitable provider and related procurement actions are continuing.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.9 Interim Climate Change Committee report on agriculture emissions – government response and riparian planting

- On 16 July, Ministers Shaw and O'Connor announced a Government proposal to price agricultural emissions under the ETS from 2025 and launched a discussion document to publicly consult on the means by which to do this. The proposals are in response to the report of the Interim Climate Change Committee (ICCC) on agricultural emissions.
- Government and farmers have expressed a preference for livestock emissions to be calculated at the farm level, on the basis that it gives farmers more control over how they manage their operations.
- The discussion document is also consulting on opportunities and barriers to on-farm GHG mitigation, including options to reward removals from on-farm vegetation. In addition, it proposes that work to develop a farm-level scheme for pricing livestock emissions will include investigating whether carbon removals from on-farm vegetation that is not currently eligible under the NZ ETS can be recognised and rewarded.

- MPI has provided a briefing to Minister O'Connor and Minister Shaw on options to incentivise riparian planting on farms, which they have recommended be forwarded to you and other Forestry Ministers.
- [REDACTED]
- We have been engaging with MPI and MfE on the issue of on-farm vegetation. We want to further investigate options to incentivise carbon removal opportunities on-farm that are not currently eligible under the NZ ETS, and that could also provide freshwater and biodiversity benefits. This includes riparian planting, but also potentially other activities such as wetland rewetting / restoration, and protecting small indigenous forest lots or remnants.
- One option that merits further investigation is to amend New Zealand's international accounting approach to specifically recognise riparian planting, or other farm removals more generally. Doing so would allow the Crown to receive a fiscal benefit for riparian planting, enabling any grants or ETS allocation to be fiscally neutral. This could allow fiscal recognition of the carbon benefits of riparian margins, without necessarily bringing them into the ETS. It could however also potentially make the Government internationally liable for any emissions from on farm vegetation clearance.
- Further work is needed to better understand how riparian planting could be measured and accounted for in a cost-effective way. Any change to New Zealand's international accounting settings would also need to be decided by March 2020, when the government will submit its final 2030 Paris NDC target and settings to the UN. We would also need to work closely with other agencies and stakeholders to understand and mitigate risks for achieving good outcomes from freshwater and biodiversity.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.10 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Oceania Regional Conservation Forum

- We will be attending the upcoming IUCN Oceania Regional Conservation Forum, which takes place 28 July to 2 August in Fiji. One member of the department will attend as the New Zealand State Party representative, alongside the NZ IUCN Regional Councillor and other New Zealand National Committee IUCN Members.
- We will use the meeting to progress our Pacific Strategy. As well as representing New Zealand's conservation interests, we will ensure Oceania's conservation interests are articulated and prioritised for the IUCN World Conservation Congress in June 2020.
- We are working on our approach to the World Conservation Congress and will keep you informed.

Contact: [REDACTED]

### 3 Director-General Engagements

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#### July

20–27 July Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University  
31 July Senior Leaders Hui, Basin Reserve Wellington

#### August

1 August Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa Wellington  
7 August Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington  
7 August MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington  
9 August Seafood NZ Conference, Queenstown  
14–15 August EDS Conference “Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa”, Auckland  
18 August Conservation Board Chairs meeting, West Plaza Wellington  
19 August NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington  
22 August State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm  
28 August Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Beehive  
28 August Corporate Career Board event, DOC Wellington

#### September

3 Sept DOC/Ngai Tahu Governance hui, Dunedin  
4–10 Sept Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Samoa  
17 Sept Conservation Week function, Antarctic Centre, Christchurch  
18 Sept Conservation Week function, Transport World, Invercargill  
19 Sept Zoological Society of Auckland, Auckland

#### October

02/10-04/10/09 SLT Retreat, Pounui  
07/10/19 NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC

## 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 Review
- Futurity water bottling, Otira
- GNS and Ngāti Waewae Provincial Growth Fund application for geothermal development across the West Coast

### **Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities**

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- Invitation to attend Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration
- World Ranger Day 2019 (Wednesday 31 July)
- Green Ribbon Awards

Proactively released



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

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# **Department of Conservation Status Report**

**Week beginning: 29 July 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 will provide you with a supporting briefing (19-B-0509) by 26 July for the meeting you are having with the Minister for Biosecurity on 30 July.
- DOC has recently installed six new hygiene stations in the Bay of Islands; three on the Kerikeri Rover Track, and one each on the Lower Waipapa River Track, the Pukatea Track and on the Blackbridge Road Track (part of the Te Araroa Trail).

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.2 Myrtle rust

None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 1.3 RMA advocacy update

- On 12 July, we lodged a submission on a publicly notified consent for the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) to discharge untreated wastewater and other hazardous substances to land and water. The application from QLDC is to authorise the current overflow and emergency discharges from its existing wastewater network. While we opposed the application, our submission identified a number of additional conditions that could address DOC's concerns including: system capacity; the use of modelling to influence system upgrades; how QLDC will reduce overflow occurrences over time; and duration of consent, if granted.

**Other**

None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

# 2 Updates

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## 2.1 Announcement of Provincial Development Fund projects at Sky Waka event

- The official opening of the 'Sky Waka' gondola at Whakapapa ski field is to take place on July 26. The Director Operations Central North Island will attend the event on behalf of the department.
- We understand Under-Secretary Fletcher Tabuteau will use the opportunity to announce Provincial Development Fund projects that will support the Ruapehu-Tongariro Tourism Development Programme. You received a briefing on the programme on 22 March (19-B-0165 refers).
- We understand the projects Under-Secretary Tabuteau will announce are:

- Sustainable Spatial Use of the Tongariro National Park – funds to support development of the long-term visitor management plan led by DOC and our Treaty partner.
  - Transitional Programme Manager and Programme Coordinator – funds to support implementation of the existing Ruapehu Regional Visitor Development Plan.
- We have a communications plan prepared in the event of any media requests, and will keep your office informed of any updates.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.2 Egmont National Park – request for land transfer

- New Plymouth District Council (NPDC), on behalf of Oakura Farms Ltd (OFL), has approached DOC with a proposal to acquire access strips which form part of Egmont National Park.
- NPDC is currently undertaking work to formalise access arrangements for a proposed 12.2km walking/cycling trail, the Kaitake Trail, to be constructed within unformed road reserve and a portion of private property adjoining Egmont National Park.
- NPDC requires access over land owned by OFL, which has made its agreement with NPDC conditional on “DOC agreeing to transfer the other accesses (to the Davies Track) to Oakura Farms in consideration of the new trail being granted”.
- There is a portion of Egmont National Park that NPDC is seeking to acquire, consisting of an unformed access strip in pasture, approximately 1.15ha in area, which dissects a larger parcel of land owned by OFL.
- If DOC released this land it would remove OFL’s concerns over the current access arrangement, and potentially allow OFL to develop its land (e.g. subdivide the property).
- As compensation, OFL has proposed the transfer of certain land to become part of the national park, and provision of an alternative access. A range of options is being put forward.
- NPDC is an important stakeholder within the Taranaki district and the \$3.5m Kaitake Trail is one of its key projects.
- DOC’s discussions with NPDC are in very early stages and we are currently seeking advice on the matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.3 Brown mudfish translocation in Carterton

- On 15 July, through the media, Fish and Game called for DOC to undertake an independent review of a transfer of 900 mudfish to a new site in relation to a project in Carterton in the Wairarapa which resulted in all the fish dying. (Brown mudfish have an ‘at risk – declining’ conservation status.)
- The fish translocation was required as part of a Carterton District Council project to upgrade the sewage system, designed to improve water quality in the Mangatarere Stream, Waiohine and Ruamahanga rivers.
- The mudfish were identified as occupying a drain in a paddock that would be drained. Wildlands Consultancy, on behalf of the council, applied for the necessary permit from Fisheries New Zealand under the Conservation Act (S26ZM(3)) to transfer the mudfish to an adjacent constructed wetland, hydrologically connected to the drain.

- We were consulted by Fisheries New Zealand, and we advised on the need to reduce the risks of predation from eels and support standard fish welfare and biosecurity conditions.
- Successful fish transfers depend on the alignment of several factors: suitable habitat, appropriate fish handling, availability of habitat space in the new location, predation and competition. DOC technical staff are now in the process of compiling guidelines to inform future fish recovery and transfer operations. These guidelines are increasingly used to mitigate destruction of habitat under the RMA, yet carry a significant degree of risk in terms of probability of success.
- DOC will work with Fisheries New Zealand, Wildlands Consultancy and Greater Wellington to review this particular transfer, and assess whether the advice and permit conditions were followed, what was overlooked and how transfers like this can be improved on in order to better protect these fish and their habitats in the future.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.4 Farming strategy development

- The Commercial Partnerships Team (CPT) is in the early stages of developing a partnership-strategy for working with the farming sector
- The CPT has been gathering contributions from across DOC, and in August it will start engaging with several entities representing the farming community, including Federated farmers, Beef and Lamb NZ and the Landcare Trust.
- Early themes emerging from DOC teams suggest that working more purposefully with industry bodies, supporting farmer-led catchment groups and helping farmers understand the unique biodiversity on their properties would all lead to strong conservation outcomes

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.5 9Wire environmental innovation programme

- The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has received 240 applications from around the country for the new 9Wire environmental innovation programme. This is well in excess of WWF's expectations for the programme's first year. WWF says early indications are that most applications are of a high quality, with a significant number coming from the Tasman, Nelson, Gisborne, the West Coast and Northland regions.
- Because of the large number of applications, the review period has been extended to 30 August.
- 9Wire expands on the Environmental Innovation Award programme that WWF has run in previous years. DOC is a substantial contributor and will provide mentoring/support to the successful applications. Other partners are MPI, MfE, the Auckland Council, the Callaghan Institute and the Ākina Foundation.
- WWF is looking for opportunities for Ministers to be involved in any announcements and we will keep you informed as these arise.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.6 Ecological resilience portfolio of landscape conservation projects

- In 2014, we developed a portfolio of landscape scale conservation proposals to present to what is now the NEXT Foundation. Using our ecosystem and species prioritisation data, we selected the best representative examples and presented these as an 'ecological resilience portfolio' for New Zealand biodiversity.
- Investment in ecological resilience portfolio sites directly contributes to DOC's objectives around ecosystems and species. Such sites are good examples of collaborative partnerships with NEXT and other partners.
- We are currently updating and refining the ecological resilience portfolio, including ensuring site selection and project design provides for defensible boundaries against predator reinvasion. The timeframe for a draft revised portfolio is 31 August.
- Our intention is to present the revised portfolio to the NEXT Foundation and other partners, aiming to secure the necessary investment to achieve transformational biodiversity gains that can be maintained long-term under the Tomorrow Accord.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.7 43rd World Heritage Committee Meeting update

- The 43rd World Heritage Committee meeting took place from 30 June to 10 July in Baku, Azerbaijan. DOC is a State Party for the World Heritage Convention and the Director Operations Southern South Island, represented New Zealand at this meeting.
- Our focus was on maintaining the integrity and credibility of the Committee's decision-making. The Committee has a recent history of going against advice of Advisory Bodies and of the Convention's Operational Guidelines when making decisions.
- We stressed the dependency on Committee deliberations and decisions to strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage List and received praise from several member states for our interventions.
- China's nomination of the Yellow Sea site as a World Heritage property was inscribed by the Committee. This inscription is supported by New Zealand, with parts of the Yellow Sea being an important stopover site for New Zealand's godwits and red knots during their migrations to and from their Arctic breeding grounds.
- In total, 29 new properties were inscribed to the World Heritage list.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 2.8 Rat on pest-free Motuihe Island in the Hauraki Gulf

- Motuihe is a 179-hectare pest-free island and home to endangered wildlife that are vulnerable to rat predation.
- On 21 July, the Motuihe Trust advised DOC of a rat that was caught on a camera set up by the trust to monitor kiwi on the island.
- Rangers from the Auckland Inner Islands district have begun deploying traps and tracking tunnels in the area where the rat was observed.
- Iwi with an interest in Motuihe have been advised and we are working to remove any rats from the island.

Contact: [REDACTED]

## 3 Director-General Engagements

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### July

31 July Senior Leaders Hui, Wellington

### August

1 August Holiday Parks Conference, Wellington  
7 August Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington  
7 August MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington  
9 August Seafood NZ Conference, Queenstown  
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7 October NZ Conservation Authority, Hamilton TBC

## 4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Import issue
- Tasman Mining Blackwater gold mine exploration project
- Kauri dieback

### **Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities**

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None this week.

Proactively released