



Annual Report of the
**New Zealand
Conservation Authority**

Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa

FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2017

*Presented to the Minister of Conservation and tabled in the House of
Representatives pursuant to section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987*

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Cover photo: Hump Ridge, Fiordland National Park.

Photographer: David Barnes

Back cover photo: Kepler Track, Fiordland National Park.

Photographer: David Barnes

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30 January 2018

Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

I submit, in terms of section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987, the annual report of the New Zealand Conservation Authority for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. The Act requires that the Authority shall in each year report to the Minister on the exercise of its functions and powers.

The Authority recognises this as a very active and important time for conservation in New Zealand – ‘our nature’ is an important part of our national identity and increasingly important to regional economies, communities and peoples’ well-being. Pressure on the environment is growing, as is the need to respond and adapt to climate change and better manage the large increase in visitors to New Zealand’s conservation icons.

Tourism has overtaken dairy as the country’s biggest foreign exchange earner and presents both opportunities and challenges for the Department of Conservation. The Authority has advocated for more focus on value rather than numbers; the introduction of differential and higher charges to manage visitor demand and compensate for costs incurred by the Department; and more attention on encouraging visitors to regions where the Department’s tracks and facilities have spare capacity and there is a high benefit from additional jobs.

The work of the Authority is also critical in ensuring we have the best possible plans in place for protecting and enhancing biodiversity, using public funds wisely and ensuring responsible public use and enjoyment of conservation areas. We have provided advice on the recovery of threatened species, encouraged increased expenditure on broad scale predator control through the Battle for our Birds programme, and advocated for improved protection of and management of our threatened freshwater species such as whitebait. We welcomed the announcement of Predator Free New Zealand and the success of the Million Dollar Mouse programme.

An area of significant discussion throughout the year was around the conservation governance, management and co-design work with Treaty Partners in the post-Treaty settlement era. Treaty partners have higher expectations from the Department and this will be an area for further discussion and work. We were delighted to provide feedback on the inaugural and aspirational Te Kawa o Te Urewera Conservation Management Plan, and to provide advice on conservation management plans arising from Treaty settlements for Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park and Te Hauturu-o-Toi/Little Barrier Island.

In recognition of the large role and contribution of conservation volunteers, the Authority has advised the Department on how to improve its work with volunteers and expand the scale of operations through volunteer-led initiatives. We are also seeking ways to better represent volunteers in planning documents such as conservation management strategies. The Department’s partnership projects – whether with NGOs, businesses or communities – will be essential to improve conservation in New Zealand.

We hosted the Conservation Board Chairpersons’ Conference in August 2016 in Wellington, and held two of our six meetings around the country; first, with the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board and then the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board. These events contribute to our understanding of local conservation issues and help us identify ways to improve the support for the great work the conservation boards do throughout New Zealand.

Overall, this was a busy and productive year, although some work was delayed by the impact of the Kaikoura earthquakes. I acknowledge the contribution of all retiring and continuing Authority and conservation board members; and welcome new members. We look forward to working with you over the coming year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'P'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Dr Warren Parker
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority

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Mission statement

To ensure for the people of New Zealand that the richness of New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage is valued, restored, maintained, and cared for by all, in order to enhance our environment and quality of life.

New Zealand Conservation Authority members



Front row left to right: Sandra Cook, Waana Davis, Jan Riddell, Judy Hellstrom, Jo Breese.
Back row left to right: Gerry McSweeney, Mark Christensen, Mick Clout, David Barnes, Rauru Kirikiri,
Devon McLean, Warren Parker (Chairperson), Mike Simm. *Photo: Julie Percival*



Auckland Island teal, Enderby Island. *Photo: David Barnes*

1. OVERVIEW OF 2016/17

The New Zealand Conservation Authority (the Authority) met on six occasions during the year – in August, October and December 2016, and in February, April and June 2017. The October meeting was held in New Plymouth with the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board and included a field trip to local heritage sites and Mount Taranaki. The February meeting and field trip was held in Canterbury with the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board and included a visit to Kura Tāwhiti (Castle Hill) area and the upper Waimakariri River valley. All other meetings were held in Wellington.

The Authority celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Department of Conservation (the Department), and, working alongside them, provided advice on how to improve National Park Management Plans and the quality and preparation process for Conservation Management Plans. This was to ensure they align with the Department's national 2025 goals and Treaty responsibilities, and how the Treaty partner should be treated when applying for concessions. The Authority also worked to assess the conservation benefit of stewardship land reclassifications, and ensure some now surplus conservation management plans (CMPs) are revoked as new conservation management strategies (CMSs) become operative. The Authority approved a partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan, and a full review of the Paparoa National Park Management Plan. The Authority recommended to the Minister that land be added to both Paparoa National Park and Kahurangi National Park.

In addition, the Authority provided significant input into the Department's development of the Threatened Species Strategy, whitebait management, the National Compliance Strategy 2017–2020 and the Visitor Experience Strategy 2025. The Director-General of Conservation's invitation to engage the Authority to shape the Department's direction in these and other areas of high importance to achieving successful conservation outcomes – such as harnessing the growth of volunteers working on conservation projects, and ensuring concessionaires fulfil their obligations – was welcomed.

Nominations for membership of the New Zealand Conservation Authority for the period 2017–2020 closed on 27 January 2017. Five new members were appointed for the next term ending 30 June 2020.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Authority is a statutory advisor to the Minister of Conservation and to the Director-General of Conservation on conservation issues of national importance. It was established by section 6A of the Conservation Act 1987.

The functions of the Authority are set out in section 6B of the Conservation Act 1987, and in the National Parks Act 1980, the Wildlife Act 1953, the Marine Reserves Act 1971, the Reserves Act 1977, the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, and the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. It also has specified responsibilities, set out in Treaty claims settlement legislation, with regard to consultation with tangata whenua.

The Authority has the important function of approving the 10-year conservation management strategies and national park management plans that guide the management of public conservation land, waters and species by the Department.

The Authority is committed to the partnership model between New Zealanders and the Department for the management of public conservation resources. This is embodied in the long history of formal citizen engagement in New Zealand conservation management and the diverse make-up of its membership; likewise, with the conservation boards. The conservation boards and the Authority are a long-standing legislative mechanism of the 'conservation through partnerships' ethic of the Department.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Minister appoints the 13 Authority members, including the Chairperson.

The members are selected in consultation with the Minister of Tourism (two appointments), the Minister of Māori Affairs (two appointments), and the Minister of Local Government (one appointment), on the nomination of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (one appointment); and on the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand (one appointment), Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand (one appointment), and Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (one appointment). In addition, four members are appointed following nominations from the public. This process ensures that a wide range of perspectives, life experiences and geographical knowledge contributes to the advice provided and decisions made by the Authority.

Members of the Authority are appointed for 3-year terms, and may be re-appointed. There were no changes of membership during the reporting period. However, the current term of all Authority members expired on 30 June 2017 and five new members were appointed to the Authority on 1 July 2017. The current term of all Authority members expires on 30 June 2020.

The new Authority includes: new appointees Kerry Prendergast, Mark Brough, Mita Harris, Robyn Jebson, and Tony Lepper; and reappointed members David Barnes, Gerry McSweeney, Jan Riddell, Mark Christensen, Professor Mick Clout, Rauru Kirikiri, Sandra Cook, and Dr Warren Parker (Chairperson).

4. MEETINGS

The Authority met for four one-and-a-half day meetings, all held in Wellington. In addition, two one-day meetings were held in New Plymouth and Canterbury, with one-day field trips on the day prior to the meeting. Field trips are a vital part of the Authority's way of operating, providing the opportunity to view concerns and opportunities raised in public submissions in situ, and to appreciate the local context faced by Departmental staff and communities in managing public conservation lands. It is also an opportunity to spend time with local conservation board members discussing matters important to their region.

The October 2016 meeting was held in New Plymouth with the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board. The board and the Authority visited sites of conservation, environmental and cultural significance in the Taranaki/Whanganui area, which included Pukerangiora Pā, a trip to Tapuae Marine Reserve, and the North Egmont Visitor Centre

to learn more about Project Taranaki Mounga. The Authority acknowledges the major ecological gains that this project could bring for New Zealand and supports the working partnerships of iwi, the Taranaki community, local councils and the region's private sector.

The Authority held their February 2017 meeting in Canterbury, with a day set aside for a field trip. The field trip took the Authority to various parts of central Canterbury of significance, including Kura Tāwhiti (Castle Hill) and the upper Waimakariri River valley. These areas were chosen to highlight issues around tourism pressure, tenure review, wilding pines, and irrigation. The Authority appreciated the input of Ngai Tahu representatives, Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board members, and local DOC staff.

Also during the February meeting, the Authority considered the nominations for the conservation boards. In considering nominees, care was taken to ensure succession depth, continuity of knowledge on board work priorities, and the right mix of skills around the board table for the tasks at hand. It was pleasing to be able to recommend several younger nominees for appointment and the overall lift in quality of applicants. The focus on strengthening conservation boards, and providing greater recognition to the vital role they play, has been sustained by the Authority since the 2013 Conservation Boards Review.¹

The Authority hosted the Conservation Board Chairpersons' Conference on 25 August 2016 at Premier House in Wellington. These conferences are designed to build collaboration between the Authority and conservation boards. They provide the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the Government's expectations of the boards and the role they play in conservation leadership within the communities they represent. They also provide the opportunity to share ideas and practices; and build the working relationships between the Department, boards and the Authority, and the quality and impact of the work each undertakes. Key agenda topics for the conference included: succession planning with a focus on iwi representation; tourism pressures facing the Department; the conservation board's role in whitebait management; an overview of the 2016–2017 CMS schedule and the CMS rapid prototype template developed by the Department; the Letters of Expectation, work programmes, and the annual report.

During the year the Authority hosted and heard from: Tamati Kruger, Chairman, Te Urewera Board and Kirsti Luke, Chief Executive, Te Uru Taumatua, about Te Kawa o Te Urewera Conservation Management Plan; and Dr Andrea Byrom, Director of the New Zealand Biological Heritage Natural Science Challenge, on innovative techniques being developed to support pest eradication across New Zealand.

4.1 Attendance record of members at meetings of the Authority

Member	Number of meetings 2016/17(out of total of 6)
David Barnes	6
Jo Breese	6
Mark Christensen	6
Mick Clout	6
Sandra Cook	4
Waana Davis	6
Judy Hellstrom	6
Rauru Kirikiri	5
Devon McLean	5
Gerry McSweeney	5
Warren Parker	6
Jan Riddell	6
Mike Simm	6

¹ The report can be viewed at doc.govt.nz/conservation-boards-review.

5. BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The Authority's budget for 2016/17 was \$146,000. Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. The chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$290, and other Authority members receive a daily meeting fee of \$215. Members may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged on Authority business.

6. THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

6.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states: "This Act shall so be interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi." As a body established under the Conservation Act 1987, section 4 applies to the Authority in the discharge of its functions.

The Authority continued to work with the Department and iwi to further deepen its understanding around Treaty settlement matters and to grow the partnership between iwi and conservation, as the changing model around section 4 and post-Treaty settlement arrangements progresses.

6.2 Functions of the Authority

(a) Advise the Minister on statements of general policy

General policy is the highest level of statutory planning for conservation outcomes. No changes were proposed or made to general policy in the reporting period.

(b) Approve conservation management strategies

A conservation management strategy (CMS) is a 10-year statutory document. Its purpose is to implement general policy and to establish objectives for the discharge of the Department's functions in the area covered by the strategy, and for recreation, tourism and other conservation purposes. The CMSs are developed by departmental planning staff in partnership with local conservation boards, and there are opportunities for input from the public, tangata whenua and other interested parties.

Review of all CMSs was put on hold in December 2009 while a national framework was developed (completed November 2010), and a lot of hard work has been put in since then to get CMSs up to date. Now less than half are due for review, with the Wellington CMS on track to be presented to the Authority in February 2018.

Otago CMS minor amendments

At the December 2016 meeting, the Otago Board referred a series of minor amendments to their CMS to the Authority for its consideration. In considering the minor amendments to the Otago CMS, the issues around e-bikes, aircraft landings and milestone inconsistencies were discussed. These amendments were to bring the CMS into line with all the current South Island CMSs. At the February meeting the Authority accepted the changes and, having received the Minister's comments, approved the amendments in accordance with section 171 (4) of the Conservation Act 1987.

(c) Approve conservation management plans

The Authority may be asked to approve a conservation management plan but generally they are approved by conservation boards, in some instances jointly with an iwi authority as provided in Treaty Settlement legislation. The Authority received the following plans for consideration:

Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

Ken Raureti (Chair, Bay of Plenty Conservation Board), Bronco Carson (Chair, Ngāti Whare), Earl Rewi (Ngāti Whare), and Mike Jones (Operations Manager DOC, Whakatane) presented the Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Management Plan to the Authority for feedback in December 2016. They gave an overview of its development and their aspirations for the park, and the alignment of their aspirations with those of the Department. This is the first CMP arising from a Treaty settlement to come to the Authority for comment that represents a joint management approach by DOC and a Treaty partner. Authority members considered the Plan over January and February 2017, and a response was provided to Ngāti Whare and the BOP Board following the Authority's February meeting.

Te Hauturu-o-Toi/Little Barrier Island Conservation Management Plan

The Authority received for its consideration the draft conservation management plan for Te Hauturu-o-Toi/Little Barrier Island in February 2017. The Authority made suggestions for improvements during the April 2017 meeting and wrote a letter in June to Mook Hohneck (CEO, Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust) and Lyn Mayes (Chair, Auckland Conservation Board) outlining these. Two important aspects included the predator-free status of the island and its ongoing strict biosecurity regime, and the relationship of the CMP to DOC's 2025 Stretch Goals.

(d) Review the effectiveness of the Department's administration of general policies

The Authority did not review the effectiveness of the Department's administration of statements of general policy during the reporting period. When approving statutory planning documents, the Authority seeks to satisfy itself that they give appropriate effect to the two statements of general policy, namely the Conservation General Policy and the General Policy for National Parks.

(e) Investigate or advise on conservation matters of national importance

Conservation matters of national importance discussed with the Director-General and senior staff during the reporting period included:

- Predator Free 2050
- Battle for our Birds
- War on Weeds, particularly wilding pines
- Department of Conservation Threatened Species Strategy
- Effects of increasing tourism numbers on the conservation estate
- New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016–2020.
- Marine protected areas
- Game Animal Council and herd management
- Stewardship land
- Reclassification of public conservation land
- Land disposal programme
- Freshwater fish conservation, e.g. South Island longfin eel stocks and whitebait fisheries management
- NZCA obligations resulting from Treaty settlements.

These discussions were iterative in nature. As more information is received and understanding and thinking evolves, further discussion will take place.

The Deputy Director-General Science and Policy kept the Authority informed of policy and legislative initiatives across the range of the Department's interests.

Advice was provided to the Minister in relation to:

- Net conservation benefits in relation to stewardship land
- Proposal for a border levy
- National park additions, e.g. Kahurangi National Park and Paparoa National Park.

Other matters of national importance for conservation that the Authority provided advice on during the year included:

Environmental education

The Authority reviewed the Department's conservation education work, including the Education Strategy, the Advancing Education Project, and the draft National Strategy for Environmental Education. Feedback was provided to the Department on the draft National Strategy for Environmental Education.

Te Kawa o Te Urewera Conservation Management Plan

Te Kawa sets out the principles that will guide the setting of annual priorities and operational management plans under the Te Urewera Act 2014, with a view to rebuilding a strong connection with Te Urewera, and enhancing traditional knowledge and management alongside modern management, monitoring and research. This approach incorporates aspirational goals, and will require long-term active involvement of the community. As such, Te Kawa is likely to affect the way conservation boards around the country approach their work.

The draft Te Kawa O Te Urewera Conservation Management Plan (Te Kawa) was sent to the Authority on the 20 April 2017. Tamati Kruger, Chair of the Te Urewera Board, and Kirsti Luke, Chief Executive, Te Uru Taumatua, then presented a mini-workshop to receive input and feedback from the Authority at the June 2017 meeting. The Authority provided further feedback on the plan before submissions closed in July 2017 and also provided comment on the near-final version before it went to print in August 2017.

Whitebait and fresh water

The management of whitebait remained an important issue for the Authority. Whitebait are taonga and fishing for them is treasured recreational activity within New Zealand, but there are questions about the sustainability of the catch due to loss of habitat and possible overharvesting. There is increasing anecdotal evidence of indiscriminate and large catches of whitebait for commercial gain; this is believed to have contributed to four of the five whitebait species becoming classified as threatened.

The Authority supports a national strategy for improved management of whitebait, including provision of habitat. The Authority asked the Department to undertake work that will address the information gaps and improve protection such as: providing information on harvest volumes and population trends; reviewing the possibility of banning some methods of fishing that are indiscriminate and prevent the flow of whitebait upstream; exploring options to monitor and limit the size of catch; improving compliance monitoring; and reviewing legal and other avenues that can be pursued to achieve sustainable management of the whitebait catch. Work is ongoing, and will continue to be a priority in the Authority's 2017/18 work programme.

Himalayan Tahr Management

The Himalayan Tahr Control Plan requires the Department to report annually to the New Zealand Conservation Authority on activities undertaken to implement the plan. The Authority received the 2015–16 Annual Report at the February 2017 meeting.

There is high public interest in tahr, including farming tahr on a small scale, and continued interest in hunting. The Authority pointed out that hunting is problematic, with hunters only shooting the bulls and there currently being no charge for hunting. Thus, all costs for

population and biodiversity monitoring fall on the Department. Accordingly, as part of next year's report, the Authority has requested further information on the potential to apply user charges and improve the cost-effectiveness of monitoring.

Access to cultural materials – Ngā Aitanga a Nuku

A paper, Ngā Aitanga a Nuku, outlining the work the Department has undertaken to simplify tangata whenua access to cultural materials was presented at the February 2017 meeting. The guidelines have been developed over 2 years with iwi and other groups through workshops and consultation. The guidelines provide scope for iwi to customise and manage their individual plans. The Authority considered that the guidelines produced by the Authority in 1995 are now not necessary, as these are superseded by the Department's updated and fulsome guide.

Role and recognition of volunteers in conservation

In June the Director-General introduced a new item to the Authority meetings, where at each meeting one of the Deputy Directors-General would bring a strategic issue to the table for discussion with the Authority. The first issue was brought by the DD-G Partnerships, and was about the role of volunteers in conservation.

Volunteers play a vital role in conservation in New Zealand and their contributions are a major benefit to the Department. The Authority discussed how the Department could improve its work with volunteers to expand the scale of operations, measure how volunteer work contributes to conservation outcomes, and better represent volunteers in planning documents such as conservation management strategies. The Authority recognises that the nature and quantum of volunteer work is changing, and emphasised the importance of measuring the impact of volunteers for conservation outcomes and biodiversity change and how to report on that in the future. The Authority looks forward to supporting the Department to enhance its linkages and work with the volunteer sector.



Central Otago Rail Trail. *Photo: David Barnes*

(f) Change of land status – stewardship land

The Authority notes the progress on the development of a 5-year plan for reclassification work, however, it requested that the Department go back to national organisations for their input into the list of priorities for reclassification of stewardship land, and then to conservation boards in February to prepare a refined list based on the priority analysis that the Department has undertaken. The Authority was prepared to accept the delay in order to ensure the best consultation process had been undertaken, reiterating the importance of proper consultation with all involved in stewardship land, particularly with iwi.

The recategorisation of St James from stewardship land to a conservation park for recreational use was a top priority for both the Authority and the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board during the year, and will form part of the Authority's 2017/18 work programme.

See section 7.3 of this report for changes of land status for national park land.

(g) Walkways (repealed)

(h) Education and publicity

Copies of minutes and agendas and other information regarding the Authority's functions and activities (including its meetings, which are open to the public) can be found at www.conservationauthority.org.nz.

No education or publicity activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

(i) Priorities for expenditure by the Department of Conservation

Due to changes in the way government departments are expected to identify and report on operating intentions, the Authority has adapted the way it makes input into priorities for Departmental expenditure, including developing a better understanding of the factors that determine the Department's decisions about where to direct its resources.

During the reporting year, the Authority had discussions with the Department on the Department's intermediate outcomes for its draft Four-year Plan. The Authority had regular discussions with the Director-General during Authority meetings on the ongoing work with the Department's stretch goals and the recent DOC 2025 project, which aims to create a clear picture of what conservation and recreational outcomes can be achieved at different resourcing levels and what the Department can sustainably deliver in the future.

(j) New Zealand Fish and Game Council liaison

Section 6B(1)(i) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides for the Authority to liaise with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. The Authority and New Zealand Fish and Game Council provided each other with copies of agendas and meeting papers during the reporting period. Bryce Johnson (Chief Executive, NZ Fish and Game) attended the August meeting to introduce the role of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council in the protection and enhancement of habitats for sports fish and game birds in New Zealand.

(k) Ministerial delegations

The Minister did not delegate any ministerial powers or functions to the Authority during the reporting period.

6.3 Powers of the Authority

(a) Establishment of committees

The Conservation Act enables the Authority to establish committees to carry out functions or tasks delegated by the Authority.

Committees that were active during the reporting period included:

- Wellington Conservation Management Strategy
- Tongariro National Park Management Plan partial review
- Paparoa National Park Management Plan review
- Kahurangi National Park Management Plan partial review

In addition, the Authority established two committees to work with the Department on the reviews of the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park Management Plan and Westland *Tai Poutini* National Park Management Plan initiated by the Department during the year.

(b) Advocacy

The Authority advocated its interests during the period as follows:

- Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill – the NZCA made a submission on 5 July 2016.
- EDS conference August 2016 – members participated in the Environmental Defence Society's conference *Wild Things: addressing terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity loss*, held in Auckland, 12–13 August 2016.
- Conservation and Environment Science Roadmap – the Authority made a submission on the Conservation and Environment Science Roadmap on 7 September 2016.

The Authority's submissions can be viewed on its website at www.conservationauthority.org.nz.

7. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

7.1 General Policy for National Parks

The Authority did not review, or make any changes to, the General Policy for National Parks during the reporting period.

7.2 National park management plans

Paparoa National Park Management Plan

The Authority received the Paparoa National Park Management Plan for its consideration and approval at the October 2016 meeting. It was acknowledged that this Plan had followed a new process with challenges but that it has paved the way for a real change in national planning. The plan represents a framework for the relationship between Treaty partners, the Department, the community and the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board. Lengthy discussions were had around the issues of e-bikes, heli-bikes, seasonality of biking, the Inland Pack Track route at the Punakaiki end of the track, and simplicity of language for broad public understanding. The Authority approved the Paparoa National Park Management Plan in December 2016, subject to several conditions.

Kahurangi National Park Management Plan Review

The Kahurangi National Park Management Plan Review report and recommendation was presented to the Authority at the February 2017 meeting. The Authority approved the amendment to extend the mountain biking season. The Authority agreed with the Nelson Marlborough Board that the season should not be extended to April and that e-bikes were not in the same category as a mountain bike. Ways to raise an additional fee for mountain bike use was discussed. The Authority was reassured that there is no displacement occurring between cyclists and walkers.

7.3 Additions to, and deletions from, national parks

Additions to Fiordland National Park

The Authority had earlier considered the two options regarding the recommendations to the Minister to add three land purchase blocks to Fiordland National Park. The Authority declined to make a recommendation until the Department had consulted with iwi. In light of the issues being resolved through the Paparoa National Park Management Plan, the Authority resolved to delay making a recommendation at this stage pending further discussion between the Department and the rūnanga, and to report back at a subsequent meeting.

Addition of land to Kahurangi National Park

After discussions with the Department, the Authority agreed that under sections 6d and 6h of the General Policy for National Parks, the Authority would undertake further consultation for the proposed Mokihinui addition with representatives from Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Waewae, the Buller District Council, and West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board.

Following detailed discussion and careful consideration of the reports received on the Mokihinui River catchment, and the balance of views expressed during public consultation, the Authority agreed it met all the criteria for national park status. Further, the area is contiguous and sensibly related to Kahurangi National Park, and holds nationally significant flora and fauna. Accordingly, there was no compelling reason why the Authority should not recommend the addition in accordance with section 7 of the National Parks Act 1980.

The Authority resolved to recommend to the Minister of Conservation that the Mokihinui River catchment be added to Kahurangi National Park pursuant to section 7 of the National Parks Act 1980.

Addition of land to Paparoa National Park

Now that the Paparoa National Park Management Plan review has been completed, the Authority discussed the Yorke Creek purchase and other significant blocks of conservation land adjoining the park, for addition to the Park. The Yorke Creek addition, an enclave of previously private land, contains significant ecological values and is surrounded by public conservation land, nearly all of which is already Paparoa National Park. Considering the location, unique ecological values, and following consultation, the Authority agreed to recommend that Yorke Creek be added to Paparoa National Park.

7.4 National park investigations

No national park investigations were undertaken during the reporting period.

7.5 National park determinations

No determinations were made during the reporting period. Determinations are made to waive the requirements that introduced plants and animals be exterminated in national parks and native plants and animals be preserved. They are generally made as part of a national park management plan process.

8. MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

8.1 JD Stout Trust

The Authority is a trustee of the JD Stout Trust. The Trust makes donations or interest-free loans for conservation and cultural purposes. The Trust met twice during the reporting period. Waana Davis was the Authority's representative on the Trust.

8.2 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The Authority, along with another government agency, is one of eight members of the New Zealand Committee of the IUCN, known as the World Conservation Union. The Committee meets quarterly. Mark Christensen was the Authority's representative on the Committee.

The Authority reviewed its membership of the IUCN during the year, and agreed that it should remain a member because of the value this adds to the Authority as an independent voice for New Zealand conservation.

Mark Christensen attended the IUCN World Congress in Honolulu, from 1–10 September 2016.

8.3 Land and Water Forum

The Authority is a member of the Land and Water Forum. Details about the activities of the Forum during the reporting period can be accessed from www.landandwater.org.nz.

9. CONSERVATION BOARDS

9.1 Conservation board boundaries

There were no changes to conservation board boundaries in the reporting period.

9.2 Conservation board nominations

The Minister is required to consult with the Authority prior to appointing public members to conservation boards.

The Authority provided its advice to both the Department and the Associate Minister of Conservation on the appointment process for 2017. A high standard of nominations was received for all boards and this enabled the expertise and experience of the conservation boards to be further boosted in line with recommendations in the 2013 review of conservation boards. It was also pleasing to see several younger nominees.²

9.3 Authority/Conservation Board liaison

One Authority member acts as liaison with each conservation board. This liaison includes attendance at board meetings and informal liaison with the board chairperson, which is reported back to the Authority at each meeting.

The Authority held a Conservation Board Chairpersons' Conference on 25 August 2016. The objectives of the Conference were to: be briefed on the Minister of Conservation's priorities; understand the changes in the Department regarding the relationships with conservation boards and the Department's new structure; the Letters of Expectation and work programmes; conservation board's role in improving whitebait management; concession processes; the CMS monitoring template; conservation boards' role in advocacy; board succession planning; and strengthening links between the Authority, the conservation boards and the Department.

² The review report can be found here: doc.govt.nz/conservation-boards-review

9.4 Annual reports

Conservation boards are each required by section 60 of the Conservation Act 1987 to provide the Authority with an annual report. Once complete, these reports are available from the boards and posted on the relevant board website pages.

9.5 Implementation of conservation management strategies

Most conservation boards have adopted a systematic process for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the CMS for their region and for providing advice to the Department's Operations directors in that respect. Boards report on this monitoring in their annual reports.

The Authority is working with the Department and those conservation boards with operative CMSs to continue to improve a dashboard approach to monitoring the milestones included within the CMSs.

Under the Conservation General Policy, the Department is required to provide each conservation board with a report (at least annually) on the implementation of the CMS for its region (see section 9.4).

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Authority reviewed its performance and strategy in June 2016. The Authority continued its programme of reviewing and, where necessary, updating its policies. Those addressed during the year were: 'coastal management principles', 'NZCA freshwater principles', and 'marine principles'. They can be viewed on the NZCA website at doc.govt.nz/nzca-policies.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Volunteers play a vital role in conservation in New Zealand, and their contributions are of major benefit to the Department. Community involvement in conservation continues to grow and we extend our gratitude and recognition for their work, which hugely contributes to conservation outcomes for New Zealand.

A special thank you goes to Lou Sanson, the Director-General of Conservation, who has continued to support the Authority over the 2016/17 year. We are also grateful to the staff of the Department who have attended our meetings or serviced, supported and briefed the Authority during the reporting period.

I also commend the support of Rick McGovern-Wilson, whose knowledge has been invaluable to our work; and Julie Percival, Tasha Sharp and Elena Walter for their efficient servicing of the Authority.

Finally, I extend a heartfelt thank you to members of the Authority and conservation boards for their valuable contributions during the year. As always, they are generous with their time and willingly apply their knowledge, skills and diverse life experiences to contribute to conservation and ensure we remain connected to our communities and Treaty partners.

Dr Warren Parker
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority

12. SCHEDULES

First schedule

Conservation management strategies: approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2017.

Conservation management strategy	Date approved	Situation as at 30 June 2017
Te Hiku o Te Ika	New board as of 17 December 2015	CMS process to start by 17 June 2017 as required by the Claims Settlement Acts.
Northland	8 September 2014	Operative.
Auckland	9 October 2014	Operative.
Waikato	8 September 2014	Operative.
Bay of Plenty	4 December 1997	Under review.
East Coast/Hawke's Bay	14 October 1998 (East Coast) and 19 October 1994 (Hawke's Bay)	In first stages of review process.
Tongariro/Taupo	30 May 2002	Review not currently scheduled within next 5 years.
Whanganui	9 April 1997	Part review (Rangitikei/Manawatu) in first stages of review process as part of Wellington CMS. Review of the rest of the CMS not scheduled within next 5 years.
Wellington	13 March 1996	Review under way.
Chatham Islands	12 August 1999	Review due.
Nelson/Marlborough	12 September 1996	Project planning for the review has begun.
West Coast Tai Poutini	15 April 2010	Operative.
Canterbury (Waitaha)	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Otago	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Southland Murihiku	1 June 2016	Operative as of 1 September 2016.
Stewart Island/Rakiura	9 February 2011	Operative.
Subantarctic Islands	1 June 2016	Now included as part of Southland Murihiku CMS.

The Director-General of Conservation put review of the CMSs on hold while a CMS national framework and natural heritage and destination management prioritisation tools were developed. These were approved in 2011 and the review of CMSs began, first with Northland, Auckland and Waikato as a group and then with Canterbury, Otago and Southland as a group. The remainder will follow. The statutory expectation is that each CMS will be reviewed at 10-year intervals.

Second schedule

National park management plans: approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2017.

National park management plan	Date approved	Situation as at 30 June 2017
Abel Tasman	9 October 2008	
Aoraki/Mount Cook	12 August 2004	Full review under way.
Arthur's Pass	13 December 2007	
Egmont	14 February 2002	Review due.
Fiordland	21 June 2007	
Kahurangi	13 June 2001	Partial review approved April 2017.
Mount Aspiring	23 June 2011	
Nelson Lakes	10 October 2002	Review due.
Paparoa	18 November 1992	Reviewed plan approved December 2016.
Rakiura	9 February 2011	
Te Urewera Note: as result of the Te Urewera Act in July 2014 administration passed from the Department to the Te Urewera Board; under the Act, Te Urewera is no longer a national park, but a separate legal entity for whom the board members act as trustees	13 February 2003 (the national park management plan will remain in force until it is replaced by a management plan approved by the Te Urewera Board).	
Tongariro	12 October 2006	Partial review initiated.
Westland Tai Poutini	21 December 2001	Full review under way.
Whanganui	9 August 2012	

Third schedule

Address list for conservation boards.

Conservation board	Board address (c/- Department of Conservation)
Te Hiku o Te Ika	PO Box 842 Whangarei 0140
Northland	PO Box 842 Whangarei 0140
Auckland	Private Bag 68908 Wellesley St Auckland 1141
Waikato	Private Bag 3072 Hamilton 3240
Bay of Plenty	PO Box 528 Taupo 3351
East Coast/Hawke's Bay	Private Bag 11010 Palmerston North 4442
Tongariro/Taupo	PO Box 528 Taupo 3351
Taranaki/Whanganui	Private Bag 3072 Hamilton 3240
Wellington	Private Bag 11010 Palmerston North 4442
Chatham Islands	PO Box 114 Waitangi Chathams 8942
Nelson/Marlborough	Private Bag 5 Nelson 7042
West Coast Tai Poutini	Private Bag 701 Hokitika 7842
Canterbury Aoraki	Private Bag 4715 Christchurch Mail Centre Christchurch 8140
Otago	PO Box 811 Queenstown 9348
Southland	PO Box 743 Invercargill 9840



NEW ZEALAND

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA

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