

Annual Report *of the* New Zealand Conservation Authority

Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009



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

**For the period
1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009**

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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10 December 2009

Hon Tim Groser
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 2008 to 30 June 2009. The Act requires that the Authority shall in each year report to the Minister on the exercise of its functions and powers.

The Authority has received the annual reports of the fourteen conservation boards, as required by section 6O of the Act.

Reflecting on the past twelve months, there have been challenges. Since my appointment as Chairperson in July 2008, I have come to appreciate the enormous contribution made by outgoing Chairperson, Kerry Marshall, who served on the Authority for twelve years in total, including seven years as Chairperson.

The Authority received the first of the “second generation” conservation management strategies during the reporting period; the first to be developed since the adoption of the Conservation General Policy by the Minister of Conservation in 2005.

The Authority notes your Climate Change International Negotiations portfolio is an important link with Conservation. Your commitment to review the Marine Reserves Bill within the Government’s first term is welcomed by the Authority.

The Authority has greatly appreciated receiving regular bi-monthly updates on the Department of Conservation’s work, and its wider context, from both the Director-General and General Manager Policy.

In the past year, the Authority has witnessed the Department developing a more commercial outlook, consistent with its Statement of Intent’s reference to enabling business opportunities, and the use of other new terminology, such as the “conservation economy”.

At the same time, budget cuts to the Department and conservation boards have forced some changes; some positive, some potentially negative.

The unique partnership that exists between the community and the Department is probably more important than ever before. The Department cannot do all it would like to do without community involvement, collaboration and participation in planning, prioritizing and delivering. Yet the Authority feels this relationship is being eroded when it comes to strategic planning for conservation management. Processes that are not open to public consultation are being favoured over those which are inclusive of the public.

New Zealanders as a whole care deeply about our natural and historical heritage, unique species and scenic beauty, and want continued involvement in the decision-making on, and management of, these.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. D. Ross". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Don Ross
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority

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.

The New Zealand Conservation Authority Members



From left to right: Waana Davis, Don Ross (Chair), Yvonne Sharp, Mike Browne, Linda Conning, Kay Booth, Hally Toia, Charles Crofts, Louise Savage, Bob McDowall, John Nankervis, Brian Stephenson
Absent: Basil Morrison



Basil Morrison

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1. OVERVIEW of the 2008-2009 year

The New Zealand Conservation Authority (the Authority) began the 2008-2009 year with five experienced, two recently appointed and six new members (including the Chairperson).

The Authority met formally on six occasions: in August, October and December 2008, and in February, April and June 2009; five times in Wellington, and once in Dunedin (February 2009).

Following the General Election in November 2008, the Authority briefed the incoming Minister of Conservation (the Minister) on the conservation issues of particular interest and concern to the Authority.

A wide range of matters of conservation importance has come before the Authority during the past year, the most serious of which are the implications for native plants and animals (indigenous biodiversity) if possum control by the Animal Health Board is not continued beyond 2013.

The statutory planning cycle is now in a very busy period as conservation management strategies (CMSs) from several conservancies have already expired and most of the remainder will come up for review in the next three years. Two conservation management strategies were referred to the Authority for approval during the reporting period – Bay of Plenty and West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini*.

The Authority developed a CMS Checklist so that the Department of Conservation (Department) and conservation boards are aware of what is considered by the Authority as it discharges its role as decision-maker for the CMS statutory process.

The Authority's annual recommendations of priorities for expenditure by the Department were made in the context of budget cuts across all sectors of government, in response to the global economic situation.

The Authority has paid particular attention to freshwater resources and their management this year. There are particular concerns about impacts on native fish species, a high portion of which migrate between fresh water and the sea.

Key discussions with the Director-General of Conservation, focused on the second-generation CMSs; the Department's Strategic Direction and Statement of Intent, and flowing from these, the priorities for expenditure in the context of budget reductions; the Department's Destination Management Plan; and the desire of the Department to improve relationships with the business sector for the purpose of enhancing conservation outcomes.

The Authority provided advice to the Minister on the use of deer repellent bait, its Priorities for Expenditure, on applications to use grass carp as a bio control of organisms, and on expectations of content in future national park management plans.

The Authority appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to the Director-General and other Departmental officers following briefings or presentations.

A reduction in the number of conservancies (regional management units) by the Department resulted in the disestablishment of the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board at year's end with its areas of jurisdiction divided between Bay of Plenty Conservation Board (East Coast) and Wellington Conservation Board (Hawke's Bay).

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Authority is a statutory advisor to the Minister of Conservation and to the Director-General 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 role of approving the ten-year CMSs and national park management plans (NPMPs).

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Minister appoints the thirteen Authority members including the Chairperson.

The Minister is required by the Conservation Act to consult with the Minister of Tourism (two appointments), the Minister of Maori Affairs (two appointments), the Minister of Local Government (one appointment), Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu (one appointment), 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 Authority members are appointed after receipt of nominations from the public. This process ensures that a wide range of perspectives, life experiences and geographical knowledge contribute to the advice provided, and decisions made, by the Authority.

Currently, members of the Authority are appointed for concurrent three-year terms. A mix of new appointments and reappointments every three years ensures continuity and retention of institutional knowledge. The current terms of appointment for all members expire on 31 May 2011.

3.1 An introduction to Authority members

Dr Kay Booth is from Christchurch, and has an outdoor recreation and parks management background. She is currently in her second term on the Authority. Formerly a senior lecturer in parks, recreation and tourism at Lincoln University, she is now a consultant in this field.

Kay has taken a leadership role in many outdoors organisations, including the New Zealand Recreation Association and Outdoors New Zealand. She is a former member of

the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board, and is a member of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission, and the New Zealand Geographic Board.

Kay is liaison person for the Southland Conservation Board. She was appointed after consultation with the Minister of Tourism.

Mike Browne has lived on a 200 acre beef farm at Fox Glacier since 1974. He started, and ran, the guiding company Alpine Guides Fox Glacier for 31 years, and is a founding member and past president of the New Zealand Mountain Guides' Association.

Mike is particularly interested in the West Coast, the New Zealand high country (which he continues to explore on horseback) and the relationship between tourism and conservation. Mike was appointed in July 2008. He is the liaison person for the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board. He was appointed after consultation with the Minister of Tourism.

Linda Conning is a resource management planner and an orchardist, and lives at Te Teko in eastern Bay of Plenty. She has extensive experience in nature conservation, botanical survey and planning. She is serving her third term on the Authority.

Linda is the liaison person for the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board. She was appointed on the recommendation of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand.

Charles Crofts was born at Tuahiwi, North Canterbury, and lives at Diamond Harbour. Ko Aoraki tana Maunga, ko Waitaki tana Awa, ko Ngai Tahu, Ngati Mamoe me Waitaha ana Iwi.

Charles was appointed to the Authority on the nomination of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu in June 2005. He is the liaison person for the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board, of which he is a former member.

Waana Davis resides in Lower Hutt, Wellington. She was appointed to the Authority in August 2007. Waana is the Authority's representative on the JD Stout Trust, of which the Authority is a trustee.

Waana is the liaison person for the Wellington Conservation Board. She was appointed after consultation with the Minister of Maori Affairs.

Dr Bob McDowall is from Christchurch and was appointed to the Authority in July 2008. A retired scientist, he has spent his career undertaking and managing research on freshwater fisheries in New Zealand and other southern lands, with particular emphasis on native fish, their ecology, systematics and biogeography.

He is the liaison person for the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board. He was appointed on the recommendation of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Basil Morrison CNZM, Justice of Peace, was appointed to the Authority in June 2005. He comes from Paeroa and has a dairy farming background. He is immediate past Chair of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. Basil is a director of Landcorp

Farming Ltd., a member of Waitangi Tribunal, an immediate past President of Local Government New Zealand and a former Mayor of Hauraki District.

Basil is a keen tramper, fisher and hunter and is patron of the Thames Valley Deerstalkers' Association. He is the liaison person for the Waikato Conservation Board. He was appointed after consultation with the Minister of Local Government.

John Nankervis is a consultant with the national law firm of Buddle Findlay in Wellington. He is a former member of the Taupo/Tongariro Conservation Board, and is an experienced mountaineer, having climbed extensively both in New Zealand and overseas. He is a former President of the New Zealand Alpine Club.

John is serving his third term on the Authority, having been first appointed in July 2002. He is the Authority's representative on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and is a member of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law and the Mountains Biome of the World Commission on Protected Areas. He is the liaison person for the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board. John was appointed from public nominations.

Don Ross QSM is from Christchurch, and is the Chairperson of the Authority. He is the liaison person for both the Chatham Islands and Otago Conservation Boards. He was the founding CEO of the New Zealand Landcare Trust established in 1996, until he stepped down in 2007. He lives on a rural property near Christchurch.

Don was appointed as member and Chairperson in July 2008. He was appointed from public nominations.

Louise Savage lives on a sheep and cattle farm in the foothills of the Raukumara Ranges, between Gisborne and Opotiki. She has young children aged 6 and 9. A former member of the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board, Louise is a consultant soil conservator and enjoys running on the farm and in the bush.

Louise was appointed to the Authority in July 2008. She was the liaison person for the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board (disestablished on 30 June 2009). She was appointed from public nominations.

Yvonne Sharp MNZM of Kerikeri was the Mayor of the Far North District for nine years. Her career has been predominantly in local government. Yvonne's other positions are Deputy Chair of the Queen Elizabeth the Second National Trust, Chair of the Road Safety Trust, Presiding Member of the Northland Lotteries Community Committee and Chair of the Mangatowai Community Trust.

Yvonne was appointed in July 2008 and is the liaison person for the Northland Conservation Board. She was appointed from public nominations.

Brian Stephenson is a lawyer in private practice in Auckland and Tenancy Adjudicator. Brian, a lifelong skier, tramper, climber and ski-mountaineer, is a former President of the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand and of the Alpine Sports Club. He is a member of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission.

Brian was appointed to the Authority in July 2008. He is the liaison person for the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board. He was appointed on the recommendation of the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand.

Hally Toia is from Dargaville. He is a former member and chairperson of the Northland Conservation Board with a special interest in conservation in the marine environment. Hally was appointed to the Authority in August 2007. He is the liaison person for the Auckland Conservation Board. He was appointed after consultation with the Minister of Maori Affairs.

3.2 Attendance record of members at meetings of the Authority

	<i>Number meetings attended (6 held)</i>
Kay Booth	6
Mike Browne	5
Linda Conning	6
Charles Crofts	6
Waana Davis	5
Bob McDowall	5
Basil Morrison	5
John Nankervis	5
Don Ross	6
Louise Savage	6
Yvonne Sharp	6
Brian Stephenson	6
Hally Toia	6

4 MEETINGS

The Authority met for six two-day meetings and undertook one field trip during the year. All meetings except one were held in Wellington. The sixth was held in Dunedin, including a field trip.

In addition, the Authority held three workshops associated with its conservation management strategy function, two to discuss the Bay of Plenty CMS and another to discuss its expectations when approving CMSs.

The Authority developed a checklist for CMSs, partly for its own guidance but, also, to assist the Department and conservation boards when preparing CMSs for the Authority's approval.

5 BUDGET, FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The Authority's budget for 2008/09 was \$145,000. 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.

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 ten-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 often 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.

The status of the CMS for each conservancy as at 30 June 2009, including any approved extensions to expiry dates, is recorded in the First Schedule at the end of this report.

Bay of Plenty CMS review

The Bay of Plenty CMS was the first CMS to be reviewed and the Department trialed a new approach from that used previously. The Authority received the draft CMS for approval at its October 2008 meeting. Because the Director-General had advised that he expected the Bay of Plenty CMS to become the model for how all other CMSs would be prepared and presented, the Authority needed to feel confident that the document was fit for the national role it had been given, as well as providing clear guidance for management of the Bay of Plenty Conservancy.

Representatives from the Authority met with Conservancy personnel and a representative of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board in February 2009. The Authority sent its formal response to the Board and the Conservancy in April 2009. At year’s end dialogue between the Authority, the Board and the Conservancy had yet to be scheduled. Subsequently, the CMS was withdrawn when East Coast was added to the Bay of Plenty in Departmental restructuring so that a revised draft CMS covering both East Coast and Bay of Plenty could be prepared.

The Bay of Plenty CMS consultation process attracted strong public interest and debate. A philosophical divide emerged between the Department’s desire to simplify planning documents and retain flexibility, and the concern of some submitters that a CMS is not bland and provides a reasonable degree of certainty as to how public conservation areas will be managed.

West Coast Te Tai o Poutini CMS

The Authority received the first CMS for West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* (West Coast CMS) at its April 2009 meeting. A number of significant events had conspired over the years to delay the completion of this CMS. The Authority established a Committee to lead its process to approve the document.

The Authority's response was sent to the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board and the Conservancy in May 2009 and a meeting was held in early June to discuss the comments. Five issues were discussed by the whole Authority at its meeting later that month: (1) temporary closure to the public of affected parts of conservation land during major sports events; (2) private accommodation on conservation land; (3) heli-hunting; (4) concessions in gazetted wilderness areas; and (5) the articulation of the relationship between national park management plans and conservation management strategies.

The Committee was still working through some matters requiring clarification at the end of the reporting period.

Other CMSs

CMS reviews are underway in Canterbury and all North Island conservancies except Tongariro/Taupo.

(c) Approve Conservation Management Plans

The Authority did not approve any conservation management plans during the reporting period.

(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 General Policies during the reporting period. When considering the draft Bay of Plenty and West Coast CMSs, the Authority did carefully consider how the General Policy was implemented.

(e) Investigate or advise on Conservation Matters of National Importance

The Authority considered a number of matters of national importance during the year.

Freshwater

The Authority developed a set of Principles to guide its response to issues surrounding freshwater, and made submissions on both the proposed National Environmental Standards for Ecological Flows and Water Levels, and the draft National Policy Statement for Freshwater.

Possums

The Authority received a presentation from the Animal Health Board outlining its success in eliminating bovine tuberculosis (Tb) from New Zealand on a region-by-region

basis. Of concern to the Authority is the likely negative impact on native forest areas and native species if the programme is scaled back; benefits to date would undoubtedly be lost when possum populations rebound, as they inevitably will. A related concern is the public's increasing intolerance of chemicals (notably 1080), potentially reducing the number of cost-effective tools in the animal pest-control toolbox.

Deer repellent 1080 bait

The Authority provided the Minister with advice on the use of deer repellent in 1080 baits. It strongly reiterated its advice in earlier years that indigenous biodiversity should always be the foremost consideration in the use of 1080, and that deer repellent should not be used in national parks.

Coastal and marine

The Authority appeared before the Board of Inquiry into the proposed revised New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) in November 2008. The Authority advocated for more national direction to local authorities, and for greater protection of the coastal environment. Priorities for the Authority included avoidance of cumulative effects of development on the natural character of the coastline, access, marine biosecurity, integrated management with adjoining land (particularly areas set aside for conservation purposes), and the protection of Maui's dolphin.

Wilderness areas

The Authority advised the Department that the values of wilderness areas should be carefully guarded. The Authority considers that the primary purpose of gazetted wilderness areas is to preserve unmodified and remote natural environments and provide for a self-reliant recreational opportunity with no facilities or mechanised transport.

Of particular concern to the Authority is the lack of clearly defined principles for the use of wilderness areas, particularly with regard to commercial use, and aircraft use for recreational hunting.

Department's projects to improve relationships with business

The Department has an ongoing programme to improve its processes; reduce costs to business and itself; and to transfer resources to monitoring performance.

The Authority has been advised of several initiatives to streamline processes such as a comprehensive review of Departmental concessions processing; the development of a commercial framework; and "conforming" activities, i.e., if applications for a concession conform with pre-established criteria then a faster, lower cost process applies.

The Authority advised the Department that conservation values and outcomes should always take precedence. All places should not be equally exposed to commercial opportunities and some places should be free of commercial use. There needs to be greater transparency and public participation into significant decisions regarding biodiversity off-sets and commercial activities that are not low impact (such as extractive industries); and the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the

purposes of maintaining their intrinsic values and providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public across generations should not be compromised.

St James Conservation Area

The Government announced the purchase, via the Nature Heritage Fund, of the 78,196-hectare St James Station in October 2008.

The Authority recommended that the Minister undertake a formal planning process to determine the appropriate management regime for St James, rather than entering into commitments with interested commercial, recreation and other groups on an ad hoc basis. The imminent review of the Canterbury CMS presented a timely and appropriate vehicle by which to do that planning, in consultation with the conservation board and all interested parties on a self-selection basis.

The Authority's Chair attended an invited stakeholder familiarisation tour of St James Station, and facilitated a subsequent discussion. The purpose of the exercise was not to find any firm consensus on future management of the area, but to have a wide-ranging discussion amongst interested parties.

The Department's Statement of Intent

The Authority received a presentation from Departmental officers in October 2008 and was given the opportunity to comment on the draft SOI for 2009-2012 at its February 2009 meeting.

(f) Additional matters of relevance to the Authority

Thar (tahr)

The Authority was once again concerned at the low level of hunting success reported by recreational hunters and at reports of increased numbers of thar (tahr) in the Westland/*Tai Poutini* National Park and South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

Treaty settlements/redress

Redress for Maori involving public conservation land is becoming an increasingly significant part of Treaty of Waitangi claims settlement processes. Some of these have implications for the role and functions of the Authority. Specific consultation requirements with iwi governance entities are becoming common.

Waikato-Tainui

The Crown and Waikato-Tainui iwi signed a Deed of Settlement with respect to the Waikato River and catchments on 22 August 2008.

The cornerstone of this settlement, the Waikato River Vision and Strategy, will have effects under a wide range of legislative frameworks relating to the river, including the Conservation Act 1987, where it will have effect as a statement of General Policy.

The Settlement has implications for the Authority as the Vision and Strategy will need to be implemented in conservation planning documents, including any CMSs which cover the Waikato River and its catchments, from Huka Falls to the Waikato River mouth.

The Authority may also interact with the Guardians of the Waikato River Committee (a statutory body) during the preparation of, and amendments to, relevant conservation planning documents.

Te Tau Ihu iwi

In February 2009, the Crown signed Letters of Agreement with three groups of iwi¹ with interests in the southern North Island and the northern South Island. Of particular interest to the Authority was the provision for Kurahaupo relating to eels in Nelson Lakes National Park. The Letter of Agreement gives a greater level of guidance to decision-makers on any application for customary take than is currently provided for in the Nelson Lakes National Park Management Plan.

Te Pumautanga o Te Arawa

The Deed of Settlement with Te Pumautanga o Te Arawa, signed 11 June 2008, establishes a duty on the Authority to consult with the Trustees of the Te Pumautanga Trust regarding four areas of Whenua Rahui overlay, which must be identified in the relevant CMS.

(g) Change of Status

The Authority did not consider or make any proposals for the change of status or classification of areas of national and international importance during the reporting period. It did, however, advise the Minister of Conservation that it wished to advise him, at the appropriate time, on the long-term classification of the St James Conservation Area.

(h) Walkways

The Authority did not provide any advice to the Minister or the Director-General on any matter relating to, or affecting, walkways during the reporting period. In November 2008, the Walkways Access Act, which established the New Zealand Walkways Access Commission, repealed the Authority's walkways function. Authority members Kay Booth and Brian Stephenson are members of the Commission.

¹ Ngati Toa Rangatira, whose areas of interest span the lower North Island, Cook Strait and the northern South Island; Kaurahaupo ki te Waipounamu Trust (Ngati Apa ki te Ra To, Ngati Kuia and Rangitane o Wairau), with interests in the northern South Island; and Tainui Taranaki ki te Tonga (Te Atiawa ki Te Tau Ihu, Ngai Tama ki Te Tau Ihu, Ngati Rarua, Ngati Koata and Wakata Inc) on behalf of Wai 56 claimants, with interests in the northern South Island.

(i) Education and Publicity

Copies of minutes and agendas and other information regarding the Authority's functions and activities can be found on www.conservationauthority.org.nz.

Authority meetings are open to the public and are advertised via the Authority's webpage.

No new educational material was produced during the reporting period.

(j) Priorities for Expenditure by the Department of Conservation

The Authority advised the Director-General and the Minister on two priorities for expenditure by the Department in the year beginning 1 July 2010, as follows:

Protection of indigenous biodiversity at priority places with an emphasis on animal and plant pest and wild animal control.

Statutory management planning.

Since pest control underpins New Zealand's clean and green brand, the Authority feels that the contribution of pest control to the conservation economy is of greater importance than, for example, the upgrading of visitor facilities. The cost of deferring pest control would most certainly result in greater costs in the long term.

Statutory management planning is the key means by which New Zealanders can influence the management of "their" lands and other resources administered by the Department. It provides a framework for efficient decision-making, reduces costs, and provides certainty for business, tangata whenua and the public. The Authority regards management planning as an investment, not a cost.

In addition, the Authority advised that the Department's inputs to Treaty settlements, including ongoing commitments, needed to be adequately funded by the Crown so that this activity does not impact on the core purpose of the Department "to conserve New Zealand's natural and historic resources".

The Authority recorded its support for innovative approaches that increase and improve conservation outcomes and enhance the value New Zealanders attribute to conservation, across the full range of the Department's activities and responsibilities.

(k) 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 (NZF&G). The Authority and NZF&G provided each other with copies of agendas and meeting papers during the reporting period.

(l) 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 provides for the Authority to establish committees to carry out tasks delegated by the Authority.

The committees that were active during the reporting period were:

Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan
Bay of Plenty CMS (whole Authority)
Freshwater
Grass Carp Applications
Kahurangi National Park Management Plan Amendment
New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
Outdoor Recreation Review
West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS

(b) Advocacy

The Authority advocated its interests by making several submissions and attending workshops and hearings. Refer also to section 5.2 (e) Conservation Matters of National Importance.

Future of Pest Management

The Authority was represented at a Future of Pest Management workshop in Christchurch, organised by MAF/Biosecurity New Zealand.

Outdoor Recreation Review

The Authority's submission to Sport and Recreation New Zealand advocated for:

- a range of outdoor recreation opportunities, from the wilderness experience to the front country
- places to be managed in accordance with conservation values and within their capacity
- opportunities close to urban populations
- balance between numbers of people participating, quality of experience, and protection of the environment.

Biosecurity research priorities

The Authority suggested six possible topics to deliver on the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Biosecurity Science Strategy. They related to taxonomic capacity, public awareness of biosecurity at a personal level, pathways and vector analysis of invasive

species, the detection of marine micro organisms, methods for treating Argentine ants and marine pests, and options for response to avian flu.

7 FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

7.1 General Policy for National Parks

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

7.2 National Park Management Plans

The Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan was approved on 9 October 2008. The Authority asked the Director-General, when preparing future management planning documents, for:

- the information, outcomes, objectives and policies for each place to be together in the plan
- a planning review to precede significant decisions which may pre-empt the planning
- visitor numbers and expectations to be identified in the plan so that they can be monitored
- necessary legislative amendments and policy work to be put in place to develop a robust national allocation mechanism for concessions where visitor numbers are to be limited
- progress towards the achievement of desired outcomes to be monitored as part of Departmental performance standards
- particular care to be taken in developing outcomes, objectives, policies and implementations to ensure there is a clear and logical cascade
- professional editing to be done before planning documents are referred to the Authority

7.3 Establishment of, Additions to, and Deletions from, National Parks

No new national parks were established during the reporting period.

The Authority resolved to support removal of a small parcel of land from Westland/*Tai Poutini* National Park (endorsed by the West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board) for the purpose of realigning a dangerous section of State Highway 6 at Smithy's Creek.

The Authority requested that some minor conditions be attached to the consent to undertake the road realignment for the better protection, during construction, of the national park.

7.4 National Park Investigations

No national park investigations were undertaken during the reporting period.

The Authority received a letter dated 24 November 2008 from the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, requesting an investigation into the suitability of the

newly acquired St James Conservation Area and surrounding conservation and Crown-owned land for national park status. The Authority advised the Society that it considered such an investigation was premature, as it had insufficient information upon which to make a judgement as to the desirability of such an investigation.

However, the Authority shares the view of the Society that no management decisions should be made for the St James Conservation Area. This includes the granting of concessions, that might compromise future status options, or create expectations among recreation or commercial interests before formal planning processes and public consultation have enabled all management options to be fully considered.

7.5 Mining in a National Park

No access arrangements to mine in a national park were sought during the reporting period.

8 RESERVES ACT 1977

8.1 Introduction of Biological Control Organisms

Grass carp (Ctenpharyngodon idella)

The Grass Carp Applications Committee received two applications for the release of grass carp into reserves.

The Committee recommended that the Minister approve the releases of grass carp to control *Egeria* in Lake Wainamu, Bethell's Beach in the Waitakere Ranges and their release for the purposes of eliminating *Hydrilla* from Lakes Tutira, Waikopiro and Opouahi, in Hawke's Bay.

The latter recommendation included requirements for the screening of lake outlets to prevent the escape of grass carp, and for monitoring the effectiveness of grass carp in eliminating *Hydrilla*.

9. MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

9.1 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. A meeting was held in November 2008.

9.2 The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

The Authority is one of seven members of the New Zealand Committee of the IUCN. The committee meets quarterly. John Nankervis is the Authority's representative, and attended the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008. The Authority is indebted to the Director-General and the Department for enabling John's attendance at the World Congress.

10. CONSERVATION BOARDS

10.1 Conservation Board Nominations

The Minister is required to consult with the Authority prior to appointing members to conservation boards. The Authority provided its advice on such appointments in May 2009.

10.2 Authority/Conservation Board Liaison

One Authority member acts as liaison with each conservation board. This liaison with boards takes the form of at least annual attendance at board meetings and informal liaison with the board chairperson, which is reported back to the Authority at each meeting.

10.3 Authority meetings with Conservation Boards

The Authority endeavours to meet away from Wellington once or twice a year, and uses these opportunities to meet with conservation boards and discuss local conservation issues of regional or national significance.

The Authority met with the Otago Conservation Board in February 2009 in Dunedin, when the Board highlighted the following matters:

- the outcome of high-country tenure review had resulted in the creation of some large Conservation Parks
- there is concern that the tenure review process is resulting in a lack of protection for biodiversity and landscape values on the freeholded, lowland areas
- there is concern over the proliferation of woody weeds (especially wilding *Pinus contorta*) and the growing burden of weed control owing to the increases in area the Department is managing within the Otago Conservancy
- research has highlighted the enormous value in ecosystem services that tussock grasslands provide – for instance, a large area of the Lammermoor Range is the catchment area for Dunedin's water supply.

The Board discussed with Authority members its thinking on its CMS review, that a one-size-fits-all CMS would not do Otago justice, and that the existing 1998 CMS contains so much useful information and objectives that are still to be met. Accordingly, the Board would like to retain it as an appendix to the revised Otago CMS.

An informative one-day field trip allowed further discussion of the above matters and included visits to the water-catchment area on the Lammermoor Range; Sutton Salt Lake; the predator-proof enclosures safeguarding grand and Otago skinks; the Otago Rail Trail; and the mining landscape at Macraes Flat.

10.4 Annual Reports

The fourteen conservation boards have provided the Authority with their annual reports for the year ended 30 June 2009, in accordance with section 6O of the Conservation Act 1987. These reports are available in hard copy from the boards whose addresses are

given at the end of this report, or from www.conservationboards.org.nz by selecting conservation boards by conservancy.

10.5 Implementation of Conservation Management Strategies

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

Under the Conservation General Policy, the Department is required to provide conservation boards with a report (at least annually) on the implementation of CMSs.

10.6 Conservation Management Plans

The Bay of Plenty Conservation Board approved Te Papui Tokotoro Conservation Management Plan in October 2008.

10.7 Kahurangi National Park Management Plan partial review

The Kahurangi National Park Management Plan Amendment Committee met with the Conservancy and with the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board to discuss options being considered prior to beginning a formal partial review of the Kahurangi National Park Management Plan. Matters covered were mountain bike access on defined tracks, air access provisions, hunting access, private accommodation on the Heaphy Track, and horse trekking on a defined track at Puponga. The proposed amendments were notified by the Department on 1 July 2009.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The appointment of six new members and a new chairperson at the beginning of the period, together with the receipt of the first conservation management strategy for seven years, including the first to be developed since the adoption of Conservation General Policy by the Minister of Conservation, has meant that this year has been one of learning. Learning, not only about the Authority's responsibility for approving conservation management strategies, but also about its procedures and past positions on matters. New manifestations of long-standing conservation issues have also been given attention, as identified under section 6.2.

As the Department adjusts to the priorities of a new government, seeks to find ways "to increase the value that New Zealanders attribute to conservation"² and demonstrate that "New Zealanders gain environmental, social and economic benefits from healthy functioning ecosystems, from recreation opportunities, and from living our history"³, the Authority is both challenged and challenging in its role as citizens' representative.

The Department is actively seeking to be more responsive to business. There is also a drive towards increasingly collaborative approaches to conservation management, with the aim of achieving greater returns on investment. This is a world-wide trend but there

² Department of Conservation Strategic Direction

³ Department of Conservation Statement of Intent 2009-2012

is a danger that managing public conservation lands for their economic values, the same as any other land, will be at the expense of the values and purposes for which they were set aside.

The Authority is committed to wide ranging debate and consultation with the community at large about the options for the management of the public's conservation resources by the Department. It will continue to look for evidence of that having occurred when conservation management strategies and national park management plans are referred to it for approval.

The Authority believes that CMSs and NPMPs are crucial and efficient tools in the management of public conservation lands, providing certainty to the public, businesses and recreational users about the values for which the land is managed, and determining the appropriate uses and activities upon that land.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks are due to the staff of the Department who have attended our meetings or serviced, supported and briefed the Authority during the reporting period.

Thanks especially to Director-General Al Morrison with whom we have enjoyed some robust debates, Catherine Tudhope whose institutional knowledge is so invaluable to our work, and Katrina Edwards and Elena Sedouch for their dedication to efficient servicing of the Authority.

I acknowledge the contribution made by the members of the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board which was disestablished at year's end.

On a sadder note I acknowledge the contributions of two conservation board members who died while in office this year – Gottlieb Braun-Elwert (Canterbury Aoraki) and George Ryan (Southland). Kua hinga te kahikatea o te wao nui a Tāne.

Finally, thanks to my Authority colleagues and all conservation board members who have given their time and their incredibly varied skills and diverse life experiences to the work of the Authority and conservation boards throughout the year.

Don Ross
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority
2008-2009

FIRST SCHEDULE

Conservation management strategies - approval dates

Conservation management strategy	Date Approved	Term extended by the Minister to
Northland	Approved 14 April 1999	
Auckland	Approved 30 June 1995	30 June 2010
Waikato	Approved 24 September 1996	28 December 2008
Bay of Plenty	Approved 4 December 1997	12 December 2009
East Coast*	Approved 14 October 1998	14 January 2010
Tongariro/Taupo	Approved 30 May 2002	
Wanganui	Approved 9 April 1997	9 April 2009
Hawke's Bay*	Approved 19 October 1994	14 January 2010
Wellington	Approved 13 March 1996	13 March 2011
Chatham Islands	Approved 12 August 1999	2 August 2010
Nelson/Marlborough	Approved 12 September 1996	
West Coast Tai o Poutini	In draft – expected date of approval December 2009	
Canterbury Aoraki	Approved 14 June 2000	
Otago	Approved 15 August 1998	15 August 2011
Mainland Southland/ West Otago CMS	Approved 10 July 1998	15 December 2012
Stewart Island - Rakiura	Approved 4 December 1997	4 December 2009
Subantarctic Islands	Approved 16 July 1998	16 July 2012

* The East Coast and Hawke's Bay CMSs were to be combined but with the disestablishment of the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservancy on 30 June 2009, it is now expected that the Bay of Plenty and East Coast CMS and the Wellington and Hawke's Bay CMS will be combined instead.

SECOND SCHEDULE

National park management plans – Approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2009

National park management plan	Date approved	Due for review
Abel Tasman	9 October 2008	October 2018
Aoraki/Mount Cook	14 August 2004	2014
Arthur's Pass	December 2007	December 2017
Egmont	14 February 2002	2012
Fiordland	21 June 2007	June 2017
Kahurangi	14 June 2001	2011
Mount Aspiring	October 1994	Under review
Nelson Lakes	10 October 2002	

Paparoa	18 November 1992	
Rakiura		In preparation
Te Urewera	13 February 2003	2013
Tongariro	12 October 2006	2016
Westland Tai Poutini	13 December 2001	2011
Whanganui	March 1989	2010

THIRD SCHEDULE

Conservation boards address list

Conservation Board	Board address (c/- Department of Conservation)	Board Support Officer
Northland	PO Box 842 Whangarei 0140	Jeannie Hogarth
Auckland	Private Bag 68908 Newton Auckland 1145	Raewyn Bennett
Waikato	Private Bag 3072 Waikato Mail Centre Hamilton 3240	Des Williams
Bay of Plenty/East Coast	PO Box 1146 Rotorua 3040	Leilani Fraser
Tongariro/Taupo	Private Bag 2 Turangi 3353	Jo Hood
Taranaki/Whanganui	Private Bag 3016 Wanganui Mail Centre Wanganui 4540	Louise Davies
Wellington/Hawke's Bay	PO Box 5086 Lambton Quay Wellington 6145	Bronwyn Bell
Chatham Islands	P O Box 114 Waitangi Chatham Islands 8942	Alex McKillop
Nelson/Marlborough	Private Bag 5 Nelson Mail Centre Nelson 7042	Kay Switzer
West Coast Tai Poutini	Private Bag 701 Hokitika 7842	Janet Orchard
Canterbury Aoraki	Private Bag 4715 Christchurch Mail Centre Christchurch 8140	Brenda Preston
Otago	PO Box 5244 Moray Place Dunedin 9058	Mark Clark
Southland	PO Box 743 Invercargill 9840	Gloria Harris



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