



Annual Report of the
**NEW ZEALAND
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

for the period
1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003

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

7 November 2003

Hon Chris Carter
Minister of Conservation
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

I submit, in terms of section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987, the eleventh report of the New Zealand Conservation Authority, covering the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003.

This report includes extracts from the annual reports of all fourteen conservation boards.

During this reporting period we have celebrated:

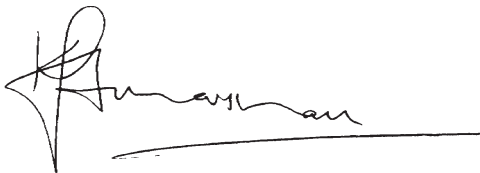
- the opening of New Zealand's first tussock grasslands conservation park in Otago - Te Papanui Conservation Park;
- additional Government funding through the recreational facilities funding package;
- the establishment of two new marine reserves off Waiheke Island and the Auckland Islands, and
- a number of significant land purchases for conservation purposes.

Key actions of the Authority have been:

- the drafting of a revised statement of general policy for national parks;
- the approval of revised management plans for Nelson Lakes and Te Urewera national parks;
- the publication of the revised NZ Walkways booklet, and
- the continuation of conservation advocacy work over a variety of issues.

I wish to commend to you the contributions made by members of the Authority and the conservation boards during the year. I particularly want to acknowledge the active role the Authority and the conservation boards continue to play in helping shape conservation management in New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Marshall', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kerry Marshall
Chairperson

VISION STATEMENT

In its statutory role, the New Zealand Conservation Authority/Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa (NZCA) will show leadership as an independent adviser on conservation. It will be an advocate for conservation within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi, by promoting, initiating and drawing attention to major conservation issues and will seek to have all people participate in conservation in all facets of their lives.

New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) Members

Back row: Nganeko Minhinnick, Edward Ellison, Peter Geddes, David Chandler, Alan Mark, Kerry Marshall (chairperson), Bryan Hutchins, Marian van der Goes

Front row: Katharine (Kath) Dickinson, Lorraine Stephenson, Wendy Nelson, Linda Conning, John Nankervis

Photograph of NZCA members at Cape Kidnappers, Hawke's Bay, on 12 December 2002



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1. INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Conservation Authority (referred to as the Authority) met formally on six occasions during the 2002/2003 report period. Four of these meetings were held in Wellington with the remaining meetings held in Napier and on the Chatham Islands.

The Authority met with the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board while it was in Napier and visited Cape Kidnappers. The Board took this opportunity to discuss with the Authority its key issue of concern, being the damage caused to fragile dune systems by off-road vehicles.

Representatives of the Chatham Islands Conservation Board highlighted to the Authority, during its visit to the Chatham Islands, the biosecurity risks faced by the islands' unique fauna and flora. This matter has subsequently been taken up by the Authority with the Government.

Members of the Wellington Conservation Board had a combined session with Authority members at its June 2003 meeting. The Board highlighted its concerns about eel management and the impacts of coastal development on the "natural character" of the coast.

The Authority held a conference call during this report period to consider the nominations for appointments to conservation boards and to formulate advice to the Minister of Conservation, as provided for in section 6P of the Conservation Act 1987.

A workshop session was held in October 2002 to consider the working draft of the revised general policy for national parks.

The Authority welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss conservation issues with the Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, at its October 2002 meeting.

Paul Jackson (Crown Property Management Manager, Land Information New Zealand) briefed the Authority on the tenure review process at the Authority's meeting in June 2003. This process is undertaken in terms of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998.

Separate committees of the Authority provided feedback on papers relating to the development of the Oceans Policy and general policy under the Conservation Act and other Acts, and considered the draft revised Te Urewera and Nelson Lakes national parks management plans.

The Authority identified the following strategic priority areas on which to concentrate energy during the report period:

- marine;
- visitor/nature and historic interface;
- tussock grasslands and associated ecosystems;
- freshwater fisheries;
- pest control and biosecurity.

For each strategic priority area, the Authority established working parties to define the key issues, identify the Authority niche, identify indicators of success and prepare menus of possible actions. Work is ongoing: most working parties are now developing appropriate menus for action as well as setting up means to evaluate these actions.

The Authority has finalised its service agreement with the Department of Conservation (referred to as the Department) which sets out the administrative requirements of the Authority. This agreement will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Several Authority members have completed the Pukenga Atawhai training programme through the Department.

2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE NZCA

Membership of the Authority for the reporting period was as follows:

Mr David Chandler, Auckland
Ms Linda Conning, Te Teko
Dr Katharine (Kath) Dickinson, Dunedin
Mr Edward Ellison, Dunedin
Mr Peter Geddes, Whangarei
Ms Marian van der Goes, Karitane
Mr Bryan Hutchins, Te Anau
Dr Alan Mark, Dunedin
Mr Kerry Marshall, Richmond (chairperson)
Ms Nganeko Minhinnick, Auckland
Mr John Nankervis, Wellington
Dr Wendy Nelson, Wellington
Mrs Lorraine Stephenson, Dannevirke

The above members of the Authority have been appointed by the Minister of Conservation for terms expiring on 31 May 2005. The Minister appointed Mr Kerry Marshall as the chairperson of the Authority for the term of his appointment.

3 FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$250.00 and other Authority members receive a daily meeting fee of \$190.00. Members

can also be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while travelling on Authority business.

Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951.

4 THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

4.1 Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987

Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 states “This Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”. The Authority is established under the Conservation Act 1987 and section 4 applies to the Authority in the discharge of its functions.

The Authority has developed a template to assist it to give effect to section 4 in its work. This template requires the Department to identify section 4 considerations in papers prepared for the Authority and the Authority to do the same in papers it generates.

The Authority reviews its performance against the template on an annual basis.

4.2 Section 6B (1) of the Conservation Act 1987 – Functions of the Authority

(a) Advice to the Minister on General Policy

The Authority, following an approach from the Minister of Conservation, agreed in December 2001 to review the general policy for national parks. The review would be concurrent with the development of general policy under the Conservation Act 1987.

It was noted, however, that the National Parks Act 1980 and the Conservation Act 1987 established different processes for reviewing general policy for national parks and developing general policy under the Conservation Act 1987.

The Authority considered the draft general policies at its meeting on 9/10 October 2002 and provided feedback to the Department. Further work was undertaken on the draft general policy for national parks and this was approved for release for public submission on 13 December 2002, subject to a number of amendments. Kerry Marshall and Marian van der Goes were delegated to sign off the document, on behalf of the Authority.

At its December meeting, the Authority established a committee comprising Marian van der Goes, Edward Ellison, Kath Dickinson and John

Nankervis, to work with the Department on the publication of the draft policy and associated publicity. At its April 2003 meeting, the Authority agreed to a process for consultation on the draft general policy for national parks and it was noted that the draft conservation general policy had been sent to the Minister of Conservation for approval for public notification.

Kerry Marshall and Marian van der Goes signed off the draft general policy for national parks for public release in June 2003. The Minister of Conservation's agreement to the concurrent public notification of the draft conservation general policy was awaited at the end of the report period.

(b) Approval of Conservation Management Strategies and Plans

Section 17D (2) of the Conservation Act 1987 sets a goal of five years for the preparation of conservation management strategies (CMSs).

A conservation management strategy outlines a ten-year plan for integrated conservation management in a conservancy. Each conservancy's CMS is prepared by the Department in consultation with the conservation board. Once a CMS has been publicly released and amended in light of public submissions, the conservation board reviews the amendments and refers the CMS to the Authority for approval.

All CMSs, except for the West Coast CMS, have now been approved by the Authority. The history of the Authority's consideration of specific CMS documents is set out in the table below. There are sixteen approved conservation management strategies.

The West Coast CMS was delayed to allow for the re-notification of a revised draft which incorporates the additional management responsibilities of the Department as a result of the transfer of indigenous forest from Timberlands West Coast Limited.

Several CMSs are now approaching the end of their 10-year timeframe. During the report period, Kath Dickinson represented the Authority on a working group which considered ways to improve the CMS development process and bring greater consistency to the overall approach and presentation of the CMSs as they are revised. The purposes of the review are to reduce costs, reduce timeframes, and improve CMS readability and utility. The Authority acknowledges the extensive effort that the Department is putting into this exercise.

Approval dates and/or status of conservation management strategies as at 30 June 2003:

CMS	CMS ACTIVITY
Northland	Approved in April 1999 on the understanding that a review would be considered after 3 years. The decision to develop general policy has delayed the review.
Auckland	Approved in June 1995.
Waikato	Approved in September 1996.
Bay of Plenty	Approved in December 1997.
East Coast	Approved in October 1998.
Tongariro/ Taupo	Approved in April 2002.
Taranaki/ Wanganui	Approved in April 1997.
Rangitikei/ Hawke's Bay	Approved in September 1994.
Wellington	Approved in March 1996.
Nelson/ Marlborough	Approved in September 1996.
West Coast	The CMS's approval process has been delayed owing to the Director General of Conservation's decision to review the draft document so that the land formerly under the management of Timberlands West Coast Limited and now managed by the Department can be included.
Canterbury/ Aoraki	Approved in June 2000.
Otago	Approved in June 1998.
Southland	Stewart Island CMS approved in December 1997. Subantarctic Islands CMS approved in July 1998. Mainland Southland/West Otago CMS approved in July 1998.
Chatham Islands	Approved in August 1999.

(c) Review Effectiveness of the Department's Administration of General Policies

There are two general policies:

- (i) The General Policy for National Parks (published in 1983), and
- (ii) The New Zealand Walkways Policy (approved in 1995).

The above policies guide the Department in the development of CMSs and management plans for national parks (NPMPs). A review of the general policy for national parks is currently under way and draft conservation general policy is being developed.

(d) Conservation Matters of National Importance

The Authority received presentations from the Department and/or submitted or provided advice on the following topics:

- Revised Concessions Standard Operating Procedure (SOP);
- Freshwater Strategy;
- Statement of Intent;
- development of the Oceans Policy;
- freshwater fish transfer;
- land environments of New Zealand;
- management of visitors by the Department;
- marine classification system;
- mining – Pike River;
- Nga Akiakitanga Nuku Kaupapa Maori a Te Papa Atawhai;
- Measuring Conservation Achievement (MCA)/Ecological Management Framework (EMF);
- Marine Reserves Bill;
- lahar management – Mount Ruapehu;
- proposed Conservation Law Reform Bill;
- caring for archaeological sites – draft guidelines
- transfer of kakapo from Maud Island to Te Kakahu/Chalky Island;
- tenure review;
- concession management;
- Himalayan thar;
- kiwi recovery plan;
- grass carp applications.

The Authority considered an application to release grass carp into Lochview Ponds for the control of aquatic weeds but resolved not to support the application as it did not believe the need to use grass carp was demonstrated. The Authority established a formal process to deal with future applications.

(e) Change of Status

See section 5.3

(f) Walkways

One meeting of the walkways co-ordinating group, convened by the Department, was held during the year; a further meeting was cancelled due to the unavailability of many members. The group was established in 2000 to share information relating to the management of walkways under the NZ Walkways Act 1990 and the implementation of the NZ Walkways Policy. David Chandler is the Authority's new representative on the group, replacing Craig Potton whose term expired on 31 May 2002. The main issues discussed at the meeting held on 15 November 2002 were landowner liability; the Department's internal review of track standards and survey of track users; Wellington City Council's Track Strategy; Te Araroa progress report; the work of the Walkways Co-ordinating Group and the need for a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Conservation and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC).

A former Department recreational planner, Alan Wooster, was engaged to revise the NZ Walkways booklet published by the former NZ Walkways Commission in 1983. The booklet was printed during the report period and distributed following its launch in July 2003.

(g) Education and Publicity

No new education material was published during the report period.

The NZ Walkways booklet was revised to publicise the many unique opportunities that walkways provide to discover New Zealand's heritage and to encourage New Zealanders/visitors to go walking.

Demand has continued for the 1999 publication "Pests and Weeds: A blueprint for action" and the customary use documents. This has, however, been at a lower level than the last report period. These documents can be downloaded from the Authority's webpage.

Information on the Authority's webpage (within the Department's website) was maintained throughout the year. Copies of minutes and agendas as well as details about the Authority's members and functions can be found on the webpage, which now has its own domain name (i.e. www.conservationsauthority.org.nz).

(h) Priorities for Expenditure

Section 6B (1) (h) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides for the Authority “to advise the Minister and the Director-General of Conservation annually on priorities for the expenditure of money”. The Authority discussed this function at its August 2002 meeting and identified the following as its priorities for expenditure for the Department’s 2003/2004 business planning year:

- completion of general policy and concessions work – development of effective links to management tools;
- Marine – establishment of a marine protected areas strategy, review of the Marine Reserves Bill and development of the Oceans Policy;
- Land Status Change/Section 8 – advancing proposals, considering other ways to achieve protection;
- Biosecurity – focus on invasive weeds/coastal habitats/advocacy/border control;
- Control/eradication of pests and weeds/implementation of the deer and dog policies;
- advancing threatened species protection work, including plants;
- Tussock lands – achieving appropriate conservation status, east South Island protection;
- Statutory advocacy – clarification of role, more consistent responses;
- Toxins – addressing public concerns/biocontrol/toxins;
- Freshwater protection – clarity on role, responsibility/development of a national policy statement;
- establishing national consistency – visitor programmes, baseline messages;
- working with communities and tangata whenua to own the conservation ethic;
- resourcing and linking science better within the Department of Conservation, especially at conservancy level;
- involvement in the genetic engineering debate;
- protection of ecosystems under threat, geothermal, mid-low altitude east of Southern Alps.

In addition, in June 2003, the Authority was invited by the Minister of Conservation to provide feedback on priorities for the output plan for 2003/2004 between the Minister and the Director-General of Conservation. The following priorities were identified:

(a) Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- Implement integration of MPAs into the Oceans Policy.
- Implement the establishment of a representative network of marine protected areas for New Zealand including the completion of the information gathering/consultation stages.

- Provide adequate resources for the management and enforcement of existing and new marine reserves.

(b) Walkways over private land (subject to the NZ Walkways Act 1990)

- Maintain the existing network of walkways in New Zealand and complete any outstanding gazettal action.
- Promote the identification, approval and gazettal of new walkways in urban and rural areas.

(c) Eastern South Island High Country

- Advocate biodiversity values on private land.
- Ensure sufficient resources are provided for the future management of areas acquired by the Department of Conservation.
- Financial provisions for whole property purchases need to be made.
- Need for a strategic view of the protection needs of a range of high country environments (including low-mid altitude ecosystems) through change of land status, tenure review and purchase of land.
- Review conservation value and potential allocation of unallocated crown land (UCL).
- Endorse identified classes of land including their associated water bodies (refer to descriptions (i) to (v) below) and riverbeds being returned to full crown ownership for management by the Department.

(i) Lands that provide habitat for any indigenous species listed as being threatened or of conservation concern.

(ii) Lands needed to maintain or restore a full range of habitats and ecosystems to a healthy functioning state.

(iii) Other lands containing significant inherent natural heritage values.

(iv) Lands which contain sites of historic significance associated with early Maori and European travel, resource exploitation and occupation.

(v) The margins of all lakes, streams and river-side riparian lands.

(d) Freshwater Conservation

- Extend the application of the Department's Freshwater Strategy by promoting a Freshwater Policy Statement under the Resource Management Act 1991 with the Ministry for the Environment for multi-agency application.

(e) Visitors

- Provide resources for research/monitoring so the Department is better able to assess the effects of visitors and concessions especially in protected natural areas.
- Undertake ongoing monitoring of physical impacts of visitors in the terrestrial environment.
- Provide greater resources for interpretation and monitoring of the marine environment.

(f) Integrated Pest Management

- Advocate to the public the importance of integrated pest management by using resources such as Wren Green's 1080 report and inform them about biosecurity risks.

(i) New Zealand Fish and Game Council Liaison

Section 6B (i) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides for the Authority to liaise with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council.

The Authority provided the Council with copies of its agendas and meeting papers during the report period.

Bryce Johnson and Mike Britton (Fish and Game New Zealand staff) spoke to the Authority at its August 2002 meeting about the NZ Fish and Game Council's statutory functions and matters of mutual interest.

(j) Ministerial Delegations

There were no Ministerial delegations during this report period.

4.3 Section 6C (1) of the Conservation Act 1987 - Powers of the Authority

(a) Establishment of committees

The following committees were operative during the report period:

A special access committee

Peter Geddes and David Chandler. This committee prepared the Authority's submission to the Ministerial Land Access Reference Group.

Onepoto Pine Trees Committee

John Nankervis (convenor), Alan Mark and Wendy Nelson. It was established to make a determination under section 4 (2) of the National

Parks Act 1980. The Authority has been formally requested to make a determination regarding a row of exotic trees, located within Te Urewera National Park. A procedure has been established and submissions were awaited at the end of the report period.

Nelson Lakes National Park Management Plan Committee

The Nelson Lakes National Park Management Plan revised draft was received in October 2001. A committee comprising Kerry Marshall (convenor), Craig Potton, Edward Ellison, Kath Dickinson and Nganeko Minhinnick was established to consider the plan. The plan was approved by the Authority in October 2002.

Te Urewera National Park Management Plan Committee

The Te Urewera National Park Management Plan revised draft was received in August 2002. A committee comprising Lorraine Stephenson (convenor), John Nankervis, Alan Mark and Wendy Nelson considered the plan. The plan was approved by the Authority in February 2003.

Grass Carp Committees

Commenting on Applications to Release: John Nankervis (convenor), Peter Geddes and Wendy Nelson.
SOP Reviewers: Nganeko Minhinnick and Kath Dickinson.

Marine Reserves Bill Committee

Wendy Nelson (convenor), Peter Geddes, Edward Ellison and Kerry Marshall.

(b) Advocate the Interests of the Authority

The Authority, through its Marine Conservation Working Party, has maintained contact with the Oceans Policy Secretariat and provided further advice on the Oceans Policy. This advice has included detailed feedback on working papers as well as advice on a number of key issues in oceans management.

The Authority, through its Marine Reserves Bill Committee, prepared a submission on the Marine Reserves Bill to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee. Although the Authority supported the concept of marine reserves and the decision to review the Act, it suggested a number of improvements (through its submission) to the Bill to improve the long-term application, enhance its relevance to and acceptance by the community and improve its effectiveness as a tool for the management of marine areas for conservation purposes. Kerry Marshall and John Nankervis appeared before the Committee in support of the Authority's submission.

The Authority put forward a submission to the New Zealand Food Safety Authority on proposed enhancements for the requirements for the supply of wild animals. It expressed concern with any formal action which might restrict the efficient commercial hunting of feral mammals, particularly red deer, from the more remote areas of public conservation lands and thereby increase their adverse impact on conservation values.

Following on from freshwater habitat being identified as a NZCA strategic priority area and from concern about eel management expressed at the conservation board chairpersons' conference, the Authority invited Dr Robert (Bob) McDowall (internationally respected fisheries scientist and New Zealand's foremost biologist specialising in the ecology, natural history and taxonomy of New Zealand's freshwater fishes, in particular native species) to talk about freshwater issues. Dr McDowall highlighted that aquatic values have been undervalued in New Zealand for many years. He said further research was needed to fill the significant information gaps in our knowledge of native fish species.

The Authority expressed concern to the Minister of Conservation about the adverse impacts some foreign purchases of pastoral leases are having on traditional public access by New Zealanders and others to the high country of New Zealand. It recommended that the Overseas Investment Commission be directed to attach, as a condition to purchase high country pastoral lease properties by overseas persons, the requirement that they must go through the tenure review process.

The Authority approached the Minister of Research, Science and Technology, advocating a greater allocation of funding for the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology, particularly for biodiversity research and improved opportunities to train young scientists in specialised areas of science such as taxonomy. It is recognised that good science plays an important part in guiding conservation management decisions.

The Authority, following receipt of a copy of the Sustainable Development for New Zealand Programme for Action from the Hon Marian Hobbs, Minister for the Environment, wrote to the Ministry for the Environment expressing an interest in the programme of action for quality and allocation of freshwater.

The Authority made a submission to the Ministerial Land Access Reference Group on issues relating to public access onto or across private land, providing a number of examples of impediments from throughout the country. It advocated for practical and secure access to and along the nation's waterways, lakes and coastlines as enshrined in the commonly accepted view of the Queen's chain. Peter Geddes presented the submission to the Ministerial Land Access Reference Group.

5. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

5.1 General Policy for National Parks

A review of the general policy is currently being undertaken.

5.2 National Park Management Plans

The Authority considered the following draft revised national park management plans during the report period:

Plan	Received	Status at 30 June 2003
Te Urewera National Park Management Plan	August 2002	Approved February 2003
Nelson Lakes National Park Management Plan	October 2001	Approved October 2002

5.3 Establishment of, Additions to and Deletions from National Parks

The Authority recommended to the Minister of Conservation that the Okarito Ecological Area be added to Westland Tai Poutini National Park.

5.4 National Park Investigations

No new national park investigations were initiated during this report period but the Authority received a proposal at its October meeting (after a presentation by Dr Gerry McSweeney) from the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ Inc. to establish a new national park in the Kaikoura Ranges. Kerry Marshall has since met with Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, and the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board to ascertain their views. Written comments were received from other interested parties. No debate of the proposal had taken place during the report period.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

6.1 JD Stout Trust - the Authority is a member of the JD Stout Trust. The Trust makes donations or interest-free loans for conservation and cultural purposes. During the report period, Kerry Marshall was the Authority's representative.

6.2 The World Conservation Union (IUCN) - the Authority is one of seven members of the New Zealand Committee of the IUCN. This committee holds meetings quarterly. During the report period, Wendy Nelson was the Authority's representative.

6.3 Threatened Species Trust – the Authority chairperson is a trustee. This Trust meets once a year.

7. CONSERVATION BOARDS

7.1 Conservation Board Nominations

The Minister is required to consult with the Authority prior to appointing members to conservation boards. In May 2003 the Authority provided its advice to the Minister with respect to the conservation board appointments for 2003.

7.2 Authority/Conservation Board Liaison

One Authority member acts as an Authority liaison person with each conservation board. The following members were appointed to act as liaison persons with the conservation boards indicated:

Northland	Peter Geddes
Auckland	David Chandler
Waikato	Nganeko Minhinnick
Bay of Plenty	Linda Conning
Tongariro/Taupo	John Nankervis
East Coast/Hawke's Bay	Lorraine Stephenson
Taranaki/Whanganui	Wendy Nelson
Wellington	Kath Dickinson
Chatham Islands	Wendy Nelson
Nelson/Marlborough	Kerry Marshall
West Coast Tai Poutini	Marian van der Goes
Canterbury	Alan Mark
Otago	Edward Ellison
Southland	Bryan Hutchins

The Authority meets away from Wellington once or twice a year and uses that opportunity to meet with conservation boards and discuss conservation issues of local importance. As identified at the start of this report, the Authority met in Napier and on the Chatham Islands during the report period.

7.3 Annual Reports

The fourteen regional conservation boards have furnished the Authority with their annual reports in accordance with section 60 of the Conservation Act 1987.

7.4 Implementation of Conservation Management Strategies

Most conservation boards have adopted systematic processes for monitoring CMS progress and providing advice to conservancies as they implement conservation management strategies. The boards have reported to the Authority on this monitoring in their annual reports.

7.5 Conservation Management Plans

No plans were approved during the report period.

7.6 Board Advice and Advocacy

Boards were involved in a wide range of other issues and processes through the year. Most boards were involved in statutory advocacy through regional and district planning and resource consent applications.

In addition to the matters already mentioned above, the table below lists some of the issues which individual boards addressed during the year. These activities are more fully covered in the boards' individual annual reports.

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Northland	Active in contributing to policy development including the Marine Reserves Bill, bio-prospecting review, marine mammal tourism in Northland, and mangrove and catfish management. Continuation of strong focus on marine conservation advocacy work and the various initiatives being undertaken to better inform the community about the need for pro-active management of the marine environment. Involved in the Northland Agricultural Field Days at Dargaville. Continuation of monitoring the implementation of the Northland Conservation Management Strategy. Board members were actively involved in conservation programmes throughout the report period.

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Auckland	<p>Marine protection continues to be a priority area with the Board supporting the development of a marine protected areas strategy by the Department to ensure open and transparent processes. The Board has been seeking a more strategic approach to aquaculture through the Auckland Regional Council. It lodged a supportive submission on the Marine Reserves Bill but expressed some concerns about aspects of the Bill such as its narrow vision. Continued active input into significant conservation issues that affect the marine environment and those transport/roading proposals that impact on Auckland's green spaces and heritage values. State highway proposals, mangrove management, exchanges of land, walkways and liaison with a wide cross-section of the community are some of the issues that have involved the Board during the report period. Continuation of monitoring the implementation of the Auckland Conservation Management Strategy.</p>
Waikato	<p>Continuation of monitoring the implementation of the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy. Attempted to increase community interest in Board activities. Made submissions on the Marine Reserves Bill and on a number of local conservation issues. Liaison maintained with the Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve Committee which met twice during the report period. Involvement has continued with the Ballance Farm Environment Awards – main thrust of awards is to recognise and reward sustainable land management practices.</p>

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Bay of Plenty	<p>Monitoring the implementation of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Management Strategy and advocating for geothermal fields - a special responsibility due to the importance of the geothermal fields in the Bay of Plenty. The Board feels it has an important role to play as a link between the Department and the local community.</p> <p>Growing level of public attendances at Board meetings and interest in conservation issues in the Bay of Plenty region. Strong advocacy role commenting on a number of matters – Te Pae Pae Aotea Marine Reserve; Marine Reserves Bill; regional and district plans; control/management of ships' ballast water and sediment; banding of gannets on Whakaari Island and transfer of hihī from Mokia to Kapiti Island.</p>
East Coast/ Hawke's Bay	<p>Conservation achievements have included the completion of the Te Urewera National Park Management Plan review as well as operational plans for the Te Angiangi and Te Tapuwae O Rongokako marine reserves. The Board has provided advice to the Department on priorities for business planning, marine reserves and caring for archaeological sites as well as taking an active interest in the proposed amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991. In addition it has lodged submissions on the management of ships' ballast water and sediments; biological control for the weed Buddleia, Marine Reserves Bill, Te Papapae Aotea Marine Reserve Application, recovery plan for Powelliphanta land snails and catfish and worked on the proposal to gazette a wilderness area at Ruakutiri, Te Urewera National Park.</p>

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Tongariro/ Taupo	<p>Considerable time and energy has been devoted to the review of the Tongariro National Park Management Plan as well as an ongoing involvement with the Mt Ruapehu Crater Lake issues. The Board is in the process of developing a protocol for monitoring the implementation of the conservation management strategy. It maintains an active interest in the management of visitor pressures on Tongariro National Park, in particular the Northern circuit and the Whakapapa and Turoa ski areas, and recognises that in the future, as a result of this pressure, a debate may be needed on continuing unregulated freedom of access to areas such as the Tongariro Crossing.</p>
Taranaki/ Whanganui	<p>Monitoring of the implementation of the Wanganui CMS has continued. The serious decline of the kiwi numbers within the Egmont National Park, Taranaki and Whanganui generally continues to be of concern. The Board was very active in advocating for a variety of conservation issues through submissions to local government and central government.</p>
Wellington	<p>Major issues have been the declining state of the region's long fin eel fishery and the increasing pressure placed on the coastal environment by development. Both these concerns have been acknowledged as serious national issues. Water quality is another major area of concern – both freshwater and around the coastline. Considerable energy has been directed towards securing improvements to sewage treatment in the Wairarapa area. The Board put forward submissions and appeared at several hearings. Conservation management strategy monitoring continues to be valuable by providing clear direction for Board input into the financial planning process and identifying areas of concern for future emphasis.</p>

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Nelson/ Marlborough	Priorities have been reviewing the management plan for Abel Tasman National Park, increasing the level of emphasis on marine management and encouraging initiatives that mean the public are better informed about conservation. A very successful weekend session was held for Board members on Maori culture and the Treaty of Waitangi. Ongoing involvement in commenting on concession applications – particular concern about potential impacts of new concessions during the summer period in places such as Abel Tasman National Park.
West Coast Tai Poutini	Work has continued on the review of the draft West Coast Conservation Management Strategy. Advice was provided to the Department on a range of concession applications. Very active in advocating for conservation through submissions on resource consents. Submission put forward on the Marine Reserves Bill. Concern about impacts of increased visitors to the Nile Valley area.
Canterbury Aoraki	Work has continued on the review of the Aoraki Mt Cook National Park Management Plan, commenting on concession applications and monitoring the implementation of the conservation management strategy. Board efforts directed towards tenure review; weed and pest control; recreational facilities and implementation of the deed of settlement with Ngai Tahu. Strong focus on policy rather than management issues. The Board has commented on a number of draft annual plans, regional plans, resource consents and other planning documents released by local and regional councils. It has serious concerns about resource consent applications for freshwater for irrigation.
Otago	Major focus has been the high country tenure review process. Concern about lack of progress on the review of the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan. Submission prepared on the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan to convey views on a number of cross-boundary issues. Active steps taken to improve ongoing communications with regional and local councils. Continued conservation management strategy monitoring. Input into three pastoral review proposals, concession applications, use of 1080 poison by the Department, caring for archaeological sites guidelines, future of captive thar and specifications for tracks and outdoor visitor facilities.

BOARD	ACTIVITY OR CONSIDERATION
Southland	Continuation of CMS monitoring, input into concession applications, strong links maintained with local Fish and Game Council/Southland District Council and other conservation groups. Provided comments on a number of planning documents and resource consent applications. Concern about congestion at Milford Sound – overcrowding impacting on visitor experience and the natural environment. Much work has been done during the report period to progress the review of the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.
Chatham Islands	Emphasis on establishing stronger connections with the Chatham Island community. Continuation of CMS monitoring programme, input into species transfers, land purchase process and biodiversity strategic review. Concern about biosecurity threats to the islands' unique fauna and flora from mainland New Zealand and elsewhere.

8. CONCLUSION

Another year, another report - time to reflect on and consider what has been and still needs to be done. Conservation and the Department are never far from media headlines, with 30% of the terrestrial environment 'owned' by the public and managed on their behalf by the Department.

A kaleidoscope of wonderful and exciting conservation achievements and stories which need to be celebrated and acknowledged. But competing interests exist and heart-stopping reversals and declines occur despite everyone's best efforts.

New Zealand's biodiversity is distinctive and unique and there are a number of agencies dedicated to keeping it that way. However we are barely holding the line. Whether we are making a net gain is questionable, despite the increase in resources and knowledge and the real passion and energy expended to save New Zealand's treasures. The highest profile example is the plight of the kiwi on mainland New Zealand. A variety of introduced animals are taking a terrible toll.

Biosecurity is a term which includes those animals. More broadly it encompasses risks posed by pests and diseases to the environment, the economy and to human health. Protecting New Zealand from such invaders is a daily task requiring great diligence and becoming more demanding and urgent.

It is extremely encouraging to note the increasing engagement of the wider community in conservation and protection of the environment. That needs to be extended to individual awareness of how our actions can impact negatively. The only way we will ward off threats to our unique natural heritage is through greater community 'ownership' and care of the environment and avoidance of negative impacts.

A key pressure is the increasing number of visitors wanting to explore and experience the delights which are New Zealand. Forty years ago our country welcomed 60,000 international visitors. Today there are two million: by 2009 there may be three million. Most visitor activity will be in and around the conservation estate. We need to plan for growth so that what New Zealanders value and what visitors come to experience is not eroded by commercialism and over-development or "loved to death". New Zealand's essential charm is in its sense of being lightly trod.

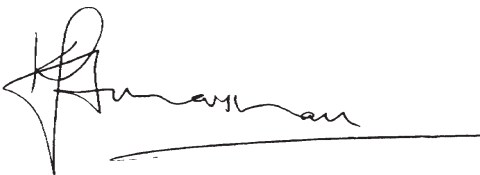
9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I wrote last year, while the Authority 'makes a difference', the challenge for members continues to be 'to make a bigger difference'. I want to acknowledge the efforts of members to respond to that challenge this year and thank them for their dedication to the work of the Authority.

I also acknowledge the open and engaging style and enthusiasm for conservation of our Minister, the Hon Chris Carter, and I particularly give thanks for the commitment and foresight of the Government which continues to recognise the uniqueness of New Zealand's natural heritage by providing concrete support through increased funding for its protection and enjoyment.

I would like to thank Hugh Logan, the Director-General of Conservation, for his continued support and co-operation with the Authority and also the staff of the Department who service the Authority or work closely with it.

Finally I acknowledge the efforts and energy of conservation board members in addressing a wide range of conservation issues in the past year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Marshall', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kerry Marshall
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority