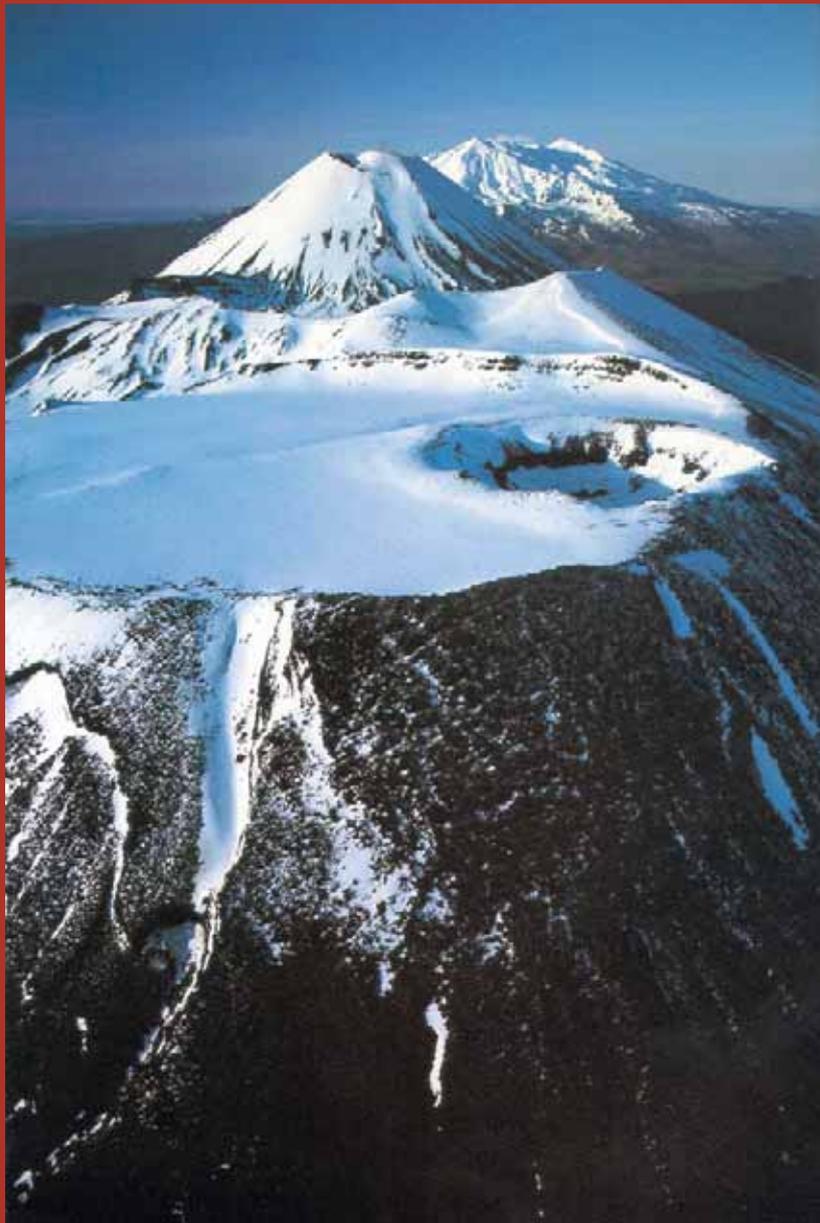


**Annual Report of the
New Zealand Conservation Authority**

TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA



FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2005

Cover photo: The peaks of Tongariro, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu, the area gifted to the nation by Te Heuheu Tukino which form the nucleus of Tongariro National Park, New Zealand's first national park (photo DOC).

Annual Report of the

New Zealand Conservation Authority

**for the period
1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005**

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

ISSN 1176-4635

30 November 2005

Hon Chris Carter
Minister of Conservation
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Minister

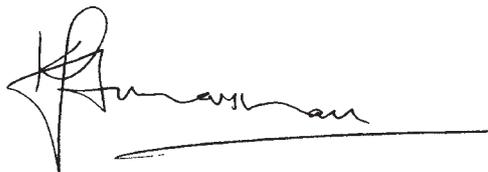
I submit, in terms of Section 6E of the Conservation Act 1987, the thirteenth report of the New Zealand Conservation Authority covering the period of 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.

The Act requires that the Authority shall in each year make a report to the Minister on the exercise of its functions and powers.

This report includes information derived from the annual reports of the 14 conservation boards: full copies of their reports are available on request.

It is customary to commend to you the contributions made by individual members of the Authority and the conservation boards. I have pleasure in doing so in regards to their efforts in the past year. The Authority and conservation boards continue to make a difference in helping shape conservation management in New Zealand.

Yours sincerely

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

Kerry Marshall
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority

Vision Statement

In its statutory role, the New Zealand Conservation Authority/Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa 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.

The New Zealand Conservation Authority Members



Left to right: Bryan Hutchins, Edward Ellison (inserted into photo), David Chandler, John Nankervis, Nganeko Minhinnick, Wendy Nelson, Linda Conning, Peter Geddes, Lorraine Stephenson, Marian van der Goes, Kerry Marshall (Chairperson), Alan Mark.

Absent: Kath Dickinson

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1. INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Conservation Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body established by section 6A of the Conservation Act 1987. It represents the long-term public interest in conservation and is closely involved in conservation planning and policy development affecting the management of public conservation lands administered by the Department of Conservation. The Authority is not a board of directors with governance responsibilities.

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, the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990. It also has specified responsibilities with regard to consultation with tangata whenua set out in Treaty claims settlement legislation.

The Authority met formally on five occasions during the 2004/05 reporting period – in August, October and December 2004, and in February and April 2005. Three of the meetings were held in Wellington, one in Auckland in August 2004, and one in Wanganui in April 2005.

Authority members were honoured with a civic reception from the North Shore City Council when it met in Auckland. Two past chairpersons of the Authority, David Thom and Sir Duncan McMullin, also attended the reception. During the Auckland visit, field trips enabled Authority members to view two community-run projects: the restoration of Rangitoto Island's historic baches and the revegetation of the adjacent Motuihe Island. Such projects are significant in the Auckland region's conservation matrix. Visits were also made to two nationally important historic reserves: Fort Takapuna and North Head.

A second field trip held when the Authority met in Wanganui allowed members to consider issues relating to the management and future of small forest reserves. Four reserves in urban, coastal sand country and pastoral settings were visited. Departmental staff and conservation board members accompanied the Authority on both field trips, greatly enhancing the value of the trips to the Authority.

The Authority's major achievement this year was completion of the review of the General Policy for National Parks, a process that began in December 2001. The General Policy, approved at the Authority's April meeting, is a significant milestone and a tribute to past and present Authority members who have devoted considerable time and energy to seeing the statement through to completion.

The draft revised Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan was approved in August 2004 after comments from the Minister of Conservation, the Hon Chris Carter, were considered.

The Authority continued to work, through its working parties, on the following strategic priority areas: marine; visitor/natural/historical values interface; tussock grasslands and associated ecosystems; freshwater habitat; and pest control and biosecurity.

The Authority has consciously chosen to operate at a high or strategic level and channel its effort into areas where it can add value in debates about matters of national importance to conservation. Strategic priorities and other actions are closely monitored, with decisions on whether to involve itself in an issue determined by a three-point test:

- (a) was there a role for critiquing or challenging by the Authority?
- (b) what value would the Authority's involvement add? and
- (c) could the Authority play a role in finding a way forward?

Authority members welcomed the opportunity to hold a formal meeting to discuss conservation issues with the Minister of Conservation during the year. The chairman also met with the Minister on a number of occasions.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

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

	Number meetings attended
David Chandler, Auckland*	5
Linda Conning, Te Teko*	5
Katharine (Kath) Dickinson, Dunedin	4
Edward Ellison, Dunedin	5
Peter Geddes, Whangarei	5
Marian van der Goes, Karitane	4
Bryan Hutchins, Te Anau	3
Alan Mark, Dunedin	5
Kerry Marshall, Richmond* (chairperson)	5
Nganeko Minhinnick, Waiuku	3
John Nankervis, Wellington*	4
Wendy Nelson, Wellington*	5
Lorraine Stephenson, Dannevirke*	4

* reappointed for a further term on 16 June 2005

Authority members are appointed by the Minister of Conservation. The terms of all members ended on 31 May 2005. Appointments for the three year term ending 31 May 2008 were gazetted on 16 June 2005. Six members were reappointed and seven new members were appointed. The Minister reappointed Kerry Marshall as the chairperson of the Authority until 31 May 2006. The new members are Barbara Arnold of Palmerston North, Kay Booth of Lincoln, Charles Crofts of Diamond Harbour, Mike Crozier of Wellington, Robyn Jebson of Queenstown, Basil Morrison of Paeroa, and Piri Sciascia of Wellington.

3. FEES AND ALLOWANCES

The chairperson receives a daily meeting fee of \$250 and other Authority members receive a daily meeting fee of \$190. Members can also be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred while engaged 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 so be 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 detail section 4 considerations in papers prepared for the Authority and the Authority to do the same in papers it generates.

The Authority reviews the template annually with a view to making changes if required. The review was carried out at the Authority’s February meeting, with members continuing to remain satisfied with the way in which the template was working.

The revised General Policy for National Parks is evidence of the active attention the Authority has given to its responsibilities under Section 4 of the Conservation Act. Whereas in the 1983 General Policy for National Parks there were just two references to Māori, the revised policy sets out in some detail the Authority’s expectations as to the engagement of Māori as tangata whenua in the management of lands and waters of national parks in which they have cultural and historical interests.

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

(a) General Policy

The review of the 1983 General Policy for National Parks was completed in April when the Authority approved the statement for publication. This ended a process begun in 2001 when the Authority agreed to review the General Policy for National Parks concurrent with the development by the Department of general policy under the Conservation Act 1987 and other related legislation.

At the end of the previous reporting period, public submissions on the draft revised General Policy for National Parks had been received and the Authority had identified major issues for resolution. Redrafting work by subgroups of Authority members was assisted by a workshop in August 2004. An oversight group (Kerry Marshall, John Nankervis, Marian van der Goes and Wendy Nelson) managed the process and referred issues requiring resolution to the Authority.

At the Authority’s meeting in October 2004, the decision was made to signal the Authority’s intention to allow for the possibility of mountain-biking in national parks to be considered through the national park management planning process, subject to conditions to protect natural values and the recreational experience of other users. Given the considerable public interest in this issue, the Authority issued a press release announcing this decision.

The revised draft statement of General Policy for National Parks was referred to the Minister of Conservation for comment in early November. The Minister's comments, along with those of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and minor matters raised by the Department of Conservation were considered at the Authority's December meeting.

Issues raised by Ngāi Tahu were considered and advice was sought from the Minister and the Director-General of Conservation. The revised General Policy for National Parks was approved and adopted at the Authority's April meeting.

In September 2004 the Authority held a second workshop to provide comment to the Department on the proposed general policy for the Conservation Act and related legislation. In December it provided recommendations to the Minister of Conservation relating to the draft general policy.

(b) Conservation Management Strategies and Plans

A conservation management strategy (CMS) outlines a ten-year plan for integrated conservation management in a conservancy. Each conservancy's CMS is prepared by the Department in consultation with its 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 been approved by the Authority. There are sixteen approved CMSs. A number of CMSs are now due to be reviewed having reached the end of their ten-year working lives. The status of CMSs as at 30 June 2005 can be found in the First Schedule at the back of this annual report.

In April 2005 the Authority recommended that the Minister of Conservation agree to extend the Auckland CMS by two years. At the same time the Authority expressed its concern to the Department that CMSs were not always being given the priority they deserve.

In October 2004, the Authority approved a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the review of CMSs.

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

At the beginning of the period there were two general policies:

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

These policies guide the Department in the development of CMSs and national park management plans. As discussed above, the Authority approved the revised General Policy for National Parks in April 2005. No work was undertaken in relation to the New Zealand Walkways Policy. During the period the Government was considering options for public access which could have implications for the role of the Authority with regards to Walkways and for the New Zealand Walkways Policy.

(d) Conservation Matters of National Importance

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

- Milford Sound Piopiotahi Sustainable Development Report
- Fiordland Marine Management Bill
- Undaria control (see also below)
- Long-finned eels – decline in populations (see also below)
- Kiwi – management options (see also below)
- Deer in Fiordland National Park
- Deer Farming Notice No. 4 and other provisions relating to keeping deer in captivity
- Tenure review
- Status of stewardship land (see also below)
- Control of live brown bullhead catfish
- Use of deer repellent in 1080 (possum) bait (see also below)
- Formal assessment of 1080 by ERMA
- Marine conservation
- Responsible use of off-road vehicles
- Biosecurity matters (see also below)
- Extension of the boundaries of the Honeycomb Hill Caves Specially Protected Area, Kahurangi National Park
- Review of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
- Draft Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement and Implementation Plan
- Guidelines for use of bicycles on tracks managed by DOC
- Control of Himalayan Thar

Undaria

The Authority has reported in previous years its disappointment at the lack of a timely and comprehensive central government response to the invasive seaweed *Undaria pinnatifida*. Accepting that it had spread to many parts of mainland New Zealand the Authority sought central government funding to prevent its spread to the subantarctic islands, Chatham Islands, Stewart Island and Fiordland. While the Government was prepared, as noted below under Biosecurity to take rapid and adequately-funded action to protect agricultural, horticultural and health interests, the Authority is disheartened that it has been unprepared to provide much more modest funding to protect New Zealand's unique environment and indigenous biodiversity.

Long-finned eels

Worldwide eel populations are declining rapidly due to a loss of habitat, impediments to migration and over-fishing. New Zealand has three species of eel and their population makeup is changing. The Authority is particularly concerned at the population decline and changes within the indigenous long-finned eel population. This is a very long living species which is slow to breed. The Authority has recommended to the Minister that he take action to secure the long-term preservation of long-finned eels and not allow commercial take from public conservation land.

Kiwi

The Kiwi Recovery Plan in accordance with which the Department allocates resources and focuses its effort in relation to the conservation of kiwi expires in 2006. The Authority was advised of the preliminary thinking of the Department for the new plan to 2016. The Authority felt that the proposed 10-year goal was inadequate for New Zealand's national emblem, with which New Zealanders associate strongly. It also questioned the proposal that the same number of breeding pairs of each kiwi species be subject to intensive management, regardless of the current abundance of each species which varies from approximately 200 to 20,000. The Authority was extremely disappointed to read that the Department expected the overall kiwi population of 75,000 to decline to around 40,000 over the 10-year period. The Authority notes with interest the groundswell of private and community efforts to protect kiwi, evidence of the importance "Kiwis" attach to the widespread distribution and survival of this unique bird.

Stewardship land

When the Department of Conservation was established in 1987 and land was transferred to it from the former departments of lands and forests for the purposes of conservation, the land was known as stewardship land. Some of that land has since been classified into a more specific land category such as national park or some form of reserve but most of it remains within the stewardship category. Despite the protection accorded as land held for conservation purposes, there is a perception that surfaces from time to time that stewardship land is of low conservation value and therefore available for non-conservation purposes. The Authority recommended to the Director-General that he take action to classify into more specific land categories stewardship land with high conservation value.

Deer repellent 1080 baits

The Minister sought the views of the Authority on the use of deer repellent baits during possum control operations. The Authority advised the Minister that the use of deer repellent baits on public conservation land was not generally appropriate, should be limited to statutory bodies carrying out a statutory purpose, and should be limited to designated Recreational Hunting Areas or other appropriately designated areas and the boundaries of conservation areas adjoining deer farms.

Biosecurity

The Authority was briefed by a Department biosecurity official on a retrospective application by the Ministry of Health to aeri ally spray *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti) onto land administered under the Reserves Act 1977. This was required as part of a campaign to contain and control the Southern Saltmarsh mosquito at Wairau Estuary and Lake Grassmere in Marlborough. The Authority recommended that the Minister of Conservation approve the application. The Authority also supported an urgent request from Biosecurity NZ to spray *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk) over parts of Auckland to combat a range of alien moths (including Fall web worm and *Spilosoma* sp.) on an 'as and when needed' basis for five years. This was to allow for rapid responses against alien moths rather than case by case applications with their attendant delays and costs. Support for the proposal was subject to the Minister of Conservation receiving an annual report demonstrating the spray was not adversely affecting indigenous organisms or negatively affecting any ecosystem, and that there was sufficient scientific advice supported by research to indicate that adverse affects will not occur.

The Authority also considered an application by the Southland Conservancy to release biological organisms to control weeds. While the Authority recommended that the Minister of Conservation approve the application, it recorded its concern about the possible impacts of biological control agents on indigenous biodiversity in remote or special environments and urged caution.

(e) Change of Status

See section 5.3 of this report.

(f) Walkways

No work specific to New Zealand Walkways was carried out by the Authority during the reporting period.

(g) Education and Publicity

The Authority continued a campaign begun in the previous reporting period highlighting the adverse impacts of off-road vehicles on sensitive environments. This year the Authority welcomed the decision by the Advertising Standards Authority to adopt environmental principles in its Code for Advertising Vehicles which had been sought by the Authority. The Authority also sought to meet with the Department to discuss options for research into the effects of off-road vehicles on biodiversity, environmental values and people's experiences. In a related move, the Authority wrote to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance seeking extra research funding in the 2005 Budget for ecosystem research.

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 there (www.conservationsauthority.org.nz).

Visitors to the Authority's website can download several documents published by the Authority in recent years, such as the General Policy for National Parks, *Pests and Weeds: A Blueprint for Action*, the popular *New Zealand's Walkways* booklet, and its 1997 documents on Māori customary use.

(h) Priorities for Expenditure by the Department of Conservation

Section 6B (1) (h) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides for the Authority "to advise the Minister and the Director-General annually on priorities for the expenditure of money". The Authority discussed priorities for expenditure in the Department's 2005/06 year at its meeting in August 2004.

Authority members discussed priorities for 2005/06 and developed the following advice:

- i) Increase public support for conservation through:
 - greater publicity about saving icon species of importance to the public
 - increasing engagement with the tourism industry
 - working with the Animal Health Board and local government better on pest/weed control
 - encouraging more community conservation projects

- seeking more sponsorship, particularly one-off recreation projects
- ii) Spend a greater proportion of the recreation budget on marine recreation, interpretation and improved visitor centres (does not mean new or bigger)
- iii) More emphasis on monitoring so as to assist business decisions
- iv) Freshwater issues
- v) Marine and mammalian pest biosecurity
- vi) Capacity and capability building to increase access in the high country

The Authority raised two concerns:

- how was biodiversity funding to be maintained/enhanced?
- was the Department being spread too thinly and should it do less?

(i) New Zealand Fish and Game Council Liaison

Section 6B (1) (i) of the Conservation Act 1987 provides for the Authority to liaise with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council (the Council). The Authority provided the Council with copies of its agendas and meeting papers during the reporting period. Kerry Marshall attended a Council meeting in July 2004.

The Council took a close interest in the review of the General Policy for National Parks with respect to sports fish and game birds. Concerns raised by the Council were considered by the Authority as the review progressed.

(j) Ministerial Delegations

There were no Ministerial delegations during the reporting period. The Minister did however ask the Authority for advice on the use of deer repellent baits on public conservation land. Before providing that advice the Authority received a presentation from the Animal Health Board. The Authority's advice was reflected in the Minister's decision.

4.3 Section 6C of the Conservation Act 1987 – Powers of the Authority

(a) Establishment of Committees

The Conservation Act provides for the Authority to establish committees to carry out tasks designated by the Authority. Just one committee was operative:

Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan Committee

Marian van der Goes (convenor), Alan Mark, Bryan Hutchins and Edward Ellison. The management plan was approved by the Authority in August 2004 and the committee then disbanded.

(b) Advocate the Interests of the Authority

The Authority raised concerns with the Minister of Biosecurity about the decision to end funding for eradicating the invasive seaweed *Undaria pinnatifida* from Big Glory Bay and Halfmoon Bay on Stewart Island, and Bluff Harbour. The Authority was extremely disappointed by the decision, which threatened to undo work carried out in previous years. Failure to fund the programme carries the risk that *Undaria* will spread to Fiordland and the subantarctic islands as well as the potential loss of Stewart Island's marine biodiversity values. A press release condemning the decision was issued in October 2004. In February 2005 the Authority resolved to take its concerns to the Prime Minister and the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Biosecurity.

The Authority made a submission to the Ministry of Fisheries on a proposal to restrict possession and disposal of the brown bullhead catfish.

Officials from the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation made presentations on the Government's Waters of National Importance (WONI) programme. The Authority subsequently made a submission on the public consultation document *Freshwater for a sustainable future; issues and options*.

David Chandler represented the Authority at the second 'Biosecurity Summit' held in Auckland on 18–19 November 2004.

Officials from the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry made presentations to the Authority on the changes to the Department's role under the new biosecurity system that took effect on 1 November 2004.

Submissions were also made on the Fiordland Marine Management Bill and the draft New Zealand Marine Protected Areas Strategy.

5. FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT 1980

5.1 General Policy for National Parks

See section 4.2 above.

5.2 National Park Management Plans

Details of national park management plans' approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2005 can be found in the Second Schedule at the back of this annual report.

The Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan was approved by the Authority in August 2004. The Authority concurred with the Minister's desire to see the same standard of consultation that occurred with takata whenua during the preparation of this plan applied to all stakeholders when future plans are prepared. As a result the Authority wrote to all conservation boards drawing attention to the Minister's desire to see greater commitment to consulting with relevant sector groups and individuals with an interest in national park management plans.

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

The Authority approved the addition of two parcels of land from the Hapawhenua Valley to Tongariro National Park in August 2004.

In April 2005 the Authority supported the exclusion of land from Westland National Park for roading associated with improvements to the approaches to the bridge over the Omoeroa River.

5.4 National Park Investigations

No new national park investigations were begun during the reporting period.

In December 2004 the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society withdrew its proposal to establish a national park over the Kaikoura Ranges and suggested that a conservation park be created instead. The Authority wrote to interested parties from whom it had sought views on the earlier national park proposal to seek their views on an appropriate conservation status for the area.

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. Kerry Marshall is 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. The Committee holds meetings quarterly. The Authority is represented by Wendy .. Nelson. Department official Mike Donoghue tabled a report on the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Bangkok at the Authority's December meeting. Kerry Marshall was a member of the New Zealand delegation to the Congress.

6.3 Threatened Species Trust

The Authority chairperson is a trustee. The Trust meets once a year. During the year the Trust was renamed to Treasured Species Trust.

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 April 2005 the Authority provided its advice to the Minister with respect to the conservation board appointments for 2005.

7.2 Authority/Conservation Board Liaison

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

Conservation Board

Northland
 Auckland
 Waikato
 Bay of Plenty
 Tongariro/Taupo
 East Coast/Hawke's Bay
 Taranaki/Whanganui
 Wellington
 Chatham Islands
 Nelson/Marlborough
 West Coast Tai Poutini
 Canterbury Aoraki
 Otago
 Southland

Authority Liaison Person

Peter Geddes
 David Chandler
 Nganeko Minhinnick
 Linda Conning
 John Nankervis
 Lorraine Stephenson/Linda Conning
 Wendy Nelson
 Kath Dickinson
 Wendy Nelson
 Kerry Marshall
 Marian van der Goes
 Alan Mark
 Edward Ellison
 Bryan Hutchins

The Authority meets away from Wellington once or twice a year and uses that opportunity to meet with conservation boards and discuss local conservation issues of national importance. As noted at the start of this report, the Authority met with the Auckland Conservation Board in August 2004 and the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board in April 2005.

7.3 Annual Reports

The fourteen conservation boards have furnished the Authority with their annual reports for the year ended 30 June 2005 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 the Department's conservancies as they implement CMSs. The boards have reported on this monitoring in their annual reports.

7.5 Conservation Management Plans

No plans were approved during the reporting period.

7.6 Board Advice and Advocacy

Most boards provided feedback or nominations in response to "Our World Heritage – Discussion Document: Toward a New Zealand Tentative List". Thirteen boards responded to the Authority's request for feedback on options under consideration in response to submissions to allow for some mountain-biking in national parks.

The following lists some of the additional issues and activities of individual boards during the reporting period. These matters are more fully covered in the boards' individual annual reports.

CONSERVATION BOARD	Brief summary of the main issues and activities of the Board during the reporting period
<i>Northland</i>	Conservation through commercialisation of rare and endangered species; commercial use of DOC resources to bolster funding; “all things marine” – made a submission on the introduction of species to the MinFish Quota Management system; continued development of the Board’s National Marine Park proposal; impacts on Bream Bay of proposal to convert Marsden B power station to coal.
<i>Auckland</i>	Discussion and consultation on proposed Great Barrier Island Marine Reserve; provided comment on Northland’s Mimiwhangata Marine Reserve proposal; provided advice on proposed development in the Te Arai/Maungawhau area; comment provided to Environment Southland re. aerial bait drop on Macauley Island in the Kermedecs to eradicate kiore; involved in ALPURT B2 project (the extension to the Northern Motorway); undertook field inspections to Motutapu and Rangitoto Islands, and an inspection to the Warkworth Area to view development issues; participated in conservation board research project; provided advice to Department on triggered concession applications for Home Bay, Motutapu Island; joined the Authority for their August meeting and field trip to Inner Gulf Islands; made a submission for the inclusion of Auckland’s volcanic field in the list of possible World Heritage sites.
<i>Waikato</i>	Maintained close interest in the progress of National Wetlands Trust to establish a wetland centre at Rangiriri; continuation of support for Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust; public forums at Putaruru, Raglan and Tairua in conjunction with meetings at Waotu, Motakotako Marae and Tairua Bowling Club.
<i>Bay of Plenty</i>	Banding of gannets on Whakaari Island; lodged several submissions to Environment Bay of Plenty on various Regional Plans; lodged a submission with Ministry for the Environment on the ‘Sustainable Water Programme of Action’.
<i>East Coast/Hawke’s Bay</i>	Amalgamation of the conservancy’s two CMSs, planning for the review of the same; submissions on a variety of topics including: proposed Aotea Marine Reserve application, Dactylanthus Recovery Plan, Marine Protected Areas Policy Statement and Ministry for the Environment’s Freshwater for a Sustainable Future. The board also participated in a social science research project to understand the ways that conservation boards and the department work together to achieve conservation outcomes.
<i>Tongariro/Taupo</i>	Progressed review of Tongariro National Park Management Plan; began review of Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan; lodged five submissions in support of the region’s natural resources; attended World Heritage Committee meeting at Grand Chateau, chaired by NZ representative, conservation board member and Paramount Chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa – Tumu te Heuheu.

<i>Taranaki/Wanganui</i>	Highlighted issues surrounding flood damage from Feb 2004 storm; hosted the Authority and had a joint meeting/field inspection with them; made comment to the department on the following documents and policies: the use of 1080 for Pest control, proposed Kiwi Recovery Plan, Dactylantus Recovery Plan and the Tapuae/New Plymouth Marine Reserve Application. Wrote to the Minister of Conservation highlighting issues surrounding commercial deer hunting in the Ruahine Ranges. Made various submissions to other Government agencies and local authorities; implemented new procedures arising from Treaty claim settlements with Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Ruanui. The Board acknowledged the contribution of noted conservationist and board member, Keith Chapple, who died during the year.
<i>Wellington</i>	Focus on issues arising from coastal development, threats to landforms, water quality and eel populations; future management of Kapiti Island northern end and Lake Wairarapa eastern margin and wetlands site visit.
<i>Chatham Islands</i>	South Chatham proposed covenant; landscape protection; summaries of species recovery plans in operation on the Islands; management of Island taonga; Buff Weka translocation to Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, Canterbury.
<i>Nelson/Marlborough</i>	Biosecurity threats from exotic pests and pressure on fresh waterways; revision of Abel Tasman National Park Management Plan and drafting of Puponga and Farewell Spit Management Plan; management of Queen Charlotte Track; marine protection and land status at Kaikoura; North Nelson marine reserve proposal; Marlborough Sounds Fisheries Management Working Group; and impacts upon marine mammals; TrustPower's proposed hydro scheme on the Wairau River. 180,476 ha of high country land in Molesworth Station became recreation reserve on 1 July 2005.
<i>West Coast Tai Poutini</i>	Development of West Coast CMS, provision of advice on concessions and in advocacy for conservation through the resource consent process and changes to district plans. Received briefings on the Animal Health Board Possum Control Programme for the West Coast and from West Coast Regional Council re: water quality; mining and gravel extraction; field inspection of Lake Kaniere and its environs - issues of interest were water quality, effects of possible expansion of population, weeds, sewage disposal and the formation of a local 'Friends of the Lake' group.
<i>Canterbury Aoraki</i>	Operated the Pohatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee; Te Waihora Joint Management Plan; Waitaki Catchment committee; several field inspections over wide conservancy area; official opening of Ahuriri Conservation Park.
<i>Otago</i>	Marine reserve proposal for Nugget Point/Tokatā; protection of forest at Mount Watkin/Hikaroroa and on the Leith Saddle near Dunedin; high country tenure review; vehicle impacts and access in the high country; establishment of walkway between Macetown

	and the Motatapu Road; environmental effects of commercial forestry; official opening of Ahuriri Conservation Park (partly in Otago).
<i>Southland</i>	Worked extensively on the Fiordland National Park Management Plan Review; joined the Minister, DOC staff, iwi, media and members of the local community at the opening of Southland's newest conservation park – Eyre Mountains/Taka Ra Haka; continued involvement in commercial surface water activities in the fiords.

8. CONCLUSION

At the end of the 2004 financial year I made mention of the Authority's focus on the revision of the General Policy for National Parks. For the five meetings this year just past, nothing has changed. The Authority finally adopted the General Policy in April 2005.

Along with the new Conservation General Policy, the revised General Policy for National Parks will provide the most valuable guide and tool in the revision of conservation management strategies and national park management plans.

The Authority believes that these reviews should be taken as quickly as possible to ensure that they reflect the policies and to provide up to date guidance for the management responsibilities of the Department of Conservation. For the first time there will be some national standardisation in strategies and plans.

As international tourist numbers climb and New Zealanders increasingly explore their country, a greater pressure is put on public conservation lands. The Department of Conservation continues to up-skill its ability to handle that pressure. In addition, along with increasing visitor numbers, the Department is asked to administer an ever-increasing public conservation estate. It can only do this well if additional investment by Government is considered to deal with both aspects.

Tourism NZ promotes New Zealand very successfully as 100% Pure, with the inference that New Zealand is therefore, clean and green. The perception is not the reality – our ecological footprint per capita is one of the worst in the world today. As a nation we have to be smarter if we are going to deliver the Tourism NZ promise.

There is no question that the Authority undertakes its statutory functions efficiently and with professional verve. Where it would like to make a bigger difference is in its advisory role: its record is chequered. The Authority has over the past few years elected to champion a suite of matters it considers of strategic priority as noted elsewhere; the aim to make some conservation and preservation gains - in key areas such as freshwater, marine and biosecurity. As I mentioned last year we barely hold the line. The Authority has been particularly saddened by the apparently limited ability of Government to stem the tide of invasive species and prevent their establishment. New Zealand's unique biodiversity faces an increasing battery of threats each year and more needs to be done offshore to stifle the trickle before it becomes a flood.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the end of this financial year a number of members retired from the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Seven new members have been appointed but due to the lateness of their appointments it was decided to cancel the scheduled June meeting.

I should like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the members in the past year. The General Policy for National Parks was finally adopted at the April meeting after a year of total dedication to the task by members. Their legacy will be that document and the influence it has on conservation management strategies and national park management plans.

The ongoing support of the Government, particularly the Minister of Conservation, to conservation in New Zealand is both timely and appropriate. There has been a miscellany of strategic environmental and conservation gains in the past year. The Government is to be congratulated for its commitment and support of New Zealand's natural heritage.

I should like also to thank Hugh Logan, the Director-General of Conservation, for his continued support and his department's 'ownership of the Authority'. The staff who service the Authority and those who have worked with it, are again worthy of special mention. We would not have produced General Policy without their 'going the extra mile'.

Finally I acknowledge the efforts of conservation board members and their conservancy staff for their work over the past year. There is no question that the demands on their time and commitment are becoming increasingly stretched as expectations rise and the public lands expand.

Kerry Marshall
Chairperson
New Zealand Conservation Authority
October 2005

FIRST SCHEDULE

Conservation management strategies - approval dates and/or status of review as at 30 June 2005

Conservation management strategy	Conservation management strategy activity
Northland	Approved 15 April 1999 on the understanding that a review would be considered after 3 years. The decision to develop general policy delayed the review.
Auckland	Approved 31 May 1995
Waikato	Approved 24 September 1996
Bay of Plenty	Approved 4 December 1997
East Coast	Approved 14 October 1998
Tongariro/Taupo	Approved 30 May 2002
Wanganui	Approved 9 April 1997
Hawke's Bay	Approved 19 October 1994
Wellington	Approved 13 March 1996
Chatham Islands	Approved 12 August 1999
Nelson/Marlborough	Approved 12 September 1996
West Coast	In working draft
Canterbury	Approved 14 June 2000
Otago	Approved 15 August 1998
Mainland Southland - West Otago	Approved 10 July 1998
Stewart Island - Rakiura	Approved 4 December 1997
Subantarctic Islands	Approved 16 July 1998

SECOND SCHEDULE

National park management plans - approval dates and/or status of reviews as at 30 June 2005

National park management plan	Date approved	Review update
Abel Tasman	July 1986	Currently under review
Aoraki/Mount Cook	14 August 2004	
Arthur's Pass	October 1994	Currently under review
Egmont	14 February 2002	
Fiordland	August 1991	Currently under review
Kahurangi	14 June 2001	
Mount Aspiring	October 1994	Currently under review
Nelson Lakes	10 October 2002	
Paparoa	18 November 1992	
Rakiura	To be prepared	
Te Urewera	13 February 2003	
Tongariro	December 1989	Currently under review
Westland Tai Poutini	13 December 2001	
Whanganui	March 1989	Currently under review

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