New Zealand Conservation Authority

Te Pou Atawhai Taiao o Aotearoa

Meeting

3 and 4 December 2025

Agenda and Meeting papers



Photo: North Kaweka Range
Photographer: Laura Rutten

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NZCA)
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA
3 and 4 December 2025
Two hundred and sixth meeting, to be held at:
West Plaza Hotel, Wakefield Street, Wellington, starting at 9.00am

D means Decision required, A means Advice required, I means Information only

	AGENDA			
Item		#	*Priority*	*Pages*
-	**NZCA Members only** – *(Servicing staff and public excluded)*	-	-	**9.00 – 9.30**
1	**Welcome and Chairperson's Introduction**	I	L	-
2	**Apologies** – receive	A	L	-
3	**Conflicts of Interest for the Meeting** – identify	A	L	1-2
4	**NZCA members' environmental scan** (include political / strategic updates from Chair)	A	E/K	3-4
5 T	**Statutory Land Management update** – David Griffin	I	C	5-12
6 T	**BioInvest update** – Tim Bamford and Richard Maloney	A	F	13-14
7 T	**Statutory Planning and Marine update** – Katherine Hughes	I	A/B/ D/J	15-30
	Lunch			
8	**Developing DOC's Treaty capability and capacity** – Sheridan Smith (DD-G Treaty Relationships) – *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	I	F	31-32
9	**Stakeholder relationships: Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi** – Liana Poutu *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	I	C/D	33-38
10	**ANZBS Implementation Plan and CBD** – Kirstie Knowles and Michelle Crowell	A	F	39-40
11	**MOC / DOC expenditure advice 2026-27** *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	D	E	41-42
12	**Status report** – note progress in actioning resolutions from the meeting held in June 2025	I	L	43-51
13	**Fast Track Approvals Act** – standing item	I	L	52-55
	Thursday			
14	**Wild Animal Management topics**	I	F	56-57
	14.1 Himalayan Tahr Annual Report – Ben Reddiex and Tom Brookman	I	F	59-72
	14.2 Predator Free 2050 Strategy Review: outcomes of the consultation – Ben Reddiex	I	F	-
	14.3 HOSI and HMP update – Dave Carlton (Sika) and Mark Ryan (Wapiti)	I	F	73-112
15	**D-G strategic session** – Penny Nelson (D-G) *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	A	E	113-114

16	**Minister of Conservation strategic session** – *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	**I**	**E**	**115-116**
17	**Stakeholder relationships: Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc.** – Megan Dimozantos	**I**	**L**	**117-118**
18	**Minutes**	**D**	**L**	**-**
	18.1 – approve minutes for the meeting held in October 2025	**D**	**L**	**119-130**
	18.2 – approve "in-committee" minutes for the meeting held in October 2025 *(expected to be taken "in-committee" with public excluded)*	**D**	**L**	**131-133**
19	**Representation and Liaison**	**I**	**L**	**-**
	19.1 Chair's report	**I**	**L**	**134**
	19.2 Conservation board and other liaison reports	**I**	**L**	**135-136**
	19.3 Report back on the IUCN World Congress – Aroha Mead	**I**	**L**	**137-146**
20	**Correspondence** – receive the inwards and approve the outwards correspondence	**D**	**L**	**47-150**
-	**NZCA only** – Debrief *(Servicing staff and public excluded)*	**-**	**-**	**-**
	Meeting close	**-**	**-**	**-**

NZCA's Strategic Priorities

A	Conservation Management Strategies
B	National Park Management Plans
C	Land status recategorisation e.g. stewardship land
D	Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty settlement conservation management
E	Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation
F	Opportunities for step change in conservation
G	Visitor management on public conservation lands and waters
H	Climate change adaptation and mitigation
I	Rivers and freshwater ecosystems
J	Marine ecosystems and protected areas
K	Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management
L	NZCA's performance

Meeting timetable

Wednesday 3 December

Start	9.00am
Morning tea	10.00 – 10.15am
Lunch	12.30-1.00pm
Afternoon tea	3.00 – 3.15pm
Dinner	6.00 for 6.30pm

Venue: St John's Restaurant

Thursday 4 December

Start	8.30am
Morning tea	10.30 – 10.45am
Lunch	12.30 – 1.00pm
Close	2.30pm

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

For meeting on 3 and 4 December 2025

I move that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely **–**

Agenda Items: 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, and 18.2

The general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows (OIA refers to Official Information Act 1982):

General subject of each matter to be considered	***Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter***	***Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution***
Item 8 – Developing DOC's Treaty capability and capacity	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)
Item 9 – Stakeholder relationships: Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)
Item 11 – MOC / DOC expenditure advice 2026-27	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)

Item 15 – Director-General strategic session	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)
Item 16 – Minister of Conservation strategic session	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)
Item 18.2 – Approval of 'in-committee' minutes from meeting held in October 2025	The interest that would be affected is the need for the Authority to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being, which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials. Good reason exists under sections 9(2)(f)(iv) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Official Information Act 1982.	Sections 48(1)(a)(ii) and 48(1)(d)

I also move that the following officials be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of their knowledge of these topics (as listed) and/or their role in servicing the Board:

- Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer (DOC) – all
- Sophie Bird, NZCA Servicing Officer (DOC) – all
- Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer (DOC) – all
- Sheridan Smith, Acting DD-G Treaty Relationship (DOC) – item 8
- Liana Poutu, Chair, Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi – item 9
- Sean Zeitjes, Planner, Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi – item 9
- Penny Nelson, Director-General (DOC) – 15
- Hon Tama Potaka, Minister of Conservation – item 16
- Kayla Wilson, DOC Private Secretary – item 16

This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matter to be discussed, is relevant because the stated persons have had input into, advised on or been advised of the matters sought to be excluded.

(Mover) *(Seconder)*

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.3

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
REGISTER OF INTERESTS
and
IDENTIFICATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

For meeting on 3 and 4 December 2025

Please use this form to update your register of interests and to note any actual or perceived Conflict of Interest with regard to any agenda item for this meeting

Name	
Register of Interests update Identification of any actual or perceived conflict of interest with regard to any agenda item	…… …… …… …… …… …… …… …… …… …… …… …… ……
Signed (NZCA member)	
Date	

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.4

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **NZCA members' environmental scan**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (E): Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation NZCA Strategic Priority (K): Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management.
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	No
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Identify** next steps for items presented
Context	This agenda item allows members to bring forward any issues of environmental concern that they believe could benefit from the Authority's input. Members should be prepared, and circulate, any information as necessary prior to the meeting to allow for informed discussion. No topics have been identified to date for discussion at this meeting.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.5

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: David Griffin – Land Regulatory Delivery Manager

Subject: **Statutory Land Management Update**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Priority C: Land status recategorisation e.g., stewardship land
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	Yes – regular update
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper.
Context	This report provides an update on work related to strategic land management issues, including outstanding NHF queries.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.5

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: David Griffin – Land Regulatory Delivery Manager

Subject: **Statutory Land Management Update**

Context: The Statutory Land Management (SLM) Team manage the statutory processes associated with public conservation land (PCL).

We undertake the statutory consent requirements associated with the various Acts, for example, access easements over private land to PCL, appointments of administering bodies, reclassifications, acquisitions, exchanges, and disposals to name only a few.

Generally, our work is "business as usual", but occasionally this work, requires input from you, e.g. removing or adding land to a National Park.

This report provides a summary on SLM work, an update on key areas of interest and special projects.

Background / Introduction

1. Statutory Land Management undertakes the statutory consent requirements associated with the various Acts, for example, access easements over private land to PCL, appointments of administering bodies, reclassifications, acquisitions, exchanges, and disposals of land.
2. Where those processes involve the removal or addition of land to a National Park, SLM may seek input from the NZCA.
3. This report provides a summary of SLM work, an update on key areas of interest and special projects.

Process status updates – NZCA Priority C

4. Appendix 1 summarises what has occurred on current work to the end of the financial year, and the proposed actions planned over the next 6 months for the following requirements:
    - NHF acquisitions – outstanding reclassifications
    - Additions of land to National Parks
    - Special Projects

Key Updates

5. The team is awaiting the outcome of a several high-profile matters – Stewardship Land Reclassification Project, the Wakatu litigation and Riversdale Flats, to inform next steps on what is captured in our Project plan and the resource demands.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.6

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Richard Maloney, Principal Advisor Biodiversity Planning

Subject: **Update on BioInvest (DOC's Biodiversity Planning Approach)**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority F: Opportunities for step change in conservation BioInvest is DOC's approach to understanding its investment in all of its Biodiversity work, and therefore impacts on all of its biodiversity strategic objectives.
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	February 2025, agenda item 201.10 April 2025, agenda item 202.10
Prior Discussion	Does the Authority need to meet about this item, to form an opinion, before the presenters arrive? No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Provide** feedback on the contents of this paper
Context	The Department is implementing a more transparent and consistent way of understanding its biodiversity work and how it invests – BioInvest. Key outcomes from BioInvest include: • A shift of our investment decisions from **issue by issue** and species-specific investment to prioritised investment **across whole biodiversity portfolio** • A split of DOC's biodiversity work into 33 programmes, with allocation of funds to species and ecosystems based on outcome plans (with prioritisation) • Having outcome plans prepared for every species and ecosystem, including activities, sites and costs to manage to persistence of these • An increase in DOC's ability to understand spend and trade-offs to inform decision-making • Being able to report on outcomes achieved, rather than amount of work undertaken

1

	We will update NZCA on progress towards implementing this approach, including new biodiversity impact measures related to outcomes, and next steps as we roll-out and continually improve the approach.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.7

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Katherine Hughes, National Management Planning Advisor
Lesley Douglas, National Marine Protection Advisor

Subject: **Statutory Planning and Marine Update**

NZCA Strategic Priorities	(A) Conservation Management Strategies (B) National Park Management Plans (D) Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty Settlement conservation management (J) Marine ecosystems and protected areas
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	Yes – regular update
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	We recommend you: a) Note the contents of this paper. b) Consider whether this paper meets your needs and, if not, what changes you may like to see implemented.
Context	You are involved in conservation planning for the management of public conservation lands and waters, including in relation to Treaty settlements. You approve conservation management strategies (CMS) and national park management plans (NPMP) and provide advice to the Minister and Director-General of Conservation about development of these documents, conservation management plans (CMP), and the creation of marine protected areas (MPA). This is a regular update on your priorities related to our projects, and support and advice work.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.7

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Katherine Hughes, National Management Planning Advisor
Lesley Douglas, National Marine Protection Advisor

Subject: **Statutory Planning and Marine Update**

Background/ Introduction

1. This update comprises a written report and maps outlining our statutory planning and marine protection work.

Project status updates – NZCA Priorities A, B, D, J

2. The attached maps summarise our work to November 2025, since the October 2025 meeting, and use a traffic light system[1] showing the status of:
   - conservation management strategies (CMS)
   - national park management plans (NPMP)
   - conservation management plans (CMP)
   - marine protection processes currently underway (MPA).
3. Appendix 1 outlines proposed actions planned for the next 9 months (December 2025 – August 2026).

Key milestones

Statutory Planning

Improving the management planning system

4. A management planning improvement work programme has been established to identify and implement operational improvement initiatives. This work is intended to complement proposed legislative reform, to deliver both immediate and enduring change.
5. As part of this programme, we have developed a 'Readiness Assurance Process', which tests internal and external readiness to begin a planning process before decisions are made to start the statutory component.
6. Work is also underway to develop guidance for engagement of Treaty partners through a statutory planning process.

Conservation Acts (Land Management) Amendment Bill (CALM Bill)

7. We have continued to support work being undertaken on the CALM Bill as it relates to statutory planning.

[1] Red – due for review; Orange – being worked on; Green - current

1

Te Hiku CMS

8. We are aware that you and the Minister have both reached out to Te Hiku iwi for comments for feedback on your written recommendations.

9. We are available to support you in considering the implications of feedback, once received.

West Coast Te Tai o Poutini CMS review

10. We are considering the implications of the proposed CALM Bill for this review process. The Steering Group has decided to pause drafting until the new policy direction is more developed. They will meet at the end of this year to reassess the pause and decide on next steps for the process.

Herds of Special Interest (HOSI)

11. We are continuing to work as part of a DOC project team to support processes directed by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing to consider designating HOSI for wapiti deer in Fiordland and sika deer in the Central North Island, including:

    - engagement with Treaty Partners, you, and other statutory stakeholders
    - the development of draft herd management plans for each proposed HOSI.

12. A public consultation and submissions process on the draft herd management plans is running from 10 November to 8 December 2025.

13. DOC's HOSI project team will be providing a separate and more detailed update to you on this work.

Management Planning Committee

14. We attended the committee meeting on 13 November. The Policy team provided information on the proposed National Conservation Policy Statement under the CALM Bill. We gave a brief update on the West Coast CMS review and the Readiness Assurance Process improvement work.

National Marine Protection Programme (Regulatory Services)

Southeast marine protection process (South Island) SEMP

15. No change in status since the last paper.

Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014 review (DOC and Fisheries NZ)

16. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand continued the evaluation of the Act's management measures and started drafting a report to Ministers that will outline the review outcomes.

17. Agencies have undertaken public consultation on the effectiveness of the management measures, receiving 55 submissions. These insights will inform the final review report to Ministers.

Hākaimangō-Matiatia (Northwest Waiheke) marine reserve application

18. No change in status since the last paper.

Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve review

19. Ngāti Konohi Hapū met for their Annual General Hui in early October. Due to Hapū capacity, they requested a pause on this process until February 2026.

Marine Policy Processes

Revitalising the Gulf: Government action on the Sea Change plan (marine protection)

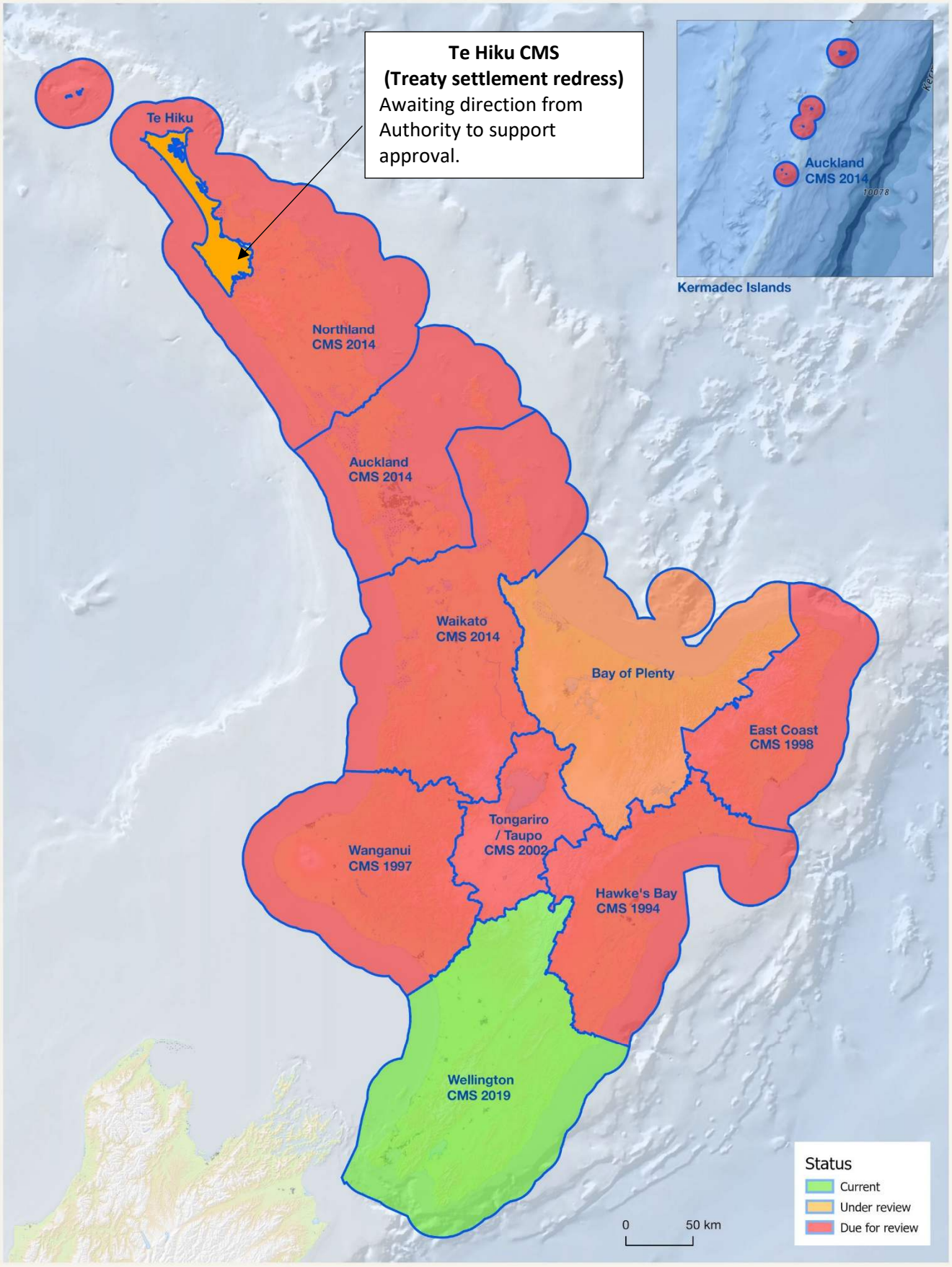
20. The Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Act 2025 came into law on 25 October 2025.

Appendix 1: Planned actions for active projects

Key: NZCA priorities	A – Conservation Management Strategies (CMS)	B – National Park Management Plans (NPMP)	D – Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty Settlement conservation management	Other conservation management plans (CMP)	J – Marine ecosystems and protected areas

Project	Stage/status and planned actions					
	December 2025 – February 2026		March 2026 – May 2026		June 2026 – August 2026	
West Coast Te Tai o Poutini CMS (full review)	Drafting	• Consider the impacts of the CALM Bill on this process.	Drafting	• Draft new CMS • Continue engagement on specific topic areas	Drafting	• Draft new CMS • Continue engagement on specific topic areas
Te Hiku CMS (new)	NZCA consideration/ approval	• NZCA consideration of CMS and consultation with Te Hiku iwi and the Minister of Conservation. • Approval • Preparation for publishing	Implementation	• Publishing • Handover to Te Hiku iwi and DOC Operations team		
South-East Marine Protection statutory process	Judicial review process Order in Council and Cabinet processes Preparation for implementation	**NOTE: statutory process, implementation steps and timeframes are affected by the judicial review. The extent is unclear at this point. Timeframes and steps have not been adjusted in this table to reflect delays due to the judicial review process.** • Crown Law leading work to assess judicial review and set out next steps • Finalise steps in the statutory process to formally establish the marine reserves (Order in Council drafting) • Type 2 MPA and Kelp Protection Area – Cabinet processes (Fisheries New Zealand) • Continue engagement with Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka Rangatira and implementation planning	Judicial review process Gazettal and implementation	• Marine reserves – Cabinet and Executive Council processes • Gazettal of marine reserves • Implement any Cabinet-approved Type 2 MPAs and the Kelp Protection Area • Continue scoping implementation planning requirements alongside Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka Rangatira	Judicial review process Statutory element project closure	• Continue engagement with Kāi Tahu Papatipu Rūnaka Rangatira and handover implementation responsibilities to district operations team
Hākaimangō – Matiatia (North-West Waiheke) marine reserve application	Ministerial decision-making	• Support Minister's decision-making on marine reserve application • Minister considers DOC's advice and makes decisions on the application (timeframe unknown)	Concurrence decisions and implementation planning, if marine reserve approved	• Seek concurrence decisions from Minister for Oceans and Fisheries and Minister of Transport • Commence implementation work	Implementation, if marine reserve approved	• Continue implementation work
Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014 review	Development of recommendations and report drafting	• Analyse submissions from public consultation • Complete drafting of review report • Deliver report to Ministers	Seek Ministerial decisions, plan for implementation	• Seek Ministerial decisions (if any) • Start planning for implementation of any agreed actions • Continue public communications	Transition to implementation/ Project closure	• TBC, depending on previous steps

Project	Stage/status and planned actions					
	December 2025 – February 2026		March 2026 – May 2026		June 2026 – August 2026	
Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve review	Scoping process (paused until February 2026)	• Initial engagement with mana whenua and Management Committee to scope review • Develop project management plan and establish governance • Develop communications plan • Conduct initial outreach to stakeholders	Review underway	• Develop evaluation framework and information collation • Select indicators • Communicate with public according to plan	Review underway	• Evaluate indicators • Continue public communication
Revitalising the Gulf: Government action on the Sea Change plan – marine protection	Mana whenua engagement	• Work with MPI and Te Tari Whakatau to formulate an approach for developing biodiversity objectives for each proposed high protection area	Mana whenua engagement	• Begin engagement with mana whenua to develop biodiversity objectives for each proposed high protection area	Mana whenua engagement	• Continue engagement with mana whenua to develop biodiversity objectives for each proposed high protection area



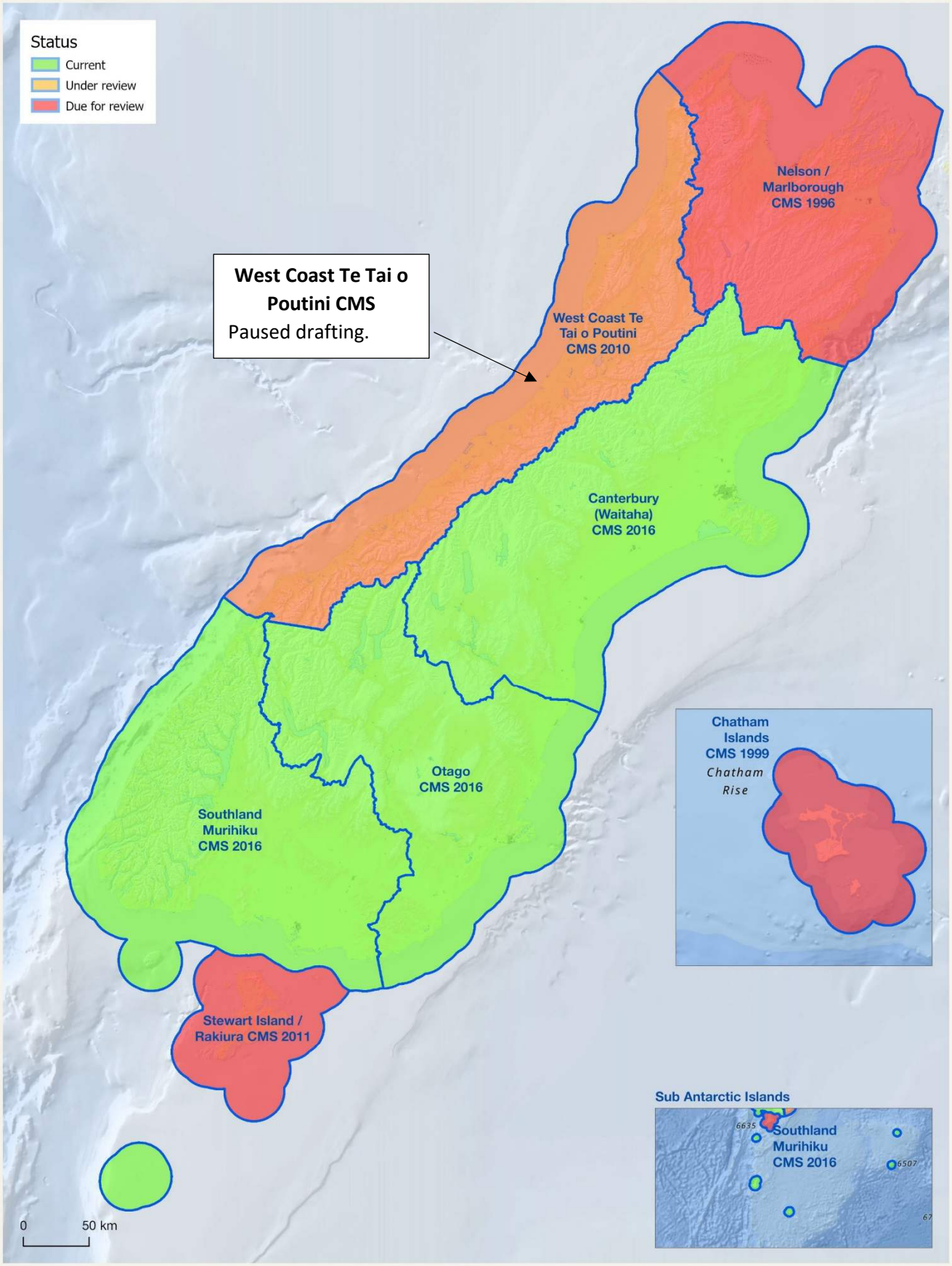
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CMS projects - North Island

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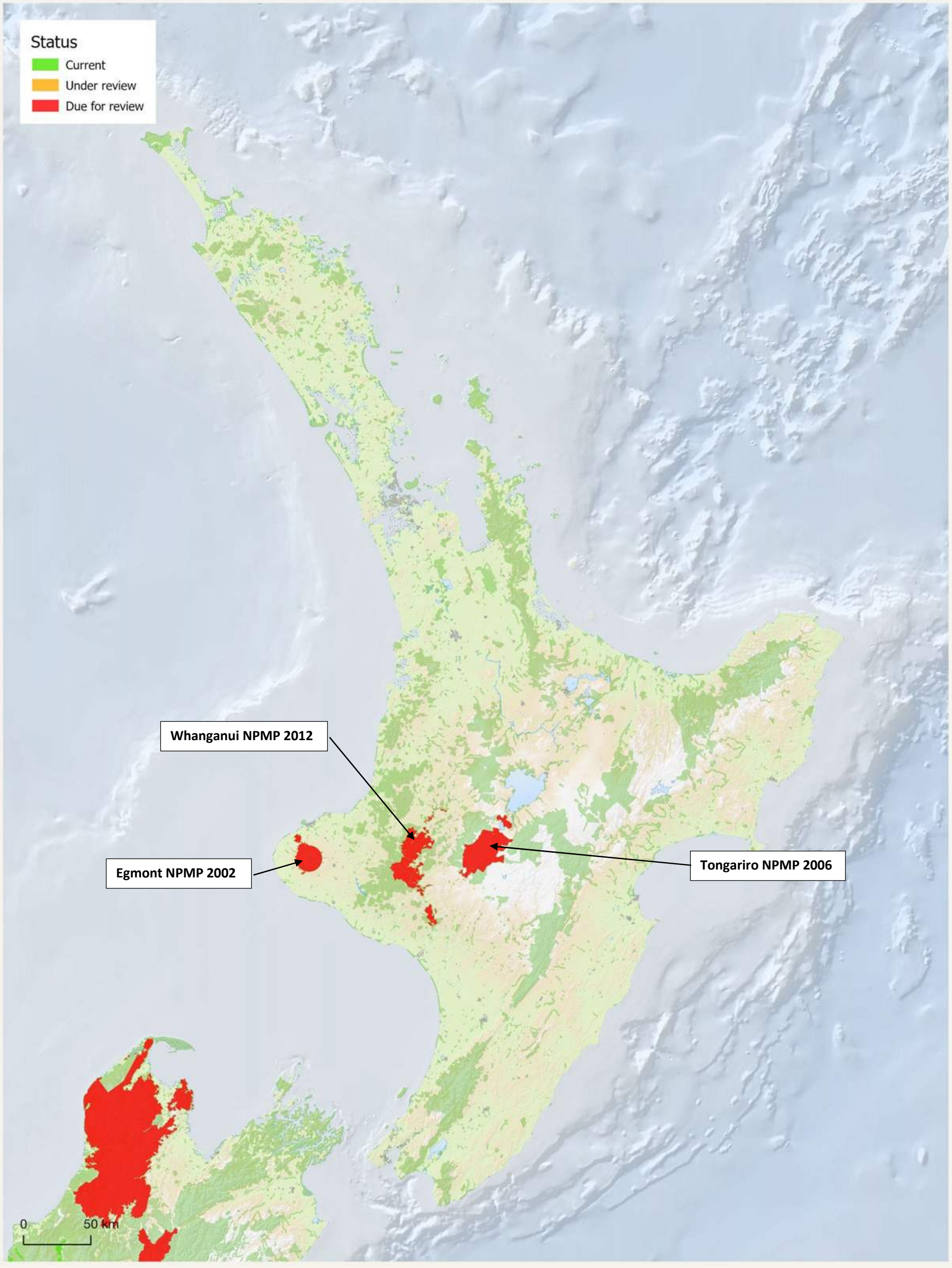
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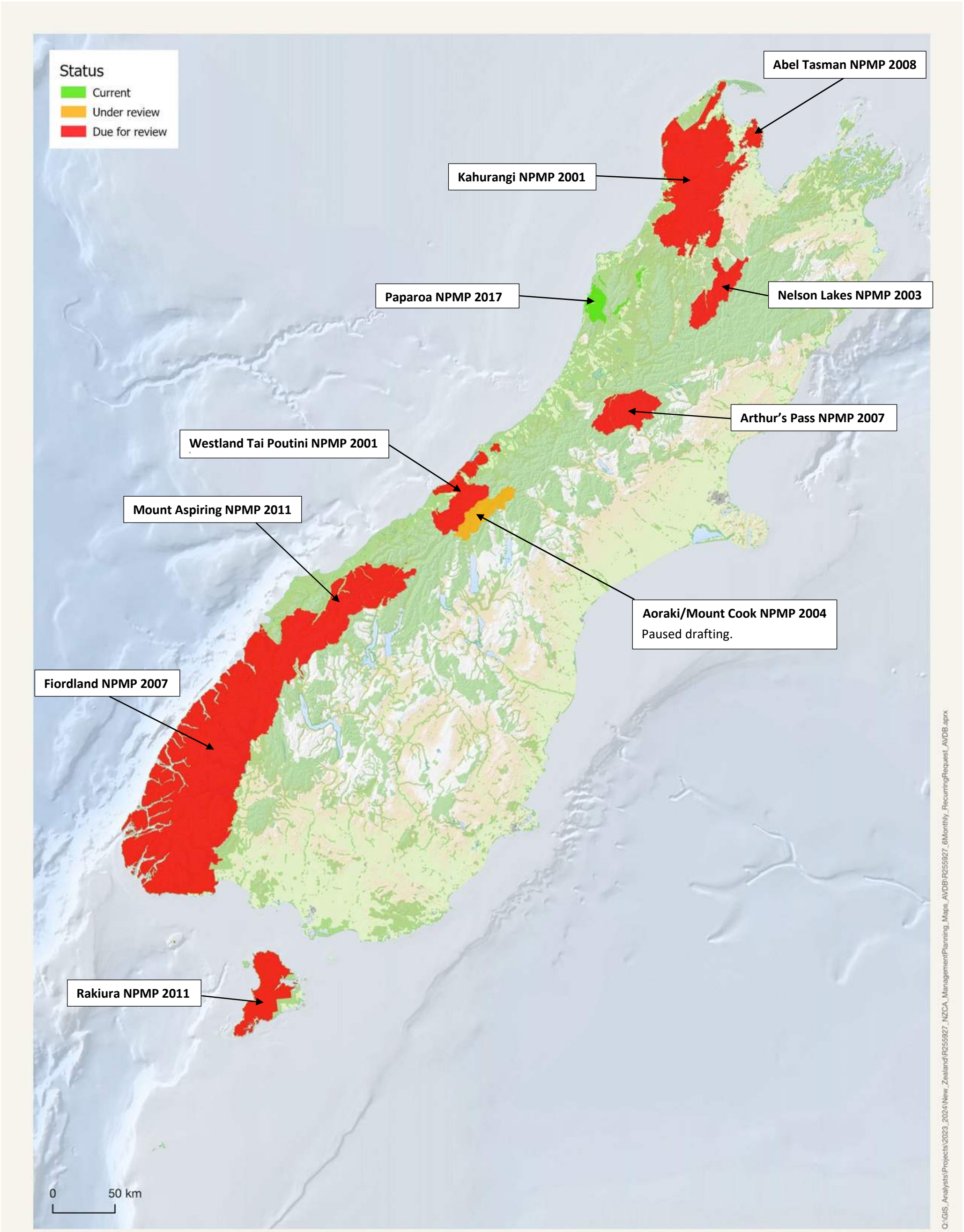


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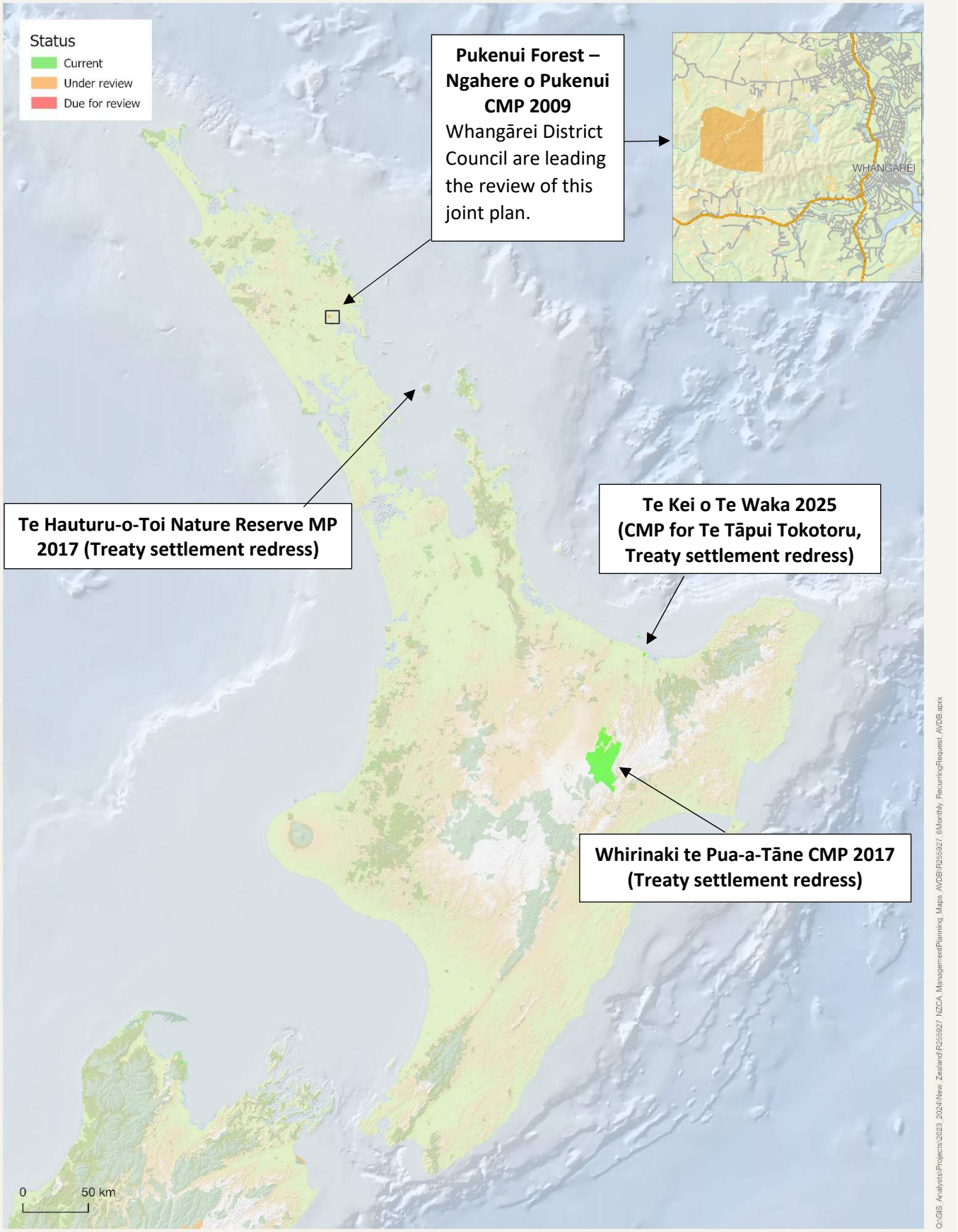


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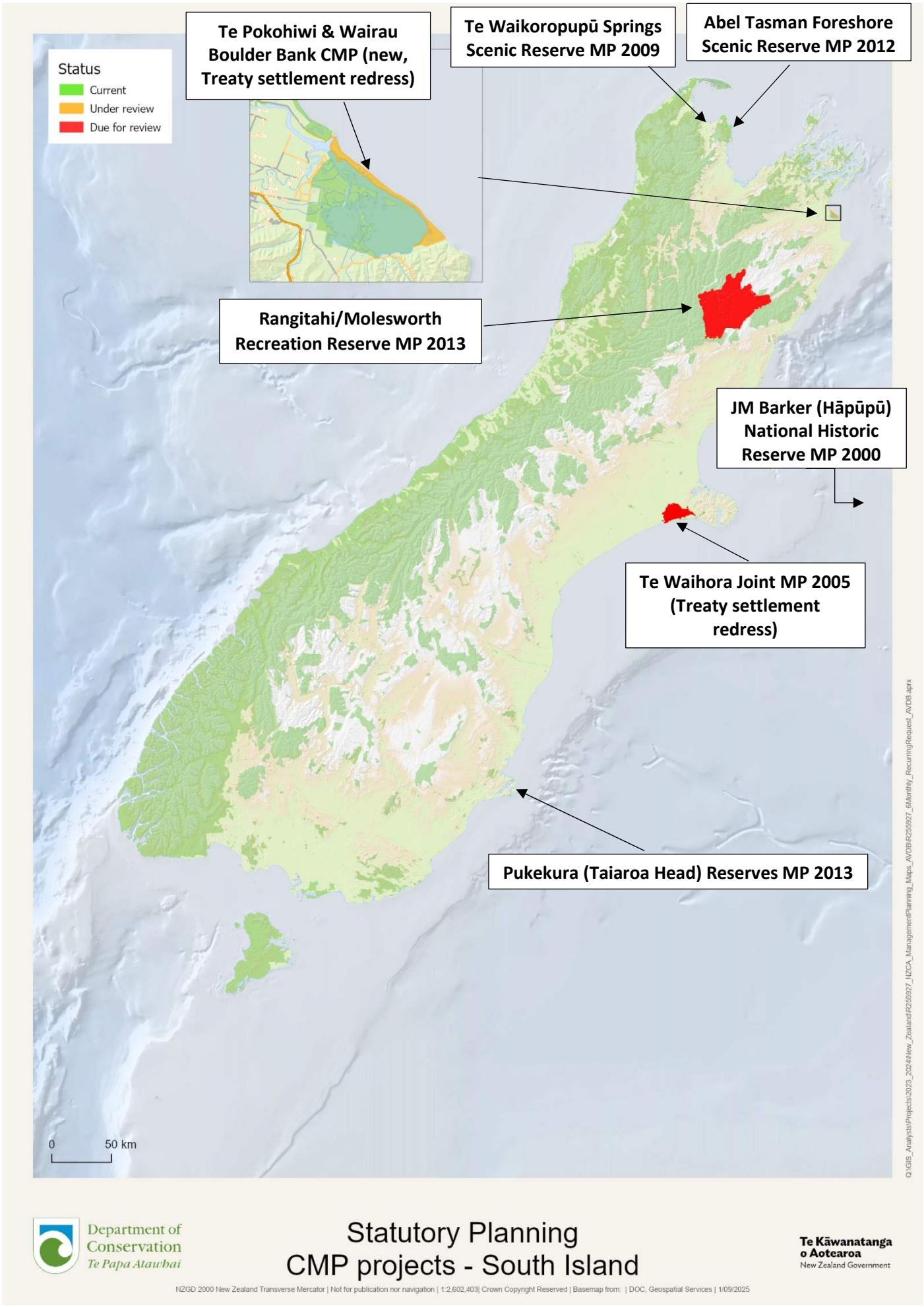
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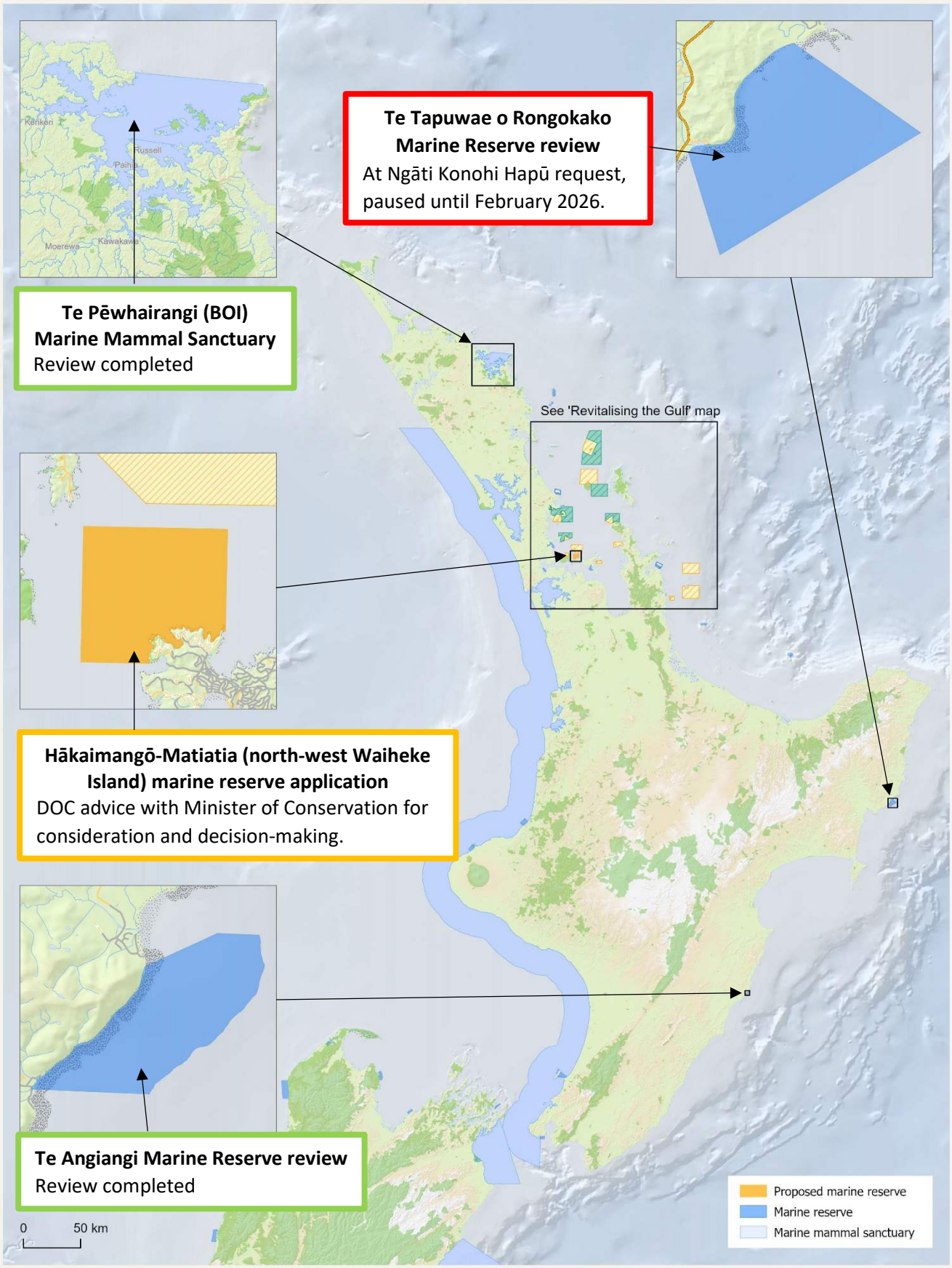
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Status
Current
Under review
Due for review
Te Pokohiwi & Wairau Boulder Bank CMP (new, Treaty settlement redress)
Te Waikoropupū Springs Scenic Reserve MP 2009
Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve MP 2012
Rangitahi/Molesworth Recreation Reserve MP 2013
JM Barker (Hāpūpū) National Historic Reserve MP 2000
Te Waihora Joint MP 2005 (Treaty settlement redress)
Pukekura (Taiaroa Head) Reserves MP 2013
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Te Papa Atawbai

Marine Protection Projects North Island

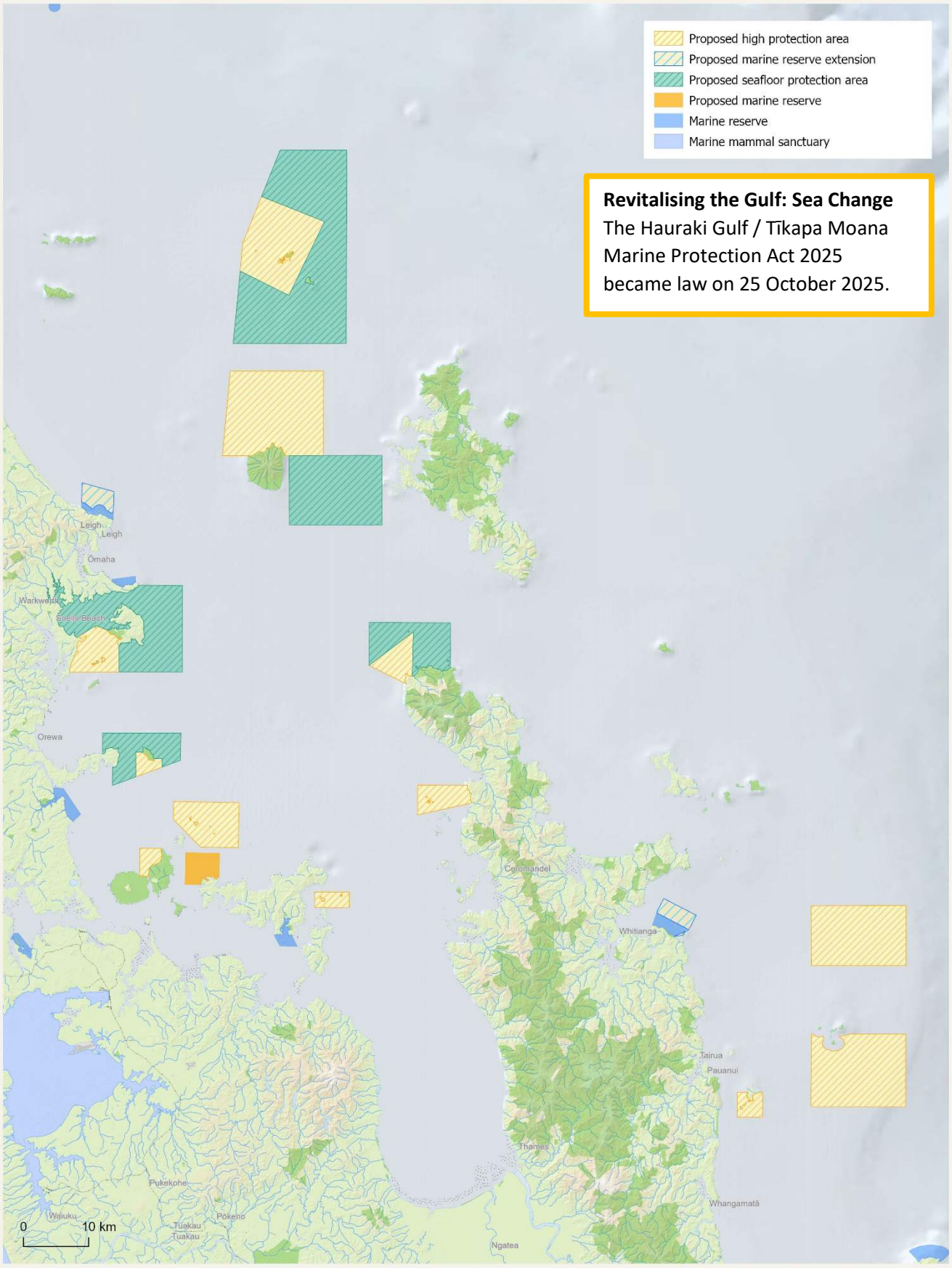
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Complete

Underway

Pending



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Marine Protection Projects
Revitalising the Gulf - North Island

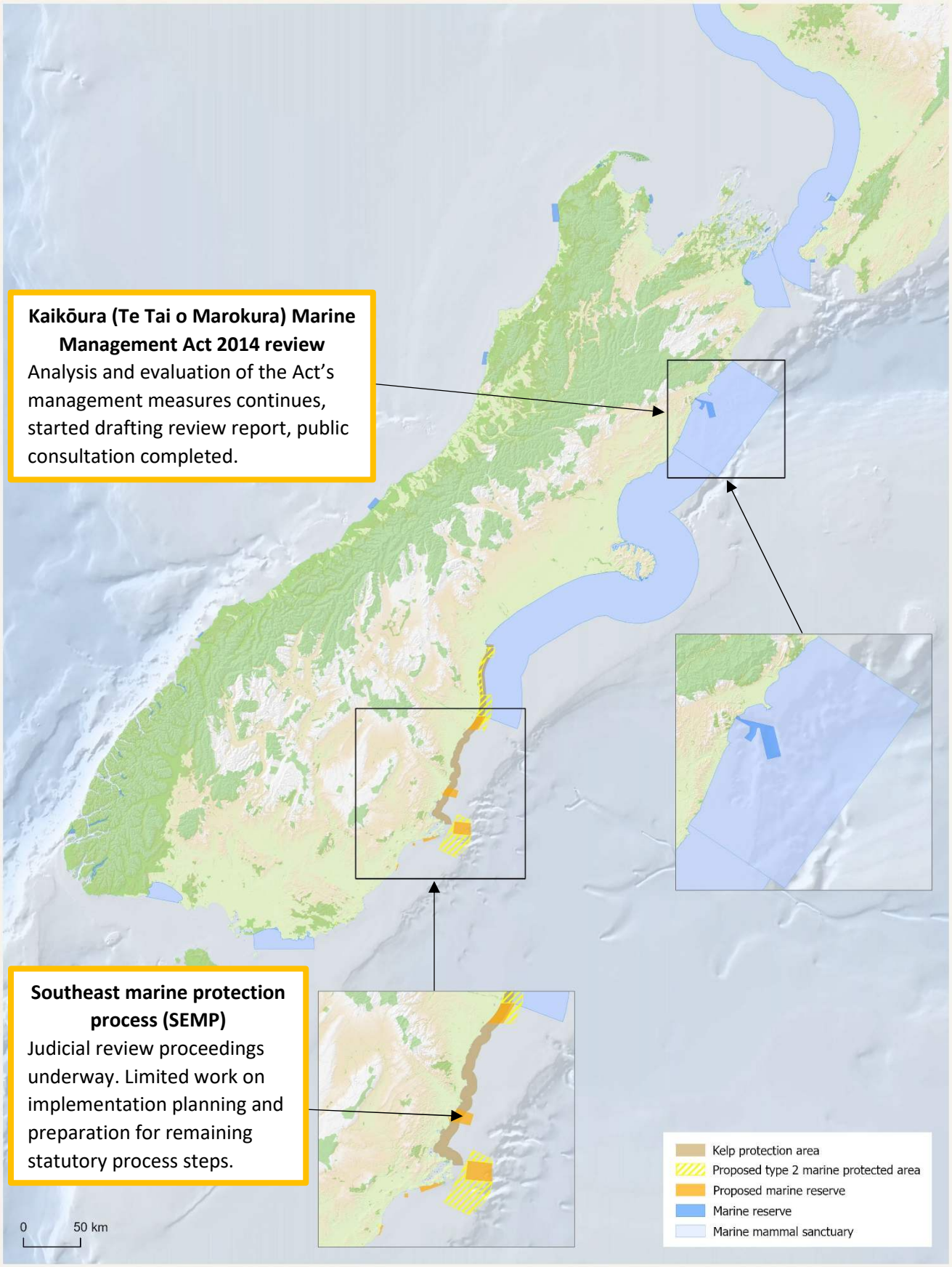
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Underway

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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Marine Protection Projects South Island

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Underway

Pending

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.8

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **Developing DOC's Treaty capability and capacity**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority D: Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty settlement conservation management NZCA Strategic Priority K: Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management.
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Identify** next steps for items presented
Context	This agenda item will allow members to engage with Sheridan Smith (Acting DD-G Treaty Relationships). As presented by Penny at our hui in October, Sheridan comes with a wealth of experience but is new to DOC. The objective of today's meeting is whakawhanautanga and a discussion of how we can support Sheridan and her important mahi as well as what would help us, as the Authority, to fufil our statutory functions and strategic obligations. Sheridan attended the recent Treaty Partnerships Committee meeting, the notes from which were circulated in the Monday email of 17 November.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.9

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **Stakeholder Relationships – Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority D: Treaty of Waitangi and post-Treaty settlement conservation management NZCA Strategic Priority G: Visitor management on public conservation lands and waters
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Engage** in discussion
Context	**Structure:** Liana Pouto, Chair, and Sean Zietjes, appointed Planner for Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi will present to the Authority on items included in this paper. There will be an opportunity to korero following the presentation.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.10

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 3 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **ANZBS Implementation Plan and Report to CBD**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority E: Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today s economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation.
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	June 2025 – agenda item 203.11
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Provide** feedback on the contents of this paper
Context	**Biodiversity Strategy implementation plan** We have drafted the next implementation plan for Te Mana o te Taiao following public consultation earlier this year. The plan includes 11 critical actions, and a range of ongoing programmes of work across central and regional government that will contribute to delivering New Zealand's national biodiversity targets. We will finalise the plan following feedback from the Minister of Conservation and expect the plan to be published in early 2026. It will then be submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as part of New Zealand's response to the Global Biodiversity Framework. The plan focuses on system level actions and enablers such as ensuring we target our efforts where they will make the most difference and increasing overall funding through new methods.

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	7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity New Zealand's next report to the CBD is due in February 2026, which covers the period 2020-2025. The report includes indicators that each country must complete, this includes New Zealand's contribution to the 30x30 global target. It also includes a narrative report for each of New Zealand's 13 national targets. The report will show the progress being made against the 13 national targets, noting some areas for improvement to be addressed through the next implementation plan. The report highlights achievements including Jobs for Nature, passing the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Act, and developments with the voluntary nature credits market.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.13

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **MOC/DOC expenditure advice 2026-27**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (E): Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation.
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Agree** to a set of priorities for expenditure of money in 2026-27 b) **Agree** to advise the Minister and Director-General of these priorities to be considered in the Department's budget preparations for the financial year 2026-27
Context	One of the functions of the Authority is to advise the Minister and Director-General annually on priorities for the expenditure of money (section s6B(1)(h) of the Conservation Act 1987 refers). At this meeting, Authority members should agree to priorities for expenditure of money for the Department's 2026-27 financial year, so that these can be considered by the Minister and Director-General of Conservation in the Department's budget planning cycle. **Context: Priorities for expenditure of money 2025-26:** At the December 2024 meeting, the Authority agreed to write to the Department advising them of their recommended priorities, as follows: marine reserves; predator, ungulate and weed control; section 4 obligations; and the general policy reviews. Subsequently, in light of the new Government's request for public service departments and agencies to seek up to 6% savings from their budgets, the decision was made to work with the Minister and Department to develop priorities that reflected the revised budget settings.

DOC-10529225 Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer
18 November 2025

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	Context: Priorities for expenditure of money 2026-27: The Minister's priorities for the current year include: • Progressing the Conservation Law Reform • Resolving Wildlife Act permitting issues, and reducing the Conservation Act concessions backlog • Iwi relationships • DOC's commercial strategy The Authority should take these into account, in addition to it being an election year, when providing their advice.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.12

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NZCA)
Meeting on 3 and 4 December 2025

Status Report as of 18 November 2025

Risk Register

RESPONSIBILITY	TOPIC	REQUIRED ACTION	PROGRESS
February 2021			
1. NZCA staff	World Heritage	NZCA to write to MOC regarding the lack of action by the Department in progressing World Heritage nominations, since the creation of the Tentative List in 2006	DOC initiated a review of New Zealand's World Heritage tentative list on 19 May 2025. NZCA invited to be on both the Working Group and Steering Group.
2. NZCA Members and Staff	Overdue planning documents	NZCA to seek legal advice on the risk that may derive from the outdated suite of planning documents (especially CMSs and NPMPs)	NZCA Servicing staff to follow up with Wendy Nelson

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ACTIONS FROM RESOLUTION

N/S Not started	Action overdue	Underway or ongoing	Action completed

RESPONSIBILITY	TOPIC	REQUIRED ACTION	PROGRESS	STATUS
June 2025				
1. NZCA	Te Hiku CMS	If allowed by Teams (see below) approve the Te Hiku CMS in an out of cycle Teams meeting	Minister is still waiting on response from three of the Te Hiku Iwi	

OTHER ACTIONS (NOT FROM RESOLUTIONS)

N/S Not started	Action overdue	Underway or ongoing	Action completed

RESPONSIBILITY	TOPIC (AGENDA #)	REQUIRED ACTION	PROGRESS	STATUS
October 2025				
1. NZCA/ NZCA Servicing Staff	Te Aupōuri grievances with DOC (205.4)	Draft a letter to DG regarding grievances aired by Te Aupōuri re DOC actions	Letter sent to DG 20 October	
2. NZCA Servicing Staff	Fast-track process document (205.4)	Update Fast-track discussion document and spreadsheet	Circulated with Moday Missive on 28 October	
3. NZCA/ NZCA Servicing Staff	Fast-track resourcing (205.4)	Draft letter to DG regarding resourcing for reviewing Fast-track applications for both NZCA members and NZCA Servicing staff	Letter sent to DG 17 October	
4. NZCA Servicing Staff	NZCA Priorities for 2025/26 (205.4)	Update NZCA 2025/26 Priorities and upload to NZCA Teams site	Updated – Filed in NZCA Teams site	

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5. NZCA EO	Te Hiku CMS approval (205.5)	Clarify that the Authority can make decisions and approvals via a Teams meeting.		
6. NZCA Chair	Te Hiku CMS (205.5)	NZCA Chair to contact Te Hiku CB Chair to advise that we are waiting on feedback from the four Iwi in Te Hiku.	Completed – directly following last meeting	
7. NZCA/ NZCA Servicing Staff	Milford Opportunities Project – Governance Group (205.9)	Draft a letter to the Minister and cc in DDG regarding NZCA representation on the MOP Governance Group.	Letter sent to MOC 17 October	
8. NZCA Servicing Staff	Conservation Board Chairs Conference – Chairs Feedback (205.11)	Draft a letter to the DG with the feedback and questions raised from the Conservation Board Chairs Conference in October 2025	Letter sent to DG 17 October	
9. NZCA Servicing Staff	Conservation board liaison roles (205.11)	Circulate the factsheet to members and CB chairs, setting out the liaison role	Circulated with the Chair's letter on 22 October	
August 2025				
10. Mick Abbott/ NZCA Servicing Staff	NZCA Budget (204.5)	Create a 'job sheet' for use in future work, look at time allocated and who etc. particularly for FT work	Mick has prepared a draft for circulation	
11. NZCA Executive Officer	NZCA Budget	Look into the use of a Board tool e.g. *Diligent* to reduce printing costs.	Follow up from previous investigation of a board tool which was not cost effective at the time.	
12. Philip Duffey, DOC	Statutory Planning (204.6)	Advise NZCA of timeline for Te Hiku CMS from approval to operational	Phil will provide the details for forwarding to the members.	
13. DOC Policy staff	NCPS development (204.7)	The Policy and Regulatory Systems team will share with the NZCA the proactive release of papers by the Department on the Conservation Act Land Management amendment.		

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14. Siobhan Quayle/ NZCA members	Fast Track process (204.11)	Siobhan Quayle will further consider ways the Department can help reduce the workload for the NZCA for Fast-Track applications.	The Department will make available information such as S51 reports and any other reports it can share to help the NZCA assess applications.	
15. Izzy Fenwick/ NZCA Servicing Staff	NZCA Budget (204.12)	Izzy will develop a priorities triage framework that NZCA could use when considering upcoming work including Fast-Track applications.	A draft paper was discussed at the October meeting and subsequently – to be adopted at the December meeting.	
16. Mick Abbott /NZCA Servicing Staff	NZCA December meeting (204.12)	Invite FMC to speak at December meeting	Mick has spoken to Megan Dimozantos, invitation confirmed.	
June 2025				
17. NZCA Executive Officer	Abel Tasman National Park additions (203.5)	Talk to Martin Rodd Regional Director about whether there is a need for urgency	Defer until after the Court of Appeal hearing in 2026 – EO to followmup with Peter Galvin	N/S
18. Shad Rolleston	Abel Tasman National Park additions (203.5)	Close the loop by going back to the board and mana whenua who were at the meeting to discuss next steps.	Shad Rolleston provided a draft letter on 13 June	
19. NZCA Executive Officer	Predator Free 2025 Strategy Review (203.15)	Arrange for Ben Reddiex to provide updates to the Authority.	Confirmed for December meeting	
20. NZCA Servicing Staff	Pūkaha (Mount Bruce) (203.16)	EO to get an update on Pūkaha / National Wildlife Centre (Mount Bruce) before next meeting.	EO contacted Rachael Mora, SM LNI, on 6 Oct and on 14 Nov. They will provide an update for sending with a Monday Missive – delayed	
February 2025				

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21. Wendy Nelson and NZCA Executive officer	Science system	Wendy Nelson to draft a letter to the Minister of Science, Innovation, and Technology (Hon Shane Reti), regarding the restructure of the science system.	Draft received 19 March, circulated to members for comment in Monday Missive 24 March. 12 June, letter needs to be reworked, EO to work with Wendy Nelson for this	
22. NZCA members	Short format discussion documents	Mick Abbott, Aroha Mead, Shad Rolleston and Wendy Nelson to work on the short format discussion documents.	Decision made at Oct 2025 meeting to hold for now and relook at this in 12 months	
23. Executive Officer	Follow-up for the Minister	EO to send the Minister the two reports the Authority wrote on the Management Planning system, and the work that conservation boards did in 2015 on identifying their five priority pieces of stewardship land for re-assessment.		
24. NZCA staff	FTAA applications	NZCA servicing staff to ask that DOC inform the Authority when an application is lodged that requires the Authority's input. Ask DOC for the above.	EO receives the weekly spreadsheet showing the status of FTA applications	
25. NZCA members	Options Development Group	Authority to form a list of ODG actions that could be undertaken by the Department and send to the Minister and to the D-G.	Drafts underway	
26. NZCA members	ODG recommendations	Members to create a document/template, with wording relating to this document, for members to draw on for NZCA submissions and analysis.	Drafts underway	
27. Executive Officer	Taranaki Maunga Treaty settlement	EO to ask Andrew McLellan of the Treaty team to give a presentation to the Authority on the Taranaki Maunga CSA, similar to the one he presented to the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board.		

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August 2024				
28. NZCA Staff	Mining on PCL	Servicing staff to ask for further information from the Department on the 80 mining permissions currently in operation on PCL. When were the permits issued and for how long?	EO to follow-up with Siobhan Quayle.	
29. NZCA Staff	Advice to Minister	Members to draft letter of advice to the Minister on the issues discussed, stressing the need for TMoTT to be a 'whole of Government' requirement.		
30. Sally Gepp	Alignment of NPSs	Sally Gepp will draft the letter to the Ministers about aligning national policy statements.	June 2025: Does NZCA want to comment on NPS that are being reviewed? The Authority should make a submission.	
June 2024				
31. Executive Officer	Wapiti in Fiordland National Park	EO to follow up on Authority's legal requirements over the Wapiti issue (see #27 below)		
32. Executive Officer	Proposed additions to Abel Tasman National Park	EO to share with the Authority the work done for the addition of Paparoa National Park to use as reference for this process.		
April 2024				
33. NZCA Members and Staff	Article on Genetic Modification	Authority to provide advice to MOC about new technologies (synthetic biology) as tools to support conservation mahi and endorse the work of the IUCN. Also include the Ministers for Science and Environment.		

34. NZCA Members and Staff	Loder Cup	Authority to open a dialog with other nominating agencies on leading a review of the Loder Cup, to evaluate the long-term representation of women and Māori and update the wording around the award, after the 2024 Cup has been awarded.	This will be initiated after the 2024 Loder Cup recipient has been confirmed, so the two processes don't overlap.	
February 2024				
35. NZCA Staff	Te Urewera huts demolition	Servicing staff to provide ongoing updates on developments and timelines. SLT to inform NZCA of decisions taken on the matter.	Was advised this is underway at the April 2025 meeting. Follow up for December meeting	
36. NZCA Members and Staff	Wapiti in Fiordland National Park	Sally Gepp to provide a summary of considerations and legal questions raised during the meeting to send to Steph Rowe relating to the Wapiti in Fiordland National Park issue.	Summary of questions provided by Sally on 27 February 2024. Awaiting Steph's response.	
August 2023				
37. NZCA staff	Tongariro National Park Management Plan	NZCA to provide Authority members with background context to their 2017 approval of the cycle trail from Turoa to Ohakune.	Report drafted on 25 January 2024.	
April 2023				
38. NZCA staff	Disaster response and emergency fund	NZCA to receive information on the Department's strategy for disaster response and use of emergency funds.	Update received on 31 July from Dan Heinrich. A final report with recommendations from the Recovery Taskforce will be ready in mid-September.	

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COMMITTEE ACTIONS

N/S Not started	Action overdue	Underway or ongoing	Action completed

RESPONSIBILITY	DATE	REQUIRED ACTION	PROGRESS	STATUS
Marine Committee				
A.				
Treaty Partnerships Committee				
B. NZCA Staff	July 2024	To have a discussion on the ODG at the Conservation Board Chairs Conference 2025		
C. NZCA Staff	July 2024	Servicing staff to investigate the best channel for this to ask for an update on the progress of the MHF portfolio (noting this could potentially be to ask MOC directly at the August Authority meeting).		
D. NZCA Staff	July 2024	Servicing staff to request an update from Penny Nelson on how the ODG recommendations have been implemented by the Department since they were published.		
E. NZCA members	June 2024	Treaty Partnership Committee to frame up a discussion on the ODG recommendations, and share it with Tame's team.		
F. Huia Forbes	March 2024	Huia's team to give a presentation on the Treaty Settlements outcomes on biodiversity in the past 5-10 years at the June NZCA meeting.		

DOC-10468478

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.13

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **Fast Track Approvals**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (L): NZCA's performance
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	Draft document distributed for discussion Refer to Minutes from the 9 October NZCA meeting: Agenda Item 4
Prior Discussion	Discussed at August and October NZCA meetings
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Approve** the proposed process document
Context	This agenda item allows members and the NZCA servicing staff to have a discussion around the process for assessing Fast Track Approvals Act applications, especially the consideration of ecological impacts. **Agree** to the attached NZCA process to assess and triage Fast-track applications to determine if NZCA should make a submission

1

NZCA Fast-track Triage[1] Process Document

3 November 2025
Prepared by the NZCA Servicing Team, DOC

NZCA Mission

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 following is the agreed process for triaging Fast-track applications where the NZCA has been invited to comment by a Panel.

The Department has its own process for tracking substantive applications. Not all will progress to an application, but more than half will possibly be forwarded to the NZCA for comment.

The NZCA identified a need for more transparency on what is coming through the system, and the need to develop a triage system to ensure NZCA is contributing effectively and considerately to applications.

This document and the accompanying triage spreadsheet outline an agreed process to ensure that NZCA time is spent effectively, is not dispersed, and focused on the areas where the NZCA has the most contribution to make. It will also include consideration of budgetary factors.

Triaging Fast-track applications

When the NZCA is invited by the Environment Protection Agency to submit on a Fast-track application, the following is a suggested triaging framework, to determine if the NZCA should proceed with a submission:

1. Is it a National or Significant issue?
2. How does the application align with the NZCA priorities, in particular **giving effect to Section 4 of the Conservation Act**?
3. Other considerations include:
    a. What is the significance of the threat to conservation lands, te taiao, and our waters—drawing primarily on departmental assessments?
    b. To what extent does NZCA's position align with that of the Department, which is likely given we work under the same legislation?

[1] In environmental law, "triage" refers to a strategic decision-making approach for allocating scarce resources to the most pressing conservation and restoration needs, similar to how it's used in emergency medicine. It is a controversial but increasingly necessary strategy to prioritise actions like species protection, habitat restoration, and climate change adaptation, especially when faced with limited budgets and increasing environmental crises.

1

c. Are there any additional positions being held in the community that the NZCA sees merit in also considering? *(Noting community groups are looking to NZCA to consider positions that may not be addressed by applicants or agencies, as community groups do not have an opportunity under the legislation to comment on applications).*

4. Has a Conservation Board submitted (*or is proposing to submit*)?

Allocation of time

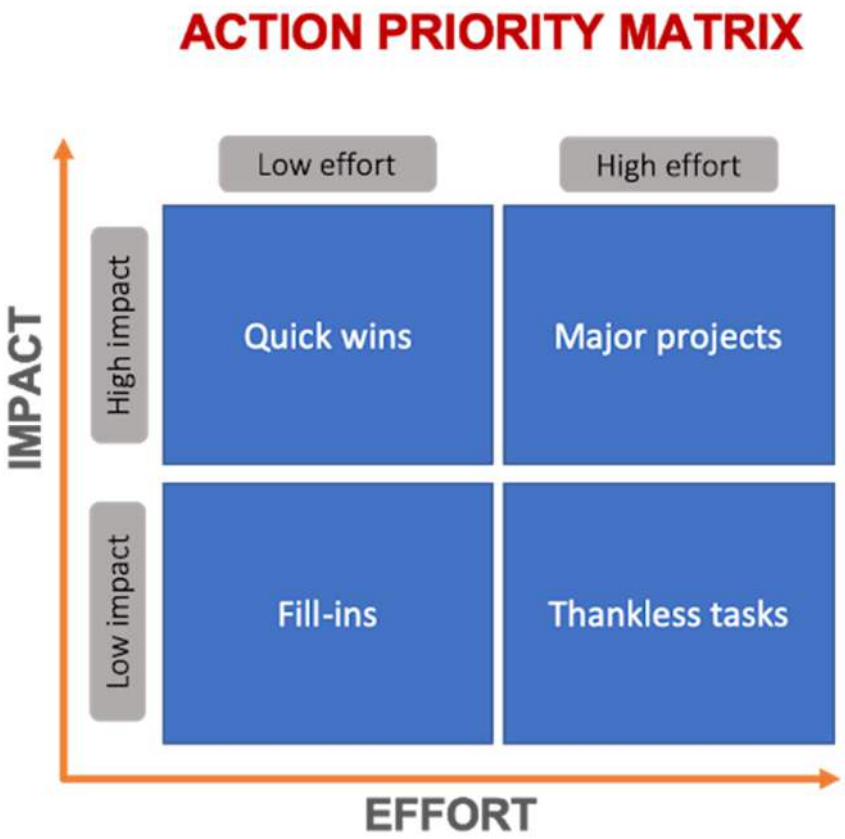
- The NZCA Servicing Team will maintain a spreadsheet for triaging incoming referrals. They will do an initial triage of potential applications that may be relevant to NZCA (points 1 and 2 above). For example, processes that need RMA consents will not come to NZCA for comment [noting that they don't go to DOC either].
- Each application that is considered relevant to the NZCA is triaged by a NZCA member (from point 3 above), with knowledge of the issues/places related to the application, using the framework outlined below.
- Engagement should be undertaken, by the NZCA member, with the relevant Conservation Board to understand their perspective, and obtain any historical and contextual knowledge relevant to the application.
- The allocated member will prepare a short one-page summary (with any links etc) with a recommendation whether to make a submission or not.
- The NZCA has agreed a time frame of up to one day is allocated for this phase.
- If the NZCA decides to proceed with a submission, **time allocations must be outlined and agreed to prior to any work being undertaken** to ensure the NZCA remains within its budget constraints.
- A record can be kept via the proposed spreadsheet on decisions made by NZCA.

1

Framework for decision making

The matrix below should be used when triaging and prioritising work projects.

Applications the NZCA submits on should ideally fall into the top two boxes. It was agreed that the NZCA should be focusing on applications where they can make a valid contribution, and in addition to any submission made by the Department.



1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.14

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Ben Reddiex, Director National Programmes

Subject: **Wild Animal Management**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	Strategic priority (K) - Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	Does the Authority need to meet about this item, to form an opinion, before the presenters arrive? No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of these papers b) **Provide** feedback on the contents of these papers
Context	This session covers a series of issues managed by the National Programme Directorate at DOC. This will include: • **14.1 Himalayan tahr:** The report on the Department of Conservation's *Tahr Programme 2024-2025* provides detailed information on implementation of the Himalayan Thar Control Plan 1993 in the year 2024/2025. A separate cover page and the report follow. • **14.2 Predator Free Strategy review**: DOC is finalising the Predator Free 2050 Strategy for 2025–2030 following public consultation (closed 30 June 2025). The updated strategy will set 2030 goals, confirm target species, and strengthen community-led predator control. Final strategy release is expected late 2025, followed by an updated implementation plan. DOC will update the NZCA on the Strategy review to date and discuss next steps.

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	• **14.3 HOSI update:** On behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, the Department of Conservation is leading the statutory process for developing the proposals for the Sika and Wapiti Herds of Special Interest. The Minister released the draft Herd Management Plans on 10 Nov for public consultation. DOC will provide an update on the process so far and NZCA's role in next steps. The two draft Herd Management Plans are included for discussion.

1

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.14.1

REPORT

Meeting Date: 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Ben Reddiex, Director National Programmes

Subject: Himalayan Tahr Programme

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	Strategic priority (K) - Effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's conservation management
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	December 2024 Agenda Item 200.5 (2023-24 report) October 2023 Agenda Item 193.8 (2022-23 report) October 2022 Agenda Item 187.8 (2021-22 report) October 2021 Agenda Item 181.13 (2020-21 report) October 2020 Agenda Item 175.12 (2019-20 report) December 2019 Agenda Item 170.4 (2018-19 report)
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper
Context	The *Report on the Department of Conservation's Tahr Programme 2024-2025* provides detailed information on implementation of the Himalayan Thar Control Plan 1993 in the 2024/2025 year. This provides key context for consideration and discussion of the programme's direction for 2025/2026 and future years.

Report on the Department of Conservation's Tahr Programme 2024/2025

Submitted to the New Zealand Conservation Authority in November 2025



One of many kea encountered during ground-based tahr control operations in the Landsborough Valley. Photo: DOC

Summary

2024/25 was the largest official control effort delivered by the Department of Conservation (DOC) since the current reporting approach started in 2020, eclipsing the record set in 2023/24. Official control prioritised preventing tahr expansion from the feral range, and reducing densities in national parks and wilderness areas. Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) 'environmental offsets' were directed into areas of higher tahr densities. This complementary application of control tools meant that despite much of DOC's work being outside the feral range, where operations typically control few tahr, this year resulted in the second largest DOC-led control total on record. In addition to DOC official control and AATH offsets, recreational hunters made substantial contributions to tahr control.

'Catch per unit effort' control data, paired with DOC and stakeholder observations, over a number of years suggest that in national parks and the Northern Exclusion Zone, tahr densities have reduced substantially. This is congruent with the tahr population survey undertaken in 2023, which suggests that it's likely that the overall tahr population reduced slightly between 2019 and 2023. In addition to overall numbers reducing, the reproductive capacity of the remaining herd has likely reduced, as most control inside the feral range (outside the national parks), targets female and juvenile animals.

Recent analysis of tussock height measurements found that where monitored tussock grasslands have been impacted by tahr, recovery was not evident at the last measurement despite substantial tahr control in preceding years. Analysis of a broader range of vegetation data collected at those sites is underway to understand whether there are other changes, or signs of recovery, occurring in these alpine tussock grasslands.

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Context

The management of Himalayan tahr (tahr) on Public Conservation Land (PCL) is guided by the Himalayan Thar Management Policy (the Policy) 1991 and Himalayan Thar Control Plan (HTCP) 1993. The Policy outlines an approach to manage and maintain hunting and other control pressure at a level to protect natural values from tahr impacts. It sets a maximum population of 10,000 tahr across lands of all tenure throughout their defined feral range. The HTCP provides an operational vehicle for the Policy's objectives and limits; the primary construct for this is defining seven Management Units (MU), each with tahr population density limits, based on factors including location, vegetation, and recreational use. It also outlines expectations for monitoring tahr populations and vegetation condition to inform future tahr management, as well as the keeping of tahr for commercial and other purposes.

The HTCP 1993 is implemented through annual operational plans that identify management actions for each MU. As DOC's tahr management work is led as a national programme, one annual operational plan is prepared for the entirety of the programme, and a single annual report provided to the New Zealand Conservation Authority. Reports follow a standard format and present data in a consistent way, to help track and compare key information through time.

2024/2025 Operational Delivery

Delivery of the Tahr Control Operational Plan (TCOP) 2024/25

The TCOP 2024/25 was developed by the tahr programme in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and through engagement with members of the Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group (TPILG) and DOC's Regional Operations Group. Table 1 below outlines the number of tahr controlled over the full 2024/25 year within the management units and across each control type. This excludes most recreational hunting activity, for which robust data are not available; while unquantified, this contribution is considered to be substantial.

Table 1 - Number of tahr controlled (on PCL) within Management Units from known sources

Year 1 July – 30 June	DOC	AATH trophies	AATH 'environmental offsets'	Ballot hunters	Tahr Carcass Recovery	Organised recreational hunters	Other	Total
2018/19	168	264	0	619	400	63	244[1]	1758
2019/20	7238[1]	8	2936[2]	726	421	0	60[3]	11389
2020/21	7481[1]	17	0	889	0	0	60[3]	8447
2021/22	5750[1]	43	0	843	0	182	144[3]	6962
2022/23	5256[1]	342	415[4]	913	0	412	158[3]	7496
2023/24	3629[1]	309	2757[4]	850	0	330	163[3]	7847
2024/25	4641[1]	285	2704[4]	685	0	437	43[3]	8599

[1] Includes contracted control; [2] Includes control not undertaken in 2018/19; [3] Zero Invasive Predators programme; [4] includes offsets conducted inside the feral range but outside management units, but reported here for consistency to show the total number of AATH offsets undertaken (in previous years all were within the MUs).

Under the 2024/25 TCOP, the equivalent of 352 hours of official aerial tahr control were delivered. Control was delivered through a combination of DOC staff and contracted aerial control and DOC staff and contracted ground-based control. The undertaking of Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) offset control was also directed (led) by the Department; under the conditions of their permits, AATH operators are required to control 5 female/juvenile tahr for each wild animal trophy they take on public conservation land. The resulting number of tahr removed in each Management Unit, inside the feral range but outside the management units, and outside the feral range are detailed in the 2024/25 row of Table 2 below. Maps outlining the locations of DOC's official control operations inside the feral range in 2024/25 are available on DOC's "Himalayan tahr sightings and control maps"[1] page.

[1] http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/

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Table 2 - Tahr removed by Department-led Control

Year 1 July – 30 June	MU 1	MU 2	MU 3	MU 4	MU 5	MU 6	MU 7	Inside Feral Range, Outside Management Units	Outside Feral Range	Total
2018/19	168	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	387	555
2019/20	2113	246	1603	3675	1278	1332	58	NA	517	10822
2020/21	555	1038	641	3299	241	1697	10	NA	265	7746
2021/22	0	873	187	3007	111	1572	0	196	449	6395
2022/23	406	832	334	2706	116	1277	0	322	390	6383
2023/24	285	866	617	3330	459	568	34	395[1]	527	7081
2024/25	256	873	584	1931	953	2147	153	703[1]	295	7895

List of Management Units: MU 1 Rakaia / Rangitata; MU 2 South Whitcombe / Whataroa; MU 3 Gammack / Two Thumb; MU 4 Westland Tai Poutini NP/ Aoraki Mt Cook NP; MU 5 Ben Ohau; MU 6 Landsborough; MU 7 Hunter / Wills. Outside Feral Range is inclusive of tahr removed in the Northern and Southern Exclusion Zones.
Note: The tahr reported across management units in Table 2 are control totals from DOC-led control made up of a mixture of contracted control, AATH environmental offsets and DOC-delivered control. Not recorded on this table are tahr removed by AATH trophy concessions, tahr carcass recovery, Zero Invasive Predators programmes, or recreational hunting (see Table 1).
[1]Includes Tahr controlled as AATH offsets did not have sufficient data to assign their location, so they are captured within the 'inside feral range' total.

Comparison with prior years

The operational effort delivered in 2024/25 (352 hours) was greater than planned under the TCOP (290 hours); this was largely due to the redeployment of funds budgeted for monitoring initiatives that were delayed. The 352 hours was the largest control effort delivered since the current recording approach (using hours of aerial effort) commenced (See Table 3).

Table 3 – DOC official control operational effort (2020 to 2025)

Year 1 July – 30 June	Operational Effort Inside the Feral Range (hours*)	Operational Effort Outside the Feral Range (hours*)	Overall Operational Effort (hours*)	Component delivered through ground-based control (hrs / %)
2020/21	239	71	310	0 / 0
2021/22	188	95	283	11 / 4
2022/23	173	139	312	15 / 5
2023/24	139	196	335	44 / 13
2024/25	183	169	352	125 / 36

* Since 2020, DOC's official control effort has been measured in hours of aerial control, or equivalent control delivered by other methods.

The total number of tahr removed by DOC-led control was the second highest recorded, behind 2019/20 when the current (nationally-led) tahr programme started (Tables 1 and 2). DOC's official control numbers were lower than most previous years; however, additional effort in directing a large number of AATH offsets and facilitating coordinated recreational hunting opportunities led to the overall increase in the control total from known sources.

The lower DOC official control numbers in 2024/25 and 2023/24 compared to earlier seasons can primarily be attributed to:

- Changes in operational focus between years, primarily an increase in the proportion of DOC's work that focuses on low tahr density areas outside the feral range; and
- A continued DOC official control focus in national parks and wilderness areas where evidence suggests densities are decreasing.

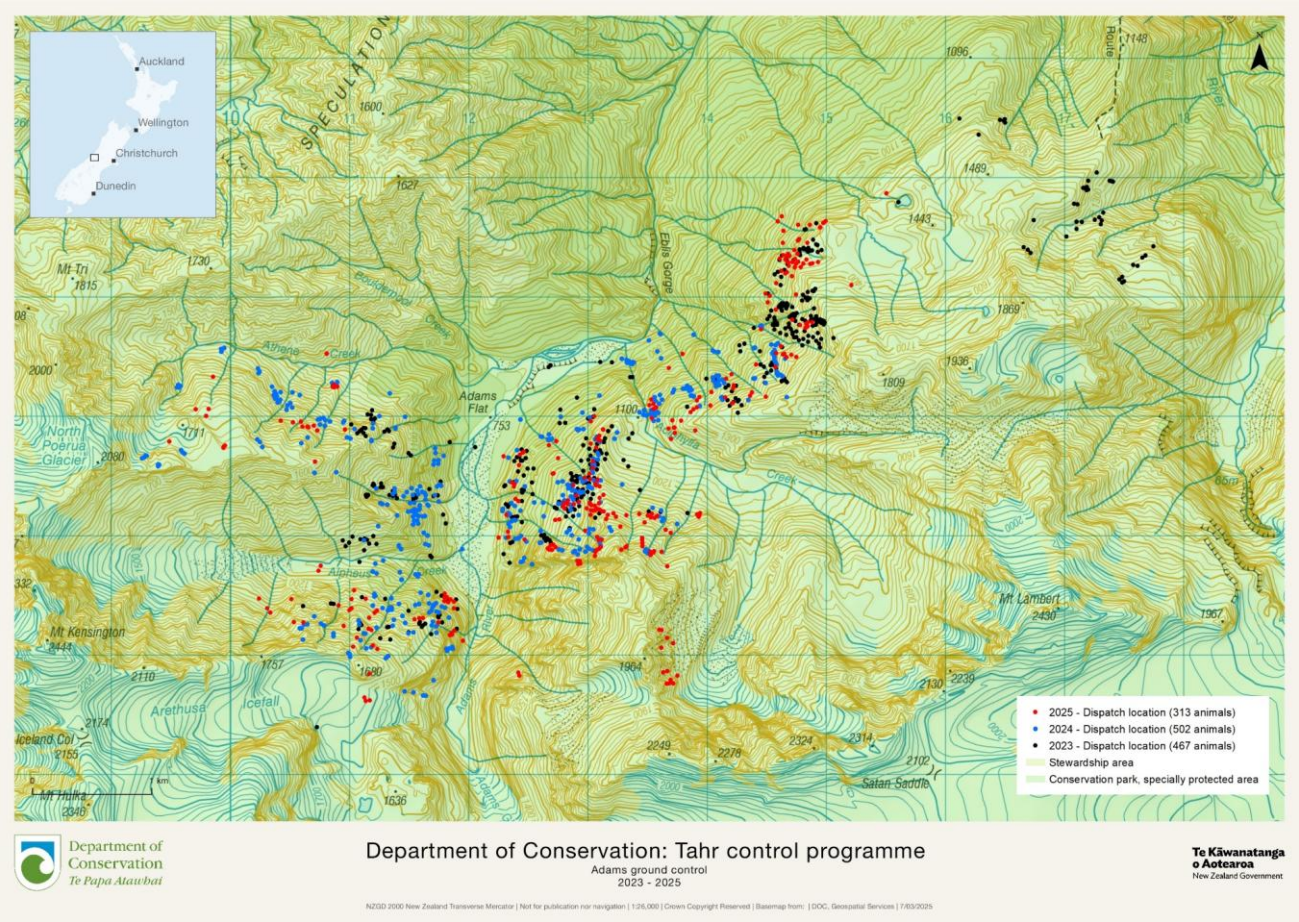
Implementation of ground-based control

In response to observations of tahr utilising forest and sub-alpine scrub habitats on the West Coast, which may reduce the effectiveness of traditional aerial control, DOC has increased ground-based control in recent years.

Following initial trials in 2021/22 and 2022/23 the proportion of control delivered through ground-based hunting has increased substantially, from 0% in 2020/21 to 36% in 2024/25 (Table 3).

Repeat operations in the Adams River, within the Adams Wilderness Area, have yielded useful information regarding the effectiveness of ground-based control in reducing tahr numbers within small geographical areas (catchment, or sub-catchment). The 2023 and 2024 operations encountered high densities of tahr and delivered control that was more cost efficient that recent aerial control operations in the area. However, in 2025, after 988 tahr were removed from the catchment by preceding operations, hunters encountered, and consequently controlled, fewer tahr (see Table 4). Hunting tactics were adapted to achieve control to low levels, compared with the initial population 'knock-down' of previous years. These results highlight the versatility of ground-based control in adapting to wild animal population changes and control requirements, and the ability to concentrate effort in small areas of the landscape.

Figure 1 – three years of control waypoints from the Adams River catchment, demonstrating the intensity of control effort within a small area that ground-based control can provide.



1

Table 4 – Ground-based control in the Adams River (2023 to 2025)

Year	Hunter Days	Tahr Controlled (female and juvenile)	Tahr per Hunter Day	Tahr Per Hour required for aerial control to deliver cost-equivalent control
2023	20	486	24	81
2024	36	502	14	41
2025	40	315	8	19

An unanticipated benefit of the 2025 Adams Flat ground-based operation was the discovery of a kiwi pukupuku/little spotted kiwi (*Apteryx owenii*) by one of the hunters.

In addition to the 315 tahr controlled in the Adams River through DOC's ground-based control, 1,232 were controlled in the Landsborough River valley and 403 in Makaawhio/Jacobs River valley.

In an operational environment where helicopter costs have substantially increased in recent years, and where tahr have shelter from helicopters (e.g. West Coast scrub), the implementation of ground-based control is an effective supplement to aerial hunting. In some areas it may be a more effective and efficient primary control method, with the potential to follow through to control to low levels; data from operations will continue to be evaluated to inform how future operational investment is best directed between methods.

Tahr control outside the feral range, and inside the feral range but outside management units

Control of tahr numbers outside the feral range defined by the HTCP is an important component of preventing range expansion and the establishment of new populations. Based on an external review of outside feral range operations in 2021, the programme increased control effort outside the feral range. A particular focus is reducing the risk of expansion to the north or south of the feral range along the Southern Alps, where mountainous terrain would suit tahr and a number of National Parks are located (Arthur's Pass, Mt Aspiring, Fiordland).

During 169 hours of aerial control effort, a total of 295 tahr were controlled outside the feral range during 2024/25. This contrasts with 527 tahr controlled outside the feral range in 2023/24 (196 hours), 390 in 2022/23 (139 hours). Broadly speaking, the increase in effort required to control tahr in these areas is considered a positive development; often increasing control effort required per animal is an indication of a lower population of animals. However, the variety and breadth of operations outside the feral range also mean there are substantial operational changes from year to year which may also impact the data in ways unrelated to tahr abundance.

The areas with the most consistent investment and control approaches through time are the Northern Exclusion Zone (NEZ) and Southern Exclusion Zone (SEZ). The NEZ is one of the areas where a decision was made in 2021/22 to substantially increase investment. The results in Table 3 suggest that with concerted effort in the NEZ, based on available data, tahr densities have likely reduced.

Table 5 - Summary of aerial control effort and number of tahr controlled in the Northern Exclusion Zone from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

Tahr Control Operational Plan	Hours of aerial control in the NEZ	Number of tahr controlled	Catch per unit effort (tahr per hour)
2020/21	6.3	49	7.8
2021/22	24.9	210	8.4
2022/23	39.4	143	3.6
2023/24	63.1	174	2.8
2024/25	55.0	61	1.1

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Appendix 1 provides a map with details on the number of tahr controlled in specific areas outside the feral range over this time period.

In 2021/22 the TCOP included the tahr programme's first allocation of aerial control to specifically target tahr inside the feral range but outside the management units. These operations were aimed at reducing the potential for movement of tahr to outside the feral range.

Subsequent TCOPs have continued this approach, focusing on the southern and north-western areas inside the feral range where there are considered to be elevated risks of tahr moving outside the feral range. On the West Coast, inside feral range control has also been used to provide operational flexibility for control operations working within Westland Tai Poutini National Park, to target tahr close to but outside the Management Unit, improving efficiency operating at a landscape scale. AATH offsets also contribute to control inside the feral range but outside the management units where there are pockets of higher tahr densities (primarily adjacent to Management Unit 6 (Landsborough)).

Appendix 2 provides a map with details on the number of tahr controlled during DOC official control operations in specific areas inside the feral range but outside the management units during 2024/25 operations.

Relationships and Engagement

Relationship with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

During 2024/25, DOC and Ngāi Tahu continued their commitment to developing the Treaty partnership in relation to tahr management.

Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group

The TPILG liaises with DOC, presenting the views of various stakeholders and entities with interests in tahr management. Membership includes representatives from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, statutory boards and authorities (including the New Zealand Conservation Authority), the recreational and commercial hunting sector, farming bodies, outdoor recreation groups and Forest & Bird.

A total of three TPILG meetings were held during 2024/25. The first was an update on progress under TCOP 2024/25, and summary of 2023/24, on the 27th of August 2024. The December 2024 (6th) and March 2025 (7th) TPILG meetings were centred around the development and review of the 2025/26 TCOP; that engagement also included two rounds of written submissions. At the December 2024 meeting, members were provided with contextual material to consider to inform written submissions to the Department prior to drafting of the TCOP; this included a presentation on, and discussion of, tussock grassland monitoring results. A timeline for TCOP development and feedback was also outlined; those submissions were due by 27 January 2024 (4 submissions were received). The draft plan was then circulated to the TPILG on 21 February to facilitate feedback on the draft at the March 2025 meeting. Members had until 4 April to provide additional written feedback on the draft after the meeting (2 submissions were received). Feedback from these meetings and written submissions helped to refine the 2025/26 plan, with the final TCOP 2025/26 being released on 10 June 2025.

Game Animal Council control mid-point meeting

Continuing the operating and consultation rhythm established in 2020, DOC met with representatives of the Game Animal Council on 14 August 2024 to discuss operational details of the first half of official tahr control effort for 2024/25. DOC considered the Council's advice in determining the operational detail of work for the remaining control effort.

Recreational Hunters

DOC encourages hunters to shoot tahr. In 2024/25 DOC continued to work with the recreational hunting sector to provide information on both control activity and observations of tahr. This included:
- continued posting maps of control effort and the locations of observed identifiable males to DOC's website[2], and
- tahr content updates within DOC's wild animal management newsletters 13 September 2024 and 8 April 2025.

The West Coast tahr ballots are a valuable recreational contribution to tahr control, focused in the Hooker/Landsborough and Adams wilderness areas. Since 2019, an average of almost 800 tahr per year have been controlled during the ballots (See table 1). In 2024/25 DOC, along with the New Zealand Tahr Foundation, supported the Game Animal Council's development of a tahr ballot education module within their 'Better Hunting' online education resource. The module highlights the ballot's role for conservation and how hunters can maximise it, as well as providing information on how to camp safely and responsibly in the wilderness areas, particularly regarding kea interactions. The module was rolled out to successful 2025 ballot holders as a trial, and following positive feedback has since been made generally available online.

[2] http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-control-operations/tahr-sightings-maps/

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Figure 2 – DOC staff undertaking an inspection of the Eblis Tops ballot landing site, in the Adams Wilderness Area.



In 2024/25 DOC again worked with the New Zealand Tahr Foundation to facilitate the Foundation's delivery of organised recreational hunts in MU6 (Landsborough) and, for the first time, in MU4a (Westland Tai Poutini National Park). The Foundation conducted repeat operations in the Jacobs/Makaawhio River and Mahitahi River valleys, as well as operating at new locations in the Clarke, Paringa, Otoko and Troyte River catchments. The operations removed 437 mainly mature females from those areas, focusing on forest and scrub habitat where aerial control is less effective than in the alpine environment. Since 2022 almost 1,400 tahr have been controlled through this initiative (see Table 1, 'Organised recreational hunters').

Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting

AATH is a high value tourism activity undertaken in New Zealand, using a helicopter to locate, hunt and retrieve a trophy animal for a hunter. Under AATH permits for PCL, operators are required to undertake environmental offsets; for each trophy they must control 5 female/juvenile wild animals. These offsets are administered through DOC's tahr programme.

AATH trophy numbers peaked in 2022/2023 (593 trophies) due to a back-log of demand after COVID-19 border closures. Since then, trophy numbers have gradually reduced. In 2023/24 309 tahr trophies were taken, from a total of 525 wild animal trophies; those trophies generated 2,625 environmental offsets and 2,704[3] offsets were subsequently undertaken in 2024/25.

The 2023/24 TCOP specifically included AATH offsets within DOC's control delivery for the first time, based on forecast trophy/offset numbers provided by the New Zealand Professional Hunting Guides Association after a survey of their members. This approach was beneficial in distributing control effort across the landscape, targeting AATH offsets to areas with higher tahr numbers, meaning DOC official control could focus on lower-output work where control to zero, or low, density is required. Based on that positive trial, AATH offsets continue to be integrated in TCOPs.

[3] includes a number of offsets 'carried over' from the previous year.

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Monitoring Updates

Continuing work in line with the 2020/21 research and monitoring strategy, the following lines of research and monitoring have been implemented:

Estate condition trend

Ongoing monitoring of estate condition in the tahr feral range occurs through the national monitoring system (Tier 1), along with additional longer-term monitoring of tussock grassland plots. Historic monitoring reports are available on DOC's 'tahr and conservation[4]' web page.

In the 2024/25 year, analysis of tussock-height data collected from variable-area tussock grassland plots at 8 long-term alpine monitoring sites was completed; the most recent measurements at these sites were completed between 2021 and 2023. The report was provided to the Authority in early 2025/26 after a peer review process; it documents a link between increased ungulate (primarily tahr) activity and decreasing tussock height. Tahr activity increased from 1990-2023 across most of the sites monitored, and tussock height decreases were similarly observed in most locations.

Given the coarse temporal scale of this monitoring (up to 10 years between remeasurements) and the slow response of mature tussocks to changes in their environment, these tussock height data may not reflect changes in vegetation condition in response to increased tahr control since 2019. Analysis of other data collected at those sites is underway and a report is anticipated in 2025/26, which will provide a more detailed picture of other vegetation changes at those plots. Re-measurement of tussock grassland sites is also due to commence in 2025/26; this will be a 5 year rotation since the last measurements, covering a period of sustained, substantial tahr control at many of the sites.

In 2021/22, drawing on a number of the themes identified in the research and monitoring strategy (outlined above), work began to develop and trial a 'rapid impact assessment method' for tahr browse, incorporating a broader suite of sites and species than the existing tussock plots. A substantial field pilot was run in 2023. The resulting data have been analysed by Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and it is anticipated a technical report will be available in 2025/26.

Figure 3 – Recording data during 'rapid impact assessment method' field trial.



[4] https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-and-conservation/

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Understanding tahr populations

As previously reported to the Authority, a series of tahr population estimates have been generated in recent years based on aerial surveys conducted by DOC. The relevant reports, and a plain language summary are available on DOC's 'Tahr and Conservation'[5] web page:

- Estimates of Himalayan Tahr (Hemitragus jemlahicus) Abundance in New Zealand: Results from Aerial Surveys[6] (2016-2019),
- Abundance of Himalayan tahr in the South Rakaia/Upper Rangitata and Gammack/Two thumb Management Units[7] (2021)
- Abundance of Himalayan Tahr on Public Conservation Land in New Zealand[8] (2023),
- Monitoring Himalayan Tahr populations in New Zealand[9].

Surveying tahr within the mountainous terrain they inhabit is resource intensive. The surveys follow a robust process and the estimates provided by the survey method are of similar precision to comparable wildlife estimates internationally; nonetheless the estimate ranges are broad, due to the inherent natural complexity and variability surveying wildlife populations. Consequently, it would be costly and of limited benefit to survey frequently; no additional surveys were undertaken in 2024/25.

Since the 2023 tahr population estimate (22,100 to 40,150 (a mean of 29,800) tahr on PCL within the management units), over 20,000 tahr are known to have been removed from PCL, plus many more by recreational hunters. It is considered likely that this level of control has continued to reduce the tahr population on PCL. This is considered a positive situation, particularly considering:

a) the substantial control effort that has gone into national parks and areas outside the Feral Range (focused on outcomes at place, rather than overall population reduction), and

b) that control within the feral range (outside the national parks) has focused on female and juvenile tahr, which should reduce the reproductive capacity of the remaining tahr herd.

DOC is considering options to further improve understanding tahr populations, including exploring the potential to incorporate demographic population modelling as a resource-efficient means of augmenting current information generated by periodic population surveys.

[5] https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/tahr/tahr-and-conservation/
[6] https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/parks-and-recreation/hunting/west-coast/himalayan-tahr-abundance-september-2019.pdf
[7] https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/parks-and-recreation/hunting/tahr/tahr-estimates-2021-south-rakaia-upper-rangitata-gammack-two-thumb.pdf
[8] https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/parks-and-recreation/hunting/tahr/tahr-abundance-public-conservation-land-2023-aerial-survey.pdf
[9] https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/parks-and-recreation/hunting/tahr/himalayan-tahr-population-monitoring-2024-factsheet.pdf

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Outlook and Plans for Next Year (2025/26)

TPILG discussions

In December 2025 engagement on the 2026/27 TCOP will commence and is expected to again span 4-5 months, including 2 meetings (December 2025 and March 2026) and two opportunities for written submissions.

Population estimates and vegetation monitoring

The analysis and reporting of two lines of vegetation monitoring data (additional data from variable area tussock plots, and the tahr browse impact method pilot) will be completed, and will provide important context regarding vegetation condition and tahr management. Remeasurement of variable area tussock plots will commence, five years since their previous measurement; the work will be completed over three summer field seasons.

AATH offsets and permitting

The AATH system is closely linked to tahr management, as tahr are the primary target for AATH and 'environmental offsets' generated by AATH are utilised for tahr control.

The 2024/25 AATH reporting season has recently concluded at the time of writing (the season spans February to August); subject to final confirmation of concessions returns, 285 bull tahr trophies were reported taken from PCL, out of a total of 453 wild animals. This equates to 2,265 offsets to be directed via the 2025/26 TCOP. At the time of writing, the bulk of those offsets are complete.

AATH operators were issued with new permits in late 2024/25, which cover the activity to the end of the next season (August 2026).

Recreational Hunters

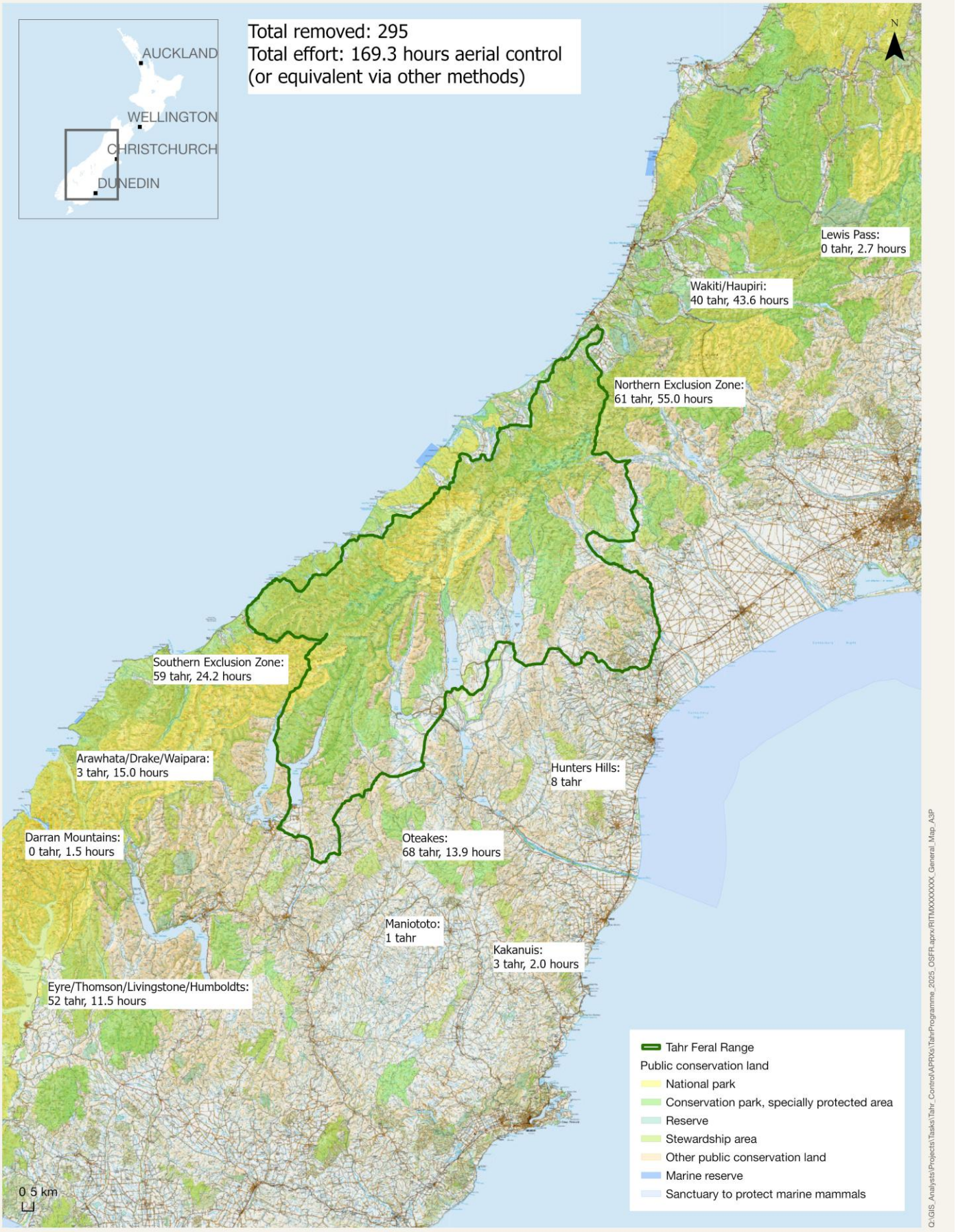
The 2025 ballot was the second run in a revised format with a shorter period of 9 weeks, but with additional landing sites. A number of 'alternate sites' in Westland Tai Poutini National Park were used in 2025 due to a predator control operation that affected established sites within the Adams Wilderness Area. The 2026 ballot is anticipated to return to a more established set of sites, but follow the same overall format.

The New Zealand Tahr Foundation's Community Agreement with DOC in South Westland will continue, with control operations planned in a number of catchments within management units 4a (Westland Tai Poutini National Park) and 6 (Landsborough).

Financial Summary (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025)

Control operational delivery costs for the 2024/25 financial year were approximately $1,100,000.

Appendix 1. Department of Conservation tahr control outside the feral range 2024/25



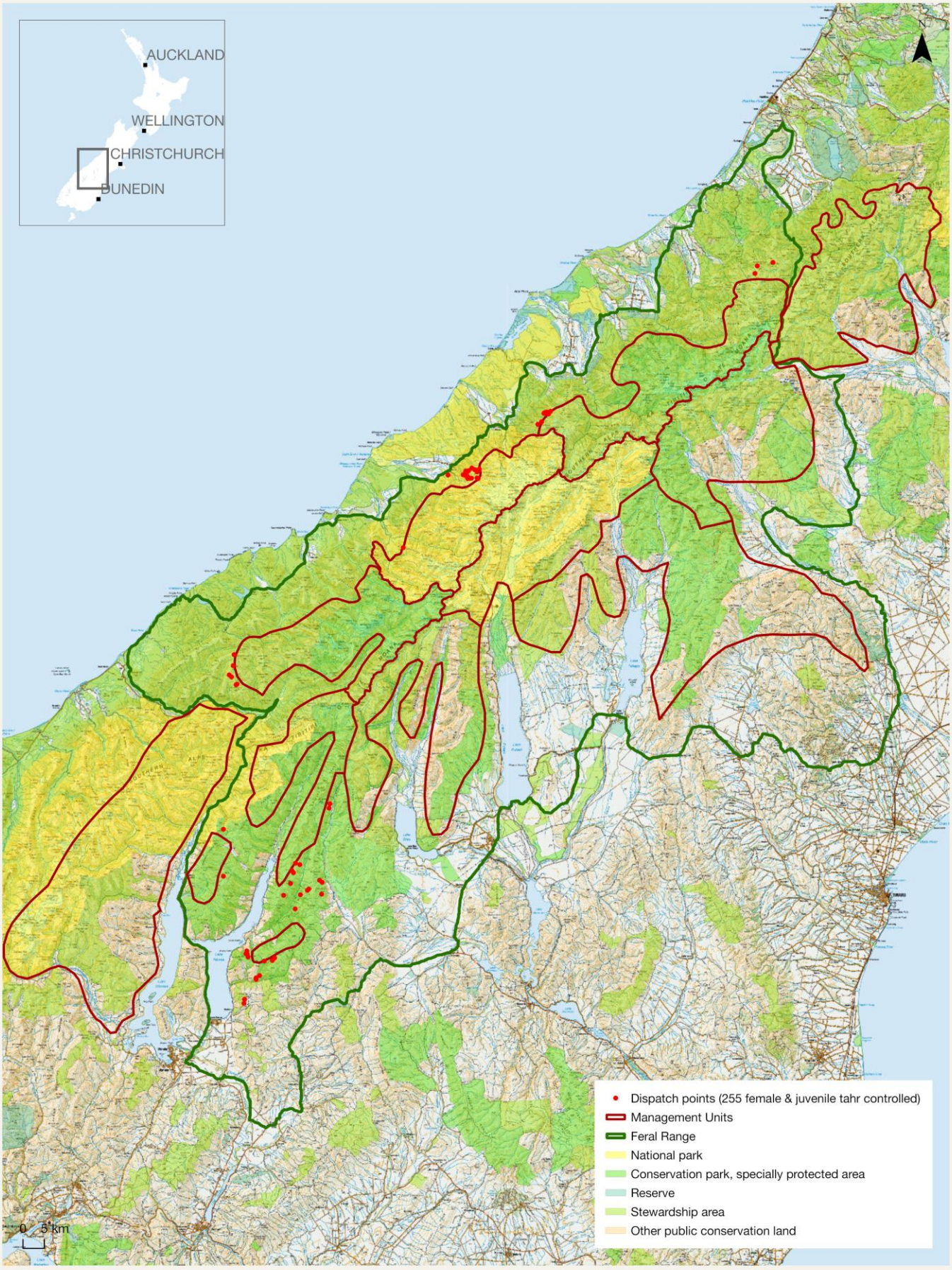
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Department of Conservation - Tahr Programme
Outside feral range
1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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Appendix 2. Department of Conservation tahr control inside the feral range but outside the MUs 2024/25



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Department of Conservation - Tahr Programme
Inside feral range outside management units
July - November 2024

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.14.3

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Ben Reddiex, Director National Programmes

Subject: **Draft Wapiti and Sika Herd Management Plans**

November 2025

Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest

Draft Herd Management Plan



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

1

Cover: Fiordland Wapiti Area. *Photo: Department of Conservation*

Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest Draft Herd Management Plan

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This document is available at www.doc.govt.nz/wapiti-hosi-consultation

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1

Foreword

Welcome to the *Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest Draft Herd Management Plan*.

This is the first draft herd management plan prepared in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013 to be publicly notified for submissions. It relates only to the management of Fiordland wapiti and the designation of a herd of special interest within the Wapiti Area in Fiordland National Park.

The Plan seeks to recognise the outstanding values of Fiordland National Park, the World Heritage Area status of Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand, and the unique place Fiordland wapiti have come to have within the Park. In doing so, the Plan attempts to balance the critically important task of conserving New Zealand's most precious wild spaces in their natural state with the day-to-day realities of conservation and wild animal management.

The Plan also acknowledges the connection that Treaty partners and iwi Māori have to the area and seeks to recognise the significance of Fiordland National Park to all New Zealanders.

This Plan represents the culmination of years of effort by individuals and organisations, including the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and the New Zealand Game Animal Council.

I expect there to be a range of benefits from managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes. These will be set out in a future Gazette notice should I ultimately decide to designate a Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest. However, it is helpful to briefly comment on expected benefits at this stage in the process.

Of particular importance are the benefits of improved ecological outcomes for indigenous species and ecosystems through targeted population management, regular monitoring and responsible harvest decision making by the hunting community.

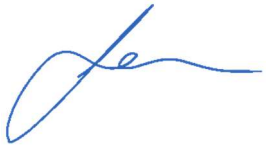
Similarly, I expect there to be a range of benefits for hunters, particularly the enhancement of an already high-quality and highly sought after hunting experience where hunters enjoy a unique wilderness experience.

It is my hope that there will also be a range of benefits for iwi, hapū and local communities. These include opportunities for Papatipu Rūnanga to be involved in Fiordland wapiti management activities and for the hunting community to be empowered and actively involved in the management of Fiordland wapiti. I anticipate that this will foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship among the hunting community and promote connections to the cultural and natural heritage of the Wapiti Area, with hunters increasingly contributing to a range of conservation efforts, such as chamois and deer control, environmental monitoring, maintenance of recreation facilities, and predator control initiatives.

I expect that managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes will also lead to sustainable non-government funding for the management of the Wapiti Area and will have economic and social benefits for local communities. In this respect, I anticipate commercial benefits associated with hunter tourism, social benefits arising from the hunting community supporting local initiatives, and the retention of specialist expertise and capability in wild deer management, control, recovery and monitoring activities through ongoing management.

If approved, this Plan will provide direction for management of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest over the next 5 years.

This is the starting point, and I now invite submissions on this Plan. The submission period closes on Monday 8 December 2025.



Hon James Meager

Minister for Hunting and Fishing

10 November 2025

1 Introduction

A 'herd of special interest' is a herd of game animals within a defined area of public conservation land that the responsible Minister has, in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013, formally designated to be managed for hunting purposes while ensuring that conservation values continue to be protected.

The *Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest Draft Herd Management Plan* (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with section 19 of the Game Animal Council Act and only becomes effective if the herd of wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*) in Fiordland is designated as a herd of special interest under section 16 of that Act.

Purpose of this Plan

This Plan directs management of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest on behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing. It establishes objectives and strategies for the management of wapiti in the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest Area (the Wapiti Area) to achieve the benefits expected to be gained by managing this herd of deer for hunting purposes.

This Plan applies to all species of deer in genus *Cervus* that occur in the Wapiti Area in Fiordland National Park, as shown in Map 1, **Appendix 1**. These animals are collectively referred to as 'Fiordland wapiti'.

The Plan allows for responsive and adaptive management, while also providing clarity on intended outcomes. It does not contain the day-to-day details of operational management. However, the objectives and strategies set the framework for operational management, monitoring and reporting.

Application of the Plan and statutory context

This Plan takes effect from the date stated in the New Zealand Gazette notice formally designating the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest. It continues to apply until formally amended or replaced by the responsible Minister.

The Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest designation and this Plan apply only to Fiordland wapiti and their management. They do not apply to the wider Fiordland National Park area or conservation management activities provided for by the National Parks Act 1980, Conservation Act 1987, Wild Animal Control Act 1977 or relevant statutory planning documents. Those Acts and planning documents continue to apply alongside this Plan. For example, they continue to regulate non-hunting-related concessions and authorisations and guide conservation and other animal management activities, such as predator control.

The Game Animal Council Act is listed in Schedule 1 of the Conservation Act. This means that the Game Animal Council Act must be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.[1]

A glossary of key terms is provided in **Appendix 2**.

Overriding considerations

This Plan has been prepared to be consistent with the overriding considerations identified in the Game Animal Council Act. For this Plan, the relevant overriding considerations are the:

- welfare and management of public conservation land and resources generally;
- *General Policy for National Parks 2005*;[2]
- *Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy 2016*;[3]
- *Fiordland National Park Management Plan 2007*;[4] and
- pest management strategies and plans made under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

[1] Conservation Act 1987, section 4.
[2] New Zealand Conservation Authority. 2005. General Policy for National Parks. Wellington: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/national-park-policy
[3] Department of Conservation. 2016. Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy. Wellington: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/southlandcms
[4] Department of Conservation. 2007. Fiordland National Park Management Plan. Invercargill: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/fnp-management-plan

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Key parties and relationships relevant to this Plan

Minister for Hunting and Fishing

The Game Animal Council Act provides a ministerial power to establish herds of special interest, by way of notice, and to manage herds of special interest.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing is the relevant Minister for the purposes of the Game Animal Council Act, including for the designation of a herd of special interest and development of a related herd management plan. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing has exercised these powers in the making of this Plan and designation of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing may delegate their herd of special interest management powers under the Game Animal Council Act to the New Zealand Game Animal Council (the Game Animal Council), and the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (the Department) may carry out functions on behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

Ngāi Tahu

Ngāi Tahu are the tangata whenua with rangatiratanga or mana whenua (tribal authority) over the area covered by this Plan. Ngāi Tahu are the Crown's Treaty partner under the Treaty of Waitangi, and this Plan acknowledges the Crown's obligations to give effect to the principles of the Treaty as set out in section 4 of the Conservation Act, as well as its obligations under the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement 1997, Ngāi Tahu (Pounamu Vesting) Act 1997 and Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

The relationship between Ngāi Tahu and the Minister of Conservation is the primary relationship with respect to the management of Fiordland National Park. This Plan is subject to the protocols required under section 282 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act.[5]

Lake Te Anau (Te Ana-au), which forms part of the eastern boundary of the Wapiti Area, is a Deed of Recognition site acknowledged by the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act.[6] Many bird and plant species that are recognised as taonga (treasures) to Ngāi Tahu can be found within the Wapiti Area.[7]

The Wapiti Area is within the takiwā of the four Papatipu Rūnanga (Rūnaka) of Murihiku (Southland), which include:

- Ōraka-Aparima Rūnaka;
- Hokonui Rūnanga;
- Waihōpai Rūnaka; and
- Te Rūnaka o Awarua.

References to Papatipu Rūnanga in this Plan refer to these four rūnanga.

New Zealand Game Animal Council

The Game Animal Council is a statutory entity established under the Game Animal Council Act.

This Council has a range of functions in relation to game animals, which include deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs. These functions include advising and making recommendations to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, raising awareness of the views of the hunting sector, providing information and education, promoting codes of conduct and operating certification schemes, and liaising with hunters, representatives of tangata whenua and organisations to improve hunting opportunities.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing may delegate powers to manage a herd of special interest to the Game Animal Council. These powers must be exercised for the effective management of the herd, consistent with the management of public conservation lands and resources generally, and in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act. Subject to the terms of any delegations, the Game Animal Council will work closely with the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and the Department to implement this Plan.

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[5] As found on the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu website (ngaitahu.iwi.nz) and in Appendix 13 of the *Southland Murihiku Conservation Management Strategy 2016* (doc.govt.nz/southlandcms).

[6] Deed of Settlement between Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Her Majesty the Queen, 22 October 1998, Section 12: Mahinga Kai, Attachment 12.111. govt.nz/assets/Documents/OTS/Ngai-Tahu/Ngai-Tahu-Deed-of-Settlement-Section-12-Mahinga-kai-general-21-Nov-1997.pdf

[7] Taonga species as per Schedules 97 and 98 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

Under the Game Animal Council Act, the Game Animal Council also has a function to assess the costs of managing Fiordland wapiti as a herd of special interest (and herds of special interest more broadly) and to make recommendations to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on ways to recover those costs.

Fiordland Wapiti Foundation

The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation is an incorporated society that was established in 1993 and undertakes a range of management, community and conservation initiatives relating to wapiti in the Wapiti Area and wider Fiordland National Park.

Since 2005, the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation has undertaken an animal control programme in the Wapiti Area, working closely with the Department via a community agreement with the Director-General under section 53 of the Conservation Act. The Foundation's work has included managing the control and removal of around 900–1,100 deer from the Wapiti Area annually and managing recreational hunting in the Wapiti Area during key times, such as the bugle.

The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation also undertakes a range of predator trapping work, bird surveys, and facility maintenance and upkeep in the Wapiti Area as part of the community agreement.

In early 2025, the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation proposed that the Minister for Hunting and Fishing initiate a process to consider designating Fiordland wapiti as a herd of special interest under the Game Animal Council Act. The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation will likely be engaged to undertake many aspects of the day-to-day implementation and delivery of this Plan, including animal management and control, hunter management, and educational initiatives.

Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

The Department is responsible for administering conservation legislation such as the Conservation Act, National Parks Act and Wild Animal Control Act. It has a responsibility to promote conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage resources, foster recreation, and allow tourism. The Department also has a responsibility under section 4 of the Conservation Act to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

On behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, the Department leads the statutory process to develop herd management plans and ensure that legislative requirements are met. The Department will support implementation of this Plan in accordance with delegations and directions of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

2 Values and key context

Natural heritage and conservation values

Fiordland National Park became a national park in 1952 and covers over 1.2 million hectares. It is treasured for its pristine and dramatic landscapes, rich indigenous biodiversity, and unique flora and fauna. Its forest cover of ancient and mature southern beech and podocarps contains unique communities of native flora that are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. In the subalpine zone, tussock grasses and daisy species thrive, and higher in the alpine zone, there are herbfields.

This Park, along with Westland Tai Poutini, Aoraki / Mount Cook and Mount Aspiring National Parks, forms part of Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

Fiordland is a sacred place that is bound up in the heritage of the three principal historical iwi of Te Waipounamu (the South Island): Waitaha, Ngāti Māmoe and Ngāi Tahu. The area was also one of the sites of early exploration, exploitation and settlement of New Zealand by Europeans.

The Wapiti Area covers approximately 15% of Fiordland National Park's total area, or 190,700 hectares (including lakes and waterbodies). The area is bounded by Lake Te Anau to the east and deep fiords and the rugged Tasman Sea to the west, with the Franklin and Stuart Mountains rising to nearly 2,000 metres above sea level in the central area.

Throughout the Wapiti Area, the treeline is low (850–1,000 metres), with a discontinuous zone of scrub, tussock grasslands and sensitive alpine herbfields extending up to around 1,500–1,600 metres. While rock and snow predominate at higher elevations, plants can still be found in favourable niches.

The Wapiti Area does not contain any ecological management areas or units that have been identified by the Department's existing statutory management plans, but it is home to indigenous endemic birds, including pīwauwau / rock wren, whio / blue duck, mōhua / yellowhead, kākā, kea, tokoeka / southern brown kiwi and tawaki / Fiordland crested penguin. Indigenous vegetation across the Wapiti Area is complex and unique, with wet mosses, liverworts, lichens and filmy ferns on the ground and tree trunks. The forest understorey includes diverse shrub species, including karamu / coprosmas, kāpuka / broadleaf, puahou / five finger and various ferns. Tawhai / silver beech and tawhairauriki / mountain beech are widespread in the canopy, and rimu, matai, miro and tōtara can be prominent in areas near lakes and fiords.

Within the Wapiti Area – particularly in the Nitz Creek, Glaisnock River, Lugar Burn, Stillwater Creek, Doon River and Edith River catchments – there are comparatively broad U-shaped valleys, with open areas of grassland breaking up vast tracks of forest and wetland. The western coast of the Wapiti Area is broken by large fiords, from Te Hāpua / Sutherland Sound in the northwest to Hāwea / Bligh, Te Houhou / George and Taitetimu / Caswell Sounds in the centre west and Taiporoporo / Charles Sound at the southern extent.

The Wapiti Area includes the 123,800-hectare gazetted Glaisnock Wilderness Area, which is renowned by self-reliant and highly experienced recreationists for its substantially unmodified landscapes, solitude, natural quiet and limited recreational facilities. The remainder of the area is within the 'Western Remote' visitor setting described in the *Fiordland National Park Management Plan 2007*, which has similar recreation and wilderness values to those found in the adjoining Glaisnock Wilderness Area.

Conservation and introduced species

Introduced animal species, including wapiti, can have significant and long-lasting impacts on an area. Deer browse can suppress forest regeneration, change plant communities and threaten biodiversity. Deer are selective feeders, so where they negatively affect native plant communities, species that are preferred by deer suffer more damage than species that are avoided.

Research indicates that regeneration is possible with intensive management, but this is generally slow, location specific and costly to sustain. Plant growth also depends on light and nutrient availability, so competition from deer-avoided species may slow down the recovery process, leading to long-term changes in forest composition.

Biodiversity declines and changes in plant community composition can reduce ecological resilience, including resilience to the impacts of climate change.

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An objective of the *Fiordland National Park Management Plan 2007* is to reduce and control introduced animals (including Fiordland wapiti) by all available means to a level that allows for the regeneration of browsed indigenous flora.

Deer control is expensive, with eradication and the maintenance of deer-free areas costing significantly more than suppression (population reduction) activities over the same area. Therefore, prioritisation is undertaken, and emphasis is placed on controlling deer to protect priority areas and species.

Accordingly, control work by the Department in Fiordland National Park is generally focused on maintaining deer-free areas (such as Secretary and Coal Islands, and the Cleddau valley) and continued intensive suppression to support habitat for the Takahē Recovery Programme in the Murchison Mountains.

Since 2005, the Department has worked closely with the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation on an annual control programme in the Wapiti Area using a combination of recreational hunter effort and coordinated professional control operations. In other areas, the main method of deer removal is commercial wild animal recovery operations and/or recreational hunting.

Intensive control, commercial wild animal recovery operations and community-led programmes have resulted in variable suppression of the deer population over time in Fiordland National Park. While extensive commercial venison recovery significantly reduced deer numbers in the 1970s to 1990s, market conditions have been increasingly unfavourable for commercial operations since then. Resourcing for official control work has also been variable over time. By contrast, the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation's control programme has resulted in relatively consistent levels of management activity since 2005, with operational costs routinely being covered by recreational hunters and coordinated wild animal recovery operations within the Wapiti Area.

Hunting and recreation values

Fiordland wapiti herd

The Fiordland wapiti herd holds historic significance to many New Zealanders and is a New Zealand hunting icon. Ten wapiti bulls (males) and eight wapiti cows (females) were released into Fiordland National Park at the head of Te Houhou / George Sound in 1905. Ten of these animals were gifted to New Zealand from the United States of America by then President Theodore Roosevelt and the remainder were purchased by the Tourism Department. Wapiti were initially protected to enable them to breed and establish in the area, with the first hunting licence being issued in 1923.

Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are also present in the Wapiti Area. It is not possible to physically separate the species within the Wapiti Area, and the two species interbreed. As a result, there are very few, if any, pure-bred wapiti or red deer present in this area. The herd largely comprises wapiti–red hybrids, with individual animals having more or less wapiti traits.

Fiordland wapiti have been sought-after trophy animals for many years, as they produce the largest round-antler trophies of any deer species in New Zealand and the only wild hunting opportunity for wapiti-type deer in the Southern Hemisphere. Hunters voluntarily support efforts to preserve the genetic integrity of the Fiordland wapiti herd.

Hunting and managing for hunting purposes

Hunting Fiordland wapiti is a unique experience in the challenging yet rewarding environment of this remote part of Fiordland National Park. With no road access and few huts, the area provides an extreme wilderness experience and is a drawcard for thousands of hunters each year.

The favoured hunting period is during the bugle or rut, when emboldened bulls are vocal to attract cows. The bugle runs from mid-March to late April, and hunting access during this time has been managed by a ballot administered by the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation for over 20 years. The ballot involves the allocation of hunting opportunities to 25 hunting blocks (as shown on Map 2, **Appendix 1**) to around 600 recreational hunters. Within this framework, hunter activity within the blocks has been managed across four 10-day periods. The number of entries into the bugle ballot has far exceeded the hunting block allocations available for the past 10 years.

This Plan sets objectives and strategies for the management of Fiordland wapiti within the Wapiti Area for hunting purposes in a way that is consistent with the overriding considerations outlined in section 1 and in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act. This involves focusing on improving conservation outcomes and habitat health to improve animal quality and enhance the Fiordland wapiti hunting experience. It

encourages hunters to act as caretakers for the Wapiti Area (and the environment more broadly) rather than end-use consumers. A herd of special interest designation is the only management tool that specifically provides for the management of game animals for hunting purposes on public conservation land.

Managing the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest for hunting purposes enables management to also focus on hunting experiences and outcomes, which includes improving herd genetics via selective targeting of Fiordland wapiti that have less wapiti-like traits. Over time, this can improve herd quality and promote animal and trophy characteristics that are sought by hunters.

Adoption of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest management approach is intended to encourage collective and concerted action for Fiordland wapiti management and the conservation of indigenous flora and fauna in the Wapiti Area. It seeks to do this by recognising and providing for a range of values, conservation outcomes, communities and recreational activities, and by building on recent collaborative efforts between the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and the Department to improve Fiordland wapiti management. This, in turn, is expected to expand the number of people contributing to conservation efforts more broadly. Working with hunters and other interested parties to increase understanding of the impacts Fiordland wapiti and other introduced species have on indigenous species can contribute to hunters adopting a conservation mindset when hunting.

It is important to recognise the contribution hunters can and, in particular areas, already do make to conservation. The work of the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation in the Wapiti Area reflects this – through both management of the Fiordland wapiti population itself and wider conservation efforts, such as predator trapping and control work, hut restoration, and support for the Murchison Mountains Takahē Specially Protected Area.

Monitoring, research and reporting to support management

Monitoring is an important aspect of herd management, as it provides information that allows the effectiveness of management actions to be evaluated and the objectives for managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes to be met. A range of methods and tools are available to be used and adapted annually to ensure that the most appropriate method is being implemented to build on the data already collected within the timeframe in which the information is needed.

Research will allow the effectiveness of management to be improved and support the objectives and strategies for managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes being met.

Reporting on herd management activities shows progress in meeting the objectives and strategies. This provides transparency and accountability to Treaty partners, stakeholders and members of the public who are interested in the management of Fiordland wapiti. Regular reporting will also support an efficient and effective plan review process.

Culture, heritage, community and stewardship values

There are a range of views on Fiordland wapiti and how they should be managed. Some see Fiordland wapiti as an introduced species and so think that the animals should be removed. Others seek to realise the value of the herd as a part of the contemporary cultural and community context of Fiordland National Park. To support hunting, recreation and management of the Park, a network of huts was developed in the Wapiti Area over many years, with some dating back over a century. Today, huts remain at the head of George and Caswell Sounds, on the shores of Lakes Hankinson and Thomson, and in the Glaisnock and Worsley valleys. The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation has worked closely with the Department to maintain the huts under a community agreement since 2005. This builds on conservation projects undertaken by the Foundation to help protect indigenous species and habitats in the Wapiti Area, including:

- the deployment and operation of over 500 predator control traps;
- a range of native bird and animal surveys; and
- the removal of chamois when sighted during deer control and recovery operations.

As with the management of Fiordland wapiti, the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation's conservation and facility maintenance work has contributed to the management and preservation of conservation, recreation, cultural and heritage values associated with the Wapiti Area, enabling the Department to focus its resources on other priority areas.

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Work by the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and other groups that are committed to undertaking conservation activities contributes to the management and protection of public conservation land and should be acknowledged and recognised.

This reflects the values many associate with the Wapiti Area, particularly the Glaisnock Wilderness Area, which is highly valued for its remoteness and its landscape, which is relatively unmodified by human activity.

Most activities other than hunting in this part of Fiordland National Park occur on the boundaries of the Wapiti Area during the summer period and outside the peak hunting times. There is very little concessionaire activity in the Wapiti Area, particularly in the Glaisnock Wilderness Area, where applications to undertake commercial activity can only be granted where they are provided for in the *Fiordland National Park Management Plan 2007*.

The George Sound Route within the Wapiti Area is managed for its remote almost wilderness experience, with users needing to be experienced and self-reliant.

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3 Objectives and strategies

This section sets out the approach to be taken for managing the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest to ensure that the objectives for managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes are met.

Objectives

Objective	Description
1	Fiordland wapiti are managed in a manner that allows for the maintenance of natural biodiversity by restoring ecological processes and communities of browsed indigenous flora and preventing the loss of indigenous species from their current range.
2	The Fiordland wapiti hunting experience is enhanced, and the Fiordland wapiti herd produces high-quality bulls for balloted hunters to take annually during the bugle.
3	Generate sufficient revenue through partnerships and sponsorships, seek to recover costs from the hunting community, and in-kind support is increased to ensure the delivery of this Plan is wholly or largely self-funded.
4	Engage the hunting community in the management of Fiordland wapiti and the Wapiti Area so the community provides support for local conservation and social initiatives.
5	The Treaty partner relationship with Papatipu Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is strengthened, and opportunities for Papatipu Rūnanga to be involved and participate in the management of Fiordland wapiti are increased.
6	Knowledge and understanding of the dynamics between Fiordland wapiti and indigenous species and ecosystems are improved.
7	Monitoring enables adaptive management and demonstrates whether the management of Fiordland wapiti is achieving the objectives and strategies of this Plan.
8	Research supports and enhances management of Fiordland wapiti and the Wapiti Area.
9	Public reporting provides information on whether the Plan is achieving the Objectives.

Strategies

Strategy	Description
1	**Use a range of tools to manage the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest and improve the hunting experience.**
General	
1.1	Set and review annual Fiordland wapiti control targets to align management of the populations with the objectives and strategies of this Plan.
1.2	Coordinate and manage recreational hunting and commercial and professional control operations to selectively remove Fiordland wapiti in a way that: a) protects and enhances the hunting experience during the annual bugle; b) optimises genetic selection and minimises hybridisation; c) maintains a sex ratio of 1.1 bulls per cow; and d) achieves a proportional increase in older bulls in the herd.
Recreational hunting	
1.3	Operate a hunting authorisation system for hunting Fiordland wapiti within the Wapiti Area, and require hunters to obtain an authorisation and adhere to its conditions.
1.4	Specify hunting conditions by notice in the Gazette, including conditions relating to the periods and times when Fiordland wapiti may be hunted and specific dates that apply to the bugle period.[8]
1.5	Use a ballot and block system during the bugle period to allocate authorisations and manage recreational hunting of Fiordland wapiti.

[8] Game Animal Council Act 2013, section 18(2).

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Strategy	Description
1.6	Allow recreational hunting outside the bugle period that focuses on Fiordland wapiti with fewer wapiti-like traits and cows rather than bulls.
1.7	Seek to charge fees to hunt Fiordland wapiti to cover costs associated with managing the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest, such as advertising, hunter education and management, and animal management and control activities undertaken throughout the year.
1.8	Use any revenue generated through fees, additional to that required for management of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest, for conservation initiatives within the Wapiti Area or other areas of Fiordland National Park.
Commercial recovery and professional control operations	
1.9	Use authorised commercial recovery and professional control operations as part of Fiordland wapiti management, applying the following criteria: a) Seek to incentivise commercial recovery contributions to control targets where necessary through subsidies funded by fees, sponsorship and other commercial partnerships associated with the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest. b) Focus professional control operations on difficult-to-access areas where recreational hunting and commercial recovery operations cannot meet control targets, or doing so is not commercially viable. c) Seek to meet professional control operation costs through fees, sponsorship and other commercial partnerships associated with the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest. d) Focus commercial recovery and professional control operations on deer with the least wapiti-like characteristics.
2	**Undertake monitoring and research to support management and decision making.**
Monitoring	
2.1	Develop and implement a monitoring programme that includes the following: a) Ecological monitoring that covers both alpine areas (above the bushline) and forested areas (below the bushline), which may include, but is not limited to, the following methods and tools: i. Seedling ratio index ii. Permanent 20 x 20 metre plots iii. Alpine deer browse iv. Faecal pellet counts b) Exploring the use of new monitoring methods, tools and technologies, and seeking the views of Papatipu Rūnanga, the Southland Conservation Board and the Department prior to their use in the Wapiti Area. c) Monitoring the hunter harvest, which may include, but is not limited to, monitoring the hunter contribution to control targets and the age and length of jaws to determine herd age structure, genetic integrity and growth rates. d) Monitoring voluntary and partnership contributions to the key management objectives. e) Monitoring hunter satisfaction with the management of Fiordland wapiti, including, but not limited to the: i. quality of Fiordland wapiti available; and ii. ballot and authorisation process, including the information available to hunters prior to and after their hunting trips.
2.2	Undertake ecological monitoring in accordance with relevant standards used or set by the Department.
2.3	Include the results from all monitoring in an annual report (see strategy 4 below).

Strategy	Description
Research	
2.4	Seek opportunities to undertake or support research relevant to the management of Fiordland wapiti and/or their effects within the Wapiti Area.
2.5	Explore opportunities with Papatipu Rūnanga to incorporate mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in management and research activities, and increase understanding of the impact of Fiordland wapiti on taonga species.
2.6	Undertake relevant research that may relate to, but is not limited to, the: a) changes in herd health and genetic composition of the Fiordland wapiti herd; b) spread, behaviours and effects of Fiordland wapiti on indigenous flora, and how this compares with that of other deer species; c) movement patterns and habitat utilisation of Fiordland wapiti within the Wapiti Area; and d) potential impacts of aerial hunting on the movements and habitat utilisation of Fiordland wapiti.
2.7	Address relevant research findings in an annual report.
3	**Foster partnerships and community stewardship.**
Partnerships	
3.1	Seek to develop partnerships and commercial opportunities associated with Fiordland wapiti to help meet the costs of implementing this Plan.
3.2	Engage with Papatipu Rūnanga when developing partnerships with others to ensure that the interests and values of Ngāi Tahu in relation to such partnerships are considered.
3.3	Actively promote the Fiordland wapiti hunting experience to domestic and international markets.
Stewardship	
3.4	Provide educational opportunities for communities, hunters and interested parties about the: a) contribution that managing Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes makes to improving forest and herd health; b) impacts of Fiordland wapiti on the environment and conservation values, and what the objectives of this Plan are working to achieve; c) selection of Fiordland wapiti when hunting to improve conservation, herd health and recreational outcomes; d) Fiordland wapiti hunting experience; e) visitor requirements and behaviours in Fiordland National Park; and f) requirements for hunting safely.
3.5	Seek opportunities to work with Papatipu Rūnanga when developing hunter authorisation, education and promotional materials to ensure that Ngāi Tahu values and cultural information are recognised and provided for.
3.6	Seek opportunities to work with Papatipu Rūnanga to ensure that management activities recognise and reflect Ngāi Tahu values.
3.7	Provide a range of opportunities for the hunting community and other interested parties to actively contribute to Fiordland wapiti herd management and control activities.
3.8	Work with local communities in Te Anau and Southland to develop opportunities to participate in activities such as open days, hunter training and education days.
3.9	Work with the commercial and recreational hunting communities to facilitate and support social initiatives.
3.10	Seek to provide a range of opportunities for the hunting community and other interested parties to contribute to wider conservation initiatives within the Wapiti Area, such as predator trapping and control programmes and the maintenance of historic huts and public recreation infrastructure.

Strategy	Description
4	**Undertake annual planning and reporting on management activities.**
Annual operational plan	
4.1	Develop an annual operational plan for the activities planned for the coming year to help achieve the objectives. This operational plan should include, but is not limited to: a) setting annual population management and control targets, including the sex ratio of Fiordland wapiti and specific locations within the Wapiti Area for control; b) outlining methods to achieve targets, such as managed recreational hunting, commercial wild animal recovery operations and professional control operations; c) determining the annual ballot process (including ballot times and a breakdown of block dates); d) identifying any other planned work or initiatives; and e) identifying parties or entities responsible for management activities and related timeframes.
Annual report	
4.2	Prepare and publish an annual report detailing the activities undertaken in the previous year, including, but not limited to: a) overall herd management, including the number of Fiordland wapiti controlled, the control method(s) used, areas where control occurred and the control effort; b) results and outcomes of monitoring activities, such as ecological monitoring and hunter participation and satisfaction evaluations; c) key metrics of the ballot process and related outcomes, such as the total numbers of ballot entrants, bugle participants and Fiordland wapiti taken during the ballot period, and the condition and quality of the animals; d) sponsorships and commercial partnerships; e) hunter training, education and community initiatives; f) wider conservation activities supported; and g) opportunities to improve management going forward.
4.3	Include financial reporting in the annual report in relation to: a) ballot processes and fees; b) Fiordland wapiti control and other conservation activities; c) overall expenditure on management of the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest and contributions from the Department and/or central government; and d) monitoring.
4.4	Work with the Department when preparing the annual report prior to its finalisation and public release.
4.5	Present the annual report to Papatipu Rūnanga and the Southland Conservation Board, if requested.

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4 Compliance, review and enforcement

Plan compliance and review

This Plan binds the Game Animal Council.

It must be reviewed at intervals of not more than five years, in accordance with section 19 of the Game Animal Council Act. Unless otherwise directed by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Plan reviews are to be initiated early in the fourth year of a five-year Plan cycle.

The review will consider annual reports, monitoring data and results, and relevant research as part of an assessment of whether the Plan's objectives and strategies are delivering the benefits expected to be gained by managing the Fiordland wapiti for hunting purposes. The review will also address the overriding considerations.

Depending on review findings, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing may determine amendment to the Plan is not required.

Where the Minister for Hunting and Fishing considers review findings warrant amendment of this Plan, any such amendments will be made following the process set out in the Game Animal Council Act. This includes the public notification of an amended Plan and an opportunity for interested parties to make submissions.

Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest compliance and enforcement

Schedule 1 of the Game Animal Council Act sets out the compliance and enforcement framework that applies to the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest (if designated).

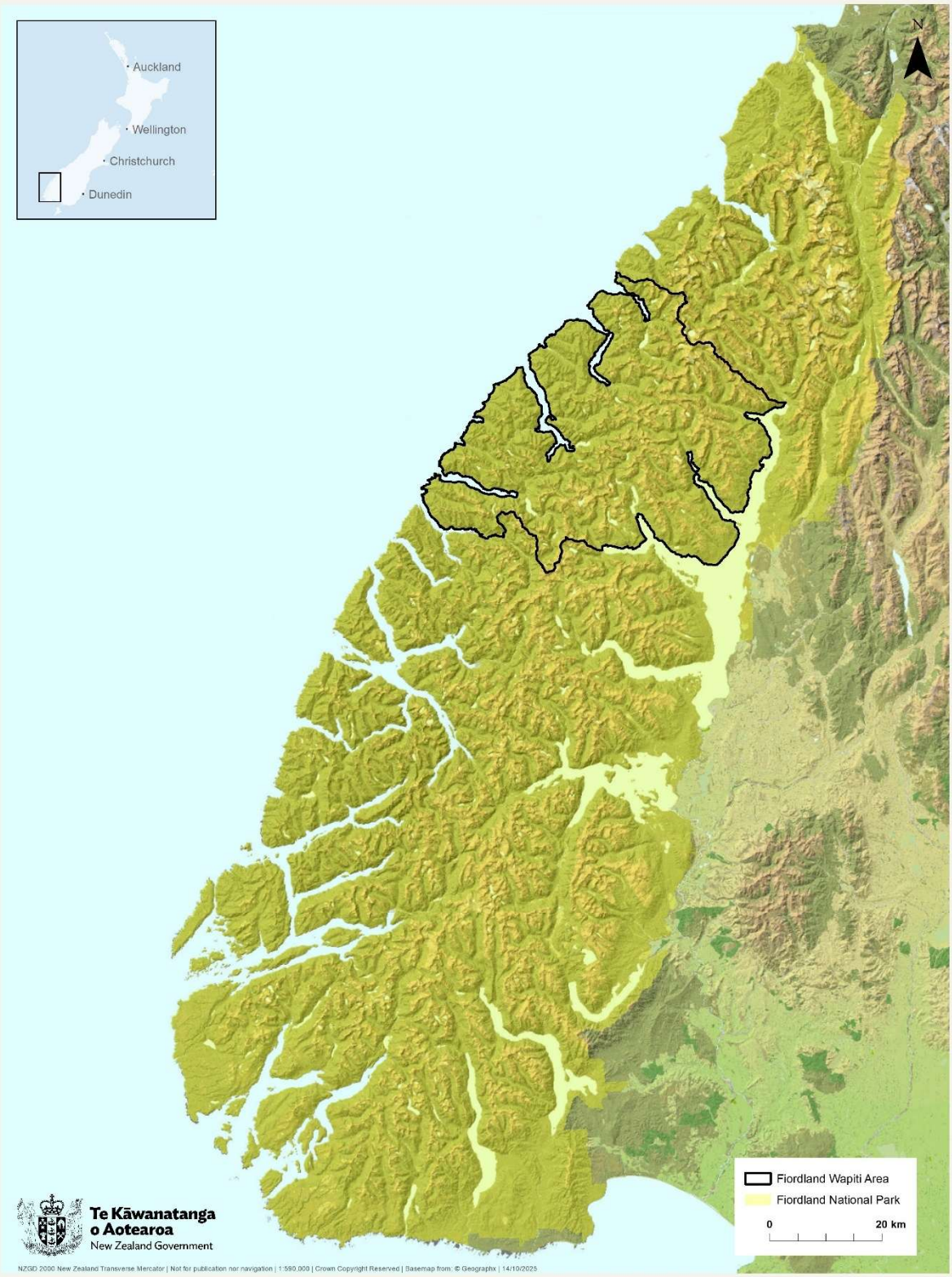
The Director-General of the Department may appoint and remove enforcement officers and honorary enforcement officers. Officers have the power to prevent or stop offending, require personal details, to search, stop any activity, and seize any animal, animal product or thing that provides evidence that an offence has been committed.

A person who hunts or kills any animal in a designated area for a herd of special interest without the appropriate authorisation, licence or permit is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding $5,000.[9]

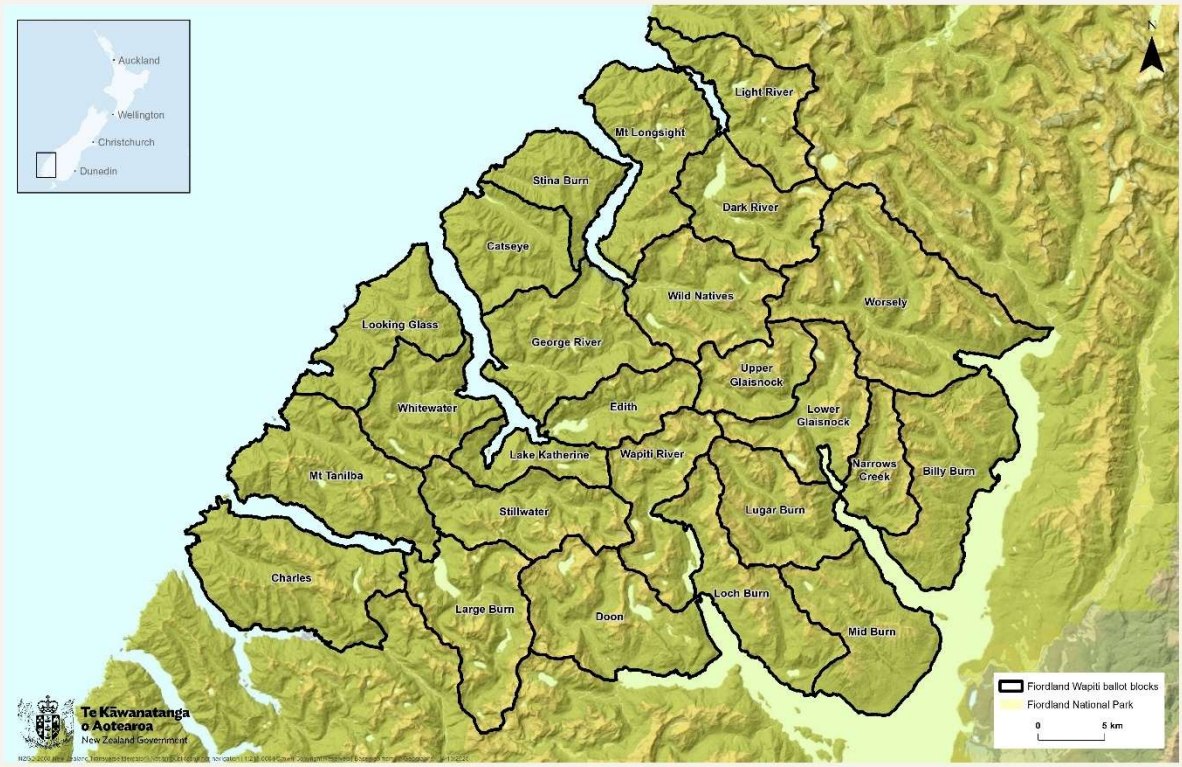
[9] Game Animal Council Act 2013, section 30(1).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps



Map 1: Fiordland Wapiti Area, and Fiordland National Park – overview



Map 2: Fiordland Wapiti Area – close-up and ballot blocks

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Appendix 2: Glossary

Authorisation
Collective term for types of approvals (whether permits or otherwise) issued by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing under section 18 of the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

Ballot and block system
An annual lottery process that is used to allocate pre-defined hunting areas to hunters through a random ballot draw. Those who are successful in a ballot receive an authorisation to hunt in a particular block for specified dates within the ballot period (for example, a 10-day period). Ballot systems can be used to protect and enhance the hunting experience during peak times.

Bugle
A distinctive, high-pitched, whistle-like sound produced by bull wapiti during the wapiti breeding season to attract cows. The breeding season generally occurs from mid-March to late April in the Wapiti Area and is known amongst hunters as the 'bugle period'. This is when wapiti bulls are most vocal and less cautious, which enhances the hunting experience.

Commercial hunting
Hunting undertaken by professional hunters for their livelihood and intended to maximise the take or kill of animals. This does not include guided recreational hunting, transportation of recreational hunters or other means of assistance for recreational hunting for which a consideration is paid.

Community
Any individual or group (whether statutory or non-statutory, formal or informal, commercial or non-commercial) with an interest in a particular conservation issue.

Conservation board
An independent body established under section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987. The primary functions and powers of conservation boards are set out in sections 6M and 6N of the Conservation Act and section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. These functions include advising the New Zealand Conservation Authority or Director-General of the Department of Conservation on conservation matters of importance in their area. They also have an important conservation advocacy role. The relevant conservation board for this Plan is the Southland Conservation Board.

Control target
A target number of deer to be removed from the Wapiti Area via recreational hunting, commercial hunting and professional control operations on an annual basis, as set out in an annual operation plan.

Fiordland wapiti
Hybrids between wapiti deer (*Cervus canadensis*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) that occur within the Wapiti Area and are subject to the Gazette notice designating the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest.

Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest Area (Wapiti Area)
The area within Fiordland National Park that is subject to the Gazette notice designating the Fiordland Wapiti Herd of Special Interest, as shown on the maps in **Appendix 1**. This area reflects the Wapiti Hunting Area identified on Map 7 – Visitor Setting in the *Fiordland National Park Management Plan 2007*.[10]

Herd of special interest
A species of game animal in a specified area of public conservation land that the responsible Minister has, in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013, formally designated to be managed for hunting purposes while ensuring that conservation values continue to be protected.

Indigenous flora
Plants that have established in New Zealand without the assistance of humans, vehicles or aircraft. This includes species that are unique to New Zealand, as well as those that may be found elsewhere in the world.

[10] doc.govt.nz/fnp-management-plan

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Minister for Hunting and Fishing
The Minister responsible for the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

Professional control operation
Activities to search for and shoot wild animals as a non-recreational and non-commercial activity specifically to help achieve control targets. Professional control operations generally do not involve recovery of the animals or any parts of the animals. Professional control operations may selectively target wapiti based on the sex and condition of individual animals.

Recreational hunting
Hunting undertaken by recreationists where there is no commercial gain involved in the activity.

World Heritage Area
A site designated under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention as being of outstanding universal value for its cultural or natural heritage.

Wild animal recovery / venison recovery
Wild animal recovery refers to activities involving the use of an aircraft to search for, shoot or immobilise wild animals and the recovery of those wild animals (whether dead or alive) or any part of those animals. Venison recovery refers to the above activities when specifically recovering venison meat from a dead deer.

Wilderness area
Any part of a national park that has been set apart as a wilderness area under section 14 of the National Parks Act 1980.

November 2025

Sika Herd of Special Interest

Draft Herd Management Plan



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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Cover: Kaimanawa Forest Park. *Photo: Department of Conservation*

Sika Herd of Special Interest Draft Herd Management Plan

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Foreword

Welcome to the *Sika Herd of Special Interest Draft Herd Management Plan*.

This is the first draft herd management plan prepared in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013 to be publicly notified for submissions. It relates only to the management of sika and the designation of a herd of special interest within the Sika Area of Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area.

The Plan seeks to recognise the unique values of these areas and the special place sika have come to have within them. In doing so, the Plan attempts to balance the critically important task of managing these wild spaces so that natural and historic resources are protected, facilitating public recreation and enjoyment of these resources subject to that protection, while considering the day-to-day realities of conservation and wild animal management.

The Plan also acknowledges the connection that Treaty partners and iwi Māori have to these areas and seeks to recognise the significance of the Kaimanawa Mountains and Kaweka Range to many New Zealanders.

This Plan represents the culmination of years of effort by a number of individuals and organisations, including the Central North Island Sika Foundation and the New Zealand Game Animal Council.

I expect there to be a range of benefits from managing sika for hunting purposes. These will be set out in a future Gazette notice should I ultimately decide to designate a Sika Herd of Special Interest. However, it is helpful to briefly comment on expected benefits at this stage in the process.

Of particular importance are the benefits of improved ecological outcomes for indigenous species and ecosystems through targeted population management, regular monitoring and responsible harvest decision making by the hunting community.

Similarly, I expect there to be a range of benefits for hunters, including a higher quality and more sustainable hunting experience and venison yield, due to there being fewer but healthier animals, and an improvement of sika trophy quality over time. By encouraging and enabling greater participation of the sika hunting community and other interested parties in herd management processes, we hope to promote a sense of herd and environmental stewardship and increase voluntary contributions to conservation activity more broadly.

It is my hope there will also be a range of benefits for iwi, hapū and local communities. These include enabling the active involvement of iwi and hapū in sika management activities, increasing our understanding of the impacts sika can have on taonga (treasured) species and mahinga kai (food-gathering) practices, and taking steps towards protecting and restoring culturally significant resources.

Finally, I anticipate that this new approach to sika management will have meaningful economic, social and wellbeing benefits for a range of communities by increasing hunter tourism, support for community and social initiatives, and partnerships between iwi, community groups, businesses and conservation organisations.

If approved, this Plan will provide direction for management of the Sika Herd of Special Interest over the next 5 years.

This is the starting point, and I now invite submissions on this Plan. The submission period closes on Monday 8 December 2025.



Hon James Meager

Minister for Hunting and Fishing

10 November 2025

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1 Introduction

A 'herd of special interest' is a herd of game animals within a defined area of public conservation land that the responsible Minister has, in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013, formally designated to be managed for hunting purposes while ensuring that conservation values continue to be protected.

The *Sika Herd of Special Interest Draft Management Plan* (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with section 19 of the Game Animal Council Act and only becomes effective if the herd of sika (*Cervus nippon*) in the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Forest Parks and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area is designated as a herd of special interest under section 16 of that Act.

Purpose of this Plan

This Plan directs management of the Sika Herd of Special Interest on behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing. It establishes objectives and strategies for the management of sika in the Sika Herd of Special Interest Area (the Sika Area) to achieve the benefits expected to be gained by managing this herd of deer for hunting purposes.

This Plan applies only to sika existing in the Sika Area, as shown in **Appendix 1**.

This Plan allows for responsive and adaptive management, while also providing clarity on intended outcomes. It does not contain the day-to-day details of operational management. However, the objectives and strategies set the framework for operational management, monitoring and reporting.

Application of the Plan and statutory context

This Plan takes effect from the date stated in the New Zealand Gazette notice formally designating the Sika Herd of Special Interest. It continues to apply until formally amended or replaced by the responsible Minister.

The Sika Area covers parts of Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area. The Sika Herd of Special Interest designation and this Plan apply only to the Sika Area and the management of sika within it.

The designation and Plan do not apply to wider conservation management activities provided for by the Conservation Act 1987, Wild Animal Control Act 1977 or relevant statutory planning documents. Those Acts and planning documents continue to apply alongside this Plan. For example, they continue to regulate the hunting of pigs and red deer and non-hunting related concessions and authorisations, and guide conservation and other animal management activity, such as predator control.

The Game Animal Council Act is listed in Schedule 1 of the Conservation Act. This means that the Game Animal Council Act must be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.[1]

A glossary of key terms is provided in **Appendix 2**.

Overriding considerations

This Plan has been prepared to be consistent with the overriding considerations identified in the Game Animal Council Act. For this Plan, the relevant overriding considerations are the:

- welfare and management of public conservation land and resources generally;
- *Conservation General Policy 2005*;[2]
- *Hawke's Bay Conservation Management Strategy 1994*;[3]
- *Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy 2002*;[4]
- *Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan 2007*;[5]

[1] Conservation Act 1987, section 4.
[2] Department of Conservation. 2005. Conservation General Policy. Wellington: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/general-policy
[3] Department of Conservation. 1994. Conservation Management Strategy for Hawke's Bay Conservancy 1994–2004. Napier: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/hawkes-bay-cms
[4] Department of Conservation. 2002. Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy 2002–2012. Turangi: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/tongariro-taupo-cms
[5] Department of Conservation. 2007. Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan. Wellington: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/kaimanawa-management-plan

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- *Kaweka Forest Park Conservation Management Plan 1991*;[6] and
- pest management strategies and plans made under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Key parties and relationships relevant to this Plan

Minster for Hunting and Fishing

The Game Animal Council Act provides a ministerial power to establish herds of special interest, by way of notice, and to manage herds of special interest.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing is the relevant Minister for the purposes of the Game Animal Council Act, including for the designation of a herd of special interest and development of a related herd management plan. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing has exercised these powers in the making of this Plan and designation of the Sika Herd of Special Interest.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing may delegate their herd of special interest management powers under the Game Animal Council Act to the New Zealand Game Animal Council (the Game Animal Council), and the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (the Department) may carry out functions on behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

Treaty partners

Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Whitikaupeka, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, Ahuriri Hapū, Ngāti Hineuru and Heretaunga Tamatea are the tangata whenua with rangatiratanga or mana whenua (tribal authority) over parts of the area covered by this Plan. They are the Crown's Treaty partners under the Treaty of Waitangi, and this Plan acknowledges the obligation on the Crown to give effect to the principles of the Treaty as set out in section 4 of the Conservation Act. The Department often engages with these Treaty partners through the post-settlement governance entities identified below, as those entities are mandated to represent hapū within their takiwā. The relationship between Treaty partners and the Minister of Conservation is the primary relationship with respect to the management of Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area.

Treaty partner areas of interest relevant to this Plan

Ngāti Tūwharetoa

The entirety of Kaimanawa Forest Park and the northwestern parts of Kaweka Forest Park. The Ngāti Tūwharetoa Claims Settlement Act 2018 establishes Te Piringa agreement between the Crown, through the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of the Department, and Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa (being the post-settlement governance entity established through the Ngāti Tūwharetoa Deed of Settlement).

Ahuriri Hapū

The part of Kaimanawa Forest Park near the Ngaruroro River headwaters, particularly around the Oāmaru River and Te Matia Stream, and large areas of Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area, including around Don Juan peak, Whittle Road and the length of the main Kaweka Range. The Ahuriri Hapū Claims Settlement Act 2021 establishes Te Kawa o Papa between the Crown, through the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of the Department, and the Trustees of the Mana Ahuriri Trust (being the Ahuriri Hapū post-settlement governance entity established through the Ahuriri Hapū Deed of Settlement).

Ngāti Hineuru

Kaimanawa Forest Park from the Kaipo and Ōamaru Rivers in the eastern Kaimanawa Mountains, and the northern and eastern parts of the Kaweka Range around Te Pukeohikaura, Te Puia and Mangatutu. The Hineuru Claims Settlement Act 2016 establishes Te Kawenata between the Trustees of Te Kōpere o te iwi o Hineuru Trust (being the post-settlement governance entity established through the Hineuru Deed of Settlement), the Minister of Conservation and the Director-General of the Department.

Heretaunga Tamatea

The area around Kuripapango. Other areas of Kaweka Forest Park within the Heretaunga Tamatea area of interest (such as the Kaikomata and Glenross Ranges) are outside the Sika Area and are not directly relevant

[6] Department of Conservation. 1991. Kaweka Forest Park Conservation Management Plan Napier: Department of Conservation. doc.govt.nz/kaweka-management-plan

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to this Plan. The Heretaunga Tamatea Claims Settlement Act 2018 between the Trustees of the Heretaunga Tamatea Settlement Trust (being the post-settlement governance entity established through the Heretaunga Tamatea Deed of Settlement) and the Crown is relevant to the management of this area.

Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Tamakōpiri

The southern reaches of Kaimanawa Forest Park and southwestern aspects of Kaweka Forest Park. At the time of writing, Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Tamakōpiri are working through a Treaty settlement process with the Crown as part of the collective represented by Mōkai Pātea Waitangi Claims Trust.

Other Treaty partner interests and relationships

In many places, the public conservation land subject to this Plan shares a boundary with land owned or managed by entities affiliated with Treaty partners, including land parcels that are protected by Ngā Whenua Rāhui kawenata. Although this adjacent land is not directly subject to the Sika Herd of Special Interest designation, many of the entities who own or manage that land are keenly interested in this Plan.

New Zealand Game Animal Council

The Game Animal Council is a statutory entity established under the Game Animal Council Act.

This Council has a range of functions in relation to game animals, which include deer, tahr, chamois and wild pigs. These functions include advising and making recommendations to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, raising awareness of the views of the hunting sector, providing information and education, promoting codes of conduct and operating certification schemes, and liaising with hunters, representatives of tangata whenua and organisations to improve hunting opportunities.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing may delegate powers to manage a herd of special interest to the Game Animal Council. These powers must be exercised for the effective management of the herd, consistent with the management of public conservation land and resources generally, and in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act. Subject to the terms of any delegations, it is anticipated that the Game Animal Council will work closely with the Central North Island Sika Foundation (the Sika Foundation) and the Department to implement this Plan.

Under the Game Animal Council Act, the Game Animal Council also has a function to assess the costs of managing sika as a herd of special interest (and herds of special interest more broadly) and to make recommendations to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on ways to recover those costs.

Central North Island Sika Foundation

The Sika Foundation was formed in 2015 to engage with the sika hunting community, the Department, the Game Animal Council, tangata whenua and other stakeholders to explore designating a Sika Herd of Special Interest.

Since its inception, the Sika Foundation has sought to better understand the sika herd and educate hunters and the wider community about management regimes that protect the special nature of both the Central North Island and the sika herd.

The objectives of the Sika Foundation are to:[7]

- actively manage the Central North Island sika herd to provide enhanced levels of protection for the forests and grasslands in which these animals live and improved benefits to hunters;
- advance a management regime that involves a collaborative partnership between recreational sika hunters, the Game Animal Council, the Department, local iwi, interested landowners and other stakeholders;
- achieve and maintain consistent, appropriate harvest levels of healthy sika through improved coordination of recreational sika hunting and other management actions, as required; and
- increase the understanding by recreational sika hunters and the wider community of the sika herd, its value and management through better information and education.

In early 2025, the Sika Foundation proposed that the Minister for Hunting and Fishing initiate a process to consider designating sika as a herd of special interest under the Game Animal Council Act. The Sika Foundation will likely be engaged to undertake many aspects of the day-to-day implementation and delivery of this Plan, including animal management and control, hunter management, and educational initiatives.

[7] The constitution of the Sika Foundation is available at sikafoundation.co.nz/our-objectives.

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Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

The Department is responsible for administering conservation legislation such as the Conservation Act and Wild Animal Control Act. It has a responsibility to promote conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage resources, foster recreation, and allow tourism. The Department also has a responsibility under section 4 of the Conservation Act to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Department administers the Game Animal Council Act in relation to the Sika Herd of Special Interest. On behalf of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, the Department leads the statutory process to develop herd management plans and ensure that legislative requirements are met. The Department will support implementation of this Plan in accordance with delegations and directions of the Minister for Hunting and Fishing.

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2 Values and key context

Natural heritage and conservation values

Kaimanawa Forest Park (77,348 hectares) was established as a land management unit in 1969, most of which is centred on the Kaimanawa Mountains.

The topography of Kaimanawa Forest Park is characterised by:

- four main mountain ranges running northeast to southwest in the south and southwest;
- a complex multi-directional ridge system in the northeast; and
- gently sloping terrace land in the north.

Elevations range from 560 metres above sea level in the north to 1,727 metres above sea level at the summit of Makorako. In summer, this Park can be very hot and dry, while in winter, inhospitable snow and blizzards are common at higher elevations.

Biodiversity in Kaimanawa Forest Park typically comprises montane and alpine species. It is dominated by beech forest and alpine plant communities and animals that are commonly associated with these. It contains a large area of alpine habitat, while smaller areas of podocarp-broadleaf forest occur in the southwest.

Most of the vegetation in Kaimanawa Forest Park, except in the extreme south, was destroyed by the last eruption of the Taupō Volcano in 186 AD. The forest then fully returned but was later reduced in extent, particularly in the south and most of the larger river valleys, by Māori and European fires. Where fires occurred, there is now a mosaic of red tussock grassland, scrub and smaller pockets of beech forest.

The adjoining Kaweka Forest Park (59,000 hectares), which covers most of the Kaweka Range, was gazetted in 1974. Kaweka Forest Conservation Area (1,146 hectares) adjoins Kaweka Forest Park around Don Juan peak and is integrated with Kaweka Forest Park for management purposes. Therefore, the information below regarding Kaweka Forest Park applies equally to Kaweka Forest Conservation Area.

The topography of Kaweka Forest Park is similar to that of Kaimanawa Forest Park, with the main Kaweka Range a dominant feature, running roughly north to south along the Park's eastern flank. A number of other ranges and high points are also prominent, particularly Te Pukeohikarua and the Black Birch and Kaikomata Ranges. The Park is also characterised by numerous stream and river valleys, most notably the Ngaruroro, Tutaekuri, Ngaawapurua/Harkness, Donald and Makino.

Like Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park covers a range of elevations, from 213 metres above sea level where the major rivers leave the Park up to the high point of the Kaweka Range at 1,724 metres above sea level. The Park also experiences a dramatic range of weather conditions, from hot and dry periods in the summer through to freezing snowstorms during the winter months.

The area was widely used by Māori as a hunting ground for kiore and birds in the pre- and early European period. In the 1860s, European farmers introduced sheep to the area, using fire to burn off native grasses, native forest and scrub for pasture. In the early 20th century, the spread of rabbits, erosion and the challenging climate led to grazing on the main range being abandoned.

The Kaweka Range is the driest section of the North Island mountain axis, and plant compositions reflect this. Vegetation varies from indigenous forest to alpine grasslands and scrublands. On the eastern flanks, infestations of wilding pines (particularly *Pinus contorta*) are a significant issue.

In both forest parks, vegetation destruction through volcanic activity, man-made fires and erosion was further exacerbated by the introduction of pigs, goats, possums and deer. However, despite the effects of burning, grazing and wild animals, the forest parks still contain a wide range of ecosystems, some of which are ecologically significant. The forest fauna is typical of alpine and beech forest communities, with a diverse range of bird species reflecting the different types of habitats that are present.

Several rare and threatened species have been recorded, including the pekapeka / long-tailed bat, kiwi-nui / North Island brown kiwi, whio / blue duck, kārearea / New Zealand falcon, North Island kākā, koekoeā / long-tailed cuckoo, mātātā / North Island fernbird, toutouwai / North Island robin and kākāriki / parakeets.

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Conservation and introduced species

The introduction of red deer, sika, pigs, possums, horses, goats, hares, rabbits, rats, mice, hedgehogs, cats and mustelids to the Kaimanawa Mountains and Kaweka Range has caused significant ecological change over the last century. A key issue is the management of impacts by deer.

Red deer were introduced to the area in 1901, and the population grew steadily. Sika were then liberated in 1905 near the northeastern end of what is now Kaimanawa Forest Park and eventually outcompeted red deer. The range of sika now covers approximately 9,000 square kilometres of the Central North Island, across various land tenures.

Deer have caused palatable understorey species like puahou / five finger and patē / seven finger to be replaced by unpalatable species such as horopito and crown fern within forest habitats in the forest parks. Deer are also compromising canopy replacement at some sites. Research indicates that regeneration is possible where most of a deer population at a site is removed through intensive management, but this is generally slow, location specific and costly to sustain. Plant growth also depends on light and nutrient availability, so competition from deer-avoided species may slow down the recovery process, leading to long-term changes in forest composition.

Biodiversity declines and changes in community composition can reduce ecological resilience, including resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Deer control is expensive, with eradication and the maintenance of deer-free areas costing significantly more than suppression (population reduction) activities over the same area. Therefore, prioritisation is undertaken, and emphasis is placed on controlling deer to protect priority areas and species. Sika management in the Sika Area is complicated by the distribution of sika and the fact that they often move across boundaries between the Sika Area and adjacent land.

Deer management and control in the forest parks has evolved over time. Between 1998 and 2015, the Department led a programme of aerial deer control to manage numbers within Kaweka Forest Park. Known as the Kaweka Mountain Beech Project, this programme aimed to restore and protect tawhairauriki / mountain beech forests in Kaweka Forest Park from the impacts of deer browsing.[8] It involved monitoring seedling recruitment, growth and mortality across various plots, and assessing the effectiveness of deer control methods such as fencing, aerial hunting and recreational hunting. The project used adaptive management principles and also sought to enhance recreational hunting experiences. Aerial control of deer was the primary method used to support forest regeneration. As part of the programme, analysis and modelling of vegetation monitoring data predicted that aerial deer control during the vulnerable seedling and sapling phases leads to canopy and gap closures in mountain beech forest at most open sites within 40 years. The use of other, less intensive methods in isolation was shown to be significantly less effective, with far longer recovery times.

In 2022, with funding from the Department and support from the Game Animal Council, the Sika Foundation began a new programme of adaptive deer management and research in the forest parks.[9] This involved professional ground and aerial deer culling operations by specialist operators using thermal imaging equipment to target hinds, and facilitating access for recreational hunters into the 15,000-hectare Remote Experience Zone in Kaimanawa Forest Park.[10] The programme recognised that hind-focused management reduces the reproductive output of the herd and the associated stress on the environment. Between 2022 and 2025, the programme removed over 1,100 deer, and the results informed future habitat management strategies.

[8] For further information, see: Duncan R, Ruscoe W, Richardson S, Allen R. 2006. Consequence of deer control for Kaweka mountain beech forest dynamics. Napier: Department of Conservation. Landcare Research Contract Report LC0607/021. doc.govt.nz/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/kaweka-deer-control.pdf

[9] Further information is available on the Sika Foundation's website: sikafoundation.co.nz/adaptive-deer-management-plan-2022-2025.

[10] The Kaimanawa Forest Park Remote Experience Zone is shown on Map 1 of the *Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan 2007*: doc.govt.nz/kaimanawa-management-plan.

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Hunting and recreation values

Sika herd

The sika herd in the Sika Area is part of the only wild herd of sika in the Southern Hemisphere and draws international and domestic hunters to the Central North Island. Sika have unique markings, produce high-quality antlers and are elusive, all of which make them attractive to hunters.

The sika which are now part of the Herd of Special Interest can be linked back to sika gifted by the Duke of Bedford in England to the New Zealand Government. The gifted animals were received by the Tourist and Publicity Department in 1904 and released on Poronui Station on the northern boundary of what is now Kaimanawa Forest Park in January 1905.

Over time, the sika population adapted well to the local conditions and spread widely. From the 1960s, sika became the subject of a range of studies focused on their dispersal, habitat use and potential for hybridisation with other deer species. Throughout the 1970s to 1990s, sika came to increasingly dominate red deer within the Sika Area as a result of their superior physiology and ability to outcompete other species.

At the same time, the popularity of the sika hunting experience continued to grow. In recognition of the sport-hunting potential of the sika herd, the northern part of Kaimanawa Forest Park and eastern part of Kaweka Forest Park were gazetted as recreational hunting areas under the Wild Animal Control Act in 1982 and 1986, respectively. These recreational hunting areas (or RHAs) were intended as places where recreational hunting is the primary means of controlling deer, with management actions to be guided by wild animal control plans issued by the Director-General of the Department. Although only one Kaimanawa wild animal control plan was made, recreational hunting opportunities in the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges remain highly significant to the hunting community.

During the sika rut, large numbers of hunters descend on the Sika Area, and it is not uncommon for hundreds of vehicles to be parked along key access points into the area.

While accessible locations see significant hunting pressure, the more remote parts of the Sika Area are exposed to comparatively little hunter activity. This is particularly the case outside the rut, with the Kaimanawa Remote Experience Zone and harder-to-reach parts of the Kaweka Range often seeing little recreational hunting pressure. In these areas, limited access opportunities affect the contributions recreational hunter activity can make to sika population management.

The sika hunting experience draws people from throughout the North Island and beyond. Sika hunting trade shows and events, hunter tourism, commercial activity, and related social enterprise all contribute to a vibrant and passionate sika hunting community.

Hunting and managing for hunting purposes

Sika have generally been hunted year round in the Sika Area, but the best time to hunt them is widely considered to be between late February and August, but particularly during the autumn roar (mid-March to the end of April), when emboldened stags (male sika) are vocal to attract hinds (female sika), and during spring, when sika feed on new plant growth.

Stags are hunters' preferred target because of their impressive antlers, which can reach between 11-30 inches long and can have 6–8 points.

This Plan sets objectives and strategies for the management of sika within the Sika Area for hunting purposes in a way that is consistent with the overriding considerations outlined in section 1 and in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act. This involves taking an adaptive management approach, with a particular focus on improving habitat health to increase animal quality and enhance the sika hunting experience. It encourages hunters to act as caretakers for the Sika Area (and the environment more broadly) rather than end-use consumers. A herd of special interest designation is the only management tool that specifically provides for the management of game animals for hunting purposes on public conservation land.

Managing the Sika Herd of Special Interest for hunting purposes involves focusing control efforts on sika hinds, which will have both environmental and hunting benefits. Hinds have smaller home ranges than stags, which means that overabundant female groups can cause intense localised impacts. By contrast, stags spend more of their time in alpine areas, tussock grasslands, farm edges and forestry mosaics outside the Kaimanawa and Kaweka beech forests.

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The abundance of stags is managed through hunter harvest, as they are the preferred target of recreational hunters. A male-biased population benefits hunters by ensuring that there are sufficient males available for harvest despite a smaller population overall. It also enhances rut hunting experiences, which are considered to be the pinnacle of sika hunting due to the vocal nature of sika stags.

In a male-biased population, multiple males compete for mating rights with the lower proportion of healthy cycling females. This increased mating competition encourages sexual dimorphism, where traits such as a larger body and antler size become more prominent over time. These larger, more dominant stags are more likely to win the right to breed with cycling hinds, allowing them to pass their genes to the next generation, which leads to intergenerational changes in the sika herd that are desirable to hunters.

Maintaining the sika population at low levels reduces the environmental impacts on flora, leading to an increased availability and diversity of preferential browse plants. This, in turn, improves the health of sika, which increases fawn survival, body size, body fat content and antler growth, leading to an improved quality and quantity of venison and antlers.

Improved habitat health also contributes to an enhanced sika hunting experience. Being immersed in a thriving environment with a diversity of palatable species in the browse tier, hearing kiwi and ruru/moreporks calling at night, observing whio in the rivers, and seeing flocks of kākā and kererū in the canopy all enhance the hunting experience.

The ongoing management of deer populations will also reduce deer-induced impacts on some non-canopy palatable species within the forest parks. Even a low-density sika population is likely to affect the regeneration of highly preferred palatable species in deer-accessible sites, but less-preferred palatable species will benefit from the sika population being maintained well below the maximum sustainable yield. Highly preferred palatable species can be found throughout the forest parks in locations that are inaccessible to deer, such as on stream banks, bluff systems, and stumps and beech buttresses in windfall areas, as well as on other plants as epiphytes.

Adoption of the Sika Herd of Special Interest management approach is intended to encourage collective and concerted action for sika management and the conservation of indigenous flora and fauna in Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area generally. It seeks to do this by recognising and providing for a range of values, conservation outcomes, communities and recreational activities, and by building on recent collaborative efforts between the Sika Foundation, the Department and others to improve sika management. This, in turn, is expected to expand the number of people contributing to conservation efforts more broadly.

Monitoring, research and reporting to support management

Monitoring is an important aspect of herd management, as it provides information that allows the effectiveness of management actions to be evaluated and the objectives for managing sika for hunting purposes to be met. A range of methods and tools are available to be used and adapted annually to ensure that the most appropriate method is being implemented to build on the data already collected and within the timeframe in which the information is needed.

Research will allow the effectiveness of management to be improved and support the objectives and strategies for managing sika for hunting purposes being met.

Reporting on herd management activities shows progress in meeting the objectives and strategies. This provides transparency and accountability to Treaty partners, stakeholders and members of the public who are interested in the management of the Sika Herd of Special Interest. Regular reporting will also support an efficient and effective plan review process.

Culture, heritage, community and stewardship values

There are a range of views on sika and how they should be managed. Some see sika as an introduced species and so think that the animals should be removed. Others seek to realise the value of the herd as a part of the contemporary cultural and community context of the Central North Island. Although perspectives on the animals differ, there is a shared desire to see improved management of the Sika Area. This reflects the significant cultural, heritage and stewardship values associated with this area.

Tangata whenua have a long-standing and profound connection with the Sika Area through concepts including tūrangawaewae (a place to stand or place of belonging) and whakapapa (genealogical lineage). These connections can transcend both the physical and spiritual worlds. Many tangata whenua are deeply

concerned about the degraded state of the ngahere (forest) and the threats introduced species pose to taonga species, traditional practices and indigenous biodiversity, as well as being able to meaningfully exercise kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and contribute to improving outcomes.

The Sika Area also has a long history of European influence and activity. A number of significant heritage features from the early European period remain, including the Iron Whare musterer's hut made from vertical slab tōtara and dating back to the 1870s, and the Armed Constabulary Stockade near Tarawera.

More recently, parts of Kaweka and Kaimanawa Forest Parks within the Sika Area have become a focal point for hunters and trampers, with many travelling from around the North Island to enjoy the rugged terrain, unique flora and fauna, and extensive network of backcountry huts and tracks here. The relatively accessible nature of the forest parks, particularly from Littles Clearing and Kuripapango, as well as the Lotkow, Makahu, Clements Mill and Kaimanawa Road ends, contributes to their popularity.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Kaimanawa Remote Experience Zone in the southeast of Kaimanawa Forest Park is relatively difficult to access and prized by a range of park users for its relatively untouched nature and provision of one of only a few wilderness-like experiences in the North Island.

Many of the rivers within the Sika Area are popular with anglers, with the brown trout fishery being a highly sought-after experience. These same rivers and waterways are also popular with paddlers, who enjoy rafting and kayaking in many places within Kaimanawa and Kaweka Forest Parks.

Throughout the same area, a range of community conservation and stewardship initiatives are undertaken by several groups, including the Sika Foundation. These efforts focus on predator trapping to support native bird species – particularly whio, North Island brown kiwi and short-tailed bats. A range of groups are also increasingly interested in and contributing to efforts to maintain recreation infrastructure, particularly the network of huts and bivies located throughout the Sika Area. Given its accessibility, the area is also popular with outdoor recreation, school and other groups. Concessionaire activity within the Sika Area is focused on outdoor recreation and education, research, and infrastructure.

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3 Objectives and strategies

This section sets out the approach to be taken for managing the Sika Herd of Special Interest to ensure that the objectives for managing sika for hunting purposes are met.

Objectives

Objective	Description
1	Sika are managed in a manner that allows for the maintenance of forest ecosystem processes, including canopy regeneration, and protects threatened species and their habitats.
2	The sika hunting experience is enhanced while contributing to overall management and regeneration of the Sika Area.
3	Seek to generate in kind support, and revenue through partnerships and sponsorships, to contribute to the cost of delivering this Plan.
4	Engage the hunting community in the management of sika and the Sika Area so the community provide support for local conservation and social initiatives.
5	Relationships between Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Whitikaupeka, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, Mana Ahuriri Trust, Hineuru Iwi Trust, Tamatea Pōkai Whenua, the Department, the Game Animal Council and the Sika Foundation are strengthened, and opportunities for tangata whenua to be involved and participate in the management of sika are increased.
6	Knowledge and understanding of the dynamics between sika and indigenous species and ecosystems are improved.
7	Monitoring enables adaptive management and demonstrates whether the management of sika is achieving the objectives of this Plan.
8	Research supports and enhances the management of sika and the Sika Area.
9	Public reporting provides information on whether the Plan is achieving the Objectives.

Strategies

Strategy	Description
1	**Use a range of tools to manage the Sika Herd of Special Interest and improve the hunting experience.**
General	
1.1	Set and review annual sika management targets to manage populations in a way that aligns with the objectives and strategies of this Plan.
1.2	Coordinate and manage recreational hunting, herd management hunts, and professional control operations and harvest activity to selectively remove sika in a way that: a) prioritises areas for population control; b) protects and enhances the hunting experience during the sika rut; and c) achieves a male-biased population, with a higher proportion of older males.
1.3	Apply other management options if recreational hunting is insufficient to maintain a sika population that achieves the ecological objectives of this Plan.
General recreational hunting	
1.4	Operate a hunting authorisation system for hunting sika within the Sika Area, and require hunters to obtain an authorisation and adhere to its conditions.
1.5	Specify hunting conditions by notice in the Gazette, including conditions relating to the periods and times when sika may be hunted.[11]
1.6	Allow open hunting area access to Sika Herd of Special Interest hunting opportunities unless this would pose substantial safety risks, the level of demand is reducing hunter satisfaction or restriction is otherwise required for management purposes.

[11] Game Animal Council Act 2013, section 18(2).

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Strategy	Description
1.7	Explore opportunities to establish a hunter ballot or booking system in the Kaimanawa Remote Experience Zone during the sika rut period.
1.8	Work with relevant groups and organisations to manage recreational hunting access for short periods outside the sika rut where necessary to support population management activities.
1.9	Encourage hunters to: a) target the removal of hinds to reduce the population of breeding females; and b) selectively remove sika to increase the proportion of older males in the herd.
Herd management hunts	
1.10	Provide opportunities for the hunting community and other interested parties to contribute to and participate in herd management hunts.
1.11	Focus herd management hunts on opportunities to: a) facilitate access to parts of the Sika Area where access is difficult, recreational hunter activity is limited or sika abundance is particularly high; b) increase awareness in the hunting community of the impacts of sika on these parts of the Sika Area; and c) contribute to animal control activities.
1.12	Seek opportunities to recover venison from sika removed as part of herd management hunts where efficiency and effectiveness are not compromised.
Professional control operations	
1.13	Undertake professional control operations where recreational hunting and herd management hunts are insufficient to maintain a sika population that achieves the objectives of this Plan.
1.14	Seek opportunities to recover venison from sika removed as part of professional control operations where efficiency and effectiveness are not compromised.
2	**Undertake monitoring and research to support management and decision making.**
Monitoring	
2.1	Develop and implement a monitoring programme that includes the following: a) Ecological monitoring, which may include, but is not limited to, the following methods and tools: i. Seedling ratio index ii. Permanent 20 x 20 metre plots iii. Alpine deer browse iv. Faecal pellet counts b) Exploring the use of new monitoring methods, tools and technologies, and seeking the views of tangata whenua, the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board, the East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board and the Department prior to their use in the Sika Area. c) Monitoring the hunter harvest, including the hunter contribution to control targets and the age and length of jaws from animals harvested to determine the herd age structure, genetic integrity and growth rates. d) Monitoring voluntary and partnership contributions to the key management objectives. e) Monitoring hunter satisfaction with the management of the Sika Herd of Special Interest, including, but not limited to, the: i. quality of sika available; and ii. authorisations processes, including the information available to hunters prior to and after their hunting trips.
2.2	Undertake ecological monitoring in accordance with relevant standards used or set by the Department.
2.3	Include the results from all monitoring in an annual report (see strategy 5 below).

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Strategy	Description
Research	
2.4	Seek opportunities to undertake or support research relevant to the management of sika and/or their effects within the Sika Area.
2.5	Explore opportunities with tangata whenua to incorporate mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in management and research activities, and increase understanding of the impact of sika on taonga species.
2.6	Undertake relevant research, which may relate to, but is not limited to, the: a) spread, behaviours and effects of sika on indigenous flora, and how this compares with that of other deer species; b) movement patterns and habitat utilisation of sika within the Sika Area; and c) changes in the health and composition of the sika herd over time.
2.7	Address relevant research findings in an annual report.
3	**Work closely with iwi and hapū to manage sika.**
3.1	Seek to establish a forum or rōpū (group) with relevant iwi and hapū to enable the sharing of perspectives and enhance opportunities for iwi and hapū to be involved in management of the Sika Herd of Special Interest.
3.2	Seek to create opportunities for iwi and hapū to be actively involved in delivering herd management activities.
3.3	Engage with Treaty partners when developing partnerships with others to ensure that the interests and values of tangata whenua in relation to such partnerships are considered.
3.4	Work with Treaty partners when developing hunter authorisation, education and promotional materials to ensure that these appropriately recognise and provide for their values and cultural information.
4	**Foster partnerships and community stewardship.**
Partnerships	
4.1	Seek to develop partnerships and commercial opportunities associated with sika to help meet the costs of implementing this Plan.
4.2	Actively promote the Sika Herd of Special Interest hunting experience to domestic and international markets.
Stewardship	
4.3	Provide educational opportunities for communities, hunters and interested parties about the: a) contribution that managing sika for hunting purposes makes to improving forest and herd health; b) impacts of sika on the environment and conservation values, and what the objectives of this Plan are working to achieve; c) selection of sika when hunting to improve conservation values, herd health and recreational outcomes; d) Sika Herd of Special Interest hunting experience; e) visitor requirements and behaviours on public conservation land; and f) requirements for hunting safely.
4.4	Provide a range of opportunities for the hunting community and other interested parties to actively contribute to sika herd management and control activities.
4.5	Work with the local communities in the Central North Island to develop opportunities to participate in activities such as open days, hunter training and education days.
4.6	Work with the professional and recreational hunting communities to facilitate and support social initiatives, such as local foodbanks and charities.
4.7	Seek to provide a range of opportunities for the hunting community and other interested parties to contribute to wider conservation initiatives within the Sika Area, such as predator trapping and control programmes and the maintenance of public recreation infrastructure.

Strategy	Description
4.8	Seek opportunities to work with the owners and managers of private land adjoining Kaweka Forest Park, Kaimanawa Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area to improve the management of sika beyond the Sika Area.
5	**Undertake annual planning and reporting on management activities.**
Annual operational plan	
5.1	Develop an annual operational plan for the activities planned for the coming year to help achieve the objectives. This operational plan should include, but is not limited to: a) setting operational areas and annual control targets, including the sex ratio of sika and specific locations within the Sika Area for control; b) outlining methods to achieve targets, such as recreational hunting, herd management hunts and professional control operations; c) providing opportunities for the carcass recovery of venison associated with control operations; d) setting the annual sika hunting process, including the issuing of authorisations and any key dates; e) identifying any other planned work or initiatives; and f) identifying parties or entities responsible for management activities and related timeframes.
Annual report	
5.2	Prepare and publish an annual report detailing the activities undertaken in the previous year, including, but not limited to: a) overall herd management, including the number of sika controlled, the control method(s) used, the areas where control occurred and the control effort; b) results and outcomes of monitoring activities, such as ecological monitoring and hunter participation and satisfaction evaluations; c) key metrics of hunter management, such as the number of authorisations issued and available information on the ages, locations, condition and quality of the sika taken; d) sponsorships and commercial partnerships; e) hunter training, education and community initiatives; f) wider conservation activities supported; and g) opportunities to improve management going forward.
5.3	Include financial reporting in the annual report in relation to: a) sika control and other conservation activities; b) overall expenditure and contributions by the Department and/or central government to manage the Sika Herd of Special Interest; and c) monitoring.
5.4	Work with the Department when preparing the annual report prior to its finalisation and public release.
5.5	Present the annual report to Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Whitikaupeka, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, Mana Ahuriri Trust, Hineuru Iwi Trust, Tamatea Pōkai Whenua, the Tongariro Taupō Conservation Board and the East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board, if requested.

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4 Compliance, review and enforcement

Plan compliance and review

This Plan binds the Game Animal Council.

It must be reviewed at intervals of not more than 5 years, in accordance with section 19 of the Game Animal Council Act. Unless otherwise directed by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing, plan reviews are to be initiated early in the fourth year of a 5-year plan cycle.

The review will consider annual reports, monitoring data and results, and relevant research as part of an assessment of whether the Plan's objectives and strategies are delivering the benefits expected to be gained by managing the sika herd for hunting purposes. The review will also address the overriding considerations outlined in section 1.

Depending on the review findings, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing may determine that an amendment to this Plan is not required.

Where the Minister for Hunting and Fishing considers that the review findings warrant amendment of this Plan, any such amendments will be made following the process set out in the Game Animal Council Act. This includes the public notification of an amended Plan and an opportunity for interested parties to make submissions.

Sika Herd of Special Interest compliance and enforcement

Schedule 1 of the Game Animal Council Act sets out the compliance and enforcement framework that applies to the Sika Herd of Special Interest (if designated).

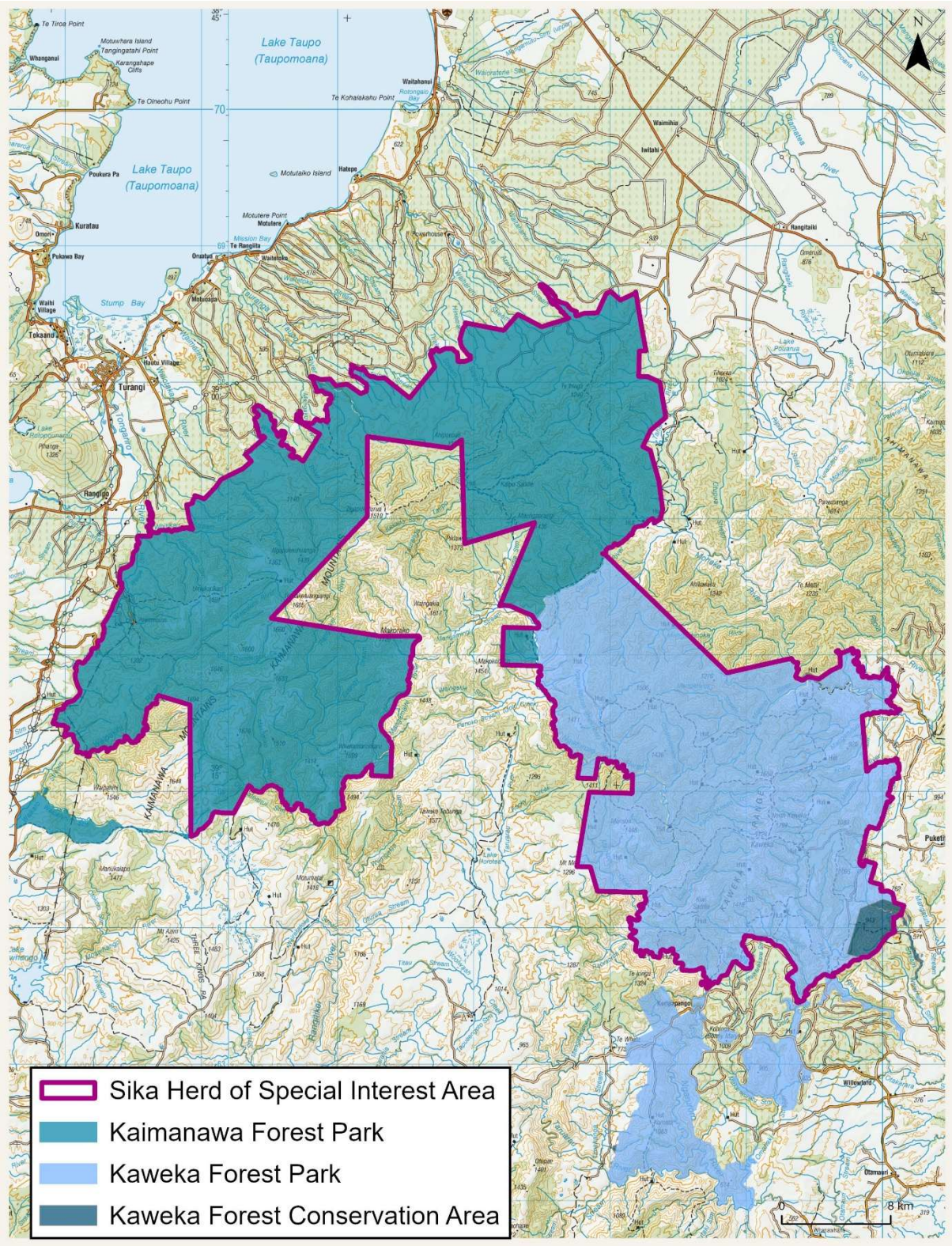
The Director-General of the Department may appoint and remove enforcement officers and honorary enforcement officers. Officers have the power to prevent or stop offending, require personal details, search, stop any activity, and seize any animal, animal product or thing that provides evidence that an offence has been committed.

A person who hunts or kills any animal in a designated area for a herd of special interest without the appropriate authorisation, licence or permit is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding $5,000.[12]

[12] Game Animal Council Act 2013, section 30(1).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps



Map 1: Sika Herd of Special Interest Area

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Appendix 2: Glossary

Authorisation
Collective term for types of approvals (whether permits or otherwise) issued by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing under section 18 of the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

Community
Any individual or group (whether statutory or non-statutory, formal or informal, commercial or non-commercial) with an interest in a particular conservation issue.

Conservation board
An independent body established under section 6L of the Conservation Act 1987. The primary functions and powers of conservation boards are set out in sections 6M and 6N of the Conservation Act and section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980. Their functions include advising the New Zealand Conservation Authority or Director-General of the Department of Conservation on conservation matters of importance in their area. They also have an important conservation advocacy role. The relevant conservation boards for this Plan are the Tongariro Tāupo and East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Boards.

Control target
A target number of deer to be removed from the Sika Area via recreational hunting, commercial hunting and professional control operations on an annual basis, as set out in an annual operation plan.

Herd management hunt
Coordinated hunting activity facilitated by an entity empowered to undertake management activities for the Sika Herd of Special Interest, with hunting effort generally being undertaken on a voluntary (non-commercial and non-professional) basis. The main benefits are data collection and hunter education. Herd management hunts can also contribute to managing animal populations in some circumstances.

Herd of special interest
A species of game animal in a specified area of public conservation land that the responsible Minister has, in accordance with the Game Animal Council Act 2013, formally designated to be managed for hunting purposes while ensuring that conservation values continue to be protected.

Indigenous flora
Plants that have established in New Zealand without the assistance of humans, vehicles or aircraft. This includes species that are unique to New Zealand, as well as those that may be found elsewhere in the world.

Minister for Hunting and Fishing
The Minister responsible for the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

Professional control operation
Activities to search for and shoot wild animals as a non-recreational and non-commercial activity specifically to help achieve control targets. Professional control operations generally do not involve recovery of the animals or any parts of the animals. Professional control operations may selectively target sika based on the sex and condition of individual animals.

Recreational hunting
Hunting undertaken by recreationists where there is no commercial gain involved in the activity.

Sika Herd of Special Interest
Sika (*Cervus nippon*) occurring within the Sika Herd of Special Interest Area.

Sika Herd of Special Interest Area (Sika Area)
The area and parts of Kaimanawa Forest Park, Kaweka Forest Park and Kaweka Forest Conservation Area that are subject to the Gazette notice designating the Sika Herd of Special Interest, as shown on the map in **Appendix 1**.

Sustainable forest canopy
Replacement of the forest canopy within 40 years of natural canopy collapse. Natural canopy collapse refers to the end of the natural life cycle of canopy species (trees) or occasions where environmental factors such as wind, snowstorm damage, or fungal or insect attack cause large areas of canopy species to die.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.15

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **D-G / NZCA strategic session**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (E): Strategic advice to the Minister and D-G in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Engage** in discussion
Context	**Structure:** Penny Nelson (DG) will be present for this session. The session will allow Penny to provide updates and current issues within the Department, and across the public sector more generally.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.16

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **Minister of Conservation**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (E): Strategic advice to the Minister and DG in the context of conservation in today's economy, the governance requirements, and strategic advice on public policy documents and legislation.
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	Yes
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Note** the contents of this paper b) **Provide** advice to the Minister of Conservation
Context	Hon Tama Potaka will join the Authority in person on the Thursday 4 December. There will be time earlier in the Authority meeting for members to have a prior discussion before they meet with the Minister.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.17

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **Stakeholder Relationships – Federated Mountain Clubs**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority G: Visitor management on public conservation lands and waters
Reference to Previous Paper(s) on this Subject	N/A
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Engage** in discussion
Context	**Structure:** Megan Dimozantos, President of the Federated Mountain Clubs will present and discuss with the Authority on some of the key issues facing the Clubs which include: • Modernisation of conservation legislation • Stewardship land reclassification • Future visitor networks • Fast-track Approvals Act

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.18.1

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **8 and 9 October 2025 meeting Public Minutes**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (L): NZCA's performance
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Approve** the 8 and 9 October 2025 minutes as a true and accurate record.
Context	The draft minutes from the Authority meeting on 8 and 9 October 2025 were circulated to members by email on 28 October, with reminders on 3 and 10 November, requesting that comments be received by 14 November. Once the Public Minutes are approved, they will be uploaded to the NZCA website www.conservationauthority.org.nz

New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)

Te Pou Atawhai Taiao O Aotearoa

9 October 2025

205th meeting, held at 8.30am

Te Ahu Centre, Cnr SH1 and Mathews Ave, Kaitaia

Unconfirmed Public Minutes

Unconfirmed

Present:
Edward Ellison, Chairperson
Tak Mutu
Greg Duley
Ina Kara-France
Tāne Davis
Shadrach Rolleston
Mick Abbott
Paul Norris
Dean van Mierlo

Apologies: Aroha Mead, Wendy Nelson, Izzy Fenwick

In attendance:

Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer, DOC	
Vicky Weeds, NZCA Servicing Officer, DOC	
Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer, DOC	
Philip Duffey, National Management Planning Advisor	Item 9
Mariel Combs, Team Lead National Marine Protection Programme	Item 9
Penny Nelson, Director-General, DOC	Item 10

Karakia

The Chairperson recited a Karakia to bless the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Chairperson's Introduction

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Authority discussed the development of the Conservation Law Reform and the National Conservation Policy Statement. They were concerned with the lack of transparency and felt they need to insert themselves more. The Chair will raise this with the D-G. They will look to have more frequent meetings of the Statutory Planning Committee, given their responsibilities under the legislation with regard to CMSs and the GPMP.

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The Authority resolved to move “into-committee” for agenda items 10 & 12.2.

Edward Ellison/Mick Abbott/carried

Agenda Item 2: Apologies

Apologies were received from Wendy Nelson, Izzy Fenwick and Aroha Mead

The Authority resolved to receive the above apologies for the meeting.

Edward Ellison/Tāne Davis/carried

Agenda Item 3: Conflicts of Interest for the Meeting

Dean van Mierlo noted that he is working on Fast-track matters on behalf of the Department. He has undertaken not to comment on specific issues related to specific Fast-track applications but will contribute to the general discussion on process.

Agenda Item 4: NZCA members’ environmental scan

Te Aupōuri issues

The Te Aupōuri discussion from the field trip was top of mind at the start of the meeting. Penny Nelson (Director General, DOC) had arranged for Henry Weston (DDG Regional Operations) and Mina Pomare-Peita (Chair of the Te Hiku o te Ika Conservation Board) to speak to Tipene Kapa-Kingi, CEO of Te Aupōuri. Edward has followed up with Henry, but Henry is yet to engage with this conversation. It was felt that direct communication is needed with Penny to see this resolved, given the Department has a wider responsibility. The Authority will ask for a clear process going forward. While the Authority is not responsible for resolving the issues between Te Aupouri and the Department, they are responsible for holding the Department to account.

It was suggested that a letter be drafted to the Department from the Authority outlining the concern that the Department is in breach of the both the Treaty settlement and the relationship agreement. The letter should ask for a commitment from the Department on a plan to action the allegations and stress the need to uphold and give mana to this agreement.

Action: NZCA to write to the Director General outlining our concerns and requesting a plan to address the issues. The letter to be copied to Te Aupōuri and the Chair of the Te Hiku Conservation Board.

Fast track Process

A draft document was shared with the Authority members on 26 September 2025 outlining a proposed process to triage and work on Fast-track submissions.

There was robust discussion on the process of triaging applications, and it was agreed that although the Authority’s Purpose and Priorities are a guide for all work undertaken by the Authority, section 4 obligations should be reiterated in the fast-track document. The Servicing Staff will undertake an initial triage of applications.

It was also noted that mana whenua are being asked to comment on applications within their rohe, and the cultural impact evaluations should be left to mana whenua to comment on their own matters.

Unconfirmed

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The Authority discussed asking the Department for extra resources for not only the Authority but the Statutory Bodies Team, as the additional workload from Fast-track has resourcing implications for them also.

If a community group writes to us with concerns, the Authority needs to consider those letters, but we need to have an overarching look through the application but include those letters in the triage pack. As an independent voice the Authority will need to make sure we do not become a spokesperson for the NGOs and community groups, we can take their view into consideration but make sure we are drawing our own conclusions.

Action: The Servicing Staff will redraft the triage document and circulate for comments.

Action: The NZCA will write a letter to the Director General, DOC, to ask for additional resourcing for both the Authority and the Statutory Bodies Team.

Strategic priorities

The Authority reviewed the updated NZCA Purpose and Priorities. It was questioned if the Conservation Amendment Land Management should be included in the priorities. It was agreed that while the legislation has not yet been introduced, the Authority needs to engage with the Department as it is developed, so it will be incorporated at this stage. It was also noted that these priorities are not ranked, and a note should be added to the document stating this.

Action: NZCA Staff to update and resend to Authority members.

Agenda Item 5: Te Hiku Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

The Executive Officer advised that the Minister's office had received the CMS for final review and was waiting on a response to his letter from the four Iwi.

The Authority committed to approve the CMS in an out of cycle meeting, post response from the Iwi.

Action: The Executive Officer will check the legality of approving the CMS via an online meeting. Provided this is clarified, and responses are received, a meeting will be arranged to approve the CMS.

The Authority agreed to provisionally approve the CMS as it stands, dependant on final comments from Iwi.

Shad Rolleston/Tāne Davis/carried

Agenda Item 6: Confirm meeting dates for 2026

The Authorty discussed potential dates for next year's meetings. The Authority agreed with the dates listed, other than the April dates given the proximity of Easter (first weekend of April in 2026). It was agreed the April dates will move to 15-16 April. For the two out of Wellington meetings it was decided to go to Otago in April 2026 and Auckland in October 2026.

Unconfirmed

Agenda Item 7: Ratify Biocontrol Committee decision

Not discussed.

Agenda Item 8: Status Report

The Authority discussed the items on the status report and provided the following updates.

- Items 1 and 9 – Mick Abbott advised these are completed. Rick McGovern-Wilson (NZCA Executive Officer) will follow up and confirm.
- Item 3 – The CMS implementation date will likely be 1 February 2026; this allows the Department time to editing and publishing.
- Item 13 – There have been further meetings around the appeal for the Tasman National Park additions, looking to resolve the issues, especially about the coastal strip under the Spain award. Of those six blocks only one site is contentious so the others will likely be able to be added to the National Park. Rick McGovern-Wilson (NZCA Executive Officer) to follow up with Peter Galvin (DDG Policy). Also, to check if any land was going to be passed back to Iwi.
- Item 15 – Predator Free 2025 Strategy Review, EO to follow up with Ben Reddiex (Director National Programmes) with potential report at the December meeting.
- Items 20, 23 and 26 – Will need to be removed from the status report as they were sitting with past members and this work will not continue.
- Item 35 – Loder Cup, this is very specific to plant biology and focuses on contributions to understanding protection and conservation of our native flora. Maybe a new award could be considered to be awarded by the Authority for conservation work. This discussion should be continued when Aroha Mead is back. Can enquire about all conservation awards currently available.
- Item 29 – Mining on Public Conservation Land enquiry about the 80-mining permissions currently in operation on Public Conservation Land. There has been no progress to date. This will be followed up by the Executive Officer.
- Item 36 – Te Urewera huts demolition and removal of other infrastructure on former conservation land. This will be followed up by the Executive Officer.

The transfer of public conservation land to Te Urewera as part of the Ngāti Rupani is not in the status report but had been on the agenda in October/December 2024. The Authority had provided advice to Te Arawhiti and the Treaty settlements team in 2024, and their response was sent to members a while ago. The EO will ask Peter Galvin for an update on the matter.

Action: Mike Abbott to send the "job sheet" to the Executive Officer.

Action: Executive Officer to contact FMC President to confirm details for the December meeting.

Action: Members requested agenda item numbers be included in column 2 of the table as a reference to the discussion on individual topics.

Agenda Item 9: Statutory Planning and Marine update

The paper was taken as read. Mariel Combs (Team Lead National Marine Protection Programme, DOC) and Philip Duffey (National Management Planning Advisor, DOC) presented to the Authority. Mariel passed on Lesley Douglas' apologies.

Unconfirmed

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Statutory Planning update

Philip Duffey presented to the Authority the Statutory Planning team updates. The team are working on notifications around HOSI and Herd Management Plans, which will be publicly notified in mid-November.

The Statutory Planning team have been working with Policy team on the Conservation Area Land Management (CALM) Bill. Planning reform includes amenities area.

Rick McGovern-Wilson (NZCA Executive Officer) provided a verbal update on the Te Hiku CMS process.

The Milford Opportunities Project Governance Group is in the initial stages of being stood up. The team are currently assessing access charging and allowing an amenities area in the park but looking to get a clearer view of the impact of these before continuing. It was raised by the Authority that as the law still currently applies, the Department should still be coming to the Authority for advice not just for providing updates. Philip advised he will pass that back to the Statutory Planning team that they are still to liaise with the Authority.

The Governance Group for the Milford Opportunities Project includes two representatives from Ngāi Tahu, one from MBIE Tourism Group, one from Environment Southand, and two independent members. It will be chaired by Penny Nelson. The NZCA noted that as we are currently working under existing legislation and would likely be doing so in the near future, that NZCA representation should be considered for the Governance Group. The NZCA have legislative responsibilities under both the National Parks Act and the Conservation Act and feel it is appropriate for them to have representation.

The Authority asked if the West Coast CMS is still being worked on. Philip advised that it is still progressing and will get the governance group back together to discuss this process. There are challenges with progressing it given the potential new legislation.

The NZCA reminded the Planning Team of the statutory role of the NZCA and they and conservation boards needs to be considered in all current work.

> *Action: NZCA to write a letter to the Minister of Conservation, cc Penny Nelson (Director General, DOC), requesting representation of the NZCA on the Milford Opportunities Project Governance Group.*

Marine update

Mariel Combs gave the Authority an update from the Marine team. There were some late changes to the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill, during the second reading regarding ring net fishing. This Bill has now passed its third reading, and the team are looking to the implementation of legislation.

Southeast Marine Protection update, litigation is underway but there is no progress to report currently.

The Authority resolved to move “into-committee” for agenda item 10 Edward Ellison/Mick Abbott/carried

Unconfirmed

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The Authority resolved to move out of "committee".

Edward Ellison/Mick Abbott/carried

Agenda Item 11: Report back from the Conservation Board Chairs Conference

Edward advised that the conference had a good turnout, was extremely valuable and good to continue. Tāne and Edward were representing the Authority as hosts for this meeting.

Peter Galvin (DDG Policy, DOC) had presented for over two hours on Department-related issues, the progress on the conservation law reform programme, including charging for access and the development of the National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS), and led a good robust discussion.

The Chairs only session was good, and they gave a report back to the NZCA. Ora Barlow, Co-Chair of the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board, collated a report on the issues discussed at this session. These were:

1. Strengthening Te Tiriti Partnerships – Section 4
2. Biodiversity at Landscape Scale
3. Te Mana o Te Taiao
4. Governance, Funding, and Policy Reform
5. Concessions Accountability
6. Relationships and Transparency
7. Te Hiku o Te Ika-a-Māui Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)
8. That the Conservation Board Working Group with Henry Weston is reinvigorated.

The Chairs would like to see the terms for conservation board membership increased to four-year terms instead of the current three. This would require an amendment to the legislation. There were a few Chairs whose terms expired due to having served the maximum of two terms.

It was agreed the NZCA should increase the number of meetings of the Statutory Planning Committee to help keep current CMS developments on track.

Other discussion from the conference included questions around what monitoring the Department undertakes on concession conditions, including cultural impacts, and the potential to set up a Māori caucus within the conservation boards chairs group. The Conservation Board Working Group that was set up by the D-G post the 2023 Chairs' Conference was also discussed, and it was agreed that the Chairs would like this to be re-established.

There was a request from the Auckland Conservation Board Chair for a Terms of Reference for the NZCA liaison role

Action: the NZCA would write to the Director General, DOC outlining the requests from the Chairs only session of the Conservation Board Conference.

Action: The NZCA staff will share the terms of reference for NZCA liaison role to conservation boards, with the board chairs.

Action: Rick McGovern-Wilson will follow up with Rena Kohere, Chair East Cost Hawke's Bay regarding a Māori caucus within the Conservation Boards.

Unconfirmed

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Agenda Item 12: Minutes

Agenda Item 12.1 Approve the Public Minutes for meeting held in August 2025

The Chair moved to approve the public minutes are a true and accurate record.

One matter, to be updated, in the Conflicts of Interest in the August minutes was to clarify Dean van Mierlo has been providing legal advice to the Department on Fast Track applications.

Aroha Mead advised via the Chair she would like to continue being the East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board liaison going forward. Taranaki/Whanganui liaison role is still open, and Tak Mutu will do this until a liaison is appointed.

The Authority resolved to accept the public minutes of the meeting held on 13 – 14 August 2025, with the corrections as noted, are a true and accurate record.

Edward Ellison/Ina Kara-France/caried

The Authority resolved to move "into-committee" for agenda item 12.2

Tak Mutu/Shad Rolleston/carried

The Authority resolved to move out of "committee".

Edward Ellison/Mick Abbott/carried

Agenda Item 13 Representation and Liaison

Agenda Item 13.1 Chair's report

Taken as read

Agenda Item 13.2 Conservation board and other liaison reports

Taken as read, report from Wendy Nelson for the Wellington Conservation Board

Verbal updates from Authority members included:

- Bay of Plenty: Tak Mutu reported that the board haven't been able to make quorum for the last two meetings and are struggling without proper servicing by the Department.
- Taranaki Whanganui: Tak Mutu also gave a report for this board. Liana Poutu, member of the Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi (Taranaki Maunga) has asked to attend a Board meeting.
- Regional Directors, DOC have indicated that they would like to initiate a boundary change to split Taranaki Whanganui board and add them into Waikato and Tongariro Taupō boards respectively. The boards are opposed to this change.
- World Heritage committee: Taranaki Maunga is being added considered for addition to the World Heritage Tentative list.

Unconfirmed

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- Otago Board: Paul Norris has agreed to take over the liaison role for the Otago Board from Mick Abbott. Mick had attended the meeting the previous week where the agreed to continue with co-chairs and had a focus on conservation law reform.
- West Coast: Dean van Mierlo has agreed to be the new liaison and is meeting them at the next meeting.
- Chatham Islands: Edward Ellison reported on their recent meeting which he joined online There are several issues for the Board including lack of connection with the BSO or people on the ground from the Department, including the Statutory Manager. Henry Weston (DGG, Regional Operations, DOC) joined the meeting to discuss some if these issues. It was agreed there was work to be done around building a better connection between the Department and the Board.

Agenda Item 14: Correspondence

The Authority resolved to receive the inwards correspondence and approve the outwards correspondence.

Edward Ellison/Tak Mutu/carried

Debrief

The Chair noted that they are looking forward to meeting Izzy Fenwick in person and welcomed Dean in person. Thanks to the Department staff who made this trip valuable.

Meeting Closed:

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a Karakia at 1.30 pm and thanked everyone for their constructive contributions.

Unconfirmed

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.18.2

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Rick McGovern-Wilson, NZCA Executive Officer

Subject: **8 and 9 October 2025 meeting In Committee Minutes**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (L): NZCA's performance
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Resolve** to go "into committee", and b) **Approve** the 8 and 9 October 2025 In Committee minutes as a true and accurate record.
Context	The draft minutes from the Authority meeting on 8 and 9 October 2025 were circulated to members by email on 28 October, with reminders on 3 and 10 November, requesting that comments be received by 14 November.

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New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.19.1

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Edward Ellison, NZCA Chairperson

Subject: **Chairs Report**

Tēnā koutou

The Conservation Board Chairs Conference convened in Wellington just prior to the October meeting of the Authority and was an important opportunity for Board Chairs to discuss current issues and identify items for the Authority to advocate on their behalf with the Department. Department staff also provided conference with useful presentations on a range of topics including conservation law reform and the fast-track process.

I have communicated with Minister Potaka on several occasions post the October meeting to provide an update on the outcomes of the Kaitaia meeting of the Authority, including progressing toward approval of the Te Hiku CMS. In addition, the ongoing mahi of the Authority on specific topics were discussed on a couple of occasions.

Regular communications have also been maintained with DG Penny Nelson on conservation matters as they relate to the ongoing work of the Authority.

New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.19.2

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Wendy Nelson, NZCA member

Subject: **Stout Trust Granting Panels meeting**

Background/Introduction

1. The meeting of the Stout Trust Granting Panels was held in Wellington on 22 October 2025 at the offices of Perpetual Guardian, with Stephanie Gillbanks from Perpetual Guardian as the Client Manager, and chaired by Peter Walls. I joined by Teams from Paris (21 – 22 October).

Details/Comments

Reporting on previous grants:

- 2022 grant of $40,000 to the Auckland War Memorial Museum for the Te Toki a Tapiri waka restoration project. The project was very successful, and the museum has a webpage dedicated to the project. Stephanie Gillbanks advised that the museum was unable to go ahead with the 3D scan of the waka, and so it has returned $12,000 of the grant.
- Stephanie Gillbanks reported that a recurring message from many grant recipients was that Stout Trust grants often provided seed funding which has been pivotal in the organisation receiving funding from the Lottery Environment and Heritage fund (which requires 1/3 of funding to be in place prior to applying). Even relatively small amounts of funding can have a significant snowball effect.
- The Christchurch Arts Centre has shared images of the new arts studio, funded in part by a $12,000 grant from the Stout Trust. The centre reported increased visitor numbers and enhanced collaboration among artists.

The Panels were shown some of the outputs from previous years' grants including a number of books, recently published, or soon to be published:

- 2022 grant to the Auckland War Memorial Museum – 'The Dark Dad; War and Trauma – a daughter's tale' by Mary Kessler
- 2022 grant to Objectspace – 'Warwick Freeman: Hook Hand Heart Star', which has been shortlisted for the 2025 Best Design Awards.
- 2023 grant to the Royal New Zealand Artillery Corps – 'Those who have Courage: The history of the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps and predecessor forces' by Matthew Wright; and
- 2023 grant to Auckland University Press – 'Atlas of New Zealand Wars' volume 1 by Derek Leask.

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Summary of 2025 Grant allocations:

The overall grant budget was $1,110,000. Of this, up to $230,000 could be allocated to applications under $20,000, and $880,000 was available to applications over $20,000.

In the under $20,000 category the grants for the Historical and Natural Sites category totalled $77,300.00, and the grants for the Arts category totalled $152,900.00.

In the over $20,000 category the grants for the Historical and Natural Sites Panel totalled $452,000.00, and grants for the Arts Panel totalled $427,800.00.

Two potential amendments to the funding guidelines for applicants were discussed.

- ”Applications to assist in the protection of native species and ecosystems on private land are likely to be more favourably assessed if the private land is covenanted and/or has guaranteed right of public access.”
- “For applications resulting in the production of a work of art, the artwork must ultimately remain in ‘public’ ownership (i.e. be permanently on public display or part of a gallery or museum collection). It may not be sold into private ownership.”

The exact wording will be refined prior to the 2026 grant round.

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New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.19.3

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Aroha Mead, NZCA member

Subject: **Report back on the IUCN World Congress**

DOC-10521878

Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer
18 November 2025

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Report to NZCA on IUCN World Conservation Congress

Aroha Te Pareake Mead

20 October 2025

This is my report on the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, 8 – 16 October 2025. I am a member of three IUCN Commissions (World Commission on Protected Areas, Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy and Species Survival Commission). I am also a member of the Policy Development Working Group (PDWG) that was tasked with developing an IUCN policy on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation, and as per the NZCA decision, I was accredited as Head of Delegation for the NZ Conservation Authority.[1]

Background on NZCA and IUCN

NZCA joined the IUCN in 1981 as a government agency member (Category B). According to the IUCN Members database there are six NZ members of IUCN in good standing (i.e. up to date with their fees).

- State and State Agency members**:** Department of Conservation, NZCA, Landcare – Category A & B
- NGO Members: Forest & Bird NZ, WWF NZ, ECO – Category C
- IPO Members: Category D - none at present but Te Tira Whakamataki is in the process of submitting an IPO membership application.

I'm aware that previously there were more members, Lincoln University, Predator Free Inc. and Wellington Zoo, but they do not appear in the membership database. There is a committee of NZ Members chaired by Geoff Key, Forest & Bird. Wendy Nelson is the Authority's representative on that Committee. Catherine Iorns is the NZ representative on Council member. When her term finishes in 2029, it will be the turn of a government rep. to be on Council.

The World Conservation Congress

The Congress is held every four years. It comprises three distinct components. A Forum featuring sessions to profile the work of IUCN Members and Commissions (9-12 October), an Exhibition of over 140 exhibits (9-13 October) and the Members Assembly for the 1400 Members of IUCN (13-15 October). The five themes of the Congress were:

Scaling Up Resiliant Conservation Action
Reducing Climate Overshoot Risks
Delivering on Equity

[1] There were no financial costs to NZCA associated with my attendance at the Congress. My airfare, accommodation and per diem were fully covered by IUCN PWDG. My time was voluntary.

Transitioning to Nature Positive Economies and Societies
Disruptive Innovation and leadership for Conservation

The Congress Forum

There were an estimated 10,000 registered participants at this Congress and over 1400 sessions scheduled across a massive conference complex with multiple halls. It was quite overwhelming. I tended to move between the Oceania, Indigenous Peoples, CEESP and SSC Pavilions, and only ventured from those spaces for specific sessions I was either talking in, or facilitating, or had committed to attend. (Overall, I estimate I attended less than 10% of the total offerings). On the other hand, being around 10,000 people from across the world and all walks of life, government, NGO, indigenous, private sector, all there because they are doing things to protect nature is absolutely energizing and gives such hope. I attended daily briefings of the PWDG and participated where I could in Oceania IUCN members activities. The NZ Ambassador to the UAE did invite all the NZ members to the Embassy for a lunch but I was unable to attend. I did, however, appreciate the invitation.

A Day in the Life – below was a typical day.

08:00 – 09:00	Daily briefing session PWDG Motion 87
10:00 – 11:00	Panel on IPOs, Indigenous Pavillion
11:00 – 12:00	Reimagining Conservation, CEESK Knowledge hub
12:00 – 12:15	IUCN Red List Update, Press Conference Rm
13:00 – 14:10	Biobanking Guidelines for Conservation Purposes
14:00 – 15:00	Tribute to Jane Goodall, Plenary, Hall 3
15:30 – 16:00	Briefing with Oceania members on Motions 87 and 133
17:50 – 18:30	Oceania members meeting with IUCN DG
19:00 0 21:00	World Future Council Awards, Te Awa Tupua

The main outcomes

The Abu Dhabi Call to Action sets out a focused set of key priorities that reflect the most pressing global challenges and opportunities discussed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. It brings together the collective outcomes, commitments, and calls for action expressed throughout Congress, centred around reaffirming nature as the foundation of human and planetary well-being; strengthening multilateralism and collective action; ensuring justice and inclusive participation; advancing science, knowledge, innovation and education; and scaling up and aligning resources for nature and climate action. The Abu Dhabi Call to Action | IUCN World Conservation Congress

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The Members' Assembly

The Members' Assembly is the business end of the Congress. Members vote on Motions, adopt the budget and work programme, elect the President, Treasurer, Regional Councilors and Commission Chairs and confer awards. Motions, once adopted, become Resolutions and form the basis of IUCN policies and influence governance priorities and amendments to statutes.

IUCN Members adopted a new 20-year Strategic Vision and four-year Programme. Unite for Nature on the path to 2045: A 20-year Strategic Vision for the Union that sets out IUCN's vision for "a just world that values and conserves nature", while Nature 2030: One nature, one future. The IUCN Programme 2026-2029 defines the implementation plan.

200 motions were submitted prior to the Congress, of which 138 were accepted and 50 were rejected. Online discussion of 138 motions was organised in two 'readings' and commenced on 23 April and concluded on 23 June. During the first reading, approximately 750 comments were made, which increased to approximately 1,800 during the second reading. While many of the discussions saw active participation by a variety of Members, the total number of Members that participated in the online discussion was only 137 (<10% of the Membership), of which more than 70% were from the West Europe and North America and the Caribbean Regions. Further, only about 40 Members (<3% of the Membership) were responsible for 80% of the comments in the discussion.

One hundred (100) motions were submitted to an electronic vote prior to Congress. The remaining motions were referred to the Members' Assembly for continued debate and vote. As well, 11 new motions were accepted at the Congress itself. Among the motions are ones that shape climate policy, promote environmental justice, and strengthen Indigenous stewardship. In turn these have direct relevance for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil and the next Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Conference of the Parties in Uzbekistan.

"T*ogether, these and the other adopted motions reaffirm IUCN's role as a bridge between science, policy, and practice. They provide a collective mandate for governments, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, and the private sector to act decisively on the interconnected biodiversity and climate crises, which are already seriously affecting human-well-being*," said **David Goodman, Senior Multilateral Policy Officer for IUCN's Centre for Policy and Law**. "*As the world prepares for the upcoming UN Climate Change and CITES Conferences, the outcomes of the IUCN Congress will help shape more inclusive and effective global action for people and nature*."

Motions 87 Synthetic Biology in relation to nature conservation – Motion 133 Moratorium on release in the wild

My main role at the Congress was as a member of the Policy Development Working Group responsible for drafting an IUCN Policy on Synthetic Biology (synbio) in relation to nature conservation. I provided a presentation on this draft Policy at the April 2025 NZCA meeting. At that time, I briefed the Authority on both the inclusive and participatory process used to draft the policy (including considering over 800 peer review comments submitted by members on two draft versions), as well as on the content.

The goal of the policy is to provide a basis to inform decision-making:

- on whether or not to use a synthetic biology application for nature conservation,
- on the responsible use of synthetic biology for nature conservation on a case-by-case basis; and
- on how to address the implications for nature conservation of the use of synthetic biology in other sectors on a case-by-case basis.

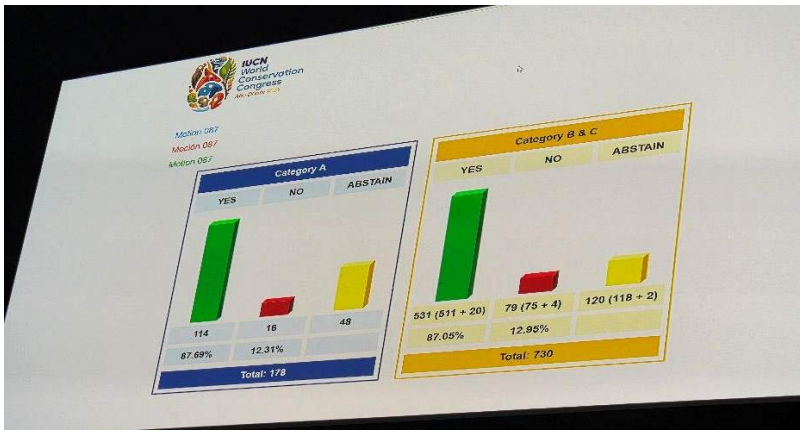
The policy is intended to harmonize with international instruments, goals, and guidelines. It neither supports nor opposes synbio as the scientific evidence is simply not available to argue one way or the other and does not specify particular applications or technologies of synthetic biology in order to avoid implying an overly narrow scope, while aiming to ensure the policy is future-proof given the rapidly evolving field. The policy lays out principles and general considerations, including considerations for FPIC (free, prior, informed consent) and equitable sharing of benefits.

Some Members submitted Motion 133 calling for a Moratorium on Releasing genetically engineered wild organisms into natural ecosystems. Motion 133 was originally rejected by the Motions WG. The proponents however appealed and it was reinstated. Motion 133 proposed a moratorium on products of a specific technology being released in the wild which at face value seemed a worthy cause. However, a moratorium contradicts the case-by-case basis of the policy (Motion 87). 133 also insisted that only an IUCN Members Assembly could remove the moratorium (without laying out the principles for doing so) and also required IUCN to refer to the moratorium in any communications, discussions, interventions by IUCN on gene technologies.

Members of the PDWG and Citizens Assembly were not allowed to lobby for one or the other Motion. Our role was solely to provide technical assistance or respond to questions about process,

We held three Forum sessions on the processes that contributed to Motion 87, i.e. the Citizens Assembly and Policy Development Working Group. As well, four contact groups were held throughout the Forum for 87 and for 133. (8 contact groups in total). Monitoring the fate of these particular motions was time intensive, relationship straining (because I knew some of the proponents of 133 and understood and shared some of their concerns) and nail biting because voting didn't happen until the last day because of the contact groups still trying to negotiate compromise text.

The vote for Motion 87 (Policy on Synthetic Biology in relation to Conservation) was conclusive.



The vote for Motion 133 however was very tight. I'm going to claim that the 1 vote margin of Category A was the NZCA vote!



For a copy of the final policy : 087-AMEND-IUCN policy on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation-EN.pdf

There has been considerable press interest in the outcome of the vote, some of which is quite inaccurate. Below are links to some of the articles.

Innovation Wins: IUCN Rejects Moratorium, Adopts Balanced Synthetic Biology Framework - Revive & Restore

Protecting Nature or Re-engineering It? The IUCN's Defining Choice – A Bigger Conversation

Moratorium on genetically engineering wild species in natural ecosystems – IUCN membership split down the middle | CBD Alliance

Governing the use of AI and protecting digital evidence

With Motion 143, Members have called for the development of a Union-wide policy and guidelines for the ethical and ecologically responsible use of artificial intelligence in conservation. The motion recognises AI's potential for biodiversity monitoring, threat detection, ecological modelling and participatory science, while noting risks including environmental impacts, algorithmic bias, and threats to data sovereignty.

The motion calls for an inclusive working group to co-develop the policy and recommends capacity-building programmes to strengthen ethical use, transparency, and equitable access. It also positions IUCN to ensure conservation priorities are considered in international AI governance.

Curbing the wildlife pet trade

Motion 108 mandates IUCN to develop guidelines to control the commercial pet trade in wildlife, an issue with growing conservation, welfare, and health implications. This initiative is expected to inform discussions at the next CITES COP, where countries will negotiate measures to regulate and reduce unsustainable wildlife trade.

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My Highlights from the Congress

- **Te Awa Tupua Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act 2017 received the Global Impact Award from the World Future Council.** I was extremely honoured to support Gerard Albert's video acceptance speech with a few words.



An impromptu waiata tautoko was provided by some IUCN NZ members. Nominations had been received from 41 countries and awardees selected by an international jury in recognition of *transformative policy and legislation that moves beyond policy violence to policy that enables living in harmony with nature and future generations.*
Recipients of the other awards were also inspiring (e.g. Policy Awards given for the Bhutan Biodiversity Act, Law 287 on the Rights of Nature, Panama, National Environment Act, Uganda and others) On return to Aotearoa, I gave the award to the Turia whānau to take back to Whanganui.

- **Noticeable Culture shift in IUCN** – The days of IUCN and the conservation movement being lead and dominated by western conservations is long over. *Diversity of values, perspectives, knowledge systems has been mainstreamed* as was evident in all aspects of the Congress, visually and in substance. There are now 31 Indigenous Peoples Organisations as members with full speaking and voting rights, and the contributions of non-western countries was far more evident than I have seen at previous Congresses. T
- Another organisational cultural shift that I noticed was the *move away from negative narratives about crisis, loss, tipping points, calamity, catastrophe etc., to instead focus on more positive messaging such as profiling local, national, regional, global improvements, more emphasis on green lists and on what is working.* As such a number of Motions actually compel IUCN to progress green lists and to add to red lists practical measures that can be adopted to improve the status of species. Examples include, a Motion to change the name of the Climate Crisis Commission to Climate Action Commission, and holding The IUCN Green List Awards Ceremony in the Plenary (rather than as a side event) to honour 24 new Listings from 13 countries.

- Confirmation that **investing in an inclusive and participatory process** to develop policy on contentious issues **works** – IUCN took a momentous leap in its' approach to the policy on Synthetic Biology by establishing not one but two participatory mechanisms. A Citizens Assembly (of IUCN member nominees selected for having no prior knowledge of Synthetic Biology) and the Policy Development Working Group. The resultant outcome carried a lot of buy in from Members because they were actively involved. Had the policy not been approved it would have been disastrous not only because of the issue of synthetic biology but also because it would have demonstrated to states that inclusivity doesn't work and isn't worth the investment.

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- **NZCA Voting Member** although I was on IUCN Council for 4 terms (2000-2016) I was never a voting member. This Congress provided me a new experience of being able to cast a vote which I did vigilantly. Voting was a challenge however as the Assembly was the first fully hybrid meeting catering to in-person and online participation. Asa such there was a delay between casting a vote and seeing the results. I think on one Motion I mistakenly cast the only Category B No vote for an amendment to that Motion. That's when I realised the significance of a vote. It was a full circle moment for me to vote to approve Motion 87 after spending over 15 years and three Congresses to systematically get to this point. Motion 133 (on the Moratorium) was defeated by one government vote. Had I not been accredited to the NZCA , that Motion may well have survived and all the human and financial resources that had been expended to develop an inclusive policy would have been wasted.

- **Appointment to the Steering Committee of the Species Survival Commission.** I accepted an invitation to to join the Steering Committee of the SSC and to be an Impact Chair, Inclusivity & Diversity. The SSC is the largest of the IUCN Commissions with a membership of over 10,000 members. My task over the next four years is to help diversify the membership and to increase the application of indigenous knowledge in red and green list assessments. It is my intention to establish a global TF on Indigenous Knowledge & Species Assessments.

- **The Role of Indigenous Peoples in IUCN** - there's a saying indigenous peoples often cite in UN negotiations " ***We are not here to be included. We are here to shape outcomes."*** The impact of the indigenous members of IUCN and of indigenous peoples in general on conservation policy, practice and outcomes was very visible. Several adopted motions highlight the central role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conserving nature. Motion 094 underscores the importance of Indigenous languages and traditional knowledge in biodiversity conservation, urging support for community-led initiatives to preserve languages and intergenerational ecological knowledge. It calls for collaboration with UNESCO, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), to ensure Indigenous knowledge is valued alongside scientific research. Indigenous leadership in protecting nature and sacred natural sites, species, and landscapes is the focus of Motion 107. By adopting this motion, IUCN Members called for wider recognition of sacred sites, landscapes, and elements within IUCN protected area categories and guidance that ensures continued Indigenous stewardship.

I had an active role in the indigenous programme. I opened the Indigenous Pavillion, spoke on several panels including one with the President and DG of IUCN on the whakapapa of indigenous peoples in the Union as well as a Panel on Re-imagining Conservation.



Lucy Muleneki, IUCN President Razan Al Mubarak, IUCN Grethel Aguilar, Aroha

Recommendations

There is great value in NZCA's membership in IUCN. Like any membership, you get out of it what you are willing to put into it. Having a representative on the NZ IUCN Committee is a basic form of participation. There are many opportunities to increase the Authority's involvement in key IUCN activities, such as:

- ✓ **World Protected and Conserved Areas, Panama 2027**

Panama will be hosting the next World Parks Congress in 2027. Exact dates have yet to be confirmed. NZCA should send representation. I will be attending funded through the SSC and am happy to be part of a NZCA delegation but I think it would be worthwhile to send the Chair or another Authority member.

I also recommend encouraging Te Urewera, Te Awa Tupua and Taranaki Maunga to submit a workshop proposal for the Congress. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the notion of the rights of nature but I found that many of the proponents of rights of nature initiatives routinely refer to the NZ precedents but lack understanding of the cultural context of these three cases.

The Congress will be organised around three integrated themes, each selected for its transformative potential. The outcomes will be frameworks for action, capable of shaping global and local strategies for lasting conservation impact. The themes being developed include:

- Global change and biodiversity – opportunities and threats for protected and conserved areas to address global challenges;
- Scaling Effective Conservation – securing gains, recognising key opportunities for focus and investment, ad determining how and where to scale;
- Conservation and People – recognizing and defending rights, responsibilities, and relationships in a changing world.

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- ✓ **Join an IUCN Commission**

Authority members can join any of the seven IUCN Commissions on an individual voluntary basis thus joining a global network of conservation and community and indigenous leaders, policy makers and practitioners. Become an IUCN Commission member | IUCN

Hamilton Zoo is opening a new SSC Ecotourism and Species Centre in Hamilton. They're just about to recruit a NZ based Director, fully funded. The main task of this group is to develop Guidelines on Ecotourism and Species. If Authority members know of people with an interest in ecotourism, please let me know. (Edward, Rick and Tak I have previously briefed you by email about this initiative). I have joined this TF.

- ✓ **Promote IUCN Resolutions**

The Authority can reinforce Resolutions in multiple ways, including, referring to them in submissions, selecting those resolutions relevant to the NZCA's to include implementation in our work programme. The full list of motions is available here, and the results of the motions, now Resolutions, adopted during the IUCN Congress 2025 are available here.

I hope this link works. It's a video from the IUCN Facebook page providing a summary of the Congress. Video | Facebook

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the NZCA. Thanks in particular to Wendy for your ongoing representation of the NZCA on the IUCN Committee and to Rick for being the lead contact for the Authority's IUCN membership.

Aroha Te Pareake Mead, NZCA Member

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New Zealand Conservation Authority Meeting No. 206	Agenda Item: 206.20

REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 and 4 December 2025

Prepared By: Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer

Subject: **Correspondence**

NZCA Strategic Priority and/or the Relevant DOC SOI Goal	NZCA Strategic Priority (L): NZCA's performance
Prior Discussion	No
Recommendation or Action Required	It is recommended that the Authority: a) **Receive** the inwards correspondence, and b) **Approve** the outwards correspondence
Context	Attached is the correspondence schedule for the Authority's inwards and outwards mail since the last NZCA meeting. The mail log is emailed weekly to members, giving members the opportunity to request copies of the correspondence. The correspondence is available for inspection on the Authority's Teams channel.

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AUTHORITY (NZCA)
MAIL LOG FOR PERIOD 20 SEPTEMBER TO 14 NOVEMBER 2025

INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE			
Date Received & File Reference	**From**	**Topic**	**Comment/Status**
24 September 2025	Otago Conservation Board	Agenda for meeting on 30 September 2025	FYI
25 September 2025	Hon Tama Potaka, Minister of Conservation	Reply to NZCA letter of 5 September seeking feedback from the NZCA on the draft Te Hiku CMS	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
26 September 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 26 September 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
29 September 2025	Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board	Annual Report for 2024-25	FYI
3 October 2025	Southland Conservation Board	Confirmed minutes for meeting on 7 July 2025	FYI
3 October 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 3 October 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
8 October 2025	East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board	Agenda for meetings on 9 and 17 October 2025	FYI
10 October 2025	Otago Conservation Board	Confirmed minutes for meeting on 22 July 2025	FYI
10 October 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 10 October 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
14 October 2025	West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board	Agenda for meeting on 21 October 2025	FYI
17 October 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 17 October 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
21 October 2025	David Carlton, Principal Wild Animals Advisor, DOC	Sika HOSI – draft Herd Management Plan; seeking submissions / comment	FYI – forwarded to members
22 October 2025	Mark Ryan, Senior Wild Animals Advisor, DOC	Wapiti HOSI – updated draft Herd Management Plan; seeking submissions / comment	FYI – forwarded to members
23 October 2025	West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservation Board	Confirmed minutes for meeting on 22 July 2025	FYI
24 October 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 24 October 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
31 October 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 31 October 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
3 November 2025	Hon Tama Potaka, Minister of Conservation	Reply to NZCA letter of 17 October re the Milford Sound Programme Board	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
6 November 2025	Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board	Meeting Papers for meeting on 13 November 2025	FYI
7 November 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 7 November 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
10 November 2025	Hon James Meager, Minister for Hunting and Fishing	Public notification of Draft HMP for sika and wapiti	FYI – forwarded with Monday email
13 November 2025	Southland Conservation Board	Agenda for meeting on 13 November 2025	FYI
14 November 2025	Tourism Industry Aotearoa	Newsletter for Friday 14 November 2025	FYI – forwarded with Monday email

DOC-10521910

Leanne Hay, NZCA Servicing Officer
November 2025

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OUTWARDS CORRESPONDENCE			
Date Sent & File Reference	**To**	**Topic**	**Comment**
1 October 2025	Tipene Kapa-Kingi, CEO Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri	Reply to his letter of 13 August with a formal complaint of Treaty breaches	FYI
17 October 2025	Hon Tama Potaka, Minister of Conservation	Milford Opportunity Governance Group membership for NZCA	FYI
17 October 2025	Penny Nelson, DG Department of Conservation	Resourcing for Fast-track for NZCA and SBT	FYI
17 October 2025	Penny Nelson, DG Department of Conservation	Conservation Board Chairs' feedback from the conference	FYI
20 October 2025	Penny Nelson, DG DOC, cc; Tipene Kapa-Kingi, CEO Te Aupōuri, Mina Pomare-Peita, Chair THCB	Issues raised with NZCA by Te Aupōuri during field visit on 8 October	FYI
20 October 2025	Chatham Islands Conservation Board	Acknowledging receipt of their 2024-25Annual Report	FYI
20 October 2025	Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board	Acknowledging receipt of their 2024-25Annual Report	FYI
22 October 2025	CB Chairpersons and MOC Private Secretaries	NZCA Chair's Letter for the October 2025 meeting	FYI