

Chatham Islands Conservation Board

Te Pou Atawhai O Rekohu Wharekauri



Annual Report

to the New Zealand Conservation Authority

1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016



Chatham Islands Conservation Board

Tē Pou Atawhai O Rekohu Wharekauri

Annual Report 1 July 2015- 30 June 2016

Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority
Pursuant to section 6(0) of the Conservation Act 1987

ISSN 1776-3906 (Print)
ISSN 1179-2582 (Online)

Serviced by the Department of Conservation
Chatham Island Office
PO Box 114, Waitangi, Chatham Islands

Front Cover Photo: Conservation Board members at Waihere Head, Pitt Island & view across the Waihere grazing block with Mangere Island to the far right

Photographer: Connie Norgate

1 INTRODUCTION

Chairperson Dinee Fleming welcomed newly appointed members Pauline Mckay, Judy Kamo and Amanda Horler on to the Board at the beginning of the 2015/16 year and confirmed a further term for current members Susan Thorpe and Di Gregory-Hunt who were both keen to continue in their roles, providing valuable experience for our Board of seven members.

With some structural and operational changes within the department throughout 2015 the Board have had some continuity from the local DOC office with Connie Norgate in the role of Operations Manager and Alison Turner providing secretarial services and support to the Board until her departure in early 2016.

Following the 2013/14 review of the role of Conservation Boards, the Board this year responded to the Associate Minister of Conservation's letter of expectation, with a programme of CMS topic reviews, and a commitment to maintaining the board's already strong local conservation advocacy role.

Dinee Fleming attended the annual Chairperson's conference in Wellington, which confirmed that our board are well placed to meet their statutory CMS role, with their strong understanding of the conservation and community priorities for the Chatham Islands.

Meetings of the CICB are open to the public, and members of other conservation groups are often invited to attend. This with the addition of DOC staff ensured varied attendance at the meetings.

Over the 2015/16 year, meetings were held at the following venues;

- Ngati Mutunga Offices in Te One
- Di Gregory Hunts home (Rauceby) on Pitt Island
- Henga Lodge
- Whakamaharatanga Marae in Te One
- DOC Office in Te One

The first Board meeting of the year held at the Ngati Mutunga Offices in Te One was significant in that it provided opportunity for Chair and current members to welcome the three new Board members, Judy, Amanda and Pauline. The Board also determined their CMS reporting priorities for the coming year to June 2016, with the February 2016 topic of Community Liaison and Involvement being postponed to late 2016 or early 2017 given its relevance to Seaweek.

CMS Topic	Board member responsible	Meeting location & date
Pitt Island	Di Gregory-Hunt	Rauceby, Pitt Island (deferred to late 2015 from early 2015 due to weather cancelations)
Habitat Protection and Establishment	Amanda Horler	Henga Lodge
Marine Ecosystems	Mana Cracknell	Whakamaharatanga Marae April 2016 (initially planned for Taiko town however this

		has been deferred)
Treaty Relationships	Susan Thorpe	DOC Office, Te One (initially planned for Kopinga Marae)

All Board members were looking forward to the November meeting and field trip on Pitt Island which had previously been postponed from June 2015 due to a combination of ill health, a broken down plane and dubious weather. The trip over highlighted the challenges of living remotely with heavy fog coming in soon after the first flight took off limiting any further flights that day. With half of the Board on Pitt and the other half on Chathams the meeting was delayed a day. The meeting was held at Rauceby, the Gregory-Hunt family farm and home of Board member Di. The Board were thrilled to enjoy the island especially Waihere Head, the historic Glory Cottage and Caravan Bush (Ellen Elizabeth Preece Conservation Covenant).

This trip highlighted to the Board the importance of Caravan Bush and the predator fence especially in regard to species with the Chatham Petrel still in good numbers and potential future translocations for birds currently found only on the outer island Nature Reserves such as Chatham Islands Black Robin and Chatham Islands Snipe.

Di Gregory Hunt had received valuable feedback from the community on their expectations on the role of DOC and conservation work on Pitt Island. The community consistently advised the importance of transparency and information sharing by DOC given the relevance of its work and management of grazing areas to Pitt Islanders.

Another highlight for the Board was welcoming Minister Nicky Wagner and MP Jacquie Dean to their first meeting of 2016 at Henga Lodge. The meeting followed with a site visit and lunch at Admiral Farm and Gardens with Lois Croon. The CICB Annual Letter of Expectation was tabled for discussion by the Minister who discussed the commitment to empower and upskill Conservation Boards in support of their conservation and community connection. Di Gregory-Hunts absence due to the Pitt Island plane not flying in heavy fog was no reflection on her desire to attend.

A visit to Hapupu National Historic Reserve and Taia Historic Reserve in May coincided with a visit from Deputy Director General Mike Slater and Regional Director Reg Kemper. Both managers were visiting the island to better understand the work taking place and the future priorities. The Board had previously written to them asking for support in reaching an outcome for the long process of vesting the Taia Historic Reserve in Moriori as agreed upon purchase in 2001. The Board also asked for some resolution around an outcome for the dilapidated White House given the current housing shortage on the island and welcomed the visit and support in resolving these very polarising issues in the community.

Dinee Fleming advocated the Conservation Board had achieved some good work in 2015/16. The increase of the Board from 5 to 7 members has allowed more skill and knowledge to be shared. “It is also really good to see younger members of the community stepping up into these leadership roles” Dinee also wants to see more advocacy across the community so that people can have a stronger understanding of what DOC does and feel more connected to it and involved in the work. Judy Kamo highlighted the importance of field trips “with the intention of all Board Members getting to see the great work and results first hand” This was supported by Susan Thorpe who was pleased to see DOC leaders visiting significant places to support and understand some of the issues.

As a newbie to conservation matters Pauline McKay also advocated the trips as a good way of understanding sites, “I have found in my short time my interests have grown thanks to Alison, Connie, Diknee and my fellow board members”

2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

The Board membership and meeting attendance during from 2015- 2016 was as follows:

Board Member	Meetings attended
Dinee Fleming (Chairperson)	4/5
Mana Cracknell	5/5
Dianne Gregory-Hunt, Pitt Island	3/5
Susan Thorpe	5/5
Pauline McKay	5/5
Amanda Horler	5/5
Judy Kamo	4/5

Diane (Dinee) Fleming of Owenga, Chatham Islands *1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017*

Diane Fleming (Dinee) is a farmer and a landowner, active in wetland restoration. This is Dinee’s third year as Chairperson. With her wide understanding of the history, culture and economy of the Chathams Dinee brings strong balanced local knowledge to her Chairperson’s role. She is of Hokotehi Moriori and Ngati Mutunga o Wharekauri descent.

Diane (Di) Gregory-Hunt, Pitt Island *1 May 2014 to 30 June 2019*

Mrs Gregory-Hunt is a farmer. She is a member of the Pitt Island Reserves Committee and has been a member of the Pitt Island Reserves and Conservation Purposes Trust. Di has been active in many of the conservation projects on Pitt, including monitoring of nesting albatross and Chatham Island snipe. Di and her family have land protected under Conservation Covenants and are active in habitat restoration projects.

Mana Cracknell, of Kaingaroa, Chatham Islands *1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017*

Mana is a retired university academic. He has been involved in many environmental research projects in the Chatham Islands looking at biodiversity and beekeeping strategies. His outdoor recreation interests are gardening, fishing, bee-keeping and tree planting. Mana is of Rongomaiwahine, Ngati Kahungungu, Rangitane and Rongomaiwhenua-Moriori Iwi.

Susan Thorpe, of Owenga, Chatham Islands *1 May 2014 to 30 June 2019*

Susan is a director of a heritage consultancy company. She has research experience in archaeology, cultural heritage, and the environment, and enjoys being involved in ecological

restoration projects. Her outdoor recreation interests are water sports, sailing, fishing, tree planting and gardening.

Amanda Horler of Chatham Islands *1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018*

Ms Horler is a Chatham Island born farmer raising her young family on the Chathams. She has been active in many conservation projects, including the covenanting of forest areas on her farm, tree planting on Mangere Island, plant nursery work, and supporting the local school tree planting projects in local reserves.

Judy Hirāni-Kamo of Chatham Islands *1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018*

Mrs Kamo is of Ngati Mutunga and Ngai Tahu descent, is a member of Hokotehi Moriori Trust, a Maori Warden and 6th generation Pitt Islander. A mother of four, she has a farm with her husband John on the Chatham Islands, and works as a Senior Health Worker for Ha O Te Ora O Wharekauri. She has a strong interest in conservation and regeneration of our Island's ngahere. Whanau, rongoa, farming and gardening are important in her life.

Pauline Mackay of Chatham Islands *1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018*

Mrs Mackay has lived her whole life on the Chatham Islands, raising her family here and participating in and contributing to a wide range of community activities. She has just finished a 25 year term on the Norman Kirk Memorial Reserve committee. Her understanding of Chatham's whanau, people and heritage and their connection with conservation are important.

3 BOARD MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

Five formal Board Meetings were held on main Chatham during the reporting period.

Date	Meeting venue
August 18 th 2015	Ngati Mutunga Offices, Te One
November 25 th 2015	Rauceby, Pitt Island
January 28 th 2016	Henga Lodge, Henga
April 5 th 2016	Whakamaharatanga Marae, Te One
June 7 th 2016	DOC Office, Te One

The Board welcomed a number of other visitors to the Board meetings. Kerri Moir from ECAN provided helpful updates around biosecurity and animal and plant pest control work. Jamie Beaton from MPI, Toni Gregory-Hunt, Judy Lanauze, Celine Gregory-Hunt and Cheryl Webster attended as members of the community. Michelle Cracknell joined us for part of a number of our meetings over the year. Local staff from DOC contributed to meetings and on

several occasions joined the Board for lunch. Mike Bell from the Taiko Trust gave regular updates via the District report.

4 THE BOARD'S DISTRICT

The Chatham Islands lie 860 km east of Christchurch, at 44° south in the path of the Roaring Forties and consist of eight islands of appreciable size. The total land area is 97,000 hectares of which main Chatham Island (90,000 ha) and Pitt Island (6,190 ha) are the largest. The Chathams straddle the international dateline: local time is 45 minutes ahead of the rest of New Zealand.

The Chatham Islands are an amazing collection of islands consisting of contrasts and extremes: beautiful still sunny days with magical blue skies through to raging 45 knot storms that in their own way are awe-inspiring. For much of the year the climate is temperate – temperatures in the low twenties in midsummer but can drop close to 0 degrees in the winter with scattered hail and sleet and occasional snow.

Generally main Chatham Island is low-lying and comprises flat to rolling topography. The highest point on the island is only 299m. There are many swampy valley floors and extensive peatlands. The catchments are generally small and shallow but there are a few incised streams in the south. Here the land is at a higher altitude forming a tableland of deep peat covering basalt with a fertile coastal clay region which ends abruptly at impressive basalt bluffs. In the north there are scattered volcanic peaks and long stretches of sandy beach while the island has a large central lagoon of 20,000 ha and there are many moderate sized lakes.

Both the natural vegetation and fauna are highly modified and are reduced to remnants as a result of human occupation. Low forest once covered most of the islands. Approximately 10 % of the forest cover remains – most in the south of the main island.

Five main forest types are present featuring broad-leaved species and tarahinau (*Dracophyllum arboreum*). Much of the area has converted to bracken and shrubland and to a lesser extent pasture. There are extensive areas of restiad, sedge and heath wetlands.

The Chathams have the highest level of endemism of any New Zealand biogeographic region. Forty one of the Chatham Islands 465 native plants, 18 of the 73 native birds, 8.5% of New Zealand's threatened freshwater fish. About 20% of the 800 insect species are endemic to the Chathams. One reptile is also endemic to these islands. The New Zealand Geo-preservation Inventory lists 31 sites of nationally important geological interest. 700 archaeological sites are recorded and many more unrecorded.

The Department of Conservation has an Office at Te One on main Chatham with 12 permanent staff, with one staff member largely based on Pitt Island. Volunteers, staff and researchers are present on Rangatira (South East Island) and Mangere Island for periods during the year, undertaking species monitoring work during the breeding season of endangered bird species, and continuing with the habitat restoration programme.

There is a small amount of protected land (Crown and private covenants) in the Chathams - about 8% of Chatham, 30% of Pitt and three nature reserves - (Mangere (113ha) and South-East (208ha) Islands and Tuku NR (1238ha). A significant number of important habitats have been protected and a significant amount of land has been protected through the covenanting of private land. A key focus of the Department's work in the Chathams is threatened flora and

fauna programmes. The vast expanse of ocean surrounding these islands is rich in marine life and supports internationally significant populations of sea birds and nationally significant populations of whales, dolphins, seals and sharks.

The Chatham Islands Conservation Board represents a total island population of approximately 600 people (Chatham and Pitt Island) and has particularly close contact with the community. Chatham Islanders have very strong ties to their land and resources, reflected by their livelihoods of fishing, farming, and tourism.

The Board also consults and works with the Imi/Iwi on the Chatham Islands along with the other conservation groups such as Taiko Trust and CHART, as well as the Chatham Islands Council, Chatham Islands Enterprise Trust, Federated Farmers and the Chatham Islands Visitor Industry group.

STATUTORY FUNCTIONS UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT

6M(1)(c) To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans for areas within the jurisdiction of the Board

Conservation Management Strategies (CMS)

The Board were updated on the current timeline for CMS revision however there is no clarity on when the Chatham Islands CMS might be reviewed and the commencement date is still to be confirmed.

As part of the board's response to the Associate Minister of Conservation's annual letter of expectation, the board identified four new CMS topics for review during the year however Pitt Island (which was deferred from last year) was also undertaken. These were:

1. Habitat protection and establishment
2. Marine Ecosystems
3. Treaty Relations
4. Community Liaison and involvement

For each of these topics the department prepared a report on progress of CMS objectives for the Board to consider. The Board then led a response to each report and provided valuable advice for DOC not just for future management but also to support changes to any new CMS that could strengthen the outcomes of DOC's priority work.

Three of the topics were covered during the year. Board member Di Gregory-Hunt conducted a survey of the Pitt Island community and their views on Pitt Island conservation priorities, which added depth and good topics for discussion at the Pitt Island Board meeting.

6M(1) (d) (ii) To advise the Department on any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board

1. The Board worked on reclassification of Stewardship Land on the Chathams at which time the Board gave good advice for each site.

2. The Conservation Streamlining Bill was discussed and the Board advocated their support to streamlining of any processes the department has, further advocating the complexity of DOC's statutory and planning processes.
3. The permit process for concessions was also reviewed and the Board recommended that:
 - a) The CICB, along with Imi/Iwi be notified of all permit and concession applications for the Chatham Islands
 - b) The CICB develop advisory guidelines so that applications could be considered in terms of benefit to island conservation, benefit to the local community, consideration of technical advice, and ensuring all applications met the condition of doing no harm
 - c) The department advises applicants of research and collection permits of any type that the applicant must provide feedback to the community on the reason for the research and outcome. This can be done through on-island presentations to community, through the schools or media i.e. submitting a story in the Chatham Islander.
 - d) The department advises applicants of the complexities of completing research on Chatham Islands in relation to landowner approval for access given the many areas that are inaccessible to the public. Especially on Pitt Island.
3. During the year the CICB considered and advised the Department on the following:
 - a) A number of research permit applications for completing various forms of research across the Chatham Islands, including Pitt and the outer islands Rangatira and Mangere
 - b) The vesting of Taia Historic Reserve in Moriori, a process in the making for some 15 years
 - c) The role and output of the Chatham Islands Natural Heritage Group
 - d) The outcome and future use of the White House (historic commissioner's cottage) on Tiki Tiki Hill.
 - e) The Waitangi Wharf upgrade, future management and feedback to the community on conservation and environmental risks of the upgrade
 - f) The criteria and timetable for this year's round of DOC Community Fund (CCPF) applications.
 - g) The management and strategic work at J M Barker National Historic Reserve (Hapupu) relating to the Rakau Momori and its Advisory Board
 - h) Management and research priorities for species on Rangatira and Mangere Islands, what is DOC achieving in its work aside from several lengthy reports.

POWERS OF CONSERVATION BOARDS

6N (2)(a) *The Board may advocate its interest at any public forum or in any statutory planning process.*

Review of Conservation Boards

The Board were pleased with the result of their input to the Conservation Boards review process and subsequent increase from five to seven members, effective 1st July 2015.

LIAISON

A Department

Working within the new DOC Operations structure after a change from the Services/Partnerships structure of the previous two years. The Board has been supported throughout the year by Connie Norgate (Operations Manager for the Chatham Islands). Mark Davies (Acting Director Conservation Services, Lower North Island) followed by Reg Kemper (Director Operations, Lower North Island) none of which were able to attend board meetings during the 2015/16 year. Dave Carlton (Acting Operations Manager Chatham Islands) attended one meeting while acting on Connie Norgate's behalf.

Local DOC staff joined the board for parts of their meeting. The Board were kept informed of any new staff and staff changes through the District Office report presented at every meeting. Local DOC staff feel very connected to the Board and recognise the importance of their role in the conservation community.

B Community

Taiko Trust

The Taiko Trust continues to build on their conservation achievements, with a third successful season of albatross chick transfer and rearing at Point Gap. This is also the second year of the Trust completing the taiko protection work previously undertaken by DOC. The Trust held well attended open days for locals to visit the albatross site at Point Gap and provided good advocacy at the Chatham Island Festival in March 2016.

The Board were pleased with the progress of the Taiko Trust over the year and advocated their support to the Trust in maintaining good conservation outcomes.

Chatham Heritage and Restoration Trust (CHART)

CHART continues to lead conservation projects in the community, and in particular building on their Waitangi foreshore dune planting work.

Their longstanding project to fence and undertake restoration planting at Blind Jims continues to make progress.

Chatham Islands' Conservation Award

This award, started in 2004 was awarded to the Te One and Kaingaroa schools as a shared award for the ongoing efforts of tree planting every year at Ocean Mail and Henga Scenic Reserves. The award was presented at the Chatham Island Festival in March 2016 with the intention that the award itself would sit for 6 months at each school.

The Board are keen to make a decision on the next award at year end 2016 with a BBQ and celebration with DOC staff, conservation community and volunteers where they intend to present the Conservation Award.

Environment Canterbury

The Board continues to encourage an active working relationship with the Environment Canterbury (ECAN) and attendance is invited at meetings during the year to update the range of biosecurity, weed and animal pest control work being undertaken by ECAN on Chatham and Pitt Islands.

DOC Community Fund

The Board advocated the allocation of conservation funding through the DOC Community Fund (previously CCPF) and were pleased to see a good number of applications received from the Chatham Islands in the regional pool.

The successful projects were;

- Taiko Trust – Shag monitoring and Taiko burrow search
- Di Gregory-Hunt – Parea translocation from South Chathams to Pitt Island &
- Nadine Lanauze – Albatross colony establishment on Pitt Island

C Pitt Island

Di Gregory-Hunt has continued to be a strong advocate for all Pitt Island conservation issues on the board, working with the community to ensure opportunity for all of community to provide feedback on conservation outcomes and priorities.

The Pitt Island Reserves and Conservation Purposes Charitable Trust (PIRCPT) was re-established to support the process for renewal of the Glory and Waihere licenses. The PIRCPT made recommendations on the future management and renewal of the leasehold blocks on Pitt Island on expiry of the current license agreements in May 2016.

DOC ran a fair and open process of renewal and the new licenses have been awarded for the extended term of 10 years. The PIRCPT plan a meeting again in the near future to consider community representation on the Trust.

The department has some work to do in relation to strategic planning and review of its work and priorities with the Pitt Island community over the next year.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/2016

The Board annual budget of \$22,000, increased from \$15,000, which with the two new members is a sufficient amount to run the board including an annual visit to Pitt and or the outer Island Nature Reserves.