



Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board

Annual Report

1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016



Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board

ANNUAL REPORT

1 JULY 2015 – 30 JUNE 2016

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1. Chairperson's report

Much of the focus of the Board throughout the year has been on the updating of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Wellington/Wairarapa/Manawatu regions. The Department of Conservation ('the Department' or 'DOC') began the process by contacting known interested parties and inviting them to consult on issues the CMS document may need to take into account. This preliminary round of consultation was essential in helping begin the process of formulating the document.

A CMS subcommittee was formed and has met with the Department's planners on a number of occasions and, at the time of writing, the 'notified' draft version of the new CMS is expected to be out in the public domain prior to Christmas of this year. At the beginning of the year, the CMS template was modified to reflect a much more user friendly document; it would appear that this will be the case and the new format will be much improved on the current document.

Our liaison with Iwi has continued throughout the year and with a number of settlements now completed, post settlement consultation will begin.

Board members have attended a number of Fish & Game meetings throughout the year and an invitation was extended to the Manager of Wellington Fish & Game to address us at our Palmerston North meeting. This indicated that a strong and positive relationship exists between the Department and Fish & Game within the region.

Field trips to Castlepoint, Pukaha Mt Bruce, the Palmerston North area and other venues were very beneficial and always a great learning experience for members of the Board to view the work of the department, engage with conservation stakeholders and learn something of the area.

Other planned field trips were often affected by severe weather systems and had to be changed. Once again, our attempt to visit Kapiti Island was fraught with excessive wind and rain cancelling any chance of the boat being able to transport us to the Island.

The Board and the Department have an ongoing open dialogue with the WARO operators and recreational hunters in discussing future management options available in the Ruahine Forest Park. This has been a 'bone of contention' for many years and it is pleasing to see some positive liaison taking place between the parties involved.

The Board has fulfilled the Ministers requirements as listed in the 'letter of expectation'. However, the lack of involvement of the public at Board meetings remains a concern. We set aside a time slot for members of the public to address us and for some reason there is little take up. The meetings are advertised and an invitation to come along and address us is given. The Board is intending to address this as a priority over the next year.

We have a rather diverse mix of backgrounds on our Board and as such it has not been easy to achieve complete consensus on some issues, national submissions, and issues

like the Ruataniwha land swap seem to bring some basic philosophical differences to the fore. Local issues appear to have precedence over national issues and given that the Board is a 'regional' Board, the public's expectations are most likely just that. With the loss of and inactivity of a number of members throughout the year, we have struggled a little to function as we should, however as we moved through the year and the Department's changes began to settle we moved ahead and will end the year on a positive note.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Waana Davis, our NZCA liaison member, and to all the Departmental staff from across the region for the support and help they have given the Board over the past year.

Don Adams

Chairperson

Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board



Photo: Interior of beech forest showing lichens, Mount Holdsworth, Tararua Forest Park,
Photographer: Lindsey MacFarlane

2. Introduction

Following the review of the Conservation Boards completed in 2013, Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board (the Board) was re-established in March 2014 by the Minister of Conservation. It is one of 15 statutory bodies appointed by the Minister under Section P of the Conservation Act 1987. The functions and powers of the Board are outlined in Sections 6M and 6N respectively. Each of the 15 Conservation Boards has their own geographically defined area with up to 12 members.

In a 'Letter of Expectation' sent to the Board, the Associate Minister of Conservation, Nicky Wagner, provided the Board with a clear work programme for the year.

The Board developed a work programme for 2015/16 that was accepted by the Minister of Conservation.

3. Work Programme Overview

The Wellington Conservation Board work programme was developed in response to the Letter of Expectation from the Associate Minister of Conservation dated 31 August 2015. It is structured in three parts, namely:

Part A: Planned Board activities aimed at meeting the Regional Work Programme contained in the letter:

- Review/development/monitoring of statutory management plans including Conservation Management Strategies (CMS);
- Advice relating to stewardship land;
- Other statutory functions for the Board;
- Advocacy; and

Part B: Planned Board activities aimed at general expectations contained in the letter:

- Working with the Department;
- Taking account of the Ministerial priorities for the Department, as contained in the Statement of Intent;
- Working with adjoining Boards and the NZCA;
- Understanding the Board's contribution to giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi;
- General engagement with the community, including raising the profile of the Board; and

Part C: Risks/Issues from the Board's perspective, and opportunities for conservation growth that are not covered above.

4. Membership of the Board

Members are appointed to the Board by the Minister of Conservation, and are representative across the different communities and interests within the region.

During 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 there have been 10 members on the Board (see Table 1). Phil Gurnsey resigned and ended his term on 4 July 2015. He was replaced by Jenny Rowan, who started on 17 August 2015.

Table 1. Board membership during 2015/16

Name	Area	Date first appointed	Term ends
Don Adams (Chairperson)	Masterton	1 May 2014	30 June 2018
Anne Lawrence	Palmerston North	1 May 2014	30 June 2016
Karen Fifield	Wellington	1 May 2014	30 June 2016
Pene Lefale	Wellington	1 July 2014	30 June 2017
Jim Rainey	Mangaweka	1 May 2014	30 June 2019
Richard Steedman	Taihape	1 July 2014	30 June 2018
Barry Wards	Upper Hutt	1 May 2014	30 June 2019
Jonathon Procter	Palmerston North	1 July 2014	30 June 2017
Phil Gurnsey	Wellington	1 May 2014	4 July 2015
Jenny Rowan	Kapiti Coast	17 August 2015	30 June 2018

5. Board's area

5.1 Coverage

The Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board's coverage extends from the bottom of the North Island to the mouth of the Turakina River in the west, up Turakina River and over the top of the Ruahine Forest Park, down the eastern boundary of the Forest and then out across to the east coast near Waimarama. It includes the three Wellington harbour islands Matiu/Somes, Mokoia and Makaro/Ward, as well as Kapiti and Mana islands.



Figure 1. Map of Wellington Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Te Upoko o te Ika Conservation Board area

5.2 Significant areas of natural and historic importance

MANAWATU

Ruahine Forest Park

Vegetation in the park varies as the forests in the north are generally a mix of podocarps, including red beech, rimu, miro, mataī and mountain beech, with kahikatea dominating swampy areas. Further south, the dense growth of leatherwood (tūpare), forms the largest unbroken expanse in the country.

Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve

One of only a few places in the world where a river passes through a dividing range. Tawa and podocarp species dominant the steep bush clad hills. A long term collaborative project with many partners is enhancing the biodiversity and recreation opportunities of the area.

Manawatu Estuary

Listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as a Wetland of International Importance. This estuarine wetland has one of the most diverse ranges of birds to be seen at any one place in New Zealand, a total of 95 species have been identified at the estuary. It is a significant area of salt marsh and mudflat and a prized feeding ground for many birds, including the migratory eastern bar-tailed godwit.

Manawatu/Horowhenua Coastal Dunes

These dune systems are habitat for fragile and rare wetland plants and hold particular importance for whānau, hapū and iwi. The Foxton Beach dune fields are recognised as one of the largest parabolic dunes systems in the southern hemisphere.

WAIRARAPA

Pukaha/Mount Bruce National Wildlife Centre

Located in the northern Wairarapa, the centre plays an important role in the captive breeding of many of New Zealand's endangered bird species, as well as fulfilling an educational role by giving the public the opportunity to see these birds. Native birds are also being returned to the adjoining Pukaha Mount Bruce forest.

Tararua Forest Park

With increasing altitude from the edge of the park, lowland podocarp/tawa or podocarp/kamahi forest passes into montane podocarp/beechn, then subalpine pure beech (forming a sharp treeline), to alpine tussock grasslands.

Aorangi Forest Park

Beech forest dominates the north of the range with hīnau and mataī characterising the hardwood forests and lower altitudes. The shrublands of the river terraces and coastal foothills are generally dominated by tauhinu while, elsewhere, mānuka and kānuka are the prevalent species at low altitude. Small areas of sub-alpine shrubland occur on the higher peaks.

Lake Wairarapa and Lake Onoke

The lakes and their associated wetlands and scattered forest remnants are the largest wetland system in the lower North Island. The wetlands contain mudflats, lagoons, sand flats, marshlands, salt marshes and back waters. The area is considered to be of national and international importance for indigenous plant and animal communities.

WELLINGTON

Rimutaka Forest Park

Beech forest dominates much of the park, joined by podocarps at lower altitudes. These forests support hundreds of indigenous plant species and provide habitat for a range of invertebrates, freshwater fish, reptiles, and birds, including reintroduced brown kiwi.

Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve

Turakirae Head offers earthquake-raised beaches that record a continuous geological upheaval over the past 7,000 years. It also has Wellington's largest fur seal colony.

Waikanae Estuary

This nationally-significant reserve protects a natural mosaic of freshwater lakelets, saltwater lagoons and marshes, tidal sand flats and sandy beach at the mouth of the Waikanae River. It is connected to the Kapiti Marine Reserve and Kapiti Island Nature Reserve, providing a rare sequence of protection for animals that move between sea, river and land habitats.

Kapiti Marine Reserve

Kapiti Marine Reserve links the world-renowned bird sanctuary on Kapiti Island with the protected Waikanae estuary on the mainland, creating a rare continuum of protected land and sea. The reserve covers two areas – a small section to the north of the seaward side of the island, and a larger section between the protected areas of Kapiti Island and Waikanae Estuary.

Kapiti Island Nature Reserve

This 1,965 ha sanctuary is 5 km off the west coast of the lower North Island. It is home to many native species that are either very rare or entirely absent from the mainland, including: kōkako, brown teal/pāteke, saddleback/tīeke, stitchbird/hihi, takahē, North Island tomtit/miromiro and little spotted kiwi/kiwi pukupuku.

Mana Island Scientific Reserve

Many bird species can be seen on Mana Island, including takahē, little penguin/kororā, brown teal/pāteke, fluttering shearwater/pakahā, Australasian gannet/tākapu, yellow-crowned parakeet/kākāriki, little spotted kiwi/kiwi pukupuku and North Island robin/toutouwai.

Matiu/Somes Island Scientific and Historic Reserves

Matiu/Somes Island, the largest of three islands located in Wellington Harbour, is a predator-free scientific reserve. It is also a historic reserve with a rich multicultural

history. Ownership of the Wellington Harbour Islands was transferred to the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust as part of its Treaty settlement package. The Department continues to manage the islands under the Reserves Act.

Taputeranga Marine Reserve

Taputeranga Marine Reserve is 6 km from the city centre on Wellington's south coast, providing easy access to study, interact with and record marine life and habitats.

6. Board meetings and field visits

The Board decided to rotate its meeting locations between Manawatu, Wairarapa, and Wellington to enable Board members to learn more about the conservation lands within the region and the issues associated with them, and meet with the many conservation stakeholders working to enhance conservation values.

During 2015/16, the Board's formal programme comprised five meetings and four field trips, one of which was a presentation as bad weather resulted in a cancellation of the planned field trip. Meetings of the Board were held in Otaihanga on the Kapiti Coast, Pukaha Mt Bruce, Kenepuru (Porirua), Palmerston North, and Masterton combined with Castlepoint. This was one more meeting than the usual four as the May 2015 meeting had been cancelled and replaced by a meeting in July.



Photo: From left
Karen Fifield,
Jenny Rowan,
Don Adams,
Robin
Potangaroa
(Kahungunu ki
Wairarapa)
Jenna Hoverd
(DOC Ranger,
Chatham
Islands) at
Castlepoint, May
2016

6.1 Meetings

Table 2. The Board scheduled four full-day meetings and one meeting that was split over two half days.

Date of meeting	Meeting Venue	Location
3 July 2015	Southwards Car Museum, Otaihanga	Kapiti Coast
21 August 2015	Pukaha Mount Bruce	Wairarapa
28 November 2015	Department of Conservation Palmerston North Office	Palmerston North
20 February 2016	Department of Conservation Wellington District Office	Kenepuru (Porirua)
20-21 May 2016	Department of Conservation Masterton Office and Rangiwihakaoma Education Centre	Masterton Castlepoint

6.2 Field trips

Visits to specific locations provided opportunities for the Board to:

- Become more familiar with the conservation values of key places;
- Discuss management challenges and approaches with Department staff and stakeholders; and
- Increase understanding and opportunities for conservation growth.

2015/16 field trips:

- 4 July 2015: Planned trip to Kapiti Island postponed due to weather conditions.
- 22 August 2015: Guided tour of Pukaha Mount Bruce.
- 27 November 2015: Trip to Manawatu Estuary cancelled due to weather. It was replaced by a presentation from the Department on the Himatangi Scientific Reserve, Omarupapako, whitebait Creek, Manawatu Estuary and Lake Waiwiri.
- 19 February 2016: The planned trip to Kapiti Island had to be cancelled due to weather conditions so an alternative trip to Catchpool, Rimutakas, south of Wainuiomata, was held. Melody McLaughlin, the manager of the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust, was there to talk about the very successful kiwi relocation and breeding program her voluntary group is undertaking in the area.
- 20 May 2016: Castlepoint Lagoon and Reserve accompanied by members from Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Masterton who spoke about the history of the area.



Photo: From left Don Adams, Melody McLaughlin (manager Rimutaka Forest Park Trust), Reg Kemper (Director, Operations, Lower North Island, DOC), Barry Wards, Richard Steedman and Jim Rainey visiting Catchpool February 2016.

6.3 Board member's attendance

Table 3. Board attendance at 2015/16 meetings and field trips

Board Members	Number of meetings attended (5 held)	Number of fieldtrips attended (4 held)
Don Adams (Chairperson)	5	4
Anne Lawrence	3	1
Karen Fifield	4	1
Jonathon Procter	2	1
Richard Steedman	3	2
Pene Lefale	4	2
Jim Rainey	3	2
Barry Wards	5	3
Phil Gurnsey	1	0
Jenny Rowan	4	3

For approved Board activities, Members are paid \$180 per day and the Chairperson \$240 per day.

6.4 Board sub-committees

The Board had two sub-committees during 2015/16.

Concessions

Sub-committee members were Don Adams, Barry Wards and Phil Gurnsey.

Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

CMS sub-committee members were Jim Rainey, Barry Wards, Jenny Rowan, Jonathan Procter and Richard Steedman.

6.5 Liaison roles

In order to network and raise its profile, the Board agreed to assign liaison roles with the neighbouring Fish & Game Council, neighbouring conservation boards and other conservation groups.

The following liaison roles were agreed for 2015/16:

- Iwi Liaison – Whaka Rongotai – Richard Steedman, Jonathan Procter
- Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board – Richard Steedman
- Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board – Jim Rainey
- East Coast Hawke’s Bay Conservation Board – Anne Lawrence
- Rangitikei Environment Group – Jim Rainey
- Fish & Game Manawatu – Jim Rainey
- Wairarapa Liaison (includes local Fish & Game, hunting groups and Wairarapa Marine Protected Area) – Don Adams
- Aorangi Steering Group – Don Adams
- Project Kaka – Barry Wards
- Wellington Wairarapa Forest & Bird – Barry Wards
- Wairarapa Moana Representative – Barry Wards
- Nature Connections – Karen Fifield
- Strategic Advisory Committee for Kapiti Island Reserves – Barry Wards (Director-General appointed role)
- Ruahine User Group – Anne Lawrence

In addition, the Board appointed liaison roles to the 2015-16 recipients of the Department of Conservation Community Fund. The following liaison roles were agreed during 2015/16:

- Tinui Parish ANZAC Trust – Don Adams
- Aorangi Restoration Trust – Don Adams
- Te Kāuru – Jonathan Procter
- Wellington Marine Conservation Trust – Barry Wards

- Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust Inc. – Barry Wards
- Kotukutuku Ecological Restoration Project – Jenny Rowan
- Pukaha Mount Bruce Board – Don Adams
- Wildbase Recovery Community Trust – Jonathan Procter
- Rangitikei Environment Group Incorporated Society – Jonathan Procter
- Society for Conservation Biology – not assigned
- Aorangi Awarua Trust – Richard Steedman

For more information on the Community Fund see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/funding/doc-community-fund/>



Photo: Richard Steedman releasing Kiwi between the Aorangi-Awarua Trust Lands and Northern Ruahine Forest Park as part of the Te Potae o Awarua project.

6.6 Other meetings and activities

Conservation Board Chairs' Meetings

Don Adams (Chairperson) attended the Conservation Boards' Chairperson's Conference held in September 2015. Among the topics discussed were the structural changes within the Department and the shift from Partnerships to Operations, and Conservation Boards' relationship with the new smaller Partnerships group. Also discussed was relationships with Iwi, and the need for the process of recruiting Board members needing strengthening, as a number of newly elected members have not finished their terms.

7. Public involvement

The Board informs and interacts with the public through forums, correspondence, an annual report, DOC website, media releases and the Conservation Board Newsletter.

The Conservation Boards' Newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/newsletters/conservation-boards-newsletter/>

The Board's formal relationships with specific organisations are described in section 13.

7.1 Public Forum

During 2015/16, the Board welcomed individuals to a Public Forum, a half an hour session scheduled at each meeting, to enable people to speak to the Board about agenda items or other conservation issues.

Matters raised by speakers who participated in these Forums included:

- neglect of old historic huts in the Orongorongo Valley in the Rimutaka Forest Park after they are transferred to DOC ownership;
- a report on conservation activities at the Whareroa Farm Reserve;
- concerns about environmental impacts of two dams proposed in the Wairarapa; and
- the role of the Fish & Game Council in managing, maintaining and enhancing game birds and sports fish resources, and Fish & Game's current planning and programmes.

The Board regards the Forum as an important opportunity to hear from the community and hopes to see more people participate in 2016/17.

7.2 Correspondence

The Board values receiving information from people who have interests and/or a long-term association with specific areas within the Wellington region.

7.3 Distribution of the Board's Annual Report

The primary audience for the Board's Annual Report is the New Zealand Conservation Authority. The Board will circulate the report more widely to increase awareness of the Board's role and conservation issues in the Manawatu, Wairarapa and Wellington regions.

The Board's webpage can be found at:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/wellington/>

7.4 The Board's website

The Board posts information about the region, meeting agendas and minutes, the Board Members and Annual Report on its pages of the DOC's website.

7.5 Media

Media releases were considered at meetings and distributed as appropriate.

The Board placed a news item on their webpage covering the February 2016 field visit.



Photo: North Island Robin with food in beak, Kapiti Island

8. Work Programme

The Wellington Conservation Board work programme was developed in response to the Letter of Expectation from the Associate Minister of Conservation dated 28 August 2015.

The work programme sections are as follows:

8.1 Review / development of statutory management plans including Conservation Management Strategies (CMS)

8.1.1 Fulfil Board responsibilities in the review of the Wellington CMS towards the aim of recommending the approval of the draft by the NZCA early in the 2016/17 year.

The Board's role is to work with the Department to review the current CMS and to recommend (after a public process) a revised CMS for approval to the NZCA.

Background

The Board's area is presently covered by two existing CMSs for Wellington and Whanganui, which expired in 2005 and 2007 respectively.

Development of the replacement draft CMS started in 2009/10, reflecting the new Board boundaries that included parts of Hawke's Bay. The 2009/10 draft CMS was not notified. On this basis, the expiry dates for the two existing CMSs were extended by the Minister of Conservation to allow this review process to be completed.

Further changes of Board boundaries occurred again in 2013/14 following the restructure of DOC and the review of Conservation Boards. A new review of the Wellington CMS started again in 2014/15.

During 2015, pre-drafting public consultation was held. Meetings took place throughout the region to engage with local communities and gain information about what people value about their local places. The Board provided input through a workshop exercise on places within the region.

2015-16 Progress

A CMS Sub-committee meeting was held in Palmerston North in October 2015.

At the end of 2015, discussions held at the Gisborne-based NZCA meeting resulted in a decision to undergo a rapid development process to create a new prototype template for the CMS. This was directed by the Director General of DOC.

At the November 2015 Board meeting, it was agreed to align the Wellington CMS review with the East Coast Hawke's Bay review timeline and await the outcomes of the rapid development improvement project.

A Board member attended a two day CMS Rapid Improvement Planning Meeting with DOC in February 2016. The new template is being developed as a slim line legally required hard copy of the CMS which has less prose and more tables. It will be more user friendly and practical than the older style CMSs. It will clearly show the work and focus for the region, will guide DOC's Business Planning, support DOC's Operations Teams' work, and strengthen Section 4 responsibilities and relationships with whānau/hapū/iwi. It will be supported by web-based information that is more flexible than the legal document, can more readily be updated and will connect with the community much more than previously.

In March 2016, the Wellington Conservation Board CMS Committee attended a workshop with the DOC Manawatu, Wellington and Wairarapa Operations Managers and DOC Planners. The workshop was to progress work on the Places and milestones for the CMS.

The Planners are continuing to work on re-drafting of the 10-year vision, Treaty of Waitangi Partnerships sections, and drafting the regional objectives, regional polices and authorisations. Some re-drafting has continued as a result of the comments from the March workshop, including adding in Whānau/hapū/iwi table to each Place.

Over the next few months, the CMS Subcommittee will continue to work with DOCs planning team on the drafting and ongoing development of the CMS.



Photo: WCB CMS Subcommittee at work, 15 October 2015 . From left Jon Procter, Don Adams, Jenny Rowan, Allannah Irvine (Operations Manager, Manawatu), Barry Wards, Mark Buckley (Management Planner, Hamilton), Jim Rainey, Chris Berry (Planning Manager, Hamilton)

8.1.2 *In conjunction with the Department, determine priorities for implementation of the draft Wellington CMS*

There has been no activity on implementing the draft Wellington CMS during 2015/16, as the drafting of the Wellington CMS is not yet complete.

8.2 Stewardship Land

8.2.1 *Provide the Minister and Department with advice on priorities for reclassification of stewardship areas that require increased protection because of their significant conservation values.*

During 2015-16, DOC progressively supplied the Board with information, maps, descriptions, and other information on the areas of Stewardship land within the Wairarapa, Wellington and Manawatu districts. Board members also received a copy of the document *Reclassification of Conservation Land (including Stewardship Land) 5 year plan*.

Reclassification of Stewardship Land is a process for assessing the conservation values of stewardship land to decide the best outcome for each area: some possible outcomes include incorporating into an existing Forest Park, reserve or similar, reclassifying to a higher level of protection, exchanging for an area with a higher conservation value, or selling off.

In May 2016, the Board received DOCs recommendations, including their ranking priority for reclassification of Stewardship Land within the Board's region.

The Board's role was to give a community perspective to this choice by choosing its own top five areas for reclassifying. This was done in June 2016 at a special meeting in Wellington. As well as recommending the top 5 areas the Board made recommendations on all of the areas of Stewardship Land.

8.3 Other Statutory Functions

8.3.1 *Nurture ongoing working relationships with Fish & Game Councils regarding issues of mutual interest within the region.*

Throughout the 2015/16 year, through the established liaison connections, the Board received regular updates on the Wellington Fish & Game Council meetings and activities in each of the Wellington, Wairarapa and Manawatu districts.

Phil Teal, Manager Fish & Game Wellington, attended the November 2015 meeting and addressed the Board during the Public Forum.

8.3.2 Advise on proposed changes of status for nationally and internationally important areas, when sought by the Department.

During 2015/16, the Board has supported the Ramsar application for the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands area. This included a letter of support to the Minister of Conservation.

8.4 Advocacy

8.4.1 Pursue all reasonable opportunities to advocate at community forums and in any statutory planning processes

During 2015/16, Board members have attended a range of Community Forums. Some examples of forums attended are:

- the Rangitikei Royal Forest and Bird Society meeting October 2015;
- the opening of the Te Araroa Paekakariki track, at Parliament and at Paekakariki during April 2016;
- the opening of another small bridge in the estuary at Otaki, with the Friends of the Otaki River group in April 2016;
- the opening ceremony of the new free-flight aviary at Pukaha Mount Bruce in May 2016;
- the Tinui Anzac Day 100 Years' Service (as liaison member for the Tinui Parish ANZAC Trust Community Funded project to Develop the Tinui ANZAC Walkway);
- the Taihape Bird Paintings opening; and
- Mangatarere Restoration Society meeting and stream ramble.



Photo: Board members with Minister Hon. Maggie Barry at the opening of the new free-flight aviary at Pukaha Mt Bruce National Wildlife Centre, May 2016. From left Don Adams (Chair), Jenny Rowan, Karen Fifield, Maggie Barry, Jon Procter, Barry Wards.

During 2015/16 the Board advocated in the following Statutory Planning Processes:

- submitted on the Ministry for the Environment's 2016 A New Marine Protected Areas Act: Consultation Document;
- ratified its response to the Department with regards to the Routeburn Concession, generally agreeing with the changes that had been put in place;
- gave consideration and feedback on the proposed Conservation Streamlining Bill;
- wrote to the Waikato Conservation Board Chair noting its concerns on the issue of whitebait, their species' decline and that the Board had agreed to let the Conservation Authority take the lead on this issue.

8.5 Working with the Department

8.5.1 *Board members will maintain good working relationships and open dialogue with Directors, Managers and Board Support Officers in order to engage strategically in conservation for the region.*

Late in 2015, DOC appointed Sarah Owen as the Statutory Manager for the Lower North Island Region. Sarah has the responsibility for the Department's relationship and interactions with the Conservation Board. As well, the Board's administration is supported by a Board Support Officer based in Palmerston North. Board meetings are attended by the Statutory Manager, the Lower North Island Operations Director and local Operations Managers. Other DOC staff attend meetings as required for specific discussions: during 2015-16 these have included rangers, planners, and the Pou Tairangahau. The presence of these staff members at meetings has facilitated open dialogue and good working relationships between the Board members and the Department.

In between meetings, Board members are able to, and regularly do, communicate with DOC staff. DOC staff have readily provided a range of information when requested and work hard to ensure that they support the Board.

The Board received an Operational Report from DOC at each Board meeting. Items in this report that are of any interest or concern are discussed at the meetings with the Operations Managers.

During 2015, the Board agreed to a new draft template for DOC to use for their reports to the Board.

The Board recognises that its focus is on policy issues, strategic direction and planning and not on the operational details of the Department of Conservation.

8.6 Taking account of Ministerial priorities for the Department

8.6.1 *Identify opportunities to support the War on Weeds*

During 2015/16 The Board has:

- requested information and had discussion on the issue of Wilding Pines;
- had a member sit on the panel to select the success applicants for the DOC Community Fund;
- liaised with Community Fund Groups, including those with a focus on weed control; and
- contributed to the review of the *Dirty Dozen* list.

8.6.2 *Support an increase in the number of Marine Protected Areas*

The Board supports the proposal for a Wairarapa Marine Protected Area. This proposal has the support of the community and the three Wairarapa mayors but has been put on hold until Treaty Settlements in the area are at a later stage.

8.6.3 *Support the Battle for our Birds programme and the continued and effective and efficient use appropriate pest control measures.*

The Board supports the initiative of the Minister and DOC in the Battle for our Birds programme.

8.6.4 *Support initiatives in building relationships with key conservation partners towards establishing new conservation programmes.*

Board members are involved with:

- Kapiti Biodiversity Governance Group; and
- Kapiti District Council Accord Development.

8.7 Working with adjoining Boards and the NZCA

8.7.1 *Board members will liaise with neighbouring Conservation Boards in order to progress cross boundary CMS issues and other matters of mutual interest*

The Board has members with liaison roles with the East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservation Board, the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board and with the Taranaki Whanganui Conservation Board. When possible, the liaison members attend the other Board's meetings and report back to the Wellington Board. As well, the Wellington Board welcomes the liaison members from these Conservation Boards to their meetings. When it is not possible to attend meetings in person, the Board is kept up-to-date through the minutes or personal contact.

The Board was pleased to have Waana Davis (NZCA liaison) attend the August 2015 and February 2016 meetings to update the Board on NZCA discussions and activities. The

Board also receives the NZCA's agenda's, minutes, letters to Conservation Board Chairpersons and, since early 2016, their public meeting papers.

8.8 Understanding the Board's contribution to giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi

8.8.1 *Understand and support the Board's and Department's obligations under Treaty settlements as well as principles under section 4 of the Conservation Act*

During 2015/16 The Board has:

- received a presentation prepared by DOC Legal Services on Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987;
- expressed concerns about gaps in Iwi representation on the Board;
- invited members of the Kahungunu ki Wairarapa to participate; they spoke during the Board's Field trip at Castlepoint;
- agreed at the May 2016 meeting to invite local iwi to each meeting to update the Board on progress with Treaty Settlements; and
- received updates on DOC's liaison with Whanau/Hapu/Iwi.

8.9 Engaging with the community, including raising the profile of the Board

8.9.1 *Board members will liaise regularly with other conservation entities, such as district and regional councils, NGOs and community groups, in order to enhance the profile of the Board and pursue good working relationships on issues of mutual interest and concern.*

During 2015/16, Board members have had many regular liaisons with other conservation and community groups. Members have given regular reports on the meetings and activities of these groups:

Aorangi Steering Group

A combination of groups, such as the Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, TB Free NZ, Local Iwi and recreational hunting representatives, along with several Aorangi Restoration Trust members. They are putting together a management plan and working on long and short term goals for the Aorangi Forest Park area.

Nature Central

Regular reports on the DOC-Council relationships have been reported to Board meetings.

Nature Connections

Regular information was provided to the Board on Nature Connections' work and activities.

Rangitikei Environment Group (REG)

Regular updates on activities from this group have been received throughout the 2015/16 year.

Ruahine Users Group

This group's main topics have been issues around access to the Ruahines, community involvement in huts, tracks, biodiversity issues and WARO. These have been brought to the Board table.

Kapiti Island Strategic Advisory Committee

The Kapiti Island Strategic Advisory Committee (KISAC), comprising of Ngāti Toa Rangātira and Department of Conservation representatives focus on ensuring taonga species on Kapiti Island, flora and fauna, are protected and enhanced, that there is improved accessibility to parts of the island which have cultural and spiritual significance as well as oversight for the preparation and approval of a management plan for the Kapiti Island reserves sites. The committee engaged with the Department and the Board on matters relating to the review of the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy and the draft Greater Wellington Natural Resources Plan.



Photo: Takahe feeding, Kapiti Island **Photographer:** Nadine Gibbs

Wairarapa Moana Wetlands Project

The key thing on the project agenda has been the Ramsar application. The Board wrote to the Minister of Conservation in support of the application.

Ruahine Hunter Liaison Group

Reports from this group's meetings have been regularly received by the Board.

Orongorongo Huts

During 2015/16, the board received a presentation from the Orongorongo Club and exchanged correspondence on the maintenance of Orongorongo Huts and the CMS. Concerns received from the public around the hut booking system were discussed and passed on to DOC. The Board receives updates from this groups meetings.

As well, Board members have engaged with the community in many other ways, some examples are:

- attended the Whareroa Guardians AGM;
- attended a Kapiti Accord meeting to discuss the possibility of the three groups working more closely together;
- attended a Biodiversity meeting at Ministry for the Environment;
- maintained connections with a variety of conservation groups, such as the Whareroa Collaboration Group, Kapiti Coast Environmental Accord committee, the US/Kapiti Marines Trust (Chair), Whareroa Guardians, and Kapiti Coast Bio Diversity Committee;
- attended the New Zealand Professional Hunting Guides Association (NZPHGA) AGM; and
- attended Restoration Day in Carterton.



Photo: Cone Hut, the second oldest hut in the Tararua Forest Park

Photographer: Richard Nester