

# Pūrongo ā-Tau mō te Kanorau Koiora **Annual Report for Biodiversity 2024/25**

Prepared by Biosecurity and Biodiversity Section, Integrated Catchment Management

# Rārangi kaupapa

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# He tīmatanga kōrero

## Introduction

The biodiversity annual report summarises non regulatory biodiversity related work completed by the Waikato Regional Council (the council) for the 2024/25 year.

This is the first report that summarises the council's work relating to biodiversity across multiple directorates. It is hoped that additional content and metrics will be provided in future including information on coastal biodiversity related work, biodiversity outcomes sought through resource consent conditions, and advocacy with territorial authorities.

It is envisaged that an annual report will be produced each year as a companion document to the Regional Pest Management Plan Operational Annual Report, which is required under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

This is a non-statutory document, and financial information is provided in summary form only.







# Tirohanga whānui

## Programme overview

The legislation relating to biodiversity is complex and features in numerous regulatory, legislative and strategic documents.

Various agencies undertake biodiversity management, and a summary of council-related biodiversity responsibilities is provided in Appendix 1. The Waikato Regional Council focuses its effort on leadership and coordination, supporting others by providing information, expertise and funding, and enabling restoration activities that will lead to better biodiversity outcomes.

The council takes a portfolio approach to managing biodiversity-related work and groups this work into seven themes (Figure 1).

Each directorate is responsible for delivering its own work programme, which means that biodiversity-related work is overseen by several committees including the Environmental Performance Committee, Integrated Catchment Management Committee and Strategy and Policy Committee.

The Biodiversity Advisory Group, comprising senior staff from across the directorates, oversees biodiversity-related work. However, until now, no mechanism captures the achievements and deliverables for the entire biodiversity work programme. This annual report is intended to fill that gap.



*Figure 1: Conceptual overview of the council's biodiversity-related work and the directorate responsible for delivering it.*



# Policy context and strategic alignment

The council’s work to support biodiversity outcomes is linked to all the strategic priority areas of the Strategic Direction 2023–2025.

While our work aligns most strongly to the biodiversity and biosecurity priority area, it also achieves deliverables under water and coastal and marine, and contributes to community connections, sustainable development and infrastructure, and transition to a low emissions economy.

Programme	Alignment with WRC strategic areas					
	Water	Biodiversity and biosecurity	Coastal and marine	Sustainable development and infrastructure	Community connection	Transition to a low emissions economy
Strategic leadership	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Medium
Delivering restoration with others	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Medium
Measuring success	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak
Policy reform	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Medium
Tools and innovation	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak
Compliance and monitoring	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak
Pest control / threat management	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Strong	<div></div> Medium	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Weak	<div></div> Medium





# Ngā hua nui

## Highlights from our programmes

This section gives a summary of biodiversity related work undertaken by the council in each of the seven themes.

**Strategic leadership, shared services**

**Delivering restoration with others**

**Measuring success**

**Tools and innovation**

**Policy reform**

**Compliance monitoring and enforcement**

**Pest control/threat management**



# Strategic leadership, shared services

Within the region, our iwi partners, stakeholders and communities look to us to provide effective leadership and direction when it comes to managing biodiversity. Effective leadership is not only about ensuring transparency in decision making, monitoring and reporting. It is also about working with and empowering others in their efforts towards achieving effective biodiversity and biosecurity outcomes.

## Programme

### Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy

The Waikato Biodiversity Accord was developed as a mechanism to strengthen biodiversity collaboration between signatories. A key component of the accord is a commitment to work together to develop and implement a biodiversity strategy for the Waikato region. The next step is to develop the Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy, which will foster a unified vision, establish clear goals, and drive coordinated action to safeguard and enhance the region’s biodiversity for the benefit of future generations.

#### Key achievements

To date, 12 organisations have become signatories and have committed to actioning the Waikato Biodiversity Accord. The accord remains live and other organisations may become accord partners at any time.

#### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances	Commentary
General rate	<div></div>	<div></div>	Completed within budget.

#### Key challenges

Policy and legislative reform being led by central government is creating uncertainty. Timely engagement will remain a challenge for the project, and to manage this we are working with iwi partners and stakeholders closely to ensure meaningful iwi and community participation.

#### What’s coming up

Development of the Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy is underway and will be completed in 2026.

## Programme

### Waikato Regional Coastal Plan

The proposed Waikato Regional Coastal Plan (proposed plan) contains provisions that guide the management of activities that may adversely affect ecosystem processes, functions and integrity, and indigenous biodiversity within the Waikato coastal marine area. It also promotes restoring and enhancing ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity.

The Waikato coastal marine area contains ecosystems and habitats including estuaries, lagoons, coastal wetlands, intertidal zones, rocky reef systems, eelgrass and saltmarshes, and many threatened or at-risk indigenous plants and animals, as well as species that are important for recreational or cultural purposes. The proposed plan identifies and maps areas where these significant indigenous biodiversity values require protection.

#### Key achievements

The proposed plan was notified in August 2023, and public hearings were held between February and April 2025.

#### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate	<div></div>	<div></div>

#### Key challenges

Policy and legislative reform being led by central government is creating uncertainty.

#### What’s coming up

Council will consider adopting the Independent Hearings Panel recommendations as Council decisions in September 2025 and these will be notified for appeals later in 2025.

# Delivering restoration with others

The council puts significant effort into supporting and empowering restoration activities across a spectrum of community restoration projects and programmes to build capacity and capability to deliver biodiversity outcomes. It provides advice and support to iwi, hapū, landowners, community groups, and individuals through site restoration advice and/or funding and through the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme. This section overviews our key programmes of work under the delivering restoration with others theme.

## Programme

### Coastcare

The Coastcare programme is a partnership between the local community, iwi, territorial authorities, Department of Conservation, and the council, aiming to protect and restore coastal environments. It focuses on dunes but also undertakes restoration activities in estuaries, coastal forests and coastal wetlands.

Coastcare plays an integral part in education, raising environmental awareness, and advocating for coastal environments. Community Coastcare groups are active at more than 50 locations at 30 different beaches on the east (Coromandel) and west coasts of the Waikato region.

#### Key achievements

This report includes statistics from the combined Coastcare programme, which includes work undertaken by the council's partners, primarily the Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC).

### Coastal planting WRC and TCDC

 **50,000 plants**

**38**  
public  
planting events 

**25**   
beach sites planted

**674**  **1,650**  
volunteers volunteer hours

#### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate		

#### Commentary

This programme is on track but rising costs (e.g., materials, contracted services) have resulted in reprioritisation of the work programme.

#### Key challenges

Programme delays have frustrated some community group members due to pausing further dune rehabilitation (earthworks) while authorisations under the Wildlife Act are sought to survey, disturb, salvage and release absolutely protected wildlife. See the feature box for more detail.

Rising costs put pressure on this programme and service levels will reduce to stay within existing budgets. A review of the delivery model has been completed and will be evaluated through the next LTP process.

#### What's coming up

The Coastcare programme has operated since 1993 growing considerably in size, scope, and complexity. This growth has largely been organic, with minimal consideration given to long term outcomes. An operational plan is being developed to set objectives, outcomes to improve the mid to long term planning, and delivery of the programme that will provide clarity and direction for the council (Coastcare lead agency), partners, agencies and community groups.





## Coastal fauna and Wildlife Act 1953 implications

Volunteers and staff regularly observe native lizards and other native fauna in coastal dunes. Native fauna such as lizards and katipō spiders are fully protected under the Wildlife Act 1953, which means they cannot be harmed or disturbed without an authority from the Department of Conservation.

In early 2024, the council, in consultation with DOC and TCDC, put Coastcare's large scale earthworks (to rebuild dunes) on hold until information was gathered about the fauna present in the region's coastal habitats.

A community hui hosted by the Kūaotunu Dune Care Group in November 2024 looked at balancing restoration priorities to rebuild dunes and remove weeds with ensuring harm to native wildlife is avoided or minimised. Representatives from the council, TCDC, Ngāti Hei, the Coastal Restoration Trust of New Zealand, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, and Otama Reserves Group attended the hui.

The council undertook a coastal fauna survey at ten Coromandel beaches over the 2024/25 summer, with support from TCDC, to develop a Fauna Management Plan, which supplements applications made to DOC. The first of two authorities has been approved, which allows the council to survey for lizards at all Coastcare and priority biodiversity sites in the region. The second authority, to disturb, salvage and release absolutely protected wildlife was lodged in May 2025 and we anticipate receiving that soon allowing earthworks for dune restoration to resume with minimal impact on coastal wildlife.



Katipō spider (*Latrodectus katipo*)



Moko skink (*Oligosoma moco*)



Checking to see if skinks have colonised an artificial refugia

Programme

# Priority biodiversity sites

Approximately 300 priority biodiversity sites across the region have been identified, ensuring a representative range of ecosystems is prioritised for funding eligibility. Priority biodiversity sites include naturally uncommon ecosystems (e.g. karst, geothermal, frost flats), threatened ecosystems (e.g. kahikatea forest, wetlands) and privately owned ecosystems that are underrepresented on public land and therefore not subject to DOC protection and management (e.g. lowland forest).

The priority biodiversity sites programme supports willing landowners, iwi, community groups, agencies and partners to protect and restore indigenous ecosystems and threatened species on private land. Financial support is available for works exceeding regulatory requirements and meeting a set of guidelines. A large proportion of priority biodiversity projects involve collaborating with other funders, both internal (e.g., with catchment and biosecurity teams) and external (e.g., QEII National Trust, the Waikato River Authority, Wairakei Environmental Mitigation Charitable Trust, Department of Conservation).

## Key achievements

In 2024/25, the priority biodiversity sites programme supported work on 39 sites and surrounds, covering some 14,555 hectares in total. Restoration and pest control projects were undertaken within coastal, geothermal, freshwater wetland, shallow lake, lowland forest and kahikatea forest ecosystems, including internationally, nationally and regionally significant sites such as Whangamarino wetland, Toreparu wetland, Tauhara maunga (Taupō), Tokaanu geothermal and wetlands (southern shore of Lake Taupō), Tainui Reserve (Mōkau) and Port Waikato dunelands.

Activities undertaken through the priority biodiversity programme included fencing, restoration plantings, predator control, weed control, biodiversity surveys, community engagement and training (trapping workshop and herbicide for community volunteers’ workshop).

## Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate	<div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div></div>
Commentary		
This programme continues to meet its KPI and benefited from an increase in funding in the 2024-2034 LTP.		
This programme met the council KPI of 20 priority biodiversity sites under management.		

## Key challenges

There is steady demand for funding from this programme from landowners, which is managed through timing of works, meaning some projects do not proceed until funding is available.

## What’s coming up

In addition to site restoration works, further work to streamline reporting and mapping of project sites will be completed.

Developed restoration plans at 3 sites, covering 351ha



Retired 63.2ha at 5 sites



Upgraded 17.87km of fencing at 5 sites

Restoration native plantings 8.85ha at 5 sites



Purchase of traps and trap supplies for 1,173ha at 8 sites



Purchase of bait stations and bait supplies for 431.7ha at 4 sites

Weed control at 10 sites totalling 616.4ha



Monitored 12,666ha for native and pest fauna



## Priority Biodiversity Sites

- Priority biodiversity site 2024/25 projects
- Confirmed priority biodiversity site
- Possible priority biodiversity site





# Hamilton Halo

Hamilton Halo has been operating since 2007, aiming to increase the number of tūi and korimako/bellbird in Hamilton City by controlling rats prior to bird breeding season, which increases the survival rate of tūi fledglings at sites within a 20-kilometre radius of the city.

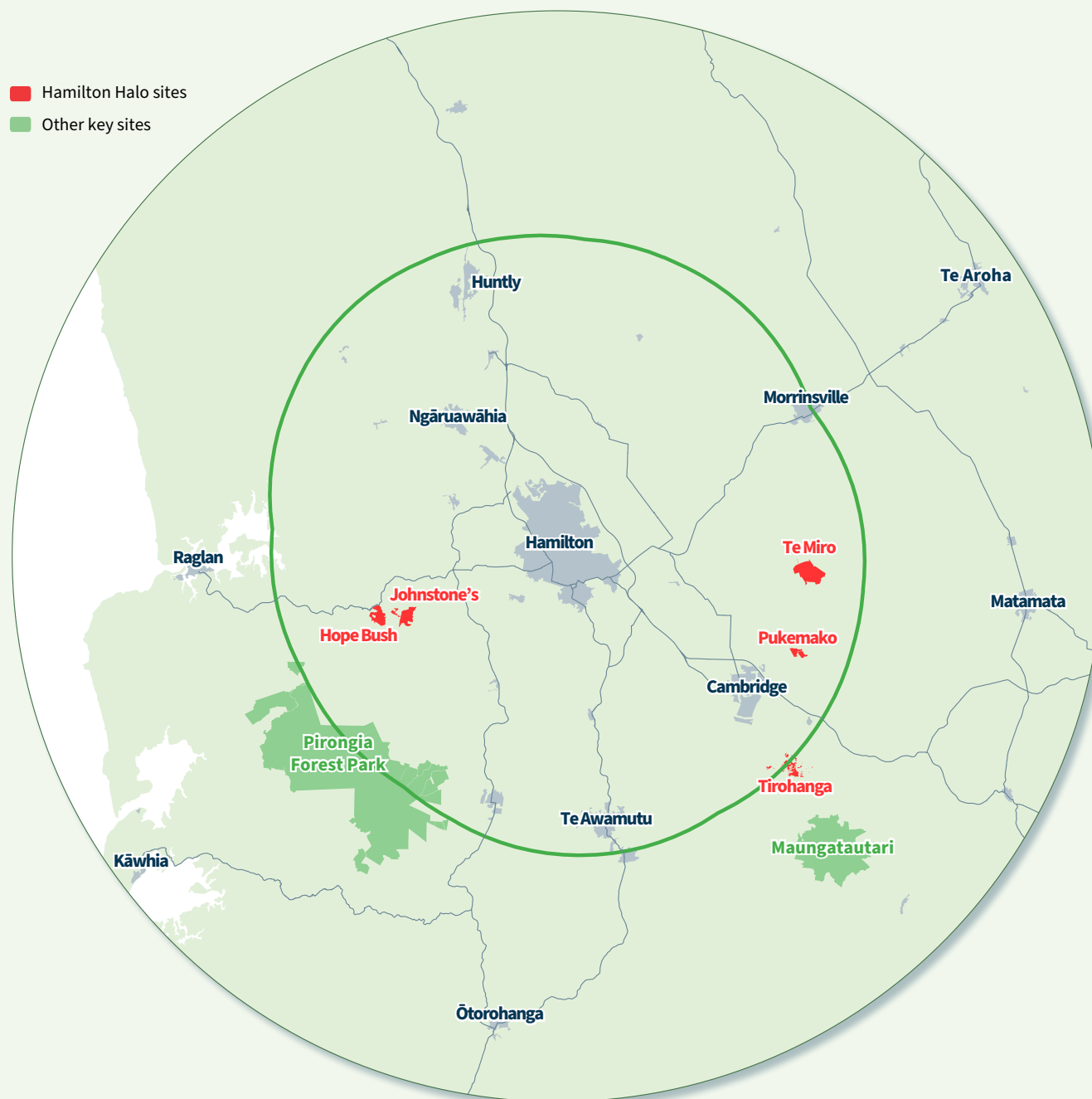
The 2024/25 pest control operations all achieved below 5 per cent residual tracking index (RTI) for rats and are reported in the RPMP Operational Plan Annual Report.

Possums also have an adverse impact on native bird populations through predation, damage to habitat and competition for food. Residual trap catch (RTC) monitoring is used to measure possum relative density. In 2024/25 a five yearly RTC was undertaken at Halo sites and this showed that in addition to successful rat control, possum numbers had also been reduced. Post control RTC ranged from 1.49 to 5.8 per cent.

Results from the triennial citywide bird survey in August and November 2024 (Fitzgerald et al. 2025) show that tūi numbers continue to increase with the highest abundance recorded since monitoring began in 2004. Numbers of riroriro/grey warbler and warou/welcome swallow have also increased since 2004. Of interest, some rare visitors to Hamilton were sighted during the survey: kārearea/New Zealand falcon, kākā, and kererū. Sightings of kōtare/kingfisher, pūkeko and tauhou/silvereye have declined since the first survey in 2004.

The triennial bird survey is a jointly funded project between Waikato Regional Council and Hamilton City Council.

- Hamilton Halo sites
- Other key sites







Atkin's Pond

## Programme

# Shallow lakes and wetlands

The shallow lakes and wetlands programme focuses on improving specific lake attributes through restoration activities such as weed control, fencing lake buffers and planting native vegetation. The programme also gathers data, which includes submerged macrophyte surveys (LakeSPI) and other in-lake surveys where data for that lake is deficient. The shallow lakes and wetlands programme is a long running collaborative programme formalised through the Waikato District Lakes and Freshwater Wetlands Memorandum of Agreement and the Waipā Peat Lakes and Wetlands Accord. These agreements have supported iwi and key agencies to coordinate their efforts.

### Key achievements

The council contributed funding towards restoration projects, including two multi partner lake restoration projects led by iwi enterprises at Lake Okowhao (Te Kauri Marae Project) and Lake Waahi (Morepork Puna Project). Both projects included fencing, controlling weeds, and planting natives in gully heads and wetland seeps of the lake catchments.

A landowner-led lake restoration project at Lake Milicich was co-funded and included weed control within the lake buffer margin and planting natives over a large buffer around the lake. Restoration works continued at Opuatia wetland, building on recent investment through the shovel ready programme.

Data deficient lake surveys were undertaken at Lakes Hamareha, Rotohoko and Patetonga. LakeSPI surveys were undertaken at Lake Hamareha, Lake Rotohoko and Atkin's Pond.

### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate		

### Commentary

An ambitious collaborative programme did not proceed as planned, which resulted in an underspend.

### Key challenges

The long running nature of this programme means that many of the easy tasks such as fencing and planting of lake margins have been completed. The focus now is increasing the size of buffers and working with less-willing landowners. This programme relies on all players being ready and able to participate at each site. This requires a true partnership approach and means that collaborative projects can take years to come together and can stall or accelerate depending on funding opportunities and willingness of all involved. Dealing with in-lake legacy issues due to decades of sediment and nutrient input requires innovation and a whole-of-catchment approach. Appropriate legislation and policy settings and changes in land management are complex and particularly challenging for shallow lakes, as found in the Waikato region.

### What's coming up

It is hoped local iwi and the council will secure co-funding for a large restoration project.

# Lake Whangape

The Lake Whangape catchment has had significant investment in the last twenty years through multiple initiatives including fencing and planting riparian areas, retiring steep and/or marginal land, controlling weeds and maintaining the lake weir.

Between 2017-2023 the council, DOC, Waikato-Tainui with additional funding from the Waikato River Authority and the Ministry for the Environment’s Freshwater Improvement Fund, invested \$2.9 million to coordinate a work programme that included 22.5 kilometres of new fencing, 3.6 kilometres of upgraded fencing, environmental weed and alligator weed control, the development of a kaitiaki monitoring framework, planting over 53,000 native plants, and financial support for landowners to implement eleven diffuse pollution interventions within the catchment.

Combined with additional council investment through the river and catchment programme, 23 per cent of the properties in the Lake Whangape catchment received funding assistance in the same period to fence streams, retire land or undertake native plantings (Grainger 2023).

Detecting a link between management interventions and improvement in lake water quality measures is challenging and demonstrates why many ecological programmes focus on output monitoring rather than outcome monitoring. While Lake Whangape is still in an entrenched turbid state, the lake is “likely improving” for a range of measures (total phosphorous, total nitrogen, ammonia, chlorophyll-a and Secchi disc depth) over the last 20 years. While it is difficult to demonstrate a linkage between the work in the catchment and lake water quality, lakes in nearby catchments have continued to show declining water quality (for example Lake Waikare degrading trends in chlorophyll-a).

Notably in recent years, algal blooms at Lake Whangape have not shown the high magnitude events that were recorded in the summers of 2019, 2020 and 2021. However, we also advise some caution in drawing conclusions over periods of a few years as environmental signals (e.g. from climate cycles) can influence these results.



Total Phosphorus	
STATE	TREND
D	↗
Attribute Band	Likely improving

Ammoniacal Nitrogen	
STATE	TREND
B	↗
Attribute Band (toxicity)	Likely improving

Secchi disc depth	
STATE	TREND
D	↗
Attribute Band	Likely improving

Total Nitrogen	
STATE	TREND
D	↗
Attribute Band	Likely improving

Chlorophyll a	
STATE	TREND
D	↗
Attribute Band	Very Likely improving



## Programme

# Shallow lake level management

Minimum lake levels have been set for 27 of the 28 lakes in the regional plan to promote the sustainable management of the peat lakes and their wetlands and to protect them from further degradation. The shallow lake level programme oversees management of the 15 weirs that the council is responsible for and provides technical advice to other organisations who manage lake level structures.

### Key achievements

In 2024/25, the following deliverables were achieved:

- A new weir was constructed at Lake Rotongata.
- Resource consents for three lake weirs were renewed (Lakes Maratoto, Areare and Pikopiko).
- All WRC managed structures (15) were inspected and maintenance for structural integrity and fish passage was undertaken at two lakes (Lakes Whakatangi and Areare).
- Continuous lake level monitoring was undertaken at nine lakes.

### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
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General rate	●	●
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### Commentary

Operational work on track, capital work programme planning and implementation in development following inclusion in the Regional Asset Management Plan.

### Key challenges

There is one lake listed in the regional plan that requires a minimum lake level to be set. The landowner has not agreed to the council undertaking lake level monitoring to begin the lake level setting process.

Some of our partner organisations do not have the resources and/or expertise required to manage lake levels and rely on regional council staff for technical advice and some would prefer that the council manage these assets. Balancing requirements of rules in the regional plan and managing expectations of other agencies, while still being good partners through the Lakes and Wetlands Accord and Memorandum of Agreement, is a balancing act.

### What's coming up

Applications to renew resource consents for weirs at Lakes Rotomanuka and Ruatuna will be lodged in 2025/26.



## Programme

# Natural Heritage Partnership Programme

The Natural Heritage Partnership Programme is well known for its contestable grants for community groups, but the programme includes a wide range of additional initiatives and projects, including:

- providing technical advice and support for individuals, iwi, and community groups undertaking biodiversity projects – large and small
- supporting capacity and capability building for community biodiversity groups and sub-regional hubs
- coordinating the Waikato Bat Alliance – a partnership between agencies, iwi and other interested parties to ensure a more collaborative and strategic approach to bat management and conservation
- coordinating the Collective Impact project – an initiative to empower communities and support and enhance the effort of the many groups, agencies, and other stakeholders to amplify positive biodiversity outcomes at landscape scale
- managing the contract for the Waikato Biodiversity Forum coordinator on behalf of other funders (Department of Conservation, Hamilton City Council, Waipā District Council, Waikato District Council and South Waikato District Council). The Waikato Biodiversity Forum is an independent organisation set up to provide advice to community groups working to restore the environment.

### Key achievements

Highlights from this programme include:

- two workshops to upskill approximately 30 arborists and agency policy and planners in bat ecology, conservation, protocols, legislation and policy
- volunteering workshop aimed at community group leaders and coordinators with a focus on attracting and retaining quality volunteers

- supporting the Waikato Biodiversity Forum to organise two well-attended field days:
  - Biodiversity without borders in Pukekohe with approximately 70 attendees
  - South Waikato Biodiversity field trip showcasing on farm and community biodiversity projects in South Waikato with approximately 40 attendees.
- supporting sub-regional hubs in the central Waikato and Coromandel to deliver 11 local events (e.g., workshops, webinars, walk and talks) for approximately 180 attendees to upskill community groups on a range of topics and provide opportunities for these groups to connect and learn.

The first contestable funding round of the Natural Heritage Fund (formerly a discretionary fund) after the natural heritage targeted rate was increased to \$15 per property, the first increase since the rate was introduced in 2005, was undertaken. The council was then able to support 64 community led projects in 2024/25:

- 36 through the Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund,
- 20 through the Environmental Initiatives Fund, and
- 8 through the Natural Heritage Fund.

The SSCIF funding trial commenced. Thirty per cent of funding available through the SSCIF has been allocated to two biodiversity sub-regional hubs to distribute to community groups in their local area in a way that meets the needs of their local groups and reduces the administrative burden on these small conservation groups and the council.

Through the Collective Impact project, the council has developed and is currently testing a GIS based platform called Kete Taiao Waikato, a spatial data and monitoring tool for community conservation groups. See the Tools and Innovation Section for more detail.

## NHF - Return on Investment Case Studies

The three case studies below demonstrate some of the variety of return on investment achieved through the Natural Heritage Partnership Programme. The return on investment for community-led biodiversity work is complex and incorporates financial, biodiversity, volunteer labour and social licence returns, often achieved over extended time frames. The intent is that future reports will expand on return on investment metrics, in particular for the EIF and NHF.

1

### A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand – The Karioi Project

A Rocha Aotearoa has been working with the Whāingaroa/Raglan community for over 15 years to restore biodiversity on Mount Karioi and more recently this work has extended into the surrounding landscape. This group undertakes pest control on Karioi and backyard trapping in and around Raglan. It also supports an iwi-led kākā reintroduction project and wetland restoration project and runs an environmental education and awareness programme.

The total project cost over the next three years is \$3.1 million and council contributions have enabled A Rocha Aotearoa to leverage significant other funding. Through the Natural Heritage Fund, the council contributes \$393,000 over four years, 13 per cent of total project costs. Nine other funders have also confirmed financial contributions to the project and in excess of 11,000 volunteer hours contributed by the local community per annum. In addition, the backyard trapping programme includes a social enterprise component where landowners can contribute financially to The Karioi Project for their staff to undertake the pest control work. This diverse funding stream approach increases resilience for the project.



## Financial overview

### Funding source   Programme delivery   Finances

Natural heritage  
targeted rate

Uniform annual  
general charge

### Commentary

This programme continues to meet its KPI and benefited from an increase in funding in the 2024-2034 LTP.

This programme met the council KPI of 60 groups and/or individuals funded through the NHPP.

## Key challenges

The timing of the decision to increase the targeted rate required two rounds of the Natural Heritage Fund to be run back to back, requiring some business as usual work to be deferred.

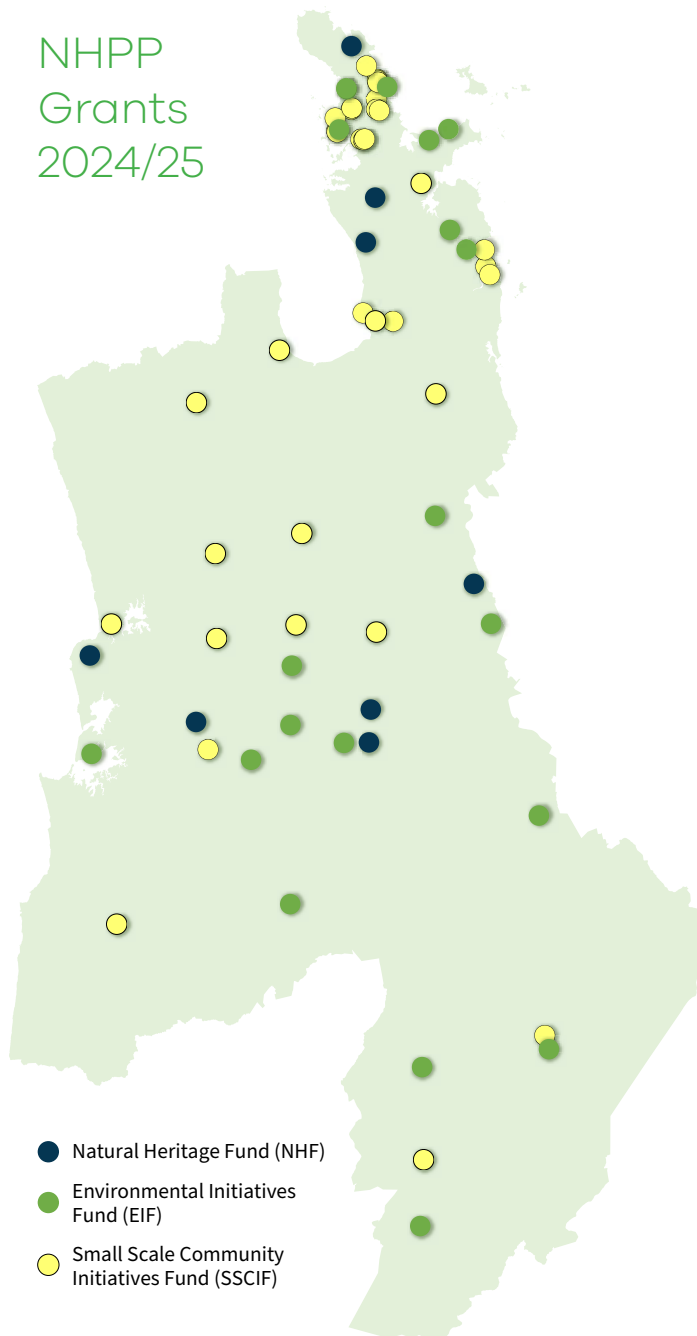
## What's coming up

Decisions on the next round of Natural Heritage Fund and Environmental Initiatives Fund were made in August. Further work on reporting outcomes and return on investment will be progressed.

Results from the SSCIF funding trial will be analysed and presented to councillors.

The Mana Koiroa Mana Whenua | Protecting biodiversity on shared Māori land project funded through the 2024-2034 LTP will be completed. This project will evaluate options to better support biodiversity work on Māori land held in shared ownership

## NHPP Grants 2024/25



2

## Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust – The Kaimai Mamaku Restoration Project

Manaaki Kaimai Mamaku Trust (MKMT) operate as a subregional hub, supporting the operational delivery of eight iwi led pest control projects initiated to restore the mauri of the Kaimai Mamaku Ranges.

In February 2025, the council granted \$200,000 from the Natural Heritage Fund for over two years, contributing approximately 14 per cent of the total project cost of \$1.43 million. Three other funders have confirmed financial contributions to MKMT and several more directly fund the eight iwi-led pest control projects. The council funding to support this project not only leverages other funding but also supports a group that shows significant leadership in trialling innovative and sustainable funding options for conservation projects in the Waikato. MKMT is one of only nine pilot projects across New Zealand trialling a voluntary nature credits market.

3

## Whenuakiwi Trust, operating as Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group

Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group (WKCG) has been undertaking pest animal control in the Whenuakite area for over 24 years. While this group remains dedicated to their primary goal of protecting the local kiwi population, the benefits to biodiversity due to long term pest control have been much wider. Flocks of kererū, numbering as high as 200 birds, are now seen the area. Kākā, NZ dotterel and Australasian bittern also benefit from this group's unwavering dedication. Ongoing monitoring shows the local kiwi population is thriving, increasing from one pair per 102 hectares of forest in 2001 to one pair per 22 hectares in 2025, demonstrating a five-fold increase in kiwi numbers over this time.

# Measuring success

The council has statutory obligations to quantify the state of indigenous biodiversity on private land and monitor spatial and temporal trends.

Regional councils are required to report progress towards maintaining and restoring native biodiversity on private land. To achieve this, the council focuses on private land and works with the Department of Conservation who collect this information from public conservation land. A three-tiered approach has been adopted nationally to describe monitoring: tier 1 (monitoring which operates at a broad scale for national or regional context), tier 2 (nationally consistent monitoring of managed places and species to report on management effectiveness), and tier 3 monitoring (intensive, targeted monitoring for research and evaluation).

## Programme

### Tier 1 monitoring

The 2024-2034 Long Term Plan provided resources to establish and maintain long term terrestrial biodiversity monitoring and reporting in the region, which complements existing wetland, coastal, and freshwater monitoring programmes.

Of the 385 tier 1 sites located on an eight-kilometre grid spacing across the region, 290 are on private land. The council plans to monitor 124 non-forested sites and 80 forest sites on private land (complementing Ministry for the Environment’s vegetation monitoring in forest) over a five-year return cycle to better understand the state and trend of ecosystem health through standardised biodiversity measures. Department of Conservation collects similar measures at 75 sites on public conservation land in the region.

#### Key achievements

After a successful field pilot in 2023/24 (16 sites) (Overdyck 2025), the council undertook tier 1 monitoring at 25 sites in 2024/25. Vegetation, bird, bat and pest data were collected following the national standard tier 1 methodology, with Survey123 apps also being developed and implemented to streamline animal data collection in the field. Results are being analysed and will be reported through the five yearly state of the environment report. An annual data summary will be available in October when results are given to landowners at each site. Preliminary results suggest several new records for bats in the region.

#### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate	●	●

#### Commentary

This programme, while early in establishment, has met milestones to date.

#### Key challenges

Information sharing arrangements between central government, DOC and regional councils are yet to be formalised and established. Challenges in existing data use agreements with landowners and data transfer mechanisms are being explored.

Pilot seasons indicate the original cost estimates for the programme fall short of what actual costs are likely to be. Staff are currently working through options with a preference to modify the sampling design to fit within existing resource allocation with the least effect on data quality.

#### What’s coming up

**Tier 1** – A total of 44 sites are planned for monitoring in the 2025-2026 season including non-forested, natural forest and exotic forest habitat.

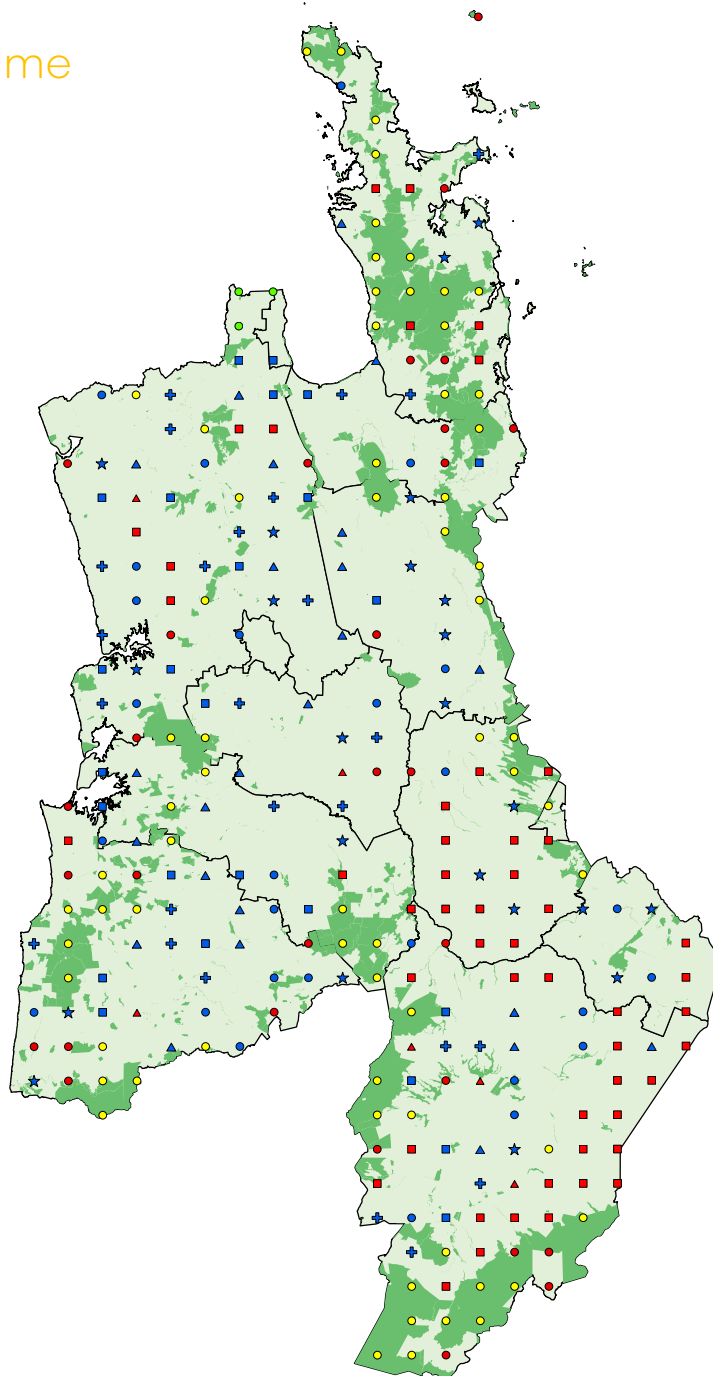
**Tier 2 monitoring programme** – Funding from the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan commences in year 3 of the LTP (2026/27). Preparatory work to set up the programme ahead of recruitment will be undertaken in 2025/26.

**Tier 3 monitoring programme** – Funding from the 2024-34 Long Term Plan is planned to commence in year 4 of the LTP (2027/28) and will be reviewed during the development of the 2027-37 LTP. This resource comprises OPEX solely as seed funding or contributory funds for research focused on species of importance to the Waikato Region, and/or to establish Waikato specific species threat status to help identify high priority biodiversity sites and to support high value restoration projects.



## Tier 1 Programme Plot locations

- ★ WRC: Pilot 2023-24
- WRC: 2024-25
- WRC: 2025-26
- ▲ WRC: 2026-27
- ✚ WRC: 2027-28
- Auckland Council
- DOC
- MFE natural forest
- MFE exotic forest
- ▲ MFE
- Public conservation land
- Territorial authorities



## Geothermal biodiversity monitoring

Prior to 2024, there was no established standardised and ongoing monitoring of geothermal vegetation within protected geothermal systems in the Waikato region. Monitoring within development geothermal systems, however, is generally well established through resource consent processes, although methodologies differ across sites.

This study established biodiversity monitoring (flora, avifauna, herpetofauna, introduced mammals) of geothermal ecosystems within sites in protected, limited development, and research geothermal systems and identified five yearly monitoring frequencies. The standard national monitoring framework methodology (Bellingham et al. 2021, Hurst et al. 2022) was able to be implemented in most cases with minor modifications in spite of the range of challenges presented by monitoring in dangerous habitats. Drones are useful to expand monitoring (in a more limited capacity) into areas that are unsafe to access on foot, particularly in habitats containing low stature vegetation or bare ground. They allow for truly randomised plots to be established at sites where it would otherwise be too dangerous (Wildlands 2025).

Five flora species and three avifauna species with threatened status were recorded from the 17 permanent plots and the additional 11 plots measured by drone alone.

## Geothermal herpetofauna surveys

There has been little research on indigenous vertebrate species presence or distribution in geothermal habitat other than several anecdotal sightings of geckos at Craters of the Moon and Orakei Korako. The lack of knowledge means council staff have been unable to include herpetofauna protection or mitigation conditions in geothermal resource consents or district planning provisions. The most effective way to achieve change in this space is to acquire scientifically robust and statistically sufficient data, published in a peer reviewed technical report.

This information will underpin advice for consenting processes, policy and planning provisions, improve education resources on geothermal habitat value, review the Waikato Regional Council's state of the environment monitoring programme and to inform future investment into restoration and protection projects.



## Programme

# Biodiversity inventory

A region wide biodiversity inventory (vegetation-based ecosystems) has been drafted and is now being validated for accuracy. It is needed to provide a clear understanding of the regional biodiversity resource. It provides the base information to allow biodiversity management priorities on private land to be set across the region. Biodiversity priority setting will be more systematic and explicit and can be set for biodiversity monitoring at a regional scale. This information will inform numerous applications including the identification of biodiversity restoration priorities. It currently informs landowners about what biodiversity resources their properties are likely to contain and assists industry to meet its business compliance obligations.

This project underpins implementation of the policy directions of RPS Chapter 11 and is the basis for strategic and proactive engagement with stakeholders. It is the critical step in the process to protect and manage Significant Natural Areas and indigenous biodiversity.

### Key achievements

A robust, repeatable, cost-effective method using historical information, aerial obliques and GIS was developed to validate sites from a desktop. Dozens of additional ecosystem types have been added to the biodiversity inventory, above what was modelled. Approximately 18,000 polygons (or 35 per cent) have been added to the inventory since modelling. The biodiversity inventory has been prioritised for numerous internal and external projects (e.g., west coast harbour catchments, South Waikato District, Auckland-Hamilton corridor, Waikato River). There are currently 72,180 polygons that make up the biodiversity inventory and 77 per cent (55,751 polygons) have been validated. The inventory is currently shared and utilised internally, with a view to wider sharing once validation is complete.

### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate	<div></div>	<div></div>
Commentary		

Resourcing for this project has reduced to a maintenance level and so ongoing progress is slow but steady.

### Key challenges

Limitations around using dated aerial oblique imagery and retaining skilled contractors are the main challenges in this programme.

### What's coming up

Ninety-five ecosystem factsheets have been written describing most ecosystem types in the region and will be published soon.



# Tools and innovation

This theme connects our scientific research and data with the staff and communities who use them. It focuses on providing restoration guidance, pest management tools, and methods to assess ecosystem health.

## Key achievements

### Kete Taiao Waikato

This is a mapping and data management tool designed for community groups to capture data relating to their biodiversity projects. Waikato Regional Council has developed this tool in response to community feedback on its need for an integrated platform that easily records and reports on data relating to all project activities.

The tool is currently being tested by community groups and is available as a desktop application and as a mobile application that can be used in the field. It enables groups to input and analyse a wide range of activities (e.g. trap catch, planting areas, number of volunteers, monitoring) to plan and inform decisions about their projects and report on outputs and outcomes. The tool has integration capabilities with TrapNZ (an existing platform used throughout New Zealand for recording trap, bait, monitoring and biodiversity outcome data).

Kete Taiao Waikato will allow biodiversity outcomes to be more effectively and efficiently reported by community groups and allow the council to visualise landscape scale outcomes and understand what is being achieved across the region.

### Other tools and innovation initiatives

Other developments that are in their early stages include:

- development of an acid sulphate soil prediction map, supporting landowner and council decisions regarding earthworks and water levels to prevent acid sulphate discharges and potential fish kills
- an online Kahikatea Green Wheel application, supporting landowner monitoring of progress in protecting kahikatea fragments
- investigations into the feasibility of soil eDNA as a potential indicator of soil health.

### Financial overview

Funding source	Programme delivery	Finances
General rate		
Commentary		

Although small, this resource has supported several innovative initiatives that otherwise could not have been achieved with existing budgets.

### Key challenges

Developing and implementing applications is sometimes dependent on other council IT initiatives and frameworks. In soil eDNA monitoring, the methodology may have limitations that mean the technology does not yet provide sufficiently reliable or repeatable data for state of the environment monitoring; this applies to all scientific innovation.

### What's coming up

**Kete Taiao** – Once user testing is complete, the tool will be distributed and training provided to community groups.

**Other tools and innovation initiatives** – Providing guidance to landowners to minimise the impacts of working in and around acid sulphate soils (progressing with funds from another cost centre) continues as does developing the Kahikatea Green Wheel interface for landowners and further investigating the potential for soil eDNA to indicate soil health metrics for inclusion in state of the environment monitoring.



## Policy reform

The government has signalled changes to the Resource Management Act and other associated planning instruments. The council has engaged with these processes including preparing submissions and working with Te Uru Kahika to develop a regional sector approach. The Biosecurity Act is also under review and changes could influence biodiversity work programmes.

## Compliance monitoring and enforcement

Investment in a collaborative work programme between local and regional authorities to undertake education, compliance, monitoring and enforcement to ensure biodiversity related policies and rules are being met has been deferred, pending completion of the Waikato Biodiversity Strategy.

## Pest control/threat management

This work is reported through the Biosecurity Annual Report and is available on our website.





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## Data acknowledgements

### Priority Biodiversity Sites

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ICM Biodiversity Priority Sites Data.

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### Halo

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RAP Areas:

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DOC Conservation areas

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### NHPP Grants 2024/25

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### Tier 1 Programme Plot locations

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# Appendix 1

## Legislative and Planning Framework for Biodiversity (as at August 2025)

	Initiative or instrument	Status	Context for Waikato region
International Direction	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	<b>In effect</b>	<p>The CBD is an international legal instrument for the conservation of biodiversity and New Zealand is a signatory.</p> <p>In response to the CBD, the Department of Conservation (DOC) developed Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 that regional councils have a role in implementing.</p>
	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance	<b>In effect</b>	<p>The Ramsar Convention requires the promotion of the significance of these wetlands and monitoring of any changes to their ecological character, the wise use of wetlands especially through national policy, and wetland conservation.</p> <p>There are seven sites in New Zealand that are listed as wetlands of international importance under the Convention. Three of these are in the Waikato region – the Firth of Thames, the Kopuatai Peat Dome, and the Whangamarino Wetland. WRC coordinates with DOC (lead agency) in the management of these wetlands.</p>
National Legislation	Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)	<b>In effect</b> but will be repealed and replaced	<p>There are specific clauses in the RMA that relate to regional biodiversity management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 30 of the RMA requires regional councils to control land use for the purpose of “maintaining and enhancing ecosystems in water bodies and coastal water”. Regional councils are also responsible for objectives, policies and methods for maintaining biodiversity.</li> <li>• Section 31 of the RMA requires territorial authorities to control “the effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purpose of maintaining indigenous biological diversity.”</li> <li>• Section 62(1)(i)(iii) requires regional policy statements to “state the local authority responsible, in the whole or any part of the region, for specifying the objectives, policies and methods for the control of the use of land to maintain indigenous biodiversity”.</li> </ul> <p>The current government has committed to making a range of reforms to New Zealand’s resource management system. This includes amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), as well as ultimately replacing the act with laws premised on the enjoyment of property rights as a guiding principle.</p>
	The Biosecurity Act 1993  Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement	<b>In effect</b> but under review	<p>The Biosecurity Act provides a legal framework for keeping harmful organisms out of New Zealand. An overhaul of this legislation is currently underway, led by the Ministry for Primary Industries and Biosecurity New Zealand (as part of the wider Biosecurity 2025 Programme of Work).</p> <p>The Biosecurity Act enables regional councils to monitor and manage harmful organisms within its region. The mechanism for this in the Waikato region is the Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032.</p> <p>Biosecurity 2025 provides the direction that New Zealand’s biosecurity system needs to take over the next ten years. It includes a mission statement, principles, strategic directions, targets for 2025 and initial actions.</p>



	Initiative or instrument	Status	Context for Waikato region
National Legislation	Conservation Act 1987 and related legislation	<b>In effect</b>	<p>The Conservation Act covers the management, advocacy, promotion of land, natural and historic resources for conservation purposes as well as preserving indigenous and recreational freshwater fisheries and freshwater fish habitats.</p> <p>The Conservation Law Reform programme, which is one of the priority actions in Te Mana o te Taiao, is currently being led by DOC and covers 24 separate pieces of legislation. These include a review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wildlife Act is used to protect wildlife and regulate game bird hunting, including the establishment of wildlife reserves;</li> <li>• Stewardship land in New Zealand. There are significant biodiversity areas in the Waikato region that are classified as stewardship land, including parts of Pureora and large swathes of land on the west coast;</li> <li>• Marine Protected Areas (several laws);</li> <li>• The management of conservation land, including making protection of natural areas easier, charging for access to some conservation land and supporting growth in tourism.</li> <li>• Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000, along with a suite of related planning instruments.</li> </ul>
	Climate Change Response Act 2002	<b>In effect</b>	<p>The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 substantially added to the Climate Change Response Act 2002, which has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (which puts a price on greenhouse gases) which is administered by the Environmental Protection Authority;</li> <li>• Established the Climate Change Commission;</li> <li>• Set a domestic emissions reduction target by 2050;</li> <li>• Created a series of five yearly emissions reduction budgets and plans;</li> </ul> <p>Established a range of climate adaptation measures (including a National Adaptation Plan).</p>
National Direction	National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB)	NPS-IB – <b>in effect</b> but under review	<p>The NPS-IB provides direction to councils to protect, maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity requiring at least no further reduction nationally. It requires councils to work in partnership with tangata whenua, provides a strong framework for identifying and managing SNAs; requires biodiversity also to be managed outside of SNAs including habitats for highly mobile fauna; details principles for offsetting and compensation in the effects management hierarchy, and requires regional councils to develop biodiversity strategies to promote the restoration of biodiversity. The NPS-IB is limited to land (terrestrial) ecosystems and some aspects of wetlands and will apply across all land types/tenures, both public and private.</p>
	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)	NPS-FM – <b>in effect</b> but under review	<p>The NPS-FM provides direction on how freshwater should be managed under the RMA. It requires regional councils to give effect to Te Mana o Te Wai, improve degraded water bodies and maintain or improve all others in alignment with the bottom lines in the NES-FM, map and avoid further loss or degradation of wetlands, create specific targets for fish abundance, diversity and passage, and identify and map habitats of freshwater dependent threatened species (to name a few).</p>
	National Environmental Standards for freshwater (NES-FW)	NES-FW – <b>in effect</b> but under review	<p>The NES-FW regulate activities that pose risks to the health of freshwater and freshwater ecosystems. It lays out a series of requirements and standards to protect wetlands, fish habitat and passage, and rural and urban streams.</p> <p>A change to the Waikato Regional Plan was required in response to the NPS-FM and NES-FM (Plan Change 1). This plan change aims to improve the water quality of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers and is currently progressing through the Environment Court appeal process.</p> <p>The Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Regulations 2020 prohibit the access of cattle, pigs and deer to lakes, rivers more than one metre wide and specified wetlands or that support a threatened species.</p>

	Initiative or instrument	Status	Context for Waikato region
National Direction	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)	In effect	The NZCPS provides national direction on the management of the coastal environment. It is the only compulsory national policy statement (with the RMA requiring that there is one in place at all times). The Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS), the Waikato Regional Plan, the Regional Coastal Plan (RCP) and district plans are required to give effect to the NZCPS. In relation to biodiversity management, policy 11 of the NZCPS requires the avoidance of adverse effects of activities on indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems and the habitats of indigenous species.
	National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry 2023 (NES-PF)	In effect	The NES-CF lays out a set of regulations for maintaining and improving environmental outcomes associated with plantation forestry and exotic continuous-cover forestry (sometimes called carbon forestry) over one hectare. They do not apply to indigenous forestry activities. The NES-CF regulations cover eight core plantation forestry activities that have potential environmental effects, for example, afforestation, harvesting and earthworks. Certain provisions relate to indigenous biodiversity, such as the need to ensure that forestry earthworks plans contain procedures to identify and avoid disturbance of threatened or at-risk indigenous species of birds and fish, and restrictions on clearance of indigenous vegetation associated with commercial forestry.
	National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL)	In effect	The NPS-HPL seeks to protect highly productive land from inappropriate land use, subdivision and development. Regional councils are required to map and identify highly productive land in their RPS. There are exceptions and one of these is in relation to activities for the purpose of protecting, maintaining, restoring or enhancing indigenous biodiversity (clause 3.9(2)(e)). A plan change to the WRPS will be required in response to the NPS-HPL. This will include the highly productive land map and any associated policy changes.
	National Adaptation Plan (NAP)	In effect	This plan is required under the Climate Change Response Act 2002 and responds to the risks identified in the National Climate Change Risk Assessment 2020. Safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems is a key focus of the NAP, which recognises the dual biodiversity and climate crises. The NAP states that the government will prioritise nature-based solutions to climate change and will integrate work programmes to address these crises in a coordinated manner.
	Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP)	In effect	This plan is required under the Climate Change Response Act 2002 and sets out how New Zealand will meet its second emissions budget and transition to a low emissions future. Nature-based solutions feature in the ERP as a way of addressing the biodiversity and climate crises concurrently. The ERP states that the government will prioritise nature-based solutions, investigate the potential of a biodiversity credits market, explore partnerships with the private sector to plant native trees on Crown owned land, and prioritise promising activities/technologies that increase non forestry removals such as blue carbon, peatlands and riparian vegetation.
Regional Instruments	Te Ture Whaimana – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River	In effect, under review	Te Ture Whaimana is the primary direction setting document for the Waikato and Waipā rivers. It has the same effect as a national policy statement and therefore, district and regional plans and regional policy statements must give effect to it. Te Ture Whaimana requires that the health and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipā rivers is restored and protected for current and future generations. The direction provided in Te Ture Whaimana influences the management of freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity in the Waikato region. Te Ture Whaimana is in the formative stages of a statutory review which is expected to take a total of two years.
	Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS)	Operative	The WRPS is a document required under section 59 of the RMA. They must provide an overview of resource management issues within a region, as well as policies and methods to achieve integrated management of resources within that region. The WRPS is a key document influencing biodiversity management in the Waikato region and outlines key responsibilities and requirements for territorial authorities and WRC.  The ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity chapter (ECO) in the WRPS sets out a series of objectives, policies and methods relating to the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity. This includes methods relating to the establishment and maintenance of a biodiversity inventory (ECO-M6), a requirement for local indigenous biodiversity strategies to be prepared (LIBS), and requirements for district and regional plans to protect significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (to name a few).  Three plan change processes are underway to give effect to national direction, including the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD), NPS-HPL and the NPS-FM (WRC Freshwater Policy Review).



	Initiative or instrument	Status	Context for Waikato region
Regional Instruments	Waikato Regional Plan (WRP)	<b>Operative</b>	<p>The WRP implements the WRPS. It sets policies, methods and rules to manage natural and physical resources in the Waikato region. Some provisions within the WRP require that adverse effects on biodiversity are avoided, remedied and mitigated (as a key assessment criteria for activities such as takes of geothermal water). In addition, the WRP sets out specific policies and rules relating to the management of water resources, which have an inherent link to biodiversity values.</p> <p>There is currently one proposed change to the WRP – Proposed WRP Plan Change 1 – Waikato and Waipā River Catchment. This plan change introduces new rules for managing farming activities that may affect the quality of freshwater. It also introduces new objectives and policies relating to activities that may affect water quality. It is currently progressing through the Environment Court appeal process.</p>
	Waikato Regional Coastal Plan (WRCP)	<b>Currently under review</b>	<p>The WRCP contains policies, methods and rules relating to the management of the coastal environment in the Waikato region. The coastal plan recognises water quality, natural hazards and indigenous biodiversity whilst also managing the use of coastal resources.</p> <p>The WRCP is currently being reviewed. A proposed new plan was notified for public submission in August 2023 and hearings on the plan closed in July 2025. As part of this process, feedback is being sought on a map and schedule that identifies coastal areas with significant biodiversity. Marine protected areas are being considered as part of the coastal plan review.</p>
	Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022 – 2032 (RPMP)	<b>Operative</b>	The Waikato RPMP 2022-2023 has been prepared by WRC under the Biosecurity Act. It is a regulatory plan specific to the Waikato region, that identifies harmful organisms considered to be pests and outlines the process for their management through rules. The management of pests is a key action for protecting biodiversity in the Waikato region and the WRPMP is a key enabler of this. It includes specific provisions for supporting pest management work occurring in high biodiversity value areas, reducing the spread of pests and complementing and aligning pest management approaches in neighbouring regions.
	Joint Management Agreements (JMAs)	<b>Five operative JMAs</b>	WRC has five JMAs with iwi partners within the region (Raukawa, Te Arawa River Iwi, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Waikato-Tainui), created under section 36B of the RMA. These JMAs include the agreed process for input into RMA planning documents, resource consent applications and engagement.
	Iwi Environmental Management Plans (IMP)	<b>Operative</b>	An IMP is a document developed and approved by an iwi, hapū or marae that outlines matters of importance relating to resource management within their respective rohe or area of interest. They are an expression of rangatiratanga to assist iwi, hapū and marae with exercising kaitiakitanga roles and responsibilities. These plans often contain historical accounts, cultural values and narratives, descriptions of areas of interest and the preferred approach for consultation and engagement (in relation to planning and policy processes). IMPs often identify aspirations that the iwi, hapū or marae has for the natural environment and can include provisions relating specifically to biodiversity management and enhancement. The RMA requires local authorities to “take into account” any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority (which includes IMPs) (section 66(2A)). A list of IMPs in the Waikato region is available here: <a href="#">Iwi management plans   Waikato Regional Council</a>
Corporate documents	WRC Strategic Direction – Takatū Waikato 2022 – 2025	<b>Operative – under review</b>	The WRC Strategic Direction identifies six key strategic priorities to help build a resilient Waikato region. These priorities were informed by consultation with the community on the Long Term Plan, the Regional Coastal Plan and the Regional Pest Management Plan in 2021. These priorities will guide WRC’s organisational investment, actions and direction for the next decade. One of the priorities identified is biodiversity and biosecurity. The strategy recognises the severe rate of decline of native vegetation and biodiversity in the region. It recognises the need for managing the biodiversity present in the Waikato region and contains goals for developing a strategic pathway and supporting/working with others to protect ecosystems.
	Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022 – 2032	<b>Operative</b>	The WBS sets out WRC’s blueprint for operating and maintaining a collaborative, cohesive and comprehensive biosecurity system in the Waikato region over the next decade. It is a non statutory strategy that integrates WRC’s regulatory and non regulatory biosecurity functions (including the RPMP) with other biosecurity activities such as monitoring and surveillance, research and collaborative action. The strategy recognises that positive biodiversity outcomes are dependent on effective biosecurity measures and actions.

	Initiative or instrument	Status	Context for Waikato region
Corporate documents	Waikato Freshwater Strategy - Te Rautaki Waimāori Mō Waikato	<b>Operative</b>	<p>The Waikato Freshwater Strategy is a non statutory strategy that provides a road map for freshwater use over the next 50 + years. It identifies three key themes – advocacy, smarter methods and better information to assist WRC with managing fresh water more effectively. The strategy informs WRC’s 2018-2028 long term plan and identifies a key programme of activities that need to occur to reach the goal of effective long term freshwater management.</p> <p>The Strategy recognises the importance of freshwater ecosystems for biodiversity. It also recognises that habitat restoration and biodiversity enhancement activities led by community groups gives the best return on investment for freshwater enhancement and signals the importance of providing funding support for this.</p>
	Climate Change Roadmap – Te takatū o Waikato rohe	<b>Operative</b>	The Climate Change Roadmap is a discussion document that identifies 9 key pathways for emissions reduction and climate change adaptation in the Waikato region. These pathways will inform the way WRC operates in the future, but will depend on sustained, collaborative engagement from all sectors of society to achieve mutually agreed targets. Ongoing engagement with iwi partners, territorial authorities, sector industries and other key stakeholders is occurring to inform WRC of gaps and opportunities for collaboration. There are two pathways that relate to biodiversity – Pathway 3 (biodiversity and biosecurity) and Pathway 6 (afforestation and planting).
	Zone Management Plans	<b>Operative</b>	Zone management plans (ZMPs) are the primary tools for implementation of all river and catchment management activities in the Waikato region. They are non statutory strategic documents. ZMPs outline a series of actions to be taken to enhance biodiversity throughout each catchment.
	Catchment and Harbour Management Plans	<b>Operative</b>	Catchment and harbour management plans are non statutory strategies that set out the vision for a specific catchment over 10-20 years that can support and inform statutory documents (e.g., district and regional plans). Catchment and harbour management plans often identify biodiversity values within a catchment and any associated threats and outline key methods for enhancing biodiversity and ensuring that land use activities in the catchment minimise effects on ecosystems.
	Waikato Region Shallow Lakes Management Plan	<b>Operative</b>	This plan draws together information on the shallow lakes of the Waikato region, a framework for their management and any associated management challenges and opportunities. It has a duration of 10 years and is reviewed every three years. It is a non statutory, technical report/plan.





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He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

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Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,  
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand  
[waikatoregion.govt.nz](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz)  
0800 800 401