

NPCA Chairman's Report For the 2008 /2009 year

1. Introduction

I am pleased to present the report on work undertaken by the NPCA during the 2008/2009 year.

2. Role and the Year in Perspective

The NPCA provides a coordinating forum for agencies and stakeholders involved in possum and vertebrate pest control to:

- cooperatively address industry issues,
- share information
- develop best practice, and
- promote training and professional development.

As such it contributes to effectiveness overall in dealing with the possum and vertebrate pest problem in New Zealand, and plays a role in raising industry standards.

It gives effect to its industry standards role through the provision of a range of services that include; development of best practice guidelines, running an annual conference and other technology transfer initiatives, managing the monitoring accreditation scheme, producing newsletters, publishing and distributing technical publications, provision of information services providing project management services for pest industry projects and support for training initiatives.

3. Management Committee

Between Annual General Meetings the affairs of the NPCA are run by a management committee whose membership represents key industry agencies and practitioners.

The Management Committee membership for the 2009 year was:

Mike Hawes	-	Chair and Department of Conservation
Penny Fairbrother	-	Animal Health Board
Bill Martyn	-	Local Government NZ
Martin Brenstrum	-	North Island contractor representative
Bronwyn Shute	-	South Island contractor representative
John Sanson	-	MAF/Biosecurity NZ

During the year of this report the management committee had four meetings and covered a wide range of topics from the applied and practical aspects of pest control through to regulatory and policy matters.

4. Reports from Management Committee Members

Reports from member organisations provide an important means for management committee members to keep up to date with developments in a complex and rapidly changing industry.

Reports are then further communicated and extended to the industry as a whole through newsletters and the website, as well as by members communicating through their own networks.

The following summarises what was reported by member organisations to Management Committee meetings during the year:

4.1. Animal Health Board

Penny Fairbrother's AHB reports to the NPCA management committee included:

In April 2009 the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) determined that 1080 cereal bait coated with deer repellent is covered under an existing Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act (HSNO) approval. This product still needs to go through the appropriate approval process with NZFSA, but this should be completed by early 2010.

Nearly 10 years of research is about to be brought to fruition with the registration of a zinc phosphide paste bait for possums. In October 2008 NZFSA advised that, subject to the ERMA review, approval has been granted for ZAP paste. An application was then submitted to ERMA in late 2008, and in early 2009 it completed the pre-screening process. ERMA publicly notified the application in June 2009 and their decision is expected early next year.

With the exception of Hawkes Bay, AHB vector management was 100% in-house by 30 June 2009. This saw a number of people no longer being involved in the industry, as in the past there were over 120 people involved in vector management around the country and now there is a full time regional staff of about 30.

John Deal was appointed the new Communications Manager and Nick Hancox become AHB's Operational Policy Manager, meaning that he could devote his time primarily to the review of the National Pest Management Strategy which was a major focus for the 2008/09 year and subsequently notified to the Minister in September 2009. Early indications from stakeholders, industry and government indicate that there will definitely be a future TB control strategy, although the focus will shift to eradicating TB from wild animal vectors rather than just reducing the number of infected herds.

AHB hosted the fifth International *M. bovis* (Bovine Tb) conference at Te Papa in Wellington, August 2009. Much of the planning was complete by June 2009 and a significant number of earlybird registrations had been received.

1080 related issues:

1. Regarding the kea and 1080 event, AHB (in consultation with DOC) identified a couple of AHB operations for winter 2009 that will likely be

postponed until the outcome of some short term research into key operational factors affecting kea mortality.

2. AHB entered into a collaborative arrangement with DOC re funding two large projects aimed at identifying the benefits to trees and birds in areas receiving aerial 1080 control.
3. In response to increased anti-1080 activity (primarily on the West Coast), AHB conducted a number of West Coast Open Days to talk about issues relating to 1080.
4. AHB developed a 1080 Best Practice Guidelines for internal use. This was made available to other groups in the industry.

4.2. Department of Conservation

- Mike Hawes reported that the Department's existing baseline funding received an ongoing reduction of \$13.5 million per annum in the 2009 budget (totalling \$54 million over the next four years) across departmental and non-departmental funds. This was accommodated in the 2009/10 business planning in line with the Government's priorities, with savings made across both support and service, as well as operations. The priority was to retain existing staff wherever possible.
- DOC responded in February to the NPCA's request for reinstatement of the previous funding level of \$50,000 (reduced last year to \$25,000); by advising that it may need to further reduce its funding contribution. It advised in June however that it was able to make a one-off contribution of \$25,000 but couldn't commit to any ongoing annual grant. The Department stated that it continued to support the work of the NPCA. Ongoing financial support will continue to be explored.
- As a result of the budget cuts, another internal DOC review was commenced entitled "Prioritising for the future". The Project is taking a systematic look across all aspects of the Department's business, identifying where things are working well and where efficiencies can be made. This will help place the Department in a good position to achieve conservation priorities within the reduced baseline.
 - Identifying low priority work and/or low return on investment projects
 - Identifying areas where further investment is required
 - Identifying opportunities for further contribution to Government outcomes
 - Identifying interdependent work streams to ensure alignment with Departmental and Government goals
 - Identifying actions to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and cost savings
- Meeting reports during the year provided updates on a report being prepared following a workshop with DOC and Regional Councils on the potential benefits to biodiversity of possum control undertaken by the AHB and the benefits if DOC, AHB and Council possum control were aligned as far as possible. This information was prepared for the AHB's formal public consultation process for the new NPMS.
- Updates were also provided on ongoing AHB research to find a bait station that would allow Feratox to be used in weka areas. DOC's Pesticide Advisory Group had assessed results from trials last year of the modified Sentry bait station and it was agreed to allow larger field operations to proceed, subject to monitoring the fate of radio-transmitted weka. AHB and DOC met further to discuss suggested

modifications to the weka-proof bait station design, including reducing the size to make it more user friendly for contractors and design factors to minimise the risk of spillage. A repeat of the earlier field trial occurred with the newly modified station, in the Marlborough Sounds in July and August, to assess spillage, the efficacy in terms of possum kill, and following the fate of individual weka. 31 weka were radio-tagged, although 4 were outside the treated area and excluded. Two of the weka subsequently died and tested positive for cyanide. A full report has still to be prepared and this will be provided to the DOC Pesticides Group for consideration. This work will be presented at the conference.

- Updates were also provided on kea research following the deaths of a number of kea on the West Coast last year. The kea research programme is a three year project trying to assess the overall benefits and risks to kea from 1080. The main aspects include monitoring birds through aerial operations, measuring the benefits to kea from reduction of predators, and looking at options for bird repellents in baits. At the final count, 13 kea were exposed to bait through an aerial operation at Mt Arthur in Tasman, 3 birds at Rahu Saddle on the West Coast and 10 birds in the Hawdon Valley in Canterbury. All have survived. These results to date are very promising. This work will also be presented at the conference.
- A number of 1080 issues occupied the Department throughout the year.

4.3. Local Government

Bill Martyn reported that the year began as the previous one finished with discussion around NPCA's role and the potential for it to change. Local Government (LG) members via the Biosecurity Managers Group (BMG) queried if NPCA could offer more services to their group. Although Possum management remains important to LG other pests named in the Regional Animal Pest Management Strategies (RAPMS) are a high priority as well.

NPCA have produced some excellent publications concerning pests other than possums that have been funded over above the normal funding streams of NPCA. It appears a logical evolution to some that NPCA formally apply its skills and resources to other pests. Some thought has also been given to NPCA performing an industry watchdog role such as keepers of the control toolbox.

Concurrent with this discussion was the release of two reports on the future of pest management in NZ. One of the reports was commissioned by MAFBNZ the other LG. Both reports highlighted areas for improvement with several aspects requiring further industry discussion and resolution. The outcome of this work could have a major influence on what direction NPCA takes into the future.

A decision has been made to await the completion of the work streams to see what options may become available.

This year councils in general have focused on reducing the rate burden to their community's particularly in the wake of the global recession. This has put great pressure on council programmes and placed all funding under a good deal of scrutiny. A consequence of this was BMG reviewing the funding and service arrangement with NPCA. As part of the review the BMG wanted information on specific topics these were

- Projects completed in the last four years that directly benefit LG
- Further explanation of in-house and admin expenditure
- Legal ramifications around intellectual property
- The contractual obligations of the participating agencies
- What further services could NPCA offer?

The committee decided that a report should be compiled to address BMG questions. The report was presented to BMG by MK and MH at the BMG June meeting. The exercise gave us (NPCA) a good opportunity to assess our performance and presented a good marketing platform.

A learning from this was that we had probably under sold our services and that even our member agencies had less awareness about our services and products than would be expected.

This is an area where we must improve and continue to work on.

A further opportunity for NPCA this year has been securing the role of project manager for the 1080 guidelines project. Initially this was a very difficult piece of work to scope and develop a project brief for. A steering committee was formed involving NPCA, ERMA, AHB, MAFBNZ and LG. The steering committee put together a brief and appointed a contractor to develop the guidelines. DM is the contractor and he has put together a template of the guidelines and will soon be contacting people to work in a TAG DM will also involve several people in an consultation group. The project is scheduled for completion mid 2010. It has been very pleasing to see this piece of work come together so well.

Currently BMG are working with NPCA to develop a training survey to identify skills gaps and training needs in the pest management industry.

BMG are also considering the engagement of NPCA to project manage 1080 use SOP's for LG.

Other issues of interest were LG concern that the industry is losing ground to the anti 1080 lobby and the revised MOH model permit conditions. Fortunately NPCA were able to submit on the draft conditions as communication and opportunity for LG submission was very limited.

All in all it has been a busy year with a reasonable amount of interaction between NPCA and LG. I am pleased with the direction we are headed in and believe we must keep working hard to deliver relevant and high quality services.

4.4. Contractors

NI Contractors Report

Martin Brenstrum reported on issues and developments:

Reports included:

- The key matters arising from PestNet Meetings
- The changes contractors were making in the transition phase of the AHB taking pest control and monitoring in-house and comment that things would settle down as people got used to the new system.

- Recommendations for ERMA have controlled substance licensing to include an interim or “learner’s” license. This would enable new people to the industry to be given training on the job and in-house.
- Reports on the technology conference run by Pestnet at Lincoln University and some suggestions for such future conferences to alternate between the North and South Islands and have a focus on field aspects. He felt that there was still a need for the Wellington conference which targets the management level. He saw this as the flagship of the industry and was very important and commented that the most crucial factor to consider with conferences was the cost of sending people to them.
- Concerns from monitors about the variation in contractor attribute scores between regions as part of the preregistration process for contractors to be eligible to tender for contracts.
- Concern that there would soon be a greater numbers of monitors than monitoring work available for them to carry out. This could affect staffing levels in some of the bigger companies.
- Some contractors were finding the PDA technology very challenging but this should improve over time.
- He raised the point of whether monitoring and control contractors should be entirely responsible for training or whether the commercial side of the industry (e.g. bait manufacturers) should take more responsibility for training to ensure a suitable reservoir of trained staff exists.
- A number of issues around AHB contracts were raised. They included the cancelling of some AHB contracts, the placement of monitor lines and adherence to the monitoring best practice protocol.
- A recommendation that the industry should consider bringing in licensing for brodifacoum, and reviewing the conditions for its use.
- The efforts of the industry to encourage public support for the continued use of 1080 should include the importance of aerial application of 1080 for control of rabbits.

South Island Contractors

Bronwyn Shute reports:

This has been a particularly difficult year for me following the tragic workplace death of my husband in January. This followed his sister’s death in a car accident 4 months earlier and was followed by their father’s death in June 2009. I would like to acknowledge the sensitivity and help the Animal Health Board gave

following Deane's death with the OSH reporting requirements, as this is the last thing you are thinking of at a time like this.

It has been encouraging to see PestNET membership increase over the past year. This was made possible by lowering subscription costs to target members who may have found joining unviable previously. Meetings are a great way for contractors to come together and share thoughts, ideas or views. Increased membership adds another dimension to the already vast knowledge shared by contractors in the industry.

We now have planning underway for the next PestNET Conference to be held at Lincoln in early September 2010 and hope to see many of you there. We have received positive feedback from previous conferences and encourage contractors to bring along their field staff. To ensure this happens costs are kept to a minimum and we have relevant presentations and trade displays of interest to field staff.

Finally I would like to acknowledge two of our South Island members who have recently passed away. I would like to extend my sympathy to the families of Mike Hoar and Anne Musgrave whose knowledge and presence at meetings and conferences will be sadly missed.

4.5. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

John Sanson reported on:

The Future of Pest Management

A MAFBNZ commissioned "think piece" on the pest management sector was released in November 2008. A regional council think piece, representing a regional view, was developed concurrently. Together these reports provided the platform for developing a future strategy for pest management in New Zealand, and MAFBNZ implemented the 'Future of Pest Management' project. The aim of the project is to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for New Zealand for the pest management investments that we make.

The project is split into seven work streams, each with a project team comprising key stakeholder representatives, and the project will:

- confirm the current state of our pest management system and future challenges;
- clarify what an effective future pest management system looks like
- clarify who should do what – roles and accountabilities;
- identify improvements to frameworks and tools that enable effective pest management and ensure these are fit for purpose;
- develop and implement a strategic action plan
- The overall timetable for the project is:
 - Release of a strategic action plan by May 2010
 - Consultation on the strategic action plan completed by August 2010
 - Final strategic action plan and implementation plan completed by end September 2010.

Performance Measurement Framework for Pest Management

Throughout the year MAFBNZ has continued to work with other pest management agencies (Department of Conservation, Regional Councils, and Animal Health Board) to develop a performance measurement framework for pest management across the whole biosecurity system. This work is being carried out by Landcare Research and Nimmo Bell. Work undertaken to date includes: a review of the current state of performance measurement; case studies of approaches to performance measurement in other sectors and other countries; pilot trials of the framework with three regional councils; and completion of a framework design which has been endorsed by agency Chief Executives.

Economic Costs of Pests

MAFBNZ engaged Nimmo-Bell to undertake a review of the economic costs of pests to New Zealand (economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts) to develop a baseline of information and to inform performance measurement and reporting in the future. This report was completed in September 2009 and estimated the total cost of pests to New Zealand as 1.93% of GDP or \$3,424 million (excluding impacts on indigenous biodiversity). The full report is available on the MAFBNZ website. The report recommends a number of actions to address gaps and improve our knowledge of pest costs over time.

Rabbit Management

MAFBNZ coordinates the Rabbit Coordination Group which has representatives from regional councils, DOC, LINZ, Federated Farmers, Landcare Research and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The group has met regularly throughout the year to share information and focus on issues affecting rabbit management, such as the ERMA review of 1080 and its use for rabbit control, and increased rabbit populations in some areas.

MAFBNZ commissioned Roger Lough to report on rabbit management issues in New Zealand, and address the recent Federated Farmers proposal to the Government to establish local Rabbit Control Boards (or similar structure) and making a case for Crown funding for rabbit control in relation to environmental impacts. The report, developed with input from the Rabbit Coordination Group, has recently been completed and provides an overview of current rabbit population trends and impacts, with a particular focus on rabbit prone land in the South Island. The report noted that:

- there are increasing populations in some rabbit prone areas, however rabbit numbers remain low on some highly prone land due to ongoing effective management including secondary control measures; and
- there is an apparent increase in resistance to RHD;
- It is very difficult to differentiate between production and environmental impacts of rabbits, however at the point where environmental impacts are significant production values will already have been severely impacted.

The report also highlighted examples of good land management practices and formed the view that effective and sustainable rabbit management requires ongoing secondary control, rather than reliance on RHD and poisoning programmes when numbers reach high levels. The report made a number of recommendations regarding the need for improved uptake of best practice,

research priorities, and opportunities to implement systems to support improved coordination between all landowners and occupiers (crown and private) and biosecurity agencies. The full report will be available on the MAFBNZ website shortly.

Other projects

- MAFBNZ worked with Dairy NZ on the technical aspects of the Tb National Pest Management Strategy review and continues to work with the Animal Health Board on the review of the strategy. A preferred future option has been identified and supported by funding organisations, and the AHB has put this proposal out for consultation.
- MAFBNZ is continuing to work with the NPCA and other agencies to develop Best Practice Guidelines for aerial use of 1080.
- DOC led a project to develop a database of physical control tools for animal and plant pests, with information taken largely from existing DOC and regional council systems. The database was completed in July 2009 and provided to regional council biosecurity managers for review and comment. DOC and MAFBNZ will be investigating options for making the database available as an online, updateable resource for people undertaking pest management activities. The database will also be used to identify where there is a lack of tools or none that are particularly effective, and inform strategies to address tools gaps into the future.
- The MAFBNZ Animal Welfare Group gained funding to commission research into the animal welfare status of control tools for animal pests, and this research will be completed by June 2010.
- A MAFBNZ representative attended the Vertebrate Pest Committee meeting in Brisbane in July 2009, and will be attending the next meeting in Melbourne in November 2009 to maintain linkages and share information with Australian pest management organizations.
- MAFBNZ, DOC and Regional Councils are currently implementing a jointly funded long term management programme for kauri ecosystems to address the impacts of a fungal disease known as kauri dieback (*Phytophthora taxon Agathis*). The programme aims to contain the soil-borne disease which is affecting kauri trees in the upper North Island and Great Barrier Island. Pigs (and pig hunters) have been identified as a potential risk vector of the disease and agencies will be working with the pig hunting community to implement vector control and hygiene measures.

5. Operations and Project Programme

The NPCA manages an annual programme of projects that give effect to its strategic objectives.

In general the projects are aimed at improving work quality standards in the industry.

To that end the 2009 programme, had a focus on the development of best practices and the regulatory aspects of pest control. It continues the trend of higher standards being required across the board from pest control practitioners in order to better manage risk and ensure that pest control operations are effective.

Projects and initiatives undertaken during the year ended June 2009 as part of the operations and project programme have all got this quality assurance focus and produced a range of resources and best practices, published to the new publication standards introduced last year. These included:

1. Cholecalciferol Brochure - Its use for Possum and Rodent Control

A brochure covering a number of aspects on cholecalciferol use for possum and rodent control. Includes information on how cholecalciferol works, what it looks like, the risks to humans and animals and how to keep safe when using it.

http://www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76&Itemid=91

2. Cyanide Brochure- Its use for Possum Control

A brochure covering aspects on cyanide use for possum control. Includes information on what cyanide looks like, the risks to humans and animals and how keep safe when using it.

http://www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76&Itemid=91

3. Private Landowners Guide to Possum Control – Control Tools and Techniques

An information package for landowners on methods used to control possums. It provides up-to-date information on traps, bait stations and toxins. Includes contact details of suppliers of possum control equipment, bait and accessories.

http://www.npca.org.nz/images/stories/NPCA/PDF/a3%20landownrs%202009_07.pdf

4. Feral Pigs - a review of monitoring and control techniques

A summary of what is currently known about the monitoring and control of feral pigs. Primarily for field staff and contractors undertaking feral pig monitoring and control but also useful for community groups and private land holders and managers wanting to manage the impacts of feral pigs.

<http://www.npca.org.nz/images/stories/NPCA/PDF/a10%20-%20feral%20pigs.pdf>

5. Feral and Stray Cats - Monitoring and Control, a Preliminary Guideline towards Good Practice

A background overview of cats in New Zealand is presented, followed by discussion around monitoring, and the practical aspects of feral cat control. The

primary recipients of this guideline are field staff and contractors responsible for designing, commissioning and reporting on feral cat control and monitoring
<http://www.npca.org.nz/images/stories/NPCA/PDF/a11%20%20feral%20cat%20website%20version.pdf>

6. Leghold Traps - A guideline for capturing possums, ferrets and feral cats using leghold traps

A guideline for trapping vertebrate pests using leghold traps to:

- maximize pest control effectiveness through best practice,
- ensure trapping is compliant with legislation and regulation.

Includes guidance on target species, trap selection, techniques and trap maintenance.

http://www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=89

7. Kill Traps - a guideline to trap possums, ferrets, stoats and feral cats using kill traps

A guideline for trapping vertebrate pests using kill traps to:

- maximize pest control effectiveness through best practice,
- ensure trapping is compliant with legislation and regulation.

Includes guidance on target species, trap selection, techniques and trap maintenance.

http://www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=89

8. 1080 Best Practice Guidelines

This year the NPCA worked with ERMA, control agencies and stakeholder groups and established a project steering committee to develop agreed industry aerial 1080 best practice guidelines. This involved developing project specifications, calling for expressions of interest, letting the project contract and securing funding.

Diederik Meenken of Biodiverse Limited was appointed to develop the proposed guideline. Diederik has some 15 years' experience in vertebrate pest control including research and field work. In recent years he has authored and reviewed a range of best practice guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures; advised on biodiversity management; and contributed to the industry's training programmes.

The project is well underway and Diederik worked with the Steering Committee to initially establish the guiding principles and overall structure of the guideline. He has now completed a draft to present to the Committee to consider prior to moving to the wider consultation phase.

The project is due for completion in mid-2010.

9. Water sampling stage 3

This project is intended as an initiative to assist health professionals and pest control practitioners with the adoption of the revised water sampling best practice requirements for aerial 1080 operations. The best practice was updated by Landcare Research and a link to it has been posted to the NPCA website. For consideration of funding and extra time involved in negotiating the update with Ministry Of Health and Landcare research this project was deferred to the 2010 project programme.

10. Review of the accreditation database

The first stage of this initiative to provide ongoing reporting on the unit standard status of monitors as part of the Recognition of Current Competencies process was completed and further changes are awaiting input from AgITO.

11. Toxins brochures (Stage 2)

This project was deferred for consideration in the 2010 project programme and includes two or more toxins from the list of pindone, 1080, diphacinone, coumatetralyl, flocumafen, and zinc phosphide.

6. NPCA Technology Transfer Conference

The national technology transfer conference continues to be a very important part of the NPCA's annual programme. It is one of the few times in the year when the possum control industry gathers together to exchange ideas and keep up to date on new research and technology.

As such the conference is the most important of the range of technology transfer tools the NPCA has to get new research and technology information out to end users. Beyond the conference the transfer of information is continued and supported by the website, email and through regular newsletters.

During the year, discussions were held on the future of the technology transfer conference with a number of options being canvassed, including co-operating with PestNET and running a national conference in the North and South islands in alternating years. The discussion on conference issues is continuing, with a view to implementing any changes in time for the 2010 conference.

7. Industry Training

During the 2008/09 year 89 people participated in 9 courses run by Eurotafts under the current training programme. These courses included Field Operative (trap-catch and waxtag), Designer and Vectorlink training.

Course No	Course Type	Course Date	Course Location	No Participated
217	VectorLink	July 08	West Coast Reg Council	8

216	VectorLink	July 08	Mosgiel	9
203	Designer	Aug 08	Christchurch	6
205	Field Operative	Sept 08	Mosgiel	12
204	Field Operative	Sept 08	Turangi	10
224	Field Operative	Feb 09	Richmond	15
218	Field Operative	Mar 09	Turangi	14
219	Field Operative	April 09	Mosgiel	7
225	Field Operative	April 09	Turangi	8
TOTAL				89

The year saw a decline in the demand for the training courses, with this trend continuing to date. This may be attributed in part to the AHB restructuring to move vector control contracting in house. It appears to be having the effect of requiring a smaller number of monitors but working more full time than part time. This trend is also apparent from the data presented which is shown below.

8. Accreditation

The approved operator accreditation scheme for monitors is administered by the NPCA on behalf of the industry. It provides an ongoing assurance that monitors are up to date and have a work history that meets the required standards.

Accreditation Information, which includes the current accreditation status of monitors, expiry dates, location, organisation and registration numbers, can now be accessed directly on the website at

http://www.npca.org.nz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=109&Itemid=62

The use of the website in this way ensures that monitoring information is up to date and is available to individuals, contractors and agencies.

Monitors now have the opportunity to convert their training and experience into the relevant unit standards and a separate report on the unit standards status of monitors is also available. Currently 85 field operatives have completed their assessment for equivalent unit standards. This represents just under a quarter of the total number of field operatives.

This requires ongoing liaison with the AgITO to link approved assessors with course participants to enable the post course assessment to take place. In turn the AgITO provides quarterly reports to the NPCA on the unit standard status of monitors.

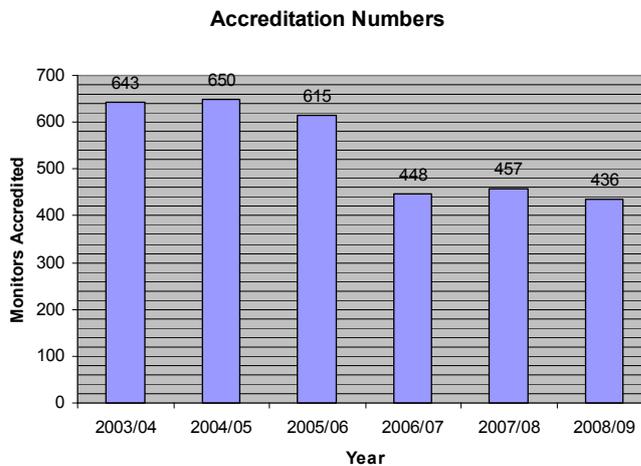
The accreditation database currently has 436 monitors registered as field operatives, designers and planners. (See table below for distribution). This is down from the 457 reported at the same time last year.

Qualification	Number Qualified
Field Operative (Trap Catch & Waxtag)	173
Field Operative (Trap Catch only)	206
Total Field Operative	379
Designer (Trap Catch & Waxtag)	21
Designer (Trap Catch only)	29
Total Designer	50
Planner	7
TOTAL	436

The table and graph below track the trends in the total number of accredited operators over the last 6 years.

The table shows that accreditation numbers remained relatively stable until the 2006/07 year when there was a 27% decrease, followed by a 2% gain last year and a 4.6% drop in the 2008/09 year.

Period	Total Accredited monitors
2003/04	643
2004/05	650
2005/06	615
2006/07	448
2007/08	457
2008/09	436



8.1 Policy for Dealing with Contract Monitoring Performance Issues

A policy and standard operating procedure was approved by the management committee as a quality assurance measure to ensure that the standards and the integrity of the monitoring accreditation scheme are maintained.

It provides a basis to deal with monitoring contract performance issues where performance fails to meet the required standards. As such the policy affects monitors, individual companies undertaking contract monitoring work and contracting agencies.

The policy provides the power to revoke accreditations where the NPCA has reasonable grounds to believe that a monitor has seriously failed to meet standards. But more importantly it provides a policy framework and a process to deal with any such cases that is transparent and fair to all concerned.

9. Website

9.1 General

The NPCA website continues to be a well used source of information for people engaged in the pest management industry. User statistics show a significant increase during the 2008/09 year and this trend is continuing to date.

In particular it is noted that increases in use are associated with downloading and purchasing NPCA's publications, viewing information on monitoring accreditation and for information on the Technology Transfer Conference.

9.2 Improvements

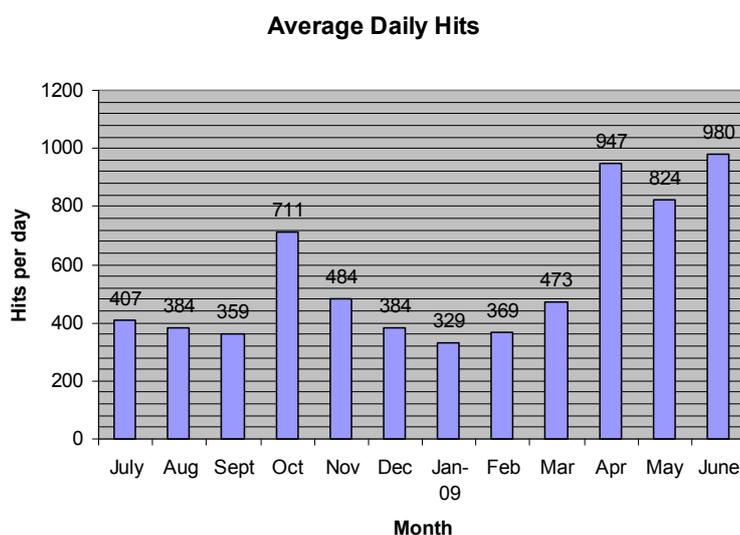
Developments implemented during the year include; incorporating the new NPCA logo into the home page banner and a new template structure allowing greater use of visual media and easier navigation for users.

The key to this has been the transfer of the web information to a later software version and move to a three column template. It provides a cleaner, fresher look and a more user friendly format.

Future developments to the website are envisaged such as improved links to other websites and the possible use of blogs to assist in particular with the industry consultation stages in the development of best practices and technical publications.

9.3 Statistics

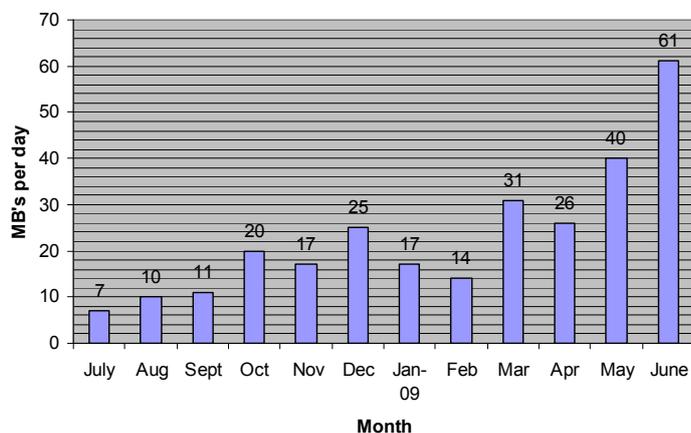
Website hits or pages viewed averaged over 550 per day or over 200,000 for the year and is a significant increase on the 150,000 hits recorded for the 2007/08 year.



Over 23 megabytes were downloaded per day during the year and this downloading rate has been sustained up to the present time.

A large portion of the downloaded megabytes are due to visitors downloading publications. A typical publication on the website is 1 to 3 MB's in size.

Average Daily Megabytes Downloaded



9.4 Publication Downloading

Publications downloaded from the website during the year are summarized in the table below. The top publications were the monitoring best practice protocols, Possum and Ferret Traps, Questions and Answers on 1080, and the safe handling and use of VTAs.

Average Quantity of Publications Downloaded Per Month

Rank	Code	Title	Downloaded Per Month
1	A1	Protocol for Possum Population Monitoring Using the Trap-Catch Method	57.5
2	A4.4	Possum and Ferret Traps: A report to inform and advise users of trapping products	39.5
3	A2	Protocol for Possum Population Monitoring Using the WaxTag Method	29.5
4	C1	Questions and Answers on 1080	24.5
5	B2	Vertebrate Toxic Agents - Minimum requirements for the safe use and handling of vertebrate toxic agents	20
6	B1	Legislation Guide - User Guide to Legislation Relating to Vertebrate Pest Control	17.5
7	B7	Signage	17
8	A5	Pest Rabbits - Monitoring and Control	16.5
9	A9	Wallabies - Monitoring and Control	13.5
10	A10	Feral Pigs - a review of monitoring and control techniques	13

9.5 Newsletters

Newsletters are receiving very positive feed back from readers and are an increasingly important means for NPCA to communicate with the wider industry and

carry out its technology transfer role. This year a special effort has been made to make them more visually appealing with more photographs, charts, graphs and visual media. At the same time a focus on the good news stories, the latest developments in the industry and updates on new research and initiatives to control pests, has ensured that they continue to be relevant to those involved in the pest control industry.

They are distributed electronically, via a list of almost 1000 recipients, as well as being posted on the website.

10. In Conclusion

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their contribution and it is worth noting, as always, that it is a voluntary input and members all have full time jobs to attend to.

My thanks also to Russell Hall of Guy Martin and Co, for the provision of accounting and financial management services, to Anne White and James Suter for minute taking and meeting servicing and Shona McCahon for her editorial expertise. Finally thanks and acknowledgements to Maurice Kennedy of Eurotafts International Ltd for his input in progressing the NPCA's objectives and in providing the necessary co-ordination, management and administrative inputs.

Mike Hawes

Chair
NPCA