

NPCA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 2010/2011 YEAR

I am pleased to report on the work undertaken by the NPCA for the 2011 year

The year has been marked by a number of quite significant developments and achievements.

1. Incorporation

A major step was our registration as an incorporated society, including the change of name to the National Pest Control Agencies Inc. This change gave effect to the decision made at the 2010 AGM. It reflects the widening of NPCA's role over the years and provides a suitable framework for NPCA to fully play its part in the pest control industry.

Our application for charitable status is being considered by the Charities Commission, with a decision expected in December or early 2012. Once a green light is received from the Charities Commission, we expect our donor status to be confirmed by the IRD, a decision we understand is usually automatic.

We envisage these constitutional developments will enable NPCA to better participate in the new structure envisaged for the pest control industry under the future of pest management initiative (FoPM). The new incorporated society and charitable status will also provide a better basis for attracting project and operational funding.

2. The Future of Pest Management (FoPM)

We have continued to engage in the process associated with MAF's Future of Pest Management project. FoPM is a very big exercise, looking at how the wider biosecurity sector will manage its governance, information and best practice frameworks in future. Where NPCA sits in any future regime is still to be determined but there is industry support for the retention of NPCA, with many concerned that its potential loss would be a tremendous waste of a successful model and resources, and a step backwards.

This year, NPCA has particularly sought to have input into the definition of roles in the management of the FoPM Toolbox that is currently a work in progress.

3. Combined Future Conferences

Another significant step was the agreement reached with the Biosecurity Institute to combine our annual Technology Transfer conference with the Institute's NETS conference. A memorandum of understanding about how the Institute and NPCA will work together on future conferences was developed and adopted in June.

The first joint conference will run in July 2012. While it brings to an end 17 years of running a dedicated NPCA technology transfer conference it makes good sense; by bringing together vertebrate pest, plant and aquatic pest content the annual NETS conference will become a one-stop event for the whole spectrum of biosecurity. It also makes sense in the current financial climate that technology transfer initiatives such as

conferences are rationalised. That said, our focus will still be on the pest control practitioner as our primary target audience.

We are contributing to the planning and the shaping of the 2012 conference through our representation on the conference planning committee.

4. Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report on 1080.

The Parliamentary Commissioner (PCE) for the Environment issued a report on 1080 in June. This notable report and its recommendations are supported by the NPCA and will set a framework for all involved with 1080 for many years to come.

NPCA was interviewed by PCE researchers in the preparation and research stage of the report and it was pleasing to be able to point to NPCA's aerial 1080 guidelines and other best practice publications as tools to guide the quality assurance of aerial 1080 operations.

5. Management Committee

The Management Committee looks after the affairs of the NPCA on behalf of its members between general meetings. Its input in providing a governance role is very important and was particularly so this year in the implementation contribution of the constitutional matters described earlier and in guiding the project programme.

The Management Committee membership for the 2010 year was:

COMMITTEE	REPRESENTING
Bill Martyn Environmental Manager, Horizons Regional Council	Local Government
Mike Hawes Technical Support Supervisor, Marlborough Nelson Conservancy	Department of Conservation
Brent Rohloff Programme Manager Southern Sth Island	Animal Health Board
Martin Brenstrum Director Central Districts Pest Control	Contractor representative
Clyde Holden Director Trapper Holden	Contractor representative
Sherman Smith Senior Adviser National Coordination Pest Management	MAF/Biosecurity NZ

The committee members report on matters from their parent organisations that are relevant to NPCA at the committee meetings. This reporting is an invaluable way of keeping NPCA up-to-date with industry issues and development. The main aspects

reported during the year are summarised in Appendix 1. The Committee has also listened to feedback and suggestions from members and quickly implemented change to enhance NPCA's performance. This has seen us act as project managers, lobbyists, mediators, educators and publishers in the year past.

6. NPCA as an Industry Forum

The value of NPCA as a forum to discuss industry issues was well illustrated by the NZ Deer Stalkers Association's representations on 1080 made to the Management Committee. Their views were fed back to the control agencies for further consideration and NPCA then reported back to the Association. We have agreed to keep in touch.

In another instance, issues relating to monitoring best practice were brought to the table through the regular reporting by contractor representatives to the committee. These issues were ultimately addressed in the revision of the trap-catch protocol method guidelines. In the process, NPCA held a number of meetings with AHB and liaised closely with contractors. Once the issues relating to best practice methodology were separated from those relating to contracting standards we were able to implement the protocol review and publish an updated edition in October.

7. Operations and Project Programme

The annual operations and project programme was focused on developing and maintaining best practice resources for pest control.

NPCA's resource library now has over 50 best practice guidelines and public information titles and the year has seen some very important publications completed. These are listed below and while all are important, completing the two new aerial 1080 guidelines and updating the rabbit control and monitoring guidelines come near the top of the list.

It is also worth drawing attention to the process used of using a project steering committee in association with a contractor. This together with extensive consultation ensures that we get industry buy in and a quality job at a cost effective price.

It should also be noted that in developing best practices we get a large voluntary technical and specialist input from right across the vertebrate pest control industry. That this happens is a testament to the standing NPCA has with the Industry and I would like to place on record our thanks and appreciation to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed in this way during the year.

The 2011 programme produced new best practice guidelines and updated existing resources as follows:

Completed NPCA Publication Projects

- The over-arching ***Aerial 1080 Guidelines, published in April***, were one of the biggest projects NPCA has undertaken, involving wide consultation within and outside of the industry.
- The ***Aerial 1080 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Local Government*** were published in September.

- A brochure on the safe use of **Brodifacoum** was developed.
- The review of the **Leg-hold Monitoring Protocol** was been completed in October.
- The **Best Practice Guidelines for Rabbit Control** completed were completed in April.

NPCA Publication Projects in Progress

- A new brochure about **PAPP** are nearly finalised, but there are still some issues around conditions of sale that are holding up final clearance.
- A new brochure about **Zinc Phosphide** is nearly completed but, although it has been EPA approved. it is still going through the MAF-NZFSA hoop.

Initial work is underway on the **VTA Safe Handling and Use Guideline**, including the task of restructuring the document into a more user-friendly format.

A start has been made on a **Pest Sign Recognition Guide** with researching available resources. The project so far is getting a lot of positive support.

Other projects

- The layout and formatting of a guide Age Determination of Feral Pigs is being finalised by the publishers.
- Rooks being progressed by Landcare research and with funding assistance from Horizons.
- Project specifications for a **Machine Hygiene Project** are completed, a steering committee confirmed and we are now awaiting confirmation of finance.
- Training needs for monitoring and controlling rabbit populations were identified in a very successful workshop run at Lincoln University and work has begun on designing training based on these needs.

8. Technology Transfer Conference November 2010

Over 110 people took part in the 2010 conference, 20 papers were presented around the symposia themes of new developments and new toxins for vertebrate pest control. It was the 16th and last in the long tradition of stand-alone NPCA conferences

It is pleasing to note that the conference workshops on monitoring, rabbits, rooks and regulatory changes were very successful in working through issues and coming up with solutions and recommendations. As a direct result, the monitoring best practice protocol was revised and initiatives in rook control launched. At the same time, the rabbit workshop outcomes led to the very successful training needs workshop run subsequently at Lincoln University. The regulatory workshop at the conference also achieved its purposes of communicating the wide range of changes on regulations relating to the pest control industry.

The benefits of the conference as a forum to bring together the whole cross section of the pest control industry to network and interact with colleagues should also be emphasised. These aspects were ranked highly in the conference evaluation and recommendations were made for future conferences to provide more time for this, and to improve the poster sessions.

The proposed joint conference in 2012 will be a one stop shop covering weed pests, aquatic pests and vertebrate pests, with the NPCA bringing in an expanded vertebrate pest control component to the programme.

The transfer of new pest control technology to practitioners remains a key objective for NPCA and will be further strengthened by the decision, mentioned earlier, to run a combined NPCA/NETS conference from 2012.

9. Monitoring Accreditation and Training

Administration of the approved operator accreditation scheme for monitors is an important aspect of NPCA's work as it provides an assurance that monitors will meet minimum standards.

180 renewal applications were processed and the number of accreditations during the year declined by 5%. This reflects a shift towards the use of more survey work in monitoring possum populations and less reliance on the leg-hold trap catch method.

NPCA maintains current accreditation information on the NPCA website www.npca.org.nz. This includes the current accreditation status of monitors, expiry dates, and registration numbers. The service is well used, via both the website phone enquiries.

In summary the records show:

Qualification	Number 2010	Number 2011
Field Operative (trap catch only)	163	152
Field Op (trap catch and waxtag)	196	181
Designer (trap catch only)	25	23
Designer (trap catch and waxtag)	20	21
Planner	7	3
Total	411	380

The shift toward survey methods to monitor possum populations is also having an effect in reducing the demand for training monitors under the Industry Training programme. Two courses were run during the year in Mosgiel and Turangi.

10. Communications

Website

In June 2010, the website underwent a major overhaul and transfer to a new web host. Analysis of the usage statistics a year later, compared to the pre-overhaul figures, indicated that the website is being used more and that its findability on the web has improved:

- average daily hits doubled;
- average daily data usage increased by 60%

- visits spiked responsively to industry events or NPCA service provision, correlating, for instance, with publication dates of the NPCA newsletter and the aerial 1080 guidelines.

The most popular sections on the website were publications, product suppliers, about NPCA and accreditation.

Further rationalisation and incremental changes are being carried out as resources permit, with the objective of further improving the website's profile and findability on the web.

Newsletter

Two newsletters were produced during the year. Although this was less than the usual three editions, the focus has been on quality and achieving a balance of update notice material and topical stories of more general and human interest, such as the personal profiles and good news stories. Feedback has been very positive.

11. In Conclusion

The 2010 year has been a year of change for NPCA, in the wider context of pending change in the pest control sector generally. With the constitutional developments we have a framework suitable for adapting to that change. We are also developing closer relationships within the sector through such steps as the combined NETS conference initiative, which will bear us in good stead.

It has also been a year of significant achievements in all our service provision areas. Two things stand out. The first is that we have consolidated our lead agency position in project managing and developing best practice guidelines in our field. The second is that we have generated greater industry awareness and use of our services. The increased use of the website and the positive feedback received from our newsletters are good indicators of this.

Our achievements this year have set high standards I am confident that that NPCA will continue to deliver these results in 2012 year and beyond.

I would like to pay particular thanks to members of the Management Committee for their contribution to the committee and for their assistance to me in my role as NPCA Chair.

Finally, thanks also Eurotafts, NPCA's service provision provider; to Shona McCahon for her excellent work as newsletter editor; to other staff; and to the many people and subcontractors who have contributed to the range of services that has made the 2011 year a very good one for the NPCA.

Bill Martyn
NPCA Chair
22 November 2011

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY REPORTS FROM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES OF PARENT ORGANISATIONS:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bill Martyn

Local Government members went into the year keen to see what changes the FOPM programme would introduce for NPCA. Perhaps a little frustratingly we are no further ahead in realizing what the future under FOPM will look like.

Local Government has observed NPCA's continued hard work in redefining its role and improving service to members, acknowledging and rewarding these efforts with continued support in terms of funding and patronage of NPCA services.

A pleasing aspect for me is the way Local Government members have taken an interest in NPCA's business and recommended ways in which NPCA's service can be improved.

Apart from the funding support, councils and their staff contribute considerably to NPCA through such activities as attending workshops, reviewing standards, reviewing publications, including in some cases, giving direct input in writing them. A number of councils regularly contribute but a special mention this year should go to Greater Wellington Regional Council and, in particular, Ray Clarey. All of this work is voluntary and makes NPCA a uniquely competitive organisation in our industry.

The relationship between NPCA and Local Government is already strong and will, in my opinion, be further strengthened by NPCA's willingness to adapt and improve in the climate of change that is affecting everyone involved in the industry.

ANIMAL HEALTH BOARD REPORT

Brent Rohloff

The revised National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) was approved by the Minister and is now in place. The strategy focus is the reduction of the Vector Risk Area by eradicating TB from wildlife over large tracks of New Zealand, while ensuring infected herds remain at low levels. The strategy also includes the Proof of Concept areas, where we will prove to our stakeholders we can eradicate TB from wildlife in deep bush areas.

Over this year, AHB has focused on working with contractors to address various concerns. Monitoring standards and continuity of work have been discussed and we are working towards solutions. AHB see considerable benefits in regular and open communications with both individual contractors as well as PestNET. AHB has also focused on improving contractor safety systems, with a particular focus on quad bikes. It has been pleasing to see the positive and proactive approach by contractors to the issues.

Given the data collection requirements of the new strategy, PDA's (personal digital assistants) and the VectorTrax software have been developed to ensure accurate

capture and transfer of field data from vector surveys. The technology is now being deployed throughout New Zealand

The aerial 1080 season was completed successfully with a significant number of operations on the West Coast, the Central North Island and Otago.

Research remains a high priority for the AHB. As usual, significant funds have been directed into projects that have the aim of improving efficiency of vector control, as well providing tools that enable calculation of TB eradication with confidence. AHB-funded research projects will provide us with both tools and techniques to enable us to meet the requirements of the NPMS, and provide valuable information to the wider pest control industry.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION REPORT

Mike Hawes

Organisational Design Review

The department's recent review focused on Conservancies and National Office. The key points are:

- centralising advice and support functions at 3 service centres – Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch;
- most positions will be established in the new service centres but some have been retained in other geographic locations but will report remotely to the service centres;
- a net loss of 96 positions across the country.

The new structure will be fully implemented by 1 July 2012. Once Treasury has confirmed the funding cuts sought from this year's budget, a further review is envisaged next year, looking at DOC's operational functions and may include Conservancy and Area boundaries.

Kea baiting protocols being tested

As part of a DOC and AHB programme investigating the benefits and risks of aerially applied 1080 for kea, this year about 50 radio-tagged birds were monitored at three sites:

- Okarito (North and South) - AHB/DOC operations covering 30,000ha, completed in September. 37 kea were monitored. 7 of the 9 birds in the North Okarito block died. It is difficult to clearly attribute factors to the cause of death (as with the ones previously at Franz/Fox), but may be something to do with the selectively logged cut-over nature of the North Okarito podocarp forest.
- Wangapeka - AHB operation covering 30,000ha, completed in late September. 12 kea were monitored and all survived. 3 nests are also being monitored within the control area to determine the benefits of pest control on breeding success. It's hoped to pick up another 2 or 3 nests. Results won't be clear until late summer.
- Abbey Rocks – DOC operation covering 12,000ha, completed in late October. 9 kea were monitored and all so far are OK.

To date, 81 kea have been monitored over 5 operations since a new baiting protocol was put in place for kea areas. Of these, 7 birds (north Okarito) have died.

DOC has assessed any potential changes to performance standards as a result of the Okarito kea deaths. No significant changes have been added. Although this second incident raises the risk profile for kea, there was no clear cause or factors to relate it to and hence no suitable additional performance standards to mitigate the risk (apart from not using 1080 in kea areas). It was recommended that development of a bird repellent should proceed as fast as possible.

Workshop with fur recovery industry

Following an earlier meeting between DOC, Textiles NZ and the Ministers of Agriculture and Internal Affairs, a workshop was held with DOC, AHB, Textiles NZ and the NZ Fur Council. Some of the key points follow.

- The NZFC were keen to explore the possibilities of gaining exclusive fur harvesting rights over blocks of public conservation land.
- Desire to move from the situation where 80% of fur is supplied by part-time amateurs to a situation where most of the fur is supplied by full-time professionals.
- Provision of more consistent national information for possum fur hunters, e.g. specific page on DOC website.
- AHB to provide a picture of what their programme will look like over time, possibly on their website.
- Discussion on whether the paperwork could be simplified, e.g. DOC and MOH consents.
- Keen to do further trial work looking at whether possum fur trapping could make a useful contribution to existing possum pest control contracts and deliver conservation benefits.
- Industry consideration of a code of practice for fur and possum harvesters.

Resetting possum traps

Goodnature Ltd's Version 10 possum resetting trap is the first trap worldwide to meet the NAWAC guidelines for class A humane traps. DOC is continuing to plan for wider scale field testing of the stoat, possum and rat traps following a \$4m government allocation over 3-4 years. The trials will run at DOC's 6 mainland island sites.

New 'Managing animal pests' section of the DOC website

Most DOC Animal Pests SOPs and an abridged Status List with Performance Standards sheets are now available on the DOC website. Anyone who logs into the old Extranet can click on a link to this new section. Any changes to SOPs will automatically appear on the new site as they occur, so will always be the most current versions.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY REPORT

Sherman Smith

Biosecurity toolbox management

Oversight and coordinated development of the tools we use for biosecurity (including pest management) is done well in some parts of the biosecurity system and not so well in others. Regional and central government leaders identified the need for managing the toolbox so that we have all the tools we need in the face of an increasing number of pests, coupled with threats to the toolbox (e.g. by protestors or problems with supply). This means tools for physical control and monitoring of pests in the marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments, and tools to support operations such as best practice

guidance, regulatory standards and support for community groups to work closer and better with government (and vice versa).

This concept of oversight and management of the toolbox is now being implemented under the leadership of an establishment committee of key biosecurity participants - initially the Animal Health Board, regional councils, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Conservation, and tangata whenua. A business case to underpin the work is being considered by the committee in December, with a vision or strategy document, implementation plan and action plan set to be considered in early 2012. The establishment committee will need to work closely with the NPCA and other stakeholders over the next year as it works out where there is a need for better coordination and oversight, and where it is already sufficient.

Rabbits

The New Zealand Rabbit Coordination Group has been working to improve rabbit management in New Zealand through the implementation of their Rabbit Plan of Action. The NPCA has been supporting this work through updating rabbit best practice guidelines and through a project currently underway to develop a training programme for rabbit operators. The development of aerial 1080 guidelines and local government 1080 standard operating procedures by NPCA has also supported the Rabbit Coordination Group in meeting its objectives.

Best practice information

MAF is supportive of the collaborative approach that NPCA has taken to producing new best practice guides. Both food safety and pest management personnel within MAF have provided input into a number of the new guidelines produced by NPCA this year.

PESTNET REPORT (presented verbally at AGM and appended subsequently)

Martin Brenstrum

PestNET met four times during 2011, in March, June, August and November. At the 16 November AGM held in Dunedin, Kevin Battersby (Chairman) and Bruce Waddell (Secretary) were elected to office, Malcolm Thomas remains Treasurer, and the other executive members are Martin Brenstrum, Clyde Holden, Murray Leckie and Tony Leith.

PestNET has appreciated the AHB's willingness to meet and work with contractors during the year on issues such as, continuity of work, retention of experienced staff, staff training, improvement of contractor safety systems, best practice, retention of key control tools and monitoring.

PestNET appreciates having the opportunity to be represented on the NPCA and looks forward to working with the AHB, Regional Councils and Department of Conservation in 2012.
