

NPCA Newsletter



National Pest
Control Agencies

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NPCA provides a forum for agencies and stakeholders involved in vertebrate pest control to co-operatively address industry issues, share information, develop best practice and promote training/professional development. Any individual or organisation engaged in the vertebrate pest control industry is eligible for membership.

The NPCA is run by a management committee of six people and a National Co-ordinator.

Management committee:

Bill Martyn, (Chairperson), *Local Government New Zealand*

Brent Rohloff, *Animal Health Board*

Bruce Warburton, *Landcare Research*

Martin Brenstrum, *Contractor*

Sherman Smith, *Ministry for Primary Industries*

Euan Kennedy, *Department of Conservation*

National Coordinator: Maurice Kennedy

TIME FOR COLLABORATION

In sitting down to write this piece I am conscious of the many times, as NPCA Chair, I have spoken of change in our industry. Once again major change is with us; this time in the form of the ongoing restructuring of DoC.

For our friends in the Department this is a time of great upheaval and uncertainty. Some will lose their positions, others will be redeployed, most will have new challenges to meet. For those directly affected, our thoughts are with you and we can only hope that - whatever transition lies ahead of you - the journey will be as smooth as possible with bigger and better things awaiting you.



Many of us in the aligned agencies will experience change from the restructure as well. Several existing cross-agency partnerships involving DoC, for instance, have achieved some amazing outcomes in areas such as endangered species protection, pest control and visitor asset development. How these projects will work in the future and the personnel involved are bound to change.

However, I am certain that now, more than ever, we must collectively stay focused on our shared purpose and resist any inclination to become introverted within our agencies. We need each other at our collaborative best to seize the opportunity that the Pest Management Toolbox project offers, and, already, a good deal of work has been completed on producing a draft framework for it.

NPCA is well placed to have a significant role in the Toolbox development and establishment. Together, we built NPCA into a leader in best practice publishing and technology transfer; together, we must ensure that its work is recognized as an invaluable foundation for the future of pest management and will continue with the Toolbox framework.

I call on all members to review the draft Toolbox proposals when released and to work with your colleagues, organisations and NPCA committee members to have your say in ensuring the best possible outcomes are achieved.

Bill Martyn

NPCA Chairperson

BIOSECURITY ACT REFORMS BRING CHANGES TO PEST MANAGEMENT

The new consolidated Biosecurity Act now incorporates reforms from last September that were primarily aimed at improving provisions for border risk management (e.g. Import Health Standards, and containment facilities) and pest management (e.g. clarifying roles and accountabilities as well as improving and simplifying processes for pest plans).

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is working with partner agencies and stakeholders to progressively implement the pest management related changes, including developing guidance for implementing and reviewing regional pest plans under the new provisions.

Key pest management changes are summarised below.

National Policy Direction for pest management and assigned responsibility for decisions

A new instrument for pest management, called a National Policy Direction (NPD), has been added, which must include:

- directions on setting good neighbour rules; and
- directions on how long before existing plans (e.g. existing regional pest management strategies) must be assessed for their consistency with the NPD and reviewed if required.

Another instrument relating to pest management is the assignment of responsibility for a decision when an issue relating to a harmful organism or to a pathway arises. The Minister will now be able to assign responsibility for deciding the appropriate response to a government agency, regional council, or other party. However, the

Minister cannot use this process to compel another party to take action.

Developing and implementing the NPD and the process to assign responsibility for decisions is a priority for the MPI. Public discussion documents have been drafted which set out the instruments as two sets of proposed regulations under the Biosecurity Act 1993. The required public consultation process for the proposed regulations will run for a six week period during May and June 2013. The Minister for Primary Industries will release a media statement publicly notifying the consultation. MPI will also be in contact with stakeholders in early May with information on the consultation, including closing dates for submissions.

Pest Management Plans

The former 'pest management strategies' have been renamed 'pest management plans'. The new step-by-step process for developing plans at both national and regional levels includes:

- an extended period, from 5 to 10 years, for reviewing plans; and
- the ability to undertake a partial plan review as well as whole plan reviews, to provide greater flexibility



Wilding pines spreading near Mt Cook: the sort of issue where the Ministerial decision-making role could be used.



Pathway management in action: outdoor wear being checked for stowaways, southern islands quarantine facility, Codfish Island.

Photo by Adam Gilly, Crown Copyright. Department of Conservation: Te Papa Atawhai.2005

in addressing new pest issues that might arise within the 10 year review cycle.

Pathway Plans

The Act also allows for national and regional 'pathway management plans' – in other words, managing the ways in which harmful organisms may spread. In many cases, the proactive pathway approach is thought likely to be more efficient and effective than reactively managing pest occurrence. In the marine environment, for instance, it is difficult and expensive to find and control pests, so investing effort in controlling the spread of risk organisms along pathways is likely to be a more effective approach.

A model pathway plan is likely to be developed in collaboration between agencies and stakeholders, and will draw on experience with established pests such as Chilean needle grass.

Leadership functions

New provisions set out complementary leadership roles in pest management:

- the Director-General of MPI provides overall leadership, which includes overseeing New Zealand's systems for pest management; and
- regional councils provide leadership regionally.

The leadership roles include facilitating communication, co-operation and co-ordination, and promoting public support for pest management.

'Good neighbour' rules

The relationship between regional authorities and the Crown (as landowner) also altered under the new biosecurity provisions.

The Crown can now be required under both the new regional pest management plans and pathway management plans to comply with pest management obligations and meet the costs.

How these good neighbour rules work will be guided by the National Policy Direction for Pest Management (NPD) which is currently under development. However, it is likely to address immediate externalities of invasive pest species crossing boundaries from Crown land to private land and, potentially, to deal with species that have a wider impact than in the immediate vicinity of a boundary line.

These changes will hopefully bring Crown land, such as the rail corridor, the NZTA road network and land administered by DoC and LINZ, under the same standard as land in private ownership.

ANIMAL WELFARE UPDATE

During August and September last year, the Ministry for Primary Industries publicly consulted on its discussion document, *Animal Welfare Matters: Proposal for a New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy* and amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Included in the document was a proposal to clarify in the Act that extreme conduct, which goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting, fishing or controlling pests, could be subject to a charge of wilful or reckless ill-treatment.

The Ministry received over 2,200 written submissions from a variety of sectors, industry organisations, animal welfare interest groups, and individuals. The majority of these submissions (over 1,700) were generated from the SAFE website. There were also about 150 submissions that dealt mostly or exclusively with dog issues, often about dog tail docking.

The submissions are now available on the Ministry's website, along with a summary of the submissions, at <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/consult/proposals-for-aw-strategy-and-aw-act>

During the consultation period, the Ministry held six stakeholder workshops around the country to encourage discussion and debate about the issues and options raised in the document. The workshops were attended by approximately 120 key animal sector stakeholders.

The Ministry finalised the draft strategy and proposals for legislative change in light of the consultation feedback for cabinet consideration and an announcement on the outcome is expected in the near future.

POSSUMS AND WALLABIES NO LONGER PROTECTED

Possoms and wallabies are now explicitly excluded from protection under the Wildlife Act 1953.

Previously listed as noxious animals (along with deer species, moose, wapiti, chamois, goat, tahr and pig), both are now listed in Schedule 5 of the Act, which lists "Wildlife not protected".



NETS3013 : SHAKE IT UP!

Planning is well underway for NETS2013 (National Education and Technology Seminar) - the second combined seminar of the National Pest Control Agencies and New Zealand Biosecurity Institute.

> 31st July - 2nd August 2013

> TranzAlpine Train and Shantytown, Greymouth.

Registration and the first part of the programmes will take place on the train journey from Christchurch to Greymouth.

As the programme below shows, there is a wide range of animal pest presentations, which have been organised in two parallel sessions on the Wednesday and Friday in order to accommodate the diversity of presentations within the timeframe.

Additionally, there will be a series of six short 5-minute presentations with an emphasis on trade and new technology in animal pest control.

The conference programme also includes some very interesting international guest speakers.

Johann Van Der Merwe, Quarantine Manager of the Gorgon project, a massive natural gas fields development off the coast of Western Australia, will talk on



'What does it take to set a new benchmark in biosecurity? The Barrow Island experience'.

Simon O'Connor, Science Coordinator of Fircroft Australia (for Chevron Australia) will give a presentation on *'Monitoring an extreme form of rarity - the single unwanted entrant'.*

NETS2013— ANIMAL PEST PRESENTATIONS			
WEDNESDAY			
SESSION	THEME	PRESENTER	TOPIC
A	Conservation initiatives	Mark Geaney	Pigs in paradise: innovative feral pig control in the Waitakere Ranges, Auckland.
A	Conservation initiatives	Andrew Gormley	Conservation benefits of possum control in forests (DOC project) and where to next?
A	Conservation initiatives	Grant Norbury	Pest fencing or pest control: a bio-economic analysis of cost-effectiveness.
A	Conservation initiatives	Ingrid Gruner	Impacts of Himalayan tahr on snow tussock grasslands.
A	Conservation initiatives	Catriona MacLeod	Agri-environmental indicator development for the New Zealand sustainability dashboard.
A	Production landscapes	Ken Wright	An overview of a pest data field recording system.
B	New Technologies	Jamie Mackay	Novel long-term possum control devices.
B	New Technologies	Helen Blackie	Automated pest monitoring and surveillance devices.
B	New Technologies	Helen Blackie	New lures for possum control.
B	New Technologies	Bruce Brewer	Henry traps: the learning curve.
B	New Technologies	Elaine Murphy	Development of a stoat/rat re-setting toxin delivery device (Spitfire).
B	New Technologies	Peter Sweetapple	Increasing possum detection rates at low densities.

THURSDAY			
A	TB & vector management	Dave Morgan	Making ground control of possums more cost-effective.
A	TB & vector management	Carlos Rouco	Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of possum ground control and monitoring in the southern South Island.
A	TB & vector management	Bruce Warburton	Encounter and interaction rates of possums with traps:
A	Production landscapes	Steve Ellis	Pest management qualification review: improving vocational training.
FRIDAY			
A	Conservation initiatives	Josh Kemp	Effects of 1080 on kea.
A	Conservation initiatives	Andrea Byrom	Improved predictions for masting: help in early warning of rodent irruptions.
A	TB & vector management	Ivor Yockney	Quantifying the forage distance of possums in the northern South Island high country.
A	TB & vector management	Andrew Gormley	Outcomes of the initial implementation of the Proof of Freedom POF framework.
A	TB & vector management	Dan Tompkins	Possum vaccination against bovine tuberculosis.
B	Production landscapes	Janine Duckworth	Rabbit haemorrhagic disease for improved rabbit bio-control in New Zealand.
B	Production landscapes	Diane Fraser	The spread of the spur-winged plover in New Zealand.
B	Production landscapes	Peter McCarthy	Indian Myna mitigation options for New Zealand.
B	Conservation initiatives	Phillip Dawson	The silent forest - hearing is believing - or is it?
Plenary	Plenary	Andrea Byrom	Predator-Free New Zealand: an aspirational goal?

FIND OUT MORE

Watch the NPCA website (<http://www.npc.org.nz>) and NZBI website (<http://biosecurity.org.nz/nets/next-nets>) for:

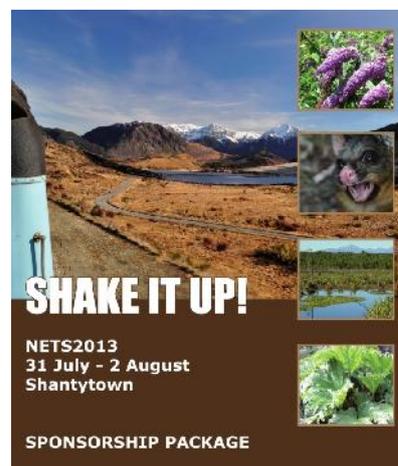
- more information about the final programme
- opening of registrations (due soon).

NETS2013 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsorship is always an important factor in enabling the NETS organisers to offer a high quality, well-run event whilst also keeping the registration costs affordable for participants.

It is also a great way to promote your organisation's role and/or products to a targeted audience. A range of sponsorship packages are available.

For information about the sponsorship package or to discuss sponsorship opportunities for NETS2013, please contact Carolyn Lewis on 0274 434 431 or carolyn.lewis@xtra.co.nz.



MIKE HAWES : A CAREER IN CONSERVATION

Mike Hawes stood down from the NPCA Management Committee last year after five years as the Department of Conservation's representative, including two years as NPCA Chairperson. He brought to the committee not only his many years' experience in pest management but also his notable capacity for hard work and leadership.

NPCA National Co-ordinator, Maurice Kennedy, says Mike made a significant contribution to NPCA's work during a time of great change in the vertebrate pest control industry; as evidenced by Mike's first report, in 2007, which touched on problems with raised set standards, the 1080 reassessment and DoC's inputs to assist the Animal Health Board's Tb strategy review.

"Mike contributed importantly to the development of best practices, such as the development of aerial 1080 best practice guidelines, and was instrumental in getting the current pest sign recognition project started through the initial scoping phase," Maurice says. "And, we must remember that this was a part-time role that coincided with the demands of a time of great change within the Department.

"We extend our thanks and best wishes to Mike for his valuable and constructive contributions on both technical matters and key NPCA issues."

Forest Service beginnings

Ironically, Mike had no thought of a career in conservation when he enrolled at Otago University in 1974. His original intention to do a degree in land surveying morphed along the way and he ended up graduating with a BSc in maths. He had no idea what to do with it and took a few short-term jobs to make ends meet before winding up in the New Zealand Forest Service in 1981.

"I started with a mapping job in the draughting section in Nelson and, when that finished, was offered work on

forest measurement in the local pine blocks. There was a lot of pushing or cutting through gorse to locate the forest plots and to measure stem diameters and tree heights. On a good day we would blow the tops out of pine trees with a shotgun to collect samples for testing."

In his first summer on the job, Mike took up the opportunity to join one of the teams in the backcountry on the annual summer animal/vegetation surveys that the Forest Service undertook to measure the impact of introduced animals on native forests and grasslands.

"Looking back, that was the highlight of my working life," Mike recalls. "In the previous few years I'd got heavily into tramping and climbing in the local hills so it was a dream job - more a lifestyle than a job. We were flying or walking into many of the remotest areas in Nelson and Marlborough and living in the backcountry for weeks on end."

From his initial casual team member role, Mike then went on to working the whole summer season as team leader and then worked fulltime organising surveys, analysing data and writing reports. At quieter times of the year, he relished the opportunities to get out and about on other environmental forestry work.

Then to DoC

Then, in 1987, came the big government department shakedown; the commercial pine forests were split off and the Forest Service, Lands and Survey and Wildlife Service were merged into the Department of Conservation.

"Within a short space of time, we saw the protection of public land and the management of recreation, historic places and flora and fauna all come under one department. It was a big ask," Mike reflects.

Mike moved from field to office-based work. He took on a progression of bureaucratic titles as his job, and the



At a survey hut in the Lees Creek., Marlborough, in 1983.

Department, changed through a number of internal reviews - culminating most recently in the title of "Integration Coordinator" as DoC embarks on another round of restructuring that will see it operate under a new model, focused on community and business involvement in conservation.

Of the changes he's seen over the years, Mike says, "There's been increasing focus on health and safety, with safety in the workplace rightfully becoming paramount; increased development of standard operating procedures and best practice; and increasing public scrutiny, with growing concerns around the use of toxins, animal welfare and accountability. And, of course, the major developments in technology, particularly around traps and toxins."

Mike has also observed NPCA steadily changing over time, with its initial possum focus broadening to animal pests and its annual conference recently merging with the wider biodiversity NETS conference. He thinks the coming years will likely see NPCA continue to change as central and local government look to integrate pest management more widely.

"The NPCA has been through a lot of changes in the last few years as it has tried to define its ongoing role in the pest control industry. Pest control work continues to ramp up around the country in an ever-changing world of technological changes, of government departments restructuring and refocusing, and of private concerns taking on increasingly complex pest control programmes. And, there's talk of a pest Free NZ!

"Against that context, there is probably an even greater need now than ever to have a cross-industry forum such as the NPCA, in promoting best practice, standards and coordinated effort.

"The highlight for me, personally, over my 5 years with NPCA was seeing the industry-wide aerial 1080 guidelines developed and signed off by the main players."

Below: Mike Hawes planting tussocks at Beebys Knob, Gordon Range, Tasman, circa 1984.



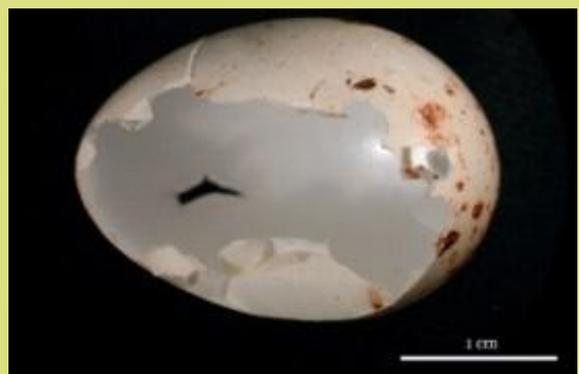
PEST SIGN RECOGNITION PROJECT

There has been a lot of interest in NPCA's proposed pest sign recognition guide project, which Mike Hawes helped to get off the ground. It is proposed to develop the guide as an interactive website to assist people identify pests from field sign.

Currently, NPCA is in the process of putting together a project team, sourcing funding and exploring project partnership opportunities.

Right: Kill sign—tui egg predated by ship rat.

Photo: John Innes, Landcare Research



SENIOR UK MINISTER PRAISES NEW ZEALAND'S TB CONTROL PROGRAMME

Britain's most senior agriculture minister heaped praise on New Zealand and its work in controlling bovine tuberculosis (TB) during a fact finding visit in earlier this April.

Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, had recently approved badger culls in Somerset and Gloucestershire in order to tackle what is seen, like possums in New Zealand, as the major source of infection in farmed livestock.

He came to learn more about New Zealand's bovine TB programme and how effective disease and wild animal control had played its part in reducing infected herd numbers from some 1700 in 1994 to around 70 today, laying the platform for New Zealand to embark on its current path towards eradicating the disease.

During a visit to a Wairarapa farm, Mr Paterson met the AHB's TB Eradication and Research Manager, Dr Paul Livingstone, who has visited the UK and Ireland several times in recent years at the invitation of government experts there. Dr Livingstone was able to share his knowledge of the situation here and overseas.

Mr Paterson said he was keen to see expertise shared between the two countries, saying he had "enormous

admiration" for what New Zealand done about its TB "wildlife reservoir, the possum."



Photo: sourced from TB Free England website <http://www.tbfreeengland.uk.com/>

ON ALERT: BIRD INVADER REPORTEDLY BACK

One of the world's most invasive bird species - the red-vented bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) - is reportedly present in Auckland.

The Ministry for Primary Industries, is working urgently with the Department of Conservation and Auckland Council to track down and eradicate the unwanted invaders, and has asked Aucklanders to help by reporting possible sightings.

The red-vented bulbul (originating in parts of Asia) is common in other parts of the Pacific, particularly in Fiji and suburban Sydney. It damages fruit and vegetable crops, will feed on native fruits, seeds and insects, and compete so aggressively that other birds are displaced from their habitats.

The birds have probably hitched a ride to Auckland on a commercial vessel or recreational yacht - and not for the first time! A small population established during the 1950s and then, in 2006, a small number were found again. In both instances they were eradicated.

Identification

Red-vented bulbuls are a medium-sized bird around the size of a starling (20 cm in length – body and tail). They are generally dark coloured with a lighter chest and rump, and a small crest on their head. A very distinctive crimson-red patch beneath their tail is a key identification feature. Full information, including pictures and an audio track of their unique call is at: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/red-vented-bulbul

Seen a suspect?

Report your observations immediately to MPI's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline - 0800 80 99 66.



Red-vented bulbul.

Image from Red-vented_bulbul_2_MPI_factsheet_Apr2013

NEW NPCA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER

EUAN KENNEDY

Euan Kennedy is the new Department of Conservation representative on the NPCA Management Committee.



He is a Technical Advisor with DoC, based in Christchurch, where currently he specialises in the control of animal pests on public conservation lands. This is a relatively new role which profits from natural linkages to Euan's earlier work with threatened species, island restoration and marine conservation.

Formerly, Euan worked nationwide with the New Zealand Wildlife Service as a protected species specialist. Eradicating pests from islands occupied much of his time. Following transition to the Department of Conservation in 1987, he worked in a broad range of biodiversity disciplines in Otago and Canterbury.

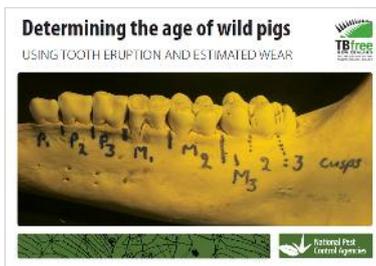
In his spare time, he has acquired considerable experience with community-led conservation and is a founding trustee of New Zealand's ground-breaking Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust (1987). He holds post-graduate degrees from Lincoln University in the social and biological sciences.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The following publications have been either updated or released as new publications since our last newsletter in December 2012. All are available online or can be ordered in printed format from NPCA at www.npca.org.nz.

NEW PUBLICATION

***Determining the Age of Wild Pigs, using tooth eruption and estimated wear* (Code A15)**



Produced by the Animal Health Board, with NPCA's support, to provide field workers doing wildlife survey work with a photographic guide to help estimate the age of pig jaws.

Note: colours may print out differently from the PDF version available online, depending on the printer and paper used. Alternatively, contact AHB to find out about obtaining pre-printed copies.

DUE SOON: MACHINERY HYGIENE GUIDELINES

A new publication, *Machinery Hygiene Guidelines and Logbook to Prevent the Spread of Pests and Weeds*, is to be published soon.

A working group representing the Local Government Biosecurity Managers Group, Rural Contractors New Zealand, Federated Farmers and the Ministry for Primary Industries has supported and had input to its development.

As well as being available for online downloading, the Guideline will be produced as a sturdy logbook in which contractors can keep records of their machine wash-downs.

UPDATED EDITION

***Pest Rabbits, Monitoring and Control Good Practice Guidelines* (Code A5)**

This November 2012 edition updates the previous 2011 edition.



Changes relate specifically to the Modified McLean Rabbit Infestation Scale, which has been updated in section 4.2 to version 1.0, adopted by the New Zealand Rabbit Coordination Group in October 2012. All references to the Modified McLean Scale in this edition refer to the 2012 scale.

If you are interested in ordering copies, please contact Maurice Kennedy at npca@xtra.co.nz

