

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

REFLECTIONS ON 2013

As the year draws to an end, I find myself evaluating the performance of NPCA once again. Have we been productive and contributed in a meaningful way by adding value to the industry for our members? Have we been able to gain traction in what has been a considerable period of change?

To my thinking, the answers are mixed.

On the positive side, the years of NPCA's repositioning and development have reached fruition: – we are now a registered charity (not an easy achievement these days) and we have received our first grant from the Lottery Grants Board towards the animal pest sign recognition guide project, which can now get under way (see page 4). The ability to receive funding of this nature is huge for our endeavours and is recognition of our value both to industry players and to wider community groups as well.



We also completed the machine hygiene guidelines, a project that took us outside NPCA's normal vertebrate pest field and was a fabulous collaboration involving, for the first time, Federated Farmers (see page 5). The guidelines are stage one of more work to come on pathway management and the theme of 'Biosecurity at the Farm Gate'.

Where we didn't achieve so well was in securing a clear future direction under the Ministry for Primary Industries' Pest Management Toolbox project. This failure was somewhat beyond NPCA's control, of course. Meanwhile, however, most of those in the industry desire a decision to be reached about how the Toolbox will be managed. NPCA is willing to help in establishing the Toolbox and is prepared to play a significant role in its future.

Should the Toolbox project not eventuate, our members can take heart in knowing that NPCA is still here and is placed better than ever to continue providing quality service in best practice publication and technology transfer to our members and to the wider public, which is increasingly involved in pest management.

On balance, despite the frustrations, it has been another great year with some milestone achievements. I extend big thanks to the management committee and to Maurice Kennedy and his crew of support contractors.

Bill Martyn

NPCA Chairperson

NOTICE OF AGM — NOVEMBER 21ST 2013, WELLINGTON

See details overleaf...

NOTICE OF AGM — NOVEMBER 21ST 2013, WELLINGTON

Hear about NPCA's work in the past year and have a say on plans for the 2014 year.

When?

2.00 pm - 4.00 pm, Thursday 21 November 2013.

Where?

Level 6, Braemar Building, 32 The Terrace, Wellington

RSVP:

So we can confirm numbers for **afternoon tea**, please RSVP npca@xtra.co.nz by Monday 18th November, 2013.

Business:

- Minutes of 2012 AGM,
- Management committee reports
- Financial reports
- Election of two management committee members
- General business.

Topics covered will include: issues and achievements in the 2013 year including: breaking new ground with projects, the NETS seminar, and policy to do with NPCA's potential role within the Pest Management Toolbox initiative.

NETS2013 REVIEW & NETS2014

Planning is underway for NETS2014. Taranaki will be the host region and more information about dates, venue, programme and call for papers will be announced in coming months. Keep checking NPCA's and the NZ Biosecurity Institute's websites.

YOUR FEEDBACK?

Meanwhile, NPCA is represented on the NETS 2014 organising committee and will be working to ensure the programme will meet the needs of the vertebrate pest control sector in terms of technology transfer, information sharing, hands-on training and networking.

To that end, we invite you to send in, before the AGM on the 21st November:

- your feedback on any aspects of NETS2013 (programme, venue, timing etc) and/or
- suggestions on what you would like to see in the NETS2014 programme.

Alternatively, come to the AGM with your feedback and ideas, as an agenda item for discussion will be, 'how well is the NETS seminar format meeting the vertebrate pest sector needs?'

Please email NPCA (npca@xtra.co.nz) or phone Maurice Kennedy (04 499 7559).

PETER NELSON AWARD 2013

This year, the coveted Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy went to the Northland Regional Council. The trophy is awarded annually to recognise achievement in vertebrate pest management within New Zealand. The council earned the award for its work over more than a decade with thousands of Northlanders in a wide range of pest control work.

The Biosecurity Institute said the award recognised the council's "significant efforts and outstanding success in engaging the wider community in a range of pest control initiatives" throughout Northland. The initiatives included: providing advice and assistance to significant private ecological restoration projects; supporting community groups and volunteers; sponsoring training programmes for both young and old, and providing training assistance and opportunities for participants to gain formal qualifications under the NZQA unit standards framework.



Don McKenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager, Northland Regional Council, received the award on the council's behalf at NETS2013 in Greymouth.

NPCA 2014 PROJECT PROGRAMME

On the agenda at the AGM will be NPCA's project planning and prioritisation for the coming year. Some key projects that are already underway or are under consideration follow.

Publications review and update:

Diederik Meenken has been contracted to undertake this project. He will update NPCA's best practice guideline publications to keep pace with legislative changes and agency name changes and will also review and update where necessary the technical content to keep pace with new findings and developments.

Simplified best practice formats:

The idea of producing simplified versions of the best practice publications in abbreviated leaflet or fact sheet formats will be investigated. These would not replace the current full publications but offer a complementary source of easy-to-read, 'how to' guidance for the growing numbers of people who are undertaking animal pest control in communities. The project would involve determining the depth of content and the style of format appropriate to the target audience via survey and feedback from potential end users, and, if the concept looks worthwhile, scoping the work and cost of producing the simplified versions.

Machine Hygiene Project:

Promotion of the 'Keep it Clean' Guidelines and log-book (see p. 5) is planned, to foster awareness of its existence amongst agencies, regulators and end users, as well as promoting its use amongst contractors. Other opportunities to extend the guideline/logbook concept in controlling the spread of pest animal and pest plant species will also be noted and progressed.

Pest sign recognition guideline project:

Funding requirements will be confirmed and additional funding sought if required, and the writing, illustration, design and website development (implemented see more p.4.)

Rabbit website:

Possible development of the website will be followed up with the Rabbit Co-ordination Group and assistance provided as required.

National bio-control strategy:

NPCA will keep in touch with the Bio-managers Group over the possible contracted-out development of a strategy, with the objective of NPCA eventually hosting the strategy when complete.

UPDATE: PEST MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW

Proposed qualifications for the Pest Management industry have received approval for development from NZQA. A working group, comprised of industry representatives including Regional Councils, DoC, TB Free and pest control contractors, has been working to finalise the details.

There have been a couple of noteworthy changes to the proposed structure, including a decision to move only two qualifications forward for listing. The reasoning behind this is that the industry may be better served by utilising generic business and staff management qualifications, rather than having a specific qualification which may not be widely available. There may be an opportunity to review this decision once the new qualifications are well established and are being utilised by the industry.

Another major change is that the qualification will be aimed at a broader audience – 'pest management' for the purpose of the qualification will also include professionals undertaking pest control in urban environments. This is possible because the qualification includes only very broad 'outcomes' which describe the graduates' skills and knowledge. The detailed content of learning and assessment will be included in the learning programme

Here is an example of how a qualification outcome might translate into different contexts:

Qualification Level:

"Plan and perform inspection, control and monitoring operations for a minimum of two pest animal types."

Programme Level:

Council Biosecurity Officer / Pest Control Contractor

- learning and assessment carried out for possums and rabbits, programme may include planning operations and dosing rates for relevant toxins

Urban Pest Control Technician

- learning and assessment carried out for invertebrates and rodents, programme may include integrated pest management for built environments and fumigation in confined spaces.

A final round of consultation on the qualifications is about to start, with the aim of finalising the qualification and submitting them to NZQA for listing in early December. Please visit Primary ITO's website view the qualifications and read further updates <http://www.primaryito.ac.nz/pest-management-qualification-review>

LOTTERY FUNDING ENABLES PEST SIGN RECOGNITION PROJECT

NPCA is delighted that the Lottery Grants Board has granted funding for our proposed pest sign recognition project, which will enable the project to go ahead.

NPCA first scoped out the project in 2011 (see newsletter No. 26) and concluded that it was not only feasible but would fill a significant gap in the tools available for people carrying out vertebrate pest control in the field.

While there is a good deal of information on pest sign available online and in various publications, it is scattered, variable in quality and not always relevant to New Zealand. The aim is to create a a single, comprehensive source of New Zealand-based animal pest sign information.

There's been considerable interest and support for the project from public agencies, community groups and NGO's.

Project outline

The objective is to produce a visual 'Pest Busters' guide to help people identify the presence of pest animal species in the field.

It will be developed as a highly visual website-based tool, structured to enable interactive searching in a number of ways, depending on the user's starting point (e.g. starting with animal droppings or with animal tracks.) Users will also be able to look up the specific sign information about each of the pest species.

To optimise accessibility for a wide range of users, we hope to develop the website so that it will be directly accessible via mobile phones and other electronic devices for users in the field. Alternatively, for those who prefer to use hard copy, information will be printable as fact sheets or booklets.

The guide will cover animal droppings, animal tracks, vegetation and other damage, kill sign, and other clues such as eye shine, burrows, vocalisations and behaviour traits .

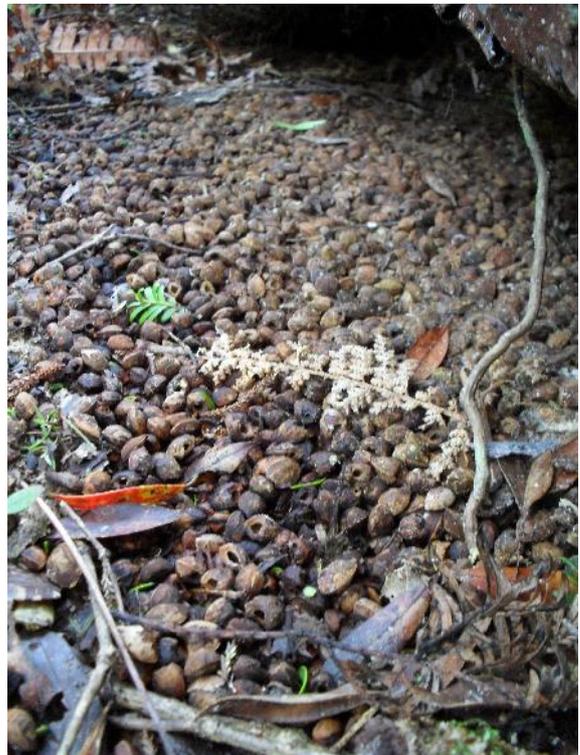
Initially, the pest species covered will be: possums, stoats, ferrets, weasels, rabbits, Norway rats, ship rats, kiore, feral cats, feral goats, feral pigs, mice, hedgehogs and several deer species. In due course, it is hoped that further species will also be added.

What now?

NPCA will manage the project, working with a soon-to-be confirmed project team that will undertake the writing, illustration, graphic design and website development. A project advisory group will also be formed to provide peer review on the technical content.

The timeframe has still to be confirmed but it is hoped the website will be up and running by the end of 2014.

SPOT THE SIGN: which animals left these signs?



Answers:

Left: Possum chews on kamahi, Stewart Island. Right: rat larder, miro seeds, Stewart Island. Both photos courtesy DOC.

'KEEP IT CLEAN' PUBLICATION LAUNCH

NPCA's latest publication, *'Keep it Clean, Machinery Hygiene Guidelines and Logbook to prevent the spread of pests and weeds'*, will be officially launched at Federated Farmers' Wellington office on 20th November.

The new publication highlights the risk of weeds and pests being spread when machinery moves around the countryside, and provides clear guidance on how to keep machinery clean. Its importance to New Zealand's biosecurity will be highlighted at the event.



The co-operative effort that went into the publication will also be acknowledged at the launch. A working group representing Rural Contractors New Zealand, Federated Farmers, the Local Government Biosecurity Managers Group, and the Ministry for Primary Industries supported and gave input to the development of the guidelines, which were compiled by Diederik Meeken. NPCA then took over the editing and publication part of the process.

The publication is aimed most particularly at those working in the rural contracting and farming sectors but is relevant to our own sector too. It provides a succinct best practice checklist of methods and precautions to ensure that machinery is kept clean.

Record keeping is also important so the guidelines include an extensive logbook section in which machine operators can record when and where they carry out machine clean-downs. This enables them to demonstrate their own good practice and can help to trace back pest incursions if they occur.

The sturdy spiral-bound logbook can be ordered through the publications section on NPCA's website:

- publication code A16
- price \$7.50, GST inclusive.

REORGANISING DOC'S FRONT-END SERVICES

DOC launched the final component of its new structure on 2 September 2013. The changes relate principally to DOC's front-line services and affect the Department's first points of contact with the public and associates.

The new arrangements dovetail with shared-service adjustments, launched on 1 July 2012, which reshuffled technical advisory, science, policy and regulatory functions into regional hubs in Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

September's restructuring introduces a fundamentally different way of doing business. Internally, there is a new emphasis on mobility, which borrows from the hard-won experience of DOC's parent agencies prior to 1987. DOC's regional boundaries are intended to be more permeable than before. Skills and knowledge transfer is expected to improve through greater mobility of practitioners and advisers alike. This will help to lift capacity and compensate for reductions in staff numbers.

The new front-end structures are asymmetric. Conservancies and Areas have ceased to exist, along with the notion of local autonomy and self-sufficiency (now deemed to have encouraged parochial focuses and fragmented approaches to work). Front-line conservation work is now done through two main work streams distributed in six regions, but with different inter- and intra-regional boundaries according to stream. To maximise DOC's connections with people, functional centres for work streams and their staff are not generally co-located.

'Conservation Services' is the stream which does DOC's on-ground operational work. Services teams comprise DOC's frontline practitioners and technical specialists who look after New Zealand's natural, recreational and cultural heritage on public conservation lands.

'Conservation Partnerships' is a second, companion stream which has been radically expanded to build partnerships in conservation with Kiwis (people) of all persuasions. The principle of mutual benefit is axiomatic to DOC's partnership ambitions. Partnership work is expected to be diverse and demanding. It aims to develop mutually rewarding relationships with the corporate sector as well as mobilise conservation muscle at the grass-roots level in local communities.

Partnership teams are intended to be the public face of DOC and the first point of contact with associates and the public at large.

The work of staff in a third support stream is intended to free up the staff in the first two streams to concentrate on what they do best. Conservation Planning teams throughout the country will manage all front-end operational planning and related matters.

(cont. overleaf)

KAKA ON THE INCREASE IN WELLINGTON

Last spring, a kaka chick fledged successfully in Wellington's Town Belt – just ten minutes walk from the central business district and, most significantly, outside the predator-free Zealandia wildlife sanctuary.

According to Matu Booth, Conservation officer from Zealandia, it wouldn't have been possible without the pest control being undertaken in and around the city.

Matu lives near Prince of Wales Park where the chick was raised. Last spring, he noticed a kaka pair in the area and realized from their behaviour that they were nesting. He checked the kaka monitoring at Zealandia and verified that, although both the banded birds were from the sanctuary, they were not returning there.

Matu followed the male bird and identified the nest in a large poplar tree where the female was by then incubating eggs.

"When I notified the Wellington City Council, it turned out that the poplars were to be felled the following week," Matu recalls. "All the brakes went on and the tree felling was postponed until such time as the chicks had fledged."

The nest was, of course, monitored from then on. Two weeks after the chick fledged, its mother died of unknown causes. The male bird then took over chick care and provisioning. The chick survived the vulnerable fledgling stage and after some months became independent

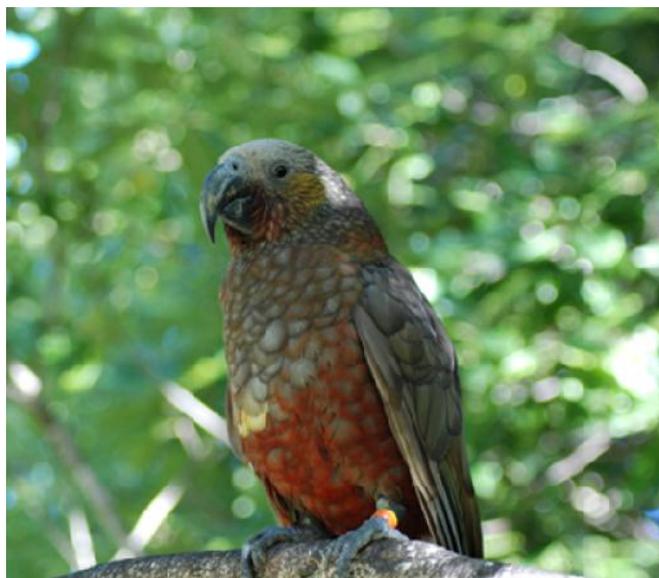
"We initially thought that there was just the one chick," Matu says, "but much later, when the poplars were being felled, a second chick, also close to fledging, was found dead in the nest cavity, which goes to show that the parents had successfully hatched and raised two chicks outside the safety of the sanctuary."

Matu says there could be as many as twenty or thirty unbanded kaka in the city, which means that kaka are

successfully breeding at unknown sites both in and outside of Zealandia.

"Pest control is the key to these birds living and breeding independently."

The male parent from last year's pair is living proof of this: he is no longer seen at the sanctuary now but has returned to Prince of Wales Park this spring with a new girlfriend. The pair are unmistakably engaged and nesting!



Kaka are on the increase in Wellington city, although this bird was photographed at Mt Bruce. Photo: Crown Copyright Department of Conservation *Te Papa Atawhai*

REORGANISING DOC'S FRONT-END SERVICES

(cont. from previous page)

The new ways of working present DOC staff with many challenges, many arising from changes in roles which will take time to clarify. The three-way partitioning of conservation work is expected to be particularly challenging. Looking further ahead, DOC is preparing itself for the demands tomorrow's partnership arrangements will make of DOC resources, expertise and abundant ingenuity.

Euan Kennedy is National Co-ordinator for Island Biosecurity (Technical Advisor, Animal Pests) with the Department of Conservation, Science and Capability, based in Christchurch. Contact: ekennedy@doc.govt.nz