



# Lower North Island 5-Year Regional Strategy

**Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi**  
*Without foresight or vision the people will be lost.*

Kia ora koutou

To improve conservation in the Lower North Island (LNI) we need to be bold, creative, and agile in our approach. We set our sights high and focus on what is most impactful for nature and for people to thrive in our region.

We are not accepting managed decline. Instead, we are leaning in, with our communities and partners, to improve conservation outcomes, particularly in our four special places. Our Conservation Boards are aligned with us in these aspirations. All three boards were given the opportunity to actively engage in the development of this strategy, ensuring we give effect to the key priorities the boards have identified in their Conservation Management Strategies.

We can't do this alone. We will work through and with imi, iwi, hapū and likeminded partners to achieve our vision. This is critical for us to succeed. We will empower and support tangata whenua in their leadership and aspirations for their rohe. We will uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Our aim is for conservation to resonate in the minds of people in our region. Nature and its benefits will be relevant to people, in their homes and their communities. We want more kiwis involved with conservation, especially our tamariki – rallying behind our valued DOC brand. Always be naturing!

We take an integrated landscape approach to conservation, aligned to nature, rather than district or regional boundaries. We ensure all factors and perspectives are weighed and considered in prioritising our most critical work.

And the rock on which all this mahi is built? Our people. The wellbeing of all those that work within LNI is my priority. Together we make the magic happen! We've built this strategy together and it will guide the direction of our work for the next five years, building towards our 2050 goals.

Finally, this strategy will guide us in the key shifts needed to change the way we work. By being clear, intentional, innovative, and united as a regional team, we will use our collective talent to best effect. I am immensely proud to be part of this amazing team.

Mauri ora

Alice Heather, Kaihautū a Rohe | Regional Director, Lower North Island

# Purpose

This strategy outlines our vision for the Lower North Island region for 2050 and the mahi we will undertake over the next five years to achieve our vision. It connects Te Papa Atawhai – Department of Conservation (DOC)'s national strategy to our region and provides a framework to guide staff in delivering our priorities.

Developed with input from district staff and Conservation Boards, it recognises the importance of ongoing engagement with imi, iwi and hapū, which we will strengthen through kanohi ki te kanohi hui in 2026.

This is a living document that will continue to evolve.

## LNI's 2050 vision:

*That people feel connected to the land, ecosystems thrive, and we are working with and through imi, iwi, hapū, and partners to achieve our vision.*

## To achieve this vision:

We prioritise, we partner, we adapt and make gutsy calls – for conservation we are the purveyors of hope.

***With integrity we connect, empower and achieve.***

# Our Focus

## We will focus on four special landscapes;

- Aquatic Ecosystems
- Central Spine
- Natural Capital
- Rēkohu Wharekauri Chatham Islands

We will prioritise our mahi and focus on the work that will have the most impact in helping us to achieve our vision.

We will be an honourable Treaty partner.

We understand the key shifts that need to be made and will implement actions to make these shifts.

We will ensure that our mahi gives effect to national biodiversity heritage and visitor priorities.



# Key Shifts

- We will operate as a regional team with a district focus, guided by leadership that prioritises critical conservation work across the region and beyond.
- Our thinking will be bold, creative, proactive, and visionary - a mindset of 'We can do!'
- Rangers and district leaders will be empowered to succeed.
- We will strengthen partnerships with imi, iwi, and hapū, supporting their aspirations within their rohe. We will empower tangata whenua and communities to act as kaitiaki of their places.
- Our approach will be integrated and landscape-based - working at ecosystem scale and aligning with nature rather than imposed boundaries.
- We will concentrate on four key landscapes, leaning in where we can make the greatest difference.
- Collaboration will be key - working through and with others to amplify impact.
- Work programmes will be intentional, focused on delivering critical outcomes and making a measurable difference.
- We will leverage resources through volunteers, commercial partners, and philanthropy.
- Monitoring and storytelling will showcase the impact we achieve at place.
- We will unite across DOC resources to deliver national priorities at a regional level.



# Honourable Treaty Partner

If DOC wants to be an honourable Treaty partner, partnership must be part of how we work every day, this extends beyond formal obligations. (DOC Treaty Operating Model 2026)

We are committed to being an honourable Treaty partner. This means we must:

## **Prioritise Treaty relationships and strengthen our partnership with imi, iwi, and hapū by;**

- Understanding what imi, iwi and hapū taiao aspirations are, and why they're important.
- Involving imi, iwi and hapū early in planning, and co-design activities that address their aspirations as well as ours.
- Providing consistency in our planning and engagement and greater visibility of what we are delivering.
- Investing in tangata whenua conservation initiatives and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and shared learning.
- Agreeing to disagree at times and continuing to work towards shared goals.
- Ensuring our rangers know who are tangata whenua, understanding local tikanga (customs) and kawa (protocols), and feeling confident working alongside imi, iwi and hapū.

## **Treat our imi, iwi, and hapū partners with respect and act in good faith by;**

- Hearing and understanding aspirations through day-to-day trusted relationships
- Supporting imi, iwi and hapū to be active and involved in DOC mahi.
- Understanding the significance of taonga and working with tangata whenua to look after it.
- Ensuring tangata whenua have access to resources and support to exercise rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga, and cultural practices.
- Ensuring kanohi ki te kanohi engagement with imi, iwi and hapū around this Strategy and regular refresh through existing mechanisms such as regular hui and annual planning process

## **Build our Treaty literacy and Te Ao Māori capability by;**

- Making better decisions because we are informed by tikanga, kawa, and mātauranga (traditional knowledge).
- Ensuring mātauranga is well-regarded and understood and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and shared learning.
- Sharing partnership experiences internally so our people can see what good partnership looks like in practice
- Growing trust and being known to be an honourable Treaty Partner.

We work alongside one imi, 30 iwi, and many hapū to deliver our shared responsibility - helping Papatūānuku thrive!





## Regional Snapshot

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### We manage some amazing landscapes

The Lower North Island offers opportunities for exciting immersive nature experiences. Our islands are biodiversity hotspots and hold rich heritage stories for conservation, Moriori, and Māori.

**Rēkohu Wharekauri Chatham Islands:** Home to unique flora and fauna, the islands contain 5% of NZ's critically threatened species and 10% of all threatened or at-risk species.

**Wild South Coast:** From Nga-ra-o-Kupe to Turakirae Head, this coastline boasts dramatic scenery and a RAMSAR wetland restoration site. Wairarapa Moana supports over 50 rare species, including bittern, black-fronted tern, dwarf mistletoe, torrent fish, and longfin eel.

**Central Spine:** Stretching from Remutaka to Kaweka, these ranges provide vital ecosystem services like freshwater and flood management, plus extensive backcountry recreation. With united effort they can again be biodiversity strongholds.

**Other treasures:** River and wetland ecosystems, marine reserves, and iconic sites such as Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre, Castle Point, Manawatū Estuary, Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge, Hāpūpū, Te Whanganui Ā Orotū, Ōtātara Pā Historic Reserve, and the waka miheke find on Rēkohu.

**Kapiti Island:** A shining example of nature's recovery after a century of conservation. One of NZ's oldest reserves, it protects endangered birds and is a hub for translocation. The Whare, built in the 1860s, is NZ's oldest conservation building.

# LNI as seen through the eyes of our people

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“The landscape of our region is wonderfully varied - beautiful coast and marine reserves, islands and wild nature, mountain ranges and remoteness, rare native species and people. Being part of a community that is dedicated to such varied landscapes and wildlife, and is working to protect them, is a privilege.”

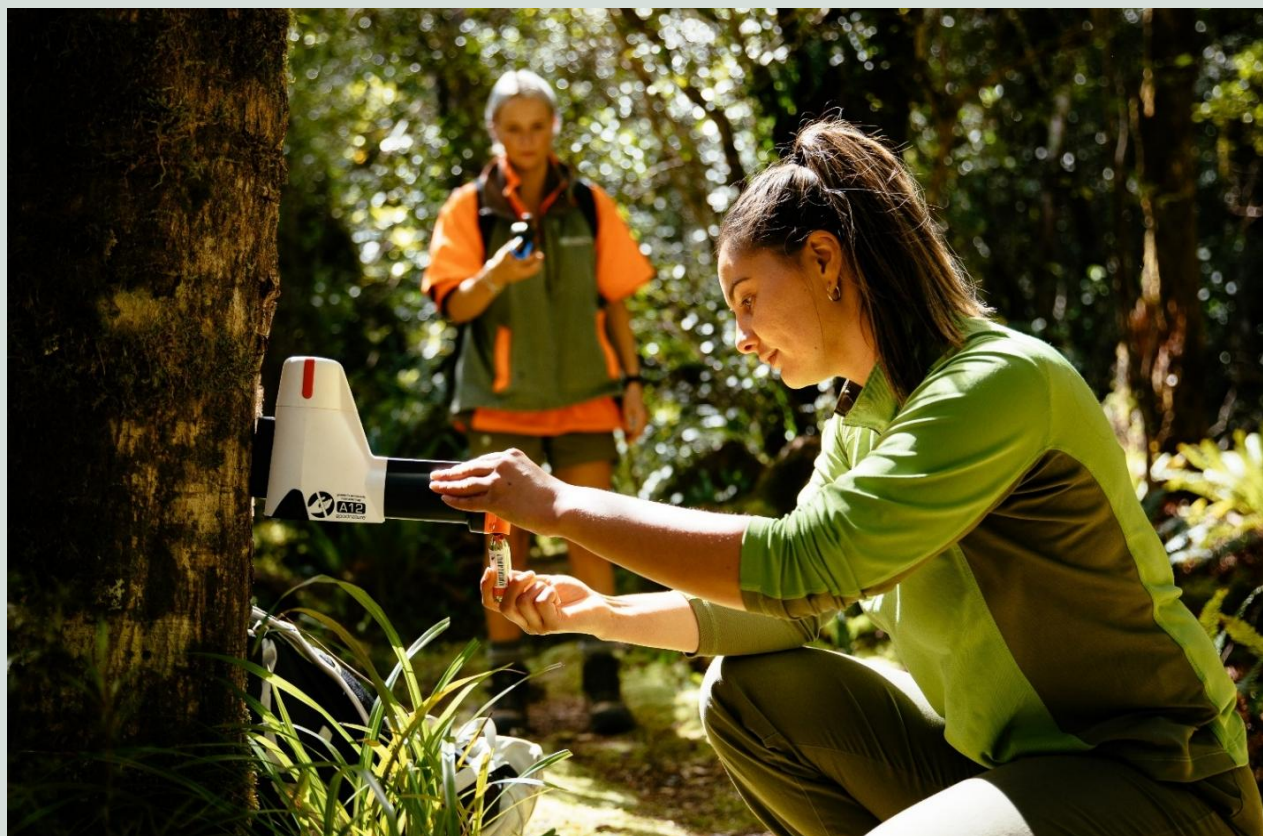
“The stunning flow from mountain to sea - Kaweka, Maungaharuru, Lake Tūtira, Te Whanganui-a-Orotu, and Cape Kidnappers - these landscapes are not only visually breathtaking but ecologically rich and deeply significant. The waterways that connect them, and the communities that live alongside them, tell powerful stories of resilience and connection.”

“Our islands represent wild, unpeopled New Zealand where you still experience the sounds of a world dominated by nature.”

“The incredible coastal scenery and wide-open spaces of Rēkohu Wharekauri Chatham Islands. A community that is embracing conservation as a pathway to the future. It might be cloudy but there is never a dull day!”

“Our forested reserves and parks with 500+ year old podocarps - these trees are truly incredible and getting up close to them a grounding experience that’s hard to replicate.”

“Palliser Bay, rich in marine habitats and marine life, fed by Wairarapa Moana / Lake Ōnoke, and nestled between two forest parks with bush almost meeting the sea.”



## We are...

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Diverse communities: Imi, iwi, hapū, farmers, fishers.... urban commuters/professionals, rural folk and retirees (including volunteers).




Our people - dedicated, committed, and always looking out for one another. We are passionate about our mahi and the visible progress we and our partners are making. The team that makes it happen!

“There’s a strong sense of whanaungatanga in our team, and it’s something I deeply value.”







We lead with vision tempered by pragmatism and prioritise the wellbeing of our people. “I’m proud to be supported by strong leadership and managers who genuinely empower us. Their trust and guidance create a space where we can do meaningful work and make a real difference.”

# Regional Snapshot



## Biodiversity

-  3 marine reserves, including marine mammal haul out areas
-  Over 30% endemic NZ species are in LNI, mostly on the Chatham Islands
-  5 predator-free islands support rare and threatened ecosystems

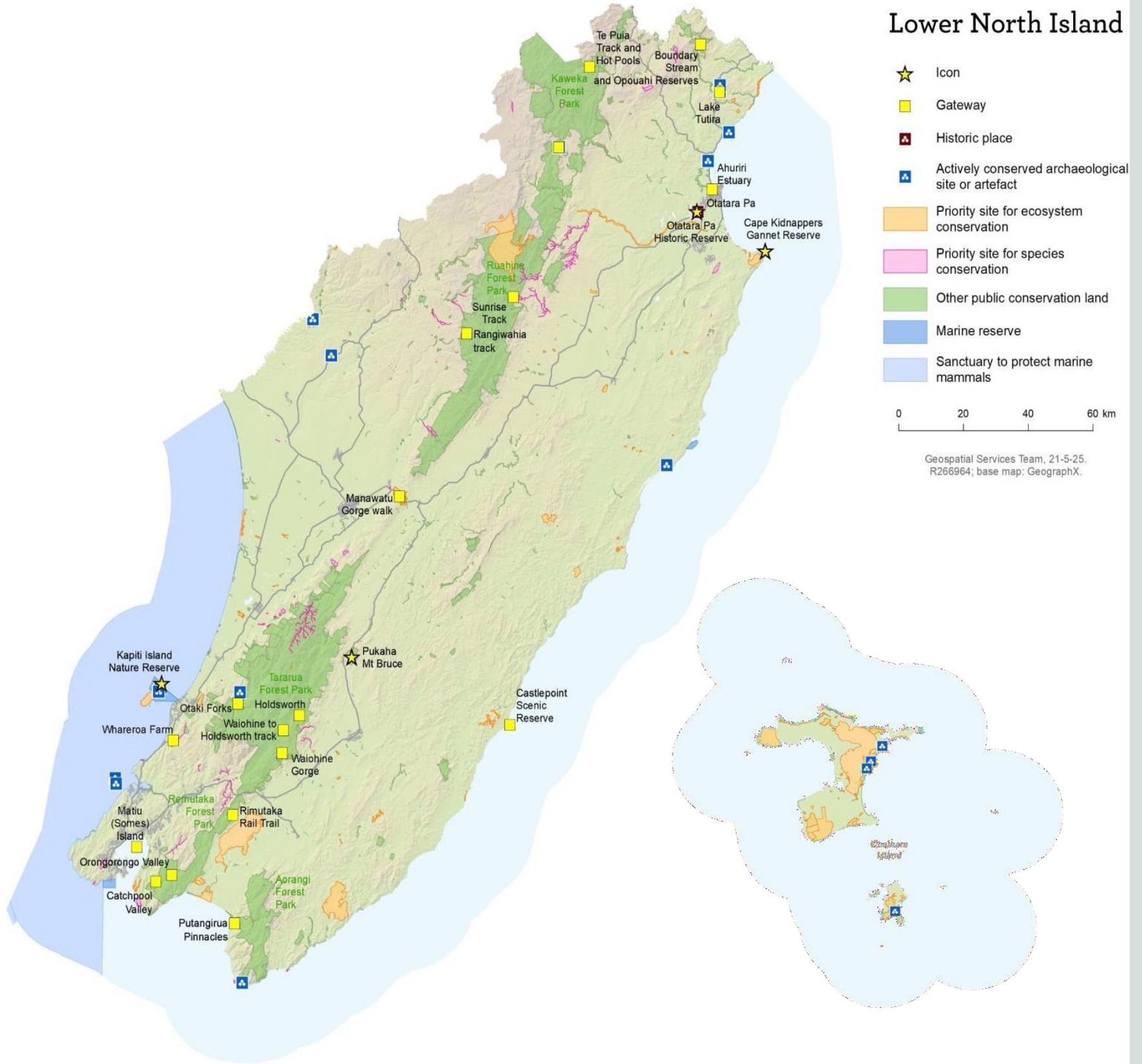
## Heritage & Visitor

-  157 Huts (40% under third party management - 63 total)
-  27 Campgrounds
-  1830 kms of tracks
- 70 Actively managed heritage places
-  4 Heritage icon sites: Nga-ra-o-Kupe (Kupe's Sail), Matiu/Somes Island, Otatara Pa, Hāpūpū/ J M Barker Historic Reserve (Chatham Islands)
-  Key visitor experiences – Kapiti Island, Pūkaha/ Mt Bruce, Castlepoint Scenic Reserve, Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve and Te Apiti
-  c.800 active permissions

## Threats

-  Sea spurge
-  Ungulate browsing in the central spine
- Biosecurity of our pest free islands

## Lower North Island





## We have some big opportunities...

**Imi and Iwi leadership in conservation** - to continue to build strong partnerships with imi, iwi and empower tangata whenua to lead conservation efforts on their whenua.

**Matiu Somes Island** - to deliver engaging, unique, immersive cultural and conservation experiences that will position Wellington as a must-visit destination for both domestic and international tourists.

**Natural Capital concept** - to showcase how conservation can thrive in large urban environments through a model that can be replicated and enhances the Department's profile. People and nature living harmoniously in what feels like a lush bush setting!

**Hawke's Bay Nature Fund** - to further leverage external investment and mobilise communities to support large-scale landscape restoration.

**Central Spine** - to collaborate across districts and regions - mobilising all sectors of the community to restore this valued natural landscape and preserve the unique cultural heritage of our backcountry.

**Our people** - to enable and empower our smart, passionate, and agile rangers and leaders - working collaboratively across the region to achieve more, pioneering significant conservation gains through unified action and shared purpose.

**Strong partnerships** - to maintain and grow relationships with imi, iwi, hapū, councils, farmers, and community groups to mobilise conservation efforts.

**Volunteer contribution** - to further recognise and expand the considerable work delivered through volunteer networks.

**Storytelling for impact** - to share the stories of our rohe in ways that inspire a call to action for conservation.

**Asset optimisation** - to repurpose underperforming assets, such as vacant housing, to reduce costs or generate additional revenue for DOC.

**Focusing on the future** - to engage communities at place, particularly our Aquatic ecosystems and Central Spine, to connect them to conservation through visible impact at places they care about.

**Heritage sites and stories** – to connect New Zealanders with the large number of heritage sites and stories present in LNI, while growing an understanding of our cultural heritage work.

**The LNI Population** – to move people from connection to building advocacy and taking action for nature and heritage.

## We have some big challenges...

**Our nature** - We're holding the line for key threatened species in our rohe, but they're not thriving - often restricted to small fragmented remnants of once-large ecosystems. Our forest parks offer extensive habitats, yet they're under pressure from browsing animals that risk canopy collapse.

**Low priority** - much of the DOC estate we manage is culturally and recreationally significant to imi, iwi, hapū, and local communities, but these areas often lack biodiversity priority.

**Our visitors** - our visitor experiences attract few international tourists, leaving us outside the government's tourism and funding priorities.

**Our environment** - Many rivers are degraded, and much of our front-country landscape is heavily modified.

**Our huts and tracks** - our backcountry network is extensive but financially unsustainable, so many sites appear worn and neglected.

**Visibility of our mahi** - Most of our conservation work happens in remote, isolated areas with low visibility. Meanwhile, large urban populations are increasingly disconnected from accessible conservation experiences, weakening public support and threatening the future of conservation nationally.

**Politics** - operating in the region that hosts the seat of government adds layers of political complexity and demand (but also an opportunity to better harness).

# Our Special Places

## Aquatic Ecosystems

### Goal

To ensure that LNI is home to thriving river, wetland, and marine ecosystems, that enrich people's lives.

### Overview

New Zealand's rivers, wetlands, and marine environments have long supported communities and prosperity. However, human activity has caused significant degradation. Since the 1850s, 90% of wetlands have been lost, and marine ecosystems - among the largest globally - face increasing pressures from climate change, pollution, and overfishing.

### Current State

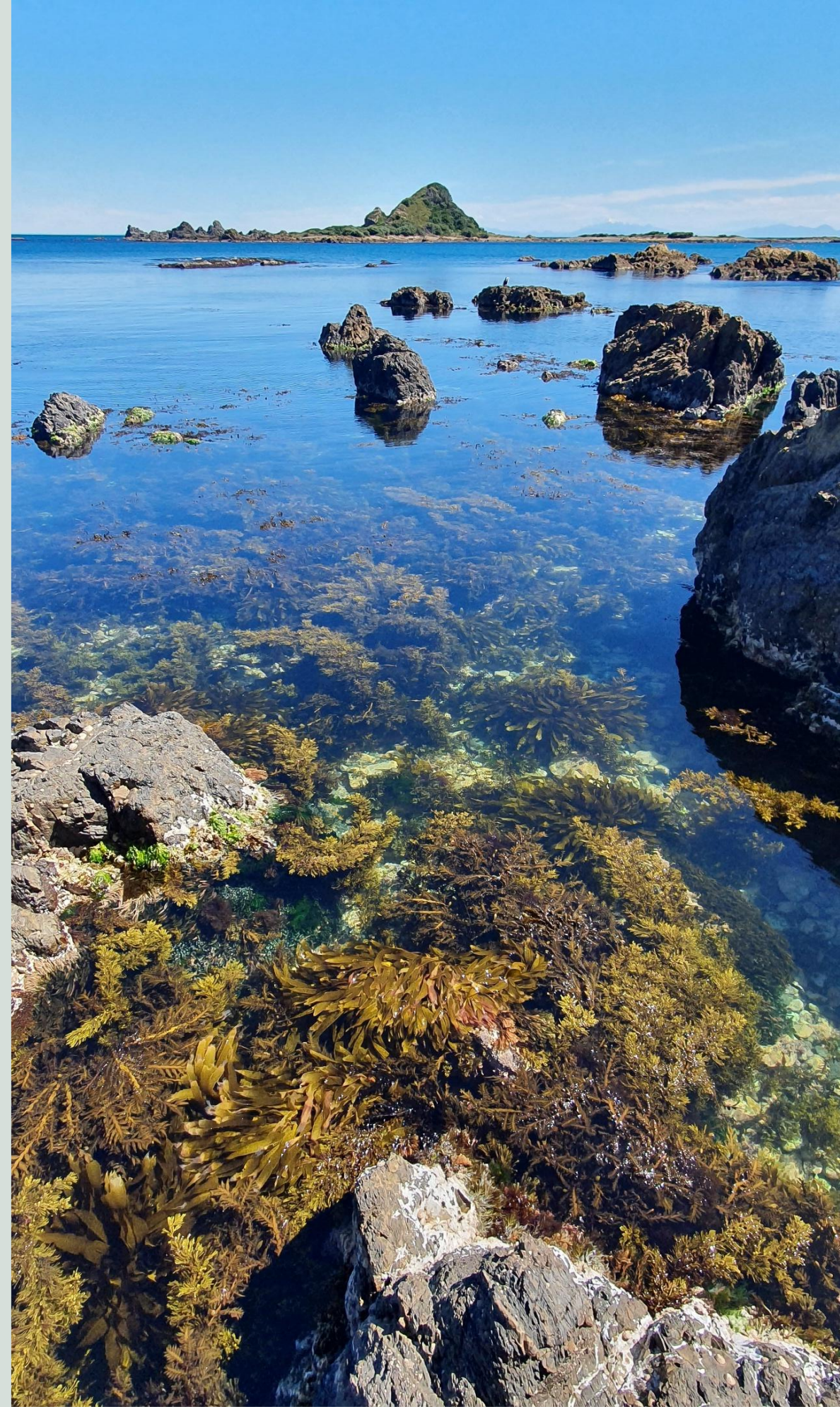
Aquatic ecosystems are in poor and declining condition. Knowledge gaps remain on effective management for rivers, lakes, and wetlands, and data on marine reserves is limited. Immediate priority: improve understanding of ecosystem health, identify gaps, and target actions for greatest impact.

### 5-Year Actions

- Form effective partnerships with key stakeholders in the aquatic space.
- Identify data and methodology knowledge gaps and develop plans to remedy.
- Make current state data accessible for stakeholders, in a form that is easily understood.
- Identify and prioritise key aquatic sites and programmes of work.
- Develop a roadmap of projects of highest benefit to ecosystems, indigenous species, iwi and community with some underway.
- Uphold the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and Te Mana o te Wai.

### 2050 outcomes

- Water quality degradation is reversed, with the restoration of healthy, swimmable waterways.
- Freshwater fauna is flourishing, especially those species that were threatened with extinction.
- Marine life is thriving within marine reserves and beyond.
- We have created viable 'green' corridors - mountains to sea, along our important river corridors, supporting the restoration of native flora and fauna across our region.
- Sustainable cultural harvest of taonga species is widely accepted and occurring.
- Communities see the benefits and value of conservation. They are strongly connected with and contributing to priority conservation work along the rivers, wetlands and coastal areas where they live. We are all naturing.





# Our Special Places

## Central Spine

### Goal

To ensure that LNI hosts vibrant, resilient forest ecosystems that are cherished and actively supported by local communities.

### Overview

Our Central Spine, from Aorangi and Remutaka Forest Parks in the south, to Tararua, Ruahine, Kaweka Forest Parks and beyond, deliver essential ecosystem services such as fresh water and flood management but are under threat from over browsing. Left unchecked, the forests will fall silent, and the communities downstream will face increased risks from severe weather events.

### Current state

The current state of the environment in the Central Spine is poor and declining. The risk of canopy collapse is real in some areas following the loss of forest understory due to browsing.

### 5-Year Actions

- Complete and implement outcome plans for all key focus areas.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to develop and execute a strategic approach to ungulate control across the Central Spine, including measurable targets and a robust monitoring framework.
- Increase education and awareness about key focus areas and their role in the broader ecosystem, supported by a comprehensive communications and engagement plan.
- Partner with iwi, hapū, councils, farmers, communities, and interest groups to empower and support their active participation in restoring and protecting the Central Spine and to source external funding for this critical work.

### 2050 outcomes

- Forests have been brought back from the brink of collapse, with a recovering understory protecting important downstream ecosystem services.
- We have secured enduring ungulate control at a landscape scale.
- We work with a large number of partners sharing an aligned vision.
- Communities understand and experience the benefits of the ecosystem services provided by a flourishing Central Spine. They are actively contributing to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity and recreational opportunities of the Central Spine. We are all naturing!

# Our Special Places

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## Natural Capital

### Goal

Wellington communities experience a city alive with native flora and fauna - a truly green city.

### Overview

Wellington is one of the few cities worldwide where biodiversity is improving. After losing its original forests and wildlife post-settlement, recovery began in the 1990s. Today, thanks to collective effort, native birds like kākā and kiwi thrive across the city, inspiring backyard trapping, conservation volunteering, and a stronger connection to nature.

### Current state

The Natural Capital's environment is fair and improving. There is extensive mainland pest control, but gaps remain and achieving Predator Free 2050 is still a long journey. Many people are engaged in predator control and there are opportunities to better coordinate our conservation efforts and harness the collective passion to achieve a truly natural capital.

### 5-Year Actions

- Establish a partnership programme to reduce domestic cat predation on native species through initiatives promoting responsible cat ownership.
- Support reintroductions of threatened species to Wellington and nearby islands via collaborative working groups.
- Maintain effective barriers to protect kiwi and other ground-nesting birds from ferret incursions.
- Establish community groups to lead first response for injured or at-risk native wildlife.
- Run media campaigns to raise awareness and provide guidance on managing human-wildlife conflicts (e.g., kākā in roof spaces).

### 2050 outcomes

- Thriving native flora and fauna, with urban dwellers comfortably co-existing with nature.
- Island and mainland sanctuaries remain predator-free and threatened species are safeguarded.
- Wellingtonians are passionate advocates, actively engaged in conservation efforts, and proud of the unique, 'alive' bush capital in which they live.
- Tangata whenua, agencies and communities lead the movement to restore nature, with DOC as a key facilitator and enabler. Together we are succeeding!
- This successful approach has been extended out across the wider LNI region.



# Our Special Places

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## Rēkohu-Wharekauri Chatham Islands

### Goal

Rēkohu-Wharekauri Chatham Islands are predator-free. Every morning residents and visitors are woken by a resounding dawn chorus.

### Overview

The Chatham Islands are home to some of the world's most threatened bird and plant species. Their long isolation and unique geology have created an environment unlike anywhere else on Earth. While human settlement has significantly impacted the islands, many indigenous ecosystems and species have endured, and the natural character of the islands remains visible across much of the landscape.

### Current state

The current state of the environment is fair but fragile. Large areas of native vegetation have been cleared for pasture, leaving less than 8% of land protected and reducing habitat for native species. Many ecosystems face threats from rising sea levels and invasive pests. Remaining native vegetation is largely unprotected and in poor condition, with limited public access to nature. Predator-free islands like Rangatira and Mangere provide safe havens for some species, but these populations remain vulnerable to catastrophic events such as incursions or avian flu (HPAI).

### 5-Year Actions

- Support Chatham Islanders to control predators on Chatham Island and eradicate cats from Pitt Island.
- Support and empower community participation in wildlife conservation, cultural harvest, and improving threatened species status.
- Implement ambitious, sustainable predator control focused on ecosystem-level protection.
- Develop and maintain release sites for translocated species.
- Apply world-class biosecurity to protect Nature Reserve islands and ensure operational continuity and visitor access.
- Communicate the cultural, social, and economic value of conservation investment in accessible formats.

### 2050 outcomes

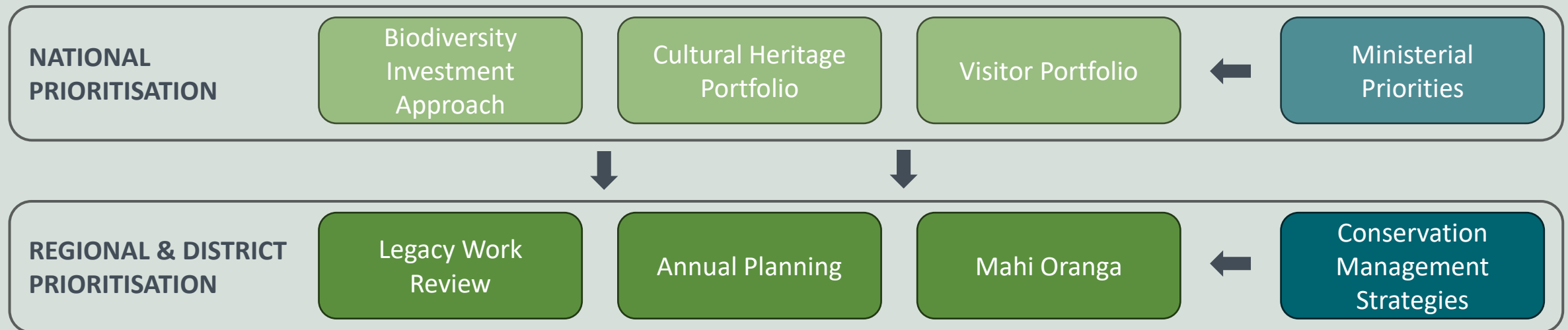
- The Chatham Islands are predator-free. The dawn chorus is restored, and nature is part of life.
- Translocations are no longer required, offshore island biodiversity needs minimum intervention.
- Species and ecosystems are more resilient to climate change and catastrophic events.
- Sustainable cultural harvest of taonga species is widely accepted and occurring.
- Karure/Kakaruia/Chatham Island's Black Robin is prevalent on the main island.
- Imi, iwi and the wider island community are leading the way with conservation, ably supported and enabled by DOC. All islanders are proud of what they have achieved and see the value and benefits of conservation to their daily lives. We are all naturing.



# Prioritisation

As a region, we need honest and robust conversations about prioritisation - focusing on the work that delivers the greatest impact for species, ecosystems, and conservation.

Several factors drive prioritisation, and success depends not only on making smart decisions around identified priorities but also by determining the lower priority work we must stop. We must focus our efforts on the most critical priorities. We must identify new and innovative ways of protecting our precious flora and fauna and achieving our conservation outcomes. We must mobilise our communities, always be naturing, as we cannot do this alone.



## Conservation Management Strategies

When prioritising our work, we must consider national priorities alongside the relevant Conservation Management Strategies (CMS) for context. These have been developed by Conservation Boards and guide outcomes for places significant to imi, iwi, hapū and communities.

Our three conservation boards – Wellington, East Coast Hawke’s Bay, and Chatham Islands, have played an important role in developing our strategy, and continue to have a key role in representing the public interest in conservation across our region.

Our boards continue to oversee and inform the strategic context for our work in LNI.



# The Biodiversity Investment Approach



Our national biodiversity priorities have changed over time. The Biodiversity Investment Approach is a new, dynamic system to plan, cost, manage, and report on all our work for nature. This “BioInvest” approach will help us identify where we can make the biggest difference for nature.

Our biodiversity efforts are spread across threats, ecosystems, species, obligations and research, with a focus on preventing imminent and irreversible loss of threatened species and ecosystems.

For LNI this means we focus on...

## Ecosystems

- Rare and threatened ecosystems with outcome plans.
- High-ranking representative ecosystems and predator-free islands.
- Marine Reserves and nationally significant waterways.

## Threats & Obligations

Support delivery of:

- National programmes e.g. NPCP, WAM, Avian Influenza.
- Statutory obligations e.g. Whitebait compliance.
- Partnerships – formal commitments and contracts e.g. Wairarapa Moana.
- Regional pest management plans.

## Species

- Critically threatened species with outcome plans (most threatened Nationally Critical and Nationally Endangered species)
- Enabling others to deliver on iconic species outcome.

## Research

- Research is being led nationally by technical advisors. LNI will support this work.

# Visitor Portfolio

Our visitor priorities have been strengthened over recent years, with a refocus on a fit-for-purpose and financially sustainable visitor network. In LNI, we now have greater understanding of where our most used experiences are, as well as what assets remain underutilised. This means we can look ahead over the next five years to progressing the Department’s aspiration of providing easy-to-plan, memorable experiences supported by well-maintained facilities, in the right places.

For LNI this means...

Focusing on maintaining the highest priority visitor experiences and looking for alternative ways (through others) to maintain or divest lower priority experiences.

Over the next 5 years LNI will work with partners and targeted stakeholders to understand aspirations for the visitor network. This will enable us to deliver on a strategically aligned and financially sustainable visitor network over time.

# Cultural Heritage Portfolio

By 2031 we will shift our focus on our work at place, we will improve knowledge and work on the systems and support we need to ensure our heritage is protected, respected and sustained for future generations.

This means we will be:

1. Shifting our balance of resources to support iwi and hapū to uphold and express kaitiakitanga and tino rangatiratanga in ways that are meaningful to them.
2. Focusing effort to sites at immediate risk of loss and not just maintaining visible and visited heritage places.
3. Improving our knowledge by establishing a robust monitoring regime.
4. Building knowledge of heritage values on PCLW to enable evidence-based decisions, making well informed decisions based on good data, mātauranga, modelling, and understanding of our partners’ concerns.
5. Embedding cultural heritage into the Pae Maunga capability framework.
6. Continuing to strengthen staff understanding of legislative responsibilities and accountability for delivery of heritage work.

For LNI this means...

There is no change in Business Planning Direction for 25/26.

During 25/26 Heritage Portfolio outcome plans will be developed to provide more detail for work in 26/27. These will show how existing work aligns with the new heritage portfolio structure, and the shifts that are expected.

# 5-Year Key Shifts

| Current State  | 2050 Desired State   | Five-Year Goals   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Holding strong relationships with imi, iwi and hapū is already a priority within region, however we are not consistent in how we engage with and consider imi, iwi and hapū aspirations in our planning process.</p>  | <p>Dynamic partnerships with imi, iwi and hapū underpin our day-to-day work. Our strategic planning is enriched through early engagement with and incorporation of Treaty partner aspirations.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treaty 5-year plans are embedded in annual planning through consistent Treaty Ranger involvement in planning processes.</li> <li>• We share conservation stories that highlight strong partnerships with imi, iwi and hapū, and recognise the ongoing learning that informs and enhances our mahi.</li> <li>• Systems are in place to sustain relationships beyond individual roles</li> </ul>   |
| <p>District focused work prioritisation and delivery. Silos between biodiversity, recreation, and community teams. A poverty mindset. We can't readily say how our work adds value.</p>  | <p>Working regionally by default. We have implemented our shifts and enablers. We tell compelling stories.</p> <p>We have a can-do attitude in all we do.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have made demonstrable changes in our culture and ways of operating.</li> <li>• Empowered rangers are driving and delivering BAU, while regional leadership is ensuring we only focus on critical conservation priorities across region.</li> <li>• We have a large and resilient team of rangers in region skilled in delivering biodiversity work on Rēkohu Wharekauri Chatham Islands.</li> <li>• We have several case studies providing a compelling story of the value we add in collaboration with imi, iwi, hapū, and partners.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Work is split up across districts and is not coordinated. Sites are mostly resourced by local district staff and funding. Our local priorities may not align well with national or regional priorities.</p>   | <p>Region and district boundaries are gone. We work with imi, iwi, hapū, partners and across all of DOC at the appropriate landscape scale to achieve significant conservation shifts.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have cross-regional and cross-region teams working on our critical conservation priorities.</li> <li>• We are aligned with imi, iwi, hapū and partners on our common goals.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>We are holding the line on biodiversity loss for our 20 species that are on the brink of extinction and our five threatened ecosystems.</p>   | <p>Our threatened species are abundant, and their range is expanding, creating a positive halo effect for conservation. Cultural harvest of taonga species is sustainable. We are working seamlessly as one DOC team to achieve the best conservation outcomes.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have mobilised a collaboration of the willing and together we are beginning to effect change.</li> <li>• We have made noticeable gains in controlling the threats to our key native ecosystems.</li> <li>• Forest collapse within the Central Spine has been avoided in key places, with gains being made across the whole landscape.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Most of our sites are in managed decline and visitor experiences are not always optimal. We manage too many assets for our (currently declining) resource base, while costs and societal expectations are increasing. We have some excellent partnerships in place.</p> | <p>We offer a high-quality experience at our priority visitor sites. We have a coherent, well-maintained network of backcountry huts and tracks. We offer great immersive front country experiences, appealing to and engaging a broad range of ethnicities and ages. A range of other groups and organisations are providing experiences within public conservation lands and waters.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Tier 3 sites are managed by others or closed.</li> <li>• Action plans are in place to uplift the quality of our priority visitor experiences.</li> <li>• A core network of engaging and accessible experiences on conservation land is growing New Zealanders' connection with nature and their historic and cultural heritage.</li> <li>• We are investing in visitor sites in a way that balances natural hazard risk to people and assets with great visitor experiences.</li> <li>• We are focusing on places where cultural heritage values are most at risk, while empowering Treaty partners in caring for places important to them.</li> </ul> |

# 5-Year Key Shifts – cont.

| Current State  | 2050 Desired State  | Five-Year Goals   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>We are holding the line on biodiversity loss for our 20 species that are on the brink of extinction and our five threatened ecosystems.</p> | <p>Our threatened species are abundant, and their range is expanding, creating a positive halo effect for conservation. Cultural harvest of taonga species is sustainable. We are working seamlessly as one DOC team to achieve the best conservation outcomes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have mobilised a collaboration of the willing and together we are beginning to effect change.</li> <li>• We have made noticeable gains in controlling the threats to our key native ecosystems.</li> <li>• Forest collapse within the Central Spine has been avoided in key places, with gains being made across the whole landscape.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>We are failing to realise the full value of many of our assets and experiences, or recover costs where it is fair to do so</p>              | <p>We have a resilient funding base to support our most critical mahi.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are telling compelling stories about the value of investment in conservation, which has resulted in significant external investment across region.</li> <li>• We are generating good commercial gains from the full utilisation of our assets, supporting DOC Inc and our work at place.</li> <li>• We are appropriately balancing the tension of revenue generation and conservation outcomes to enable the region to deliver its critical work at place.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Our icon sites remain undeveloped. The fabric at some is vulnerable and our most important stories are not told.</p>                        | <p>Our icon sites are well - conserved and interpreted. They enjoy a high public profile and deliver a compelling experience of the past.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept plans for icon sites are finalized, with funding secured for priority projects.</li> <li>• The development of Matiu Somes Island as a key tourist destination is progressing well - led by iwi and supported by external funders.</li> </ul>   |



# LNI 5 Year Priorities

## Biodiversity

### Key

- **Fully deliver:** Focus effort on delivering outcomes for high-priority initiatives already underway.
- **Future work:** Avoid starting new high-priority work unless it is funded through external sources.
- **Status Quo:** Continue current actions to hold the line to prevent imminent and irreversible loss/other agreed work identified with region to maintain

### Ecosystems

#### Fully deliver (pending plan build):

- nine representative ecosystems like Kāpiti Island.
- Waikanae River
- Kāpiti Marine Reserve
- rare and threatened ecosystems like coastal dunes

#### Status quo:

- Northern Ruahine, including adaptive deer management

### Species

#### Fully deliver:

- 13 plants, four Powelliphanta snails, and Pitt Island longhorn beetle.

#### Status quo:

- 44 threatened species such as shore plover, black robin and taiko, while leveraging funding through others to do more

### Threats

#### Fully deliver:

- sea spurge and spartina
- island biosecurity for four islands like Rangatira and Mangere Islands
- Ungulates like Tararua goats
- Pitt Island cat eradication

### Obligations

**Status quo:** regional pest management plans Wairarapa Moana and Manawatu Estuary RAMSAR sites

## Heritage

**We will work with imi, iwi and hapū** at places such as Rēkohu/Wharekauri/Chatham Islands, Matiu/Somes Island, Ōtaki former Health Camp, Ōtātara pā, Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge to understand their aspirations for those places and how we can support them to achieve these aspirations.

**We will shift the focus of our heritage work** to places at immediate risk of loss. This means the work may look different from the usual maintenance we have been doing and the places where we work may be different. Key locations of concern are the waka miheke excavation site at Wharekauri Coastal strip, Ōtātara Pa, and Te Kauwae-a-Māui/Cape Kidnappers.

**Our teams will be supported and encouraged** to take up heritage training opportunities to improve their understanding of the responsibilities we have for heritage and to uplift their capability to lead and deliver heritage work.



Glory Cottage, Pitt Island. Photo: Harvey Steed

## Visitor

**Shift from Assets to Experiences:** Building on the outcomes from FVN, assets are being arranged into experiences and will be managed through the system to reflect this. Over the next year, we will review the visitor experiences within our region and understand how our network aligns with Showcase, Everyday, Explorer and Self-reliant groupings. We will consider the wider context including changes in visitor expectations to optimise the visitor experiences we are providing

**Showcase that popular everyday experiences are our top priorities,** ensuring good quality infrastructure and support information, alongside revenue generating opportunities. For example, we will focus on Matiu Somes, the Manawatu Gorge Tawa Loop, Castlepoint and Te Whanganui a Orotu track to ensure they are maintained to the levels visitors expect.

**Reducing work on lower priorities.** Focusing on our priorities may mean reduced work in other places and investment decisions for some places may not be approved. We will proactively divest assets where there is no longer visitor value. We will consider the resilience of our investments following damage from extreme weather events or at the end of an asset's life.

**Working with partners and stakeholders** will become increasingly important to manage the visitor network. We will look for opportunities with Backcountry Trust, Greater Wellington Backcountry Network, and others to determine future management of some experiences.

**Revenue generation remains a priority for DOC,** and we will continue to look for new opportunities to ensure users support the maintenance and protection of the places they visit, including through increased compliance and ranger presence at popular campsites.

# 5 Year Priorities - Examples of our priorities at place

## Aquatic Ecosystems

**Focus:** Ensuring that LNI is home to thriving river, wetland, and marine ecosystems that enrich people's lives and that our mahi aligns with imi and iwi aspirations.

### Biodiversity priorities

*Waikanae Awa, Kapiti Marine Reserve, threatened plants and species*

### Heritage priorities

*Coastal dune areas with heritage value, Lake Papaitonga*

### Visitor priorities

*Swimmable rivers, pristine environments*

## Rēkohu-Wharekauri Chatham Islands

**Focus:** Working towards predator-free islands where every morning residents and visitors are woken by a resounding dawn chorus. We will ensure our mahi aligns with imi and iwi aspirations.

### Biodiversity priorities

*Feral cat eradication, Pitt Island longhorn beetle, island biosecurity, threatened plants and species*

### Heritage priorities

*Waka miheke, Hapupu Historic Reserve, areas with wāhi tchap' value*

### Visitor priorities

*Hapupu Historic Reserve*

## Central Spine

**Focus:** Ensuring that LNI hosts vibrant, resilient forest ecosystems that are cherished and actively supported by local communities. Our mahi will align with iwi and hapū aspirations at place.

### Biodiversity priorities

*Ungulate control, threatened plants and species*

### Heritage priorities

*Select backcountry huts, Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge*

### Visitor priorities

*Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge, front country walking, tramping & camping experiences*

## Beyond our Special Places

**Focus:** Ensuring we take a landscape approach to protecting nature, and that our mahi aligns with iwi and hapū aspirations

### Biodiversity priorities

*Coastal turf ecosystems, threats – spartina & sea spurge, representative ecosystems*

### Heritage priorities

*Ōtātara Pā, Te Kauwae-a-Maui, Otaki Health Camp*

### Visitor priorities

*Te Whanganui a Orotu, Castlepoint, Wild Coast track*

## Natural Capital

**Focus:** Wellington communities experience a city alive with native flora and fauna – a truly green city. Our mahi will align with iwi and hapū aspirations at place.

### Biodiversity priorities

*Island biosecurity for Kapiti, Mana Island and Matiu Somes and threatened plants & species*

### Heritage priorities

*Matiu Somes Island*

### Visitor priorities

*Matiu Somes Island, Kapiti Island*

## To achieve this mahi we will;

Prioritise and strengthen our partnership with imi, iwi, and hapū – be honourable Treaty partners.

Empower our people, operating as a regional team with a district focus.

Work through and with others.

Be bold, creative, proactive and visionary in our approach.

As a collaboration of the willing we can work together to improve biodiversity across our rohe and strengthen the connection of our communities to conservation and the benefits it brings them. By working as one, our impact is greater – together we will make a difference! Always be naturing!

- Alice Heather, Kaihautū a Rohe | Director of Regional Operations, Lower North Island



# DOC's Values and Behaviours



## Integrity

It's about being open, honest and responsive.

We build trust and include others.

We do what we say we will.

- **Be open, honest and transparent**
- **Follow through on what we say we will do**



## Connect

It's about working together to make a difference for nature.

Whakawhanaungatanga | we build authentic relationships.

Kotahitanga | we work together as one.

- **Mahi tahi | work together to achieve better outcomes**
- **Make every interaction count**



## Empower

It's about enabling each other to grow and succeed.

In a high trust environment we innovate, share knowledge and learn from others.

- **Create space for others to succeed**
- **Find the simplest way**



## Achieve

It's about being purposeful. We get things done.

Our work makes a positive impact for future generations.

We celebrate progress.

- **Be solutions focused**
- **Do the right work**

Our *integrity* grounds us, our *connections* take us further together, we *empower* ourselves and others to do the best work, so we *achieve* more for nature and Aotearoa New Zealand.