

2. PROPOSED REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY – BIODIVERSITY PESTS

Officer responsible Director of Policy	Author Terence Moody, DDI 371-1834
Corporate Plan Output: Environmental Health Policy Vol II P.7.2.Text.16	

The purpose of this report is to determine whether submissions are to be made on the above Pest Management Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed Pest Management Strategy made under the provisions of the Biosecurity Act 1993 was formally notified on 21 April by the Canterbury Regional Council. The closing date for submissions is 1 June 2001. The strategy is available on the Environment Canterbury web site at <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/echome/echome.shtml>

The Regional Council, through its officers, presented on several occasions to Councillors the then proposed contents of the strategy and the Council made submissions on a previous draft.

This strategy covers the following pests:

Wasps; Possums, Mustelids [Ferrets, Stoats, and Weasels]; Feral Cats; Feral Goats; Feral Pigs; Feral Deer; Wild Thyme; Boneseed; Wilding Conifers [Lodgepole Pine or *Pinus contorta*]; Phragmites; Egeria.

It also declares the following organisms to be controlled in targeted areas but does not afford them pest status. Wilding Conifers [Mountain Pine, Corsican Pine, Scots Pine, Larch, Douglas Fir].

OBJECTIVES

The strategy sets out the following objectives for animal pests

- Reducing possum numbers by 95% in targeted areas containing high environmental values
- Reducing mustelids and feral cats by 95% in targeted areas containing high environmental values
- Eradicating all feral deer, pigs and goats in targeted areas containing high environmental values; and
- Eradicating wasps in targeted areas containing high environmental values

For plant pests a number of objectives are included.

- For wild thyme, eradicating all wild thyme plants prior to seed set each year within the zones identified on Map 1 (Okuku and Garandale areas) and prevent the establishment of wild thyme outside these zones.
- For boneseed, eradicating all boneseed plants prior to seed set each year, from land outside the Port Hills Zone and reducing by 20% the area of land infested with boneseed within the Port Hills Zone.
- For wilding conifers, protect biodiversity values in targeted areas of the Canterbury Region by eradicating all self-sown wilding conifers in targeted high value environmental areas.
- For Hieracium, protect biodiversity values in targeted areas by reducing the area infested by 20% at 10 sites.
- For Phragmites, protect biodiversity values in the Canterbury Region by eradicating all phragmites in the Canterbury Region.
- For Egeria, protect the biodiversity values associated with waterways by preventing the establishment of egeria in waterways presently free from infestations and contain egeria present in the Avon River within the Kerrs Reach zone.

FUNDING

Environment Canterbury considers that the community as a whole is the principal beneficiary of the strategy and has therefore decided that the general rate should be the revenue source.

CONCLUSIONS

It is noted that, in general, the proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy [PMS] Biodiversity Pests can be supported. Some pests that were originally suggested by this Council for inclusion in a PMS have not been included in this proposal. These have been considered for “no action” at this time. For example, Canada geese are seen to be controlled under the Wild Life Act by the Fish and Game Council. There was seen to be insufficient evidence to justify Regional Council intervention under the Biosecurity Act for Darwin Ant, Black Poplar, White-tailed Spider and Yellow Lupin.

It is considered that several matters still need clarification:

- The use of the phrase “carry out or facilitate control operations” is equivocal and leaves the City Council unsure of whom will be responsible for control costs for both boneseed and Egeria. These could be significant over the term of the strategy.
- The Port Hills zone, as shown on Map 2 of the strategy, excludes some significant areas of boneseed on the Port Hills. Who will be responsible for eradication (as the strategy proposes) for those areas?
- What happens *when* Egeria extends out of the containment zone, as NIWA assure us that it will?
- The question has been raised as to whether Environment Canterbury is able to carry out monitoring of water bodies for Egeria? Inspection will require using divers, who will also need to be able to recognise Egeria.
- Are there sufficient resources within Environment Canterbury to carry out the promised publicity and education campaign to increase awareness of these pests?
- The wetland & riparian weed purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) was put forward as a proposed pest for the strategy as it is a significant biodiversity pest but this has not been included.
- Argentine ants have recently been found in New Zealand and there is at least one population in Christchurch. This raises the question as to how such “new” biodiversity pests be dealt with in the strategy.

Recommendation: That the Christchurch City Council make a submission to Environment Canterbury on the Proposed Pest Management Strategy Biodiversity Pests on the matters detailed in the officer’s report including clarification on the management of Canada geese in terms of how they intend to co-operate with the Fish and Game Council.