

Submission on Let's Protect Our Environment

Auckland Councils Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) October 2024

1. Establishment of an Emergency Fund for Biosecurity Incursions

We urge the council to establish a responsive biosecurity emergency fund to address significant threats from invasive species swiftly. The response to exotic *Caulerpa* in our marine environment was delayed, resulting in unnecessary damage. A dedicated fund will enable Auckland Council to mobilise resources promptly and implement large-scale responses to new incursions, minimising harm to our ecosystems and supporting mana whenua and community-led conservation efforts.

2. Proof-of-Concept Eradication Partnership

We recommend a collaborative project with Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) to eradicate one high-priority species entirely from New Zealand as a proof of concept. Such a partnership would help refine national eradication protocols, build public confidence, and showcase Auckland's commitment to protecting native biodiversity.

3. Strengthened Responsibilities for Pet Owners

To mitigate the impact of domestic animals on native wildlife, we call for increased responsibilities for pet owners, particularly regarding cats and dogs. We propose larger fines and enhanced monitoring for dog-related offences in conservation areas, along with mandatory microchipping, collaring, and registration for cats. Additionally, we recommend empowering community groups to capture unregistered cats in parks and reserves, allowing these groups to protect local wildlife effectively.

4. Ongoing Support for Tū Mai Taonga and Cat Regulation Initiatives

STET supports the continuation of funding for the Tū Mai Taonga project on Aotea / Great Barrier Island, which has demonstrated positive impacts on indigenous species. We also recommend mandatory de-sexing for cats in conservation areas and additional regulations to control cat translocation to islands. As part of this effort, the council should advance elimination plans using the current tool set, with provisions to pivot strategies if they prove ineffective.

5. Marine Resilience through Reduced Human Predation

To build resilience against marine incursions and the impacts of climate change, we encourage the council to reduce human predation levels, specifically fishing, in sensitive marine ecosystems. The Motiti decision provides clear precedence, establishing the council's authority to restrict fishing to protect biodiversity. STET urges the council to initiate public consultation on how and where to implement these protections, ensuring Auckland's marine environments can recover and thrive under reduced pressures.

STET appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and urges Auckland Council to take a proactive, adaptive approach to biosecurity and conservation.
Sincerely,

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