



Biodiversity Plan

Palmerston North

SMALL CITY BENEFITS, BIG CITY AMBITION

2018/21

Te Kaunihera o Papaioea
Palmerston North City Council



To fulfil the vision of small city benefits, big city ambition the Council has adopted five goals. The Eco City Strategy was developed to achieve **Goal 4: An eco city**, and this plan shows how the Council will contribute to achieving this goal.

Council wants to build on its success in boosting native birdlife in the Turitea Reserve, and partner with Rangitāne to potentially reintroduce locally extinct species that have survived elsewhere. The reserve is one of the most well-preserved podocarp forests in the Lower North Island. Monitoring shows that since Council began extensive predator control a decade ago, native birdlife has increased tenfold within the reserve. The operation has reduced predators in the area to very low numbers, allowing many previously struggling flora and fauna to rebound. Kākā from Pukaha/Mt Bruce have been spotted in the reserve recently, and it is possible they could re-establish themselves there. If the predator control programme was discontinued, predators from adjacent areas would swiftly reinvade, undoing what has been achieved.

Connecting the reservoir of birds in the Turitea with the city through a series of 'green corridors' will encourage more birds to come down to the city. This could radically change the experience of visiting the Esplanade and the river, and be a substantial drawcard for the city. Eventually the link could be extended along the Manawatū River pathway to Te Apiti and the Ruahine Ranges, and provide the missing link from Wellington to East Cape – a corridor along the Central Range.

Council will build on previous work by extending the green corridors programme into neighbouring gullies and streams to create a network of links from the Turitea to the Manawatū

River and into the city. Planting in these gullies will also provide auxiliary benefits such as reducing erosion, improving water quality, providing habitats for eels and other native fish, and improving amenity. Council will need to plant more trees along streets and in city parks to ensure native birds, once down in the city, have adequate year-round food sources.

Council will continue to support the work of Palmerston North's very active environmental community by facilitating greater coordination and cooperation between groups. Council encourages native plantings where practical and provides guidance on which plants are most appropriate in different contexts.

Following the announcement of the 'Predator Free New Zealand' vision, Council has become involved with several trial projects supporting Rangitāne and the wider community to be more involved with controlling introduced predators. Initial results have been highly encouraging, but more work needs to be done to grow the nascent trapping network into a city-wide project. Spreading protection for the native wildlife across Palmerston North is a key part of Council's vision to have thriving native biodiversity within the city.



The purpose of the Biodiversity Plan is regenerating native biodiversity (Priority 3, Eco City Strategy).

The Council plays its part in regenerating biodiversity within its rohe by:

- Re-establishing bush, particularly along walkways; Controlling introduced predators; Working in partnership with iwi; Supporting community efforts.



Where we are now



- 98% of the original bush cover of the Manawatū has been cleared.
- As a consequence of habitat loss and introduced predators (including: rats, mustelids, possums, and wild and domestic cats), many species have significantly declined or even become extinct (some globally, some only locally).
- Intensive pest control of the Turitea Reserve and other bush remnants has reversed species decline, with a significant improvement in bush vitality and native fauna within the managed area. This has had a broader impact as well, with some native birdlife (particularly Tui) noticeably improved within the urban context.
- Community predator control projects are being trialed in Moonshine Valley and Aokautere, with initial success.
- The 'Green Corridors' project has begun the process of connecting the city with the Turitea.
- The Wildbase Recovery Centre is under development.
- 15 habitats of local significance are protected in the District Plan.
- Many, but not all, of the city's streets contain street trees. More affluent and established streets have street trees. Less than 12% of street trees are native species.

Where we want to be



- Mātauranga Māori (Māori indigenous knowledge) is a fundamental foundation for understanding and managing indigenous species in Aotearoa New Zealand and is incorporated into Council practice.
- Pests in the Turitea Reserve and adjacent forests are further suppressed, allowing those ecosystems to continue to recover.
- Where possible, locally extinct species are reintroduced.
- The Turitea Stream is connected with the city through an extensive green corridor network; native wildlife is increasingly coming down into the city.
- Community predator control is widespread, minimising the impact of introduced predators across the city.
- More native-friendly species are planted within the city, providing year-round food sources for native wildlife.
- More habitats of local significance identified and protected in the District Plan.
- The mauri of urban streams is enhanced, and native aquatic life is thriving.
- All streets have street trees, where practicable.

How we're going to get there

Day to day / ongoing actions to achieve the purpose

- Expand the green corridors programme to plant the riparian margins of streams linking the Turitea Reserve with the city and river.
- Plant native bird friendly trees in Council reserves and roadsides, where appropriate.
- Control animal and plant pests in Council reserves.
- Support community groups involved in biodiversity activities.
- Review District Plan to identify and protect additional habitats of local significance.
- Increase street tree plantings. Give effect to the City Wide Vegetation Framework.
- Encourage landowners to apply QEII covenant to land containing significant native biodiversity.

New ongoing actions to achieve the purpose

- 'Predator Free Palmerston North' - Support iwi and local communities to control predators across the city. Enhance freshwater bodies such as wetlands and urban streams, and provide more opportunities for people to interact with these sites.
- Review District Plan to identify and protect more habitats of local significance.

Specific programmes to achieve the purpose (with timeframe)

- Reintroduce toutouwai (North Island robins) into the Turitea Reserve (by end of 2018/2019).
- Investigate excluding deer from Turitea Reserve (by end of 2018/2019).



Actions contributing to Council's strategic themes

a) Smart city practices

- Track predator trapping using GIS and remote monitoring to improve predator monitoring and control.
- Trial emerging technologies such as self-resetting traps in inaccessible areas.
- Use aerial drone technology to survey bush remnants and inform decision-making for planting, pest-control and habitat restoration.
- Carry out terrestrial monitoring using GIS and other tools to identify tree cover and environmental effects of development.

b) Sustainable practices

- 'Eco-source' trees to preserve local genetic diversity.
- Provide information to residents about how to best encourage native wildlife on their property, and manage their pets responsibly.
- Greater emphasis is put on enhancing urban waterways (also partially covered in the Three Waters Plan).
- Develop the Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre as a gateway to biodiversity in the wider city.

c) Iwi partnerships

- Acknowledge the status of Rangitāne o Manawatū as mana whenua and kaitiaki, in particular in regards to indigenous biodiversity issues by ensuring that the iwi has a primary role in ecosystem management decision-making.
- Support the exercise of Rangitānenuirawa (kaitiakitanga) and tiakitanga, allowing Rangitāne o Manawatū to achieve their aspirations to regenerate their customary rohe.
- Strengthen Māori involvement in decision-making, and foster Māori indigenous knowledge and its development in a contemporary context with iwi and the wider Māori community.

d) Strategic partnerships

- Work with Massey, NZDF, and other landowners to strengthen green corridor links into the city.
- Work with Horizons as a key biodiversity partner in the region.
- Collaborate with regional partners on the Te Āpiti Governance Group.
- Collaborate with regional partners through the Manawatū River Leaders Forum.



Measures of success



- Increase in native bird numbers
- Increase in number of trees, particularly native and bird friendly species
- Increase in native aquatic life
- Increase in the area of significant habitats protected by the District Plan
- Decrease in predator tracking rates
- Increase in eco-tourism numbers

Related policies

- City Wide Vegetation Framework
- Animals and Bees Bylaw
- Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

Long-term Plan levels of service

Council works with iwi and community groups to re-establish bush, particularly along waterways, and to control introduced predators.

Long-term Plan KPIs

Green Corridors planting, 5000 trees planted per year (average per year over 3 years).





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