
Part 3: NORTHLAND'S ACTION TO ADDRESS BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT



Marae Plant Training, Motatau.
(Photo: NRC)

There are a number of agencies, organisations, community groups and individual landowners that have a role in the protection, restoration and maintenance of biodiversity on both public and private land.

There is a variation in the capacity of local communities and their councils to enhance biodiversity in the region. Councils in Northland have adopted a wide range of approaches to biodiversity management from active involvement to the provision of policy tools and mechanisms to support biodiversity.

The Northland Regional Council works alongside landowners and communities to protect and restore biodiversity values. The Council provides a strong advocacy and education role to support landowners, community groups and environmental education in schools. There has been an increase in staff capacity and in-house expertise within the Land Operations unit to support landowners and biodiversity enhancement functions.

District councils are also contributing to protection, maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity in a range of projects and functions across the full range of council activities to varying degrees. All three district councils engage external ecologists to provide technical advice and expertise.

This section provides an outline of information from current regional policy statements and district plans with particular emphasis on:

- The nature of existing rules and provisions that address biodiversity.
- Specific tools and mechanisms provided by councils to support biodiversity.
- The efforts of other agencies and organisations to support biodiversity.

3.1 Legislative Provision for Protecting Biodiversity in Northland

District and regional councils have a role in ensuring that the “planning environment” of the region is conducive to landowner protection of the region’s biodiversity values. Policies, rules, and activities developed by these agencies and organisations can have a significant influence on the degree of protection of biodiversity values in the region.

The 2003 amendment to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) clarified that managing biodiversity is an explicit function of both regional and district councils and that they must provide for the maintenance of biodiversity in their regional and district plans.

The following additional functions were added for Regional Council’s:

30. *Functions of regional council’s under this Act*

(c) *The control of the use of land for the purpose of*

(iii)a *The maintenance and enhancement of ecosystems in water bodies and coastal water:*

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- (ga) *The establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods for maintaining indigenous biological diversity:*

The following additional functions were added for territorial authorities (district councils):

31. *Functions of territorial authorities under this Act*

- (b) *The control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purpose of:*

- (iii) *the maintenance of indigenous biological diversity*

This is in addition to the responsibilities under Part 2 of the RMA, particularly Section 6(c) which included as a matter of national importance “*the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna*”.

The statutory mechanisms provided in the regional and district plans provide a long term strategic plan that addresses a 10-year planning horizon. They also include flexibility for the protection of significant indigenous vegetation, habitats, and fauna.

In addition to the statutory mechanism regional and district councils advocate for legal protection of important ecological areas on private land. This protection can be achieved through a number of different mechanisms including:

- Open space covenants (QEII National Trust 1977)
- Conservation Covenants (Reserves Act 1977, Conservation Act 1987)
- Wildlife refuges (Wildlife Act 1963)
- Nga Whenua Rahui
- Nature Heritage Fund



QEII covenanted bush,
(Photo: NRC)

The Long Term Community Council Plan (LTCCP) is another long term strategic plan that addresses a 9-year planning horizon. The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) requires that each council must prepare a LTCCP, with a detailed three year plan of the council's activities, a moderately detailed plan for six years and less detailed plan out to nine years. The LGA provides a broad mandate for local authorities to involve themselves in economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues. The Act provides a greater scope for community participation in determining what local authorities do and how they do it.

The Act is outcome-focused, meaning that it requires local authorities to plan for, and report on specific and measurable results in communities and their environments (*NRC LTCCP, June 2006 Enfocus Ltd- Biodiversity and the LTCCP, May 2004*). An outline of council's LTCCP is provided later in this section.

3.2 An outline of Council Effort to Support Biodiversity

3.2.1 Regional Policy Statement

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) 2002 was prepared by the Northland Regional Council to achieve the integrated management of Northland's natural and physical resources. It is a key document for identifying issues related to the development, use, and protection of resources in Northland and establishing an associated management framework for dealing with them.

The RPS outlines issues, objectives, policies and methodologies that guide the preparation of strategies and plans. The RPS recognises the relationship between soil conservation, land management, and pest management and includes an Ecosystems and Biodiversity section.

The current RPS sets out policies, objectives, and methods aimed principally at protecting and maintaining areas of significant indigenous vegetation, and significant habitats of indigenous fauna in the region. This guides the development of district plans prepared by the three district councils in Northland and the development of regional plans prepared by the NRC.

The RPS also promotes and encourages voluntary mechanisms for the protection and restoration of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna, especially significant sites by:

- Providing advice on existing mechanisms (all agencies)
- The establishment of an Environment Fund.

Under the 2005 amendments to the RMA 1991, district and regional plans must now give effect to the Regional Policy Statement.

The NRC has undertaken a five year review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the RPS. As part of this review, the Council identified that the ecosystems and biodiversity section is a top priority for review, particularly given the new functions for councils as discussed above. The NRC is currently investigating a plan change to the ecosystems and biodiversity chapter. A full review of the RPS will also be undertaken in 2009.

3.2.2 Regional Pest Management Strategy

Pest management is governed by the Biosecurity Act 1993 and the crown agency responsible for administering the Biosecurity Act is Biosecurity New Zealand which is a part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The Biosecurity Act also empowers Regional Councils and provides for Regional Pest Management Strategies (RPMS) aimed at controlling regionally significant pests. The strategies are not to be inconsistent with any national strategies, regulations and the Regional Policy Statement plan prepared under the RMA 1991. The council may also have regard to the provisions of hapu/iwi management plans in developing the pest management policy.

Legislation that may impact upon the strategy in areas of funding, control methods, service delivery and monitoring include:

- Agricultural Compounds Act 1998
- Conservation Act 1987
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
- Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
- Local Government Act 2002
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Reserves Act 1977
- Wild Animal Control Act 1977.

A number of other agencies and individuals have responsibilities for pest management and these are set out within the the Biosecurity Act.

The three local authorities – Far North, Kaipara and Whangarei district councils – have responsibility for pest management on council land and road verges (as the roading authority).

The Department of Conservation is not bound by the Regional Pest Strategy but can be required to contribute to funding pest control in the region as set out under the Biosecurity Act.



Landcare group member controlling wild ginger. (Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)

Northland Pest Management Strategies include animal, plant and insect pests and are aimed at eradication where possible, control, educating landowners, preventing pest introductions and stopping the further spread of established pests.

The council provides a range of mechanisms for prevention and management of pests including publicity and promotion, advisory services and pest management methods carried out by council or contractors (NRC).

Community Pest Control Areas

Under the Regional Pest Management Strategy, Community Pest Control Areas (CPCAs) are established in agreement between a community group and the Northland Regional Council. They are aimed at controlling animal and plant pests in a specified area. A management plan is prepared by the community group in consultation with landowners and council staff which clearly sets out the level of control to be achieved for each pest, the proposed costs to landowners and the level of council support that is required to manage the area. The plan also includes monitoring methods to measure the level of effectiveness of the pest control and outlines the agreed maintenance levels to be achieved to protect and enhance the biodiversity values in the area.

The council provides for the costs of the initial control of pests and additional materials which can include on-ground training, traps, agrichemicals, poisons and monitoring equipment. These resources can be supplied for a period of two years free of charge, followed by a further two years at 50% of the cost price.

Council has provided more the \$500,000 for 2005-2006 towards Community Pest Control Areas in the region.

3.2.3 Northland Regional Council Environment Fund

Since 1996 over \$1.5 million has been provided by the Northland Regional Council to private landowners and community groups with an annual contestable fund for 2006.

Currently more than \$500,000 is available to landowners for the following projects:

- Restore and protect indigenous habitats.
- Fencing.
- Wetland protection and enhancement.
- Pest animal and plant control.
- Revegetation and enhancement of native plants.
- Coastal dune enhancement and protection.
- Stock exclusion from the coastal marine area.

Further information on this fund is available from the Northland Regional Council.



A range of projects are supported by the Environment Fund
(Photos: NRC)

Case Study-Oneriri Peninsula Community Pest Control Area

A co-operative agreement between neighbours is proving a success in the first Community Pest Control Area set up with the Northland Regional Council in 2005.

The agreement protects a 4000ha peninsula on the council's southern boundary on the Kaipara Harbour.

Council spokesperson Carl Cooper says with an access of just 400 meters across, the peninsula was considered the perfect spot for a CPCA because it was defensible from reinvasion by pests. In addition, one of the members of the group owns the land leading to the peninsula entrance point, so providing a buffer zone of pest control.

Mr Cooper says there was a lot of suspicion at first because the CPCA was a new concept, but the landowners in the area quickly came on board.

The council's contractors used a variety of poisons to knock down possum numbers on the peninsula to 4 %, well below the target of 10 % residual. Rat numbers are below 1 % and tracking tunnels and trapping have not managed to find any remaining mustelids. Since the initial cull, it is hoped to be able to use low levels of poisons to maintain the target numbers and minimise any effects on other animals and the environment. There are 4000 bait stations on the property to be maintained.

The response from the forest and birdlife has been dramatic, which has made the landowners even more enthusiastic.



Oneriri Peninsula
(Photo: NRC)

Pest control and fencing off bush areas and the coastline from stock has become part of the farm staff's schedule. Staff members are given an extra incentive of a weekly dozen of beer for their pest control efforts. The NRC's Environment Fund has helped with fencing costs. The management plan sets out the responsibilities of the landowners for the future maintenance of the pest control area.

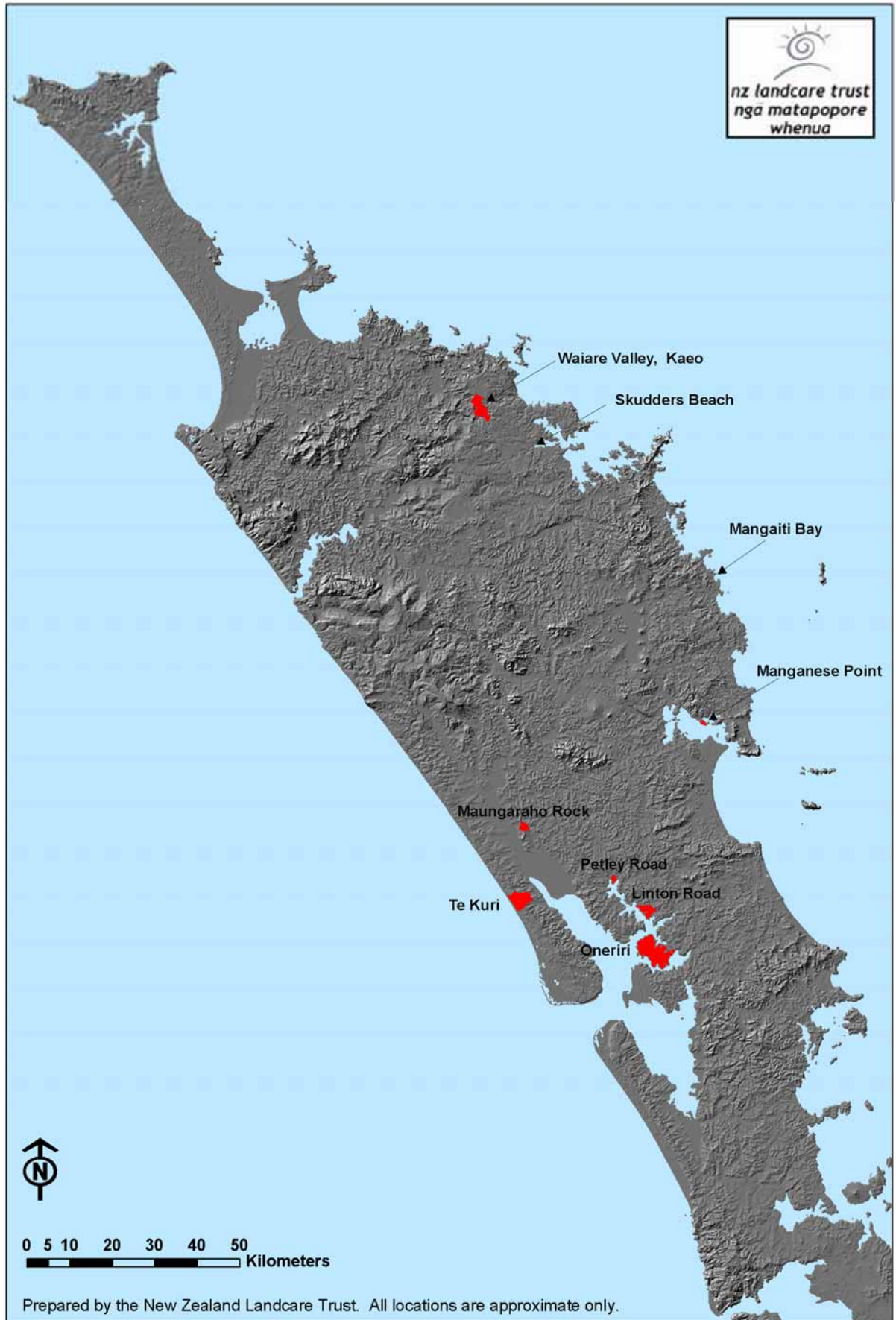


Figure 4: Community Pest Control Areas as at 2006

Source: Northland Regional Council

3.2.2 Whangarei District Council

Specific examples of formal mechanisms to support biodiversity values



Roadside Kiwi sign
(Photo : NZ Landcare Trust)

The operative Whangarei District Plan has detailed provision, policies and rules relating to clearance of indigenous vegetation and/or wetlands in Section 17 of the District Plan. Schedule 17a provides criteria for ranking significance of areas of indigenous vegetation and habitat. Objectives and policies relating to significant ecological areas are used when assessing consent application include the following:

- Provision made for individual tree protection which only relates to urban trees identified in the district plan as heritage trees. A register of these trees is held with council. (The WDC has introduced a new rule to include protection for coastal pohutukawa over six metres high and within 200metres of the coast).
- Environmental benefit lots - a process by which the developer provides an extra lot for the protection of significant features including notable trees, indigenous habitats and wetlands that meet set criteria. These features are registered against the property.
- Provision to require conditions to be attached to consents to protect endangered species including prohibition of cats and dogs in or near kiwi habitat. A provision is also applied for goat exclusion areas, particularly in areas where they have been eradicated.
- Formal protection mechanisms through conservation covenants with QEII Trust or Reserves Act 1977 for areas that meet the stated criteria.
- Provision to establish linkages between significant ecological sites through the esplanade reserve requirement process on subdivision.

Specific examples of incentives and informal methods to support biodiversity values

The Whangarei District Council provides an economic incentive through rate relief for landowners who voluntarily covenant land for the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and habitats. WDC also undertakes monitoring of conservation covenants registered with it. Copies of the site report, along with some management advice, are provided to participating landowners.

Consideration is also given for a waiver or reduction of subdivision consent application fees where the sole or principle purpose of the subdivision is protection of significant habitats of indigenous vegetation or habitats of indigenous fauna.

Since 1998 the council has contributed \$30,000 per annum to the QEII National Trust for the establishment of new open space covenants within the district. To date 100 new covenants have been established in the district and these are monitored by the QEII National Trust with information provided back to the District Council.

Whangarei District Council approved a contestable Environmental Enhancement Fund in August 2007 that is available to both individuals and community groups. The sum available is \$20,000 pre annum and can be applied to a range of projects that benefit biodiversity primarily on private land including (but not limited to) weed and animal pest control, restoration planting, and fencing.

Example of joint projects for biodiversity enhancement and protection

Joint management plans have been prepared for two large forest tracts of council's indigenous forest bordering the Whangarei city. Pukenui Forest (DOC) and Western Hill Reserves (WDC) provide an opportunity for a partnership approach involving several agencies, organisations, iwi and adjoining landowners for biodiversity restoration, maintenance and protection.

The Parihaka Management Plan provides an opportunity for a partnership with agencies, organisations, iwi and community for the biodiversity maintenance, enhancement and restoration.

Both these management plans were publicly notified and received final approval by Council in November 2006. This was subject to the various land parcels covered by the management plan being classified as reserves under Section 16 of the Reserves Act 1977.

3.2.5 Far North District Council

Specific examples of Council's formal mechanisms to support biodiversity values



Community Day (Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)

The Far North District Plan provides policies and rules relating to clearance of indigenous vegetation and/or wetlands and criteria for ranking significance of areas of indigenous vegetation and habitat.

Where the land is subject to permanent protection, Council will consider applications for a remission of rates on the land set out in their Remissions Policy. Where the protection is for a finite period, but for a term of less than 10 years, Council has introduced policy to provide for the postponement of rates for the period that the protection is in place.

Other methods for formal protection of indigenous vegetation and habitats are provided through conservation covenants with the QEII National Trust, Nga Whenua Rahui and conservation covenants under the Reserves Act 1977.

Specific examples of incentives and informal methods to support biodiversity values

Since 2003 the council has provided \$50,000 per annum for biodiversity funding to assist and encourage landowners and community groups to protect and enhance indigenous vegetation on private land. The criteria set down for the Significant Natural Areas (SNA) Fund includes:

- fencing
- weed and animal pest programmes
- planting
- advocacy programmes aimed at protecting, maintaining and/or enhancing significant natural areas
- monitor pests, weeds and habitat values.

Some examples of non-regulatory or voluntary methods and advice to protect and enhance biodiversity values

The Council recognises and acknowledges the landowner's contribution to habitat protection and provides constructive advice to assist the landowner with identifying management priorities, (such as weed and pest control). The owners are encouraged to protect all sites of indigenous flora and fauna with site-specific recommendations as to how to gain assistance to meet these goals.

Where an area has high ecological values, and there are few other sites protected within the vicinity, the owners are advised of this. The landowner is encouraged to consider formal protection, generally QEII Open Space Covenant or Council covenant provision as an option. The area is registered with the council and follow-up visits are carried out by an ecologist. These voluntarily protected areas form a significant proportion of the total indigenous habitat in the Far North area and are consequently very important (Tricia Scott, *pers. comm*).

Advice is also given when the landowner applies to clear indigenous vegetation in a rural protection zone and is notifying Council as required in the District Plan. This provides an opportunity to monitor the property as a whole and discuss incentives available to protect and enhance indigenous habitats.

The Council takes a solutions-based approach in which alternative mechanisms to clearance for improving productivity/returns from the property are discussed. When the clearance can be offset by improvements in the quality of the protected areas and the clearance is necessary to the economic well being of the landowner, the agreed area and conditions of clearance are documented. Ecological information is collated and the areas proposed for clearance and protection are identified on aerial photographs, agreements documented and the outcomes monitored.

Landowners are provided with an information package containing a range of biodiversity information from various sources to assist with their projects.

3.2.4 Kaipara District Council



The Kaipara District Plan provides policies and rules relating to clearance of indigenous vegetation and/or wetlands and a criterion for ranking significance of areas of indigenous vegetation and habitat. A register of ecological features is provided in the plan.

Council is currently undertaking a review of the District Plan and updating management methods to address significant ecological values in Kaipara District.

Pouto Lighthouse, West Coast.
(Photo: NRC)

Specific examples of council's formal mechanisms to support biodiversity

- Policies and rules relating to clearance of indigenous vegetation and/or wetlands.
- Objectives and policies relating to significant ecological and natural areas including ranking criteria.
- Conservation covenants with the QEII National Trust and subject to the Reserves Act 1977 and Nga Whenua Rahui. Rates relief is offered to landowners for protected land.

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- Register for Trees of Special Amenity Value. Trees that are considered to be of historic, scenic and scientific value have protection status under the District Plan.
 - Financial contribution by applicants towards the protection and/or enhancement of a significant heritage or natural feature as a condition of land use consent or subdivision consent including fencing or restoration planting.
 - Financial contribution by applicants towards the protection and enhancement of riparian areas as a condition of land use consent where habitat or water quality values of adjoining lakes, rivers or coastal waters are likely to be adversely affected by land use activities.

Specific examples of incentives and informal methods to support biodiversity



Planting native gentian *Sebaea ovata* at Pouto. (Photo : DOC)

The Kaipara District Council Biodiversity Improvement Fund was established in 2005 and provides funding to landowners and community groups that will benefit native biodiversity. The Council currently provides \$15,000 annually.

Kaipara District Plan provides rates relief for sites containing significant ecological features, formally or informally where the areas protected are clearly and accurately defined on a plan.

Provision is made for the reimbursement of survey and legal costs where the land is gifted to the council as a reserve and provision for the waiver of resource consent fees where an Open Space Covenant is to be registered over an ecological feature.

Table 4 summarises the policy tools and other mechanisms utilised by district and regional council's in Northland to encourage management and protection of the region's biodiversity values.

Figure 5 summarises the location of successful recipients of Far North and Kaipara District Council grants. Note that the recipients for the NRC Environment Fund or Whangarei District Council Environmental Enhancement Fund were not available in a digital format for inclusion at the time of publication.

Table 4: A summary of policy tools and mechanisms to support biodiversity utilised by local government in Northland.

Method:	NRC	WDC	KDC	FNDC
Register of significant ecological sites				
Vegetation clearance rules				
Criteria for ranking significant areas and habitats				
Subdivision controls				
Conservation covenants				
Assistance to establish QEII covenants				
Rates relief				
Management plans and agreements				
Education and advice to landowners				
Direct funding				

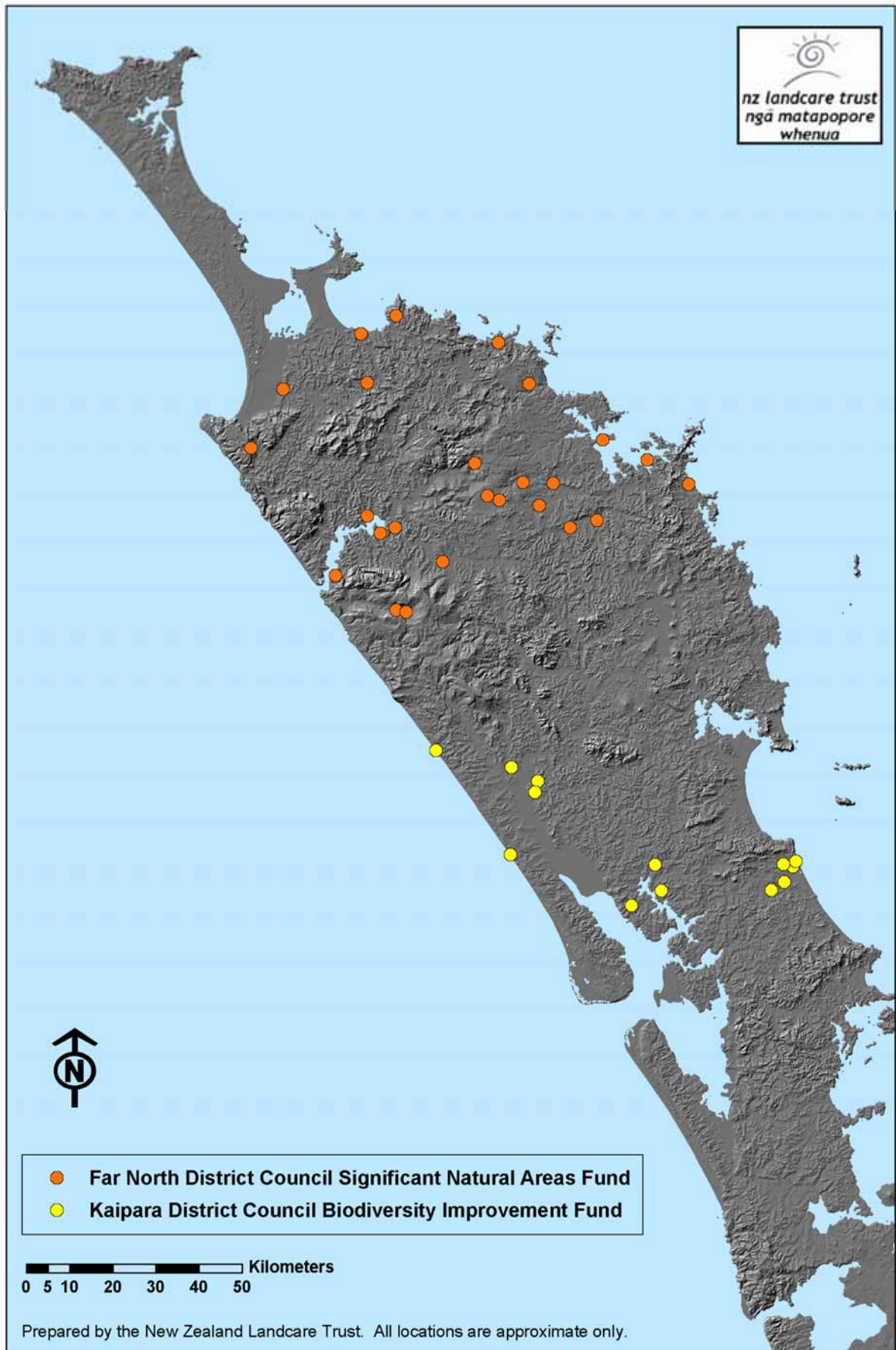


Figure 5 – District Council biodiversity enhancement fund grants to June 07
Location of some projects have not been entered at time of publication

3.3 Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP)

Provisions to benefit biodiversity

A survey carried out in Northland (AC Nielson 2005) showed that the community valued the natural environments of Northland highly. This survey showed that sustainably managing Northland's natural environment was the third most important outcome sought by Northlanders behind a safe and healthy community and a sustainable infrastructure.

One of the core focuses of the Northland Regional Council is environmental management and under it's LTCCP it acts as lead agency, joint lead agency or in a supporting/advocating role for this focus.

The Regional Council has established working relationships to achieve community outcomes with a number of organisations including government, sector and community groups, Maori, private enterprise, and the regions' three district councils. The Regional Council has the responsibility to report regularly on the community's progress towards achieving its outcomes and to undertake regular environmental monitoring to assess progress. Biodiversity outcomes in the Regional Council's LTCCP relate to existing council planning documents which have a biodiversity component and include the Northland Regional Policy Statement, Regional Pest Management Strategies, Regional Water and Soil Plan of Northland and the Regional Coastal Plan.

Identified priority outcomes included in the NRC LTCCP that focus on biodiversity include:

- Maintaining and improving water quality.
- Developing and implementing a plan to identify and protect Northland land with high biodiversity values, together with landowners, relevant government agencies and the district councils
- Maintaining and where necessary improving soil conservation as an integral part of land use
- Preparing strategies to eradicate or control pest organisms that threaten indigenous biodiversity values
- Encouraging the development and implementation of a habitat strategy for threatened species in Northland, in conjunction with the Department of Conservation
- Increasing the area of high biodiversity-value land under formal protection together with the Department of Conservation, district councils and the QE II Trust
- Increasing the areas of marine reserves and marine parks in Northland

The Kaipara, Whangarei and Far North District Councils provide biodiversity outcomes in the LTCCP's and these are outlined as follows:

- Kaipara District Council: Particular attention has been paid to incentives to protect indigenous vegetation and species by supporting the QEII National Trust through the provision of covenants.
- Whangarei District Council outlines the balance between the built and natural environment. There are some biodiversity outcomes for management of the district's natural biodiversity particularly the icon species (kiwi) and for the weed management, and establishment and monitoring of the conservation covenants under the Reserves Act and QEII National Trust.
- The Far North District Council provides outcomes for biodiversity focused on the balance between the built and natural environment. Particular attention has been paid to an appropriate mix of incentives for the protection of native bush and wildlife in keeping with the objectives of the district plan.

3.4 Funding opportunities for indigenous biodiversity in Northland

Table 5 sets out a summary of funding potentials and opportunities that directly assist biodiversity in Northland.

Table 5: Local Government and other Funding For Biodiversity in Northland

Organisation	Type of funding	Annual Contribution	Comments / Criteria	Timing for funding
Whangarei District Council	• QEII covenanting	\$30,000	• Additional funding to assist QEII for the management of covenants that meet QEII criteria	Annually
	• Crimson Coast NZ Refinery Co	\$10,000	• Provision of pohutukawa trees for planting	Annually
	• Environmental Enhancement Fund	\$50,000	• Maximum of \$4000 or 50% of project costs. • To encourage and assist with voluntary work that benefits the natural environment generally on private land.	Annually
Far North District Council	• SNA Fund	\$50,000	• Community based initiatives that aim to improve the quality and/or extent of indigenous vegetation and the survival rates of indigenous fauna • 50% of project costs and maximum of \$5000 per project	Annually
	• Heritage Assistance fund	\$50,000	• Conservation work relating to land or archaeological site, notable trees, cultural sites significant to Maori	Annually
Kaipara District Council	• Biodiversity Improvement Fund	\$15,000	• 50% of project costs • Benefit to the native biodiversity • Degree of community benefit • Extent of contribution by applicant	Annually
	• Project Crimson		• Provision of pohutukawa seeds	Annually
	• Heritage Assistance Fund	\$10,000	• 50% of project costs • Conservation work relating to land or archaeological site	Annually
Northland Regional Council	• Environment Fund	\$525,000	• Up to 50% of costs for general restoration, fencing, biodiversity protection; wetland enhancement; tree planting; plant and animal pest control; coastal dune enhancement & protection, • Up to 33% of costs of stock exclusion from the coastal marine areas.	Annually

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Pest Control Areas 	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As agreed in the management plan for each area 	
Queen Elizabeth II Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Covenants 	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and enhancement of habitats, landscapes 	Throughout the year
Department of Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nga Whenua Rahui 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of indigenous ecosystems on Maori Land 	Every quarter
Department of Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matauranga Kura Taiao Fund 	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revival, use & retention of traditional Maori knowledge & practices in biodiversity management 	Annually
DOC/MFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Condition Fund 	~\$2m nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and maintain the conditions of indigenous vegetation, species and habitats on private land 	Six Monthly
DOC/MFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Advice Fund 	~\$1m nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and advice to land managers for protection of indigenous species, workshops, field days, publications 	Six Monthly
MFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Management Fund 	Variable nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental management initiatives 	Annually

There is a range of other funders that provide support for biodiversity in the region, including;

- World Wildlife Fund Habitat Protection Fund
- Transpower Landcare Trust Grant
- Fish & Game NZ
- BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust
- ASB Community Trust
- Lotteries Environment and Heritage

More information on criteria and eligibility for these funds is available from the funder or the NZ Landcare Trust.

3.5 Biodiversity Advice and Condition Funds

A major opportunity for active management of biodiversity values on private land was the establishment by central Government of the Biodiversity Advice Fund (BAF) and the Biodiversity Condition Fund (BCF) in 2001. This currently has just over \$3 million to allocate nationally each year. Increasingly these funds are prioritised towards projects that meet the Statement of National Priorities released by central government in April 2007 (see Appendix 2.)

The government biodiversity website www.biodiversity.govt.nz summarises the funds as follows:



Kukupua [NZ Pigeon] Photo: DOC

“The Biodiversity Condition Fund aims to improve and maintain the condition of areas of indigenous vegetation, species and habitats (including wetlands and water bodies). The Fund seeks to broaden community effort in the management of indigenous biodiversity, and to complement contributions for its enhancement. It will fund projects that enhance biodiversity outside public conservation lands, and particularly on areas under legal protection. Projects could involve, for example, fencing or pest control”

“The Biodiversity Advice Fund supports the provision of information and advice to land managers to assist them in managing indigenous biodiversity. It will fund projects that inspire landholders or groups to improve the condition of indigenous biodiversity (outside of public conservation land). The advisory services may be one off or ongoing. Methods of providing information and advice could include field days, expert advice, wananga, publications (including electronic material), training, workshops and seminars.”

The introduction of these funds gave huge impetus to work for biodiversity on private land. From 2002, funding rounds 2 to 8 were “open” rounds which allocated funding to projects totalling over \$3.5 million for the BAF and over \$7.5 million for the BCF.

Within the overall data, Northland received nearly \$308,000 from the BAF (or 9.27 % of the total funding available) in Rounds 2 – 8 and \$1.275 million from the BCF (or 17.75 % of the total funds allocated). This reflects Northland’s relatively high residual biodiversity values. These calculations were made by sorting “allocated funding” by Region ID and subtracting the “National NZ” Region ID from the total before working out percentages.

A full list of projects that have received Biodiversity Condition and Advise Fund support in Northland is included in Appendix 4.



Flax snail; (Photo: DOC)



Taiharuru Landcare Nursery; (Photo: NRC)



Poroti School Planting; (Photo: NRC)

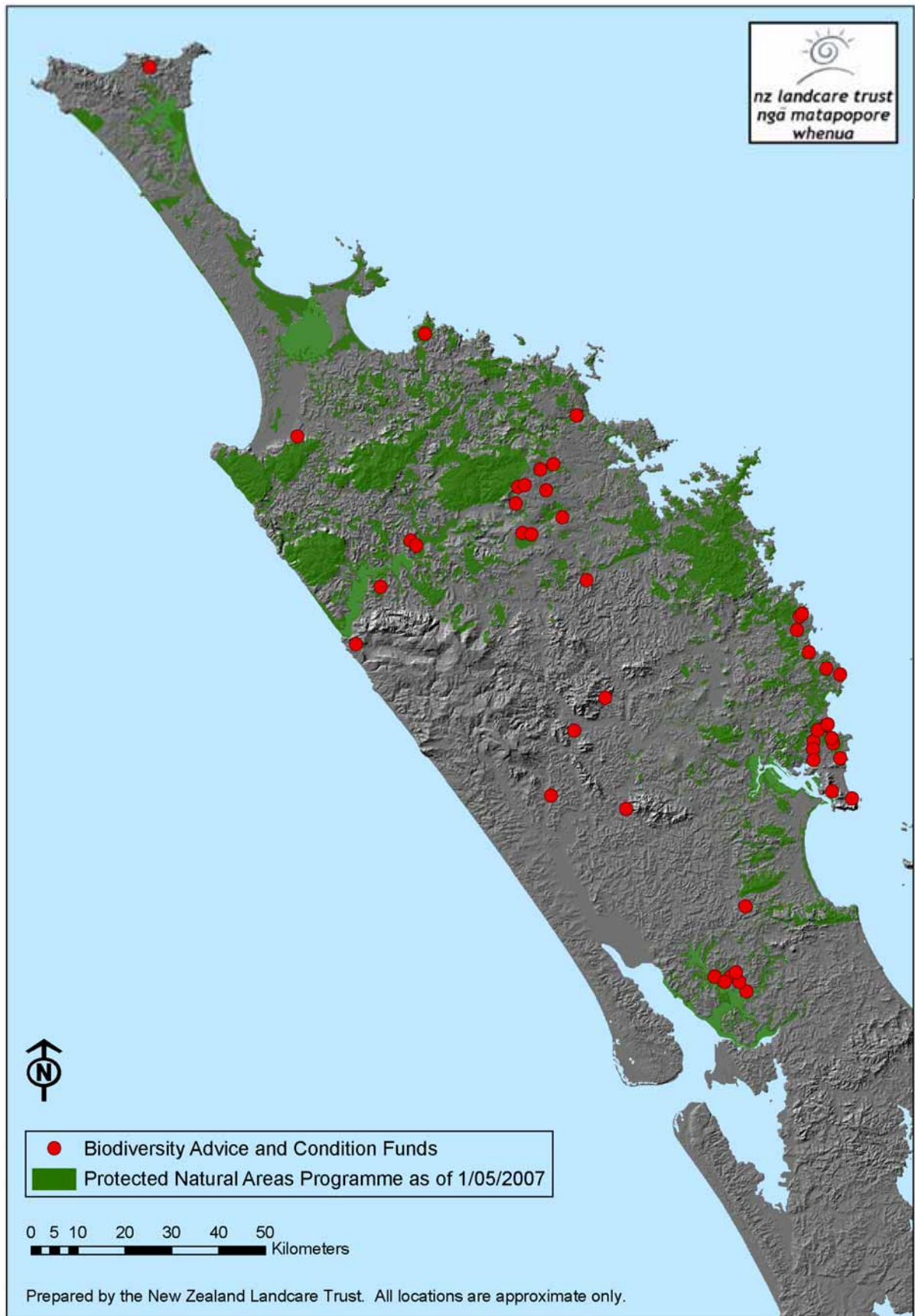


Figure 6: Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund projects.

NB: Locations of some projects have not been entered at time of publication

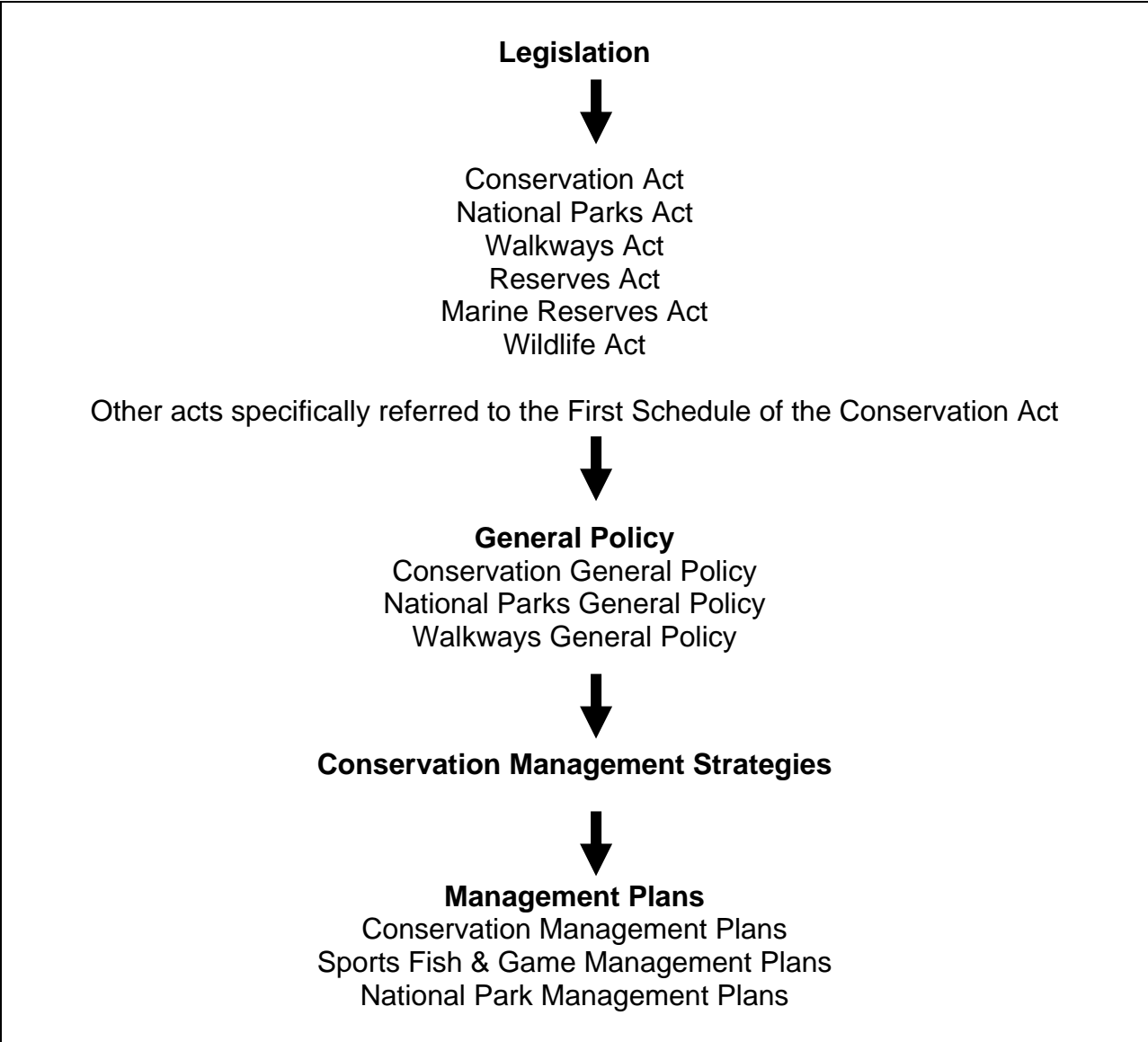
3.6 An outline of other agencies and organisations’ management of biodiversity in Northland

3.6.1 Department of Conservation (DOC)

The Department of Conservation manages the Crown Estate in Northland and New Zealand. It is the main agency responsible for the management of indigenous vegetation and fauna and provides an advocacy role on private land. This is carried out under the Conservation Act 1987, created to promote the conservation of New Zealand’s natural and historic resources. The Department also has a statutory interest in the various processes of territorial authorities such as the RMA where consents may affect the public interest in biodiversity values.

The Department has three main general policies that relate to conservation in New Zealand. The purpose of general policy is to provide guidance for the interpretation of conservation legislation and the development of conservation management strategies and plans.

Table 6: Statutory framework for management of public conservation estate



Conservation Management Strategies and Plans

The Department works to a range of plans, strategies and agreements which set out goals, actions and directions for management work and strategic directions.

The Statement of Intent 2005-2008 is a forward-looking document and sets out longer term directions for the Department, as well as management actions that will be undertaken in the coming year.

Conservation management strategies are 10-year regional strategies that provide an overview of conservation issues and give direction and set priorities for the management of public conservation land and waters, and species for which the Department has responsibility.

The Northland Conservation Management Strategy is currently under review and is expected to be updated for 2009.

The department also prepares other plans and strategies such as species recovery plans, recreation plans and pest management plans.

Community Involvement in Conservation

The Northland Conservancy of DOC has taken the lead in a number of community conservation initiatives. These include significant input to development of the department's national staff and community guidelines on conservation with communities, *From Seed to Success* and direct support for the Nga Maunga ki te Moana Trust's *Whitebait Connection* and *Experiencing Marine Reserves* programmes. Each of the department's area offices has its own annual conservation with communities action plan, which describes how the department and communities can work most effectively together and when the department's role is to support, guide, partner or lead. These plans link the department's on-the-ground work to conservancy-wide and national strategic directions. The conservancy is developing a culture of working at all levels of the participation and partnering continuums, aiming for collaborative conservation management wherever this is appropriate (Sioux Campbell *pers. comm.*).

3.6.2 NZ Landcare Trust



Trapper Training Day;
(Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)



Kiwi release with Murray and Helen
Jagger; (Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)



Waimate North Landcare nursery
working bee; (Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)

The NZ Landcare Trust fosters sustainable land management and biodiversity initiatives by working with community groups in Northland operating on private land (and around the country).

The Landcare Trust has successfully contributed to many Landcare initiatives in Northland that are enhancing the biodiversity values of the region. It supports landowners and Landcare groups undertaking biodiversity management work in partnership with other agencies and organisations in the region. Landcare Trust also works closely with funding providers to support projects in Northland. The Landcare model focuses on keeping the balance of power within the community, by building community capacity and encouraging ownership of environmental issues. It helps groups establish, plan, develop networks, and to become effective in nature conservation.

The independence and absence of statutory roles has assisted the Landcare Trust in its role at the inter-agency level with facilitation of the Northland Biodiversity Enhancement Group, the informal Northland Kiwi Landcare Forum and other regional initiatives.

Case Study-Puketi Forest

The Puketi Forest Trust aims to maintain the northern forest for the reintroduction of about 20 species, including robins, kiwi, kokako and kaka.

Trust chairman Gary Bramley says the charitable trust was formed in 2003 and is guided by its founding Document which sets out its purpose to restore Puketi to a “complete living forest” and raise the perception and the value of the forest in the collective consciousness of the community.

The trust has established a management agreement with the Department of Conservation, where the Department undertakes to control possums and goats.

The trust employs contractors to trap mustelids, cats and rats and aims to control pests in an area of about 5000ha.

Mr Bramley says neighbours also help with pest control work in a bid to provide a buffer zone for the forest to minimise reinvasion. At least 8 landowners in the vicinity of the trusts core work area in the Puketi Forest have been assisted by the NRC Environment Fund to undertake further fencing and restoration on their properties.

There is currently one very lonely male kokako living in the forest, and kaka visit occasionally from offshore islands that are free of pests. Robins have not been seen in the forest for more than 40 years.

Since the pest control work cut pest numbers, trustees have noted increasing numbers of North Island brown kiwi, kukupa, tomtits and tui. These results will help the trustees decide when the environment has improved enough for the reintroduction of the vanished species.

The trust has had most of its support from the ASB Community Trust as well as Lotteries Grants heritage fund and BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust.

The public is invited to help by sponsoring a hectare of forest, sponsoring a kilometer of track or buying traps and bait stations. Monitoring has shown a rapid increase in bird numbers.



3.6.3 Queen Elizabeth II National Trust

The QEII National Trust was established in 1977 under legislation to aid conservation on private land. It is a statutory organisation independent from government, managed by a Board of Trustees and comes under the “umbrella” of Department of Conservation as its current funding and administrative “parent”. The QEII National Trust Act 1977 enables the trust to:

- Negotiate and administer open space covenants (or protection agreements) with landowners.
- Acquire and manage land.
- Provide financial grants for open space projects, and
- Advocate open space protection through advice, research and information.

The provision of the QEII Trust's open space covenant enables a mechanism through which landowners can voluntarily protect significant natural and cultural features on their land. The open space covenant is a perpetual legally binding agreement, which is registered on the title of the land. The QEII Trust assists landowners with ongoing management advice and support for covenanted areas including advice on pest control, species management and restoration methods.

The establishment of covenants can assist councils to meet their responsibilities under the Resource Management Act, including the recognition and protection of significant natural and cultural features and indigenous biodiversity.

Northland Regional Council and the Whangarei District Council assist and share costs for the management of conservation covenants and make annual financial allocations for the establishment and management of covenants.

Table 7:- Number of registered covenants and hectares approved for Northland

	Number of Covenants approved and still to be registered	Area (ha) Registered	Number of Covenants Fully Registered	Area (ha) Approved
All of Northland	88	1473	431	6458
By Habitat Type				
Wetland	17	298	45	439
Forests	78	1310	391	5780

Source: QEII National Trust, July 2007

QEII Trust is an active member of the Northland Biodiversity Enhancement Group and has worked in close partnership with the councils, NZ Landcare Trust, agencies and organisations to protect and maintain significant habitats and features in the region.

Further information pertaining to the types of habitats and ecological values was not available at the time of preparation of this report. It is being collated by the QEII National Trust following permission from the landowners. The Trust anticipates this type of information will be available in 2007-2008 depending on landowner response. However, ecological information can be requested for QEII National Trust covenants established as a condition of consent for council subdivision applications. The Whangarei District council is currently working towards providing the locations and associated ecological information through council's GIS database.

Further discussion of legal protection options is given in Appendix 5.

3.6.4 Fish & Game NZ

Fish & Game NZ is an angler and game bird hunter organisation established under the Conservation Act 1987 and has a statutory mandate to manage New Zealand's freshwater sports fisheries as defined in the Freshwater Fishing Regulation 1983 and game bird hunting as defined in the Wildlife Act 1953. Its funding sources come mainly through annual licenses and permits and the Northland branch also receives funding through a capital reserve to assist towards revegetation, enhancement and weed control for wetland areas they manage.



The organisation also works closely with other agencies in Northland with particular focus on wetland restoration for game bird and fish habitat and access for game shooters.

There are three major wetland areas owned by F&G in Northland including the Flaxmill Wetland, Jack Bisset Wetland and Kawakawa Wetlands.

Bisset Wetland Field Day;
(Photo: Fish & Game NZ.)

Wetland areas such as the Waitangi Wetland and Wairua River Government Purpose Wildlife Management Reserve are managed on behalf of the Department of Conservation while still allowing access for game bird shooters. Borrowcut Wetland on the Hikurangi Swamp is managed on behalf of Whangarei District Council.

3.7 Landcare projects and other community initiatives

3.7.1 Regional Landcare initiatives



Community Planting;
(Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)

There are currently more than 55 Landcare and community groups operating in Northland many of which are involved in a range of biodiversity focused projects from small scale possum control, plant pest eradication to large ecosystem protection projects. There are at least 52,000 hectares of land being actively managed for kiwi protection in Northland by Landcare groups and the Department of Conservation. 60% of the actively managed area for kiwi is on private land.

These initiatives are supported by the various agencies and organisations in Northland with provision of resources and technical advice via workshops and educational programmes and one on one assistance.

Figure 7 shows the location of landcare and other community group projects in Northland. A list of some of the landcare and community group activity is given in Appendix 3.

3.7.2 NZ Forest Restoration Trust (NZFRT)

The NZFRT was founded in 1980, and is particularly active in Northland. NZFRT specialises in the purchase and management of large blocks of land, often located adjacent to DOC estate. The Trust has acquired six blocks in Northland to protect species, restore habitats and improve quality of waterways:

- Puhoi in the Far North.
- Puketī Mokau.
- Professor W.R McGregor Reserve.
- Elvie McGregor Reserve.
- Cynthia Hewett Reserve.
- William Upton Hewett Memorial Reserve.

The NZFRT has received funding through the ASB Charitable Trust, Lotteries Grant, Whangarei Native Forest & Bird Protection Society and QE II National Trust and various donations and sponsorship.

Case Study - Waiotira Landcare Group – Run Furry Shield contenders!

The Waiotira Landcare Group has been in operation for only a couple of years but can already report a major impact on possum numbers in the area.

The group meets regularly at the Waiotira Golf Club for a social evening to compare tallies of possums killed. Since October 2005, the members of the group have reported more than a thousand culled.

In a spoof on the Ranfurly Shield, the group awards a keenly sought Run Furry Shield to the families that have the highest tallies of possums killed.

Waiotira farmer Ingleby Coxe says the shield was designed and made by the group's convenor Brian Hoy, and features possum skull and cross bones.

"It's quite awful to look at," she says.

The group uses fun trophies and neighbourhood social evenings and free sausage sizzles to try and encourage a sustained effort in pest control.

"It's all about making possum control more fun. We want to encourage more young people to get involved because they can go out with their Dads and have a great time. If we can get the younger generation involved, hopefully they will continue in the future."

But Ingleby says maintaining enthusiasm is not easy and the Landcare group has mostly settled into a stalwart group.



Public Enemy Number One – the possum;
(Photo: Landcare Research)

She says with possum fur fetching good prices, there are several professional possum pluckers operating in Northland who will visit a property and kill possums for fur.

Several families use contractors on their properties and this has helped keep possum numbers down in the district, which includes land that is mostly easy rolling farmland with some steep parts and pockets of native bush.

Ingleby, who was recently given a merit award in the Ballance Farm Environment Awards and is well known for her research into farm forestry, says the group has been invited to apply for funding assistance. But they are quite suspicious of taking up funding, because of the legal ties and obligations that can be involved.

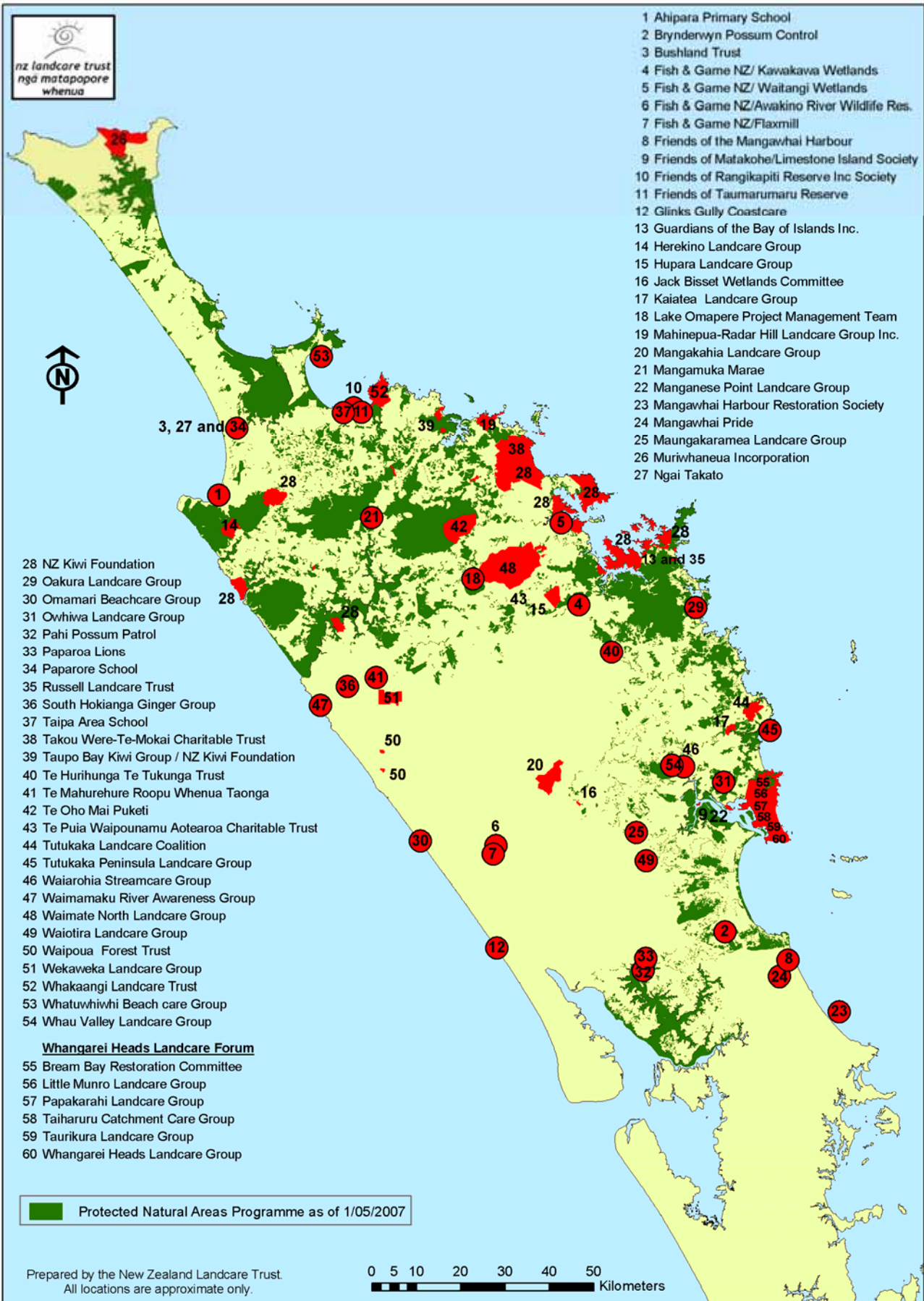


Figure 7. Some Landcare and Community Group Projects

3.7.3 The NZ Kiwi Foundation

The Kiwi Foundation is a charitable trust based in the Far North to assist in the protection of kiwi on private land. The trust currently covers up to an area of 15,000 hectares of private and legally protected land in Northland.

The foundation also works closely with other organisations, Landcare groups, agencies and councils in an advice and advocacy role. The foundation depends on funding from donations, sponsorship and charitable trusts.

Specific example of NZ Kiwi Foundation and landowner partnership

The future of the kiwi in Northland is looking brighter thanks in part to a unique partnership between land owners and the Kerikeri based NZ Kiwi Foundation.

Kiwi on about 16,000 hectares of Northland and 10,000 hectares on the Taporā peninsula near Wellsford will benefit from predator control programmes.

Most of the land is privately owned and teams of trappers from the Kiwi Foundation work with the landowners to set up trapping and poisoning programmes.

“We quickly recognised that you had to have professional trappers to deal with the whole spectrum of pests. Most people are capable of dealing with rats and possums themselves using toxins and/or traps. But the big killers in terms of kiwi and wildlife are stoats and cats,” said Dr Greg Blunden, convenor of the Kiwi Foundation,

Cats and stoats won’t take poison and need to be trapped and this requires skill, he added, so the foundation has trained locals to work as trappers.

As new partnerships with landowners are made, the map on the wall of Dr Blunden’s office is altered. It looks like a jigsaw puzzle and each time a new piece is fitted it adds towards the picture of a fully protected kiwi zone which is relatively safe from predators.

Dr Blunden said that the NZ Kiwi Foundation’s long term aim is to eradicate mammalian pests north of Auckland.

“I don’t consider that what we are doing now is sustainable in the long run – over 30 community groups working for kiwi with huge amounts of volunteer time, funding and large amounts of toxins, all of which has to be maintained forever,” said Dr Blunden. “What we need is a very big peninsula to eradicate pests from and then maintain very low numbers. The obvious peninsula starts at the Auckland isthmus.”



A stoat caught in a Fenn trap;
(Photo: NZ Landcare Trust)

Figure 8 shows the distribution of kiwi populations and areas of active management in Northland, based on data to 2005.

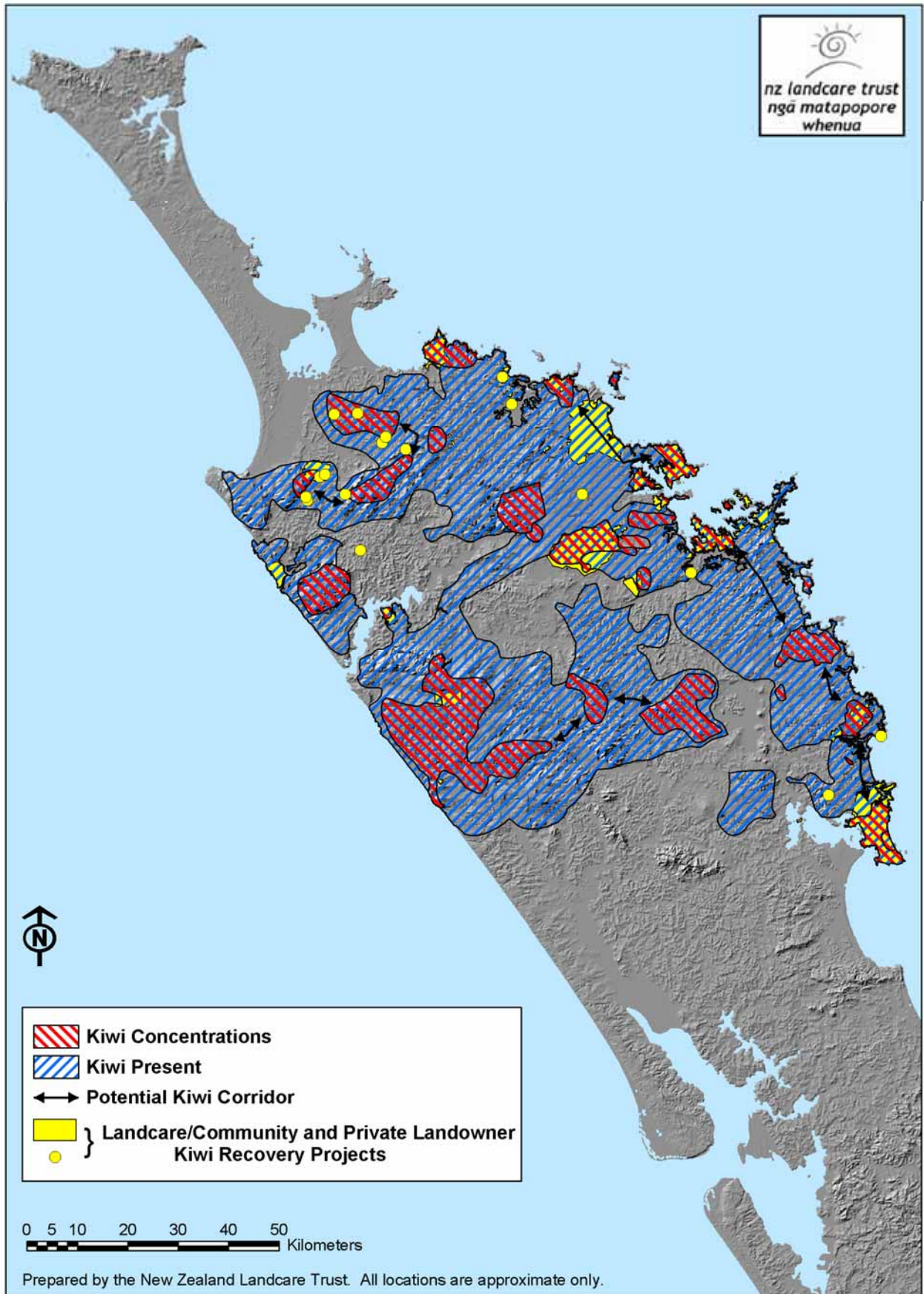


Figure 8: Kiwi distribution and kiwi recovery projects in Northland

Source: Based on Pierce et al 2006.

3.8 Other components of the Whole of Northland Project.

3.8.1 Interagency Planning Workshop – August 2005

An Interagency Planning workshop held in August 2005 provided a forum for discussion with agencies and organisations to identify their priorities, opportunities and commonalities for biodiversity management and protection in the region.

Agencies and organisations who attended the workshop were:

- Department of Conservation
- Northland Conservation Board
- Northland Regional Council
- Far North District Council
- Kaipara District Council
- Q E II National Trust
- Northtec
- Te Puni Kokiri
- Fish & Game NZ
- NZ Landcare Trust.

The workshop provided facilitated group discussions on the following topics:

- What are the components of biodiversity?
- What are the opportunities for collective Biodiversity Enhancement in Northland?

The workshop identified the differing goals and objectives of agencies and organisations and provided some opportunities for co-operative work. These outcomes are set out in Appendix 1.

The opportunity exists now to build upon the foundations set by the Whole of Northland, to further the partnerships developed, develop new relationships with other key stakeholders, and enhance the priority setting with organisations and agencies responsible for promoting biodiversity enhancement in Northland.

A summary and components of the Interagency planning working is included in Appendix 1.

3.8.2 GIS database

Successful biodiversity enhancement and restoration requires coordinated responses from a range of organisations and agencies. Biodiversity enhancement over the Northland region will itself be enhanced by the ability to look at the “Big Picture” of what is going on at a regional basis.

A key component of the Whole of Northland project has been the initial development of a GIS database to identify priority ecosystems and current areas of management:

- **Biodiversity effort.** . As detailed in this report, a number of landowners belong to Landcare or community groups and a significant number of individual landowners are undertaking biodiversity activities on their land seeking to maintain, protect and restore habitats and fauna. A number of agencies and organisations in Northland contribute significantly to supporting these projects. Councils and other organisations including the Department of Conservation, QE II National Trust and the NZ Fish & Game also undertake biodiversity protection and maintenance activities on legally protected land throughout the region. Where possible these site are recorded on the GIS database.

- **Priority ecosystems.** Both the Significant Natural Areas programme of the Northland Conservancy of DOC, and the recently released national priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity on private land (Protecting our Places) identify priorities areas including rare ecosystems and species distribution.

Where the locations of biodiversity activities of landowners and agencies can be aligned to the location of priority ecosystems it will provide agencies and organisation with a management tool for identifying gaps and opportunities to focus and support further biodiversity effort and protection in Northland.

Agencies and organisations in Northland maintain biodiversity-related databases in varying stages of development. This report has attempted to capture biodiversity information currently accessible from agencies and organisations' Geographic Information System (GIS) and associated database information. GIS information has been provided by the Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council, Whangarei District Council, QEII National Trust, Wildland Consultants, and NZLCT. A complete list of layers currently included in the database is included in Appendix 6.

Point and polygon information has been entered using grid references (NZMS 260 series 1:50000) from information provided by Kaipara and Far North District councils for their environment fund projects, Landcare groups, community groups, Fish & Game NZ, and the NZ Kiwi Foundation but is by no means a full and accurate picture of biodiversity activity in the region. Figure 9 show information on biodiversity activity overlaid on the Protected Natural Areas data (as of 1/05/07) to show how projects are aligned to valued ecosystems in Northland.

The GIS database aims to build on existing information which will in time provide a comprehensive picture of biodiversity values and management and information is being provided by agencies and organisations in Northland.

However this is by no means a complete picture of what is happening in Northland. A significant amount of biodiversity information is yet to be updated and entered in to the agencies and organisations GIS database. Two district councils have limited GIS capacity to capture data entry.

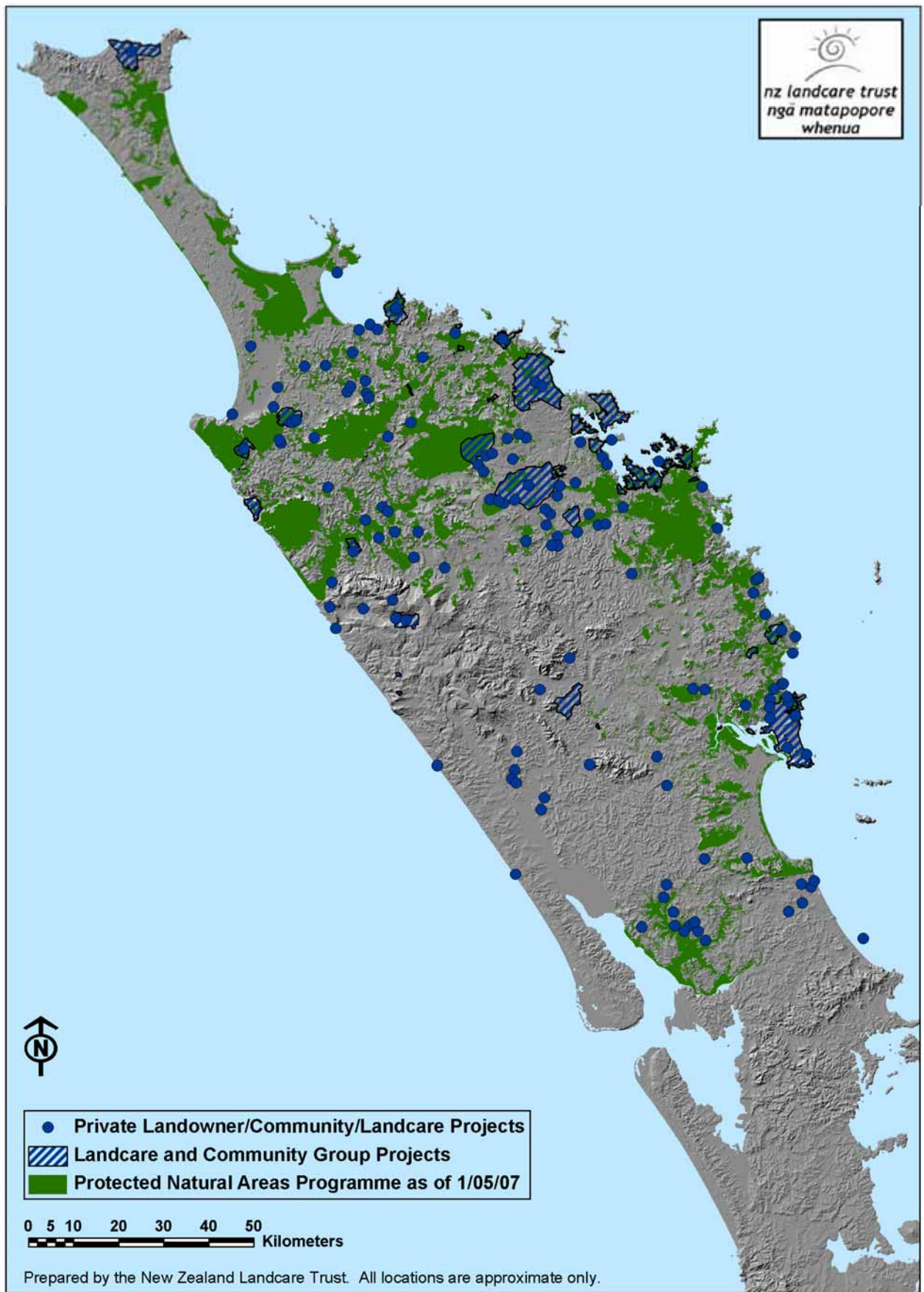


Figure 9: Biodiversity Enhancement Projects in Northland