Mahere whakahaere karearea ā-rohe

Let's kōrero about pests

Consultation report

Regional Pest Management and Marine Pathways plans

Northland Regional Council
Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau

1 List of abbreviations

The Act	Biosecurity Act 1993
NPD	National Policy Direction for Biosecurity 2015
NRC	Northland Regional Council
RPMP	Regional Pest Management (and Marine Pathways) Plan
WDC	Whangarei District Council
WMP	Weed Management Plan

2 Executive summary

Northland Regional Council (NRC) is the management agency responsible for developing and implementing the Te Taitokerau Regional Pest Management and Marine Pathways Plan (RPMP) in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act). The current RPMP was adopted in 2017 until 2027, NRC staff have started the review of this plan with the aim of replacing this with a new RPMP 2026-2036.

Staff have undertaken consultation on the review of the plan with a range of stakeholders. This has been undertaken to:

- inform the development of the RPMP's cost/benefit analysis pursuant to sections 70 and 90 of the Act and the NPD 2015; and
- commence consultation requirements under sections 72 and 92 of the Act, which require NRC to undertake consultation with tangata whenua, agencies, stakeholders, and all other people that are likely to be affected by the RPMP[1].
- understand and incorporate hapū, iwi, and tangata whenua perspectives into the plan, reflecting our commitment to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The results of our consultation to date have elicited feedback from a wide array of communities and stakeholders. Some have shared their views on the candidate species and rules that have been put forward, and others have gone further and highlighted ongoing impacts from additional species, or offered ideas and suggestions on how to tackle pest management in certain areas.

[1] https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0095/latest/DLM315723.html

3 Purpose and background

Biosecurity and protection of indigenous biodiversity is a critical issue for Te Taitokerau and a major part of the work undertaken by Northland Regional Council. Drafting a Regional Pest Management Plan is more than just a statutory requirement; it is an opportunity to drive actions that support community aspirations and other key council strategies. RPMPs are generally reviewed only once every 10 years, meaning a significant amount of work is necessary at the front-end of plan development to create a robust document that will stand up over time.

For this plan review, we chose to seek public feedback on our biosecurity priorities before putting pen to paper. Calls for general public feedback and targeted communications to Te Tiriti partners and stakeholders were undertaken from October 2024 until March 2025.

Our goals in undertaking this first round of seeking input were to:

- Promote engagement with our consultation and increase awareness of biosecurity issues in Te Taitokerau;
- Get preliminary feedback on our intentions and previous biosecurity objectives from a wide range of Te Tiriti partners, stakeholders, communities, and agencies;
- Targeted engagement events with tangata whenua to hear their perspectives, as Te Ao Māori is not well reflected in the current RPMP; and
- Start our planning process with the knowledge of our communities' priorities.

This report summarises the key themes and messages that were discussed in our many hui and correspondences, with the aim of informing the public, elected council members, and staff on the biosecurity priorities across the region.

A proposed candidate species list was included in the consultation and engagement process. The proposed list was developed through workshops with NRC staff that are biosecurity specialists, consultation with Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland Council), and a desktop literature review of various other regional councils comparing the rules, species and classifications in their RPMP. The proposed candidate species list was workshopped with the NRC Biosecurity and Biodiversity Working Party (which included members from Te Ruarangi, our Māori and council working party), and was approved by NRC councillors on the 22nd of October 2024 before the consultation period began in early November 2025.

The proposed candidate species list developed alongside the discussion document is provided on our website.

4 Te Tiriti Partnership

Northland Regional Council's (NRC) Long Term Plan 2024–2034 places Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnerships at the heart of its strategic direction, supported by the policy *He kaupapa here mō te noho rangapū ā-Tiriti me te Māori*, which guides how NRC supports Māori participation in decision-making. The policy also requires NRC to consult with Māori when developing policies and plans, particularly where impacts may differ for Māori communities, and promotes the inclusion of Māori values such as mana, whakapapa, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and kaitiakitanga.

This commitment is further embodied in *Tāiki ē*, NRC's Te Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan, developed in collaboration with Te Taitokerau Māori and Council Committee (TTMAC – Te Ruarangi). The strategy outlines a clear and accountable pathway for giving effect to Te Tiriti obligations, ensuring that NRC upholds its responsibilities and strengthens its partnership with tāngata whenua across Te Taitokerau.

5 Consultation and engagement methods

Consultation and engagement was undertaken through numerous channels, including:

- Public events, such as festivals and A&P shows;
- In-person/online meetings with NRC staff and interested parties;
- Social media invitations to review information and provide feedback online;
- Written/email correspondence to a wide range of groups and individuals working in the pest management space;
- Monitored and reviewed social media posts and newspaper articles.

Invitations for consultation and feedback on the draft list of candidate species for inclusion and other matters of interest were open to the general public, though targeted consultation was sought from organisations and individuals with vested interests in the development and implementation of a RPMP. Staff are still continuing to reach out to agencies, tangata whenua and respond to inquiries from the general public and businesses.

5.1 Tangata whenua engagement - Whānau Oranga Framework (WOF)

Tangata whenua engagement was guided by the Whānau Oranga Framework (WOF), a kaupapa Māori approach endorsed by Te Ruarangi. The WOF uses four pou – mana, mahi, whanaungatanga, and taiao – as a test to prototype, and refine community voice. It amplifies whānau perspectives and brings relational depth to the plan, enabling tangata whenua to clarify their views, shape their responses, and determine their own actions within the framework.

6 Feedback received

Feedback was received through multiple channels:

- The online feedback (form on the website, Facebook and other social media)

- Written feedback (emails or other)
- Hui with iwi/hapū/kaitiaki groups
- Meetings conducted in person or online
- Events attended and facilitated by staff.

As part of this work, NRC staff developed a discussion document and associated proposed candidate species list to inform the public of the process and potential species for inclusion into the new RPMP.

Staff used a variety of methods to engage with tangata whenua, agencies and stakeholders, marinas, pet breeders, nurseries, community groups and other people affected,

NRC received a large amount of feedback about what pests people are seeing around the region and what is causing concerns. NRC staff thank those that took the time to share their views, and this feedback will be used to shape the direction of the future Regional Pest Management and Marine Pathways Plan 2026-2036.

6.1 Who NRC received feedback from

We have heard from various communities across Te Taitokerau:

- Tangata whenua engagement
    - Te Tiriti partners
    - Kaitiaki groups
    - Iwi/hapū/hapori
    - Tangata whenua community groups
    - Kuia and Kaumātua
    - Public drop-in sessions
    - Community events across the region
- Other stakeholders
    - Regional councils in Auckland, Tauranga Moana and Waikato
    - Landowners, farmers, industry organisations and agencies
    - Community organised pest control groups and Predator Free 2050.
    - Nurseries and pet shops
    - General public at a range of events and organised hui.

6.2 Online statistical breakdown

Web statistics The Pest Plan webpage was set up for the public to be able to easily access the consultation materials but also find more information on pests through the NRC website.	
www.nrc.govt.nz/pestplan views during the feedback period	Page views: 1294

Social media statistics Posts were created and shared through a range of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.	
Impressions (number of times that the content was displayed to users)	23,042
Engagements (user interactions with content)	1,153
Engagement rate	5%
Post link clicks	210

7 High-interest species

Throughout the region there are a group of pests that are prominent in the media and in the feedback received from communities including:

- Exotic caulerpa
- Freshwater gold clam
- 'Feral' dogs and cats
- Cattle
- Moth plant
- Madagascan Ragwort
- Wasps

These pests received a large amount of interest from the public and featured largely in social media as well as groups that are attempting to manage these pest species. Overall, there was support for the inclusion of these pest species listed above or for more stringent rules, and an increase in support for community groups/tangata whenua to be able to better manage these species through resourcing and education.

There was also feedback that suggested or supported the undertaking of more site-lead work on specific pests and either extending the areas for existing projects or the creation of new areas. For example, including the Predator Free 2050 projects around the region with a different species classification (specific to that project area) and more stringent rules for their target species (possums, rats, mustelids).

The changing landscape in Te Taitokerau was mentioned highly throughout the feedback and the need for NRC to develop a plan that has provisions and rules that will still be reflective of how the environment will change over the 10-year plan life. Highlighted in the feedback is the growth of the forestry sector in the region and locations where farmland is being converted into forestry. There is concern about the movement of pest plants and mammals being enabled from joining of native blocks to newer forestry blocks.

8 Overall themes

The discussion document and other engagement material invited feedback on biosecurity issues important to the reader. Feedback therefore reflected what people saw in their areas, in their industries, or provided commentary and concerns with respect to impacts that a new RPMP could have on their day-to-day. We found that the feedback was represented by some overarching themes, even across different stakeholder groups.

As we had invited all stakeholders to tell us what was important to them, what they were seeing in their areas or in their work, and how NRC could help shape the next RPMP to address these issues, many of the responses were focused on:

- pests that are ubiquitous (found everywhere);
- criticisms of a perceived lack of action on particular pests;
- criticisms on candidate species inclusion where stakeholders have interests in those organisms and/or where we have not shown evidence of organisms being current or future pests.

This also meant that this feedback generally did not include opinions or views on some of our current pest management focuses, such as our deer eradication program, exclusion/eradication of sea spurge, or the massive efforts undertaken regarding exotic Caulerpa.

These themes are elaborated on in the following paragraphs and categorised by topic.

8.1 Pet breeders

Northland has 6 known physical pet stores that sell fish and reptiles, as well as numerous breeders and sellers of fish, reptiles, and exotic parrots. Out of region online sales of pets are also common, including an existing international export market for exotic parrots.

Our discussion document highlights that there are several existing and new animal species that have been identified as 'pest pets', and that NRC will be looking to restrict the breeding and sale of these animals. This is expected to have direct impacts on those breeders who raise and sell these animals as their trade.

Exotic parrots

Staff received written emails providing initial feedback on the RPMP discussion document, which subsequently led to phone conversations and in-person meetings with individual breeders and breeders associated with the Northland Parrot Society. These discussions are ongoing, but included:

- Recognition that Indian ring-necked parakeet, Rainbow lorikeet, and scaly-breasted lorikeet are potential pests due to their ability to breed in the wild and existing pet populations;
- Scepticism that the other parrot species included in the candidate species list pose a pest threat, due to best practice standards that are used by export-focused breeders and observed viability of the different parrot species held in captivity;

- A desire to work with NRC to develop a better framework to manage the risks associated with escapee populations. Some ideas put forward are included in the discussions at the end of this report;
- Confirmation that there would certainly be economic impacts on commercial breeders, including secondary impacts down the supply chain (salaried employees, food producers, stockists, etc.).

Reptiles and fish

The candidate species list included 'all exotic turtles and lizards'. No written feedback or targeted meetings were held to discuss these inclusions. Verbal feedback from members of the public was supportive, particularly with regard to red-eared slider turtles, which are becoming more conspicuous in the wild.

Similarly, no specific written feedback was received regarding pet fish species (goldfish or koi), only verbal support for rules and management at in-person events.

8.2 Pigs, goats, and kauri dieback

Pigs, goats, and kauri dieback are all listed within our existing RPMP, and feedback regarding these species from hapū, conservation groups, and individuals had the common theme of interconnectedness. Pigs and goats are known vectors of kauri dieback, and calls have been made to link the outcomes of control for each of these species with the intent of protecting particular forests.

Forest & Bird provided in-depth feedback, particularly around the need for NRC to lead or enable methods to better coordinate groups that are controlling these pests. This is discussed further in Section 9 of this report.

Feedback included an acknowledgement that the management of pigs in particular will require significant education for communities where pig hunting forms part of the social fabric.

8.3 Waterfowl

Waterfowl comprises different species including ducks, geese, and swans. These are flocking birds adapted to spending significant amounts of time on or near water bodies. Due to the size of the flocks, the size of the birds, and the amount of time spent on or near water bodies, they can pose significant environmental and economic challenges, with their faecal matter leading to nitrogen and *E. coli* contamination, and their feeding habits destroying nearby agricultural lands.

From the feedback received, common concerns were raised about black swan and Canada geese.

Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is native to Western Australia but has a large natural migratory range and is found throughout that continent. In the 1800s, it was distributed around the world as an ornamental species, including to New Zealand in the 1860s. However, research indicates that the species was naturally colonising New Zealand at around the same time. It is possible that this time period was coincidental due to the ecologically recent arrival of humans to New Zealand, and an

ecological niche being available due to the extinction of the New Zealand Swan (*Cygnus sumnerensis*) in the 1400s. As a result of this natural colonisation by the bird itself, the species is considered to be 'native' and therefore cannot be managed through the Regional Pest Management Plan. Private control can still be undertaken with the appropriate permits from Fish & Game during the corresponding hunting season.

The Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) was introduced as a game bird but is no longer managed under those provisions. Concerns about their environmental and economic damage have been discussed with many members of the general public at A&P shows, and has featured prominently in hui held with different hapū that are managing land at the catchment scale.

8.4 Weeds on roadsides, public land, and unmanaged land

The majority of feedback received regarding pest plants centred around Northland's vast tracts of land that provides habitat for both regenerating native plants and a raft of introduced weeds, and the ongoing struggle with responsibility for management of those weeds. Due to the broad nature of this topic, numerous meetings were held with key stakeholders to bolster the good feedback received from the general public.

8.4.1 Roadside weeds

Pest plants within road corridors are currently managed under Rules 6.4.2.1 and 6.4.2.2 of our RPMP. Rule 6.4.2.2 requires road controlling authorities (District Councils, NZTA, and KiwiRail) to develop and implement a Weed Management Plan (WMP), with oversight from NRC. The purpose of a WMP would be to identify target species and target road corridors where weed management would be undertaken. It is recognised that eradication of all weeds in a road corridor is not possible, so the WMP would be a tool to prioritise improved outcomes in key areas.

Whangarei District Council

Only Whangarei District Council (WDC) had an existing WMP, though it is noted that it was out of date and NRC staff were not aware of particular outcomes from its implementation. WDC staff met with NRC staff and confirmed that this approach suited their operations, though it was recognised that more attention would be needed to better implement the plan and perhaps update the WMP in accordance with the rule. WDC noted that identifying specific target species in the rule would help direct the creation of a WMP.

New Zealand Transport Agency

Staff met with NZTA to discuss the same rule, where it was made apparent that agency budgets were largely focused on health, safety, and network efficiency. As weed management operations were funded through the same budget as all other operational activities (including road maintenance, sightline maintenance, grass mowing, etc.), the primary focus of NZTA inevitably demoted weed management to being a non-priority. NZTA staff noted that a rule requiring a WMP would not necessarily improve accountability, but specific rules for specific weeds in the road corridor may.

General public

The general public raised concerns:

- about a perceived lack of weed management, with many emails and discussions raising concerns about the ongoing spread of weeds such as pampas, Taiwan cherry, agapanthus, privet, moth plant, and woolly nightshade, amongst others;
- where landowners were trying to undertake weed management on their own property while the adjoining road corridor has little or no management;
- about the methods of roadside weed management, with some noting that ongoing use of herbicides resulted in unwanted spray drift and runoff into their own property, and others noting that the timing of spraying/mowing did not take into account bee foraging.

In some instances, there was confusion over which council (regional or district) is responsible for undertaking weed management.

Weed Action Whangarei Heads Trust

NRC staff met with Weed Action Whangārei Heads Trust, which is an organisation that undertakes voluntary weed management across public and private land within Whangārei Heads and some of the surrounding areas. This group has been focused on:

- removing target weed species from high-value areas, such as Mount Manaia and Te Whara / Bream Head;
- reducing weed density along major road corridors, focusing on Whangārei Heads Road and Ocean Beach Road;
- educating members of the public with roadside advertisements, online engagement, and working bees; and
- working with other agencies, community groups, and hapū to reduce weeds in the area.

The Trust indicated a desire for more stringent rules with respect to management of roadside weeds and suggested a potential framework to collaborate with Whangarei District Council in achieving this. This suggestion is discussed further in Section 9 of this report. Additionally, members expressed an interest in how 'Good Neighbour Rules' could be used to compel private landowners into being more responsive to weed management.

8.4.2 Unmanaged land

In more remote areas of the region, concerns on weed management focused on large tracts of land where owners were absent or unable to control weed proliferation. This included:

- Forestry land, particularly where new 'carbon forests' were being planted in place of pasture, and on production plantations which were not subject to sufficient weed management. This was notably more prevalent speaking with people in western Kaipara District and the Far North;

- Pasture land that has been subject to poor management or where the landowner is unable to manage emerging weeds, particularly Madagascar ragwort. This was more prevalent speaking with people in the Far North.
- Public land, whether Crown-owned/managed or council owned/managed, where herbicide use and/or mowing was not undertaken for different reasons. There are some notable locations where public land surrounds the water supply and treatment infrastructure with minimal or no weed management.

8.5 Commercial and food production weeds

Plants that serve an economic or social function are generally grown by commercial nurseries, the horticulture industry, and communities seeking self-sufficiency. These plants can be grown for their ecological functions, physical characteristics, nutritional values, or purely for aesthetics. Feedback has been received regarding some of these plants and potential inclusion in our RPMP in both support and opposition, as summarised below.

8.5.1 Palms and ornamentals

Responses from Northland's nurseries were limited but highlighted that commercial growers are generally knowledgeable and understanding of the intent behind banning the sale and propagation of particular plants. Through the feedback provided, there were some notable challenges to some of the ornamental candidate species for inclusion into the 'banned from sale and propagation' list:

- *Ficus pumila*, creeping fig. An ornamental creeper, often used in urban settings and along fences/walls. Feedback noted scepticism that these have been invasive in New Zealand, particularly since these are predominantly used in urban settings.
- *Ensete ventricosum*, Abyssinian banana. An ornamental subtropical that does produce viable seed but not edible fruit. These are also identified as a valuable permaculture crop for its rapid growth and nutritional content for livestock. Feedback claimed that seeds do not travel far from their mother plant and that seedlings can be easily managed.
- *Dietes bicolour*, African iris. Clumping, rhizomatous perennial. Drought-tolerant and used for ornamental purposes in urban settings and formal gardens. Feedback from suppliers stated that there was not sufficient evidence that this plant is invasive in New Zealand, despite widespread cultivation.

It was noted in multiple feedback letters that there exist cultivars and hybrids of many ornamental plants that do not exhibit the same level of 'weediness' as natural genotypes. This has been demonstrated in Auckland with a variety of "Ecopanthus", low-fertility Agapanthus cultivars.

There were also submissions highlighting the ongoing battles with some garden escapees that are already on our RPMP, such as jasmine and Taiwan cherry. In particular, there are multiple volunteer groups that spend significant amounts of time in controlling these garden escapees in high-value ecological areas and public land.

We did not receive any negative responses regarding the potential inclusion of Chinese fan palm and bangalow palm on the 'banned from sale and propagation' list. We are aware of some palm-

specific nurseries and will attempt to reach out to them again to better understand potential impacts on their businesses.

On the other hand, there was written support from the general public, conservation groups, DOC, Forest & Bird, and Whangarei District Council for the inclusion of these two species, with some stating that further rules and/or public education will be necessary to reduce the existing number of palms. Additional species were recommended by those organisations as well, including the Australian Cabbage Palm (*Livistona australis*) and the Queen Palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*).

8.5.2 Horticulture crops

Horticulture NZ provided a written submission identifying a range of potential horticultural pests and highlighting the ongoing changes to Northland's climate, both of which add significant pressures to food production and biosecurity.

The species identified include a range of insects and fungi that are not currently in our RPMP. Some of these species have not yet established in New Zealand and would still fall under the remit of Biosecurity NZ at the border, for example:

- Brown marmorated stink bug
- Oriental fruit fly
- Queensland fruit fly

Pseudomonas syringae PV actinidae (PSA) and *Isotenes miserana* (Orange fruit borer) are present in New Zealand. The former is subject to a national Pest Management Plan, while the orange fruit borer may not be subject to any management plan.

We only received a single submission (from Department of Conservation) suggesting the inclusion of Fall Army Worm.

8.5.3 Permaculture plants

Feedback was received from some commercial nurseries and other growers focusing on, for a lack of a better term, 'permaculture' plants. For the purposes of this report, this term refers to the range of sub-tropical fruits and crops that are used for sustained food sources, mulching and/or soil improvement, and alternative sources of structural material. Such species may not be widely cultivated or well known, but they have been identified as being potentially weedy, but also potentially more important economically and socially as Northland's climate and agricultural landscape changes.

These plants include, but are not limited to:

- Loquat varieties; a small, orange fruit grown mainly for food. Seeds are dispersed by kererū and exotic parrots.
- Abyssinian banana; large, leafy plant that does not produce edible fruit, but its roots can be harvested. Its leaves can be used in place of palm leaves in certain cuisines, and the plant itself is also used as livestock fodder and/or a chop and drop species.

- Guava (*Psidium guajava, Psidium cattleianium*); small fruit-bearing bush or tree that can produce large amounts of fruit. These also grow easily from seed, producing fruit within just a few years.
- Timber bamboo (*Phyllostachus edulus*); bamboo is widely cultivated for fast-growing privacy hedges, but timber bamboo is not common in New Zealand at this time. Nevertheless, there are some that use bamboo for structural purposes and may have aspirations for processing this into timber.

8.6 Freshwater pests

Reed sweet grass (*Glyceria maxima*) is a perennial aquatic grass that grows up to two metres in height and can form exclusionary mats in drains, streams, and wetlands. Some people raised this as an issue at A&P shows, in written feedback, and at hui, calling for this weed to be included in the next RPMP to protect and aquatic habitats.

At the time of writing this report, freshwater gold clam species (*Corbicula fluminea* and *Corbicula australis*) are not known to be present in Northland. Feedback on this species was limited to feedback from tangata whenua (see Section 8 of this report).

8.7 Wild and roaming animals

Sustained control animals that are often targets of conservation efforts in Northland include possums, stoats, and rats. In areas where such control has been successful and sustained, there has been noticeable increases in wild kiwi populations and growing observations of other native birds, such as bitterns and kaka, and coastal birds such as fairy terns and dotterels. These areas may be held in either public or private land and are often fenced off or set aside primarily for their conservation value. However, these areas are also often adjacent to working farms and homes, where people keep pets and working animals. In some instances, domestic dogs and cats can kill birds in conservation areas.

There are also areas in Te Taitokerau where roaming dogs and potentially wild packs of dogs have caused significant mortality to flocks of sheep and even injuries to people.

There are further places in Northland with roaming and/or wild herds of cattle. While these are not widespread throughout the region, these herds have caused significant localised impacts on native bush, private property, and even human injuries on and off the road.

As a result of people's personal experiences and media attention, the impacts of these animals to conservation attempts and animal husbandry have resulted in numerous responses from people and groups to manage these animals under the RPMP.

8.8 Marine pests

We received one email regarding Pacific oysters, requesting that these are placed into the plan due to their ability to compete with native oysters. Pacific oysters are a major aquaculture crop in New Zealand with potentially more oyster farms on the horizon in Northland's coastal waters.

The invasive *Caulerpa* species that is being found along Northland and Auckland's east coast is headlined across many forms of media, and consultation has resulted in strong feedback from coastal hapū and iwi on the need to include this pest into the RPMP and list it as an eradication species.

The long-spined sea urchin was placed on our candidate list as a 'research species'. More information about its provenance is required to determine eligibility for management under the BSA. Feedback on this included observations of its presence at Poor Knights and in the waters around the Hen and Chickens.

Feedback on *Asparagopsis taxiformis* supported its inclusion into the plan, noting the potential for seaweed blooms and subsequent decay to result in rapid deoxygenation of coastal waters and the subsequent impacts on intertidal flora and fauna.

Much of the feedback on marine pests arose from consultation and communications with tangata whenua / moana. Our coastal iwi and hapū have requested that ongoing management, including monitoring and operations, consider their roles in kaitiakitanga, as well as their ability to sustainably harvest kaimoana. Specific details are described in the following section.

9 Tangata whenua engagement

Overview

The objective of the tangata whenua engagements was to seek authentic tangata whenua voice from hapū, hapori and iwi into the plan development.

The engagements sought to:

- Clarify tangata whenua perspectives on community objectives and NRC activities
- Shape responses, needs, and actions in relation to NRC's requests for input
- Identify practical steps to achieve community aspirations
- Explore opportunities for tangata whenua to take on enhanced roles and responsibilities that benefit both tangata whenua and NRC.

These engagements were grounded in kōrero centred on a living, breathing taiao. The feedback highlights the key actions communities wish to pursue to uphold **te Mana o te Taiao**.

Tangata whenua consistently emphasised the importance of a thriving environment for future generations. A healthy taiao identified by flourishing ngahere, clean waterways, and vibrant native flora and fauna; essential for rangatahi to connect with nature and for the ecosystem to remain in balance.

The engagements provided NRC with valuable insights and lived experiences into methodologies that could be used for pest management strategies that are centred in Te Ao Māori and working in partnership with mana whenua.

Key themes from engagement

Feedback from tangata whenua consistently highlighted:

- The significance of a thriving taiao for the well-being of mokopuna
- The value of mātauranga Māori and sustainable pest management practices, favouring natural methods over chemical solutions
- The importance of empowering whānau and hapū as kaitiaki, with greater community involvement and leadership
- Concerns about tangata whenua being excluded from leading NRC programmes, often relegated to post-engagement roles.

The tangata whenua engagement provided an in-depth detailed and cultural account of tangata whenua perspectives. It explicitly states it provides "kōrero that has been given, shaped by community dialogue.

Understanding of "Pest"

Localised definitions of "pest" varied across rohe, encompassing:

- Animals or insects harmful to humans, agriculture, or the environment e.g., possums, rats, stoats, rabbits, magpies, wild cats, pigs, goats, ferrets, bats, non-native lizards, carp, and even humans in certain contexts.
- Broader interpretations, such as anything in the wrong place at the wrong time without economic value.

This reflects a more nuanced understanding of "pest" beyond biological invasiveness.

Sustainable practices and Mātauranga Māori

Tangata whenua shared practical examples of traditional knowledge, including:

> *"Planting native species helps counteract pest plants, and using natural methods like weaving cabbage leaves to grow mussel spats".*

The language used in feedback was direct and action-oriented, calling for meaningful partnership. For example:

- Emphasis on **Toitu Te Whenua, Toitu Te Tiriti**
- Advocacy for pooled funding to enable local decision-making
- Calls for **Tino Rangatiratanga**, with hapū leadership in pest management plans that integrate whakapapa, pepeha, and cultural values.

Critique of current practices

> Strong concerns were raised about the use of pesticides and poisons, which were seen as harmful to the whenua, awa, and moana, contradicting the role of kaitiaki. Resource disparities were also highlighted
> *"Despite having significant mātauranga, rural whānau are poorly resourced".*

Additional pests identified across rohe included wilding pines, flame trees, pūkeko, and even government policies particularly in Hokianga.

Kaitiaki: philosophical and practical insights

The explanation of kaitiaki delves into its philosophical and practical implications, linking it to

> *"returning to traditional food practices,"*
> *"recognising capitalism's negative impact on the environment," and*
> *"criticising places like Bunnings for selling pest plants".*

Specific proposals and expectations

Tangata whenua provided concrete suggestions to enhance the partnership:

- Classify **Exotic Caulerpa** as an eradication pest, with strict rules and buffer zones; request for NRC partnership in surveillance and monitoring.
- High concern regarding the potential incursion of Freshwater Gold Clam, with tangata whenua actively protecting freshwater sites and supporting "check, clean and dry" programs.
- Pool pest management funding to enable localised decision-making and create training and employment opportunities.
- Promote collaboration between hapū/iwi and dual-funded projects.
- Embed **Toitu Te Whenua, Toitu Te Tiriti** (land thriving, Treaty thriving)in the RPMP.
- Advocacy for Tino Rangatiratanga (self-determination) and hapū/iwi leadership in pest management plans, integrating whakapapa, pepeha, and cultural values.
- Address the harmful impacts of pesticides and poisons on the "whenua" (land), "awa" (rivers), and "moana" (sea), contradicting the role of kaitiaki.
- Recognise the under-resourcing of rural whānau despite their in-depth knowledge mātauranga Māori.
- Support alternative pest management methods, including traditional trapping and **rongoā** plants.

Summary

The use of the Whānau Oranga Framework (WOF**)** within the Tāiki ē work programme demonstrates a commitment to genuine and authentic engagement and community ownership. This approach moves beyond consultation, fostering deeper partnership. Tāiki ē sets the strategic intent for a robust Te Tiriti partnership, while the RPMP consultation process shows how this intent is being applied in practice. It highlights both the progress made and the areas where further partnership and resourcing are needed. The overarching goal is clear: to ensure tangata whenua have a meaningful, influential, and well-resourced role in environmental decision-making and pest management.

9.1 Tangata whenua candidate species feedback

Exotic Caulerpa

Strong feedback from tangata whenua that exotic Caulerpa should be classified as an eradication pest species and stringent rules in known locations where exotic Caulerpa is being managed which would also include a buffer zone. Acknowledging that achieving eradication in the moana comes with its challenges, partnering with tangata whenua to start surveillance and monitoring for early intervention of incursions is hugely important. There has been significant media coverage and public awareness around exotic Caulerpa, in particular after Cyclone Tam and the efforts of mana whenua and the community to remove tons of exotic Caulerpa from the seashores so that it was not left to float back out to sea.

Freshwater gold clam

Raised by iwi and hapū on the west coast of Te Taitokerau where there are Wai Māori (freshwater) bodies of significance including Kai Iwi Lakes and Poutō Lakes. The Kai Iwi Lakes are high traffic areas from visitors that travel from out of region, including Waikato where the freshwater gold clam incursion is currently. There is a high concern from tangata whenua that a freshwater gold clam incursion has a high probability, and tangata whenua are actively trying to protect freshwater sites supporting the check, clean and dry programme and advocacy through summer periods and beyond.

10 Stakeholder proposals

Many of the stakeholders who engaged in this process are frontline conservation groups that have been working on specific biosecurity and biodiversity programmes for many years. In their provided feedback, some groups have developed ideas to address some of the shortcomings that our current plan and operations have had. A few of these suggested are detailed below.

10.1 Forest & Bird

A discussion with Forest & Bird representatives covered a range of topics, including the management of wild ungulates (e.g. pigs, goats, and deer) with the aim of reducing the spread of Kauri dieback. A suggestion was made to implement a targeted programme that would achieve multiple objectives:

- Identification of high-value land with healthy stands of kauri;
- Selection of three 1000ha areas to implement a site-led management plan focusing on reducing ungulates in those areas;
- Develop a three-year programme with set key performance indicators to monitor and assess the effectiveness of management; and
- Expand the areas where KPIs have been achieved, and/or refocus management efforts where they have not.

This programme should also include education and advocacy to enable those local communities to understand the cause and effect of ungulates in these forests, consequences of sustaining wild pig populations, and encouraging participation of local hunters in the physical management of these wild animals.

Parallel to this programme, the mapping of these areas and subsequent success/failures would better inform other conservation groups within the region.

10.2 Weed Action Network Whangārei Heads Trust

This conservation group arose out of some volunteers in the Whangārei Heads area who have been managing weeds on roadsides and in high-value areas, such as Manaia, Mt Aubrey, and along the coastlines and public parks. They have existing relationships and buy-in from private landowners and some departments within Whangarei District Council (WDC), but the weed corridor along the road is troublesome due to the health and safety of operating on this high-speed road on steep banks.

The Trust have put forward a suggestion that they become more involved in weed control along the roadsides on behalf of WDC, in some form or another, to improve WDC's ability to comply with the RPMP rules requiring the implementation of a Weed Management Plan. This could entail:

- running training sessions for roading contractors to improve weed management (selection, timing, methods);
- undertaking weed management themselves, either on the back of already programmed road works or independently, with WDC roading contractors arranging traffic management; and/or
- assisting in the development of a Whangārei Heads site-specific Weed Management Plan.

The suggestions above are largely outside the remit of a RPMP, but a site-led approach could be written into the rules, with NRC taking a non-statutory role in assisting third parties in collaboration.

10.3 Northland Parrot Society

A meeting was held with three representatives from the Northland Parrot Society, and a separate meeting with a parrot breeder, where the existing ban on parrot breeding and sales in Auckland's Regional Pest Management Plan were discussed. Their desire is that we take a more flexible approach, with management focused on actual wild flocks rather than the blanket ban of exotic parrots.

The discussion led to exploring potential measures to reduce risks of accidental bird releases, which included:

- Development of a best practice guide for bird keepers, outlining aviary requirements and confirming what is allowed or not (e.g. free flying outside);
- Support for bird clubs to educate members on the rules and outcomes sought in the RPMP;
- Development of parrot register – likely focused on breeders rather than back yard hobbyists – along with an associated tracking system using numbered leg rings and/or microchips.

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Northland
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā rohe o Te Taitokerau