New Zealand National Committee of IUCN members (NZ-IUCN):

Report to the 2019 Oceania Regional Conservation Forum
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Summary
The New Zealand National Committee of IUCN members (NZ-IUCN) comprises New Zealand government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), international NGOs and individual IUCN Commission members. This report outlines the structure of the Committee and our contribution to the IUCN Programme over the last four years, focusing on delivery of Programme 1 – valuing and conserving nature. The report also comments on our preparation for the 2020 IUCN World conservation Congress.

Introduction
The New Zealand National Committee of IUCN members (NZ-IUCN) was established in 2000 to promote the objectives of IUCN in Aotearoa - New Zealand (New Zealand). It provides a forum where IUCN members can work collaboratively to enhance the conservation and restoration of our natural environment.

Our purpose:
To promote relevant IUCN policy, knowledge, tools and expert networks in New Zealand that support social and economic prosperity that is in harmony with nature.

Our approach:
- Inform policy development in New Zealand to reflect IUCN international policies and guidelines;
- Inform policy development that enables conservation regionally and globally, focusing on the Pacific, Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, and the marine realm;
- Support, promote and encourage the use of IUCN tools, guidelines and resources; and
- Facilitate New Zealand participation in IUCN knowledge building and exchange processes.

The New Zealand Department of Conservation - *Te Papa Atawhai* - is the State Party Member. Other NZ members of IUCN include:

- Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research
- Lincoln University
- NZ Conservation Authority
- Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ Ltd. (Forest & Bird)
- WWF-NZ
NZ-IUCN meet as an Executive Committee of member body representatives four times a year. Meetings are currently open to all New Zealand IUCN members and generally take place in Wellington at the Department of Conservation (Conservation House), with others joining electronically. Our Annual General Meeting is held in September. Elected positions to the NZ-IUCN Executive Committee currently include:

- Chair: Kirstie Knowles, Department of Conservation
- Deputy-Chair: Vacant
- Treasurer: Barry Weeber, Environment & Conservation Organisations of Aotearoa NZ
- Regional Councillor: Andrew Bignell

Over the last few years, the Executive Committee has been focused on developing a Strategic Plan and key work priorities. We have also been planning for renewed promotion of NZ-IUCN to encourage wider engagement with the Committee and the work of IUCN more broadly. This includes planning for our 2020 Symposium, which will focus on the theme of Climate Change impacts on conservation in New Zealand.

**Contribution to the IUCN Programme**

**Programme 1: Valuing and Conserving Nature**

New Zealand’s species and ecosystems have intrinsic value, and their high degree of endemism (52% of our species are found nowhere else) means the continued existence of our species is not only nationally important but globally important. NZ-IUCN and its members are addressing the value New Zealanders place on nature and how we conserve species in a number of ways:

**Red List of Threatened Species**

New Zealand, largely through government agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Manaaki Whenua, have contributed to a number of IUCN species assessments in addition to managing our own NZ Threat Classification System. NZ-IUCN members promote the threat status of species identified by the New Zealand and IUCN species listing processes. Combined with research from members such as Manaaki Whenua, these assessments contribute to our national reporting tools, such as the 2019 Ministry for the Environment’s ‘Environment Aotearoa’ report. This report found that 90 percent of seabirds, 76 percent of freshwater fish, 84 percent of reptiles, and 46 percent of vascular plants are currently threatened with or at risk of extinction. The extinction risk has worsened for 86 species in the past 15 years.

**NZ Biodiversity Strategy and National Policy Statement on Biodiversity**

The Department of Conservation is coordinating the revision of the *New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (NZBS)* to replace the current Biodiversity strategy, adopted in 2000 and expiring in 2020. The NZBS is being developed in consultation with other government agencies, local councils, iwi/hapū and the wider public with the purpose of providing a national framework to guide how New Zealand will protect and enhance biodiversity. The *New Zealand Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020* provided an update to the
Biodiversity Strategy to reflect progress towards some of the global strategic goals set by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Alongside the NZBS, the Ministry for the Environment is developing a National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) under the Resource Management Act that will set out a range of regulated measures that require councils to take a more proactive role in protecting biodiversity. The NPSIB will fill a significant gap in the way we manage our biodiversity across public and private terrestrial and wetland ecosystems, by providing national direction and guidance to local councils. It will strengthen management of biodiversity on private land where many of our threatened species, habitats, and ecosystems are found.

**Illegal Wildlife Trafficking**
New Zealand has robust law (the Trade in Endangered Species Act) to implement the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and address illegal wildlife trafficking. In addition to the continual implementation and enforcement of this law, the Department of Conservation is assessing the need for policy reform and considering the application of infringement provisions to CITES implementation.

At the London Wildlife Conference in 2018, the NZ Government committed to assess the need for domestic ivory regulation. In the Pacific, New Zealand has been working with our Pacific partners on outreach to reduce demand for CITES listed species, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade administered “Pacific Security Fund”.

**Governance tools**
NZ-IUCN members have contributed to discussions on methods to conceptualise, measure and report the value and significance of biophysical systems, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Key initiatives in this space include:

- **The Living Standards Framework**: a high-level framework that emphasises the diversity of outcomes that reflect New Zealand’s unique culture and that are meaningful to New Zealanders, and helps the government to analyse, measure, and compare those outcomes through a wide and evolving range of indicators, including our natural environment and social connections. In 2019 Wellbeing was introduced as a framework for The Living Standards Framework. This is regarded as an innovation to move beyond the limitations of GDP as a measure of economic activity. Wellbeing is more holistic in that it has four domains: social, natural, human and financial capital. Natural capital therefore brings environment and conservation into economic assessment and contributes to an evaluation of intergenerational wellbeing and resilience.
- **Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand – Ngā Tūhoo Aotearoa**: supports the wellbeing framework with a suite of statistical indicators that go beyond economic measures to include social and environmental indicators, that will allow assessment of our current and future wellbeing.

**Species and Ecosystem Recovery**
NZ-IUCN members have directly and indirectly contributed to the species and ecosystem recovery goal through a wide variety of initiatives.

Manaaki Whenua’s research, for example, was central to the new recovery plan for the next stage of the Kōkako Recovery Programme (2017–2025). The plan will advance what has been one of New Zealand’s most successful bird recovery operations, with the goal of further doubling the number of kōkako
breeding pairs, focusing on rapidly recovering population numbers to mitigate the genetic effects of small population sizes.

Manaaki Whenua have also used e-DNA techniques to characterise patterns of species richness and diversity for eight taxonomic groups across five different land-use types, providing compelling evidence that different taxa respond differently to land-use changes. They have also developed numerous tools to aid species identification and enhance conservation management. For example, online information and tools for Sapriniinae and Carabidae beetles, knowledge and diagnostic tools on Saldidae (shore bugs), which are susceptible to landscape modification, and publication of three new checklists of the New Zealand flora (ferns and lycophytes, seed plants, and hornworts, liverworts and mosses). Their work on wetlands has also demonstrated that small wetlands are critical for safe-guarding rare plant species, challenging the simplistic notion that we need only safeguard a few large examples of functioning wetlands.

Our environmental NGOs have contributed on a wide variety of species and ecosystem recovery programmes. Most notably, they advocated for greater protection of Hector’s and Māui dolphins, which resulted in the first restrictions on set-netting in both Māui and Hector’s dolphin habitat. Ongoing advocacy applies as part of the Department of Conservation’s Threat Management Plans for Hector’s and Māui dolphins and for New Zealand sea lions. WWF-NZ also played an integral role in the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust to help reduce by-catch of seabirds, in particular the Black Petrel, in the Hauraki Gulf.

**Protected Areas**

NZ-IUCN has taken an active role in national conversations about oceans and marine protected areas in recent years. For example, WWF-NZ and Forest & Bird both worked with campaign partners to achieve a commitment from the New Zealand Government to establish a Kermadec/Rangitāhua Ocean Sanctuary. Advocating for marine protected areas in New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone and in the high seas have also been priorities for our environmental NGO members, including ECO. WWF-NZ also led the ‘Biggest Whopper’ campaign, which was reflected in the New Zealand Government’s report to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its reporting of New Zealand’s marine protection achievements within no-take marine reserves. In 2017, committee members Catherine Iorns and Ann Brower initiated, contributed to, and facilitated a special issue of Policy Quarterly focused on Marine Governance.

Manaaki Whenua studied the effectiveness of sanctuaries as a management strategy for threatened species and showed that while fenced sanctuaries provide the best outcomes, even unfenced areas provide considerable benefits for biodiversity. This research also found species responses are not all equal, with some benefiting more than others.

**Invasive Alien Species**

In response to the threats to New Zealand’s wildlife posed by introduced predators, especially rats, stoats and possums, the government adopted the vision of achieving a predator free New Zealand by 2050. “Predator Free 2050” (PF2050) is a step-change programme driving coordinated, progressive, eradication nationwide. In 2018 the New Zealand Government approved $81 million over four years to suppress predators in priority ecosystems, protect and increase biodiversity on offshore islands and develop more effective and efficient predator control methods. Predator Free 2050 Ltd, established by the government, has invested in large-scale predator free projects in a number of areas. Alongside these are over 1200 community projects assisting with predator control.
Manaaki Whenua, in concert with New Zealand’s Biological Heritage Science Challenge, have led the development of the national research strategy to achieve the PF2050 goal. They also advised regional councils on the steps needed to eliminate predators and how these can be integrated with other biodiversity restoration initiatives. Manaaki Whenua also lead two of three new Department of Conservation-funded ‘PF2050 tools to markets’ projects to help make new predator control tools safer, more cost effective, or to enlarge their scale. The first project aims to extend a Norway rat-specific pesticide to also targets ship rats. The second project will evaluate the potential sensitivity of native birds to a new type of bait in order to underpin the toxin’s potential development for aerially distributed stoat control.

The Department of Conservation has been working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to develop a programme of work on invasive species, linked to climate change. Under the whole of government “Pacific Reset”, MFAT is seeking to build resilient ecosystems and one component of this will likely support Pacific island countries and territories to better understand, protect against, manage and control, and reduce the impacts of invasive species, where New Zealand can add real value through technical expertise and relevant experience.

Nature for All
The Department of Conservation contributes to the IUCN Health and Wellbeing specialist Group and implements the Nature for All goals through our Healthy Nature, Healthy People programme. This includes working closely with the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand to promote nature connection as a mechanism for positive mental health and wellbeing. It also includes work to encourage people with disabilities to get out into outdoor settings.

Programme Area 2: Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources

Effective and equitable governance of natural resources is promoted and supported by NZ-IUCN in a number of ways:

Natural Resource Management
ECO continues to press for improved paradigms and processes for governance of resource and land claims and their impacts on nature, focusing on shifting from rights-based approaches to putting nature and tangata whenua (indigenous people) at the heart of decision making. They are pressing for legislative reforms in relation to mining, climate change, agriculture, biosecurity and fisheries management and improvements to the New Zealand Resource Management Act and the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act. They, and other environmental NGOs, have welcomed the New Zealand government’s climate related policy of accepting no new oil and gas applications except in Taranaki.

WWF-NZ has an innovative long-term partnership with Moana New Zealand, the country’s largest iwi owned inshore fishing company, which has delivered a ground-breaking commitment on Māui dolphins and actions to reduce bycatch of threatened sea birds, reduce energy and water use, reduce waste, and ensure joint advocacy for improved fisheries management.
In the international sphere, ECO has continued to work with, and independently of, the New Zealand Government on UN rules for management of human impacts and activities on the high seas in areas beyond national jurisdiction (via the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and the High Seas Alliance).

**Bottom-up governance systems**
The Department of Conservation, WWF-NZ, Forest & Bird and ECO have supported hundreds of community groups to implement projects ranging from invasive pest control to environmental education programmes. The Department of Conservation’s Community Fund - Pūtea Tautiaki Hapori – funds projects to the value of $4.6 million per year, focused on protecting and restoring our natural habitats, and halting the decline of and restoring healthy, sustainable populations of our native species.

**Antarctic and Southern Ocean Region**
On 1 December 2017, after five years of work led by New Zealand and the United States, and supported by NZ-IUCN members, the world’s second-largest marine protected area (MPA) came into force in waters off Antarctica. The Ross Sea MPA was agreed by the 25-member Commission for the Conservation of Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). It safeguards more than 1.55 million square kilometres of water off Antarctica, with more than 1.12 million square kilometres being fully protected as a no-fishing zone. The MPA balances environmental protection, sustainable fishing and science interests. It protects important habitats and foraging areas for marine mammals, birds, fish, and invertebrates, including iconic species in the region such as Weddell seals, killer whales and emperor penguins.

NZ-IUCN members continue to support other MPA proposals in the Southern Ocean and wider conservation interests in Antarctica.

**Climate Change**
NZ-IUCN members support the work of Generation Zero, 350.org and other groups for their work in achieving the New Zealand government’s introduction of the *Climate Change (Zero Carbon) Amendment bill*. This is a major step in climate change policy, particularly as New Zealand’s greenhouse gas emissions have risen by 23% since 1990. The purpose of the bill is to provide a framework for clear and stable climate change policies up to 2050 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The anticipated Act will establish a Commission to advise on setting budgets and targets. The bill distinguishes between long-lived cumulative CO\textsuperscript{2} and Nitrogen gases, and short lived but toxic methane. It sets specific targets to reduce long lived gases to net zero by 2050 and reducing methane to 24-47% below the 2017 level by 2050. The bill signals provision for Māori membership on the Commission, for consultation, transparent reporting and assessment of the effects of climate change policies on Māori communities, working people and regions.

There has been high engagement in the submission process, with IUCN member organizations, organizations across all sectors, academics and the public involved in sharing information and preparing submissions. While there are areas for strengthening in the bill, including the challenge of aligning the budgets and targets with the 1.5degrees warming limit, this is a ground-breaking step towards a net zero carbon economy.
Programme Area 3: Deploying nature-based solutions to address societal challenges

NZ-IUCN have contributed to programme 3 in a number of ways, including:

**Understanding cultural values**
Māori have traditional rights and obligations in respect of lands and waters and the endemic species that reside within them. The Department of Conservation is working to deliver conservation more effectively through policy and operational approaches that will enable Crown-Māori partnerships to flourish.

ECO is also working closely with the New Zealand Government, industry, local government and others to improve linkages, cooperation, information sharing and understanding of Mātauranga Māori (indigenous knowledge and approaches) within New Zealand’s system of biosecurity and control of invasive species. These efforts, under the banner of BioSecurity 2025, aim to protect natural ecosystems, livelihoods, domestic and commercial food security, and to maintain cultural and social resilience. Such controls are becoming more important in the face of ecosystem stresses from climate change and marine systems disruption.

WWF-NZ has supported an initiative led by Ngati Kuri (an Iwi from the north of New Zealand) that brought together indigenous Pacific ocean leaders to share knowledge, embrace shared aspirations and deepen connections. This has resulted in the formation of *Te Moana Nui a Hiva*, a cultural network for the Pacific Continent. The network’s vision is to ‘Inspire all people to commit to action for the protection and restoration of our Pacific Continent’.

**Contributing to the SDGs and Aichi Targets**
NZ-IUCN members contributed to the Department of Conservation led *National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), delivered in 2019. The report captures multiple initiatives taken at the national level and a selection taken at the local level, including by local government, non-governmental organisations and business.

NZ-IUCN members also contributed to New Zealand’s first *National Review of progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), presented at the UN’s High-Level Political Platform in July 2019. Contributions were made in relation to SDG Goals 14 and 15. In relation to Goal 13, and in addition to achievements outlined in NZ’s SDG report, WWF-NZ has worked with companies in NZ to support them in developing Science Based Targets. This is gaining momentum, and a total of six companies developed targets in the 2019 financial year. NZ-IUCN members also advocated for the New Zealand Zero Carbon Act, engaging thousands of New Zealanders in dedicated campaigns.

**Ecosystem stewardship**
NZ-IUCN members are involved in a number of awards programmes that acknowledge communities, individuals, organisations and youth achievements in conservation. For example, the *Green Ribbon Awards* recognise outstanding contributions to protect and manage New Zealand’s environment. *Wild Creations* is a collaboration between the Department of Conservation and Creative New Zealand that gives New Zealand artists the chance to be inspired by our unique natural and historic heritage. The *Toroa Award*, recognises the work of students who engage their community in an environmental project in the Otago region of New Zealand. WWF-NZ’s *Conservation Innovation Awards* have provided support...
for community conservation innovators, including ground-breaking water pollution testing technology, invasive predator tracking and pest control methods.

Financial mechanisms
WWF-NZ spearheaded a blockchain pilot on Tuna in the Pacific, which has been critical to the launch of “OpenSC”, a new blockchain-enabled food tracking platform launched by WWF-Australia in January 2019. WWF-NZ also supported colleagues in the Pacific to implement an innovative partnership with Le Cordon Bleu culinary institute connecting local fishers in Fiji with the hospitality sector on Vanua Levu and delivering better value for responsibly caught fish. They are also working on a successful three-year project with fisheries and communities in Fiji and are part way through a second Fiji focused project, providing NZ$2 million committed over three years.

Restoration of degraded landscapes/watersheds/seascapes
NZ-IUCN members are involved in a wide variety of large-scale restoration projects. For example, landscape restoration programmes are a major work area for the Department of Conservation’s Partnerships Group. They provide a significant contribution to the Department’s purpose of working with others to increase the value of conservation for New Zealanders. Project Janszoon, for example, is a unique restoration initiative across the whole of Abel Tasman National Park, from iconic dunes and plants to forests and wildlife. The project aims to control weeds and predators, restore native birds and plants, future-proof its work by connecting communities and achieve long-term biodiversity outcomes.

After intense lobbying by NZ-IUCN members, particularly Forest & Bird and Lincoln University, the landscape and biodiversity values of the Mackenzie Basin, has been made a Ministerial priority. The Department of Conservation is now leading work to develop a Mackenzie Dryland Heritage Area to protect this landscape. This area is internationally recognised as ‘outstanding’, and the complex of naturally rare, glacially-derived, dryland ecosystems, coupled with the extreme climate of the region, have resulted in distinctive biodiversity that is not represented to the same extent elsewhere in New Zealand. WWF-NZ have also developed a first of its kind large landscape project in Northland, connecting social, environmental and economic initiatives through community engagement and with community ownership.

Preparation for the IUCN 2020 World Conservation Congress
NZ-IUCN is looking forward to the 2020 World Conservation Congress and has begun discussions in preparation, including:

- Participation at the IUCN Regional Conservation Forum;
- Participation at the World Conservation Forum;
- Participation in the Motion Process;
- Participation on draft policies and resolutions of interest (e.g. IUCN Synthetic Biology policy);
- Reviewing the draft Programme 2021-24;
- Participation in the nomination of candidates for IUCN Council.