

Pests & biodiversity



The pests and biodiversity group of activities contributes to the following community outcomes:

- A strong economy
- Business and farming activities do not harm the environment
- Environment, in general, is to be looked after
- Native plants and animals can thrive

Environment Canterbury works closely with the community and other partners as the lead agency for managing and controlling pests specified in the Regional Pest Management Strategy and undertaking small-scale management programmes (Biosecurity Act 1993). It is also responsible for controlling the use of land to maintain indigenous biodiversity (Resource Management Act 1991).

KEY ISSUES FOR 2010/11

Animal pest threats to production from land

With the reducing effectiveness of rabbit haemorrhagic disease, a broader range of control methods are required to keep rabbit numbers down to acceptable levels. Continued effort is required to control wallabies within the wallaby containment area. Ongoing effort is required to eradicate the small residual rook population.

Plant pest threats to production from land

Containing the spread of plant pests such as gorse and broom, and reducing infestations of nassella tussock, requires ongoing effort to ensure that land is not lost from production. Ongoing effort is required to eliminate plants identified in the total control plant pest programme.

Animal & plant pest threats to biodiversity

Protection of indigenous biodiversity requires ongoing management to limit the impact of animal pests and the spread of specific plant pests such as wilding conifers, boneseed, old man's beard and wild thyme.

Decline in regional biodiversity

Pests, including wilding conifers, boneseed, possums and feral goats, threaten biodiversity values. Land and water management practices can also impact on biodiversity values. Both can result in loss of species and habitat, which can be difficult to reverse. Appropriate management to limit these impacts is often necessary.

Bovine Tb programme

In areas where the bovine Tb control programme has been successful, national level funding will cease. This means communities will need to consider how to maintain pests at low levels and ensure benefits to biodiversity are not lost.

The maintenance or increase of the local share contribution to this programme is another key issue.

New pest incursions

The ongoing threat of introduction of new plant and animal pests requires vigilance and co-ordination with communities and government agencies. Climate change may also contribute to the introduction of new pests, as a result of warmer temperatures.

Integrated Biodiversity Management

The Regional Biodiversity Strategy (RBS) and the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) provide the platform for an integrated and collaborative approach to protection and enhancement of regional biodiversity values.

The RBS provides the overall strategic direction and priorities for biodiversity protection regionally, and promotes protection of these. Improving the health of water ecosystems is a priority for the CWMS. An Immediate Steps biodiversity restoration programme is proposed for freshwater ecosystems as part of the CWMS. This is a separate but linked group of activities (see pages 83 and 121 of this document).

Which key issues have changed since the 2009-19 LTCCP?

The CWMS has been endorsed by the Council. See the Amendment to the LTCCP in Appendix 1 on page 121.



Effect on the four well-beings

Controlling animal and plant pests is essential for rural Canterbury's economic well-being. There are also benefits to indigenous biodiversity, resulting in enhanced environmental well-being.

Protecting, maintaining and restoring assets, such as braided rivers, lakes and wetlands, will enhance environmental well-being. Social and cultural well-being is enhanced as a result of maintaining both quality of life and a sense of regional and national identity.

There is the potential for the use of some pesticides to have a negative impact on indigenous biodiversity, affecting environmental well-being. This is mitigated through the application of best practice and strict observance of resource consent conditions.

Involving the community

- The Regional Biodiversity Strategy Advisory Group and the Biodiversity Steering Group bring a collaborative approach to biodiversity protection.
- Pest management liaison committees represent land holders and provide advice on work programmes in rating districts and strategic pest issues.
- Individual landholders, groups of residents, and landcare and river catchment groups work with Environment Canterbury on issues such as wilding conifer control, wetland protection, pest control and riparian restoration.

UNCERTAINTIES	ASSUMPTIONS
For 2010/11, the following is uncertain:	For 2010/11, it is assumed that:
a) The number and scale of new pest incursions.	a) There will be a limited number of new pest incursions during 2010/11.
b) The future effectiveness of rabbit haemorrhagic disease.	b) Rabbit haemorrhagic disease will become less effective and other control tools will be required.
c) The implications of climate change on the environment.	c) That there will be some long-term adverse impact on biodiversity values. However, no immediate provision has been made.
d) The impact of possible changes resulting from the review of the Regional Pest Management Strategy.	d) That there will be only minor changes to the Regional Pest Management Strategy. Provision for any changes will be made as appropriate.
e) The funding commitment to the Canterbury Regional Biodiversity Strategy.	e) Partner agencies will continue to support the Canterbury Regional Biodiversity Strategy, financially or through "in-kind" contributions.

Which uncertainties have changed since the 2009-19 LTCCP?

The rural ratepayers of Banks Peninsula represented by the Banks Peninsula Pest Management Liaison Committee have recommended to council that the existing Community Initiated Programme for possums should be continued for another year before being reviewed. Council has agreed to fund \$105,000 for 2010/11 consistent with current funding levels.

Which assumptions have changed since the 2009-19 LTCCP?

No change.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Priority in 2010/11

The focus of this group of activities is on controlling pests and protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

WE WILL UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

Strategy

Continue implementing and developing strategies for pests and biodiversity.

Investigations

Investigating pest and biodiversity related issues.

Planning & consents

Developing policy for managing pests and biodiversity, assessing implementation and effectiveness, and processing resource consent applications.

Monitoring

Monitoring trends and state of pests and biodiversity.

Operations

Implementing pest and biodiversity management programmes.

Communicating, educating & advocating

Informing the community about pest and biodiversity issues and engaging with all partners.

Regulating

Managing compliance and enforcement of the requirements of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005.

Our work programmes in 2010/11

Strategy

- Contribute to strategic development of an approach to pest issues.
- Contribute to strategic development of an approach to biodiversity issues, including reviewing progress towards achieving objectives.
- Preparing biodiversity management plans for high priority sites.

Investigations

- Investigate new pest control tools.
- Research the ecology of pest species.

Planning & consents

- Prepare and report on Regional Pest Strategy Operational Plans.
- Respond to national initiatives for pests.
- Work with communities to develop community-initiated programmes.
- Assess implementation and effectiveness of pest management and biodiversity strategies.
- Review the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Strategy.

Monitoring

- Monitor and report trends for infestations of total, progressive and containment plant pests.
- Monitor and report effectiveness of biodiversity and pest control programmes.
- Undertake surveillance for potential pests.
- Monitor indigenous ecosystems including wetlands, forest remnants, exotic tree spread.

Operations

- Biodiversity strategy implementation including high priority sites.
- Undertake rook control.
- Undertake rabbit control in the Banks Peninsula Pest Rating District.
- Undertake possum control within the Community Initiated Programme area on the Banks Peninsula.
- Control pests in targeted areas to protect indigenous biodiversity.

- Undertake small-scale management programmes to eradicate newly identified pests which have potential to impact on production and biodiversity values.
- Release bio-control agents in rating districts.
- Undertake operations to remove total control plant pests prior to seeding.
- Undertake wilding conifer control in targeted areas.
- Hold a region-wide consent for the use of 1080.
- Contribute financially to bovine Tb control programmes.
- Work with landholders to protect wetlands and remaining indigenous habitats.

Communicating, educating & advocating

- Facilitate pest management liaison committees throughout Canterbury.
- Provide information to the community and raise awareness about the management and control of pests and biodiversity issues.
- Increased protection of indigenous biodiversity through the Environment Enhancement Fund.
- Contribute to Canterbury Regional Biodiversity Strategy inter-agency partnerships.
- Communicate with landholders to co-ordinate rabbit control operations involving multiple properties.

Regulating

- Undertake property inspections on pest-prone land and advise landholders when control work is required under the Regional Pest Management Strategy.
- Undertake enforcement action where landholders have failed to carry out work required under the Regional Pest Management Strategy, e.g. rabbits, nassella tussock, gorse and broom.
- Undertake surveillance of nurseries and places where plants are sold and propagated.

What's changed in our work programmes since the 2009-19 LTCCP?

No change.

OUR LEVELS OF SERVICE

How Environment Canterbury's levels of service relate to the community outcomes

Levels of Service Outcomes	Community			
	A strong economy	Business and farming activities do not harm the environment	Environment, in general, is to be looked after	Native plants and animals can thrive
1 Controlling pest threats to production from land and biodiversity	■	■	■	■
2 Maintaining a capability to respond to incursions of unwanted pests	■	■	■	■
3 Maintaining and enhancing Canterbury's indigenous biodiversity			■	■

Environment Canterbury's contribution will be reported on each year in our Annual Report.

³ McLean and Guilford scales: Rabbits: The modified McLean scale has 8 levels, ranging from 1 no rabbits present, to 8 where rabbits are likely to be seen in extremely large numbers. At level 3 odd rabbits are seen; signs and some buck heaps show up, with pellet heaps spaced 10 m or more apart on average (refer to the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005 for further information). Where rabbit levels exceed level 3 and rabbit haemorrhagic disease is likely to be effective, no formal control programme is required. Wallabies: The Guilford Wallaby infestation scale has five levels, ranging from 1 no sign seen, to 5 with high probability of seeing wallabies. Where Wallaby numbers exceed level 3 within the wallaby containment area or if wallabies are present outside this area a control programme is required. (refer to the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005 for further information).

⁴ Includes feral goats, possums, magpies, boneseed, wilding conifers, bell heather (refer Regional Pest Management Strategy 2005).

1 Controlling pest threats to production from land & biodiversity

Measure 1

The number of sites with total control plants where seed is set.

Measure 2

The number of rooks.

Target for measures 1 and 2

See table below.

TARGETS FOR TOTAL CONTROL PESTS		African feather grass	African love grass	Baccharis	Bur daisy	Coltsfoot	Entire marshwort	Saffron thistle	White-edged nightshade	Rooks
2006/07	Actual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	14
2007/08	Actual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	10
2008/09	Actual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	9
2009/10	Target	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	8
2010/11	Target	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	4

Source: Environment Canterbury.

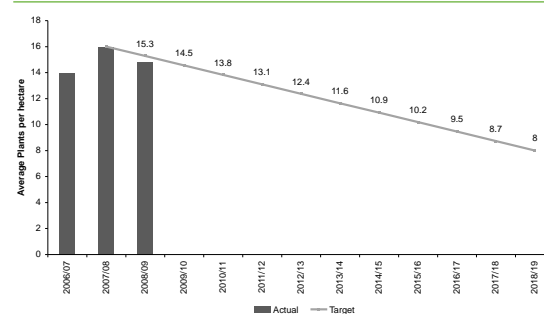
Measure 3

The average number of nassella tussock plants per hectare.

Target

A decline in the average number of nassella tussock plants per hectare.

NASSELLA TUSSOCK



Source: Environment Canterbury.

Measure 4

The effectiveness of containment pest control programmes in keeping rabbits and wallabies below level 3 on the McLean and Guilford scales³, and preventing the area of gorse and broom from increasing.

Target

See table.

TARGETS FOR CONTAINMENT CONTROL PESTS					
		Rabbits	Wallabies	Gorse	Broom
2006/07	Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%
2007/08	Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%
2008/09	Actual	100%	100%	100%	100%
2009/10	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%
2010/11	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Environment Canterbury.

Measure 5

The number of new biodiversity pest⁴ control programmes initiated annually.

Target

See table.

Note: a programme may involve one or more sites.

NEW PROGRAMMES INITIATED ANNUALLY		
2007/08	Actual	5
2008/09	Actual	3
2009/10	Target	2
2010/11	Target	2

Source: Environment Canterbury.

Measure 6

The number of restricted⁵ or unwanted⁶ pests that become established.

Target

See table.

NUMBER OF RESTRICTED OR UNWANTED PESTS BECOMING ESTABLISHED			
		Restricted pests	Unwanted pests
2006/07	Actual	None	None
2007/08	Actual	None	None
2008/09	Actual	One ⁷	None
2009/10	Target	None	None
2010/11	Target	None	None

Source: Environment Canterbury.

2 Maintaining a capability to respond to incursions of unwanted pests

Measure

Availability of a regional response capability that meets Biosecurity New Zealand's requirements.

Target

Available at all times.⁸

⁵ Restricted pests: 32 pests identified as being potentially invasive. Some are already present in small numbers. Refer to the Canterbury Regional Pest Management 2005 Strategy for a full list.

⁶ Unwanted pests: Organisms with potential to be invasive, but not yet present.

⁷ Chilean needle grass was discovered in North Canterbury through Environment Canterbury's surveillance programme in 2008/09.

⁸ These targets were introduced in 2009/10 so no previous data is available.

3 Maintaining & enhancing Canterbury's indigenous biodiversity

Measure 1

Progress on implementing priority actions in the Regional Biodiversity Strategy where Environment Canterbury is the lead agency.

Target

See table.

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY ACTIONS		
Actions	Results	Date
Priority Sites management Plans (Action 1.2)	3 site specific plans are developed each year	Ongoing
Review incentives and funding mechanisms (Action 1.4)	Findings are reported and implemented	2010/11
Collate existing restoration information (Action 2.2)	Map known restoration initiatives	2010/11
Biodiversity monitoring programme (Action 6.1)	An integrated monitoring programme	2010/11
Knowledge development (Action 7.1)	An inventory about existing information and knowledge about biodiversity	2010/11

Source: Environment Canterbury.

Measure 2

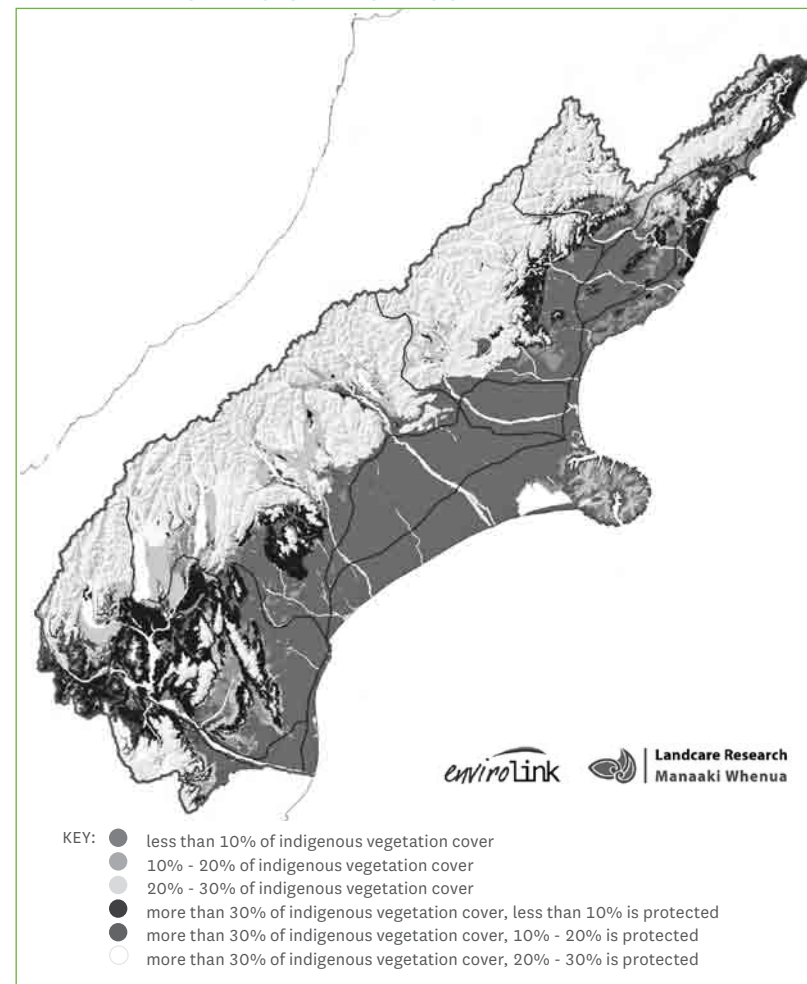
The area of indigenous vegetation in threatened environments with 20% or less remaining (see map below).

Target

The area of indigenous vegetation is increasing (reported 3 yearly).

Note: next report is due in 2011/12.

THREATENED ENVIRONMENTS - CANTERBURY REGION



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

\$'000	Annual Report 2008/09	Annual Plan 2009/10	LTCCP 2010/11	Annual Plan 2010/11
Total Expenditure	4,550	6,250	6,175	6,099
<i>Funded by:</i>				
General rates	2,138	3,487	3,622	3,545
Targeted rates	1,492	1,595	1,668	1,575
User pays/Other	121	690	704	386
Grants	674	116	61	96
Interest	88	105	120	51
Total Income	4,513	5,993	6,175	5,653
Reserves Increase/(Decrease)	(37)	(257)	-	(446)

Asset management & capital expenditure

There are no significant assets involved in this group of activities.

How this work is funded

For more information on source of funds and rationale for selection, see:

- Funding and Financial Policies 2009, Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19 Part B.
- Rating information on pages 99-110.

What's changed in this financial summary since the 2009-19 LTCCP?

Additional targeted rates have been budgeted to continue the Banks Peninsula Community Initiated Programme for possum control through the 2010/11 year. This increase has been offset by additional reserve use as agreed by pest district liaison committees.

User Pays funded expenditure required for regional pest management strategy enforcement work has been reduced reflecting lower levels of activity in prior years.

Rating for Bovine Tb control - what the council decided

Background to the proposal

The national bovine Tb control programme controls possums and other vector carriers of bovine Tb. It was agreed in 2009, based on community submissions, that ratepayers would continue to contribute approximately 10% of the cost of running the programme in Canterbury (the local share). For the 2009/10 year the agreed amount was \$650,000. The draft budget for 2010/11 was \$500,000. This programme is funded 75% targeted rate on rural land and 25% general rate.

The Animal Health Board requested that provision be made for a local share contribution of \$775,000 for bovine Tb operations in the Canterbury region for 2010/11. This would have required an extra \$275,000 to be rated over and above the \$500,000 currently in the annual plan budget.

The Draft Annual Plan 2010/11 proposed:

To increase rates to meet this extra cost.

What the submitters told us

118 submitters provided their views on the proposed increase. Of these, 69 supported a rates increase to ensure the ongoing control of Tb, and another 19 supported the increase if funded by the main beneficiaries.

Council's decision

It was decided not to increase rates to cover the extra costs, but to use \$230,000 of Environment Canterbury's Bovine Tb Reserves fund instead, resulting in a total local share contribution for 2010/11 of \$730,000.