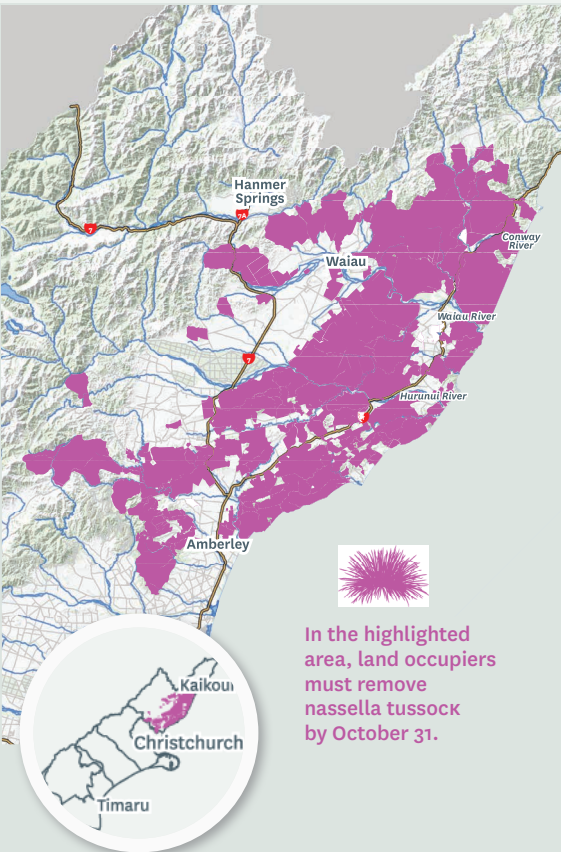


Biosecurity Bites

SPRING 2018



Sharpen your grubbers

It's nassella grubbing time. Hopefully you have already booked in your nassella contractor (or yourself!) and made a start on your control for this season. If your property is inside the highlighted area on the map your plants need to be removed by 31 October, if you're outside of this area, your plants need to be removed by 30 September. Contact us early if you will have any issues meeting your control deadline.

Introducing new biosecurity officers

Jemma Hippolite, Biosecurity Officer, Timaru

Born in Nelson, Jemma has recently moved down from the Bay of Plenty to join us in Timaru. She has an aquatic pest background having previously worked for Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

Jemma enjoys diving, fishing and hunting in her personal time and is looking forward to getting out and about in the water and on the hills around South Canterbury.



Bianca Marshall, Biosecurity Officer, Amberley

Joined the northern Biosecurity team in July. She is very happy to be working in the North Canterbury region where she has lived her whole life.

Growing up in Loburn on her parents' horse stud is where she developed her passion for horse riding and the outdoors. Before starting at Environment Canterbury Bianca studied at Lincoln University and graduated with a bachelor degree in Agriculture and has worked on dairy, sheep and deer farms as well as having 6 years' experience in banking. Away from work Bianca enjoys jet boating, fishing, playing netball and touch rugby as well as skiing in winter.



Kaitlin Allan, Business Support Administrator

Kaitlin Allan joined the Biosecurity team as the Business Support Administrator in June, and will be working with the Northern, Central and Southern Biosecurity teams. Before joining Environment Canterbury, she was with Eliot Sinclair and Partners in Christchurch working as an Accounts Administrator. In her spare time Kaitlin loves spending time with animals, cooking, attempting DIY furniture projects, travelling, spending time at Lake Brunner, and is also working towards her postgraduate diploma in Business Management.



Lizzie Rogatski, Biosecurity Officer, Amberley

Lizzie joined the Northern Biosecurity team in July. She grew up on a sheep, beef and deer farm on the West Coast of the South Island. She studied Biosecurity at Lincoln University before going to sea to work as a Fisheries Observer for the Ministry for Primary Industries. After this, she worked for PGG Wrightson as part of the Onto Farm Team. She is passionate about biosecurity and the outdoors. In her spare time, she is a very keen fisher and dancer. Lizzie also enjoys travelling, jet boating, white water rafting, food and being in the hills.



Keep Canterbury whiskey free

Whiskey grass poses a threat to our economy and environment. Like many other pest plants, it forms dense stands and displaces desirable species. It has low nutritional value for livestock, accelerates erosion and poses a fire risk.

Whiskey grass, also known as broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), is present in the North Island but is not known to be present in Canterbury.

It is a tall grass that grows to one metre with a distinctive erect habit and curly leaves. Leaves are orange-brown during summer and fade to a straw colour in winter. Its seed heads have a fluffy appearance as the seed is surrounded by white hairs to about 1cm long.

Its main way of spreading is thought to be by cutting seeding plants and wind dispersal.

We are aiming to prevent the establishment of whiskey grass as part of the exclusion programme in the Canterbury Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-2038.

We will be monitoring in targeted high-risk areas where it is most likely to occur.



Please let us know if you think you have found whiskey grass in Canterbury by calling 0800 ECINFO.

Photo right: Fluffy looking seed heads of whiskey grass/broomsedge

Photo credit: Auckland Regional Council



Inspections – a few changes

Land occupiers will be hearing more from us during our inspection process for gorse and broom. We are putting more focus on educating land occupiers about the WHAT, WHEN, WHY, WHO and HOW.

We aim to contact you a month prior to an inspection. This is so we can tee up a time for a face-to-face meeting at our initial inspection. This is a great opportunity for you to share what you have done (or plan to do) regarding pest control for your property. It allows us a two-way conversation to share perspectives, property history and technical knowledge. You are welcome to join us on our inspection. If for any reason you don't yet meet the requirements on our initial visit you will have the opportunity to act before our next visit. The above contact process is followed again prior to our follow-up visit.



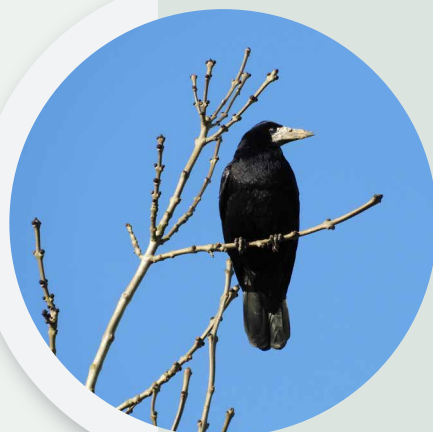
One rogue rook

We have had excellent success in reducing the rook population in Canterbury. We had several hundred in the 1990s and now there is just one suspected rook remaining.

There are rooks both north and south of our region, so birds could still arrive in Canterbury and we need to keep an eye out. We monitor for rooks from September to November when they are easier to find. Please don't shoot or frighten rooks from your property if you find them. These actions can result in scattering the rook population to form new colonies. Rooks are very intelligent. Once they become wary they are much more difficult to control. We manage and pay for rook control in Canterbury.



Report suspected sightings to 0800 ECINFO or email biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz





Branches with gall mite are attached onto invasive Scotch broom.

Mighty mite broom control

Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius) is looking sick since the first releases of Western Europe's broom gall mite (Aceria genistae) in 2008.

A decade on, Canterbury is starting to see the damage these mites can do. Broom gall mites cause stunting, reduced flowering and in some circumstances, kill whole broom bushes.

Your local biosecurity officers have been strategically distributing broom gall mites in Canterbury over the last decade. We have been the first agency to see the benefits of it attacking broom. Since its distribution we have observed broom plants in the Waiau Toa/ Clarence River heavily loaded with galls and others completely dead. North Canterbury's Waiau Uwha River has heavily galled plants and, when combined with dry conditions, large areas have died.

Landcare Research, the agency responsible for getting broom gall mite into New Zealand, has also observed good results from their trial blocks. Hugh Gourlay marked 144 plants at Leslie Hills to follow and 3.5 years later half of them were dead and the rest were galled. At Lincoln, 70 out of 72 plants have died, most likely due to gall mite attacks.



To learn more about gall mite identification, and how to collect and distribute, visit www.landcareresearch.co.nz



Wandering wallabies

You can report sightings of wallabies (dead or alive) outside of the South Canterbury containment zone using our wallaby geomap, found at www.ecan.govt.nz/biosecurity (bottom of page in blue box). We use your sightings to help eliminate small populations before they become established.

Free 'biosecurity' and 'no entry' signs

We have free signs for Canterbury residents wanting to implement on-farm biosecurity. Call 0800 ECINFO if you want one.

To learn more about on-farm biosecurity visit www.ecan.govt.nz/biosecurity





Photos above: Myrtle rust
Image source: Ministry for Primary Industries

Myrtle rust

Myrtle rust, a serious fungal disease, was confirmed as present in the Tasman region earlier this year. The public is encouraged to report any possible cases to MPI's Biosecurity Hotline - 0800 80 99 66. Take a photo and make the call **don't touch it!**

Rabbits on lifestyle blocks

You might see more rabbits around at this time of year as spring is their peak breeding season.

Rising numbers should drop off at the end of summer. It is unlikely a smaller lifestyle block will have a wild rabbit population exceeding level three on the Modified McLean Scale, which is the level we are aiming to contain them to.

Rabbits can still be a low-level nuisance, so as a lifestyle block resident you may wish to implement control or deterrent methods.

Control options for lifestyle blocks are limited as shooting is often not allowed. Fumigation is effective in the breeding season (July to October/November) before a young rabbit's dispersal range increases. Magtoxin (Magnesium phosphide) is commonly used. You can purchase this from your local farm store.

Trapping is another tool. Live trap rabbits so you don't accidentally kill a domestic animal. If you are not able to kill a rabbit humanely yourself, engaging a professional pest control operator is a good option. Releasing a rabbit to another location is a biosecurity offense.

Deterrents WILL NOT reduce a rabbit population. They are useful to help protect your property, plantings and vegetable patch. Deterrents include repellents, tree protectors, fencing and habitat modification.



Visit National Pest Control Agencies (npca.org.nz) for humane rabbit control and deterrent methods.

Modified McLean Scale

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <p>✓ 1 No sign found. No rabbits seen.</p> <p>2 Very infrequent sign present. Unlikely to see rabbits.</p> <p>3 Pellet heaps spaced 10m or more apart on average. Odd rabbits seen; sign and some pellet heaps showing up.</p> | <p>X</p> | <p>4 Pellet heaps spaced between 5m and 10m apart on average. Pockets of rabbits; sign and fresh burrows very noticeable.</p> <p>5 Pellet heaps spaced 5m or less apart on average. Infestation spreading out from heavy pockets.</p> <p>6 Sign very frequent with pellet heaps often less than 5m apart over the whole area. Rabbits may be seen over the whole area.</p> <p>7 Sign very frequent with 2-3 pellet heaps often less than 5m apart over the whole area. Rabbits may be seen over the whole area.</p> <p>8 Sign very frequent with 3 or more pellet heaps often less than 5m apart over the whole area. Rabbits likely be seen in large numbers over the whole area.</p> |
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