

## Biosecurity and Biodiversity Working Party Record of Actions

Meeting held in the Council Chamber  
36 Water Street, Whangārei  
on Wednesday 21 May 2025, commencing at 1:00 pm

### Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, Councillor Jack Craw  
NRC Chair Geoff Crawford  
Councillor John Blackwell  
Councillor Marty Robinson  
TTMAC Representative, Michelle Elboz  
Te Ruarangi Representative, Mira Norris (online)  
TTMAC Representative, Niki Conrad (online)

### I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao - GM – Biosecurity  
Pou Tiaki Taiao | GM Environmental Services (online)  
Biosecurity Marine Manager | Kaeden  
Biosecurity Partnerships Manager (online)  
Tāhūhū Rangapū - Chief Executive Officer  
Biosecurity Pest Plants  
Biosecurity Predator Free Manager  
Secretariat Personal Assistant Pou Tiaki Taiao  
Personal Assistant Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao  
Cr Macdonald (2.07pm)  
Biosecurity Specialist  
Kaitātari Kaupapa Wai Māori  
Policy Specialist - Freshwater  
Policy Planning Manager (online)

The meeting commenced at 1pm with karakia by TTMAC Representative, Michelle Elboz.

### Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

### Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

TTMAC Representative, Nyze Manuel; Biosecurity Manager - Incursions and Response

### Record of Actions – 12 March 2025 (Item 4.1)

**Presented by:** Sandra Harris, Secretariat | Personal Assistant Pou Tiaki Taiao

### Agreed action points:

- Record of actions taken as read and agreed.

## Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 4.2)

**Presented by:** Don McKenzie, Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao - GM – Biosecurity

### Discussion and Agreed action points:

- Myrtle Rust
  - Request for Dr Beccy Ganley to present at next meeting
- Caulerpa
  - Presentation as per agenda item
- Wetland mapping
  - An update on data progress with Māori Technical Advisory Group.
- Sea spurge –
  - Jo provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing sea spurge management efforts in Northland. A total of 22 small infestation sites have been identified across six key areas, with control operations actively underway. These efforts are being carried out in close collaboration with local iwi and hapū, ensuring community involvement and cultural alignment.
  - The recent impact of ex-Cyclone Tam has heightened concerns about the potential deposition of new sea spurge seeds from Australia, increasing the urgency of surveillance and control measures. In response, an additional \$175,000 has been allocated for extensive survey work, which is being conducted in partnership with community volunteers and local iwi/hapū.
  - To support the long-term sustainability of the programme, the Northland Regional Council (NRC) has secured a funding agreement with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), providing up to \$80,000 annually. Despite this progress, several challenges remain, particularly around health and safety compliance and the need for adequate training for local groups involved in the work.
  - The discussion also highlighted the importance of improving regional coordination and establishing clear communication protocols. Concerns were raised about the current reliance on the Department of Conservation (DOC), with calls for a more structured and strategic approach to managing the programme moving forward.
  - Niki Conrad confirmed surveillance efforts by Iwi and hapu in the Far North
- Update Madagascar ragwort
  - Noted: Staff will present a future paper to the working party outlining the progress and effectiveness of collaboration with industry stakeholders in managing Madagascar Ragwort. A recent meeting with DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand at Pārengarenga Farms highlighted the urgency of the issue, with the weed causing significant economic impacts across affected sectors.
  - Noted: Development of an action plan is currently awaiting confirmation of industry co funding Concerns were raised about the weed's spread into forestry areas and the apparent lack of robust biosecurity controls to contain it.
  - Discussion: explored the potential for national regulation and the launch of awareness campaigns to support control efforts. There was unanimous

agreement that Madagascar Ragwort poses a threat of national significance and requires immediate, coordinated attention.

- Discussion: Additionally, the need for a national media campaign was emphasized to elevate public understanding and engagement. The group also highlighted the importance of drawing on international knowledge and experiences to inform local strategies, particularly in terms of public education and awareness around invasive plant species.

*Secretariat note: request for Item order change 4.4 Asparagopsis taxiformis status to precede 4.3 Caulerpa Update. Working Party in favour.*

### **Caulerpa Update (Item 4.3)**

**Presented by:** Derek Richards, Biosecurity Specialist

#### **Discussion and Agreed action points:**

- Derek Richards provided an update on ongoing marine biosecurity efforts, with a focus on surveillance and control activities in the Bay of Islands and surrounding regions. These efforts are being carried out in collaboration with the Department of Conservation (DOC), NIWA, and local community groups, highlighting a strong multi-agency approach.
- Noted: Innovative technologies are being trialled to enhance eradication efforts, including the use of submersible dredges and treatments involving ultraviolet light and chlorine. These tools aim to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of marine pest control.
- Noted: A significant funding boost of \$6.3 million has been secured from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to support the development and deployment of these eradication tools. Public awareness remains a key component of the programme, with a strong emphasis on vessel hygiene to prevent the spread of marine pests.
- Discussion: The group agreed to support staff recommendations for the development and implementation of a local eradication plan, marking a proactive step toward long-term marine biosecurity in the region.

*Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions*

1. That the working party note the information contained in this report and its attachments.
2. That the working party support staff in their requests to Biosecurity New Zealand to stand up a project to have an eradication plan and surveillance in place for Northland

### **Invasive Asparagopsis taxiformis status (Item 4.4)**

**Presented by:** Kaeden Leonard, Biosecurity Manager – Marine

#### **Discussion and Agreed action points:**

- Discussion: *Asparagopsis taxiformis*, a non-native marine species, has been identified in Whangaroa Harbour, prompting concern due to its potential ecological impact. In response, staff have recommended advocating to the Ministry for Primary Industries

(MPI) for the species to be formally listed as an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act.

- Noted: A local kaitiaki group, led by Mira Norris, is actively undertaking a survey and developing a management plan to assess and address the presence of the species. There was agreement to proceed with drafting and sending a formal letter to MPI requesting Unwanted Organism status for *A. taxiformis*.
- Discussed: To strengthen the case and ensure a coordinated regional response, it was also suggested that Northland engage with Auckland and Waikato councils to seek their support for the initiative.

*Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions*

1. That the report 'Invasive *Asparagopsis taxiformis* status' by Don McKenzie, Pou Tiaki Pūtaiao - GM Biosecurity be received.
2. That the CE write to MPI seeking a decision to list *A taxiformis* as an Unwanted Organism under the Biosecurity Act.

## Regional Pest Management Plan Update (Item 4.5)

**Presented by:** April Nordstrom, Kaitātari Kaupapa Wai Māori; Leon Keefer, Policy Specialist - Freshwater

### Discussion and Agreed action points:

A summary of public consultation feedback was presented, highlighting several key themes and community perspectives:

- Strong support was expressed for a site-led management approach, reflecting a preference for locally tailored solutions.
- Concerns were raised about unmanaged weed nurseries and the proliferation of invasive species along roadside vegetation, with calls for more proactive control.
- The need for enhanced advisory services for wasps was identified.
- The pig control needs to be included as a part of integrated site-led management programs.
- Mixed views emerged regarding the banning of certain plants, including guava and loquat, indicating the need for further discussion and clarity.
- Discussion on parrots included the potential for exemptions for export breeders, suggesting a need for targeted engagement with affected stakeholders.
- Concerns about wild dogs and cattle were noted, with a clear preference for reliance on existing regulatory measures with staff able to give advice to District Councils and communities on management of these animals.

### Next Steps

- Staff will refine the species list and associated rules based on the feedback received.
- Further engagement will be undertaken with parrot breeders and relevant industry stakeholders to address specific concerns.

- Staff will create a draft rule to the Road and Rail section, to provide for NRC to enforce provisions of the Biosecurity Act on road and rail controlling authorities where management plan has not been complied with, and where the required work has not been done, to do the work and recover costs as is provided in the Act.

*Direction to continue as per report and agreed actions*

1. That the Biosecurity and Biodiversity Working Party receive this report.
2. That the working party provide feedback and guidance to staff on candidate pest species as highlighted from the consultation phase.

## **Whakamutunga (Conclusion)**

The meeting concluded at 4.29pm karakia closed by TTMAC Representative, Michelle Elboz.

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