



Friday, 11 August 2017

Department of Conservation

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### **Submission on Draft Threatened Species Strategy**

The Environment Institute is a not-for-profit, professional association for environmental practitioners from across Australia and New Zealand. The Institute supports environmental practitioners and promotes independent and interdisciplinary discussion on environmental issues. The Institute also advocates environmental knowledge and awareness, advancing ethical and competent environmental practice.

The draft Threatened Species Strategy sets out the New Zealand Government's plan to halt the decline in our threatened species and restore them to healthy populations. The Strategy identifies further steps we need to take not only to restore those species that are already at risk of extinction, but also to prevent others from becoming threatened.

The Strategy aims to safeguard our vulnerable threatened species, by establishing clear goals for increasing the number of threatened species we (Department of Conservation, Councils, other agencies and the public) are working on, and prioritises some threatened and at risk species for intensive management to set them on a path to recovery by 2025.

The the vision proposed goals are sound:

1. Manage 500 species for protection by 2025 and 600 species for protection by 2030.
2. Enhance the populations of 150 prioritised threatened and at risk species by 2025.
3. Integrate Te Ao Māori (the Māori world view) and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) into species recovery programmes by 2025.
4. Support research, particularly through the National Science Challenges, that helps us to better understand data deficient species.

Although EIANZ has concerns that the statutory tools to protect and allow for threatened species habitat on both private and public land are exceedingly slow.

There does appear to be one significant gap in the strategy – engaging local government and private landowners in protecting threatened species habitat and eliminating pests from private land.

- Page 25 of the draft implies that there are regulatory tools to protect threatened species habitat, this not the case; the Wildlife Act only protects habitat on conservation reserves and covenants.
- We cannot rely on RMA zoning and rules to protect threatened species habitat, without a National Policy Statement for Biodiversity (that addresses this matter), and then it may take up to a decade to get appropriate measures in place.

- In some cases Central and Local Government may need to consider measures to address significant loss of production values when private land is taken out of production for the protection of threatened species habitat e.g. transferrable development rights (currently used in Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions).

EIANZ welcomes and strongly supports the Threatened Species Strategy, the approach taken, the goals and the timelines proposed.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bellingham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Mark Bellingham

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