

# Nelson Nature Strategy 2017-2020



## Introduction

Nelson Nature is Nelson City Council's long term programme (2015-2025) to protect, restore and enhance the Nelson/Whakatū region's native ecosystems and species. Nelson Nature is both a holistic and targeted approach to care for Nelson/Whakatū's natural environment, boosting the conservation and ecological work carried out on both public and private land.

The programme recognises the Council's responsibilities as a Unitary Authority (encompassing both city and regional functions) and delivers on a number of non-regulatory aspects of the Resource Management Act and the Nelson Resource Management Plan (the Whakatū/Nelson Plan, currently under review). It also aligns strongly with the Nelson Biodiversity Forum's objectives as outlined in the [Nelson Biodiversity Strategy](#).

The Department of Conservation (DOC) provides technical support to the Nelson Nature programme which ensures both agencies' work in Nelson/Whakatū is aligned to maximise outcomes and provides additional technical expertise to the programme. Nelson Nature works closely with other agencies, community groups, businesses and private landowners to coordinate restoration efforts and enhance ecological outcomes across the Region.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a framework to guide and help prioritise operational planning and implementation for the Nelson Nature programme. This Strategy outlines the six key focus areas<sup>1</sup> for the Nelson Nature programme, which include all of the eleven projects identified in the Initial Business Case for Nelson Nature (A1345953). The Strategy identifies the overall programme's goal and outlines project objectives and priority actions for the next three years. These are listed in order of priority, based on an assessment of their inherent biodiversity value and the urgency, achievability and biodiversity gains if they were achieved.

The Strategy has been developed with support from the Department of Conservation, Nelson Biodiversity Forum and iwi.

## Goal

*Protecting, restoring and enhancing Nelson/Whakatū's natural environment  
from the mountains to the sea.*

## Projects, Objectives and Priority Actions

### 1. Dun Mountain and inland hill country mineral belt, limestone outcrops and forest ecosystems

**Objective:** The unique and/or rare plant and animal species and communities in the mineral belt, limestone outcrops, and the forests of Dun Mt and upper Maitai and Roding catchments are protected and enhanced.

**Explanation:** The Dun Mountain mineral belt is a nationally important ecosystem because of the rare plants and animal communities that occur there. The mineral belt is contiguous with the upland forests of the upper Maitai and Roding catchments, which themselves hold a range of different forest types,

including rare limestone outcrop communities. The Dun Mountain mineral belt and Maitai/ Roding forests combine to create a 10,000 ha area that is significant for its exceptional biological diversity of species and ecosystems. The mineral belt, limestone and forest ecosystems are threatened by pest plants and animals, particularly wilding conifers, vine weeds, browsing mammals and mammalian predators.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Manage impacts of wilding conifers on mineral belt as per wilding conifer operational plan
- 2 Develop and implement an Ungulate Management Plan to protect vegetation communities
- 3 Manage the impacts of gorse and Spanish heath on the mineral belt as per the Gorse & Spanish Heath Operational Plan
- 4 Develop and implement a *Powelliphanta hochstetteri consobrina* snail management plan
- 5 Develop and implement a strategic weed management plan to protect high value forest areas within the upland parts of the Maitai and Roding catchments
- 6 Establish impact of possums and hares on flora values within limestone, forest and mineral belt ecosystems and feasibility of management
- 7 Establish impact of predators on fauna values within limestone, forest and mineral belt ecosystems and feasibility of management

## **2. Waterways**

**Objective:** Aquatic biodiversity of Nelson/Whakatū's freshwater streams and rivers is protected and enhanced.

**Explanation:** Native fish are threatened in urban waterways by loss of spawning habitat and barriers that restrict fish migration. High levels of sediment, contaminants (e.g. heavy metals, litter), nutrients, lack of dissolved oxygen and warmer water temperatures have a negative impact on native fish populations and other aquatic biodiversity in both rural and urban waterways. Stock access to waterways, contaminated stormwater and lack of riparian vegetation contribute to these impacts.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Develop catchment operational plans for key rivers and streams
- 2 Protect and enhance habitats for fish spawning
- 3 Remove native fish barriers
- 4 Establish and maintain riparian margins to protect and enhance freshwater biodiversity
- 5 Facilitate stock exclusion from riparian margins
- 6 Advocate for maintenance of minimum flows for instream biodiversity values
- 7 Advocate and/or support for reduction in contaminants and sediments into freshwater

### 3. Coastal Habitats

**Objective:** Key coastal and estuarine ecosystems, sites and species are protected and enhanced

**Explanation:** Nelson/Whakatū's coastal ecosystems are amongst the most heavily modified ecosystems in the region. Dunes and sandspits are largely dominated by exotic vegetation, only a small fragment of the original native vegetation cover of coastal flats and estuarine vegetation remains largely due to reclamation, urban and farm development. Despite this habitat loss, a number of nationally threatened plants and animals persist in coastal ecosystems, including banded rail, coastal peppergrass and a beetle endemic to the Tahunanui back beach. These vulnerable coastal ecosystems and species are at risk from plant and animal pest impacts and increasingly, to climate change effects, e.g. coastal inundation and erosion.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Prioritise key sites for protecting coastal and estuarine biodiversity, including provision for sea level rise
- 2 Develop and implement management plans for high priority coastal and estuarine sites

### 4. Significant Natural Areas on private land

**Objective:** Protect and enhance remaining significant biodiversity sites on private land.

**Explanation:** Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) are sites that have natural ecosystem values that are representative, rare, diverse, and/or provide important corridor connections or habitats for rare native species. Ninety percent of the 160 SNAs identified in Nelson/Whakatū are on private land. The SNAs on private land include a range of forest types, coastal ecosystems and freshwater wetlands and are often the few remaining refuges for protecting Nelson/Whakatū's ecosystems and species. Private landowners often do not have the resources required to manage the plant and animal pest threats to these sites by themselves.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Prioritise SNAs and potential SNAs to determine engagement and support offered
- 2 Respond to requests from landowners to support survey on potential SNAs
- 3 Work with landowners to protect and manage highest priority SNAs
- 4 Prioritise requests from landowners to protect/manage SNAs outside the top priorities

### 5. Biodiversity corridors & networks

**Objective:** Enhance the connection and condition of fragmented parts of the terrestrial and/or freshwater environments through corridors or networks.

**Explanation:** Many of the Nelson/Whakatū's remaining native ecosystems are small and fragmented which restricts the dispersal of native wildlife and recovery of remnant and regenerating native vegetation.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Define, identify and prioritise key biodiversity corridors and networks
- 2 Develop and implement a management plan for high priority corridors and networks

**6. Wildlife Halo**

**Objective:** Protect key native bird species in the Halo area.

**Explanation:** There are a number of community groups and individuals in Nelson/Whakatū who are controlling introduced predators in Parks and backyards with the goal of enhancing wildlife populations. Independent of this, native bird populations in Nelson/Whakatū are likely to increase as birds disperse from the predator-free Brook Waimarama Sanctuary. There is the potential to further enhance native bird populations around the City by providing strategic guidance, technical advice and support for existing and new community predator control and habitat enhancement initiatives.

**Priority Actions:**

- 1 Develop an independent feasibility study for the protection of key native bird species in the Halo area
- 2 Develop and implement an operational plan to control predators and enhance wildlife habitat in the Halo area

**Monitoring and Review**

A monitoring programme to assess the achievement of the objectives and actions in the Strategy is being undertaken as part of the Nelson Nature programme.

The Strategy will be reviewed annually during development of the Nelson Nature annual work programme, and fully updated every three years, in consultation with the Department of Conservation, the Nelson Biodiversity Forum and iwi.

<sup>1</sup> There is an additional project currently within the Nelson Nature programme that is focused on Taiwan Cherry management. The objective of the Taiwan Cherry project is to manage the impact of this weed species on Nelson/Whakatū's biodiversity values. The status of Taiwan Cherry is currently being reviewed as part of the Nelson Tasman Regional Pest Management Plan and will determine whether Taiwan Cherry management becomes part of the Nelson/Tasman Biosecurity Programme. In the interim, Nelson Nature will continue to lead the management of Taiwan Cherry in Nelson/Whakatū, with the following priority actions: 1. Develop a feasibility study for the eradication of Taiwan cherry and if appropriate; and 2. develop and implement an operational plan to manage Taiwan cherry.