

Report 15.531  
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Committee Environment  
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## **Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022: Operational Plan Report 2014/15**

### **1. Purpose**

To report on the performance of the 2014/15 Operational Plan for the implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

### **2. Background**

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) is responsible for the Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS). The Council approved the current RPMS on 17 September 2002.

Under Section 100B of the Biosecurity Act 1993, Council is required to prepare an annual Operational Plan outlining the activities under the RPMS. Following the end of the financial year, Council is required to produce an Operational Plan Report, detailing the results of the Operational Plan.

The Operational Plan Report is made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

### **3. The Operational Plan Report**

During 2014/15 the Biosecurity Department continued the implementation of the RPMS as outlined in the Operational Plan 2014/15. Control activities are based on the biology of the pest plant and pest animal species and best practice pest control methodology. Resources are allocated according to the impact of the species and the subsequent requirements of the management programmes.

The control and management regime for each pest species is considered against the impacts, spread, costs and benefits of the species. All pests in the strategy are listed in one of five management categories; Regional Surveillance, Containment, Total Control, Suppression and Site-Led.

The majority of resources continued to be allocated to the Total Control and Site-Led species. Intensive surveys for Total Control plant species were

undertaken across the region. All 1,108 Total Control sites were inspected at least once during the year and any plants found were controlled. Good progress is being made, with 314 of the Total Control sites now determined to have the target species eradicated.

The Total Control rook programme in 2014/15 was deferred. This was the second season we managed to control only a small portion of the nesting birds due to another extremely windy season. It is unknown what long term impact this reduced control over the last two seasons will have on the success of the programme. The programme is aiming to achieve total control of rooks in the region by 2025.

The successful suppression of feral rabbits continues across the region with numbers remaining at low levels overall. The mild start to winter, which usually favours rabbits, appeared to have little impact on the rabbit population. The rabbit haemorrhagic disease continues to cycle naturally in the wild rabbit population, assisting with the management of rabbit numbers.

The Regional Possum and Predator Control Programme (RPPCP) controlled possums and other predators across 70,200 ha of the Wellington region during the 2014/15 year. The programme included 42,200 ha declared free of bovine Tb and a control of further 28,000 ha in areas which have never been included within the National Pest Management Strategy for Bovine Tb vector control programme. The RPPCP continues to expand, now encompassing peri-urban areas of Wellington (7,250 ha). The monitoring results for the majority of controlled areas indicate we are keeping possum numbers at very low levels that are well below the target of 5% Residual Trap Catch.

Site-Led programmes remain the primary focus of the RPMS, with successful management of a wide range of plant and animal pests in specific sites. The long-running Key Native Ecosystem programme, now administered by the Biodiversity Department, continues to be successfully implemented. A realignment of the work programme has seen pest control expand into a number of new vulnerable ecosystems.

An essential part of implementing the Strategy is successful relationship building and providing advice and education to the community. The Biosecurity department retains strong partnerships with Central and Local Government, iwi, science providers, community groups and the general public. Advice and education remains an important tool to ensure that the public are aware of their responsibilities under the RPMS, and can access resources and information for successful pest management.

Enquiries from the public remain an important part of the RPMS, with 961 enquiries for information, advice and assistance with pest control during the 2014/15 year. Many of these required site visits or inspections, often followed by control advice and sale of equipment. The GWRC website continued to receive regular enquiries seeking information and advice on pest management.

The attached 2014/15 RPMS Operational Plan Report further details the achievements against the objectives of the Operational Plan, and lists the spending and outcomes of the control programmes.

#### **4. Communication**

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the RPMS Operational Plan Report 2014/15 is available for inspection. Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Minister(s) for their review and comment.

#### **5. The decision-making process and significance**

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002. Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation of the making of decisions.

##### **5.1 Significance of the decision**

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter is considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

##### **5.2 Engagement**

In accordance with the significance and engagement policy, no engagement on these matters was considered necessary.

#### **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Approves the Operational Plan Report 2014/15 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.*
- 2. Notes that a copy of the Operational Plan Report 2014/15 will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.*
- 3. Notes that the Operational Plan Report 2014/15 will be made available for public inspection.*

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Report approved by:

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**Attachment 1: Operational Plan Report 2014/15 for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022**