

TIMARU



DISTRICT COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera a Rohe
o Te Tihi o Maru

Your Natural Heritage

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS

Summer 2025 Update

Native musk - *Thyridia repens*
a coastal marshland species



YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

www.timaru.govt.nz

A message from Nigel Bowen, Timaru District Mayor

The political spotlight is never far from biodiversity these days and many of you are already living and breathing its goals without realising it.

Council has made huge strides with the work that went into the Proposed District Plan and irrespective of changes that come out of the hearing process; we will continue to work and build on the good work that's already been done.



That good work includes empowering our local ecological groups that spend their weekends planting trees, and farmers who plant native shelter belts and riparian margins, and protect wetlands.

There are many other residents with a passion for our environment, and their projects are diverse. Some fund the work themselves, others apply to Council for biodiversity grants that can help their projects gain traction.

So our community is already invested and involved in many biodiversity projects, some trying to protect indigenous biodiversity that is unique to our patch but at risk of being lost.

Farmers, whose lives depend on the land, naturally go about their daily lives knowing they must look after the natural environment that looks after them. They are actively sharing information and good practice.

This work is for all of us, and has been developed in partnership with interest groups, landowners and Manawhenua.

These newsletters demonstrate Council's commitments to share knowledge and understanding and, if possible, even the passion of those undertaking this great work. They are an opportunity for all of us all to learn about where they might get involved and even the act of reading it will grow your own knowledge.

Keep supporting us as we continue on this important journey.'

FIND OUT MORE - INFORMATION AFTERNOON

An information afternoon on caring for areas of significant biodiversity on private properties will be held toward the end of March 2025.

Date, time and venue yet to be finalised, but keep an eye on Council website and Council noticeboard page for further details.

Any queries to Council's Planning Unit: 03 687 7200, or Gary Foster: 0274 310 637

HE WAKA EKE NOA

We are all in this together

Welcome to this update on Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) in the Timaru District.

As readers of previous editions of this brochure will know, the Timaru District Plan is under review.

The process is very involved, but is a fascinating process of which I will try to simplify and summarise here. SNA rules (and all the other rules for that matter) came into effect September 2022 and will become operative with whatever amendments are made by the hearing panel as a result of the submissions and hearings.

| ECC-01 | Clearance of Indigenous vegetation (except as provided for in ECC-02 for Road protection works or ECC-03 for National Grid activities) |
|--|---|
| 1 Significant Natural Areas Overlay | Activity status: Permitted Where PER-1 The vegetation to be cleared is causing an imminent danger to human life, structures, or utilities and the clearance is undertaken in accordance with advice from a suitably qualified arborist; or PER-2 The clearance is carried out by the relevant Road Requiring Authority: 1. to install road safety assets for the purpose of reducing traffic risk within the road corridor, and the clearance is less than 5m ² within a single block; or 2. to maintain existing roadside drainage; or PER-3 The vegetation clearance is carried out by Ngāi Tahu whenua for the purposes of mahinga kai or other customary uses, where it has been certified by Te Runanga o Aorangi that the activity will meet tikanga protocol (Note: Te Runanga o Aorangi will notify the Timaru District Council prior to such activities occurring); or PER-4 The vegetation clearance is carried out to remove material infected by unwanted organisms as declared by the Minister for Primary Industries Chief Technical Officer, or an emergency declared under the Biosecurity Act 1993; or PER-5 |

The above shows a snapshot of Rule 1, taken from the notified plan, setting out restrictions on what can be undertaken in SNAs.

The current, Operative District Plan (the “ODP”), which has been effective since 2005, is still operative, and running concurrently with the Proposed District Plan (the “PDP”). Much of the PDP is not yet operative, with a notable exception of the Significant Natural Areas Chapter, which was given immediate legal effect by the Environment Court in 2022. The PDP is being reviewed, line by line, and each rule, including those that have immediate legal effect, can be submitted on by anyone, recommending changes (a process which has now passed).

Council staff have commissioned a report on each submission received and provide a recommendation on any changes that should be undertaken to the PDP, based on the submissions received. These reports are commissioned under section 42A of the Resource Management Act 1991, and so we refer to it as a “s42A report”, and the officer who wrote the report as a “s42A officer”.

On 12 and 13 November, 2024, "Hearing D" was held in the Council Chambers. This hearing covered the Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity Chapter, which included the rules relating to SNAs. The hearings panel heard (and now get to consider) all submissions, evidence, and the recommendations made by the s42A report. In due course, the Hearings Panel will issue a decision, or a decision on part of the PDP, announcing what changes are to be adopted. When the decisions are issued, the parts that the decision relates will ultimately replace the ODP.

References and Useful Links

The Operative District Plan

www.timaru.govt.nz/services/planning/district-plan/district-plan-online

The Proposed District Plan

www.timaru.govt.nz/services/planning/district-plan/proposed-district-plan

Hearing D details

www.timaru.govt.nz/services/planning/district-plan/proposed-district-plan/hearings-information/hearing-d-os-zones-hazards-and-risks-nat-environment

Hearing D 12 November 2024 DAY 1 recording

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-tqez61-94

Hearing D 13 November 2024 DAY 2 recording

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2U8_yM09lw

Would you like to receive this news via email instead?

Please send an email to one of our contacts below and they will subscribe you.

Questions or queries

If you have any questions relating to SNAs, then do not hesitate to contact either William Halkett (Planner) and Hamish Barrell (Planning Manager), at the Timaru District Council by phone (03 687 7200), with any queries you may have. They are more than happy to assist you.

Gary Foster who is assisting the Planning Unit on a part time independent basis may also be able to help and can be contacted on 027 431 0637.



Pilot project for Biodiversity in South Canterbury – A Review.

In August 2023 funding was approved by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) for a 12 month pilot project in South Canterbury to explore the impact of having a Biodiversity Facilitator in the region to facilitate improving outcomes of indigenous biodiversity enhancing projects and programs.

While much of the funding for this project came from Ministry for the Environment (MfE), additional funding from the Mid & South Community Canterbury Trust enabled the Sustainable South Canterbury Trust to create the Biodiversity Facilitator position.

Chris Konings was recruited by the Trust to this role in late August 2023 and drew upon his previous experience in community engagement, change management, youth work and science. Chris grew up across the road from Ruakura Research Station, in Hamilton and is married to a North Otago farmers daughter. He has four adult children and has tramped all over NZ. He has a B.Sc. in Biology and Earth Science from Waikato, a P.G.DIP. in Ministry from Otago and graduated a Master in Environmental Policy & Management from Lincoln University 2022.

With a blank sheet on how to get the project off the ground Chris very quickly got into the role and set some objectives for what he wanted to achieve during the 12-month trial period. Those objectives were.

1. Education and sourcing advice for landowners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups, including practical advice and educational resources across a range of topics like species identification, management or eradication of pests and invasive species, funding opportunities, restoration management, volunteer management.
2. Helping different groups connect across the landscape for greater combined impact.
3. Building a shared knowledge base across volunteers, community groups, and council staff, facilitating problem solving and development of community resources.
4. Encouraging better understanding and working relationships with Mana whenua

To meet those objectives Chris identified four initial priorities that he wanted to achieve and those priorities and the outcomes to date for them are as follows on the following pages.

- a. To facilitate the empowering of a localised coastal community wanting to enhance the biodiversity of their lagoon, and document this process of coastal community biodiversity enhancement.

Normanby Lagoon

Following an approach from a landowner adjacent to the Normanby lagoon on the coast south of Timaru in late 2023 an open information evening chaired by Chris was held in the Normanby Hall in April 2024 to identify and discuss issues and opportunities for enhancement of the lagoon. The meeting was attended by 31 locals and representatives from Timaru District Council, Environment Canterbury and Dept of Conservation.

An outcome from that meeting was a desire by the local community for them to establish and lead a Normanby Lagoon Catchment Group. This group was established and formalised in May 2024.

The group was successful in obtaining Significant Natural Areas funding to purchase traps for an ongoing pest control programme, and plants to begin revegetation of the lagoon margins.

On 1 September a planting morning attracting some 24 locals and others saw

550 native plants placed along portions of the northern side of the lagoon to improve habitat in these areas and to provide buffer from adjacent arable farming activities.

Since that time the group have applied to ECAN's OTOP Zone committee for biodiversity funding to enable further revegetation plantings to be undertaken around the lagoon perimeter and are investigating an option to fence a portion of the lagoon edge to prevent stock access to the fragile lagoon margin.

The group continues to manage the existing revegetation plantings to ensure successful establishment, and undertakes continuing animal pest control. The issues of excessive water buildup in the lagoon have also been raised and is the subject of conversations with both KiwiRail and ECAN to see if some protocol can be established to manage this.



- b. To facilitate drawing together multiple voluntary, similarly focused, groups in a region, to encourage and resource the groups in their biodiversity enhancing activities. For example, the predator free, forest restoration, and catchment groups in South Canterbury.

This has been successful. Good connections have been established with various groups across South Canterbury including Orari River Protection Group, Project Peel, Blandwood Road group, in Geraldine area, Point Bush Sanctuary, Friends of Studholme Bush, Kelcey's Bush, Wainono lagoon in Waimate area, Friends of Claremont Bush, Talbot Forest, Kakahu Bush, Burkes Pass, SC Forest and Bird, Central South Island Fish and Game, QE2 trust and many others. Additionally, Chris says that whilst working with DOC, several different trapping groups have been established and/or connected across the region, plus contact has been

made with many individuals involved in ecological restoration work on their own or public lands.

This is an area that is one of continuing growth and there is however still much that can be achieved in this space. Encouraging groups and individuals to work collaboratively to showcase their activities, share knowledge and resources is he says a great way to improve ecological outcomes and encourage other likeminded owners, volunteers and others to participate.



Fairlie A&P show

c. To facilitate a senior high school aged youth group who are interested in the environment, want educational and experiential opportunities that inspire and equip them for future lifelong involvement in biodiversity enhancing activities.

There have been some good positive outcomes here. Using the Eco Centre at Redruth as a base Chris holds monthly meetings to which up to 30 young persons regularly attend – to date these have looked at plant identification, soils, climate change and coastal erosion.

The topic of trapping and animal pest control is coming up.

A recent camp was held at Peel Forest showing kids aspects of planting and maintenance, pest plant and animal control, plant identification and cultural significance.

Secondary schools from across South Canterbury are involved including Mackenzie College, Timaru Boys High, Timaru Girls High, Roncalli College, Craighead, Mountainview College, Geraldine High and Waimate High School.

Chris says the object is to facilitate good information and participation among the young people so that school groups can

also encourage better and more effective outcomes with a focus on senior school students to empower them to show leadership. Chris has also established working ties with groups such as ECAN Youth Ropu, Forest and Bird Youth and Lions Leos.

He says that groups working together accentuates the 'team' concept where together everyone achieves more.



- d. To facilitate good management and sustainability of indigenous biodiversity enhancing projects and actions by businesses so that a vision of a restored indigenous biodiverse environment is achieved and encourages sustainable business practices.

Chris freely admits that this priority has suffered due to a lack of time and resources over the term of the project.

He is however enthusiastic about the opportunities that could be realised with

this initiative which he says aims to provide support mechanisms and resources to be able to achieve enhanced environmental and biodiversity outcomes at a business level.

Other stuff Chris has been involved with

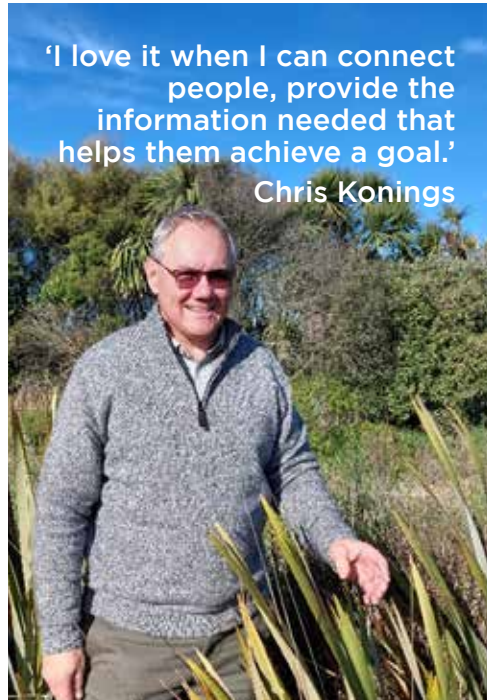
- Assisting local groups or individuals with restoration and pest control initiatives on private and public land, and especially helping people come to grips with information and processes involved in biodiversity enhancement work. For example organising seminars that teach how to design your restoration planting.
- Encouraging the new Four Peaks Te Moana Catchment group and connecting them with Doc's Tim Exton for a trapping talk.
- Sourcing funds for groups.

During the course of the 12-month project he has enjoyed meeting people and hearing about all the great mahi they are doing on their farms or in the local bush reserves, catchments and coastal areas.

Chris' final comments on the 12 month project: Empowering, fun, challenging, positive, problematical, frustrating, and yet satisfying when it comes together.

Where to from here for Chris?

Chris is working half time for the Eco Centre and half time for Timaru District Council in the Drainage and Water Team on the Seadown water main renewal project.



If you want to connect with different groups or showcase what you're up to, please get in touch at ibdfacilitator@gmail.com or call me on 0220 847 450.



Native salt tolerant Glasswort – *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* and Remuremu – *Selliera radicans* beds along the margin of Te Wharetawhiti – Pig Hunting Creek

Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands.

Wetlands are taonga, supporting high levels of biodiversity, and contribute vital ecological functions.

They provide habitat and breeding grounds for a diverse range of species including indigenous invertebrates, plants, fish (for example, kōkopu and tuna (eels), and bird species eg. Australasian bittern-matuku-hūrepo and pied shag - kāruhiruhi, many of which live only in wetlands. Wetlands act as 'kidneys' and giant sponges – they clean the water of excess nutrients and sediment, control flood water and pollutants, and act as carbon sinks (removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere). Wetlands have strong cultural, economic, and spiritual importance for Māori. They are a key source of mātauranga (knowledge), material and resources for mahinga kai (traditional food resources), rongoā (traditional Māori medicine), raranga (weaving), and whakairo (carving).

Nationally there has been a 90% decline on wetlands across New Zealand and in Canterbury this figure is even higher, with most wetland loss across NZ in recent years being attributable to pasture development mainly for dairying.

Across the coastal frontage of the Timaru District there are 24 coastal lagoon and wetland SNAs comprising some 63ha. In addition, there are DOC reserves such as Normanby Lagoon, Waitarakao and Spider Lagoon, and wetlands in private ownership such as Horseshoe lagoon at Seadown.

Threats facing these coastal lagoons and wetland areas include grazing, inappropriate public use, pollution of ground water, animal pests particularly mustelids and rats which prey on native fauna, an increasing range of plant pests, encroachment from adjacent land activities, and loss of habitat resulting from coastal erosion and retreat due to climate change.

Since mid-2023 Timaru District Council and Environment Canterbury have jointly been working at surveying these local sites and identifying actions that can be undertaken to improve biodiversity outcomes going forward. These include options such as fencing, pest plant and animal control, and revegetation plantings.

Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands

As a result of this several projects have been initiated including

SNA 742a Parke Rd, Clandeboye

This SNA has now been fenced for stock exclusion and revegetation plantings have been undertaken. The owner also fenced out an additional area of land immediately adjacent to the SNA which contains significant wetland values, and this has almost doubled the size of the wetland now protected.

This SNA contains a range of sedges – *Carex sp* as well as rushes – *Juncus sp*, and raupo – *Typha orientalis*. During survey work at this site an Australasian bittern- matuku-hūrepo, was observed. This bird is now classified as critically endangered in New Zealand and is seldom seen locally.

The SNA is also frequented by a range of other aquatic bird species as well.



Lagoon area of SNA 742a



New fence and additional wetland area added.

SNA 96f Ellis Rd Normanby.

Following consultation with the adjoining landowner and DOC some fencing and revegetation plantings have been undertaken along the north side of this wetland area. While there is currently no stock access to this site the extended northern perimeter will provide assurance against this in the future. It also provides a buffer between the adjacent arable farming activities as well as adding further habitat for a range of native fauna.

This SNA while small contains 3 distinct ecotypes including extensive beds of Caldwell's club rush – *Bulboshoenus caldwelli*, salt turf meadow containing a range of native species and open water providing habitat for a range of waders and water bird species.



SNA 96 a,b,c,d,e. Normanby Lagoon - Ohinekowau

This is one of the larger coastal lagoons in South Canterbury comprising 5 privately owned SNAs and a DOC reserve. In total it comprises approx. 11ha, - the water level within the lagoon itself expanding or decreasing dependent on rainfall and water inflows.

Features of the lagoon are

- 19 species of remnant native plants recorded: NZ musk, batchelors button, coastal goosefoot, arrow grass, rush, glasswort, three square, salt grass, sea spurrey, marsh ribbonwood, pohuehue, retoreto, duckweed, *Ruppia*, raupo, Caldwell's clubbrush, *Lilaeopsis*, spike sedge, fireweed.
- Habitats include open water, mud flat turf, sedgeland, reedland, salt meadow and grassland.
- Habitat for a range of native and introduced migratory, water, wading and coastal bird species including pied stilt, banded dotterel, white heron, shags, paradise shelduck, black swan, various duck species and Canadian geese.
- Invertebrate habitat
- Perimeter conifers – pines / macrocarpas provide perching and nesting habitat for birds
- Acutely threatened land environment

With the assistance of the biodiversity facilitator at the South Canterbury Sustainable Trust the Normanby Lagoon Catchment Group, comprising all landowners surrounding the lagoon, has now been formed to promote and initiate options for the enhancement of the



Normanby Lagoon - Ohinikowau

lagoon. With SNA funding assistance traps have been purchased and a programme of trapping is now underway around the lagoon perimeters. A start at revegetation plantings around the perimeter of the lagoon by the catchment group took place in early September in which 50 locals participated. (See pic earlier in newsletter) Other options for this site include further plantings, fencing for stock exclusion, water quality testing to establish some base line data, and the establishment of a protocol to manage lagoon water levels impacted by the railways culvert and sea water ingress. A DOC reserve lies within the lagoon and colony of pied shag resides here in the old pine trees fringing the lagoon along with a range of other aquatic bird species.

SNAs 95a,b,c,d,e. Pig Hunting Creek, Normanby.

Plans for the restoration and enhancement of this lagoon ecosystem are being developed. Thanks to an Environment Canterbury OTO grant options will be identified, prioritised and implemented. This is a larger site and there is a lot of potential to improve values here, which we will feature in a future addition of this newsletter.

SNA 851. Orakiapoa Lagoon, Milford.

Lying on the northern side of the Opihi River this is an area of high natural values and of considerable cultural significance. This lagoon system contains a range of ecotypes and habitats and is an important local fishery and whitebait breeding area. Some initial control work has been undertaken on yellow flag iris – *Iris pseudacorus* which is established here and putting pressure on the native plant values. Follow up work on areas treated to date has again recently been undertaken. Adjacent landowners Peter and Christine Bonifacio are also setting aside a large area which has been ungrazed now for over 10 years and where wetland values are increasingly apparent. They are working with QEII to establish a covenant over the now ungrazed area and have begun undertaking some revegetation plantings this spring.

In addition to the above specific projects ECan have been initiating control programmes for Reed Canary Grass – *Phalaris arundinacea* an invasive grass weed of wetland areas, undertaking eDNA testing to establish some baseline data on fauna living in these areas, and working with landowners outside of the SNAs to promote practices that will result in better water quality and outcomes not only in the SNAs themselves but also the water systems that feed them.

Several other projects within this coastal environment are also under consideration and will be progressed over the next couple of years.

Funding for these coastal enhancement projects has to date been a mix of Timaru District Council SNA grants, ECan grants and individual property owners' contributions.



Yellow flag Iris in wetland showing sprayed and unsprayed plants.



Recent native plantings adjacent to SNA851

Survey of Pied Shag – kāruhiruhi

During September this year a census of pied shag -kāruhiruhi numbers along the South Canterbury coastline was undertaken by Rosemary Clucas of ECan.

Also known as cormorant this endemic native bird once common throughout the area in past years, suffered heavily from indiscriminate hunting due to the bounty formerly in place on black shags. As a result of this the bird virtually disappeared from our area but has started to make a recovery with nesting sites now being found locally. The last census of pied shag numbers in this area was undertaken over 20 years ago.



Rosemary Clucas points to a roost tree

The new census indicates that the species is making a comeback locally with around 149 nesting pairs and individuals counted over 5 local sites. It is hoped that this and future surveys will give a better picture of the recovery of this species in South Canterbury. New Zealand is rich in cormorant or shag species with 12 of the 36 worldwide species occurring here. The word 'shag' is old english and refers to the tuft like crest on the head of some species.

Unlike most other shag species, the pied shag is reasonably confiding, allowing close approach when roosting or nesting in trees. It generally forages alone, but occasionally in small groups when prey is abundant.



Roadsides as wildlife corridors

Roadsides are not just important for our transport needs. They also provide corridors for wildlife movement, habitat and food for a wide range of birds and invertebrates.

They are often the final refuge for the few remaining remnant native plants that fortunately still persist in some of our more developed rural areas.

While to many it may not seem important in the greater scheme of things, these individual trees or patches of remnant bush represent the very last vestiges of the original land cover now remaining on roadside areas.

Additionally these last remnants also provide stepping stones across our rural landscapes assisting the movement of bird and invertebrate species. Many of our small native birds will only fly short distances over open ground so remaining trees and shrubs on roadsides will often provide refuge for them. Roadsides, and especially unmown ones, provide habitat and food for a range of native fauna including a multitude of invertebrate species. Evidence is now showing that many of our native invertebrates can be as efficient at pollinating crops as bees.

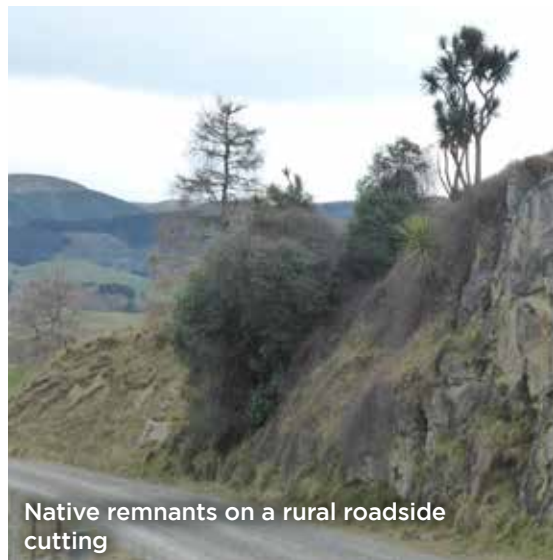
The values that roadsides provide for plants and animals are not always well known or appreciated, and as such Council is keen to raise awareness of these to ensure that they not only remain but are given every opportunity to thrive into the future.

To achieve this the value of these remnants needs to be acknowledged by everyone



Muehlenbeckia complexa on a roadside fence line adjacent to SH1 at Seadown

with an interest in the road reserve areas and this includes adjoining land owners, other agencies such as power and communications providers, Council, NZ Transport Agency and roading maintenance contractors.



Native remnants on a rural roadside cutting

Over the past year or so bright orange markers with the wording "Protected Native Plants" have been placed adjacent to some individual trees or near remaining groups of remnant natives to highlight their presence. These markers provide some information on what can be done to ensure the survival of these plants and also give contact details for anyone who may have a query about them. What can you do to help

- Identify and protect all remaining remnant native plants
- Avoid overspray from weed control programmes on the roadside or adjacent paddocks.
- Look at reducing mowing of roadside areas as these provide food source for birds, lizards and invertebrates.
- Avoid unnecessary or damaging use of roadsides for vehicle and machinery movements grazing or feed storage,
- Report any damaged or missing markers to Council so we can arrange to replace these.
- Contact Timaru District Council to ask for advice if unsure



Roadside remnant identification markers showing individual trees or roadside groups of remnant plants.

Hailing from Latin America which includes all the countries in South America as well as Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean islands banana passion fruit is a strong growing evergreen climbing vine.

It has three lobed leaves and attractive pink hanging flowers which are followed over summer by hanging thin skinned fruits ripening to a yellow orange colour. It was introduced into New Zealand as an ornamental.

Depending on the species the fruit may be cylindrical *P. pinnatistipula*, or oblong in shape *P. tarminiana*, – hence the common name.



Passionfruit flower

Passion fruit vines grow high into the canopy of the trees that support them forming large masses. They are tolerant of most soil types and the vines will produce highly viable seed within 2 years. They are tolerant to shade when young and seedlings can establish beneath an overhead foliage canopy such as native bush. The stems of the plant will root where they touch the ground.

The plant readily spreads from seeds distributed by birds, pigs and possums and will inhabit native bush, hedges, orchards, exotic plantations, waste land, gardens and roadsides.



Passiflora tarminiana. Oblong fruits

Where no support is available it will make a large rambling ground cover mound.



P. pinnatistipula. Rounded fruits.

Note distinctive 3 lobed leaves which are a feature of all passionfruit vines.

The vine smothers the canopy of supporting bush or trees preventing native plants from establishing and it is difficult to control.

Early detection of this plant is desirable as control methods are time consuming and the vines will usually be growing on desirable plants that we want to avoid any damage to. Best control is achieved by cutting the vine stems above ground level and tying them up to prevent contact with the ground. The rootstocks should be pulled out or treated with herbicide to prevent their regrowth.

Predator Free 2050

The Predator Free 2050 mission is focused on the complete removal of 5 predators from New Zealand – rats, stoats, ferrets, weasels and possums.

It is aimed at protecting and enhancing New Zealand's unique flora and fauna of over 80,000 endemic plants, animals and fungi, which developed over millions of years of isolation from other land masses. Many are found nowhere else in the world and yet, compared to other countries, New Zealand has a high number of native flora and fauna that are classified as endangered or threatened. This means they're at risk of becoming extinct in the near future if actions are not taken to protect them.

The Predator Free 2050 initiative launched by the government in 2017 looks to address this. The programme is managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) nationwide, and regional Predator Free Rangers have been appointed. These rangers work with other DOC rangers across the country to implement the programme within their areas and communities.

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K



Tim Exton's role as regional predator free ranger

Tim Exton, Community Ranger at the DOC Raukapuka area office in Geraldine, put his hand up to be a regional Predator Free Ranger. He covers the Canterbury area from Rangiora in the north to the Waitaki River in the south, and west to Mt Cook and Springs Junction.

Tim says his role is to work with other DOC rangers in the Canterbury area to deliver programmes that will increase knowledge around animal behaviour, traps and trap safety, trapline setup and education, and encourage community participation. His aim, he says, is to "make other people experts" so that these individuals can then work in their communities with others to increase the level of understanding needed to undertake effective trapping programmes.

Active Predator Control Projects in Canterbury

In the Canterbury area there are several trapping initiatives underway.

Some examples of these include:

- A **Predator Free group** established on Banks Peninsula
- A programme in the Ashburton River with ECan and Forest and Bird (F&B)
- A programme in the Ashburton basin with DOC at O Tū Wharekao, ECan on the Ashburton River and F&B on the Ashburton River
- **Project Peel** at Peel Forest, including predator and weed control
- **Talbot Forest Working Group** in Geraldine, running a trapping programme within Talbot Forest reserve
- **Orari River Protection Group** for weed and predator control along the river
- **Upper Rangitata Gorge Land Care Group** and **Arowhenua marae**, operating a programme along the full length of the Rangitata River – Jobs for Nature Projects to protect native birds on the river
- **Te Ngawai River predator control** for long-tailed bat protection, undertaken by Arowhenua – Te Kete Tipuranga O Huirapa
- **Predator Free golf courses** – WWF funding for riparian planting and predator control on golf courses in the Timaru District
- **South Canterbury Eco Centre** in Timaru, running a range of biodiversity programmes
- **Normanby Lagoon Catchment Group** – Restoration work for the lagoon, which includes predator control
- **Waimate Eco Project**, which encompasses a range of activities over various areas – A landscape scale predator control plan with work commencing in Studholme Bush
- **Wainono Lagoon** – Planning for predator control on the lagoon edges
- Plus, many private individuals and groups undertaking trapping across the region.

Successes and challenges in predator control

Tim says results so far have been fragmented but are achieving good outcomes in certain locations. Project Peel, he notes, is a good example of where a community-led trapping scheme has significantly reduced predator numbers in the Peel Forest reserve and surrounding areas, resulting in a noticeable increase in bird and invertebrate life. The dawn chorus in the area is now more impressive than ever.

But big gaps remain across the region, and Tim says part of his role is to work with the existing groups to find out where those gaps are so that some targeted effort on filling them can be initiated.

Predator control in revegetation programs

While PF2050 is aimed at pest eradication to improve biodiversity values, Tim says people need to be aware that trapping for predator control also needs to be included as a component of revegetation programmes. The new plantings provide habitat not only for native species but for introduced predators as well.

Rural areas: addressing predator control challenges

Predator control in rural areas is a work in progress. Tim says many landowners, while keen to do something, are constrained by a lack of time. In these areas, the need for predator control in bush areas and remnants is well known and accepted. Tim works with landowners to initiate control programmes around farm buildings, which often provide suitable habitat for pests, especially rats and feral cats.

Improved trap technology is also helping. There are now automated traps, such as the AT220, that can be set up and require checking and maintenance less frequently. These traps contain a pest-attractive lure, can cater for a range of pest animals, and will reset after each kill up to 100 times, which usually covers a period of between 6 to 12 months. While the initial trap cost is higher at around \$500 per trap, the benefits are significant.

Many rural communities are also very good at working with each other, which helps.

Urban areas: trapping strategies and challenges

In urban areas, Tim says predators react differently than in rural areas, as they are more attuned to human activity. Tim believes that an effective trapping strategy in urban areas will require a trap in at least 1 in every 6 properties. These can be as low-cost as a simple baited rat trap in a tunnel or may utilise a range of other more sophisticated traps that are readily available on the market.

Research indicates that statistically, you are never more than 8m from a rat, which is a sobering thought. Tim says that just because you don't see them doesn't mean that they are not there. He reminds people, "These pests are the ninjas of the bush or urban areas—they don't want to be seen, and often, if you see one, you can be sure that there are more."

Training and resources for effective predator control

Training in pest control is available, and Tim highlights the programme run by the Nelson-Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). In conjunction with a facilitator from NMIT, Tim runs a 2-day course on predator control methods. This course is NZQA approved, costs \$178.00 per participant, and can cater for a group of 10 to 20 persons. The course teaches participants to understand pest animal behaviours, looks at the various traps available and their suitability for pest types, trap user safety, and how to set up and maintain an effective trapline.

Attendees of these courses often return to their communities to lead pest control initiatives. Tim also offers a half-day course that covers these topics in less detail but still allows participants to run effective trapping programmes.

DOC also has a trapping guide available in hard copy or for download online at DOC Predator Free 2050 Community Trapping.

Expanding the focus: feral cats and hedgehogs

While the current 2050 aim is to control possums, rats, and mustelids, Tim is of the opinion that other pests will be included in time, especially feral cats and hedgehogs, both of which are voracious hunter-killers of native fauna.

Using TrapNZ to improve predator control

A site that provides up-to-date information on pest control activities is TrapNZ. This site allows you to log your trapping and monitoring details and to update with kill numbers. It is a national database that can be interrogated and the data interpreted to make your predator control more efficient.

The urgency of effective predator control

Ultimately, Tim says that effective pest control is essential if we are to stop the decline in our endemic species, and that failure to do so will have significant consequences for our special birds, lizards, and invertebrates. Planting more areas with native plants to create habitat would help as well.

Tim Exton with a range of traps



TIMARU



DISTRICT COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe
o Te Tihi o Maru



YOUR PLAN OUR FUTURE
TIMARU DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW

Timaru District Council

2 King George Place

Timaru 7910

enquiry@timdc.govt.nz

P: 03 687 7200

F: 03 687 7209
