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Committee Catchment Management
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Report 2007/08

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 2007/2008 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

2. Background

Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act requires Greater Wellington, as the Management Agency, to prepare an operational plan for each Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) which it has approved. Furthermore, the Agency must prepare a report on the plan and its implementation no later than five months after the end of the each financial year. The report is to be made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

A few Regional Councils use the Annual Plan reporting process to provide details on performance against RPMS Operational Plan objectives. The Biosecurity Act does provide for this option. However, it is considered more transparent to use a separate reporting process where greater detail can be included on performance, trends, issues and expenditure for scrutiny by ratepayers.

3. Comment

Attachment 1 contains the Annual Report on implementation of the 2007/2008 Operational Plan. This is the sixth progress report detailing performance against the objectives in the twenty year Strategy.

Section 88(6) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 requires a regional pest management strategy to be reviewed every five years. The review process for the Wellington strategy is in the final stages before publication. The public consultation and hearings have been completed, and subsequent amendments made to the RPMS document. A final proposed RPMS is scheduled to be presented to a Council meeting for adoption early in 2009.

4. Highlights

- 4.1 A review of our performance indicates that we are continuing to make considerable progress in meeting most of the current Strategy objectives. With the review of the RPMS, the focus of the control work will change, with the objectives and or categories for some pests being amended to meet the new objectives of the strategy. The reviewed RPMS will see an increased focus on pests that have the most adverse potential or actual impact on the region. Resources will also tend to be focused on site, rather than species, led control.
- 4.2 During 2007/08 the intensive field surveys around Eradication pest sites continued. This resulted in increased numbers of new pest plant infestations being recorded, with a corresponding increase in awareness of pests by the affected landowners.
- 4.3 For pest plants, the emphasis has continued to be on Eradication species and increasing our involvement in biodiversity projects with other stakeholders. Stronger relationships have been developed with the Territorial Authorities (TA), with a continued expansion of KNE pest plant control. Joint work programmes are continuing with the Department of Conservation (DoC) and Biosecurity NZ.
- 4.4 A major focus of pest animal work remains on the biodiversity support programmes. Working relationships continue to strengthen with TA, care groups, private landowners and DoC. Control work on TA Reserves has expanded further, but growth is now restricted by funding limitations. The rook control programme was affected by the unsettled weather patterns, but operations on our northern boundary were successfully completed. Rabbits remain at low levels generally, with the RCD virus continuing to cycle. However resistance to the virus is increasing and traditional control methods were required to reduce numbers in some areas.
- 4.5 Responsibility for pest control remains largely with landowners and occupiers, making education and communication an essential part of the control programme. Biosecurity staff are continuing to encourage public awareness of biosecurity matters through various communication initiatives. Greater Wellington has a duty to ensure these parties are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address biosecurity risks. Responding to client enquiries is a major function of GW staff under the Strategy. In 2007/08, staff managed 1,312 individual enquiries from the public. Many of these involved site visits and the supply of advice and equipment.
- 4.6 A well-informed public is essential for the achievement of both national and regional biosecurity objectives. Biosecurity agencies simply do not have enough resources to adequately explore and investigate all potential pest incursions. New areas of control such as invertebrates, marine and aquatic organisms are serving to further spread staff and resources. Increased public knowledge is also contributing to an increased number of new pest infestations being notified. This necessitates an ongoing need to reprioritise work programmes to ensure adequate control is maintained on key species. In some cases this has resulted in RPMS tasks being delayed.
- 4.7 The attached 2007/08 Operational Report contains separate Pest Plant and Pest Animal sections with an outline of performance against key activity objectives; an overview of major strategy issues encountered during the year, details on biodiversity support programmes; and, finally, ecological and trend monitoring activities.

5. Communications

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the Annual Report is available for inspection.

Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministers for their review and comment.

Consideration will be given to using Elements to provide a summary of the key issues.

6. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- (1) ***Approves the Annual Report on the implementation of the 2007/2008 Operational Plan for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.***
- (2) ***Notes that a copy of the Annual Report will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.***
- (3) ***Notes that the Annual Report will be made available for public inspection.***

Report prepared by:



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Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: