

Autumn – 2013

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# Protect



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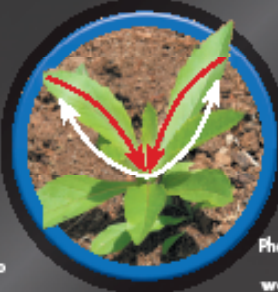
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# Autumn 2013

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# From the Editor

## Much has already happened

Welcome to the first issue of Protect for 2013. A lot has already happened in the biosecurity sphere this year. Particularly noteworthy is the announcement of a new Minister for Primary Industries. A short introduction to new minister Nathan Guy appears in this issue. The NZBI Executive has said it is keen to continue regular contact with the new minister following the meeting with the previous minister, requested by last year's Annual General Meeting. As well, the Auditor General's

Review of Biosecurity Preparedness and Response has been released. Comments on the report and the Minister's response to it also appear in this issue.

I continue to be involved in planning NETS2013 with the Canterbury/Westland committee and with co-ordinating the Archives Project working group. Updates on both these projects also appear in this issue.

Best wishes  
**Chris Macann**



The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute can be found on the web at [www.biosecurity.org.nz](http://www.biosecurity.org.nz)

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## NZBI News

# Report from the Executive

## Kia ora and hello from the Executive.

**T**he Office of the Auditor General (OAG) recently completed a review of the Ministry for Primary Industry's (MPI) readiness to respond to biosecurity incursions and its handling of past pest and disease responses. Details of the review can be seen at [www.oag.govt.nz/2013/biosecurity](http://www.oag.govt.nz/2013/biosecurity) and I encourage all of our members to take the time to look at the OAG's recommendations. More details appear in this edition of *Protect*.

The Executive believes that the NZBI should be at the forefront of discussions relating to any possible improvements and refinement of New Zealand's biosecurity system since our members collectively represent all levels of the sector, from national strategic planning to the coalface. I look forward to continuing the dialogue the NZBI established after NETS2012, with the new Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy.

### NETS2014

I am pleased to announce that Taranaki Regional Council has kindly agreed to host NETS2014 with support from Waikato Regional Council. On that note, the Canterbury Branch gave the Executive an update on NETS2013 at our meeting on March 20. One of

the unique inclusions I am looking forward to this year is the workshops being held on the train on our way to Greymouth. The international speakers have been confirmed and details can be viewed on the NZBI website.

**The NZBI should be at the forefront of discussions relating to any possible improvements and refinement of New Zealand's biosecurity system.**

### Seconded members

Another discussion point coming out of the recent Executive meeting is that the final draft of the remit to change to the constitution regarding Seconded Members to the Executive will be distributed to the branches prior to their individual AGMs so that members will have an opportunity to review and comment prior to voting at the main AGM at NETS2013.

Finally, on a personal note, after almost a decade working in local government I have recently taken up a new position in the private sector for Kaitiaki o Ngahere, a company specialising in ecological restoration and biosecurity, and would like to take this opportunity to thank my new employers for being fully supportive of my involvement in NZBI.

**Pedro Jensen**

[pedro@kaitiakiorestitution.co.nz](mailto:pedro@kaitiakiorestitution.co.nz)



## Branch news: Central North Island

# Biosecurity threats continue regardless of the dry summer

**W**ow, it has been a dry start to the year. However the biosecurity issues don't disappear when there is a drought. Our December branch meeting was held at Te Kauwhata in the northern Waikato, a part of the province where a lot of biosecurity work is taking place, with a particular focus on lakes. Here are a couple of highlights:

## Koi carp trap

The branch's meeting location was a great opportunity to showcase the new koi carp fish trap on Lake Waikare. Dave Byers made a presentation about the trap which we then visited, coinciding with its first operation. Koi carp are increasing in Waikato waterways and have been implicated in the collapse of plant life in Lake Waikare, which is no wonder when they eat almost anything and undermine the lake edge while feeding. Koi carp females can carry 750,000 to a million eggs, making this pest extremely difficult to manage. Australia has similar issues with carp as we do and an Australian company has developed a trap for catching carp which Waikato Regional Council is trialling. Dave is aiming to remove 30 tonne of fish a year, with all the fish caught being processed on site into fertiliser, and used in potting mix. Thanks and well done Dave for your presentation and field trip.

## Kauri dieback

John Dodgson representing the Onepu Charitable Trust from the west coast settlement of Kawhia shared with us his grave concerns around kauri dieback. John was involved in a survey in the Kawhia area looking for kauri and was surprised how prolific the species was. After hearing a talk about the Auckland situation, he was alarmed by Auckland's video surveillance showing only 20 per cent of visitors using the park's hygiene stations; in other words 80 per cent were ignoring it. Given this level of apathy and that these visitors then pass through Kawhia on their way south, John

**Locals need to take ownership of their area and be proactive in informing people about the spread and impact of Kauri dieback.**



*Waikato Regional Council Biodiversity Officer Dave Byers operating the Lake Waikare koi carp fish trap the council is trialling.*

was after ideas on how to overcome this apathy without preventing access. We had a great discussion around this topic with a very simple but obvious outcome; Kawhia locals need to take ownership of their area and be proactive in informing people about the spread and impact of kauri dieback with support from groups that are already fighting this battle. Thanks John for highlighting this issue and once again reminding us about the local potential impact of this highly destructive and invasive pest.

This meeting once again showed the need to catch-up, hear, learn, encourage and debate the issues facing us as we go about protecting our areas against these invasive pests. Keep up the great work everyone.

**Darion Embling**  
NZBI Central North Island Branch

## NZBI Archives update

# Grant applied for to help oral histories

This month (April) the Heritage Committee of the Lotteries Commission will consider the NZBI's request for a grant of \$15,000 for the Institute's Oral History Project.

The Working Group has compiled a large list of people to interview for the project and is on the lookout for as many more as may be out there.

The first stage will involve about six interviews – three from the pest animal side and three from the pest plant side. These will be followed by more at the next stage.

The Working Group is continuing to work through the lists of who has what and where and to get as many names of old-timers as possible as well as senior people still working.

Let me know if you would like to be on an email list of people who wish to receive regular updates.

As well please stay on the lookout for historical material that may be useful and let the working group know of what is held and where.

The next step in the Archives Project will be to consider the material held by members and people elsewhere to decide what is worthy of formally storing in a permanent archive to be established by the Institute.

The Working Group comprises Pedro Jensen, Dave Galloway, Lynne Huggins, Ray Clarey and Chris Macann.

Updates on the project can be viewed in the members' section of the NZBI website.

**Chris Macann**  
NZBI Archives Project Co-ordinator

## NETS2013 – Shake it Up!

For the first time ever, NETS is being held on the West Coast – at the historical village of Shantytown, just outside of Greymouth.

It will be the middle of winter, so expect cold weather and even snow! To make sure that we get through even if snow blocks road access over the Southern Alps, NETS2013 officially starts in Christchurch on July 31, when delegates board the Transalpine train for the trip to Greymouth. This trip is part of the programme (yes, you will be doing biosecurity stuff on the train!), and the return ticket on the Transalpine is included in the full registration fee (which is expected to be similar to 2012's registration fee).

As a venue, Shantytown is a showcase of West Coast culture and history, and has a great conference facility for NETS2013. As an accommodation centre, Greymouth has a wide range of accommodation, ranging from large hotels and motels, to backpackers and holiday parks. The conference dinner will be held at Shantytown where you will experience local flavours both in food and entertainment, and in lieu of an official Mix 'n' Mingle this time around, the new Monteith's Brewing Company venue in Greymouth will be the unofficial gathering place for delegates.

Thanks to our Trans-Coastal team on the NETS2013 committee, great field trips to biosecurity/biodiversity

hot spots on the Coast are being organised to give you a real taste of this very special part of New Zealand.

National Pest Control Agencies is again joining the NZBI in putting together a diverse and interesting programme for this year. Keynote speakers will include Johann Van Der Merwe and Simon O'Connor presenting on Chevron Australia's Barrow Island restoration project, and Landcare Research's Andrea Byrom on the idea of a predator-free New Zealand as an aspirational goal. As always, there will be a full programme of speakers in concurrent sessions covering the broad spectrum of biosecurity work being undertaken around the country.

Delegates can return to Christchurch on Friday afternoon once NETS2013 has finished, or they can extend their stay on the Coast and use their return ticket on the Transalpine on Sunday afternoon. If enough interest is shown at registration time, a post-conference programme for that weekend can be organised for delegates who wish to stay on and return to Christchurch on the Sunday afternoon.

The NETS2013 page on the NZBI website is being updated regularly with information for potential delegates, and registrations are open this month.

**NETS2013 Organising Committee**

## NZBI NEWS

# Search on for Pest Management Services Award last awarded in 1999

The search is on for the Pest Management Services Award which was first presented by the late Peter Nelson at the combined Institute of Pest Management Officers and Institute of Noxious Plants Officers National Education and Training Seminar (NETS) held in Rotorua at the Quality Inn, 17 to 19 August 1992.

The first recipient was Carl Cooper of Northland Regional Council. Subsequent awards were made to:

1993 – Roger Lorigan (Waikato Regional Council) & Derek Lowe (Lakeland Helicopters) for the development of GIS technology to improve aerial baiting

1994 – Not awarded

1995 – Sean Boswell (Marlborough Regional Council) for his work in the development of the use of Pindone Liquid for pest management

1996 – Diederik Meenken (Wellington Regional Council) for his work on monitoring techniques and for services to Pest Management Services Ltd

1997 – Campbell Leckie (Taranaki Regional Council) for his time and commitment to the development of training requirements for the pest industry

1998 – Jeff Donaldson (Otago Regional Council) for his involvement with the arrival of RHD

1999 – An industry Pre-Qualification Assessment Panel. Names of the panel were not mentioned in

the statement (NZIPMO 30th AGM Minutes, Airport Hotel, 19 November 1999) but probably included Campbell Leckie, Kevin Christie, Grant Crawford, Lyndon Dynes and Kevin Battersby.

2000 – Not awarded (Item 6, NZIPMO AGM Minutes, Brentwood Hotel, 7 November 2000)

2001 – Not awarded (Item 7, NZIPMO AGM Minutes, Brentwood Hotel, 11 December 2001)

2002 – Not awarded. (Statement reads “to be awarded at a later date”, Item 7, NZIPMO AGM Minutes, Brentwood Hotel, 27 November 2002)

2003 – Not awarded. Not noted in minutes of VPMINZ AGM held at Rutherford Hotel, Nelson, 9 July 2003. This was a combined NZ Biosecurity Institute and Vertebrate Pest Management Institute of NZ National and Education Training Seminar (NETS).

2004 – Not awarded or mentioned at the combined VPINZ/BI Institutes NETS held in Rotorua, 21 to 23 July 2004.

2005 – VPMINZ officially dissolved and merged into NZ Biosecurity Institute

So the last time the Pest Management Services Award was officially recorded was in

2002. It is easily recognisable and could be a worthy additional complement to the Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy.



**Ray Clarey**



## News from MPI

## False declaration earns trotting driver community service sentence

A Christchurch horse racer was sentenced in the Christchurch District Court to 120 hours community service for knowingly making a false declaration to quarantine inspectors in August last year.

Anthony Butt, an experienced harness racer, did not declare soiled harness-racing driving equipment when he arrived at Christchurch International Airport from Sydney.

When questioned by a quarantine inspector, Mr Butt said he had not been riding horses when he was in Australia. When asked about his dirty clothing, he said that it came from New Zealand.

Subsequent investigations, including analysis of video footage, showed that Mr Butt had been racing in the clothing and equipment in question.

"Equine biosecurity is taken very seriously by MPI, as horse racing contributes a significant amount to the New Zealand economy," said Canterbury/Westland

Compliance Manager Peter Hyde.

"Concerns around the deadly Hendra virus mean that those travelling from Australia need to take special care that they have decontaminated any equipment that may pose a biosecurity risk.

"The offending is made all the more serious in this case as Mr Butt knowingly made a false declaration after being potentially exposed to an extremely serious biosecurity risk. As a professional involved in the horse-racing industry he is well aware of the risks posed to the industry by Hendra and other biosecurity threats."

The maximum penalty for knowingly making a false declaration is 12 months imprisonment and/or a fine of \$50,000.

For further information about the risks posed to New Zealand by the Hendra virus visit: [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/hendra-virus](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/hendra-virus)

## No penalty following disclosure of mangos

An air passenger from Brisbane shocked Ministry for Primary Industries border staff recently by arriving in Auckland with two crates of fresh mangos.

"It is common to see a passenger carry one or two fruit items, but two whole crates is really over the top," said Operational Support Coordinator Steve Gay.

Mr Gay said the mangos posed a high biosecurity risk to New Zealand.

"They're a favourite fruit for Queensland fruit fly, a pest that would have a devastating impact on New Zealand horticulture if it became established here."



The woman declared the fruit, so did not receive any penalty. She thought it was okay to bring mangos into New Zealand after talking with the airline, said Mr Gay.

"The good thing is the woman declared the goods, which shows our biosecurity messages are getting through to international

passengers. We'll be talking further with the airline to see if there is any confusion about our biosecurity rules."

The crates contained 28 mangos which have since been destroyed.

## Importation of birds nests brings fine

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) applauds the stiff fine handed down to a woman who three years earlier tried to deceive an airport quarantine inspector and illegally bring packets of bird nest into New Zealand.

Chen Shar Wong was arrested at the Auckland International Airport after arriving from Taiwan. She faced two charges under the Biosecurity Act 1993 of knowingly making false and misleading statements to an inspector, and knowingly attempting to possess

unauthorised goods under the Crimes Act.

In February 2010, an MPI quarantine inspector seized four packets of bird nest from Mrs Wong at the airport. Mrs Wong had claimed the bird nests were sea weed.

Mrs Wong pleaded guilty to the charges in Manukau District Court on the same day as her arrest. She was convicted on both charges and fined \$2750.

Judge Cunningham said aggravating factors in the sentencing were the high biosecurity risk posed by

## News from MPI

the bird nests, and that Mrs Wong clearly knew she wasn't allowed to bring the nests into the country.

Mrs Wong had previously been accredited by the former Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to work as a transitional facility operator. Such operators receive training in how to identify biosecurity risks.

"This is someone who understood our biosecurity

system and knew the biosecurity risks of what she was doing," said Greg Keys, MPI Manager North, Compliance and Response.

"The size of the fine reflects the severity of the offences. I sincerely hope it sends a clear message to anyone else who is considering flouting our biosecurity rules."

## New recruits set to become detector dogs

Nine new floppy-eared Labrador puppies have begun their first step to becoming biosecurity detector dogs. After leaving the MPI Detector Dog Breeding Centre in Auckland they head to private homes, where they will spend the next year learning how to conduct themselves in public.

The F-Litter was born on December 4 to proud parents Demi, an existing MPI detector dog, and Guiding Light RJ, a breeding stud from the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind Guide Dog Services. Guiding Light RJ comes from successful guide dog lines.

It is the first time that MPI has used a breeding stud from another service, said Roger Cook, MPI's Manager Detection Technology.

The puppies have recently been named. In reference to the name of the litter, all individual puppy names will begin with "F", Mr Cook said.

F-litter is the second litter under a new MPI breeding programme for Labrador detector dogs.

Labradors provide the flexibility of being able to work with both passengers and mail. MPI has traditionally used beagles with passengers and mixed breed dogs with mail. The Ministry is continuing to breed beagles.

Detector dog teams are very useful for detecting biosecurity risks when used with other checks at the



***F-Litter, the latest addition to MPI's detector dog programme, will spend the next year in private homes being socialised before training in the skills of detection.***

border, Mr Cook said.

"No single border intervention is sufficient to manage biosecurity by itself. Dogs are good at picking up seeds and plants that can be hard to detect by X-ray. They also screen people faster than X-ray, and their visual presence is a significant factor," he said.

## Snake found in container of scrap metal

The interception of a snake in a container of scrap metal in January provided a positive biosecurity start to the new year.

The snake was found dead at a Manukau scrap yard when a specially trained yard worker (Accredited Person) opened a container that had arrived in Auckland from Vanuatu. The worker passed the snake on to a MPI quarantine inspector who had arrived to assess the cargo for biosecurity risk.

The snake has yet to be formally identified, but is believed to be a non-venomous boa from the *Candoia* family.

Geoff Gwyn, Acting Director Border Clearance Services, said the snake was very fresh and appeared to have died from fumigation, a process that all imported containers of scrap metal undergo before

being unloaded.

"We see scrap metal consignments as high risk for hitchhiking pests, insects and soil, which is why MPI requires all imported scrap metal containers to be fumigated at their first port of arrival," he said.

"The interception showed that the different parts of our border biosecurity system are working as they should," he says.

"For example, we rely on Accredited Persons to recognise biosecurity threats when they open shipping containers and to take appropriate action. And if the container hadn't been fumigated, we could have had a live snake on our hands."

He said the Ministry for Primary Industries has a team of quarantine inspectors and dog teams to respond to live snake incursions.

## News from MPI

# Ministry seeks mystery ant sender

The Ministry for Primary Industries is seeking public help to find a person who sent an ant sample to an insect scientist at Landcare Research in Auckland, but provided no contact details or information about where the ant was found.

The ant has been identified as an Australian species of carpenter ant, the golden sugar ant (*Camponotus aeneopilosus*), and it appears to be a new introduction to the country.

The single insect was packaged in a small plastic jar and addressed specifically to the Landcare Research scientist with a short note saying only "Hi, here is an ant I found at the beach". The signature on the note was indecipherable.

MPI's Plants and Environment Incursion Investigation Manager Mark Bullians said the potential impacts of this ant, should it become established in New Zealand, are uncertain.

"We know some species of carpenter ants can cause structural damage to wooden buildings as they chew out holes in wooden materials to build their nests. This particular ant may also have potential for environmental impact as, if established here, it could build nests in native trees and compete with native insects and birds for food.

"For these reasons, we're very keen to hear from the sender of this ant sample. We would like to find out more about the location the ant was found so that we can carry out an investigation and ensure that if there are further ants, they are located and destroyed," Mr

Bullians said.

MPI has made considerable effort in the weeks since the ant sample was sent in late last year to try to locate the sender but all enquiries so far have drawn a blank.

The ant was sent in a courier envelope and the courier company concerned can only provide minimal information that the envelope was one of a batch purchased by a courier contractor based in Te Aroha. For this reason the ministry believes the sample may have come from somewhere in the Waikato.

In addition, Landcare Research has contacted all its usual submitters of specimens to ask if they know about the sample or possible senders, but no-one has responded.

Mr Bullians asks that the person who sent the ant, or anyone who knows this person or knows about this issue, contact the Ministry's freephone Pest and Disease hotline: 0800 80 99 66.

"After exhausting all possible means of locating this person, we appeal to the public for support in this search. It may be that the ant was dead when found and had been caught up in someone's shoes or outdoor/camping gear that had been used overseas. We're optimistic that it is a single one. But we'd like to have some certainty."

If you think you have seen a number of unusually large ants, particularly in a beach area, please report it through the above phone number.

## Industry News

# Invasive species catch a wave

**M**ore than two years have now passed since the Tohoku earthquake rent the seafloor 64km miles off the coast of Japan.

Aside from the human tragedy of the disaster, the tsunami has had another, quite unexpected, effect: the transport of invasive species across the globe. Plants and animals from the north-west Pacific are now washing up more than 12,800km away on North American beaches, sparking fears that a wave of ecological invasions could be threatening coastal environments the length of the continent.

How have these organisms managed to travel so far? Such was the force of the tsunami as it tore into docks, boats and buildings on the Japanese coast that an estimated 1.5 million tonnes of debris was washed out to sea. This was not just the usual plastic waste that pollutes the Pacific Ocean but included individual

blocks of steel and concrete weighing more than 100 tonnes that have been sighted drifting off the coast of Hawaii and North America. This large flotsam provides a substrate for sedentary coastal life and can shield species from the worst of oceanic conditions. Individual species regularly make similar transits attached to the hulls of boats.

However, what has surprised ecologists in this instance is the number of species that are washing up after 15 months adrift. While whole communities are not turning up on American shores – larger and more mobile animals in particular have long since been washed away – species are certainly arriving en masse in North America. For example, a pier from Misawa port in Japan was harbouring more than 100 species when it beached in Oregon in June 2012.

From **CABI Invasives Blog**

# Review to improve industry training

**T**he pest management industry is among many involved in a review by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Here is a summary of the work of the review group based on an article by review co-ordinator Catriona Petrie from Primary ITO, the industry training organisation which facilitates training in the agriculture, horticulture, equine, water and sports turf sectors.

NZQA has initiated a Targeted Review of Qualifications in response to concerns raised by industry, education and other groups about the difficulty with understanding New Zealand's system for qualifications at Levels 1 to 6.

One of the key differences between the old qualification system and the new system is a staged process which intends to establish that there is a need for the qualification before full development begins.

Work began on determining the training and qualification needs of the biosecurity pest management sector during the Agriculture Review Cluster. However, the industry successfully requested a separate group encompassing quarantine, incursion response and urban pest management, as well as pest control, compliance and monitoring.

The review has involved a wide range of stakeholders including representatives from regional councils, the

Department of Conservation, the Animal Health Board, NPCA, Biosecurity Managers Group, tertiary education organisations and employers and contractors working in the industry. All of these stakeholders contributed to establishing the needs of the sector and identifying the training needs for various roles in the industry.

Primary ITO (encompassing AgITO, HortITO, SportsTurfIT, EquineIT and WaterIT) will lead the development of the qualifications. The organisation will also be the guardian of the qualifications holding primary responsibility for maintaining them and ensuring consistency between graduates once the qualifications are registered.

However, ultimately the qualifications will be owned by the industry. This is because they are the result of industry input to ensure that training and qualifications add

value for employers, employees and for "New Zealand Inc". For this important reason, it is vital for industry to work together to establish what the needs are so we can build the capability of the sector as a whole.

If you or anyone you know is interested in more information about the review, or in being involved in the review, please contact Steve Ellis (Industry Working Group Leader) at [steve.ellis@trc.govt.nz](mailto:steve.ellis@trc.govt.nz) or Catriona Petrie (Review Co-ordinator) at [catriona.petrie@primaryito.ac.nz](mailto:catriona.petrie@primaryito.ac.nz).

**It is vital for industry to work together to establish what the needs are so we can build the capability of the sector as a whole**



## Industry News

# Distant find of concern to Nelson's great white butterfly hunters

Entomological sleuths have been busy in the Nelson area as part of a multi-agency attempt to eradicate the great white butterfly (GWB) which poses a major economic and environmental threat. Here is a report on their detective work, by Richard Toft from environmental and ecological consultancy Entecol.

In mid-February this year, the great white butterfly eradication team received an alarming report from a resident in Upper Moutere, some 25 km from the Port Nelson epicentre, of a great white butterfly caterpillar "guarding eggs". This was twice as distant as the previous outliers found in Richmond. The caterpillar was dead when found, and the eggs it was guarding were actually the yellow cocoons of the *Cotesia glomerata* parasite that had emerged from its body. The caterpillar was subsequently confirmed as a great white butterfly.

## Unusual aspects

There were some unusual aspects to this find. The final stage caterpillar was on a relatively small broccoli plant in a garden with a number of other brassicas, but thorough searching found no evidence whatsoever that there had been a cluster of GWB caterpillars feeding on the brassicas in this garden. Even the plant that the dead caterpillar was found on had relatively minor damage consistent with small white butterfly caterpillars rather than the intensive chewing damage typically found on plants that have hosted a cluster of GWB caterpillars. Also, this locality represented by far the largest single leap in known distribution.

Adult great whites are powerful fliers and travel of this distance would certainly be possible, and could also have been done in stages, but is there an alternative explanation as to how a single caterpillar could have turned up at this Upper Moutere address? As it happens, the residents of the property provided a possible alternative.

The residents had recently bought vegetables from a market garden stall in Richmond. A week earlier there had been a positive find of GWB on nasturtium at Best Island, a little over 1km from that market garden stall.

## Valid pathway

The residents of the Upper Moutere property place the outer leaves and off-cuts from their vegetables in the garden outside their kitchen door. This is the garden where the single GWB caterpillar was located, and the broccoli plant on which the caterpillar was found was the closest brassica to this vegetable scrap

## The great white butterfly

The great white butterfly was discovered in a Nelson garden in 2010. It is a threat to New Zealand commercial and home brassica vegetable crops and to native cresses. The caterpillars can be readily identified by feeding in groups on plants they favour, including brassica vegetables, particularly cabbages and broccoli, and nasturtiums and honesty. The caterpillars are speckled black and greyish-green with three yellow lines along their bodies. The great white butterfly lays its yellow eggs on host plants in batches of 30 to 100 eggs. In contrast, the small white butterfly lays its more cream-coloured eggs singly or in pairs.

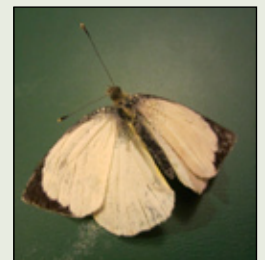


Photo: Martin Heine

area (about 1.5m away). The validity of this potential pathway from Richmond was further strengthened recently when the residents purchased sweetcorn from the same vegetable stall and found two large caterpillars of other species hiding in the loose sheaths (a green looper and a cutworm). The operations team conducted surveillance around this market garden and although they did not find GWB, they were able to establish that brassicas were on the stall amongst other vegetables and that there was even some nasturtium growing around the vegetable stall itself. The managers of the market garden have been made aware of the potential issue with GWB and are on heightened alert for unusual caterpillars among their brassica crops. Regardless of pathway, the positive find of GWB from Upper Moutere is of obvious concern to the eradication programme and triggered a prompt consultation with our Technical Advisory Group (TAG). They were asked whether this discovery, 25km from the epicentre, meant the eradication cause was lost. The



## Industry News

TAG members were unanimous in their feeling that it was too early to call off the attempted eradication and that single, isolated finds did not constitute evidence for established populations occurring outside the known infestation zone. Eradication operations should proceed.

### Preparations for autumn

Based on previous years' reports, we are expecting a new peak of GWB activity from late March through to the end of May. Evidence suggests the bulk of the population produced over spring and early summer entered a pupal aestivation over summer and will begin emerging about now. There is also a suggestion that the males will tend to emerge first. This appears to be borne out by observations in the core area around the Port Hills where the team collected 18 adults in the last week, of which 16 were male. Similarly, the pupae we have held in containment since the end of November have just begun emerging. The first emerged on February 20, followed by another on March 1 and two more on March 8 and 9. Of the four (out of 16) emerged so far, three are male.

Over the last two weeks, the team has found a number of egg clusters and early instar larvae in the core area during active surveillance. Positive reports to the 0800 number are still low, but we are expecting a big surge in public reports very soon, as the first autumn generation of caterpillars get to a noticeable size.

### Expected surge

In preparation for the expected surge in butterfly numbers, press releases have gone out encouraging residents to catch and kill all white butterflies. We are also hoping to use volunteers to undertake butterfly killing operations at some key sites around the core area where field workers are noticing higher levels of white butterfly activity.

Having been stretched by the intensity and spread of GWB finds over spring and early summer, we are increasing operational activity significantly for the autumn and early winter period. Entecol is taking on additional field operations staff and DOC is moving additional field staff to Nelson to really boost operational staff numbers for the next three months.

Additional logistics support, in the form of more vehicles and communications equipment, is also being



**Above: Close-up of GWB eggs from an unusually large cluster containing 198 eggs. Typically clusters contain 30 – 100 eggs.** Photo: Entecol



**At left: two clusters of GWB eggs on a brassica in a Nelson garden.** Photo: Martin Heine

brought to the battle. The extra resourcing will allow us to maintain a constant active surveillance presence in the core population area around the Port Hills, while still being able to respond effectively to finds in the outer zone.

### An unwelcome ally?

Nelson is home to a wide range of invasive invertebrates. One of the most unwelcome invaders of residential areas

is the Argentine ant, with several parts of Nelson, Stoke and Richmond now heavily infested by this pest. The field team recently responded to a report of GWB at Mount View, one of the areas also infested by ants. Here they discovered a cluster of very young GWB caterpillars being predated by Argentine ants. The ants were simply picking the small caterpillars up whole and running them back to their nests to be butchered and fed to their own larvae. Had the operations team arrived a short time later, there would have been no sign that GWB had been there apart from the marks where the eggs had been attached to the leaf.

For more information: [richard@entecol.co.nz](mailto:richard@entecol.co.nz)

Adapted from **Great White Butterfly News, Issue 6, March 1, 2013.**

## Industry News

# Kauri dieback programme sponsor keen to 'spread the word, not the disease'

**A**uckland printing firm SOAR has joined the Kauri Dieback Management Programme as a sponsor.

SOAR Director Jenny Carter said her company wanted to get involved and raise awareness of the disease to help stop its spread throughout the kauri lands.

SOAR is providing pro-bono printing to the Kauri Dieback Management Programme as well as helping to "spread the word, not the disease".

**Until more is known the preventative measures of cleaning soil off shoes and equipment before and after forest visits is essential.**

Relationship Manager for the Kauri Dieback Management Programme Ian Mitchell, said his group was extremely grateful for the support of SOAR and the growing number of schools, community groups and corporates which are getting involved.

"SOAR is being innovative and proactive in helping us to get the message out to the public about the need for cleanliness, vigilance and care around kauri trees.

"We need all the help we can get to stop the spread of kauri dieback disease and everyone can help right throughout the kauri land regions."

The Kauri Dieback Management Programme is a partnership between the Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Northland Regional Council, Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and tāngata whenua.

The partnership agencies are working to understand the disease's complexities, including how to control or cure it. Until more is known the preventative measures of cleaning soil off shoes and equipment before and after forest visits is essential.

Kauri dieback is caused by a fungus-like disease: microscopic spores in the soil infect kauri roots and damage the tissues that carry nutrients within the tree. Infected trees show a range of symptoms including yellowing of foliage, loss of leaves, dead branches and lesions that bleed gum at the base of the trunk. It kills kauri of all ages.

## Cockroach exposes pupil's contempt

**A** cockroach has given the game away for an international student attempting to smuggle a snack into New Zealand.

The cockroach escaped from a package of food being smuggled through Christchurch airport by an international pupil but, being under 17 the teenager will not face charges.

The boy hid dried kumara and pork-filled buns in two large bags and tried to pass the packages off as bags of tea but was caught by a Ministry for Primary Industries quarantine official, following a flight from China.

As the official inspected one of the bags, a cockroach escaped from the package. It was quickly captured.

"We were particularly unimpressed by the contempt the student showed

to our biosecurity laws and to the dangers to which he was exposing New Zealand's primary sectors and environment," Michael Walker, team leader, MPI Border Clearance Services South said.

"He clearly knew he was breaking the rules, otherwise he wouldn't have hidden the food."

Officials often have issues with flights coming from Asia because of the language barrier and more relaxed biosecurity regulations in the East, the spokesman said.

People failing to declare biosecurity risk goods can be fined up to \$100,000 and face up to five years in prison.

MPI planned to visit Burnside High School to ensure international students there were aware of biosecurity obligations.

**'We were particularly unimpressed by the contempt the student showed to our biosecurity laws and to the dangers to which he was exposing New Zealand's primary sectors and environment.'**

Michael Walker, team leader, MPI Border Clearance Services South.

## Industry News

# Water poppy (*Hydrocleys nymphoides*) invades ornamental ponds

A concerned land owner from Lake Rotoiti, called the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) seeking information on a plant growing in one of their ornamental ponds. Alarm bells rang when they cleared their pond, only to have the plant return with vengeance, completely covering the pond's surface within a year.

The land owners thought it might be water poppy as they had read the council's Pest Management booklet and recognised a photo of the flowers. The plant may have been bought from a market in Te Puke, some years earlier, though they were not certain as the ponds were on the property when they purchased it.

Richard Mallinson and Steph Bathgate, of BOPRC visited the property. Despite their being no flowers present, the inflated mid-ribs on the underside of the waxy leaves were indicative of water poppy. Photos were sent to Dr John Clayton (NIWA) who confirmed the identification.

Neighbouring properties were inspected and the nearby shoreline of Lake Rotoiti was checked. No sign of the offending weed was recorded.

On February 12, Steph Bathgate and Dale Williams manually removed the water poppy from the pond. First the weed was cleared by hand and placed beside the pond to dry out. Once the majority of the weed was removed, a sludge pump (kindly loaned by the Department of Conservation) was used to drain the concrete-bottomed pond. Fragments (mostly stolons) were picked out from various cracks and crevices in the concrete and vegetation fringing the pond was

removed. Stolons were found among fern mats from the lip of the pond and beneath two boulders within the pond. A water blaster was used to dislodge remaining fragments.

Water pumped from the pond was directed onto a driveway that drains into dense bush on the land owner's property. The ground was checked for rogue fragments. The pump was pulled apart and decontaminated by DOC staff back at the fire depot, and all other equipment was checked then left to dry in the hot February sun.

Two days later the pond was swept clean and the weed was placed into heavy-duty polythene bags, prior to being transported to the BOPRC depot where they were stacked in the sun to kill the plant material.

The success of this eradication operation will only be known once the pond has been re-filled and left to re-establish.

Thankfully the land owners were extremely helpful and knowledgeable regarding pest plants (terrestrial and aquatic) and this helped make the eradication process very smooth. They have agreed to leave the pond empty until it re-fills naturally with rain water. Given the current dry weather it is highly unlikely that any fragments will have survived. BOPRC staff will continue to monitor the site but are confident that any signs of a re-infestation will be reported immediately.

**Thankfully the land owners were extremely helpful and knowledgeable regarding pest plants (terrestrial and aquatic) and this helped make the eradication process very smooth.**

Contributed by **biosecurity staff at Bay of Plenty Regional Council**

## Sand prompts safety recall

Hardware chain Bunnings last month issued a product safety recall notice for a magnetic insect screen it sold between October 2012 and January 2013.

The notice said: "The product's plastic weight sleeve contains untreated imported sand and soil material.

No harmful material has been identified in the sand and soil, however, should it get out of the plastic sleeve, it could present a biosecurity risk to our agricultural industries or our unique environment. These screens need to be disposed of according to New Zealand biosecurity requirements."

## Industry News

# Once bitten not twice shy for aquatic weed controller in Fiordland

A university student bitten on the head by a shark while diving in Fiordland only escaped its clutches when her dive partner punched it in the nose.

Jenny Oliver was a member of a diving team helping remove a pest weed from Sunday Cove in December, when a seven-gill shark approached her.

The shark made several attempts to bite her oxygen supply, before taking her head in its jaws.

Ms Oliver said she was "more surprised than scared" when the shark first bit her regulator.

"[I] felt that staying calm and letting him figure out that my dive gear wasn't food would be better than aggravating him," she said.

However, the shark would not leave Oliver alone. It gave up biting her regulator, only to start biting her head and she became trapped in its jaws.

Luckily, she was wearing a thick hood.

Her dive buddy punched the shark in the nose.

"Clearly I was nervous when the shark was shaking the top of my head in its jaw, but it was all over so fast there was barely time for me to react," she said.

**'Clearly I was nervous when the shark was shaking the top of my head in its jaw.'**

Jenny Oliver, shark attack survivor

Department of Conservation marine ranger Richard Kinsey, who was diving with Ms Oliver and had been diving for 17 years, said sharks were often spotted in Fiordland.

"It's not uncommon to encounter one. I've come across them before but never had any issues like this.

"They are potentially aggressive but they're not as big as some other sharks and they usually leave people alone.

"It did get a little bit interesting... She was quite lucky".

Environment Southland, the Ministry for Primary Industries and DOC are working together to eliminate the Asian seaweed, undaria, from Sunday Cove.

Ms Oliver, who is completing a masters degree in marine biology at Victoria University, said the experience had not put her off diving in Fiordland.

"I'm looking forward to the next trip. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to dive and spend time in such a special place".

Adapted from an article in the *Southland Times*

## New MPI minister, associate minister appointed

The new Primary Industries Minister is Nathan Guy, who replaced David Carter at the end of January.

Mr Guy is the MP for Otaki.

Before entering Parliament Mr Guy was involved in farming and local government. He served for eight years on the Horowhenua District



Nathan Guy

Council and managed the family dairy farm. In 2000 he was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to study beef exports to the United States.

The new Associate Minister for Primary Industries is Rangitata MP Jo Goodhew.



Jo Goodhew



## Industry News

# Report of the Auditor General on biosecurity readiness and response

The Office of the Auditor General recently conducted an audit of Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) biosecurity preparedness and response activities. The report of that audit was recently tabled in Parliament and is available at: [www.oag.govt.nz/2013/biosecurity](http://www.oag.govt.nz/2013/biosecurity).

The report contains a mix of criticisms and positive observations. It makes a series of recommendations, primarily around improving preparedness. MPI has accepted the report and its recommendations, and issued this statement:

## Recommendations will improve system

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) said recommendations made in the Office of the Auditor General's review of biosecurity preparedness and response will serve to further enhance New Zealand's biosecurity.

The OAG has released its audit findings which highlight both strengths and weaknesses in MPI's readiness for biosecurity incursions and its handling of past pest and disease responses.

Deputy Director General Andrew Coleman said MPI accepted the findings and recommendations and noted that the Ministry had already made significant changes to some of its processes prior to the report's release.

"The report itself notes that improvements have been made including updating plans for dealing with specific pests; better surveillance targeting; and more regular exercises and simulations.

"This audit does not indicate that the system is broken, but rather identifies areas where we can do things better.

There is always room for improvement," Mr Coleman said.

The OAG audit addresses only the pest and disease readiness and response components of the wider biosecurity system.

"Responding to pests and diseases within New Zealand is only one part of what we do. While we

**This audit does not indicate that the system is broken, but rather identifies areas where we can do things better."**

Andrew Coleman  
MPI Deputy Director  
General

## Minister welcomes biosecurity report

Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy has welcomed the report from the Auditor-General into biosecurity incursions, and says it will be carefully considered by the Government.

"Biosecurity is my top priority as minister and we will carefully consider any advice and recommendations that could improve our biosecurity system.

"We are always looking to review how we do things, and improve our systems. This report is part of that process.

"Continuing to improve the system is the top priority for me as minister," Mr Guy said.

need to be prepared to respond quickly and efficiently to incursions, we have robust systems in place to prevent incursions occurring in the first place.

"While zero risk can never be attained, our biosecurity system has been successful to date in preventing many high risk pests and diseases entering New Zealand. There have also been notable successes in eradicating some pests, for example, saltmarsh mosquito, fire ants, Asian gypsy moth and painted apple moth."

Mr Coleman said the report also noted that MPI (and its predecessor MAF) had by and large been successful at responding to incursions, and has developed high-trust relationships with partners and improved biosecurity by sharing knowledge and fostering innovative practice.

Looking specifically at preparedness for a foot and mouth disease outbreak, Mr Coleman said planning for an incursion was a high priority for the organisation.

"We're working together with New Zealand's livestock industries to further improve our level of preparedness and are working to a specific response preparedness plan following the extensive Exercise Taurus held last year.

"Ultimately the best biosecurity system for New Zealand will be one where MPI works in partnership with primary industries on a collaborative approach to preparedness and response so that industry expertise is harnessed to achieve the outcomes needed. That's what we are heading towards."



## Biosecurity personnel profile

## David Moverley

Role: Invasive Species Adviser  
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

**Auckland Branch member David Moverley is now working as an adviser to the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, based in Samoa. He spoke to Protect about his new position.**

**T**he Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is one of three agencies that form the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), and is mandated to assist and promote the protection and conservation of the Pacific region's environment and natural resources. SPREP has 21 Pacific Island Country and Territory members and five supporting member countries. With a staff of about 80 our work is guided by the 2011-2015 SPREP Strategic Plan which has four priority areas: Climate Change; Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management; Waste Management and Pollution Control; and Environmental Monitoring and Governance. As such SPREP is the Pacific focal point for many international conventions and treaties such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

I work within the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division which also contains specialists in terrestrial and coastal ecosystem management, marine cetaceans, migratory species and turtles, and ecosystem based adaptation which focuses on using ecosystem resilience as a method of reducing the effects of climate change.

My role is quite diverse but its focus is on providing both regional and country support in the management of invasive alien species (IAS). The regional mechanism I have to achieve this is the Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific ("the Guidelines") which is essentially a list of components that make up a comprehensive IAS management programme. The document has been mandated by all SPREP member countries and focuses on nine thematic areas, within three sections, to assist all those involved working with IAS in the Pacific to work together in a co-ordinated manner whether they be an international, regional or national agency, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or a local institution.

With more than 10,000 islands in the Pacific and an area covering one third of the world's surface this task is quite challenging. Thankfully there are many

organisations that actively contribute to this cause. SPREP co-ordinates the Pacific Invasive Partnership (PIP) to assist with co-ordinating all the actions.

PIP is the umbrella regional co-ordinating body for agencies working on invasive species in more than one country of the Pacific. PIP promotes co-ordinated planning and assistance to meet the invasive species management needs of the countries and territories of the Pacific. Some New Zealand-based organisations that participate in PIP are Landcare Research, the Department of Conservation, New Zealand (MFAT) Aid, and the Invasive Species Specialist Group based at the University of Auckland.

Currently I have a major Global Environment Facility (GEF) project to manage that aims to facilitate approximately 100 IAS management actions based on "the Guidelines" in 10 participating countries in the Pacific. Some are in countries where IAS management is well established such as Palau and other parts of Micronesia and others where there is little or no existing knowledge, baseline information or skills such as Papua New Guinea. Key parts of my job in relation to this project are providing suitable processes, technical and administrative advice and helping to make important links between countries, PIP partners, consultants and trainers.

It is a very busy job and one that often means spending weekends in transit, waiting at airports or catching up on the many tasks that make up my day. I get to see and experience many different cultures and places, even when at home I am in the beautiful islands of Samoa.

The most rewarding part of my job is contributing to the sustainable future of the Pacific peoples, their lifestyle and their environment. My particular position is funded by New Zealand (MFAT) Aid which provides an extra motivation for me to ensure that my time is well spent. It is great to be one of the many New Zealanders who are involved with assisting in the Pacific, and seeing the difference we make as a country to this area confirms my pride in my country.



**The most rewarding part of my job is contributing to the sustainable future of the Pacific peoples, their lifestyle and their environment.**

## Weedbusters

# Weedbusters doing well 10 years on

It's 10 years since Weedbusters was officially launched in New Zealand as a national weeds awareness programme, and wow, have we come a long way since then.

To celebrate this milestone, a new 10th anniversary Weedbusters blog is being launched at [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz) on May 1.

This blog is a chance to revisit the great things that have happened in weedbusting in the last 10 years, and the awesome people and groups who have been involved.

It's also an opportunity to look at what is currently

happening in the world of weeds in various areas of New Zealand, both within agencies and organisations dealing with weeds, and within communities which are busting weeds in their local areas.

What I would love to collect for this blog are any Weedbusters anecdotes you might have from your own involvement, any ideas for profiles of Weedbusters groups or individuals, or issues you would like raised. If you have any ideas, please email them to me at [info@weedbusters.org.nz](mailto:info@weedbusters.org.nz).

**Carolyn Lewis**

National Weedbusters Coordinator



## The Tail

### The open and shut case of the stowaway cat

A well-travelled cat has been placed in quarantine in the United Kingdom after enduring a 3540km journey from Egypt to Britain inside its unwitting owner's suitcase.

The seven-year-old Persian cat which was accidentally zipped inside the case in Cairo, is said to have been extremely fortunate to survive the freezing temperatures inside the cargo hold on a five-hour flight from Egypt to London.

"We've had dogs and cats in the past that have stowed away, but it's the first time we've had one come through via a suitcase" a UK kennel owner said.