



New Zealand
Biosecurity Institute

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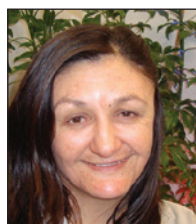
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The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute can be found on the web at www.biosecurity.org.nz

A fistful of puns

Targeting pest plants takes on a whole new meaning in a story in this issue that demands a fistful of puns.

Well done Wellington for being on the frontier of innovation where it's not only the animals getting shot at, as a tall-tale-but-true from the 'wild west' of Wellington tells.

Northland too has been involved with some outlaw hunting. **The region has spent a few dollars more on the one-that-got-away**, or did it? Money spent in the region on searching for an outlaw was well spent even if the culprit is still at large, or not?

Wild rabbits in some parts of the country are not feeling too well, and hopefully their health will continue to decline. In the meantime it's a matter of wait and see.

In the matter of bats, it's a case of the good and the bad. Bats can be the stuff of horror stories and this week's 'tail' is a bit of a nightmare but it has a happy ending.

The story from the Archives takes the Institute back to its united beginnings. **It's a reminder of the rich heritage of this Institute which goes back a long way** further.

I attended a Biosecurity Communication Network forum in Christchurch recently. It was the second national gathering of a diverse group of communications professionals who came together to learn about biosecurity and relate how it affected their industries. The outcomes from these gatherings will feed into the Biosecurity 2025 strategy, and ultimately the outcome of a biosecurity team of 4.7 million. **There was a strong will among participants to maintain and nurture the Network.** Hopefully this will trigger further interest.

CHRIS MACANN,
EDITOR

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Take advantage of the opportunities of membership, and the importance of what we do

In response to concerns raised by some members the NZBI Executive prepared a media statement expressing displeasure at the inclusion of pest plants in list of trees suggested for planting as part of the Billion Trees project.

President Darion Embling was interviewed on the matter by Radio New Zealand. His comments received significant air time. **Darion highlighted the importance of the work our members do and the importance of supporting them in that work.**

The Institute continues to be represented on relevant national forums.

President Darion continues to be a voice for the Institute on the Biosecurity 2025 Skills and Assets Working Group.

Protect Editor Chris Macann represented the Institute at the Biosecurity Communication Network forum and reports that all participants are keen to see such a network maintained.

We are pleased to announce that Heidi Pene has received an NZBI Professional Development Award to help her to travel to Sydney to attend the 21st Australasian Weeds Conference in September.

The Institute has two major grants available to help members to travel or to take advantage of personal development opportunities.

We encourage all members to take advantage of these opportunities.



Darion Embling, President

Work to further develop the website continues and the archives project is ongoing.

Thank you to all who have supported Biosecurity Week, individually and through your organisations in the run-up to NETS2018.

THE NZBI EXECUTIVE



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It's Biosecurity Week: spread the good word

Biosecurity week begins on Monday 23 July, the week of the NZ Biosecurity Institute's annual National Education and Training Seminars (NETS2018) in Nelson, 25-27th July.

This year's theme as always is aligned with the NETS2018 theme of: *'Shining the Light on Innovation'*

The aim of the biosecurity-themed week is for Institute members to showcase their work to their communities and to promote good biosecurity practices that will help members carry-out their work.

President Darion Embling said he is hoping as many members as possible will get out and evangelise for the Institute.

"We've got plenty to show-off about," he said.

Among the many local innovative approaches to biosecurity the three-days of Nelson seminars will shine a light on are: Project De-vine which has developed into a significant charitable trust to tackle pest vines, the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership which manages marine pest threats, the successful great white butterfly eradication programme, and Project Janszoon which restores habitats and removes pests from the Abel Tasman National Park.

Velvetleaf on Heidi's Australian agenda

Waikato-based pest control manager, Heidi Pene has received an NZBI Professional Development Award to help her to travel to Sydney to attend the 21st Australasian Weeds Conference (9-12 September, 2018).



Heidi will present a paper on velvetleaf: *'Abutilon theophrasti – its biology and management in New Zealand'*.

Heidi has been involved with the Waikato velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*) control programme since 2011 and has a high level of knowledge of its management. Heidi's employer C G Hale Ltd is also supporting her and funding the conference fee.

Institute members will benefit from Heidi's attendance when she reports on her experience at NETS2019.

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Biosecurity institute disappointed at recommended trees list mistake

The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute prepared this article in response to concerns from members about pests being included on the list of trees suggested for planting as part of the Billion Trees project.

Key biosecurity interest organisation, the NZ Biosecurity Institute (NZBI) has reacted strongly to reports that the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has had to remove weeds and pest plants from the list of trees it was encouraging people to plant.

The Billion Tree Programme encourages New Zealanders to plant one billion trees over the next ten years, but it was revealed today [JULY 5, 2018] that some of the trees suggested by MPI are classified as weeds, and at least one is illegal.

Institute president, Darion Embling said he's been hearing today from his members who are unhappy that this situation has arisen.

"Our members work pretty hard to rid NZ of pest plants. MPI's Biosecurity 2025 strategic document is about aligning the biosecurity system, so it is a surprise to see MPI going against its own policies and supporters.

It's great to see members of the Institute, who understand the risk of these pests, speaking up and wanting these invasive pests managed and not planted as part of the Billion Trees project.

Mr Embling said the NZ Biosecurity Institute supports the National Wilding Conifer Strategy for controlling wild pine trees. That's about 'the right tree in the right place'. This mistake by MPI is obviously encouraging the 'wrong trees', Mr Embling said."

He said he was pleased MPI had removed the pest trees from the list however it is very disappointing that such a mistake was made.

The NZ Biosecurity Institute is the professional training and networking organisation for people involved in all aspects of biosecurity including

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It's great to see members of the Institute, who understand the risk of these pests, speaking up and wanting these invasive pests managed and not planted...

- Darion Embling

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pest animal and plant management, and border control. Its members work for research organisations, educational institutions, regional councils, government departments and private organisations. All are involved in protecting NZ from invasive species.

Mr Embling said every year Institute members spend hundreds of hours controlling or managing the risks to the economy and the environment of the effects of introduced pests.

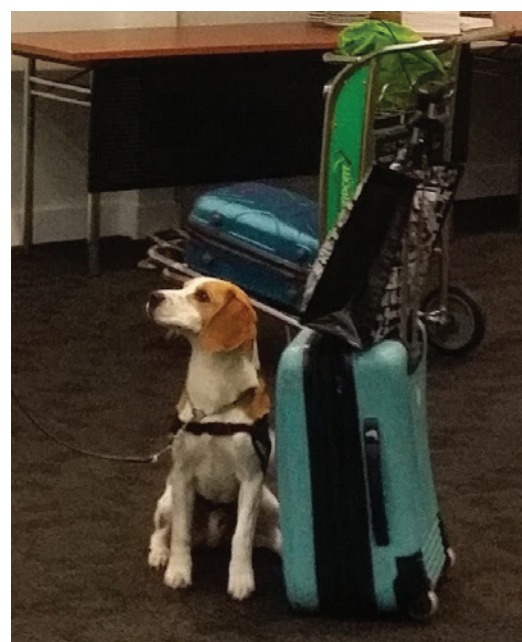
"This is work which costs the country hundreds of millions of dollars each year through control, research and border control budgets. This money is coming out of all New Zealanders' pockets," he said.

Continuing the conversation: the Biosecurity Communication Network Christchurch Forum

The Biosecurity Communication Network held its 2nd national forum in Christchurch on June 19th. Protect Editor Chris Macann represented the NZBI at the gathering. Here is his brief overview:

The Biosecurity Communication Network is a diverse group of communicators, from organisations all with a stake in biosecurity. The forum attended by around 50 people followed one held in Wellington on March 1st which created an impetus for a network of biosecurity communicators to be established and maintained.

Of note is that this is a forum of predominantly professional communicators from a wide range of sectors, but each with a significant interest in biosecurity.



Clever Beagle, there's definately a stink bug in here.

MPI staff shared a sneak-peak at the new unifying identity being developed to create a biosecurity movement of 4.7 million, and presented the baseline research into behaviours and attitudes of New Zealanders around biosecurity. MPI intends to release these details some time soon.

Dr Edwin Massey, Biosecurity Manager from NZ Wine spoke about biosecurity and the wine industry and Mike Taylor, team manager of Aquatic and Environment Health at MPI spoke about marine biosecurity.

MPI Detector Dogs were in action where they excelled at finding stink bugs and other items unwanted. The stink bugs were well-and-truly dead and were for detection demonstration only.

Chris Choat from unitary authority the Tasman District Council explained the role of regional councils in biosecurity.

Clare Hamilton from the Vehicle Importers Association spoke about the effects on the second-hand imported car industry, of recent biosecurity measures involving incoming vehicle shipments.

Jessica Smith from Te Tumu Paeroa, the division of the Ministry of Māori Development which looks after Māori land, spoke of biosecurity as it related to Māori landowners.

The group agreed it was a valuable and diverse network and work to maintain it will be valuable.

The forum is one of a large number of groupings across the country whose comments are feeding into the Biosecurity 2025 Strategy.



The Great Wilding Pine Shoot-out

Here is a story about innovation in which Wayne Cowan, Senior Biosecurity Officer for Pest Plants at Greater Wellington Regional Council tells a tale of wild west justice to control outlaw pine trees.

"The Wellington region has an emerging problem with wilding pines, particularly in the Rimutaka ranges and on steep hill country to the east of the Hutt Valley.

While the usual method of control would be to drill and fill them with Metsulfuron, difficulty accessing target trees through tight scrub and across very steep terrain has precluded this approach.

We explored the option of transporting workers by helicopter, however most of the affected areas are cloaked in regenerating scrub growing to a height of four metres ruling out either landing the aircraft or human sling loading staff onto the site.

We trialled spraying the trees with a handgun from the helicopter and while this method reliably killed trees up to four-six metres in height it didn't work on trees taller than that.

Aerial spraying from a fixed nozzle attached to the helicopter was effective but the damage sustained by surrounding native growth was not acceptable so it was back to the drawing board.

Then our aerial contractor came up with a great idea after reading an article in an overseas magazine; why not shoot the herbicide into the tree trunk with a shotgun? Much trial and error followed; projectiles were engineered, filled with five grams of Metsulfuron and shot into cut rings of *Pinus radiata* that could be split afterwards to gauge the results.

After much trial and error we eventually came up with a projectile that, if shot from a predetermined distance dependant on the trunk diameter, entered the tree to the desired depth and effectively delivered the herbicide into the cambium layer.

Next came trials on living trees; during December 2016 pines up to 20 metres in height were shot from the ground with herbicide-laden projectiles. Trees up to 400mm in diameter received two shots on opposite sides of the trunk while larger trees received three-four shots at equally spaced around the circumference depending on trunk size.

The treated trees started to brown-out within eight weeks and all were fully browned-out by June 2017.

At this time we also conducted trials shooting trees from the aircraft but without herbicide to ascertain if the process was actually feasible. We discovered that the target trees were very easy to shoot and even on very steep terrain we were able to place shots effectively.

From the aerial trial we were able to ascertain that the target trees could be controlled for as little as \$40 each all up cost.

Now all that remains to be done is the actual live trial.

It was planned to do the trial in the Rimutaka range during the 2017-2018 growth season but poor weather over the period together with the pressure of other work commitments precluded this from happening.

We are now planning to do the trials this coming growth season and if Wellington's legendary equinoctial winds allow, the work should be finished by the end of November.

If the trial proves to be successful we will have a cost effective option to kill larger trees and this, together with spraying smaller trees should provide a long term solution to the wilding pine problem."



Ambitious plan to eradicate pests from all Taranaki native habitats

A plan to eradicate pests from Taranaki will get an \$11.7 million funding injection from co-funding vehicle, Predator Free 2050 Ltd, Conservation Minister, Eugenie Sage announced in June.

Taranaki Taku Tūrangā—a region-wide collaboration between Taranaki Regional Council and rural landowners, aims to eradicate introduced predators from native habitats.

The project starts near New Plymouth and will be progressively rolled out across 4,500 hectares of farmland surrounding the Taranaki/Egmont National Park.

The area will be defended from re-infestation by a 'virtual barrier' created by a network of intensive trapping.

"Government funding of \$11.7 million invested via Predator Free 2050 Ltd into Taranaki Taku Tūrangā, aims to suppress or eradicate rats, stoats and possums in the area.

What is the Taranaki Mounga Project?

The separate Taranaki Mounga Project is a collaboration between DOC, eight Taranaki iwi, Next Foundation and others. This focusses on the national park and offshore islands. DOC has multiple roles in this project: in governance as a major partner in the project; as a funder of ecological restoration and predator control within the National Park; and, together with contractors, its rangers are involved in delivering the work on the ground.

DOC supports the Taranaki Taku Tūrangā Project through its involvement in the Taranaki Mounga Project, as the two projects will work closely together, under the 'Restore Taranaki' banner.

"This funding is being matched by local government and other funders at a ratio of more than three to one, with a total project budget of \$47 million over five years."

"Taranaki Taku Tūrangā will build on significant predator control work already being undertaken by the Taranaki Mounga Project—a large scale ecological restoration collaboration between Department of Conservation, eight Taranaki iwi, the NEXT Foundation and other sponsors, covering the 34,000 ha of the national park," Eugenie Sage said.

In late 2017, PF2050 Ltd issued a request for expressions of interest in collaborative landscape-scale predator control projects. Forty-five groups, representing six percent of New Zealand's land area, expressed interest.

Seven projects were asked to develop proposals. Taranaki Taku Tūrangā is the first to be confirmed for PF2050 Ltd investment.

In addition to the funding being provided by Predator Free 2050 Ltd, the 2018 Budget provided an extra \$81.3 million in new funding to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for landscape scale predator control as part of an extra \$181.6 million in operational funding for DOC over the next four years. That funding allows DOC to plan ahead and target the pests that are devastating the habitats of New Zealand's unique species.



What is Predator Free 2050 Ltd?

Also known as PF2050 Ltd, it is a government-owned charitable company established to support co-funding arrangements to help expand and upscale predator control operations. It aims to work towards a predator free New Zealand by 2050.

The Taranaki Taku Tūrangā Project—which is led by the Taranaki Regional Council working with rural landowners in the Taranaki Region is the first project to receive investment from Predator Free 2050 Ltd.



Plant and animal control to help black-fronted terns

Feral cats, hedgehogs, ferrets as well as the partially protected Australasian harrier, are among a number of predators killing the Nationally Endangered Waiau Toa/Clarence river black-fronted terns, in the north of the Canterbury region.

The Waiau Toa/Clarence river black-fronted terns have a predicted decline rate of around 50 percent over the next 30 years if no action is taken to protect them.

A 2012-14 Department of Conservation and Wildlife Management International Ltd study of the upper Waiau Toa/Clarence and Acheron Rivers black-fronted tern breeding colonies showed survival rates were extremely low due to predation by introduced mammals.

As a result, DOC and Environment Canterbury committed more than \$500,000 to a five-year predator control project involving predator trapping around three main breeding colonies supplemented by weed control and habitat enhancement.

During the 2017/18 black-fronted tern breeding season, 492 predators were caught, with hedgehogs making up almost half of that total.

However, while hedgehogs were the most commonly caught predator, feral cats continued to prove they were the most dangerous predator to the black-fronted tern colonies accounting for 17 percent of observed nest failures in the 2017/18 breeding season.

Australasian Harriers are included specifically in the Waiau Toa/Clarence River predator control programme as monitoring and surveillance of the colonies showed they are having the same impact on the colonies as mammalian predators.

The project does not seek to eliminate Australasian Harriers, but rather reduce their numbers around the three black-fronted tern colonies in order to give them a better chance at survival.

Australasian Harriers are partially protected under law and may only be killed for limited reasons including when they endanger other protected or endangered species.

Environment Canterbury reports that the combination of predator trapping, weed control and habitat enhancement is having a positive impact on the Waiau Toa/Clarence River black-fronted tern population.

When the project began in 2015/16 only one egg per ten nests survived to fledgling stage.

This year, one egg per two nests survived. The project will continue until 2020.



*This is what it is all about: black-fronted tern
[Photo: Sam Haultain, DOC]*



Hedgehog, a significant predator not targeted specifically



Australasian hawk

New Canterbury Pest Plan

Canterbury's new twenty-year Regional Pest Management Plan was born on the first of July.

The introduction to the plan says the emphasis is on maintaining control efforts to prevent existing legacy production pests such as broom, gorse, rabbits, wallaby and nassella tussock, from proliferating, while also increasing the focus on stopping new pests entering and becoming established.

It says this approach will help ECan become more resilient, with pests managed for both production and biodiversity protection purposes. The plan is aligned with neighbouring regions' to help prevent new pests arriving.

There is **more focus on pests that affect regional biodiversity** and acknowledgement that much of the pest control done throughout the region benefits biodiversity.

The inclusion of site-led programmes gives ECan a new way of working, with the ability to target pest management to areas of biodiversity value.



The rabbit, a legacy pest.



Legacy pest plant—gorse.



What's going on with rabbits? - an update

Testing of two wild rabbits found on a Bay of Plenty farm has confirmed the presence of the already identified new strain of the calicivirus in the region.

This is the second time that the strain has been confirmed in New Zealand. The first confirmation was in a single wild rabbit found on Marlborough farm in May. Called RHDV2, the new strain is widespread in Europe, but until recently it had not been found in New Zealand.

Meanwhile as predicted, **the controlled released virus is having variable results** across the country.

The Otago Regional Council reported on 5th June that its staff were currently part way through night counts, with approximately 80% of the sites showing a decrease in rabbit numbers. Reductions are in the range of 0-80% with an average of around 29.9% which is in line with expectations.

Scott MacLean, Director Environmental Monitoring and Operations at the Otago Regional Council said "We have 10 rabbit samples from the field, which have tested positive for RHDV1 K5. This indicates that K5 is active in the wild rabbit population."

Landcare Research scientist Dr Janine Duckworth said results of night-counts reported so far from Canterbury and Otago indicate reductions in rabbit numbers from 0-80 %, with an average reduction in 30% to 40%. She said **there have been some reports of big impacts around Christchurch.**



Nothing fishy here: Waikato is serious about pest fish

At the end of May Waikato regional councillors voted unanimously in favour of budgeting \$60,000 a year over three years for a pest fish coordinator.

The funding is subject to an equivalent amount being provided by the Department of Conservation. The coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the coordination of programmes to manage invasive pest fish, especially koi carp, in the Waikato.

Other high risk pests identified in the ten year plan review include wallabies, kauri dieback, velvetleaf, alligator weed and yellow flag iris.



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Wallaby way out of bounds

Two central North Island contractors and their specially trained biosecurity dogs joined a multi-agency hunt for a wallaby reportedly seen in the South Hokianga in May.

Kane McElrea, the Northland Regional Council's Biosecurity Manager – Partnerships & Strategy, said a witness's description of the distinctive kangaroo-like creature—which they had seen close-up more than once—and its feeding and other behaviour indicated the mystery animal could indeed be a wallaby.

As a result, up to a dozen staff and contractors from the council, Department of Conservation and Te Roroa iwi worked on an initial response over roughly 500 hectares of privately owned farmland and native bush.

"In my opinion, **they're even more of a threat to Northland than possums**, which is why they are formally classified as an 'exclusion pest' under the council's Regional Pest Management Plan due to the serious environmental, economic and other risks they pose."

Initial surveillance using high tech thermal imaging equipment, baited motion detection cameras and DNA testing of scat and fur had not yet confirmed the presence of any wallaby.

Experienced response contractors with two specially-trained wallaby tracking dogs arrived in Northland to undertake additional surveillance.

"If indeed a wallaby or wallabies are here, the most likely scenario is a deliberate, and illegal liberation from either the central North Island or Kawau Island." (Wallaby were famously introduced to New Zealand almost 150 years ago when Sir George Grey released them on Kawau.)

Kane said it's understood the witness saw a wallaby on at least two separate occasions at their Waimamaku property in recent months, but did not initially appreciate the potential significance of the incidents.



Wallaby-busters Guus Knopers and Lotte.

"Council only became aware of the situation recently (in mid-April) after news of the sightings reached another Hokianga local, who realised the seriousness of a potential incursion and in turn alerted the Department of Conservation."

Mr McElrea said locals in the search area were supportive of the multi-agency efforts and said the case serves as a reminder of the need to report any suspicious animal, fish or plant as soon as practicable.

One of the specialists brought into Northland for the response is Te Puke man Guus Knopers who runs Bay of Plenty-based company 'K9 Detection'.

Accompanying Mr Knopers was Lotte, his eight-year-old German short-haired pointer, who has been specifically trained to track wallabies.

Mr Knopers says it took about 12 months' training for Lotte to gain the special Department of Conservation certification she holds and the duo do a lot of wallaby tracking in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty.

Kane said the regional council is footing the roughly \$10,000 bill for the initial response to the potential wallaby incursion. However, if the pest's presence was confirmed in Northland, a more extensive campaign to eradicate them would be needed.

Kane reported to 'Protect Magazine' in mid-July that there was no more news.

"We have moved into a surveillance approach now, and will respond again if additional information or sightings are reported," he said.



Community pest control helps Northland's new Kiwi Coast

An ambitious goal to create the nation's first large-scale kiwi-safe 'ecological corridor' linking Northland brown kiwi populations over almost 300km of Northland is fast becoming a reality.

A formal partnership between the Northland Regional Council and the Kiwi Coast Trust consolidates the strong working relationship between the pair.

Kiwi Coast is a community-led collaboration linking a variety of landcare and pest control projects spanning the length of Northland.

It links conservation projects, iwi and hapu, landowners, farmers, forest management companies, government agencies and schools which share a desire to boost kiwi numbers and create a linked corridor of kiwi-safe areas.

Kiwi Coast Coordinator Ngaire Tyson said the partnership builds on more than 20 years of successful community-led kiwi recovery work and will help both parties with their mutual biodiversity and community goals.

She said **collectively the groups and projects are already carrying-out pest control over more than 130,000 hectares.**

Ms Tyson said **Kiwi Coast groups are already contributing more than \$500,000 worth of volunteer labour annually."**

Regional council Chairman Bill Shepherd said the council will in turn provide a number of practical and financial resources to support Kiwi Coast.

"We already contribute roughly \$300,000 a year through various funding streams to a number of community pest control projects within the Kiwi Coast area. Under the new agreement, we'll now make an additional contribution of almost \$90,000 annually to the trust itself over the next five years to help with the project's coordination."



Northland Regional Council Biosecurity Specialist Pete Graham and Kiwi Coast Coordinator Ngaire Tyson with 'Kharma', a female Northland brown kiwi.

Key Industries' Pied Piper: a more effective bait station for rat control

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Many more start on *Mycoplasma bovis* work

Biosecurity Minister Damien O'Connor. Announced at the end of May that 25 new Incident Control Point managers had entered the field immediately after completing training.

"These case managers are appointed to work one-on-one with affected farmers under movement controls. They support farmers with information and advice on the practical aspects of the controls.

"He said a further 25 will undergo training in upcoming weeks, greatly boosting capacity to help those farmers affected by the disease.

"The 50 new Incident Control Point staff are on top of the 250 at the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) already undertaking the work.

Much more science

Biosecurity Minister Damien O'Connor announced in mid-June the Government will invest \$30 million over two years in scientific research to support the fight against *Mycoplasma bovis*.

"No other country has attempted eradication, and our farming systems are unique, so **there are questions that have never been adequately explored** by scientists.

"At the top of the list of priorities will be developing a single animal test. This will help us to provide greater clarity to affected farmers, and help us to understand the spread of the disease and to focus our efforts where they are most needed.

"Newly-appointed MPI Departmental Science Adviser, Dr John Roche, will assemble the science from international and domestic scientific expertise.

"Dr Roche most recently worked as a principal scientist at DairyNZ. As well, he has a PhD in ruminant nutrition from the National University of Ireland.

Tracking not really on track: further progress needed

In mid-June Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and NAIT National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) Ltd reported that knowledge of the NAIT scheme has increased in the wake of the *Mycoplasma bovis* response, however **some farmers are still ignoring their legal obligations,**"

Manager of compliance investigations Gary Orr said "The *Mycoplasma bovis* response has highlighted the importance of tracing animal movements and having complete and accurate information available.

He said "Since the start of the year, MPI has undertaken around 200 NAIT compliance checks on farms and saleyards where cattle or deer are present."

In addition, MPI has conducted 19 proactive compliance operations across the country, including during the moving period, and the intensive programme to track cattle movements across Cook Strait in March. As well there are eight active investigations underway.

Mr Orr said NAIT Ltd had begun to check records in order to identify farmers who continue to offend.



Biosecurity awareness at national field days

Concerns over the spread of *M. Bovis* appear not to have affected turn-out at last month's National Field Days [JUNE 13-17].

This year's event attracted more than 130,000 visitors, a similar number to last year.

Organisers this year said there was a bit more of a focus on biosecurity because a few concerns had been raised about the safety of going to the field days in the shadow of *M. bovis*.

Both MPI and the event organisers said they worked with industry groups to ensure all visitors were aware of farm biosecurity before their visit.

In terms of biosecurity at the site itself; Field Days chief executive Peter Nation said the fields around the venue used for car parking had not been used for grazing. He said the one live dairy cow at the field days had the appropriate animal tracking documentation.

In terms of information dispensed at the Field Days; MPI said it had a large display at the forefront of its regular significant exhibit which reinforced key messages on *Mycoplasma bovis* and enabled farmers an opportunity to have their questions answered.

Federated Farmers, Biosecurity NZ, Dairy NZ, Rural Support Trust and Rural Women NZ sponsored material encouraging attendance at the field days all offering support at their exhibits on-site.



Removing trees top help native and introduced fish

A popular little lake in South Canterbury's Mackenzie Basin is getting some help to reduce invasive trees that are clogging its shoreline and surrounding wetlands.

A project to reduce alder trees around Lake Poaka got underway in May.

Introduced alder trees spread rapidly and colonise particularly well in wetlands. At Lake Poaka, they have been clogging up the shoreline and wetlands, reducing the amenity of the lake and degrading the habitat of many wetland species.

The aim is to, both benefit both native species and improve the recreation value of the lake.

Protecting native plant and bird species

Central South Island Fish & Game Council Officer, Rhys Adams, said native and introduced fish species co-exist at the lake. **"By removing alder trees, the habitat of the Mackenzie Basin endemic bignose galaxias, a threatened native fish, will be protected and access to anglers who target brown and rainbow trout will also improve greatly."**

The project will also benefit a number of plant and bird species whose habitats are threatened by the invasive trees. Dean Nelson, DOC Senior Ranger for Biodiversity, said: "The secretive bittern is known to inhabit the wetlands and kaki/black stilt also use Lake Poaka and the nearby Waterwheel Wetlands.

Opening up the wetlands would make it a more attractive habitat for kaki to feed and nest in. Several highly threatened small herbs are found in the wetlands including the pigmy clubrush (*Isolepis basilaris*), sneezeweed (*Centipeda minima*) and a type of native buttercup, *Ranunculus brevis*."

The project is supported by Upper Waitaki Water Zone Committee's allocation of \$11,000 of funding from Environment Canterbury, along with contributions from the Department of Conservation and Central South Island Fish & Game.

No patience for smugglers

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) applauded a \$3,300 fine dished out in May to an air traveller who deliberately failed to declare plant materials.

Arriving at Auckland Airport from China in April, the passenger ticked the "no" box on her declaration card asking whether she was bringing plants into New Zealand.

A search found seeds concealed in three bags of food and in a hand towel. Two plant cuttings were also found in her baggage and jacket.

"It's great to see the courts are running out of patience with air passengers who try to smuggle risk goods into New Zealand." MPI's team manager investigations Simon Anderson said

The sentencing follows the recent \$4,750 fine for a frequent traveller from Thailand, who failed to declare packets of seeds and fresh garlic bulbs.

Up 'till mid-May there had been nine biosecurity convictions for air travellers since October in Auckland, with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,000.

Daniel Picot: Biosecurity Officer, Pest Animals team, Greater Wellington Regional Council



Daniel Picot, right, with colleagues, from left Darren Lees, John Hambidge and Ashley Alberto.

How long have you been in your job?

I'm quite new to this position, having been in the job for ten months.

What motivates you to be involved in biosecurity?

As a keen surfer, diver and tramp, I have a huge appreciation for the New Zealand outdoors. I find that working in biosecurity allows me to work outside in beautiful places as well as being a part of protecting our natural heritage.

What has been your career path to your current position?

I completed a Master of Conservation Biology at Victoria University of Wellington. Following my studies, I worked as a ranger for Auckland Council, then Department of Conservation, working in both conservation and recreation. A large part of my previous role as a ranger was in pest animal control. I enjoyed the nature of this work and decided to pursue a position where it would be my main focus.

What makes up a normal day for you?

My job is really varied, and takes me across the whole Wellington region. Most days you'll find me out in the field, doing pest animal control. My team manages all pest animals in the region from possums to goats, which means there is a lot of variety in type of control work we do. Other aspects of the job include dealing with enquiries from the public, volunteers, GIS mapping and general equipment maintenance.

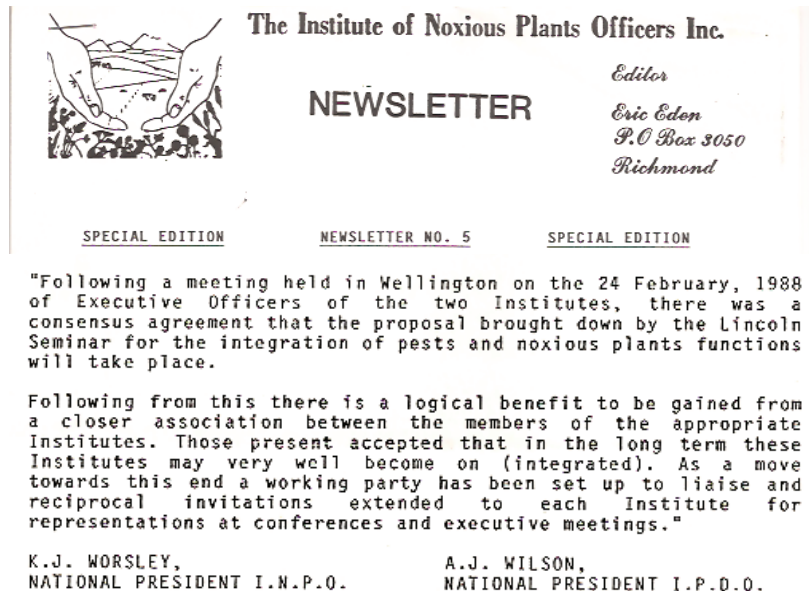
What do you enjoy the most about your job?

I really enjoy spending most of my days in the field, which keeps me fit and allows me to enjoy the Wellington outdoors. The job is varied, interesting and I get to work with a great crew.

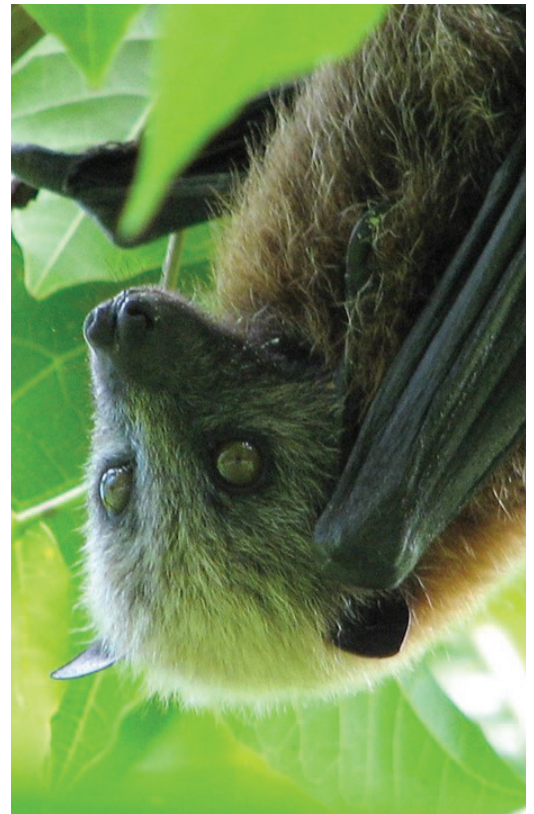


From the Archives

Joint statement from the Institute of Noxious Plants Officers and the Institute of Pest Destruction Officers published in the Institute of Noxious Plants Officers Newsletter Number 5 Special Edition 1988



The Tail



Batman loses his head at the border

This issue's 'Tail' is all about the head.

A traveller's grisly gift for his family did not make it past the border recently, when, arriving from Apia, he declared a bat's head at Auckland Airport.

The traveller said his family had eaten the rest of the bat in Samoa and he wanted to show the head to relatives in New Zealand.

The head was in poor condition, partly mummified with loose flaps of skin.

Bats are what nightmares are made of. They have a terrible reputation as disease carriers.

"You see some strange things carried by passengers in this job and this one is definitely up there" commented a staffer.



Biosecurity Bonanza 2018

Landcare Research will host its annual national Biosecurity Bonanza in Christchurch this year on September 17th.

This free workshop will present the latest biosecurity research being undertaken at Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research and its partner organisations.

The workshop will be held at the Sudima Hotel at Christchurch Airport from 8:30 - 3:00.

For more information contact:
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Phone 03 321 9684



The New Zealand Biosecurity Institute can be found on the web at www.biosecurity.org.nz