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Committee Catchment Management
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Report 2008/09

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 2008/2009 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

2. Background

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

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

3. Comment

Attachment 1 contains the Annual Report on implementation of the 2008/2009 Operational Plan. This is the seventh progress report detailing performance against the objectives in the twenty year Strategy.

Section 88(6) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 requires a regional pest management strategy to be reviewed every five years. The review process for the Wellington regional strategy has been finalised. The reviewed RPMS became operational on 12 June 2009.

4. Highlights

- 4.1 The review process of the Strategy was completed and the new strategy become operative on 12 June 2009 bringing changes to the way we address pest management issues in the region. Resources will tend to be site focused rather than species-led, with control aiming to further enhance the economy and environment of our region.
- 4.2 The seventh year of Strategy implementation saw great advances in the effective management of a wide range of pests. Our effort was greatly supplemented by support from landowners, care groups and Territorial Authorities (TA).
- 4.3 During 2008/09 the intensive field surveys around Eradication (Total control in new Strategy) pest sites continued. Our survey effort, covering 7,117 sites, resulted in increased numbers of new pest plant infestations being recorded, with a corresponding increase in awareness of pests by the affected landowners.
- 4.4 For pest plants, our involvement in biodiversity projects with other stakeholders has been enhanced. Stronger relationships have been developed with TA, with a continued expansion of KNE pest plant control. Joint work programmes are continuing with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and MAF Biosecurity.
- 4.5 A strong focus of pest animal control work remains on the biodiversity support programmes. Working relationships continue to strengthen with TA, care groups, private landowners and DOC. Control work on TA Reserves has expanded further, but growth is now restricted by funding limitations. The rook control programme was very successful this year with favourable weather patterns present. It was encouraging that rabbits remain at low levels generally across the region, with the RCD virus continuing to cycle.
- 4.6 Responsibility for pest control outside of the Key Native Ecosystems and TA reserves remains largely with landowners and occupiers, making education and communication an essential part of the control programme. Greater Wellington (GW) has a duty to ensure these parties are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate knowledge and skills to address biosecurity risks. Biosecurity staff continued to encourage public awareness about biosecurity matters through various communication initiatives including numerous newspaper articles, presentations and attendance at A&P shows and field days. Staff also updated a suite of GW publications on pest species to align information with the reviewed Strategy.
- 4.7 A well-informed public is essential for the achievement of both national and regional biosecurity objectives. Biosecurity agencies simply do not have enough resources to detect all potential pest incursions and pest spread in a timely manner. New areas of control such as invertebrates, marine and aquatic organisms are putting further pressure on limited staff and other resources. Increased public knowledge is contributing to an increased number of new pest infestations being notified. This necessitates an ongoing need to reprioritise work programmes to ensure adequate control is maintained on key species.
- 4.8 Responding to client enquiries is a major function of GW under the Strategy. In 2008/09, staff managed 1,447 individual enquiries from the public. Many of these involved site visits and the supply of advice and equipment.

- 4.9 The enclosed 2008/09 Operational Report contains separate Pest Animal and Pest Plant sections with an outline of performance against key activity objectives; an overview of major strategy issues encountered during the year, details on biodiversity support programmes; and, finally, ecological and trend monitoring activities.

5. Communications

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the RPMS Operational Plan Report 2008/2009 is available for inspection.

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

6. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- (1) **Approves** the Annual Report on the implementation of the 2008/2009 Operational Plan for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.
- (2) **Notes** that a copy of the Annual Report will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.
- (3) **Notes** that the Annual Report will be made available for public inspection.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:



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Attachment 1: Enclosed separately