



## What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the biological diversity or variety that extends from genes (simple) to ecosystem processes (complex). Biodiversity includes all plant and animal species - including humans - from microscopic genetic material to the tallest, oldest trees. Also the differences between individuals, habitats and ecosystems and the ways these link and rely on each other. Biodiversity forms a fundamental part of the natural heritage and the unique character of our region.

## The big picture

New Zealand is fortunate to have a large public conservation estate (about 1/3 of our land area). Most of this is in uplands and mountains, where the habitats and species are generally well-protected.

The Department of Conservation, other agencies, a great number of landowners, and conservation groups are working hard to restore and improve biodiversity. Despite this, indigenous biodiversity is in a continued state of decline.\*

Habitats and species are more threatened in lowland areas, where they are usually on private, often unprotected land. Landowners play a critical role in protecting and enhancing what natural biodiversity remains on our productive lowland landscapes.

\*Environment New Zealand 2007; www.biodiversity.govt.nz.

## Here in Hawke's Bay

The national situation is replicated in Hawke's Bay. Some areas support a diverse and significant range of indigenous species and ecosystems - mostly inland, mountain areas such as the Kaweka and Ruahine Ranges and the Urewera Ranges. However there are few biodiversity strongholds in the rest of the region. Some areas are critical to the region's biodiversity welfare and are not well-protected, such as remnant native bush and wetlands on private land.

As Hawke's Bay has developed, clearing, drainage and land use change has reduced the variety in our natural environment. Other pressures include biosecurity risks, the unsustainable use of natural resources, habitat fragmentation, the increasing need for infrastructure and climate change.

## What we are doing

A number of agencies are working together to develop a biodiversity strategy for the Hawke's Bay region. The strategy will be a voluntary collaboration, i.e. not legally required, between Hawke's Bay organisations with responsibilities for environmental management, and is due for release in 2014.

The Strategy will cover relevant aspects of biodiversity in Hawke's Bay, such as the protection of key species and habitats, mauri values, community engagement and partnerships.

By working together, it is hoped that shared 'buy-in' with the community will help us to use available resources more efficiently - being assets, people, time and money.

## Link with the National Biodiversity Strategy

Hawke's Bay's Biodiversity Strategy will reflect relevant values and goals of the National Biodiversity Strategy. Other regions with biodiversity strategies include Taranaki, Canterbury, Greater Wellington and Auckland.

## Our vision

Hawke's Bay's biodiversity is enhanced, healthy and functioning, through the management and protection of species, sites and ecosystems.

## What we want

- Long-term goals for habitat protection, to help diverse ecosystems function successfully
- A region-wide approach, with strategies to achieve our goals
- Prioritised areas for action, with respective commitments
- Stakeholder contributions aligned to achieve these goals.

## Our focus

An inventory of species and habitats will underpin the strategy. It will provide a baseline to help us focus on the outcomes we agree and the priorities we set.

**Species:** sustainable populations of native species region-wide

**Habitat:** sustain, protect and improve native habitats and ecosystem services

**Mauri:** sustain and protect mauri to enable wellbeing

**Community:** support education and engagement to connect with our community

**Partnership:** collaborate effectively, align programmes and share responsibilities

## Structure

The member organisations developing this strategy have formed a Biodiversity Strategy Steering Group. A Biodiversity Accord will be prepared as part of developing the biodiversity strategy. The accord will allow all stakeholders involved or interested in biodiversity protection and enhancement to publicly acknowledge their commitment to the regional strategy.

The Steering Group organisations will in turn commit their organisations to the delivery of biodiversity strategy objectives and outcomes.

A subset Core Working Group is drafting the technical elements of the strategy, made up of the Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Hawke's Bay Forestry, Nga Whenua Rahui, and the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust.

The Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Strategy is a non-statutory collaboration. The idea is to work collectively to get the most out of policy, planning and resourcing. The strategy recognises and will work within existing plan provisions at a regional and local council level.



## Biodiversity Blues

New Zealand, as one of the last countries to be settled, has a "disastrous history of indigenous biodiversity loss"

Brake & Peart, 2013, p5.

75%



Approximately 75% of indigenous forest cover has been lost

Ewers et al. 2006

61



61 bird species have become extinct due to human factors, and a further 40% are threatened with extinction

Miskelly et al 2008

34%



34% of vascular plant species are either extinct, threatened with or at risk from extinction

de Lange et al. 2004

67%



67% of indigenous fish are threatened with or at risk from extinction and it is a similar story for other species.

Allibone et al. 2009