

PLANNING AHEAD FOR BIOSECURITY IN SOUTHLAND

A proposed Biosecurity Strategy and proposal for a
Southland Regional Pest Management Plan



Harmful species – animal, plant and marine – pose a major threat to our region, both ecologically and economically. How Southland's biosecurity is managed now and into the future is something our whole community can contribute to.

This is your chance to have a say on the proposed Biosecurity Strategy and a proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan. This consultation document provides a basic overview, but you can read the full documents and find out more at www.es.govt.nz/pestplan.



Why do we need a new plan?

The current Regional Pest Management Strategy needs to be reviewed to meet the new requirements in the Government's National Policy Direction for Pest Management. To do this we have undertaken a significant review of the existing strategy and, in consultation with interested groups and individuals, we have developed a proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan, accompanied by a Biosecurity Strategy.

The strategy outlines how Environment Southland will oversee the management of biosecurity over the next 10 years, including key objectives and how these may be achieved. It's our vision for biosecurity into the future and, together with the proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan, tells Environment Southland's biosecurity story.

The future of biosecurity is about much more than rules and regulations, it's about communities working together to ensure we manage and protect our region from harmful species. The proposed strategy and plan sets out the way we work, and will continue to work, to assist and support the individuals and groups already doing their part for biosecurity.



What's changed?

Our new proposal for a Regional Pest Management Plan looks different to our previous strategy. It contains fewer specified pests and rules. This is largely because many harmful species do not need regional rules for us to manage them.

A detailed process was used to consider each species and whether it was appropriate to include it in the plan. This included considering any national rules already in place, undertaking an impact assessment, a cost benefit analysis, and consideration on whether any potential rule was likely to be effective, fair and enforceable. Only those species that met the threshold in this process were included in the plan.

However, just because a harmful species is not specifically mentioned in our pest plan does not mean we do not have a role to play in managing it – our biosecurity team is able to offer information, advice and assistance on all types of harmful species.

Environment Southland manages and contributes to a range of programmes and projects designed to protect and enhance the natural environment, people, property, business and investment – much of how we do things day-to-day will not change.

Biosecurity also contributes directly to the preservation and enhancement of Southland's indigenous biodiversity. Environment Southland's programmes work together across the organisation to contribute to a thriving Southland. Biodiversity is a key priority for Environment Southland. Strong pest management has a major part to play in enhancing biodiversity, by reducing the impact of harmful species that threaten native flora and fauna.





Highlights from the proposal for a Regional Pest Management Plan for Southland

The proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan includes 72 specific pests, including animal pests, pest plants and marine pests. It includes rules for how these will be excluded, eradicated or controlled.



The plan incorporates 'good neighbour rules' for pests including gorse, broom, ragwort and nodding thistle. Landowners are bound by these rules to ensure pests on their land don't impact on their neighbours' properties. Good neighbour rules apply to the Crown agencies, as well as private landowners.



Site-led programmes – Stewart Island and Omai are the two communities where site-led programmes are proposed in the plan. This will allow for rules specific to these areas to be introduced. At both of these locations, this will mean introducing rules that apply to domestic cats. These rules will manage the impacts of pest cats and support efforts to improve native biodiversity.

Stewart Island/Rakiura (including the Titi Islands and other offshore islands and islets) is already fortunate to be free from a number of pests, but there are many more that present risks. The proposal for a Regional Pest Management Plan includes some specific rules for this area that will reinforce some of those already in place and add new ones based on issues which are important to the community.



We propose to cease our urban gorse and broom inspection programme as it currently operates. We will continue to respond to complaints, and boundary rules will be in place to reduce impacts on neighbours. This is because the biosecurity benefits of the urban gorse and broom programme are outweighed by the costs.



We propose to remove the pest classification from chinchillas in Southland, as it is considered highly unlikely they would be able to establish a viable wild population, particularly given climatic conditions.

Wilding conifers will have new rules in the pest plan, which will help protect our high risk areas like alpine ecosystems. This is important to protect the investment and work that has already been undertaken and any future work in wilding conifer control.



We propose to keep Bengal cats as an exclusion pest, as research suggests they have the potential to breed with the existing wild population of feral cats to create a more efficient predator. This would have significant biodiversity impacts within Southland. Bengal cats can continue to be owned as pets in Southland, but a permit is required and a number of rules apply.



Controlling possums will continue to be a major focus, with ongoing support for landowners to manage possums on their properties, through our growing Possum Control Areas (PCA) programme. We propose some changes to the RTC (Residual Trap Catch) boundaries.



Where do you fit in?

We want to hear what you think about this plan: Do you think we are making the best use of available resources? Is our attention focused in the right areas? Are there major issues you think we haven't addressed?

Biosecurity is very much a community issue and one that will benefit hugely if the whole community becomes involved. We want to ensure money is spent in the right places and the responsibility for managing pests lies with the right people. Focusing pest management where it will have the most benefit to biodiversity in Southland is also a key goal.

The proposed Biosecurity Strategy and proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan will set the scene for pest management in Southland for the next 10 years, so it is important that we get it right. We can only do that if you give us your feedback.



Tell us your views

We want to hear your views on the proposed Biosecurity Strategy and the proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan. To find out more and get a copy of the proposals go to www.es.govt.nz/pestplan or give us a call on 0800 76 88 45. We can receive your feedback in a number of ways:



Mail

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Online

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Submissions close at 5pm, Tuesday 23 October.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



28 AUGUST



Submissions open



23 OCTOBER



Submissions close



**LATE 2018 –
EARLY 2019**



Hearings



EARLY 2019



Decisions released



MID 2019



Plan operative

Note: These timeframes may be subject to change.

