Chatham Islands Council

Biosecurity Strategy

2021-2041

Our people, our Islands, our future

chatham islands council

At a glance

Our vision:

Together we protect our islands from harmful organisms, to preserve their unique biodiversity and protect our community's culture, lifestyle, and economic wellbeing

Our priorities:

1. Keep harmful organisms out

Goals:

1.1. Our border biosecurity programme is fit for purpose and performing consistently
1.2. A surveillance programme is undertaken across terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments to detect any new incursions
1.3. All high-risk pathways are monitored and managed to reduce the likelihood of new incursions
1.4. We work proactively with the community, industry and shipping companies to ensure they are aware of and manage incursion risks
1.5. An effective incursion response system is in place and ready for deployment if we find any new harmful organisms
1.6. Our knowledge, and border control and surveillance tools are continually improved through research and technology.

2. Mitigate the impact of harmful organisms already on the Islands

Goals:

2.1. Low-incidence pests are eradicated from the islands
2.2. Infestations of higher incidence pests are contained and progressively reduced
2.3. The effectiveness of control programmes are monitored, and improved as necessary
2.4. Harmful organisms within terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments are monitored to detect any increase in extent or impact
2.5. Our knowledge, pest management tools and monitoring techniques are continually improved through research and technology.

The key outcomes to be delivered by the Strategy by 2041 that will achieve the vision are:

1. There are no new harmful organisms established in the islands
2. We have a detailed understanding of which harmful organisms are present on the islands, across the terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments
3. The impacts of existing pests on the Islands' biodiversity, culture and economic wellbeing are reduced or removed
4. The people of the Chatham Islands are well-supported in their biosecurity efforts
5. We are applying the latest knowledge and tools in the delivery of our actions
6. We are always looking ahead to understand and plan for new high-risk pests and pathways over the next 50 years

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and scope

This strategy has been prepared by the Chatham Islands Council (the Council). It is a non-statutory document that provides overarching direction to the Chatham Islands biosecurity programme and complements the Chatham Islands Pest Management Plan. The Strategy has effect within the administrative boundaries of the Chatham Islands Territory. This comprises the islands known as the Chatham Islands and the area of the territorial sea adjoining those islands as defined by the Chatham Islands Council Act 1995.

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out the Council's strategic direction and framework relating to its biosecurity responsibilities for the next 20 years. In particular, the Strategy:

- sets out the Council's leadership responsibilities, vision, and priorities for biosecurity in the Chatham Islands, and
- outlines and integrates, across all things biosecurity, the non-regulatory and regulatory programmes and activities that the Council will either lead or participate in.

The Strategy addresses the Council's biosecurity roles and responsibilities (and not those of other agencies). The Strategy does not contain rules. Rules relating to pest management are set out in the Chatham Islands Pest Mangement Plan, which is a Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) under the Biosecurity Act 1993 (BSA).

Unless the context relates otherwise, for the purposes of this Strategy, 'biosecurity' refers to the management of all harmful organisms, which includes animals, plants, and pathogens, and not just those legally defined as 'pests' in a RPMP. The BSA definition of a pest only relates to "...an organism specified as a pest in a pest management plan".

1.2. Structure

The Strategy is divided into the following sections:

Section 1 introduces the Strategy, including its purpose, scope and structure.

Section 2 sets the scene, providing some background on the Chatham Islands, the Islands' values that require protection, and the biosecurity threats and management challenges we face.

Section 3 provides a brief overview of the New Zealand biosecurity system and how the Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity framework fits within this.

Section 4 sets out our vision, priorities for managing biosecurity risks and the key outcomes we will deliver in order to achieve this vision.

Section 5 provides details on the key actions that we will use to deliver the strategy, and the key principles for how we will work.

Section 6 outlines the monitoring and review provisions of the Strategy.

A definitions section containing terms and acronyms used in the Strategy is presented at the back.

2. Background

2.1. Geography

The Chatham Islands are located 860km due east of Christchurch, New Zealand (Figure 1). There are eleven islands in the Chatham Islands Group. The two largest – Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri and Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria – support settlements comprising communities of about 700 and 50 people, respectively. The largest of the nine remaining islands – South East Island/ Hokorereoro/Rangatira, Mangere/Maung' Rē Island, and Little Mangere/Tapuaenuku Island – are adjacent to Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria. A star shaped group makes up the Star Keys/Motchu Hopo/Motuhope to the east of Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria. Three small islands make up The Sisters/Rakitchu/Rangitutahi to the north of the main island group.

2.2. Our Islands' unique biodiversity values

The Chatham Islands is a unique and special part of New Zealand. Its geology, isolation, topography, climate and soils have given rise to unique natural environments, with landforms such as cliffs and volcanic cones, rivers, wetlands and indigenous vegetation and habitats. Due to its isolation, the Chatham Islands have fewer pests than mainland New Zealand. This has meant that the Chatham Islands have retained a high degree of endemism and many of the smaller offshore islands are of major conservation significance because of their largely unspoilt or restored environments, containing endemic coastal vegetation and ecosystems.

The Islands are home to many species that are nationally and internationally important to biodiversity. Forty seven of the Chatham Islands' 388 indigenous terrestrial plant species (e.g. Chatham Island Christmas tree/rautini, Chatham Island astelia/kakaha), 18 of its 73 native birds (e.g. Chatham Island oystercatcher/tōrea, Chatham petrel/ranguru, Chatham Island wood pigeon/parea, Chatham Island tūi), and about 20% of the 750-800 insect species are found nowhere else in the world. Wetlands are extensive and diverse on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri and Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria, dominated by endemic flowering plants and ferns (e.g. Cox's matipo, toetoe and soft speargrass). The endemic Chatham Island mudfish (Neochanna rekohua) has been found only on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri. The inshore marine life of the Chatham Islands is similarly unique, with seven endemic seaweeds, and a number of marine mammals can be seen in the waters, e.g. New Zealand fur seal, sea lions, elephant seal, leopard seals, as well as whales and dolphins.

However, widespread forest clearance, drainage of wetlands and habitat fragmentation, along with predation, has led a high proportion of the Islands' endemic species (up to 20%) to be threatened with extinction. This includes iconic species such the Chatham Island forget-me-not/kopakopa/kopukapuka, tāiko/tchaik' and black robin. The introduction of new pests could have a devastating effect on the indigenous biodiversity of our Islands.

Figure 1 - Map of the Chatham Islands

2.3. Our lifestyle, culture and economic wellbeing

As Chatham Islanders, we enjoy a unique lifestyle, valuing the open space, sense of freedom, safety, lack of time constraints and easy access to hunting and fishing activities and the outdoors that the Islands' provide. The natural environment is inseparable from our cultural identities and vital for our social wellbeing. It is important that we protect this for future generations.

Moriori and Ngāti Mutunga are the recognised imi/iwi, with the Hokotehi Moriori Trust and Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust the respective mandated bodies representing imi/iwi. Much of the coastal environment is of importance to imi/iwi with a number of imi spiritual sites located in proximity to the coast. Moriori and Ngāti Mutunga are both regarded as Treaty partners by Chatham Islands Council and their relationship with these islands is a matter of national importance to be recognised and provided for through the Council planning processes. They have a special status in local government planning and resource management activities. Chatham Islands Council acknowledges that these two groups have distinct cultures and practices.

The isolated nature of the Islands means that our economic and social welfare is inextricably linked to the sustainable management of the natural and physical resource base, which provides, directly or indirectly, for the livelihood of the vast majority of islanders. The main economic base of the Chatham Islands is primary production – fishing and farming. The fishing industry accounts for the greatest proportion of the Islands' income as well as providing 40% of jobs. Paua (Haliotis iris) and crayfish (Jasus edwardsii) are the main exports, although wet fish (blue cod Parapercis colias, blue nose Hyperoglypha antartica) and kina (Evechinus chloroticus) are also harvested. Future expansion of the shellfish industry is expected following Central Government investment in shellfish aquaculture farms. Farming is the second highest earner, with live export of sheep and cattle for meat production the main farm export, supplemented with wool. There is also a growing apiculture industry on the islands.

Ecotourism is a growing industry on the Islands, with the spectacular landscapes, rare and endemic plant and birdlife, and sustainably harvested kaimoana advertised as main selling points to potential visitors. Recent Central Government investment in the Islands' tourism industry is hoped to lead to increased visitor numbers, with a domestic New Zealand island-holiday destination particularly attractive in a post-Covid world.

2.4. What are the biosecurity threats to our environments?

2.4.1. Threats to our marine environment

Invasive marine organisms are an important concern, both for their potential impact on indigenous marine biodiversity, but also for the fishing industry. They compete with and displace species important for their biodiversity, cultural and/or economic value, alter the marine environment and community structure, and foul boats, aquaculture equipment and marine structures, leading to increased costs and maintenance.

Once a harmful marine organism is present, it is either impossible or extremely expensive and technically difficult to control or remove it. It is therefore important to prevent their arrival in the first place, by managing potential pathways to, and within, the Chatham Islands. Marine organisms tend to arrive in ballast water, on boat hulls, or on marine structures and equipment being brought into the area. If a harmful organism is detected, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) take a leading role in determining what should be done about it (i.e. eliminate, control, or do nothing), and the Council may be involved in any resulting management, at MPI's direction.

A potentially major incursion was successfully managed in 2017, when one tug and two barges associated with the wharf upgrade project were found to have a range of harmful marine organisms attached (Undaria pinnatifida, Mediterranean fanworm, clubbed tunicate, Didemnum vexillum and oysters/mussels that could potentially have been infected with Bonamia disease). This demonstrates the importance of regular surveillance of marine sites and vessels.

We currently know very little about the presence and absence of marine pests under the water around the Chatham Islands. We have a highly qualified dive team that can carry out biannual dives at each of the four Chathams ports, but a lack of resources limits our ability to undertake systematic underwater surveys around coastal areas.

(Photo courtesy of Weedbusters)

2.4.2. Threats to our terrestrial environment

Due to its isolation, the Chatham Islands have fewer invasive terrestrial organisms than mainland New Zealand. However, established pests such as gorse, possums, rats, hedgehogs, Canada geese and feral goats are already impacting on our economy, our natural ecosystems, and could contribute to the loss of rare species. To date, Council control programmes have focussed on terrestrial weed and pest animal species that pose the greatest risk to environmental and production values.

There are a number of organisms that are becoming more of a concern to the community, such as feral cattle, feral horses and black swans. These organisms are having an ever-increasing impact on the natural environment and, in the case of feral cattle, public safety.

It is essential to prevent the introduction of new terrestrial organisms, deliberate or accidental, that may impact on the endemic biodiversity values of the islands, as well as the economic base of farming and ecotourism. Strong border controls and effective surveillance are fundamental, and recent incursions to the Chatham Islands (e.g. German wasp, black ants, cockroaches, and tree lupin) highlight the importance of timely and effective incursion response. Several pathogens are present on mainland New Zealand, including myrtle rust, bovine and bee diseases, which if introduced to the Chatham Islands would have a significant detrimental effect.

In addition to the mainland New Zealand-Chatham Islands border, we also recognise the need to protect Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria from the numerous pests that are present on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri but not present on Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria (e.g. rats, possums, hedgehogs) – in essence, the need for ‘a border within a border’.

We have a good understanding of the invasive terrestrial organisms present on the island, and the risks they pose. In general, terrestrial species tend to be easier to detect, we have a greater degree of experience in dealing with them, and there is a greater body of scientific research around them, because of a traditional focus on pests that affect production.

2.4.3. Threats to our freshwater environment

There are currently few introduced freshwater plants or animals known to be present on the Chatham Islands. Introduced freshwater plants can impact on indigenous biodiversity by altering freshwater ecosystems and habitats and competing with and displacing native species. Introduced freshwater fish, frogs and invertebrates may modify or destroy natural habitat, destroy native plants, and prey upon or compete with native fish and invertebrates for food and habitat[1]. Invasive species therefore have the potential to compromise aesthetic values and adversely impact agriculture, recreational activities (e.g. swimming, boating, fishing) and tourism.

The majority of introductions of harmful organisms into freshwater ecosystems are either through intentional or accidental human release. Many freshwater pest introductions emanate from the pet and aquaria trade. This issue is very difficult to control and monitor.

There is not a wide body of information available to be able to accurately assess the presence and actual or potential impact of specific introduced freshwater species throughout the Chatham Islands Territory. For many freshwater pests, there are no, or only limited, effective control methods available. A lack of resources, operational capacity and technical expertise has restricted our ability to undertake active surveillance in freshwater environments.

[1] *For example, see Hokotehi Moriori Trust (2019) A plan for the freshwater systems and fisheries of Rēkohu.*

2.5. What are the management challenges we face?

Our unique biodiversity and remaining pristine environments are under threat. The Chatham Islands are nationally and internationally important for their biodiversity value. Many species are found nowhere else in the world, and some ecosystems remain virtually untouched. Our biodiversity is precious but will be degraded and lost if we allow weed and animal invaders to transform our environment. We also need to protect the investments and efforts that are being made on the Islands to replant and restore indigenous ecosystems and recover threatened species.

We need to mitigate the impact of harmful organisms already on the Islands and prevent new potential pests from arriving.

We are physically isolated. With isolation comes the challenge of having to import and export the majority of what we need, and what we produce. This creates high-risk pathways that need to be managed carefully to prevent harmful organisms from spreading to the Islands.

Strong border controls and effective surveillance and incursion response are fundamental.

We also need to prevent pests from spreading between islands. It's not just the border between mainland New Zealand and the Chatham Islands that needs protecting. We also need to prevent the spread of harmful organisms present on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri that are not currently found on Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria (e.g. possums, rats and hedgehogs), and the other outer islands.

We need to work with our community to help manage high risk pathways.

We have limited resources to do the work. Our small community on the Islands, and consequently small rating base, means that there are fewer people and resources available to help fund, and carry out, biosecurity work.

We need clear priorities, and effective partnerships with the community, other agencies and industry are vital to help us to achieve our biosecurity goals.

There are gaps in our knowledge. We do not have an extensive understanding of which potentially harmful organisms are present in our freshwater and marine environments, and we lack effective control tools for all species, particularly in freshwater systems.

We need to continue to improve our understanding of the risks, and management methods required, to protect the Islands' values, across marine, terrestrial, and freshwater environments.

Potential future risks we need to be aware of:

Expansion of the tourism industry. While beneficial for the local economy, an increase in visitor numbers will increase the risk of pest "hitch-hikers" finding their way to the Islands.

Expansion of the aquaculture industry. Planned aquaculture development increases the economic risk posed by marine invaders that threaten productivity and increase costs.

Climate change will lead to new biosecurity risks. It is predicted that climate change will lead to warmer and wetter conditions in the Chatham Islands, which could increase their suitability for some organisms and help to increase the spread of pests and weeds. Sea level rise may alter habitats and change pest distribution in low-lying areas. The impact of climate change on biosecurity operations needs to be a major factor for consideration over the next 20 years and beyond.

We need to continue to look ahead - plan for new potential risks and stay up to date with the latest scientific research and tool development.

3. New Zealand's biosecurity system

The management of harmful organisms in the Chatham Islands Territory sits within a much wider system – the New Zealand biosecurity system (see Figure 2). We need to understand this wider system so that we know what powers and tools are available to help deal with our biosecurity threats.

3.1. Legislative background

Chatham Islands Council is a unitary authority with the powers of a regional council, under the Local Government Act (2002). The Council's biosecurity related programmes and activities are underpinned or authorised by several legislative mandates and policy instruments.

3.1.1. Biosecurity Act (1993) and the National Policy Direction for Pest Management (2015)

The Biosecurity Act 1993 (BSA) provides a mandate and a set of powers and tools for pest control that aims to protect a broad suite of values including agricultural and environmental. Under the BSA, Chatham Islands Council are obliged to provide *"... leadership in activities that prevent, reduce, or eliminate adverse effects from harmful organisms that are present in New Zealand (pest management) in their region"*. Leadership is shown through the promotion and facilitation of pest management in the region; encouraging alignment, communication, and co-operation amongst those involved.

The National Policy Direction (NPD) was put into effect in 2015 and provides guidance to councils in setting Regional Pest Management and Pathway Management Plans.

Tools to facilitate Council's obligations under the BSA include:

Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP)

The RPMP provides a statutory mechanism for pest management, identifies which organisms are classified as "pests" and sets clear objectives for their management. Any rules that people must follow to manage pests must be included in a RPMP. The RPMP also identifies the costs and funding sources for administering and implementing the Plan.

Chatham Island Council have prepared a RPMP entitled "Chatham Islands Pest Management Plan (2021-2041)". This plan identifies animal and plant pest species to be included in one of four management programmes (Exclusion, Eradication, Progressive Containment and Sustained Control). For each pest, the objective for management is stated, along with the principal measures and any rules that will be used to help achieve these objectives.

Regional Pathway Management Plan

This provides a statutory mechanism for developing rules to prevent harmful organisms from being transported into new or different areas. It manages pathways rather than specific pests.

Small-scale management programme

The Council can access certain powers and undertake direct control of an 'unwanted organism'[2] without needing to prepare or review a pest or pathway management plan, subject to certain pre-requisites.

3.1.2. Local Government Act (2002)

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) sets out the statutory purpose of local government and the role of local authorities. It also provides, in the form of Long Term Plans (LTPs), the framework for the direction and priorities of each local authority. Through LTPs, councils secure funding for non-regulatory activities, with specific measures subject to the work programming / budgeting and community consultation process.

3.1.3. Resource Management Act (1991)

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires regional councils to sustainably manage the natural and physical resources of the region, including the Coastal Marine Area. Its focus is on managing adverse effects on the environment through regional policy statements, regional and district plans, and resource consents. The RMA, along with regional policies and plans, can be used to manage activities so that they do not create or exacerbate biosecurity risk, e.g. coastal discharges and disposition activities spreading marine pests.

The recent National Policy Statement (NPS) for freshwater and forthcoming NPS for biodiversity are likely to have connections with pest management and environmental protection.

The Chatham Islands Resource Management Document (CIRMD) (2018) presents a framework for the integrated management of natural and physical resources of the islands (including the sea area out to the 12 mile territorial limit). The CIRMD contains aspects of a regional policy statement, a district plan, a coastal plan, and regional plan, providing the information required under the RMA, and is administered by Chatham Islands Council.

[2] *Refer to MPI's register of unwanted organisms on the website https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/finding-and-reporting-pests-and-diseases/registers-and-lists/*

3.1.4. Other Legislation

Council Plans and activities must also comply with other legislation.

The Wild Animal Control Act 1977 (and the Wild Animal Control Amendment Act 1997)

This controls the hunting and release of wild animals such as deer, goats, and pigs, as well as regulates deer farming and the operation of safari parks. It also gives local authorities the power to destroy wild animals under operational plans that have the Minister of Conservation's consent. Control of wild animals under a RPMP has this consent.

Wildlife Act 1953

This controls and protects wildlife not subject to the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. It defines wildlife that are not protected (e.g. feral cattle, feral cats, feral dogs), are to be game (e.g. mallard ducks, black swan), partially protected or are injurious. It authorises that certain unprotected wildlife may be kept and bred in captivity even if they are declared pests under a pest management plan (e.g. ferret, stoat, weasel, polecat). The Director-General of Conservation must approve any plans to control injurious birds (e.g. rooks).

Reserves Act 1977 and Conservation Act 1987

These contain provisions that support pest management within a specific context. The role of regional councils (including unitary authorities) under such legislation is limited to advocacy.

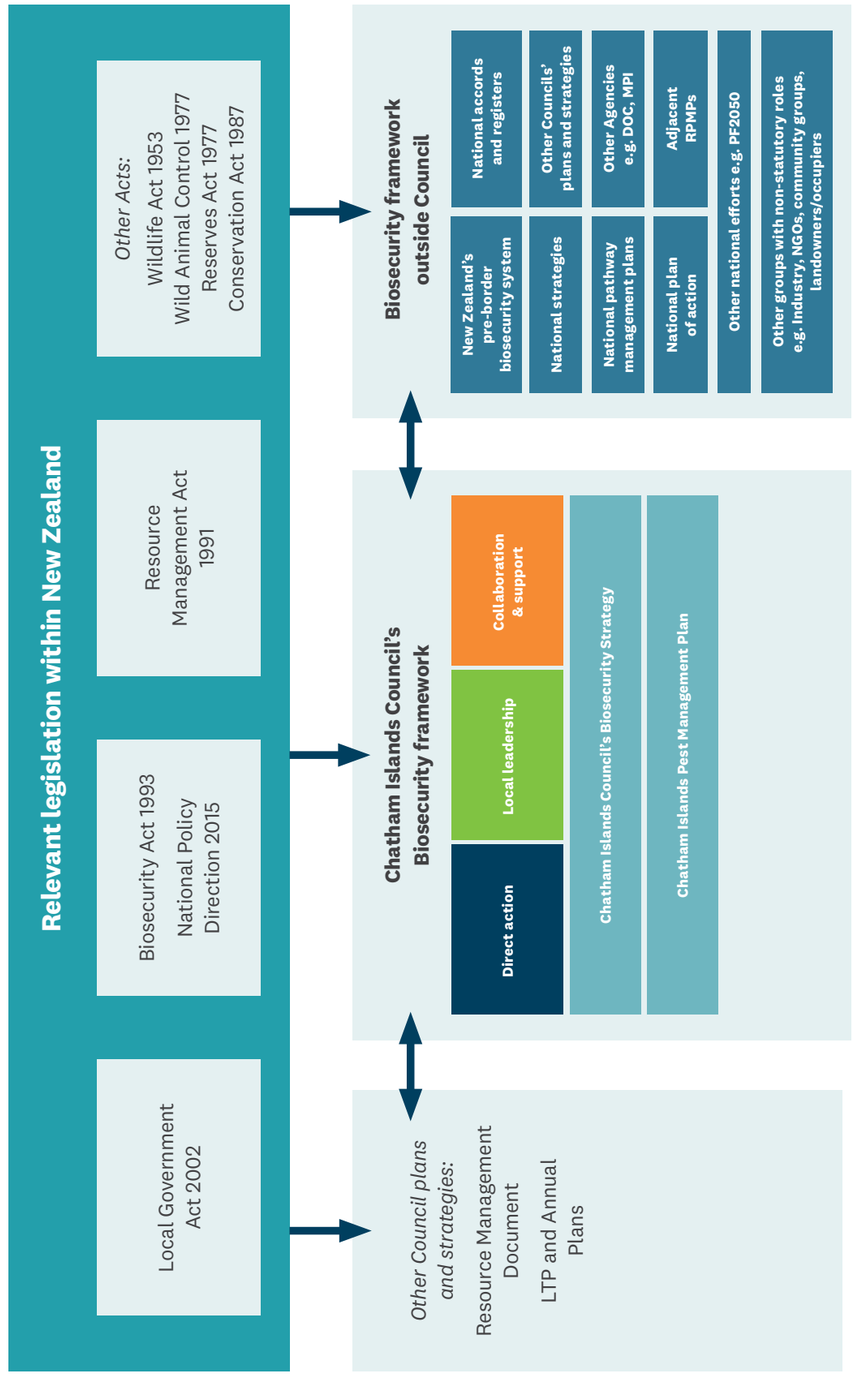

Figure 2 - The Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity framework, within the New Zealand biosecurity system

3.2. The biosecurity framework outside Council

Alongside the Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity framework sit relevant national strategies, plans and accords; other region's strategies and plans; as well as others' work in biosecurity management, including New Zealand's pre-border biosecurity system (Biosecurity New Zealand) and national efforts, such as Predator Free 2050.

As part of this Strategy, the Council is seeking not to duplicate the work of other agencies and groups, but rather alignment and to identify activities and programmes to work co-operatively, provide support and add value where appropriate.

3.2.1. National strategies, plans and accords

This Strategy aligns with national strategies, plans, and accords, where their outcomes align with the outcomes of Chatham Islands Council, including:

- Biosecurity 2025 is the national biosecurity strategy that provides direction for New Zealand's biosecurity system. It is described as a partnership between people, organisations, Māori, and central, local, and regional government, aimed to make the biosecurity system more resilient and future-focussed, to protect our taonga and New Zealand from pests and diseases.
- If any national pest management plans or pathway management plans are developed, they would form a key part of the wider framework.
- The Council is a signatory to the National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA), which designates plants as Unwanted Organisms under the Biosecurity Act, and prohibits their sale, propagation, and distribution throughout New Zealand.

3.2.2. Other Councils' plans and strategies

The Chatham Islands are not directly adjacent to any other region in New Zealand. However, other Councils' plans and strategies that cover ports and transport hubs through which people and freight travel to the Chatham Islands are of relevance, in terms of managing the risk of harmful organisms spreading to and from the Islands.

3.2.3. Other agencies

Other agencies also have statutory roles and obligations in relation to biosecurity. The key agencies and their roles are:

Ministry for Primary Industries

MPI is the Government department charged with leadership of New Zealand's biosecurity system.

Biosecurity New Zealand is a business unit of MPI with responsibilities that include certain pre and post border roles that are important to prevent the introduction of new species to New Zealand. MPI also has a lead role administering the BSA and undertaking pest and disease surveillance.

MPI-led programmes of relevance to this Strategy include the National Biosecurity Capacity Network, the Marine High-Risk Site Surveillance Programme, the Invasive Ants Surveillance Programme, the National Pest Plant Accord, the National Pest Pet Accord, National Interest Pest Response, and Freshwater Pests Partnership Programme.

Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is the principal Central Government agency involved in the conservation of biodiversity, operating under a number of different statutes, including the Conservation Act 1987, the National Parks Act 1980, the Wildlife Act 1953 and the Reserves Act 1977. DOC's responsibilities include managing pests and other harmful organisms on public conservation estate, as well as promoting conservation off the public conservation estate through funding and advocacy. DOC has an ongoing presence on the Chatham Islands.

DOC is required to control pests on land that they occupy or administer in accordance with any good neighbour rules set out in the RPMP.

DOC manages about 4% of the land area of the Chatham Islands (7,129 ha), with areas ranging in size from about four to 1300ha. It manages South East/Hokorereoro/Rangatira and Mangere/ Maung' Rē Islands as Nature Reserves with public access restricted, and these islands are now free of introduced predators and herbivorous mammals. DOC also manages a network of protected areas on the Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri and Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria.

3.2.4. Other groups with non-statutory roles

Other groups we work alongside, who undertake work in the biosecurity space include:

- Moriori and Ngāti Mutunga, who manage land to keep it free of weeds and animal pests.
- Landowners, who manage their land to keep it free of weeds and animal pests, particularly where they are the direct beneficiary of their work.
- Non-government organisations and community groups (e.g. Chatham Islands Conservation Board) who undertake pest management for environmental protection
- Ports who are involved in marine pest surveillance and management programmes, both on the mainland and on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri.
- Industry, through educating and encouraging staff and customers to apply good biosecurity practices (e.g. shipping companies, air carriers, eco-tourism operators, fishing industry)
- Organisations involved in national-scale efforts, such as Predator Free 2050, which aims to deliver the eradication of possums, stoats and rats by 2050.

The majority of landholdings in the Chatham Islands are held in imi/iwi and joint ownership. The offshore islands have traditionally had little Council involvement, with imi/iwi families and the Crown as owners controlling the resources.

The Islands have one of the highest numbers of covenants in New Zealand for its size, through Forest Heritage and Ngā Whenua Rāhui funds. Covenanted areas, many on private title, are managed by or with the support of the landowner. Planting, stock exclusion, weed control and animal pest control are all part of their management. In addition, there are areas that owners have fenced off for protection but are not under any formal covenant.

The Chatham Islands have two pests that fall under the remit of the national Predator Free programme: possums and rats. These predators are present on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri but are currently absent from the other islands. A Chatham Islands Predator Free programme has general support and is in the early stages of development. Feral cats are also being considered for inclusion in the Predator Free programme due to their presence on both Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri and Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria. It will be important to coordinate and align the actions of all biosecurity players to support any Predator Free movement in the future.

3.3. Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity framework and toolbox

The Council's biosecurity framework describes our approach to tackling our biosecurity challenges. We have identified the following as key elements of the framework: direct action, the provision of local leadership, and working with others through collaboration and providing support. Figure 3 outlines the range of tools at the Council's disposal within this framework. Working with others and using a combination of methods creates a stronger approach overall.

3.3.1. Pathway management

The most effective way to manage harmful organisms, is to prevent the organism from becoming a problem in the first place. This is the concept behind pathway management, which focusses upon the prevention of harmful organisms from reaching a destination. Pathway management provides a more cost-effective approach than responding to problematic species after they have arrived and become established, at which point management control is often difficult and expensive. This is particularly relevant in a Chatham Islands context.

In the Chatham Islands, key pathways are:

- **Mainland New Zealand – Chatham Islands**

  The transfer of harmful organisms from mainland New Zealand and its coastal waters, via air and sea transport of people and goods.

- **Within Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri**

  The transfer of harmful organisms already present in restricted locations on Chatham Island to new areas of the Island (e.g. seeds transferred on machinery or tramping boots).

- **Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri – Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria and other offshore islands**

  The transfer of harmful organisms present on Chatham Island/Rēkohu/Wharekauri to other islands in the group where they are not present, e.g. rats, hedgehogs, and possums to Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria.

Effective pathway management requires a range the biosecurity tools described in Figure 3, incorporating direct actions (e.g. surveillance, checking procedures and quarantine measures), leadership (e.g. provision of information and training in biosecurity methods) and working with others (e.g. raising awareness of biosecurity risks and encouraging others to report sightings).

Direct action

Control of harmful organisms	Monitoring & surveillance	Border biosecurity programme

- Border biosecurity programme
- Incursion response programme
- Pest management, as directed in the RPMP
- Regular surveillance to understand the presence/absence and extent of harmful organisms on the Islands
- Proactive control of other harmful organisms (not named in the RPMP)
- Identification and management of high-risk pathways through which harmful organisms may arrive to the Islands

Local leadership

Planning & legislation	Provision of knowledge & training

- Provide overarching direction for Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity work within a Biosecurity Strategy
- Provide direction on which are the high-risk organisms that require control through the RPMP
- Be a point of contact for advice and information
- Demonstrate good biosecurity practices to others by providing advocacy, education, and training

Collaboration & support

Supporting the community	Working with industry	Collaboration with other agencies & science partners

- Support landowners and imi/iwi to carry out their biosecurity work, through the provision of facilitation, funding, and advice
- Respond to ideas and opportunities created by the Chatham Islands community (e.g. Predator Free)
- Encourage 'community eyes' by providing information on surveillance and good biosecurity practices
- Raise awareness of how activities (e.g. economic, recreational, cultural) can create pathways for harmful organisations to arrive at the Islands, and how to manage these risks
- Collaboration and information-sharing with other agencies (e.g. DOC, MPI) to achieve the best results for pest management, incursion response and surveillance
- Co-operation with science partners to improve our knowledge of the risks caused by harmful organisms, and in the development of new control and surveillance technologies

Figure 3 - Chatham Islands Council's biosecurity framework and toolbox

4. Our biosecurity strategy

4.1. Our vision

Together we protect our islands from harmful organisms, to preserve their unique biodiversity and protect our community's culture, lifestyle and economic wellbeing.

4.2. Our biosecurity priorities

1. Keep harmful organisms out

The most significant risk to our islands is from harmful organisms that are not present. Keeping harmful organisms off the Chatham Islands is far more cost effective than trying to deal with them once they have become established. Pathway management is key to preventing their arrival. Due to our reliance on imports, exports and tourism, there are many pathways for these organisms to make their way to the Chatham Islands, or between the islands, associated with movement from New Zealand or other countries. These include imported vehicles, small boats, timber and machinery, and with tourists, imported livestock, plants and general freight. Even commercial foods, fertilisers, grains and potting mix can contain organisms we do not want here.

It is critical that our biosecurity system is fit for purpose and ready to keep these harmful organisms out, both now and across the next two decades.

Goals:

1.1. Our border biosecurity programme is fit for purpose and performing consistently
1.2. A surveillance programme is undertaken across terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments to detect any new incursions
1.3. All high-risk pathways are monitored and managed to reduce the likelihood of new incursions
1.4. We work proactively with the community, industry and shipping companies to ensure they are aware of and manage incursion risks
1.5. An effective incursion response system is in place and ready for deployment if we find any new harmful organisms
1.6. Our knowledge, and border control and surveillance tools are continually improved through research and technology.

2. Mitigate the impact of harmful organisms already on the Islands

Established harmful organisms on the Islands (e.g. gorse, Canada geese, feral goats) are already impacting on our economy, degrading our native ecosystems and threatening our unique species. We will work with the community and others to progressively reduce, and remove where possible, these unwanted invasive species, to lessen their impact on the Islands' values.

Goals:

2.1. Low-incidence pests are eradicated from the islands
2.2. Infestations of higher incidence pests are contained and progressively reduced
2.3. The effectiveness of control programmes are monitored, and improved as necessary
2.4. Harmful organisms within terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments are monitored to detect any increase in extent or impact
2.5. Our knowledge, pest management tools and monitoring techniques are continually improved through research and technology.

4.3. Key outcomes

The key outcomes to be delivered by the Strategy by 2041 that will achieve the vision are:

- There are no new harmful organisms established in the islands
- We have a detailed understanding of which harmful organisms are present on the islands, across the terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments
- The impacts of existing pests on the Islands' biodiversity, culture and economic wellbeing are reduced or removed
- The people of the Chatham Islands are well-supported in their biosecurity efforts
- We are applying the latest knowledge and tools in the delivery of our actions
- We are always looking ahead to understand and plan for new high-risk pests and pathways over the next 50 years

5. What we will do to deliver the strategy

Direct action

Marine	Terrestrial	Freshwater
Maintain a fit-for-purpose border biosecurity programme to manage pathways (Goal 1.1; 1.3)		
Exclude marine pests by checking: • Imported used aquaculture and commercial fishing equipment • Imported used recreational diving and fishing equipment • Checking vessels	Exclude terrestrial pests by checking: • Imported used tools and equipment; livestock; vehicles; building materials • Imported aggregate and soil • Checking vessels and aircraft	Exclude freshwater pests by checking: • Imported freight (e.g. used tools and equipment; vehicles; pet and aquaria items)
Undertake effective surveillance for incursions in and around the islands (Goal 1.2; 1.3)		
Increase frequency of surveillance by dive team to inspect: • Boats (e.g. hull fouling) • Key marine sites, such as docks, harbours, cultural gathering sites, native ecosystems and habitats	Regular surveillance by biosecurity officers at: • Key terrestrial sites, such as native ecosystems and habitats; agricultural/production; sites of cultural significance • Sites where pest control has been undertaken	Start surveillance of key freshwater environments by biosecurity officers to inspect: • Key freshwater sites, such as native ecosystems and habitats; sites of cultural significance; recreational values
Maintain our effective incursion response capability (Goal 1.5)		
• Planning incursion response protocols • Resourcing/partnering with other agencies	• Maintaining readiness to respond • Reporting and review of incursion responses	
Deliver effective pest control (Goal 2.1; 2.2)		
Control invasive marine organisms identified as posing a risk to biodiversity/economic/ cultural/ recreational values (when directed to by MPI)	• Eradicate pests identified in the RPMP eradication programme • Contain and reduce pests identified in the sustained control and progressive containment programmes • Control other invasive terrestrial organisms identified as posing a risk to biodiversity/ economic/cultural/recreational values	Control invasive freshwater organisms identified as posing a risk to biodiversity/economic/ cultural/recreational values
Surveillance and monitoring of existing organisms to understand their presence and extent, and to check if our work is effective (Goal 2.3, 2.4)		
Increase monitoring frequency by the dive team to inspect: • Boats (e.g. hull fouling) • Key marine sites, such as docks, harbours, cultural gathering sites, native ecosystems and habitats • Regular monitoring of management sites to check effectiveness of control (if/ where applicable)	Regular surveillance by biosecurity officers at: • Key terrestrial sites, such as native ecosystems and habitats; agricultural/production; sites of cultural significance • Sites where pest control has been undertaken • Regular monitoring of management sites to check effectiveness of control	Start surveillance of freshwater environments by biosecurity officers, to inspect: • Key freshwater sites, such as native ecosystems and habitats; sites of cultural significance; recreational values • Regular monitoring of management sites to check effectiveness of control (if/ where applicable)

Local leadership

Marine	Terrestrial	Freshwater
Provide direction and planning for biosecurity work (Goal 1.4)		
Administration of biosecurity strategy and RPMP • Assessment and identification of marine pests appropriate for RPMP exclusion programme • Using other legislation to control marine pathways (e.g. RMA rule on bilge discharge, Unwanted Organisms) Developing and maintaining shipping requirements for commercial operators	Administration of biosecurity strategy and RPMP • Assessment and identification of terrestrial pests appropriate for RPMP exclusion programmes • Using other legislation to control pathways (e.g. Unwanted Organisms)	Administration of biosecurity strategy and RPMP • Assessment and identification of freshwater pests appropriate for RPMP exclusion programmes • Using other legislation to control pathways (e.g. Unwanted Organisms)
Share knowledge and provide advocacy and training (Goal, 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 2.4)		
Advocate and educate to promote good biosecurity practices, share knowledge of control tools and practices, advise how to manage high-risk pathways, provide information on which organisms are pests and what this means to the public, and encourage others to report sightings.		
Work with: • Recreational users (boat owners, diving, fishing) • Industry (fishing, freight companies, civil contractors, aquaculture, tourism operators, port operator) • Cultural users • Ministry for Primary Industries	Work with: • Landowners • Importers • Industry (shipping and freight, tourism, civil contractors) • Recreational users (e.g. trampers, hunters) • Cultural users	Work with: • Landowners • Community - pet and aquaria owners • Industry (tourism, pet, and aquaria trade, civil contractors) • Recreational users (trampers, fishing) • Cultural users

Collaboration & support

Marine	Terrestrial	Freshwater
Support the community to control pests on their properties (Goal 1.4; 2.1; 2.2)		
Identify and implement any necessary support, funding, or guidance to enable the community to control harmful organisms in marine environments	Provide facilitation, advice, and funding to aid: • landowners to carry out control (e.g. helicopter spraying, bulk buying chemicals) • proactive community programmes (e.g. cat de-sexing, black swan egg hunt)	Identify and implement any necessary support, funding, or guidance to enable the community to control harmful organisms in freshwater environments
Partner with other agencies and organisations to maximise our pest control, incursion response and surveillance actions (Goal 1.2; 1.5; 2.1; 2.2; 2.4)		
Work with partners to: • identify mutually beneficial surveillance and control of harmful marine organisms • share knowledge and surveillance on marine pests • Engage with MPI to request more direct action to monitor and control marine pests	Work with partners to: • promote border biosecurity between Chatham Island/ Rēkohu/Wharekauri and Pitt Island/Rangihaute/Rangiauria and Outer Islands • identify mutually beneficial surveillance, incursion response and control of harmful organisms • ensure control of weed plants on Crown land boundaries	Work with partners to: • identify mutually beneficial surveillance and control of harmful organisms • share knowledge and surveillance on freshwater pests
Undertake research and development to make sure we are always operating at the leading edge of science (Goal 1.6; 2.5)		
Work with other agencies and science partners to improve knowledge of pest risks, control techniques, surveillance methods and tools • What are the key marine, terrestrial and freshwater sites to monitor for new pests? • What are high-risk pathways to monitor? • Which harmful organisms are currently posing a threat to our marine, terrestrial and freshwater environments? • Which harmful organisms may pose a threat to our marine environments in the future? • How can we improve our tools and techniques (for control, quarantine, surveillance and incursion response)?		

5.1. Key principles for how we will work

Ongoing and proactive biosecurity management

- We are committed to actively work to prevent new incursions of harmful organisms
- We will address incursions of harmful organisms before they become established, reducing costs in the long term

Responsive and flexible

- We will manage harmful organisms in the most efficient and effective way, working with the community to deliver solutions
- We will take a precautionary approach to emerging or changing situations
- We will seek pragmatic and innovative ways to achieve results

Strong relationships and engagement

- We recognise that protecting the Islands from harmful organisms relies on strong relationships across the community, imi/iwi, Central Government agencies, Chatham Islands Council, Environment Canterbury, and industry
- We will maintain strong relationships with the community, and raise awareness and support for biosecurity and pest control, to ensure that nearly all activities and operations can be resolved without needing to use rules and regulation
- We will be inclusive and actively engage, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of others
- We will be responsive to community-initiated ideas, opportunities and concerns

6. Strategy monitoring and review

Figure 4 below shows the review cycle for the Strategy. The Council will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Strategy by:

a) for pest management programmes -

i. undertake monitoring activities as outlined in the RPMP

b) for other biosecurity actions carried out by the Council -

i. maintain a record of activities, (including liaison, advocacy, proactive control and surveillance);

ii. analyse any baseline monitoring undertaken across marine, terrestrial, and freshwater environments and, as the programme progresses, assess changes against baselines; and

iii. undertake regular surveillance during all biosecurity operations to check that our actions are working

Progress on implementing targets in the Strategy will be annually monitored and reported on through the annual planning process under the Local Government Act.

A more comprehensive review will also be undertaken after ten years, and in conjunction with the review of the RPMP, to ensure the Strategy continues to be relevant, effective and efficient.

Figure 4 - Planning, implementation, monitoring and review of the Biosecurity Strategy

Definitions and acronyms

This section provides the meaning of words used in this Strategy. When a word is followed by an asterisk (*), the meaning which follows is the meaning provided in section 4 [interpretation section] of the Biosecurity Act 1993 or *National Policy Direction for Pest Management 2015*.

Animal	means any mammal, insect, bird or fish, including invertebrates, and any living organism except a plant or human.
Appropriate	means as determined to be appropriate by the Chatham Islands Council or its officers acting under delegated authority.
Biological diversity (or biodiversity)	means the variability among living organisms, and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.
BSA	means the Biosecurity Act 1993.
Chief Technical Officer*	means a person appointed a chief technical officer under Section 101 of the Act.
Crown land	refers to land vested in the Crown and administered by a Minister, and includes all land forming part of any national park, any reserve within the meaning of the Reserves Act 1977, and all unoccupied lands of the Crown.
Direct control	means pest control undertaken by or funded by the Chatham Islands Council.
DOC	refers to the Department of Conservation.
Effect*	includes any positive or adverse effect, temporary or permanent effect, past, present or future effect, cumulative effect which arises over time or in combination with other effects – regardless of the scale, intensity, duration or frequency of the effect, potential effect of high probability, potential effect of low probability which has a high potential impact.
Environment*	includes: ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and their communities, all natural and physical resources, amenity values, the aesthetic, cultural, economic and social conditions that affect or are affected by any of the above.
Eradicate	in relation to an organism, means to totally clear the organism from New Zealand, or a region or part of a region.

Eradication	means to reduce the infestation level of the subject that is present in New Zealand to zero levels in an area in the short to medium term.
Exclusion	means to prevent the establishment of the subject that is present in New Zealand but not yet established in an area.
Harmful organisms	refer to the full range of organisms capable of having adverse and unintended impacts on marine, freshwater or terrestrial environments and includes: (a) pest animals or plants identified in a national or regional pest management plan or national or regional pathway plan made under Part 5 of the Biosecurity Act 1993; or (b) any other new or established and exotic animal or plant that could pose a threat to values of interest, and (c) their related vectors/ pest agents, and particles such as prions, (including organisms that have been purposefully established but later prove to be a threat to the values).
Indigenous	means native to New Zealand.
Introduced	means a species brought from its natural range to New Zealand by a human agency.
LGA	refers to the Local Government Act 2002.
LTP	refers to long term plans prepared under the Local Government Act 2002.
National Policy direction* or NPD	means the direction approved under section 57 [of the Biosecurity Act 1993].
Organism*	does not include a human being or a genetic structure derived from a human being, includes a micro-organism, includes a genetic structure that is capable of replicating itself (whether that structure comprises all or only part of an entity, and whether it comprises all or only part of the total genetic structure of an entity). Includes an entity (other than a human being) declared by the Governor General by Order in Council to be an organism for the purposes of the Act. Includes a reproductive cell or developmental stage of an organism. Includes any particle that is a prion.
Person*	Includes the Crown, a corporation sole, and a body of persons (whether corporate or unincorporated).
Pest*	means an organism specified as a pest in a pest management plan.

Pathway*	means movement that: (a) is of goods or craft out of, into, or through: (i) a particular place in New Zealand; or (ii) a particular kind of place in New Zealand; and (b) has the potential to spread harmful organisms.
Pathway management plan*	means a Plan to which the following applies: (a) it is for the prevention or management of the spread of a harmful organism (b) it is made under Part V of the Act (c) it is a national pathway management plan or a regional pathway management plan.
Unwanted organism*	means any organism that a chief technical officer believes is capable or potentially capable of causing unwanted harm to any natural and physical resources or human health, and (a) includes— (i) Any new organism, if the Authority [Environmental Risk Management Authority] has declined approval to import that organism; and (ii) Any organism specified in the Second Schedule of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996; but (b) does not include any organism approved for importation under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, unless— (i) the organism is an organism that has escaped from a containment facility; or (ii) a chief technical officer, after consulting the Authority [Environmental Risk Management Authority] and taking into account any comments made by the Authority concerning the organism, believes that the organism is capable or potentially capable of causing unwanted harm to any natural and physical resources or human health.

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