

Biodiversity Advisory Group

AGENDA

Notice of Meeting:

A meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group will be held on:

Date: Monday 3 February 2025

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Wakanui Room (Ground Floor), Te Whare Whakaterere
Ashburton Library & Civic Centre, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton

Membership:

Ashburton District Council

Cr Leen Braam (Chair)
Cr Lynette Lovett
Cr Richard
Mayor Neil Brown (ex officio)
Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces)
Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager)
Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Bio Advisor)

QEII Trust

Alice Shanks

Ashburton Water Zone Committee

Adi Avnit

Environment Canterbury

Donna Field

Forest & Bird, ACCT

Val Clemens, Edith Smith, Mary Ralston

Awa Awa Rata Reserve

Mary Ralston

Foothills Landcare Group

Gen de Spa

Department of Conservation

Ian Fraser

Kanuka Trust

Kim Wall

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective

Angela Cushnie, Janine Holland, Willy Leferink

Fonterra

Tom Munro, Robb Stevens

Synlait

Sarah Mason

Fish & Game

Nikki Dellaway

Federated Farmers

Mike Salvesen

Methven Birdsong Initiative

Barry Maister

Upper Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group

Sally Stevens

Biodiversity Advisory Group

Timetable	
Time	Item
1:00pm	Meeting commences
1.05pm	Fonterra presentation (<i>online</i>) - Cain Duncan (re Whakamana te Waituna Trust)
1.35pm	Birdsong Initiative Trust - Barry Maister & Mac MacElwain

1 Apologies

- Sally Stevens

2 Extraordinary Business

3 Declarations of Interest

4 Confirmation of minutes – 4 November 2024 **3**

5 Implication of cats on native biodiversity / cat management policy **7**

6 Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor's Report **11**

7 Group Updates **35**

4. Biodiversity Advisory Group Minutes – 4/11/24

Minutes of a meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Monday 4 November 2024, in the Wakanui Room, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton, commencing at 1.00pm.

Present

Mayor Neil Brown; Councillors Richard Wilson (Acting Chair) and Lynette Lovett; Alice Shanks, Adi Avnit, Edith Smith, Angela Cushnie, Willy Leferink, Kim Wall, Val Clemens, Andy Hirschberg, Tom Munro, Sarah Mason (Synlait), Barry Austin, Donna Field, Ian Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager) and Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor).

In attendance

Mark Chamberlain (ADC Roading Manager), Lucy Brown (Governance Support) and Linda Clarke (ADC Communications Advisor)

Mel Brooks (MHV Irrigation)

1 Apologies

For lateness: Mayor Neil Brown

For absence: Cr Leen Braam, Ian Fraser, Barry Maister, Gen de Spa, Robb Stevens, Sean Spencer, Janine Holland, Sally Stevens and Mary Ralston

2 Extraordinary Business

Item 7, implications of cats on native biodiversity, will be withdrawn from today's agenda and reported back to the Group at the next meeting in 2025.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cr Richard Wilson – Shareholder of MHV Water Ltd

4 Confirmation of Minutes

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 5 August 2024 be taken as read and confirmed.

Lovett/Avnit

Carried

5 Planting on road reserves for environmental benefits

The Chair welcomed Mel Brooks from MHV who presented their proposal for roadside reserves with the vision to lead the programme in collaboration with Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective through their network of farmers across the district.

Discussion showed general support with further considerations required including conversations with landowners and Council, allowance for water seepage and roading infrastructure vulnerability/deterioration, access to services, accessibility for mowing, passing of stock and related damages, maintenance and upkeep, types of plantings and their benefit, maintenance of adjacent sheltering trees and hedges, future protection of such reserves.

Neil McCann and Mark Chamberlain contributed from a rural road safety perspective with the need for consideration by Council and further related reporting.

Recommendation to Council

That Council considers options for native planting on rural road reserves using appropriate native plants with maximum height <1.5 metres.

Cushnie/Leferink

Carried

6 **Ashburton River Hakatere Shorebird Habitat Management Strategy 2023-2030**

Donna Field presented the ECan strategy for the protection of shorebirds species and their habitats. Spoke of methods from trapping of predators to signage, fences, the influences of human activities and education, pests (plants and animals). The Strategy includes restrictions on access for vehicles and dogs, construction and maintenance of raised islands for breeding grounds, RDR engagement for managing water releases, investment and feasibility options towards gaining Ramsar Status for the Ashburton River SH1 downstream.

Andy spoke about DOC's bird monitoring projects overseen by their Twizel operations.

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report.

Clemens/Wilson

Carried

8 **Updated threat classification of indigenous plants in the Ashburton District**

Alice referred to the plant list of significance and impacts, with some species showing overall decline. Christian spoke of Matagouri which is no longer threatened or protected. Discussion followed on managing indigenous vegetation the resource consent process.

Andy confirmed that DOC are working to review what the presence of kettle holes would look like for the region, maintenance programmes, wildlife and monitoring going forward.

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report.

Wilson/Smith

Carried

9 **Ecologist / Biodiversity Advisor's Report**

- Meeting dates have been confirmed for 2025, with the first meeting of the Biodiversity Group to be Monday 3 February. This meeting will likely be a fieldtrip. Further information will be provided.
- DOC – have signalled they will be conducting a review of their Biodiversity Strategy implementation Plan which will go out for consultation.

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor.

Wilson/Brown

Carried

10 **Group activity updates**

Department of Conservation

- DOC have received additional funding for the white-bellied skink project (trapping and monitoring) for the next 18 month period. The project is now working to acquire the rest of the infrastructure, trapping team personnel and technical advice for focus around Ōtuwharekai, namely Taylors Range and Harpers Range. Currently behind in monthly trapping schedule having not completed this in October.

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective

- Implementation of ADC Biodiversity Strategy – Our Natural Place - discussed collaboration for best use of time and resources given shared specific goals. Funding allocations, presentations and educations and awareness.
- Carters Creek – pest control for Ashburton Forks, presence of Old Mans Beard in the Ashburton River with concerns around its management and elimination.

Synlait

- Sarah Mason (On-Farm Biodiversity Lead) was introduced as the new Synlait representative. Sarah spoke about her role and Synlait's "Grow Programme" making more of a supplier hub through education.

Kanuka Trust

- Update on programmes centred around working with schools. Specific programmes include species studies and a big focus on predator control and enquiry. Pleasing to see the programmes creating enthusiastic and passionate participation, bringing the opportunity to create that real depth within our community.

ADC Open Spaces

- Update including planting of the wildflower area of the domain and activity surrounding this project.
- To assist with the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting reporting and planning, Ian asked Group members to email their reports / updates at least 10 days before the meeting date.

Fonterra

- National roadshows with farmers, centred around creating better efficiencies in farming. Positive and well supported response to engagements. Interest areas being environmental, nutrition focused and support with community funding.

Ashburton Water Zone Committee

- Ashburton Water Zone Committee recently disbursed up to \$50,000 across six biodiversity projects around the district. Seeing an increase in groups approaching the Committee for funding in relation to trapping programmes. Many groups are not aware of other streams for funding available and there is a need to create community awareness of this.

Mt Somers Walkway Society (Barry Austin)

- Trapping and relocation programmes are showing variations in the trapping numbers, especially possums. There's a need to reduce wasp activity in the area through their baiting programmes.

Environment Canterbury (Donna Field)

- ECan will be conducting bird surveys along the Upper and Lower Hakatere rivers mid to end of November 2024.

Forest & Bird, ACCT (Val Clemens & Edith Smith)

- Harris Reserve planting project - 50 clematis throughout the reserve with the aid of ADC biodiversity funding, and a further 800 kanuka plantings to infill site. Pleasing to see many treated trees recovering in the Pudding Hill stream area.

QEII Trust

- Meeting with a focus on weeding programmes in Te Pirita this Saturday 9 November. Alice welcomed assistance and referred the Group to the website for further information.
- South Rakaia Huts –the Chilean rhubarb needs to be removed.

Rakaia Reserve

- Cr Lovett reported that the Rakaia Reserve Board are looking to hold a working bee in the reserve area between the river and the domain and volunteer support would be welcomed.

Stockwater Transition Plan

- Council will receive a report and adopt the Plan in December. Cr Wilson will provide the Group updates as the Plan progresses.

11 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group is scheduled for Monday 3 February 2025, commencing at 1pm.

The meeting concluded at 2.53pm.

5. *Implication of Cats on native biodiversity and need for Mid-Canterbury Cat Management Policy*

Author Barry Maister

Affiliated Organisation - Methven and Foothills Birdsong Trust

Summary

- The district has a stray/feral cat issue, which results in serious pressure on native fauna (invertebrates, skinks, birds).
- It needs a Cat Management Policy to help reduce that stray/feral cat population.
- Companion cats need to be desexed and microchipped to reduce the number that “go feral”.

Recommendation

- 1. That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group recommends to Council that it introduces a formal Cat Management Policy.

Background

1. The Trust is trying to increase the amount of native birdsong heard in Methven. Five-minute bird counts have confirmed the paucity of native birds in Methven. Research has indicated widespread community support for the initiative, and it is estimated that there are +/- 500 companion cats in Methven. Vets say that while some are desexed, very few are microchipped and registered.
2. Consequently, there is widespread and indiscriminate breeding and many of these litters wind up straying or abandoned and fending for themselves. This is greatly exacerbated by completely uncontrolled breeding amongst stray and feral populations. It's estimated that each un-spayed female can produce more than 300 kittens in a lifetime and this number exacts a very heavy toll on all native fauna.
3. The group therefore is recommending to the group to explore a Cat Management Policy that mandates the desexing and chipping of companion cats to help save the remaining biodiversity in Mid-Canterbury. Many Councils have already undertaken this, including our neighbouring [Selwyn District Council](#). A summary table of existing policies and those under development are presented in the table below.
4. Many cats wander beyond their owner's property up to 5 km. This creates a risk of them becoming injured, killed by vehicles, lost, or becoming a nuisance to neighbours. Feral and domestic cats feed on native biodiversity (lizards and birds) when away from home. Some enter high-value biodiversity sites and conservation reserves, especially along river margins with nesting bird sites, killing the chicks and feeding on adult birds.
5. People living around a new subdivision have reported their cats bringing in dead lizards which eventually stops after a few months, suggesting that the population of lizards displaced in the new development has disappeared. Managing these adverse effects of cats on native biodiversity calls for a district-wide cat management policy or a review of the existing animal control bylaw to incorporate a chapter on cats for desexing, microchipping, and registration with the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR).
6. Microchipping and microchip registration support the community's ability to identify and return domestic cats to their owners. This reduces the period when cats are being separated from their owners. Desexing will reduce the number of unwanted litters of kittens, reducing the number of abandoned cats, which contributes to the population of stray and feral cats. These will in turn reduces the impact of the feral and domestic cats on Mid-Canterbury native biodiversity.

Table 1: Summary of existing policies and those under development for Cat management in New Zealand

Existing Policies	
Selwyn District Council, 2021	All domestic cats over the age of four months in Selwyn district must be microchipped and registered with the approved microchip registry New Zealand Companion Animals Register (NZCAR).
Ruapehu District Council, 2022	Microchip and desex and register all cats more than six months old to be to the NZCAR.
Whanganui District Council 2020	Desex all cats before 4 months old, and microchip and register to the NZCAR. Exclusion of cats kept for breeding purposes applies.
Whangārei District Council, 2022	Desex and microchip by six months of age and register to the NZCAR.
Palmerston North City Council, 2018	Cats over six months of age need to be microchipped and registered with the New Zealand Companion Animals Register, or other Council-approved microchip registry. Exclusion of cats kept for breeding purposes applies.
Hutt City Council, 2024	Amended Control of Animals Bylaw to include a section on the Keeping of Cats - Owners of cats over 12 weeks of age to microchip and register on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR); and desexed (unless kept for breeding purposes and registered with a nationally recognised cat breeders' body)
Wellington City Council 2016	All domestic cats over the age of 12 weeks must be microchipped and the cat's microchip registered with New Zealand Companion Animal Register. All domestic cats over six months must be desexed unless they are kept for breeding purposes and the owner is a currently registered breeder with a recognised New Zealand registering body.
Far North District Council, 2024	All cat over the age of 4 months is microchipped and the microchip registered with NZCAR and desexed unless it's used for breeding purposes and registered with a nationally recognised breeder body.

Buller District Council	<p>Rules on cats in urban areas only (Westport and Reefton).</p> <p>No more than two cats in one house; any cat over six (6) months must be microchipped and registered in NZCAR, and desexed unless the cat is for breeding purposes or advised by the Vet that desexing will affect the cat's health.</p>
Auckland City Council (Unitary Council) 2015	<p>Guidelines on cat management include desexing, microchipping and registering with the NZCAR, and restriction of cats in some sensitive islands with high ecological values.</p>
Policies in development	
Tasman District Council (Unitary Council)	<p>Proposed to microchip and register cat on NZCAR. Consultation shows 89% of the community proposing desexing of the cats as well, except those used for registered breeding purposes.</p>
Nelson City Council (Unitary Council)	<p>Proposed to have all domestic cats over the age of six months to be microchipped and desexed unless they are kept for breeding purposes, or the operation poses a high risk for a cat and registered on NZCAR.</p>
Auckland City Council (Unitary Council)	<p>Currently consulting on "cat management for wildlife protection" through its Regional Pest Management Plan review.</p>

6. Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor report

Christian Chukwuka, PhD, CEnvP, Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor

Recommendation

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor.

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Biodiversity Advisory Group with an update on projects carried out by the Biodiversity Advisor since the last meeting held in November 2024.
- The report brings about the opportunity for members to ask questions and seek clarification on any items mentioned.

Report

1. Whakamana te Waituna Trust – talk by Cain Duncan and Robb Stevens (Fonterra Group)

The Whakamana te Waituna Trust was set up in February 2018 to coordinate activities of the partners involved in working to restore the mana of the Waituna Lagoon and Catchment - Te Runanga o Awarua/Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu; Department of Conservation; Environment Southland; Southland District Council; Fonterra (joint Living Water programme with DOC).

The partners and the Ministry for the Environment, through the Freshwater Improvement Fund, committed \$13.3 million funding over five years. Whakamana te Waituna's programme was established to address the pressures on, and ensure the long-term resilience of, the Waituna community, catchment and lagoon.

2. Biodiversity Strategy Implementation - Progress update on the implementation

Council staff are continuing to meet with more stakeholders to discuss aspects of the strategy implementation for which they have input.

Proposed Research/Conservation Projects

- i. Ecological connectivity modelling and blue-green network for Mid-Canterbury. This project is being trialed as part of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024 Action 4 Implementation (see report item 6 below).
- ii. Ecological assessment of the coastal dongsas - Council staff have opened a conversation with the team of the Naturally Uncommon Ecosystems project at the

Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research to develop a methodology and assist with the assessment of the coastal dune on the Ashburton coast.

- iii. Rūnaka-led actions – conversation on these actions is ongoing with Te Rūnaka Arowhenua. (see actions 1.1D, 1.2 A-B, and 4.2 B-C in the attached).
- iv. ADBAG-led actions progress update **See attached Appendix 1**

2. Council Biodiversity Grant Application Round for 2025

Application round for the Council 2025 Biodiversity Grant has opened until February 28, 2025. Please familiarise yourself with the grant criteria to see what a biodiversity grant can fund before applying or supporting a landowner in applying for the grant. Details of the application can be found here, <https://www.ashburtondc.govt.nz/ashburton-district/grants-and-funding/grants/opening-soon/biodiversity-grant>

3. Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy- Community and Stakeholders Workshop

Council has started the development of the District’s Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy with nature-based solutions (e.g. Biodiversity enhancement and restoration) signalled as one of the key focus areas. Early engagement with the community is ongoing until 23 February. This stage is for information gathering on areas to focus on and what matters to the community. Details of the work process can be found here, <https://itsourplace.nz/climate-change-sustainability-strategy>.

A public workshop will be held on 12 February 2025 and a stakeholders’ workshop will be held on 13 February 2025 here at the Council, Te Whare Whakare. Registration link - <https://itsourplace.nz/climate-change-sustainability-strategy/climate-change-sustainability-workshop-registration>

4. Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy Revitalisation Steering Group

This project is ongoing, with the first collective meeting, ‘Workshop 1’, scheduled for 18 March 2025 from 9 to 12 at Environment Canterbury’s offices in Christchurch.

Boffa Miskell manages the project on behalf of Environment Canterbury. Updates will be given at every ADBAG meeting until the strategy is adopted. Christian Chukwuka and Femke van der Valk (Strategy/Policy) sit on the group as Council staff representatives. Cr Richard Wilson and Cr Leen Braam, who are Council’s appointees on the Biodiversity Champions Group and the Central Biodiversity Advisory Group respectively, have been nominated as Council’s governance Steering Group representatives, subject to Council approval.

5. Ongoing and Future Consultation with Biodiversity Inputs

- a. MPI is inviting preliminary submissions on the “Partnering to plant trees on Crown-owned land” proposal. Submission documents can be found here - <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/partnering-to-plant-trees-on-crown-owned-land-request-for-information/>.

While it's not intended to have a BAG / Council submission, we advise that this will be of interest to individual stakeholders and groups with potential projects within the affected crown lands. Submission closes on 28 Feb 2025.

6. Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024 Implementation

Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor continues to work with the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024 Action 4 proposed implementation- Action 4.2 –

“Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally-led implementation” incorporating Nature-Based Solutions and a region-wide natural ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment.”

Part of this project is to establish a region-wide blue-green network to increase natural capital and indigenous biodiversity to offer nature-based solutions to climate change effects. Details of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan can be found here -

<https://www.canterburymayors.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/COR9403-CCPP-Document.pdf>

The project team includes representatives from Environment Canterbury, Waimakariri and Selwyn District Council.

7. Ongoing Projects (Planting and Pest Management)

- a) **Plantation Road Project Fencing** – Fencing of some parts of Plantation Road as approved by the Council to make the site an insurance reserve has been completed. This will be followed by enhancement planting by September 2025.



- b) **Pudding Hill Stream control** is ongoing. This is an ADBAG-led project delegated to Council and ECan Staff. We received an additional \$7342 + GST from Ashburton Water Zone Committee funding to continue this project on removing weeds along the Pudding Hill Stream banks (willows, sycamore trees, larches, Douglas fir, Himalayan honeysuckle, alders, poplars, and monkey musk). The weed project is on the main Pudding Hill Stream upstream channel within the forest area.
- c) **Wakanui/Mill Creek Biodiversity Enhancement (Township area)** - Planting on Wakanui/Mill Creek Channel at Argyle Park and on the same channel by SH1/East Street -

Project brief sent to potential contractors for quotes, and we are currently evaluating the quotes.

This project is part of the enhancement to improve water quality and aquatic habitat for the fish and support the establishment of green corridors along the Wakanui Creek channel. We plan to use only Carex grasses and shrubs less than 1m in height at maturity to retain the landscape visual of the sports field and railway/business area. Planting is scheduled for April/May 2025.

- d) **William Street Reserve Planting** – coordinated and managed riparian planting at the end where the William Street drainage swale adjoins the Ashburton River corridor. Over 5100 native plants were planted. This project sits within the Open Space Reserve operation.
- e) **Pest Control at Awa Awa Rata Reserve**- The next phase of the pest control at Awa Awa Rata Reserve is scheduled for March/April 2025. Previous efforts to control mammalian ungulate are yielding results and we hope to continue.
- f) **Wakanui Beach, Taylors Stream Reserve, Ashton Beach, Ashburton Business Estate, and Lake Camp/Clearwater Weed Spray**- Weed control completed at these sites before the Christmas holiday season camping. We have undertaken repeat weed spray at Taylors and Bowyers Stream reserves due to the frequent summer rain we had over Christmas.
- g) **Kakahi Survey on Lagmhor Creek**, a recommended action from the last ecological health indicator assessment for Lagmhor Creek, was delayed due to staff availability and the holiday period. A new date for the project will be scheduled in 2025.
- h) **Carters Creek Enhancement Planting led by Carters Creek Catchment group**
The landscape plan with riparian planting list for this project has been signed off by the Council Open Space Team. Planting is expected by Autumn 2025.

8. Field Trip - 8 May

We are proposing a field site visit for ADBAG on Monday 8 May 2025, to farmland with good and unique biodiversity practices. Members will have the opportunity to have on-the-spot input on ways to improve farm biodiversity and visit some of the recent biodiversity improvements. The site visit will replace our usual quarterly meeting and will be led by Angela Cushnie (Mid-Canterbury Catchment Collective Coordinator) and Sarah Mason (Synlait On-Farm Biodiversity Advisor). The bus will depart at 1pm from the Council offices, Te Whare Whakatere, 2 Baring Square East, and return around 4 pm. Light refreshments will be provided.

Appendix 1 Progress update

Our vision:

A district where biodiversity is protected and enhanced from the mountains to the sea (ki uta ki tai) by an engaged community that values and cares for it.

This vision links to all four Community outcomes as envisioned in our current Long-Term Plan:

			
Residents are included and have a voice Ka whai wāhi, ka whakaputa kōrero kā kainoho	A district of great spaces and places He tiriwā pai, he wāhi pai i tēnei takiwā	A balanced & sustainable environment He taiao toitū	A prosperous economy based on innovation and opportunity He ōhaka whai rawa i ruka i te aroka hou me te whai āheika

Our GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: The remaining indigenous biodiversity in the Ashburton District is protected and maintained.

This means (objectives):

- 1.1 Ecological values within the district are identified and protected.
- 1.2 Taoka species and sites with takata whenua cultural values are identified and protected.
- 1.3 Further loss of indigenous species is prevented by the control or eradication of pest species (fauna and flora)
- 1.4 Impacts of development and human activity on significant ecological values are properly managed.

Goal 2: The indigenous biodiversity in the Ashburton District is restored, enhanced and ecologically interconnected for the benefit of the community.

This means (objectives):

- 2.1 Indigenous vegetation cover within the district has increased over time.
- 2.2 Biodiversity sites and habitats of indigenous species and taoka are interconnected.
- 2.3 Community projects that aim to restore and ecologically link indigenous biodiversity sites and habitats in the district are identified and supported (support: time / expertise / biodiversity grant)
- 2.4 Eco-tourism through biodiversity is encouraged and promoted in Ashburton District while ensuring that impacts are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Goal 3: Knowledge on biodiversity is gathered and shared, informing and empowering the stakeholders and the community.

This means (objectives):

- 3.1 Research into and collection of data on the state of biodiversity in the district is improved.
- 3.2 Knowledge of Manawhenua world view /Biodiversity within the district is documented and shared.
- 3.3 Knowledge of Ashburton indigenous biodiversity is shared with the community and stakeholders (landowners, industry groups, environmental protection groups, local and regional government agencies).
- 3.4 School environmental programmes are sustained and improved.

Goal 4: Collaboration and participation among Council, Rūnaka and Stakeholders in the wider community for conservation and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity is encouraged.

This means (objectives):

- 4.1 Cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders is encouraged.
- 4.2 Council takes a leadership role in working together and encouraging conservation and enhancement.
- 4.3 The general public is encouraged to participate in conservation and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.
- 4.4 Community projects that aim to protect, maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity are supported.

Implementation timeframe

The lifespan for the strategy is expected to be 20 years. However, some actions may be achieved sooner. Achievement is also dependent on financial availability, legislative changes and commitment. As a guide, we have split the timeframes into the four categories below. Actions that run for the entire life of the strategy are designated as “ongoing” and actions associated with NPS-IB statutory provisions or implementation are designated in bold.

Short-term (ST)	:	1-3 years
Medium-term (MT)	:	3-10 years
Long-term (LT)	:	10+ years
Ongoing	:	Actions that are already happening and that will run throughout the life of the strategy.

Reporting and review

We will report annually on the progress of the Action Plan’s implementation. An interim review of the Action Plan is to be undertaken after the first 12 months and a full review, to ensure it remains current and meets the needs of our community, every three years.

A full review of the entire Strategy will be undertaken every five years.

Role of Ashburton District Council

The role of Council in the Strategy and Action Plan is defined in broad terms below:

- **No role** – not an issue, role of other agencies and organisations.
- **Advocate** – collecting and sharing community views with government, agencies or organisations to help improve the district. This can be active or passive.
- **Influence** – educate and work to change people’s perceptions or behaviour to provide positive community outcomes.
- **Support** – support agencies leading the work (e.g. research, funding or bringing stakeholders together).
- **Plan and Resource** – take direct lead and involvement to achieve specific outcomes (e.g. developing plans, consultation, funding, resourcing).

Partners and organisations involved

This draft strategy was prepared in partnership with Te Rūnaka o Arowhenua.

The “Who” column in the Action plan table indicates the organisations involved in the action with the first named organisation being the lead agency.

Resource and Funding

Resourcing will come from a range of sources, with significant contributions to the success of the strategy coming from other agencies and the community. Funding is available within the existing Council operations or budgets (staff time or operational budget) or may come from specific central government support to local councils, external contractors or other sources. There will also be a potential to seek external grants/funding from other agencies involved with biodiversity and conservation. Community will be supported through the Council Biodiversity Grant (\$15,000) available per year for community projects. .

The Action Plan

Protect and maintain

Goal 1: the remaining indigenous biodiversity (rare, threatened, taoka and other significant species and their habitats) in the Ashburton District are protected and maintained.

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	When	Activity	
1.1	Ecological values within the district are fully identified and protected.	A.					
		B. Encourage covenants and other forms of land protection in private properties and Council reserves with ecological values	Influence	ADBAG, QEII, Landowners	Ongoing LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop in-house covenant process in line with section 77 of the Reserve Act. – - Develop incentive for landowners with covenants on their property. - Increase support for landowners to seek for biodiversity protection through covenanting (actions 2.3 A &B). <p>Work to date: In progress - Council legal team to draft the working document and forward to the team for input</p>	
		C. Identify and protect Ashburton District's special	Plan & Resource	ADC, ECan, DOC, community	Short term	<p>MCCC to lead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey and identify coastal dongas within private land and advise on protection and restoration. - Survey and Identify Limestone rocks and boulders at the 	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	When	Activity	
		features with ecological values (e.g. coastal dongas)				<p>foothills and advice owners for need for protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommend including these land features into District Plan in the next review. <p>Work to date: GIS layers request logged on Council system Contact made with Manaaki Wehnuua Landcare Research team</p>	
		D. Undertake ecological assessment of the drains and make recommendations on protecting the values	Support	Rūnaka, ECan, MCCC, ADC, Suggested for Review Fish and Game, HHWET? MHV?	Short term	<p>Work with Arowhenua to identify drains in ADC that need to be surveyed.</p> <p>Develop a work program to undertake the survey- consultants or Council staff to work with Aro whenua?</p> <p>Hinds drain report 2016</p>	
		E.					
1.2	Taoka and their habitats are identified and protected	A. Undertake an assessment of Manawhenua cultural/ heritage sites and determine taoka species present in the district	Support	Rūnaka, ADC	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Arowhenua to develop work program for cultural/ heritage sites and values identification within ADC. - Map the site of cultural/ heritage sites and values and establish which sites that needs to be made publicly available. - Support Manawhenua in retaining this project. <p>Work to date: Discussion ongoing with Arowhenua on this action.</p>	
		B.					

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	When	Activity	
1.3	Further loss of indigenous species is prevented by the control, or eradication, of pest species (fauna and flora).	A. Support pest management approach with other stakeholders to control plant and animal pests.	Support	ECan, DOC, LINZ, Rūnaka, ADBAG, MPI, ADC	Short Term (develop) MT (implement)	Work to date: 1. ADC Representation stakeholders project meetings (Staff time) 2. Locked in funding support for Rakaia Gorge Weed Program-2024-207 (3 years). 3. Trap loan to some organisations undertaking pest control in the district.	
		B. Continue pest management program in all Council reserves and Open Spaces.	Plan & Resource	ADC	Ongoing	- Annual pest control in Lake Camp/Clearwater - Quarterly Deer Control in Awa Awa Rata Reserve (funding limited- Collaboration with DOC) - Weed Spray in all rural reserves and Council planting sites (as required) - Ongoing animal pest control in Ashburton Business Estate and Domain. - Ongoing weed clearing in Smallbone Drive Reserve - Streamline pest control in all Council land for data management. - Collate information on other Council lands requiring pest control. - Set up pest control timeline and inform appropriate Council unit. - Develop work program with contractors in line with c above.	
		C. Promote weed prevention, for instance, by engaging with nurseries and garden centres throughout the district.	Advocate	ECan, ADC, Stakeholders	Short term	2024/2025 - Develop weed map pamphlet for gardens with input from ADBAG and ECan Biosecurity team. 2025/2026 Conversation ongoing with ECan Biosecurity team to update and review Weed buster's booklet.	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	When	Activity	
		D. Continue implementation of Lake Camp/Clearwater Management plans for the eradication of wilding trees in the area.	Plan & Resource	ADC, Hut holders, ECan, DOC, ADBAG .	Ongoing	BAU	
1.4	Impact of use and development and human activity on biodiversity is properly managed	A. Promote collaborative response to degradation of Ō Tū Wharekai	Advocate	ECan, ADC, Rūnaka/Iwi, DOC, Stakeholders	Ongoing	BAU Council Ecologist represented in Ō Tū Wharekai Working group Ongoing Ō Tū Wharekai Management Plan development ongoing	
		B. Review ADC vegetation clearance rule for Rural zones to provide better protection for indigenous biodiversity.	Plan & Resource	ADC	Short term –	ST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review ADC rural sections of the District Plans and advise on section that needs review based on current regulation and standards. - Introduce separate chapter in the district plan on natural environment /ecosystem management. 	
		C. Ensure existing biodiversity is conserved and enhanced	Plan & Resource	ADC	Short term	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce a Biodiversity Net Gain approach to all new subdivision and development. - Biodiversity baseline data for each site to inform above. - Advise Council on Tree replacement policy for tree removal- 	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	When	Activity	
		in new subdivisions and development projects.				<p>exclude pine and exotic shelterbelts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore Soil biodiversity protection in new subdivisions – Medium term - Develop an existing tree policy to inform tree mitigation in new development sites. 	

Restore and interconnect for the benefit of the community.

Goal 2: The indigenous biodiversity in the Ashburton District is restored, enhanced and ecologically interconnected for the benefit of the community.

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
2.1	Indigenous vegetation cover has increased over time within the district.	A. Advocate to increase the indigenous vegetation cover target as set in the NPS-IB or by the regional council at the local level.	Advocate	ADC, Rūnaka, ECan MHV?	Short term – MT	ST - Native trees for urban street trees? - Develop Micro forestry approach (width 5m) with ecological linkages to existing plantings - Ecological connectivity and buffer sizes? - Blue-Green Network and Nature-based solutions?	
		B. Promote integration and use of appropriate indigenous species for shelterbelt planting and replacement on private farmland within the district to increase vegetation cover.	Influence	ADC, Federated Farmers, MCCC, ADBAG, MHV?	ongoing	All parties	
		C. Investigate the use of	Plan &	ADC, Rūnaka,	Short term-	All parties	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
		stormwater swales, MAR (Managed Aquifer Recharge) sites, rivers and stockwater race networks to improve native vegetation cover in the district.	Resource	Irrigation Companies- MHV, ECan, Landowners , MCCC	MT	- At scoping phase pending stockwater discussion. - Trial planting in two Council stormwater basin initiated in new subdivisions	
		D. Encourage the use of native vegetation for council planting projects (street trees, reserves and berms)	Plan & Resource	ADC	ongoing	BAU	
		E. Investigate the ecologically suitable riparian	Plan & Resource	Rūnaka, ECan, ADC	ongoing	- At scoping phase	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
		buffer and promote it to the community					
2.2	Biodiversity sites and threatened species habitats are interconnected.	A.					
		B.					
		C.					
2.3	Supporting projects that aim to restore and interconnect indigenous biodiversity sites in the district (<i>support = time / expertise / biodiversity grant / funding</i>)	A. Investigate incentives to landowners with indigenous native vegetation sites on their farmlands.	Plan & Resource	ADC	Short term - MT	Scheduled for 2025/2026 Work with MCCC and Federated Farmers?	
		B.					
		C. Continue to support biodiversity projects undertaken by other stakeholders in the district	Support	ADC, Water Zone Committee, Dairy (Synlait/Fonterra) and Irrigation Companies.	Ongoing	Rakaia Gorge Weed control – Ecan, LINZ, SDC, landowners. LINZ Upper Rakaia Weed program Forest and Bird Wilding Project at Lake Heron area ECan River planting projects	
2.4	Eco-tourism	A.					

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
	through biodiversity is encouraged in Ashburton District while ensuring that impacts are avoided, remedied or mitigated (Economic benefit of biodiversity).	B.					

Educate and enhance awareness

Goal 3: Knowledge on biodiversity is gathered and shared, informing and empowering the stakeholders and the community.

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
3.1	Research into and collection of data on the state of biodiversity in the district is improved. <i>Knowledge gathering</i>	A. Compile general biodiversity information on the Ashburton District and its characteristic features and make it available to the public.	Plan & Resource	ADC, ADBAG	ongoing		
		B. Investigate climate change implications for Ashburton district Biodiversity to plan for future resilience programs.	Plan & Resource	ADC, ECan, Stakeholders	Short term	1. The action will be carried into wider proposed Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Actions. 2. Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024 - “Action 4.1 Develop a Canterbury-wide natural ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment. Action 4.2 Develop a blue-green network plan for Canterbury and accompanying guidance to support locally-led implementation.” Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor is working with the project team to ensure Mid-Canterbury is captured fully in these two actions above.	
		C.					
		D. Complete GIS mapping of	Resource	ADC, DOC, ADBAG	Ongoing / Short term	BAU	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
		Ashburton District ecosystems and make it available to the public.				- At scoping phase - Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and University of Lincoln collaboration established.	
		E. Initiate and support biodiversity research within Ashburton District to foster relationships and increase the knowledge base and available information.	Support + Influence	ADC, Universities, Rūnaka/Iwi, Stakeholders, ADBAG	MT	- Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, University of Canterbury and University of Lincoln collaboration established.	
3.2	Knowledge of Manawhenua world view /Biodiversity within the district is documented and shared. <i>Knowledge sharing</i>	A. Collate information on sites of cultural/heritage values and taoka and make it available to the community.	Support	Rūnaka, ADC	MT		
		B. Promote the mahika kai concept to share knowledge and increase awareness.	Influence	Rūnaka, ADC, ADBAG	MT		
3.3	Knowledge of Ashburton indigenous biodiversity is shared with	A. Advocate and distribute information to landowners regarding biodiversity values.	Advocate	ADBAG , ECan, Stakeholders, ADC	Ongoing	Synlait- Met with Sarah Fonterra- ? MCCC – Quarterly meeting set up Kanuka Trust- same as above	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
	communities. (Landowners, industry groups, environmental protection groups, Council local and regional government agencies)	B. Initiate citizen science programs to involve communities in data gathering on Ashburton Biodiversity	Plan & Resource	ADBAG, ECan, Stakeholders, ADC	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce community-based and school-led environmental monitoring- Water ways? Land? - Develop citizen science monitoring tools and training. - At scoping phase Kanuka Trust? ECan? ACCT?	
		C. Initiate and support regular media publication of Ashburton District Biodiversity information on external media channels.	Plan & Resource	ADC, ADBAG	Ongoing	ADBAG members to send in interesting topics to publicise. Opportunity for collaboration in this space with other agencies.	
		D. Maintain relevant biodiversity updates on ADC website and use it as an information portal.	Plan & Resource	ADC	Ongoing	Done twice a year- January and June, or when there is update. Completed for January 2025	
		E. Provide accessible knowledge and professional services to landowners when required.	Influence	ADC	Ongoing	More pamphlets?	
		F. Create greater awareness of the importance of	Influence	ADC, Stakeholders	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop biodiversity monitoring framework for landowners in the district – with ECan - Billboard? 	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
		biodiversity and native vegetation across the primary industry.				- Free Planting advice? (ECan, MCCC, MPI)	
		G. Organise seminars and workshops for landowners, stakeholders and primary sectors on environmental issues and outcomes.	Plan & Resource	ADBAG, ECan, Stakeholders, Community	Short term -MT	- Annual workshops for catchment around the district - Work with on-farm support staff to achieve above ECan, MCCC, MPI, Kanuka	
3.4	School environmental programmes are sustained and improved.	A. Support and extend school environmental programmes and biodiversity projects to more schools in Ashburton District.	Support	ADC, ECan, ADBAG, Stakeholders	Ongoing	Kanuka Trust? ACCT? Draft letter to school principals, build-in biodiversity into existing curriculum- no new curriculum. Head of Science for secondary school? Ashburton College – Water quality and Riparian planting with field trip to Winchmore	
		B. Celebrate International Biodiversity (22 May) and Conservation Days (28 July) with the schools and community	Support	ADBAG, Stakeholders, Community	Short term	- Annual biodiversity celebration every 22 May in the district - Planting/Workshop/Catchment visits? - National wetlands day - Bird of the year ADBAG- all hands-on deck	

Cooperate, encourage and celebrate community participation.

Goal 4: Collaboration and participation among Council, Rūnaka and Stakeholders in the wider community for conservation and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity is encouraged.

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
4.1	Cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders are encouraged.	A. Strategic partnerships with stakeholders and relationships are fostered through regular ADBAG meetings.	Influence	ADBAG, Stakeholders	Ongoing	BAU	
		B. Maintain appropriate Council representation in stakeholders with an interest in biodiversity.	Influence	ADC	Ongoing	BAU	
4.2	Council takes a leadership role in working together and encouraging conservation and enhancement.	A. Advocate for biodiversity protection and enhancement within Council as an organisation and communicate these principles regularly to staff.	Advocate	ADC	Ongoing	BAU	
		B. Investigate and support the review of project code/standard to reflect biodiversity protection and enhancement (e.g. culvert allowing fish passage and migration,	Influence + Support	Rūnaka, ECan	Short term	Proposed MHV + UC Canterbury Fish passage research project.	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
		sediment protection and floodplain repairs and enhancement using native plantings)					
		C. Foster active partnership with the manawhenua at all levels of decision-making in biodiversity management.	Influence	ADC, Rūnaka	Ongoing	BAU	
		D. Integrate biodiversity principles across Council activities. For example, increasing the percentage of native planting used in Council reserves, street trees and road berms.	Advocate	ADC	Ongoing	BAU	
		E. Support implementation of Council surface water strategy to improve biodiversity.	Influence	ADC	Ongoing	BAU	
		F.					
4.3	General public is encouraged to participate in conservation and	A. Continue collaboration of stakeholders and volunteer networks for biodiversity projects within the district	Influence	ADBAG, Stakeholders	Ongoing	BAU All stakeholders depending on need and location	

	Objectives	Actions (bold = NPS-IB)	Role of ADC	Who	Date	Activity	Results
	enhancement of and celebrate biodiversity	B. Investigate and establish biodiversity funding/resource pool (Community Natural Environment fund) to support biodiversity and sustainability projects in the community.	Advocate	ADBAG, Stakeholders	Short term	- Set up Community Natural Environment fund account code with the Finance team (ED/ADBAG/Finance) Collaborate with Economic Dev Team, Community Boards, and ECoEducate team on advertising the fund with Businesses and Community.	
		C. Introduce the Environment Champions Award to celebrate local biodiversity achievements.	Plan & Resource	ADC	Short term	- Develop award criteria with Economic Development team and ADBAG. - Certificate/Fund/Maori plaque?	
4.4	Community projects that protect and maintain indigenous biodiversity are supported	A. Support projects that aim to protect and maintain biodiversity in the district.	Support	ADC, ADBAG	Ongoing	BAU	

7. *Group Activity Updates*

7.1 **Lake Heron Conservation Society**

Hot news from our group is the discovery of an endangered weevil in the area. The only other known habitat is in the MacKenzie Basin where the numbers have reached critical levels.

A quick count by excited DOC staff showed at least 40 and maybe more in the area.

Trapping has continued every month, more help would be welcome, we go up on the last Sunday of the month, starting at 9am and out to Staveley Café for a debrief by 2pm.

We only go if the weather is good, the view up there is nothing short of spectacular! Easy walking.

Ross has looked at the stats from the last seven years and they show;

659 Hedgehogs

97 Cats

160 Stoats

52 Weasels

173 Ferrets

165 Rats

38 Rabbits

58 Possums

5 Mice

Total 1407 have been caught.

7.2 **Mt Somers Walkway Society**

The group have been catching up with weed control over the last few weeks. The vast area of the Stour Valley, including the ridges and creeks leading down into the valley, have been walked and patches of mainly broom have been sprayed. The broom on the shingle flats is difficult to see as it has been chewed down to 50mm by hares so you have to walk close together to spot it. To date we have spent 176 man hours, and used 72 knapsacks of spray on this project.

Wasp baiting has started on the mountain, the weather has held that up a bit, several fine days in a row are needed from mid-December onwards for it to be successful.

Trapping has been ongoing with a steady catch rate. We are hoping to extend the trap line around the front of the mountain a bit further, to improve the bird life. We are going to apply for funding to get some auto traps as they are working well at Lake Heron.

Visitor numbers to this whole area have increased hugely, car parks have been full, cafes at Mt Somers and Staveley have been busy and a lot of overseas tourists have been visiting the area, probably because the great walks have been booked out and are too expensive.

DOC's proposed increase of the hut fees to \$57 will put tramping out of reach of a lot of the families we see on the tracks -it's a bit strange when Government wants to increase tourism. I don't think we are promoting what we have got in Mid Canterbury anywhere near enough.

Barry Austin
Lake Heron Conservation Soc.
Mt Somers Walkways Soc.

Biodiversity Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the advisory group is to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan
- Maintain partnerships between local and regional organisations with an interest in the management of indigenous biodiversity
- Provide a forum for discussion and community-wide promotion of biodiversity
- Be a conduit for the Council relationship building with the landowner and general public where appropriately
- Provide advice to Council on biodiversity related matters e.g. ADC Natural and Built Environments grant applications

Membership

Representatives on the working group were invited based on their organisation's participation in developing the Canterbury Regional Biodiversity Strategy, and/or their ability to contribute to the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan.

Ashburton District Council

Mayor Neil Brown (ex officio)
Cr Leen Braam (Chair)
Cr Lynette Lovett
Cr Richard Wilson

Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces)
Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager)
Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor)

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective

Angela Cushnie, Janine Holland, Willy Leferink

QEII Trust

Alice Shanks

Environment Canterbury

Donna Field, Henry Winchester

Ashburton Water Zone Committee

Adi Avnit

Forest & Bird

Edith Smith, Val Clemens, Mary Ralston

Foothills Landcare Group

Gen de Spa

Ashburton Community Conservation Trust

Edith Smith, Val Clemens

Federated Farmers

Mike Salvesen

Awa Awa Rata Reserve

Mary Ralston

Department of Conservation

Ian Fraser

Fish & Game

Nikki Dellaway

Fonterra

Tom Munro

Synlait

Sarah Mason

Kanuka Trust

Kim Wall

Mt Somers Walkway Society & Lake Heron Conservation Society

Barry Austin

Methven Birdsong Initiative

Barry Maister

Upper Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group

Sally Stevens

Speaking rights will be granted to one member of each of the advisory group member organisations at each meeting.

Membership of the group may be amended to include representatives from other organisations. This will be at the discretion of the Ashburton District Council.

To form a quorum, the attendance of representatives from at least 6 of the advisory group member organisations, in addition to at least two ADC local representatives, is required.

Representatives from other organisations may be invited to attend advisory group meetings as the need arises.

Members may send alternates in their place or nominate another person from their organisation if they are unable to attend a meeting.

Names and organisations above may change over time as requested by the members without going through formal term of reference review.

Meeting Frequency

Meet four times a year, with the option for one additional meeting if required.

Delegations

The representatives on the working group are expected to:

- Meet to facilitate the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan
- Form project groups where appropriate to work towards specific actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Share information, both on organisational initiatives and collaborative initiatives, to support better decisions and knowledge of biodiversity
- Communicate and consult with one another in a flexible and open way
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate
- Represent their organisations' policies
- Respect other organisations' governance and policy approaches and priorities in the district / region, and seek a consensus approach to work with these

Ashburton District Council Biodiversity Funding

The Ashburton District Council has an annual fund of \$15,000 available for biodiversity projects. Funding applications are accepted twice annually, in February and August, however if the total fund is distributed in February another funding round will not be held. Applications for a biodiversity grant are to be referred to the Biodiversity Advisory Group for comment, before going to Council for their decision on the funding applications.

Reporting

The Ashburton District Biodiversity Advisory Group will report to Council.

Costs & Expenses

It is acknowledged that being a member of the advisory group will involve a commitment of members' time and energy, and will involve travel to Ashburton District Council to attend meetings. These costs will be met by the organisation(s) or group(s) that members represent. Costs of meetings and associated catering will be met by Ashburton District Council. Meetings will generally be held in the Council meeting rooms, and may be held in other venues throughout the district as appropriate.

Adopted

9 April 2020 (Reviewed 02/23)