

Biodiversity

Key Native Ecosystems and Biodiversity Plans

Taking action to protect the jewels in our biodiversity crown

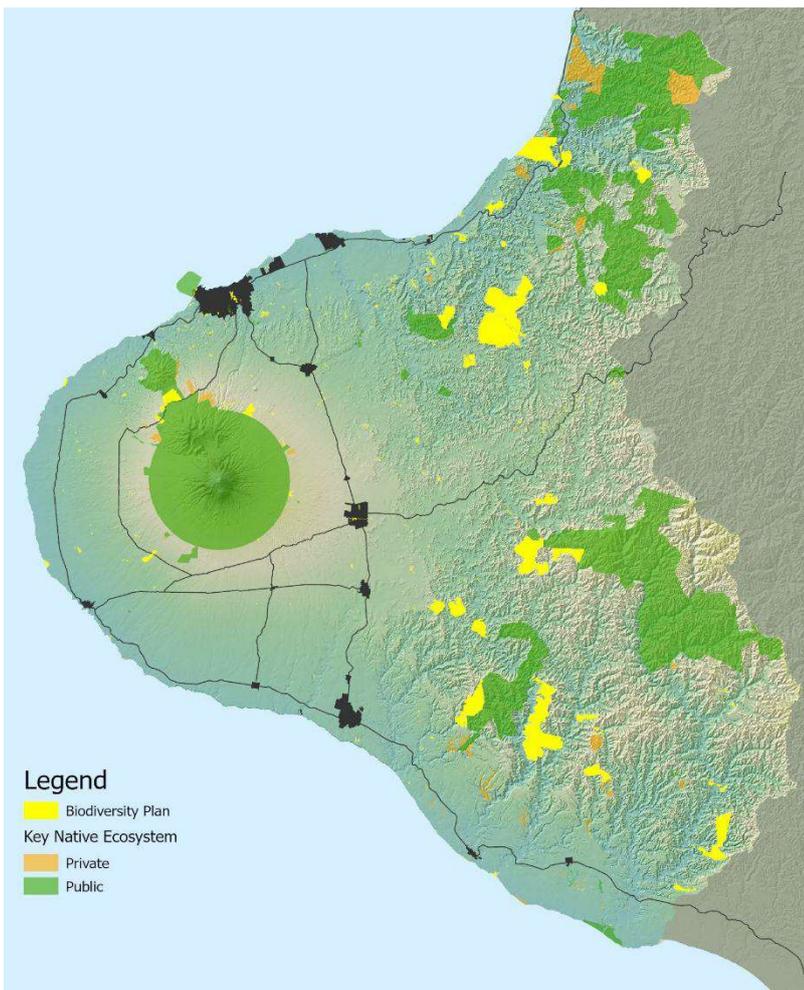
Number 3
Jan 2023



The Taranaki Regional Council offers free site assessments and advice to all Taranaki landowners interested in managing native ecosystems on their properties. Each year the Council prepares new Biodiversity Plans, covering priority wetlands, indigenous forest and coastal sites which have been identified as 'Key Native Ecosystems'.

KEY NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS (KNE)

While all remnant wetlands, indigenous forest and coastal ecosystems are important, the Taranaki Regional Council has a voluntary process for identifying the 'jewels in our biodiversity crown'. These 'jewels' are called 'Key Native Ecosystems' and have been assessed as having indigenous biodiversity values of regional significance to Taranaki. At Jan 2023, 358 Key Native Ecosystems had been listed on the inventory. New sites are identified every year.



Map - Key Native Ecosystems in Taranaki.

WHAT MAKES KEY NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT?

Key Native Ecosystems are regionally significant because they are:

- home to nationally or regionally threatened or at-risk native plant and animal species, or
- representative of originally rare ecosystems and indigenous vegetation now much reduced from its original extent, and/or
- important connections or buffers to other sites of value, or provide seasonal habitat for threatened or at-risk species.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF I OWN A KEY NATIVE ECOSYSTEM?

Identification of your remnant wetland, forest or coastal site as a Key Native Ecosystem does not impose any regulatory obligations on your use of the land. Rather it is a way to recognize its value, and for the Council and other funders to prioritise support to landowners who wish to protect the biodiversity associated with their site.



Goldstripe gecko *Moko mangaeka*: Largely endemic to Taranaki. Many threatened species urgently require habitat protection.



Taranaki Regional Council
Environment Services
Email: biodiversity@trc.govt.nz
Ph: 06 765 7127, www.trc.govt.nz

WHAT ARE THE THREATS TO KEY NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS?

The health of KNEs will decline without active management. Typical threats include:

- stock browsing and trampling
- habitat loss and fragmentation
- drainage and modification of wetlands
- invasion and spread of pest animals and plants which prey on, or out compete, native species.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL DOING TO PROTECT KEY NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS?

It is widely recognised that the protection and restoration of native ecosystems depends on the motivation and effort of the people who own the land. Without their commitment and active management the health of these areas will decline.

The Council is working with willing private landowners to identify and promote the protection of priority ecosystems. Each year the Council adds new sites to the KNE inventory and prepares new Biodiversity Plans which include financial and in-kind support to landowners willing to actively manage their sites. At January 2023, 230 Biodiversity Plans have been prepared for the 358 KNEs in the region.

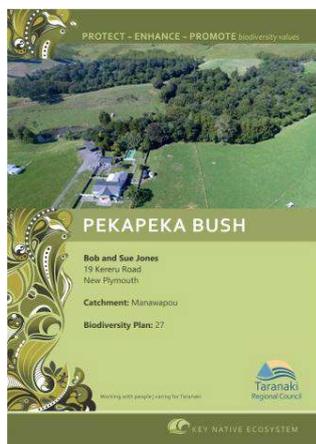
WHAT IS A BIODIVERSITY PLAN?

Planning of work at KNEs is important to ensure achievable, site-specific management actions are identified.

A free Biodiversity Plan is developed, in consultation with the landowner, by experienced Biodiversity Officers.

Proposed Pekepeka Bush KNE Biodiversity Implementation Plan								
Action	Current Circumstance	Proposed Initiatives	Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Legal Protection	Protected with a DOC covenant	No further protection required	L	-	-	-	-	-
Fencing	The fence is in poor condition and needs repair. Stock and goats are accessing the forest.	Fence repair and maintenance	H	Contribute to 1st priority fence repairs - TRC, Landowner.	Contribute to 2nd priority fence repairs - TRC, Landowner.	Monitor fence, clear fallen trees - Landowner	Monitor fence, clear fallen trees - Landowner	Monitor fence, clear fallen trees - Landowner
Invasive Weed Control	There are a few weeds that have the potential to spread throughout the bush if left uncontrolled. Removal of pest plants would be beneficial.	Control of fly, cathartid, bell, parakeet, rabbit, possum, and wild ginger.	H	Direct control of weeds - TRC contractor	Direct control of weeds - TRC contractor	To be assessed	Maintenance weed control - Landowner	Maintenance weed control - Landowner. TRC may contribute towards herbicide requirements.
Invasive Animal Control	Pest animals that threaten the bush and native fauna include possums, goats, mustelids, hedgehogs and rats.	Control possums, mustelids, rats and, when required, cats.	H	TRC to install trap hardware and bait stations and provide initial knockdown of pest animal populations	TRC to monitor pest populations. TRC and landowner to service traps	Landowner to service traps. TRC may contribute towards bait and lure requirements	TRC to monitor pest populations. Landowner to service traps	Landowner to service traps. TRC may contribute towards bait and lure requirements.
Blanketing/Enhancement Planting	Planting required on some banks to prevent erosion	Plant 100 plants in open areas created by pest plant control	M	-	Supply plants - TRC. Planting and TRC staff.	Remove plants from weeds - landowner. Repair any dead seedlings if required - to be assessed.	To be assessed	-
Management Advice and Monitoring	Site condition assessment carried out. Biodiversity Plan with management recommendations prepared.	Ongoing support and management advice to be extended to landowner. Conduct flora and fauna surveys and site condition monitoring	M	Provide management advice and supervise control works. Conduct flora and fauna surveys as required - TRC	Provide management advice and supervise control works. Conduct flora and fauna surveys as required - TRC.	Provide management advice. Repeat if priority. Condition Assessment	Provide management advice. Conduct flora and fauna surveys as required - TRC	Provide management advice. Conduct flora and fauna surveys as required - TRC

The Biodiversity Plan (pictured) is a booklet which identifies the objectives, ecological values and threats at the site. It describes an agreed programme of work to improve the health of the ecosystem. Biodiversity Plans are customised to suit the site and landowner.



Biodiversity Plans have an initial five year duration. They provide the landowner with a clear idea of what tasks are required to sustainably manage the site to achieve the protection and restoration of biodiversity. It also describes what tasks Council staff, or volunteers, can do to assist landowners.

Biodiversity Plans can be used to access funds from organisations like QEII National Trust, district councils, Department of Conservation and various community trusts.

HOW CAN THE COUNCIL HELP?

The Council is currently working with interested landowners and care groups to implement Biodiversity Plans for Key Native Ecosystems.

For landowners with an area of remnant native ecosystem on their property the Council will conduct a free initial assessment and provide advice on management. If the ecosystem meets KNE criteria, and the landowner is willing, the site will be added to the KNE inventory.

For landowners interested in actively protecting their Key Native Ecosystem the Council can provide ongoing support. The extent of this support will vary according to the level of priority of the site and available resources. However, it will also depend on the landowner's commitment or contribution. For example, is it protected with an Open space covenant and what actions will the landowner be prepared to carry out over the next five years and beyond?

The contribution of the Council will be specified in the Biodiversity Plan and may include the following:

- assistance with the covenanting process
- fencing
- knock down and initial control of pest plants
- set up of a trap network for predator control i.e. mustelids, feral cats
- Traps or bait stations and bait to reduce possum numbers to <10% required in Self-help possum control programme
- restoration planting
- signage
- feral goat control
- monitoring to identify new indigenous species and determine the effectiveness of management actions and improvements over time
- provision of ongoing advice and information on ecological restoration and pest plant and animal control.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

If you are interested in taking action to protect biodiversity on your land, please contact:

Biodiversity programme
Environment Services

Taranaki Regional Council

Private Bag 713, Stratford, 4352

Email: biodiversity@trc.govt.nz

Ph: 06 765 7127