

Department of Conservation's intent: Where will wētā be?

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The Department's outcome statement "New Zealanders gain environmental, social and economic benefits from healthy functioning ecosystems, from recreation opportunities, and from living our history" places society at the front of natural heritage conservation. Our five year statement of intent considers the context: "The resources available for conservation work are constrained by an ongoing tight fiscal environment and the inevitable effects of inflation. However, the value of conservation's contribution to 'brand New Zealand' is increasingly recognised. There is potential to draw on the increasing environmental awareness of consumers, businesses and communities to sustain and grow their contribution to conservation work". An ambitious programme of change includes centralising science and advisory roles followed by restructuring operational capacity and objectives (underway) while at the same time nationalising the process of choosing sites where ecosystems and species are to be conserved. This process reflects the dual goals to conserve a full range of ecosystems and secondly, persistence of nationally threatened species. In the medium term, strategic drivers include ongoing decline of native plants, animals and ecosystems, economic drivers and a requirement to deliver better public services. The priority then is to optimise species and ecosystems management to achieve better value for money. The results planned for include; increasing the number of species (including some invertebrates) actively managed through nationally prioritised prescriptions from 50 in 2011-2012 to 300 by mid 2016. A more challenging intent is to implement nationally prioritised ecosystem management for 400 ecosystem management units over the next 4 years. Native invertebrate assemblages are expected to benefit from reduction of pest plants and animals among ecosystems and new systems and tools for monitoring and reporting will include invertebrate indicators as well as population trend for threatened species.

