

Waikato Koiora Rau

Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2050

September 2026

Kia tau iho mai te tauwhirotanga o te wāhi ngaro ki runga i Te Arikinui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po me te Whare Kāhui Ariki – Paimārire ki a rātou.

E te hunga mate, koutou i haohia e te kūpenga o Taramainuku, haere ki tua o Paerau, haere ki te iti o kahurangi, okioki ai.

Ki a tātou te hunga ora.

E ngā maunga whakahī, e ngā wai whakatere taniwha, e ngā karangatanga maha puta noa i te rohe.

Ko te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Waikato e mihi atu nei ki a koutou.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

May the providence of the unseen realm cascade upon the Māori Queen,
Nga wai hono i te po and her esteemed lineage –
May goodness and peace reign over them.

To those who have been caught up in the net of Taramainuku,
your people continue to grieve. Depart, with all our deceased to the next world.

To those living.

We acknowledge you, your ancestral mountains, your water bodies, your people and your communities.

Waikato Regional Council extends its greetings to you all.

Warm greetings to us all.

Back to top

He kupu whakapuaki
Chairperson's foreword

We have a special relationship with the environment (te taiao). It underpins how we live in the Waikato region. From mountains to sea, the health of our forests, wetlands, rivers and coasts sustains our communities, livelihoods and cultural identity. Yet the cumulative pressures of habitat loss, pests, pollution and a changing climate demand that we do more – and do it together.

The Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2050 (the strategy) sets a clear, shared direction to 2050 to stop further loss, reverse decline and invest where the return for communities and nature is highest. This includes integrating biodiversity restoration with catchment management and recognising nature as essential infrastructure that protects communities and supports long-term economic wellbeing. The strategy aims to bring together many good projects into one coordinated programme of action across land, fresh water, coastal and marine environments.

At a time of resource management and local government reform, maintaining a coherent, long-term vision and shared regional direction is especially important. While legislation, institutions and delivery models may evolve, healthy biodiversity remains fundamental to a resilient, productive and prosperous Waikato region.

The strategy's development has been guided by the Waikato Biodiversity Accord and shaped by iwi, individuals, community groups, industry representatives, environmental organisations and central government agencies.

It builds on the ideas, aspirations and practical solutions shared by hundreds of people and organisations across the Waikato region. It focuses effort where it counts most: restoring rare and depleted ecosystems, reconnecting habitats mountains to sea (ki uta ki tai), improving data and monitoring, and supporting locally-led action with practical tools and incentives. It is intentionally concise, future-focused and designed to adapt as science, mātauranga indigenous knowledge and national direction evolve.

We would like to sincerely thank the many individuals and organisations who have contributed their time, knowledge and expertise to the development of this strategy. Their insights have helped shape a practical and enduring direction for biodiversity in the Waikato region.

Achieving the strategy's vision will require ongoing collaboration, shared leadership and coordinated investment, recognising that no single organisation can deliver the outcomes alone. We are committed to turning this strategy into action through a collaborative implementation planning process supported by a regional implementation group. By bringing together the strengths, knowledge and resources of many organisations and communities, we can make meaningful progress towards our shared vision for biodiversity in the Waikato region.

Warren Maher
Chair, Waikato Regional Council

Back to top

Te mauri o te taiao, he taiao mauri ora

Biodiversity in the Waikato region: thriving, connected, resilient

Outcome 1

Ecosystems across the region flourish and expand, ki uta ki tai (from mountains to sea).

Outcome 2

Populations of indigenous/taonga species, their habitats and ecological connections are resilient and improving.

Outcome 3

Communities are informed, supported and motivated to restore and champion the Waikato region's biodiversity.

Outcome 4

Māori leadership, mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga guide biodiversity restoration through enduring partnerships.

Outcome 5

People and nature prosper together in the Waikato region.

Pou 1

Protecting and restoring what matters

Protecting and restoring native species, habitats and the ecological functioning of ecosystems by addressing climate, biosecurity and other threats, while preserving the values that connect people to the environment.

Strategic focus areas

1. Prioritise restoration of the region's most threatened, rare and vulnerable ecosystems while maintaining and enhancing biodiversity across the landscape.
2. Reconnect ecosystems through ecological corridors, linkages and buffers – ki uta ki tai (mountains to sea).
3. Protect and restore wetlands, peatlands, floodplains, riparian margins and coastal systems as frontline nature-based solutions for climate and ecosystem resilience.
4. Support species recovery and ecosystem restoration through invasive species management.

Pou 2

Empowering landowners and communities

Supporting landowners and local communities with the knowledge, skills, resources and connections they need to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity.

5. Maintain and strengthen regional biodiversity support networks for community groups, landowners and local iwi/hapū.
6. Facilitate long-term investment and incentives for biodiversity restoration and management.
7. Grow public awareness, participation and understanding about biodiversity across the region.
8. Build the skills, knowledge and support for locally-led action.

Pou 3

Partnering with tangata whenua

Working alongside tangata whenua to integrate mātauranga Māori and guide engagement, leadership and delivery in biodiversity management.

9. Integrate iwi, hapū and whānau aspirations, place-based knowledge and mātauranga Māori into biodiversity planning and delivery.
10. Strengthen education and investment pathways to support iwi, hapū and whānau-led biodiversity action.
11. Integrate mātauranga Māori into environmental monitoring and reporting processes.
12. Implement collaborative partnership models/projects for ecosystem restoration throughout the Waikato region.
13. Restore culturally significant biodiversity sites to enhance continued customary practices.

Pou 4

Strengthening data, policy, and investment

Building the data, information, policy and investment needed to prioritise the right places for biodiversity restoration, measure progress and support restoration across the Waikato region.

14. Improve alignment and coordination of biodiversity policy across councils and central government.
15. Develop and maintain a regional biodiversity mapping and spatial planning framework.
16. Prevent further biodiversity loss while supporting measurable biodiversity recovery and gain.
17. Develop and implement targeted incentives to reverse ongoing ecosystem degradation and drive biodiversity gains.
18. Build shared understanding and improve biodiversity knowledge through targeted research, consistent biodiversity monitoring and clear accessible reporting.

Rārangi kaupapa
Contents

He kōrero whakataki
Executive summary 6

Te whakarite kaupapa
Setting the scene 7

He tīmatanga kōrero
Introduction 8

What is biodiversity and why is it important? 9
Biodiversity in the Waikato region 11
Pressures and their impacts on biodiversity 12
The current biodiversity management system 14
Why do we need a regional biodiversity strategy? 16

Te anga a te rautaki ā-rohe
Regional biodiversity strategy framework 17

Te aronga
Strategic direction 18

Protecting and restoring what matters 20
Empowering landowners and communities 23
Partnering with tangata whenua 25
Strengthening data, policy and investment 28

Te whakatinanatanga me te aroturukitanga o te rautaki
Strategy implementation and monitoring 31

Te whakatinanatanga
Implementation 32

Strategy to implementation pathway 33
Oversight of implementation 35
Implementation plan 35
Monitoring and reporting 36
Review 38

Ngā āpitihanga
Appendices 39

Glossary 40
Appendix 1:
Organisations and agencies involved in the biodiversity system 43
Appendix 2:
Key legislation and policy documents for biodiversity management (as at August 2026) 45
Appendix 3:
Waikato Biodiversity Accord principles 48

He kōrero whakataki
Executive summary

The **Waikato Regional Biodiversity Strategy** provides a shared long-term direction for protecting, restoring and enhancing indigenous biodiversity, bringing together tangata whenua, communities, landowners and agencies to halt biodiversity decline, recover ecosystems and species, and support a resilient and prosperous future.

The Waikato is home to a remarkable range of forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastlines and marine environments. These natural areas support indigenous species, sustain cultural values and provide many of the services people rely on every day, including clean water, fertile soils, flood protection and climate resilience. However, biodiversity continues to decline as a result of habitat loss, invasive species, pollution and climate change.

Throughout development of the strategy, participants consistently called for stronger collaboration, practical support for communities and landowners, better biodiversity information, clearer priorities, stronger partnerships with tangata whenua, sustainable funding and a greater focus on implementation. These themes have directly shaped the outcomes, pou and strategic focus areas presented in this strategy.

This strategy sets a shared vision for biodiversity to be **thriving**, **connected and resilient**. It focuses on five outcomes: healthier and better-connected ecosystems; resilient and increasing indigenous species populations; communities actively involved in protecting and restoring nature; tangata whenua exercising rangatiratanga as kaitiaki; and biodiversity being recognised as essential to wellbeing, resilience and prosperity. The strategy promotes a mountains to sea (ki uta ki tai) approach, recognising that biodiversity is connected across land, freshwater, coastal and marine environments.

The strategy is organised around four pou: focusing action to maintain and enhance biodiversity; empowering landowners and communities; partnering with tangata whenua; and strengthening data, policy and investment. Together, these provide a coordinated framework for action, with a focus on ecosystem restoration, species recovery, ecological connectivity, invasive species management, community stewardship, biodiversity investment and better information to support decision making.

Implementation will be guided by a collaborative implementation plan developed after the strategy is adopted. Progress will be monitored, reported and reviewed over time to ensure actions remain effective and responsive to new information and changing circumstances. By building on the work already underway and improving coordination across the biodiversity system, the strategy aims to leave future generations with a richer, healthier and more resilient natural environment.



This strategy sets a shared vision for biodiversity to be thriving, connected and resilient.

Back to top

North Island kākā (Nestor meridionalis).



Section 1

Te whakarite kaupapa
Setting the scene

He tīmatanga kōrero **Introduction**

Archey's frogs and alpine bogs, bacteria and butterflies, chromosomes and centipedes, eels and estuaries, forests and fumaroles, genes and geckos, wetlands and whales – these all form part of the rich biodiversity of the Waikato region.

Our natural capital sustains and defines us. Biodiversity is central to te ao Māori, supports primary industries and local economies, and strengthens the identity and wellbeing of our communities.

The Waikato region's ancient forests (ngahere), volcanic mountains (maunga) and its rivers (awa), lakes (roto) and coastal wetlands (repo) are ecological treasures as well as cultural taonga that carry the whakapapa (genealogy) of the iwi and hapū who have cared for them across generations. These ecosystems support an extraordinary range of species and community wellbeing, yet many are increasingly under pressure.

The **Waikato Biodiversity Accord** (2024) laid the groundwork for this strategy by bringing partners together to collaborate on a regional approach to biodiversity management. This first regional biodiversity strategy sets a shared direction for protecting, restoring and enhancing biodiversity across fresh water, estuarine, coastal and marine environments. Developed by Waikato Regional Council (WRC) on behalf of the region, it reflects the collective knowledge and aspirations of iwi, territorial authorities, individuals, industry representatives, community groups, environmental organisations and central government agencies.

Our natural capital sustains and defines us. Biodiversity is central to te ao Māori, supports primary industries and local economies, and strengthens the identity and wellbeing of our communities.



Archey's frog (Leiopelma archeyi), photo: Mahakirau Forest Estate

What is biodiversity and why is it important?

In this strategy, **"biodiversity" means indigenous biodiversity** – the native plants, animals, fungi and other living organisms that occur naturally in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the ecosystems, habitats and ecological processes that support them. It includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems, consistent with the **Resource Management Act 1991** (RMA) and the **National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023** (NPS-IB).

The strategy recognises that biodiversity has intrinsic value – it matters in its own right, not only for the benefits it provides to people. The strategy also acknowledges that biodiversity is understood and valued through diverse worldviews across the Waikato region, including mātauranga Māori, science, stewardship traditions, community experience and sector-based perspectives.

Healthy biodiversity underpins the natural systems that sustain our daily lives. It helps to keep water clean, form soil, recycle nutrients, store carbon, and buffer the impacts of floods, erosion, storms and droughts. Diverse, functioning ecosystems are more resilient to climate change, pests, diseases and habitat loss, and are recognised as essential natural capital that underpins environmental health, productive land use and local livelihoods.

Biodiversity supports cultural, social, community and economic wellbeing (Figure 1). It shapes local identity, attracts visitors, enables recreation and learning, and anchors people's connection to place. Healthy and diverse ecosystems reduce pest and disease risks that can impact primary sector productivity, including horticulture, forestry and aquaculture. For tangata whenua, biodiversity is part of a living whakapapa, and protecting native species and habitats supports mātauranga Māori, customary practices and intergenerational kaitiakitanga.

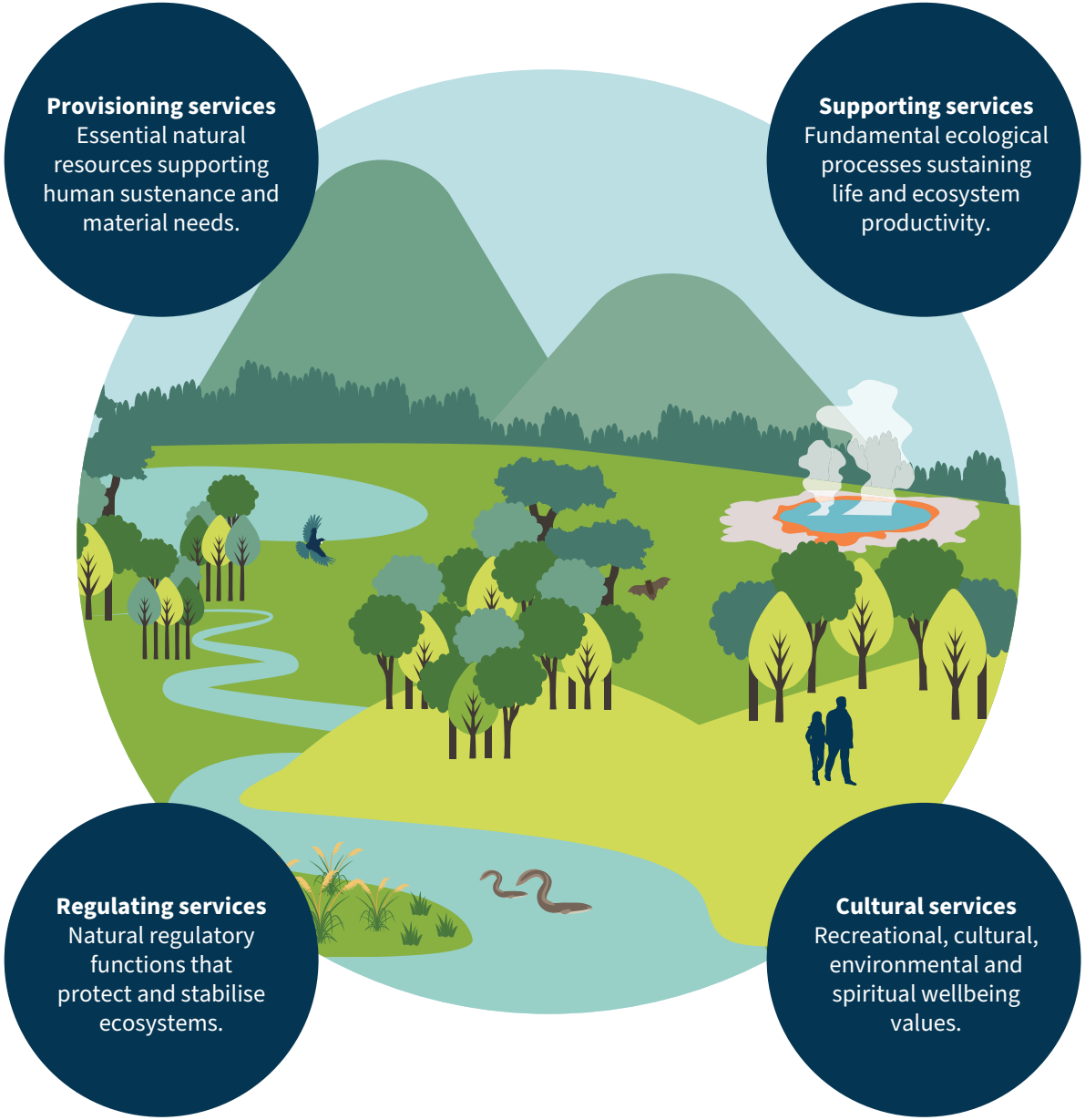


Seagrass or rimurēhia (Zostera muelleri)

Back to top

Figure 1

Ecosystem services



Provisioning services

- food
- water
- medicines
- wood and fibre
- biomass fuel
- ornamental resources
- genetic resources

Supporting services

- nutrient and water cycling
- primary production and
- photosynthesis
- soil formation
- oxygen production
- habitat provision

Cultural services

- mental and physical health
- recreation and tourism
- cultural identity and expression (e.g. waiata, karakia)
- species conservation
- education
- aesthetic values
- sense of place
- inspiration
- spiritual and religious values

Regulating services

- air purification
- climate stabilisation
- disease control
- flood mitigation
- erosion control
- water purification and waste treatment
- plant pollination

Back to top

Biodiversity in the Waikato region

The Waikato region is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most ecologically varied regions, spanning alpine areas, geothermal fields, extensive river systems, wetlands and lakes, conifer-broadleaved forests, dunes, estuaries and coastal habitats. These diverse landscapes support many endemic species and ecosystem types found nowhere else in the country.

Freshwater systems are a defining feature, with more than 16,000 kilometres of rivers and streams and approximately 200 lakes. These waterways support migratory native fish such as eels (tuna) and whitebait (īnanga and kōkopu), diverse invertebrates, aquatic plants and nationally important waterbirds.

The coastline extends approximately 1150 kilometres across the exposed west coast, the Tīkapa Moana Firth of Thames and the Coromandel Peninsula. The Firth of Thames is internationally recognised for its importance to aquaculture and migratory shorebirds. Coastal waters support fish and shellfish; rocky reefs host rich marine habitat with macroalgae forests, horse mussel beds, sea grass meadows, tubeworm beds, sponge gardens, anemones, sea pens and corals. Near Port Waikato, the critically threatened Māui dolphin still occurs.

Despite significant land modification, over 7500 native forest fragments under 25 hectares remain, including kahikatea stands that support high beetle diversity and offer refuge in the pastoral landscape. Moehau and the Coromandel Peninsula host distinctive fauna such as the Coromandel striped gecko, Moehau stag beetle, brown kiwi and Archey's frog, and native birds like the North Island robin (toutouwai), kākā and kererū.

The region contains 70 per cent of New Zealand's geothermal ecosystems, home to globally unique plants, animals and micro-organisms. Peatlands are another defining feature – Kopuatai Peat Dome, the country's largest intact restiad bog, is internationally significant for its unique vegetation and carbon storage capacity. The internationally recognised Whangamarino Wetland supports threatened species including the swamp helmet orchid, the giant wire rush with its native moth, "Fred the thread", and the Australasian bittern (the latter two species also occur at Kopuatai).

Karst landscapes extend from Port Waikato to Mōkau, including glow worm caves, Awaroa koromiko (Hebe scopulorum), cave spleenwort (Asplenium cimmeriorum), eyeless cave beetles and cave wētā.



Whangamarino Wetland

Urban areas also host important biodiversity – at least 31 threatened and at-risk species have been recorded within Hamilton city, including a rare urban population of pekapeka tou-roa (native long-tailed bats). Coastal towns, such as Whāingaroa Raglan, include numerous significant biodiversity areas intertwined with residential properties.

Together, these ecosystems and species, along with many others, are what makes the Waikato region ecologically distinct and varied.

Back to top

Pressures and their impacts on biodiversity

Biodiversity in the Waikato region has undergone substantial historical loss and continues to decline. Many native ecosystems are still being fragmented or degraded each year, and many populations of threatened species are reducing (Figure 2).

Freshwater ecosystems face significant pressure. Intensified land use has increased sediment, nutrients and other contaminants entering rivers, lakes and estuaries. Nearly half of monitored river sites now fall below national sediment standards. Native fish such as tuna and whitebait are declining due to poor water quality, habitat loss and barriers that block their migration.

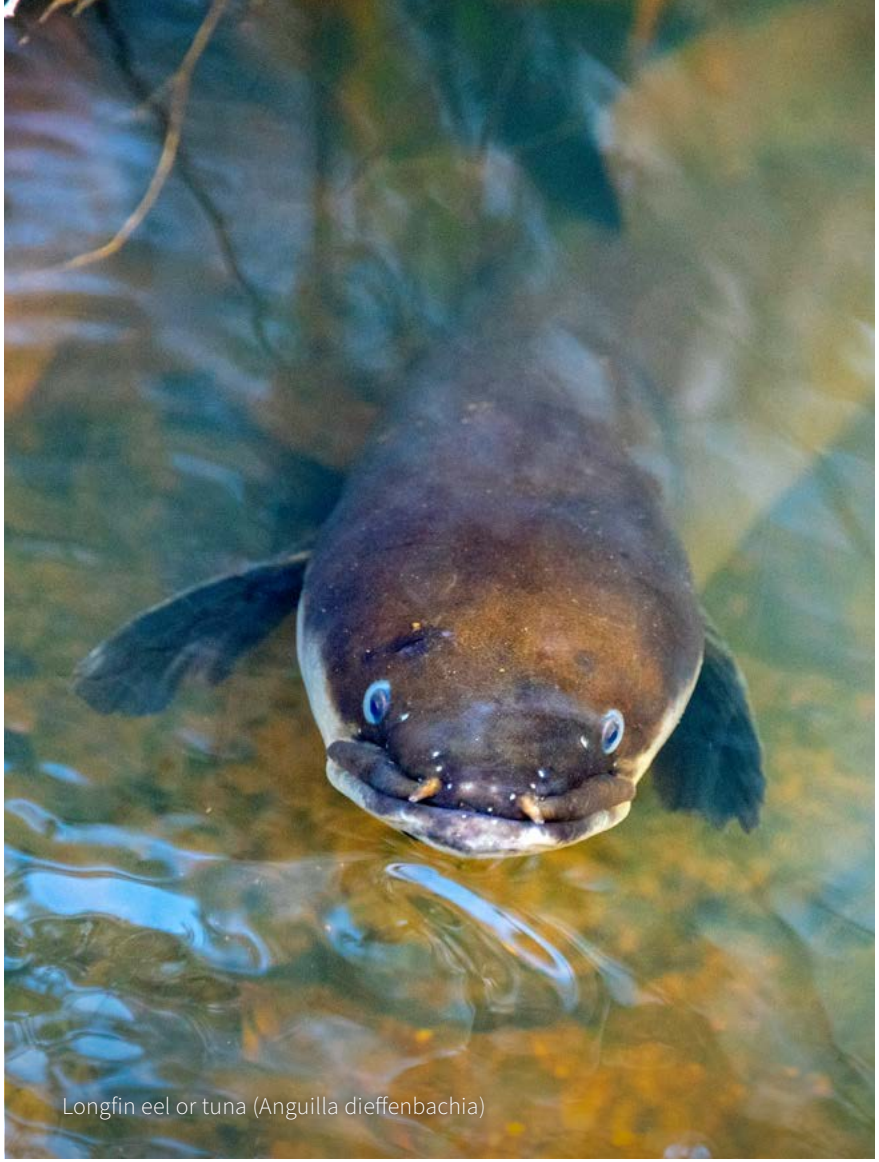
Estuaries, as receiving environments, are especially vulnerable. Sediment build-up, nutrient enrichment and low oxygen conditions are degrading habitats, including seagrass beds, shellfish reefs and sponge gardens. Around 2000 square kilometres – about one fifth of the Waikato coastal marine area – is disturbed each year by bottom contact fishing.

Habitat loss on land remains a major driver of decline. Only 27 per cent of the region retains native vegetation, and around 75 per cent of peat wetlands have been drained. These long-term pressures contribute to more than 300 native species now threatened or at risk of extinction.

Invasive plants and animals add further pressure by suppressing native regeneration, altering habitat structure, and preying on and outcompeting native birds, fish, reptiles and invertebrates.

Climate change is putting extra pressure on biodiversity by altering temperatures, rainfall patterns and natural cycles, making it harder for species to survive and adapt. More frequent storms, droughts, heatwaves and rising sea levels are damaging habitats, shifting where species can live and increasing the spread of pests and diseases – all of which accelerate the decline of already vulnerable ecosystems.

Together, habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution and water quality degradation, invasive species and climate change all have a compounding effect. Despite these challenges, halting and reversing biodiversity decline is possible, but only with greater and more coordinated action.



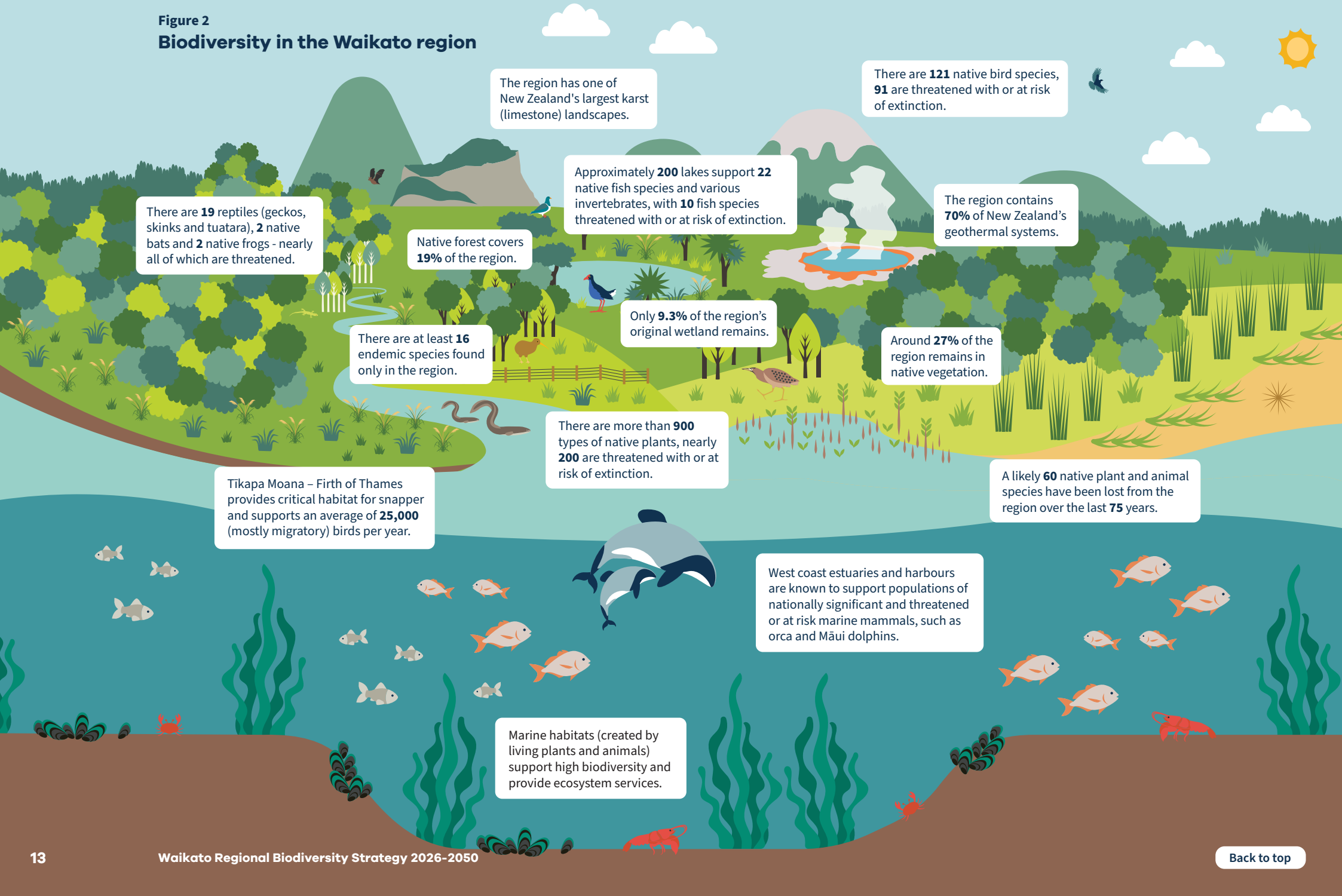
Longfin eel or tuna (Anguilla dieffenbachia)

The Waikato State of the Environment Report 2022 brings together years of environmental monitoring data to provide a snapshot of environmental health, trends and pressures across the Waikato region.

Back to top

Figure 2

Biodiversity in the Waikato region



Back to top

The current biodiversity management system

Indigenous biodiversity spans land, air, fresh water, coastal and marine boundaries, crossing the jurisdictions of local, regional and national agencies. Managing indigenous biodiversity is guided by a wider framework of obligations, including the RMA, NPS-IB and also **Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2050**.

For the region, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement 2016 (WRPS) provides overarching policy direction, alongside iwi environmental management plans and **Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato** (Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River), the statutory framework for restoring the Waikato River.

Biodiversity management is place-based and involves many partners: iwi and hapū, community groups, landowners, businesses, industry, research organisations, territorial authorities, councils and central government agencies (Figure 3). Appendix 1 and 2 summarise agency responsibilities and key biodiversity mandates across relevant laws and plans.

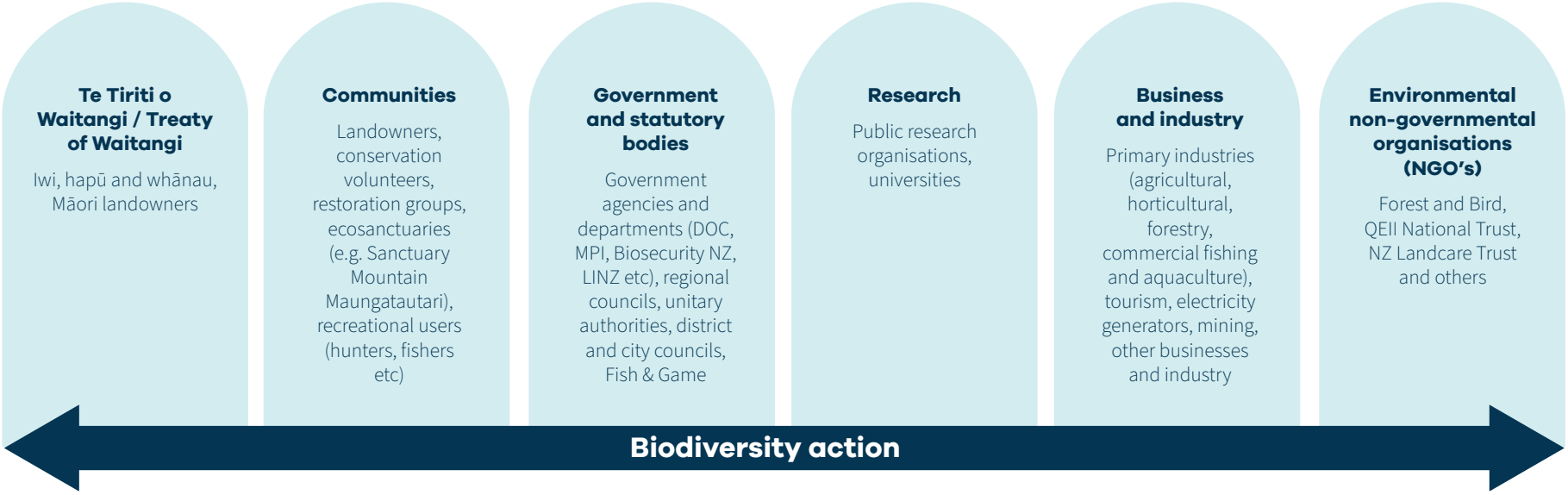
The region's 11 territorial authorities have key roles through district plans and local biodiversity strategies, such as Hamilton City Council's **Nature in the City** Strategy, Hauraki District Council's **Biodiversity Strategy** and Waikato District Council's **Taiao in the Waikato** strategy.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is a key partner, managing large areas of public conservation land, leading threatened species recovery, pest/weed control and habitat protection. DOC also oversees the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao under the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Private landowners, businesses and industry groups play a crucial role through controlling invasive species, native planting, fencing waterways and investing in restoration. Community groups, trusts and catchment collectives also deliver significant on-the-ground work alongside iwi, hapū, other landowners and councils – much of it on private land where many threatened ecosystems remain.

Figure 3

The range of people and organisations involved in biodiversity management



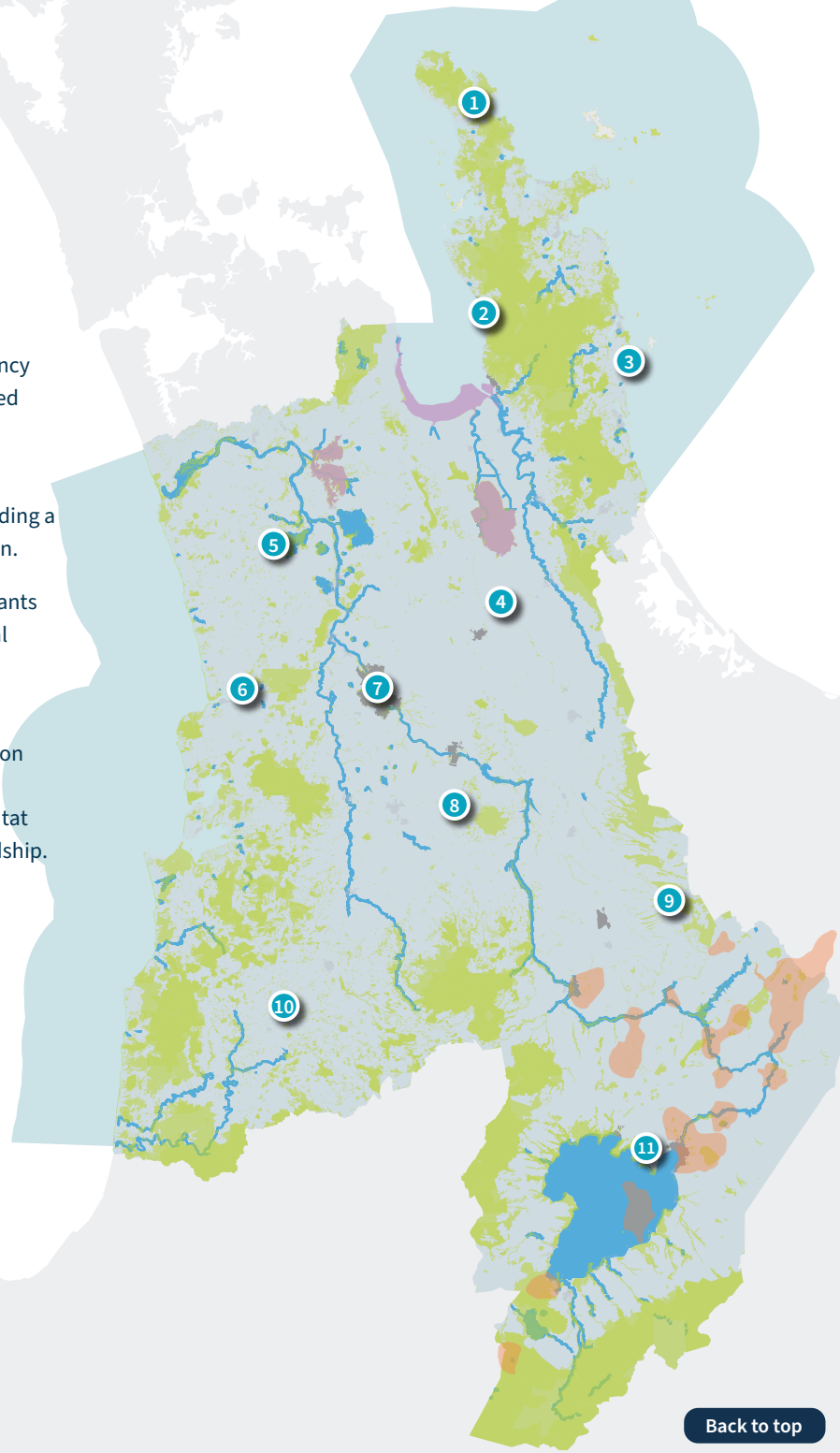
Back to top

Figure 4 highlights some of the biodiversity initiatives underway across the Waikato region.

Figure 4

Restoring biodiversity in the Waikato region – project examples

1. **Moehau:** Concentrated trapping has created a 450-hectare kiwi sanctuary near Port Charles.
2. **Upper Waioumu:** Large-scale planting and streambank fencing has cut sediment and nutrient run-off while creating habitat corridors.
3. **Whangamatā and Pāuanui:** Dunes rebuilt through soft-engineering using spinifex and pīngao to strengthen coastal resilience.
4. **Piako-Waihou:** A community hub brings together farmers, iwi and people of all generations to restore and protect the river catchments flowing through the Hauraki Plains
5. **Lake Whangapē:** Landowner wetland restoration and slope retirement has reduced sediment inputs and revived lake-edge habitats.
6. **Whāingaroa Harbour:** Extensive fencing and planting has reduced sediment and enhanced estuarine habitats.
7. **Kirikiriroa Hamilton:** A community initiative restoring a city gully by engaging students in hands-on habitat recovery.
8. **Maungatautari:** A community and agency supported fenced sanctuary has restored forest ecosystems and taonga species.
9. **Mokaihaha:** A forestry company and charitable trust partnership is safeguarding a nationally significant kōkako population.
10. **Piopio:** More than 300,000 trees and plants established across 231 hectares by local farms to improve water quality and landscape resilience.
11. **Taupō district:** Environmental education programme in 45 schools and early childhood centres is driving native habitat restoration and environmental stewardship.



Back to top

Why do we need a regional biodiversity strategy?

Although many good projects are underway, work is often fragmented. A regional strategy creates one clear direction and framework to focus effort, guide investment, clarify roles and track progress across land, fresh water, coastal and marine environments. It brings national and regional priorities together with locally led action, helping us to meet obligations under the NPS-IB and resource management framework, and alignment with Te Mana o te Taiao.

The strategy is intentionally high level. It sets a vision, outcomes and strategic focus areas under four pou (pillars), while detailed actions, methods, milestones and resourcing (as set out in Appendix 5 of the NPS-IB) will be developed through a companion implementation plan.

This approach lets us adapt as science evolves, pressures change, or national requirements are updated. The strategy is a starting point and will be refined over time alongside the implementation plan.

The resource management system is undergoing significant reform with the replacement of the RMA, which is expected to reshape the statutory framework for environmental protection, biodiversity management and spatial planning. The strategy will need to remain flexible and responsive to these changes, while providing enduring regional direction for biodiversity outcomes.

In this context of ongoing legislative change, the regional biodiversity strategy needs to stay agile so that it can align with future national and regional planning requirements.

A regional strategy creates one clear direction and framework to focus effort, guide investment, clarify roles and track progress across land, fresh water, coastal and marine environments.



Awaroa koromiko (Veronica scopulorum), photo: brucedc, iNaturalist

Back to top



Waikato River, Hipapatua Recreational Reserve

Section 2

Te anga a te rautaki ā-rohe **Regional biodiversity strategy framework**

Te aronga
Strategic direction

Through engagement on the strategy, participants consistently highlighted the following priorities:

- *stronger collaboration and coordination*
- *practical support for communities and landowners*
- *stronger partnerships with tangata whenua*
- *sustainable funding and investment*
- *better information, monitoring and reporting*
- *action that protects what remains while restoring what has been lost.*

These priorities have directly informed the development of the vision, outcomes and strategic focus areas

Vision

Te mauri o te taiao, he taiao mauri ora
Biodiversity in the Waikato region: thriving, connected, resilient

Guiding principles

How we'll work

The Waikato Biodiversity Accord provided the foundation for the development of this strategy. The accord is a regional agreement that brings together organisations with the common goal of creating and putting the strategy into action.

The accord principles have been adopted to guide the actions of all parties and the delivery of this strategy (Appendix 3).

Outcomes

What we are aiming to achieve by 2050 or earlier

The strategy sets out **five outcomes** for 2050 (page 19). The first two outcomes focus on restoring healthy biodiversity across the landscape. Outcomes 3 and 4 are about empowered and connected people. This reflects the fact that for people to thrive, the natural world around them must thrive, too. Healthy, diverse ecosystems provide services that people rely on (Figure 1), meaning our wellbeing is inseparable from the wellbeing of nature and biodiversity. The last outcome highlights that the Waikato region's long-term economic wellbeing and resilience rely on healthy ecosystems that support regional prosperity and economic productivity.

We will know we have been successful in achieving the vision when we are achieving these outcomes.

Pou and strategic focus areas

Four pou (pillars) define the major domains where effort must occur, providing the structural backbone of the strategy. They remain stable across the strategy timeframe and organise activity without describing detailed work.

Each of the four pou contributes to all five of the strategy's long-term biodiversity outcomes.

The **strategic focus areas** (pages 20-39) identify the priority directions within each pou and clarify what must advance in that domain to achieve the strategy's outcomes.

Back to top

Outcome 1

Ecosystems across the region flourish and expand, ki uta ki tai (from mountains to sea)

By 2050, indigenous ecosystems across the Waikato region are healthier, larger and better connected, from mountains to sea. While maintaining and protecting the region's existing biodiversity, restoration efforts are focused on rare, threatened and highly depleted ecosystem types (including examples such as wetlands and dunes) where investment can deliver the greatest ecological gains. Together, these efforts will support a network of resilient, self-sustaining ecosystems that support biodiversity, maintain genetic diversity and are able to better adapt to changing environmental conditions. Progress is measured and regularly reported through agreed ecological indicators against established baseline information on ecosystem extent, condition and connectivity.

Outcome 2

Populations of indigenous/taonga species, their habitats and ecological connections are resilient and improving

By 2050, indigenous and taonga species are showing measurable improvements in abundance and distribution across the region. No further local extinctions occur, and the threat status of indigenous species is improving. Secure habitats, ecological corridors and restored migration pathways support resilient populations, and progress is tracked through measurable indicators of species status and habitat condition.

Outcome 3

Communities are informed, supported and motivated to restore and champion the Waikato region's biodiversity

By 2050, people, landowners, tangata whenua and the community are informed, supported and motivated to be active stewards of indigenous biodiversity. Caring for nature is a visible and valued part of everyday life, community identity and decision making, with people actively contributing to the protection, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity across the Waikato region.

Outcome 4

Māori leadership, mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga guide biodiversity restoration through enduring partnerships

By 2050, tangata whenua exercise rangatiratanga as kaitiaki, working in partnership with communities, landowners, agencies and scientists, and applying mātauranga Māori alongside ecological science, local knowledge and practical experience. The mauri of culturally significant sites, taonga species and mahinga kai areas are strengthened and measurable recovery is evident. Success is demonstrated through jointly developed cultural and ecological indicators, reflecting shared responsibility, stewardship and partnership.

Outcome 5

People and nature prosper together in the Waikato region

By 2050, people and nature prosper together because biodiversity and ecosystem health are improving alongside economic prosperity and community wellbeing. Thriving ecosystems support productive soils and landscapes, resilient communities and sustainable land and water use. Biodiversity and ecosystem function are recognised as essential natural infrastructure – strengthening productivity, resilience and wellbeing across the Waikato region.

Pou 1 Protecting and restoring what matters

Protecting and restoring native species, habitats and the ecological functioning of ecosystems by addressing climate, biosecurity and other threats, while preserving the values that connect people to the environment.

Strategic focus areas

1 Prioritise restoration of the region's most threatened, rare and vulnerable ecosystems while maintaining and enhancing biodiversity across the landscape.

What this means

Focus priority investment first on ecosystems at greatest risk – such as lowland forests, wetlands/peatlands, dunes and other under-represented habitat types, where action can deliver the greatest biodiversity gains. This prioritisation recognises that resources are finite and ongoing maintenance and enhancement of existing biodiversity across the wider landscape remains essential to prevent further decline and support long-term biodiversity outcomes.

Why this is a priority

- These ecosystems hold exceptional biodiversity and other values but are heavily depleted, fragmented or close to ecological tipping points.
- Actively managing the most threatened areas can deliver significant biodiversity gains by addressing key threats and improving ecological condition.
- Prioritisation helps to ensure representation of all ecosystem types and aligns local action with DOC's national ecosystem-based management approach.
- Protecting the rarest ecosystems strengthens the region's overall ecological resilience and supports the recovery of species dependent on them (especially threatened species).
- This approach complements efforts to maintain and enhance biodiversity across the wider landscape, recognising that biodiversity gains can be achieved through targeted investment, locally led and landowner-led protection and restoration initiatives.

2 Reconnect ecosystems through ecological corridors, linkages and buffers, ki uta ki tai (from mountains to sea).

What this means

Identify, protect and enhance ecological connectivity across terrestrial, fresh water, coastal/marine, urban and aerial environments to reduce habitat fragmentation and support species movement from mountains to sea. This includes buffering existing habitats, creating habitat "stepping stones" along catchment riparian zones and incorporating these areas into spatial planning and into related plans and consenting decisions (Figure 5).

Why this is a priority

- Habitat fragmentation (such as clearing a continuous indigenous vegetation sequence into two or more fragments or losing freshwater passage for species through culverts or dams) is a major barrier to species movement and ecosystem resilience.
- Enhancing, buffering and linking habitats can deliver significant and measurable biodiversity gains within relatively short timeframes compared with many other restoration interventions.
- Functional connectivity enables species to move, migrate and shift ranges as conditions change, improving resilience to climate change and disturbance.
- Improved connectivity in upper catchments directly benefits downstream ecosystems and coastal receiving environments.

Strategic focus areas

3 Protect and restore wetlands, peatlands, floodplains, riparian margins and coastal systems as frontline nature-based solutions for climate and ecosystem resilience.

What this means

Prioritise the protection, restoration, and re-establishment of natural flood- and climate-buffering systems across the region: wetlands, floodplains, riparian margins, steep upper catchments and hillsides, coastal dunes and estuaries.

Efforts can be focused in high-risk areas such as the lower Waikato River catchments, Hauraki Plains and Coromandel Peninsula. Methods to improve natural water storage, sediment retention and coastal resilience may include water management strategies for peatlands, expanding riparian buffers, restoring dunes and estuarine margins, and creating “room for the river”.

Why this is a priority

- The Waikato region has lost over 90 per cent of its wetlands, removing natural flood storage and increasing sedimentation and carbon emissions.
- Nature-based solutions reduce flood peaks, buffer drought, slow run-off, protect against coastal inundation and promote ecosystem health – particularly in vulnerable areas like eastern Coromandel Peninsula and the Firth of Thames which are increasingly exposed to sea level rise, storm surge and marine heatwaves.
- These interventions also directly support regional flood protection objectives and can reduce long-term reliance on engineered solutions.
- High-quality nature-based solutions can be cost-effective, deliver co-benefits of biodiversity habitat and cultural values, and are endorsed in national adaptation plans and climate change policies.

4 Support species recovery and ecosystem restoration through invasive species management.

What this means

Coordinate WRC, DOC, iwi and hapū, territorial authorities and community groups to deliver region wide programmes that manage invasive species with measurable targets. This includes terrestrial invasive species (such as goats, deer, pigs, possums, feral and stray cats, mustelids and rats), freshwater invasive species, environmental weeds and marine biosecurity threats.

Align control methods, timing and monitoring across land tenures, improve pathway management (vessels and equipment) and incorporate new technologies (such as remote sensing, AI-assisted monitoring) to increase efficiency. Use both result and outcome monitoring to track biodiversity gains and guide decisions.

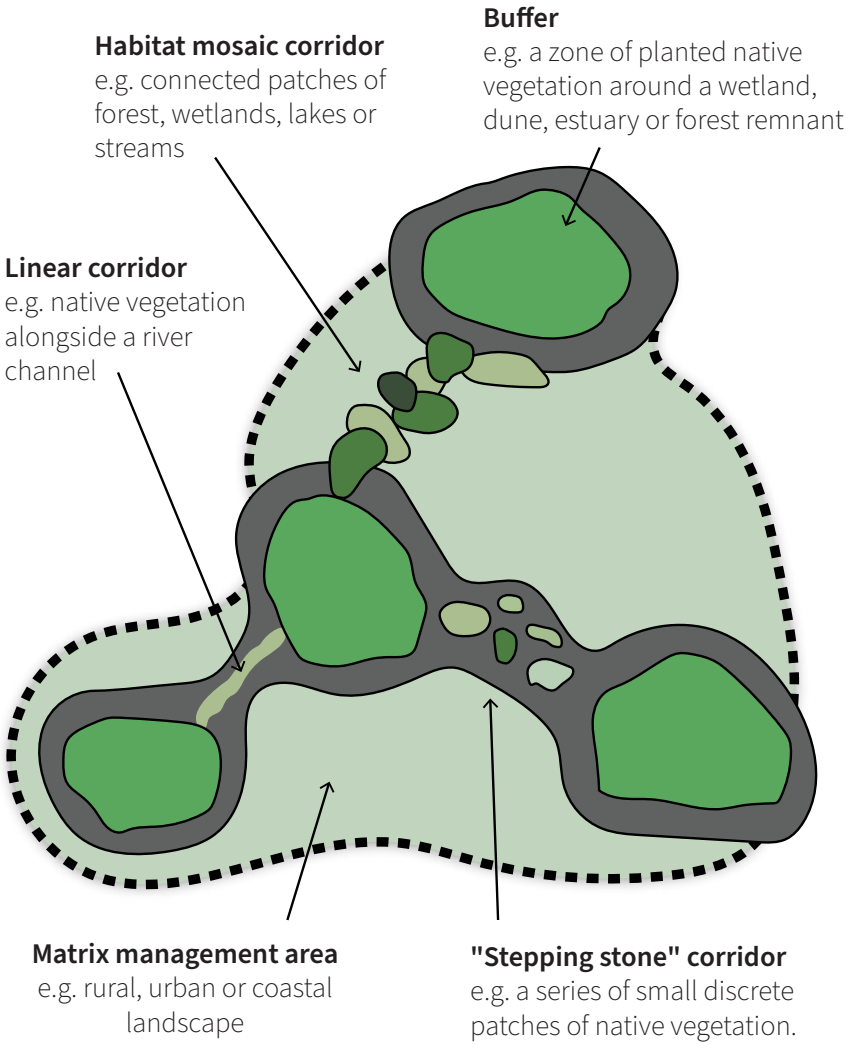
This strategic focus area will be delivered in alignment with the **Waikato Biosecurity Strategy**, the **Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan**, **Predator Free 2050** initiatives and other agency programmes, ensuring biodiversity priorities directly inform invasive species management and investment decisions.

Why this is a priority

- Stakeholders identified coordinated management of invasive species with measurable targets as the most cost-effective way to restore biodiversity at scale and reduce reinvasion.
- A warming climate is expanding pest ranges on land, in fresh water and at sea, increasing pressures on forests, wetlands, coastal ecosystems and other vulnerable biodiversity areas.
- Preventing the introduction and spread of new invasive species is typically more cost-effective than controlling established populations.
- Joined-up delivery, pathway management and innovative tools improve efficiency, reduce duplication, limit reinvasion risk and deliver better biodiversity outcomes in priority catchments and coastal waters.

Figure 5

Diagram of a terrestrial ecological network, with “stepping stones” and linear landscape corridors linking core areas





Kahikatea swamp forest, Yarndley's Native Bush Reserve

Back to top

Pou 2 Empowering landowners and communities

Supporting landowners and local communities with the knowledge, skills, resources and connections they need to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity.

Strategic focus areas

5 Maintain and strengthen regional biodiversity support networks for community groups, landowners, local iwi and hapū.

What this means

Scale up a coordinated support structure linking local hubs, iwi and hapū, community groups, landowners, coastal communities, councils and agencies to improve collaboration. This includes cutting duplication and making work visible, including cross-district and catchment to coast partnerships.

Why this is a priority

- Biodiversity restoration across the Waikato region relies on both agency-led programmes (including DOC and regional councils) and the efforts of communities, landowners, environmental groups, iwi and hapū. Continued recognition, collaboration and practical support are needed to maximise their collective impact.
- Many community groups and volunteer networks operate in isolation and are stretched for resources, missing opportunities to work together.
- Volunteer fatigue and organisational vulnerability threaten long-term biodiversity outcomes if not supported by stable partnerships, technical assistance and sustained funding.
- Community feedback has emphasised the need for better connection and collaboration to maximise collective impact.
- Regional coordination helps funding go further. By purchasing equipment in bulk, sharing resources and providing consistent reporting and accountability, hubs improve value for money and give funders confidence that investment is producing measurable outcomes.

6 Facilitate long-term investment and incentives for biodiversity restoration and management.

What this means

Create a coordinated regional funding framework that makes it easier for iwi and hapū, landowners, community groups and local hubs to access sustained support for biodiversity restoration. This includes exploring new and innovative funding tools such as philanthropic partnerships and biodiversity credits and aligning funding decisions with regional biodiversity priorities.

Why this is a priority

- Many groups face short-term, uncertain funding and high competition for grants.
- The Government's Jobs for Nature programme demonstrated that consistent, long-term investment unlocks action at scale, builds capacity and strengthens partnerships.
- The regional community wants coordinated, fair (transparent) and accessible funding, reduced administrative burden, and new funding tools such as private sector partnerships to broaden investment opportunities and reduce pressure on rates.
- Local communities often know their landscapes best and should be supported through practical assistance and technical advice.

Pou 2 Empowering landowners and communities

Strategic focus areas

7 Grow public awareness, participation and understanding about biodiversity across the region.

What this means

Deliver a region-wide, co-designed education and communications programme that celebrates local success, promotes pride in biodiversity restoration, uses engaging visual tools and clearly shows people how they can get involved. Tailored resources will support communities and groups such as schools, landowners and industry partners.

Why this is a priority

- Success stories and progress are not widely shared.
- Low awareness of biodiversity's value remains a major barrier.
- Communities want accessible maps, inspiring case studies and plain language content.
- People need clear information about roles, responsibilities and where to find support.

8 Build the skills, knowledge and support for locally led action.

What this means

Develop a region-wide programme that strengthens local leadership, skills and practical capability by providing training, tools and support for community leaders, landowners, community nurseries and pest control contractors. This includes working with education providers to grow a strong pipeline of skilled graduates, ensuring the region has the ecological, technical and cultural expertise needed for long-term restoration and kaitiaki roles.

Why this is a priority

- Communities are ready to lead but need support and clear pathways to act.
- Limited volunteer and governance capacity is holding back restoration.
- Strong demand exists for skills in nursery management, invasive species control and restoration methods.
- Shared training and monitoring improve data quality and support better decisions.
- Long-term workforce development, including tertiary training, will ensure appropriately skilled and experienced people continue to enter the field.

Pou 3 Partnering with tangata whenua

Working alongside tangata whenua to integrate mātauranga Māori and guide engagement, leadership and delivery in biodiversity management.

Strategic focus areas

9 Integrate iwi, hapū and whānau aspirations, placed-based knowledge, and mātauranga Māori into biodiversity planning and delivery.

What this means

Integrate iwi environmental management plans, iwi partnership agreements, mātauranga Māori and relevant legislation (including Te Ture Whaimana) across all pou and priority areas, and support community groups to build effective relationships with iwi and hapū.

Why this is a priority

- Iwi environmental management plans set clear biodiversity aspirations that should guide strategy implementation.
- Mātauranga Māori and ecological science provide complementary sources of knowledge that can strengthen biodiversity planning, monitoring and restoration outcomes.
- Current legislation and resource management reform require alignment with iwi-specific legislation, partnerships with Māori and better integration of Māori values in planning.
- Integrating iwi perspectives strengthens trust and legitimacy as described in the Waikato Biodiversity Accord principles (Appendix 3).

10 Strengthen investment and education pathways to support iwi, hapū and whānau-led biodiversity action.

What this means

Establish tailored incentives to enable Māori-led restoration projects, monitoring and governance on Māori land. Funding should recognise that iwi and hapū have different starting points, capacities, and circumstances, including factors associated with land tenure.

Why this is a priority

- In the Waikato region, 44 per cent of Māori freehold land contains indigenous vegetation, offering significant biodiversity restoration opportunities while respecting landowner aspirations.
- Many iwi face funding and capacity constraints that limit long-term, Māori-led action on their whenua.
- Feedback highlighted the need for practical incentives specifically for Māori land.
- Sustained, Māori-led biodiversity restoration needs long-term, multi-partner funding.

Pou 3 Partnering with tangata whenua

Strategic focus areas

11 Integrate mātauranga Māori into environmental monitoring and reporting processes.

What this means

Work with iwi and hapū to deliver Māori-led monitoring that integrates mātauranga Māori, tracks taonga species and ecosystem health, builds kaitiaki (guardian) capability, and follows agreed iwi and hapū data stewardship protocols.

Why this is a priority

- Iwi seek to monitor taonga species so that their values and priorities shape decisions.
- Those with long-standing relationships with whenua and wai often detect environmental changes early through close observation and experience.
- Cultural indicators are largely absent from current biodiversity monitoring.
- Youth/rangatahi training and joint monitoring strengthen kaitiakitanga and trust between partners.

12 Implement collaborative partnership models/projects for ecosystem restoration throughout the Waikato region.

What this means

Develop partnership agreements between agencies, community organisations and iwi and hapū to support restoration on Māori land, balancing biodiversity protection with landowner aspirations and recognising existing joint decision-making arrangements.

Why this is a priority

- Many iwi seek to progress biodiversity restoration in line with settlement commitments and cultural values but require practical support.
- Managing significant natural areas (SNAs) on Māori land is sensitive and benefits from partnership approaches.
- Tangata whenua have called for genuine, respectful collaboration that upholds cultural practices.
- Co-designed biodiversity restoration programmes enable shared planning, decisions and resource use.

Pou 3 Partnering with tangata whenua

Strategic focus areas

13 Restore culturally significant biodiversity sites to enhance continued customary practices.

What this means

Work with iwi and hapū to protect and restore the biodiversity of culturally significant sites and their taonga species and revitalise practices such as kai (food) gathering, rongoā (traditional healing) harvesting, rāhui (prohibition) and maramataka-based (lunar calendar) management.

Why this is a priority

- Restoring taonga species supports both ecological resilience and cultural wellbeing, enabling traditional kai to return to marae tables.
- Customary practices align care for the environment with natural cycles, support climate resilience and allow ecosystems to recover.
- Protecting culturally significant places uplifts mana (authority) and deepens Māori identity and connection to place.

Piako River green corridor planting



Back to top

Pou 4 Strengthening data, policy and investment

Building the data, information, policy and investment needed to prioritise the right places for biodiversity restoration, measure progress and support restoration across the Waikato region.

Strategic focus areas

14 Restore culturally significant biodiversity sites to enhance continued customary practices.

What this means

Work with territorial authorities and DOC to clarify roles and align biodiversity strategies, plans and policy approaches across the region. Support clear and consistent biodiversity protections, ecosystem health outcomes and restoration priorities through future planning and policy frameworks.

Why this is a priority

- Fragmented policies and differing council approaches to biodiversity management create confusion and reduce effectiveness.
- Local biodiversity strategies need regional backing to deliver action at the district level.
- Integrating biodiversity actions with climate, catchment and biosecurity planning enables more joined-up, place-based solutions that support healthier and more resilient ecosystems.
- Fit-for-purpose and regionally consistent plans and policies are important tools to help avoid ongoing biodiversity decline, providing greater certainty for communities, landowners and decision makers.

15 Develop and maintain a regional biodiversity mapping and spatial planning framework.

What this means

Ensure that regional spatial planning identifies and protects ecological corridors, climate refugia, indigenous biodiversity strongholds and key terrestrial-freshwater-coastal linkages and reflects these in zoning and land use controls. The objective becomes protecting ecological function across landscapes, not just individual sites.

Why this is a priority

- Regional spatial planning provides a unique opportunity to integrate land use, infrastructure and environmental outcomes in a single strategic framework, enabling biodiversity priorities to be identified and reflected in future planning and investment decisions.
- A spatial stocktake focuses effort on high impact places (such as corridors, refugia) rather than spreading resources too thinly.
- A corridor-based, landscape approach supports connectivity and resilience across terrestrial, fresh water and coastal ecosystems.
- Quantitative targets help focus restoration effort and guide long-term biodiversity management. They can be developed through local indigenous biodiversity strategies and embedded into regional spatial planning.

Pou 4 Strengthening data, policy and investment

Strategic focus areas

16 Prevent further biodiversity loss while supporting measurable biodiversity recovery and gain.

What this means

Protect indigenous biodiversity from further decline by developing policy that supports actions to maintain and enhance ecosystem extent, condition, connectivity and species populations across the region. This includes recognising the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity as a minimum (as captured in the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and the NPS-IB), while pursuing longer term restoration, species recovery and biodiversity gains through coordinated action, stewardship and investment.

Why this is a priority

- Biodiversity across the Waikato region has experienced significant historical loss and continues to face pressure from habitat fragmentation, invasive species, land use change and climate change.
- Preventing further loss is an essential foundation for biodiversity recovery, but maintaining the status quo alone will not reverse past declines.
- Long-term biodiversity gains will require restoration, enhancement and sustained investment alongside measures that avoid further degradation.
- A clear distinction between avoiding loss and achieving recovery helps provide direction without pre-empting future statutory policy, regulatory or planning approaches.

17 Develop and implement targeted incentives to reverse ongoing ecosystem degradation and drive biodiversity gains.

What this means

Practical, tailored incentives will encourage restoration and help address long-standing pressures on ecosystems (such as historical land use change, pests and habitat loss), and support landowners and communities who want to enhance biodiversity alongside productive uses. Tools may include biodiversity credits, covenant support, transferable development rights, streamlined consenting for restoration, technical support, private investment, philanthropic partnerships and recognition programmes for committed land stewards.

Why this is a priority

- Achieving biodiversity recovery at the scale required will depend on attracting and coordinating investment from public, private, philanthropic and community sources.
- Many priority biodiversity areas are on private or Māori land and need practical support.
- Many biodiversity areas need restoration and protection to secure their long-term sustainability.
- Incentives lower cost barriers, support voluntary action and encourage landowners to go beyond compliance.
- Tailored support helps address the specific challenges of Māori land.
- Rewarding active enhancement builds long-term stewardship and ecological resilience.

Pou 4 Strengthening data, policy and investment

Strategic focus areas

18 Build shared understanding and improve biodiversity knowledge through targeted research, consistent biodiversity monitoring and clear, accessible reporting.

What this means

Promote consistent monitoring methods and shared indicators (including mātauranga Māori and cultural measures) to track biodiversity across ecosystems and land tenures. Establish and maintain baseline information to help measure change over time. Provide clear, accessible reporting tools such as maps, dashboards and visual summaries so that people easily understand where biodiversity is located, how it is changing, and where action will have the greatest impact.

Why this is a priority

- Reliable baseline information and regular reporting are needed to demonstrate whether biodiversity outcomes are improving over time.
- Patchy and inconsistent monitoring limits the ability to assess trends or understand regional change. Scaling it up will give a clearer picture of ecosystem health and restoration effectiveness.
- People want simple, reliable information to guide action and avoid duplication.
- Cultural and social indicators ensure tangata whenua values and community perspectives inform biodiversity decisions.
- Clear, visible reporting supports transparency, collaboration and more effective, evidence-based decisions.


Kauri (Agathis australis)



Pīngao (Ficinia spiralis)

Section 3

Te whakatinanatanga me te aroturukitanga o te rautaki **Strategy implementation and monitoring**

Back to top

Te whakatinanatanga **Implementation**

Indigenous biodiversity in the Waikato region is in decline, and delay will lock in higher costs, greater risk, and fewer future choices. This strategy sets a regional direction towards stopping further biodiversity loss, reversing decline where it matters most, and supporting the recovery, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity across the region. It seeks to focus effort and investment where it can deliver the greatest benefit for nature and communities.

It prioritises rare and threatened ecosystems, landscape scale connections from mountains to sea, building capability and readiness, and actions that deliver multiple public benefits – including climate resilience, flood protection, water quality, cultural wellbeing and economic productivity.

Success depends on a number of shifts, including moving from:

- fragmented projects to coordinated, region wide action
- short-term funding to sustained, aligned investment
- data gaps and duplication to shared evidence, spatial planning and consistent limits.

Rather than assuming increased funding, the implementation of this strategy will identify where existing resources can be redirected, consolidated or better coordinated, clarify which focus areas need early investment and outline how partners can support delivery.



Mercury Islands tusked wētā (Motuweta isolata)
photo: theylooklikeus, iNaturalist

Back to top

Strategy to implementation pathway

This strategy defines outcomes, pou and strategic focus areas (Table 1). The implementation plan will identify targets, indicators and milestones, drawing on available baseline information and monitoring programmes, to help track progress towards the strategy outcomes and measure success over time.

Table 1

Strategy hierarchy overview

Level	Purpose	Key question	Key components
Vision	Long-term future state	What future condition do we seek?	Biodiversity in the Waikato region: thriving, connected, resilient
Outcomes	Measurable regional changes that realise the vision	What changes must occur by 2050?	Ecosystem connectivity; species and habitat recovery; Māori leadership; regional collaboration; people and nature prosper together
Pou	Strategic domains where effort must occur	Where must effort occur?	Ecosystem protection; landowners and communities; tangata whenua partnerships; data, policy and investment systems
Strategic focus areas	Priority directions within each pou	What must progress within each pou?	Habitat restoration; invasive species control; biodiversity support networks; funding frameworks; collaborative partnerships; spatial planning; restoration incentives
Examples of indicators	Evidence that outcomes are improving	Is the outcome improving?	Ecosystem health monitoring; pest tracking; biodiversity indicators; mātauranga Māori; regional reporting

Table 3 shows a strategy to implementation pathway, organised around the four pou. The purpose is to identify the strategic focus areas, possible lead organisations and potential indicators of success, and the expected focus for delivery over time. This pathway is designed to provide a clear line of sight from the strategy to the implementation plan and help guide the sequencing of effort, investment and collaboration.

Many strategic focus areas build on work that is already underway across the Waikato region. Rather than indicating when work will commence, the implementation status identifies the expected focus for delivery and investment over time. These categories reflect factors such as existing progress, urgency, reliance on multiple organisations, national priorities, complexity, and resourcing requirements (Table 2). Investment may involve improved coordination, reprioritisation of existing resources, new partnerships and future funding opportunities identified through the implementation plan.

Table 2

Strategy implementation status

Status categories	Explanation
Immediate priority	Areas requiring early focus through planning, coordination and delivery.
Sustain and strengthen	Existing programmes and activities that require continued effort, coordination and improvement.
Building capacity	Areas where capability, information, partnerships, funding mechanisms or systems need to be developed.
Longer-term development	Areas likely to mature over a longer timeframe or depend on broader system change.

Following release of the strategy, a collaborative implementation planning process will begin. The implementation plan is the primary delivery mechanism and will provide a more detailed level of analysis around feasibility, priorities, timeframes and budgets.

Table 3

Strategy to implementation pathway

Outcomes	Pou	Strategic focus area	Status	Responsibility (lead*)	Examples of potential indicators to measure progress
1. Ecosystems across the region flourish and expand, ki uta ki tai (mountains to sea). 2. Populations of indigenous/ taonga species, their habitats and ecologicial connections are resilient and improving. 3. Communities are informed, supported and motivated to restore and champion the Waikato region's biodiversity. 4. Māori leadership, mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga guide biodiversity restoration through enduring partnerships. 5. People and nature prosper together in the Waikato region.	**Pou 1** Protecting and restoring what matters	1. Prioritise restoration of the most threatened ecosystems while maintaining and enhancing biodiversity	Immediate priority	WRC in collaboration with other entities	• Ecosystem health indicators • Habitat extent and connectivity • Threatened species status • Taonga species trends • Pest population trends
		2. Landscape connectivity			
		3. Nature-based solutions	Building capacity	WRC* in collaboration with other entities	
		4. Coordinated control of invasive species	Sustain and strengthen	WRC*, DOC*, MPI	
	Pou 2 Empowering landowners and communities	5. Regional biodiversity networks/hubs	Sustain and strengthen	WRC* and DOC* in collaboration with other entities	• Restoration funding levels/ investment leveraged from partners • Participation in restoration programmes • Number of active community hubs • Restoration project coverage • Biodiversity awareness indicators • Trends in biodiversity condition and indicator species within community-led restoration areas
		6. Facilitate long-term investment	Build capacity	All entities	
		7. Grow public awareness and understanding	Sustain and strengthen		
		8. Capacity development	Build capacity	All entities including education providers	
	Pou 3 Partnering with tangata whenua	9. Integrate te ao Māori into planning	Sustain and strengthen	WRC* and iwi	• Mātauranga Māori monitoring indicators • Number of Māori-led restoration programmes • Cultural engagement indicators • Trends in taonga species
		10. Investment pathways for Māori-led restoration	Build capacity	WRC*, DOC* in collaboration with other entities	
		11. Mātauranga Māori	Build capacity	Iwi*, WRC , DOC	
		12. Partnership approaches	Immediate priority	Iwi*, WRC, DOC	
		13. Restore culturally significant sites	Build capacity	Iwi* in collaboration with other entities	
	Pou 4 Strengthening data, policy and investment	14. Policy alignment	Longer term development	WRC* and territorial authorities* in collaboration with DOC	• Policy alignment indicators across councils • Biodiversity datasets and monitoring coverage across ecosystems • Accessibility and use of regional biodiversity datasets • Consistency of biodiversity reporting
		15. Biodiversity in spatial planning	Build capacity	WRC*, DOC	
		16. Policies for maintenance and enhancement	Sustain and strengthen	WRC*	
		17. Restoration incentives	Build capacity	WRC*, DOC, territorial authorities and other entities	
		18. Accessible monitoring information	Immediate priority	WRC*, DOC*	

Oversight of implementation

To support collaboration and implementation of the strategy, the regional council will establish a core implementation group with membership that includes tangata whenua, territorial authorities, DOC, QEII National Trust and other entities and organisations as required. This group will share information, guide collective work programmes, identify implementation issues and maintain focus on long-term outcomes. The implementation process will seek to provide opportunities for participation by iwi across the region, recognising different aspirations, priorities and capacity.

Adding independent oversight of the biodiversity strategy keeps momentum focused on long-term biodiversity outcomes and builds public trust and accountability.

The regional council will maintain the overall responsibility and will prepare the implementation plan, coordinate monitoring and reporting and review progress against the strategy outcomes. This will be in collaboration with the core implementation group and others as required.



Long-tailed bat or pekapeka (Chalinolobus tuberculatus)

Implementation plan

The implementation plan for the regional biodiversity strategy will be a working document, updated regularly as actions evolve, new work is identified, or funding and timeframes change. It will translate the technical and procedural requirements of the NPS-IB into a practical, region-wide approach, ensuring that the strategy delivers on national biodiversity obligations while supporting local action.

The implementation plan will be developed soon after the final strategy is adopted. It will translate the outcomes, pou and strategic focus areas into a practical programme of work, setting out the actions to be taken, when they occur, how partners will contribute, and how progress will be monitored and reported. It will outline:

- **what is being done now** – current work under each strategic focus area
- **what will be done and when** – the specific actions planned each year or across multiple years
- **responsibilities** – who will lead and support each action
- **how each action contributes** – how the action supports the strategy outcomes
- **how tangata whenua will be involved** – including how the Pou 3 partnership, resourcing and cultural monitoring commitments will be implemented in practice (such as agreements and data stewardship arrangements)
- **how the actions will be funded** – including alignment with partner budgets and investment
- **what resources are needed** – staff, technical support, equipment, or funding required for delivery
- **any risks and how they will be managed**
- **how progress will be tracked** – any monitoring, reporting or evaluation needed
- **how to address emerging issues that contribute to biodiversity decline** – for example, climate change.

The initial implementation plan will be developed to cover out to 2030, focusing on setting the foundations needed to deliver the strategy's short-term priorities. This initial timeframe provides an opportunity to review the plan after significant local government and resource management reform processes and in line with council long-term planning cycles. A five-year review and implementation cycle will follow this initial phase. This will allow the strategy to accommodate our understanding of the best methods and approaches to meet the outcomes as new knowledge and tools become available. Annual reporting will track progress against strategy commitments and actions in the implementation plan.

Back to top

Monitoring and reporting

The NPS-IB requires a regional biodiversity monitoring programme to help us understand whether indigenous biodiversity is improving, what threats are most urgent, and whether strategy actions are working.

Table 3 shows some potential indicators that could be used to track progress. Existing state of the environment monitoring for the region (Figure 6) provides some baseline and trend information but gaps remain across ecosystems, species assemblages and emerging pressures, meaning important changes can go unnoticed. Developing a more comprehensive suite of indicators is one of the strategic focus areas in this strategy and this will be an important part of the implementation process.

Monitoring will align with existing reporting systems across different organisations and incorporate mātauranga Māori indicators through partnership with tangata whenua, recognising that cultural indicators may vary between iwi and hapū. Monitoring information will be provided by lead organisations and implementation partners and coordinated through the regional implementation group. Reporting on biodiversity indicators will occur at the end of each implementation cycle to allow that monitoring to inform the development of the next implementation plan.

The regional council will be responsible for preparing consolidated progress reports against the strategy outcomes, on behalf of the strategy partners. Progress reports will be reviewed by the implementation group and made publicly available. Reporting will track progress against the strategy outcomes, implementation plan actions and agreed indicators, helping to identify achievements, emerging issues and priorities for future action.



Environmental monitoring, Lake Patetonga

Back to top

Figure 6

Monitoring ecosystems across the Waikato region



Geothermal vegetation
- Extent and condition of geothermal habitat
- ~20 sites



Threatened species for conservation status
- Regional threat status assessments
- New programme



Freshwater wetlands
- Extent of freshwater wetlands
- Coverage of protected freshwater wetlands
- Assessed regionally



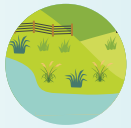
Coastal habitats
- Extent of coastal habitats
- Protected coastal areas
- Assessed regionally



Intertidal habitat mapping
- Extent of intertidal habitats
- 15 estuaries



Freshwater wetland condition index
- Assessing the ecological condition of freshwater wetlands
- ~20 sites



Riparian monitoring
- Regional riparian characteristics survey
- ~430 sites



Estuarine vegetation survey
- Extent of estuarine vegetation
- 20 estuaries



Threatened environment classification
- Monitoring and classifying threatened environments
- New programme



River water quality for ecological health
- ~110 sites



Tier 1 Monitoring
- Terrestrial ecosystem monitoring at key sites across the region
- ~200 sites



Indigenous vegetation
- Extent of indigenous vegetation on land
- Indigenous coverage of protected areas on land
- Forest fragmentation
- Assessed regionally



River biology
- Macroinvertebrate, aquatic plant and fish monitoring
- ~250 sites



Intertidal seagrass monitoring
- Monitoring the health and condition of seagrass beds
- 7 sites



Regional estuarine monitoring programme
- Sediment-dwelling animals and sediment characteristics
- ~20 sites



Other naturally uncommon ecosystems
- Monitoring the extent and condition of frost flats, karst, kahikatea fragments
- Assessed regionally

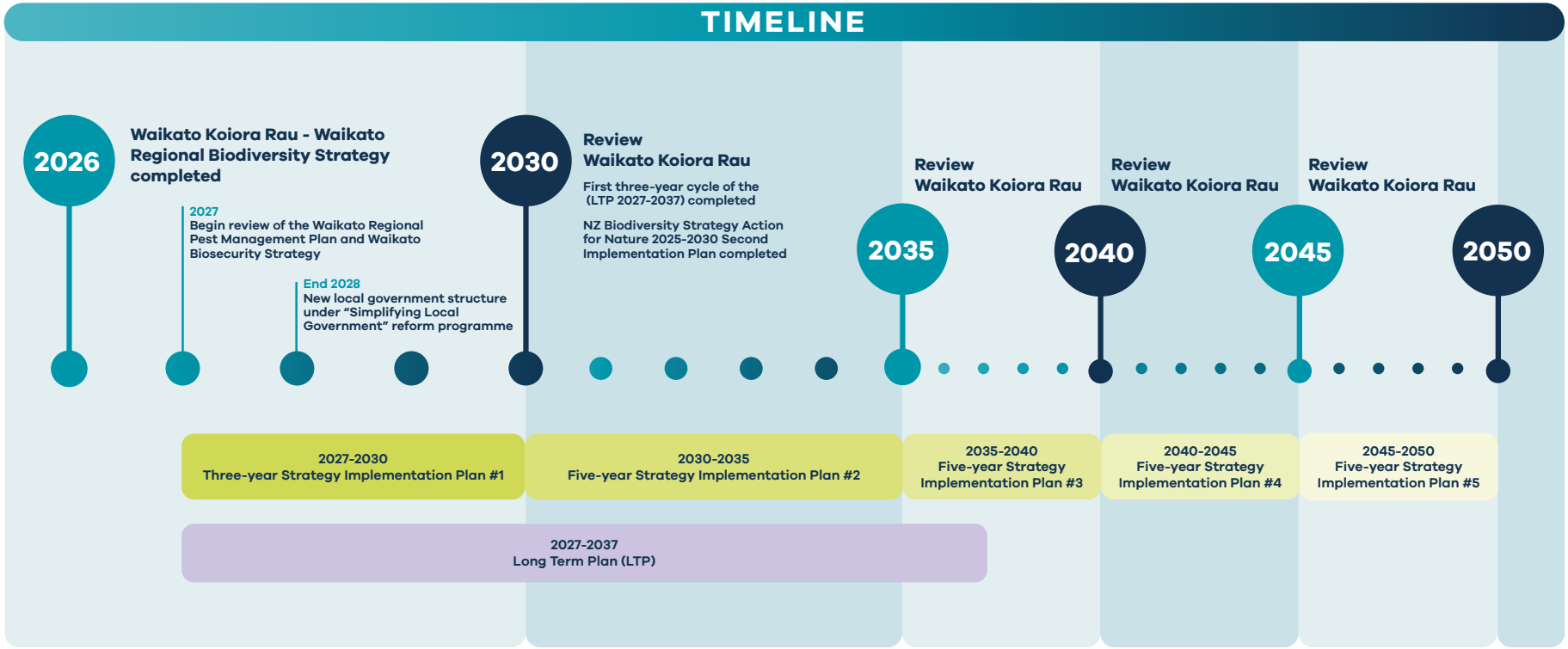
Review

The strategy will be formally reviewed every three to five years, aligned where possible with the review cycles of the Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan, Waikato Biosecurity Strategy, national biodiversity strategy, and the implementation plan(Figure 7).

The next formal strategy review is planned for 2030, followed by five-yearly reviews thereafter. Earlier reviews may be triggered if significant policy or system changes arise.

Figure 7

Regional biodiversity strategy review and implementation planning timeline



Back to top



Waiotapu Geothermal Field

Section 4

Ngā āpitihanga
Appendices

Back to top

Glossary

Term	Definition
At risk	A species that is not currently threatened, but could quickly become so if their decline continues, or if new threats arise (as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists).
Biodiversity	Biological diversity or the variability among living organisms from all sources including land, marine and freshwater ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species (including genetic diversity), between species and of ecosystems.
Biosecurity	The exclusion, eradication or management of pests and diseases that pose a risk to the economy, environment, human health or cultural/social values.
Capacity	The skills, knowledge, resources and organisational capability required to undertake biodiversity work.
Climate change	Long-term shifts in global or regional climate patterns (typically over decades or longer). May be due to natural factors or human activities.
Climate refugia	Areas that remain suitable for species, natural communities or ecosystems despite wider climate change impacts.
Ecosystem	A community of living organisms interacting with each other and with their physical environment.
Ecosystem health	The ability of an ecosystem to function naturally, support life, and remain resilient to stress or disturbance.
Ecosystem services	The benefits people obtain from nature, such as in nutrient cycling, soil development, clean water, climate regulation and cultural identity.
Endemic species	An indigenous species found only in Aotearoa New Zealand or within a particular locality or region.
Enhancement	The active, deliberate and ongoing improvement of condition, resilience and biodiversity value of ecosystems, species and genetic resources.
Fragmentation	The breaking up of habitat into smaller, isolated areas that results in a loss of ecological connectivity.
Habitat	The area or environment where an organism or ecological community lives or occurs naturally for some or all of its life cycle, or as part of its seasonal feeding or breeding pattern.
Hapū	Kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe.
Healthy ecosystem	An ecosystem that functions naturally, is resilient to stress and supports diverse species.
Indigenous	Native to Aotearoa New Zealand.
Indigenous biodiversity	The living organisms that occur naturally in New Zealand, and the ecological complexes of which they are part.

Term	Definition
Indigenous vegetation	Vascular and non-vascular plants that are native to the ecological district in which that area is located.
Iwi	Tribal group of Māori people descended from a common ancestor(s).
Kaitiaki	A person practising guardianship of ecosystems and natural resources.
Kaitiakitanga	Active protection and enhancement of the life force/mauri of ecosystems.
Ki uta ki tai	Managing the environment as an interconnected system – from mountains to sea.
Mahinga kai	Traditional food-gathering areas.
Maintaining indigenous biodiversity	Ensuring no overall reduction in the population size of indigenous species; the functioning, range, extent, connectivity or resilience of their habitats and ecosystems; and where necessary, the restoration and enhancement of ecosystems and habitats.
Mana	Authority and prestige; can be lost, diminished or restored.
Maramataka	The traditional Māori lunar calendar used to guide environmental rhythms and seasonal activities.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori customary knowledge, values, practices and world views developed through long term relationships with place.
Maunga	Mountain, peak.
Native species	Species found naturally in Aotearoa New Zealand, including migrant species visiting on a regular or irregular basis.
Nature	A holistic term that encompasses the living environment (te taiao) – that is, all living organisms and the ecological processes that sustain them. By this definition, people are a key part of nature. This strategy uses the term “biodiversity” to refer to biological diversity and “nature” when considering the wider processes, functions and connections of the natural environment, of which biodiversity is a part.
Nature-based solutions	Actions that restore, manage or protect ecosystems to address challenges such as climate impacts, flooding and erosion while simultaneously providing community wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.
Pest	Any living organism that causes significant harm to native biodiversity, the environment, human health or the economy.
Private land	Land owned by individuals or entities (not managed by the Department of Conservation or any other public body).
Public conservation land	Land administered by the Department of Conservation for whatever purpose.
Pou	A carved wooden post, pillar, or upright support used in traditional architecture.

Term	Definition
Rangatiratanga	Right to exercise authority, sovereignty, self-determination.
Resilience	The ability of an ecosystem to recover from and absorb disturbances, and its capacity to reorganise into similar ecosystems.
Restoration	Active work to improve or reinstate degraded ecosystems or habitats so that they regain their natural character, ecological processes, and cultural or visual qualities. Restoration may also include enhancement.
Rohe	Territory or region.
Taiao	The natural world.
Tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land.
Taonga	In the context of the strategy, taonga are plants and animals treasured by tangata whenua.
Te ao Māori	The Māori world; a Māori perspective/world view.
Threatened species	A species facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild and includes nationally critical, nationally endangered and nationally vulnerable species as identified in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists.
Wai	Water.
Wetland	Includes permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions.
Whakapapa	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent.
Whenua	Land.

Appendix 1: Organisations and agencies involved in the biodiversity system

Organisation	Roles and Responsibilities
Regional councils, including WRC	WRC is responsible for maintaining indigenous biodiversity across the region under the RMA 1991, which requires regional councils to establish, implement and review objectives, policies and methods for maintaining indigenous biological diversity. This includes managing the effects of land use on freshwater, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems, protecting significant native vegetation and habitats, and supporting pest management under the Biosecurity Act 1993. WRC also leads regional monitoring, catchment management, and policy development to ensure biodiversity is safeguarded across all land tenures – public, private and Māori. WRC's role is further guided by national direction, including the NPS-IB, which requires councils to identify and manage significant natural areas, work in partnership with tangata whenua, and maintain indigenous biodiversity through clear policies and monitoring.
Territorial authorities	Under the RMA, territorial authorities have the role of controlling the effects of the use, development and protection of land, including for the purpose of the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity. Territorial authorities (city and district councils) share significant responsibilities for biodiversity management under the RMA 1991. They are required to control the effects of land use and subdivision to maintain indigenous biodiversity, and to protect significant natural areas and significant habitats of indigenous fauna through their district plans. Under the NPS-IB, territorial authorities must identify and map SNAs and manage the effects of new activities on these areas, and update district plans to give effect to national and regional requirements. Territorial authorities also play a practical, on-the-ground role by managing biodiversity on council-owned land such as parks, reserves and road corridors, supporting local restoration groups, and aligning district-level biodiversity strategies with regional priorities.
Department of Conservation (DOC)	Responsible for conserving the natural and historic heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand on behalf of and for the benefit of present and future New Zealanders. DOC is funded and empowered to manage the public conservation estate, including on land and in marine protected areas. In the Waikato region, DOC owns or administers 347,053 hectares of protected terrestrial indigenous cover, representing 89 per cent of all protected natural land cover in the region. DOC also directly manages 800 hectares of marine reserve – while this is the primary "no-take" area owned/managed by DOC, the region has broader marine protection coverage across the east coast (Hauraki Gulf Marine Park) and west coast (West Coast North Island marine mammal sanctuary). DOC works with private landowners, councils and other agencies to manage biodiversity in these areas.
Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT)	A mega-ministry launched on 1 July 2026, responsible for advising the Government on policies and issues affecting cities, transport, housing, regional development and the environment, and for providing an integrated national environmental management system that balances infrastructure growth with environmental protection through cohesive laws, regulations and national direction.

Organisation	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)	Responsible for growing and protecting Aotearoa New Zealand by maximising export opportunities for the primary industries, improving sector productivity, increasing sustainable resource use and protecting the country from biological risk. Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) supports the planting of exotic and indigenous forests, sustainable forest management, programmes such as the Emissions Trading Scheme, and forestry grants. Fisheries New Zealand works to ensure that fisheries resources are managed to provide the greatest overall benefits to New Zealanders. Biosecurity New Zealand leads the biosecurity system, which includes our efforts to prevent pests and diseases from arriving and eradicating or managing those that do arrive or have been here for some time.
Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)	Responsible for land titles, topographical information, managing Crown property and a variety of other functions.
New Zealand Fish & Game Council (Fish & Game)	Established under the Conservation Act 1987, Fish & Game manages, maintains and enhances sports fishes and game birds along with their natural habitats in the interests of anglers and hunters.
Queen Elizabeth the II National Trust (QEII Trust)	The QEII Trust works with private landowners who wish to have some of or all their land legally protected. A covenant is registered on the title to the land, providing legal protection that binds the current and all subsequent landowners. The QEII Trust contributes to the establishment of the covenant and regularly monitors the land to ensure it is managed in accordance with the covenant conditions. On private land in the Waikato region, QEII covenants cover 15,234 hectares.
Waikato River Authority (WRA)	The WRA funds and guides projects that restore and protect the health of the Waikato River, such as wetland and riparian restoration, habitat enhancement, and initiatives that revive mahinga kai and taonga species.
Public Research Organisations (PRO)	There are four PROs in New Zealand: Earth Sciences New Zealand; Bioeconomy Science Institute; the New Zealand Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science; and the New Zealand Institute for Advanced Technology. Science New Zealand is the representative organisation. Together, the four PROs provide science-based solutions to environmental and economic challenges, bringing connection, innovation, and commercial focus to the science sector.

Appendix 2: Key legislation and policy documents for biodiversity management (as at August 2026)

	Legislation / Policy document	Summary
International	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), agreed at the 1992 Earth Summit, is the global treaty to conserve biodiversity, use it sustainably, and share the benefits of genetic resources fairly and equitably. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022) sets global goals and targets such as protecting 30 per cent of land and sea by 2030 and restoring nat
	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands	The Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Waikato region has three of the seven New Zealand sites included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (Whangamarino, Kopuatai Peat Dome, Firth of Thames).
National	Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020	New Zealand's national direction for addressing biodiversity decline by 2050. It sets long-term goals for protecting ecosystems, restoring degraded environments, strengthening Māori leadership in biodiversity management, and improving biosecurity. The strategy guides collaboration across central and local government, iwi/Māori, landowners and communities, and underscores the need for coordinated monitoring and action at regional and local levels.
	Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)	New Zealand's national direction for addressing biodiversity decline by 2050. It sets long-term goals for protecting ecosystems, restoring degraded environments, strengthening Māori leadership in biodiversity management, and improving biosecurity. The strategy guides collaboration across central and local government, iwi/Māori, landowners and communities, and underscores the need for coordinated monitoring and action at regional and local levels.
	National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (NPS-IB) (amended 2025)	The NPS-IB is a regulatory framework under the RMA designed to halt the decline of native flora and fauna and is the national direction for addressing biodiversity decline by 2050. It sets long-term goals for protecting ecosystems, restoring degraded environments, strengthening Māori leadership in biodiversity management and improving biosecurity.
	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020	The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 sets requirements for managing fresh water in a way that gives effect to **Te Mana o te Wai**, prioritising the health of waterbodies and freshwater ecosystems. Councils must protect wetlands and streams, improve degraded waterbodies, set environmental outcomes for values such as aquatic life, and manage fish passage barriers. It also requires comprehensive monitoring, annual reporting and the development of freshwater plans.
	Resource Management (NES for Freshwater) Regulations 2020	The NES-FW regulate activities that pose risks to the health of fresh water and freshwater ecosystems. A nationally consistent set of rules that cover wetland protection, fish passage, stream reclamation, intensive winter grazing, feedlots, agricultural intensification, and fertiliser use. Councils must administer consenting pathways, monitor compliance and update regional plans to align with the regulations. For WRC, this work is linked to Plan Change 1 in managing land use impacts on water quality.

	Legislation / Policy document	Summary
National	Marine Reserves Act 1971	Marine reserves provide the highest level of marine protection in New Zealand. This Act provides for the establishment of fully protected marine reserves where all extraction and disturbance are prohibited. Reserves safeguard entire marine ecosystems from the surface to the seafloor, allowing species and habitats to recover. They serve as reference areas for scientific research and long-term monitoring and contribute to wider marine biodiversity outcomes.
	Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Protection Act 2025	Strengthens the legislative framework for protecting the Hauraki Gulf, building on the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 and the Sea Change spatial plan. It supports integrated management across agencies, iwi and stakeholders; introduces enhanced marine protection tools; and enables implementation of an ecosystem-based fisheries plan. Measures include restricting bottom trawling to a few specific corridors and improving environmental outcomes for the Gulf.
	Biosecurity Act 1993	New Zealand's core legal framework for managing pests and diseases that threaten the environment, economy and human health. It provides regional councils with powers to detect, control and eradicate unwanted organisms and supports border biosecurity, surveillance and incursion response. For Waikato Regional Council, implementation occurs through the *Regional Pest Management Plan* and wider biosecurity programmes.
	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (amended 2025)	The NZCPS requires councils to protect coastal biodiversity, preserve natural character, manage coastal hazards and avoid adverse effects on significant coastal ecosystems. The NZCPS has strong legal force: regional policy statements and coastal plans must give effect to it. Its provisions guide how councils manage coastal development, activities and resource use.
	Planning Bill (introduced in 2025)	As part of the RMA reform programme, the Planning Bill replaces current regional and district plans with a single combined plan for each region, integrating spatial planning and land use planning. The purpose of the Planning Bill is to establish a framework for planning and regulating the use, development and enjoyment of land.
	Natural Environment Bill (introduced in 2025) (NE Bill)	The purpose of the NE Bill is to establish a framework for the use, protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a replacement to the RMA.
	Local Government Act 2002	This Act requires councils to prepare long term plans and annual plans to state a community's long-term goals and priorities and key performance targets. Key elements of long term and annual plans relating to biodiversity include funding local government activities through rates and charging development contributions.
	Predator Free 2050 strategy	Predator Free NZ Trust and DOC are the key players of the Predator Free strategy with a goal to eradicate rates, stoats, ferrets, weasels and possums in New Zealand by 2050. The movement brings together iwi and hapū, individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, central government, local government, community groups and landowners.

	Legislation / Policy document	Summary
National	Conservation Act 1987	Sets out DOC's core responsibilities for conserving natural and historic heritage, including species protection, freshwater ecosystem management, and the stewardship of public conservation land. DOC works in partnership with councils, iwi and communities to support biodiversity protection, restoration and advocacy in environmental decision making to protect taonga for future generations. The Act is currently undergoing reform to modernise conservation management and planning, and administration of conservation land.
	Wildlife Act 1953	Provides legal protection for most native wildlife and regulates game bird management. It specifies which species are protected, partially protected, or unprotected, and enables the creation of wildlife sanctuaries and refuges. The Act underpins protections for threatened species and guides how people may interact with wildlife. Under this Act, the Crown owns all wildlife, except unprotected species.
Regional	Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River	*Te Ture Whaimana* is the primary direction-setting document for the Waikato and Waipā rivers. It has the same effect as a national policy statements and, therefore, district and regional plans and regional policy statements must give effect to it. The direction provided in *Te Ture Whaimana* influences the management of freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity in the Waikato region.
	Waikato Regional Policy Statement (WRPS)	The WRPS is a document required under section 59 of the RMA. The WRPS provides region-wide objectives and policies for managing natural and physical resources. The ECO chapter sets priorities for protecting, maintaining, and enhancing indigenous biodiversity. District and regional plans must give effect to the WRPS, ensuring consistent delivery of biodiversity requirements across the region.
	Waikato Regional Coastal Plan (WRCP)	The WRCP contains policies, methods and rules relating to the management of the coastal environment in the Waikato region. The coastal plan recognises water quality, natural hazards and indigenous biodiversity whilst also managing the use of coastal resources (for example, dredging, sand extraction, aquaculture and the discharge of contaminants).
	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)	The *Waikato Biosecurity Strategy* is a non-statutory document that sets out WRC's blueprint for ensuring that the council operates and maintains a comprehensive biosecurity system within the next 10 years. It integrates the non-regulatory and regulatory biosecurity functions, including the WRPMP, and all other biosecurity activities such as monitoring and surveillance, research, incursion response and collaborative action.
	Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022 – 2032 (WRPMP)	A statutory plan under the Biosecurity Act identifying pests in the region and setting objectives, rules, and methods for their management. The WRPMP supports biodiversity by controlling harmful species, aligning regional pest management with neighbouring regions, and enabling compliance and enforcement where required.

Appendix 3: Waikato Biodiversity Accord principles

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Treaty settlements as a foundation

We acknowledge that tangata whenua are kaitiaki at place and that they wish to exercise their tino rangatiratanga (authority and self-determination) over their land. We respect their mana, kawa, tikanga, mātauranga and whakapapa.

The Accord honours the deep connection between tangata whenua and the natural world through whakapapa. It will ensure that mātauranga Māori informs our biodiversity vision while upholding tikanga (protocols) and addressing historical breaches of Māori land rights. We are guided by the principles of partnership, protection, participation and shared decision-making.

Hāpaitia te ara tika e pūmau ai te rangatiratanga mō ngā uri whakatipu
Foster the pathway of knowledge to strength, independence and growth for future generations

Collaboration and partnership

Shared responsibility, working together, and forming partnerships are essential for maintaining, restoring and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi
With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive

Integrated and coordinated approach

We will achieve a greater positive impact on habitat connectivity and ecological integrity by coordinating our collective efforts, resources, expertise, funding and actions (including working within resource and financial constraints) beyond administrative boundaries.

Mā te rongo ka mōhio; mā te mōhio ka mārama; mā te mārama ka mātau; mā te mātau ka ora
Through resonance comes cognisance; through cognisance comes understanding; through understanding comes knowledge; through knowledge comes life and wellbeing

Honesty, trust and accountability

Transparency, honesty, and accountability will be maintained in all biodiversity management actions and decisions. This includes respecting the interests and mandates of all signatories.

Tā te tika ka hua, tā te pono ka toha
From truth comes growth, from honesty comes generosity

Inclusiveness and participation

All signatories will be involved in and participate in delivering actions to foster a sense of collective responsibility for managing indigenous biodiversity.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini
My success is not the work of one, but the work of many

Long-term commitment and adaptability

We need a long-term, inter-generational and adaptable strategy that is regularly reviewed to acknowledge the need for sustained effort and flexibility when circumstances change

Ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata; ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tīna
Seek out distant horizons and cherish those you attain

Waikato
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

He taiao mauriora **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari **Strong economy**

ISSN 2230-4339 (Print)
ISSN 2230-4347 (Online)
November 2026 #7704

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401