

TE MANA O TE TAI AO AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Progress Report

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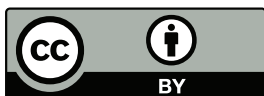
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Introduction

Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (ANZBS) 2020 outlines the overall strategic direction for biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand through to 2050.

Implementation of the strategy is intended to be dynamic, adapting to new information, tools and methods as they arise, with plans regularly updated and progress publicly reported. The ANZBS Implementation Plan, launched in April 2022, is a stocktake of actions under way or planned at that time by nine central government agencies (**table 1**), Ngā Whenua Rāhui and Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa that contribute to the ANZBS objectives.

The central government agencies, Ngā Whenua Rāhui and Te Uru Kahika assessed their progress in carrying out actions at the end of 2023/24 (**table 2**). This report summarises the status of all 204 actions. Regional councils and unitary authorities have reported on progress as a collective (of 16). These councils have varying levels of involvement in the actions attributed as a whole to ‘councils’, and not all councils are undertaking work listed in the ANZBS Implementation Plan.

Table 1. Central government agencies accountable for actions in the first ANZBS Implementation Plan

Department of Conservation	Environmental Protection Authority
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand
Ministry of Education	Ministry for Primary Industries
Ministry for the Environment	Te Puni Kōkiri
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	

Table 2. Definitions for self-assessment of progress in carrying out actions

Status	Definition
Completed	For completed actions
Started and on track for completion	For time-bound actions that are currently on track to be completed by the specified date in the plan
Started and unlikely to complete in the timeframe	For time-bound actions that will not be or have not been completed by the date specified in the plan
Ongoing and in a good state	For ongoing actions, and where agencies are happy with progress
Ongoing and requires further work	For ongoing actions, and where agencies believe improvement can be made in regard to progress
Cancelled or on hold	For actions that are not progressing at this time

Progress in carrying out actions

Overall progress

Agencies progressed delivery of the 204 actions, reporting 10% as complete, 72% in progress and 18% with a status of on hold, unlikely to complete in the time frame, or cancelled.

At the end of the 2023/24 year, the proportion of the 147 ongoing actions reported to be in a good state of progress is similar to the previous year (**figure 1**). Fewer actions were reported as 'ongoing – requires work', compared with the previous year, which corresponds to an increase in actions reported as 'on hold/cancelled'.

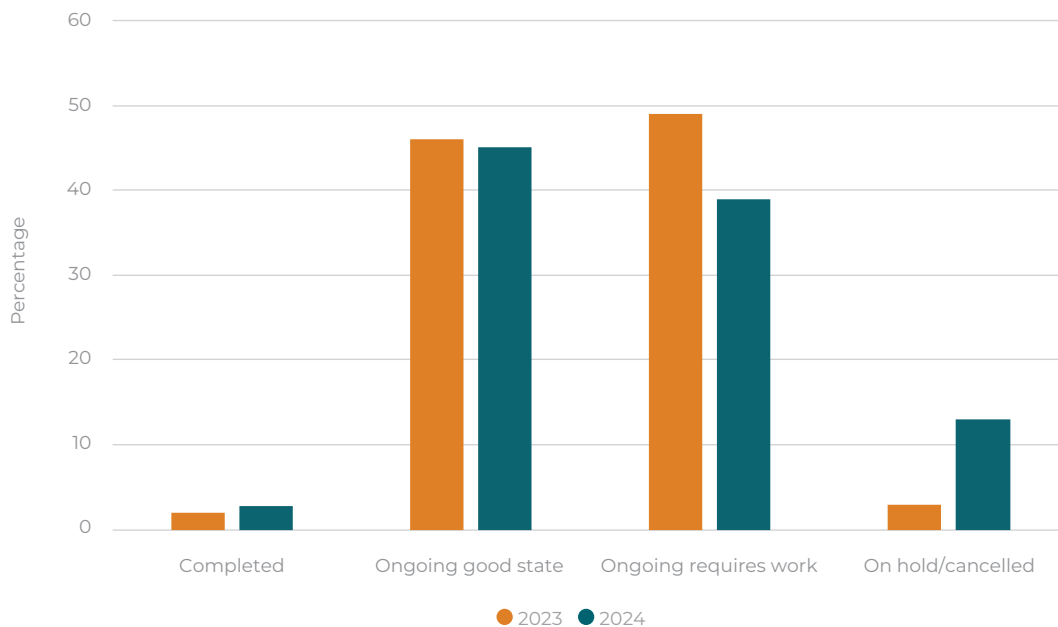


Figure 1. Ngā Whenua Rāhui, central government and Te Uru Kahika self-assessment of progress with actions defined as ongoing (n=147).

Agencies reported completion of five actions at the end of 2023/24, bringing the total to 16 for those actions that had a defined time frame (**figure 2**). Overall, just under half of the 57 time-bound actions were reported as on track for completion and there was no change in the proportion of actions 'unlikely to complete on time', or 'on hold/cancelled' from the previous year.

The appendix provides a list of actions completed over 2023/24.

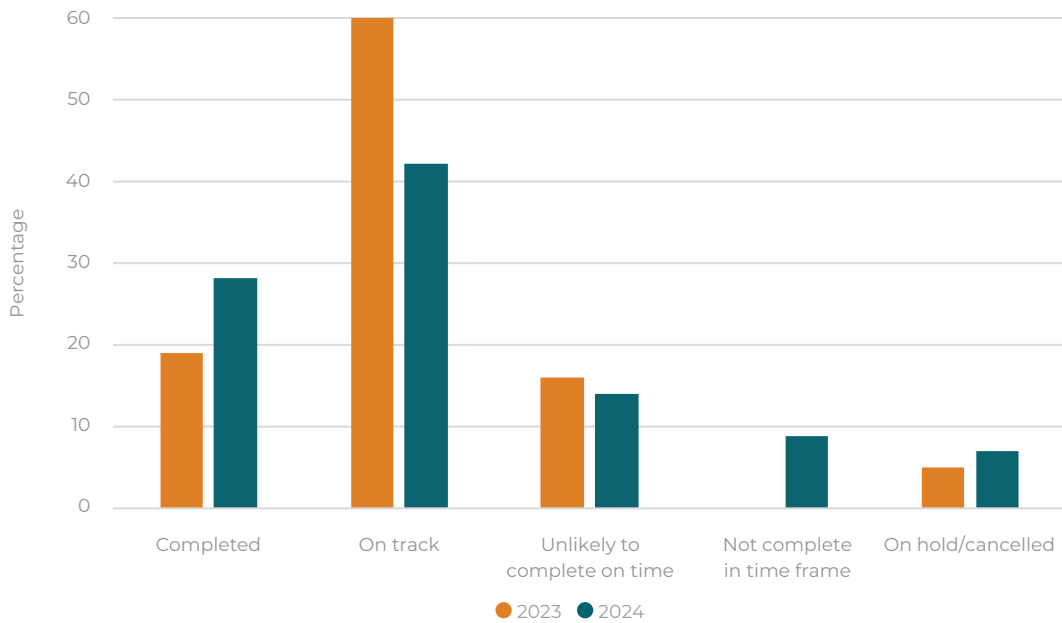


Figure 2. Ngā Whenua Rāhui, central government and Te Uru Kahika self-assessment of progress with **time-bound actions** (n=57). 'Not complete in time frame' is a new classification for this reporting period, as actions have continued beyond the proposed achievement date.

Progress of actions by objectives

The current actions are listed in the ANZBS Implementation Plan under one of the 13 objectives of the strategy. An indication of how actions are progressing by objective is provided using a traffic-light framework.

Actions that are:



complete, ongoing in a good state, or on track for completion are classified as 'green'



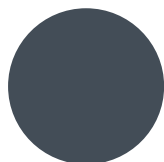
ongoing and requiring work are classified as 'orange'



cancelled, on hold, unlikely to complete or have not been completed in the timeframe are classified as 'red'.

The following representation of progress shows the percentage of actions for each traffic-light classification, with traffic lights scaled according to these percentage classes.

More than 60%



30%–59%

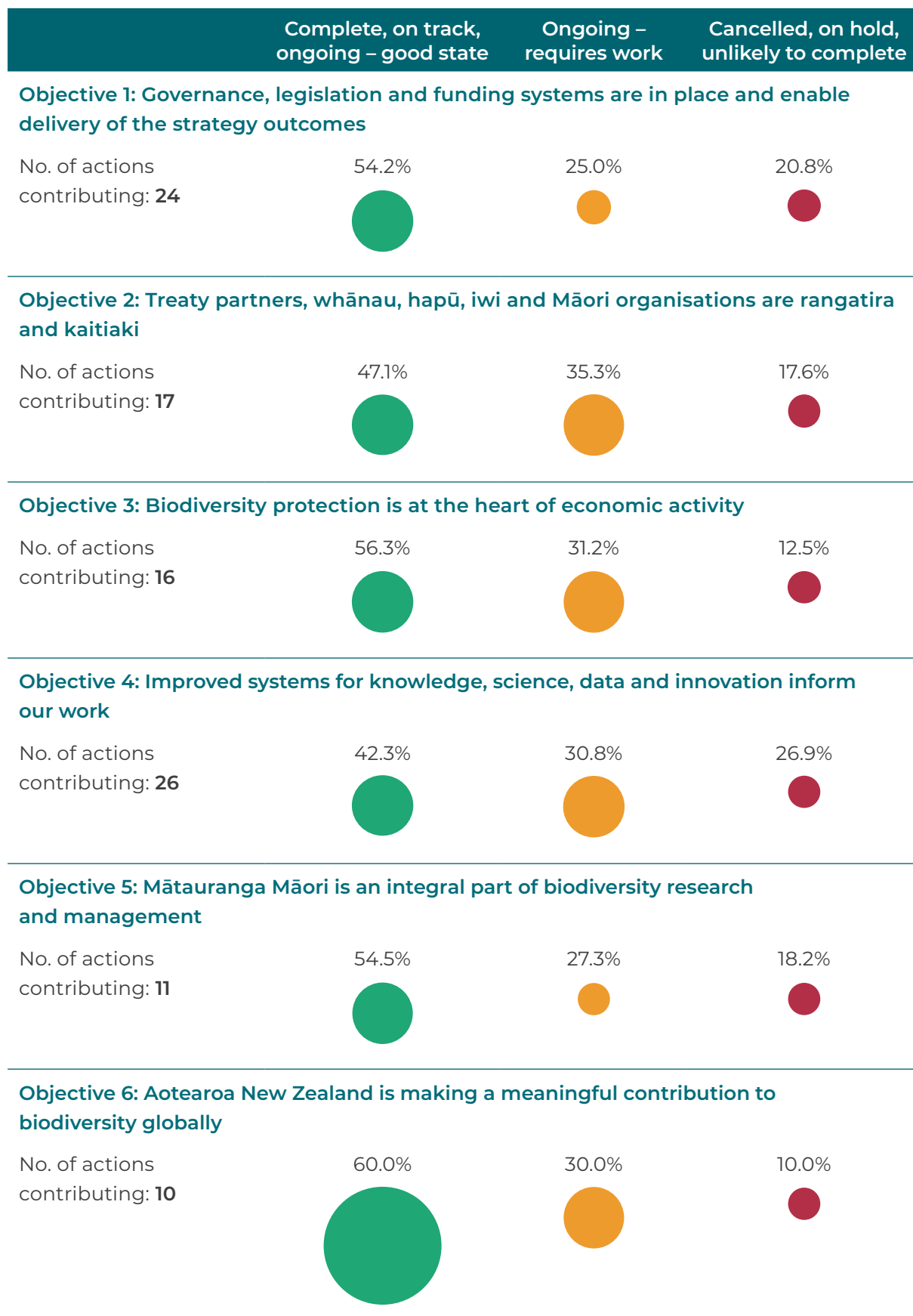


Less than 30%

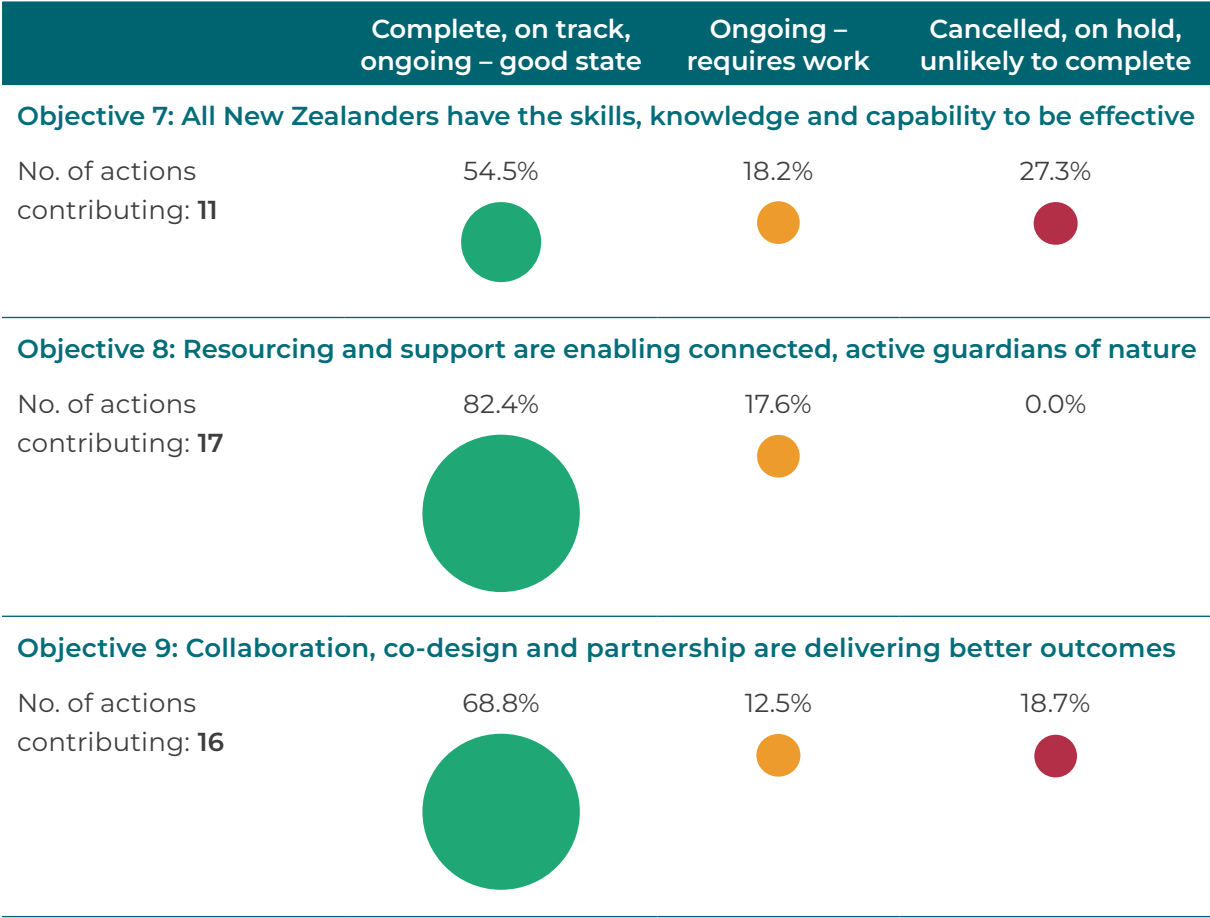


Overall, for 4 of the 13 objectives, 60% or more of the contributing actions are classified as green. An increase in the number of actions reported as cancelled, on hold or started and unlikely to complete in the timeframe this year has resulted in 10 of the 13 objectives having more than 10% of the contributing actions classified as red.

Tūāpapa – getting the system right



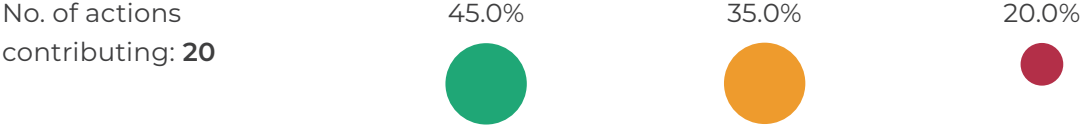
Whakahau – empowering action



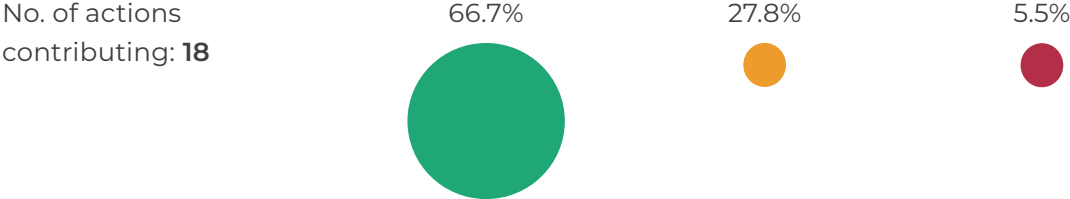
Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu – protecting and restoring

	Complete, on track, ongoing – good state	Ongoing – requires work	Cancelled, on hold, unlikely to complete
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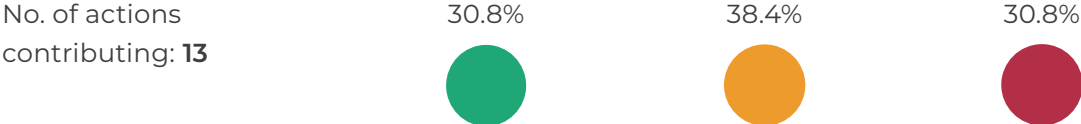
Objective 10: Ecosystems and species are protected, restored, resilient and connected from mountain tops to ocean depths



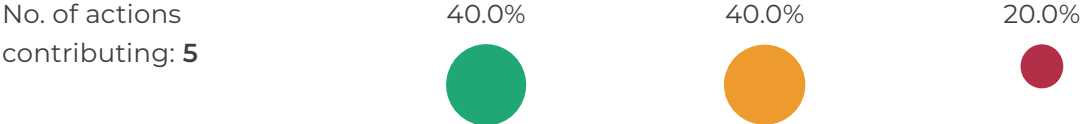
Objective 11: Biological threats and pressures are reduced through management



Objective 12: Natural resources are managed sustainably



Objective 13: Biodiversity provides nature-based solutions to climate change and is resilient to its effects



A snapshot of progress

The ANZBS Implementation Plan focuses on the immediate need to establish well-functioning systems and processes, and the priority initiatives that directly address the most pressing drivers of biodiversity loss. This snapshot describes the progress in delivering important implementation actions during 2023/24.

Tūāpapa – getting the system right

'Tūāpapa – getting the system right' is the first pillar of the ANZBS. This strategic priority area focuses on having the right systems, processes and enabling conditions in place to tackle the biodiversity crisis.

Governance, priorities and coordination

Over 2023/24, collaborative governance for the biodiversity system progressed with the establishment of the Biodiversity System Governance Group. This group comprises chief executives from central and regional government and leaders from across the biodiversity system. The Biodiversity System Governance Group provides a forum for agreeing shared priorities and driving change across the biodiversity system.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (Biosecurity) continued to develop, with biosecurity system participants, a list of strategic priority actions that will drive improved biosecurity system performance. Agency reporting also indicated that having clear priorities is driving their work, for example, new funding from both the Department of Conservation (DOC) Community Fund and Natural Heritage Fund was directed only to projects focused on rare and threatened ecosystems. Along with this, DOC's threatened species programme is prioritising actions for threatened species where efforts will seek to avoid irreversible loss.

Numerous examples can be found at a programme level of coordinated work programmes striving for collective effect, such as:

- The Tipu Mātoro National Wallaby Eradication programme (a partnership between central and local government, farmers, iwi and environmental groups), which delivered 490,000 hectares of surveillance and control operations over 2023/24.
- The National Wildling Conifer Management Programme (a partnership between central and local government, farming and forestry sectors, iwi and communities) received funding of \$7.051 million from the International Visitor Levy, which allowed an additional 143,900 hectares of control work to be undertaken in 2023/24.
- The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), DOC, Ministry of Health, Health New Zealand, regional councils, industry and iwi prepared New Zealand's response plan for highly pathogenic avian influenza. This sets out a coordinated response across sectors and all levels of government.

DOC recently established the National Wild Animals Coordination Group to coordinate and prioritise action for effective wild animal management across the sector. It represents various interests and organisations, including conservation, the hunting sector, primary industry groups, local government and research institutions.

Legislation and implementation

Policy proposals to amend the Biosecurity Act 1993 and amendments to the Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989 have been progressed and are with respective ministers for decision. The Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill was introduced in 2023 and reported back to the House with unanimous support from the Environment Select Committee in June 2024.

In August 2023, the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB) came into force. Regional councils have started revising or developing regional biodiversity strategies with mana whenua and communities. The Government has introduced a Bill to pause the NPSIB requirement for mapping of significant natural areas for three years. The pause period would allow for a review of how these areas should be identified, assessed and managed.

Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) continues to implement changes introduced by the Crown Pastoral Land (CPL) Reform Act 2022, publishing the first CPL Strategic Intentions Document and Performance Monitoring Framework during 2023/24. This sets out how LINZ will deliver on the vision to manage CPL in a way that maintains or enhances its inherent values and supports productive and sustainable pastoral farming.

Quality data, data processes and accessibility

Agencies are working on improving accessibility to data, quality of data and data management to support decision-making and measurement of outcomes. Monitoring frameworks and programmes have been implemented by MPI (Fisheries) and DOC. MPI has implemented a fisheries monitoring and indicators framework for the Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana. DOC is trialling an outcome framework for Predator Free 2050 through regional projects and a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of wild animal management operations.

Additionally, MPI (Fisheries) is progressing spatial management measures to consider the broader environmental effects of fishing on indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems. DOC completed a data standards framework for Predator Free 2050 during the year.

Completion of the Outcome Monitoring Framework for biodiversity through a cross-government group will support reporting on the ANZBS outcomes. This is a significant step towards an all of government approach to data systems, processes and consistency in data for decision-makers. Through the recently established Aotearoa Evidence and Monitoring Consortium, members (from central and local government) will seek to fill gaps in the monitoring and data needs from the Outcome Monitoring Framework.

He Awa Whiria

In the context of ANZBS, He Awa Whiria acknowledges both mātauranga Māori and other scientific disciplines and ways of seeing and understanding the world as equally valid, distinct and separate knowledge systems in biodiversity management. The National Science Challenges (NSCs) were completed in June 2024, many of which have progressed scientific understanding of biodiversity challenges and opportunities from both a mātauranga and Western science viewpoint.

- The Sustainable Seas NSC aimed to enhance the use of marine resources within environmental and biological constraints. This challenge has built capability in ecosystem-based management, the blue economy and Mana Moana.
- Ngā Rākau Taketake Strategic Science Investment platform advanced our understanding of kauri dieback and myrtle rust, integrating mātauranga Māori into the research. Additionally, this challenge fostered collaboration, community engagement and innovation in the management and protection of forests.
- The Land-based Ecosystems Strategic Science Investment fund platform supports critical capability and research activities related to land-based ecosystems. This fund has been extended for a further two years while the national science system is reformed, the outcome of which will continue to support the ANZBS.

Central and local government are driving improvements in the integration of mātauranga Māori to their toolbox for addressing pressures on biodiversity and creating space for its development and restoration. For example, support from LINZ of the Te Arawa Lakes Trust's Uwhi trial has shown how a mātauranga-based approach can suppress invasive lake weeds and improve habitat for native species. DOC is leading an enquiry into the ecological character change of one of its seven internationally significant wetlands, engaging with iwi to integrate mātauranga and consider the rights and interests of Māori in the reports.

Whakahau – empowering action

Whakahau – empowering action is the second pillar of the ANZBS. This strategic priority area focuses on enabling everyone to help protect and restore our biodiversity.

Capability and capacity

Medium- to long-term capacity and capability have been identified as a significant issue by the Regional Council BioManagers Special Interest Group, which has initiated a plan to address sector needs. Capability is an issue across the biodiversity system, and agencies are implementing and supporting bespoke capability-building programmes or integrating them into biodiversity management work programmes, such as:

- Heteri-A Nuku Kaitiaki, which provided training and employment outcomes in conservation leadership to 24 individuals this past financial year
- training workshops in ungulate control as part of scoping wild animal management operations.

The Jobs for Nature programme achieved significant tangible progress in building capacity and capability to tackle biodiversity loss. As at June 2024, funding allocated by DOC has enabled 906 people to complete both formal training, such as Growsafe, and structured conservation training through programmes such as conservation leaders, marine kaitiaki, te ara taiao and predator free apprenticeships and training.

Educating our tamariki to ensure future passion and capability to deliver on the aspirations of ANZBS is a focus for central and local government, either directly or through working with iwi and communities (e.g. EnviroSchools). The Ministry of Education continues to refresh the curriculum and provide learning resources that incorporate learning important

for respecting and caring for te taiao. The Environmental Protection Authority continued to deliver its environmental DNA initiative Wai Tuwhera o te Taiao – Open Waters Aotearoa. An external evaluation of the programme determined it to be an exemplar of Māori–Crown relationships.

Protecting indigenous biodiversity on Māori and private land

Landowners, farmers and rural communities understand the value of biodiversity and are actively working to enhance it on their land through formal protection. Applications from Māori land trusts for Ngā Whenua Rāhui funding were oversubscribed in 2023/24. This funding enables predator and browser management activities, fencing and planting of waterways, and preservation of mātauranga and tikanga.

Regional councils continued to directly provide support to Māori, iwi and hapū partners, landowners, community groups and partner organisations to deliver biodiversity projects at place. For example, Northland Regional Council, DOC and local hapū have launched a 2-year programme to eradicate sika deer from Russell Forest, the first step in a decade-long effort to eliminate all wild deer from Northland. This initiative aims to protect threatened species like the North Island brown kiwi and kauri by preserving their habitats.

Agencies are testing new approaches to increasing the protection of indigenous biodiversity and thriving, productive ecosystems across all land tenures. For example:

- In 2023, the Ministry for the Environment and DOC consulted on whether a biodiversity credit system could help to incentivise the protection and restoration of native wildlife in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- The Ministry for the Environment piloted four incentive projects. Two focused on trialling innovative approaches to biodiversity protection and restoration (testing aerial dropping of native seedballs and a herbicide smart-boom delivery system), and two trialled regional biodiversity coordinators (in Northland and Southland) to support communities to achieve biodiversity outcomes.

Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu – protecting and restoring

Tiaki me te Whakahaumanu – protecting and restoring is the third pillar of the ANZBS. This strategic priority area focuses on addressing the direct pressures that are causing a decline in biodiversity.

Progress in managing pressures on the land

Ground and aerial operations were undertaken across the country, for deer, goats and tahr during the year. Agencies delivering operations reported meeting or exceeding targets through additional funding resources. Success was also reported in predator management, with 750,000 hectares of predator control delivered through DOC's National Predator Control Programme, and post-operational monitoring showing positive results. DOC's National Eradication Team continued to develop new tools for effective stoat and feral cat eradication from islands. The team also improved pest-detection capability for immediate incursion response and achieved rat eradication from Mou Tapu and Ulva Islands.

DOC is now developing a smart weed alert tool that will allow earlier detection and response to new weeds. This project was initiated through the GovTech Accelerator programme. Additionally, DOC developed a commercial industry harvest incentivisation model for deer through the Wild Animals Management Programme. MPI implemented an enhanced avian influenza surveillance programme to detect highly pathogenic avian influenza as early as possible.

Regional councils continued to deliver pest management programmes through implementation of regional pest management plans and regional biosecurity strategies. In late 2023, a groundbreaking project involved releasing 10 'seeker' wallabies fitted with satellite GPS collars into sites in South Canterbury and Otago. This research aims to see if these 'spy' wallabies will lead hunters to other wallabies. The project is part of the Tipu Mātoro National Wallaby Eradication Programme.

Progress in managing pressures in the marine environment

Six marine reserves were approved by ministers in October 2023 and work is under way with Kāi Tahu to establish co-management of marine reserves and develop mātauranga Māori research plans. However, judicial review proceedings were filed in June 2024 seeking to overturn ministerial decisions on all six marine reserves.

The review of Te Angiangi Marine Reserve with Ngāti Kere is almost complete, and terms of reference to review Hikurangi Marine Reserve have been prepared with the Kaikōura Marine Guardians, DOC and MPI (Fisheries).

MPI and DOC are leading the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission review of conservation and management measures to mitigate the impact of fishing for highly migratory fish stocks on seabirds. Options for improving seabird bycatch mitigations were presented to the Commission's Scientific Committee.

Progress in managing pressures in freshwater environments

Regional councils progressed delivery of their regulatory responsibilities in freshwater environments, including implementation of national direction, alongside provision of support for freshwater restoration projects aimed at restoring degraded waterways and wetlands. For example, Environment Canterbury committed \$1.67 million to a range of protection and restoration projects, including implementation of the recently developed Upper Waimakariri River weed strategy and protecting threatened braided river bird habitat in the Hakatere/Ashburton River.

MPI (Biosecurity) led a coordinated response to the exotic freshwater clam (*Corbicula*) incursion in the Waikato region, with partners including river iwi, the Waikato River Authority, Waikato Regional Council, DOC and LINZ. At present, the clams are confined to the Waikato River catchment.

Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle removed the biological control agent (grass carp) for the invasive aquatic plant *Hydrilla verticillata*, found in several lakes across Hawke's Bay. A successful reintroduction of grass carp has put the project back on track.

The Living Water programme (DOC and Fonterra partnership) came to an end after 10 years, with 70 projects completed across 5 regions. Of Fonterra farms in the Living Water catchments, 98% have now implemented farm environment plans to mitigate the environmental risks arising from farming operations. MPI is providing support, through the Integrated Farm Planning Accelerator Fund, to farmers interested in creating integrated farm plans to manage different areas of their farms, including freshwater and biodiversity. Thirty-six projects have been funded to date.

Contributing to management of pressures beyond Aotearoa New Zealand's borders

Various agencies are contributing to numerous projects across the Pacific that benefit biodiversity and communities. Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand provided financial and technical support to:

- the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- nature-based solutions in the Pacific through the International Union for Conservation of Nature
- the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service
- the Global Fund for Coral Reefs
- Climate and Biodiversity Smart Marine Spatial Planning.

Next steps

This report summarises progress in carrying out ANZBS actions as at the end of 2023/24. These actions contribute to the goals and objectives of the ANZBS, alongside other work programmes not captured in the implementation plan. Progress on delivering these actions is intended to be assessed again at the end of 2024/25.

New Zealand's seventh national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be submitted in early 2026. It will draw on analysis from this ANZBS implementation progress report and that from 2023.

Agencies are working together to develop the next ANZBS Implementation Plan. This is intended to give direction on the most critical actions for central and local government to complete in partnership with others between now and 2030. Agencies will continue with their core work programmes, and their activities will be captured as a consolidated list in the next ANZBS Implementation Plan.

Appendix: Actions recorded as completed during 2023/24

Action	Reporting agency
Objective 1: Governance, legislation and funding systems are in place and enable delivery of the strategy outcomes	
Ensure a governance structure is in place that provides leadership, accountability, and inclusive and transparent decision making.	Department of Conservation
Review of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 to end tenure review and improve the way 1.2 million hectares of Crown pastoral land is administered and regulated.	Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand
Objective 4: Improved systems for knowledge, science, data and innovation inform our work	
Most councils use zonation analysis tools to identify priority biodiversity.	Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa
New Zealand’s Biological Heritage National Science Challenge, which aims to ‘Protect and manage New Zealand’s biodiversity, improve our biosecurity, and enhance our resilience to harmful organisms’ by conducting research under the impact pillars ‘Whakamana’, ‘Tiaki’ and ‘Whakahou’. Research funding is administered to a host organisation (Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research) and managed through an independent Governance Group, Director and Management Team representing the Challenge.	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
The Ngā Rākau Taketake Strategic Science Investment Fund platform, which was set up to enable kauri disease and myrtle rust related research that aligns with the priorities identified in the Kauri Dieback Science Plan and Myrtle Rust Science Plan (developed by MPI). This investment has a strong focus on te ao Māori and integrates mātauranga Māori into nearly all aspects of the research. The platform looks to empower communities to protect, manage and help restore taonga that are impacted by these biosecurity threats.	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

The Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, which aims to 'Enhance the utilisation of our marine resources within environmental and biological constraints'. Sustainable Seas is tackling this by developing an ecosystem-based management approach to marine resource use, working with industry and research sectors to ensure sustainability. Research funding is administered to a host organisation (NIWA) and managed through an independent Governance Group, Director and Management Team representing the Challenge.

Ministry of Business,
Innovation and
Employment

Objective 10: Ecosystems and species are protected, restored, resilient and connected from mountain tops to ocean depths

Review DOC's strategic approach towards the management and recovery of threatened species to ensure alignment with Te Mana o te Taiao – ANZBS.

Department of
Conservation