

Hon Chris Carter

Minister of Conservation



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Background Information

New Threatened Species List announced today

The total number of threatened species reported in the new list was 2788 (up by 416). There were net increases of 23 species listed in the Nationally Critical category, 32 species in Nationally Endangered and 10 species in Nationally Vulnerable, a reduction of 8 in the total listed as in Serious Decline, and increases of 23 in Gradual Decline, 72 in Sparse and 264 in Range Restricted. These are net changes: in each category, some species were added and others were removed; these changes include both movements between categories and new additions to the list.

An additional 984 taxa were newly listed as Data Deficient—that is, likely to be threatened, but with too little information to fit them into a threatened category.

This brings the total in this category to 3031.

The majority of the newly listed threatened and Data Deficient taxa were added as a result of new information about their status rather than a real sudden change in status. However, there were some genuine declines and recoveries.

Improvement in status:

The status of four species is considered to have genuinely improved sufficiently over the past 3 years to have resulted in a changed threat classification. These are:

BIRDS

- **Codfish Island fernbird** (*Bowdleria punctata caudata*): Nationally Critical to Range Restricted. Originally found in only one location, its population has recovered from temporary reductions caused by the kiore eradication on Codfish Island; birds are now much more abundant than before the rat eradication took place. A second, healthy population has also been established on another pest-free island using translocation techniques.
- **Crested grebe** (*Podiceps cristatus australis*): Nationally Critical to Nationally Endangered. Survey results show that this species has increased in numbers. Predator control work has been undertaken at two important breeding sites (around Lake Pearson and on a nesting island on Lake Clearwater), along with the management of willows to improve nesting sites.
- **Campbell mollymawk/New Zealand black-browed albatross** (*Thalassarche impavida*): Nationally Vulnerable to Range Restricted. This species' recovery from earlier decline has been confirmed. This recovery shows a close correlation with the reduction in fishing intensity around New Zealand in the mid-1980s.
- **Black petrel** (*Procellaria parkinsoni*): Gradual Decline to Range Restricted. Although formerly in decline, there is no current evidence that this continues. Populations are found on Hauturu/Little Barrier Island and Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island). The eradication of cats on Hauturu/Little Barrier Island substantially improved the security of this sector of the population.

Decline in status:

At the same time, 40 species are considered to have genuinely worsened in status sufficiently over the past 3 years to have resulted in a changed threat classification. These are:

BIRDS

- **Bounty Island shag** (*Leucocarbo ranfurlyi*): Range Restricted to Nationally Critical. This change in listing was due to increased concern about *Leucocarbo* shags in general. This species is a Bounty Island endemic and therefore is seldom surveyed. Furthermore, previous surveys used different methods so may not be directly comparable. However, these surveys did indicate a substantial decline in numbers prior to 1997.
- **Fiordland crested penguin** (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*): Gradual Decline to Nationally Endangered. There has been a massive historical decline in this species since European settlement, and this is assumed to be continuing at some sites. A reconsideration of the total population size prompted revision of the listing. In the early 1990s, a population survey found 2260 nests, giving a conservative population estimate of less than 5000 mature individuals.
- **Chatham Island shag** (*Leucocarbo onslowi*): Range Restricted to Nationally Endangered. The low count in 2003 may reflect a poor breeding season rather than population decline, but the expert panel took a precautionary approach.
- The data need confirmation by repeated counts.
- **Grey duck** (*Anas superciliosa superciliosa*): Serious Decline to Nationally Endangered. Continued hybridisation with introduced mallard ducks is causing continued severe population decline.
- **Black-fronted tern** (*Sterna albobriata*): Serious Decline to Nationally Endangered. This change in listing was due to both improved knowledge and continuing decline. The species is very susceptible to predation and disturbance. The Ashburton River/Hakatere population decreased from 750 birds in 1981 to 200 birds in 1990.
- **Pitt Island shag** (*Stictocarbo featherstoni*): Range Restricted to Nationally Vulnerable. A survey in 2003 revealed a 25% decline over 6 years.
- **Salvin's mollymawk** (*Thalassarche salivini*): Range Restricted to Nationally Vulnerable. This change in listing was due to a precautionary approach being taken by the expert panel and concern regarding high levels of bycatch. Population decline at the breeding site (Bounty Island) was recorded between 1978 and 1997, but the methods used in the counts may not be comparable.
- **South Island rifleman** (*Acanthisitta chloris chloris*): Not Threatened to Gradual Decline. This species has recently disappeared from Stewart Island/Rakiura, and anecdotally it also seems to have disappeared or be less conspicuous in some South Island lowland forest areas.
- **North Island rifleman** (*Acanthisitta chloris granti*): Not Threatened to Gradual Decline. This change was based on a general impression of declining conspicuousness.
- **Red-billed gull** (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*): Not Threatened to Gradual Decline. Population decline documented at the three largest colonies (Three Kings, Mokohinau and Kaikoura) has been sufficient to meet the Gradual Decline criteria.

BRYOPHYTES

- **Moss** (*Chorisodontium aciphyllum*): Range Restricted to Nationally Endangered. The Stockton population (one of four known populations) was extirpated by mining since the last listing (2001). Confined to Stockton and Denniston Plateaus.
- **Moss** (*Seligeria diminuta*): Range Restricted to Nationally Endangered. This Canterbury limestone endemic has been impacted by rock climbing at Castle Hill and by habitat modification associated with filming.

FRESHWATER FISH

- **Dune lakes galaxias** (*Galaxias* sp.): Serious Decline to Nationally Vulnerable. There are two surviving populations at Kai Iwi lakes. Extirpation of the third population has now been confirmed; it has not been seen for more than a decade. The species is vulnerable to further exotic fish introductions and to water quality deterioration.
- **Eldon's galaxias** (*Galaxias eldoni*): Gradual Decline to Nationally Vulnerable. This change is based on both real decline and new knowledge. This species is known from 12 streams: five small populations are vulnerable to water quality changes resulting from farming, four to forestry impacts, and one to invasion of the habitat by predatory trout; two populations are secure. Restoration and habitat protection is occurring on some streams.
- **Gollum galaxias** (*Galaxias gollumoides*): Not Threatened to Gradual Decline. This change results from more information being gathered and from an increase in threats to water quality related to land use. The species is widespread (29 known populations), but few populations are secure (Catlins and Stewart Island/Rakiura). The species is vulnerable to predation by trout.
- **Upland longjaw galaxias** (*Galaxias prognathus*): Sparse to Gradual Decline. Decline has been observed when revisiting known sites and potential threats to water quality have increased. It is known from three or four catchments only. Local vulnerability/declines may get worse if land use intensifies and impacts water quality following tenure review. This species was referred to previously as the longjaw galaxias.
- **"Southern" galaxias** (*Galaxias* "Southern sp."): Data Deficient to Gradual Decline. This change results from more information being gathered and from an increase in threats to water quality related to land use. Habitat degradation is causing decline in Southland. There are secure populations on Stewart Island/Rakiura. This southern taxon was previously thought to be part of the range of the flathead galaxias, but is now thought likely to be a distinct species.

REPTILES

- **Grand skink** (*Oligosoma grande*) and **Otago skink** (*Oligosoma otagense*): both Nationally Endangered to Nationally Critical. Population modelling based on a long-term mark-recapture study at the main stronghold indicated a severe threat of extinction within 10 years from 2003 for both species. Small peripheral populations are also disappearing.
- **Whitakers skink** (*Cyclodina whitakeri*): Range Restricted to Nationally Vulnerable. A very large historical decline can be inferred from the relict current distribution compared with the subfossil distribution. Monitoring confirms a continued decline at Pukerua Bay (the only mainland site). There are two secure and healthy populations on offshore islands. The total area occupied is only about 20 ha. There are also three translocated populations. The predicted decline on the mainland is likely to be offset by increases in translocated populations in the longer term, and captive management is under way.

- *Hoplodactylus* “Matapia Island”: Sparse to Gradual Decline. Previously thought to be confined to Matapia Island, this small gecko is now known to also occur on the mainland (Te Pahi area and Karikari Peninsula). Mainland decline has been inferred due to destruction of habitat during coastal development (particularly on Karikari Peninsula) and predator impacts.
- **Goldstripe gecko** (*Hoplodactylus chrysosireticus*): Sparse to Gradual Decline. Found on Mana Island and in flax near the coast in Taranaki. A reinterpretation of existing information led the expert panel to infer that the mainland population is declining, because the population recovery on Mana Island following mouse eradication demonstrates the species’ vulnerability to mammalian predation.
- **Harlequin gecko** (*Hoplodactylus rakiurae*): Sparse to Gradual Decline. Decline was inferred from recent observations of reduced rates of sightings at a few sites. There is extensive unsurveyed habitat, exact habitat preferences are unknown, and threats and trends are unknown. However, the species is likely to be extremely slow breeding and slow maturing, and is often found in the open on the ground both by day and night, making it vulnerable to predation by mammals (cats, rats and possums), which is severely impacting bird species at the same sites.
- **Ornate skink** (*Cyclodina ornata*): Not Threatened to Gradual Decline. Found in lowland areas throughout the North Island. Although there are numerous secure island populations, there is concern about the level of mainland decline. This species had been lost from known sites in Northland—one of its main strongholds. Decline on the mainland may be partly offset by population increases on islands following pest eradications. Taxonomy of the Three Kings population requires attention.

TERRESTRIAL INVERTEBRATES

- **Aphid** *Paradoxaphis aristoteliae* Sunde, 1987: Data Deficient to Nationally Critical. This aphid is known from only two sites. It has been repeatedly found at Dolamore Park, Gore, and was previously found at Lake Rotoroa, Nelson Lakes; however, new information indicates that it is no longer found at the latter site.
- **Snail** *Rhytida oconnori* Powell, 1946: Nationally Endangered to Nationally Critical. This large snail is confined to marble areas on Canaan around Harwoods Track and upper Gorge Creek. Recent surveys indicate approximately 80% decline in the last 4 years.
- **Spider** *Zealoctenus cardronaensis* Forster & Wilton, 1974: Data Deficient to Nationally Critical. This species is known from only one female specimen collected in 1969 in tussock at high altitudes at the southern end of Cardrona Valley. Recent search effort (1999 and 2000) in Cardrona Valley found no new specimens.
- **Forest ringlet butterfly** (*Dodonidia helmsii*): Gradual Decline to Serious Decline. Concerted survey effort indicates that this butterfly has disappeared from lowland sites, despite plentiful habitat. Very small remnant populations remain at high altitude. Vespulid wasp predation is a possible cause of the decline.
- **Moth** *Notoreas* “Wellington”: Gradual Decline to Serious Decline. This species is endemic to the south Wellington coast (seven sites between Titahi Bay, Wellington, and White Rock, eastern Wairarapa). It feeds only on the prostrate coastal plant *Pimelea* cf. *urvilleana*. The habitat of the plant and moth has been partly destroyed by a range of incursions including four-wheel-drive vehicles, off-road motorbikes and cattle trampling.
- **Moth** *Gingidiobora nebulosa* (Philpott, 1917): Sparse to Gradual Decline. The sole host plant (*Gingidia montana*) is suffering browse reduction, which must be impacting on the moth population.

- **Karikari tree weta** (*Hemideina thoracica* chromosomes race $2n = 23,24$): Range Restricted to Gradual Decline. Habitat of this weta on Karikari Peninsula has been destroyed during coastal development, and this threat is continuing.
- **Ground beetle** *Mecodema howitti* Castelnau, 1867: Range Restricted to Gradual Decline. This eastern Banks Peninsula endemic lives in forest remnants and old logs in pasture. These are being lost (rotting away or being cleared and burnt), causing decline.
- **Large land snail** *Powelliphanta* "Haast": Range Restricted to Gradual Decline. Good data indicate that high levels of thrush predation at Marks Range colonies are causing decline.

VASCULAR PLANTS

- *Cortaderia turbaria*: Nationally Endangered to Nationally Critical. The wild population now stands at 150 individuals. This reflects a drop of 60%–65% since 1999, and further losses are anticipated. The main threat comes from a root fungus—*Fusarium* wilt—which was first identified in the northern populations 1–2 years ago. It has now eliminated at least one natural population and is taking out another planted one. As yet, the fungus cannot be controlled once it has infected a plant, and it is probably the same fungus that has made cultivation of *C. turbaria* difficult. At present, it is unclear whether *Fusarium* is a recent arrival; it possibly arrived in cultivated *C. turbaria* stock and then spread from the nursery and/or in plantings. It is also unknown which wild populations are infected/clean. Imminent extinction is a strong possibility, but some conservation measures to halt the pathogen's spread are now in place.
- *Hebe societatis*: Range Restricted to Nationally Critical. This status change reflects the very small area occupied and very high risk rather than current decline. In 2002, all available alpine habitat on the mountain was surveyed. However, this species was not found anywhere other than at the initial discovery site of 2 years previously. The estimated area of occupancy is 100 m × 200 m and the estimated number of plants is c. 1500. No loss of plants is apparent, although the slopes nearby are being seriously damaged by pigs. Pigs could easily turn over the whole 2 ha of *Hebe* habitat.
- *Puccinellia walkeri* subsp. *chathamica*: Range Restricted to Nationally Critical. This species is found on the Chatham and Auckland Islands. We know its situation well on the Chatham Islands, where c. 900 plants cover 0.1 ha. Threats come from the unrestricted access of browsing animals to the beaches it occupies, competition from weeds, and habitat loss via erosion, etc. The habitat size places it into the Nationally Critical category. However, we do not know its exact status on the Auckland Islands. A botanist who knows the plant well recently spent a month visiting most accessible coastal portions of the Auckland Islands and saw very little of it.
- *Leptinella rotundata*: Gradual Decline to Nationally Vulnerable. One of the three remaining populations (at South Head) had virtually disappeared in April 2002 through the collapse of a sea cliff and the spread of grasses.
- *Tetrachondra hamiltonii*: Gradual Decline to Serious Decline. This species is under threat from weeds spreading into turf habitats throughout its range. It is found at one site in the North Island, and at scattered sites in the South Island and on Stewart Island/Rakiura (mainly western). This species, which is endemic to New Zealand, is one of only two species in the family.
- *Leucogenes tarahaoa*: Range Restricted to Serious Decline. This species is endemic to the Mount Peel Range near Geraldine. Its situation has deteriorated through the spread of browsing animals and habitat deterioration partly caused by the impact of trampers.
- *Jovellana sinclairii*: Range Restricted to Gradual Decline. This species is endemic to the central North Island—Hicks Bay and Taumarunui south to the Ruahine Range. It is found on fertile river flats in forested areas and is threatened by browsing animals (particularly goats),

competition from weeds and habitat fragmentation. Surveys in 2002 failed to find it at many of its former sites.

- Other species may have substantially improved or deteriorated in status without triggering the criteria to change category

Reference: Hitchmough, R.; Bull, L.; Cromarty, P. (comps) 2007: New Zealand Threat Classification System lists - 2005. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 194 p.

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