



Biodiversity

Tasman is home to plants, birds, and animals found nowhere else in the world

Biodiversity is short for biological diversity. It describes the variety and diversity of all life on land, in freshwater, and marine ecosystems.

Biodiversity has intrinsic value. It is also important for our economy, providing fertile soils, pollution control, and clean water. High social and cultural values are associated with biodiversity. Without it, we have a much-reduced quality of life.

Health check: Tasman's biodiversity

Tasman has a wide range of habitats, and as a result is rich in plant and animal life. Our district is home to several internationally and nationally significant estuaries and sand flats, recognised for the rich abundance of life they support.

However, like the rest of New Zealand, biodiversity in Tasman is declining. The loss of biodiversity is happening across the board, in our oceans and estuaries, rivers, forests, and our urban centres.



Over the past 50 years in Tasman we have lost takahe, orange-fronted and red-crowned parakeet, saddleback, the short-tailed bat, kakapo, kokako, and little-spotted kiwi. Other species such as kaka, kea, rock wren, blue duck and great-spotted kiwi are in decline except where there are predator control operations.

Habitat loss and degradation is a significant contributor to our declining biodiversity. The historical drainage of freshwater wetlands has resulted in the loss of sediment traps, ecosystems which are important as spawning areas for native fish, and as areas rich in food and nutrients for birds and plants. Changes in land-use for primary industries and some fishing practices have had ecological consequences. In urban places, houses and infrastructure have replaced natural landscapes, putting pressure on biodiversity.

Other key challenges include the extensive spraying of scrub on farms, intensive land use, non-indigenous pests and weeds, direct loss through weather events, and sea level rise.

Toward protection and restoration

There is hope for Tasman's biodiversity. Recently, awareness of the threat to and importance of our biodiversity has grown. In Tasman, more than half the land in our district is now protected for conservation purposes. In these places, ecosystems are relatively extensive and intact.

There are also several restoration programmes around the district involving Tasman District Council, iwi, communities, industries, and landowners. Together, they are replanting along waterways and improving connectivity between habitats and ecosystems from the mountains to the sea (ki uta ki tai).

Nationally, the Government has released the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and is developing a National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity. Locally, council has established a forum of passionate local experts to create a Bio Strategy for Tasman. This will provide strategic direction and action priorities for biodiversity and biosecurity initiatives within the district and help inform the new Aorere ki uta, Aorere ki tai - Tasman Environment Plan.

In 2018, we heard from our communities and staff about some of the actions they desired for the protection and restoration of our biodiversity. Their top wishes included for council to connect the dots from the mountains to sea, get rid of invasive pests, protect our special places, refocus freshwater monitoring from quantity and quality to ecosystem health, and reduce fine sediment in waterways.

Building on previous community feedback, through the process to create the new Tasman Environment Plan we want to hear local knowledge about special places in our district that might need additional management and/or protection. The Tasman Environment Plan is our opportunity to partner with iwi, landowners, industry, and our communities, and help deliver national and local level biodiversity strategies, to ensure thriving wildlife across Tasman's land, freshwater, and marine environments for generations to come.



Get involved

There's a lot of good work happening across the district to protect places with high biodiversity values. Many predator control and planting projects welcome new volunteers.

You can also make a difference by letting us know your views about biodiversity issues and opportunities in our district. Have your say online: www.environmentplan.tasman.govt.nz.

We will keep you informed as we progress the Aorere ki uta, Aorere ki tai - Tasman Environment Plan and provide regular opportunities for your input and feedback on the matters that are important to you.

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