

A revised Strategy for Birds New Zealand / Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa – 2015 to 2025

Preamble: In 2015 the *Ornithological Society of New Zealand / Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa*, popularly known as Birds New Zealand, celebrated its 75th anniversary. To help celebrate that point in the Society's history it was fitting to set out a 10-year strategy that will advance our **Purpose, Aim, Objectives** and the **primary activities** in order to achieve improved public understanding and wider acceptance of the Society in the community. The 10-year strategy builds on an earlier strategic plan adopted in 2005. The present strategy was adopted by the Society in 2015.

This revised strategy, amended in 2020/21 at the midpoint of the 10-year period provides a focus for the next five years, specifically from 2021 to 2025, that is appropriate to the Society's present circumstances.

1. Statement of Purpose: Encourage the study, use of knowledge and enjoyment of birds.

2. Vision: A vibrant and viable society having Charitable status under New Zealand law that is recognised as the leading authority on the birds of New Zealand/Aotearoa and supports the enjoyment of birds and contributes to their conservation through enhancing knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of them.

3. Values:

- Encouraging and assisting an enthusiastic amateur and professional membership that supports the study and enjoyment of birds.
- Applying rigorous scientific principles to all Birds New Zealand studies and projects.
- Safeguarding the welfare of birds in all Society activities.
- Demonstrating impartiality in the selection of studies and in the dissemination of information about birds.

4. Aim and Objectives of the Society:

Aim: To create a nation-wide study group comprising individual members or groups cooperating on different aspects of ornithology as suits their interests or circumstances and all contributing to greater ornithological knowledge and to the enjoyment of birds.

Objectives:

1. *Encourage, organise and promote* the study of birds and their habitat use particularly within the New Zealand region.
2. Foster and *support the wider knowledge and enjoyment* of birds generally.
3. *Promote the recording and wide circulation* of the results of bird studies and observations.
4. *Produce a journal* and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest.
5. Effect *co-operation and exchange of information* with other organisations having similar aims and objects.
6. Assist the *conservation and management of birds* by providing information from which sound management decisions can be derived.
7. Maintain a *library of ornithological literature* and other media for the use of members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds.
8. Promote the *archiving* of observations, studies and records of birds particularly in the New Zealand region.
9. *Carry out any other activity* which is capable of being conveniently carried out in connection with the above objects, or which directly or indirectly advances those objects or any of them.

5. Prominent strengths of the Society:

- An *independent, trusted, science-based organisation* having a reputation for impartiality and having amongst its members a diverse and comprehensive range of knowledge and experience in ornithology. Rigorous scientific standards are applied to all Society schemes and projects.
- The Society has a nation-wide network of *skilled, knowledgeable and experienced volunteer observers*.
- The Society has a *national and a regional basis in its organisation*, with 20 regions providing a local network to support the participation of members in bird studies and other activities.
- The Society is recognized and trusted by the wider community for *reliable identification of birds* and as an *authoritative source of knowledge about birds and their habitats* in New Zealand and the South Pacific region.
- The Society promotes both a *scientific and general interest* in birds and their habitats.
- The Society has a well-established record of *useful studies* on various aspects of ornithology.
- The Society has a *range of well-established and respected 'tools'* that support members for achieving its objectives, including, New Zealand Birds Online, New Zealand eBird, New Zealand Bird Atlas, seven national bird study schemes, 'Notornis', 'Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand', 'Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand', 'Birds New Zealand' magazine and it endorses the 'Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand'.
- The Society has its own financial resources and *enjoys financial independence*.

6. Major Goals:

- Increase awareness of the Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the Society through inspiring a scientific and a general interest in birds and their habitats.
- The Society will be recognised by the scientific community as the premier independent knowledge-base on ornithology in New Zealand and the South Pacific, in particular, for the reliable identification of birds.
- Increase membership of the Society with a focus on gaining younger members both professional and amateur.
- Invite Māori participation in the activities of the Society.
- Review all Society projects and schemes and introduce new programmes on topics of national and regional importance that will engage the interest and participation of members, especially where the conservation significance of bird species and their habitats are poorly known.
- Review and revise Memorandums of Understanding and enter into new alliances with relevant organisations where these will advance the Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the Society.
- Investigate the benefits of and if appropriate apply to become a Constituent Organisation of the Royal Society of New Zealand.
- Continue to employ an Executive Officer and other staff when appropriate.

7. Strategic Activities – 2015 to 2025:

Increase awareness of the Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the Society:

- Publish a succinct article in the Society's magazine (*Birds New Zealand*) outlining this revised Strategy, including the recent adoption of the popular name of *Birds New Zealand* and a revised logo. This article should be the basis of a Press Release to be circulated to the news media and also placed on the Society's website and Facebook Page.
- Continue to promote the use of a revised Society logo in *Birds New Zealand*, on the Society's website, on letterheads, business cards and other documents based on the easily recognisable 'Notornis' image.

- Utilise an active media strategy, especially the use of digital media, to increase community awareness of the Society, the Society's Purpose, Aim and Objectives and to promote the exchange of information about birds, including,
 - active use of the Society's website, the Society's popular magazine (*Birds New Zealand*), Twitter and Facebook pages.
 - further development of the functionality of the Society's website for the benefit of members, possibly including a link to a blog where members can contribute stories, articles, notes or photographs.
 - regular use of the print media, national and regional newspapers, magazines, radio and TV to promote broader community knowledge of birds and ornithology.
 - encouraging greater interest and appeal of the Society amongst all sectors of New Zealand society through various actions including the following,
 - circulation of an e-newsletter amongst school and university students and other young people,
 - publication of student profiles,
 - strengthened university liaison,
 - encouragement of student discussion groups at annual conferences,
 - documentation and publication of ornithological research undertaken in universities.
 - continue to encourage the preparation and wide distribution of regional newsletters.
- Advise the Society's primary collaborators including the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, museums, universities and like-minded societies of this revised Strategy aimed at achieving the Society's Aim and Objectives.

Encourage recognition of the Society by the scientific community as the premier independent knowledge-base on ornithology:

- Continue to publish original papers and short notes in *Notornis* by professional and amateur members on all aspects of field or laboratory studies on ornithology, reviews of ornithological literature, student research and reports of specialist ornithological events.
- The Society's scientific journal, *Notornis*, will not change in name, content or editorial style. Continue to apply high standards of scientific rigour, objectivity and independence in editorial matters.
- Council will investigate and report to the membership not later than the AGM in 2021 of the benefits of the Society becoming a Constituent Organisation of the Royal Society of New Zealand as a means of reinforcing our scientific links with science in New Zealand and to increase our profile in the New Zealand science community.
- Maintain and if appropriate enhance the role and scope of the Scientific Committee of the Society, including mentoring of non-professional members in conducting studies.
- Promote purposeful engagement with other organisations, including Government policymakers and Māori, in order to help achieve the Society's ambition of gaining wide acceptance as the premier knowledge-base on ornithology and more generally about birds in New Zealand.
- Review all Society projects and schemes with a view towards redefining objectives, field observation, data collection and data analysis procedures, and reporting. Not later than December 2023 publish a scholarly scientific paper in *Notornis* of the knowledge gained and lessons learned from each scheme, and also publish a popular article in *Birds New Zealand*.
- Encourage and facilitate members, both professional and amateur, and students at schools and universities to contribute towards current or proposed regional and national studies on birds and their habitats and the publication of results in *Notornis*.
- Encourage research on 'niche' topics in ornithology that are not being studied by others.

Promote a general interest in, enjoyment of, and knowledge of birds and their habitats:

- Increase membership of the Society with a focus on gaining younger members, both professional and amateur.
- Continue to consider ways and means of increasing the Society's membership, to develop a 'Welcome Pack' for issue to new members.
- Facilitate the delivery of video conferencing/lectures (using 'Zoom'-type technology) to regions, especially to members living in small regions, in order to strengthen their engagement and participation in learning about the results of new research on birds. Upon request, arrange for experienced members and/or Councillors to assist with or manage specific events, including giving talks, in regions that have limited ability to do this.
- Design and promote a range of field activities specifically for younger members that will provide memorable 'hands-on' practical experience and information about ornithology and birdwatching.
- Design and introduce new programmes on topics of national and regional importance that will engage the interest and participation of a wide cross-section of members, especially where the conservation significance of bird species and their habitats in New Zealand are poorly known.
- Engage with Māori, both nationally and regionally, to design and introduce programmes and activities that recognise and document customary knowledge (mātauranga Māori¹) about birds.
- Invite local iwi, hapū and whānau to attend and contribute to local Society meetings and annual conferences.
- Review and if thought necessary revise application forms and other Society documents to ensure that matters concerning mātauranga Māori are incorporated.
- Continue to encourage members to contribute written articles, photographs or art for publication in *Birds New Zealand* that are of popular interest and will help expand the knowledge and enjoyment of birds in the community.
- Encourage members to make greater use of the various tools that are available for studies and the enjoyment of birds and their habitats, especially 'New Zealand eBird', 'New Zealand Bird Atlas' and 'New Zealand Birds Online', and to train members in their use.
- Arrange interesting and vibrant annual conferences comprising a mix of scientific and general interests which will be known as the *New Zealand Bird Conference*. Promote *New Zealand Bird Conferences* to the news media.
[Note: Council will assume responsibility for arranging the core aspects of annual conferences, including registration and the scientific and workshop programmes, in order to relieve smaller regions of the burden of making all conference arrangements. Invite representatives of like-minded organisations to participate].
- Encourage Birds New Zealand regions to offer financial support to student members of the Society to attend the annual conferences, and to attend international ornithology conferences.
- Upon request, provide encouragement and technical advice to "The Young Birders of New Zealand" through arrangements that have been agreed and expressed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2019. Review and if necessary, revise the MOU not later than 1 June 2022.
- Continue to maintain a national library of published literature concerning ornithology and through the archiving of field and other records submitted by members and records acquired from other sources. Regularly circulate details of the library to members and encourage user interest in the library.

¹ The term mātauranga Māori literally means Māori knowledge and is closely aligned to the period of pre-European contact as it encompasses traditional concepts of knowledge that Māori ancestors brought with them to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Ref: www.aut.ac.nz/study/study-options/maori-and-indigenous-development/research/research-expertise/matauranga-maori

Relevance to conservation of birds and their habitats:

- To make the Society more relevant to the wider community, to encourage the assembly of submissions to national or local governments in New Zealand or to international agencies on issues concerning ornithology, including the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats, or to promote the increased awareness of birds by the wider community utilising science-based information collected by Society members.
[Note: Arrangements for making submissions should follow existing Manual procedures].
- Develop meaningful cooperative relationships with the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, the Department of Conservation and other organisations where appropriate. Review and as appropriate revise Memorandum of Understanding agreements with these organisations, or enter into new agreements if this approach will help achieve the Society's Aim and Objectives.
- Encourage regular collaboration between the regions of the Society and local branches of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand and other like-minded societies, through joint meetings, joint field trips and training activities in order to make birding activities more enjoyable and to increase dissemination of knowledge about birds.

Financial resources, independence and administration:

- Continue to secure adequate financial resources in order that the Society can maintain its financial independence.
- Council will review the publication of Notornis as a digital/online journal only ('no paper' version) not later than the AGM 2021.
[Note: One approach is for the Notornis index to be published in the magazine Birds New Zealand and for Regional Representatives or the Executive Officer to print and post copies of specific papers upon request if a member does not have their own printing facilities].
- Actively encourage contracts or other formal arrangements that are self-funding and can involve members for the sale of technical information about birds to national or local authorities, companies, consultants or other enquirers.
[Note: Arrangements for the sale of information, including pricing, should follow existing Manual procedures].
- Encourage regular commercial advertising in Birds New Zealand as a means of expanding communication about the Society in the wider community and for raising revenue.
- Continue to welcome donations and bequests to the Society to facilitate the implementation of national or specific regional or individual projects, including research.
- Continue to employ an executive officer to service the interests of Council, its specialist officers and committees and Regional Representatives to achieve smooth and effective administration of the Society's affairs.
- Consider the employment of other staff where this will help achieve the Society's Aim and Objectives.

Amendments to this Strategy:

- This Strategy may from time to time be reviewed and if necessary, amended by Council following consultation with members.

Amendments endorsed by Council on 29 November 2020, and further amended on 14 April 2021 following consultation with Regional Representatives and all members. This final version is dated 10 May 2021.