

Regional Pest Management Strategy Operational Plan Report

2013/2014



**MARLBOROUGH
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Cover Photos

Front cover: Flowering Chilean Needlegrass (*Nassella neesiana*) near Blind River.

Rear cover: Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) lurking within an urban garden in Blenheim.



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DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Regional Pest Management Strategy Operational Plan Report 2013/2014

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Executive Summary

The majority (86%) of performance measures have been achieved throughout the year. This is an increase on the previous year where 76% of measures were achieved.

Some key areas of improvement were the Total Control pest programme where all targets were achieved in 2013/2014 and work relating to the National Pest Plant Accord where again, all targets were achieved. Both of these areas were highlighted as required improvement out of the 2012/2013 report.

The Total Control pest programme has had an up and down year. For a number of species (e.g. Parrots Feather, African Feathergrass), plant densities are getting to near zero-levels which is an excellent achievement. However, other species are utilising their biological advantages to continue to persist despite best efforts. This year, there were 'flare-ups' of three species (Saffron thistle, Bathurst Burr and Eel Grass) resulting in a new sites and the return of another. This goes to show that for many of these species, even at such low densities, even eliminating everything found each season may not mean eradication is achievable.

The Containment Control pest programme remains the largest for Marlborough District Council staff due to the number of properties involved and continued facilitation of those landholders to ensure obligations are met. Overall, the level of control work carried out across remains high with a Notice of Direction only needing to be issued on 29 occasions when undertaking a total of 375 physical inspections.

Over the course of 2013/2014, major developments have occurred in the way Chilean Needlegrass is being managed in Marlborough. Not only is Council placing a greater emphasis on its programme, but the community is responding with a swell of support for the newly formed Chilean Needlegrass Action Group (CNGAG). There are still improvements to be made in the Council programme and these continue to be the focus for staff.

Biosecurity incursions – both into and within Marlborough – continue to become more apparent. A new arrival into Marlborough was in the marine space with yet another response led by Council after the discovery of Mediterranean fanworm on a vessel in Waikawa Bay. Fortunately, no further evidence of fanworm on fixed structures was found but there is an ever present risk of more introductions. New Chilean Needlegrass infestations continue to show up and can be a result of historical movements.

1. Introduction

The Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough (the Strategy) was made operative on 17 December 2012. It was the result of a review that spanned major amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993 in September 2012. Because of this, the review was carried out under transitional provisions within the Act which meant it was completed under the previous version of the legislation. This report will also retain the terminology and structure as per the existing Strategy until such a time it is reviewed under the new legislation.

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a framework for the efficient and effective management or eradication of pests and unwanted organisms so as to:

- (a) Minimise actual and potential adverse and unintended effects associated with the targeted pests; and
- (b) Maximise the effectiveness of individual pest management through a regionally co-ordinated approach.

The Strategy classifies a number of plants and animals in the region as pests, and specifies the management regime for each pest. For each pest the management programme sets out the effects of the pest to be addressed, the objective to be achieved and the main methods to achieve the objective, including rules relating to each pest.

1.1. Purpose of Operational Plan Report

The Operational Plan for 2013/14 was prepared in accordance with Section 100B of the Biosecurity Act 1993 and identifies and outlines the nature and scope of activities the Marlborough District Council intends to undertake in the implementation of its Regional Pest Management Strategy. This report outlines progress of the Operational Plan in the 2013/14 year and outlines key achievements/performance measures for the year.

1.2. Linkages

The Operational Plan (and subsequent Reports) is integrated, as far as possible, with the Marlborough District Council's Regional Policy Statement, Resource Management Plans and the Marlborough District Council Long Term Plan 2012-2022. The Long Term Plan provides an overview of all Marlborough District Council functions, including pest management and biosecurity activities.

This Operational Plan Report should also be read in conjunction with the Strategy.

2. Pest Management Programmes

2.1. Introduction

The Strategy classifies 33 plant and 4 animal species as pests because they cause, or are capable of causing, a significant negative impact on Marlborough's economy and/or environment. The Strategy separates individual pests into classifications, which require various levels of intervention.

The management regime for each pest applies to all or a specified part of the land within the district. In most situations the obligation lies with the land occupier to actually carry out the control of these pests. The only exception is for pests classified as 'Total Control' where either the Marlborough District Council or the Department of Conservation will implement control programmes directly.

Marlborough District Council is primarily responsible for the co-ordination of pest control programmes, ensuring occupiers comply with their obligations, carrying out surveillance to determine new infestations of pests and educating and advising land occupiers as to the most appropriate form of control for each pest.

2.2. Pest Plant Status

The table below summarises the district's pest plants and their designated status as classified in the Strategy.

Plant Pest Species	Status	Comments
African Feathergrass	Total Control	Marlborough District Council initiative. These pest plants are limited in their distribution but have the potential to severely affect either pastoral farming or cereal harvesting and/or environmental values in the district. Implementation of these programmes is delivered by the Marlborough District Council. The cost of control for these pest plants is shared between the Marlborough District Council (75%) and the land occupier (25%) where the infestation occurs.
Bathurst Bur		
Bur Daisy		
Saffron Thistle		
Giant Needlegrass		
Chinese Pennisetum		
Parrots Feather		
Boneseed	Total Control	Marlborough District Council/Department of Conservation joint initiative. These pest plants are limited in their distribution but have the potential to invade large areas of the district's indigenous forest, scrub or waterways. Implementation of these programmes is delivered by the Marlborough District Council/Department of Conservation. The cost of control for these pest plants is shared between the Department of Conservation and the Marlborough District Council.
Climbing Spindleberry		
Eel Grass		
Madeira Vine		
Moth Plant		
Spartina		
Evergreen Buckthorn		
Senegal Tea		
Cathedral Bells		

Plant Pest Species	Status	Comments
Nassella Tussock	Containment Control	Land occupiers are required to annually destroy all plants on their properties before they produce seed.
Chilean Needlegrass		Land occupiers are required to annually destroy plants on their properties before they produce seed.
White-Edged Nightshade		The degree of intervention required by land occupiers to manage these pest plants depends on the classification of each property. The control requirements range from the destruction of all plants on Fringe properties to a boundary control regime on Core properties.
Kangaroo Grass		
Broom and Gorse		Land occupiers are required to progressively control broom in the Upper Awatere and broom and gorse in the Upper Wairau River catchments. All land occupiers are required to destroy all broom and gorse plants within 10 metres of their property boundary if the adjacent property is free of these pest plants.
Ragwort		Land occupiers are required to destroy Ragwort plants within 50 metres of their property boundary if the adjacent property is free of this plant pest.
Nodding Thistle		Land occupiers are required to destroy Nodding Thistle plants within 100 metres of their property boundary if the adjacent property is free of this plant pest.
Contorta Pine		Land occupiers are required to destroy all plants with the exception of properties located directly adjacent to the Wye Reserve.
Reed Sweet Grass		The Marlborough District Council is responsible for controlling this pest plant.
Blue Morning Glory	Surveillance	The key objective for management of these pests is to monitor their distribution, their impacts and gain some understanding of the spread of these organisms over time.
Climbing Asparagus		
Egeria		
Cotton Thistle		
Kahili Ginger and Yellow Ginger		
Lagarosiphon		
Purple Loosestrife		



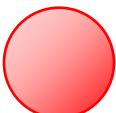

2.3. Animal Pest Status

The table below summarises the district's animal pests and their designated status as classified in the Strategy.



Animal Pest	Status	Comments
Rook	Total Control	Successful Rook control has been carried out in Marlborough and ongoing surveillance to monitor any re-establishment continues. No rookeries have re-established since 2005. If rooks were allowed to re-establish they are capable of causing significant damage to cereal crops and pasture. The Marlborough District Council will carry out any Rook control within its district with the aim of eradication.
Rabbits	Containment Control	High Rabbit populations affect soil and water quality have a detrimental impact on economic production and increase the risk of soil erosion. It is the Marlborough District Council's responsibility to ensure land occupiers comply with their obligation to control Rabbits. Marlborough District Council will continue to carry out Rabbit population trend monitoring and offer advice on control.
Possums		Possums cause extensive defoliation of native forest and predate on native fauna. At present in Marlborough there are no Possums on our offshore islands. A rule in the Strategy prohibits the release of Possums onto any offshore island in the Marlborough Sounds. Possums are vectors of bovine Tb and can cause large economic loss to the beef and dairy industry. Possums also cause extensive damage to young commercial forestry plants. Currently AHB undertake possum control.
Invasive Ants	Surveillance	Darwin Ants are in the Strategy as an invasive species that originates from Australia. Surveillance for these and other invasive ants will be carried out annually to determine their presence and/or distribution.


2.4. Performance Scoring System



To help guide readers through the ensuing performance measures, a traffic light system has been adopted to highlight those measures achieved, partially achieved or not achieved.

Symbol	Definition
	<p>Achieved. All actions have been taken with the measure achieved.</p>
	<p>Almost Achieved. Actions have been undertaken but the measure has not been fully achieved for reported reasons.</p>
	<p>Not Achieved. Actions have not be undertaken to the level required or not been undertaken at all and the measure has not been achieved.</p>
	<p>Not applicable. No actions were required to measure against the target.</p>

3. Total Control Pest Objectives and Performance Targets

Objective To eradicate Total Control pest plants from Marlborough.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Action Taken to Meet Targets
3.1 100% of active, High Priority Total Control Pest sites are controlled annually by 30 June. ⁽¹⁾	<p>100% of active, High Priority sites were visited in 2013/2014</p> <p>A total of 247 active, High Priority sites were targeted for control in the 2013/2014 year. 305 sites in total were controlled.</p> <p>Some active sites, specifically for Boneseed and Moth Plant, were not visited as there were not prioritised. Three such Boneseed sites were not inspected based on low plant densities in previous years. These sites were at Te Awaiti Bay, Oyster Bay (Tory Channel), and Ocean Bay, Port Underwood.</p> <p>93% of all active Moth plant sites were visited. Surveillance work carried out at an additional 22 sites, 8 of which resulted in new sites. These new sites have been registered/mapped and prioritised for follow-up work.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, implement and manage services required to carry out control operations. Carry out surveillance work for each of the 16 Total Control pest plants including Spartina grass to make up a minimum of 200 hours. Record and maintain pest plant abundance and distribution data to enable trend monitoring over the duration of the Strategy.
3.2 Carry out not less than 200 hours of surveillance and subsequent control for Total Control pest plant species annually by 30 June. ⁽¹⁾	<p>76.70 hours of surveillance work for Total Control pest plants were carried out in 2013/2014 resulting in 336 plants destroyed (not including Spartina). This is compared to 66.25 hours in 2012/2013 resulting in 34 plants destroyed (not including Spartina).</p> <p>1276 hours of control work was carried out in 2013/2014 for Spartina. Most of this time is attributed to searching (surveillance) rather than actually controlling (destroying) any plants found. A total of 21 stems/patches of Spartina were sprayed.</p>		

<p>3.3 A measured decline to <3000 pest plants (excluding Boneseed) destroyed annually over all sites by 30 June.</p>	<p>1788 pest plants were destroyed over all sites. 460 kilograms of Eel grass was also removed from Waterlea Creek.</p>		
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Objective To ensure Rooks do not establish in Marlborough.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Action taken to meet Targets
<p>3.4 Annually monitor all historical sites where Rooks have resided in the past (if those sites remain in existence) by 30 June.</p>	<p>Monitoring was carried out by way of contact with the two landholders where Rooks have resided in the last 10 years and surveillance was conducted at the site. Surveillance was also undertaken at historically-sighted areas.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an annual Rook survey and report on the presence of rooks at previous active sites. • Actively sought public and land occupier reports of sightings of Rooks.
<p>3.5 Undertake a public awareness campaign annually in Spring to facilitate sightings of Rooks.</p>	<p>Article in newspaper to foster awareness and report sightings. No reports of Rook activity were received by the Marlborough District Council.</p>		

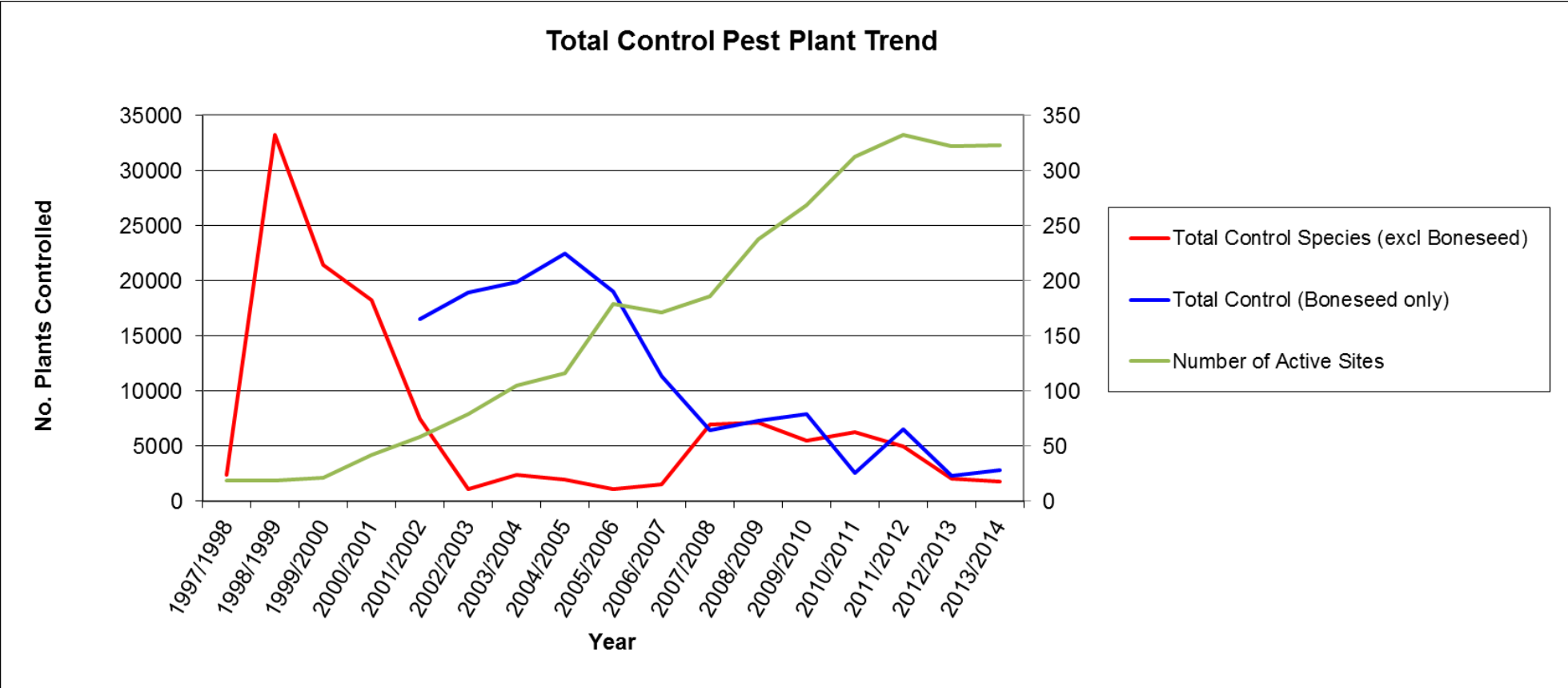


Figure 1: Total Control Pest Plants Trend

Note: Individual trends can be found in Appendix 1.

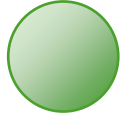
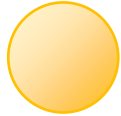



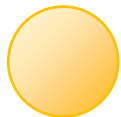

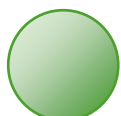

Left - Plate 1: *Saffron Thistle (Carthamus lanatus) plants re-emerging at an historical site near Maxwell Pass.*

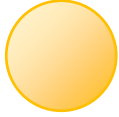
Above - Plate 2: *The underground tuber of the invasive Madeira vine* (Anredera cordifolia) removed by biosecurity staff when undertaking control.*

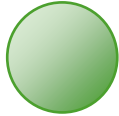

**Can also be known as Mignonette vine.*




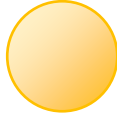
4. Containment Control Pest Objectives and Performance Targets

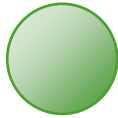
Objective			
To prevent any increase in the distribution and density of pest plants and reduce infestation levels where possible.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Action Taken to Meet Target
4.1 Annually prepare and distribute pest plant control programmes to land occupiers, as required, annually by the deadline set for the relevant containment pest species.	*Note: The 12 month period for Nassella Tussock data commences in the previous financial year on 1 March 2013. 500 control programmes were issued to land occupiers with Containment Control pest plants.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually prepare control programmes for all land occupiers where an active infestation of a pest plant occurs. Prioritise pest plants for inspection and carry out inspections or verify compliance.
4.2 Annually inspect a combined minimum of 85% of Nassella Tussock, Kangaroo Grass and White-edged Nightshade sites to confirm the issued control programme has been completed to standard. ⁽¹⁾	A total of 398 control programmes were issued for the containment pest plants Nassella Tussock, Kangaroo Grass and White-edged Nightshade. 316 of the 398 or 79.4% of properties issued with a control programme were inspected to confirm completion to standard.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake the strategic management of pests on some sites classified at Fringe.
4.3 An annual inspection is made with 100% of Chilean Needlegrass Fringe sites to inspect for compliance, undertake education/assistance or undertake control activities.	A total of 118 sites are classified as Fringe for Chilean Needlegrass. 100 sites (85%) had an inspection by Council staff or contractors. 52 sites were issued with a Control Programme with 38 out of 52 (73%) properties were inspected to determine compliance or given education. No Notices of Direction were issued. 66 sites are strategically managed by Council with 62 of these inspected (94%) to undertake control activities.		

<p>4.4 Annual contact is made with 100% of Chilean Needlegrass Core sites to either inspect for compliance or undertake education/assistance activities.</p>	<p>27 Core sites were issued with a Control Programme. 26 out of 27 sites (96%) were inspected for compliance or given education. 2 Notice of Directions were given.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with those landholders with a 'Core' CNG property to ensure compliance with boundary control rules and foster further best practise management.
<p>4.5 < 40 land occupiers issued with notices of direction due to non-compliance with Strategy rules within the 12 month period to 30 June.</p>	<p>29 land occupiers were issued with a Notice of Direction.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out enforcement action where required to ensure that occupiers meet their obligations to control pest plants.
<p>4.6 Annually undertake not less than 200 hours of Containment Control pest plant surveillance by 30 June. ⁽¹⁾</p>	<p>272.85 hours of surveillance work was carried out for Containment Control pest plants. Out of that total, 149.55 hours were spent on Chilean Needlegrass surveillance covering 81 properties. Chilean Needlegrass was found and destroyed on 44 of those properties.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise pest plants for inspection and carry out surveillance. • Any spread of pest plants to be recorded by GPS or field map notation and captured on the Marlborough District Council GIS for later mapping and area calculation.
<p>4.7 Annually complete all Reed Sweet Grass control programmes by 30 June.</p>	<p>All Reed Sweet Grass control operations were completed. Gibson Creek, Roberts, Pukaka, and Marukoko Drains were targeted twice to control any re-growth before autumn frosts. A new site was found on the Northbank of the Wairau and sprayed out by handgun. The d'Urville Island site was also targeted, low numbers of plants were found and spot sprayed. d'Urville Island will only require biannual work in future.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to progress the Reed Sweet Grass control programme on d'Urville Island as well as those sites on the mainland.

<p>4.8 Annually complete planned control operations for <i>Pinus Contorta</i> by 30 June.</p>	<p>A plan was established early in 2013/14 to undertake a single operation to control low density <i>Pinus contorta</i> within the Acheron catchment which has spread from the Branch/Leatham Containment Area.</p> <p>In an attempt to gain efficiencies through joining with the Molesworth operations, the timing was pushed to May/June 2014. As a result of poor weather conditions, the operation continued to get pushed until a decision was made to hold off until after Winter.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and target specific areas of control where <i>Pinus contorta</i> has spread from the containment area.
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<p>Objective To minimise the impacts that feral rabbits have on pasture production, crops, forestry plantations and soil conservation values in Marlborough by maintaining feral pest rabbit populations at levels at or below the maximum allowable level (MAL) identified for the two sub-regions, the 'Upper Awatere/Clarence' and the 'Remainder of the area within the District'.</p>			
<p>Performance Targets</p>	<p>Reporting</p>	<p>Performance</p>	<p>Action Taken to Meet Target</p>
<p>4.9 Annually create a schedule of 'high-risk' properties requiring inspection by 31 January each year.</p>	<p>A schedule of high risk properties was created on 20 January 2014.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a geographical representative sample of properties deemed 'high risk' of Rabbit population increase by 31 January and implement an inspection regime. Where Rabbit infestations exist above the maximum
<p>4.10 Undertake annual inspections on properties deemed high-risk by 30 June.</p>	<p>A total of 25 property inspections were undertaken to assess rabbit population levels.</p>		

<p>4.11 Prepare and distribute a Notice of Direction to land occupiers where populations persist above the MAL for greater than 12 months from the problem being identified and advice provided.</p>	<p>No Notices of Direction were required.</p>		<p>allowable level, issue advice and where possible provide an adaptive management approach to ensure the land occupier can meet their responsibilities. If this issue persists, issue a Notice of Direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out the planned population trend monitors.
<p>4.12 Less than 2 land occupiers are known to be in breach of the ≤ MAL 4 Strategy rule as at 30 June each year.</p>	<p>No properties are known to be in breach of MAL 4.</p>		
<p>4.13 Less than 6 land occupiers are known to be in breach of the ≤ MAL 3 Strategy rule as at 30 June each year.</p>	<p>No properties are known to be in breach of MAL 3.</p>		
<p>4.14 Annually undertake trend monitoring across the 13 established night count transects by 30 June.</p>	<p>All transects – excluding one at Molesworth – were monitored. The ‘Kiritown’ transect at Molesworth was not monitored this year as safe passage across the Acheron River was not available.</p>		

Objective			
To prevent the establishment of Possums on offshore islands in the Marlborough Sounds.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Action taken to meet Target
4.15 Respond to reported sighting of Possums on offshore islands within five working days.	<p>There was single report of a possum on Blumine Island in the Queen Charlotte Sound. An investigation was actioned immediately by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Support was offered from Marlborough District Council to assist.</p> <p>The subsequent investigation which included the deployment of kill traps and detection devices resulted in the killing of two adult possums and one juvenile.</p> <p>Further surveillance work is being continued by DOC.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit public feedback on any Possums sighted on all offshore islands. • Report all sightings to the Department of Conservation who will undertake investigations with Marlborough District Council staff in support, if required.

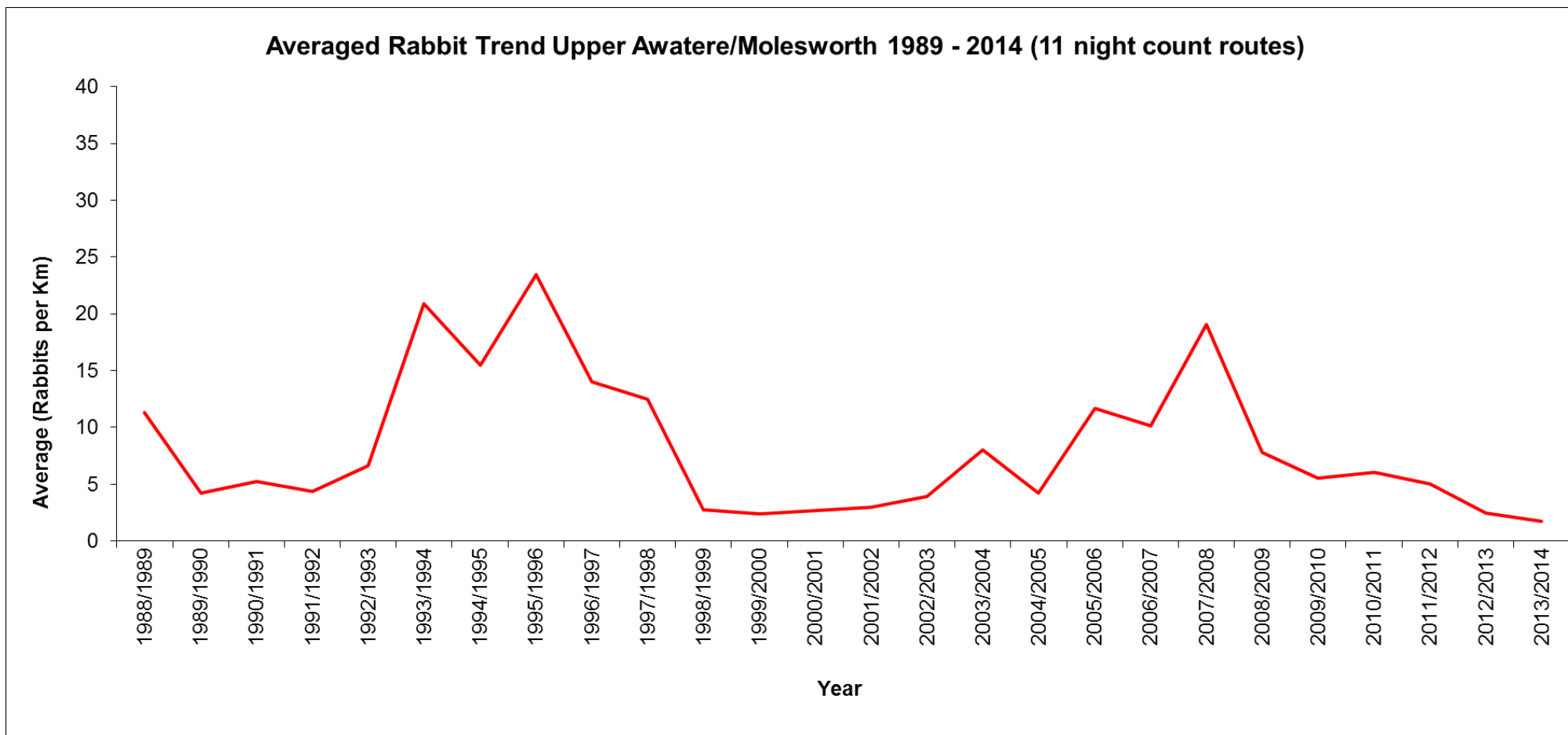


Figure 2: Averaged Rabbit trend from the Upper Awatere/Molesworth night count routes






Photos:

Left – Plate 3: The new heavy infestation of Chilean Needlegrass (CNG) discovered on a stop-bank at Spring Creek in December 2013. It was reported by the landowner after learning what CNG was.


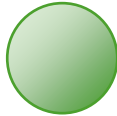
Above – Plate 4: Evidence of landholder control work of Nassella tussock found during a Council inspection.

5. Surveillance

Objective			
To monitor the distribution, the impacts and the spread of surveillance pests, fund appropriate research projects regarding surveillance pests and educate the public as to their identification and most appropriate method of control.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Action Taken to Meet Target
5.1 Undertake surveillance activities to evaluate pest distribution and impacts for invasive ant species and report findings by 30 June each year.	Monitoring and subsequent control work was undertaken at the recently discovered Rarangi foreshore Argentine Ant infestation site in collaboration with the Department of Conservation. Reducing the level of infestation at this site is proving difficult. After reports of invasive ants in urban Picton, surveillance work was carried out by a contractor to assess the nature of the infestation. These results have shown a substantial sized area infested with Argentine Ants.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect properties to determine their pest status. Act on feedback from the public in relation to new pest infestations or instances of any unwanted organism or potential incursion of a harmful organism. Record new and update existing pest distribution on the Marlborough District Council's GIS database. Utilise contract services to assist in the undertaking of control/ surveillance work for pest plants and animals.
5.2 Annually undertake not less than 100 hours of surveillance for pest spread, other than Total Control pest species, outside known sites and evaluate pest distribution and impacts. (1)	15.1 hours of specific surveillance was carried out for Surveillance pest plants. 108 hours of passive surveillance for Aquatic pest plant species was also carried out throughout the year during control efforts for Reed sweet grass, Parrots feather, and Eel grass.		
5.3 Update records, within five working days of finding or being informed of any pest plant or pest animal, while carrying out surveillance.	A new infestation of Woolly nightshade was found in Marlborough at Moetapu Bay. The new site has been registered in the biosecurity database, and the extent of the infestation mapped. Some opportunistic control work was carried out. A new infestation of the Containment Pest Plant Reed Sweet Grass was found at Langley-Dale on the North Bank. The extent of the infestation was mapped, and contractor assistance was used to		

	<p>carryout control work as per the current control programme for Reed Sweet Grass in Marlborough.</p> <p>In both instances, Council records were updated within two working days.</p>		
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6. Ecological Threats



Objective			
Encourage community initiatives and site led management programmes. Identify sites with significant ecological value where the reduction of a range of ecological pest threats would be effective in protecting those values. Provide information material and advice on impacts, threats and control options.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions Taken to Meet Target
6.1 Provide annual support to land occupiers where pest animal/plant issues have been identified as a threat to the integrity of a designated Significant Natural Area (SNA) on their property.	<p>Through the SNA programme managed by the Marlborough District Council's Environmental Scientist – Land Resources, pest/weed work was carried out on 14 SNA sites across Marlborough in 2013/14.</p> <p>8 of these sites were in South Marlborough where the focus was on pest weed control.</p> <p>The 6 remaining sites were in North Marlborough where on 2 of them, animal pests (Mustelids, Possums and rodents) were the focus.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marlborough District Council has a voluntary landowner assistance programme applying to significant natural areas sites, which includes pests/weed threat works. The Marlborough District Council actively supports community led pest management initiatives.
6.2 To encourage community led pest management initiatives.	<p>Active support has been provided to the following community groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endeavour Inlet Conservation Trust – to control invasive weeds at Endeavour Inlet within the forest reserve and along stream margins. Long Bay residence – to remove invasive vines from native bush. Waima Valley Ecological Restoration Society – funding toward the ongoing Old Man's Beard project. Grovetown Lagoon Restoration Project Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust 		

7. Educational Activities

Introduction

The Marlborough District Council recognises the advantages of a strong advisory and educational role in pest management and therefore takes a very active role in providing information and advice on the various impacts caused by pests and the best methods for controlling animal and pest plants.

Objective			
To educate the public in the identification of regional plant and animal pests and promote and encourage the most appropriate management and control options.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions taken to meet Target
7.1 Annually review and, where necessary, publish/refresh pest fact sheets for pests listed in the Regional Pest Management Strategy.	<p>No new fact sheets have been prepared due to the pending review of the Strategy. Existing publications and fact sheets have been distributed at every opportunity.</p> <p>Through the Chilean Needlegrass Sustainable Farming Fund national programme, new pamphlets, seed ID cards, CNG awareness videos and farm biosecurity signage has been developed and circulated wherever possible.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a strong advisory and educational role to create a greater understanding of land occupier pest management roles and responsibilities. Continue to provide input into the Ministry for Primary Industry-led Chilean Needlegrass Working

<p>7.2 Annually organise and attend at least one pest specific focus group meeting and at least one pest related field day.</p>	<p>Marlborough District Council Biosecurity staff have attended several public events. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marlborough A&P Show 8-9 November 2013 focusing on Chilean Needlegrass awareness, • Flaxbourne Show 23 March 2014 also focusing on Chilean Needlegrass, and • Festival 22 March 2014 where the focus was on general pest weeds. <p>One well attended public community meeting on 3 February 2014 was organised by Marlborough District Council staff to discuss Chilean Needlegrass issues. From this meeting a community-led group has formed of which Biosecurity staff attend monthly meetings and are funding a Landcare Trust facilitator.</p> <p>A presentation was given to Young Farmers Association on 9 April 2014 on Chilean Needlegrass awareness.</p>		<p>Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Marlborough District Council's website manager to coordinate website updates.
<p>7.3 Each year, review the overall structure and scope of information on the Marlborough District Council's website and initiate updates by 30 June.</p>	<p>Website material is under constant review by staff.</p>		






Above – Plate 5: Biosecurity educational stand at the Picton Festival – March 2014



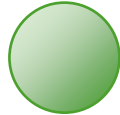
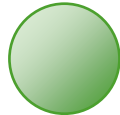

Above – Plate 6: CNG awareness display at the Marlborough A&P Show – November 2013

8. Biological Control Programme

Objective			
To enhance the establishment of biological control agents for a range of pest plants, with the aim of achieving an environmentally acceptable and cost effective method of control.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions Taken to Meet Target
8.1 Agree on annual biological control programme outcomes in conjunction with the Biological Control Collective Group by 31 July each year.	<p>The Marlborough District Council continued to support a National Biocontrol programme managed through the Biological Control Collective Group and implemented by Landcare Research.</p> <p>A biannual assessment project studying the impact of ragwort biological control agents in Marlborough was completed in April 2014. This project was carried out in support of a national assessment project run by Landcare Research.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the collective biological control programme managed by Landcare Research. Assist Landcare Research to Complete Nation-wide assessment of ragwort biocontrol agents Monitor the distribution of biological control agents and harvest and release biological control agents where required to enhance their distribution.
8.2 If requested and if feasible, provide biological control agents which have established in the region, to occupiers on request, for the purpose of further distribution.	<p>The Marlborough District Council received one request for the re-distribution of Ragwort Flea beetle to d'Urville Island. Due to the presence of the Flea beetle on d'Urville Island no harvests for re-distribution from other parts of Marlborough were undertaken. Educational Information on harvesting and re-distribution was provided.</p> <p>Council also received a request to re-distribute biocontrol agents for <i>Tradescantia</i>. Given the three agents released in Marlborough are not yet confirmed as being established, no re-distribution of <i>Tradescantia</i> biological control agents was undertaken.</p> <p>A biocontrol agent for <i>Buddleia</i> was released in the Ure River Valley.</p>		

<p>8.3 Monitor and gather information on the establishment of any new biological control species released within the region by 30 June each year.</p>	<p>Release site monitoring at Waikakaho found that <i>Tradescantia</i> biological control agents were not yet present in sufficient numbers to sustain harvesting and re-distribution in 2014.</p>		
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9. National Pest Plant Accord

Objective			
To prevent the sale, distribution or propagation within New Zealand of any plant pest listed in the National Plant Pest Accord.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions Taken to Meet Target
9.1 Undertake a minimum of four casual plant outlet inspections annually by 30 June.	Only one active inspection was carried out during normal working hours. However, numerous 'passive' inspections were also carried out by biosecurity staff at markets and car-boot sales during the weekends. No NPPA plants were identified.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect casual plant outlets for banned plants. Inspect commercial retail outlets for banned plants Ensure compliance with obligations. Promote a strong advisory and educational role in association with the National Pest Plant Accord. Record and report inspection results to the Ministry for Primary Industries.
9.2 Inspect a single, selected commercial retail outlet each year by 30 June.	13 commercial outlets were inspected and two non-compliances identified. Council Staff will follow-up to ensure compliance has been achieved in the near future.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record and report inspection results to the Ministry for Primary Industries. Ensure all inspections are carried out by a warranted officer.
9.3 Respond to all complaints relating to the sale of National Pest Plant Accord listed plant species within 3 working days.	No complaints about the sale of National Pest Plant Accord plants were received.		

10. Research

Introduction

The Marlborough District Council understands the need for research in the field of pest management and provides funding for a number of research projects.

Objective To support research programmes which benefit pest programmes in the Marlborough district.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions Taken to Meet Target
10.1 Ensure all research activities being undertaken or committed to be approved and involvement documented by 30 June each year.	<p>The major research project to gather further residue data for Taskforce Herbicide continued in 2013/2014. The bulk of activities related to the collection of samples from the trial sites. The final two efficacy trial sites were established in the Hawkes Bay. The animal residue trial was completed in August 2013 and the final report has been received.</p> <p>Support was provided to a landholder (by way of Taskforce herbicide supply) to trial mixing the product into an existing fern spraying exercise. The results will be purely observational and potentially used for an educational field day in due course.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate proposals and gain approval for any expenditure. • Evaluate proposals and gain approval for any expenditure. • Verify appropriate use of budget and ensure outcomes are documented and reported. • Plan and undertake research trials in a cost effective manner • Undertake serological sampling of Rabbits to assess immunity status against the Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD).
10.2 Complete Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) immunity level survey by 30 June each year.	<p>Due to low Rabbit levels, a full RHD survey (3 sites) was not possible this year. As a result, two sites were selected – Muller and Upcot Stations. Again due to low rabbit numbers, the majority of rabbits came from Upcot (26) with only 4 from Muller.</p>		





Left and Above - Plate 8 & 9: Rabbit showing deformed ears from a lack of circulation. This is characteristic of being exposed to the RHD virus.

Table 1. Results of 2014 RHD immunity level survey from Upcot Station.

Age of Rabbit	Number of rabbits	Number of rabbits not exposed to RHD	Number of rabbits with RHD immunity
Juvenile	2 (8%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Adult	7 (27%)	3 (12%)	4 (15%)
Old Adult	17 (65%)	3 (12%)	14 (54%)
Total	26	7 (27%)	19 (73%)

11. Biosecurity Programmes – Other

Objective			
To facilitate partnerships with industry and the Crown in the management and coordination of national pest and unwanted organism programmes.			
Performance Targets	Reporting	Performance	Actions Taken to Meet Target
11.1 Implement activities relating to the Freshwater Pest Partnership Programme by 30 June each year.	Another change was made as to how the summer advocacy programme was delivered in Marlborough. This season, Fish & Game was contracted to carry out the advocacy programme thorough the employment and direction of a summer advocate. This was the first year this has occurred in Marlborough so there were some teething issues selecting the right person for the role. Overall, the arrangement worked well.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support National Freshwater Pest Partnership Programme in partnership with support from the Ministry for Primary Industry. Attend committee and partnership meetings of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership as well as provide financial support.
11.2 Provide on-going support in the implementation of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy.	<p>Active participation and agreed funding was supplied to the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership throughout the year.</p> <p>As part of the wider marine biosecurity responsibilities of regional councils, Council staff led a second marine pest response in Waikawa Bay when a vessel was discovered in February 2014 with large Mediterranean fanworm (<i>Sabella spallanzanii</i>) on its hull. After an extensive delimiting survey, no further fanworm were discovered. Investigations over the next steps are continuing.</p> <p>Staff also led the decision to implement a Long Term Management Plan for the invasive sea squirt <i>Styela clava</i> in Picton. This was signed-off in January 2014 with the first dive scheduled for May 2014. However, this was delayed because of a number of <i>Styela</i> discovered during the delimiting survey for fanworm.</p>		



Above – Plate 10: The fouled vessel which was discovered to be harbouring Mediterranean fanworm (*Sabella spallanzanii*).
NOTE – three fanworm are visible highlighted by the yellow circle.

12. Review of the Operational Plan

In accordance with Section 100B(1)(b) of the Biosecurity Act 1993, a review of the Operational Plan was carried out on 2 July 2014. Some amendments were deemed necessary in accordance with Section 100B(1)(c). The proposed amendments to the Operational Plan 2013-2017 are outlined below:

Section	Current Target	Proposed Change	Reason
3.4	Annually monitor all historical sites where Rooks have resided in the past (if those sites remain in existence) by 30 June	Annually monitor all sites that previously had rooks in residence within the last 10 years and investigate an sightings within 2 working days	Bring the target in alignment with the status of Rooks in Marlborough and the way the programme is
4 (new)	N/A	Undertake annual surveillance, and carry out required control works, on 100% of Fringe Chilean Needlegrass sites where Council undertakes strategic management.	To reflect to heightened status of the Council Chilean Needlegrass programme.
4.3	An annual inspection is made with 100% of Chilean Needlegrass Fringe sites to inspect for compliance, undertake education/assistance or undertake control activities.	An annual inspection is made with 100% of Chilean Needlegrass Fringe sites, with a landholder obligation for control, to inspect for compliance.	As a result of a new target focussed on sites where Council undertakes strategic management, the existing target requires subtle modification to reflect only the landholder obligation component of the programme.
4 (new)	N/A	Investigate any new reports of potential Chilean Needlegrass infestations within 2 working days.	To reflect to heightened status of the Council Chilean Needlegrass programme.
10.2	Complete Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) immunity level survey by 30 June each year.	Move from Section 10. Research into either Section 8. Biological Control.	To group all activities or initiatives that relate to a biological control mechanism together for reporting purposes.

13. Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

The Strategy specifies how the effect of the Strategy is to be monitored throughout its duration. The term 'effect' covers two main areas:


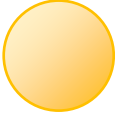

- The effectiveness of the Strategy in terms of achieving its stated objectives.
- The environmental effects of the Strategy's implementation.

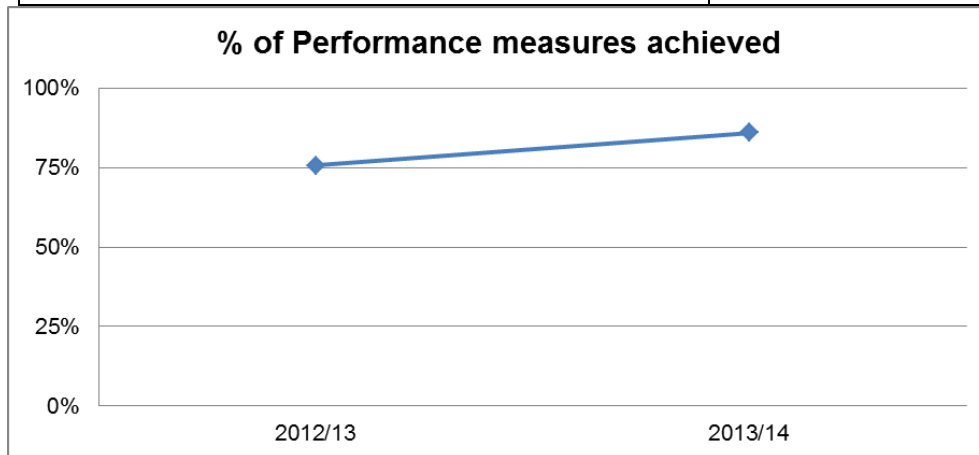
A combination of techniques is used to measure the effectiveness of the Strategy in terms of achieving its stated objectives.

1. Long-term monitoring – For example, rabbit trend monitoring.
2. The analysis of outputs.
 - a. The level of non-compliance for landholder obligation programmes. The analysis of non-compliance can be used as a proxy for the progress against the objective of each programme.
 - b. Whether plants are found and destroyed for Total Control species. The number of plants destroyed each year for Total Control species is used to track the status of both the sites where plants are found and the quantum of the infestation across Marlborough.

14. Performance Overview

Overall scoring of Performance Objectives (excluding those that are not applicable):

Measure	2013/2014 Score
 Achieved	30 (86%)
 Almost Achieved	5 (14%)
 Not Achieved	0 (0%)
TOTAL	35 (100%)



Appendix 1 – Total Control Pest Plant Data Trends

