

5.31 Tall wheat grass (*Thinopyrum ponticum*)

Why is it a threat?

Tall wheat grass is a rigid, erect, perennial tussock forming grass (termed as bunchgrass in the USA) growing taller than other *Thinopyrum* species, up to 3 metres tall. It is well adapted to seasonally flooded, salt influenced habitats, especially those where summer droughts are frequent. The main infested area in Marlborough is adjacent to the lower Ōpaoa River and seeds are likely to disperse through drainage channels to this and the Waikārapī Lagoons and Te Pokohiwi/Boulder Bank which is an important conservation area.

Values threatened by tall wheat grass invasion would be likely displacement of a range of salt marsh vegetation types that include the at-risk declining species *Mimulus repens* by tall growing monocultures of this grass. The conservation area also supports possibly the greatest diversity of wetland birds in New Zealand and the tall dense vegetation likely to result from invasion would affect a number of birds by reducing foraging and nesting areas, increasing shelter for predators and increasing fire risk.



Objective

Over the duration of the RPMP, control tall wheat grass (*Thinopyrum ponticum*) in the Marlborough district to less than or equal to 2016 levels to minimise adverse effects on economic wellbeing, the environment and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Intermediate Outcome:

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive Containment	Sustained Control	Site-led
-----------	-------------	-------------------------	-------------------	----------

Principle measures to achieve the objective

1) Council Inspection and Service Delivery

Inspection by Council may include staff or contractors:

- Delivering a service to control tall wheat grass in liaison with the occupier.
- Visiting properties or doing surveys to determine whether pests are present.
- Monitoring effectiveness of control.
- Carry out control using administrative powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, if necessary.

2) Requirement to Act

Land owners and/or occupiers or other persons may be required to act where rules or statutory obligations dictate:

- The presence of pests is to be reported.
- Pests are not to be spread (propagated, sold or distributed).

3) Advocacy and Education

Council may:

- a) Provide general purpose education, advice, awareness and publicity activities to land owners and/or occupiers and the public about pests and pathways (and control of them).
- b) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers to control pests.
- c) Promote industry requirements and best practice to contractors and land owners and/or occupiers.
- d) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers and other persons to report any pests they find.
- e) Facilitate or commission research.

Rules

Rule 5.31.2.1

Occupiers are required to notify Council of any new infestation of tall wheat grass (*Thinopyrum ponticum*) on land that they occupy within 5 working days of the initial observation.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Note: Current distribution data is able to be viewed online via Council's Smart Maps service.

Explanation of the rule:

The purpose of this rule is in accordance with section 73(5)(a) to assist Council with surveillance. Requiring occupiers to notify Council of new sites and plants on their properties, in addition to Council's own surveillance, will assist Council in achieving the objective of the programme. New infestations will be able to be controlled and incorporated into the programme.

Notifying the Council of the presence of the specified pest will enable the Council to:

- Update its records.
- Map new sites of this pest.
- Carry out control work before they spread.
- Determine whether new control regimes should be considered.
- Provide advice and information to occupiers where appropriate.

Council as the management agency will administer the rule.