



**MARLBOROUGH  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# **Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough**

## **Operational Plan Report 2011/2012**

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# REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OPERATIONAL PLAN REPORT 2011/2012

## 1. Introduction

The Regional Pest Management Strategy is known as the “Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough” (the Strategy). It was made operative on 2 July 2007 following the review and amendment of the existing Strategy which expired on 3 September 2006.

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 coordinated 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, the main methods to achieve the objective and the rules relating to each pest.

### 1.1. Purpose of Operational Plan Report

This Operational Plan Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, and identifies and outlines the nature and scope of activities the Marlborough District Council has undertaken in the implementation of its Strategy for 2011/2012.

Reports on performance targets are included in this Operational Plan Report. This will enable key stakeholders to judge the performance of Marlborough District Council as the management agency for the Strategy.

### 1.2. Linkages

The Operational Plan is integrated, as far as possible, with Marlborough District Council's Regional Policy Statement, Resource Management Plans and the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). The LTCCP provides an overview of all Marlborough District Council functions, including pest management and biosecurity activities for 2011/2012.

This Operational Plan Report should also be read in conjunction with the Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough 2007.

## 2. Pest Plant Management Programmes

### 2.1. Introduction

The Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough 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 <sup>(1)</sup>, 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 coordination 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 <sup>(1)</sup> | Comments   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| African Feather Grass | TC                    | Marlborough District Council initiative.<br><br>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 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          | TC                    |  |
| Bur Daisy             | TC                    |  |
| Saffron Thistle       | TC                    |  |
| Giant Needlegrass     | TC                    |  |
| Chinese Pennisetum    | TC                    |  |
| Parrots Feather       | TC                    |  |
| Boneseed              | TC                    | Marlborough District Council/Department of Conservation joint initiative.<br><br>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 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 | TC                    |  |
| Eel Grass             | TC                    |  |
| Madeira Vine          | TC                    |  |
| Moth Plant            | TC                    |  |
| Spartina              | TC                    |  |
| Evergreen Buckthorn   | TC                    |  |
| Senegal Tea           | TC                    |  |
| Cathedral Bells       | TC                    |  |

| Plant Pest Species              | Status <sup>(1)</sup> | Comments   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Nassella Tussock                | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to annually destroy all plants on their properties before they produce seed.   |
| Chilean Needlegrass             | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to annually destroy plants on their properties before they produce seed.   |
| White-Edged Nightshade          | CC                    |  |
| Kangaroo Grass                  | CC                    | 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.  |
| Broom and Gorse                 | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to progressively control broom in the Upper Awatere River and broom and gorse in the Upper Wairau River catchments.<br><br>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 this pest plant |
| Ragwort                         | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to destroy Ragwort plants within 50 metres of their property boundary if the adjacent property is free of this pest plant.   |
| Nodding Thistle                 | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to destroy Nodding Thistle plants within 100 metres of their property boundary if the adjacent property is free of this pest plant.  |
| Contorta Pine                   | CC                    | Land occupiers are required to destroy all plants, with the exception of properties located directly adjacent to the Wye Reserve.  |
| Reed Sweet Grass                | CC                    | Marlborough District Council is responsible for managing this pest plant.  |
| Blue Morning Glory              | S                     | The key objective for management of these pest plants is to monitor distribution, the impacts and the spread of these organisms.   |
| Climbing Asparagus              | S                     |  |
| Egeria                          | S                     |  |
| Cotton Thistle                  | S                     |  |
| Kahili Ginger and Yellow Ginger | S                     |  |
| Lagarosiphon                    | S                     |  |
| Purple Loosestrife              | S                     |  |

<sup>(1)</sup> Refer to the Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough definitions of Total Control (TC), Containment Control (CC) and Surveillance (S)

### 2.3. Pest Animal Status

The table below summarises the district's pest animals and their designated status as classified in the Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough.

| Animal Pest  | Status <sup>(1)</sup> | Comments  |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| Rooks        | TC                    | There are currently no active rookeries in Marlborough. Small numbers of transiting birds are occasionally seen and, if allowed to establish, they are capable of causing significant damage to cereal crops and pasture. Marlborough District Council will carry out rook control with the aim of ensuring birds do not establish within Marlborough.  |
| Rabbits      | CC                    | High rabbit populations affect soil and water quality and have a detrimental impact on economic production and increase the risk of soil erosion. It is Marlborough District Council's responsibility to ensure land occupiers comply with their obligation to control rabbits, coordinate and facilitate control activities, carry out rabbit population trend monitoring and offer advice on control. |
| Possums      | CC                    | Possums cause extensive defoliation of native forest and predate on ground and tree nesting native birds and their eggs. 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.  |
| Darwins Ants | S                     | The key objective for management of these pests is to monitor their distribution, their impacts and the spread of these organisms.  |

<sup>(1)</sup> Refer to the Regional Pest Management Strategy for Marlborough definitions of Total Control (TC), Containment Control (CC) and Surveillance (S)

### 3. Total Control Pest Objectives and Performance Targets

#### Objective

To eradicate Total Control pest plants from Marlborough

| Performance Targets  | Action taken to meet Target   | Achievements   |
|--|---|--|
| <p>3.1 Complete control operations at 100% of known sites by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>3.2 Carry out not less than 200 hours of surveillance for Total Control pest plant spread outside known sites by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>3.3 No new infestations resulting from spread from known sites of these pest plants established in Marlborough.</p> <p>3.4 A measured decline to &lt;4500 pest plants destroyed over all sites by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>3.5 Recover, by 30 June 2012, 25% of all costs for those Total Control pest plants identified in the Marlborough District Council initiative.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan, implement and manage services required to carry out control operations.</li> <li>• Carry out surveillance work for each of the 16 Total Control pest plants.</li> <li>• Record and maintain pest plant abundance and distribution data to enable trend monitoring over the duration of the Strategy.</li> <li>• Recover 25% of the control costs, as deemed reasonable.</li> </ul> | <p>All active total control pest plant sites were visited and any plants found were destroyed. Those sites where the target weed continued to germinate are visited regularly through the season until all germinating plants for the season have been destroyed (NB Appendix 2 contains details of plant numbers destroyed and shows population trends over time).</p> <p>131.25 hours of surveillance work was carried out for total control pest plants away from known sites.</p> <p>A total of 31 new sites of a total control pest plant were found. This includes 29 new sites of Moth Plant, 1 new site of Evergreen Buckthorn and 1 new site of Climbing Spindleberry. A large number of the 29 new sites of Moth Plant were found as a result of information from the public. On top of this, Chinese Pennisetum plants were found on 8 properties that had a previous history of the weed for the first time in many years.</p> <p>A total of 11,448 total control plants were destroyed over all sites. This figure does not include Parrots Feather as it is a semi-aquatic weed and it is difficult to count the number of plants controlled due to its growth habit. Only 0.72L of herbicide concentrate was used to control Parrots Feather in two separate control operations.</p> <p>The Marlborough District Council has recovered, where appropriate, 25% of the costs incurred when controlling these pest plants from landowners where infestations occur.</p> |



**Objective**

To eradicate rooks in Marlborough.

| <b>Performance Targets</b>   | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>   | <b>Achievements</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| 3.6 Annually, monitor all historical rookeries in Marlborough by 30 June 2012.<br><br>3.7 Implement a control programme if technically feasible by 30 June 2012. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek public and land occupier reports of sightings of rooks.</li> <li>• Carry out an annual rook survey and report on population trends.</li> <li>• Plan and implement a control programme if technically feasible and conditions are suitable.</li> </ul> | <p>All historical rookeries were surveyed with no rook activity sighted.</p> <p>In response to an advertisement for public sightings, 5 sightings of rooks were received and documented. All 5 cases were followed-up with either a phone-call or field inspection. In all cases, no birds were sighted again or found to be nesting.</p> <p>No control programmes were required in 2011/2012.</p> |

#### 4. Containment Control Pests - Objectives and Performance Targets

| <b>Objective</b>  |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| To prevent any increase in the distribution and density of these pest plants and reduce infestation levels where possible.  |   |   |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>  | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>  | <b>Achievements</b>   |
| <p>4.1 Prepare and distribute pest plant control programmes to land occupiers, where active infestations of pest plants occur, by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.2 85% land occupier compliance with the requirements of the Strategy rules by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.3 &lt;50 land occupiers issued with notices of direction under the non compliance requirements of the Strategy rules.</p> <p>4.4 Undertake not less than 230 hours of Containment Control pest plants surveillance by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.5 Complete planned control operations for Reed Sweet Grass by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.6 Prepare introductory guidelines for Taskforce herbicide use by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.7 Inspect 100% of external boundaries of Chilean Needlegrass Core properties that form the outer limit of the Core area.</p> <p>4.8 Inspect 100% of all Chilean Needlegrass and Kangaroo Grass Fringe properties.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually prepare control programmes for all land occupiers where an active infestation of a pest plant occurs.</li> <li>• Prioritise pest plants for inspection and carry out inspections or verify compliance.</li> <li>• Carry out enforcement action where required to ensure that occupiers meet their obligations to control pest plants.</li> <li>• Plan, implement and manage services required to carry out control operations.</li> <li>• Prioritise pest plants for inspection and carry out surveillance.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Continue to progress the Reed Sweet Grass control programme on D'Urville Island as well as those sites on the mainland.</li> <li>• Ensure external Core boundary control is achieved.</li> </ul> | <p>Control programmes were issued for 480 properties with infestations of containment control pest plants.</p> <p>The following number of pest control programmes by species were issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nassella Tussock - 365</li> <li>• Chilean Needlegrass - 73</li> <li>• Kangaroo Grass - 18</li> <li>• White-Edged Nightshade - 4</li> <li>• Broom and Gorse containment control area (Upper Wairau) - 9</li> <li>• Broom containment control area (Upper Awatere) - 11</li> </ul> <p>Of the 480 properties issued with a control programme, 334 were inspected to ensure compliance with the Strategy. A total of 94 other properties were deemed to be compliant and were not prioritised for an inspection as a result of assessing historical compliance and landowner return forms.</p> <p>In total 428 (89.2%) properties were deemed to be compliant through inspection of audit regimes without the need for enforcement.</p> <p>32 properties required enforcement action and were issued</p> |

**Objective**

To prevent any increase in the distribution and density of these pest plants and reduce infestation levels where possible.

| Performance Targets  | Action taken to meet Target  | Achievements  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>4.9 Complete planned control operations for Pinus Contorta by 30 June 2012.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all Chilean Needlegrass and Kangaroo Grass on Fringe properties are destroyed in accordance with Strategy rules.</li> <li>• Plan and target specific areas of control where Pinus Contorta has spread from the containment area.</li> </ul> | <p>with a Notice of Direction under the Biosecurity Act 1993. Out of these, 2 occupiers failed to comply with their Notice of Direction and were issued with a Notice of Intention to do Work on Default under section 128 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. Default work was carried out on both of these properties.</p> <p>A total of 648.75 hours of surveillance work was carried out by Council officers. This was made up of 400 hours for Nassella Tussock, 170 hours for Chilean Needlegrass, 33.5 hours for Kangaroo Grass and 36 hours for White-Edged Nightshade. Council continues to record any new sites of containment control pest plants found during inspection work and has updated any known pest infestation maps where required.</p> <p>All known infestations of Reed Sweet Grass in the region were controlled this season. No new sites were found.</p> <p>In conjunction with PGG Wrightson, a comprehensive pamphlet for the use of Taskforce herbicide was produced for distribution. This was made available to all those purchasing Taskforce herbicide as well as being available through the Council.</p> <p>Two control operations were planned and subsequently undertaken for Pinus Contorta on land adjacent to the Wye Reserve containment area. The main operation was controlled re-growth on the Page property where large trees were removed 5 years prior. This was undertaken using ground control techniques. The other operation continued the 'push-back' of spillover in the head of Boundary creek.</p> |

**Objective**

To prevent any increase in the distribution and density of these pest plants and reduce infestation levels where possible.

| Performance Targets | Action taken to meet Target | Achievements   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|                     |                             | <p>Both operations were undertaken to a high standard.</p> <p>Further surveillance and control of scattered tress was also undertaken using the new aerial technique applying herbicide. This proved to be cost effective to cover large areas with low density trees.</p> <p>All complaints regarding containment control pests were actioned within five working days.</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 rabbit populations at levels at or below the maximum allowable level identified for the two sub-regions, the 'Upper Awatere/Clarence' and the 'Remainder of area within the District'.

| Performance Targets  | Action taken to meet Target  | Achievements  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>4.10 Complete initial inspections of properties identified for inspections by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.11 Prepare and distribute pest rabbit control programmes, by 30 June 2012, to land occupiers where populations exist above the MAL.</p> <p>4.12 &lt;10 land occupiers exceed the Strategy rule MAL 4 as at 30 June 2012.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a geographical representative sample of properties deemed 'at risk' of rabbit population increase by end March and implement an inspection regime.</li> <li>• Where rabbit infestations exist above the maximum allowable level, issue a control programme and where possible provide an adaptive management approach to ensure the</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 48 properties were inspected to assess rabbit population levels. 36 inspections were carried out on 'new' properties while 12 were carried out on properties with existing Control Programmes. One property was found to be non-compliant but was inspected later in the year and found to be compliant again.</li> <li>• Seven properties with 2010/11 Control Programmes were inspected for compliance. Six of the properties had carried out suitable control work or had a natural</li> </ul> |

**Objective**

To minimise the impacts that feral rabbits have on pasture production, crops, forestry plantations and soil conservation values in Marlborough by maintaining feral rabbit populations at levels at or below the maximum allowable level identified for the two sub-regions, the 'Upper Awatere/Clarence' and the 'Remainder of area within the District'.

| <b>Performance Targets</b>   | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>  | <b>Achievements</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>4.13 &lt;15 land occupiers exceed the Strategy rule MAL 3 as at 30 June 2012.</p> <p>4.14 Complete compliance inspections of previous year's control programmes by 30 October 2012.</p> <p>4.15 Trend monitor the 12 established night count transects by 30 June 2012.</p> | <p>land occupier can meet their responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-inspect all properties issued with a control programme to ensure compliance.</li> <li>• Carry out the planned population trend monitors.</li> </ul> | <p>reduction in rabbit levels, and were compliant on inspection. One property still had rabbits above the MAL and was subsequently issued a Notice of Direction to carry out rabbit control by 31 March 2012. Upon follow-up in April 2012, rabbit numbers had dropped substantially and this property was also compliant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The remaining 5 properties had a later completion date of either 31 March 2012 or 30 August 2012. As a result the inspection carried out was merely a check-up to see how progress was going. Upon inspection, all 5 properties had shown substantial reductions and could be signed off early.</li> <li>• No new 2012/2013 Control Programmes were required this season due to the low rabbit numbers encountered across most of the historically rabbit prone areas.</li> <li>• All 12 night-count transects were trend monitored as well as the establishment of a thirteenth route in Coastal Ward Trend graphs can be found in Appendix 1.</li> <li>• Serological blood sampling was carried out at only one site in 2012 – Molesworth Station (see Section 9 – Research).</li> </ul> |

**Objective**

To prevent the establishment of possums on offshore islands in the Marlborough Sounds.

| <b>Performance Targets</b>   | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>   | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| 4.16 Respond to reported sighting of possums on offshore islands within five working days. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit public feedback on any possums sighted on all offshore islands.</li> <li>• Report all sightings to the Department of Conservation who will undertake investigations with Marlborough District Council staff in support, if required.</li> </ul> | <p>One report of possum sign was received from a pine control contractor on D'Urville Island on 11 November 2011.</p> <p>As a result, Council assisted the Department of Conservation financially to carry out a delimiting survey of the wider area in January 2012. No further sign was found.</p> |

## 5. Surveillance Pests - Objectives and Performance Targets

| <b>Objective</b>   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 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.   |  |  |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>   | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>   | <b>Achievements</b>  |
| <p>5.1 Undertake surveillance and evaluate pest distribution and impacts for Darwins Ants and other invasive ant species and report findings by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>5.2 Undertake not less than 70 hours of surveillance for pest spread, other than Total Control pest plants, outside known sites and evaluate pest distribution and impacts.</p> <p>5.3 Update records, within five working days of finding or being informed of any pest plant or pest animal, while carrying out surveillance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect properties to determine their pest status.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Record pest distribution on the Marlborough District Council's GIS database.</li> <li>Utilise contract services to assist in the undertaking of specific surveillance for invasive ants.</li> </ul> | <p>Council again engaged a contractor, Kaitiaki O Ngahere Limited to conduct invasive ant surveillance across four selected areas in Marlborough. These were the three main linkages to the sounds waterways – Havelock, Picton and Waikawa; as well as the urban area in Blenheim surrounding the known Argentine Ant core area.</p> <p>Darwins Ants were found in high numbers throughout Havelock, in small pockets within Picton with no invasive ants found in Waikawa. Argentine Ants were found to still be within their known range within Blenheim.</p> <p>All ant species surveillance and location sites have been recorded on Council's GIS database.</p> <p>Council officers carried out 74 hours of pest plant surveillance work. This was made up of 55.5 hours of Cotton Thistle and 7 hours for Purple Loosestrife. Information on these species is being collected for the next RPMS review.</p> |

## 6. Educational Programme - Objectives and Performance Targets

### 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 pests and pest plants.

| <b>Objective</b>  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| To educate the public in the identification of regional animal pests and plant pests and promote and encourage the most appropriate management and control options. |   |  |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>  | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>  | <b>Achievements</b>  |
| 6.1 Review and where necessary publish pest fact sheets for pests listed in the Regional Pest Management Strategy.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a strong advisory and educational role to create a greater understanding of land occupier pest management roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>   | The requirement for pest fact sheets is constantly reviewed. Due to the large effort over the previous two years, there was not a need for further fact sheets to be printed in 2011/12.   |
| 6.2 Organise and attend at least one pest specific focus group meeting and at least one pest related field day.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the Rabbit Focus Group meetings and publish rabbit control newsletters periodically.</li> </ul>   | Council continues to place a large emphasis on educating land occupiers in the identification and control of pests identified in the RPMS.   |
| 6.3 Continually review the overall structure and scope of information on the Marlborough District Council's website by 30 June 2012.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise a Taskforce herbicide use training field day.</li> <li>Assist with a Chilean Needlegrass pest pathway field day and workshop.</li> <li>Liaise with the Marlborough District Council's website manager to coordinate website updates.</li> </ul> | <p>The rabbit newsletter continues to be published biannually with an issue sent out in August 2011 and April 2012. This is also available on the website.</p> <p>Through the registration process for Taskforce herbicide, best practise information sheets have been produced in conjunction with the supplier and manufacturer. Field days were also held on 7 November 2011 in Cheviot, 8 November 2011 in Seddon, 9 November 2011 in Blenheim and 10/11 November 2011 in the Hawke's Bay.</p> |



**Objective**

To educate the public in the identification of regional animal pests and plant pests and promote and encourage the most appropriate management and control options.

Council staff have attended and provided input into the MPI-led pest pathway workshop and newly formed CNG working group. Two CNG working group meetings have been held – one in Wellington and the other in Blenheim.

The website continues to be reviewed with all fact sheets available in the Biosecurity section of the Council website.

## 7. Biological Control Programme – Objectives and Performance Targets

| <b>Objective</b>  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 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.  |   |  |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>  | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>  | <b>Achievements</b>  |
| <p>7.1 Agree on annual biological control programme outcomes in conjunction with the Biological Control Collective Group by 30 March 2012.</p> <p>7.2 Provide biological control agents which have established in the region, to occupiers on request, for the purpose of further distribution by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>7.3 Undertake at least one release of a new bio control agent by 30 June 2012.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the collective biological control programme managed by Landcare Research.</li> <li>• Release Chilean Needlegrass rust bio control agent if import approval is granted.</li> <li>• Release Tradescantia Beetle and Woolly Nightshade Lace Bug if available.</li> <li>• Monitor the distribution of biological control agents and harvest and release biological control agents where required to enhance their distribution.</li> <li>• Undertake initiatives to assess the impact on pest plants of biological control agents released in Marlborough since 2009.</li> </ul> | <p>Council continues to contribute financially to the Biological Control Collective Group.</p> <p>An application to ERMA by this Council, in conjunction with Landcare Research, to import a rust which attacks Chilean Needlegrass has been successful. We are still awaiting the importation of the rust itself into New Zealand.</p> <p>No requests have been received from land occupiers to release a biological agent established elsewhere in the region.</p> <p>No further releases of Nodding Thistle or Ragwort agents were made this year. Releases of these agents are no longer required as they will now be widespread across the region.</p> <p>Two releases of Tradescantia Leaf Beetle and one further release of Green Thistle Beetle were made this year.</p> <p>One visit was made to a Broom Gall Mite site to determine if it had become established and the good news was it had. A visit to the original Green Thistle Beetle release site also proved positive. They had established at the site but there were not enough adult beetles to consider a harvest.</p> |

## 8. National Pest Plant Accord

| <b>Objective</b>  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| To prevent the sale, distribution or propagation within New Zealand of any pest plant listed in the National Plant Pest Accord.   |  |  |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>  | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>   | <b>Achievements</b>  |
| <p>8.1 Annually inspect 50% of the plant retail outlets in Marlborough by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>8.2 Respond to any complaints relating to the sale of banned plant species within five working days.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect half of the plant retail outlets each year on a rotational basis for any plants identified on the National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA).</li> <li>• Ensure compliance of obligations.</li> <li>• Promote a strong advisory and educational role in association with the NPPA.</li> <li>• Record and report inspection results to Biosecurity New Zealand.</li> <li>• Ensure all inspections are carried out by warranted officers.</li> </ul> | <p>Opportunistic inspections were carried out by Council officers looking at roadside stalls and market displays. Larger retail outlets were not prioritised for inspection in 2011/12.</p> <p>No complaints were received regarding the sale of banned plant species.</p> <p>No notifications of pest plant incursions into Marlborough were received from Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).</p> <p>Council officers submitted two separate applications to MPI to include an introduced plant on the National Pest Plant Accord. The two applications were for Californian Poppy and European Spindleberry. Neither species was included on the NPPA after consideration by the NPPA Technical Advisory committee.</p> |

## 9. Research - Objectives

### Objective

To support research programmes which benefit pest programmes in the Marlborough region.

| Performance Targets   | Action taken to meet Target   | Achievements  |
|---|---|---|
| <p>9.1 Provide resource to undertake research as approved by the Marlborough District Council by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>9.2 100% of RHD immunity level surveys completed by 30 June 2012.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake serological sampling of rabbits in support of the national project to determine the effectiveness of RHD following the use of conventional rabbit control techniques.</li> <li>• Evaluate proposals and gain approval for any expenditure.</li> <li>• Verify appropriate use of budget and ensure outcomes are documented and reported.</li> </ul> | <p>The MPI granted a certificate of registration for Taskforce Herbicide in November 2011. Council applied to the EPA and the MPI for a modified re-assessment to include aerial application of the product and to allow its use on Kangaroo Grass in early 2012. This was approved in August 2012 after an EPA hearing held in May. A new label has been produced to include these changes.</p> <p>Several trials have been carried out using Taskforce Herbicide to get a better understanding of the best way to use this product. Links to these trial reports are included on the Councils website.</p> <p>One site was sampled in 2012 for RHD immunity. This was due to difficulties in finding sites that were holding levels of rabbits that were able to be sampled.</p> <p>The sample site in 2012 was Molesworth Station. Two geographically distinct samples were able to taken where 82 samples were collected and sent away for analysis. The results for this testing were presented through to the Environment Committee Information Package and in the community newsletter.</p> <p>Support for other research projects are assessed on a case-by-case basis. In 2011/2012, support has been given to a pilot study looking into the suitability of an alternative toxin for rabbit control. This has also been supported by other regional councils and central government agencies through the Rabbit Coordination Group.</p> |

## 10. Biosecurity Programmes – Other

| <b>Objective</b>  |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| To facilitate partnerships with industry and the Crown in the management and coordination of national pest and unwanted organism programmes.  |   |  |
| <b>Performance Targets</b>  | <b>Action taken to meet Target</b>  | <b>Achievements</b>  |
| <p>10.1 Continue, as directed by MPI, to support the implementation of the Didymo Long Term Management Plan objectives by 30 June 2012.</p> <p>10.2 Provide ongoing support in the implementation of the Management Plan for the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy.</p> <p>10.3 Provide partnership support to Biosecurity New Zealand to respond to any new pest incursion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Didymo Long Term Management Plan in partnership with the Department of Conservation, with support from MPI, Fish and Game and Tasman District Council.</li> <li>• Attend committee and partnership meetings of the Top of the South Marine Partnership.</li> </ul> | <p>Council received ongoing funding from MPI for Didymo and other fresh water Biosecurity advocacy during the 2011/12 season. The Department of Conservation provided the service for Council and undertook advocacy work. Their report has been received and sent to MPI for acceptance.</p> <p>The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership has been responsible for the development of a Strategic Plan with a view to safeguarding the marine environment with buy in from the public and marine users. During the year the partnership has prepared an Operational Plan and an Operational Manual whilst also undertaking extensive advocacy with stakeholders and marine users.</p> <p>MPI did not request any support for any new marine pest incursion during the report period.</p> <p>Council continues to actively be involved assisting the Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust with its programme for the management of wilding conifer spread in the Queen Charlotte Sound. The Trust has embarked on new wilding conifer control incentives in the Pelorus Sound and on D'Urville Island.</p> |

## 11. Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

The Strategy specifies how the effects of the strategies are to be monitored throughout their 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.

This report will satisfy stakeholders that the majority of stated operational plan objectives have been achieved during 2011/2012, while the term 'environmental effects' is much more difficult to quantify.

Where there is appropriate monitoring methodologies available to measure a stated objective, data has been collected to measure these outcomes. Pest population trend data and occupier compliance will assist Marlborough District Council and stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of the Strategy.

## 12. Summary

1. The majority of performance measures have been achieved through the year.
2. The eventual registration of Taskforce herbicide for aerial application has been a great leap forward for the management of three major pest plants for pastoral Marlborough. Over the ensuing years, it is hoped herbicide use will be integrated into the management of Nassella Tussock, Chilean Needlegrass and Kangaroo Grass. Hopefully some real gains will be made in their suppression, containment and possibly eradication respectively.
3. The majority of occupiers have complied with written obligations through the issuing of pest control programmes. Legal directions are only issued once all other compliance alternatives are exhausted. 34 Notices of Direction were issued as a result of occupiers failing to meet their obligations under the Strategy. Two Notices of Intention to do Work on Default were issued as a result of further non-compliance. Default work was carried out on both of these properties that failed to comply.
4. Land use changes with their associated activities continue to increase the risk of Chilean Needlegrass (CNG) seed being spread from infested areas to clear areas. Marlborough District Council are working with MPI and Environment Canterbury to look at better ways to minimise any further spread risks.
5. An unfavourable season for rabbit breeding and survival has meant a quiet year for rabbits. No control programmes were required to be issued with all properties with previous programmes all seeing a large reduction in numbers.
6. Excellent progress has been made in both finding moth plant sites and carrying out control of moth plant predominantly in urban Blenheim.
7. Extensive surveillance work for total control and containment control pest plants continues. New pest plant sites for several pest plants continue to be discovered. These sites are recorded and the Marlborough District Council takes appropriate action to ensure the plants at these sites are destroyed where required, either by Council officers or by land occupiers.
8. The Marlborough District Council and the Department of Conservation continue with great success in moving toward eradicating Spartina Grass from the region.
9. The Marlborough District Council continues to be active with assisting industry and other stakeholders with pest programmes, in particular, Didymo and other marine biosecurity measures.

# Appendix 1

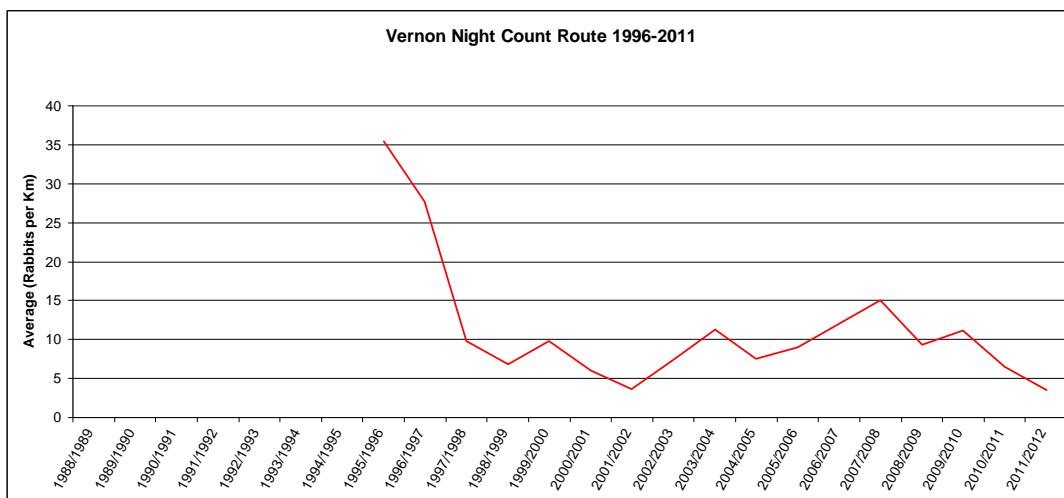
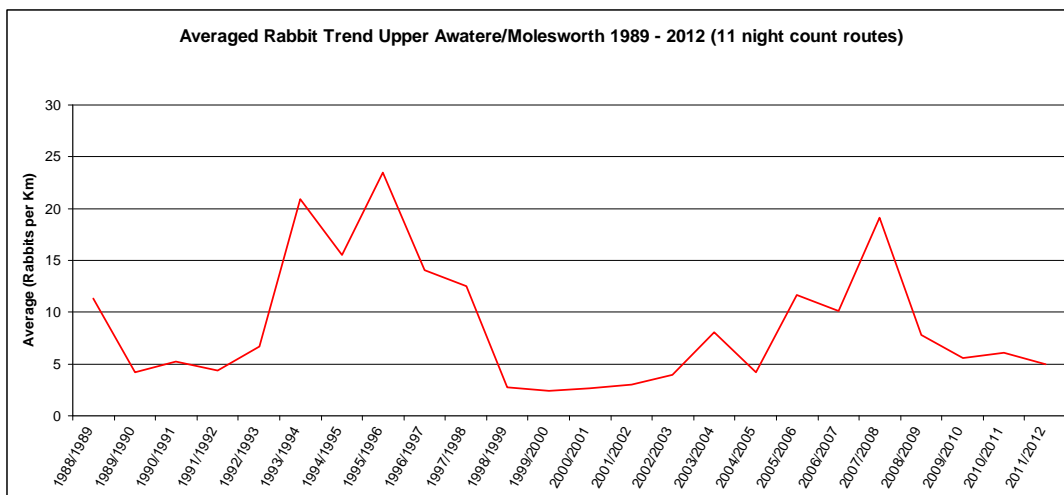
## Rabbit Long Term Trend Monitoring - Night Count Data

The desired end result of the Rabbit Pest Management Strategy is to ensure rabbit populations are controlled so that they do not adversely affect the economic viability of our primary industry or soil and water quality. It is difficult to quantify the economic or environmental effects of changing rabbit populations.

The graphs below show rabbit levels pre RHD (pre 1997) and the subsequent trends since that time. There have been pronounced peaks in rabbit abundance in the mid 1990s and again in 2007. In both instances, the rabbit population has been brought back down by, initially the introduction of RHD, then more recently through intensive conventional control. The more recent increases can be correlated to an increase of RHD immunity in the rabbit populations.

On a positive note, recent population recoveries have been slower than pre-RHD suggesting RHD is still having some impact in the current environment but is still only complementary to physical control.

Breeding conditions have not been optimal over the past 2 years resulting in poor survival of young. This has meant a slower building of numbers or in some cases, a reduction as can be seen in both the Upper Awatere/Molesworth averaged trend and the coastal Vernon trend.

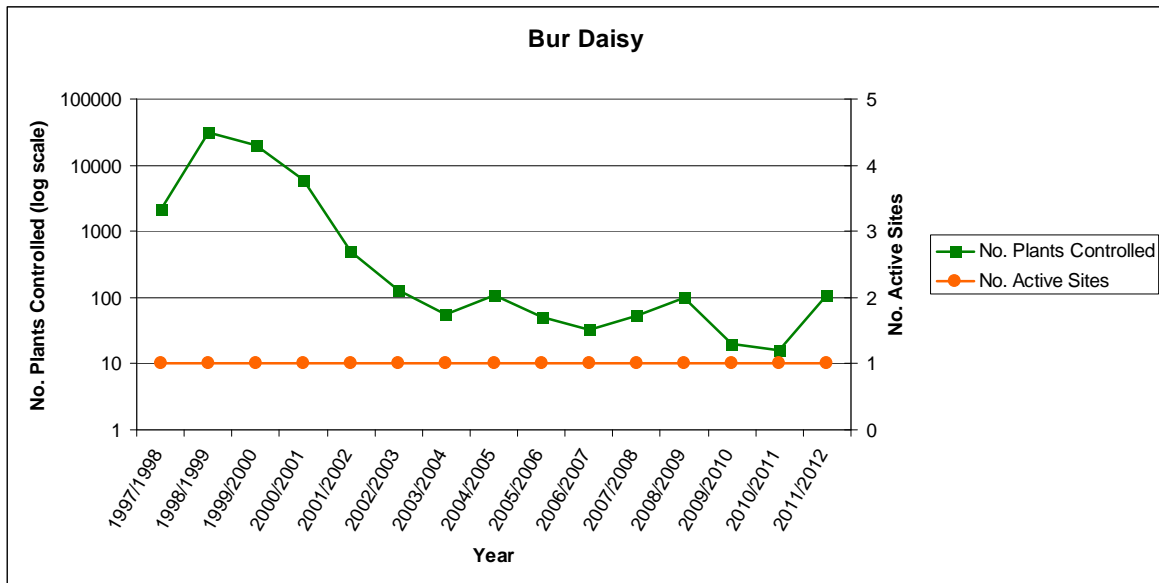


## Appendix 2

### Total Control Pest Plant – Trend Data

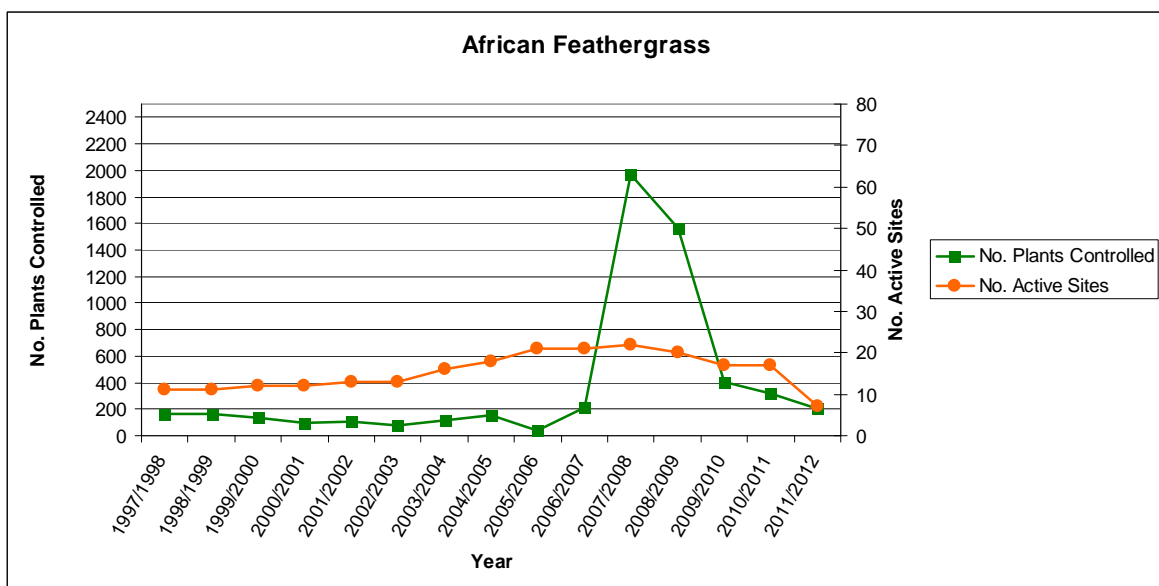
#### Bur Daisy (MDC Initiative)

There continues to only be a single known site of Bur Daisy in Marlborough at a property in the Lower Waihopai Valley. The number of plants controlled is trending downward however 2011/12 saw a spike in the number of plant controlled. This could be linked to the exceptional growing conditions this season in Marlborough.



#### African Feather Grass (MDC Initiative)

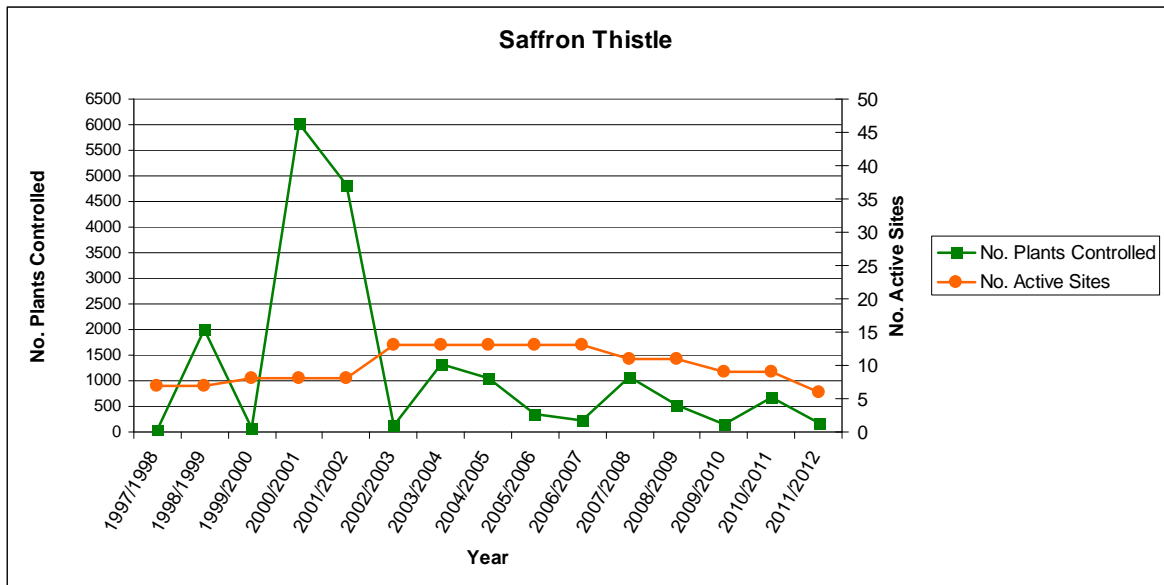
Control work continued at 7 known sites of African Feather Grass in Marlborough. A number of sites were moved to historic status due to no plants being found over the previous 5 years. These sites will still be inspected but on a longer rotation. The 203 plants controlled in the 2011/12 season is a continued reduction and can be attributed to the excellent work carried out by Council staff.





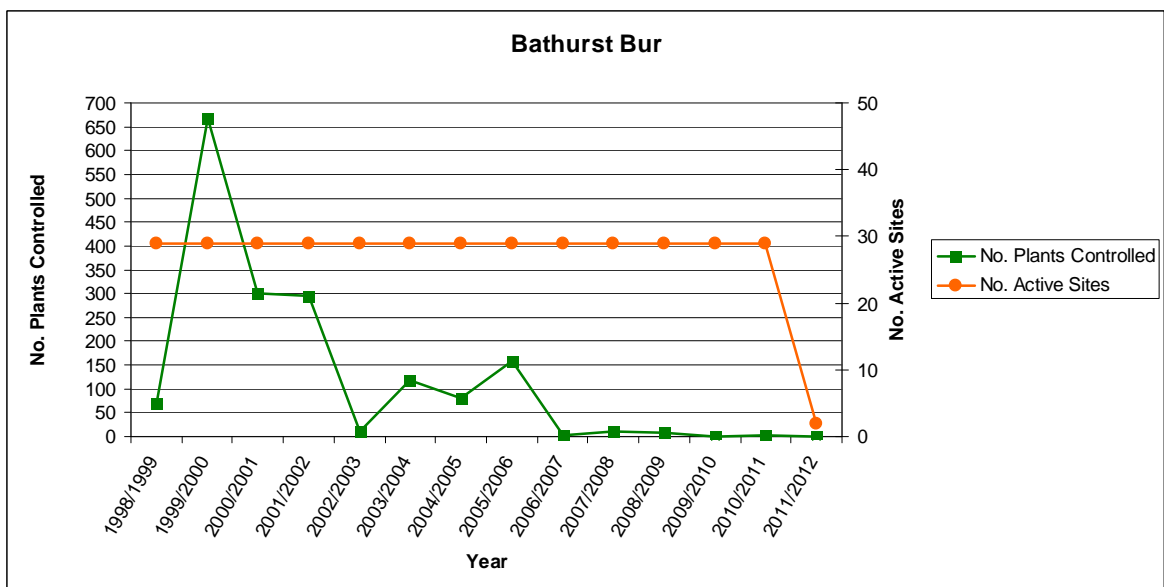
### Saffron Thistle (MDC Initiative)

Control work continued at 6 known sites of Saffron Thistle in Marlborough. A number of sites were moved to historic status due to no plants being found over the previous 5 years. These sites will still be inspected but on a longer rotation. The 178 plants controlled in the 2011/12 season is a continued reduction and can be attributed to the excellent work carried out by Council staff.



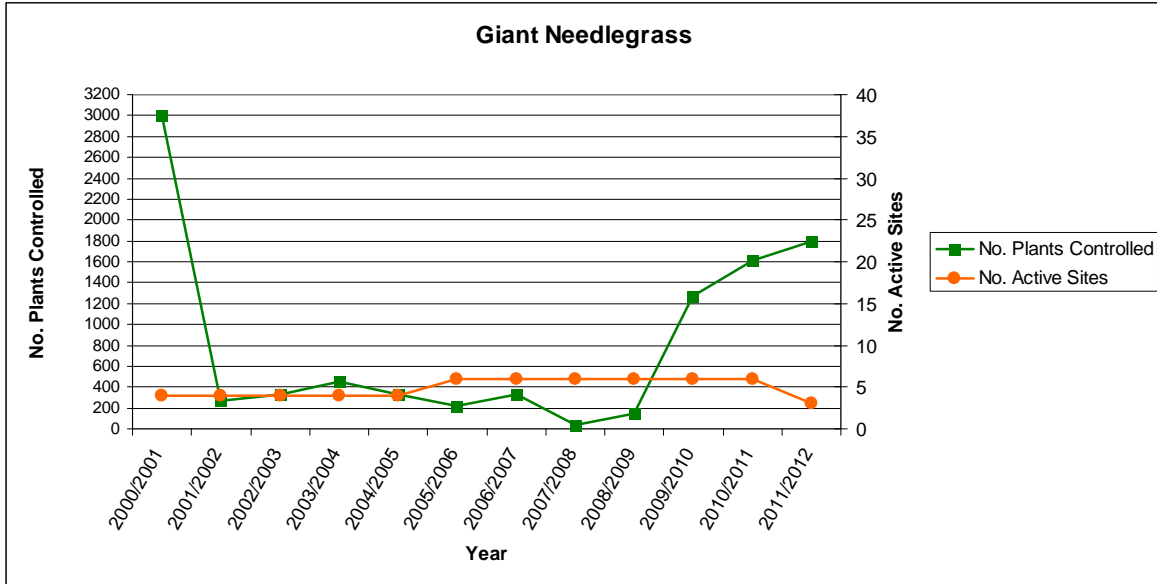
### Bathurst Bur (MDC Initiative)

Control work was carried out at 2 of the known sites of Bathurst Bur in Marlborough. A review of the status of all sites with a historical infestation of Bathurst Bur resulted in 27 sites being changed to a historical status. Bathurst Bur is very close to being eradicated from all known sites with no plants found this season.



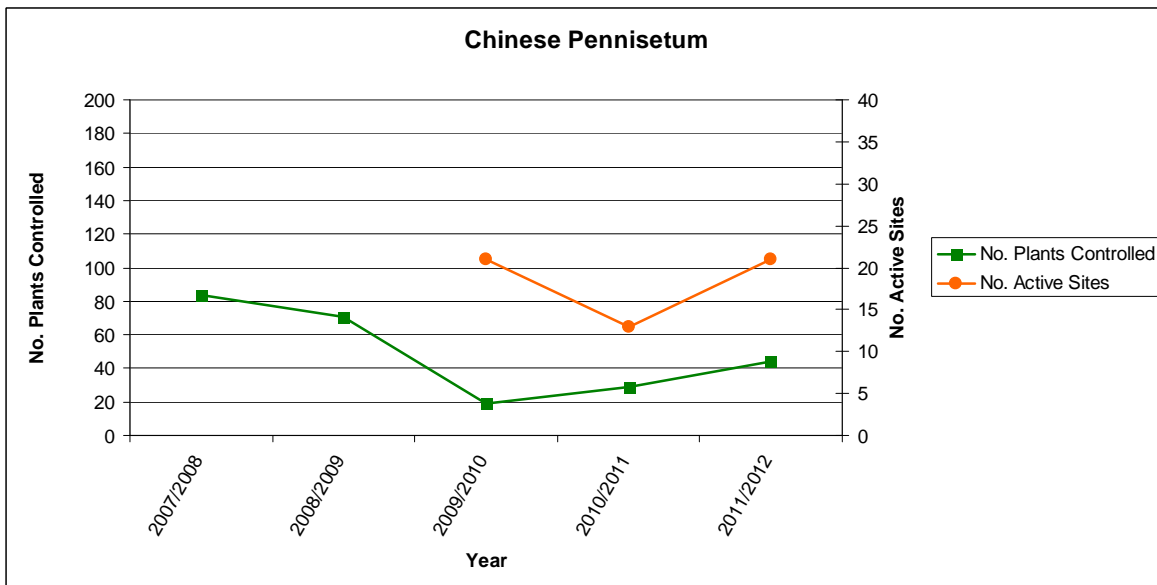
### Giant Needlegrass (MDC Initiative)

While there is only 3 known sites of Giant Needlegrass that are actively controlled, the number of plants controlled over the previous 3 seasons continues to climb. The main driver behind this increase has been the status of the land where the sites occur – forestry. The primary sites where Giant Needlegrass occurs in the Upper Wairau Valley have been logged in 2009. It is in these logged areas where there has been a dramatic increase in the number of plants found and destroyed.



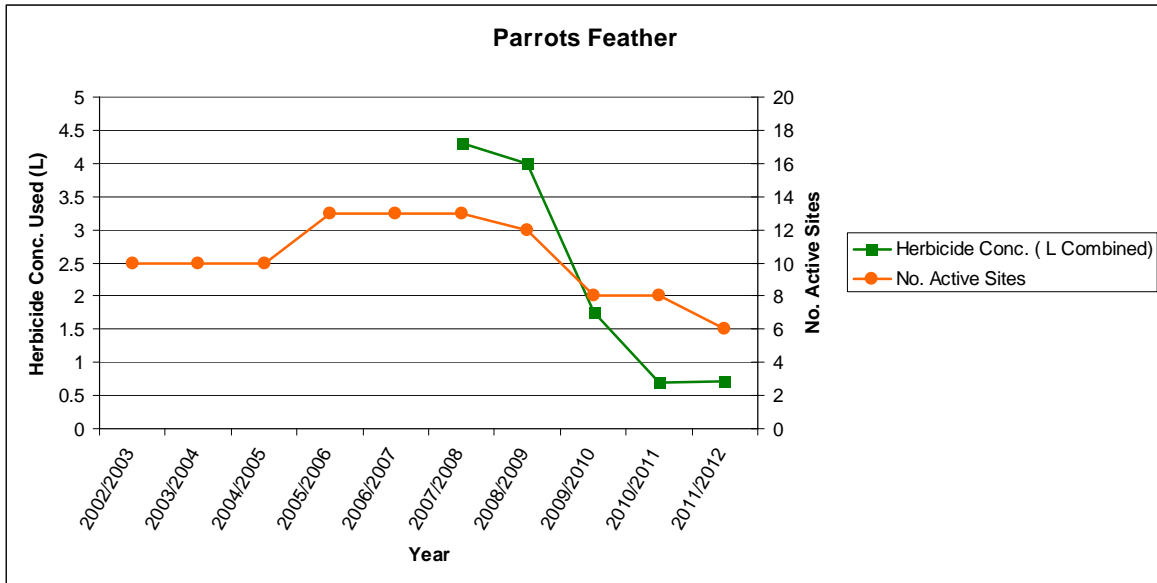
### Chinese Pennisetum (MDC Initiative)

Since moving to Total a status of Total Control in 2007, the number of Chinese Pennisetum plants controlled has been reducing. However, a new intense effort by Council staff over the previous 2 seasons has resulted in both new sites found and some historic sites again producing small numbers of plants. As a result, both the number of sites and plants controlled have risen over the past 2 seasons.



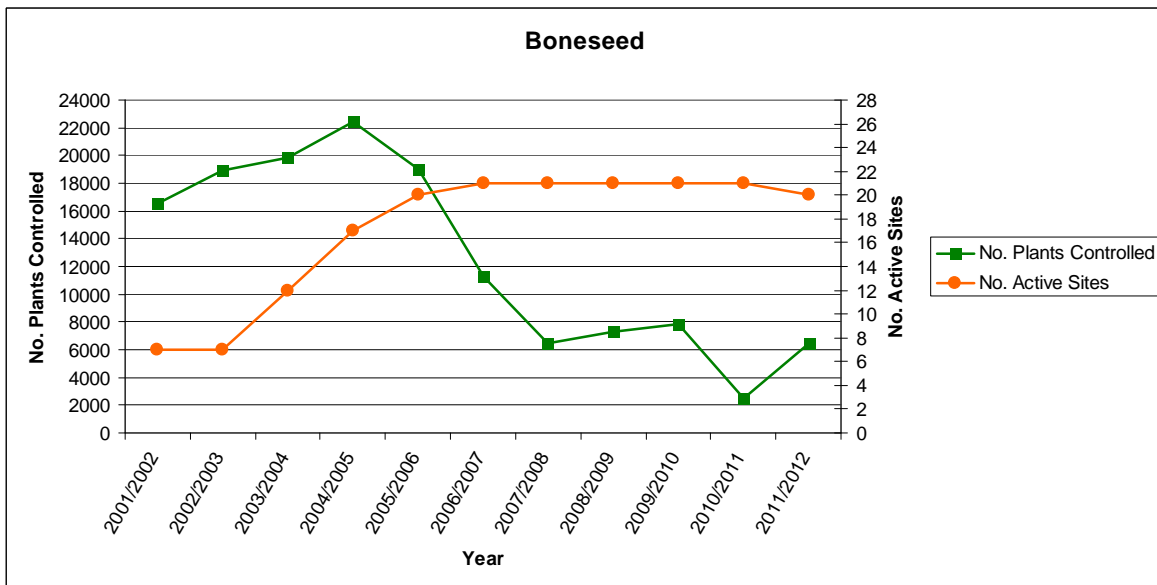
### Parrots Feather (MDC Initiative)

Control has continued at 3 known sites of Parrots Feather in Marlborough. This has included engaging contractors traversing the Core site of Gibson’s Creek combined with Council staff doing a follow-up run while also covering the other active sites. The amount of herbicide concentrate required continues to fall as fewer patches are being found.



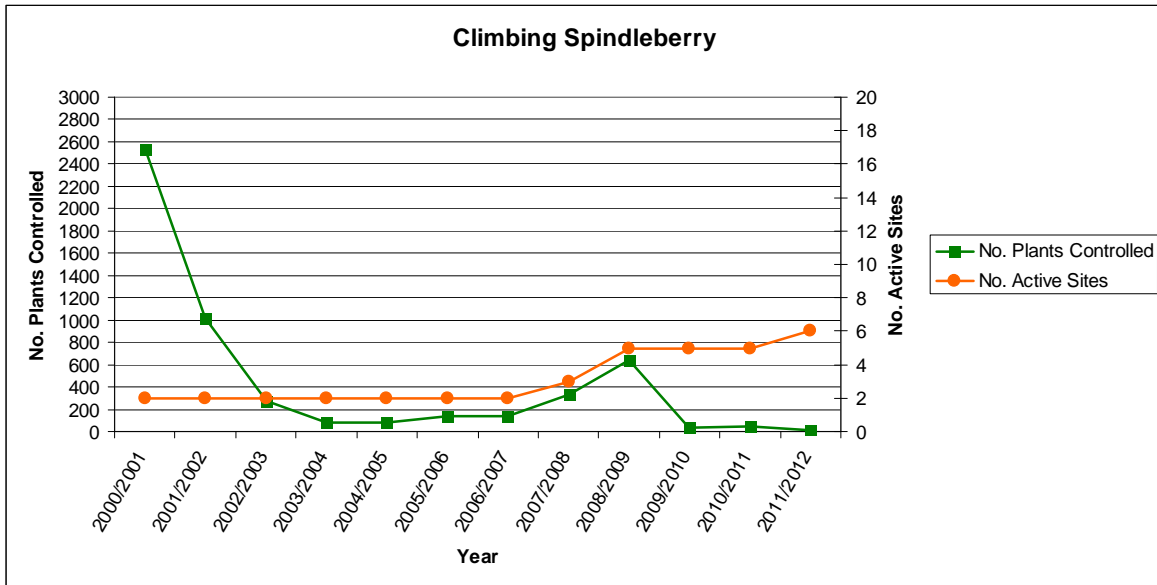
### Boneseed (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

The combined initiative of Council and the Department of Conservation continues to undertake joint control of boneseed primarily in Queen Charlotte Sound. The 2011/2012 season saw an increase in the number of plants controlled.



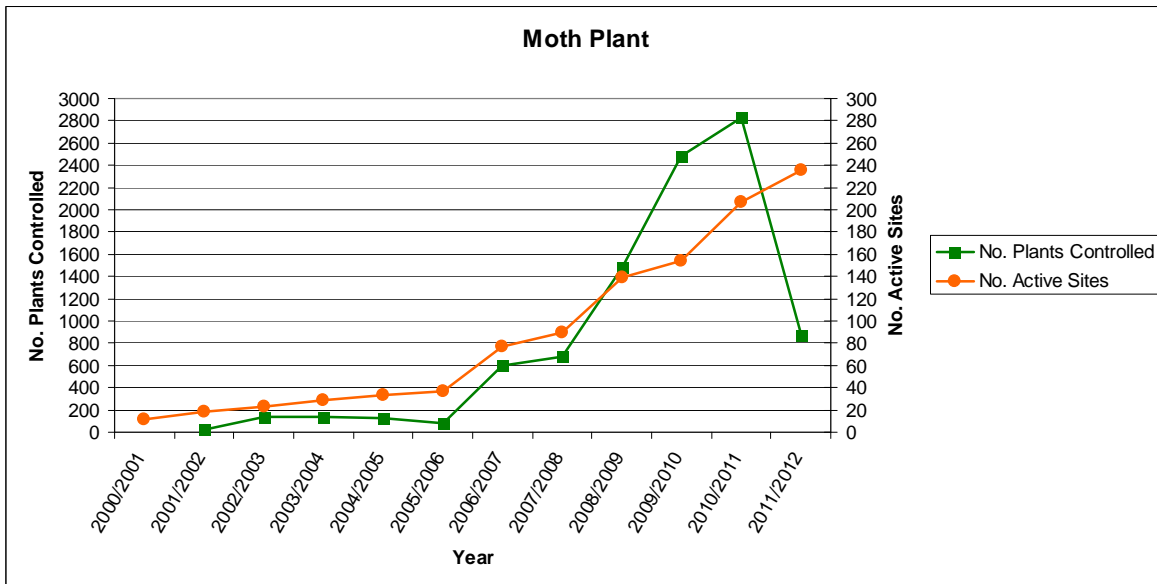
### Climbing Spindleberry (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

The control of Climbing Spindleberry is carried out by the Department of Conservation weed team based at the Sounds Area Office in Picton. The number of plants controlled was down to less than 50 across all sites in 2011/2012.



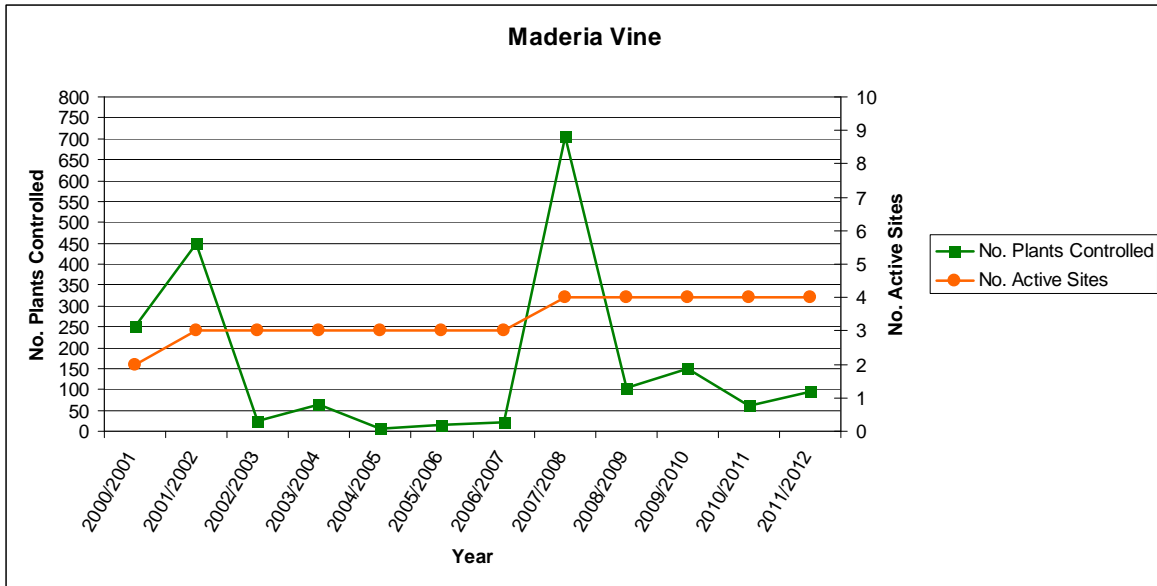
### Moth Plant (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

There has been a sharp increase in the number of new moth plant sites over the previous 2 years. This has been a direct result of excellent feedback from primarily the Blenheim community in response to newspaper advertisements by Biosecurity staff. Of note has been the reduction in plants controlled in 2011/12 which reflects a possible decrease in re-growth from existing sites. This is a positive sign.



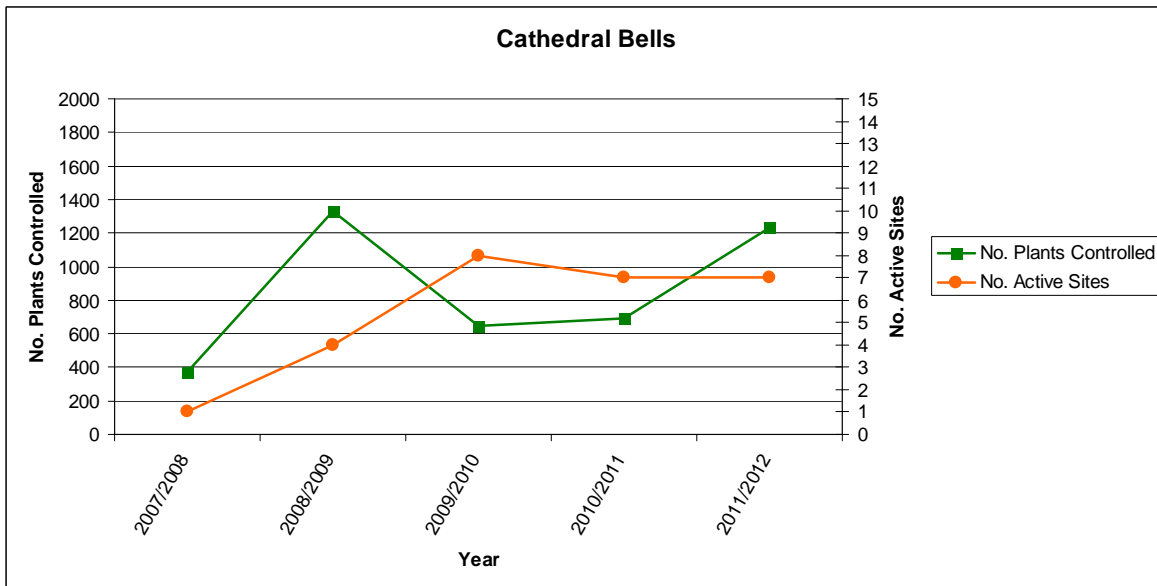
### Madeira Vine (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

The control of Madeira Vine is carried out by the Department of Conservation weed team based at the Sounds Area Office in Picton. There are a small number of sites primarily in the Sounds where continued control is targeting the removal of all plant material to inhibit re-growth from underground tubers.



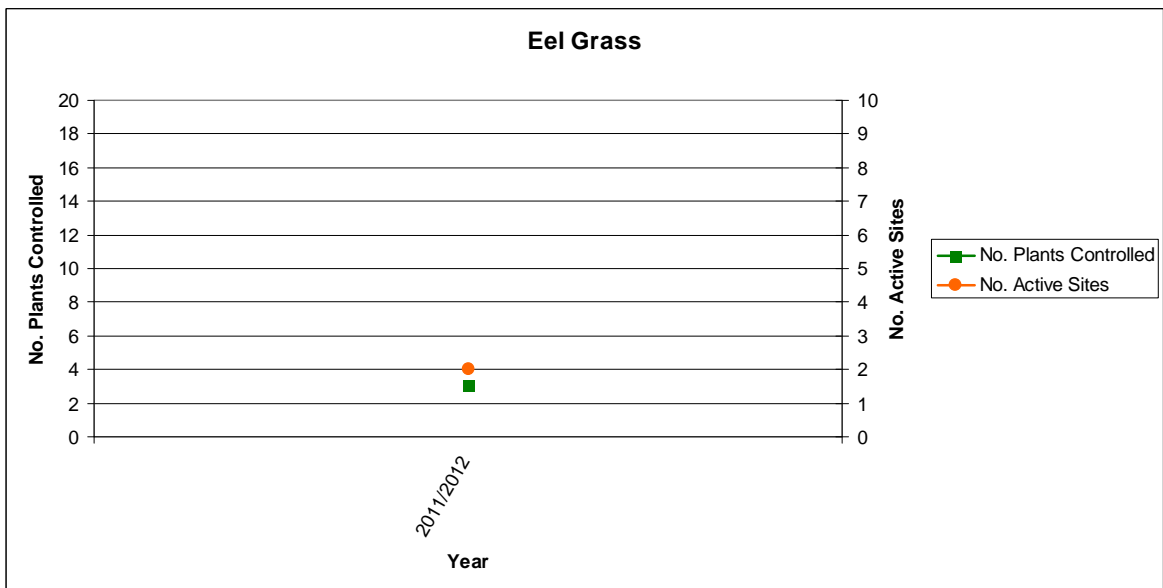
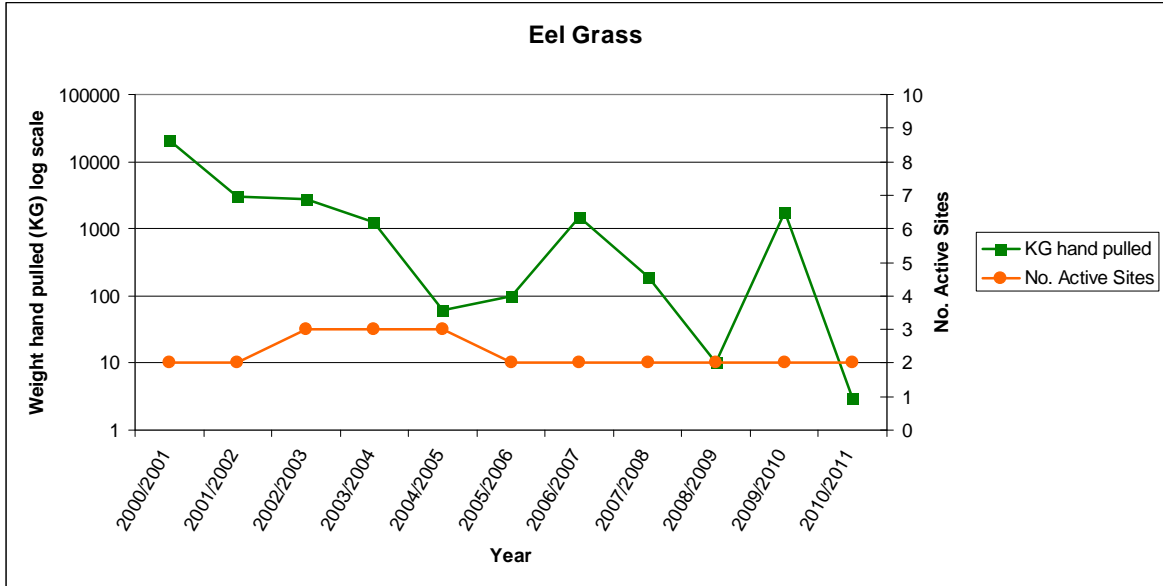
### Cathedral Bells (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

The control of Cathedral Bells is carried out by the Department of Conservation weed team based at the Sounds Area Office in Picton. There are a small number of sites primarily in the Sounds where control is continuing.



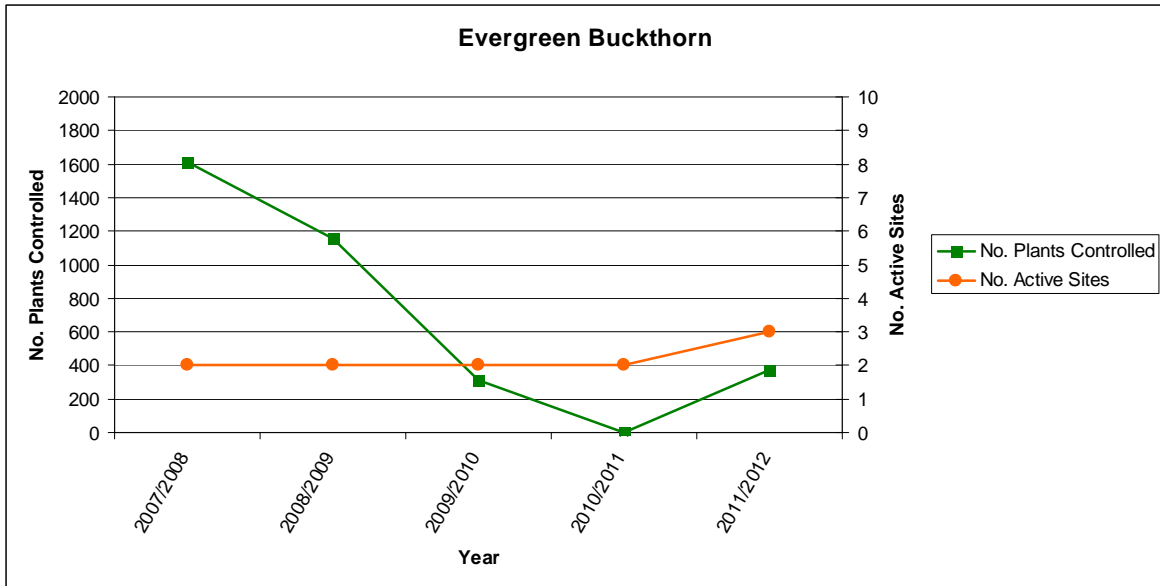
### Eel Grass (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

Eel grass is currently only found in the Opawa River loop and Waterlea Creek. It was also found historically in the Opawa River near the Taylor confluence. Very large quantities of Eel grass was physically removed when first targeted in 2001. Volumes removed by hand since then have been reducing to a point where in 2011/2012 only 3 plants were found across the 2 remaining sites. As a result, the method of recording has shifted to plants controlled.



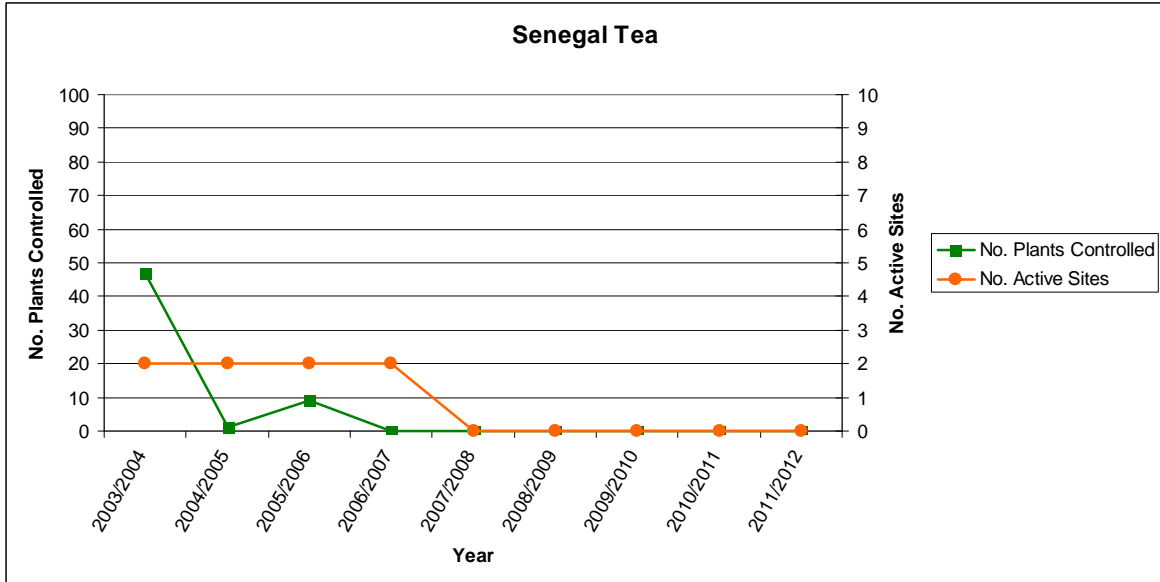
### Evergreen Buckthorn (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

The control of Evergreen Buckthorn is carried out by the Department of Conservation weed team based at the Sounds Area Office in Picton. There are a small number of sites in the Manaroa area where control is continuing. Further search effort in the past 2 years have found further infestations at the Manaroa forest site as well as a new site at the entrance to Clova Bay.



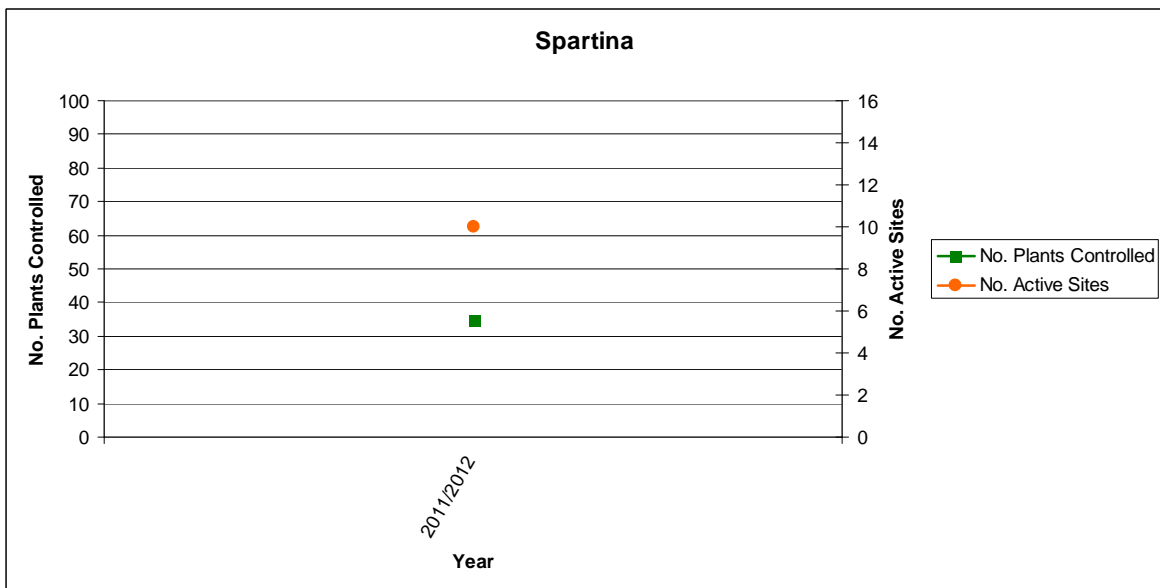
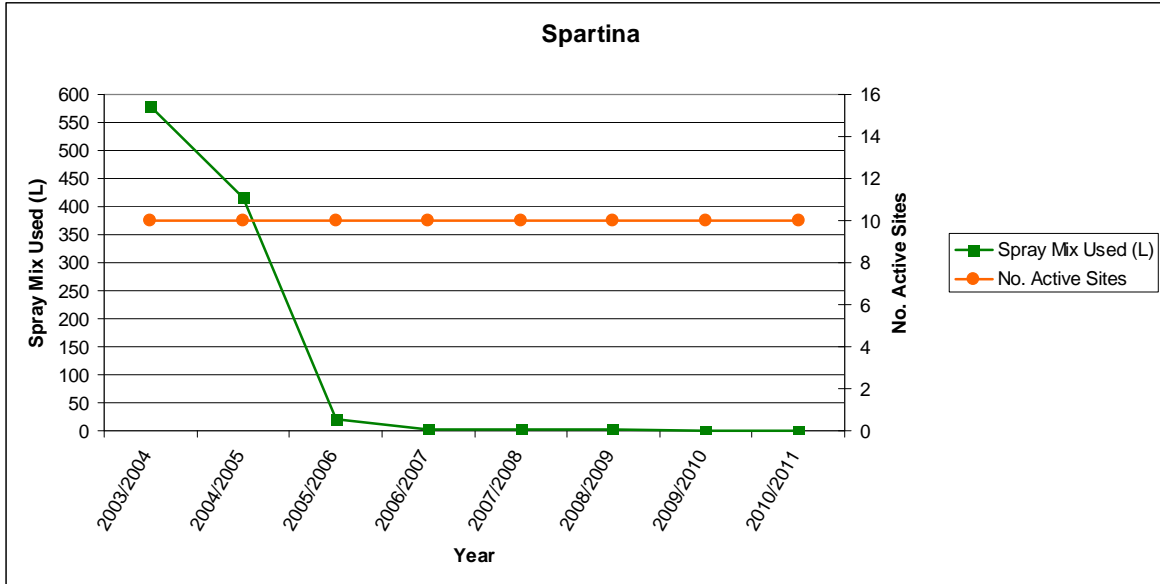
### Senegal Tea (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

Senegal Tea was deemed to be eradicated in 2007/2008 from the only two known sites.



### Spartina (MDC/DOC Combined Initiative)

Spartina control continues to be carried out by Department of Conservation staff. There are 10 existing geographic areas where Spartina is found that are the focus of both surveillance and control. Since the extensive removal of Spartina from the Pelorus, Kaituna and Mahikapawa estuaries, intensive surveillance and control has brought levels down to a point where the recording of plants controlled has now become possible.



Record No: 12273612