



# Forest & Bird

TE REO O TE TAIAO | *Giving Nature a Voice*

## Forest & Bird Conservation Policy - Use of pesticides and herbicides

One of the biggest threats to Aotearoa's unique plants and wildlife, habitats and landscapes is from introduced pest animals and weeds. Pesticides and herbicides are used to control pest animals and weeds because in many cases they are the -

- most effective and long lasting,
- less labour intensive, and
- most cost effective option,

and in some instances pesticides or herbicides are the only practical option.

Forest & Bird recognises that pesticides and herbicides have an important role to play in protecting some of our special plants and wildlife and therefore supports the carefully managed and responsible use of pesticides and herbicides for conservation purposes, through the -

1. Application of a precautionary approach when planning and implementing pest control programmes with respect to the use of pesticides and herbicides. This will include considering;
  - whether there are practical non-chemical alternatives,
  - the potential impact on native species
  - the risks to public health and the environment
  - whether the pesticide or herbicide is persistent in the environment, etc.
2. Compliance with best practice and with relevant legislation when using pesticides and herbicides, including any requirement to obtain a resource consent and any policies and requirements of any manager of the land where the pest control is to be carried out.
3. Adherence to worker, volunteer and public health and safety best practice, and to minimising any impact on indigenous plants and animals and other non-target species such as pets and stock.
4. The storage, transport and disposal of waste products from pest and weed control operations in an approved manner that does not pose a threat to human, animal or plant life or health.

# Forest & Bird Conservation Policy - Use of pesticides and herbicides

## Policy Background

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To inform the public of Forest & Bird's position on the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- To support the carefully managed, responsible and safe use of pesticides/herbicides for conservation purposes:
- To ensure that the Society's own use of pesticides is in line with its pesticide policy and is safe, responsible and based on a precautionary approach.
- To assist F&B staff, and branches and members with submissions on council and local board plans, pest control and pesticide use bylaw reviews etc.

### Context

#### What is Forest & Bird?

Forest & Bird is New Zealand's independent voice for nature. It is a national non-government organisation, with 50 branches throughout New Zealand with a supporter base of around 70,000. Forest & Bird's mission is: *To protect and restore nature in Aotearoa/New Zealand.*

#### What is unique about Aotearoa/New Zealand?

Unlike the rest of the world, New Zealand's fauna evolved without mammalian predators. They developed unique characteristics, like flightlessness, that makes them especially vulnerable to disturbance and predation by introduced mammalian predators. The arrival of humans and many of the plants and animals we brought with us have had a devastating impact on our native species and their broader ecosystems.

A large number of our native species have already become extinct and many are struggling because of the impacts of pest plants and animals.

Conservation practice in New Zealand has often been very successful in dealing with introduced predators and many weed species, particularly introduced predator and weed eradications on off shore islands, mainland sanctuaries and key conservation areas. Currently large numbers of volunteers spend many hours doing weed and pest control, while in parts of the conservation estate introduced pest species are managed by DOC in order to maintain and grow our threatened species in the wild. In many cases the use of pesticides and herbicides is the most effective method to carry out that control.

## Why have a policy on pesticides and herbicides?

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Forest & Bird recognises the important role a range of pesticides and herbicides play in New Zealand conservation efforts to protect our unique native and endemic biodiversity.

However, by their very nature pesticides and herbicides are potentially dangerous and any use must be undertaken with proper consideration of the potential for both negative and positive outcomes on many of our native species.

This policy is about ensuring any use of pesticides and herbicides for conservation purposes, whether on private or public land, is carried out in a careful, responsible and safe manner.

## Policy Detail

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- whether there are practical non-chemical alternatives,
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- the risks to public health and the environment
- whether the pesticide or herbicide is persistent in the environment, etc.

2. Compliance with best practice and with relevant legislation when using pesticides and herbicides, including any requirement to obtain a resource consent and any policies and requirements of any manager of the land where the pest control is to be carried out.

3. Adherence to worker, volunteer and public health and safety best practice, and to minimising any impact on indigenous plants and animals and other non-target species such as pets and stock.

4. The storage, transport and disposal of waste products from pest and weed control operations in an approved manner that does not pose a threat to human, animal or plant life or health.

## **Outcomes – What we want to see**

- Where they are appropriate; improved conservation outcomes from the careful use of pesticides/toxins.
- The use of application techniques that achieve the conservation objectives whilst minimising non-target effects.
- Forest & Bird and public awareness of, and compliance with, regulations and best practice that apply to the responsible choice and use of pesticides/toxins for conservation purposes.

## **Relevant National Policy/Legislation**

Conservation Act 1987

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996

- HSNOCOP 3 Management of Agrichemicals code of practice NZS 8409:2004

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

- health and safety regulations.

Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997. Resource Management Act 1991

- Resource Management (Exemption) Regulations 2017
- Regional and district plans