

# Arataki Subdivision

DRAFT Fauna Management Plan  
Prepared for CDL

10 June 2025





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# 1.0 Introduction

CDL propose to develop an 11 ha greenfield residential subdivision at Arataki Road, adjoining Havelock North.

The site contains the following ecological features:

- Pasture grasslands, covering most of the site.
- Rank grasses along fencelines and other ungrazed areas.
- Exotic trees (mostly eucalypts and a few macrocarpas) along the eastern boundary and adjacent embankment. Most of these trees are outside of the property.
- The ornamental trees around the existing houses and driveways within the site.

There are no streams or wetlands within the site.

These terrestrial habitat features provide potential habitat for indigenous fauna such as lizards (herpetofauna), bats and birds (avifauna). Vegetation within the site will be largely removed during earthworks.

This Fauna Management Plan (FMP) describes the methods to reduce the effects of the proposed subdivision works on indigenous fauna, including potential effects on lizards, bats and birds.

The objective is to maintain or enhance species populations within works areas by avoiding and minimising impacts on them. These objectives will be achieved by implementing industry-accepted best practice methods and undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced specialists.

The removal of the eucalypts adjacent to the site is not part of this application.



## 2.0 Wildlife Act and Fauna Protections

Native animals including bats, birds, lizards, frogs and some invertebrate species are 'absolutely protected' under the Wildlife Act (1953, s63 (1) (c)), and their habitats are protected by the Resource Management Act (1991) and administered by the DOC and local authorities (WRC and Hauraki District Council, HDC), respectively.

A Wildlife Act Authority (WAA permit) is required to handle, catch, release or kill native wildlife including lizards, birds, bats and frogs. WAA permits typically include conditions that need to be met to ensure the safety of wildlife. These conditions may include limiting who may undertake the activity (e.g. experienced persons only), a maximum number of animals that can be disturbed and the timing and quantity of surveys.

The Fast Track Approvals Act (2024) was enacted to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits, combining the requirements of several other Acts in a single Approvals process. Information required for Wildlife Act Approvals are included in Schedule 7. This includes the purpose and nature of the proposed activities, the effects of the proposed activities on protected wildlife, and methods proposed to avoid and minimise adverse effects. This requires species protected under the Wildlife Act and known or predicted to be present to be listed 2(1)(d), and impacts on threatened, data deficient, and at-risk wildlife species (as defined in the New Zealand Threat Classification System) to be assessed.

This FMP describes how potential adverse effects on protected fauna will be mitigated.

No Wildlife Act Approvals are sought.

## 3.0 Proposed Activities

The proposed activities that may affect protected fauna comprise vegetation clearance prior to earthworks.

The extent of earthworks is shown in Figure 1.

The affected habitats are shown in Photos 1-10.

## 4.0 Protected Fauna

Most of the site comprises grazed pasture with negligible fauna habitat value.

Potential habitat is provided by tress, debris and rank grasses around the margins of the site. These may provide habitats for native lizards, bats and birds. The potential species present and potential impacts are described below.

## 4.1 Lizards

No lizard species have been recorded within or adjacent to the Site. Five species are known to be present within 15 km of the site, including northern grass skink (*Oligosoma polychroma*), northern spotted skink (*O. kokowai*), Hawke's Bay skink (*O. auroaense*), ngahere gecko (*Mokopirirakau* 'southern north island') and barking gecko (*Naultinus punctatus*). In the wider area, lizard records were typically in areas of indigenous vegetation or around areas of recent infrastructure and in coastal areas. Outside these areas, herpetofauna records were scarce, likely reflecting both land use (much of the area is modified pastoral grassland) and a lack of survey effort or lizard-specific investigations.

The invasive plague skink (*Lampropholis delicata*) which are classed as an "unwanted organism" (Biosecurity Act 1993), are commonly found throughout the upper North Island at high densities and are likely present within the Site. Introduced frog species, including southern bell frog and the southern brown tree frog are present in the wider area and may be present within the Site. These species are non-native species and as such are not a constraint to the proposed development and are not further considered for this assessment.

Based on this desktop assessment, there is low probability of herpetofauna species being present in the grazed areas; moderate probability of the common skink species (northern grass skink) being present in the ungrazed areas; and a low probability of threatened species (Northern spotted skink, Hawke's Bay skink) being present because of their limited distributions.

## 4.2 Bats

There are no notable areas of native or exotic mature forest that border the site. The closest long-tailed bat (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) records are c. 19 km to the south of the Sites boundary at Mohi bush in 2016. There are no short-tailed bat (*Mystacina tuberculata*) records within 25 km of the site (the nearest known records for this species being over 70 km from the project site and they are extremely unlikely to be present).

We note that there is a noticeable lack of recorded surveys for bats around the coastal Napier, Hastings and Havelock North areas and areas of potential suitable bat habitats nearby may not have been surveyed.

Considering the available bat records and the habitat present within the site, it is considered that the potential for long-tailed bats to be utilizing the site to be generally low. Despite this, long-tailed bats have been known to travel in excess of 50 km from their roost sites, and therefore are in the foraging range of a known bat population.

## 4.3 Avifauna

A total of 38 species of indigenous birds have been identified within the local OSNZ and eBird grid-square. An additional 19 species of exotic birds have also been recorded. We do not consider that any of the introduced species of birds require further consideration.

Of the 38 indigenous bird species on record, 22 are classified as Not Threatened, 11 are classified as At-Risk and five are classified as threatened under the New Zealand Threat Classification System (Robertson et al., 2021). Apart from the grey duck, the Site is unlikely to

provide habitat for these threatened species, although, several of these species may traverse the Site when moving between coastlines.

Based on available data, the site appears to lack habitat for many native birds. Some native birds, including cormorant and heron (due to proximity to the coast/Tukituki River) species may utilise the eucalyptus tree shelterbelt, amenity planting and paddocks as potential nesting habitat. Additionally, during construction, banded dotterel which are known to be present in the area, may nest in the earthworks area.

Birds are highly mobile and will generally move away from noise and activity, although eggs and chicks are extremely vulnerable to disturbance during the breeding, and nesting season. For this reason, site clearance will be undertaken outside of the forest bird nesting season (August-February inclusive) as far as practicable.

## 5.0 Fauna Management Overview

Fauna management comprises the following:

- Birds – tree removal outside of nesting season (March to July inclusive) OR nest check and avoidance protocols (August to February).
- Bats – identification of potential roots trees. Acoustic surveys required prior to felling. Acoustic surveys limited to period when bats are active (September to April).
- Lizards – habitat management comprising grazing and removal of ground debris.
- Bat and Lizard fauna are subject to incidental discovery protocols.

Fauna management must be completed prior to vegetation clearance.

Fauna management must be undertaken with seasonal time constraints. Timing must take into account the seasonal constraints to fauna activity to avoid periods when lizards and bats are inactive (May-October, inclusive), and as far as possible, when native birds are nesting.

Vegetation and habitat clearance within the site must be managed to allow sufficient time to survey and capture (where applicable) fauna prior to site works.

If fauna salvage is required, the release site must be of a suitable quality and extent to support the population of the species to be relocated.

The project ecologist will confirm that these surveys have been undertaken and confirm what further action (if any) is required as a result of the findings.

The ecologist will notify the client in writing to confirm that fauna management is complete and habitat clearance may commence.

## 6.0 Bird Management

### 6.1 Nest Check Protocols

Vegetation clearance within the works footprints shall, as far as practicable, take place outside the native bird breeding season (August-February inclusive).

For work occurring in the months of March to July, no bird management is required.

If vegetation clearance is undertaken during the main breeding season, a bird and nest survey will be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced ecologist. The bird and nest survey protocols are:

- Any vegetation scheduled for removal will be surveyed for native bird nests within 24 hours prior to clearance.
- If an active native bird nest is identified during the visual inspection, all vegetation removal within 20m of the nest will cease until the ecologist has confirmed that the nest has failed, or the chicks have fledged. This area will be clearly demarcated to ensure the vegetation is not accidentally felled.
- Once an area of vegetation has been confirmed clear of active native bird nests (i.e. the chicks have fledged or the nests have failed), vegetation clearance will commence as soon as possible to prevent birds laying a second clutch.

### 6.2 Monitoring and Documentation

The findings of each site clearance will be documented and reported. The following information will be included: if any active bird nests, or occupied crevices were observed; if vegetation clearance was delayed because of an active nest was observed; the date of clearance; and if any bird nests were missed. Survey details (climatic conditions, time and date, and search effort) will also be recorded.

## 7.0 Bat Management

### 7.1 Bat Roost Protocols

Bat management procedures shall be in general accordance with the most recent DOC guidelines “Protocols for minimising the risk of felling occupied bat roosts (Bat Roost Protocols)” (v4: 2024).

Tree felling must be carried out between 1 October and 30 April when bats most active so are easier to detect and less vulnerable to disturbance<sup>1</sup>. A flow chart showing the process for tree removal is provided in Appendix 1 (from DoC, 2024).

- Acoustic bat monitors (ABMs) should be used to detect bat activity in the first instance. These must be installed by someone accredited with Competency 3.1<sup>2</sup> to determine bat presence around trees due to be felled.
- Surveys should be undertaken over a minimum of two consecutive valid survey nights<sup>3</sup> with no bat activity to have confidence that bats are not roosting in the clearance area.
- If there is uncertainty, and indications of a bat roost (e.g., crevice with staining), a trained arborist may climb the trees to check for bats under the direction of an approved bat specialist. The bat specialist must be accredited with Competency 3.3.
- If a bat is detected, surveys must continue until the bat(s) has moved to a new roost.
- If bats continue to use the roost, there is uncertainty about whether bats have left the roost, or there is high bat activity in the area, an ecologist accredited with all level 3 competencies will advise on how to proceed, consistent with the Bat Roost Protocols. The Operations Manager at DOC Hauraki will be advised.
- Trees can be felled if no bats are present. Trees must be on the day of inspection / on the day following survey completion.
- Felled trees must be checked for bats. Accidental discovery and mortality protocols are provided in Section 9.

## 7.2 Monitoring and Documentation

No further action / monitoring is required after trees are felled and checked for bats. Reporting will include a record of any trees that contain bat roosts and details the size, location and type of tree. Where no bats are detected within potential bat roost trees within the vegetation clearance areas then survey data will be provided separately.

## 8.0 Lizard Management

A tracking tunnel survey was undertaken. No lizards were detected. It is concluded that no significant populations of native lizards are present. No intensive pre-clearance management is required.

It is possible that lizards are present, and it is proposed to undertake low-intensity and relatively passive habitat management comprised of debris clear and by hand or machine and grazing (for example, providing temporary fencing to increase grazing access. This will reduce habitat

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<sup>1</sup> Bat surveys can be undertaken in North Island when temperatures exceed 8 degrees for the first four hours after sunset (Borkin et al 2023), on still, dry nights. Acoustic recorder (ABM) should begin recording no less than half an hour before sunset.

<sup>2</sup> A set of competencies developed by the NZ Bat Recovery Group to ensure that anyone working with bats is competent to do so.

<sup>3</sup> See climatic conditions above.

favourability and encourage any lizards to move outside the grazed area, thereby reducing risk of potential effects.

Incidental discovery protocols are described in section 9.

## 9.0 Incidental discovery protocols

Fauna may be accidentally discovered (injured or deceased) during Project works, and an ecologist may not be on site to assist. In the event of fauna injury / mortality, the following procedures should be followed.

### 9.1 Bats

If a bat (intact, injured or dead) is discovered on the ground or in vegetation at any point during site clearance or geotechnical works, works will pause immediately and the DOC Hotline called (0800 DOC HOT, 0800 362 468). Works will not resume without approval from DOC. More detailed instructions for managing bat discovery during vegetation maintenance works can be found in the 2024 DOC Bat Roost Protocols (V4) and Bat care for first responders (Wildlands, 2019).

### 9.2 Lizards

If an injured native skink or gecko is discovered, the animal should be placed in a box or container with holes in the lid and moist earth/leaf litter from the site and kept in a cool, shaded place. The Project ecologist should be contacted immediately, and they will notify DOC. If a dead animal is discovered, it should be placed in a ziplock bag in a secure container and the project ecologist contacted. The project ecologist will contact DOC and organise an examination if required.

## 10.0 Reporting requirements

Methods and results of all ecological surveys related to site clearance will be recorded and reported to Hawkes Bay Regional Council.

Records will include:

- Details of bird nests and bat roosts and actions taken to avoid damage to active nests / roosts.
- Details of any accidentally discovered fauna and steps taken following discovery.

## 11.0 References

Borkin, K. M., Giejsztowt, J., McQueen-Watton, J., & Smith, D. H. (2023). Influence of weather on long-tailed bat detection in a North Island exotic forest. *New Zealand Journal of Ecology*, 47(1).

DoC, 2024. Protocols for minimising the risk of felling occupied bat roosts (Bat Roost Protocols) Version 4: October 2024 approved by the New Zealand Department of Conservation's Bat Recovery Group. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/native-animals/bats/bat-recovery/protocols-minimising-risk-felling-occupied-bat-roosts.pdf>

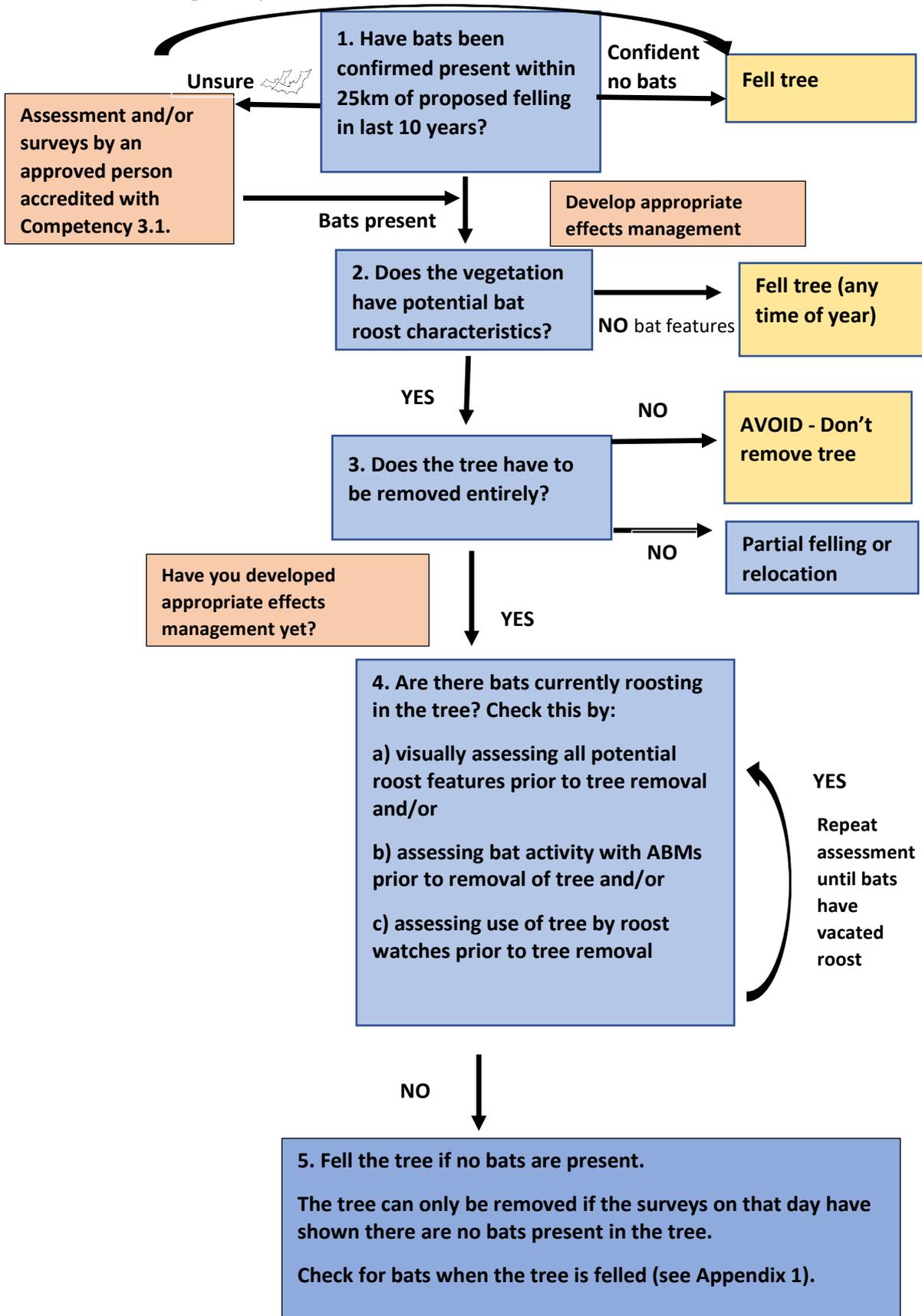
Robertson *et al*, 2021. Conservation status of birds in Aotearoa New Zealand, 2021. NEW ZEALAND THREAT CLASSIFICATION SERIES 36. NZ Department of Conservation. December 2021.

Wildlands (2019). Advice for first responders. Appendix 6 of Initial veterinary Care for New Zealand bats.

# Appendix 1: Bat Management Resources

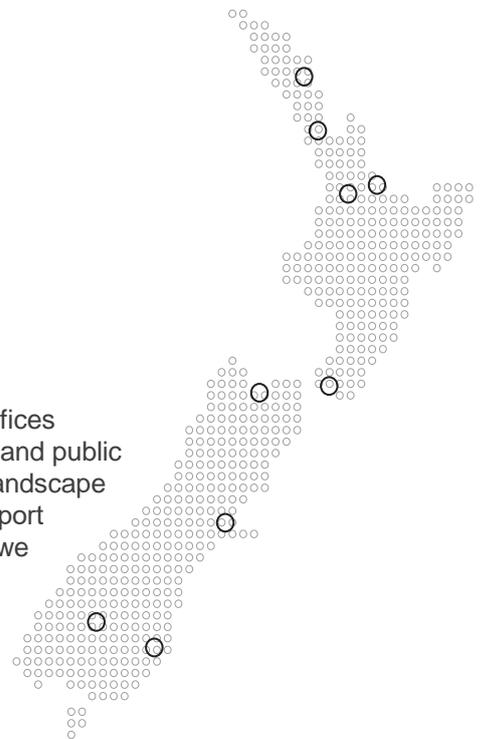
**Figure 1. Tree removal in bat areas flow chart**

Each numbered step relates to a step in the Decision Tool for Tree Removal. Follow each step fully in the text to work through the process.



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