

July 2026

Fast-track Approvals

Wildlife Approval Report



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

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Introduction

1. On 31 March 2026, Winstone Aggregates (a division of Fletcher Concrete and Infrastructure Ltd) lodged a substantive application with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for the Hunua Quarry Development (the Project). On 23 April 2026 EPA determined that the application was complete and complied with section 46(2) of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).
2. As part of the application, Winstone Aggregates is seeking an approval that would otherwise be sought under the Wildlife Act 1953.
3. On 2 June 2026, in accordance with section 51(2)(e) of the Act, the Panel Convener directed the EPA to obtain a report prepared by the Director-General of Conservation. This report is due to the EPA on 28 July 2026.

Purpose of the report

4. This report provides commentary to support the Panel's assessment of the application for a wildlife approval. The content of this report has been formed by information from out Treaty partners, where available.
5. The Act outlines at Schedule 7, clause 3 that this report must address the following matters:
 - *The purpose of the Wildlife Act 1953 and the effects of the project on the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval.*
 - *Information and requirements relating to the protected wildlife that is to be covered by the approval (including, as the case may be, in the New Zealand Threat Classification System or any relevant international conservation agreement).*
 - *Any conditions that should be imposed to manage the effects of the activity on protected wildlife.*
 - *Any conditions that recognise or protect a relevant Treaty settlement and any obligations arising under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 or the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019.*

Overview of DOC's report

6. Overall, DOC's assessment concludes that, subject to recommended conditions, the proposed activities are broadly consistent with the purposed of the Wildlife Act 1953. The LMP appears to be appropriate for elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*).
7. The Lizard Management Plan (LMP) was reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:
8. Assessment of actual and potential effects on lizards: The effects management outlined in the LMP are designed to minimise these potential effects with a less than minor overall effect on any lizards at a population level.
9. Proposed strategy to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to lizards: The proposed salvage methods and approach follow best practice methods outlined in DOC's herpetofauna inventory and monitoring toolbox (DOC 2012). Any lizard salvage and vegetation clearance of lizard habitat will be undertaken only during periods when lizards

are more active, between October and mid-April and subject to approved conditions. The salvage will be undertaken by suitably qualified persons under the supervision of Authorised personnel. However, DOC preference is that a project herpetologist and entomologist be named in conditions, which has not been provided within the LMP.

10. Discussion of post salvage monitoring- post-release monitoring will be triggered if one or more elegant geckos are translocated, or if 10 or more of any other lizard species are translocated. ARDS¹ cards will be submitted to DOC by the Project Herpetologist within 1 month following the end of the salvage. Lizard salvage outcomes will be reported by the Project Herpetologist to DOC (per requirements of the Wildlife Approval).
11. Identification of risk and contingencies- Measures are included within the LMP and proposed Wildlife Approval to monitor, adapt and amend and cease development, should matters arise prior, during or after the approval is given effect too.
12. Overall, DOC's assessment concludes that, subject to recommended conditions, the proposed activities are broadly consistent with the purposed of the Wildlife Act 1953. The LMP appears to include appropriate methodologies for salvage and relocation, proposes habitat enhancement measures, appropriate for elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*).

However, DOC recommends that consideration is given to the following matters:

13. **Release Site:** DOC's Technical Advisor raised concerns about the suitability of the release site in the Hunua Ranges Regional Park proposed in earlier iterations of the LMP (for elegant geckos in particular), but also other species, as:
 - a. The lizard species assemblage at the proposed receiving site (Hunua Ranges) is not well understood. This may take considerable effort to ascertain (especially if population densities are low), and would require a lizard survey similar to what was done by the quarry's ecologists earlier this year (utilising the same range of survey devices / techniques) conducted in suitable conditions during the 'active' season for lizards (October to April).
 - b. The number of founders (lizards relocated) may be limited – possibly too few to found a new population in the absence of existing populations near/at the release site. If that were the case, then there would be no protection provided as the population would die out. For elegant geckos in particular, recent salvage efforts have shown diminishing encounter rates, with only three geckos found (all males) since 2020.
 - c. The proposed methodology (soft release site with pest control) has shown mixed success with green geckos (*Naultinus* spp.) but has generally not been very successful. The Department's expert is aware that a similar approach was also used previously on site at Hunua Quarry and appears to have not been successful (although this could have been due to factors unrelated to the soft-release methodology).
 - d. DOC recommended Tiritiri Matangi Island (Tiri) as a better available site to translocate elegant geckos. After discussions with DOC, the applicant considered this and amended their LMP to reflect Tiri as their release site for elegant geckos and Hunua Ranges Regional Park – for other lizard species and as a back-up site for elegant geckos.

¹ ARDS cards – Amphibian and Reptile Distribution Scheme cards

14. **Adaptive management:** the applicant has referred to “adaptive management” in the LMP, stating *‘Minor flexibility or adaptations to the current methods proposed in this LMP may be made at the discretion of the Project Herpetologist’*. Any changes to the LMP would require a variation of the wildlife approval to update the conditions to amend the reference to a later-dated LMP version. Adopting an adaptive management approach could lead to changes in methodology necessitating an update to the LMP. Such a variation could be considered and, if appropriate, authorised by the Director-General of Conservation (D-G) in accordance with clause 7(2) of Schedule 7 of the Act.
15. DOC recommends that reference to “adaptive management” is removed from the LMP as its inclusion introduces uncertainty by implying that changes to methodology are enabled and do not require further approval, although minor adaptations can be made in consultation with DOC or with agreement from DOC

Sources

16. This report draws on information from the substantive application, in particular:
- Hunua Quarry Development Lizard Management Plan (Boffa Miskell). Provided with application as Appendix B12.8.4 17 July 2026.
 - Hunua Quarry: Assessment of Ecological Effects (AEE, Boffa Miskell, 2026a)
 - Hunua Quarry: Part C Wildlife Act Permit dated 17 July 2026.
 - Hunua Quarry: Pest Management Plan (PMP, Boffa Miskell, 2026b)
 - The assessment in this report is informed by DOC Technical Advisor Nicholas Harker (herpetologist). Mr Harker’s credentials and relevant experience are included within the technical assessment at Appendix B.

Context and background

Project Overview

17. Winstone Aggregates is seeking an approval through the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (“FTAA”) to expand the existing quarry operation at 489 Hunua Road, Hunua (the Project). It is located approximately 5 km east of Papakura and 35 km southeast of Auckland’s CBD. The current site lies within the Special Purpose – Quarry Zone (SPQZ) under the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) and encompasses a well-established quarrying and processing complex.
18. Winstone Aggregates proposes to develop the existing Symonds Hill Pit within the Hunua Quarry to secure additional high-quality greywacke resource and enable the continued extraction of aggregate from the quarry for a further 80 years, which will increase annual quarry production to a peak of 5.4 million tonnes of aggregate. This project is integral to the Auckland region meeting its ongoing demand for construction materials, as the Auckland region continues to grow and replace/revitalise its infrastructure.
19. Quarrying activities that will have actual or potential adverse ecological effects include forest clearance, explosions, truck movement, light/noise disturbance. Anticipated impacts associated with these activities include noise, dust and vibration.

Location

20. Hunua Quarry is situated in dissected hill country near the eastern boundary of the Manukau Ecological District within the wider Auckland Ecological Region. The quarry lies within the foothills of the Hunua Ranges east of Papakura, which contain the most

extensive areas of native vegetation in the Manukau Ecological District (most of the Manukau ED is pastoral farmland). Hunua Quarry is surrounded by established large tracts of indigenous vegetation including several areas identified as Significant Ecological Areas on steep hill and valley systems. Elegant geckos (*Naultinus elegans*) were detected in mature kanuka within the site in 2007. In 2011, a Lizard Relocation Plan (LRP) was prepared to guide lizard management within the site. A total of 152 elegant geckos were relocated between 2011 and 2025.

21. The proposed activity will be restricted to the land at Hunua Quarry, Papakura, where the lizards will be captured and to land where the lizards will be released into two lizard release sites; Tiri for up to 75 elegant geckos (*Naultinus elegans*) as directed by DOC staff, and Hunua Ranges Regional Park for other lizard species and as a back-up site for elegant geckos.

Summary of wildlife approval sought

22. The Symonds Hill Pit development will occur in eight indicative stages over up to 66 years to allow continuous production while progressively implementing environmental mitigation and rehabilitation. The Project will require the clearance of native vegetation in identified areas tied to project stages.
23. Previous surveys have identified that the elegant gecko occurs within kānuka shrublands and forest throughout the Symonds Hill area. It is considered likely that elegant gecko may be present within the project footprint but due to the complexity and height of habitat are difficult to detect.
24. The wildlife approval sought is for the capture, handling and relocation of potential lizards that will be found within the Hunua Quarry for the purpose of minimising injury and mortality to protected lizards during vegetation removal. Elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) is confirmed to be present at the project site.
25. Potential species like copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*), ornate skink (*O. ornatum*), forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*) and Pacific gecko (*Dactylocnemis pacificus*) may be present based on habitats and distribution records but have not been detected previously.
26. A Lizard Management Plan (LMP) has been prepared as part of their suite of approvals under the FTAA to address the potential effects on lizards within the site that may be impacted by the project. The LMP was amended after the lodgement of the application, following discussions with DOC, to include translocation of lizards to Tiri.
27. The LMP sets out actions that are intended to protect lizard populations inhabiting the site via salvage and habitat enhancement. Key points relevant to this application are discussed below, and associated recommended conditions are provided in Schedules attached at the end of this report.
28. In assessing the application against the purpose of the Wildlife Act, it is relevant to consider protection at both the individual level (e.g. minimising impacts, safe capture and handling) and population level (e.g. taking into account benefits offered by habitat enhancement etc).
29. The specific activities proposed involving protected wildlife are:

- capturing lizards using pitfall / funnel traps and by hand;
- handling lizards to identify species, measure and photograph them;
- releasing lizards into a prepared release site; and
- incidental killing of lizards that could not be captured.

30. Catching and handling actions are to occur within the Source Site:

- Source site: The quarry lies within the foothills of the Hunua Ranges east of Papakura. Further eastward, the forested Hunua Ranges are encompassed within the Hunua Ecological District. The quarry is located at -37.086851, 175.001521 (NZTM), shown in Figure 1 of the LMP.
- Release site(s):
 - a. Tiritiri Matangi Island (1769063E, 5947764N) – for up to 75 elegant geckos (*Naultinus elegans*) into the Lighthouse Valley area, or elsewhere as directed by DOC staff.
 - b. In the Hunua Ranges Regional Park – for other lizard species and as a back-up site for elegant geckos. The exact release location is not known at present, but the coordinates of -37.038873, 175.170135 (NZTM) are a central point in the park.

Department of Conservation advice

31. DOC expressed concern about the low number of elegant geckos found in surveys to date and the consequential viability of a founder colony in the Hunua Ranges. DOC recommended an alternative release site of Tiri as providing a much higher chance of protection given Tiri's mammalian pest-free environment, with the assurance of biosecurity in the long to support the success of the proposed salvage.
32. Overall, DOC's assessment concludes that, subject to recommended conditions, the proposed activities are broadly consistent with the purposed of the Wildlife Act 1953.
33. The Lizard Management Plan (LMP) was reviewed and evaluated against the criteria discussed below in Assessment section.

Technical Assessment

34. The LMP is considered to be technically appropriate and fit for purpose for managing the potential effects of the proposed works on indigenous lizards.
35. Hunua Quarry has been the subject of several previous lizard surveys and lizard salvages. Despite the presence of suitable habitat for several other species on site, only elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) has been detected during this previous work.
36. No native lizards were detected during recent surveys conducted by the applicant's ecologists (2026), although it is likely that elegant geckos are still present in suitable habitat which will be cleared during quarry expansion.
37. The applicant has correctly identified the other native lizard species which are most likely to be present on site, through presence of suitable habitat and known records within the surrounding landscape.

38. The applicant has identified the impacts of the proposed activity on individuals and populations of native lizards that may be present on site.
39. The proposed salvage methodology for the species which are likely to be present are identified in the LMP. The Lizard Management Plan is in accordance with best practice.
40. DOC's position is that Tiritiri Matangi would be a preferred release site for elegant geckos, as opposed to the Hunua Ranges which is currently identified as a back-up site.
41. This was considered by the Applicant and amended in the LMP. The proposed release site of Tiri for elegant geckos is suitable, as the island has an existing population of green geckos in the establishment phase (translocated from Hunua Quarry between 2016 and 2025). If only small numbers of elegant geckos are found, the previous releases on Tiri will give confidence that there are sufficient founders for a viable population.
42. For other species, if release is to occur in Hunua, it would be essential to understand what lizard species are present at the proposed Hunua Ranges release site first. If only small numbers of lizards are relocated, the presence of conspecifics at the release site will ensure population viability.
43. Alternatively, a release location closer to the source site (e.g. within contiguous habitat which isn't being cleared - where the presence of conspecifics can be assumed), may be more suitable.
44. DOC considers there is insufficient information about the lizard species assemblage at the applicant's proposed Hunua Ranges release site. DOC recommends the Applicant survey the Hunua sites before releasing lizards (of other species) to the Ranges, to ensure population viability at the receiving site.
45. The LMP states that it is unlikely that more than 75 elegant geckos will be salvaged from the Project Site and in turn proposes that a maximum of 75 individuals be released on Tiri. Any geckos salvaged in excess of this number would be released into the Hunua Ranges Regional Park, which is proposed as a recipient site for other lizard species and as a contingency site for elegant geckos. DOC recommends that the Panel consider requiring 'all' salvaged elegant geckos to be released on Tiri. The risk of this eventuality may be low, as the applicant considers it unlikely the 75-gecko threshold will be reached and that Tiri has sufficient capacity to accommodate all individuals recovered.

Overall Assessment

46. The Department of Conservation has used the information points set out at clause 2(1) of Schedule 7 of the Act as a framework for providing advice on the application.

Lizard Management

Survey

47. A population of elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) was discovered at the Hunua Quarry Stage 5 expansion footprint in 2007. Between 2011 and 2025, 152 geckos were salvaged. Initially, lizards were translocated to a release site within the wider quarry and the later translocations moved lizards to a release site on Tiri.
48. No native lizards were detected on the Site during the 2025-26 surveys, despite the presence of potential habitat. Pre-salvage surveys will be undertaken within 6 months of any vegetation clearance operation. Survey intensity will reflect the quality of the

habitat to be cleared, acknowledging that over the life of the consent and the duration of the proposed extraction, vegetation communities will change.

49. Information about native lizards present, or potentially present, at the Site are drawn from Bioweb and Auckland Council fauna records (within 20 km), and published species distribution information.

Species

50. None of the native herpetofauna recorded within 20 km of the Project Site (Table 1 of the LMP, page 8) are classified as 'Threatened' in the New Zealand Threat Classification System.
51. From surveys, Bioweb and Auckland Council fauna records, the following herpetofauna community was established,
- Elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) are present within the Site
 - Copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*), Ornate skink (*O. ornatum*) forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*) and Pacific gecko (*Dactylocnemis pacificus*) may be present based on habitats and distribution records but have not been detected previously.
 - Plague skinks (*Lampropholis delicata*) are known from the site but are classified as an unwanted organism. No management is proposed for plague skinks, and they are not discussed further.

Lizard Salvage Approach and Methods

52. DOC considers the methodology proposed in the LMP is generally appropriate and that the suggested conditions will ensure best practice is followed. Methods include:
- Live trapping using pitfall or mesh funnel traps
 - Artificial retreats (ARs)
 - Manual and visual searches
 - Mechanical habitat removal
 - Post-felling manual searches of felled vegetation:

53. Effects

a) Vegetation Clearance:

Over the life of the project (66 years), approximately 48.6 ha of vegetation will be cleared. This area includes 3 key habitat types for elegant geckos:

- Kānuka forest with emergent broadleaves & podocarps
- Tawa-taraire forest with mature kanuka
- Kānuka/manuka scrub

Applicants estimate that <75 geckos will be impacted by the proposed expansion. No other lizard species have been detected within the site and it is not possible to estimate how many, if any would be impacted.

b) Injury, death or disturbance during construction

Lizard surveys and salvage will be undertaken in potential habitat areas prior to clearance. These surveys will be extended beyond these areas if suitable habitat has expanded and lizards may have dispersed into those areas. Where lizards are detected, they will be captured and relocated to a prepared release site using

standard salvage and relocation methods by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologists.

c) Habitat loss and fragmentation

Habitat loss is a certainty if lizards are present. Indigenous forest revegetation in a combined area of 52.5 ha is described in the AEE. Habitat fragmentation is unlikely to result from the pit expansion as vegetation will be cleared in stages without leaving isolated vegetation fragments. Based on the vegetation types, 25.35 ha of key habitat for elegant geckos, and other lizards, will be removed. A further 19.11 ha of lower quality lizard habitat will be cleared.

d) Noise, dust and vibrations

Potential sub-lethal effects include ongoing disturbance from elevated noise, dust, light and vibration levels which can impact animal health and breeding success. The dust generated by quarry operations is more likely to be deposited along exposed forest margins, coating leaves and suppressing sensitive understorey and epiphytic flora, thereby impacting the food and air quality for native lizards. Noise, dust and vibration levels are proposed to be managed through consent conditions and industry best practice.

e) Exposure to predators

Pest management is proposed across the site, comprising new and existing pest management areas. Pest management is detailed in the Hunua Quarry Pest Management Plan.

f) Stress and disease transmission

Lizards will be placed in individual containers and kept in a cool place until released. Handling will be minimised to ensure they do not become stressed. All traps will be checked daily in the morning. Lizard handling will follow best practice and hygiene protocols to minimise the risk of disease transmission. Disease screening prior to translocation to Tiri is proposed by the revised LMP.

g) Lizard release site: pest control and research

Intensive mouse control is proposed at the release site. Applicant also identifies research opportunities for drone surveys of geckos in the release site. However, DOC recommended Tiri as a release site as it offers much higher chance of protection because the island is mammalian pest-free, and benefits from the assurance of biosecurity in the long term. This consideration was adopted by the Applicant and is now reflected in the new site plan and updated LMP, dated 17 July 2026.

Management and Release site

54. Due to potential presence of native lizards, it is not possible to avoid impacts on them as the project proposes that all the vegetation within the Site is removed. For this reason, lizard salvage is the proposed management method, and a new release site is proposed.

55. The management approach prior to any clearance is to:

- Delineate habitat clearance areas.
- Survey / salvage likely habitat for lizards prior to clearance.

- Carefully fell vegetation and repeatedly check felled vegetation for geckos over a three week period.
 - Mulch felled material following all checks.
56. Pre-salvage surveys will be undertaken within 6 months of any vegetation clearance operation. Survey intensity will reflect the quality of the habitat to be cleared, acknowledging that over the life of the consent and the duration of the proposed extraction, vegetation communities will change.
57. If lizards are detected at any time, salvage activities will begin immediately, and trapping intensity will increase to 5 m spacing of trap tools in an approximate grid layout.
58. If no lizards are detected after 5 days, trapping will cease in that area. Post-felling management may still be required, dependent on vegetation composition (i.e. presence of mature kānuka).
59. All lizards captured will be taken to the release site, or into quarantine within 8 hours.

Best practice methods

60. Lizard survey and salvage tools are consistent with the DOC Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox (DOC 2012).
61. The lizard management will follow best practise standards provided in Department of Conservation guidance documents. These include methods to survey and capture lizards (DOC 2012) and follow the 'Principles for Lizard Salvage Translocations' (DOC 2019) and 'Guidance for lizard habitat clearance' (DOC 2023). The key principles, discussed in this report where applicable, include:
- Lizard species' values and site significance must be assessed at both the impact (development) and receiving sites. Actual and potential development-related effects and their significance must be assessed.
 - Alternatives to moving lizards must be considered.
 - Threatened lizard species require more careful consideration than less-threatened species.
 - Lizard salvage, transfer and release must use the best available methodology.
 - Receiving sites and their carrying capacities must be suitable in the long term.
 - Monitoring is required to evaluate the salvage operation.
 - Reporting is required to communicate outcomes of salvage operations and facilitate process improvements.
 - Contingency actions are required when lizard salvage and transfer activities fail.
62. Lizards will be held individually in cloth bags in a secure, vented container out of the sun. Lizards will be transported to the release site or captive holding facility and will not be held for more than 8 hour. Lizards will be released into prepared habitats (e.g. dense grassland and woody refuge piles) in the release site.
63. Potential risks associated with the proposed management plan are overheating, overcrowding/ competition, displacement and injury/ death. These risks will be minimised using an experienced herpetologist and suitably experienced field staff under the supervision of the herpetologist. However, However the project ecologists are not named in the LMP. DOC's preference is that a project herpetologist and entomologist be named in conditions. Training requirements or standards do not exist for lizard or

protected invertebrate handling, so DOC usually assesses suitable people based on peer review and credentials supplied by the proposed project ecologist.

64. Although credentials have not been supplied with this application, contributing ecologists to the LMP, Katherine Muchna have previously been assessed by DOC as being suitably experienced to safely handle lizards and oversee their management.
65. DOC requests the opportunity to review and certify the credentials of any additional supervising project ecologists prior to approval.

Contingency Actions

66. Lizards can inhabit unlikely locations and sometimes be found in surprising abundance. The following contingency plans are proposed:
 - Higher number of lizards captured than expected- If the number of lizards captured by the 10th trapping day isn't declining, destructive searches and mechanical habitat removal is proposed to remove any remaining habitat onsite, so lizards are unlikely to disperse back into the site.
 - Lizard monitoring does not detect translocated individuals- In the first instance, monitoring surveys will intensify in order to try and detect geckos in the release area.

Competencies

67. It is important that wildlife management is led by ecologists who are suitably experienced to ensure that management plans are implemented to the necessary standards and welfare is safely managed during capture, handling, transport and release.
68. The LMP says lizard salvage will be implemented by or under the supervision of Matt Turner (Herpetologist, Boffa Miskell) or Katherine Muchna (Senior Herpetologist, Boffa Miskell) with support from Boffa Miskell staff.
69. DOC's preference is that a project herpetologist and entomologist be named in conditions. Training requirements or standards do not exist for lizard or protected invertebrate handling, so DOC usually assesses suitable people based on peer review and credentials supplied by the proposed project ecologist.

Monitoring and reporting

70. Lizard salvage outcomes will be reported by the Project Herpetologist to DOC (per requirements of the Wildlife Approval). Reports will be provided by 30 June of the year the activity took place. The monitoring and reporting provisions of the LMP appear appropriate and no concerns were raised.

Term

71. DOC accepts a term of 10 years to be appropriate.

Incidental killing and overall wildlife protection

72. The LMP identifies mortality as a potential effect for the lizards that could not be captured. The LMP proposes actions to minimise death or injury but has applied for 'incidental killing' under the Wildlife Approval. DOC takes the view that, in general, the proposed management actions are aligned with the Wildlife Act's purpose of wildlife protection. Subject to recommended conditions being imposed and complied with, there may be a net benefit for the populations, even if there are some incidental deaths.

Matters considered in relation to the criteria for a wildlife approval

Statutory context

73. Clause 1 of Schedule 7 defines "wildlife approval" as meaning a lawful authority for an act or omission that would otherwise be an offence under any sections 56(1), 58(1), 63(1), 63A, 64, 65(1)(f), 70G(1), 70P, 70T(2) of the Wildlife Act 1953.
74. Catching alive, killing and liberating protected wildlife without lawful authority are offences under the Wildlife Act:
- Sections 63(1) and 70G(1) make it an offence to "hunt or kill" (the definition of which includes related activities such as "taking", "capturing" and "disturbing") protected wildlife without lawful authority. This also includes killing that is incidental, which is that which is not directly intended but is unavoidable and foreseeable as a consequence of carrying out an otherwise lawful activity (s 53A).
 - Section 56(1)(ab) establishes that no person may liberate; or capture or attempt to capture or have in their possession for the purpose of liberating, wildlife without the prior written authority of the Director-General.
 - The activities proposed (catch alive, handle, liberate, and incidentally kill wildlife) can be considered for wildlife approval under the FTAA. A wildlife approval granted under the Act is treated as if it were granted under the Wildlife Act (Schedule 7, clause 7(1)).

Purpose of the Wildlife Act 1953

75. The purpose of the Wildlife Act is to protect wildlife. It sets the legislative framework for protecting wildlife in New Zealand.
76. The Wildlife Act creates a tiered system, with different levels of protection required for different species. Most wildlife is absolutely protected – meaning that it cannot be lawfully hunted, killed, harassed, or possessed without specific authorisation. Some species that may be hunted or killed in certain circumstances, such as in set hunting seasons, or to prevent damage to property. Finally, the Wildlife Act also identifies wildlife that is not protected and not controlled for hunting purposes.

Information and requirements relating to protected wildlife

The threat status of species identified in the LMP that may be present in the area are provided below:

Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Red List status
Elegant gecko	<i>Naultinus elegans</i>	At Risk - Declining
Forest gecko	<i>Mokopirirakau granulatus</i>	At Risk – Declining
Pacific gecko	<i>Dactylocnemis pacificus</i>	Not Threatened
Copper skink	<i>Oligosoma aeneum</i>	At Risk – Declining

Ornate skink	<i>Oligosoma ornatum</i>	At Risk – Declining
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- Elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*) are confirmed as present within the Site.
- Forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*), Pacific gecko (*Dactylocnemis pacificus*), Copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*), Ornate skink (*O. ornatum*) may be present based on habitats and distribution records but have not been detected previously.
- Plague skinks (*Lampropholis delicata*) are known from the site but are classified as an unwanted organism. No management is proposed for plague skinks, and they are not discussed further.

The role of species management plans

77. Wildlife Act approvals for wildlife salvage typically include approval of a species management plan as part of the process. That is, an applicant provides a lizard management plan with their application, detailing proposed actions. The detail in the lizard management plan informs the assessment against the purpose of the Wildlife Act and, if the application is approved, the Wildlife Act authorisation is conditional on compliance with the approved plan.

- a. Wildlife Act approvals for wildlife salvage typically include approval of a species management plan as part of the process. That is, an applicant provides a species management plan with their application, detailing proposed actions. The detail in the species management plan informs the assessment against the purpose of the Wildlife Act and, if the application is approved, the Wildlife Act authorisation is conditional on compliance with the approved plan.

Conditions to manage effects on protected wildlife

78. The applicant has provided a thorough set of conditions for the wildlife approval. DOC has recommended minor tracked changes and recommended conditions aligned with best practice. Recommended conditions are in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 at the end of this report.
79. This recommendation includes consideration of section 83 of the Act – DOC considers that each condition would not be more onerous than necessary to address the reason for which it is set.

Additional Information

International Conservation Agreements

80. The table below outlines the international agreements that are relevant to the approval being sought.

Table 1: International conservation agreements

Relevant Agreement	Signatory date
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – Membership and Contributions for Nature Platform	New Zealand became a member in 1948

The United National Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

81. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international agreement that promotes the development of global targets, national strategies and action plans by countries for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity.
82. As a party to the CBD, New Zealand is required to have a national biodiversity strategy and action plan. *‘Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020’* sets out New Zealand’s national contribution to reversing the loss of biodiversity worldwide.
83. Key objectives of the strategy that are relevant to this application include:
- biodiversity protection is at the heart of economic activity
 - natural resources are managed sustainably
 - management ensures that biological threats and pressures are reduced through management
 - ecosystems and species are protected, restored, resilient, and connected from mountain tops to ocean depths.
84. The application seeks to salvage and relocate resident lizards from the project site. The proposal to salvage lizards and enhance lizard habitats at the relocation sites should provide a level of biodiversity protection from the adverse effects of the development. Potential effects on lizards are anticipated to be less than minor and with the proposed mitigation measure, in the long term with the proposed pest management would provide a net benefit for native lizards.

International Union for Conservation of Nature

85. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a globally recognised conservation body and New Zealand’s membership reflects its commitment to biodiversity and ecosystem protection. While the IUCN is not a treaty-level agreement, New Zealand’s contributions to the IUCN’s Contributions for Nature platform and its alignment with global biodiversity targets (e.g. the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework) reflect a strong public commitment to species recovery and habitat protection.

86. The IUCN Red List status of species named in the application is provided in the table below:

Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Red List status
elegant gecko	<i>(Naultinus elegans)</i>	Vulnerable (decreasing)
Forest gecko	<i>Mokopirirakau granulatus</i>	Vulnerable (decreasing)
Pacific gecko	<i>Dactylocnemis pacificus</i>	Least concern (stable)
Copper skink	<i>Oligosoma aeneum</i>	Least concern (stable)
Ornate skink	<i>Oligosoma ornatum</i>	Least concern (decreasing)

Consistency with statutory planning documents and policy

87. The following statutory planning documents and associated policies are relevant to the consideration of the wildlife approval sought for this Project.

Conservation General Policy 2005

88. The Conservation General Policy 2005 (CGP) provides guidance for the administration and management of lands and waters and natural and historic resources managed under conservation legislation including the Wildlife Act.

89.1 Under policy 7 of the CGP, DOC should undertake statutory advocacy to protect natural resources, particularly when indigenous terrestrial species are threatened with loss or decline.

89.2 The CGP does not contain policies specific to the proposed wildlife activities. However, the following policies are relevant:

11.1(a) Any application for a concession or other authorisation will comply with, or be consistent with, the objectives of the relevant Act, the statutory purposes for which the place is held, and any conservation management strategy or plan.

11.1(c) ...authorisation holders should monitor the effects of authorised activities on natural resources, historical and cultural heritage, and the benefit and enjoyment of the public, including public access, to inform future management decisions.

11.1(d) ...authorisation holders will be responsible for the safe conduct of their operations, including the safety of staff, clients, contractors, and the public, and compliance with relevant safety standards and legal obligations.

Auckland Conservation Management Strategy 2014-2024

89. The Auckland Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) describes the conservation values of Auckland. It provides guidance for DOC's work in the form of a vision, objectives, outcomes for Places, policies, and milestones.
90. This CMS describes the conservation values present in Auckland and provides guidance for the Department's work in the form of a vision, objectives, outcomes for places, policies and milestones, translating the Department's Strategic Outcomes to Auckland. The places described in Part Two of this CMS have been identified for the purposes of integrated conservation management and require some specific management direction.
91. Section one contains a vision, objectives and milestones that apply to all public conservation lands, waters and resources in Auckland. Section two addresses places in Auckland that have been identified for the purposes of integrated conservation management, and which require some specific management direction. Each place has a description, an outcome statement (outcome), policies and milestones.
92. The Project Site is not located within a place listed in Part Two. Locations not covered in the places section of the CMS require less detailed management direction. Conservation management will still be undertaken in these areas in line with the vision, objectives, policies milestones and related provisions in parts one, three and four of the CMS.
93. Though not the exact site for the project, CMS mentions Hunua Ranges (part in Manukau) of significance due to being a second major hill range flanking Auckland's metropolitan area; dominated by native forest and water catchments with lake reservoirs; significant areas of native forest and maturing vegetation; low levels of built modification; rated very high on two assessment criteria and high on four others.
94. Auckland Council manages a large area of the Hunua Ranges, with public conservation land located to the north and south. The ranges contain naturally uncommon kauri, podocarp and tawhairaunui/hard beech. One of the objectives of the CMS is to recognise that the Hunua Ranges are geographically a single entity despite being divided by DOC and local government jurisdictions, and liaise closely with the Auckland Council, Waikato councils, tāngata whenua and others to achieve integrated and compatible decision making about the protection, enhancement and recreational use of them.
95. The CMS does not contain policies specific to the proposed wildlife activities. The application is not inconsistent with the CMS.

Previous engagement with the proposal

96. The applicant first made contact with DOC in December 2025 to begin pre-lodgement engagement. The applicant and DOC have engaged in dialogue to discuss the proposal, particularly in relation to the wildlife approvals required prior to lodgement on 31 March 2026.

Post-lodgement

97. DOC and the applicant have continued to engage post lodgement, and the engagement has been constructive, particularly in relation to a proposed variation of the lizard release site suggested by DOC. This report will identify where outstanding issues remain.

Treaty of Waitangi settlement considerations and obligations

Treaty of Waitangi settlement obligations

98. Under section 7 of the Act the Panel must act in a manner that is consistent with obligations arising under existing Treaty Settlements. Ministry for the Environment (MfE) provided a report which sets out the section 18 matters it considered relevant to the application. MfE did not consult with DOC during the preparation of this report.

99. DOC has read the report and agrees with the Treaty settlements listed are relevant to this Project, however, in addition to these DOC notes the relevance of the legislated settlements of Ngāti Manuhiri and Ngāti Paoa.

Treaty of Waitangi principles

100. DOC's work in preparing this report has been carried out in a manner that, as far as possible, gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (arising from the obligation on DOC from section 4 of the Conservation Act). This includes providing the Panel information about our engagement with Treaty partners on the application, as well as commenting on whether granting the proposed approval would be consistent with Treaty principles.

- **Partnership** – mutual good faith and reasonableness.
- **Informed decision-making** - Both the Crown and Māori need to be well informed of the other's interests and views. Consultation is a means to achieve informed decision-making.
- **Active protection** - requires informed decision-making and judgement as to what is reasonable in the circumstances.
- **Redress** – requires recognition of existing rights and interests.

Summary of engagement

101. In preparing this report, the Department of Conservation has engaged with the following Māori entities;

- Ngāti Whanaunga
- Ngāti Te Ata
- Ngāti Tamaterā
- Ngāti Tamaoho
- Ngāti Maru
- Te Ākitai Waiohua
- Ngāti Paoa
- Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki

102. For this application, this has included:

- Notifying Treaty partners of the application.

103. We note this has occurred within the context of the fast-track process with prescribed timeframes, and where the applicant has an obligation to consult and Treaty partners have a right to be invited to comment. The scope of engagement also recognised DOC's role to provide reports and comments on the application, and not in its usual role as decision-maker.

104. Ngāti Maru responded that they will defer to the Mana Whenua for that area, Ngāti Te Ata Wai o Hua and Te Akitai Waiohua for their consultation and engagement with this application.

105. 95.6 DOC have kept Treaty partners informed by email during the consideration of the Fast Track application, when it was lodged with the EPA and most recently they were emailed in relation to the revised release arrangements for salvaged lizards from Hunua Ranges to Tiri. In addition to the Maori entities listed above, DOC informed the following Māori entities of the proposed translocation to Tiri;

- Ngāti Manuhiri
- Te Kawerau a Maki
- Te Patukirikiri

106. Given time constraints in the finalising of this report relative to the change to the release site, Treaty partners have not yet had sufficient opportunity to review and comment on the revised translocation arrangements to Tiri.

Appendix A: Proposed Wildlife Act Conditions- Schedules

PROPOSED WILDLIFE ACT AUTHORITY CONDITIONS

The applicant has proposed conditions (listed as Schedule 3 below) relating to lizard management in their wildlife approval conditions (Appendix B12.7 Conditions) and DOC is satisfied with the condition set provided. Further to this, DOC has proposed Schedule 1 list and additional conditions in Schedule 2 to facilitate ongoing management of the approval. If this condition is accepted along with the recommendations identified in this report, DOC would be satisfied that the approval would be in line with the purpose of the Wildlife Act and provide for the protection of absolutely protected wildlife.

SCHEDULE 1

1.	Authorised activity (including the species, any approved quantities and collection methods) (clause 2)	1. <u>Activity:</u> a. To catch, handle and liberate lizard species listed in Schedule 4 for the purpose of wildlife salvage and monitoring b. To incidentally kill wildlife listed in Schedule 4 provided all reasonable steps are taken in accordance with this approval to avoid killing wildlife. 2. <u>Methodology-</u> In accordance with 'Hunua Quarry Development Lizard Management Plan (Boffa Miskell)' dated 17 July 2026
2.	The Land (clause 2)	<u>Source site:</u> Hunua Quarry, at 489 Hunua Road, South Auckland located at -37.086851, 175.001521 (NZTM). <u>Release site:</u> - Tiritiri Matangi Island (1769063E, 5947764N) – for up to 75 elegant geckos (<i>Naultinus elegans</i>) into the Lighthouse Valley area as directed by DOC staff. - In the Hunua Ranges Regional Park – for other lizard species and as a back-up site for elegant geckos, in consultation with DOC. The exact release location is not known at present, but the coordinates of -37.038873, 175.170135 (NZTM) are a central point in the park. Location will be confirmed <u>in consultation with DOC</u> prior to any capture.
3.	Personnel authorised to undertake the Authorised Activity (clause 3)	a) to be confirmed b) Additional personnel as may be approved in writing by the Department.

4.	Term (clause 4)	(insert date of Approval) 10 years from date of approval
5.	Authority Holder's address for notices (clause 8)	The Authority Holder's address in New Zealand is: Winstone Aggregates PO Box 17 195 Greenlane Auckland Attention: Phil Heffernan – Winstone Project Manager Email: Phil.Heffernan@winstoneaggregates.co.nz
6.	Department of Conservation's address for notices	The Grantor's address for all correspondence is: Permissions Team Level 4 73 Rostrevor Street Hamilton 3200 askpermissions@doc.govt.nz_
7.	Special Conditions (clause 10)	See Schedule 3

SCHEDULE 2

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE AUTHORITY

Interpretation

1. The Approval Holder is responsible for the acts and omissions of its employees, contractors or agents. The Approval Holder is liable under this Authority for any breach of the terms of the Authority by its employees, contractors or agents as if the breach had been committed by the Approval Holder.
2. Where obligations bind more than one person, those obligations bind those persons jointly and separately.

What is being authorised?

3. The Approval Holder is only allowed to carry out the Authorised Activity in the Land described in Schedule 1, clause 5.
4. Any arrangements necessary for access over land that is controlled, owned, or managed by someone other than the Department of Conservation are the responsibility of the Approval Holder. In granting this authorisation the Grantor does not warrant that such access can be obtained.
5. The Approval Holder must immediately notify the Department of Conservation of any taxa found which are new to science. In addition, the Approval Holder must lodge holotype specimens and a voucher specimen of any new taxa with a recognised national collection.

Who is authorised?

6. Only the Authorised Personnel described in Schedule 1, clause 2 are authorised to carry out the Authorised Activity, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Director-General for Conservation.

What are the liabilities?

7. The Approval Holder agrees to exercise the Authority at the Approval Holder's own risk and releases to the full extent permitted by law the Department of Conservation employees and agents from all claims and demands of any kind and from all liability which may arise in respect of any accident, damage or injury occurring to any person or property arising from the Approval Holder's exercise of the Authorised Activity.
8. The Approval Holder must indemnify the Director-General of Conservation against all claims, actions, losses and expenses of any nature which the Director-General of Conservation may suffer or incur or for which the Director-General of Conservation may become liable arising from the Approval Holder's exercise of the Authorised Activity.
9. This indemnity is to continue after the expiry or termination of this Authority in respect of any acts or omissions occurring or arising before its expiry or termination.

What about compliance with legislation and Director-General of Conservation's notices and directions?

10. The Approval Holder must comply with all statutes, bylaws and regulations, and all notices, directions and requisitions of the Director-General of Conservation and any competent Authority relating to the exercise of this Approval.

Revocation

11. The Director-General of Conservation may revoke this (Authority pursuant to clause 7(4) of Schedule 7 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024) at any time in respect of the whole or any part of Authorised Activity if:
 - a. the Approval Holder breaches any of the conditions of this Approval; or
 - b. in the Director-General's opinion, the carrying out of the Authorised Activity causes or is likely to cause any unforeseen or unacceptable effects.
12. If the Director-General of Conservation intends to revoke this Approval in whole or in part, the Director-General must give the Approval Holder such prior notice as appears reasonable and necessary in the circumstances.

What about the payment of costs?

13. The Approval Holder must pay the standard Department of Conservation charge-out rates for any staff time and mileage required to monitor compliance with this Approval and to investigate any alleged breaches of the terms and conditions of it.

What about Progress or final reports?

14. If the Director-General of Conservation (D-G) so requests, the Approval Holder must keep the D-G and relevant Treaty partners informed on the progress of the Authorised Activities. Upon completion of the Activities and in accordance with any reasonable request from the D-G, the Authority Holder must forward a copy of the research findings, reports and publications to the D-G. The Approval Holder acknowledges that the D-G may provide copies of these findings to relevant Treaty partners.

Are there any Special Conditions?

15. Special conditions are specified in Schedule 3. If there is a conflict between this Schedule 2 and the Special Conditions in Schedule 3, the Special Conditions will prevail.

Can the Authority be varied?

16. The Approval Holder may apply to the Director-General of Conservation for variations to this Approval in accordance with clause 7(2) of Schedule 7 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

SCHEDULE 3

WILDLIFE PERMIT CONDITIONS

Authorised Activity

1. All works relating to lizard fauna, including capture, handling, marking and relocation must occur in accordance with the Lizard Management Plan prepared by Boffa Miskell dated 17 July 2026.
2. The wildlife approval is for the capture, handling, and release of elegant gecko (*Naultinus elegans*), copper skink (*Oligosoma aeneum*), ornate skink (*O. ornatum*), forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*) and Pacific gecko (*Dactylocnemis pacificus*), provided that best efforts are taken to avoid incidental deaths in accordance with the Lizard Management Plan.
3. The Approval Holder is permitted to kill wildlife listed in Schedule 4 provided all reasonable efforts have been made to meet all of the terms and conditions expressed and implied in this Authority.
4. This wildlife approval is valid for 10 years from the date of approval.

Lizard Capture and Handling

5. Lizards must only be handled by those people named in the Lizard Management Plan, or by others under the direct supervision of a SQEP.
6. Lizard capture, handling and relocation must only be undertaken between 1 October and 30 April when lizards are most active.
7. Capture and handling of lizards must involve only techniques that minimise the risk of infection or injury to the animal and must follow those described in the Herpetofauna inventory and monitoring toolbox <http://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/biodiversity-inventoryand-monitoring/herpetofauna/>.
8. The DOC Operations Manager for Auckland must be contacted immediately for further advice if lizard species other than those listed in Condition 2 above are located within the clearance area or within the release site.
9. The Authority Holder must ensure all live capture traps are covered to protect lizards from exposure and minimise stress. Damp leaf litter or other material must be provided to reduce desiccation risk, and the bottom of the pit-fall trap must be perforated to allow drainage of water.
10. The Authority Holder must ensure all live capture traps, (e.g., pitfall traps and G minnow traps), are checked at least every 24 hours.
11. The Authority Holder must sterilise any instruments that come in contact with the lizards and/or are used to collect or measure lizards between each location. A separate holding bag must be used for each animal. All gear should be thoroughly cleaned and dried between sites.
12. The Authority Holder must ensure lizards are temporarily held individually in a suitable container (e.g., breathable cloth bag) and held out of direct sunlight to minimise the risk of overheating, stress and death.

13. The Authority Holder is strongly encouraged to adhere to current best practice hygiene protocols when visiting sites of known native frog populations to avoid the spread of pest organisms such as chytrid fungus.

Death of wildlife associated with salvage activities

14. If any lizards should die during the approved activities of catch, transfer or liberation, the Approval Holder must:
- (a) inform the Auckland DOC Operations Manager [insert contact details] within 48 hours, chill the body if it can be delivered within 72 hours, or freeze the body if delivery will take longer than 72 hours; and
 - (b) send the body to Massey University Wildlife Post Mortem Service for necropsy OR as otherwise advised by the Auckland DOC Operations Manager, along with details of the animal's history; and
 - (c) pay for any costs incurred in investigation of the death of any lizard; and
 - (d) if required by the DOC Operations Manager, cease the Authorised Activity for a period determined by the DOC Operations Manager.

Euthanasia

15. If any lizards are found injured as part of the Authorised Activity, the Approval Holder must contact the Project Ecologist to get advice on management of the lizard. Injured lizard(s) may be euthanised on recommendation of the Project Herpetologist or a veterinarian.

Reporting

16. A report summarising the salvage and relocation results must be prepared and submitted to auckland@doc.govt.nz and permissionshamilton@doc.govt.nz within 30 working days from the completion date of the salvage. Specifically, this report will include:
- a) details and Results of lizard salvage and relocation work. Should native lizards be found, then the following will also be included in the report:
 - i. photos of lizard salvage methods utilised;
 - ii. photos of lizards captured (including photos of the salvage and relocation areas);
 - iii. a map showing the location of lizard upon capture and upon release;
 - iv. the species and number of any lizards detected, captured, and released, and
 - v. the results of all surveys and monitoring.
 - a) descriptions of how lizard management activities outlined in the LMP were followed, including conditions detailed in the WAA permit and associated resource consent conditions;
 - b) an Amphibian and Reptile Distribution Scheme (ARDS) card detailing information relating to captured lizards (also to be provided to herpetofauna@doc.govt.nz); and,
 - c) a brief summary regarding the outcomes of the LMP, including any improvements/changes that should be implemented in future.

Costs

17. The Approval Holder must pay the Department of Conservation's standard charge-out rates for any staff time and mileage required to monitor compliance with this Approval and to investigate any alleged breaches of the terms and conditions of it.

Employees, Contractors, or Agents

18. Winstone Aggregates is responsible for the acts and omissions of its employees, contractors and agents.
19. Winstone Aggregates is liable under this Approval for any breach of its terms by employees, contractors, or agents, as if the breach were committed by Winstone Aggregates.
20. Where obligations bind more than one person, these obligations bind those persons jointly and separately.

SCHEDULE 4

Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Red List status
Elegant gecko	<i>Naultinus elegans</i>	At Risk - Declining
Forest gecko	<i>Mokopirirakau granulatus</i>	At Risk – Declining
Pacific gecko	<i>Dactylocnemis pacificus</i>	Not Threatened
Copper skink	<i>Oligosoma aeneum</i>	At Risk – Declining
Ornate skink	<i>Oligosoma ornatum</i>	At Risk – Declining

Appendix B: Technical expert credentials

DOC has relied on the advice of technical expert Nicholas Harker (Herpetology)

His credentials are set out below:

My full name is Nicholas Forbes Harker. I hold a BSc/LLB majoring in Ecology, and a BSc Hons (with distinction) in Biological Sciences from the University of Auckland. I am currently a Technical Advisor in the Fauna Advice Team in the Department of Conservation. I have held this position for 10 months, and prior to that worked as a consultant herpetologist for eight years.

My current work has primarily focused on species recovery, translocation, and survey with a focus on herpetology. Previously (as a consultant) my work was focussed on lizard survey and salvage for developments. I am a current member of the Lizard Technical Advisory Group in DOC, and have been Chairperson/President of the New Zealand Herpetological Society Inc. since 2018.