

APPLICANT RESPONSES TO DOC PRE-LODGEMENT COMMENTS

DOC Comments	Applicant Response	Reference
Wildlife Act Permissions		
DOC has not been provided with any ecological surveys related to this proposal. It is likely that authorisation under the Wildlife Act 1953 to capture, handle and relocate lizards will be required (and for incidental harm). Surveys will need to be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of any protected wildlife to determine if additional approvals are required. DOC discussed the potential species that may be present on the site in a meeting with the applicant's terrestrial ecologist on 17 April 2026. The following species were discussed: Lizard species identified within 15km of site: • Copper skink (At Risk – declining) • Barking gecko (At Risk - declining) • Northern grass skink (Not Threatened) • Raukawa gecko (Not Threatened) Bats have been recorded within 25km of site. Long-tailed bat (Threatened –Nationally Critical). Further survey work will be needed to determine presence or absence of bats. Avifauna potentially present near the site, especially within river and riparian wetland: ▪ Pied shag (At Risk – recovering) ▪ Black shag (At Risk - relict) ▪ Little black shag (At Risk – naturally uncommon)	Applicant agrees with DOC's comments in these respects and will be undertaking fulsome ecological surveys to confirm presence or absence of any protected wildlife. At this referral stage it has been conservatively anticipated that wildlife approvals will be required. Surveys and additional ecological work will inform the scope of these for the substantive application.	Section 3.2 of the Referral Application Document Bullet pt 4 on Slide 4, bullet pt 3 on slide 6 and bullet pt 3 of slide 4 of Attachment 7A.

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▪ New Zealand dabchick (Threatened – nationally increasing) ▪ Grey duck (Threatened – nationally vulnerable) ▪ Bittern (Threatened – nationally critical) ▪ North Island weka (At Risk - relict) There are no records of the North Island weka being present on the site, but it is suspected to be present. The potential dam has a large footprint so there may be need to capture weka if they are found to be present. A wildlife approval will be needed if this is the case.		
Of particular concern for avifauna is the proposal for ramping of the dam once operational. The effects of ramping on breeding birdlife if water levels rise by 5m as proposed could be significant, especially in shallower areas.	At this stage, the Applicant's ecologists don't see this as a significant potential effect given that this will be new habitat that will not be suitable breeding habitat for most birdlife. Never-the-less this potential effect is acknowledged and will be fully assessed as part of the substantive application	Refer bullet pt 5 on Slide 4 and bullet pt 3 on slide 14 of Attachment 7A.
The application for wildlife approval needs to include all the information listed in Schedule 7, Clause 2 (FTTA). Guidance for applying for a wildlife approval under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 can be viewed here: Guidance for applying for a wildlife approval guidance-for-applying-for-a-wildlife-approval.pdf DOC considers that adverse effects on conservation values, including indigenous biodiversity, that arise as a result must be appropriately managed. This is of particular importance where the species affected are Threatened or At-Risk and where those effects may be cumulative.	Noted	Section 3.2 of the Referral Application Document
Freshwater Fisheries Regulations		

DOC Comments	Applicant Response	Reference
There is limited fish survey information available in the area, but DOC suspects present on site could be: • Longfin eel (At Risk – declining) • Inanga (Threatened – nationally vulnerable) Wetlands are present at the proposed site, and it is likely a complex freshwater fisheries approval will be needed for the dam and potentially other aspects of the project. There is potential that the dam would significantly impact fish passage and water quality downstream of the site. Additional information would help to clarify this risk. DOC also notes that there is a regional whitebait fishery nearby. The updated Fish Passage Guidelines (Version 2.0) set out best-practice approaches and design standards for providing fish passage: https://niwa.co.nz/freshwater/fish-passage-home/new-zealand-fish-passage	Agreed and will be addressed in the substantive application.	Refer bullet pt 4 on Slide 4, bullet pt 3 on slide 6 and bullet pt 3 of slide 4 of Attachment 7A.
Treaty partners		
In the time available, DOC has not carried out a process to identify Treaty partners with interests relevant to this site. DOC encourages the applicant to engage directly with relevant Māori groups as required by section 29 of the Act.	Agreed and support. Engagement with relevant Māori groups will continue through the substantive application preparation phase.	
Treaty Settlement implications/considerations:		
DOC is aware of the following Treaty settlement obligations that may be relevant to this site • Rongowhakaata Claims Settlement Act 2012	Agreed and addressed in the Referral Application Document	Section 3.6.3 of the Referral Application Document

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• Ngai Tāmanuhiri Claims Settlement Act 2012		
Potential Resource Management Act (RMA) considerations and effects:		
No ecological surveys have been provided to DOC at this time. If the project is referred, additional information about the values of the site and any impacts of the proposal to habitat and indigenous vegetation will need to be provided as part of the substantive application. It is recommended that any historical ecological surveys are updated to ensure they reflect the current conditions of the site. DOC notes that a range of native fish species have been identified in lowland waterways near the site. Surveys should be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of these species within the project footprint.	Applicant agrees with DOC's comments in these respects and will be undertaking fulsome indigenous vegetation surveys to inform the substantive application.	Refer slide 3 (vegetation), slide 4 (birds), slide 5 (lizards), slide 6 (bats), slide 7 (wetlands), slide 8 (streams), slide (water quality) and slide 10 (fish) of Attachment 7A.
DOC Statutory Planning Document considerations in relation to site (e.g. CGP/CMS/CMP):		
The relevant statutory documents for this application include: > Conservation General Policy: Policies and plans > East Coast Conservation Management Strategy Consideration should be given to: > Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects, including culminative effects, > conserving any threatened and at-risk species to ensure their persistence, > protecting and restoring relevant indigenous ecosystems; and > maintaining habitat connectivity and water quality of waterways.	Agreed and future ecological surveys will partly inform the design of the Project. A full assessment of the project against these statutory documents will form part of the substantive application.	

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Specific information requests to applicant(s)/agent for pre-app engagement at this point:		
Further engagement is recommended prior to lodging a substantive application if the project progresses as this would allow DOC to give more focused feedback on the application. DOC has requested additional information on: > Freshwater related information, for example species lists, impacts of the dam on fish passage, hydrological changes, and sediment movements. > Any terrestrial or freshwater offsetting proposed in relation to the project. A full ecological assessment, including assessment of the actual and potential effects on vegetation, freshwater, and fauna including fish passage, avifauna, lizards, and bats should be conducted.	Applicant agrees with these comments and will be undertaking surveys to confirm presence or absence of native fish within the reservoir footprint.	Refer bullet pt 5 on Slide 10 and bullet pt 2 on slide 16 of Attachment 7.A.