



## **Appendix AH**

# Ecological Management Plan

# DRAFT

## ecoLogical Solutions

Environmental Consultants



May 2026

## Wairākei South Ecological Management Plan

Submitted to:  
Bell Road Limited Partnership



water



fauna



flora



land

## Quality Assurance

This report has been prepared and reviewed by the following:

**Prepared by:** Raven Allen  
Ecologist



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**Reviewed by:** Chad Croft  
Senior Terrestrial Ecologist



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**Final Review by:** Richard Montgomerie  
Managing Director



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ecoLogical solutions

tauranga office  
115 the strand, tauranga 3141.



auckland office  
building 2/195 main highway,  
ellerslie, Auckland, 1051



northland office  
30 leigh street, kāeo  
po box 180, kāeo 0448



nelson office  
58 factory road, brightwater



[www.ecoLogicalsolutions.co.nz](http://www.ecoLogicalsolutions.co.nz)

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background .....	1
1.2	Scope and Objectives.....	1
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Fish Management Plan .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	4
2.2	Permits .....	4
2.3	Earthworks Staging and Timing .....	4
2.4	Fish Relocation Methodology.....	5
2.4.1	Introduction.....	5
2.4.2	Isolation of The Capture Area .....	5
2.4.3	Stage 1: Pre-Works Relocations .....	6
2.4.4	Stage 2: Dewatering Relocations.....	6
2.4.5	Stage 3: Excavation Relocations.....	6
2.5	Fish Capture and Handling .....	6
2.6	Fish Release Locations .....	7
2.7	Culvert Design and Installation .....	7
2.8	Reporting.....	7
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Avian Management Plan .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.2	Potential Species Requiring Management .....	9
3.2.1	New Zealand Pipit.....	9
3.2.2	New Zealand Dotterel .....	9
3.2.3	Variable Oystercatcher .....	9
3.3	Vegetation Clearance .....	10
3.4	Monitoring.....	10
3.4.1	Rationale .....	10
3.4.2	Timing.....	10
3.4.3	Monitoring Survey Methods .....	11
3.4.4	Operator Observations.....	11
3.4.5	Discouraging Nesting.....	12
3.5	Reporting.....	12
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Bat Management Plan .....</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	12
4.2	Purpose and Objectives of Management.....	12
4.3	Approach.....	13



4.3.1	Project Bat Ecologist.....	13
4.3.2	Bat Roost Protocols .....	13
4.4	Reporting and Closure.....	13
<b>5.0</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>14</b>

## Index to Figures

Figure 1:	Site location and context.	2
Figure 2:	Fish relocation sites.	8

## Appendices

Appendix AJ of the application – Lizard Management Plan.

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Bell Road Limited Partnership (BRLP) has proposed a development project (Wairākei South) located at 339 Bell Road, Papamoa, Bay of Plenty ('the Site'). The Wairākei South Development proposal was referred as a Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) project and confirmed in December 2024.

Wairākei South is a large-scale c. 350-hectare mixed use development including residential and commercial zones, community spaces, school sites and infrastructure such as stormwater and wetland management areas located at 339 Bell Road, Papamoa, Bay of Plenty directly off the Tauranga Eastern Link, SH2 ('the Site') (Figure 1). The Site has been primarily used for intensive agriculture, specifically dairy stock grazing and maize crops both presently and historically. The balance of the land is made up of flat paddocks serviced by gently elevated, well-maintained farm races that provide access for livestock and vehicles.

As part of the FTAA application process Ecological Solutions prepared an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (Ecological Solutions 2026 – Appendix L of the application). The EclA identified the need to prepare an Ecological Management Plan (EMP) to mitigate adverse effects on indigenous fauna resulting from the proposed development.

### 1.2 Scope and Objectives

Ecological Solutions has been engaged by BRLP to prepare an Ecological Management Plan (EMP).

The following EMP describes the methodology for how adverse effects on native fauna will be managed during watercourse diversion and reclamation, vegetation clearance, and construction. Specifically, the EMP outlines the approach to be used in the capture and relocation of native fish (Fish Management Plan (FMP) Section 2.0) as well as measures to be implemented to prevent injury or mortality of native birds (Avian Management Plan (AMP) Section 3.0), bats (Bat Management Plan (BMP) Section 4.0) and lizards (Lizard Management Plan (LMP) Appendix AJ of the application).

The lizard management plan has been included as an appendix so that it can be conveniently attached as a separate document as part of an application for a Wildlife Act Authorisation (WAA) from the Department of Conservation (DOC).

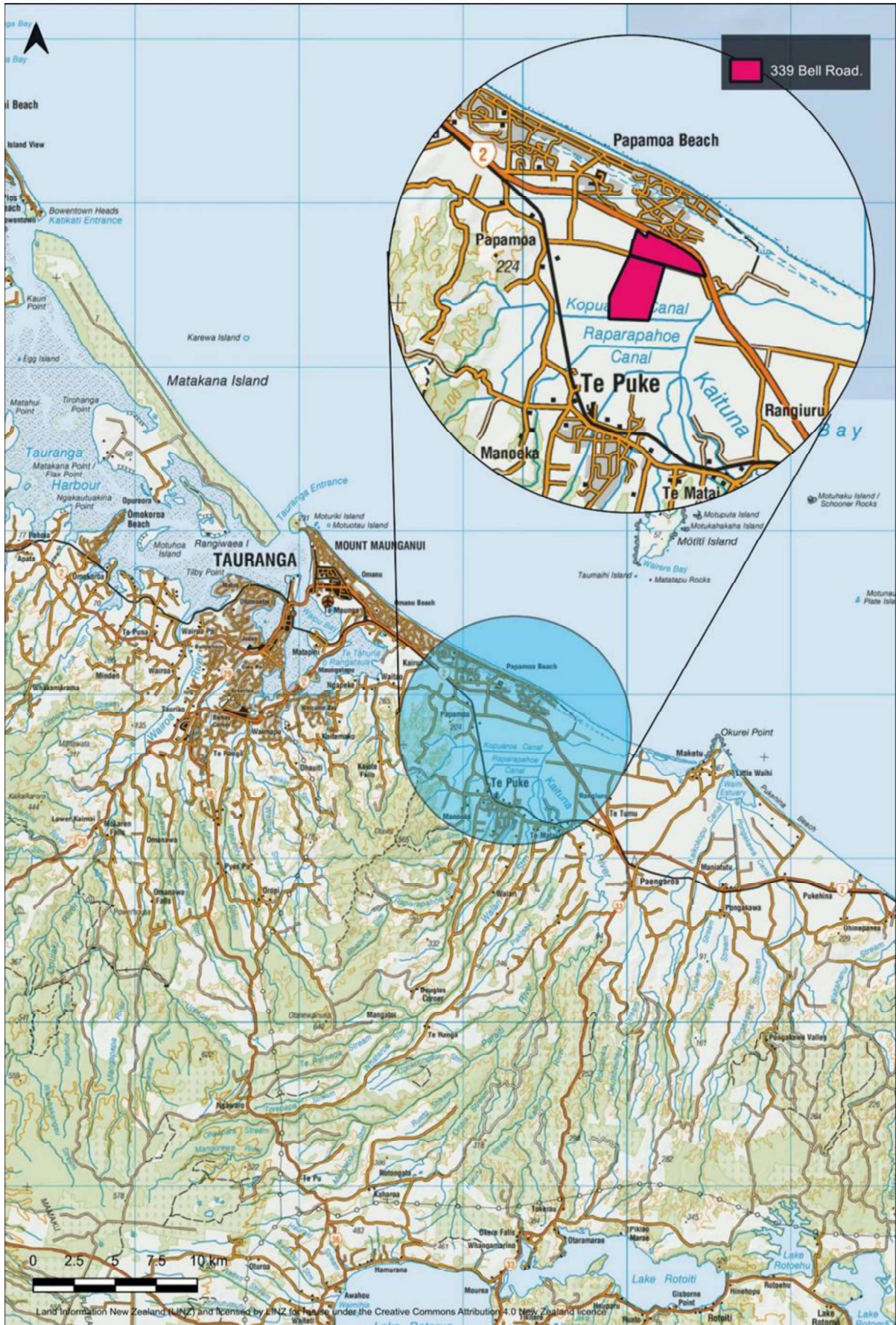


Figure 1: Site location and context.

## 2.0 Fish Management Plan

### 2.1 Introduction

The proposed development will result in a loss of artificial drains which provide habitat to indigenous fish. To manage adverse effects on fish this FMP has been prepared to inform relocation of indigenous species.

Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling, carried out by Ecological Solutions in July 2025, within the artificial drains recorded shortfin eel (*Anguilla australis*, 'Not Threatened'). It is anticipated that other species known to occur in the catchment may also reside in the Bell Road Drain such as īnanga (*Galaxias maculatus*, 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable'), common smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*, 'At Risk – Declining'), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*, 'Not Threatened'), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*, 'At Risk – Naturally Uncommon') and Cran's bully (*Gobiomorphus basalis*, 'At Risk – Naturally Uncommon') (Dunn et al., 2025).

### 2.2 Permits

Fish relocations are to be carried out under the relevant permits including:

- A special permit from the Ministry of Primary Industries to capture fish using methods outside of amateur fishing regulations.
- An approval to transfer aquatic life under either section 26ZM(2) or 26ZM(3) of the Conservation Act 1987. Section 26ZM(2) is administered by the Ministry of Primary Industries in situations where a species is being translocated to locations where it already occurs while Section 26ZM(3) is administered by the Department of Conservation authorising the translocation of species to locations where that species is absent.

### 2.3 Earthworks Staging and Timing

The following outlines earthworks staging and timing of fish relocations:

- Earthworks are proposed to commence during the earthworks season (i.e. 16 September to 30 April) and will be completed across multiple earthworks seasons.
- Staging of earthworks will allow fish relocations to be more easily managed as earthworks will be undertaken in discrete areas and resulting in shorter lengths of drain required to be fished at any one time. This means impact reaches will be more effectively fished prior to and during earthworks.
- The timing of fish relocations will depend on the construction schedule and weather/flow conditions prior to fishing. Fish relocations in sections of Bell Road Drain will require fine weather and base flow conditions so monitoring the weather forecast and maintaining close communication with the Construction Site Manager will be required.
- The Construction Site Manager will determine start times for pre-works fishing and is to provide the freshwater ecologists at least 14-days notice of the intended construction start dates for each stage of works. This will ensure that exclusion net installation and fish relocations can be completed before earthworks commence.
- During the pre-works fishing stage, after a reach has been fished and the required catch rate has been achieved, the ecologist will notify the Construction Site Manager so that the fished section is isolated (e.g., banded) as soon as practicable to minimise the chance of fish moving into the fished reach.

- The dewatering and excavation stages of fish relocations should be carried out in fished sections soon after water has been diverted into temporary diversion channels to minimise stress on any fish remaining in the isolated reaches that lack flow.

## 2.4 Fish Relocation Methodology

### 2.4.1 Introduction

The staging of earthworks over multiple years across the Site means pre-works fish relocations are able to be carried out in shorter manageable sections of drains prior to works.

Longer sections of drain to be fished will be divided into shorter reaches (approximately 200 m) to make them more manageable to fish effectively. If a reach is divided into sub-sections, exclusion nets would be installed and maintained over the duration of fishing and until it can be assured that fish will not move back into the reach.

Fish relocations will be implemented in the following phases:

- Stage 1: Pre-works fish relocations.
- Stage 2: Dewatering fish relocations.
- Stage 3: Excavation fish relocations (if required).

During Stage 3 excavation works, a suitably qualified and experienced freshwater ecologist will be present onsite during the works and will observe all drain excavation works in order to sift through excavated material / spoil in order to salvage any stranded fish.

### 2.4.2 Isolation of The Capture Area

Fish barriers will be erected at the upstream and downstream extent of the capture areas, as well as at roughly 200-metre intervals along the length of the Bell Road Drain. The purpose of these barriers is to isolate discrete reaches within the capture area to prevent fish from moving between them. This will help to maximise the efficiency of the capture and relocation programme.

These barriers will be constructed from plastic mesh fencing held in place by steel waratahs driven into the bank and drain bed. A layer of heavy-duty shade cloth with a mesh size of approximately 3 mm will be attached to the upstream side of the plastic mesh to block fish passage while still allowing water to flow through. These barriers will be constructed so that they extend above the normal water level to reduce the risk of them becoming overtopped during rain events.

The fish barriers will remain in place until the drain works have been completed to prevent fish from moving into the area of works. For this reason, the barriers will be erected as close to the commencement of the drain works as possible to minimise the length of time that they will be required to be in place.

High flow events or having the mesh clogged with debris may result in overtopping or breaching of the barriers, which will reduce their effectiveness. Therefore, all barriers will be checked daily by the contractor for intactness during the duration of the fish capture and relocation programme.

After the fish relocation work has been completed, only the barriers located at each end of the capture area will be inspected daily. This is because it will be logistically difficult to inspect all of the barriers throughout the length of the capture area, and the barriers furthest

upstream and downstream are also the most important in terms of preventing fish from entering the watercourse.

### 2.4.3 Stage 1: Pre-Works Relocations

#### ***Fyke Netting***

Pre-works netting will be carried out in each reach using fine mesh fyke nets set at approximately 10 m intervals if depths/vegetation allows. Nets will be baited, set overnight and cleared the following morning. Nets will be deployed with an air gap if dissolved oxygen levels are low to ensure fish can gulp air from the surface.

Any fish captured will be handled as per protocols set out in the Fish Capture and Handling section 2.5.

#### ***Electric Fishing***

Once the trapping and/or netting in the impact section has reached the target catch rate, the section will be electric fished as a final check that fish have been removed. Electric fishing will involve multiple passes carried out in short sections to maximise fishing effort and to ensure as many fish as possible are captured prior to diversion.

After the ecologist is satisfied that electric fishing has captured as many fish as possible, the fished reach can be isolated (e.g., banded) and Stage 2 of fish relocations can commence.

### 2.4.4 Stage 2: Dewatering Relocations

Experience has shown that fish (e.g., mostly eels) are likely to remain in drains even after netting/trapping and intensive electric fishing. It is proposed that any remaining fish will be salvaged during the dewatering stage when water is diverted into temporary diversion channels and the impact section isolated.

A suitably qualified and experienced ecologist will be onsite during the dewatering. Any fish observed moving within the channel during the dewatering stage when water levels are lowered will be captured using hand-held nets and/or the potential use of an electric fishing machine if it is safe to do so. Any fish observed will be captured using hand-held nets and handled as per protocols set out in the Fish Capture and Handling section below.

### 2.4.5 Stage 3: Excavation Relocations

After dewatering, there is still potential for eels to be present within the channel as they can burrow into drain edges or the soft-bottomed silt/mud bed. A suitably qualified and experienced ecologist will be onsite during the excavation. During the excavation stage, any material removed from the channel and deposited into designated holding areas will be inspected by the ecologist. Any fish observed will be captured using hand-held nets and handled as per protocols set out in the Fish Capture and Handling section below.

## 2.5 Fish Capture and Handling

The following procedures will be followed for the transfer of native fish or pest fish.

- All fish captured will be immediately transferred into a clean bucket or fish bin of water from the existing habitat and placed in a well-shaded location. Water may be collected from the release site to ensure it is cool and of good quality.
- Multiple fish bins will be used if there are large numbers of fish captured to reduce stress on captured fish.

- Battery powered aquarium pumps will be used to maintain dissolved oxygen in fish bins if required.
- Fish will be checked to ensure that all aquatic plant material is removed prior to transfer into the bucket/fish bin.
- Native fish will be monitored and released within two hours of capture if water quality is poor and fish are displaying signs of stress.
- Pest fish will be humanely euthanised.
- If large numbers of eels are collected, immediately prior to release, eels will be transferred from fish bins into catch bags, to enable safer transport (i.e., carrying by hand) from the vehicle to the release site.

## 2.6 Fish Release Locations

The following outlines recommended fish relocation sites:

- Fish release sites will be located within the same catchment and include a primary site on the lower Kaituna River at the Bell Road boat ramp and a secondary or back up site upstream of the Raparapahoe Canal (Figure 2).
- After fish capture, consideration will be given to the number of fish captured, life stage of the captured fish, stocking rates, and proximity of the release site to the capture location to minimise stress on the released fish.
- Eels will likely make up the greatest proportion of biomass during fish relocations, so they will be released into the Kaituna River as it provides suitable habitat for eels and the greatest carrying capacity (Figure 2).
- Other species may be distributed between the primary release site or the secondary depending on the location of the capture and number of fish captured to avoid stress and over stocking at the release sites.

## 2.7 Culvert Design and Installation

All culverts and crossings at the Site will be designed, installed and monitored in accordance with the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (MfE 2020) and the New Zealand Fish Passage Guidelines (Franklin et al., 2024). Where culverts are to be installed, the site will be isolated and fish removed prior to instream works in accordance with the methods described in Section 2.4.2 Isolation of The Capture Area and Section 2.4.3 Stage 1: Pre-Works Relocations.

## 2.8 Reporting

Ecological Solutions will report the results of the fish relocation work to the consent holder and Bay of Plenty Regional Council within one month of completion. Results will include the following information:

- Fish species caught.
- Number caught.
- Health/condition.
- Location of capture.
- Location of release.

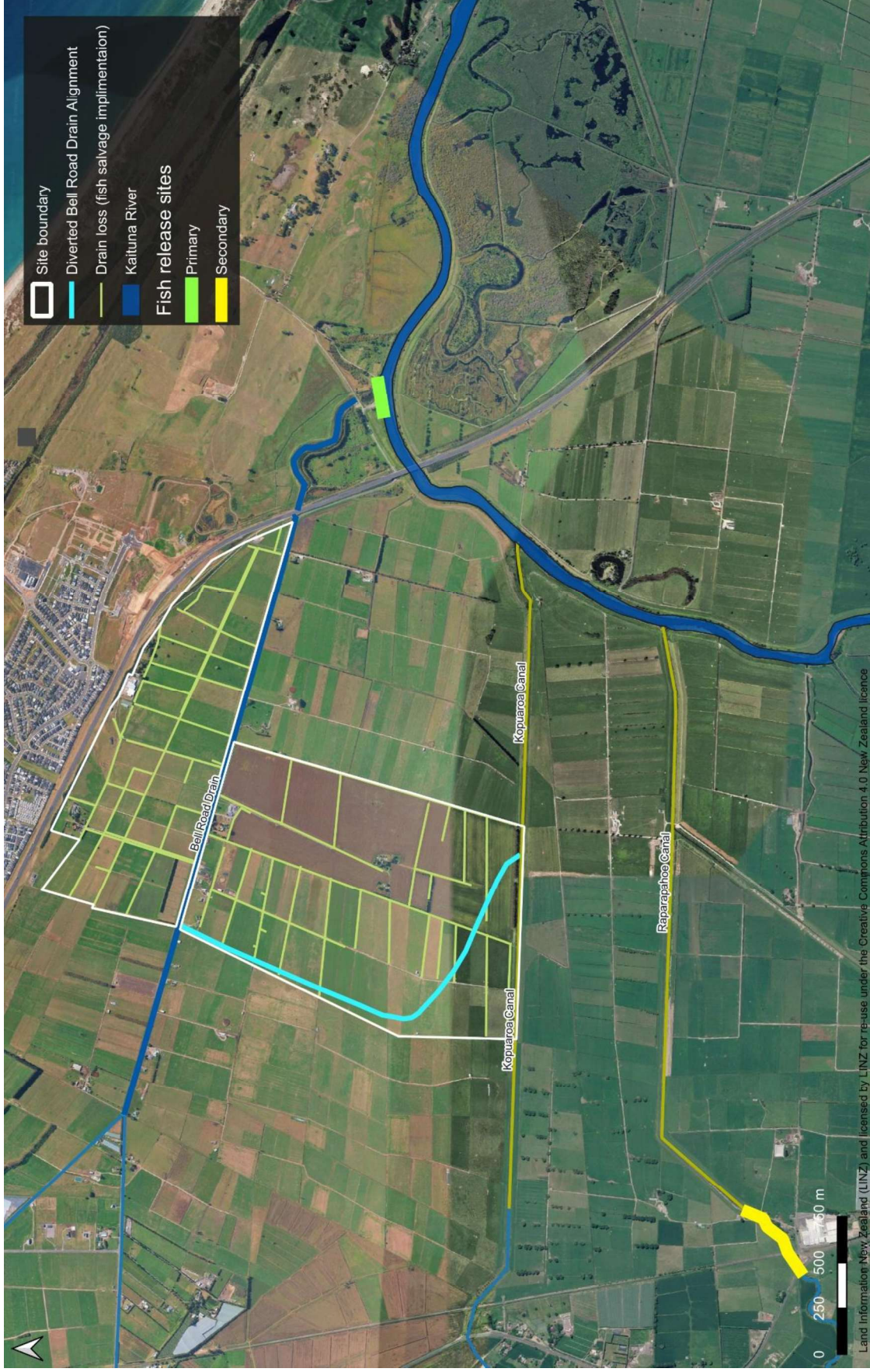


Figure 2: Fish relocation sites.



## 3.0 Avian Management Plan

### 3.1 Introduction

Existing trees and shrubs that will be cleared during the development of the Site provide potential nesting habitat for birds. Birds using the Site are common species of no conservation concern and will readily habituate to disturbance. Nonetheless, most native birds are protected by the Wildlife Act (1953). Vegetation clearance has the potential to affect nesting birds when carried out during the breeding season (between September-February inclusive).

In addition, some birds such as those known to be in the surrounding area are known to opportunistically utilise construction sites for foraging and nesting once they are exposed and surface water collects. Foraging birds are unlikely to be harmed by activities, but species that may nest within the Site during construction will need to be managed in accordance with this AMP.

### 3.2 Potential Species Requiring Management

#### 3.2.1 New Zealand Pipit

The New Zealand pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*) breed during August – March. The nest is a sizable cup of woven grass under tussocks and grass clumps within fern, and partly or fully covered with vegetation. Clutch size is typically 2–4 (average 3) eggs and incubate for 14–16 days. Chicks do not congregate after fledging, and parents and fledglings can end up hundreds of meters from nest sites.

The New Zealand Pipit has the potential to use habitat within the earthworks footprint for breeding.

#### 3.2.2 New Zealand Dotterel

The northern subspecies of the New Zealand dotterel (*Anarhynchus obscurus*) generally breed between September to January but it can be earlier or later depending on the individual and the particular site. The nests are simple scrapes in the substrate, sometimes sparsely lined or decorated, often with a marker of driftwood or vegetation. Three eggs are laid, usually from August or September, and are replaced if lost. Incubation usually takes 28–30 days and the fledging period averages about 6 weeks (Bannock 2012).

The New Zealand dotterel has the potential to use habitat within the earthworks footprint for breeding.

#### 3.2.3 Variable Oystercatcher

The variable oystercatcher (*Haematopus unicolor*) usually lay eggs from October onwards (rarely September) and replaced if lost. Incubation is shared and takes about 28 days.

Variable oystercatcher occasionally nest a short distance inland, usually on mown or grazed grassy areas or bare ground, similar to habitat occurring within the earthworks footprint. Consequently, once earthworks commences and the Site is exposed there is a reasonable probability that some variable oystercatchers may attempt to nest within the Site given the proximity to the Site to the coast (Marchant & Higgins 1993).

### 3.3 Vegetation Clearance

Key aspects of the avifauna management to be implemented prior to any vegetation clearance to minimise impacts on native bird nests, eggs and chicks are:

- The preference is to avoid vegetation clearance during the peak breeding season (between September to February inclusive).
- If vegetation clearance occurs within the bird breeding season (between September to February inclusive), the following measures to be implemented:
  - Bird nest survey prior to vegetation clearance by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist to identify nests.
  - Assistance from an arborist to identify bird nests where trees are too tall or dense to properly assess from the ground.
  - Trees may be felled within seven working days of the survey if no active nests found.
  - When active nests of native species are found, individual trees and immediate area surrounding vegetation (i.e., <10 m distance from tree) are to be left.
  - Trees with active bird nests are to be clearly marked and cordoned off.
  - Trees with active bird nests are to be monitored regularly until nesting birds have fledged or nests are naturally abandoned.
  - Monitoring of trees with active bird nests will include the collection of the following information: date and time, GPS location and/or area of checking, outcome of bird nest check (i.e., presence or absence of active nests).

### 3.4 Monitoring

#### 3.4.1 Rationale

Given the potential of indigenous bird species of conservation interest nesting within the earthworks footprint during their breeding season (refer to Section 3.2), it is important to protect any birds and nests known to be present.

The following methods will be used to ensure any effects on native birds of conservation interest that may utilise the Site during earthworks are minimised.

#### 3.4.2 Timing

The following observations are relevant to the Site:

- Each of the species of conservation interest with the potential to be nesting typically arrive between June and September each year.
- The main breeding season for each species is usually September–December.
- The incubation period for each of the species is typically 20–28 days.
- Site works and other activity is likely to deter birds (with the exception of dotterel) from establishing nests in a particular place, forcing them to nest elsewhere.

If vegetation clearance/earthworks is to be undertaken during the breeding season, nest check surveys of the proposed clearance area will be undertaken by suitably qualified

ecologist(s) no more than 5 days prior to commencement.

Any individual nests detected will be checked to determine whether it is still proceeding or has been completed or abandoned. Personnel carrying out nest checks will use binoculars or spotting scopes to inspect each nest area so as to maintain the largest practicable separation distance from the nests and avoid causing abandonment or unnecessary disturbance.

### 3.4.3 Monitoring Survey Methods

Nest check surveys will be performed in grids across imminent earthworks stages in greater coverage. Surveys will still be undertaken across the wider earthworks footprint to inform future management, but at a lower effort. All birds of conservation interest seen or heard will be recorded and their approximate location will be marked using a GPS. The number of birds observed, and their behaviour will be recorded and if behaviours are consistent with breeding (i.e., calling, displaying or other behaviour) then individuals are to be observed from a distance for five minutes to see if a nest can be located.

If a nest is located this will immediately be reported to the manager or supervisor in charge of site earthworks, so that the 50 m exclusion zone can immediately come into effect.

General guidelines adhered to when monitoring during the breeding season include:

- Observing birds (particularly those breeding) from a distance with the use of binoculars or spotting scopes.
- Observing nests from a distance >50 m with the use of binoculars or spotting scopes. If a nest is inadvertently discovered during the course of the walkover, immediately retreating from the nest and moving back to a distance to observe.
- Limit long distance observations of nests to no more than 15 minutes (5 minutes maximum during hot or cold conditions).
- Not completing monitoring in the rain, in case a nest is inadvertently discovered.

### 3.4.4 Operator Observations

Any staff or operators likely to encounter birds or nests are required to be familiar with this plan and comply with its contents.

All such staff or machine operators will be advised to watch for bird activity including potential breeding activity or nests and to report the locations of any birds or nests found to the manager or supervisor in charge of earthworks operations for confirmation of bird species type and their status by the ecologist.

If any nests are found in an area where earthworks is intended to occur, either by the monitoring or by operators or staff onsite, the manager will ensure that the nest is protected by informing staff and operators of its location, instructing operators to observe a 50 m exclusion zone and marking that exclusion zone. The manager or supervisor will also inform the ornithologist/ecologist carrying out the regular monitoring surveys of the discovery before the next scheduled survey. Marking will be carried out in such a way that it does not attract people to the Site to investigate. A map will be produced that shows the location of any nests being avoided.

### 3.4.5 Discouraging Nesting

To reduce the need to disrupt earthworks activities by having to place a 50 m buffer around any nests that may be recorded during monitoring, nesting birds will be discouraged each prospecting season using one or more of the following methods employed by NZTA (Bannock 2012) including:

- Completing a disruptive site walkover regularly between the first of July and prior to the onset of breeding.
- Installing reflective streamers/tape in breeding habitat to deter birds from nesting. Note this method is effective over the short term (3 weeks) but decreases over time as the birds become accustomed to it.
- Parking earthworks machinery in future stage locations, starting the engine from time to time, but not moving equipment.

### 3.5 Reporting

The consent holder will prepare a written report detailing the results of the monitoring. The report is to be submitted to the consent authority on a quarterly basis while this consent is being exercised.

In order to achieve this, the ornithologist/ecologist carrying out the monitoring shall prepare and provide a brief summary report and map suitable for inclusion in a quarterly report to the Consent Holder within 10 working days of completing each survey.

## 4.0 Bat Management Plan

### 4.1 Introduction

Long-tailed bats (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*) have been recorded within 10km of the Site. Therefore, there is a possibility that the proposed development will impact long-tailed bats through vegetation clearance if they are present at the time this occurs. Long-tailed bats are Threatened - Nationally Critical and are absolutely protected under the Wildlife Act (1953).

### 4.2 Purpose and Objectives of Management

The purpose of bat management is to avoid injury to, or mortality of, long-tailed bats during construction.

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Avoid clearance of potential bat roost trees outside the period of greatest bat activity (1 October to 30 April inclusive).
- Avoid injury or death of bats during clearance of 'high risk' potential bat roost trees through implementation of the Department of Conservation's Bat Roost Protocols (Department of Conservation 2024) prior to the felling of trees between 1 October and 30 April inclusive.

## 4.3 Approach

### 4.3.1 Project Bat Ecologist

Implementation of the bat management plan is to be supervised by a DOC certified competent bat specialist. The project bat ecologist (PBE) will be experienced at implementing bat management protocols and a recognised Level 3.1 and 3.3 competent bat ecologist (Department of Conservation 2024).

### 4.3.2 Bat Roost Protocols

Implementation of the Bat Roost Protocols version 4 (Department of Conservation 2024) will ensure injury and death of bats are avoided by:

- Identifying potential roost trees requiring management.
- Specifying timing of tree clearance.
- Undertaking pre-clearance acoustic monitoring and visual roost watch surveys where required.
- Outlining actions for detecting and encountering bats during pre-felling.
- Felling trees within the recommended window when bats are most active and environmental conditions are most suitable (i.e., between 1 October and 30 April inclusive).

## 4.4 Reporting and Closure

- A compliance report will be prepared following the completion of each season of vegetation removal which includes:
  - Confirmation that vegetation removal was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Roost Protocols and associated consent conditions.
  - Details of the works undertaken prior to the removal of high-risk bat roost trees (i.e., species, DBH, total number of trees, GPS coordinates, description of acoustic monitoring undertaken and results).
  - If injured or dead bats are found during tree felling, DOC will be notified immediately and a report documenting the protocols undertaken will be completed.
- Bat management may be considered closed/completed following the submission and acceptance of the compliance report.

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# APPENDIX AJ

## Lizard Management Plan