BATHURST RESOURCES LIMITED

Lizard Management Plan

Buller Plateaux Continuation Project

October 2026

BUL-ENV-PLN-005 v2.0

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ACO	Artificial Cover Object
AEC	Animal Ethics Committee, Department of Conservation
Bathurst	Bathurst Resources Limited, including its subsidiary companies BT Mining Ltd, Bathurst Coal Ltd, and Buller Coal Ltd
BPCP	Buller Plateaux Continuation Project
BDC	Buller District Council
BOMP	Biodiversity Outcome Monitoring Plan
BRL	Bathurst Resources Limited
Buller Plateaux	A collective reference to the Stockton Plateau and Denniston Plateau
DOC	Department of Conservation
DPPA	Denniston Plateau Protection Area
ELF	Engineered Land Form
FTAA	Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
LMP	Lizard Management Plan (this Plan)
MFS	Mount Frederick South Project sub-area
NZTCS	New Zealand Threat Classification System
PCEMP	Pest Control and Elimination Management Plan
Plan	Management Plan
Project disturbance area	The area to be disturbed by habitat clearance and earthworks associated with the Project
RMA	Resource Management Act (1991)
SEMP	Site Environmental Management Plan
SQEP	Suitably qualified and experienced person
SVL	Snout Vent Length
The Project	The Buller Plateaux Continuation Project
UWHR	Upper Waimangaroa Haul Road (a Project sub-area)
VDT	Vegetation Direct Transfer
WAA	Wildlife Act Authority
WCRC	West Coast Regional Council

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

1.1.1 Overview

Bathurst Resources Limited (BRL) is a publicly listed New Zealand coal mining company with a focus on people and long-term environmental sustainability. BRL is New Zealand's largest coal mining company, producing over 2 million tonnes of coal each year and employing over 550 people. Through its majority owned joint venture company BT Mining Limited, BRL operates the Stockton coal mine on the West Coast of the South Island, and Rotowaro and Maramarua coal mines in the North Island. The remaining estimated mine life at the Stockton Mine is currently approximately 5 – 7 years.

BRL is seeking approvals through the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ('FTAA') for the Buller Plateaux Continuation Project ('BPCP', or the Project) (Figure 1). The purpose of the Project is to reconsent the existing infrastructure and mining operations associated with the Stockton Mine and provide access to additional coal mining areas across the Buller Plateaux. The coal resource in the current Stockton operations is close to depletion, and further coal resources for blending are required.

1.1.2 Project Location

The BPCP includes parts of both the Denniston and Stockton Plateaux, collectively referred to here as 'the Buller Plateaux' and is located approximately 15km northeast of Westport. The BPCP is a complex proposal which seeks to enable a mix of ongoing and new mining activities. The land tenure is a mix of Crown, private and BRL owned land. The authorisations required for the proposed activities are being bundled into a single application to proceed through the FTAA process.

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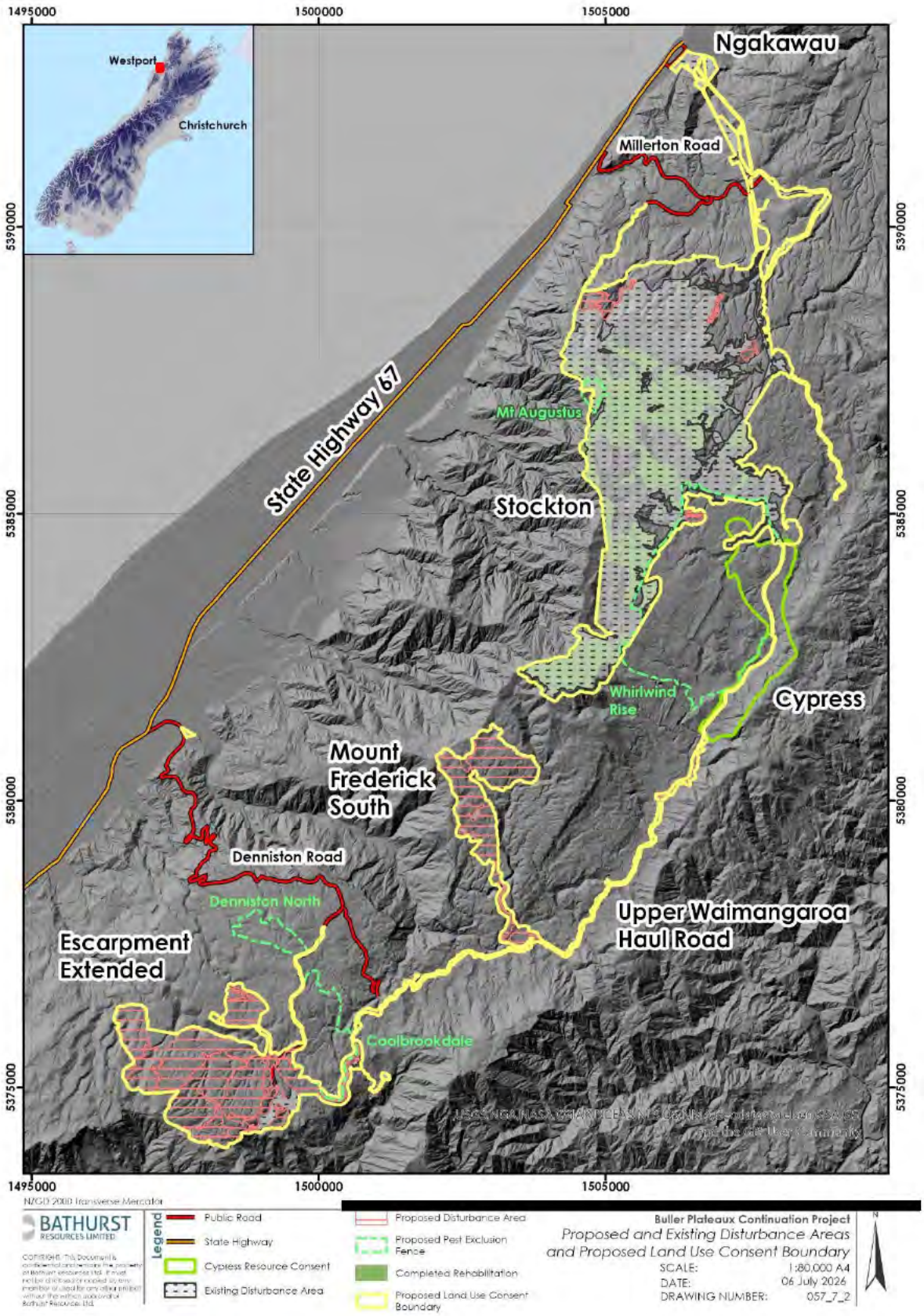


Figure 1: Proposed disturbance areas

1.2 Plan purpose, objectives and scope

The objective of the Lizard Management Plan (LMP) is to avoid and minimise adverse ecological effects on indigenous lizards during construction and operation of the BPCP through effects avoidance and minimisation measures, with the purpose of this LMP to set out the methods for achieving this objective.

Accordingly, this LMP details methods for capture, handling, temporary holding and relocation of lizards and associated applied research. The LMP is intended to support a Wildlife Approval application by Bathurst Resources Ltd (BRL) under Schedule 7 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA), and the Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcoLogical Solutions 2026).

This LMP also includes, in Section 3.2.2, a statement of how the methods proposed for the salvage, handling and relocation of lizards will ensure that best practice standards are met, as required by clause 2(1)(f) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA.

This LMP also applies to vegetation clearance and ground disturbance for the construction of the pest exclusion fences and weka-free exclosures (Section 3.6) and sets out measures to avoid and minimise the incidental capture of lizards during mammalian pest control (Section 3.7).

Measures to rehabilitate or compensate for adverse effects on lizards are also addressed in other plans. This includes:

- The rehabilitation of habitat for lizards and other values through either habitat transfer or native revegetation and habitat enhancement, as set out in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-002).
- Compensation for residual effects on lizards that cannot otherwise be avoided, minimised, remedied or offset as addressed in the Pest Control and Elimination Management Plan (PCEMP) (BPCP-ENV-PLN-022).
- Monitoring to assess outcomes for lizards and inform adaptive management or contingency measures if required, as detailed in the Biodiversity Outcome Monitoring Plan (BOMP) (BPCP-ENV-PLN-009).

Table 1 below provides a summary of effects management measures for lizards and the primary management plan relevant to each measure.

Table 1 Summary of lizard effects management measures and relevant management plans

Lizard management measures	Primary management plan(s)
Physical delineation of disturbance area and habitat/biodiversity features for salvaging	**LMP**
Determination of onsite construction method refinements to further avoid or minimise effects where possible	**LMP**
Compliance monitoring and reporting in relation to lizard habitat effects avoidance and minimisation (excluding salvage and relocation operations)	**LMP**
Salvaging and relocation operations including:	**LMP**

• manual searching and deployment and checking of ground ACOs • handling and release into relocation sites	
Salvage and relocation of lizards within their habitat via vegetation direct transfer (VDT) of approximately 125 ha of vegetation, including lizard-specific measures to maximise survival (Section 3.2.3)	**RMP and LMP**
Lizard monitoring (radiotracking) and reporting to assess the success of salvaging and relocation operations for geckos	**LMP**
Compliance monitoring and reporting in relation to salvaging and relocation operations	**LMP**
Ecological rehabilitation of habitat for lizards and other biodiversity values via native revegetation, habitat transfer and relocation of salvaged habitat features including rocks and coarse wood	RMP
Compensation for residual effects via pest elimination within the proposed pest exclusion fence network and intensive pest control	PCEMP
Lizard monitoring to assess rehabilitation and compensation outcomes for lizards and inform adaptive management or contingency measures. This monitoring is distinct from monitoring salvage and relocation outcomes and is in relation to verifying outcomes for lizards in relation to: • Ecological rehabilitation within the Project disturbance area • Compensation actions within the pest exclusion fence network and the Blackburn-Pakihi intensive mammalian pest control area	BOMP

[*Placeholder: Additional conditions relating to the application of mātauranga Māori and exercise of kaitiakitanga.*]

1.3 Lizard Management Plan requirements

The full suite of proposed conditions relevant to lizard management is addressed in the Ecological Management Plan Framework.

1.4 Wildlife Approval requirements

All indigenous lizards are legally protected under the Wildlife Act 1953 (Wildlife Act). The FTAA provides for Wildlife Approvals, which authorise acts or omissions that would otherwise constitute offences under specified provisions of the Wildlife Act, including instances where native lizards may be harmed or killed during Project activities.

This LMP addresses the following matters specific to the Wildlife Act under the FTAA:

- Handling of lizards (including non-threatened, 'At Risk' and 'Threatened' lizard species);
- Salvaging of lizard species from the Project disturbance area;
- Relocation of salvaged lizards into relocation sites;
- The success of the salvaging and relocation operations (to the degree possible);

- Inadvertent lizard injury and death; and accidental discovery (threatened species);
- Wildlife Approval reporting requirements.

Best practice standards. Clause 2(1)(f) of Schedule 7 of the FTAA requires a statement of how the methods proposed to be used will ensure that best practice standards are met. For lizards, the best practice standards applied in this LMP are the nine principles in the Department of Conservation's Key principles for lizard salvage and transfer in New Zealand (DOC 2019) and the herpetofauna survey and capture methods in DOC's Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox (Greene & McNutt 2012). Section 3.2.1 (Table 4) sets out how each principle is met and Section 3.2.2 (Table 5) sets out how each salvage and relocation method ensures those standards are met.

1.5 Animal ethics approval

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires that separate approval is necessary for manipulation of any animal. In this case application of radio telemetry transmitters to lizards has been deemed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) to be manipulation requiring separate approval. The main requirements of this approval are annual reporting on work completed to ensure that the welfare of the lizards during the radio telemetry trials is considered.

1.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder consultation regarding associated technical reports and this management plan has been summarised in the Stakeholder Consultation section of the BPCP FTAA main application.

A draft of this management plan was supplied to relevant regulators and iwi (Te Runanga o Ngāti Waewae) as part of the FTAA pre-consultation engagement.

Once this management plan is approved, this section will document all future stakeholder engagement undertaken for subsequent versions.

1.7 Responsibilities and Competencies

BRL holds overall responsibility for implementation of, and compliance with this plan and any Wildlife Act Authorities obtained by BRL.

All ecologists and sub-contractors implementing the protocols outlined in this plan shall be suitably experienced and will work under the instruction of the Project Herpetologist(s). The Project Herpetologist(s) will be suitably qualified and experienced in lizard surveys, lizard salvaging and relocation operations and applied monitoring and research, including radio-tracking.

2.0 Effects on lizards and effects management

Information on lizard values, effects and effects management including relevant figures, is provided in the Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoLogical Solutions, 2026) and summarised below.

2.1 Lizard values and habitat use

In total three native lizard species are present within the Project disturbance area and an additional species is potentially present (Table 2), based on habitat suitability, confirmed presence during field surveys, and known presence in the general area.

Table 2: Native lizards observed during surveys and species likely to be present

Common name	Scientific name	Threat status (NZTCS)[1]	Abundance
Westland speckled skink	*Oligosoma aff. newmani "Westland"*	At Risk - declining-	Encounter rates are relatively high compared to other areas within the species' range; however, densities are uncertain due to challenges in inferring densities from detection rates in complex habitats. A summary of lizard survey results on the Buller Plateaux is provided in Table 6 of the Buller Plateaux Contextual Study (EcoLogical Solutions, 2026)
Northern grass skink[2]	*Oligosoma polychroma*	Not Threatened	
Forest gecko	*Mokopirakau granulatus*	At Risk - declining	
West Coast green gecko	*Naultinus tuberculatus*	Threatened - nationally vulnerable	

Together, forest geckos and West Coast green geckos use the entire suite of habitat types on the Buller Plateaux with the obvious exclusion of open water or highly disturbed areas that lack vegetation (e.g. roads). Forest geckos are nocturnal and typically occupy sandstone pavement (where they are common underneath rock slabs), bluffs and tors, shrublands, prostrate vegetation and forest. West Coast green gecko occupy shrublands, fernlands on tussock wetland areas, sandstone pavement and forest. West Coast green gecko are not known to use cover objects or crevices. The Speckled skinks are expected to use open habitats but not forest or tall shrubland interiors because they are too shaded to provide ideal skink habitat.

Across the Buller Plateaux, natural habitat mosaics with high physical (structural) complexity, adequate food resources throughout the year and adequate shelter/refugia from extreme weather (temperature, wind and desiccation) are likely to support a high carrying capacity of lizards. This includes habitat mosaics within topographically diverse areas such as gorges and gullies.

2.2 Effects on lizards

Potential adverse effects on lizards relating to mining construction will include:

[1] New Zealand Threat Classification System (Hitchmough et al, 2026).
[2] In addition to the three species present on the Plateau, the nationally Not Threatened grass skink (*Oligosoma polychroma*) is also known to exist in the vicinity of the project in lower elevation habitats and while its presence cannot be ruled out it is assumed that this species is not present in most if not all impacted areas and that based on the Not Threatened classification and low magnitude of effects it is expected that the level of residual effects on this species will be less than moderate.

- 755 ha of vegetation and habitat loss through habitat clearance and earthworks within the Project Disturbance Area
- The creation of habitat edge effects, altering the composition and health of adjacent vegetation (i.e. habitat degradation), which may affect habitat suitability for flora and fauna.
- Direct mortality or injury to lizards, which may be harmed during habitat clearance or earthworks activities.
- Habitat fragmentation and isolation due to the loss and reduction of available habitat types and by reducing the ability for lizards to disperse across the landscape for food, shelter, and breeding purposes, i.e. severing or partially severing access to habitats that would otherwise be suitable.
- Disturbance associated with construction-related noise and vibrations or dust.
- Vegetation clearance and ground disturbance along the alignments of the four pest exclusion fences and within the weka-free exclosures which may injure or kill lizards and remove or modify habitat. These works are managed under Section 3.6.

Potential long-term ongoing adverse effects on lizards during mining operations may include:

- Ongoing habitat degradation associated with habitat loss, edge effects and fragmentation, which permanently affect movement of some species, with possible effects on meta-population dynamics and increased vulnerability to local extinction.
- Ongoing disturbance effects, particularly on habitat margins/edges, through noise, dust, artificial lighting and blasting.
- Mortality or injury associated with operations.
- Incidental capture and death of lizards in traps used for mammalian pest control and eradication (particularly mouse and rat kill traps) within the pest exclusion fenced areas and the intensive pest control area. This is managed under Section 3.7 and the PCEMP and the risk of incidental capture and death of lizards in traps is considered to be extremely low.
- Cumulative effects on lizard populations of the Buller Plateaux arising from the Project in combination with historic and existing mining (including the existing Stockton Mine and Escarpment Mine) and other land disturbance, which have progressively reduced and fragmented lizard habitat on both plateaux.

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2.3 Measures to reduce the severity of effects

Measures to reduce the severity of effects on lizards include effects avoidance and minimisation through Project shaping as detailed in the Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoLogical Solutions, 2026).

Measures to further avoid or minimise effects through detailed design and construction as detailed in following sections broadly include:

- measures to avoid or minimise effects on high values habitat through further project refinement during detailed design and construction
- measures to avoid or minimise unnecessary impacts to non-disturbed areas
- Salvage and relocation operations

Measures to rehabilitate habitat (including for lizards) within the Project disturbance area are set out in the RMP. The long-term focus of rehabilitation will be to develop self-sustaining ecosystems with similar lizard diversity and functionality to the surrounding (undisturbed) environment to the degree possible. However, the extent and proportion of vegetation types will be different to the pre-mining situation with fewer, more simple vegetation communities which lack the extensive ecotones and complex mosaic of types characteristic of the pre-mining vegetation. The main ecological drivers of altitude, aspect, drainage, rock cover and slope will remain. The rehabilitation proposed for the Project includes:

- Vegetation direct transfer ('VDT'), which constitutes both effects avoidance/ minimisation because it avoids or minimises habitat loss and harm to lizards and rehabilitation because habitat is transferred back into the Project disturbance area once ready. VDT also constitutes a salvage and relocation method in its own right, because lizards present within transferred vegetation sods are moved with their habitat to rehabilitation sites. The RMP targets at least 15% VDT across the BPCP, and approximately 125 ha of VDT (predominantly low pākihi and shrubland) is expected to be achievable based on the rehabilitation schedule. In addition to the targeted salvage and relocation described in this LMP, a considerable number of lizards are therefore expected to be salvaged and relocated through VDT (Section 3.2.3).
- Native revegetation of engineered landforms once suitable for rehabilitation.
- Mammalian browser and predator control and weed management across ecological rehabilitation sites
- Deployment of salvaged habitat features to rehabilitation sites to provide refugia for lizards as set out in the RMP. This includes the deployment of salvaged rocks, boulders and coarse wood as well as the placement of rocks and boulders into scraped depressions (0.5m – 1m deep) within the engineered landforms to provide winter refuges for lizards when in torpor.

2.4 Level of residual effects

The level of residual effects on lizard species after avoidance, minimisation and remediation measures have been considered is summarised in

Table 3 below.

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Table 3: Level of residual effects on lizards

Species	Threat status (NZTCS)[3]	Areal extent of habitat loss (ha)[4]	Residual effect
Westland speckled skink	At Risk - declining	755 ha of direct habitat loss and 128 ha of indirect effects (which is conservatively assessed as total loss)	Very high
Forest gecko	At Risk - declining		Very high
West Coast green gecko	Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable		Very high
Northern grass skink	Not Threatened	Assumed to be a small fraction of habitat impacted by project activities if present	Low

2.5 Residual effects management

To address residual adverse effects on lizards that cannot be avoided, minimised, or remedied, residual effects management for lizards (and other values) will include 911 ha of pest-exclusion fenced areas delivering a pest (and weka) free stronghold (Appendix A, Figure 1 and 1A-D) to eliminate impacts from introduced predatory mammals, which are a key agent of decline for all lizards on the Plateaux. This includes the following pest exclusion fences:

- Denniston North fenced area (47.3 ha) (Figure 1A)
- Coalbrookdale fenced area (154.4 ha) (Figure 1B)
- Mt. Augustus fenced area (14.6 ha) (Figure 1C)
- Whirlwind Rise fenced area (694.9 ha) (Figure 1D)

2.6 Expected outcomes for lizards

A net loss of high-quality lizard habitat is expected and it is uncertain whether there will be net loss or net positive outcomes in terms of population size within 35 years as the magnitude of benefit associated with residual effects management is unable to be determined with precision. The response of lizards to the mammalian pest exclusion fence and to other mammalian pest control regimes that form part of the broader residual effects management package will be verified through proposed biodiversity outcome monitoring for lizards as set out in the Biodiversity Outcome Monitoring Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-009).

[3] Threat status is based on the most recent New Zealand Threat Classification System publication, which is Hitchmough et al 2026;
[4] Ecological and general disturbance edge effects will occur in addition to this direct loss.

3.0 Effects avoidance and minimisation protocol

3.1 Avoidance and minimisation protocol (excluding salvage and relocation)

Iterative and ongoing refinement of the Project disturbance area will be undertaken during detailed design and construction to avoid impacts on high value lizard habitats and associated lizards to the degree practicable. Additionally, prior to habitat clearance the following onsite avoidance and minimisation actions will be undertaken

- Project boundaries will be physically delineated by a surveyor and provided to operators to avoid or minimise the possibility of inadvertent clearance of habitat outside the disturbance area
- Where practicable and safe to do so, tall vegetation will be directionally felled to fall into the disturbance area to avoid unnecessary damage to the immediately adjoining habitats outside the disturbance area.
- Where practicable, clearance of vegetation will be avoided from May – September (inclusive) when lizards are inactive and less likely to be captured. Some habitat clearance activities will need to be undertaken in winter periods (see Section 3.4), though the location and extent of lizard habitat to be cleared outside of lizard salvage season is not yet able to be confirmed. Where vegetation clearance of lizard habitat cannot be avoided during this period (in accordance with Condition LIZ6), salvage (including the full fixed minimum salvage effort, Section 3.5.1.3) will be completed in the preceding salvage season and clearance will be supervised with post-clearance searching (Section 3.5.2).
- As set out in the RMP, vegetation direct transfer will be undertaken to the extent practicable. Where undertaken, this will avoid or minimise lizard habitat loss and the likelihood of harm within the disturbance area. VDT will also salvage and relocate lizards that are present within the transferred vegetation, as described in Section 3.2.3.
- VDT provides suitable habitat for forest gecko and Westland speckled skink but the presence of West Coast green gecko in VDT has yet to be confirmed, noting that this species is considerably more difficult to detect (EcoLogical Solutions Limited, 2026). It remains unknown whether lizards were present in VDT habitats because they had survived transfer or because they had colonised VDT from surrounding areas or both.
- Other measures to avoid or minimise general effects on terrestrial biodiversity values (including lizards) are detailed in other plans including but not limited to:
  - Management of edge effects via planting of newly exposed edges, use of soil, boulders, logs and other resources to create a bund and other actions as required to reduce edge effects as detailed in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-002).
  - Sedimentation and erosion via the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for Land Disturbance Activities (BPCP-ENV-PLN-013)
  - Accidental spills and fire via the Hazardous Substances Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-014)

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  - Noise, Blasting and Vibration via the Noise, Blasting and Vibration Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-016)
  - Dust suppression via the Dust Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-017)
  - Lighting via the Lighting and Visual Amenity Management Plan (BPCP-ENV-PLN-018)
- As set out in Section 3.2, salvaging and relocation operations will be undertaken for all three lizard species confirmed present (and northern grass skink in the unlikely event that this species is present in the Project footprint), including an applied research programme to assess outcomes as described in this LMP. Notwithstanding this, it is conservatively assumed that these measures will not materially reduce the overall severity of effects on lizards, due to:
  - the expectation, consistent with DOC (2019), that even using best practice methods a high proportion of lizards will remain undetected in the habitats present (Table 4); and
  - uncertainty regarding post-relocation survival of salvaged individuals (noting that monitoring post-relocation survival is proposed as set out in Section 7.4).

3.2 Salvaging and relocation

Salvaging and relocation protocols are set out in the following sections

3.2.1 Salvaging principles

The salvaging approach addresses the nine principles in the Department of Conservation's guidance document *Key principles for lizard salvage and transfer in New Zealand* as set out in Table 4 below[5]. Section 3.2.2 then sets out how each salvage and relocation method in this LMP ensures that best practice standards are met.

Table 4: Assessment against key salvaging and relocation principles

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
Principle 1: Lizard species' values and site significance must be assessed at both the development and receiving sites	Principle addressed. Lizard species values and site significance are assessed at: • the development sites as detailed in the Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcoLogical Solutions 2026) • the relocation (receiving) sites as detailed in the Residual Effects Management Report (Alliance Ecology 2026)
Principle 2: Actual and potential development-related effects and their significance must be assessed	Principle addressed as detailed in the Buller Plateaux Continuation Project Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EcoLogical Solutions 2026)
Principle 3: Alternatives to moving lizards must be considered	Principle addressed as detailed in the Substantive Application and the Buller Plateaux Continuation Project Terrestrial Ecological Impact

5 Department of Conservation Lizard Technical Advisory Group (2019). Key principles for lizard salvage and transfer in New Zealand. Department of Conservation, Wellington

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
	Assessment Report (EcoLogical Solutions 2026) noting that the location of the coal resource is fixed. Avoidance of effects (thus negating the need to move lizards) has therefore focussed on avoidance of the highest value habitats for infrastructure such as roads, buildings and overburden disposal sites and reducing the Project disturbance area where achievable.
Principle 4: Threatened lizard species require more careful consideration than less-threatened species	This principle is addressed via the level of effort assigned to specifically targeting West Coast green gecko for salvaging which is nationally Threatened (nationally vulnerable). Targeted effort for this species comprises dedicated diurnal visual searching teams (a minimum average of 8 person-hours per hectare, twice the minimum average for the other species, focused on the highest quality habitat), nocturnal spotlight searching, drone surveillance, searching of felled forest canopy during supervised clearance, and radio-tracking of relocated individuals.
Principle 5: Lizard salvage, transfer and release must use the best available methodology	Principle addressed. Lizard salvage, transfer and release under this LMP follow the key principles in DOC (2019) and the standard methodologies in DOC's Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox: Herpetofauna (Greene & McNutt 2012), adapted for site conditions at the BPCP. Site conditions do not alter the standard of the methods applied; they determine which best practice method is applied in each habitat type. Section 3.2.2 (Table 5) sets out how each method meets best practice standards. In summary: • **Salvage (Sections 3.3 to 3.5):** salvage is undertaken using artificial cover objects (Section 3.5.1.1) and diurnal and nocturnal manual searching aided by a certified lizard detection dog and drone surveillance, with manual searching specified separately for each of the three species to reflect their habitat preferences and detectability (Section 3.5.1.2). Consistent with DOC (2019), salvage is undertaken over multiple events (four ACO checks and repeat search passes) to a fixed minimum average effort per hectare for each search method, with effort focused on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance, the overall approach being to salvage as many lizards as possible (Section 3.5.1.3). All Vegetation Clearance of lizard habitat and all VDT is supervised, with post-clearance salvage of any lizards exposed (Section 3.5.2). • **Salvage timing (Section 3.4):** salvage is undertaken from October to April inclusive when air temperatures exceed 10°C, and is integrated with the Project's year-round vegetation clearance programme. Vegetation Clearance of lizard habitat will be avoided from 1 May to 30 September inclusive where practicable (Condition LIZ6). Where it cannot be avoided, the full fixed minimum salvage effort will be completed in the preceding salvage season, habitat will be modified after the final salvage event to discourage recolonisation, and clearance will be supervised with post-clearance searching. • **Transfer and handling (Sections 3.2.3, 4.1 and 6.1):** lizards are handled only by an experienced herpetologist, appropriately trained ecologists or trained mine site personnel working under a Wildlife Act Authority, using sterilised equipment. Lizards are held

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
	in cloth bags during salvage and in ventilated containers with vegetation or leaf litter and a wetted sponge during transport, kept at a constant ambient temperature, for no longer than 24 hours (72 hours where identification by DOC is required), and are transported in accordance with the Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare (see Section 4.1 for handling and holding and Section 6.1 for the handling and release protocol, including bag and container types and temperature). Within VDT areas, lizards are transferred with the vegetation, soil and refugia they occupy directly onto rehabilitated landforms, without being captured or held (Section 3.2.3). • **Release (Sections 6 and 7.4):** lizards are released on the plateau of capture, preferentially into the relocation site closest to the point of capture, within the pest exclusion fenced areas or, until these are completed and cleared of mammalian pests, the interim relocation sites including weka-free exclosures (Section 6.2). Lizards are released into species-specific microhabitats that provide adequate complexity and cover, at least 20 m apart unless found together, and release details are recorded (Section 6.1). Post-release survival of geckos will be monitored by radio-tracking (Section 7.4). **Searchable and non-searchable habitat.** Using these methods, lizards can be effectively and readily salvaged from the majority of the Project footprint, which comprises searchable habitat as determined by the Project Herpetologist in consultation with BRL's safety personnel. In broad terms, searchable habitat excludes interior tall forest and sites where health and safety risks cannot be adequately managed. Some habitat is not searchable, for one of two reasons: • **Lizards cannot be detected or captured:** arboreal geckos in the canopy of interior tall forest cannot be detected or captured by pre-clearance searching and cannot be captured even if detected (e.g. by drone). In tall forest, forest margins will be searched, and trees will be directionally felled under supervision and the felled canopy and debris searched immediately after felling and, where safe, again after a further period (generally at least 24 hours) (Section 3.5.2). More generally, lizards are difficult to detect and capture in highly complex habitats (e.g. dense vegetation, root mats and rock crevices). Detection in these habitats will be maximised by combining the methods above with machine-assisted searching during supervised clearance, repeat salvage events and increased effort wherever lizards are detected. • **Health and safety:** some areas cannot be safely searched, or cannot be safely searched at night, where hazards are present and the associated risks cannot be adequately managed. These include abandoned mine shafts (fall risk), abandoned mine portals (irrespirable atmosphere), underground subsidence and sinkholes (ground collapse, entrapment), deep or flooding water bodies (drowning), cliffs, significant drop-offs and excessively steep ground (fall from height), heated coal or coal fires, including areas

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
	downwind (irrespirable gas emissions, burns), and sandstone pavement where prostrate vegetation may conceal small but deep fissures (fall from height, entrapment). Before salvage, a health and safety assessment by the Project Herpetologist with BRL's safety personnel will identify hazards and apply controls where possible, e.g. daytime inspection, marking or barricading of hazards and marked access routes (Section 3.5.1.2). Nocturnal spotlight searching, an effective method for detecting forest gecko and West Coast green gecko, will be undertaken in all lizard habitat confirmed as safe for night work. Areas where hazards cannot be controlled will be excluded from searching or from night work, mapped, searched from safe margins by day where possible, subject to supervised clearance, and reported annually (Section 10.1). No matter the level of effort applied, not all lizards can be salvaged from parts of the Project footprint where VDT is not undertaken. As DOC (2019) notes, "even using the best methodology, a high proportion of lizards will remain undetected, so compensation for any loss of lizards and/or their habitat will be required". Within VDT areas, lizards that are not detected are transferred with their habitat rather than lost during clearance (Section 3.2.3). Accordingly, the best practice salvage set out in this LMP is complemented by, not substituted by, the compensation package (the 911 ha pest exclusion fence network) described in the PCEMP.
Principle 6: Receiving sites and their carrying capacity must be suitable in the long term	Principle addressed via the conservation management actions proposed for relocation sites coupled with their size. Lizards salvaged from the Denniston Plateau will be relocated into: • Denniston North pest exclusion fenced area (47.3 ha), or • Coalbrookdale pest exclusion fenced area (154.4 ha) on Denniston Plateau. Lizards salvaged from the Stockton Plateau will be relocated into: • Mt. Augustus pest exclusion fenced area (14.6 ha) on the Stockton Plateau • Whirlwind Rise pest exclusion fenced area (694.9 ha) on the Stockton Plateau. As detailed in the PCEMP, habitat types within each pest exclusion fence are highly suitable for the three species that require salvaging and there is high certainty that all lizard species will recover within mammalian-pest free areas. Each fence will be maintained for 50 years while the population-doubling outcome target and net loss/gain assessment are framed over 35 years . However, there will be a delay, and in some cases, a significant delay between lizard salvage during initial clearance and the construction of pest exclusion fences, and completion of pest eradication. Commencement of construction for each fence will start concurrently with the commencement of works in proximity to each fence with commencement of eradication assumed to follow the year after, Fence construction by stage is as follows:

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
	• Stage 1 – Denniston North pest exclusion fence • Stage 3 – Coalbrookdale pest exclusion fence • Stage 5 – Construction of Mt Augustus pest exclusion fence • Stage 7 – Whirlwind Rise pest exclusion fence For lizards salvaged early on the Stockton Plateau, there will be a notable time delay between when lizards are relocated and when mammalian pests are eliminated within the two fences. To partially reduce issues with relocating lizards to pest-exclusion fence areas prior to the construction of the pest exclusion fences and the elimination of mammalian pests therein, salvage lizards will be relocated to weka free exclosures as set out in the proposed consent conditions (Conditions WEK 1 – WEK 3). Regardless lizards are proposed for release in these areas with lizards salvaged on Stockton released into areas around which the Mt Augustus and Whirlwind Rise pest exclusion fences will be constructed and lizards salvaged on Denniston released into areas around which the Denniston North or Coalbrookdale pest exclusion fence areas will be constructed. The numbers of lizards that are expected to be salvaged are unlikely to have adverse effects on resident lizards via inter- or intra-specific competition due to the number of salvaged lizards being relocated relative to the areal extent of relocation sites (the 911 ha of habitat within the pest exclusion fence network). The carrying capacity of each permanent and interim relocation site will be assessed before any release, and releases will not exceed that capacity (Section 6.2). Interim relocation sites are described in Section 6.2 and shown on Figure 1E (Appendix A).
Principle 7: Monitoring is required to evaluate the salvage operation	Principle addressed via radio-tracking of forest gecko, West Coast green gecko and CritterPic monitoring (or similar technology) of all three species to evaluate the success of salvage and relocation programmes as set out in Section 7 and the BOMP.
Principle 8: Reporting is required to communicate outcomes of salvage operations and encourage process improvements	Principle addressed through: • Reporting requirements as set out in Section 10 of this LMP in relation to salvage and relocation activities, results and adaptive management. • Reporting on the success of relocations as determined by radio-tracking (Section 7 of this LMP) and as set out in the BOMP.
Principle 9: Contingency actions are required when lizard salvage and transfer activities fail	It is assumed that lizard salvage will not materially reduce the overall severity of effects, given that, as anticipated by DOC (2019), a high proportion of individuals are likely to remain undetected within this landscape even using best practice methods, along with the inherent challenges in verifying success through monitoring (as outlined above). Accordingly, although salvage and relocation outcomes will be monitored via the proposed radio-tracking programme, the compensation framework has been developed on the basis that these activities will not materially reduce adverse effects. Similarly, no reduction in effect severity has been attributed to the ecological rehabilitation programme.

WAA Salvaging Principles	Assessment
	Contingency actions specific to salvage and transfer will nonetheless be implemented as follows: • if capture rates in an area are materially lower than expected for the habitat type, the Project Herpetologist will review search timing, methods and effort allocation and adjust them for subsequent events; and • if radio-tracking indicates that survival, site fidelity or body condition of relocated geckos is materially lower than that of resident geckos, release methods (including soft release within weka-free exclosures, release site selection and release timing) will be reviewed in consultation with DOC and the LMP updated in accordance with Section 12. On this basis, no additional contingency measures beyond the proposed compensation package are included. However, contingency measures will be implemented if monitoring indicates that the compensation programme is not achieving its intended outcomes—specifically, the target of doubling each lizard species population within pest exclusion fences over a 35-year period.

3.2.2 Statement of how the salvage methods ensure best practice standards are met

Table 5 sets out, for each salvage and relocation method identified in Section 1.4, the best practice standard that applies and how the method specified in this LMP will ensure that standard is met. Every part of the lizard habitat within the Project disturbance area will be subject to salvage using one or more of these methods, with the method applied determined by habitat type and site safety as set out in Section 3.4.

Table 5: Statement of how salvage and relocation methods ensure best practice standards are met

Salvage / relocation method (clause 2(1)(b) action)	Best practice standard	How the LMP method ensures the standard is met
Artificial cover objects (ACOs) (Section 3.5.1.1)	Toolbox: ACOs are a standard method for detecting and capturing skinks and ground-dwelling geckos; they must be deployed in advance to allow occupation and checked repeatedly. DOC (2019) Principle 5: use of multiple complementary methods.	Average of at least 4 ACOs per ha across the approximately 560 ha of low-stature and shrubland lizard habitat (≥2,240 ACOs); deployed ≥10 months before clearance; first check ≥6 months after deployment; four checks ≥1 month apart (one check only in the approximately 125 ha subject to VDT); each ACO GPS-recorded.
Diurnal manual searching for Westland speckled skink	Toolbox: systematic hand searching of refugia (rocks, logs, vegetation, crevices)	Minimum average of 4 person-hours per ha (≥1,740 person-hours across the approximately 435 ha of non-forested habitat and forest margins not subject to VDT); searching by SQEP-led teams when air temperature exceeds 10°C and

and forest gecko (Section 3.5.1.2)	during suitable weather. DOC (2019) Principle 5.	outside moderate–heavy rain; assisted by a certified lizard detection dog; effort focused on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance.
Diurnal visual searching for West Coast green gecko (Section 3.5.1.2)	Toolbox: visual encounter searching for arboreal geckos during basking conditions. DOC (2019) Principle 4: greater effort for Threatened species.	Dedicated team; minimum average of 8 person-hours per ha (≥3,480 person-hours across the approximately 435 ha of non-forested habitat and forest margins not subject to VDT), focused on the highest quality habitat where geckos are at higher relative abundance; on sunny, calm mornings and late afternoons; naked eye, binocular and drone surveillance; slow, methodical search technique informed by Escarpment Mine radio-tracking.
Nocturnal spotlight searching (Section 3.5.1.2)	Toolbox: spotlighting is a standard method for nocturnal geckos and for green geckos. DOC (2019) Principles 4 and 5.	All lizard habitat confirmed safe for night work by pre-salvage health and safety assessment; minimum average of 1 person-hour per ha (up to 435 person-hours across the approximately 435 ha not subject to VDT) in addition to diurnal effort, focused on the highest quality habitat; areas excluded for safety mapped, searched from safe margins by day and reported.
Repeat salvage events and fixed minimum salvage effort (Section 3.5.1.3)	DOC (2019): salvage over multiple events, ceasing only after repeated unsuccessful attempts.	Salvage undertaken over multiple events (four ACO checks and repeat search passes) to a fixed minimum average effort per hectare for each search method; effort focused on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance (where effort may be considerably higher than the minimum average), with less effort in poorer quality habitat where lizard numbers are lower, the overall approach being to salvage as many lizards as possible; clearance of an area does not commence until salvage of that area is complete, as confirmed in writing by the Project Herpetologist. This meets the purpose of DOC (2019) Principle 5 of maximising the number of lizards salvaged.
Supervised clearance and post-clearance salvage (Section 3.5.2)	DOC (2019) Principle 5: best available methodology, recognising that some lizards will only be exposed during and after clearance.	All clearance of lizard habitat supervised by a SQEP; machine-assisted staged lifting of rocks, logs and vegetation mats; felled tall forest canopy searched for arboreal geckos before removal; post-clearance searching within 24 hours.
Timing of salvage and clearance (Sections 3.1 and 3.4)	DOC (2019) Principle 5 and Toolbox: salvage when lizards are active; avoid clearance when lizards are inactive.	Salvage 1 October–30 April when air temperature exceeds 10°C; clearance avoided 1 May–30 September where practicable (LIZ6); where unavoidable, the full fixed minimum salvage effort completed the preceding season, habitat modification after the final event, and supervised clearance.
Handling, holding and transport (Sections 4 and 6.1)	DOC guidance on keeping lizards in captivity (Gibson, no date); Code of Welfare: Transport within New Zealand (MPI 2018); Animal Welfare Act 1999.	Handling by trained personnel under SQEP direction; sterilised, ventilated containers with cover and moisture; held ≤24 hours (≤72 hours for DOC identification); full data record for each lizard.

Release and receiving sites (Sections 3.2.1 and 6.2)	DOC (2019) Principles 1 and 6: receiving sites assessed and suitable in the long term, within carrying capacity.	Release on the plateau of capture into pest exclusion fenced areas or weka-free exclosures; species-specific microhabitats; lizards released ≥20 m apart unless found together.
Vegetation direct transfer (Section 3.2.3)	DOC (2019) Principles 3, 5 and 6: alternatives to moving individual lizards considered; best available methodology; receiving habitat suitable in the long term. VDT methods as set out in RMP Section 4.3.5.	Approximately 125 ha of VDT (≥15% target) moves lizards with intact habitat, including individuals not detected by salvage; direct and immediate placement; optimally sized buckets; VDT connected to natural habitat and gullies and enhanced with refugia; SQEP present during VDT of lizard habitat; recorded in the VDT Register and monitored under the BOMP.
Monitoring, reporting and contingency (Sections 7, 10 and Table 4)	DOC (2019) Principles 7, 8 and 9.	Radio-tracking of ≥200 geckos (subject to AEC approval); CritterPic® monitoring; annual reporting of effort, captures and capture rate per unit effort by area salvaged; salvage-specific contingency actions (Table 4, Principle 9).
Personnel (Sections 1.7 and 11)	DOC (2019); Condition LIZ4.	All salvage led or directed by the Project Herpetologist or a SQEP; all personnel trained and inducted.

On the basis of Table 4 and Table 5, the methods proposed in this LMP for the salvage, handling and relocation of lizards will ensure that best practice standards, as set out in DOC (2019) and the DOC Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox, are met.

3.2.3 Salvage and relocation of lizards via vegetation direct transfer

In addition to the pre-clearance salvage and supervised clearance and post-clearance salvage described in Sections 3.3 to 3.5, a considerable number of lizards will be salvaged and relocated through vegetation direct transfer (VDT), which forms a significant part of the effects management package for the Project. VDT involves the removal of intact mats or sods of vegetation together with the attached soil, leaf litter, refugia and associated fauna, and their direct and immediate placement onto rehabilitated engineered landforms (RMP Section 4.3.5). Indirect transfer (i.e. stockpiling or temporary storage of VDT material) is not proposed for the BPCP. Lizards within transferred sods are therefore moved together with their habitat, cover and food resources, rather than being individually captured, held and released.

The RMP sets a target of at least 15% VDT across the BPCP as a whole. Based on the timing of vegetation stripping and the rehabilitation schedule, VDT of approximately 125 ha of vegetation is expected (85 ha within the ESE Project sub-area and 40 ha within the MFS Project sub-area), much of which is expected to comprise low pākihi and shrubland vegetation types (RMP Section 5.6). This is equivalent to approximately 16.5% of the 755 ha Project disturbance area. These vegetation types, together with the prostrate vegetation on sandstone pavement and weathered boulders that will also be transferred to create rockfield habitat (RMP Section 5.5), provide habitat for Westland speckled skink and forest gecko, while shrubland and tussock/fernland vegetation is also used by West Coast green gecko (Section 2.1).

VDT complements, rather than replaces, the salvage methods set out in this LMP. However, full pre-clearance salvage (Section 3.5.1) is not considered necessary for lizard habitat scheduled for VDT. Almost all lizards are expected to survive VDT, being transferred with the vegetation and substrate they occupy, and/or to self-disperse from the VDT footprint into adjacent habitat. Pre-clearance salvage in these areas will therefore be reduced to a single ACO check, undertaken immediately prior to VDT, including the checking and recovery of all ACOs. As acknowledged by DOC (2019), even when best practice salvage methods are applied a high proportion of lizards will remain undetected. VDT directly addresses this limitation because lizards that are not detected or captured during salvage (including cryptic individuals within dense vegetation, root mats, soil and rock crevices) are transferred within the sods rather than being lost during clearance. For this reason, the number of lizards salvaged and relocated via VDT is expected to be considerable and additional to the indicative salvage estimates in Section 5.

Monitoring of established VDT at Stockton Mine has recorded forest gecko and Westland speckled skink within VDT sites (five forest geckos and one speckled skink recorded at three of four VDT sites surveyed in 2020; EcoLogical Solutions 2026), and outcome monitoring has confirmed that VDT is the most effective rehabilitation method for lizards in the short term (RMP Section 6.2). As noted in Section 3.1, it remains uncertain whether lizards recorded in VDT survived transfer, colonised from surrounding habitat, or both, and the use of VDT by West Coast green gecko has yet to be confirmed. The monitoring measures below are intended to address these uncertainties.

To maximise the survival of lizards salvaged and relocated via VDT, the following measures will be applied, consistent with the RMP (Sections 4.1, 4.3.5 and 6.2):

- Use of larger, optimally sized excavator buckets to lift sods intact and minimise injury to, and loss of, individual lizards during the VDT process.
- Direct and immediate placement of VDT sods onto prepared rehabilitation areas, with no stockpiling or indirect transfer.
- Where practicable, VDT of lizard habitat will be undertaken during the lizard active season (October to April inclusive), when lizards are more likely to be able to move and re-establish within the transferred habitat.
- Placement of VDT so that it is ecologically connected to retained natural habitat and in proximity to gully habitat complexes, including the VDT inoculation areas (approximately 10 ha comprising 20 sites of 0.5 ha at the ESE Project sub-area, and 5 ha comprising 10 sites at the MFS Project sub-area) and the VDT allocated to providing connectivity across each Project sub-area (approximately 10 ha at ESE and 8 ha at MFS) (RMP Section 4.1).
- Enhancement of VDT, where achievable without damaging vegetation, and of adjoining planted areas with rock slabs, rock piles, small logs and branches, including at least two piles of boulders and/or logs (5–20 m² each) per hectare in planted areas adjoining VDT, using weathered, non-acid-forming or otherwise geochemically benign rock (RMP Section 6.2).
- An SQEP will be present during VDT of lizard habitat to capture any lizards exposed, displaced or injured during lifting and placement of sods. Uninjured lizards will be released into the adjoining placed VDT or into the relocation sites in Section 6.2, and injured lizards managed in accordance with Section 8.0. All such captures will be recorded in accordance with Section 4.2.

- Mammalian browser and predator control and weed management within rehabilitation sites, as set out in the RMP.

The source and receiving locations and the extent of VDT undertaken from lizard habitat will be recorded in the VDT Register (RMP Section 10.1.2) and reported in the annual lizard compliance monitoring report (Section 10.1). The presence and persistence of lizards within VDT receiving areas will be monitored as part of the rehabilitation outcome monitoring for lizards under the BOMP (BPCP-ENV-PLN-009).

3.3 Salvaging protocols

Prior to salvaging works commencing, a comprehensive induction relating to the management of lizards will be conducted for relevant contractors, the Environmental Manager, and other authorised personnel.

The protocols for lizard salvaging and relocation specified below are consistent with standard methodologies from DOC's Inventory and Monitoring Toolbox: Herpetofauna (Greene & McNutt 2012) and are commonly used on many construction projects. The methodologies have been adapted in this LMP for local site conditions at the BPCP.

3.4 Salvaging within the Project disturbance area and timing

Lizard salvaging during the day will be undertaken during warmer months (October to April inclusive) and only when temperatures exceed 10°C. While habitat clearance will be avoided to the extent possible outside these months, there will be a time-lag between salvaging and habitat clearance when clearance occurs outside lizard salvaging season, i.e. during May – September inclusive.

Lizards will be salvaged prior to habitat clearance by day, and by night where safe, in all lizard habitat within the Project disturbance area. The best practice method applied differs in the following locations:

- Interior tall forest, where lizards in the canopy cannot be detected or captured by pre-clearance searching: forest margins will be searched and salvage within the interior will be undertaken through supervised directional felling and searching of felled canopy and debris (Section 3.5.2).
- Excessively steep and rocky terrain, and locations with abandoned mine shafts or portals, subsidence or other hazards identified in Section 3.5.1.2, where the pre-salvage health and safety assessment determines that ground-based searching is unsafe: these areas will be mapped, searched from safe margins, subject to supervised clearance and post-clearance searching where safe, and reported in the annual report (Section 10.1).

3.5 Salvaging methods

Lizard salvaging will be undertaken prior to, during and immediately after habitat clearance.

Salvage will comprise: ACO deployment; a fixed minimum salvage effort of four ACO checks and diurnal and nocturnal manual searching, focused on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance (Section 3.5.1.3); and supervised clearance with post-clearance searching.

3.5.1 Pre-clearance salvage

Pre-clearance salvaging will include diurnal and nocturnal manual searching aided by drone surveillance and a certified lizard detection dog, and the deployment and checking of Artificial Cover Objects (ACOs) as specified below. The proposed combination of methods is expected to capture all lizard species present. However, West Coast green gecko detections are limited to manual searching (by day and night), as this species is not targeted using other methods that are suited to capturing species that use artificial or natural cover objects.

3.5.1.1 Artificial Cover Objects

Ground ACOs will be deployed across all low-stature vegetation and shrublands throughout the Project disturbance area (approximately 560 ha of the 755 ha), a minimum of 2,240 ACOs in total (an average of 4 ACOs per ha), to target Westland speckled skink and forest gecko (and northern grass skink, if present). Within these habitats, ground ACOs will be deployed in microhabitats where lizards are deemed to be most active (e.g., along logs, rock edges or in the margins between complex habitats and bare ground). The actual number of ACOs deployed within a given hectare will vary, with more ACOs deployed in higher quality habitat. Ground ACOs will not be deployed in interior tall forest, where capture rates are expected to be materially lower because forest gecko has abundant alternative refuges (crevices and bark) and the habitat is poorly suited to Westland speckled skink, or in areas excluded from ground-based searching for health and safety reasons.

Within the approximately 125 ha of low-stature vegetation and shrubland in the Project disturbance area that will be subject to VDT, ACOs will be checked once and removed immediately prior to VDT operations, because almost all lizards present are expected to be salvaged and relocated through the VDT process (Section 3.2.3). VDT lifts and moves the vegetation, root mat, soil and surface refugia as intact sods, which are placed directly and immediately onto the rehabilitated landform, so lizards sheltering within them are moved with their habitat rather than having to be found and caught. The areas proposed for VDT are predominantly low pākihi and shrubland, where forest gecko, Westland speckled skink and West Coast green gecko live within the vegetation, root mats, soil and rock crevices that make up the transferred sods, so VDT captures the cryptic individuals that conventional salvage methods most often miss. The Project Herpetologist or a SQEP will supervise each VDT operation and capture any lizards exposed or left behind. Forest gecko and Westland speckled skink have been recorded in established VDT sites at Stockton Mine (EcoLogical Solutions 2026), showing that transferred habitat supports lizards, although whether these individuals were transferred with the sods or colonised from surrounding habitat has not been confirmed.

For habitat that will be cleared and not subject to VDT, all ground ACOs will be deployed at least 10 months prior to habitat impacts, with the first of four checks occurring a minimum of 6 months after deployment, and the subsequent three checks at least 1 month apart to allow sufficient time for lizards to occupy the ACOs. Further checks are not proposed because lizards are far more likely to be detected in earlier ACO checks than later ones; at Escarpment Mine the highest ACO capture rates were recorded on the first check in both the mine footprint and the DPPA (Baber et al. 2015). Typically the last check would occur immediately prior to habitat clearance, but this will not be possible for any clearance that occurs outside the standard lizard salvaging season.

Each ground ACO will consist of double-layered onduline sheets (475mm x 400mm) with 7-8mm spacings created between the bottom and top layers of each ACO sheet using small stones, twigs or dowels. Deploying and establishing ACOs will include:

- Clearing low-stature vegetation to bare earth/ground where feasible using heavy duty hand rakes
- Weighting ACOs with rocks or heavy duty ground staples (300mm x 6mm) where rocks are absent or sparse.

Each ground ACO will be GPS-recorded, numbered and flagged to assist with re-sighting during salvaging operations.

3.5.1.2 Manual searching

Manual searching will be undertaken within two weeks of habitat clearance at a given site, except when habitat clearance occurs in winter months, in which case there will be up to several months difference between the completion of manual searching and actual habitat clearance activities. Manual searching will involve the following:

- Visual surveys for West Coast green gecko in prostrate or shrubland vegetation including the use of binoculars and drones targeting gecko in suitable habitat from which individuals can be feasibly salvaged.
- Manual lifting and checking of cover objects for Westland speckled skink and forest gecko (and northern grass skink, if present) including the use of a certified lizard dog to detect the presence of lizards under rocks or within low-stature vegetation.
- Nocturnal spotlight searching for forest gecko and West Coast green gecko in all lizard habitat confirmed as safe for night work.

Manual searching for West Coast green gecko

Manual searching for West Coast green gecko will be undertaken by one or more 2-3 person teams of suitably trained ecologists during suitable weather conditions, specifically sunny calm mornings or later afternoons during warmer months when lizards are basking in vegetation and detection probability is highest.

Manual visual searching for West Coast green gecko will be undertaken by a dedicated survey team/s in all low prostrate and shrubland vegetation and along forest margins that can be feasibly searched.

Searching will include a mixture of naked eye, binocular and drone surveillance techniques. A minimum average of 8 person-hours of manual searching per hectare will be undertaken in all non-forested habitat and forest margins within the Project disturbance area excluding roads and areas subject to VDT (estimated at 435 ha). This amounts to a minimum total of 3,480 person-hours of search time. Search effort will be focused on the highest quality habitat where West Coast green gecko are at higher relative abundance, informed by habitat suitability and capture rate, and may be considerably higher than the minimum average in these areas and lower in poorer quality habitat (Section 3.5.1.3).

Searching for West Coast green gecko will be undertaken using a slow and methodical approach, to avoid geckos detecting the herpetologists. A previous radio-tracking study (Tonkin & Taylor 2015) undertaken as part of the existing Escarpment Mine salvage and relocation programme indicated that geckos may detect searchers moving nearby the search location and, as a result, begin moving deeper into vegetation therefore reducing detection success.

Drone surveillance will be conducted using a DJI Mavic 4 Pro or similar which includes a high-resolution camera with a 168mm telephoto lens (minimum). The drone will be flown at low altitude and slow speed to maximise detection of West Coast green gecko within vegetation. The drone will be manoeuvred across optimal habitats, with the camera angled obliquely to scan vegetation surfaces where lizards are most likely present.

Manual searching for Westland speckled skink and forest gecko

All accessible non-forested habitats and forest margins will be manually searched for Westland speckled skink and forest gecko during daylight hours. Searching will be undertaken by one or more 2-3 person teams of suitably qualified and experienced ecologists during suitable weather conditions within the salvaging months, which includes all weather except where the temperature is <10˚C and during moderate to heavy rain. This team/s will operate separately from the West Coast green gecko survey team. Any northern grass skink encountered during ACO checks or manual searching will be salvaged and relocated using the same methods.

Manual searching for Westland speckled skink and forest gecko will involve carefully lifting or turning over rocks and any other cover and searching suitable crevice habitats using a small torch. A minimum average of 4 person-hours of manual searching per hectare will be undertaken in all non-forested habitat and forest margins within the Project disturbance area excluding roads and areas subject to VDT (estimated at 435 ha) amounting to a minimum of 1,740 person-hours of search time. Search time will be focused on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance (Section 3.5.1.3), informed by habitat suitability and capture rate as indicated by the initial ACO pre-salvage checks to be undertaken prior to manual searching.

Manual searching for forest gecko and Westland speckled skink will be assisted by a certified lizard detection dog working systematically through the survey area under the direction of a qualified handler (in addition to the 2 – 3 person team/s). The dog is trained to locate lizards using scent cues and to indicate presence without making contact, allowing targeted searches of likely refuges such as rock piles, vegetation, and ground cover. When the dog signals, the handler confirms detection. The use of a trained detection dog increases survey efficiency and detection probability for cryptic or low-density

lizard species that are difficult to locate using standard visual search methods alone. Detection of West Coast green gecko by the lizard dog is also possible when geckos are positioned in vegetation near the ground.

Nocturnal searching for forest gecko and West Coast green gecko

Nocturnal spotlight searching will be undertaken for forest gecko and West Coast green gecko, both of which are readily detected at night by eye-shine or body colour when active or resting on vegetation. Searching will be undertaken by teams of at least two suitably trained ecologists using head torches and hand-held spotlights on suitable nights within the salvage season, working slowly through shrubland, prostrate vegetation, sandstone pavement, bluffs and forest margins.

A minimum average of 1 person-hour of nocturnal searching per hectare will be undertaken in all lizard habitat confirmed as safe for night work, in addition to the diurnal search effort above. Search effort will be focused on the habitat of highest suitability and capture rate, where lizards are at higher relative abundance (Section 3.5.1.3).

Before any salvage (diurnal or nocturnal) is undertaken in an area, a pre-salvage health and safety assessment will be undertaken by the Project Herpetologist with BRL's safety personnel to identify hazards, including abandoned mine shafts and portals, underground subsidence and sinkholes, deep or flooding water bodies, cliffs, significant drop-offs and excessively steep ground, hazards associated with historic underground fires (including areas downwind), and deep fissures concealed by prostrate vegetation on sandstone pavement. Hazards will be controlled where possible (e.g. daytime inspection, marking or barricading of hazards and marked access routes). Areas where hazards cannot be controlled will be excluded from ground-based searching or from night work (as applicable), mapped, searched from safe margins by day where possible, subject to supervised clearance, and reported in the annual report (Section 10.1).

3.5.1.3 Repeat salvage events and fixed minimum salvage effort

Consistent with DOC (2019), salvage will be undertaken over multiple events (four ACO checks and repeat search passes). A salvage event comprises a check of all ACOs and a pass of diurnal (and, where safe, nocturnal) manual searching across the area being salvaged, undertaken in suitable conditions.

Fixed minimum salvage effort. Across the approximately 435 ha of lizard habitat not subject to VDT, a fixed minimum salvage effort will be completed, comprising:

- four checks of all ground ACOs (an average of at least 4 ACOs per hectare of low stature and shrubland habitat; Section 3.5.1.1);
- a minimum average of 8 person-hours per hectare of diurnal searching for West Coast green gecko (Section 3.5.1.2);
- a minimum average of 4 person-hours per hectare of diurnal searching for forest gecko and Westland speckled skink (Section 3.5.1.2); and
- where safe, a minimum average of 1 person-hour per hectare of nocturnal searching for forest gecko and West Coast green gecko (Section 3.5.1.2).

Vegetation Clearance of any area of lizard habitat will not commence until salvage of that area has been completed and documented in accordance with this section, as confirmed in writing by the Project Herpetologist. Across the Project, the minimum effort (including the single ACO check in VDT areas) is 7,460 ACO checks (1,740 ACOs x 4 checks and 500 ACOs x 1 check), 5,220 person-hours of diurnal searching (1,740 person-hours for forest gecko and Westland speckled skink and 3,480 person-hours for West Coast green gecko) and up to 435 person-hours of nocturnal searching.

Because the minimum salvage effort is fixed and known in advance, salvage can be planned and resourced ahead of the clearance sequence so that the full effort is delivered before clearance.

Focusing effort on the highest quality habitat. The salvage effort above is a minimum average per hectare across the lizard habitat to be cleared, not a uniform rate to be applied to every hectare. The Project Herpetologist will focus salvage effort on the highest quality habitat, where lizards are at higher relative abundance, as indicated by habitat suitability, ACO check results and early captures. In these areas, salvage effort may be considerably higher than the minimum average. Conversely, in poorer quality habitat where lizard numbers are lower, salvage effort will be less than the minimum average. The overall approach is to salvage as many lizards as possible: for the same total effort, focusing effort where lizards are most abundant, rather than spreading it evenly across lower-quality ground, is expected to increase the number of lizards salvaged. Evidence from Escarpment Mine supports this: West Coast green geckos were found in only one of five 9 ha DPPA monitoring grids, reflecting their patchy distribution, and refining search methods using radio-tracking information (searching shrubland as well as prostrate vegetation, searching in early to mid-morning in warm, still conditions, and searching slowly for movement) increased the West Coast green gecko encounter rate in the mine footprint 2.6-fold between 2014 and 2015, with 0.2 geckos per person-hour achieved in the highest-yield grid (Baber et al. 2015).

How this approach meets DOC (2019) Principle 5. DOC (2019) Principle 5 states that salvage events "should only stop after at least three unsuccessful salvage attempts under appropriate field conditions", the purpose being to maximise the number of lizards salvaged. A three zero-capture stopping rule has not been adopted in this LMP because, for species with low detection probability in structurally complex habitat, a run of three consecutive salvage events without captures does not mean that lizards are no longer present, or that salvage has materially reduced the population within an area, and it is therefore not a reliable measure or indicator of salvage success. This applies particularly to West Coast green gecko, but also to Westland speckled skink and forest gecko in the rock, sandstone pavement and dense vegetation habitats of the Buller Plateaux. DOC (2019) notes that the proportion of lizards caught during monitoring is "highly variable and usually low (<50%)". Radio-tracking at Escarpment Mine showed that forest geckos spent only a small proportion of their time under cover objects small enough to be searched, and most of it under large rocks that could not be turned over or at the base of prostrate vegetation where they could not be seen, and that West Coast green geckos crawl deeper into vegetation once they are aware of searchers; only a small proportion of the geckos present can be detected during salvage, and actual populations are much larger than salvage results imply (Baber et al. 2015).

The approach in this LMP instead meets the intent of Principle 5 by:

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- retaining multiple salvage events (four ACO checks and repeat search passes);
- committing to a fixed minimum average salvage effort per hectare for each search method, with double the minimum average diurnal search effort for the Threatened West Coast green gecko;
- focusing effort on the highest quality habitat where lizards are at higher relative abundance, so as to salvage as many lizards as possible; and
- linking salvage to measured outcomes (post-release survival, site fidelity and body condition of radio-tracked geckos, Section 7), rather than to a stopping rule that, for these species, does not indicate salvage success.

Salvage effort, captures and capture rate per unit effort (by species and method) and the date on which salvage was completed will be recorded for each area salvaged and reported in the annual report (Section 10.1).

3.5.2 Supervised clearance and post-clearance salvage

It is likely that lizards will remain within cleared mining areas unless they are captured and relocated elsewhere. Under the guidance of the supervising herpetologist, suitably qualified and experienced ecologists will salvage and relocate lizards from within Project disturbance areas if they are encountered after habitat clearance or vegetation transfer. The timeframes during which this methodology will be applied will depend upon the timing and duration of habitat clearance and vegetation transfer and will need to be planned in conjunction with mine scheduling. Trained environmental personnel will manually search for displaced lizards within 24 hours of vegetation clearance activities in a given location, within the mining footprint(s).

All vegetation clearance of lizard habitat will be supervised by the Project Herpetologist or a SQEP. Clearance will be staged so that rocks, boulders, logs and vegetation mats are lifted or moved by machine in stages under the direction of the supervising ecologist, who will search the exposed habitat and salvage any lizards before work proceeds. Likewise, all Vegetation Direct Transfer operations will be supervised by the Project Herpetologist or a SQEP to capture any lizards that remain after Vegetation Direct Transfer has occurred.

In tall forest, trees will be directionally felled into the disturbance area and felled canopy and debris will be searched for arboreal geckos by suitably trained ecologists immediately after felling and before the material is mulched, removed or used for vegetation direct transfer. Where safe, felled canopy material will be left in place for a period determined by the Project Herpetologist (generally at least 24 hours) to allow a further search.

3.6 Pest exclusion fence and weka-free exclosure construction

Construction of the four pest exclusion fences may result in localised vegetation clearance and/or ground disturbance. However, substantial portions of the proposed fence alignments follow existing roads, drill tracks, haul roads or other previously disturbed surfaces and will therefore require little or no additional vegetation clearance. New disturbance will principally be associated with sections requiring establishment of a construction platform, installation of the fence skirt, culverts and gates, and any localised vegetation clearance necessary to maintain fence integrity. The extent and nature of

disturbance will vary between fence alignments and will be confirmed through detailed fence design during construction.

Final fence alignments and construction access will be refined in consultation with the Project Herpetologist and, where practicable, will utilise existing disturbed roads and tracks and avoid bluffs, rock tors, boulder fields and other identified high-value lizard habitat. Where new disturbance is unavoidable, the construction footprint will be restricted to the minimum practicable width required for safe fence construction, operation and maintenance.

Where these works affect lizard habitat:

- fence alignments and access tracks will be selected, in consultation with the Project Herpetologist, to follow existing disturbed tracks, avoid bluffs, rock tors, boulder fields and other high-value lizard habitat where possible, and the cleared corridor will be limited to the minimum width required for construction and maintenance;
- Lizard habitat within the corridor will be salvaged in accordance with Sections 3.4 and 3.5, including ACOs, diurnal and nocturnal manual searching, the fixed minimum average salvage effort per hectare applied to the area of lizard habitat within each fence section (Section 3.5.1.3), and supervised clearance;
- lizards salvaged from fence alignments will be released into suitable habitat within the fence footprint at least 20 m from the alignment, and within the nearest weka-free exclosure where available; and
- salvage effort, captures and releases along fence alignments will be reported in the annual report (Section 10.1).

3.7 Minimising lizard bycatch during pest control

Kill traps used for mammalian pest control and eradication within the pest exclusion fenced areas and the intensive pest control area (in particular mouse and rat traps) can capture lizards. To avoid and minimise this:

- trap types, housings and entrance designs will be selected in consultation with the Project Herpetologist to exclude or minimise the capture of lizards, and traps will be sited away from basking sites, rock piles and other high-use lizard microhabitats where possible;
- all non-target captures of lizards will be recorded (species, location, trap type) and reported in the annual report (Section 10.1).

4.0 Handling, data collection, sampling and transporting lizards

4.1 Handling

Lizard handling will be kept to a minimum to reduce stress caused to the animals. Lizards will only be handled by an experienced herpetologist, appropriately trained field ecologist/s, or trained mine site personnel working under a Wildlife Act Authority.

Captured lizards will be temporarily kept (held) in sterilised containers with ample air flow, foliage or similar cover, and moisture. Lizards will be kept in these containers for a maximum of 24 hours prior to their release into appropriate relocation site/s. The only exception is where a lizard is held for identification by DOC (Section 4.2), in which case it may be held for up to 72 hours. Lizards will not be held for longer than these periods without the prior written approval of DOC. All temporary captivity procedures will be undertaken in accordance with DOC Guidelines (Gibson, no date).

4.2 Data collection

Each individual lizard salvaged will be assigned a number and the following information will be recorded:

- Date and time of capture and weather conditions;
- Lizard salvage personnel
- Capture methodology, including Ground ACOs, Manual searching (Human detected), Manual searching (Lizard dog detected), or Manual searching (Drone detected).
- Capture location (GPS coordinates) and Ground ACO identifier
- Habitat type (using habitat classifications from the Terrestrial Ecological Impact Assessment report (EcoLogical Solutions 2026))
- Microhabitat type (all microhabitat types within 1m2 of detection), ie prostrate vegetative ground cover, bare rock, leaf litter, loose rock/boulder, shrubland, or forest.
- Sex (reproductive status for females), age class, Snout to Vent Length (SVL) and tail status (regenerating versus original tail), and overall health and condition; and
- High resolution images of each lizard's dorsal, lateral and ventral surfaces and the side of its head will be taken to assist with later identification of individual lizards.

Information will be recorded onto customised field data sheets and subsequently entered into an Excel spreadsheet (or similar) for descriptive and statistical analyses.

If unusual lizards are captured that cannot be readily identified to species level in the field, DOC will be notified and, if requested, these animals (or high-resolution photos of them) will be provided to DOC for identification. Any animals requiring confirmation of species that cannot be undertaken via photos, will be held in containers as explained above and provided to DOC, Westport Office as soon as possible after capture (generally within 24 hours but up to 72 hours if found outside DoC office hours). Information on

the capture location, habitat type and when the animal was found will be provided to DOC along with the animal. Once the animal has been identified by DOC, the Project herpetologist or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist(s) will collect and release it as part of the relocation programme.

If circumstances require the holding of lizards for periods longer than 24 hours for relocation, or 72 hours for provision to DOC for identification (e.g. where research and release would be improved by a longer period), then this holding will only occur with the prior written approval of DOC, with explanations around temporary husbandry.

Where the collection of genetic material to support understanding of the taxonomy of lizards within the Buller Plateaux is considered desirable, it will be the responsibility of the Project herpetologist who will work under the guidance of DOC as generally described in DOC's Standard Operating Procedure for bird blood / feather and reptile tissue sampling. Any animals that are incidentally killed, or any tails that are dropped and recovered in the course of mining and lizard work will be retained, where possible, and provided to DOC as part of this genetic work.

5.0 Salvage estimates

It is difficult to estimate the number of lizards likely to be salvaged from the Project disturbance area based on the proposed level of effort. Nevertheless, to provide indicative context, the most relevant available dataset is from the Denniston Plateau Protection Area (DPPA) programme, which overlaps the current Project disturbance area, and where lizard monitoring was undertaken in 2015 across five sites. The DPPA is a 700 ha contiguous block located in the northern and eastern parts of the Denniston Plateau. Some of the DPPA is located within the Project Disturbance Area in that it is characterised largely by coal measure pakihi, sandstone erosion pavement, manuka shrubland, mixed beech and southern rata mountain forest. Mean encounter rates for each of the three lizard species likely to be impacted were as follows for ACO checks and manual searching:

- Forest gecko:
  - 0.0275 per ACO check (52 individuals from 1891 checks)
  - 0.02 per person-hour searching (8 individuals from 403.1 hours searching).
- Westland speckled skink:
  - 0.0005 per ACO check (1 individual from 1891 checks)
  - No Westland speckled skink were detected during 403.1 hours of searching; however, it is assumed that Westland speckled skink will be detected using this method, and that use of the lizard dog will greatly assist with detecting this species.
- West Coast green gecko:
  - 0.124 geckos per person hour (50 individuals from 403.1 person hours searching).

If encounter rates from the earlier DPPA monitoring study are applied to the level of effort proposed for this salvaging and relocation programme, the potentially indicative numbers of lizards salvaged via ACO checks are as follows:

Forest gecko - approx. 240 based on best available information and the minimum effort specified, comprising:

- 205 forest gecko salvaged from ACOs based on an encounter rate of 0.0275 per ACO x 7,460 ACO checks (1,740 ACOs x 4 checks and 500 ACOs x 1 check)
- 35 forest gecko from manual searching via turning over rocks based on encounter rate of 0.02 per person hour x 1,740 person hours.

Westland speckled skink – approximately 4 based on an encounter rate of 0.0005 x 7,460 ACO checks (1,740 ACOs x 4 checks and 500 ACOs x 1 check) noting that Westland speckled skink are considerably more prevalent on the Stockton Plateau and elsewhere on the Denniston Plateau and the actual number salvaged may be an order of magnitude higher.

West Coast green gecko - approximately 432 based on an encounter rate of 0.124 individuals per person hour x a minimum of 3,480 person hours searching.

Northern grass skink - not estimated; the species has not been detected within the Project disturbance area and, if present, is expected to occur only in low numbers.

These estimates are based on the minimum effort specified and exclude nocturnal searching, use of a certified lizard dog to assist detection rates, the focusing of effort on the highest quality habitat (Section 3.5.1.3), and supervised clearance, all of which are expected to increase the number of lizards salvaged. They are indicative only and are provided to inform the scale of the relocation and monitoring programme; compliance with best practice is secured through the methods in Section 3.5 and the statement in Section 3.2.2, not by reference to a proportion of the population salvaged.

It is not possible to reliably estimate the total number of lizards present within the Project disturbance area, and therefore the proportion of lizards that will be salvaged. Encounter rates from ACO checks and manual searching, such as those recorded in the DPPA monitoring programme, are indices of relative abundance rather than measures of absolute density. How detection rates relate to the number of lizards actually present per unit area is unclear and difficult to interpret. Detectability varies with species, habitat structure and complexity, season, weather, time of day and observer, and many lizards spend much of their time in refugia (such as deep crevices, dense prostrate vegetation, root mats and forest canopy) where they cannot be seen or captured. The same detection rate may therefore reflect very different densities in different habitats, and a low detection rate does not necessarily mean that few lizards are present. This is particularly true in the structurally complex habitats of the Buller Plateaux. No study has yet calibrated detection rates against known lizard densities in these habitats, so encounter rates cannot be converted into population estimates with any confidence. The destructive sampling proposed in Section 7.2 is intended, in part, to address this uncertainty. Until such data are available, salvage outcomes will be reported as effort, captures and capture rate per unit effort by area salvaged (Section 10.1) rather than as a proportion of the population salvaged.

The estimates above relate only to lizards individually captured by the salvage methods in Section 3.5. In addition, a considerable number of lizards will be salvaged and relocated within their habitat through VDT of approximately 125 ha of vegetation (Section 3.2.3). Because lizards moved by VDT are not

individually captured, their number cannot be counted directly or estimated with precision. However, as VDT transfers lizards that remain undetected following salvage, the number of lizards relocated via VDT is expected to be considerable and additional to the numbers above.

6.0 Relocation protocol

This section provides detail on the methods that will be used for lizard transfer and relocation.

6.1 Handling and release protocol

The following steps will be undertaken by the suitably qualified and experienced ecologist(s) to ensure appropriate handling of lizards occurs. The transportation of all lizards will comply with the Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare.[6]

Capture, handling and relocation of lizards will be undertaken in accordance with the following methodologies:

- All field equipment that indigenous lizards may come into contact with (e.g. plastic enclosures, collection bags, scales, etc.) will be sterilised;
- Hand sterilisation will be undertaken;
- Salvaged lizards will be placed in either cloth bags (only during salvage), or in suitable ventilated plastic containers (during transportation). Care will be taken so that the bags and containers will be kept at a constant ambient temperature. Vegetation/leaf litter and a wetted sponge will be added to plastic containers to shelter and protect lizards during transportation;
- Where practical, lizards will be placed into ventilated two-litre plastic containers for no longer than 24 hours for transportation and relocation to the relocation site (unless identification by DOC is required); and
- Lizards will be released into appropriate habitat within the relocation sites detailed in section 6.2 below, suitable for the species being relocated. Lizards will be released at least 20 metres apart, unless found together.

Upon release, the following information will be recorded for each lizard:

- Date and time of release and weather conditions;
- Release location (GPS coordinates) and habitat type; and
- Release photograph(s).

6.2 Relocation sites

Salvaged lizards will be relocated into suitable habitat within one of four pest-exclusion fenced areas (Appendix A, Figure 1A - D):

[6] Ministry for Primary Industries (2018). Code of Welfare: Transport within New Zealand. MPI, Regulation and Assurance Branch, Wellington 6140

- Denniston North pest exclusion fenced area (47.3 ha) on Denniston Plateau (Figure 1A)
- Coalbrookdale pest exclusion fenced area (154.4 ha) on Denniston Plateau (Figure 1B)
- Mt Augustus pest exclusion fenced area (14.6 ha) on the Stockton Plateau (Figure 1C)
- Whirlwind Rise pest exclusion fenced area (694.9 ha) on the Stockton Plateau (Figure 1D).

Salvaged lizards will be preferentially released into the relocation site closest to the point of capture, provided this remains compatible with the carrying capacity of the pest-exclusion fenced area. Lizards shall be relocated into suitable species-specific micro-habitats within the relocation site(s) that provide adequate complexity and cover.

In addition to the relocation sites above, lizards salvaged and relocated via VDT (Section 3.2.3) will be relocated together with their habitat into VDT receiving areas on the rehabilitated engineered landforms, including the priority VDT locations, inoculation areas and connectivity areas identified in the RMP (Section 4.1 and Figures 10 and 11). These receiving areas will be connected to retained natural habitat where achievable and enhanced with refugia and managed for mammalian predators and weeds as set out in the RMP.

Lizards that are salvaged in relation to early vegetation clearance may need to be released into the pest exclusion fence areas prior to the construction of the pest exclusion fences and/or the elimination of mammalian pests within. For lizards salvaged earlier in the programme there is expected to be a delay between relocation into the pest exclusion fences and the eradication of mammalian pests therein. To partially reduce issues with relocating lizards to pest-exclusion fence areas prior to the construction of the pest exclusion fences and the elimination of mammalian pests therein, salvage lizards will be relocated to weka free exclosures as set out in the proposed consent conditions (Conditions WEK 1 – WEK 3)

Until the pest exclusion fence on the relevant plateau has been completed and mammalian pests eradicated, salvaged lizards will be released into interim relocation sites comprising (a) weka-free exclosures (Condition WEK 1 – WEK 3) and (b) designated interim release areas within the footprint of a proposed pest exclusion fenced area on the same plateau. The interim relocation sites are shown on Figure 1E (Appendix A). Each weka-free exclosure will be established before any salvage commences on that plateau.

Before any lizards are released into a permanent or interim relocation site, the Project Herpetologist will assess carrying capacity of the permanent or interim relocation sites and immediate surrounds for each species by: (a) mapping species-specific habitat within the site; (b) undertaking a baseline survey of resident lizard relative abundance (using the CritterPic®, ACO and manual search methods in Sections 3.5 and 7.3); and (c) setting a maximum release density of lizards per hectare of suitable habitat per species, having regard to the baseline results. Releases into a site will not exceed its assessed capacity; once capacity is reached, lizards will be released into the next nearest relocation site on the same plateau, or an additional weka-free exclosure will be established. The capacity assessment, and the number of lizards released into each site, will be reported annually (Section 10.1).

7.0 Monitoring and applied research

7.1 Monitoring objectives

The objective of the salvaging and relocation monitoring and applied research programme is to determine the success of the programme through a better understanding of actual densities of lizards (West Coast green gecko) on searchable habitat types on the plateau and the response and likelihood of success of salvage and relocation.

Ultimately this salvaging and relocation monitoring and applied research programme is intended to:

- Inform the effects assessments and effects management measures for future projects with similar effects;
- Contribute to a broader understanding of the success of salvaging and relocation operations on lizards.

7.2 Density estimates

Destructive sampling will be carried out within the Project disturbance area that will not be subject to VDT, to determine the actual abundance of West Coast green gecko in these targeted areas and better understand likely abundances of lizards across the Buller Plateaux. Specifically, plots of suitable West Coast green gecko habitat within the Project disturbance area will be selected and systematically searched for West Coast green geckos. During searching, habitat will be incrementally removed from the plot and comprehensively searched until there is no more potential habitat remaining inside the plot.

The purpose of this approach is to quantify densities of West Coast green geckos within targeted areas, thereby providing an evidence base for estimating potential abundance across comparable habitats on the Buller Plateau. This will, in turn, improve understanding of the magnitude of Project effects and the effectiveness of proposed compensation measures.

To this end, twenty x 100 m^2 (10 m x 10 m) plots of suitable West Coast green gecko habitat within the Project Disturbance Area will be selected using a spatially stratified randomised approach over the life of the project. Barrier fences (e.g. silt fences) will be deployed around the perimeter to prevent potential movement of lizards in and out of the plot. All available habitat (i.e. vegetation) within these plots will be systematically searched for West Coast green geckos and then removed until there is no more potential habitat inside the plot.

It is not feasible to determine population densities of forest gecko or Westland speckled skink, as these species utilise habitats that cannot readily be surveyed. For example, individuals may occur beneath large, immovable boulders, within rock crevices, or under dense, structurally complex low-stature vegetation, where detection probability is inherently low.

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7.3 CritterPics®

The CritterPic® animal monitoring system is a small, motion triggered camera trap that captures high-quality images of small animal species with real-time image transfer. The system is a useful tool for investigating the occurrence or occupancy rates of lizards, particularly for cryptic species at low densities in highly complex and/or difficult-to-access sites.

CritterPics (or similar technology) will be employed to assess survivorship and occupancy trends of relocated individuals over time (or relative abundance trends if AI-trained individual species detection proves feasible). One hundred CritterPic units will be deployed at ground level across lizard relocation sites and will be installed near artificial cover objects (ACOs), suitable basking sites, or natural refugia (e.g. rock piles, logs, dense vegetation). Cameras will be configured to take rapid still images or short bursts when triggered.

To obtain baseline information, CritterPics will be installed for a two-month period (February–March) within pre-selected relocation sites inside the pest exclusion fence network prior to relocation. These units will then be reinstalled and monitored annually over the same two-month period on an ongoing basis before and following the release of relocated lizards for the duration of the consent.

Each unit will be baited with dried strawberries, tinned sardines, tinned pear, and peanut butter, with 50% of CritterPics also baited with a PoaUku long-life lure. The CritterPics (or similar technology) will be secured to the ground, and the entrance to each unit will be cleared.

As set out in the BOMP (BPCP-ENV-PLN-009), this method will also be applied to monitoring the response of lizards to the elimination of mammalian pests within the pest exclusion fences (i.e. through changes in occupancy rate or relative abundance. To this end, a further hundred CritterPics (or similar technology) will be established in suitable locations away from relocation sites.

7.4 Radio-tracking

Assuming Animal Ethics Committee approval is granted, a minimum of 200 geckos (100 West Coast green geckos and 100 forest geckos) will be radio-tracked across the duration of the salvaging and relocation programme (ca 10 years) to assess the effectiveness of relocation to release sites within the pest exclusion fenced areas. 140 of these will be salvaged geckos (70 West Coast green geckos and 70 forest geckos) and 60 will be resident geckos (30 West Coast green geckos and 30 forest geckos) captured in the vicinity of the relocation sites.

This assessment will be based primarily on survivorship, spatial dynamics (site fidelity) and body condition of relocated lizards. If the radio-tracked lizards survived, exhibited site fidelity at release sites and maintained body condition, results would suggest that relocation of salvaged lizards is an effective management approach. This radio-tracking work will add to knowledge obtained from a previous radio-tracking study undertaken in 2013 and 2014 by Bathurst in relation to the existing Escarpment Mine consent (Tonkin & Taylor, 2015). Conversely, if lizards do not survive relocation, dispersed away from the release site or body condition/ health deteriorated, then this would suggest that the relocation of salvaged lizards was not an effective management option (or possibly that radio-tracking negatively impacted individuals).

To monitor the relocation success of geckos (>10g) salvaged from the Project disturbance area, Holohil BD2X (0.45 gram) transmitters will be used together with a TR4 receiver. This approach will ensure that the total weight of the transmitter and harness is < 5 % of the animal's body weight, which is below the < 7.5% of body weight threshold recommended for lizards (Beausoleil et al. 2005).

Cotton-like hypoallergenic, breathable surgical tape will be used to attach the transmitters. This approach was first trialled by Matthew Salmon, University of Otago (Salmon 2002). The technique has since been used successfully on several native gecko species including common geckos, southern forest geckos, Harlequin geckos, Duvaucel's geckos, Marlborough green geckos, and jewelled geckos (Hoare et al. 2013; Baber et al. 2015). The weight of the harness is approximately 0.02 g (on average). Therefore, the combined weight of the transmitter and harness (0.47g) will be <5% and well below the < 7.5 % threshold recommended for lizards.

Radio-tracking will be conducted in consultation with appropriately experienced ecologists from DOC and in accordance with an approved DOC Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) permit (AECXXXX).

8.0 Inadvertent lizard injury or death

The following steps will be implemented if any injured or dead lizards are found during lizard salvage in accordance with the Wildlife Approval:

- The Project herpetologist in consultation with BRL will notify the DOC Local Area Manager at the earliest opportunity within 24 hours of becoming aware that an injured or dead lizard has been found.
- If DOC requests it, any dead lizard of a Threatened, At Risk, or Data Deficient species shall be sent to the appropriate Wildlife Postmortem Service for necropsy. The body is to be chilled if it can be delivered within 24 hours, or frozen if longer than 24 hours to deliver.
- Appropriate measures shall be undertaken to minimise further lizard deaths.
- If injured lizards are found during salvage, a suitably qualified vet will be contacted to discuss options
- Injured lizards will be kept in an appropriate portable enclosure (i.e., a clean, well-ventilated plastic container) under the direction of the Project Herpetologist to ensure the animal is handled appropriately until the lizard(s) can be assessed and treated.
- The decision to euthanise or release the injured lizard(s) to the lizard relocation site will be undertaken at the direction of a qualified vet if available or alternatively the Project Herpetologist

9.0 Incidental discovery protocol (threatened species)

As part of site inductions, all contractors and staff will be made aware of the possibility of the 'Threatened', 'At Risk' and 'Data Deficient' lizard species being present and will be supplied with photographs so they know what they look like.

Contractors and staff will also be briefed regarding the incidental discovery protocol for lizard and all other relevant incidental discoveries as set out in this plan.

Personnel are responsible for notifying their supervisor upon the discovery of any 'At Risk' or 'Threatened' herpetofauna, on the same working day as the discovery. The supervisor will notify the Project herpetologist and Environmental Manager.

Any 'At Risk' or 'Threatened' species that is discovered on site and not identified in this management plan, i.e. any species other than Westland speckled skink, forest gecko, West Coast green gecko or Northern grass skink, will be reported to the Project herpetologist and site Environmental Manager. The Environmental Manager will then liaise with the DOC Local Area Manager and iwi. All discoveries are to be recorded in a database with an incident register and log of actions taken for each discovery.

If additional 'At Risk' or 'Threatened' species not addressed by this LMP are discovered at any stage in the lifetime of the Project, these species will be incorporated into this LMP.

Should any novel lizard species be recorded, the Project Herpetologist will be engaged to submit the record to the DOC Amphibian and Reptile Distribution Scheme (ARDS), to undertake a follow up survey and make recommendations (if any), and to review relevant aspects of this LMP accordingly.

10.0 Compliance monitoring and reporting

Compliance or incident reports described in this section will be submitted to Council.

10.1 Annual lizard compliance monitoring report

The annual lizard compliance monitoring report will sit within the overarching Ecology Annual Monitoring Report and shall include:

- Confirmation that lizard effects avoidance and minimisation protocols were followed in accordance with the LMP and associated proposed conditions, including:
  - A description of methods and results relating to lizard salvaging operations
  - For each area salvaged: ACO checks and diurnal and nocturnal search effort (person-hours), captures and capture rate per unit effort by species and method, and the date salvage was completed
  - Maps and reasons for any areas excluded from ground-based or nocturnal searching following the pre-salvage health and safety assessment, and the alternative methods applied
  - Salvage effort, captures and releases along pest exclusion fence and exclosure alignments (Section 3.6), and all lizard bycatch recorded during pest control (Section 3.7)
  - The carrying capacity assessment for each relocation site and the number of lizards released into each site, by species (Section 6.2)

  - The extent (ha) of VDT undertaken from lizard habitat, the source and receiving locations (from the VDT Register, RMP Section 10.1.2), and any lizards captured during VDT operations, by species (Section 3.2.3)
  - Maps illustrating where avoidance or minimisation measures were undertaken
  - A description of actions and results in relation to the salvage and relocation monitoring and applied research programmes
- Recommendations for potential changes to improve the effectiveness of lizard management in relation to the LMP scope.
- Representative photos showing evidence of salvage and relocation operations being undertaken along with evidence of release and relocation site restoration and enhancement measures.

Annual reporting related to the LMP will cease once lizard salvage and relocation programme is complete, inclusive of the radio-tracking programme to assess the likely success of operations for forest and West Coast green gecko.

The outcomes of LMP implementation will be summarised in a final (post-construction) report submitted to the West Coast Regional Council (WCRC) and Buller District Council (BDC) as part of the ecology reporting requirement.

Results associated with the BPCP programme, which includes monitoring at the lizard relocation release site, will continue to be reported on annually.

10.2 Incident monitoring and reporting

The Regulator/Grantor will be notified as soon as practicable but no more than five working days after an unscheduled event associated with habitat clearance. Such events include notable compliance failure that results in adverse ecological effects, or an event that causes vegetation damage on a scale that requires an urgent remedy according to the Project Herpetologist to return to compliance with any section of the BPCP ecological management plans and planting programmes.

A subsequent investigation report will be provided to the Regulator/Grantor within 30 working days and include the following information:

- The causes of the incident, the emergency response measures (if applicable), and the response proposed to avoid a recurrence of the issue;
- An assessment undertaken by the Project Herpetologist which details any adverse effects of the exceedance; and
- Proposed measures to address effects.

As appropriate, lizard management activities and monitoring results will be documented and reported in the Ecology Annual Monitoring Report. At the time of submitting this report, BRL shall advise of any material changes that it intends to initiate and the timeframe for such material change.

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10.3 Animal Ethics Committee Reporting requirements

The AEC will most likely have reporting requirements and these will be followed and adhered to and where practicable integrated with the wider reporting requirements.

11.0 Roles, Responsibilities, and Training

BRL is committed to continual training and awareness of all staff, employees, and contractors. Training and awareness procedures are an integral part of ensuring the full implementation of the Lizard Management Plan across all aspects of all projects. Effective and regular communication at all levels reinforces the message that ecology management issues are taken seriously and that the LMP has the active support of the principal contractor.

Implicit in the effective management of lizard values of all areas where BRL operates is the allocation of responsibilities to key individuals. Details of roles and responsibilities associated with this Lizard Management Plan are provided in Table 6 below.

The Buller Plateaux Continuation Project Mine Induction Package, induction process and regular training will encourage environmental awareness of all staff, employees and contractors on the BPCP.

Ongoing training and awareness initiatives will take place for specific teams that deal with mine operations that impact on lizards, such as vegetation clearance and other forms of disturbance to areas outside of the mine footprint(s).

Table 6: Personnel responsible for implementing the LMP and associated tasks

Position	Accountable Task
Site Senior Executive (SSE) / General Manager (GM)	• Provide adequate resources for the implementation of this LMP. • Overall accountability for implementation of this Plan; • Endorses significant management responses where required; and • Approve any other key management plans and agreements where required
Environmental Manager	• Be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the requirements of this LMP and communicating any issues to the BPCP Management Team; • Facilitate any monitoring required as part of the LMP • Report on lizards of the Buller Plateaux as part of the EMS Management Review Process to the BPCP Management Team; • Address the external reporting requirements of the plan and manage the Annual Monitoring Report and Annual Work Plan process; • Oversee corrective actions, as required, to address non-compliance and the reporting thereof to consent authorities; and • Ensure lizard monitoring is conducted, recorded and communicated as per the requirements of this plan.

Position	Accountable Task
	• Co-ordinate training of the employees and contractors with regards to their responsibilities in relation to this LMP.
Project herpetologist	• Responsible for ensuring the technical elements of the plan are undertaken according to best practice and by suitably qualified experts. • Confirm in writing, for each area of lizard habitat, that salvage has been completed in accordance with Section 3.5.1.3 before Vegetation Clearance commences, and lead the pre-salvage health and safety assessment for nocturnal and ground-based searching.
Lizard specific consultants or contractors	• Undertake work practices that comply with the LMP. • Periodically assess VDT sites within the rehabilitated mine footprints to determine the suitability of rehabilitated sites on the ELF for lizard relocation
Mine Planning Manager	• Ensure that risks to the lizard fauna have been incorporated into the mine design and staging, ELF design and rehabilitation planning for the mine.
Training supervisor	• Coordinate training for employees and contractors on lizard management responsibilities and procedures under this Plan; • Support the development and delivery of lizard-related training and induction content.
Supervisors	• Ensure day-to-day operations are undertaken in accordance with the mitigation and management measures set out in this Plan; • Provide instruction to workers on relevant lizard controls and protocols; • Identify and respond to operational activities that may increase lizard effects; and • Monitor the effectiveness of lizard management measures and report issues as required; and Implement corrective actions as directed.
All personnel	• Comply with site procedures and controls relevant to lizard management; • Report any lizard related issues, or incidents that may adversely affect lizards within and beyond the mine boundary during mine construction and operation to their supervisor; and • Participate in inductions and toolbox talks relevant to the requirements of this Plan.

12.0 Management Plan Approval and Revision

Any proposed changes to this LMP will be confirmed in writing by the consent holder following consultation with Buller District Council and West Coast Regional Council. Te Runanga o Ngāti Waewae and the Department of Conservation will be consulted on any material proposed changes that may arise.

12.1 Change Register

This Lizard Management Plan is issued, revised, and amended under authorisation of the CEO.

A copy will be stored electronically with access available to all workers. The signed hard copy will be maintained in the Wellington document library.

Reasons for making changes will be documented and recorded in the document management table, refer to Table 7. A copy of the original document and subsequent versions will be kept for records and marked as obsolete. Each new/updated version will be issued with a version number and date to eliminate obsolete documentation being used.

Table 7: Document management

Document Management:			
Regulatory Approvals Authorities:			
Document Owner:			
Document Owner Name:			
GM HSEC Approval Signature:			
Date:			
Document Approver:			
CEO Name:			
CEO Signature:			
Date Approved:			
Revision History:			
Date	**Version No.**	**Lead Author**	**Contributing Authors**
Version No.:	**Detail / Changes:**		
Next Planned Review:			

13.0 References

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A.1. Appendix A Pest exclusion fence figures

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Projection: NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

MT. AUGUSTUS
14.6HA

WHIRLWIND
RISE
694.5HA

Birchfield

Jones Creek
Reserve

Waimangaroa River

Denniston
Reserve

Denniston

DENNISTON
NORTH
47.3HA

Burnetts Face

COALBROOKDALE
154.3HA

This plan has been prepared by MapHouse on the specific instructions of our Client. It is solely for our Client's use in accordance with the agreed scope of work. Any use or reliance by a third party is at that party's own risk. Where information has been supplied by the Client or obtained from other external sources, it has been assumed that it is accurate. No liability or responsibility is accepted by MapHouse for any errors or omissions to the extent that they arise from inaccurate information provided by the Client or any external source.

Pest exclusion fenced areas

BATHURST PEST CONTROL

Plan prepared for Alliance Ecology | 24 March 2026

Alliance Ecology™ MapHouse

LEGEND

- Pest exclusion fence
- Disturbance area

0 500 m

1:40,000 @ A3

Data Sources: Alliance Ecology, Eagle Technology, LINZ, StatsNZ, NIWA, Natural Earth, © OpenStreetMap contributors., Eagle Technology, LINZ

Figure 1

Projection: NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

DENNISTON
NORTH
47.32HA

COALBROOKDALE
154.3HA

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Exclusion Fences: Denniston North

BATHURST PEST CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Plan prepared for Alliance Ecology | 24 March 2026

Alliance Ecology™ MapHouse

LEGEND

Pest exclusion fence

0 100 m

1:6,000 @ A3

Data Sources: Alliance Ecology, Eagle Technology, LINZ

Map 1A

Projection: NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

COALBROOKDALE
154.3HA

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Exclusion Fences: Coalbrookdale

BATHURST PEST CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Plan prepared for Alliance Ecology | 24 March 2026

Alliance Ecology™ MapHouse

LEGEND

Pest exclusion fence

0 100 m

1:7,000 @ A3

Map 1B

Data Sources: Alliance Ecology, Eagle Technology, LINZ

Projection: NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

MT. AUGUSTUS
14.63HA

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Exclusion Fences: Mt. Augustus

BATHURST PEST CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Plan prepared for Alliance Ecology | 24 March 2026

Alliance Ecology™ MapHouse

LEGEND

Pest exclusion fence

0 50 m

1:2,000 @ A3

Data Sources: Alliance Ecology, Eagle Technology, LINZ

Map 1C

Projection: NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator

WHIRLWIND
RISE
694.54HA

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Exclusion Fences: Whirlwind Rise

BATHURST PEST CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Plan prepared for Alliance Ecology | 24 March 2026

Alliance Ecology™ MapHouse

LEGEND

Pest exclusion fence

0 200 m

1:12,000 @ A3

Map 1D

Data Sources: Alliance Ecology, Eagle Technology, LINZ