

Predator Free New Zealand Trust
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Submission on National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity

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The Predator Free NZ Trust is an independent Trust established in 2013 around the vision "To connect and energise all NZ'ers towards a predator free NZ to enable our native species to thrive". We have a keen interest policy that supports this goal and helps protect our native species and reverses their decline.

A National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity is important to give clear guidance to Councils around identification, protection and measurement of native species.. We strongly agree that there are many areas outside Public Conservation Land that need protection and it is necessary to have a framework to enable councils to identify and protect these consistently.

The NPSIB needs to be more aspirational than simply maintaining indigenous biodiversity, especially given the rate of decline and the other challenges facing our native biodiversity. Maintaining is just the start, we also need to be addressing protection, restoration and enhancement.

Restoring indigenous biodiversity and reversing its decline needs a long term approach. Maintenance and long term improvement is an essential part of protecting our native biodiversity. Particularly important is protection from predators which significantly impact our indigenous biodiversity.

One of our key concerns is that there is very little mention of the quality of SNAs and we urge that more measures around quality and maintenance, including best practice predator control, to ensure the protection of SNAs. In order to maintain biodiversity at scale we can't simply lock areas up and hope for the best.

We note that the NPS contains no reference to other government policies such as Predator Free 2050 and the One Billion Trees programme. Linking these into the NPS would be beneficial to ensure they are also considered.

Regional Biodiversity Strategies are important and all Regional Councils should have these in place. These Regional Strategies need to be developed with community, iwi

and landowner involvement to ensure their aspirations and vision for the region are also captured.

We agree identifying SNAs is an important part of protecting and improving our indigenous biodiversity. The practical implementation of this needs careful planning and councils need to be mindful when working with landowners and ensure this process is collaborative and beneficial to both parties. There is potential for this to be very powerful if done well.

Connectivity of habitat should be considered when identifying SNAs. Scale and connectivity are important factors to ensure diverse and thriving indigenous biodiversity.

It is also important to remember that not all significant indigenous biodiversity will exist within SNAs (nor should it) Provisions need to be made for the protection of indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs.

We believe that the NPSIB is a very important document, we realise there are many stakeholders and it will be hard to please everyone. However Aotearoa's indigenous biodiversity is rapidly declining and we need strong leadership to prevent further loss or even worse irreversible loss. It is essential to ensure Councils have clear guidelines to operate under and an overarching direction to prevent further biodiversity loss. With this, hopefully we can enhance what is left and enable our native species to thrive in a range of ecosystems across the country.