

## Takahē Welfare Emergency Plan

### About this document

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this plan is to describe the welfare considerations for takahē in emergency situations. An emergency situation can be either a natural event e.g. flood or earthquake or anthropogenic e.g. fire or global pandemic.

The scope of this document covers all locations and facilities that takahē inhabit/are held. The Plan is intended to ensure that the welfare of takahē is considered, and where possible, the viability of the population is maintained in face of a major event.

## 1.2 Introduction/Context

In order to re-establish self-sustaining populations across locations where takahē once persisted naturally, takahē are maintained at sites where introduced browsers and predators are excluded or managed to levels that do not impact on takahē at the population level. The vulnerability of the metapopulation is reduced by distributing the genetics across many sites, however some sites are more valuable than others e.g. Burwood Takahē Centre. The mechanisms that provide predator/competitor protection e.g. predator fences, may have negative impacts on welfare of takahē during emergency situations if the care and checks normally provided ceases due to access or availability of resources.

## 1.3 Compliance

Only the Operations Manager, on advice from the Senior Ranger is authorised to approve variation from this plan and are accountable for those decisions. They are required to use their professional judgement and to seek advice, or to escalate when in doubt. All decisions should be documented. It is expected that variations from requirements in this Plan will be the exception rather than the norm, and that bird welfare and health and safety requirements are compulsory. Common sense should prevail in the case of exceptional or emergency field situations.

## 1.4 Prerequisites

- Familiar with Emergency Procedures for local area

## 1.5 Terms and definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Burwood	Burwood Takahē Centre
FENZ	Fire & Emergency NZ

## 2. Overview

### 2.1 Roles and responsibilities

Requirement	Who is accountable?	Scope	Links
Overall responsibility for decisions made across the metapopulation in an emergency	Operations Manager	Signs off Plan and approves any substantial deviations	
Provides technical advice and prioritises response actions	Senior Ranger	Document owner, collects information and recommends actions	
Initiates response actions	Supervisor	Document coordinator. Resources responses and assigns actions	
Responsibility for actioning the Burwood Response	Burwood Site Lead	Provides initial assessment and information to Senior Ranger and Supervisor. Initiates actions as assigned by the Supervisor.	

Requirement	Who is accountable?	Scope	Links
Responsibility for actioning the Recovery Site Response	Recovery Site Ranger	Provides initial assessment and information to Senior Ranger and Supervisor. Initiates actions, if any, as assigned by the Supervisor.	Section 5
Responsibility for coordinating Sanctuary and Secure sites response	Secure Site Ranger	Ensures institutions and sites that hold takahē have robust and appropriate plans to care for takahē following a disaster. Coordinates updates and responses from individual sites	Section 4
Responsibility for actioning Sanctuary and Secure sites response	Individual institutions	Ensures takahē welfare in their care are considered in emergency plans. Provides status information to sanctuary site ranger when appropriate and actions response as per agreed plans.,	Section 4

## 3. Burwood Takahē Centre

On average, around 100 takahē are held at the Burwood Takahē Centre near Te Anau. Modelling has shown that Burwood is critical for the ongoing success of Takahē Recovery and is therefore a priority for any response following an emergency.

The centre has 4 groups of predator proof pens which are geographically separated and individually isolated. A third of these pens rely on solar power electricity to remain pest proof.

### 3.1 Fire

A Fire Response Plan has been developed for Burwood (refer [docm-1111702](#)). In summary, fire fighting responsibility lies with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) and no one is authorised to enter takahē pens without first consulting with the local Incident Controller (IC).

The area is identified in FireCom databases as a priority area for response and immediate air attack with the aim of fast knock down.

### 3.2 Long term regionwide or national incident

A major incident, such as an earthquake, will likely causes damage to infrastructure and isolate Burwood for several days if not weeks. Any incident response will ensure the safety of staff and their families first and therefore, depending on whether staff are on site, it may be several days before any local response can be initiated at Burwood.

#### 3.2.1 Pen security:

Checking all fences and repairing any damage to ensure takahē are contained, and, where possible, pest free status is maintained, is the first priority. A good stock of fence repair materials should be maintained at base at all times. Fence checks should be undertaken, if possible, within 24-48hrs of the event.

If no damage to external fence, trap checking is low priority and can be stopped for several months. If an external fence was down for a period of time and incursion is likely, internal trap baiting should commence as soon as possible and be regularly checked until comfortable pen is pest free. If pest incursion is suspected, consider relocating takahē to free ranging area in top pen or doubling up other pens. The genetic value of the individuals and the impact on the receiving pens must be considered before any move.

#### 3.2.2 Water

If the weather is hot and dry, checking on water availability in pens should be undertaken as soon as possible. Tanks and water reticulation within the pen may have been damaged during the event so be prepared to carry in water. A supply of 20L containers is available at base and the Weydon Burn has a good supply of water. In winter or following significant rain, checking on water is less of a priority.

### 3.2.3 Food

Burwood takahē are supplementary fed cereal-based pellets twice a week. It is suspected supplementary feeding contributes to only a small proportion of their diet (estimated 5-10%), with tussock and other grass species naturally found within the pens making up the majority. It is therefore expected that penned takahē at Burwood could survive several weeks, even months without supplementary feeding and suffer no to minor effects. There is however more of a risk to bird welfare during colder winter months when natural food sources are reduced or of lower nutritional value and the resulting poor body condition make takahē less able to cope with the cold Southland conditions.

During an emergency situation, other than supplies already on site, access to supplementary pellets will likely not be possible or in the best-case scenario, delivery will be very slow. Conservation of stored food will therefore be critical and supplementary feeding will need to be justified based on the scale and severity of the incident. Burwood should always have 4 weeks of normal feedout volumes on site.

Below are some suggested reduced supplementary feed regimes.

Location	Winter (or unusually cold periods)	Non-winter *
Top Pen (other than Subs pens)	No supp	No supp
Top Pen Subs	Supp weekly	Supp fortnightly
Summer Pens	Supp weekly	Supp weekly
Gorge Hill Pens	Supp weekly	Supp fortnightly
Down Hill Pens	Supp weekly	Supp weekly

\* Volumes or frequency's can be further reduced in spring with first flush and abundant food availability.

### 3.3 Injured/sick birds

Injured takahē should be transferred to the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital if possible. If road transport not possible, phone advice on treatment should be sort (Dunedin Wildlife hospital or Massey Wildbase). Local vet support could also be used. Helicopter transport should be considered for high value individuals, but helicopter availability is likely to be severely limited during a large-scale natural disaster.

Wildbase @ Massey

06 350 5329

Dunedin Wildlife Hospital

[info@wildlifehospitaldunedin.org.nz](mailto:info@wildlifehospitaldunedin.org.nz)

0800 362 458

Northern Southland Vet Services

03 249 7039

## 4. Sanctuary & Secure Sites

Approximately 100 takahē are held at Sanctuary and Secure sites across New Zealand. These sites are managed for multiple species and habitats by the DOC districts, Councils, institutions, or Trusts which hold them. Each of these sites has their own Emergency Plans in place with provision for the welfare of takahē which has been approved by the Recovery Programme.

The Sanctuary Sites Ranger will collect info when appropriate on the status of these populations to inform the national response. They will also provide advice and help coordinate resources for local responses.

## 5. Recovery Sites

The Takahē Programme has two recovery sites/wild populations; Murchison Mountains (n = 198) and Kahurangi (n=31).

Other than periodic monitoring the Recovery Programme has little interaction with these populations due to their remote locations and the expectation that these populations are self-sustaining.

Pest control (trapping and toxic drops) is likely to become a low priority during an emergency situation. In most cases the cessation of trap checks for several years (depending on whether it is a year following a masting event) will have little impact on the overall population. Therefore, there will be no direct actions applied to Takahē Recovery Sites post emergency.

### 5.1 Recovery Site evacuation

If during a pest plague year the population experiences excessive loss to the point where a predetermined threshold is crossed, evacuation of targeted individuals will be initiated. Thresholds are set in advance, and known individuals assigned a rank according to their genetic value. Birds would be initially evacuated to the top enclosures at Burwood.

Further detail can be found at: [Takahe Evacuation Comms Plan 2020](#)

### 5.2 Injured/sick birds

Injured/sick takahē should be transferred to the closest of: Auckland Zoo Vet Hospital, Massey Wildbase or the Dunedin Wildlife hospital. If road transport not possible, phone advice on treatment should be sought and local vet support could also be used. If available and necessary, consider helicopter transport.

Auckland Zoo Veterinary Hospital

09 360 3805

Wildbase @ Massey

06 350 5329

Dunedin Wildlife Hospital

[info@wildlifehospitaldunedin.org.nz](mailto:info@wildlifehospitaldunedin.org.nz)

0800 362 458



## 6. Related documents

[Takahe Recovery Plan](#)

[Takahe metapopulation status - including risk analysis](#)

[Takahe Evacuation Comms Plan 2020](#)

[Takahe Husbandry Manual](#)

[Risk Inventory for Takahe](#)

[Site MOU, Permit, Management Plan spreadsheet](#)

[Burwood Fire Plan](#)

