

# Wildlands Wellington News February 2019

*An update on our people and services.*

**Wildlands: providing outstanding ecological services to sustain and improve our environments.**

## Fauna Translocations

Fauna translocations are commonly carried out to reduce the impact of site development on species, which may otherwise be affected. This technique can be used for a range of species, including lizards and fish, but may need to be carried out over summer while animals are active.

### Cobham Drive Lizards

Wellington City Council are developing new walking and bike paths along Cobham Drive. Wildlands ecologists have been involved in trapping and re-homing of lizards from this site.

Over 300 pitfall traps were used to capture 380 northern grass skinks. Catch rates started high (155 on the first day) but declined progressively down to 10 or so on the last day, which is a good indication that most of the skink population was captured. All skinks were given individual marks to identify them and were translocated to two nearby sites. This will form the basis of a research project to determine the success of lizard translocation projects.



Cycleway margins will be rehabilitated with new skink habitat and skinks may recolonise naturally, or will be translocated into this area. Overall, Wellington City Council are pleased that the construction project included work to minimise and mitigate impacts on indigenous fauna. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/109866588/hundreds-of-native-lizards-being-relocated-for-wellington-harbourside-development>



### Carterton Mudfish

Wildlands ecologists have been very busy over recent months catching and translocating threatened mudfish from a spring and drain system to be used for the upgrade of Carterton District Council's wastewater treatment plant.

Fish were recovered from 1,200 linear metres of four metre wide drains. Fyke nets and Gee Minnow traps were used over 23 nights, totalling 1,365 trap nights. This captured 921 brown mudfish (*Neochanna apoda*) which were then successfully relocated to an adjacent constructed wetland and 196 shortfin eels

(*Anguilla australis*), which were released in a nearby stream within the same catchment.

<http://cdc.govt.nz/mudfish-rehomed-wastewater-project-heads-into-next-phase/>



### Equipment hygiene

Equipment hygiene is always of utmost importance in fauna translocations, to prevent the spread of diseases. As part of this we take care to carefully clean and sterilise all equipment. This image shows some of the 300+ cleaned buckets used for a lizard salvage.

## Wetland Delineation

More than 90% of New Zealand's wetland area has been lost in the last 150 years, which equates to one of the highest rates of loss in the world. To help protect the remaining wetlands it is increasingly important to accurately delineate and assess any potential wetland areas. As part of this, Landcare Research are developing a robust, evidence-based, delineation tool, adapted for New Zealand from the USA Federal Wetland Delineation System for regulatory purposes (Environmental Laboratory 1987). Delineation is based on vegetation, soil hydrology and hydric soils. To adapt this into a New Zealand-specific tool, a collaborative team of scientists, including Wildlands ecologists, have been classifying indigenous and exotic plant species according to their fidelity to wetlands and expected prevalence. These techniques are proving to be effective in identifying wetlands and delineating their boundaries and are being used to provide a standard national approach for hearings, policy, and planning.



<https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/publications/innovation-stories/2015-stories/wetlands-drylands>



**Wildland Consultants has been Certified Carbon Neutral status since 2016.**



Westpac Rotorua Business Excellence Awards 2017  
 Ngāta Tahi Kōwhiri Pūkū Westpac Rotorua  
 Best Overall Business  
 \*\*\*\*\* Victoria

*Supreme Winner*

## Wellington People:

	<p><b>Astrid van Meeuwen Dijkgraaf, PhD Ecology, Senior Ecologist</b></p> <p>A highly experienced ecologist involved with large projects such as subdivision and infrastructure consent applications; and monitoring and inventory. Strong project management skills make Astrid the ideal person to oversee projects while her technical skills and experience means that she can identify and initiate appropriate investigations and solutions for your projects.</p> <p><b>Specialist skills:</b> Survey and monitoring and expert witness at Hearings (birds, bats, lizards, ecology, biodiversity offsets), design of monitoring programmes and data analysis, plant-fauna interactions and management.</p>
	<p><b>Frances Forsyth, MSc Ecology, Senior Ecologist</b></p> <p>An environmental scientist and ecologist with experience on a wide variety of projects particularly those involving freshwater fish. Frances has a reputation for well-researched, thoughtful and practical work with well-written clear reports.</p> <p><b>Specialist skills:</b> Ecological restoration, ecological management plans, expert witness at Hearings, freshwater fish, and stream management. SEV and electric-fishing qualified.</p>
	<p><b>Rachel McClellan, PhD Zoology, Principal Avifauna Ecologist</b></p> <p>An experienced ecologist and expert ornithologist who has worked on a wide variety of projects including strategic and conservation plans for large-scale restoration programmes, environmental impact assessments for mines, hydroelectric proposals, subdivisions, and wind farms, and the evaluation of threatened bird management programmes.</p> <p><b>Specialist skills:</b> Design, implementation and review of fauna monitoring programmes, expert witness at Hearings (seabirds, shorebirds, forest birds, wetland birds), expert ornithological advice, writing and review of environmental impact assessments.</p>
	<p><b>Keely Paler, MSc Biosecurity and Conservation, Ecologist</b></p> <p>An ecologist with experience in field assessments and desktop based analysis focusing on a range of species including invertebrates, plants, and pest plants. Keely is an integral part of projects with a large field work or data compilation component, such as assessments of potential Significant Natural Areas (SNAs), assessments for Forest Stewardship Council certification, and vegetation and weed mapping.</p>

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

Wellington Auckland Hamilton Whakatāne Rotorua Tauranga Gisborne Christchurch Dunedin

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