



# Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-22

## *Our Vision*

*The Ashburton District community values and cares for biodiversity and accepts the shared responsibility to work together to ensure it is sustained and enhanced, both now and into the future.*





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## Summary

The Ashburton District relies on its land and natural environment as the backbone of industry and the economy. Protecting this environment requires protecting the processes which ensure its continuing survival – an important function of biological diversity.

Biodiversity loss is increasingly recognised as a significant environmental issue which requires immediate action. Our native plants and animals are in serious trouble with more than 900 native species approaching extinction and another 2,800 declining or at risk. According to the Parliamentary Commissioner of the Environment, out of 168 native bird species, four out of five are in decline, and some are at risk of extinction.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is a voluntary commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This non-binding plan intends to address the state of our district's biodiversity and give effect to regional and national strategies.

Key stakeholders have been closely involved in the formulation of this plan, as part of the Biodiversity Working Group, established by the Ashburton District Council in 2010. Led by Ashburton District Council, the Biodiversity Working Group developed the Action Plan in a collaborative process that included a wide range of perspectives, including environmental advocacy, landowner interests, the public sector, and industry.

The result is a blueprint for biodiversity progress that coordinates the diverse perspectives in our community into clear objectives to protect and enhance biodiversity in the Ashburton District. This plan shares ownership for protecting our district's environment equally among the community—urban residents, farmers, developers, agencies, Council and community groups all have an important role in implementing these actions.

Meaningful progress toward the objectives of this plan requires:

- (1) Accurate and comprehensive knowledge about our local biodiversity, and;
- (2) Community awareness and participation.

Collating existing knowledge, completing a survey of the districts roadsides and maintaining the Biodiversity Working Group will provide better information to enable better decision-making. Becoming a community which values and cares for biodiversity and accepts the shared responsibility to work together will require promotion and education, which is a key focus of this plan.

Continued sustainable growth and prosperity in our community requires significant action to protect our unique local biological wealth, and the Biodiversity Action Plan provides the blueprint for progress.

### The Ashburton District Biodiversity Working Group

The members of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Working Group have donated their time, cooperation and knowledge of biodiversity to preparing and reviewing this Action Plan. The group will continue to work toward realising the vision and actions contained in the Action Plan with the responsibility for overseeing the progress of actions and engaging proactively with a wide range of groups in the community.

## Objectives

The objectives of this plan align closely with the Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region and provide the overall direction for local biodiversity protection and promotion in the next five years.

The objectives are:

1. Identify the current state of biodiversity in the Ashburton District
2. First to protect, then maintain and restore significant areas of biodiversity
3. Engage with landowners in the identification, protection and enhancement of biodiversity
4. Integrate biodiversity protection principles into Council policy and practice
5. Celebrate local biodiversity and encourage protection and enhancement by the community

## Priority Actions

These actions have been identified as particularly significant actions for driving progress in this area.

- 1.2 Complete the ecological survey of the Ashburton District roadsides
- 3.1 Distribute information to landowners regarding biodiversity identification, protection and enhancement
- 5.1 Maintain the Biodiversity Working Group, to meet at least quarterly for implementation of the Action Plan
- 5.7 Maintain a webpage on the Ashburton District Council website for biodiversity

## Acknowledgements

The groups below have contributed their valuable time, input and vast knowledge to the activities of the Biodiversity Working Group.

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Ashburton District Council | • Fish and Game             |
| • Fonterra                   | • Foothills Landowners      |
| • Synlait                    | • Forest and Bird           |
| • Department of Conservation | • QEII National Trust       |
| • Environment Canterbury     | • Mt Somers Walkway Society |
| • Federated Farmers          | • Whitcombe Landcare Group  |

# What Is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is short for “biological diversity”, describing the level of diversity in natural life. This includes:

- the variety of different species, (micro-organisms and fungi, right through to trees, plants and animals),
- the genes they comprise, and
- the ecosystems they are a part of.

The Resource Management Act 1991, Section 2(1) defines biodiversity as “the variability among living organisms, and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.” Indigenous biodiversity refers to those species that occur naturally, including migrant species.

The Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan is concerned firstly with the protection and management of indigenous species and habitats; and also with species, habitats and systems that support indigenous biodiversity, and our communities.

This conception of biodiversity allows recognition of the important biological role now played by some introduced species, whilst acknowledging that indigenous biodiversity remains the first priority. Extending this definition to include systems supporting biodiversity such as shelter-belts also recognises the vital role of these processes in the continuing survival of species and habitats.

## Why does biodiversity matter?

Biodiversity contributes to important natural processes that are necessary for ecosystems to sustain life. Biodiversity supports ecological functions by:

- purifying air and water
- producing raw materials such as food or fibre
- controlling pests
- decomposing waste
- maintaining soils and recycling nutrients
- pollinating plants
- regulating climates

These ecological functions provide us with water, food, shelter, fuel, clothing, medicines, building materials, means of transport and power generation. In short, the complex interaction of processes that biodiversity supports is crucial for continued human survival and development.

Economic development relies on clear air, clean water, pest control and a stable climate – which rely on the balance of biodiversity. Safe and healthy environments also underpin marketing and tourism opportunities, recreation, heritage and community identity. The loss of biodiversity values disrupts natural systems and can have consequences such as species loss, land degradation, erosion, declining soil structure and salinisation.

## Global Biodiversity

The natural processes that biodiversity supports are becoming strained, because of increasing levels of human consumption and industrial production. The situation has reached critical levels, and biodiversity loss is now occurring on an immense scale. The Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted in 1992 and has become one of the world's most significant agreements with 180 countries (including New Zealand) ratifying the agreement.

## New Zealand Biodiversity

New Zealand is unique in that our indigenous biodiversity includes an extraordinary number of *endemic* species – that is, indigenous species that only occur naturally in New Zealand.

This includes:

- 80% of all vascular plants;
- 70% of all native terrestrial and freshwater birds;
- all bats;
- all native amphibians;
- all reptiles;
- 90% of freshwater fish.

There are 34 global biodiversity 'hotspots' - regions with a high level of endemic species, as well as habitat destruction and high biodiversity loss. New Zealand is one of these spots, supporting the State of New Zealand's Environment report which asserts that declining biodiversity values are our "most pervasive environmental issue".

Our national identity closely links to our connection with New Zealand's unique biological life. This can be seen in our national emblems, which use the koru, kiwi and silver fern.

New Zealand has a wide range of ecosystems. Most terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems are unique to New Zealand including forests such as kauri, kahikatea, pohutukawa, podocarp, mixed broadleaved and red beech; tussock grasslands and scrub. This is also true of marine ecosystems such as seamounts and geothermal seep systems.

Our main ecosystem types include wetlands, riparian areas, dunelands, indigenous forests, shrublands, lowland tussock grasslands, alpine and mountain.

Some of these ecosystems perform significant environmental functions. For example, wetlands help the moderation of run-off and the provision of consistent water flow in dry conditions while also trapping sediment and filtering nutrients.

## Takata Whenua

Kati Huirapa hapu members have the manawhenua, and are the speakers of tino rakatirataka within the boundaries of Ashburton District. They hold kaitiaki obligations for many of the natural and physical resources in Ashburton District. As such, they have a close and ongoing concern with land, waterways and other taoka. Arowhenua Runaka is also the caretaker of traditional knowledge and customary expertise in the District.

There are many places of spiritual and cultural importance to Takata Whenua in the District, including waterways, waahi tapu and waahi taoka. Takata Whenua are the traditional guardians of the natural and physical environment. Despite the development of local government and its responsibilities, Kati Huirapa people have continued to carry this responsibility and are active in protecting the natural integrity of the District for future generations. Arowhenua Runaka maintains its guardianship obligations (Takata tiaki duties) to ensure that the health and survival of these resources and areas are maintained for future generations.

As has traditionally been said:

*Nga Uri o Takaroa.  
Nga Uri o Tane*

*The children of the god of the sea  
The children of the god of the forest  
Who will speak for our children, grandchildren, those yet born?  
Who are the guardians of their inheritance? Takata Whenua”*

The Council recognises the relationship Takata Whenua have with the District’s natural and physical resources and this Action Plan supports that relationship by seeking to protect, maintain and restore significant areas of biodiversity.

The protection of natural and physical resources important to Kati Huirapa such as areas of indigenous vegetation is a shared concern of Maori and non-Maori in the District. However, this relates to the physical quality of resources, and the Takata Whenua spiritual, historical and cultural values, such as the mauri of water, are not likely to be shared by others. It is therefore important that Takata Whenua are involved in actions affecting these resources and is a partner to the Council in this Action Plan.

# Ashburton District Biodiversity

The Ashburton District is rich in biodiversity, particularly with our unique braided river systems, an integral part of the district's natural identity. The Ashburton District is home to a variety of native fish, birds and vegetation, some of which are rare and threatened. The brief descriptions below are based on the limited information that is readily available, and the combined knowledge of the working group.

## The Plains

The plains are Ashburton District's most highly modified natural landscape, as is the case across New Zealand. Less than 1% indigenous vegetation cover remains on the Canterbury plains and ongoing loss and fragmentation is likely, with most remnants too small and isolated to survive without assistance. Indigenous biodiversity remnants on the plains are acutely threatened, with threats including the loss of roadside remnants of significant indigenous vegetation, the loss of shelter belts that act as wildlife corridors, animal and plant pests, lack of awareness, land use changes, intensification and subdivision.

## Lowland Streams

Most of the lowland streams in the Ashburton District are spring-fed and provide valuable fish and invertebrate habitats, as well as wildlife corridors. This includes small ephemeral streams running through farm land. Significant loss of habitat has already occurred in streams and riparian areas. Continued biodiversity decline is likely due to factors including stock access, contaminant discharge, vegetation clearance, land use intensification without safeguards, animal and plant pests and large gaps in our knowledge of these streams.

## Wetlands

"Wetlands" are wet areas that can include shallow water and water margins in and around swamps, bogs, lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries. Although wetlands are an ecosystem with one of the highest levels of species diversity, they are now one of New Zealand's rarest ecosystems and have been identified as a National Priority for Protection. Wetlands perform vital functions by improving water quality and providing important habitat for many species, particularly migrant birds. Wetlands can also mitigate carbon impacts, in some cases at higher rates than our native forests.

## Ō Tū Wharekai

Ō Tū Wharekai is a wetland system in the high country of the Ashburton District which includes the upper Rangitata River, 12 Ashburton lakes, ephemeral turfs, streams, swamps and bogs. This area is part of a Department of Conservation led initiative which focuses on protection and enhancement of water quality, habitat and species diversity, as well as monitoring and research efforts. Continued threats to wetlands across the District include a lack of awareness of the values of wetlands, vegetation clearance, land drainage, channelizing and impoundment. Further issues include stock grazing, predators, pest invasion and barriers to fish passage.

## Braided Rivers

The braided rivers that flow through the Ashburton District are a rare and internationally significant feature, as well as a National Priority for protection. These rivers are a unique habitat for many fish, animals and plants and a significant habitat for threatened and endangered birds. Despite the

Rangitata and Rakaia rivers being protected by Conservation Orders, continued threats include weeds, animal pests, human behaviour, land use intensification, water abstraction, channelization, changes in flow levels, and declining water quality. Didymo and other invasive aquatic species also pose a threat, as do barriers to fish passage and habitat disturbance from gravel extraction and recreational threats such as uncontrolled vehicle access.

## High Country

Ashburton District's high country is an iconic landscape with high biodiversity values. Despite extreme weather patterns and vegetation modification through burning, grazing and agricultural development, there are still large areas of indigenous vegetation remaining. This includes extensive areas of tussock grassland, beech forest and shrublands. Ongoing threats to the high country include pest invasions of plants such as wilding conifers and animals such as rabbits. Significant land use changes, intensification and subdivision has led to a loss of wetlands, tussock grasslands and shrublands.

## Foothills

The foothills are highly modified in some parts, although there are protected areas and significant public conservation land. Threats to the foothills are animal and plant pests, increasingly from wilding conifers and including weeds that originate from domestic gardens. Land use changes have led to loss of wetlands, tussock grasslands and indigenous cover. Fire is also a threat to the biodiversity in this area.

## Coastal Lagoons and Estuaries

Coastal lagoons, dongas, estuaries and river mouths provide a network of significant habitats for invertebrates, fish, birds and plants. There has been high modification and loss of ecosystems, habitats and vegetation. Continuing agricultural and urban development pose further threats, while other challenges affecting this environment include coastal erosion, recreational uses, sediment load changes, potential climate change, weed encroachment, pests and changing river flows.

## Urban

The town of Ashburton is the district's largest urban settlement, followed by Methven and Rakaia. Smaller rural townships include Mt Somers, Hinds, Mayfield, Fairton and Chertsey. Urban areas are highly modified, with little to no remaining indigenous vegetation and many exotic and introduced species. This has led to decreased water quality, spreading weeds, contaminant discharge and subdivision into previously non-urban areas. A key issue in urban areas is a lack of awareness of biodiversity.

## Marine

The district's marine environments, bordered mainly by gravel beaches, also face threats to their biodiversity. Contaminant disposal, human behaviour, vehicle access to beaches, erosion and the effect these factors have on water quality all pose challenges to marine biodiversity.

# The Wider Context

## National Context

**Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991** - The RMA provides mechanisms for central, regional and local government to protect biodiversity and clarifies roles and responsibilities. This is provided for in Section 31 of the RMA which refers to the responsibility of district councils to control actual or potential effects of land use and development for the purpose of maintaining indigenous biological diversity (Section 31(1)(b)). The Act also identifies protecting areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna as a matter of national importance, which Council gives effect to through the District Plan (Section 6).

**New Zealand Biodiversity Action Plan 2016** - This action plan sets national targets towards the protection and sustainable use of our biodiversity. These targets are intended to enable New Zealand to demonstrate progress towards the five strategic goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020.

**Local Government Act (LGA) 2002** - The Local Government Act requires councils to consider "the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment" and "the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations" in its approach to sustainable development (Section 14).

**Statement of National Priorities 2007** - This statement provides local authorities, communities and private landowners with information about the most threatened types of ecosystems and habitats on private land from a national perspective. These are:

- a) land areas with only 20 per cent of their original native vegetation cover left (e.g. Canterbury Plains);
- b) wetland and sand dunes;
- c) areas of indigenous vegetation located in 'originally rare' terrestrial ecosystem types;
- d) protection of habitats of New Zealand's most threatened species.

**Predator Free 2050**—Announced in 2016, this is an ambitious national goal to rid New Zealand of the most damaging introduced predators, rats, stoats and possums by 2050.

## Regional Context

**Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013** - This document provides an overview of the resource management issues in the Canterbury region. It re-emphasises the importance of the four national priorities for the protection of indigenous biodiversity and promotes collaboration between stakeholders as a way of achieving an integrated and coordinated management approach to halting the decline in Canterbury's indigenous biodiversity.

**Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region 2008** - The regional strategy is the main document related to the Biodiversity Action Plan. This plan gives local effect to the vision and goals of the regional strategy by identifying actions that will support their achievement. Published in 2008, the guiding priority principle of the Regional Strategy is to focus first on protecting and maintain what remains and then on restoring what has been lost. Strategic links to the regional strategy are discussed within each objective.

**Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) 2009** - The CWMS is also a key document for the Biodiversity Action Plan. The Strategy delivers a strategic framework for environmentally sustainable water use, and also has specific targets to protect ecosystems, habitats

and landscapes. The strategy identified indigenous biodiversity as a “supporting principle” and lists ecosystem health and biodiversity as an outcome area which has a range of specific targets.

## Local Context

**District Plan** - The Ashburton District Plan contributes to the protection of indigenous biodiversity by identifying areas of significant conservation value, classified according to their intactness, rarity, representativeness, distinctiveness, diversity or patterns. Plan “rules” regulate for the protection and maintenance of these areas. Activities such as earthworks and indigenous vegetation clearance are subject to restriction across the District to allow protection of natural conservation values.

# Role of the Biodiversity Action Plan

The Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan sits within a strategic regional and national framework for biodiversity protection. It’s central purpose is to give effect to Canterbury’s Regional Biodiversity Strategy, at the district level, and to align with the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

As with the Regional Strategy, the Action Plan is a non-regulatory voluntary document which is aimed at encouraging the voluntary promotion and protection of our local biodiversity. The status of the Action Plan as a community-owned, non-statutory plan has the following benefits:

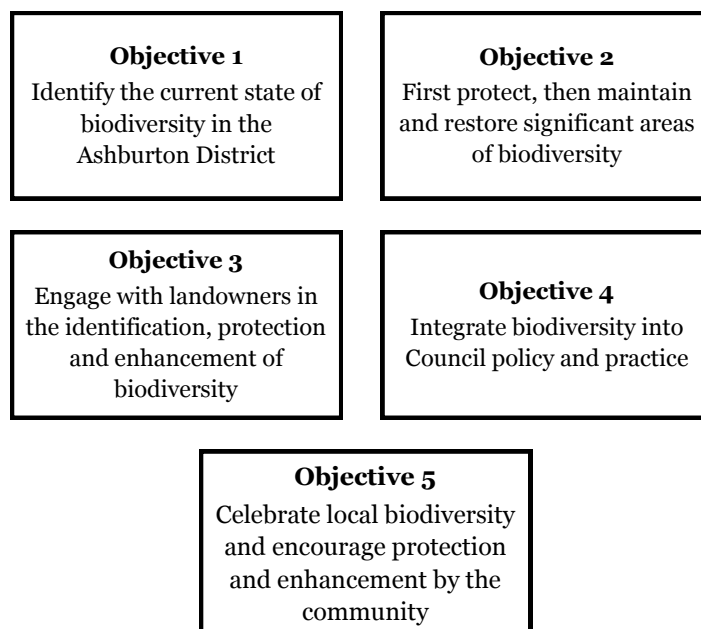
- Enables the Action Plan to remain a ‘living document’  
Environmental concerns are by their very nature, dynamic. The non-binding status of the Action Plan allows actions to be flexible and adaptable, changing to suit the needs of the ecosystems which they support and the community involved in its implementation.
- Promotes mutual trust and information sharing with landowners  
As the Action Plan is a non-regulatory document based on trust and voluntary action, lasting relationships with landowners and industry associations can be built and maintained.
- Establishes a proactive and voluntary approach  
Plans based on compliance and legislation can have the unintended consequence of promoting a “reactive” approach to protection. The voluntary, community-based nature of the Biodiversity Action Plan enables a proactive approach toward biodiversity protection.
- Promotes collaboration in the community  
Engaging with the community and encouraging organisations to lead protection actions promotes cooperation and collaboration within the community, essential to the success of a paradigm shift toward environmental and biodiversity appreciation.

## Our Vision

**The Ashburton District community values and cares for biodiversity and accepts the shared responsibility to work together to ensure it is sustained and enhanced, both now and into the future**

### Objectives

The objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan are broad medium-term goals that have been identified as key focus areas. Objectives have been ordered at random and there is no hierarchy. There are, however, a small number of actions which are identified as a priority, and others which rely on the completion of these priority actions.



### Responsibility

This Action Plan reflects the view and ideas of a number of groups and organisations in the community, the result of a collaborative effort. Responsibility for implementing these actions will rely on the efforts of the Biodiversity Working Group and the wider community mobilised by the group. The Ashburton District Council is committed to facilitating this group and has lead responsibility for a number of significant actions.

### Timeframe

This action plan contains actions for the next 5 years. Short term actions are direct and measurable, while the medium-term actions, particularly those that are dependent on the results of short term priority actions (such as the survey of the plains) are left open to accommodate future decision making.

<b>Year 1</b>	Ends July 2018
<b>Year 2</b>	Ends July 2019
<b>Years 3-5</b>	Ends July 2022

## Objective 1

### Identify the current state of biodiversity in the Ashburton District

#	Action	Responsibility	Year One	Years 2 & 3	Years 3-5	Priority Action
1.1	Collate, analyse, and summarise relevant existing information and available research relating to biodiversity in the Ashburton District	ADC, BWG	✓			
1.2	Complete an ecological survey of the Ashburton District roadsides	Ashburton Community Conservation Trust, Forest and Bird, ECAN, ADC, BWG	✓			✓

\*denotes actions contingent on the completion of a priority action.

#### Ecological Survey

The specific parameters used and process followed for the ecological survey will be determined in the implementation of the Plan. The parameters and process will be in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Biodiversity Action Plan—including engaging with landowners at an early stage.

#### Strategic Links

##### Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region

**Goal 6** Improve the range and quality of knowledge and information about Canterbury's biodiversity for its sustainable management

## Objective 2

### First protect, then maintain and restore areas of significant biodiversity

#	Action	Responsibility	Year One	Years 2 & 3	Years 3-5	Priority Action
2.1	Use all collated biodiversity information, including survey results, to plan actions for years 2-5 that target areas needing urgent attention*	BWG, ADC		✓		
2.2	Identify projects and initiatives for the Biodiversity Working Group to support with reference to the outcomes of 1.1 and 2.1.*	BWG		✓	✓	
2.3	Protection/ restoration initiative led by a localised group supported by Biodiversity Working Group	Localised Group, BWG	✓	✓	✓	
2.4	Support the ongoing use of the contestable fund to partially or jointly fund community projects that protect or enhance biodiversity provided they are consistent with the grant criteria.	ADC, BWG, External funding agent	✓	✓	✓	
2.5	Engage with local Runanga to identify an area of significance for a joint project that supports its protection	ADC, BWG, Te Runanga o Arowhenua		✓		
2.6	Support the Ashburton District Council in the administration of its responsibilities under the Resource Management Act for managing unauthorised vegetation clearance.	BWG, ADC	✓	✓	✓	

\*denotes actions contingent on the completion of a priority action.

### Strategic Links

#### Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region

**Goal 1:** Protect and maintain the health of all significant habitats and ecosystems

**Goal 2:** Restore the natural character of degraded habitats and ecosystems

## Objective 3

### Engage with landowners in the identification, protection and enhancement of biodiversity

#	Action	Responsibility	Year One	Years 2 & 3	Years 3-5	Priority Action
3.1	Distribute information to landowners regarding biodiversity identification, protection, enhancement and regulation.	BWG, ADC	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2	Celebrate landowner success stories via the biodiversity webpage and media/Council publications	ADC, BWG	✓	✓	✓	
3.3	Build relationships with stakeholders through a forum/workshop	BWG, ADC	✓	✓	✓	
3.4	Encourage covenants and other forms of land protection	ADC, BWG, QEII		✓	✓	
3.5	Keep a current and comprehensive list of funding sources for landowners available online	ADC	✓	✓	✓	
3.6	Support and promote the Council's biodiversity grants scheme.	ADC	✓	✓	✓	
3.7	Promote integration and use of appropriate indigenous species in modified environments (rural and urban)	BWG	✓	✓	✓	

\*denotes actions where implementation is contingent on the completion of a priority action.

### Strategic Links

#### Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region

**Goal 3:** Increase the integration and use of indigenous species in modified environments (e.g. farm, urban, lifestyle blocks).

**Goal 4:** Enhance public awareness, understanding and support of biodiversity

**Goal 5:** Encourage, celebrate and support action by landowners and communities to protect, maintain and restore biodiversity

## Objective 4

### Integrate biodiversity principles into Council policy and practice

#	Action	Responsibility	Year One	Years 2 & 3	Years 3-5	Priority Action
4.1	Integrate biodiversity principles across Council activities and practices.	ADC		✓		
4.2	Advocate for biodiversity protection and enhancement within Council as an organisation and communicate these principles regularly to staff through newsletters and updates.	ADC	✓	✓	✓	

### Strategic Links

#### Biodiversity Strategy for the Canterbury Region

**Goal 3:** Increase the integration and use of indigenous species in modified environments (e.g. farm, urban, lifestyle blocks).

**Goal 6:** Improve the range and quality of knowledge and information about Canterbury's biodiversity for its sustainable management

## Objective 5

### Celebrate local biodiversity and encourage protection and enhancement by the community

#	Action	Responsibility	Year One	Years 2 & 3	Years 3-5	Priority Action
5.1	Maintain the Biodiversity Working Group, to meet at least quarterly	BWG, ADC	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2	Launch the reviewed Biodiversity Action Plan to the community with an event to bring together other community stakeholders	BWG, ADC	✓			
5.3	The Biodiversity Working Group to meet with the Ashburton Water Zone Committee when there are common issues to discuss.	BWG, Ashburton Water Zone Committee	✓	✓	✓	
5.4	Regular promotion through the media of biodiversity events and initiatives	BWG	✓	✓	✓	
5.5	Biodiversity-focused project for school-aged children to promote within schools	BWG	✓			
5.6	Promote weed prevention, for instance, by engaging with nurseries and garden centres	BWG	✓	✓	✓	
5.7	Maintain the biodiversity webpage on the Ashburton District Council's website	ADC	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.8	Source available biodiversity-related information and education resources, make available in Council offices and stakeholder organisations	BWG, ADC	✓	✓	✓	
5.9	Publish a booklet and/or website page about Ashburton biodiversity after survey has been reported on, incorporating all known information*	ADC, BWG		✓		

\*denotes actions where implementation is contingent on the completion of a priority action.

# Implementation and Monitoring

## Implementation

The Biodiversity Working Group, in partnership with the Ashburton District Council, will oversee the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan. As per Action 5.1, the group will meet at least quarterly to plan the way actions are carried out and monitor the progress of the Action Plan.

The working group will play a crucial role in the implementation of this action plan, particularly through promotion and communication, within their own vast networks and the wider community. Key actions will be carried out in accordance with the input, advice and opinions of the group, continuing with the successful collaboration that created this Action Plan.

### Principles of implementation

The actions in the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan will all be implemented in accordance with the following principles

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Community
- Collaboration
- Cooperation
- Trust

## Annual Progress Review

Each year, Ashburton District Council staff will be responsible for completing an Annual Progress Review, which will be reported to both the Biodiversity Working Group and to Council. These reports will highlight the achievements of the preceding year in biodiversity, measure progress against the Action Plan and monitor timeframes in order to ensure Council and stakeholders are held accountable to their actions.

## Statutory Monitoring

The Resource Management Act 1991 and Local Government Act 2002 require monitoring and reporting on the state of the environment. The requirement for monitoring under the Resource Management Act enables Council to evaluate whether the objectives, policies in its District Plan are being met and can identify matters that need to be addressed in a review of the District Plan—including the protection and maintenance of biodiversity.

A monitoring programme is currently being developed at Council to enable District Plan monitoring—including the effectiveness of environmental protection and consent compliance.

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