



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: Lindsay Vaughan, Policy Planner

REFERENCE: B122

SUBJECT: **BIODIVERSITY OVERVIEW – INDIGENOUS TERRESTRIAL FAUNA OF TASMAN DISTRICT - REPORT EP08/12/09** - Report prepared for meeting of 16 December 2008

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to introduce the Council to a new publication by Dr David Butler on the native terrestrial fauna of Tasman District. Copies of this publication will be distributed at the meeting.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2004, Council commissioned a report by Geoff Walls and Dr Philip Simpson (Tasman District Biodiversity Overview) which reviewed the indigenous ecosystems on private land in Tasman District and identified opportunities for protection. This brought together information from a variety of sources and provided detailed descriptions of the location, topography and plant ecosystems in each of the sixteen ecological districts that make up Tasman District and the proportion of each ecosystem that is included in the conservation estate. It described Tasman district as being “ecologically very rich”, “special in terms of indigenous biodiversity”, with “valuable opportunities for conservation of indigenous on private land.” It noted that with most of the conservation estate is located in hill country, there are much fewer examples of indigenous ecosystem present in the lowlands.

Dr David Butler was commissioned by Tasman District Council in 2006 to provide a report that describes the native animals that can be found in Tasman District. The publication was largely completed in 2007 and Biodiversity funding was sought to cover the cost of printing. It is the successor to Kath Walker’s 1987 report “Wildlife in the Nelson Region”, published by the NZ Wildlife Service.

3. FEATURES OF THE PUBLICATION

The publication notes that Tasman District is rich in animal life and contains many species found nowhere else in the country. This is attributed to its complex geological history, variable landforms, and range of habitat that includes the specialised fauna found on the areas of limestone and marble.

Tasman is nationally significant for its birdlife, its land snails and its cave fauna. In summer it supports over 20% of New Zealand’s wading birds and most of the South Island’s banded rail. It has seven species of geckos, three species of skinks and is a centre of evolution for Powelliphanta land snails.

It contains descriptions of Tasman's many bird species, reptiles, mammals, amphibians and invertebrate, along with a superb selection of photos, and the threats posed by invasive animals and plants. Where appropriate, there is an entry that describes what landowners can do.

It acknowledges the extensive work being undertaken by groups and individuals involved in restoration and pest control within the last ten years, following the success of the DOC mainland pest control programmes and notes the role played by Tasman Biodiversity Forum in providing opportunities for these groups to get together. It concludes by noting that there are an increasing number of people becoming involved in restoration programmes and more sophisticated tools becoming available for pest control; these may allow indigenous animals to increase in number and distribution and return to habitat that they once occupied.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee **receive** the Report

Lindsay Vaughan
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