



OIAD-2243

30 September 2022



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, received on 02 August 2022 in which you asked for:

“I’m following up this item to be considered at the latest Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board meeting:

KĀKĀRIKI KARAKA OPERATIONS TEAM:

The establishment of a new population at Brook Sanctuary is continuing to look positive. Final translocation for the 21/22 breeding season was completed 29th April. Large mixed flocks (31 birds seen in one flock) of unbanded and banded kākārīki karaka have been seen in the Sanctuary.

The population in the South Branch Hurunui appears to be experiencing a severe decline and will likely require more intensive monitoring and protection to persist under the current conditions.

Can DoC please provide all briefings/updates this year about Kākārīki Karaka in North Canterbury? I plan to use these briefings, hopefully supplemented by an interview, for a news story. In particular, I’m hoping the briefings will contain more information about what’s happening in the South Branch of the Hurunui”.

On 5 August you clarified your request to:

“Can DOC please provide all briefings/updates (standalone documents) this year (2022) about Kākārīki Karaka in North Canterbury.”

On 12 August 2022 we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 27 September 2022 due to the consultation necessary to make a decision on the request.

The 25 July 2022 update referred to in your request to the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board was based on the following information:

- The population estimates in the April to July monthly updates indicate that the kākārīki karaka (Orange-fronted parakeet) population in the Hurunui South Branch appears to have declined sharply from approximately 280 birds to 96.
- The method used to generate these population estimates has some limitations and the results need to be treated with a degree of caution (more detail can be found in one of the documents being released [Item 11]). However, the results are being taken



- seriously and have prompted further work to better understand the current state of this population, and what steps can be taken to reverse the apparent decline.
- The exact reasons, and the science behind, the potential decline are yet to be fully examined.
 - The Kākāriki Karaka Recovery Group believes that there are currently four possibilities:
 - not all the images from the cameras on the seed feeders have been reviewed yet;
 - less monitoring work was undertaken in South Branch in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, which reduced the number of banded birds being re-sited and resulted in an underestimation of the population;
 - a 'lag period' on the population estimate because additional data is still being processed and added; or
 - that this is an actual population decline.
 - A range of work is planned to better understand what is happening to this population:
 - Firstly, rangers will be undertaking a full valley-wide survey, which is planned for early October;
 - A review of photographs from electronic seed feeders is also underway to maximise the accuracy and precision of population estimates;
 - Predator monitoring videos are also being reviewed to better understand any changes to predator abundance in the South Branch Hurunui.
 - Historically, populations of this critically endangered species in North Canterbury have gone through significant 'boom and bust' cycles in response to changes in food abundance and predation.

Significant progress is being made in other areas of the recovery programme. We are very pleased with the positive gains being made in the new population established at the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary. The population on Blumine Island also appears to be gradually increasing, with the latest annual survey indicating that population has increased approximately 10% on the previous year. Additional aviary capacity is also being added in two facilities that breed kākāriki in captivity for release.

I have decided to release the relevant documents listed in Table 1 below in full. Please note that these documents contain information relating to the wider kākāriki karaka recovery programme, not just North Canterbury/South Branch Hurunui. Due to the public interest, I am releasing the documents to you in full.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents may be published on the Department's website.

If you wish to discuss this with the Department, please contact media@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Jo Macpherson
Director Operations, Eastern South Island
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Encl. 1

Table 1 – Schedule of Documents

Item	Date	Document Description	Decision
1	26/04/2022	Minutes of Kākāriki Karaka Recovery Group Hui – 11 March 2022	Released in full
2	14/07/2022	DRAFT Minutes of Kākāriki Karaka Recovery Group Hui – 27 June 2022	Released in full
3	28/01/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project Dec 2021-Jan 2022	Released in full
4	06/03/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project Feb 2022	Released in full
5	01/04/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project March 2022	Released in full
6	09/05/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project April 2022	Released in full
7	10/06/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project May 2022	Released in full
8	09/07/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project June 2022	Released in full
9	05/08/2022	Orange-fronted Parakeet Project July 2022	Released in full
10	15/10/2021	Orange-fronted parakeet work plan 2021-2022	Released in full
11	08/07/2022	Status of OFP population in SBH - July 2022	Released in full