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**Committee** Rural Services and Wairarapa  
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## Annual Rook Control Report - 2005

### 1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with a summary of actions undertaken to control rook populations within the Wellington region in accordance with the objectives of the Regional Pest Management Strategy.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

The Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) classifies rooks as Containment Pests. The RPMS identifies the Masterton District as a Containment Zone with two specific objectives –

- To have no breeding rookeries outside the Containment Zone by 2006, and
- To have no more than five breeding rookeries within the Containment Zone by 2006.

To achieve these objectives, Biosecurity staff have focused on poisoning programmes using a combination of aerial nest baiting and ground baiting when rooks are damaging crops. In the last two years only aerial baiting has occurred. There have been no complaints about crop damage to warrant attempts at ground baiting.

Aerial baiting of nests is a high risk operation. Consequently only fully trained and accredited operators are used, adhering to a strict standard operating procedure.

#### 4. 2005 Operations

Aerial nest baiting of all known rookeries was carried out again this year with all nests treated. This included fresh nests without any eggs or chicks present. Only half strength toxic bait was used.

Amalgamated Helicopters Wairarapa Ltd was contracted to undertake the initial surveys and subsequent nest baiting.

Aerial surveys were initially used to identify rookeries. The Wairarapa survey identified one new rookery and eleven others that were active. In the Western Zone, a single rookery was located after receiving landowner feedback. This rookery contained 20 birds, significantly more than previously sited. This suggests either active breeding or northern recruitment has occurred in the past year.

Public feedback following an advertising campaign was important in identifying three additional rookeries in the Wairarapa.

Nest baiting occurred on two separate occasions, approximately two weeks apart. Initial baiting occurred on the 5 & 6 October and again on the 25 October at the following sites –

Site	No. of nests baited (5/6 Oct.)	25 October
Glenopal	12	25
Mataikona	6	6
Pinehaven	8	3
Springhill	8	10
Teroto	6	4
Takitaki	11	9
Bagshot	6	11
Te Parae	1	0
Hapua	3	13
Orui	3	7
Katatane	2	6
Eparaima	2	0
Belvedere	1	0
Ohariu	2	4
Gleniti	0	7
Glendu	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>107</b>

A total of 178 active nests were baited during the operation. This equates to approximately 800 new rooks if the new 4.5 birds per nest multiplier is used. The number of nests treated was slightly less than the 2004 year. However, the discovery of new rookeries has elevated the 2005 total but should result in a rapid reduction in bird numbers in the future.

The 2005 operations indicates that there were 16 known breeding rookeries in the Region with 15 located in the Wairarapa and 1 in the Western Zone.

Biosecurity staff continue to work closely with Horizons Regional Council to maximise co-ordination of operations and information exchange.

The results of the 2005 programme suggest that the objectives of the RPMS will not be met by the 2006 deadline. However, accurate details will not be available until the 2006 spring survey is completed.

## **5. Communication**

Details of the rook survey and operations were included in the October / November edition of the Rural Services Newsletter. All landowners were asked to report sightings to the Council. This request had a very positive response.

Results of the 2005 operations will be included in a future edition of the Newsletter.

## **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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