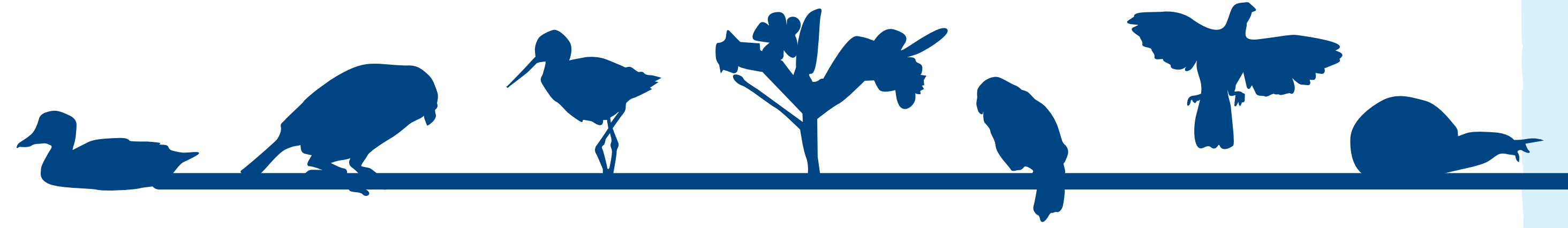


The budget constraint and the costs of New Zealand threatened species programmes



Aim

To investigate the effects of the budget constraint on the costs of New Zealand threatened species programmes.

Research

Data was collected from a survey of the New Zealand Department of Conservation's Recovery Group Leaders for 11 threatened species programmes.

Predicted costs are derived from the estimated annual costs of the actions needed to achieve the objectives in each threatened species' recovery plan (Figures 2 and 3).

A budget constraint exists when funding falls short of cost. Funding and expenditure may indicate more about a budget constraint or an ability to gain resources than the cost of a programme.

The task of estimating costs is complex, and so the results are subject to uncertainty.

Results

The power trendline indicates there are more programmes that have lower annual costs and a few programmes that have higher annual costs (Figure 1).

The budget constraint for the 11 threatened species programmes, which represent less than 2% of New Zealand's 603 "Acutely Threatened" species (Hitchmough, 2002), is predicted to be NZ\$18.6 million from 2003 until 2012 (Figure 4).

2 programmes expect to be allocated full funding, 5 programmes need few resources but expect to be allocated minimal funding, on an irregular basis, or will have to source funding from general budgets; 4 programmes need more resources but are expected to be allocated partial funding (Figure 4).

The mean expected funding for the 9 programmes that are not fully funded is 28% of their predicted cost: the South Island Long-tailed Bat programme is critically underfunded, expecting to be allocated funding equal to 1.5% of cost from 2003 until 2012.

Conclusions

The effect of the budget constraint is that allocating funding to a threatened species programme will have a cost in terms of the management of other species.

Minimal or partial funding of threatened species programmes will delay the recovery of a species, which could in turn both increase the risk of a species' further decline and the cost of the programme over time.

To appreciate the cost in terms of the management of other species and any shortfall in funding, estimates of the costs of threatened species programmes need to be included in funding applications for threatened species conservation.

Key Reference

Hitchmough, R. (2002) New Zealand Threat Classification System lists 2002. *Threatened Species Occasional Publication 23*, Department of Conservation, Wellington.

