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Our Ref: R4582/R3421

31 March 2021

Karl McLeod
Kotahi Projects Ltd

Dear Karl,

LIZARD SALVAGE AT WESTERN SPRINGS PARK – MARCH 2021

Introduction

Kotahi Projects Ltd, on behalf of Auckland Council, engaged Wildland Consultants Ltd to commence a lizard salvage along the proposed accessway before earthwork and tree felling activities. Wildlands ecologists undertook lizard salvage efforts for terrestrial skinks from 22 March through 26 March. All activities carried out between these dates followed the comprehensive guidelines of the Western Spring Lizard Management Plan (LMP) in order to satisfy conditions 26, 27, and 28 of the consent.

As required by condition 37, this memo describes the methods and results from the lizard salvage works performed prior to earthworks.

Methods

Wildlands ecologists undertook lizard salvage efforts for terrestrial skinks through the means of trapping and hand-searching. The salvage was concentrated along the proposed four-metre access track, where heavy machinery will be staged to assist in the felling and disposal of the identified pine trees. Installation of 50 pitfall traps and 30 funnel traps were deployed on 1 March 2021. All traps were left open for a minimum of two weeks before salvage. The time between the deployment of traps and salvage efforts allows fauna to habituate to the devices and allows the pitfalls to settle into the soil.

Hand-searching was focused in select areas around decomposing woody debris and ponga (*Cyathea dealbata*) trunks, which were manually deconstructed. Leaf litter and understorey vegetation were removed and inspected.

Spotlighting for indigenous arboreal geckos occurred on two clear weather nights (24 and 25 March) with temperatures greater than 16 degrees Celsius.

Results

Fourteen copper skinks (*Oligosoma aeneum*) were caught during trap checks and hand-searching. Only two copper skinks were observed in pitfall traps during the survey (both on 24 March) and none were captured in funnel traps. The other twelve copper skinks were recovered during hand-searching. No arboreal geckos were observed during spotlighting. A few Australian plague skinks (*Lampropholis delicata*) were also observed along the edges of the forest.

Table 1: Indigenous lizard species relocated during lizard salvage at Western Springs Park

ID	Species	Sex	Weight (g)	Snout-Vent Length (mm)	Vent-Tail Length (mm)	Tail Regeneration Length (mm)
CS01	<i>O. aeneum</i>	F	3.22	60	40	24
CS02	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Juvenile	0.38g	30	31	0
CS03	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Juvenile	0.33g	32	11	0
CS04	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Juvenile	0.31g	30	30	0
CS05	<i>O. aeneum</i>	F	3.17g	55	62	0
CS06	<i>O. aeneum</i>	M	2.56	51	58	0
CS07	<i>O. aeneum</i>	M	1.95	48	58	0
CS08	<i>O. aeneum</i>	M	2.88	49	57	0
CS09	<i>O. aeneum</i>	F	3.00	57	60	0
CS10	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Juvenile	0.27	27	28	0
CS11	<i>O. aeneum</i>	F	2.35	50	52	0
CS12	<i>O. aeneum</i>	F	2.21	40	38	15
CS13	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Juvenile	.97	35	44	0
CS14	<i>O. aeneum</i>	M	2.90	54	60	0

Conclusions

In summary, a lizard salvage along the four-metre wide proposed access track was carried out, targeting areas of dense vegetation and large woody debris that provides habitat for indigenous lizards species. Fourteen copper skinks were recovered during these efforts prior to earthworks. As required in the LMP, all captured skinks were relocated into constructed refuges within comparable microhabitats identified on Auckland Zoo grounds that are subject to sustained predator control.

Yours sincerely



Nick Goldwater
Principal Ecologist
Wildland Consultants Ltd



Plate 1: Copper skink caught at Western Springs Park during lizard salvage works. 22 March 2021.