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Submission on Marlborough District Council, Long Term Plan

From:

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Introduction

1. Forest & Bird wish to be heard in support of this submission. We would like to be heard via teleconference if possible.
2. This submission is made to Marlborough District Council on behalf of the national office and the Marlborough branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society New Zealand Incorporated.
3. Forest & Bird is New Zealand's leading independent conservation organisation, which has played an important role in preserving New Zealand's environment and native species since 1923. We are independently funded by private subscription, donations, and bequests. Our mission is to protect New Zealand's unique ecological values, flora and fauna, and natural habitat through the sustainable management of indigenous biodiversity, natural landscapes, rivers, lakes, and coastal environments.
4. Since the 1960s Forest & Bird has contributed significantly to conservation in Marlborough as an advocate for the environment through national, regional, and local planning processes; as an educator through our Kiwi Conservation Club; and in action through on-the-ground conservation work by our membership .
5. Marlborough District Council is tasked with the purpose of sustainably managing the natural and physical resources in Marlborough to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; safeguard the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects of activities on the environment. We ask the Council to consider this responsibility and reflect on what this means as protectors of the natural environment throughout this plan process.
6. Increasingly the needs of future generations are being made known as we are called upon by our youth to act with their interests at heart and their livelihoods at stake; we understand what needs to be done to maintain the life-supporting capacity of our ecosystems; and we have the ability and authority to limit the

damage of our practices on the environment. We hope and anticipate Council will act in a way that is consistent with these values when considering the Long Term Plan and our submission.

7. Before people arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand, 80% of the land was covered in dense forest. Now only 24% remains. It's the same for wetlands, with over 90% degraded or lost; vertebrate species, with 79% threatened with or at risk of extinction; and freshwater fish, with 76% threatened with or at risk of extinction. We are losing the things we value so much, the ecosystem that protect and sustain us, and that we are inherently connected to.

8. A recent survey of youth mental health and concerns in Aotearoa found (<https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications>):

"Many students saw the future as bleak and felt that their generation was inheriting a broken world. Climate change was a strong theme... Some expressed a sense of facing a hostile world with insufficient adult support. Others felt older generations had created a mess and were leaving it to young people to find solutions."

"Young people want action for a brighter future including... Action to address climate change and other urgent environmental issues."

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce5f37259122e59aa/t/5f3394a2654885030c051243/1597215912482/Youth19+Youth+Voice+Brief.pdf>

"As researchers and members of Aotearoa New Zealand communities, we consider that this data about youth mental and emotional health needs is concerning and attention to address long term causes and current needs is required. Increases in distress over the last decade have been reported in many developed nations. There are multiple hypotheses or theories about why this is. These ideas include... [the] climate crisis..."

A response to the question "What do you think should be changed to support young people in New Zealand better?" was "The climate and how polluted the environment is, I feel like this is what is making our country toxic and you can't really be happy if the environment is sad. (Pacificfemale, decile 1, age 15)"

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce5f37259122e59aa/t/5f338e4cfb539d2246e9e5ce/1597214306382/Youth19+Mental+Health+Report.pdf>

9. When nature thrives, our communities thrive. Healthy native forests and tussocklands, wetlands, and rivers sequester carbon, provide habitat for native species, filter freshwater, and protect us from floods and droughts. We're also inherently connected to nature, and numerous studies show that when we

connect with nature, we're happier and healthier.

10. Forest & Bird has a national strategic vision - which is also reflected in our aspirations for Marlborough District:

- **Climate Centred:** Marlborough is resilient to the impacts of climate change. Any activities or developments in the region must actively mitigate their contribution to climate change. People understand the threat and urgency of climate change and are supported in climate change practices.
- **Economy that Supports Nature:** Marlborough's local economy and nature are interconnected. A healthy natural environment will support a healthy economy.
- **Vibrant Landscapes:** Marlborough's terrestrial native flora and fauna, and natural features are protected and enhanced in urban and rural areas. Marlborough's landscapes are free from damaging weeds, introduced predators and feral browsers. Development can occur without clearing and destroying landscapes and their respective ecosystems.
- **Oceans Alive:** Marlborough residents recognise the health of the marine environment is strongly connected to both land and sea-based activities and treat it with respect. Marlborough's sounds and oceans are protected and returned to their original, healthy states. Fishing and aquaculture activities follow ecosystem-based management principles. Marlborough's marine environment is protected through a network of no-take marine protected areas and other appropriate measures, including Council protected sites.
- **Energised Water, Rivers and Wetlands:** Marlborough's rivers, lakes and streams are clean, healthy and teeming with life. Wetlands are protected and enhanced.