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**Media release**

**EDS congratulates Commissioner for the Environment on Birds report**

The Environmental Defence Society has congratulated Dr Jan Wright, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, on her latest report on the state of New Zealand's birds, *Taonga of an Island Nation*.

"The report is an especially revealing and insightful analysis of our native birds and shows that much more needs to be done to protect threatened species. 93 species of our birds are endemic to New Zealand." said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"The perilous state of many species is a further wake-up call for all New Zealanders and the Commissioner is calling for urgent and co-ordinated action from relevant agencies.

"Dr Wright has made 7 recommendations all of which need to be acted on with urgency.

"In particular, I note that Dr Wright has called for a fresh national conversation on the use of gene technologies. She clearly envisages an expanded tool-box to confront the predator threat that would include innovative use of genetic interventions.

"EDS is very supportive of that. Saving our native birds will require us to have a more open attitude to the use of such methods.

"Dr Wright also reminds Government that whilst the Predator Free 2050 aspiration is welcome, it implies a significant ramp up in available funding.

"This should be seen as an investment in New Zealand's future, partly protecting our brand but also recognising the importance New Zealanders place on the intrinsic values of our natural world.

"As she says:

*It is my view that one of the things we should seek to achieve is the restoration of abundant, resilient, and diverse birdlife on the New Zealand mainland.*

"We strongly support and endorse the Commissioner's analysis and conclusions," Mr Taylor concluded.