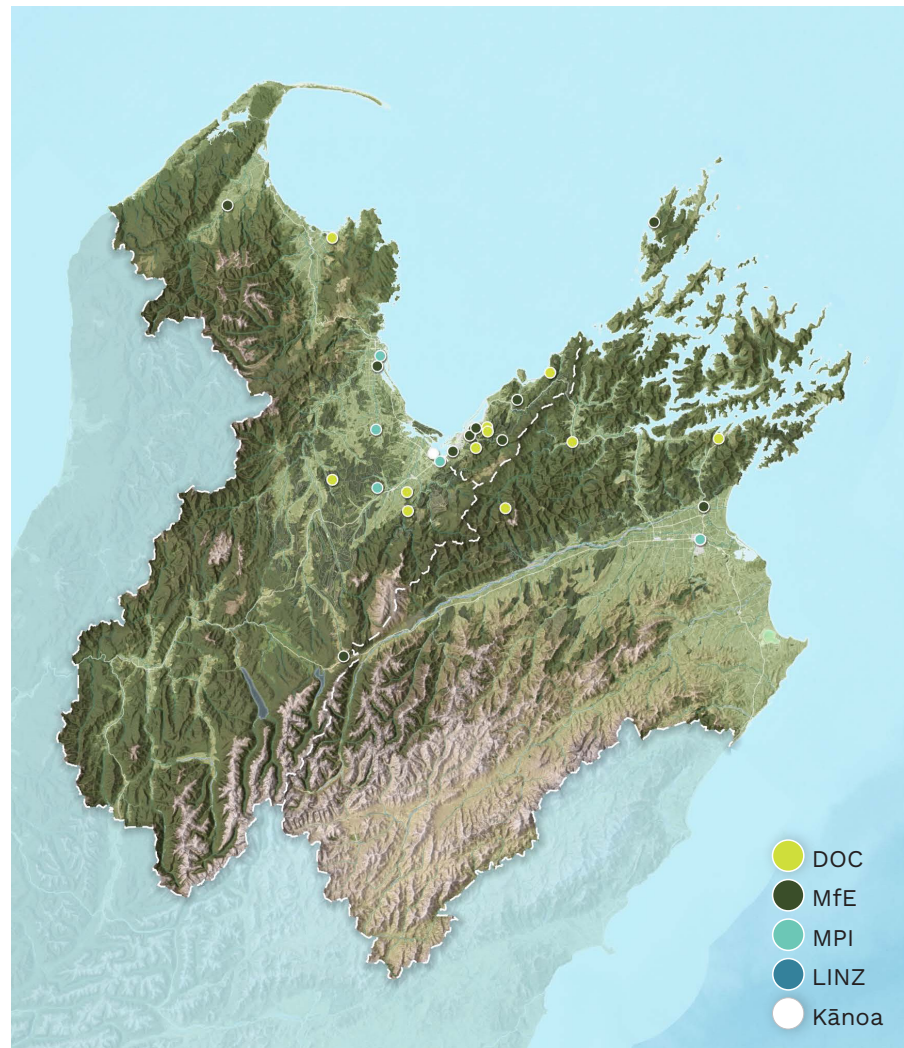


Purpose: To show the Jobs for Nature investment to date in the Top of the South region and the significance of funding in the context of economic and environmental challenges to the region.



Map sourced from Land Information New Zealand 2023

Significance of Jobs for Nature (J4N) funding to the Top of the South region during the COVID-19 pandemic

Economic and employment impacts: The Top of the South economy was projected to experience a decline in earnings by \$280 million due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the largest hits forecast in retail, accommodation, and construction sectors. GDP in Marlborough was estimated to have declined by 14.4%.¹ The local unemployment rate was expected to rise to 8.6%, with almost 1 in 10 jobs expected to be lost.²

At the end of May 2020 the number of unemployed or work-ready people in the Top of the South region increased to about 4,200 people. This was reported to be the highest rate of unemployment rise in New Zealand at that time.³ Marlborough experienced a loss of 1,528 jobs from April 2020 to March 2022, and the unemployment rate in March 2022 was 4.9%.⁴

Māori and Pasifika were forecasted to be disproportionately impacted due to the effects on the hospitality and retail sectors. Māori employment in Nelson-Tasman was forecast to decline by 12.9%, resulting in a loss of 281 jobs.⁵

During February 2020, 20% of contractors employed by the logging industry in the region had stopped, 60% had reduced hours, and 20% were maintaining business as usual.⁶ The seafood industry was also hit hard, with a 50% drop in exports to China compared to the same period the previous year.⁷

Environmental challenges facing the region

Climate change is already affecting the Top of the South with predictions of more extreme weather events, storm surges, severe flooding, coastal erosion, and increased fire risk.⁸ The Marlborough Sounds, in particular, are expected to be severely affected due to their proximity to the water.⁹

The 2022 flooding and cyclone had significant impacts on the region. The severe weather event caused over 550 landslips and severe flooding, affecting residential areas and local infrastructure.¹⁰ The total estimated cost of recovery was \$57.1 million, with plans to fund the recovery over ten years.¹¹

Water quality: The main threats to water quality in the region include the intensification of agriculture and population growth, which can lead to increased runoff and leaching from agricultural land, stormwater, and industrial discharges.¹²

The security of water supply is likely to be a significant issue for these regions. Drier average summer conditions, coupled with growth in demand for water, are likely to place increasing pressure on water resources. Freshwater is becoming a scarce resource, as evidenced during the 2019 drought.¹³

Coastal erosion: Rising sea levels and coastal erosion are significant concerns in the Top of the South. A risk assessment showed that an estimated 8,400 people live in low-lying coastal areas that are vulnerable to storm inundation and sea-level rise. More than 5,000 buildings, mostly in the Motueka-Riwaka area, 350 archaeological sites, and 2,106 hectares of coastal indigenous vegetation are at risk.¹⁴

Biodiversity: In Tasman, there are 20 indigenous species of freshwater fish, with 16 of these species migrating between the sea and freshwater environments as part of their life. 12 of these species, are classified as either 'At Risk or Nationally Vulnerable' according to the Department of Conservation. This decline is largely attributed to extensive changes in land use, which have resulted in the deterioration of their habitats.¹⁵

Regional Profile: Top of the South/Te Tauihu

How is J4N investment addressing environmental challenges facing the region while creating employment opportunities?

Data as at 30 September 2023

Funding	\$66 million across 37 projects
Employment opportunities	1,238
Hours worked	547,136

The J4N projects in the Top of the South are collectively delivering the following benefits to the region:

Increased protection of biodiversity

Projects, such as the Maitai Ecological Restoration and the restoration of high biodiversity value sites in Wakapuaka and Whangamoia catchments, focus on restoring ecosystems. This includes pest, plant, and animal management, site preparation, and native planting throughout various sites in the region.

Picton Dawn Chorus operational plan focuses on increasing predator trapping, with Mt Richmond Wilding Conifer training and employment enhancement project targets plant infestations.

Freshwater restoration

Projects like the Pelorus/Te Hoiere Waterways Restoration and the Tasman Wetlands for Water Quality and Freshwater Ecosystems aim to restore freshwater ecosystems. This includes activities such as weed control, seed collection, plant propagation, and cultural health monitoring.

Capability development

The Ngāti Koata project support roles and the Kaimahi for Nature program aim to build capability and capacity, enabling better participation in conservation projects.

Cultural heritage restoration

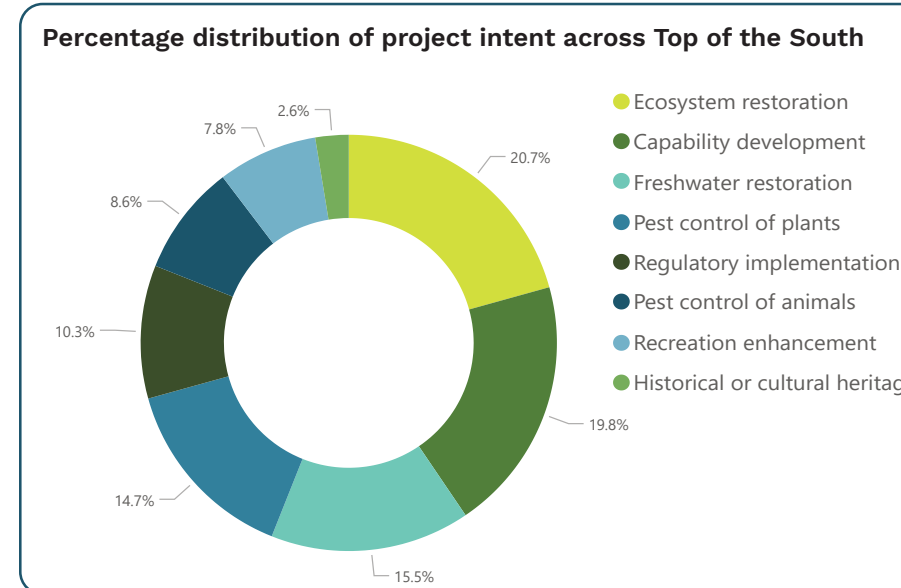
Some projects, like the Tekateka Restoration, focus on restoring sites of high cultural and ecological value. This includes pest control and targeted planting of taonga species in regenerating forest areas.

Overview of labour market participation in the Top of the South region

Labour market	
Working age population ¹⁶	92,900 (2023)
Labour force participation rate ¹⁷	70% with an estimated 62,400 people employed (2023)
Employment rate ¹⁸	68% (2023)
Median annual household income	\$98,500 (2023)
Unemployment rate	3% NEET: 15% (2023)

Māori for Nelson-Tasman ¹⁹	
Population	10.8% (16,311) (2018)
Working age	6,500 (2020)
Participation	75.4% (2020)
Unemployment rate	9.0% (2020)

Pasifika as at March 2020 ²⁰	
Population	2.3% (3,519) (2018)
Working age	3,000 (2020)
Participation	86.3% (2020)
Unemployment rate	Suppressed* (2020)



Source [Q1 Data as at 30 September 2023]

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