

Tohu-whakaahua | Photo-points



Photo-point monitoring is the easiest tool for tracking biodiversity change on your farm.

Photo-points are a common way to make direct comparisons of vegetation coverage over time. Photos are taken at marked points, during the same season and time, in the same direction, at regular intervals (e.g. every 6 months or every year).

The approaches to taking landscape and close-up photo-points are slightly different.



Landscape photo-points:

Landscape photo-points are best for showing changes in major landcover types, like shrubland or forest.

The images should include whole hillsides or similar large areas.



Panorama photo-points:

Use a panorama setting to get a broader landscape image. Panorama photos provide an excellent way to encapsulate wider areas that cannot be captured in a single photo.

If you don't have a device with a panorama option, 2-4 photos work well to cover a hillside opposite a photo point.



Close-up photo-points:

Close-up photo-points provide more detailed information on the dominant species and their overall abundance at a particular site.



Drone photo-points:

Drones also provide an excellent way to obtain aerial images of forest remnants and other biodiversity assets that are hard to photograph from the ground.



Key components of photo-point monitoring

Photo-points are cheap and easy to establish and manage.

These four steps are the simplest way to take a successful sequence of photos that will allow you to interpret vegetation cover changes through time.



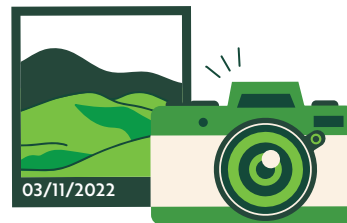
Permanently mark photo-points

This ensures photos are always taken from the same place. This is best done using a metal standard driven into the ground, as fences, buildings and trees can be moved.



Take photos at the same time of year

Photos are best taken in early summer (Nov-Dec) after the spring growth flush but before vegetation starts to brown-off through the heat and dry of summer. This reduces seasonality differences.



Take original photos with you

This is essential to ensure that photos are consistent (e.g. angle, inclusion of key features). Having a camera with the ability to zoom is helpful to make sure that the area captured in the image is the same each year.



Develop a series of photos over several years

A single unusual season can result in misleading results, which can be avoided by building up a sequence of images over several years.

Photo-point examples

You can see from these photos the dramatic changes that may not have been fully appreciated without monitoring.

Monitoring photos courtesy of Alison Stanes



Mangatawhiri Wetland | 2007



Mangatawhiri Wetland | 2021



Bull siding | 2003



Bull siding | 2021



Twin Hills Gullies | 2010



Twin Hills Gullies | 2021



Looking for more resources?

Resources and support are available to farmers from many different places and sources.

This map to the right suggests where to find support to plan for successful biodiversity outcomes on your farm.



The Farming with Native Biodiversity website has a wide selection of resources all held in one spot for your convenience.

Head over to biodiversity.nz to start browsing.

