

Information accurate as at September 2026.

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Ecology

What lives here, what will be affected, and what OceanaGold will do about it?

Protecting and enhancing the ecology around our Macraes Operation is a commitment we take seriously. As part of Macraes Phase Four, we are proposing our most ambitious ecological programme yet — a legally protected restoration and compensation package covering more than 2,000 hectares, including a predator-free wildlife sanctuary, large-scale native planting, and wetland restoration that will deliver net gains for tussock, shrubland, lizards, and key bird species. Our commitment runs to 2050 and beyond, with a dedicated conservation trust carrying the programme on permanently after that. This fact sheet explains what lives here, what mining will affect, and exactly what we will do about it.

The land around Macraes is special

The Macraes area supports over 600 indigenous plant species — likely the highest concentration of rare plants per hectare anywhere in New Zealand. Tussock grasslands, wetlands, and rocky outcrops are home to plants and animals found almost nowhere else.

What will mining affect?

MP4 extends gold mining through to the late 2030s. Surveys identified the following in the project area:

Habitat

- Up to 90 ha of snow tussock grassland.
- Around 11.5 ha of natural wetland, including 1.14 ha of rare ephemeral (wet following rain) wetlands.
- 0.26 ha of schist rock outcrops — habitat that cannot be recreated.

Wildlife

- 27 threatened or at-risk plant species.
- Around 155,500 lizards, including the declining southern grass skink and kōrero gecko.
- Kārearea, banded dotterel, and South Island pied oystercatcher all nest here.
- 17 notable insect species, including a nationally vulnerable moth.

What OceanaGold must do before clearing anything.

The rules require avoiding harm first:

- Consents for the Back Road Waste Rock Stack will be surrendered — that habitat stays undisturbed.
- No-go areas protect vegetation, wetlands, and rock outcrops outside the mining footprint.
- Ecologists survey every area before work begins.
- Lizards are caught and moved before clearance — minimum 120 person-hours per hectare.
- Rare plants are dug up, propagated, and replanted at protected sites.
- Around 10% of affected tussock is moved as intact sods, soil, seedbank, and insects included.



The restoration and protection commitment

Some habitat loss is unavoidable. So OceanaGold has committed to a restoration package covering more than 2,000 hectares — all legally protected forever.

→ 1 Murphys Ecological Enhancement Area — the centrepiece

A 252 ha predator-proof fenced sanctuary in the Murphys Creek catchment, with 1,170 ha of surrounding pest control — the largest safe refuge for native wildlife in the area.

- Protects the only known Otago skink population on OceanaGold land.
- Safe breeding ground for kōrero gecko, kārearea, banded dotterel, and pied oystercatcher.
- OceanaGold funds the fence and pest control until 2050, then transfers to a conservation trust.

→ 2 Mt Highlay Restoration Area

- 265 ha of pine saplings removed before they smother open native habitat.
- 175 ha of tussock planted — nearly double the area lost.
- 15 ha of specialised planting around rock outcrops.

→ 3 Cranky Jims Link

- 50 hectares of native shrubland restored, linking up existing protected areas.
- 21 hectares of podocarp forest started — rimu, mataī, tōtara, kōwhai — a forest type that no longer exists in this part of Otago.

The big picture

More than 875 ha of native habitat added to the legally protected covenant network — compared with around 360 ha disturbed. OceanaGold is committed to this programme until 2050, then a conservation trust carries it on permanently.

How will we know it's working?

All commitments are checked by independent ecologists. If targets aren't met, OceanaGold must take corrective action.

While mining is happening

- Independent ecological experts on site during all clearance, keeping records of every plant, turf sod, and lizard moved.
- Surveys check for nesting birds before each season's work begins.

Over the long term

- Tussock and shrubland: plant cover and species diversity checked at 5, 10, and 20 years.
- Wetlands: condition and rare plants checked at 2, 5, 7, and 15 years
- Lizards: counted annually inside the sanctuary for at least five years.
- Pest control: trap results checked annually across the full 1,170 ha buffer.

If anything falls short, corrective action must happen within set timeframes. Annual reports from independent ecologists are available for regulatory audit.

Wetland compensation

- More wetland restored than lost, including rare seasonal wetlands and sedgelands
- Stream-side habitat along Murphys Creek and North Branch Waikouaiti River fenced and restored.

What the plan aims to achieve

What OceanaGold is doing

Tussock grassland: Net gain — **175 ha** planted and **~500 ha** protected and pest-managed.

Dry shrubland: Net gain — **50 ha** planted and **88 ha** protected.

Rock habitat: Net gain — **15 ha** planted around outcrops and **44.5 ha** protected.

Lizards: Net gain — predator-free sanctuary and pest control.

Kārearea, dotterel, oystercatcher: Net gain — landscape-scale predator control.

Most wetland types: Net gain — more wetland restored than lost.

Honest acknowledgement: Some Threatened plant species cannot be moved.

There will be some permanent loss.



Macraes' Environmental team members releasing lizards at the Island Block covenant



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Murphy's Ecological Enhancement Area

A large, managed refuge for lizards, as well as protected habitat for birds, invertebrates and indigenous vegetation communities.

- 252 ha predator exclusion fence.
- 1,170 ha landscape-scale mammalian pest control.
- 395 ha continuous covenant connecting Murphy's Ecological Enhancement Area to Redbank (Murphy's Link).



MT HIGHLAY TUSOCK RESTORATION AREA

HIGHLAY HILL COVENANT

HIGHLAY CREEK ECOLOGY COVENANT

CRANKY JIM'S LINK/GREY SCRUB RESTORATION AREA

CRANKY JIM'S CREEK ECOLOGY COVENANT

CRANKY JIM'S WETLAND OPEN SPACE COVENANT

DEEPELL STATION ECOLOGY COVENANT

Macraes Flat

STREAM PLANTING ENHANCEMENT

MEEA PREDATOR EXCLUSION FENCE (250HA)

MEEA 1 km BUFFER

INDICATIVE RED BANK COVENANT

MURPHY'S LINK

2

Mt Highlay

Integrates tussock restoration, VDT (Vegetation Direct Transfer) and the ongoing protection of lizard habitat through an "averted loss" approach

- 175 ha of Tussock Planting, including 15 ha of rock edge flora restoration
- Removal of 265 ha of exotic pine preventing the future degradation of lizard habitat

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Cranky Jim's Link

Buffers and connects Cranky Jim's Shrubland Covenant with Island Block Covenant to the north, with 50 ha of dry shrubland planting followed by enrichment to transition towards a podocarp-broadleaf forest, a functionally extinct ecosystem within the Macraes' ecological district

- Connection of MEEA (known Otago skink population) to Redbank Covenant (grand skink population) links two 'Threatened' fauna species within the region.



Compensation Package

Three sites for terrestrial compensation package components are proposed, along with additional sites for wetland compensation actions.



Wetland Residual Effects

The compensation package targets wetland and riparian habitats across multiple sites throughout OGL landholdings. Compensation actions will improve wetland extent, condition, hydrology, flora and riparian function. Key creation, restoration, enhancement and protection measures include:

- **6.9 ha** of sedgeland
- **5.6 ha** copper tussock wetland
- **1.9 ha** of degraded ephemeral wetland
- **0.2 ha** of seep wetland
- **0.1 ha** of shrubland wetland
- **1.8 ha** indigenous herbaceous wetland
- **9 ha** of unclassified wetland.

By the numbers

252 ha of predator-free sanctuary at Murphy's Creek

~90 ha of tussock grassland affected

11.5 ha of natural wetlands lost (total)

27 spp Threatened or At Risk plants in footprint

~155,500 lizards in the affected area

225 ha of new native planting committed

578 ha of existing native habitat protected and pest-managed

1,170 ha of surrounding pest control area

265 ha of pine forest removed at Mt. Highlay

>2,000 ha total land with conservation gains from this project

to **2050+** how long OceanaGold is legally committed to fund this

Want to know more?

OceanaGold is committed to a long-term partnership with the community and it is important to us that you have reliable information about what we are proposing and what it means to you.

Macraes Information Centre

Location: 117 Ronaldsay Street, Palmerston, Otago.

Open hours: 9.00 am to 3.00 pm weekdays.

This fact sheet is based on the Terrestrial and Wetland Ecology Summary prepared by Bioresearches for Oceana Gold (NZ) Limited (August 2026, Job No. 68766#BIO2). The full technical report suite (E1-E18) is part of OceanaGold's MP4 application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

Disclaimer: Plain-language summary for community information only. Based on Bioresearches (2026), Terrestrial and Wetland Ecology Summary (Rev 0, 21 August 2026). The full technical report suite should be consulted for complete detail.



Find out more about Macraes Phase Four: www.macraesphasefour.co.nz
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