

REFERENCE PROJECT

Conservation - Lizard recovery

Location: Port Hills, Christchurch
Date: 2014 and 2015
Client: Christchurch City Council
Consultant: AECOM (formerly URS NZ)

Following the Christchurch earthquakes in 2011 Abseil Access have been involved in the stabilisation work above critical infrastructure throughout the Port Hills. Many of the cliffs and escarpments required removal of loose rocks, boulders and flakes. This resulted in loss of habitat for the dwindling & nationally protected skink & gecko populations.

Abseil Access got together with conservation herpetologists and the council to mitigate the risks to the protected lizard species and re-locate individuals to safer environments.

With extensive training in reptile handling an urgent Translocation Permit was granted and our lizard climbing (Clizarding) team set to work catching lizards on the steep escarpments.

Using an array of devices lizards were located and teased out of bottomless cracks and carefully handled into transport vessels. Over 200 geckos and skinks were rescued, including the discovery of two spotted skinks, not thought to inhabit the Port Hills area. Suitable new local habitats were found, some were returned to the area after site work had been completed and some were transferred to the predator free environment at Riccarton Bush. Selected geckos were fitted with radio location devices to monitor the success rate of the translocation process.

Abseil Access are committed to conservation initiatives and our crews thoroughly enjoy getting involved in these projects.



Above: Canterbury Gecko



Above: Spotted Skink

