

# Protecting native taonga species with pest control in Waitaanga Forest

The Department of Conservation's Ngāmotu/New Plymouth Office plans to reduce possum and rat numbers in the Waitaanga Conservation Area and adjoining reserves, using aerially applied 1080.

## Why we are controlling pests in these areas?

It is about protecting native species at risk. There is a battle for the survival of these species happening throughout New Zealand. Everyday rats, stoats and possums are killing birds and other native animals and browsing on our forests killing plants and preventing regeneration.

Tiakina Ngā Manu is the Department of Conservation's ongoing campaign to protect our native species and ecosystems at risk using aerial 1080 predator control. It's about protecting what's in our backcountry so they can be there for future generations to enjoy.

The Waitaanga operational area (19,029ha) comprises a diverse range of native vegetation including beech forest - a relic of a former, more extensive forest. Rare plants include the nationally vulnerable wood rose/Pua ō te reinga (*Dactylanthus taylorii*), scarlet mistletoe (*Peraxilla colensoi*) and red mistletoe (*Peraxilla tetrapetala*).

Other ecologically important features in the area are threatened bird species such as: North Island brown kiwi, kārearea (New Zealand falcon), toutouwai (North Island robin) and whio (Blue Duck).

Significantly, both short and long-tailed bats (pekapeka) are also present in the Waitaanga forest.

Ongoing periodic control is required to ensure breeding success of kiwi, kokako, and other threatened taonga species.



North Island brown kiwi chick. Photo: Backyard Kiwi

## Predator control works

DOC has identified sites where rare and endangered plants and animals are under the greatest threat. In Taranaki this year, these are the Waitaanga, Parininihi/Whitecliffs, Pouiatoa and Taramoukou forests. Pest control operations are planned for these sites to limit the damage being done by rats, stoats and possums and increase the chances of breeding success for native species.

Monitoring after Tiakina Ngā Manu operations show possum and rat numbers have been knocked back, and native species have thrived:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/tiakina-nga-manu>

## How it is happening

Cereal baits containing the toxin 1080 will target possums and rats. DOC is employing experienced contractors Ecofx Ltd to deliver the operation. Cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 will be applied aerially over 19,029ha of the Waitaanga operational area. Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute bait along pre-determined and monitored flight paths.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and contractors Epro Ltd will contact all neighbours prior to the operation starting.

## Why we are using this method

Aerial application of cereal pellets containing 1080 is the most effective control method over large areas. It is the only viable method in remote, rugged terrain. Ground-based trapping and bait stations are effective in smaller more accessible areas, however the number of possum/rodents and stoats can overwhelm trapping networks. In those areas aerial 1080 may be used to supplement the existing ground-based work. Aerial 1080 operations target rodents and possums. Stoats are also reduced effectively as they eat rodents/possum carcasses.

## Timeframe

We will look to begin pre-feeding with non-toxic bait from August 2020, to prime the predators. Toxic bait being laid no earlier than five days after the application of pre-feed baits.

All operations are weather dependent. Closer to the time we will notify you of the specific dates for the operation.

## Operational planning

For this operation, Ecofx and the Department will consult with stakeholders, affected landowners and communities. DOC also engages and works closely with iwi, its Treaty Partner, for all predator control. Before an operation begins, neighbours are contacted, warning signs are erected, and advertisements are put in local newspapers.

Following feedback from this consultation, decisions will be made on what changes can be made to the operational plan to mitigate the effects of the operation on you.

The Department will also contact iwi, adjacent landowners and stakeholders after the operation to inform them the operation has been completed successfully, including details of reduction of predator numbers.

Use of 1080 requires the consent of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and permission from the Ministry of Health. These regulations ensure that the toxin is applied safely to safeguard the public and the environment.



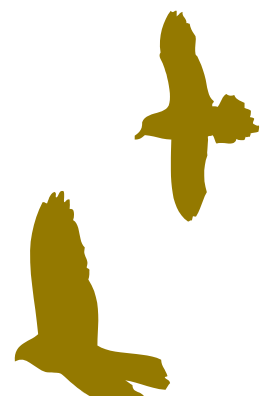
Ship rat eating fantail (piwakawaka) chicks at nest. Photo: Nga Manu Nature Images



Possum and rat eating young birds. Photo: Nga Manu Images.



Long-tailed bat (pekapeka). Photo: DOC image library



## Key Facts: What you need to know

1080 is a manufactured, biodegradable toxin. Its active ingredient, fluoroacetate is salt that occurs naturally in poisonous plants in Australia, Africa and Brazil. It does not accumulate. It is broken down naturally by micro-organisms, fungi and plants into harmless compounds and does not leave permanent residues in soil, water, plants or animals.

DOC complies with all relevant regulations and takes a precautionary approach to the aerial application of biodegradable 1080.

All operations begin with an aerial pre-feed of non-toxic bait to prime possums/rodents to eat the toxic bait that will be applied afterwards.

- The toxic cereal bait pellets contain 0.15% of 1080. They are about 2cm long, cylindrical and dyed green.
- Non-toxic pre-feed cereal pellets are about 2cm long, cylindrical and sandy coloured (not dyed).

## Important information

1080 is poisonous to humans, domestic and game animals. Dogs are highly susceptible. In areas where the toxin has been applied, the risk to dogs will remain until poisoned carcasses have disintegrated, which can be more than six months. Neighbouring landowners are offered muzzles and emetic pills for their dogs.

These risks can be eliminated by following these rules:

- DO NOT touch or eat bait pellets
- WATCH children at all times
- DO NOT EAT animals from this area
- Poison baits or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS keep dogs out of the area or use muzzles

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or carcasses. When signs are removed, this means that you that you can resume normal activities in the area. Please report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs. If in doubt, check with DOC.

## If you suspect poisoning

- Seek medical attention from your local doctor or hospital.
- Contact the National Poisons Centre: 0800 764 766.
- In an emergency dial 111.



## For more information:

### Ecofx Limited

Operational Controller  
Ph: (07) 873 8130

### Department of Conservation

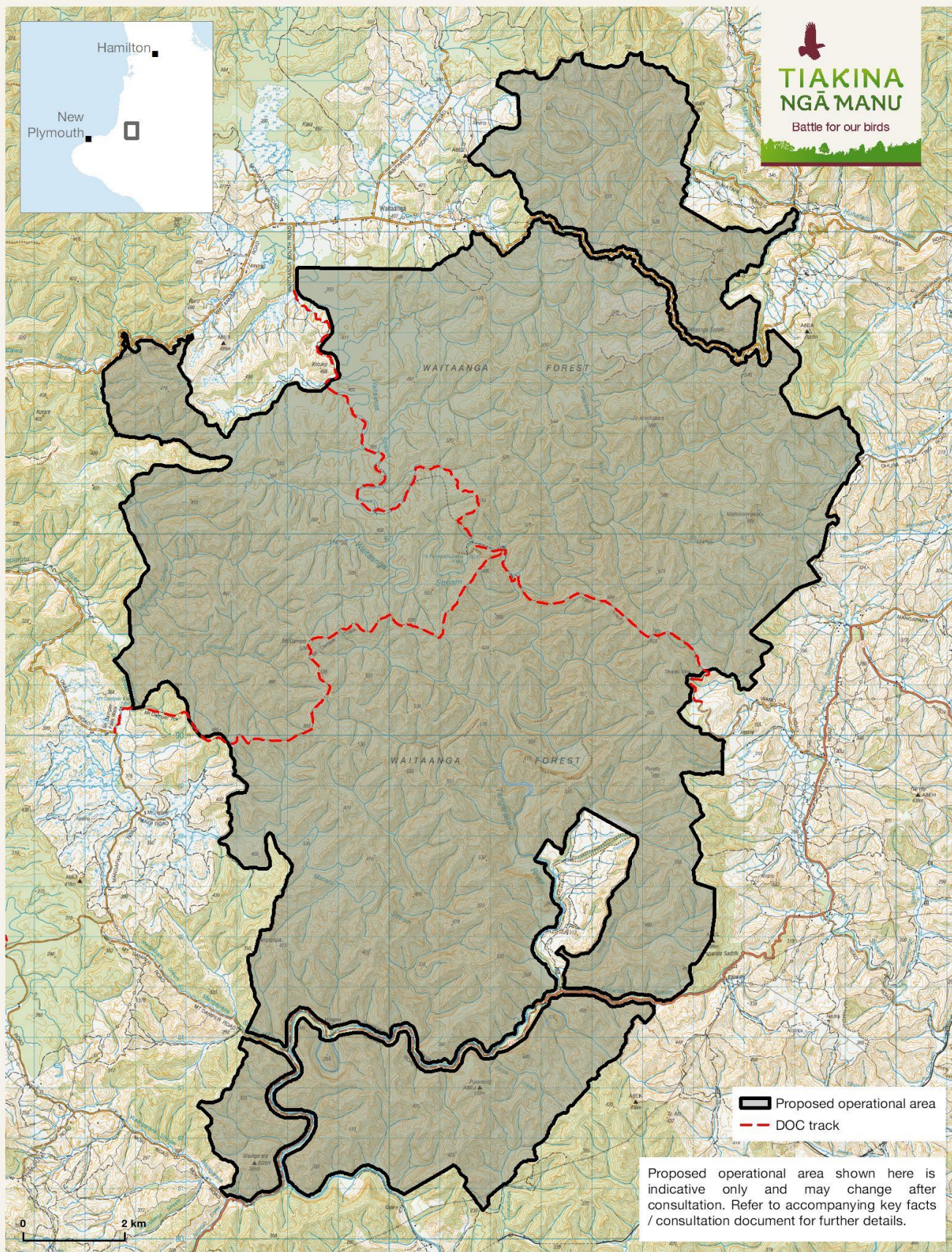
Biodiversity Ranger  
Ph: 06 759 0350  
Email: [newplymouth@doc.govt.nz](mailto:newplymouth@doc.govt.nz)

Ngāmotu/New Plymouth Office  
55A Rimu Street  
New Plymouth

[www.doc.govt.nz/tiakina-nga-manu](http://www.doc.govt.nz/tiakina-nga-manu)

[www.doc.govt.nz/pesticide-summaries](http://www.doc.govt.nz/pesticide-summaries)





Waitaanga Plateau  
Aerial Predator Control 2020  
Proposed operational area: 19,029 ha



NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator  
Not for navigation | 1:95,000  
Crown Copyright Reserved | NZTopo, © Crown  
DOC, Geospatial Services | 3/07/2020

New Zealand Government

Department of Conservation  
Ngāmotu/New Plymouth Office  
PO Box 462  
New Plymouth 4340  
New Zealand

April 2020  
Phone: +64 6 759 0350  
Email: [newplymouth@doc.govt.nz](mailto:newplymouth@doc.govt.nz)  
[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)