

Protecting native taonga species with predator control in Pirongia and Te Kauri Forest Parks

The Department of Conservation's (DOC) Waikato District and Waikato Regional Council plan to reduce possum and rats within Pirongia Forest Park (12,500ha), Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve (1,011ha) and 2,500ha of adjoining privately owned land (see map)

Why we are controlling possums and rats

Pirongia Forest Park and Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve are culturally important areas and nationally important home for species such as kōkako, kereru and North Island Robin. It is also a high-value site for kākā, long-tailed bats and pua o Te Rēinga/rose wood. Predation by rats and possums is severely affecting the kōkako population and ongoing periodic control is required to ensure breeding success of kokako, and other threatened taonga species.



North Island Kokako. Photo: DOC



Long tailed Bat. Photo: DOC

Reducing the number of possums feeding on Mt Pirongia's forest means fewer trees will die and new plants will have a chance to get established. The result – a healthy forest.

A healthy forest improves the stability of the catchment, reducing the amount of soil eroding into the surrounding rivers and streams and sediment in the Kawhia, Aotea and Raglan harbours. A healthy forest also acts like a sponge, 'catching' and temporarily 'absorbing' rain, so less water ends up in rivers and streams when it rains heavily.

How it is happening

Cereal baits containing the toxin 1080 will target possums and rats. The baits will be applied aerially sing

helicopters. Toxic baits are cereal pellets about 3cm long, cylinder shaped and dyed green.

Why we are using this method

We have found baiting using biodegradable 1080 is a highly effective form of possum and rat control. Currently biodegradable 1080 is the only viable tool to suppress predators across large landscapes and in rugged or remote areas of public conservation land.

Timeframe

DOC will contact all neighbours, place warning signs at entrances to public conservation land (including private land included in the operation area) and advertise in newspapers immediately prior to the operation starting.

The operation will commence during first clear weather window between 1 July and 30 September 2020. This will include application of non-toxic pre-feed bait first and then toxic bait pellets (containing 1080) is applied.



Dactylanthus Taylorii. Photo: DOC

Operational planning

The use of 1080 requires permission from the local Public Health Protection office of the Ministry of Health.

DOC assesses and approves all pesticide operations on public conservation land on behalf of and following procedures approved by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). DOC managers approving operations apply conditions to ensure all legal and policy requirements are met, and any potential risks in the operations are managed.

We consulted people most affected by this operation prior to finalising the operational detail and area. This involved considering their concerns and needs regarding the operational details and timing. We have also notified other people using this fact sheet.



North Island Robin. Photo: DOC

Important information

1080 is a manufactured biodegradable toxin. Its salt, fluoroacetate, occurs naturally in poisonous plants in Australia, Africa and Brazil – and in very low concentrations in New Zealand's native pūhā.

1080 is poisonous to humans and domestic animals. Dogs are highly susceptible. Poisoning can occur through eating baits or poisoned animals. The risk to dogs will remain until carcasses have rotted, perhaps for more than six months.

Toxic bait pellets contain 0.15% 1080. They are cylindrical about 3cm long and dyed green.

Non-toxic bait pellets are cylindrical about 3cm long and sandy coloured (not-dyed).

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 or from within the "buffer zone" outside the treatment area boundary. The buffer zone is 200m for rabbits, 1km for hare and possums, and 2 km for deer, goats, pigs and any other animals.
- Remember, poison baits or carcasses are **DEADLY to DOGS**

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about toxins. Warning signs indicate toxin residues may still be present in baits or carcasses. When signs are removed, this means 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

Always contact:

- **Your local doctor**; or
- **Local hospital**; or
- **National Poisons Centre**: 0800 764 766 (urgent calls) or 03 479 7248, or dial 111.

For more information

Please get in touch if you want to be notified again prior to the operation.

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Pirongia Forest Park and Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve including areas of private

