



TIAKINA
NGĀ MANU

Battle for our birds

Consulting on the protection of native taonga species in Moehau Ecological Area.

The Department of Conservation's Whitianga Office plans to reduce possum and rodent numbers in the Northern Coromandel Moehau Ecological Area to prevent further degradation of the forest canopy.

Values

Moehau mountain is sacred to local iwi, its full name, is Te Moengahau-o-Tamatekapua (the windy sleeping place of Tamatekapua). Tamatekapua was the commander of the *Te Arawa* canoe and was buried on the mountain.

Moehau is nationally significant habitat for Coromandel striped gecko, Coromandel kiwi and Archey's frog. It is also an important area for North Island robin/toutouwai, kākā and kērēru.

An amazing variety of unique and rare plants live here sharing a diverse range of habitats from coastal cliffs to sub-alpine grasslands. Moehau contains coastal pōhutukawa, kauri, tawa and podocarp forests, within lowland and montane bioclimatic zones. Moehau is the northern limit for many southern montane species such as mountain toatoa and mountain cedar (pahautea).

Wind and rain sculpture the rugged peak of Moehau that rises steeply from the sea. At 892m it is the highest point on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Why are we proposing to control predators?

High rat numbers have negative impacts through predation of native lizards, eggs, birds, insects, and seeds. They compete with native animals for food and prevent seedling growth.

Possoms browse large amounts of native vegetation which significantly impacts the health of the forest. Pohutakawa, northern rātā, kohekohe, kāmahī and Hall's tōtara are favoured by possums and will die if possums are not periodically controlled to low densities. Possums also raid nests for eggs and chicks and compete with native animals for food. Reducing possum numbers allows native forest habitats to recover.



Archey's Frog. Photo Credit: James Reardon



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Moehau needs a large reduction in possum numbers and periodic control to keep possum browse at low levels. Control of rodent numbers is also needed to ensure native birds' nesting season has the greatest chance of success and that chicks can reach adulthood.

Where are we proposing to control predators?

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is planning predator control over an area of 4500ha (see attached map) in the Moehau Ecological area

Consultation – Have your say.

DOC is continuing to work closely with iwi, hapū affected by this planned predator control. It is also consulting with adjacent landowners and the affected community on the effects of this control plan and we would like to hear your views. We are here to listen to you.

How we are proposing to protect the area

The plan is to aerially apply cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 over the area as shown on the map. Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute the bait along pre-determined and GPS monitored flight paths.

Timeframe

At this stage, the operation is planned to occur between 1 July and 31 August 2021. The operation is weather dependant.

Use of a range of predator control methods to protect species

Aerial application of cereal pellets containing 1080 is the most effective pest 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.

Aerial 1080 operations target possums and rodents. Stoats are also reduced effectively as they eat the targeted rodents and possums.

Predator control works

Research shows that robin/toutouwai and kākā breed more successfully with intensive predator control.

Coromandel kiwi chicks are vulnerable to stoats until they weigh about 1kg. The proposed Moehau aerial 1080 operation will reduce predators ahead of their nesting

season, giving them the best possible chance for chicks to reach adulthood.

Monitoring results for species at one site generally hold true for other areas. For more monitoring results see:



Kērēru. Photo Credit: Liz Whitwell

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/proof-that-1080-is-saving-our-species/>

Planning

DOC engages and works closely with iwi and hapū for all predator control operations. The Department also consults with stakeholders, affected landowners and communities.

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

A notification fact sheet will be distributed closer to the time to describe the results of the consultation, any changes to the boundary plan, and a more precise timeframe.

Also, our contractor EcoFX Ltd will contact all neighbours, place a notice in the local newspaper and put up warning signs at entrances to public conservation land immediately prior to the operation starting.

DOC's Whitianga Office staff will contact iwi, adjacent landowners, and stakeholders to inform them that the operation has been completed, including providing information on the reduction of predators following the control. Whenever possible, the Department will also

provide outcome monitoring information for key taonga native species for this area.,.

The use of 1080 requires consent from the local Public Health Unit.

DOC assesses vertebrate predator control operations that use a toxin on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). DOC staff and their contractors follow procedures approved by the EPA. These regulations ensure that the toxin is applied to safeguard the public and the environment.

Key facts - What you need to know

1080 is a manufactured biodegradable toxin. Its active ingredient, fluoroacetate is a salt occurring naturally in poisonous plants in Australia, Brazil, and Africa. 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.

The Department of Conservation complies with all relevant regulations and takes a precautionary approach to the aerial application of biodegradable 1080 toxin.

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

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

Managing the risk

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 carcasses have disintegrated, which can be more than six months.

These risks can be eliminated by following these rules:

DO NOT touch or eat the bait.

WATCH children at all times.

DO NOT EAT animals from this area.

Toxic baits and carcasses are **DEADLY to DOGS**.

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. These warning signs indicate pesticide residues may be still present in baits and animals. When signs are removed this means you can resume normal activities in the area.



North Island Robin. Photo credit: Liz Whitwell

For more information

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Moehau Ecological Area – Proposed application area. This plan is indicative and may change subject to the consultation phase.

