

# Consulting on the protection of native taonga species in the Moki and Mākino Conservation Areas

The Department of Conservation's (DOC) Ngāmotu/New Plymouth Office plans to reduce possum, rat and stoat numbers to protect North Island brown kiwi, pekapeka, and forest canopy species from local extinction in the Moki Mākino area.

## Values

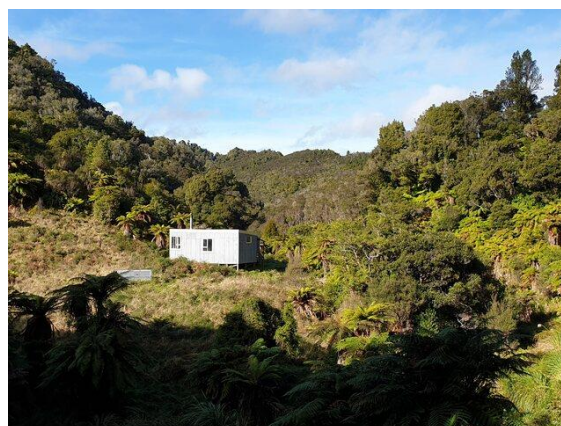
The Moki and Mākino Conservation Area is a large tract of forest extending across North Taranaki. It is dominated by tawa and kāmahī forest and is home to taonga such as North Island brown kiwi, yellow-crowned kākārīki, and pekapeka (long and short-tailed bats).

The ancient ngāhere, cleanses and protects the quality of the water that flows through the region and retains the health of the forest for all inhabitants and beyond. The terrain of the area is steep hill country characteristic of North Taranaki.

## Why we are controlling possums and rodents

Possums browse the canopy and damage the integrity of the forest. Northern rātā, kamahi and other plants are favoured by possums and the canopies of these trees are in danger of collapse. These predators must be controlled to allow the native forest to regenerate and flourish to ensure the survival of the natural inhabitants - the native birds, bats, lizards and invertebrates.

Rats and stoats eat birds' eggs and prey on chicks and bats. This predation severely impacts the ability of these taonga species to survive.



Rerekapa hut in Moki Conservation Area Photo: Tamsen Walker

Controlling predators allows our native species to breed and reach adulthood.

Kiwi are long lived and slow breeding. Stoat control is known to improve kiwi survival rates. The decline of the NI brown kiwi population without control is likely to be between 2-3% per year. Without pest control, kiwi chick survival is about 6%, largely due to predation by stoats.

## Where are we proposing to control predators?

DOC is planning predator control over an area of 10,272ha (see attached map) in the Moki and Mākino Conservation Areas.

## Consultation – Have your say

DOC is continuing to consult closely with local iwi Te rūnanga o Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Mutunga, on this planned operation. 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.

DOC staff from the Ngāmotu/New Plymouth Office or our contractor EcoFX Limited, would like to contact you at a convenient time to discuss the proposed operation; how it affects you, and what we can do to mitigate these effects.

## How we are proposing to protect the area

The plan is to aerially apply cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 over the area (see map below). Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute bait along pre-determined and monitored flight paths.

## Use of a range of predator control methods to protect species

Aerial application of cereal pellets containing 1080 is the most effective control method over large areas. It is the only viable method in large, remote, and rugged areas. 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 possums and rodents. Stoats are also reduced effectively as they eat rodents/possums.

## Time frame

At this stage, this operation is planned to occur during the winter of 2021. The operation is weather dependent.

## Planning

DOC engages and works closely with iwi, for all predator control. DOC also consults with key stakeholders and affected landowners.

Following feedback from this consultation, there will be decisions on what changes can be made to the



North Island brown kiwi are found in the Moki Makino Photo: Andrew Walmsley

operational plan to mitigate the effects of the operation on you.

DOC or its contractors will provide an update to confirm the outcomes of the consultation and any resulting changes to the operational boundary plan, and a more precise timeframe.

Also, the contractor EcoFX Limited will contact all neighbours, advertise in the local newspaper and place warning signs at entrances to public conservation land immediately prior to the operation starting.

DOC will contact iwi, landowners and affected stakeholders and the local community after the operation to inform them that the operation has been completed successfully and provide predator reduction results. Whenever possible DOC will also provide iwi and affected parties with updates on the positive outcomes for native species following this control

Use of 1080 requires permission 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 follow procedures approved by the EPA. These regulations ensure the toxin is applied safely 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 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.

The Department of Conservation 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 2 cm long, cylindrical and dyed green.
- Non-toxic pre-feed cereal pellets are about 2 cm long, cylindrical and sandy coloured (not-dyed).



Pekepeka (long-tailed bat) found in Moki and Mākino forests. Photo: Colin O'Donnell

## Managing 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 poisoned carcasses have disintegrated, which can be more than six months. These risks can be eliminated by following these rules:

**DO NOT** touch 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.

## For more information

Please contact:

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Or

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



Map of proposed predator control of 10,272 in the Moki and Mākino Conservation Areas.  
 The boundary is indicative and may change subject to consultation.

