



TIAKINA
NGĀ MANU

Battle for our birds

Protection of native taonga species in Papakai Ecological Areas.

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

Values

The Papakai Ecological Area is a nationally significant habitat for Coromandel striped gecko, Coromandel kiwi and Archey's frog. It is also an important area for kākā and kererū.

A rich variety of unique and rare plants live in this conservation area, it includes lowland podocarp to sub-alpine forests of kauri, tawa and northern rātā. The Manaia Kauri sanctuary is located at the northern end of the Papakai Ecological Area

Wind and rain sculpture the rugged peaks of Papakai and Maumaupaki that rises steeply to 822 metres.

Why are we proposing to control predators?

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

Possoms browse large amounts of native vegetation significantly impacting the health of the forest. Northern rātā, kohekohe, kāmahi 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.



Rata Photo Credit: Liz Whitwell

Papakai 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 chicks can reach adulthood.

Where are we proposing to control predators?

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is planning predator control over an area of 10690ha (see attached map) in the Papakai Ecological area.



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

How we are proposing to protect the area

The plan is to aerially apply cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 over the area shown on the map. Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute the bait long 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 kereru and kākā breed more successfully with intensive predator control.

Coromandel kiwi chicks are vulnerable to stoats until they weigh about 1kg. The proposed Papakai 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.

Planning

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

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 the toxin is applied to safeguard the public and the environment.

Without predator control:

Only **5%** of kiwi chicks hatched in the wild will make it until they are old enough to breed – their 4th birthday.

With predator control:

Up to **60%** of kiwi chicks hatched in the wild will survive to breeding age.

North Island Brown Kiwi
DOC Protecting taonga species booklet 2020

The infographic features a background image of a North Island Brown Kiwi. It contains two rows of kiwi chick icons. The top row, under 'Without predator control', shows 10 icons, with 9 crossed out with a red 'X', leaving only 1. The bottom row, under 'With predator control', shows 10 icons, with 4 crossed out with a red 'X', leaving 6. The text is in white and yellow against a dark green background.

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.

DOC 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 2 cm in diameter, cylindrical and dyed green.
- Non-toxic pre-feed cereal pellets are about 2 cm 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.



Kererū. Photo credit: Liz Whitwell

For more information

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Papakai Ecological Area – Planned predator control application area. This plan is indicative and may change subject to the consultation phase.

