TIAKINA NGĀ MANU
Battle for our birds

Consultation for the protection of native taonga species with predator control in Hauturu

Waikato Regional Council (the Council) and the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Maniapoto office plan to reduce possum numbers to protect native species from local extinction in in the Hauturu-Awaora area (11,199 ha).

This area has significant cultural values for the Maniapoto and Tainui iwi. Threatened native species for the area include the bush falcon karearea *(Falco novaeseelandiae)* and the endemic rock hebe (*Veronica scopulorum).* The rock hebe is only found on the steep and rugged limestone bluffs of the Hauturu-Awaroa landscape. The Hauturu-Awaroa landscape forms the catchment for Lake Koraha which is the most ecological significant lake for the Waikato and nationally is recognised as the second most significant for its ecological condition.

Why we are controlling possums

Possum numbers are significantly high for the area. Monitoring shows possums have reached levels threatening bird and plant populations.

Predation of eggs and browsing by possums causes threatened native species like the falcon and rock hebe to decline. In some cases our most important vulnerable native taonga face local extinction.

In Hauturu-Awaora, the Council and DOC, are planning to carry out predator control to protect the rock hebe and the catchment of Lake Koraha covering more than 11,199 ha (see attached map). This will give the rock hebe a chance to survive from heavy possum browse, sustain breading bush falcon pairs and protect the integrity of the Lake Koraha catchment.

Hauturu landscape Photo Credit: Waikato Regional Council

Reducing the number of possums browsing the Hauturu-Awaora bushland means fewer trees will die and new plants will have a chance to establish. 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. 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.

Waikato Regional Council

Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government

Predator control works

Massey University's Institute of Natural Resource collected data from 87 falcon nests. They found no adverse impacts caused from 1080 and the falcon population increased, with 71% chicks fledging after three years of predator control.

Consultation – Have your say.

Waikato Regional Council is consulting closely with Maniapoto and Tainui iwi, hapū, whānau. We are also consulting with affected landowners, key stakeholders and the community.

The Council is consulting on the effects of this planned predator control operation and would like your views. We are interested in understanding how you consider the proposed operation could impact you.

EcoFX has been assigned by Council to carry out consultation with landowners and other affected parties. EcoFX 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 planning to protect the area

Cereal pellets containing biodegradable 1080 would be applied aerially over the area. Helicopters with calibrated buckets would distribute bait along pre-determined and monitored flight paths.

With permission from neighbouring landowners the surrounding pasture margins and farmland will receive ground-based control. This will involve cereal pellets in bait stations containing Brodifacoum or Cholecalciferol and Diphacinone along with Potassium cyanide (Feratox pills) and Cholecalciferol (Feracol) in biobags.

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 remote, rugged terrain. Ground-based methods are effective in smaller more accessible areas, however the number of possums, can overwhelm ground-based control 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 possums and rodents.

Time frame

At this stage, this operation is planned to occur between the 1st of April and 30th July 2021. The operation is weather dependent, and you will be kept informed for specific dates.

Flowering rock Hebe. Photo Credit: Bruce D. Clarkson

Planning

The Council and DOC engage and work closely with iwi and hapū for all predator control operations. The Council and EcoFX will also consult with key stakeholders, affected landowners and affected communities.

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

A notification fact sheet will be distributed closer to the time to confirm any changes to the boundary plan and a more precise timeframe.

Also, EcoFX will contact all neighbours, place a notice in the Waitomo News and Waikato Times newspapers. Warning signs will be installed at entrances to public

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conservation land and private land immediately prior to the operation starting.

The Council will contact iwi, landowners and stakeholders after the operation to inform them that the operation has been completed and provide details of reduction of predator numbers. Whenever possible, Council will also update iwi, affected landowners, stakeholders and the local community about the conservation outcomes for the area resulting from this predator 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) on PCL. Council is running the operation and will follow all 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 a salt occurring 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 Council 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 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).

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

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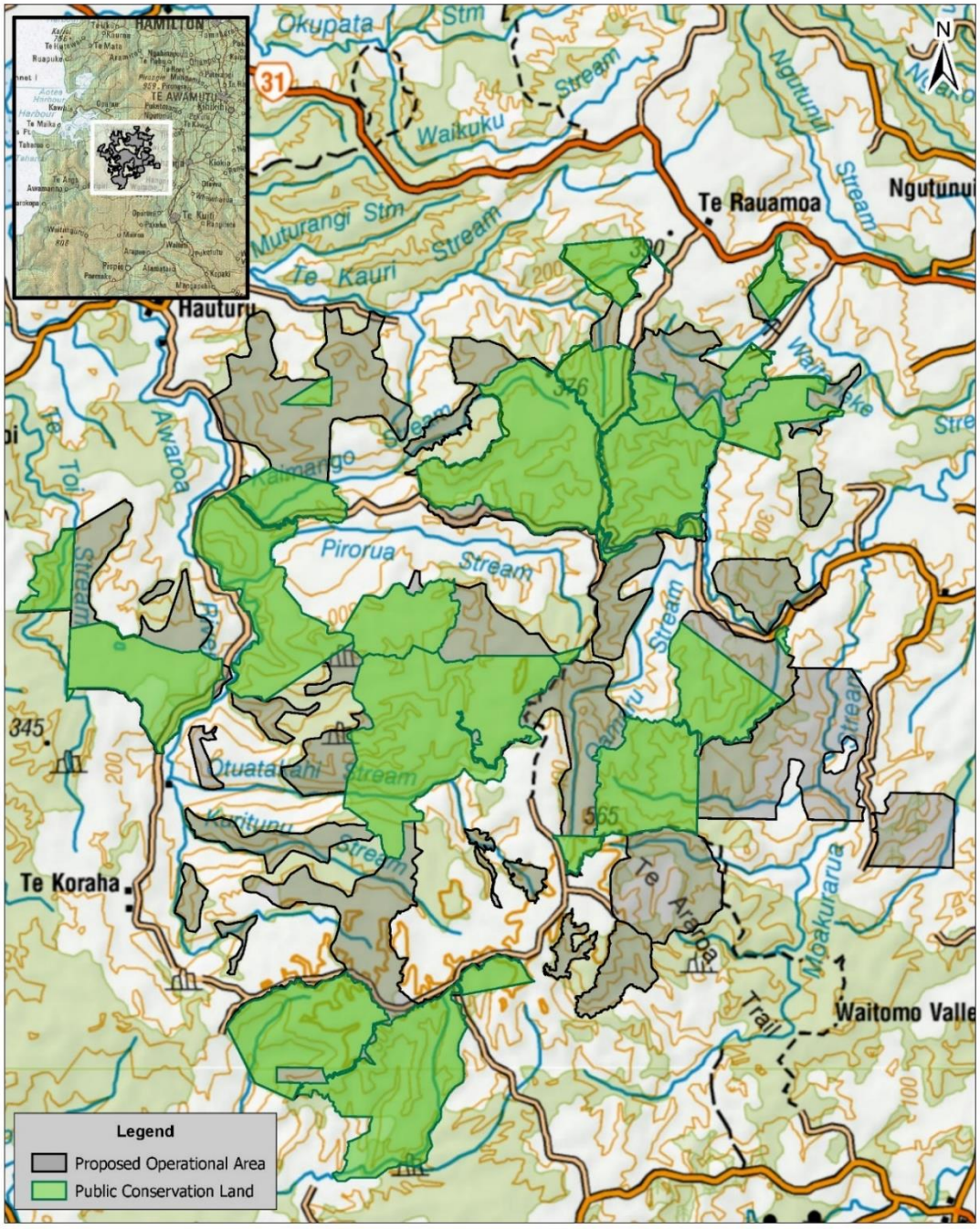
Hauturu Priority Possum Control Area – Planned predator control application area. This plan is indicative and may change subject to consultation and boundary checks.



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Proposed Aerial Operation

Hauturu - Awaora, Ngutunui and Honikiwi

0 1 2 3 4 km

Scale at A4
= 1:

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