



TIAKINA
NGĀ MANU

Battle for our birds

Protecting native taonga species with predator control in Moehau Ecological Area.

The Department of Conservation's Whitianga Office plans to reduce possum and rodent numbers over 4,600ha 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 kēreru.

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 controlling possums and rats?

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.

Possums 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.

How it is happening

Cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 will be aerially applied over the area as shown on the map. Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute the bait long pre-determined and GPS monitored flight paths.

Why are we using this method?

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.

Timeframe

The Department of Conservation (DOC) will contact all neighbours and place warning signs immediately prior to the operation starting.

At this stage, the operation is planned to occur between 1 May and 30 June 2022. The operation is weather dependant.

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:

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



Kēreū. Photo Credit: Liz Whitwell

Planning

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

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

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.

If you suspect poisoning

Contact:

- [Your local doctor](#); or
- [Local hospital](#); or
- [National Poisons Centre](#): 0800 764 766 (urgent calls) or 03 479 7248 (non-urgent and general enquiries) or dial 111.



North Island Robin. Photo credit: Liz Whitwell

For more information

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