

Consulting on protecting native taonga species in Pouiatoa and Taramoukou

The Department of Conservation's (DOC) Ngāmotu/New Plymouth office plans to reduce possum, rat and stoat numbers to protect taonga species in Pouiatoa and Taramoukou Conservation Areas.

Why we are controlling possums and rats

The National Predator Control Programme is DOC's ongoing campaign to protect at-risk native species using aerial 1080 predator control. This campaign is pivotal in strengthening ecosystems through the reduction of devastating pest species populations, allowing vulnerable native flora and fauna to revive and be enjoyed for generations to come.

Pouiatoa Conservation Area is a stronghold for various native bird species inhabiting North Island Western brown kiwi, North Island kōkako, as well as pekapeka (long-tailed bats). Years of ongoing predator control from local community groups in addition to previous 1080 operations, has ensured the continuity of these taonga species. Pouiatoa is of significance to local iwi Ngāti Maru and Ngāti Mutunga.

Taramoukou Conservation Area is a culturally significant site for local iwi (Ngāti Mutunga, Te Atiawa). The Taramoukou ecosystem contains the largest kohekohe dominant forest in the Taranaki, as well as one of Taranaki's most distinctive wetlands, containing strong populations of mātātā (fernbird) and a remnant North Island western brown kiwi population.

Both areas are inhabited by species such as toutouwai (North Island robin), pōpokotea (whitehead), tītipounamu (rifleman), miromiro (tomtit), and kārearea (NZ Falcon) among others. Predation and competition from possums, rats, and mustelids threaten the survival of these birds, and the plants in these forests.



NI kōkako Photo credit: David Cook

Pest control works

Aerial application of 1080 pellets is the most effective control method over large areas. It is also often the only viable method in remote and rugged terrain.

Biodegradable 1080 pellets will be applied aerially over the 6,113ha area of the Pouiatoua and Taramoukou Conservation Areas (see map attached) by experienced contractors EcoFX Limited. Helicopters with calibrated buckets will distribute the bait along pre-determined flight paths.

Have your say

DOC will consult with local iwi in the area for this operation. Contractors EcoFX will consult 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.

Timeframe

We intend to commence pre-feeding with non-toxic bait from August 2023. Application of the 1080 will occur in the nearest weather window but no earlier than five days after pre-feed.

All operations are weather dependant. You will be notified no less than two weeks prior to commencement of the operation. Signage will also be placed at road ends and access points to the blocks prior to bait application.

Planning

DOC engages and works closely with iwi for all predator control. EcoFX will provide consultation with key stakeholders and affected landowners for this operation.

Following feedback from this consultation, there will be decisions on what adjustments can be made to the operational plan, mitigating effects of the operation on you.



NI western brown kiwi Photo credit: Neil Hutton

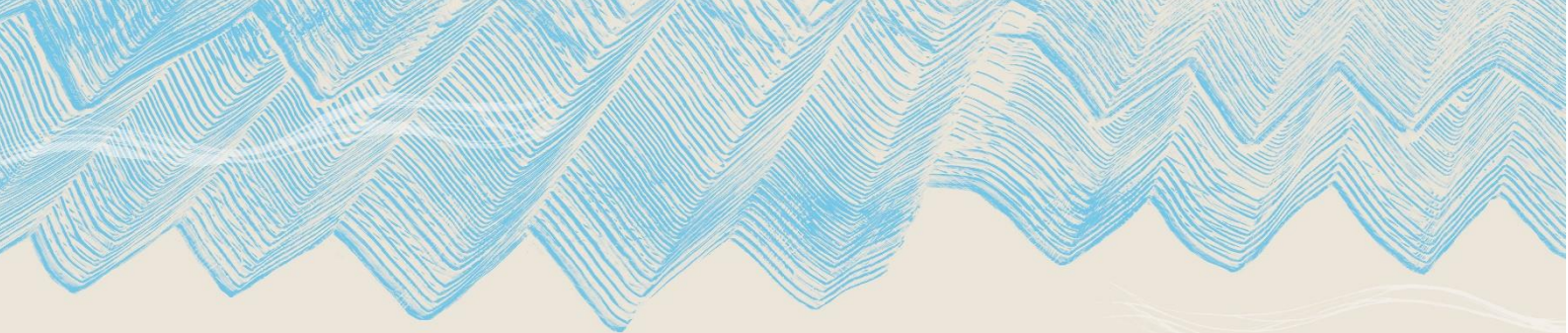
Iwi, adjacent landowners, and stakeholders will be contacted after the operation to inform them the operation has been completed successfully, including details of reduction of predator numbers.

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 a naturally produced salt found in poisonous plants throughout Australia, Africa, and Brazil. Fluoroacetate does not accumulate and is naturally broken down by micro-organisms, fungi, and plants into harmless compounds, meaning no permanent residues remain in soil, waterways, plants, or animals.



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

- The non-toxic pre-feed pellets are approximately 2 cm long, cylindrical, and sandy coloured (not dyed).
- Toxic cereal bait pellets contain 0.15% of 1080. They are approximately 2 cm long, cylindrical, and dyed green.

Managing risk

1080 is poisonous to humans, game, and domestic 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 take over 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

Signage will remain in the area until all traces of toxin have dissolved, with removal of signage indicating it is safe to resume standard activities in the area. If unsure, contact your local DOC office.

For more information

Please contact:

Department of Conservation

Biodiversity Ranger

Ngāmotu /New Plymouth Office

55A Rimu Street

New Plymouth

Email: newplymouth@doc.govt.nz

Phone: 06 759 0350

Or

EcoFX

Email: admin@ecofx.co.nz

Phone: 07 873 8130

Map of proposed predator control in Pouiatoa Taramoukou

This map shows the area proposed for pest control. The boundaries may change subject to consultation and other operational planning requirements.

