

# Consulting on the protection of native species in the Hutiwai, Mohakatino, and Waitaanga conservation areas

The Department of Conservation (DOC) wants to reduce possum, rat, and stoat numbers to protect native species

## Native wildlife needs protection here

Native species are under threat from rats, stoats, and possums. The National Predator Control Programme is DOC's ongoing campaign to protect at-risk native species by controlling introduced predators. This campaign is pivotal in strengthening ecosystems through the reduction of devastating pest species populations, helping vulnerable native flora and fauna to revive and be enjoyed for generations to come.

Without protection, we risk losing the unique natural heritage and biodiversity within the Hutiwai, Mohakatino, and Waitaanga Conservation Areas. These areas are home to a wide array of native flora and fauna species over a vast area that extends across North Taranaki and into Waikato and Manawatū-Whanganui.

Dominated by tawa, kamahi, and beech trees, these forests provide habitat for many native animals including North Island brown kiwi, pekapeka (long and short-tailed bats) whio, and recently rediscovered kōkako.

## The plan to control introduced predators

To protect native species, our team in Ngāmotu/New Plymouth is planning to reduce predator numbers across 55,563 hectares of the forest.

The most effective tool to control predators over large areas is bait pellets containing sodium fluoroacetate (1080). Helicopters distribute bait across the forest along pre-determined and monitored flight paths. This is the only way to control possums, rats, and stoats across vast, remote, and rugged landscapes.

Ground-based trapping and bait stations are effective in smaller more accessible areas, however the number of predators can overwhelm trapping networks.



Kōkako

## Monitoring native species

Sustained predator control can achieve an increase in breeding success for birds, can reduce competition for food sources, and limit pressure on tree canopies from possum browsing.

Kōkako were rediscovered at Waitaanga in early 2023, seen for the first time in over 20 years. The population will be closely monitored pre and post breeding season annually, with the success being gauged through fledgling survival.

A small bait station and trapping network has been set up in Waitaanga to provide some protection for the rediscovered population kōkako but aerial 1080 will be crucial to population increase.

Read the kōkako discovery story:

[www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2023-media-releases/call-of-the-kokako-signals-conservation-success/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2023-media-releases/call-of-the-kokako-signals-conservation-success/)

## Key facts about 1080

1080 is a manufactured, biodegradable toxin. Its active ingredient, fluoroacetate, is found in poisonous plants in Australia, Africa, and Brazil. It is also found at lower levels in our native plants.

1080 bait is broken down naturally in the environment 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 application of 1080.

Operations begin with the distribution of pre-feed non-toxic bait to prepare possums/rodents to eat the toxic bait that will be applied afterwards.

Learn more about why we use 1080 to control introduced predators.

[www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080](http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080)

## Proposed timeframe

Predator control operations occur when monitoring shows predators have reached levels that threaten the populations of native species. Operations are weather dependent.

The operation in Hutiwai, Waitaanga, and Mohakatino Conservation Areas is planned from August 2024. The operation is likely to be run in two phases, with Waitaanga being treated first, followed by Hutiwai/Mohakatino.

## Have your say

DOC and contractor EcoFX are consulting with iwi and key stakeholders including adjacent landowners for this predator control operation. We aim to understand people's views and answer any questions they may have.

The DOC team at Ngāmotu/New Plymouth or our contractor EcoFX would like to contact you to discuss the proposed operation. This includes how you think it could affect you and your wellbeing, native flora and fauna, natural resources, and your ability to protect, manage, and use these resources.

As part of this consultation process, we will consider what we can do to mitigate any effects.



North Island western brown kiwi  
Photo credit: Neil Hutton

## Consultation next steps

Your feedback during consultation will help guide decisions about the operational plan.

DOC or our contractor will update you about the outcomes of the consultation and any changes to the treatment boundary plan. This update will be in the form of a notification fact sheet, and it will include a more precise timeframe for the operation.

Use of 1080 requires permission from the Ministry of Health. DOC is delegated authority by the Environmental Protection Agency to decide applications for permission to use 1080 on land administered or managed by DOC. DOC ensures that all legal and policy requirements are met, and that any potential risks of the operation are managed.

## Map of planned predator control area

The map on the next page shows the planned area of 55,563 ha for predator control. The boundaries may change subject to consultation and other operational planning requirements.

## Managing risk

1080 is poisonous to humans, domestic animals, and game. In areas where the toxin has been applied, dogs are highly at risk until poisoned carcasses have disintegrated. This takes four-to-eight months or longer. Seek veterinary advice for suspected poisoning of domestic animals.

### Risks can be eliminated by following these rules:

**DO NOT** touch bait

**WATCH** children at all times

**DO NOT EAT** animals from this area or within the buffer zone outside the treatment boundary.

The standard buffer zone is 2 km for deer and pigs, 200 m for rabbits, and 1 km for hares, tahr, wallabies and possums.

### Poison baits or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. These signs indicate pesticide residues may be still present in baits and poisoned carcasses. When signs are removed this means you can resume normal activities in the area. Always report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs.

### If you suspect poisoning, please contact:

- Your local doctor or hospital
- The National Poisons Centre: 0800 764 766 (urgent calls) or 03 479 7248 or dial 111
- Seek veterinary advice for suspected poisoning of domestic animals

## For more information

### Please contact:

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Phone:(07) 873 8130

[www.ecofx.co.nz](http://www.ecofx.co.nz)

### Visit the DOC website:

See more information about DOC's National Predator Control Programme

[www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/national-predator-control-programme](http://www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/national-predator-control-programme)

Learn more about why we use 1080 to control introduced predators.

[www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080](http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080)

See operational updates and detailed maps of predator control on public conservation land

[www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/pesticide-summaries](http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/pesticide-summaries)

See updates about track access and safety

[www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/alerts](http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/alerts)

Learn more about Predator Free 2050

[www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050](http://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050)

