

Notification about predator control in Warawara Forest

To protect native species, the Department of Conservation (DOC) is going to reduce possum, and rat numbers in Warawara Forest.

Why we are controlling introduced predators

Warawara Forest is a unique habitat, with endangered plants and animals including kauri snails, kūkupa, long-tailed bats and kiwi. Warawara also holds the last remaining population of tītīpounamu / rifleman in Te Tai Tokerau. Tītīpounamu are one of only two surviving species of the ancient New Zealand wren.

Introduced predators like rats, feral cats, possums, stoats and weasels are severely harming the mauri/health of Warawara Forest. Controlling these predators reduces the damage to native plants, birds, snails, lizards and insects. It promotes forest recovery and reduces possum migration from public conservation land to private land.

In 2015, an aerial predator control operation was delivered. We saw rat numbers plummet, rātā flowering for the first time in years, kūkupa flying in numbers and the overall health of the forest increase significantly. To maintain a healthy forest and help native species to grow, ongoing predator control is needed.

How are we going to achieve this

The safest and most effective method we have to control introduced predators over large areas is to use biodegradable cereal pellets containing 1080. This bait targets rodents and possums. Stoats are also controlled through secondary poisoning as they feed on the carcasses of the dead rodents.

Helicopters will safely and precisely distribute bait across 7,082 hectares of the forest along pre-determined and monitored flight paths. This is the only viable method to control introduced predators in Warawara Forest due to the vast and rugged terrain.

Through sustained predator control using 1080, there is a big increase in breeding success for native birds, their food source is more abundant, and the forest canopy is healthier.



Tītīpounamu / rifleman
Photo by Bianca Maddox

Consultation and consent outcome

This operation has been approved by the Warawara Komiti Kaitiaki/Warawara Guardians Committee. The committee includes representatives from the 10 marae in the area, Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa and DOC.

DOC has also consulted with other key stakeholders including landowners adjacent to the treatment area. This involved discussing the operational plan and considering ways to mitigate any concerns.

DOC is delegated the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to decide applications for permission to use 1080 on land administered or managed by DOC. DOC is obtaining the required permission from the Ministry of Health.

Warawara Whakaora Ake

This work is part of Warawara Whakaora Ake - the Warawara Restoration Project which aims to protect and enhance the mauri/health of the forest through coordinated pest control. The partners involved include Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa, Warawara Komiti Kaitiaki, DOC, Northland Regional Council, and Reconnecting Northland.

Timeframe

The operation is planned for the first clear weather window from June 2024. The timing is weather dependent.

This operation begins with the distribution of non-toxic pre-feed bait pellets. This prepares possums and rodents to eat the toxic bait (dyed green) that is applied afterwards. Both baits are about 16 mm in diameter and cylindrical shaped.

Managing risk

1080 is poisonous to humans, domestic and game animals. 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.



1080 pellets

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

Map of predator control area within Warawara Forest

This map shows the 7,082 ha area we are controlling possums, rats, and stoats to protect native species. It is indicative because the boundaries may change subject to a boundary check.

Next steps

Adjoining landowners and other stakeholders will be notified and there will be a public notice in the local newspaper/s. There will also be warning signs placed at entrances to the treatment area immediately prior to the operation.

After the operation, DOC will contact iwi, hapū, and stakeholders about the results of the operation. We also aim to share insights about the outcomes for native species overtime.



Warawara Forest

For more information

Please contact:

The Operational planner

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OR: EcoFX Aerial Operations Manager

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Visit the DOC website:

See more information about DOC's National Predator Control Programme

www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/national-predator-control-programme

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

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

Learn more about why we use 1080 to control introduced predators

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080

