Consulting on the protection of native species in Moehau

The Department of Conservation (DOC) wants to reduce rodents, possums, and stoats to protect native species

Native wildlife needs protection here

Native species are under threat from rodents, stoats and possums. Without protection, we risk losing the unique natural heritage and biodiversity on Moehau mountain and surrounds.

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 is buried on the mountain.

Moehau is a nationally significant habitat for unique native species like Coromandel striped gecko, Coromandel kiwi and Archey's frog. It is also an important area for North Island robin/toutouwai, kākā and kererū.

The area supports a diverse range of indigenous bird species and rare and unique plants. The area spans a diverse range of habitat varying from coastal cliffs to sub-alpine grasslands. Moehau forests are made up of coastal pōhutukawa, kauri, tawa and podocarps, within the lowland and mountain zones. Moehau is the northern limit for many southern montane species such as mountain toatoa and mountain cedar (pahautea). At its peak, Moehau rises steeply from the sea to 892m, sculptured by wind and rain to create the rugged top of the Coromandel Peninsula.

The plan to control introduced predators

To protect native species, our team in Coromandel is planning to reduce predator numbers across 4,674 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 rodents, possums 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



Mount Moehau native forest. Photo: Ben Gordon

Moehau currently has a broad stoat trapping network covering much of the north to southeast side of the mountain. Some of these trap lines also run to Coromandel township. However they only cover a small portion of the larger area that needs protection. The trapping network is managed by local groups, community, contractors and DOC.

This is part of DOC's National Predator Control Programme. We are protecting the remaining populations of threatened native species while tools continue to be developed to eradicate rodents, possums, and stoats across New Zealand.

Monitoring native species

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

Research shows that robin and kākā breed more successfully with intensive predator control.

Coromandel kiwi chicks are vulnerable to stoats until they weigh about 1kg. The proposed Moehau predator control operation using 1080 will reduce predators ahead of the native bird nesting season to give vulnerable chicks a better chance at survival.



Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

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 nontoxic 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-ofcontrol/1080

Proposed timeframe

Predator control operations are done when monitoring shows predators have reached levels that threaten the populations of native species. Operations are weather dependent. At this stage, the operation in Moehau is planned to occur between 1 July and 30 November 2025.

Have your say

DOC consults with iwi, hapū and key stakeholders including adjacent landowners for predator control operations where 1080 is the proposed method. We aim to understand people's views and answer any questions they may have.

Eco FX has been contracted to help manage the Moehau predator control operation.

The DOC team and Eco FX will contact you to discuss the proposed operation.

We want to understand how you think it could affect the following:

- You and your wellbeing.
- Native flora and fauna.
- Natural resources.
- 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. This may include considerations like adjusting the proposed operational boundaries or time of year.



Archey's frog. Photo: Ben Gordon



Coromandel striped gecko. Photo: Liz Whitwell

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.

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. 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

Map of planned predator control area within Moehau

The map on the next page shows the planned area of 4,674 hectares for predator control.

For more information

Please contact:

Operational planner, Whitianga Office, Department of Conservation, PO Box 276, Whitianga

Phone: (07) 869 5639

Email: <u>coromandeldistrict@doc.govt.nz</u> OR **Eco FX**, PO Box 248, Otorohanga Phone: (07) 873 8130 Email: <u>ecofx-office-nz@rentokil-initial.com</u>

Visit the DOC website:

See more information about DOC's National Predator Control Programme.

www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/national-predator-controlprogramme

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

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

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

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/pesticidesummaries

See updates about track access and safety

www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-beforeyou-go/alerts

Learn more about Predator Free 2050

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050





Moehau Aerial Predator Control 2025

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa New Zealand Government

Atawbai Proposed treatment area: 4,674 ha NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator | Not for navigation | 1:70,000 | Crown Copyright Reserved | Basemap from: LINZ CC-BY, © Crown | DOC, Geospatial Services | 29/01/2025