

# Consulting on the protection of native species in Pirongia Forest Park and Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve

**The Department of Conservation (DOC) and Waikato Regional Council (WRC) wants to reduce rats and possums to protect native species**

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## Native wildlife needs protection here

Taonga species are under threat from rats, and possums. Without protection, we risk losing the unique natural heritage and biodiversity within our Pirongia and Te Kauri forests.

A healthy forest is vital for maintaining the stability of the catchment, reducing the amount of soil eroding into the surrounding rivers and streams and sediment entering Kawhia, Aotea and Raglan Harbours.

These forests have huge cultural importance including sites of mahinga kai and wāhi tapu and provide a home to many nationally important species. It is a high-value site for kākā, pekapeka/long-tailed bats, pua o Te Rēinga/wood rose (*Dactylanthus taylorii*), kōkako, and kauri.

Predation by rats and possums can severely affect kōkako and ongoing periodic predator control is required to ensure breeding success of these birds, and other threatened taonga species.

Past predator control operations have been hugely successful at reducing rat and possum numbers.



Juvenile Kōkako. Photo: Paul Jansen

## The plan to control introduced predators

This work 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 possums, rats and stoats across New Zealand.

To protect native species on Pirongia maunga and Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve, our team in the Waikato is planning to reduce predator numbers across 16,952 ha of the forest as well as some surrounding private land as agreed to by the landowners.

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 tracked 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. Aerial control in kauri areas also reduces the need for boots on the ground that might spread kauri dieback.

## 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.

Surveys have revealed huge growth in kōkako numbers at Mt Pirongia thanks to the massive efforts of volunteers from the Pirongia Te Aroaro ō Kahu Restoration Society to control rats, possums and mustelids each year within the Mangakarā & Sainsbury Management Areas

Pirongia now has at least 24 breeding pairs – an increase from 16 pairs in 2022.

Kōkako have now moved outside the 1,300ha management area and are attempting to breed in areas without protection from predators. The use of aerial 1080 across 16,952ha of forest will support Kōkako to successfully fledge their chicks on the maunga.



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



Waikato  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato*

## 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 condition 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 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 Pirongia Forest Park is planned to occur between August and October 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.

The Waikato DOC team or our contractor EcoFX would like to contact you to discuss the proposed operation.

We want to understand 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 of the aerial control method that has been chosen for these two sites.



Pekapeka long-tailed bat. Photo: Colin O'Donnell

## 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 to avoid harvesting from 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 Pirongia Forest Park and Te Kauri Park Scenic Reserve

The map on the next page shows the planned area of 16,952 ha for predator control.

## For more information

### Please contact:

Department of Conservation - Waikato District Office  
Operational Planner  
Ph: 0800 275 362  
E: [waikato@doc.govt.nz](mailto:waikato@doc.govt.nz)

Waikato Regional Council  
Pest Animals Lead  
Ph: 0800 800 401  
E: [ppca@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:ppca@waikatoregion.govt.nz)

### EcoFX

Operation Planner  
Ph: 07 873 8130

E: [Ecofx-office-nz@rentokil-initial.com](mailto:Ecofx-office-nz@rentokil-initial.com)

### 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)

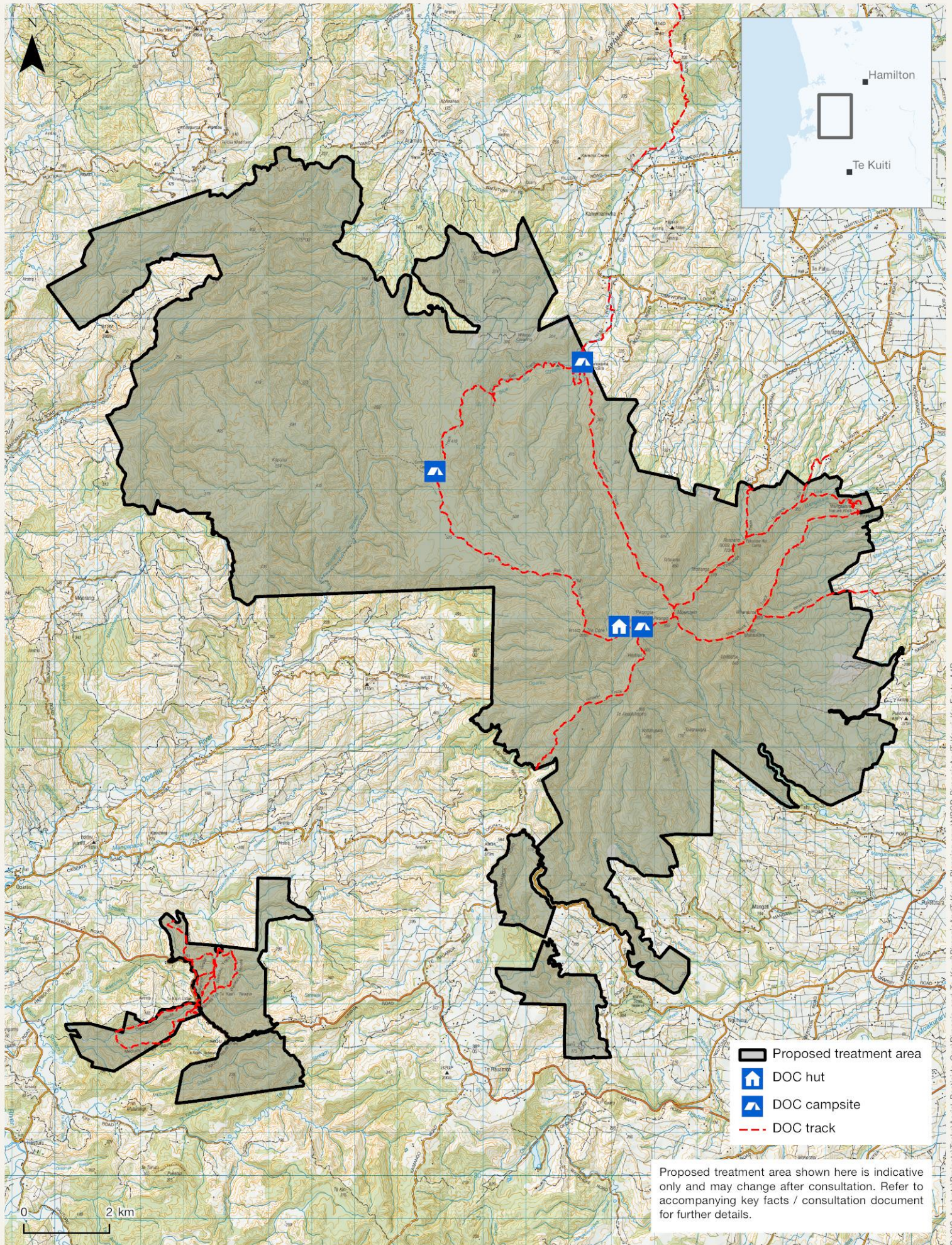
See updates about track access and safety

[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)





Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai



## Pirongia and Te Kauri

### Aerial Predator Control 2025

Proposed treatment area: 16,952 ha

**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government