

Protecting native species with predator control in Punakaiki 2024

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

Native wildlife needs protection here

Native species are under threat from rats, stoats and possums. Without protection, we risk losing the unique natural heritage and biodiversity within the Punakaiki block. DOC is undertaking a pest control operation over approximately 42,000 hectares of conservation land in the Western Paparoa area between Barrytown and Charleston. This pest control is needed primarily to protect great spotted kiwi but also kākā, whio and giant snails in this area from increased predator numbers. This area last had large scale predator control 2021.

The plan to control introduced predators

To protect native species, our team in the Buller is planning to reduce predator numbers across approximately 42,000 hectares of forest.

The most effective tool to control predators over large areas is bait pellets containing sodium fluoroacetate (1080). 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.



Great spotted kiwi. Photo: Rod Morris

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.

DOC's species monitoring shows 9 out of 10 kiwi chicks die before they reach breeding age if effective predator control is not undertaken. A 2017 study in the Northern Paparoa Range found that 100% of great spotted kiwi chicks were killed by stoats. A study of great spotted kiwi chick survival in Kahurangi National Park has shown that aerial predator control operations significantly increase kiwi chick survival up to 70%. There is higher kiwi chick survival for two seasons after these operations.

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

Our plan for the Punakaiki

The most effective tool we have to control predators over large, remote areas is biodegradable cereal pellets containing 1080.

Bait pellets are distributed across the forest by helicopters using technology that enables precise and accurate placement to best target predators.

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

This will support stoat trapping and other conservation work by DOC and community groups in the Punakaiki.



Paparoa Ranges

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 Punakaiki is planned to occur between August and October 2024 .

Consultation and permissions

DOC and VCS have consulted with iwi partners and people most affected by the operation prior to finalising operational detail and area. This involved listening to and considering their concerns and needs regarding the operational details and timing.

Use of 1080 requires permission from the Ministry of Health. DOC is delegated the power of 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 the Paparoa Range.

The map on the next page shows the planned area of approximately 42,000 hectares for predator control.

For more information

Please contact:

Vector Control Services

Ph: 0508 141 268

Email: info@vcs.net.nz

AND/OR

Operational planner DOC Kawatiri/Westport Office

Ph: 03 788 8008

Email: paparoavc@doc.govt.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

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

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

See updates about track access and safety

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



Proposed treatment area shown here is indicative only and may change after consultation. Refer to accompanying key facts / consultation document for further details.