



*Te Roroa*

*Te Hei! Te roroa o te tangata, rite tonu ki te kahikatea!*

## TE TOA WHENUA POSSUM CONTROL

Te Toa Whenua (900ha) is a land restoration project based in the Lower Waipoua Valley. With enormous rata, kohekohe, puriri as well as threatened animals present within this area there is a need to establish an ongoing programme of possum control to protect these native species. The bait station will be over both the Te Toa Whenua Project area and forest in parts of the adjoining Te Tarehu/Waipoua Forest Conservation Park. This will give a total possum control area of approximately 1800 hectares.

### BIODIVERSITY THREATS

The two main browsing threats to the forest plant community comes from possums and goats with additional pressure of habitat disturbance from pigs. In addition, this area of the Waipoua has both young and ancient Kauri, and there are confirmed areas of kauri dieback within the possum control area.

- New Zealand's native plants are particularly vulnerable to damage from browsing and the combination of possums damaging the upper canopy and goats (and pigs) browsing the understorey vegetation will eventually result in severe deterioration.
- This part of the Waipoua has not had effective possum control since 2011, where control was achieved largely by aerial 1080, with some ground control in the outside edges.
- This part of the Waipoua is within the area of ground pig control that is completed using local contractors. Goat control has been sustained here for a few decades, and goat impact is now extremely isolated.
- High rat numbers will be a factor in the depletion or local extinction of small forest bird species and will be having a major impact on invertebrate communities such as pupurangi (snails). The proposed ground possum control will not control rats.
- Rats, cats, stoats and ferrets are an ongoing threat any nesting birds. The entire area of proposed possum control is within the predator trapping network managed by Kaitiaki Kiwi. This network adjoins a network of predator traps managed by the Department of Conservation, to give a total of about 4,500 hectares of ground predator control. This network is not effective at managing rats but is effective at managing stoats.
- The proposed ground possum control has been planned in great detail to generally avoid areas of kauri, and with best-practise mitigation protocols in place to manage the risk of kauri dieback spread. These measures have been put together by the Te Roroa Kauri Dieback Tactical Team.



### COMMUNITY PEST CONTROL AGREEMENT

A Community Pest Control Agreement (CPCA) at Te Toa Whenua has been established between Te Roroa and the Northland Regional Council with support from the Department of Conservation. The objective of this project is to **reduce possum impact at Te Toa Whenua to allow native flora to recover and regenerate**. Our first focus is to reduce the number of possums in the reserve and maintain them at low levels.

## FIRST STAGE OF FOREST RESTORATION – POSSUM CONTROL

Possum browse impact is currently high within the wider Waipoua forest. There is a large amount of possum sign on trees and runs from the reserve to adjoining areas. What is required is an initial knockdown through ground control followed by the establishment of bait stations at 100m intervals along transects that are 400m apart to do regular operations and maintain possum numbers at low densities.

Cyanide in the form of Feratox will be the toxin we use for possum control.



Feratox Bags (With nontoxic prefeed paste surrounding it). Photo Connovations

## HOW IS FERATOX USED?

- Feratox is the trade name for an encapsulated form of cyanide that is used for possum control in New Zealand.
- Feratox is dispensed to possums from bait bags or placed directly into a non-toxic feed paste or pellets.
- Bait bags contain one to two Feratox pellets (47.5% cyanide - 475g/kg) which are incorporated within the non-toxic feed paste. This is dyed green.
- To release the cyanide poison, possums have to chew hard enough on the Feratox pellet to crack it in their mouth, releasing the cyanide. It releases a small amount of gas, just enough to kill one 6kg possum.
- ground level.
- Feratox pellets that get dislodged to the ground by rats will perish and break down in the soil once wet.



Bait Station, Prefeed and Feratox Pellets (Green). Photo Connovations.

## WHY DO WE USE CYANIDE?

Cyanide has been used for possum control in New Zealand since the mid-1960s for the following reasons:

- It is fast acting – possums become unconscious within one minute and die three to four minutes later
- It is effective for use in high possum density areas
- Baits are small and easy to lay so large areas can be treated by hand
- Possums die on the spot, allowing fur and skin recovery
- There is low risk of secondary poisoning.

Feratox can only be used by Certified Approved Handlers or by persons under their direct control.

Cyanide is a vertebrate toxic agent (hazardous substance) under the Hazardous Substance and New Organisms Act 1996 and the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997. A consent from the Public Health Officer is required to ensure the measure we have taken minimise the risks to the public.

## RISKS TO HUMANS & DOGS

Feratox is very safe to handle and the cyanide within breaks down & disperses rapidly on contact with moisture.

There is very little risk to humans and dogs from Feratox unless several pellets are eaten at once.

As such its possible but very unlikely that a possum killed by Feratox would kill a dog or a pig that fed on the carcass.

It is recommended not to eat pigs or other animals within or around the operational area immediately after the Feratox has gone out. However, the risk is extremely small and this is a precautionary approach only.

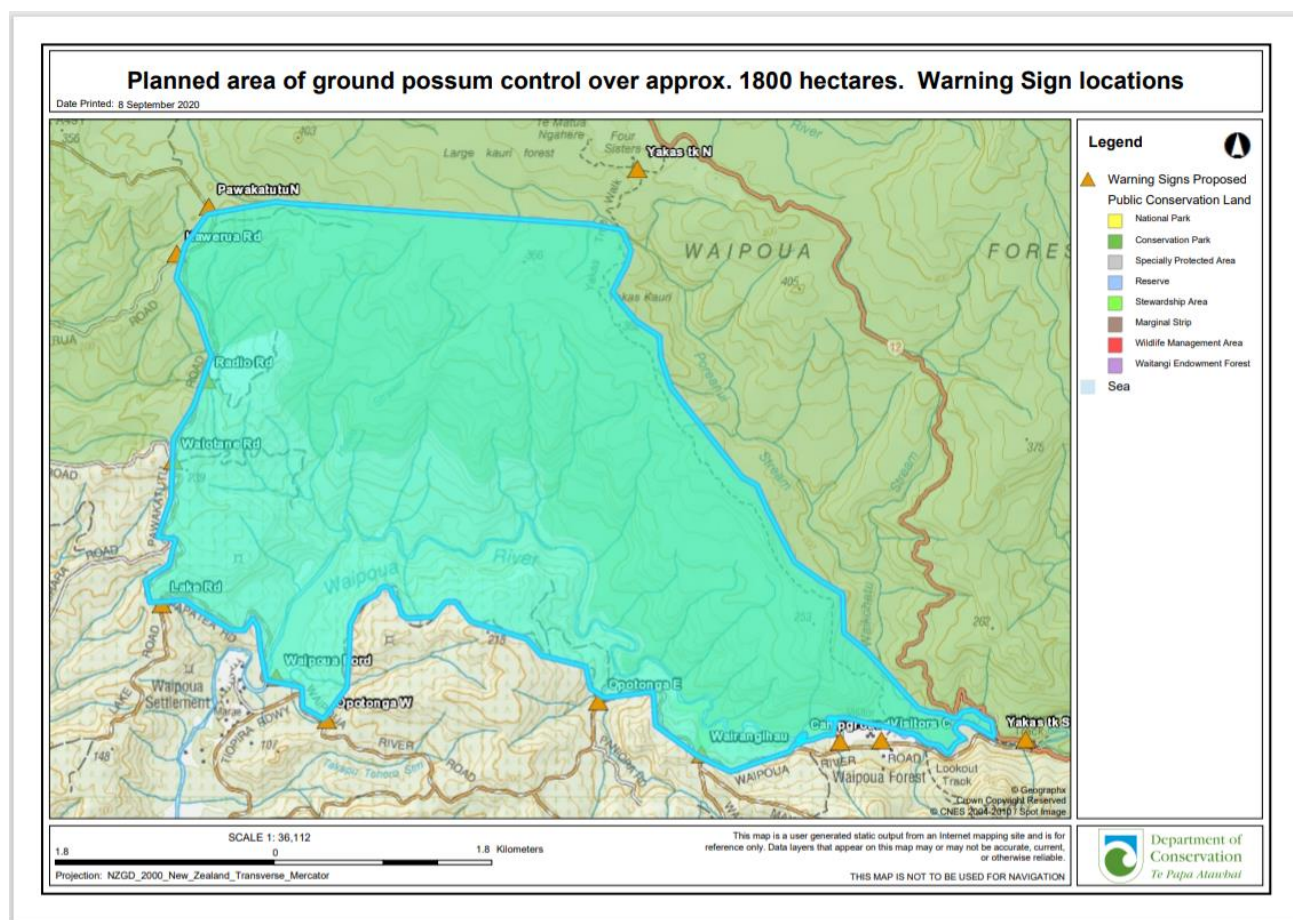
Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When signs are removed, this means that you that you can resume normal activities in the area. Please report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs.

## REMEMBER

- DO NOT touch bait
- WATCH CHILDREN at all times
- As precaution do not eat feral meat from the operational area.
- Remember, poison baits are DEADLY to DOGS & treat carcasses as deadly to dogs.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Courtney Davis (Te Roroa Environs Manager) – 09 439 6443 or email [cdavis@teroroa.iwi.nz](mailto:cdavis@teroroa.iwi.nz)



Map of planned baitstation lines. Baitstations will be placed at least 20m off public walking track

