

# Protect our species in Kahurangi National Park



## Pest control to protect native species from widespread predator plagues

The Department of Conservation will be carrying out aerial pest control over a large area of Kahurangi National Park from 6 May 2019 to protect native species from predator plagues that could decimate their populations.

This pest control is needed to protect the park's whio, rock wren/tuke, kea, kākā, great spotted kiwi, *Powelliphanta* snails, long-tailed bats/pekapeka and other vulnerable native species.

In many forest and tussock areas, very high seeding (known as a mast) in 2019 is providing more food for rodents fuelling rapid rises in their numbers. This in turn leads to increased stoat numbers due to the abundance of rodents to feed on.

Monitoring in Kahurangi National Park has shown escalating rat numbers that could reach plague proportions by late spring if not stopped. The pest control will target rats but will also curb rises in stoat numbers through their eating poisoned rodent carcasses

The aerial 1080 predator control will help protect native birds from predator attacks during their critical breeding season so more adults and chicks can survive to build populations.

## Predator control works

In 2014 and 2016, DOC carried out aerial 1080 predator control over approximately 300,000 hectares of Kahurangi National Park following similar mast events that led to rises in rat numbers. Monitoring showed rodents were reduced to low levels at most sites and stoat plagues were avoided.

Intensive species monitoring from these operations showed significantly higher rock wren and kea nesting success as a result the 1080 predator control. For more information go to <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/proof-that-1080-is-saving-our-species>.



Whio/blue duck Photo: DOC



Rock wren/tuke. Photo: Rod Morris



Great spotted kiwi chick in Kahurangi National Park.  
Photo: Anja McDonald

## What is happening?

DOC has contracted Vector Free Marlborough Ltd (VFML) to manage the Kahurangi aerial 1080 predator control work.

Cereal baits containing biodegradable 1080 pesticide (0.15% or 15 parts 1080 to 10,000 parts of cereal bait) will be applied over approximately 326,000 hectares of the park.

The toxic bait will be sown at a rate of 1.5 kg/ha using 6 gram baits to ensure enough baits are available for control of rats which have relatively small home ranges.

Due to the large size of the Kahurangi operation, the area is divided into four operational blocks. The timing and order of non-toxic and toxic bait application in each block is dependent on there being several days of suitable weather and other factors.

In each block, non-toxic prefeed bait will be aurally applied prior to the aerial application of 1080 bait. This makes rats and possums more likely to eat the 1080 baits.

Ground control using hand-laid 1080 baits may take place in areas where aerial bait application is restricted, for example, around public huts and other facilities.

Public notices informing of the pest control will be placed in local newspapers before the aerial application of toxic bait begins. Notices will be placed in huts and warning signs will be installed at entrances to operational areas. Information can also be found under 'alerts' on the Kahurangi National Park page on the on the DOC website

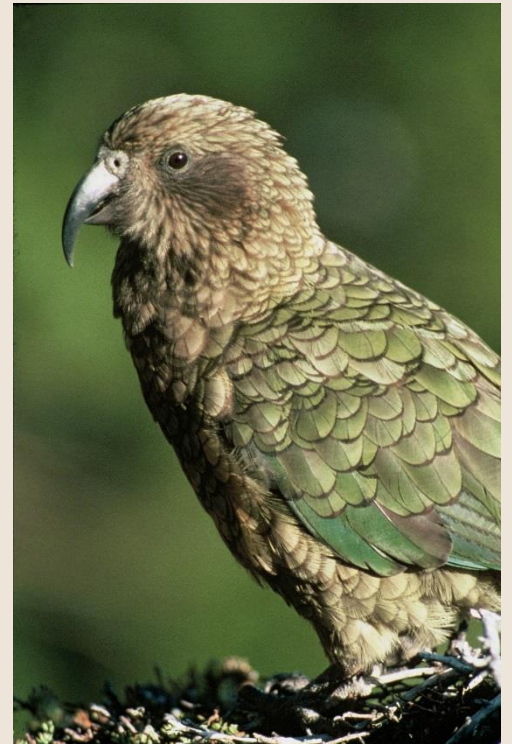
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/nelson-tasman/places/kahurangi-national-park/>.

Recreational hunters should go to the pesticide application web pages for up to date information

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/pesticides/>.

Adjoining landowners will be notified of aerial 1080 bait application immediately before it takes place. Due to there being four operational blocks, some people may receive several notifications as aerial bait application is carried out in each operational block.

Most DOC huts and the area around them will be excluded from the aerial toxic bait distribution. Water supplies will be either unaffected or alternative supplies will be provided at huts until Public Health Permission conditions are met.



Kea. Photo C Rutledge



Kaka. Photo: Leon Berard

## Track and road temporary closures

Immediately before aerial application of toxic bait begins, VFML staff will visit some huts to advise people there of the operation taking place. Tracks will be closed for entry immediately before and during aerial application of 1080 bait in an operational block. Tracks will remain closed until they have been inspected and cleared of baits as much as possible. This is likely to entail tracks being closed from half a day and up to several days at remote sites.

The following roads will be closed during the non-toxic and toxic bait applications:

- Cobb Road between the Cobb power station and Trilobite Hut.
- Wangapeka River Road between Dart River ford and Courthouse Flat.
- McCallums Mill Road from the entrance to Kahurangi National Park to the Oparara area.

Tracks will remain open during the aerial application of non-toxic prefeed bait. People on the tracks should exercise care if a helicopter is applying bait directly overhead.

## Pest control management

Discussions have taken place with neighbouring landowners and others with an interest in the park in finalising the planning for this operation. Public Health Permissions will include conditions to manage public safety. The Environmental Protection Authority and DOC also set stringent procedures and standards that must be met.

## What you need to know

The Department of Conservation complies with all relevant regulations and takes a precautionary approach to the aerial application of pesticides.

- *The 1080 cereal baits are about 2 cm long, cylinder-shaped and are dyed **green**.*
- *Non-toxic pre-feed cereal pellets are about 2 cm long, cylinder-shaped but are **fawn-coloured** (not dyed).*

## Managing risk

Dogs, in particular, are highly susceptible to 1080. The risk to dogs from poisoned carcasses will remain until they have completely rotted, perhaps for more than 6 months.

### Precautionary approach

*Risks can be eliminated by following these simple rules:*

- *DO NOT touch bait*
- *WATCH CHILDREN at all times*
- *DO NOT EAT animals from this area*
- *Poison baits or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS*

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. Warning signs indicate pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When signs are removed, this means you can resume normal activities in the area. Please report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs. If in doubt, check with your local DOC office.

## More information

Vector Free Marlborough Limited

Free phone: 0508 548 008

Email: [communications@vectorfree.co.nz](mailto:communications@vectorfree.co.nz)

Website: <http://www.vectorfree.co.nz>

## What to do if you suspect poisoning

Contact emergency services: 111

National Poisons Centre: 0800 764 766

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Also see [doc.govt.nz/battleforourbirds](http://doc.govt.nz/battleforourbirds)

