

Aorere (Kahurangi National Park) Predator Control Operation for Iconic Species Protection.

To protect species such as native land snails (*Powelliphanta*), whio and kiwi in north-west Kahurangi National Park, the Department of Conservation (DOC), intends to carry out predator control over approximately 50,000 hectares of public conservation land. Vector Free Marlborough Limited (VFML) has been engaged by DOC to manage this operation.

Description of the area

The treatment area comprises approximately 50,000 hectares of Kahurangi National Park and North-west Nelson Forest Park between the coast at Kahurangi Point/Big Bay and the inclusion of most of the Aorere River in the east. The southern boundary is at the Domett Range. A section of the Heaphy Track between Brown Hut and approximately 3 km west of James Mackay Hut is included.

This area holds seven species of Nationally Endangered *Powelliphanta* landsnails, and is a stronghold for great spotted kiwi/roaroa. Also present are whio/blue duck, kea and kaka. A small population of translocated takahē are present, mostly in the Goulard Downs area.

Why we are doing predator control.

A heavy seeding (mast) occurred in north-west Nelson region during 2019. This natural event, that should benefit native species, instead caused predators such as rodents and stoats to increase dramatically in numbers.

A large predator control operation over 300,000 hectares of Kahurangi National Park was planned for 2019/20 to control these predators but the Aorere portion of that operation needed to be postponed until 2020.

Predator control in the Aorere treatment area from mid-2020 will reduce the high stoat numbers caused by heavy seed-fall during 2019, and provide protection for species such as kea, whio and kiwi during the 2020/21 nesting period.

Predator control works

DOC has carried out similar mast response operations in Kahurangi National Park in 2014 and 2016. Monitoring of kea and whio showed significant increases in the nesting success of both species following 1080 control. There are similar results from elsewhere for kaka, robin, rifleman and for other species also within the Aorere treatment area.

Method of predator control

Ahead of the 2019 operation DOC worked closely with its Treaty Partners on desired outcomes and consulted with stakeholders and the community.

From any time after 20 July 2020 Vector Free Marlborough Ltd will apply baits containing biodegradable 1080 to the treatment area.

A pre-feed of non-toxic baits will occur no less than five days prior to the 1080 operation. This operation will entice the rodents to eat the pellets.

Each phase of the operation is weather dependant and the project may extend over several months.

The toxic baits are in the form of a cylindrical cereal pellet, approximately two centimetres in diameter, with each bait containing 0.15% of Sodium fluoroacetate (1080). Toxic baits are dyed green to deter birds and contain a cinnamon lure to attract rodents.

Non-toxic pre-feed baits are in the form of a cylindrical cereal pellet, approximately two centimetres in diameter and sandy coloured (not-dyed). Prefeed contains a cinnamon lure to attract rodents.

The aerial operation uses calibrated buckets and GIS mapping technology to ensure bait drops in the designated area.

The pesticide is poisonous to humans and domestic animals. Always **remember**:

- **DO NOT** touch or eat the bait
- **WATCH CHILDREN** at all times
- **DO NOT EAT** animals from this area or from within the “buffer zone” outside the treatment area boundary. The buffer zone is 200m for rabbits, 1km for hares, tahr, wallabies and possums, and 2 km for deer, pigs and any other animals.
- Toxic baits and carcasses are **DEADLY to DOGS**

Warning signs will be erected at all main public entry points and at public facilities within the area. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still remain in baits and carcasses, possibly for more than six months. Observe the precautions whenever you see toxin warning signs present.

All walking tracks in the area will be closed immediately before the start of the 1080 operation until inspected and cleared of most baits. Tracks will not be closed for the prefeed operation and advisory signs will be erected immediately before the start. Observe the precautions on these advisory signs.

If you suspect poisoning

Always contact: Your local doctor or local hospital or the **National Poisons Centre: 0800 764 766** (urgent calls) or 03 479 7248, or dial **111**.

For further information, contact the Aorere Operation Controller:

Vector Free Marlborough Limited
PO Box 5171, Springlands, Blenheim 7241
Free phone: 0508 548 008
Email: communications@vectorfree.co.nz

A detailed map of the application area may be viewed at the DOC Takaka Office and Westport Office and also at the Vector Free Marlborough Limited website:

<http://www.vectorfree.co.nz/current-aerial-operations.html>

Visit also: www.doc.govt.nz/tiakina-nga-manu



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