

Consulting on the protection of native species in New Creek

The Department of Conservation (DOC) wants to reduce possums, rats and stoats to protect native species in the New Creek area

Local native wildlife requires safeguarding

Within the south-western reaches of Kahurangi National Park and the neighbouring conservation land lies a rich mix of New Zealand's most well-known, as well as lesser-known plant and animal species.

The New Creek area encompasses a wide range of habitats, extending from exposed alpine environments through diverse beech forests to lowland broadleaf, where towering podocarps and northern rātā are prominent.

Numerous native species within these ecosystems are under threat, and rely on control of possums, rats and stoats for their survival. These include great spotted kiwi/roa, blue duck/whio, kea, kākā and species of Powelliphanta/giant carnivorous snails. Three native mistletoe species are also at risk from possum browse.

The plan to control introduced predators

To protect native species, our team in the Buller district is planning to reduce predator numbers across 68,772ha of the forest.

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 monitored 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.

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.



Powelliphanta species within Kahurangi National Park. Credit: DOC

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.

The largest of our kiwi species, great spotted kiwi/roa (*Apteryx haastii*) live largely at higher altitudes in some South Island national parks, including Kahurangi. Kiwi are doing much better in areas where predators are regularly controlled. Despite their size, chicks are still vulnerable to stoats, particularly during South Island beech mast conditions, which we are currently experiencing. Without intervention, we know kiwi chick survival is at 20% versus 80% with predator control.

Kea live throughout Kahurangi National Park including within New Creek. Between 2009 – 2014, when there was no large-scale predator control, only 2% of nests were successful. In contrast, in the breeding seasons following 1080 operations in 2014 and 2016, an average of 50% of nests produced young kea.

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

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 is planned to occur between 1 October –15 December 2026.

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.

Our contractor Rentokil Rural & Environmental Services would like to contact you to discuss the proposed operation. This includes how you think it could affect the following:

- 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.



Overlooking Kahurangi National Park, from Mount William. Photo:

Consultation next steps

Your feedback during consultation will help guide decisions about the operational plan.

DOC 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 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 New Creek

The map on the next page shows the planned area of 68,772ha for predator control.

For more information

Please contact:

Rentokil Rural & Environmental Services
0508 Possum (03 614 7418)
south-island@rentokilruralenvironmental.co.nz
www.rentokilruralenvironmental.co.nz

OR:

The Department of Conservation
DOC Operational Planner
72 Russell St Westport
Ph:0800 DOCHOT
westport@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

