



TARGET 0

Research and operational news from Predator Free 2050 Limited
QUARTERLY. ISSUE 1. MAY 2019

Field Update

Taranaki

Recent sightings of North Island robins at Pukeiti Gardens are a sign of the impact Towards Predator-Free Taranaki is having *says Project Manager Toby Shanley.*

.....

The project has recently completed the first of two *aerial applications of 1080 in the Kaitake Ranges*, a contractor-led predator knock-down operation across adjacent farmland and the installation of a remotely monitored detection network and virtual barrier system.

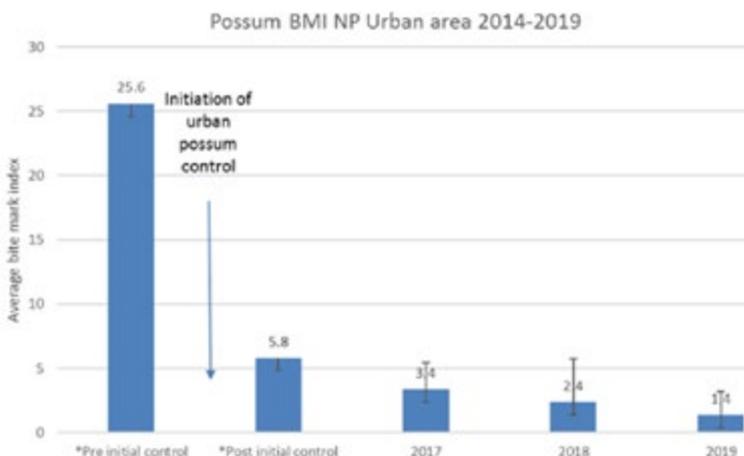
A community engagement programme is encouraging Oakura residents and farmers within the 4,500 ha zero possum area to report sightings to an 0800 number. The campaign has led to over *50 possums being caught in backyards since January.*

.....

Trials of the *NZ Auto Traps AT220 self-setting trap* are continuing.

.....

Monitoring is showing significant decline in urban possum numbers in New Plymouth.



Hawke's Bay



.....

"We're already starting to look beyond Mahia," says Campbell Leckie, Manager of Catchment Services at Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

The *Predator Free Hawke's Bay* team has started putting traps and surveillance cameras out in the first of a dozen phased sectors of the 14,500ha Mahia Peninsula on schedule with their four-year Whakatipu Mahia possum eradication plan.

"Already we are seeing things in the technical, policy and engagement areas that we can improve on and can help reach eradication goals elsewhere in the region," says Campbell.

He spoke on a panel at the recent *Crazy and Ambitious 2 Symposium* arguing Predator Free NZ is more of a reality than a dream.

.....

Whakatipu Mahia is being assisted by *three new cadets* with associations to local iwi Rongomaiwahine and hapū Maungaharuru-Tangitū.

Wellington

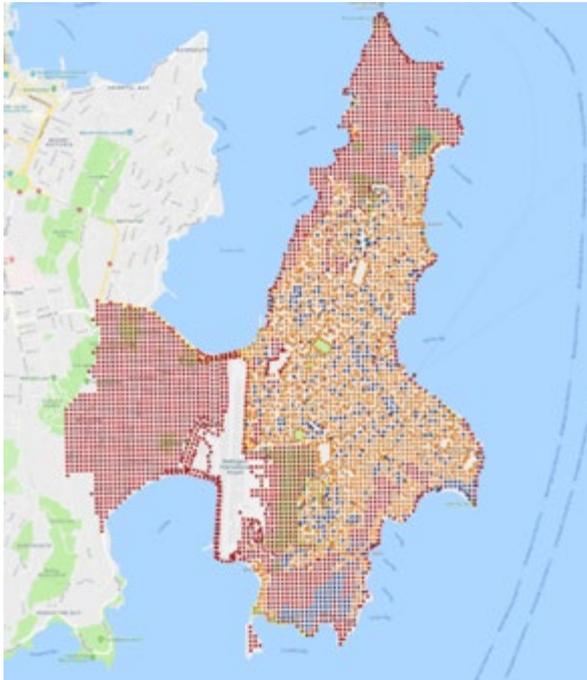
92% of capital city residents support Predator Free Wellington, up from 84% two years ago, a survey released in April has found. 70% of the 1000 respondents indicated they were currently controlling predators in their backyards or in reserves, or have done so in the past.

.....

Infrastructure for the **Miramar Peninsula rat and stoat eradication operation** will be installed in June and July, and by the end of the year the project team will be looking to verify zero rats, stoats and weasels. An operational team of 24 FTEs is being recruited on fixed term contracts to deliver the project.

About 3,000 households will be involved in the Miramar project. Currently the project has obtained 80% of the required individual permissions and needs another 500 households to host a bait station and/or trap on their property to meet the eradication plan target.

Project communications lead Kylie Reeves says using a map on Facebook drew a huge response with more than 50,000 reached, 13,000 people engaged and hundreds of messages from people wanting to contribute.



Orange dots show property permissions gained and blue dots awaiting approval.

Capital Kiwi project leader Paul Ward expects to have traps out across the project's 23,000ha area around Wellington by the end of winter 2019. Eighty stoats have been trapped to date. A monitoring plan capable of verifying eradication is being developed.



A recent **Facebook posted video** about four-wheel drive club support for deploying stoat traps at Te Kopahou, south west of the city, reached over 25,000 people with 11,000+ views.

.....

Dame Kerry Prendergast and Paul Ford (head of comms at TradeMe and founder of NZ cricket fan community The Beige Brigade) recently joined the Capital Kiwi Trust Board.

Waiheke



"So, a fairly daunting task ahead of you Mary ..." was how a recent radio interview started with Te Korowai O Waiheke's freshly appointed Project Director. Mary Frankham told **Waiheke Radio** a "deep respect for community wisdom" is a core motivator for her work.

.....

The management team for the Waiheke project was confirmed in April, with Jenny Holmes appointed as Engagement Manager and Jo Ritchie as Operations Manager. The team will work out of shared office space with donated vehicles from Giltrap Toyota.

.....

Jo Ritchie says Auckland Council's biosecurity GIS team is helping create a 'linear battle map' using roads, tracks, fence lines and habitat boundaries. This will inform logistical planning and help engage the community in designing a 1 trap/6ha network.

Dunedin

The **Predator Free Dunedin** Trust has appointed consultancy Ahika to deliver project management. The funded FTE position will be shared between Brent Rohloff, Mike Thorsen and Rhys Millar.

Mike is an experienced ecologist who will facilitate the work of research partners and assist with eradication planning. Former OSPRI South Island Manager Brent will manage contracts with delivery partners and Rhys will focus on strategy, stakeholder relations and project leadership.

Ahika also manages the project's communications contract, which delivered a **first newsletter** with a video message from Trust chair Marian Hobbs.

.....

Rhys has recently worked with Predator Free 2050 Limited's Louis Nel to develop a financial system that captures contributor spend and in-kind contributions across the complex Dunedin project and helps tracks it against the 2:1 co-funding requirement. This may be applicable for other projects.

.....

On the peninsula, possum residual trap catches have dropped to less than 1% from as high as 30% in 2017. As survivors and male juveniles move out of previously neglected, hard-to-reach areas the project is appealing to the public to report sightings.

Research effort is being put into modelling the potential for reinvasion from urban forest fragments and corridors.

.....



A 'possum aversion fence' made of number 8 wire, rabbit netting and three hot wires caught the attention of ZIP CEO Al Bramley during a recent visit. He was impressed with its performance and is keen to verify its effectiveness through pen trials at ZIP's Lincoln facility.

More Projects coming

Predator Free 2050 Limited received **18 expressions of interest from groups seeking Provincial Growth Funding** for new large landscape projects in the surge regions.

Six projects from Northland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay and West Coast have been invited to submit Requests for Proposals, with new projects expected to be announced later this year.

R&D Update

New products coming

Predator Free 2050 Limited received **63 expressions of interest for Provincial Growth Funding** for improved predator control products, able to be in field use within three years.

Seventeen shortlisted proposals – for ground control devices, lures, species-specific toxins, AI-equipped cameras, drones and remote sensors, and wireless and data platforms – are undergoing further panel assessment, with decisions on the allocation of over \$5m in contestable funds expected next month.

ZIP news

Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) completed the first phase of its predator removal operation in the 12,000 ha Perth River valley in South Westland in April and have published an **update on its website**.

.....

Research by ZIP has found a lean network of lured trail cameras is a highly sensitive method of detection for possums, rats and stoats. Detection devices that provide a food reward appear to become more sensitive over time, as animals return to feed on the lure. ZIP is suggesting detection devices be installed into project areas and lured well ahead of predator removal operations to maximise the likelihood of detecting any surviving individuals.

.....

Pre-feeding rat traps in a virtual barrier may increase catch rates by as much as 50%, initial results of a trial at Bottle Rock suggests. When complete, results will be posted on ZIP's **Findings and Technical Reports web page**.

ZIP capacity strengthened

Predator Free 2050 Limited is supporting ZIP to productionise products for use by other projects.

ZIP's possum leghold trap system and automated lure dispenser are now available for purchase (email products@zip.org.nz). The ZIPinn (rat and stoat trap), and remote reporting system will be available within 12 months.

Predator Free 2050 Limited Science Strategy Manager Prof Dan Tompkins said projects were reliant on new tools and methodologies to meet eradication targets and new funding will also help ZIP meet demand for advice and support.

NAWAC trap testing



Predator Free Wellington recently arranged NAWAC testing of the BT 200 trap on stoats, which passed cleanly with an A rating. The trap is a copy of the DOC 200 available from [National Springs and Wire Products NZ Ltd](#).

.....

Predator Free 2050 Limited and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recently funded Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research to assess the killing performance of the Victor® Professional rat trap for ship and Norway rats, and the Modified Victor stoat and rat trap for Norway rats.

The Victor® Professional rat trap set in a Predator Free NZ wooden tunnel passed the **NAWAC trap-testing criterion** when tested on ship rats but failed for Norway rats.

The Modified Victor stoat and rat trap set in a Predator Free NZ wooden tunnel passed when tested on Norway rats, but the trap's performance should be considered marginal for large Norway rats.

The report recommended that Victor® Professional rat traps or Modified Victor stoat and rat traps in Predator Free NZ wooden tunnels be promoted to individuals and community groups for trapping ship rats.

In areas where Norway rats may be present, the Modified Victor stoat and rat trap was recommended, noting some large rats may survive capture and users should be encouraged to check the trap frequently.

Using DOC series traps, which have higher impact momentum, would increase the probability of killing large Norway rats.

Gene tech outlook



According to a March paper in the *Journal of Ornithology*, which reviewed tools being developed for the Predator Free 2050 programme, “current techniques will probably be inadequate to effect nationwide eradications, and new tools (possibly based on genetic technologies) will probably be required.”

.....

Predator Free 2050 Limited Science Strategy Manager Prof Dan Tompkins sits on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Task Force on Synthetic Biology and Biodiversity Conservation which released **Genetic frontiers for conservation: an assessment of synthetic biology and biodiversity conservation** in May.

The report provides recommendations and guidance regarding the potential positive and negative impacts of synthetic biology on biodiversity conservation.

Data standards coming

Predator Free 2050 Limited hosted a workshop of trapping data platform providers and developers in May as part of a joint effort to publish a shared, open data standard for predator control activities.

Seven platform providers were represented, each with a different emphasis and approach to data collection.

Predator Free 2050 Limited contractor Olivia Rothwell expects to share a draft standard and recommendations for governance and access with conservation users by the end of this year.

Office update

Staff news

Su Sinclair has been appointed as Predator Free 2050 Limited's new Project Support Manager. Su joins us from Auckland Council where she has held roles as a senior ecologist, biodiversity adviser and biosecurity officer. Su also managed the successful 2000ha Hunua Kokako Recovery Project so has good hands on experience of ground-based predator control. She will be the primary point of contact for landscape projects and help manage our growing number of research contracts.

.....

Predator Free 2050 Limited CEO Ed Chignell recently blogged about **how it should be** after visiting Great Barrier Island. The Predator Free 2050 Limited team were hosted by researchers from **Wildlife Management International Limited**, conducting a long term study of the island's important black petrel colony.

.....

Ngai Tahu Senior Environmental Advisor Estelle Leask and Federated Farmers Chair Katie Milne have recently been appointed to the **Predator Free 2050 Limited Board**.

Noted

The Department of Conservation has initiated a community training programme with the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) and plans to offer the course annually in each region.

The **2-day Level III credited course** is aimed at volunteers and land owners who want to learn more about trapping best practice and to prepare a Predator Control Plan.

.....

Plans for the eradication of predators – feral pigs, cats and mice – from **Maukahuka/ Auckland Islands** moved a step closer in May with a partners hui hosted by Ngai Tahu aimed at funders and collaborators. Ta Tipene O'Reagan outlines the challenge in this **video**.

.....

A new report on the **Social, Cultural and Ethical Challenges facing the Predator Free New Zealand** by the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge Bioethics Panel was launched recently. **James Russell discussed its findings on Breakfast TV**.

.....

The Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust has published a **20-year review** of ecological work on Great Barrier Island. One of trust's objectives is to find the most effective, affordable and socially acceptable method of suppressing rats at low to zero levels using a mix of low potency bait and traps.

.....

9Wire is a new WWF programme designed to link environmental innovators with investors and mentors, backed by Ākina, DOC and others. Applications for support close July 8, 2019.

HOLD THESE DATES

19 June 2019

Project lead teleconference

11 Sept 2019

Project lead catch-up meeting

4 Dec 2019

Project lead teleconference

Mar 2020 TBA

Second Project Coordination Workshop



pf2050.co.nz

(09) 217 3172

Level 7
45 Queen Street
Auckland 1010

PO Box 106040
Auckland City 1143