Notification about predator control in Wangapeka

To protect native species, the Department of Conservation (DOC) is going to reduce possums, rats and stoats in the area.

Why we are controlling introduced predators

The Wangapeka area of Kahurangi National Park is home to some of New Zealand's most iconic and lesser known flora and fauna, many of which are endangered or threatened by introduced predators.

The vegetation ranges from the open alpine tops and unique karst landforms of Mt Owen to a variety of beech and lowland broad-leaved forests with large podocarps.

There are many native species in these habitats that are at risk and need protection from introduced predators. These include whio, roroa/great spotted kiwi, kea, kākā, long-tailed bats/pekepeka, Melicytus improcerus and scarlet and red mistletoe.

Recent monitoring results in the area have shown that stoat and rat numbers are high. We need to control them to give native species the best chance to survive and grow, and to ensure the outcomes achieved through previous predator control operations are not lost.

How are we going to achieve this

The safest and most effective method to control introduced predators over large areas is to use biodegradable bait pellets containing 1080. This bait targets rodents and possums. Stoats are also controlled through secondary poisoning as they feed on the carcasses of the dead rodents.

Helicopters will accurately distribute bait across 73,814 ha of the forest along pre-determined and monitored flight paths. This is the safest and most effective way to control predators in the Wangapeka area due to the vast and rugged terrain.

There is a trapping project within the area that aims to reduce stoat predation of whio. However, a trap network alone is not enough to suppress stoats to low enough levels so periodic aerial 1080 treatments are required to allow for an increasing whio population.

DOC will monitor rats and stoats as well as whio before and after the operation.

Whio blue duck. *Photo: Leon Everett*

Consultation and consent outcome

DOC has consulted with hapū, iwi and key stakeholders including landowners adjacent to the treatment area. This involved discussing the operational plan, listening to any concerns and considering ways to mitigate them.

DOC is delegated authority by the Environmental Protection Agency to decide applications for permission to use 1080 on land administered or managed by DOC. Permission has been granted for this operation. DOC has also received the required permission from the Ministry of Health.

Next steps

Adjoining landowners and other stakeholders are being notified and there will be a public notice in the local newspaper. There will also be warning signs placed at entrances to the treatment area immediately prior to the operation.

After the operation, DOC will contact iwi, hapū, and stakeholders about the results of the operation. We also aim to share insights about the outcomes for native species over time.

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Timeframe

The operation is planned for the first clear weather window between 10 February 2025 and 30 September 2025.

This operation begins with the distribution of non-toxic pre-feed bait pellets to prepare possums and rodents to eat the toxic bait (dyed green) that is applied afterwards. Both baits are about 16 mm in diameter and cylindrical shaped.

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.

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 predator control area

The map on the next page shows the confirmed area of 73,814 ha for predator control.

For more information

Please contact:

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Website: www.vectorfree.co.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

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

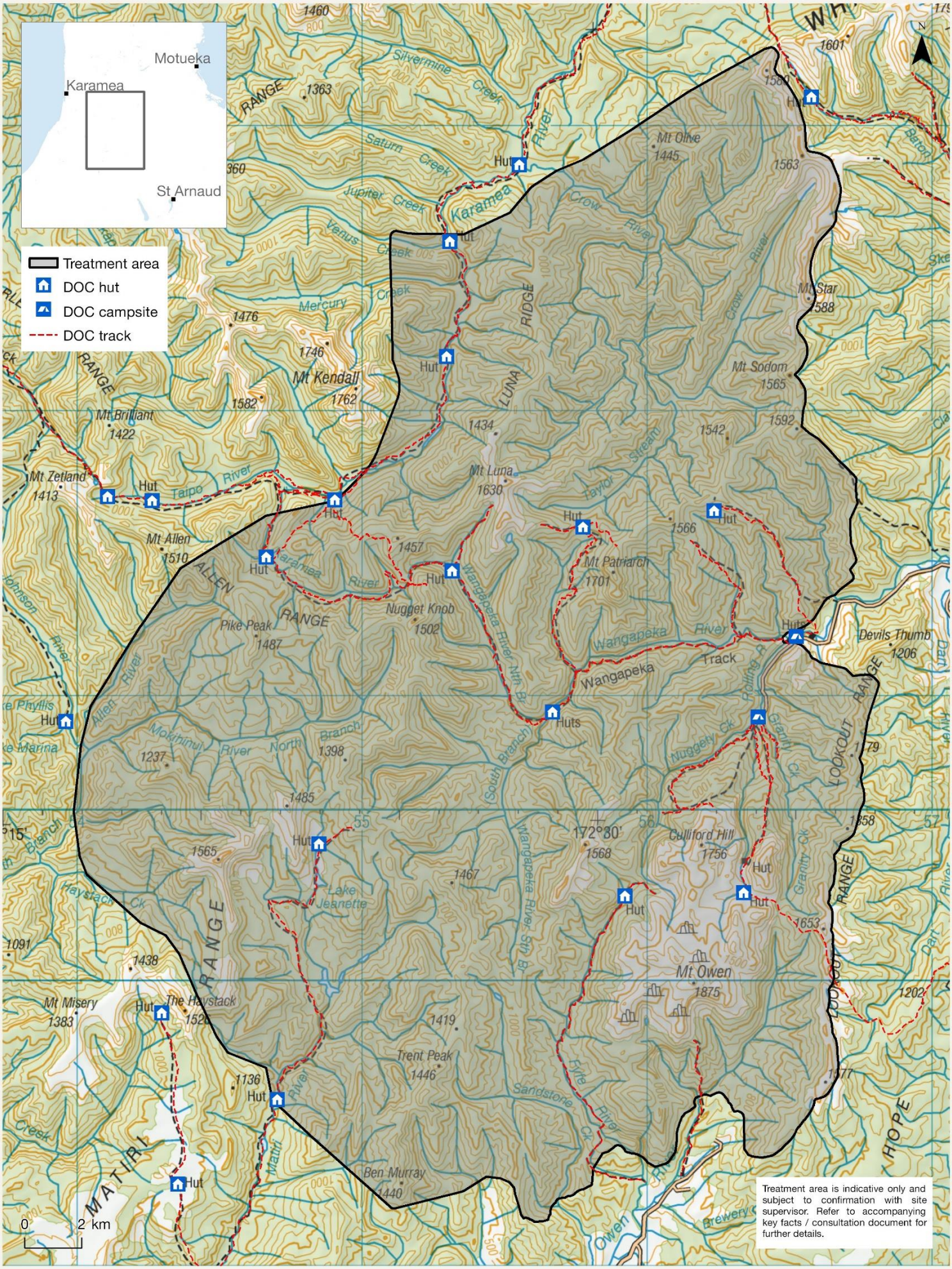
Learn more about why we use 1080 to control introduced predators

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080

Learn more about Predator Free 2050

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050

Wangapeka South Branch. Photo: Leon Everett



Kahurangi Wangapeka

Aerial Predator Control 2025

Treatment area: *73,814 ha*

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawbai

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government