



## 1080 POSSUM CONTROL OPERATION

### Akatarawa Forest

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE

### What’s happening?

This notice is to inform you about a large-scale possum control operation using the controlled vertebrate toxic agent Sodium Monofluoroacetate (1080) in the Akatarawa Forest between June and September 2007, weather dependent.

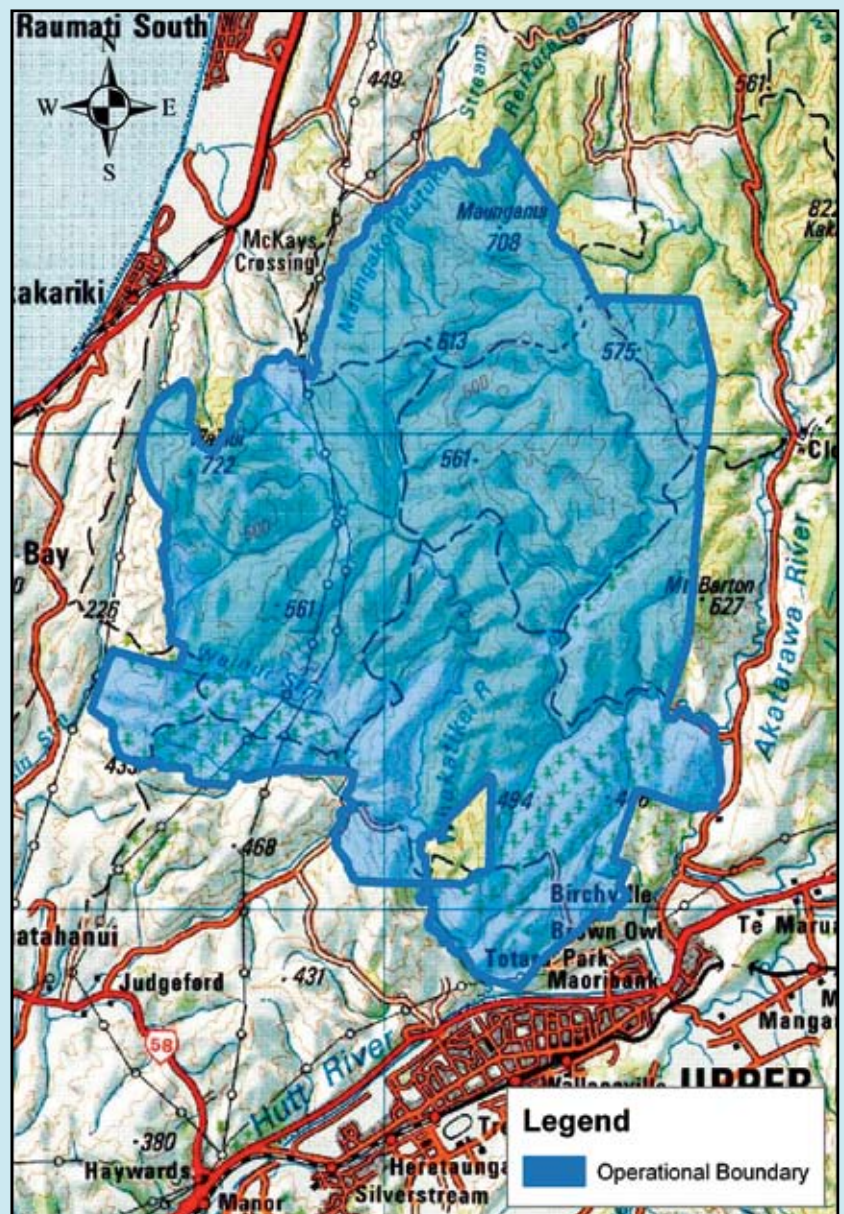
You need to be aware of this information if you live in, or near to, the operation area or intend to visit the area highlighted in the adjacent map. We would also be grateful if you could bring this notice to the attention of anyone that you know who intends to visit the area during the operation period. Signs will be erected, public notices published in newspapers, and information available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz) before the operation commences.

### Why are we doing this?

We need to reduce possum numbers to protect the health of this future water collection area. We also need to protect our economic investment in the 3,000ha plantation forest, part of the overall 15,000ha forest. A healthy forest provides the best land cover for water supply purposes, as it filters out impurities and minimises erosion.

Recent monitoring shows that possum numbers are approaching an unacceptable level. Without control, the high number of introduced possums will have a devastating effect on native vegetation and pine trees. Prolonged possum browsing threatens kamahi and rata forests with collapse.

Possoms also threaten the survival of our native wildlife by eating invertebrates, eating native birds’ eggs such as kereru and kaka, and competing with them for food.



Proposed operation map (subject to final approvals)





Black tree fern destroyed by possums feeding. Photo credit DoC



Possum feeding on Five-finger berries. Photo credit Rod Morris

## How will we do this?

The operation area (approx 15,000ha) will be aerially treated with the controlled vertebrate toxic agent Sodium Monofluoroacetate (1080).

Non-toxic pre-feed cereal pellet bait will be applied initially.

Five to fifteen days later (weather dependent) the area will be aerially sown with 1080 pellet bait.

The bait will be applied at a rate of 2kg/ha by helicopter using a GPS satellite-based navigation system to ensure accurate delivery.

## Why use 1080?

1080 is particularly suited for use in New Zealand because, unlike other countries, there are no large native ground-dwelling mammals that can be affected by its use. Of the available poisons, 1080 is the only one registered to be spread from the air. This makes 1080 a cost-effective tool for possum control over large and remote areas of terrain.

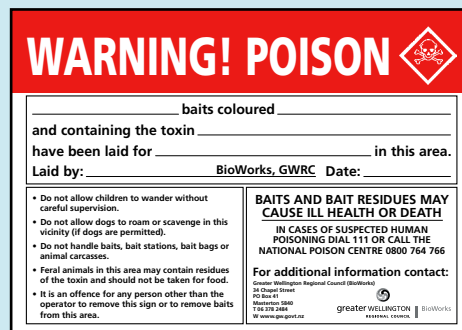
## How do we notify the community?

- this information sheet is provided to all neighbouring property owners
- schools are notified
- local user groups (hunting clubs, tramping clubs, mountain bike clubs, etc.) are notified
- Police, health centres and veterinary clinics are notified
- District and City Councils are notified
- advertising in local newspapers
- local media are notified
- detailed information on our website – [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)

## Safety precautions

Aerial 1080 operations can only proceed under strict Medical Officer of Health requirements and resource consent. 1080 is a controlled substance under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act and can only be applied by licensed operators. Greater Wellington also has its own stringent requirements (set out in standard operating procedures) which must be met.

Public warning signs will be placed at all main access points and signs will remain in place until the operation area is safe.



Sample 1080 warning sign

It is an offence to handle bait or interfere with warning notices. Strictly supervise or keep children away from the operation area. **1080 is extremely toxic to humans.**

If you suspect 1080 has been swallowed, seek medical aid immediately. Symptoms of 1080 poisoning normally appear between thirty minutes and four hours. They include vomiting, shaking, involuntary hyper-extension of the limbs, convulsions, and finally cardiac and respiratory collapse.

All 1080 bait is **green**. Non-toxic pre-feed bait is **fawn/tan**.

**IN CASE OF ACCIDENTAL POISONING DIAL 111**



1080 bait





Healthy Black tree fern. Photo credit DoC

We strongly recommend keeping dogs and cats away from areas where bait is being used. Dogs and cats are susceptible to poisoning from eating bait and can die from secondary poisoning from eating possum carcasses.

## Precautions for dogs

**1080 is extremely toxic to dogs.** Dogs are ten times more susceptible to 1080 poison than any other animal. Always keep dogs under strict control and keep them well fed, preferably with meat.

**Keep all dogs out of 1080 areas.** Alternative dog exercise areas will be provided throughout the operation by Greater Wellington and Upper Hutt City Council. The areas selected are: Te Marua entrance to Kaitoke Regional Park, Tunnel Gully, Trentham Memorial Reserve and Harcourt Park. A brochure showing the location of these is available from both Council offices or online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz).

Dogs outside the operational area could access possums poisoned during this operation if there is a flood and carcasses are washed down rivers and streams. We will be checking both sides of rivers and streams after floods and will use notices to warn dog owners to keep their dogs on a lead along riverbanks.

Dogs suspected of having eaten 1080 should be given an emetic. **This is not an antidote.** There is no guaranteed antidote for 1080 poison. However, in many cases a dog's life may be saved with glycerol mono acetate or acetamide glucose. This must be administered by a veterinary surgeon as the dog will need to be tranquillised and the drug administered intravenously. Success will depend on the time lapse between poisoning and treatment. Get your dog to a vet as soon as possible.

A detailed 1080 factsheet and recommended dog walking areas brochure are available online at [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)

## Emetic

Place a knob of washing soda (sodium carbonate), about one centimetre in diameter, down the back of the dog's throat. Allow 10 minutes after administering the washing soda for the dog to vomit. Further doses may be given safely if the first dose is not effective. If unsuccessful at first, try again. A repeat dose will not be harmful. Greater Wellington will supply sodium carbonate emetic on request. Washing soda is also available from most supermarkets.

Care must be taken with the vomit from a poisoned dog, as this is also potentially lethal. Do not leave a dog alone or leave the vomit where another dog can eat it. Any vomit material should be buried.

## Muzzles

Dogs should be muzzled as long as poisoned carcasses are still accessible. Muzzles, suitable for most dogs, are available for purchase from Greater Wellington, farm supply agencies or veterinary clinics.

Allow time for the dog to get used to the muzzle before the poisoning operation starts. It is essential that the muzzle is comfortable and secure.

Greater Wellington has a range of muzzles, which come in eight sizes and range in price from \$17.00 to \$25.00. These muzzles are suitable for all dogs.

## Feral game and meat

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has advised that under the Meat (Residues) Regulations and the Game Regulations, feral animals intended for sale to a game pack house cannot be hunted in areas where poisons have been laid. Appropriate declarations have to be supplied to establish that the animals are from areas free of contaminants.

Do not sell feral animals taken:

- from the operational area for a minimum of four months after the cessation of the poisoning operation or;
- within 2km (or 5km for feral pigs) outside the boundaries of the poisoning operation.

The above policy should also apply for feral animals intended for personal consumption.

## 1080 and the environment

1080 is a naturally occurring chemical (Sodium Monofluoroacetate) that can be manufactured synthetically. 1080 is biodegradable so does not persist in soil. In favourable conditions, soil micro-organisms break down 1080 to safe naturally occurring substances in about two weeks.

1080 operations do not contaminate water supplies.

However, we are aware there are public concerns relating to potential contamination of drinking water supplies following aerial 1080 operations. Controls over aerial application require aircraft to avoid major water bodies or waterways that flow into potable water supplies.

With regards to potential water contamination, Greater Wellington has been an active participant in testing water supply catchments following aerial applications of 1080. Between 1993 and 2006, 141 water samples from public water supply catchments within the Wellington region were tested. No trace of 1080 was detected. These included the main supplies for Wellington and Hutt Cities, Otaki, Masterton, Carterton, Greytown, Featherston and the coastal Castlepoint community. A further 30 tests have been completed for private water supplies. Testing duration ranged from 2 to 120 days with no trace of 1080 ever being detected in any of the tests.

A 60kg person would need to drink 2,300 litres of water containing 2 parts per billion of 1080, every day, for some weeks, for sub-lethal effects to occur.

1080 has been used in New Zealand since the 1950s and is the most studied, well-understood toxin in New Zealand. Studies here and overseas have repeatedly confirmed the 'ready biodegradability' of 1080 in soils. Field sampling indicates that 1080 does not leach through soils in measurable amounts into waterways.

## Benefits for our native birds

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of rare and endangered birds in the world. The primary cause of their decline is the impact of introduced pests such as rats, stoats and possums. Without predator control, native birds have a bleak future. However, the good news is that, in areas where the poison 1080 has been used, the birds are coming back.

Improvements in bait technology and application methods have reduced the risk to native birds. 1080 cereal baits are dyed green and flavoured with cinnamon oil, which makes the baits unattractive to birds. Less 1080 poison is now used in 1080 operations – the application rate of bait has been reduced from 10-20 kg/ha in the 1980s to 2kg/ha in recent years.

Careful monitoring shows no evidence of long-term negative impacts on native bird populations from 1080. Bird populations benefit from 1080 operations in the longer term, as more food becomes available (less competition from possums) and there is reduced pressure on eggs and fledglings. Native bird numbers increase after the first year of a 1080 operation, as the toxin also kills rats (and stoats that eat the rats) thereby giving the birds a chance to breed in relative safety.

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand advocates the use of 1080 to protect native species, describing it as "...the best available tool for significantly reducing pest numbers and allowing native forests, birds and invertebrates to thrive once more".



Bellbird. Photo credit DoC



Whitehead. Photo credit Peter Reese



Tomtit. Photo credit DoC

## For more information

To view operational maps or for information on progress contact us at Greater Wellington's Masterton Office on **0800 023 249**. John Hopkirk, Contracts Co-ordinator, or Scott Forbes, Manager, (BioWorks) will return your call.

Information is also available on:  
Greater Wellington website: [www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)  
Click on: Winter possum control feature link button/  
Akatarawa Forest

Department of Conservation website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)  
Click on: Conservation/Possums  
Conservation/Threats and impacts/Animal pests/  
Pest control/1080

Animal Health Board website: [www.ahb.org.nz](http://www.ahb.org.nz)  
Forest and Bird website: [www.forestandbird.org.nz](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz)  
Click on: Publications/Factsheets/1080

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Greater Wellington is the  
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