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TE MAHERE Ā-ROHE KAUPARE RIHA
PŪRONGO O TE MAHERE MAHI 2024/25

REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN
OPERATIONAL PLAN REPORT 2024/25

Greater Wellington
Te Pane Matua Taiao

1. Whakarāpopototanga Matua | Executive Summary

The Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-2039 (RPMP) was prepared in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993 and became operative on the 2nd of July 2019. It contains objectives specific to individual pests and outlines how Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington), as the Management Agency, will achieve those objectives.

This report summarises the achievements and outcomes of the RPMP Operational Plan 2024/25 work programme and the resources used to deliver these. It should be read in conjunction with the RPMP Operational Plan 2024/25.

We delivered four categories of species-led and four site-led programmes during 2024/25. Additionally, we are involved in four programmes that are part of national agreements and/or are funded nationally.

The total internal budget of $12,013,151 was underspent by $443,496 (3.7 percent). We achieved all of our performance measures, noting that some are of an ongoing nature, but are on track to meet overall objectives.

Issues and opportunities

Marine Biosecurity

It is written into our Long-Term Plan (2024/34) that from 2024 to 2027 we will intensify our efforts to enhance marine biosecurity by monitoring for invasive pests, developing pest incursion response plans, and educating vessel users on reducing the risk of spreading marine pests.

Changes to the Biosecurity Act

A review of the Biosecurity Act (1993) has been signalled but the timeframes and nature of these changes are unclear. A review is also expected for the Wild Animal Control Act (1977).

Funding extra unbudgeted RPMP needs

Occasionally we find a large or complex pest infestation for which we do not have the ability to carry out best practice control due to a lack of extra budget. For example, inspecting a new Eradication pest plant species site but not having the budget to carry out a delimit survey in the same 12-month period. A special fund for dealing with such eventualities would be useful, noting that it might not be needed in any given year.

Key Achievements

Predator Free Wellington

Predator Free Wellington (PFW) has taken significant steps forward in the effort to eliminate rats, stoats, weasels and possums in Wellington city. The first phase of the project has been completed – Miramar Peninsula. The second phase of the project – Lyall Bay to the Central Business District (CBD) – is well underway.

The positive ecological outcomes are clear, supported by both anecdotal feedback from the community and wildlife monitoring data. The PFW team continues to contribute regionally by training and developing community skills and advising on similar initiatives from other parts of the region. Operating in the heart of the city, PFW has built relationships with all the local trapping communities across Wellington city. This includes the Mt Vic Vermin Trappers, Predator Free Miramar, and Predator Free Lyall Bay. These communities are essential to the success of the Predator Free Wellington Project, as they provide a framework for engaging communities in these suburbs, and allow for key community leads to be involved in the work as it unfolds.

The project operates under a model of continuous improvement, including trials of new technologies to make the operation faster and more economical. This continuous improvement mindset also applies to our staff. PFW are proud to be developing our people and creating a generation of trappers with a hunting mindset. Our staff do not simply fill bait stations and move on. They consider their surroundings, habitat and food availability before making a decision. Data is also one of our key drivers. Our field team now have access to live and up to date field data on their phones, allowing their decisions to be more informed than ever.

Pest Plant and Pest Animal teams

We received 82 less enquiries from the public than in the 2023/24 year, and a significant number of species and sites have been controlled since the last report:

- The teams have addressed 891enquiries from the public.
- Pest Plant Biosecurity Officers have inspected 975 hectares of land.
- 51 RPMP plant sites were classified as eradicated this year.
- 1,181 ungulates have been removed from the environment.
- We have recorded 2,684 hedgehogs, 795 mustelids, 520 pest cats, 672 possums and 3,070 rats in our traps. This equates to 7,741 invasive predators but does not represent the full extent of control across our wider device network. Thousands more are controlled using bait stations around the region, as well as in devices serviced by our volunteer and community groups.

2. Kupu Arataki | Introduction

The Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-2039 (RPMP) contains objectives specific to individual pests and outlines how Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington), as the Management Agency, will achieve those objectives. The RPMP has clearly defined rules to be met by all land occupiers. It is our responsibility to ensure land occupiers are aware of, and meet, their obligations for pest management on their properties. We can also undertake pest control operations where there is recognised regional benefit.

A cost-benefit analysis (CBA) was undertaken for all species proposed for the RPMP. Species from the previous Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 were included as well as other species of interest which had been noted by officers leading up to the review process. This process decided what control, if any, was to be undertaken and what level of management was needed for the species.

We implement the RPMP region-wide through:

- **Monitoring** for the presence of declared pests in the Wellington Region.
- **Minimising** the actual and potential adverse or unintended effects associated with the specified organisms.
- **Eradicating** certain organisms, reducing the extent of others, and containing those species that are already well established.

This report summarises the achievements and outcomes of our work program resulting from the RPMP Operational Plan for 2024/25 and the resources used to deliver these.

The report should be read in conjunction with the RPMP Operational Plan 2024/25.

3. Kaupapa - tirohanga whānui | Programme overview

3.1 Species led programmes

There are four species led programmes that are outlined in the RPMP: The invasion curve (Table 1 and Figure 1) designates the different management programmes.

Exclusion programme: To prevent the establishment of a species that is present in New Zealand but not yet established in an area.

Eradication programme: To reduce the infestation level of a species to zero levels in an area in the short to medium term.

Progressive Containment programme: To contain or reduce the geographic distribution of a species.

Sustained Control programme: To provide ongoing control of a species to reduce its impacts on values and spread to other properties.

Additionally, we are involved in four programmes that are part of national agreements and/or are funded nationally:

National Pest Plant Accord: To prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of pest plants (approximately 135 named species) within New Zealand.

National Interest Pest Response programme: To eradicate certain species (currently just Manchurian wild rice) from the Wellington Region.

Check, Clean, Dry: To keep our waterways clean and free of invasive freshwater pests.

Biocontrol programme: To fund biocontrol programmes for prioritised pest species.

Management programmes	Infestation phase	Phase characteristics
Exclusion	**Absent**	Pest not yet established in the Wellington Region, or it has been eradicated from all known sites in the region.
Eradication	**Lag**	Pest numbers low, rate of population increase low, distribution limited.
Progressive Containment	**Explosion**	Rapid growth in pest population size and range.
Sustained Control	**Established**	Pest is abundant and/or widespread.

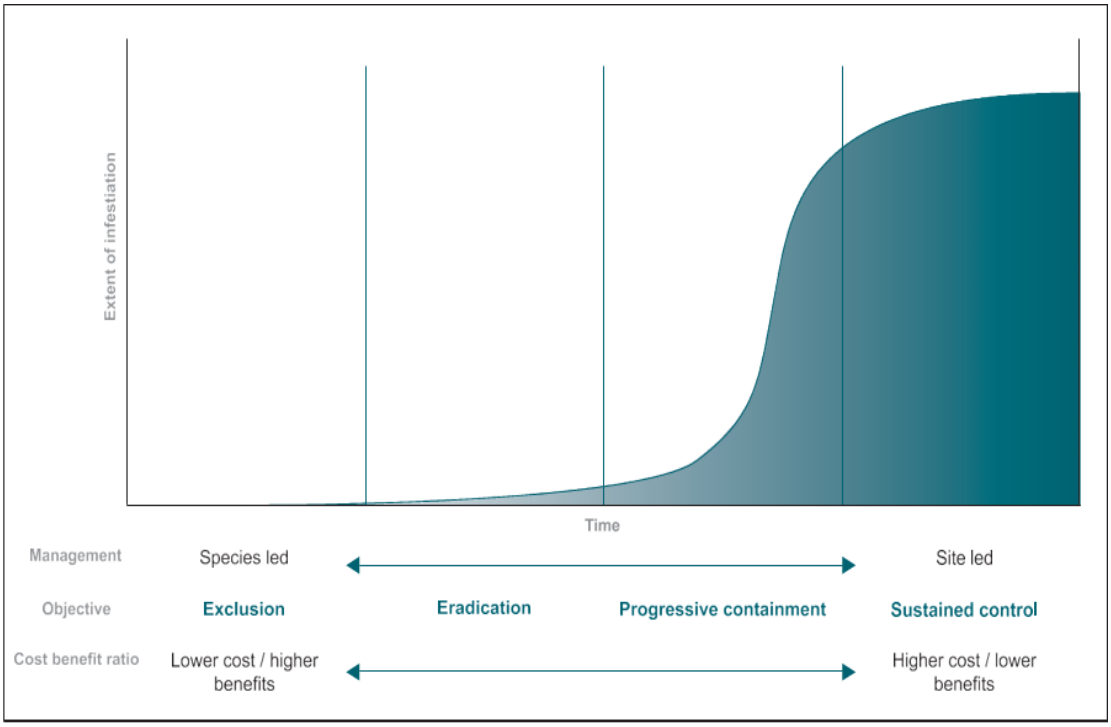
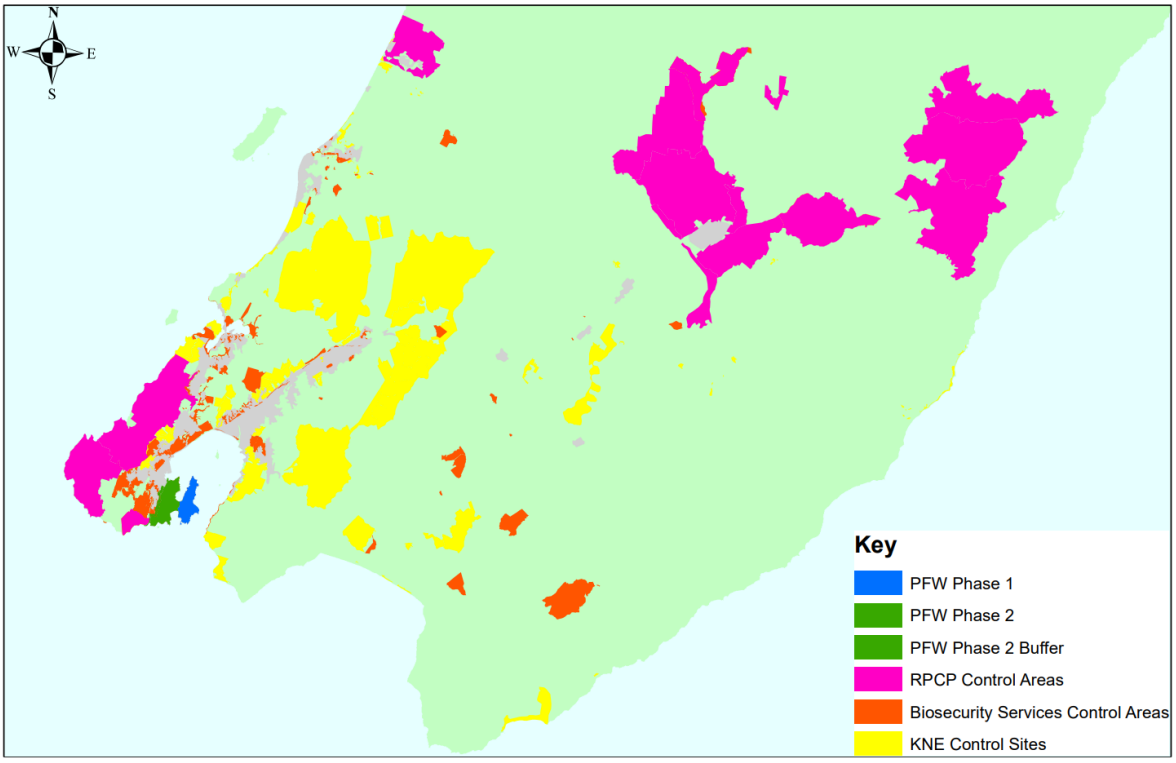


Table 1 and Figure 1. The Invasion Curve - Pest infestation phases through time in relation to appropriate management. Adapted from the RPMP

3.2 Site led programmes

There are four site led programmes that are delivered through the RPMP (see Map 1 below).



Map 1: 2024/25 Site led programme coverage of the region

Predator Free Wellington programme (PFW): Aims to eliminate mustelids, possums and rats from Wellington city, focussing on the area designated Phase two in the CBD, and to maintain the areas already cleared of predators in this Phase two area and the Miramar Peninsula. Predator Free Wellington is a project funded by the Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington, Predator Free 2050, the NEXT Foundation and other smaller funders/sponsors. Once the rate of progress is known, Predator Free Wellington will gather permission to operate on private land in the subsequent Phased areas.

Regional Predator Control Programme (RPCP): To maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity through control of possums and other predators that are a serious threat to our native biodiversity and economy. The areas we work in are chosen based on protecting the best biodiversity ecosystems outside of the Key Native Ecosystem programme. Formerly this programme was driven largely by declarations of bovine Tuberculosis freedom.

Biosecurity Services programme: This activity aims to provide biosecurity delivery services across the region. This includes maintaining a buffer for predators around Pukaha/Mt Bruce, providing cost recovery services to Territorial Authorities and landowners and controlling Argentine ants to

minimise the risk to Kāpiti Island. Activities such as these lead to biodiversity gains for the region by reducing the impact of pest and invasive species.

Key Native Ecosystem programme (KNE): To protect and restore representative examples of original indigenous ecosystem types of high value in the Wellington Region through effective biodiversity management. This involves the development of strategic operational plans, planning operational activities, working with management partners and delivery of management activities including pest control.

3.3 Pest control methods

We use a range of methods and tools to control pest plants and pest animals within the region. All control operations are undertaken by trained staff, contractors or volunteers using industry accepted best practice techniques. Our methodology considers innovation, environmental and humane factors alongside cost-effectiveness and practicality. Where chemical-based pest control methods are utilised, the most effective and least harmful option is always preferred, with all chemical application following best practice manufacturer instructions, endorsed by the New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority.

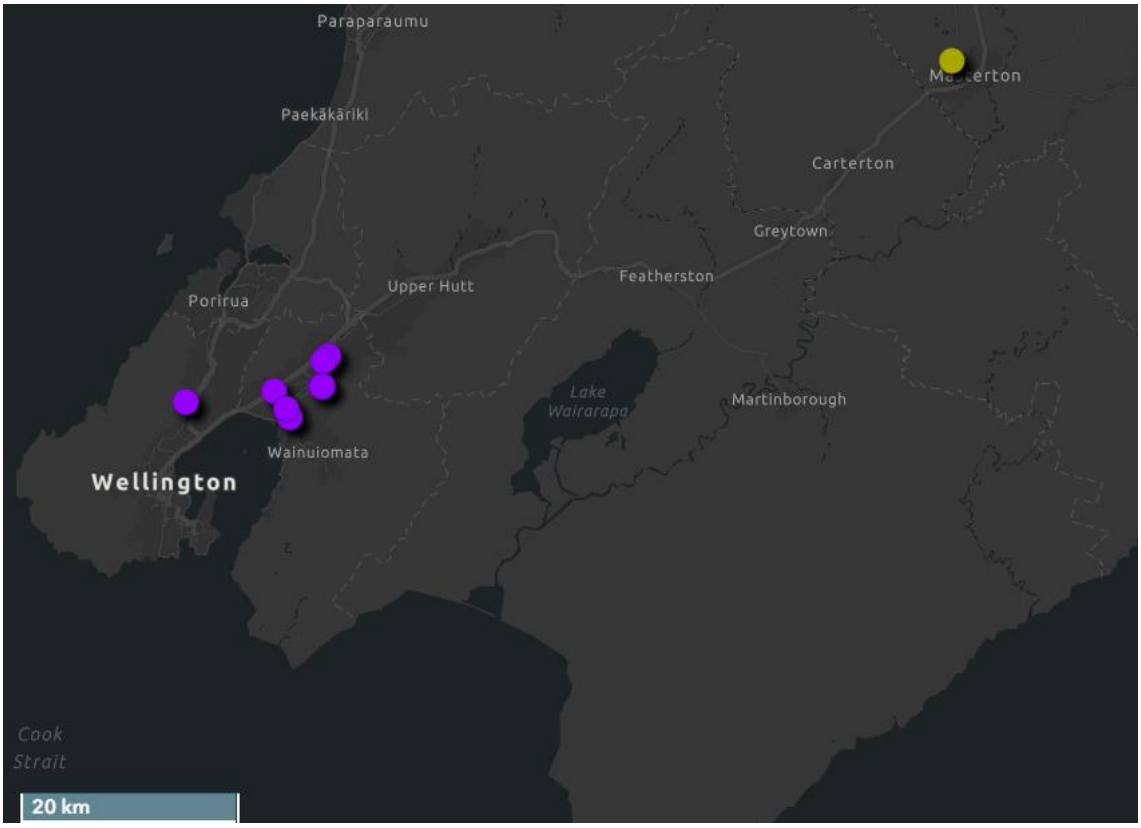
4. Tipu Riha | Pest Plants

4.1 Exclusion programme

Alligator weed *(Alternanthera philoxeroides),* Chilean needle grass *(Nassella neesiana),* Nassella tussock *(N. trichotoma*).

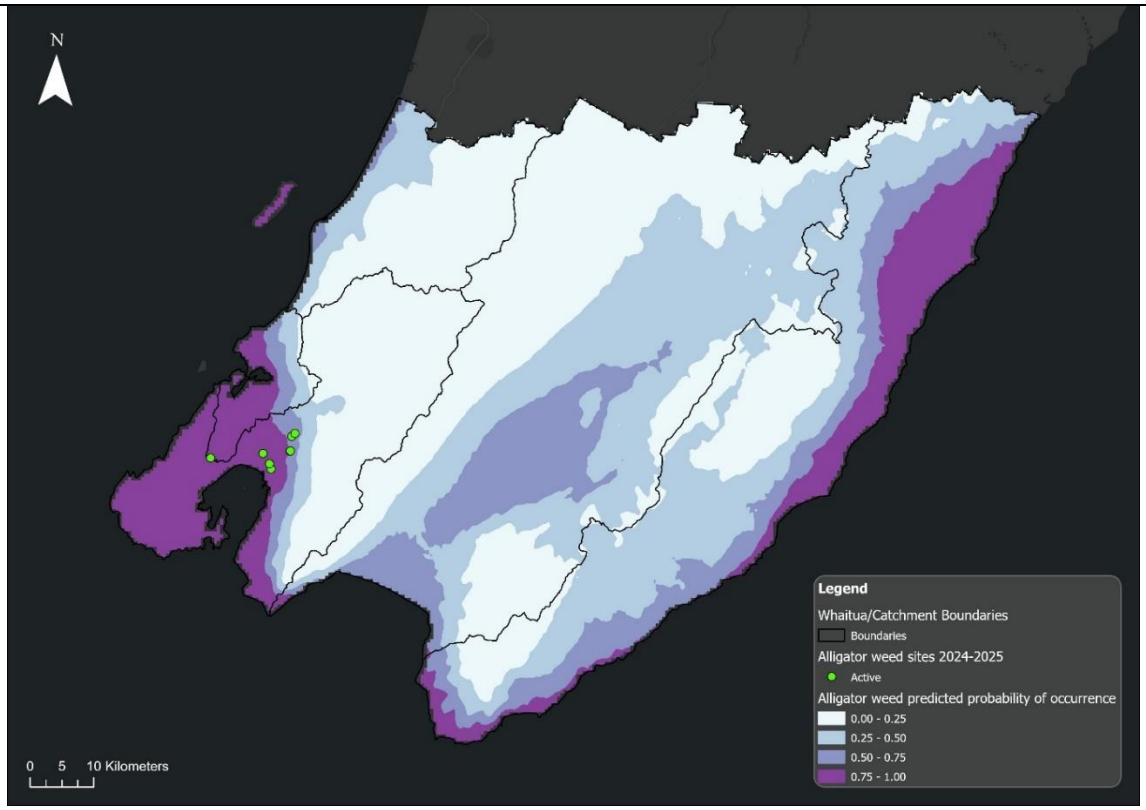
Aim: Prevent the establishment of exclusion plant species in the Wellington Region.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Identify new sites New incursion sites of exclusion plant species are identified.	Achieved. Eight new alligator weed sites found. No further Nassella tussock incursions.

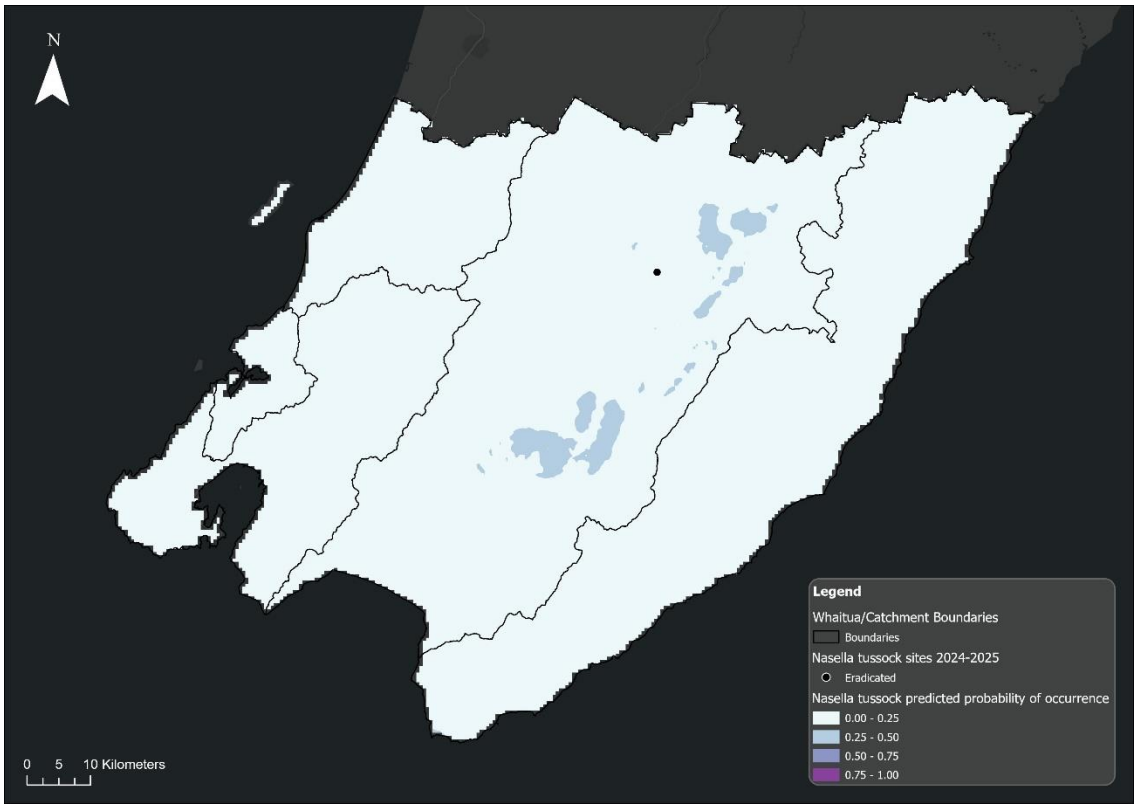


Map 2. Exclusion species sites 2024/25

Alligator weed in purple. Nassella tussock in yellow (an historic site, long eradicated).



Map 3. Alligator weed potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019
Modelling is based solely on regional climate data at this stage. More advanced modelling could provide further insight by adding soil data and other factors in. For now, we are agreed that these maps offer likely scenarios.



Map 4. Nassella tussock potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019.

Nassella modelling is based on national distribution versus climate data, due to an inadequate number of data points in the North Island, and the map may not be as accurate as the modelling for other species.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Incident investigation and response Initial investigations for all reports undertaken within five working days. Response plans developed and implemented within 20 working days	Achieved.
Biodiversity Outcomes	
The five initial active alligator weed sites have increased to 13, this is largely due to a public awareness campaign, with all alligator weed sites located in urban areas, whether in pots or residential gardens. The key invasion pathway for this species is human actions/interference, which is what we must target before alligator weed has a chance to naturalise in the region. Waikato and Northland regions can offer cautionary tales of the impact of alligator weed. Farmers have had to set aside entire paddocks which have been taken over by the weed. Waterways have become clogged, and the costs of managing a species that can double the area it covers within a couple of months, are ongoing and very expensive.	

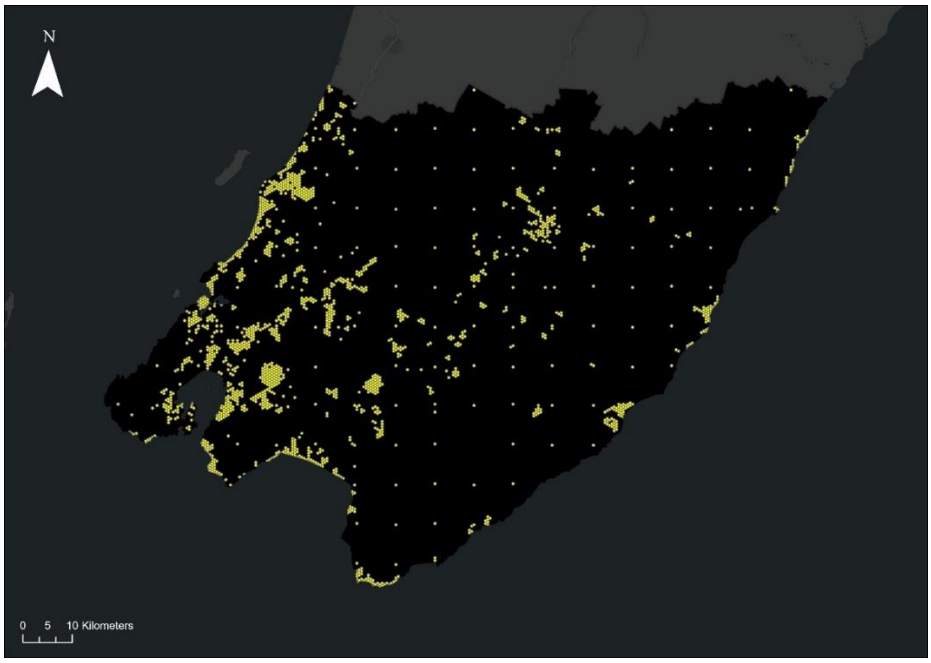
4.2 Eradication programme

Moth plant (*Araujia hortorum*), Senegal tea (*Gymnocoronis spilanthoides*), spartina (*Sporobolus anglicus, S. alterniflorus*), velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*), woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*).

Aim: Destroy all known infestations of eradication plant species in the Wellington Region.

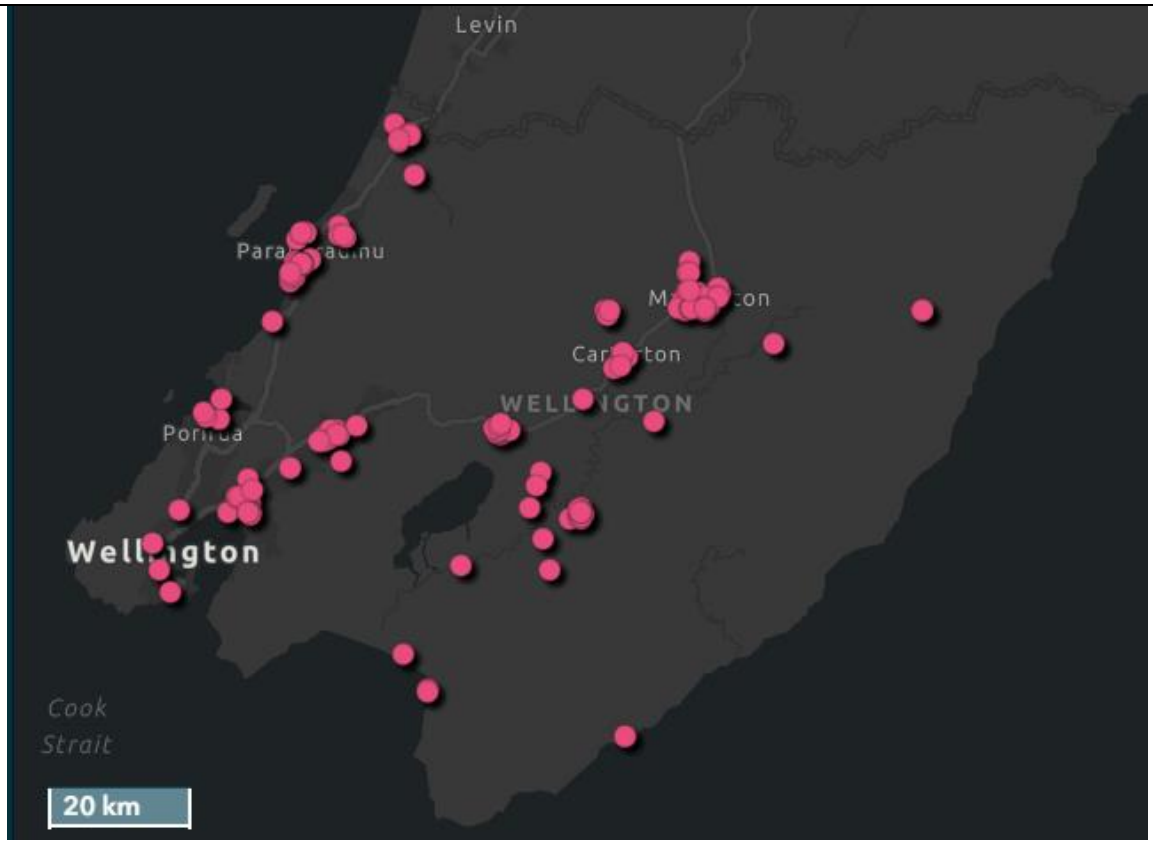
Performance Measure	Result and Details
Identify new sites New sites of eradication plant species are identified.	Achieved. Across the region, 39 new eradication species sites were found. Our largest population of eradication species is woolly nightshade, found on the Kāpiti Coast ranging from Paekākāriki to Ōtaki.

Species	Location of new management sites
Moth plant	Seven sites: one on the Kāpiti Coast, four in the Masterton district, two in Porirua.
Senegal tea	One site: Waingawa River (Masterton).
Woolly nightshade	Thirty-one sites: two in Lower Hutt, 25 on the Kāpiti Coast, two in the Masterton district, two in Wellington city.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Incident investigation and response Response to reports from the public on eradication plants will initially be responded to within five working days and actions completed within 20 working days.	Achieved.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Best practice management All management sites visited on scheduled best practise rotation.	Achieved. We exceeded this for Senegal tea sites by visiting twice during the year to prevent reestablishment.
Eradication species management site visits 2024/25	

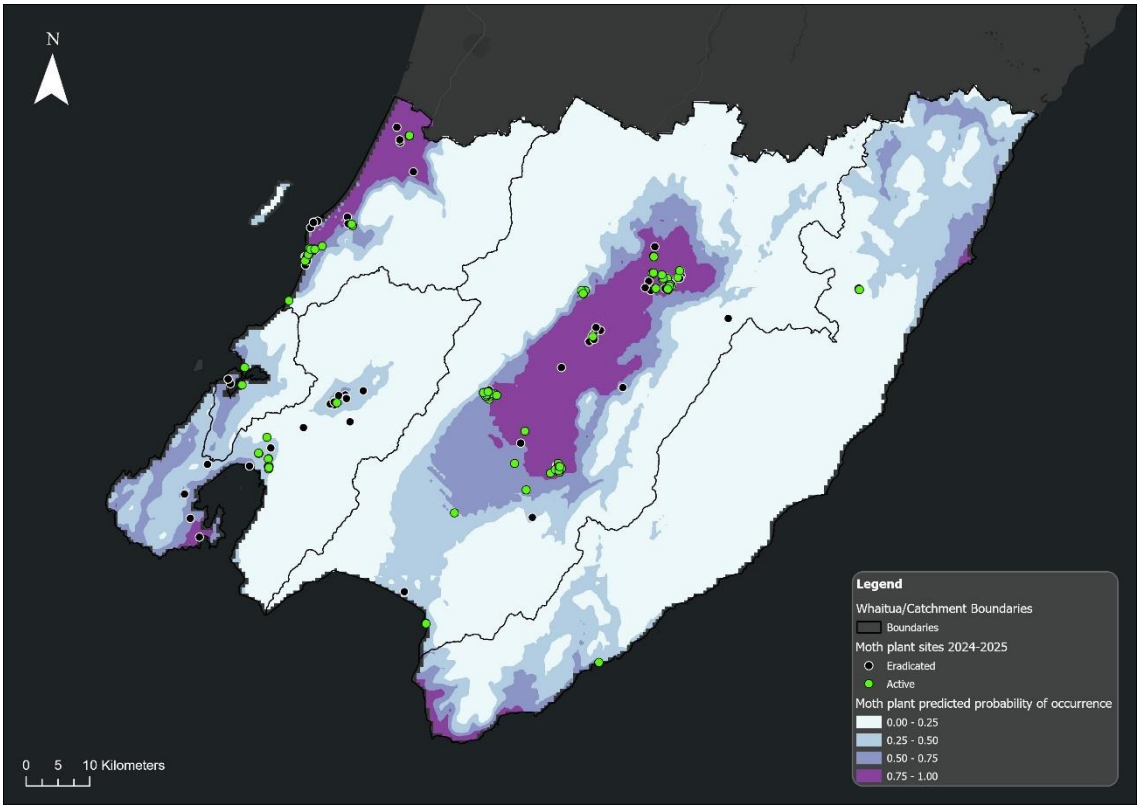


Map 5. Total land surveyed to identify pest plants within the Wellington Region since 2019

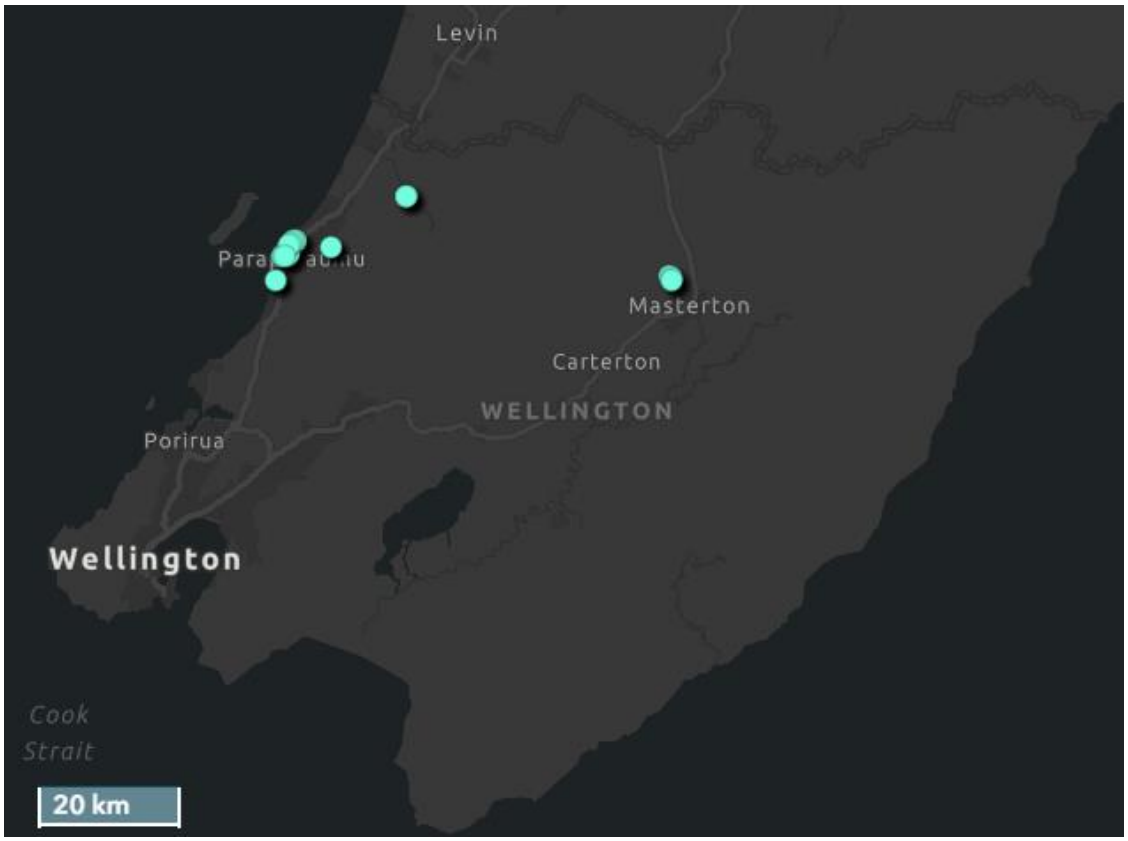
Includes State of the Environment vegetation monitoring plots that are surveyed by our Environmental Monitoring team.



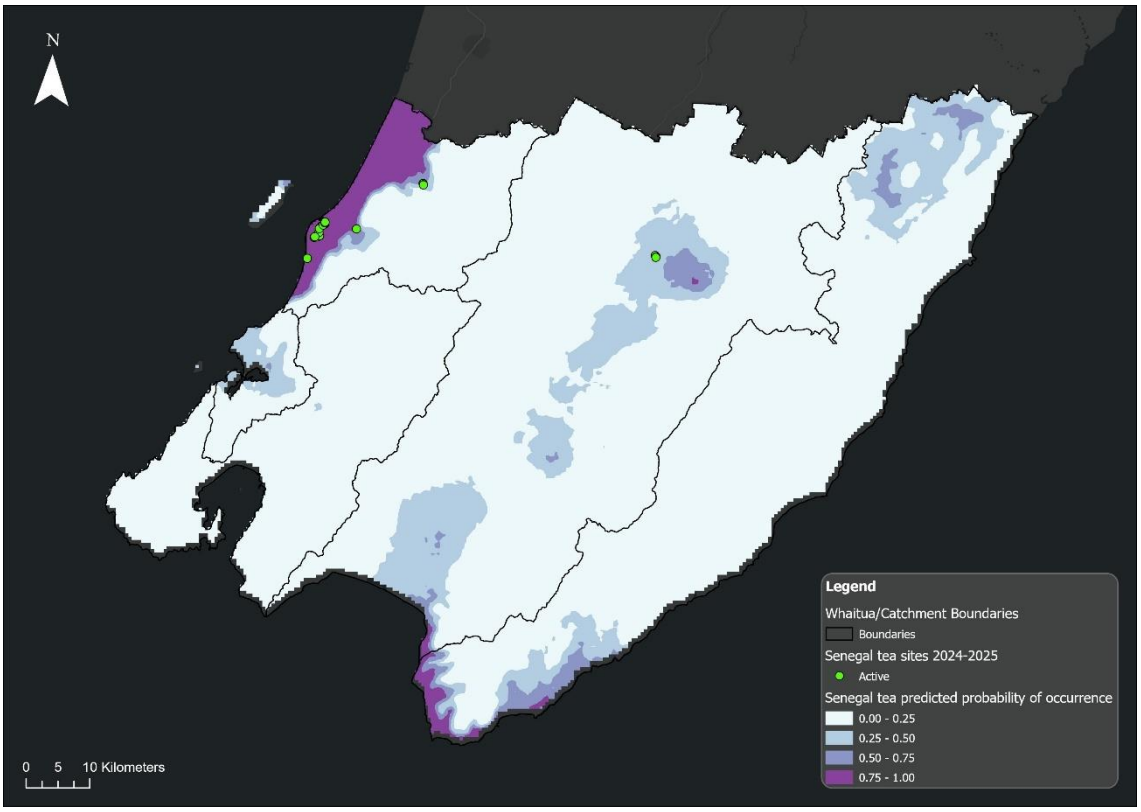
Map 6. Moth plant sites



Map 7. Moth plant potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019

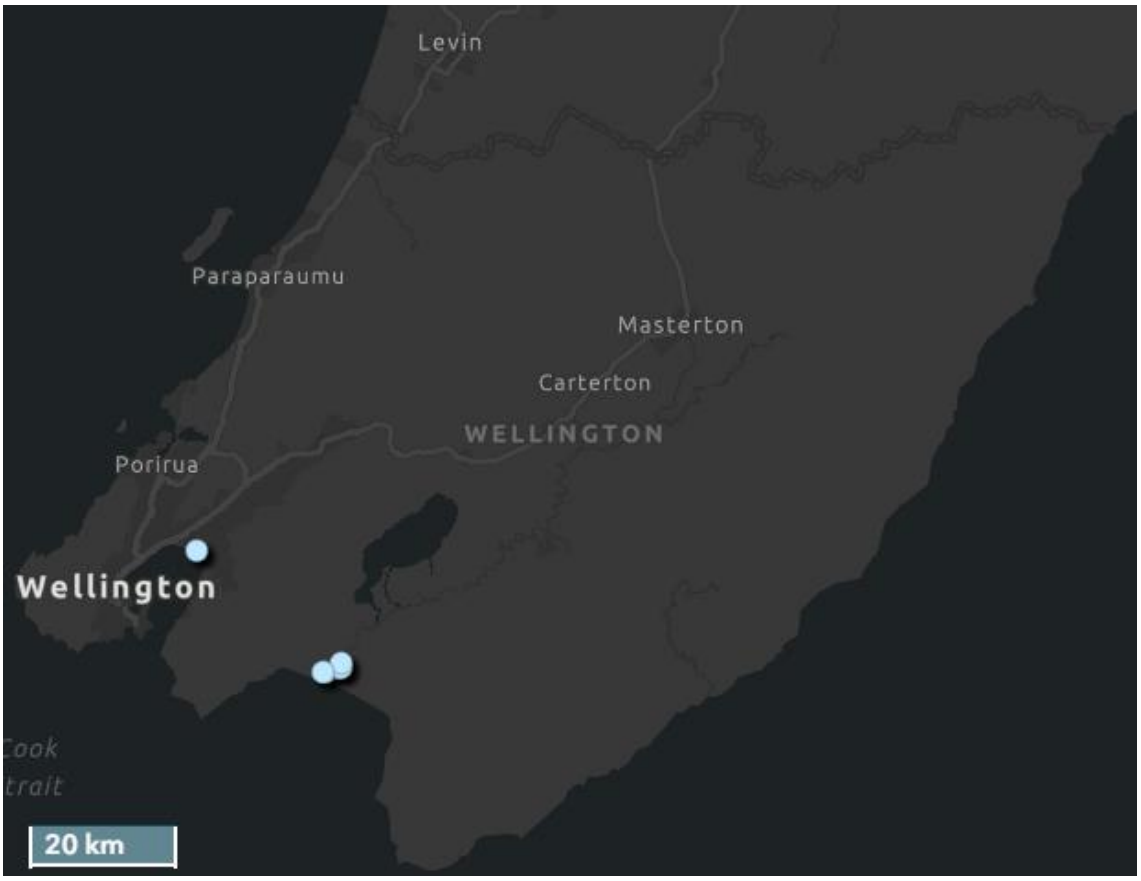


Map 8. Senegal tea sites

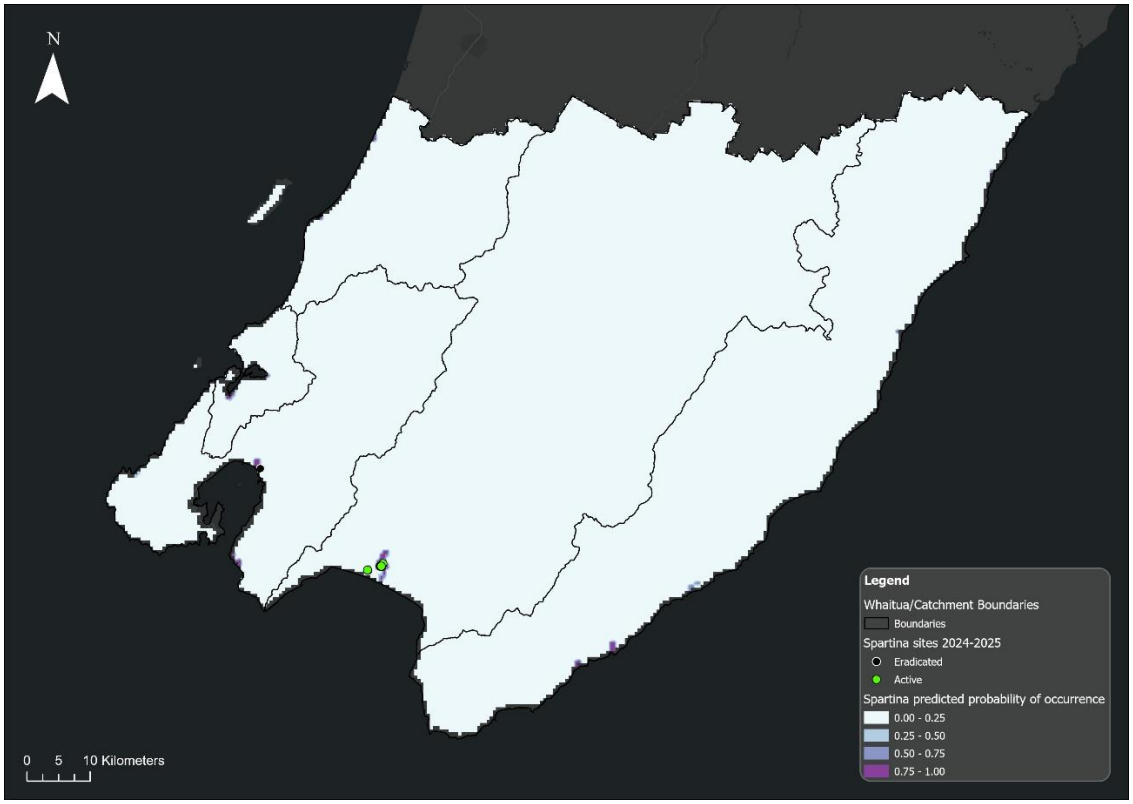


Map 9. Senegal tea potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019

This species is only found in and on the banks of waterways and wetland areas.

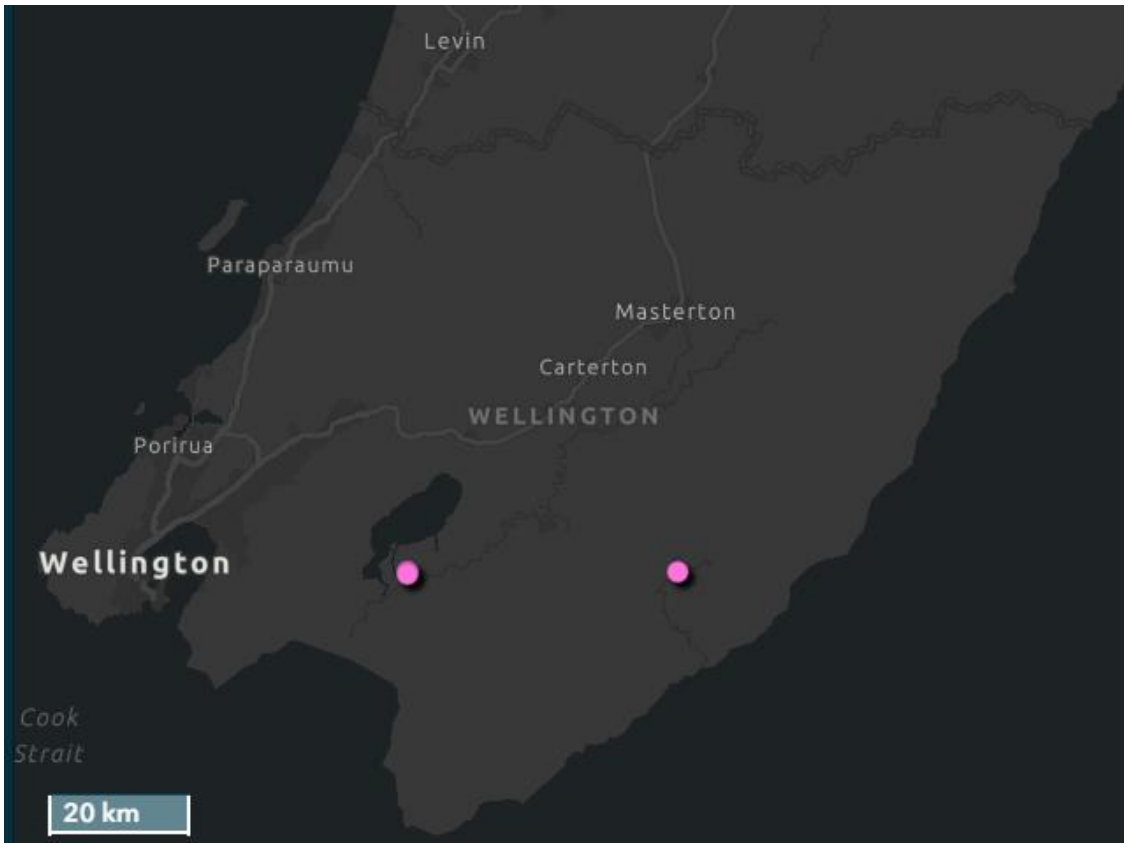


Map 10. Spartina sites

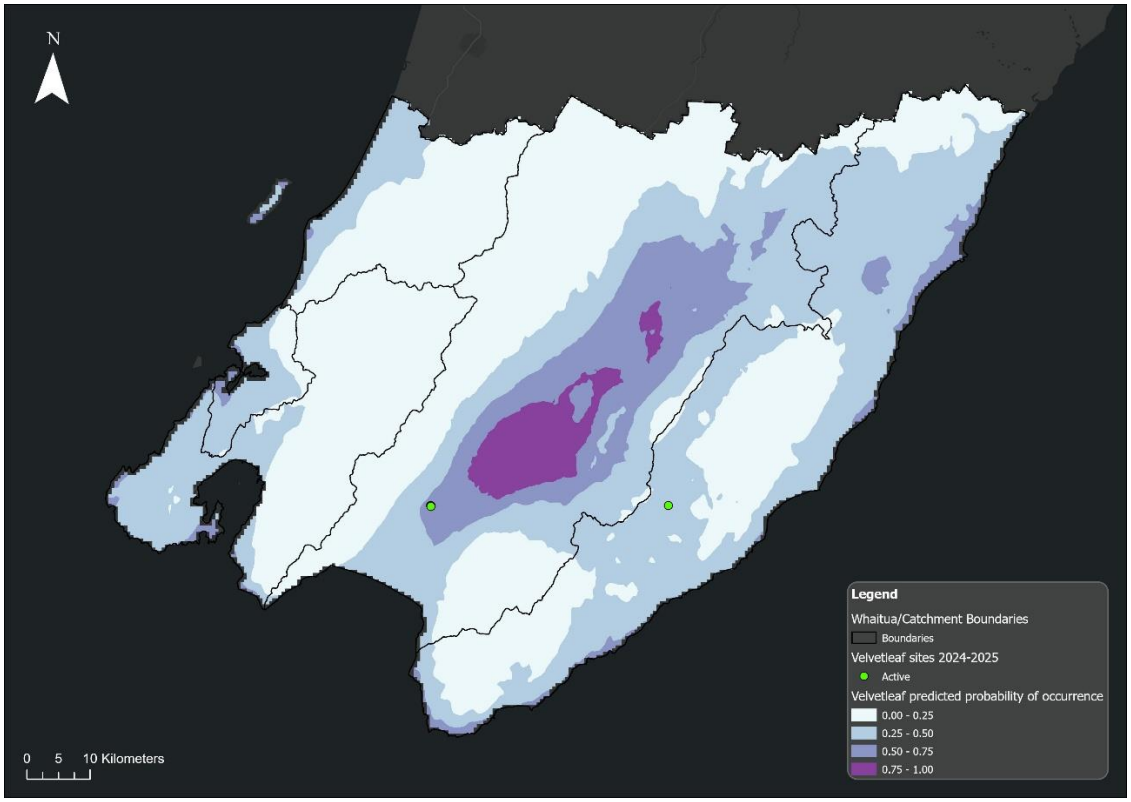


Map 11. Spartina potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019

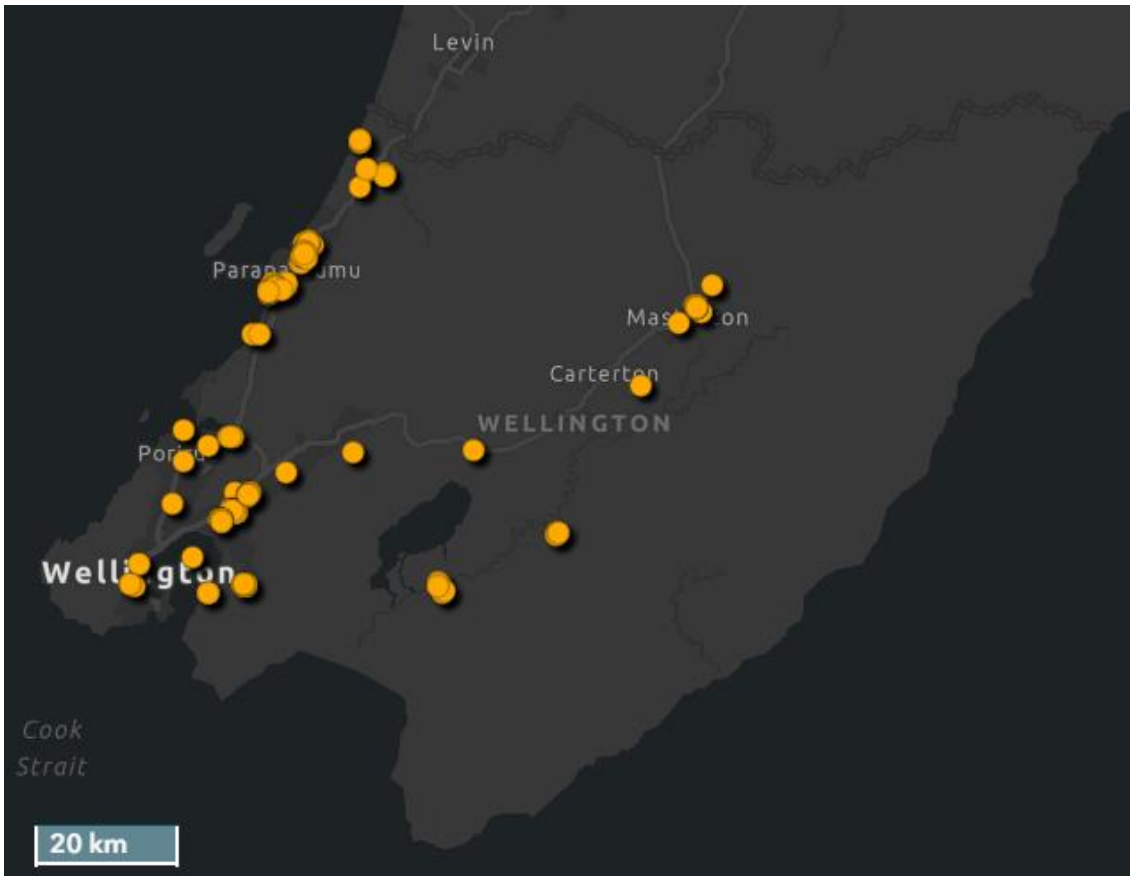
Note – in this case the white colouration denotes zero probability of occurrence.



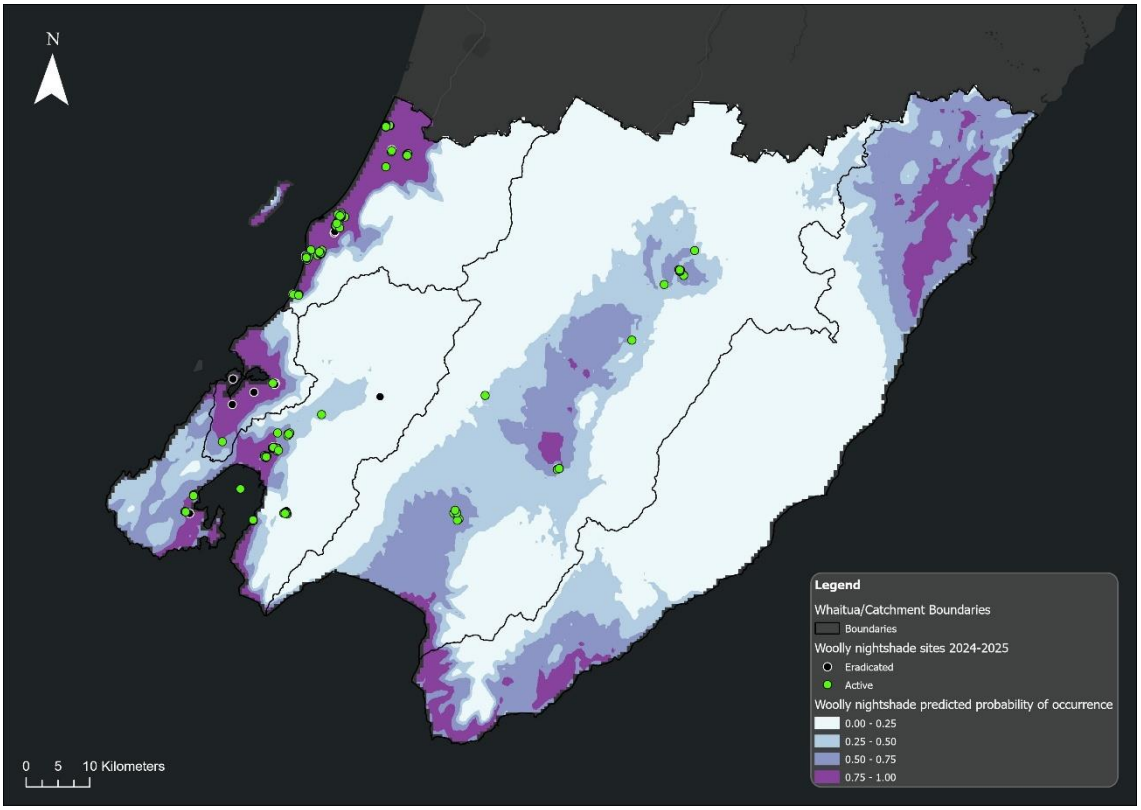
Map 12. Velvetleaf sites



Map 13. Velvetleaf potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019

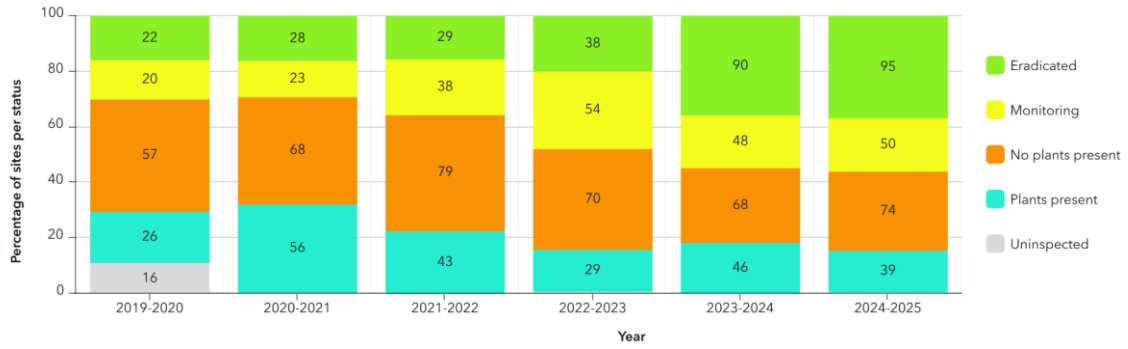


Map 14. Woolly nightshade sites

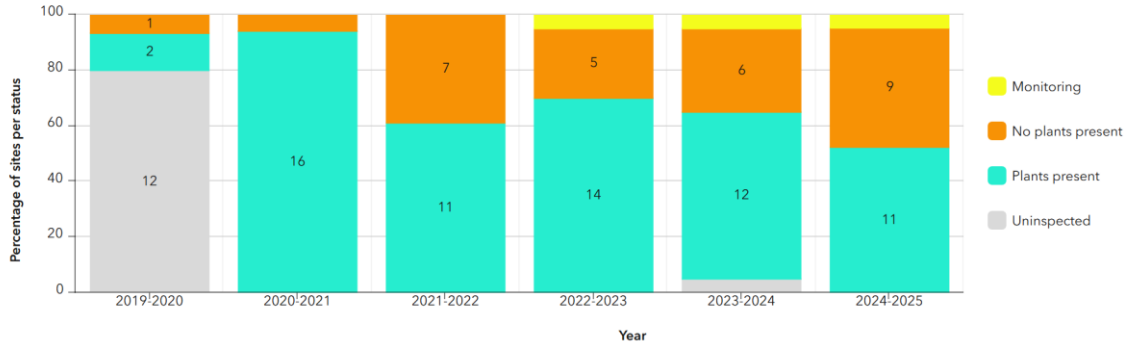


Map 15. Woolly nightshade potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019

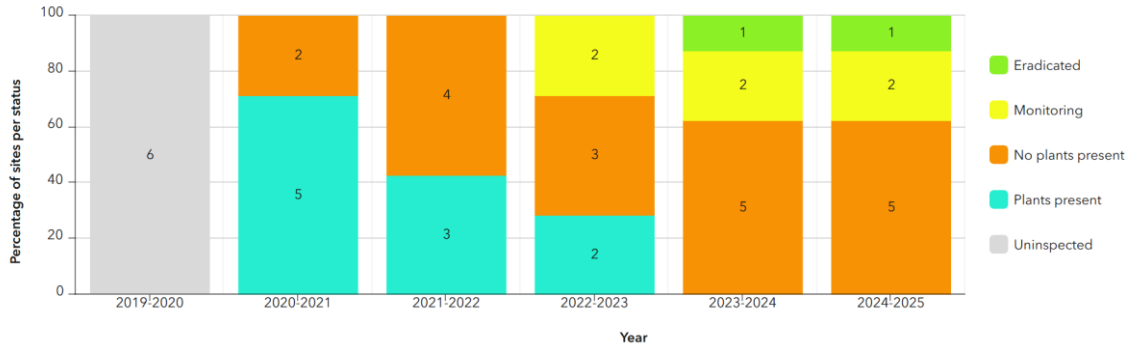
Progress towards eradication



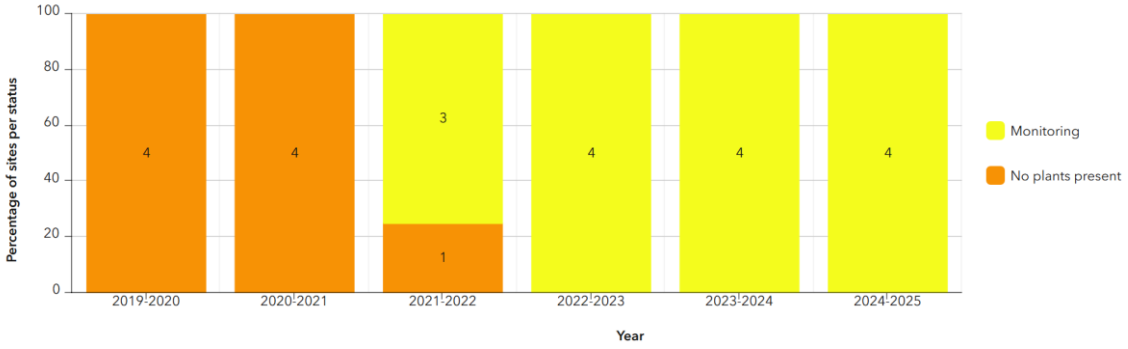
Graph 1. Moth plant site status change over time



Graph 2. Senegal tea site status change over time



Graph 3. Spartina site status change over time

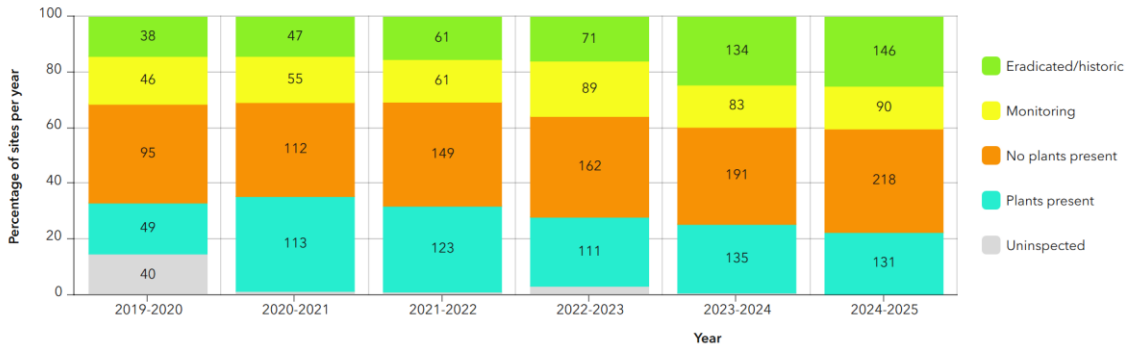


Graph 4. Velvetleaf site status change over time

Graph 5. Woolly nightshade site status change over time

Summary table for Eradication species in 2024/25

Species	Number of sites eradicated	Number of adult plants	Number of juvenile plants	Infestation Area	Sites with plants present
Moth plant	5	55	3,143	2.26ha	23%
Senegal tea	0	259	215	8.81ha	52%
Spartina	0	0	0	1.76ha	0
Velvetleaf	0	0	0	16m^2	0
Woolly nightshade	8	52	1,167	19.64ha	33%



Graph 6. Overall progress for eradication species

Biodiversity Outcomes

We aim to see an annual decrease in number of adult plants observed or in the infestation area of existing sites. Note that our mapping system does not reflect the decreases in individual infestation sizes because we retain the original infestation area as a precautionary measure for future surveys.

Overall progress towards eradication is trending the right way, as seen in the proportions graphed above. We are now one quarter of the way through the timeframe of the RPMP. Our work results in maintaining and/or allowing the improvement of biodiversity, prevents these pest plant species from establishing

in our Key Native Ecosystems and other valuable habitat, and results in improved integrity of resilience of native ecosystems in the face of a changing climate.

Photo 1. A situation we want to avoid – Credit: M. Riley, Waitara

Orange dots indicate a gully full of woolly nightshade, which continues to either side of the photo. This is a common sight in Taranaki, where woolly nightshade is widely distributed and a landscape scale issue, but thankfully in the Wellington Region we are on track to eradicate all known infestations.

4.3 Progressive Containment programme

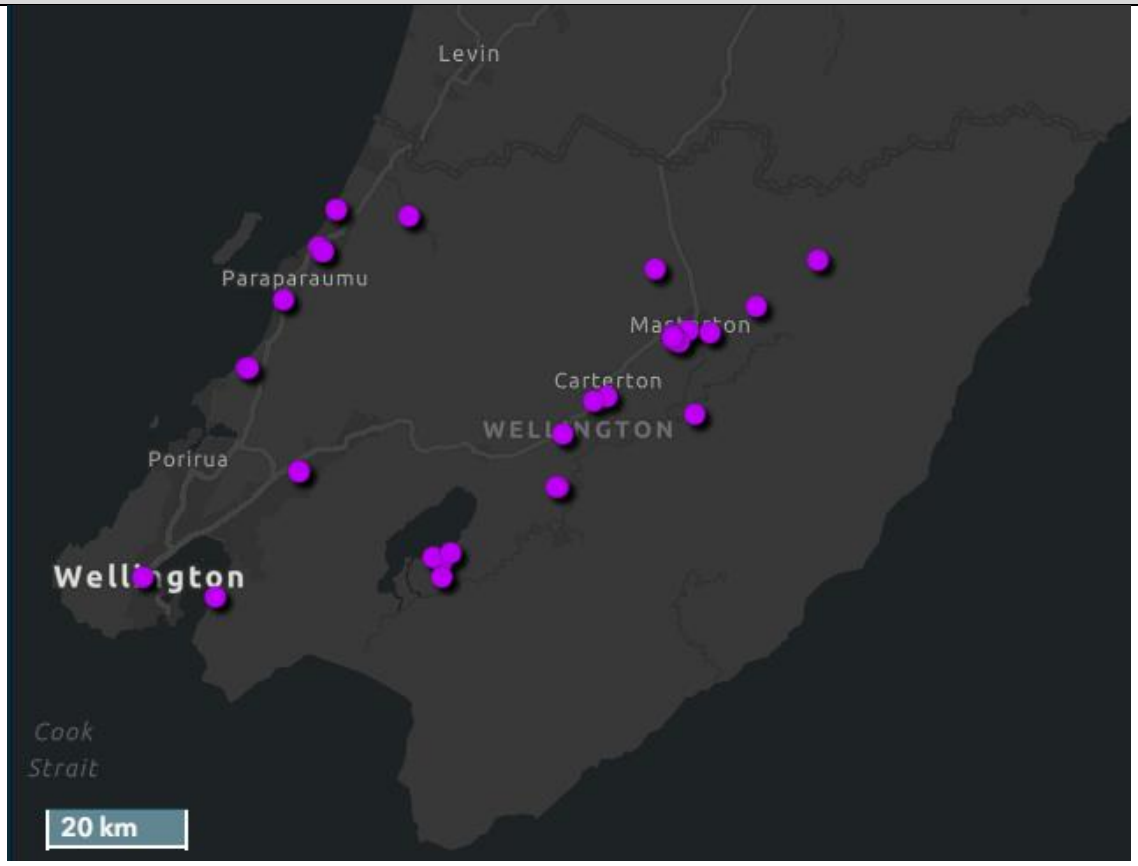
Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), wilding conifers: European larch (*Larix decidua*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and pine species (*Pinus spp*.).

Aim: Progressively contain and reduce the geographic distribution of progressive containment plant species in the Wellington Region.

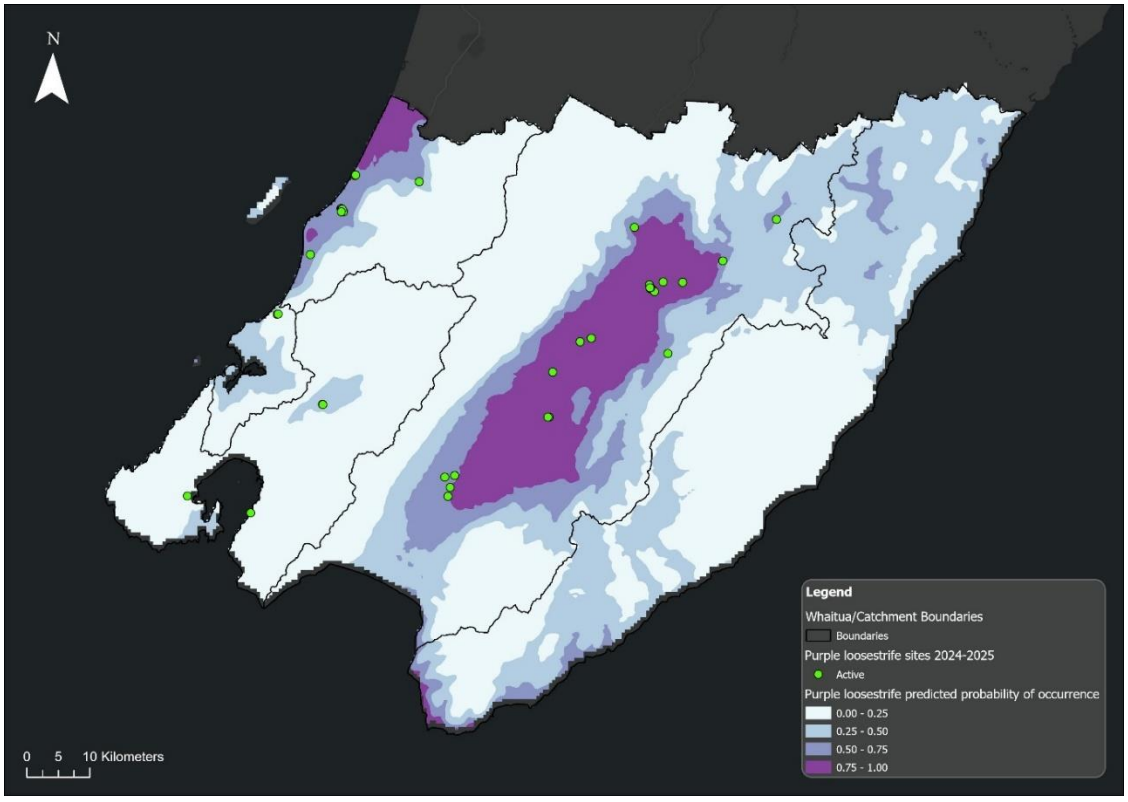
Performance Measure	Result and Details
Incident investigation and response Initial investigations for all reported sightings or discoveries of purple loosestrife or wilding conifers undertaken within five working days and decisions documented within 20 working days.	Achieved. Of three reports, one was a positive identification.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Best practice management All management sites visited on scheduled best practise rotation.	Achieved.
Species	**Location of new management sites**
Purple loosestrife	Passive eDNA samples from two rivers indicated the presence of purple loosestrife: Awhea River (South Wairarapa) and Whareama River (near Castlepoint). Areas with suitable habitat will be identified and ground surveys will be conducted to locate the infestations.

Photos 2 and 3. Hand pulled purple loosestrife, habitat at risk from this species – Credits: H. Paris, Greater Wellington and L. Bennett, Greater Wellington

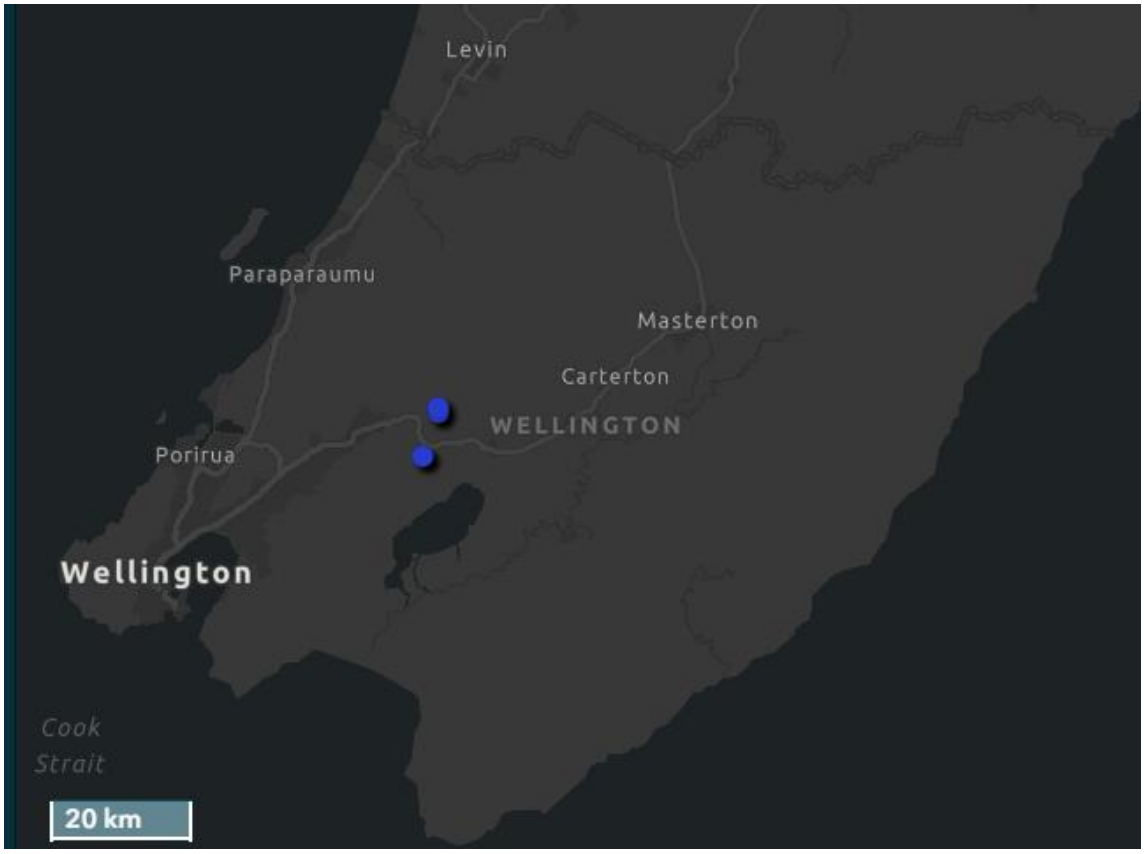
Progressive containment species management site visits 2024/25



Map 16. Purple loosestrife management sites

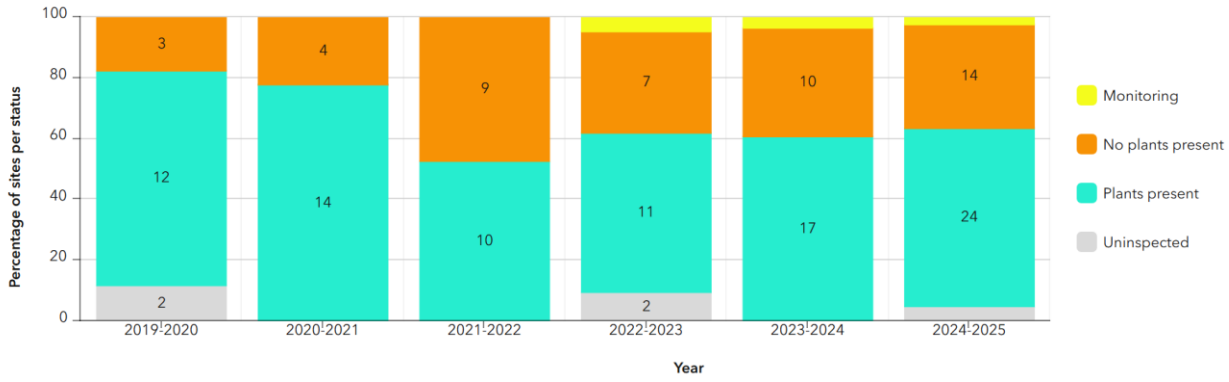


Map 17. Purple loosestrife potential habitat modelling and occurrence since 2019



Map 18. Wilding conifers management sites

Progress towards progressive containment



Graph 7. Purple loosestrife site status change over time

We aim for an annual decrease in the density and/or distribution of adult plants observed within the existing containment sites.

Wilding conifers: Progress at our three management sites – Ladle Bend, Marchant Ridge, and the upper reaches of the Back Track, Pakuratahi is visible as changes to vegetation coverage in aerial photography (our aerial photography is updated every three to four years), as well as in more immediate comparisons using drone photography.

At Ladle Bend we are progressively drilling all larger *Pinus radiata* and Douglas fir. There are far more saplings of Douglas fir than of *P. radiata*. The drone images below from March

2025 show the previous season's work. There will be a much larger number of dying/dead pines visible after a concerted work program this financial year.

Photo 4. Wilding conifers within the Ladle Bend wetland KNE area indicated

Many of these pines have been controlled this season, those controlled in the previous season are clearly visible. While forestry surrounds the wetland, we are committed to eliminating wilding conifers in the wetland area, and to then keeping it free of them.

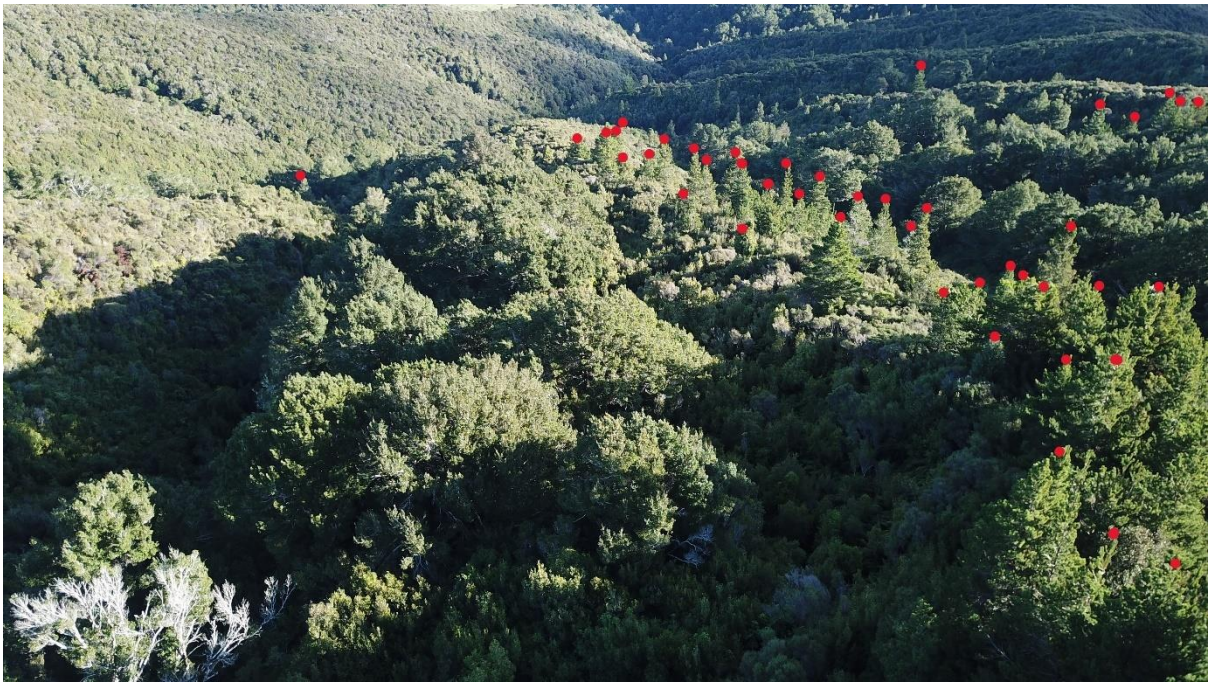


Photo 5. Work at Marchant Ridge is ongoing with results visible when on site

Trees are chain sawed or drilled. Wilding conifers descending down a ridgeline are indicated with a red dot. Most if not all of these are now drilled and poisoned.

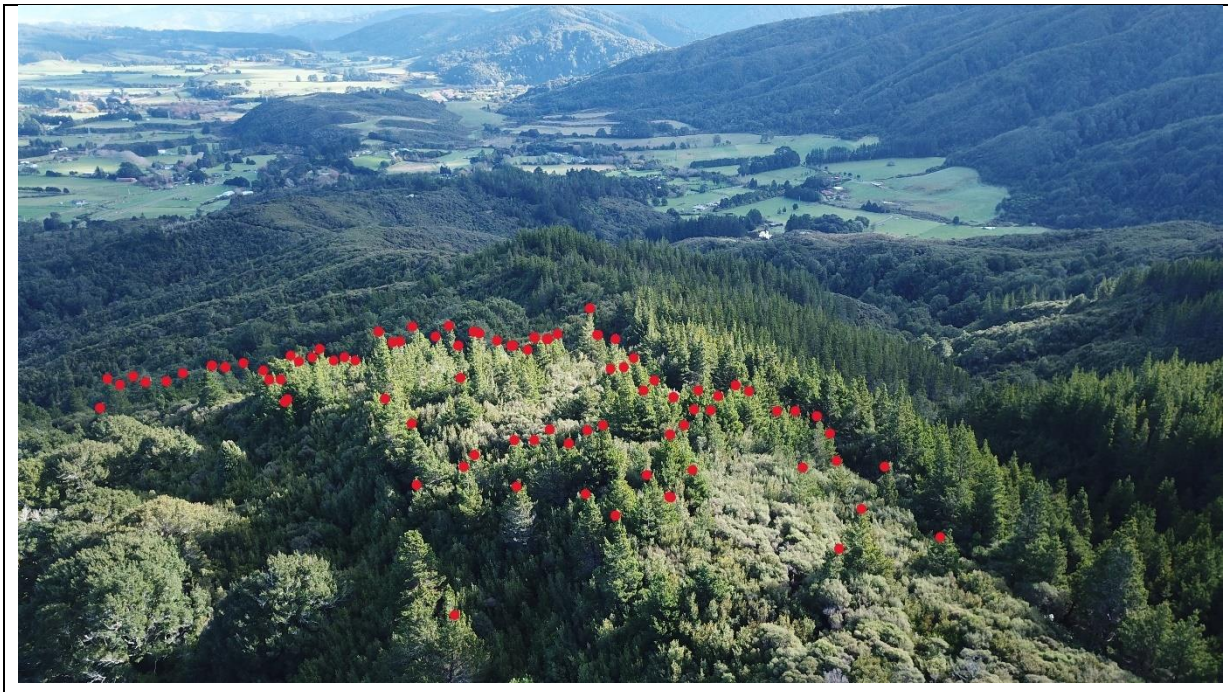


Photo 6. Outlier wilding conifers beyond historic erosion control plantings, Marchant Ridge area

In the Back Track area, we are progressively pushing back the invasion of wilding conifers to the pine plantations that they came from. No work was done at this site in the 2024/25 year.

Summary table for Progressive containment species 2024/25

Species	Number of adult plants	Number of juvenile plants	Infestation Area	Sites with plants present
Purple loosestrife	3,742	1,042	123.77ha	44%
Wilding conifers	600+	2000+	16.6ha	100%

Biodiversity Outcomes

We only take action for these species if they are in certain areas –

Purple loosestrife in wetlands or waterbodies identified as outstanding waterbodies and wetlands in the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region. We have also controlled purple loosestrife strategically in areas not designated as outstanding, that are capable of spreading seed and fragments to those key areas we have designated for control work.

We collaborate with the Department of Conservation (DOC) in the Lake Wairarapa area (Matthews Lagoon and Boggy Pond), where DOC arrange the operational work. At Wario Wetland we work closely with Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Trust on a

management approach that is both effective and considers the significance of the area – using manual control of plants rather than herbicide in most instances.

Wilding conifers where alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems are at risk. Progressive drilling of larger pines (leaving them standing dead for the least destructive degradation over time) supports the growth of the native understory.

Our work ensures the valuable, diverse native ecosystems we are controlling wilding conifers in will, in time, be returned to their natural state and not be dominated by wilding conifers that outcompete natives. By chain sawing smaller conifers, more light reaches the understorey in the shorter term, giving native species more of a competitive advantage.

4.4 Sustained Control programme

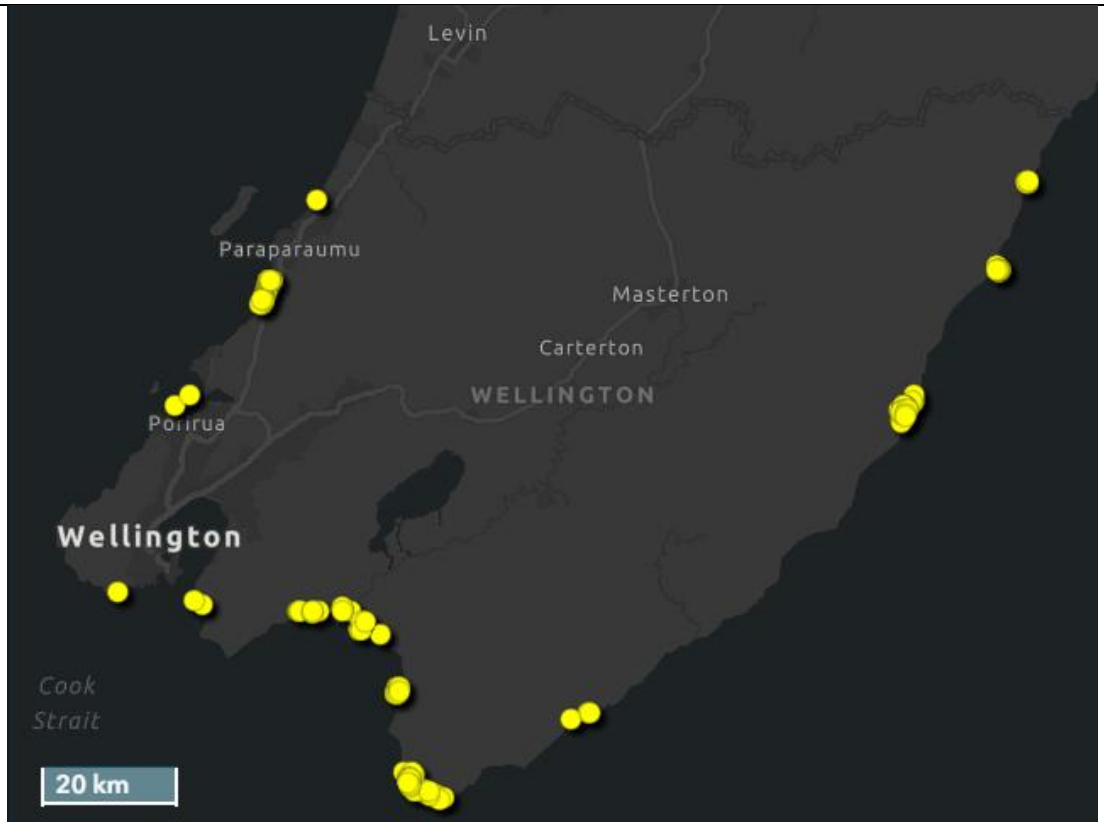
Blue passionflower (*Passiflora caerulea*), boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), climbing spindleberry (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), eelgrass (*Vallisneria spiralis*, *V. gigantea*).

Aim: Control sustained control plant species to reduce their spread and minimise adverse effects.

Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Incident investigation and response Initial investigations for all reported sightings or discoveries of sustained control plants undertaken within 10 working days and decisions documented within 20 working days.	Achieved. We found 51 new sustained control species sites.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Best practice management All management sites visited on scheduled best practise rotation.	Achieved.
Species	**Location of new management sites**
Blue passionflower	Twenty-eight sites: two in Lower Hutt, 15 on the Kāpiti Coast, 11 in Wellington city.
Boneseed	Twenty sites : three in Lower Hutt, one on the Kāpiti Coast, one in the Masterton district, 15 in South Wairarapa.
Climbing spindleberry	Three sites: one on the Kāpiti Coast, two in the Masterton district.

Sustained Control species management site visits 2024/25

Map 19. Blue passionflower management sites

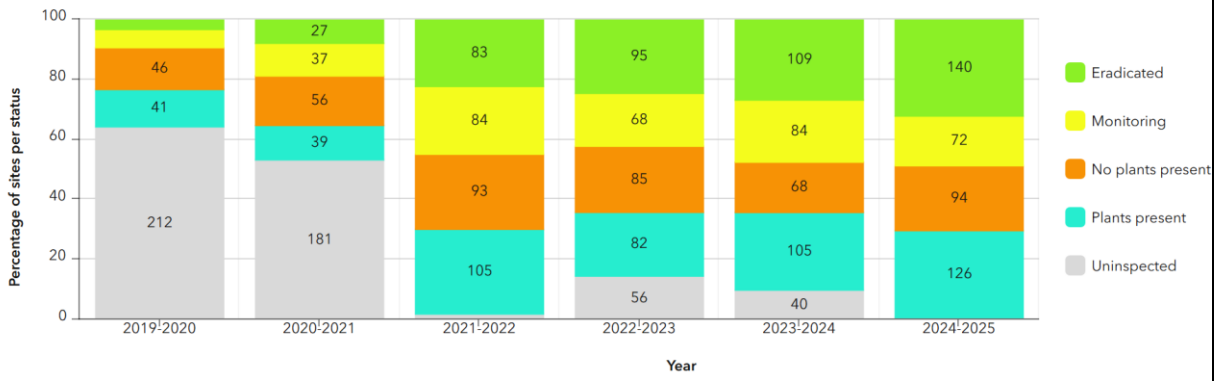


Map 20. Boneseed management sites

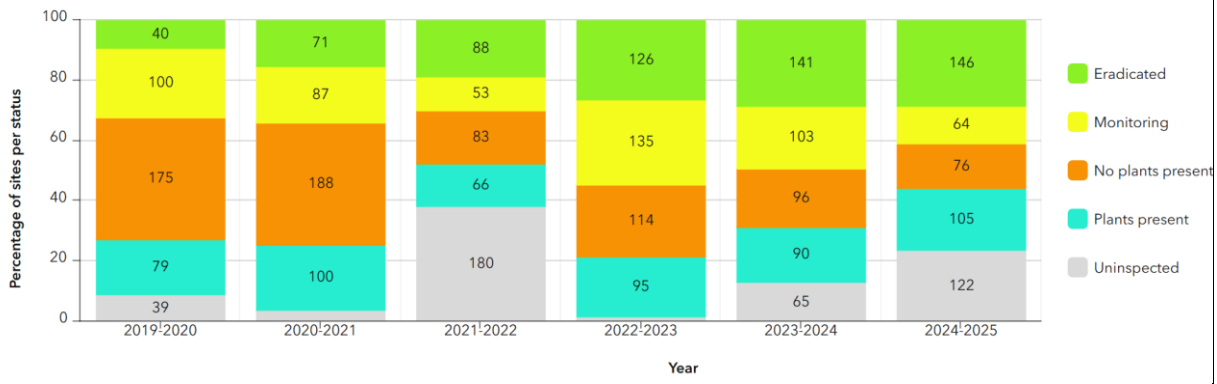
Map 21. Climbing spindleberry management sites

Map 22. Eelgrass management sites

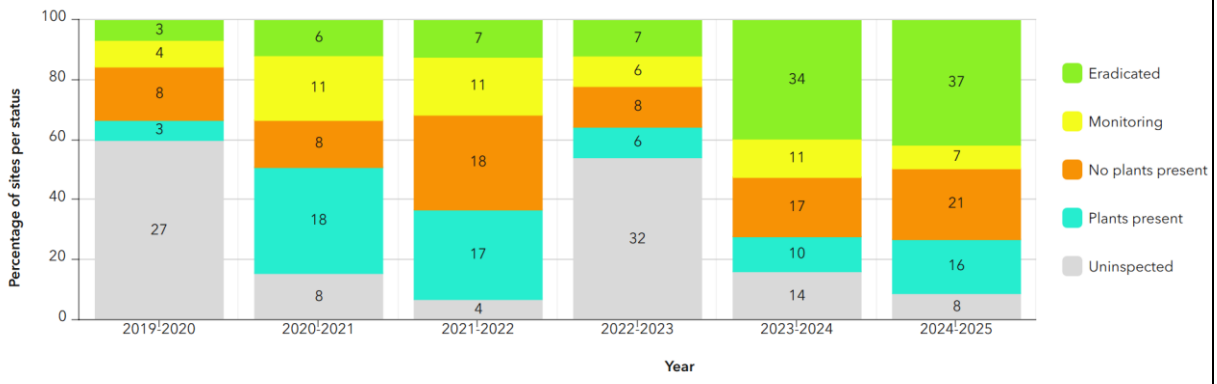
Progress towards sustained control



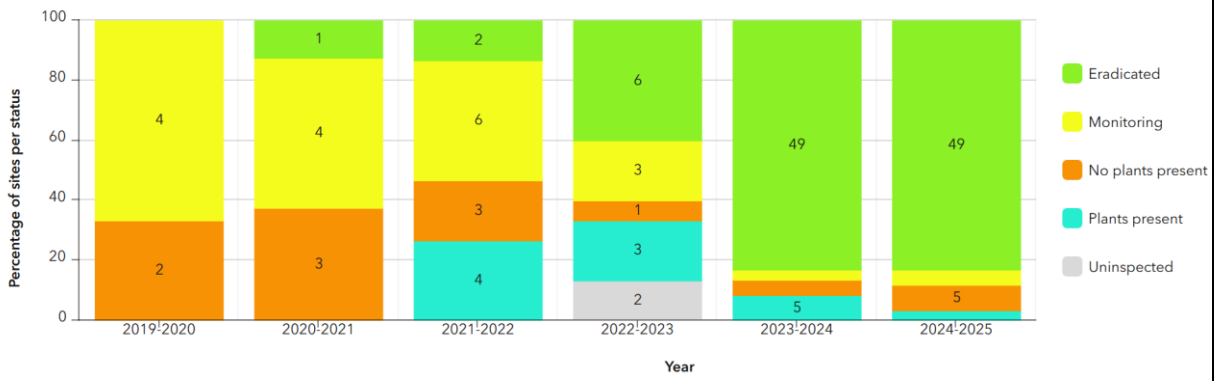
Graph 8. Blue passionflower management - change over time



Graph 9. Boneseed management site status change over time

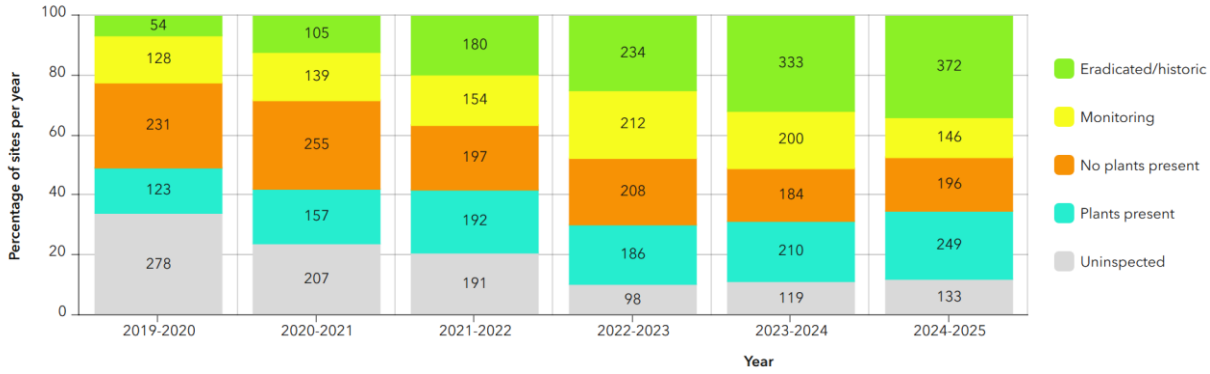


Graph 10. Climbing spindleberry management site status change over time



Graph 11. Eelgrass management site status change over time

Summary table for Sustained control species 2024/25						
Species	**Total active sites**	**Number of sites eradicated**	**Number of adult plants**	**Number of juvenile plants**	**Infestation Area**	**Sites with plants present**
Blue passionflower	295	30	358	3,184	4.53ha	37%
Boneseed	367	7	3,490	2,546	783.98ha	25%
Climbing spindleberry	52	5	136	369	28.99ha	23%
Eelgrass	10	0	420	8	1.06ha	20%



Graph 12. Overall progress for Sustained control species

Biodiversity Outcomes

The proportion of management sites that are eradicated is steadily increasing each year, indicating our approach will meet the objective stated in the RPMP.

We control boneseed in non-productive coastal habitats of high biodiversity value where the indigenous species and environmental values should be protected from colonisation by boneseed, such as the area around Parangarahu Lakes, East Harbour Regional Park.

When left uncontrolled, boneseed can either dominate or form a monoculture over time. This is very evident on the coastal areas around Eastbourne, leading out towards Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui.

At some sites of low density, we're also reducing boneseed in buffer areas surrounding the management sites to reduce seed sources and limit the potential for re-infestation.

Blue passionflower and climbing spindleberry are aggressive, invasive climbers that can smother trees, cause the collapse of forest canopies and impact the ability of native species to regenerate due to the lack of light. We found a large blue passionflower site at Queen Elizabeth Park for which the available budget did not allow complete control, so in the 2025/26 year completing control work will be a priority.

Reducing the density and preventing the spread of eelgrass means the natural rivers, lakes and wetlands in our region experience less sedimentation, flooding and loss of habitat for native species due to eelgrass is avoided.

4.5 Site led programme

Banana passionfruit (*Passiflora mixta*, *P. mollissima*, *P. tripartita*), cathedral bells (*Cobaea scandens*), old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*)

Aim: Control and reduce the geographic distribution and/or extent of these species within the Hutt City Council territorial authority boundary (programme delivered by the Hutt City Council).

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Incident investigation and response Provide compliance enforcement assistance to the Hutt City Council (HCC) within 10 working days of receiving a request.	No longer applicable. Hutt City Council have added climbing asparagus and pampas to their programme and have shifted their focus to controlling these five species in their bush reserves rather than on all land within Lower Hutt territorial boundaries.

4.6 Key Native Ecosystem programme

Pest plants as per (but not limited to) the RPMP Harmful Organism list. Species to target are decided individually at each site.

Aim: Protect and restore representative examples of original indigenous ecosystem types of high value in the Wellington Region (58 sites, approximately 49,000 ha). Below is the pest plant control component of this programme.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Ground based weed control Complete ground-based weed control at 55 sites.	Achieved.
Parangarahu Lakes Area in East Harbour Regional Park is one of our Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) sites. Amongst the raupo surrounding the water we have extensively controlled yellow flag iris, and on the hillsides, we search systematically for boneseed - an invasive ecosystem altering plant which we work to eliminate in key coastal areas. The gorse, while overwhelming in coverage, shelters emerging native plants and allows them to grow up through it. Gorse plants will die eventually when overtopped by native plants and regeneration of gorse will be prevented by a taller canopy layer.	

Photo 7. Parangarahu Lakes Area - Credit: J. Kluge, Greater Wellington

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Aerial based weed control Complete aerial-based weed control at up to four sites.	Achieved.

Biodiversity Outcomes

Each Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) site has an operational plan that guides restoration and maintenance efforts. These plans are developed in collaboration with mana whenua, local councils, private landowners, community groups, and other organisations to ensure long-term protection of these valuable ecosystems.

Restoring damaged ecosystems takes time. Our work focuses on controlling invasive plant and animal pests to protect native species and support ecosystem recovery. These interventions are essential for reversing the impacts of human activity and introduced species.

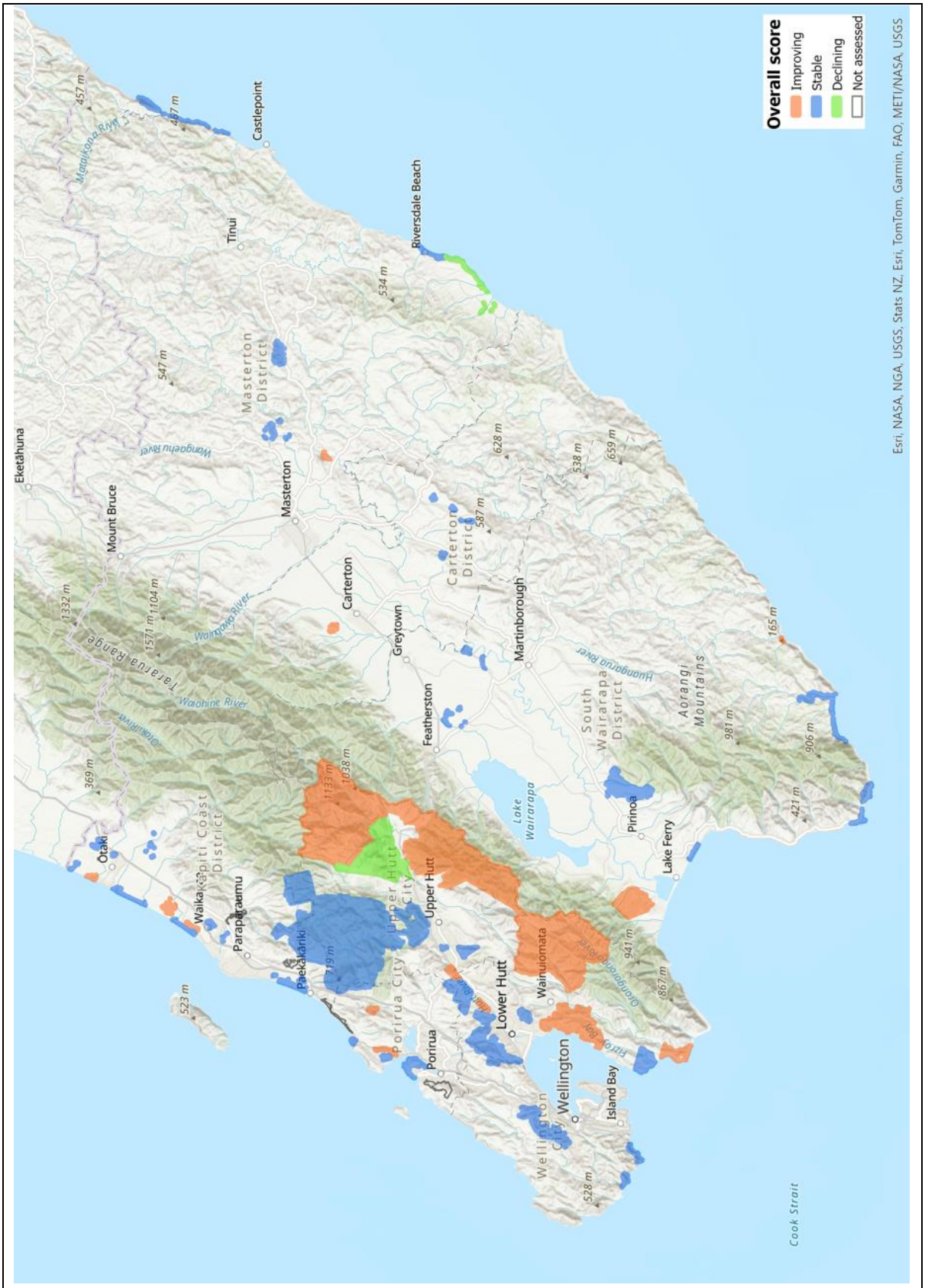
Key ecological outcomes that are sought include greater abundance and coverage of native species, improved survival and recruitment of native seedlings, increased habitat and resources for indigenous fauna and enhanced water quality.

To track progress, our Environment Restoration team conducts ecological assessments every five years, aligned with reviews of KNE operational plans. These assessments evaluate:

- **Ecological integrity** including ecosystem representation, indigenous species dominance, species occupancy, and ecosystem function.
- **Ecosystem pressures** such as fencing status, pest presence, and the extent of intervention work.

Each site receives a combined score based on these factors, indicating its overall ecological trend.

Map 23 presents the overall scores for all assessed KNE sites. However, since assessments span a five-year period, site conditions may have changed since the last evaluation. As a result, current scores could differ if reassessed today.



Map 23. KNE site state and trend overall assessments.

4.7 National Pest Plant Accord

Aim: Prevent the sale, distribution and propagation of a set list of plants within the Wellington Region.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Incident investigation and response Initial investigations for all reports of pest plants on the National Pest Plant Accord list undertaken within five working days.	Achieved.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Events Events that sell plants monitored and retail outlets visited.	Achieved. We visited 32 plant retailers, and contacted other outlets via email. Six Wairarapa based events attended and four species from the NPPA list were prevented from being sold.

4.8 National Interest Pest Response programme

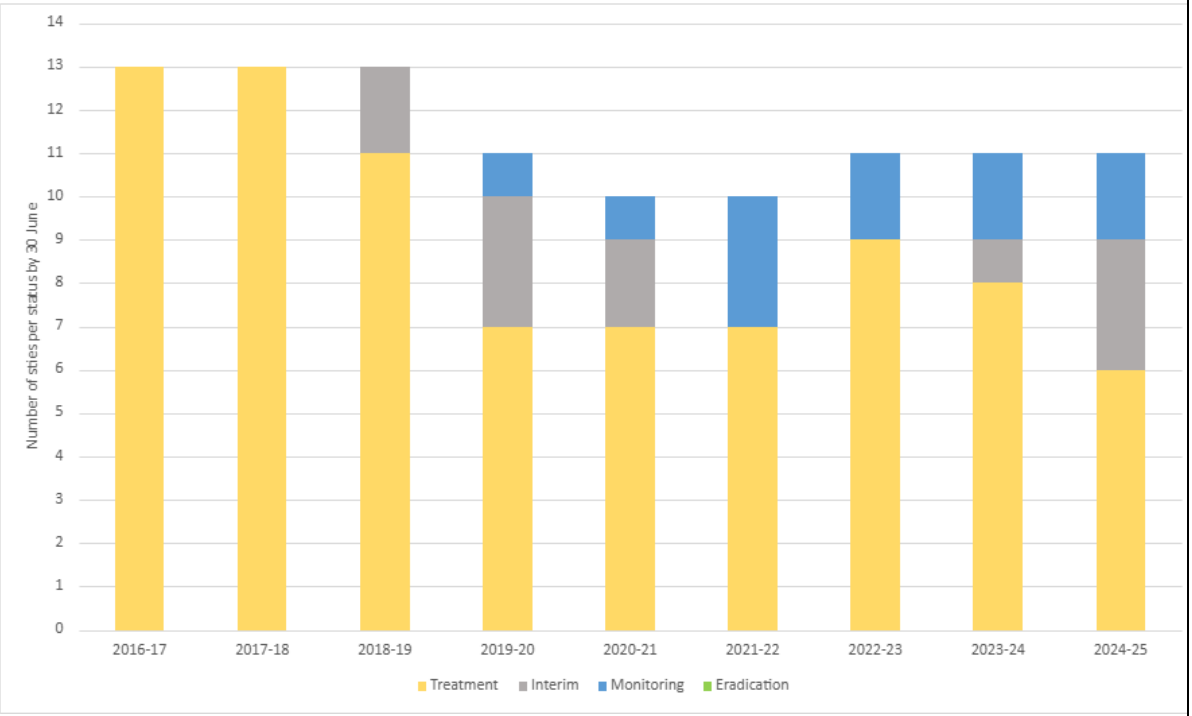
Aim: Eradicate National Interest Pest Response (NIPR) plants from the Wellington Region, as directed by the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Identify new sites New incursion sites of National Interest Pest Response plants are identified.	Achieved. One new site consisting of tanks containing water hyacinth was found in Carterton and reported to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). This resulted in the destruction of all plants on site equating to approximately 155 kilograms of water hyacinth.

Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Incident investigation and response Response to reports from the public on National Interest Pest Response plants will initially be responded to within five working days and actions completed within 20 working days.	Achieved.

Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Best practice management All Manchurian wild rice management sites visited and control undertaken on scheduled best practise rotation.	Achieved. All 115 active sites inspected, plants present and controlled at 52 of these sites.

Progress towards eradication



Graph 13. Change in Manchurian wild rice infestation status for the Wellington Region

- Treatment sites have live foliage.

- Interim sites have had no live foliage found for up to two years.
- Monitored sites have had no live foliage found for two to ten years.
- After ten consecutive years of no live foliage found, a site is classified as Eradicated.

The national goal for Manchurian wild rice management includes the eradication of populations in Greater Wellington.

We aim to see an annual decrease in the number of adult plants observed and in the infestation area of existing sites, and we report to MPI annually.

Map 24. Manchurian wild rice sites, Kāpiti Coast.

4.9 Biocontrol programme

Aim: Undertake Biocontrol for prioritised target weeds in the Wellington Region.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Release and transfers of biocontrol agents Biocontrol agents are released (directly from Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research) or transferred from other translocation sites.	Achieved. Transfers were completed for 28 tradescantia leaf spot fungus sites and one ragwort plume moth site.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Progress towards establishment Monitor agents until it is determined that a given agent has successfully established and is self-spreading or has failed to establish.	Ongoing - see table below.

Summary of Biocontrol agent status for 2024/25			
Biocontrol Agent	**Release year**	**Number of Releases/Transfers**	**Monitoring Results**
Boneseed leaf roller	2007	8	Suspect failure
Broom gall mite	2009	800+	Widespread
Broom leaf beetle	2009	3	Uncertain
Broom psyllid	1995	1000+	Widespread
Broom seed beetle	1994	600+	Widespread
Broom shoot moth	2008	3	Uncertain
Buddleia leaf weevil	2007	100+	Widespread
Darwin's barberry seed weevil	2016	4	Present
Gorse colonial hard shoot moth	2002	5	Failed
Gorse pod moth	1997	abundant	Widespread
Gorse soft shoot moth	2007	12	Widespread
Gorse spider mite	1989	abundant	Widespread
Gorse thrips	1990	abundant	Widespread
Hemlock moth	-	-	Widespread
Japanese Honshu white admiral butterfly	2017	11	Present
Mistflower gall fly	2001	3	Established
Mistflower fungus	2009	1	Established
Old man's beard leaf fungus	1997	3	Failed
Old man's beard leaf miner	1995	abundant	Widespread
Old man's beard sawfly	2002	2	Failed
Old man's beard mite	2021	4	Widespread
Privet lace bug	2015	1	Failed
Cinnabar moth	2006	abundant	Widespread
Ragwort plume moth	2012	12	Established
Ragwort flea beetle	1988	abundant	Widespread
Smilax rust	2020	19	Uncertain
Californian thistle flea beetle	1994	2	Failed
Californian thistle gall fly	2006	1	Failed
Californian thistle leaf beetle	1993	3	Failed
Californian thistle stem miner	2010	2	Uncertain

Green thistle beetle	2008	200+	Widespread
Nodding thistle receptacle weevil	1972	9	Widespread
Nodding thistle crown weevil	1990	4	Established
Nodding thistle gall fly	2005	12	Established
Scotch thistle gall fly	2005	79	Widespread
Tradescantia leaf beetle	2011	12	Established
Tradescantia stem beetle	2012	10	Suspect failure
Tradescantia tip beetle	2013	9	Suspect failure
Tradescantia yellow leaf spot fungus	2018	38	Established

Biodiversity Outcomes

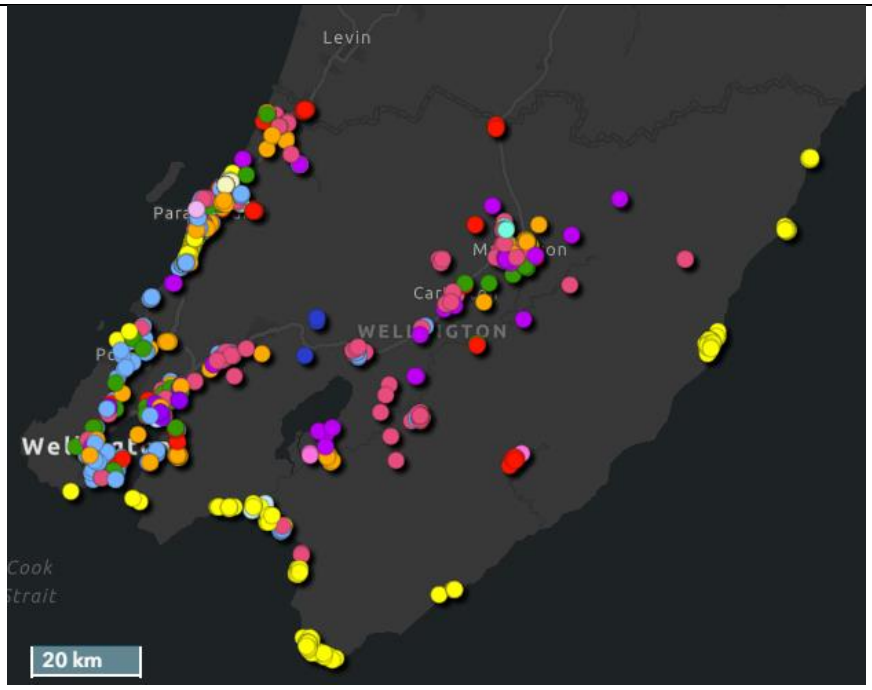
Biocontrol agents are a safe, cost-effective and important tool to help manage weed populations when the other management options are limited due to the target species' abundance and distribution, lack of effective control measures, or presence in sensitive areas.

Once established, over a long time, a biocontrol agent can ideally reduce the health of a pest plant population to a point where the species is present but no longer has a competitive advantage and any ecosystem altering effects are negated.

Tradescantia yellow leaf spot fungus has continued to establish and spread around the region, and we have been able to transfer it to new sites as well. We must now wait to see whether it is as effective here as in other areas of New Zealand where some tradescantia sites have experienced significant damage, allowing native regeneration to occur and preventing the usual spread of the weed.

The old man's beard mite has also continued to spread around the region with little assistance, and we wait to see what effect this insect can have on old man's beard populations around the region – we hope to start seeing visible signs of infection: growth abnormalities in developing shoot tips and leaves, which can reduce growth rates and may cause shoots to die. Because old man's beard is a weed that is very much in the public eye, we often receive requests for assistance to control old man's beard infestations: we have high hopes for this particular biocontrol agent.

On the next page is an indication of the distribution of all the RPMP pest plant species (different colours for different species) sites in 2024/25, showing the value of biocontrol agents for their potential in helping to manage invasive species.



Map 25. Summary of RPMP 2024/25 pest plant sites

4.10 Check, Clean, Dry programme

Aim: Keep waterways in the Wellington Region free of invasive freshwater pests.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Promote CCD message	
Attend outdoor/freshwater events.	Achieved.
Produce regular social media posts during summer.	Attended four freshwater events across the region. Ten social media posts circulated.
Distribute CCD resources to relevant retailers, etc, in the region.	CCD collateral delivered to 15 stores.
	Biosecurity New Zealand updated CCD procedures following the discovery of the freshwater gold clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) in the Waikato region, and we distributed the new promotional material with an emphasis on the new threat.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Waterside CCD signs maintained	
Review and maintain 74 waterside signs at least once over the season.	Achieved.
	All 74 signs replaced with new CCD messaging due to the Waikato gold clam infestation.

5. Kīrearea | Pest Animals

5.1 Exclusion programme

Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*, *Macropus eugenii*).

Aim: Prevent the establishment of wallabies in the Wellington Region.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Identify new sites New incursion sites of wallabies are identified.	Achieved. No new wallaby incursions were identified. All reported wallaby sightings were investigated with a high level of confidence in our zero detections.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Incident investigation and response Initial investigations for all reports undertaken within five working days. Response plans developed and implemented within 20 working days. Continue to work with MPI and provide surveillance activities for any new sightings in the region.	Achieved. All investigations were responded to within the appropriate timeframes. We report any sightings through MPI's national database 'Wall-IS'.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Incident investigation and response Report on sites of interest/recent investigations.	Achieved. The most recent investigation was a possible reported sighting of a wallaby along the Remutaka Hill Road and Tauwharenīkau River upstream of Tutuwai Hut. Investigation resulted in no detection of any wallaby presence.
Biodiversity Outcomes	
The National Wallaby Eradication Programme objective is to contain wallabies within designated containment areas by 2025, by reducing outlier populations and reducing wallaby numbers within buffer areas inside containment (source: Hop-to-it-Presentation.pdf) Currently, wallabies in the North Island are found on Kawau Island in the Auckland region and in the Rotorua Lakes area. Containing them to these areas – preventing	

their spread – makes eradication possible. Zero detections of wallabies in our region this year is a good result that feeds into the national objective.

The damage wallabies do - damaging native forests and preventing regeneration, destroying habitat for native species, competing with livestock for feed resources, increasing erosion risks and decreasing water quality, are magnified when added to the impacts caused by other invasive herbivores already present.

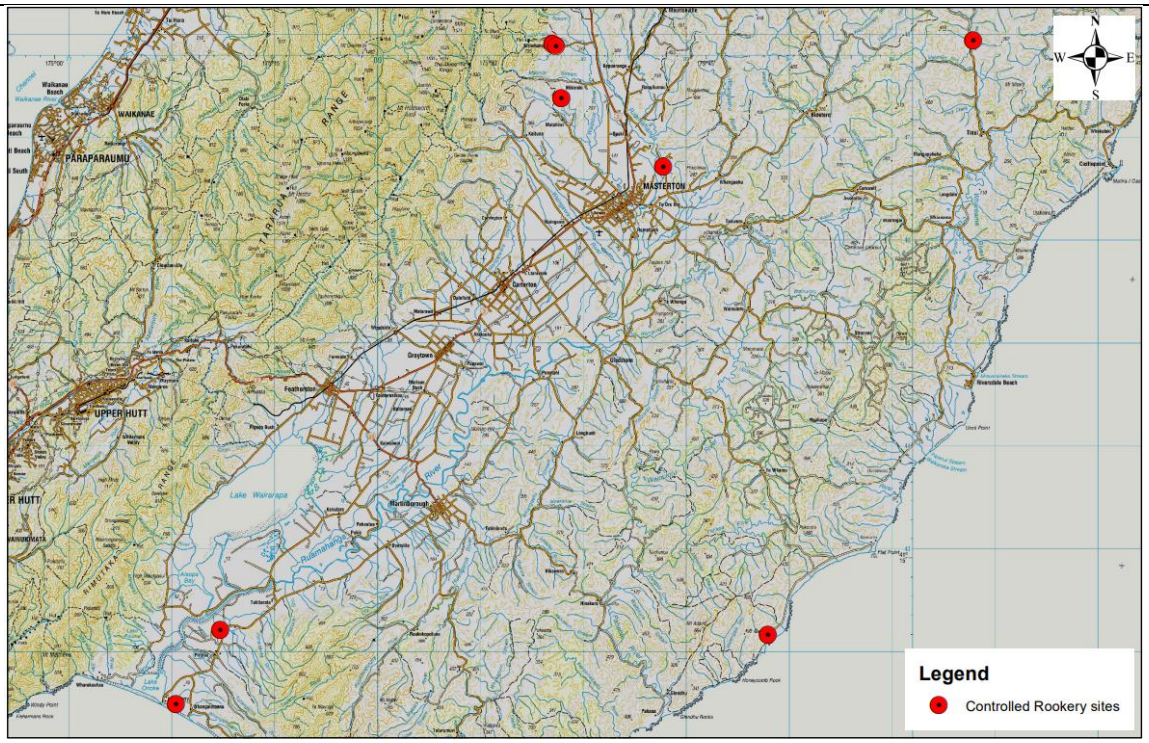
Keeping wallabies out of our region prevents a decrease in the resilience and quality of our native biodiversity.

5.2 Eradication programme

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

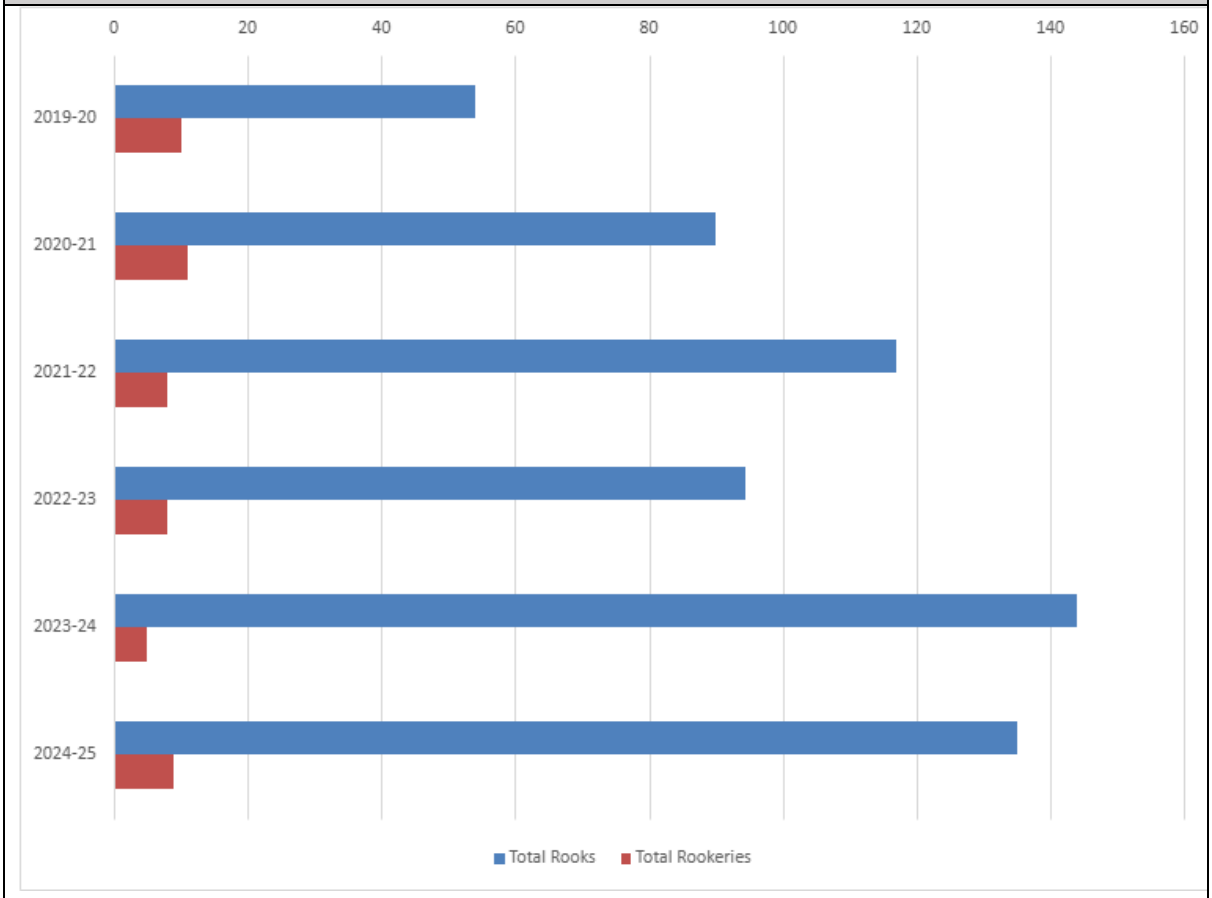
Aim: Eradicate all rooks from the Wellington Region.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Identify new sites Historic rookeries and new reported rookeries are surveyed.	Achieved. Three breeding rookeries identified – two less than the previous year.
Pre-control surveillance in September 2024 resulted in aerial rook nest baiting taking place in October 2024, with visits to eight of the nine identified active rookeries. There were two less 'active nests' containing eggs or chicks than the previous year and while the number of empty nests is the same as the previous year, these were distributed differently. Empty nests were also treated with the toxin DRC1339 in order to control any rook that interacts with a nest. The 'ninth' rookery had one nest, and two birds observed there, with a decision made to shoot rather than bait the empty nest. Upon returning to carry out control, the nest was deserted. It is likely the nest was built by a male bird, and that both rooks seen there were males. No rooks were detected around Wellington or the Kāpiti Coast this year, even after extensive media efforts.	
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Best practice management Control (by aerial nest treatment or ground control) of rooks at all known sites is undertaken.	Achieved. Seven active nests controlled that held eggs or chicks. We controlled 23 nests that were fresh but did not contain eggs or chicks.



Map 26. Wellington Region active and controlled rookery sites, 2024.

Progress towards eradication



Graph 14. Wellington Region rook trends for the duration of the 2019-39 Regional Pest Management Plan.

Note – an error in the previous year's report stated the total number of nests as 9 – the correct value was 32. This has been corrected in the data used for graphing.

Horizons Regional Council undertook their annual regional aerial rook nest baiting operation before us with a total of 182 active nests treated at 44 rookeries.

A new rookery was found on land bordering our regional boundary with Horowhenua that held 51 nests of which 19 were 'active' holding eggs or chicks. A second check of treated rookeries later failed to identify any further active nests requiring baiting.

We regularly meet with Horizons Regional Council and other interested agencies to co-ordinate and discuss nest baiting programmes, methodologies, etc, and to collaborate in order to keep our northern boundary under the present form of control.

Regional Councils collaborate nationally to increase strategic awareness of rook population dynamics. Information is entered to a shared database, although this does not yet have enough data to offer a true perspective on national progress in eradicating rooks.

Biodiversity Outcomes

Our own aerial nest baiting programme is delivering results that may achieve the end goal of no breeding rookeries in our region by 2029.

We maintain a high level of surveillance and intend to ensure the few infrequent rooks that visit the Kāpiti Coast and other areas west of Wairarapa do not get the opportunity to settle and expand their numbers.

We also carry out summer ground baiting programmes to target small satellite flocks of rooks as and when appropriate.

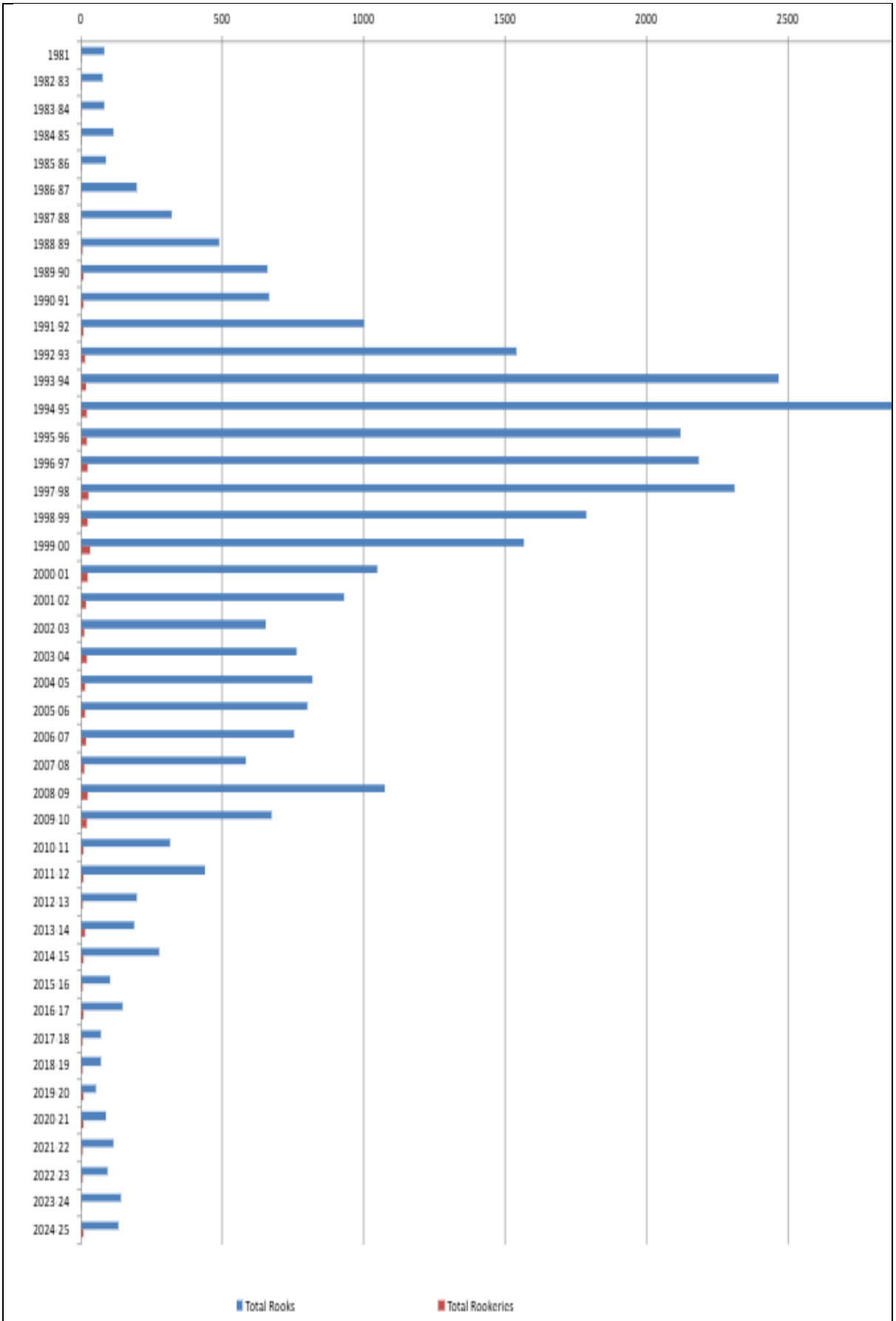
The gains made since rook numbers were at their maximum in the early 1990's are significant: the population estimated at just over 3000 rooks is now calculated to be around 135.

We have gone from 24 active nests (containing eggs and/or chicks) in 1981, to a high of 881 active nests in 1994, down to seven active nests this season, 45 years later!

Much of New Zealand is vulnerable to colonisation by rooks, with suitable habitat, topography and climatic conditions. The potential foraging area of a colony left uncontrolled may extend from around 15 to over 100 square kilometres around the rookery or roost (LandCare Report, 2010).

Using industry calculations, it is estimated that 3000 rooks could remove all seed from 30 hectares over a 15 day period (LandCare Report, 2010).

3000 rooks equate to around 1200kg of foraging bird biomass (Bionet Rook Guidelines).



Graph 15. Historic rook trends since control began in the Wellington Region

5.3 Sustained Control programme

Feral rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), wasps (common wasp – *Vespula vulgaris*, German wasp – *V. germanica*, Australian paper wasp – *Polistes humilis*, Asian paper wasp – *P. chinensis*).

Aim: Sustained control of rabbits to minimise adverse effects to the environment and maintain populations below Level 5 McLeans Scale (See Appendix 2).

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Public enquiries Response to public enquiries about feral rabbits undertaken within 10 working days.	Achieved. We received 89 enquiries, with another 60 enquiries regarding sale of control measures.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Cost-recovery management Appropriate control undertaken at sites for • Hutt City Council (HCC) • Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) • Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) • Wellington City Council (WCC) • Te Awa Kairangi – Hutt River • Ōtaki River • Waikanae River • Our programmes including, KNE, Recloaking Papatūānuku, Planting operations and Wairarapa Moana • Private landowners	Achieved. Feral rabbit management undertaken across 65 distinct sites using night shooting techniques with 3,300 rabbits shot. In response to client enquiries, 80 sites were treated with pindone carrot or pindone pellets, as cost recovery control.
Pindone control	
We manufacture and apply pindone carrot bait for private landowners, at landowner/occupier cost. We used 9L of pindone concentrate, which corresponds to 1,800kg of pindone carrot bait applied within the region. Two examples of this are: **Riversdale**: In April 2025, 110 kg of pindone carrot bait was laid on 13 residential properties in Riversdale (eastern Wairarapa), where rabbits have been an issue for local ratepayers for a long time. While 54 ratepayers gave consent to have pindone laid, boundary fencing issues meant only 13 properties could be treated. Pindone carrot bait was laid for a few rural lifestyle block owners in Greytown and Masterton,	

but in general property owners faced low pressure from rabbit issues in the Wairarapa in 2024/25.

Tawa Bush Reserves: Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves (in Tawa) undertook a community led rabbit control effort. We worked with landowners to undertake pindone control on 40 private properties surrounding the Tawa Bush Reserves.

Night shooting

We carry out night shooting throughout the year for rabbit control around the region, often on a monthly schedule, to reduce rabbit numbers, and in some cases specifically to protect planting sites.

Rabbit control across HCC and WCC sites continues to be effective, with many long-standing sites now showing little to no rabbit activity. In HCC, the programme has transitioned to a purely search-and-destroy approach, responding to sightings rather than maintaining fixed target sites. In contrast, WCC continues to identify and prioritise specific target areas based on need, while sites where rabbits have been completely removed are no longer visited on a routine basis. This shift has allowed resources to be redirected to other parks and reserves, where public sightings and thermal surveys help identify new populations for control.

At KCDC sites, only one-third the number of rabbits were removed compared to the previous year, despite similar levels of effort. Sustained control efforts and targeted pindone treatments have likely driven this apparent decline in local populations.

While the total number of rabbits shot under the Recloaking Papatūānuku programme nearly doubled this year, four of the seven sites recorded lower numbers than the previous year. One site alone accounted for roughly 70 percent of the 629 rabbits removed, highlighting a concentrated population and targeted effort. At several sites, however, hares and deer posed a more significant challenge, indicating a shift in pest pressure and the need for broader management strategies.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Monitoring Regional trends are assessed using Modified McLean Scale, Kilometre night counts and fly testing for Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease presence.	Achieved. Average rabbits per kilometre:

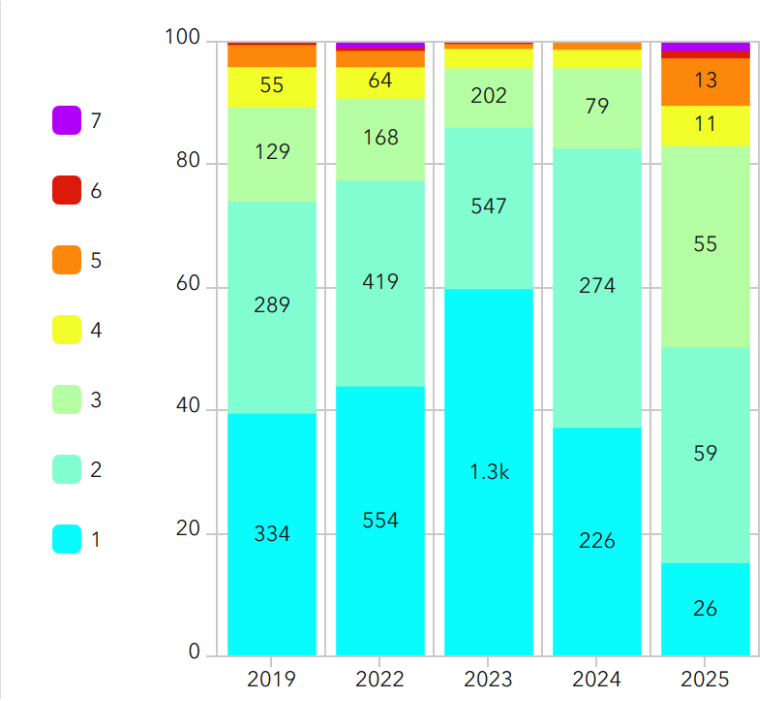
Zone	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Western	13.67	15.60	10.07
Eastern	1.82	1.98	1.52

We first used the rabbit night count methodology in 2021/22, along the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and the Waikanae River, and now rabbit night count routes include locations along the WCC's Skyline Walkway ('Western zone'), and on six Wairarapa properties ('Eastern zone'),

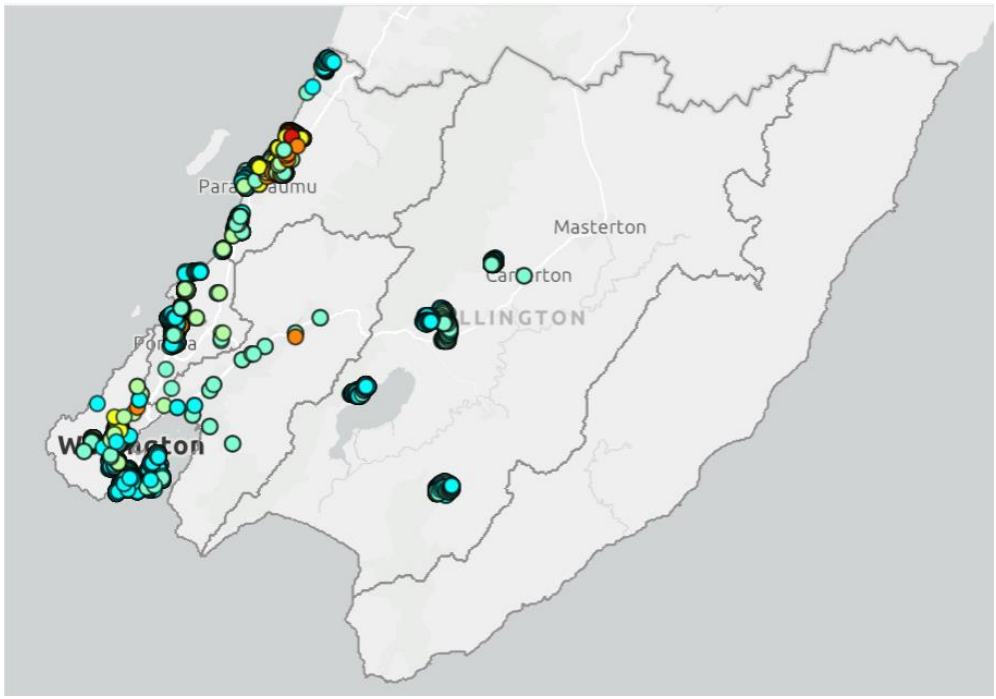
In addition to night counts we put fly traps out at 39 sites around the region (23 in the east, 16 in the west) for rabbit virus sampling. Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research (MWLCR) analyse the samples (results were not available at the time of writing).

Modified McLean Scale monitoring (MMS) is a survey method we carry out annually, at the same sites. This gives us a constant sample of how the region is tracking with

rabbit population density. The previous two years (2023 and 2024) showed a decline in moderate to high density populations (MMS scale 4-6 from the heights of 2021/22.) However this year has shown a return to some high rabbit density sites scoring 6-7 mms. Rabbit populations in most sites assessed are primarily low-moderate (MMS scale 1-3). Many of these sites do receive rabbit control to some degree. But not all, so this is a useful way to measure overall regional population variance.



Graph 16. Modified McLean Scale for Rabbit surveys, where 7 indicates the highest population density. See Appendix 2 for MMS descriptions



Map 27. Rabbit survey locations and MMS colour coding

Biodiversity Outcomes
We can't account for the number of rabbits removed due to pindone control, but the outcomes are measured as a reduction in the levels seen in monitoring methods such as the Modified McLean Scale of rabbit infestation in areas of control (see Graph 16 above). Combined with targeted removal of ungulates, hares and possums, this takes a significant amount of browsing pressure off new plantings in the region. Most of the hares we control are targeted in regional parks around Recloaking Papatūānuku restoration sites.

Aim: Sustained control of wasps to minimise adverse effects to the environment and protect human health.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Public enquiries Response to public enquiries about wasps undertaken within 10 working days.	Achieved. A total of 21 wasp enquiries were reported this year. This is significantly higher than in 2023/24 and is also reflected in the experiences our field workers had through summer and into autumn.

Area (TLA)	Number of nests reported
CDC	2
HCC	4
KCDC	5
MDC	4
PCC	1
SWDC	2
UHCC	2
WCC	1

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Cost-recovery management Appropriate control undertaken at sites.	Achieved.

Biodiversity Outcomes
Wasps are controlled for the threat they present to the general public, and to industries such as apiculture, viticulture, forestry and agriculture. The occurrence of wasps, whether *Vespula* (common and German wasps) or *Polistes* (paper wasps) species at high densities in native ecosystems are a threat to native invertebrates from predation and competition for food resources.

6. Kaupapa - whakahaere ā-pae | Site led programmes

6.1 Predator Free Wellington

Mustelids (ferrets – *Mustela furo*, stoats – *M. erminea*, weasels – *M. nivalis*), possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*, *R. rattus*).

Aim: Eliminate and maintain elimination of mustelids, possums and rats from land contained within the boundaries of the Predator Free Wellington initiative (Phase one - Miramar Peninsula, Phase two – Owhiro Bay to CBD).

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Community engagement Permission gained from landowner /occupiers to work on private land. Community enabled and trained to commence predator control work in Phase two and maintain the successes in Phase one (Miramar Peninsula). Support for project from community maintained.	Achieved. Landowner permissions and engagement continue to be acquired as needed. Volunteer training and engagement continues to grow as we expand our operation into more areas accessible to the public.

All land access needed to date has been secured by community outreach initiatives. As the operation requires more permissions, those needs are met by the Community Outreach and Field teams.

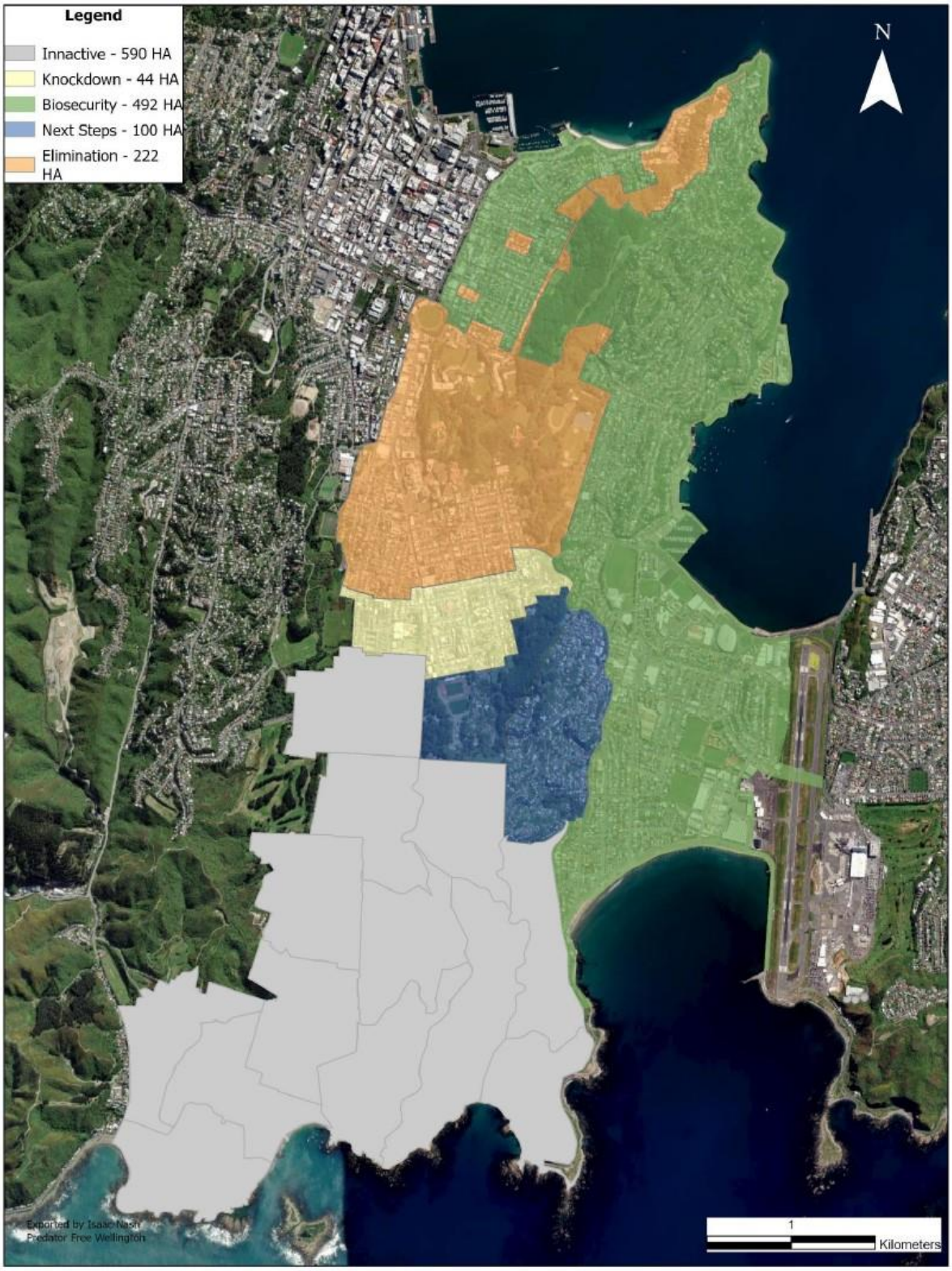
Volunteer involvement is continuing to grow. The community are now taking on substantial parts of eradication efforts in the public spaces in Wellington. This includes parts of Mt Victoria, and Truby King Park.

Wellingtonians are now being contacted by text and email as an improved process to inform them of our visits to their properties. Public support remains high with staff being welcomed onto properties, largely due to the work invested in creating and maintaining relationships with our stakeholders.

A great deal of effort is invested in community outreach. We consider it our obligation to share what we have learned and do in this space, with any other community that wants to use this knowledge.

Regular community presentations occurred during the year, to schools, kindergartens, Wellington College and Victoria University, community groups such as residents' associations, rotary clubs, Lions Clubs, other Predator Free groups, and to events such as community fairs and the Kotahi Music Festival.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Progress towards eradication	
Maintain the biosecurity network and predator freedom of Miramar Peninsula.	Biosecurity status is maintained and incursion events are detected and eliminated as soon as possible.
Continue eradication of target species in the Phase two area and implementation of the Phase two biosecurity network monitoring cleared areas.	Work in Phase two continues. We are over halfway through the Phase two operational area. Currently we have: • 336 hectares operational • 492 hectares in biosecurity status • 590 hectares inactive.
Species	**Result and Details**
Norway rat	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Ship rat	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Ferret	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Stoat	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Weasel	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Possum	Elimination currently under way in Phase 2
Biodiversity Outcomes	
With the elimination and reduction of the target species many native species have been given the space to thrive and proliferate. Kārearea (falcon) have been successfully breeding in Miramar for several years now and for the first time, species such as kākāriki (red crowned parakeet) and kākā have been recorded on detection cameras. Since the project began there has been a 91 percent increase in native bird detections in the most recent bird count monitor. There is widespread and equitable participation across the project. This means the ecological and wellbeing benefits, such as rat free homes or increased wildlife, and potential benefits of participating, such as improvements to people's psychological, physical and social wellbeing, are not limited to particular sectors of society.	



Map 28. PFW operational areas 2024/25

6.2 Regional Predator Control programme

Mustelids (ferrets – *Mustela furo*, stoats – *M. erminea*, weasels – *M. nivalis*), possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), pest cat (*Felis catus*).

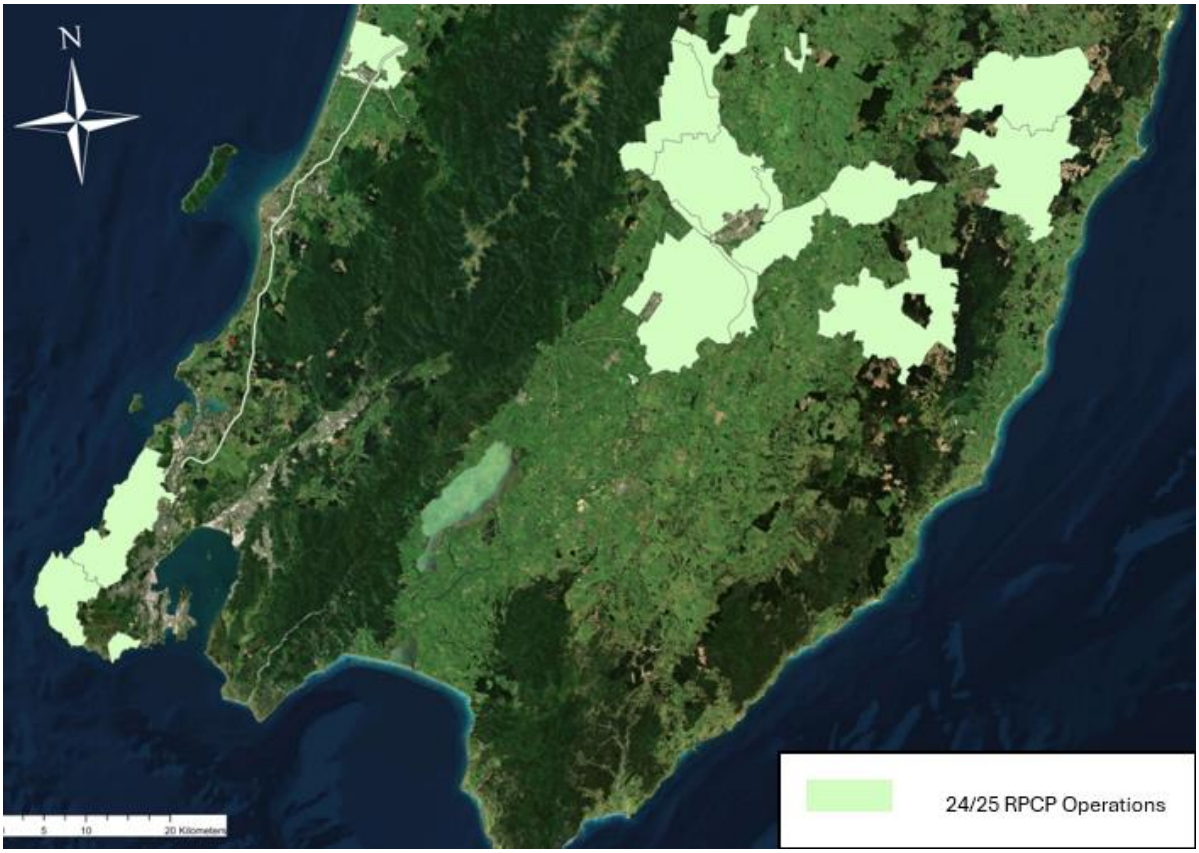
Aim: Control possums and other predators that are a serious threat to our native biodiversity and economy.

Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Possum management Planned control at all possum management sites completed **%** of the total RPCP area of 86,821 hectares.	Achieved. Planned control was implemented in 100 percent of the RPCP area. Additional areas also received control.

Summary of 2024/25 management activities

Site	**Whaitua (catchment)**	**Area (ha)**	**Control activities completed?**
Ruamahanga Mustelid	Ruamahanga	1,068	DOC250 trapping and servicing of brodifacoum bait stations
Waingawa to Gladstone Bridge	Ruamahanga	1,547	DOC250 trapping and servicing of brodifacoum bait stations
Upper Waingawa	Ruamahanga	511	Install and service DOC250 traps
Ōtaki	Kāpiti	3,694	DOC250 trapping and servicing of brodifacoum bait stations
Weston Exclusion	Ruamahanga	608	Brodifacoum bait stations and trapping
Waipoua	Ruamahanga	10,670	Brodifacoum bait stations
Homebush - Te Ore Ore	Ruamahanga	4,788	Brodifacoum bait stations
Sulphur Wells - Rewanui	Ruamahanga	5,817	Brodifacoum bait stations
Carterton Taratahi	Ruamahanga	15,315	Removing bait stations
Tinui	Eastern Wairarapa	10,907	Brodifacoum bait stations
Langdale	Eastern Wairarapa	11,290	Brodifacoum bait stations
Ohariu-Makara	Whanganui-a-Tara	8,568	Cyanide and brodifacoum bait stations
Terawhiti	Whanganui-a-Tara	4,878	Cyanide bait stations and night shooting
Te Kopahou	Whanganui-a-Tara	729	AT220 trapping
Tararua Foothills	Ruamahanga	7,809	Brodifacoum and cyanide bait stations
Tinui North	Eastern Wairarapa	7,177	Contracted out

Predator Pathways	Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua & Kāpiti	1,854	Install and service DOC250 traps
Total		**97,230**	



Map 29. Regional Predator Control Programme operational areas where possum and mustelid control was delivered in 2024/25

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Possum Monitoring Possum populations monitored at selected sites.	Achieved.

Possum monitoring using waxtags was planned and undertaken in the Tinui North and Te Kopahou areas following possum control.

Te Kopahou (525 hectares): Monitored in March 2025. This is a trend monitor to understand the effectiveness of an AT220 trap network overtime. Results came in at 48 percent Wax Tag Index (WTI), which equates to a Residual Trap Catch (RTC) of approximately 13 percent. This is down from 68 percent WTI pre-trap installation.

Tinui North (6,344 hectares): Monitored in January 2025 post control with a WTI of 14 percent equating to approximately a 1.2 percent RTC.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Predator management Planned control at all predator management sites completed. 12 services/year	Achieved. All planned predator control was undertaken, with 12 services to each trap in the year, as scheduled.

Summary of 2024/25 management activities

Site	Whaitua/ catchment	Area (ha)	Number of trap services planned for the year	Ferrets trapped	Stoats trapped	Weasels trapped	Pest cats
Ruamahanga	Ruamahanga	1086	12	0	1	5	6
Te Whiti	Ruamahanga	1574	12	1	1	16	64
Ōtaki	Kāpiti	3694	12	6	1	1	22
			Total	7	3	22	92

The following were not targeted species but were also trapped: 456 hedgehogs, 187 rats.

Biodiversity Outcomes

Ōtaki mustelid control

There have been a few sightings of bittern in the O Te Pua wetland which the Ōtaki Mustelid programme surrounds. This is a positive sign and highlights the importance of ongoing predator control.

Ruamahanga and Te Whiti mustelid control

Both of these operations are specifically placed in areas known to contain dotterel nesting sites, minimising predation to these small, defenceless, native birds. Another huge benefit of these operations is that they disrupt major predator pathways – mustelids are known to travel along natural barriers such as the Ruamahanga River.

6.3 Biosecurity Services programme

European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus occidentalis*), feral deer – fallow, red and sika (*Dama dama*, *Cervus elaphus*, *C. nippon*), feral goat (*Capra hircus*), magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*, *G. tibicen hypoleuca*), feral rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), mustelids (ferrets – *Mustela furo*, stoats – *M. erminea*, weasels – *M. nivalis*), pest cat (*Felis catus*), possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*, *R. rattus*)

Aim: Provide biosecurity delivery services across the Wellington Region

<table>
<tr><th>Performance Measure</th><th>Result and Details</th></tr>
<tr><td>Small mammal management

Bait station and trapping operations completed at 71 Territorial Authority sites.</td><td>Achieved.

Control delivered at 71 sites.

<table>
<tr><th>Territorial authority</th><th>Number of sites</th></tr>
<tr><td>HCC</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>KCDC</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>WCC</td><td>29</td></tr>
<tr><td>PCC</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>UHCC</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><th>Species trapped</th><th>Number</th></tr>
<tr><td>Hedgehogs</td><td>335</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ferrets</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stoats</td><td>71</td></tr>
<tr><td>Weasels</td><td>51</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pest cats</td><td>32</td></tr>
<tr><td>Possums</td><td>167</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rats</td><td>780</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>1437</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Small mammal management

Trapping operations for predators at Pukaha/Mount Bruce buffer area completed.</td><td>Achieved.

<table>
<tr><th>Species</th><th>Number trapped</th></tr>
<tr><td>Ferrets</td><td>43</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stoats</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Weasels</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pest cats</td><td>69</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>128</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
</table>

Small mammal management

Trapping operations for predators at Wairarapa Moana area completed.

Achieved.

Predator control networks	Number of trap services completed
Lake Domain	12
Kahutara Lagoon	18
Ōnoke Spit extension	12
Ōnoke Spit	12
Pounui Lagoon	17
Te Pouaruhe	16
Tauanui Confluence	12
Barrage Gates	12
Total	**111**

Species trapped	Number
Hedgehogs	152
Ferrets	16
Stoats	39
Weasels	90
Pest cats	66
Rats	364
Total	**727**

Biodiversity Outcomes

A consecutive year of bittern and spotless crake monitoring around the Wairarapa Moana Wetlands by Shane Cotter has seen a significant rise in the numbers of both species.

The male bittern is most vocal in the early mornings and late evenings producing a 'booming' call from a strategic territorial location. The monitoring undertaken at these prime times, provides a picture of the density of males living within a wetland environment.

This was particularly evident at Boggy Pond/Kahutara Lagoon where predator trapping has been ongoing for 12 years. The trapping network remains unchanged at this key wetland complex which is the stronghold for bittern and spotless crake.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Feral Rabbit management Feral rabbit control completed at all agreed Territorial Authority sites and Recloaking Papatūānuku sites.	Achieved. Control delivered as detailed in the Sustained control (Rabbits) section.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Ungulate management Planned control at all agreed deer, goat and pig management sites completed.	Achieved.

Summary of 2024/25 ungulate control

Hutt City Council

Species	Deer	Goats	Pigs	Ungulate total	Hunter days	Kills per day
Contractors	52	0	1	53	39	1.36
Our staff	34	0	9	43	18	2.39
Total	86	0	10	96	57	1.68

Recloaking Papatūānuku

Species	Deer	Goats	Pigs	Ungulate total	Hunter days	Kills per day
Battle Hill	0	1	0	1	0.5	2
Kaitoke	51	0	0	51	24	2.13

Other Sites and Projects

Species	Deer	Goats	Pigs	Ungulate total	Hunter days	Kills per day
Puketiro Forest	0	61	0	61	4	15.25
Wainuiomata Planting Operations site	5	0	0	5	2	2.5
WOWCAZUP	5	10	0	15	5	3
Private Property	9	15	0	24	6	4

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Magpie enquiries Responded to owners/occupiers wanting to undertake magpie control with 15 days of receiving a request for information and/or assistance.	Achieved. Responded to 23 magpie enquiries across the region.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Magpie control Undertake control of magpies within 10 working days where there is a threat of injury to people.	Achieved.
Performance Measure	**Result and Details**
Argentine ant* control Control of Argentine ants at Queen Elizabeth Park and Kāpiti Boating Club. (*this species is listed as a Harmful Organism in the RPMP 2019-39)	Achieved. Treated these two sites in Kāpiti Coast district.

6.4 Key Native Ecosystem programme

European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus occidentalis*), feral deer – fallow, red and sika (*Dama dama*, *Cervus elaphus*, *C. nippon*), feral goat (*Capra hircus*), mustelids (ferrets – *Mustela furo*, stoats – *M. erminea*, weasels – *M. nivalis*), pest cat (*Felis catus*), possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*, *R. rattus*).

Aim: Protect and restore representative examples of original indigenous ecosystem types of high value in the Wellington Region (58 sites, approximately 49,000 ha). Below is the pest control component of this program.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Small mammal management Bait station and trapping operations completed at 69 Key Native Ecosystem (KNE) sites.	Achieved. Control delivered at 69 sites using a variety of different toxins and trapping techniques. We have traps and bait stations operational in KNE's across the region. In most cases these are checked in general on a monthly basis through the year.

Species trapped	Trapping Results
Hedgehogs	2197
Ferrets	30
Stoats	126
Weasels	280
Pest cats	261
Possums	505
Rats	1926
Total	**5325**

The trapping results above summarise our own records as well as those of volunteers who assist us and record their data in the webapp, TrapNZ.

Monitoring results can be viewed at www.gw.govt.nz under Key Native Ecosystem programme - small mammal monitoring.

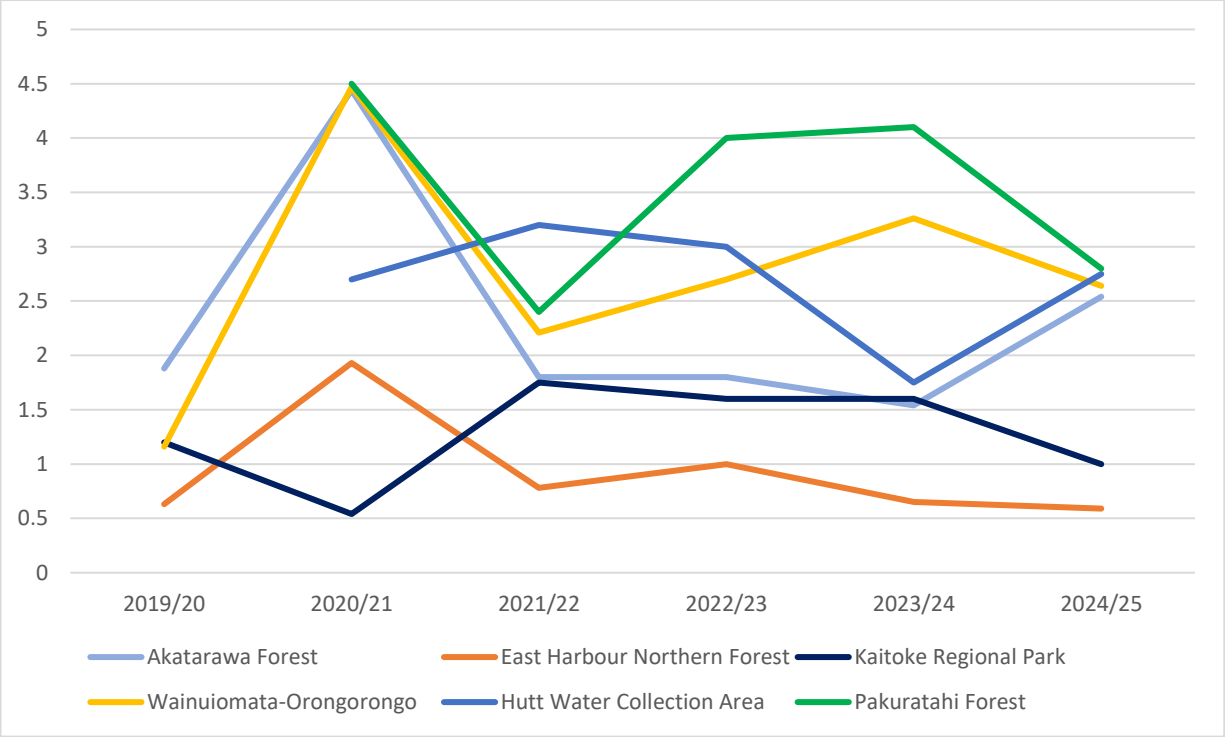
Tracking tunnels are used to establish a tracking rate, expressed as the percentage of all tunnels put out for monitoring that were 'tracked' (footprints left behind) by the species in question. A zero tracking result stated below means the species presence was not identified in the tracking tunnels.

Small mammal monitoring – undertake small mammal monitoring at selected sites					
Hedgehogs: KNE site and tracking rate (% tunnels tracked)					
KNE site		**February 2024**		**February 2025**	
Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui		10%		5%	
Belmont Korokoro		12%		10%	
Catch numbers reduce over winter as hedgehogs go into hibernation. By September they are active again, and are regular non-target kills in traps set for mustelids. Note that monitoring only occurs where there is rodent monitoring happening, not at all KNE sites. Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui is a good case study, where intensive predator trapping of mustelids and hedgehogs is carried out in order to protect breeding banded dotterels.					
Rats: KNE site and tracking rate (% tunnels tracked)					
KNE site		**August 2024**	**November 2024**	**February 2025**	**May 2025**
Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui		1.3%	0	0	0
East Harbour Northern Forest	Mainland Island	2%	0	2%	12%
	Non-treatment	30%	14%	16%	26%
Queen Elizabeth Park		0	15%	30%	30%
Wainuiomata-Orongorongo	Mainland Island	20%	0	0	6%
	Non-treatment	90%	90%	81%	96%
At Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui, rat tracking results peaked in May 2019, and then since November 2020 results have been zero or very close to, due to the intensive trapping for mustelids and hedgehogs, which by default will trap rats too.					

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Possum management (aerial) Possum population monitoring undertaken in Pakuratahi KNE site to assess the effectiveness of the aerial 1080 operation undertaken by OSPRI as part of their Northern Remutaka Operation. Due to OSPRI not being able to complete the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo catchment as part of the Northern Remutaka Operation due to water supply needs, we undertook the planning for this project to occur in winter 2025. This operation will be completed as soon after 1 July when fine weather windows and water supply requirements line up.	Achieved. Following OSPRI's aerial 1080 operation, we saw a good reduction in possum numbers, the operation was an overall success. Results: Pre 1080 application– 18 percent WTI. Post 1080 application – 1 percent WTI.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Ungulate management Planned control at all deer, goat and pig management sites completed (14 sites).	Achieved. Control delivered at 21 sites, 798 ungulates killed.

Summary of 2024/25 KNE ungulate control activities



Graph 17. Ungulate kills (deer, goats, pigs) per unit hunter effort

Biodiversity Outcomes

Over the 2024/25 year, the ungulate control programme continued to operate across multiple sites, adapting to persistent challenges posed by increasing regional populations and ongoing immigration into managed areas.

While overall ungulate numbers and control efficiency have remained steady or declined slightly, increased effort, refinements in scheduling and the introduction of new techniques—such as thermal drone assisted night shooting, remote-triggered camera response and targeted pig trapping—have supported continued progress.

Pig trapping at Wainuiomata/Orongorongo resulted in the removal of 13 animals from just two hunter days effort, while night shooting contributed 21 and aerial shooting eight of the 37 deer shot. Wainuiomata/Orongorongo recorded the highest kill rate at 2.64 kills per hunter day, with a total of 148 ungulates removed.

Akatarawa Forest showed a marked improvement in control efficiency, increasing from 1.54 to 2.54 kills per hunter day compared to the previous year. This uplift is largely attributed to additional buffer hunting efforts in the adjacent Puketiro Forest, where goat populations remain high.

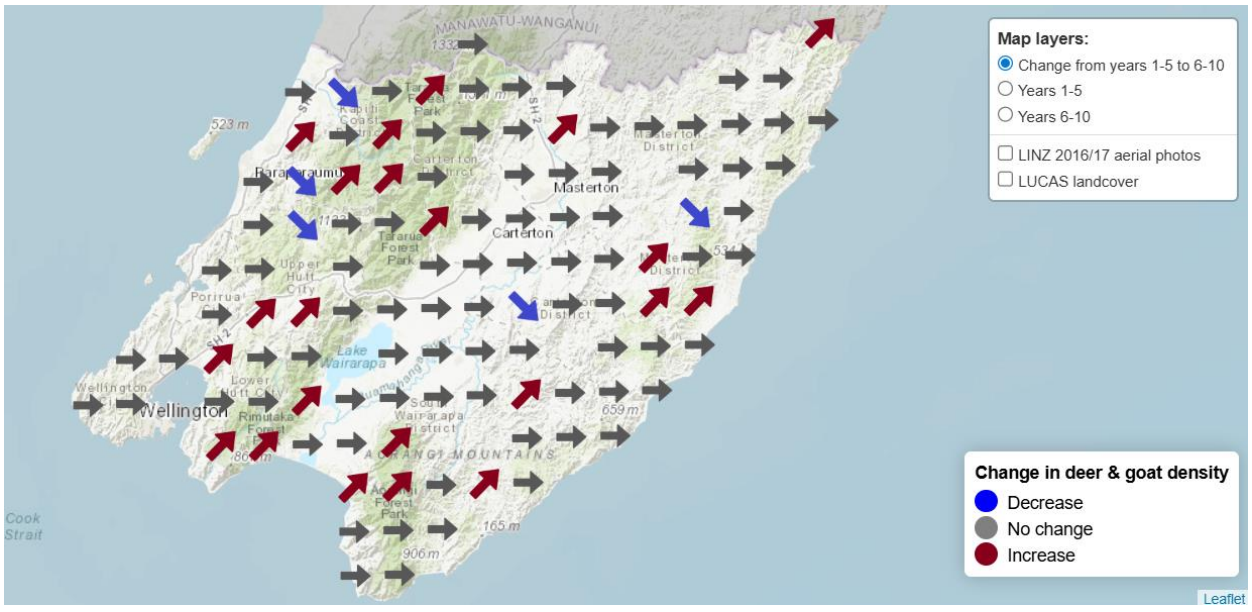
Kaitoke Regional Park experienced a decline in efficiency, dropping from 1.6 to 1.0 kills per hunter day. This reduction is likely due to significant deer control through night shooting undertaken through the Recloaking Papatūānuku funded project to reduce the impact of deer on planting sites, which removed an additional 26 red deer from pasture margins. These efforts are contributing to a noticeable reduction in deer numbers within the adjacent forest areas.

A formalised night shooting programme along the Remutaka Hill Road (SH2) was established, primarily targeting goats within the road corridor which will also be considered as buffer control to the Pakuratahi forest park.

A notable addition to the programme in 2024/25 was the establishment of a new control site at Waterfall Road KNE, where 24 goats were successfully removed. Additionally, increased pig activity has been observed along Wellington's south coast, indicating a potential need for expanded control efforts in that area.

Other programmes have contributed to ungulate control in overlapping areas, complementing Key Native Ecosystem-funded efforts. The programme continues to maintain low numbers in many control sites but remains under pressure from broader regional ungulate trends.

The following map provides an overview of deer and goat density change from two monitoring cycles between 2014/24. More detail can be seen here: Greater Wellington — terrestrial-ecology (gw.govt.nz).



Map 30. Change in deer and goat density

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Ungulate management Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Catchment Zero Ungulate project planning	Achieved. Operational plan produced and ready to start in 2025/26.

Summary of 2024/25 Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Catchment Zero Ungulate project

A ten-year plan to reduce feral pigs, deer, and goats to zero-density within the Wainuiomata/Orongorongo water collection area has now been developed.

Implementation of this plan will have landscape-scale benefits to natural ecosystems and will help to protect the quality of bulk water supplied to Wellington and the Hutt Valley. The detailed operational project plan includes three main components:

- A significant increase in control effort including ground hunting, aerial hunting, trapping and other methods.
- Reducing immigration from surrounding public conservation land by a combination of buffer area hunting and completing the fencing of the catchment boundary.
- A significant increase in monitoring to track changes in animal densities, help with locating survivors as the project drives animal densities towards zero, and track the response of vegetation to reduced browsing pressure.

During the 2024/25 year a network of 60 game cameras was established across the catchment and the first six months of records were collected and analysed.

This produced some surprising results. Seasonal fluctuations in deer distribution are dramatic. Goats were found to be more widely distributed than previous data had suggested. Kiwi were also more widespread than expected, but on the downside stoats and feral cats were also common. This has prompted us to start planning for better predator management throughout the area.

Ten goats and five deer where opportunistically controlled during camera servicing, fence planning and a Thermally Assisted Aerial Control (TAAC) trial. The trial determined that the TAAC method was not well suited to the area due to vegetation density.

Other work completed during this financial year included detailed planning of a walking track network and huts for worker accommodation, and an assessment of repairs needed to the existing deer fence on the western and northern boundaries. A collaboration agreement with DOC regarding management across the shared boundary was also drafted.

7. He Tohutohu, He Mātauranga, He Whakaaanga | Advice, Education and Engagement

Aim: Support pest animal and plant management through education and advice on pest control and impacts.

Performance Measure	Result and Details
Response to public enquiries Provide information to landowners about their responsibilities for pest control. Provide information and advice to the public regarding pest identification, impacts and control, through website information, social media, events and site inspections. Provide advice and support to community groups undertaking pest control. Provide up to date information on all RPMP pest species on our website	Achieved. We responded to 623 pest animal enquiries (including 184 sales enquiries for traps, etc), almost 200 less enquiries received than the previous year. We responded to 179 pest plant enquiries, about the same as last year. Our **Pest and Weed Central** hub (find this at www.gw.govt.nz, via 'Environment', 'Pest management') receives regular maintenance and updates with species specific information.
Response to Biosecurity Enquiries in 2024/25	

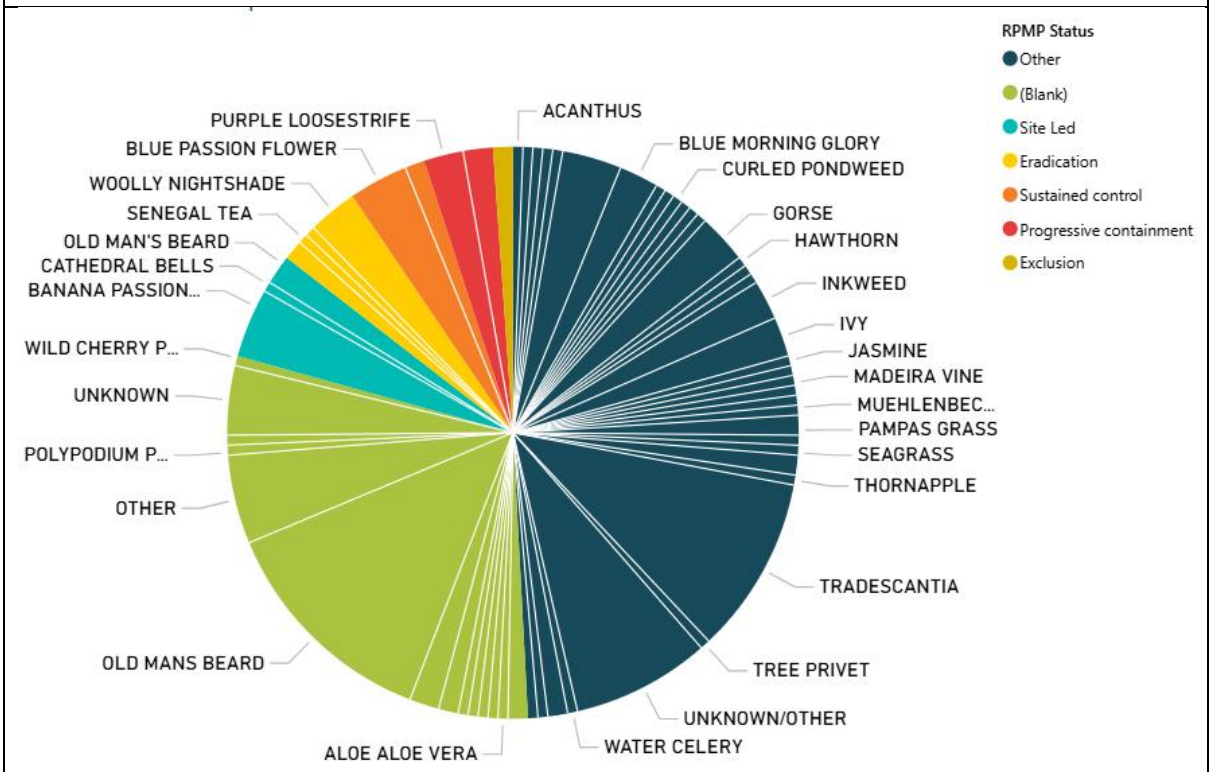


Chart 1. Pest Plant Enquiries: Proportion according to main pest plant species

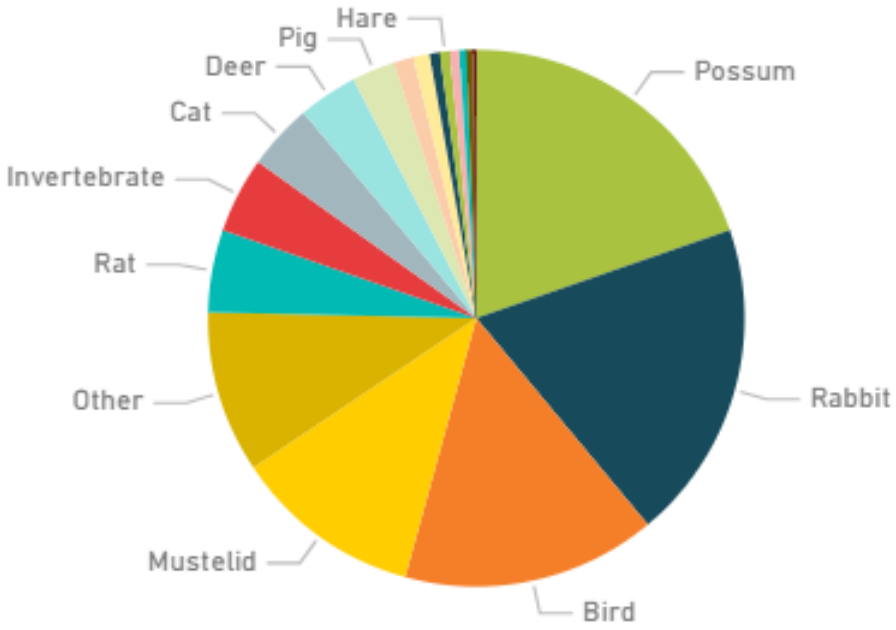


Chart 2. Pest Animal Enquiries: Proportion according to pest animal groups

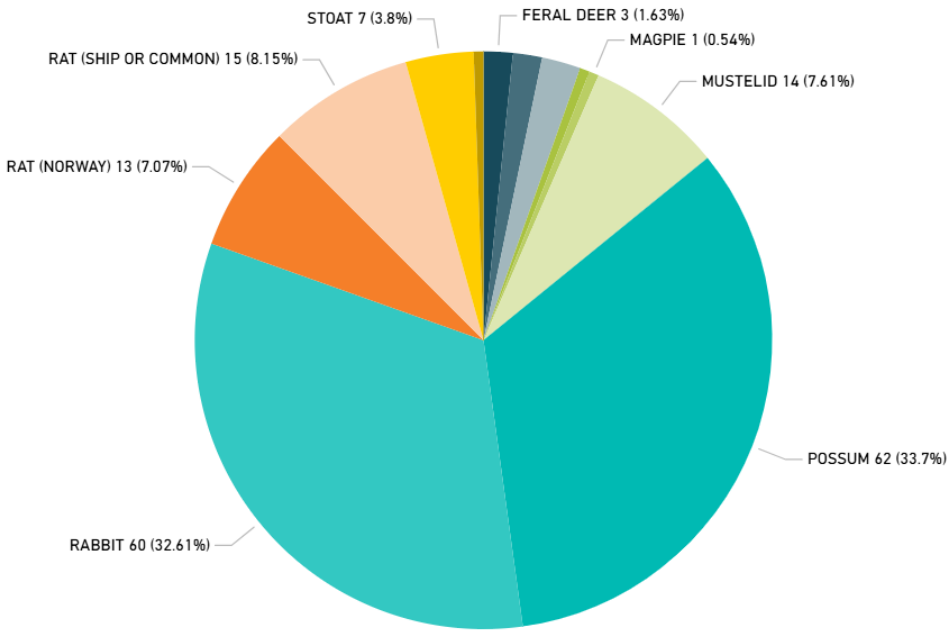
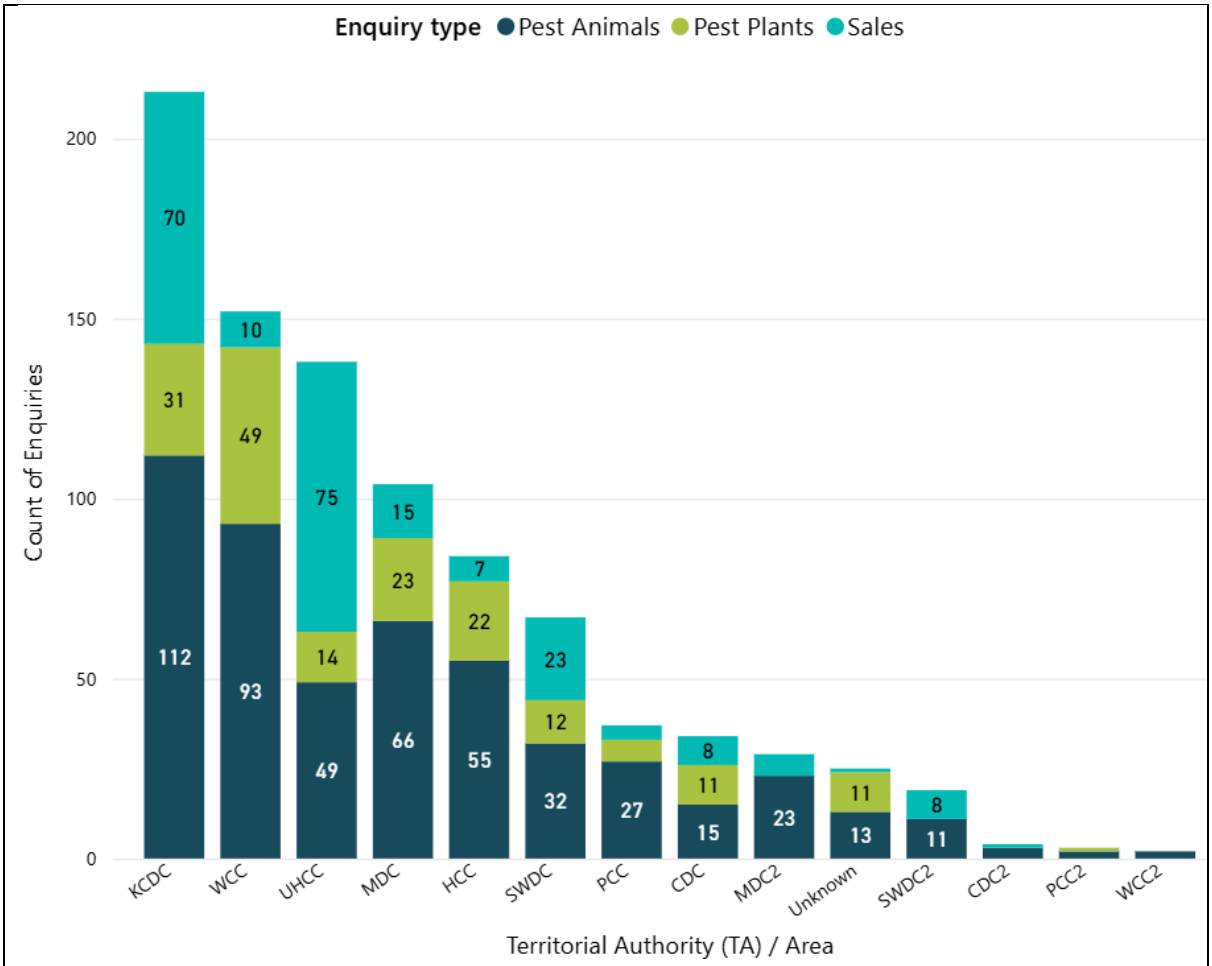


Chart 3. Pest Animal Sales Enquiries: Count by pest species



Graph 18. Biosecurity Client Enquiries, by Territorial Authority

Information on our external website	
Item	**Number of downloads/views**
RPMP 2019-39	690 (up from 508 last year)
RPMP Operational Plan Report 2023/24	29 (down from 42 last year)
RPMP Operational Plan 2024/25	127 (up from 79 last year)
Pest and Weed Central website	49,309 views

Promotions

We began a Pest Plant Awareness Promotion in early 2025, where respondents received a $20 voucher for native plants if they reported a new site of an RPMP species. The promotion is still running.

Pest Animals staff attended a variety of community-led training and outreach events, including Predator Free Waikanae, Korokoro Trappers, Victoria University Sustainability Expo, and Naenae College. These engagements supported local initiatives and partnerships, while also promoting biosecurity and ecology as career pathways to students.

Pest Animals staff ran a stall at the annual A and P show in Clareville, raising awareness around Pest Animal's and subsequent control along with engagement with the general public.

Pest Animals team leader and a Senior Biosecurity Officer attended the Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference (AVPC) held in Sydney. Their participation facilitated engagement with national and international experts in vertebrate pest management, enabling the exchange of current research, emerging technologies, and strategic approaches. Attendance at this conference supports the professional development of staff and contributes to the continuous improvement of our operational practices.

Our staff presented on urban deer control at the Trans-Tasman Deer Forum, sharing insights from a successful project in Lower Hutt. The presentation was well received, with several attendees requesting further information to support similar initiatives, highlighting the value of trans-Tasman knowledge exchange in ungulate management.

8. Whakarāpopototanga Pūtea | Financial Summary for 2024/25

The table below outlines budget, actual expenditure and the variance for delivering the Plan.

Species or Site led	Programme	Pest Animals or Pest Plants	Budget	Actual	Variance
Species led	RPMP	Pest Animals	$2,244,883	$2,029,119	-$215,764
		Pest Plants	$1,865,722	$1,560,075	-$305,647
	National	Pest Plants	$37,000*	$37,000*	n/a
Site led	PFW	Pest Animals	$3,789,003	$3,368,093	-$420,910
	RPCP	Pest Animals	$2,033,474	$2,029,931	-$3,543
	Biosecurity services	Pest Animals	$275,132	$627,651	$352,519
	KNE	Combined	$1,804,937	$1,954,786	$149,849
Totals – excluding external revenue			$12,013,151	$11,569,655	**-$443,496**

*external revenue for this work (MPI funded Manchurian wild rice control and Check Clean Dry programme. Territorial authorities fund pest animal management in some of their regions).

Ngā Āpitihanga | Appendices

Appendix 1: Chemical Controls that we used to implement the Operational Plan for 2024/25

Herbicides:

Clopyralid

Cloralid 300

Glufosinate 200

Glyphosate 360, 510

Glyphosate/terbuthylazine/amitrole/oxyfluorfen blend

Haloxyfop-P-Methyl 100, 150

Metsulfuron-methyl 600

Picloram

Picloram/triclopyr blend

Terbuthylazine 500

Triclopyr 600

Herbicide gels: picloram

Vertebrate Toxic Agents and insecticides:

Brodifacoum (Pestoff pellets, Pestoff High Strength, Final blocks)

Bromadiolone (Contrac blocks)

Cyanide (Feratox bait bags and pellets)

Diphacinone (50D, Ratabate - Strikers and paste, Ditrac)

Diphacinone and Cholecalciferol (Double Tap)

DRC 1339 paste (rook nest baiting)

Fipronil (Vanquish Pro ant bait, Vespex wasp bait)

Permethrin (Dust 2 Dust wasp powder)

Pindone (rabbit pellets, liquid concentrate)

Appendix 2: Modified McLean Scale

Scale	Rabbit Infestation
1	No sign found. No rabbits seen.
2	Very infrequent sign present. Unlikely to see rabbits.
3	Pellet heaps spaced 10m or more apart on average. Odd rabbits seen. Sign and some pellet heaps showing up.
4	Pellet heaps spaced 5-10m apart on average. Pockets of rabbits, sign and fresh burrows very noticeable.
5	Pellet heaps spaced 5m or less apart on average. Infestation spreading out from heavy pockets.
6	Sign very frequent, with pellet heaps often less than 5m apart over the whole area. Rabbits may be seen over the whole area.
7	Sign very frequent, with two or three pellet heaps often less than 5m apart over the whole area. Rabbits may be seen in large numbers over the whole area.
8	Sign very frequent, with three or more pellet heaps less than 5 metres apart over the whole area. Rabbits likely to be seen in large numbers over the whole area.

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