



2025



Hūnua Ranges

Pest management and use of 1080

The problem

- Possums and rats are impacting long-term forest health and destroying our native flora and fauna in Hūnua Ranges. Monitoring of pest numbers indicates they are increasing to a level where parkwide control will be required in 2025. This will ensure we maintain the gains from the previous successful pest control operations, most recently aerial control in 2022.
- The increase in pest numbers puts at risk the unique wildlife habitat and high ecological values of the Hūnua Ranges parkland and surrounding conservation land.

Keeping Hūnua healthy

Any solution that we come up with must:

- Be effective at managing all target pest species across a large area.
- Be done with minimal disturbance and impact to the natural environment – in particular recognising that the Hūnua Ranges is kauri dieback free.
- Ensure adverse effects on species of non-target wildlife must be known to be minor and/or can be avoided, remedied or mitigated
- Ensure any risks to human health and community well-being can be avoided, remedied or mitigated
- Be cost-effective.

What are we currently doing?

- Auckland Council has previously carried out three aerial pest control operations using 1080 cereal pellets across the Hūnua Ranges regional parkland, Department of Conservation administered lands and approximately 2,500ha of private land. These operations successfully reduced possums and rats to very low numbers over a large area. Aerial pest control has reduced the need for annual ground-based

pest control within parkland areas and has enabled funded possum control to be expanded to 14,000Ha of private land within the Hūnua buffer zone.

- Due to the success of the previous operations, and based on annual monitoring, the time between aerial operations is every three years.
- We are now planning to repeat pest animal control across the ranges for late winter/early spring 2025. This will be undertaken using aerial application and some ground control.

What happens next?

- A detailed planning process will be undertaken.
- Community/landowner and stakeholder engagement phase
- We are guided by strict protocols for planning and delivering an operation like this, set down by Government agencies including Ministry of Health and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

The operation

- The operation will be carried out in late winter 2025, when park visitor numbers are at their lowest, between July and October, and pests are at their hungriest. The operation is weather dependant.
- We will talk to the public well in advance about how the operation will be carried out; what people who live and work in the ranges need to know; and how people can find out more information.
- Planning for communications for public notices, signage, posters and newsletters is being prepared.

Water supply

- The Hūnua Ranges Regional Park provides 65 per cent of Auckland's potable water supply
- Safety of this supply is essential
- As part of each operation hundreds of water samples are collected following bait application, Hūnua is one of the largest water monitoring programmes for pest control operations carried out in New Zealand. Not a single public drinking water sample from previous operations has detected the presence of 1080.
- Auckland Council will work with Watercare and the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on developing the approach to working in and around reservoirs and waterways.

About kōkako in the Hūnua Ranges

- As a result of predation by pest animals, kōkako numbers in the Hūnua Ranges dropped to only one breeding pair in the 1990s
- A kōkako Management Area (KMA) was established to protect kōkako through intensive pest control over 2,000ha of the Hūnua Ranges, about 6.5 per cent of the total park area
- The 2015 and 2018 operations resulted in two of the best kōkako breeding seasons since the recovery project began. The 2022 kōkako census determined the current population to be 259 pairs and over 500 individuals. This population is now the second largest for mainland New Zealand with significant growth in the population over the past ten years enabled by effective pest control.

Expanding pest control

- Since the 2018 operation we have been working with landowners in the Hūnua buffer area to control possums, focusing on a contiguous area of control surrounding Hūnua Ranges of more than 14,000Ha.
- This work has focused on ground control methods to control and reduce possums on private land surrounding the park and therefore slow possum reinvasion of the parkland. There is also the opportunity for adjoining private land to be included in the 2022 operation
- Since 2020 Council has delivered a targeted mustelid, ground-based, control project covering over 6000Ha of Hūnua parkland, this project supports our efforts to reduce a wide range of predators impacting our threatened species.

Find out more

Join our email distribution list – subscribe to our distribution list by emailing us at HunuaProject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

- This will be used to send bulletins and important information to stakeholders, communitygroups/volunteers, neighbours, and regular users of the Hūnua Ranges parkland.
- You can opt out at any time; however, we recommend you stay on the list to ensure you're getting timely information, direct from council.
- You can also contact the Hūnua Project team at any time and can share this email address with colleagues and friends.

Another good source of information will be council's website. This will be updated throughout the project – visit www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/hunuaproject



Need help?



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