

Working towards a pest free Kawau Island

Protecting our environment

April 2025



Weka and chicks, Jude Hynes



About the project

Auckland council is proposing to remove all pest animals species from Kawau Island in two stand alone projects.

The first project will focus on the eradication of browsers, specifically wallabies and possums.



Kākā, Jude Hynes

The vision

Kawau is a much-loved tranquil paradise for residents and visitors alike, a low-key place to escape the hustle and bustle of Auckland city.

With browsing species gone, the native forest is flourishing and full of life, supporting an abundance of native birds, reptiles and invertebrates.

When enjoying a walk across the island, residents and visitors are immersed in birdsong and navigate around a diversity of regenerating native plants.

With the island's waters pristine clear and the land respected, the community thrives. Kawau is a place for residents and visitors to treasure for generations.

Benefits of the project

The complete removal of pest animal species would make Kawau Island the largest inhabited pest-free island in New Zealand. It would build on the valuable work that has been done already and be an important stepping stone to Aotearoa becoming predator free.

Restored habitats to support more of our precious native species and help the recovery of threatened species and ecosystems.

More native species thriving due to its proximity to other pest-free islands and sanctuaries, allowing many native bird species to arrive and settle naturally once invasive species are removed.

Regenerated forests with more pollination, seed dispersal and seedling survival possible without pest animals.

Reduced erosion and fire risk thanks to less vegetation damage, regeneration of fire-resistant plants and an increase in soil moisture content.

With a pest free island, there would be no need for the continued use of toxins to control pests.

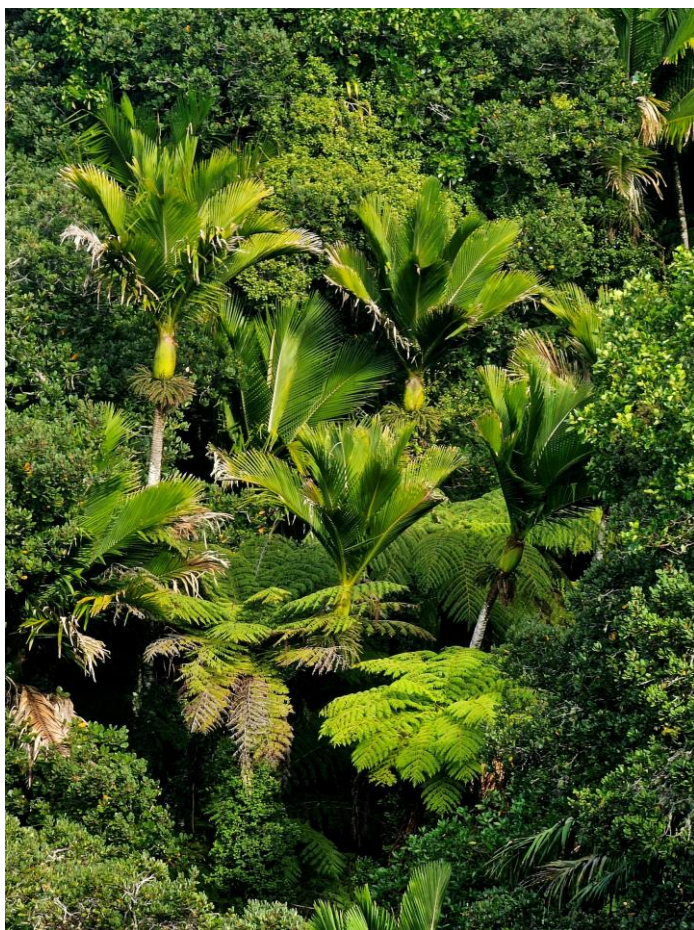


Kawau / Shag nest, Jude Hynes





Forest understory damaged by wallabies, David Kingston



Thriving Kāwau forest, Brad Windust

The threat of pest animals

Animal pests are damaging Kāwau's environment:

Wallabies

- Wallabies are browsers and selectively feed on native forest seedlings and eat plants and young trees.
- This destroys understory vegetation, reduces food and habitat for native species and prevents forest regeneration.

Possums

- Possums consume native vegetation, flowers and fruits, and suppress native plant regeneration altering forest composition.
- Possums prey on birds and their eggs, lizards, and threatened native insects, and carry diseases.
- They compete with native bird species for food and habitat such as cavity-nesting birds like kākā.

Rats

- Rats eat insects, reptiles, birds, bats, and various plants and seeds, which disrupts native ecosystems.
- The ship rat is an adept climber, enabling it to prey on tree-dwelling bird species.
- Norway rats are larger and prey on ground-nesting birds, their eggs and their chicks, such as New Zealand dotterel.

Stoats

- Stoats prey on native birds, their eggs, and other small wildlife, leading to severe declines in biodiversity.

Join us in protecting Kāwau

The success of this project depends on the support and involvement of Kāwau Island's community. Council is committed to working with you, keeping you up to date, and listening to your feedback.

Here's how you can help:

Stay informed: Attend community meetings, read updates, and get involved in discussions.

Volunteer: Join in local control efforts and become a steward of the island. Visit www.kawauisland.org/associations for more information.

Check your gear for pests : Before you leave the mainland, check and clean your gear. Freshly pack belongings and food into sealed bags or containers. Look for plague skinks and ants that can crawl in. Visit www.doc.govt.nz/pestfreeaurakigulf

Voice your opinion: Share your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions with us or your community representatives to help shape the project.

Your community representatives are:

- Carl Weaver – Chair of the Pōhutukawa Trust
- Michael Wheatcroft – Chair of Kāwau Island Residents and Ratepayers Association
- Jon Bilger – Chair Kāwau Island Community Forum

Contact us:

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