

# Working towards a pest free Kawau Island

Protecting our environment

June 2024



## About the project

Auckland Council is proposing to remove pest animal species from Kawau Island in two stand-alone projects.

- The first project would focus on the removal of browsers, (wallabies and possums) and is expected to take approximately two years.
- The second proposed project would focus on predators (rodents, and if present, stoats) and remains in feasibility assessment.

This project is a partnership with Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust and the Department of Conservation, working in collaboration with members of the Kawau Island Community.



Kākā, Jude Hynes

## A tranquil paradise

For years, Kawau Island has been a cherished haven for both residents and visitors. Nestled away from the hustle and bustle of Auckland city, it offers a serene escape.

Imagine a place where browsing species no longer disrupt the mauri or natural balance of the environment. The native forest thrives, teeming with life—native birds, reptiles, and invertebrates find sanctuary here.

By eliminating pest animals, Kawau becomes a timeless treasure—a legacy for generations to come.

## The threat of pest animals

Animal pests are damaging Kawau's environment:

### Wallabies

- Wallabies 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

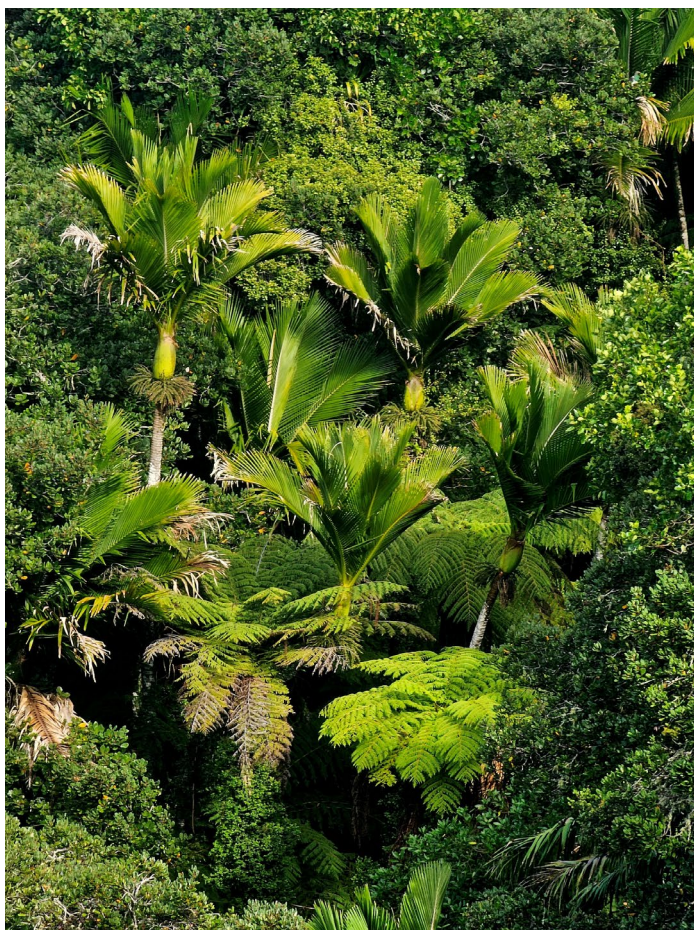
- Even in low numbers, stoats will prey on native birds, their eggs, and other small wildlife, leading to severe declines in biodiversity.







Forest understory damaged by wallabies, David Kingston



Thriving Kāwau forest, Brad Windust

## Benefits of the project

The complete removal of pest animal species would make Kāwau Island the largest inhabited pest-free island in New Zealand. It would build on the valuable work achieved to date and be an important stepping stone to Aotearoa becoming predator free.

**Restored habitats** to support more of our taonga/ treasured 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, paving the way for 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 in the absence of browsing 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.



Kāwau / Shag nest, Jude Hynes

## 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](http://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 skins and ants that can crawl in. Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/pestfreeaurakigulf](http://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:

**Email:** [kawauislandproject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:kawauislandproject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

**Visit:** [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/kawau-island](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/kawau-island)

**Phone:** 09 301 0101

