

UMUKARIKARI AERIAL BOVINE TB CONTROL OPERATION

The Umukarikari aerial pest control operation is planned for spring 2017, weather dependant. This operation will cover approximately 12,000 hectares and is a collaboration between the Department of Conservation (DOC) and OSPRI's TBfree programme.

DOC predicts extensive beech seeding, as occurred in 2014 and 2016 in the South Island, is likely to occur this year in many North Island Forests including the Kaimanawa Forest. Heavy seeding is expected to drive introduced predators such as rats, mice and stoats to high numbers.

This operation is an integral part of DOC's Battle for Our Birds, to protect vulnerable populations of whio/blue duck in the rivers of the western Kaimanawa Forest.

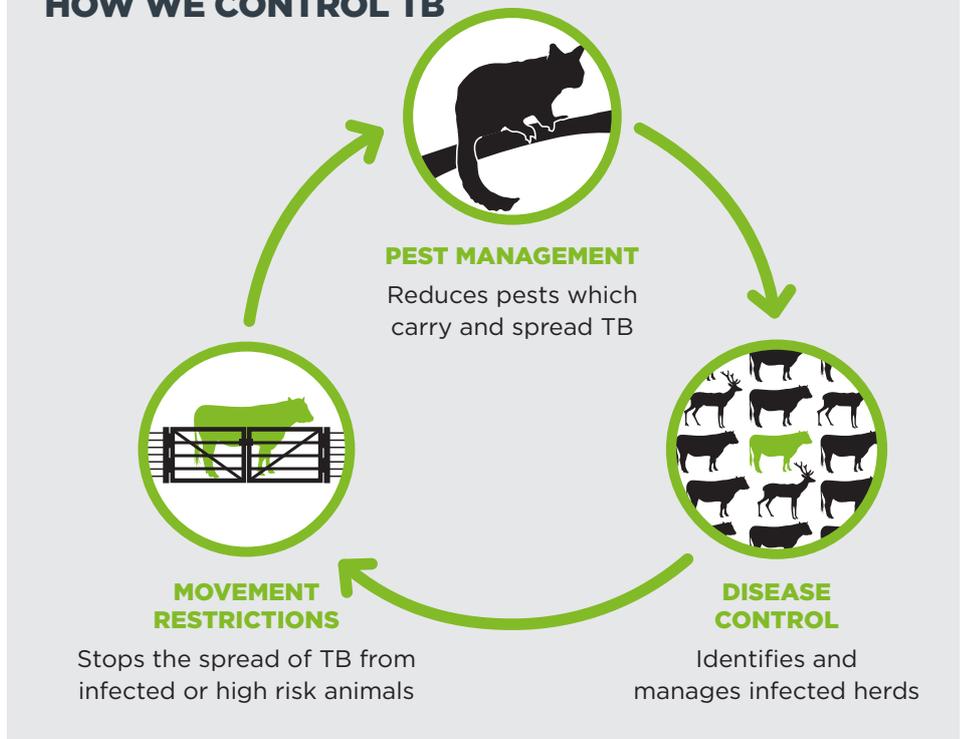
Whio are prone to predation, particularly by stoats. Research has shown in areas without predator control up to 90% of whio nests can fail. The operation plans to control predators before the breeding season to increase the chance of breeding success for whio.

The area was last treated in 2013 as part of the TBfree programme.

TB ERADICATION

OSPRI's TBfree programme aims to control and eradicate bovine TB from New Zealand. This work is determined

HOW WE CONTROL TB



by the National Pest Management Plan (TB plan). The TB plan was reviewed in 2015 by an independent group, the Plan Governance Group. This group was made up with members from DairyNZ, Beef+Lamb New Zealand, Deer Industry NZ, Federated Farmers, the Ministry for Primary Industries and OSPRI. The outcome of the review was that OSPRI has been tasked with achieving total eradication of TB from New Zealand.

Under the new plan, our goals are to:

1. Eradicate TB from New Zealand
 - TB freedom from cattle and deer herds by 2026
 - TB freedom from possums by 2040
 - Biological eradication by 2055
2. Maintain period prevalence below 0.2% (no more than 0.2% of New Zealand's herds infected) while achieving eradication



TARGETING POSSUMS & RATS

POSSUMS

To eradicate bovine TB, possum numbers need to be kept extremely low – around one to two animals every 10 hectares. Monitoring has shown that further control work is needed in the Umukarikari area to reduce the possum population and minimise the risk of the disease spreading through wild animal populations and onto farmed cattle and deer. Possum control has dramatically reduced the number of infected herds in the Waikato region. This area was last treated in 2013.

RATS

Rats are introduced pests which threaten the long-term survival of native species. There are three species of rat in New Zealand, the Pacific rat/

kiore, ship or common rat and Norway or brown rat. Rats eat any small animals and plant material, including the adults, eggs and chicks of many rare, native birds.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The operation will begin with the distribution of non-toxic, tan-coloured cereal pellets by helicopter. This “prefeed” gives possums and rats a taste for the pellets and overcomes bait shyness. One to two weeks later, toxic, green cereal pellets – each containing 0.15 percent biodegradable sodium fluoroacetate (also known as 1080) – will be applied by helicopter at a rate of one and a half kilograms per hectare. That’s about one bait to every 45 square metres. As this operation is also aiming to benefit the bird population, smaller baits that are more easily consumed by rats will be used. Deer repellent will be used across the entire operational area.

The Umukarikari operation will be subject to strict safety, quality-assurance and monitoring requirements. Advanced GPS navigational equipment will be used to ensure the pellets are accurately placed and exclusion zones avoided.



Baits covered in deer repellent. The non-toxic pre-feed pellets are brownish-tan while the toxic baits are green.



THE METHOD

A vast majority of possum control in the region is done by local contractors using ground-based traps and hand-laid toxins. The remaining, far smaller area is controlled using aerially applied pellets containing biodegradable 1080. Aerial control is efficient, cost effective and has been extremely successful at knocking possum numbers down to very low levels in the past. It is preferred in areas like Umukarikari due to the rugged nature of the terrain. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment also supports aerial control. The commissioner completed an extensive review into the use of 1080, in which she strongly endorsed its continued use in New Zealand.

Please visit pce.parliament.nz to read this report.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW

The operation will commence in August/September 2017. A contractor will be doing the work on behalf

of OSPRI's TBfree programme. Before the operation, affected landowners and occupiers will be contacted and visited by one of our contractors. They will discuss boundary issues, water supply safety and the management of any risks to dogs and livestock. Affected landowners and occupiers will be contacted again before the operation starts, notices will be published in local newspapers and warning signs will be placed at all likely access points to the operational area.

BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

The operation will have additional conservation benefits for native birds and bush. Possums eat the forest canopy and prey on native birdlife, including eggs and chicks. Biodegradable 1080 is also extremely effective at controlling other introduced predators such as ship rats and stoats.

The area is also home to many native forest birds such as kaka, tui, tomtit and bellbird. These native birds, their eggs and their young are

most vulnerable to predation from rats, possums and stoats during the breeding season.



© Tomas Sobek

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Warning signs will be placed at all main access points to the operational area and everyone must follow the cautions on the signs. There's no health risk when using this area as long as you follow these instructions:

Do not handle any bait or allow children to wander unsupervised. Cereal baits containing 1080 are dyed green.

Do not hunt or take game from within a two kilometre radius of the operational area for human or pet consumption. It's an offence

to sell meat products that have been exposed to 1080. Hunting can resume approximately four months following the control work, or after two months if 100mm of rain has fallen.

Please observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about the pesticide. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When the signs are officially removed, you can resume normal activities in the area. Free dog muzzles will be provided on request. Please contact OSPRI on 06 353 2710 to obtain a muzzle.



Do not bring dogs into the area until the warning signs have been officially removed.

Dogs are particularly susceptible to 1080. They must not be allowed access to bait or poisoned carcasses which remain toxic to dogs until they have fully decomposed.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT POISONING

Contact your local hospital or doctor, or **dial 111**

National Poisons Centre
0800 POISON (764 766)

If a domestic animal is poisoned, contact a local veterinarian.



FURTHER INFORMATION

OSPRI

Palmerston North

P 06 353 2710

E Vector.SNI@ospri.co.nz
tbfree.co.nz | ospri.co.nz

Contractor

Epro Ltd

Operations Controller

P 07 376 7329

E control@epro.co.nz

For more information on controlling bovine TB and why 1080 is used in New Zealand, visit 1080facts.co.nz

THERE IS NO RISK TO PUBLIC DRINKING WATER

Biodegradable 1080 is highly soluble and does not persist in water or soil. Local health authorities apply strict conditions to aerial operations so that drinking water supplies are not contaminated. Safety has been confirmed by tests on several thousand water samples taken after aerial 1080 operations over many years.

