



Welcome to the TRC Pest Bulletin, our new newsletter that will replace possum control reminder letters. Please do take a few minutes to read it.

Our goal is to send this newsletter by email rather than post wherever possible, as email is a more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way to update you on pest issues affecting your farm and the wider region. We would therefore be grateful if you could let us know your email address (see box overleaf for details).

The newsletter will contain important information about the Self-help Programme, Towards Predator-Free Taranaki and pest plant management. We will include useful things like new techniques and traps, details of monitoring, reminders of the pest management you should be thinking about each season and any changes to Council rules or procedures.

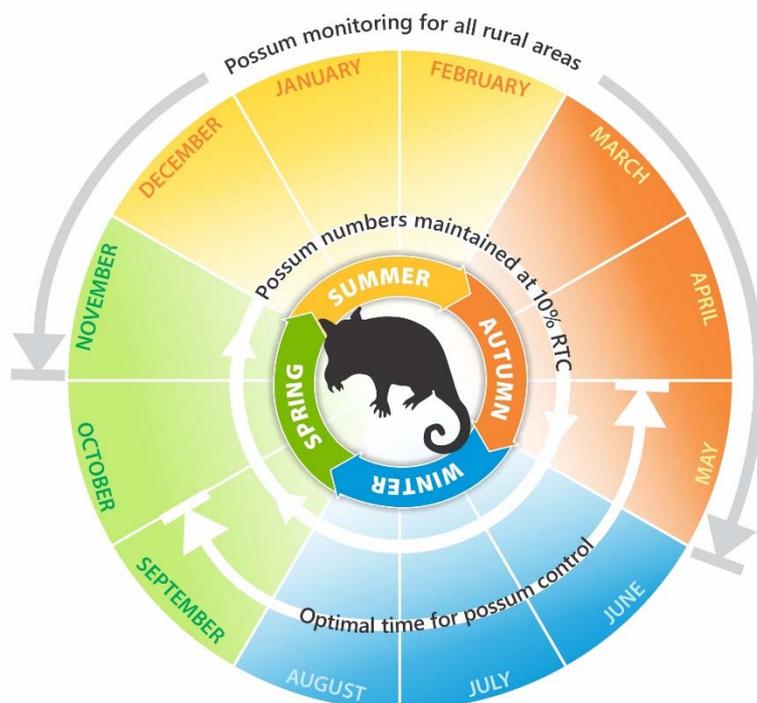
You may have noticed a few more “roadkill” possums while out and about. While not exactly a scientific monitoring method, this increase is also evident in our monitoring programmes. There could be many reasons for this, but whatever the reason it is a great reminder of the importance of keeping on top of possums on your property.

We hope you enjoy the read and we welcome your feedback on what you might like included in future editions.

From the Environment Services team thank you for your hard work over the last year. We hope you have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and we look forward to working with you in 2022.



SELF-HELP PROGRAMME



Changes coming in 2022

Next year we intend to modify how we manage the Self-help Programme. Possum monitoring for all operations (East, South, Northwest) will be done between November 2022 and May 2023. You will no longer be sent email or letter reminders to do your control.

The change to our monitoring timing will mean less inconvenience for you during the busy lambing and calving seasons.

We encourage you to undertake possum control at the optimal time between May and September 2022 when the natural food supply is at its lowest.

We will also continue to integrate the Self-help Programme with the Towards Predator-Free Taranaki rural programme (mustelids). We'll provide more details around that in coming newsletters.

Current and upcoming possum monitoring

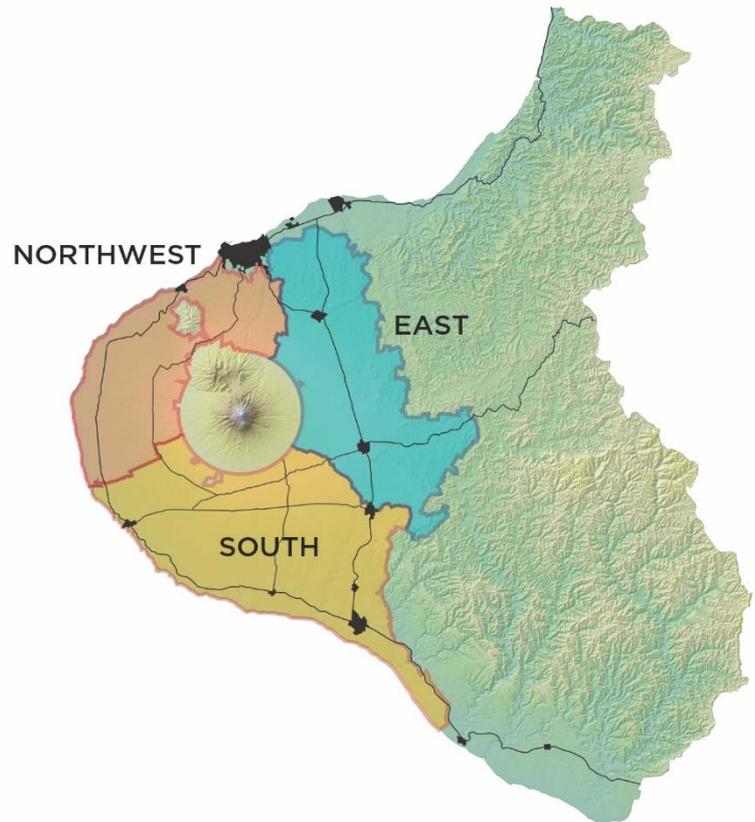
For properties in the **Northwest** operations possum monitoring will start in March 2022, slightly earlier than in previous years. We are letting you know now to ensure you have plenty of time to complete your possum control by then. As noted above, you will not receive the usual email or letter reminder and you won't get a phone call asking what you plan to do. The time we save by not calling you will allow more time for monitoring and ensure possum numbers don't get back out of control.

In the **South** operations possum monitoring is currently underway using both trap catch and wax tag methods. Our team will contact you if monitoring is to be done on your property.

When and how should I do my possum control?

The optimal time to undertake possum control is between May and September when the natural food supply is at its lowest. Possums will be hungry so will take bait and be attracted to traps. When control is done before spring it also protects nesting native birds.

The best methods of control are trapping and poisoning; you can do it yourself or engage a private contractor.



However you do it, our best advice is co-ordinate with your neighbours to get as big an area done as you can at the same time to protect yourselves from reinvasion.

In saying that, we understand farmers are busy people so you are free to undertake control whenever and however you wish, as long as you keep numbers below the 10% catch rate.

This reduces loss of pasture due to possum browse, helps keep our region TB free, minimises damage in plantation forests and gardens and protects native habitat.

What if there are too many possums on my property?

Firstly, don't panic! If officers suspect possums are greater than a 10% catch rate (or 10 possums caught in 100 traps) you may be issued with a Notice of Direction. This is a formal legal document that may seem a bit scary but essentially it's a formal reminder that you need to undertake control by a set date. We then re-check to make sure numbers have reduced. If they haven't you will have failed to comply and further action can be taken.

Questions? Need advice or help?

Contact your Environment Officer on 0800 736 222 or email biosecurity@trc.govt.nz.

Left: TRC Environment Officer checking wax tags.



TOWARDS PREDATOR-FREE TARANAKI

Mustelids (weasels, stoats and ferrets) have been added to the Self-help Programme through the Regional Pest Management Plan. This means land occupiers in predator control areas are now required to maintain traps on their properties.

Towards Predator-Free Taranaki is rolling out the mustelid control project around the mountain over a 10-year period (see map). After our contractors carry out the initial control, responsibility is then handed back to the landowner.

Once you're signed up to the programme, you will be required to check your traps at least eight times a year – more often if you can - and record your catches on Trap NZ.

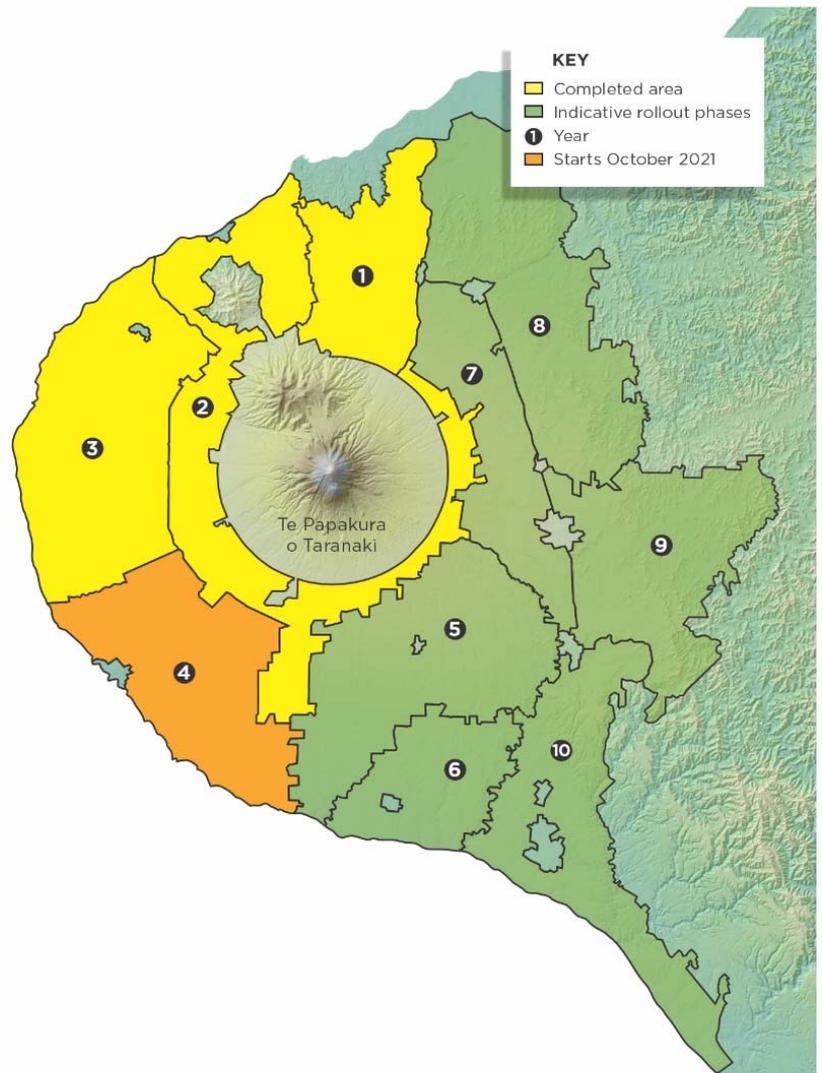
Where is it at now?

Phase 4 of the rural programme is now nearing completion. Contractors have been out in Oeo and Ōpunake setting up mustelid traps and doing the initial control. Huge thanks to landowners within this area for your support.

Thanks also to landowners in phases 1 to 3, for your ongoing work. Across the programme there are now 7,629 mustelid traps, with 1,168 mustelids recorded as caught on Trap NZ. Great stuff.

Questions?

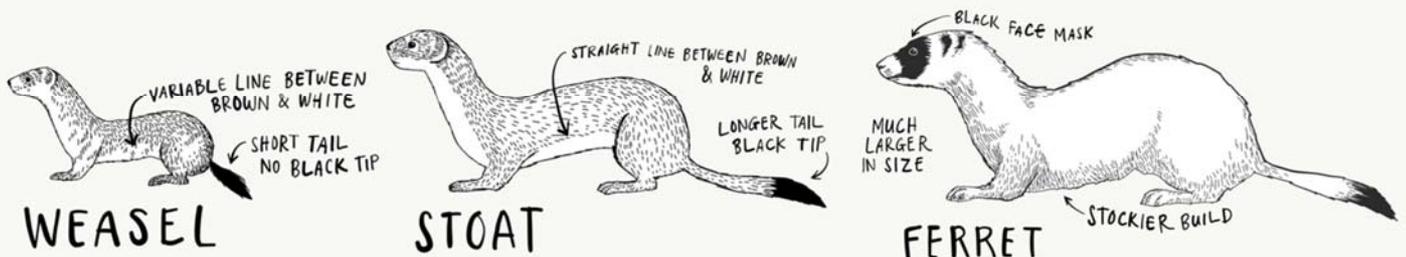
We're always happy to help out. Please contact Towards Predator-Free Taranaki Environment Officer **Kieran Godfrey** on **027 210 9885**.



Receive this newsletter by email

Please email info@trc.govt.nz with 'Email address update' in the subject line and your name, address, LS plan number (if possible) and preferred email address in the body. Thanks!

Image credit:
PredatorFreeNZ





PEST PLANT MANAGEMENT

Now is a great time to identify and effectively control pest plants as they are actively growing.

The following species are sustained control plants under the Regional Pest Management Plan. That means you must destroy all plants on your land.

Our Environment Officers inspect properties across Taranaki for pest plants year-round. If they are discovered you will receive a Notice of Direction, requiring you to undertake control by a specified date.



Yellow Ragwort

Flowering November to April. Land occupiers west of a pest management line must destroy all plants. East of the line they must destroy within 20m of property boundary



Giant Gunnera

Flowering October to November.



Old Man's Beard

Fluffy seeds February to May.



Wild ginger

Flowering January to March.



Right: Contractors spraying pest plants