



Welcome to the autumn edition of the TRC Pest Bulletin. This quarterly newsletter replaces the reminder letters for possum control you previously received and contains updates and information for the rural community. Please do take five minutes to grab a cuppa and have a read - and feel free to share it around. As always, we welcome your feedback. Enjoy!



SELF-HELP PROGRAMME

When it comes to possums, the bad news is we're seeing increasing numbers across Taranaki. The good news is together we can do something about it. The best time to do your possum control is between May and September, so please start thinking about it now. If you plan to use a contractor, we suggest you book in ASAP - they're pretty busy so don't leave it until the last minute!

With numbers on the rise the Council is taking a firmer stance when it comes to enforcement of the rules. So if you're unclear on what's required, or need advice or assistance, get in touch with us now.

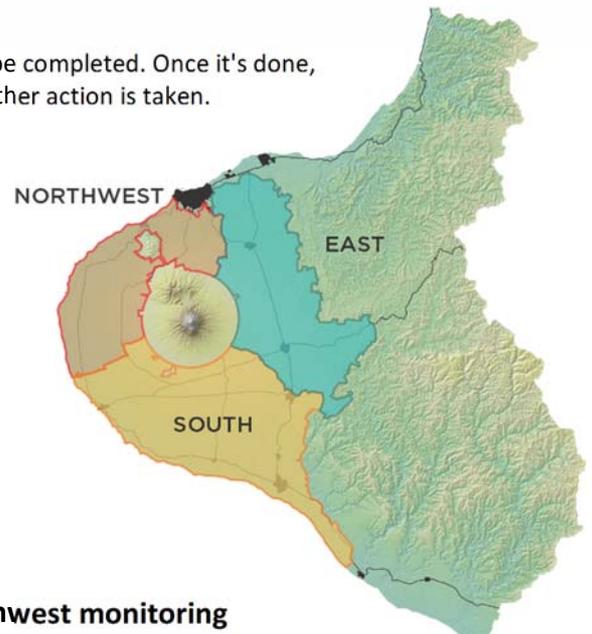
Southern monitoring reveals possum hot spots

We are currently completing possum monitoring in the South operation. There have been several hot spots with catch rates well above required levels. In some areas it appears there has been little or no control work done, which is disappointing. These farmers are making it harder and more expensive for their neighbours, who are working hard to keep numbers low.

As a result, an increased number of Notices of Direction have been issued and we will return for follow-up monitoring to ensure the work is being done.

A **Notice of Direction** is a formal legal document issued under the Biosecurity Act 1993. It outlines the land occupier's responsibility to control pests and sets the date control must be completed by. Pest species and their rules are defined in the *Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki*. For the Self-Help Programme land occupiers must maintain possum numbers on their land to below a 10% residual trap catch. Being issued with a Notice of Direction does not mean any offence has occurred, it merely sets a date for when effective control

must be completed. Once it's done, no further action is taken.



Northwest monitoring to begin

We will monitor across the Northwest operation between March and June. A contractor or Council officer will contact you if monitoring is to be done on your property. If your possum catch rate is above 10%, you'll be issued a Notice of Direction. So if you've let your control efforts slip, get onto it now.

A reminder that next financial year all of the Self-Help Programme possum operational areas will be monitored between November 2022 and May 2023.

Questions? Need advice or help?

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



TOWARDS PREDATOR-FREE TARANAKI

Phase 4 of the mustelid trapping roll-out is complete, with landowners now maintaining the traps installed by our contractors.

On the whole the transition went smoothly and we wish to thank everyone in this area for your co-operation and commitment. Over the last four years we've continually tweaked the rural project to make it quicker, more efficient and as hassle-free as possible for you. As part of this, a number of traps are equipped with remote trap sensors, so you know when they've sprung and need attention.

For now, keep checking and re-baiting those traps monthly (more often if you can) and recording results on Trap.nz.

Soon we'll start gearing up for Phase 5 (in orange on map) which is scheduled for later this year. Look out for another update in the next newsletter.

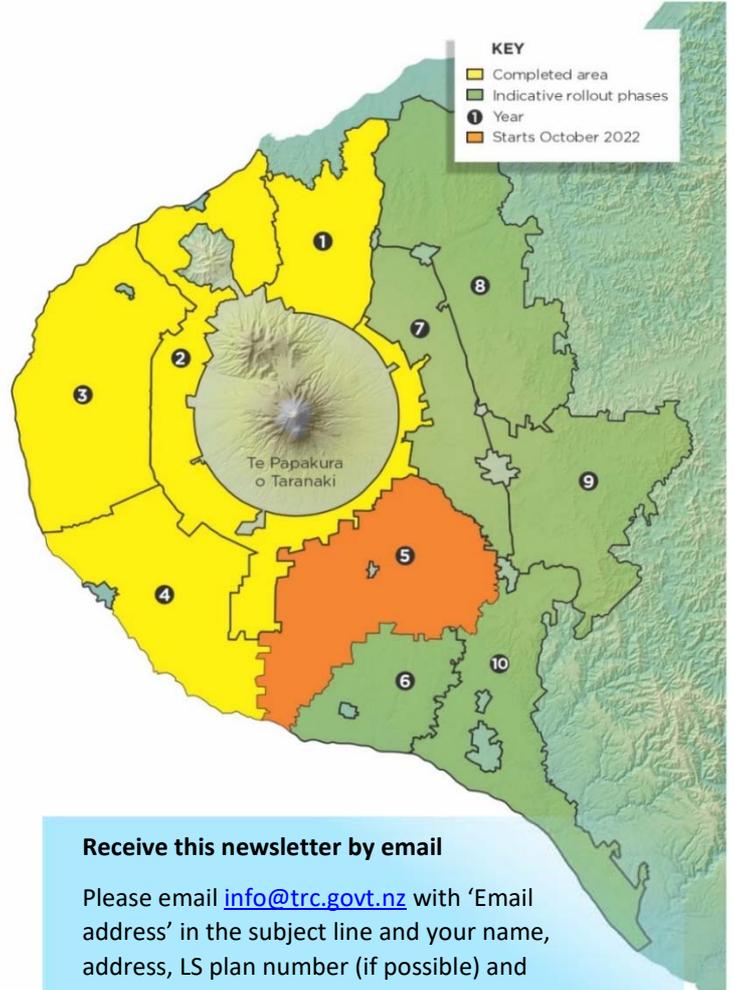
Mustelid movement slowing down

But about now, they slow down and tend to stay around the same area. Food resources reduce and they get hungry as it gets colder. It's therefore extra important all your traps are set, baited and ready for mustelids that may be sticking around for winter.

Stoats, ferrets and weasels move around a lot over the spring and summer months. That means there's a good chance they'll eventually come across a set trap, whether it's on your farm or one down the road.

Where do I get bait?

We've had a few people asking about bait lately. We're working through some options at the moment to help make ordering and receiving bait easier. In the meantime, please contact us if you need bait and we'll point you in the right direction.



Receive this newsletter by email

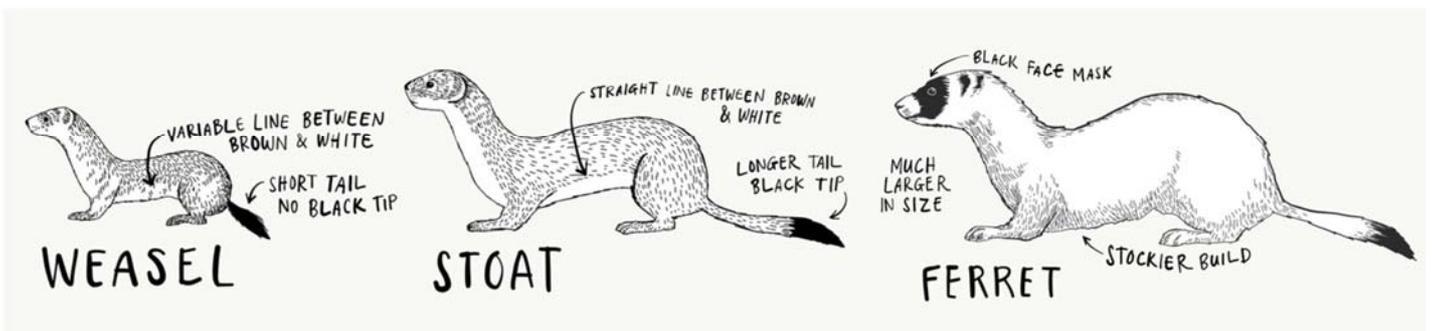
Please email info@trc.govt.nz with 'Email address' in the subject line and your name, address, LS plan number (if possible) and preferred email address in the body. Thanks!

Of course, the best bait is fresh rabbit meat so if you're out shooting chuck a few in the freezer and you're sorted. Other options include eggs, fish or fish-flavoured cat food and specialist stoat lures.

Questions?

We have officers dedicated to the Towards Predator-Free Taranaki rural programme. Give them a call on 0800 736 222 or email pftaranaki@trc.govt.nz.

Image credit:
PredatorFreeNZ





PEST PLANT MANAGEMENT

Thank you to everyone who's been in touch to report pest plants across the region recently. As a result, we've identified a couple of new sites where the Council has undertaken direct control in accordance with the Regional Pest Management Plan. If we did direct control on your property and you notice new growth on the remaining pest plants, or new seedlings, please contact us so we can get onto it quickly.

There have also been a number of Notices of Direction issued to land occupiers to control their pest plants, with follow-up visits scheduled.

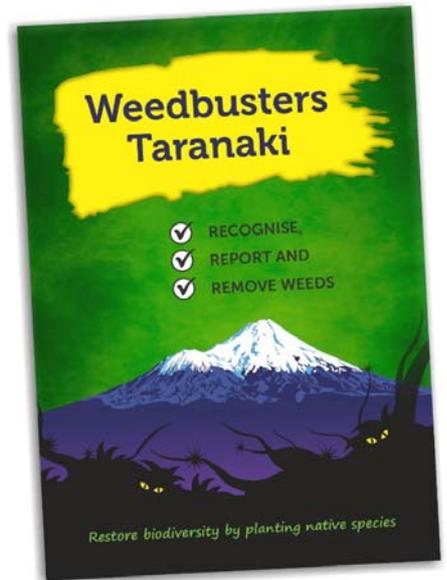
In autumn and winter pest plants can be harder to spot and effectively control. However if you do come across a pest plant on your property, we encourage you to spray or remove it. You may also wish to mark the spot with a piece of string or take a note, so you can head back in spring to check it hasn't returned.

Please note you are responsible for pest plant control on your property's riparian margins i.e. to the water's edge.

Handy websites: www.weedbusters.org.nz

www.agpest.co.nz

www.ombfree.nz



HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Do you have a weed-sized hole to fill? The new Weedbusters Taranaki booklet helps you identify common weeds in our region and suggests natives to plant in their place. Best of all, it's FREE. Contact us if you'd like a copy or download at <https://tinyurl.com/taranakiweeds>



RABBIT CONTROL



rabbit



hare

Rabbits compete with livestock for pasture, cause land damage from burrowing, browse on native plants and support predator populations.

We're approaching the best time of year to undertake rabbit control. Control is more effective in autumn and winter as rabbits have finished breeding, are more mobile and there is less food available so they are more likely to take bait.

There are a few different methods you can try - check out some helpful control tips from our friends at Hawkes Bay Regional Council at <https://tinyurl.com/hbrabbits>.

Do you know the difference between a rabbit and a hare?

You might think this is a silly question, but we have seen TV news items about rabbits using pictures of hares! So in case you've always been too scared to ask...

Hares are bigger than rabbits with large ears and hind feet. Their fur is usually reddish-brown. They live life above ground so their young are born fully developed. They tend to flee when threatened.

Rabbits are smaller. Wild rabbits tend to have grey/tan fur, although they can also be black. Rabbits are social animals so live in groups. While they dig burrows in Taranaki they often live under hedges, wood piles or buildings and will hide when threatened. Their young are undeveloped at birth.



IN OTHER NEWS...

Have you seen the monthly column in the *North Taranaki Midweek* and *Taranaki Star* by TRC Environment Services Manager Steve Ellis? In case you missed them, here's a recent one you might enjoy.



Seeking Taranaki's biodiversity gems

Is there a special piece of native bush on your property? A place where the tūi and kererū hang out or a home to distinctive plants, fungi, flowers or insects?

If there is, keep reading. Because it might be even more special than you think.

Taranaki Regional Council has identified more than 300 Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs) throughout Taranaki, ranging from one to 800+ hectares. Frankley, Woodleigh and Ōmata Schools have KNEs on or adjacent to their grounds, an incredible way for students to learn about and contribute to biodiversity. There are well-known KNEs such as Pukekura Park, Waipu Lagoons and Stratford's King Edward Park as well as more hidden gems.

KNEs are sites with significant biodiversity values for our region. In assessing a potential KNE Council officers look at factors such as the presence of threatened or distinctive indigenous flora and fauna, ecosystem type and representativeness, presence of threatened land environments, ecological context of the area and sustainability of the area.

Above: TRC Environment Officer Kelsi Bayly monitoring at the Mimi Estuary KNE in North Taranaki.

It can be a real thrill to discover and report what we find to the landowners. We've discovered kiwi, long-tailed bats (pekapeka-tou-roa), North Island robin (totowai), fernbird (mātātā), swamp maire, jointed fern – the list goes on!

The Council prioritises 20 KNEs per year to prepare a Biodiversity Plan that helps the owner protect and further enhance their habitat. It includes funding towards work such as predator trapping, planting and fencing.

A Plan could cover anything from freshwater fish passage to predator control to wetland ecology to riparian management. It's a great opportunity for landowners and we are constantly amazed by the incredible results we see.

Check out www.trc.govt.nz/key-native-ecosystems and if you think your piece of paradise might fit the bill, get in touch. To see KNEs near you go to tinyurl.com/keynativeecosystems. KNEs are shown in yellow - click on one for details.



Follow **Taranaki Regional Council** and **Towards Predator-Free Taranaki** on Facebook for more on what we're up to.