

Pest management review FOR Taranaki



The Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki

The *Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan for Taranaki* sets out the regulatory framework for the Taranaki Regional Council's pest management over the next 10 years. It builds on existing work, and addresses both plant and animal pests, in line with the Biosecurity Act 1993. Once adopted, it will replace the *Pest Management Strategy for Taranaki: Animals* and *Pest Management Strategy for Taranaki: Plants*.

Protecting Taranaki from the risks of harmful plants, animals and diseases is an ongoing challenge. Under the Biosecurity Act, rules may be imposed through national or regional pest management plans. These can bring significant costs and obligations to people. There are also costs to ratepayers when rules need to be monitored and enforced by the Council.



A brushtail possum

Meaning of 'pests'

The Biosecurity Act's definition of a pest is "...an organism specified as a pest in a pest management plan". The following table, top-right, shows the 18 plant and animal pests targeted in the Plan for eradication or sustained control in Taranaki. 'Other harmful organisms' not classified as pests have been separately addressed in the draft *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy*.

Pest	Programme
Climbing spindleberry	Eradication
Giant reed	Eradication
Madeira (mignonette) vine	Eradication
Senegal tea	Eradication
Brushtail possums	Sustained control
Giant buttercup	Sustained control
Giant gunnera	Sustained control
Gorse	Sustained control
Nodding, plumeless and variegated thistles	Sustained control
Old man's beard	Sustained control
Pampas (common and purple)	Sustained control
Wild broom	Sustained control
Wild ginger (yellow and kahili)	Sustained control
Yellow ragwort	Sustained control

The inclusion of any pest is subject to analysis of the costs and benefits of the proposed management programme, and its nomination must comply with the requirements of the Biosecurity Act and the *National Policy Direction for Pest Management 2015* (refer *Factsheet 5*).

Eradication programmes

The Council aims to fund and carry out eradication of the following four pest species in Taranaki, in recognition of the regional benefits. Under the Biosecurity Act, it may enter properties for surveillance, monitoring and control purposes.

- Climbing spindleberry.
- Giant reed.
- Madeira (mignonette) vine.
- Senegal tea.



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Sustained control programme

The sustained control programme will target the following 14 agricultural and environmental pests:

Pest	Rules	
	Good Neighbour	General
Brushtail possums	Yes	Yes
Common pampas	Yes	
Giant buttercup	Yes	
Giant gunnera	Yes	Yes
Gorse	Yes	
Kahili ginger	Yes	Yes
Nodding thistle	Yes	
Old man's beard	Yes	Yes
Plumeless thistle	Yes	
Purple pampas	Yes	
Variegated thistle	Yes	
Wild broom	Yes	
Yellow ginger	Yes	Yes
Yellow ragwort	Yes	Yes

The species listed in the table on the left are relatively widespread and are having significant impacts on Taranaki.

Under the Plan, land occupiers would be responsible for ensuring that those species do not cause problems for their neighbours.

The Council would be responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the two rules in the Plan's sustained control programme:

- Good Neighbour Rules apply to both private and Crown land occupiers, and address 'spill-over' effects of the pest on adjacent properties that are applying pest control (see *Factsheet 4*).
- General or other rules for private land occupiers that, by law, cannot be applied to the Crown but which apply an additional level of control, deemed appropriate by the community, to maximise the effectiveness of individual control.

Apart from brushtail possums, the sustained control pests are all plants or weeds. Since the early 1990s, the Council has worked with Taranaki land owners to facilitate possum control across intensively-farmed land through the Self-Help Possum Control Programme.

This has been so successful that the Council recently extended its possum control activities into urban New Plymouth, in collaboration with the New Plymouth District Council.

Pest	A summary of the Plan's rules for land occupiers in Taranaki	
	Good neighbour	General
Brushtail possums	A land occupier adjacent to properties in the Self-Help Possum Control Programme must maintain possum numbers to below a 10% residual trap catch within 500 metres of their boundary where an adjacent land occupier is in the Self-Help Possum Control Programme and is maintaining possums present on their land to below a 10% residual trap catch, excepting any property or part of a property east of the Self-Help Possum Control Programme boundary or in an urban area.	A land occupier in the Self-Help Possum Control Programme must maintain possum numbers present on their land to below a 10% residual trap catch.
Giant buttercup	A land occupier must destroy all giant buttercup present on their land within five metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing giant buttercup within five metres of their property boundary, excepting any property or part of a property in an urban area.	
Giant gunnera	A Crown land occupier must destroy all giant gunnera present on their land within 500 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing giant gunnera within 500 metres of their property boundary.	A land occupier must destroy all giant gunnera present on their land.

Pest	A summary of the Plan's rules for land occupiers in Taranaki	
	Good neighbour	General
Gorse	A land occupier must destroy all gorse present on their land within 10 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing gorse within 10 metres of their property boundary, excepting any property or part of a property in an urban area.	
Kahili ginger	A Crown land occupier must destroy all wild ginger (kahili) present on their land within 1000 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing wild ginger (kahili) within 1000 metres of their property boundary.	A land occupier must destroy all wild ginger (whether yellow or kahili) present on their land.
Nodding and plumeless thistle	A land occupier must destroy all nodding and plumeless thistles present on their land within 100 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing nodding and plumeless thistles within 100 metres of their property boundary, excepting any property or part of a property in an urban area.	
Old man's beard	A Crown land occupier must destroy all old man's beard present on their land within 10 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing old man's beard present within 10 metres of their property boundary.	A private land occupier must destroy all old man's beard on their property, excepting (a) any parts of a property that lie within 50 metres from the middle of the Waingongoro River south of Opunake Road and for which the Council has not completed its initial control programme; and (b) any parts of a property that lie within 50 metres from the middle of the Patea River east of State Highway 3.
Common and purple pampas	A land occupier must destroy all pampas present on their land within 2000 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing pampas within 2000 metres of their property boundary.	
Variegated thistle	A land occupier must destroy all variegated thistles present on their land within five metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing variegated thistles within five metres of their property boundary, excepting any property or part of a property in an urban area.	
Wild broom	A land occupier must destroy all wild broom present on their land within 10 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing wild broom within 10 metres of their property boundary, excepting any property or part of a property in an urban area.	
Yellow ginger	A Crown land occupier must destroy all wild ginger (yellow) present on their land within five metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing wild ginger (yellow) within five metres of their property boundary.	A land occupier must destroy all wild ginger (whether yellow or kahili) present on their land.
Yellow ragwort	A Crown land occupier, or land occupier east of the Pest Management Line (outside the dairying area of Taranaki) must destroy all yellow ragwort present on their land within 20 metres of their property boundary where the adjacent land occupier is managing yellow ragwort within 20 metres of their property boundary.	A land occupier west of the Pest Management Line (inside the dairying area of Taranaki) must destroy all yellow ragwort on their land, excepting any Crown land in which case Good Neighbour Rule 6.13.4.2 applies.

Key changes in the Plan

Key changes between the current strategies and the Plan include:

- The Plan combines plant and animal pest management.
- It is streamlined and provides detailed rules and management methods for the 18 plants and animals classified as pests. 'Other harmful organisms' not classified as pests are separately addressed in the draft *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy* (see *Factsheet 2*).
- The Plan includes new Good Neighbour Rules to help prevent land occupiers from imposing unreasonable pest management costs on adjacent properties where the pest is being controlled (see *Factsheet 4*).
- The Crown will be bound by Good Neighbour Rules, making pest management more effective and efficient.
- The Council is undertaking initial control of old man's beard along the Kaupokonui Stream and Waingongoro River to knock down infestation levels, with land owners then expected to manage the controlled areas. Rules were not applied previously due to heavy historic infestations and the excessive cost of control to land occupiers.

Change of focus for certain species

Certain species identified as pests in the current strategies will no longer be subject to rules.

They will instead be managed through 'pathway', surveillance, and site-led programmes as part of the *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy*. They include:

Animals	Plants
Argentine ants	Australian sedge
Brown hare	Brush wattle
European rabbits	Darwin's barberry
Feral cat	Egeria
Feral deer	Japanese walnut
Feral goats	Lagarosiphon
Feral pigs	Spanish heath
Magpies	Ragwort – pink
Mustelids	Undaria
Pest fish	Woolly nightshade
Rooks	



Wild ginger

- **Pink ragwort** is treated the same as yellow ragwort in the current strategies, however its regional distribution is limited to mainly roadside reserves, and it is palatable to stock. The Council believes it is better to address pink ragwort and similar pests that spread through known dispersal pathways via the *Taranaki Regional Council Biosecurity Strategy* rather than impose rules.
- **Rabbits** have historically been a localised but manageable problem in Taranaki. Rather than continue to rule how and when land occupiers should control them, the Council believes such decisions can be safely left to the individual.
- Requirements to control **Argentine ants** were onerous given the ants' active nature, sheer numbers and formation of super-colonies, and the cost of control. The Council instead aims to work with others to better manage the spread of Argentine and other invasive ants through advocacy, surveillance, education, and incursion programmes.

Species considered but not included

Other harmful species considered for inclusion in the Plan but for which rules were not considered appropriate include hornwort, tutsan/sweet amber, and yellow bristle grass.

- The eradication of **hornwort** in Lake Rotorangi was assessed as unfeasible given its ability to propagate from small fragments. As with other aquatic weeds and pest fish, control options are extremely limited.
- **Tutsan** is largely restricted to localised infestations in the eastern hill country and does not present sufficient threat to agricultural production or biodiversity values to warrant rules.
- Most **yellow bristle grass** infestations are being found on road and rail verges. Control is costly and difficult, as many normal methods are ineffective and can worsen the problem. A regulatory regime would also be hard to enforce. The Council is instead working with the New Zealand Transport Authority, district councils and Federated Farmers to manage the pathway spread of yellow bristle grass, and to research, survey, monitor and control it through biological methods.