

July 2024

Kawau Island multi-species eradication project



Working towards a pest free Kawau Island

Project update

In March, we sent an update about how we were adapting our approach to the multi-species eradication project in response to community feedback. This included:

1. amending our initial project operational programme to carry out the proposed eradication as **two standalone projects**
 - the first project focusing on the removal of browsers (wallabies and possums)
 - the second project focusing on the removal of predators (rats, and if present, stoats); this requires further ongoing discussion with the community before being confirmed
2. establishing a new project structure with greater community representation.

These changes signified a move from the feasibility phase of the programme to the operational planning phase for the wallaby and possum removal.

Since then, we have worked in collaboration with a number of landowners who have successfully stood up a community-led forum and nominated the third community representative to join the Steering Committee.

Your community representatives are:

- Carl Weaver, Chair of the Pōhutukawa Trust
- Michael Wheatcroft, Chair of Kawau Island Residents and Ratepayers Association
- Jon Bilger, Chair Kawau Island Community Forum.

What we've been doing:

- progressing the detailed operational planning needed for the wallaby and possum removal
- continuing discussions with crown agencies and third-party funders to secure funding required for the wallaby and possum eradication project
- getting a better understanding of the property access agreement landscape, including arrangement of access agreements for several key sites.

The next step in progressing the project is to proceed with the procurement phase. This involves:

- Auckland Council seeking proposals for the delivery of a range of operational activities; this involves different procurement processes depending on the services.

The first package of work is for **services** to lead and implement the removal of wallabies and possums. This involves establishing a team of pest eradication specialists by inviting proposals from experienced suppliers on the open market.

These experts will need to have skills in leading pest eradication projects as well as hunting, trapping, bait station management, geographic information systems (GIS), and dog handling. A key component of this process considers offering employment opportunities for the Kawau Island community.

There will also be several individual agreements that will be negotiated with local suppliers to deliver **logistical support services** for the project such as fencing and transport services.

We'll also be looking at **additional services**, including:

- baseline monitoring to establish relative abundance of possums on the island
- data collection and mapping tools for the ground-based operations.

The final package of work to be procured is for an independent supplier to **confirm target species have been successfully eradicated**.

This work will take place in the concluding stages of the project and will include working with detection dog teams and using data obtained from a fixed camera network for a period of time.

We will keep you updated on the outcome of this process. If you have any questions, you can reach us at kawauislandproject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

New Zealand Nature Fund fundraising

We're excited this project has gained support from the New Zealand Nature Fund (NZNF), a not-for-profit organisation that raises and manages donations to a wide range of conservation projects. The NZNF will feature the project on their website to introduce it to a wide philanthropic audience and will manage donations from Kawau Islanders who have expressed an interest in contributing to the project.

The NZNF noted the importance of this project to the wider conservation efforts within the Hauraki Gulf, marking the project as a key milestone in Auckland's predator free journey. It also emphasised the collaborative nature of the project including support from members of the local community and Pohutukawa Trust.

The NZNF welcomes all donations. You can share the link to donate or donate directly via the New Zealand Nature Fund website: nznaturefund.org/projects/kawau-island

Property permissions process

Auckland Council has engaged Island Conservation to lead discussions with landowners regarding property access for the wallaby and possum removal. Island Conservation team members are meeting with landowners to discuss the project and to complete landowner agreements. These include property access permissions and any specific concerns or safety considerations, particularly concerning people or pets.

Feedback from landowners will help inform our operational planning, as part of a continual engagement and process improvement practice.

To arrange a meeting with Island Conservation or for any questions, please email: kawau@islandconservation.org

You can also contact our project team with any questions: kawauislandproject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Project information guides

We recently published guides that provide more information on:

- the removal of wallabies and possums from Kawau Island and commonly asked questions
- A general introduction to the project that outlines the threats of pest animals, benefits of the project, and the different ways you can work towards protecting Kawau Island.

You can find these guides on our Auckland Council webpage: www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/kawau-island

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