

September
2024



Kawau Island multi-species eradication project

Working towards a pest free Kawau Island

Monitoring work underway

In September and October Auckland Council will be carrying out two key pieces of monitoring work on Kawau Island ahead of the wallaby and possum eradication operation. These will help guide planning for the operation and provide a current understanding of possum numbers and ecosystem health across the island.

The first project is possum population monitoring, aimed at estimating current possum numbers on Kawau Island. This is a one-off piece of work, expected to take around seven days in mid-September, and is weather dependent. Our contractors will use certified live capture possum traps with a non-toxic lure to attract possums. The traps are raised 100cm off the ground to protect kiwi and weka and no toxins will be used during the monitoring work. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the project team at kawauislandproject@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

The second project is baseline ecosystem monitoring, scheduled to begin in late October. This will give us an understanding of the current state of Kawau Island's ecosystems before the eradication operation begins. Ecosystem monitoring work is something the council will do annually to track what changes occur in the island's ecosystems over time, especially once browsing mammals (wallabies and possums) have been removed.



Looking out to Hauturu / Little Barrier Island from Kawau Island, photo by Jude Hynes.

Update on the project procurement process

We are mid-way through the procurement process for the diverse range of services needed to carry out the removal of wallabies and possums from Kawau Island. We have extended the deadline for proposals to allow suppliers extra time to ask questions about the specifics of this operation and to submit their plans. We've had a great response with approximately 13 different suppliers interested in delivering the different services required for this project.

Understanding the timeline: two stand-alone projects

We understand there has been some confusion within the Kawau Island community regarding the timeline of the eradication programme. We hope the information below provides greater clarity.

We have split eradication programme into two standalone projects.

Project one: focuses on removing browsing species, specifically wallabies and possums, and is expected to take approximately two years. Preparatory groundwork (cutting tracks, building fences) is set to begin later this year.

Project two: remains in an assessment phase. If approved, it would follow the completion of project one and focus on the removal of predators, specifically rodents, and if present stoats. This requires further and ongoing discussion with the community before being confirmed.

In the meantime, if you're interested in controlling rodents on your property, contact the Kawau Community Conservation Trust (also known as the Rat Pack). They are establishing a network of community coordinators across Kawau to help landowners and residents work together to reduce rodent numbers. You can reach out to Sharon Harper on info@kawauconservation.co.nz for more information.

Argentine Ants incursion

Earlier this year, a new infestation of Argentine Ants was found in Schoolhouse Bay, in addition to the already known site at Vivian Bay. Council staff will be at these sites in October and November to begin monitoring and treatment work in an effort to eliminate this pest species.

Besides being a major household and garden pest, Argentine ants pose a serious threat to our natural areas and wildlife because of their aggressiveness and appetite. Argentine ants form super colonies and can kill and displace native invertebrates that many indigenous species depend on. They will eat lizards, bird eggs and newly hatched chicks, potentially threatening endangered populations.

Steps you can take to prevent bringing Argentine ants to Kawau include:

- Checking your gear and bags, building and landscaping supplies before heading to the island.
- Know what to look out for - Argentine ants are often dark honey-brown in colour, fast moving, swarm together and travel in trails.
- Buy your plants from a Plant Pass certified nursery. These nurseries follow biosecurity procedures to help reduce the risk of pests being transported to Kawau Island. Find your nearest Plant Pass nursery here: <https://www.plantpass.org.nz/biosecurity/participatingproducers>
- Be vigilant. Argentine ants like warm, dry places. They are often found on the ground under timber, retaining walls, metal or concrete or in plant pots and boats. If you think you have these ants on your property, contact Auckland Council to identify them.
- For more information on this pest go to <https://www.tiakitamakaurau.nz/protect-and-restore-our-environment/pests-in-auckland/pest-search/linhum/>



An Argentine Ant

Getting ready for Summer: boat and travel tips

Heading to Kawau to get the house ready for summer? Make sure you're not carrying any unwanted stowaways with you.

Check your equipment, gear and boats: rodents, ants, plague skinks, and weeds are emerging with the warmer temperatures and may hitch a lift. Give your gear a good shake out if it's been stored over winter before you pack.

Clean your boat and gear: look for biofoul (plants, algae, small animals) on your hull and dirt on your shoes or tramping gear. Any gear that's been used in areas where kauri grow could carry kauri dieback disease, seeds or pests. Clean dirty gear and footwear to remove all soil and seeds.

Close all food containers: pack food into sealed containers and then zip up bags to keep pests out.

You may encounter one of our hard-working biosecurity dog teams at Sandspit. They play a crucial role in inspecting for potential pests, often assisting Pest Free Warranted Operators. Dogs are chosen for their thoroughness, speed, and non-invasive approach to checking risk goods. Conducting biosecurity checks before travel to Hauraki Gulf islands helps mitigate the risk of introducing pests, which, once established, can be extremely challenging to eradicate.

For more info check out <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment/what-you-can-do-for-environment/Pages/transporting-items-hauraki-gulf-islands.aspx>



Rosie and Rochelle at Sandspit Wharf checking for pests

Property permissions meetings

A reminder that the Island Conservation team are in the process of discussing property access permission with landowners for the wallaby and possum work. If you haven't heard from one of the community liaison team or would like to touch base again, please reach out by email Kawau@islandconservation.org or phone (details below) to organise a time to discuss the project and property permissions:

- Julie Alach, 027 266 8373
- Vaughan Spurdle, 022 618 1001
- Chris Palmer, 027 4734721

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