

Kaitoke/Hutt River Catchment

POSSUM CONTROL



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

The Greater Wellington Regional Council will carry out an aerial possum control operation in the Kaitoke/Hutt River Catchment from 1 July 2014

Where is the possum control area?

The possum control area covers approximately 10,000 hectares of Kaitoke Regional Park backcountry and the Hutt River Catchment. The area is located at the southern end of the Tararua Ranges and marked on the map inside this leaflet. This area is owned and managed by the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). Aerial possum control has been carried out twice in this area, in 2003 and 2009.

Why is it being done?

GWRC actively manages biodiversity in the most significant sites in the region. Kaitoke Regional Park and the Hutt River Catchment contain many rare native tree, plant and bird species, including kaka, kakariki, karearea (NZ Falcon) and southern rata. These forests are also used as a water supply catchment.

Recent monitoring has indicated that possum populations are once again reaching levels that threaten the health of the forest and the biodiversity it supports.

Possums eat a wide range of native plants and prey on birds, eggs, reptiles and invertebrates. This can severely damage the diversity of the forest, slowing down regeneration and reducing numbers of nationally threatened species. Possum control has the additional benefit of also controlling rats and stoats. A reduction in numbers of these introduced predators will further protect native plants and birds.

A healthy and intact forest provides the best land cover for water supply purposes, providing improved water retention during dry periods and minimising the amount of soil getting into the water. Possums can transmit diseases such as giardia and cryptosporidium which can contaminate water supplies and lead to serious illness.

How will we control the possums

Greater Wellington Regional Council will use cereal-based baits containing the biodegradable toxin 'sodium fluoroacetate', commonly known as '1080', to control possums in the area shown on the fold-out map inside this leaflet.

The baits will be laid using helicopters equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) navigational technology. This will ensure baits are placed accurately. This method has historically been very successful in reducing possum numbers to a very low level.

The baits are the size of a wine bottle cork and will be coloured green to make them unattractive to birds. We will apply 1.5kg of bait per hectare. This will be equal to one bait every nine metres across the control area. Given the size of the possum control area and the rugged terrain, using baits containing '1080' is the most effective, cost-efficient and safe method.

In June 2011, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment strongly endorsed the continued use of '1080' in New Zealand.

Where can I get information updates from?

Information sheets and operational maps are mailed to all property owners neighbouring the possum control area.

Letters are written to:

- Schools
- Local user groups (hunting clubs, tramping clubs)
- Police, health centres and veterinary clinics
- District and city councils

We also give information to, and place adverts in, local newspapers. All updates will be on www.gw.govt.nz.

Is there any risk to the public water supply?

There will be no risk to the public water supply as a result of this possum control operation. Water will not be taken from the Hutt River Catchment during, or immediately after, the baits are laid.

The Te Marua Water Treatment Plant will use an alternative water supply, the Stuart Macaskill Lakes, during and immediately after the possum control operation. The Medical Officer of Health will advise when the Hutt River Catchment can be used for supply again.

Safety precautions

Aerial 1080 operations can only proceed under strict Medical Officer of Health requirements and resource consent. 1080 is a controlled substance under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act and can only be applied by licensed operators. In addition, Greater Wellington has its own stringent requirements which must be met.

Public warning signs will be placed at all main access points and signs will remain in place until the operation area has detoxified.

It is an offence to handle bait or interfere with warning notices. Strictly supervise or keep children away from the operation area. 1080 is extremely toxic to humans.

If you suspect 1080 has been swallowed, seek medical aid immediately. Symptoms of 1080 poisoning normally appear between thirty minutes and four hours. They include vomiting, shaking, convulsions, finally cardiac and respiratory collapse. All 1080 bait is green. Non-toxic pre-feed bait is fawn/tan.



**In case of
accidental
poisoning
dial 111**

Feral game and meat

Do not eat or sell feral animals:

- Taken from the possum control area
- Or within 2km outside the boundary of possum control area (5km for feral pigs)

for a minimum of four months after the distribution of the toxic baits.

Under the Ministry of Primary Industries Meat (Residues) and Game Regulations, feral animals intended for sale to a game pack house cannot be hunted in areas where poisons have been laid. Declarations that the animals are from areas free of contaminants must be supplied.

Precautions for dogs

1080 is extremely toxic to dogs. Dogs are ten times more susceptible to 1080 poison than any other animal. Keep all dogs out of the possum control area.

Dogs outside the possum control area are at risk if they are able to scavenge carcasses that may have been washed along rivers during a flood. Greater Wellington staff will be checking the sides of the river after floods. Dogs should be kept on a lead when alongside the river in areas adjacent to the possum control area.

If you suspect your dog has eaten 1080:

- Try to make it vomit by giving an emetic (see below)
- Take it to a vet immediately



The speed of treatment following poisoning is the most important factor in the survival of the dog.

Vets near the possum control area have been notified that 1080 is being used.

There is no guaranteed antidote for 1080 poison. However, in many cases a dog's life may be saved with glycerol mono acetate or acetamide glucose. This must be administered by a veterinary surgeon as the dog will need to be tranquillised and the drug given intravenously.

What is an emetic?

An emetic is a medicine or a product that is given to cause vomiting. It is a first-aid option before seeking immediate veterinary help. Causing your dog to vomit using washing soda crystals (sodium carbonate) will limit the amount of poison the dog absorbs. Washing soda crystals are available from most supermarkets.

- Place a knob of washing soda crystal, about 1cm across in size, down the dog's throat.
- If the dog has not vomited after 10 minutes a second dose can be given.
- Repeat doses will not be harmful
- Do not leave the dog alone

The vomit from a poisoned dog can poison other animals. Bury the any vomit material.



Further information

If you require further information or have any questions, please contact:

Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 40847
Upper Hutt 5140

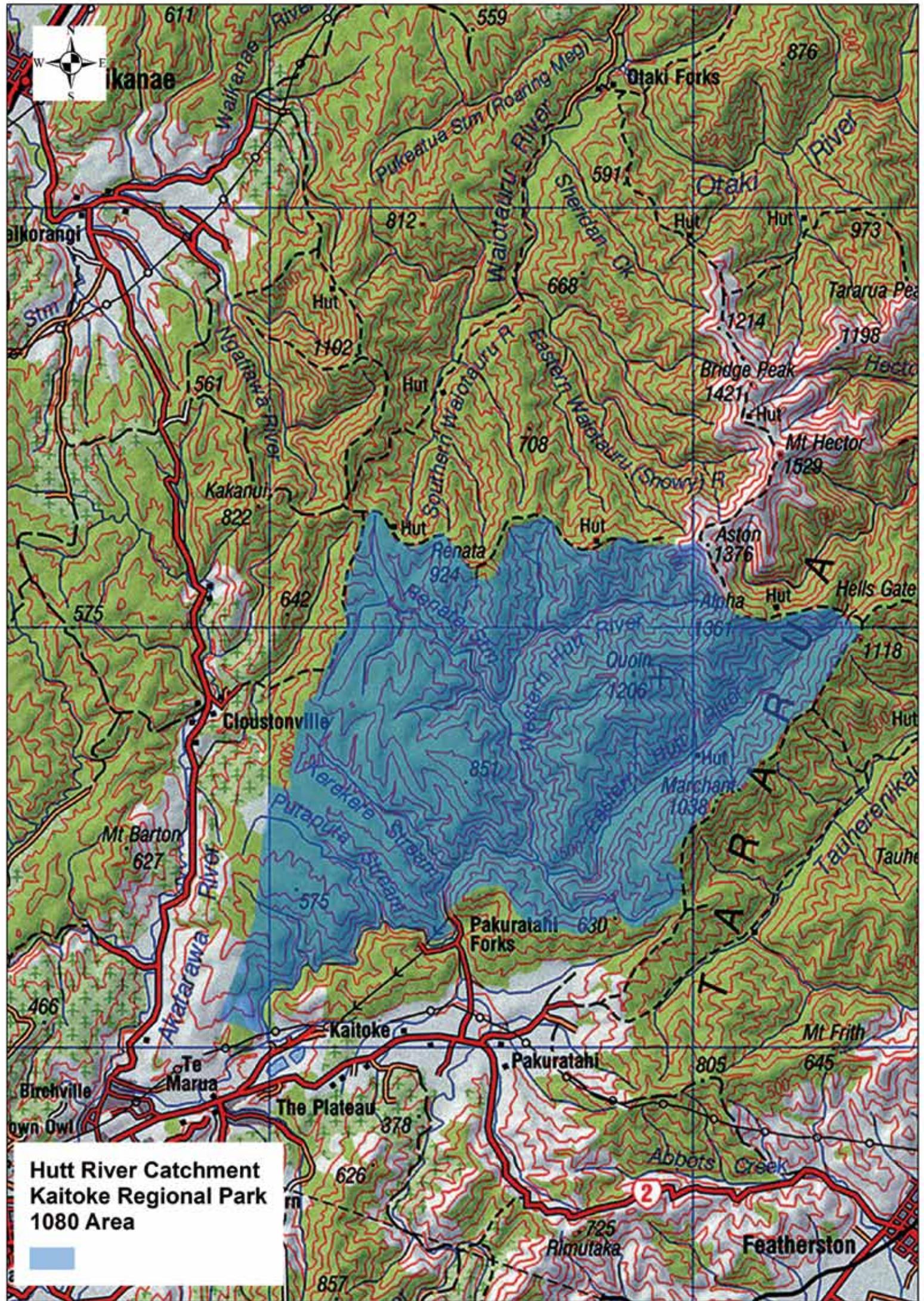
04 5264 133
pest.animals@gw.govt.nz

For more information on how and why sodium fluoroacetate is used in New Zealand, please see www.1080facts.co.nz.

Follow the Wellington
Regional Council



www.gw.govt.nz



Hutt River Catchment
Kaitoke Regional Park
1080 Area

