

Possum Control in Havelock North

Hawke's Bay Regional Council will be working with Hastings District Council on a possum control operation centered around the outskirts of Havelock North - from February to June 2010.

The goal is to reduce possum numbers to a low level working in conjunction with the rural Possum Control Areas or PCA's that already exist around Havelock North and Te Mata Park.

Existing damage to flora and fauna and the threat of damage to boutique industries around the village - such as olives - has led Hawke's Bay Regional Council to repeat its successful urban possum control programme trialed on Napier Hill last summer.

This was based on programmes that have been in place in Wellington and Auckland for some time. The results of this programme has seen an increase in native birds across Napier Hill, and the trees are flourishing as well. This is something that will be good to see around Havelock North.

Possums travel from gullies and surrounding lifestyle blocks into the suburbs. Nearby neighborhoods should also see changes for the better, such as increased native bird life, and less vegetation damage to house gardens, parks and reserves.

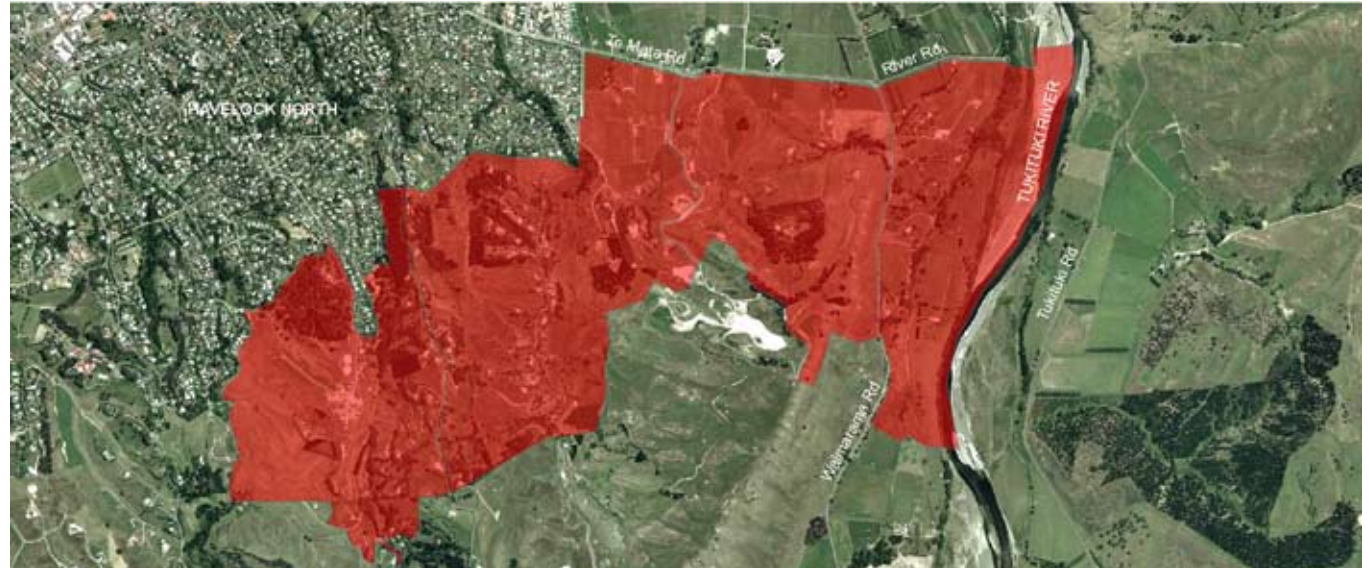
This possum control operation is one of the Regional Council's programmes to increase biodiversity and improve your lifestyle in the urban areas. We also support the Pathways project, enhance waterways such as the Karamu Stream, and restore wetlands at Pekapeka and Waitangi Estuary.

Residents can decide the control methods

The possum control will be carried out from mid February to June 2010 in the area shown in the map.

Hawke's Bay Regional Council will use skilled contractors who will use a variety of methods to ensure an efficient and safe control programme. Residents will be able to decide the type of control method on their property. The success of the programme will depend on the level of community support.

Area for possum control, February-June 2010



The contractors will carry ID cards. They will contact all property owners or residents whose land they would like to access, and will have to have your signed permission before they do control work on individual properties. They will provide property owners with additional information on the control methods, safety aspects and provide contact details. All traps will be pinpointed by GPS technology so they can be maintained and retrieved at the end of the control operation.

Keen to get rid of possums?

If you know you have a possum problem now (perhaps a particular tree or route favoured by possums) please let the contractor know when they contact you. The information will be valuable in helping the contractor plan the best placement of traps.

What happens after the control is completed?

After the initial control has been completed, the Regional Council aims to maintain possums at very low levels, with the support from Hastings District Council and the community.

The community can assist by regularly servicing a bait station or a kill trap on their property. Bait stations and traps are subsidised by the Regional Council and can be purchased through the Farmlands store.

Please talk to us if you would like to be part of a community biodiversity group for the Havelock North area.

For further information about this urban biodiversity control work you can learn more by visiting the Regional Council website - [www.hbrc.govt.nz/What we do/Pests/Animals/Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.hbrc.govt.nz/What%20we%20do/Pests/Animals/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions), or the Fact Sheet link.

For specific concerns please phone Dean Roughton on 833 8088.



Looking forward to fewer possums

Selby Palmer lives on Waimarama Road looking over his 1200 ten-year-old olive trees.

In high numbers possums turn to alternative feed sources like vines or new growth on olive trees. In urban areas, it's the damage possums do to native plants, stripping new growth and eating things like berries, an important food source for birds, not to mention roses.

"Around here, in town, it's the gardens. My neighbours are always complaining about possums in their gardens. They're very prevalent around here."



Selby's own traps have been working overtime. "I'm catching some big old grays. This area will certainly benefit from one

of these control programmes. Let's get rid of the bloody things."

Selby is well aware of the threat of possums from a farming point of view. As the owner of Te Aratipi Station, a 1200ha coastal hill country property near Maraetotara, he has seen the Regional Council's possum control programme make a huge difference to his farm. The initial programme caught about 2000 possums including 50 from Selby's garden on the first night.

"The catch is minimal now but important once the numbers are low, let's keep them there."

He has seen regeneration on native bush, and the native birds are coming back in their numbers. Also poplar or willow poles planted for erosion control have a better chance of survival. The improvement in the garden is obvious too.

"They used to hammer the garden, roses in particular. Possums on the roof sounded like they were walking around with their hobnail boots on too."

Safe methods to be used

The contractor is able to use a number of control methods, and residents can decide which is the most appropriate for their property.



Live capture trap is a cage which catches the possum; the contractor takes the possum off site within hours to dispose of humanely.



The **Timms Kill trap** is the most commonly used trap in urban gardens throughout New Zealand. The Timms trap is usually set on the ground.



Bait Stations help maintain low possum densities after the control has been carried out, and are also set in trees around 1.5 - 2m above the ground.



The **Possum Master trap** is a kill trap that is set in trees around 1.5 - 2m above the ground making it a good choice to use in the urban environment.

The control methods that will be used in the Havelock North area have been used very successfully and safely in a number of other cities around New Zealand, such as Napier, Wellington and Auckland.

Safety notes

If you have a concern about safety of young children or pets, please feel free to discuss this with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council's contractor when he calls.