



CONSERVATION
TE PAPA ATAWHAI

CONSERVATION ADVISORY SCIENCE NOTES

No. 15

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND IN THE 1970s AND 1980s AND THEIR IMPACTS ON KIWI

(Short Answers in Conservation Science)

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Location: NZMS


POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND IN THE 1970s AND 1980s AND THEIR IMPACTS ON KIWI

Most possum hunting was by using cyanide paste. It was easy to apply and operators could get a return more quickly than by using traps. Cyanide paste was also lighter to carry, especially when hunting areas were remote. With trapping you had to check your trapline every day and wait a day to skin the possums.

Poisoning

In the 1970s, 400 cyanide licences were issued in one year. Possuming peaked in 1987 then dropped right off. Very little is being done at all now (early 1990s).

Cyanide was the poison used because the possums died on the spot. 1080 and phosphorus have also been used recently mainly for pest control. Cyanide is laid in the following manner: A blob of cyanide paste is squeezed out of the tube like this:

(actual size) 

This is then covered by the lure which had a flour base.

Lures used in the late 1970s and 1980s were: cloves, curry powder, oil of wintergreen (these were the main ones with cloves (ground) being the top choice). Other lures used were: raspberry, cinnamon, magnolia, eucalyptus oil and orange.

If one person went through an area poisoning possums and did not do very well, the next person that covered that area would change the lures used.

Some possums were found with suspected egg shells in their guts and others were observed eating sheep remains.

Trapping

Traps were used extensively in the Bay of Islands area, mainly by the Pest Board personnel (John Bannister).

Most kiwi caught or killed were by traps, mostly by inexperienced trappers. Professionals avoided kiwi because it affected their returns monetary-wise.

Most kiwi caught were on wet nights especially in pine country.

Four trappers who caught kiwi:-

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| (a) | 10 years - 8 kiwi |) | |
| (b) | 6 years - 1 kiwi |) | Number trapped (and usually released) |
| (c) | 15 years - 5 kiwi |) | |
| (d) | 10 years - 3 kiwi |) | |

In my experience most kiwi deaths were caused by the following:

- dogs
- land development
- mustelids, cats
- trapping

Kiwi are on a bigger decline and I believe this is now because of possums and mustelids (mainly ferrets) - Tangihua, Kaipara, Tapuhi, Ngunguru etc.

Trappers

The following trappers would be able to supply additional information:-

Frank Steiner: Baldock Road - Brynderwyns, Mareretu State Forest down to Wellsford.

Doug Kay and Ronnie Kay (son): Farm at end of Tangihua Road (farmer).

Murray Child: Owns area at Tangihua (locality itself) (farmer).

Milton Parker: Waimatenui.

John Bannister: Ohaeawai - Kaikohe area.

Don Fenwick: Whangarei County Council.

A look at the poisons book at Wrightsons would give an idea of how much poison was being used and by whom and where they lived.

MAF could give an indication of poisons licences issued over whatever period you wanted to know. See Winston Kake.

Geographical Areas

The following table summarises my knowledge of possum control operations in Northland. The intensity of cyaniding and trapping is ranked on a 0-3 scale (nil to high intensity).



P.O. BOX 4266

KAMO, WHANGAREI

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Brynderwyn Ranges	Q08 : 26420-65665	1 generally 3 on edge	3	Heavily trapped around the periphery. Mainly poisoned. Operators had pig dogs with them.
Mareretu State Forest	Q08 : 26335-65760	1	3 south 1 north	Mainly on the southern slopes along Finlayson Brook Road. Not much at eastern end.
Waipu Gorge	Q08 : 26353-65712	0	3	Intensively poisoned.
Pukekohe Hill	Q08 : 26197-65740	0	3	Poisoned by County Council - Don Fenwick.
Taylor Road	Q08 : 26212-65765	0	3	Poisoned by County Council - Don Fenwick.
Tangihua Range - West	P07 : 26092-65933	2	3 around verges	A lot of ferrets on north-western slopes.
Paerata	P07 : 26045-66003	Probably 0	1	
Maungaru Range	P07 : 25950-66016	3	3	
Maungaru Mountain	P07 : 25985-65970	0	3	
Houto Mountain	P07 : 25995-66027	0	3	
Mangatipa Block	P07 : 25961-66055	0	3	
Houto Road - Scattered scrubby bits	P07 :	0	3	
Rifle Range, Brewer Road, Wharekohe	P07 : 26315-66035	0	2	
Spences Bush, Windy Hill	P07 : 25975-65860	0	2	
Maungatawhiri	P07 : 25962-65833	0	2	
Girls High School road	P07 P: 26057-65873	0	2	
Boar Stream Bush	P07 : 26040-65859	0	2	
Railway Bush, Tangowahine	P07 : 25983-65900	0	3	
Kirikopuni Valley Road	P07 : 25980-66023	0	3	

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Forestry Roads NE of Tutamoe Range	P07 :	0	3	
Manganui River	P07 :	0	3	
Ruakaka State Forest	Q07 : 26355-65880	0	3	Because of proximity to Whangarei, everybody hit these areas when the skin price was high.
Waipu Caves	Q07 : 26350-65825	0	3	
Takahiwai	Q07 : 26380-65935	0	3	
Tangihua Range SE side (Lodge area and east)	Q07 : 26123-65900	2	3	
Bartlett Rd, Waiotira	Q07 : 26205-65865	0	2	
Maungakaramea ("Church Hill")	Q07 : 26185-65945	?	2	
Maungatapere Mountain	Q07 : 26182-66018	?	?	Poisoned and trapped by locals.
West end Otaika Valley Bush	Q07 : 26254-66030	0	2	Some on Jeeves property and steep western end, but generally not much otherwise because of walking tracks in the area.
Eastern Fringe Otaika Valley	Q07 : 26282-66020	0	1	
Rest of Otaika Valley	Q07 : 26272-66024	0	0	
Pukenui Forest/Western Hills	Q07 : 26254-66085	?	? probably	
Waiparera	Q07 : 26425-66080	3	3	Probably not done for 6 years now.
Mt Tiger	Q07 : 26376-66084	3	3	
Owhiwa Road	Q07 : 26401-66059	3	3	
Scallop Road NZFP area	Q07 : 26407-66095	3	3	
Kauri Mountain	Q07/R07 : 26504-66021	?	?	
Mt Manaia	Q07 : 26478-65980	?	?	
Bream Head	Q07/R07 : 26517-65930	?	?	

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Marlow Road and Bounder Bed Stream	Q06 : 26130-66280	3	3	
Wright Road, Aponga	P06 : 26060-66130	0	?	Mainly poisoned by County Council.
Motatau Forest	P06 : 26080-66230	?	?	
Patutahi NZFP	P06 : 26041-66262	3	3	Intensive pig hunting.
Motaretahi	P06 : 26004-66284	0	2	
Matawaia, Pokapu Road		0	3	
Motatau	P06 : 26050-66360	0	3	Pig hunting.
Rakautao Forest	P06 : 25920-66380	3	3	Pig hunting.
Mangakahia Forest	P06 : 25970-66180	Fringe Trapping	3	Intensive pig hunting.
Omauri Road	P06 : 25972-66217	3	3	Intensive pig hunting.
Twin Bridges	P06 : 25874-66194	3	3	Intensive pig hunting.
Tokawhero Forest	P06 : 25920-66244	3	3	Intensive pig hunting.
Lake Tauanui & south to Te Opou Stream	P06 : 25887-66320	2	2	Ken Lord - owner.
Marlborough Forest (NE of Tutamoe Range)	P06 : 25780-66130	2	3	
Opouteke and Takitu Road	P06 : 25852-66135	3	3	Mainly pine forest.
Awarua Block (Awarua to Gammon Road)	P06 : 25840-66250	3	3	
Waimatenui - south of road, east to river	P06 :	0	3	One of the first possum liberation areas in Northland.
Mataraua Forest	P06 : 25720-66255	3	3	Milton Parker's area.

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Mangatawa Road	P06 : 25716-66323	0	2	Milton Parker's area.
Waipoua Forest	O06 : 25620-66190	?	?	Milton Parker.
Waoku Coach Road	O06 : 25684-636250	0	3	Milton Parker and Alan Gardiner.
Waima Forest	O06 : 25600-66310	0	3	
West of Duddy Road, Omanaia	O06 : 25615-66397	?	?	Maori Affairs Block.
NZFP south of Ngawha Springs	P05 : 25890-66410	3	2	
Waikaramu Road, Ohaeawai	P05 : 25915-66512	3	0	John Bannister
Hui te Werawera Stream	P05 : 25880-66560	3	2	
Puketi Forest	P05 : 25760-66635	3 edges	3	Some areas not done intensively, but main areas have been.
Pukewharariki Forest	P05 : 25750-66460	3	3	
NZFP south of Moerewa	P05 : 26050-66415	0	2	
Whangae Road Bush	P05 : 26070-66485	0	2	Northern faces only.
Opuia Forest east of Otao	P05 : 26080-66549	?	0	
Taratara Bush, north of Oromahoe Road	P05 : 26023-66540	0	2	
Hupara Road Bush	P05 : 25993-66494	?	?	
Waitangi Forest	P05 : 26030-66613	0	2	
Russell State Forest	Q05 : 26250-66450	3	3	Dogs used. Pig hunting.
Whangaruru North Head	Q05 : 26353-66478	3	3	
North of Bland Bay	Q05 : 26340-66515	3	3	
Cape Brett	Q05 : 26295-636652	?	0	Only time Alan knows of it being poisoned is by DoC.

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Taheke Scenic Reserve	Q06 : 26400-66130	3	3	
Hugh Crawford Reserve	Q06 : 26437-66180	0	3	
Kaiatea	Q06 : 26420-66186	0	3	
Soda Springs Reserve	Q06 : 26444-66226	0	3	
Glenbervie Forest	Q06 : 26340-66190	3	3	
Whananaki South Road to Matapouri Road	Q06 : 26405-66255	3	3	
Otongo to Whananaki (Whananaki North Road)	Q06 :	3	3	
Kaiikanui Road	Q06 : 6363 Grid square	3	3	Lots of kiwi between 26350-66344 to Hansen's Hill. Lots of pig hunting, night shooting.
Kaimamaku	Q06 : 26300-66325	3	3	
Puhipuhi Forest	Q06 : 26273-66330	3	3	Dogs used for possum work. Intensive pig hunting.
Huruiki	Q06 : 26302-66391	0	3	Belongs to Lou Pickens.
Long Road to Tapuhi Road	Q06 : 26195-66380	3	3	T Webb and B H LeClerc
Hay Road, Ruapekapeka	Q06 : 26160-66390	3	3	
Koheroa Hill, Monument Road	Q06 : 26175-66366	3	3	
Parakiore	Q06 : 26267-66150	0	0	
Hikurangi Mountain	Q06 : 26256-66216	2	2	
Tanekaha (Heaton Road)	Q06 : 26205-66227	3	3	
Purua State Forest	Q06 : 26139-66178	3	3	
Rarewarewa	Q06 : 26142-66205	3	3	

POSSUM CONTROL OPERATIONS IN NORTHLAND

Locality Name	Map and Grid Reference	Trap	Cyanide	Comments
Manawaora to Russell (whole peninsula)	Q05 : 26160-66570	?	0	Only time Alan knows of it being poisoned is by DoC.