TBfree

SOUTHERN RIMUTAKA AERIAL BOVINE TB CONTROL OPERATION

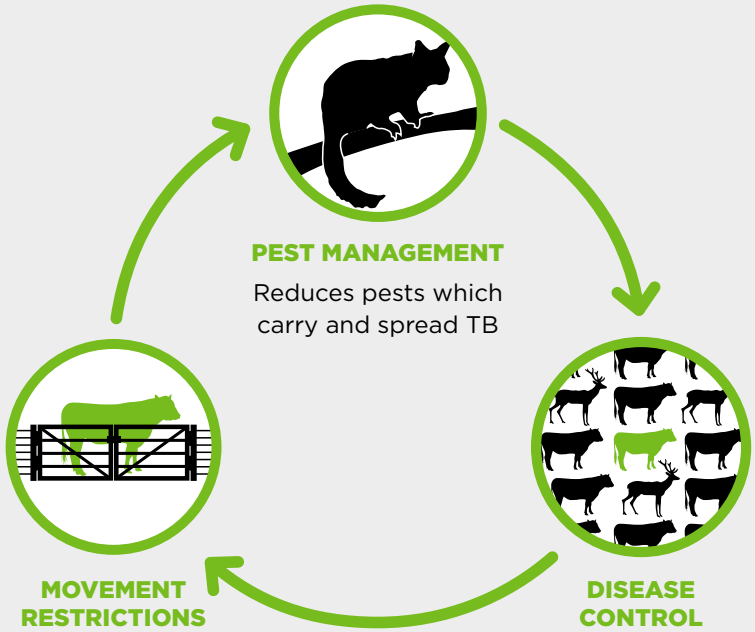
OSPRI'S TBFREE PROGRAMME

The TBfree programme aims to manage and eventually eradicate bovine tuberculosis (TB) from New Zealand's farmed cattle and deer and wild animal populations. We use possum control, along with regular herd testing and movement restrictions, to achieve this objective. Information gathered from wild animal surveys, recent and historic findings of TB in wild animals, herd testing results and the operational history of the region is used when planning operations.

TARGETING POSSUMS

To eradicate bovine TB, possum numbers need to be kept extremely low – around one to two animals every 10 hectares. Monitoring has shown that control work is needed in the Southern Rimutaka area to reduce the possum population and minimise the risk of the disease spreading through wild animal populations and onto farmed cattle and deer. Possum control has dramatically reduced the number of infected herds in the Greater Wellington region. Controlling disease prevents livestock production losses and protects the world-leading reputation of New Zealand's dairy, beef and deer products. This area has not been treated by OSPRI's TBfree programme before.

HOW WE CONTROL TB



WHAT TO EXPECT

The operation will begin with the distribution of non-toxic, tan-coloured cereal pellets by helicopter. This "pre-feed" gives possums a taste for the pellets and overcomes bait shyness. One to two weeks later (weather permitting), toxic, green cereal pellets coated with deer repellent – each containing 0.15% biodegradable sodium fluoroacetate (also known as 1080) – will be applied by helicopter at a rate of two kilograms per hectare.

That's about one bait to every 60 square metres. The Southern Rimutaka operation will be subject to strict safety, quality-assurance and monitoring requirements.

Advanced GPS navigational equipment will be used to ensure the pellets are accurately placed and identified exclusion zones avoided.

THE METHOD

A vast majority of possum control in the region is done by local contractors using ground-based traps and hand-laid toxins. The remaining area is controlled using aerially applied pellets containing biodegradable 1080. Aerial control is highly-efficient, cost-effective and has historically been extremely successful at knocking possum numbers down to very low levels. It is preferred in areas like Southern Rimutaka due to the rugged nature of the terrain. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment also supports aerial control. The commissioner completed an extensive review into the use of 1080, in which she strongly endorsed its continued use in New Zealand.

Please visit pce.parliament.nz to read this report.

Baits covered in deer repellent. The non-toxic pre-feed pellets are brownish-tan while the toxic baits are green.

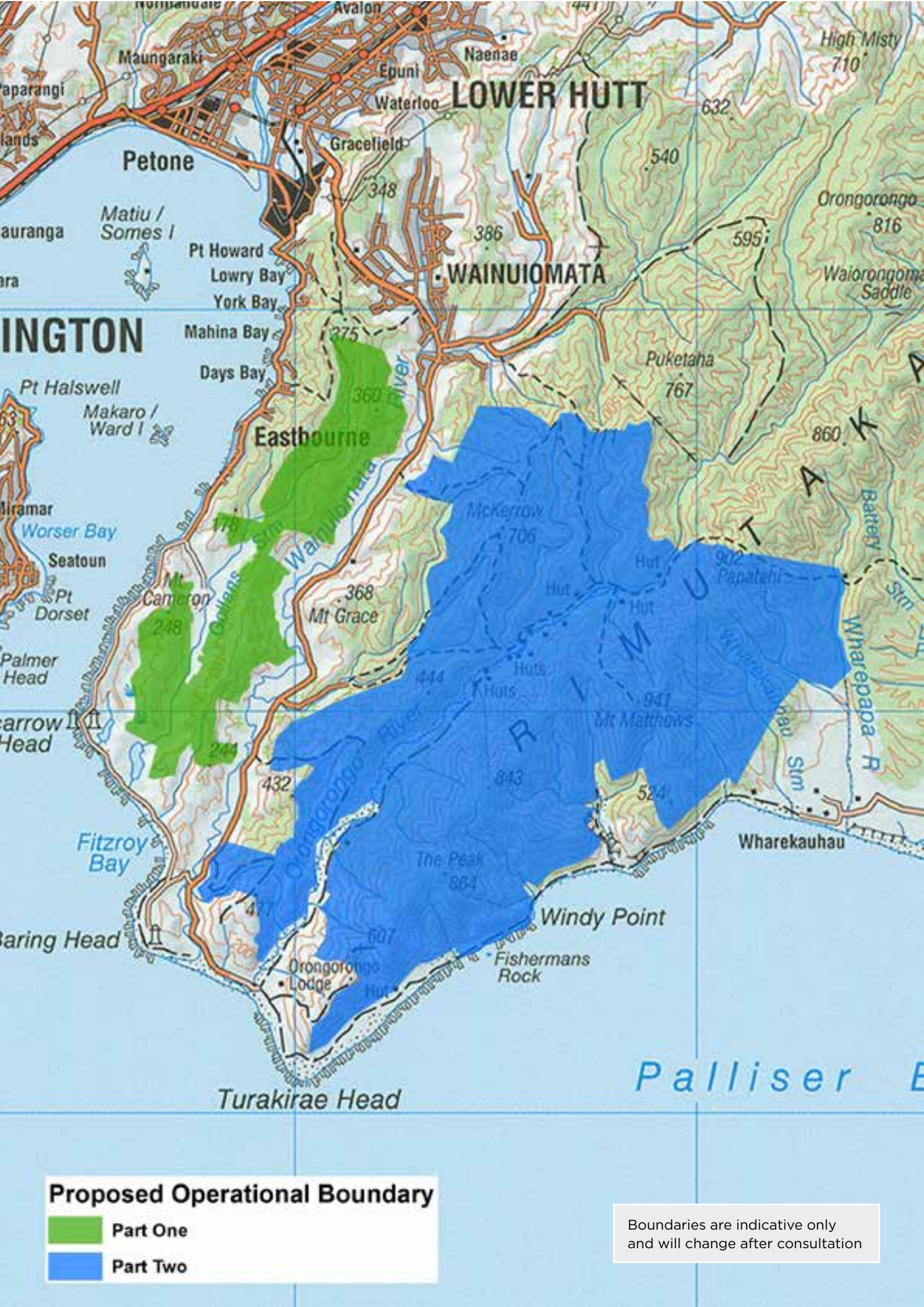
WHAT HAPPENS NOW

Part 1 (noted on map) of the operation is scheduled to begin pre-feeding in March. Toxic bait will laid as soon as possible after the third of April, weather dependant. Part 2 of the operation is scheduled to begin pre-feeding in May.

All landowners/occupiers within and adjacent to the proposed control area will be contacted and visited by TBfree contractors ahead of the operation. They will discuss boundary issues, water supply safety and the management of any risks to dogs and livestock. Consents from Greater Wellington Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Health are required for this operation. Affected landowners/occupiers will be contacted again before the operation starts, notices will be published in local newspapers and warning signs will be placed at all likely access points to the operational area.

BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

The operation will have additional conservation benefits for native birds and bush. Possums eat the forest canopy and prey on native birdlife, including eggs and chicks. Biodegradable 1080 is also extremely effective at controlling other introduced predators such as ship rats and stoats.


Avalon
Maungaraki
Naenae
Epuni
LOWER HUTT
Waterloo
Gracefield
Petone
Matiu / Somes I
Pt Howard
Lowry Bay
York Bay
Mahina Bay
Days Bay
WAINUIOMATA
Pt Halswell
Makaro / Ward I
Eastbourne
Miramar
Worser Bay
Seatoun
Pt Dorset
Mt Cameron
Mt Grace
Palmer Head
Fitzroy Bay
Baring Head
Turakirae Head
Windy Point
Fishermans Rock
Wharekauhau
Wharepapa R
Orongorongo River
Waiohine River
Waiu Collens Stm
Battery Stm
Mt Matthews
Mckerrow
Puketaha
Orongorongo
Waiorongoma Saddle
High Misty
Papatehi
Huts
Hut
Lodge
RIMUTAKA
Palliser
632
540
595
816
710
767
860
902
706
941
843
524
444
432
368
386
348
375
360
248
244
177
607
477
Proposed Operational Boundary
Part One
Part Two
Boundaries are indicative only and will change after consultation

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Warning signs will be placed at all main access points to the operational area and everyone must follow the cautions on the signs. There's no health risk when using this area as long as you follow these instructions:

Do not handle any bait or allow children to wander unsupervised. Cereal baits containing 1080 are dyed green.

Do not hunt or take game from within a two kilometre radius of the operational area for human or pet consumption. It's an offence to sell meat products that have been exposed to 1080. Hunting can resume approximately four months following the control work, or after two months if 100mm of rain has fallen.

Please observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about the pesticide. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When the signs are officially removed, you can resume normal activities in the area. Free dog muzzles will be provided on request. Please contact OSPRI on 06 3532710 to obtain a muzzle.

Do not bring dogs into the area until the warning signs have been officially removed.

Dogs are particularly susceptible to 1080. They must not be allowed access to bait or poisoned carcasses which remain toxic to dogs until they have fully decomposed.

THERE IS NO RISK TO PUBLIC DRINKING WATER

Biodegradable 1080 is highly soluble and does not persist in water or soil. Local health authorities apply strict conditions to aerial operations so that drinking water supplies are not contaminated. Safety has been confirmed by tests on several thousand water samples taken after aerial 1080 operations over many years.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT POISONING

Contact your local hospital or doctor, or **dial 111**

National Poisons Centre
0800 POISON (764 766)

If a domestic animal is poisoned, contact a local veterinarian.

FURTHER INFORMATION

OSPRI
North Island office,
Palmerston North
P 06 353 2710
E vector.SNI@ospri.co.nz
tbfree.co.nz | ospri.co.nz

Contractor
BioWorks
Masterton
P 06 378 2484
E Graeme.Butcher@gw.govt.nz

For more information on controlling bovine TB and why 1080 is used in New Zealand, visit 1080facts.co.nz