The Department of Conservation plans to control possums and rats in the following Manawatu Coastal Reserves: Omarupapako/Round Bush Scenic Reserve; Himatangi Scientific Reserve (and adjoining Horowhenua District Council Reserve- Barber’s Bush Scenic Reserve), and Awahou Conservation Area. Refer to map.

How it is happening

Rat Control
The pesticide diphacinone (trade name : Pest-off rat bait 50D) will be used for rat control. 0.5kg – 1kg of bait will be placed in phylproof stations throughout the reserves every 3 months. The diphacinone baits are cereal based, 10mm in diameter and dyed green. Other anticoagulant pesticides —Racumin (coumatetralyl) and Ratabate (diphacinone)— may also be used for rat control and have the same mode of action as Pest-off rat bait 50D. Cholecalciferol in the form of Feracol paste may also be used in the phylproof bait stations for targeted possum control. Cholecalciferol is also toxic to rats and may also have an impact on the rat numbers.

Possum Control
The pesticide cholecalciferol (trade name: Feracol) will be used for possum control. It will initially be placed throughout the reserves using “strikers” which are a biodegradable potato starch bait station with a highly palatable feed paste with the active ingredient cholecalciferol added. These will be stapled to trees approximately 1m from the ground along rat bait station lines. The frequency of striker application will be in response to possum population monitoring.

Timeframe
The operation will be ongoing and poison warning signs will be installed immediately prior to the pesticide being distributed in the reserves.

Important information
The pesticides, cholecalciferol, diphacinone and coumatetralyl are poisonous to humans and domestic animals. Poisoning can occur through handling or eating the bait, or consuming dead or poisoned animals. Treat all baits as poisonous, and keep domestic pets out of the operational area. Animal carcasses will remain poisonous until they have decomposed. There is no health risk associated with using this area provided the following rules are observed:

- DO NOT handle any bait
• DO NOT allow CHILDREN to wander unsupervised
• DO NOT bring dogs into this area.
• DO NOT handle or eat ANIMALS from this area. (includes buffer zones below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Within buffer</th>
<th>Pesticide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>2km</td>
<td>Any except cyanide or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cholecalciferol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits</td>
<td>200m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hares, Wallabies or</td>
<td>1km</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Possums</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer or any other wild</td>
<td>2km</td>
<td>Any except cyanide or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animal</td>
<td></td>
<td>cholecalciferol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presence of warning signs indicates that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. The removal of signs will tell you that you can resume normal activities in the area. If in doubt, check with DOC.

Why we are controlling possums and rats
Possums and rats affect the health of native ecosystems. They eat seeds and seedlings, impact on forest regeneration, compete with native wildlife for food and prey on birds, eggs and invertebrates. Possum and rodent control improves habitat and decreases predation on native wildlife. The areas contain threatened native species which are vulnerable to predation from possums and rats. Control of possums and rats will significantly benefit these threatened species. We plan to carry out ongoing control to ensure these significant coastal forest remnants remain healthy.

Why we are using this method
From previous operations, we have found poison bait to be an extremely effective form of possum and rat control. When used appropriately feracol possum bait, pest-off and other anticoagulant rodent baits are effective toxins for keeping possums and rats at low levels.

Because we are setting up new pest control infrastructure in the reserves we will be continuing to monitor pest numbers to make sure we are achieving our target goals.

Operational planning
The use of these pesticides requires the Department of Conservation’s internal approval process to be met. This ensures the operation meets our Quality Management Standards for pesticide use. This approval entails a detailed assessment of risks involved with the operation. The document produced is called an Assessment of Environmental Effects, and a copy for this operation can be obtained from the DOC office in Palmerston North.

If you suspect poisoning
Contact the National Poisons Centre
Tel 0800 764 766 (0800 POISON)
Or dial 111 and request an ambulance
In the case of a domestic animal being poisoned contact a local veterinary service.

For more information
Department of Conservation
Manawatu Rangitikei Area Office
717 Tremaine Avenue
Private Bag 11010
Palmerston North 4442
Tel: 0-6 350 9700
Fax: 0-6 350 9701