PREDATOR FREE 2050
TUIA TE TAIAO

Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand

Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2026–2030)

Predator Free 2050 vision

Whakahokia mai ngā reo karanga o te pepeke, o te pekapeka, o te ngārara o te manu ki ngā ngahere, ki ngā whenua pāmu, ki ngā tāone iti, ki ngā tāone nui me ngā takutai.

Return the
voices of the
insects,
bats,
reptiles
and birds
back to the forests,
farmlands,
towns,
cities and
coasts.

Cover: Installing a sentinel adaptor device to a trail camera on Mou Tapu, Wānaka. *Photo: Blake Hornblow*
Contents page: Eradication work on Mount Te Kinga as part of the Predator Free Te Kinga project. *Photo: Shelley Crawford*

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Innovate for a predator-free New Zealand: Predator Free 2050 Strategy (2026–2030)

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This report incorporates insights from a public consultation process that were generated using Microsoft 365 Copilot, a generative AI tool. We read all unique submissions, tagged related comments to themes, identified key insights based on engagement and used Copilot to draft short summaries. All AI-generated content was manually reviewed and verified by the team that drafted the strategy.

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Contents

Te kupu takamua a te Minita
Minister's foreword

Kua uaua te noho o te tini o ngā momo kararehe, manu māori ahurei e kitea ana i Aotearoa. I takea mai rātou i i tētahi mekamoutere taratahi i roto i ngā mano tau tini ngerongero o mua, ā, ko ngā kaikonihi aruaru i a rātou i whai i a rātou mā te koi o ō rātou whatu, ā, ko te whakautu tauārai ki aua kaikonihi he tū mārika, he whakatūmatapō hoki me ngā wawao pērā. He tino roa te noho o ēnei momo koiora i te ao nei, he pōrori te tupu, ā, he parirau kore ētahi – nā ēnei mea katoa i te tino whakaraerae tō rātou noho i te kawenga mai o ngā kaikonihi hou e te tangata. Nā konei kua tino heke te taupori o ēnei momo.

Kei Aotearoa nei ētahi o ngā pāpātanga korehāhā tiketike rawa huri noa i te ao. Kei Aotearoa nei hoki tētahi o ngā ōwehenga tiketike rawa o ngā momo mōrea, whakamōrea rānei i te ao – neke atu i te 75% o ngā momo ngārara, manu, pekapeka māori, ika wai māori katoa. Ki te kore tātou e aro wawe atu, ka ngaro rawa pea ētahi o ngā momo whakamōrea rawa o ēnei momo i roto i ngā whakatupuranga tangata e rua noa iho pea kei mua i te aroaro.[1]

Ko Kaikonihi-kore 2050 te urupare māia a Aotearoa ki te hekenga kanorau koiora o ōna momo ake, nā ōna kaikonihi. Ko te whāinga o te hōtaka he ārai i te hurihanga mutunga kore o te ārai kaikonihi, me te haepapa i ēnei kararehe i Aotearoa me ōna moutere moana i mua i te tau 2050.

Many of the unique native animals found in Aotearoa New Zealand are in serious trouble. They evolved on an isolated archipelago with predators that hunted by sight, so in order to survive, they evolved defences such as freezing and camouflage. These species are long living and slow growing, and many became flightless – traits that made them highly vulnerable when humans introduced new predators. As a result, their populations have plummeted.

New Zealand has one of the highest extinction rates in the world. It also has one of the highest proportions of threatened and at-risk species in the world – over 75% of all native reptile, bird, bat and freshwater fish species. Without urgent action, the most critically threatened of these species could disappear within just two human generations.[1]

Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) is New Zealand's bold response to biodiversity decline due to predators. The programme aims to stop the never-ending cycle of predator suppression and eradicate these animals from New Zealand and its offshore islands by 2050. Since its launch in 2016, PF2050 has focused on mobilising New Zealanders to engage with its vision and take action in their local communities. Studies have shown that New Zealanders have embraced the predator-free

1 **stats.govt.nz/indicators/extinction-threat-to-indigenous-species**

Studies have shown that New Zealanders have embraced the predator-free movement – 39% of New Zealanders have now heard of the programme and 29% have trapped introduced predators.

Mai i tōna whakarewanga i te tau 2016, i aronui a Kaikonihi-Kore 2050 ki te whakaoho i ngā tāngata o Aotearoa kia whai wāhi ki ōna kitenga, kia hāpainga hoki ā rātou mahi i ō rātou hapori ake. Nā ngā rangahau i whakakite kua tahuri ngā tāngata o Aotearoa ki te awhi i te kōkiri kaikonihi-kore – 39% o ngā tāngata o Aotearoa kua rongo kōrero mō te kaupapa, ā, 29% kua hopu i ētahi kaikonihi i kawea mai i tāwāhi ki ēnei moutere.[2]

I te tau 2020 i whakatakotoria te mānuka kia hangaia ētahi rohe kaikonihi-kore i te tuawhenua o Aotearoa. Kua puta kē mai ngā hua o tēnei whāinga matawhānui – i ēnei rā ka kitea e te whatunga kāmera mamao a Predator Free South Westland i te tini o ngā rowi, he maha kē atu aua rowi i te maha o ngā kiore (ko te rowi te kiwi onge rawa o Aotearoa) i te tonga o Ōkārito.[3]

Kua kite ā-kanohi au i ngā hua o ngā kaupapa tāone nui pēnei i Kaikonihi-Kore, Te Whanga-nui-a-Tara, i tangohia ai ngā kaikonihi i Te Motu Kairangi / Miramar Peninsula, me te aha he 136% te pikinga ake o te maha o ngā manu māori.[4]

movement – 39% of New Zealanders have now heard of the programme and 29% have trapped introduced predators.[2]

In 2020, the challenge to create predator-free areas on mainland New Zealand was set. This ambitious goal is already showing results – Predator Free South Westland's remote camera network now detects more rowi (New Zealand's rarest kiwi species) than rats in south Ōkārito.[3]

I have witnessed first-hand the benefits of city-based projects like Predator Free Wellington, where predator removal on Te Motu Kairangi / Miramar Peninsula has resulted in a 136% increase in native birds.[4]

More predator suppression work is happening than ever before, spanning over 1.8 million hectares of public conservation land, as well as council reserves and private properties. This work helps protect threatened species and hold the line while eradication technology advances. People and governments worldwide are looking to New Zealand for the technological advances we are achieving –

2 Predator Free New Zealand Trust. 2024. Measuring the perceptions of Predator Free 2050 since 2022 benchmark study: Final debrief June 2024. Wellington: Predator Free New Zealand Trust. **predatorfreenz.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PFNZ_Final-debrief_2024.pdf**

3 **pfsw.org.nz/more-rowi-than-rats-an-exciting-milestone-in-south-okarito**

4 **pfw.org.nz/our-project/news/miramar-peninsulas-bird-numbers-flying-high**

He nui kē atu ngā mahi ārai kaikonihi o ēnei rā i ō mua mahi, ka kapi ināianei ngā heketea 1.8 miriona whenua tautiaki tūmatanui, tae atu ki ngā punanga kaunihera me ngā whenua tūmataiti. Nā ēnei mahi i tautiaki ngā momo koiora whakamōrea, i aukati hoki ētahi atu pānga me te mōhio kei te pai haere ngā hangarau haepapa e hangaia ana e te ao. E aro nui ana ngā iwi me ngā kāwanatanga o te ao ki Aotearoa mō ngā ahunga whakamua o ngā hangarau haepapa kīrearea e mahia nei e tātou – he whanaketanga ēnei ka tupu hei ahumahi hou, ka tuku taonga ki te ao, arā, hei ahumahi hou mō tēnei motu.

Kāore anō kia mutu te ako mō ēnei āhuatanga. I roto i ngā tau i mua i 2030, ko te aronga nui he tautoko i ngā mahi whakamīharo e kawea nei i tēnei wā, me te āki i ngā mahi auaha mō ngā taputapu, mō ngā tikanga mahi me te tuituinga mai i te hapori, hei kaupare i ngā tātaramoa e whakapōrearea nei i te whakawhānuitanga o te kaupapa ki te motu katoa.

Ko te aronga tae mai ki tēnei wā, kua hāngai ki te kiore, ki te paihamu, ki te whānau toriura (te toriura, te whereti, me te wīhara), engari kia mārama te tangata ki te pānga kino o ētahi atu kaikonihi ki ō tātou koiora māori. Tā tēnei rautaki he tāpiri i ngā ngeru mohoao momo hei haepapa ki te rārangi momo ūnga, he tāpiri hoki i ngā mauhi me ngā tuatete ki te rārangi rangahau, i runga i te mōhio he pai ake me tino mārama ki ngā tauwhitinga ki ngā pūnaha rauropi māori e tutuki ai te matakite mō Kaikonihi-Kore 2025.

Ka nui taku hari mō te āhua o ngā tau e 5 o te hōtaka, i a tātou e kōkiri nei i te auaha, e whakaoho ana i ngā tāngata o Aotearoa kia kōkiri mahi mō te taiao, kia puta ai he Aotearoa kaikonihi-kore i te mutunga.

E mihi ana ki a koutou katoa mō te wāhi ki a koutou i roto i ēnei mahi.

Hōnore Tama Potaka
Minita mō Te Papa Atawhai

developments that will, in time, create a new export industry for the country.

There is still much to learn. Leading up to 2030, the focus is on supporting the great work that is already underway while also driving innovation in tools, techniques and community engagement to overcome the challenges that currently limit cost-effective nationwide expansion.

To date, the focus has been on rats, possums and mustelids (stoats, ferrets and weasels), but the devastating impact that other significant mammalian predators are having on native wildlife needs to be recognised. This strategy adds feral cats to the target species list and mice and hedgehogs to the research list, recognising the need to better understand predator interactions with native ecosystems to achieve the PF2050 vision.

I am excited for the next 5 years of the programme as we drive innovation, inspire more New Zealanders to take action for nature and prepare to achieve a predator-free New Zealand.

Thank you all for the part you play.

Hon Tama Potaka
Minister of Conservation

Introduction and context

Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) has an ambitious goal of eradicating selected small mammalian predators from Aotearoa New Zealand by 2050 so that nature and communities can thrive.

Introduced predators like rats, mustelids, possums and feral cats are some of the leading drivers of biodiversity decline in New Zealand and have a devastating impact on the wildlife, economy and culture here.[5]

PF2050 aims to create a future where ecosystems are resilient and can be enjoyed by future generations.

A target species list was created in 2016 and includes 7 of the 10 mammalian predator species in New Zealand – possums, ship rats, Norway rats, kiore, weasels, stoats and ferrets. These species were chosen because they were considered the most harmful and realistic to eradicate by 2050.

This strategy adds feral cats to the target species list, putting them in scope for nationwide eradication by 2050. This change recognises the major impact they have on native wildlife and the public support for addressing this issue.

Mice and hedgehogs have been added to the research list so that the impact they have on native species, including their likely response to the removal of other predators, can be better understood. This knowledge will help drive investment in developing humane and effective tools and techniques for their management.

The Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC) is the strategic lead for the PF2050 programme, but work across all of New Zealand's landscapes and communities will be a shared effort – this is reflected in the use of the word 'we' and 'our' in this strategy.

5 Department of Conservation. 2020. Biodiversity in Aotearoa: an overview of state, trends and pressures. Wellington: Department of Conservation. **doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/biodiversity/anzbs-2020-biodiversity-report.pdf**

Southern rātā in full bloom after predator elimination work for the Predator Free South Westland project. *Photo: Jase Blair*

Current state of the programme

PF2050 has captured the hearts and minds of New Zealanders like no other conservation initiative has before. It has provided a focus for action, which has stimulated investment, engagement and research. Over the 9 years since the PF2050 goal was announced, New Zealand has made significant progress and learnt a lot about what it will take to achieve the goal.

Through a coordinated and massive nationwide effort from DOC, Iwi, Hapū, Imi, large-scale predator elimination projects, communities, scientists, non-government organisations (NGOs), regional councils, philanthropists and a diverse range of individuals, we have shown that a predator-free future is within reach. Examples of these efforts include:

- developing a proof of concept for elimination in urban, rural and natural environments – this has had promising initial successes, such as on Te Motu Kairangi / Miramar Peninsula in Wellington (urban cityscape) and in South Westland (rural and conservation areas)
- creating new technologies, such as toxic baits, artificial intelligence (AI)-led surveillance tools and smart trap developments, which have significantly improved the detection, removal and defence of predators
- developing an understanding of the operational models and community support systems that can enable elimination across the country
- gaining a clear grasp of the innovation and science requirements that will enable a shift from proof of concept to approaches that are cheaper, scalable to large areas and defendable against predator reinvasion.

These achievements are significant and bring the vision of a predator-free future into sight.

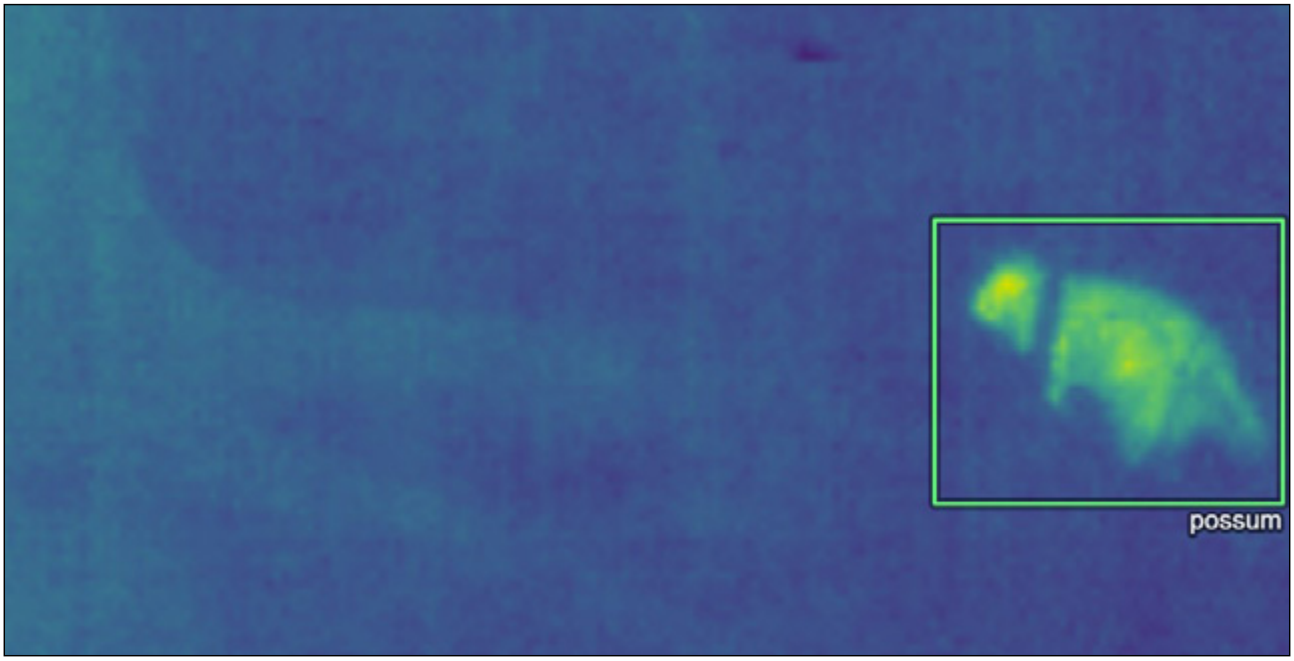


Image processing platform. *Photo: The Cacophony Project*

The next challenges:

- Fill key knowledge gaps to position PF2050 to expand operational delivery.

- Develop clear approaches for elimination in urban, rural and conservation landscapes.

- Build the evidence base around the environmental and economic benefits of PF2050.

- Grow public awareness and support to underpin the programme.

If the focus on research, development and innovation is successful over the next 5 years, New Zealand will be able to consider operational expansion towards 2050.

The timeline on pages 32–34 outlines the trajectory of benefits, outcomes and milestones we aim to achieve by 2050.

Top left: Proterma™ predator bait containing 1080, ready for trials targeting feral cats and stoats. *Photo: Finlay Cox*
Top right: Conor is one of more than 1,000 people involved in the Predator Free Dunedin collective. *Photo: Predator Free Dunedin*
Bottom left: Transporting a tītī/sooty shearwater for relocation, Rēkohu / Wharekauri / Chatham Islands.
Bottom right: Elizabeth, Predator Free Wellington ranger, showing young children a gecko habitat. *Photo: Peninsula Early Learning*

Alignment with *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020*

PF2050 is part of a wider response to implement *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020* (ANZBS), which sets the strategic direction for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity in New Zealand.[6] The strategy identifies introduced invasive species as one of the five key pressures facing New Zealand's native biodiversity.

The species targeted in PF2050 are some of the most damaging invasive predators to native biodiversity.[7] As PF2050 expands nationwide, it is important to coordinate with national programmes that manage other ecosystem threats and pressures, such as browsing animals like deer and goats, to ensure that biodiversity gains from investment and effort are maximised.

Tāne Mahuta, Waipoua Forest, Northland. *Photo: Natalia Volna, itravelNZ*

6 **doc.govt.nz/anzbs-2020**
7 **doc.govt.nz/predator-free-2050**

Importance of predator suppression

The aspiration to achieve mainland predator eradication will take decades to realise. So, for now, predator suppression plays a very important role in PF2050.

For decades, many individuals, conservation groups and agencies have been involved in predator suppression across New Zealand to reduce predator numbers and ensure that there are safe spaces for threatened species. This critical work has reduced predator numbers to low levels, providing temporary but essential relief to native species, and in many cases, ensuring their survival.

Predators are now being actively suppressed across more of the country than ever before – but this work is ongoing and persistent. PF2050 marks a turning point, a shift from ongoing predator suppression to a permanent state of predator eradication. This will deliver ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits, many of which are already being experienced, and free up the effort and cost associated with ongoing predator suppression for other national priorities.[8]

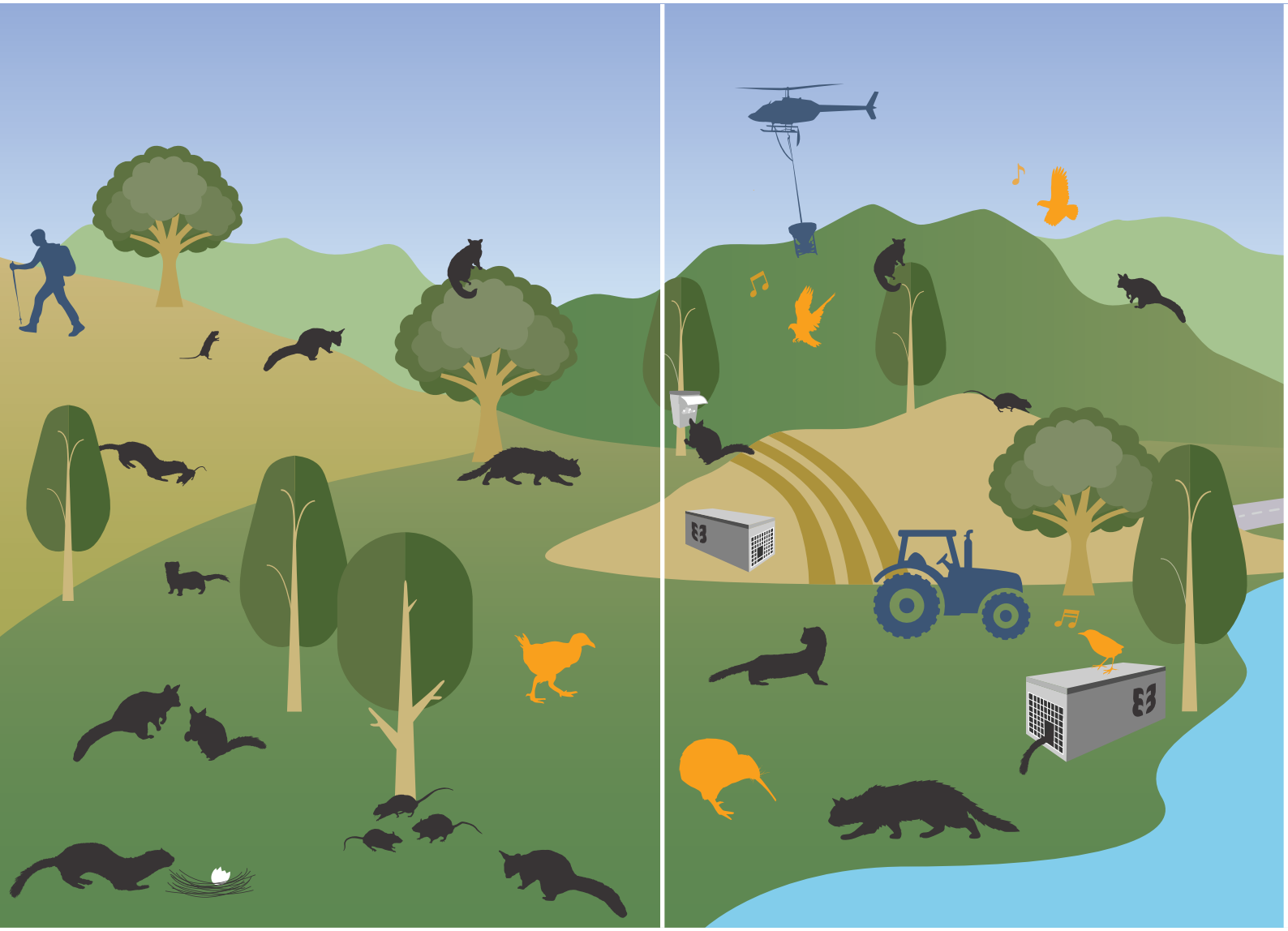
This strategy weaves together all types of predator management and focuses on:

- progressing multi-species elimination where achievable, worthwhile and sustainable with the goal of maximising biodiversity outcomes by addressing the local threats
- trialing elimination through landscape projects to refine the tools and techniques for broader application
- suppressing predators to ensure that we maintain wildlife populations in the meantime.

The graphic on the following page demonstrates the different predator management approaches and shows how predator suppression can ensure the survival of some native species (e.g. kiwi, pīwakawaka / New Zealand fantail, tūī) even where low numbers of predators remain. By contrast, other species (e.g. tīeke / saddleback, hihi / stitchbird, kākāpō and many seabirds) depend on ecosanctuaries and pest-free islands where multi-species eradication has been achieved.

8 Reeves K. 2025. Beyond the numbers: the hidden impact of Predator Free Wellington – Most Significant Change Evaluation Report. Wellington: Predator Free Wellington. **reports.pfw.org.nz/site/assets/files/2522/msc_report_august_2025.pdf**

Impacts of predator control approaches on native species and the environment



No predator management

- Introduced predators continue to eat precious native plants and animals, and many native animals go extinct, some in as few as two human generations.
- New Zealanders' connections to nature, wellbeing, recreation, tourism and the economy all suffer.

Predator suppression

- Many wildlife populations stabilise and grow, and though this will not free New Zealand of predators, it keeps numbers low for a few months or years at a time.
- Suppressing predator numbers over and over again is expensive and only benefits limited parts of New Zealand.

Predator elimination

- Through innovative tools and technologies, predators are completely removed from large areas on the mainland without using fences.
- Predators that re-enter the eliminated areas are quickly detected and removed before they breed and establish permanent populations.
- Native plants and animals within these areas flourish.

Predator eradication

- Predators are completely removed and cannot re-enter areas where they have been eradicated from.
- Many of New Zealand's offshore islands are in an eradicated state, where the potential for reinvasion is minimal due to large water barriers and defence and response systems.
- New Zealanders enjoy a deepened connection to nature through flourishing wildlife and a bolstered economy.

Kiwi translocation to Waiheke Island. *Photo: Te Korowai o Waiheke*

PF2050 as a collective effort

Achieving the PF2050 goal cannot be done by any single organisation alone – it will require collective effort to be successful. This strategy is designed to guide the efforts of communities, Iwi, Hapū, Imi, large-scale predator elimination projects, NGOs, philanthropists, scientists, innovators, businesses, fenced ecosanctuaries, schools, landowners, central, regional and local government, and others. Everyone has a vital role to play in realising the vision of a predator-free New Zealand.

The benefits we expect to see from PF2050 give our work a shared purpose – to restore balance to the environment, protect biodiversity, strengthen community wellbeing, and enhance the health of people, nature and the economy.

Given the collective nature of PF2050, we have outlined key ways of working that guide how we act, make decisions and collaborate across the programme – through learning, innovation and inclusion.

Wānanga at Kura Reo o te Taiao, Rotorua. *Photo: Rawhitiroa Photography*

Ways of working

Build flourishing Treaty partnerships

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | the Treaty of Waitangi guides our relationships, decisions and actions. We aim to ensure that Māori values, rights and knowledge are embedded across the programme at every level.

Provide national direction and foster local leadership

While we share a national goal, local leadership is critical and supported to tailor approaches that reflect communities' unique ecosystems, people and experiences.

Ensure inclusive governance

Diverse voices shape the direction of PF2050. Achieving the PF2050 goal will require a collaborative effort from Iwi, Hapū, Imi, local, regional and central government, scientists, industries, and communities – so we seek to ensure that how we operate reflects these perspectives.

Learn together

The programme provides tools, guidance and support to measure what truly matters – healthy ecosystems, thriving communities and authentic Treaty partnerships. We actively share insights, tools and lessons across those involved, from those working on island biosecurity to landscape-scale elimination and eradication work. Transparent and accessible information helps us learn from one another.

Communicate and engage effectively

We engage New Zealanders in shaping decisions and the direction of PF2050 because we recognise that the best and most enduring solutions to complex challenges emerge from communities' valuable knowledge and experience. We also share with New Zealanders how we have made progress towards the PF2050 goal and amplify their stories about being part of it.

Toroa pango / light-mantled sooty albatross, Adams Island.
Photo: Mat Goodman

Strategy

Becoming predator free would transform New Zealand's forests, cities, towns and farmlands into places where native plants and animals can thrive. It would also help support and realise the outcomes of the ANZBS. But the benefits of achieving PF2050 extend far beyond just biodiversity recovery – it is expected that New Zealanders, communities and the economy will experience transformative benefits, both quantifiable and intangible. And we will not have to wait until 2050 to see them – we know that many New Zealanders are already feeling the benefits of predator-free action in their daily lives.

Children on Te Motu Kairangi / Miramar Peninsula maintaining and monitoring the tracking tunnel.
Photo: Peninsula Early Learning

Expected benefits of PF2050 and alignment with ANZBS outcomes

Community outcomes

ANZBS outcome 3
People's lives are enriched through their connection with nature

ANZBS outcome 4
Treaty partners, whānau, Hapū and Iwi are exercising their full role as rangatira and kaitiaki

Community benefits

- Tangata whenua revitalise indigenous practices, such as rongoā (medicine) and mahinga kai (food gathering), as well as te reo Māori, tikanga (customs) and the transmission of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge)
- New Zealanders feel pride in seeing results after giving their time and working alongside others towards a common goal
- More New Zealanders have daily wildlife encounters, strengthening national identity and linking past, present and future generations
- New Zealanders have improved physical and mental health
- The dawn chorus becomes part of New Zealanders' everyday lives
- Whānau are given the opportunity to work on their whenua (land) and reconnect to the taiao (environment)
- Young New Zealanders are equipped with the knowledge, skills and environmental values needed to pursue long-term careers in science and conservation

Biodiversity outcomes

ANZBS outcome 1
Ecosystems, from mountain tops to ocean depths, are thriving

ANZBS outcome 2
Indigenous species and their habitats across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond are thriving

Economic benefits

- New Zealand spends less on long-term pest animal management, freeing up money for other priorities and biosecurity challenges
- New Zealand's pest-tech industry is thriving domestically and internationally
- Damage to public and private infrastructure is reduced
- Regions, cities, towns and the backcountry are thriving as a result of growing tourism and spending from enhanced destination appeal
- The spread of toxoplasmosis and leptospirosis are reduced, which has a positive impact on the economy, humans and livestock
- New Zealand has advanced technical skills and pest management/eradication intellectual property that is valuable to international markets and translates to other environmental challenges
- The farming community spends less on disease management

Economic outcomes

ANZBS outcome 5
Prosperity is intrinsically linked with a thriving biodiversity

Clockwise from left: After years of predator control by the Tamahunga Trappers volunteer group, kiwi are returned to the forests of Tamahunga. *Photo: Tamahunga Trappers*; Southern rātā. *Photo: Jase Blair*; EzyLure devices. *Photo: Itch Photography*

Past achievements (2016–2025)

The period from 2016 to 2025 demonstrated the proof of concept for a predator-free New Zealand and highlighted the benefits and value that PF2050 can deliver to New Zealand. The following highlights from this period were delivered through large-scale predator elimination projects and other work.

Abundant biodiversity

- **South Westland's bush turned red with flowering rātā** over summer 2024, thanks in part to **Predator Free South Westland eliminating possums on over 100,000 hectares** in the area.[9]
- **Maukahuka / Auckland Island**, part of the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands UNESCO World Heritage Site, is **closer to being free of introduced pests** through the readiness phase of the Maukahuka / Auckland Island programme. The 46,000-hectare undertaking is the largest and most complex offshore island eradication New Zealand has set itself. [10]
- **Kākāpō are one step closer to returning to Rakiura / Stewart Island**, with trials underway to test feasibility, social licence and operational approaches through the Predator Free Rakiura programme. At 186,000 hectares, the island would be New Zealand's largest eradication project to date.[11]
- **Fiordland tokoeka chicks are now surviving at a rate of 60%**, up from 0%, thanks to the National Predator Control Programme.[12]
- **Waiheke Island residents are now living amongst 76% more native birds** than in 2020, including 388% more kākā, thanks to the efforts of the community and Te Korowai o Waiheke.[13]

9 Department of Conservation. 2023. Predator Free 2050 biennial progress report – June 2023. Wellington: Department of Conservation. **doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/our-work/predator-free-2050/predator-free-2050-progress-report-2021-2023.pdf**

10 **doc.govt.nz/our-work/maukahuka**

11 **blog.doc.govt.nz/kakapo-raise-predator-free-stakes**

12 Department of Conservation. 2025. Predator response: protecting native species 2025/26. Wellington: Department of Conservation. **doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/our-work/national-predator-control-programme/predator-response-booklet.pdf**

13 Te Korowai o Waiheke. 2024. Impact Report Pūrongo Kawekawe: July 2023 – June 2024. Auckland: Te Korowai o Waiheke. **static1.squarespace.com/static/66caff957fd0481a3ecd846f/t/67a06797349ca5244483a68e/1738565542257/IMPACTREPORTTKOW_for%2Bonline%2Bsingle%2Bpages%2B2024-10-31.pdf**

People upskilling in trapping through a predator trapping course in Taumarunui.

Better connected and more resilient communities

- Communities across New Zealand are **living with more native species** through PF2050 initiatives:
  - **Whangārei Heads communities have kiwi in their backyards**, thanks to the substantial and long-term efforts of community groups and Predator Free Whangārei.[14]
  - **Most Wellington residents are experiencing daily wildlife encounters** due to the success of work by Predator Free Wellington, The Capital Kiwi Project and Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne. Kōtare/kingfisher populations have increased more than six fold and pīwakawaka populations have quadrupled.[15]
- **Iwi and Hapū are expressing their tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) by leading large-scale predator elimination landscape projects.** Four Iwi- and Hāpu-led projects are restoring their ancestral lands through removing predators and incorporating innovation grounded in mātauranga Māori.
- **29% of New Zealanders have participated in community or backyard trapping.**[16]

14 backyardkiwi.org.nz
15 reports.pfw.org.nz/2024-25-impact-report
16 predatorfreenz.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PFNZ_Final-debrief_2024.pdf

Zero Invasive Predators research facility, Christchurch. *Photo: Itch Photography*

Innovation and economic prosperity

- **New Zealand's innovators and developers have grown a local market for pest technology**, which is now estimated to be worth over $15 million, with international exports rising.[17]
- **Investment in potential gene technology tools and AI have the potential to make PF2050 more efficient and less costly** in the future.
- **Predator Free Wellington has quantified the social, economic and environmental benefits of its elimination project**, which in phase 1 (Te Motu Kairangi/Miramar Peninsula) returned a positive $1.29 per dollar invested and in phase 2 saw an increase to $2.49 per dollar as the project expands across Wellington.[18]
- Bringing whānau home, **Tū Mai Taonga**, an Iwi-led, large-scale predator elimination project on Aotea/Great Barrier Island, **is now the biggest employer on the island**.[19]
- **Predator Free Taranaki's Zero Possum project** has **removed possums from thousands of hectares** of farmland, further safeguarding farmers from the risk of bovine tuberculosis.[20]
- **Over 9,000 community predator suppression initiatives are supporting the survival of many native species** and providing opportunities for social connection, which enhances wellbeing.[21]

17 Predator Free 2050 Limited. 2024. Predator Free 2050 Limited Annual Report 2024. Wellington: Predator Free 2050 Limited. **doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/pf2050/papers-and-reports/pf2050-limited-fy2024-annual-report.pdf**

18 **pfw.org.nz/trapping/our-trapping-guides/research/return-on-investment-2025**

19 **ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2023/11/tu-mai-taonga**

20 **trc.govt.nz/environment/working-together/towards-predator-free-taranaki/restore-kaitake-zero-possum-project**, **ospri.co.nz/tb-and-pest-control/controlling-possum-population**

21 **trap.nz**

Present strategy (2026–2030)

PF2050 is an ambitious, first-of-its-kind goal that demands coordinated action across multiple fronts. The next 5 years are critical as we drive the innovation needed for scalable, cost-effective and defendable national eradication. We also need to maintain our progress to date, while inspiring more New Zealanders to take action – because they know the personal and community benefits of a predator-free future.

Five key indicator goals for the next 5 years have been selected to track and report on progress annually. These goals reflect our ongoing efforts while building the tools and techniques – through innovation and research – that will support taking us to the next phase of PF2050.

We need to align national efforts, community action and technological innovation and help our partners understand their roles, monitor progress and contribute meaningfully to achieving a predator-free New Zealand by 2050.

Kākā on Waiheke Island.
Photo: Al MacDiarmid

FOCUS AREA 1

Mobilise for action

Inspire and empower New Zealanders and communities to take action towards achieving PF2050.

KEY ACTIONS

- Continue to inspire New Zealanders about a predator-free future – national, regional, Imi, Iwi and Hapū stories about predator-free work help grow awareness, increase support, and build confidence that PF2050 is achievable and worthwhile.
- Empower New Zealanders to take action for nature and support PF2050, and offer a range of ways and resources to do so.

INDICATOR GOALS FOR 2030

GOAL 1

One in two New Zealanders is aware of PF2050

- 89% of New Zealanders believe that nature is thriving, but the reality is different. Closing this perception gap is key to building public awareness of predator threats and the opportunity PF2050 offers to restore biodiversity.
- Public awareness of PF2050 lays the groundwork for building active support from New Zealanders – for land access, biosecurity compliance and eradication tool acceptance.

GOAL 2

All large-scale PF2050 projects actively support the aspirations of local Imi, Iwi and Hapū

- PF2050 offers an opportunity to strengthen partnerships between Moriori, Māori and the Government by working together to achieve an abundant natural environment. To truly support the aspirations of local Imi, Iwi and Hapū, all large-scale projects must create meaningful opportunities for involvement and leadership.
- Māori values, practices and stories are integral to the PF2050 kaupapa (cause), and nationwide success in a future roll out will depend on the active support of hundreds of Iwi and Hapū across the country.

FOCUS AREA 2

Maintain the gains

Maintain predator-free areas and continue suppression efforts to protect threatened species, while supporting community-led groups to sustain their work.

KEY ACTIONS

- Demonstrate levels of predator control through the National Predator Control Programme.
- Support existing community-led predator suppression projects through better resourcing, systems and tools so that community participation is connected and counts.
- Enhance biosecurity to reduce the risk and cost of incursions on mammalian predator-free islands and fenced sanctuaries.
- Grow and share the knowledge of people working to restore the environment.

INDICATOR GOALS FOR 2030

GOAL 3

Populations of threatened species are maintained and increased through predator suppression

- While new approaches are developed to scale up elimination in the future, PF2050 will continue protecting threatened species through predator suppression.
- This essential work is driven by community groups and volunteers, who will be actively supported alongside local government and DOC's National Predator Control Programme, which safeguards 20% of public conservation land and plays a critical role in threatened species recovery.

FOCUS AREA 3

Innovate for eradication

Advance affordable, humane and socially acceptable tools and techniques to build a toolbox and adaptable blueprints for large-scale predator elimination across diverse landscapes.

KEY ACTIONS

- Undertake high-priority research to address key knowledge gaps.
- Develop new and improved tools and technology for detection, removal and defence, while continuing to explore future solutions, such as gene technology.
- Test and innovate on large-scale, multi-species elimination projects across different landscapes.
- Foster a working culture where scientists, tool developers and practitioners can blend their expertise from multiple disciplines and perspectives to address PF2050's biggest challenges.

INDICATOR GOALS FOR 2030

GOAL 4

The ability to defend predator-free areas against reinvasion is faster and more cost effective

- Until nationwide eradication is achieved, we will continuously monitor and manage predator reinvasion into predator-free sites.
- To enable expansion across the country, we need advances in technology to improve boundary defence and provide confidence that incursions can be managed quickly and cost effectively to prevent reinvasion or breeding.

FOCUS AREA 4

Prepare to accelerate

Ensure that the foundations are in place to transition from local to national elimination, with clear actions, costs and benefits, and community readiness.

KEY ACTIONS

- Demonstrate that moving from sustained predator control to national eradication will bring significant ecological, social and economic benefits.
- Develop a clear plan that includes risk and cost assessments of different roll-out scenarios, evaluates community readiness, considers Treaty relationships, and updates necessary regulations, including feral cat management.
- Build the workforce through structured and coordinated educational and career development pathways.
- Develop a range of long-term partnerships to fund PF2050.
- Progress eradication work on priority islands.

INDICATOR GOALS FOR 2030

GOAL 5

One New Zealand city is free of predators

- Achieving elimination in an urban area is more challenging than in natural environments. It requires active support from the majority of the community, refined operational methods, and socially acceptable tools and techniques.
- This goal is not just about one city. Achieving it will mean that we have a cost-effective elimination blueprint that can be adapted for other urban areas. It will also restore biodiversity to places where most New Zealanders live, allowing them to experience the benefits of a predator-free environment.

Future path to a predator-free New Zealand (2030–2050)

The journey to a predator-free New Zealand will evolve over time, shaped by the momentum we build and the lessons we learn along the way.

Achieving the programme's 2030 goals – such as amplifying community action, sustaining suppression, expanding the toolbox through innovation and building investment readiness – will set a strong foundation for ramping up progress over the next 20 years. This timeline outlines a possible path from 2030 to 2050, showing how the achievements we aim for by 2030 can unlock more ambitious outcomes and benefits in the decades that follow.

By 2035

- The majority of New Zealanders are feeling the benefits of a local predator-free environment and believe that PF2050 can be achieved.
- Community groups and projects can sustain their work and monitor/connect their success to PF2050.
- An innovation pipeline is supporting the development and refinement of new and improved tools for elimination.
- The Sub-Antarctic World Heritage Area is completely free from mammalian pests through the completion of Maukahuka Pest Free Auckland Island.
- The capability and capacity of the workforce is ready for national roll out.

By 2040

- Businesses embrace PF2050, recognising the associated economic opportunities.
- PF2050 has galvanised domestic and international philanthropic investment.
- Eliminated and eradicated areas are being defended with best practice biosecurity standards.
- Ongoing refinement and economies of scale drive the cost of PF2050 down substantially.
- The regulatory system is ready to enable expansion across all land tenures.
- Mammalian pests are eliminated from at least 5 million of New Zealand's 8.5 million hectares of backcountry and their pest-free status is maintained.
- Stoats are eradicated from Waiheke Island, providing a proof of concept for urban and rural stoat elimination, where aerial bait cannot be used.
- Mammalian pests are eliminated from at least 1 million hectares across rural and urban areas and their pest-free status is maintained.

By 2045

- The majority of New Zealanders have played a role in PF2050.
- Environmental restoration supports language, tikanga, and the transmission of mātauranga Māori and totohungatanga Moriori (Moriori knowledge).
- Government and non-government investment shifts from predator control to biosecurity and biodiversity across the country.
- New Zealanders are engaged in discussions on the possibility of using genetic-based predator management tools.
- Kākāpō populations on Rakiura/Stewart Island and the mainland are booming.
- Mammalian predators have been eradicated from New Zealand's island network.
- Mammalian pests are eliminated from New Zealand's 8.5 million hectares of backcountry and their pest-free status is maintained.
- Multiple cities are predator free, with many others well on the way.

By 2050

- A new 'biosecurity' generation is born with no first-hand experience with rats, mustelids or possums but the knowledge and skills to protect and rejuvenate the environment.
- Tourism is booming, as visitors come to New Zealand to visit a country that is nearly predator free.
- Forests with fewer browsing mammals return to health and abundance, enabling cultural practices such as mahinga kai and rongoā, strengthening the connection between healthy ecosystems and healthy people.
- New Zealand is a global leader in predator management and has a significant economic market in providing tools and advice to the world.
- Most investment is being focused on delivering the final eradication areas across mainland New Zealand.
- Sustainable employment in rural and urban areas provides opportunities for tangata whenua to work on biosecurity and taonga (treasured) species activity in their rohe (region).
- The final urban eradication operation in New Zealand's most populated city is close to completion.
- More eradication is achieved in this phase than any of the previous phases.

Pekapeka / short-tailed bat eating *Dactylanthus taylorii* pollen or nectar.
Photo: © David Mudge, Ngā Manu

PREDATOR FREE 2050
TUIA TE TAIAO

Join us in making New Zealand predator free

This strategy sets the direction – but it is people like you who bring it to life.

There is a way for everyone to get involved. Visit the following websites to learn how you can support the programme:

- **predatorfreenz.org/get-involved**
- **doc.govt.nz/predator-free-2050**

Together, we can create a thriving, predator-free New Zealand.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Elimination	When all resident individuals from a population of an invasive species have been removed, but reinvading individuals are present but not breeding (i.e. no 'establishment').[22]
Eradication	When every individual from a population of an invasive species has been removed from a defined geographic area for a defined minimum period of time.[23]
Large-scale predator elimination projects	Projects that are working on a proof of concept for large-scale predator elimination, often across multiple land tenures and communities. The proof of concept covers both operational and social aspects of delivery, so that New Zealand can learn how to eliminate predators at scale without using fences. These projects can be led by the community, councils, Iwi, Hapū or Imi and are funded by both central government and other sources. The main difference from community-led suppression projects is that their focus is on the complete elimination of predators, which requires the testing of new approaches and tools.
Offshore islands	Islands where the shortest distance from any point on the island to any point on the mainland, or other large, inhabited island, is greater than 500 metres.
Predator suppression	The reduction of predator publications to very low level to help protect native species and ecosystems. This does not involve complete elimination and is also sometimes referred to as 'predator control'.

22 Russell JC. 2025. Invasive species eradication standards. Trends in Ecology & Evolution. 40(11):1051–1053. **doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2025.09.002**

23 **doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2025.09.002**

Appendix 2: Target species list

The target species list contains the list of predators we aim to eradicate from New Zealand by 2050. The focus until 2030 is to develop multi-species elimination and eradication techniques across a range of land types to enable this.

The target species list includes rats (Norway rats, ship rats and kiore), possums and mustelids (weasels, ferrets and stoats) and has been expanded in this strategy to include feral cats. This change recognises the major impact of feral cats on native wildlife and the public support for addressing this issue.

The target species list provides a focus for those working to address invasive species and biodiversity pressures in New Zealand and incentivises the development of new tools and techniques to manage the target predators across different environments. The list also guides investment into predator-free projects that are trialling new approaches to eradicate predators.

Predator Free 2050 projects (whether community, Iwi or government led), retain the flexibility to target the predator or pest species relevant to their local ecosystem.

Offshore island eradications have a wide scope to target any mammalian pests relevant to achieving the biodiversity gains needed on the target islands – recognising that it is easier to remove more species from islands than from the entire country.

Appendix 3: Feral cats

Feral cats are a significant predator in New Zealand, having major impacts on native birds, bats, invertebrates and lizards.[24] They also carry the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis (*Toxoplasma gondii*), which is a known cause of death for Hector's and Māui dolphins, other native wildlife, and livestock.[25]

The Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai already controls feral cats at many places, such as the Central Otago drylands, in order to protect skinks and shorebirds at coastal breeding sites. Regional councils also play a significant role in controlling feral cats. Feral cats have been eradicated from several offshore islands, including Raoul Island and Rangitoto Island.

New Zealanders' support for intensifying the management of feral cats is growing.[26] Public feedback on the inclusion of feral cats in Predator Free 2050 was overwhelmingly supportive and there have been several petitions to Parliament on this issue.[27]

Adding feral cats to the target species list will further the development of new tools and techniques for their humane and effective management. It also recognises the growing body of evidence around the impacts of feral cats on our biodiversity and that not targeting them would likely undermine the benefits of removing the other predator species.

To enable the successful elimination of feral cats, there will need to be mechanisms to prevent unwanted companion cats or stray cats creating populations of feral cats. This would include the development of national cat management regulations and growing public awareness about responsible cat ownership measures.

24 doc.govt.nz/feral-cats

25 nzncmg.com/toxoplasmosis

26 predatorfreenz.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PFNZ_Final-debrief_2024.pdf

27 www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/53SCEN_EVI_102570_EN10039/erica-rowlands, www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/54SCPETI_EVI_44dd1ef9-10fc-44b7-1453-08db737e0fe6_PETI2126/jaeger-sims#RelatedAnchor

Appendix 4: Know the difference – companion, stray and feral cats

There are three types of cats in New Zealand – companion, stray and feral. The difference between these types of cats is based on where they live and their relationship with people (as outlined in the graphic below).

Responsible and caring cat owners have an important role to play in achieving a predator-free future where companion cats are well taken care of. Companion cats are loved family members for approximately 40% of New Zealand households and will never be a target for any predator-free work.

Cat owners can play their part in reducing the impact of cats on native wildlife by desexing and microchipping their pets and keeping them safe at home using tools such as 'catios', which are enclosed outdoor areas for cats.

This will also help make sure that unwanted companion cats do not create a pipeline for future stray and feral cat populations.

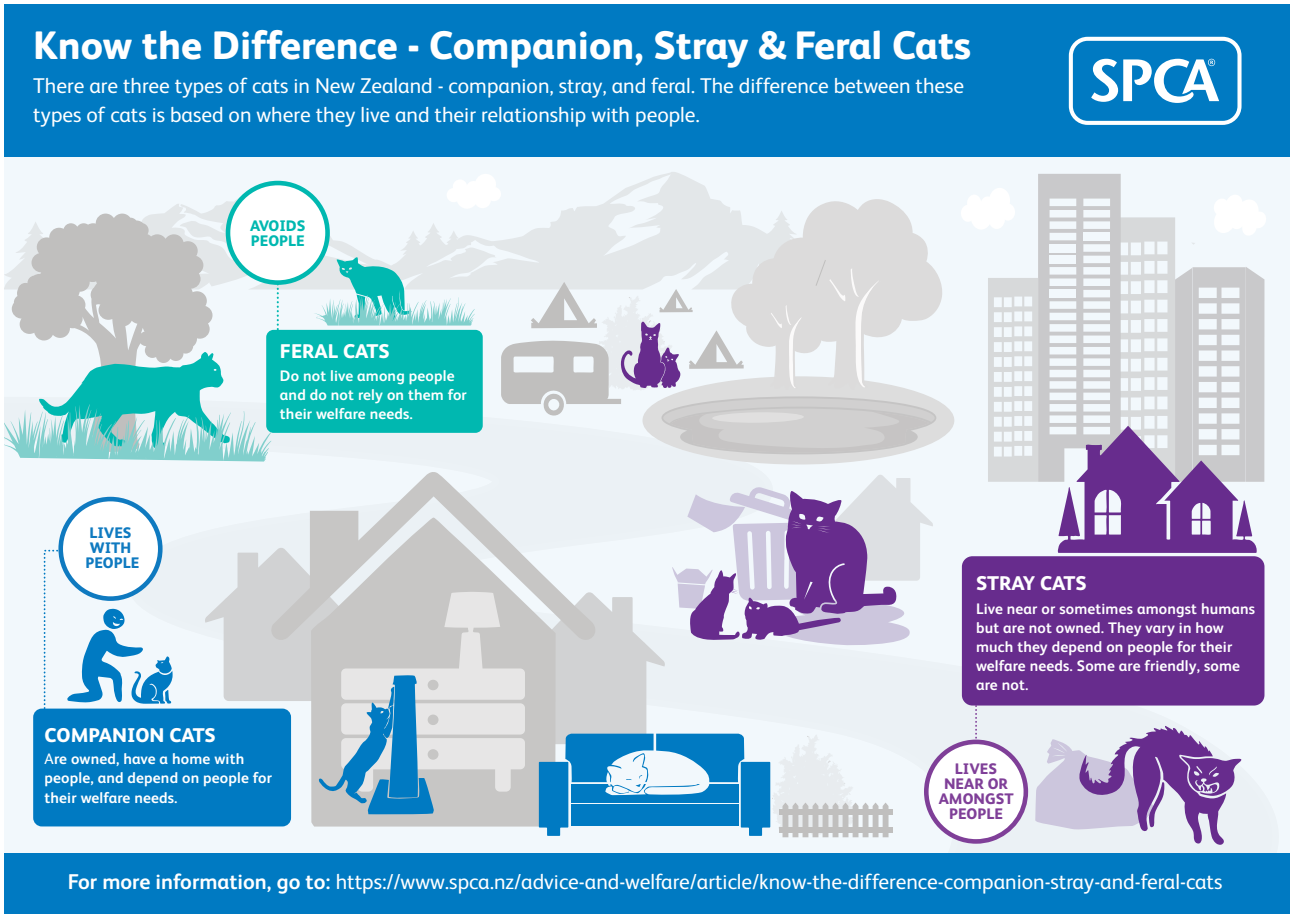


Image: SPCA New Zealand

Appendix 5: Research list

Mice and hedgehogs are the only remaining introduced small mammalian predators not included on the Predator Free 2050 (PF2050) target species list, yet they have a significant impact on native wildlife, particularly threatened lizard and invertebrate populations, including wētā. There are concerns that their continued presence may significantly diminish the biodiversity gains achieved through PF2050, particularly following the removal of other target species.[28] Therefore, management of these species needs to be addressed as part of PF2050.

We need to learn more about these predators and how they interact with other species – particularly when the other predators in their ecosystem are removed. Recognising mice and hedgehogs as part of the research list for PF2050 will enable us to better understand their impacts on native species and likely response to the removal of other predators, develop tools and techniques for humanely and effectively managing them, and make informed future decisions on whether to add them to the target species list.

28 Norbury G et al. 2024. Insights paper: analysis of the target pest species for Predator Free 2050. Contract Report: LC4544. Prepared for the Department of Conservation. Wellington: Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. **doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/pf2050/insights-paper-analysis-of-the-target-pest-species-for-predator-free-2050.pdf**

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