



Brian Shields, Auckland Council Biosecurity Specialist and his specially trained Welsh springer spaniel Rhys Jones.

Rhys Jones is the world's first Argentine ant detection dog, trained to distinguish between native and non-native ant species. The cost-effective team of dog and trainer has been proven to be 33% more accurate than traditional methods.

## Help keep the Hauraki Gulf pest-free

Please: **Check your gear for stowaways**

- rats, mice, Argentine ants, rainbow skinks

**Clean your footwear and gear**

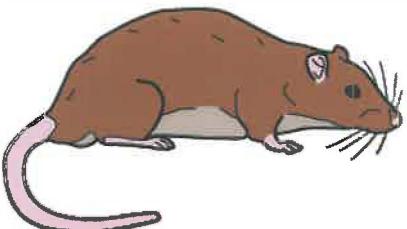
- remove soil and seeds

**Report any sightings**

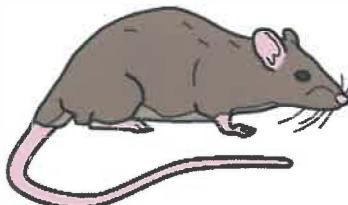
to Auckland Council 09 301 0101

Visit: [www.treasureislands.co.nz](http://www.treasureislands.co.nz)

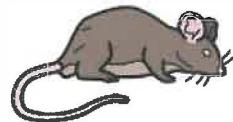
Additional stowaways to watch out for:



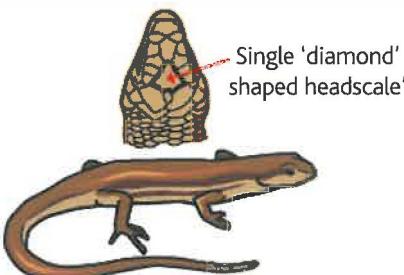
**Norway rat**  
Small ears, short tail



**Ship rat**  
Big ears, long tail



**Mouse**



**Rainbow skink**

► **Find out more:**

visit [www.treasureislands.co.nz](http://www.treasureislands.co.nz)



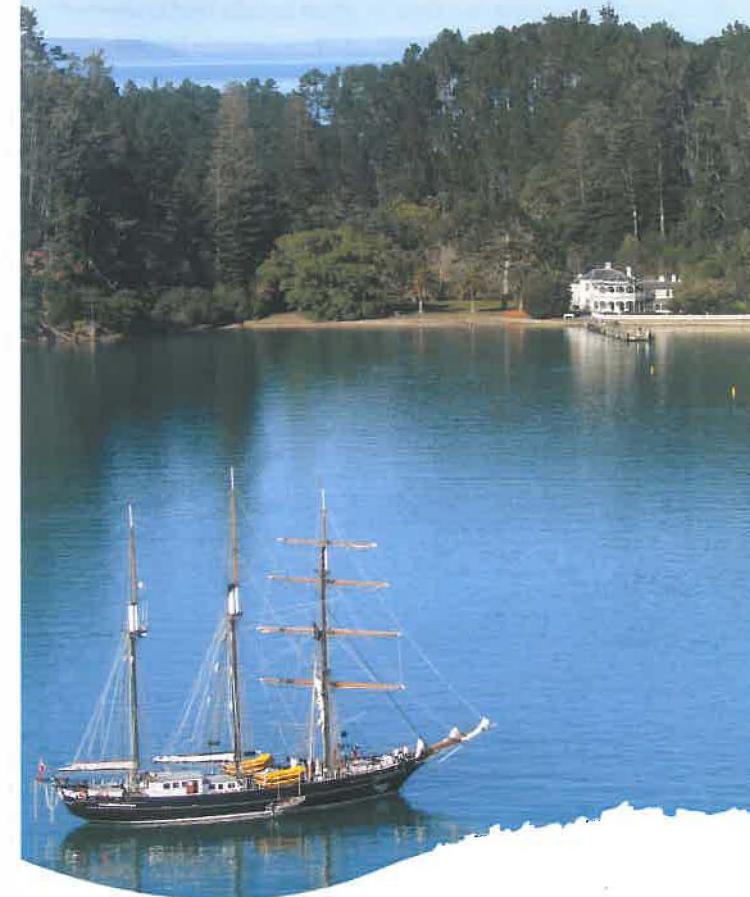
Hauraki Gulf  
Marine Park  
Te Taiao Moana  
Te Moana Nui a Toi



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

Rodney  
Local Board  
Auckland Council

**Help protect  
Kawau Island from  
Argentine ants**



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Marine Park  
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## What's the issue?

The Argentine ant (*Linepithema humile*) is among the top 100 of the world's most invasive and problematic ant species, impacting significantly on lifestyle and human health, the environment and economic value.

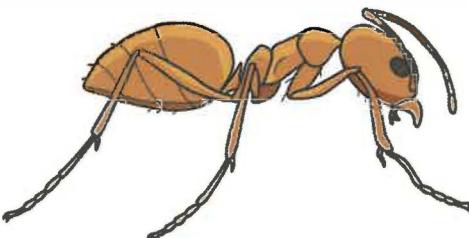
The species is particularly troublesome in coastal areas and on islands due to the common formation of super-colonies. While their bite is not poisonous, they have been known to cause allergic-type reactions in some people, and cause great distress by invading homes and coastal sites in massive numbers, ruining foodstuffs, and attacking and killing native birds.

Since their discovery in Auckland in 1990 this species has been found in a variety of locations recently, including Kawau, Waiheke and Great Barrier islands.

## How to recognise them:

### Physical characteristics:

- slender, 2-3mm long
- pale honey – dark brown
- do not give off the typical formic acid smell when crushed.



2-3mm

## Behavioural characteristics:

- nests found in both warm, dry places and moist soil, with a tendency to gravitate towards sites of disturbance including under concrete, timber, buildings and boats
- will eat both sweet and protein based items, including dead insects, birds and other small animals
- often found on citrus trees
- will travel in steady, straight trail lines, often four to five ants wide, swarming over obstacles rather than around them.

## Why is this an issue for Kawau Island?

Kawau Island is home to many native animal species, including threatened natives such as the North Island weka and North Island Brown kiwi. Argentine ants are widespread throughout the Rodney district, rendering Kawau vulnerable to infestation.

A risk of re-invasion exists due to the relative ease through which Argentine ants can make their way to Kawau undetected in baggage, equipment, potting soil, building material, camping gear, etc. The consequences of re-invasion include impacts on the Island's economy, lifestyle, ecosystems and visitor experience.

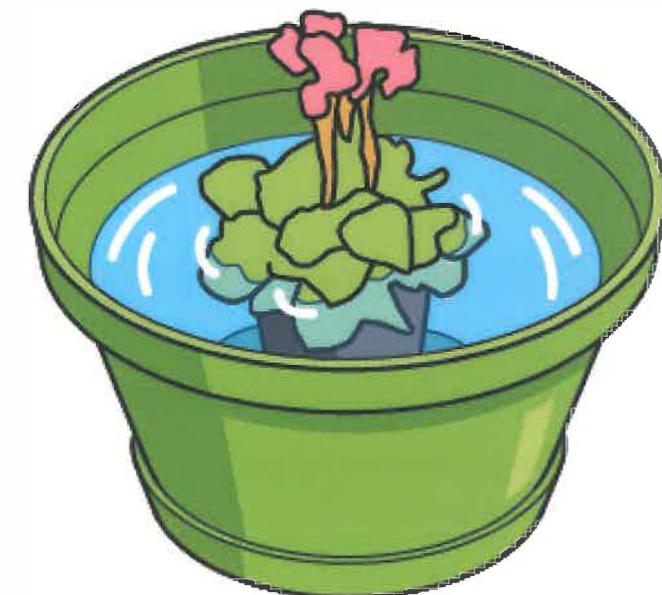
## What have we done?

- **January 2010:** A survey was conducted in eight high risk sites for the presence/absence of Argentine ants, with Vivian Bay and Schoolhouse Bay showing positive results.
- **2011:** A similar survey was undertaken at all Kawau wharves, building sites and gardens in the coastal margin.
- **October 2012:** An eradication programme was established in Schoolhouse Bay using 'Xtinguish' (Fipronil) bait. An audit six weeks later detected no ants in the controlled area.
- **February 2013:** Treatment of the Vivian Bay site using 'Biforce' and 'Biff Ant' (Bifenthrin) insecticides.
- **Ongoing:** Monitoring and treatment of both infected sites will be maintained by Auckland Council during spring and summer 2014.

## What can you do to help?

By adopting these simple measures you can help keep Kawau and other islands in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park safe from re-invasion:

- check travel and camping gear, building supplies and planting media prior to departure for the island by shaking and banging equipment
- pot plants should be dunked in water for two minutes so that any ants will float to the surface
- car, caravan, trailer, boat tyres and house entry points can be sprayed using permethrin based products
- surfaces favoured by ants can be cleaned with lemon juice, soapy water or diluted vinegar, eucalyptus or tea tree oil
- raise awareness of Argentine ants with friends, family and visitors to the island.



Dunk your pot plants in a bucket or bin of water for two minutes to check for Argentine ants.