

Possums

Possums are native to Australia. In Australia possums are not a problem, but in New Zealand they are causing a lot of trouble for our native trees and birds. They find some of our New Zealand trees super tasty. Possums love to eat rata, tree fuchsia, broadleaf, mistletoe and pōhutukawa trees.

Why possums are pests in NZ

Possums eat mainly leaves (most often from our native trees). They will also eat the eggs and chicks of many native birds, such as kererū, kiwi and tūī, as well as native invertebrates like wētā and large land snails. Possums can do a lot of damage to New Zealand native animals and plants.



Possum in tree. Photo: DOC

Possum facts

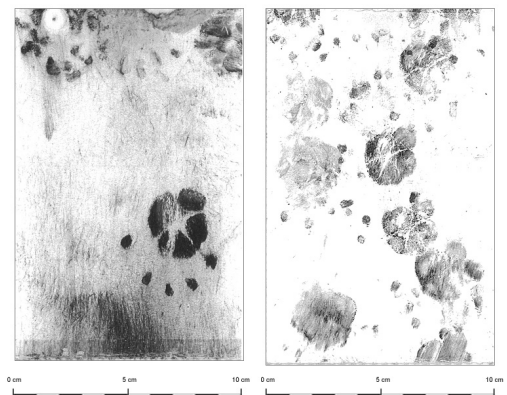
- One possum will eat about 3 shopping bags full of leaves in one night
- Because they find some trees more delicious than others, possums can wipe out certain trees from areas where they are living
- Possums can carry a disease called TB and spread it to farm animals

Why did people bring possums here?

Possums were brought to New Zealand in 1837 by people who wanted to farm and hunt them for their fur. What people didn't realise was how many plants, birds and insects possums would eat without any large predators around to eat them.



Possum droppings. Photo: Astrd Van Meeuen-Dijkgraaf



Possum footprints. Photo: Greater Wellington Regional Council