OSPRI

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Western Tararua livestock and taonga species protection

A joint approach

OSPRI and the Department of Conservation (DOC) are collaborating on a predator control operation in the Tararua Range. This will increase the effectiveness of their respective objectives: OSPRI to eradicate TB and DOC to protect native plants and wildlife, such as kākā.

Update

Predator control operations on the eastern side of the Tararuas was completed in July 2021. We are now planning to complete the western side in the first suitable weather window from the end of January 2022. Please see map on following page which highlights these two areas. Please adhere to warning signs that are still present in the area.

Planning

DOC and OSPRI have engaged with iwi and key stakeholders to hear their views on the proposed operation. Feedback from this process was carefully considered and informed the decision-making process. EPRO Ltd, contracted by OSPRI, carried out consultation with landowners and other affected parties. Contractors discussed boundary issues, water supply safety and management of risks to dogs/livestock, and how to mitigate any impacts of the proposed operation (such as changing the planned control area). Consents processes are being finalised with both the Public Health Unit and the Department of Conservation.

Operational details

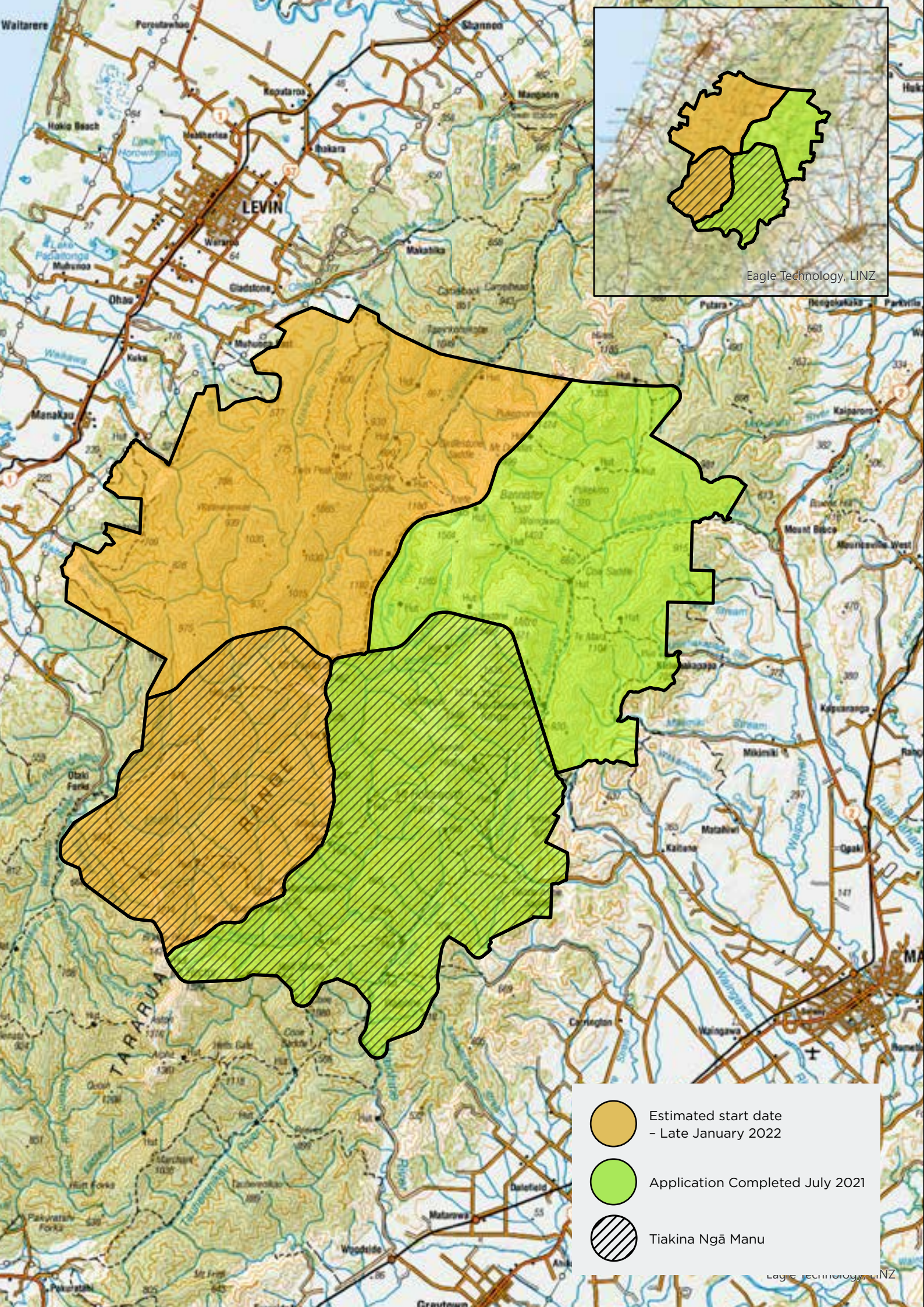
The operation will begin with the distribution of non-toxic cereal pellets by helicopter. These brown cylindrical shaped baits are 4cm long and 16mm wide. The toxic operation would then occur one-two weeks later (weather dependent).

Each bait contains 0.15% of sodium fluoroacetate and will be distributed at a 1.5–2kg/ha rate. Toxic baits are green, 16–20mm wide and cylindrical shaped.

Advanced GPS navigational equipment will be used to ensure the pellets are accurately placed, exclusion zones avoided, and an accurate record of bait distribution obtained..

Notification

Affected landowners and occupiers will be contacted again before the commencement of the operation. Public notices will be published in local newspapers and radio ads played throughout the month of toxin application. Warning signs will be placed at all likely access points to the operational area.


Eagle Technology, LINZ
Estimated start date
– Late January 2022
Application Completed July 2021
Tiakina Ngā Manu
Eagle Technology, LINZ

Benefits of collaboration between OSPRI and DOC

Goal 1: Targeting possums to eradicate TB

Reducing and keeping the possum population low reduces the risk of TB being spread. OSPRI's TBfree programme uses possum control along with regular herd testing and movement restrictions to achieve bovine TB eradication goals. Information from wild animal surveys, recent and historic findings of TB in wild animals, herd testing results and the operational history of the region are used when planning operations.

TB eradication goals are:

- TB freedom in cattle and deer herds by 2026
- TB freedom in possums by 2040
- TB freedom in all wildlife by 2055

TB history in the Tararua Range

TB has been found in the wildlife on the eastern side of the range from Mt Bruce to Mikimiki Crown and on the western side from Ōtaki Forks to Holdsworth campground. This is an area covering 29,801 hectares in the Northern Tararuas. The last control in the western side was in 2013 and in 2014 for the eastern side. There has been no control in the central sections of this TB management area since 1996 (Upper Ōtaki) and 2001 (Mangahao/Ruamahanga). The last infected herd was in 2003 in the western section of the range.

Goal 2: Protecting native species through predator control in Tararua Forest Park

Project Kākā

The Tararua range is home to the iconic kākā, bellbirds, kakariki, rifleman and other native birds. Native tree fuchsia is also present. Project Kākā, DOC's proposed area for predator control, is at the southern end of OSPRI's TB Management Area in the northern part of the Tararua Forest Park. DOC has controlled possums, rats, stoats and goats in the area to protect native fauna and flora against browsing and predation every three years since 2011, and prior to that at six-to-seven year intervals. Since 1994 more than 60,000 ha of the range has been controlled.

Predator control works

By knocking the predator population down and keeping numbers low, native species in the area can regenerate. Intensive monitoring by DOC, OSPRI, Manaaki Whenua-Landcare Research and Greater Wellington Regional Council has shown significant drops in predator numbers after each aerial 1080 operation and increasing populations of native bird species. Monitoring of plants such as tree fuchsia clearly shows survival is far better in areas that have had predator control.

DOC and OSPRI will monitor the result of this operation and update all affected parties on the reduction of predators.

The road to TB eradication

Testing wildlife
We check the wildlife to see if TB is present in an area.

Possum control – year one
Possums spread TB. Getting numbers low will help stop TB.

Keeping possum numbers low
It's important to keep possum numbers low over multiple years to break the TB cycle.

Testing wildlife
We test wildlife to check if TB still exists. The animals will be checked for signs of TB. Samples may be grown in a laboratory. If TB is found, you will be told by TBfree.

TB Eradicated

Important information

Warning signs will be placed at all main access points to the operational area. 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.

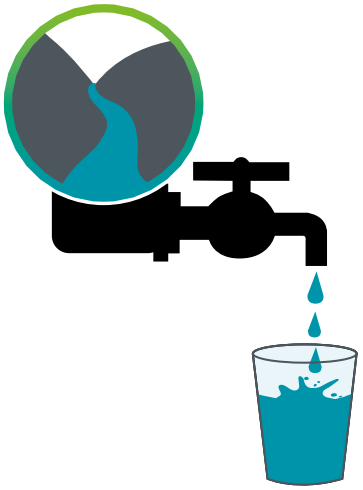
Do not hunt or take game from within a two-kilometre radius of the operational area for human or pet consumption. It's an offence to sell meat products that have been exposed to 1080. Hunting can resume approximately four months following the control work.

Please observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about the pesticide. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in the baits or carcasses. 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 06 353 2710 or vector.sni@ospri.co.nz 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
Palmerston North Office
P 06 353 2710
E vector.sni@ospri.co.nz
W ospri.co.nz

DOC
Wairarapa
P 06 377 0700
E masterton@doc.govt.nz
W doc.govt.nz

Contractor
Epro Ltd
P 0800 ASK EPRO
(0800 275 3776)
E control@epro.co.nz

Links to further information

- Controlling bovine TB and how and why 1080 is used in New Zealand: 1080facts.co.nz
- DOC's Tiakina Ngā Manu work: www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/tiakina-nga-manu
- Recreational hunting, 'TB Information for Hunters' factsheet: ospri.co.nz
- Commercial hunting: Ministry for Primary Industries and Department of Conservation websites.
- OSPRI's 'Operational Status' online.
- DOC's 'Pesticide Summary' online.