



Taranaki Taku Tūrangā

**Towards  
Predator-Free  
Taranaki**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
SUMMARY**  
2019|2020





# Towards Predator-Free Taranaki

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY 2019 | 2020

The second year of the Towards Predator-Free Taranaki project has seen a rapid expansion of the project area and the realisation of a key project milestone with the completion of a predator control buffer surrounding the national park. 2019/2020 was also a year of consolidating the significant gains that have been made in the urban part of the project, and expanding to new urban areas including Waitara, Ōkato and Ōpunake. The zero density possum programme has also seen steady progress as we relentlessly push towards completely removing the threat that possums pose towards the Kaitake/Oākura area.

## Zero Density Possum Programme

The possum eradication in the Kaitake Range and surrounding land has moved into a 'mop-up' phase following the initial control. Trap networks are established throughout the zero density possum area, including a large scale remote reporting leg-hold trap network covering the entire 2,500ha Kaitake range. This coupled with a remote reporting leg-hold trap barrier consisting of 1,300 traps, makes for a highly technical and challenging operation which is at the leading edge of predator control technologies. Possum numbers continue to decline and the team are having to work ever harder to remove the remaining individuals.

## Rural landscape predator control

The second year of the rural landscape predator control programme has seen a significant increase in the area covered by predator control. Building on the first year area which covered 14,000ha between New Plymouth and Taranaki Mounga, year two has completed a predator control buffer around the entire national park covering 29,000ha. Camera monitoring for the year two area indicates that the goal of a greater than 90% reduction in mustelid numbers was achieved. This result

highlights the huge benefit of this predator control buffer for the vulnerable native species inside the national park, such as whio and kiwi.

## Urban predator control

The Urban part of the project has gone from strength to strength, initially focusing on New Plymouth and Oākura, the project has now expanded to Waitara, Ōkato and Ōpunake. Schools continue to play a pivotal role in promoting the project and distributing traps to their communities. Volunteering continues to increase as more and more people come forward to do their part in contributing to predator control on public land. Community groups are leading the charge in a lot of areas inspired by the prospects of what can be achieved when we work collaboratively.

## Research and monitoring

Research has continued on some of the most critical scientific questions involved in the project in partnership with Manaaki Whenua. Important questions relating to predator ecology and behaviour in the Taranaki context are attempting to be answered and monitoring is continuing to assess changes in predator abundance and recovery of native biodiversity values.

# Urban



**43 schools**  
actively involved  
in the project

Over **6,000**  
traps distributed



Over **50%** of the  
New Plymouth trap  
network serviced  
by volunteers



STUDENT FROM HUIRANGI SCHOOL

# Rural

**42,000 ha**  
covered by predator control

**>90%**

reduction in mustelid  
population following  
predator control

**4,091**  
mustelid traps  
deployed





# Zero possums

4,500ha  
targeted for eradication

Kaitake remote monitored  
trap network covering  
2,500ha



Remotely monitored trap barrier  
consisting of 1,300 traps has  
completed over 500,000   
trap nights