



Shooting is a quick way to reduce pest numbers a short time before planting.



Pest animal damage to freshly planted seedlings can be severe.

## INTRODUCTION

The Riparian margins, particularly if retired, improve the habitat of pests as well as desirable wildlife. Four pests, possums, hares, rabbits and pukekos are likely to be problems alongside Taranaki's streams :

- Possums, as well as browsing palatable foliage, break tree leaders and branches even in possum-resistant species. They are also a potential source of bovine tuberculosis.
- Hares bite off new plants to mark their territory (rather than to feed), and can kill large numbers of plants in a few nights.
- Rabbits, apart from eating tree seedlings, emerge from riparian margins to feed on pasture.
- Pukekos, where numerous, pull out new plants and leave them lying on the ground.

## CONTROL OPTIONS - PRE-PLANTING

Damage to new plantings can be considerably reduced by reducing pest numbers beforehand. The standard options for initial control are:

- Possums - shooting, trapping or poisoning
- Hares - shooting
- Rabbits - shooting
- Pukekos - culling during late autumn-early winter (the shooting season)

Shooting is something landowners can easily undertake themselves without outside help. Most landowners are familiar with use of firearms, and the safety precautions necessary when shooting. A firearms licence must be held to use a firearm.

Trapping or poisoning on the other hand, involve the use of devices or substances that may be unfamiliar. Correct use is essential, firstly to kill the target pest; secondly and more importantly, to avoid inadvertent injury or death to wildlife, livestock or people. Information and assistance may be needed by landowners, and is available from the Council's Pest Animal Management Staff. A Controlled

Substance Licence must be obtained to use controlled pesticides.

For landowners who do not wish to use traps or toxic baits, an alternative option is to spray egg-based repellents onto seedlings, the day they are planted - refer to the Council's information sheet **Use of repellents** for details. This option protects the seedlings, but does nothing to control the pests.

## CONTROL OPTIONS - POST-PLANTING

Eradication of pests from riparian margins is desirable, though maybe hard to achieve. Control, to minimise infestations and damage, is both essential and practical.

For effective long-term control, consider using:

- Permanent bait stations for possums. These can be made at no cost from a wide variety of "re-cycled" plastic containers. It is important to cut a hole that allows the target pest to feed on the bait, to fix the bait station in a position where it can access the hole, and use bait that is unattractive to non-target species.
- Bulk feeders for possums. These are more expensive to make, but can be used for a long time, and do not need to be replenished as frequently as bait stations.

These devices are suitable for placement in riparian margins where stock are excluded, and they will not be a risk to farm animals. Traps and baits which are low-risk for native birds may be used.

Landowners must have a Controlled Substances licence to apply some baits such as phosphorus and cyanide, but do not need a licence for several others, notably talon pellets (for possums) and pindone pellets (for rabbits and hares). Please contact the Taranaki Regional Council for further information.

For further advice or information about sustainable land management contact:

### TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL

Land Management Section

Private bag 713, Stratford

Ph: 06 765 7127

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## COUNCIL ASSISTANCE

The Taranaki Regional Council's pest animal management responsibilities primarily lie in the Biosecurity Act 1993. Under the Biosecurity Act, the Council has prepared the *Pest Management Strategy for Taranaki: Animals* ('the Strategy').

The Strategy incorporates 23 pest animals which cause, or are capable of causing significant damage to the environment and primary industry.

The Strategy focus is on possums in particular. However other pests such as rabbits, hares, mustelids, goats, deer, pigs, magpies and rooks are also addressed. In the Strategy, rules requiring the occupier to control pests (for possums and rabbits only) may apply. However, Council assistance in the form of advice and information, training in the use of toxins, supply of toxin or toxin bait, and other forms of assistance is also available.



Bulk feeders are a good way to achieve ongoing pest control in a retired riparian margin.

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