

Kākāriki  
Yellow-crowned parakeet



# Key facts about rat control in the Abel Tasman National Park

As part of the work to restore and preserve the Abel Tasman National Park's rich wildlife, Project Janszoon and the Department of Conservation are planning aerial pest control this autumn to protect native species from rising rat numbers during a beech mast.

The pest control will be essential for native species recovery and ecosystem restoration and is part of a park-wide pest management programme that includes an extensive trapping network.

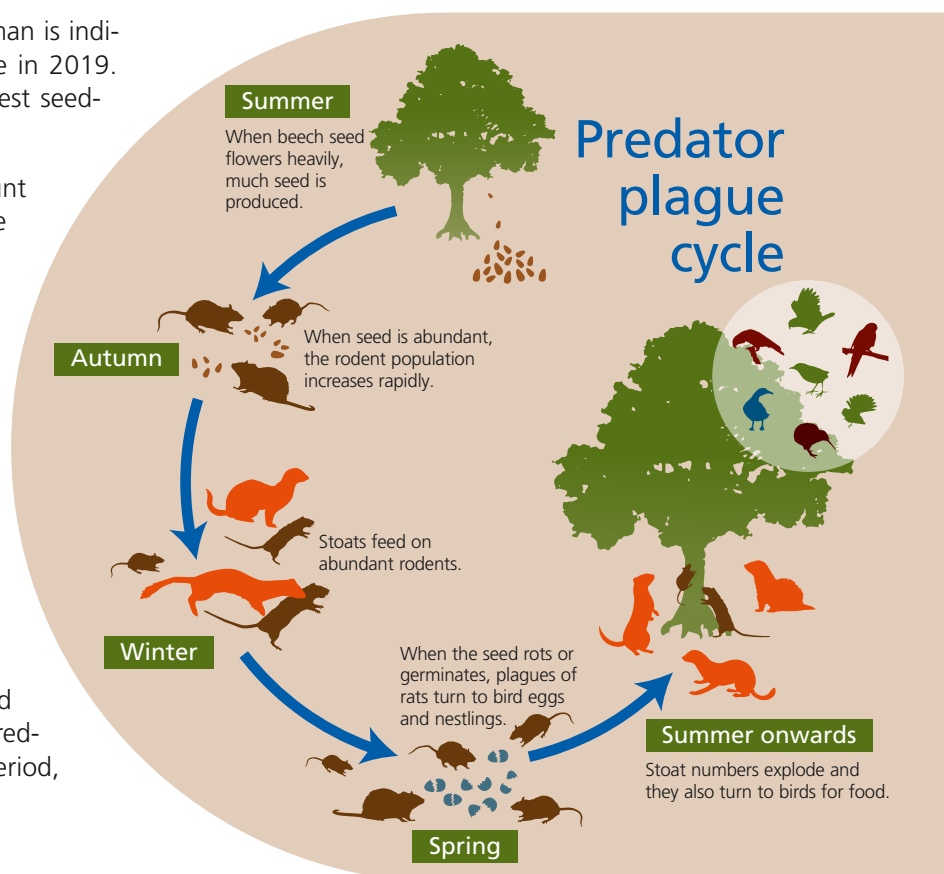
## Why are we controlling rats in the Abel Tasman?

Monitoring of beech seed in the Abel Tasman is indicating a heavy beech mast will take place in 2019. Indications are it may be one of the heaviest seed-falls on record.

During a beech mast, an enormous amount of beech seed falls, and rat numbers surge because of the abundance of food. When the beech seed is gone, these predators target chicks and nesting birds and they can decimate bird populations.

This poses a major threat to the park's vulnerable native wildlife including native birds and giant landsnails. High numbers of rats can overwhelm the extensive trapping networks operating in the park so aerial 1080 pest control is used to supplement these networks during a beech mast.

Aerial pest control is highly effective and will help protect the park's birdlife from predator attacks during their critical nesting period, increasing adult and chick survival.



## What is happening?

We will be aerially applying cereal baits containing bio-degradable 1080 pesticide (0.15% or 15 parts 1080 to 10,000 parts of cereal bait) over approximately 11,449 ha of Abel Tasman National Park. The toxic bait will be sown at a rate of 2 kg/ha—the equivalent of around 5 baits across an area the size of a tennis court.

Prior to the 1080 bait distribution we will carry out a pre-feed aerial application of non-toxic baits over the area. This ensures predators are more likely to eat the 1080 baits.

Helicopters will use Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology to achieve even coverage of bait. It also enables pilots to be sure of boundaries. Between Bark Bay and Tonga Quarry, and at the head of Awaroa Inlet, we plan to sow bait as close as practicable to the high water mark to ensure no residual rats are left. A shoreline inspection will be undertaken immediately after the operation to remove any exposed bait.

The Abel Tasman Coast Track and 50 metres either side of the track (except the section between Bark Bay and Tonga Quarry), and coastal huts are excluded from the

aerial bait distribution. Wainui Hut, Moa Park Shelter and Mosquito Bay campsite will have alternative water supplied and bait will be cleared from the immediate surrounds. Temporary alternative water supplies will also be available at Bark Bay Hut, Medlands Beach, the old Torrent Bay Estuary campsite, and the Bark Bay boaties water supply. The aerial pest control will also not include any part of Canaan Downs, Takaka and Marahau valley catchments, and the Torrent Bay and Awaroa water supply catchments.

The Awapoto to Castle Rock section of the Abel Tasman Inland Track, Wainui track, Wainui Saddle to Inland Track, Wainui Hut to Inland Track, track to Awaroa school site, Cleopatra's Pool and Falls River tracks and Coast Track between Bark Bay to Tonga Quarry will be closed during the toxic bait application until they have been inspected by DOC staff and cleared of bait. This is likely to entail the closure of these tracks for up to one day.

## Why we are using these methods?

Research has shown that rapidly rising rat numbers produced by beech mast conditions, and the subsequent surge in stoat numbers, can overwhelm trap networks. Ground control on its own cannot protect threatened bird and snail populations from such beech mast predator surges. Aerial 1080 pest control is the most effective pest control method over large areas and difficult terrain.

Aerial 1080 pest control reduces pest numbers to extremely low densities and will supplement our other pest control, such as our extensive stoat trapping network.



Birds like toutouwai/robin benefit from 1080. Monitoring at Mount Stanley in the Marlborough Sounds compared survival and nesting of robin between a site where 1080 was used, and another



with no pest control. All robins survived through the pest control operation and nesting success was nine times higher after 1080 treatment than in the comparison area. Over winter 84% of robins survived compared to 37% in the non-treatment area.

A 2011 Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment report into the use of 1080 found it was the most effective tool to protect our native wildlife.

Without 1080 pest control the ecology of the park would continue to decline and we would not be able to reintroduce species such as kākā to the park.



## Timeframe

The aerial application of non-toxic pre-feed bait will take place from 29 April 2019, and be followed by the aerial application of toxic 1080 baits. The precise timing of both these operations will be determined by periods of favourable weather.

No toxic bait will be applied during the holiday periods of 31 May–3 June (Queen's Birthday) and 6–21 July 2019.

Public notices will be placed in local newspapers prior to the operation beginning and warning signs will be erected at access points to the treatment area and high public-use sites.

Adjoining landowners and concessionaires will be notified of the toxic bait application before it takes place.

## Important information

The pesticides we use are poisonous to humans and domestic animals. Poisoning can occur through eating baits or poisoned animals.

- 1080 baits are cereal pellets about 2 cm long, cylinder-shaped and are dyed **green**.
- Prefeed aerial cereal pellets are about 2 cm long, cylinder-shaped but are **fawn-coloured**.

**In particular dogs are highly susceptible to 1080.**

**The risk to dogs with pesticide in carcasses will remain until they have rotted, perhaps for more than six months.**

**These risks can be eliminated by following these simple rules:**

- **DO NOT touch bait**
- **WATCH CHILDREN at all times**
- **DO NOT EAT animals from this area**
- **Remember, poison baits or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS.**

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When signs are removed, this means that you can resume normal activities in the area. Please report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs. If in doubt, check with DOC.

## Pest control management

DOC, Project Janszoon and the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust have talked with neighbouring landowners, concessionaires, iwi and others with an interest in the park about the restoration strategy they have put in place and how it is to be achieved.

A stoat trapping network is in place across 90% of the park, and a network of self-resetting rat traps has been established in coastal areas between Anchorage and Bark Bay. Aerial 1080 operations to control rats and possums have been undertaken in 2014, 2016 and 2017, and ground-based possum control is happening along the coastal strip.

Permission to undertake the operation has been granted by the Nelson/Marlborough Public Health Unit and from DOC. DOC and the Public Health Unit set conditions for the operation to manage public safety and environmental risk. The Environmental Protection Authority also set stringent procedures and standards that must be met.

The process for obtaining approval involves a DOC Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE). A copy of the AEE for this operation can be viewed at the DOC Motueka office.

## If you suspect poisoning

Always contact:

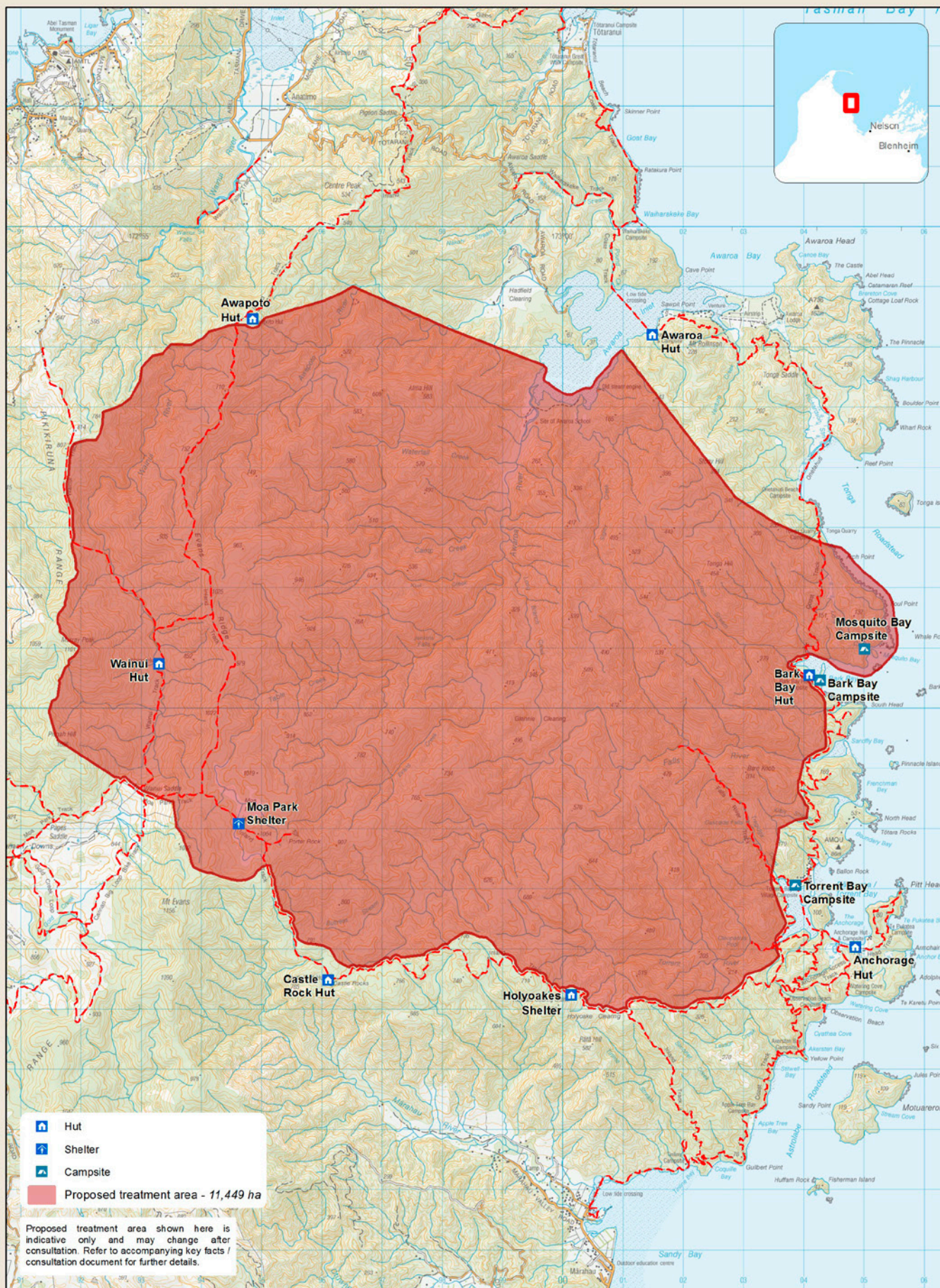
- Your local doctor or
- Local hospital or
- National Poisons Centre:  
0800 764 766 (urgent calls) or  
(03) 479 7248 (non-urgent and general enquiries)  
or dial 111

## For more information

Motueka Office  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 97  
Motueka 7143  
Phone: (03) 528 1810

Please contact the Motueka office if you would like to be notified again prior to the operation.





## Southern Abel Tasman Treatment Area

1080 Aerial Pest Control 2019

Proposed Treatment Area: 11,449 ha



New Zealand Government

1:56,617  
NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator  
Not for navigation  
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Base map: LINZ Topo50/250  
DOC: Geospatial Services

19/02/2019

AbelTasman\_Initial Consultation Map.mxd  
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