

# Predator Free Waiheke

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Hauraki Gulf Conservation Trust



# Hauraki Gulf Conservation Trust

Established 1997 to initiate and support environmental projects in the Hauraki Gulf

- *Waiheke Walking Festival*
- *Awaawaroa Bay Projects*
- *Te Toki Reserve / Okahuiti Wetland Restoration*
- *Waiheke Schools Wetland Restoration Project*
- *McKenzie Reserve, Enclosure Bay*
- *Predator Free Waiheke*

# Predator Free Waiheke

- Ian's dream
- Realisation that it is possible!
- Waiheke as one of the Treasure Islands in the Gulf
  - Safe habitat for self introduced birds
  - Not exporting our rats and stoats to other pest free islands
- Waiheke has
  - Diverse ecosystems
  - Community that values biodiversity
  - Many existing predator control initiatives
- First steps: AC/DOC/HGCT/GIFT funding for
  - Pilot mustelid control project
  - Scoping out what needs to be done to make Waiheke Predator Free



*Today kaka  
tomorrow kiwi?*



# Mustelid Pilot Study



# Why mustelids?

- Relatively easy and non – controversial
- Are a huge threat to many native species
- Good hook to engage community



# The approach

- Stakeholder group
  - Ngati Paoa
  - Waiheke Resources Trust, Forest & Bird, SPCA, QEII Covenanters
  - Local Board, Auckland Council, DOC
  - High School, BirdSafe
- Technical Advisory panel
- Recruit and train local trapping team
- Trial Innovations



# The Vision

“We dream of a Waiheke where our diverse natural environments are alive with birdsong and the community is fully engaged as kaitiaki of the island”



# The Waiheke Ways

- Incorporating existing projects, local knowledge and experience
- Working closely together, sharing ideas and data, and adopting multiple approaches
- Learning by doing, from others ... and from our mistakes
- Embracing best practice and new technology
- Together tackling the challenging issues such as absentee owners, prey switching, reinvasion, secondary poisoning and responsible pet ownership;
- Involving the whole community, with everyone playing a part





# Aims of the mustelid pilot

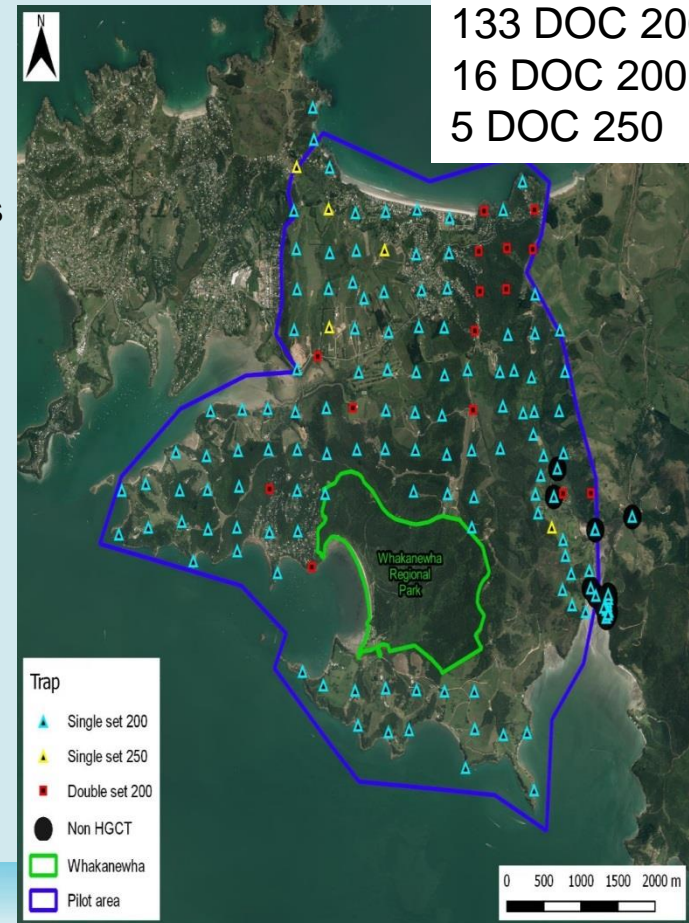
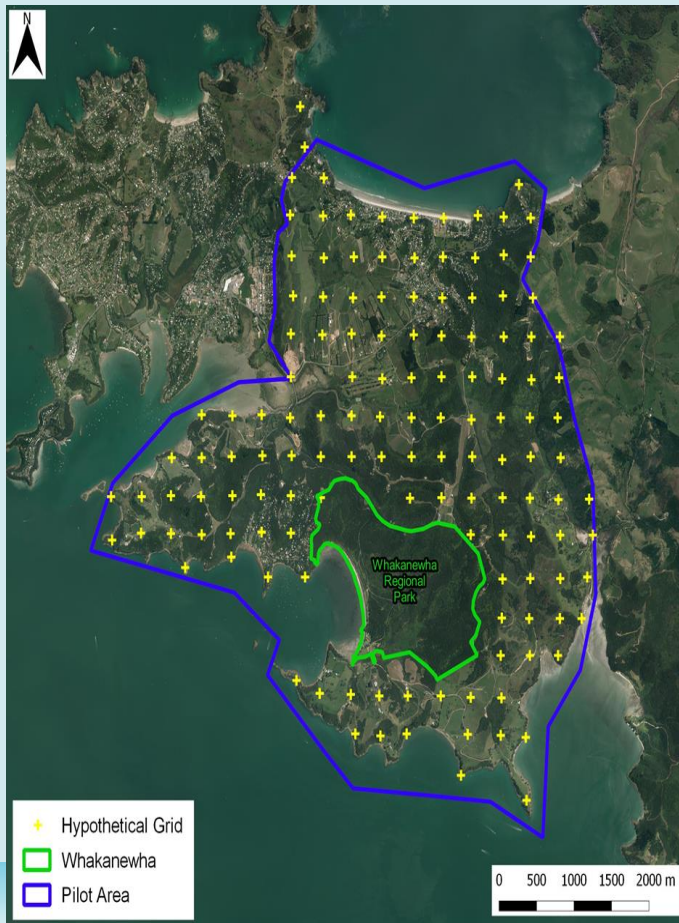
1. **Test the level of community support** for landscape scale animal pest control and potentially the eradication of mustelids
2. **Build capacity and knowledge** in the local community
3. **Learn about landscape scale control** on Waiheke
4. **Build knowledge on Waiheke mustelids**



# Onetangi to Whakanewha

**154 traps**

133 DOC 200 single  
16 DOC 200 double  
5 DOC 250



# Checks and catch

Number of traps out	154
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Number of participating landowners	68
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Number of checks	864
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## *Catch*

<b>Stoat</b>	<b>5</b>
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Rat	70
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Hedgehog	53
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Other (Mice, Rabbit, Feral cat, Myna bird)	9
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<i>% checks with any catches</i>	<i>16%</i>
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# So what did we learn?

## 1. Test the level of community support for landscape scale animal pest control

- Landowners generally very supportive
- Less knowledge about mustelid control than about rats
  - *Information leaflet*
- Happy for the team to do the job
- 3 refusals
  - *Need strategies– adjust grid, extra traps at edge, peer pressure*
- Importance of team ID
- Can take time to get permission
  - *Advance contact?*
- Need apolitical, transparent, partnership group leading the project



## 2. Build capacity and knowledge in the local community

- **Local field team recruited**
  - *Some already had experience*
  - *All gained more – leading to other jobs for them!*
- **Paperwork an issue**
  - *More team support needed*
- **Data sharing an issue**
- **Took much longer to set up and manage the operation than we had envisaged**
  - *Health & Safety*



### 3. Learn about landscape scale mustelid control on Waiheke

- **Grid laid successfully**
  - *Consider lines as well?*
- **Remote traps an issue**
  - *Time and cost to service – Satellite nodes/ Goodnatures might help*
  - *H&S - working in pairs*
  - *Minimise in layout*
- **Allow 2 hours to lay a new trap and 0.5 hours to service**
  - *Large variation according to accessibility*
  - *Plus management /admin time*



## 4. Build knowledge about Waiheke mustelids

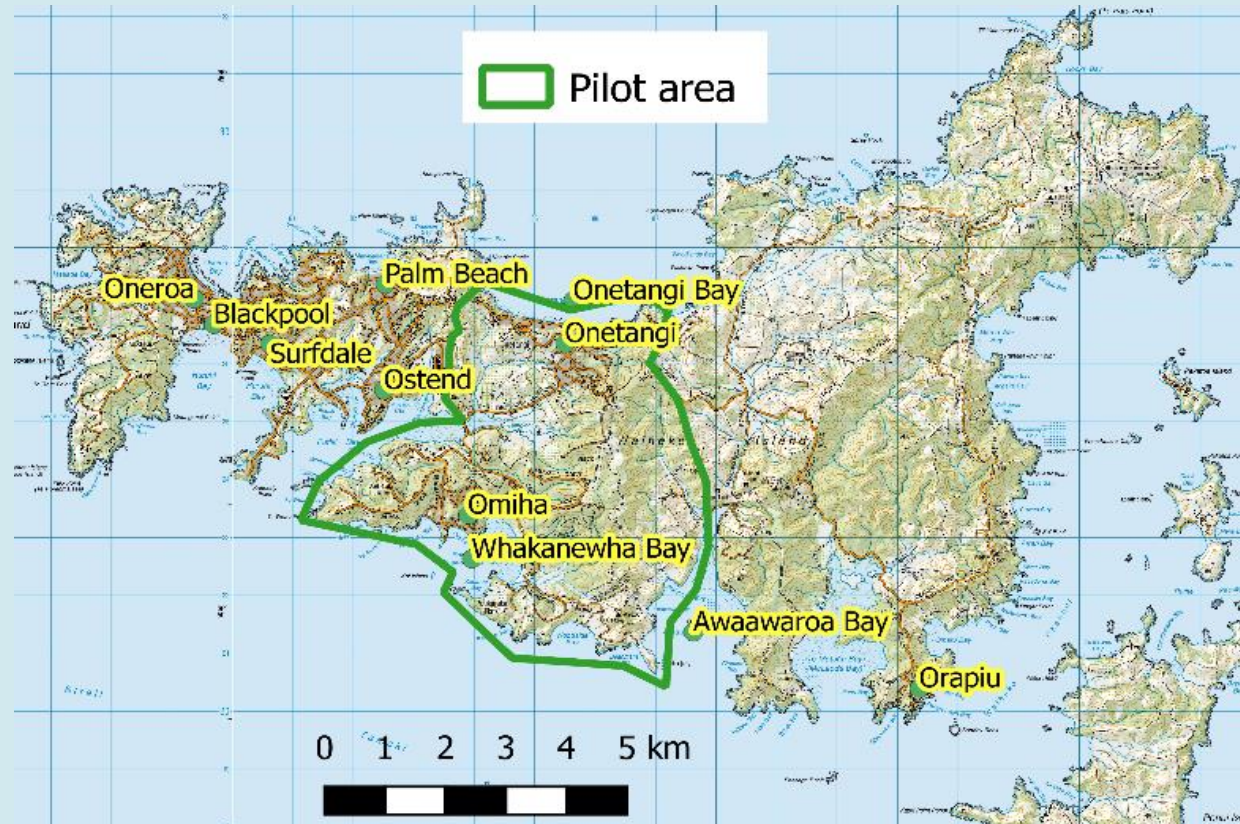
- **Catch seems low?**
  - *In line with other projects – is a ‘long game’ with these trap- shy, intelligent animals*
  - *Low populations? Concentrated in a few areas?*
  - *Prebaiting?*
  - *Novel lures – eg ferret bedding, mouse pee...*
  - *Sighting campaigns to build knowledge of areas/ preferred habitat*
  - *Collaboration with other projects*





# Next steps

- Bottom End Survey
  - What already done?
  - What support needed?
- LB grant applied for to continue in pilot area and extend to Western Waiheke





# Scoping

*What do we need to do to achieve  
PFW?*



# What do we need to do to achieve PFW?

- Operations
- Community engagement
- Biodiversity Monitoring
- Data management
- Fundraising
- Governance



# Transition

- From HGCT to a partnership with community organisations, Council, Local Board, New environmental contractor
- Widening the scope
  - Mustelids, rats, weeds, ++
- Community engagement and participation



# The challenges

- Building trust
- Local politics
- Governance
  - Who makes decisions?
  - Who applies for funding?
- Who is on the project team?
  - Are they paid? By whom?
  - Who do they report to?



# Building a consensus

- Everyone involved cares deeply...
- But not everyone agrees!
- Important to voice opinions, doubts, concerns
- A mosaic of different approaches – not one single way of doing things



# How can AC help?

- \$\$\$ - and fundraising support/ advice
- Technical support
- Legitimacy (?)
- Support not control





HE AHA TE MEA NUI O TE AO,  
HE TANGATA, HE TANGATA, HE TANGATA.