

Wide Scale Predator Control in Hawkes Bay: Feasibility Forum

Hawkes Bay Regional Council / Landcare Research: Environlink Advice Fund.

Discussion: Thursday 12th November 2009. Hawkes Bay Regional Council, Napier.

Setting the scene

- HBRC has community programmes already in place (possum control – brodifacoum in bait stations. Rats as by-catch).
- Any new programme must stand up at a cost/benefit analysis to attract community. This will be difficult and may require specialist participation to value 'biodiversity' benefits.
- Must be clear in goals: species protection, reintroduction following predator control (spp may include: falcon, kaka, blue duck, kiwi, bitterns, fernbirds, kaka beak etc).
- Once goals established, threats (predators, habitat loss) need to be identified.

Tools and tactics

- Tools currently available for predator control.

Traps (ie DOC250, Fenn) - Require regular servicing for continual use – time-expensive.

Toxins (Brodifacoum / Diphacinone).

- Tools coming on stream:

Good Nature: Resetting traps – one annual check. Stoat and rats traps going through efficacy testing now. \$160 per trap + estimated \$11/trap/year to service (cf: current \$45 per trap + \$96/trap/year to service). [*Self setting traps are more cost effective after 2 years*]. Possum self setting trap (Henry Trap). Due May next year, \$90.

Connovation. PAPP. Possible registration of compound forecast May 2010 for stoats and cats. Baits in bait station of some description. Spacing similar to traps. Future aerosol devices planned. No costings yet. PAPP is toxic to dogs and this warrants discussion of applicability in a widescale-farmland landscape.

- What funding is needed and where could it be sourced?

ECOED – Alistair Bramley suggested that Charitable Trusts would be more amenable to supporting a project if it had minimal 'ongoing' costs. Amounts of up to \$5M are not unknown. This makes the high set-up cost of new self-setting traps much more attractive.

Measurable goals and realistic objectives

- The group considered that wide-scale predator control is currently possible 'with unlimited funds'. However, it was acknowledged that a HB-wide approach was not realistic in the first instance and that a smaller area be identified and targeted with a

10-year vision for expansion. The size of the area was not discussed but needs to be at the scale of the furthest moving predator.

- Where to start? A few key criteria were identified that should help select the optimal area to begin a wide scale predator programme. These included:
 1. Critical Habitat/ Regionally important sites.

DOC is currently undergoing an 'inventory' process in HB to identify important sites on crown land. It is hoped that this will be done by Christmas 2009. Both the local Area Office (Jan Hania) and central office (Ben Reddiex) have pledged support by sharing this information with the HBRC.

2. Linked to ongoing 'biodiversity recovery' sites etc Boundary Stream, community predator control programmes, Cape Kidnappers Reserve, Kaweka Kiwi Programme.

Current 'biodiversity' sites will provide the source populations of native species which, once released from predation pressure, will be able to disperse out into the wider landscape.

3. In areas with an enthusiastic community who will take ownership of the programme – needs a catchy vision/goal/name. Eg. "a kiwi in every backyard".

Current possibilities include: Tutira Maungahururu Visionary Group and any of the 18 individual groups involved in HBRC funded Biodiversity Protection community programme.

4. Where early successes are gained (outcomes) and used for marketing/ expanding the programme.

Who would monitor and communicate success? Potential to hook into the new Landcare Research programme. HBRC, DOC and community groups could all be involved.

Progressing the wide-scale predator control concept: What needs to be done?

Initial Steps:

- Selection of initial area(s) – feasibility document that identifies potential areas. This to be done after DOC identifies 'priority' sites. HBRC to identify their own priority sites if different.
- Core group established to oversee the project.

Follow up:

- Inventory of the selected sites for biodiversity concerns and identify the specific threats.
- Costing of predator control 'tools' over the designated area and identify funding sources. Estimate the time/personnel required to service control devices.
- Establish the extent of community involvement which could be realistically achieved.
- HBRC Link in with Landcare Research/DOC for biodiversity monitoring.
- Longer term goal setting.

Attendees:

HBRC

Rod Dickson
Allan Beer
Campbell Leckie
Steve Cave

ECOED /Wildtech

Alistair Bramley
John Wilkes

DOC

Jan Hania
Dan Herries
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Good Nature

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Connovation

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Landcare Research

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