



PREDATOR FREE TE KINGA

NEWS

Predator free project gathering pace

Predator Free Te Kinga is a five-year predator control project that aims to transform more than 3800 hectares of forested land into a predator-free conservation area.

The project was launched in May 2020 with a long-term plan to eradicate possums from Mt Te Kinga and other predator populations in the Lake Brunner area. Predator Free Te Kinga seeks to halt the decline of the catchment's many endangered or threatened species, allowing them to thrive and eventually spur their repopulation from the 'mountains to the sea'.

The project is currently underway with the information gathering phase, identifying different species and assessing predator numbers via 259 motion-detection cameras and accompanying moto lures set up around an inner and outer monitoring ring.

The motolures attract predators to a monitoring site and a photo is taken each time a predator visits the site.

Staff visit the motion-detection cameras monthly to check batteries and download the memory cards for analysis and classification to assist with key decisions to the operational work plan.

The information gathered to date has revealed several predator clusters in the monitoring area, including a stoat cluster near Lake Brunner. Data such as this will be utilised by the Lake Brunner Community Catchment Care Group to shift their traps and devices to target the area surrounding the camera sites.

Monitoring in the field

The table below shows the predators detected by the motion cameras to date. These are not the total number of predators, but how many times a predator has triggered the motion cameras.

Species	Inner Ring	Outer Ring
Possums	852	1204
Rats	7717	8806
Stoats	59	147
Cats	509	267



What is a MotoLure?

A MotoLure is an automated lure device for trapping or detecting predators. The lure dispenses a preset amount of protein-rich bait such as mayonnaise or Nutella. A motor driver inside the MotoLure partially rotates each day forcing a bolt to depress the syringe and dispense a pre-programmed amount of fresh-scented lure. Luring is known to increase encounter rates with cameras by encouraging predators with a food reward.

Conservation students assist in the field

The possum eradication project at Te Kinga has provided the perfect learning environment for Conservation and Earthcare students from Greymouth High School.

The students have been assisting pest control experts at Te Kinga to manage 60 monitoring stations over a 5 km section of the inner monitoring ring around the Inchbonnie area.

Out in the field, students change the SD cards and batteries at each monitoring station and download and classify the images back in the classroom. The data is then shared with the West Coast Regional Council to help inform the project on predator control numbers in the Te Kinga area. Students have learnt about rural pest control operations, skills and techniques for population survey monitoring, and have undertaken industry relevant qualifications that contribute to their NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 certificates.

The Conservation and Earthcare courses are run by Papa Taiao Earthcare and Greymouth High School through the West Coast Trades Academy.



New apprentices on board

Predator Free Te Kinga has welcomed two full time apprentices to the programme. The Predator Free Apprenticeship Programme, funded through the Government Jobs for Nature scheme, is focused on increasing the number of skilled predator control operators in New Zealand through a two-year training programme. Participants complete the NZQA Certificate in Pest Operations (Level 3) and a number of other industry qualifications, learning directly from experienced pest control specialists during their apprenticeship. They also provide local on-the-ground support to conservation community groups, landowners, and other projects.

Predator Free Te Kinga's goal supports the creation of a predator free New Zealand by 2050 and to see the regeneration of our native bird and plant life by growing a workforce armed with the skills required to become future environmental leaders.

Predator Free Te Kinga provides an excellent outdoor classroom allowing the apprentices room to develop their skills across a wide range of activities while making a meaningful contribution to conservation and biodiversity outcomes within the project area.

Find out more

To find out more about the Predator Free Te Kinga project, contact the team at the West Coast Regional Council, phone: 0508 800 118 or email: TeKinga@wrc.govt.nz