

Piopio East PPCA

Protection of biodiversity, farm production and catchment values

PPCA programme

Waikato Regional Council funds and undertakes work in more than 50 priority possum control areas (PPCAs) in the Waikato region, covering around 543,000 hectares and involving thousands of landowners.

PPCAs are areas initiated by the council to:

- protect and enhance biodiversity (including improving the stability of catchments)
- enhance farm production
- maintain the gains of previous or existing possum control.

Recent extreme weather events have made clear the importance of intact healthy forests to protect catchments, with control of pest animals an integral part of that. Developing and maintaining professional relationships with landowners is critical to the long-term success of our PPCA programme.

You can view the locations of PPCAs on the council's interactive mapping service at waikatomaps.waikatoregion.govt.nz search PPC.

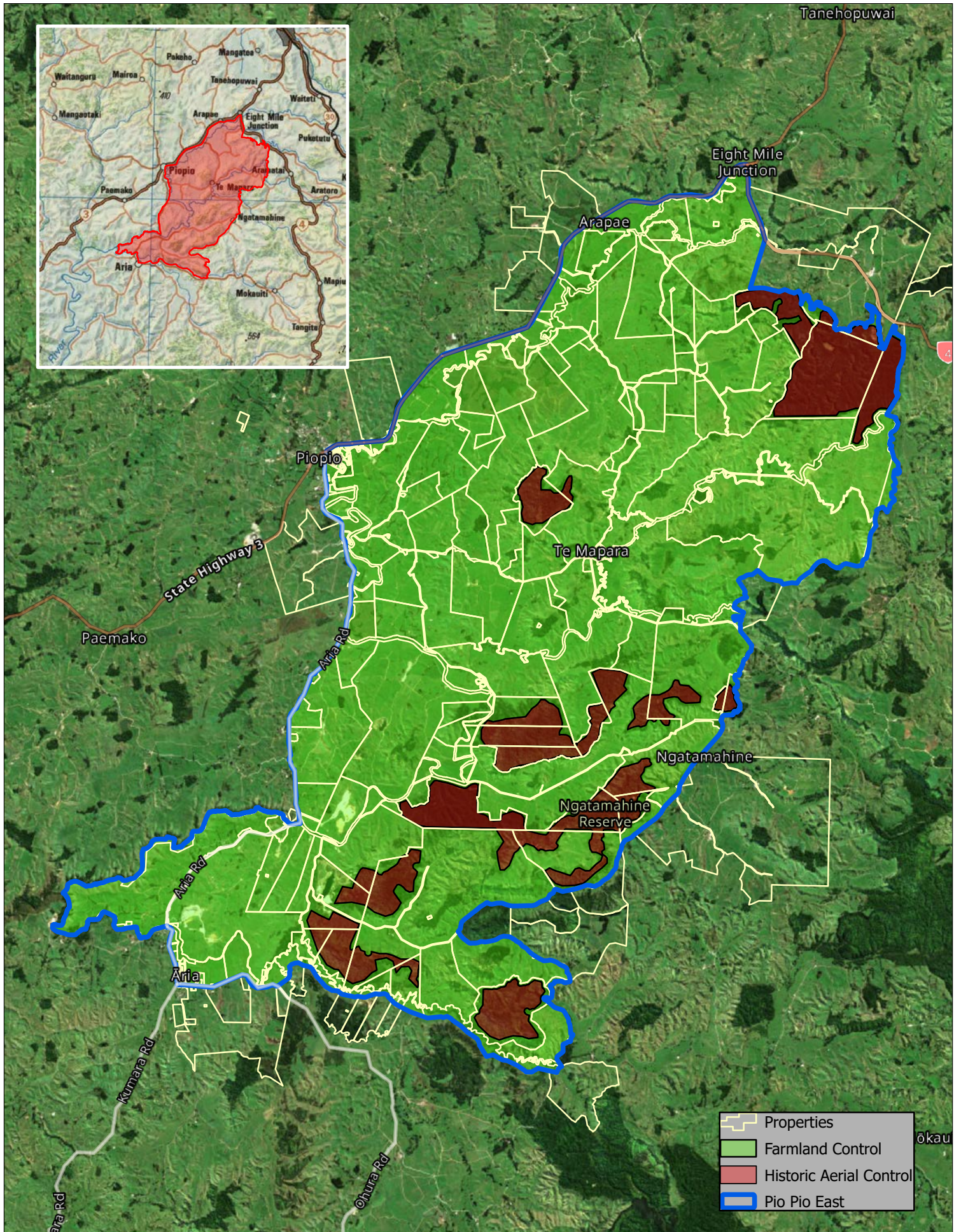
Piopio East PPCA

The Piopio East PPCA covers approximately 12,885 hectares and includes native habitat through farmland, exotic plantation forestry and tracts of remnant native forest. It includes a series of stream catchments (from northeast to southwest, the Mapara, Kaitaringa, Rangikohua and Mokauiti streams) within the Mokau River catchment. The council uses both ground (worker deployed) and aerial (helicopter) delivered possum control methods within this PPCA. These methods complement each other across the different habitats and terrain within the operational area.

Pest animal control within this PPCA began in the 1990s as part of national TB vector control. The council's possum control has maintained the biodiversity gains and suppressed possum numbers since 2009. This PPCA is an important part of a much wider network of areas receiving pest animal control work by the council, the Department of Conservation (DOC), the community and landowners. Together, this work helps to protect taonga species, biodiversity values, water quality and the integrity of partly forested stream catchments of the Mokau River.

Table 1: History of pre-operation and post operation results for Piopio East PPCA.

Years	Piopio East PPCA	Pre-operation % RTC result	Post operation % RTC result
2010/11	Farmland Aerial	6.11% RTC 6.57% RTC	0.88% RTC 1.34% RTC
2013/14	Farmland	5.64% RTC	1.44% RTC
2016/17	Farmland Aerial	7.85% RTC 7.85% RTC	2.28% RTC 0.26% RTC
2020/21	Farmland	13.53% RTC	0.99% RTC
2022/23	Farmland (did not trigger an operation)	4.30% RTC	N/A
2024/25 (planned)	Farmland Aerial	Yet to be done Yet to be done	N/A



Pio Pio East Possum Control Operational Areas



Created by: WRC
Date: 24/10/2023
Job No.: REQ202871



Why are we controlling predators?

Possums have a broad range of impacts on natural areas; they browse the canopies of favoured trees like kamahi and northern rata, eat flowers and fruit and the chicks and eggs of our native birds. Rats and stoats also prey on our native birds, as well as our native insects, lizards and frogs. Controlling these pest animals with ground control methods and aerial 1080 helps to protect our forest environments and all the taonga native species that live within them. Reduced possum numbers also benefits pasture growth and horticultural crops, and home gardens and orchards.

Predator control methods to protect native species

The council uses of a range of pest animal control methods to protect native species.

Aerial application of cereal pellets containing 1080 is the most effective control method in large and/or remote and/or rugged areas. While this aerial control method targets possums and rodents, it also has the benefit of effectively reducing mustelids and feral cats.

Aerial 1080 operations often reduce predators down to near undetectable levels and is used where ground-based control (people on foot) is inefficient, ineffective, or dangerous for the ground crew. An aerial operation is also the best tool where ground-based control work could have a negative impact on the environment, for example, it could help spread the organism that causes kauri dieback, or chytrid fungus that impacts native frogs. Walking through areas also puts native species with cryptic camouflage, like frogs, invertebrates and lizards, at risk of being stood on and creates tracks that help predators move around more easily.

Ground operations using traps, bait stations and biobags are effective and more appropriate in smaller more accessible areas of forest and vegetation throughout cropping/farmland.

Ground operations generally occur every three to five years, while aerial operations tend to be delivered every six to seven years. Sometimes, however, the number of possums, rodents and stoats can overwhelm baiting and trapping network, so aerial operations are also carried out concurrently to supplement the ground operation.

Time frame

At this stage, aerial and ground control operations in Piopio East PPCA are planned to occur mid-2025. Delivery of the aerial operation is weather dependent.

Facts

1. Control operations in this PPCA, including in small public conservation land (PCL) reserves, is funded by ratepayers in the Waikato region through the targeted biosecurity rate.
2. This PPCA has large tracts of forest, and steep and remote areas, where effective control of possums and rodents can only be achieved via an aerial operation.
3. You can find commonly asked questions about 1080 on the Department of Conservation website at [doc.govt.nz](https://www.doc.govt.nz); search for *1080 frequently asked questions*.

