



## PAKURATAHI FOREST

JULY 2005

# Feral goat control

### Why control goats?

In natural environments goats are one of the most destructive pests. Goats are social animals that tend to mob in groups and eat their way through the native vegetation. Each goat eats vast quantities of plants and seedlings from a wide range of species.

Their continual eating prevents natural regeneration of protective bush cover, which leads to erosion problems and landslips. Over time, the native forest is reduced to scrub and tree ferns. And, as goat mobs eat native plant ground cover, the likelihood of browse-resistant weeds establishing themselves is greatly increased.

### What has happened so far?

In 2001 Greater Wellington initiated the goat control programme within the regional parks, forests and water catchments. Since then, over 2000 goats have been removed.

So far, goat control has been carried out in:

- Akatarawa Forest
- Wainuiomata Water Catchment
- Battle Hill Farm Park
- Belmont Regional Park
- Hutt Water Catchment
- Kaitoke Regional Park.

### What is planned?

This year Greater Wellington is expanding the goat control programme into Pakuratahi Forest. During May this year, we ran an initial goat control cull along the north-eastern end of Pakuratahi Forest which removed 48 goats. In August/September, we plan to extend the goat control along the north-western side of Pakuratahi

Forest and work southwards. This area includes Mt Climie.



Feral goats damage native vegetation.

### What methods are used?

Professional goat cullers hunt the forest on foot using trained goat bailing dogs. Initially the goat control operation involves intensive hunting. Once goat numbers have been reduced, tracking collars are put on individual goats within selected areas of the forest. Goats are social animals, so these collared goats will join any other goats still in the area. When the hunters come back to re-hunt the area, they use a tracking device which leads them directly to the collared goat and the mob of goats it has joined. These collared goats are aptly named Judas goats.

Alongside the control work, we have forest health monitoring plots so we can monitor the vegetation changes against the reduction in feral goat numbers. A helicopter may be used by the hunters to gain access to the remote parts of Pakuratahi Forest.

### How can you help?

As a neighbouring landowner, you can assist in feral goat control. We encourage you to reduce goats on your land. Controlling goats on adjoining land is very beneficial because it reduces the reinvasion rates, both from the adjoining land into Pakuratahi Forest and vice versa.

If you have any queries or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Jaap Knegtmans, Environmental Ranger.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Greater Wellington  
PO Box 40847  
Upper Hutt  
www.gw.govt.nz

Jaap Knegtmans  
Environmental Ranger  
Parks & Forests  
04 526 5342  
027 467 3067  
Jaap.knegtmans@gw.govt.nz

Publication date June 2005

Publication no. GW/PF-G-05/99