HAWKE'S BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI

Meeting of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council

Date: Wednesday 27 August 2025

Time: 12.30pm

Venue: Council Chamber
Hawke's Bay Regional Council
159 Dalton Street
NAPIER

Late Items Attachments Excluded From Agenda

Biosecurity Annual Report
1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025

Report on the 2024-25 Operational Plan

August 2025
Hawke's Bay Regional Council Publication No. 5705

HAWKES BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI

ISSN 2703-2051 (Online)
ISSN 2703-2043 (Print)

Catchment Operations

Biosecurity Annual Report 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

August 2025

Hawke's Bay Regional Council Publication No. 5705

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Executive Summary

Hawke's Bay Regional Council is the management agency responsible for developing and implementing the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) 2018-2038 in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993.

The RPMP is a combination of eradicating or effectively managing specified pests or groups of pests. It describes the biosecurity activities undertaken throughout Hawke's Bay and outlines the management or eradication of specific organisms. Doing so will:

- minimise the actual or potential adverse or unintended effects associated with these organisms, and,
- maximise the effectiveness of individual actions in managing pests through a regionally coordinated approach.

As the management agency, Council is required to prepare an annual operational plan that outlines how the plan will be implemented. Following the end of each financial year, staff will report to Council on the implementation of the operational plan.

This is the Annual Report for the 2024/2025 year relating to the Operational Plan for the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Plan.

1 Introduction

Regional councils have a mandate under Part 2 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) to provide regional leadership in activities that prevent, reduce, or eliminate adverse effects from harmful organisms in their region.

The purpose of the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) is to provide for the efficient and effective management or eradication of specified harmful organisms in the Hawke's Bay Region. It builds on the 2013 Strategy and previous pest management programmes. The purpose of the Plan is to:

- Minimise the actual or potential adverse or unintended effects associated with those organisms; and
- Maximise the effectiveness of individual actions in managing pests through a regionally coordinated approach.

This Annual Report records progress in implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan via the Operational Plan 2024-2025, covering the council's biosecurity activities from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. The Annual Report of regulatory activities is a statutory requirement under section 100B(2) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act).

2 Pest Plants

The RPMP lists 33 plant species as pests, divided into five management categories.

The Annual Report provides a brief description of the Council's activities in each of these pest plant categories for the 2024/2025 year.

2.1 Exclusion Pest Plants

These are pest plants that are unknown in the Hawke's Bay region and would likely have significant adverse environmental and/or economic impacts if they were to establish. The objective of this programme is to prevent their establishment.

Exclusion	Staff Days	Management Regime
Alligator weed	89	As a surveillance tool, eDNA samples were taken at a range of waterways across Hawke's Bay. A notification process has also been established, and HBRC will be alerted to any notifiable organisms detected in eDNA samples taken in Hawke's Bay. Through the above eDNA surveillance programme, alligator weed was detected at Lake Whatumā and the Mangatarata stream in Hawke's Bay in 2023. Significant ground control works have been undertaken on the lake margins and in the Mangatarata stream, using both staff and contractors. Aerial spraying operations over the lake itself occurred in October and March after permission was granted by the Environmental Protection Authority. Surveillance of the majority of the Mangatarata stream and adjacent low lying areas was undertaken with a detector dog and handler, as well as targeted surveillance by helicopter over likely sites of
Marshwort	0	
Noogoora bur	0	
Senegal tea	5.75	
Spartina	0	

		incursion. The sites surveyed aerially included Lake Poukawa, the wider Whatumā basin and the Tukituki river from the Mangatarata confluence to the Papanui confluence. No alligator weed was found during these surveillance events. A management plan for Alligator weed was prepared and presented to Council, outlining operations and associated costs. The area infested on and around Lake Whatumā is around 15 ha in total, with isolated patches of Alligator weed being found down the Mangatarata stream (the outlet of the lake). Approximately 10 properties have alligator weed on them on the lake's eastern edge. Although control efforts to date have significantly reduced the alligator weed infestation, continued pressure will need to be applied, as it can grow and spread rapidly. Ongoing monitoring and control are undertaken on the lakeside properties and Mangatarata stream. Senegal tea was discovered in Te Awa o Mokotūāraro (Clive River) in May 2024 through a positive eDNA test found in the Wilderlab public database from late 2022. This detection was escalated, and staff discovered multiple infestations encompassing much of the Clive and a portion of the Karamu stream. It is estimated that the total infestation occupies an area of less than a hectare but spans a 13km stretch of the respective waterways. No meaningful control was undertaken this year due to ongoing consultation with local and adjacent stakeholders/hapu regarding concerns about the proposed control tools. A trial was undertaken at a Council owned site to assess the effectiveness of using a salt solution as a control method. Staff will be assessing the results in spring. Surveillance was also undertaken to assess further extent of infestation with no significant increase in the extent of the infestation at this time. A management plan is being drafted for Senegal tea to provide information on costings and staff time.

2.2 Eradication Pest Plants

These are pest plants in the Hawke's Bay region where eradication is possible. The objective is to destroy all known infestations of these species within the Hawke's Bay region before seed set. HBRC undertakes direct control through service delivery at all known sites.

Eradication	Staff days	Management Regime
African feather grass	2.3	This plant is confined to the Maraekakaho stream and some of the berms on the Ngaruroro river. All sites were checked with only one plant found.

Cathedral bells	2.3	All known rural sites were controlled by contractors or staff. A few sites are now clear. One site at Patoka, which suffered significant damage and overall vegetation clearance in Cyclone Gabrielle, was examined this year, with few plants found.
Goats rue	0.3	Staff monitored all high-risk roadside areas and known infestation sites in Eskdale. Plants were only found at one roadside area in Central Hawke's Bay and in the Eskdale area.
Purple loosestrife	0	Difficulty of access meant the two sites in the region could not be checked this season.
Spiny emex	4.4	Spiny emex exists at two sites in the region, in Ahuriri and at Whakaki. At the Whakaki site, higher moisture levels across the year led to significant germination and all plants were controlled. At the Ahuriri site, numbers remain static, with no germination this year. Spiny emex has a very long seed life.
White edged nightshade	4.75	All known sites were surveyed with no plants found.
Yellow water lily	0	After 25 years of repeated monitoring after initial control, the yellow water lily was declared eradicated from all formerly infested sites in the 2023/2024 financial year.
Phragmites	19	In accordance with the contract between HBRC and the Ministry of Primary Industries, HBRC will destroy all infestations before seed set. The majority of this time was spent dealing with multiple small sites around Napier, but with some time spent at the known sites in Havelock North and Puketitiri, assisting with excavation works.

2.3 Progressive Containment Pest Plants

These are pest plants in the Hawke's Bay region, where they are too widespread to eradicate. However, there is an opportunity to progressively contain and reduce their geographic distribution either across the region or specified areas within the region. This programme is achieved through a combination of occupier responsibility and direct control by HBRC through service delivery at all known sites.

Progressive containment	Staff days	Management Regime
Apple of Sodom	31	Several farms in the Seafield Road area are the main problem areas. One new site of significance was discovered in the Poraiti area, which will require repeated control. Improvements continue to be made each year on the existing sites. Staff removed and destroyed isolated plants.
Australian sedge	6.6	Australian sedge is only found in the Wairoa district. Most work is subsidised through the incentive scheme and undertaken by contractors. One new property was discovered in the Tuai area and controlled.

Progressive containment	Staff days	Management Regime
Cotton thistle	2.75	Numbers were higher than the previous two years, thanks to a new infestation on a property in the Bayview area. Otherwise, numbers would have been static.
Darwin's barberry	20	There are two infestations, one at Gwavas and one at Puketitiri. Both were surveyed, and control work is ongoing. An extensive surveillance and control programme continued at Puketitiri, using contractors and a more significant proportion of staff time than in previous years. A new area was discovered at Gwavas that was significantly infested, this was controlled in conjunction with DoC and Panpac.
Japanese honeysuckle	1.25	This programme applies to the Tutira area, as outlined in the RPMP. Much of this work involved the use of contractors.
Nassella tussock	2	Although plant numbers are reducing, there is a large seed bank. A site detected fourteen years ago in the Tukituki area continues to be of concern due to the high numbers of plants being found each year.
Old man's beard	44.5	The main control areas are north of the Napier-Taupo Highway and in areas of high biodiversity value. Areas found adjacent to the Ruahine Ranges were surveyed again and controlled, with one new site discovered in the uppermost reaches of the Tukituki river. One new site was discovered in the Waipunga valley that was significantly infested, which was controlled aerially. Aerial surveillance of the Waipunga river valley was also undertaken for a distance of more than 20 kilometres downriver of this new site, with no more found. A significant programme of aerial works in the Wairoa area was completed this financial year with no issues.
Saffron thistle	45	Numbers were low this year owing to a wet autumn and spring. All known sites were controlled.
Velvetleaf	0.5	Known sites were assessed. Machinery hygiene was enforced. No plants were found.
Wilding Conifers	21.5	Pinus contorta is mainly a problem in areas that are close to conservation land. 12,113 hectares were aerially surveyed and controlled in the Napier/Taihape Rd area, including Owhaoko B East, D7B, D1, and the eastern flanks of the Otupae range on Timahanga Station. A further 6,000 hectares was aerially surveyed, including the Owhaoko D1, D8B and D4B blocks and the area around Mt Meany adjacent to the headwaters of the Manson Creek, which is part of the western edge of the Kaweka Forest Park. In the Rangitaiki area, 381 hectares were surveyed and controlled with a mixture of ground and aerial methods. The areas included various Runanga blocks in the upper Waipunga catchment as well as Wairanga Station in the Taharua catchment. Any Pinus contorta/Douglas fir detected was controlled. MPI have continued to help finance control programmes in the Napier/Taihape Rd area and has financed control programmes in the Rangitaiki area. However, this funding is projected to decrease.

Progressive containment	Staff days	Management Regime
Woolly nightshade	145.25	Multiple new urban sites were found this season, most had small infestations of young plants with the occasional larger tree. Logged forestry blocks in the rural environment continue to provide significant numbers of seedling and sapling regrowth. Generally, numbers were similar to previous years in the rural environment, except Mahurangi Station, which was discovered in the 23/24 financial year.

2.4 Sustained Control Pest Plants

These are pest plants that are well established in Hawke's Bay, where preventing or minimising the spread of these pests between neighbouring properties is the primary objective. This includes boundary control pest plants, where a neighbouring occupier may be required to control these pests on their boundary to prevent the spread onto adjacent properties.

Chilean needle grass

Chilean needle grass is a tough weed to control. With the current control tools available, HBRC can only attempt to contain it within known areas. Although only three new properties were discovered this season, over the last eight years the average rate of increase in the total number of properties sits at 10 percent per annum. New properties are generally found due to the advocacy programme and an increased surveillance programme. Continued subdivision creates extra properties, as well as other land use changes. This increase in properties has created additional pressure (in Spring/Summer) on staff resources and budgets at an extremely busy time for the Biosecurity team.

HBRC continues running a joint advocacy programme with Environment Canterbury and the Marlborough District Council regarding Chilean needle grass. Subdivision of properties with known Chilean needle grass infestations also increases the number of landowners contacted each year.

Chilean needle grass and river gravel extraction

Chilean needle grass is known to occupy parts of the Tukituki and Waipawa River courses in Central Hawkes Bay. Gravel extraction restrictions remain in place from 2 kilometres downstream of the Patangata bridge down to the Tukituki mouth owing to the number of sites in the active channel.

A full length survey was commissioned in the summer of 2024 of the Waipawa and Tukituki rivers. The survey area extended from the Mangaonuku/Waipawa confluence, to the Tukituki/Waipawa confluence and from there to the Tukituki mouth at Haumoana, searching for Chilean needle grass in the river channel and beaches. This survey was conducted by contractors administered by Biosecurity staff and funded in partnership with the IPMO team. The results of this survey reinforced the current status of the restrictions, with no Chilean needle grass being found in the river channel from the Mangaonuku/Waipawa confluence to a point 2 kilometres downstream of Patangata bridge and moderate infestations of Chilean needle grass being found in places below the boundary of the unrestricted area for extraction.

Privet

Contractors and individual staff removed 60 Privet plants. Management programmes for hedges are ongoing.

Yellow bristle grass

Staff worked with NZTA and Wairoa District Council to manage the risk posed by mowing regimes during seeding and the requirement for mower washdowns. High-risk landowners were also contacted.

2.5 Sustained Control Pest Plants – Boundary Control

These are pest plants that may require neighbouring occupiers to control on their boundary. They are Bathurst bur, Blackberry, Gorse, Nodding thistle, Ragwort and Variegated thistle. This season, the amount of time spent in this area was minimal, with only 18 hours recorded. Complaints were related to Blackberry, Ragwort and Variegated Thistle.

Enforcement is the key management tool for Boundary Control plants. Controls are only enforced if their location contravenes RPMP rules (e.g., gorse within 10 metres of a neighbour's boundary, provided that boundary is clear) and only if there is a complaint.

2.6 Biodiversity Pest Plants

These plants have an adverse ecological effect and are managed outside the RPMP.

Climbing Spindleberry

This plant is present along the banks of the Waipawa and Tukituki Rivers. This season, all areas were controlled by staff. Some of the remaining infested areas are difficult to move through owing to significant gorse, blackberry, and broom infestations.

Giant/Asiatic Knotweed

This plant is present in the Tuai township area and at the Waipukurau Transfer Station. A contractor sprayed the Tuai infestation, and the Waipukurau site was clear. It is a very invasive plant that will smother native plants, especially lower-growing species and saplings.

Aquatic Pests

HBRC, Fish and Game, and DOC took samples from strategic sites on the main Hawke's Bay Rivers and sent them away for DNA analysis to ascertain whether Didymo was present. All samples this year were negative for Didymo. eDNA samples were also taken at multiple feeder streams in areas not often surveyed. These included the Mangamahaki Stream, Maungatutu Stream, Otamauri Stream, Okoeke Stream, Mangatahi Stream and Waipunga River. No pests listed within the RPMP were detected.

2.7 Surveillance Programme

More staff time was invested in certain pest plants, such as Woolly nightshade, Chilean needle grass, Alligator weed, and Senegal tea.

During property inspections for pest plants, staff map pest locations using ArcGIS Field Maps. This allows staff to assess whether infestations have increased or reduced over time. During visits, staff take the opportunity to discuss any relevant concerns with the occupier. In comparison to the 2023/2024 financial year, visit totals increased by approximately 27 percent.

Biosecurity officer visits	Properties
Rural visits	1,516
High-risk sites/QEII	116
Urban visits	908
Nurseries and pet shop visits	20

2.8 Surveillance of Railway Land

Staff have a good working relationship with Treescape, the contractors responsible for vegetation control along the rail corridor in Hawke's Bay. Staff communicate with the Area Supervisor annually, identifying areas that need control. Treescape then does the work when required. This procedure enables staff to control pest plants along the railway tracks throughout the region in a timely manner.

2.9 State Highway and District Road Monitoring

A good working relationship has been developed between staff and Waka Kotahi (NZ Transport Agency) and the Central Hawke's Bay, Wairoa, and the Hastings District Councils for clearing roadside weeds. When weeds are cleared from roadsides, staff ensure the adjacent property owner clears their side. District Councils and NZTA have cooperated in setting up no-mow zones when Chilean needle grass is seeding in November/ December.

The NZTA provides an additional budget to control pest plants on its roadsides, such as Old man's beard, Japanese honeysuckle, Chilean needle grass, and Pampas. HBRC staff manage this budget, ensuring that these pest plants are controlled at the optimum time.

2.10 Nurseries and Pet Shops

Nurseries in the Hawke's Bay area are inspected at least once every three years to ensure that no plants banned for sale under the National Plant Pest Accord are being stocked. Twenty nurseries were visited this year. Three were non-compliant with National Pest Plant Accord rules and received non statutory advice to remove the offending plants. Where possible, staff focus efforts on new nurseries or informal plant sale arrangements as a higher priority.

2.11 Regulatory

No Notices of Direction were issued this year. 67.5 hours were spent on machinery inspections this year.

2.12 Education and Publicity

These activities aimed to reach a wider community than can be achieved through farm visits. Biosecurity staff worked with the Rural Partnerships team and the Communications team. There was only one display this year at the East Coast Farming Expo.

The following topics have been printed in the media (local newspapers, newspapers, magazines).

- Chilean needle grass
- Alligator weed
- Senegal tea
- Check Clean Dry

Our Communications team also made social media posts on the following topics.

- Chilean needle grass
- Senegal tea
- Darwins Barberry
- Apple of Sodom
- Wilding conifers
- Alligator weed

Further summary of the social media data is located at the end of this report.

Pamphlets on Woolly nightshade were distributed in selected urban areas throughout Hastings, Napier, and Wairoa.

Biosecurity staff worked with the Māori partnerships team to facilitate engagement with relevant iwi/hapu on the following pest plants.

- Alligator weed
- Senegal tea

2.13 Biological Control

HBRC contracted Landcare Research to:

- Develop new Biological Control Projects.
- Provide a plant identification service.

Landcare Research is continuing to evaluate/import possible biological controls for Aquatic weeds, Japanese honeysuckle, Woolly nightshade, Chinese privet, Field horsetail, Mothplant, Nassella tussock, Tradescantia, Sydney golden wattle, Chilean flame creeper, Pampas, Darwin's barberry, Wild ginger, Old man's beard, and Banana passionfruit.

Staff monitored the Californian green thistle beetle on behalf of Landcare Research, and the beetles were present at all sites monitored.

2.14 Pest Plant Subsidy Scheme

The scheme was set up to assist landowners in undertaking control programmes.

Type	Number	Amount
Rural	77	$92,038
Urban	0	0

The main pests controlled through this scheme were Chilean needle grass, Saffron thistle, Australian sedge, and Old man's beard. Please note that this subsidy only applies to a small number of pest plants within the RPMP.

2.15 Conclusion

Most pest plant programme objectives have been achieved.

Generally, the number of pest plants continues to decrease except for Chilean needle grass, where new properties/sites are continually being found.

The team were disappointed that Senegal tea control could not be undertaken this season, but in order to build good relationships with stakeholders, it was deemed that surveillance and consultation were the course of action to take for this year.

The biosecurity team's two aerial control operations on alligator weed at Lake Whatumā were successful, and the team hopes to continue to improve upon this in subsequent years. The overall infestation has significantly reduced when compared with the original infestation.

Surveillance and monitoring carried out this year have continued to target certain pest plants (particularly Chilean needle grass, Saffron thistle, Woolly nightshade, and exclusion pests). Staff continue targeting the areas surrounding known sites, areas of high risk, QEII covenanted sites, dump sites, creeks/drains, and rivers and areas that are presently being controlled for low-incidence plants.

3 Pest Animals

The RPMP lists 25 animal species as pests, divided into five management categories. The Annual Report provides a brief description of the activities the Council undertook in 2024/2025 for each pest category.

3.1 Exclusion Pest Animals

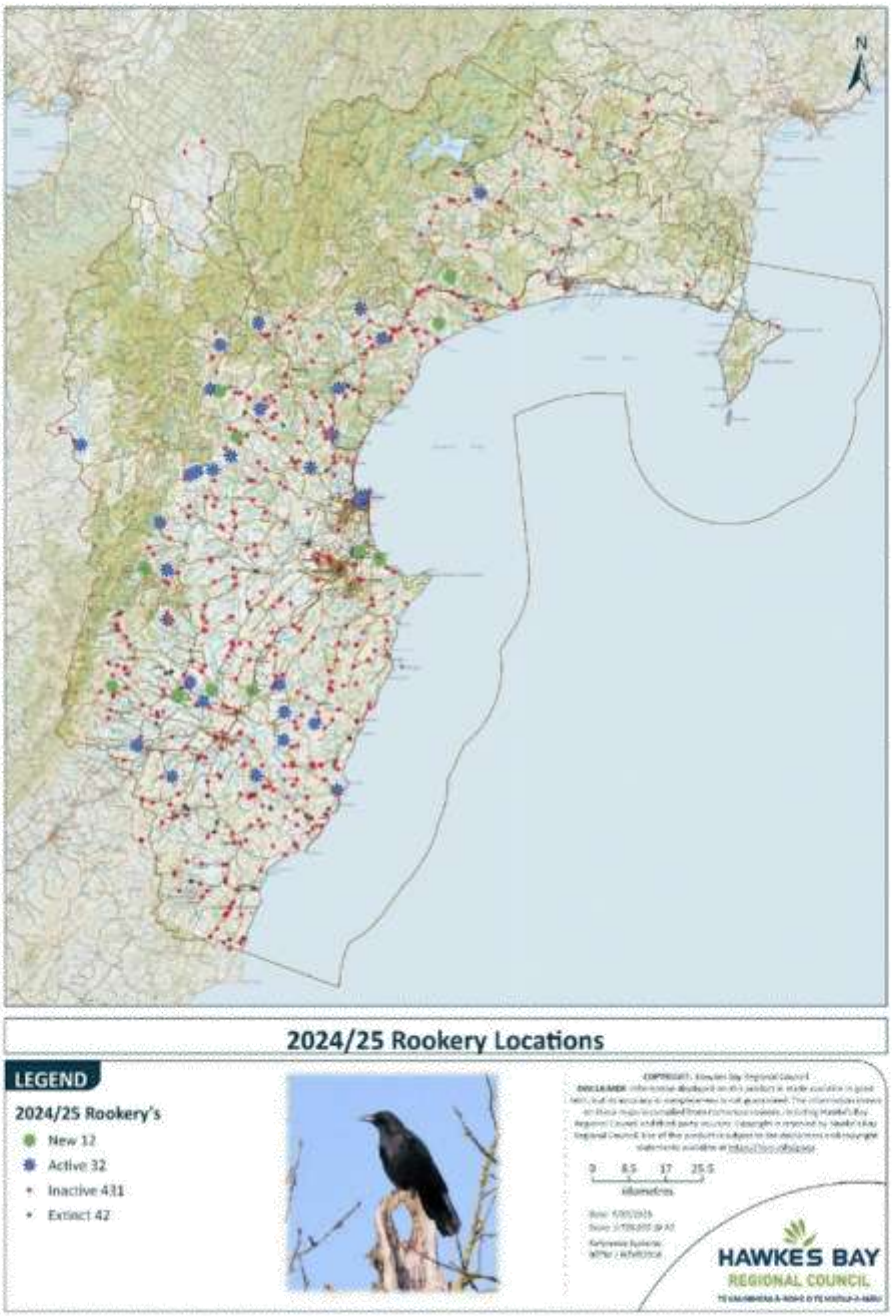
These are pest animals that are not known to be present in the Hawke's Bay region. If they were to establish themselves, they would likely have significant negative environmental and/or economic impacts. The objective of this programme is to prevent their establishment.

Exclusion	Management Regime
Wallaby	Two reported sightings were deemed credible enough in the Tarawera/Waipunga area to conduct staff led surveillance. Staff undertook ground surveillance and eDNA sampling, taking samples from the Waipunga river and Okoeke streams, the nearest waterways to where these sightings. No wallabies were detected.
Mediterranean fanworm & Clubbed tunicate	When a vessel berths in the Inner Harbour, an Incoming Vessel Form is completed and submitted to HBRC. A risk analysis is undertaken, and if the vessel is deemed high-risk, divers inspect it. The HBRC marine biosecurity surveillance program intercepted two incursions of Mediterranean fanworm this year – the two incursions were on the same vessel and the fanworm were removed and treated. Stakeholder and Partnerships Relationships have been formed with key stakeholders, including Napier City Council, Napier Sailing Club, Port of Napier, Legasea HB, Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership, Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership, NIWA and Biosecurity New Zealand.

3.2 Eradication Pest Animals

These are pest animals in the Hawke's Bay region where eradication is possible. The objective is to eradicate rooks from the region and all possums contained within Possum Eradication Areas.

Eradication	Management Regime
Possum **(within the Whakatipu Mahia area)**	HBRC is in the final stages of removing possums from the 14,600ha Māhia Peninsula as part of the Whakatipu Māhia project. Land occupiers within this area have been signed up for the Possum Eradication Area programme contained within the RPMP. The Peninsula has been split into two areas – Phase 1, the southern 5500ha – and Phase 2, the northern 9000ha. A bait station contract was issued for 3 service rounds of bait station fills in the Mahia Scenic Reserve and all 3 services were completed by February 2025. Possum detection dogs and handler services were employed to survey and mop up pockets of remaining possums across the peninsula, with the majority of work occurring in or adjacent to Grandy Lakes Forest and Mahia Scenic Reserve. Two trapping contracts were issued for Grandy Lakes Forest and Mahia Scenic Reserve and were completed by April 2025. A camera network was reinstalled in December 2024 and stayed active throughout the financial year. The vast majority of detections occurred in the Mahia Scenic Reserve with the occasional vagrant individual noted in other parts of the peninsula. This helped inform the trapping contracts.
Rook	All known rookeries within the Hawke's Bay Region were aerially treated using an under-slung strop man applying DRC 1339 gel directly into nests. This season, 44 active breeding rookeries were located. A total of 471 nests were treated, and of these, 273 nests had either chicks or eggs. Post-control inspections on some of these rookeries indicate that previous control has been successful with significantly reduced activity. This year, we received two enquiries regarding rook ground control. However, after some time and effort, it was cancelled due to the infrequent presence of rooks on the feed lines.
Figure1: Aerial Rook Control 2024-2025	



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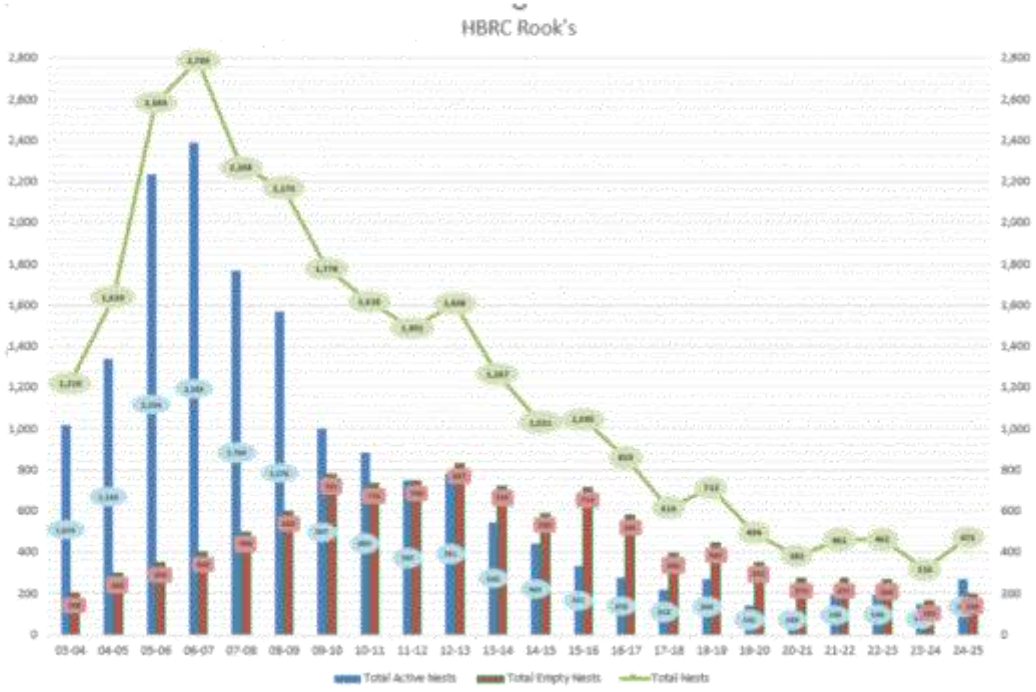
Graph 1: Rook Nests Trends

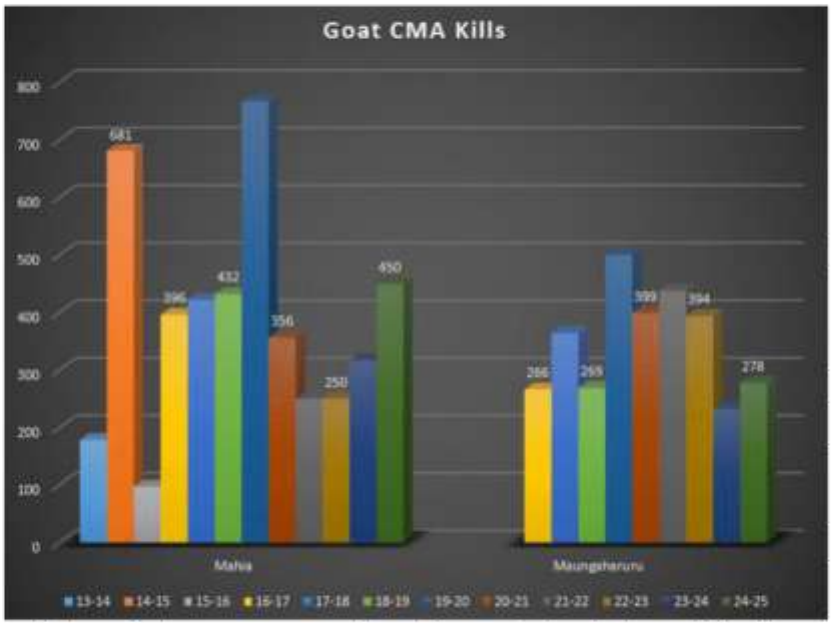


3.3 Sustained Control Pest Animals

These are pest animals that are widespread across the Hawke's Bay region. The objective is to sustainably control these pests to minimise adverse effects on the Hawke's Bay region's environmental values and economic well-being.

Sustained Control	Management Regime
Feral Goat	Feral goat control operations were carried out across two Coordinated Management Areas (CMAs): Mahia (7,672 ha) and Maungaharuru (28,000 ha), resulting in the removal of 728 goats this season. • **Mahia CMA** is jointly managed by Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC), the Department of Conservation (DOC), and supported by Grandy Lake Forests. The area is currently in the maintenance phase, with efforts focused on preserving gains within internal zones and keeping goat populations low along boundary properties. Reinvasion remains a significant challenge due to high goat numbers on surrounding lands. • **Maungaharuru CMA** is jointly funded by HBRC and DOC and is also in the maintenance phase. Similar to Mahia, reinvasion from adjacent areas continues to pose a risk.

Graph 2: Goat CMA Kills



Phytosanitary pests	Occupiers are responsible for managing production pests at pipfruit production sites. Resolving apple black spot, codling moth, European canker, fireblight or light brown apple moth control disputes between neighbouring parties is undertaken by the HBFGA in the first instance. If an agreement cannot be reached, the HBFGA will advise Hawke's Bay Regional Council of the situation and seek appropriate enforcement action to be undertaken under the Biosecurity Act. HBRC has not received any requests to undertake enforcement action against phytosanitary pests.
Possum (rest of region)	Land occupiers within Possum Control Areas (PCAs) are required to maintain possum densities at or below 4% residual trap catch (RTC). The PCA programme currently spans 772,900 hectares. Following the TB outbreak in Hawke's Bay, approximately 99,973 hectares within the PCA programme are now managed by OSPRI. HBRC biosecurity staff are working closely with OSPRI, which has adopted a regionally based operating model with staff located in Hawke's Bay. Possum monitoring was conducted over 188,587 hectares—approximately 28% of the PCA programme area—to assess compliance with RPMP requirements.

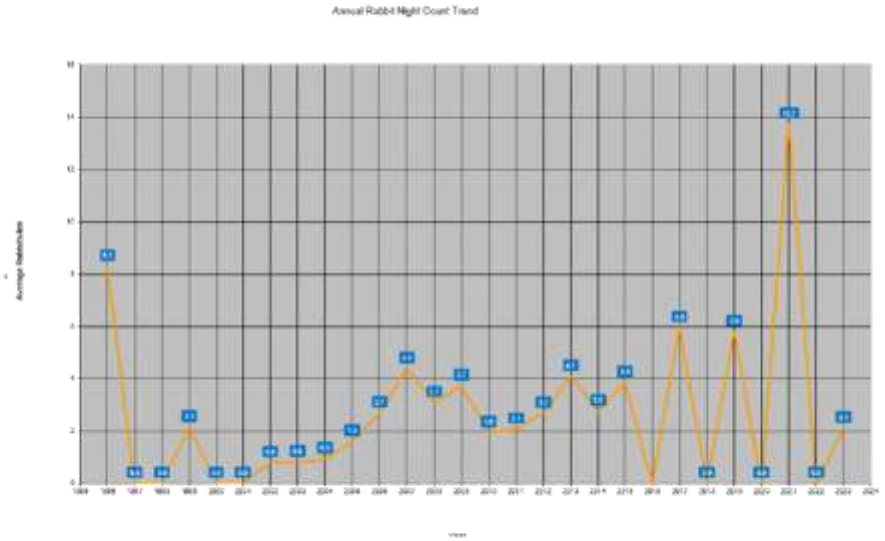
PCA possum monitoring programme 2024-2025

Properties	Area monitored (Ha)	Number of monitoring lines	Average Residual Trap Catch (RTC %)	Number of monitoring Lines > 4% RTC
567	188,587	2,371	1.3%	294

Despite an overall mean trap catch rate of 1.3% across the monitored area, a significant number of lines—294 in total—exceeded the 4% threshold, indicating localised possum pressure. Furthermore, 10% of the properties monitored (52 out of 567) failed to meet the required standard of 4% RTC.

	Biosecurity staff are currently working with the Guardians of the Ruakituri Catchment group to resolve recent failed monitoring results in that catchment. The majority of properties that initially failed have since engaged HBRC-approved contractors to carry out possum control, eliminating the need for formal enforcement measures. HBRC supported land occupiers with best practice advice, a 40% subsidy on selected control products through Farmlands and PGG Wrightsons, and financial aid for possum control in difficult terrain. Furthermore, 9 QEII covenants received either free possum control (covenants >20ha) or free bait sufficient to control possums within the QEII area (covenants <20ha). HBRC engaged a contractor to carry out possum control across all river berm land managed by HBRC. This initiative was undertaken as part of HBRC's good neighbour responsibilities, to fulfil its obligations under the Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP), and to support the efforts of neighbouring landowners participating in the Possum Control Area (PCA) programme.

Graph 3: Possum Monitoring Data

Rabbits	23 rabbit enquiries for advice and assistance were received over the last 12 months. Assistance was provided in the form of Environment Topic handouts, verbal advice, and in some cases demonstrations on the use of Pindone pellets and Magtoxin for rabbit control. **Rabbit night counts** (April 2023, April 2025) For the 2024/2025 financial year, rabbit night counts began in May 2025 owing to weather conditions. These were not completed before the end of the financial year due to difficulties with weather conditions and are still ongoing. These will be reported upon in the 2025/2026 annual report owing to the data at time of reporting being incomplete. However, anecdotally rabbit numbers are similar to last season. **Graph 4: Rabbit night counts** 

3.4 Site-Led Pest Animals

The objective is to support coordinated and integrated pest control in defined areas that protect and restore specific ecological or biodiversity values that are threatened or compromised by pests.

Site-led	Management Regime
Feral cats **Feral deer** **Feral goats** **Feral pigs** **Hedgehogs** **Mustelids** **Possums** **Rats**	The following table outlines the projects that received assistance through the site-specific programme. These projects form a wide range of initiatives, from working with individual land users to projects with significant local community involvement. The site-specific programme is only implemented at sites of ecological importance.

Project	Location	Target species
Pohue Bush	Te Pohue	Ungulates
Edenham	Elsthorpe	Ungulates
Motumokai Bush	Porangahau	Ungulates
Kapiti	Maraetotara	Ungulates
Waiparere	Waiparere	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
Puahanui Bush	Tikokino	Ungulates, mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
Wedd Bush	Tikokino	Ungulates
Gillies Bush	Maraetotara	Ungulates
Te Aratipi	Maraetotara	Ungulates
Little Bush	Puketitiri	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
Pakaututu Bush	Puketitiri	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
Maungataniwha	Whirinaki Forest Park/Te Urewera Forest Park border	Rodents

Site-led	Management Regime		
	Birch Hill	Porangahau	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums, Ungulates
	Aramoana Reserve	Aramoana	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
	Hinekatorangi Wetlands	Eskdale	Mustelids, Rats, Hedgehogs, feral cats, Possums
	Te Kowhai	Porangahau	Ungulates
	Cloverfields	Porangahau	Ungulates
	100 Acre Bush	Maraetotara	Ungulates and rodents
	Whittle Bush	Puketitiri	Goats
	Tahere Bush	Whakaki	Ungulates
	Waikareao	Porangahau	Ungulates
	Waituku	Whakaki	Ungulates
	Baldwin	Central Hawkes Bay	Ungulates
	Waikokomiko	Esk Valley	Rodents

3.5 Education and Advice

The Biosecurity team continue to post regular articles in "Our Place", concentrating on rabbits, rooks, PCA updates and the use of maintenance contractors. Alongside pest plants, Pest Animal staff have worked closely with the HBRC Communications Team to implement a new HBRC Pest Hub website, including incorporating factsheets covering all aspects of pest animal control.

3.6 Research Initiatives

One research initiative was implemented during the 2024-2025 year. This is a two year project conducted by AgResearch assessing weed seed survival in extracted gravel when that gravel has been subjected to various crushing and screening processes. This project was initiated by Hawkes Bay Regional Council to begin with but was joint funded by Otago Regional Council, Environment Canterbury, Marlborough District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Horizons Regional Council, Hawkes Bay Regional Council, Waikato Regional Council and Auckland Council. This issue is particularly topical given the ongoing gravel extraction restrictions in the middle and lower sections of the Tukituki due to the presence of Chilean needle grass in the riverbed.

4 Communications

The 2024/2025 biosecurity communications plan aims to raise awareness of our efforts and educate the community on biosecurity in Hawke's Bay. It highlights how:

- We manage regional pests to reduce their impact on biodiversity, agriculture, and the economy.
- We protect, sustain, and enhance native species through animal and pest plant control.
- We collaborate with other organisations to align programmes and share biosecurity responsibilities.
- We work closely with landowners to support pest education and animal control.
- We promote education through community engagement and communications.
- We empower our community to take action against the spread of invasive pests.

This year we delivered a wide range of communications on animal and plant pests through multiple channels – media releases, video, social media, interviews for magazines and papers, web content, and internal comms.

Media release topics included Senegal tea, Alligator weed, Check Clean Dry and Chilean needle grass.

HBRC website: Pest Hub

The HBRC website pest hub is user-friendly for all pest plants and animals under the Regional Pest Management Plan, including marine pests and diseases. It also includes many other pests in New Zealand, including those not currently known to be found in Hawke's Bay.

The site provides the ability to report a pest, including a geo-location. The hub details our regional pests, including descriptions, photos, what harm or damage they may cause, and how they can be controlled. Management programmes and rules relating to each pest are also included, which lets people know if they need to take any steps if found on their property - https://www.hbrc.govt.nz/environment/pest-control/pest-hub/

The tables below show that the usage of all web pages increased from the 2023-2024 Financial Year to the 2024-2025 Financial Year. This is pleasing as it could be inferred that landowners and occupiers are becoming more willing to research pests and solutions to those pests themselves. It could also be inferred that the communications plan is driving engagement with these pages.

As at approximately April 2025, the Pest Hub provider went into liquidation and was purchased by another company. The charges set by the new provider to host our pages on their platform increased significantly. It was decided that we would take the opportunity to review the pages and their functionality as well as bring the hosting of those pages in house. This review process began in June 2025.

Table 1: Webpage Statistics 2023/2024

Web Page	Visits: 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024
Pest Hub	4475
Pest Control	709
Pest Plants	637
Regional Pest Management Plan	512
Animal Pests	393
Biosecurity	302
Pests On My Farm	272
Tukituki River Controlled Area Notice (now expired)	509
Predator Free Hawkes Bay	250
Marine Pests	249
Pest Hub Enquiry/Reporting Forms	194
Check Clean Dry	107
Chilean needle grass	31

Table 2: Webpage Statistics 2024/2025

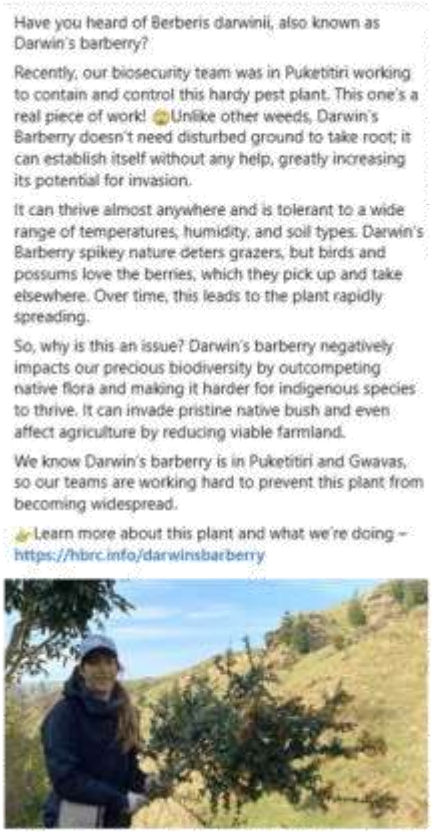
Web Page	Visits: 01 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Pest Hub	10,387
Pest Control	1,038
Pest Plants	833
Regional Pest Management Plan	596
Animal Pests	585
Biosecurity	394
Pests On My Farm	388
Tukituki River Controlled Area Notice (now expired)	43
Predator Free Hawkes Bay	255
Marine Pests	249
Pest Hub Enquiry/Reporting Forms	217
Check Clean Dry	126
Chilean needle grass	85

13 social media posts were made on the Hawkes Bay Regional Council social media channels relating to biosecurity with varying levels of engagement recorded.

Reach is a measure of unique users viewing content and is an indicator of potential audience size. Essentially this is a measure of who sees the content. Link clicks are a good sign of interest as usually links are set to drive traffic away from the post. For example, to an information page, article or Pest Hub page.

An example of the content posted is below.

Darwin's barberry
Reach: 28,293 (13 link clicks)
Apple of Sodom
Reach: 22,373 (17 link clicks)
Mediterranean fanworm diving Ahuriri
Reach: 20,223
Californian Green Thistle Beetle
Reach: 18,636 (25 link clicks)
Wilding pines
Reach: 14,571
Senegal tea with Warren
Reach: 7,468 (15 link clicks)
Chilean needle grass
Reach: 6,358 (22 link clicks)
Dive Hard re share marine pests
Reach: 4,503
Corbicula check clean dry reminder
Reach: 3,726
Summer check clean dry reminder
Reach: 1,639 (2 link clicks)
Year to date achievements (posted in November 2024)
Reach: 4,180 (3 link clicks)
Duck shooting check clean dry
Reach: 7,733 (6 link clicks)
Senegal tea
Reach: 2,261 (8 link clicks)



Have you heard of Berberis darwinii, also known as Darwin's barberry?

Recently, our biosecurity team was in Puketitiri working to contain and control this hardy pest plant. This one's a real piece of work! Unlike other weeds, Darwin's Barberry doesn't need disturbed ground to take root; it can establish itself without any help, greatly increasing its potential for invasion.

It can thrive almost anywhere and is tolerant to a wide range of temperatures, humidity, and soil types. Darwin's Barberry spikey nature deters grazers, but birds and possums love the berries, which they pick up and take elsewhere. Over time, this leads to the plant rapidly spreading.

So, why is this an issue? Darwin's barberry negatively impacts our precious biodiversity by outcompeting native flora and making it harder for indigenous species to thrive. It can invade pristine native bush and even affect agriculture by reducing viable farmland.

We know Darwin's barberry is in Puketitiri and Gwavas, so our teams are working hard to prevent this plant from becoming widespread.

Learn more about this plant and what we're doing – https://hbrc.info/darwinsbarberry

2025-2026 Biosecurity Operational Plan

Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-38

August 2025
Hawkes Bay Regional Council Publication No. 5704

HAWKES BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL
TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI

ISSN 2703-2051 (Online)
ISSN 2703-2043 (Print)

2025-2026 Biosecurity Operational Plan

Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-38

August 2025
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Contents

26 August 2025 9.52 am

Introduction

Regional councils have a mandate under Part 2 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) to provide regional leadership in activities that prevent, reduce, or eliminate adverse effects from harmful organisms that are present in their region.

This operational plan sets out how Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) will implement the objectives set out in the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-38 (the RPMP). This operational plan is effective from 01 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

Background

Hawke's Bay Regional Council is the management agency responsible for developing and implementing the Hawke's Bay Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-2038 in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993.

The RPMP sets out policies and rules that in combination seek to achieve the eradication or effective management of specified pests or groups of pests. It describes the biosecurity activities that will be undertaken throughout Hawke's Bay and outlines the management or eradication of specific organisms. Doing so will:

- minimise the actual or potential adverse or unintended effects associated with these organisms, and,
- maximise the effectiveness of individual actions in managing pests through a regionally coordinated approach.

As the management agency, Council is required to prepare an annual operational plan that sets out how the plan is to be implemented. Following the end of each financial year, staff will report to Council on the implementation of the operational plan.

This plan is the operational (management) response to supporting or directly achieving the objectives contained within the RPMP and is delivered by the Biosecurity team of the Catchment Services section within the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) group.

Integration with Annual Plan

As far as practicable, the Operational Plan has been integrated with council's Annual Plan. The Annual Plan sets the overall priorities and work programmes for the organisation and provides an overview of related pest management activities for the 2025/2026 year. Implementation costs are included in the Annual Plan.

Integration with Biodiversity Activities

HBRC has responsibilities to manage biodiversity under the Resource Management Act 1991. The management of high value biodiversity areas across the region is coordinated by the Biodiversity team of the Catchment Operations team within the ICM group. Pest plant and pest animal control is a key method for managing native biodiversity, requiring ongoing investment of council resources, with resources allocated to the Priority Ecosystem programme. This programme focuses on managing the areas of highest biodiversity value in Hawke's Bay, which includes ongoing coordinated pest control. Implementation of this programme requires close coordination with the Pest Plant, Pest Animal and Predator Free Hawke's Bay teams. This work is complemented by other efforts such as deer fencing to exclude feral deer and advocating for legal protection under QEII and other covenanting agencies.

Pest Categories

Exclusion Pests

The purpose of this category is to prevent the establishment of a pest which is present in New Zealand but not yet established in the region. Eradication of an incursion of an exclusion pest will be attempted by the Council in conjunction with other agencies such as MPI, DOC and neighbouring Regional Councils.

Eradication Pests

The purpose of this category is to reduce the incidence or density of a pest to zero levels in an area in the short to medium term. For pests such as rooks, this could take over 30 years to achieve.

Progressive Containment Pests

The intermediate outcome for this category is to contain and reduce the geographic distribution of the pest to an area over time. Progressive containment pests are those where a pest is at high densities in parts of Hawke's Bay, but of low extent or limited range. Eradication is not feasible region-wide, but it is feasible to prevent the pest from spreading to other parts of Hawke's Bay or to eradicate the pest from parts of Hawke's Bay.

- Existing populations will be monitored and, where appropriate, systems set in place to prevent further spread.
- New technologies and methods will be investigated and introduced where possible.

Sustained Control Pests

The purpose of this category is to ensure pests are being controlled, to reduce impacts on values and spread to other properties. This may include boundary control of pest plants or suppression of a pest animal over a large geographic area where eradication is not possible.

Site Led Pests

A site-led programme is the coordinated and integrated control of pests in a defined area that aims to protect and restore specific ecological or biodiversity values which are threatened or compromised by pests. Site led programmes focus on the ecological or biodiversity values of the site rather than simply the control of pests.

Pests contained within the RPMP

Table 0-1: Number of Pest Species in the Plan.

Number of species (or groups of species) in the Regional Pest Management Plan					
Type of pest	Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive containment	Site led	Sustained control
Plants	5	8	11		9
Animals	1	2		8	5

Phytosanitary	5
Marine	2

**Note some species have more than one programme.*

Table 0-2: Pest Plant species included in RPMP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
African feather grass*	*Cenchrus macrourus*	Eradication
Alligator weed*	*Alternanthera philoxeroides*	Exclusion
Apple of Sodom	*Solanum linnaeanum*	Progressive Containment
Australian sedge	*Carex longebrachiata*	Progressive Containment
Bathurst bur	*Xanthium spinosum*	Sustained Control
Blackberry	*Rubus fruticosus* agg.	Sustained Control
Cathedral bells*	*Cobaea scandens*	Eradication
Chilean needle grass*	*Nassella neesiana*	Sustained Control
Cotton thistle	*Onopordum acanthium*	Progressive Containment
Darwin's barberry*	*Berberis darwinii*	Progressive Containment
Goats rue	*Galega officinalis*	Eradication
Gorse	*Ulex europaeus*	Sustained Control
Japanese honeysuckle	*Lonicera japonica*	Progressive Containment
Marshwort*	*Nymphoides geminata*	Exclusion
Noogoora bur	*Xanthium strumarium*	Exclusion
Nassella tussock*	*Nassella trichotoma*	Progressive Containment
Nodding thistle	*Cardus nutans*	Sustained Control
Old man's beard*	*Clematis vitalba*	Progressive Containment
Phragmites*	*Phragmites australis*	Eradication
Purple loosestrife*	*Lythrum salicaria*	Eradication
Privet (Chinese and tree)	*Ligustrum sinense, L. lucidum*	Sustained Control
Ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*	Sustained Control
Saffron thistle	*Carthamus lanatus*	Progressive Containment
Senegal tea*	*Gymnocoronis spilanthoides*	Exclusion
Spartina	*Spartina alterniflora, S. anglica, S. gracilis, S. maritime, S. x townsendii*	Exclusion
Spiny emex	*Emex australis*	Eradication

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
Variegated thistle	*Silybum marianum*	Sustained Control
Velvetleaf*	*Abutilon theophrasti*	Progressive Containment
White-edged nightshade*	*Solanum marginatum*	Eradication
Wilding Conifers	*Ref glossary pg 102*	Progressive Containment
Woolly nightshade*	*Solanum mauritianum*	Progressive Containment
Yellow bristle grass	*Setaria pumila*	Sustained Control
Yellow water lily*	*Nuphar lutea*	Eradication

** Unwanted organisms (as declared by a Chief Technical Officer)*

Table 0-3: Pest Animal species included in RPMP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
Feral cat	*Felis catus*	Sustained Control, Site-led
Feral deer (incl. hybrids)	*Cervus elaphus, C. nippon, C. dama*	Site-led
Feral goat	*Capra hircus*	Sustained Control, Site-led
Feral pig	*Sus scrofa*	Site-led
Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	Site-led
Mustelids (ferret, stoat, weasel)	*Mustelo furo, M. ermine, M. nivalis*	Sustained Control, Site-led
Possum	*Trichosurus vulpecula*	Eradication, Sustained Control, Site-led
Rabbit	*Oryctolagus cuniculis*	Sustained Control
Rat (Norway and ship)	*Rattus norvegicus, R. rattus*	Site-led
Rook*	*Corvus frugilegus*	Eradication
Wallaby (Bennett's, dama, parma, brush-tailed rock and swamp)*	*Macropus rufogriseus rufogriseus, M. eugenii, M. parma, Petrogale pencillata, Wallabia bicolour*	Exclusion

** Unwanted organisms (as declared by a Chief Technical Officer)*

Table 0-4: Marine Pests species included in RPMP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
Mediterranean fanworm**	*Sabella spallanzanii*	Exclusion
Clubbed tunicate	*Styela clava*	Exclusion

*** Notifiable organism (s45 Biosecurity Act)*

Table 0-5: Phytosanitary Pests species included in RPMP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
Apple black spot	*Venturia inaequalis.*	Sustained Control
Codling moth	*Cydia pomonella*	Sustained Control

Common Name	Scientific Name	Programme
European canker	*Neonectria ditissima*	Sustained Control
Fireblight	*Erwinia amylovora*	Sustained Control
Lightbrown apple moth (Leafroller)	*Epiphyas postvittana*	Sustained Control

This operational plan details the Plan objective for the control of the pests defined within the RPMP and provides a brief description of what activities HBRC will undertake to achieve the stated objective.

Principal Measures

This plan and the RPMP are based on the following core areas of HBRC's responsibility:

Regulation (standards and enforcement)

Standards, rules, and restrictions are set, and compliance enforced with penalties, when and where necessary.

Inspection

Regular property inspections ensure that rules and regulations are being met and changes in pest densities are determined over time.

Monitoring

Undertaking monitoring for pests in the region to determine their presence, distribution, and effects, and to measure the extent to which the objectives of the RPMP are being achieved.

Direct control

Funding and undertaking pest control in some circumstances as a service for regional benefit.

Advice and education

Free advice is given to raise awareness of pest problems and to provide land occupiers with the information to control their own pests.

Community initiatives

Guidance and support are provided for community driven initiatives to control pests.

Cost recovery

A full cost recovery operational service is available for pest control.

Biological control

As approved biological control agents become available, HBRC may elect to utilise them. Biocontrol is currently a key tool in the management of rabbits and various pest plant and other harmful species.

Pest Plants

1.1. Exclusion Pest Plants

Objective

Prevent the establishment of exclusion pest plants in the Hawke's Bay region.

Targets

Conduct searches in areas vulnerable to infestation, follow up on reported sightings and raise public awareness of exclusion pests. Develop partnerships with other organisations and community groups that have expertise or an interest in protecting the environment.

Eradication of exclusion species will be attempted by HBRC in conjunction with relevant Crown agencies and stakeholders where practicable.

Council will provide training to relevant council staff and stakeholders about the identification of the exclusion pests to assist in early detection. Council will provide advice, attend events, and undertake publicity campaigns to increase public awareness of exclusion pests.

Exclusion	Management Regime
Alligator weed	Develop partnerships and distribute information to interested and relevant parties to extend the area monitored for the presence of these pest plants. Investigate possible pathways for these pest plants to move into Hawke's Bay. Respond to reports of these pests, using powers under the Biosecurity Act if required. Alligator weed and Senegal tea have been discovered in Hawke's Bay. Eradication and surveillance programmes have been put in place.
Marshwort	
Noogoora bur	
Senegal tea	
Spartina	

1.2. Eradication Pest Plants

Objective

Destroy all known infestations of these species within the Hawke's Bay region, prior to seed set.

Targets

Undertake direct control through service delivery at all known sites. Assessment of existing infestation points to decide whether any surveys are required. Inspection and delimit regime to be carried out at all known sites.

Control work will be undertaken annually by council staff, contractors, partners and/or stakeholders and data will be recorded in Clover.

Eradication	Management Regime
African feather grass	
Cathedral bells	
Goats rue	

Purple loosestrife	HBRC will destroy all infestations prior to seed set.
Spiny emex	
White edged nightshade	
Yellow water lily	
Phragmites	In accordance with the contract between HBRC and Ministry of Primary Industries, HBRC will destroy all infestations prior to seed set.

1.3. Progressive Containment Pest Plants

Objective

Progressively contain and reduce the geographic distribution of the pest plant either across the region or specified areas within the region.

Targets

Through a combination of direct control (service delivery) and occupier responsibility (monitoring and compliance) all known infestations will be controlled prior to seed set where practical.

Council staff will control populations within the containment area through a variety of control methods, including but not limited to spraying. The long-term goal for many of these pests is eradication but is not feasible within the short to medium term.

Council staff will also support communities to reduce the impact of progressive containment pests through regulatory and non-regulatory biosecurity programmes.

Progressive containment	Management Regime
Apple of Sodom	Occupiers are responsible for the control of Apple of Sodom, Australian sedge, Cotton thistle, Darwin's barberry, Japanese honeysuckle, Saffron thistle, Velvetleaf and Woolly nightshade on their land. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations prior to seed set where it is practical to do so. Occupiers may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme.
Australian sedge	
Cotton thistle	
Darwin's barberry	
Japanese honeysuckle	
Saffron thistle	
Velvetleaf	
Woolly nightshade	
Nassella tussock	Occupiers are responsible for controlling Nassella tussock on their land and may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme. HBRC will at its discretion control known infestations before the seeds set.

Progressive containment	Management Regime
Old man's beard	As stated in the RPMP, Old Man's Beard (OMB) is not as widespread North of SH5 as it is South of this area, therefore it is beneficial to require occupiers to continue to control old man's beard north of SH5. Occupiers North of SH5 are responsible for controlling old man's beard on their land and may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations prior to seed set where it is practical to do so. There is also a progressive containment programme along the Ruahine and Kaweka ranges, to prevent the establishment of old man's beard in the ranges. HBRC, upon forming an agreed work programme with the Department of Conservation, will control all old man's beard within a 500-metre buffer zone along the edge of the Ruahine and Kaweka ranges (as per map in RPMP 2018-38). South of SH5 and outside of the 500-metre buffer zone along the edge of the Ruahine and Kaweka ranges, Council will still encourage the control of OMB but will not enforce compliance. Land users below SH5 will still be eligible for the incentive scheme for the control of OMB. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations before seeds reach maturity where it is practical to do so.
Wilding Conifers	Occupiers are responsible for controlling Pinus contorta on their land and may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations where it is practical to do so. Occupiers are responsible for controlling Scots pine, mountain pine and dwarf mountain pine on their land in the designated containment area and may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations where it is practical to do so. HBRC will collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure the milestones it is responsible for within the Kaimanawa and Rangitaiki Management Units are completed, and MPI are supplied with all the necessary data required.

1.4. Sustained Control Pest Plants

Objective

To provide for ongoing control of the subject, or an organism being spread by the subject, to reduce its impacts on values and spread to other properties.

Targets

Several pests are well established in Hawke's Bay, many of which have been subject to various control aspirations over time. The primary objective is to prevent or minimise the spread of these pests between neighbouring properties.

Sustained Control	Management Regime
Bathurst bur	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Bathurst bur within 5 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier

	complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Bathurst bur.
Blackberry	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Blackberry within 10 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Blackberry.
Chilean needle grass	Occupiers are responsible for controlling Chilean Needle grass on their land and may qualify for a subsidy under the incentive scheme. Chilean needle grass was identified in dry summer areas of Hawke's Bay - west of Napier, and at Bay View, Puketapu, Havelock North, Maraekakaho, Poukawa, Tukituki flood plain, Otane, Patangata, Waipawa, Waipukarau, Wakarara, Omakere, Onga Onga and Porangahau (approx. 800 ha in total). There are infestations on river berm land and roadsides. Biosecurity staff will arrange to control Chilean needle grass on public land. On private land, occupiers are required to meet the rules outlined in the RPMP and control Chilean needle grass in accordance with their agreed management programmes. HBRC will at its discretion control some known infestations before the seed set where it is practical to do so. HBRC will work with Marlborough District Council and Environment Canterbury in raising awareness of CNG within New Zealand.
Gorse	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Gorse within 10 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Gorse.
Nodding thistle	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Nodding thistle within 20 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Nodding thistle.
Privet (Chinese and Tree)	Upon receipt by Council of a doctor's certificate/positive blood test clearly showing a person to be suffering a Privet allergy, Council will, within the urban area (50km speed zone or less), destroy any isolated Chinese and Tree privet plants within 50m of the residence or place of work of that person. If, upon inspection by Council, large numbers of plants exist, including as hedges, a direction will be served on the occupier to prune to prevent flowering or destroy the plants thoroughly.
Ragwort	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Ragwort within 20 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Ragwort. The presence of biological controls will be considered when a complaint is made.
Variegated thistle	HBRC, upon receiving a written complaint, will ensure the occupier destroys all Variegated thistle within 5 metres of the property boundary that is adjacent to the adjoining occupier complainant's boundary where the adjoining occupier is also destroying, or the land is clear of, all Variegated thistle.
Yellow bristle grass	HBRC will collaborate with roading authorities to manage likely vector pathways of Yellow bristle grass.

1.5. Biodiversity Pest Plants

These are plants that have a negative ecological effect which are managed outside of the RPMP. Plants that presently fall into this category are Boneseed, Climbing Spindleberry, Blue passionflower, Asiatic knotweed, Giant knotweed, Moth plant, Pampas and Purple ragwort.

1.6. Biological Control of Pest Plants

HBRC continues to support research into biological control of pest plants. HBRC's priorities for further research into bio-control agents during the life of the RPMP are Chilean needle grass, Moth plant, Nassella tussock, Old man's beard and Japanese honeysuckle. The region's biological control agents for Ragwort, Nodding thistle, and Gorse are widespread and active. A biological control agent for Californian thistle is steadily becoming established.

HBRC contributes funding to the National Biocontrol Collective, a sector group of Regional Councils and Unitary Authorities that pool resources to research new biocontrol agents and set national priorities for biocontrol research.

Over the duration of this operational plan staff will continue to work effectively to engage Māori landowners and hapu at a local and regional level in the consultation around new biocontrol releases.

1.7. National Pest Plant Accord

The Ministry of Primary Industries manages the National Pest Plant Accord, which has declared 135 plants as unwanted organisms under the Biosecurity Act. HBRC has agreed to be responsible for ensuring that people selling plants are conforming to the requirements of the Act, and not selling or propagating these plants. All pest plants and unwanted organisms are banned from sale and propagation under the Biosecurity Act. All retail outlets that are known to sell plants will be visited at least once every three years, to ensure that they are not selling any pest plant listed in the RPMP or the Pest Plant Accord.

1.8. General Advice and Information

Biosecurity staff will provide advice, attend events and undertake publicity campaigns to increase public awareness of pests. The information is intended to assist occupiers meet their obligations under the RPMP. Biosecurity staff will also assist with the general identification of plants and provide information and education material about poisonous plants.

Staff will inspect plant outlets and markets within the Hawke's Bay region for the sale and/or propagation of RPMP species. Training will be provided to relevant staff and stakeholders in identifying pests to assist in early detection.

HBRC implemented a new website called Pest Hub in 2019. It lists many pests, including those listed within the RPMP. It contains information on their impact, best practice control techniques and the public can report a pest to HBRC staff.

As at approximately April 2025, the Pest Hub provider went into liquidation and was purchased by another company. It was decided that we would take the opportunity to review the pages and their functionality as well as bring the hosting of those pages in house. This review process began in June 2025.

Pest Animals

1.9. Exclusion Pest Animals

Objective

Prevent the establishment of exclusion pest animals in the Hawke's Bay region.

Targets

Undertake surveillance of high-risk areas/pathways. Follow up on reported sightings or reports of illegal releases and raise public awareness of exclusion pests. Develop partnerships with other organisations and community groups that have expertise or an interest in protecting the environment.

Eradication of exclusion species will be attempted by HBRC in conjunction with relevant Crown agencies and stakeholders where practicable.

Council will provide training to relevant council staff and stakeholders about identifying the exclusion pests to assist in early detection. Council will provide advice, attend events, and undertake publicity campaigns to increase public awareness of exclusion pests.

Exclusion	Management Regime
Wallaby	Undertake active surveillance of high-risk areas/pathways for these pests. Develop partnerships with interested and relevant parties to extend the area monitored for the presence of these pests. Investigate possible pathways for these pests to move into Hawke's Bay. Respond to reports of this pest, using powers under the Biosecurity Act if required.
Mediterranean fanworm	
Clubbed tunicate	

1.10. Eradication Pest Animals

Objective

Eradicate rooks from the region. Have no active rookeries within 20 years of the commencement of the RPMP. Eradicate all possums contained within Possum Eradication Areas.

Targets

Destroy all active rook nests within the Hawke's Bay region and eradicate possums within those areas identified as Possum Eradication Areas. Inspect pet shops, online sales and wildlife shelters if reports are received of the sale and/or breeding of possums and rooks. Support appropriate research initiatives, including biological control should it become available. Undertake direct control through service delivery.

Eradication	Management Regime
Possum	A Possum Eradication Area is created once written agreements have been entered into with 75% or more of the total proposed land area. The Council will undertake possum eradication work within the entire Possum Eradication Area. Once possum eradication commences, land occupiers within the area shall maintain possum eradication status in accordance with the Hawke's Bay Regional Possum Control Technical Protocol (PN 4969).

	The Whakatipu Māhia project is in the final stages of removing all possums from the 14,600ha Māhia Peninsula. Resident possums are now confined to the 360ha Māhia Scenic Reserve. The proof of absence camera network was removed over winter to minimise water damage to the cameras, and these will be reinstalled once lambing finishes in Spring. Remaining possums in the Scenic Reserve will be targeted utilising the bait station network, kill traps, and newly developed Spitfires. If the camera network indicates that possums are at a low enough density, then scat (using detector dogs) surveys to target this control work will be effective. Once this scat mapping is complete, night hunting using dogs will mop up any remaining individuals.
Rook	Over the duration of the Plan, all active rook nests will be destroyed within the Hawke's Bay region. Information will be provided to land occupiers on rook identification, the potential adverse effects they cause, whom to contact for rook control, and the risks of inappropriate control.

1.11. Sustained Control Pest Animals

Objective

Over the duration of the Plan, sustainably control sustained control pest animals in order to minimise adverse effects on environmental values and economic well-being within the Hawke's Bay region.

Sustained Control	Management Regime
Feral Goat	Sustainably control feral goats on land contained within Feral Goat Coordinated Management Areas to zero density or to levels specified within a Written Management Agreement approved by Hawke's Bay Regional Council. A Feral Goat Coordinated Management Area is created once written agreements have been entered into with 75% or more of the total land area. The Council will coordinate initial feral goat control work within the entire Feral Goat Coordinated Management Area. Once feral goats have been reduced to low levels, occupiers within the area are required to maintain feral goats in accordance with this Protocol.
Possum	Sustainably control possums contained within Possum Control Areas to ensure population density on that land is at or below 4% residual trap catch. An occupier within a Possum Control Area shall maintain possum densities on their land at or below 4% residual trap catch, in accordance with the Hawke's Bay Regional Possum Control Technical Protocol (PN 4969). Possum monitoring will be undertaken by council on a sample of properties within the PCA area to assess if properties are meeting the plan rule. Compliance action will be undertaken for properties that fail to meet the plan rule. This includes land where the Good Neighbour Rule applies. HBRC will support land occupiers in managing possum densities through providing best practice advice, and financial assistance for managing possums in difficult terrain. Landowners who have a QEII block less than 20 hectares on their property are eligible to receive free possum bait sufficient to control possums within the QEII area. For landowners with QEIIs greater than 20 hectares, or where several small QEIIs are collectively greater than 20 hectares, HBRC arranges and pays for possum control.
Rabbits	Sustainably control rabbits to ensure population levels are maintained below Level 4 on the Modified McLean Scale (2012). The following will be undertaken: • Conduct annual regional rabbit night counts. (April 2021, April 2023, April 2025, April 2026) • Conduct targeted biannual surveillance of rabbit prone areas. • Provide advice and education to land occupiers, including occupiers of small blocks, to help them control rabbits by the most efficient and effective means. • Monitor for compliance and where appropriate enforce the rabbit control rule. At its discretion, and as set out in an approved management programme, Council may meet up to 50% of the cost of rabbit control on rateable land where rabbit numbers exceed 4 on the McLean Scale. Council will continue to support research initiatives, including biological control, and release biological control agents for the control of feral rabbits when appropriate.
Rabbit night count locations	


22
13
10
6
3
23
19
7
15
18
2
9
16
21
20
12
5
11
1
17
4
8
HASTINGS
Waipukurau
Nightcounts
Nightcounts
Line 1 Smedley Stn
Line 12 Thorn Flat
Line 2 Glendale Stn
Line 13 Clonkeen Stn
Line 3 Opuahi Stn
Line 15 Makahu Stn
Line 4 Waipawa River
Line 16 Northlands Stn
Line 5 Otiria Stn
Line 17 Gwavas Stn
Line 6 Woodstock Stn
Line 18 Mountain Valley
Line 7 Pakaututu Farms
Line 19 Tarawera Stn
Line 8 McGregors
Line 20 Big Hill Stn
Line 9 Kaweka Farms
Line 21 Ngamutoa
Line 10 Te Aue Stn
Line 22 Woodlands Stn
Line 11 Summerlee Stn
Line 23 Ranginui Stn
HAWKE'S BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Rabbit Nightcount Locations
1:360,000
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1.12. Site-led Pest Animals

Objective

Support sustainable control of site-led pests at sites of ecological importance to levels appropriate for the protection of ecological values, recreational values, and economic well-being within the Hawke's Bay region.

Targets

Coordinated and integrated control of pests in defined areas that protect and restore specific ecological or biodiversity values which are threatened or compromised by pests. Sites include:

- Priority Ecosystems (Hawke's Bay Regional Council)
- Recommended Areas for Protection (Department of Conservation)
- Sites of Special Wildlife Interest (Department of Conservation)

Site-led	Management Regime
Feral cats **Feral deer** **Feral goats** **Feral pigs** **Hedgehogs** **Mustelids** **Possums** **Rats**	Support land occupiers and community groups in managing site-led pests at areas of high biodiversity value though technical information, best practice control techniques and provision of traps or ungulate control. An agreement will be signed with the land occupier agreeing to utilise the traps and undertake best practice. HBRC staff will work with other groups to maximise outcomes of council programmes e.g., Erosion Control Scheme, Predator Free Hawke's Bay, Environmental Enhancement projects, Ecological Management and Enhancement Plans.

Phytosanitary Pests

Objective

Sustainably control apple black spot, codling moth, European canker, fireblight and lightbrown apple moth on unmanaged pipfruit production sites to protect economic well-being of the pipfruit industry within the Hawke's Bay region.

Targets

Occupiers of unmanaged pipfruit production sites shall, on receipt of a written direction from an Authorised Person, control:

- Apple black spot (Venturia inaequalis) on their land from the presence of green tips until fruit maturity/harvest; and
- Codling moth (Cydia pomonella) on their land if five (5) or more codling moths are caught in any one codling moth pheromone trap during any calendar week on their land;
- European canker (Neonectria ditissima) by inspecting all pipfruit trees on their land at least four times during the year, applying post-harvest sprays if canker is found and removing and burning all infected pipfruit tree parts showing any presence of European canker; and

- Fireblight (Erwinia amylovora) on their land during the pipfruit bloom period (from pink to petal fall); and
- Lightbrown apple moth (Leafroller) (Epiphyas postvittana) on their land once thirty (30) lightbrown apple moths are caught in any one lightbrown apple moth pheromone trap on their land from 15 December until fruit harvest.

Sustained Control	Management Regime
Phytosanitary pests	Resolving apple black spot, codling moth, European canker, fireblight or lightbrown apple moth control disputes between neighbouring parties will be undertaken by HBFGA in the first instance. If pest monitoring on the affected managed pipfruit production site over a reasonable time confirms that: • there is a clear difference in the management inputs required to control phytosanitary pests compared to the previous three years; and • monitoring results indicated that the phytosanitary pest outbreak is more severe along the boundary with the adjacent unmanaged pipfruit production site. Then HBFGA will advise the occupier of the unmanaged pipfruit production site(s), that they are deemed to be an exacerbator of phytosanitary pests. HBFGA will be entitled to give the occupier of the unmanaged pipfruit production site(s) 14 days to reach an agreement. If agreement cannot be reached and/or control is not undertaken within that time, HBFGA will advise Hawke's Bay Regional Council of the situation and seek a direction to control phytosanitary pests on the unmanaged pipfruit production site. On receiving advice regarding the situation, Hawke's Bay Regional Council will initiate appropriate enforcement procedures under the Biosecurity Act for the control of the phytosanitary pests.

Financial Summary

Council's Long-Term Plan 2021 – 2031 sets out the planned expenditure and required funding, via rates and user charges, for the operational and planning activities associated with pest management

The expenditure budgets as per the 2025-2026 Annual Plan are summarised in the table below:

Biosecurity 25/26 Annual Expenditure	25/26 Annual Plan expenditure budget
Pest Management Strategies	$ 0
Pest Plant Incentive Scheme	$ 0
Primary production Pest Plants	$ 499,987
Environmental/human health pest plants	$ 944, 982
Biological Control	$ 34,556
Rabbit control	$ 32,652
Possum control	$ 1,471, 719
Site specific pest animal control	$ 121,489
Rook control	$ 206,105
Possum Bait and Rabbit Subsidy	$ 0
Pest Annual General Advice	$ 0
Pest Animal Research	$ 0
Marine Pests	$ 120,707
Total including Organisational Overheads	$3,511,558

Regional Pest Management Plan Review

The Hawkes Bay Regional Pest Management Plan 2018-2038 is to be reviewed this financial year. The Regional Pest Management Plan is the main statutory document implementing the Biosecurity Act 1993 in the region.

As per section 100D of the Biosecurity Act 1993, '*council must initiate a review of a plan as a whole if the plan was last reviewed as a whole more than 10 years previously*'.
The Act outlines a six step process for developing/reviewing a plan where all steps must be completed in the outlined order:

Regional pest management plans

Given the resource challenges HBRC is facing and current minimal budget and staff time to undertake this review, a pragmatic and fiscal approach will be undertaken that will meet the requirements of the BSA but not overcommit the limited resource.

Measuring Performance

The following criteria will be used to measure the success or otherwise in implementing the Operational Plan:

- Completion rate of programmes contained within this Operational Plan;
- Results from trend monitoring undertaken, and an assessment of these results;
- The education initiatives undertaken during the year;
- The number of Notice of Directions issued, the level of compliance with those notices, and any follow-up activity undertaken;

- The outcomes of all service delivery operations undertaken;
- The results of biological control research and monitoring, and the number of bio-control releases undertaken;
- All research initiatives to which contributions have been made during the year; and
- Any cross-boundary issues that arose and how they were resolved.

Implementation Report

A report on the Operational Plan and the success or otherwise of its implementation will be prepared no later than five months after the conclusion of the financial year. A copy of this report will be provided to Council.