

PEST ANIMALS ARE COSTING US.
Working together can make a difference.

Upper Aparima Pest Animal Impact Assessment: Key findings

Pest animals affect our farms, livestock, native bush and waterways. But how significant are the impacts across Upper Aparima, and what can be done about them?

The Upper Aparima Catchment Group worked with local landholders and technical experts to better understand the scale of the problem and build support for a coordinated, catchment-wide approach to pest control.

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Pest animals are having a real impact

A community survey of 22 landholders, managing approximately 14,600 hectares, highlighted concerns about possums, deer and pigs across the catchment.

Possums: a biosecurity concern



- 19 of 22 respondents ranked possums among their top three pest animal concerns.
- 20 of 22 see possums or signs of possums on their properties at least seasonally.
- 18 of 22 were concerned about the risk of TB spreading from possums to livestock.

Possums are the main wildlife carrier of TB in New Zealand. Sustained possum control is central to reducing the risk of TB transmission to livestock.

Deer: damage to crops and farm operations



- 10 of 22 respondents reported crop losses caused by deer in the previous year.
- 9 of 22 estimated that deer cost their farming operation $1,000 or more annually.

Pigs: damage to pasture and livestock



- 13 of 22 respondents reported pasture damage caused by pigs.
- 3 of 22 reported livestock losses associated with pigs.

Impacts beyond the farm

Pest animals also affect native bush and the wider environment:

- 12 of 22 respondents ranked damage to native bush and vegetation among their top three concerns.
- 8 of 22 ranked water quality degradation among their top three concerns.

Survey findings reflect the views of the 22 participating landholders, who managed approximately 14,600 hectares. This was a practical sample, not a census of the whole catchment.

Pest animals don't stop at property boundaries

Pest animals move freely across farmland, forestry and conservation land. This means control on one property can be undermined when neighbouring areas are not managed at the same time.

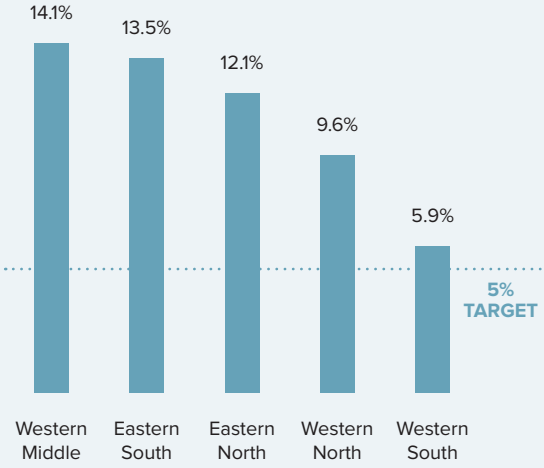
The assessment found that landholders are already taking action:

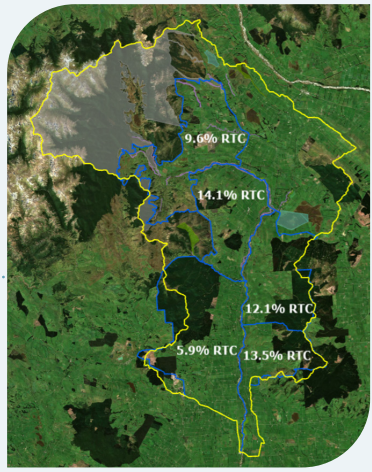
- 21 of 22 respondents had carried out pest control in the previous 12 months.
- 17 of 22 supported a coordinated, catchment-wide possum control programme.
- 21 of 22 were willing or open to using TrapNZ or similar tools to share pest sightings and control information.

What did the possum monitoring reveal?

Pre-control monitoring was undertaken across five bush and farmland blocks, covering approximately 46,100 hectares.

All five blocks recorded a Residual Trap Catch (RTC) result above the programme's 5% target. Three recorded results above 10%.





RTC is an index of possum activity, not a count of every possum.
The results provide a baseline to help guide control and monitor progress.

A coordinated approach

The findings reinforce the importance of working together across property and land-use boundaries. Coordinated control can help reduce the risk of reinvasion and make individual landholder efforts more effective.

Taking action together

The assessment is helping the Upper Aparima Catchment Group build a more coordinated approach to pest animal management.

A coordinated possum control programme, delivered by NZ Conservation Services, is now underway on participating properties, building on the RTC monitoring work.

What's next?

The group will continue to:

- Use RTC monitoring to guide possum control and track progress.
- Encourage landholders to share pest sightings and control information through tools such as TrapNZ.
- Explore opportunities for more coordinated deer and pig control.
- Keep landholders informed and share what is being learned.

The group's experience may also offer useful lessons for other catchments looking to understand pest animal impacts and work towards more coordinated control.

Thank you

A big thank you to the Upper Aparima landholders who contributed their time to this project. We would also like to acknowledge Environment Southland, and in particular Kaitlin Dickson and Dave Burgess, for their in-kind support through RTC monitoring, mapping and survey design. We also thank Andy Kinley of K Traps Ltd, James Horton at OSPRI, Jesse Bythell at QEII National Trust, and Sean Jacques at the Department of Conservation for their contributions.



How to access the full report and summary

Visit the Upper Aparima page on the Thriving Southland website to download the summary flyer and full Pest Animal Impact Assessment:

www.thrivingsouthland.co.nz/upper-aparima

Want to know more or have a chat?

Contact our Catchment Coordinator Stacey Stuart on 021 566 229.

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