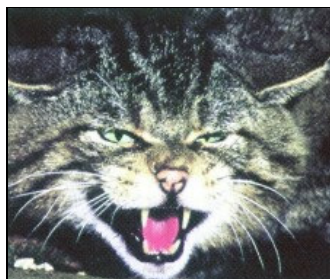


## 4. PEST ANIMAL STRATEGIES

The organisms listed in the following Strategies are declared to be pest animals under the Biosecurity Act. The reason for declaration as a pest, management objectives, rules and obligations for land occupiers are defined for each pest animal.

### 4.1. PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR FERAL CAT, FERRET, STOAT, WEASEL AND RAT



#### Description of the Pest

Feral cats (*Felis catus*) are simply domestic cats that have become established in the wild. Their coats vary from pure black to orange tabby, and some resemble the striped dark and pale grey of the true European wild cat. The adult males are generally larger than the females.



The ferret (*Mustela furo*), stoat (*Mustela erminea*) and weasel (*Mustela nivalis vulgari*) belong to a group of animals known as mustelids. The ferret is the largest of the three species and is about 48-56cm long. Their colours vary but they are usually dark brown and blackish all over, with a creamy under fur. The face is pale with a dark mask over the eyes. Adult males are generally larger than the females.



The Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) is the larger of the two European rats found in New Zealand. The coat of the Norway rat is grey-brown and shaggy with a pale underside. The Ship rat (*Rattus rattus*), is smaller but has a larger and thicker tail.

#### Distribution of Pest

The pests are widespread in Northland, usually due to human help.

#### Problems Caused

All these pests predate on native species of animals and have associated adverse ecological effects. Cats and mustelids are known vectors of bovine Tb. They also carry parasites and toxoplasmosis that causes abortions in sheep and illness in humans. Rats eat and contaminate grain and food stores and some nut crops.

### Parties Affected

All landowners and residents that value natural ecological systems are affected, along with industries and storage facility operators.

### Impact Evaluation

<u>Impact</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Potential</u>
Cultural	Low	Medium
Ecological	Medium	High
Human Health	Low	Medium
Soil & Water	Low	Low
Production	Low	Medium
Public Infrastructure	-	-
Public Safety	-	-
Recreation	Low	Medium
Trade (International)	Low	Medium
Overall Regional	Low	Medium

### Regional Effects

The pests are not a major threat to the Region except in an ecological sense. Their effect on some native species is such that some, including the kiwi, are threatened with extinction. The risk of the pests of becoming bovine Tb vectors is only a potential at this stage. Toxoplasmosis and parasites carried by mustelids affect the economic returns to farmers by spreading these diseases and pests to stock and are a threat to human health.

### Need to Intervene

The effects of the pests are not such as to require major Regional control programmes. Work will however be carried out in community pest control areas when other pest numbers are being reduced. Advisory and education services are seen as necessary to maintain public awareness and encourage landholder control to limit their impact.

### Goal (Long Term)

- To minimise the adverse effects of the pests on indigenous fauna and primary production.

### Objectives (Five Year)

- To maintain, and where necessary increase, public awareness of the problems caused by the pests and associated control techniques
- To reduce the numbers of these pests in community control areas to levels at which they no longer threaten the values for which the control area was established.

### Tactics and Technical Methods to be Used

Education	Advice to occupiers and other interested parties. Media releases, brochures and publicity campaigns.
Regulation	Rules provide for no mustelid farming, and are against illegal liberations of all these animals.  Rule 6.4.1.15 Prohibition on Mustelid Farming. Rule 6.4.1.16 Prohibition on Liberation of Mustelids and Cats Rule 6.4.1.17 Prohibition on Distribution and Sale of Pest Animals



densities to a level agreed to in a management plan for the area, the occupier of the property shall maintain the pest animals population densities to those agreed to in the management plan.

6.4.1.15      Prohibition on Mustelid Farming

No person shall keep in captivity or farm any mustelids in Northland.

6.4.1.16      Prohibition on Liberation of Mustelids and Cats

No person shall liberate or release from captivity any mustelid or cat.

6.4.1.17      Prohibition on Distribution and Sale of Pest Animals

No person shall distribute to other persons or offer for sale or hold in a premises where animals are offered for sale, any live pest animal which is subject of a Northland Regional Council Pest Management Strategy, except to slaughter.