

4.7. PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR FERAL GOAT



Description of the Pest

Under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, any goat that is not suitably identified and effectively contained is a "wild" goat. The wild goat (*Capra hircus*) varies in size and colour. The adult male goat stands 76-91 cm at the shoulder, with a body length of 116-152 cm. Wild goats weigh between 54-68 kgs and have a 'blocky' appearance, with stout strong legs designed for climbing. The female looks similar to the male but is considerably smaller.

Distribution of the Pest

Wild goats are widespread throughout Northland. Populations are generally dense in areas of exotic and indigenous forest vegetation, as well as in areas of poor pasture/scrub land. The largest numbers of wild goats are on private properties which border the Department of Conservation estate and in Department of Conservation land not under goat management programmes.

Problems Caused

Goats destroy the under storey of vegetation and, when combined with possum damage to the upper canopy, severe deterioration of native forest occurs. Pest plant invasion can occur under these circumstances. Goats also damage vegetation planted on land retired for soil conservation purposes and in newly planted or young trees in exotic forests. Goats (along with possums), are the most destructive animals found in forests. They are born survivors, with the ability to exist in a healthy state where other animals would die out.

Parties Affected

Landowners, particularly farmers and owners of exotic forests. All Northlanders are affected by damage to native, protection and recreational forests, loss of endangered species, and by increased erosion and flooding.

Impact Evaluation

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

Regional Effects

Goats are in some areas severely degrading native flora and fauna, causing erosion and in turn water quality problems. Production loss due to goats can be severe on exotic plantings. Companies have reported instances of 30% tree damage in the first year after

planting. Production losses on pastoral land are minimal, with farmers generally able to control numbers through fencing and shooting.

Need to Intervene

The Department of Conservation has responsibilities for controlling wild goats under the Wild Animal Control Act. However, because of funding constraints, the Department is not able to control all wild goats within its estate. Prevention of these pests establishing in goat-free habitats such as Te Pahi, is a priority and maintenance of low numbers in remaining high value habitats will be important. The Department of Conservation has identified 43 areas of high wild goat populations, but only has funding to control a small number of them. The Department is concentrating on goat control operations within its estate where possum control work is also being carried out.

Regional Council assistance will be provided to landowners where significant environmental damage or significant production loss is occurring. Goats can be controlled by landholders in most other circumstances. Goats will be controlled in community pest control areas, where other pest numbers are also being reduced.

Goal (Long Term)

- To reduce and maintain the wild goat population to below a level at which they are causing any significant environmental damage or significant loss of primary production.

Objectives (Five Year)

- To reduce the wild goat populations to a level which landholders can themselves maintain without Regional assistance.

Tactics and Technical Methods to be Used

Education	Advice to landowners and other interested parties Brochures and publicity campaigns. Community meetings and field days.
Regulation	Rules on goat farming in defined areas around Regionally significant indigenous forests which are goat-free or have small feral populations. These regulations mirror what is already contained within the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941 and other related statutes. Rule 6.4.1.1 Requirement to Identify Goats Rule 6.4.1.3 Prohibition on Liberation of Goats Rule 6.4.1.4 Keeping of Goats in Restricted Areas Rule 6.4.1.5 Farming of Goats not to Cause Erosion. Rule 6.4.1.6 Fencing to Contain Goats Rule 6.4.1.7 Capture and Destruction of Goats & Recovery of Costs. Rule 6.4.1.11 Control of Pest Animal Populations by Land Occupiers in Community Pest Control Areas Failure to comply with these rules creates an offence under section 154 (r) of the Biosecurity Act 1993.
Services	Department of Conservation managed control service on Conservation land. Regional Council managed control service in other areas where significant conservation or significant production losses are occurring.

Rules

6.4.1.1 Requirement to Brand Mark or Similarly Identify All Farmed Deer and Goats

No person shall keep deer or goats on a property unless they are branded or marked with some clearly visible identification.

6.4.1.3 Prohibition on Liberation of Deer and Goats From Properties

No person shall liberate release or allow to escape from captivity any deer or goats held on any property and shall report any escapes to the Regional Council within 24 hours. (Reiterates in part, section II Wild Animal Control Act 1977).

6.4.1.4 Keeping or Farming of Goats Within Restricted Area (Land Adjacent to Nationally Significant Indigenous Habitat)

No person shall keep in captivity or farm goats within 1 kilometre of the boundaries of areas of Regionally significant indigenous habitat identified generally on Map B and more definitively on cadastral maps held by the Northland Regional Council except with, and subject to the conditions stated in, a consent issued by the Northland Regional Council.

6.4.1.5 Keeping of Deer and Goats Must Not Cause Accelerated Soil Erosion

No person shall keep deer or goats in a manner which is likely to cause injury or damage to any Regionally significant indigenous flora or fauna or is likely to lead to soil erosion, contamination of any water body by sediment or result in flooding.

6.4.1.6 Requirement For Properties Containing Goats to be Appropriately Fenced

Every occupier on whose land goats are being kept shall at all times ensure that the land is fenced to a standard which effectively contains the goats and prevents their escape. NB: A similar provision relating to fencing to contain deer is included in section 12, 12A, 12B of the Wild Animal Control Act

6.4.1.7 Capture and Destruction of Deer and Goats and Recovery of Costs Incurred By Management Agency

When the owner of escaped deer or goats advises the Council of their escape a management agency, authorised person or accredited person may, having given the owner 7 days to recover the animals, capture and/or destroy any deer or goats found not contained by fencing and may recover the cost of such work from the owners of the animals, or the person(s) responsible for their release. (Parallels powers of Director-General of Conservation pursuant to section 12C, Wild Animal Control Act 1977) (4/71)

6.4.1.11 Control of Pest Animal Populations by Land Occupiers in Community Pest Control Areas

Where a management agency has undertaken initial control work on a property and/or supplied resources to reduce pest animal population 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.