

DUAL Traverse participants help keep the Hauraki Gulf pest-free

You can do your bit to help protect the newest and most exciting restoration project in the country! Simply carry out a few simple but crucial checks on your gear before you head off to Motutapu for the DUAL.

We are asking for the help of all athletes and their supporters of the DUAL Traverse to take note of and put into practice the biosecurity checklist below. This excellent sporting opportunity has an environmentally-friendly spirit and funds raised will go directly back to island restoration.

Biosecurity checklist

Your gear	Things to do before coming to the DUAL Traverse on Motutapu	Tick box
Packs, bags, containers	Check for mice, insects, seeds and soil and clean if found. Once packed, keep it closed tight.	
Footwear	Check laces and seams for seeds. Check sport shoe treads for soil and seeds. Clean if found. Socks are notorious for collecting weed seed, check them too.	
Clothing	Check pockets and Velcro tabs for seeds and clean them if needed.	
Food	Pack all food in sealed containers free from insects like ants.	
Bikes	Check tyre treads, pedals and gears for weeds and plant material and soil. Clean them.	
Your mates and family	Ask others that are coming if they have checked their gear. Thanks for helping!	

Rodent and Insect Proof Containers – How can I tell if it's good enough?

Packs: Backpacks, day packs, college bags and other material bags that can be sealed by a draw string or zipper are acceptable. Packs that are in poor condition are not suitable.

Plastic bins: Ideal containers for transporting gear to the island as they are usually robust enough to withstand rough handling. Must have tight fitting lids and not be over-packed. Fish bins, chilly bins and poly pails are all included in this category. Cardboard boxes are chewable and fall apart when wet, therefore are not ideal.

Plastic Bags: PVC dry bags are acceptable as are super thick plastic bags, in other words the plastic must be thicker than your average rubbish sack as these are prone to tearing. All bags must be securely sealed or tied before being taken on board the ferry. Open plastic bags, shopping bags etc are not acceptable.

RESTORING RANGITOTO & MOTUTAPU

The Department of Conservation began a large scale animal pest eradication project on Rangitoto and Motutapu islands in June 2009. Following on from the removal of possums and wallabies in the 1990s, the seven remaining pest animal species have been targeted for eradication. These are: ship and Norway rats, mice, rabbits, stoats, feral cats and hedgehogs.

The eradication project began after the first ever DUAL event on the islands. This year is your chance to ensure all the hard work that has occurred over the past year has not been in vain!

A HUGE SUCCESS!

To date it's looking like a huge success, with no sign of rodents, stoats or rabbits since the bait drop. Now there are just a few hardy hedgehogs and the odd feral cat to remove. Rodents are the most likely animal to make it back to the island, but only with human help. Make sure you're not the person to liberate a mouse back onto these special islands.

DON'T LET RATS RETURN

It does happen... already this year a rat was caught after re-invading pest-free Motuora. In 2008, rats reinvaded Motuora and Motuihe and were caught after considerable effort. The most likely scenario is that they arrived on these islands off someone's boat or in gear brought to the islands.

MOTUTAPU RETURNING TO FOREST

The pest-free project on Rangitoto and Motutapu complements the Motutapu Restoration Trust's 50-year plan to replant one third of Motutapu in forest, now in its second decade. Volunteers have been hard at work weed-busting and raising and planting native trees. Help them by not only by competing in this event to raise funds for the Trust, but by checking your gear for weed seeds.

ARGENTINE ANTS

Argentine ants are small brown ants that can build up in massive numbers. Because of their sheer numbers, appetite and aggressiveness, they pose a serious threat to conservation islands. Check all your gear for any ants or other insects. Argentine ants are a major household pest that can access screw-top jars, microwaves, stoves and fridges.

The damage pests can do...

- **Rats** eat native plants and animals, in particular native birds, lizards, and insects. They also consume large quantities of native seeds which has serious implications for native plant regeneration. Ship rats can swim at least 500m and Norway rats up to 1km. They could easily swim from a moored boat to an island.
- **Mice** compete for food with our native species and eat insects and lizards. Not known to invade islands by swimming, but have been recorded invading islands via transport of stores and equipment. A mouse was found during a self-bag check of a visitor to the Karori Sanctuary in Wellington (a "mainland island" with a predator fence around it).
- **Soil** – Kauri Die-back, commonly known as PTA (*Phytophthora taxon Agathis*) is a microscopic fungus-like plant pathogen (a disease causing agent) that only affects kauri. PTA can kill trees and seedlings of all ages. PTA is believed to be a soil-borne species spread by soil and soil in water. People can spread PTA via soil on their shoes or gear, especially if they go off track.
- **Seeds** – Weed seeds easily attach themselves to shoes, laces, Velcro and tend to nestle in your pockets. Weeds threaten our native flora and cost DOC thousands of dollars each year.
- **Argentine ants** kill and displace other species of (native) ants. They also compete with native birds for food such as insects and worms, compete with native birds and lizards for nectar and displace and kill other native invertebrates.

See www.treasureislands.co.nz for more information on protecting the Hauraki Gulf.