



# Help keep Motutapu pest-free

*Rangitoto and Motutapu are now pest-free, but we need your help to keep it that way.*

As a participant in the DUAL Traverse, you're already showing your support by raising funds to help protect one of the largest and most exciting restoration projects in the country.

There is just one more thing to do before you head to Motutapu for the DUAL - take a few minutes to do some crucial checks for anything from the mainland that may be harmful to life on the island.

We've included a handy checklist below. Thanks in advance for your help!

## Biosecurity checklist for coming to Motutapu

Gear	Action	✓
Packs, bags, containers	Check for rats, mice, insects, seeds and soil. Once packed, keep your bags sealed to prevent stowaways.	
Footwear	Check laces and seams for seeds. Check shoe treads for soil and seeds. Socks are notorious for collecting weed seeds.	
Clothing	Check pockets and Velcro for seeds and dirt.	
Food	Pack all food in sealed insect and rodent-proof containers.	
Bikes	Check tyre treads, pedals and gears for weeds, plant material and soil.	
Other people's gear	Ask others that are coming with you, such as friends and family, if they have checked their gear. Send them a copy of this flyer.	
Camping gear - for those staying at the Motutapu Campground	Check your tent and other camping equipment thoroughly for rats, mice, insects, seeds and soil. Often camping gear is stored over winter in places easily accessible to rodents and insects.	

### How to make belongings insect and rodent proof

#### Packs

Backpacks, day packs, college bags and other material bags must be sealed by a drawstring and flap or with a zipper. All bags and packs must be in good condition with no holes.

#### Plastic bins

These must have tight-fitting lids and not be over-filled. Cardboard boxes are not acceptable—they can be chewed through and fall apart when wet.

#### Plastic bags

PVC dry bags are acceptable as are thick plastic bags (thicker than your average rubbish bags, which are prone to tearing). All bags must be securely sealed or tied before being taken on the ferry. Open plastic bags, e.g. supermarket shopping bags, are not acceptable.



## Restoring Rangitoto and Motutapu

The Department of Conservation (DOC) began a large-scale animal pest eradication project on Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands in June 2009. Following the removal of possums and wallabies in the 1990s, the seven remaining pest animal species were targeted for eradication. These pest animals were ship and Norway rats, mice, rabbits, stoats, feral cats and hedgehogs.

### A HUGE SUCCESS

In August 2011 DOC declared both Rangitoto and Motutapu officially pest-free. This marked the successful completion of the most challenging and complex pest eradication projects ever undertaken by the Department. Takahe and saddleback (tieke) were released as part of the celebration.

### DON'T LET RODENTS RETURN

Rodents are the most likely animal to make it back to the island, but they can't do it on their own. Both Rangitoto and Motutapu are too far from the mainland for a rat or mouse to swim to, so can only be brought in by visitors to the island. Make sure you're not the person to undo all the good work so far—check your gear for rodents.

### KEEP ARGENTINE ANTS OUT

Argentine ants are small brown ants that pose a serious threat to islands because of their large numbers, huge appetite and aggressiveness. They are a major household pest that can access screw-top jars, microwaves, stoves and fridges, so be diligent when checking your gear for these and other insects.

### MOTUTAPU RETURNING TO FOREST

The pest-free project on Rangitoto and Motutapu complements the Motutapu Restoration Trust's 50-year plan, now in its second decade, to replant one-third of Motutapu in forest. Volunteers have been hard at work weed-busting, and raising and planting native trees. Competing in this event raises funds for the Trust and checking your gear for weed seeds further helps the cause.

### 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 500 m and Norway rats up to 1 km. They can easily swim from a moored boat to an island.
- **Mice** compete for food with our native species and eat insects and lizards. Mice can pass through a hole as small as a wedding ring and can easily hide in bags and packs. They are not known to invade islands by swimming, but have been recorded invading islands through the transport of supplies and equipment. A mouse was found during a self bag check of a visitor to 'Zealandia', a mainland sanctuary in Wellington protected by a predator-proof fence.
- **Soil** can carry diseases harmful to our native vegetation. Kauri dieback, commonly known as PTA, is a microscopic plant pathogen that only affects kauri. PTA can kill trees and seedlings. People can spread PTA via soil on their shoes or gear, especially if they go off track. For more info see [www.kauridieback.co.nz](http://www.kauridieback.co.nz)
- **Seeds** can easily attach themselves to shoes, laces and Velcro, and tend to nestle in pockets. Weeds threaten our native flora and cost DOC thousands of dollars each year.
- **Argentine ants** kill and displace our native ant species. 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.

SCARY FACT: In Argentina bowls of water are placed under bed-legs to protect residents from ants nesting in bedding!

See [www.treasureislands.co.nz](http://www.treasureislands.co.nz) or [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) for more information on protecting the Hauraki Gulf.



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

New Zealand Government