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# PET OWNERSHIP IN THE WAITĀKERE RANGES

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The Waitākere Ranges are home to a trove of treasured native species; including kōkako, pepeketua/ Hochstetter's frogs, toutouwai/ North Island robins, and threatened pekapeka-tou-roa/ long-tailed bat.

At the Ark in the Park, located in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, a dedicated team of over 400 volunteers work tirelessly year-round to protect our precious ngahere. Protecting the unfenced borders of the Ark in the Park, are over 200 properties that form our Buffer Zone - neighbours like you who are involved with their own back yard conservation controlling pest species, and helping to save native birds across an even larger area!

This landscape-scale focus links the Ark in the Park with neighbouring conservation projects, and provides a network of safety for our precious native species.

## Minimising the risks to our wildlife

Our native species evolved without mammals to hunt them. Introduced mammals, such as rats and stoats, predate our native species, including contributing to the loss of kōkako nests every year at the Ark in the Park. Some Scenic Drive residents have been visited by their own backyard kōkako that were reintroduced to the Waitākere Ranges by the Ark in the Park; we need our local community involved to keep our Waitākere Ranges ecosystem healthy.

Rats and stoats aren't the only mammals affecting our native species – companion animals such as cats and dogs can also play a role. Aotearoa is a community of cat lovers, with the highest rate of cat ownership in the world, but this doesn't mean we can't also care for our native species. If pets are allowed to stray beyond their homes, they are putting both themselves and our native birds, reptiles, and insects in danger.

## About the Ark in the Park

The Ark in the Park is a partnership between Forest & Bird and Auckland Council, with support from mana whenua Te Kawerau ā Maki. Established in 2002, our conservation, which is funded by generous donors, now protects over 2000ha of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park.

## Unowned cat management

The Ark in the Park is recognised as an intensively managed threatened species area, which allows us to offer even better protection for our native species. This allows our volunteers to continue their weekly checks of our trap network which was first established in 2002. This network includes a small number of humane, approved, Steve Allan kill traps for cats.

**As well as controlling rats, stoats, and possums, we use traps to ensure unowned cats aren't contributing to the loss of our native species.**

Any cats caught will be recorded by staff; they will be scanned for a microchip and checked for signs of ownership. In the unfortunate event that any pets are caught inside the threatened species area, their families will be contacted immediately.

## Keeping your pets safe

Alongside our trap network the Ark in the Park also has a bait station network, which volunteers service 3-4 times per year. We are part of the local community and love all animals; we want to protect our wildlife as well as our pets. To keep pets safe from traps or toxic bait which are in place at all times, and to keep our wildlife safe from mammals, please consider the following over the page:

- Keep pets at home – whether this be indoors, or in your yard, please keep our wildlife and your pets safer by reducing the chances for your pet to roam.
- Microchipped and registered pets are easier to manage. Please keep your cats and dogs microchipped, ask your vet about reliable microchips, and register them on the NZ Companion Animal Register ([www.animalregister.co.nz](http://www.animalregister.co.nz)). Your vet should check the microchip every visit, so you know its up to date and working fine.
- A collar with your pet’s details (including your current contact details) will ensure any roaming pets are able to be returned home. Even better – a brightly coloured collar will also keep our wildlife safe. Check out this site for a crafty project: [www.kcc.org.nz/make-an-anti-predation-collar-for-your-cat](http://www.kcc.org.nz/make-an-anti-predation-collar-for-your-cat).
- De-sex your cat. This stops them contributing to the surplus of unowned cats, and will keep our wildlife safer.
- Cats are happiest and healthiest at home; indoor cats live significantly longer than their roaming counterparts. When cats are left to roam, even well-fed cats can hunt, maim, and kill our native wildlife. Check out cat proof fencing, catios and enrichment ideas online for ready-made or DIY options to keep your cat happy at home on your property.

- When going away please put your pets in kennels or catteries, or get someone to regularly keep an eye on them and make sure they’re still feeling loved.

### Where to start?

There are a number of places that offer resources to support our pets:

- Organisations such as the SPCA regularly offer discounted or free de-sexing and microchips – see their website or social media pages for up to date information.
- See Auckland Council’s website for handy tips about pet ownership specific to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

### How can you support the wildlife of the Waitākere Ranges?

There are many ways to get involved, both from home, and out in the ngahere.

- Support the Ark in the Park by volunteering or donating. If you’re a neighbour, join the Ark Buffer Zone and we’ll supply you with free traps for possums and rats, and free pest management advice suited to your back yard - learn more here: [www.arkinthePark.org.nz](http://www.arkinthePark.org.nz).
- Get involved with other local conservation groups - learn more about your neighbours on Auckland Council’s site Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau: <https://www.tiakitamakaurau.nz/>.

This pamphlet is available on the Ark in the Park website [www.arkinthePark.org.nz](http://www.arkinthePark.org.nz), along with links to resources and additional information. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Auckland Council’s biosecurity team at: [pestfree@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:pestfree@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

