

Pests & Biosecurity on the Chatham Islands



BRINGING PETS INTO THE CHATHAMS?



What you need to know ...

The Chatham Islands environment is unique and beautiful and the economy is highly dependent on farming and fishing. The Chatham Islands are free of many pests and diseases which cause economic and environmental problems on mainland New Zealand.

The importance of biosecurity

The Chatham Islands has a Pest Management Strategy to help protect the environment and economy from unwanted pests and diseases. Some animals commonly kept as pets in New Zealand could easily become pests on the Chathams or carry pests as 'hitch-hikers'.

Animals that are prohibited from the Chathams:

Rabbits

Rabbits and hares are NOT present on the Chathams. A female rabbit can produce up to 40 young per year. They compete with stock for grazing and could cause significant economic and environmental damage.

Mustelids (ferrets, stoats and weasels)

These predators are NOT present on the Chathams and would cause significant harm to the unique bird life if introduced. Ferrets are also known to carry bovine tuberculosis.

Movement of these animals is prohibited under the **Wild Animals Control Act**.

Pets to avoid bringing in:

Goats

Goats are a Total Control Pest under the Chatham Island Pest Management Strategy and there are restrictions on these potential pests. A feral goat population can double in number every two years.

Wild goats are agile animals and are able to exploit most habitats, damaging native vegetation, young trees and contributing to the erosion of soils.

Exotic fish

There are no known freshwater pest fish on the Chathams. Many of New Zealand's waterways have been invaded by exotic pest fish such as koi carp, rudd, perch, tench, mosquito fish and catfish which have either been accidentally or deliberately introduced. The release or escape of aquarium stock is a significant and ongoing source of new establishments.

Pest fish could thrive in the pristine waterways of the Chathams. They could prey on native species or modify the aquatic ecosystems by their feeding habits.

Bringing in freshwater fish may also bring in freshwater weeds. A small weed fragment can be enough to start





a new infestation which could be expensive or even impossible to eradicate.

Please leave all fragments of waterweed where you found them, or dispose of them in the rubbish.

Reptiles (frogs, turtles and lizards)

Importing reptiles could pose a serious biosecurity risk. Rainbow skinks were first recorded in Auckland during the 1960s, probably arriving accidentally in cargo from Australia. These lizards reproduce more than five times as fast as most native lizards and are now widespread over much of the North Island.

Wild turtles have become a problem in Auckland's waterways and drains. These aggressive turtles, which can be bought in pet stores, have a painful bite and are prolific breeders.

Introduced reptiles can reach high populations in a relatively short time, competing with or preying on native animals including birds and insects.

Birds

Some exotic birds such as eastern rosellas, rainbow lorikeets and magpies could become pests on the Chathams if they escape. Of equal concern are diseases these birds may carry.

Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (or PBFDF for short) is a viral disease affecting parrots. The disease is especially serious for small chicks, killing many while still in the nest. Adult birds can develop feather loss, beak deformities and their immune

system may fail, making them prone to other infections or predator attack.

This virus survives for a long time in the environment and is easily spread from bird to bird or by contaminated cages. PBFDF poses a significant threat to the native parrots of the Chathams.

Cats and dogs

Please make sure your cats and dogs are fully immunised and wormed before bringing them to the Chathams.

For further information about biosecurity or queries about moving pets to the Chatham Islands, please contact the Biosecurity Officer on 03 305 0013 or email info@cic.govt.nz.

Chatham Islands Council
P O Box 24
Waitangi
Chatham Islands
Phone 03 305 0033
Facsimile 03 305 0044
www.cic.govt.nz

