

Oruawharo Medlands Ecovision:
Medlands Landowner 2023 Survey Report Summary.
[December 2023]

Exploring local landowners attitudes to predator pest control including targeting species and methods employed.



OME Mission:

“To work with the community to improve the habitats of native species by managing invasive pest species, restoring and nurturing the local dune, wetland and bush ecosystems”.

OME:

Oruawharo Medlands Ecovision (OME) is a local community group with an environmental focus, based in Oruawharo Bay on Aotea/ Great Barrier Island. We are a group of enthusiastic and passionate locals who know we have a lot to protect here in our neighbourhood, from pāteke/brown teal, matuku hūrepo/australasian bittern and mātātā/fern bird in the wetland and New Zealand dotterels on the beach and dunes to niho taniwha/chevron skinks along the creeks further inland. This is indeed a special piece of Aotea, you just have to stop and take notice!

We aim to nurture and protect the taonga on our doorstep and we are in the planning stages of an expansion of our pest managed area, hoping to include many private properties as well as public land in the OME Phase 2 project.

Landowner Questionnaire:

We designed a survey questionnaire for the landowners of the Medlands Oruawharo area to ascertain if they were supportive of predator control on their properties and in the greater area, were they undertaking predator control on their properties and what species were they targeting, were they open to the potential use of toxins for rodents, and were feral cats and pigs targets?

Method:

- Data was collected by the Oruawharo Medlands Ecovision team.
- They used a combination of approaches:
 - Face to face, email or mailout
 - An online, self complete questionnaire
 - Reminders by email, on OME Facebook and website.
- Results were tracked and linked to the property address, as they came in.

Results:

Of the 188 property addresses tracked, OME has received responses from 100 of them.

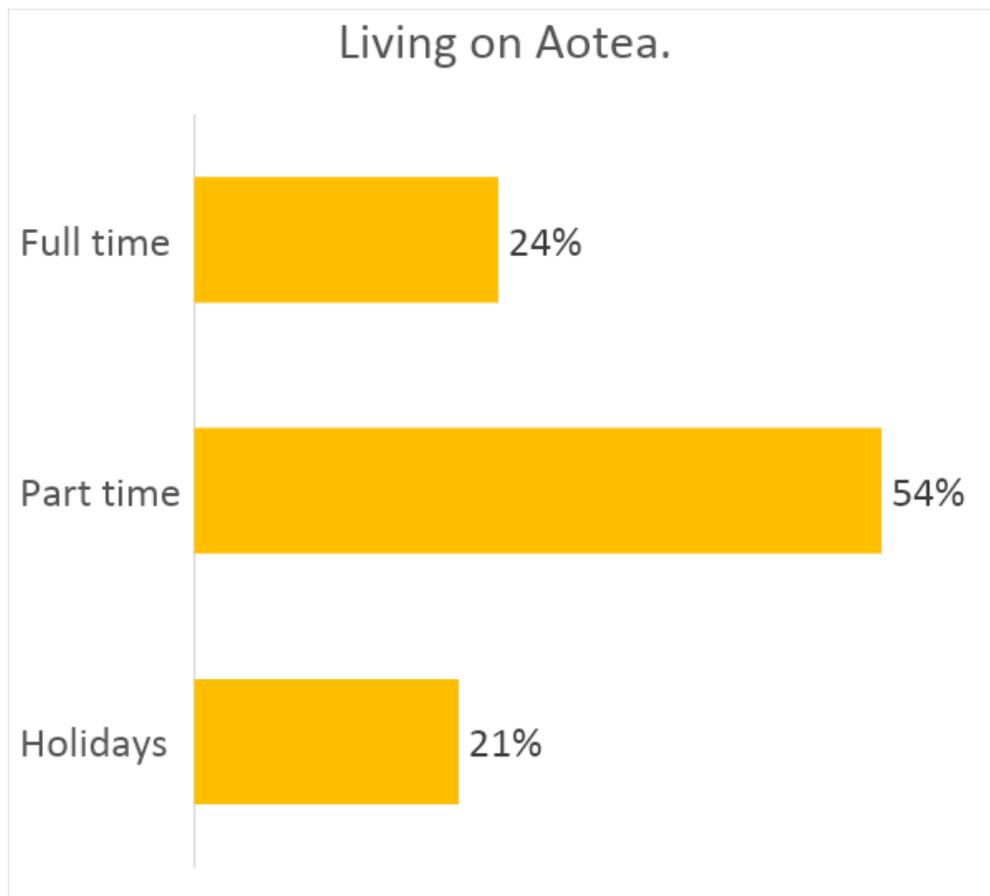
Attempts to achieve delivery of the questionnaire and completion with return of the questionnaire were made over a period of 9 months before the survey analysis was undertaken.

A response rate of 53% is considered common in surveys of this type.

We did not have mail, email or telephone contact details for some and many landowners are part-time [over half] and not readily available for face to face contact. Some landowners will have been provided the questionnaire but have not returned it.

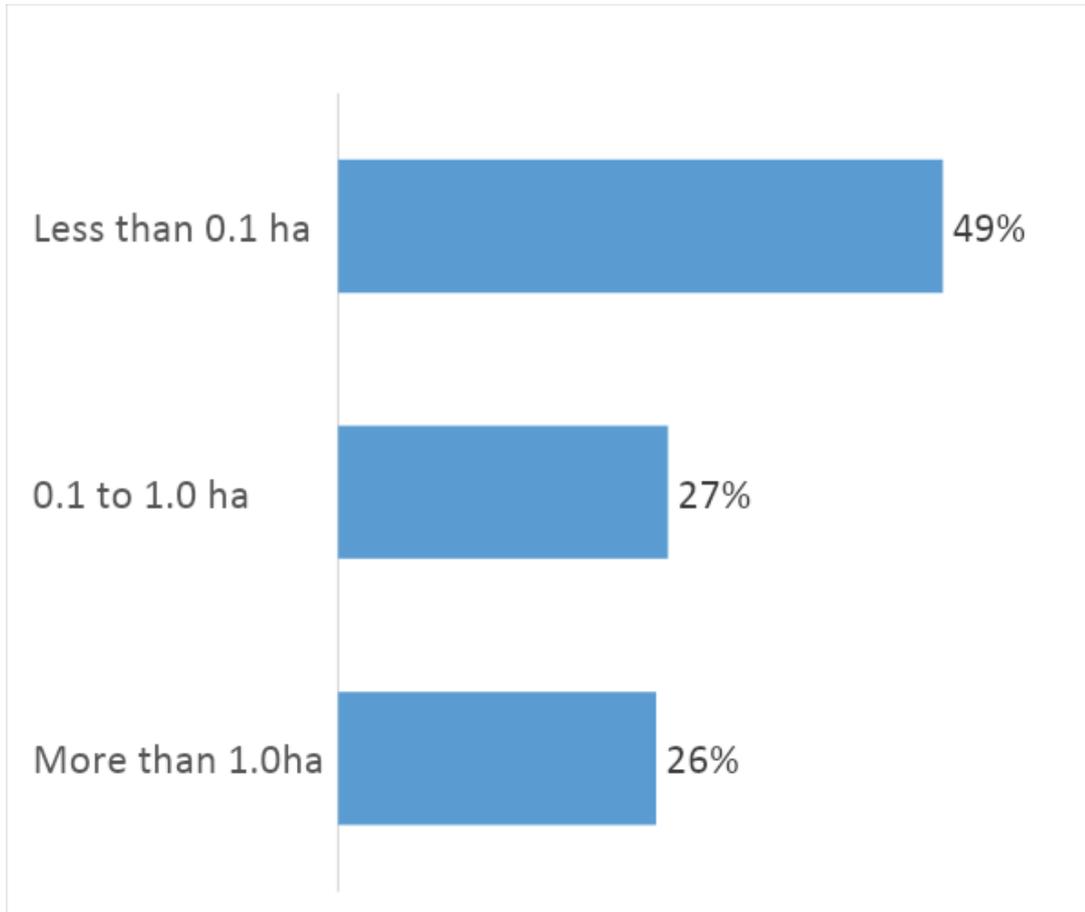
A summary of the results received so far follows:

Respondents Time Spent On Aotea:



A quarter of respondents were full time residents in the Medlands Bay area while three quarters were part time residents.

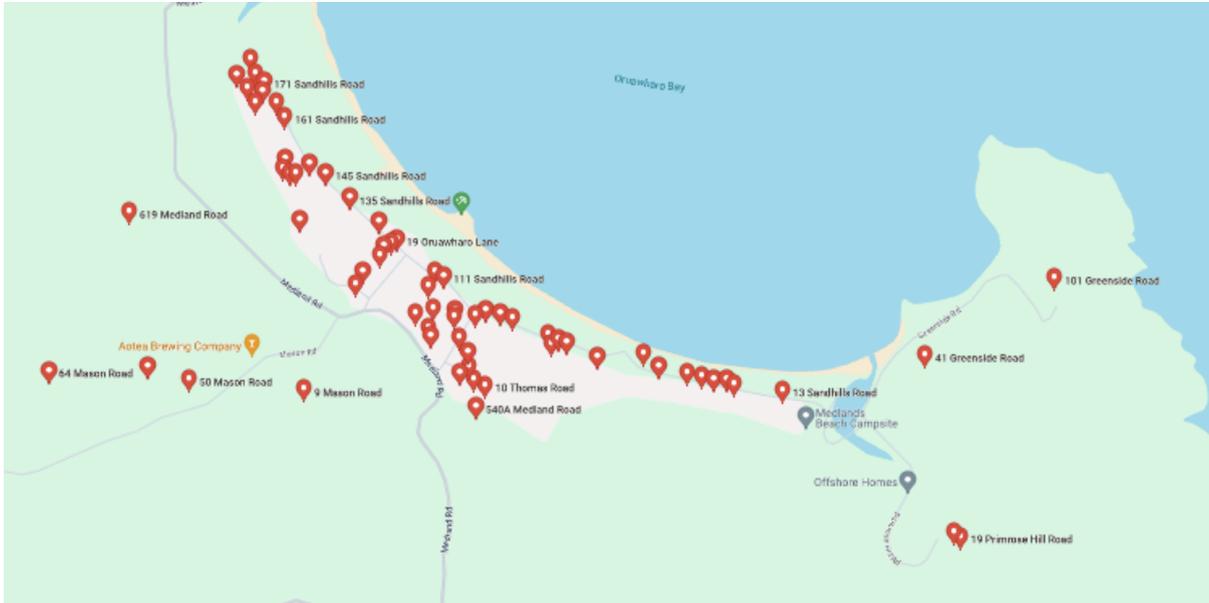
Property Size:



Half the respondents had smaller sections of less than 0.1 hectare.

- $\frac{1}{4}$ have sections of greater than 1.0 hectare.
- The greatest number of respondents were from Sandhills Rd and its side roads.

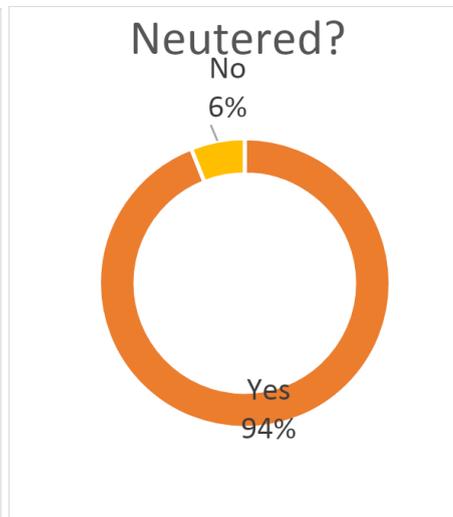
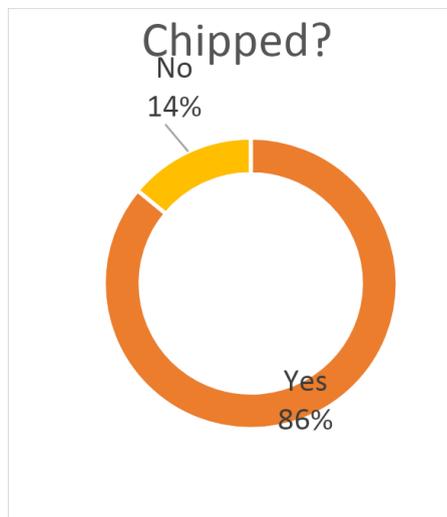
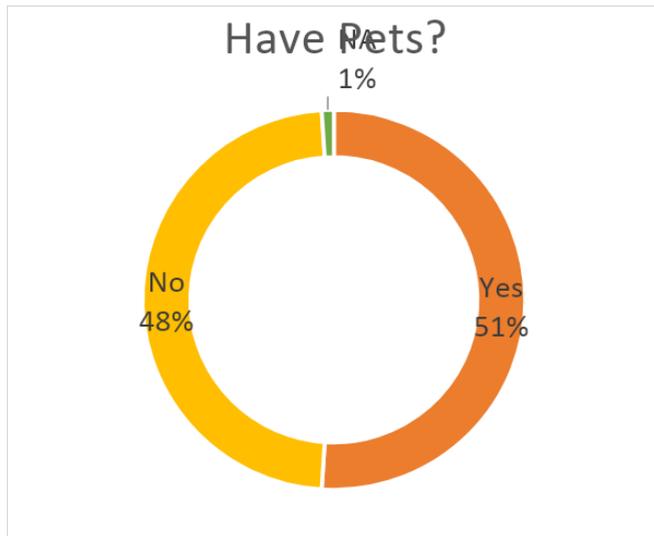
Property Location of Respondents:



Pets And Their Management:

Q: Do you have pets or other animals? If so, are they neutered and microchipped?

Half of the respondents had pets. Most of these pets were neutered and/or microchipped

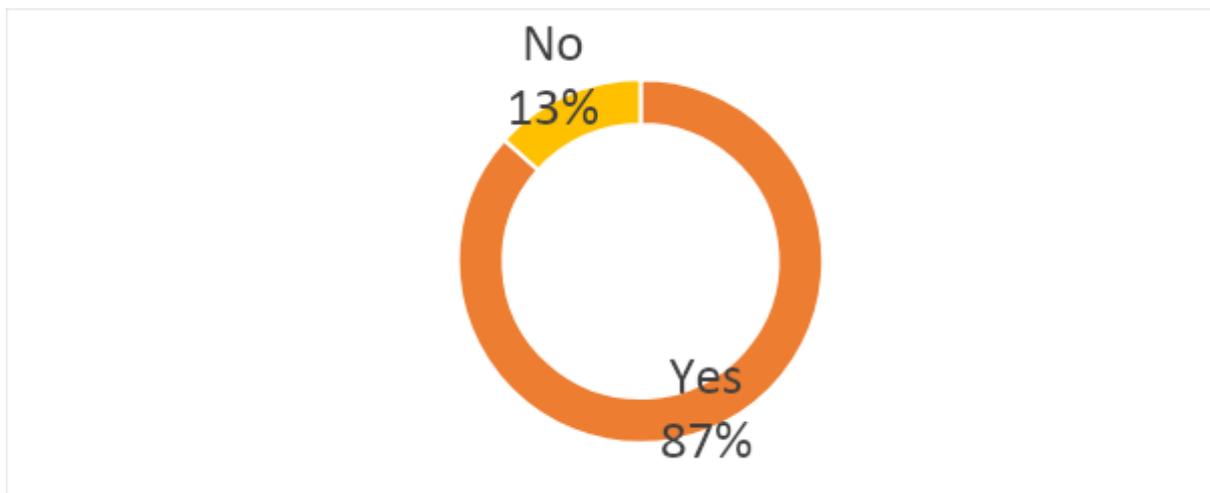


Base 100

Pest Control Undertaken:

Q: Do you undertake any kind of pest control on your own property?

- This was happening on their own properties with 87% of respondents.
- Rats were the targeted species in 83% of cases.
- Traps were used by 78% and bait stations by 52%.
- Rat toxin use was agreed to by 79% with some caveats.



Base 97

Comments included:

“Multiple trapping technologies + toxin in dog-proof bait stations”.

“Maintenance at least weekly. Try to shoot rabbits. Aspire to catch pigs in the brig”.

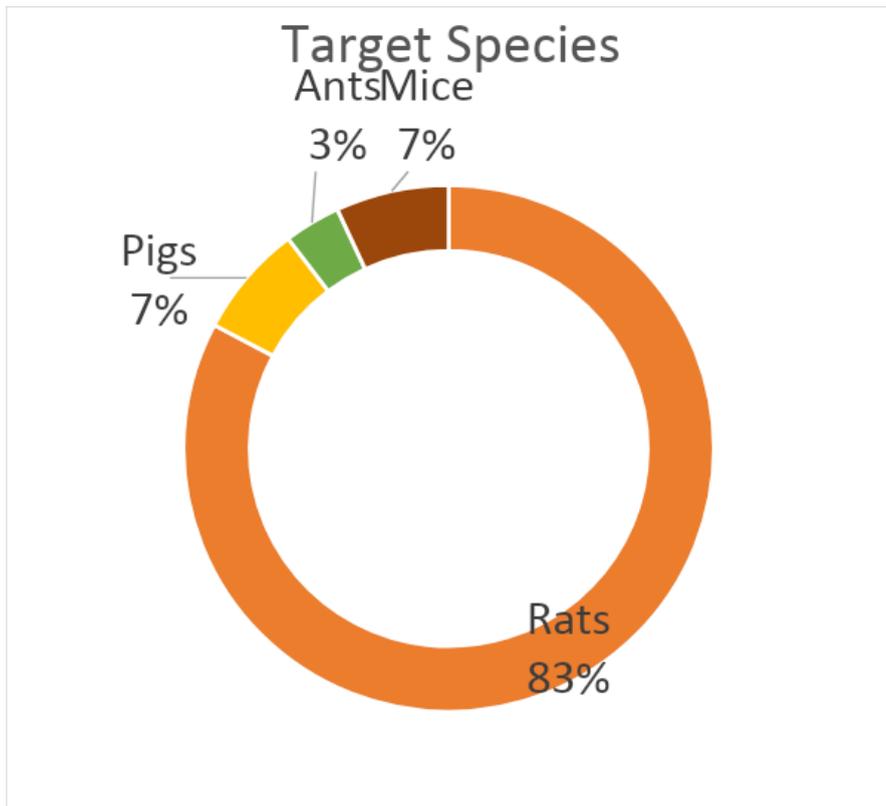
“Trapping weekly, baiting Murray Staple”.

“Weekly traps + 6 monthly bait stations”.

“No but happy to have traps”.

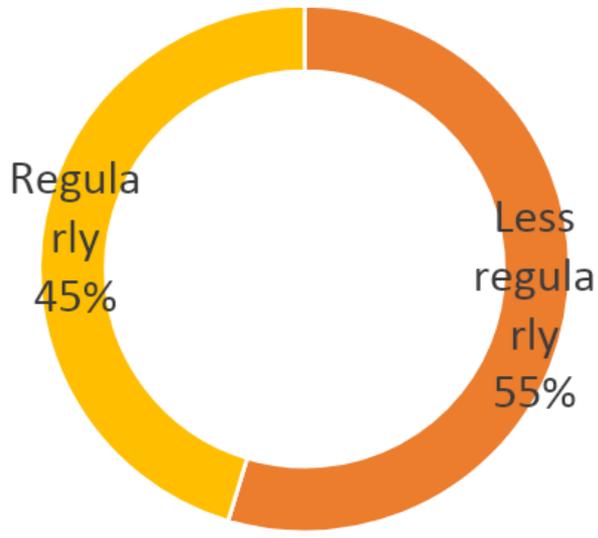
“No, would like help”.

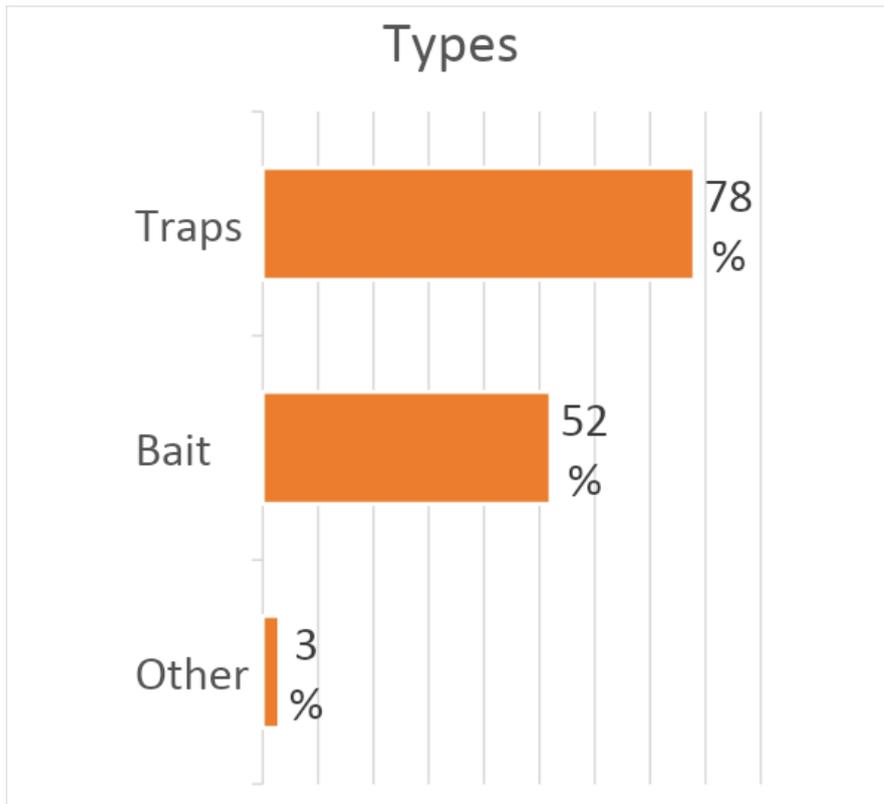
Type And Frequency Of Pest Control:



Base 24

Frequency





Comments about types and frequency were inconsistent. If the respondent did not mention a type of pest control, it was assumed it was traps (3 responses):

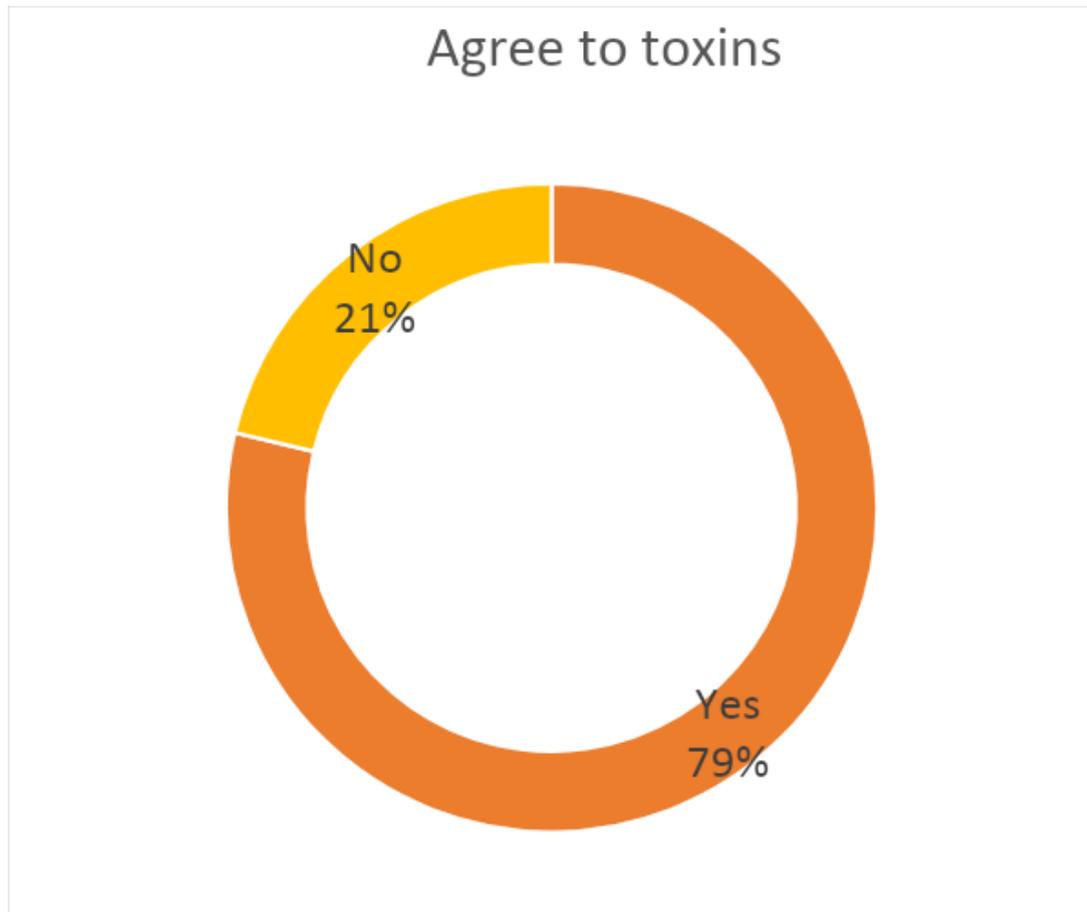
Frequency was inferred from what they said and the question on how often they were on Aotea:

Q2. How often do you reside on Aotea? and Q5. What type and how often? Assumed frequency.

- Holidays
- Full time
- Regularly
- Less regularly

Support for Pest Control:

Q: Would you agree to the use of toxins for rat control on your property?



Base 94

Conditions applied:

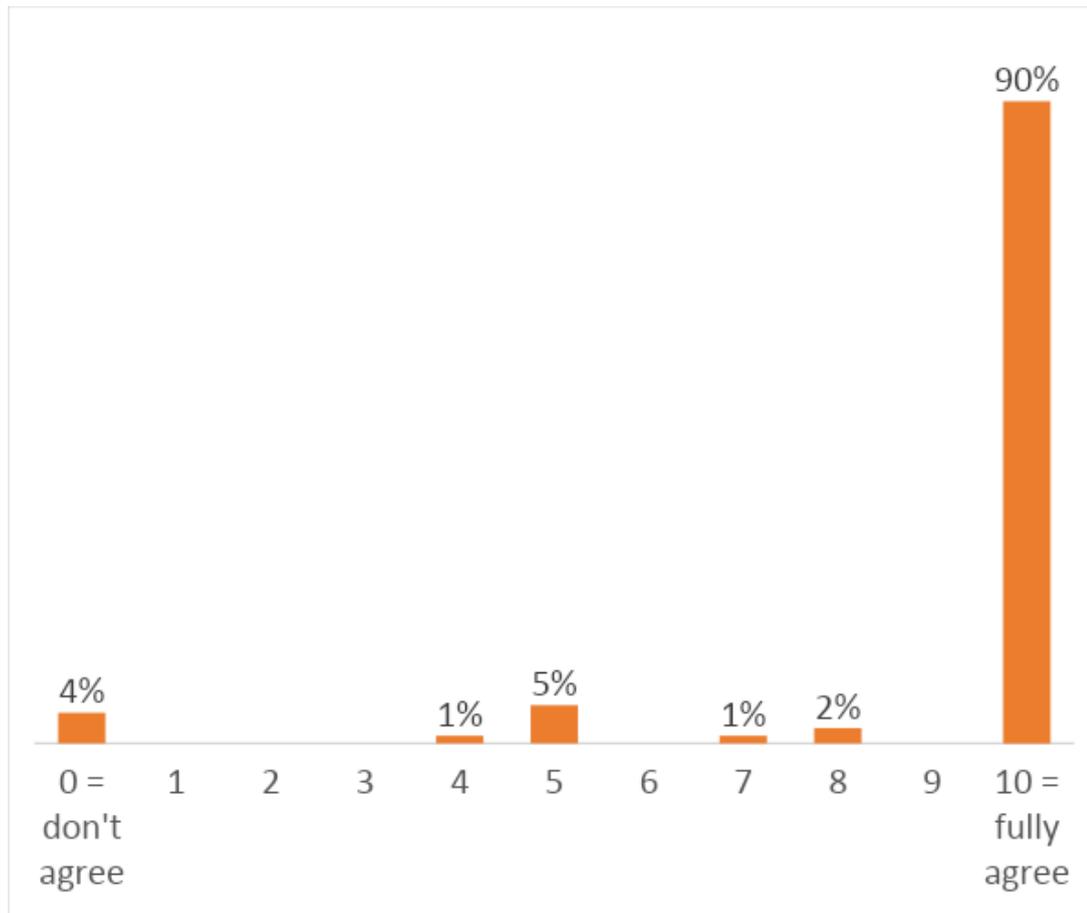
- “Yes, in controlled and managed ways, using best practice”.
- “Yes, maybe if a one off hit rather than poison use carrying on and on for years”.
- “Yes, bait stations”.
- “Yes, if safe and was at my direction”.
- “Yes, if cats cannot get it”.
- “Yes, if informed”.
- “Yes, if it doesn't have impact on native birds”.
- “Yes, however it must be secure from neighbours dog”.

People who Disagreed with using Rat Toxin [n=20]

- 18 of the 20 are currently using pest control measures on their property.
- 15 of the 20 live on Aotea part time/in the holidays.
- Property sizes were similar to the total sample.
- These were some final comments at the end of their survey:
 - “Yes, we could be interested in more involvement when we reside there for longer periods”.
 - “Just comments....Yes to above except we're not there very often. I'm not very comfortable with using Brodifacoum which has an average time till death of 7 days. Pretty inhumane even for a lowly bird eating rat. Can you get hold of 1080? Kills within 5-10 hrs and less chance of secondary poisoning. I'll discuss some other poisons when I'm up next - hopefully in next week or so”.
 - “Visitors and part time property owners should not be allowed to bring cats to the island”.
 - “No questions but would love the feral pigs to be brought under control. It was bad enough 40+ years ago when the goats would roam freely and they were really aggressive. No goats now!”
 - I would want to know what was involved in the large pest management control before agreeing to proceed. i am concerned that trapping is done in a humane way.
 - Not interested in poisons. Shooting rabbits and pigs and a cat registry and compulsory reflector collars on the island is a

Feral Cat Control.

Q. What is your opinion on feral cat control?



Base 97

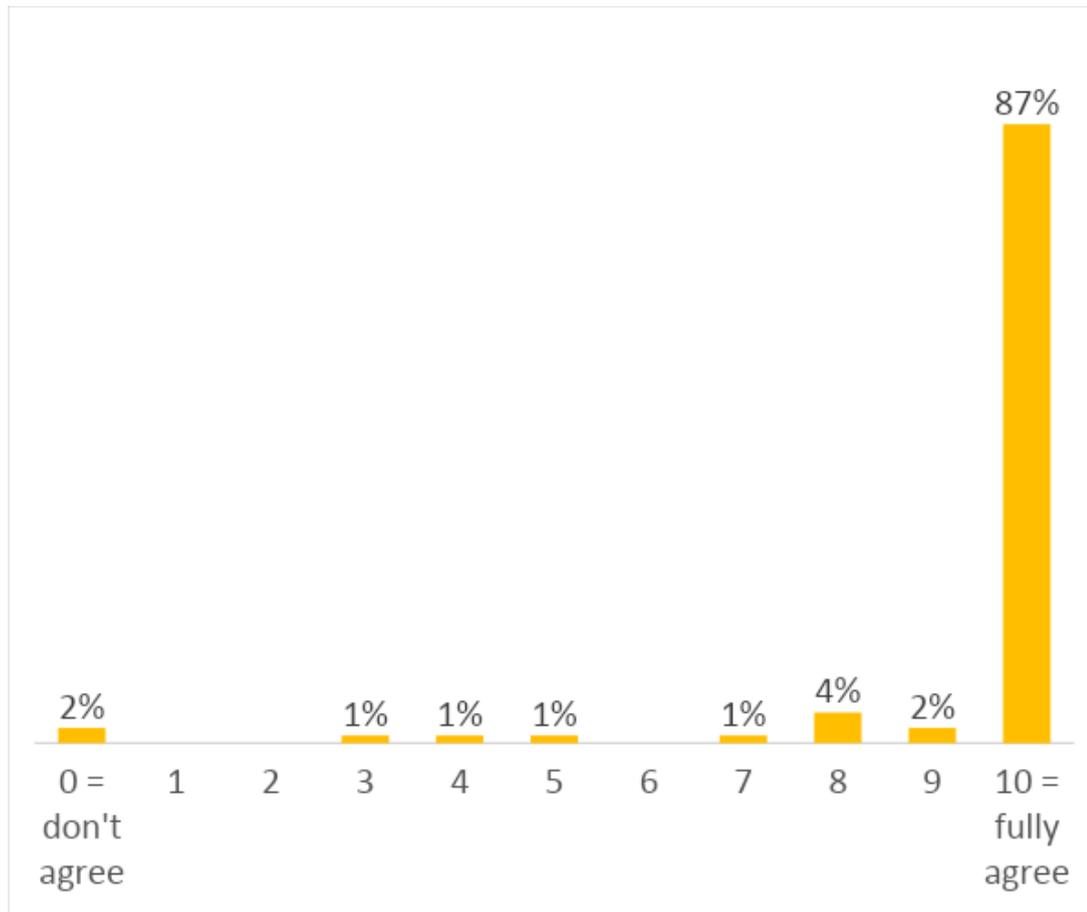
90% of respondents agreed with control of feral cats.

Feral Cat Control Caveats and Concerns:

- While there was overall very strong agreement, there were caveats and concerns:
 - *“Likes cats, so reluctant to answer”.*
 - *“Not sure this would work without rat control at the same time”.*
 - *“Only humanely”.*
 - *“Support it 100% but recognise the dilemma of pet cats (either side of us)”.*
 - *“Support - against 1080”.*
 - *“Worried about true analysis. Like to hear more. How many cats are eradicated?”*
- But overall, support was overwhelming:
 - *“Feral cats should be eradicated”.*
 - *“Get rid of them”.*
 - *“Go all out to eliminate”.*
 - *“Go for it”.*
 - *“Yes =we are domestic cat owners”.*

Feral Pig Control:

Q. What is your opinion on feral pig control?



- There was warm support for feral pig control.
- The only issue raised was concern for the impact on local hunters, by two people.

These written comments were converted to 0

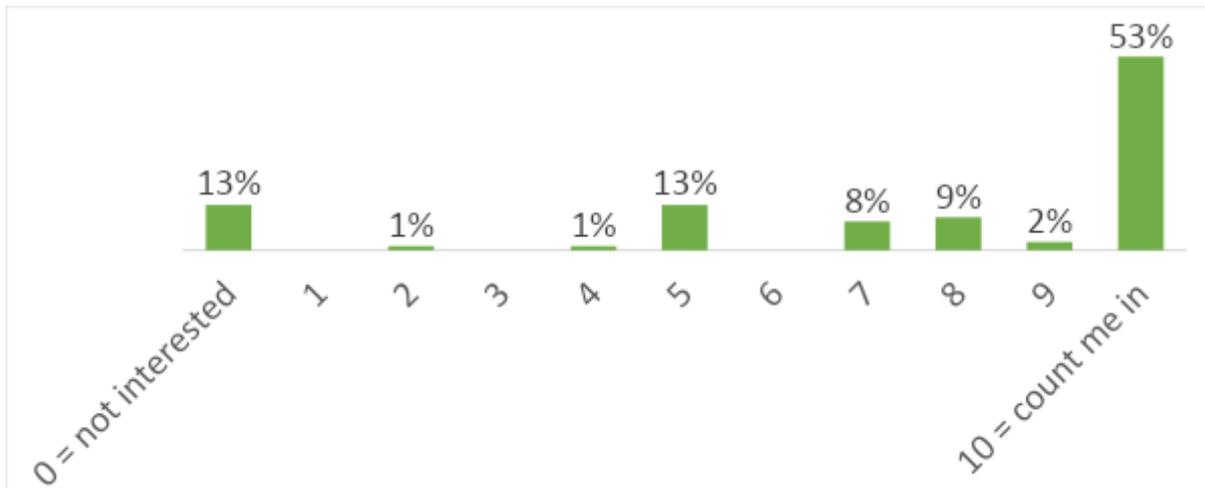
- “thinks locals who hunt for food should be consulted/considered”.

These written comments were converted to 10

- “100% supportive. An increasingly urgent issue as we start to see sand dune erosion”.
- “Agree with it”.
- “Control them”.
- “Control/kill/eradicate”.
- “Controlled”.
- “Eliminate feral pigs”.
- “Get rid of them”.
- “Go all out to eliminate”.
- “Go for it”.
- “Good”.
- “Good idea”.
- “Hopes pig hunters are culling where it matters to ensure areas of regrowth”.
- “It should be undertaken”.
- “Kill”.
- “Kill them”.
- “Miles too many”.
- “More control needed”.
- “Must be controlled using traps/shooting”.
- “Ok”.
- “Only humanely”.
- “Pigs are a major problem here”.
- “Shoot”.
- “Shoot/get rid of them”.
- “Some level of support. Needs control”.
- “Support it”.
- “Support. Don't know much about it”.
- “Very much proactive”.
- “We support feral pig control-strongly”.
- “Yes – required”.
- “Yes = live traps”.
- “Yes please”.
- “Yes, feral pigs are destructive. I do get them at my place from time to time. Control would be good but can understand local residents concerns if they hunt them for food”.

Interest in Getting Involved:

Q. Would you be interested in being involved in a large pest management project?



Summary:

The survey has demonstrated that there is very strong support for predator pest control in the Oruawharo Medlands area. This extends to targeting rodents, feral cats and feral pigs. Many home owners are part time occupants but most already engage in some form of predator control.

OME's plans for moving from Phase 1 predator trapping in the dunes and wetlands to expand to the hills behind in Phase 2 is largely supported by our community survey. We remain open to more feedback but are very encouraged by the support shown by the local community.

We look forward to being able to progress predator control in the Oruawharo Medlands area over a wider area. It is with a view to meeting up with Tū Mai Taonga as they progress down the motu from the north and ultimately with working towards the goal of Predator Free 2050. It is a moderately expensive process for a volunteer organization that does require fundraising support on an ongoing basis.

Raoul Stuart (chair) and Lotte McIntyre (coordinator)

Acknowledge: Survey analyst, Fiona Cameron