

## Chew Card Detection Monitoring

The standard Residual Trap Catch (RTC) method of using traps works well when there are moderate to low possum numbers present. However, the PCA programme has been so successful that this method is having trouble detecting possums when populations are low.

Landcare Research has developed a detection method that is more sensitive to possum interference when



numbers are low. The chew card monitoring technique uses core-flute markers which are partially filled with peanut butter as a lure for possums to bite into. Possums will leave unique teeth marks which can be identified. The chew card is six times more sensitive to detecting possums than the leg hold trap.

As chew cards don't capture possums, the cards can be left out for 7 nights without needing to be checked daily. Removing the daily checking requirement of the device makes chew card monitoring more cost effective. As a result of this, the council is able to monitor more of the PCA programme with no increase in monitoring cost.

Essentially the chew cards are a 'mapping' tool to indicate to the Council where possum 'hot spots' or where limited possum maintenance is occurring. Where this happens Council will be requiring property owners to undertake more rigorous possum maintenance techniques over their

properties, or face additional monitoring for possible compliance action to reduce high possum numbers.

In compliance situations, the Residual Trap Catch method (using leg hold traps) will still be used to make sure possum numbers are under the 5% RTC requirement.

### Possum Control Area Establishment Process

Landowner has a possum problem



Landowner contacts Hawke's Bay Regional Council and discusses control options



Regional Council approaches individual landowners to sign them into the programme



If 75% of the community support the programme the area is designated a Possum Control Area



Regional Council contractors undertake initial knockdown of possum numbers. This is paid for by Regional Council.



Regional Council Biosecurity staff contact landowners 3-6 months after initial control to discuss maintenance control options.

#### For further information

For further information on animal pests or the Regional Pest Management Strategy, please contact the Biosecurity Animal Pest Officers at the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

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