

# Key facts about wasp control on Rotorua's public conservation land



The Department of Conservation's Rotorua office will be undertaking wasp control in several areas of public conservation land around the Rotorua Lakes Area in January and February 2017. See attached map for the operation areas.

## Why should we control wasps?

Vespid wasps (wāpi) are now one of the most damaging insect pests in New Zealand's natural areas and their numbers seem to be increasing. The introduced wasps threaten our native birds – particularly in our honeydew beech forests. The wasps have been seen killing chicks as they emerge from their eggs and taking available honeydew, which is a valuable energy source for birds such as kaka, tui and bell birds.

High densities of wasps put intense predation pressure on native invertebrates, in particular native caterpillars and orb web spiders. Wasps attack honey bees, raid their hives and rob their honey. The flow-on effects include lost honey production, the cost of replacement bees and in turn higher pollination costs for horticulture.

Wasps pose a significant threat to human health – more than 1300 people a year seek medical treatment for wasp stings and many more wasp stings are unreported.

## Why is DOC doing this work?

Conserving many of New Zealand's natural resources and provision for safe recreation is key for DOC. Control of pests on public conservation land to protect these values is an important part of our role.

To protect the mauri of our forests DOC believes wasp control measures are necessary. Reducing wasps will significantly benefit conservation and te mauri ki te taiao (the life force of the environment).

## Timeframe

This operation will take place during the period of the 1st of January to the 28th of February 2017, when wasps are known to be feeding on protein and the weather is suitable. Non-toxic protein bait will be used early January to confirm wasps have begun feeding on a protein diet. DOC will notify all adjacent landowners and place warning signs immediately before the operation. All bait will be removed by the 28th February 2017.

## How will DOC control wasps?

A bait station control operation will be undertaken using Fipronil, also known as VespeX or Xtinguish.

The active ingredient in the bait is extremely toxic to wasps however it poses a very low risk to mammals or birds. The bait is made up of sardine catfood, which does not attract bees. Bait stations are yellow and set at 1.5m above ground to exclude non-target animals like weka.

This method has been trialled under strict research conditions in Nelson Lakes and proven to reduce wasp populations and cause little adverse effect to other species. Bait stations only need to be filled once in summer and all remaining bait is removed after three to seven days.

## What areas will be targeted?

Ten sites around the Rotorua Lakes Area are proposed. All are on public conservation land. This will include six campgrounds, three tracks, a marginal strip and a peninsula.

The following campsites will be included: Hot Water Beach (Tarawera trail, Rotomahana Conservation Area), Tarawera Outlet (Te Tapahoro Recreation Reserve), Ash Pit and Brett Road Rerewhakaaitu campgrounds (Lake Rerewhakaaitu Recreation Reserve), Tikitapu (Lake Tikitapu Scenic Reserve), and Okareka (Lake Okareka Scenic Reserve) campgrounds.

In Okareka we will target the Mistletoe track (Lake Tikitapu Scenic Reserve), Taumaihi peninsula (Lake Okareka Scenic Reserve) and the southern end of the marginal strip (Lake Okareka Marginal Strip).

The Eastern Okataina and Northern Tarawera track (Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve and Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve) will also be targeted.

A map of these sites is included below.

## What safety measures are there?

DOC will be working closely with the manufacturer of the insecticide to ensure the scale up programme is managed rigorously applying the best practice and procedures developed at Nelson Lakes. This includes the practice of removing bait the wasps haven't eaten and using a monitoring programme.

## For more information

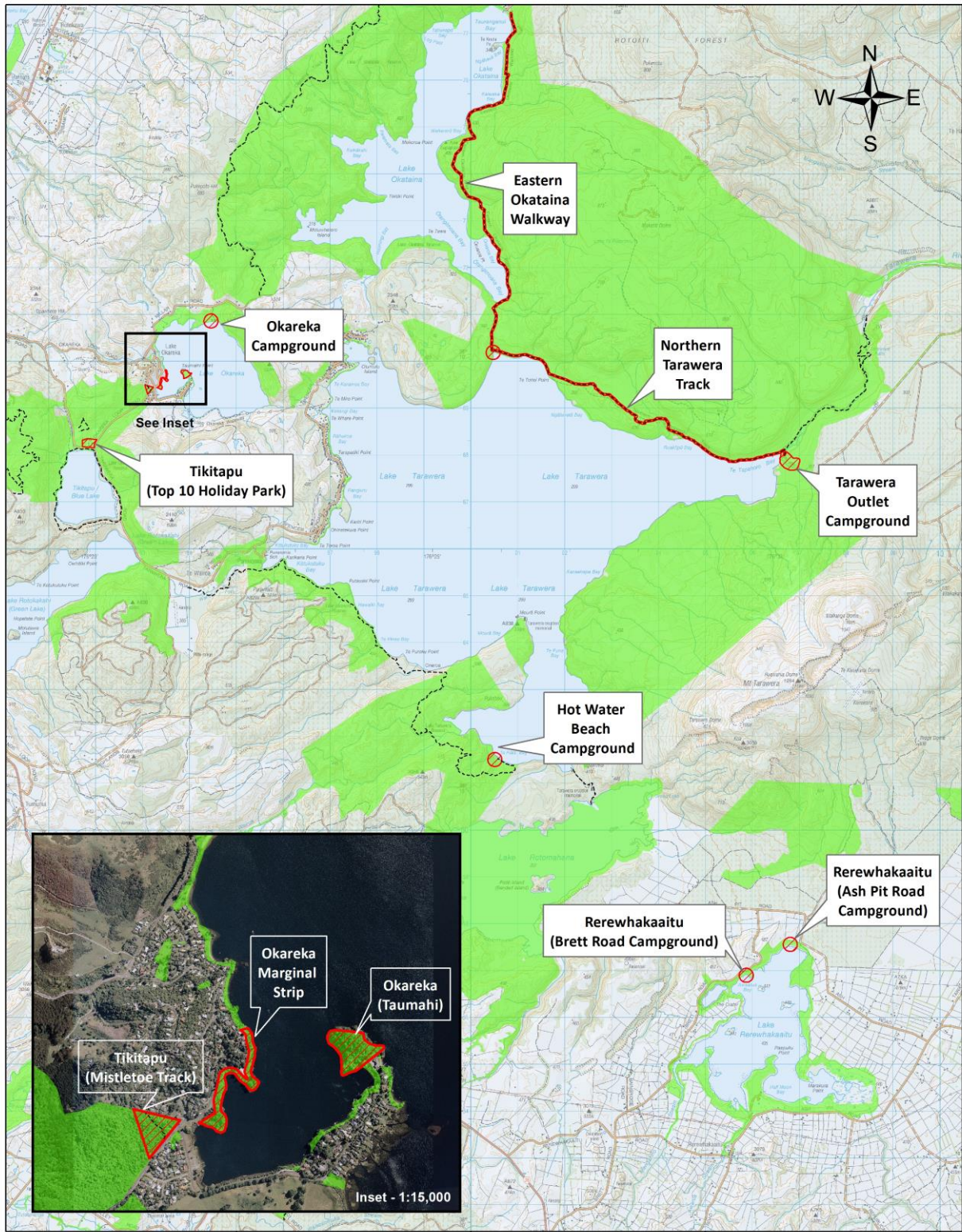
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# Proposed Pesticide Operational Area



## Wasp control 2017

Control area
  DOC managed track
  Public conservation land

0 1 2 3 4 km  
 1:80,000  
 NZTM Projection, NZGD 2000

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