

## Prevent unwanted plants and insects from invading islands

- When loading and unloading check for unwanted insects, plants and seeds.
- Take particular care that the soles of your shoes, your socks, pockets and packs are free of plant material.
- Do not discard seeds and plant material near or on islands.



Above: Weeds can directly impact on the survival of native animals: a diving petrel caught in boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*). Photo: Emma Ross.

Below: Weeds smother native vegetation and prevent regeneration: a matai smothered by old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*). Photo: Graeme La Cock.



## Rules for islands

- Check with your nearest Department of Conservation office whether you can land on a particular island, and if a permit to land is required.
- Do not leave any rubbish on islands. As well as being unsightly it also attracts rodents.
- Keep to tracks, and minimise disturbance to bird or seal breeding colonies by walking around them. Approaching too closely may cause parents to abandon young.
- Do not take your pets to islands. Cats and dogs can have a devastating impact on native wildlife.
- Keep New Zealand's islands safe from unwanted plants, insects and animals. This is vital for the protection of the unique plants and animals that live on these islands.
- Fire is a major threat to these islands. Smoke only at permitted sites.
- Report any sightings of animal, insect or plant pests to your local DOC office immediately.

**Please do your bit to protect our vulnerable wildlife such as the saddleback.**



Above: Saddleback/tieke. Photo: Garry Norman.

Cover: A rat attacks a fantail nest. Photo: David Mudge.

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# Help protect New Zealand's offshore islands from pest animals, plants and insects



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Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Why protecting islands is important

New Zealand's native animals and plants evolved over millions of years in the absence of mammalian predators. Many are very vulnerable to the Polynesian rat (kiore) introduced by Maori, and the Norway rat, ship rat and house mouse introduced by European settlers. These animals, in conjunction with other pests, such as stoats and some exotic plant species, have wiped out or endangered many New Zealand native species.

Some, such as saddleback, stitchbird, little spotted kiwi and tuatara, are now generally found only on a few offshore islands. Such islands have become refuges for plants and animals that are found nowhere else in the world. These protected islands also provide essential breeding grounds for marine mammals and sea birds.

The survival of these island-dwelling species depends on protection from threats such as fire, introduced animals and plants, pollution of the surrounding seas, and depletion of food resources by recreational and commercial fishing.

The Department of Conservation puts considerable effort into removing and controlling pests and carrying out appropriate quarantine measures on islands.

***Please help us in our efforts  
to keep islands free of new pests.***



Rodents (rats and mice) not only prey on but also compete with native wildlife for food. Photo: David Mudge.



Tiny beaks are no match for determined teeth and claws. Sometimes a rat will consume almost all of a bird, but on other occasions it will merely devour the content of the head. An adult bird which lingers on the nest in hope of protecting its young also runs the risk of being killed. Photo: David Mudge.

## Help prevent rodents from invading islands

### Boat owners

- Always have rodent poison baits or rodent traps laid on your boat.
- Prior to departure to a rodent-free island check all obvious rodent shelters, e.g. fenders, dinghies etc for unwanted stowaways.
- Rodents are most active at night. When your vessel is moored on the mainland, reduce the risk of rodent entry onto your vessel by ensuring doors and hatches are closed. Please ensure that gaps and vents are screened.

### Check your packing

Many rodents arrive on islands in badly packed food and bulk supplies.

To reduce this risk:

- Seal containers and cardboard boxes with tape.
- Tie bags tightly.
- When loading and unloading, check packages for rodent sign, e.g. droppings, gnaw marks etc.
- Preferably pack containers on day of travel.
- If you are unsure about the package, unpack, re-inspect and repack.