

## Lake Rotoiti Pest Control Project to Save Pohutukawa

Forest & Bird and the Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserves Board are initiating a pest control project to save the iconic Pohutukawa in the lakeside reserves. The alarm was raised when the skeletal remains of trees were noticed around the lake and old, large trees suddenly died over the summer of 2021 from possum browsing. Pohutukawa are a favourite food for possums who will intensively browse a tree, returning night after night to the same tree, systematically stripping it before moving on to another one of the same species. With this kind of treatment, it is little wonder that the tree, and sometimes whole forests, die so quickly. Without possum control we risk losing pohutukawa in reserve areas over time.

The pest control will involve trapping and poisoning of possums to protect the pohutukawa, and also target rats and mustelids which predate the threatened dabchick and other native birds who live on the lake. Pest control will be put in place at Te Arero Bay, Puketapu Point/ Honeymoon Bay and Te Rerengaotemokai Point at Otaramarae. A survey of Pohutukawa throughout the Lake Rotoiti scenic reserve network will also be done to assess the need to extend the protective pest control.

The project is being supported by the Department of Conservation and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, and the pest control work will be done by the Te Arawa Lakes Trust kaimahi team. For more information contact Kate Graeme ph 021 254 4037  
K.Graeme2@forestandbird.org.nz



Dead Pohutukawa on Parikawau Point, on the eastern arm of Te Arero Bay



Dead and dying Pohutukawa on the inner western arm of Te Arero Bay