

Waipahihi Botanical Gardens

Cats are popular pets and companions – as well as being a predator of our native species.

Many of the volunteers of the **Waipahihi Botanical Gardens** are cat owners – but we have noticed an increasing number of cats roaming the gardens. They are a potential and very real danger to our birdlife and small animals which consider the Gardens ‘home’.

Our Treasures (Taonga) in the Gardens

We're particularly keen to encourage more native birds to visit or live in the Gardens. Many tui come and go, spreading out across Taupō township, chasing each other, seeking nectar. Several woodpigeon (kererū) are using the gardens most of the year. In March and April you will see them eating the red berries of miro trees, while in spring they nibble the young shoots and flowers of the kowhai trees. Fantail (piwakawaka) and silvereye (tauhou) are plentiful – and welcomed.

In recent years we have had occasional sightings of bright green gecko – we're keen for these little creatures to become established in the Gardens.



What impact do cats have?

Cats are highly skilled hunters and are known to kill all kinds of native wildlife including birds, bats, lizards and insects. They hunt regardless of hunger and – even if they don't bring home what they catch – they can be destructive hunters.



Cats are an apex predator in Aotearoa — this means nothing preys on them and therefore we want to minimise their impact on our ecosystems as much as possible.

In our towns and cities, native birds do not breed fast enough to stop the decline caused by domestic cats.

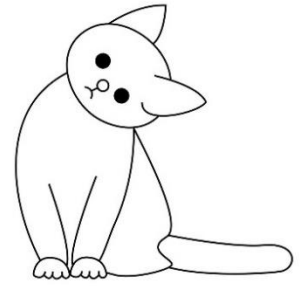
At the Waipahihi Botanical Gardens we'd like to safeguard our neighbourhood species and ask that you play your part in protecting our environment from predators.

As a cat owner, how can you help us?

Responsible cat ownership is important to help keep our native species safe. It includes microchipping cats, desexing, limiting the number of cats per household and keeping cats inside at home as much as possible.

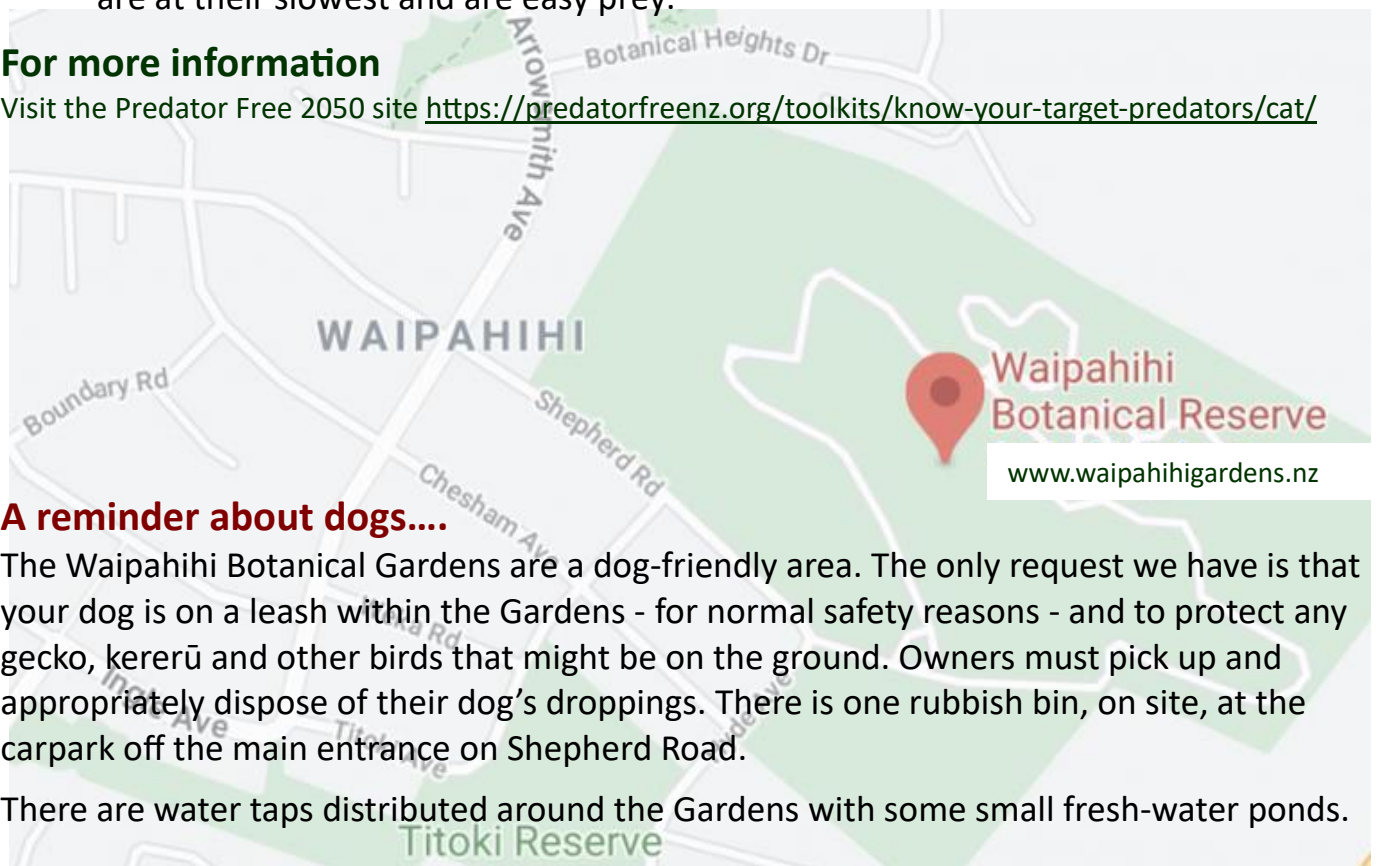
Here are some things you could do to help us safeguard the Gardens:

- Add bells to your cat's collar — the more bells the better.
- Desexing prevents any unwanted kittens, and microchipping helps identify your cat as owned.
- Consider keeping your cat indoors or keeping it on your own property. Raising an indoor cat is very common overseas and increasing in New Zealand.
- If you're not ready to keep your cat indoors all the time, try to keep your cat inside as much as possible, but for at least one hour before dusk and for an hour after dawn — this is when our vulnerable species are at their slowest and are easy prey.



For more information

Visit the Predator Free 2050 site <https://predatorfreenz.org/toolkits/know-your-target-predators/cat/>



A reminder about dogs....

The Waipahihi Botanical Gardens are a dog-friendly area. The only request we have is that your dog is on a leash within the Gardens - for normal safety reasons - and to protect any gecko, kererū and other birds that might be on the ground. Owners must pick up and appropriately dispose of their dog's droppings. There is one rubbish bin, on site, at the carpark off the main entrance on Shepherd Road.

There are water taps distributed around the Gardens with some small fresh-water ponds.



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www.waipahihigardens.nz

Thank you