

# Otago Peninsula Possum Eradication 2024

The Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group have been controlling possums on the Peninsula for the past 13 years. Alongside staff Peninsula locals have clocked over 100,000 volunteer hours getting us to this point - a Peninsula that is very close to being possum free! We are now in the final phase of the eradication and we need everyone's help to locate the last remaining possums.

The most useful thing you can do to help is to look for signs of possums and **REPORT IT!** Simply go to [predatorfreepeninsula.nz](https://predatorfreepeninsula.nz) and either fill in the sighting form or email us directly.

Not sure what to look for? Turn this sheet over for handy tips on what to look out for. If you find something and you're not sure if it's possum then please take a photo and email it to [possums@opbg.nz](mailto:possums@opbg.nz)

The more eyes on the ground the more likely we are to succeed in making the Peninsula a safer place for our native flora and fauna.



Seen a possum? *Report it!*

[predatorfreepeninsula.nz](https://predatorfreepeninsula.nz)



## Why are possums a problem?

Brushtail possums were brought over to New Zealand from Australia in 1837 to establish a fur trade. Without natural predators they soon reached high densities and have been causing staggering amounts of damage to native bush throughout New Zealand. They reached the Otago Peninsula in the 1950s and were soon causing havoc in bush remnants and gardens. Widespread possum control started on the Peninsula in 2011 and since then we've seen a raft of improvements in our natural environment. The numbers of tui and bellbird are on the rise, bush remnants are regenerating and raids on veggie gardens and orchards have decreased dramatically. One happy resident finally has roses in bloom after 20 years of possums eating the buds!





# Help us by looking for possum sign

Possum poop varies but in most cases is a classic jellybean size and shape. One possum can excrete 100 pellets a night! Colour is often very dark brown, but will change with diet (for example pine pollen turns it pale yellow). If you find poop that is very black with pointed ends it is most likely from a hedgehog.



Possums are territorial and like to leave notes on trees for other possums, like community notice boards. Look for a series of horizontal scrapes leading up a tree like rungs on a ladder. These are often easiest to see on mahoe trees. Their sharp claws will also leave long scratch marks along the trunks of trees that they climb.



Apples are a favourite treat for possums and their bite marks can be distinguished from birds if you know what to look for.



## Possum

Possum teeth make a series of flat edges around the bite zone. The teeth marks make flat scrapes across the bite, which is much shallower than bird damage.

## Bird

Beaks make triangle notches in edge of bite zone. Apple often hollowed out forming "caves" with just the skin left. Notice the pointy peck marks in the flesh.

# Seen a possum?

*Report it!*



**POSSUM  
FREE ZONE**

REPORT SIGHTINGS TO

[WWW.PREDATOR FREE PENINSULA.NZ](http://WWW.PREDATOR FREE PENINSULA.NZ)

Almost!  
We just  
need  
YOUR  
help!