

## Deer repellent trial starting March 2025

Predator Free Rakiura is now planning for the first stage of operations to eradicate feral cats, rats, possums and hedgehogs from Rakiura / Stewart Island. As part of this work, we are trialling ways to understand and minimise the potential impact of eradication operations on the island's valued white-tailed deer population, given their importance to people and to the local economy.

During discussions with hunting representatives, they have recommended research into the effectiveness of deer repellent bait on white-tailed deer. While repellent-treated bait has been tested in other deer species around Aotearoa, little is currently known about how this species responds.

Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP), in collaboration with Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, is starting this work by conducting a trial of the deer repellent Prodeer, in a nontoxic bait.

### Purpose of the trial

This trial aims to assess whether Prodeer deer repellent discourages white-tailed deer from eating non-toxic bait. The results will inform ZIP's proposal to trial the use of deer repellent more widely.

### Timing and location

The trial will begin in early March 2025, and continue in different areas over several months.

Trials will take place on public conservation land with permission from the Department of Conservation (DOC). Signs will be placed at track entrances and near trial sites.

Trials may also be undertaken on private land. If you would like us to undertake a trial on your land please contact us at [info@zip.org.nz](mailto:info@zip.org.nz)

### What the trial involves



**Non-toxic cereal bait pellets** - undyed and containing no toxins (*pictured above*) - will be placed by hand in front of monitoring cameras. Non-toxic bait will be tested equally with and without deer repellent, allowing comparisons of white-tailed deer interactions. Once deer are observed interacting with the non-toxic bait, the site will be relocated, and any remaining bait will be removed.



*Deer interaction with non-toxic lure captured by a trail camera in South Port Pegasus.*

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research has designed the trial and is leading data analysis. ZIP is implementing the trial, including fieldwork.

Read more about the project:

**[www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz](http://www.predatorfreerakiura.org.nz)**