



# Feral goats

## Why are they a pest?

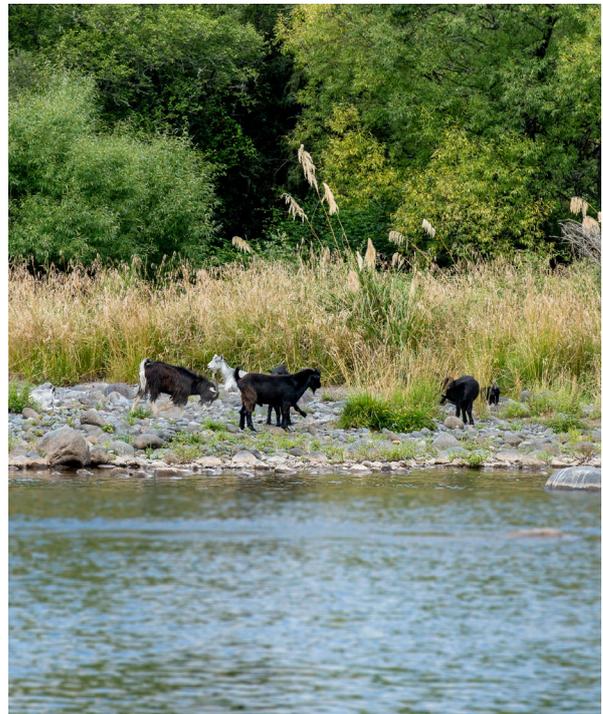
Feral goats cause considerable damage to smaller trees, shrubs, herbs and seedlings.

This can reduce the amount of new trees growing to replace older trees, severely damaging our native forests.

Goats are agile and well adapted to a wide range of environments. They can use steep, rocky slopes and bluffs that other animals cannot, which can cause erosion and make it hard for plants to grow back.

## What do they look like?

- **Size:** Adult bucks (males) stand up to 91 centimetres at the shoulder, with a body length of up to 152 centimetres, and weigh up to 55 kilograms. Does (females) are smaller, weighing up to 35 kilograms.
- **Appearance:** Feral goats can be white, black, brown, or a combination of these colours. Both sexes have horns and are a similar size to sheep. Bucks are larger than does, bearded, and have a pungent smell during rutting (mating season).
- **Signs:** Hoof tracks, scat (droppings), and intensive grazing of smaller trees and shrubs.
- **Similar species:** Goats are classed as an ungulate (hoofed mammal). Similar pest species include feral deer and feral pigs.
- **Habitat:** Feral goats inhabit several environments, from coastlines to alpine areas, including forests, shrublands, grasslands and plantations.



### Common name:

Feral goat

### Scientific name:

*Capra aegagrus hircus*

### Management programme:

Site-led

Site-led programmes have rules for specific pests that only apply in that area. Site-led areas have special biodiversity and other values to protect.

## When can I spot them best?

Feral goats can be spotted year round.

## What are the rules?

Feral goats are managed as pests under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. They can be hunted as a resource, but their control is necessary to prevent damage to native ecosystems, and it is illegal to release them into the wild without a permit.

To improve and prevent further damage to indigenous ecosystems, feral goats are in the site-led programme of the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan (2019–2029).

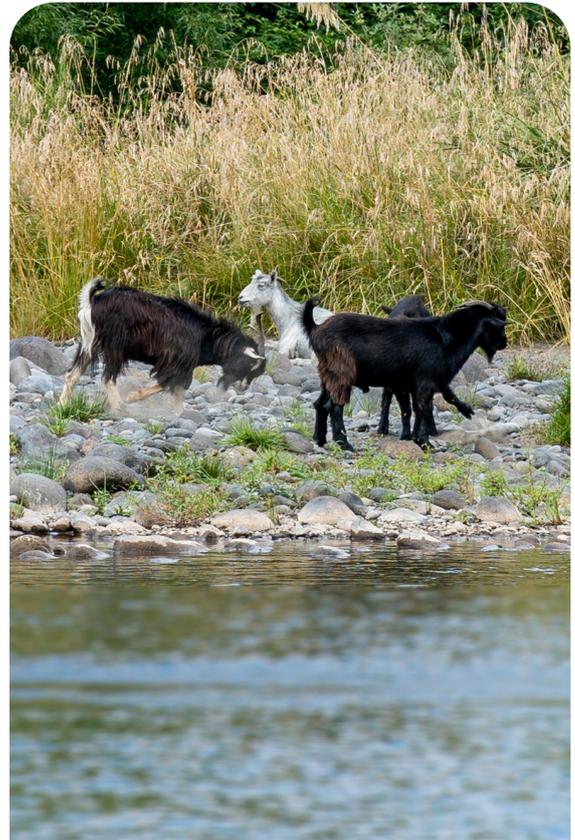
The Dunedin site-led areas are West Harbour (including Mt Cargill, Quarantine Island and Goat island) and Otago Peninsula.

No person shall keep, hold, enclose or otherwise harbour feral goats in any place, either in transit to or present in site-led areas.

To achieve this, ORC takes a lead role in supporting the goals of community groups and agencies in site-led areas in relation to feral goats. This may be through advice, education, funding, or requiring landowners to undertake control when needed.

## What should I do?

For information on controlling feral goats, visit the Department of Conservation website at [doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/wild-goats/](https://doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/what-to-hunt/wild-goats/)



For more information, visit [orc.govt.nz/goat](https://orc.govt.nz/goat)

