

# Environmental and pest management attitudes of Hauraki Gulf island communities

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Due to successes on uninhabited islands the progression of mammal eradication to inhabited islands is increasingly being considered. With progression to inhabited islands comes the need for better social engagement approaches. Evidence has suggested unplanned and unstructured social approaches towards mammal eradications on inhabited islands may increase barriers to achieving community support, with often lengthy community dialogue and unclear pathways to conflict resolution. Focusing on four inhabited islands in the Hauraki Gulf, Rakino, Kawau, Great Barrier and Waiheke, and a stratified sample from the Auckland mainland region (a control group), a survey focusing on these communities' attitudes towards the environment and pest management was undertaken. All four Hauraki Gulf island communities had pro-attitudes towards both the environment and pest management, however elevated uncertainty was associated with attitudes towards pest management. Rakino Island (from which rats have already been eradicated) respondents had a consistently greater tendency towards pro-attitudes than all other geographic areas of the study. The communities of Great Barrier and Waiheke Island held similar pro-attitudes, and Kawau Island aligned more closely with Auckland mainland for environmental attitudes but with the other three islands for pest management attitudes. The level of support for rat eradication outstripped those opposed, unsure, or upon which support depended on other factors. More importantly, those unsure also outstripped those opposed, indicating the benefit of future engagement with these communities to address the underlying reasons for their uncertainty.