



# Shakespear Regional Park

## Shakespear Open Sanctuary Important information for cat owners

**Shakespear Open Sanctuary is an open and accessible wildlife sanctuary that integrates recreation, conservation and farming. It's a place where rare and endangered species can live and thrive.**

The sanctuary is a community partnership between the Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc (SOSSI), Auckland Council, the NZ Defence Force, Watercare and our community.

Forty North Island robins (toutouwai) were released into the sanctuary earlier this year, joining the whitehead birds that were successfully released in 2015. Both species are now breeding.

### **We have also had many other successes in the past five years.**

- **Reptile recovery.** Four new lizard species have been discovered, making Shakespear the most bio-diverse mainland reptile site in the region.
- **Seabirds as ecosystem engineers.** Three species have been discovered as resident or attracted to our acoustic playback. They also import marine nutrients to the land.
- **Scarce and shy.** There are obvious signs of a growing number of species such as banded rail and spotless crane in the sanctuary.
- **Shorebird success.** Each year NZ dotterels have fledged 10 or more chicks, up from zero before pest eradication.

We need to remain vigilant if this is to continue – and as a neighbour you have a big part to play.

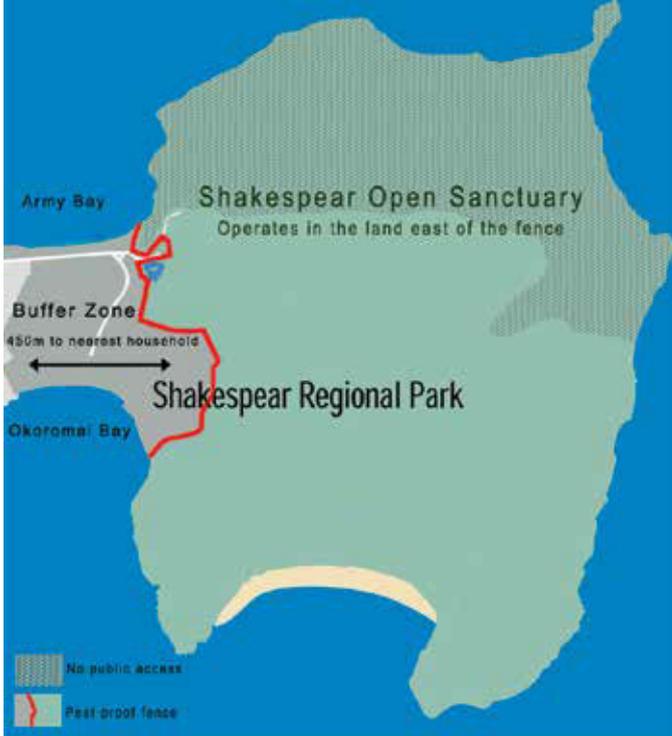
### **Keeping pests at bay**

The park is a sanctuary to a growing number of rare and endangered plant and animal species. Cats and other mammals pose a considerable threat to our burgeoning sanctuary wildlife.

We know our local community considers it a privilege to be living so close to an open sanctuary like this, but it also creates some challenges. One of these is the prevalence of pest animals such as companion and stray cats and the risk of them finding their way into the sanctuary, putting native birds and reptiles in danger.

A 1.7km pest-proof fence is in place to stop pest animals getting into the sanctuary. This is complemented by an active ground-based pest monitoring and control programme throughout the park.

The fence has been designed to integrate our popular regional park with high conservation values, but its coastal ends mean there is a risk that pests can still enter.



*The pest-proof fence at Shakespear Open Sanctuary.*

### What will happen if my cat is found in the open sanctuary?

We have a steadfast commitment to protecting the sanctuary and its values, and we take any sighting of a pest animal extremely seriously.

**If a cat or any large predator is identified inside the sanctuary beyond the pest-proof fence, it will be shot in order to protect the native wildlife in the sanctuary.**

This is in line with our cat management policy at this and the other open sanctuary in Tāwharanui Regional Park. Our methods of control of pest animals are in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act.

A 2015 review of this policy concluded that this is still the most appropriate way to manage cats and protect native wildlife inside the open sanctuary.

However, we don't want to shoot your family pet. This summer we will continue to apply a 'one strike' policy for domestic cats found in the buffer zone, the area located just before the pest proof fence line.

If we sight or capture a cat in this buffer zone we will make reasonable attempts to identify its owner so it can be returned, but with a warning that if it happens again the cat will be shot.

Regrettably, if the owner cannot be located, the cat will have to be shot.

### Why not just trap and return them?

This is not an effective management tool and our experience has been that cats will generally return, become 'trap shy' and be harder to catch.

Most cats have no form of identification so we have no way of knowing who they belong to. If you have a pet cat and would



*The pest-proof fence at Shakespear Open Sanctuary.*  
Photo: Maria Atkins

like to be contacted if it is caught in the buffer zone, please put an identification tag on its collar. We also recommend microchipping.

### How can pet owners help?

- **Please have your cat microchipped.** Talk to your vet and make sure the chip details are registered on the NZ Companion Animal Register. Vets, the council's animal shelters and groups like the SPCA have access to the register and park staff have access to chip "scanners."
- **De-sex your cat.** This reduces the risk of them wandering.
- **At night-time** keep cats inside as much as possible, as this is when they are most likely to wander.
- **When going away** please put your cat in a cattery or get someone to keep an eye on it so it is entertained and looked after.
- **Dog owners** should also be aware of and follow dog walking rules and seasonal restrictions.

### How can I support the open sanctuary?

We receive fantastic support from the community to develop and maintain the open sanctuary. You can support the open sanctuary by:

- becoming a supporter of SOSSI
- joining 'Sunday at Shakespear' monthly workdays
- volunteering in the sanctuary. Volunteers assist with:
  - animal pest surveillance and control
  - weed management
  - wildlife monitoring
  - native habitat creation
- keeping an eye out for winter public planting dates.

**For more information on volunteering, contact Auckland Council Senior Ranger for Open Sanctuaries, Matt Maitland on [matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:matt.maitland@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)**

#### Find out more:

[regionalparks.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://regionalparks.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)  
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