



Middleton Stream work report: End of Financial Year 2025/26

Privet Control

This financial year's privet control programme focused on continued suppression and eventual eradication of privet across the management area. Two control rounds were completed over the year, the first in late October and November 2025, and the second in early March 2026. The two rounds together allowed the team to work across the site and follow up on regrowth from earlier treatment.

The first round covered Sections 1 and 2 in full, along with the majority of Section 3. Control involved a combination of cut-stump and foliar herbicide applications, adjusted for plant size and density. Section 3 was the most challenging area, with a number of smaller sub-areas and dense vegetation pockets that required additional time to work through carefully.

A large quantity of rubbish was observed along the north-western boundary of Section 3, appearing to have been dumped from neighbouring properties (likely 18 or 20 Ada Street). This debris continues to limit access in that area and will need to be addressed to enable further control work.

The second round, undertaken in early March 2026, picked up where the first had left off. The team finished the remainder of Section 3, worked through the top half of Section 4 (stopping behind 8A Ada Street), and treated half of Section 5. Techniques used across the round included drill-and-fill on larger privets and cut-stumping of juveniles and seedlings, providing both immediate control and longer-term suppression of regrowth.

General Weed Control

General weed control forms an essential part of maintaining and supporting the recovery of native plantings across the site. This financial year's programme included a dedicated maintenance visit in early December 2025, timed prior to the main flush of summer weed growth to reduce competition on establishing natives during their key growing period.

The visit covered Block 1, Section 2, and Section 4, targeting tradescantia, bindweed, and Madeira vine as the main species of concern.

Progress through Block 1 was slow due to a particularly dense stand of tradescantia and bindweed. A large stand of Madeira vine along the north-western boundary of Section 2 also required significant attention. All three species are high-impact smothering weeds that compete directly with native regeneration.

Spot-spraying around established native plantings was carried out where required, maintaining clear release zones to promote growth and improve survival rates. Continued follow-up will be needed to keep pressure low on the persistent species, particularly tradescantia and Madeira vine, which regenerate readily from fragments and stem nodes left in the leaf litter.



Pest Animal Control

Pest animal control at Middleton Stream continued this year through three baiting pulses on the standard four-week rotation, in late spring (14 November to 19 December 2025), late summer (2 February to 4 March 2026), and autumn (17 April to 15 May 2026). The network operated at reduced capacity for the year, with eight of ten bait stations active (Stations 1 and 2 were offline due to Watercare construction works on site) and six of the nine traps recording activity across the reporting period. All bait was brodifacoum-based, deployed through Protecta Sidekick stations, continuing the toxin transition begun in FY 2024/25.

Because rodent activity is strongly seasonal, this year's three pulses have been compared against pulses running in equivalent months from previous years, rather than to annual totals.

Two rats were caught during the late spring pulse, broadly in line with the three catches recorded during the equivalent pulse in 2022. Bait take was 0.71 kg across the eight active stations.

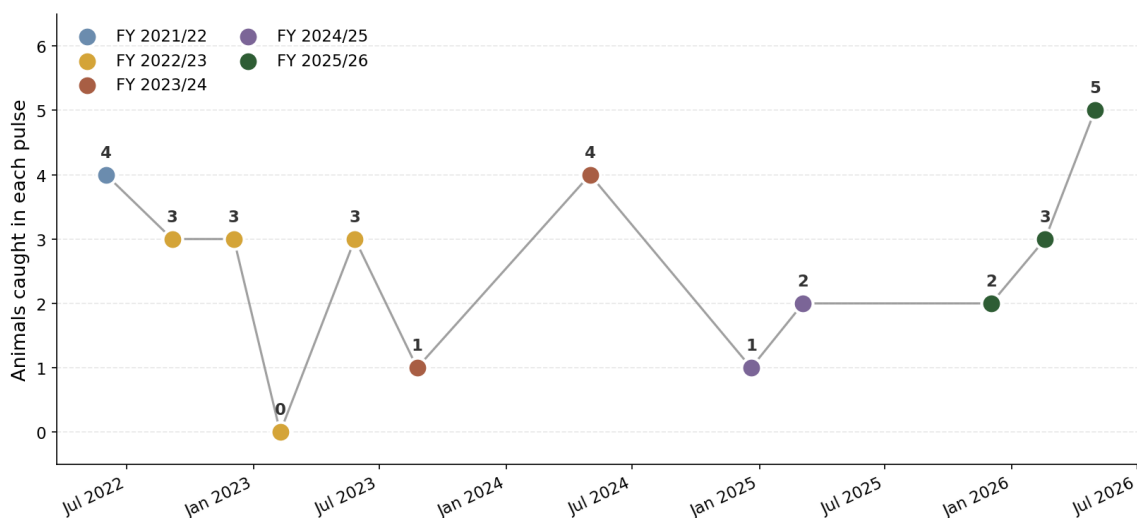
The late summer pulse produced three rat catches, up from two during the equivalent pulse in 2025, despite fewer traps operating this year. Bait take per station also fell year on year, from 0.092 kg in 2025 to 0.052 kg this year. The pattern points to a real shift in how rodents are engaging with the network, with more catches at traps and less take at stations.

The autumn pulse produced five rat catches, the highest count recorded for any autumn pulse in the five-year record. The equivalent pulse in 2023 produced three catches. Bait take this year was 0.61 kg, closely aligned with the 2023 comparator (0.65 kg) despite two fewer stations being operational.

Across all three pulses, this year's catches were exclusively rats. No possums, hedgehogs, or mice were recorded, in contrast to more diverse catches in earlier years. Catch counts match or exceed the seasonal norms of previous years, while bait take per station is at its lowest recorded level in every pulse this year. The most likely explanation is sustained control pressure since the brodifacoum transition in FY 2024/25. Because brodifacoum is lethal in a single feed, rats take bait once and are unable to return, which naturally reduces per-station take. The simultaneous increase in trap catches suggests a genuine shift in how rats are behaving throughout the site, with more being caught by traps and fewer feeding at bait stations. Adding monitoring tunnels in FY 2026/27 will confirm whether there are simply less rats overall, or if the rats are instead avoiding bait stations due to bait shyness.



Rat & pest catches per pulse — Middleton Stream, 2022-2026



Bait taken per station per pulse — Middleton Stream, 2022-2026

