

Check below decks and clean your gear

Help from boaties and fishers will make a big difference in keeping pests out of the Hauraki Gulf islands.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is appealing to boaties and other island visitors to check below decks, clean gear and leave pets at home before landing on or mooring near the gulf islands.

Mice and rats particularly love the dark spaces in and around boats while Argentine ants will rapidly make any close space home, says DOC spokesperson Richard Griffiths.

“It’s amazing how quickly these pests become stowaways. Argentine ants are particularly nasty because they’re so easily spread and they form large colonies readily.”

Likewise it’s easy for ants and weed seeds to get into gear, shoes and clothing and hitchhike to a new island location.

“It sounds like a pain checking boats and gear every time you go out but it can make all the difference to keeping our islands the fantastic locations they are,” Richard says.

There’s also a fire ban for the gulf islands – while it’s OK to use gas barbecues, it’s best to use them on board your boat rather than on shore.

For more information check out [www.doc.govt.nz/ by region/Auckland](http://www.doc.govt.nz/by region/Auckland) or your nearest DOC office.