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Fast Facts about Paihamu:

- It is the 3rd warmest fur in the world, so one can turn down the heat when using Wild-Wool products.
- Wild-Wool products are manufactured in New Zealand supporting a small industry. New Zealand has lost many manufacturing jobs to China and Australia over the last decade.
- Wild-Wool is naturally eco-friendly since it is biodegradable, recyclable, durable and reusable.
- This animal is protected in its native Australia—so will not disappear.
- Indeed, it was initially brought to New Zealand from Australia to establish a fur trade—it has a silky touch, no nap or single direction, plush under fur, low pilling, static free, strong leather (comparable to the quality of mink leather in strength, pliability and lightness), lighter than wool, warmer than wool and incredibly soft and sumptuous.
- Many conservation groups support the marketing of Paihamu. Some support it because Paihamu crowds out native species and the other risk factors above. Others support it because they oppose the use of 1080 and marketed fur is humanely killed.
- 70 million Paihamu in New Zealand (which is about the size of California). That is 17 Paihamu for every New Zealander (there are more Paihamu than sheep).
- The Paihamu eat 20,000 tons of vegetation nightly, enough to fill a container ship nightly. They feast on some gorgeous plants and trees, some of which are endangered.
- In addition to the carbon dioxide issues implicit in these numbers, this means the vegetation and habitat for other animals (as well as plants) are being destroyed.
- Species of animals and plants (some of which exist nowhere else in the world) are in danger of extinction due to the Paihamu.
- Paihamu can carry tuberculosis and it can spread to cattle—thus affecting other industry in New Zealand.

- The Paihamu is non-native to New Zealand. Indeed, no mammals are native to New Zealand, save for two small species of bat.
- Paihamu have a 30% reproductive rate which means the numbers are rising extremely quickly.
- Because the Paihamu is non-native, it has no natural enemies to stop its huge population growth.
- To control the numbers now, the government uses a poison (1080) that has been banned from US federal lands since 1972. NZ uses over 90% of the world's supply of 1080.
- This poison kills the Paihamu as well as collateral animals (birds, horses, deer, pigs, hunting dogs, pets) in what is described by observers as an "excruciating" death. As well, secondary poisoning occurs.
- The poisoned Paihamu are not utilized by any industry, just left to rot.
- In contrast, the Paihamu used in Wild-Wool products are killed humanely. New Zealanders are ardent in their commitment to humane trapping methods. Most are killed with cyanide bait (it is regulated, and the Paihamu are unconscious within 30 seconds and die in under two minutes), some are humanely trapped and some are hunted.
- Fur is simply leather with the hair left on--so it is less processed than most leather.
- The best source of leather and fur is an animal whose population requires abatement.
- None of this fur is farmed. Indeed, it is illegal to farm Paihamu in New Zealand.
- Marketing aligns incentives. Trappers will have a financial incentive to trap more when the price and demand increase. More Paihamu collected by humane methods means less inhumane 1080 poison being used. This also means that fair wage is paid to trappers, processors and manufacturers, increasing employment (especially in rural areas) throughout New Zealand.
- Faux fur is not eco-friendly. It is petroleum based and uses toxic chemicals. Sometimes, what is thought to be faux fur is actually cat or dog hair (US Humane Society).
- The alternative of doing nothing irreparably hurts the New Zealand environment and its native animals.

Ecological Profile

New Zealand faces an ecological crisis in the form of a small, non-native animal, the Paihamu. Originally brought to New Zealand in the 1800s to establish a fur trade, the Paihamu has overrun its adoptive habitat and threatens to destroy iconic New Zealand wildlife such as the beloved native kiwi bird and many other flora and fauna.

The Paihamu had no natural enemies as it had in Australia to keep its population in check. Indeed, no mammals are endemic to New Zealand save for two small species of bats, but there are a large number of other unusual plants and animals. New Zealand's unique biodiversity is internationally significant. As the most remote landmass as well as the last major landmass to be populated outside the polar regions, New Zealand retains floral and faunal oddities —such as the dinosaur-relative the tuatara —that elsewhere died out eons ago. The Paihamu proceeded to multiply and devour the tasty new landscape with abandon and without competition. Now the initial few hundred have become an estimated 70 million. **To put that in context, there are 17 Paihamu for every single New Zealand citizen.**

The ecological effect on New Zealand's forest and wildlife has been staggering. The 70 million Paihamu now occupy 99 per cent of the country and nightly consume 20,000 tons of vegetation, enough to fill a container ship. The pesky Paihamu feasts on many native trees, threatens protected native bird species, as well as insects and animals (like the Weta, one of the heaviest insects on Earth). The beloved New Zealand icon, the kiwi bird, already endangered, is also susceptible to this pest. Beautiful 3-4" giant land snails, found nowhere else in the world and nearing extinction, are another victim of the Paihamu's appetite.

The Paihamu is also known as the Australian brushtail possum, a very different species from the North American opossum. The Australian brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*, translating to furry-tailed little fox) has a brush tail, not a rat tail, is a different color and size, and has a fur with exceptional qualities. Although Australia is home to some 40 species of possum, this one was specifically selected to export to New Zealand because of its fur qualities, which include low pilling, freedom from static, silky handle and warmth. Further, Paihamu's leather quality (strength, lightness and pliability) is on par with mink. Although the popular names of the two animals are similar, they are not closely related.

New Zealand's second favorite sport, after rugby, is trying to rid itself of this pest. Marketing products made from the fur helps, but the Conservation Department of

the government also baits Paihamu-afflicted forests with poisons, including one long-banned in the United States. This compound (1080 —sodium monofluoroacetate) is spread by helicopters over large areas in cereal-based pellets, poisoning other animals such as deer, pigs and hunters' dogs. The SPCA and many local citizens are against the use of 1080. Controlling the population by hunting and trapping is a better option, turning a problem into a resource. Conservation groups support the marketing of fur products made from Paihamu.

Like the US, New Zealand has lost much of its manufacturing base, especially to China. Marketing Paihamu throws and pillows supports a small processing and manufacturing industry that has operated in New Zealand for over a century. Wild-Wool™ has no intention of moving manufacturing away from New Zealand. This is not a mass-produced product. Every throw and pillow is hand-made. Wild-Wool™ will not save a few dollars to sacrifice quality. Also, keeping manufacturing in New Zealand is consistent with its ecological ideals.

Conservation groups that support eradication and marketing of Paihamu include: The New Zealand Department of Conservation, the Maruia Society, The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand, The Ecological Foundation, Greenpeace New Zealand, and WWF New Zealand

The option of faux fur is faux in more ways than one. Faux fur is petroleum based (polyester and nylon are derived from oil), using toxic chemicals that contribute to pollution. Nylon production entails emission of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas. Further, most of the faux manufacturing occurs in China (where labor law compliance is suspect in some factories). The Humane Society has documented cases of dog and cat hair being used and marketed as faux. Faux fur is not renewable, recyclable or biodegradable. In contrast, Wild-Wool™ throws and pillows are renewable, durable, recyclable and biodegradable. As well, they are heirlooms, not something to be thrown to the back of the closet in two years.

You can turn down the thermostat when you climb under this throw. This fur is the world's third warmest (behind Arctic fox and polar bear). The thermal qualities are due to an unusual hollow core to each fur hair. Because the fiber has no scales and is hollow, it has a very silky handle, is very light (14 per cent lighter than wool) and is very warm (8 per cent warmer than wool). The only other animal fur on the planet that exhibits this property is the endangered polar bear.

Much Paihamu fur today is spun with New Zealand raised merino wool to make high-end accessories with a cashmere-like feel. These practical, yet luxurious

products are now available on our [Wild-Wool](#) site. This 100% natural fiber product is solely sourced and manufactured in New Zealand.

The use of Paihamu for luxurious and practical products emerges as the best of available options. Doing nothing could cause the extinction of native animals and plants as well as the possible spread of bovine tuberculosis. Aerial spreading of 1080 may have untold environmental consequences, causes inhumane collateral and secondary poisoning and wastes the natural resource. With marketed fur, the Paihamu are humanely collected, the leather, fur (and meat) are utilized, and New Zealand rural employment is revitalized. **The best source of leather and fur is an animal whose population requires abatement.**

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is Wild-Wool™ the world's most eco-friendly fur?

Wild-Wool™ is the world's most eco-friendly because New Zealand's non-native Paihamu are destroying its delicate ecological balance to the degree that native species of flora and fauna (plants and animals) that are found nowhere else in the world are in danger of extinction. Also, the 70 million Paihamu are a vector for bovine TB, eat over 20,000 tons of vegetation nightly and now occupy 99% of New Zealand. The government's only other solution is to drop large amounts of poison over vast areas of countryside. This poison has been banned from US federal lands since 1972 and many New Zealanders are concerned about long term consequences to the land and waterways caused by the repeated aerial dropping of this chemical. The best source of leather and fur is an animal that requires abatement. Further, this fur is recyclable, durable, renewable and biodegradable. More information is found in the Ecological Profile section of this article.

Is this fur farmed?

No. It is illegal to farm these animals in New Zealand. Practically speaking, there is no interest either. At a population of 70 million, there is plenty available in the wild.

Are these made in New Zealand?

Yes. The furs are collected in New Zealand, processed in New Zealand and all production occurs in New Zealand. Then they are shipped to Wild-Wool™.

Are the animals humanely killed?

Yes. New Zealanders are ardent in their commitment to humane collection methods. The vast majority of Paihamu are killed using cyanide laced bait and they

are unconscious within seconds. A smaller number are trapped in humane traps or hunted. Although not an easy topic, there are few alternatives for ridding New Zealand of this pest. Birth control chemicals are years, possibly a decade or longer, from development. Many conservationists see collection and marketing of the Paihamu through these methods as preferable to dropping 1080 laced cereal pellets over vast acres of forestland with untold consequences to the land and water. The option of doing nothing and ignoring the problem will have devastating consequences to the ecological balance in New Zealand.

Will my purchase really make a difference?

Yes, in two ways. The first is that you will support the market for procuring Paihamu using humane methods. The larger, more macro part of Wild-Wool's mission is to demonstrate to the government that there is a viable alternative to killing the Paihamu with 1080 and not using the animal for its fur, leather or meat. If there is enough of a market response, perhaps then the government will be motivated to spend its eradication funds on assisting with marketing the fur rather than using 1080.