

Biosecurity New Zealand says it has maintained strict restrictions to control fruit fly following detections of the pest earlier this year.

Part of Northcote has been under a Controlled Area Notice since April 26. This restricts the movement of certain fruits and vegetables out of controlled areas, preventing the spread of any fruit flies still in the area, it explains.

Additionally, the biosecurity team says it has installed a network of fruit fly surveillance traps that attract male fruit flies. It checks these regularly, it adds.

"It is that continued vigilance that led to the discovery of another single male fruit fly on 15 July in a trap in the current controlled area, 350 meters from where the last was found on 31 May," says Biosecurity New Zealand spokesperson Dr. Catherine Duthie.

"We cannot afford to take our foot off the pedal. We have found 10 of these flies in the Northcote area since February."

She adds that the entity hasn't found any evidence of larvae, pupae, eggs or female flies. Yet, she indicates that "the continued finds indicate that Queensland fruit flies remain in the area, albeit at very low levels".

Biosecurity NZ's future scheme

Keeping a careful watch over the situation is crucial; an established population of the flies could be devastating to New Zealand's multi-billion dollar horticulture industry, emphasizes the entity.

"Once we start heading out of winter, we will be looking at stepping up again," Duthie adds.

She explains the focus at that time will be on maintaining controls and continuing with baiting and more intensive trapping.

"Biosecurity New Zealand understands that this response is a significant inconvenience for those living and working in the controlled area. And we are so grateful for your continued support over the many months these restrictions have been in place."

Detailed maps of the controlled areas and a full description of the boundaries, and full information about the rules are at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/fruitfly