

*COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER – Mahi tahi!!*

## Rangers' Report – April 2018

### Operational Summary...

Tena koutou e hoa ma (gidday friends)! I hope most of you have been getting out and about in this stunning autumn weather, I thoroughly recommend a walk around Bream Head at the moment, the birds have exploded in numbers and bird song is being heard at chorus levels throughout most of the reserve over most of the day.

Rodent take of the pindone toxin is still relatively high in most areas of the reserve, although rodent indices usually trend a few percent higher in mid – late autumn as they increase their food gathering to produce more body fat in order to survive the leaner winter months. As always, our ranger and volunteer toxin and trapping teams have not slowed down the frequency and quality of predator control and it has been a really busy month also training up new keen volunteers and assessing that those already in the team are being consistent with our very high level of quality control methods. The five-minute bird count teams, led by Mike and Jenny Butcher, have been out in the very early hours of the day (my favourite time of day) to the four count sites situated throughout key listening areas within Bream Head. We have had our first visit by a large group of 50 Auckland University of Technology (AUT) environmental sciences students in April. I presented to the group at our headquarters with the students sitting on the gravel and trap boxes – a reality I pointed out to them of the difficulties conservation community groups face trying to raise sufficient funds for essential infrastructure. However, the students were exceptional listeners and very interested in the nuts and bolts of intensive mainland predator and weed control and the larger scale holistic issues our 'business' is challenged with. As well as all this we have been joined by local DOC ranger staff for a few days to battle with the large infestations of Mothpant, which are mainly restricted to the Northern and eastern flanks of Bream Head. Some good bamboo control work has occurred near the entrance to our HQ facility and we have cut a surface water swale in the paddock above the HQ buildings to stop water eroding the bank above said structures. Read on to find out more detail about some of these cool outcomes the BHCT has achieved in April.



## Monthly predator control results: April 2018

Pest	Total # caught this month	# of Total caught inside reserve (i.e. not on boundary/buffer zone).	# caught this month prev. yr.	# caught 2018 YTD	# caught 2017 YTD.
Rat	16	2 of 16	9	77	24
Possum	0	0	2	0	9
Stoat	0	0	0	3	6
Weasel	4	0	3	20	5
Ferret	0	0	0	0	0
Feral cat	0	0	0	0	0
Mouse	11	1 of 11	0	65	1
Hedgehog	0	0	0	3	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>49</b>

## Monthly Species monitoring results/updates: April 2018

Species	Method	#	ID	Sex	Location	Status/comment
n/a						
n/a						

## Volunteers for Africa (and BHCT)!!

Word must have got out (or it may be the amazing hours of work by Melissa Arsenault), Bream Head is the place to volunteer. Over the past few years we have been blessed by a dedicated team of core volunteers working hard on the reserve, however recent months has seen a large increase in new volunteers signing up through our website or directly with Melissa. Melissa and I have been very happy to place volunteers into new roles or replace a couple of volunteer positions left vacant. I thoroughly enjoy inducting the new team members, iterating strongly how vitally important quality and consistency is in our methodology to control those last remaining, cunning pests. We have also seen the start of a volunteer weed control team, albeit that at present it is the mighty one of Marc Lawrence – it might as well be three people with Marc out there 8-9 hours at a time! We are confident we will get someone to work with Marc soon to tackle more nasty weed sites, which as stated in my introduction, we are enjoying seeing the positive reduction of rather quickly. We are aiming now for a toxin/trap track maintenance team also (cutting vegetation) who will mainly concentrate on the volunteer lines on the north side of Bream Head as these lines have regenerating scrub/bush and need more attention to keep them easier/safer for volunteers to walk. We also have new administration volunteers, such as the energetic Jenny Lawrence from Mcleod Bay, who working with the fund-raising team, a group of local technological 'geeks' are forming a research and technology committee and we also hope to have a new science advisory committee soon too. For the physical work on the reserve we are aiming to have at least two people per activity so that there is great health and safety, a nice social interaction benefit and that you can help each other keep the quality levels high. If any of these volunteer groups sound like they spin your wheels, then please contact Melissa on 4340655 or email [grassroots63@outlook.com](mailto:grassroots63@outlook.com) . to join a great team. By the way, the biennial volunteer social events and our working bees are always well catered and a great time for hanging out with like minded people from your community also.

## AUT inaugural visit...

It was very exciting to have a large group of second and third year AUT environmental science students visit Bream Head and our Trust during mid semester break this April. Just over 50 students from all walks of life and many nationalities spent an entire day understanding our project and using the resource of the reserve to learn how to conduct environmental studies in the field. Firstly, I presented to the group an overview of the history of the Trust and then provided an in-depth talk and show of all the projects the Trust is involved with restoring Bream Head to former times. This involved showing the students our GIS maps, traps, monitoring equipment and provision of statistical data such as volunteer hours, RTIs, trap catch rates etc. I also provided these future environmental specialists with current and potential future political and industry issues facing community conservation groups in New Zealand.

This new relationship is all thanks to our crazy-busy Trustees, in particular, long time serving Trustee Rod Gates. Rod has worked tirelessly on this relationship with AUT (and many, many other projects for the Trust over the years) and has been the driving force which has led to the tertiary providers' involvement with BHCT. This relationship is mutually beneficial with student research projects already about to initiate using historical data sets collected by BHCT, with the aim to formulate reports with findings that can hopefully help our management of predator control and species monitoring now and going forward. I hope we can also get students to assist the Trust with research projects on the ground, that provide us the necessary information to conduct current and aspirational projects in a scientifically proven manner. Of course, we have been enjoying the support of our local Northtec environmental students and lecturer staff for a few years already now on some key projects such as the two bird translocations, the placostylus snail surveys, Bream Head skink surveys and others. We see the relationship between the two tertiary groups and BHCT as a complimentary group with enough resource and projects for all to utilise.

## Weeds get busted Bream Head style....

As stated in the operation introduction, the BHCT rangers (and some keen volunteers) have been making huge headway into our weed infestations. We have had some good support in March and April from DOC staff too and they can see the positive outcomes that are already beginning to show in sites that would have otherwise continued to grow out of control. Together, we gathered mature seed pods before they exploded thousands of new seed and we eliminated all mature plants in the known sites, so the spread potential is contained for this year from those sites. This method allows us to move very fast through more sites, containing more potential spread and then we follow up in 6-9 months with seedling control via low level spraying. Leaving the seedlings in the first attack poses no spread risk and we can move a lot quicker through the cleared sites when we return and therefore we can see the seedlings better with the matures out of the way. This is all part of our new weed control method which I am currently formulating into our next weed plan for Bream Head and should be finished later this year. So, 2018/19 are mainly containment years, 2020-2021 and onwards will hopefully mainly be controlled site follow up, buffer searching and surveying for new weeds. The Trust has only been able to afford this new increased weed control system due to the increased volunteer effort, which has effectively allowed rangers to transfer some of their previous predator control time into this important work stream too – go the mighty BHCT volunteers!!



*DOC ranger Kallan Mehrtens controlling Mothplant*

## Myrtle rust is back, we need your help!

As you may have already heard Myrtle rust has been discovered again in Kerikeri and now in Mangawhai. There is high

chance it is therefore in our area. We need your eyes in focus for this plant disease whenever you are out in our reserves, or even in and around your own property. Early detection could allow small infestations to be treated. Below is information from DOC's website. Any suspicious sightings should be directed to MPI via the contact details below.

# Myrtle rust

*Myrtle rust is a fungal disease that severely attacks plants in the myrtle family including pōhutukawa, mānuka and rātā. It is now in New Zealand.*

**Look out for myrtle rust and contact MPI on 0800 80 99 66 if you see it.**

## What to do if you see myrtle rust

- Don't touch!
- Don't collect samples as this might spread the disease.
- If you can, take a photo of the rust and the plant it's on.
- Phone MPI's exotic pest and disease hotline 0800 80 99 66.
- If you accidentally come in contact with the affected plant or the rust, bag your clothing and wash clothes, bags and shoes/boots when you get home.

Your reports of suspected cases are vital in helping determine where myrtle rust is in New Zealand, how far it has spread and whether eradication, containment, or even slowing the spread is feasible.

The earlier we find out about any New Zealand infection, the greater our chance of doing something about it.

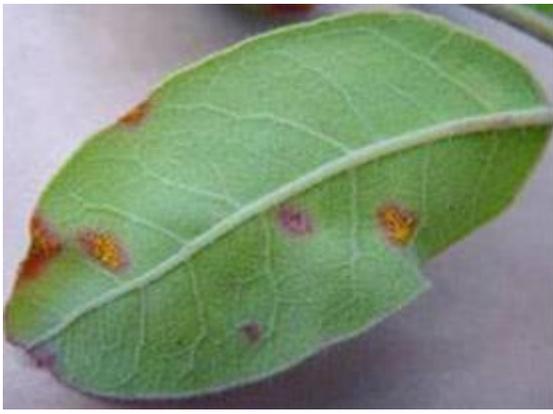
**If you're planning to plant myrtle species check the [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz) for advice.**

## What it looks like

Myrtle rust generally attacks soft new growth including leaf surfaces, shoots, buds, flowers and fruit.

Symptoms to look out for are:

- bright yellow/orange powdery patches on leaves
- brown/grey rust pustules (older spores) on older lesions
- leaves that are buckled or twisted and dying off.



How the disease begins and forms - new yellow pustules and small brown spots



The lesions get bigger and produce masses of bright yellow spores

## Weed of the Month **The Community Weed Bin is here!**



**Community Weed Bin available now at the Parua Bay Community Centre!**

**Bring in your invasive weeds and we will dispose of them free of charge**

The bin is located in the top carpark of the Parua Bay Community Centre. It is a bit of a pilot project, but we hope to be able to keep it there for a month, depending on whether people respect its purpose.



So get weeding and bring in your invasive weeds – this includes weeds like moth plant, wild ginger, elaeagnus, woolly night shade, tradescantia, climbing asparagus, jasmine, blue morning glory and tree privet and chinese privet. If you are not sure you can always give us a call on 022 056 2277.

Please help us to continue to provide this service by NOT dumping:

- Regular garden waste and lawn clippings
- Bamboo, palm trees and flax
- Native plants
- Tree trunks and large branches
- Rubbish and inorganic items
- Weeds removed from around kauri trees, because of the risk of spreading kauri dieback disease.

Don't forget when you are doing your weeding to remove by the roots, or to use some herbicide to stop cut weeds growing back. Saves work and weeds in the long run. Free advice and herbicide available to help with this too – just ask!

For more information check out [weedaction.org.nz](http://weedaction.org.nz)  
[info@weedaction.org.nz](mailto:info@weedaction.org.nz)



Spread the word!

### Coming up in May:

**Tracking Tunnel monitoring...**the ranger team will install and recover the 150 tracking tunnel cards during mid-May to collect the rodent tracking index (RTI) for May 2018. This will be a very interesting RTI round due to the very high rodent spike we have witnessed from late January this year. The May RTI is, on historical average, a few percent higher than the August and December indices.

**More mothplant control...**the BHCT volunteers and rangers will be out in teams again trying to contain the spread of mothplant in the north side of Bream Head throughout April.

**Volunteers back into toxin control...** our dedicated volunteers will be back out on the reserve checking bait stations and traps to maintain our tight hold on pests and predators.

Okay my friends, take care out there and I hope to see you in and around the reserve or our beautiful region!

Nga mihi mahana

Adam

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