

COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER - Mahi tahi!!

Rangers' Report – December 2018 – January 2019

Operational Summary...

Nga mihi mahana

Boy its hot out there, I hope you are all coping with the warm weather and your tanks have enough water. The native species will be struggling a bit with the dry but the dense canopy of trees in the valleys and on the south side of the reserve are helping to retain some moisture in the leaf hummus and soil. This translates into a better survival chance for invertebrates, which provides vital food and moisture for others further up the food chain (such as kiwi).

Unfortunately, our wonderful time with Bruce Cole-Baker as field contract ranger has come to an end as I write this. Bruce has left the Trust to have back surgery, and then his beautiful family plan to leave us for a new adventure in the USA. I will write up a better tribute to Bruce next month (there was a tribute to him on our Facebook page recently). What this means is that until a replacement (big shoes to fill) has been found, I am alone running the ship, and February is turning out to be a very busy month as it is. I do have some support from ex ranger Pete Mitchell which is greatly appreciated. Therefore, this report is going to be very short my friends, as I just simply do not have the time to do a detailed document.

So, we have had another great summer with stoat numbers relatively low, which I am so excited to say has allowed the five monitored grey faced petrel (gfp) chicks to fledge successfully in late January. This is the second season that we have had a 100% successful fledging rate of our monitored gfp. This outcome is such a strong reflection of the success of the Trusts' predator control and monitoring programme and is a very big deal in mainland ecological restoration because these seabirds are highly sensitive to predation by rats and stoats. Let's not forget this is being led by community on the mainland, without a predator proof fence! We have caught seven stoats in December 2018, but only one in January 2019 bringing the summer stoat season catches to a total of eight, which is the same as 2017. You will see in the table below that we did catch 10 stoats over the calendar year for 2018, but we usually look at the summer catch figures for stoats over a December and January period. The really positive news is that both the 2017/2018 and the 2018/2019 summer seasons catch totals are quite a bit less than the 13 caught in 2016/2017.

You can see that the 2018 rat, mouse and weasel catch totals are far higher than in 2017. As I have noted in my previous reports this is all down to the fact that we added 123 new snap-e rat traps to the northern boundary in 2018 (which are great at catching rats, mice and weasels), and that we intensified the possum and feral cat traps on this line also. Therefore, it is totally acceptable that there is going to be a large total catch rate differential in 2018 compared to previous years' total catch rates for these predators. We will hopefully see a more balanced total catch rate by the end of 2019 when we can fairly compare the results.

The other fantastic news is that the annual average residual tracking index (RTI) for rats in 2018 has stayed at a very impressive 1.3%. This means that if we were to install a rat trap anywhere within the reserve our chances of catching a rat is only 1.3%. Our wonderful volunteers have continued to battle though the heat to keep our traps and toxin stations in tip top condition. We have shot some cool videos of how to check and reset traps, toxin stations and some monitoring equipment for volunteers to keep well trained. Our bird monitoring team have conducted five-minute bird counts for the summer with plenty of native species picked up in the surveys. And, if all this wasn't enough for you, our acoustic recorders have discovered ground calls from cooks petrels and fluttering shearwaters within Bream Head/Te Whara!! The

Trust is keen to follow up this result by being able to find capacity to search for burrows of these two seabirds, just like we did with the gfp.

Okay team, that's it for now. Hopefully I will have more time in March to write a more detailed February report, and if I missed anything out from this summer report I will add it in then. Many thanks for your continued support, the reserve is really becoming a haven for native species and I implore you to come and check it out, especially on these beautiful days (morning and evenings are best).

Monthly predator control results: December 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	17	2 of 17	5	165	69
Possum	0	0	0	15	12
Stoat	7	7 out of 7	3	10	10
Weasel	3	0 of 3	0	52	11
Ferret	0	0	0	0	0
Feral cat	0	0	0	1	0
Mouse	8	0 of 8	3	202	15
Hedgehog	1	1 of 1	2	5	18
Totals	36	10 of 36	13	450	137

Monthly Species monitoring results/updates: December 2018

Species	Method	#	ID	Sex	Location	Status/comment
Rats	Monitor with tracking tunnels December 2018	150 tracking tunnels	n/a	n/a	Entire reserve	1.3% residual rat tracking (+/- 1%) 20% residual mouse tracking (+/-6%) 32% residual weta tracking (+/- 3%)
n/a						

Monthly predator control results: January 2019

Pest	Total # caught this month	# of Total caught inside reserve (i.e. not on boundary/buffer zone).	# caught this month prev. yr.	# caught 2019 YTD	# caught 2018 YTD.
Rat	11	2 of 11	13	11	13
Possum	5	0 of 5	0	5	0
Stoat	1	0 of 1	3	1	3
Weasel	2	0 of 2	4	2	4
Ferret	0	0	0	0	0
Feral cat	0	0	0	0	0
Mouse	10	0 of 10	11	10	11
Hedgehog	6	2 of 6	1	6	1
Totals	35	4 of 35	32	35	32

Monthly Species monitoring results/updates: January 2019

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



A visitor gets air lifted above Ocean Beach due to a broken leg



A nest of plague skink eggs - the invasive skink from Australia



Adam checks and refills one of the three kauri dieback cleaning stations



"I'm hungry, I'm hungry..." A juvenile pied shag feeds on the wing in a tree above Ocean Beach.



Large adult stoat caught in a Steve Allan cat trap near the gfp sites



Adam during filming of trap check videos to be posted on YouTube for volunteer training



A late flowering pohutukawa tree Jan 4th, 2019.

Coming up in February:

Combined weed war...The Trust rangers and DOC rangers will combine powers once again to tackle the two known infestations of Climbing Asparagus in a planned attempt control this invasive pest and effectively suppress its spread.

Biennial lizard survey...The BHCT rangers will conduct the lizard survey for 2019 in February using pitfall and G-minnow traps, as well as artificial covers and spotlighting.

More school visits...Trust ranger Adam Willetts will conduct environmental education with 50 school children from Kokopu Area School.

Mauri ora (good spiritual health!)

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