

Pests? What Pests?!

This year's major pest control operation has just been completed and we have had the greatest reduction in pests yet.

Earlier in the year we completed an intensification project where the spacing of the bait station lines was reduced to 75m apart and bait stations installed every 75metres along those lines, effectively giving us a 75m x 75m bait station grid throughout the forest. This increased the number of bait stations from 900 to over 1800 giving the greatest possible coverage and control of rats/possums.

Planning for this years pest control operation began very early with consultation required with neighbours, councils, Iwi, and other affected parties. Approval then had to be obtained for DOC and the MOH (Medical Officer of Health). A lot of hours were spent by Hamish Dean completing this work. Many thanks

Volunteers completed pre-control monitoring of rats, which gave us an RTC (Residual Trap Catch) of 47%, which for Otanewainuku was very high. Possums were at a more modest 7.7%. Thanks to Keith McLeod for co-ordinating this.

Thanks to a funding grant from the DOC Community Fund contractors worked the North and South block while our volunteers laid bait on the Mountain block. Work started with volunteers bagging bait into 750gram bags per bait station.

The baiting operation was then completed over 4 weeks with 2 rounds of pre-feed placed in the bait stations to key the animals onto the bait stations, and then a final placement of bait in the bait stations. The last weekend we removed uneaten bait.

We had a great turn out of 40 plus volunteers each weekend, walking the lines up and over the mountain, carrying pack loads of pre-feed and bait. Thanks to the huge support we managed to complete all the tasks we had planned.

We had a huge uptake of the pre-feed, meaning the pests were keyed onto the bait stations. The bait then went out and boy did it work a treat on those pests. We had fantastic weather throughout the operation, which helped keep the bait in good condition and provided great feeding conditions. During and after the operation we also had volunteers walking and checking farm boundaries and checking dams. At the end of the operation we completed another rat monitoring and possum monitoring. The RTC results werewait for it 0% for rats and 0% for possums. WOW! We had never had a result like that before.

We have given those pests a huge hit at the peak of the bird breeding season and given the forest a huge lift. A huge thanks to all the volunteers involved. No matter what you did, all the hard work helped us achieve great results! This gives the Trust huge confidence moving forward, that working together and planning well we can have a big impact on pest numbers in the bush.

Peter Crane | Operations Committee.



Photos Moana Bianchin

New Chair Hans Pendergrast

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our new Chair to the Trust. A long-time volunteer, Hans is full of passion for Otanewainuku and has worked tirelessly on our Strategic Action Plan over the past 12 months. He and Jan live on the Whataroa side of the mountain on Seales Rd. He is the son of Jim Pendergrast, founder of the Trust.

Peter Crane did a fine job stepping in when Phil Wells had to stand down as Chair in 2014 due to ill health. Thank you Peter for all you do. Peter is on our Operations committee. Phil has resigned as a Trustee, but continues his stellar work for the Trust in education, alongside Carole Long.

Draft Strategic Plan

2015-22

On 1 December 2015 Trustees approved this document as an operative draft plan.

It is presented for review by DOC, Iwi, our volunteers, funders, Western Bay District Council (WBDC), Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC), Tauranga City Council (TCC), and the community.

We seek your input to this draft and value your comments or suggestions. If you would like to view a hard copy or be sent a PDF please email us: info@kiwitrust.org or phone 543 2147

Copies can be found on our website - About tab. Feedback by 31 March 2016 please.



Stoat Trapping

This year so far we have been reasonably successful catching stoats, ferrets, rats, cats, the odd possum and hedgehogs. Whilst a lot of suburban people think hedgehogs are "cute", they are anything but in our bush as they have a voracious appetite for invertebrates (food required for kiwi) and they will devour lizards and weta. Our stoat traps work well in catching these pests. The number of mustelids (i.e. stoats and ferrets) trapped is comparable to last year's catches, with a total of 88 to end of October. We don't catch very many weasels, however, last year, a white weasel was caught. Rat numbers are slightly higher and there has been a significant increase in the number of cats caught. Last year, we had trapped 9 feral cats and to the end of October this year, we have had 17. Most feral cats have been caught in traps close to the road which may suggest that they have been "dumped" but the odd one has been trapped further in on lines. We have just purchased some cat traps and hope to have these in place prior to Christmas. Feral cats are lethal in the bush, killing birds and occasionally taking eggs. Feral cats will prey on native lizards, fish, frogs and large invertebrates. So the efforts of the dedicated stoat trappers involved in Otanewainuku are paying dividends in terms of ensuring these pests are taken care of so that our kiwi, kokako, robin and a whole host of fauna that reside in this beautiful part of New Zealand are protected.

Not only do lot of Otanewainuku stoat trappers maintain their traps and tunnels, most of them take pride in keeping their lines clear of windfalls and the ever invading supplejack. This makes a huge difference on workdays where lines have to be cleared for baiting operations in the latter part of the year.

We have been fortunate to have several very enthusiastic new people come on board in terms of stoat trapping. It is always a pleasure to show willing people how stoat traps and tunnels are maintained. Of course, we would like to have more trappers to share the load, so if you are interested in helping keep our precious birds safe, and want to become a stoat trapper, please contact me. Again, a **huge thank you** to our stoat trappers for their tireless efforts. It is very rewarding when you are walking along your stoat line, and you sense something is watching you, and look up to find a robin just a very short distance from you, or it may be a fantail flitting around or tomtit. From time to time, we hear kokako call and if one is very lucky, actually see these birds high up in canopy. There are always wonderful surprises in this part of the world!

Jenny Black

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P. 544 8100 eves



A rare albino weasel caught last year.



Natalia Lunson, our newest Stoat Trapper

Photo: Jenny Black

Nigel Veale

The Trust would like to thank Nigel Veale, who is stepping back, for his hundreds of hours of service in many areas: His substantial role with the Kiwi monitoring team tracking kiwi, lifting eggs at night and transporting them with great hope to Kiwi Encounter, ongoing kiwi monitoring at the Warrenheip crèche and, alongside Phil Wells, Nigel was the driving force behind our biggest funding application to date to DOC for money to ensure the bait station intensification this year. Nigel appears in "Operation Nest Egg" a short documentary by Aaron Smart about the egg which hatched the kiwi chick who we now know as Pistachio. www.vimeo.com/69599603

We hope to bring you a full volunteer profile of Nigel in the next newsletter—Ed.



Photo: Dove Edwards

2015 - A year to be proud of!

With the winding down of another busy year it is a good time to take stock and reflect on some of the great work, and dedication of supporters that make our successes possible. Here is a taste of what has been going on in the second half of 2015!

Line clearing workdays were held in July and August as well as rat population monitoring to check on pest numbers prior to our Spring workdays. The Spring work days themselves saw a superb turnout of volunteers all doing their bit to control rats and possums in the forest.

The result of all of this work? Rat and possum monitoring showed an unprecedented decrease from 47% and 7.7% Residual Trap Catch, respectively, to an outstanding 0%! This is a huge boost to the ecology of the forest.

Another highlight of 2015 has been the review of our Strategic Plan. The Trust has undertaken this review in response to the clear need to embrace the entire ecology of our unique, virgin forest. The new Strategic Plan guides the Trust towards its 20th year in 2022.

The Trust is much more than volunteers doing their great work in the forest. Behind the scenes many people work hard to keep the Trust moving forward and up to date with all of our financial and legal commitments. For example, our current annual financial report is coming very close to complying with new reporting standards for charities that came into effect in 2015, and work continues towards our goal of 100% compliance by 31 March 2016!

We will have a number workdays planned for after Christmas to fix up some items that were identified during the pest control operation, so watch this space. If you're interested in getting involved in activities like the above please get in touch. We warmly welcome **new volunteers!**

Katie Brown

Volunteer Profile: Gavin Cherrie

How long have you been interested in conservation? I was about 8, my Cub pack were involved in conservation week activities, I have been hooked ever since.

How and when did you first get involved with the Trust? Why did you want to get involved? 2008. I had left my job to start a new business. My goal was to work part time and dedicate more hours to the things that were important to me. Volunteering with an ecological trust was on that list so when I read about an Otanewainuku work day in the Bay Of Plenty Times I decided to go along.

Can you tell us about the first volunteer activity you took part in? Stapling bags of toxin to trees. It was funny, I mistakenly thought the day started at 12:00 so I arrived at 11:50 to find that most people were munching on a sausage before heading home. Dave Edwards had just returned from doing some lines and said there were more to be done, did I want to have a go? He walked down part of the line with me, showed me how to do the job, then headed off to do some other lines. I got back to the shelter around 3:30, the sausages were all gone.

What did you enjoy about it? Walking bait lines alone in Otanewainuku during a heavy rain shower. It was about as connected to nature as I had ever been.

What role do you now have within the Trust? Can you tell us a bit about what it involves? I have taken on the role of running the fund raising committee. So far there is a committee of one so the meetings do not last very long. I have been part of the team developing the strategic plan which has helped with my understanding of how the fundraising group can contribute to the work of the Trust as a whole. The plan has some challenging goals so we are going to have to get creative in our approach to find the money and resources to successfully execute.

How do you keep yourself busy when not volunteering for the Trust? Family, surfing, kayak fishing and reading. Work wise I have my own engineering consultancy: I am a director of a local food manufacturing company and a good friend and I have a "green tech" start-up called 2+.

What have been the highlights of your involvement so far? I have really enjoyed working with all the wonderful, dedicated people who I meet in all aspects on the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust organisation. But my favourite moment is every work day at about 09:20 when you step off the road and into the forest, it feels like coming home.



Larissa, Gavin, Suzanne and Tyler Cherrie

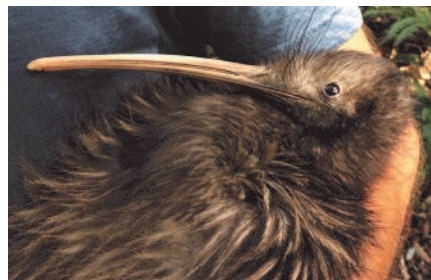


Photo: Pauline Brown

Ngarie having a check up with Dave Brown

Kiwi Update

The number of known kiwi at Otanewainuku is the same as recorded in our last newsletter; a single female and four couples. Good news! Our couples have all shown signs of mating.

Maui and Whetu are still producing non viable eggs. Our youngest couple, Te Hoe and Wyunna abandoned their nest after a very short period so no luck with eggs, not unusual for a first nesting attempt. Kaha and Fetah unfortunately abandoned their nest at 46 days, 14 days shy of the optimum pick up time. These eggs were viable but unfortunately too cold to be hatched at kiwi Encounter. We still have Kowhai and Ngarie sitting on eggs; all going well they may give us a Christmas surprise this year!

We have 14 kiwi, including Pistachio, at Warrenheip which we will need to start moving out to make way for eggs that were lifted out of the Whirinaki a few months ago. These eggs have been sourced from five wild male kiwi and are presently being raised for us at Kiwi Encounter. Pistachio is due for a transfer as soon as we can locate her in Warrenheip. She dropped her transmitter a few months ago and I have been given the OK to catch her and transfer her during the breeding season. I will attempt to get over to Warrenheip this week with Diane Prince and her kiwi day dog and try and locate Pistachio, not an easy task with all the kiwi scent within the enclosure.

Dave Brown

Great Kiwi Morning Tea

The tag team of Phil Wells, Dave Brown, Carole Long and of course Koro Kiwi were the stars of the Great Kiwi Morning Tea hosted at Bayswater Retirement Village on 16 October as part of Save the Kiwi month.

After an introductory talk and PowerPoint presentation by Carole, Phil explained the process of pest control, demonstrating the use of bait stations and trap tunnels. A transmitter had been fitted to a toy kiwi which was hidden in the pot plants on the stage of the auditorium, and Dave explained the telemetry for tracking the birds then "tracked" the kiwi onto the stage. This was well received, and our kiwi specimen and egg were a great talking point.

We had a quiz about kiwi after morning tea and gave out a Forest & Bird calendar as one prize, one of the Village Entertainment Committee members donated a toy kiwi full of marshmallows as another prize, and we had a special bonus for spot prizes. Because we were one of the first events registered nationwide we received a case of Highlander condensed milk which was sponsored by Nestles - very popular! Donations from village residents totalled \$253 - certainly a Great Morning!

Carole Long



Stoa Volunteer Co-ordinator Jenny Black



Dave Brown, Phil Wells and Carole Long

Thank you!

Thanks to **Port of Tauranga** for your donation of \$350, to **Comvita staff** for your ongoing payroll donations, to **Bureta Garden Club** for your donation of \$100 following a talk, to the **Oropi** branch of **Rural Women** \$50, to the **Tauranga Probus Club** members \$140, to **Oropi School** for your fund-raiser this year which raised \$200.10. Thanks also to **SkyCity Hamilton** for your kiwi work donation \$2,200. Thanks to all our other donors, big and small as well as our Sponsor a Hectare donors. Every donation is appreciated and helps us to care for the Otanewainuku Forest.

Our ongoing thanks to Western BOP District Council for monitoring support, TECT for kiwi work, Kiwi For Kiwis for Kiwi work (the 2015 year we were pledged \$8,820) and WWF- for kiwi work.

To help strengthen the connection between DOC, grant recipients and the significant investment/contribution being made to conservation the CCPF has been renamed the **DOC Community Fund**. The name change will also help improve clarity regarding the role of DOC in administering the fund." Funding was used for pest control & bait station expansion. Te Puke Vets, Wild Kiwi Clothing, Kerry Ryan and Associates ,2+ and Cloudnine continue to support us!

Congratulations to Dave Wills and Sarah King on the birth of their son, Daniel Ryan.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



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TECT



Alive at Night—Weta, Spiders, Moths, Bugs



Photo: Bryce McQuillan

www.brycephotography.co.nz

As part of conservation week the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust hosted a night walk. Thirty people ranging from five years old to over seventy met at the picnic area at sunset on Friday 6th November. We were privileged to have two of NZ's most knowledgeable entomologists; Peter Maddison and Bryce McQuillan, join our bug discovery.

Peter Maddison has led night walks at Otanewainuku in the past and has a huge knowledge base and experience, from a life time commitment to studying insects. Bryce McQuillan specialises in insect photography, especially spiders. There are around 2000 known species of NZ native spiders and at the rate Bryce and others are discovering new species, it is Bryce's estimate that there is probably about 2000 species yet to be discovered. His most recent project was supplying the photos for "A Photographic Guide to Spiders of New Zealand". Bryce's enthusiasm and attention to detail was contagious and everyone appreciated him freely sharing his knowledge and experiences.

As fantastic and wonderful as Otanewainuku is during the day when we can see the trees and hear the bird life, for those who want to experience something completely different, then a night visit reveals a whole different world. Friday evening was dry and mild; pleasant for people, but not quite so attractive to insect night life. Even so, we did see a huge number and range of insects. On a drizzly, high humidity, warm night we could expect to see up to ten times as many insects as we saw this time.

We saw large cave weta through to the smallest of spiders. Bryce even found a rare spiny long horn beetle. Finding this sort of insect is an indication of the excellent health of Otanewainuku forest.

At the end of the evening walk many of the visitors personally, sincerely thanked Peter and Bryce for their input. The children in particular were appreciative, and took the time to say so, as they realised that they had experienced an opportunity to see and learn from the forest, that not a lot of children get.

The Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust's strategic plan has a new "tag line":
When the Forest Flourishes, the People Flourish.

This night walk experience was an excellent example of this, where our flourishing forest gave our visitors an enjoyable and educational experience that added value to their lives.

Hans Pendergrast



Western Bay of Plenty
District Council



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



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