

Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust

NEWSLETTER OF THE
OTANEWAINUKU KIWI TRUST

www.kiwitrust.org



"Ensuring the long term survival of kiwi in Otanewainuku Forest, preserving our taonga of native flora and fauna for generations to come."

No.2 SPRING 2004

Our first AGM - Strong Support

Oropi School's multipurpose rooms once again burst at the seams with volunteers, locals and visitors keen to hear the very latest on kiwi from Paul Jansen, National Kakapo Team leader and BNZ Kiwi Recovery Trust advisor.

Chairman Mark Dean congratulated the team on establishing the Trust as an Incorporated Charitable Trust with the legal expertise of Bruce Brown. A dedicated band of volunteers monitors trap lines and collects vital data. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with DOC, who have offered help and encouragement in work they are not able to do. A website has been established www.kiwitrust.org and regular newsletters sent to volunteers and sponsors. Environment BOP, Comvita, and Te Puke Forest & Bird have given major support. Mark made special mention of the assistance given by Robyn Skelton of Landcare Trust in working on strategic planning and vision for the future. The strategic plan and draft vision for the Trust were presented to the meeting by Mark Dean with immediate and long term goals and also looking ahead to outcomes for 2030.

Paul Jansen gave an excellent presentation on the status of kiwi there are four distinct species and six sub-species over the whole of New Zealand. Research shows that numbers are declining and mustelids are the main enemy. Stoats take out at least 50% of chicks.

Without community support, kiwi are doomed in New Zealand. They will not fit on offshore islands because they need too much space. The good news is that there are 50+ community groups doing kiwi work in the North Island, and for kiwi in the Western Bay of Plenty it is all hands to the pump! Options to be considered are moving birds, taking eggs and using Operation Nest Egg to hatch chicks, perhaps using an island like Mokoia to raise chicks to 1 kg when they can survive in the wild.

Paul congratulated the Trust team of volunteers led by Dave Edwards and Neale Blaymires for their innovative methods and good ideas on bait trials. He recommended networking with other groups and said that DOC has a kiwi hui planned for the end of March 2005.

Conservation Week Open Day & Sign Unveiling

More than 30 people braved the weather to gather at Mountain Road, and the refurbished shelter was buzzing with activity. Te Puke Rotary, who originally built the shelter in 1975, have kept it tidy and recently worked with DOC staff, Adopt-a-Track volunteers and Trust members to give the site a clean up before the new interpretation sign was installed.

Mark Dean welcomed everyone and outlined the work the Trust was doing and plans for the future. Neale Blaymires gave a great demonstration of trapping techniques for stoats and had the children totally enthralled by producing a dead rat which had been caught in a trap set nearby overnight. This was to illustrate the tunnels and trap sets planned to reduce rat numbers as well as mustelids in the forest. Welcome additions to the volunteer team were signed up on the spot and more workers are needed for the springtime trapping effort.

Sharon Seager "unveiled" the new sign on behalf of Comvita NZ Limited who sponsored it, and the information adds a further insight to this special forest and the species of birds and plants to be seen here.

The rain held off and intrepid trekkers set off with Neale and Dave Edwards to explore trap lines. Glenn Ayo led a family group on the rimu walk and Carole Long took another group to the top of the mountain where the skies cleared and views from the trig platform were quite spectacular.

Te Puke Forest & Bird won an award from Trustpower for their work in setting up the project, and the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust was nominated for one of the inaugural Bay of Plenty Conservation Awards.

Carole Long

Open Day & BBQ

Date : Sunday 31 October 11am to 3pm

Venue : Shelter, Mountain Road, Otanewainuku Forest

Trustees will lead guided walks to the top of the mountain, around the rimu walk, and adventurous souls can inspect a trap line with our stoat trapping team. Bring : Lunch, drink, warm clothes, sturdy footwear, raincoat. Sausages & bread provided.

Contact : Carole Long 07 542 0224



Officially unveiled sign at rear, families relax and enjoy a cup of tea.

Volunteer Notice Board

With summer on it's way and holidays if you are going to be away for an extended period or other wise can't do you trap line could you please contact Dave Edwards and he will arrange for some one to fill in for you. Thanks to all the volunteers whether you are checking trap lines or working behind the scenes on things like the data base. Without you the kiwi trust would not exist and remember your suggestions and feed back are always welcome.

Dave Edwards

Traps and tunnels

In the last newsletter I suggested setting off the Conibear traps to help free up the triggers which tend to stick after long periods of inactivity, by way of explanation stoats and rats have a natural aversion to pushing past something like the trigger wires when they feel too much resistance, so the freer they are the better. It has also been a puzzle why we catch the odd animal leaving a tunnel and not when they are entering it, last week I caught a stoat that had been trying to squeeze between the top of the trap and roof of the tunnel, we will build a baffle system for the lift off tunnel covers and ask volunteers to change them over as they do their lines,

It is harder to get motivated during winter to get out and do trap lines due to the weather and also stoat catch rates drop of markedly, but with the now increased bird life in Otanewainuku it is still a pleasant place to spend some time and remember it's far better to catch that female stoat now before she gives birth to the next generation of killers.

Bird monitoring

The bird-monitoring program that we started in July is starting to build up some useful data; everyone should have their identification kits. Obviously some people will have more experience than others But this is only a matter of practice And a bit of training that we are doing at open days, if you have questions on bird monitoring contact Carole Long 542 0224



Salted rabbit vs eggs

The salted rabbit has continued to be effective during winter with only 1 stoat caught on an egg and 6 stoat/ferrets on rabbit so far. We will continue the egg and rabbit trial for another year, however with a new range of long life rabbit and fish baits coming on the market these may replace the salted rabbit if they are proven to be as effective. From 1st Jan 04 to the end of July we have caught 3 times as many stoats on salted rabbit as we have on eggs. DoC have started their own salted rabbit and egg trial in Northland, the initial results of which are similar to ours.

Trapping in Otanewainuku 2003 - 2004 season (this year)

Month	Ferrets & Stoats	Details
Aug '03	X	1 stoat, 4 rats.
Sep '03	XXX	3 stoats, 9 rats. L17 not checked for months. All traps removed & modified.
Oct '03	XXXXX	4 stoats, 1 ferret, 10 rats, 2 feral cats.
Nov '03	XXXXX X	6 stoats, 8 rats.
Dec '03	O	3 rats, 1 hedgehog, nil stoats
Jan '04	xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxx	18 stoats (11 on rabbit, 7 on egg), 8 rats, 2 hedgehogs
Feb '04	XXXXX X	6 stoats (5 on rabbit, 1 on egg), 8 rats & 1 feral cat (rabbit).
March '04	XXXXX XXXXX XX	7 stoats (6 rabbit, 1 egg), 5 ferrets (2 rabbit, 3 egg), 8 rats, 1 possum.
April '04	XXXXX XX	6 stoats (all rabbit), 1 ferrets (on rabbit), 10 rats and 1 feral cat (rabbit).
May '04	XXX	0 stoats, 3 ferrets (all rabbit), 6 rats.
June '04	XX	2 stoats (all rabbit), 0 ferrets, 6 rats, 1 feral cat (rabbit).
July '04	XXXX	2 stoats, 2 ferrets, 10 rats, 1 small possum.
Total	67	55 stoats, 11 ferrets, 3 hedgehogs, 82 rats, 2 possums & 5 feral cats.

Trapping in Otanewainuku 2002 - 2003 season (last year)

Total	28	26 stoats, 2 ferrets, 1 chicken, 4 hedgehogs, 75 rats, 3 possums & 3 cats.
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Teacher Trainees Help Out

On our recent workday students from the University of Waikato at Tauranga came along to help set up our new rat trapping programme.

On the Sunday they set out the new rat tunnels along Lines 20 and 19. In the outdoor photo is Marg Cosgriff (second on the left), along with seven students who are training to become primary school teachers. Marg teaches the new environmental education module which is now a compulsory part of the primary teacher training degree. She chose the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust to provide the students with a practical experience in environmental protection.

The tunnels were constructed the day before at Neale Blaymires' workshop by some of the other students in Marg's class. The indoor photo (inset) shows students hammering, pop riveting and bending components for the 95 rat trapping tunnels which they built. After this successful weekend Marg is keen to include the Kiwi Trust in next years environmental education course.

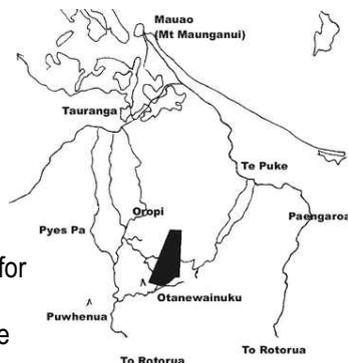
Sponsor a hectare or become a volunteer

You can sponsor a hectare for just \$25 a year. Corporate sponsorship is also available for businesses.

Either fill in the form on the back of our brochure, or email us info@kiwitrust.org and we'll send you a brochure.

Volunteers with all sorts of skills, from database maintenance and trap checking, to scones baking are also wanted.

Contact Dave Edwards ph 544 0885.



Rat trapping project

Now that our stoat trapping programme is well in place, we have applied for funding from Environment BOP for intensive rat trapping.

Over the past year we have examined the pro's and con's of trapping versus toxins, and have come out on the side of kill trapping as the most effective long term method for keeping down rat numbers. We have trialed various methods of trapping rats, and have developed a metal tunnel which houses a Victor Professional snap trap. These look like your standard wooden based rat trap but are extra grunty with a set of double springs and a plastic trigger plate. Nasty on the innocent fingers if handled carelessly.

The key to using snap traps for rats is to always have them mounted in a tunnel so the rat can only approach from the nasty end of the trap. If a rat trap is placed out in the open, the trap will fire the rat into the air when it climbs over from the rear (which they do half of the time). Not only has the rat had a flight lesson it's now trap shy. Our tunnels stop this happening, and the traps are also mounted on a sliding tray so they can be pulled out the rear of the tunnel for quick inspection and re-baiting.

We will be notified towards the end of November if we are successful in our Environment BOP Enhancement Fund application. In the meantime we have begun construction of the metal tunnels to house the rat traps. We already have 140 rat tunnels made by volunteers in Neale's workshop, and on Sunday (October 3) two of the trapping lines in Otanewainuku had tunnels set out, ready for rat traps to go in during December.

The project will be staged over the next couple of years, so only a third of the rat trap tunnels need to be installed each year. For this year 360 tunnels are needed, another 360 next year and then finally 360 in 2006. Each year the intensive rat trapping will start at the beginning of spring in August when the rat numbers are low and they are just ready to start breeding up for summer (this year will be late because we have to wait for the funding approval). This coincides with the breeding period of our native birds and will stop the rats raiding nests and killing nesting birds.

Neale Blaymires



New rat trap and tunnel

Thank-you very much!

We'd like to thank the following groups for their recent support. Check out our website for other businesses who support us.

Howick Kindergarten : A massive \$530 raised by the children!

Sponsor a hectare - new sponsors

Mr Eric Geddes, M & P Hodge, Rose Webber & Dennis Mathews, Mr Barry McKey, Robyn Brooks, Barbara Bianchin, Maartje Houthuyzen, AVO Systems Ltd, Diane J Yorke, Doug & Ruth Espin, O'Hara Wildlife Estate, Lindsay Park and Jenny & Graeme Treloar.

Line Setting Workday

Date : Sunday 28 November

Extending old and cutting new lines. Meet 10am at the Otanewainuku shelter. We will work through to approx 3pm. Bring warm gear and good boots, a small pack with lunch and a drink. Cancelled if wet. All welcome!

Contact Dave Edwards if coming
Ph 544 0885

Volunteer Profile

The Trust depends on volunteers to keep the trap lines monitored and the baits fresh. Each newsletter we'd like to introduce you to some of the people that work so hard, often behind the scenes.

The Wright Family : Don, Linda and children Shannon 11 years, Jared 9 years and Ashleigh 5 years. Don has lived in Oropi all his life. Don works at Allbrights, a local recycling firm, Linda works for Ubix. The children attend Oropi School.

Best Thing About Living at Oropi: The close community and being in the country. We would like to stay in Oropi for as long as possible.

We don't like: Seeing rubbish scattered around on the side of the road.

We look after: Lines 13 and 15. This takes 2 ½ hours every two weeks in summer and once a month in winter. Once I found a stoat that was still warm so I brought it home to show the kids. They thought it was cute.

Who does the work: Don alternates between taking either Shannon or Jared each trip. The children look forward to their turns.

A comment from Shannon: I like climbing up and down the ropes, seeing if there is anything in the traps. It's really fun going in the bush with Dad

A comment from Jared: I like checking the traps and taking the lids off. I like climbing up the ropes

"We hugely appreciate the time that the Wright family so willingly put into looking after their lines. Some trapping lines have ropes strung down steep sections to make it easier traverse."

Editor

Rat Tunnel making

Saturday 30 October

Saturday 27 November

Come to Neale's workshop in the Papamoa hills and help make some rat trap tunnels. 586 Te Puke Quarry Road, Te Puke. 10am byo lunch - tea and coffee provided! Please ring Neale if you are coming so he can bake enough biscuits!

All helpers get to take home a rat trap & tunnel to use at home.

contact Neale Blaymires
Ph 573 4157

Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust Contacts - who's who?

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