



Oh... Rats!



Photo Courtesy BOP Times

Neale Blaymires - the reverse Pied Piper

The rat trapping project has kicked into gear, with line numbers 16 through to 23 on the Southern side of Number 2 Road set up. That's 200 rat traps open for business.

Most of the rat trapping volunteers seem to come from the Te Puke side of Otanewainuku and are mostly family groups – with mum, dad and the kids pulling dead rats out of traps. Rat lines need to be cleared weekly until rat numbers are down, then on a monthly basis.

To make checking traps a quick and pleasant job, we have a snazzy rat trapping kit made up of various pouches and webbing belts rivetted together. All the tools and equipment are worn around the waist, so there's no need to take off packs and rummage around for gear. The kit is still under development, and the volunteers keep coming up with new improvements.

Our bait systems are being improved as well. The peanut butter used to bait traps grows extraordinary fungal gardens after sitting in the damp forest for a month, and often look like small furry animals. So we are testing small ziplock "bait bags" to hold the peanut butter. These bags only cost a couple of cents each and keep the peanut butter fresh for months, but still allow an attractive smell to waft out through the plastic covering. Chocolate buttons are also being tested as a bait. This calls for volunteers with an iron will – those who can resist the fragrant allure of Cadbury's Dark Chocolate?!

During our first trial rat trapping line we had problems with feral cats and ferrets stealing the occasional dead rat – complete with the attached trap as well. To stop these thefts, we have fitted an additional baffle inside the tunnels. The most recent modification to the traps is the "anti-gick fitting". Lifting a trap jaw covered in slippery dead rat gick is a tricky task – so attaching a small cable tie loop onto the jaw has given our volunteers something to pull on, and helps keep their fingers gick-free.

Please contact Neale Blaymires at 573 4157 or neale@orcon.net.nz if you want to take on a rat trap line.



Carole Long with the missing sign

Kiwizone Signs

We are delighted that DOC has provided Kiwi Zone signs at the entrances to the forest, but one of these has been removed from No.2 Road entrance. Please let us know if you have any information leading to its recovery, or it can be dropped off at the DOC office in Greerton. Many thanks! Thanks also to **Inroads** for their contribution to design and installation.

Open Day

Meet for a free sausage sizzle with volunteers and trustees and get an update on progress and plans for the future.

Guided walks available during the afternoon with options of going to the top of the mountain, around the rimu walk, or adventurous souls can inspect a trap line with our stoat trapping team.

Date: Sunday 20 November 2005 Time: 12 noon

Location: Meet at the shelter by the carpark at Otanewainuku Forest on Mountain Road, Oropi. Travel up No.2 Road from Te Puke, or up Oropi Road and Mountain Road from Tauranga.

Bring: Lunch (to go with the sausages), drink, WARM CLOTHES, sturdy footwear and a raincoat.

Contact: Carole Long 542 0224

Volunteer Notice Board

The last few months have been typically quiet for catching stoats, which has given us a chance to review most of the trap lines and sort out any problems with the traps or lines. This review will be ongoing, and I hope to get out with each volunteer at least once a year. It is important to have that field time with each of you so I can pass on new ideas and get your feedback. It is surprising to learn just how many ways there are to do the same job! If we haven't gone out together this year and reviewed your live, do give me a call and we'll make a time that suits.

New Volunteers

With the ongoing expansion of our control area we have taken on some new trap line volunteers. Jim Pearson and Greg Williams will monitor the new trap lines over Otanewainuku Mountain. Klaus Neirmann has taken over lines 6/8. Tom King, Allan Holst and Ces Parsons will look after lines 16/18. This trio also volunteer their time to maintain the public walkways in Otanewainuku. We welcome you all on board and extend a special thanks to our long serving volunteers and those who give up time to help out on workdays.

Long Life Stoat Baits

Unfortunately the long-life baits we were trialing proved to be overly attractive to rats so we have gone back to using salted rabbit. The results of our long term salted rabbit trial have been circulated to interested parties. We have had positive feedback from all over the country. Other trials have also now been carried out and they have similar results showing that salted rabbit catches 2 to 3 times more stoats than hen eggs, and is proving to be a valuable weapon in helping to control mustelid numbers. Copies of our two reports can be downloaded from our website www.kiwitrust.org

Rat Trapping Co-ordinator

Thanks to Peter Crane who will be taking over the co-ordination of rat trapping once set up.

Work Days

Anyone interested in taking part in a work day, cutting new track lines or laying out traps. Contact Dave E to make a time. Small groups most welcome!

JOIN THE RAT PACK!

Rat trapping has begun in a core area of the forest to reduce rodent numbers during this spring breeding season. We have focussed on an area close to where kiwi were heard in the winter survey. (See Cover for contact - Ed)

Looking for something "Stoatally" New?

Stoat lines have also been extended over the mountain. If you can spare a couple of hours a fortnight, please contact our volunteer coordinator Dave Edwards (*details at right*) and leave your contact details. The monitoring of trap lines is not arduous, and training is given in trap setting, with gloves provided so you don't have to handle those pesky pests!

Situations vacant

With the expanding role the Trust is playing at Otanewainuku comes an ever increasing workload which at present is spread between too few people. If you'd like to come along to an operations committee meeting or are interested in one of these roles, do contact me. We're a friendly bunch and it's very satisfying work.

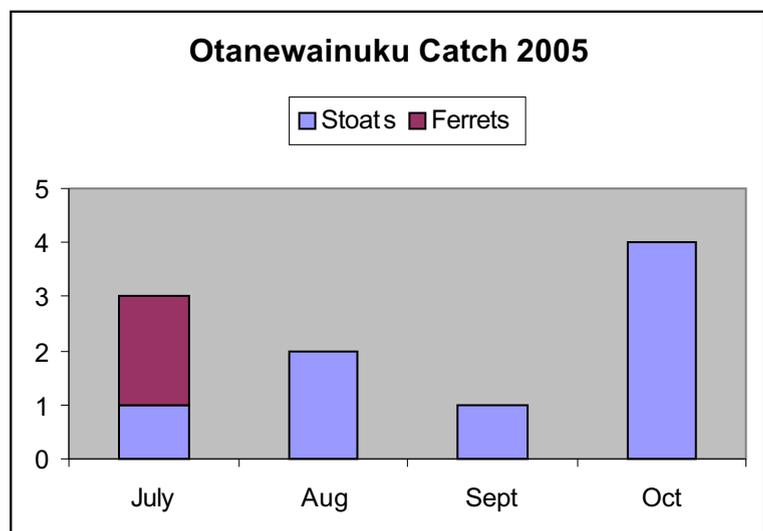
Feral Cat Control Co-ordinator

Volunteer to take on co-ordination and trapping of feral cats in the Otanewainuku Forest. Trapping area will be close to roadsides where dumping occurs.

Contact: Dave Edwards 07 544 0885
djedwards@xtra.co.nz

Trapping Tally in Otanewainuku

For the latest tally update see our website www.kiwitrust.org



Volunteer Profile - Maartje Houthuyzen

Interview by Sharon Seager

Maartje Houthuyzen and her partner John live in Oropi. She looks after the stoat traps on Lines 1 and 4. Maartje has been a Trust volunteer for three years. She started on lines 21 and 23, but these lines were much too steep and hard. In places she used ropes to get herself up banks. She was told lines 21 and 23 were medium grade and says she would hate to see a hard line! She is currently training in preparation for walking the Milford Track.

Maartje also helps with the kiwi listening surveys. Having spent her childhood in South Africa she has to remind herself that the all snorting, grunting and stamping about noises are not made by dangerous animals. She is fascinated by how different the bush can be on any night. Sometimes the bush is in "deciduous mode" with things constantly dropping on your head, other times it is very quiet.

How much of a commitment are your lines?

I take 1 to 1 ³/₄ hours to clear and set my traps, depending on how slippery the track is and how much I've caught. In winter I go up once a month, in summer the frequency increases to every fortnight. It is easier in summer, and with daylight saving I can go up after work.

I always go into the bush with someone else. I nab whoever I can, and have taken up a few of my colleagues from the National Bank. Some disappear when I mention trap clearing, others enjoy it and are keen to go again. I have two friends who are my most regular bush buddies, Eleanor and Colin.

What keeps you going?

I really want to see kiwi in the bush. I would pay to be involved with releasing kiwi back into Otanewainuku. I have noticed a change in the bird numbers since I've been trapping. Early in the morning I am hearing more birds. If you sit still for a moment there are more birds around.

My biggest frustration is seeing the amount of rubbish dumped on the side of the road. We've come across cars pushed over the edge of banks. Once we saw a new dump and scrambled down to make sure no one was injured. I don't know why people drive all that way to dump cars when it's free to take them to the wreckers

It's also frustrating when I'm all organised to do the line and it rains. Occasionally if I have lots of other commitments I go up in the rain. Not many people volunteer to come with me then!

I really wish I had the influence to bring more young people into the Trust, people in their twenties, and young families.



Maartje on dark night during a kiwi listening survey

Geology of our Mountain

Otanewainuku is an andesite volcano, amongst the southernmost in the chain of Coromandel volcanoes. These volcanoes were active in the Miocene era, around 20 million years ago. Andesite volcanoes are found in areas where oceanic and continental tectonic plates are colliding. The lava that erupts from the volcano contains melted rock from both types of plates. The particular mineral combination and the quick cooling of the lava forms the finely grained greyish rock known as andesite. This can be seen clearly in rocks at the Whataroa waterfall, off the Rimu loop track.

Thanks to Basil Graeme and "The Reed Guide to New Zealand Geology"

Business Sponsorship

Is your business or someone you know looking for a worthy local environmental project to sponsor??

We have a range of sponsorship options from as little as \$250 per annum.

Bronze: 10 hectares for 1 year \$250

Silver: 20 hectares for 1 year \$500

Gold: 40 hectares for 1 year \$1000

Platinum: 100 hectares for 1 year \$2500

For more info contact Mark Dean 07 5433021
Mark@naturalenvironments.co.nz

Otanewainuku Photo Competition

Congratulations to the winners of our competition!

1st Prize

Dennis Brooks, of Auckland
Lunch for two at the restaurant Kiwi 360

2nd Prize

Jan Pendergrast of Oropi
Subscription to Forest and Bird Magazine

Photos will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter.

Thank-you very much!



Southern Cross

We'd like to thank Southern Cross Building Society for their generosity and becoming a Silver Sponsor (\$1000 per annum). Our Chairman Mark Dean is shown here presenting a framed certificate and poster to Deborah Lee, (Branch Manager) and Diane Yorke (Supervisor).



Howick Kindergarten

Another BIG thank you to the children and parents at Howick Kindergarten who auctioned off some stunning kiwi works of art to help us save kiwi in Otanewainuku. Well done kids!

Do check out their web site
www.kidssavingkiwi.co.nz

Oropi School

Board members were delighted last month to receive a cheque for \$88 towards the Trust's work. This was raised by a sausage sizzle at school and continues the special connection of the Oropi school and community with the work being done in the Otanewainuku forest. Congratulations on such a fine effort and many thanks! The school was presented with a certificate and framed poster at assembly.

Sponsor a Hectare

Robin Brooks, Mark Crowley, Dennis Brooks, TL & MJ Parker, Judy O'Sullivan, Roger Brewster, Joyce Bates, Pat O'Callaghan, Tauranga Tramping Club, Elizabeth Mayo, Janice Todd, Bill Wallace, Joy Demler, Graeme Weld, Janet Butler, Jonathon White, Val Sinclair and Oropi Rural Women.

Special thanks to those of you who have sponsored ten hectares

Do check out our website www.kiwitrust.org to see other businesses who support us.

Looking for a Perfect Gift for Christmas?

How about sponsoring a Hectare (or two!) On their behalf.

We can send your recipient a special certificate and Otanewainuku gift card from you. They will also receive our regular newsletters.

Email info@kiwitrust.org
Ph Moana 07 543 1478
for more info.

Sponsor a Hectare

You can sponsor a hectare for just \$25 a year. Either fill in the form on the back of our brochure, or email us info@kiwitrust.org and we'll send you a brochure.



Dogs kill kiwi
Leave them at home

Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust Useful Contacts

Chairman	Mark Dean	07 543 3021	mark@naturalenvironments.co.nz
Volunteers	Dave Edwards	07 544 0885	djedwards@xtra.co.nz
Trapping	Neale Blaymires	07 573 4157	neale@orcon.net.nz
Secretary	Carole Long	07 542 0224	carolelong@xtra.co.nz
Finances	John Mullany	07 579 1917	j.mullany@clear.net.nz

Please send photos, comments and other newsletter or web site contributions to:

Moana Hodge
Hereford Rd, Oropi, R.D.3
Tauranga 3021

Ph 07 543 1478

Or preferably by email to:
moana@webstitch.co.nz