

ABEL TASMAN BIRDSONG TRUST

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



General Volunteer Info

Welcome to the August 2015 Birdsong Trust newsletter!

My name is Rebecca Martin, and I've recently started as a Volunteer Coordinator for the Trust. Essentially, I'm here in the background to help enter trap data, keep the newsletter going, and help all you hardworking field volunteers with anything you need, so please get in touch if you have any questions/queries/comments, or anything exciting to report!

I'm hoping to set up a social event to meet you all soon, but in the meantime, I'm available at any time on 0223270447 (text or call), or at the atbirdsong1@gmail.com email address! ☺



New Volunteers

Three new volunteers have joined our volunteer team recently: Welcome to Larina, Alistair and Koa! ☺ They spent Saturday morning with Dave training and will check lines on their own on the next check.

Also, Alistair has come forward to look after our new depot behind Abel Tasman Kayaks, and he will keep the shed organized and working efficiently. So thanks Alistair!

Thanks, as always, are due to Aquataxi, Sea Shuttle and the DOC boat for taking crew into the Park.

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Trap & Monitoring Results

Possum Chew Card Monitoring

The Trust's sentinel possum traps have been unused for several months due to zero possum catch. However, there is anecdotal evidence that there may be a slow rise in possum numbers, so, last week, Paul and Tom mounted possum "chew cards" to trees that have sentinel traps mounted on them (T-line, and from A26 to A 80). These cards attract possums and rodents, and the number of bite marks on the cards can be used as a monitoring tool to indicate the density of possums in an ecosystem. The sentinel traps will be reactivated if there is enough evidence of possum bites on chew cards.

HOT OFF THE PRESS results show that almost 70% (68.4%) of chew cards had been chewed by rodents, and almost 16% had been chewed by possums (15.8%), from a total of 57 chew cards! DOC and the Trust's pest trapping sub-committee will discuss whether these possum results warrant a targeted possum trapping regime over the coming months.

Pitt Head Rodent Foot Tracking Tunnel (FTT) Monitoring & A24 Trap Results

The August results show that no rats (0%) were detected from the Pitt Head FTT's, whereas 17% showed mouse activity (from a total of 3 FTT lines):

Number of lines	3		
Mean rat tracking rate per line	0%	± SE	0%
Mean mouse tracking rate per line	17%	± SE	9%

The A24 traps (205 of them) were checked at Pitt Head on the 24th July, with 23 counters showing a total of 23 strikes for the month = approx. 11% strike rate (compared to 19% in May and 13% in June). 25 gas cylinders were replaced, which was less than in May & June. We can infer from this that the trap firings continue to reduce from previous very high levels and that rodent numbers may be dropping in this area.

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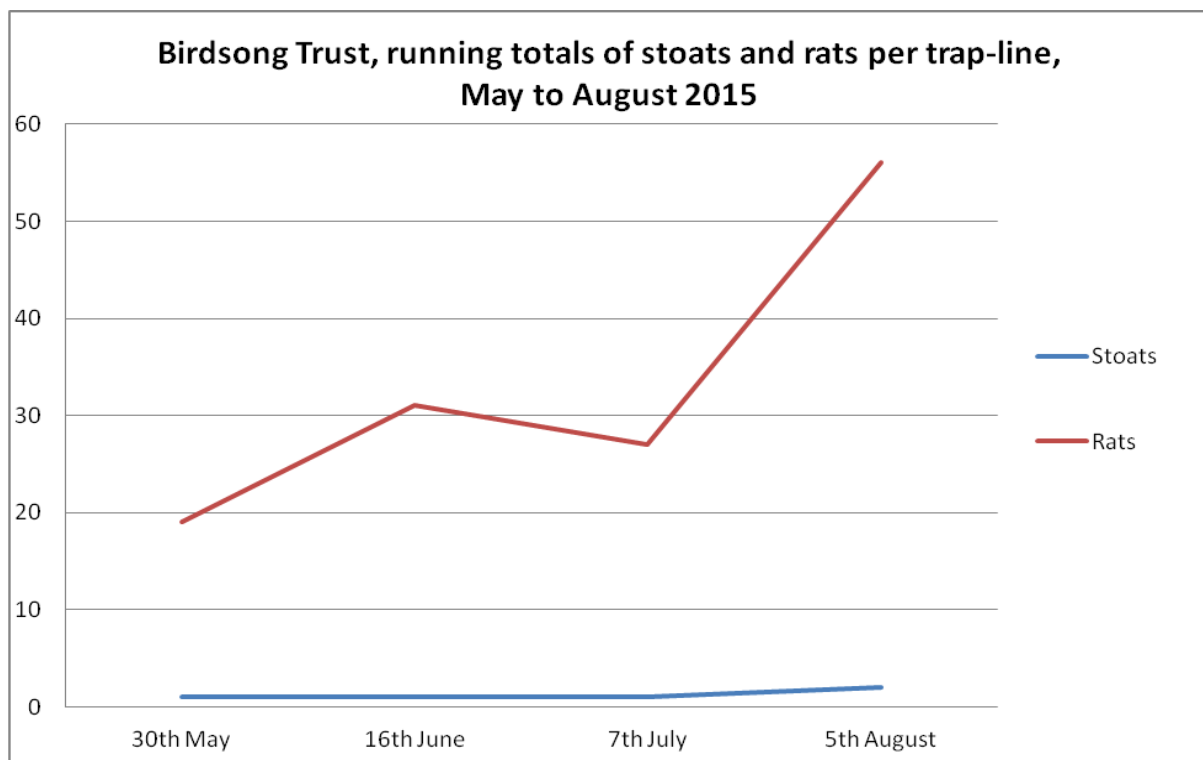


Trapping Report July 2015

Running totals for all traps since October 2010 are **2033 rats and 156 stoats!**

The following members of our volunteer team were responsible for the August checks: Tom, Peter and Moppy, Paul, Dave, Elise, Larina, Alistair and Koa, and Allan and his Pitt Head crew. As, always, thanks to all of you for giving so much of your time.

Catch rates have been consistently high over the past 3 months, and appear to be still rising:



As you can see below in the graph and table, some line catches are now **topping 50%, and the average is 30%**. This is very concerning, especially coming into bird-breeding season, and the most important part of the year for protecting new hatchlings.

All of this reinforces the need to keep going with our fortnightly trapping regime for the moment!

However, it's somewhat reassuring to note that stoat catches remain low.

August 2015

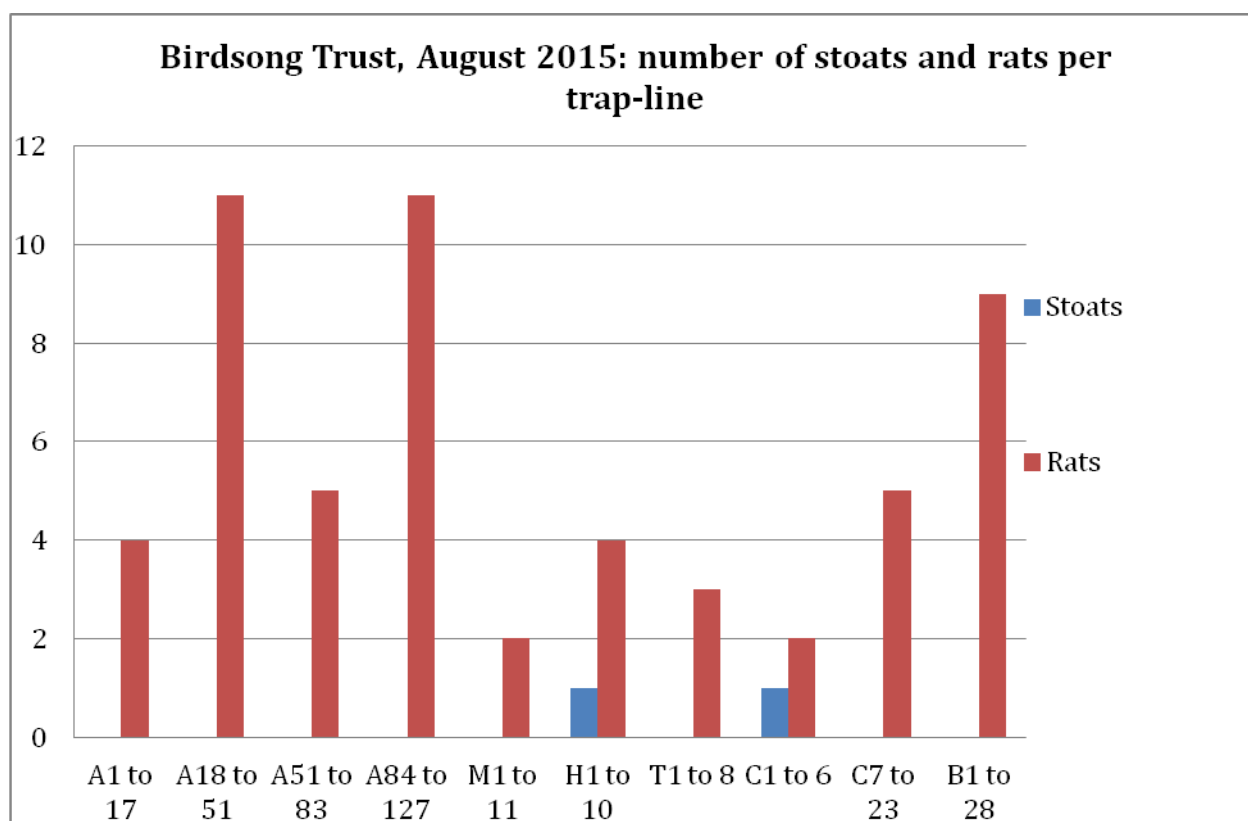
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Table 1: Birdsong Trust trap-catch results for rats and stoats from August 2015 in the Abel Tasman National Park

Date	Line and traps checked	Volunteer	Stoats	Rats	Mouse	Percentage
4 th August	A1 to 17	Dave, Larina, Alistair, Koa	0	4	2	35.29%
2 nd August	A18 to 51	Elise	0	11	0	33.33%
31 st July	A51 to 83	Peter, Moppy	0	5	0	15.63%
31 st July	A84 to 127	Paul	0	11	0	25.58%
31 st July	M1 to 11	Tom	0	2	0	18.18%
2 nd August	H1 to 10	Tom	1	4	2	25.00%
4 th August	T1 to 8	Dave, Larina, Alistair, Koa	0	3	0	37.50%
31 st July	C1 to 6	Peter, Moppy	1	2	0	50.00%
31 st July	C7 to 23	Dave	0	5	0	31.25%
31 st July	B1 to 28	Dave	0	9	0	32.14%



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Other News

Motueka High School Activity Day

Tom Horn attended a Motueka High School/Project Janszoon activity at Anchorage last weekend – here's his summary of the day:

Last Saturday I was invited by the Project Janszoon Motueka High School Student Advisory committee to join them on a day of activities around Anchorage. The Abel Tasman Seashuttle took about fifty students, parents, and invited people. Devon Mclean, the chair of Project Janszoon, and Helen Lindsay, a plant ecologist who is working for Project Janszoon, were also there.

After several hundred plants were planted and a great lunch was had, we took groups of students on a 'walk and talk around' Anchorage and explained the restoration work Project Janszoon and Birdsong Trust are doing on-site.

This was the first big outing organized by the High School students to look at what has been achieved so far in their adopted area. They have been cutting weeds and planting dune species for almost a year now, so it was great to have a look at how this work has developed. The day was very successful and the highlight was listening to a Saddleback while boating back home past Adele Island!



Motueka High students carrying plants and equipment for their activity and restoration day at Anchorage

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