

# Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteer Newsletter



## *Christmas Message from Kim McGlashen, Birdsong Trust Chair, to all our volunteers and supporters*

As another year draws to a close we can reflect on how fortunate we are to live and work in this part of the world. We are about to share it with the usual influx of summer holiday makers and that provides us the opportunity to share the good news of the tremendous progress being made in the Abel Tasman as a consequence of community effort backed by funding from the Lotteries Grants Board, DOC's Conservation Partnership funding, commercial operators, businesses and individuals.

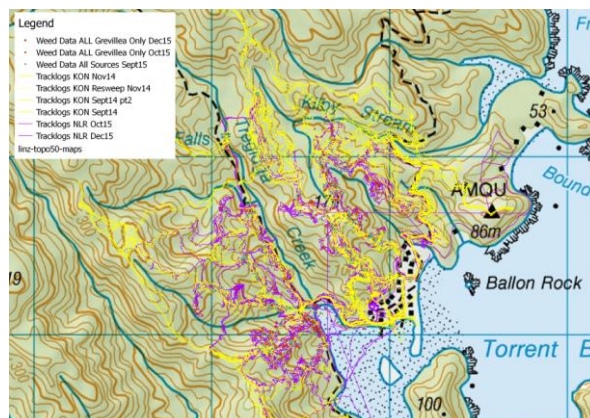
It's been a busy year for the Trust, with the trapping activities of our volunteers still expanding! A new trap-line was recently deployed up the track to Holyoake's clearing. Our trap-lines are now divided into three sectors, each with a team leader. The auto-reset A24 traps are performing well (spot the mouse in the picture below!), with very low numbers of rodents and mustelids being recorded from tracking tunnel checks.



We hope soon to be able to release South Island robins back onto the mainland in this area frequented by visitors – what an achievement that would be!

This spring, The Birdsong Trust have been continuing to remove the pines from the foreshore between Glasgows and Torrent Bay, and poisoning missed trees behind Boundary Bay. The stand of *Pinus pinaster* behind the Bark Bay hut has also been further reduced in area. Most of the coning trees in the coastal areas have been identified and spot-treated. Another program to reduce the seed source from the Marahau end is also planned.

Weed spread (the noxious variety!) from private settlements in the Park has been the target of an eradication program and we learn more about the invasive nature of some common garden plants from the reports of our contractors (see map below). We will not get them all this time around but we will significantly reduce the seeding trees and spread.



**Example of contractor's GPS tracklogs for weed control work behind Torrent Bay**

*Hakea* often creates debate about controlling methods but there is no immediate answer to the colonisation by this weed on the more barren soils of the park.

I readily acknowledge the support given by our commercial operators and DOC in ferrying volunteers in and out of the Park and the support



**December 2015**

## Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteer Newsletter



we receive from businesses such as Adama NZ Ltd who have generously provided chemical for our weed and pine programs. It would not have been possible without you all.

My special thanks to all our volunteers for their efforts, and hope to see you at the annual BBQ (further details below). I pass on greetings from the trustees and of course have a very Merry Xmas!

Kim Mc Glashen

December 2015

### ***Volunteer BBQ – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016***

All volunteers are warmly invited to the annual Birdsong Trust summer BBQ, which will be held on the evening of the **20th January 2016**. This is always a highly enjoyable event, and is a great opportunity for the Trust to thank all the volunteers, and for everybody to catch up after the year's work.

This year, we will combine the BBQ with an evening scenic cruise, courtesy of Wilson's Abel Tasman. We will be gathering at 6.15pm, and **leaving from Kaiteriteri at 6.30pm sharp**, returning at 8.30pm.

To reassure any reluctant sailors, we'll be going out aboard Wilson's Vista Cruise boat (picture below). It's specially designed to be very stable. The plan will be to go for a bit of scenic cruise via Adele Island, with a pause to listen to the birdsong. Then we will stop off at a sheltered cove for the barbecue with the opportunity to go ashore if you don't like movement on the boat. If the weather is 'bumpy', we'll shorten the cruise and have more opportunity to go ashore. Obviously, if the weather is very bad, we'll arrange an alternative venue but let's hope we get the usual Abel Tasman clear, calm waters.

We hope you can join us!



**\*If you have not already done so, please RSVP to [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com) if you will attend, by 10<sup>th</sup> January 2016\***

### ***New trapline on the Inland Track from Tinline to Holyoakes Clearing***

Congratulations to Tom Horn, Allan Barker, John Wells and many other volunteers who have worked hard to get the Holyoake Line fully operational. The 62 double traps are at last distributed along the H line from Tinline to Holyoakes and back down to a junction near the main coastal track.

### ***Annual Bird Count from Torrent Bay to Tinline***

The annual bird count was successfully completed in November. This is the first year that Georgina Upson was coordinating this and she would like to thank Tom Horn, Allan Barker and Ingrid Hutzler for assistance in ironing out some small gremlins that were lurking around. Thanks also go to Beryce and Don, Ingrid, Lucy, Tom, Koa and Alistair, Mark and Georgina for doing the counts. For those who were unable to do a count this year, keep those ears in tune because you will be needed next year.

There appears to be some mixed news with the birds. Fantails were notably down in numbers this year but there was a report of a tomtit and some



**December 2015**

## Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteer Newsletter



brown creepers. The results have been posted to Peter Gaze and we can look forward to his report in the future.

### ***Fiordland Crested Penguin spotted in the ATNP!***

During Ingrid's survey for wetland birds at Anchorage/Torrent Bay on 14 October, Steve Franklin (DOC Hut Warden) spotted a penguin in the cave at Te Pukatea Bay (Abel Tasman NP). At closer inspection it was clear that it was a Fiordland crested penguin. Attached is a photo taken by Til Melis (Birds NZ Volunteer). It turns out that a very similar individual was spotted on 7 October at the Glen (near Nelson), and more recently Tom Horn spotted a Fiordland Crested penguin on Adele Island on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December - possibly the same bird!!!!???



Ingrid submitted an official "Unusual Bird Report" to the national "Rare Birds Committee" of Birds New Zealand <http://osnz.org.nz/rarebirds.htm>.

Here is Colin Miskelly's reply (he is the Convenor of Rare Birds Committee):

*"What a neat discovery to make! You have correctly identified this bird as being a Fiordland crested penguin. While it lacks the pale cheek stripes usually present in this species, the relatively small beak, the*

*absence of bare skin at the base of the beak, and the broad eye-brow stripe all confirm this identification.*

*Fiordland crested penguins do occasionally wander as far north as Cook Strait. I am aware of more records from the Wellington coast (particularly Kapiti Island and adjacent coast) than from Nelson and the Marlborough Sounds. Over this side of the strait they used to get reported about once every two years, but I have not heard of any for about 5 years, which may reflect a suspected decline in their total population meaning there are fewer birds on the edge of their distribution range.*

*Birds New Zealand encourages any sightings of crested penguins away from their breeding grounds to be submitted as Unusual Bird Reports, to allow the record to be verified and added to the archive of UBRs from around the country."*

So **please submit any sightings of rare birds to [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz)** and let me know if you spot anything unusual out there on your travels and I can include in the newsletter!! ☺

### ***Wasp Control programme to start in the ATNP!***

Our volunteers will be happy to hear that a wasp control programme will start in the Park this summer. It will be carried out by the Department of Conservation and funded by Project Janszoon and the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve Fund, which is funded from foreshore concession fees.

As well as blocks at Pitt Head and Falls River it will include the entire coast track and around the huts. If you would like more details, please follow this link:

<http://www.janszoon.org/news/janszoon-news/taking-the-sting-out-of-abel-tasman-national-park/>



December 2015

# Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteer Newsletter



## *Trapping Report August - October 2015*

Running totals to date are: **2154 rats, 162 stoats, 104 possums, 26 mice, 12 weasels, and 6 hedgehogs!**

The Marahau depot has been greatly improved and now features a freezer, kindly donated by Pam Holyoake. Alistair Sheat has installed a workbench and made other improvements, so many thanks for your efforts Alistair!

The following members of our volunteer team were responsible for the October – December checks: Tom, Sally, John R, Dave W, Charlie, Peter and Moppy, Paul, Elise, Don & Beryce, Georgina, Larina, Alistair and Koa, Robert, Sarah, Malou, and Allan and his Pitt Head crew. A special welcome to Linda Peat and Regan Bridge, who have recently joined the team!

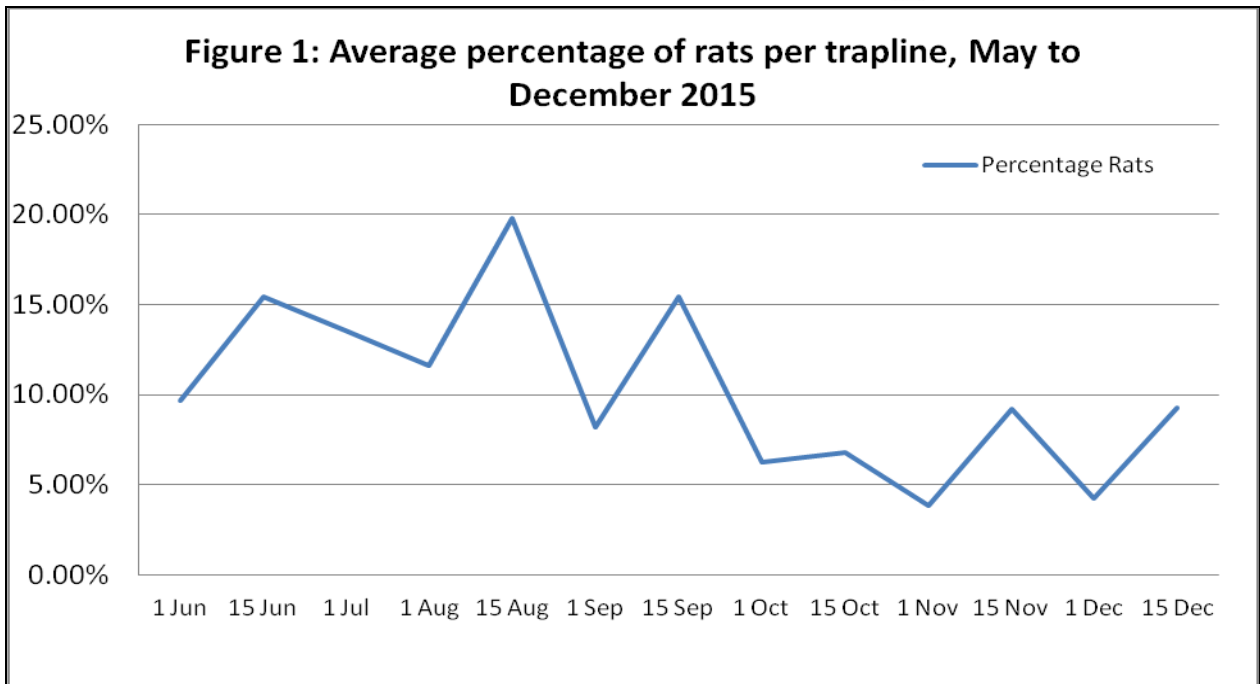
Catch rates had been high over the Winter, but they decreased in Spring, and the average line catch is remaining below 10%, which is great news! The following table and graph outlines some of the key results for the last few months.

**Table 1:** Birdsong Trust trap-catch results for rats from mid-October to mid-December 2015 in the Abel Tasman National Park

Line	No. of Traps Checked	15 Oct	1 Nov	15 Nov	1 Dec	15 Dec
A	127	9	4	14	5	18
B	28	0	3	2	0	2
C	23	1	1	1	2	2
H	62	0	0	0	2	2
M	11	0	0	1	1	0
T	8	3	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>



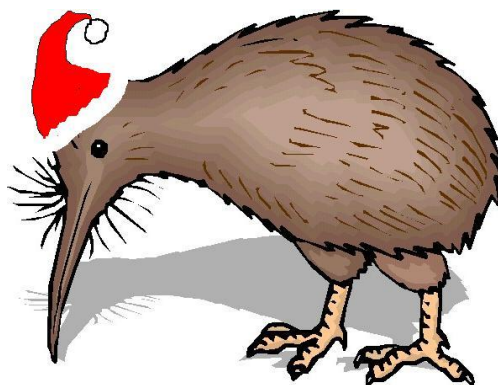
**December 2015**



Thanks for getting this far, and, as always, thanks to all of you for giving so much of your time! ☺

Many thanks are also due to Jen Calder for the use of her bach over the last few months, and the DreamMaker and Palms Motel businesses for their private donations.

Happy Christmas and see you all in 2016!



December 2015