



## ***Welcome to 2017!***

Hello everyone and welcome to the March issue of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust's newsletter. Your efforts are truly appreciated and we are beginning to see a real difference in the biodiversity of the Abel Tasman National Park (ATNP) as a result of the hours you are putting into our activities.

This newsletter highlights our efforts to help rid the ATNP of pests, namely stoats, rats, possums and wasps. Keep up the great work everyone!



*Two fresh stoats caught near Holyoakes Clearing  
(Photo credit: Michelle Bridge)*

## ***Warm thanks and a welcome***

The Trustees recently expressed their sincere thanks to Jim Coleman for his valuable contribution to the Board of Trustees as he retires from the role. We welcome John Richards as his replacement and we look forward to his positive input in the future.

## ***'War on Wasps'***

In February, the threshold was reached to begin the Abel Tasman National Park's 'War on Wasps' control programme.

The programme, initiated by the Nelson Mail, was supported by DOC for technical advice, and the Tasman Environment Trust for administration and distribution of funds.

A marketing campaign was launched and it engaged community involvement and generated significant 'contributions' from members of the public, businesses and organisations.

ATBT was granted \$1500 of the monies raised and this purchased bait and supplies to complete the poisoning in the southern part of the ATNP.

The protein-based bait Vespex, which contains the insecticide fipronil, targets wasps. It is not attractive to bees, which are attracted to sugar instead of protein.

The method means many nests can be controlled from a single bait station as wasps take it back to their nests to feed to their larvae.

Follow this link to a great article/video about the [Wasp Wipeout](#).

Thanks to Allan Barker and Tom Horn who led our programme. We are grateful that wasp numbers will be low and it makes the bush a much safer place to visit.



*Wasps taking the bait! (Photo credit: Delwyn Dickey)*

## ***Robin update:***

Pete Gaze and Ingrid Hutzler visited Adele Island in December to check on its biodiversity. It's great to see that the translocation of the South Island robins in 2009 was a success. Follow this link to watch a great video: [Adele Island Robin](#)



One of the banded robins transferred to Pitt Head has been spotted – back on Adele! Two of our volunteers, Laine and Andrew Harding, spotted a banded robin on Adele and passed the details to Pete Gaze who responded: “You came up trumps with that bird! It is B-115234, a female banded on 4 May and then released at Pitt Head. This shows that at least one of our 50 missing birds made it successfully back to the island! Thank you”. This sighting indicates our translocated birds may have dispersed and that is why we aren’t able to spot them on Pitt Head.

If you sight robin on your travels, especially banded ones, please let us know by sending an email with all the details to [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com)

## Possum Control

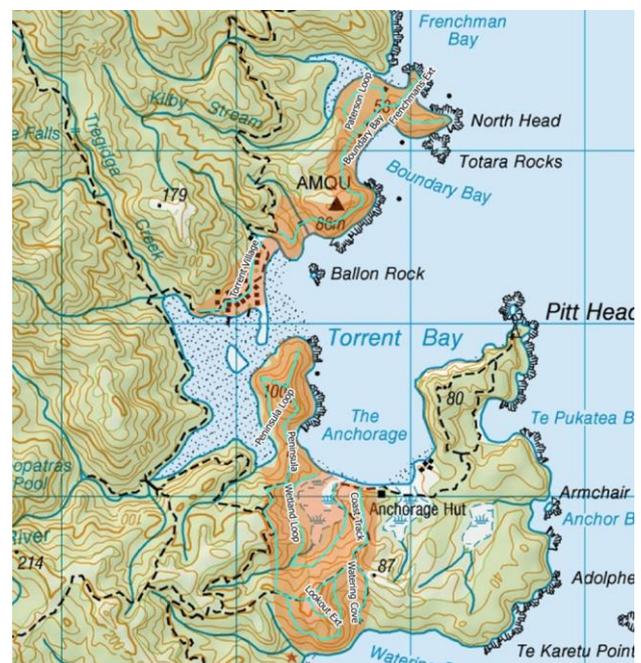
Following a Waxtag survey undertaken by Alistair and Koa Sheat, six new “volunteer friendly” Trapinator possum traps were installed in early November to address the ‘hotspots’ (A55 to A60). These were installed adjacent to existing Sentinel possum traps to test their efficacy. Both trap designs were baited with FeraFeed. To date only one possum has been caught at A56 in one of the Sentinel traps. Surprisingly a rat was caught in one of the Trapintors – indicating this design must have a soft trigger!



*The red handle sets/unsets the Trapinator which is much safer and simpler than the Sentinel design (Photo credit: CMI Springs).*

## Torrent Bay rat trapping extension update

We have been successful with our latest NZ Lotteries Grant Board application and can now proceed with our proposed Torrent Bay rat trapping extension. Approximately 240 A24 traps will be installed adjacent to the existing Pitt Head trapping area, through the township, and onto North Head via Boundary Bay. This extension will result in comprehensive coverage of this area and links in with the DOC trapping network located further inland.



*Proposed Torrent Bay trapping extension (Image credit: Andrew MacAlister).*

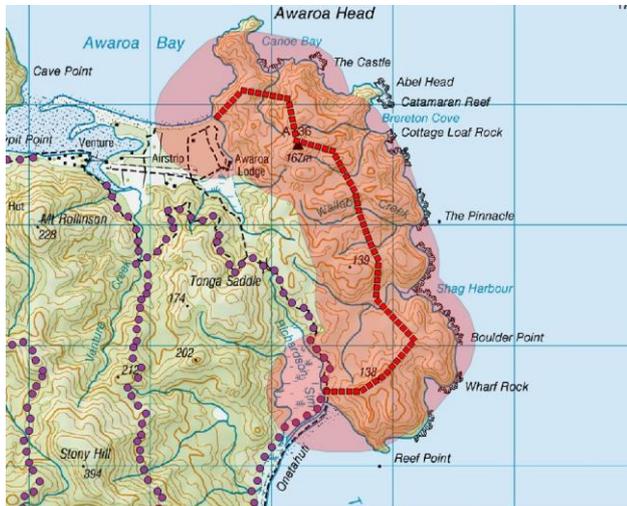
We are on the look out for more volunteers to help with this new extension and also the Awaroa Head trapline (see details below). Please get in touch if you would like more information.

## Penguin protection on Awaroa Head coastline

A proposed trapline on Awaroa Head is set to protect the penguins that live and nest along this part of the coastline. The new trapline (installed by DOC and Project Janszoon) is going to be



maintained by ATBT. It's great to be able to extend our coverage to protect more species in the ATNP.



*Proposed Awaroa Head trapline. The pink is the buffer which indicates the coverage offered by the single trapline (red line).*

## **Health and Safety update**

Our Health and Safety Plan has been updated and circulated to our volunteers. There is a copy in the Marahau Shed for those of you that want to have a review of it before heading into the ATNP. We take your safety very seriously and it is important to us that you can volunteer with minimal risk.

Please let Abby know if you have any incidents (or near misses) so we can all learn and make changes if necessary. There are copies of the relevant form in the Marahau Shed or you can email [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com) to get an electronic copy.

Thanks for your help with keeping us all safe.

## **Evening cruise and bbq a success**

Our wonderful volunteers and supporters were recently treated to an amazing cruise to Adele Island to listen to the evening birdsong. Huge thanks to Wilsons Abel Tasman for donating their 'Vista' boat and staff to us for the evening. It was a great way to network with like-minded folk and experience first-hand what trapping and restoration can do for an ecosystem.



*Volunteers enjoying our recent Wilsons cruise. (Photo credit: Abby Butler)*

As always, we readily acknowledge the support given by our commercial operators, Project Janszoon and DOC in the work we undertake.

Thank you to all our recent donors – your input assists us to achieve our positive outcomes.

Thanks to all our volunteers – with your support we are removing pests and giving our native species a fighting chance.

**Abby and the ATBT Trustees**



## *Trapping Report Summary - December 2016.*

*Written by Alistair Sheat, Trapping Team Leader*

Trapping results for the months of October to December 2016 (table 1) show 198 rats and 13 stoats/weasels were caught. This is up from 172 rats and 3 stoats/weasels caught in the previous 3 months. The 13 of stoats/weasels caught is a very large increase. The percentage rats caught per month per total traps is becoming quite variable with C line at the highest rate (see chart below).

Table 1: Stoats or weasels and rats trapped for October to December 2016

<b>Line</b>	<b>Stoats /Weasels</b>	<b>Rats</b>	<b>Average % Rats Per Month Per Total Traps</b>	<b>No of Traps on Line</b>
A	2	100	26	127
B	1	25	21	38
C	1	26	38	23
H31/1 to H31/12	3	8	22	12
H1 to H62	5	32	17	62
Marahau	1	3	9	10
Tinline	0	4	17	8
Lines Combined	13	198	23%	282

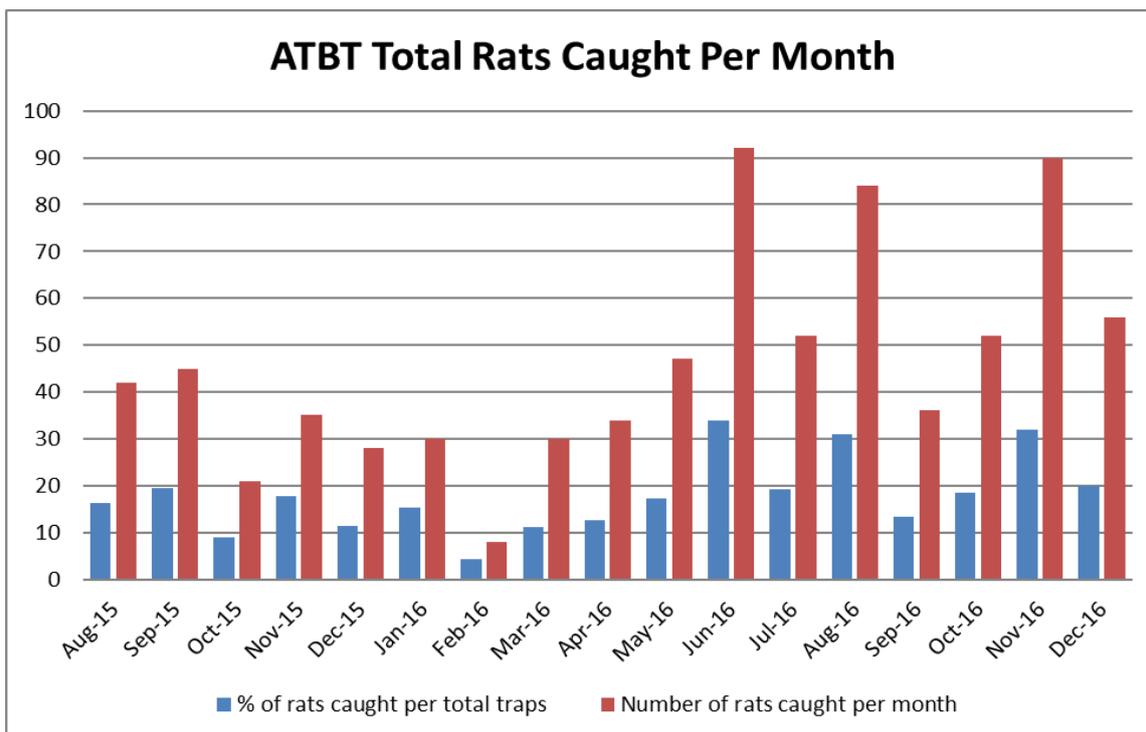
**Overall, 31 stoats/weasels and 782 rats have been caught Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust volunteers since August 2015** (when records first were stored in the database).

Note that the rats noted as caught are from checking traps twice during the month.

The chart below shows the monthly % rats caught per total traps and rat numbers caught per month since August 2015 when data was first entered into “Animal Pests – Trapping” database.

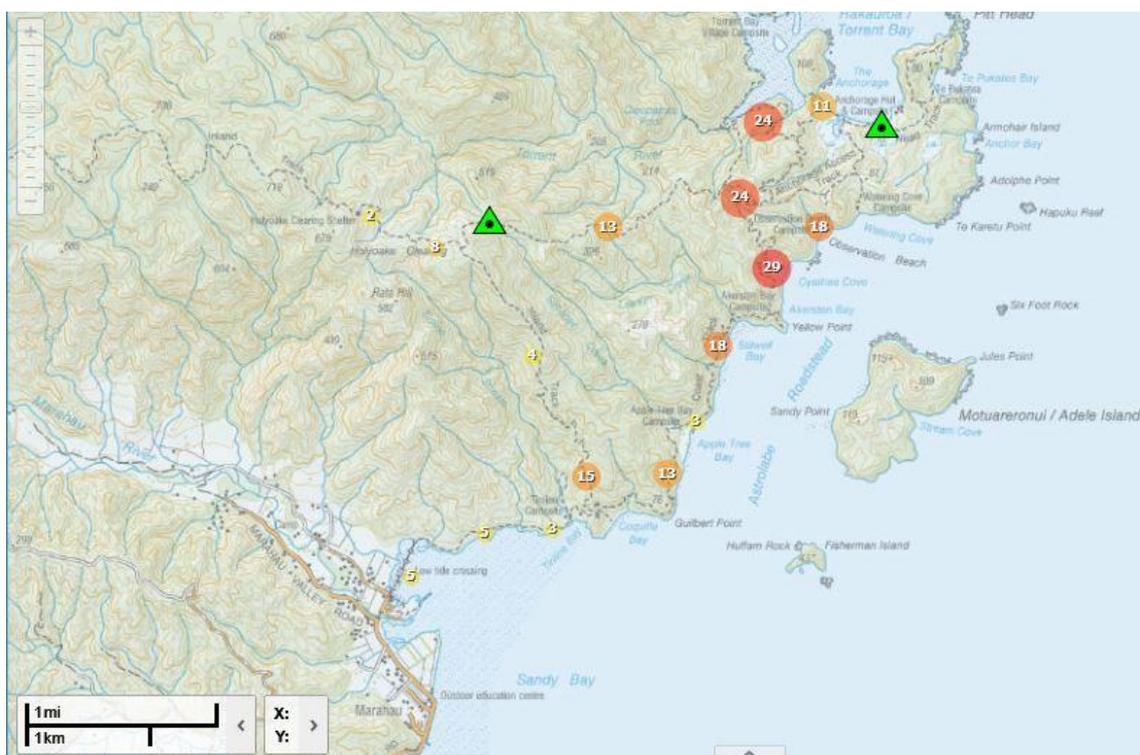
Note that trap line H31-1 to H31-12 has only been in operation since March 2016 and H12 to H62 since December 2015 so the results prior to April are not directly comparable to now. Also 7 new traps have been added to B line since October 2016.

The chart shows there was an increase in rats caught since September, with the largest number caught in November.



The map below shows numbers in red, orange and yellow circles. These numbers are the number of rats caught in neighbouring traps in a clustered circle. The green triangle is where there is a rat caught in a single trap, but not in general proximity to other rats caught.

Density of rats trapped October to December 2016





The map shows 107 rats (more than 50% of the rats caught) are in the Anchorage/Cyathea Cove area. This result is very similar to the July to Sept 2016 rat density.

The map below shows where stoats and weasels have been caught since August 2015. There seems to be a different picture emerging where less stoats/weasels are being caught at the entrance of the park and more near Holyoake Clearing.

