

A big bag of autumn rats!

Extreme weather this autumn has played havoc in the Park with some traps swept down streams or caught by high tides. Beach walkers retrieved a couple that had floated out to sea and found their way back to a nearby beach. These were returned to the Trust. Others haven't been seen since. A lesson learned from this? Yes! Put a number and Birdsong logos on all trap boxes; chain traps that are placed under bridges.

Many thanks to Georgina, Jason, Peter, Beryce, Al, Leena, Dave, and Paul who removed 14 dead rats from their traps in their checks on 29 March and 12 April.

Aurora, Peter and Moppy, Tom, Beryce and Don, Jim and Janet, Paul, Laine and Andrew reported another 16 rats in their traps checks on 29 April and 10 May. These bring the running total to 1150 rats, 131 stoats, 93 possums, 20 mice, 5 hedgehogs, 1 quail.

New volunteers joined our team

We have three new volunteers, all involved with conservation work in the past. They are Laine and Andrew Harding and Don Pittham. While living on their yacht Leeway, Elaine and Andrew have volunteered to carry out checks to ensure the predator free status of Fishermans Island.

Laine and Andrew reported that the South Island Robin had migrated from Adele to Fishermans Island last year, which is great news. Unrelated to that: three Kea have taken up residence in Marahau since April and Tom recently counted 14 Tui on one small tree near the Abel Tasman Track entrance. Unfortunately the 4 Banded Rails have not been spotted for a couple of months.

Our newcomers mean we now have 36 active volunteers - way more resources than currently needed which is very timely, since the extension of our trapline is about to take off. Allan and Tom have marked a off track trapline between Cythea Cove and Watering Cove and about 18 sites are ready to receive traps. Many thanks again to John and Debbie who surveyed this line in February - that made the job a lot easier.

Allan Barker is about to build 80 new stoat boxes for deployment from our presently furthest trap station #80, all the way to Anchorage and Cleopatra's Pool. This will add 80 stoat traps to our current 99, in turn extending another two big sections to our roster. This extension would not be possible without the support of Aquataxi, Seashuttle and Wilsons providing sea transport to volunteers. Many thanks to them!

Adele and Fishermans Islands

Adele Island has been checked again and there were no predators present. At the Pitt Head project, all 200 trapping sites are operational with modified and improved Good Nature traps. DOC is about to run tracking tunnel surveys to establish current predator density. If density is sufficiently low, South Island robins will be transferred from Adele and released on Pitt Head as previously reported.