

## **Birdsong Trappers Undaunted by the Rain!**

So far our checks have not been too affected by rain. Our check on 26 April was a real stand-out for the number of rats caught in the northern section, with about two thirds of the stoat bait disappearing! It was a different picture on the following check - only a few rats were caught, but lots of bait was missing, again in the northern and the Marahau sections.

A lot of the "Erayze" rabbit bait that had gone mouldy and almost 'melted away' was perceived perhaps no longer effective, but that might in fact not apply to our target animals whose main criterion for a good meal is smell!

### **Thanks team!**

A big thank you to the checking team - Pat and Dave, Georgina, Paul and Tom, Jason, Peter and Leena; some of you were very busy!

We welcome our new and fully trained volunteer, Paul!

### **Trap check results 26 April:**

**3 rats, 10 rats, 16 rats, T1 rat, 20 rats, 32R rats, 34 rats, 35 possums, 37 rat, 43 rats, 44 rats, 52 rat, 55 rat, 56 rat, 57 rat, 59 rats, 65 rats, 68 mice, 70 rats, 79 rats, 80 rats.**

**Total: 19 rats, 1 possum, 1 mouse**

#### *Observations for the record:*

- Lots of bait was missing in unspecified traps in M line and trap 1-9, 13, 14, 21, 23, 30R, 31, 31R, 33R, 35, 35R, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 72, 76, 77
- plus in a few more unspecified, all bait gone.
- 30R, 31R, 33R, 35R, 38, 73 all sprung
- 32R found 20m away from original location near track - suspected tampering,
- 34R missing,
- 35R moved to replace 34R
  
- No Rat trap at 35 anymore
- 37 possum lure clips half out
- 42 needs baitholder



**Students at a Tararua College in the North Island, making stoat traps for a local project**

- 64 possum lure clips missing
- tags in sections 50 to 80 need cleaning

## **Trap check results 11 May:**

**M6 rats, 5 rats, 14 rats, 18 rats, 26 rats, 30R rats, 32 possums, 38 rats, 51 rats, 79 stoats.**

**Total: 8 rats, 1 possum, 1 stoat.**

**Running totals:**

**887 rats, 104 stoats, 83 possums, 18 mice, 4 hedgehogs and 1 quail**

## **Observations and for the record:**

- Bait gone: M1, M2, M4, M5, M6, 2, 3, 20, 21, 46, 47, 48 - sprung :
- M2, 51. M line needs new bait-holders (three nails)
- 42 have new bait holder
- 64 have new possum lure clips

## **Video Clip**

For a 20 second video clip from YouTube on the use of the new stoat traps, click on the following url:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=axN2r0Cqocl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=axN2r0Cqocl)

## **Other news:**

The **Treeplanting** project from the causeway to Tinline has been postponed to September. I will keep you posted.

**Adele Island** has been checked by Allan, Georgina and Eric. All traps on the Island Loop ( 39 traps) have been re-baited and all other standby traps are now unset. The next check is due in July. Most of the self-setting Good Nature traps on **Pitt Head Mainland Island** had new peanut butter lure containers fitted, to better attract rats. Every fourth trap was baited with Erayze rabbit bait to target stoats.

This work was done by Allan assisted by Tom and a couple of Allan's friends, John and Charly. The remaining traps will be changed over this week.

Ornithologist Peter Gaze has recommended that, provided the South Island Robin has flourished sufficiently on Adele Island, **surplus Birds be transferred from Adele to the Pitt Head Mainland Island.**

Another criterion of this exciting development that has been achieved is the number of predators on Pitt Head which are now very low.

## **New Trapping Strategy**

Chris Golding from Doc. has developed **a new trapping strategy.**

Subsequently Birdsong Trust members have decided to extend the coastal stoat-line. TDC is withdrawing from the Yellow Point to Anchorage area and the Birdsong Trust

will extend the line to Anchorage in order to further protect Pitt Head. With more traps to be checked, this means that our three and half year old routine will be reshuffled. After that we will establish a trap-line up to the Holyoake Clearing turn off and back down to Cleopatra's Pool, with another off-track line running between our Coastal line and the proposed Holyoake line.

This will increase our stoat traps from the current 100 to roughly 250, plus possum traps. More traps means more volunteers and it's great to see that more people are joining us. However, once we reach this size it's very likely we may abandon our valiant double-hit effort (i.e. twice monthly) and revert to checking the traps once a month. This is DoC best practice anyway, and probably practised by almost all other volunteer organisations.

And finally Chris Golding has updated our **safety plan**. Tom will circulate the new plan to all of trappers via e-mail. Please read it carefully and reply back to Tom as read, so that names can be 'ticked off'. It is essential that all of us involved with trapping are up to date and signed off on safety.

Information provided by Volunteer Coordinator Tom Horn