

# Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Newsletter

March 2018



Hello everyone and welcome to the March edition of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust's newsletter. We have had a busy summer with many volunteer hours spent on the ground undertaking various worthwhile projects in the Abel Tasman National Park (ATNP).

## *Avian updates!*

### *Pateke/Brown Teal*



A Pateke/Brown Teal and her ducklings (Photo credit: NZ Birds Online)

Project Janszoon and DOC released 20 birds at Hadfield Clearing behind Awaroa estuary in May last year. The great news is that two clutches of ducklings have been spotted on the water! Once the most common native duck in New Zealand, pateke now only number 2,500 and are only found in two sites in the South Island. This is positive start to establishing a healthy population in the park. Other suitable wetland habitats have been identified near Awaroa and Totaranui. If breeding continues successfully, these areas might have their own pateke populations before long!

### *Toutouwai/Robin*

Two robins have recently been observed on Pitt Head.

To recap, 50 robins were transferred from Adele Is to Pitt Head in April 2016 and by August none could be found.

Ornithologist Pete Gaze said at the time "While it is disappointing none of the robin appear to have

stayed in the relocation area, it is not uncommon for them to disperse after translocations".

Therefore, sighting these two birds is a very positive sign that they have returned.

We undertake extensive and successful rat control in the Pitt Head and Torrent Bay so these birds will be protected if they remain in this area.

If you observe a robin anywhere in the Park, especially banded ones, please let us know by sending an email with all the details to [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com).

### *Tieke/Saddleback*



South Island Saddleback (Photo credit: BIA Birdimagery)

Saddleback on Adele Is are still proving to be quite elusive. A kayak survey around the island is planned in the coming weeks. Resident birds reply to recorded calls from a speaker so this method will be used to map the general location of birds. Watch this space!

## *Biosecurity News*

### *Mouse Eradication on the Abel Tasman Islands*

Monitoring after DOC's aerial drop of brodifacoum to eradicate mice from Adele, Fisherman and Tonga Islands is still ongoing. Traps, footprint tracking tunnels, chew cards and the use of a specially trained rodent dog are all tools being used to detect

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the presence (or absence) of mice. All going to plan a 'predator free' declaration will be made in June. Please remember to check your gear before heading into the Park on foot or by boat!



Biodiversity infographic (Image credit – Project Janszoon)

## ***Bait stations for boaties***

We continue to donate bait stations to local boat owners to have onboard their vessels. We believe that ensuring boats are free from rodents is an important step in keeping the Abel Tasman Islands predator free. We still have some available so email [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com) to get yours today.

ATBT also donate the bait stations for rodent control at the Nelson (and soon Motueka) marina. This is an important location of intensive predator control. We thank Nayland College for monitoring these on our behalf.

## ***Wasp Wipeout campaign***

ATBT, Project Janszoon and DOC recently completed their second successful 'Wasp Wipeout' campaign. This campaign, initiated by the Nelson Mail, was supported by DOC for technical advice, and the

Tasman Environment Trust for administration and distribution of funds.

The protein-based bait Vespex, which contains the insecticide fipronil, was used to target wasps. Vespex is not attractive to bees as it is protein, not sugar, based. Many nests can be controlled from a single bait station as wasps take the bait back to their nests to feed to their larvae.

Now people will be safe to visit the park and our native nectar feeding birds and bees will not have competition for honeydew

We thank the 'Wasp Wipeout' campaign for funding our bait.



Wasp taking bait at Mosquito Bay (photo credit: Marion van Dijk)

## ***Torrent Bay rat trapping extension update***

Our Torrent Bay rat trapping extension project is now complete! Over 200 of the self-resetting A24 traps now protect more of the ATNP. Thanks to the NZ Lottery Grants Board for their grant which allowed us to achieve this great outcome.

## ***Annual evening cruise a success***

Our wonderful volunteers and supporters were recently treated to another special cruise to Watering Cove to listen to the evening birdsong. Huge thanks to Wilsons Abel Tasman for donating their 'Vista' boat and staff for the evening. It was a great way to network with like-minded folk and

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experience first-hand what trapping and restoration can do for an ecosystem.

## *Would you like to donate?*

We now have a 'Give-a-Little' page set up to make donating to our cause a little easier. Please go to the 'Give-a-Little' page and search 'Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust' or follow this link:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/abel-tasman-birdsong-trust>. The instructions are easy to follow.



## *Are you keen to be involved?*

We are currently extending our trapping programme from Torrent Bay to Awaroa and we are in desperate need of more volunteers to help with this effort. Email [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com) if you would like more information about how you can help.

Good News! Often the 'seeing and touching of dead animals' can put people off being a trapping volunteer. The A24 trap is designed so that no dead animals need to be seen or touched! Checking these traps are a great way to get into this special part of the Park.

## *Acknowledgements*

Our recent evening cruise was a great opportunity to thank and farewell Pamela Holyoake from our board of Trustees. Pamela was instrumental in securing the funding for our successful and highly visible wilding pine and weed control projects. Her input is truly missed.

Thank you to our local commercial operators, members and all recent donors – your input assists us to achieve our positive conservation gains.

We readily acknowledge the support we receive from both DOC and Project Janszoon. We continue to build on our positive relationship which allows us all to undertake a vast amount of work and improve the visitor experience of the ATNP.

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



Korimako/Bellbird singing (Photo credit: DOC)

## **Our Vision:**

The forests and beaches of Abel Tasman are once again filled with the birdsong that awakens and delights visitors.

*Kia whakaoho te mauri o te Ata-hapara. Kia rongo, Kia Kite, Ki te reo koro tui o Te Tai tapu*

## **Abby and the ATBT Trustees**



## Trapping Report Summary: January - February 2018

*Written by Alistair Sheat*

**A total of 92 mustelids and 1,324 rats have been caught by Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust volunteers since August 2015** when records first were stored in the database. Historic records show that between October 2010 and August 2015, 158 mustelids and 2156 rats were caught, making a **grand total of 250 mustelids and 3,480 rats caught since October 2010.**

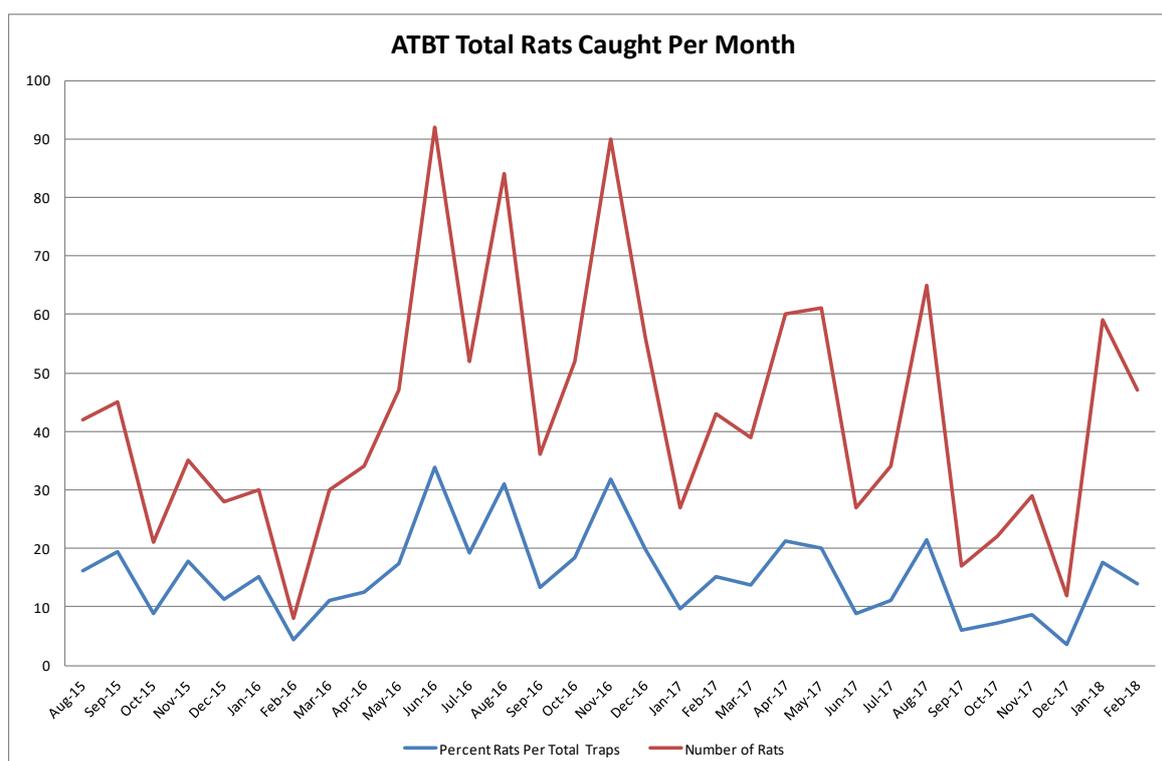
Trapping results for the two months of January and February 2018 (table 1) show 106 and 15 mustelids were caught compared to the 41 rats and 10 mustelids caught in the previous 2 months.

Table 1: Mustelids and rats trapped for January and February 2018

Line	Mustelids	Rats	Average Percent Rats Per Month Per Total Trap boxes	No of Trap Boxes on Line
A	1	61	24	127
B	0	3	4	39
C	2	9	20	23
H31/1 to H31/12	0	0	0	12
H1 to H62	7	14	11	62
Marahau	1	3	14	11
Stilwell	2	8	18	22
Tinline	0	6	38	8
Pitt Head	0	2	3	32
Lines Combined	13	106	16	336

Note: The rats and mustelids noted as caught are from checking traps twice during the month.

The chart below shows the monthly % rats caught per total trap boxes and rat numbers caught per month since August 2015.



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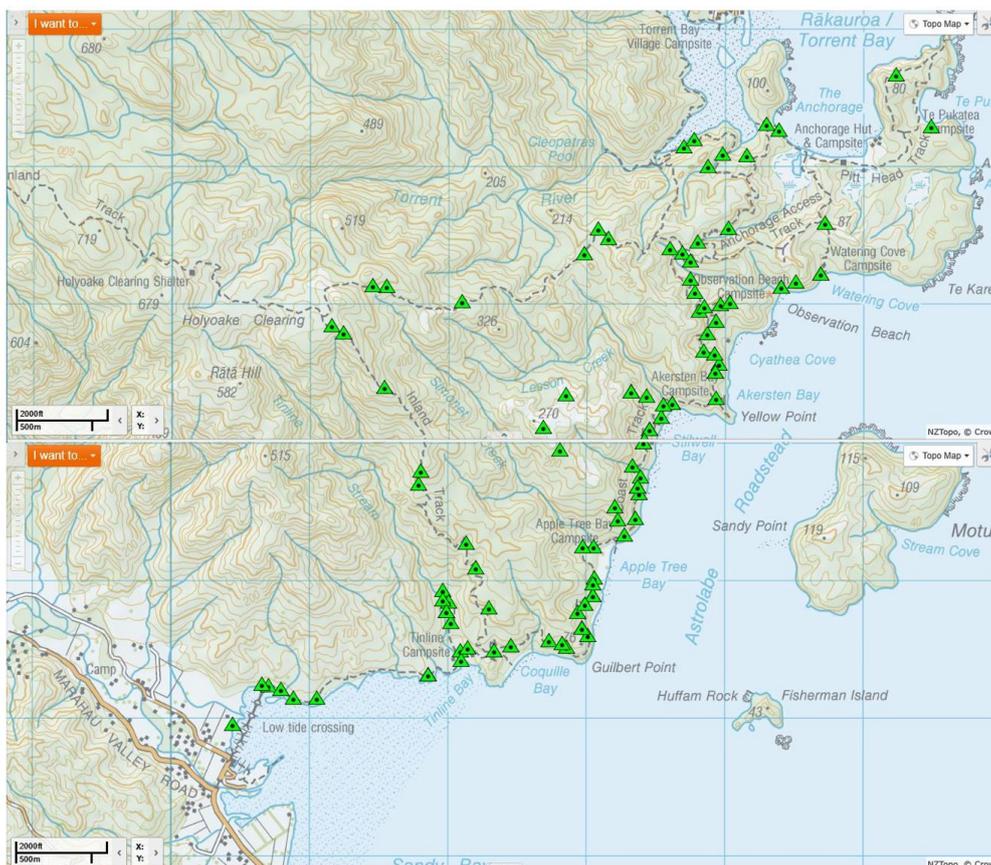


There was a very large increase in rats caught in January 2018 compared to November and December 2017. February's rat catch was slight down on January, but still high.

The increase in the number of rats caught, particularly since December 2015, would be in part due to more trap boxes in operation as in the table below.

Date	Location	Number of Boxes	Trap type
December 2015	H12 to H62	51	51 double set
March 2016	H31/1 to H31/12	12	12 double set
October 2016	B32 to B39	8	8 single set
May 2017	SW1 to SW22	22	11 run through double set and 11 ZIP double set
Nov 2017	PH1 to PH32	32	Pitt Head stoat line to complement the A24 traps
<b>Total</b>		<b>125</b>	

The map below indicates where rats were caught (green triangles) over the two months January and February 2018. In the last two months rats have been caught mainly along the Coastal Track between Tinline and Cyathea Cove, and between Cyathea Cove and the Anchorage access track. A few rats were also caught Holyoake line.





Interestingly two rats were caught on the Pitt Head stoat line in the middle of the original Pitt Head A24 trap area. Also, two rats were caught on the track between Watering Cove and Anchorage which is within the A24 network extension. See Appendix 1 for a map of the A24 network.

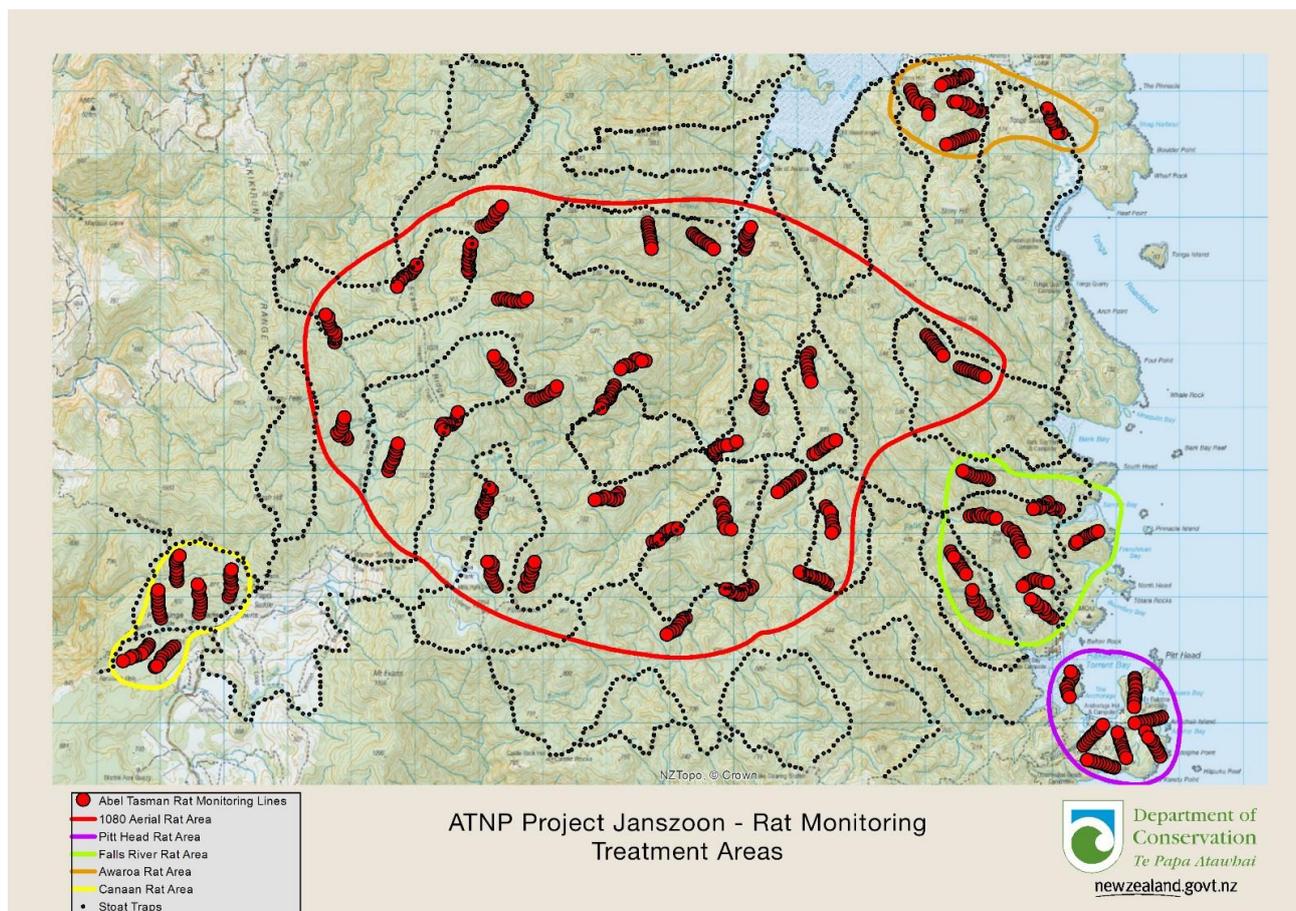
## ***Possum Control***

Based on possum 'hot spot' locations from the Wax Tag survey results, sentinel possum traps were selectively removed from between A26 and A80 and relocated into selected sites on Holyoake line, upper A line, B line and C line.

**Thirteen** possums were caught in the two months Jan and Dec 2018. **8** of the **13** were caught on the Holyoake line. Two possums were caught on A and B line and 1 possum caught on C line. These results show the value of the wax tag survey and redeployment of the sentinel possum traps

## ***Rat Monitoring***

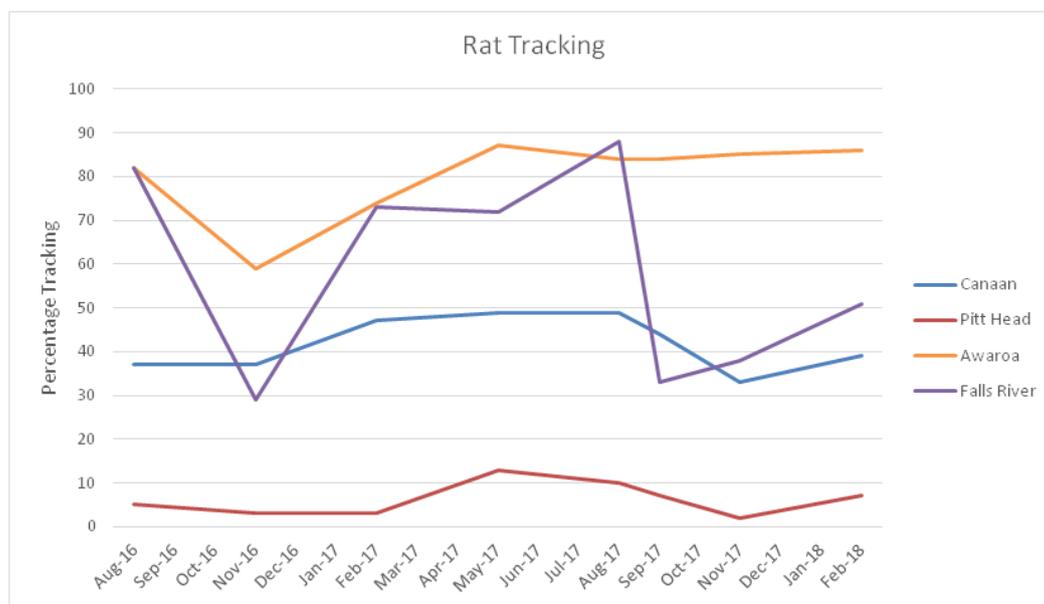
Rat monitoring is undertaken quarterly in the park (February, May, August and November) and produces a Foot Tracking Index (FTI) presented as a percentage. There are five different predator control treatments in Abel Tasman National Park and monitoring is undertaken in each treatment area (Figure below). There are a total of 59 rat monitoring lines within southern Abel Tasman:



Rat monitoring tracking tunnel locations in southern Abel Tasman National Park to fit the five different predator control treatment sites. There are seven rat monitoring lines in the Pitt Head area where A24s provide rat control.



February rat monitoring results shows that the A24 network at Pitt Head continues to provide good rat control with rat tracking sitting at 7%. This is much lower than other areas of the Park where rat monitoring is undertaken (Figure below).



## Acknowledgements

Trap checking volunteers: Marieann Keenan and Paul Kennedy (new volunteers), Anthea and Brian Harvey, Mike and Lorraine Endres, Pat and Dave Lewis, Peter Sharples, Josh and Tamsin Leenhouders, Elise Jenkins, Beryce Vincenzi, Don Pittham, Al Rynn, John and Deb Hughes, Tom Horn, Sarah Brewer, Lou Peat, Jared, Andrew and Elaine Harding, Eric Mc Pherson, Georgina Upson, Dave Wilson, Kirsten Schmidt, Andrew Eastwood, Christie Douglas, Austen Dean, William Sheat, Koa Saxby, Alistair Sheat. Ruth Beuke, Allan Barker, John Wells, Bruce Reid, Bruce Whitwell and John Richards. Abby Butler (Volunteer Coordinator and adviser). Sian Reynolds and Jim Livingstone (DOC partners and advisers including PJ Pest Report, maps and trapping app advice).

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Appendix 1: Map of the A24 network and stoat trap lines (NB additional A24 traps exist behind Glasgow Bay, Boundary Bay and in the Torrent Bay village but are not yet mapped)

