



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

Predator Control Report – October 2021

Overview

The Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust has objectives “to preserve native flora and fauna in Abel Tasman National Park” and “to enhance the Abel Tasman National Park and its environs for recreation and enjoyment by residents and visitors now and in the future”.

The Park’s native birdlife is preserved in part by trapping predators (mustelids and rats). Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust volunteers check traps once or twice per month. The results from trap checking are recorded and entered into the DOC “Animal Pests – Trapping” internet-based application that allows systematic recording of trapping results, data analysis and reporting of rats and mustelids (stoats or weasels) trapped by volunteers.

DOC “Animal Pests – Trapping” and walk the Line (WTL) app are being replaced by a new GIS trapping database called TrapNZ. The transition to TrapNZ is planned for November 2021 when all trapping data will be transferred from “Animal Pests – Trapping” to TrapNZ. This predator control report will be the last report based on data in “Animal Pests – Trapping”.

A grand total of 385 mustelids and 7532 rats have been trapped since October 2010. Volunteers check 580 trap boxes and 650 A24 traps. (Note that ATBT volunteers also check traps up at Canaan and Falls River. These will be reported by Project Janszoon until their configuration is finalised in TrapNZ.)

June to October 2021 Trap Box Results

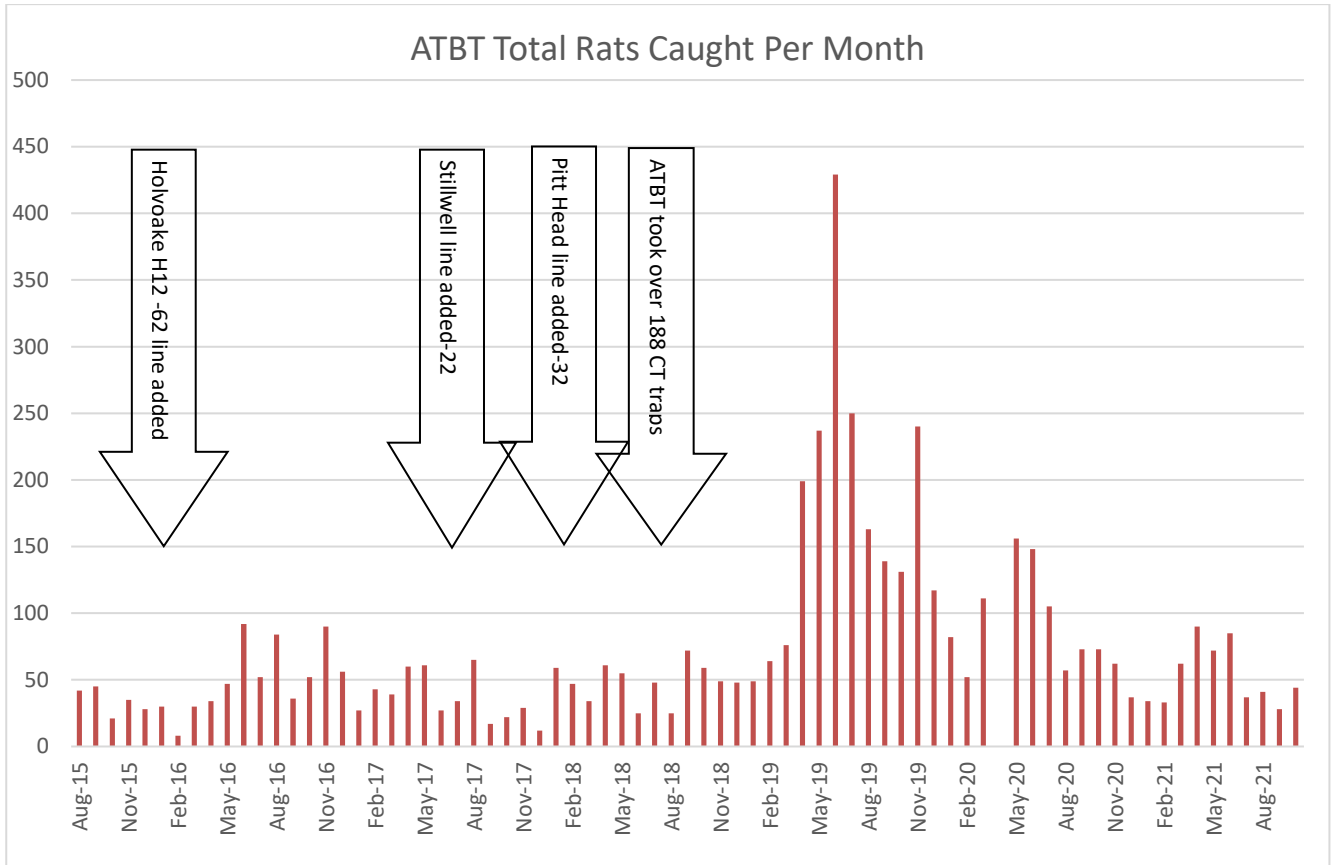
Trapping results for the **5 months** for June to October 2021(table 1) show 4 mustelids and 235 rats were trapped.

Table 1: Mustelids and rats trapped for June to October2021

Line	Mustelids	Rats	Average Percent Rats Per Month Per Total Trap boxes	No of Trap Boxes on Line
A	0	68	9	145
B	0	6	3	39
C	0	0	0	23
H31/1 to H31/12	0	3	6	12
H1 to H62	0	27	9	62
Marahau	1	9	11	16
Stilwell	0	9	10	22
Tinline	0	3	8	8
Pitt Head	0	7	5	32
Awaroa Head	1	14	8	42
Coastal Track 1	0	14	8	37
Coastal Track 2	0	14	7	40
Coastal Track 3	2	35	21	33
Coastal Track 4	0	19	12	40
Boundary Ridge Box	0	8	7	29
Lines Combined	4	235	9	580

Question 1: What is the trend in rat numbers trapped by ATBT volunteers?

Chart 1 below shows the total rat numbers trapped per month (red line) since August 2015.



The chart shows rats trapped in **June to October 2021** are down to low levels after being up from March to June. The high rat-catch in 2019 was due the beech mast.

A relatively high contributor to rats trapped June to October 2021 was the 35 rats trapped from Coastal Track 3 line between Tonga Quarry to Tonga Saddle, and the 19 rats trapped on the Coastal Track 4 line from Tonga Saddle and Awaroa Hut (See Average Percent Rats Per Month Per Total Trap box in Table 1 above). This relatively higher number of rats caught corresponds to the high rat tracking tunnel results for the 5 FTT lines behind Awaroa for May 2021 of 100%, 100%, 70%, 100% and 100% and September 2021 of 70%, 44%, 78%, 63%, 63%.

The area behind Awaroa does not receive any treatment for rats. E.g. 1080 or A24 trapping. See “Footprint Tracking Tunnel Results” section later in this report.

A future plan is an A24 network in behind Awaroa. See concept plant opposite.

Concept Plan for 'AWAROA VILLAGE' A24 Network
Abel Tasman National Park



Question 2: Where were rats trapped in June to October 2021?

The map below shows the “density” clusters of rats trapped over the five months June to October 2021. Numbers in red circles represent clusters of rats trapped in adjacent traps. The higher the number in a red circle the higher the “density” of rats trapped. Green triangles indicate only one rat trapped in a trap.

Map 1: Rats trapped June to October 2021



The cluster map shows in the last five months the highest density of rats trapped were from near Tinline (12); opposite Adele Island on the Coastal Track (10, 8, 8); Torrent River bridge (7); and Tonga Saddle (9,9).

Heart of the Park Sanctuary Project

In December 2018 the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust received a Lotteries Grant called “Heart of the Park” (HOTP) for extending the current A24 trapping network in the Falls River and Moncrieff Reserve areas.

Heart of the Park Project Progress

Tracking tunnel (FTT) results can be seen and discussed on the next page.

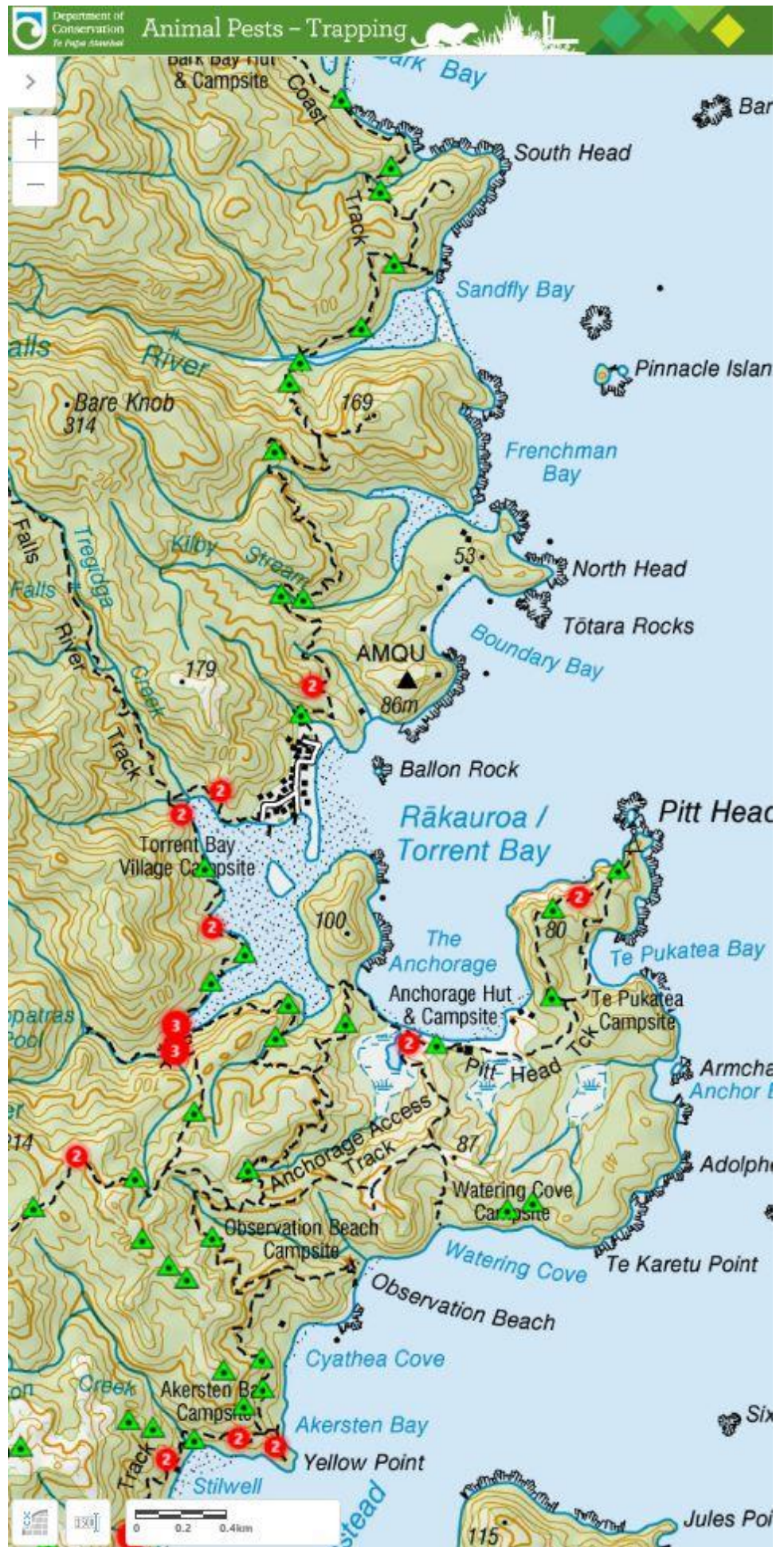
Rats Trapped

The map opposite shows rats trapped by trap boxes within the HOTP Sanctuary area for the last five months from June to October 2021.

Rats continue to be caught in box traps on the boundary or within the area of the HOTP project from Bark Bay to Yellow Point.

To keep rat populations low, it is important to continue to work of optimising the performance of the A24 network.

Newly purchased trail cameras and data from A24 strike counters or Chirps will be used to guide A24 performance improvement and protection of vulnerable birdlife.



Footprint Tracking Tunnel Results

Tracking tunnels (FTT) are used to provide a snapshot the level of rodent (rat and mice) activity.

Tracking tunnel results for Sept 2021 in the ATBT A24 trapping networks are depicted in on the two maps opposite. There are 10 tracking tunnels per line. The yellow dots indicate the presence of rats in a tunnel.

For the FTT lines south of Bark Bay show rat tracking as follows:

Site	June 20	Sept 20	Mar 21	May 21	Sept 21
Falls River 13:	60%	50%	0%	0%	32%
Falls River 16:	44%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Falls River 20:	50%	42%	10%	0%	0%
Falls River 21:	50%	20%	0%	0%	20%

Rat tracking in the Moncrieff/Pitt Head area were as follows:

Site	June 20	Sept 20	Mar 21	May 21	Sept 21
Moncrieff M8	40%	30%	20%	0%	0%
Moncrieff M9	30%	10%	10%	30%	10%
Pitt Head P3	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%
Pitt Head P4	20%	10%	0%	11%	0%
Torrent T5	20%	20%	11%	20%	30%
Torrent T6	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Torrent T7:	13%	21%	10%	0%	0%

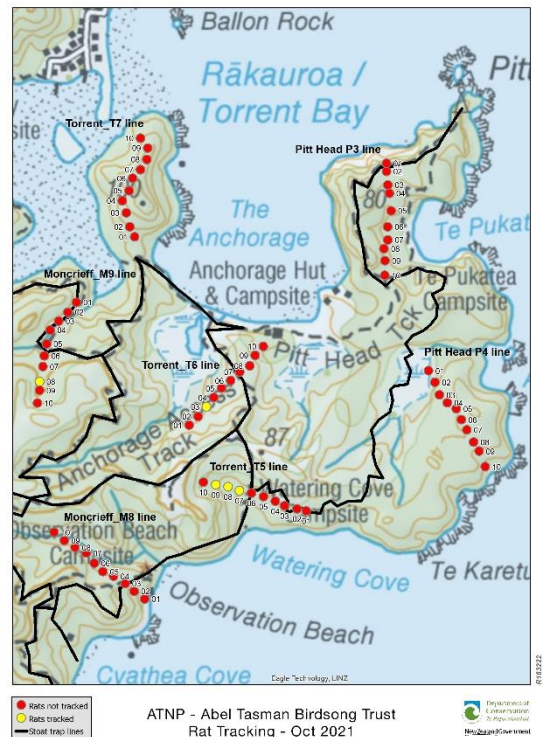
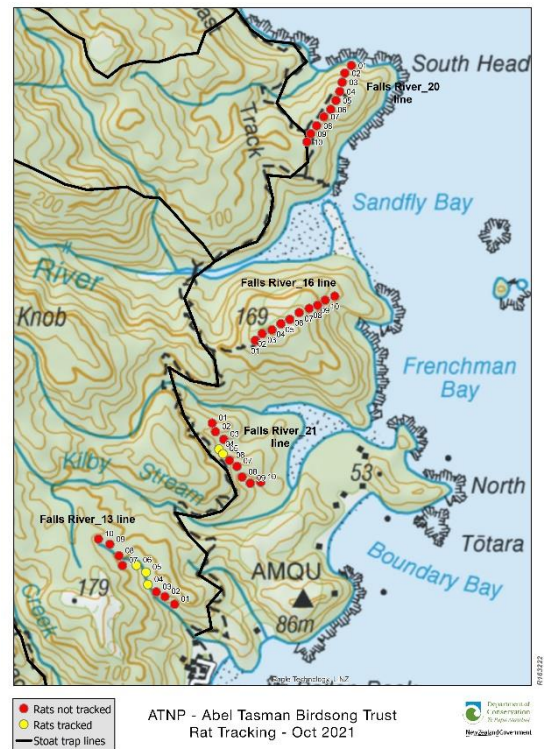
Overall, the average tracking tunnel results for all of the HOTP FTT lines was 10% for Sept 21. An OK result for the A24 networks and the HOTP project relative to the goal of <5%.

Torrent T5 FTT line (near Watering Cove) is consistently tracking at between 20 and 30% and may require some additional A24 traps. Similarly, Moncrieff M9 consistently tracks 10% or greater.

Falls 13 (behind Torrent Village) and 21 (behind Frenchman Bay) are starting to creep up so will need watching.

Overall, there is very little mouse tracking since May 2021.

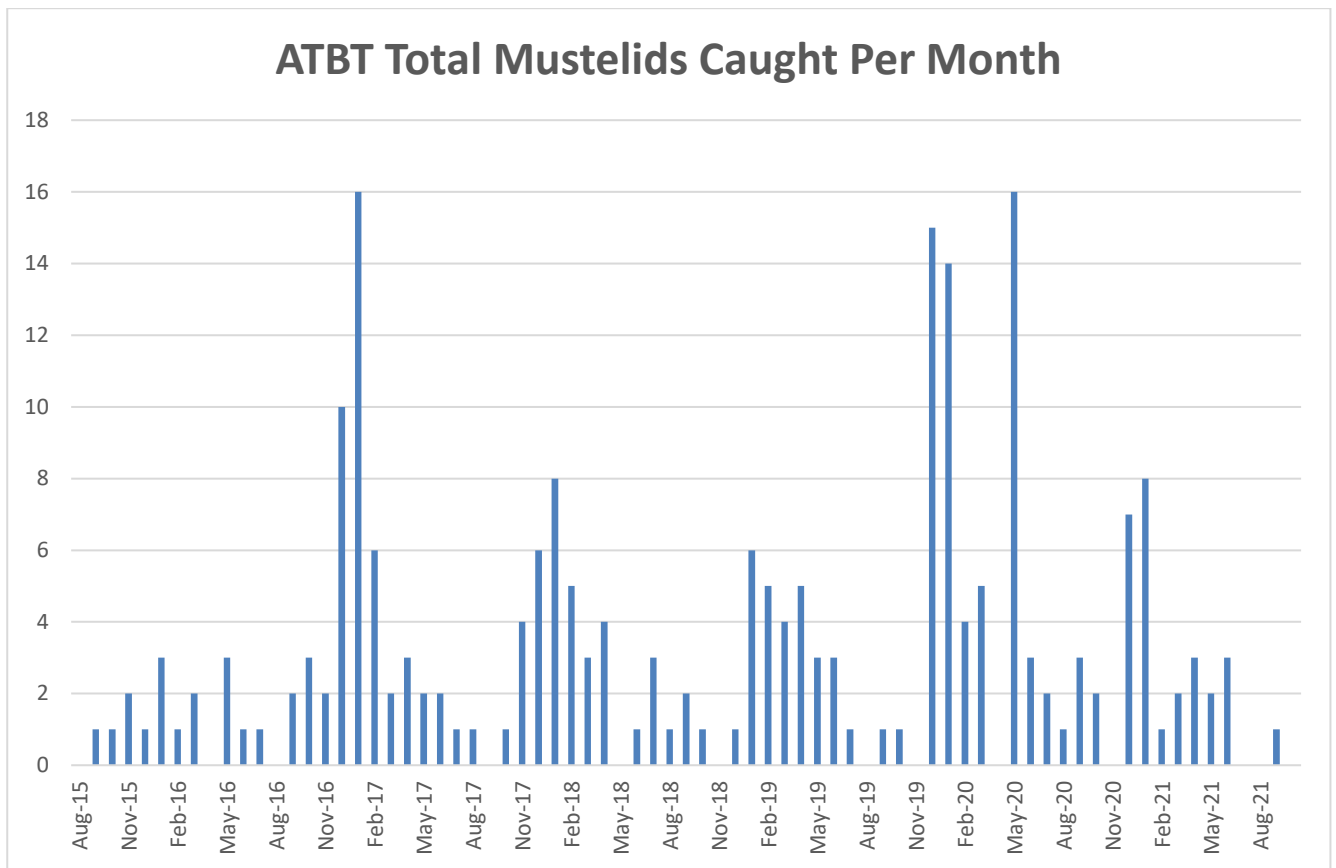
For comparison the 5 FTT lines behind Awaroa for Sept 21 tracked at: 70%, 44%, 78%, 63%, 63%. This area does not receive any treatment for rats. E.g. 1080 or A24 trapping.



Question 3: What is the trend in mustelid numbers trapped?

Mustelid numbers trapped in June to October 2021 were low relative to the usual trend of higher mustelid capture during the months December to February.

Chart 2: ATBT total mustelids trapped per month from August 2015.



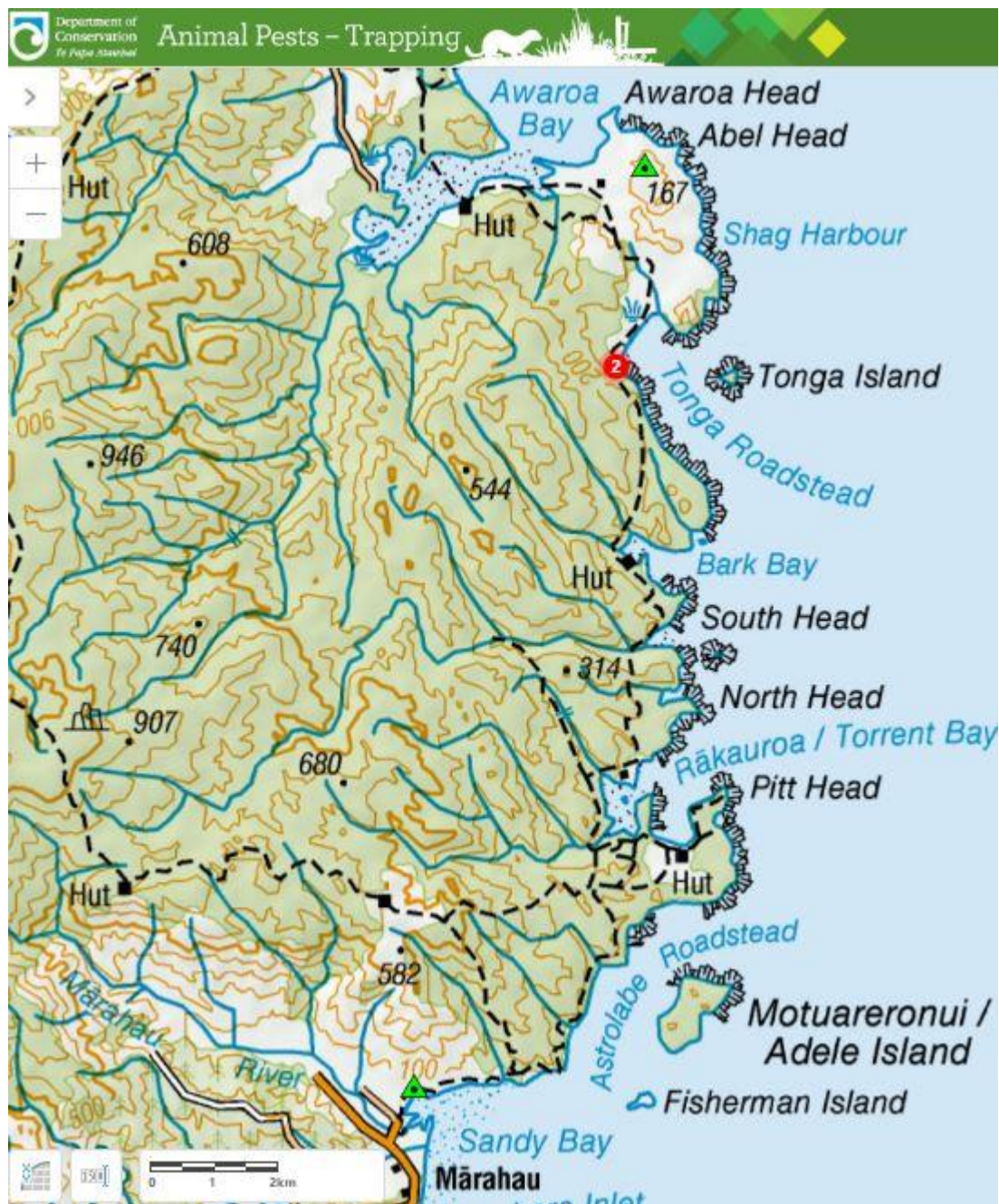
However, the low stoat catch does not mean that there are no stoats around. The image of a stoat investigating an A24 trap was caught on a trail camera in Cyathea Cove in October 2021.

Interestingly, a dead and partly decomposed little blue penguin was found about 40m below this location two weeks after this picture was taken.



Question 2: Where were mustelids trapped?

Map 4: ATBT mustelids trapped June to October 2021



The four mustelids (stoats and weasels) were trapped only at the beginning of the Coastal Track, Tonga and Awaroa line.

Volunteer Photographs from the Park

The following photographs of small and beautiful flora were taken by volunteers Beryce and Don while out trap checking in the Park.

In October many orchids were in flower bud (mainly sun orchids) and many in open flower (mainly spider (Corybas oblongus). But the most obvious were the flowers of the bush lawyer hanging in bunches, like grapes, from the vines and the flowers of the tree daisy.

Below are 3 photos, one of the Green-hood orchid, *Pterostylis banksii*, another of the spider orchid, *Corybas oblongus*, and the third of the bush lawyer flower, *Rubus* sp.



Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all the Birdsong Trust volunteers for giving their time checking traps (and acting as impromptu visitor advisers and promoters of Birdsong Trust work).

Thanks to Peter Minchin for adding trapping data to the database for CT and Awaroa trap lines.

Abby Butler (Volunteer Coordinator and adviser), assisted by Fran Forsey.

Jim Livingstone, Chris Golding, and Josh Preston (DOC partners and advisers).

Bruce Vander Lee and team (Project Janszoon (PJ) partners and advisers)

Water taxi companies for carrying volunteers into the Park. Abel Tasman Kayaks who host the Marahau shed and Bruce Reid who hosts the Motueka shed.

Concessionaires whose levy component contributes to the funding of Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust operations. Sponsors and donors for their contributions.

Pic Picot and Pics Peanut Butter for peanut butter for A24 trap lures.

William Sheat for updating the spreadsheet that analyses the trapping data for producing graphs and data tables in this report.

Bill Franklin and DOC Marahau team for boating in batches of new trap boxes in and old boxes out from Akersten Bay and Cyathea Cove.

Finally, to all the Park visitors who show interest and support for all the work of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust. A special thanks to those that catch water taxis into the Park and contribute part of their taxi fare to ATBT's conservation efforts.

Appendix 1 Map of the Heart of the Park Sanctuary Project

