



# Friends of Rotoiti News

## Summer 2009

I thought as I have some exciting news to share with you (see FOR - Supporters Club) and I am about to go on parental leave that it was a good excuse to send out an 'extra' summer newsletter.

### **Friends of Rotoiti - Supporters Club**

At the 'Friends' October 2008 meeting we discussed and agreed on the concept of starting a Friends of Rotoiti supporters club, in recognition that there are people out there who appreciate the work of the group and would like to contribute but are not able to actively. A supporters club would allow for these people to be involved through an annual subscription which can then support the 'Friends' work.

Recently the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project (RNRP) staff sent a letter to Sir David Attenborough updating him on the RNRP and the work of the Friends of Rotoiti as he launched the RNRP back in February 1997. He was invited in the letter to become the patron of the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project or an honorary member of the Friends of Rotoiti supporters club.

We have kept this under wraps as we did not want members to be disappointed if he was not keen, but we received a letter back from Sir Attenborough on Christmas Eve. He felt, as he was not in touch with the RNRP on a frequent basis he would not feel right about becoming the projects patron but he would be very proud to be an honorary member of the Friends of Rotoiti supporters club!

So the idea now is to promote the supporters club through the establishment of a Friends of Rotoiti website and probably a press release.

### **Friends of Rotoiti website**

John is at present putting together a website for the 'Friends'. It will include background information on the group, any new news, how to subscribe to the supporters club or become an active member, trapping results and links to the 'Friends' newsletters and the DOC website for information about the RNRP. John or the new Community Relations Ranger will keep you updated on its progress and when it will go live.

### **DOC 250 traps on the Rainbow Valley stoat line given new entrance holes**

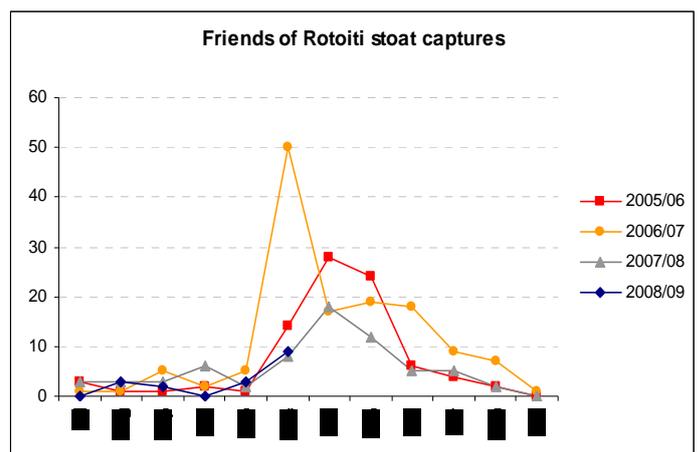
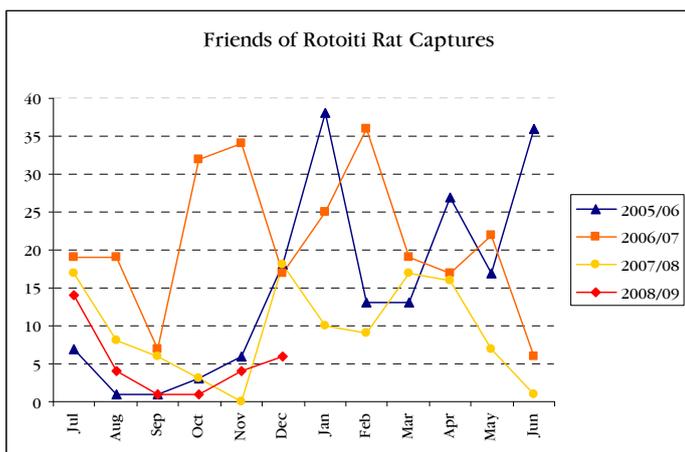
We have had two really unfortunate weka captures on the Rainbow Valley stoat line over December and January. One bird was caught in a DOC 250 trap and the other in a fenn trap which had been knocked over. Due to this members have stapled new wire mesh ends to the DOC 250 traps which have a smaller entrance hole in them; we hope that this measure will eliminate weka from gaining access to these traps in the future. Catching the second bird in the fenn trap is yet another reason to replace these traps! We have a stock of DOC 250 traps to replace the rest of the fenns on this line and will look at either setting up a working bee this year to make up the trap boxes or price up a contractor to carry out the work.

## Whisky bait trial

The bait trial on the Whisky stoat line is now under way with the rabbit meat-polymer baits set in all odd numbered traps in December and eggs in all even numbered traps. The trial will run for at least one year. Kate Steffen's, Biodiversity Assets Ranger will be monitoring how the bait compares, capture and weather wise to eggs. There is a new data sheet which needs to be used when checking this line which captures all the information Kate needs. These data sheets can be found in a green clip folder in the Friends gear room.

## Where are all the pests!

As most of you will have noticed it has been an incredibly quiet season for rats and stoats with captures on the rat lines being the lowest since the 'Friends' started trapping in 2001 and stoat numbers mirroring last years captures which were very low. This will have been wonderful for the bird life up at the lake with lower pest numbers over the breeding season. But with three species of beech flowering in spring we may well be in for a mighty big beech mast this year which will see a rise in rats and then stoats.



## Finally, its good bye for now from me

Well I'm off on parental leave on the 30th January (no I wasn't just eating a lot more pies!). The new Community Relations Ranger, Petrina Carter (better known as Petr) will be starting in mid February. I know I won't be able to stop my self coming up to the lake, so hope to see you all with the new addition at the next 'Friends' meeting. In the mean time take care all and happy trapping!



Notice the label on the wine bottle - a photo of me holding my first stoat capture - the wine is called Leggett's leg puller, made by Bryce Buckland, cheers Bryce!