



Friends of Rotoiti News

November 2012

Welcome to the busy months! After the quieter months of winter, we are now gearing up for the busier warm months - more pests breeding, which should mean more pests captured!

This newsletter is a joint effort with all the roster co-ordinators reporting on their 'bits and bobs' so there's something for everyone here I think. This is a bit of a 'catch up' and another one is planned before Christmas, so if you would like to include something, please forward it to me.



Cheers, Petr

Reminders

- For all possum captures - make sure you mark on the data sheet whether it was caught in a DOC trap or a sentinel.
- When doing checks on the week-end, and you're going into the visitor centre through the back door - please take the time to say G'day to whoever is on reception. They can hear the door but then don't know who it is. Thanks!
- Vehicle availability over summer - try to schedule trap checks that need DOC vehicles to be done on the week-end as that's when more vehicles will be available.

Next two training meeting dates

Saturday 24 November 2012
(Lake Rotoiti Community Hall)

Saturday 30th March 2013
(Lake Rotoiti Community Hall)

Sad farewell to Chris Smith

Chris passed away 21st June 2012 after a long brave battle with cancer. Our deepest sympathies to Pam and family, and we will always remember Chris's big smile when he came to help with rat trapping.

Supporters

Thank you to those who are supporting us this year. As at the 31 October we've received \$2,731 being :

\$ 580	\$20 memberships
\$ 55	feeding Fen our kiwi dog
\$ 150	egg baits
\$ 600	kea nest protection
\$ 0	polymer meat baits
\$ 0	kiwi transmitter
\$ 1,346	general donations.

(A special thank you to Tiffany Conklin who lives in the US, who donated \$366 towards possum control. Tiffany made this donation as a gift to her aunt and uncle who live in Queenstown)

Sentinel possum traps on the Rainbow valley (Bryce Buckland)

One problem we have discovered is that some kind person is removing possums from our sentinels for fur. This is ok, but we do need to know what they catch and because all the traps are being re-set incorrectly.

The person/s doing this need to learn how to re-set the traps correctly. Petr made very cool laminated signs that we have installed above each trap asking the culprit to let us know what they catch and if they in fact do make contact with Petr, she will ask that they call in and get "driving instructions" on setting the Sentinel correctly.

If this fails we may have to move the traps and unmark them to avoid interference. It seems as though when we do the checks we will need to be sure each sentinel is set correctly.

Remember the hook goes on the crook

Tophouse Road line (Peter Hale)

For the benefit of new and prospective members I thought a bit of background information would be of interest. This line of 43 DOC200 stoat/rat trap boxes was set up in 2009, running along Tophouse Rd from the junction with Korere Tophouse Road to the junction with Highway 63.

Checking this line involves an easy 1 hour amble past the old Telegraph building (now the Wotherspoon residence) and historic Tophouse Hotel to Wairau Pass with great views of the St Arnaud range, Robert ridge and Mt Angelus.

The line is currently checked by three groups utilising a variety of methods: mountain bike, leaving a vehicle at each end and walking or splitting the line in half with each group walking from opposite ends and back. In future the line will be able to be checked by vehicle once a road management plan is in place.

As with all Friends lines, polymer baits are attached to screws in the tops of traps 1 - 10 to try to minimise mouse predation. The checking schedule follows RNRP guidelines with 2 weekly checks in the summer (November to April inclusive) and monthly checks in winter (May to October), bait changes are at eight week intervals to spread the job between the three groups.

Catch numbers are low to moderate, as an example the 2011 figures are: 24 rats, 1 stoat, 6 rabbits and 1 hedgehog. So far this year the tally is 12 rats, 2 stoats, 5 hedgehogs and 1 cat.

Unfortunately the line is susceptible to trap theft - one stolen in 2011 and four so this year.

If you are interested in checking this line (as with all other lines) please contact me or one of the groups directly.

DOC200 Reminder : Use of bait screws – make sure the polymer bait is screwed right up to the top of the box. If not, mice are still able to get a ‘foothold’ and eat the bait. The whole potential benefit of using these screws can’t be assessed if this is happening.

Rainbow line (Marg Hunter)

Rainbow has been very quiet over the winter this year. The possum numbers have kept up though which is a bit scary especially after all the possums caught in the leg hold traps by the animal health people.

We have had someone taking the possums out of some of our sentinels and plucking them, just wish they would reset them properly and advise us of the trap numbers and the catch – chance is a fine thing I think. We have stapled notices on the trees by the traps asking for this info – wait and see.

Warwick and Alec have placed a few traps down at Dip Flat around the army quarters so it will be interesting to see if we pick much up – usually where there are humans there are vermin – time will tell.

I would like to thank Warwick, Alec, Peter and Ray for all their hard work in putting the ski field road traps back out and their time spent maintaining everything up there – a job well done and very much appreciated.

Remember to check sentinel baits and correct setting due to recent interference - as per Bryce’s note on the front page. Also remember to take a spare trap box when going out in case of a box needing repair or missing. If one is replaced, note the number on it and enter it in the book where the boxes are stacked.

Whisky Falls line (Warwick Ward)

Since the last meeting the Whisky trap line has continued to produce a small number of captures, particularly in the stoat department & with possum captures easing down from last last years totals.

This spring has also seen new teams let loose checking the trapline. Thank you to Dave & Barbara Smissen, Liz Christensen & Brenda Hatwell for their efforts.

For the last few months we have been trialling a new type of possum lure that has given good results, but is susceptible to washout in heavy rain so it has been decided to go back to possum putty until the weather has warmed & become more settled & we will try again.

Mt Robert / Speargrass lines (Ray Vibert)

Brian has recently come across people hunting from the Speargrass track, so a new Health and Safety requirement in our safety plan is that all volunteers checking this line MUST wear a high visibility vest. Please use the vests in the FOR room up at the workshop - or if you have your own, that's fine.

Ray reports that these lines have been fairly quiet over the past few months, with a couple of captures on each check - mostly possums in the sentinel traps.

Rat Trapping (Janice Gibbs)

We have put all the new wooden tunnels out in Black Valley, Robert and Holland Street and are gathering impressions from trappers about ease of use and adaptations that may be needed. Our numbers of catches of mice have been up quite dramatically this last month or two so we will be interested to see if the rat numbers also increase.

New traps have been put out and Lyne and I have washed, dried and refurbished the old ones ready for re-use.

Weka damage is still an issue and we have used Will's idea of putting rubber bands on the tunnels and this has helped but not entirely solved the problem. The weka are wily and persistent little devils.

We have had a few of our members coping with health issues this last few months so are constantly on the lookout for new people to join us and take the pressure off. We really appreciate our Rotoiti residents who help us out with extra jobs and beat work. Thanks to you all.

Workshop (Warwick Ward)

Since finishing making up 900 sets of componentry for the RNRPs A24 self-resetting traps (a set consists of a wire mesh screen, a platform to elevate the intruder to within 150mm of the trap base & a steel bracket to secure the trap to the box), a trial run of 50 ply rat tunnels was made, these are now out in the field.

Just finished are another 50 DOC200 trap boxes, 10 as replacement stock for RNRPs, 10 each for two Motueka based trapping groups, & 20 for our own replacement stock.

Trap Boxes (Warwick Ward)

DOC 200s, to enable an accurate check to be kept on these, there is now a notebook provided to note the serial number of the box taken as a replacement, as well as a note of its final position, eg RV 58.

For sales of DOC200s, sentinels, or rat tunnels - please contact either Petr, Peter Hale or Warwick.

This will enable a better check to be kept on the numbers available, & enable better forward planning of expenditure.



Friends of Rotoiti - Captures from December 2001 to October 2012

Total Pests 17,891

	Rat	Mouse	H/hog	Stoat	Ferret	Weasel	Cat	Rabbit	Possum	Bird
Stoat traps	1,497	18	1,133	808	72	34	28	172	162	15
Rat traps	1,638	11,530	34	21	1	14		3		23
Possum Traps									726	
Totals	3,135	11,548	1,167	829	73	48	28	175	888	38

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