



Friends of Rotoiti News

October 2008

Happy spring to you all, looking forward to a little less snow and a whole lot more sunshine! Thanks to all members who kept the rat and stoat trap checks going over the winter months and participated in a variety of other jobs.

Recycling fenn boxes to extend the Whisky Falls stoat line

Friends members had a very productive working bee in August converting some old fenn boxes to take the new DOC 200 traps. These converted boxes and DOC traps will be used to replace the last of the old fenn traps on the Mt Robert Road stoat line and also to extend the Whisky Falls stoat line, situated on the Lakeside Track, to Coldwater Hut.

The extension has now been measured and marked out and a further 27 traps at 100 metre spacing will take the stoat line to the hut. We hope to get the new traps out in the field some time in October.

Stoat bait trial

As discussed at the last Friends of Rotoiti meeting we will be trialling a new bait type for stoats along the Whisky Falls line. The bait, made by Trappers Cyanide Ltd, www.traps.co.nz, is a rabbit meat/ polymer mix and comes in small blocks.

The new bait will be placed in all odd numbered traps along the line with eggs in the even numbered traps. We will be trialling the 'life' of the bait - how well it lasts, how long one piece will attract stoats for and whether the wasps will take it over the summer months.

For the trial to be effective it has to run for at least one year and possibly longer if stoat captures are low over that year. We will be using a new data sheet to record captures and also to record degradation of the bait over time. This trial will be nationally important so we do have to follow some guidelines. If you find you are rostered on to check the Whisky Falls line and have not had a run down about how to check the bait please come and see me or give me a call or email for an update. We hope to start the bait trial once the Whisky Falls line has been extended to Coldwater Hut.

More rat traps for the Peninsula Nature Walk

We have also been busy on the rat trapping front this winter with the decision to place some more rat traps along the Peninsula Nature Walk. Originally this line had rat traps set at 100 metre intervals in between the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project (RNRP) stoat traps. It was decided to bring this spacing down to 50 metres and have a rat trap at every stoat trap sight as well. These traps have the same numbering as the RNRP's stoat traps and will be set once rat numbers increase again.

Rat bait trial

The rat bait trial continues with some changes. We tested foam soaked in cinnamon oil on alternate traps along the Black Valley Walk (BVW) and Gibbs Walk (GW) lines and did not have much success, possibly due to the fact that rat numbers are very low at present. We have now swapped cinnamon for aniseed

and will trial this bait on all alternate traps along BVW and GW over spring and summer.

The next Friends of Rotoiti meeting will be on the **25th October**, starting at **9.30am** at the **DOC Nelson Lakes tea room (St Arnaud)**. I have some great video footage to show you of a kiwi health check which was carried out this year. We will be supplying the usual BBQ lunch. **Please let me know if you are coming to the meeting by the 20th October**, phone (03) 521 1067 or email sleggett@doc.govt.nz.

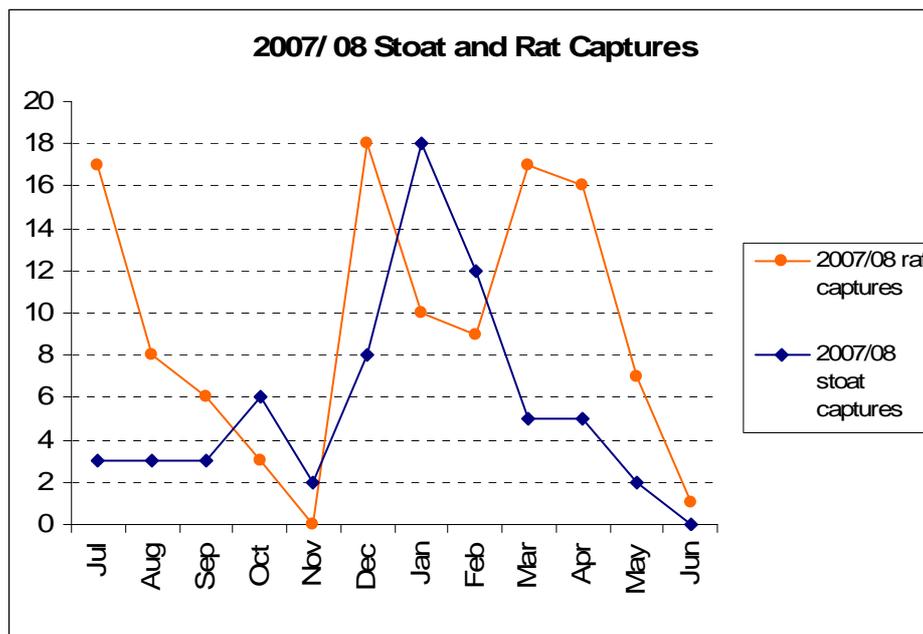
The latest figures of captures for the stoat and rat traps from December 2001 to August 2008.

	Rat	Mouse	H/hog	Stoat	Ferret	Weasel	Rabbit	Possum
Stoat traps	627	-	773	517	48	10	98	89
Rat traps	1099	5079	32	16	1	10	2	-

The latest figures of captures for the warrior possum traps from May 2005 to August 2008.

	Mt Robert Road - 3 traps	Rainbow Valley - 16 traps	Whisky Falls - 14 traps
Possums	52	169	210

Stoat captures on stoat control lines and rat captures on rat control lines for the 2007/08 year.



The graph above shows captures on all stoat and rat control lines for 2007/08. Although much lower this year, the usual peak in both rat and stoat numbers is apparent through November to January.