



Friends of Rotoiti News

Winter 2009

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for being so welcoming while I settled in with Sally away for most of this year. It's a great experience to work with such experienced, passionate and motivated people who are determined to make a difference. Thanks!



FEN "OUR KIWI DOG" - Fen has done a great job on his inaugural kiwi locating trips in May, working with Dave Rees and Sarah Forder who are his interim certified handlers. The first mission was to locate a female kiwi, Onekaka, who had dropped her transmitter. She was burrowed up with her partner Takaka and young Marama, both of which had transmitters that could be tracked in to. As the team approached an obvious burrow system, Fen (now keen as mustard) was tied to a tree 2m from the



burrow and told to sit. He calmly watched the handling of all 3 birds and was allowed to have a good sniff at their feet and the burrow before leaving. Dave handled Fen on the second trip to locate Te Matau, although Fen led the way straight to him before the telemetry could catch up. Te Matau made a dash but was caught by one of the team. Fen sat whimpering a little until Dave began to notice that Fen was taking a keen interest in the burrow again. A second kiwi dashed out, which was surrounded and caught. This bird was a female - Anatoki - who had been without a transmitter for almost 18 months (she used to hang out near the campsite where campers would often hear her calling at night). Well done Fen!

BEECH MAST? Welcome to another winter where the counting is underway to see if we are in for a beech mast (seeding event). If so, we can expect pest numbers to increase hugely in spring. The final results aren't in yet however it looks like a partial mast for all three species of beech - could be busy times ahead!



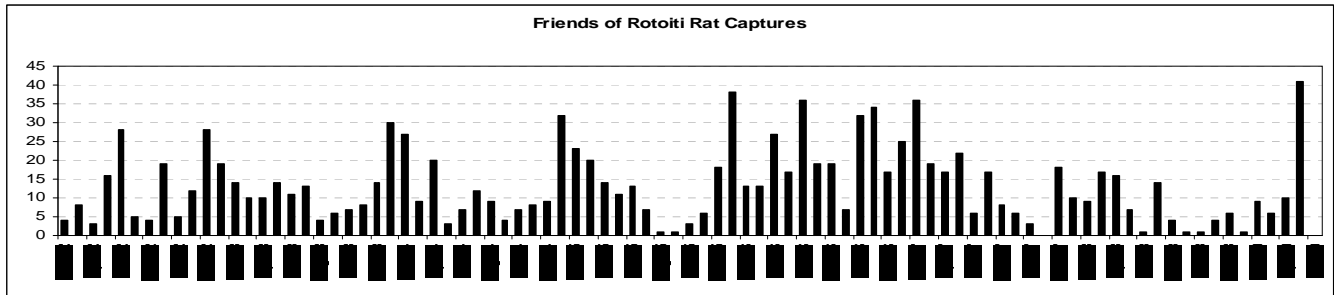
ROBIN MONITORING - Friends of Rotoiti have been asked to help monitor banded Robins around the village again. Four males have been banded in the RNRP, and eight birds (three females and five males) around the rat lines. Watch this space for more info once all the details are worked out.



The latest figures of captures for the stoat and rat traps from December 2001 to June 2009 - a total of 9,194 pests removed.

	Rat	Mouse	H/hog	Stoat	Ferret	Weasel	Cat	Rabbit	Possum	Bird
Stoat traps	733	-	856	562	52	9	6	109	117	6
Rat traps	1194	5477	32	18	1	11	-	3	-	8

RAT TRAPPING - We have just broken the record with the highest number of rats caught in a single month in Friends of Rotoiti history - 41 in May 2009!



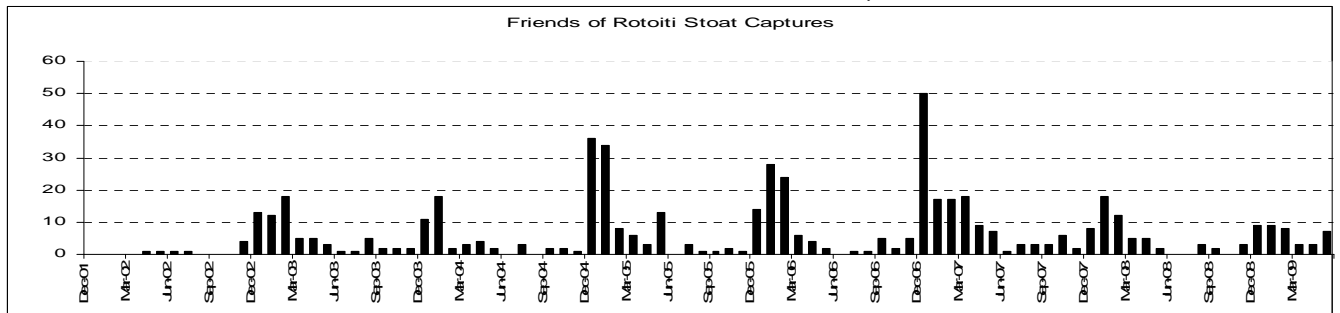
A few reminders when checking the rat traps and boxes :

- Make sure the bait is completely cleaned off the yellow trigger plate (underside too).
- Position the box so the entrance hole is clear of branches etc.
- Check that the nail is secure in the wooden base - in May 2009 a Robin was caught in a rat trap on the Black Valley Stream line as the nail had fallen out and the trap slid towards the entrance hole.

THANK YOU to Will Rickerby who has built us 86 new rat tunnels. This was a fantastic exercise in recycling too as Will made use of old Real Estate signs and salvaged the old wire mesh ends from the Fenn boxes being converted for the RNRP. Will was able to cut them down to make new mesh ends so the only new material required was ply for the bases and staples.



STOAT TRAPPING - The stoat numbers have continued to be quite low.



A NEW STOAT LINE - 'Friends' support of the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project (RNRP) is about to expand with a new stoat line to be established along Tophouse Road. The roster co-ordinator will be Peter Hale, with the view of utilising local FOR members for this new roster. Thank you to Tammy Bruce from the RNRP for initiating this new project, and providing the support and funds to make it happen so quickly.

FENN BOX CONVERSION - The conversion of the last 110 Fenn boxes has begun and we now have the DOC200 traps to go in them. Thanks to Warwick Ward and Peter Hale for all their workshop time spent preparing the components. The plan is to convert lots of 30 or so in batches to ensure no gaps are left in the Rainbow Valley line during the conversion.

POSSUM CAPTURES ON STOAT CONTROL LINES - 454 total!	MAY, JUNE 2004	JULY 2005 TO JUNE 2006	JULY 2006 TO JUNE 2007	JULY 2007 TO JUNE 2008	JULY 2008 TO MAY 2009	TOTALS
RAINBOW	3	69	57	40	7	176
MR ROBERT	4	14	20	13	2	53
WHISKY FALLS	n/a	45	110	51	19	225



TOTAL PESTS CAUGHT TO DATE : **9,648** : What an achievement for 7 ½ years of hard work! The big 10,000 mark is just around the corner....

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