



TRAPPER'S REPORT

March 2014

Mustelid kills on the trap lines are still quite good although starting to drop off to off-peak numbers now the height of summer is over. Rat kills are starting to rise again. I guess this is because the bulk of native trees have now finished fruiting and the trap baits are probably becoming more attractive to rats. Having said that, Pigeon wood, Kahikatea, and Mahoe are still quite heavy in berry along with a lot of small bush shrubs. I don't think these natives with their smaller berries appeal to Rats as much as the large fruits of Terraire, Karraka, etc.

The new traps from NRC have arrived so we now have around 70 more boxes to carry in and install on the trap lines. With the inclusion of these new traps our lines will be looking very good. I noted that over the peak Mustelid kill time, mid December to mid February the last lot of new traps really made a difference with many of them successfully taking out predators we may not have caught had they not been in place. With this in mind the latest lot of new traps should make our trap lines even more effective!

Wasp numbers are incredible in Pukenui at the moment. Most days I see at least one or two nests and care needs to be constantly taken to avoid being attacked. These wasps are quite aggressive and should a nest be disturbed or you get too close they attack immediately and will chase you for some distance. I have achieved some quite impressive sprint times while escaping these nasty wee critters and luckily have only received a handful of stings over summer. They are not my favourite Pukenui resident!!! With the sheer numbers of these aggressive wasps I do wonder what impact they may have on native fauna. Gerry has agreed to buy me wasp poison so I will poison each nest as I find them and hopefully this will make an impact on them over time.

Wood pigeon numbers seem to be very good at the moment with many being seen in groups. I suspect these may be young birds that have recently become independent and able to get around the bush on their own. Tomtit numbers are also good and it's great to see so many breeding pairs of these neat little bush dwellers going about their business.

Regards, Chris.