



Trapper's report Pukenui/Western Hills Charitable Trust (May 2015)

Hello all,

Well it's feeling like autumn up in Pukenui at the moment. Rat numbers have been very low in most of my area. Fingers crossed that this is a sign of a successful poisoning programme.

All bait stations should be empty now. Max, Gerry, Bevan and I have all removed what we needed to, as have DOC and others. The bait stations seem to have done a good job with most having been well fed upon. Max and I have returned to some bait lines to do maintenance and repairs and will continue to do so through the winter, in preparation for next time.

Whilst clearing the stations I came across this critter. A nice sized cave weta about the size of my thumb. It was happy to be handled and I transferred it to a little cover, as it had ended up rather exposed once the bait station it was hiding behind was moved.



Another stoat was caught above the quarry gardens last week. That's great news. You may note my last report mentioned a stoat group seen and subsequent catches, close by here. Hopefully it's last of that family.

I had an enjoyable experience observing the native fish and koura in one of the tributaries that lead into the Whau Valley dam. A few crumbs from my sandwich crust soon had five or six around and a couple of small koura. I'm assuming they're banded kokopu but not sure as the video I took is a little blurry. I intend to take more photos when next in the area.



Max, Mark and I have continued our Kiwi handler training with some interesting visits to the Purua area. If there is to be a kiwi program for Pukenui in the future, it is vital we have suitably trained handlers. Rolf Fuchs helped us track down a nice surprise out there, with this young kiwi living in the same burrow as the

older male. It is always a pleasure to see these amazing birds.



We have begun re-marking the predator lines. These will now have blue triangles which should be in view from both directions. With these going up, much of the tape in Pukenui is coming down. I have also begun a clean-up and re-mark of parts of the main tracks. Some of the orange markers are gone, damaged or in need of a spruce up. As this happens I'll be removing tapes along these main tracks as they're not needed and also snipping and clearing some of the tighter parts.

Unfortunately, we still seem to have to odd new splotch of paint turning up. If anyone knows who is doing this please encourage them to get in touch so we can mark these areas for them. Spray paint in the bush is NOT ok, but if someone is worried the track is too vague we need to know.

That's all for now. I will be recovering the cameras next week so let's hope there are some good pics in there for next month's report. My last check had a picture of a morepork flying past at night (unfortunately blurry), some cheeky possums, and a rat, half in view. Hardly award winning photography.

Be careful out there as the tracks are a little more slippery than usual.

Cheers

Luke Robertson - Pukenui Trapper

