



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

Hello all,

It's drying up and the tracks are once again a pleasure to behold. Less slipping sideways and more moving forward.

Through the winter period, the tradition with the Trusts' trapping schedule is to change to eggs and a longer cycle of change. This has its pros and cons. On the plus side they last well.... aaand that's about it. As a bait they're pretty poor.

As we have the stoat numbers midly low in the forest, the most common catch is rats (as it has always been). These vermin follow their noses through the forest whilst looking for food. As eggs have little smell, the number of rats picked up is very small. Even though the rat is not our target for these traps I believe it's better to catch a few than almost none.

The difference was huge in the change back to meat baits (salted rabbit). I checked over the yellow line while doing the blue and in one week, traps that had not had a single kill during the winter had one and sometimes two, and that is only 4 days after change-over. I will be inviting some discussion on this subject so feel free to have a think about it. Perhaps next year we'll test both baits at once vs. one or the other. I did take a bunch of photos showing the difference in these traps but have unfortunately lost my personal camera in the meantime.

My lines only caught one weasel during the late winter and a few rats. Bevan had the same result, catching the 'smallest weasel I've ever seen', (his words). Other than that he did have a reasonably high catch on rats in the WDC water catchment, considering the wintery conditions.

On change-over I have picked up a stoat above Clements Quarry but no cats, nor possums for some time.

We've had a few odd goings on with the red trap line in the past couple of weeks. Bevan reports that some of his traps have been moved a few metres and one has completely gone (????). Neither of us can understand this as it would have been a bit of a carry to remove it. He also found a doc250 dumped over the fence near the weir. I'm guessing this was one of Max's that he has had on the farmland. We will have to talk with the leasee as to whether it was him and I'll be seeking discussion on this at the October Trust meeting.

We have also lost one box with 2xdoc200's in it at the Quarry as earthworks were carried out in which the traps were buried.

Also it seems people are visiting the Amalin carpark at night which I'll also discuss at the meeting.

I urgently need to have a 'how to' on trapping for a few select people. Tanya, David from the Quarry Gardens and a volunteer put forward by Gerry. I'd like to get onto this so will put forward that an hour or two one afternoon be put aside to make this happen. I can make my time work so ask for a way to find a time to suit the others.

Cheers

Luke Robertson - Pukenui Trapper

