



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE  
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST  
CHARITABLE TRUST  
(December 2012)**



*Northland Hospitality*

Xmas is not only the Season to be Jolly, but also a time to say Thank You. On a pleasant late spring afternoon, the Trust said "thank you" to a number of our volunteers and sponsors who have given their time, effort and money to maintain the momentum we have built up over the past two years. While we were there, Denis added more kowhai trees to the kowhai grove he has created and in a few years it will be loud with the song of the tui.

Talking of which, Ian Buckley and myself attended the AGM of the Puketi Trust. After the formalities, a group of us walked up the Pirau Track (which is now closed) to see the fourth largest kauri tree on the planet, called "Te tangi o te Tui"...the song of the tui. The Puketi Trust has just successfully released Kokako into their forest and Ian and I were keen to pick the brains of their volunteers. Our Trust has also made a strategic decision, if we are allowed, to return Kokako to Pukenui/Western Hills Forest.

Following our successful funding application to the ASB Community Trust and the confirmation by us that part of that money will be spent on hiring a part-time trapper, several of us met with Allan Gardiner, DOC Hunter, to discuss the position including drawing up a job description and a work plan. It is agreed that the trapper will primarily service the tougher stoat lines that have become more than a challenge for our older, regular volunteers. The trapper will be a regular presence in the forest and be able to keep an eye on any goats or pigs that he may come across, plus anything else of interest or alarm.

We have wanted to encourage research students into the forest, and a study has just been published on a rare spider. Also, two PHD students contacted me with regard to putting pit-fall traps in the forest near the Barge Park area. They have promised to let me know how they get on. This sort of information is invaluable as we build up a profile of biodiversity in the forest, and can help us with our funding applications.

Last week, I took a class of Kamo Primary School pupils into the forest from Amalin Drive. We looked at the new plantings, visited the weta box and I showed them a mounted stoat, in association with the stoat trap. They then walked the circular track. They asked me if there was anything the school could do practically to help the forest...any ideas?

Finally, the second and last poison of the Ark in the Park area was completed last Monday, with very encouraging lack of rat and possum sign. We will do it all over again next year.

Have a great Xmas and I hope you can brush up your suntans sometime in the New Year!

**Gerry Brackenbury**  
Ranger (Part-time)