



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE  
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST  
CHARITABLE TRUST  
(June 2013)**



*Northland Hospitality*

I attended the bi-annual North Island Kiwi Hui south of Cambridge and, once again, was impressed by the quality of speakers and the variety of topics. These included talks on state-of-the-art recorders for kiwi, new synthetic lures (eau de rat), new toxins (PAPP), night-vision cameras and what other conservation Trusts were up to, including ones in Northland. It was a great opportunity to catch up with fellow travellers around the North Island and hear about their successes and challenges.

It has been a busy month with a lot happening. Margaret and I have finished the ASB review of our activities over the past year, as required, and we will be preparing our next funding application with the ASB. This has to be in by 01 July, so we will have to get our skates on!

For better or worse, weeds are raising their ugly heads once again. Sara Brill of NRC is preparing for her weed workshop, which seems to be proving to be popular, and our weed contractor (Northland Vegetation Control) has finished behind the Quarry Arts Trust. I visited the site with Richard Campbell of NVC to view their work and we were both happy with the results. I would like to thank Paul McDonald, Whangarei District Council Parks Manager, for paying the account on our behalf.

On the animal pest side of things, Max Hutchings is organising a pest training day for our volunteers, looking at new traps and their management. Chris Windust, our trapper, tells me he has been catching lots of rats and one stoat. As one of the goat hunters in Pukenui, he is seeing startling re-growth throughout the forest, with no sign of any goats.

On the education front, I have been liaising with Kamo Primary School teacher, Jane Norman, who, as we know, is the recipient of a Royal Society Fellowship which will start on 01 August. We are working on a programme for her to look at insects in different parts of the forest, particularly weta, plus lizard numbers in the forest.

I was recently invited by Wendy Holland, DOC Community Relations Officer, to a meeting at her office. She and her CR colleagues are engaging with a number of community conservation Trusts like ours to "determine what support groups need in order to grow conservation in Northland". After the i/v, she recommended that we consider developing a 5 year strategic plan, looking at the Trust's goals and outcomes. It provides guidance for a Trust and transparency with stakeholders and sponsors. It pulls all plans into one document and helps members keep up to speed on what is being achieved and what is dropping off. It is not a cheap exercise, as you are advised to pay a specialist in this area to guide one through, but it may be an important investment in the future. Think about it.

Finally I have spent some time at meetings to produce a prescription for the District Health Board to see if they can support the use of toxins in the Whau Valley water catchment. Watch this space!

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