



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



Northland Hospitality

Since my last report two months ago, perhaps the biggest and most practical achievement by the Trust has been finishing Stage one of setting up the intensive trapping and poisoning grid over 220 hectares in the designated “Ark-in-the-Park” area. Stage two will happen shortly with the laying out of poison once again, targeting rats and possums. Heavy stoat traps have been put out manually by our dedicated volunteers and already we are killing both stoats and ferrets. At least, this time, it will not be so cold, wet and muddy! Pukenui Forest is deceptively steep and rugged and care is needed when working in the forest.

We have received good news from DOC with regard to our long-tailed bat population, following a survey by DOC Ranger Nigel Miller. It seems the many mature trees in the forest have provided ample roost sites for them and the many clean, dissecting streams have provided ample food of insects for them. Our predator control work can only help to increase, over time, this population of NZ's only mammal species. Nigel has written a short file note, distributed with this report.

On March 1st to 3rd, the annual Northland Field Days will be held at Dargaville. Elise Batelaan, Environmental Planner with the WDC, would like us to put up a small display of the work we have achieved in Pukenui Forest. It will be small as the Council is constrained for space, but they are willing to help us put it together. The display will be in the Biodiversity Northland Tent, along with the NRC, DOC, Kiwi Recovery and other environmental organisations. The theme for this year is “Celebrating Northland Communities”. I was pleased to hear Elise say to me that the effort the Trust is putting into Pukenui Forest is the biggest conservation project currently being supported by the WDC!

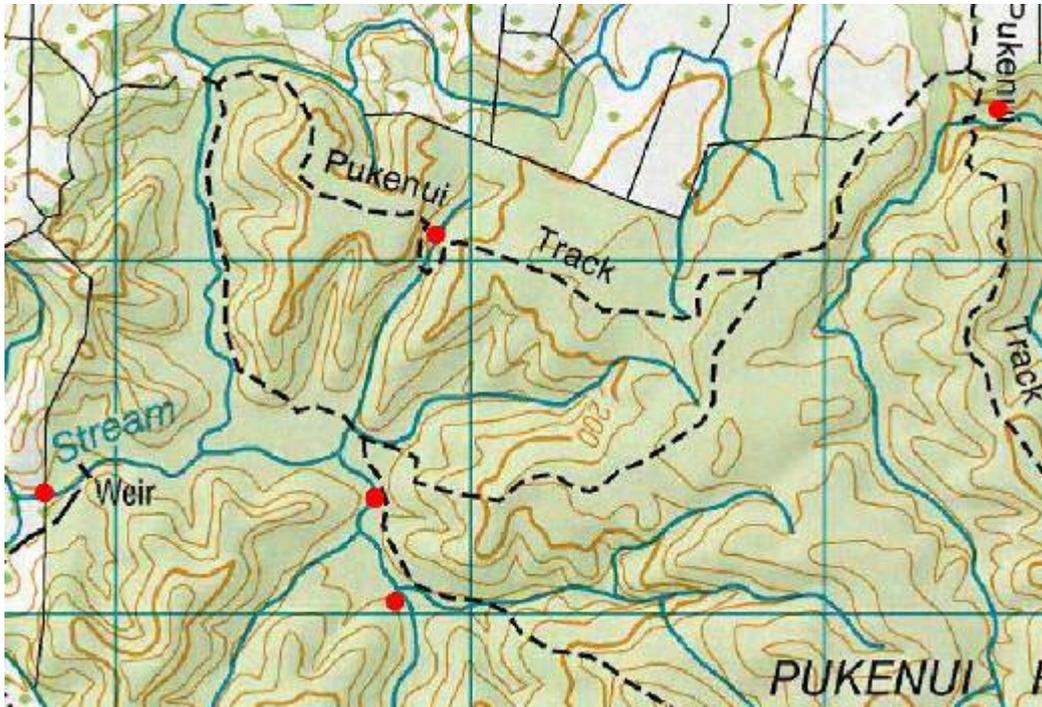
As Councillor and Trustee Sharon Morgan reminded us, we have made huge gains in a relatively short time. In a nutshell...bats, kiwi, goats, ark/park, good partner relationships, fish and stoats to name but a few.

Finally, I have organised a meeting with the Northland Conservation Board, which is administered by the Department of Conservation, to share with the publically appointed members all that we have achieved in the last few years. We will not have long to do this, but it is a great opportunity for us to get alongside another conservation organisation and let them hear the work of a “new kid on the block” as it were.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (Part-time)

File note:- Bat survey – Pukenui Forest – 23 November – 9 December 2011.

Five automatic bat recorders were set on 23 November within Pukenui forest. They were retrieved on 2 December and analysed for bat passes using “BatSearch” software. Sites chosen were all associated with waterways and one included a forest margin / stream confluence.



Box no.	GPS Grid reference	Results
1	1714438E 6048425N Whau Stream	Good numbers of l.t bat passes
2	1712907E 6048084N Nth loop gut	Few l.t bat passes
3	1711787E 6047354N Mangere strm/ forest edge	Few l.t bat passes
4	1712730E 6047319N Mid Mangere strm	No data recorded
5	1712790E 6047039N Upper Mangere strm	Very good numbers of l.t bat passes

A suspected short-tailed bat pass was sent to Brian Lloyd for confirmation but was not considered to be a short-tailed bat. Send files as “zipped” attachments.

Five further automatic bat recorders were placed by the Pukenui Trust in more eastern and southern locations. Only two of these boxes recorded any data (trig and O SD cards) and only one had recorded low numbers of long tailed bat passes in the vicinity of 1716438E 6046201N.

N Miller 14 December 2011