

Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 08/04/2021



Carl Dowd and ranger Ben holding Kama and Chris Humfrey before returning them to their burrow.



Morrie after health check and ready to be released.



Ranger Bevan with Angitu during health check/transmitter removal.

Trapping:

Pest numbers have remained low yet again over the month of March, with rats as usual being the most frequently caught pest. The odd stoat and feral cat are still about, and the first weasel of the year has been caught this month also. Our baited trail cameras have yet to detect anything which is a good sign that the pest numbers are in fact low and we don't have a tonne of trap shy pests running amok in the forest. Nonetheless we will keep moving these around in the field and see if anything shows up. This year to date we have caught a total of 97 pests which is considerably lower than this time last year with 164 pests' total, some data is still yet to be received so these numbers will change slightly when that does come in.

Trap data summary 2021:

Table 1: Trap data to date (some data still coming!).

MONTH	WEASEL	STOAT	RAT	CAT	HEDGEHOG	FERRET
JANUARY	0	3	34	4	6	0
FEBRUARY	0	1	18	0	2	0
MARCH	1	2	22	1	0	0
YTD	1	6	74	5	8	0

Comparison to this time last year:

Table 2: 2021-2020 data comparison (some data still coming!).

PEST	THIS YEAR TO DATE	THIS TIME LAST YEAR
WEASEL	1	2
STOAT	6	13
RAT	74	135
CAT	5	0
HEDGEHOG	8	14
FERRET	0	0
TOTAL PESTS	97	164

Toxin/bait stations:

We have continued work on our toxin expansion into the Whau Valley catchment which included removing the remnant of a failed toxin line from years ago, the terrain along this line was horrendous but after a day's hard work we got it done. We plan to put bait stations in this same area but will be working with the terrain by following ridges and streams rather than fighting against it which should make it far easier.

Kiwi monitoring:

We have continued monitoring the newly released kiwi weekly which have been moving around the forest a lot more than they were initially. We were able to locate all birds from last month with #69 turning up not far from Karanui estate, Forsyth near Whau Valley dam and Morrie in a small fragment of bush just outside the forest. We have also located Jasper or rather his transmitter which he had kicked off in the forest behind Barge Park which is great. Ataahua was last seen near the nowhere tree and Niwi was last seen near the Mangere stream. We have picked up weak signals for both so they can't have gone too far.

We have started doing health checks and transmitter removals this week with the help of Carl Dowd from Pataua North Landcare. We've had good luck thus far having caught up with Morrie, Angitu, Kama and Chris Humfrey already. All four were in good condition with Morrie, Angitu and Chris Humfrey gaining 300g, 50g and 20g respectively and Kama remaining the same weight at 3kg. Of the four birds we have decided that only Morrie will keep his transmitter on as he is a particularly calm bird and is in an easily accessible spot which will make him a great advocacy bird in the future.

Both Angitu and Kama have been relatively settled so we were quite happy to remove their transmitters officially making them wild birds. Chris Humfrey on the other hand had done the work for us and removed his transmitter of his own accord which left us thinking that was the end of it. It turned out however that he was huddled up in a nearby burrow with Kama, neither being too impressed about being disturbed! They were both pulled out, weighed, and put back in the burrow to continue doing their thing, an early sign of breeding activity I reckon! We plan on catching up with the rest of the birds over the next few weeks hopefully they're all doing as well as these guys are.

The monitored kiwi have been active for an collective average of 10.33 hours per night during their second month in the forest. Forsyth and Jeanette were the most active birds this month both with an average of 11.16 hours of activity per night. On the opposite end of the spectrum the newly named Shazza (formerly #73) was the least active this month with an average of 9.42 hours of activity per night.

Table 3: Average activity of each kiwi between 08/03/2021 and 7/04/2021.

KIWI	AVERAGE ACTIVITY (hrs)
Angitu	10.75
Sandy	9.75
Jeanette	11.16
Niwi	MIA
Kama	10.08
#44	10.67
Chris Humfrey	10
Atarau	10.08
Morrie	10.42
Ataahua	MIA
#69	10.5
Shazza	9.42
Forsyth	11.16
#78	10