

## Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 9/11/2017

The weather is certainly warming up and with it the forest is becoming more and more alive with every passing day! We've had an interesting month this month with an increase in the number of predators caught, the ranger station been built at the quarry gardens and possibly the most tui I've ever seen or heard on a single day within the forest. Ben and I attempted to capture footage of these tui singing the melodic tunes they're so well known for on camera, but it truly didn't do it justice, nonetheless feel free to check out the footage we did manage to capture on the Pukenui Forest facebook page.



*Stinging nettle found alongside a stream edge*



*A weta spotted within a vegetation monitoring site*

### Trapping:

Data summary:

	RAT	WEASEL	STOAT	CAT	HEDGEHOG	FERRET
<b>January</b>	7					
<b>February</b>	10		5	1		
<b>March</b>	33		5		6	
<b>April</b>	11			1	4	
<b>May</b>	31	1	1	1	7	
<b>June</b>	14		2	3		
<b>July</b>	39		2			
<b>August</b>	26					
<b>September</b>	6		1			
<b>October</b>	40		7	1	1	1
<b>November</b>	3					
<b>Total to date</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>

*Table 1: Pukenui Trap data to date (some data still missing).*

Both rat and stoat catch has gone up significantly this month as the warmer weather moves in. Most of these captures have been on trap lines outside the toxin controlled area with 17 and 11 rats caught on the yellow and blue lines respectively and three of the seven stoats as well as a ferret being caught on the buffer. In comparison to this, the red and purple lines which lie within the toxin controlled area caught a grand total of 1 hedgehog and 1 cat

between them over the last month highlighting just how much of an effect our toxin operations have on reducing pest numbers in these areas. The trail cameras installed last month are yet to detect any trap shy stoats which is a good sign but nonetheless we will continue to move these around the trap lines in attempt to detect these pesky critters.

### **Toxin/bait stations:**

Maintenance of the existing toxin blocks has continued over the last month with many of the lines now looking tidier and most of the gaps have been filled. Preparations for the December toxin operation are already underway the ordered toxin has arrived, and a packing day will be planned in the coming weeks. Additionally, we plan make a new map for each toxin blocks over the next month with detailed instructions on the back of each map to reduce confusion for any volunteers helping during future toxin operations.

### **Monitoring:**

Monitoring was a little hit and miss this month with only five of ten existing vegetation plots being found. Those that were found had several pegs missing or hidden away beneath years of leaf litter so were not particularly well set up to be monitored. Because of this not a lot was achieved regarding the actual monitoring as our monitoring time was spent locating and re-marking plots. This highlights the importance of having appropriate equipment and infrastructure in place if long term monitoring is to be carried out accurately. Considering this we plan to spend time in the coming months setting up said infrastructure for a number of monitoring projects in order to make monitoring as comparable as possible from year to year.

### **Other:**

We had a handful of keen Northtec students join Ben and I for a day of trapping this month, to show them how our trap and toxin network is set up, to set a few traps and to talk about why we do it. Not one of them shied away from the challenge and they all got into it and got their hands dirty which was great to see! It's good to see Northtec students taking advantage of the forest right on their doorstep and we hope to see more of them in the future.

The new ranger station has been built at the quarry gardens over the last few weeks and is looking awesome! The container used for the storage of our equipment which is currently sitting at the quarry arts centre will soon be moved to the same location giving Pukenui a convenient hub. Having a hub like this is great for a multitude of reasons as it is much easier to keep organised and also gives us a location to organise events such as volunteer days.

### **Upcoming events:**

- Volunteer day 16/11/2017 at Whangarei quarry gardens.
- Toxin packing (Date to be confirmed).
- December toxin operation 4/12/2017.
- Ongoing maintenance.



*Keen Northtec students after a day's trapping.*