

Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 8/11/2018

As the weather continues to warm the forest increasingly brims with activity! Tui are singing their beautiful melodies, the shining cuckoo have returned in force, kukupa are down low nesting, grey warblers are getting grumpy with us when we get to close to their nests and we finally have our first kiwi chick! Needless to say its been a busy yet very interesting month!



Kaka spotted high above Maunu. Are they hanging out in Pukenui? Photo courtesy of Heather Fielden.



Ruud Kleinpaste poses for a photo at the Karanui entrance with Rangers Ben and Bevan.



Our first kiwi chick!

Trapping:

Data summary 2018:

Table 1: Trap data to date.

MONTH	WEASEL	STOAT	RAT	CAT	HEDGEHOG	FERRET
JANUARY	0	10	47	0	6	0
FEBRUARY	0	7	18	0	5	0
MARCH	0	6	47	0	6	0
APRIL	0	5	48	2	5	0
MAY	0	3	33	0	4	0
JUNE	1	1	21	0	5	0
JULY	0	2	19	0	2	0
AUGUST	1	3	25	0	1	0
SEPTEMBER	0	1	39	4	1	0
OCTOBER	3	2	48	0	6	0
YTD	5	40	345	6	35	0

Comparison to this time last year:

Table 2: 2018-2017 data comparison.

PEST	THIS YEAR TO DATE	THIS TIME LAST YEAR
WEASEL	5	4
STOAT	40	26
RAT	345	270
CAT	6	7
HEDGEHOG	41	22
FERRET	0	1
TOTAL PESTS	437	330

Mustelid numbers have increased as the weather begins to warm with 3 caught on the buffer and 2 on the forests edge this month. Rat catch has also seen a slight increase throughout the forest with 48 caught this month compared to 39 last month. Hopefully we'll see less in the near future as a result of the last toxin operation, fingers crossed! This year to date we have caught a hefty total of 107 more pests than this time last year with 24 more stoats, 1 more weasel 75 more rats and 19 more hedgehogs. We have caught 1 less cat and 0 ferrets to date. Why we are catching so much more than last year is anyone's guess, perhaps there are more pests about or perhaps we're just getting better at it!

Toxin/bait stations:

We have finally got footage back from the trail cams we left in the forest a few weeks ago which have revealed our suspicions were correct, the blasted rats are getting into the Ferafeed! The crafty little beggars appear to be hanging from the bait station mesh with their tails and use their hind legs to stabilize themselves on the bottom of the bait stations whilst they feed on the tasty Ferafeed and avoid the toxic Feratox. This of course means that by the time possums arrive there is no toxin left to topple them! Ben and I have a plan to prevent this happening however, we've altered a block of bait stations in a way in which no mesh is external leaving very little for the rats to get a hold on. We'll test this alteration during our December toxin operation and if successful we'll begin converting the rest of the bait stations to match, here's hoping it works.

Kiwi monitoring:

Woohoo! We have confirmed our first kiwi chick! How fitting is it that Chuckles named after our since passed volunteer Ian Buckley produced the first chick? This is a truly momentous achievement for Pukenui Trust and something all involved should be extremely proud of! It's been a lot of years of hard work by people both past and present to get to this point but it is now paying off in dividends, so good work team and great job Chuckles! You'll be

interested to know Chuckles has now left the nesting area and has become super active again. We're guessing he's out stuffing his face after been housebound so long! He was last found sharing a patch of kauri grass with Lovie further confirming she is indeed the mother to our newest addition and that the pair remains strong!

All the other kiwi continue to do amazingly! Lovie and Fanton are all going about their usual business in the core area and remain very active. Matarau now seems to be firmly settled in to the Woods Rd area. Te Kamo is still very close by Wracky, we're now almost certain they are a breeding pair based on this. And we have managed to track down Wracky's nesting area which is nicely nestled amongst pampas bushes about 500-600m into the forest behind Smithville Rd, he is now currently on day 52 of incubation which means he is due to hatch early to mid-December.

Waimarie's chick timer detected a hatch earlier this month but when we went in to check he was still sitting on an egg, because of this we decided it best to leave him alone. He may very well have had a chick in the burrow with him, but we couldn't check with the egg present. He continues to sit on his egg which seems to be taking an awfully long time to hatch and is quite possibly a dud. There is of course a chance the egg is fine but only time will tell, we're remaining hopeful!

The kiwi's collective average activity for October was 7.28 hours per night down from 8.51 hours last month. This is again due to the low activity of the nesting males, we expect this number to go up in the next few months as they begin come off their nests and go back to their usual business. Te Kamo (Green) was the most active bird this time around with an average of 11.00 hours of activity per night up from 10.91 hrs per night in September. And as expected our nesting males were again the least active with Chuckles (Red) being the least active of the three with only 2.76 hrs per night a slight increase from last month at 2.66 hrs per night.

Table 3: Average activity of each kiwi between 01/10/2018 and 31/10/2018.

1/10/2018- 31/10/2018	
KIWI	AVERAGE ACTIVITY (HRS)
CHUCKLES	2.76
FANTON	10.33
LOVIE	10.75
MATARAU	8.5
TE KAMO	11
WAIMARIE	4.22
WRACKY	3.38

Other:

The bug-man Ruud Kleinpaste was in town from the 10/10/2018 for a few days in which he displayed cave weta caught from Pukenu Forest to children at Mitre 10 amongst other things. He also spent a few hours in the forest with Ben, Max and I informing us about all things bug! Despite the miserable weather it was an awesome experience and amazing to

spend some time with someone as knowledgeable as Ruud, if only we had more time!
Thanks for coming along Ruud and your welcome back anytime!

Over the last few weeks we have set and retrieved both rat and mustelid tracking cards with the help of Northtec students and a handful of volunteers. These were set in multiple locations throughout the forest and coronation reserve. These have all been returned to Northtec for the students to analyse I look forward to hearing the results. Whilst retrieving the rat tunnels near Golf Harbor Drive in Maunu I'm certain I heard kaka in the forest both north and south of my location. While I am yet to see any I know others have seen kaka in the Maunu area as well as north of the forest on Crane Rd over the last few months, so keep an eye and ear out for these awesome birds.

Upcoming events:

- Volunteer day 25th of November
- December toxin operation 3/12/2018



More dead possums!