

Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 10/10/2018

It has been a busy month in the forest as we've been hard at work with the toxin operation and are already seeing great results! The weather has been great for the most part too which has definitely made our days a little easier, its so good not having to worry about slipping over with every step you take that's for sure! The bird life seems to be getting increasingly active as the weather warms up and many kukupa have been seen down low amongst the tree ferns likely preparing nests for the breeding season if their not sitting on eggs already. Read on for more detail on the month's events.



Students, parents and teachers from Glenbervie school at our new kiwi guardian post.



A very misty morning on the Taraire ridge track.



The first victim of September's toxin operation.

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 | 17 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| AUGUST | 1 | 3 | 25 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| SEPTEMBER | 0 | 1 | 39 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| YTD | 2 | 38 | 295 | 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 | 2 | 3 |
| STOAT | 38 | 23 |
| RAT | 295 | 221 |
| CAT | 6 | 6 |
| HEDGEHOG | 35 | 21 |
| FERRET | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL PESTS | 376 | 275 |

Mustelid numbers have remained low over September with only 1 stoat being caught on the buffer. Rat catch however has seen an increase throughout the forest particularly on the yellow line near Stonelea Way in Maunu and the green line which goes around the Whau Valley Dam. This year to date we have caught a total of 101 more pests than this time last year with 15 more stoats, 74 more rats, 14 more hedgehogs and an equal number of feral cats. We have caught 1 less weasel and have had no sign of ferrets.

Toxin/bait stations:

Much of our month has been spent filling bait stations and the toxin operation is now all but over with only a few of DOC's blocks left to do. So far, we have seen far more possum kill than we have seen for quite some time which is great news for the forest. Our trail cams are yet to be checked as they are still out in the forest observing what happens at the bait stations, these will be checked in the next week or two, hopefully the stations being watched are visited this time around!

Kiwi monitoring:

Great news on the kiwi front this month! Wracky has settled down with an unknown female a few hundred metres into the forest behind Smithville Rd and is on day 21 of incubation! We believe the female he's paired up with is either Pukenui whom was seen in this area often before losing her transmitter or Te Kamo whom was thought to be a male but may have been mis gendered and is currently very close by. This makes three confirmed nests in Pukenui Forest so far which is amazing! Waimarie on day 93 of incubation (overdue to hatch), Chuckles on day 78 (due any day now) and as previously mentioned Wracky on day 21.

All bar one of the monitored kiwi have remained settled this month which has made monitoring far easier than usual! The exception to this is Matarau, whom once again is on the move. Interestingly it seems she's going straight back to Woods Rd quarry which is

where we moved her back from last time. We figured there must be a reason she's so adamant on returning to this area so after a wee bit of investigation we have learnt that locals occasionally hear a male kiwi in the area also. Due to this we have decided to leave her in this area rather than move her again as she may have paired up with said male and a settled kiwi is generally safer than one constantly on the move.

The kiwi's collective average activity for September was 8.51 hours per night down from 10.07 hours last month. This drop in activity is of course due to having three of our seven monitored birds now sitting on eggs which brings down the collective average quite significantly. Lovie (Green) was the most active bird this time around with an average of 12.16 hours of activity per night up from 11.83 hrs per night in August. And as expected our nesting males are again the least active with Chuckles (Red) moving about the least of the three with only 2.66 hrs per night down from 3.08 in August.

Table 3: Average activity of each kiwi between 01/09/2018 and 30/09/2018.

| 1/09/2018-30/09/2018 | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| KIWI | AVERAGE ACTIVITY (HRS) |
| CHUCKLES | 2.66 |
| FANTON | 12 |
| LOVIE | 12.16 |
| MATARAU | 9.5 |
| TE KAMO | 10.91 |
| WAIMARIE | 3.99 |
| WRACKY | 8.33 |

Other:

Our Toyota Kiwi Guardian site was officially launched on the 21st of September with a huge number of children from Glenbervie School turning up to celebrate the opening. After karakia, waiata and a few fun activities in the carpark, the kids, parents and teachers were led through the forest by Ben, DOC rangers and myself to take in the sights and sounds of the forest. We then moved on to find the mysterious code word on our stunning Kiwi Guardian post which was created and donated by the Quarry Art Centre. This was an absolutely awesome event and a huge thanks goes out to everyone involved in its organisation and execution.

Upcoming events:

- Volunteer day 28th of October
- Tracking tunnels 24th and 25th of October
- December toxin operation 3/12/2018



Mackenzie Hita from DOC dressed up as a kauri tree during one of the kid's activities