

Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 13/09/2018

Thank goodness winter is over! We are already noticing a much warmer breeze throughout the forest which are are glad to be welcoming back. The bird life seems to be happy about it also with many grey warbler, fantail, tui and tomtit out and about singing their hearts out in the beautiful spring air. This month we have continued our trapping as per usual, began the toxin operation and have managed to track down all the kiwi transmitters unfortunately not all were attached to kiwi however... Read on for more detail on the months events.



A tui singing away in the warm spring air.



Te Kamo about to be released after transmitter reattachment.



The very strang yet interesting flower of parataniwha.

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
YTD	2	37	256	2	34	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	37	22
RAT	256	215
CAT	2	6
HEDGEHOG	34	21
FERRET	0	1
TOTAL PESTS	360	268

Pest numbers have remained low over the month of August, rats being the most frequently caught pest with the odd weasel and stoat floating about. This year to date we have caught a total of 92 more pests than this time last year with 15 more stoats, 41 more rats, and 13 more hedgehogs. We have caught 4 less feral cats, 1 less weasel and have had no sign of ferrets.

Toxin/bait stations:

Our toxin operation is currently underway with a handful of blocks complete to date. All going well we hope to have the operation complete within the next month. Over the last few operations we have suspected we may be getting less possum kill than we should be and have found several Feratox pills on the ground below bait stations. We are unsure why this is happening but think there's a possibility the either the possums have wised up and now pull the pills from the lure or rats have found a way to access them. To see if this is in fact what is happening we plan to set up the trail cameras to watch over several bait stations over the duration of the operation.

Kiwi monitoring:

Kiwi monitoring has continued with some good news and not so good news this month. The good news is we have tracked down all the kiwi including the recently named Huckleberry (previously referred to as K47) and the elusive Manuhiri whom has been off our radar for some time now. The not so good news however is that several of the transmitters were not attached to the kiwi any longer with four transmitters coming off this month. These lost transmitters belonged to Roha, Pukenui, Huckleberry and Manuhiri, fortunately these kiwi are all in or near the core area and seem to be nicely settled in deep in the forest so they are at no great risk of escaping the forest and coming to harm. With this loss of the transmitters we are now left with only seven kiwi to continue monitoring until next year.

These seven kiwi are all doing well and while they remain active they are moving far less in terms of distance than they were previously, a good sign they are settled I think! Wracky and Te Kamo are still in the forest near Smithville Rd, whilst the other five are all in the core area. Waimarie and Chuckles eggs are rapidly approaching hatch day having been incubated

for a total of 67 and 53 days respectively. This means Waimarie's egg should be hatched either next week or the week after and Chuckles two weeks after that, exciting times!

The monitored kiwi have been active for an collective average of 10.17 hours per night down from 10.81 hours last month. Fanton and Pukenui were the most active birds this month both with an average of 12.33 hours of activity per night. This is down from 12.83 hours for Fanton and up from 11.83 hours for Pukenui. As expected Chuckles (Red) and Waimarie have again been the least active this month with an average of 4 and 4.83 hrs of activity respectively per night down from 7.94 and 5.95 last month as they continue to incubate their precious eggs.

Table 3: Average activity of each kiwi between 01/08/2018 and 31/08/2018.

1/08/2018 - 31/08/2018	
KIWI	AVERAGE ACTIVITY (HRS)
K47	TRANSMITTER LOST
CHUCKLES	4.00
FANTON	12.33
LOVIE	11.83
MANUHIRI	TRANSMITTER LOST
MATARAU	11.16
PUKENUI	12.33
ROHA	12.16
TE KAMO	11.77
WAIMARIE	4.83
WRACKY	11.10

Other:

While I was away on leave Tanya and Ben organised a planting day at the Whau Valley site which I hear went fantastically! This involved planting an array of plants donated by NorthTec's Horticulture and Sustainable Rural Development programmes, Brett from a local plant nursery and the Whangarei District Council thanks guys! A big thank you also to Tanya and Ben for organising the event, Max for cooking the BBQ and of course all our awesome volunteers that turned up and got involved!

Work on our Toyota Kiwi Guardian site has continued and will be launched during conservation week on Friday the 21st of September. We are expecting 60+ children from Glenbervie Primary School as well as local media on launch day and expect Pukenui Forest to be added to the website on the 22nd of September. A huge thanks to Mackenzie Hita from DOC for all the work she has put into this can't wait for Pukenui to come alive with activity on launch day!

Upcoming events:

- Toxin operation ongoing.
- Toyota Kiwi Guardian launch 21/09/2018.
- Volunteer day 30/09/2018.