

## Pukenui Forest Ranger Report 14/10/2021



Puwhananga our native clematis. Heaps of this around at the moment!



Ranger Ben in the thick of the gorse, glad that's over with!



Huge ear fungus found in the Whau Valley catchment.

### Trapping:

We've again seen a slight dip in pest numbers over the last month with rats as usual being the bulk of the catch. Interestingly no mustelids have been caught since June. We would usually have expected to have caught a few by now but it seems like a quiet year on that front. No doubt they will start showing up in the coming months as the weather continues to warm.

We've checked up on our AT220 auto traps and can say that they are continuing to perform well with fresh possums and rats under many traps, good news for sure. We have also had a few minor issues however with dead rats getting caught up in the traps and the wire holding the traps up giving way to the weight of the trap leaving the wire bent and the trap on the ground. We're experimenting with ways to remedy the later and think we'll have that issue sorted in no time, nothing number 8 wire can't fix right?

This year to date we have caught a total of 380 pests, 8 more than this time last year. The totals include 24 less stoats and 9 less hedgehogs as well as 1 more weasel, 30 more rats and 10 more cats than this time last year. No ferrets have been detected this year.

### Trap data summary 2021:

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

MONTH	WEASEL	STOAT	RAT	CAT	HEDGEHOG	FERRET
JANUARY	0	3	28	4	7	0
FEBRUARY	0	1	21	0	3	0
MARCH	1	3	26	1	0	0
APRIL	2	2	40	0	1	0
MAY	1	0	52	2	3	0
JUNE	1	1	62	1	3	0
JULY	0	1	43	2	0	0
AUGUST	0	0	35	0	0	0
SEPTEMBER	0	0	28	1	1	0
YTD	5	11	335	11	18	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	5	4
STOAT	11	35
RAT	335	305
CAT	11	1
HEDGEHOG	18	27
FERRET	0	0
<b>TOTAL PESTS</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>372</b>

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

Due to the August-September lockdown we have postponed our September toxin operation as we were not prepared for it and have other work that must be completed by the end of the year. We aren't particularly happy about this as many native bird species are breeding and raising young this time of year so its always good to knockdown pest numbers around this time. It is what it is however, and we have gained a bit of momentum now we've been back at it for a few weeks. We managed to pack all our toxin just before the current change to alert level 3 and the other jobs are nearing completion so we should be able to get some toxin in there soon.

We've also been working on cutting in a few new blocks in the Whau Valley catchment. We managed to get these all but complete before the current level 3 announcement, but the rest will now have to wait until we drop back down to level 2 which is a bit unfortunate. Some challenging terrain in this area for sure but good fun to see a part of the forest we haven't explored yet. There is one block located in the thick of the gorse however which I must admit was not enjoyable in the slightest!

### **Kiwi monitoring:**

I'm sure you've all heard the sad news by now that we have lost at least two kiwi on the city edge of the forest to dog attacks. These birds were unnamed and were from this year's translocation in February. This is a real kick in the guts for us rangers, the trustees, the volunteers and everyone else involved with Pukenui. Dogs continue to be the number one killer of adult kiwi in Northland and owners must keep them under control at all times if we want these birds to have a chance establishing in Pukenui Forest. Please remember Pukenui Forest is a no dog zone regardless of whether your dog has been through kiwi aversion training or not.

We have managed to locate the usual three birds Atahua, Morrie and Barr all roughly in the same areas as usual indicating they are quite settled in their respective pieces of Pukenui paradise. We unfortunately didn't get a data stream for Morrie as he was a bit

distant but have done for the other two. Atahua is still quite active and showing no signs of breeding activity. Barr on the other hand is showing very little activity and his signal is indicating he may be incubating an egg! We haven't checked up on him just yet to confirm as it's still early days, but great news nonetheless!