



Volunteer lunch Invitation

Our annual celebration is an opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to make our project the success that it is. If you have trapped, weeded or planted on the Waimea Inlet over the year, you are invited to join us on

Sunday 9th November from 11.30am at The Playhouse, Westdale Road

Lunch will be provided, drinks to be purchased.

Please RSVP by 4th November to Kathryn bandedrail@gmail.com

Banded Rail in Art

This beautiful piece titled 'Banded Rail (circle)' is by NZ artist, author and adventurer Ginney Deavoll. She is inspired by the diverse flora and fauna, the coastlines and wild places in our amazing country.

"I think it's grassroots groups like yours that will ensure our native flora and fauna are here for generations to come."

Ginney comments.

Visit Ginney's website [here](#) to see more of her artwork.



For information about the Battle for the Banded Rail please contact
Project Manager, Kathryn Brownlie on 544 4537 or bandedrail@gmail.com

For trapping information or support contact Field Officer, Tracey Murray
on 540 2227 or 027 286 5866 or bandedrail@gmail.com

Trapping Results

The total catch for the September quarter was 666. Total catches since 2014 is now 15,702. There are 1,270 traps in the network.

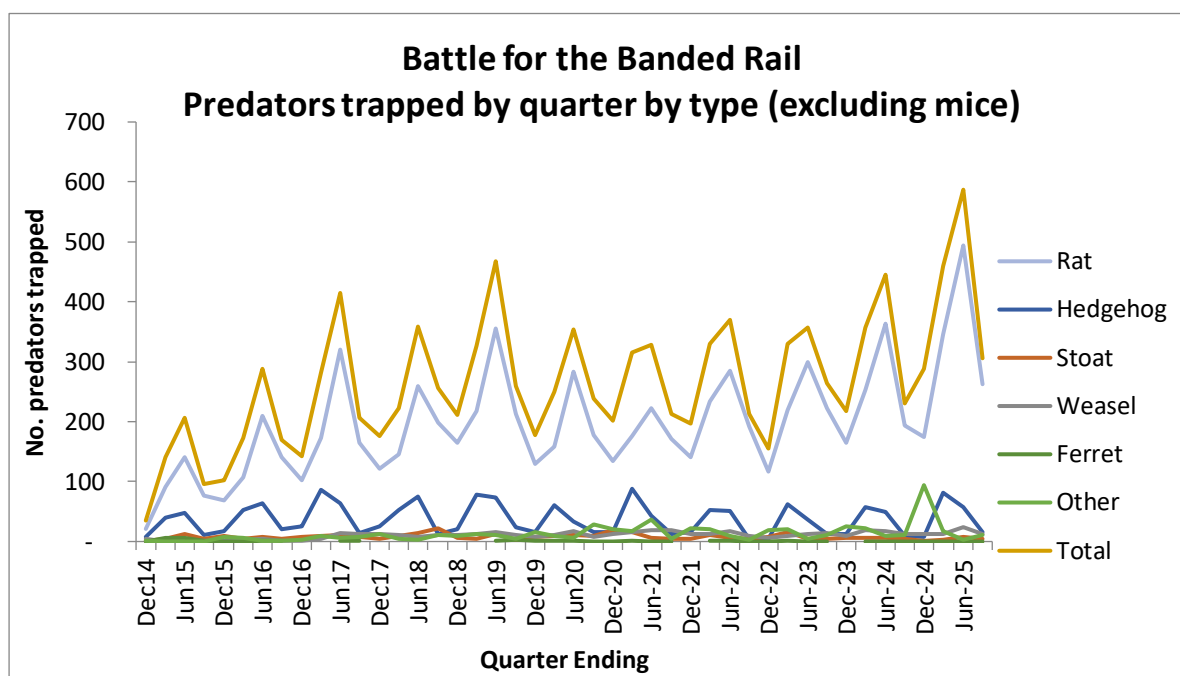
Catches for Quarter 3 2025: Sector by Pest Type

Sector	Rat	Hedgehog	Stoat	Weasel	Mouse	Ferret	Other*	Total for Quarter	Total since 2015
Mapua to Bronte	58	9	1	3	13	-	2	86	3,173
Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula	52	2	1	-	4	-	1	60	3,138
Waimea West/ Appleby Hills	71	4	3	4	240	-	2	324	4,548
Waimea Delta to Monaco	81	1	-	5	103	-	6	196	4,843
Total for quarter	262	16	5	12	360	-	11	666	
Total since 2015	8,679	1,612	326	462	3,976	36	611		15,702

* includes rabbits, birds and unspecified catches from Goodnature A24 traps where the species caught is unknown

This graph illustrates the annual pattern of catches since trapping began in late 2014.

We have excluded mice from the graph as they are not our target species, and the catches were skewing the graph results. We are still recording them in the table.



Trapping & Monitoring News from Tracey Murray

Springtime Maintenance

With the new spring growth, it is important to make sure the entrance to the trap is clear. A pest should be able to see right through the trap one end to the other. It's best trim the grass or pull it out if you can.



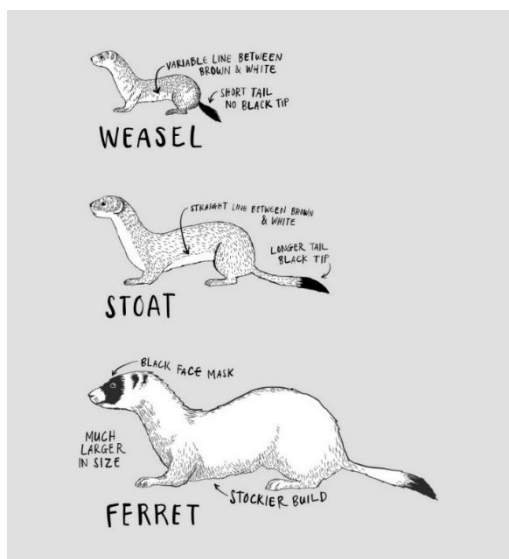
Volunteers needed for Traplines

We have 3 trap lines needing volunteers:

- The Transfer line, which is around the recycling depot at the end of Beach Road and has 15 DOC 200 traps
- Reservoir Creek line, which runs between Beach Road and Reservoir creek in Richmond along the estuary margin. It has 21 DOC 200 traps
- Waimea River and Waimea Delta East. This line is near the Waimea River cycle bridge and through to the road near Deadman's Island. Combined there are 25 DOC200 traps, but we may review the line and reduce the number of traps.

Please contact Tracey directly if you would like more information or are keen to take on one of these trap lines. Ph 027 286 5866

Weasels, Stoats & Ferrets – what do they look like?



The Mustelid Family, the difference between weasels, stoats and ferrets. Source PFNZ website

Mangarakau Matuku (Bittern) Muster October 2025

by Tracey Murray

Over the weekend of October 3rd, I was lucky enough to take part in the Bittern Muster, run by Wendy Ambury from the Love Bittern Project. It is a synchronised nationwide count of male bittern, who are counted by their 'booming' at dawn and dusk. Eight individual males were confirmed during the muster.



Wendy is so passionate about the project and the workshops were very informative. She gave us all a new insight into this unique and now endangered bird, with an estimation of about 800 birds remaining in New Zealand. We discussed the essential role of the wetland habitat to ensure the survival of these birds and the fish life that sustain them. Spreading the word and sharing knowledge to enhance our remaining wetlands is key to their survival.

For more information on the Love Bittern Project visit lovebittern.com

Thanks to friends of the Mangarakau Swamp in Golden Bay for the accommodation.

Mangarakau Swamp is the largest remaining wetland in the Nelson/Marlborough region. It is well worth a visit and taking a walk around the paths and boardwalks, and seeing the displays information in the visitor's centre.

Mangarakau Swamp, Golden Bay



Banded Rail & Fernbirds sighted at Higgs Reserve, Māpua by Jo Heatherbell

"Exciting News! Fred and I sighted a Banded Rail from Higgs Reserve yesterday. We were up on a terrace at the top end of the estuary and obviously disturbed a rail, as it caught our eye racing across a 10 metre gap in the reeds. We went down and found plenty of prints. It was about 5pm. The rail was up in the Māpua end of the reserve, not the main stream end. We will continue to keep a look out but will avoid the estuary as it will be nesting time. This sighting must be the first for about 40 years and confirms the prints Clare and I saw last summer".

Then a few days later:

"Today it got even more exciting with our "Up Close and Personal " encounter with a Fernbird! We are absolutely delighted to advise they have made it to Higgs. Definitely one. We are yet to establish if there are more as we encountered one 300-400 metres away from the first one, half an hour later, but unsure if it travelled across the gap checking out the territory".

Since these reports, additional DOC200 traps have been added to the reserve to increase protection of the birds and eggs from predators. Our local fernbird expert Paul Fisher has visited the area and hopes to be able to band any fernbirds after nesting time. Fernbird nest in *plagianthus divaricatus* and hundreds of these have been added to the area over the past couple of years.



Fernbird at Higgs Reserve

Higgs Reserve volunteers: Jo Heatherbell, Clare Kininmonth & Fred Overmars regularly carry out habitat restoration and trapping work at Higgs Reserve

Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

Atriplex cinerea census survey – 23rd November 2025

DOC has a survey planned for this Spring and is asking for help from volunteers.



Atriplex cinerea, or Grey Saltbush, is a critically threatened species which has been planted widely around the Waimea Inlet and surrounding coastline.

In many areas it seems to be thriving, but we don't have a handle on the number of plants that are persisting in natural habitats. Many of the planted population was grown from cuttings from a female plant, so there are also questions about the sex ratio of the population and whether recruitment is taking place.

We would like to survey all the known sites where this species has been planted, with the help of volunteers, in order to carry out a census of the population and record

whether each plant is male or female. If enough individuals are found and a mix of male and female plants are present, this survey may enable this species to be re-assessed as less threatened than the current threat status suggests.

If you are interested in helping with this survey, contact Laura Parks at DOC Motueka by email: lparks@doc.govt.nz

Register your interest in the *Atriplex cinerea* survey by **31st October 2025**. Further information will be distributed closer to the survey dates.

Please note: this survey requires the plants to be in flower, so survey dates may change.

Goodbye Planting Season, Hello Weeds

Now that it is spring, we are beginning the important work of plant maintenance. This involves hand clearing weeds from inside plant guards, straightening guards or removing them if the plant is big enough. We meet each Friday morning from 9 – 11am.

Friday 24 October	9-11am	Moreland Place Reserve, Māpua
Friday 31 October	9-11am	Research Orchard Road
Friday 7 November	9-11am	Cardno Way, Bronte Peninsula
Friday 14 November	9-11am	Best Island (just inside golf course gate)
Friday 21 November	9-11am	Apple Valley East (#43 Apple Valley Rd)
Friday 28 November	9-11am	Pukeko Lane
Friday 5 December	9-11am	Rain date
Friday 12 December	9-11am	Bell Island
Friday 19 December	9-11am	Maisey Embayment



Local Businesses Roll Up their Sleeves

We were pleased to have a few local businesses work with us this season. AlSCO staff and families joined in with our planting day at Greenslade Park. Afterwards they provided a very welcome BBQ lunch for all volunteers at the planting morning.

Gibbons staff spent an afternoon planting on the estuary margin near their Lower Queen St property on Neimann Creek adjacent to the cycleway. ANZ planted on Rabbit Island, continuing their support over the last few years.

It is great to work with these motivated groups of people, to support their staff team building while making physical and financial contributions to support the project and Tasman Environmental Trust.



In the Media: Volunteers Celebrate 100,000th Native in the Ground – The Nelson Mail, 27 August 2025

Katy Jones • Senior reporter

Community conservationists are celebrating the planting of 100,000 natives as part of a decade-long restoration project in the South Island's largest semi-enclosed estuary.

Volunteers helped to reach the milestone at the Waimeha/Waimea Inlet in Tasman Bay through the Battle for the Banded Rail initiative, amid signs that numbers of some endangered birds in the estuary were increasing. Project co-leader Kathryn Brownlie said more than 60 locals turned out to help plant the 100,000th plant on Bronte Peninsula in Māpua.

"It's a huge milestone, and it's a big investment as well, because ... it's all been funded through grants that we've had to apply for.

"We're very grateful to all our volunteers – we simply couldn't do something of this scale without them."

The aim of the project, which is supported by the Tasman Environmental Trust, is to boost numbers of all estuarine birdlife in the inlet by increasing safe nesting and feeding areas, Brownlie said.

Surveys of the banded rail/moho pererū, a shy, endangered bird, had been carried out there by volunteers and the results were encouraging, she said.

"We're fairly confident that the banded rail numbers are increasing. We're having more people reporting that they're seeing them, and actually last survey, [foot]prints were found and confirmed by a DOC scientist... in one spot towards Mapua that they hadn't been seen since 1981.

[Read the full story here](#)



Kathryn Brownlie, co-leader of Battle for the Banded Rail, gets stuck in at the Bronte Peninsula in Māpua

Richmond School Newsletter

TREE PLANTING

On Friday 25th of July, Rooms 13 and 15 were given the opportunity to be involved in a project to plant native trees and shrubs around the Waimea Estuary.

Our destination was Sandeman Reserve, just behind the MDF factory. At Sandeman Reserve we were met by Kathryn from the 'Battle for the Banded Rail' Project, and Richard and Mo from the Tasman District Council. They talked to us about the importance of planting natives and the benefits to birds and animals that they provide.

After being shown what to do our band of enthusiastic volunteers got to work helped by an amazing bunch of supportive whānau members. We planted 221 plants! It was hard mahi but very rewarding.

Here are the before, during and after pictures:



Before



During



After

If you head down to Sandeman Reserve, you will be able to see the planting we did. The plants are all protected by plant guards and many of them were decorated by us!

Recently the project celebrated the planting of 100,000 plants in the Waimeha/Waimea inlet. We are proud to have had a small part to play in reaching this milestone and hope to continue to be involved in the future.

Project Spotlight

Battle for the Banded Rail is just one of Tasman Environmental Trust's current projects. Here is another project working with its local community in our region.

Parapara Valley Environment Group

'Listening for Life in the Parapara Inlet' By Andrea McLeay, Tasman Environmental Trust

The Parapara River in Golden Bay has a story that winds through both hardship and hope. Once scoured bare by gold miners over a century ago, its lower reaches were stripped of vegetation. Fast forward to today, and native bush is reclaiming the land, and the river is now one of the few in the Tasman District with a forested catchment from mountains to sea.

The Parapara Valley Environment Group is fast becoming a key part of that recovery. A few weeks ago, the group carried out its first Banded Rail survey — prompted by Kathryn Brownlie from the *Battle for the Banded Rail* project. The group, which includes Bert Harris (who also works with Pest Free Onetahua), explored a new area of the Parapara Inlet, where the river meets the sea.



Their time wandering through wet mud with exuberant kids paid off — plenty of Banded Rail footprints were found, and they heard at least two, possibly four, birds calling to each other through the reeds and saltmarsh. It was an exciting discovery for the small team, who are focused on trapping and weed control to help protect this delightful valley.

Bert has also set up acoustic monitors on loan from the Department of Conservation to listen for the deep, booming call of the Australasian Bittern (Matuku-hūrepo) — another rare wetland bird that may be quietly inhabiting the inlet. Resident species already known to the area include Whio (blue duck), Kārearea (NZ falcon), and Fernbird/Matata — all signs of a rich ecosystem that's worth protecting.

As Bert says, it's rewarding to see local families out there having fun in the mud. "Everyone played a part — even the kids," he says. "It's such a special spot, and it's great to discover what's living here."

As Bert says, it's rewarding to see local families out there having fun in the mud. "Everyone played a part — even the kids," he says. "It's such a special spot, and it's great to discover what's living here."

For more inspirational stories from Tasman Environmental Trust [click here](#)