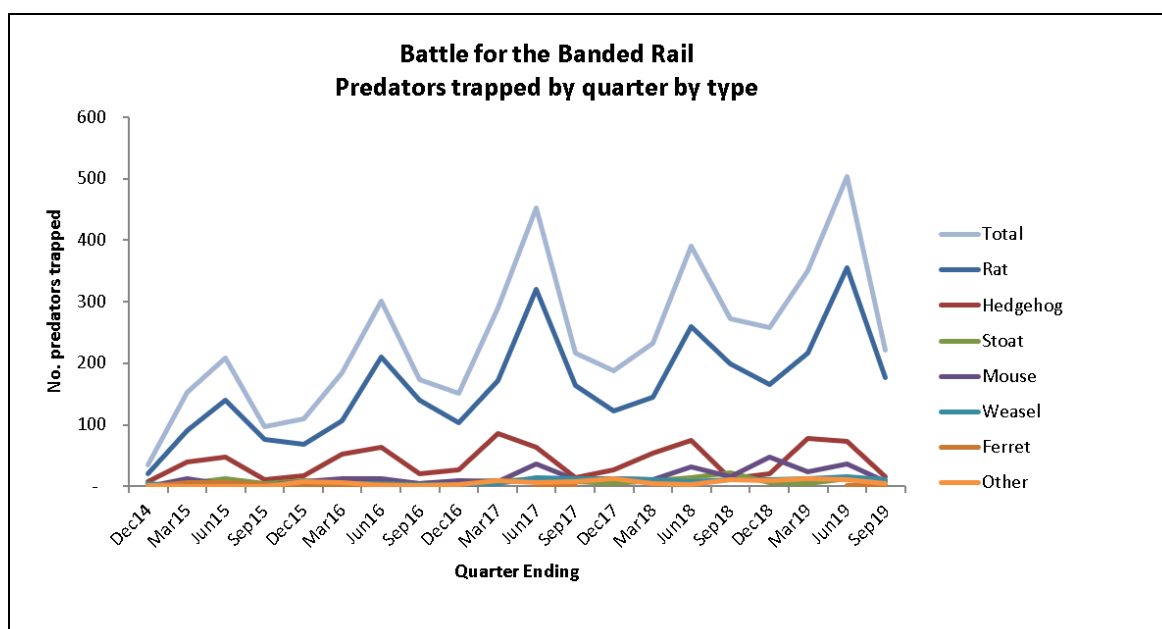


## Trapping Update

The September and December quarters have always been the ones where the total number of predators trapped bottoms out for the year. This quarter was no exception, with a total of 219 predators trapped. 70% of these were rats, 7.3% were hedgehogs, and 7.8% were the three mustelid species (ferrets, weasels and stoats).



The table on page 2 shows the trap catches since the inception of the programme in 2015. Note that the number of traps has increased over that period, by around 250%. It's not possible to do any precise analysis of trends in catch totals from these tables; so much depends on uncertain factors such as weather and food supplies, and the fact that we are now covering a larger total territory.

We are on track to better the 5,000 mark by the end of this year. That should be worth celebrating (I'm trying not to jump the gun here!) and may give impetus to setting new targets for the future.

For information about the Battle for the Banded Rail please contact  
Project Manager, Kathryn Brownlie on 544 4537 or [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)  
For trapping information or support contact Field Officer, Tracey Murray  
on 540 2227 or 027 286 5866 or [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)

## Trap Catches By Year

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019 to end September</b>	
<b>Number of Traps</b>	337	514	644	835	866	

<b>Predators Trapped</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019 to end September</b>	<b>5 year total to date</b>
<b>Rat</b>	396	560	778	768	750	<b>3,252</b>
<b>Hedgehog</b>	122	162	189	160	167	<b>800</b>
<b>Stoat</b>	32	25	31	51	20	<b>159</b>
<b>Weasel</b>	7	11	43	40	39	<b>140</b>
<b>Mouse</b>	24	38	68	105	68	<b>303</b>
<b>Ferret</b>	14	3	2	2	4	<b>25</b>
<b>Other</b>	8	11	35	27	31	<b>112</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>4,791</b>

## Top of the South Trapping workshop 22nd September

In September, Tracey attended a very informative workshop in Picton. The key speaker was from ZIP (Zero Invasive Predators). There were also speakers from DOC and Picton Dawn Chorus.

Some thoughts to take away were:

- We need to change our mind set from predator control to predator eradication if we are ever to achieve PFNZ 2050.
- Be open to new technologies and be willing to admit that what you are doing now may longer be the best way.

The main focus of the workshop was on setting up effective monitoring techniques for a predator control project and for native plant species. Some key points were:

- Collecting trapping data does not tell you how many predators are still out there
- What method to use for your location; tracking tunnels, wax tags, chew cards, cameras
- How to set out an effective monitoring line/area, spacing and location and size
- How to choose what to monitor. Does your community value the thing that you are monitoring? Is your indicator species sufficiently common enough to collect meaningful data?
- Monitoring provides feedback, encouragement to volunteers and publicity for the project.

More information can be found on DOC website and on [Pest Detective's website](#).

Interesting reading: 'Native forest monitoring' by Peter Handford

Join in recording bird sightings on 'NZ Bird Atlas'

In the afternoon we took a trip out to Kaipupu Wildlife Sanctuary which was well worth the trip. Lots of birdlife, nesting boxes for kiwi and Little blue penguin. Lovely bush and easy walking tracks to enjoy it all from. Anyone can take a trip out there by booking a boat through Cougar Line leaving from Picton. It lands in a sheltered bay on an impressive jetty built by the community.



**Kaipupu Wildlife Sanctuary**



**Whose footprints are these?**

**Detection in sand for friend or foe!**

## Update on Habitat Restoration @ October 2019: Another planting season completed

This season we planted 6,400 plants and 315 individuals contributed nearly 1,000 hours to the project. Over the last 5 winters we have planted 32,000 plants on the estuary margins. That's a fantastic effort by everyone!

Our last planting day at Research Orchard Road Reserve was phenomenal. The night beforehand, it looked as though planting might be postponed as the weather forecast was looking a bit miserable. Also that night was an All Black test in Perth which finished in the early hours of the morning for NZ viewers. So it was overwhelming when 20 volunteers had arrived before our advertised start time of 9am. In total 47 people turned up that morning. We had to send out for emergency morning tea supplies! Planting was all over in record time too. It was a great way to end our season.



### Maintenance – Plant releasing and weeding

Now that spring is here the plants are growing fast – but so are the weeds. We need to do some weeding inside the plant guards and to take guards off the plants that no longer require them. We have a few Friday mornings coming up:

Friday 25 October, 9 – 11am, Bronte Peninsula. Access from Cardno Way off Bronte Rd East

Friday 8 November, 9-11am, Dominion Embayment. Access from 43 Apple Valley Road East

Friday 22 November, 9-11am, Bronte Peninsula. Access from 92 Bronte Rd East

Bring drinking water, gloves and a hand weeding tool. Even if you can only spare an hour it would be great to have you along. We have a small group on our 'wee-die' email list. If you would like to be put on this list please let Kathryn know [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com).





## Update on the Waimea Inlet Restoration Partnership



Tasman Environmental Trust has been working with MPI to finalise the detail of the funding grant (from the Billion Trees Fund) which will support the planting of over 70,000 native trees and estuary margin plants in the next three years. We expect to be able to place our order for trees for the 2020/21 planting season soon. Applications have been received for the Programme Coordinator position so you could say the “site preparation” for the project is nearly completed. The Waimea Inlet Restoration Partnership includes Councils, DOC, Battle for the Banded Rail and some private landowners around the Waimea Inlet.

## Welcome to the new Regional Predator Control Coordinator

Kia Ora!

I am Elaine Asquith the new Regional Predator Control Coordinator appointed by TET.

My job is to engage with the predator control groups across the region to get a handle on what is going on where and to map this out. We know there are great successes to be celebrated, and if they exist we want to identify gaps which need to be plugged to make us a more effective as a network.

The plan is to combine modelling of species vulnerability with a clear picture of what groups are doing where. We will use this knowledge to develop a Taranaki Region Predator Control Strategy for Community Conservation. The lessons from the valuable work of groups such as Battle for the Banded Rail can support other groups in the region. Through engagement, sharing and knowledge I hope to support a coordinated and connected network which has clear goals, proper resources and a regionally effective predator control community network.



I have lived in Mapua for the past 5 years with my young family. I grew up in Ireland where I studied geography and environmental science. During my 18 years in New Zealand I have worked in a wide range of environmental project management and have worked with a variety of conservation projects and with community conservation groups.

I look forward to meeting the team of great people behind the Battle for the Banded Rail.

Trees That Count is a conservation charity which aims to help plant 200 million native trees, by subsidising work done by individuals and groups. It is an offshoot of Project Crimson, and deals with all native tree species. It has provided funding to the Tasman Environmental Trust to help with their various projects, including the Battle for the Banded Rail which received 500 plants this year. Last month Trees that Count posted an article about our project on their website: [Trees that Count article](#)

It's well worth a look at their website, and you may decide to get yourself on their mailing list, or help in some way. Click here to go to their website: [Trees that Count](#)

## **An Opportunistic Stoat**

Scientists studying Banded Rails north of Auckland found a nest with a partly-eaten embryo very close to hatching age. They installed a video camera to film the nest.

Next day the unhatched chick had gone, and the film showed a stoat had visited at 4.30 pm, fed on the remains, and slept in the nest for 45 minutes. When it woke it ate some further chick and egg remains, and went back to sleep for another 45 minutes.

The scientists concluded that this behaviour could result in the predation of adult birds as many birds return to their nests after predation has happened.

## **Best Time to Hear Banded Rails**

Many people working on the Battle for the Banded Rail have never seen one. They may recognise their footprints, and some may have heard them.

To hear the call, go to [NZ Birds Online](#)

If you play these noises back in the wild you will be disappointed; it tends to silence them. The best time to detect them is in the half-hour to hour before sunset, and ten minutes after sunset, according to an article in Notornis, 2015, by A.J.Beauchamp.



## Two Miniscule Extinct Flightless Rail Species Found in Central Otago

Flightless Rails scurried around Central Otago up to 19 million years before the takahe and weka roamed New Zealand forests.

16-19 million years ago there was a 5, 600 square kilometre megalake, Lake Manuherikia, covering land from Naseby to Bannockburn, and from Ranfurly to the Waitaki Valley. This was ten times the size of Lake Taupo. The lake was surrounded by a subtropical rainforest of plants typical of Australia e.g. eucalypts, sheoaks, palms and cycads. Traces of this lake are revealed in sediments near St.Bathans.

The fossil remains of two extinct rails were discovered there last year, and are thought to be the oldest flightless rails known globally. Both were very small, one of them barely larger than a sparrow.

