
Volunteer Picnic Lunch Invitation

We have another great year of trapping, planting and weeding to celebrate and to thank all volunteers who have contributed to make this project the success that it is. You and your family are invited to join us at **Hoddy Estuary Park, Sunday 22nd November from 11.30am**

We will provide BBQ lunch (including vegetarian option), tea, coffee and cake.

Please bring a chair or rug, plate and cutlery for yourself, and BYO drinks. RSVP by 16th November for catering purposes to bandedrail@gmail.com

The postponent date, should we have bad weather, is the following Sunday 29th November



Trapping & Monitoring News - from Tracey Murray

Battle for the Banded Rail is still having input into Waimea College's environmental education units by way of trips to the estuary to learn about banded rail habitat and food sources, and trap making sessions with Menzshed which students are always keen to partake in. These traps are now being added to our traplines around the estuary.

A new trapline will be going in near to Lower Queen Street industrial area in mid-November and will be monitored by a new volunteer trapper based in Richmond.

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

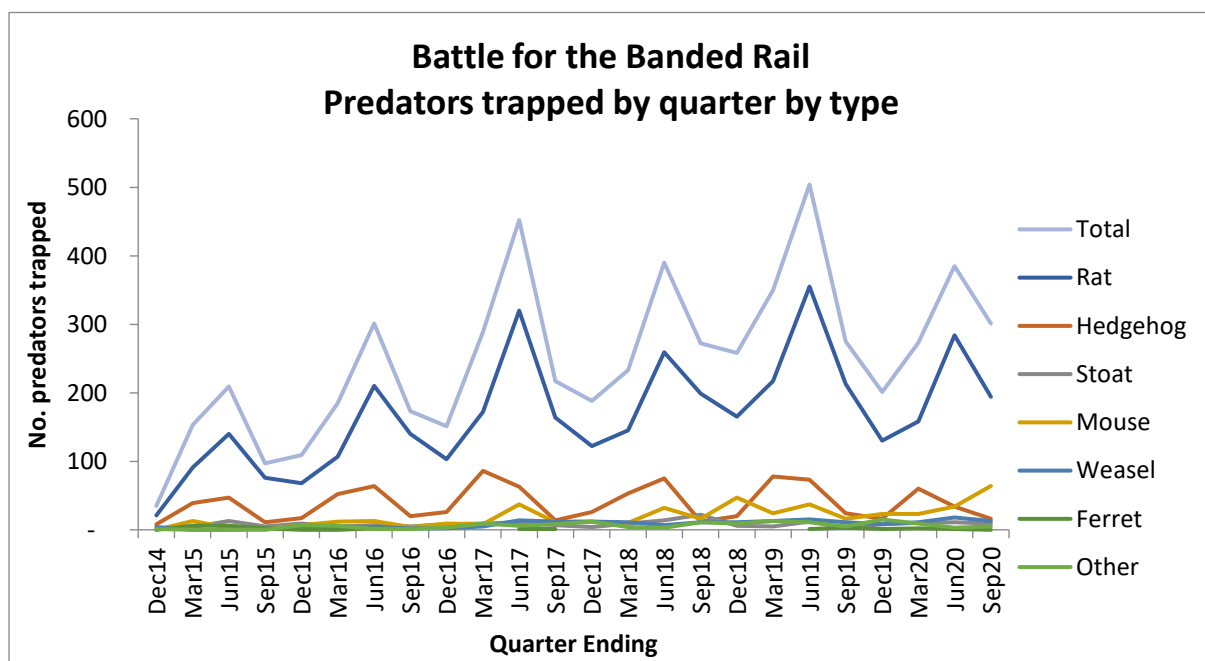
We now have 935 traps in operation. The total catch for the September quarter was 301, our highest ever for this period. This compares with 275 for the same quarter last year and 272 in 2018.

Results Year to Date by Sector

Sector	Rat	Hedgehog	Stoat	Weasel	Mouse	Ferret	Other*	Total for Year to Date
Bronte/Mapua	120	24	3	6	3	1	6	163
Waimea West/ Appleby Hills	150	22	15	13	18	-	3	221
Waimea Delta	180	22	10	14	99	1	8	334
Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula	186	42	2	9	1	1	-	241
Total	636	110	30	42	121	3	17	959

*"other" includes rabbits, birds and unspecified catches

The following graph illustrates the annual pattern of catches since trapping began in late 2014. This year saw a lower than expected peak in the quarter to June which we think is due to fewer trap checks during Covid-19 restrictions on our activities.



Monitoring

At the beginning of October our first monitoring was done, using tracking tunnels and ink cards. There are 4 monitoring areas of 12 tunnels each. These are in Stringer Embayment, Dominion Flats and Embayment, Mapua Inlet, and Waimarie near Manuka Island.

The first cards were put out using peanut butter to attract rats and were left overnight. The second cards were put out using a chicken neck to attract stoats and were left out for 3 nights.

The aim of monitoring is to get an idea of what we are NOT catching.

The ink card results showed:

Stringer: Hedgehog x4 and mice

Dominion: Stoats x2 and mice

Mapua: Hedgehog x2 and mice

Waimarie/ Manuka: Hedgehog x1 and mice

No ink cards showed rats. The stoats at Dominion Flats and in the embayment have been targeted by baiting the DOC200 traps nearby with fresh meat. One stoat was caught soon after! Both ink cards could have been showing the same stoat.

Rat



Hedgehog



Stoat



Weasel



Waimea College students building traps



We are setting up another Live and Let Live feral cat trapping project in the Lower Queen Street area to target recent cat sightings around the industrial estate.

Banded Rail Biennial Survey

On September 12th we carried out our fourth survey looking for signs of banded rail in the Waimea Inlet. 23 of us were briefed by Graeme Elliott of DOC as to what we were looking for (prints and poo) before we split off into small groups to survey nine areas. The good news is that most of us managed to spot banded rail prints.

We continue to find prints generally in the same areas we have surveyed in 2014, 2016 and 2018. We had one new spot off Cardno Way Reserve on Bronte Peninsula where prints were found this time which is very satisfying to know that our restoration and trapping work here is being noticed!

Multiple prints were found either side of the road leading to Rabbit Island in the section between the cycleway and the Rough Island bridge. Sightings of birds have also been reported here over the past months so if you are keen to see a banded rail this would be a good spot at dawn or dusk and after a high tide preferably.

Rat and dog prints were found among the banded rail prints at one site which is disheartening but good to know that the banded rail still exist there.



Embayment at Hoddy Estuary Park where banded rail prints were found during the survey. This is a good example of rushland with taller plants providing habitat for estuarine birds

Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

A few months back we were uncertain how planting season would shape up with the Covid-19 restrictions in place. Those concerns went out the window as planting season progressed. We had fantastic support from volunteers and 10,700 plants were added to the estuary edge. Over the last 6 winters the community has planted 43,500 plants in total.

Volunteer numbers increased this year with a record 62 people at the Research Orchard Road planting in August. Fortunately we had enough plants with *One Billion Trees* funds contributing more plants. We planted around 1,000 plants each Sunday.

We have secured funding from the DOC Community Fund for the next 2 years, so along with *One Billion Trees* we have plenty of planting ahead to increase the restoration efforts around the Waimea Inlet.



Plant Releasing & Maintenance on Friday mornings

This month we have begun to visit the sites for some plant releasing and weeding on Friday mornings from 9 – 11am. This involves hand weeding inside plant guards and removing plant guards once the plants are big enough. This is a very important part of our habitat restoration.

Our schedule for the coming weeks is:

Friday 6 th November	Dominion Embayment, access is from 43 Apple Valley Rd East
Friday 13 th November	Stringer Embayment, Westdale Rd
Friday 20 th November	Hoddy Estuary Park
Friday 27 th November	92 Bronte Rd East

Bring drinking water and gardening gloves and a weeding tool if you have one. We also have tools available for you to use.

If you are interested in joining us at one or more of these mornings you can let me know or just turn up.



One Billion Trees Update from Julie Newell

The Waimea Inlet Restoration, One Billion Trees Project joined forces with *Battle for the Banded Rail* this season, and plantings got off to a roaring start, with over 7,000 plants in the ground by end June (take that Covid 19!), and a whopping 23,000 plus trees planted at 24 sites around the Waimea Inlet by mid - September. This is on top of the several thousand plants already funded through *Battle for the Banded Rail* this year! 3,500 of the 23,000 plants were donated by TDC and NCC, and another 1,000 were provided by Salisbury School and NMIT. Many agencies and groups collaborated to make the season a resounding success, including TDC, NCC, DOC, Corrections, Mapua District Community Association, NMIT Trainee Rangers, Project Moturoa (Matauranga Maori focused Trainee Rangers) and horticulture students, Rotary, land owners/neighbours, contractors and, of course, *Battle for the Banded Rail* and a phenomenal effort by community planting volunteers. The plantings will make a massive difference to the estuary, its ecosystems, and the public who enjoy it. The team at Tasman Environmental Trust (TET) thoroughly enjoyed working alongside our awesome volunteers and partners.



Next phase is taking care of all of the new plants over the spring and summer, and preparing sites for next year. The project has two more years of planting to go, and we're planning on planting even more 1bt trees (about 10,000 more) next year. In an exciting development, TET and TDC worked together to secure another 70,000 odd trees' worth of funding for a Waimea Inlet "billion trees phase II" which will be managed by TDC. We'll be working closely with the phase II crew over the coming years. Phase II will be strongly focused on providing employment, as part of the new "Jobs for Nature" funding.

We'd like to say a huge thank you for all of you who turned up to help plant and maintain the estuaries emerging new forests, and hope to see you back again.

Looking after our restoration, our birds and our neighbours

As *Battle for the Banded Rail* habitat restoration increases around the Waimea Inlet, we are increasing the opportunities for walking along the margins. This brings with it the need to be considerate of the bird life we are trying to protect and the neighbours whose properties we are now able to access. It is not as enjoyable to walk along the estuary margin when it is thick with gorse and blackberry but now many areas are transformed and thick with plant protectors and the promise of native habitat.

We need to be considerate of our estuary residents – birds and people – especially if we are walking with our dogs. Many dogs that are not on a leash will enjoy the chance to chase birds or explore new areas along the way. Banded rail, pied stilts and oyster catchers are all nesting in the areas we are protecting with trapping and increased habitat. These birds are very much at risk from your dog's disturbance.

Please keep your dog on a leash when you are walking round the Inlet.



Celebrating Our Volunteers: Jo Heatherbell

Jo Heatherbell is the consummate conservationist. Not only does she participate in the Battle planting programme, but she plays a big part in the growing of the seedling trees we use, advises people on what to grow where, helps with the biennial monitoring of the banded rail population, monitors the species we plant, to note how they react to the inlet edge, and breeds butterflies in her garden and living room.

Jo admits to be “mad about birds”. She spent two years as a kayak guide on the Waimea estuary enjoying time with the Spoonbills, Godwits, Variable Oystercatchers and others. She says that at that time she “always wanted to get into conservation.”

Her day job now is at Titoki Nursery, where seventy or eighty percent of our plants are sourced from. She says the next six months are her favourite time at the nursery. Most of the seedlings are pricked out between now and Christmas; Jo can prick out up to 1000 in a day. (That’s more than two per minute; it sounds like something out of the Guinness Book of Records).

Jo’s garden is beautiful. Much of it works as a butterfly breeding production line. It’s a genuine wild habitat, an ecosystem constructed for the specific business of breeding three species; Monarchs, Yellow Admirals and New Zealand Red Admirals. Just a few of the plants used for the butterflies every stage of their life cycles include Marigolds, Coreopsis, Zinnia, Cosmos, Sunflowers, Echinacea, Salvia, Buddleia, and different types of stinging nettles. The butterflies’ all-time favourite place to lay eggs is the giant native Ongaonga nettle, but they happily make do with smaller and less vicious varieties as Ongonga is more than capable of killing people.

The caterpillars hatch from eggs laid on nettles, and spend their days dining out on it under the safety of a mozzie net to keep them safe from Paper wasps. After about three weeks they are harvested as big caterpillars and moved to a much finer netted “Caterpillar castle”, which keeps them safe from the two parasitic wasps which lay their eggs in the chrysalis of the Admiral. Here they spend their last days fattening up on more nettle, before they hang either on the nettle stalks or the underside top of the Castle.

Red Admiral caterpillars are harvested from an organised nettle plot in Golden Bay, where they are prey to the parasitic wasps and shield beetle. Then they are brought home, turned into chrysalis and returned to be safely released in the original location.

Clearly Jo is a biodiversity warrior on a large scale. Thank you, Jo, for your work both within and without the *Battle for the Banded Rail!*





thanks these organisations for their support



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Forestry New Zealand



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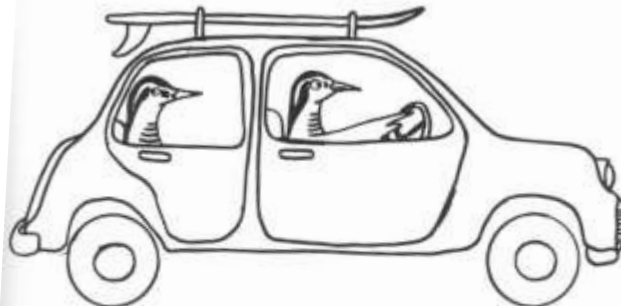
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