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## Trapping & Monitoring News - from Tracey Murray

### Catches of Note!!

Here is a fantastic report of a successful day out trapping for one of our volunteers in December, plus a banded rail sighting. Also there was a change in bait as an experiment!

*"Hi Tracey*

*Just confirming that there were definitely six stoats caught in traps on Deadman's Island when I checked them today. Also six mice, one bird, and one rat and a skink.*

*I changed the bait by adding fresh pieces of Purely Pets Rabbit and Hare meat patties. Will try again with the patties next time.*

*Spoke to the owner of the property on Deadman's Island and he saw two Banded Rail within about 50 metres of his house near shoreline just recently after rain.*

*This was on the right side of the Estuary as you are heading towards his house.*

*Kind regards*

*Anne"*



### Monitoring

Another round of monitoring using tunnels and ink cards will take place at the end of March / early April for our autumn monitoring. We now have 5 sites to monitor, with Maisey Embayment being added a few weeks ago. The monitoring sites show up as yellow dots on the trap.nz website for those of you interested to have a look at the locations. The monitoring will give an indication of what is still out in the environment, and may have become trap shy, or needs a more targeted bait, or perhaps a different trap location. Once we have started to get some meaningful data we could also report our findings in upcoming newsletters.

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)

## New Trap Line

In December, a new trapline called 'Gibbons' was put in around the industrial park at Lower Queen Street. This joins onto the lines either side of it called 'Deadman's' and 'Ravensdown' to fill in one of the remaining gaps in the lines around to Richmond. This line also covers part of Neimann Creek where it comes out into the estuary and is an important spring fed waterway.

## Now here's something creative to do with those hedgehog catches



The WOW display at Te Papa featuring a hedgehog bra. It was the winning Bizarre Bra in 2012 - definitely eye watering!!



And also at Te Papa, a Banded Rail in Te Taiao | Nature exhibition

## Trapping Results

We now have 950 traps in operation. The total catch for the December quarter was 231. This compares with 201 for the same quarter last year and 258 in 2018.

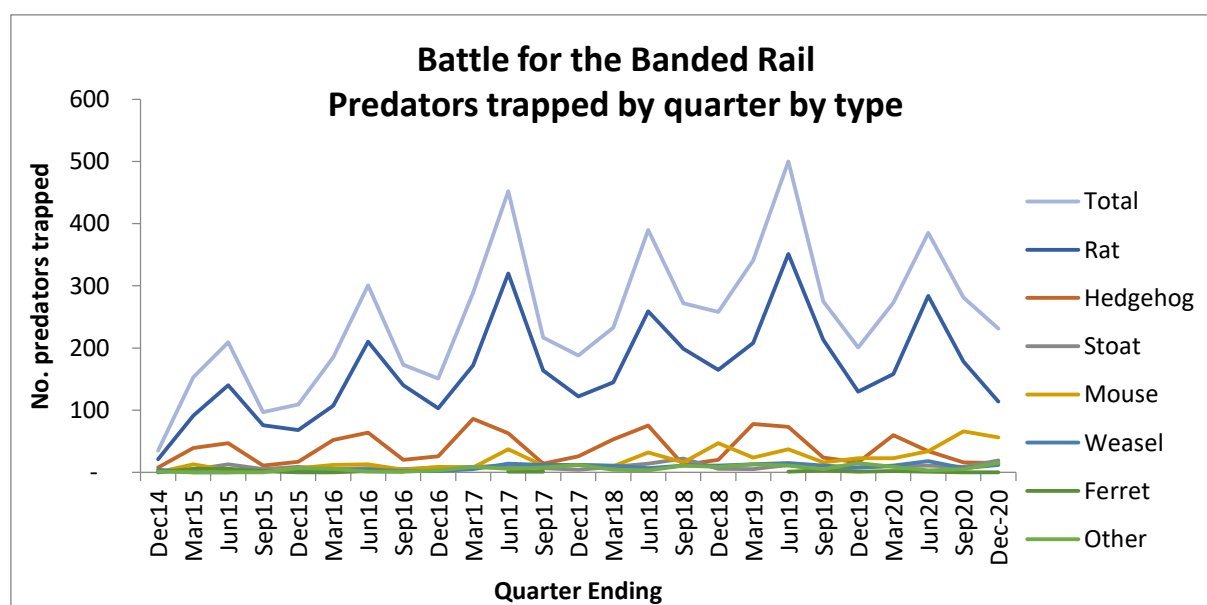
### Catches by Year by Species

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Six Year Total
<b>Rat</b>	396	560	778	768	902	734	<b>4,138</b>
<b>Hedgehog</b>	122	162	189	160	191	125	<b>949</b>
<b>Stoat</b>	32	25	31	51	28	49	<b>216</b>
<b>Weasel</b>	7	11	43	40	47	48	<b>196</b>
<b>Ferret</b>	14	3	2	2	5	3	<b>29</b>
<b>Mouse</b>	24	38	68	105	100	179	<b>514</b>
<b>Other*</b>	8	11	35	27	44	32	<b>157</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>6,199</b>

\*"other" includes rabbits, birds and unspecified catches

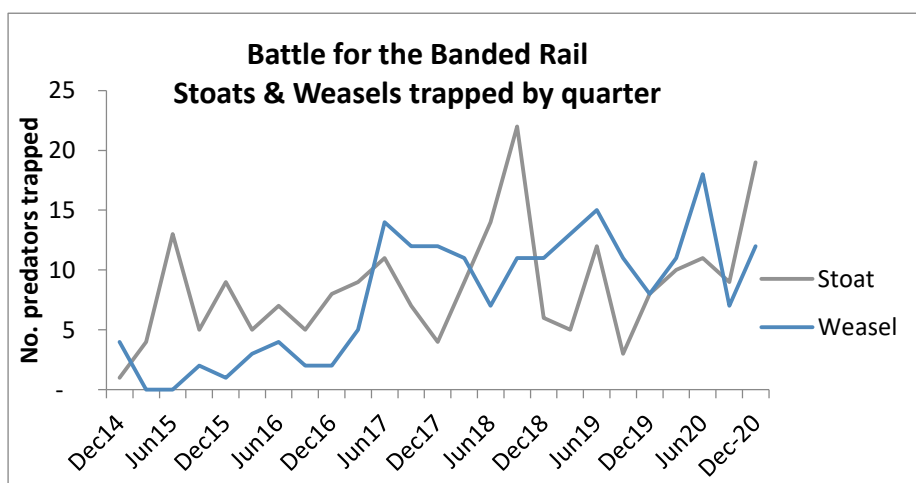
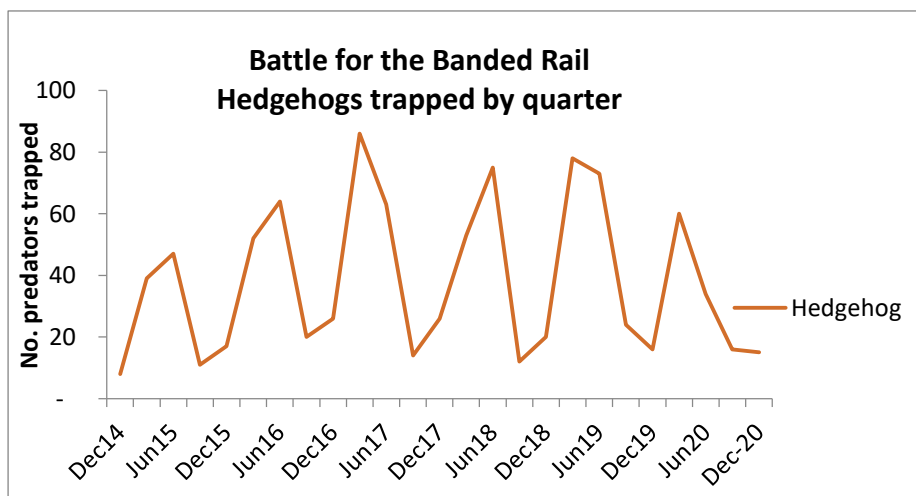
<b>Number of traps at year end</b>	337	514	644	835	883	950
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The following graph illustrates the annual pattern of catches since trapping began in late 2014.



Rats are our most frequently caught species, accounting for two thirds of all catches. Therefore, the pattern of our graphs largely follow the pattern of rat catches.

The graphs below show the quarterly catch pattern for hedgehogs, stoats and weasels. It is interesting to see that hedgehogs also have consistent seasonal peaks and troughs. It's difficult to draw conclusions on the stoat and weasel catches as the data is small in comparison to rats, but I thought it would be interesting to have a look!



## Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

### Site Reviews

In early December, Roger Gaskell of DOC and Richard Hilton of TDC joined us to review our work and help with planning for 2021 and future years. It's great to spend time with the experts and we come away knowing that we are very definitely making good progress in the restoration of estuarine habitat.



## T&G Staff Pitch In

In December we had the opportunity to host some volunteers from T&G at one of our restoration sites on Bronte Peninsula. They were a great group to work with and one of them wrote the following about their experience.

“T&G (one of the largest growers of fresh produce in New Zealand) provides permanent employees the opportunity to volunteer one day a year for a charity or organisation that they are passionate about. Eligible employees are encouraged to record in the leave process what the volunteer leave is for, so we can share the volunteering that our people at T&G have contributed to. For the last two years our Nelson office has tried to coordinate a day where a group of us work on a local project together. This is a great opportunity to give back to our local community and also have fun mixing with other work colleagues doing something that is not apples related!!



I think it's fair to say that not many of us had not heard about the Banded Rail Project before researching possible organisations that would like our help. It's also a bit of a challenge to find a suitable project that caters for everyone. The level of physical effort I think was just perfect for our group although we all commented that we were thankful the day was not too hot. Kathryn and Tracey were both very informative and passionate about their cause. We learnt so much about the Waimea Inlet, Banded Rail, and the amazing work that your group does planting, weeding and trapping. The results of what this group is doing is clearly evident and amazing.

We all had a fun day with plenty of laughs, banter and even some productive work discussions! Thank you for giving us the opportunity, supervision and training so that we could assist you and the flexibility you offered us initially whilst trying to coordinate people and a suitable day.”



**Thank you T&G for choosing to support *Battle for the Banded Rail*. Your efforts make a difference!**

## Plant Releasing & Maintenance on Friday mornings

After a break over January we are back to our Friday morning plant releasing and weeding from 9 – 11am. This involves hand weeding inside plant guards and removing plant guards once the plants are big enough.

Our schedule for the coming weeks is:

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February    Pukeko Lane  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February    Break  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February    Research Orchard Road  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February    Mapua  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March        Stringer Creek (Westdale Road)

An email is sent out a few days before each plant releasing morning. If you would like to be added to this please email me [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)



*Volunteers at our last plant releasing morning of 2020 enjoying a well earned cuppa*

## Volunteer Picnic

We held our annual volunteer lunch at Hoddy Estuary Park in late November. The event was to celebrate our achievements and to thank all the volunteers who have contributed to the project in the past year.

We were delighted when NBS offered to cover the cost of the lunch – **a huge thank you to NBS!**

It was great to be able to sit down and enjoy one of our sites on the estuary and be able to catch up with other trappers and planters.



## Celebrating Our Volunteers: Jon Robertson-Stone

*Interviewed by Anne Hilson*

Towards the back of the Salisbury School Campus is a magical carefully designed area of trees created to resemble a patch of the original lowland bush. Roger Gaskell, a DOC biodiversity guru, did the original plan. Titoki, totara, beech, kahikatea, rimu, manuka and others are close-planted and tended in a natural manner; if a tree dies it is allowed to rot and add to the forest floor. The edges of the forest are designed to provide individual tent sites for student camps. There is a back-country hut designed by the girls and built as part of a national eco-hut challenge.



This was instigated in 2004 by a small group of students supported by Teacher Aide Carolyn Shirtliff, (now Student Health Coordinator). Carolyn and the girls were later joined by school chef Jon Robertson-Stone in 2010. Jon always had a passion for birds and plants. His neighbour in Scotland, Dr Berry of Taye, a well-known ecologist at Dundee University, advised him to continue his cheffing and use his passion as a hobby. These hobbies brought him eventually to work with Banded Rail.

Both Carolyn and Jon are passionate about this school project; it helps with teaching the girls maths skills, horticulture and, importantly, social and people skills. They learn to grow plants from seed and cuttings in the large potting shed and greenhouses. It is also a place where other schools and preschools visit to learn.

And it has a big part to play in the Battle for the Banded Rail. Last planting season, for example the school provided over 1000 plants for our revegetating programme, including *Carex secta* and *C.virgata*, *Plagianthus*, *Cordyline australis*, South Island lace bark, Coastal ribbon wood, Manuka and the rare and critically threatened Grey Saltbush. The Waimea estuary is one of the few places it is now found; it has very particular location requirements so one of Jon's specific jobs is to identify these places and plant them out.

The saltbush has both male and female plants, and they are now growing them from seed, rather than cuttings. Many of their plants are grown from seed, including *Plagianthus*, which in its youth looks like a fragile droopy bright green herb. I was shown beech trees that grew from tiny seedlings to plants a metre high within one school term.



As well as all this Jon is always active in B4BR planting and weeding bees, trapping, and helps in the biennial surveys where we go searching for signs of Banded Rail to measure the success of our work. Early on Jon inspired his neighbours at Maisey Embayment to offer their estuary frontages for planting which he has subsequently nurtured.

Jon had an interest on conservation from an early age when he was brought up near the Blakeney National Nature Reserve in Norfolk, England. This is where birds arrived from Siberia for the winter, and was a home for other migratory and residential wildlife. Jon began his planting career there on school trips; planting

Marram grass on the long sandspit, and taking home European Glasswort to eat. Have any of us tried eating our local glasswort; here's a challenge!

Jon's late son, Navar, was a DOC trainee ranger, and Hutt Warden in Abel Tasman National Park. He was involved in some interesting work with possible trapping regimes in the Lewis Pass and Moutere areas, and ultimately from Hoddy Peninsula to Hoddy Estuary Park. Further inspiration for Jon.

Thank you, Jon, for the work you do in every aspect of our work. And thanks also to Carolyn, a special conservation collaborator and leader for over thirty years.



*Battle for the Banded Rail* is a Tasman Environmental Trust project. TET has recently refreshed their website [www.tet.org.nz](http://www.tet.org.nz) Have a look and see other projects and environmental work happening in our region.

Post & Rail

