

Watch a Banded Rail in the Rushes near Rough Island

(From Tasman Environmental Trust's facebook page on 25th July)

"Some super planting and a very special celebrity ...

Thanks to all those who came to the *Battle for the Banded Rail* community planting on Sunday - over 900 trees were planted on Rabbit Island in 3 hours flat! And to top it off there was a sighting of the very elusive Banded Rail. The footage is a bit "bumpy" and it is a little like playing "Where's Wally?" but it is fantastic to see these birds in their native habitat and to remember why we do this!"

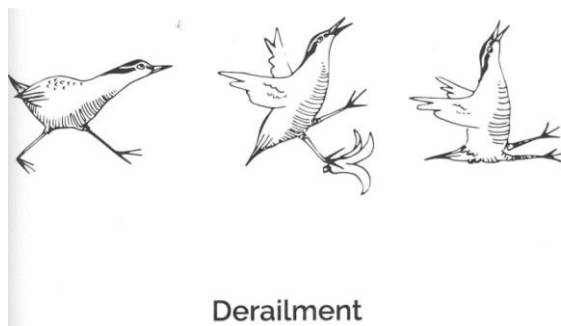


Film credit Julie Newell

Off the Rails

In our December 2019 newsletter we began sharing the cartoons from 'Off the Rails' book by Michael Scott of Great Barrier Island. We have now completed going through the book so this is the last one to include. Thanks to Michael for giving us permission to reproduce his images in our newsletter.

Great Barrier Island is a hot spot for banded rails where they are quite tame and bold, as opposed to usually being shy. They can be easily seen as they stroll around on lawns, and can make a nuisance of themselves!



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

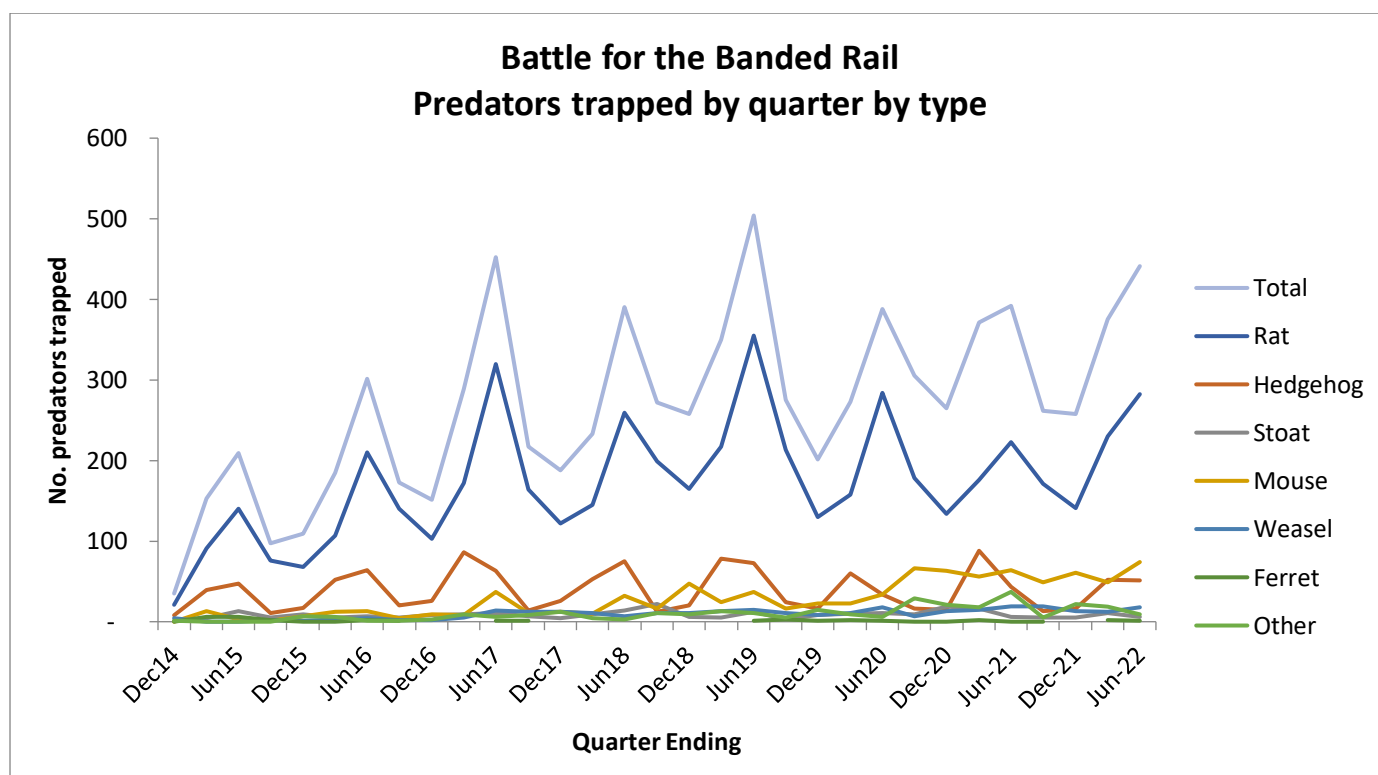
There are 1,043 traps in operation. The total catch for the June quarter was 441. This compares with 392 for the same quarter last year. Total catches since 2014 is now 8,342.

Catches for Quarter 2 2022 Sector by Pest Type

Sector	Rat	Hedgehog	Stoat	Weasel	Mouse	Ferret	Other*	Total for Quarter	Total since 2015
Mapua to Bronte	85	16	-	5	5	-	4	115	2,090
Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula	33	8	-	-	4	-	-	45	2,347
Waimea West/ Appleby Hills	49	15	3	6	5	-	-	78	1,953
Waimea Delta to Monaco	115	12	3	7	60	1	5	203	1,952
Total for quarter	282	51	6	18	74	1	9	441	
Total since 2015	5,375	1,202	265	293	874	34	299		8,342

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

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



Trapping & Monitoring News from Tracey Murray

Birds NZ Conference

In June I attended a 3 day Birds NZ conference in Christchurch. The main focus of the presentations was on seabirds. There have been some very in depth studies into why many of our sea birds continue to decline, and the reasons for this can range from ingesting rubbish, being caught in fishing operations, as well as climate change and sea temperatures increasing causing a reduction in the amount of food available for these birds.

There were also studies into why many nests fail and chicks die before fledging. Some of these reasons were predation, but also many of the flocks and breeding groups had declined to a point that the genetic pool isn't sufficient to sustain a healthy population and successful breeding.

There were also studies in several local areas in Nelson. One area being the Kahurangi national park. Despite fantastic success with Whio and other birds, they are having more and more issues with feral cats raiding the nests of kea and kiwi and showed video footage of this happening. There is also a new study, catching and banding the South Island Fern bird and monitoring breeding success and gathering information of these birds in the Nelson area.



New Trap Line In June, a new trap line was established in the reserve at Estuary Place and extending along the cycleway in both directions. This line has been sponsored by NBS bank and you will see their logo on the traps if you walk along there. Estuary Place is a new reserve and has a stream running through it and extensive new plantings to establish good bird habitat.

Mapua Dawn Chorus Backyard Trapping Project

In recent months Mapua Dawn Chorus has been busy encouraging new members to take up trapping in their backyards. An evening trapping event was held where traps were sold and information provided to help successful catches in the backyard.

A trap library has also been established and is held on the Mapua wharf outside the Museum on the third Tuesday of each month between 10.30 and 12pm. The aim of this is to lend out traps to people who are unsure about purchasing their own and would like to borrow one first. We have DOC150's, Rat traps in wooden boxes and trapinator possum traps to loan for 8 weeks at a time. The first 2 sessions were very busy. If you live in the Mapua /Ruby Bay area, then come on down to check it out or just have a chat.



Experimenting with Different Bait Types

Some of our volunteers have been trialling using a terracotta tube soaked in either a salmon oil or a chocolate oil, putting this into the DOC200 traps instead of erayz.

A volunteer who has been using this since November has noted not much difference in catch rates. He comments: *"It is 8 months since I put out the salmon oil tubes and here are the results... Half of the traps with and half without."*

Total catches for each type since 24 November:

With salmon oil (no rabbit):- 7 hedgehogs, 6 rats, 1 mouse, 1 weasel

With dehyd rabbit and without salmon oil:- 5 hedgehogs, 6 rats, 3 mice, 2 weasels.

So, not much difference in catches. The rabbit these days goes mouldy fairly quickly. The oiled tubes get swapped with fresh ones each time."





Help with Setting Out Traps

At times there are new trap lines to place out and this may require carrying up to 30 traps. Sometimes it is possible to use a wheelbarrow and at other times using a backpack or carrying back and forth from the vehicle is necessary. I am looking for someone who is free during the weekdays, and willing and able to carry DOC200 traps to give me a hand when needed. Please contact Tracey directly at pukeko92@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed for our Biennial Banded Rail Survey

Our two-yearly survey is planned for the morning of Saturday 20 August, meeting 8.30am on Westdale Road opposite The Playhouse. There will be a group briefing so we know what we are looking for, and then we will split into smaller groups assigned to survey different areas of the inlet.

If you are interested in taking part, please let Kathryn know by email bandedrail@gmail.com

In the 1980s banded rails used to be found in all the embayments in the Waimea Inlet. The likely causes of this decline are introduced predators and the loss of vegetation just above the high tide line. If our trapping and planting programmes work, we hope to see banded rails back in all the embayments of the Waimea – this survey is going to tell us whether they're increasing.

Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

Planting with Nelson College Prep students

Nelson College Prep once again chose to support *Battle for the Banded Rail* and the whole school had the opportunity to plant over 4 days in late June. The school has been planting with us on the Waimea Inlet each year since 2016.

It is great to see the boys mostly enjoying their planting and I'm sure there are some future botanists, ecologists and ornithologists among them, not to mention the worm experts, pet rock experts and getting muddy experts!



The weather finally cleared up for the boys to go tree planting at Estuary Place in Richmond. Prep supports the Battle for the Banded Rail organisation and have been planting trees in this area over many years. This will become a living legacy for our students. It's great watching the boys get excited about this outdoor activity and the timing of the tree planting fits well with one of the Matariki themes of 'Care for Papatūānuku' (mother earth).

In week 8, our class went to Waimea Estuary to plant native trees. We planted the trees to create a new habitat for a rare native bird called the Banded Rail, which hopefully will use the plants for protection and a home. We had a lot of fun and planted around 200 trees. *Dylan Bell*

This was a wonderful experience as we could socialize and at the same time plant trees in our local community. *Sebastian Padilla Victorica*

Planting Season

It's been a busy season with ten community weekend plantings since the end of May. There are still five to go – see the schedule on the last page of this newsletter. Our plants are certainly well watered with the abundance of rain we've had. Fortunately, the rain hasn't got in the way of our planting mornings and volunteers are still keen for a morning's work on the Waimea Inlet. Here are a few pictures of volunteers in action.



Plant Patch

Lemonwood

-

Tarata

-

Pittosporum eugenioides

Conservation status: not threatened

The name *pittosporum* comes from the Greek meaning “pitch seed”. Their bell-shaped flowers are followed by woody capsules containing sticky seeds, hence pitch seed and its name. *Eugenioides* means ‘resembling *Eugenia*’ which is a different genus of plants.

Tarata is endemic to NZ and found throughout the country growing in forest and scrub from the coast to subalpine habitats. It is the largest of NZ *pittosporums* and is one of the most attractive. It has a conical shape when young but is more rounded in shape when mature.

It is easily distinguished from other plants by its glossy yellow-green leaves with curly edges that when crushed have a strong lemony smell and hence its name Lemonwood.

Tarata provides nectar, fruit and seeds for birds at different times of the year and is also very attractive to bees. The seeds are immersed in dark yellow viscid pulp, that spread by sticking onto birds’ feathers.

Māori traditionally used tarata for several purposes:

- to make perfume and hair oils. The gummy resin that oozes from the bark was mixed with bird fat and plant oils such as titoki and kohia (NZ native passionfruit).
- to create a gum used as a cure for bad breath. The resin from the tree was mixed with the sap of puha
- as a glue using the resin when chewed well. The gum was rolled into a ball and lasted for a long time
- to relieve saddle-sore where the leaves were chewed into a paste and placed on raw spots
- to make small musical instruments from the trunk and branches, with the gum glue holding it together

Some other facts about tarata:

- About 200 trees and shrubs are in the *pittosporum* genus and are mainly from Australia and New Zealand but can also be found in Africa, some Pacific islands and southern and eastern Asia. The genus is probably Gondwanan in origin.
- 26 species are endemic to New Zealand. Some of these are common and widespread while a few are quite rare or endangered
- Its fast growth rate makes it a good revegetation species as it helps to rapidly establish a shade canopy
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* or kōhūhū is another common tree, has small dark red flowers and is closely related to tarata which we have planted throughout our restoration sites.
- *Battle for the Banded Rail* volunteers have planted 1,400 tarata to date



Visit to Titoki Nursery, Brightwater by Jo Heatherbell

On a rare sunny day in mid July, I organised a guided tour of Titoki Nursery with 6 other Banded Rail Enthusiasts.

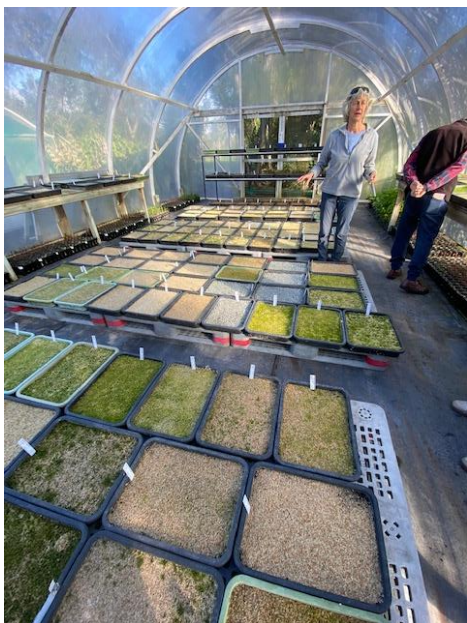
After an introduction in the "Sales" area, we moved on to the big Crop Cover where all the frost sensitive, and many other North Island species reside. There was much "oooing and rrrring" over the not so common plants, and many of the team discovered species they had never seen before. We continued on through a couple of the 'grow on' areas till we arrived at the seed tunnel. The seed tunnel is where all the season's collected seeds are carefully sown into trays, sitting quietly till germination takes place over the next few months. Each tray carefully labelled, dated and the seed source recorded. Fortunately, a few of trays had little seedlings up. Enough growth to give you an idea of how the process starts.

A quick tour of the shed work spaces followed before we were lucky enough to find the door to the Paper Pot Machine shed open. This is a relatively new way of growing plants. A very modernised Potting Machine that produces little paper pots with a growing medium wrapped in paper. A little plug of seedling is dropped into a hole drilled into the top and away they go!! {grow}

The next stop was the large area called "The Paddock". The main "growing on" area, that was rapidly being taken over by orders. Behind this area is a large Crop Cover, a place where plants can grow in a Water Controlled manner. Some species hate wet feet when first pricked out.

The circuit was completed by a walk through the "Orders" area. Blocks and blocks of orders from 40 plants to 10,000 plants! It's a massive job to bring this all together. Hats off to the staff. The last order we passed was the Banded Rail order. Well picked over by this stage.

The group were all pleased to see how the process takes place and especially to see the huge variety of natives, with some they didn't know existed! And it was good for my memory as well, to advise on plant names. I would be keen to take another group next year. Boss willing!



Titoki Nursery - from seeding through to the finished product ready to be collected and planted



TITOKI NURSERY LTD Est. 1983
"Leading Guardian of Conservation" - (NZPCN)

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.



It's all about the birds!

Kina Bird Song is about enhancing what we have and expanding on the opportunities around the Moutere Inlet. Our area of interest is Motueka to Tasman and Kina to Jakkett Island—all the land and area immediately around the Inlet.

The potential for abundant native bird life and beautiful birdsong is proven in small pockets in the Moutere Inlet now. Examples of effective predator control and habitat restoration occur in Tasman, Kina, Mariri, Motueka and Jakkett Island already. As the Moutere Restoration project takes hold, and provides the habitat, it is important for the predator control to be effective and allow our native bird population to flourish and grow.

We can help with the creation of a coastal bird corridor from the Abel Tasman to Nelson, as we are a natural link in the chain of projects covering the coast of Tasman Bay. We are trapping on private and public lands.

All native bird species and others are preyed on by rats, possums, stoats, weasels, wild cats and even mice. Trapping works and predator control are essential to protect our indigenous species.



Kina Peninsula

More Good Reading in TET's Newsletter

Tasman Environmental Trust (TET) produce a great newsletter two or three times a year which covers a wide variety of stories about people, conservation and the environment in our region. If you are interested in receiving this, please [SIGN UP HERE](#)

Latest news from TET



TET NEWS

Planting season wrap

Phew! We've blown our previous planting numbers to new levels with a whirlwind planting season.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

CONSERVATION HEROES

Salisbury School

Salisbury School in Richmond has been supporting environmental restoration in Nelson Tasman for decades.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Onetahua Restoration Project

This got off to a flying start at Farewell Spit in September with \$3 million of funding for pest eradication. (Image: Ann Wheatley)

Some of the stories in TET's last newsletter



Come and join us at a Community Planting Day on the Waimea Inlet in 2022

Sunday 7 th August	9am - 1pm	Rabbit Island, Boat Ramp Bay Peninsula Access from end of Boat Ramp Rd, on right after 98 Ken Beck Drive
Sunday 14 th August	9am - 1pm	Estuary Place, Richmond Access from Lower Queen St or from the cycleway
Sunday 21 st August	9am - 1pm	Greenslade Park Rough Island, turn right after gatekeeper's house, 6 Ken Beck Drive
Sunday 28 th August	9am - 1pm	Rabbit Island, Boat Ramp Bay Turn right after 98 Ken Beck Drive depot, park at end of Boat Ramp Rd
Sunday 4 th September	9am - 1pm	Greenslade Park Rough Island, turn right at big no dogs sign. Near 98 Ken Beck Drive

Please bring gloves, spade and drinking water. Wear solid footwear and clothes suitable for the weather conditions. Morning tea will be provided.

Battle for the Banded Rail is a project working with local communities to increase the number of banded rail and other estuarine birds on the margins of the Waimea Inlet by restoring habitat and trapping predators.

For more information email us at bandedrail@gmail.com or phone Kathryn 544 4537




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 **Te Uru Rākau**
Forestry New Zealand

 **Department of Conservation**
Te Papa Atawhai