



Volunteer Lunch

In early December about 40 volunteers joined us at The Playhouse to celebrate another year of great work around the Waimea Inlet.

It was a fun event and lovely to see everyone in their finery – well, not gardening clothes!

A huge thank you goes to all our trapping, planting, weeding, morning tea bakers and everyone who contributes to the project. Thank you to NBS, DOC and TDC for recognising the importance of our volunteers and supporting this event.



Some project statistics:

- 8 years of trapping and planting completed
- 70,000 plants planted by volunteers
- nearly 9,000 pests trapped
- 23,000 hours of volunteer time given. If valued at \$30 per hour that's a contribution of \$700,000!

Banded Rail sightings

Jon Robertson-Stone has reported repeated occurrences of seeing banded rail near his home on Maisiey Embayment. Since mid-January he has watched them on around 20 occasions. He now arms himself with binoculars and at dawn or dusk on the falling tide he will watch them for up to 20 minutes – until they disappear or his arms get tired!

He says there are definitely 2 banded rail but he suspects there are 3, but hasn't seen all 3 together. The birds are systematically working along the rushes looking for crabs to eat. They scurry, fly a little but the pair keep within close distance of each other. Jon commented that he hadn't realised just how beautiful they are.

Battle for the Banded Rail has planted and trapped along the margins here for a few years now. This is great reward for all the effort that the locals and our volunteers have contributed.



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

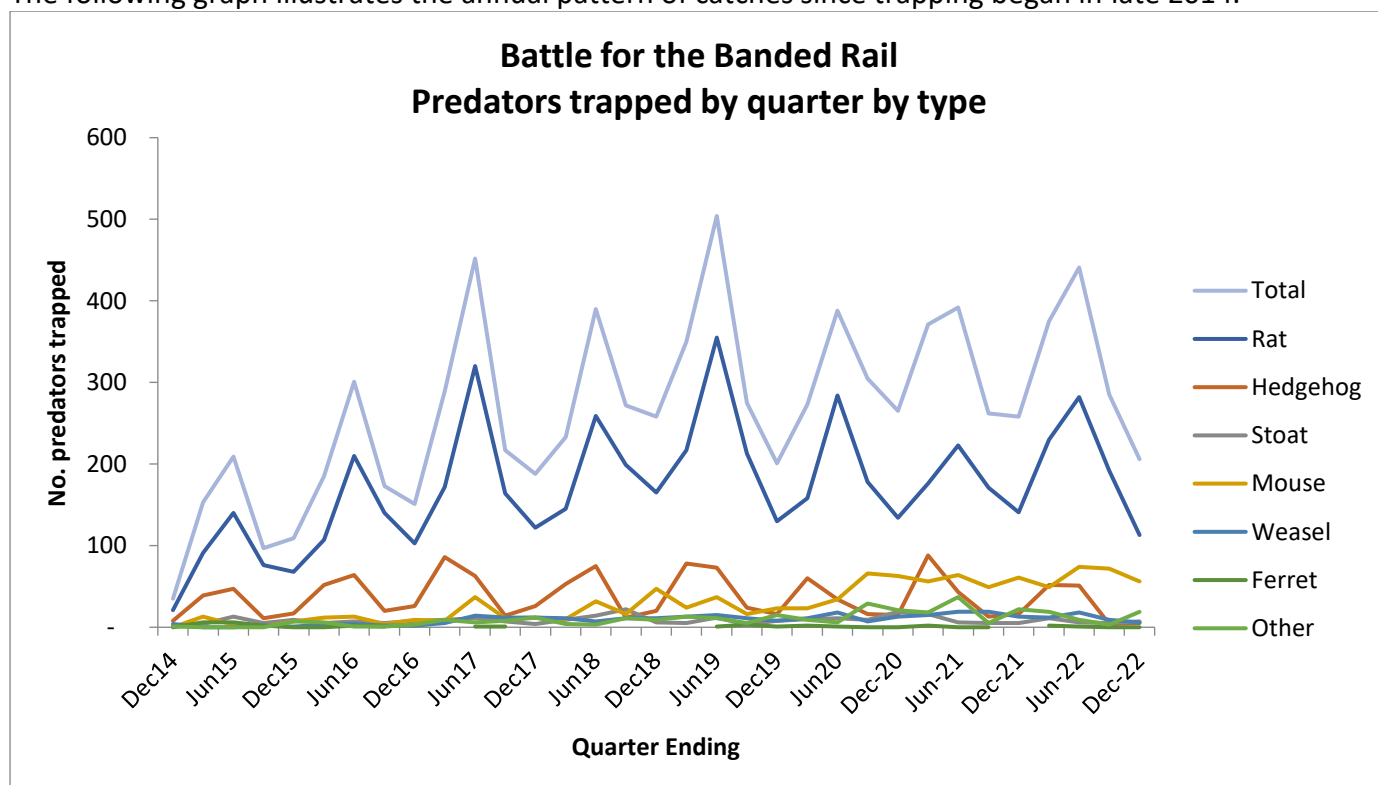
There are 1,081 traps in operation. The total catch for the December quarter was 206. This compares with 258 for the same quarter last year. Total catches since 2014 is now 8,870.

Catches by Year by Pest Type

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Eight Year Total
Rat	396	560	778	768	915	754	710	823	5,704
Hedgehog	122	162	189	160	191	125	160	112	1,221
Stoat	32	25	31	51	28	49	32	29	277
Weasel	7	11	43	40	47	49	66	45	308
Ferret	14	3	2	2	5	3	2	3	34
Mouse	24	38	68	105	100	186	230	251	1,002
Other*	8	11	35	27	44	65	83	51	324
Total	603	810	1,146	1,153	1,330	1,231	1,283	1,314	8,870

* 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

Cam Speedy Seminar

In November Cam Speedy, predator control guru, gave a series of talks in the Nelson region. These were very informative and inspiring, and promoted great discussions during the evening. This was followed up by a small group walk about in Kaiteriteri where Cam was able to demonstrate and apply some of his top tips and techniques to a trap line on the headland.

A Predator Free NZ video showing some of his techniques to make trapping more effective is worth a watch. [Click here](#) to view Cam's Tips & Tricks



KCam's top tips for the DOC 200:

- Always set off the trap **before** you work with it
 - Use an old pair of socks to dry-fire the trap and protect it from wear and tear
- Place eggs on the side rather than standing up as a natural visual cue
 - Blow eggs and use the whites and yolks as lures on the ground around the trap, placing the shell inside
- Scuff a trail leading into the trap
- Use logs, ferns or similar to create a line to direct animals to the entrance of the trap
- Make sure the mesh around the entrance to the trap is filed down smooth so there are no spikey sprags
- Blaze some trees nearby to lure possums and rats using a [mix of flour, icing sugar](#), and an appealing smell like cinnamon, vanilla, or eucalyptus
- Leave Hansel and Gretel-esque trails with raw mutton fat leading to the trap
- Rub some raw mutton fat on the wire baffles and leave a few crumbs on the doorstep
- Place bait up high in the trap to help scent flow through on the breeze
- Leave any freshly caught rodent in the box as an additional lure



Cam Speedy is a predator control expert with years of experience under his belt. Image credit: Predator Free NZ Trust.

Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

Planning for the 2023 planting season is underway. Once again, we are working closely with TDC and landowners to put together a programme for the season.

Some sites were reviewed late last year by a team including Roger Gaskell, Richard Hilton, our maintenance contractor, myself. We come away with pride for what has already been achieved and also with lots of good suggestions and recommendations for future planting.



Plant Releasing & Maintenance on Friday mornings

Our Friday mornings will begin mid February starting at Cardno Way which was rained off at the end of last year.

17 th February	Cardno Way, Bronte Peninsula
24 th February	Research Orchard Road

Locations for further Friday mornings are still to be confirmed.

Bring drinking water, a weeding tool if you have one you like to use and wear gardening gloves. We will 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.

I send out an email earlier in the week to confirm the Friday location to our 'Weeding Group'. If you would like to be added to this distribution list, please let me know.



BIRP - Bullivant Island Restoration Project by Clare Kininmonth

I guess the first question for many is where is Bullivant Island? Easy answer – stand on Māpua Wharf look to the east across the channel and you will see Bullivant Island, a small island partly surrounded by Moturoa Island and from the Māpua side distinguished by a stand of old man pines running along its sandy ridge facing the channel.

For those of you who know Bullivant Island you'll know it's a great place to kayak to, spend a youth-full (or maybe not so youthful) overnight excursion on or have a relaxing and restful daytime explore.

Let me introduce the new kids on the block: the "BIRPers". Caring locals who reached out to the TDC Reserves and Facilities team some 12 months ago to see if we could work together to remove pest weeds that were starting to take over the Island and to plant native species that once thrived there.

Happily, the answer was yes and only 12 months on we have cut down the smaller wilding pines and wattle, stopped old man's beard, gorse, ivy, blackberry, etc, in its tracks. A planting plan has been instigated that has seen Totara, Kanuka, Manuka and Akeake planted – 400 in total to date.

This season the TDC Reserves and Facilities team has cut and/or poisoned the larger wilding pines and wattles.

Battle for the Banded Rail have supplied 4 traps for the Island which is helping to protect bird life from predator attack.

If you have the time, please take it to paddle/sail/swim over and have a look at what's happening in this very special part of Māpua – from the Māpua side you can't see the stands of Totara, Kanuka, Manuka and Akeake that are already naturally re-establishing, plus the great work put in by the BIRPers. And of course, if you land on Bullivant and see something you know is a weed, feel free to pull it out!

Averill, John, Paul, Margaret, Mike, Tracey, Jo and *Clare* The BIRPers



September 2021



September 2022

Plant Patch

Kōwhai

-

Sophora microphylla

Conservation status: not threatened



There are eight species of kōwhai, all are endemic to New Zealand. *Sophora microphylla* is the most widespread species being found throughout the North and South Island.

The name *sophora* is derived from *sophera*, an Arabic name for a pea-flowered tree, *microphylla* means small-leaved. Kōwhai, along with kākā beak, are members of the pea family.

Six of the kōwhai species are trees and two are prostrate or have bushy growth habit. In the wild some species are restricted to either North or South Islands. The most restricted is *Sophora molloyi* which is only found on Cook Strait islands and headlands of Wellington's south coast.

Kōwhai occupy a wide range of habitats from riparian forests, coastal cliff faces to inland scrub.

Māori hold the tree in high esteem for the durability of its hard wood and its many medicinal properties. A poultice made from the bark was used for itchy skin and skin diseases. An infusion of the bark and some other plants such as koromiko and manuka seeds, was taken as a drink for internal pains. A person bitten in the face by a seal had kōwhai juice applied to their wounds and was well within days!

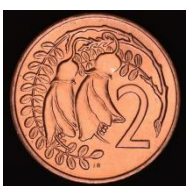
Also, at the beginning of spring, if the blossoms appear on the tree from the lower branches upwards, a warm fruitful season will follow but if the blossoms appear from the crown downwards, a cold wet season will follow. The flowering of the kōwhai is also a sign that kina and tipa (scallops) are in their prime.



Some other facts about kōwhai:

- It is the hardest native timber of New Zealand's forest. It burns hotter than coal and was ideal for fence posts that lasted up to 100 years
- The flowers are a source of yellow dye
- Tui, korimako and kererū feast on the leaves and flowers of kōwhai which are an important seasonal nectar food source for them.
- the seeds are poisonous
- pods are produced with abundant hard-coated yellow to yellow-brown seeds. Abrasion of this hard seed coat is needed before germination can happen
- *Battle for the Banded Rail* volunteers have planted 1,100 kōwhai

Remember these?



Celebrating Our Volunteers: Ruth Lineham

Interviewed by Anne Hilson

Before I met Ruth, I had no idea how complex the initial job of setting up the various plant guards is. The green plastic ones looked easy enough, but the new cardboard ones are a different story; There are ones for flat land, and different ones to protect trees on a slope. The cardboard itself is unwilling to be manipulated. It's flighty.

Enter Ruth, who moved to Māpua from Karamea on the West Coast thirty years ago. She was a keen tramper in the Kahurangi National Park, and had served time as a member of the Northwest Nelson Forest Park Committee. When the Battle for the Banded Rail got going in 2014, Jo Heatherbell motivated her to help as a planter. She also helped making up the green plastic guards, and has been guard maker-in-chief now for eight years. She takes a small fold-up table to the site, and assembles the guards, which can mean several hundred or more on a fine day which attracts large numbers of eager planters. As she turns out the final products, Alan Knowles delivers them to the planters. He often establishes a team to help him, as the walking distances involved can be quite long.



When the change was made to cardboard guards, Ruth found it difficult to keep up with the planters. Few helpers were patient enough to put up with the flighty behaviour of the cardboard. Help was at hand; Tony Cutten from Menzshed in Richmond devised two new tools. The photos show Ruth with a new plant guard, held captive in a simple and effective wooden rack, using a "pokey thing" made from an old chair leg to line up holes and make it easier to insert the bamboo sticks. Over the years Tony has made several refinements to the box.

Neither type of guard is entirely environmentally friendly; Ruth says the cardboard guards usually last for between one and two years. The plastic ones are apt to blow away into the estuary, so they are now anchored by two stakes. They also provide a favourite nesting place for paper wasps, which can be a serious hazard for people weeding.

The best way to deal with wasp nests is to spray with insecticide in the early evening when the wasps return to the nest.

Ruth has several concerns about the future of the Banded Rail.

Some years ago, she was regularly able to see several Banded Rails on the marshy area west of the causeway to Māpua Leisure Park. Today it is very rare to see one. She puts this down to the Council lowering the culvert in response to request from upstream neighbours. At the time several ornithologists and ecologists challenged the idea, but to no avail.

She is concerned that we will possibly run out of areas to expand our plantings. Some people are starting to feel we are losing many great views of the estuary. This may possibly have an effect on the numbers of landowners offering land for planting.

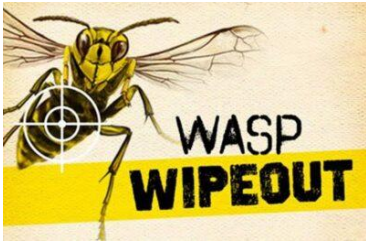
What we have already planted is definitely going to be affected by sea level rise at some stage. This is already manifest in the Research Orchard Road area. One response would be to extend the plantings to higher ground where possible. Ruth has noticed that sea level rise over the last thirty years has left species such as the Pied Stilts with no place to nest.

And finally, she shares people's concerns about the increasing numbers of dogs and cats in the area, particularly the ones that are not confined at night.

Meanwhile, every Sunday in the planting season, Ruth continues tenaciously taming the flighty bits of cardboard into solid tree protectors. Thanks so much, Ruth!



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.



Wasps are New Zealand's ultimate villain for humans and nature alike. The species we're focusing on (German and common) were introduced. They wreak havoc on our environment, killing native birds, young bats, insects, lizards and honey bees. Wasps also feed off honeydew, a valuable food source for native fauna and honey bees. They cost the NZ economy more than \$130 million a year.

They also attack, injure, and have been known to kill humans. The biomass (total weight of wasps) in Nelson and Tasman exceeds all other pests in New Zealand, including possums, stoats and rats. There are a million hectares of beech forest in the South Island and over five, and up to 40, wasp nests per hectare.

The Wasp Wipeout project targets German and common wasp populations in late summer using the Vespex wasp baiting system that reduces wasp numbers by more than 90%. TET is proud to be the national funds holder for this project, partnering with DOC, Stuff, Conservation Volunteers New Zealand and local councils to reduce the impact of wasps on our native biodiversity and enjoyment of the New Zealand outdoors.



Waimea Inlet Forum

Waimea Inlet Management Strategy 2050 and Action Plan 2023 – 2026

The Waimea Inlet Forum is hosting a meeting to discuss the draft Waimea Inlet Strategy and Action Plan at the Richmond Library from 6.30-8.30pm on Wednesday 22 February.

The draft plan is available on the TDC website.

Peter Lawless will present an overview of the draft plan and the process for its development and consultation. We invite you to attend and provide your feedback and input.

All welcome.