



## Battle For The Banded Rail

Newsletter March Quarter 2025



### Planting Season begins Sunday 15th June

Our first community planting will be on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June at Research Orchard Road Reserve. See our full planting schedule for the winter at the end of this newsletter.

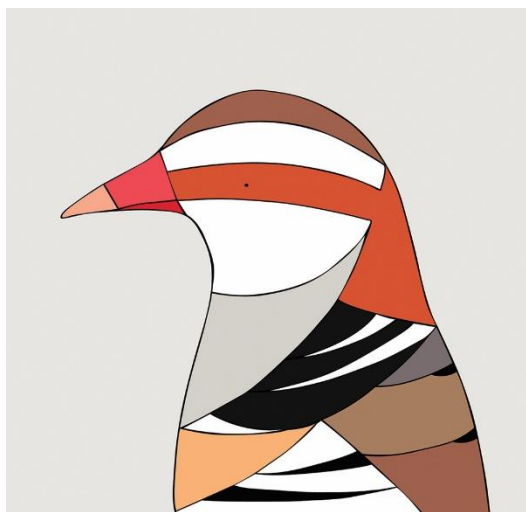
Everyone is welcome and there are jobs other than digging. Morning tea is provided.

If you would like to receive our emails about upcoming planting days through the season please email us [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)

### Do Good, Look Good!

You can now buy a *Battle for the Banded Rail* t-shirt in a variety of styles and colours. You can purchase just the t-shirt, or you can choose to add a tree or a trap to your purchase to support the project. Hats are also available.

Have a look at the [website](#) which Tasman Environmental Trust has set up in conjunction with Digitees.



### Banded Rail Art

I am pleasantly surprised to continue finding banded rail artworks to share with you in our newsletters.

This colourful work is by Eggpicnic designer Camila De Gregorio. See more of her impactful bird artwork [here](#). Most works are of Australian birds, but there are few NZ ones in there too.

Camila is based in Australia and is planning a visit to the South Island later this year and is keen to find out more about our *Battle for the Banded Rail*.

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)

## Trapping Results

The total catch for the March quarter was 869 and is our highest quarter ever. Total catches since 2014 is now 13,773. There are 1,265 traps in the network.

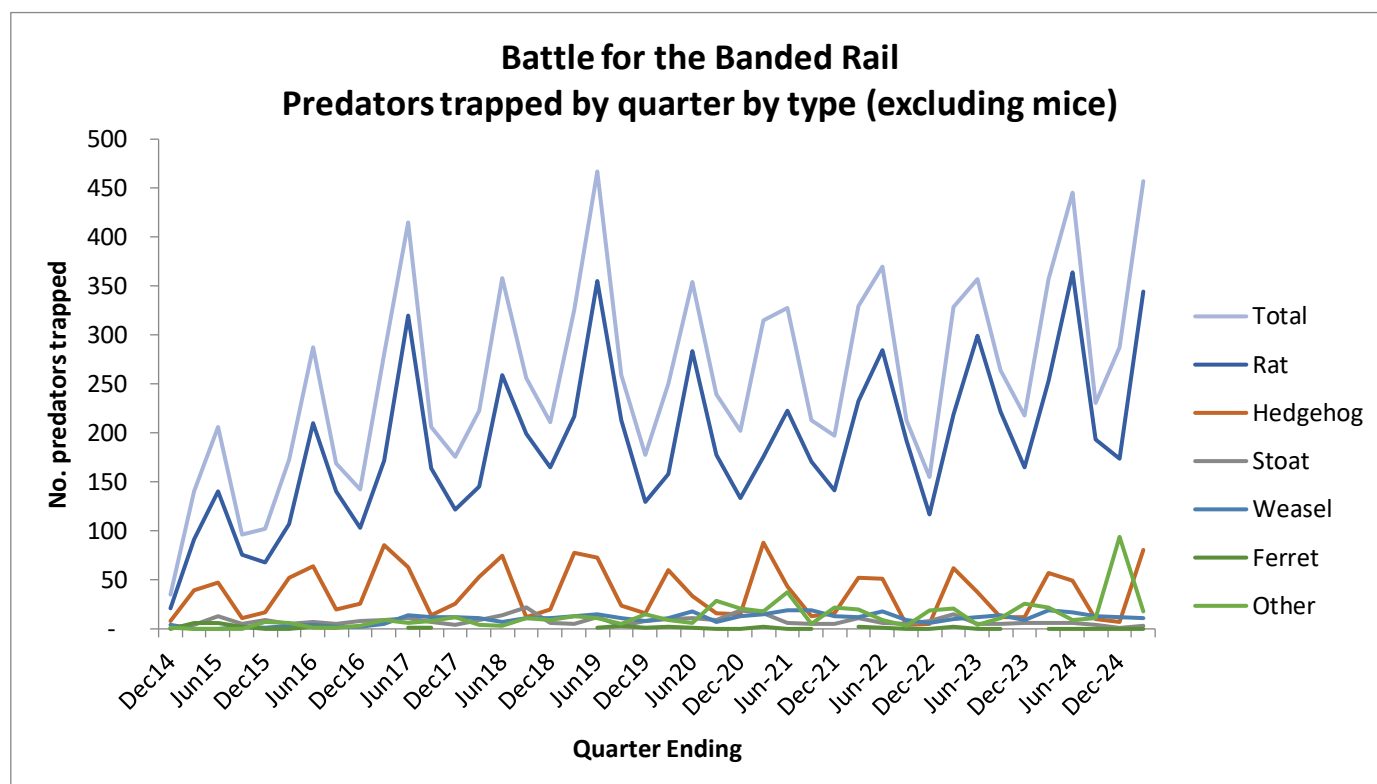
### Catches for Quarter 1 2025: Sector by Pest Type

Sector	Rat	Hedgehog	Stoat	Weasel	Mouse	Ferret	Other*	Total for Quarter	Total since 2015
Mapua to Bronte	47	19	-	2	7	-	5	80	2,951
Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula	36	19	-	-	26	-	1	82	2,984
Waimea West/ Appleby Hills	140	27	3	5	266	-	4	445	3,518
Waimea Delta to Monaco	121	16	-	4	113	-	8	262	4,330
Total for quarter	344	81	3	11	412	-	18	869	
Total since 2015	7,921	1,538	313	425	2,943	36	597		13,773

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

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

We have excluded mice from the graph as they are not our target species, and the catches were skewing the graph results. We are still recording them in the table.



## Trapping & Monitoring News from Tracey Murray

### New Trapping Volunteers Needed

A trap line along the cycleway near to **Lower Queen Street, Richmond** needs a new trapper. This is an easier one for someone who wishes to bike or walk along this flat section of the cycleway. It starts near to Sandeman reserve and finishes in front of the Ravensdown fertiliser plant. The trapline called Estuary View has 23 traps to check. Some are DOC200's and some are Rat traps in a box. Checking is encouraged every 2 weeks but should be once a month at a minimum.



Another trap line needs a new trapper at the Mapua end of **Westdale Road**. It is called Heron line and has 14 traps to check. 5 are along a walkway/driveway and the rest are on the estuary edge. This area is where we start our Banded Rail survey's because there are reliably Banded Rail footprints here. We are looking for someone who is willing to check this line every fortnight due to the traps being in such an important area.

Bait is provided and all training given to ensure all checking is safe and the volunteer feels confident to check on their own.

Please contact Tracey 027 286 5866 if you are interested in taking on either of these traplines.

### New Trap Line Installed on Rough Island

On Rough Island, a new area is being flooded by high tides and therefore providing a larger wading area for birds. This is occurring due to an increase in the size of a culvert under the road. It is hoped that more birdlife will inhabit the area as weeds are removed and more native planting is done around the edges. 15 new DOC200 traps have been installed around the edges of this wetland and are checked by one of our volunteers. The road to Rough Island is called Tic Tok Road and the new line is therefore called Tic Tok wetland.



*Rough Island wetland*



## Bird Chirp A new section featuring a different bird each newsletter

### #1 Australasian bittern / matuku-hūrepo

Bittern are extremely cryptic and rarely seen. Their presence is most often discovered due to hearing the distinctive booming call of the males during breeding season. The females are largely silent.

These unusual birds tend to live in wetlands, estuary edges, drains, lakes and flooded paddocks. When disturbed they will often stand in a 'freeze' position to blend into the surroundings.



Bittern are found throughout NZ but have declined sharply with the destruction of their wetland habitats for farming and towns. Wetland drainage is still considered the main reason for their decline along with predators, disturbance and poor water quality. There are thought to be less than 1000 birds throughout NZ. Bittern are native to NZ and their conservation status is nationally critical.

Not much is known about their migration, and they were thought to stay within about a 15km local area, but recent tracking has shown that some bittern have travelled from Christchurch to the Nelson area and back again. This migration may mean that there are less birds than previously thought.

Over the last few years TDC has been recreating a wetland area beside the cycleway near Pearl creek, at the end of Cotterell Road. It is hoped that bittern will be attracted to the area along with other wetland birds. Have a look next time you are passing.

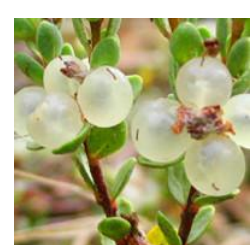
Please report any sightings so we can receive feedback on the success of the wetland as it develops. More information can be found on the 'Birds NZ' online website: [nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz)

The recent TV program, "Endangered Species" on TVNZ had an episode on wetlands and the bittern and is well worth a watch. [TVNZ+ Endangered Species Aotearoa](#)

## Did You Know?

### NZ's Top 10 Endangered Species

1. Maui dolphin
2. Canterbury knobbled weevil
3. Mokohinau stag beetle
4. Quillwort
5. NZ fairy tern
6. Limestone cress
7. Chesterfield skink
8. **Coastal peppercress** (we have been working with DOC on the recovery programme).
9. Eyelash seaweed
10. Dune swale daphne



Source and more information on the [NZ Endangered Species website](#)

## Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

### Plant Releasing / Maintenance Schedule



We have one last plant maintenance mornings scheduled in May. Plant maintenance involves hand clearing weeds from inside plant guards, straightening guards or removing them if the plant is big enough.

Friday 9 May

9-11am

Stringer Reserve, Stringer Road

### Brightwater Scouts

On a beautiful Monday evening in March, a very engaged group of Brightwater Scouts, parents and siblings came along to Sandeman Reserve to learn about our native planting and trapping.

They did some plant maintenance and left an area of new plantings looking great, then were thoroughly absorbed with Tracey's demonstration of a trap along with 'Steve the Stoat' being the stand in for a real pest.

*"Thank You SO much for your amazing session tonight and also the amazing work you do in our community.*

*The group absolutely loved tonight and are looking forward to more nights doing their bit to their bit for the community and local environment. " Jezz, Group Leader*



### Before & After

2018



2024



*Trafalgar Embayment – slowly a native forest takes shape on part of the old highway*



## Plant Patch      Flammability of native plant species

Wildfire danger can be reduced by managing the types of vegetation planted around you, especially in a rural or semi-rural area. A key action to protect property from wildfire is to create defensible space, a carefully managed area around houses and structures where flammable materials are removed or minimised. An important part of that is the planting of low flammability species.

Around your home you should:

- Keep grass short
- Keep gutters and decks clear of dead leaves, debris and pine needles
- Remove highly flammable plants and plant low flammability plants, especially within 10m of buildings
- Store flammable materials such as firewood, well away from your house

There are no 'fire-proof' plants but there are plants which resist heat and ignition from embers to some extent. The flammability of vegetation affects fire intensity is determined by their characteristics such as fuel loads, structure, oils and moisture.



*Plant Barbecue: Example of highly flammable plant vs low flammable plant at Lincoln University*

### Plant Species by Flammability Classes

These classes are intended as a guide only. Species flammability can vary as a result of genetic and environmental factors eg. flammability may increase as a result of drought conditions or mature vegetation carrying greater amounts of dead material.

**Low Flammability** – suitable for green breaks or defensible space, but when in the immediate vicinity of structures there should be a 3-4m break between plant crowns to reduce fuel continuity. Examples – *Pseudopanax crassifolius*/lancewood, *Pseudopanax arboreus*/five finger, *Coprosma robusta*/karamu, *Coprosma repens*/taupata, *Carpodetus serratus*/putaputaweta/marbleleaf, *Griselinia littoralis*/broadleaf, *Sophora microphylla*/kowhai.

**Low/moderate Flammability** – not recommended for green breaks. Dead material and litter should be removed regularly if in defensible space. Examples – *Veronica stricta*/koromiko/hebe, *Melicytus ramiflorus*/mahoe, *Aristotelia serrata*/wineberry, *Myoporum laetum*/ngaio, *Pittosporum eugenoides*/tarata/lemonwood, *Plagianthus regius*/ribbonwood.

**Moderate and Moderate/High Flammability** – these species can produce heavy accumulations of flammable litter and dead material, or have flammable green foliage. Examples – *Cordyline australis*/ti kouka/cabbage tree, *Pittosporum tenuifolium*/kohuhu, *Dodonaea viscosa*/ake ake, tree ferns, Rimu, Kauri, Kahikatea, Totara.

**High Flammability** – burn readily in forest fire conditions. Examples – *Kunzea ericoides*/kanuka, *Leptospermum scoparium*/manuka



Sources: [Scion Research](#) and [FENZ](#)



*Eves Valley Scenic Reserve: a photo taken after the 2019 Pigeon Valley fires which shows the intact gully and valley floor, surrounded by burnt mixed beech forest. Photo R Gaskell*



*Cabbage trees creating good fuel for a fire*



## Project Spotlight

*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.

### Roding River/Aniseed Valley Catchment Group



This group is working towards improving the health of the Roding River by monitoring water quality and ecosystem health and carrying out riparian planting and pest and weed control. The catchment boundary extends from Roding Dam to the Lee River confluence.

Currently they are working with Tasman District Council to improve the river reserves for the wider community to enjoy. There is potential to use the reserves to showcase their efforts and educate the community on what's happening to improve the local environment. The hope is to introduce and protect some rare fauna and improve biodiversity in the catchment area. The group is working with a range of stakeholders, including TDC, NCC, DOC, forestry companies, private landowners and funding groups to achieve these improvements.

The group was started by a small number of keen volunteers who are in it for the long haul! Their vision is for their children and the wider community to inherit a healthy river and a thriving catchment. They also hope their passion for nature conservation will inspire their children and the wider community.

Click [here](#) to see more on TET's website.





## Come and join us at a Community Planting Day on the Waimea Inlet in 2025

Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> June	9am – 1pm	Research Orchard Road
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> June	9am – 1pm	Stringer Reserve on Stringer Road Parking roadside
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	9am – 1pm	Bell Island Access from Best Island Road
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	9am – 1pm	Best Island - Greenacres Access and parking adjacent to Greenacres Golf Club
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August	9am – 1pm	To Be Advised
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	9am – 1pm	Cardno Way, Bronte Peninsula North Parking on Cardno Way, off Bronte Rd East
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> August	9am – 1pm	Greenslade Park, Rough Island

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](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com) or phone Kathryn 544 4537