

NEWSLETTER

PUKAWA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT GROUP

What do we do?



For this issue I thought I'd write about what the PWMT does to achieve and maintain the wonderful birdlife we have at Pukawa. First of all we have Jean Stanley who does such a wonderful job supported by a few locals, mainly farmers and residents about our boundaries. She is a Trustee and also manages a local group who attend to the day-to-day management of the project. The Trust members in a governance role support her and many of these also help in other ways.

What do we do? A network of traps and bait stations have been established around and throughout our area which covers all the bush areas about Pukawa from the lake to the surrounding farmland and from the Omori steps up to the store in the North to just beyond Oreti in the south. The good news is that the Omori Kuratau people have started their own wildlife trust and this will help with reducing the reinvasion of vermin from the north.

Vermin are controlled by trapping and poisoning. Trapping is carried out all year and is aimed at mustelids using lures to attract them. We do get many rats as well using these DoC200 traps. All the numbers we publicise are from these traps. The poisoning is carried out from September through to February when the birds are most at risk. We use Ditrac (diphacinone) which is the most environmentally friendly of the warfarin type anticoagulant poisons. It causes a painless death has an antidote in case of accidental poisoning. It is placed in the elongated yellow plastic Rat-Café boxes designed to only allow rats and mice to enter. The rats eliminated by this method greatly exceed those caught in our traps. So the figures you see of our trapping results only represent a fraction of the total vermin eliminated. The work must continue. I found out recently that one pair of mice can result in 5000 within six months. And rats to 1500 in 12 months. Daunting isn't it?

All of this costs money and we are managing so far. For special projects such as the recent ones to get traps and bait stations into the village, installing the new

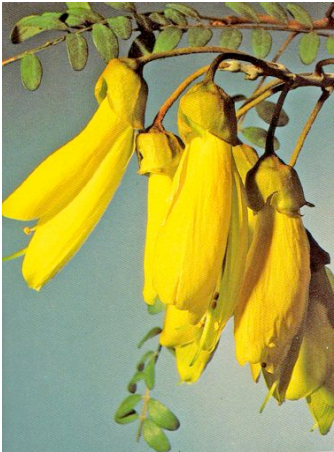
repeating Henry traps and the project to increase our trapping line about our perimeter we apply for grants from suitable funders. For materials we have more difficulty, as funding bodies do not give readily for routine repeating expenses. For this we rely on your generous donations and the PWMT thanks you very much for these. We need about \$8000 each year for our routine activities and we like to keep about the same amount as a reserve. If we suddenly have a cash flow problem it only takes a couple of months of inactivity for the good work to be undone. We service 378 traps and 180 bait stations. All the work is by unpaid voluntary labour.

What have we achieved? You are no doubt aware of the great dawn chorus and bird numbers we have. PWMT also tries to do regular bird counts to satisfy our supporters and funders. These show healthy numbers of birds but trends are hard to demonstrate because of low numbers of certain species such as robins, tomtits and falcons.

The work continues. We need your continuing support, both financial and as voluntary help. Any offers of help are gratefully received.

Barry Smith

Chairman, PWMT



Kowhai Time

It has been such a wet month rain we usually get in the month of September has fallen this month. The porous soil in our district makes any rain welcome and we have been fortunate in that the rainfall has been spread over the month with no slips or flooding. The kowhai have herald the arrival of Spring and with so many different varieties the flowering period extends over a number of weeks. Tui have arrived in numbers, moving from one tree to another, sixty five the largest flock counted.

Trapping results: A pattern is emerging from our trapping and poisoning results. Currently the interior lines have low tallies while the perimeter lines have increased in numbers.

Rats: 48 Possums 3 (1 under our self setting trap) Weasels: 1 Hedgehogs: 1.

Barry Smith
and
Jean Stanley



Kereru Demolishing Kowhai Flower Buds!

PWMT thanks our supporters for their private donations, PPOA for processing some of these, Huckleberries Charitable Trust, Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust, Department of Conservation, Waikato Regional Council and the Taupo District Council.