



## Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum Predator Trapping Report 2008/09 season

The WHLF have carried out predator trapping for kiwi recovery over the Whangarei Heads area since 2002. This report covers the period October 2008 to September 2009.

### 1.0 Trap Coverage

The trapping network has largely been in place since 2002 with additions and fine tuning of trap locations continuing since then.

Mustelid traps: 206 double sets of Mark 6 Fenn traps in mainly plastic tunnels; 20 single Doc 200 sets and 7 double Doc 20 sets in boxes.



Cat traps: 30 SA Cat traps; 10 cages are used to target cats.

					October 2008		<b>Total</b>
	Kauri Mt	Eastern Manaia	Western Manaia	Taurikura	The Nook	Kerr Rd	
Fenns	53	39	42	26	37	9	<b>206</b>
SA's	12	11	3	0	3	1	<b>30</b>
Cages	8	2	0	0	0	0	<b>10</b>
Doc 200s	3	13	8	1	1	1	<b>27</b>

The Department of Conservation Whangarei Area Office operates traps in the Nook, Taurikura Ridge, South Manaia Walkway, and Mount Aurbrey areas on behalf of the WHLF. These traps are in addition to the Department of Conservation trapping program that the trappers carry out at the Bream Head Reserve and in the buffer area to the north of the Whangarei Heads peninsular.

### 2.0 Predators trapped

**Table 2. Summary of captures by Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum Kiwi Recovery programme.**

Total captures (October to September each year)							
	Ferret	Stoat	Weasel	Cat	Hedgehog	Rat	Possum
2002/2003	1	55	46	18	65	391	Not recorded
2003/2004	4	22	21	22	52	319	24
2004/ 2005	1	30	17	38	95	403	285
2005/2006	0	26	13	29	82	357	191+
2006/2007	0	26	8	17	68	304	147
2007/2008	0	19	22	18	84	346	75+
2008/2009	0	21	25	12	112	351	144+
2009/2010*	0*	14*	8*	11*			
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>2471</b>	<b>866+</b>

\* Interim results for 2009/2010 season till March 2010

## 2.1 Comments on 2008/2009 programme by species.

### Ferrets

No ferrets have been caught in the WHLF area since 2005.

### Stoats

21 stoats were caught in the 2008/2009 season, the second lowest number for the 7 years of trapping operation and well down from the peak of 55 in the first season. Catch rates peaked in December at 8 stoats. The stoat kills were more concentrated at the northern end of trapping area due to reinvasion from inland areas. However it is noteworthy that the Department of Conservation traps on the peninsula tip of Bream Head accounted for 5 stoats over the same period, an unusually high number compared to past years. Also of note has been the establishment of a predator trapping programme in the Pataua North area by the Northland Regional Council which should have some buffering effect on the Whangarei Heads area.

**Table 3. Monthly capture stoats**

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Kauri Mt	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
E. Manaia	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
W. Manaia	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Taurikura	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
The Nook	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
Kerr Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

### Weasels

Weasel captures were 25, similar to last season's catch but still well below the first season catch of 46.

**Table 4. Monthly capture weasels**

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Kauri Mt	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
E. Manaia	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
W. Manaia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Taurikura	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
The Nook	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Kerr Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

### Cats

Cat captures were 12 this season continuing a trend down from the peak of 38 for the 2004/2005 season.

**Table 5. Monthly capture cats**

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Kauri Mt	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
E. Manaia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
W. Manaia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Taurikura	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
The Nook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Kerr Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>

## **Rats**

Recorded rat catches in the predator traps totaled 351.

30 Norway rats were identified out of the total (approximately 8.5%) although many of the trappers do not distinguish between rat species on their records.

The rat catch has remained relatively stable for the past 7 seasons ranging from a low of 304 in 2006/2007 to a high of 403 in 2004 /2005.

It is noted that some individual projects within the WHLF project area carry out targeted rat control. These results are not included in this report.

## **Possoms**

Major possum control projects have been continued by individual Landcare projects within the Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum with significant catch results. The results of these projects are not included in this report.

## **Hedgehogs**

This season's hedgehog catch of 112 is an all time high.

### **3.0 Bait**

Salted rabbit remains the main bait used because of its attractiveness to stoats, lasting properties, ease of distribution and storage in freezers. Salted possum is also used, particularly over the winter period when rabbit supply is low.

Chicken eggs were also used over the winter months this season with no success on most target species apart from weasels.

### **4.0 Community operated traps**

The standard and frequency of setting of traps by community trappers continues to vary considerably. Many of these trappers are experienced and enthusiastic trappers, while some others trap sporadically as time is available. The continued perseverance and dedication of these trappers is important to the effectiveness of the project.

Co-ordination of the community trappers by the WHLF trapper was carried out by telephone contacts and site visits to supply bait, carry out trap maintenance, collect records and audit trap setting.

Details of ongoing captures were communicated through the local newsletter, email and WHLF meetings.

### **5.0 Funding**

The Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum kiwi recovery project is very grateful for funding from central Government's Biodiveristy Condition Fund, Northland Regional Council, ASB Community Trust, and Bank of New Zealand Save the Kiwi Trust.

### **6.0 The Program's Future**

The 2008/2009 season's capture rates for mustelids continue to be well down from our first season and hopefully reflect a seriously reduced mustelid population in the area.

However Department of Conservation work monitoring kiwi chick survival rates at the Whangarei Kiwi sanctuary has indicated that over time survival rates have dropped despite an ongoing long term trapping programme there. This may be due to the generation of some trap shy stoats and emphasizes the importance of the attention to detail needed when setting traps including the removal of any old salted rabbit bait from the area completely. DOC are currently running trials using

secondary poisoning as a possible tool to eliminate any trap shy stoats from the area. When the trial results become available any implications for the WHLF trapping programme will be considered.

DOC 200 type traps make up approximately 12% of the WHLF trapping network and accounted for 10% of stoat captures, 25% of weasel captures and no cat captures. While some trapping programmes have replaced all their Fenn traps with Doc 200 we intend to continue to operate the Fenn traps, particularly in the northern region of the WHLF area where the possibility of ferret reinvasion still remains. We plan to field trial the various new multi kill predator traps as they become available. We also hope to use the new stoat toxin PAPP, when it becomes registered for use, in conjunction with the current trapping network.

Ongoing trap maintenance and fine tuning of trap positions will continue to be carried out along with the logistical and motivational support of community trappers to maintain the trapping regime and low mustelid numbers.

An independent trap audit was recently carried out on the WHLF traps by Glenn Coulston and his report is attached. The report concluded:

“I believe the trapping programme is being highly effective due to its good design and through Todd’s skill levels and thorough attention to detail.”

As a long term monitoring tool for the effectiveness of the kiwi recovery project at the Whangarei Heads annual kiwi call counts are carried out. These call counts have continued to increase in the WHLF area.

**Todd Hamilton,  
WHLF trapper**