

Greetings

Its spring and many new and exciting things are happening for the Rotokare Trust. The fence project is on the way with all the necessary paperwork, consents, contracting tenders etc being dealt with by our Project Manager, Joe Menzies ably assisted by our Project Coordinator, Kara Prankerd and many others. Without these people the Trust would be overwhelmed with the work involved in seeing our vision completed. Huge thanks to you also for supporting us in this venture as we cannot achieve this on our own. Our strength is in the people that step up to the plate to make things happen.

Joe and the fence contractors, Excluder have been around the reserve again and are very positive that erecting the fence will go well. Apparently the steel mesh is on a boat from China and it's heading this way. The start date for the fence will be determined by the weather, but we hope to get under way by the end of October or start of November.

After a few teething problems our website is up and running so we hope to keep you informed and up-to-date through that as well as this newsletter.

Total Trap Figures

Total pests caught at Rotokare Mainland Island 2006

	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Total		GrandTotal	
Stoats	14	1	1	5	4	7	0	1					33	2.8%	117	3.1%
Ferrets	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	0					6	0.5%	12	0.3%
Weasels	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0					6	0.5%	29	0.8%
Feral cats	2	1	0	3	2	2	1	0					11	0.9%	30	0.8%
Rats	86	91	157	173	55	88	52	85					787	66.7%	2173	57.0%
Hedgehogs	69	19	25	59	27	11	0	1					211	17.9%	829	21.7%
Rabbits	6	3	0	4	0	1	0	2					16	1.4%	92	2.4%
Mice	17	8	13	16	6	19	7	4					90	7.6%	479	12.6%
Possums	0	2	1	1	0	7	3	6					20	1.7%	52	1.4%
Sprung & empty traps	8	0	0	6	11	71	28	32					156		439	
No. of DOC 200 traps	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252	252		252	
No. of Victor traps	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399		399	
Total no. of traps	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651	651		651	
Total pests	195	126	200	267	94	135	64	99	0	0	0	0	1180		3813	
Mustelids	15	2	4	11	4	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	45	3.8%	158	4.1%



Trapping volunteer, Rob Brockett – G. Johnson

Our trapping programme is continuing, with many of our volunteers giving up almost a full day each time to reset and record each trap. It becomes more intense during spring with many trappers changing from checking once a month to fortnightly. After each check they send in their data and it is kindly collated by Mike Weren who then sends it through to Cees Beevers to present it in the above format for us. We are currently in the process of talks with Taranaki Regional Council, South Taranaki Council and DOC to plan the eradication of all pests next winter after the fence is finished. This looks like it will be quite a large undertaking.

If you or someone you know would be interested in checking a trap line regularly please contact our Trapping

Coordinator, Murray Sulzberger:

Phone: (06) 764 8561

Email: md.am.sulzberger@xtra.co.nz

Fundraising Successes

As you are probably aware we are not fully funded, but we are optimistic that we have enough to build the fence, caretakers' house and a classroom. However we still have ongoing costs and new initiatives to implement. We cannot achieve this without monetary support from providers and you, our supporters.

Rotokare SRT has just received the environmental grant of \$7500 toward building a section of fence from the Kupe Community Grants Program. This fund has been developed by the Kupe Gas Project partners that include Origin Energy, Genesis Energy, NZ oil and Gas, and Mitsui E&P NZ, in association with STDC. We really appreciate the support of this large local project and we may even have some of the Kupe staff out on site at working bees one day.

International support continues for the second year in a row from the Koala Trust of Australia.

We have also been fortunate to obtain funding from the WWF's Habitat Protection Fund for continuation of the trapping coordination role. This money comes from the Tindall Foundation. Stephen Tindall is the founder of The Warehouse.

Historic Sites



Site inspection day – B.Hartley

During our applications for consents it was necessary to have an Archaeologists report on some possible historical sites that may be impacted upon by the fence project. Two archaeologists, representatives from Ngati Tupaia and Trustees, Joe and Barry, inspected the sites.

There are two historic sites at Rotokare. One is a Freshwater Mussel Shell midden (rubbish heap) on the lakeside, the other a kainga behind the picnic area. It was possible that the latter could be impacted upon by the fence construction. In this case consent would have to be given by the Historic Places Trust.

The archaeologists surveyed the area and it was considered that if there is a confirmed site there it would be unlikely to extend as far as the fence. It was also thought unlikely that there would be any other site along the route of the fence.

This has yet to be confirmed in writing but it is good news in that there should be no delay in commencing work. We will still have to be vigilant and should anything come to light during the earthworks it would have to be recorded and surveyed.

Events, Activities and Nature

Department of Conservation Nocturnal Walkabout

On Friday the 11th of August the Department of Conservation (Stratford) ran a nocturnal tour of Lake Rotokare. There was a great turnout and the weather was favourable. The group took a walk around part of the track, on the way listening for ruru (which was plentiful) and keeping an eye out for glow worms. Twice they stopped and played a tape of kiwi calls – the male high-pitched whistle and the female coarse rasping notes, but unfortunately there were no kiwi nearby on this night. A bat detector was brought out for anyone willing to have a go. The bat detector picks up the bats' echo-guidance signals which are not discernable by the human ear but easily detected with this device. There were no confirmed detections this night, but there is a possibility that the short-tailed bat occurs at Rotokare.



Short-tailed bat.
Reference: www.doc.govt.nz

Natural Happenings



Spider Orchid – B.Hartley

During September and early October a Spider Orchid was flowering on the roadside. This very small plant is about 30mm high and in a group.

A rare plant classed as "in serious decline" has been flowering in the reserve for the last month. Called *Brachyglottis kirkii* or Kirk's Daisy it is an epiphyte (grows on trees) and is usually only noticed when it flowers. There are several of these plants at Rotokare, and could be seen high in the emergent Pukatea and Kahikatea across the lake from the picnic area.

David Sattler reported that about mid-July a falcon attacked a wood pigeon flying across the lake. There was a flurry of feathers but the pigeon escaped. It has been found that some birds have the rump and some back feathers more easily pulled out than those of the rest of the body so giving predators a hard time getting a grip. This was the first falcon sighting recorded for the Reserve, other sightings of falcons have been on surrounding farmland.

The birds are having a flurry of activity with the spring weather. Our resident pair of black swans are proudly promenading their cute clutch of five cygnets. When a hawk circled low for a closer look, the parents quickly corralled their charges into tight "battle formation" with military precision.

Two Canada geese were recorded on the lake during September. While they are becoming increasingly common in Taranaki this is the first recorded for Rotokare

A few metres south of the northern seat, pause and peer uphill through the branches and you will see two shag nests high atop a tree. Wait a while and you might see mum or dad come home with a feed for the noisy kids.

Sanctuaries workshop

Rotokare SR Trust was well represented at the second national Sanctuaries Workshop run by Landcare Research Ltd at Kawhia on 11& 12 September. Joe, Cees, Murray and Jenny attended. The interest in sanctuaries is growing hugely. There were 67 people present, including community groups like ours, scientists, Conservation staff, educators and funders. At least 22 sanctuary projects were represented so there were lots of opportunities to share experiences. Some of the key issues raised were around monitoring design, how to eradicate mice (no one knows the answer to that yet), re-invasions (almost inevitable), detecting and removing invaders, species translocation issues, DOC's priorities compared with communities' ones, and options for long-term financial and group viability. On the last issue, there were few answers but lots of interesting ideas (bush burial, endowment funds, developing "Sanctuaries NZ" as a unified brand to attract big corporate sponsors) and some research is underway. A web site is being developed by Landcare Research so we can all have better access to up-to-date information. We'll keep you posted on this.

Helpers

Peter Jackson and his crew from Community Probation have been doing a sterling job revamping the trapping lines in preparation for the big eradication job which will occur after the fence is up.

What's coming up?

We will be operating an information stand about Rotokare Reserve at the Egmont A&P Show in Hawera next month as a way to promote our vision and show off what we have already achieved. We will be situated in the Radio Network Marquee along with other environmental displays.

Boat Ramp

Whitakers Construction have put the steel shutters in place around the boat ramp and have started pumping the water out to enable them to build the replacement ramp. A pump will remain in place to deal with any leaks during construction. Please be aware that this is a construction zone and keep clear until completion.



Boat ramp construction – G. Johnson

WANTED ... new volunteers

We are getting to a busy stage with the fence construction hopefully beginning in the next few months. Our job list seems to be growing every week, and we would really appreciate some extra help from anybody with a bit of extra time.

If you are interested in signing up as a volunteer please fill in the attached sheet and send it back. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact our Project Manager, Joe Menzies, on (06) 764 5068 or Kara Prankerd on (06) 752 7231.



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