



Newsletter

Issue: 79

May/June 2013

Tribute to Jude Hivon

Jude Hivon died on Sunday 16 June when her house was demolished by a big landslide. Torrential rain hit Marahau that day and Jude was in her house at the time. We extend our condolences to Jude's family and friends. Jude helped with rat tracking tunnel work last year, and was a very bright and bubbly person.

Winter Notes

Maryann Ewers

Winter's fingers have now well and truly taken hold in the Flora area. As I write this, the South Island is experiencing one of the harshest snow storms in many years. The good news is that all the trap monitoring is up to date, and won't need to be checked again until August. The top three kilometres of traps have been laid out on the new 'U' line, so most volunteers can take a well earned rest over the next couple of months. With the finalisation of this line, there are now over 1000 traps = 100 kilometres protecting over 8,000 ha. over the Flora Catchment area managed jointly by Friends of Flora, DoC, and Bush and Beyond. A massive effort, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers for their continued support of the project.

But, the kiwi monitoring continues...thanks to all the kiwi trackers. The good news is that the second translocation for this year, in May, was very successful, with a total number of 12 kiwi translocated from the Roaring Lion in the heart of Kahurangi, to Deep Creek on the Tablelands, within our protected area. Once again, a huge thanks go to our Kiwi Project Managers, Sandy and Robin Toy, for the many hours put into organising and completing the translocation - Robin on the catching team and Sandy receiving. Many thanks also, to the professional kiwi dog catching team of Tash and James, along with St Arnaud DoC's Chris. Thanks must also go to our FoF volunteer Lesley, who organised all the food, and was at hand in the Roaring Lion, to help when and where needed. Thanks also goes to the receiving team in Deep Creek with Sandy, Pamela and Chris.

Kiwi Update

Sandy & Robin Toy

Mission accomplished! The weather came right in early May and we were able to translocate an additional 8 kiwi from the upper Roaring Lion to the Flora, thereby meeting our target of bringing in an extra 20 kiwi, 10 boys and 10 girls.

The translocation went very efficiently thanks to a break in the wet weather, careful planning and the skills of all involved. The contract catchers, Chris Rickard, Natasha Coad and James Fraser not only caught all the kiwi, but have also generously sponsored stoat traps on the new S and U lines in the Flora. The detailed kiwi survey of the Roaring Lion that we did in December enabled us to

target the catching. Alan and Lesley once again did a fantastic job in organising food and gear and Lesley was part of the Roaring Lion catch team. Six of the eight Roaring Lion kiwi were caught at night. This involved wading repeatedly across the river, waiting silently but alert in the darkness ready for a kiwi to respond to taped calls and come within catching distance, then a sudden intense burst of activity followed by a slog back to camp through untracked, dripping-wet bush with the kiwi in a bag, getting to bed shortly before dawn. DoC provided the critical communication between the catch team in the Roaring Lion, the release team in Deep Creek and the chopper pilot – thanks Kate and Bruce. We adopted a new release strategy, putting all 8 of the new kiwi close together in Deep Creek. A special thank you to Tom Matthews who flew into Deep Creek to bless the kiwi before they were released into pre-prepared burrows. Pam and Chris stayed in to assist Sandy in transferring the kiwi to their burrows and releasing them at dusk. A huge thank you to all involved in the translocation – you're all great!

The reason for the recent translocations is to increase the size of the founder population of kiwi to ensure that there is sufficient genetic diversity for a long term sustainable kiwi population. We therefore need to know whether the translocated kiwi stay within the project area and whether they breed. All the translocated kiwi are fitted with radio transmitters to enable us to monitor their locations and activity. So now our kiwi monitoring data sheet has 29 kiwi on it and a new challenge is beginning. The great news is that after 5 weeks, all the Roaring Lion kiwi have remained within about a kilometre of their release site and pairs appear to have remained together. This is in marked contrast to the kiwi translocated from New Creek in March, many of whom dispersed far and fast, with none of the original pairs staying together. Four of the New Creek females moved out of the project area. We did not want to bring them back until the males had settled into territories in the hope that established males will anchor the females. However, Iwa had moved south deep into the Peel Valley. She appeared settled there for a few weeks, but then disappeared for more than a month. We decided that it was time to try to locate her from the air and if possible bring her back before she disappeared completely. Unfortunately the area where she was last recorded to the south of the Tablelands is often fog bound (see photo) and so it was on the day of the hunt for Iwa. Toby Reid managed to fly under the fog to locate her and found a suitable place in a creek to drop Robin. But Iwa had been disturbed by the buzzing chopper and Robin had a real job to catch her single handed. She was transferred to a burrow in Deep Creek close to a single male and we're hoping that she will settle there with him. When caught, Iwa was in excellent condition – a very tubby kiwi!



Iwa's hiding place in the Peel buried in fog, viewed from the Tablelands



Tom Matthews (far right) with kiwi release team in Deep Creek

Beech Seedfall Predicts the Future

Ivan Rogers

Friends of Flora run two lines of beech seedfall monitoring funnels, one under Lodestone in mixed beech forest, and one in Deep Creek in red beech. The standard setup for these lines is of eight funnels at 50m intervals. The funnels are rather large at 600mm diameter, mounted off the ground on poles and with a short stocking attached to collect whatever falls into the funnel. Blokes purchasing large numbers of black knee-high hosiery always raises eyebrows at the supermarket! The lines are run during the seedfall season, the end of February to the end of May, the seedfall being collected monthly and stockings changed.

This is what is known as "*predictive monitoring*" - a high seed count means a beech "mast" (mass seed production event). The presence of massive amounts of seed in the forest fuels a population explosion of rodents in the mast year - bad news for small birds. This in turn leads to a spike in stoat numbers the following year - bad news for birds big and small. Forewarned is forearmed and steps can be taken to counter the expected high predator numbers – such as increasing trap check frequency or applying 1080.



Several FoF-ers have now been trained in the art of sorting the samples collected to extract seed by species. Here we see Keith Broady patiently sorting a sample. Very little seed was found in samples from either line this year - good news for the Flora birds.

Trapping Results to 31.5.2013

Bill Rooke

For the year ending 31 May 2013; 200 stoats, 213 rats, 81 mice, 60 possums, 2 hedgehogs and one weasel have been caught in traps maintained by FoF (16 lines) and Bush and Beyond (3 lines). The results do not include the four trap lines maintained by DoC, which are also part of the Flora Catchment Protected Area. The table below shows the top trapping lines, with the number of trapping stations per line shown for comparison.

Table 1: Data for top 10 Lines (FoF and B&B) 1.6.12-31.5.13.

Line Name	Stoats (Traps)	Rats (Traps)	Mice (Traps)	Possums (Traps)
BD	30 (58)			
R	23 (89)			
T	22 (42)			
I	22 (83)	85 (83)	44 (83)	
P	13 (66)			
LF		24 (35)		
F*	13 (56)		15 (56)	14
BB*		46 (48)		20
C*		24 (68)	10 (10)	14
G*				8
A*				4

* These five lines are the only FoF lines with possum traps

Table 2 shows the top trapping stations for each line which may be of interest to those of you who have been associated with certain lines over the years. The figures are from my notebook tallies from Day One, taken from the monitoring sheets. It should be noted that some lines have been in place far longer than others. For example, I line was put in place in February 2002, ABFG lines in February 2004, P line in November 2007, Z Line in January 2010 and T Line in April 2012.

Table 2: Number of catches by line and number of traps on the line (2002-2012/13)

Line Name	Top Stoat Trap (No. stoats)	Top Rat Trap (No. catches)	Top Possum Trap (No. catches)
I	9 (13)	83 (58)	
A*	50 (5)	58/64 (9 ea.)	20 (8)
BB*	29 (7)	36 (23)	72 (5)
LB	19 (6)	1 (10)	
G*	5/8/21 (5 ea.)	1 (12)	30 (13)
F*	20 (7)	53/12 (14 ea.)	14/24/38 (9ea.)
C*	3/60 (4 ea.)	31 (17)	26 (7)
P	26/63 (3 ea.)	20 (2)	
Z	16 (4)	1 (8)	
BD	71 (4)		
LF	10/14 (2)	20/28 (5)	
T	15/19 (2)		
LD	3 (2)		
R	1 (4)	54 (6)	
Y	23 (3)	36 (5)	
X	7 (2)		

Another interesting observation from the records is that on some lines there are traps that have never caught anything, and some where the catches are well spread around. For example, on C Line, out of 68 stations, only 4 have never caught a rat, and 47 have caught 4 or more. On I Line, 22 stations out of 83 have never caught a stoat, but all except one has caught rats, and the one exception is at the highest altitude on the line.

Operations Report

Pamela Jenkins

In spite of the snow and more slips on the Graham Valley Road, some hardy FoFers have still been busy laying out the 100 trap units that were recently helicoptered into various locations around the Deep Creek area, between the Cobb Ridge and the Flora Valley. Lots of hard work from the

dedicated crew means that the two new lines: S & U, are almost complete and will be ready for their first “setting” in the spring. A great job done by all those involved.

Winter may give us a short rest from most of our trap monitoring, but in the background there will be plenty of planning for the next season, which will be here before we know it! And it will be a valuable bit of spare time for us to make sure that all of our track maintenance is up to date - it is quite a job keeping on top of damage to tracks and their markings by windfall and suchlike!

But before wrapping up for winter, I would like to write a few words about Jude Hivon.

Jude’s life was taken tragically in the recent local rains and floods. I had the pleasure of spending a day with Jude last year: She had volunteered her help and came out with me for the first time during one of our footprint tracking tunnel weekends. A few words can’t possibly sum up a lady like Jude, but as we slogged up some of the steeper, more difficult tracks that FoF has to offer, and as we chattered together non-stop, my admiration for her, for her enthusiasm and for her *joie de vivre* grew, until by the end of the day I knew that I would enjoy getting to know Jude more.

Unfortunately our paths didn’t cross again, which I regret; but I was very fortunate to have spent that day with her.

Other News

Graham Valley Road



The Graham Valley Road up to the Flora Saddle is closed due to more material coming down off the big slip. Attempts made to bring all the loose material down using water bombing were superseded by another massive slip, which happened as a result of a deluge on Sunday 16 June. All the loose material is now thought to be down, but clearing it will take some months.

Thanks to Tash, James and Chris

We would like to thank Chris Rickard, Natasha Coad and James Fraser who have very generously sponsored stoat traps on the new S and U lines in the Flora Catchment Area. Completing these lines means that we now have approximately 8,000 ha. of land protected by a trapping programme, which is a fantastic effort.

2013 Kea Advocacy Tour

Natureland Zoo, Nelson and the Department of Conservation, St Arnaud are proud to promote and support the 2013 Kea Advocacy Tour to the Nelson and Nelson Lakes areas. Tamsin Orr-Walker (Kea Conservation Trust) and Dr Lorne Roberts (Unitec) will be at the following venues and will be covering topics such as: The launch of the Kids for Kea educational DVD, help answer tricky questions and share your knowledge of Kea, slide show, video snippets and lively discussions about all things Kea

The aim is to not only share what has been learned about this charismatic species over the years but also to hear about your thoughts and experiences so we can better plan for the future.

NELSON:

Waimea Intermediate School Hall
48 Salisbury Road, Richmond
Monday 15th July @ 7.00pm

NELSON LAKES:

Lake Rotoiti Community Hall
State Highway 63, St Arnaud
Tuesday 16th July @ 7.00pm

While these are free events, a donation (gold coin) towards the work the trust undertakes for Kea in our area would be appreciated.

Friends of Flora

P: PO Box 317,

Motueka 7143,

New Zealand

T: 03 528 9054

E: fof@fof.org.nz

W: www.fof.org.nz