



# Newsletter

Issue 100!

October 2017

## Newsletter turns 100

*Outgoing editor Ivan reminisces...*

In the very early days of Friends of Flora - 2002 - a hard copy newsletter was produced by Maryann Ewers and Bill Rooke for an issue or two. A couple of years later it was revived as the "committee minutes without the boring bits" and the Friends of Flora (FOF) newsletter went out, by email this time, to about 30 FOF-ers in January 2004. Ivan Rogers edited 54 issues for the next 6 years, before taking time off from the committee. Maryann Ewers took care of the next 14 issues before the editorship passed to Marie Firth, who edited 18 issues. Back on the committee again in 2015, Ivan resumed the editor's role and has seen it through to this one - Number 100. During this time the distribution has increased nearly 20-fold to over 550 individuals and organisations. Issue 101 will be in the hands of a new editor - Gerald Bruce-Smith. Robin Toy next shows how our trapping operation has grown over those 100 issues.



Welcome again to the Friends of Flora (FoF) newsletter. This one is No. 37 for October 2007 and brings you the latest news on our efforts to bring the birdsong back to the Flora. Most of our news is about birds this issue, starting with...

**...Big birds!**  
A reminder: please record all sightings (and calls heard) of what we call "big birds", that is kea, kaka, kakariki, whio, falcon, karears and weka. Note these birds on your monitoring sheets, 1-Line bird count sheets or email Bill and Maryann at [info@bushandbeyond.co.nz](mailto:info@bushandbeyond.co.nz) with sighting details.

**Maryann on nest!**  
Cross your fingers everyone because the first nesting attempt by *whio* in the Flora for over a decade is under way. Maryann, the juvenile female *whio* translocated from the Beaise R. early last year, was discovered sitting on an unknown number of eggs not far from the Upper Junction *swamp* last week. Keep a look out for her ducklings any day soon!

**Signs of Spring!**  
It's been a shocking spring weather-wise but that hasn't stopped the native dematis *puawhaka* putting on a show in the bush opposite the Graham Valley Rd. And while the shining cuckoos *gawaka* are possibly regretting their decision to migrate from the Solomon Islands, their "tsu-tsu" calls have been heard for some weeks now. Keep an ear out too for the first long-tailed cuckoos *kaekoa*. They are often heard screeching around the Mt Arthur hut in summer as they seek out brown creepers to parasitise.

**Training Day!**  
Put a circle around Saturday 24 November on your calendars. At 8.00 am in the DOC Motueka yard Gavin Udy will demonstrate how to rid your vehicle of all traces of *didymo* in DOC's unique *didymo* car wash. All those who take their vehicles past the gate are urged to attend. Following this, at 10.30 am in the Flora Clearing, Gavin will demonstrate the use of telemetry gear to track *whio* and, when they arrive, great spotted kiwi *kaea*.

**Weka-proofing project!**  
DOC staff have since last year been steadily chipping away at the massive task of converting all traps in the Flora to exclude weka. There's been quite

an explosion of weka numbers in the Flora in response to our predator control and they can now be encountered almost anywhere between the carpark and Salisbury Lodge. On C-Line alone there are two families consisting of pairs with 2 and 3 chicks respectively. The conversion project involves moving the trap well away from the door (and removing the second trap if double-set) and installing a new baffle system to prevent any possibility of curious weka ending up as "by-catch". The project has passed the half-way point with A, D, E, H, and upper I-Line complete.



Prints in the snow this month around this (converted) trap on E-Line show it has been inspected by a curious weka.

**Monthly pest parade!**  
Stoats: 6 (total 420 since Feb 2002)  
Rats: 23 (total 1427)  
Blacks: just 3 (total 812)  
Possums: 5 (total 301 since June 2004)  
That's closing in on 3,000 bird-munching, egg-stealing, tree-gobbling pests. In the same period DOC took 3 stoats and 12 rats off D, H, E and upper I-Line. FoFs catch for the same period last year was pretty similar at 4 stoats, 30 rats, 9 mice and 4 possums.

**Health and Safety - radios!**  
If your team is monitoring on the weekend, please remember that DOC leave out hand-held VHF radios to keep in touch within your team, with other teams or with emergency services if things go pear-shaped up there. Select Channel 5. Take a radio; it could save a life. If you're going up during the week, there are usually spare radios you can borrow for the day.  
That's all for this month. Remember, monitoring weekends are the last two weekends of each month and our website is at [www.fof.org.nz](http://www.fof.org.nz)

Ivan Rogers, FoF committee

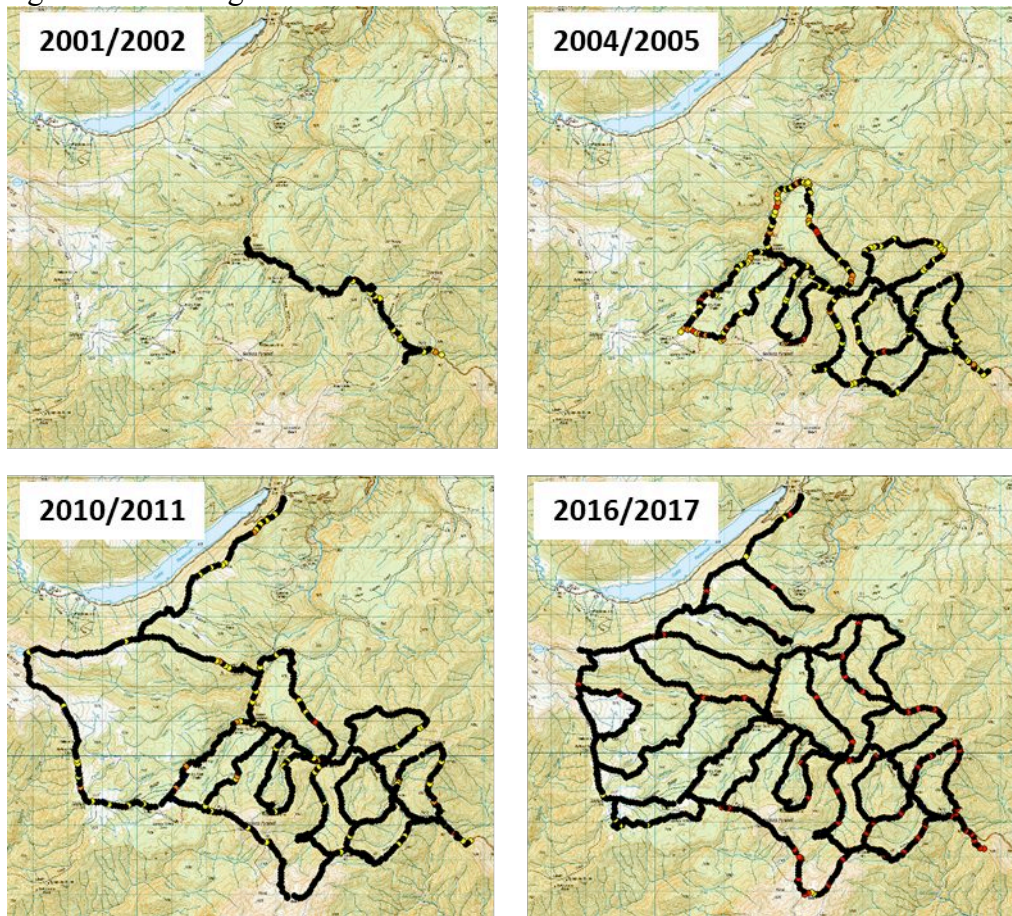
Issue 37 from exactly 10 years ago: Our first whio nest, weka prints in the snow and Spring arrives

## 100 Newsletters worth of trapping

*How we have grown.*

To mark this 100<sup>th</sup> newsletter here are a few facts and figures about the history of FOF's primary activity – trapping. The first traps were set in the Flora on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2002 – 83 traps along I-line. In 2004 there was a huge expansion with the

introduction of 489 traps along lines A-H and the extension of I-line. Since then we've restricted our growth to one new line each year except for 2009 and 2016 when we took a year off and 2011 when we introduced three new lines (LF, X, Y). The figure shows the growth of the network.



Over the years we've made a total of.....

**110,253 trap checks**

and caught a total of .....

**2,135 stoats and weasels.**

The year with the highest number of catches was 2014/2015 with 377 mustelids. This was the also the year with the highest catch rate (catches/trap-check) and not surprisingly it was the year of the big mast. The year with the lowest catch rate was last year (2016/2017).

Just to put this into perspective, Trap.NZ, one of the biggest online, community, trap-data recording systems has, as of 16 October 2017, information from 649 project groups with a total of 312,821 records and 3,245 mustelids caught. Bottom line – FOF's effort is massive! Happy Trapping.

## Kiwi Update October 2017

*Robin and Sandy Toy find our first Flora chicks are growing up...*

The final season of intensive kiwi monitoring is generating some fantastic results:

- Eight monitored pairs have started incubating. Three gave up after only a few days/weeks at least one due to weka interference. The others are monitored with infrared trail cams and we are posting interesting footage on Friends of

Flora's Facebook page under the banner 'Kiwi Tales from the Flora'. There will be no more videos after we remove the transmitters from the kiwi next year so check them out now and tell your friends about these insights into the secret life of *roroa*.

- We were ecstatic to find the cutest little (well 2.2 kg – but that's quite little for a female) kiwi snuggled up with Te Hapu, a young kiwi brought in from South Gouland 18 months ago. We caught Te Hapu to check his transmitter harness was not getting tight as his legs grow. The new female is a young kiwi born in the Flora from unknown parents and is big enough to fight off a stoat. This is a real testament to the years of hard trapping work by FOF-ers in keeping stoat numbers down and DOC's Battle for our Birds operations – thank you all!
- The weather hasn't been great this spring – snow, rain, rain, rain, snow...but perhaps the *roroa* in the Flora have it easy compared with those in Arthur's Pass. The Flora kiwi incubate for an average of 77 days while in Arthurs Pass they have to sit on the egg for 83 days!



*Te Hapu and his young friend. Pic by Sandy*

### Footnote.

It's Spring again in the Flora and to end this newsletter a couple of blooms from P Line. Expect to read much more of the Flora's alpine zone in future newsletters...



Eyebright (l) and Ranunculus (r) are flowering now above the bushline. Pics by Ivan