



Newsletter

No. 104

September 2018

Spring's arrived, and the Friends of Flora have been busy ticking boxes.

That massive pile of new double traps that sat in the DOC yard have been laid out in the field, and further orders are being processed to complete the replacement process. Ivan Rogers has confirmed that our project is to receive a massive shot in the arm from the Department of Conservation's "Battle for Our Birds" program, providing sufficient funds – \$129,000 in fact - to replace the remaining 670 traps of the entire trap network, inclusive of contractor and chopper allowances, which is all GREAT NEWS.

There's been much teamwork to reach this milestone, as you'll see in the following images, and credit must be given for the support received from the DOC ground crew – Dan, Roger, Brent, Ross and Ivan, and chopper pilot, Toby. Tutor Geoff Button, and his 22 enthusiastic trainee rangers undertook the completion of the upper F line layout, a large portion of the remaining C line traps,

and a start to B line. Sandra finalised the trap stencil design, which certainly differentiates our traps in the field, and many FOF volunteers have given their time, and assisted in a variety of roles to get this far.



Artisans at work!

The end of a trap layout day on F line





*The trainee rangers having a break on Gordons Pyramid - Dan Chisnall
Toby Reid's ground crew, Charlie, on the strop - Ivan Rogers*



Following the recent Kiwis for Kiwi Awards, we received this congratulatory letter from the Nelson Marlborough Conservation Board, addressed to all our volunteers, recognising and thanking them for their contribution/s to the biodiversity enhancement achieved under our watch within Kahurangi NP.



Friends of Flora
By email: gbruce-smith@xtra.co.nz

30 August 2018

Kia ora Gerald

Congratulations

The Board would like to extend its congratulations to Friends of Flora on its recent success at the Kiwi Awards.

The awards are a well-deserved recognition of all the wonderful conservation work that Friends of Flora continue to undertake in the Flora Catchment and Salisbury Ecological Management Unit of Kahurangi.

Please extend our congratulations and appreciation to Robin and Sandy Toy as recipients of the 'Good Egg' award, to Ruedi Mossimann, for Kiwi Conservation Image of the Year' award, and all of the wonderful Friends of Flora volunteers for the Tohu Tiketike – Kiwi Project of the Year' award.

Your contribution to conservation in the Nelson Marlborough Region and nationwide is very much appreciated.

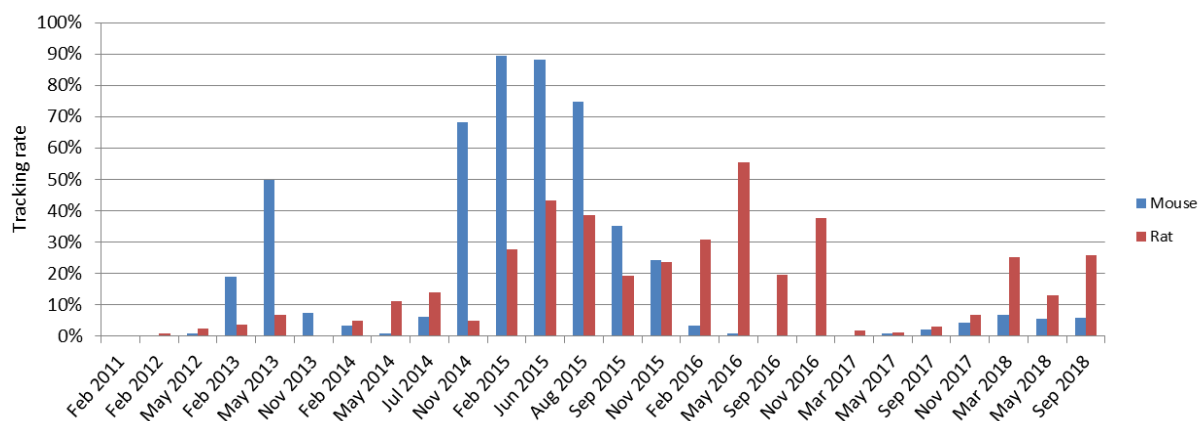
Nga Mihi

Gina Solomon
Chairperson

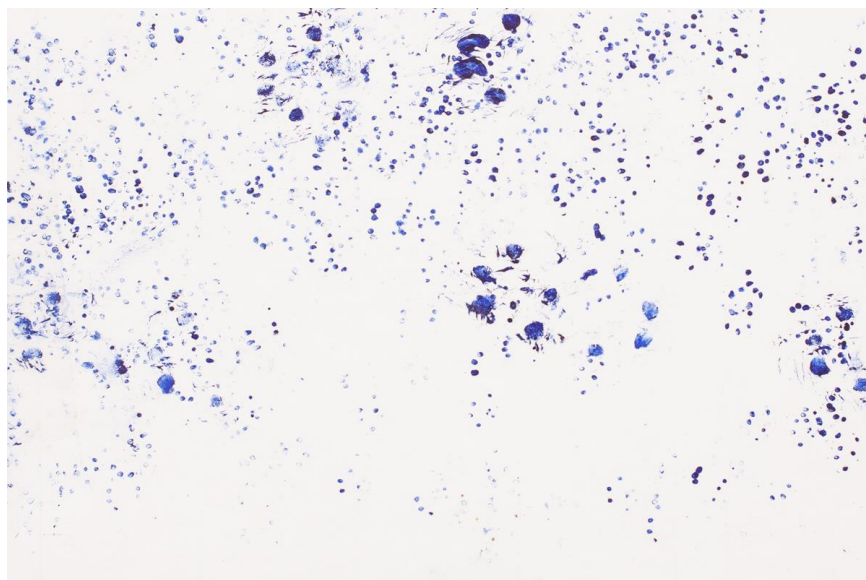
Pest news – Robin Toy reports -

FTT Tracking tunnels were set in the Flora the night of 15 September. Figure 1 shows the tracking rate of mice (5.8%) and rats (26%). The rat rate is pretty high given that we are coming out of winter. It's also not where we want to be as we head into what is predicted to be a very heavy mast year.

Figure 1 Flora tracking tunnel results



Many thanks to those who assisted with this key quarterly monitoring work. The next FTT card checks will be undertaken in November.



News from the Friends of Cobb – Marian Milne reports –

Access into the Cobb Valley remains restricted from unstable hillside terrain. With the exception of the alpine lines, all the others have recently had checks to bring them up to date. At the much monitored kea nest site adjacent to the Cobb road the birds are hanging around, but there are no indications of nesting yet.

On a research front, the Friends of Cobb, like many community trapping groups, are looking at options for multi kill traps in high catch/sensitive areas. We have been using single set DOC150s in

(box) tunnels for many years and are happy that they work. Anecdotal reports for double set traps are promising - a first kill often luring in a second.

So how do A24s compare? There are troubling reports of kea and kaka interfering with A24s at - <https://www.keaconservation.co.nz/.../SOP-safe-Pest-Control-i...>

Good Nature sell a 'weka excluder', a heavy spring attached to the A24 that should keep (our) inquisitive parrots and weka from getting caught, *but do they still catch stoats?* We could find no evidence online that A24s fitted with these excluders worked. We asked Good Nature – who make the A24 – and were disappointed to find that they also had no evidence that this set-up actually worked. So we've set about gathering our own, using six motion detection cameras set in front of both a tunnel trap and an A24 running the same lure.

In the first set of videos, a stoat is seen to go straight past the A24, enter the tunnel and is caught! A few days later, a second stoat goes straight past the A24, enters the tunnel containing the dead stoat, then exits and inspects the tunnel. If this had been a double-set, chances are we would have killed two stoats. These video segments can be viewed on the Friends of Cobb Facebook page, with further results being posted as they are processed.

Website improvements

During the past several weeks, Gary Webber from WeDoWebsites has been transferring our site and VMS to another server, whilst also taking the opportunity to deal with software updates. We thank him for ensuring that both continue to meet our reporting and data requirements.

The Friends of Flora Committee are keen to review our public web image and written content, with a refocus on - who we are - what we do - why we do it - the outcomes – in a manner that effectively engages with keen conservationists and more visually tells our story. We do have access to an external community web advisory group, however feel that it is essential that we lay down some strong foundation/s prior to seeking their professional assistance. We would appreciate assistance in this preliminary review should any FOF reader feel similarly keen, by emailing their particulars to fof@fof.org.nz.

Several FOF snippets –

Michelle Bridge has taken on a leading role within the DOC Predator Free project, and given the new demands on her time has reluctantly resigned from her FOF community engagement portfolio. We thank her for her valued contributions, wish her well in her new position, and appreciate her continuing as part of the valuable Team Bridge on LF and TG lines.

The training line has three accredited trappers to date – Greg, Hamish and Pat – all of whom have enthusiastically assisted since, on FTT, trapping and other fieldwork. Welcome to the team, and thank you for your contributions.

The replacement of the DOC150s/200s with the new doubles means there are quite a few redundant trap boxes accumulating. Their zinc plated traps are in varying states of repair, however stainless steel traps can be purchased to bring them up to best practice standard. The surplus traps are available gratis for community trapping groups – please email fof@fof.org.nz with your details.

Ivan Rogers reports on dog restrictions –

Dog offending continues in the Flora Kiwi Zone

No-one is allowed a dog in the Flora kiwi zone unless they are a DOC ranger with a species dog (always identifiable), or a DOC ranger with a ground-bird aversion-trained hunting dog, or a hunting contractor with a ground-bird aversion trained permitted hunting dog. Everyone else who takes a dog into that zone is probably committing an offence against the National Parks Act.

Despite extensive signage and broad public understanding some people continue to think the law does not apply to them, and it would be unfair to point the finger solely at hunters, as ordinary members of the public feel they are within their rights to walk their pet dogs into the kiwi zone. One young man did just this earlier this year and unluckily for him encountered a DOC ranger and FOF volunteers. Enough information was gathered to successfully prosecute this offender last month, with the lion's share of the fine being awarded to FOF.

Dogs and kiwi don't mix. All dogs, any size, any breed, are capable of killing a kiwi, whose scent dogs find irresistible.

If you encounter anyone (other than those specified above) with a dog in the kiwi zone, you have every right to stop them and get them talking. Be friendly and unthreatening. Ask them their name and where they are from. There is no harm in being nosey! Note as many of the following as you can - their appearance, race, height, build, speech, hair, eyes, tattoos, other marks, gait, disability, idiosyncrasies.

Note the appearance and breed of the dog/s, and the registration number on the tag – usually only 4 digits - which may show which Council the dog is registered with. Ask the person the dog's name.

Make a GPS waypoint or simply note the number of the nearest trap or DOC sign, and write down the date and time.

After you have engaged the offender in conversation tell them they are offending and that they must remove their dog/s from the Park. If they carry on offending, contact DOC and advise them of the particulars you have ascertained.

DO NOT PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER. If they get nasty or you get concerned for your own safety, it is best to **BACK OFF**.

Shaded area = Kiwi zone = no dog area



The South Island Kokako Charitable Trust needs Heaphy Track trampers' help -

Hello folk involved in conservation and/or tramping in the Nelson – Tasman area!

We have had some exciting reports of possible encounters with the South Island kōkako on the Heaphy Track over the past couple of years, around and between Goulard Downs Hut and Aorere Shelter, one of them just last weekend (mid-August 2018)

We thought you might be (a) interested and (b) able to share with your networks and encourage people to have eyes, ears and cameras at the ready if they're on that section of the Heaphy Track. Ideally, we'd love people to be going there sooner rather than later with the search in mind! There's also a generous reward for a provable sighting - \$10,000.

Thank you very much for your interest, for sharing, and for all you're doing for conservation!

Inger Perkins, Manager South Island Kōkako Charitable Trust - www.southislandkokako.org



The poster is divided into several sections. At the top left is a stylized white logo on an orange background. Below it is a small photo of a kokako on a wooden block. To the right is a large, close-up photo of a kokako's head, showing its black beak and orange wattle. Below the large photo is a section titled 'DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH ISLAND KŌKAKO' in white text on an orange background. This section contains a table with details about the bird's size, shape, color, movements, song, when it is active, and where it lives. To the left of this table is a QR code with the text 'Scan this QR Code to hear the call of the North Island kōkako'. Below the QR code is a small photo of a North Island kokako. At the bottom of the poster is a section titled 'LOOK, LISTEN & RECORD' in orange text. This section contains two bullet points with checkmarks, providing instructions on how to observe and record kokako sightings. At the very bottom is a green box with white text providing contact information and acknowledgments, followed by the website address 'www.southislandkokako.org' in large orange letters.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH ISLAND KŌKAKO

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Size: | Larger than a tui and smaller than a pigeon |
| Shape: | Long legs, relatively long tail, short rounded wings in flight, short stocky black beak with downward curve |
| Colour: | Dark grey or grey-blue in colour, black facial mask with an orange wattle |
| Movements: | Hopping or bounding gait, may be seen hopping along or up or down branches and tree trunks |
| Song: | The song has a sharp clarity compared with tui or other songbirds, particularly for flute-like notes. Also a 'hollow' depth to some notes, like a wind instrument or blowing across a the top of a bottle; similar to a NI kōkako with 'mews', haunting organ-like and ringing bell-like notes and song |
| When: | The more active times of year are likely to be April-early June and October-December |
| Where: | South Island and Stewart Island native forests. |

LOOK, LISTEN & RECORD

- ✓ Ideally observe carefully first, photograph/video second, and of course take usual safety precautions when heading into the backcountry
- ✓ Note colouring, size, shape, wings, bill, wattle, legs, tail, movements, behaviour, any song notes, other possibly related activity or signs

Please refer to website below for more details, advice, indicative sound files and to log an encounter.

If you would like to be on an e-mail list to receive ongoing updates of subsequent sightings to assist in your searches, e-mail info@southislandkokako.org.

Donations to support the work of the Trust can be made via the website below. Help us ensure the South Island kōkako doesn't end up as a museum piece.

Thanks go to Tara Swan for NI kōkako image and Oliver Thomas for creative alterations. Other images and soundfile courtesy of Janet Marshall, Sid Marsh, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa collection and nzbirdsonline.

www.southislandkokako.org

Thanks to the contributors, and all the FOF and affiliated volunteers who continue to make the Flora such a special place for our biodiversity heritage - enjoy it! Gerald Bruce-Smith - Editor