



Control, Monitor, Adapt, Enhance, Repeat

Kia Ora Mahurangi peninsula residents and land owners. Welcome to Mahu West Pest's eNews no.11 updating you on our volunteer organisation.

Wrap for the Year from the Chair

We now have over 100 pest control volunteers covering some 3,500 hectares, that's close to walking 3,500 rugby fields each week - except with much steeper terrain! We started the year with just a handful of enthusiastic trapline volunteers covering 2,100 hectares. Catch rates have soared as we've rolled out traplines across five of our seven hubs. By May 176 traps were in place and by the end of November we had 510 traps in the field. Jeff Marsh has been exceptional at organising this.

We must thank the Forest and Bird Protection Society, which stood us in good stead throughout the year as our umbrella organisation. They joined with us to present displays and learning opportunities on pest control at the Mahurangi West Community Hall in March, generating a lot of interest.

We became an incorporated society in November and gained charitable status in early December.

In a tight market, we've had some success with our grant submissions, including \$15,000 from Foundation North for the purchase of pest control tools and \$5,000 from the Regional Environment and Natural Heritage Grant Programme for Bat Biodiversity Research. The Mahurangi Land Restoration Project provided over \$6,000 for the restoration of Opaheke Point.



Auckland Council provided us with a grant for our part-time Community Coordinator, Nada Cottrell, as well as \$700 worth of safety equipment for our biodiversity volunteers, which included 12 branded safety vests (modelled by Michelle Spooner) and a signboard.

Significant donations this year came from the Mahurangi Trading Post (\$5,500) and the Warkworth

Community Shop (\$2,000). Specific donations for weeds totalled just over \$3000 and general donations netted us a further \$760.

Landowners purchased almost \$7,000 worth of traps to help accelerate the program. Mahu West Pest bought pest control tools totalling over \$27,600 (including Foundation North's grant). Auckland Council has now provided over \$23,000 worth of pest control tools.

I wish to thank everyone for their donations, whether in kind e.g. trap purchases (property owners), the construction of traps (The Men's Shed), donated plants (Higgins Contractors), or sums of money (big or small). It all helps achieve our goals of a pest free peninsula and

enriched biodiversity. We're already seeing the recovery of heavily browsed native trees, such as the puriri, and an abundance of birds.

Remember, we are trying to turn our \$15,000 grant into \$30,000. We only succeed when the pests have no place left to hide and breed. In order to cover all our areas we will need to more than triple our traps in the field in 2022. Any amount you can contribute, no matter how small will double the purchasing power of our grant.



It only takes about half an hour to walk a trapline. Volunteer and make a huge difference!

Wishing everyone a very happy New Year.

Brian Bramell

A Year of Bird Counts

The bird counting team has finished its first year of monitoring birdlife around Mahurangi West. While it's far too early to see any trends in bird numbers as a result of trapping, some interesting figures have shown up: the most frequently seen/heard bird across the four quarters of the year was the tui - 210 recordings; second the silvereye at 126 recordings; and third the myna at 103 recordings. In the monitoring locations where trapping had already been underway for some years, the total number of birds seen/heard is consistently higher over the four quarters than in non-trapped locations. Taking the total number of birds seen/heard over the year at all locations, endemic/native birds make up slightly over 50 percent. We're keen to have more bird monitors this coming year, so please get in touch with Fran Ashton if you're interested in joining us (see contacts below).



The tui is our most frequently spotted bird. [Photo: Auckland Council]

This Month's Trapping Update

Our latest figures have been collated by pest control coordinator Jeff Marsh, using the kill figures that a dedicated group of volunteers enter digitally into TrapNZ throughout the year. A huge thank you to our Mahu West Pest volunteers for all your hard work.

Traps: 560 (last month 510)		
Bait Stations: 266 (last month 247)		
	YEAR	MONTH
Mustelids:	6	2
Rats:	301	26
Possums:	452	123
Hedgehogs:	28	3
Other:	139	13
Total:	926	167

Contacts:

Brian Bramell: Chair BLBCIMS@gmail.com 021 0257 5957
 Nada Cottrell: nada.mahuwestpest@gmail.com 021 137 4132
 Stephanie Herron: Secretary stephanie.herron@mac.com
 Fran Ashton: eBirds ashton.sager@gmail.com 021 260 2793

Website: <https://mahuwestpest.wordpress.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahuwestpest>

Trapline Area Coordinators:

- 2 Jeff Marsh (Jamieson): jeff_marshall@mccollams.co.nz 027 590 9245
- 2 Lyn Ladyman (Opahi): brianlyn@gmail.com Ph. 09 422 0797
- 1 Ian Cheesman (Hungry Creek) ian@graphics.co.nz 022 049 5434
- 3 John Hill (Bullock Track) john.hill@xtra.co.nz 027 426 6732
- 4 Mike Neil (North Mahu West) mikeneil1951@gmail.com 027 474 1160
- 7 Stephanie Herron (Pukapuka) stephanie.herron@mac.com 027 257 7763
- 5 Peter Johnston (South Mahu West) staceydo@yahoo.co.nz 0274767561
- 6 Hub 6 Area Coordinator to be advised

