



Kia Ora Mahurangi West peninsula and Hungry Creek residents and landowners. Welcome to the latest Mahurangi West Pest eNews - updating you on our community volunteer organisation's work.

Regional Park Buffer Zone Update

Thank you to the many landowners who have got in touch with Gay Miers (Mob. 021 0468 352) volunteer Weed Control and Planting Programme Coordinator for Mahurangi West Pest. Gay and Nada Cottrell are liaising with landowners as part of Auckland Council's Buffer Zone to assess the extent of climbing asparagus weed infestations and provide further support for weed control generally. If you haven't already, please reply to Gay's earlier email for a free assessment.

Climbing asparagus smothers all undergrowth species in this Mahurangi West forest remnant.



Trap.NZ data for April

In April our volunteers increased the number of traps in the field by a whopping 127. Well done!

To date we have logged over 3,195 animal pests on TrapNZ, which includes more than 1,500 possums.



Total Traps in Field:	922		
Bait Stations:	332		
Monitoring Stations:	1		
	Total	365 Days	30 Days
Possum:	1516	728	37
Rat:	1003	509	58
Hedgehog:	174	88	10
Mustelid:	65	36	1
Other:	437	179	31
Total:	3195	1540	137

Donations to MWP are always gratefully received. If you wish, tag them e.g. pest control tools, weed control and/or native plants. Thank you for your generosity!

DONATIONS TO MWP: BANK A/C 06-0483-0894183-00

The Great Cat Debate

"Responsible owners have their companion cats de-sexed, microchipped and kept secured especially at night," says Dr Imogen Bassett.



Restore Rodney East held an Environmental Community Groups Hui on Sunday, April 30 in Warkworth. The programme included experienced environmental researchers from both Auckland and Waikato universities, as well as The Cacophony Project, with its high-tech trapping and bird recording inventions.

Jessi Morgan from Predator Free NZ and Dr Imogen Bassett, Biosecurity Principal Advisor at Auckland Council both spoke of the need to change our behaviour around keeping companion cats near ecologically sensitive native bush. The take home message is to keep cats indoors - with new legislation in the pipeline - to help ensure that no cats whether feral or companion can freely have access to feast on native fauna. Dr Bassett said, "Cats have a major impact on native birds, bats, lizards, mice, wētā and other insects and need to be controlled." Research has also shown that companion cats bring home only about a quarter of what they kill and/or eat away from home.

Trap NZ data shows that in 2022 we recorded 11 feral cat captures from traps. The previous year 15 feral cats were recorded. However, "We know there are a lot more still out there from sightings and cameras," says MWP trapping coordinator, Mike Neil.

Mike says, "A feral cat has on average 1.4 litters per year with three kittens per litter, of which 75% die before reaching maturity." Even with a minimum of 30 feral breeding cats in our area they are likely producing 126 kittens per year with 31 surviving. This research suggests that we need to catch 35 plus cats per year to reduce Mahurangi West's feral cat population. "Our current catch rate of 13 per year is far too low," Mike says.



Is there a volunteer among us with knowledge of flying a Mavic drone? We want to fly Mahurangi West's foreshore to assess cyclone damage with a view to remedial planting. Please phone Nada Cottrell if you might be able to help.

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