Sampling Stoats for Genetic Analysis

ARAPAOA KIWI TRUST
MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

We need to genetically analyse around 20 stoats each from the Arapaoa Island, southern side Tory Channel and Bay of Many Coves/Bull Head/ Snake Point areas, to determine the frequency of stoat migration from the Bay of Many Coves area and Tory Channel onto Arapaoa Island. The stoat samples on Arapaoa Island should be taken across the island.

As getting this many samples will take a while, any stoats caught by now can be used.

Preparation of samples.

- Ideally the stoat should be reasonably fresh – 1 week in a trap is ideal, 1 month not so great.
- Cut the ears or tail of the captured stoat
- Put the sample in a ziplock bag
- Record and place into the bag
    - date
    - latitude and longitude where caught
    - sex of the stoat (if you can determine)
- Keep the samples in a freezer and let me know for collection steve@arapaoakiwi.org.nz

Determining the sex of stoats.

Sexing mustelids is generally easy.

The most obvious distinction is that the female has a vaginal opening about 3-5 mm from the anus, while the male's penis opening is located well for- ward on the underside, about a third of the distance between the hind and front legs. In kill-trapped animals the opening is often marked by a yellowish discharge. Males also have a furred scrotum, though it is small from late February to early August.

All male mustelids have a baculum, which is a bone that runs the full length of the penis. The baculum lies in a pouch in the abdominal wall, on the underside of the body forward of the scrotum. The easiest way to locate the baculum is to grasp the skin and underlying muscle of the abdomen between the hind legs and roll it between your thumb and forefinger. You should be able to feel the hard, matchstick- sized bone, even in damaged or poorly preserved specimens.