

ARAPAOA KIWI TRUST NEWS

September 2024



Project Managers Update

We now have 828 traps installed in the project to date. We will install another 100 in the next two months as weather permits. We are starting to fill in the gaps in the trap coverage and we will soon have trap lines extending the whole length of the island. This is going to make a huge difference to the stoat population going forward.

We have begun an exciting research project with Maanaki Whenua Landcare Research on the feral cat situation. This research will allow us to effectively eradicate feral cats on the island. See below article for more details.

On the funding front, we have received funding from the Working for Nature fund for more traps. A big thank you to Port Marlborough and Marlborough Tour Company for becoming corporate sponsors, alongside New World Blenheim and The Interislander. This ongoing funding really helps us, as this year our trapping network has grown hugely, and we are having to pay contract trappers to service them.

This map shows the current trap lines in red. The yellow lines show trap lines that will be installed in the next few weeks.

Steve



Trap Count Table:

	Single Traps	Stoats Caught	Others Caught (eg rats)
Box Traps	723 (626)	177 (136)	837 (564)
Self Resetting Traps	83 (88)		578 (463) Strikes recorded last 12 months

Updated September 2024. (Figures in brackets are from the previous update in June 2024 for comparison)

A big thank you to Wilderness Guides (Marlborough Tour Company) and Port Marlborough for their recent sponsorship. Also the **Interislander** for another year of sponsorship. Thank you to **Working for Nature** grant to enable us to purchase a further 50 traps.

This is fantastic and allows the project to have part time contract trappers monitoring and servicing our now extensive traplines on the island.





Feral Cat Density Study



We have started an exciting collaboration with Maanaki Whenua Landcare Research (MWLR) to study the drivers for feral cat densities. MWLR are working with a number of projects across New Zealand for this study. We have 45 cameras placed at specified locations in different habitats with fish oil lures. They were all in place by the end of July and we are starting to collect the images from them.

Research questions

- What kind of environmental factors (e.g. vegetation types, terrains, prey abundances) have significant influence on cat population densities?
- How do detection probabilities of cats change in different environments and with different kind of lures?
- Do population densities affect detection probabilities?
- How could the project prioritise and optimize their cat management and

monitoring grids?

Research impacts

- Estimation of feral cat populations and potential impacts on native species across environments.
- Prioritization of areas/habitats for feral cat management.
- Informed planning of effective monitoring and control strategies based on detection probabilities across environments.
- Assistance to projects with cats as target species to plan eradication operations and assess effectiveness of their strategies.

The data collection is for 6 months and we are expecting the research to be ready for publication around June 2025.

Cats were not on our radar when we started the project. They were not really noticed that often and no-one realised how many there were. But they are the most common pest we see on our cameras. Attitudes of the public have changed a lot towards feral cats recently as well. It is interesting to compare our records with data that MWLR collected on D'Urville Island a few years ago.

	Arapaoa	D'Urville
Stoat	0.2043/100 camera nights	3.1847/100 camera nights
Cat	3.2324/100 camera nights	0.0910/100 camera nights

This table shows our stoat/cat ratios are nearly inverted compared with D'Urville. They have far more stoats than cats, and we are the exact opposite. Hopefully this research project will help explain this. One of the obvious questions - are cats controlling the stoats? MWLR don't think so.

We were originally hoping to have a study on the species interactions on Arapaoa - ie the mice, ship rats, kiore, stoats, cats. Unfortunately funding at MWLR was not available for that study.

Recent Outward Bound Teams

In June and July we have had two separate teams from Outward Bound helping us clear tracks so we can access them for trapping. THANK YOU!

In June Outward Bound Huria Watch helped us clear the old forestry tracks of gorse above Clay Point on Arapaoa Island. This was a huge team effort which will now allow us to drive

a side-by-side down the tracks when monitoring the traps and also allows us to extend our trap lines even further. We will be using spray to prevent any regrowth.

In July Blake Watch 716 helped us clear the track on the ridge above Te Aroha Bay up to Narawhia (highest point on Arapaoa and an airways navigation beacon) and beyond. This is a DOC access track that we use for some of our trap lines. Sunday started off with a stiff 2 hour walk up Narawhia to start, camping at Narawhia overnight. Great weather, great mahi, and some great views.

It was encouraging to see everyone's enthusiasm for conservation work and to be able to explain our Arapaoa Kiwi project goals and how their contribution helps us with our trapping of predators going forward.





We have a [facebook page](#) and would love it if you followed us and shared our posts

ATTENTION COMMUNITY TRAPPERS

Thank you to our volunteer community trappers who continue to provide us with their support with traps and monitoring data.

Trap Hygiene

Some of the traps are now getting a bit manky. Please try to remove all leaves, twigs and old bait from the traps. Throw any old bait into the bush (I used to say dont do this, but I have changed this now). Try to remove as much animal remains as you can (fur etc) but dont be too fussy - as hopefully it will act as a scent. Check under the trigger plate for any leaves or anything that would stop it going down. Test fire the trap using a stick. Any questions please let us know.



Thank You!



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Port Marlborough

Meet Arapaoa Kiwi Trust Team

Steve Dawson - is the Project Leader, Volunteer and Founding Trustee. Steve is retired and lives in Waikawa. Steve is a coastguard volunteer and is also Past Commodore of Waikawa Boat Club. Steve owns a classic wooden launch and is passionate about boating and the Marlborough Sounds. Email steve@arapaoakiwi.org.nz



Mark Denize – Founding Trustee. Retired, has lived in Stingray Bay, East Bay, Arapaoa Island since 2001. Mark is actively involved in local conservation including Forest regeneration carbon credits, predator trapping and much more. Email markdenize@gmail.com



Ben Wybourne – Founding Trustee. Lives in Murchison and also in East Bay on the island. Email bluewave@mshop.co.nz



Dale Savage – Trust Administrator. Dale lives in Kumutoto Bay and is passionate about the Marlborough Sounds, its environment and loves to hike and sail. Email dale@arapaoakiwi.org.nz

