

Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteer Newsletter

August 2016



Introducing Abby Butler



Hello! This is my first newsletter as the new ATBT coordinator so I thought I'd introduce myself.

Originally from South Otago, I have lived in Motueka for around 11 years. I come from a conservation based background and have had a variety of roles within DOC, most recently working at the Motueka office managing the Wangapeka/Fyfe Whio Recovery Site. I left that role to work for my two beautiful boys, Lachie (5) and Toby (3).

I have a great skill set for the coordinator role and am excited with the challenges it brings. I hope to meet many of you soon and please don't hesitate to get in contact should you have any questions. My email is atbirdsong1@gmail.com. Keep doing a great job everyone!

South Island Robin successfully transferred from Adele Island back to the mainland

50 robin / toutouwai were successfully released at the beginning of May into the intensively trapped

Pitt Head area after a 30 year absence from the mainland coastal track.

The ATBT translocated the birds from Adele Island to Te Puketea Bay near Anchorage. Robin were re-introduced to Adele Island by the ATBT in 2009 and have flourished in the predator free environment. Therefore, this was the perfect place to source birds for translocation.



Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Volunteers, Trustees and supporters welcome the Robins to their new home on Pitt Head. Credit: Ruth Bollongino

The ATBT Chairman Kim McGlashen explained that "the ATBT have been working towards bringing robin back to the mainland coast for nearly four years. It will be wonderful to see them getting a foothold around the coast so visitors can enjoy seeing the friendly birds up close".

Around 200 Goodnature A24 resetting rat traps protect the release area at Pitt Head, giving the birds a safe place to live and breed.

Click on the following link to view a fantastic video of the release.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ5rjhww8eM>



Robins contemplate their new home on Pitt Head from the cage used to transport them from Adele Is. Credit: Dave Buckton, Photo NZ

How are the released Robins doing?

Written by Pete Gaze, Project Janszoon ornithologist

“We spent three full days searching for birds (14-16 July). All of the treatment area was covered at least once, using the trapping tracks laid out by ATBT. We encouraged the birds to show themselves by clapping, whistling and playback. For the most part birds were not responsive and only the briefest of vocalisation was heard. When birds did show themselves they usually responded to feeding and stayed long enough for band identification.

Eight birds were found, seven of these were identified from their bands and only two of these had not been previously seen since the transfer. Most, if not all, of the birds we identified were males. Five of the eight were found within a few hundred metres of the release site, the other three were well spread through the southern half of the treatment block. This gives us >20 individuals that have been sighted more than a fortnight since release.

It was disappointing that birds were not singing and hence more responsive and easier to locate. However, given these difficulties it was encouraging that eight birds were still able to be found. It is not surprising that those birds which

did show themselves at this time of year were mostly males and the lack of females is not a concern. This is because males are usually quite aggressive towards females during the non-breeding season, and so females remain well away from males.

It is intended to repeat this effort in mid to late August when we expect the robins to be quite vocal, will have paired, and perhaps nesting. Those already located should be quick to find in their same areas and be keen to approach us for more food supplements. Hopefully additional birds will be found because we expect males to be calling and/or sing regularly, and females to have paired up. With a bit of luck we will even find the first nests. “

Remember to **please submit any sightings of rare birds** to www.osnz.org.nz and let me know if you spot anything unusual out there on your travels and I can include in the newsletter!! ☺

The Weeds Project is complete!

Written by Andrew MacAlister, project manager

We have recently completed the two year weed control programme funded through monies raised by the ATBT and an Environment and Heritage Lotteries Grant. Five different contracting firms were engaged from the Nelson-Tasman region. 65 different weed species were identified for control for a cost of \$255k.

There was significant in-kind support from Adama NZ Ltd (herbicide), Abel Tasman Aqua Taxis (water transport), DOC (accommodation, water transport, logistics etc), TDC (field support and GIS), Jen Calder & Wilsons Abel Tasman (accommodation).

The biggest ticket items included:

- A huge suite of weeds at Totaranui \$40.9k
- Grevillea & other weed spread behind Torrent Bay village \$37.5k

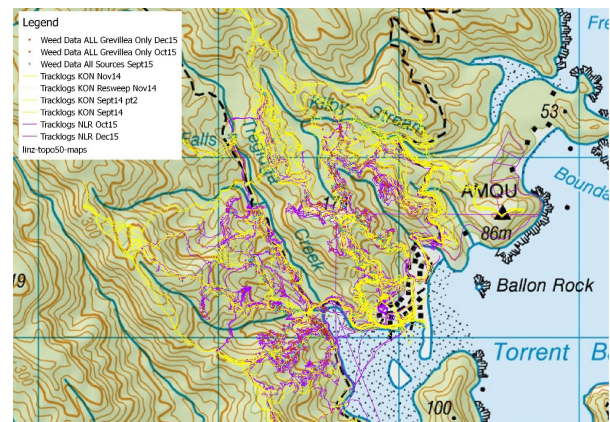


- wattle, holly and other weed spread behind Awaroa village \$36k
- a range of hard-to-kill garden escapees such as tradescantia and periwinkle \$35k
- cotoneaster, chinese privet and a range of garden escapes at Tinline \$20.6k

In summary, we have greatly reduced the range and abundance of a wide range of weeds, identified quite a few new ones, and are well on the way to eradication from the Park a large number over coming years. The weed control is really important in the coastal areas of the Park as it will allow native forest recovery to take place without competition from weeds, with several having the potential to spread as much as the Hakea species and wilding pines have.

It is very much a partnership with landowners as we can only achieve the outcomes by working in with neighbouring private land both within and adjoining the Park.

in the spring removed all adult flowering plants in the core area.

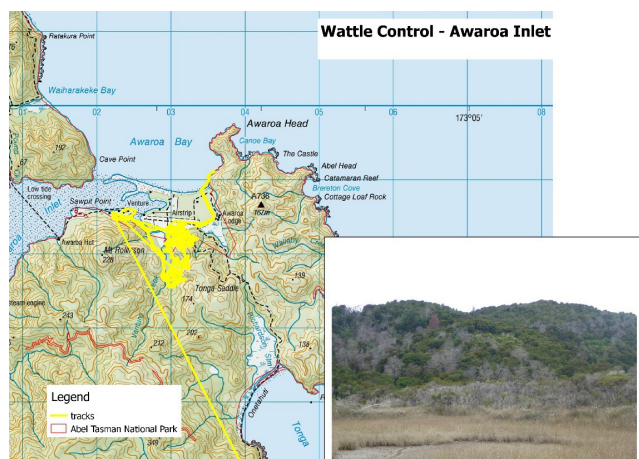


Warm thanks and a welcome

Thanks goes to Tom Horn who has recently completed the handover of the trapping team leader role to Alistair Sheat. Tom was an enthusiastic leader who attracted many volunteers in the Marahau community to assist the Trust with its work and we are truly grateful. Tom is continuing as a line leader so you will still see him out and about in the Park. Thanks to Alistair for taking over the role so our great work can continue to run smoothly.

Thanks also goes to Sandy Stephens who has recently left our Trustee Board. Sandy became a Trustee in 2009 and was the coordinator for the tree planting activities undertaken by the ATBT along the coastal track and Tinline area. We would like to thank Sandy for all her input and wish her well for her next endeavours.

A warm welcome to Alistair Sheat who has recently become an ATBT Trustee. Alistair and his wife Koa have been living in Marahau since June 2015 after moving up from Christchurch. Alistair previously worked as a research manager with Environmental Science and Research Ltd (ESR). In addition to his Trustee role, he looks after the Birdsong shed, is a line leader, and volunteer trapper.



The map above shows the GPS track logs of contractors working on the control of Wattle at Awaroa. The inset photograph indicates the dead trees as a result of poisoning.

The map below shows the GPS track logs of contractors working on the control of *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* at Torrent Bay, and data points of controlled plants. Extensive control has seen the extent of the spread delineated, and further work



Trapping Report Summary - June 2016.

Written by Alistair Sheat, Trapping Team Leader

Traps are checked and baited by Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust volunteers approximately twice per month. The results for trap checking are recorded and entered into the DOC designed “Animal Pests – Trapping” internet based application. The trapping application is a Geographical Information System (GIS) that allows systematic recording of trapping results, data analysis and reporting of rats and stoats caught for the area of the Park that Trust volunteers have stewardship over.

The general format of this report is for showing the impact of the work of volunteers in the Able Tasman Birdsong Trust. The report also poses specific questions that might come up from seeing the trapping data. Answering these questions will help guide the work of volunteers trapping predators and protecting native birds.

Trapping results for the month of June 2016 (table 1) show significant numbers of rats being trapped, particularly for the Anchorage B (B line) and Cyathea Cove (C line).

Note that the rats recorded as caught are from checking traps twice during the month.

Table 1: Stoats and rats trapped for June 2016

Line	Stoats	Rats	% Rats Per Total Traps	No of Traps on Line
A	1	41	32%	127
B	0	14	50%	28
C	0	14	61%	23
H31/1 to H31/12	0	3	25%	12
H1 to H62	0	19	31%	62
Marahau	0	0	0%	11
Tinline	0	1	13%	8
Lines Combined	1	92	34%	271

The June trap check on the A24 project at Pitt Head/ Anchorage included a lure change from Chocolate to Cinnamon and reintroduction of Rabbit based lure for mustelids at each 5th trap. General indications in June were that the pest population continues at very low levels. 23 counters showed 10 strikes in total and gas replacement was needed for 22 traps of which 14 had operated for 6 months or more. These are similar to indicators in May. May tracking results showed 3 rat footprints for a 7% score up from 3% in February but still under the 10% max target. Significantly 2 of the 3 tracks in May were in tunnels outside trap lines on the coast.

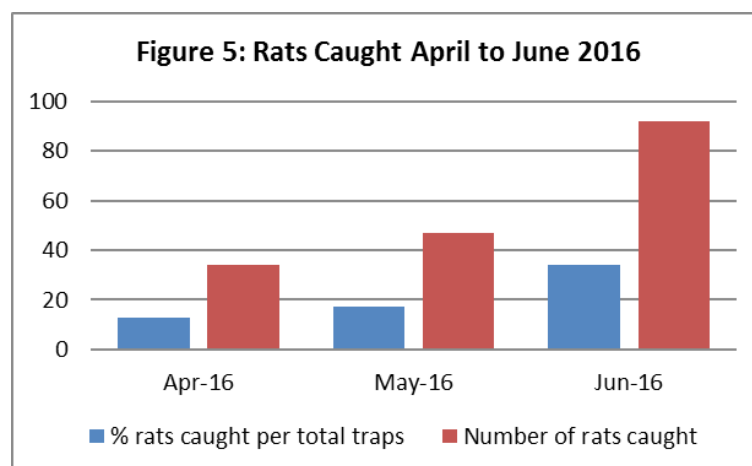
Figure 1 shows the general location where rats are caught. The map shows more than 50% of the rats caught are in the Anchorage/Cyathea Cove area. The area is adjacent to the Pitt Head area where bush robins have recently been introduced. This demonstrates the value of trapping rats to protect native birds in the Park.

The map below shows numbers in red, orange and yellow circles. These numbers are the number of rats caught in neighbouring traps in a clustered circle. The green triangle is where there is a rat caught in a single trap, but not in general proximity to other rats caught.

Figure 1: Density of rats trapped in the month of June 2016



Over the last three months there has been an increase in percentage of rats caught per total number of traps and the total number of rats caught (Figure 5). The greatest increase has been for B and C lines. A and H lines also showed an increase.





Conservation Week 2016 – The Tinline Trail

On Sunday September 18th the Birdsong Trust will be involved in a great family focussed conservation event called the Tinline Trail. From 10am - 2pm there will be a range of activities available along the coastal track from Marahau to Tinline. They will keep everyone entertained as well as be very informative. More details can be found by clicking the following link: [Tinline Trail info](#)

Helpers are still needed for both sessions (10-12 or 12-2) so please let Abby know if you are available. It will be a great chance to chat with people about what we do and maybe even recruit some more volunteers.



'Stoat on a stick' in action. Credit: Sean Magee

A quick Q and A with Allan Barker

Where are we at with the A24s, have the teething problems been mostly sorted and how do you feel about their efficacy?

The initial reliability problems with A24 traps were solved by Goodnature during our first 18 months or so and for over a year they have been a thoroughly reliable product. Still to come is long life bait to extend the check period beyond monthly and an effective lure for mustelids. General indications from some strike counters and from gas use over the 200 traps are that the traps are working well and we have not seen a big surge in activity so expect that rat numbers inside the trapped area are still low. Tracking for rats (done every 3 months) is due about now so we will get another indication from that.

Have you come across many birds on your travels in the Pitt Head area?

We are part way through the August check of the A24 traps and indications are that there are plenty of birds in there. On Tuesday I saw warblers, fantails, lots of bell birds, and 2 keruru and heard a few I could not identify - maybe they were robins!

What are your thoughts on ZIP (Zero Invasive Predators) and the preliminary chew card results?

The ZIP experiment with chew cards was to give them some idea about what rat activity to expect when tracking results were consistently low. It was a surprise to us to see the extent of rat chewing along the coastline trapline, indicating that the rats move in to our trapped area from the coast. The rapid drop off going into the centre of the trapped area gives us hope that this invasion does not get far and the core area is low in predators.



Restoration volunteer opportunities in ATNP and beyond!

Written by Helen Lindsay, Project Janszoon Restoration Leader

The projects below are mainly in the Abel Tasman, but some are further afield: please contact Helen Lindsay at helenlindsay3@gmail.com if you are interested or would like further info.

- Releasing trees at Tinline camp, Abel Tasman National Park.
- Weed control and planting at Anchorage Bay, Abel Tasman National Park.
- Releasing trees and planting at Hadfields Clearing. Awaroa, northern Abel Tasman National Park.
- Planting at Medlands Beach and weed control at Bark Bay, Abel Tasman National Park.
- Planting at Apple Tree Bay and Coquille Bay, Abel Tasman National Park.
- Planting at Kokorua Sandspit and wetland, Whangamo Valley, north of Nelson
- Nursery work - sowing seeds, potting plants, and weeding pots for local restoration projects (the nursery is situated at the DOC office on the corner of King Edward Street and High Street in Motueka).
- Releasing trees and planting at Otuwhero wetland, Marahau.
- Weed control and planting at Tapu Bay.

Notes:

1. For Abel Tasman activities (except for Awaroa) volunteers usually take the DOC boat from Marahau or sometimes a ferry from Kaiteriteri if there is a large group. There are options to walk out in the afternoon from the sites closer to Marahau.
2. For both Awaroa and Kokorua activities it is a two-hour drive to get there. For all

trips Helen can offer transport to three people from Motueka - first three in are first served! Helen can also arrange car pooling for others.

3. Most activities will be day trips although volunteers may occasionally need to stay overnight at Awaroa. Activities generally take place on weekdays except for Otuwhero and Kokorua which can have weekend dates too. Later on we may hold nursery days on weekend days too if this will help more people to participate.

In other news....

A little piece of paradise at Awaroa, recently purchased by the NZ public, was transferred into DOC ownership last month. A large number of visitors and locals attended the beautiful beach powhiri to be part of this historic occasion. Click on the following link to view the footage: [Awaroa beach transfer to DOC](#).

Project Janszoon have installed cameras at various locations throughout the Park. There is one at Awaroa, Torrent Bay, Astrolabe, and Anchorage. Each camera records a picture every 10 minutes and you can scroll through a days worth of images. They are a great way to get your fix of the Park without leaving home. [Abel Tasman webcams](#)

As always we readily acknowledge the support given by our commercial operators, Project Janszoon and DOC in the work we undertake.



Thanks to all of you for giving so much of your time! Together we are making a difference ☺