



2016 draws to a close!

Hello everyone and welcome to the December issue of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust's newsletter. Your efforts are truly appreciated and we are beginning to see a real difference in the biodiversity of the Abel Tasman as a result of the hours you are putting into our activities.

'Tinline Trail' event for Conservation Week a success

In September we joined DOC and Project Janszoon for the 'Tinline Trail' which was an event associated with the annual Conservation Week. The day started out wet which may have put a few people off venturing out, but those that did make the effort were rewarded with great activities and interesting guided nature walks. We had information and maps set up for visitors to browse and a helpful team of ATBT volunteers were on hand to answer any questions.

The 'Stoat on a Stick' was a very popular activity and the challenge was overcome by many. We had examples of animal poo to study and instructions on how to make your own Footprint Tracking Tunnel for the garden. Overall it was a great promotional activity for us and worth the effort getting there. A big thanks to those who helped and visited on the day.



*Maddie Bridge ready to help at the Tinline Trail.
(Photo credit: Abby Butler)*



Stoat on a Stick in action! (Photo credit: Lucy Hodgson)

How are the released robins doing?

You may have heard the news.... it appears the 50 South Island Robin/toutouwai transferred from Adele Island to Pitt Head in April have dispersed from their new home.

While monitoring found 18 individual birds on Pitt Head in the two months immediately after the transfer, by August none could be found.

Ornithologist Pete Gaze says it appears the remaining birds dispersed from the area between July and August. "While it is disappointing none of the robin appear to have stayed in the relocation area it is not uncommon for them to disperse after translocations" he says.

Pete says it is unlikely the birds were predated as the dispersal was sudden and a chew card survey over the same time period has shown rat density was relatively low. As the transferred birds were all banded there is a plan to search for them on Adele Island to see if some have returned.

If you sight robin in the lower reaches of the park, especially banded ones, please let us know by sending an email with all the details to atbirdsong1@gmail.com.



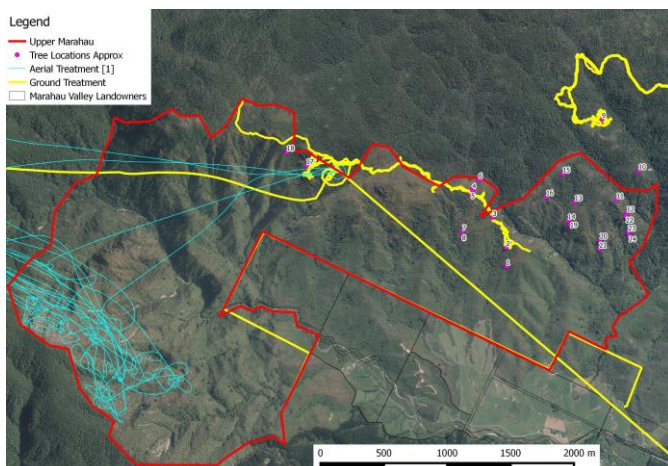
Recent social evening popular

Thanks to those who made it along to the social evening at the Sprig and Fern on the 18th of November. Positive networking took place and the guest speaker, Eric Buenz, spoke about interesting medical research that is taking place with our native tree nettle/ongaonga. On a personal note, it was great to put faces to names and I look forward to seeing you at the next event.



The Upper Marahau Wilding Pines Project is complete!

We have recently completed our Upper Marahau Wilding Pine control work. This work was funded through monies raised by the ATBT and an Environment and Heritage Lotteries Grant. The map below shows there was a combination of air and ground control. These wilding pines were seeding into the southern part of the Park so it is great to have them controlled to stop the spread.



In other pine control news.... The following sequence of photos shows the success of our wilding pine control behind Anchorage. We completed this area of control in September 2012 and you can really see the difference over the last four years. (Photo credit: Andrew Macalister)



Health and Safety update

We have been updating our Health and Safety Plan and this will be circulated to volunteers soon. The ATBT takes your safety very seriously and it is important to us that you can volunteer with minimal risk.



Trapping Report Summary - September 2016.

Written by Alistair Sheat, Trapping Team Leader

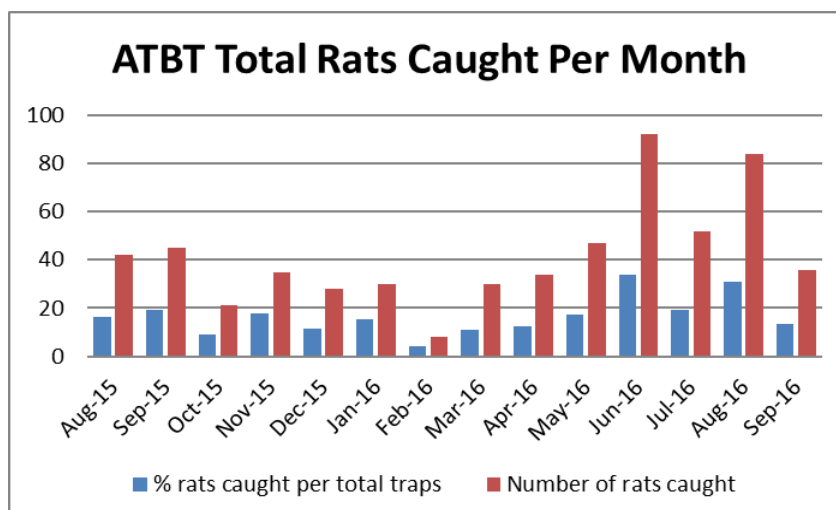
Trapping results for the months of July to September 2016 (Table 1) show 172 rats and three stoats or weasels caught. The percentage rats caught per month per total traps is fairly consistent over most lines, although this varies quite a lot for the three months (see chart below).

Table 1: Stoats and rats trapped for July to September 2016

Line	Stoats or Weasels	Rats	% Rats Per Month Per Total Traps	No of Traps on Line
A	2	94	25%	127
B	0	18	21%	28
C	0	15	22%	23
H31/1 to H31/12	1	3	8%	12
H1 to H62	0	36	19%	62
Marahau	0	1	3%	10
Tinline	0	5	21%	8
Lines Combined	3	172	21%	271

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

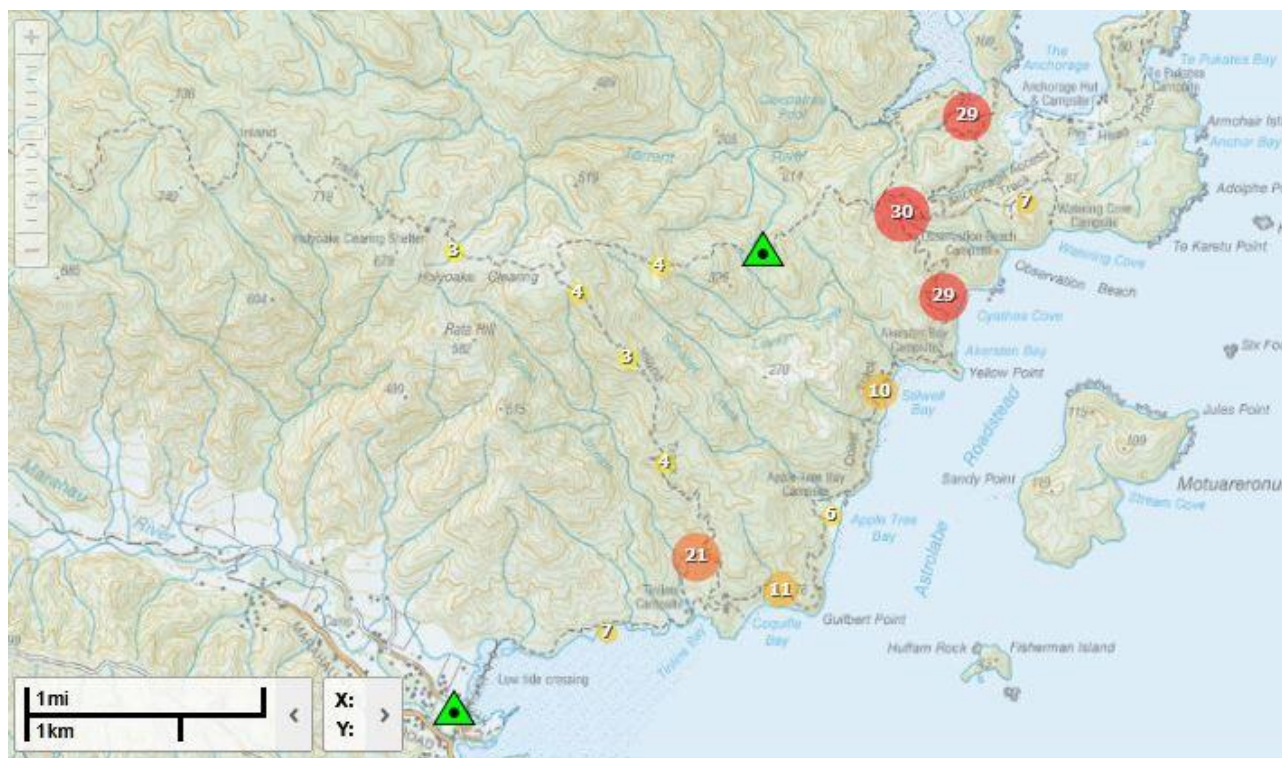
The chart below shows the monthly rat numbers and % rats caught per total traps since August 2015 when data was first entered into “Animal Pests – Trapping” database. Note that trap line H31-1 to H31-12 has only been in operation since March 2016 and H12 to H62 since December 2015 so the results prior to April are not directly comparable to now. However overall, 756 rats and 18 stoats or weasels have been caught since August 2015.





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.

Density of rats trapped July to September 2016:



The map shows more than 50% of the rats caught are in the Anchorage/Cyathea Cove area. This result is very similar to the June 16 rat density. The area is adjacent to the Pitt Head area where bush robins have recently been introduced demonstrating the importance of trapping rats to protect native birds in the Park.



Restoration News (courtesy of Helen Lindsay)

“A huge thanks to everyone who has helped with dune restoration at Appletree Bay, as part of the Firesmart programme. DOC staff cleared the gorse and then enthusiastic and energetic volunteers, including the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust and the Air New Zealand Green Team planted hundreds of sand-binding plants and trees.

The Firesmart programme not only reduces the risk of fire and the impact of erosion events, it also improves native habitat and enhances visitor experiences. A dune restoration expert, Jim Dahm, visited the Park recently to make recommendations on how to continue this work at other beaches. His advice was very encouraging and we expect to be able to achieve even more in the coming years”.

The following photos show a before and after shot of the clearing and planting at Appletree Bay, and some of the ATBT volunteers hard at work. (Photo credits: Helen Lindsay)



‘Abel Tasman’ - A smartphone app from Project Janszoon

The ‘Abel Tasman’ smartphone app developed by Project Janszoon is easy to download and has heaps of really interesting information about the Park and its inhabitants (both historic and current) – it’s well worth a look! The following info is taken from the Project Janszoon website:

“Project Janszoon is asking the public to take on the role of ‘citizen scientists’ to help with the management and restoration of the Abel Tasman.

A new observation function has been added to the ‘Virtual Visitor Centre’ smart phone app. It allows park visitors to report sightings of particular native birds, plants and introduced predators.

”This is a way of getting everyone, from school groups and overseas visitors to experienced scientists, to help us in the restoration of Abel Tasman. It will help us undertake targeted pest and weed control, and to understand a whole lot more about the distribution of threatened bird species,” says Project Janszoon operations manager Andrew Macalister.

Initially we are looking for information on the distribution of threatened species such as robin, kaka, kakariki and mistletoe, and on the presence of a range of species like goats, pigs, Gunnera, climbing asparagus and sycamore.

To submit observations go to the ‘Have you seen this’ section of the smart phone app, it adds GPS co-ordinates and also allows for photos to be included. You can download the ‘Virtual Visitor Centre’ for free by searching for Abel Tasman at the App or Google Play stores”



Warm thanks and a welcome



The Trustees recently got together to celebrate Sandy Stephens' valuable contribution to the Board as she retires from the role. Alistair Sheat was welcomed to the Board at the same time. L to R: Stew Robertson, Pam Holyoake, Kim McGlashen (Chair), Sandy Stephens, Allan Barker and Alistair Sheat. (Photo credit: Lucy Hodgson)

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



Abel Tasman National Park cruise with onboard bbq – Thursday evening, 26th of January 2017

Please pop this date in your diary. We are inviting all our volunteers to join us for an evening cruise into the Park. This will include an on-board bbq, as a way to connect with fellow ATBT volunteers and say thanks for all the hard work. Further details will be sent out in January.

Thanks again to all of you for giving so much of your time! Have a fabulous festive season,

Abby and the ATBT Trustees



Volunteers enjoying last summer's Wilsons cruise. (Photo credit: Lucy Hodgson)