

# Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Newsletter

August 2017



Hello everyone and welcome to the August issue of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust's newsletter.

This newsletter highlights our efforts to undertake local projects for local benefits.

## *What's been happening on Adele?*

### **Robin/Toutouwai**

This healthy South Island Robin/Toutouwai was photographed recently on Adele. Peter Gaze, the ornithologist involved with all robin transfers to and from Adele, had to search through many records to identify this bird. He responded "I can confirm that this is not one of the birds transferred to Pitt Head last year. Nor is it one banded on the island by Helen Taylor. Nor is it one of the robins transferred to Adele from Canaan. A process of elimination - it must be one of the original founders that came from Motuara Island!". This bird is a survivor. Translocations from Motuara Is (in the Marlborough Sounds) occurred in 2009 and 2011 so observations such as this highlight the importance of keeping Adele Is predator free.



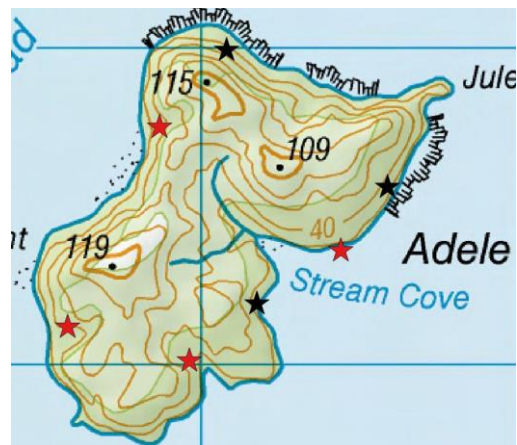
*A banded South Island robin/toutouwai (Photo credit: Darryl Wilson)*

### **Saddleback/Tieke**

In June, Project Janszoon ornithologist Ron Moorhouse and Moira Pryde undertook a Saddleback survey on Adele. They failed to observe many birds during this survey and the available data suggests that numbers aren't high.

Ron explained that

"Saddleback appear to predominantly use the wetter, coastal vegetation on the island which means that the amount of suitable saddleback habitat on Adele is just a small fraction of the island's total area. Carrying capacity is therefore limited'. This being said, ATBT volunteers have recently observed juveniles indicating there is successful breeding on Adele. As more data is gathered a better picture of population health will emerge.



*Saddleback locations (red stars - alive birds observed June 2017, black stars - deceased birds located since the transfer in 2014)*

Volunteers and visitors to Adele are asked to keep an eye out for any robin or saddleback. You can report bird sightings through DOC and Project Janszoon's Abel Tasman smartphone app - just search for 'Abel Tasman' in your Google Play or App store and download it for free. Add your sighting details in the "Have you seen this" section. Saddlebacks are still to be added as an option but in the meantime, you can record them in the 'other' section. Alternatively, you can email the details directly to [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com)

### **Mice**

Although there are no rats or stoats present on Adele, mouse numbers have been steadily climbing in recent years. DOC is undertaking an aerial drop of brodifacoum in the coming weeks to eradicate mice from Adele, Fisherman and



Tonga Islands. It will be great to remove these from the Adele ecosystem and build on the work currently being undertaken there.

## **Torrent Bay rat trapping extension update**

Our Torrent Bay rat trapping extension project is almost complete. Proposed trap lines, on both DOC and private land, have been flagged and, where necessary, cut by contractors.



*Torrent Bay rat trapping extension (Image credit: Andrew Macalister).*

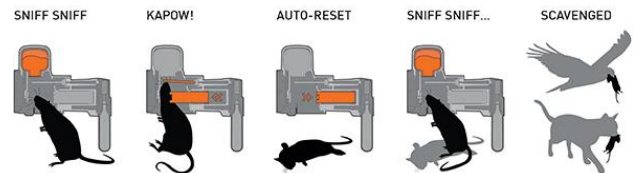
Approximately 240 A24 traps will be installed adjacent to the existing Pitt Head trapping area, through the Torrent Bay township, and onto North Head via Boundary Bay. This extension will result in the comprehensive coverage of this area and links in with the DOC trapping network located further inland.

## **So, what is an A24?**

GoodNature describes their A24 trap as “a self-resetting multi-species kill trap targeting rats and stoats. It is small, easy to install and delivers a powerful impact that kills pests instantly every time.

Attracted in by a long-life lure for either rats or stoats, once triggered the killed pests fall from

the trap which immediately resets itself up to 24 times per gas canister meaning more bang for your buck”.



*Trap in action (Image credit: GoodNature)*

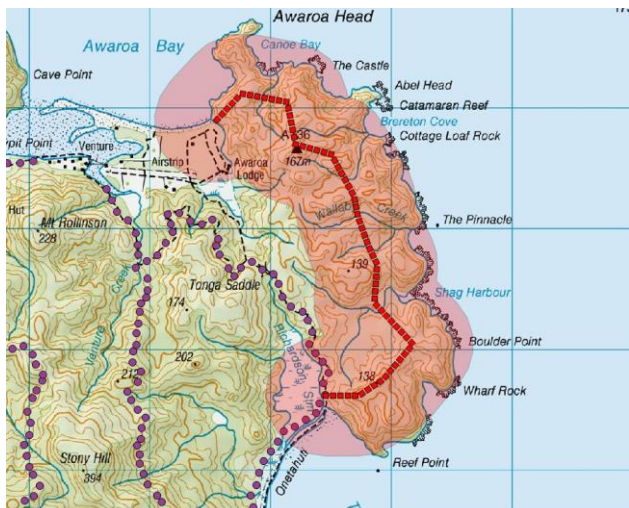
This trap design works well for us in the ATNP as more pests can be killed between trap line checks. Once our Torrent Bay extension is complete we will have almost 450 operational A24 traps in our network.



*Our A24 expert Allan Barker checking the Pitt Head lines (Image credit: Robyn Janes)*

## **Penguin protection on the coastline around Awaroa Head**

A proposed trap line on Awaroa Head is set to protect the penguins that live and nest along this part of the coastline. The new trap line, to be installed by DOC and Project Janszoon by September, is going to be maintained by ATBT. It's great to be able to extend our coverage to protect more species in the ATNP.



*Proposed Awaroa Head trapline. The pink is the buffer which indicates the coverage offered by the single trapline (red line).*

## **Beech Restoration is underway**

We have recently had two successful trips out to Adele Island to continue with planned black beech restoration. The first trip was to monitor the growth rates of black beech planted in clusters of 10 plants at 20 separate locations on the ridgeline. Preliminary results indicate that some trees have grown much more than others – with some happily growing through thick willow leaved hakea.... perhaps it is a good nursery plant after all!



*A beech growing up through Hakea (Photo credit: Helen Lindsay)*

Our second visit was to find new plots to plant a further 200 black beech trees. Monitoring results will give us an indication of where trees prosper so we can tailor our restoration strategy accordingly.



*Signs have been installed to ensure that visitors are aware of the beech restoration and don't damage young trees (Photo credit: Abby Butler)*

## **Bait stations for boaties**

We have recently donated bait stations to local boat owners to have onboard their vessels. We believe that ensuring boats are free from rodents is an important step in keeping Adele Island predator free. We still have some available so email [atbirdsong1@gmail.com](mailto:atbirdsong1@gmail.com) to get yours today.

## **Keen to be involved?**

We are still seeking more volunteers to help with trap checks and restoration. Please get in touch if you would like more information about how you can help.

## **Thanks!**

Thank you goes to the commercial operators and all our recent donors – your input assists us to achieve our positive conservation gains.

We readily acknowledge the support we receive from Project Janszoon and DOC. We continue to build on our positive relationship which allows

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us all to undertake a vast amount of work and improve the visitor experience of the ATNP.

Thanks to all our volunteers – with your support we are removing pests, restoring ecosystems and giving our native species a fighting chance.

## **Our Vision:**

The forests and beaches of Abel Tasman are once again filled with the birdsong that awakens and delights visitors.

*Kia whakaoho te mauri o te Ata-hapara. Kia rongo, Kia Kite, Ki te reo koro tui o Te Tai tapu*

**Abby and the ATBT Trustees**



## Trapping Report Summary – April to June 2017

*Written by Alistair Sheat*

**A total of 64 mustelids and 1,039 rats have been caught by Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust volunteers since August 2015** when records first were stored in the database. Historic records show that between October 2010 and August 2015, 158 mustelids and 2156 rats were caught, making a **grand total of 222 mustelids and 3,195 rats caught since October 2010.**

Trapping results for the months of April to June 2017 (table 1) show 148 rats and 7 mustelids were caught. This is up from 109 rats caught and down from 24 mustelids caught in the previous 3 months.

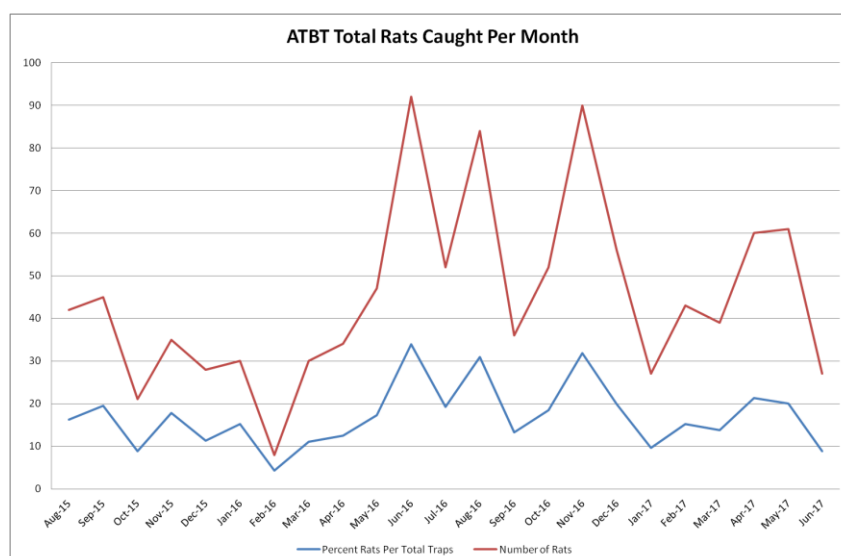
Table 1: Mustelids and rats trapped for April to June 2017

Line	Mustelids	Rats	Average Percent Rats Per Month Per Total Trap boxes	No of Trap Boxes on Line
A	0	48	13%	127
B	3	21	18%	39
C	0	15	22%	23
H31/1 to H31/12	0	7	19%	12
H1 to H62	3	42	23%	62
Marahau	0	6	18%	11
Stilwell	1	5	11%	22
Tinline	0	4	17%	8
Lines Combined	7	148	17%	304

Note: The rats and mustelids noted as caught are from checking traps twice during the month.

Rats were caught over all the area in which Birdsong Trust volunteers trap. The only distinct area where no rats have been caught in the last three months is between Watering Cove and Anchorage (C19 to C23 and B13 to B20). Note: Pitt Head has A24 traps and will be catching rats without a “body count”.

Chart 1: The monthly % rats caught per total trap boxes and rat numbers caught per month since August 2015.

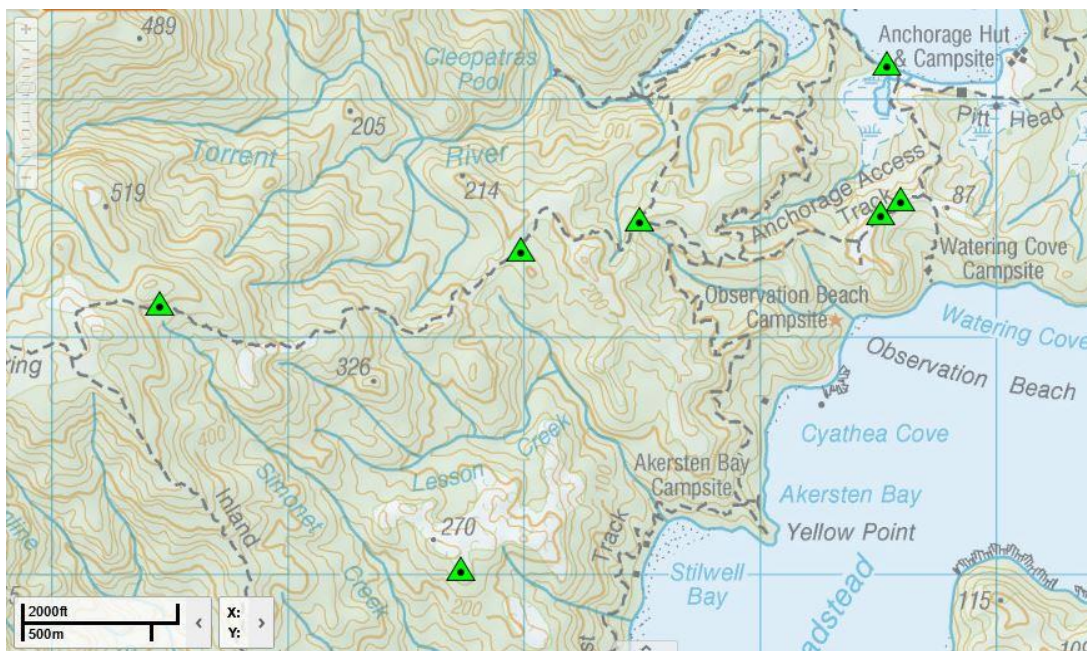


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Map 1: Indicates where mustelids have been caught (green triangles) April to June 2017





## Trap Line Overview – August 2017

