

Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust Newsletter

December 2017



Hello everyone and welcome to the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust's final newsletter for 2017. In this issue we highlight our efforts to undertake local projects for local benefits.

What's been happening on Adele?

Lizard Survey

Volunteers recently spent a week searching foliage for the elusive green gecko. The last reported sighting on Adele was in 1998 so this was the first thorough survey to find out if they are still present. A night survey was undertaken by two experienced herpetologists where they scanned for eye reflections using torch light. Department of Conservation staff, assisted by ATBT volunteers, led the daytime survey searching for geckos basking in the foliage. We also kept our eyes open for skinks and Raukawa geckos as we moved slowly through the bush.



Ruakawa gecko (Photo credit: Alistair Sheat)

Although no green geckos were observed, Ivan Rogers from DOC reported that “No fewer than 60 Raukawa geckos and 7 Northern grass skinks were observed over the week, although I think my “pet” (pictured above), who was there back in 2012, may have been counted more than once! So, it seems despite the mouse incursion the “everyday” lizards are thriving”

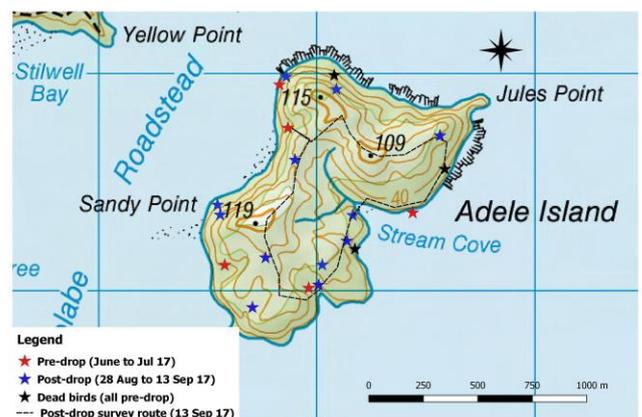
It was a fantastic day out and we were followed through the bush by inquisitive Robin/Toutouwai and some volunteers were lucky enough to see three Saddleback/Tieke in the canopy.

Saddleback/Tieke update



South Island Saddleback (Photo credit: BIA Birdimagery)

Further distribution information has been gathered over the past few months and this indicates a stable population of birds on Adele. As more data is gathered a better picture of population health will emerge.



Adele Island saddleback locations as of 13 Sep 17

Saddleback observations: red stars – pre-drop; blue stars – post-drop; black stars - deceased birds located since the transfer in 2014 (Image credit: Ron Moorhouse)

Volunteers and visitors to Adele are asked to keep an eye out for any birds. If you observe (or even just hear) a Robin, or an elusive Saddleback, please make a note of the date,

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time and the nearest trap number (written on a blue triangle next to the trap box). Photos are also particularly helpful. Please email these details to: atbirdsong1@gmail.com

Mice

Although there are no rats or stoats present on Adele, mouse numbers have been steadily climbing in recent years. Mice compete with resident birds for food. DOC recently completed an aerial drop of brodifacoum to eradicate mice from Adele, Fisherman and Tonga Islands. Intensive monitoring is currently underway to measure success. We're hoping this reprieve from competition will allow a bumper breeding season for the birds and insects on Adele.

It's the small things...

While out and about our volunteers get to spot a wide variety of flora and fauna. This wonderful Spider Orchid (*Corybas oblongus*) is a beautiful example of what special things are present in the Abel Tasman National Park if you look close enough!



(Photo credit: Beryce Vincenzi)

Torrent Bay rat trapping extension update

Our Torrent Bay rat trapping extension project is almost complete! The following image highlights the intensity of our trapping project in this area of the Abel Tasman National Park.



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

Congratulations!

The Nelson Chamber of Commerce business award winners were recently announced and we are thrilled that three of our wonderful supporters won their respective categories (with one taking the overall supreme award!).

- Abel Tasman Canyons won the Small/Medium Enterprise Award and the Supreme Business Award

- R&R Kayaks won the Business Start-Up Award

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- Wilsons Abel Tasman won the Large Business Award.

We congratulate them on this success and we truly appreciate their support of the Abel Tasman Birdsong Trust.

Going nutty!

We extend our thanks this month to the team at Pic's Peanut Butter. They recently agreed to donate their waste peanut butter for us to use as lure. Trials have found that Pic's is the best lure for rats so we are keen to get it into our traps! Thanks Pic's. You are indeed "really good"!



Thank you also goes to local commercial operators, our associate members and all recent donors – your input assists us to achieve our positive conservation gains.

We readily acknowledge the support we receive from DOC and Project Janszoon. We continue to build on our positive relationships which allows us all to undertake a vast amount of work and improve the visitor experience of the ATNP.

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

Are you keen to be involved?

We are still seeking more volunteers to help with trap checks and restoration. Please email atbirdsong1@gmail.com if you would like more information about how you can help.

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 wish you all a safe festive season!





Trapping Report Summary: September – October 2017

Written by Alistair Sheat

Historic records show that a total of 225 mustelids and 3,333 rats have been caught since October 2010.

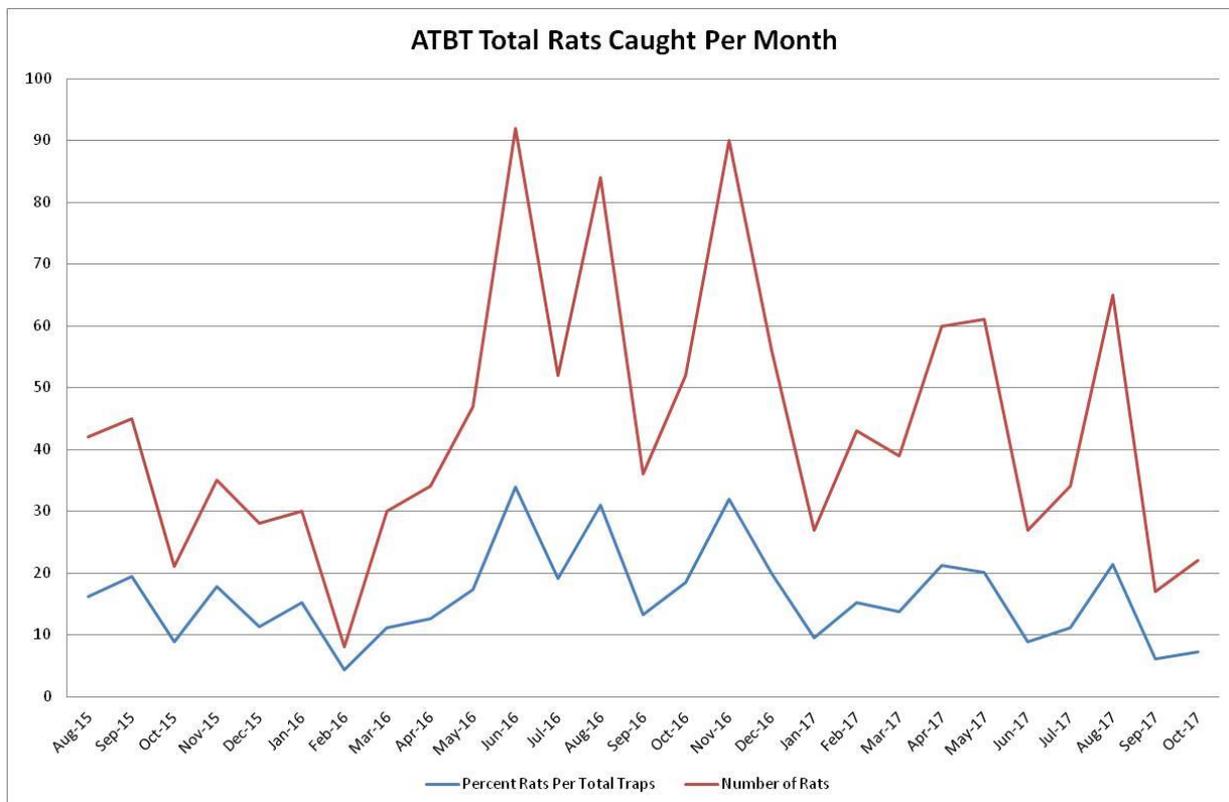
Trapping results for the two months of September and October 2017 (Table 1) show 39 rats and 1 mustelid were caught. The catch is well down on the 99 rats caught and 2 mustelids caught in the previous two months (July and August).

Table 1: Mustelids and rats trapped for September and October 2017

Line	Mustelids	Rats	Average Percent Rats Per Month Per Total Trap boxes	No of Trap Boxes on Line
A	0	27	11	127
B	0	2	3	39
C	0	4	9	23
H31/1 to H31/12	0	0	0	12
H1 to H62	0	1	1	62
Marahau	1	5	23	11
Stilwell	0	0	0	22
Tinline	0	0	0	8
Lines Combined	1	39	7	304

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

The chart below shows the monthly % rats caught per total trap boxes and rat numbers caught per month since August 2015. Rat numbers caught have dropped off considerably over the last two months. This drop from August to September is similar to the same period last year except the drop is much more pronounced.



The increase in the number of rats caught, particularly since December 2015, would be in part due to more trap boxes in operation as indicated in the table below.

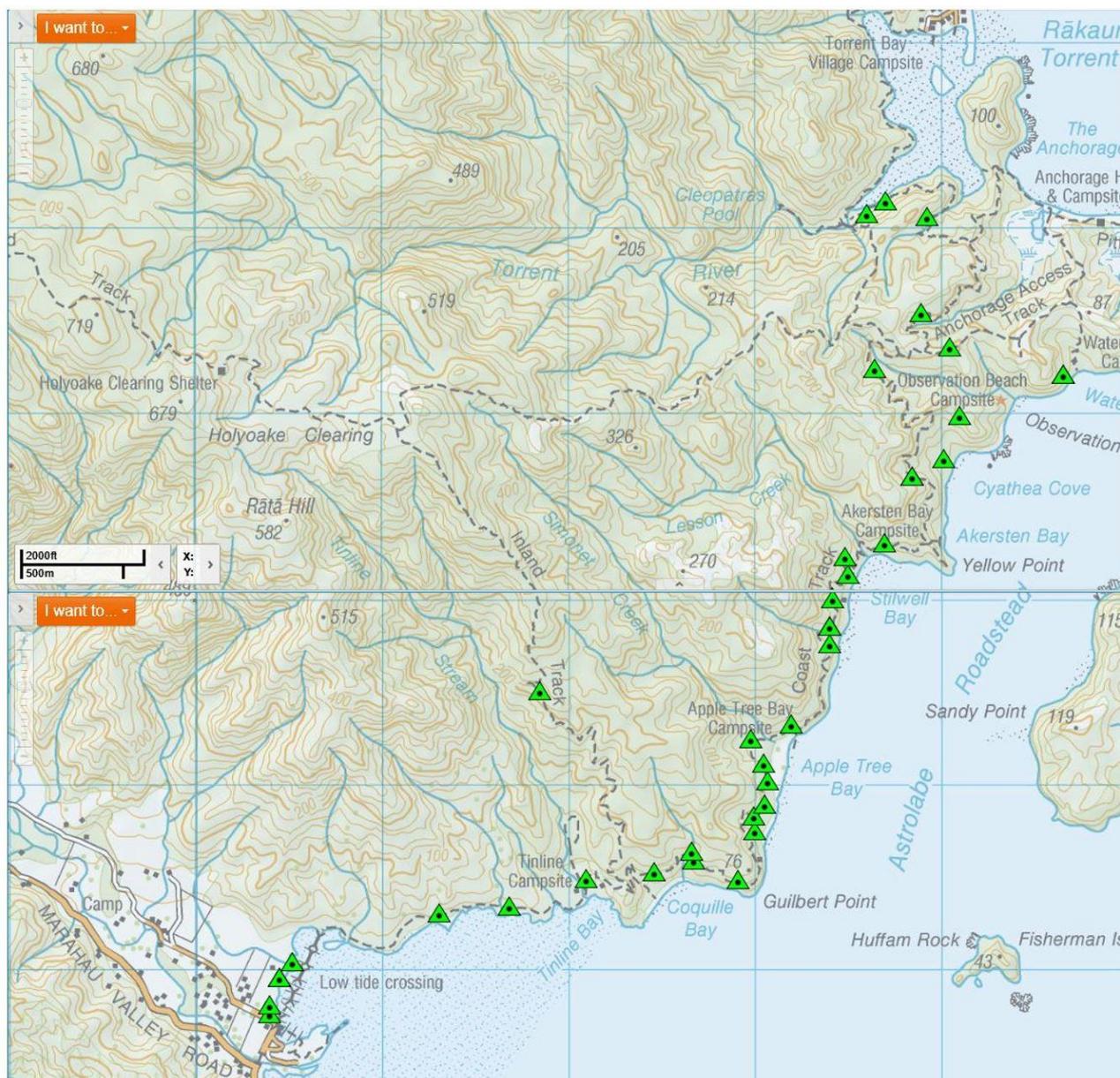
Date	Location	Number of Boxes	Trap type
December 2015	H12 to H62	51	51 double set
March 2016	H31/1 to H31/12	12	12 double set
October 2016	B32 to B39	8	8 single set
May 2017	SW1 to SW22	22	11 run through double set and 11 ZIP double set
Total		93	

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The map below indicates where rats were caught (green triangles) over the two months September and October.



The map shows in the last two months rats have been caught mainly along the coast between Marahau and Cyathea Cove, and between Cyathea Cove and Anorage. What is very noticeable is the lack of rats being caught on the Holyoake line with only one rat caught in the two months.

Note Pitt Head has A24 traps (self-resetting design) and will be catching rats without a “body count”.



Trap Line Overview - August 2017

