

# Revive Rotoiti

## *Kiwi pairings and movements*



## *Another ten kiwi to call Lake Rotoiti home*

After many hours spent patiently bobbing about in a boat and tramping up and down the St Arnaud range listening intently for the beeping of kiwi transmitters, Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project ranger Andrew Taylor has come back to us with his latest findings of the intimacies of the resident kiwi population.

Through the data Andrew collected, the RNRP team were able to establish that Rameka and Takaka are now both situated in the northern end of the project area and have shared a daytime shelter on at least two occasions. Rameka and Takaka had been a pair at Corkscrew Creek in Kahurangi National Park, where the kiwi were sourced from, but they were separated when introduced into the Rotoiti project area. Rameka spent time roaming the length of the RNRP area to begin with before finally settling in



Great spotted kiwi. Photo: Rod Morris, DOC.

the northern end of the project area where Takaka has now joined her. Tapu and Te Matau are at present in the centre of the project area along with Wainui and Tata. Tai Tapu and Te Matau moved into this area recently and were monitored sharing a daytime shelter on two occasions. Wainui and Tata, who originally held this area as their territory, both moved uphill, (maybe for some peace and quiet) and have not been monitored sharing a shelter as yet.

Finally Awaroa and Kahurangi, the breeding pair from the previous season, are currently in the southern end of the project area. They are in close proximity of each other, but as yet have not been monitored sharing a shelter. Male and female kiwi sharing daytime shelters is usually interpreted as evidence of pair bonds being successfully formed. Finally, Onetahua the lone male is located south of Kahurangi and Awaroa where he is keeping a low profile.

One of the key objectives of the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project is to reintroduce species lost from the area through pest pressures in recent times. As part of this objective, a programme to create a founder population of great spotted kiwi/roeroa in the RNRP was initiated in 2004 with the reintroduction of nine kiwi from the Goulard Downs area of Kahurangi National Park.

Due to the success of this first reintroduction, the second phase of the programme will now take place. With Bank of New Zealand Kiwi Recovery Trust funding, another five pairs of kiwi are to be reintroduced in April - May 2006. It has not yet been decided where the 10 kiwi will be sourced from; there are various populations in the upper South Island that could be considered.

Once a source location has been identified, baseline monitoring of the resident kiwi population at the location will be carried out, including monitoring calls and mapping kiwi territories. Once this is completed, the capture phase will get underway and we should have 10 kiwi winging their way to Lake Rotoiti to join the nine already in residence.



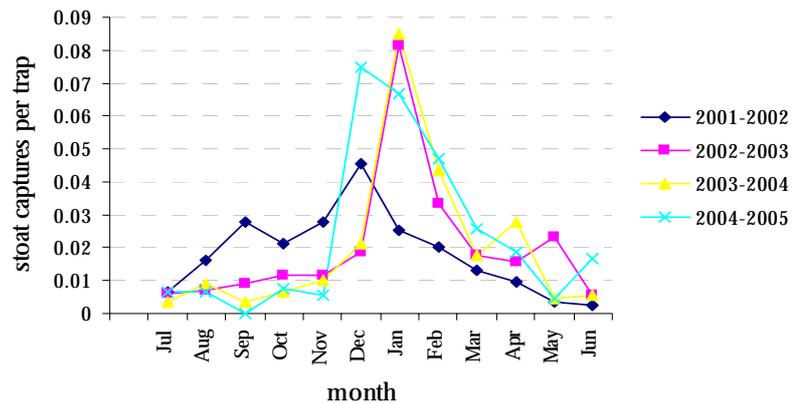
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Stoat control

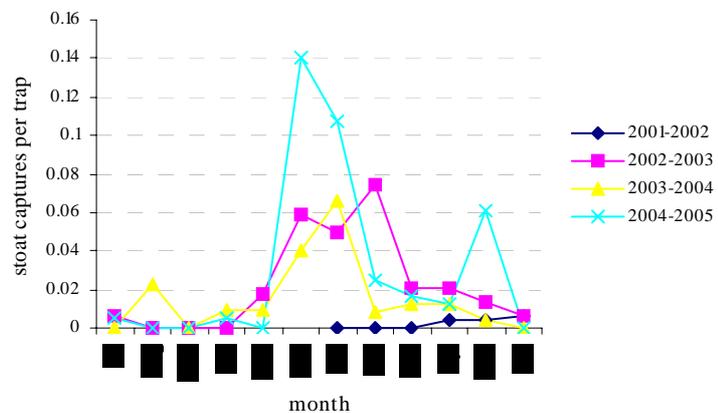
Fenn trapping to kill stoats has carried on as in previous years with no major changes to the regime in the RNRP or the Friends of Rotoiti Wairau (Rainbow) Valley and Mt Robert operations. Monitoring of stoat activity in these areas using tracking tunnels indicates very low numbers of stoats in the RNRP and, thanks to the Friends of Rotoiti, in the RNRP buffer areas.

Kaka did not breed in 2004-05, but they are breeding this summer so we will be able to test again how well the stoat control is protecting these birds.

RNRP total stoat captures per trap, 5000ha area



Friends of Rotoiti Rainbow Valley stoat captures per trap



The three goals of the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project are:

- restoration of the native ecosystem's components and processes.
- reintroduction of species lost from the area.
- advocacy for indigenous species conservation and long term pest control.

These graphs show that captures in the RNRP and Rainbow Valley were similar in the 2002-03 and 2003-04 years, but that in 2004-05 the Rainbow Valley line caught comparatively more stoats than the RNRP lines. Captures on the Rainbow Valley line probably reflect higher numbers of animals caught in response to a reasonable beech seed fall in autumn 2004. This raises the question: why did this not happen on the RNRP lines too? At this stage the answer is unknown. It might be a result of the large number of internal lines in the RNRP network dragging down the average 'captures per trap' figure, while the Rainbow Valley line maintained a higher average due to its lack of internal lines and large boundary with land on which no trapping occurs.

## *Continued interest from schools*

The Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project has become a wonderful educational resource for both primary and secondary schools.

This year, a significant number of primary and secondary schools from around the Nelson-Marlborough region brought classes up to Lake Rotoiti. Many Year 9 to Year 12 classes stayed at the Lake Rotoiti Lodge Outdoor Education Centre and took part in a guided walk or were shown a datashow presentation about the RNRP by a Department of Conservation staff member as part of their Rotoiti Lodge programme.



South Island kaka. Photo: Greg Lind, DOC.

Several schools have also incorporated the RNRP into their Year 12 biology achievement standards. Students are given a guided walk around the Honeydew Track, a datashow presentation on the RNRP and the opportunity to use the RNRP's annual reports as resource material for their assessments.

Primary schools from around the area are making good use of the resource kit "A Day at Lake Rotoiti". The kit includes activity sheets relating to the interpretation panels on the Honeydew Track in the RNRP area and a selection of word puzzles and games to promote environmental awareness. Most of the primary schools which visit the area are given an introduction to the RNRP by a DOC staff member.

## *Vandalism*

Having to report on vandalism occurring in the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project area is never pleasant. Unfortunately, again this year during the school holidays, vandalism incidents have taken place. On the Black Hill Walk, rat tunnels were crushed, orange wasp bait stations smashed off trees and markers for trap positions on the Friends of Rotoiti's new stoat line were moved to other areas. This has once again cost the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project and the Friends of Rotoiti a lot of time and money in replacing these traps and bait stations and to re-measure and re-mark the stoat line - remembering that the Friends of Rotoiti's time is all voluntary.

These incidents cause great frustration. The time spent remedying the damage could have been used on the myriad of other tasks that both the RNRP team and the Friends undertake to ensure the continued protection of native species in the Lake Rotoiti area.

## *Friends of Rotoiti*

After four years in the field faithfully catching rats, the Friends of Rotoiti decided it was time to give their rat traps a bit of tender loving care.

August this year saw a group from the 50-Plus Tramping Club, who also belong to the Friends of Rotoiti, don their rat-trapping bags and with tools in hand march out into the Mainland Island to spruce up more than 200 rat traps and tunnels. Thanks to their efforts the rat lines are all in good working order and ready for another four years of rat dispatching.



Stoat. Photo: Rod Morris, DOC.

## *A new stoat line*

The Friends of Rotoiti have decided to expand their stoat trapping effort to include the western side of Lake Rotoiti. The new line runs from the start of the Lakeside Track up to Whisky Falls and will act as a buffer for the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project.

Setting up the new line entailed making over 50 new trap covers. Half of the wood needed to build the trap covers was kindly donated by Placemakers in Nelson. The new line includes the use of both the original Fenn traps and the new ultra humane DOC 200 traps or "mashers", as they are fondly referred to by DOC staff and the Friends.

## *Friends of Rotoiti seek more trappers*

Several warrior traps have also been set up along this line to target possums and in the month they have been in operation the traps have caught over 15 possums.

With the extension to the stoat trapping lines and the ever-continuing presence of rats in the Lake Rotoiti area, the Friends of Rotoiti are always looking for more members to join their trapping ranks. If you are keen to spend time wandering through beautiful beech forests, listening to bellbirds and tuis and seeing the occasional kaka high up in the canopy, while checking traps vital for the continued presence of these species in the forest then please contact the Nelson Lakes Visitor Centre, phone (03) 521 1806.



Bryce Buckland of the Friends of Rotoiti setting a stoat trap. Photo: Sally Leggett.

## *Staff changes*

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Spring has sprung and so have a few of our staff! Since our last report on staff changes in the Winter 2003 issue there have been a few changes to the RNRP team. We have farewelled Jimbo McConchie, who was doing predator control field work and had an incredible knack of finding mistletoe. Paul Gasson, who headed the kiwi reintroduction programme, and Kimberley Parlane who worked in an advocacy role for the RNRP, have jetted off to the Chatham Islands where Paul has taken up the position of Programme Manager Biodiversity Assets. Genevieve Taylor is taking maternity leave from managing predator control and fauna monitoring and Tamsin Bruce will be filling in for her in her absence. Thankfully some new faces have appeared to fill in the gaps. We now have Dan Chisnall managing possum control, Brett Thompson and Ollie Gansell doing predator field work and Riley Neame, a trainee ranger at the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, will be spending his summer placement here.

The old and the new - The Rotoiti Nature Recovery Team. From left: Brian Paton, Sally Leggett, Matt Maitland (at rear), Genevieve Taylor, Brett Thompson (at rear), Tamsin Bruce, Ollie Gansell (at rear), Andrew Taylor and Glen Greaves. Photo: Sandra Wotherspoon.



## *Getting Revive Rotoiti on-line*

A big thanks to all those who contacted the St Arnaud Area office about receiving future issues of Revive Rotoiti electronically. You will in future be emailed copies of Revive Rotoiti as a PDF file. The newsletter will also be available on the DOC website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz). If you haven't already contacted us and would like to receive future issues of Revive Rotoiti by email, (saving the project printing and mailing costs), please email Sally Leggett at [sleggett@doc.govt.nz](mailto:sleggett@doc.govt.nz).