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September 2011

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE KOTUKU RESTORATION PROJECT

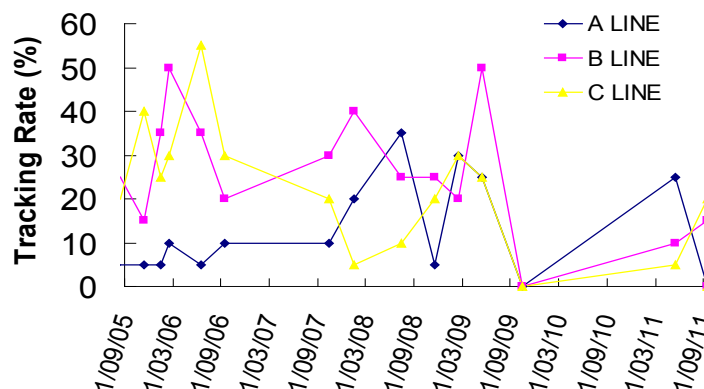
The intensity of rodent control, particularly over the summer months, raised the question of the sustainability of the project in the long term. The Glenfern Sanctuary Board asked Auckland Council Environment to put together a task force of people involved in pest control to review the Kotuku Restoration Project with a view to finding a way to achieve effective results with more economic use of resources. The review was to be wide ranging to include other potential resources and methods of obtaining them. The first result of the review produced a new Rat Control Plan based on successful models in other parts of the region. Largely changing from a trapping to a baiting regime, this would be an expansion of other rat control projects at Mohunga and Kaikoura Island. We will commence the new system in September.

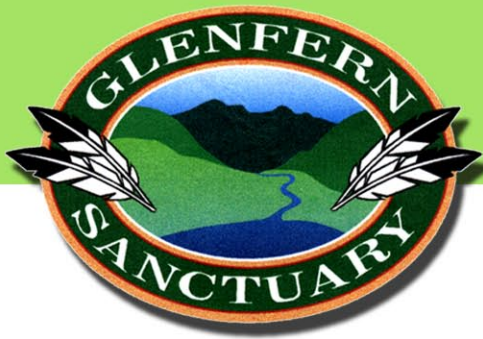
Part of the new system will be to run three index lines across the peninsula and another two outside the Sanctuary area, all of which will be monitored five times a year. While this does not tell us how many rats are on the peninsula it does provide an indication of density. The Access database will be modified to report on data collected in the same format as 'Ark in the Park'.

Index lines were monitored prior to the new baiting regime, and results are shown in the figure at right.

One of the presentations at the launch of the State of the Environment Report on the Hauraki Gulf at the Auckland War Memorial Museum highlighted the plight of the black petrel. It seems that despite our remarkable increase in nesting sites on Kotuku, the population that only exists on Aotea and Hauturu are still in decline, largely due to by-catch on long lines. There is some hope that new technology currently being developed may help to reverse this decline. Biz Bell (the scientist monitoring the black petrels) is attaching transmitters to fledglings to monitor their travels after hatching and we may get to place some on our birds in the near future.

Tracking Tunnel Results Kotuku Peninsula September 2005-2011





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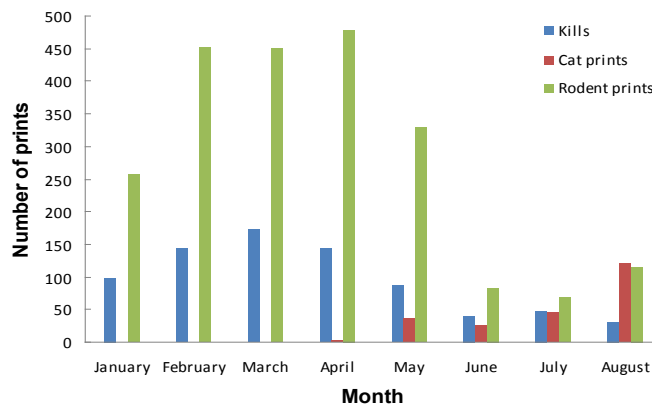
Monitoring Run 20, April 2011

Gus Knopers from BOP came with his dogs early in August to eradicate the rabbits that have invaded round the end of the fence at Orama. He also culled the rabbits outside the fence at Orama and managed to shoot a cat that his dogs latched onto in the middle of the peninsula. Until we can build a low fence into the sea at Orama we cannot eliminate the rabbit incursions.

Rene and Helena who have managed the sanctuary for the last year left us at the end of April to return to Kerikeri as Helena was due to have a baby at the end of June. They had Shem, a baby boy on the 20th June. They had done a really great job while they were here and it was sad to see them go. Phil and Karen from Hamilton filled the position but decided to leave early in August due to family commitments. Scott and Emma have now filled the position and taken to it like a duck to water. They have been here before in different capacities. Speaking of ducks we have three broods of Pateke ducklings, one just outside the fence and the other two on our duck pond just above the house.

Tony Bouzaid

The figure at right shows the prints and kills in the Sanctuary since January this year. The first cat prints were recorded in April, and have increased in number to over half the total prints in August, indicating a liking of peanut butter, but also possibly obscuring the actual rat density.



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