

Newsletter of the South West New Zealand Endangered Species Trust



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www.tepukahereka.org.nz

Our Mission

“To fund and establish a world class sanctuary on Te Puka-Hereka for rare and endangered native species of flora and fauna that will be jointly developed by private philanthropists and government participants.”

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Right: Trustee Don Goodhue deals to another stoat

Photo: Josy van den Kerkhof



Doing the Rounds

Preservation Lodge caretakers Don Goodhue and Josy van den Kerkhof spent two days doing the rounds of the Coal Island stoat traps in the beginning of December.

Day 1

The plan for the day was to make use of the helicopter that had over-nighted at the Lodge and fly to the western helipad and walk “Johan’s Track”. This track is approximately 6km in length and starting from the helipad, roughly follows the coast clockwise to Moonlight Point. After a short flight of only a few minutes, Southwest Helicopters pilot Sam Gawith dropped us onto the helipad ready to start the day. We had 5 dozen eggs and 49 traps to check and re-bait.

Heading north from the helipad we soon came across water races dug by gold miners in the 1890’s to direct water to their workings below in Number 3 Creek. Despite being close to the western shore of the island the bush was a mixture of rimu, rata and miro and made for very pleasant walking. Having to stop every 130 metres to check and re-bait each trap gave us plenty of time to take in the plant and bird life.

As we climbed on to the high point that marks the northwestern corner of the island the impact of deer browsing became obvious—for close to a kilometre we walked through bush that was strikingly devoid of undergrowth. It will be interesting to see how the bush in

this area responds to the reduction in deer numbers.

By the time we stopped for lunch we had done 26 of the 49 traps and were looking forward to getting the billy on. While we sat waiting for the billy to boil a pair of nesting rifleman darts in and out of a hole in a rata overhead. After lunch a brief detour was made to overlook Sandfly Bay on the northern corner of the island before turning southeast towards Moonlight Point.

We finally descended into Moonlight Creek through some of the most extensive gold workings on the island before rounding Moonlight Point to catch the boat back to the Lodge, 5 hours after setting off.

Day 1 completed, 49 traps checked - no stoats.

Day 2

Two days later we were dropped back at Moonlight Point by boat to walk the “Otago Retreat Track” and “Pratt’s Track” - 83 traps in all.

From Moonlight Point we continued in a clockwise direction, climbing steadily for the first half hour. Again the bush was a mixture of rimu, rata and miro. While the rata were just starting to come into flower, we frequently came

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across areas of the forest floor covered with petals from the mistletoe flower. In other places we found large numbers of green hooded orchids.

We made good progress, managing 14 traps per hour and by the time we stopped for lunch at Number 2 Creek were halfway. After a quick look around the gold workings of Number 2 Creek, a short climb brought us up to the junction with Pratt's Tack and Johan's Track at the western helipad.

Pratt's Track climbed slowly northeastward across the centre of the island to near the highest point on the island and then descended gently to Moonlight Point. We arrived back at Moonlight Point 6 ½ hours after setting out.

Day 2 completed, 83 traps checked - no stoats.

The final score - 132 traps checked - no stoats, 3 broken eggs!

Change of Trustee

Having moved from Tuatapere to Karamea earlier in the year, founding Trustee Wayne Pratt recently resigned from the Trust. Wayne has played a key role in the establishment of the Trust and had a very hands-on role in work on Coal Island - both flying and on the ground.

Wayne has been replaced on the Trust by Don Goodhue. Don and wife Josy van den Kerkhof were caretakers at Preservation Lodge in 2004 and have recently spent another 3 months at the Lodge. Both have been keen supporters of the Trust since its inception, participating in the track cutting work in 2005, with trap maintenance work on the island and Don writes the Trust newsletter.

Stoat score to date.....



(39 on Coal Island, 20 on mainland and other islands since August 2005)

Putting the Boot in.....

A funny thing happened one day in late November when some visiting trampers from Wellington were walking out to the Puysegur Point lighthouse.

They were walking along the road when a stoat ran down the bank and into the water table beside them and into a culvert. Being pretty quick for city slickers, one ran to the other end of the culvert to scare the stoat back out and another stood in the water table. The stoat duly ran back out of the culvert.

The stoat then careened back and forth along the water table until it was dispatched with a quick downward stomp of a rather large tramping boot.

Rather unorthodox but who's complaining.



*Above: One more to the tally - master stamper
Jonathon Kennett*

Photo: Allen Higgins



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