

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.”

In this edition....

- **Successful Volunteer Trip**
A report from the volunteers
- **Extra Funding**
Community Trust of Southland supports mouse eradication



Right: Volunteers on Coal Island ready to check stoat traps.

Left to right: Paul, Jan, Karen, Simon, David and Trust representative Dion Matheson.

Photo: Sam Gawith

Successful First Trip to Coal Island for Volunteers

The following report has been written by the volunteers on the December volunteer trip to Coal Island and Preservation Inlet.

We were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to participate in the Coal Island Trust stoat eradication project in December 2007.

Day 1 Coal Island

Our party of six assembled outside the hangar at Clifden on a glorious Southland day. Little did we know this was to be the start of a week bathed in sunshine and blue skies in the 'Deep South'. Sam nonchalantly dropped out of the sky and proceeded to skillfully pack masses of food, supplies and six excited volunteers into every nook and cranny of his helicopter. We were then treated to a glorious scenic flight over Fiordland National Park. After unloading our supplies we were

dropped off at the southern end of Coal Island. We divided into three groups of two covering the Johan's, Pratt's and Otago Retreat tracks. (please refer to newsletter No 8, January 2007 for further details of these tracks).

In total we checked 132 traps with two stoats found on the Otago Retreat track (the girl's first introduction to decomposing stoats!). Dion also shot a deer near the half way point on the Johan's track which increased the load in his pack considerably. The girls on the Otago Retreat track were grateful for this as Dion's heavy load slowed their progress somewhat. Sam collected us from Moonlight Point in the chopper and delivered us back to Kisbee Lodge which would be our base for the week.

Day 2 Kisbee to Oil Store via Coastal track

After packing overnight supplies we headed out onto the Coastal track toward the Oil Store, which involved a day of rock hopping and bush bashing

whilst covering the shoreline. We checked and reset 35 traps finding 14 stoats and 1 manky rat!!!!!!

The progress was slower as the terrain was more difficult to negotiate and the track less well defined. We could see the Oil Store in the distance which was to be our accommodation for the night. We managed to time the tide to navigate through the cave (another fun experience) but further along the coast with the tide against us we were forced to scramble up a bluff which provided amazing views out to the coast and beyond. It was worth the climb. Dion's surveying skills and Paul's life long experience of tramping came to the fore. We then had a steep descent down onto the coast arriving at the Oil Store.

We set up camp, relaxed on the beach enjoying the last of the afternoon sun and the glorious views, replenished reserves with dinner then headed off to Puysegur Point checking the trap lines en route. One stoat was trapped near the Oil Store. Dion was in full hunting mode but unfortunately we only saw foot prints and droppings. The power from the ocean and sun set were amazing. We walked home in the dark and collapsed into bed, ending a full and rich day.

Day 3 Inland tract to Te Oneroa

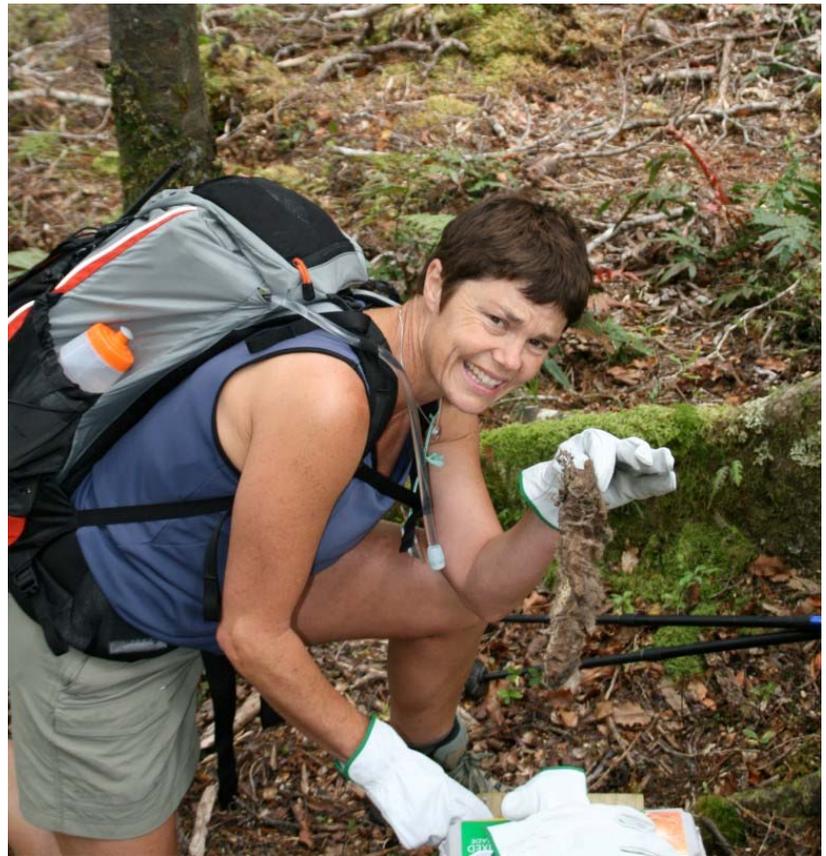
After a morning steady climb with Dion and Paul's navigational skill being put to good use, we made good progress toward the old historic gold mining sites. It was well worth the effort and gave us some sense of how difficult the life must have been in previous times. That night was spent at Te Oneroa Hut along with the native sand flies of course!! Paul checked and reset the 7 traps along this coastline.

Last Day

Another pearlier day in paradise – we checked the remaining traps on the small islands offshore from the comfort of the boat. This provided some entertainment for the group as David coordinated jumps from boat to shore, balancing eggs and machete! (McGuiver would have been proud!) No stoats were found which was encouraging. Sadly the group packed up and met Sam as he dropped out of the sky again to take us home.

The week gave us all a wonderful experience – the beautiful unspoiled deep

south in all its splendour, and the chance to participate in such a worthy scheme. It is great to see the Trust making a difference and hope that it is able to continue the fight towards pest eradication in this area. We would like to thank Kisbee Lodge owners for providing the base for this project and the Trust for its support – keep up the great work!



Above: Jan Bone dealing with a successful trap.

Photo: Karen Brown

Extra Funding for Mouse and Deer Eradication

The Community Trust of Southland is to provide \$36,000 of funding towards the mouse and deer eradication program. This funding along with the \$175,000 committed by the New Zealand Lotteries Grants Board will enable the Trust to proceed with the mouse eradication program and complete the deer eradication program that started in February 2006. The Trust would like to acknowledge the work undertaken by Angela McMeekin in preparing and presenting the applications that have resulted in this funding.



Volunteer Program Update

Since the issue of the last newsletter in July, there has been a good deal of interest in the Coal Island Volunteer Program with volunteers from as far away as Wellington already signed-up.

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