

July 2011

[www.etet.org.nz](http://www.etet.org.nz)

### Kiwi Call survey

The weather has played havoc with the survey. We are currently in a race against breeding season to get the survey finished. The weather, rain and wind have combined to lengthen the time to get the surveys finished. Talking to other projects around the country we are not alone. We have just received a couple of the new automatic listening devices which are not weather dependant. We will be trialing these and hopefully by the time we need to do the next survey it will not be such a challenge. The Purangi block of listening sites have remained static with the last survey which we expected, however we have seen an increase in the Pouiatoa block. A number of locals have reported hearing kiwi and our contractors have heard them. This is a direct result to the trapping regime and is very positive.

### Huts

It was with considerable relief to have both huts in place before the weather totally packed up. The TET funded hut was flown in as a kitset and put together. Our thanks to Standard Timber in Stratford for all their work and help.



*Hondo, Grumpy, Mike and Mark at the TET hut.*

We have put photos on both our web site and on facebook.

### Re-setting traps

I mentioned in the last newsletter that the Good Nature team have developed self-setting traps for possums. We have been fortunate to have received support from WWF and have just started a field trial with the traps. The trial is to see whether the

traps can get the residual trap catch to below 5%. The trial will continue over summer and is part of a larger DOC scientific trial. There are three sites for the field trials, our community project and the other two sites are DOC managed ones. In early August a team of volunteers headed into the field to set up the traps. The team included Marc Slade and Rosa Argent from WWF, Darren Peters DOC- Wellington, Rod Warne and Emily King DOC - Taranaki; Dean Caskey, Sean Gardiner and Bryan Ritchie - TRC; Mark Caskey, Nic Kowaleski. Harry Hall, and Bob Schumacher. Support crew included George Gallop TRC, Paul Jansen - Wellington, Laurel Aitken and me. It was a great day with all the traps out by mid afternoon.



*Rosa and Marc (WWF) concentrating*

We now have an intensive checking regime. We are collecting the dead possums and selling them. The first round of checking has resulted in 185 confirmed kills. A big thank you to everyone who helped.

We are thrilled to have World Wildlife Fund (WWF) supporting our project. They have also featured the trip up to Taranaki on their web site.



*A meal at the end of the day.*

## TVNZ

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July the programme Rural Delivery had a feature on our project. If you missed it you can view it via the TVNZ web site. Once on the site it can be viewed via the "on demand" option. We have had plenty of feedback especially about the problem with feral cats. We have had a number of reports of feral cats and currently have some cat kill traps out in the field.

## Goat control

We need to improve the understory both for good kiwi habitat and for our plans of returning kokako to the area. It is one of the key points the Kokako recovery group assess and they have advised the need to reduce goat numbers. They clean out any seedlings coming through and then hardens the ground which means pressure on kiwi for food.

We have been doing goat control in the Purangi block for three winters now and are starting to see a real improvement. It is great to see the landowners in the area mustering and selling feral goats. Between us we should keep pressure on and reduce the numbers in the bush.

During this winter our contractors killed 157 in the Purangi block. DOC put a team into the Pouiatoa conservation forest and killed 200 goats. Our contractors also spent some time in this area and killed another 185.

If you have a problem with feral goats we have a couple of reliable hunters with kiwi aversion trained dogs who we can get to help.

## Rat control

Our next biggest challenge will be to control rats in the proposed kokako area. Rats are a major predator when kokako are nesting. We plan to undertake rat control this spring. It is very intensive especially with the terrain we are working in. Members of the Taranaki Land Search and Rescue are going to be helping us. They are combining this with a training exercise to brush up their skills on GPS use and off track work.

## Firewood

We have been fortunate that the Toko Lions have donated firewood for the huts.

## Number and type of volunteers participating

Once again during the year two of our key partners have provided staff to assist the project in a volunteer capacity. These have been from Taranaki Regional Council and the Department of Conservation.

Taranaki Regional Council provides us with technical and field support. We have worked with the Pest department who have provided technical advise and field workers during the year; the biodiversity team who have provided technical advise and field support with kiwi listening; the land management team who joined us in the field day and provided advise on sustainable land types and management; the GIS team who provide all our mapping requirements, the promotion team

who assist with advertising, and printing requirements, and the senior management team. The Department of Conservation has provided technical support and field support. We have worked with the Pest team with advice re goat and rat control, the goat hunting team for field work, at with the national pest advisor for field audit review. The biodiversity team has provided field staff to help with kiwi call survey.

We have a growing group of core people who provide us with technical and field help. This has been with hut building, track work, helicopter assistance, project planning, co-ordination of contractors, developing the guided walk concept, and with web setup work.

## Cycle Tour and our guided walk.

Gosh its all happening. The bike trial goes past our project. We will have a sign up to promote the project. We are about to start our guided tours. This will be operated through Heliview in New Plymouth who now have a luxury van and will take half day tours. Check out their web site [www.heliview.co.nz](http://www.heliview.co.nz). The tour starts in New Plymouth and includes the trip to Purangi, a guided walk and the opportunity to find out more about the kiwi project plus a picnic lunch.

## Number of website hits

During the year Venture Taranaki helped to set up our social media network. We now have a presence on facebook. We are finding there are a lot of hits via this medium. We place updates on here fortnightly. During the year our ETET web site had 1098 hits. This is an increase of 118% over the previous year.

*Cheers Karen & Bob Schumacher*

