



# Oho Mai Puketi

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

Issue 15 : October 2009

Newsletter of the Puketi Forest Trust

PO Box 257 Kaeo, Northland 0448

Ph 09 4074790

Patron: DAME KIRI TE KANAWA

## The Robins Return

After 100 years the song of the North Island robin, or toutouwai, is now being heard again in one corner of Puketi Forest. This has been achieved with the financial support given by trust supporters like you, which has allowed us to cut tracks, purchase traps and employ trappers, giving robins a chance to re-establish in the forest.

Thirty robins were brought to Puketi from Mangatutu (south Waikato) in June. A population survey and health screening in March and April indicated a healthy population of robins at Mangatutu and approval for the transfer was received in May. A team of eight volunteer trust supporters, assisted by volunteers from the Waitakere (West Auckland) Ark in the Park project travelled to Mangatutu to capture the birds under supervision of Dr Gary Bramley.

Catching robins is challenging and exciting. After a bird has been attracted, one of the team keeps it around by feeding it meal worms. The other person sets up the clap trap, places a meal worm in the correct position and moves back about five metres with a tube that is attached to the trigger mechanism. (Blowing into the tube activates the trap). Meal worms are then thrown closer and closer to the trap. If all goes according to plan the robin will see the meal worm under the net and when it goes to pick it up a well timed puff triggers the trap and the net drops over the bird. Some birds can take over an hour to lure into the target area while others are caught within minutes.

### In This Issue:

The Robins Return...	1
AGM 2009...	3
Chairman's Report...	3
Kiwi...	5
Current Research...	6
Rat Trap Trial...	7
Stoat Bait Trial...	7
Feral Pigs...	7
DOC Report...	8
The Capital Fund...	8
Sponsorship Form...	9



Photo: P Hodgson



Photo: P Hodgson

Clap trap set (left) with volunteer Jock Hodgson (above) ready to blow when a robin is lured into the catch area.



Photo: P Hodgson

The first robin to be caught, after release from the trap - called BO because it has blue and orange identification bands.

After capture, the robins were weighed, measured, banded and kept in individual pet boxes with a supply of water and meal worms. The first 18 birds captured were farewelled by Ngati Rereahu representatives on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June and flown directly to Puketi by Kingsley Thompson of Heliops. They were welcomed by about 60 trust supporters and released near the centre of the trust's rat control area, on trapping line T4 not far from the Waihoanga Gorge Walk. A further 12 birds were transported by car and released on 16 and 22 June, making up the quota of 30 birds.

Welcoming the birds, Puketi Forest trustee and Piki Te Aroha Marae kaumatua Wiremu Wiremu said the transfer of toutouwai represents an important exchange between Maniapoto and Ngapuhi iwi. To remember their origin, these birds should be known as 'Toutouwai O Te Nehenehenui'. Te Nehenehenui is the name given by Maniapoto to the wider area from which the birds were taken.



Photo: P Hodgson

Volunteers head off to the forest with the robins



Photo: M Winch/D Galbraith

Robin (BO) in his new home



Photo: P Hodgson

Releasing the birds in Puketi

All birds survived the transfer and flew off to explore their new home when released. Young male and female robins are similar in appearance. From wing and leg measurements, the transferred birds are presumed to include 21 males and 9 females (males are more inquisitive and more often captured), but sexes will be confirmed by observing behaviour after release. All birds can be identified from the coloured bands on their legs.

Volunteers have spent many hours and walked many kilometres looking for robins since the release. Fifteen birds including four pairs have been located and identified within 700 metres of the release site. Two others have been heard singing but not seen. Three of the four pairs are less than an hour's walk away and have been trained to come when the mealworm container is tapped and can now be readily located. It has been interesting watching the changes in behaviour as breeding has approached. All the volunteers have been moved watching the male feed his mate during courtship. Once the female starts incubating the male turns up on his own, gathers a beak full of meal worms and flies to a branch where he sings quietly. The female briefly leaves the nest to be fed. The first eggs are due to hatch near the beginning of October.

Approval has been given to transfer a further 30 robins in 2010, subject to at least 40% survival of the first release and evidence of breeding success. So far it appears these targets will be reached.

Many thanks are due to all the volunteers who have helped capture the robins, carry them to the release site, locate them and then monitor their progress. A special thanks to Patricia Hodgson for organising the volunteers and keeping the monitoring records. Monitoring is continuing. If you would like to take part, contact Patricia at (09) 407 6239.

Robins keep the same territory all year and normally keep the same partner (if a nest fails the female may seek a new mate). They may raise three broods between July and December. First clutches are normally of two eggs and subsequent clutches three, or occasionally four.

The eggs, which are incubated by the female, take 18 days to hatch. The nestlings are fed by both parents until they leave the nest at three weeks of age. If there is only one fledgling it is fed by the male. If there is more than one the female helps until she starts re-nesting. The young start foraging for food two weeks after they leave the nest but continue to be fed for 4-7 weeks before being evicted from their parents' territory. They breed at one year of age and live, on average, for three years. However the oldest robin recorded was over 16 years old.

On the mainland robins are in decline due to habitat changes and predation. Stoats kill many robins, as do rats. (In the Pureora Forest only 4 out of 35 nests were successful without predator control and almost a third of females disappeared. Following a 1080 operation, nesting success was 72% and no females disappeared). As robins often feed on the ground, cats are also a major threat. The detrimental effect possums have on robins was highlighted on Kapiti Island, where the number of robins rapidly increased after possums were eliminated.

### Members' Email List

Since the last newsletter, about 60 members of the trust have joined the email list. The list allows us to provide occasional short notice announcements of events, volunteer opportunities and news items. For those who wish, the newsletter can also be distributed by email rather than post, saving paper and postage. Email addresses are kept secure to avoid the attention of spammers. If you would like your address added to the list, please advise by email to [info@puketi.org.nz](mailto:info@puketi.org.nz) and also tell us whether you would like to receive the newsletter by email.

## Annual General Meeting - 2009

The trust's annual general meeting, held at Pete's Pioneer and Transport Museum on August 29, was well attended by about 30 people keen to hear about the trust's progress, including representatives from DOC and Forest and Bird. Chairman John Dawn, treasurer Barbara Nock and hardworking trustees Ian Wilson and Gary Bramley gave comprehensive reports.

In 2003, the trustees determined they needed to raise \$750,000 over the next five years to fund the project. This has been achieved. Over 100 km of trap lines have been cut and 2300 rat traps, 790 stoat traps and 204 cat traps have been installed and serviced regularly over this time. To date the trust has caught 716 stoats, 110 feral cats, 43 weasels, 2 ferrets, 9622 rats, 386 hedgehogs and 1076 possums.

It costs around \$90,000 per year to conduct the trapping operation. The trust is hoping to build its capital fund to establish a sustainable income and reduce reliance on grants and donations. The trust continues to need the involvement of community volunteers for future surveys, monitoring and further species releases.

The first official screening of the Oho Mai Puketi promotional documentary, directed by Janna Sicely, was well received. The trust hopes to achieve TV airtime. Copies of the 10 minute film are available for sale – phone Keri Molloy (09 4079932) and will also be available through the trust's website.

Officers for the year 2009-2010: Chairman: John Dawn, Secretary: Keri Molloy, Treasurer: Barbara Nock, Trustees: Wiremu Wiremu, Ian Wilson, Gary Bramley, Gordon Salt.

## Chairman's Annual Report August 2009

This year has been something of a watershed for the trust. Since its inception, the trust has put most effort into pest control. This year we started the next phase which is much more rewarding; re-introducing the depleted birdlife. DOC staff brought back two female kokako of Puketi parentage in November 2008 and the trust released 30 North Island robins (toutouwai) in June 2009.

**Kokako** Unfortunately the kokako releases were not very successful. One bird died in the aviary just before release. The other mated with the remaining resident male hut bird, but the nest was predated and the female driven off. The predator is believed to have been a harrier, which we can't do much about. The female was last tracked by its radio transmitter to the Mangapapa River valley, about 5 kilometres north of the release site and outside the pest control area. The hut bird has not been seen or heard recently. The kokako programme is now being reviewed with the assistance of the national kokako recovery group. The trustees are committed to the re-establishment of kokako in Puketi and are supporting DOC staff in developing a new strategy for kokako release.

**North Island Robins** The toutouwai re-introduction has been led by Dr Gary Bramley, who prepared the application for the transfer permit (no small task), consulted iwi and other interested groups, conducted a population survey at the source area Mangatutu, and organised health screening, capture and transport of the birds to Puketi. It is early yet, but they appear to be thriving in their new home. Special thanks are due to Gary for his hard work and thorough organisation, to Wiremu Williams for facilitating consultation with the Maniapoto iwi, to DOC staff for giving helpful advice on preparation of the application and processing it promptly, to the trust volunteers who helped with capture and monitoring, and to Kingsley Thompson of Heliops who transported the birds from Mangatutu to Puketi.

**Pest Control** The pest control programme has continued using the established trap network, ably managed by Ian Wilson and carried out by contractors Scott Candy, Phil Kennedy and David Wilson, and volunteers on stoat line 10. There have been some changes in rat contractors during the year, but continuity of the trapping schedule has been maintained throughout. The trust has accounted for 3583 stoats, weasels, feral cats, rats, hedgehogs, possums and mice during the year to July 2009. The regular programme of trap maintenance and upgrading has continued.

An audit of the trust's pest control operation was carried out by Nigel Millar of DOC Whangarei in August 2008. He concluded that the operation is of a high standard, which is pleasing, and made useful recommendations which we are implementing.

**Possum Control** Under the management agreement with DOC, the trust controls mustelids and feral cats within the trust management area of 5500 hectare and rats within the 650 hectare core area. The Department controls possums, goats, pigs and dogs. Due to resource constraints and competing demands, possum control within the trust's management area is currently limited to ground based poison every three years within the core area, a line of Warrior traps around the core perimeter serviced every four weeks and sporadic fur recovery elsewhere. There is also provision for additional possum control around kokako and robin nesting areas during nesting.

The first poison operation under this regime was carried out successfully in 2007 and the target of 3% RTC was met. Subsequent reinvasion has been rapid however, despite the number that are caught in the perimeter traps. A possum can travel 600 metres in a night.

Possoms cause widespread damage in the forest and are also a threat to endangered birds during nesting. To effectively reduce their impact, possum numbers have to be maintained below 5% RTC. The trustees are working with DOC staff to improve possum control.

**Monitoring** Monitoring of rats using tracking tunnels has shown that the targets for rat control within the core area are consistently being met, and spring and autumn bird counts indicate that native bird populations continue to increase in response to predator control.

Kiwi listening was held again in May and June 2009. Fifty eight kiwi were heard from ten regular listening stations within the trust's pest control area, 75% more than the average of the previous three years. This is encouraging and we hope this trend continues.

**Kiwi Aversion Training** During October 2008 Ian Wilson organised three aversion training days with Pete Graham of DOC in Whangarei. These had a good response from pig hunters in the area, with 67 dogs trained. This was followed up by DOC staff in the Bay of Islands Area Office, who organised a successful aversion training and kiwi advocacy day on 13 March 2009 and have held several aversion training days since with Lesley Baigent, a private practice vet and kiwi aversion trainer from Kaitaia. The Department of Conservation has provided the training free to dog owners and we believe most hunters' dogs in the area have now been trained. DOC has advised that from now on training will be available every 6 months and from March 2010 aversion training will be a requirement of hunting permits.

This is good news for our kiwi and we thank DOC staff for their efforts and their commitment to dog control.

**Membership** The trust membership is currently 362, of which 140 are local (North of Whangarei), 200 are from other parts of New Zealand and 22 are overseas. June Wilson doesn't attend meetings often, but she does a lot of work in the background maintaining the membership records and mailing lists.

Two newsletters have been distributed to members during the year. I have received many favourable comments about the newsletters, for which thanks are due to Ian and June Wilson who do most of the work in producing it.

**Trustees** The trustees have held regular meetings throughout the year and have worked well together. I have mentioned the contributions from Ian Wilson, Gary Bramley and Wiremu Williams. Thanks are also due to the other trustees. Keri Molloy has handled the secretary's duties, organised the promotional film "Oho Mai Puketi" and given the trust good local coverage in the Bay Chronicle. Barbara Nock has reliably managed trust accounts as treasurer. Gordon Salt has further developed the display material, set it up and promoted the trust at shows and fairs, and has built many new trap boxes.

The trustees have maintained a good working relationship with local DOC staff, despite the frustrations inevitable when a small group of individuals attempts to interact with a large bureaucracy. I believe all the local DOC staff support the trust's aims and would do more if it were not for limited resources and competing demands. I thank Rolien Elliot and her staff for their efforts and the constantly cordial manner in which they have dealt with us and have always been available.

**Volunteers** The trust also has a good team of enthusiastic volunteers. As well as the trustees, who between them have put many hours of work towards the trust's goals, volunteers have serviced stoat trap line 10, captured the robins for transfer and monitored them since release, sat in the dark listening for kiwi and have monitored rats and day-active birds.

**Funding** The trust's activities are funded by members' donations and grants, as will be detailed in the financial report. I filled in as deputy treasurer for a couple of weeks while Barbara was on holiday earlier this year. I was impressed first by the amount of work Barbara does quietly behind the scenes, but even more so by the steady stream of individual donations coming through the post. It was a humbling experience and I am mindful of the responsibility the trustees have to ensure this money is spent wisely for maximum benefit. Thank you all for your contributions.

Thanks are also due for the substantial support provided by funding organisations; the Lotteries Grants Board, the ASB Community Trust, BNZ Save The Kiwi Trust, the Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Trust and Pub Charities.

**Plans for the Coming Year** In the coming year, the trustees intend to continue the pest control programme and steady upgrading of the trap network by replacement of traps as they reach the end of their useful life. Monitoring of pests and native wildlife will continue. We propose to introduce another 30 toutouwai in March 2010. We intend to support DOC in the kokako restoration programme and hope that the beginnings of a viable population can soon be established in Puketi.

The trust is on track to reach the goals set in the second 5 year plan and is in a good position to do so, with a strong membership, enthusiastic trustees and volunteers, reliable contractors, a good relationship with the Department of Conservation and support from the local community. The trust has sufficient funds in hand and grants promised to cover the coming year's activities. The trustees are mindful however, that a high standard of pest control must be maintained continuously or all the achievements to date will be put at risk. For this reason we strive to keep at least one year ahead with fundraising efforts, and this aspect of trust management remains as important as ever.

**Conclusion** I greatly enjoy working with the Puketi Forest Trust. I enjoy the company of enthusiastic people who get things done. I enjoy the chance to spend time in the forest with a useful purpose. I get satisfaction from seeing the results of the trust's work and from reflecting on what Puketi will be in future if we maintain the present progress. Thank you for this opportunity and your support.

## Kiwi

Before the Trust started trapping, predation of kiwi chicks by stoats and of adults by dogs meant that the Puketi kiwi population was halving every four years. In late 2003 the Trust began trapping stoats and feral cats on 2,000 hectares. We could have used transmitters to monitor breeding success and chick survival but, as monitoring costs twice as much as trapping and we were using pest control methods that had worked elsewhere, we decided to extend the area trapped to 5,500 hectares and rely on kiwi call counts for monitoring – which can be done by volunteers. Since it may take a couple of years trapping to remove resident stoats and young kiwi start calling at about age 3 years, we had hoped last year to hear an increase in kiwi calls in the original 2,000 hectares where the listening sites

Pudding Bowl Hill, Kokako Track and Waihoanga/Takapau Junction are located. The table shows there was an increase at two of the sites but no birds were heard from Pudding Bowl Hill. Had something happened to them or did they not call? This year was the first year that all listening sites had been trapped for at least three years. We are very pleased with the results as it confirms that our predator control is working and there has been no mass killing by dogs. A pleasing number of birds were heard from Pudding Bowl Hill (none called on the first night but six called on the second). Two kiwi were heard from Pirau Road (central), the first recorded from that site. With only one exception all the sites had an increase in kiwi numbers. Two new sites were added this year.

### KIWI LISTENING 2009 - COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS

SITE	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
	Mean Calls per Hour					Total Birds (females)				
Pond - Bramleys Ridge	3.25	5.25	1	3.75	4.75	4 (1)	8(3)	4(1)	5(1)	6(2)
Totara Ridge	3.75	5.75		0.75	7.1	7 (2)	7(3)		2(1)	8(4)
Bramleys Ridge (near end)	2	2.5	0.5	0.5	2.3	2 (1)	3(1)	2(1)	1	6(2)
Pirau Road (central)	0	0		0	1	0	0		0	2
Takapau/Pirau Road	0.5	0.25	1	0.5	2.75	2	1	1	1	5(2)
Rain-gauge Pirau Road	3.75	2.25	1	3.5	4	5 (1)	4	4(2)	6(1)	7(3)
Walnut/Pirau Road	0.33	4.25	2.5	1.25	3.7	1	5(1)	8(4)	3(1)	8(3)
Pudding Bowl Hill	1.5	3	0.75	0	2	2	4(1)	3(1)	0	6(3)
Kokako Track	0.75	3	1.5	2.5	1.5	3 (1)	3(2)	4	5(2)	4(2)
Waihoanga/ Takapau Junction	1.75	2		3.75	5.4	2 (1)	3(1)		4(1)	6(3)
Takapau Track S1-99					2.5					3(1)
Puketi Scenic Reserve					9					6(3)

**A special thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their evenings to sit out in the cold and count kiwi calls.**

When the Trust and DOC began kiwi aversion training in the Puketi area, research into its effectiveness had not been completed. We reasoned that as the life expectancy of a kiwi was 50 years in the Coromandel, where kiwi aversion training had been vigorously promoted for 10 years, as opposed to a life of 13 years in Northland it was probably effective. If that effect was due to nothing more than educating hunters about kiwi, how they can stop their dogs killing kiwi, and about kiwi conservation in general, it was still worthwhile. Research has now been completed and has revealed that kiwi aversion training using frozen kiwi is 60% effective. If a live kiwi is used it is 90% effective.

## Why and how does Puketī Forest have so many tree species?

*Dr Peter Bellingham of Landcare Research describes research currently under way in Puketī.*

The warm temperate rain forests of Northland are amongst New Zealand's most diverse forests. Northland's warm climate is a major reason for this greater diversity than in forests further south. Some major canopy trees, such as taraire and kauri, hardly extend south of the Coromandel peninsula, and others are even more northerly: the subcanopy tree makamaka scarcely reaches south of Whangarei. Yet even in Northland, Puketī is amongst the most diverse of the remaining rain forests. New research, which began in early 2009, is focused on understanding why Puketī is so diverse in tree species and how this diversity is maintained.

You can get a feel for the high diversity of trees in Puketī and how that diversity changes over very short distances if you walk around the Waihoanga loop trail on the forest's southern boundary. As you walk from terraces and gully bottoms up slopes to a ridge top you will see a change in dominant canopy trees. Species in the gullies include kahikatea, nikau, and patē. Those on the slopes include tawa and Hall's tōtara. Kauri and tanekaha dominate the ridge crests.

Our research is aimed at understanding the mechanisms that allow certain species to dominate particular parts of the landscape. We are focusing on the regeneration requirements of trees and in particular on their growth and survival as seedlings. This is because we expect that seeds of most of the canopy trees should be readily dispersed to most parts of the landscape and that if there are barriers to certain species growing in particular parts of the landscape, these are likely to apply during and after germination.

We are looking at where seedlings of canopy trees occur, and in what numbers, along gradients from ridge tops to gullies. This is because even over relatively short distances, many of the resources that seedlings require for onward growth change significantly. Ridge tops have greater amounts of light available for seedlings to grow, but against this ridge tops are more prone to drought and key nutrients needed for seedlings to grow, especially phosphorus and nitrogen, are either unavailable or are in short supply. Furthermore, the canopy trees on ridge tops, like kauri, have low concentrations of nutrients in their leaves and their litter decomposes slowly, and these conditions are unlikely to favour growth of some species. At the other extreme, in gully bottoms water is more available and nutrients may be in greater supply

but light in the understorey is usually much less than on ridge tops.

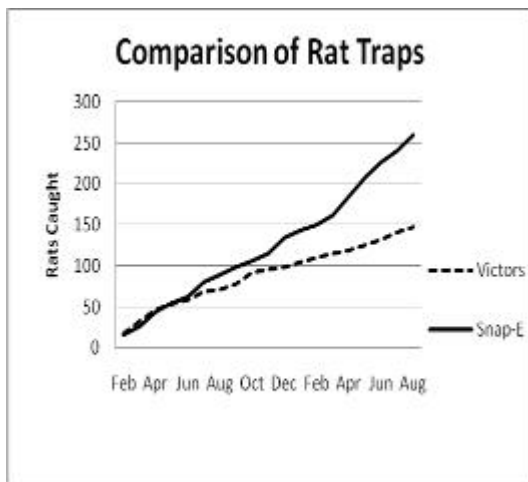
We expect that where seedlings of different tree species occur most frequently and where they grow most rapidly will reflect their capacity to use resources most efficiently. For example, we expect that ridge top specialists will be better at conserving scarce nutrient resources but cannot grow fast enough to compete in gullies.

Our investigation will follow the fate and growth of seedlings of different trees over 2 to 3 years along gradients in Puketī. To examine the mechanisms in more detail we will also be conducting an experiment in a nursery where we will look at the growth and survival of 10 tree species in different soil and light conditions.

Why should this be of general interest? Many parts of Northland are regenerating to tall forest after past clearance and there is widespread interest in restoring these new forests to their past diversity. Restoring diversity will depend on some key dispersers being present – for example, many key canopy trees such as taraire and tawa depend absolutely on kukupa for their long-distance dispersal. Other regenerating forests will require reduction of introduced browsing mammals, such as goats. But even if dispersers are present and herbivores are reduced, expectations of regeneration of many tree species may not be realised if parts of the landscape are unfavourable for growth of seedlings of some tree species. Our research can help inform managers about if and where regeneration of certain tree species might occur once threats are mitigated. Regenerating forests also offer opportunities for storing carbon. Some tree species store more carbon than others, especially those with high wood density and slow decay rates. We expect that our research can show where in a landscape the greatest concentrations of trees with high carbon storage could be expected to regenerate and ultimately dominate.

The research team is Dr Peter Bellingham and Chris Morse of Landcare Research (Lincoln), Dr David Burslem (University of Aberdeen, UK) and Dr Chris Lusk (Macquarie University, Australia). The research complements similar research being conducted in other sites in New Zealand, for example, in Te Urewera. Some of the same species, such as tawa also dominate there, so the research from Puketī will also help us understand whether trees specialise more in their regeneration requirements as tree diversity increases.

## Rat Trap Trial

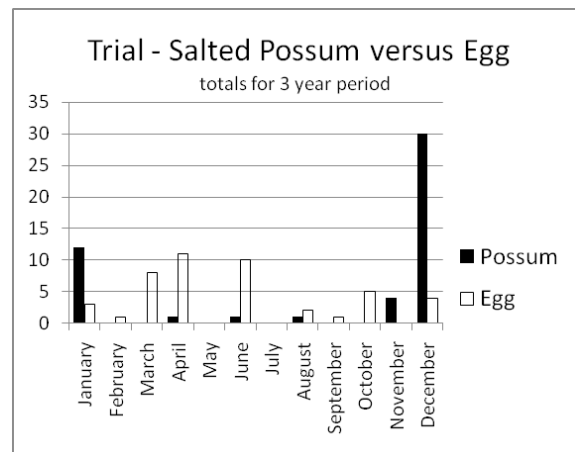


The Trust is constantly looking for better and more cost effective ways to control predators.

The generally favoured trap for rats is the Victor Professional. When the rat control area was extended in 2007, some groups had been using the Snap-E which was over twice the price but being made of plastic and stainless-steel had the potential to last longer. To test the effectiveness of the two traps a trial was set up with 100 of each trap. For the first four months there was no difference between them. As time went on the snap-E trap gave better and better results. Investigation has revealed that the treadles on the Victors were becoming stiff with corrosion, increasing the trigger force required. After extra lubrication the catch rate has become the same again but it is an extra job for the ratter. From past experience most Victors fail after three to four years due to the springs rusting or the wooden bases rotting – even though we paint them. Apart from two which developed faults in the first 6 months, the Snap-Es appear to be in good order after 18 months and are expected to last many more years. As the price of Snap-Es has come down and Victors have gone up it seems logical to use Snap-Es in the future.

## Stoat Bait Trial

The trial of bait for stoats on line 9, comparing salted possum with eggs, is nearing the end of its third year. This year the results have been consistent with previous years – in winter almost all stoats are caught on eggs, while in summer more are caught on salted possum. For the past two winters (March to September) we have used eggs in all the traps (except those in the trial that require salted possum) and the number of stoats caught over the winter has gone up from about 10 to 32 last year and 47 this year. We are hoping this will be reflected in less stoats caught in the summer and even better kiwi chick survival.



## Feral Pigs

Feral pigs are ubiquitous in Northland, pig hunting is popular, and many people misguidedly think it is a great idea to release pigs in forests. Puketi Forest is no exception. Pigs thrive in a wide variety of habitats. Both sexes grow tusks, and these along with their snouts, cause extensive damage of the ground as they search for food such as roots and earthworms. They are omnivorous, feeding on fern, insects, eggs, snails, roots and dead animals.

Pigs are regarded as a pest because their rooting damages the essential habitat of ground dwelling species, encourages the spread of weeds and prevents new native seedlings from germinating. They eat native invertebrates such as giant kauri snail and weta, and the eggs of ground nesting birds like kiwi and weka. They also interfere with pest control operations by disturbing and setting off traps.

For these reasons pigs need to be controlled to protect the native forest ecosystem. Hunting is done using dogs to locate and then hold or bail pigs until the hunter arrives to kill them.

Unfortunately, some dogs will kill a kiwi if they come across one when hunting and it is not uncommon for hunters to lose dogs in the bush. Kiwi aversion training reduces the risk that dogs will kill kiwi they find. We have found most hunters are concerned about the threat their dogs pose to kiwi and are very willing to get them aversion trained. We are pleased that DOC are now running at least two aversion training days a year and are going to make kiwi aversion training a requirement before hunters are issued with a permit.

## Report from the Department of Conservation

Another kiwi aversion training day was held on 13<sup>th</sup> September at Puketi Forest Headquarters. More than 60 dogs were trained, some for the first time and the remainder refreshing their training.

Pirau Road, which provides access to the trust's management area, is currently being upgraded. The road surface is being reshaped and metalled where needed. Vegetation is being cut back and drains and culverts cleared. This road is important for pest control and monitoring but is expensive to maintain and is sometimes abused by 4WD enthusiasts and pig hunters. A new security gate recently installed near the Forest Headquarters is much more effective at controlling access than the previous arrangement.

Extra possum control was carried out around the robin release area from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September using cyanide. DOC staff and trust volunteers treated about 230 hectares, which covers all the locations where the robins have been sighted. Indications are that a good result was obtained. Hopefully the robins can nest unmolested.

Tenders have been called for possum control in the north Puketi management area (includes Manginangina Scenic Reserve) to be carried out from October to March 2010. This contract will be based on fur recovery with incentive payments on a sliding scale for the level of population control achieved. If this format is successful it will be used in and around the trust's core management area next year.

This year's goat control contract in Puketi has just been completed. It has been particularly successful because it was carried out in winter, catching many animals before the breeding season. The cullers also commented that the trust's trap lines were useful for access to some of the remote areas.

### Where Does Your Donation Go?

In recent months a lot of publicity has been given to the small proportion of donations to some charities that are actually spent on the cause they are given for. All of the trust's administration is done by volunteers and less than one percent of the trust's income is spent on anything other than pest control. So over 99% of your donation is being spent where you want it to go. Thank you for your support.

The cost of anything other than traps and trap servicing is met by special grants and sponsorship. The robin translocation was funded by grants from the **NZ Lottery Grants Board** and the **ASB Community Trust**. Both of these organisations have also given grants towards the cost of pest control, as has the **BNZ Save the Kiwi Trust** whose grant is specifically targeted to stoat trapping. **Pub Charity** gave a grant specifically for making the Oho Mai Puketi documentary.

**CMI Springs** (manufacturers of the DOC 200 stoat trap) sponsored the AGM, covering the cost of the venue and refreshments. A new possum trap designed by the Department of Conservation and manufactured by CMI Springs was shown to the public for the first time at our AGM. CMI Springs have donated six of these traps to the Trust.

## A Gift That Keeps on Giving

*Gary Bramley*

You may remember that last year the Trust launched "The Kauri Fund," a capital fund intended to accumulate around \$1 million so that the principal could be invested and the returns used to carry out pest control in the forest. The balance of this fund currently stands at just over \$20,000 and was given a significant boost recently by the wishes of a supporter who had made provision for the Trust in her will, choosing to leave the Trust \$5,000. This money has duly been received and has been applied to the capital fund.

Carey and I have recently had cause to update our wills and I have made similar provision in my will. With a young family we are not in the position to donate as much money to the trust as we would like, but consider that the trust's work is very important. If we were to die the amount of money left in our estate would provide for the children, but it also contains enough money to make a reasonable donation to ensure the trust's work continues, and so that is what we have done.

I would encourage all the trust's supporters to consider if making such a bequest would be appropriate for them. No special paperwork is required, just name the trust and provide the address in your will and your executors will take care of the rest. If the trust for any reason is wound up then our constitution requires that any accumulated funds be given to other conservation projects in Northland, so the money will certainly be put to good use. Thank you to all those who have donated to the Kauri Fund. We will continue to seek donations to build the fund to the required level as part of our goal of achieving financial self sufficiency. If you have any questions about making a donation or a bequest to the Kauri Fund please feel free to contact one of the trustees.