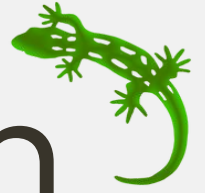


# Friends of Okura Bush



## AGM REPORT 2024



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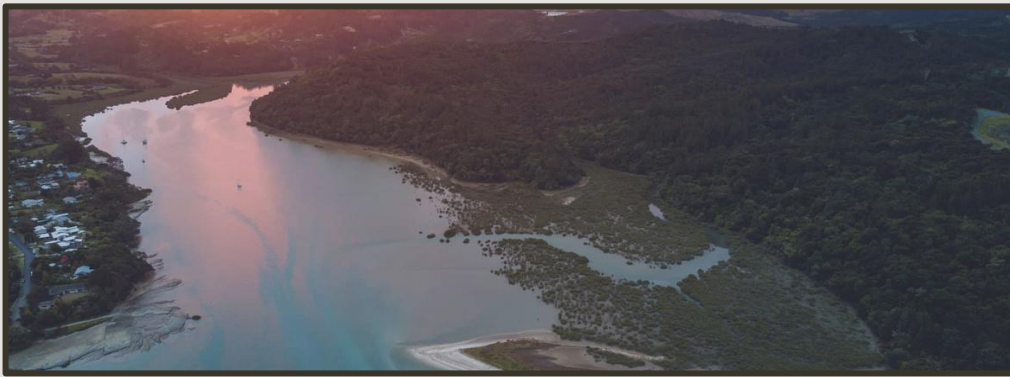


Photo credit: Frits Beneka

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Spanning an area of 116ha, the Okura Bush Reserve holds outstanding conservation value, and offers a unique remnant of Auckland's natural heritage.

It is one of the last large stands of coastal broadleaf and kauri forests between the Coromandel and Whangarei, showcasing pre-European trees of magnificent beauty.

Kauri, mature puriri, taraire, kahikatea and kōwhai occupy the reserve, as well as a high diversity of understory species.

The reserve also provides habitat to the regionally rare birds miromiro and mātātā, along with many other endangered species, and seven species of native lizard; six of which are at risk of extinction.

The significance of the reserve is further enhanced by its surrounding environment – which includes the twin estuaries of the Okura and Weiti rivers, a marine reserve, Karepiro Beach, cheniers, areas of forest on public and private land, and freshwater / wetland habitats. Karepiro Beach is a regionally important wader roost and breeding site for New Zealand dotterel, Variable oystercatcher and Pied stilt.

Friends of Okura Bush (FoOB) was established in 2013 in order to protect and restore the biodiversity of this rare and valuable ecosystem. Working in partnership with the community and key partners, it leads an environmental restoration programme that spans the Okura – Weiti – Stillwater area, from the coastline inland to East Coast Road, and includes both public and privately owned land. Initiatives include predator control, weed eradication, developing pest plans for private properties, and education and advocacy.



Photo credit: Frits Beneka

## 2. MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

Kia ora tatou

We would firstly like to say a big thank you to everyone for keeping the momentum going from when we started over eleven years ago, for all that we have achieved in that time, and for adding so much value to our restoration programmes helping to take our precious environment back to nature. In the past year, led by Jo Crawford, we have made gains in predator control, working alongside the Department of Conservation to resume trapping in our beloved Okura Bush after a hiatus of several years, developing the new Stillwater Village backyard trapping project, and working alongside Auckland Council to implement some form of cat control where our precious shore bird taonga species hang out.

Lynne Beneka and Linda Gates have kindly managed the Okura and Stillwater villages' backyard trapping so ably. Bernard Michaux very regularly monitors the shore birdlife and attributes breeding successes to the effect of our programmes.

We have been lucky to engage ReWhenua to take a lead on pest plant control on the council reserves of Deborah, Okura Esplanade and Dacre Historic and Esplanade Reserve, working their way through the five-year plans for each. The transformation from what these areas were six or seven years ago is awesome. We are grateful to the volunteers who assist in this task. Property Pest Plans, funded by our local board, are proving to be a great help in educating landowners regarding what plants are pests, alternative plant varieties and also in knocking back the animal pests.

We were thrilled to get funding to start a new project - Facing the Weed Tsunami - where, working with stakeholders across the board, we aim to develop a plan to actually eliminate the top priority weeds which seriously threaten the viability of our native bush, and indeed, our natural environment.



Restoration of the Karepiro Bay wetland has always been an aspiration of ours, and we are so pleased to be working alongside the Weiti Bay residents, Whitebait Connection and Te Kawerau A Maki to make this happen.

We cannot reiterate enough our thanks to our volunteers who contribute time and energy week after week to check and bait traps, or dealing with bramble and gorse thorns when dealing to pest plants. We also deeply appreciate the support and advice we have received from Te Kawerau a Maki and Ngati Manuhiri in helping restore an area significant to them in their rohe. Thanks must also go to all our funders and financial supporters who, without them, none of this would happen.

Last but not least, a thank you to our loyal committee who have contributed in decision making and running our organisation. A big thank you especially to Beverley Short, who has been with us since we formed FoOB in 2013 and has been our secretary for the last 10 years! Bev is passionate about our environment and has been unwavering in her endeavours to help us reach our goals. And thank you too to our coordinator, Chris Bettany, for going above and beyond in managing FoOB.

There are still challenges ahead of us, not least of them being ongoing funding, with funders having diminished funds. We were hugely disappointed to miss out on council funding for co-ordination and for further extending predator control in rural Stillwater. We are also concerned at the threat of the Fast Track Bill. We would hate to see the contribution we made to the success of the Environment Court decision to stop intensive development at Okura overturned. However, nothing will hold us back. We will continue with passion towards our objectives and taking on more. We are supported by dedicated volunteers and supporters striving to preserve our environment well into the future.

With warm regards

Lezette Reid & John Marais

Co-chairpersons

AGM Report 2024



**Above:** Community in action - working together to enhance our local environment. Volunteer support is crucial to our progress.



Photo: Frits Beneka

### 3. KEY HIGHLIGHTS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES





## 3.1 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. The continued work and dedication of our volunteers, who are essential to the success of our environmental programmes.
2. Collaboration between neighbouring property owners on weed management, driven by our property pest plans.
3. Four dotterel chicks reached their fledgling stage (the age when they can fly), out of the six eggs that hatched.
4. Engagement from Auckland Council to undertake live cat trapping
5. Facing the weed tsunami – funding was secured for a community outreach worker to support FoOB's programme of work against environmental weeds.
6. Obtaining permission from the Department of Conservation to start extending predator control within Okura Bush, following strict Kauri dieback procedures.



Photo credits: Frits Beneka

## 3.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### CHALLENGES

- **Predator control:** the theft of traps along our traplines has been costly, and created gaps in our predator control. Cat predation is also a problem with live trapping highlighting the threat posed by both domestic and feral cats.
- **Pest plants:** areas of concentrated weed invasion could quickly progress beyond reasonable control measures. The problem is worsened by the spread of invasive weeds from privately owned land, particularly where large areas are landbanked by overseas owners on the buffer zone.
- **The perfect storm:** we'll continue seeking sustainable funding sources but events from mother nature like the flooding have put a **severe strain on the budgets** of our traditional funding partners. The recession is biting and all entities in the public sector are required to cut budgets and headcount, which does not bode well when we go and ask for funds for environmental restoration.
- The implementation of the **Government's Fast-track Bill**, which bypasses the Environment Court, has the potential to cause irreversible damage to our natural environment.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- **Securing support for a weed survey** of the Okura Bush and surrounding environment would inform planning and prioritisation for weed control.
- **Business partnerships** could support longer-term planning and increase our impact.
- **Increasing our volunteer workforce** and engaging with rangatahi (youth) will strengthen our impact, and enable sustainable progress.
- **Continuing to build on the strength of our partnerships** to drive strong outcomes – including Department of Conservation (DOC), Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, Auckland Council, Te Kawerau a maki, Ngati Manuhiri, Forest & Bird, Restore Hibiscus and Bays, our locals schools and colleges, and both Stillwater and Okura Residents and Ratepayers Associations.
- **Engaging our community** to raise awareness of the challenges we face, and the importance of working together to protect our special environment.





# 4. COMMUNITY PLANTING & WEEDING



Photo: Frits Beneka

# 4.1 PLANTING DAY

Sunday 2 July 2023 dawned pouring – teeming – with rain. Oh no, this is our annual community planting with 2000 plants to plant. Who would come?

By 10 am the rain had eased and a stalwart group turned up set to brave the weather and mud to get to the planting site. In spite of such conditions, about 35 – 40 people trudged out to the site, some with youngsters, some from university, a keen contingent from Rangitoto College and other dedicated supporters, making short work of putting in the plants. The rain abated for the two hours out on site, setting in again only when we returned for refreshments at the lovely Stillwater Hall, kindly lent out to us for the day.

A team from council assisted on the day, providing spades and gloves, and a fine barbeque which supplemented the soup and goodies provided by the FoOB committee.

Thank you to all who made that planting day a success. This is a legacy that will endure for many years.

**2000 natives planted**





# 4.2 WEED CONTROL

## Weed control on the Okura Walkway (council section), Okura Esplanade, and Deborah Reserves

Through the good work of our contractors, ReWhenua, substantial progress has been made on our five-year plans for each of these areas. There was considerable additional work this year, as we continue to catch up following the covid lockdown periods. However, across large parts of the areas, we have controlled major infestations of pest plants such as climbing asparagus, moth plant, woolly nightshade, Chinese privet, and periwinkle, so that we are now reaching the stage of seedbank control. It is gratifying to see evidence of natives such as kowhai, puriri and kohekohe self-regenerating. The fruits of previous community planting days is seen as they now provide canopy cover for the new growth and enhanced habitat for our native birds, reptiles and insects.

Weed control is an ongoing process, with incursions from neighbouring privately owned land. Attempts have been made to contact the overseas landowners for their assistance in controlling the pest plants on their land, but without success. Other threats come from weeds spilling over from private land on to Deborah Reserve, and erosion on the banks of the estuary. We have recommended that another contractor, such as Wildlands, takes responsibility for the large stands of arundo grass alongside the Okura side of the estuary which are beyond the scope of our work.



**Above and below:** weed control carried out by ReWhenua



"It is gratifying to see evidence of natives such as kowhai, puriri and kohekohe self-regenerating."

### Next steps:

We are now due to update our five year weed control plans and look forward to another successful year of continuing to restore our revered taiao.

## Monthly weeding bee

As well as our contracted control of weeds, a small group of dedicated volunteers have turned up on periodic Sunday mornings to battle the weeds on the Okura Walkway, complementing the specialised work of the contractors. This last year has not seen many volunteers and we would very much like to expand the volunteer team so that we can reinstate the once-a-month Sunday morning weeding bees, both on the Okura Walkway, and at Deborah Reserve. A special thank you must go to John Marais who has so consistently promoted these volunteer days.



**Above:** Volunteer Tony Cunningham, is a tireless champion for targeting moth plant.

**Below:** Wild ginger, a pest plant commonly spotted in Stillwater.



Photo credit: Frits Beneka

Expanding our volunteer base will be a focus for the coming year.

Community engagement is essential as we work to control the weeds that are invading our environment.



## ‘Facing the weed tsunami’ project

In 2023, Geoff Reid, one of the founders of FoOB, and current vice chair, gave a provocative and well-received presentation at the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) on the threat posed by pest plants on our native forests. View his presentation, *Facing the Tsunami – Our biggest threat is on the way*, here: <https://youtu.be/LJ4T2BR3wD8?si=fo7Fw-HaSlIdBR9mC>.

This inspired FoOB to do something about the priority weeds that threaten the Okura Bush. Weeds such as climbing asparagus, bangalow palm, moth plant, Chinese privet and others. With help from funding from Pub Charity and the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, we have been able to engage a community liaison worker to engage with stakeholders – including Auckland Council, DOC, Ministry for Primary Industries, mana whenua, private landowners, community environment groups, and the business sector – to formulate a strategy to eliminate these weeds in a wide buffer around the bush, council reserves, significant ecological areas (SEAs), and biodiversity focus areas (BFAs) in our area.

The importance of this work is recognised by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment in his report, *Space invaders: A review of how New Zealand manages weeds that threaten native ecosystems*, November 2021. Since starting with us, Anwen has been meeting with stakeholders, and is focused on raising awareness about the damaging impact of weeds, as a key foundation to this work. Eliminating weeds is not a quick matter – it may take several years to deal with recurring seedbanks. FoOB is pleased that the initial response to this programme has been encouraging.



### Common weeds:

**Above:** Climbing asparagus

**Centre:** Japanese honeysuckle

**Bottom:** Bangalow palm

# 5. PREDATOR CONTROL

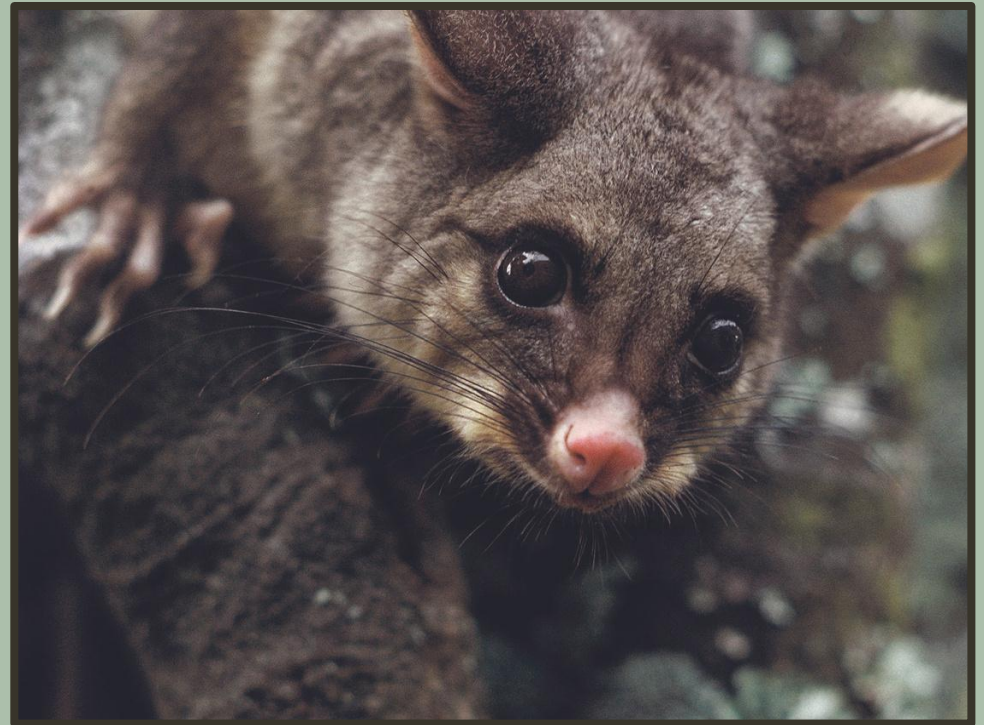


Photo: Frits Beneka



# 5.1 TRAP LINES

In addition to rodent bait stations along Dacre Historic and Esplanade Reserve our dedicated volunteers have caught the following predators in our local public reserves this past AGM year.

Predator Pest Catches	1 August 2023 - 30 June 2024
Ferrets	0
Stoats	16
Weasels	38
Possums	145
Hedgehogs	47
Norway Rats	34
Ship Rats	458
Mice	625
Rabbits	2
Indian Myna	2

NOTE: Numbers do not include our residential backyard trapping projects in Okura and Stillwater.

If you are interested in specific lines or species please visit:

[catchit.co.nz/apps/summaryportfolio/?Area=OkuraBushWalkway](https://catchit.co.nz/apps/summaryportfolio/?Area=OkuraBushWalkway)



**Above:** Map of the trap lines. The colours indicate the density of catches (the darker and larger the colour the higher the catches in those areas). Tiny yellow dots are the traps with the least catches or traps unable to be serviced due to slips or kauri dieback.

## Predator pest monitoring

Predator pest monitoring in council reserves last occurred in September 2023, and was undertaken by Wildlands using tracking tunnels over one night, and waxtags over a standard "5 fine nights" period.

Deborah Reserve came up 70% clear, 20% mice, 10% rats, 0% mustelids and 0% hedgehogs on the tracking pads with a 5% possum detection on the waxtags. It was only two years prior that the reserve had an 80% possum density so this is a great effort from the volunteers and local residents that has really paid off. It would be great to get the rodents maintained below 5%, but these figures are very positive otherwise.

Dacre Historic & Esplanade Reserve (within the bush and a couple of devices on the cheniers) had possums below 10%, with 0% mustelids and hedgehogs. Unfortunately, rodents came in well above our healthy ecosystem threshold here again both on the tracking pads and the waxtags, with rats at 40<50% between the two types of monitoring and mice at 15<30%.

**Possum density  
reduced from 80%  
to 5% at Deborah  
Reserve within two  
years.**

**Despite both bait stations and traps being in use within Dacre Historic & Esplanade Reserve, rodent density continues to be well above our healthy ecosystem threshold.**





Despite all our volunteers' efforts we expect rodents to continue to be a problem at Dacre Reserve as the entire 2.8 kilometre length of the landward boundary of the reserve is bordered predominantly by land invested with an overseas owner. This private land is over 130 hectares, incorporating wetlands, pine, exotic weeds, pasture and smidgens of native bush, with no predator control occurring at all.

The land falls within the council's 500-meter buffer zone for good neighbours of a Significant Ecological Area (SEA), but to date the council has taken no action. FoOB has attempted to contact the investor on multiple occasions to seek permission to undertake pest control on the land, however no response has been received.

As a volunteer it's hard not to think about how endless this task of protecting our natives is when adjacent land investors are not required by law to undertake pest control. You can see between these two reserves what a difference it makes when private landowners adjacent to the reserves are helping in the effort on their own properties. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to carry out monitoring within Okura Bush itself due to lack of capacity and Kauri Dieback restrictions, but it is on our radar for the future.

**How will Aotearoa get to  
Predator Free 2050  
without landowner engagement?**

## Trapline theft

FoOB had over \$1,500 worth of traps stolen from the Karepiro end of Okura Bush this past year. It's been a big blow as we have very limited predator control in Okura Bush while we continue to work out logistics around Kauri Dieback and the large slips that took out multiple portions of the track during the cyclones of 2023.

**Over \$1,500  
worth of traps  
were stolen over  
this past year**

## Native sightings via our trapline volunteers

On a much happier note, our volunteers have enjoyed spotting our Pacific Gecko again in the bush, as well as many cave weta families utilising our trap boxes, breeding giraffe weevils, dragonflies and the calls of the very elusive fernbird.

A HUGE thank you for all our trappers' mahi in looking after nature (471 hours this past AGM year). We really do appreciate you giving your time to this cause.

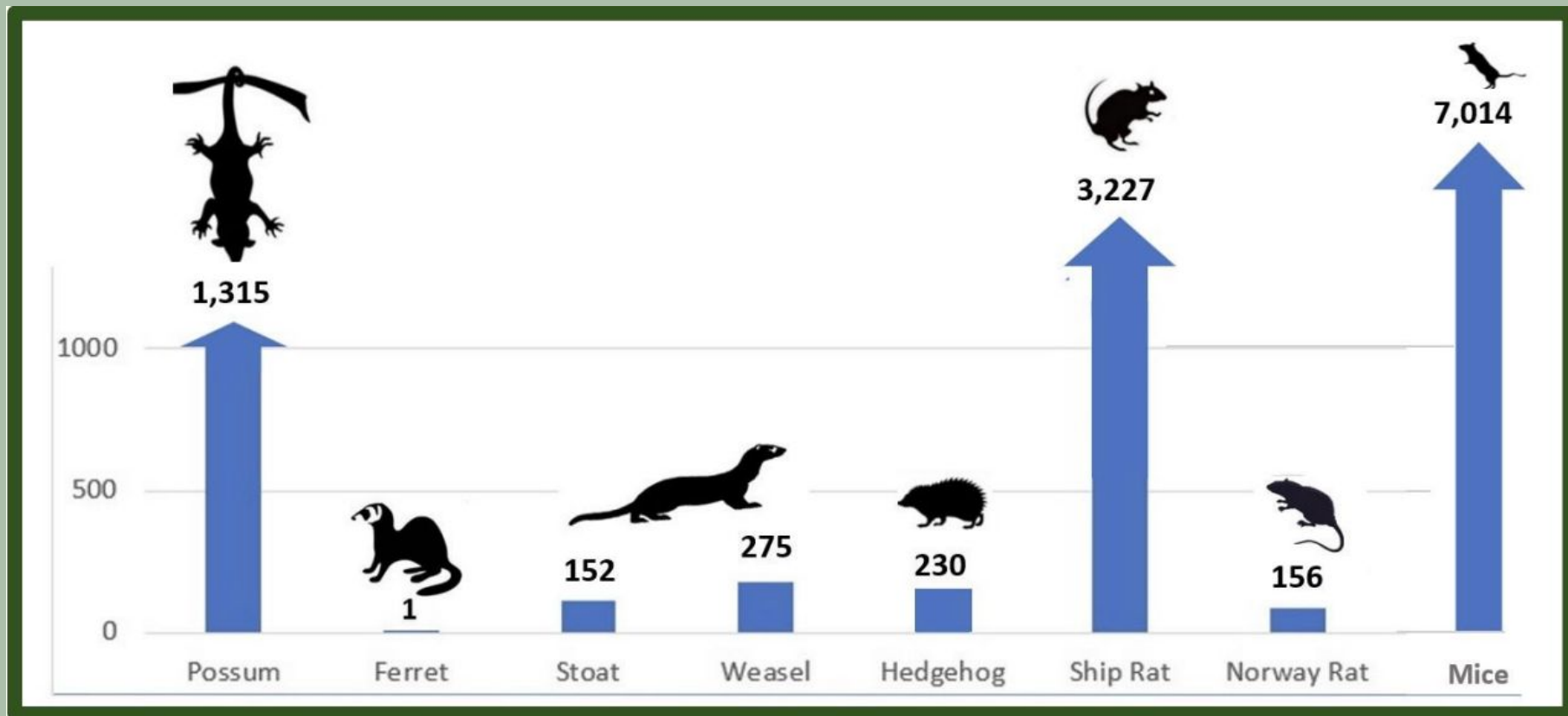
**Our trapline volunteers put in 471  
hours of work over the past year!**



**Above:** Cave weta  
**Left:** Giraffe weevils.  
Both images captured by  
trapline volunteers.



All time predator catch tally to 30 June 2024



# 5.2 CAT PREDATION

## Cats at Dacre Historic and Esplanade Reserve

Following FoOB's determined kōrero with Auckland Council, dating back to October 2022, council started undertaking live cat trapping along Dacre Historic & Esplanade Reserve this year. It was late for the 2023 breeding season but encouraging to see progress nevertheless.

Council's trapping regime was to trap for five consecutive nights, once a month, from February through to June. Two feral cats were caught, one in the February, and one in the March pulses. Two tame cats were also caught during the May pulse. One of these was microchipped and returned directly to its owner. The other had no microchip so a paper collar explaining where it had been caught was placed on the cat before it was released on Duck Creek Road away from the reserve. June saw the same tame cats caught as in the May pulse, the microchipped cat being caught twice in the same 5-night pulse, and the other receiving a paper council collar again. All cats caught have been out at the Stillwater Cheniers, despite a number of live traps being placed along the entire reserve including Karepiro Bush and beach.

Council are currently in talks about what live trapping (if any) they will provide in the next financial year.

Cats are regularly spotted on security cameras at the Ara Weiti Carpark, at the Weiti Village itself (which has a no cat policy), and on trail cameras in the reserve. A resident at Weiti Bay village accidentally caught a tame cat in a live rodent trap on their property (it was a large trap!). Cats have also been seen around building site skip bins within the village at night, and chasing after shorebirds that have been taking refuge in backyards up on the hill, so there is a long road ahead of us.

## Have you noticed how many times cats are reported as missing on our local Facebook pages?

The frequency of roaming cats highlights the need for a National Cat Management Plan with rules in place for owners, just like our country has for dogs – it's not just feral cats that pose threat to our native fauna.

AGM Report 2024



**Above:** Pateke ducks are particularly vulnerable to cat predation.

**Below:** Domestic cat released with paper collar to advise owners of its roaming.





## 5.3 BACKYARD TRAPPING - OKURA

*By Lynne Beneka - Okura Village Rat Catch Co-ordinator*

We continue to be steady with about 62 properties with traps. We have had some new members on the outskirts along Vaughans Road and East Coast Road who are enthusiastic and doing a great job, particularly with possum catching. There are only a small core group of regular trappers who respond to monthly emails and keep track of their catches. I am sure there are more catches than are reported. Jo Crawford (FoOB's Predator Pest Control Coordinator) and I were invited to give a short presentation at the ORRA AGM which resulted in a few more joining us with the backyard trapping.

The trap line along the waterline on the Deborah Reserve has continued to be checked weekly by four enthusiastic but dwindling rostered volunteers. All catches are available on CatchIT - 10 Mice, 12 Ship Rats, 10 Possums. We are still unable to access traps 1,2,3 and 5 due to the slips. A number of traps were vandalised, but have now either been fixed or replaced. Adding three possum traps has resulted in some regular catches. After adding six traps around the Okura Hall last year, we have been successful in catching five big rats and eight mice! All catch numbers have increased since a year ago in the backyard trapping, Deborah Reserve and the Okura Hall.






Species	AGM year (July 2023 - June 2024)	July 2022- June 2023
Rats 	54	35
Mice 	37	31
Possums 	14	2
Stoats 	4	0
Hedgehogs 	0	1

There has been a notable increase in the number of catches reported by our backyard trappers across the past two years.

## 5.3 BACKYARD TRAPPING - STILLWATER

This year, FoOB developed a management plan to extend our predator control into the Stillwater area, including the western margins of the Weiti River. This would complement the predator control on the Okura Walkway and also on the eastern side of the river at Archer's Bush being undertaken by Predator Free Hibiscus Coast. Although the intent had been to firstly focus on the margins of the river, and around the rural areas of ecological significance, with the generous support of Predator Free NZ we were able to establish a backyard trapping programme at Stillwater Village.

The Stillwater Boating Club gave us use of their lovely rooms for a community day where local villagers could drop by to learn more about identifying a range of predators, the relevance of controlling them and techniques in handling a range of traps. In all, it was a wonderful family day, thanks to Jo Crawford to organising it, and her team of supporters. Local resident, Linda Gates, volunteered to become the scheme's co-ordinator. Twenty-five families have now signed up to be part of the village backyard trapping scheme and further activities have been planned to encourage more to become involved over the next year.

Species	AGM year (July 2023 – June 2024)
Rats 	97
Mice 	41
Possums 	51
Stoats 	0
Hedgehogs 	7

Twenty-five families have signed up to be part of the Stillwater village backyard trapping scheme, and we are looking to grow this number.

# TRIBUTE: LOCAL CONSERVATION HERO, BARRIE HEPBURN, GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Barrie sadly passed away in January 2024, and we wanted to do him honour as he has been a real local legend protecting our natives.

When Barrie moved to the area and teamed up with another local resident Danny back in 2020 they were unstoppable!

They installed over 150 traps at the boundaries of the Weiti Bay Village development which border a large part of Okura Bush and Karepiro Beach. They also went on innumerable night shoots and helped us transport countless numbers of predator control devices to areas with difficult access.

They were also out in the wetland rounding up pesky Canadian Geese, even when Barrie had sustained an injury or two in his determination to protect the area.

Barrie's sense of humour was outrageous, and he gave some of our trappers a great laugh with his secretly placed rubber snakes in the traps to startle us. Barrie also liked to skin some of the predators – and we are grateful to him passing these on to us for educational purposes.

Thanks for all your mahi. We are sorry you never did manage to catch that Eastern Water Dragon, despite all the effort you put into it! You deserve a rest our friend.



Between the traps and the night shoots from mid 2020 and the end of December 2023 Barrie and Danny removed:

- 477 possums
- 10 stoats
- 29 weasels
- 75 hedgehogs
- 79 ship rats
- 7 Norway rats
- 619 mice
- 9 rabbits

We don't have a tally of the Canadian geese Barrie managed to shoot.

He and Danny also live-caught over 15 stray, feral and owned cats that turned up within the cat free village zone.

**Left:** Barrie Hepburn, with some of his many catches, including a rubber snake! Barrie was a stalwart volunteer, and contributed significantly to our predator control programme.



# 6. PROPERTY PEST PLANS

## BACKGROUND

A property pest plan (PPP) involves carrying out an assessment of plants on private properties to identify weeds that pose ecological threat to the Okura Bush and surrounding environment. The plan prioritises the eradication of these weeds, and offers property owners guidance on control measures for invasive weeds.

With funding from the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board, PPP's are offered to property owners who occupy land on the Okura Bush buffer zone. The buffer zone is a crucial strip of land that encircles Okura Bush, offering a control area to minimise the spread of invasive weeds into the bush where they become more challenging to control.

To date, over 60 plans have been completed. PPP's play a vital role in working with the community to raise awareness and minimise the damage caused by invasive weeds. They are also a key source of information for FoOB – giving us increased visibility of the spread of weeds in our area.

Over **60**  
property  
pest plans  
completed

**KEY WIN:**  
Property owners  
collaborating with  
neighbours to  
eradicate weeds

# COMMON WEEDS: PROPERTY PEST PLANS

Carrying out a property pest plan inevitably leads to the identification of a number of environmental weeds – and often plants that weren't recognised by the owners as weeds.

A key component of the plan is to help property owners understand the potential impact of these weeds, and to prioritise their control.

## Common environmental weeds include:

- Climbing asparagus
- Moth plant
- Privet (chinese / tree privet)
- Taiwan cherry
- Bangalow palm
- Ivy
- Monkey apple (lillipilli)
- Japanese honeysuckle
- Arum lily
- Wild ginger.



**Above:** Climbing asparagus.



**Left:** Moth plant.

## Bangalow Palm

is a popular garden plant but has the potential to cause significant ecological harm.

Kereru eat and disperse the seeds widely.

**Property Pest Plans** offer visibility of the weeds in our area and how they are spreading

# WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS: PROPERTY PEST PLAN



**Before, during and after:** FoOB supporting a landowner to identify and treat wild ginger during a property pest plan.



# 7. BIRD REPORT

By Bernard Michaux

## WHAT A YEAR!

The season had it all – it was the best breeding season for tuturiwhatu (NZ dotterel), but the worst for torea pango (variable oystercatcher). Late spring storms washed away some of the dotterel nests, but two pairs hatched the day before the storm arrived and managed to take their babies to safety, and kept them warm and dry during the downpours. Four chicks from the six eggs that hatched reached the age when they could fly – fledging – but they could so easily have been lost.

**Below:** a series of shots of the last chick of the season from the flag family. Altogether this pair had three clutches of eggs and fledged two chicks. Photographs taken from trail camera stills. Credit: Linda Gates



**Above:** one of the Dotterel pairs. The male is on the left and is more brightly coloured on the breast and belly; the female has a flag on her right leg that reads (if you look very closely) CXE. She was flagged as a youngster at Te Haruhi Bay in early 2022 and has successfully bred twice at Weiti; the youngster is about a week old.



### Torea pango (Variable oystercatchers)

The variable oystercatchers had a very odd breeding season. They started laying late and produced fewer eggs than usual. Out of the four pairs only three chicks were raised. The table below provides a summary of my records kept since 2018. Productivity is simply the number of chicks raised divided by the number of pairs.

	Variable oystercatcher / torea pango			NZ dotterel / tuturiwhatu			
Season	Fledged	Pairs	Productivity	Fledged	Pairs	Productivity	Comments
18/19	0	3	0.00	1	6	0.16	NE storms during breeding season
19/20	4	5	0.80	1	5	0.20	NE storms during breeding season
20/21	2	4	0.50	1	2*	0.50	*Covid restrictions
21/22	4	4	1.00	2	3*	0.67	
22/23	6	3	2.00	6	5	1.20	
23/24	3	4	0.75	11	8	1.40	
Average	3.2	3.8	0.84	3.7	4.8	0.69	NE storms during breeding season

Okura Chenier: VOC 1 or 2 pairs, dotterels 1 pair  
 Karepiro Beach: VOC 1 pair; dotterels 3/4 pairs  
 Weiti Chenier: VOC 2 pairs, dotterels 3 pairs

Possible reasons for increased productivity of tuturiwhatu (NZ dotterel) pairs:

- luck
- older, more experienced pairs
- earlier breeding
- pest control
- dog management.



Both Weiti and Karepiro were well used by the birds. The kuaka flock (bar-tailed godwit) roosted at Weiti this season with over 300 birds at one point when the later arriving juveniles passed through at the start of November. Between one and two hundred godwit regularly rested at Weiti over the high tide. Apart from a few, the rest flew off to China at the beginning of April. This photo must have been taken in the spring after the arrival of the godwits (brown birds at the front) but before the torea/pied oystercatchers left for the South Island. The torea/pied oystercatchers arrived in numbers to overwinter here and seem to split themselves between Weiti and Karepiro. Spot the spoonbills at Karepiro.



**Above:** Karepiro Beach.



**Above and below right:** Kuaka roost at Weiti Chenier



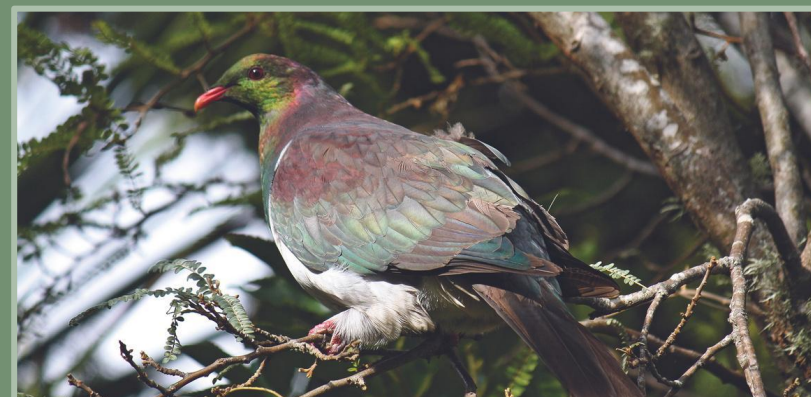


A snapshot of bird activity across the Cheniers and Karepiro Beach between January and May 2024, inclusive.

	5/1/24	16/1/24	25/1/24	11/2/24	1/3/24	5/4/24	15/4/24	27/5/24
<b>Weiti Chenier</b>								
torea pango/variable oystercatcher	6	6	7	10	18	28	27	8
torea/pied oystercatcher	46	84	75	156	141	144	124	97
tutiriwhatu/NZ dotterel	4	5	8	6	7	7	8	6
poaka/pied stilt		32	54	52	51	18	26	7
kuaka/godwit	51	35	45	21	141	13	21	0
<b>Karepiro Beach</b>								
torea pango/variable oystercatcher	7	15	13	16	20	13	0	26
torea/pied oystercatcher	73	131	132	123	151	89	174	68
tutiriwhatu/NZ dotterel	7	6	8	10	6	4	9	3
poaka/pied stilt	19		3	0	12	2	5	14
kuaka/godwit	91	105	101	3	1	0	0	19
<b>Okura River Chenier</b>								
torea/pied oystercatcher	2		2		0		2	0
tutiriwhatu/NZ dotterel	3		2		2		2	0
poaka/pied stilt	6		6		52		52	2
<b>Total number (all sites)</b>								
torea pango/variable oystercatcher	15	21	22	26	38	41	29	34
torea/pied oystercatcher	119	215	207	279	292	233	298	165
tutiriwhatu/NZ dotterel	14	11	18	16	15	11	19	9
poaka/pied stilt	25	32	63	52	115	20	83	23
kuaka/godwit	142	140	146	217	142	13	21	19

# 8. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Income 2023/2024	
Donations & Memberships	2,432
Grants Income - new grants	70,975
Carry over previous year	92,251
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>165,658</b>
Direct Costs	
Traps	6,418
Weeding - Contractors	43,330
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>49,748</b>
Operating Expenses	
Coordinator Fees	23,835
Trapping Coordinator	18,131
Depreciation	3,877
Other	2,390
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>48,233</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>67,677</b>
FYE 2023	(32,133)



## Breakdown of funding sources

Foundation North - Coordination	20,000
Pub Charity	7,000
Forest and Bird - Grant received for AT220 traps	3,975
Lotteries - Grant for coordination	20,000
Auckland Council - Grant for PPPs	20,000
	<b>70,975</b>

# 9. AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE COMING YEAR

**01**

## **Volunteer Engagement**

Engagement from the community is crucial to enabling sustainable progress. Increasing awareness and involvement in restoring our natural ecosystems is therefore a key focus for FoOB, by sharing information about the work we are doing, the impact we are having, and how our community can get involved in our programmes of work.

**02**

## **Funding Partnerships**

Working with our partners, and securing funding is a key enabler of our programmes. This past year has seen reductions in available funding, and this is a concern for our environment. We are focused on continuing to foster strong relationships with key partners and stakeholders, and engaging our business community to support continued and sustained action.

**03**

## **Responding to the Urgency**

Environmental weeds threaten to displace our native flora and fauna at a rate that could quickly become beyond reasonable control. Combining community engagement, funding streams and innovative technology to enhance and optimise our impact is increasingly important as we work towards a sustained control level.



# 10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Progress would not be possible without the support and engagement of our partners. Whether through funding or collaboration, these partnerships provide strength in unity and enable us to continue to preserve our valuable environment.

In addition to the organisations below, we are also grateful to Engineering New Zealand through the Mahurangi Penlink Project, Spencer Potbury and Z Energy. Funding is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, and ongoing support and partnership is vital if we are to keep moving forward.

Special mention must also go to the Okura and Stillwater Residents and Ratepayers Associations, and to our local schools and colleges who so loyally support our initiatives. We have appreciated also the support of the staff we have worked most closely with from Auckland Council, namely Dan Marrow, Rebecca Kemp and Sinead Brimacombe; and from DOC, Sol Cranna-Smith and Rebecca Rush.



# THANK YOU



Photo: Frits Beneka

**Toitū te marae o Tane Mahuta; Toitū te marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te tangata.**

If the land is well, if the sea is well, the people will thrive.