

Whareroa Farm Pest animal catch report

January to September 2021

The Covid Lockdown only represented a brief shutdown of trapping activities, as soon as the lockdown was over the trapping team was out and about. A breakdown of the 2021 catch record is attached below and a comparison with previous January to September catch records is below

Standout data

The most notable aspects of the 2021 catch to-date are the:

- increase in the number of mice caught,
- increase in the number of cats caught,
- decline in the number of mustelids caught - especially weasels, which in the past have been far more numerous than stoats.

The mouse catch is up but I won't attempt to guess why.

The cat catch is especially significant as the cats were caught between April and July, we've never previously caught so many cats in such a short period. The likely explanation has been provided by Whareroa neighbour Mike Alexander who, in discussion with a volunteer, said that he'd been catching cats in a live-catch trap, a cage trap I think. He said he couldn't bring himself to kill the cats so he'd been taking them away from his property and releasing them!

This may also explain the decline in **the mustelid catch** as research done by a joint LandCare Research and Lincoln University team at Lincoln has found stoats to be very scared of cats. It is highly likely that this also applies to weasels which are much smaller than stoats. This link is of course completely speculative, however.

Bad news - trap thefts.

Unfortunately, the trapping team have not been the only people frequenting the Whareroa traplines this year. Sometime in the middle of the year saw the theft of 19 leghold possum traps from the kohekohe bush opposite the caravan. These traps, supplied by DoC, were fixed to large trees with large barbed fencing staples making them very difficult to remove, even with appropriate tools. The lines are difficult to find but once a line is identified each trap is clearly identified in accordance with DoC guidelines. In future the traps will be fixed to trees with strong metal clips and removed after every use. This makes the trapping more time consuming.

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The battery powered auto resetting AT220s

In late 2020 we obtained funding from DoC for 15 of these new Whakatane-made traps. They kill all our target species - possums, cats, stoats, weasels, rats and mice - with the exception of hedgehogs - the traps are mounted on tree off the ground and hedgehogs don't climb. We had previously been given 3 of the first versions of these traps and found them astonishingly successful. The initial experience with the first three was very encouraging and the success of the 15 new traps was very impressive. However, as with the first three traps, the second 15 have seen a significant fall in possum numbers caught. As the traps still catch animals, but in much lower numbers, we suspect that the decline simply reflects the absence of animals in the vicinity of the traps. A three year programme was agreed with DoC to obtain the initial funding and new lure and batteries for three years, but we may consider relocating the traps to untrapped areas where they can be of more use.

The 15 AT220s have proven to be less robust than the initial 3 which were more of a prototype. However, Shane Williamson has established an extremely good relationship with the manufacturers in Whakatane, through which he regularly passes on work trips, and they repair and upgrade our traps extremely promptly at no charge. We remain very impressed at the traps' effectiveness. A record of the AT220 catch is attached below. **Note** - this is only a record of animals caught in the 15 DoC funded traps which were only deployed in January of this year.

My thanks as always to the trapping team, Shane Williamson, Jason Bohmer, John Rowland, Darrel Sutherland, Rodney Hopkirk, Ray Molineux, Tom Bruynel and a warm welcome to our latest recruit John Whibley (thanks to Darrel Sutherland for doing the recruiting).

Shane Cave

Whareroa pest animal catch history comparisons

January to September catch records				
	Mustelids	Rats	Mice	Cats
2021	8 ↓	173	194	10 ↑
2020	14	180	126	4
2019	20	142	126	5
2018	21	205	128	3
2017	22	258	150	6

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Whareroa Pest Monitoring: summary of trap results

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2021 Totals YTD	Totals since April 2013		
P Possum	18	7	4	9	3	9	7	2					59	10%	989	15%
W Weasel	1							1	1				3		116	
S Stoat			1		3			1					5		89	
F Ferret																
Mustelids	1		1		3			2	1				8	1%	205	3%
R Rats	20	21	24	26	20	11	20	10	21	12			185	32%	2609	41%
M Mouse	9	3	15	21	33	20	48	24	41	17			231	40%	1970	31%
H Hedgehog	9	4	15	4	9	4	1			1			47	8%	359	6%
B Bird	2									2			4	1%	30	0%
C Cat	1			1	5	2	3						12	2%	47	1%
G Goats/Deer					2								2	0%	39	1%
Rb Rabbit/Hares		1	8	3	4			1	6	7			30	5%	156	2%
Mice,H/Hogs,Cats	21	8	38	29	53	26	52	25	47	27			326	56%	2601	41%
	60	36	67	64	79	46	79	39	69	39			578	100%	6404	100%

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Whareroa Pest Monitoring: summary of trap results - AT220 Observed Kills

		Jan	Feb	Mär	Apr	Mai	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Okt	Nov	Dez	Observed Kills Totals YTD 2021	
P	Possum	18	7	2	9	3	1							40	38%
W	Weasel														
S	Stoat														
F	Ferret														
Mustelids															
RX	Rat, unknown type														
RR	Rattus rattus	9	3	3	7	2	4	7		10	4			49	
RE	Rattus exulans														
RN	Rattus norvegicus														
	Rats	9	3	3	7	2	4	7		10	4			49	47%
M	Mouse			1	1	6					4			12	11%
H	Hedgehog														
B	Bird														
C	Cat				1	2	1							4	
Rb	Rabbit														
	Mice,H/Hogs,Cats			1	2	8	1				4			16	15%
		27	10	6	18	13	6	7		10	8			105	100%

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