

The latest Animal Pest Control Team news from Shane Cave, Leader of the Animal Pest Team published on the Whareroa Guardian Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WhareroaGuardians) on March 10, 2021...

New Traps An Outstanding Success!!

Our trappers continue with the regular checking of our box traps which catch everything but possums, and Jason Bohmer catches possums in the winter using our DoC supplied leg hold traps.

Catch numbers go up and down for reasons we can never figure out, but this year's big development is in the possums caught by our 15 new battery-powered AT220 automatic resetting traps.

We also have 3 of the 1st versions of this trap which we started using in late 2019. Their initial success was striking so we applied for DoC funding to get 15 more which we received last year.

Before they were deployed, we conducted a baseline survey of target animals which we will repeat and compare after 12 months of the traps' operation. (The kills from two of those three older traps, which are still operating, are not included in the figures below).

Our 15 AT220s have killed 27 possums and 12 rats this year. One trap, just off Campbell's Mill Rd, has killed 5 possums and 2 rats. Not all 15 traps have operated all year, the last 5 only went in at the beginning of February.

These are observed kills as it's possible, albeit unlikely, that some carcasses have been moved or had other carcasses on top of them so don't get counted.

The AT220 Traps

The traps are battery powered and reset themselves after an animal is killed. They are mounted on a tree, so the carcasses fall to the ground as the trap resets.

A short ramp is fitted under the trap so carcasses are deflected to the side when they fall and new animals don't have to walk over dead animals to get up to the trap (although video recordings - done by others - show that target species are perfectly willing to walk over corpses to get to traps) .

The traps have an electronic beam trigger, so the animal doesn't have to push any physical trigger to activate the trap. The lure is dispensed by a pump at regular intervals and only needs to be replenished after several months.

The batteries are rechargeable using an ordinary phone charge plug and a USB attachment supplied by the manufacturer and the latest batteries seem to have a good life. They even turn themselves off during the day to conserve battery life as the main target species, possums, are nocturnal.

We have caught possums, rats, mice, a weasel and a cat in these traps. They are New Zealand designed and manufactured in Whakatane.

The new traps are deployed eastwards from the gum plantation then up to and along some of Campbell's Mill Rd.

This still leaves plenty for us to do, dealing with the possums that get past this line and enter the farm from areas where these traps are not deployed.

This means that for the bulk of the farm we will continue to use the leg hold traps which we've used until now to kill 930 possums.

Thanks again to the trapping team, Shane Cave, Shane Williamson, Darrel Sutherland, Rodney Hopkirk, Jason Bohmer, John Rowland, Brian Solomon and to two new recruits, Ray Molineux (2020) and Tom Bruynel (2021).

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Reminder: If you see goats on Whareroa, please send an email to Jason (jasonbohmer@gmail.com) or let us know on FB and we will forward it to Jason.

Let him know when, approximately where and how many goats you saw.

Wild Goats on Whareroa are sadly a quite destructive pest and turn up at irregular intervals in varying numbers.