

# Waitutu Field Trip Summary

August 2018



*Jenny Rickett*

*October 2018*

## Summary:

This report summarises the latest (Aug 2018) in a long-term series a quarterly monitoring trips at five sites (Poteriteri, Crombie, Waitutu, Slaughter Burn and Grant Burn) within Waitutu Forest. Rodent and mustelid monitoring was carried out, seed fall collected, and all traps checked, cleared if necessary and rebaited. Trap checks were carried out and maintenance of trap boxes at Poteriteri was carried out.

## Weather:

The weather was mixed. The first day was dry and mild, however heavy rain and wind occurred through the Wed night and persisted most of the day Thursday. Friday was mostly dry but saw high streams and rivers from the previous day/nights rainfall, however these receded quickly. Saturday and Sunday were clear and dry, and most areas saw a drop in temperatures with overnight frosts.

## Personnel:

**Poteriteri Hut:** Erina Loe, Louise McLaughlin, Max Viereck

**Slaughter Burn Hut:** Colin Bishop, Rose Collen

**Grant Burn Biv:** Rory Hannan

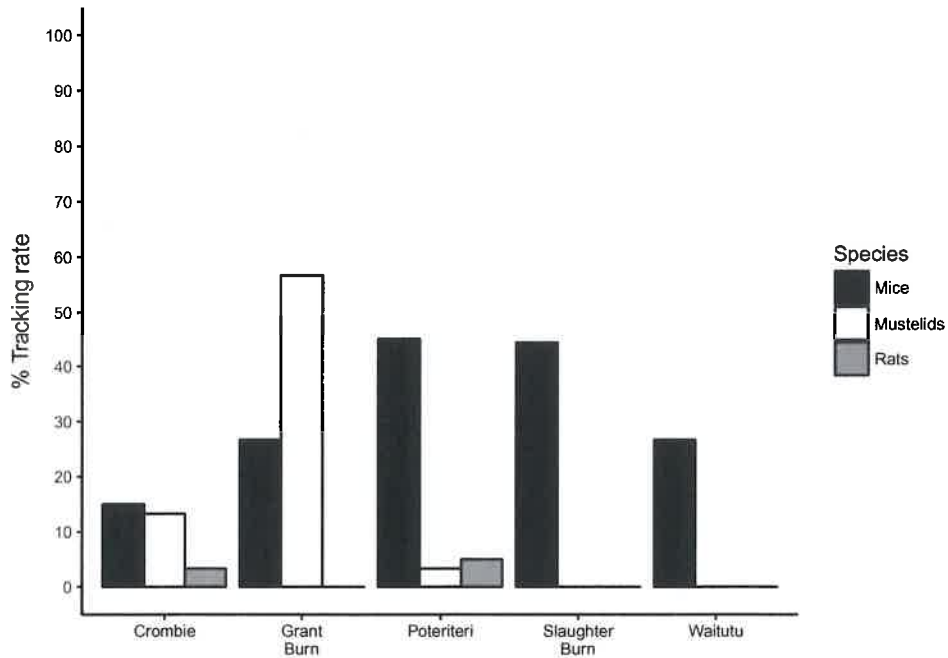
**Waitutu Hut:** Casie Heron, Jenny Rickett

**Crombie Biv:** Leanne Powell

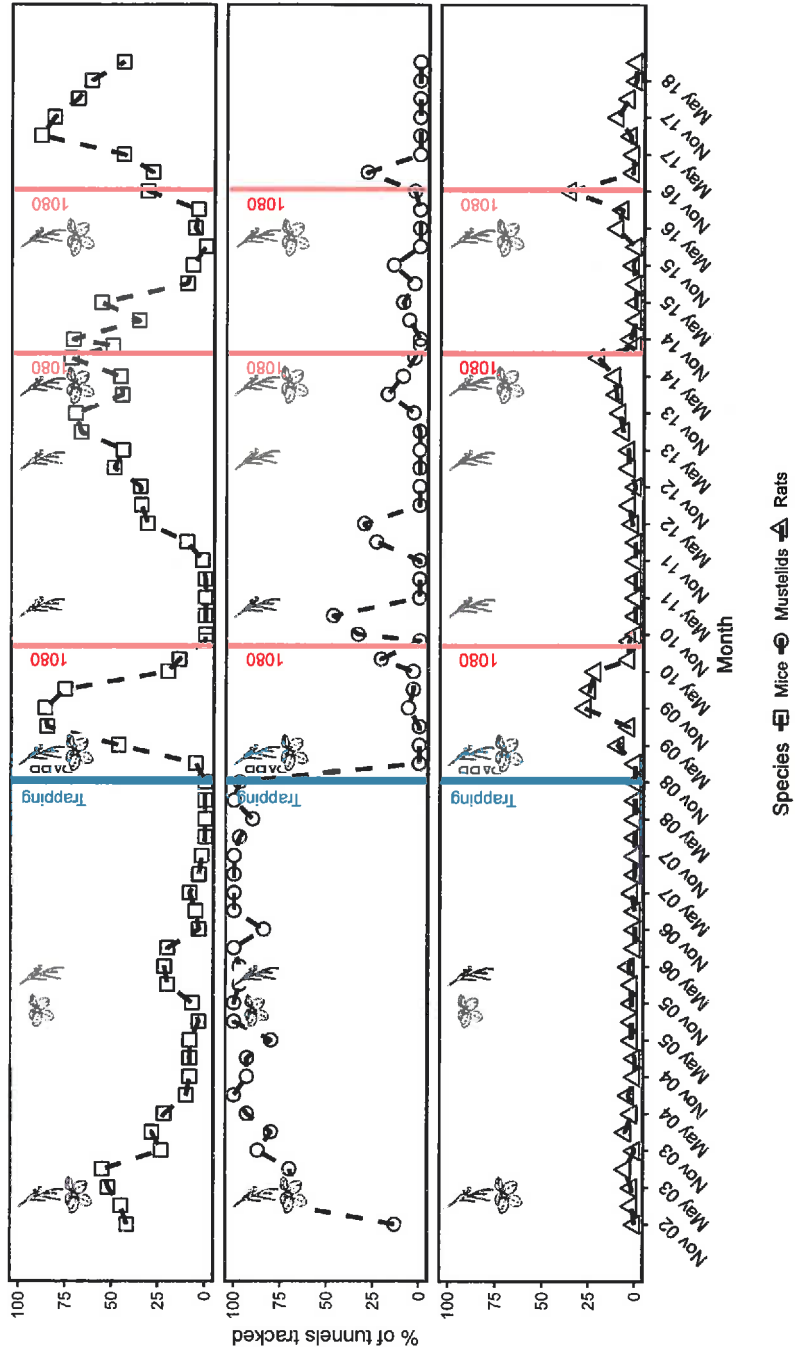
## Tracking Tunnels:

Mouse tracking activity at Slaughter Burn, Waitutu and Crombie has continued to decline significantly since May 2018. Mouse tracking at Poteriteri and Grant Burn had declined, but only slightly. Rat activity remained very low at Poteriteri and Crombie and was undetectable at Waitutu, Slaughter Burn and Grant Burn. Mustelid tracking was undetectable at Waitutu and Slaughter Burn and remained very low at Poteriteri. Crombie and Grant Burn remained stable at 13% and 60% respectively. Possum interference at tunnels was also noted on lines at Grant Burn, Waitutu and Slaughter Burn.

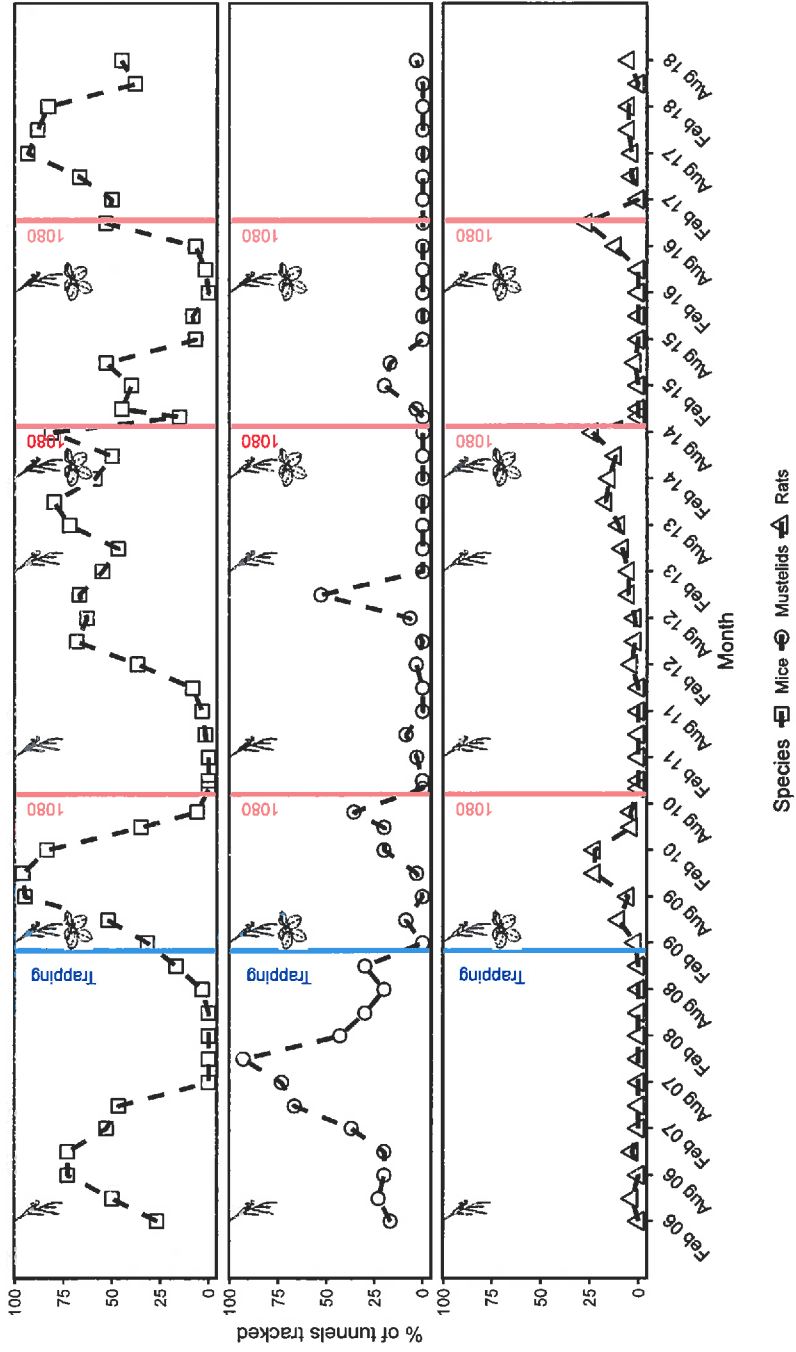
## August 2018 - All areas - % of tunnels tracked



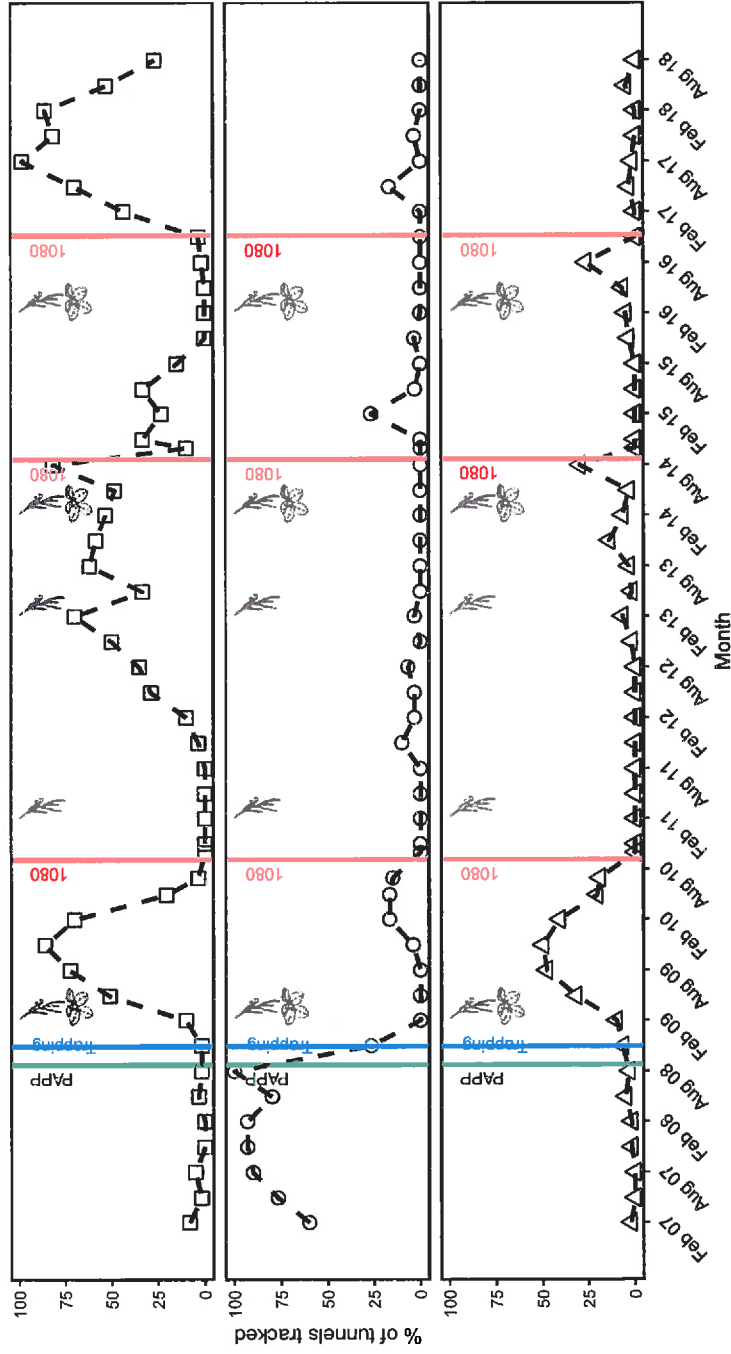
# Slaughter Burn - % of tunnels tracked



# Poteriteri - % of tunnels tracked

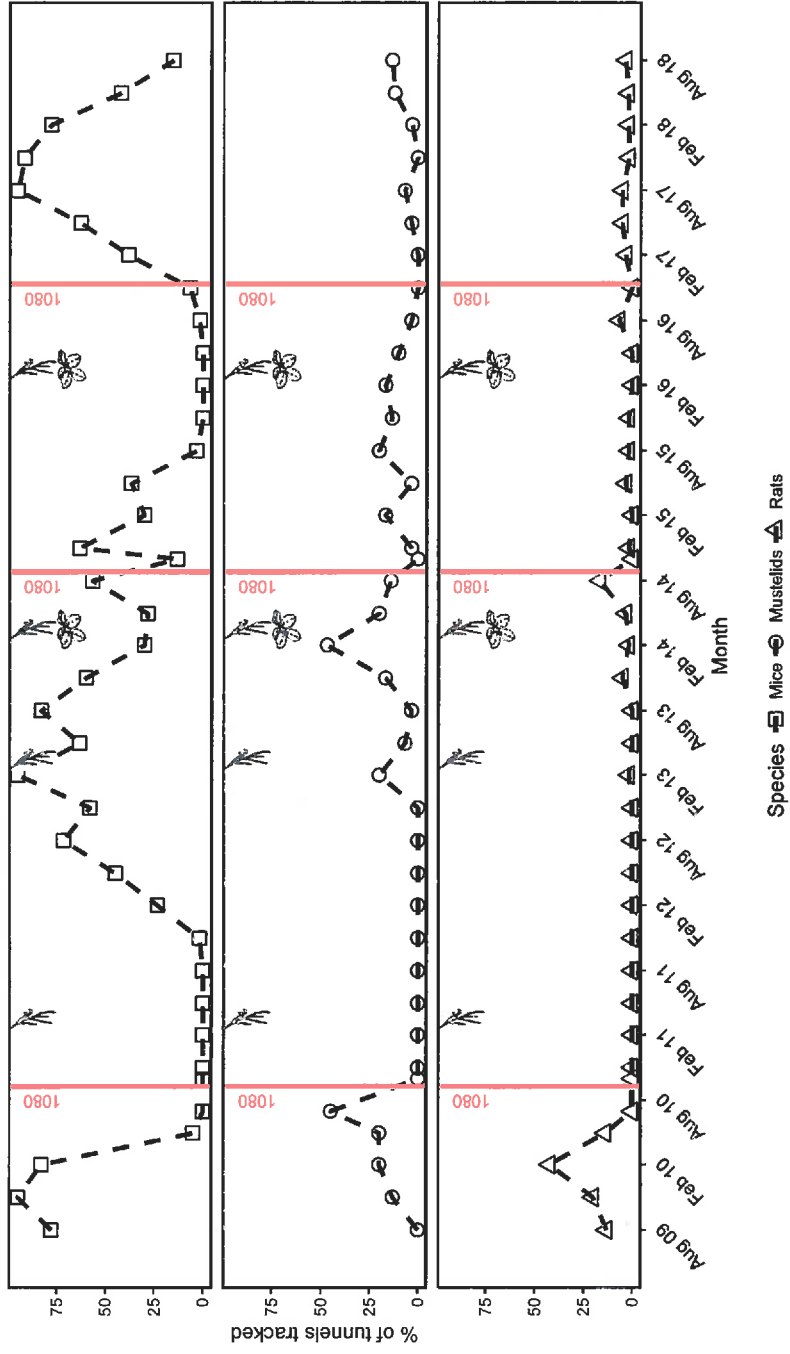


# Waitutu - % of tunnels tracked

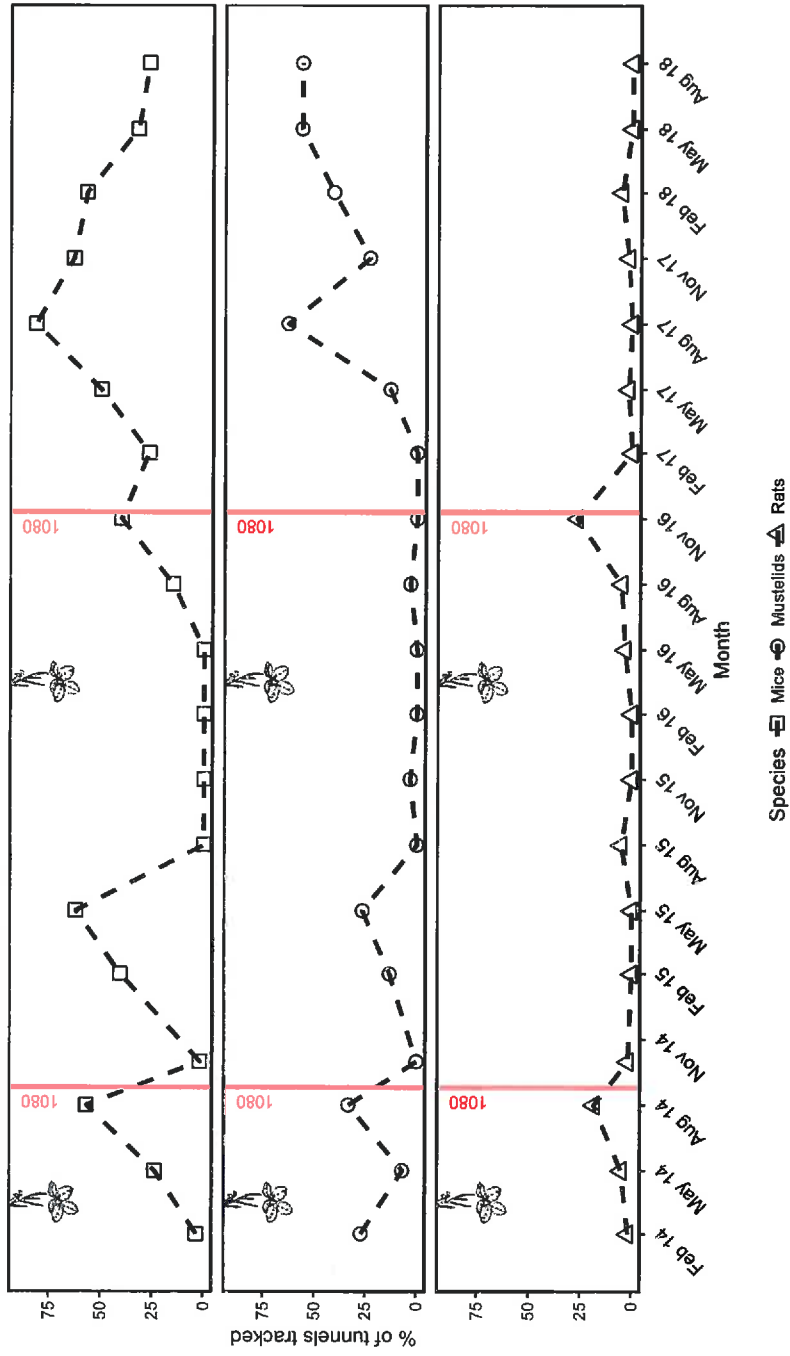


Species Mice Mustelids Rats

### Crombie - % of tunnels tracked



# Grant Burn - % of tunnels tracked



## Stoat traps:

Table 1: Animals trapped in this and previous quarterly check.

	May 2018			Aug 2018		
	Waitutu	Poteriteri	Total	Waitutu	Poteriteri	Total
No. of trap boxes checked	200	58	258	200	58	258
Mice	3	2	5	0	2	2
Rats	17	6	23	13	0	13
Stoats	23	9	32	9	6	15
Weasels	2	5	7	3	1	4
TOTAL	45	22	67	25	9	34

All stoat traps in the Poteriteri block were checked and rebaited with fresh salted rabbit meat and a piece of 'Erase' bait. Poteriteri traps also received a full service (new lid attachments, new non-target baffles and new screws holding each trap to the base). However, some of these traps will need to receive further work to correct the fastenings. Waitutu and Slaughter Burn traps were checked and baits were replaced with salted rabbit meat.

Fewer rats, stoats and weasels were caught this check in both blocks. Mouse numbers remained stable in Poteriteri and reduced in Waitutu. This is as expected for the winter months where some individuals may have succumbed to the weather and lower food resources.

## Bird lists for each site:

Kaka were seen and heard at all sites and on most days, seemingly a bit more vocal than in May. Kea were heard daily at Slaughter Burn and at least once at most other sites. Rifleman, grey warbler, bellbird, tui, fantail, tomtit, kereru and robin were commonly seen at most sites. Ruru were heard at most sites in the evenings. A fernbird was again seen by the Grant Burn Bivvy. Falcon were heard at least once at each site except Crombie, with 3 being heard/seen at Poteriteri. Three Buller's albatross observed on the beach near Grant Burn Biv.

A sea-lion was seen on the beach near Grant Burn biv and a koura in the Poteriteri area.



## Other stuff.....

Didymo sampling was planned for all sites but only carried out at Crombie, due to lack of time and heavy rain affecting river flows.

## Slaughter Burn

- Windfall cut on Toll Road and flagging tape placed.
- Water tank stand is on a lean, SW support post has sunk and tank platform has dropped 4-6 inches on one corner. This has resulted in damage to spouting system and deck. Colin has advised Sue Brownie of this and has photos.
- Colin and Rose looked for a route to establish a proposed new 'After Burn' trap line further East of Waitutu River. A line has been flagged from the start of Slaughter Burn TT line 1 to high point 149, north of the swing bridge and then south to the Toll Road, crosses the After Burn, continues south to the end of Slaughter Burn TT line 3 and finishes at the Angus Burn Line near AB29. Other areas investigated proved to be too gorgy at river/stream crossings. Line is GPS'd.
- A second route for another line west of the Waitutu River was also investigated. The route would run from the three-wire bridge, up the Slaughter Burn to Razor Ridge at the end of TT line 3, up the ridge and then south meeting the Terrace Line near TCE 13. Need to investigate whether following the 120m contour line from high point 158 to TCE15 is a better route. Also need to investigate an alternative to first 300m after leaving razor ridge, maybe going up to 194 and back down from there?
- Need to add more yellow markers to the Toll Road, especially near far end of line 1. Replace flagging tape in this area with yellow markers.
- Remove bait blocks (wooden thing that bait sits on in centre) and instead insert 2x nails to put bait on (turn box upside-down and bang through from underneath), on all trap boxes . Traps will need to be removed in order to remove the bait block. Need an 8mm socket and driver and #2 square drill, plus hammer and nails
- Traps are fastened to the base of the box with either 8mm Tech screws OR #2 square drives. After removing to remove bait block and clean, replace with 8mm tech screws.

- Add stainless steel washers to the new trap lid screws at Waitutu/S.Burn and Poteriteri.
- Bow saw and chopping block required for S/Burn hut.
- Chainsaw required to cut up wood over river from hut and fadge up to be flown over the river by the chopper.
- Chainsaw required to cut line 7 and start of the TCE line from the old hut site.
- Yellow markers needed on TCE line from old hut site to TCE 26 (top of the terrace).
- Pink markers needed on TT line 7.

### Poteriteri

- Main track from M9 to hut slashed.
- S line slashed.
- Firewood collected.
- All traps upgraded with new lid attachment mechanism, new lid fasteners (non-opening end) and internal non-target baffles.
- All traps weight tested and adjusted.
- Problem with several lines means that upgrade work needs to be checked and likely re-done on the following traps: M3-M9, R5-R10, BL2-BL5, BL8, BL9.
- Traps BL8, BL9 need adjusting? "Cannot be set without adjustment" is the comment.
- Trap RV3 needs replacing, Needs entire box and 1 new trap.
- Remove bait block (wooden thing that bait sits on in centre) and instead insert 2x nails to put bait on (turn box upside-down and bang through from underneath). Traps will need to be removed in order to remove the bait block. Need an 8mm socket and driver and #2 square drive screw driver, plus hammer and nails
- Traps are fastened to the base of the box with either 8mm Tech screws OR #2 square drives. After removing to remove bait block and clean, replace with 8mm tech screws.
- Add stainless steel washers to the new trap lid screws.

## Waitutu

- All tasks completed, no issues.
- Possum gate sprayed with CRC.
- AB trap line, between 1-20 in particular, needs new yellow markers as many have faded to almost white. Also add more markers rather than blue tape
- Black rubber bands need replacing on MP seedfall trays (x10).
- WTR trap line difficult to find from SC track and needs some remarking with new yellow triangles (at least from traps 1-11). Could do with a bit of clearing at SC track end.
- Add stainless steel washers to the new trap lid screws at Waitutu.
- Remove bait block (wooden thing that bait sits on in centre) and instead insert 2x nails to put bait on (turn box upside-down and bang through from underneath). Traps will need to be removed in order to remove the bait block. Need an 8mm socket and driver and #2 square drive screw driver, plus hammer and nails
- Traps are fastened to the base of the box with either 8mm Tech screws OR #2 square drives. After removing to remove bait block and clean, replace with 8mm tech screws.
- New handsaws required for firewood.

## Crombie

- All tasks completed, no issues.
- Seedfall lines are fine, no maintenance required.

## Grant Burn

- All flagging tape was removed from track from South Coast Track to hut for first visible 50m to avoid detection from South Coast Track.
- More of the route on Line 1 flagged through the several gorges as hard to see in low light that's normal here This needs replacing with yellow markers.
- Water tank tap needs replacement (see emailed photo) at present the nature of this tap is there is no stop bar, so if its pushed to far one way

the tap will open again. It would be easy for the tap to get knocked by wildlife etc and all water lost.

- Hut gutters require cleaning - may need to disconnect and flush and throw some water up, may not be able to access gutters due to kea proofing?
- The sliding bolts to the annex exterior door both need realigning holes re-drilling etc as the door has dropped slightly and these are difficult to operate and easy to cut fingers (you need to do this quickly to escape the sandflies!).
- Remove all excess rubbish - near empty containers etc.
- All window hinges need a good oiling with CRC. All are very stiff with corrosion due to marine environment and could easily break if not freed up more.
- There are couple of spots between Lines 3-4 where the route needs more markers.
- Remove bait block (wooden thing that bait sits on in centre) and instead insert 2x nails to put bait on (turn box upside-down and bang through from underneath). Traps will need to be removed in order to remove the bait block. Need an 8mm socket and driver and #2 square drive drill, plus hammer and nails.
- Traps are fastened to the base of the box with either 8mm Tech screws OR #2 square drives. After removing to remove bait block and clean, replace with 8mm tech screws.
- Add stainless steel washers to the new trap lid screws at Waitutu/S.Burn and Poteriteri.

Table 2: Birds seen at each site - Aug 2018

Species	Poteriteri	Crombie	SB	Y22	GB	Comment
SIPO					Y	On beach at GB
VOC						
Grey Duck						
Par. Shelduck	Y		Y	Y	Y	Numerous pairs on beach GB
Black Shag	Y			Y		
WF Heron						
NZ Falcon	Y		Y	Y	Y	3 at Pot.,1 at Y22 & GB
Kereru	Y	Y	Y	Y		Abundant
Kea	Y		Y	Y	Y	Heard daily at SB
Kaka	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Heard daily most sites
YCP	Y					
Parakeet sp	Y		Y	Y		
Ruru	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Rifleman	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Grey Warbler	Y	Y	Y	Y		Abundant
Bellbird	Y	Y	Y	Y		Abundant
Tui		Y	Y	Y	Y	Abundant
Mohua						
B Creeper	Y	Y	Y			
Fantail	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Tomtit	Y	Y	Y	Y		Abundant
SI Robin	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Abundant
Silvereye						
Blackbird		Y				
Song Thrush						
Starling						
Chaffinch	Y		Y			
Greenfinch						
Redpoll						
SBBG				Y	Y	
Pied Shag				Y	Y	
LT cuckoo						
Fernbird					Y	1 seen near GB hut
Dunnock						
Black Swan						
Pipit						

