

WAITUTU FIELD TRIP REPORT FEBRUARY 2014
25TH Feb – 3rd March

Project: Waitutu Forest Management
Code: 8401104002
Waitutu Field Work Home Page: docdm- 642920
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Summary

This was the first of the quarterly monitoring trips for 2014. Monitoring of rodents and stoats was carried out using the standard tracking tunnel method. Stoat traps were checked, cleared and re-baited at Poteriteri and east of the Waitutu River. Seed fall was collected, the deer enclosure plots checked. Maintenance was carried out on various lines.

The weather was fine for most of the trip with a few wet days

Personnel:

- Poteriteri Hut – Gerard Hill & Erina Loe
- Slaughter Burn Hut – Peter Dilks & Andy Grant
- Crombie Bivv – Pete McMurtrie
- Waitutu Hut – Darren Scott, Shinji Kameyama & Phil Colllyns
- Grant Burn Biv – Rose Collen

Transport in and out was provided by Southern Lakes Ltd.

Rodents and stoats:

Stoat abundance has increased at Crombie and Slaughter Burn since the last monitoring round in November stoat trap catch rates have increased at Poteriteri and Waitutu. Rodent abundance has dropped at all sites. The good news is there was no stoat tracking recorded at both the Poteriteri and Waitutu monitoring sites. The trapping grid is obviously working well at these sites (there is no trapping carried out at the other monitoring sites). High trap catches were recorded at Poteriteri and Waitutu with 45 trap sets out of 59 having stoats in them at Poteriteri.

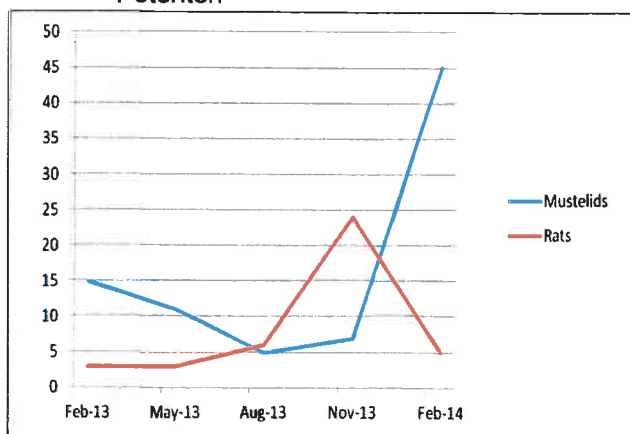
Stoat Trapping

Poteriteri – 45 stoats and 5 rats (59 trap sets)
Waitutu – 33 stoats and 25 rats (140 trap sets)

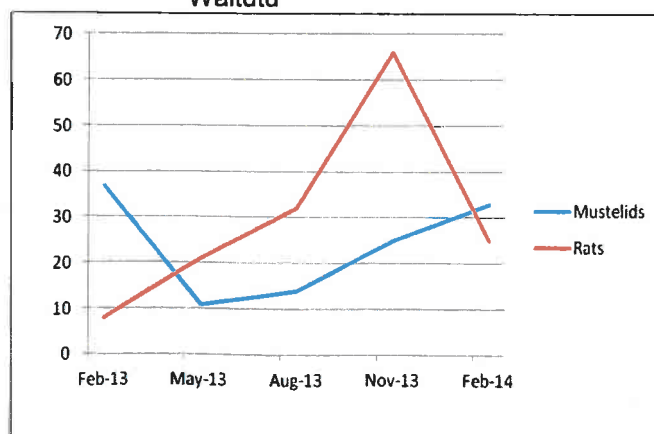
For result details see DOCDM-392381

Graphs below show trapping results over the last year since traps were re-opened. Stoat numbers are on the increase, rats are dropping off.

Poteriteri



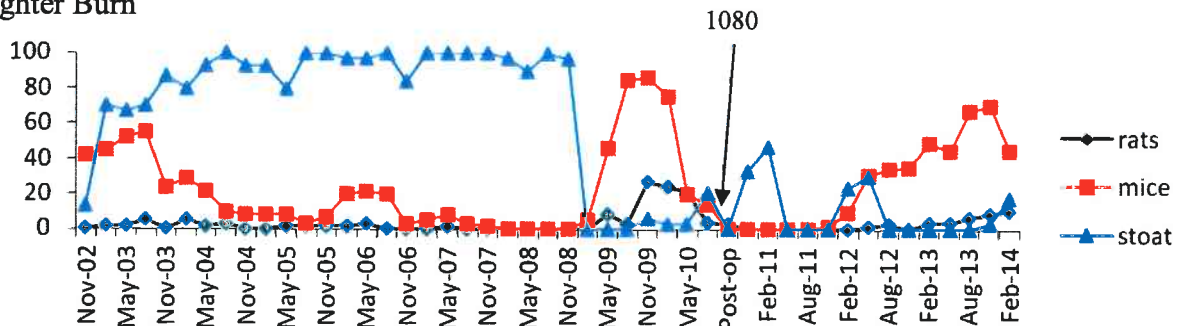
Waitutu



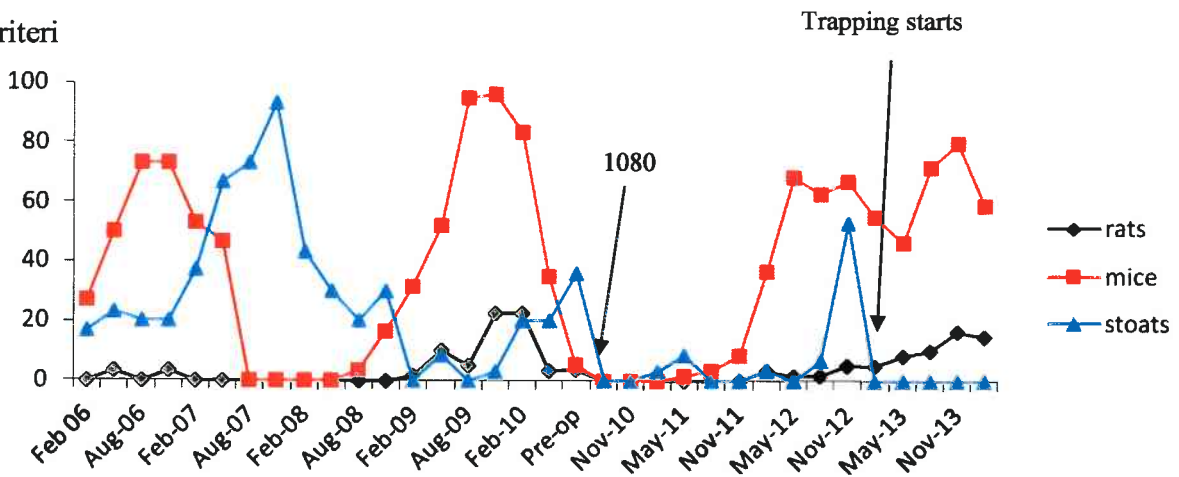
Tracking Tunnel Monitoring

Rat and mice numbers are dropping at all sites, probably due to lack of food. Stoat abundance is increasing although this has been kept low at Poteriteri and Waitutu where trapping is carried out. Rodent numbers are likely to rise again once the beech seed becomes available from late March.

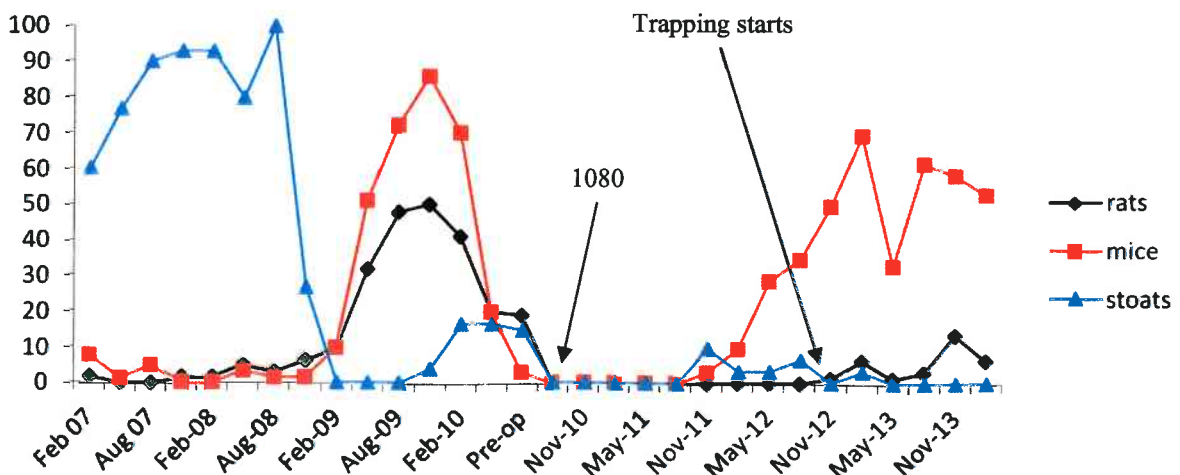
Slaughter Burn



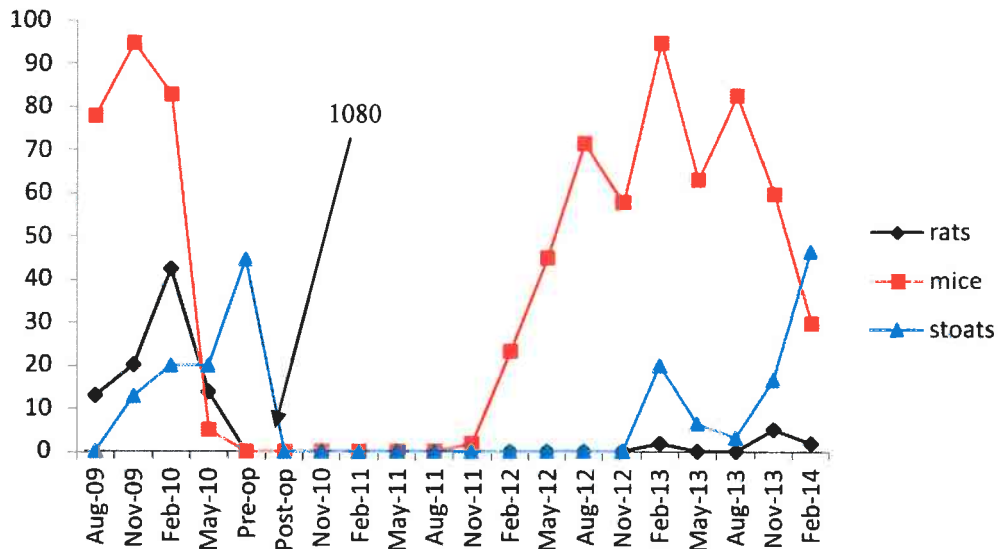
Poteriteri



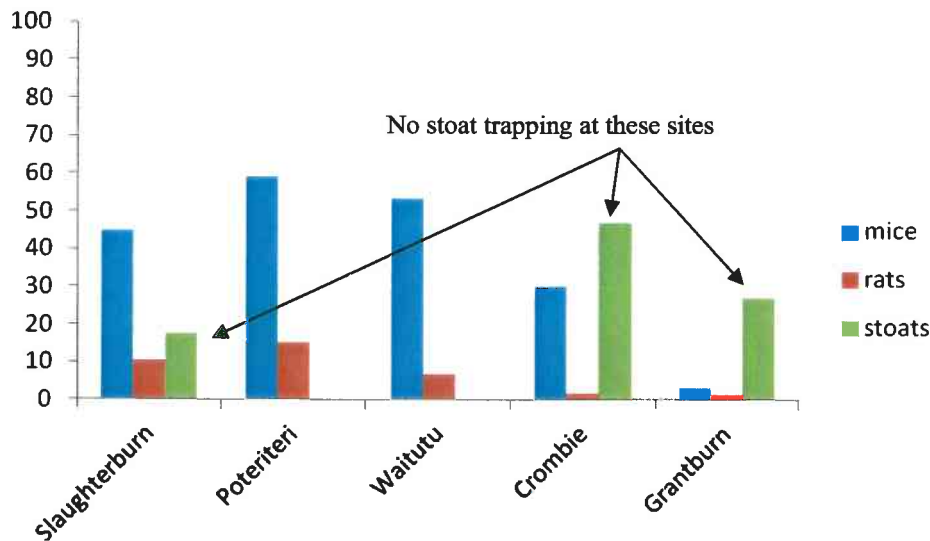
Waitutu



Crombie



All areas - % of tunnels tracked



Seed Rain Collection

Seed fall was collected from the monitoring sites at Waitutu, Slaughterburn, Poteriteri and Crombie and sent to Christchurch for analysis.

Deer and pig sign

Waitutu – Very little pig sign, some fresh sign on WTL. Plenty of deer seen.

Slaughter Burn

Recent pig rooting between hut and bridge. Deer seen regularly.

Poteriteri

No fresh pig sign, moderate deer numbers

Crombie – Pig sign south of Biv. Nine deer seen, fairly evenly spread around TT route, highest number between Biv and Line 6.

Grant Burn – very little pig sign, although some fresh sign just west of TT30. Five deer were seen; one on line 2, two between lines 3 and 4, and a hind with fawn just north of line 5.

Kaka monitoring

None carried out this trip

Bird life

Grant Burn

Tui, bellbird, tomtit, fantail, kereru, grey warbler, & kaka common, particularly tomtit and fantail. Kakariki heard at 14 locations. Robin at 12 locations. Brown creeper very rare (heard twice). Rifleman and mohua not seen or heard at all.

Waitutu

Bellbird, tui, kereru, tomit, robin, fantail, kakariki, ruru, kaka, grey warbler fantail. Kereru feeding low down on coprosma..

Poteriteri

Kaka and robins in good numbers, a group of six kaka seen near BL2. Lots of kereru low down in scrubby vegetation between B16 and B15. Kakariki, rifleman, tomtit, bellbird also heard.

Crombie

Kaka and robins heard/seen daily, kakariki and mohua occasionally heard.

Slaughter Burn

Plenty of kereru feeding on coprosma and horopito fruit on river flats, caught and radio tagged two kereru (frequency 14 + 0.5 and 26 + 0.5) for monitoring over 1080 operation. Both caught on island opposite hut. Lots of kaka & robins. One falcon seen.

General maintenance and observations

Waitutu

- Exclosure 1 & 3 OK.
- Track was cleared between L1 and L8
- Track cleared between 55L1 to 55L7
- WTR line cleared
- 54L cleared to trap 10
- Long Point track treefalls cleared
- AB line cleared to 24
- 55L cleared to trap 8
- 56L cleared

Grant Burn

- Marked route from TT line 5 to TT line 3 with pink flagging tape. The route from 5 to 4 is excellent and is ready for blue markers. The route between TT lines 4 to 3 is good enough but other options could be explored before finalised.
- Route from TT line 6 to TT line 5 and up to the top of the ridge has been marked with blue markers. Route then follows an old pink triangle bait station line down the ridge to TT line 4.

Slaughter Burn

- Track cutting on WTL carried out

Poteriteri

- Track cutting BL line completed except between BL5 and BL6.
- S line completed to S10.
- Cut track 30 between M10 & S10.
- Cut track 21 between TT60 and M7.

Crombie

- Track cutting to end of line 3 from Biv carried out

General maintenance for May field trip

Waitutu

- One trap in trap set WTL5 needs replacing
- One baffle in trap set 56L11 needs replacing
- Need more yellow markers between 55L2 and 55L5 (on way up)
- Deer enclosure plot 2 has been breached. Large tree across fence, requires chainsaw and fencing gear to repair.

Poteriteri

- Lots of track cutting and re-marking required. The section between BL5 and BL6 needs plenty of attention.

Grant Burn

- Recommend using two nails per marker.
- More paper clips required for TT trays
- Clear helipad with chainsaw (cut stumps and logs to ground level)
- Continue marking routes between lines with blue triangles and remove flagging tape.
- Bang in a few more pink triangles where needed to mark the location of TT's on both sides of tree (some only obvious from one direction and some are blue).
- Track cutting would make it quicker to get around the lines. Maybe not in May if there are lots of wasps about!

Slaughter Burn

- Track cutting needed on WTL line between TT line and base of river, yellow markers also required in this area.
- Bridge wires a bit slack.

Crombie

- Recommend supplying handsaw along with slasher for track clearing. Handsaw for woody material. Cutting woody material with slasher results in 'death stakes'.
- More yellow markers required.

Health and Safety

There were two H&S incidents on this trip Pete McMurtrie stepped backwards into a hole and hurt his knee and Darren Scott, slipped off a log and hurt his knee also.