

Hawksbury Lagoon Update

I re-commenced pest control around the Hawksbury Lagoon in March, placing DOC150 traps at various points. The traps are inside boxes which are pegged to the ground. They are visited approximately every 2 weeks to remove any pests that have been caught and to renew bait, which are pieces of rabbit; so please be aware that, if you see fur in a trap, it is probably rabbit bait. The telltale sign of a catch is a tail sticking out of the mouth of the trap! If you notice a catch, please ring or text me with the trap number and I will remove it.

Since re-commencing pest control, the traps have caught 3 brown rats, 1 black rat, 1 hedgehog and 2 stoats. Although I am confident we can keep the small mammal pests to a manageable level with ongoing trapping, one of the major threats to nesting birds is feral cats. It is envisaged to try live-trapping the area using large cage traps, on a one-night-at-a-time basis. As well as the feral cats that thrive in large numbers around the town, there would inevitably be some domestic cats that hunt around the lagoon. To this end, it would be extremely helpful if all cat owners could ensure that their pet cat is wearing a collar and bell when outside. Any cat caught would be released immediately if wearing a collar or if it has a microchip. Unidentified cats would be housed for a week and every effort made to locate an owner, before being moved on. I will also be placing possum traps around the tree areas of the lagoon as they are growing in number.

Be aware that all traps pose the potential to injure inquiring fingers. Please advise any children in the lagoon area not to touch them. If anyone has an interest in trapping I will be happy to show them around the lagoon traps and explain how they work and why it is important to carry out this programme.

All introduced mammals pose a threat to the wildlife on the lagoon, particularly nesting birds, and a steady ongoing presence of traps avoids the need for poisoning and permits us to keep these pests to a minimum.

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Do check out our website www.hawksburylagoon.org.nz for annual reports from the recent AGM.