

# Volunteer Animal Pest Control Update for Tahuna Torea Residents Biennial Meeting Tuesday 30th May, 2017

Sarah Peters, Community Park Ranger

## 1. Volunteers

- Following the resignation of one or two volunteers at the end of the last trapping season there are now nine people undertaking regular animal pest control in the reserve.
- At present there are a couple of mid-week gaps in the roster, so ideally we would like two or three additional volunteers. However, some of the gaps are being filled by existing volunteers and the pest control programme continues to be a great success at Tahuna Torea.

## 2. Trapping Results

- Due to the usual suspension of trapping from mid-December to early March there are no meaningful additions to the long-term trapping results since the last update in November 2016. Therefore the results provided at that time are repeated here. Updated results will be provided for the next meeting in six months' time.
- **Rats:** The number of rat catches has declined significantly over the last 11 years, with a further drop in the last 12 months (Figure 1). The most recent trapping season recorded the lowest ever number of rats.
- **Possums:** Catches continue to remain low, with only one possum caught in the last trapping season (Figure 2).

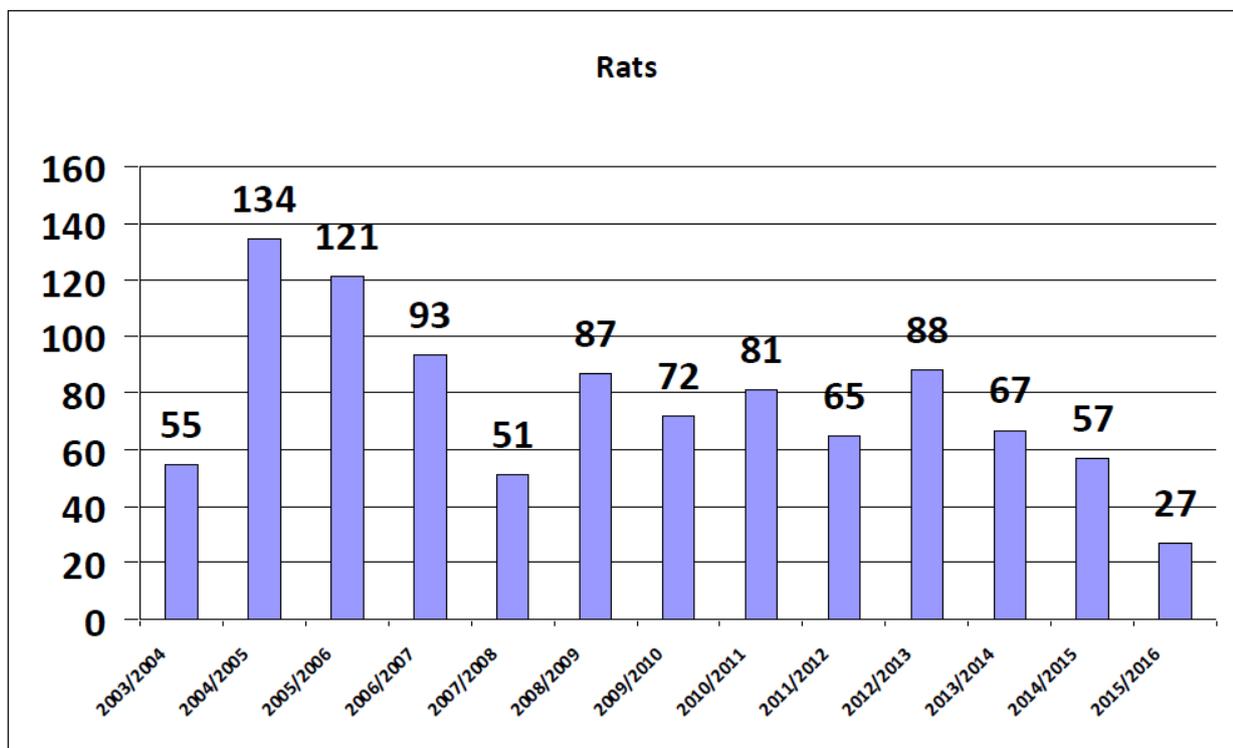
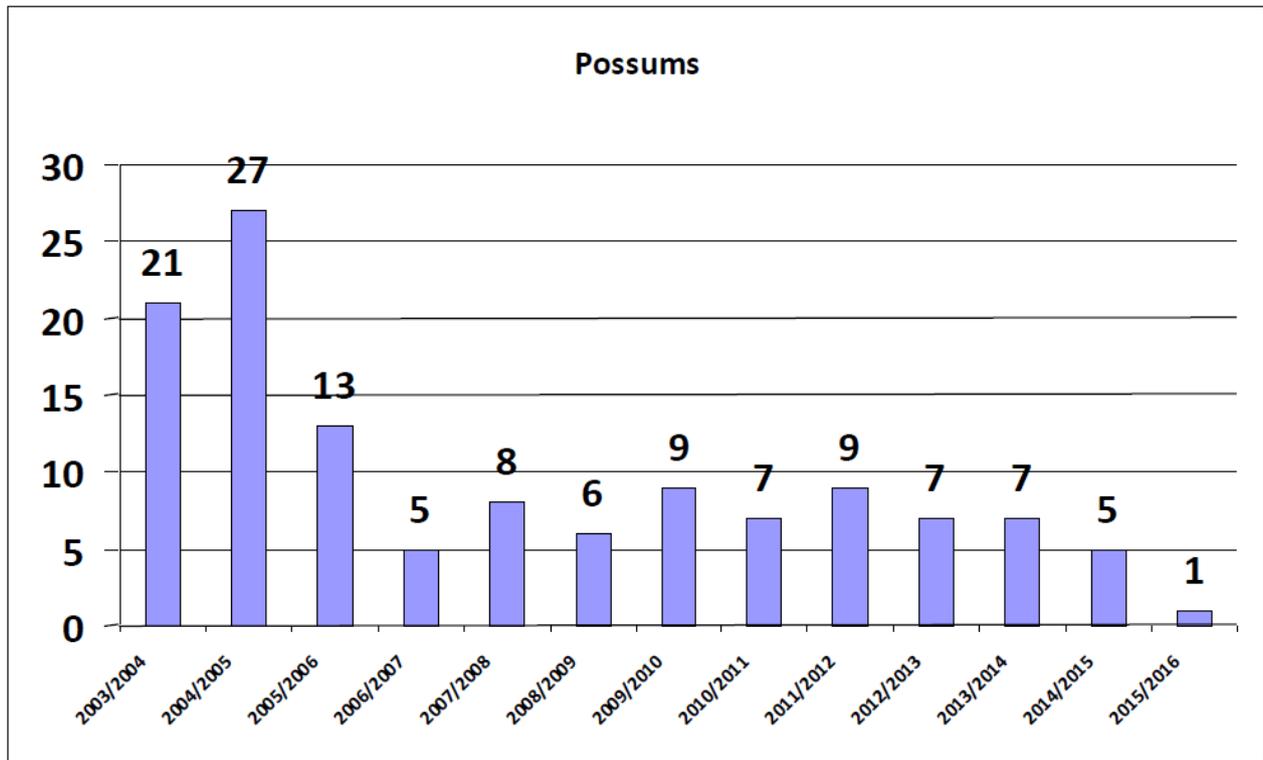


Figure 1. Number of rats caught at Tahuna Torea 2003 – 2016.



**Figure 2. Number of possums caught at Tahuna Torea 2003 – 2016.**

- **Other catches:** As well as rats and possums a number of mice and hedgehogs have also been caught. The numbers of these animals captured during the 2015/16 season are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Additional catches during the 2015/2016 trapping season.**

Hedgehog	Mouse
9	28

- **Stoats:** Following a suspected sighting of a stoat in the reserve at the beginning of 2016 two mustelid traps (DOC 200s) were installed in late January of that year. No catches have been reported.

### 3. Poison baiting: rodents

There has been no poison baiting in the reserve since around July 2016. Further to the last report the re-assessment of the locations of the bait stations hasn't yet been carried out. This can still be done if Darren (the sole poison baiter) would like to do so.

#### **4. Annual monitoring**

Pest monitoring - undertaken by contractors - took place as planned in February 2017. The results were generally in line with expectations. It is very encouraging to note that there was again no evidence of possums in the reserve. Results suggest however that hedgehogs may be on the increase. It will be interesting to see if hedgehog catches increase this year.

#### **5. CatchIT data management**

- All nine animal pest control volunteers are now using the online data capture and management system CatchIT introduced last year. There seems to be very consistent results being entered. The use of CatchIT has significantly reduced the amount of time spent entering results and has given volunteers the opportunity to create interactive maps and graphics should they wish to do so.
- A number of Tahuna Torea volunteers attended the very informative CatchIT session hosted in late November by staff from The University of Auckland Statistics Department - who created and coordinate the system. University staff demonstrated how to use the interactive maps and graphics and answered volunteers' questions.

#### **6. Annual "Thank You" get together**

The annual get together for all volunteers involved in the Local Parks Volunteer Animal Pest Control Programme took place at the beginning of April. The picnic in Cornwall Park was attended by a number of volunteers from Tahuna Torea and the event was extremely successful.