

Date: Tuesday 18 July 2017
Time: 1.00pm
Meeting Room: Claris Conference Centre
Venue: 19 Whangaparapara Road
Claris
Great Barrier Island

Great Barrier Local Board

OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS

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Item 9.1



WINDY HILL - ROSALIE BAY CATCHMENT TRUST

Windy Hill Sanctuary
Goodnature A24 Trap Project



Report 6 – 18 July 2017

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*Tabled at the Great
Barrier Local Board
meeting on 18 July 2017.*

Background

The Goodnature A24 Trap project is a collaboration between the Great Barrier Local Board, Auckland Council, DOC, Goodnature Ltd, and the Windy Hill Sanctuary. Its purpose is to establish how effectively the non-toxic, self-setting, multi-kill Goodnature A24 trap is at reducing both ship rat and kiore densities within a pest managed Sanctuary on Great Barrier Island over a two year period. This objective supports the local community aspirations to find ways to manage these pests with non-toxic methods.

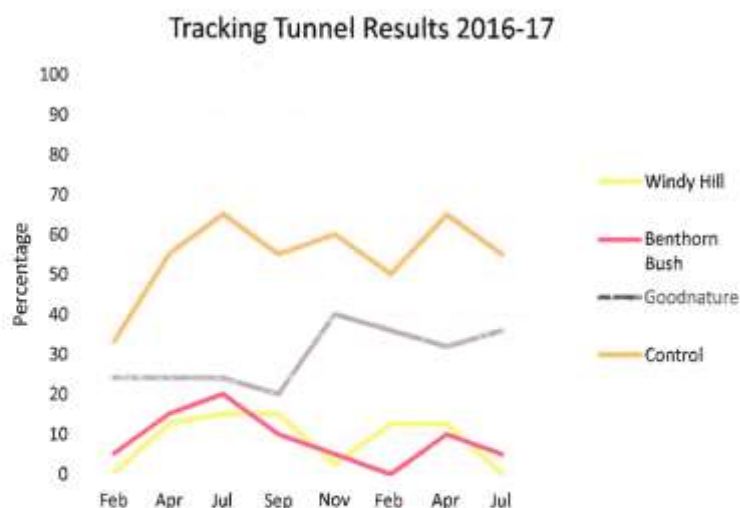
Two hundred and ninety-three A24 Goodnature traps were established in the Big Windy Hill Pest Managed Area between February 22 and 24, 2016 by a team made up of personnel from Auckland Council, DOC, Goodnature, and the Windy Hill Sanctuary.

Traps were checked monthly for the first six months, and then every 3-6 months following the replacement of the manual lure with the auto-lure pump (ALP) in August 2016. Bait and gas cylinders have been replaced at six monthly intervals since that time and rat tracking tunnel monitoring undertaken in January, April, July, September and November each year.

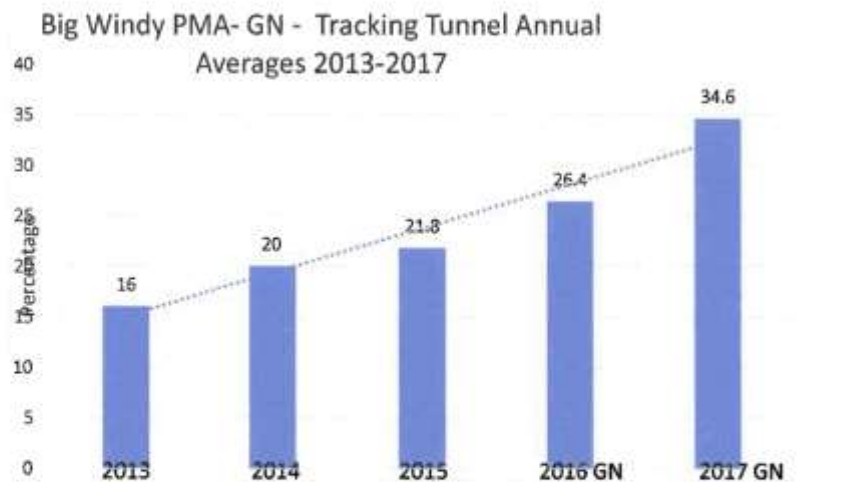
Outcomes

Since the last report in March this year there have been a number of initiatives to establish the cause of the elevated tracking tunnels in the Goodnature A24 project area.

Rat tracking indices have been higher than any other pest managed area in the Sanctuary since the Goodnature project commenced. For the latest tunnel run in July 2017, the rat tracking tunnels in the Goodnature project area stood at 36% compared to neighbouring pest managed areas Windy Hill at 0% and Benthorn Bush at 5%. These are significant differences. The unmanaged Control came in at 55%. See Graph 1 below.



The upward averaged tracking tunnel trend over time is also significant as shown in Graph 2 below.



We suspect that the elevated tracking tunnels are primarily caused by kiore. History of trap catches in the Sanctuary indicate that as ship rats are reduced through trapping and baiting the number of kiore rise. These animals are much more cautious as was shown on the camera clips taken of rat/GN A 24 trap interactions early in the project and are less easily caught. They can establish themselves in smaller territories avoiding both traps and bait – this has been demonstrated at Glenfern. Catches in the Sanctuary in 2016 were 56.4% kiore of animals trapped. When trapping first commenced in 1999 they were less than 10%.

In order to more clearly establish what animals were in the GN project area 2 trapping lines (BW I 3 - with 14 traps and I 6 with 21 traps) were re-opened between April 19th and July 5th with the aim of identifying rat species caught in the traps. Initially, checks were done fortnightly but animals were too decomposed to properly identify and this was stepped up to weekly. Early on, John Ogden undertook an audit of the field team's ability to identify kiore correctly and was impressed with their skill.

Over that time 31 animals were trapped - 15 kiore, 11 ship rats, and 5 unidentifiable. This means that 57.6% were kiore which is a very similar percentage to that in the Sanctuary area though this would rise slightly if some of the unidentified animals were kiore. It confirms that kiore are an issue and supports the A24 total body count of 90% ship rat and 10% kiore.

Auto-Lure Pump (ALP)

Autolure bait dispensers – it was noted in an informal check that one of the A24 Auto-Lure pumps was completely empty after 3.5 months and in a conversation with DOC's Lindsay Wilson (who is using hundreds of A24s,) he felt that a noticeable number didn't last longer than 4 months. On this basis, the Trust undertook a spot check on 20 lures in early June - 1 lure was empty, 3 had not dispensed bait at all, 1 had bait build up on the trigger and had outgassed. Out of just 20 units, this added up to a concerning number of devices potentially not functioning in the field.

A report brief on this matter was sent to Jeremy Warden and Goodnature Ltd. Goodnature replaced lures, and one trap that had trigger failure, and responded that they felt that mice were probably taking the Auto-Lure bait without triggering the device. However, in our experience, it would be unusual to have mice in an area with so many rats.



Bait covering the trigger.

Goodnature, Jeremy Warden, Windy Hill, and DoC are now in the process of planning a 'think tank' to more fully address the issue of kiore. Goodnature are also in the process at researching different bait delivery mechanisms.

Discussion

- After nearly 18 months of using the A24 traps it is clear that they are underperforming, as indicated by tracking tunnel indices, compared to baiting and trapping methods in neighbouring pest managed areas in the Sanctuary.
- More research is required into the persistence of kiore and the need for different bait or lure mechanisms to get these animals into A24 traps.

Goodnature have been exemplary in responding to issues and defective equipment. Their rat tracking tunnel results from other parts of NZ with kiore and ship rats are considerably less than ours (8% on the Hollyford Track) but these are areas in the South Island with much colder temperatures and probably a lot less animals.

Next steps

- The project has seven more months to run.
- ALPs and gas cylinders will be refreshed in August 2017.
- A think tank will get together soon to discuss ideas for improving kiore catch.
- Discussions are also needed to decide on the application for the A24s once the project at Windy Hill is completed in February 2018. This could include further research at Windy Hill into the traps as a perimeter only trap to trial if reinvasion could be reduced into the Sanctuary by catching more ship rats on the edges. It is thought that ship rats, which will be dominant outside the Sanctuary, will therefore be more frequent re-invaders. Installing the A24s on the perimeter, replacing standard rat traps and reducing labour significantly, will be a way of assessing their efficacy as a perimeter tool for other projects. Historic data of both perimeter and internal track rat catches will be used to compare the efficacy of the A24 as a perimeter trap tool.

Thank you, Nick Graham (Goodnature), Darren Peters (DOC), Auckland Council, and the Great Barrier Local Board for your involvement and support of this very worthwhile project. Thank you, also, to Kevin Parsons, Rachel Wakefield, and Henry Cookson for their diligent work as the Sanctuary field team.

Judy Gilbert
Sanctuary Manager

Item 9.2

REPORT TO THE GREAT BARRIER ISLAND LOCAL BOARD

18 July 2017

Firstly I would like to thank the Local Board for their generous support of the Aotea Community Upcycle Centre. It is very much appreciated and has ensured the ongoing viability of the project.

AoteaOra are now 10 months into it's Upcycling Contract with Auckland Council, which is a pilot and intended to assess the feasibility of establishing a long term facility on the Island . For a vast variety of reasons the operation had a slow start and in reality was only fully operational in February of 2017.

However, with Council assistance we now have a safe, secure and workable site, which includes a processing area, workshop, sales and garden areas. Council have been supportive in providing extra funding to water proof the containers, and have approved the finances to upgrade on one of the existing substandard storage spaces. These jobs are nearing completion. We have also received funding for a power system. This is yet to be installed. In addition Waste Minimisation have funded the purchase of a trailer which is now an integral part of our process.

While the core purpose of the contract is to divert waste from the landfill, there is a secondary purpose which includes the education of the community into what can be achieved by recycling and upcycling waste. With this in mind there is a focus on repurposing goods, and we have been funded by Creative Communities to run a series of workshops using local tutors. To date we have run eight workshops all with a focus on reusing locally sourced items and materials. All have been fully subscribed and have received very good reviews. Envirokiwi also contribute some funds for the administration of these workshops, and there is also a small fee for attendees.

We have also been involved with a school programme, inspiring the children of all three schools to make signs encouraging the populace to reduce waste.

In the 5 months where we have had relatively accurate records February – June we have directly diverted over 7000 kg's of waste from the landfill. But the actual yard aims educate and inspire the community to remake and remodel items themselves and I continually hear of inspiring projects happening privately around the island.

The has been a turnover from trade in excess of \$14000 in the 8 months of trading. This has assisted in paying The three part-time workers There are also several volunteers.

We have recently been assured of an extension to the pilot and we plan to grow on the successes and learn from the failures of the past year to make an even more inspiring project

*Tabled at the Great Barrier
Local Board meeting on
18 July 2017.*





Item 9.4

AOTEA CONSERVATION PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

14th June 2017

Honourable Maggie Barry ONZM,
Parliament Buildings,
Wellington 6160

Dear Maggie,

The Committee has had four formal meetings. The first on the 14th of September 2016 followed by further meetings on the 5th of December 2016 and a joint meeting with members of the Auckland Conservation Board on the 10th April and recently on 12th June. Two of our Great Barrier Local Board members also in attended the April Meeting.

The Aotea Conservation Park covers some 12,282ha, approximately 43% of the island, and the Department manages more than 16,000ha on Great Barrier. The Auckland Conservation Board has the statutory function for conservation management across the island.

The interconnectedness of the islands ecology is acknowledged by our committee members and we agreed it was not appropriate to only consider matters within the Parks legal boundaries but to also consider influences and issues on a more holistic basis outside the Parks boundaries encompassing the entire island. These are likely to also affect the Conservation Park to some degree. Our committee's view on this matter was also supported by the Auckland Conservation Board who were keen to develop a close working relationship.

At our first meeting our committee resolved to invite the Chairperson or a member of the Auckland Conservation Board to each of our meetings and copy the Board into our agendas and minutes.

Over the last few years the Department of Conservation has undergone a prolonged, challenging period of restructuring and change, both at a local and national level and only last December was a manager finally appointed to our new local Great Barrier office which will have 10 permanent staff once the 2 vacancies currently being advertised have been filled. Historically the Great Barrier office has had 20 + staff working here.

At our April meeting, we were provided with an Operational Report for Great Barrier Island which included recreation, historic and biodiversity work programmes currently funded and likely to be funded within the departments 2016 / 2017 business plan. (See attached April agenda item 10). The budgets for Great Barrier for this period are currently fully allocated.

Private Bag 96002, Great Barrier Island 0961,
Attention: Fenella Christian, Advisory Committee Support

*Tabled at the Great
Barrier Local Board
meeting on 18 July 2017*

DOCCM - 3072023

AOTEA CONSERVATION PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Our Committee is supportive of the aspirational vision of a Pest Free Aotea Great Barrier Island and proposes the following conservation priorities as steps towards achieving this. Funding will be necessary for these to happen:

1. Further funding for pest management around the endangered taiko / black petrel nesting sites on Hirakimata (Mt Hobson). This is needed to lift the levels of protection for in this area and would help other species struggling in the area.
2. Funding to support private community conservation projects and initiatives to develop a "Southern Sanctuary" on private and conservation property on Great Barrier. (This was a focus of our December 2016 meeting).
3. Funding and support for the Rakitu Island pest eradication project including extra funding for the removal of weka as there was no provision originally for removing the weka population. The plan is for Rakitu to become a seabird sanctuary with the reintroduction of lost species. The Rakitu pest eradication project, announced by Nick Smith on the 8th of September 2013, is scheduled to be undertaken next year and five years have elapsed since the project was first announced. This means extra funding will be needed for ongoing work other than the actual eradication.
4. Our Committee fully supports the Ngati Rehua Ngatiwai ki Aotea led "Bring Back Kokako" project (in partnership with the Department). The last Kokako on the island were trapped in this block and taken off the island in November 1995. The project includes pest "knock down" and ongoing control and suppression within the northern Te Paparahi block. Ngati Rehua have been offered kokako from a mainland source once this project is advanced to a stage where the birds can be reintroduced. At this stage funding has been provided for the feasibility study but further new funding will be required to undertake this project especially as continuing community consultation will be necessary along with the actual eradication and post eradication monitoring. The Te Paparahi block is currently free of kauri die back.
5. Our committee supports the concept of an "Aotea Great Walk" and as well as a number of designated "short walks" and "day walks and further development of and funding to extend the existing walks to enhance the visitor experience. This is an opportunity to invest in good visitor experiences with a great cultural history and in a place, that is close to New Zealand's largest urban population, Auckland.
6. There is an urgent need to review the pateke programme considering the continuing decline in numbers on Great Barrier Island.

Kind regards

Paul Downie
Chairperson
Aotea Conservation Park Advisory Committee.

Private Bag 96002, Great Barrier Island 0961,
Attention: Fenella Christian, Advisory Committee Support

DOCCM - 3072023

11 July 2017

11 Robley Crescent
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and
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Great Barrier Island

The Chairperson
Great Barrier Island Local Board
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Claris
Great Barrier Island

Attention: Izzy Fordham: Chairperson
Susan Daly

The Impact of Plague Skinks on Great Barrier Island.

I would like to thank the Great Barrier Local Board for receiving the presentation on plague skinks at the 3 Year Plan consultation hearings held on 21 June 2017 at the Auckland Council offices.

Herpetologist Dr James Reardon (Department of Conservation) has provided the following information on the impacts of plague skinks and the ecological consequences if they should become widespread on Great Barrier. I would like to share this information with the Great Barrier Local Board and seek your support for a joint DOC / Auckland Council (contact Phil Brown – Biosecurity Team Manager North/West) project to eradicate the plague skink from Great Barrier Island.

Impacts of Plague Skinks on Native Skinks, Lizards and Invertebrates

Direct and indirect competition and displacement of native skinks, lizards and invertebrates is a major concern driven by the sheer abundance that this species can attain. Unlike NZ reptiles, plague skinks can breed super prolifically and can increase radically in density and range through super abundant egg laying. They will out compete native reptiles for resources and habitat.

Disease Risk and Predator Dynamics

Plague skinks may become vectors or a reservoir of diseases and parasitic infections for our native lizards. This field is not well understood but it is a risk given the large numbers they can attain and the rapid rate of their spread.

Additionally, because they can become highly abundant to a higher extent than native species they could function as a primary prey species for predators such as rodents,

kingfishers and larger mammalian predators such as cats. This will increase the abundance of predator populations and increase the predation rates on native species as secondary prey items. More skinks to eat = more rats and feral cats.

Risk of Spread to Other Skink Free Islands and Sanctuaries

A plague skink infested Great Barrier would not only suffer the ecological impacts stated above but will also risk acting as a stepping stone for plague skinks to infest other skink free islands and pest free sanctuaries elsewhere in the Gulf and beyond. Boaties and visitors come to Great Barrier from all over the country and there would be a very great risk that these skinks could be transported by inadvertent human agency to other Gulf islands and places on the mainland. Notably DOC manages several pest free islands from Great Barrier and this would be a risk factor.

Plague skinks have now spread to the Bream Head Scenic Reserve (managed by The Bream Head Conservation Trust) where they are spreading into intact coastal forest, dispelling the previously held belief that they only occupy disturbed environments. The implications of this development for Great Barrier Island are significant.

Opportunity for Great Barrier to Lead the Way

There are currently no known methods of containing or eradicating plague skinks. DOC and Auckland Council are determined to take on this challenge and trial innovative eradication methods. It is important that eradication methods are developed on Great Barrier, not only to protect the island itself, but to perfect techniques before plague skinks reach biologically sensitive island sanctuaries. It is important that successful eradication methods are developed before this occurs.

This joint DOC / Auckland Council initiative represents an opportunity for Great Barrier to become the hub for this internationally ground-breaking research and innovation in pest skink control and eradication. It would provide an opportunity to create a centre of excellence for conservation innovation, research and practice focused on Great Barrier.

This would create a new scientific focus on the island which would greatly benefit conservation on the island. It would greatly enhance the islands recognition nationally and internationally with downstream benefits for conservation and the island economy.

I would like to request that the Great Barrier Local Board consider passing a motion of support for this project and, if approved, notify the Minister of Conservation, the Director General of Conservation and Auckland Council of the Board's support for this important project.

Yours faithfully

Bill Carlin and June Brookes