

## Banded Rail Sighted in Wellington



A banded rail features in art by Kiran Parbhu, making its presence on this beautiful artwork on a building on Ghuznee Street in Wellington.

## Habitat Restoration Progress at Maisey Embayment from 2019 to 2024



For information about the Battle for the Banded Rail please contact Project Manager, Kathryn Brownlie on 544 4537 or [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)  
For trapping information or support contact Field Officer, Tracey Murray on 540 2227 or 027 286 5866 or [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)

## Trapping Results

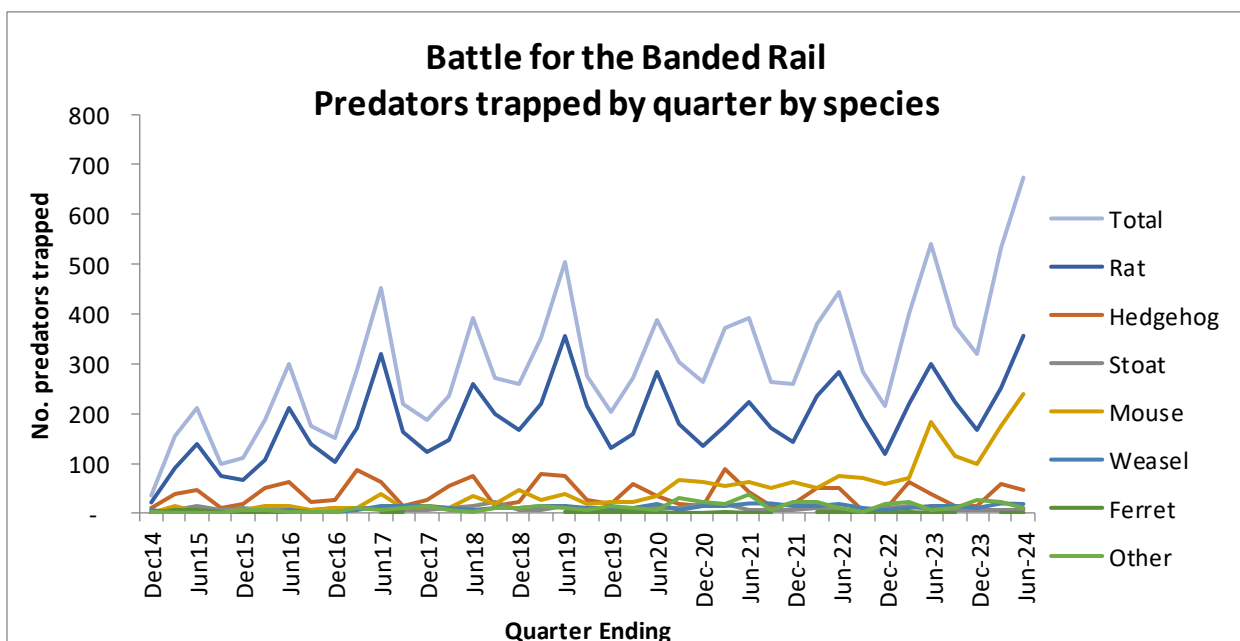
The total catch for the June quarter was 674 and is our highest quarter ever recorded. Total catches since 2014 is now 11,734. There are 1,163 traps in the network.

### Catches for Quarter 2 2024 Sector by Pest Type

Sector	Rat	Hedgehog	Stoat	Weasel	Mouse	Ferret	Other*	Total for Quarter	Total since 2015
Mapua to Bronte	82	15	2	2	13	-	-	114	2,736
Bronte to Hoddy Peninsula	63	9	-	-	19	-	2	93	2,832
Waimea West/ Appleby Hills	113	19	4	7	55	-	1	199	2,547
Waimea Delta to Monaco	98	4	-	8	152	-	6	268	3,619
<b>Total for quarter</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>674</b>	
<b>Total since 2015</b>	<b>7,202</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>468</b>		<b>11,734</b>

\* includes rabbits, birds and unspecified catches from Goodnature A24 traps where the species caught is unknown

This graph illustrates the annual pattern of catches since trapping began in late 2014



## Trapping & Monitoring News from Tracey Murray

### Trapping Hui

The regional 2 day hui was hosted by the Predator Free New Zealand Trust and Tasman Environmental Trust in May at the Headingly Centre in Richmond. It helped those who attended to gain insights, skills and connections, and to increase the impact of trapping groups and individuals, in the management of their projects and the techniques that they use. There was a big turnout from locals and others as far away as Golden Bay and Marlborough.

Some of the speakers were:

Helen Blackie, Boffa Miskell 'Predator Free 2050 – innovations in tools and technologies. What's next?'

Cam Speedy, Wildlife Management Associates 'Animal behaviour - how we use it to our advantage in predator management'

Jessi Morgan, Predator Free New Zealand Trust 'The 2050 challenge and keeping the heart and minds of Kiwis engaged'

Phil Hartwick, Pest Free Whitby Community Group lead' Insights from a great group and how to keep your community engaged'

Hemi Sundgren, Kotahitanga mō te Taiao' Conservation from a te ao Māori perspective, looking at Kotahitanga mō te Taiao, community and the bigger picture.'

Over the 2 days we listened to the speakers, looked at stalls set up in the hall, and went out on workshops held at various locations in the community with skilled leaders to learn how to improve our catch rates and to improve the management of our projects including data entry and new products.



### Bait Availability in August

During August I will be away and have asked 2 people to hold a supply of peanut butter and bait in their freezers if you run short.

Please contact Kathryn Brownlie if you live near Richmond ph/txt 021 079 5133 or Jack Hayward if you are closer to Westdale Road ph/txt 021 236 2884

### Trapping Predators Using the Phases of the Moon

Do you plant and harvest your vegetable garden by the moon? Do you fish by the moon? Many people do and recognise the positive influence that following the rhythms of nature can have on our outcomes. You won't be surprised to know it's the same with trapping predators.



*The Māori lunar calendar is called maramataka, which literally means the turning of the moon. It marks the phases of the moon in a lunar month. Image credit: Matthieu van de Wille*

Click on the link below to take you to the full article written by Cam Speedy who has become a knowledgeable educator on predator control and spoke at the recent Hui held in Richmond.

[predator-trapping-by-the-moon-the-influence-of-maramataka](#)

## Habitat Restoration Update from Kathryn Brownlie

### Our planting season takes off, sort of...



Our planting season has been disrupted by rainy weather this year more than any other. However, the rain is very welcome and we have managed to work around it even if we have got a little wet in the process. We have had five planting mornings so far and another three to go, see below for details.

*Morning tea break at Pukeko Lane*

We had a phenomenal turn out for our planting at Cotterell Road alongside Pearl Creek. Richmond Scouts helped boost the numbers to give us a record of 71 people! Plants were in the ground very quickly and we were all but finished by morning teatime.

### Upcoming Planting Days

Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> August	9am – 1pm	Cardno Way, Bronte Peninsula North Parking on Cardno Way, off Bronte Rd East
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> August	9am – 1pm	Best Island Access and parking adjacent to Greenacres Golf Club
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> September	9am – 1pm	Greenslade Park, Rough Island

### School Planting Days

Each year we have been working with school groups. So far this season Richmond School and Nelson Prep have been busy planting at Sandeman Reserve. We have more schools planting with us over the coming weeks.

A student from Nelson Prep wrote for their school newsletter:

“Tree planting was an awesome experience. First, we hopped on a bus and headed out to Sandeman Reserve in Richmond. We were greeted by Kathryn and other volunteers and were given instructions on how to plant the trees. We grabbed our shovels and started digging. Joe and I planted about 18 trees over the day. After lots of hard work we had a lunch break and then returned to school. Tree planting is a great experience and it is fun to do. We are helping to improve the environment by planting new trees along the estuary”. *Seraphim*



*A hive of activity. Richmond School planting at Sandeman Reserve in June*



Thank you Pomeroy's for your continued support for our planting days, providing freshly ground coffee for our morning teas. The morning cuppa is a very important part of our planting days!



### Coastal Peppercross *Lepidium banksii*

Coastal Peppercross is one of New Zealand's lesser-known endangered species and is classified 'Threatened – Nationally Critical'. It is a species 'on the brink' meaning it is at serious risk of extinction. It is now among the 10 most endangered plant species in New Zealand. It is named after Captain Cook's expedition botanist, Joseph Banks. A related cress was eaten by their crew to ward off scurvy and was also an important food source for Māori.

Coastal peppercross' decline has been linked to browsing, garden pests such as aphids, habitat deterioration, loss of animal species (seabirds and seals are a key factor in their ecology), competition from invasive plants, over-collecting by professional and amateur botanists, and natural events.



Photo: DOC Motueka

Today, Coastal Peppercross can only be found in managed sites in Abel Tasman National Park and the Waimea Inlet.

*Battle for the Banded Rail* volunteers have been working recently with Laura Parks of DOC to assist with the recovery programme. We're doing this by establishing raised planter beds in six locations on the Waimea Inlet. The sites are all near volunteers' homes so they can closely monitor the progress of the plants.

So far, we have built the beds, filled them with soil and fish compost, topped with mussel shells, sown the seeds and added netting to protect the plants from rabbits and pukeko. We are now waiting for germination!



Plant Patch Mākaka - *Plagianthus divaricatus* - Saltmarsh Ribbonwood  
Conservation status: not threatened

If you have been to one of our planting days, you are likely to be familiar with this important estuarine plant.

*Plagianthus divaricatus* grows in coastal environments at the heads of estuaries just above the high tide mark. It is one of only two endemic NZ shrubs that can survive with roots in slight salty water, the other is the mangrove. *Plagianthus divaricatus* is also one of NZ's eleven deciduous native plants.

The latin name *plagianthus* means "slanted flowers" and *divaricatus* describes its tangled way of growing. It flowers in spring and the flowers are tiny, greenish cream in colour and have a strong honey scented smell. The leaves are small, narrow and leathery.



Māori wove fibres from the plant to make head dresses and hats and the inner softwood has been used in paper making.

The *Battle for the Banded Rail* sites should be rush-filled with *plagianthus divaricatus* on the margins. The tangle of dark reddish-brown stems can create an impenetrable barrier which is useful to help stop some predators getting to the birds' habitat.

*Battle for the Banded Rail* has planted over 17,000 *plagianthus divaricatus* over the last 10 years.



*Plagianthus divaricatus* on the estuary edge at Cardno Way Reserve

**Biennial Banded Rail Survey** Our two-yearly survey is planned for the morning of Saturday 12 October, meeting 8.30am on Westdale Road opposite The Playhouse. There will be a group briefing so we know what we are looking for. We then split into smaller groups to survey different segments of the Waimea Inlet.

If you are interested in taking part, please let Kathryn know by emailing [bandedrail@gmail.com](mailto:bandedrail@gmail.com)



## Celebrating Our Volunteers: Lésa Heaton

*Interviewed by Anne Hilson*

Lésa's interest in the environment was galvanised during the years she spent living in Indonesia.... "the degradation of the environment was a lived experience". The introduction of plastics into the water ways particularly piqued her. Whenever they came home to New Zealand it seemed "so green and beautiful" and she knew we needed to look after what we had.

She did a lot of volunteering in Indonesia, including working on the inaugural World Cleanup Day; an annual world-wide social action programme occurring on the third Saturday of September. Local schools in a mining community were motivated to clean up a space the size of a soccer field; a massive three tonnes of garbage was taken away on two big trucks. Lésa says it felt as if they were "having a worthwhile relationship with the planet and sharing it with other people". The community is still doing this annual cleanup today.

When Lésa and Chris came back to live in New Zealand she "*didn't know the difference between a cabbage tree and a Carex secta*" but wanted to be employed in something meaningful and of interest to her, especially after studying environmental sociology (extramurally through Massey University while living in Jakarta). Someone suggested that doing voluntary work would lead to a paying job. She signed up to planting and weeding plants for *Battle for the Banded Rail*, work for Friends of the Cobb, and Project Janszoon. Within two years she had a job as Assistant Restoration Officer with Project Janszoon, supervising up to forty volunteers planting appropriate plants and weeding out pest plants in Abel Tasman National Park. The overall aim is to protect the ecological values of the area, reintroduce birds and other wildlife and restore specific ecosystems. It's also a part of the Fire Smart project, which makes sure the beaches are free of gorse and other fire-vitalising weeds, and to replace them with less flammable native species and those that are appropriate to the ecosystem.

The property they bought on the shore of the Waimea Inlet had a covenant on it forbidding any cohabitation with cats. In six years, they have despatched three feral cats. Lésa favours cat owners putting a bell on their cats to warn any birds of their presence and taking personal responsibility for their own pet's whereabouts.



*Lésa, with Laura from DOC, planting peppergrass seed*

They are increasing the vegetation on the foreshore of the property, and trapping predators. Elsewhere in this newsletter is included an article on the Coastal Pepper Cress, an endangered plant. Lésa has several wooden raised planter beds growing the peppercorn seeds in a fish compost mix, as part of the Banded Rail project. These are found amongst her revegetated area, where she can always keep an eye out for weeds, just one of several sites locally.

Taking a wider view, Lésa suggests that as our ancestors introduced these exotic plants and animals into the New Zealand ecosystem, it's up to this generation to deal with them diligently. Her own property, and how she deals with it, bears witness to that idea.

## Remembering Roger Gaskell

We were saddened and shocked to learn of Roger's sudden death in June. Roger has been part of the *Battle for the Banded Rail* crew since the project's inception.

Roger was our Department of Conservation mentor and provided guidance with our planning and reviewed our habitat restoration work. After his retirement three years ago, he continued to take an interest in our work and visited sites for an annual review. He always had plenty of valuable feedback and suggestions for us and many of us have learned a lot from him.

Roger has been credited with saving Coastal Peppergrass from extinction (see story earlier in newsletter). We hope we can make gains in the species' recovery and add to the legacy that Roger has left.

One of the last times I saw Roger was near Pearl Creek. He described a large ngaio growing here as a 'beautiful amazing original ngaio' and possibly the best on the Waimea Inlet. For me, this ngaio is now 'Roger's ngaio'.



*'Beautiful amazing original ngaio' Roger Gaskell*





## Project Spotlight

*Battle for the Banded Rail* is just one of Tasman Environmental Trust's current projects. Here is another project working with its local community in our region.

### Te Mamaku Native Corridor

The primary purpose of this project is to create a link from the Moutere Inlet to the Waimea Estuary with a native corridor for biodiversity, migrating birds and insects. This, in turn, will enhance the experience of the Dicker Ridge walking and cycling track.

What was abandoned Crown Land along SH60, overgrown by wilding pine trees, gorse and blackberries will be a native forest for future generations to enjoy.

Wide praise for enhancing local biodiversity has come from the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird, Restoring the Moutere (Tasman Environment Trust), NZLandcare Trust and Ngāti Rārua. This evolving prominence in Tasman District has resulted in sponsorship of a further 9,300 trees as part of New Zealand's gift to celebrate King Charles III coronation through Project Crimson.

Between 2022 and 2023 13,800 trees have been planted on 3.5 hectares. Another 3.8 hectares has been cleared and mulched ready for planting in 2024/2025. The winter of 2024 planting will see 11,000 trees going into the ground.

For 2025/2026 we are planning to clear more land to plant another 10,000-12,000 trees.

Read more at [TET projects](#)

