



## Motu Kaikoura

*An open sanctuary promoting wilderness education, ecosystem restoration and public recreation on an offshore island*

# KAKA COMMENTS

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MOTU KAIKOURA TRUST SUPPORTERS' NEWSLETTER ISSUE 17, JULY 2015

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## **2015 Chairman's Annual Report** - June 2014 to May 2015

### ***Our objectives – (in brief):***

- *Restoring the natural environment of Motu Kaikoura*
- *Making Motu Kaikoura available for outdoor and environmental education*

### ***The battle with the rats continues ...***

The year has seen a dramatic fall in rat numbers. A revised rat eradication programme has been able designed and managed. And the programme capably implemented by mainly voluntary on-island staff, often rebaiting bait stations fortnightly, bringing rat numbers down to relative density of 6% in July 2015. We don't have an equivalent figure for the same time last year, however, in December the previous year (2013) the relative density was close to 60%. Of course the rat density varies during the year and this year was no exception as, at the end of summer – when rat densities are usually at their highest – the rat density was measured at 44%. This figure is high but not nearly as high as in previous years. A huge improvement and proving the old adage that *"nothing succeeds like hard work"*. An it has been hard, unrelenting work. We look forward to settling into a more consistent monitoring regime so that we can compare densities from the same time of year.

The track network and rebaiting rates are continually being assessed and extended where hot spots of rat numbers, or holes of no coverage, are identified.

Support for this work has been provided by DOC and the Auckland Council for which we are grateful.

The Trust's ultimate aim is for a zero rat density. Our next target, however, is to consistently achieve under 5%. Our proximity to nearby Aotea (Great Barrier Island) where little or no rat eradication is taking place makes these targets challenging.

### ***... sustained by ongoing infrastructure maintenance***

A year ago the outer Hauraki was swept by a violent storm that left fallen trees and a large slip down the Eastern slope of the island. While Motu Kaikoura was shaken the impact was not as great as on Aotea. The main restoration work to be done after this storm centred on re-establishing the road across the island. The road is a vital part of the island's infrastructure and

considerable work is required to keep it operational. With the support of Pub Charity we have been able to buy a small second-hand digger to help with this work.

Other infrastructure work carried out include: replacing the floor of the toilet block, relaying floor vinyl and reconnecting the toilet bowls, repair of tractor, outboard motor and water tank, and connecting the temporary kitchen chalet grey water to the septic tank.

During the year the resource consents for the coastal structures on the South side of the island have been transferred from the previous owner to the Trust.

The lodge of course was burnt down towards the end of 2013. The Trust has commissioned architects who have designed a replacement. But finding funding for the replacement is proving challenging. The insurance cover we had did not allow for full replacement so we are needing to raise approx \$300,000 more.

Also underway is the heritage evaluation of the building at Bradshaw's Cove.

### ***... with support from ...***

Our supporters, volunteers, funders Pub Charity, Auckland Council, and the Department of Conservation, and our volunteer caretakers.

### ***Financial***

During the last financial year to 31 March 2015, the Trust received further income of \$71,874 and incurred expenditure of \$73,163.

Full financial accounts for the Trust have been filed with the Charities Commission.

### ***Thanks***

I would like to thank the Motu Kaikoura Trustees for their dedication through the year. Without you our achievements and successes would not have happened. My thanks to retiring Trustees Tim Martin and Rupert Wilson who have been Trustees from the beginning. Your contribution has been considerable and is greatly appreciated.

Thank you all.



Harry Doig  
Chair  
July 2015



*Christmas arriving at Motu Kaikoura 2014*



Thanks to Pub Charity for the grant to enable us to purchase this digger.



Laying grey water drainage from self contained cabin

### Rat monitoring on Motu Kaikoura



Harry Doig



Mike Lee



Reviewing their results

### Cleaning the mule



Hydraulic tipper also recently fitted



Pilot Dima and John Lowe replacing the windsock

“Always maintenance work to be done.”

## Kaka Comments Update June 2015

Well. Winter has been pretty mild this year on Motu Kaikoura. Perhaps making up for our last one but it's not over yet...

The bait take in the rat stations has slowed down substantially around most of the Island, along with the dexterity of my fingers...

Clint has cleared a couple of new tracks in the gully above Bradshaws Cove, and the girls and I helped to G.P.S motel positions and mark it. (The easy bits really) all the hard slog Clint managed himself.

Improvements have been progressing in our coastal rat line operations too. Perhaps this is due to our teamwork relying heavily on the patience of our daughters, who have become more inured to this sort of treatment over time, as well as incorporating a kayak leg into the plan so that when the kids have had enough, one of us gets to carry on in that, quietly..oh, so quietly..

The annual coastal cleanup coordinated by Okiwi school ran smoothly again this year. All of the rubbish (and some treasures) were categorised, counted and analysed graphically. Some conclusions drawn from this was the recurrence of mussel farm lanyards even after repeated communication between the concerned parties and the decision to ban all mussel farmers and yachties from our waters (just kidding on the latter, perhaps not the former).. but waste minimisation has been a hot topic on the Barrier, especially in the last couple of years.

We also participated in the Port Fitzroy raft race this Easter. Utilising one of the logs that had fallen across the road on the island, we commandeered it for use as our vessel, complete with a doomed bicycle, but the bicycle was not the only thing doomed.



Our cyclical propulsion system looked formidable enough to any opponents at water level, but turns out not enough tinkering was completed in time to make this contraption very effective anyway. Rena Mae-Telfer (our devoted friend) Clint and I were the lucky contestants to strike fear and admiration into the hearts of the assembled, then proceeded to wobble, (perhaps an outrigger arm rather than a keel was more suitable) wobble and, cut a long story short, not even manage to complete the race.

To assuage some remnants of pride, we were awarded with 'the most ingeniously designed raft'.

Anyone reading this would think we have too much time on our hands. This really isn't the case. Honest. Last I heard that doomed bike is destined for a key role in next years 'bird man' event. Come on out and join in! It'll be a hoot!

Robbie's been working with the digger to improve the road and Nick has continued with tidying up round the Bradshaw Cove house during winter visits and now doing track maintenance.

All in all, we are enjoying a peaceful winter and are happy with the teamwork and conditions out here this year.

From the Stannard family,

Clint, Jacinda, Xyra and Soren.



Nick returning to his yacht for the night



Bradshaw Cove



*Piece of history / winch at Crawford's Bay*

*Photos by Rod Miller*

# “WINNING THE BATTLE

The Motu Kaikoura Trust is now into its second year of an all-out war of attrition with rats. While we do not underestimate how tough this is going to be, we are pleased to announce that much of the interior of the Island is now free of rats and as our bait station/trapping grid continues to expand the situation continues to improve. However, we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Our next priority is to clean out the difficult-to-access enclaves of rats persisting especially along the island’s southwest coastline adjacent to Governor’s Pass and the Man o’ War Channel.

Clint Stannard, our island rat eradication operation’s manager, is doing a brilliant job in winning this war.

Our special challenge in this part of the country is that ambient rat numbers, as indicated on Gt Barrier, are enormously high, with mild winter temperatures and wild food availability promoting year-round breeding AND, as we recently found out, a South Island style late summer spike on rat numbers as well.

The Motu Kaikoura Trust is resolved on a goal of a rat free island and eco-system restoration. While we do not underestimate the demands of this challenge, our friends and supporters can be reassured that the Motu Kaikoura Trust is in this for the long haul.

We are pleased to present out latest rat management report.”

## Motu Kaikoura Rat Management Programme – Progress Report

Michael Lee Trustee July 2015 (The full report is on the website: [ww.motukaikoura.org.nz](http://ww.motukaikoura.org.nz) .Thanks to Stan Vause or I can email you a copy if you contact me at [rosaliegmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:rosaliegmiller@hotmail.com)



A plan to achieve this objective was drawn up and presented to the trustees in January 2014 and approved in February 2014. Work got underway soon after.

### **Bait Station Network**

The island network as at 30 June 2015 comprises 540 stations (plus 10 stations of the off-island control line on the Stellan Peninsula).

The present list of bait station tracks and lines is as follows:

Coastal Line	140 stations	
East Track	96 stations	182 snap traps
West Track	62 stations	80 snap traps
Parihakoakoa	60 stations	
Road Line	31 stations	62 snap traps
Slip Track	26 stations	26 snap traps
Pahangahou	26 stations	
Badlands Track	18 stations	
House Track	12 stations	
Midline Track	12 stations	
Airfield Line	12 stations	12 snap traps
Bradshaws	10 stations	
Wharf Line	10 stations	20 snap traps
Vodafone Track	8 stations	16 snap traps
Fence Line Track	8 stations	
Barn Track	5 stations	
End of Airstrip Track	5 stations	
West Link Track	4 stations	
<b>Total</b>	<b>540 Bait Stations</b>	<b>398 snap traps</b>

Total number of managed stations in the field (rat motels and Philproofs) including the off island control line: **550**

Total length of formed tracks and roads: **28.1km**

Total length of coastline: **16.5 km**

There are also **50** tracking tunnels, grouped in five lines of ten strategically placed across the island for periodic index monitoring.

## Index Monitoring results 2010 – 2015

It is assumed that the aerial bait operation in the winter of 2008 removed less than 100% of the target rats.

After the aerial drop and the eradication of the last fallow deer and other pests, after a hiatus of 3 to 6 months, rats, identified as kiore and ship rats, assumed to be survivors, in a significantly improved habitat, boosted by rats swimming from the nearby mainland, underwent what appears to have been a population irruption.

We can hindcast that from a very low population base after the aerial drop, rat levels increased to between 5 -10 % relative density by December 2009.

In December 2010 rat levels were monitored across the island by Auckland Council Biosecurity (former ARC) officers, who established the existing 5 x 10 tracking tunnel monitoring lines, and found the relative density to be **16%**.

In February 2012 (just over one year later) rat levels again were monitored by the Council Biosecurity and were recorded at **28%**.

In December 2012 rat monitoring by Unitec students recorded a relative density of **43%**.

In July 2013 monitoring by trustees gave a relative density of **77.6%**. Two stations (West Track and Overlook) indicated 100%.

In December 2013 monitoring indicated density levels were just over **59%**. While this was a reduction of 16.6% on the figures of July 2013 – it was significantly higher (16%) than the figure for the previous December.

The only positive to be taken from this was the information on just how high rat numbers could reach, without competitors and natural predators.

Given the fall-off in numbers (with only cursory trapping and poisoning) from July to December, the December 2013 relative density level of 59% is perhaps around the island's natural rat carrying capacity.

Active rat management began in March 2014.

Index monitoring by trustees in November 2014 result (2/40) = **5%**.

Monitoring by trustees in February 2015 result (4/50) = **8%**

Monitoring by Auckland Council Biosecurity in April 2015 result (22/50) = **44%**

Monitoring by Glenfern Sanctuary personnel in May 2015 (11/45) = **25%**

Monitoring by Island ops manager Clint Stannard in July 2015 (3/5) = **6%**



## Index monitoring results over the past 24 months

	July 2013		Dec 2013		Nov 2014		Feb 2015	
Lodge (RM1)	3/7	(43%)	2/7	(29%)	0/4	(0%)	1/10	(10%)
Bradshaws (RM2)	7/10	(70%)	7/9	(78%)	1/10	(10%)	1/10	(10%)
Mangrove (RM3)	9/12	(75%)	3/9	(33%)	0/6	(0%)	0/10	(0%)
West Ridge (RM4)	9/9	(100%)	10/10	(100%)	1/10	(10%)	2/10	(20%)
Overlook (RM5)	10/10	(100%)	4/9	(45%)	0/10	(0%)	0/10	(0%)
	<b>79%</b>		<b>59%</b>		<b>5%</b>		<b>8%</b>	

### Apr 2015

RM1	7/10	(70%)
RM2	3/10	(30%)
RM3	4/10	(40%)
RM4	5/10	(50%)
RM5	3/10	(30%)
	<b>44%</b>	

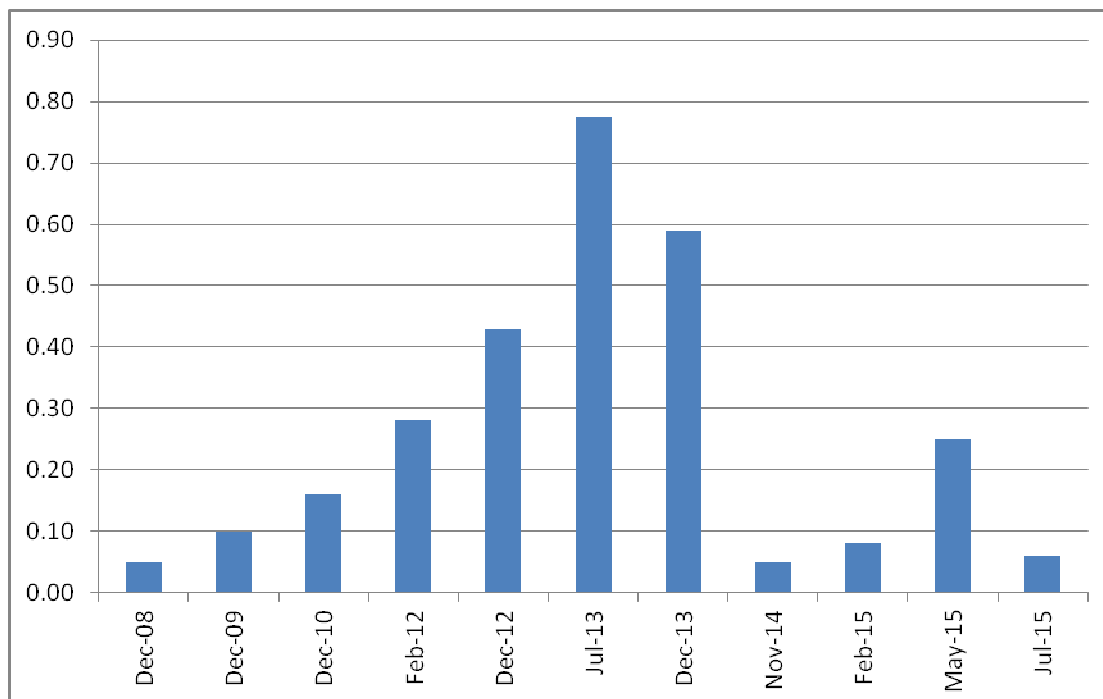
### May 2015

RM1	0/10	(0%)
RM2	1/9	(12%)
RM3	2/10	(20%)
RM4	4/7	(51%)
RM5	4/9	(44%)
	<b>25%</b>	

### July 2015

RM1	0/10	(0%)
RM2	0/10	(0%)
RM3	1/10	(10%)
RM4	0/10	(0%)
RM5	2/10	(20%)
	<b>6%</b>	

## Motu Kaikoura. Rat relative densities December 2008 – July 2015



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Rosalie Miller  
Motu Kaikoura Supporters

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*“Having vision is not enough.  
Change comes through realising the vision  
And turning it into reality.”*

*Sir Peter Blake*



[www.motukaikoura.org.nz](http://www.motukaikoura.org.nz)