

Doubtless Conservation Trustees Meeting 21/3/25

Present

Marcus, Celia and George

Weasels

Hawdon Valley trapping uses traps to fire at 50g to catch weasels, which are often lighter than a rat. They catch about 7 weasels to every two stoats. As our environment is similar, we should be catching more weasels than we currently do. Therefore we are to consider reducing the firing weight of our traps. George said that all traps that have gone out in the past two years had been set to fire close to 50g with the expectation they will get harder to fire with time. No action at this point, but something to move to in the future.

Double Tap

A poison for mice, rats and possums that is delivered via dispensers hung from trees and is serviced approximately every 6 months. Double Tap gives a humane kill. It has half life of less than 3 days, which may make it less effective for secondary poisoning of stoats. Marcus to ask Sandy if we can use this in a recreational hunting area.

AT520

We will get these added to our Community Agreement, but with no expectation that we will be purchasing large numbers any time soon. Our concerns include high cost, poor humane kill record and unproven longevity.

Cats

Advice from Hawdon rangers is that we can only expect to catch cats in the winter when they are hungry, so we should recognise we have done well to kill the two we have. Therefore unlike our other traps we will continue to service these through the winter but may not do so between late spring and autumn.

Baiting with lard has worked well in the summer, in that the bait endures through this hotter period. We will start to use other baits (cheap meat cuts, sausages etc.) from the next rebait. Catnip oil has been used and a cat caught, so this too may be worth continuing with. Will try catnip leaves in tea infusers.

Double Tap dispenser could be affixed to the chimney traps to reduce possum interference.

Xander has requested cat trap training. We will run a half hour session before the dinner.

Chimney box to be picked up by George from John Dryden when in the Lewis next week.

Duchess and Lucretia

These lines are currently grouped together but are difficult to complete in a two-day weekend. The traps above the biv are slow to service due to the rough terrain. George to alter notes to make it clear that these are optional.

In 2025-2026 season these will be separated and not bundled together as currently. Keen volunteers who might want to do the two on one trip still can, but they need to get in early and book both lines for the same weekend.

Acoustic recording

George to email Laura Molles again about her offer to analyse acoustic recording data from the Nina Valley. Placing the recorders in the field offers an excellent opportunity to back-pack out the few remaining discarded doc200s in the upper valley.

RNZ Afternoons

Lynn Freeman (Forest and Bird) has pitched to Jesse Mulligan's producer that we be interviewed. Jesse is known to be interested in predator control, and it is thought that our involvement with young people (Hurunui College) and older citizens (Rymans) will be of great interest to him.

When we get a date with Jesse, George is to speak with Tim Kelly to see if he would like to be involved.

Marcus was on Jesse's show recently for his LureGard development.

Dinner

June - July

Get Rod to talk about bird life?

Get a pub style quiz going with kills, bird sounds etc. ?

Norma and Sylvia Lines

Work party required. Tasks include:

- Two traps need replacing on Norma and one on Sylvia.
- Norma traps need reorientating and placing to be easier for trappers.
- Norma possum traps need to be moved to be closer to track and alongside a wooden box.
- Norma route needs windfall clearing.
- Sylvia could do with cutting above the steep section prior to exiting the bush on an ascent.
- This could be advertised as a weekend activity in May based in the NZDA lodge.

Devilskin Route

Marcus has recently walked this route in its entirety and noted parts of the route need rerouting, cutting and marking. The most urgent work is above our trapline and so is beyond the section that George discussed with Robin and David. George to talk with them about how far along the route they envisaged working.