



Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust Update February 2018

Braided River Project:

Thanks to the hard work of Rusty and his workers building trap boxes and putting the traps in the field there are now 593 RDWT stoat traps covering approximately 120 kms beside the Rees and Dart Rivers.

Kill score so far is 41 mustelids (stoats and weasels) and 17 rats.

This was a huge undertaking often in very hot weather so it's great to have Rusty's dedication.

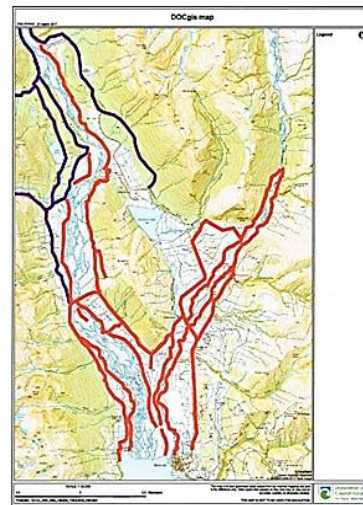


Figure 1 Overview of the existing nearby DOC trap network (purple) and the proposed new kill trap network (red).

Bats:



November's bat counting was undertaken over two calm warm nights and netted a total count of 107 bats on roadside transects down the Routeburn, Rees and Dart Valleys and around Mt Alfred.

If you are interested in joining us for the February count please contact Helen on 03 441 2221 or 027 642 7772.

Long Tail Bat

Population Survey:



In November we employed two contractors from Wildlife Management International (WMIL) who were joined by RDWT and local volunteers to undertake our initial river bird survey in the Rees and Dart Rivers. This has provided us with base population numbers from which we can deduce population changes in the future.

Wrybills



The wrybill is unique in the world for its beak with the twist to the right, used for getting invertebrates from under rocks in the braided rivers. It is a seasonal visitor to the Rees and Dart rivers, flying in from coastal areas mostly in the North Island to breed between October and January. In the October survey we counted 71 wrybill on the Dart River.

Funding

RDWT is very grateful to Central Lakes Trust, Real Journeys, Otago Regional Council, Otago Community Trust and Greenwood Environmental Trust for significant financial contributions towards this project. We have also received \$50,000 from the DOC Community Fund.

Trapping is ongoing and expensive so if anyone would like to make a donation you can do this at rdwt.org

Rock Wren



A recent survey of rock wren in the Harris Saddle and Basin area of the Routeburn revealed population numbers are up on the previous two years. Increased trapping in the area has been partly funded by the RDWT.

Sylvan Trapline:

Monthly checks of the Sylvan trapline over the summer by RDWT members have found the traps clear, which is an indicator of low predator numbers in the area. It's great to go into the bush and hear a large variety of birds feeding their young.



Eiji:

Eiji Kitai has been hut warden on the Greenstone for many years and has decided to raise money for RDWT whilst walking the length of New Zealand on the Te Araroa Trail.

Eiji completed the North Island leg of the trail in October and will continue with the South Island section in April.



Project Hollyford Face

'RDWT also funds a significant part of Project Hollyford Face on the Routeburn Track. Evan Smith, one of the MacKenzie hut wardens, has been giving inspiring hut talks about predator control for many years and using any money raised to extend the network of traps on the track. Funding from Air NZ has permitted a huge extension of the trap network down all the tributary creeks and into the alpine areas of the track.



Evan is delighted at the increased numbers of birds he is now seeing on the track and this was acknowledged by Lou Sanson in his recent Director General's Report having walked the track again this summer.'

If you would like to help out with the bat monitoring in February please get in touch with Amanda (442 9942) or Helen (4412221, 027 642 7772).