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**Pest Surveillance of the Noises Islands
Hauraki Gulf**

May 13 – 17 2002

**Auckland Conservation Corps
NZ School of Outdoor Studies**

Introduction/Aim

48 Man Days

To assist the Neureuter Family Trust and D.O.C in maintaining the already existing Bait Stations and Tracking Tunnels on Otata, Motuhoropapa, David Rocks, Maria and the surrounding islets. Our aim is to gather information from the afore mentioned equipment so that D.O.C can ascertain whether or not the prior rat eradication programme of August/September 2001 was successful and/or whether pest reinvasion has occurred. This agreement was come to in the contract between Jeff Cook of the NZSOS and Rod Neureuter of the Noises Island Family Trust on December 4th 2001. This is our second visit (as per the contract of December 4th 2001) to the islands.

Findings

In a combined effort from the Auckland Conservation Corps we put in 192 Man-hours during which we found 61 of the original 67 Bait Stations and 31 of the original 33 Tracking Tunnels, gathered information from them, replaced baits, beef jerky, and tracking cards. We left the chocolate scents untouched.

We found that none of the insect prohibiting gauze had been gnawed through by the rats, despite having rats present on the islands. After consulting George Wilson, it was decided that we would have to remove the gauze. The results we found have been recorded on the spreadsheets provided. Inaccurate maps/information have been redrawn and included also. (See attached charts and maps). The missing Bait Stations and Tracking Tunnels have been recorded on the corresponding spreadsheets.

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We found two more Bait Stations and one more Tracking Tunnel on this expedition than the previous similar expedition in February 2002. We would also like to note that one Tracking Tunnel (Tracking Tunnel #7, Motuhoropapa) had been over-turned, possibly by rodents as the Tracking Card showed unidentified marks (possibly a tail).

Results

In February the Tracking Cards showed that the islands were free of rats. However this time we have found evidence of rats on Otata (13 tracks), Motuhoropapa (3 tracks) and Scott Island (1 track), with the other smaller islands remaining clear.

On a positive front, the Tracking Tunnel cards, which were placed in February, have given us definite results proving that the Tracking Tunnel system is successful.

We have also introduced a more concise numbering system on Motuhoropapa and the David Rocks.

Recommendations

There are a few recommendations we would like to put forward for the future pest surveillance programmes:

- Old (i.e. 1970/1980) Bait Stations need to be removed for amenity reasons and to avoid confusion.
- A new design of Bait Stations could include tracking cards to give a clearer indication of what is eating the baits.
- Refrain from using insect prohibiting gauze.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Neureuter Family and George Wilson for giving us this learning opportunity. We hope that the information we have gathered is sufficient and can be used productively towards the restoration and keeping of the Noises Islands

Jeff Cook



Supervisor Auckland Conservation Corps

