



ISSUE 1 • 2023

# THE MEG-A-PHONE

A Newsletter from Moehau Environment Group

FREE  
PLEASE TAKE  
ONE

## Good news for the MEGa Rat Attack

Thanks to MEG being successful in the 2022 Lotteries Grant Application, MEGa Rat Attack has a new name: MEGa Pest Attack! This new name reflects an addition of possum and feral cat trapping to the network of 2600 rat traps that are serviced each month and extensive stoat trapping across the region. Our monitoring of the Rat Attack project for many years in a row has shown rat numbers are kept extremely low, at less than 5% small mammal index. Now it's time to tackle more predators.

The MEGa Pest Attack is one of the country's most intensive predator control sites on the mainland and it offers one of the safest habitats on the Coromandel Peninsula for brown kiwi, toutouwai, miromiro and other species such as piwakawaka, tui, ruru and kereru. So far 88 of the 150 AT220's made by NZ Auto Traps have been installed creating a 'Ring of Steel' on the boundary of the 450 hectares of regenerating bush in Port Charles. Cat traps will also be installed in specially chosen feral cat locations.

Already, nine of the installed AT220's have killed 66 possums. The AT220 is designed to primarily kill possums and rats and is a self resetting humane kill trap, serviced every three months to re lure and change batteries. Thanks to the Lotteries Foundation for supporting this project!



It takes 30 person days per month to service the 2600 rat traps of the MEGa Pest Attack and this work is carried out by the MEG Field Team.

The MEGa Pest Attack intensive trapping network is a bird sanctuary on the mainland.

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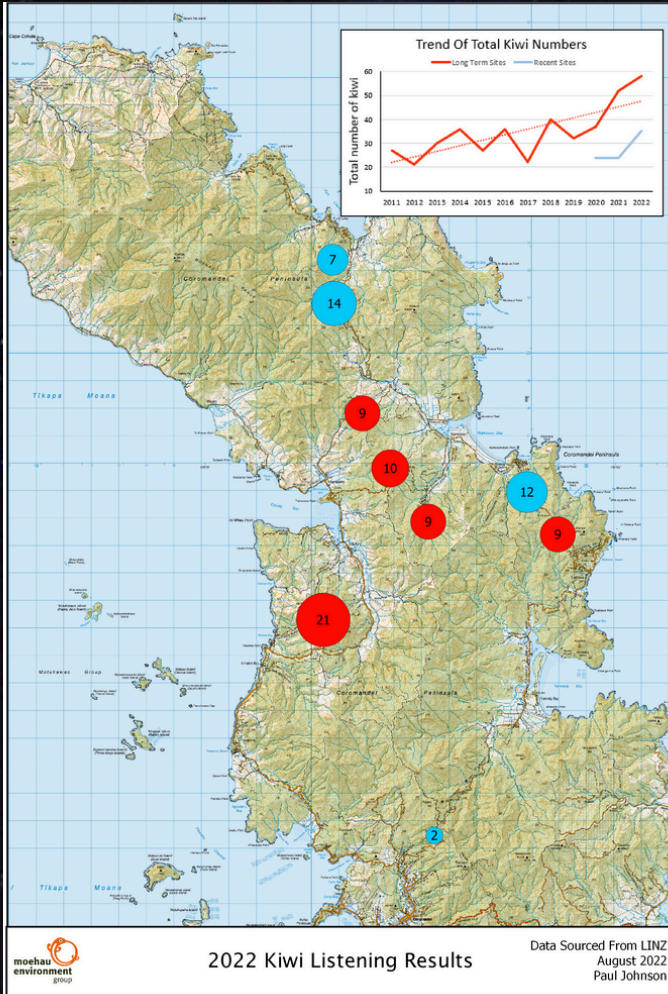
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## Kiwi Survey

Every year, MEG's kiwi listening volunteers leave their warm lounges to sit for two hours in the cool winter nights, just after dusk, to listen for kiwi. There are 9 sites surveyed every year and every ten years, MEG surveys 40 sites to see how kiwi populations are growing. The kiwi listening survey follows DOC protocol and runs for a two and a half month period, with listeners only going out when the weather is ideal for listening when there's no wind or rain. Winter is the best time to hear adult kiwi as they are preparing to mate which can involve 'flock calling' where they call loudly expecting their mate to call back. This behavior helps partnered birds locate each other and affirms that both are safe, as well as indicating to other kiwi where their territory is. Their distinctive and repeated call can travel more than one kilometer, the male North Island kiwi's call is a shrill single note repeated 15-20 times while the female North Island kiwi's call is a lower pitched and rasping coarse call repeated 15-20 times also. Funnily enough the chances of hearing kiwi decrease when the moon is full.

## Winter Lecture Series

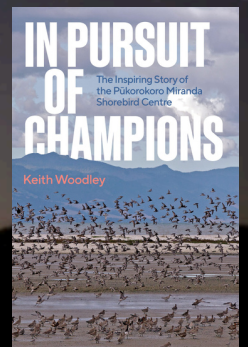
MEG's Winter Lecture Series is running again this year. Some of our speakers include Annemieke Kregtling who founded Kuaotunu Bird Rescue, sharing what she has learnt from over 15 years working 24/7 looking after sick or injured birds. Professor Dave Towns will be presenting the 'Secrets and surprises on Coromandel Islands'. His 40 year career in New Zealand environmental science has made vital inputs in the conservation of rare reptiles and the restoration of island ecosystems. Keith Woodley, a shorebird and kuaka/godwit expert and manager of Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre will present on the migration of kuaka from Aotearoa to China, North and South Korea and Alaska and the need to protect vital coastal wetland ecosystems.

Our Winter Lecture Series will be held at The Pepper Tree Restaurant in Coromandel Town.

4th June  
Annemieke Kregtling



6th August  
Dave Towns



3rd Sept  
Keith Woodley

# Stoat Hot Spot, Coromandel Kiwi Project

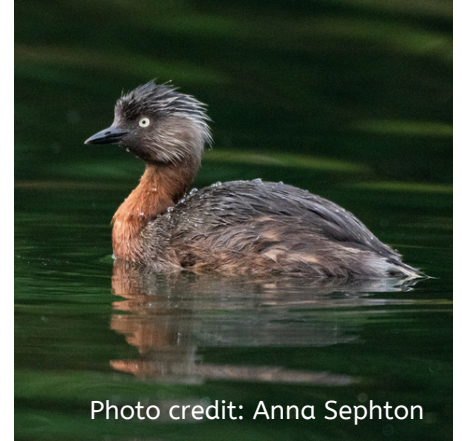


Photo credit: Anna Sephton

MEG has a long standing history of predator control and community advocacy in Kapanga/Coromandel Town and in the north of the Peninsula. We advocate for our native flora and fauna and our aim is to suppress the presence of mustelids, rats, possums and wild cats.

It is common when someone does encounter a stoat, for them to get in touch with us and we can assist them in accessing traps and learning how to become a trapper. Last spring and summer, members of the community started approaching the MEG team concerned about stoats near a hotspot of birdlife in Coromandel Town.. A stoat was caught in a live trap and a family of stoats were seen swimming across the river and running around private properties with the noticeable loss of ducklings.

Right next to this stoat hot spot is the town's sewage ponds where a wide range of native aquatic bird species congregate, including the rare pāteke duck. So with birds to protect and stoats being seen by residents right in the middle of town, we'd love to get a network of traps into urban backyards and into more shared community spaces especially around where the stoats were sighted. We are looking for funding to add a new trap line into the current Coromandel Kiwi Project. We aim to place traps in at least 20 households' backyards, at least 6 businesses, the community space of the Memorial Forest which runs along the river, near the neglected netball courts and skatepark, and as close to the council owned sewage ponds and refuse center as possible with council permission. If you're up for a new mission, join us at the beginning of this journey and get in touch with us!

Follow us on Facebook @moehauenvironmentgroup, contact us at [info@meg.org.nz](mailto:info@meg.org.nz) or make a donation by visiting our website [www.meg.org.nz](http://www.meg.org.nz)



# What's That Bird - Pāteke



Pāteke are not as common as they once were due to predation from cats, stoats and rats, loss of habitat, declining water quality, wetland drainage and being disturbed during nesting. Pāteke are mostly found in Northland, Aotea/Great Barrier Island and the Coromandel Peninsula and they are the only one of Aotearoa's three endemic brown plumaged teal that can fly. They are vulnerable to predators as pāteke hide rather than fly away when frightened. In 2003, captive bred pāteke were translocated to Port Charles in an attempt to halt their decline and MEG was instrumental in protecting these birds with predator control.



## Catch Data For Target Species



**Stoat**  
2023 FY Total - 51  
Project Total - 3,168



**Weasel**  
2023 FY Total - 12  
Project Total - 1,081



**Rat**  
2023 FY Total - 798  
Project Total - 24,976



**Ferret**  
2023 FY Total - 0  
Project Total - 8

## Sponsor a Stoat Trap & Donate

Would you like to sponsor a stoat trap within our kiwi sanctuary? Well you can! For just \$65 per year you can help provide protection for kiwi chicks in the wild. You'll receive a certificate, a map showing the location of your trap and the catch data for the sponsorship year. Not to mention lots of warm fuzzies!



## Thanks to our Volunteers, Members, Sponsors & Funding Partners...

Driving Creek Conservation Park  
Driving Creek Railway & Pottery  
Tangiaro Kiwi Retreat  
Pepper Tree Restaurant & Bar  
Richardsons Real Estate Coromandel  
Coromandel Adventures  
Coromandel Four Square  
Coromandel E Bikes  
Long Bay Camp Ground  
Star & Garter  
Four Square Coromandel  
Mitre 10 Thames



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