



**moehau**  
**environment**  
group

ISSUE 1 • 2024

# THE MEG-A-PHONE

A Newsletter from Moehau Environment Group



## 1000 possums caught in one year!

Our 1000th possum was caught in the April service of the self-resetting AT220 traps (NZ AutoTraps) from the MEGa Pest Attack. The traps have also caught over 3600 rats and mice in the year since they have been in action throughout the 450-hectare sanctuary in Tangiaro/Port Charles, adding to rat and stoat trapping already in place. Since then, the traps have continued to bring down possum numbers which is mirrored by our monitoring with cameras and wax tags. Our wax tag index dropped from 55% to 2.8% in a year (and 6 months later is 0%!!). So we know they are working! Thanks to the funding from Waikato Regional Council and the Lotteries Grants Board, we have been able to control rats and possums to low numbers and create a safer habitat for native animal species to breed and the forest to regenerate.

Peri Mawson, field team member installing and hauling AT220's into the MEGa Pest Attack project area. And one of MEG's trail cams captures a possum visitor



## This issue:

1000th Possum caught in April service  
PAGE 01

Backyard Trapping kicks off in Kapanga

Volunteer with Us  
PAGE 02

Kiwi Sanctuary Update

Fabulous Fungi!  
PAGE 03

What's that Plant?  
Catch Data, Become a Member or Sponsor  
PAGE 04





## Backyard Trapping kicks off in Kapanga to help protect endangered pāteke/brown teal.

Thanks to funding from Predator Free NZ and the mahi of local Coromandel Area School children making traps and spreading the word, our backyard trapping project is underway in Coromandel Town. Many sightings of stoats near the waterways prompted the need to protect a population of approximately 28 pāteke that have made Kapanga home.



Please get in touch on [info@meg.or.nz](mailto:info@meg.or.nz) if you have a property in town and would like to be involved. It's likely you'll qualify for a free trap!

## Volunteer for a Ginger Bash

MEG volunteers love getting together and supporting private land owners when it comes to controlling weeds on their properties. It is incredibly rewarding to come back and see that the work was worth it. Weeding is one of the ways you can volunteer and work with a great bunch of people for a few hours and stop for a drink together afterwards. Or maybe you would like to take a walk in the bush each month and check a stoatline? Get in touch and join us!



# Kiwi Sanctuary 2004 - 2024

It's timely to remember how it all began! The MEG kiwi sanctuary started with a huge effort making all the traps, cutting tracks and carrying boxes in, then checking them each month so that now a mustelid trapping network of over 15,500 ha of northern Hauraki/Coromandel is still running successfully.



Dawn and Terry Whitehouse made most of the stoa boxes for the original Kiwi Sanctuary trapping network - a huge undertaking!

**And the best news is that kiwi numbers continue to rise. Every winter volunteers sit outside after dark listening for kiwi calls so we are able to monitor the outcome of our stoat trapping. Stoats predate on kiwi chicks until they reach a size greater than 1200g. So its very exciting to see an increase in estimated kiwi numbers and to hear of them moving into new areas. Breeding success!**

Kiwi are routinely seen on our camera monitoring in the MEGa Pest Attack Sanctuary too!



## Fabulous Fungi in the Field

Our field team encounter some wonderful natural sights while out in the ngāhere. Here are a few of the fungi they see while rat or stoat trapping. Thanks to Peri Mawson for the photos of these amazing finds!



# What's That Plant?- Pua o te Reinga



Photo courtesy of Department of Conservation

Pua o te Reinga (flower of the underworld) or *Dactylanthus taylorii* is a rare native plant that grows on tree roots like a mushroom, but it's a flowering plant not a fungus. It produces lots of nectar that our native insects and birds and bats feed upon. Introduced pests like possums and rats eat the whole inflorescence before it can set seed. Once widespread, now it is only known in a few places in the country and only two spots on the Coromandel! Thanks to our Winter Lecture Speaker Avi Holzapfel from DOC we now know a lot more about *Dactylanthus taylorii* and we will be keeping an eye out for this fascinating plant. Check out the DOC website to see some images and let us know if you find any on your walks or traplines!

## Catch Data For Target Species



**Stoat**  
2023/4 FY Total - 176  
Project Total - 3,079



**Weasel**  
2023/4 FY Total - 57  
Project Total - 1,074



**Rat**  
2023/4 FY Total - 2690  
Project Total - 27,334



**Ferret**  
2023/4 FY Total - 0  
Project Total - 8



**Possum**  
2023/4 FY Total - 1098  
Project Total - 1858

## Become a Member, Sponsor a Stoat Trap or Donate

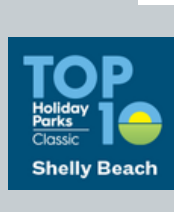
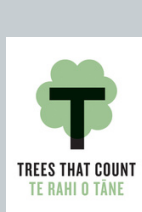
Would you like to help us give nature a helping hand? Well you can! Become a MEG member for only \$20 a year and \$30 per family. For just \$65 per year you can help provide protection for kiwi chicks in the wild. Check out all the ways you can become involved at [www.meg.org.nz](http://www.meg.org.nz) or use the handy QR code.



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



Driving Creek Railway & Pottery  
Driving Creek Conservation Park  
Four Square Coromandel  
Anna Mollekin Art  
Anna Sephton @annas\_photos\_nz



## Contact us...

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