

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



HOLLYFORD
CONSERVATION TRUST



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Thanks to

*Guy Walmsley, Jackie Young, Bill Thompson,
Peta Carey and Megan Bartlett for supplying
photographs for this report.*



WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE HOLLYFORD CONSERVATION TRUST 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

Background – The Hollyford Conservation Trust formed in 2014 to coordinate community conservation around Martins Bay, Fiordland. The Trust's core project involves ecological restoration of a 2600 ha area using a network of traps and baitstations to control rat, stoat and possum populations to low levels.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The theme of last year's Annual Report was the rallying of stakeholders to gather the resources needed to combat rat and stoat populations which were burgeoning after a wide spread mast event. By comparison this year's environmental conditions have been mild and predator population pressure low. DOC's Battle for Our Birds was also operative through the wider Hollyford Valley last September and we were able to dovetail Trust operations to achieve blanket pest control coverage through the project area while limiting ground control to DOC's exclusion zones. The outcome has been success in meeting all the targets we have for rat, stoat and possum control for the full bird breeding season.

In other areas we have also been busy. We've spent time engaging with stakeholders and have valued their support as we make progress towards the achievement of the [5-year goals](#) we set last year following a broad consultation process.

Fundraising remains front and centre and many stakeholders have contributed cash and resources to see us through this last year and into the next. In this respect, major gains were made in our quest for self-sustainability with a \$180 000.00 donation received from the Hong Kong based Sohmen Family in memory of Peta Carey's late husband, Dave Comer. We need to build further on this valuable resource as we go forward and are ever mindful that our project does not generate income. Instead it requires constant resourcing to remain effective. Without ongoing stakeholder support there is the risk that all the good work could be undone.

The one disappointment for the year was the double postponement of the South Island robin translocation we had planned in partnership with DOC. Weather intervened on both occasions and the task of reintroducing this species has now been rescheduled to March next year. We are hoping for better luck then.

We rounded out the year with a joint Martins Bay/Big Bay stakeholder function which was a great success. The minutes of that meeting are available [here](#) for anyone interested.

In final reflection, it has been a pleasure again this year to work with our trustees, volunteers and contractors to advance a cause that is dear to the hearts of all Hollyford stakeholders. As a Trust board we thank everyone for the collaborative effort that has been applied. We are grateful for your assistance and if you are able to help further then please talk to a trustee to share your ideas.

Ron Anderson
Chairman
Hollyford Conservation Trust

RATS

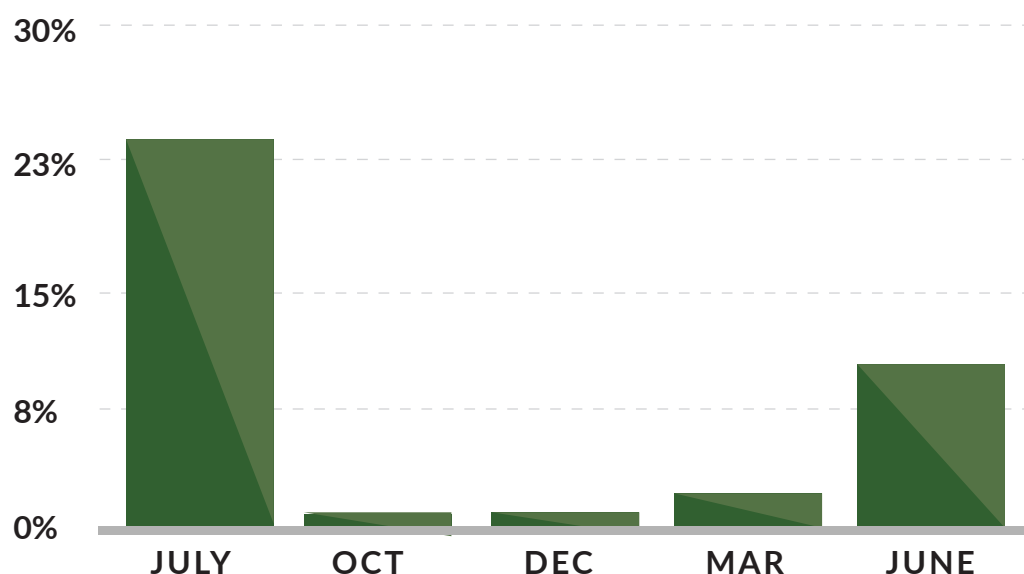
RATS, STOATS AND POSSUMS - PREDATOR MONITORING AND CONTROL

Rat control is a primary focus because our birds are vulnerable to them, particularly while nesting. This last year we continued to monitored rat population levels using our tracking tunnels lines. The target was to see rats tracking through no more than 5% of the 140 tracking tunnels we have during the bird breeding season, which for the Lower Hollyford birds starts late September.

This season we were able to avoid the mast driven volatility of last season to achieve consistent control to target throughout the bird breeding season. Rat tracking rates peaked at 24% in July 2017 but fell below 1% after the September Battle for Our Birds aerial operation that was complimented by our own bait station work within exclusion zones. As the graph below shows tracking rates stayed very low through our December and March monitoring rounds.

By June 2018, rats were tracking back up 11% but results then were patchy with large parts of the project area remaining relatively rat free. Control work will be undertaken soon to dampen the hotspots as we move towards the next bird breeding season.

RAT TRACKING RATES THROUGH 2017/18



STOATS

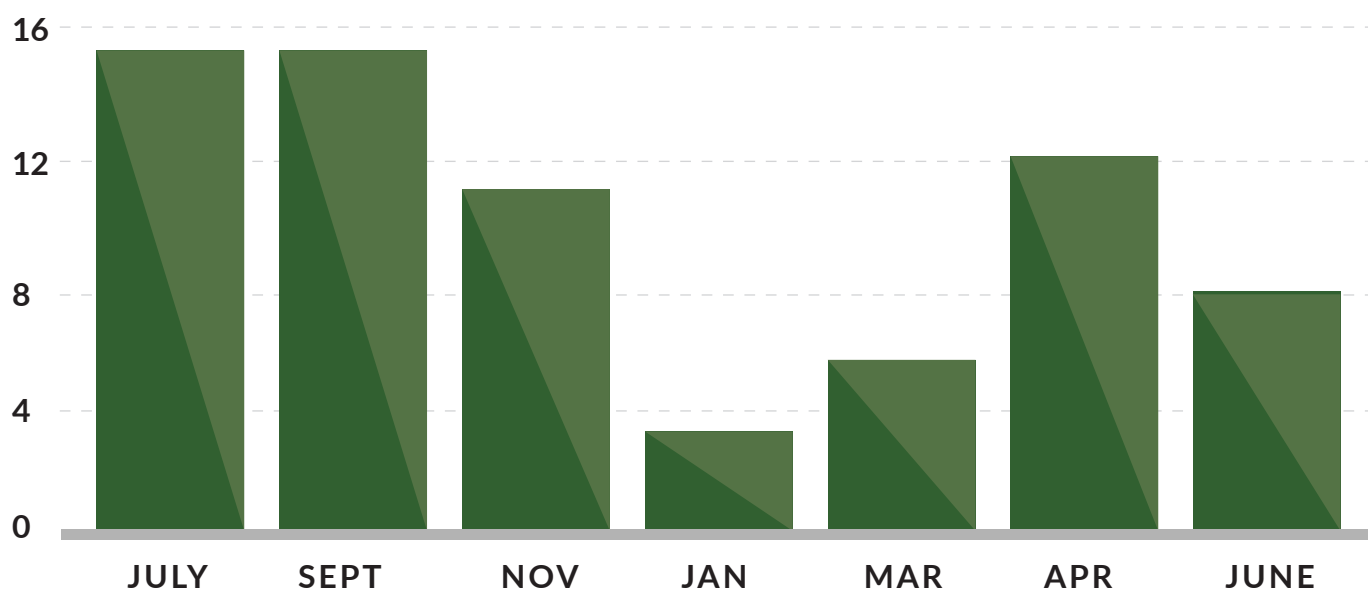
RATS, STOATS AND POSSUMS - PREDATOR MONITORING AND CONTROL

We control stoats because they also predate on our birds. They're non-discriminatory predators who will target rats but this is not as helpful as one might assume as stoat population levels trend upwards with rat population levels in a chain reaction that is particularly evident in mast seasons.

During the 2017/18 year we trapped 69 stoats within the project area. This was well down on the 189 stoats caught in the previous, mast driven, year. The chart below shows peak months were July to November as the effect of the previous mast season cleared from the system.

By January traps had been cleared and reset for the first time following DOC's Battle for Our Birds aerial operation. Trap catch rates were low then and remained so through March and April. This was pleasing as it is over this period that stoat kits venture out on their own. Ordinarily the expectation then would be higher stoat catch rates.

STOATS CAUGHT DURING 2017/18



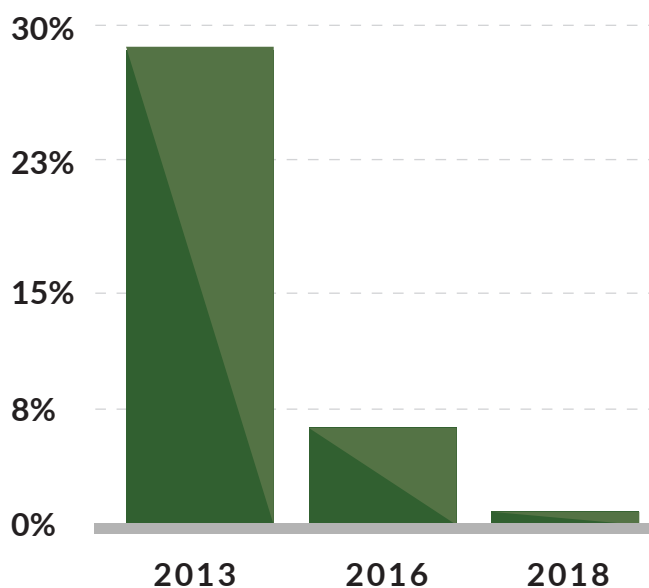
POSSUMS

RATS, STOATS AND POSSUMS - PREDATOR MONITORING AND CONTROL

Possum population levels are measured using a Residual Track Catch Index that involves trap lines being established and traps cleared on three consecutive days. We monitor to a RTCI target of $\leq 3\%$. The table below shows the impact of the control work on Lower Hollyford possums in the last five years where aerial 1080 has been applied twice (in 2014 and 2017) and ground control has taken place over the last three seasons.

The results show we are now well under our upper target level with a 0.67% RTCI result being returned on our most recent monitoring effort. The job is never complete, however, and on-going possum control will be required in order to keep population levels suppressed to the desired level.

POSSUM RESIDUAL TRACK CATCH INDEX



NATIVE SPECIES MONITORING

Industry assumptions are that positive ecological gains will flow when predator control targets are consistently met. To support the story of success, however, the Trust also monitors native forest bird populations to help show the response to its predator control programme.

In this monitoring process consistency is key so steps are taken to eliminate as many of the potential variables as possible: data is collected annually in September in fine weather and during pre-set daylight hours; transects are walked at a slow and constant speed; notes are taken recording temperature, breeze and cloud cover.

Our 2017 monitoring report suggested some fluctuation from the previous year in a number of species but ongoing positive trends since monitoring began with fifteen native forest bird species encountered from the transects lines. Ten species (bellbird, falcon, fantail, fernbird, kereru, parakeet, rifleman, shining cuckoo, tomtit and tui) all showed an increasing population trend. Three species (brown creeper, grey warbler and silvereye) showed a decreasing trend and two species (kaka and kea) showed no trend.

The report concluded with a reminder that we are not dealing with an exact science; that population trends, derived from changes in encounter (detection) rates are likely to be more reliably determined over a longer monitoring period (5-10 years).



Thanks to Mainly Fauna Ltd who again did the Trust's native bird survey work.



FINANCES

The Trust fundraises and operates to budget on a continual and on-going basis.

It has Annual Accounts prepared by its accountants PwC in the form of a Performance Report which, in addition to the usual annual financial information, includes information on the Trust's structure and measures its performance against its objectives.

Each Performance Report is independently audited before being adopted by the Trust and lodged with the Charities Commission. This has to occur by 31 September each year with the Performance Report then becoming a public record that is searchable online.

The Trust's 2017/18 Performance Report is still being prepared but is expected to show the Trust met its objectives for the year and remains in a sound financial position.

The Trust's operations however, do not generate income in themselves so the fundraising effort is ongoing with the goal ultimately to achieve baseline sustainability on the basis of stakeholder contribution alone. We made good progress in that regard this year on the back of the Sohmen family's establishment of the Dave Comer Memorial Fund which remains open for others to contribute to.

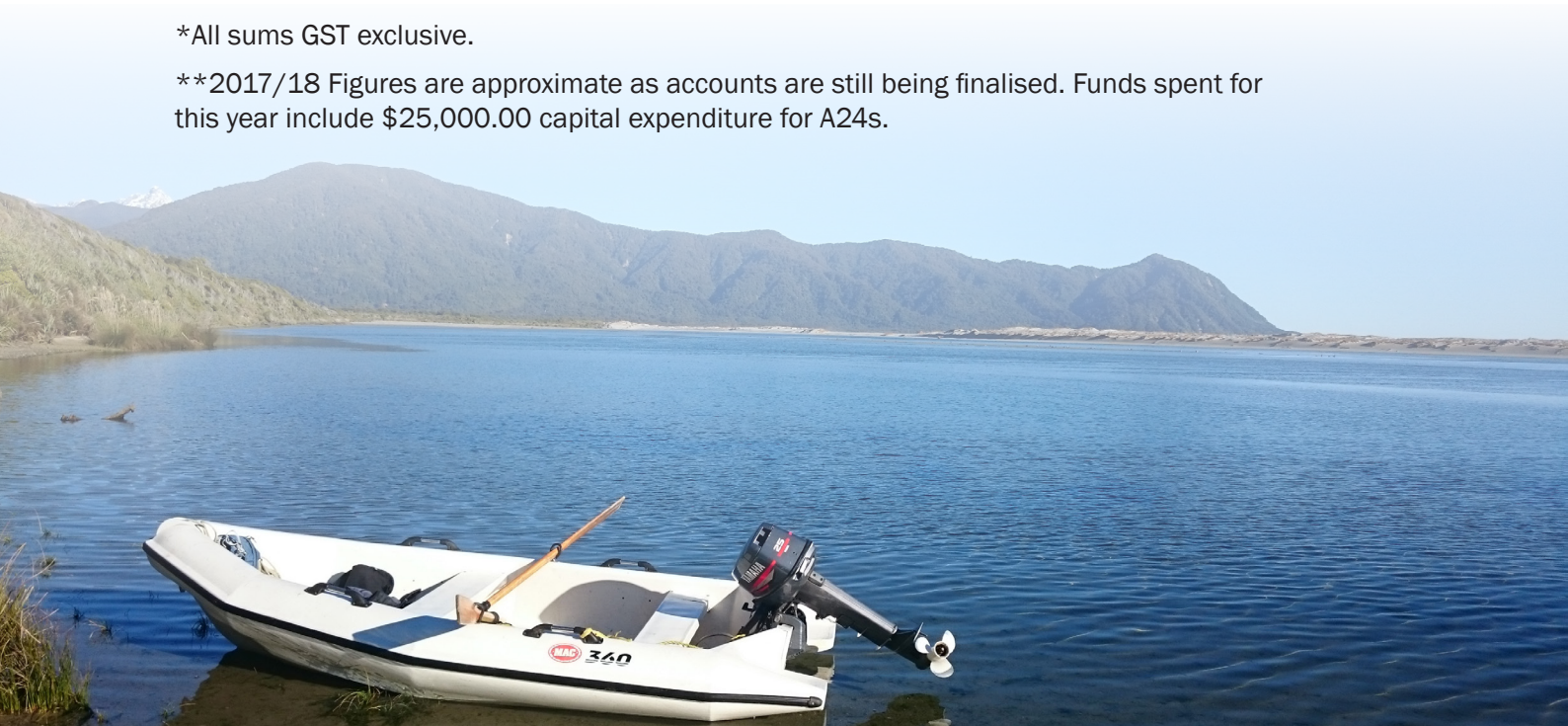
**Further funds will be required to keep the project going.
Please consider donating as you are able to.**

FUNDING THROUGH THE YEARS*

	FUNDS RECEIVED	FUNDS SPENT
2014/15	\$185,044.00	\$53,263.00
2015/16	\$462,068.00	\$447,234.00
2016/17	\$276,114.00	\$352,930.00
2017/18**	\$305,281.00	\$129,223.00
TOTALS TO 31 MARCH 2018	\$1,228,507.00	\$982,650.00

*All sums GST exclusive.

**2017/18 Figures are approximate as accounts are still being finalised. Funds spent for this year include \$25,000.00 capital expenditure for A24s.

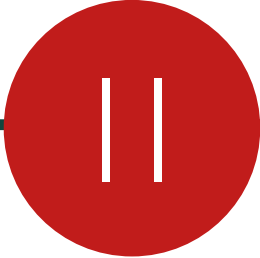


GOALS FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

In June 2017, after an extensive consultation process, trustees settled their five year goals to see:



best practice predator control result in increased bird counts and improved forest canopy health;



the project remain a community activity that recognises cultural, social and recreational values;



baseline pest control operations become self-sustaining;



native species previously present bought back to the project area.

A copy of the report on these goals is available [here](#) and a year on this Annual Report touches on the progress that has been made. The Trust's Board conducts a more formal review as part of its annual planning process and will report further in due course.



BOARD



HOLLYFORD
CONSERVATION TRUST

BOARD OF THE HOLLYFORD CONSERVATION TRUST

Chairman	Ron Anderson
Secretary/Treasurer	Peta Carey
Trustees	Adam Fairmaid, Andrew Bowmar, Andrew Clegg, Bard Crawford, Kara Edwards, Andy Lowe and Simon Hall
Manager	Michael Pullar

For Trustee biographical details please see
www.hollyfordconservationtrust.org.nz