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December 2011

Biodiversity Update -Dr. Emma Cronin

The Rodent Pest Control Plan prepared by Auckland Council was instigated in September. To date, this system is proving much less demanding on labour resources, however we will be continually improving how we can best manage the network of trails to service the bait stations, tunnels and traps. At present the new baiting regime is looking promising and I can briefly report on the following:

- Baiting throughout the Sanctuary in September and again in November to replace bait types. Data is being entering into Access for analysis using GIS, to hone our baiting regime in the future.

- Baiting and monitoring for the entire coastline monthly since September. The first bait replacement in October showed considerable bait take in certain areas, however the take has reduced markedly in November and December. Rodent faeces are predominantly present in bait stations when more than ½ the bait is removed. Figure 1 shows the % bait take by rodents from October to December.

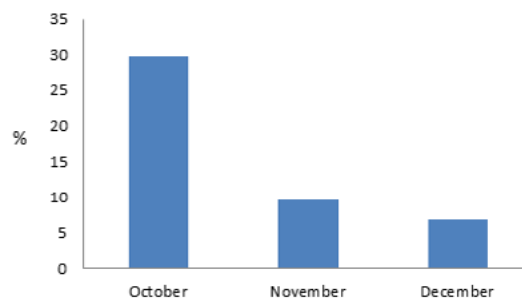


Figure 1: The percentage of bait take by rodents along the coastline during October to December.

- Rodent index line monitoring (using tracking tunnels to determine the % of rats present) was completed the first week of November, returning an average density of 7% -an improvement from the previous 12% determined in early September (Figure 2).

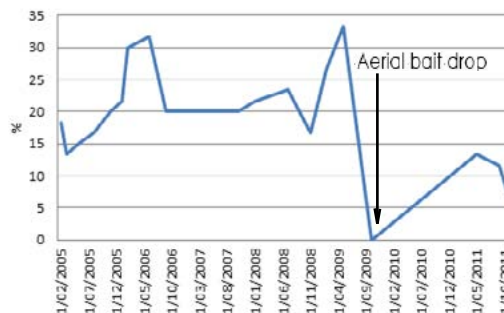


Figure 2: Rodent Index Line monitoring results from 2005 to 2011. Index monitoring occurred prior to the new baiting regime, resulting in 12% average in early Sept 2011, then 7% average early in Nov 2011.

- Baiting and monitoring the fence-ends weekly. There has been low but consistent trapping of rodents and some cat sign

In addition to this new baiting regime, we have ongoing pest control, response monitoring and restoration occurring, including;

- Rabbit control on the Karaka Bay side of the peninsula by a professional hunter (and his dogs) in August.
- Four cats trapped near Port Fitzroy fence end (during August to October)
- Completion of annual bird counts during the first week of November

