



Tennyson Inlet Islands Trust

Supporters Newsletter - Winter 2021

This edition of our newsletter contains a brief update on further penguin box installation (directly below) followed by a copy of our recent Department of Conservation Management report submitted by our Chairman.

More homes for penguins!

We had a further seven penguin houses donated to us just in time for this seasons nesting in June .This brings the total number of nesting boxes to 20; eighteen on Tawhitinui and two on Awaiti.

A big thanks to the group of volunteers and members who carried them up to the top of the islands and installed them. Pairs of penguins were viewed in both *Whare* and *End of the Road* boxes, which were installed last season, and a number of others are also showing evidence of new nesting material and occupation, which is very gratifying.

One of our volunteers reports that ‘it was a great day and it was wonderful to hear the song of multiple bellbirds around us — certainly the best I have heard out here’. Long may they sing!




As always, if you would like to volunteer with us, provide a penguin box, or make a donation, please contact one of the committee members, or complete the form in this newsletter.

Trapping Report

We now have the following traps installed and operating:

Location	Type of trap	
	DOC 200s	A24s
Tawhitinui Island	15	43
Awaiti Island	6	2
Tarakaipai Island	7	
Mainland (Odlins Reserve)		7
On hand (yet to be installed)		7



Tawhitinui, Awaiti and the Headland

The A24s continue to prove their worth and their 6 monthly service intervals has made the job of servicing the islands far easier.

August 2020 – 6 monthly refresh - A24s checked and refreshed (counter records, gas and lure replaced)

October 2020 19x of the 31 x A24s on Tawhitinui were checked to see how the strike numbers were going, considering the expected increase in rat numbers because of the mega mast year. For the A24s we checked the total number of strikes from August 29th to Oct 26th which was 119.

Feb 2021 – 6 monthly refresh - A24s checked and refreshed (counter records, gas and lure replaced). The total number of strikes from August 29th to February 8th was 145. So from Oct 2020 to Feb 2021 only 26 more strikes for those traps.

Trapping Update cont...

8 additional A24s were installed being numbers 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56.

A24 comments - Four traps had run out of gas, not a result of maximum activations, and one counter had a hole in it (gnawed through) and was not working, but has been replaced. The traps which had run out of gas are not the same ones that ran out of gas last time. It may be time to start replacing the O ring seals.

The DoC 200s were rebaited and some of the penguin boxes repositioned.

6x boxes with 2x Victor traps set with peanut butter in each, were placed, three at the NE end and three at the other end of Tawhitinui. This was in response to Derek Brown's suggestion to test if the rats are getting bait shy. Not one of the 12 traps were set off after the first week, and by April the peanut butter had gone mouldy. May be worth trying again with a different lure.

Cameras were placed at traps #30 and #49 with a prototype V1 lure in trap # 30. This lure seemed to be very attractive to wekas, and one weka was videoed jumping and flapping up to the trap eventually setting it off. The weka ran off. The trap was already 1 metre off the ground, so it was raised a further 15cms.

27th Feb a working bee was held on Tawhitinui, track clearing, putting out Ves-pex (wasp bait), Cleaning and resetting DoC 200s, and checking some of the A24s. The trail markers were refreshed. A pair of Penguins were seen in Whare.

April 2021 – 3 additional A24s were installed 57, 58 & 59, bringing the total number of A24s on Tawhitinui to 43. These additional traps were placed in areas where there were gaps in the network. Trap 56 was placed on the top of the peninsula nearby to trap 41 which had consistently higher strike numbers than any other trap. See attached map of A24 positions. Total strike numbers recorded for Tawhitinui A24s was 169. DoC 200s was 10

A traverse trail was created from trap 46 to the new positions for 57 and 58. About an hour to cut one way and five minutes to walk back. This trail was used when setting up the new traps and will make it easy at refresh time as 57 and 58 are a good 100m down from the ridge. Traps 57, 58, 59 and 42 are all lured with the Prototype V3 so it will be interesting to see the results. If the results are positive, it may be a good option to use this lure in more A24s where the rats are being very cautious.

April the 7th the A24s on the Mainland were checked and refreshed (recording only 9 strikes, with one trap out of gas).

Trapping Update cont...

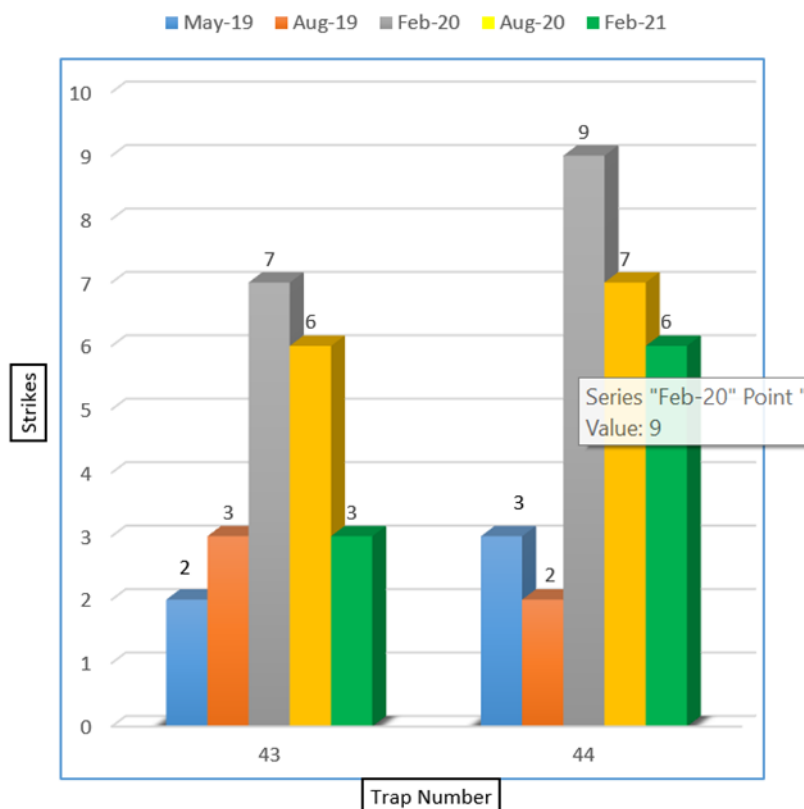
April 8th Tawhitinui a team collected Vespex containers, and installed a bird nesting box. Also found for the first time, a weta in one of the motels, which was exciting. The 2x A24s on Awaiti were refreshed with 9 strikes.

April 9th The trail marking job from the SW end was completed and A24 traps 57, 58 and 59 were set up. It was a beautiful day and we were pleasantly surprised by the amount of birdsong from Bellbirds and Warblers and occasional Tui, and fantails wherever you went. Also saw a Morepork and was able to get a photo. More birdsong than in Penzance Bay. The absence of wasps was noted (Vespex doing its job).

A24 comment - Recent information suggests that we should be changing the lure on the A24s at 4 months instead of 6. We need to decide if we are going to be changing all of them at the same time or divide the Tawhitinui traps into two groups changed at 4 months, 2 months apart.

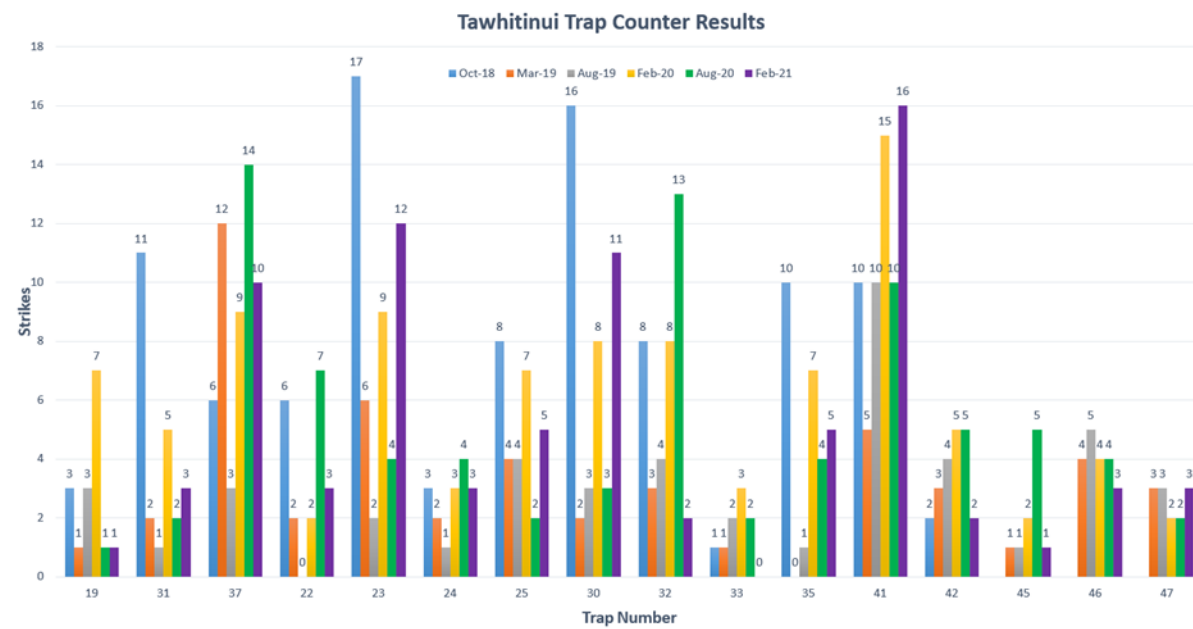
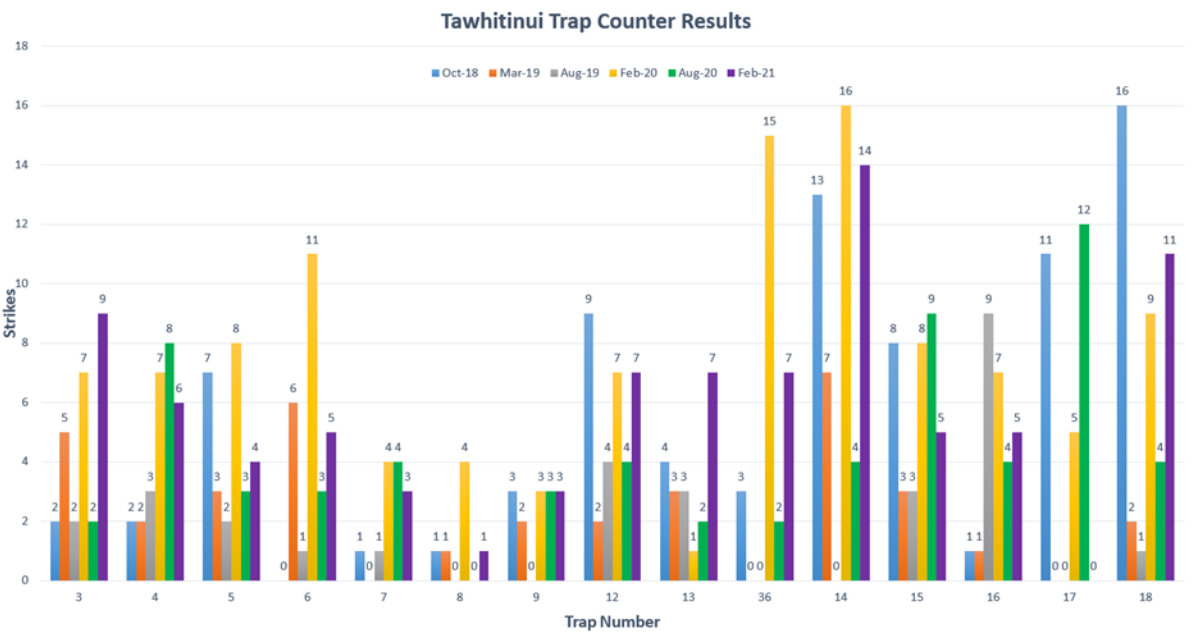
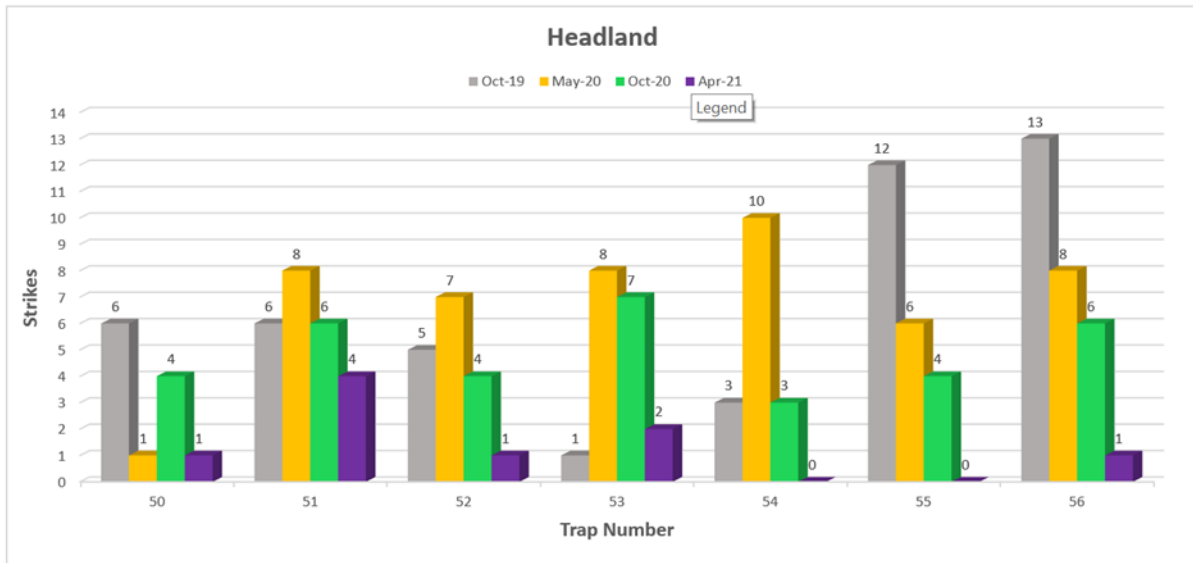
Trapping results

Trap Counter Results For Awaiti



Check out our website: www.TIIT.co.nz.

Trapping results cont...



Tracks & Structures.

We have built no tracks (other than the aforementioned trap lines) and we have installed no structures.

Health & Safety.

There have been no reported accidents. Wasps have the potential to cause injury but the continued use of Vespex has dropped the wasp numbers around our traps. DOC best practice Guidelines have been followed for all work carried out on the Islands. There are no new hazards that we are aware of. Our H&S committee completed a review of our H&S plan and CoVID19 recommendations were added in. The updated H&S plan was sanctioned by the Trustees. We all agree that the H&S plan is fit for purpose and still very applicable for use. Each of our volunteers are given a copy of it. Now that our trap lines are established and we are primarily using the A24s (on a 6-month checking cycle) we see the potential for accidents to lessen.

Species and Pest monitoring.

In November 2016 Derek Brown carried out 6 days of survey work on the Islands and produced a report detailing the species he observed. We recently communicated with Derek and it was agreed that any survey to see if the biota has changed should wait until we have a more consistent reduction of A24 trap counter numbers on Tawhitanui Island.

Weed Control.

We have removed a small number of pine trees that were growing at the North Western end of Tawhitanui Island.

Wasp Control.

The use of Vespex over the last 3 summers has been highly successful in greatly reducing the wasp populations. The permission to use Vespex is covered in the DOC-2971257 "Tennyson Inlet – Wasp CONTROL OPERATION". DOC best practice Guidelines have been followed

Habitat enhancement.

We have some good video footage showing penguins living in (and raising chicks in) our Penguin boxes. We continue to monitor the Weta living in our Weta motels and lizards living in our Lizard refugia motels and intend to install more of these in the near future

Species translocation.

We have done no translocation of any species.

Signage.

We have now installed the "No Dog" signs on the landing points of the islands plus the Penzance, Elaine & Duncan Bay launching ramps.

Report summary

The A24s are proving their worth and their 6 monthly service intervals has made the job of servicing the islands far easier. As highlighted in our 2019 and 2020 DoC reports we still have no A24s on Tarakaipai Island which is frustrating because we know there are stoats present on this island (because we have trapped them in the past). We believe it is DoCs role to formalise an agreement with Ngati Kuia around the placement and location of A24s on to the Tarakaipai Island ridge line. These indicator traps will allow us to better ascertain predator numbers and types on this island.

Thanks to our local corporate supporters



RICHMOND



We extend heartfelt thanks to the following sponsors who continue to support us:

Kono, Sanford, Sealord, Talley's, McDonald's Richmond

Along with the **Field Family in Elaine Bay** who are contributing a proportion of each bach holiday rental towards our work.

And our thanks go each of you for supporting us with membership and donations—we could n't do it without you!

Published in the NZ Seafood Mag in Feb 2019 and reproduced in the Fishing Paper May 2021

NEWS

Fishing companies fund Sounds rat battle

Lesley Hamilton

The islands of Tawhitinui, Awaiti and Tarakaipa lie within the scenic Tennyson Inlet in the Marlborough Sounds and some of our major fishing companies are funding a project to eradicate rats and restore the dawn chorus.

Talley's, Sanford, New Zealand King Salmon and Kono are among a number of sponsors helping the Tennyson Inlet Island Trust (TIIT) to eradicate rats on the islands and adjacent mainland headlands.

Paua Industry Council chief executive, sometime resident and trust member, Jeremy Cooper, said the very head of Pelorus Sound was still mostly native bush with only a very small pocket of farming, no major rivers so very little sedimentation, a very small area of pines, and no mussel farms. However, bird life has plummeted.

"There used to be noisy morning choruses. But because of a rampant rat population DOC did a 1080 drop on 4000 acres about 10 years ago and they did it again two years later. That made a hell of a difference, but we really need to be trapping rats constantly," Cooper said.

"There are other trapping programmes around, doing things like predator-proof fencing which is hugely expensive so the most logical thing for us to do was put our resources into the three islands; Tawhitinui, Awaiti and Tarakaipa. We weren't looking to eradicate every last rat but we were going to do everything we could to manage the population and bring the birds back."

These are Department of Conservation managed islands, gazetted as scenic reserves in 1914. The nearest settlements are the holiday locations of Elaine Bay, Penzance Bay and Duncan Bay.

Cooper had nothing but praise for DOC, which he said had been very helpful, but the trust thought a different approach was needed.

"DOC have standard traps called a DOC 200 and, despite it being a huge effort to set it, it flattens rats. It is really lethal but as soon as it traps a rat the trap no longer functions until someone goes and empties it and resets it," said Cooper.

"What we were finding was nobody wants to get in a boat in the middle of winter to go to these isolated islands, so the traps could be sitting for a couple of months and not getting checked. And the thing with the islands is that rats swim to them so you have a constant stream of them swimming in. So, while the DOC 200 is a good trap it was not

ideal for our situation.

"Late last summer we realised the DOC 200 traps were not doing the job as we had put chew cards out, which are just real estate signs with peanut butter on them, and within two weeks the cards had all but been eaten so we knew we had a massive infestation."

That's where Wellington company Goodnature came in.

"They have built a trap called an A24 which runs on a CO2 cylinder just like the old soda siphons and it will reset the trap 24 times. That was a breakthrough. And then what they did was develop a bait dispenser that releases bait for six months. So, you don't touch these traps for six months," Cooper said.

However, they are not cheap. The trap, with bait and CO2 for a year works out to about \$200.

"We are such a tiny little outfit and we were competing with many others for funding, so we decided to tackle some of the fishing companies, especially the mussel companies that are operating nearby," Cooper said.

"Our budget was for 40 traps per year until we could smother a 50 by 50 square metre grid radius to get the islands sorted. The fishing industry has paid for 33 of this year's 40 traps budget, for which we are very grateful.

"The fishing companies are users of the environment and have an interest in keeping it pristine. Sanford have been particularly good as they have also given us money for wasp control."

Cooper said the problem with dead rats lying about was that come January, February and March when the wasps swarm, you couldn't get in to reset



Jeremy Cooper with an A24 rat trap.



Tennyson Inlet Island Trust are placing A24 traps around Elaine Bay.

the traps. Sanford funded Vespex poison, which the wasps take back to their nests.

"Sanford also offered boating help to get anyone who needed to get out to the islands, supplied handsaws to deal with wilding pines and organised beach clean-ups."

The first A24's were put out in April last year and two months later their digital counters indicated there had been 166 strikes.

Cooper said while you knew how many rats had been killed you never saw a dead rat because they immediately fell out of the trap.

"The wekas come along and think, 'woohoo, meals on wheels' and drag them away."

The islands were only the start, he said.

"Because there is only 350 metres between the mainland and the islands at low tide we need to trap on the adjoining headlands as well. The rats swim in rafts and can swim a kilometre. We are never going to get all of them, but we are giving the birds a fighting chance. The alternative is entire species becoming extinct in our lifetimes."

The biggest island, Tarakaipa, is 36 hectares, rises to 122 metres and has history with local iwi, Ngati

Kuia and Ngati Apa.

"Te Ruaparaha came through and annihilated those living on Tarakaipa in 1828 and no one has lived there since. There is an urupa, or burial ground, there," Cooper said.

"As part of their treaty settlement the Crown gave Ngati Kuia 1.8 hectares at the very top of the island. We have nine traps around the perimeter and wanted to trap it more extensively but need to wait until Ngati Kuia have completed their internal management plan for the island. Once that is complete we will sit down with them and DOC and work out the best way forward."

Cooper said the project was a long game. Trapping would continue into the future, but already the bird song was returning.

"We are building weka houses and gecko boxes and opening up the creeks where they have been blocked to get flowing water for the birds," he said.

"Any other donations to the cause would be warmly welcomed."

The Tennyson Inlet Islands Trust is a registered charitable trust and any donations can be offset for tax purposes. You can read more at www.tiit.co.nz



MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM 2021/22

It is estimated that rats and stoats kill 25 million birds in NZ each year. The purpose of this Charitable Trust is to eradicate the pests from the three islands (Tarakaipa, Tawhitinui & Awaiti) that make up the Tennyson Inlet Island group within the Pelorus Sound.

We need your help..... While we have purchased most of the traps we require these still need servicing with gas & bait and we have ongoing development of habitat for penguins, weta and lizards.

By becoming a Friend of TIIT or by making a donation your contribution will greatly assist us in achieving our goal.

- Yearly “Friend of TIIT” Individual Membership \$ 30
- Family Membership \$ 50
- Donation—you choose the amount \$??
- Volunteer to assist with field work (monitoring & servicing of traps etc.)

We are going to BRING BACK THE BIRDS to the Tennyson Inlet Islands.

If you have ticked any of the options above please fill out your details below. With any bank deposit made you will receive a receipt that specifies our charitable status.

NAME ADDRESS PHONE EMAIL	Forms can be posted / emailed to our Trust Treasurer: Tennyson Inlet Island Trust, P.O. Box 2422, Stoke, 7041 Contacts: Secretary: Lesley Davies — davies@kinect.co.nz Chairman: Jeremy Cooper – cooper@xtra.co.nz Charitable Status registration # CC52790 Bank account details 03 1355 0865294 00
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Check out our website: www.TIIT.co.nz.