



Rewanui Bush Park

Post initial predator control report for 2008/09

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Publication Date April 2010
Publication No. GW/BIO-G-10/35

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1. Executive summary

Rewanui Bush Park is a 334ha property owned by the Montford Trimble Foundation and is located on the Masterton-Castlepoint Road, 23km east of Masterton. It has areas of native bush, open grasslands and sites suitable for growing both native and exotic species. The Foundation is developing the property as a forest park and a trial site for native and exotic timber trees.

The Mount Clyde Trig is the highest point at Rewanui and is situated 500m above sea level. The lowest point at the carpark is 200m above sea level giving an altitude range of 300m.

The original bush remnant consists of such species as rewarewa, totara, hinau, matai, titoki, lacebark, rimu, pukatea and at least one northern rata.

Rewanui is one of 49 category one recommended areas for protection identified by the Department of Conservation (DOC) in eastern Wairarapa. Rewanui is described as one of the best remaining examples of lowland forest in the ecological district with high species diversity (flora and fauna) and occupying a wide altitudinal range.



During 2004 the native bush remnants were fenced off to exclude grazing stock. There are three walking tracks in the Rewanui Bush Park.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Greater Wellington

- Continue to carry out monthly servicing of all control sites at Rewanui and record all details on predators killed and bait usage through the services of Biosecurity Pest Animals staff or an external service provider employed under a prescriptive contract.
- Implement bird count monitoring and rat monitoring as a means of measuring biodiversity changes over time through predator control.
- Over time promote community involvement with self-help, volunteer and care groups.

2.2 Montford Trimble Trust

- Over time promote community involvement with self-help, volunteer and care groups.
- The Trust should aim to ensure that monthly trap checks are carried out from August to March each year as this will cover the critical months of breeding for the majority of species. Predator levels appear at their lowest during the winter months and appear to increase with the onset of warmer weather and longer days.

3. Objective

- To maintain possum populations at less than 5% residual trap catch (RTC) therefore allowing the forest ecosystem to thrive.
- To reduce predator populations to low levels that enhances biodiversity.
- To undertake comprehensive monitoring of the flora and fauna values within Rewanui to measure changes over time through pest control.

4. Operational area

The operational area covers the whole 334ha of Rewanui farm and is situated on the Masterton-Castlepoint Road near the Blairlogie junction. Topography is mainly flat to moderately steep hill country with native bush remnants sited on the hills and gullies. There is an area of established mature pinus radiata on the property.

5. History

Rewanui Bush Park is a category one and is described as one of the best remaining examples of lowland forest in the ecological district, with high species diversity, substantial numbers of kereru and occupying a wide altitudinal range. The forested hill slopes present an impressive scenic aspect to a portion of the Masterton-Castlepoint Road.

6. Operational history

There has been a past history of large scale possum control with a bovine Tb emphasis at Rewanui. The whole property is part of the Bideford possum control operation which commenced in the 1993/94 year.

Maintenance possum control is still carried out subject to monitoring data indicating that the RTC has exceeded the acceptable levels as set by the Animal Health Board (AHB).

7. Operational procedures

The Rewanui Bush Park predator control operation remains unchanged with a total of 84 control sites.

At each site a Sentry bait station is erected above the height of any grazing animal and Pestoff 20p waxed brodifacoum pellets are administered for both possums and rats.

On the ground a Fenn mark 4 trap is set beneath a Philproof tunnel to target such species as rats, hedgehogs, ferrets, stoats and weasels. Also a Timms possum trap is established and baited to target feral cats and ferrets. All traps are baited and checked monthly (time permitting) using beef offal due to it being readily obtainable. Within the walking tracks in the bush block, DOC 200 predator traps are set. These traps are specifically designed for small animals and will exclude larger animals such as cats and fully grown hedgehogs.

8. Operational results

The monthly predator catch results for the 2008/09 year to the end of June are listed below:

Month	Cats	Rats	Hedgehogs	Ferrets	Rabbits	Magpies	Weasels	Stoats	Hawk
August	4	5	0	0	8	0	1	1	0
September	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	13	20	0	1	1	0	0	0
February	4	16	17	2	0	1	1	0	0
March	0	18	16	1	0	5	1	0	0
April	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	5	4	8	3	1	0	0	3	0
June	4	12	7	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total:	17	80	68	6	10	7	4	4	1

Note: No trap data was supplied for July, October, December, and January.

9. Discussion

9.1 Condition of Rewanui Bush Park

The overall condition of Rewanui Bush could be described as excellent since the exclusion fencing was completed following the purchase of the property. There is still some evidence of the occasional sheep or cattle beast wandering about and I have sighted varying amounts of red deer sign during while working on this operation. I understand that the deer are reduced by shooting which is a good thing for Rewanui.

9.2 Working relationships

The working relationship between the representatives from the Montford Trimble Foundation and Greater Wellington is operating well. The lessee of Rewanui has been good to work with also.

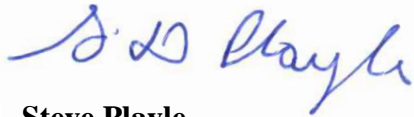
9.3 Monitoring

There was not any AHB possum monitoring undertaken at Rewanui during 2008/09. However, a contractor was employed by the Foundation to carry out a subset of very intensive monitoring programmes. This ranged from bird, lizard and invertebrate monitoring but also included some environmental monitoring.

10. Costs

Set out below is a breakdown of costs from the Greater Wellington financial SAP system up until the end of the financial year 30 June 2009.

	\$
Labour:	3,215.00
Vehicle/plant:	1,100.31
Total:	4,315.31



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