

May 2024



Kawau Island multi-species eradication project

Working towards a pest free Kawau Island

Establishment of the community forum

As outlined in our update on 1 March, the community forum is an important part of the project structure that ensures the community has a voice in the project and is involved in the project design. We called for expressions of interest from individuals or organisations who would like to take part and distributed this request to landowners and residents on 1 March and again on 27 March.

Those islanders who expressed interest, alongside council support staff, met on 23 April to establish the forum, its Terms of Reference, and select a Chair. After being nominated many times over, Jon Bilger was selected as Chair of the Community Forum. He will be the third community representative for the project and will sit on the project Steering Group alongside the Chair of KIRRA, and the Chair of the Pohutukawa Trust. As mentioned previously, council supported the establishment of the forum but will be stepping back and empowering community management moving forward.

It is important to note, that membership of the forum does not end at initial expressions of interest and the establishment meeting. The purpose of the forum is to act as a conduit between the community and the project steering group to share updates, ideas, concerns, or suggestions both ways. Ideally it will ensure a diverse range of community voices and perspectives including businesses, charitable trusts, conservation groups, and residents / ratepayers.

Meetings will be held monthly online, and any member of the Kawau Island community is welcome to be a part of the community forum.

The next community forum meeting will be held online on Tuesday 28 May at 7:30pm. If you would like to attend, please email Jon Bilger at jonbilger@gmail.com for more detail.

Stoat detection surveys

Keeping the natural environment of Tāmaki Makaurau thriving is vital to the health and wellbeing of the region's people, culture and economy.

In the last nine months, Auckland Council contractors have completed two stoat detection surveys of Kawau Island, searching for scent or sign of stoats which haven't been seen on Kawau for some years. The initial rapid assessment in late 2023 did not provide conclusive evidence of stoat presence across the areas covered within the southern half of the island. As such, a follow up survey was needed to cover the northern half and provide overall better coverage, including coastal areas that are favourable for stoats at lower densities.

The follow up survey was completed in April and involved two stoat detection dog teams methodically covering a much larger area of land. They searched across variable terrain with landowner permission, but no signs of stoats being present were found during the survey period. Four scat samples were of particular interest to the detection dog, Wero, so these were carefully collected and have been sent to Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research for analysis to determine their species. Kawau Island remains within swimming range for stoats, so ongoing surveillance planning will be considered in the future.

Keep an eye out in the winter issue of **Kookaburra** for an article written by one of the Stoat dog detection teams, Brad, and Wero the German short-haired pointer.