

THE FRIENDS OF MANGARAKAU SWAMP INC. SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER March 2020



It is nearing the end of the financial year so here is our latest Newsletter.

EVERYBODY WELCOME TO OUR AGM !

This year we will hold the AGM at the **Courthouse Cafe, Collingwood** at **11:00 am on Tuesday 5th May**. **Mark it in your diary!**

Quite a few improvements were made in 2019 -

Electrical

We have upgraded the power cable to the Lodge so we are now all electric.

Installing the power cable was a big job and involved digging a trench all the way from the Visitor Centre up to the Lodge. This meant some disruption to the road for a few weeks.



We were advised the bench-top gas cooker was illegal and not very safe so we put in an electric cooker to make things more convenient.

It also means we don't need to keep refilling the gas bottle.

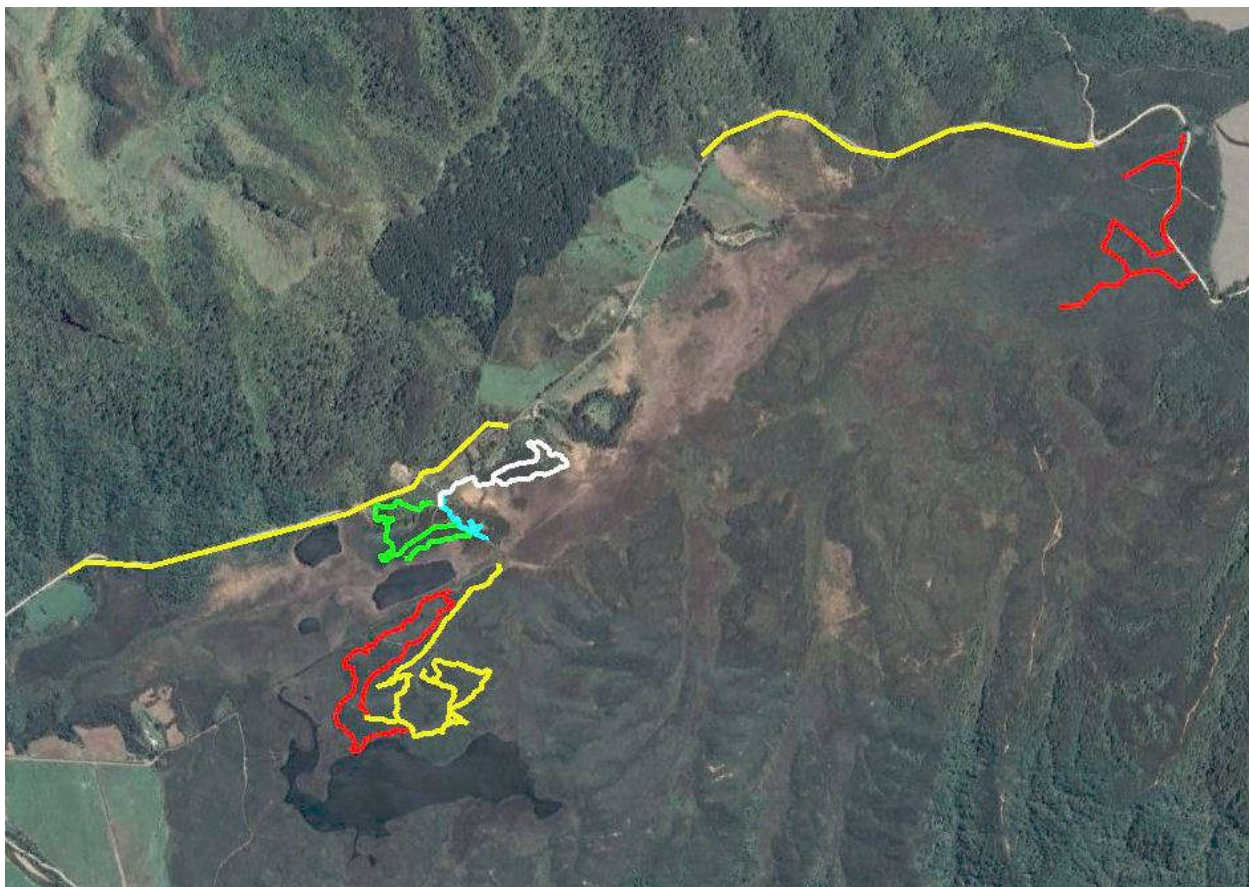


Predator Control

We have removed our trap line from behind the Outpost because DOC has put in a network of A24 self resetting traps which cover a much larger area.

These traps were relocated to two new lines. One we are calling the South East Trapping line shown in red below. It goes around the point from Big Pond to Lake Mangarakau and has already picked off several stoats.

The other one, shown in yellow, is an extension of the Robin Track and does a loop along the other end of Lake Mangarakau.



Heather, Piet and Hemo are maintaining the Dry road and Matai Point traps.

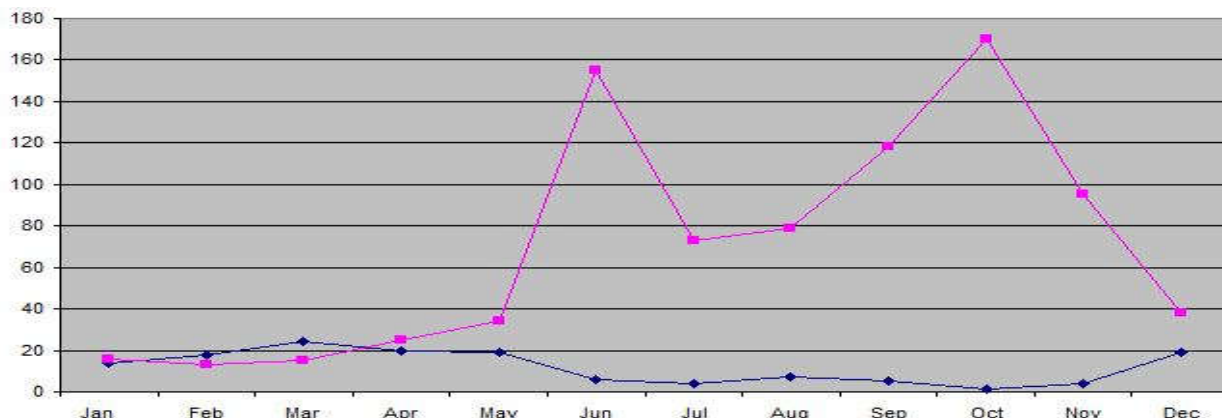
Robyn looks after the North End traps and Murray the Robin Track.

Our two new trappers, Chris and Eric, are checking the South End, Visitor Centre, Big Pond and Bobby's traps.

David is doing a sterling job maintaining, renovating and invigorating our 15 year old traps.

We are very lucky to have such a reliable and capable group of volunteers doing this work on a regular basis in all weathers. It's a big commitment and very much appreciated.

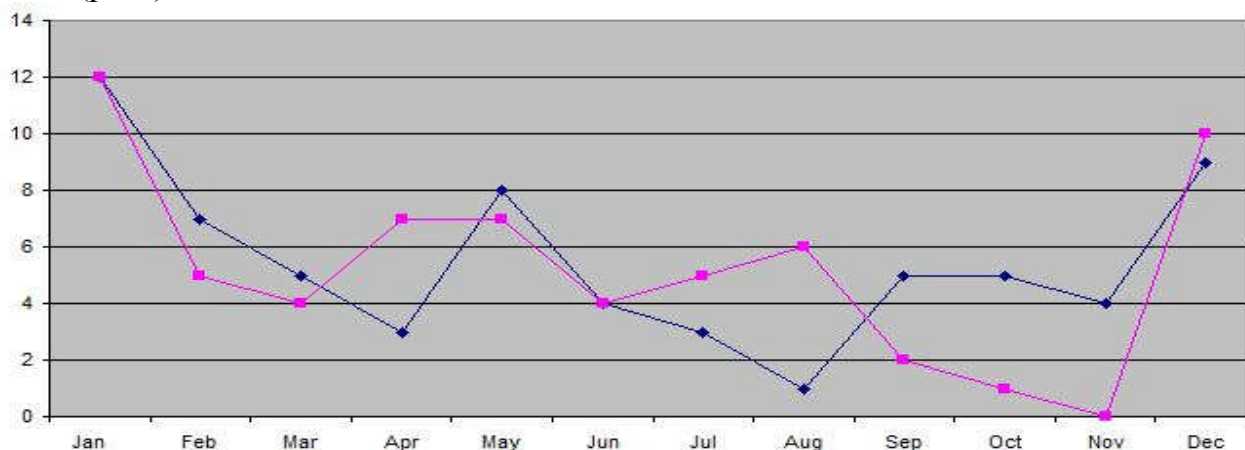
Rats



2019 produced a plague of rats, with as many as 170 being caught in a single month. Above is a chart showing a comparison between 2018 (blue) and 2019 (pink).

Stoats

By comparison, stoat catches have been similar to last year. Once again, 2018 (blue) and 2019 (pink) in the chart below.



Weeds

John and Bron continue to keep the weeds at bay and Murray has adapted to the new mower.

Bittern

We did our annual Bittern survey again, putting out the 10 sound recorders in late November.

We got the impression there were quite a few more males booming this year.

Marsh Crake

One of our neighbours, Peter Bloomfield noticed a Marsh Crake in the mouth of a Pukeko. He managed to retrieve the newly dead bird and donated it to us. We have had it mounted for display in the Visitor Centre, complete with a sound recording of the crake call. These birds are even more cryptic than the Spotless Crake but they are out there in the swamp.



Jo-Anne Vaughan

On Saturday 26th October, Friends of Mangarakau Swamp held a ceremonial Kahikatea tree planting and afternoon tea to farewell Jo-Anne. A group of very appreciative people gathered at Mangarakau Swamp to celebrate her involvement through the local Forest and Bird Branch in their various conservation projects.

Jo-Anne worked with Native Forest Restoration Trust back in 2002 to buy the reserve at Mangarakau and corralled together a group of local people to form Friends of Mangarakau by 2004. She then worked as secretary and treasurer to move FOM ahead to work on the restoration and pest control of the swamp, keeping a close eye on progress, with hands on help moving it forward as needed.

After nearly twenty years of dedication and commitment to the Swamp project, Jo-Anne is leaving Golden Bay to live with her daughter and family.



We wish her well.

