

Taneatua trial proves resetting traps' worth

A RESEARCH project undertaken by a former Trident High School student has produced staggering results when comparing the effectiveness of self-resetting predator kill traps versus traditional single-action traps, currently used in most national conservation efforts.

Chantal Lillas, who is completing a diploma of environmental management through Waiariki Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, conducted the research project in the Taneatua Forest over 10 days in August.

With the assistance of Sam Gibson, director of Gibson Ecology, she set up 25 self-resetting Goodnature A24 Rat Traps and compared their success against 25 single-action Victor Professional Snap Traps.

Victor traps are one of the Department of Conservation's best-practice single action traps and are commonly used across New Zealand.

At the completion of the 10-day project, the self-resetting A24 trap had registered an impressive 120 kills, compared with only six kills for the single action Victor traps. One-third of the 25 Victor traps were inoperative after the first night due to either having caught rats or having been set-off but not achieving a kill.

The A24 trap is the only predator trap in existence to self-reset up to 24 times before it needs to be reloaded by a human. It was developed by Wellington company Goodnature in collaboration with DoC to overcome the need to reset traditional traps after every kill.

"The results for both traps were about the same after the first night, but then the A24 traps dominated every night following for the remainder of the trial," Miss Lillas said.

"What was even more surprising, was that when we reviewed the footage from the trail cameras we'd set up, we could actually hear kiwis call-



TRAPS: Chantal Lillas sets a trap in the Taneatua Forest as part of a research project.

How it works

THE rat is attracted into the A24 trap by a potent long-life rat lure delivered constantly for six months by the Automatic Lure Pump (ALP).

As the rat brushes past the very sensitive leaf-trigger, the trap is set into action.

A CO2 pressurised piston strikes the rat's head, killing it instantly and then retracts on a light spring.

The dead rat falls to the ground and the trap automatically resets itself ready for the next pest to arrive.

ing out to each other. This was a shock to locals we spoke with who didn't even know there were kiwis in the area."

Stu Barr, founder and director at Goodnature, said he believed New Zealand could be pest free and A24 traps were going to be a powerful tool in



IMPRESSIVE: The self-resetting A24 traps registered 120 kills during the trial compared with just six for the single action Victor traps.

the fight.

"Six dead rats versus 120 dead rats is pretty compelling and is yet further validation of DoC's decision to invest in the development of self-resetting traps.

"Our traps first remove pests from an area and then keep

them under constant control so that native birds can return and bring with them birdsong. This is the future of conservation in New Zealand."

In July the Government set the ambitious target of making New Zealand predator-free by 2050.

Take the bus and be into win

BAY of Plenty Regional Council is urging morning commuters to take the bus tomorrow – September 22 – in support of World Car-Free Day.

Regional council staff will reward those who use the bus on this day with treats between 7.30am and 9am and one lucky person will win an Apple iPad Air.

Regional council transport policy manager Garry Maloney said it was a great opportunity for people to try public transport buses while doing their bit to help the environment.

Mr Maloney said using alternate transport such as public buses had other benefits, including reducing congestion, stress and improving health and wellbeing.

"While commuting on the bus you can use your mobile device or just take time out."

Regional council staff will hand out treats and take names for the iPad Air draw between 7.30am and 9am. The winner will be advised the next day, Friday.

Staff will be at the following stops:

- Willow Street, Tauranga
- Arawa Street, Rotorua
- Quay Street, Whakatane.

Slip closes track

A LARGE slip has closed the Nga Tapuwae o Toi Walkway between Ohope and Otawairere Bay.

Due to the hazardous nature of the slip, the amount of slip material and partial loss of safety barriers, Whakatane District Council has closed this section of track until further notice.

Warning and closure barriers will be placed at track entrances from Otawairere Bay and Ohope Beach and council staff will inspect the track damage and assess whether temporary safe access can be provided before full repairs are done.

Alternative access to Otawairere Bay and to and from the Nga Tapuwae O Toi walkway is available via the link track from the Otawairere Road housing area.