PEST CONTROL REPORT JUNE 2014

While control of possum numbers remains the main focus of our pest control programme we are placing increased efforts on other pest including mustelids, rats and feral cats. We have established a trap line of 12 traps for mustelids around the Gleeson Rd area. There was a ferret farm in Gleeson Rd several years ago and escapees may have been the start of the current feral population. Two ferrets have been caught, both in the same trap plus a stoat, some rats and a hedgehog.

This year we have distributed/used 211 bags of possum bait, approximately the same as last year, but we have struggled to keep up with demand. The extra work done around the Awhitu Central area has used more bait and many of the bait stations continue to be empty on the two monthly check cycle.

We have continued to use independent contractors to do RTC monitoring to both check on possum numbers and to eliminate hot spots. The results have been extremely variable with between 10 and 0 possums caught over the 3 nights of the monitor.

Areas where some landowners will not or cannot fill bait stations continue to cause problems by possums moving from these areas into cleared properties. The results of the 38 completed trap lines of the latest RTC are 4%, again with a large variation of between 11 and 0 possums caught. There are 12 more lines to be completed.

Peter Shepherd is continuing to work on the cyanide project targeting the whole of the peninsula’s west coast. This will be a yearlong project with much of the time taken up by consent and compliance issues before any practical work can start. The aim is to stop the migration of possums up the coast.

The bait line across the southern end of the peninsula continues to be our first line of defense and it is being assessed to see if any improvements/changes need to be made. The leaflet drops to RD3 residents has increased their participation in the programme which also helps strengthen the southern baitline.

I must thank the landowners who fill their bait stations and encourage their neighbours to join in our pest control programme. I would also like to thank the Auckland Council Biosecurity Team for their support in supplying bait and technical knowledge.

**Ian McNaughton**