



**WILDLIFE
ENHANCEMENT**

Protecting our natives

Dealing with rat infestations on our 17 acre property
on the banks of the Hawea River

2018 and 2022

Our Layout and rat areas at home



Some of the traps we had out, 43 shown here, but we were running upwards of 60 including the cage traps, leg holds, DoC150, 250, Fenn traps and Victor snap traps



Thermal image of a pheasant pen, 16 rats in this image, which was only 1 of 3 pens joined



The only way I managed to stop the rats
entering the pens



At our Pit



We can't poison at the pit due to the neighbors pets visits.



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We started off catching 'normal' size rats



Over time things got bigger



The biggest rat caught was some 493 mm and 490 grms in weight, we had a few up around this size 480mm+ and a gm per mm on average. Unfortunately I didn't photograph these ones. Most of the larger ones were on the outskirts of the paddocks, away from the main colony and battle scarred.

A lot easier to shoot that's for sure. This also gave thought to a hierarchy of male rats in place, due to them not being in the main feed area and in poor condition. I also learnt that rats could see the infra red light from my night vision rifle scope.

I spent 5 days catching this one.
The trap is an 880mm cat trap



My Apprentice presented me with her spoils at some unusual times



This one was mistaken as a rabbit in the trap on first sighting, just too big to get through a 60mm diam hole.



All Traps caught



Baits

My most successful rat bait when it got to baits not getting taken/attracting was young rat



Baits

- Young Rat
- Minced Salmon wrapped in muslin
- Raw animal Fat
- Rabbit
- Pheasant poult
- Fines from cutting dog meat on the bandsaw- made into rounds
- Stink Juice – gland oils
- Peanut Butter was no good to me

The pine tree rat warren and dogs



A Welsh Miner !



Pine tree Root diggings.

The dogs were pretty persistent once they got onto the rats



My Trap testing, under a security camera.
Needless to say I drove Mary nuts, waking up many times at
night studying the rats interaction.
The big rat was a long challenge, probably the longest effort I'd
put in to catch a rat.



Setting a victor Snap trap upright gave us good results .



The Fenn Trap was by far my most successful trap
The Fenn run through being my top simple design.
I'm aware of the limited use of a Fenn trap due to NAWAC.



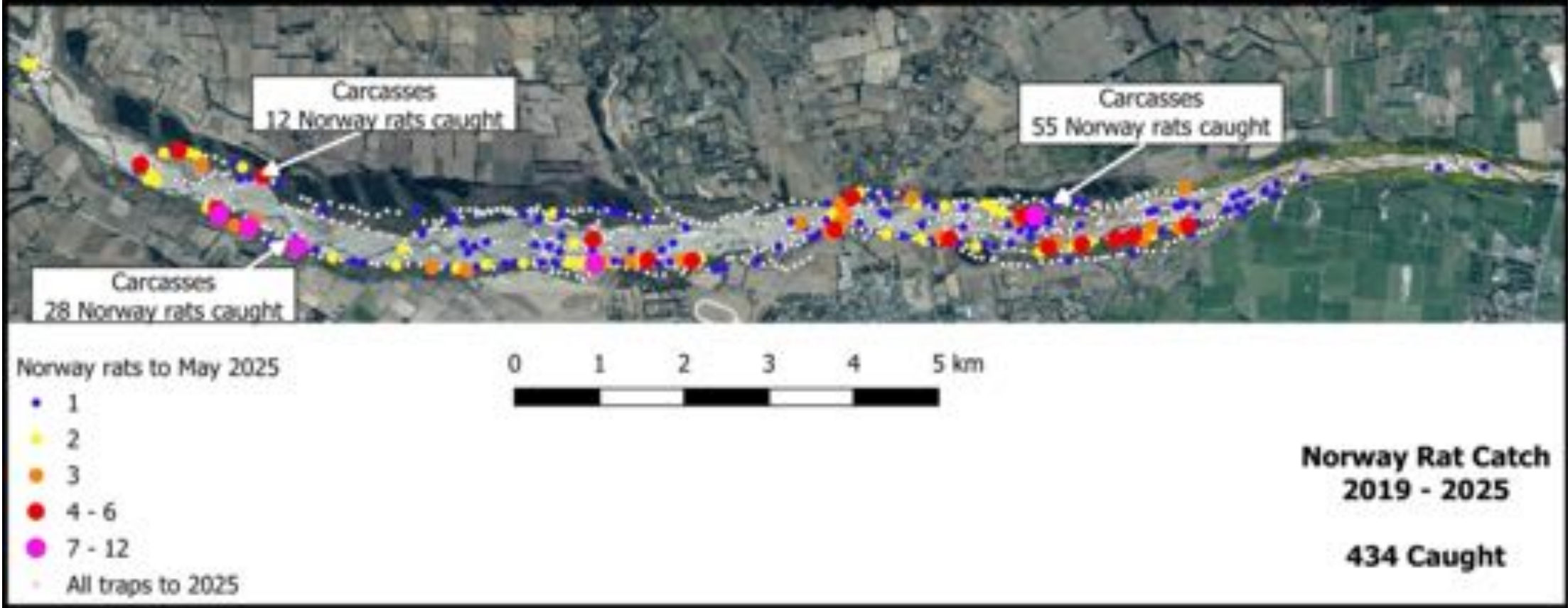
This was the result of a weeks work, starting by breaking up the earth on the run bit by bit, then placing the Fenn trap in unset, but screened, then flicking the safety catch. This was a live run indicated by Katie, the rat dog.



How I set a Fenn (or a leg hold), covered or on a run



Ashley River Project



A few more Pictures from the Ashley Issues

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250m NE of rat colony:
A Norway rat, cats and harriers (the 3 worst predator species) feeding on carcasses.



Thoughts on rat issues !

- I'm a firm believer we should be utilising dogs more. You can learn a lot and learn quicker if you know your dog. I'm lucky to be able to use mine for indication and killing of rats, now that rats are on their agenda.
- Trapping linear trapping for me doesn't always work , target feed areas with a lot more traps, create trapping islands as such. Spend more time putting traps down , not just plonk and hope. A trap is a like a good restaurant -it has to be made inviting and easy to get into, the meal is important , the siting is important, changing the menu is important.
- Remember placing a trap changes the landscape !

Continued Thoughts

- Study the animal you want to trap, find runs, feeding areas, what they want to eat . Learn to love them (maybe like!) hate will blind your efforts.
- Study the area you intend to trap, trap targeting will produce more.
- Do they feed on the way to a food zone? The ones at our place never, I hardly trapped one on the way to the feed areas, or directly outside the warrens with baited traps. Except a few young rats
- Poison needs to be selectively placed , as you could see poisoning would of caused issues for me. Neighbors animals, my own , the pheasants, chickens etc. But the rats learn, they certainly did for me and left the poison be for a long time.
- Enlist proper professional services for a heads up.

Dogs



Bitz indicating a live rat in a trap

Note the stones around for hazing and at the trap trigger set ,
rats were walking on top and setting off the trap



A professional dog and handler team at work

What to do about Norway rats?

Wildlife Protection Services – rat detection dogs.

We need to find rat colonies and deal to them there.

Carefully sited and controlled poisoning?

Study needed on rat lifestyle etc on braided rivers.



Don't forget Cats, rats will bring in cats, in my mind, they learn there's a food source from them. The mice and rabbits disappeared at our property, but cats came in, lots of cats.



What's happening at home ?

- We had more birds survive this year. That means more dinners for me !
- I know where most of my rats are and keep check on the areas, I don't think they'll ever be gone.
- I use the dogs more.
- We're down to about 15 traps running at present .
- But surprises are not always welcome as in this photo below 20+ quail were killed last week.

