Ewen lab hihi research update

February 2015

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ACCEPTED PAPERS, MEDIA & OUTREACH

- **No new papers this month**
- **Story about PIT-tags on hihi on Tiritiri Matangi featured in Auckland DOCs newsletter** http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/newsletters/whakawhiti-korero/26-february-2015/

PRESENTATIONS, VISITS & NEWS *conference presentations, visits to and from group members etc*

- Welcome to **Kate Lee** new PHD student working on the Marsden Funded hihi genomics project with **Anna**, **Patricia** and **John**
- Welcome to **Benjamin Keningale** new MSC student working with TLR genes with **Patricia** and **John**
- A big thanks to **Donal** who has returned to Europe after another season working on the Tiritiri Matangi hihi project.
- Also a big thanks to **Rachel** who assisted Donal throughout most of the season (she is still in New Zealand).
- **Victoria** continues to monitor the hihi population on Tiritiri Matangi for her PHD.
- **Lydia** has successfully completed her report from monitoring hihi and tieke at Maungatautari with great help from **Doug**.
- **Kate, Leila, Kevin** and **John** have sent a complete draft of hihi management guide chapters to DOC for review.

FEATURE STORY: Season summary for Tiritiri Matangi island

The 2014-15 breeding season on Tiritiri Matangi island was managed and monitored by Donal Smith, for the second year running, and Rachel Shepherd, who arrived on the island in October 2014. Victoria Franks, starting her PhD fieldwork on Tiri, was part of the team at the start and end of the breeding season.

This season saw a reduction in hihi numbers and productivity, with the lowest number (141) recorded in a pre-breeding survey since 2008 and the smallest number of fledglings (88) produced since the 1999-00 season. 53 females bred over the course of 83 nesting attempts, with 295 eggs laid, of which 200 hatched and 88 fledged.

This year, we began applying PIT-tag-embedded rings to hihi. These rings are plastic colour bands slightly longer than those traditionally used, with an integrated passive transponder, similar in size to a grain of rice, running along their length. These rings act as unique identifiers for their bearers, which can be read wirelessly by a data logger mounted, for example, on a feeder. This technology would allow for richer and more precise population data, amongst other possibilities. About half of the adult population has been tagged and we are monitoring closely to determine the best positioning of these tags to avoid any increase in band related injuries.

By: Donal Smith

FUNDING *our major funders and new funding news*

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CURRENT AND PAST FUNDING – thank you!

+ British Research Council + Royal Society + Leverhulme Trust + Department of Conservation + AXA-fund + NERC + SoTM + ASAB + Massey University + NZ Safety Ltd + Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund.

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