

# Rat-a-tat-tat –Feb/March 2017

(combined newsletter for Feb/Mar as your PDA's have been busy!)



**Running total since May 2016:** 512 Rats, 338 Mice, 15 Hedgehogs, 21 Weasels and 1 Stoat.

**Monthly totals for Feb (March in brackets) in Plimmerton:** 18(52) Rats, 31(67) Mice, 2(2) Hedgehogs, 4 (5) Weasles.

**Monthly total for Camborne/Mana – Feb (March in brackets):** 4 (8) rats, 6 (21) mice, 1 Hedgehog

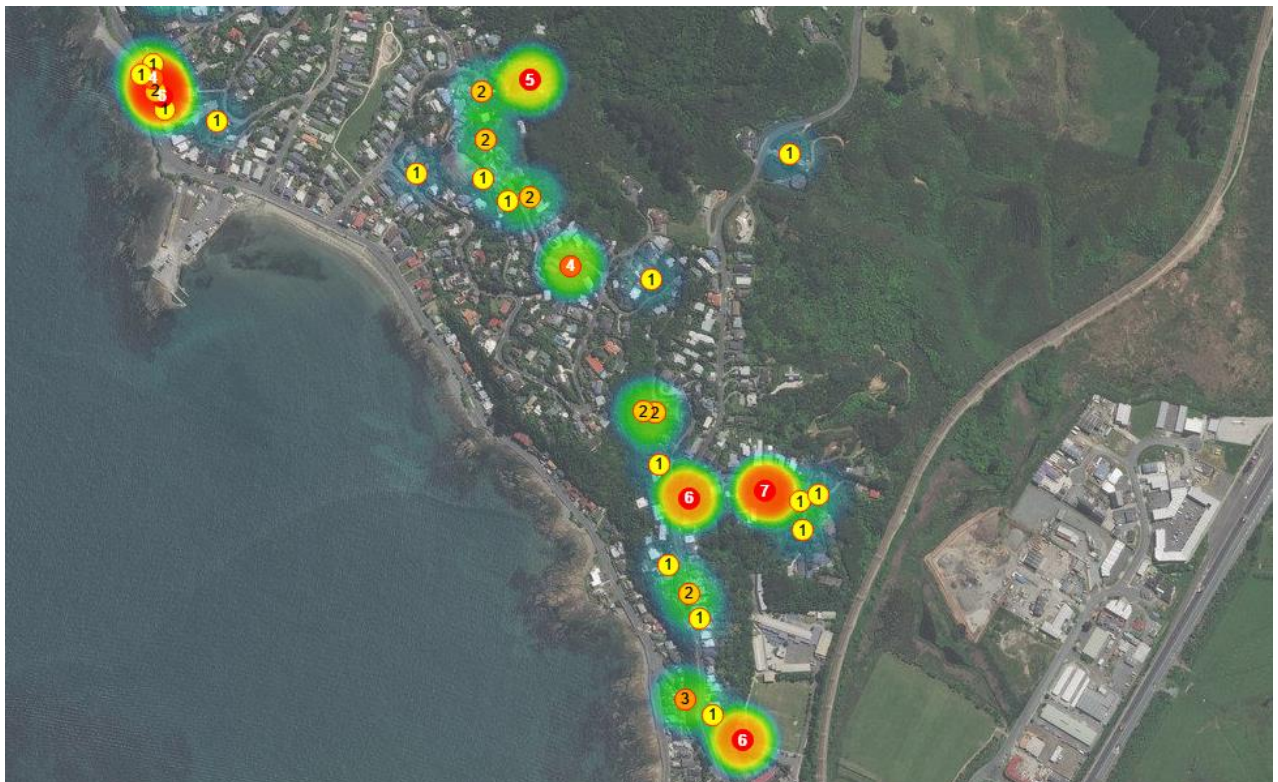


And the Golden Rat Award goes to....  
Dave of Gordon Road with 7 rats and 12 mice.

Dave checks a tunnel trap line for us along Moana Road he also traps in his own back yard. His efforts are much appreciated by the locals. Great work!

## WHERE ARE THE HOT SPOTS ?

These numbers tell us that rat numbers are on the rise!! More about this shortly, but firstly check out this heatmap for a sample area in Plimmerton – generated from the TrapNZ website, where all our data has been loaded (thanks to Dan at GroundTruth). The numbers show rats killed – colour coded red where more than 5. We have our fingers on the pulse!



There are a couple of possible explanations for the rise in our rat numbers:

1. **Autumn** on its way which means rats and mice will be on the move looking for somewhere warm with a reliable food source to spend the cooler months.... destination your place!!!
2. **A few REALLY keen trappers checking traplines** – your PDA's have sussed out a couple of potential gaps and placed multiple traps with some dedicated trappers checking these lines almost daily, with amazing results!

We now have around 250 traps out there so there are more people trapping which is boosting our tally. This does not necessarily mean there are more rats out there- just more people catching them AND reporting. There may also be more rats coming in from outside to search out new territory so stay vigilant!

Our Crofton Downs champion trapper, Kelvin Hastie says statistics show that once you start catching more mice than rats, then you are starting to get on top of the rats. Last month we caught 66 mice and 52 rats so we must be making a difference!

The good news is that autumn conditions make rats easier to trap than in summer so we'd like to encourage everyone to

- **Keep bait fresh (change weekly at least)**
- **Check your trap regularly & reset with bait**
- **Report all kills to us as they occur**

## **PDA's Report**

- Pest Free Camborne and Mana launched on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April, at the Mana Cruising Club. Anyone still wanting a trap in the area contact Ange on [pestfreemana@gmail.com](mailto:pestfreemana@gmail.com)
- Our first group of volunteers have attended a Kiwi Rail and GWRC Workshop so now we are able to check the Ara Harakeke Pathway and Rail corridor Doc 200's surrounding Taupo Swamp.
- Pest Free Papakowhai is about to launch at the beginning of May. That will give us a clear trapping network from Pukerua Bay to Paremata – heading round to Titahi Bay.

**WE HAVE PEST FREE PORIRUA IN OUR SIGHTS...**

## **SOME HOT TIPS FOR THIS MONTH:**

**Compost Bins** are often good winter hangouts for pests. Check out these tips from Growveg on rat proofing your compost bin:

- Use a solid sided bin with a secure lid
- Rat proof the base with 13mm gauge mesh or place on a concrete paver.
- Rats don't like flat smooth surfaces.
- Rats are secretive and prefer to stick to the edges of things, natural passageways drains, fences, sheds or sides of buildings (rather than out in the open). Because they are discouraged by the lack of cover keep the area around your bin clear.
- Rat-a-tat-tat on the side of your compost regularly. Rats hate to be disturbed.
- Rats are Omnivores, which means they eat anything. Don't add cooked food, meat, fish or strong smelling cheese or fats to your bin - also rats love egg shells!

Try looking at your garden from a rat point of view! What would attract them? Bird feeders? Chicken coops? Guinea pig or rabbit food?

### **Volunteers:**

Keen to hear from new volunteers. If you would like to help we need people to join our team checking the Doc 200 traps that make up the 'ring of steel' around our community. Full training provided. It's a great way to help your community and get some exercise while you're at it 😊

We are always keen to hear from new trappers. Please help us by spreading the word and getting your neighbours and friends involved. We have more traps available – just email us.

**Remember that your trap is a strategic part of our community network whether or not you are catching anything.**

Big thanks to all trappers and to the volunteers checking the 'ring of steel'.

That's it from us  
Keep those traps set and Happy trapping.

PDA's  
[http://pestfreeplim@gmail.com](mailto:pestfreeplim@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/pestfreeplimmerton>