

August 2015 OPBG Newsletter

Working Towards a Pest-Free Peninsula since 2008



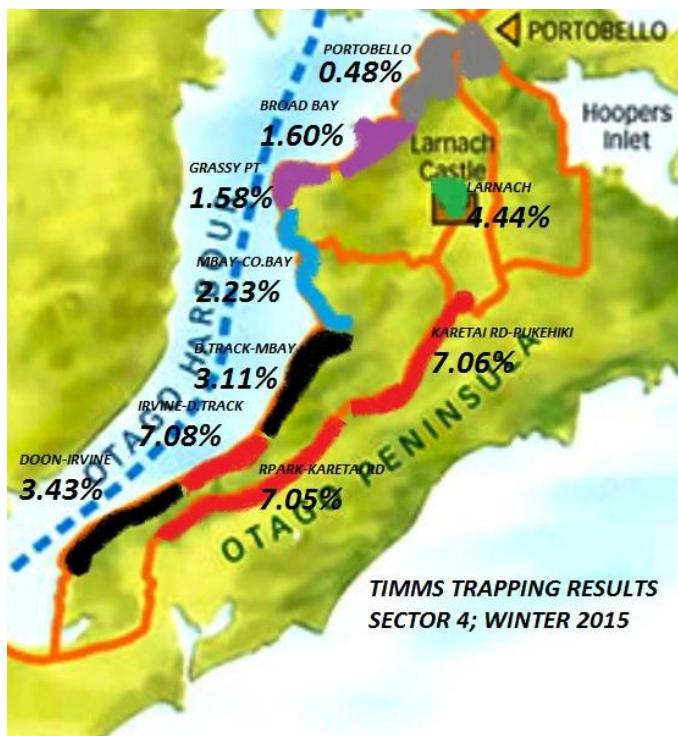
SEEN A POSSUM? HEARD ONE? SEEN THEIR SIGN?
Contact us anytime at: opbg11@gmail.com or
Brenda Cameron at: brenda.wayne@xtra.co.nz



How have we got on catching possums this winter?

It's been a great community effort in Sector 4 suburbs so far:

- 100 possums from Portobello to Macandrew Bay
- 146 possums from Glenfalloch to Irvine Rd and Highcliff Rd
- Total 246 possums from people's gardens



Critical locations remain:

- Oxley Cres and Frances St (Broad Bay)
- Grassy Point-Raynbird Bay
- McTaggart St (Company Bay)
- Upper Greenacres St (Macandrew Bay)

We'll be watching these closely and need your help, too.

Thank you Bruce Kyle, the volunteers, and D M Holdings, who worked in the suburbs.

In this map, Bruce has used % values to show numbers of possums caught per 100 trap nights. You can see a decreasing trend out towards Portobello, where a lot of our work has been concentrated. Our goal is to have all of the Peninsula at 1% or less in the next 3 years.

Sector 4 Farmland results still to come but we can say a whopping 350 possums out of Boulder Beach alone, so far.

2nd Ecology Students Assist with Monitoring

For the second year, we have had an opportunity to work with students and lecturers involved with the Ecology Degree programme at Otago University. The students took part in our August rodent monitoring session by collecting in tracking cards and practising bird counts. In the laboratory, they scored and analysed the footprint data, combined with our previous years data, as a wider teaching exercise. Moira and Cathy thoroughly enjoyed being back in the lab again after many years.

Backyard Biodiversity – Opening Young Eyes To Local Environments

The OPBG has recently launched an initial 6 month environmental education programme, in collaboration with Landscape Connections Trust (East Otago) and EnviroSchools Dunedin (Jennie Upton & Anna Hughes). This project is fully funded by a Curious Minds Science Grant from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment. Twenty-Two schools (19 Primary; 3 Secondary) have signed up and received monitoring kits comprised of numerous devices designed to detect the presence of different animal groups in the school and home gardens.



Trudi

The idea is to generate an interest in children for species they share their living and learning spaces with, within a wider framework of biodiversity-pest species education. A key component to the programme is exposing children, even as young as 6 years, to principals of scientific data collection and interpretation. We have been lucky enough to employ

two job-share facilitators, Ellen Sima and Trudi Webster, to deliver this programme. They both also work at the Otago Museum.



Ellen

New Position Available

We are looking for a new person to take and type up minutes from our monthly meetings (held 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7.30-9.30pm, Portobello Bowling Club). This is an interesting way for a volunteer to follow the work of the group without getting wet and grubby. If you're interested, call Moira – Ph. 478 0214.

Peninsula Residents Resurveyed

Back in 2010, the OPBG sent out their first Peninsula-wide household survey to over 2000 homes, to assess people's interest and support for large-scale pest control work. We would like to re-do this survey soon to update resident's views, observations, and opinions on our work. This is important, feedback from you help us to make improvements and plan what to do next.

Skinks on the monitoring agenda

A grant from Foodstuffs has kindly enabled OPBG to establish 7 monitoring lines for ground-dwelling lizards. We'd like to be able to firstly document base-line species' distributions and then with ongoing monitoring identify



any population changes, following future predator control on the Peninsula. We have possums clearly in our sights for now but increasingly there's talk about which pest animal(s) to target next.

And Finally

Thank you Mazda Foundation – for granting us funds to buy a data projector for school visits and public meetings and Pub Charity – for funding more Timms and Live Capture traps.

Thank you Katherine Lyttle, who has gone overseas but made a fantastic contribution to our website (www.pestfreepeninsula.org.nz) and the OPBG communications sub-committee.

Thank you Carey Knox (Ecogecko Consultants; www.ecogecko.co.nz) for time and advice on our lizard monitoring programme.

**** Household Tip****

Late winter pine tree flowers (catkins) can still draw possums in so plantations are a good place to set traps at this time of year. Soon, possums will start to shift to the new buds and leaf growth on willow trees so they're another key area to set traps for early spring.

All the best and as always, thank you for your support.

Brendon Cross

OPBG Chair