

## December 2015 OPBG Newsletter

*Working Towards a Pest-Free Peninsula since 2008*

### **NEED TO REPORT A POSSUM DEAD OR ALIVE?**

Contact us at: [opbg11@gmail.com](mailto:opbg11@gmail.com) or

Brenda Cameron at: [brenda.wayne@xtra.co.nz](mailto:brenda.wayne@xtra.co.nz)

### **9,000 possums and counting .....**

The first mop-up of Sector 4 has just been completed, with 190 man days spent on trapping and feratox by Otago Pest Services Ltd, 30 days spent trapping by D M Holding Ltd, and 6 months of Bruce Kyle's time. The result is 1,757 less possums living on the Peninsula. This pushes the grand total of the whole control programme to just over 9,000 possums, since 2011.



We were able to get better coverage of the land than in the initial knockdown in late 2012/2013, when 2,100 possums were caught. That means some areas were controlled for the first time this year and some major hotspots discovered.

We have included a new type of bait station, shown above. The Corliss family developed the Baitsafe station to specifically target possums and exclude rodents and birds from the bait ([www.baitsafe.co.nz](http://www.baitsafe.co.nz)). Around 100 of these have been put out around Sandymount and Boulder Beach and you will notice more going up on private land next year.

## Summary of 2015 possum cull data from Sector 4

Location	Number caught
<b>Community trapping in suburbs</b>	
Town to Mac Bay	146
Mac Bay to Portobello	100
Ocean Grove	50
<b>Farmland toxin &amp; trapping</b>	
Highcliff Rd to Harbour Side	61
Highcliff Rd to Seaward Side	284
<b>DOC Reserves</b>	
Sandymount/Sandfly Bay	415
Boulder Beach	501
<b>Monitoring Lines</b>	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1757</b>

### Community Conservation Partnership

The OPBG was awarded \$111,000 over the next three years from DOC in October. This is to fund a second part-time position alongside Cathy. We are very pleased to have this ongoing support from DOC because it allows Bruce Kyle to be retained. Bruce and the OPSL team culled another 916 possums from the DOC reserves of Sandymount, Sandfly bay and Boulder Beach.



*Moira, Trudi and Ellen at Glenfalloch the day future funding from DOC was announced.*

### New additions to the OPBG Trust team

Welcome to Marita Eisenlohr from Grassy Point, who responded to the August newsletter request for a volunteer to take minutes for the OPBG monthly meetings. Welcome also to Rod Morris from The Cove, as the newest Trustee to be nominated to the governance team.

### Peninsula Residents Resurveyed

Thank you to those of you who sent in your feedback via our recent Resident's Survey on the Next Species. There were about 220 responses. Next year, we will analyse the results

and let you know the findings. The information gathered will help form a strong base from which we can launch our next pest species coordinated effort across the Peninsula.

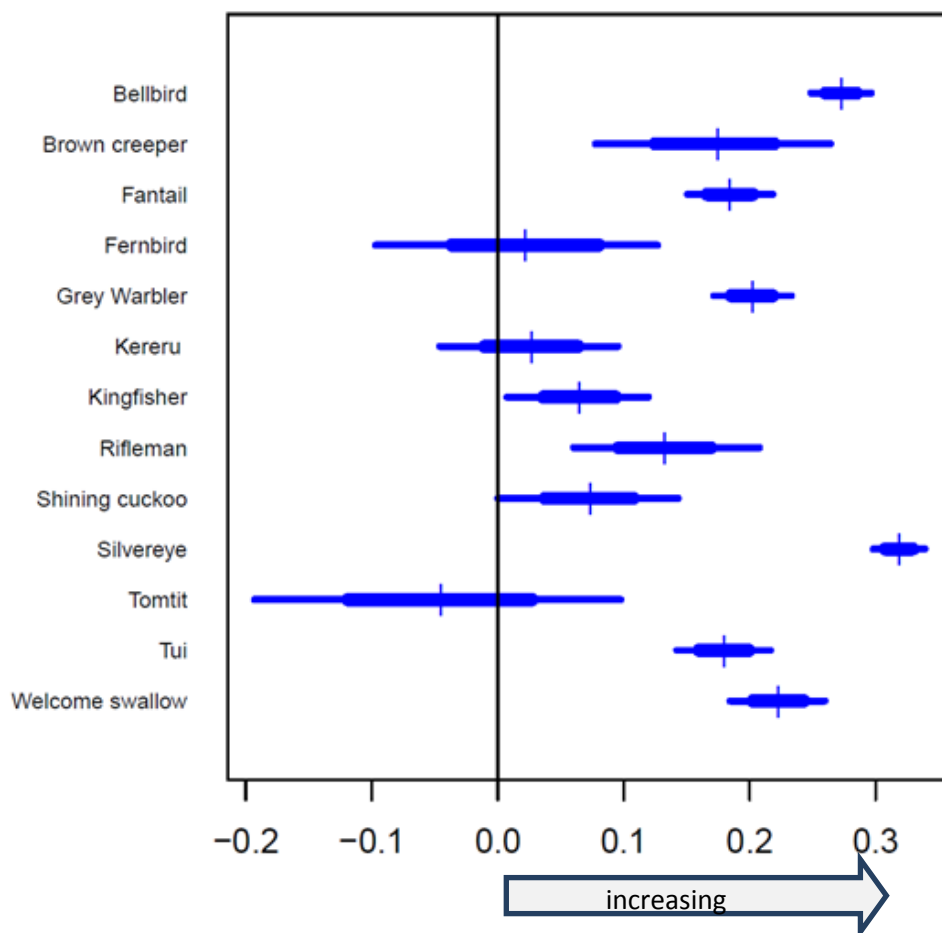
### Anyone interested in joining our bird monitoring programme?

Each bird count is a 1km walk, which is repeated 8 times per year. We need new people for around Tomahawk Lagoon and Smaill’s Beach and Sandfly Bay You will be given some guidance, training and lots of support, but a reasonable knowledge of bird species identification is useful.

If you’re interested, call Moira – Ph. 478 0214 or e-mail [moiraparker@clear.net.nz](mailto:moiraparker@clear.net.nz)

### What is the bird data showing?

Reanalysis of the OPBG bird data (by Steve Higgins & Haseeb Randhawa, Botany Dept., University of Otago) from 22 bird monitoring lines, using 30,000 observations collected by volunteers, showed emerging patterns of increase for a number of native species since 2010. *In the adjacent plot, the middle solid line at 0.0 represents the point of 'no change' in number of observations over time. Blue lines to the left of the line indicate a decrease, and to right an increase, in species' observations, respectively.*



### Spring Show

The OPBG celebrated a diverse year of work by hosting a public meeting in November at the Macandrew Bay Hall. A range of fascinating talks from Portobello school children, Macandrew Bay school children, John Nunn, Carey Knox, Jenny Rock, Haseeb Randhawa, Deb Wilson, and David Lyttle kept us entertained into the night. We had two new records: the number of people attending (90) and the amount of food eaten (go kids!).

## Backyard Biodiversity winds down for the year



Trudi Webster and Ellen Sima have been our education facilitators for the last 6 months, funded by a MBIE grant – Unlocking Curious Minds. They worked with 22 schools around Dunedin to introduce a fun and cheerful monitoring programme aimed at detecting which pest species were inhabiting the school gardens. The children and teachers also worked hard to sample invertebrates and set up artificial refuges for lizards. We will be searching for another round of funds next year to help keep the programme alive at the participating schools and to be able to

offer it to new schools. EnviroSchools and Landscape Connections Trust also collaborated on the work. *Photo of different animal footprint blocks made by Trudi & Ellen in their 'Match a Footprint' game.*

### Thank you

To Bob Morris and Mo Turnbull, retiring Trustees, for giving your time and energy to the vision of the OPBG.

To Trudi and Ellen for make Backyard Biodiversity such a success in its first year. You were just terrific!

To the new people who have signed up to receive our newsletters – the more people we can talk to and hear back from, the better!

To the people who have kindly made recent donations to the OPBG (there is now a special page for this on our website: [www.pestfreepeninsula.co.nz](http://www.pestfreepeninsula.co.nz)). These funds are invested straight back into Peninsula possum control.

### \*\*\* Household Tip \*\*\*

Summer holiday time is a good chance to rest your possum duties, while you're busy doing other things for the festive season. De-set your trap, give the springs an oil or wire-brush scrub, fill the trap with chopped up apple or carrot to keep any possum newcomer interested, and then look to activate again in February. Possums are curious, they investigate 'new' things appearing in their home ranges.

### Merry Christmas

Brendon Cross, OPBG Chair