

## Predator Free Dunedin Update

The Predator Free Dunedin initiative is gearing up on all fronts and to give you a better idea of what is happening on both sides of the harbour, in town and in other surrounding communities, please follow this link to the PFD website in the News section where PFD Project Manager Rhys Millar (also former OPBG Trustee) is talking about the vision and what is happening on the ground:

<https://predatorfreedunedin.org.nz/news/2019/6/26/june-pfd-update-with-project-manager-rhys-millar>

## Marcia Dale – introducing our new Guardians Coordinator

Marcia joined OPBG as our new Guardians Coordinator to look after our volunteers and the activities in the Waverley/Andersons Bay area, which is an important area as a buffer zone at the neck of the Peninsula. Marcia is a long term bird monitor and active possum trapper and has now taken over from Kate, our previous volunteer coordinator. We are thrilled to have her on board.



This is her report:

Residents living at the gateway to the Peninsula (Andersons Bay/Waverley/Shiel Hill) have been trapping possums for just over a year now and already are seeing an increase in the number of fantails and tui visiting their back gardens. One Andersons Bay resident of ten years has had fantails nesting in her garden for the first time ever. Another resident has finally got roses blooming after twenty years of possums eating the lot! Anecdotal evidence such as this is being reported in many sectors over the Peninsula.



Volunteers resetting a trap at the magic gum tree possum hotspot

With just over 18,000 possums removed from the Peninsula so far, we need to work harder than ever to flush out the remaining possums. We would love to hear from anyone wanting to lend a hand by checking trap lines, monitoring possums by checking chew cards, or even just going for a stroll around Sandymount to keep our trapping lines open. Please email [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz) or call 021 0237 5970 to be added to our pool of volunteers. Every little bit helps.



Harriet Dale with Bayfield Kindergarten Trapinator

### Bayfield is on board with a Predator Free Kindy

Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton are delighted that Bayfield Kindergarten is working with the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group to rid their kindergarten of rats and possums. When Kenny, one of the kindergarten's pet rabbits, started looking incredibly nervous around his bedding, the teachers took a closer look and were horrified to find a rat nest in the hutch. OPBG's Volunteer Coordinator Marcia Dale was called in to deal with the "approximately four rats" who had moved in. On closer inspection four rats turned into nine, they were despatched forthwith and the teachers found that cleaning out the rats from the rabbit hutch was the most exciting thing that's ever happened at kindy.

The teachers suggested it would probably be a good idea for Marcia to follow up this "crazy lady with a hammer" display with a talk on what pests are and why we need to get rid of them. The children showed some excellent audience participation by recreating the arrival of mammals to Aotearoa and talking about

the effect this had on native birds and other critters. They were then shown a variety of traps and taught how to keep themselves safe around them. An alternative to trapping was offered by Monty Osborn (age 4), "Send them back to Australia!"

After a chew card set out the back showed signs of possum nibbles, a Trapinator was installed in an apple tree round the back. No catches yet, but with the catch rate ramping up over winter we shall see!



Dolly Parton the Flemish giant.





Learning about trap safety

Harriet Dale with chew card



## Operations update

Planning for this year's Winter operation is in full swing and Bruce and his team are kept busy. Clearing and re-opening of last year's tracks through some impenetrable bush is ongoing and the team have begun setting up new bait stations and started systematic pre-feeding of these stations.

We are getting into mop-up mode for sectors 1 and 2. The team is getting very good results with 3 feeds of 'Prefeed Plus' in bait stations prior to cholecalciferol pellets. Addition of silica ('Kitty litter') is keeping bait dry and fresh. Bait stations containing prefeed are looking like they may be a much better detection tool than chew cards, and more likely to keep possums in the area being fed. Sandymount track clearing is still centred on the denser areas but going well with the good weather. Two of our volunteers are adding prefeed to the stations as they are located in the undergrowth. Possums are clearly using the new tracks and taking up the prefeed.



## This month's Health & Safety message from our Operations Team

Just about anybody who is working outside, on the land, in your garden, is aware that it is really important to observe personal hygiene, washing your hands often, wearing gloves and covering up cuts and scrapes.

Be aware that, whenever you handle mammalian tissues, you should be particularly careful not to infect yourself with any microorganisms or diseases that the animal that you are handling may have had. Leptospirosis is a bacteria that many wild and domestic animals carry in their urine. It can infect humans through contact with broken skin or through the eyes, nose or mouth. So, make sure that you are particularly careful when handling dead animals.

Remind yourself to check out the relevant Health & Safety plans for your OPBG volunteer activity. You can find them all on our website under:

<https://www.predatorfreepeninsula.nz/health-and-safety/>

## Possums on the Move – what are possums doing at the moment?

### July to September:

Fur recovery time by possum trappers; hollow fibres in possum fur make it some of the warmest in the world.

The hungry month: use good, strong baits in traps to pull in possums up to 300m from their dens.

Second dispersal time for second mating event; Otago Peninsula possums are breeding twice per year.

***For those of you walking or working in the more remote areas of the Peninsula, we would very much welcome if you could keep your eyes open for any possum signs or even be prepared to set a line of chew cards. With possum numbers down in a lot of places the last remaining ones are getting more elusive and harder to detect and even catch. So we are ever more relying on help from the community.***

***If you think you could help please let us know: [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz) or [info@opbg.nz](mailto:info@opbg.nz)***

**Remember our new email to Report-A-Peninsula-Possum –**

**[possums@opbg.nz](mailto:possums@opbg.nz)**

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### Contact Us

For more information visit our website:

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For general enquiries:



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To report a possum:



[possums@opbg.nz](mailto:possums@opbg.nz)

To find out more about becoming a volunteer:



[volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz)



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