

## Appendix E

Newspaper article: 'Two years of sticking it to stoats'  
The Guardian, page 26, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009.





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## Meridian Te Āpiti Community Fund

Meridian recognises the special contribution local communities make to our hydro and wind operations, and to the country's electricity sector.

The Community Fund gives your community a say on what local initiatives are supported and funded by Meridian. The Fund, managed by a panel of community members and Meridian staff, is about working together to help bring about community outcomes of value.

The Meridian Te Āpiti Community Fund covers the communities of Ashhurst and Woodville, and will provide \$100,000 to help community projects in this area over three years.

### TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

The next closing date for Community Fund applications is 27 January, 2009.

For more information on the Community Fund, or for an application form, please visit [www.meridian.co.nz](http://www.meridian.co.nz) or email [community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz](mailto:community.fund@meridianenergy.co.nz). You can also call us on 03 357 9732.

# Two years of sticking it to stoats

By Kelly Stratford,  
Community Relations Ranger,  
Department of Conservation.

It began quietly in February 2007 as a small research project looking at the effect of bait in stoat traps, but Te Potae o Awarua quickly took on a life of its own.

Today, it is a key conservation project in the Ruahines. The vision of Te Potae o Awarua (which means 'the protection of the Awarua lands') is to protect birds, like whio and kiwi, over 20,000 hectares. This is no small task, but project partners Aorangi Awarua Trust and the Department of Conservation (DOC) are up for the challenge.

Over 460 stoat traps have been set in two lines in the northwestern Ruahines. Half of the traps are unbaited to test the theory that stoats will enter traps out of curiosity. Though stoats have been caught in both baited and unbaited traps, it is too early to draw conclusions at present.

A small population of Eastern North Island Brown Kiwi are in residence in the northwestern Ruahine Ranges. In the past, chick survival rates were low due to high predator numbers. The trap line aims to reduce predators, but in the meantime chicks are given a helping hand by Operation Nest Egg (ONE). The ONE programme involves removing kiwi eggs from



Getting stoats' goat: A DOC ranger with one less native bird predator (image courtesy DOC).

the wild and hatching them in captivity. Chicks are raised until they are over 800gms and better able to defend themselves, then released. So far, nine eggs have been lifted from the Ruahines, with three kiwis returned. One has been released in the Cape Kidnappers Wildlife Sanctuary, and four new chicks are still in the care of ONE.

Whio also benefit from Te Potae o Awarua, with a rise in recorded sightings in the area. These unique native ducks are threatened by habitat loss and predation. However, recent community projects like Te Potae o Awarua and the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association Oroua Stoat Control project offer hope for whio and other native bird species in the Ruahines.

The initial 20-kilometre long trap-line is monitored monthly by volunteers. A 30-kilometre extension, added in March 2008, is currently checked by contractors. Both lines are made possible thanks to funding from Nga Whenua Rahui and Horizons Regional Council, with eggs provided by Zeagolds Foods Ltd. To date, a total of 93 stoats, 105 rats and more than 15 hedgehogs have been caught in the Te Potae trap lines.

Te Potae o Awarua relies on sponsorship and assistance from volunteers. Aorangi Awarua Trust

and DOC thank sponsors for their generous contributions, and volunteers for donating their time, energy and enthusiasm.

To find out more about the project, contact DOC biodiversity ranger Lorraine Cook at the Palmerston North Area Office on (06) 350-9700, or visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

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