

FOREST RINGLET PROJECT REPORT

Since the last report, 11 March, there has been little progress in the field. There were no new sightings of forest ringlet in any form before COVID-19 interrupted our plans.

However, planning for the future success of the project has been undertaken. Good plans are critical when dealing with Nature in all its forms.

Poster and Promotion

Posters were distributed to all DOC locations throughout the North Island and top half of the South Island. Over the winter it is planned to survey tramping stores and establish which stores plan to reopen in the spring in light of the anticipated drop in tourism post COVID-19. They will be asked to display the poster and these will be sent. Renewed contact will be made with DOC offices ensuring that the poster(s) are still on display. In the spring, posters will be promoted again via social media. Posters will also be inserted in copies of F&B magazine in September – (budgeted for). There are plans to put a notice, together with an article, in the spring (August) issue of BACKCOUNTRY in lieu of a poster.

Establishment of Breeding Programme

The planned habitat at [REDACTED] where the forest ringlets will be raised next season, will be built over the winter, utilising the parasitic-proof netting. This will also be useful in protecting the plants from [REDACTED]

As well as monitoring the Gahnia/larvae the containment facility will be improved over the winter which will involve the construction using the parasitic-proof netting, as well as establishing more host and nectar plants. This will also protect the plants from rabbits while control strategies are investigated. Control methods need to be agreeable to the [REDACTED] and also conform with local government regulations. This project is becoming an excellent example of NZ's biodiversity challenges!

The [REDACTED] will report to MBNZT any further likely spots where Gahnia is growing with the intention of finding more areas to search besides the already successful spots.

Iwi have been kept informed of progress. There are other areas along the range where there have been sightings of forest ringlet butterflies and also browsing damage by larvae on Gahnia, both by Norm Twigg and other trampers. These areas are marked for searches when COVID-19 regulations permit. Rudi Schnitzler and Robert Hoare have been contacted about the identity of the parasitic wasp but this had been delayed by COVID-19 as these two men are unable to access their scientific equipment.

Travel to Auckland for meetings

The budgeted expenses have not been fully expended partly because the [REDACTED] collaborators have been slow to get their programme up to speed as well as COVID-19. However, as soon as things change, another visit will be organised.

Because of the adverse conditions experienced over the summer and then COVID-19, MBNZT request variations in the projected expenditure for the forest ringlet project and an extension in the terms to carry over until 31 October 2021 (an additional twelve months).



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