



Matt Gleissner (left) and Jonathan Puddick with their Stepneyville Halo branded rat traps.

Port Hills trapping group gets a boost

A newly-formed backyard trapping group of Port Hills residents has received some welcome funding from Predator Free New Zealand in support of their work.

Predator Free NZ's Backyard Community Funding round 2021 awarded money to 11 groups around New Zealand after receiving more than 100 applications from highly-motivated trapping groups keen to make a difference in their communities.

The Stepneyville Halo group is a community initiative started by Cawthron scientist Jonathan Puddick after he was inspired by the work being done by the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, and the 'Nelson Halo' project and was keen to emulate this in his own suburb. The Nelson Halo project is a collaboration between Nelson City Council's Nelson Nature programme, DOC, community groups and private landowners to coordinate predator control and habitat restoration in an area called the 'Nelson Halo' that includes most of the areas within the Nelson Whakatū region, stretching from the northern point of Cape Soucis in the Marlborough Sounds, east to the Richmond Range and south to the Tasman district border.

"The funding will enable us to set up a monitoring programme and to get 100 new traps out into our suburb," says Jonathan. "We are a new, small group,

and this funding will help us to get things going and get as many people in the neighbourhood on board as we can. One of the things we want to identify is the kinds of pests we have in the Port Hills. We know we've got rats and mice, but we don't know if we've got possums and other pests."

Jonathan started out by building himself a trap, and then he built a couple more and gave them to some of his neighbours, and the group grew from there.

"For people that are keen to have more bird life and lizards in their gardens but are less keen to use the traps themselves, we can still do monitoring from their gardens via chew cards or ink cards, which gives us important data that helps the cause. People can also help by making their gardens a haven for native animals; like setting up bird feeders, making lizard gardens and insect hotels, planting pollinator plants and putting water out for birds in summer. There's lots of ways people can get involved."

If you live in the Port Hills/Stepneyville area and would like to be a part of the Halo group, please get in touch by emailing stepneyville.halo@gmail.com or you can join the Stepneyville Halo group on Facebook.



Why trap pests?

Aotearoa New Zealand has a goal to be predator free by 2050. In the last few centuries, introduced mammalian predators like stoats, rats, possums, weasels, ferrets, cats and hedgehogs have decimated our fauna. New Zealand has one of the worst extinction records of any nation and, today, some 4000 native species are considered to be at some kind of risk.

Predator Free NZ currently estimates that:

- 74% of New Zealand's native birds and 84% of our native reptile species are threatened or at risk of extinction.
- More than 25 million native birds are killed each year by non-native predators, such as possums, mustelids (ferrets, stoats, weasels) and rats.

Want to trap pests at your place?

Grab yourself a Nelson Nature subsidised predator trap for your backyard.

Traps range from \$15 to \$60 and are available in a variety of types and sizes. Nelson residents can purchase traps from the Department of Conservation Visitor Centre by Millers Acre carpark.

More than 250 Nelson residents have already taken advantage of the subsidised backyard trap scheme since it was launched in September 2020, purchasing backyard traps for rats, stoats and/or possums.

Want to find out if there is a trapping group near you?

Email nelson.nature@ncc.govt.nz or visit predatorfreenz.org/get-involved/find-a-group

Aquatic pest plant control programme

Invasive pest plants like water celery, parrot's feather and Vietnamese parsley are choking our waterways and negatively impacting stream health in Nelson. Nelson City Council is implementing a control programme from 18 October 2021 to help stop them spreading through the region's waterways and causing further damage. The programme will begin at one of the most affected sites – Orphanage Stream.

These pest plants form dense mats that block sunlight and deoxygenate the water, smother indigenous plants and trap sediment, and reduce habitat for stream life, including fish, eels (tuna) and macroinvertebrates. Choked streams can also exacerbate flood impacts, threatening infrastructure such as bridges and pathways.

Attempts to remove aquatic pest plants by hand or mechanical means have had limited success. Advice received from NIWA is that herbicide application is likely to be the most successful control technique

and has the potential to eradicate infestations over time. Use of triclopyr triethylamine (Garlon 360) is recommended as it has given excellent field control results and it does not persist in the environment.

Triclopyr triethylamine (Garlon 360) will be applied with a backpack sprayer (100ml/10L) to control water celery (*Apium nodiflorum*) in Orphanage Stream, Saxton Creek, Jenkins Creek, Orchard Stream, Arapiki Stream, and Brook Stream; Vietnamese parsley (*Oenanthe javanica*) in Poorman Valley Stream; and parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum*

aquaticum) in Hillwood Stream and a site along Cable Bay Road.

Treatment of each stream area will be done within a day. Physical signs will be placed near areas that are being treated. Council asks that people do not harvest plants or animals (e.g. tuna) from the treated area for at least two weeks after spraying. Keep dogs and children away from the area during treatment.

For more information, go to: nelson.govt.nz/aquatic-pest-plants