



Backyard trapping group take on pests the smart way

The Todd Valley Trapping Group, recipients of two Nelson City Council Environmental Grants and led by Todds Valley resident and group coordinator Carol Parton, met recently to learn how to use the Trap NZ phone app. Carol even got her first smartphone to be able to use the new technology.

"I've held off getting a smartphone for so long, but it's quite a useful tool for our trapping efforts," Carol says. "I'm excited to see how this app makes things easier for us."



Todd Valley Trapping Group coordinator, Carol Parton

The group recently received training led by Wildlife Management International, who were contracted by Council to support the trapping group.

Adding the app to the team's repertoire of tools will allow members to record trapping data on their phones, even when out of mobile phone or WiFi coverage, and share trapping data among group members.

Alongside the app, the group maintains a community trapping Facebook page where members can share their experiences, tips, catches and observations.

The training was also a chance for the group to discuss best practices for monitoring, as well as issues shared by community members – for example "pesky blighters" like ship rats and possums feeding on tree fruit.

Council contractors demonstrated how to monitor rats, as well as innovative potential solutions to the problem of bait disappearing to hungry slugs and clever mice, such as using spring-loaded spherical tea strainers to keep bait secure.

"Through starting the group and others joining, there's all these connections and links that are formed, and it has become like one big family," Carol says.

"The people in the group have a real sense of community, and there are really enthusiastic volunteers who do trapping in the reserves on behalf of the group in addition to trapping at home."

Formed in 2019, the group started with only 12 households and has since grown to about 43. In 2019, and again in 2021, the group received funding through a Nelson City Council Environmental Grant. The funding has enabled the group to offer subsidised traps and supplies to members for their backyard and lifestyle block trapping efforts, including different styles of traps that cater to all levels of physical ability and strength.

Carol says they are actively trying to expand their efforts.

"We're trying to encourage neighbours to join our cause. We have traps for sale at a 50% discount, and every person that contributes makes a difference. Even if they don't want to be active participants, the fact that they have a trap still helps."



Todd Valley Trapping Group members John, Monique and Katrina with handy trapping toolbelts made up by Carol.

Environmental Grant funding opens in August

If you are a group or individual working to improve the health of Nelson's natural environment, you may be eligible for funding support through the Nelson City Council Environmental Grants scheme.

Grant applications for less than \$5,000 have a higher chance of success, although funding of up to \$20,000 is available for selected projects in any one year. Applications for the August 2021 funding round open on Monday 2 August and close on Tuesday 31 August. Funding is limited so be sure to apply before the deadline.

Priorities for the August 2021 grants round are:

- Community projects* that protect and restore biodiversity by controlling weeds or browsing animals (e.g. goats, possums)
- Community projects* that enhance native wildlife through predator control
- Restoration projects (e.g. planting and weeding) on private properties larger than 1 ha and where there is significant investment of time/resources from the landowners
- Projects that protect and restore Significant Natural Areas
- Projects that reduce erosion on farming and forestry land
- Projects that restore waterway margins.

*Community projects are those that involve three or more landowners and/or involve public land.

The next round of Environmental Grant funding is in February 2022.

For more information go to nelson.govt.nz/environmental-grants-scheme, email nelson.nature@ncc.govt.nz or call us on 03 546 0200

Spotlight on pests

Why trap pests?

Aotearoa New Zealand has a goal to be predator free by 2050.

Predator Free 2050 currently estimates:

- 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.

How can you help?

- If you haven't already, be sure to grab yourself a Nelson Nature subsidised predator trap for your backyard.
- Traps are available in a variety of types and sizes and range from \$15 to \$60. Nelson residents can purchase traps from the Department of Conservation Visitor Centre by Millers Acre carpark.
- About 200 Nelson residents have already taken advantage of the subsidised backyard trap scheme since it was launched in September 2020, purchasing traps for rats, stoats and/or possums.

Rats!

The winter months are a great time to trap hungry rats looking for food or warmth around your house.

Rats pose a serious threat to native wildlife, preying on ground-nesting birds, their eggs and chicks, and other insects and animals like wētā and lizards. Rats also feed on the flowers, fruits, and seeds of the plants that native wildlife depend on for survival.

A great place to put a trap is near your compost bin, where rats might be seeking easy meals.