

Reading Rimu for Rats



- This data was gathered by volunteers – thanks to Grant Capill, Karen Colgan & Jacqui Geux (data and some images).
- The aim is to predict potential rat increase within the Ark, and the increased re invasion

Timeline of rimu development (Southland)

- January year 1 – pollination occurs
- February - New fruit counted
- February – August – Not much change in appearance. Dormant over winter.
- November – seed becoming brownish green



Reference: Daryl Eason, DOC, pers. comms.

- December year 1 – Pre existing fruit – preparing to swell, ripen & turn red.
- February to May year 2 – Ripening occurs, 13-16 months after pollination



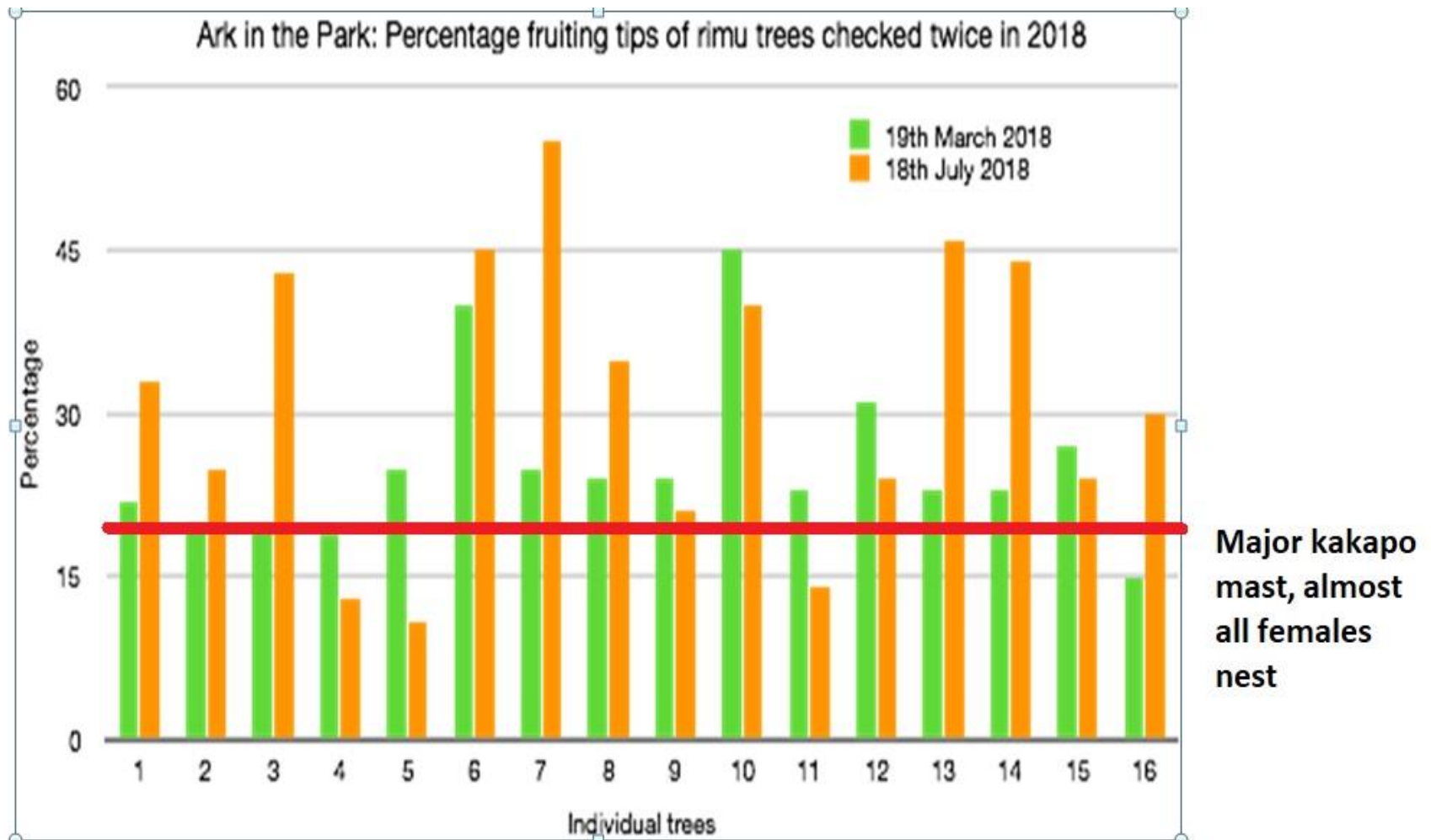
Levels for Kākāpō

- *What constitutes a mast is rather subjective; for example we considered any quantity of fruit sufficient to induce at least some kakapo to nest “a mast”.*
- *On this basis 10% was a minor mast (only a few females would nest), 15% a moderate mast (about half would nest) and anything over 20% was a major mast (virtually all females would attempt to nest).*

Reference:

Ron Moorhouse, DOC, pers.comms.

Ark results



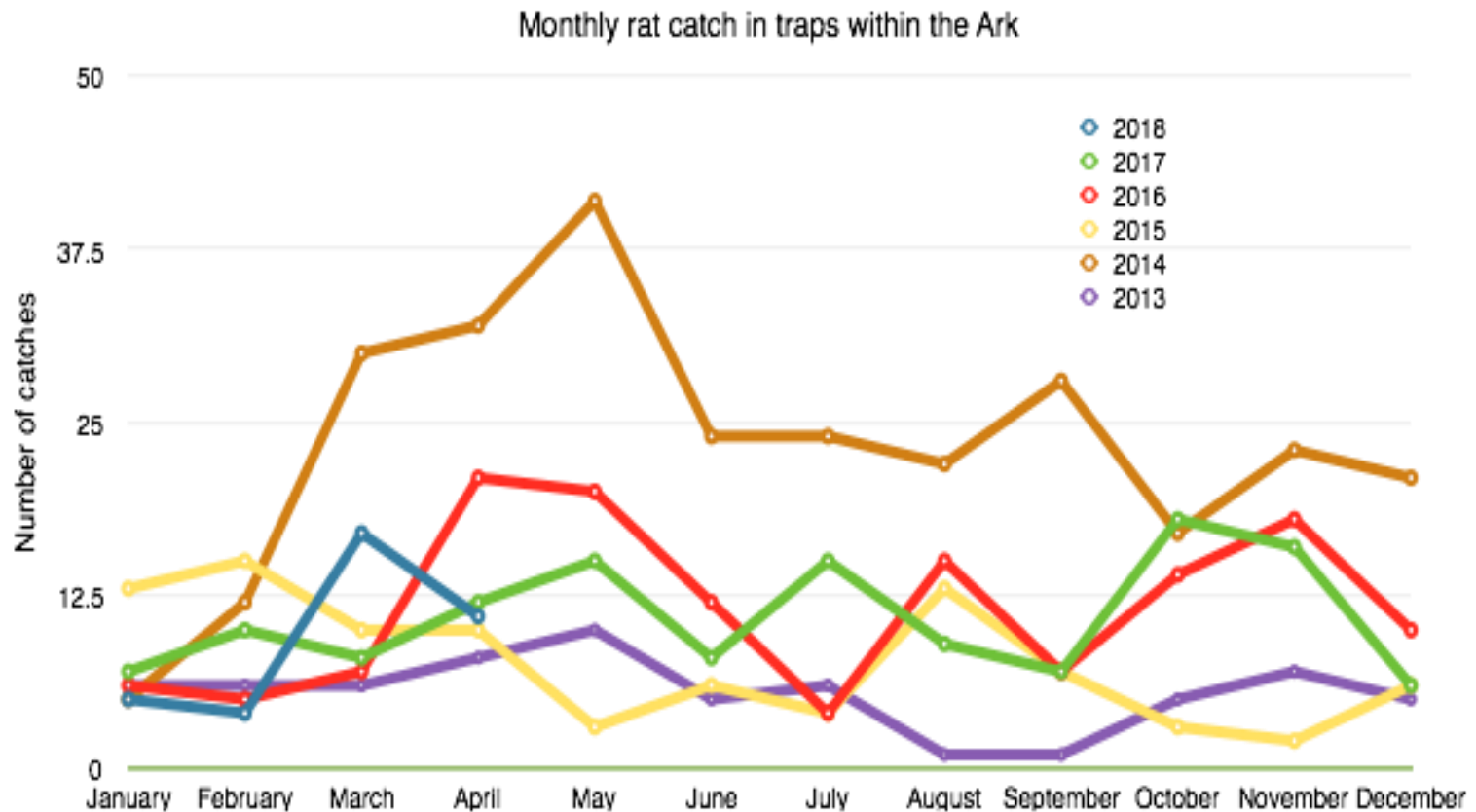
July 2018



What does this mean for us?

- How does this translate to rat numbers?
- Female kakapo weigh around 1 - 2.5kg
- Female ship rats around 130g
- That's a lot more rat stomachs filled than kākāpō stomachs.

Heavy fruiting of kahikatea & rimu in 2014



If we know its coming what can we do?

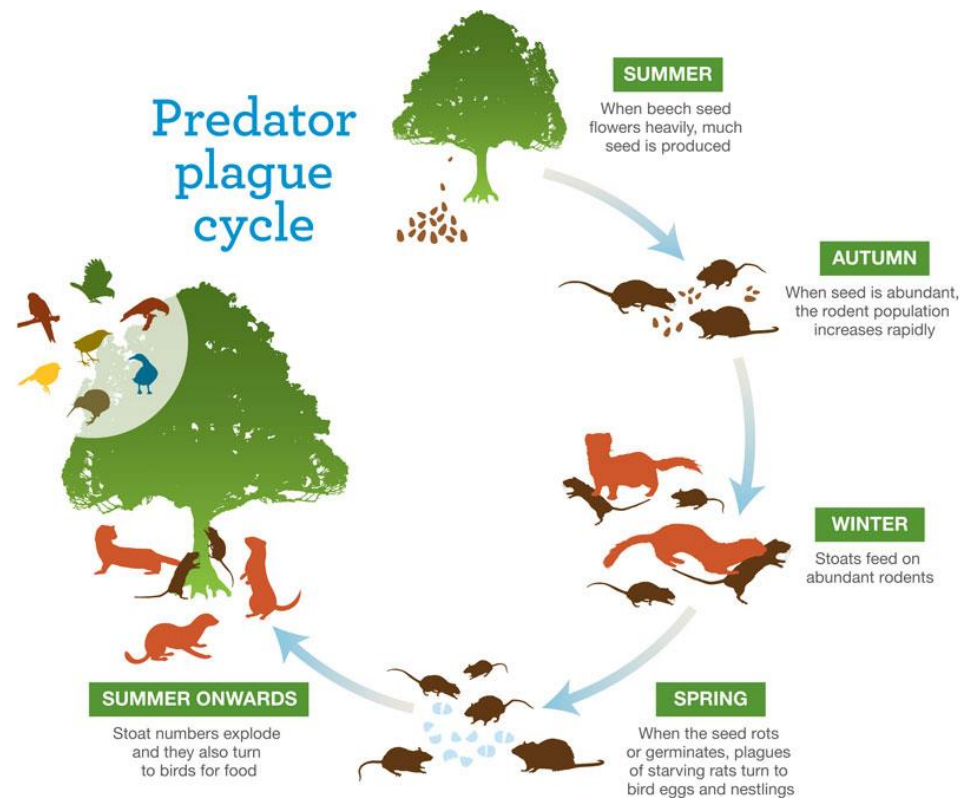
Maybe not much as natural food seems to be the preference.

In 2014 & 2015 we:

- Added non toxic lure to bait.
- Put out larger quantities.
- More frequent baiting of certain blocks.
- More peripheral baiting.

But in general

- Plan aerial drops, as is done in the Battle for the Birds and beech mast?
- Consider delaying any particular planned translocation.



In conclusion...



Coming soon to the Waitākere Ranges –
Hundreds of kākāpō chicks!



Photo: DOC