



March 2026 News

A note from the Chair

Autumn brings chillier evenings, clearer light and the perfect excuse to get out on the water. Tāwhitinui and Tennyson Inlet feel especially inviting now. Our progress this year is a direct result of the tireless work of volunteers, the generous support of our members and sponsors, and the funds raised at community events such as Pumpkin Day and the Picnic Day. Without that collective effort we simply wouldn't be seeing the improvements in trapping, tracks and bird habitat that are now evident. Thank you to everyone who has given time, skills or financial support.

If you haven't been boating lately, this is an excellent time of the year to embark on a trip and observe the striking contrast in vegetation between the islands and the mainland as you pass. While the mainland displays understated shades of greyish green, the islands stand out as vibrant beacons, showcasing a rich palette of greens in every imaginable hue, confirming the progress that has been made to reduce the predators.

We look forward to seeing you at **Pumpkin Day on the 28th March.**



Trapping Tracks

Tawhitinui and Awaiti

The Department of Conservation has now given us the green light to create a network of access tracks, updating our agreement so we can safely reach pest-control traps tucked away in some of the island's toughest terrain. These tracks are strictly for trapping work, they aren't built or maintained for public use, and they aren't signposted.

Please note that anyone from the public who chooses to walk them does so entirely at their own risk, as conditions can be hazardous and changeable.

Progress on the Rimu Track

Work continued in November on the Rimu Track on the north-west side of Tāwhitinui Island, and in February the final 50 metres were completed. The entire route is now fully benched, making access to traps along this side of the island much safer and more efficient for our volunteers.

A New Route: The Nikau Track

Across the island, two determined volunteers have put in an extraordinary effort to open up a new line of access. This new route, tentatively named The Nikau Track, runs from Trap 52 through dense kiekie and supplejack, weaving across gullies and ridges all the way to Trap 36 at the northern tip. Their work has created a clear, benched trail that dramatically improves access to traps on this side of Tāwhitinui.



NIKAU TRACK

Two Sides, Two Ecosystems

Walking these tracks highlights just how different the island's ecosystems are:

- **Rimu Track:** Drier, more open, with beech and kānuka dominating the canopy.
- **Nikau Track:** Cooler, damper, and shaded, winding through stands of old kohekohe, nīkau, and lush fern understorey. A couple of natural lookout points offer beautiful glimpses toward the Outer Sounds.

The Nikau Track is approximately 800 metres long and requires a good level of fitness due to the terrain and elevation changes.



RIMU TRACK



NIKAU TRACK



Water for the birds



In August a 3,000-litre tank and all water-catchment materials were flown by helicopter to the cleared summit of Tāwhitinui Island. Over three working days in September and October volunteers assembled the prefabricated wooden frame and coloursteel catchment, prepared the platform, positioned the tank, and completed the plumbing and fitting of two water feeders.

After a few good rainfalls the tank is now more than half full, and a camera has been installed to record the birds' visits and interactions with the feeders, providing both monitoring data and some delightful footage for supporters.

Although the tank and catchment roof sit close to the Ridge Track, they're easy to miss: a dense vegetation screen conceals the installation from casual walkers, so it's not obvious unless you know exactly where to look.



Trapping Update

Over the past five months our DOC 200s on Tāwhitinui have been checked regularly, producing variable strike rates that averaged 4–5 per visit. In November the Tawhitinui bait stations were refilled; many stations showed good bait uptake with several found empty. A subsequent DOC 200 check recorded no strikes across the network.

- A24 maintenance: A24s were refreshed at the end of November and again on 4 December. The final A24 refresh used access via the Nikau Track, where three additional traps were installed to close gaps in the network.
- Equipment upkeep: Several trap counters with low batteries were replaced or fitted with new units, and a couple of older traps were swapped out for new ones.
- The 6x A24s on Awaiti were refreshed at the end of January with total strikes being only 13. After 6 months four of the traps still had gas and the other two still had lure which shows there is a low number of rats there.

Strike totals and notable changes:

- Tawhitinui A24s Total Strikes: 125.
Strikes show an increase compared with the winter (June) total of 65.
- Trap 22, after being moved to a better location, rose from 2 strikes to 12.
- On the west peninsula two traps combined rose from 2 strikes to 14.
- In February the DOC 200s were checked and refreshed again; no traps were triggered, though quite a lot of lure had been eaten by mice. This is a record for Tawhitinui, three consecutive months, Dec, Jan and Feb with no rats caught. A number of A24s were also checked with no strikes recorded.

As always – if you are able to support us with a donation to help fund trap supplies or if you would like to join us as a member, we encourage you to complete the form on the next page.

Join Us

MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM

It is estimated that rats and stoats kill 25 million birds in NZ each year. The purpose of this Charitable Trust is to eradicate the pests from the three islands (Tarakaipa, Tawhitinui & Awaiti) that make up the Tennyson Inlet Island group within the Pelorus Sound.

We need your help

By becoming a Friend of TIIT or by making a donation your contribution will greatly assist us in achieving our goal.

We welcome volunteers to join us on fieldwork on and off the islands, monitoring and servicing traps, making penguin boxes etc.

Cost

Individual Membership \$30

Family Membership \$50

Donation (you choose the \$)

If you have ticked any of the options above please fill out your details below. With any bank deposit made you will receive a receipt that specifies our charitable status.

Privacy: your email address will be added to our database so that we can keep in touch with you, you will have the option to unsubscribe.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Tennyson Inlet Islands Trust Bank details:

SBS Nelson

03 1355 0865294 00

Reference 'membership' or 'donation'

Return your form by email to our Secretary, Lesley Davies: tiitsecretary@gmail.com





Our Sponsors

We couldn't continue our work without the generous support of our members and our sponsors.



RICHMOND



*We extend our heartfelt thanks for you all
for your amazing generosity!*

