

The Learner provided evidence of the research and investigation, development of a plan, undertaking of the action as required for Achieved and then in their evaluation wrote...

① "Because I am not an expert at determining animal footprints, there is a possibility that the prints I found have been misidentified because they can be indistinct or otherwise difficult to positively id. This could lead to us missing the presence of a pest or over-estimating the numbers of another.. This means that any future recommendations that I give to the land owner could be false and miss out controlling a predator that was actually present. However, with this being possible I was still able to fairly confidently identify pests that could be controlled with the methods that we recommended from our research.

① I had predicted that there would be a good match between the chew cards and the tracking tunnel data but due to the scattered faint nature of the prints a tally was incredibly hard to collate. The chew cards gave much more distinct identification but again they were good at showing that the pest was present but not the exact numbers. That meant that our data was limited for giving us a baseline to compare against when the different pest control methods start.

② Having a baseline makes it easier to check the effectiveness of poisons or traps so the landowner gets the best value for their effort (money and time)... They would not want to use Timms traps which are best for possums if there are none, and rats or mice were the main problem.

② Another reason for caution with our results is that the pests might have avoided each other meaning that the first one that arrived chased away other pests at the chew cards.

③ Even though our results were not perfect we were able to identify four predators present and discuss the control methods with the landowner who got more motivated to control them. The effectiveness of our monitoring is to understand the problem and to better target the responses which will lead to environmental gains for native plants affected by possum eating the trees leaves out (e.g. rata, kamahi) and rats eating their seeds (e.g. Nikau).

④ If these pests are controlled the forest remnants and their biodiversity will be sustained... At the same time the economic sustainability of the farm will not be wrecked by a TB outbreak because that is still a real concern if possum numbers build up. With a high population density they are more likely to meet a diseased possum and catch the disease...

⑤ It feels helpless to do one area with predators breeding next door. One farm is not a whole ecosystem but part of a bigger one. According to DoC's possum booklet www.doc.govt.nz/documents/science-and-technical/everybodyspossum.pdf male possums can range up to 20km and though the females don't move that far they will also spread steadily to replace them but if we tell people it is fun as well as important for the environment and economy then the individual actions will add up to make a real difference.

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- 6 As well as changing my own attitudes and behaviours as I have described I have the idea
7 that we need to encourage and even co-ordinate small projects in our region. The regional council has a community initiatives fund and if schools and clubs apply we could have many more tracking tunnels, chew cards and traps provided so we can educate people and really make a dent in the predator population.” Guardianship (kaitiakitanga) is a responsibility for both individuals and the wider community if a sustainable future is to be ensured. One action (or method) and one individual alone is unlikely to succeed. The combined effect of volunteer groups and government agencies to ensure a long term measure of success. The recently announced Taranaki Taku Turanga initiative aims to do this and it will be interesting to see how this turns out – it looks like it costs a lot of money though (\$11.7m).