

## **Rakiura Update #15 January 2024** (feel free to share)

### **Ulva Island Rat invasion.**

Ever wondered why you didn't see any deer some days?

For six days in June, two hunters and their indicator dogs searched the island for signs of deer. One set of footprints on a beach and some moderately fresh sign was found but no deer were sighted. The hunters surveyed the island extensively.

DOC are confident that there are one (at most two) deer on Ulva Island that they were unable to remove. They were comfortable that deer at this density present a low risk to the upcoming brodifacoum operation.

DOC undertook a brodifacoum poison drop to eliminate rats from Ulva Island on 16 August, at a cost of \$250,000.00 for the area of 267 Ha, close to \$936 per Ha.

The Island covers 174600 Ha. PFR would probably need a lot of friends or a mortgage to do the whole Island as at that rate, the cost would be at least \$160m.

### **Beach Cleanup**

In July volunteers completed a [Stewart Island Beach cleanup](#), removing 9.8 tons of garbage mainly plastic on western coastline from Doughboy Bay to Waituna Bay.

### **Feral Cat Bait Trial**

An update on the Readymade feral cat bait trial, conducted on the Rollars, Christmas Village and Lucky blocks Murray River, was published in September. Read the update here [Cat poison Trial update](#) Full analysis should be available soon.

### **Valuing Whitetail Deer**

In June the Game Animal Council conducted a survey determine what white-tailed deer on Rakiura/Stewart Island mean to hunters. 619 hunters responded. The GAC were happy with the response. Survey results are online. [Valuing Whitetail Deer](#)

610 parties were issued with hunting permits for conservation land during 2023. This is the third consecutive year the number of parties has exceeded 600. Of those 610 parties only 183 parties have bothered to take the 1 minute it takes to submit a Hunter Report after their hunt. That is less than 30%. If you hunted on the Island in 2023 check your party leader has put in a report and if not, get one done. It is not too late to do it now. [Link to Hunter Reports](#)

### **DOC Hut Service Standards**

DOC have directed that an Ash Bucket and a Smoke/Heat Detector be installed at Back Country Huts. Rakiura Hunter Huts fall into this category. Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust is opposed to this direction as have a number of other back country groups. [News Report](#) Reported hut fires in the past have been attributed to ash buckets and currently ashes at Hunter Huts are broadcast and we are sure that ash

buckets would result in unsightly piles of ash around huts. Imagine how long a smoke detector would last inside a hut with fire smoke or when cooking or the logic of a heat detector which does not activate until 58 degrees Celsius. Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust would welcome input from any readers with expertise in this area. [huntercamptrust@hotmail.com](mailto:huntercamptrust@hotmail.com) or 0276925338

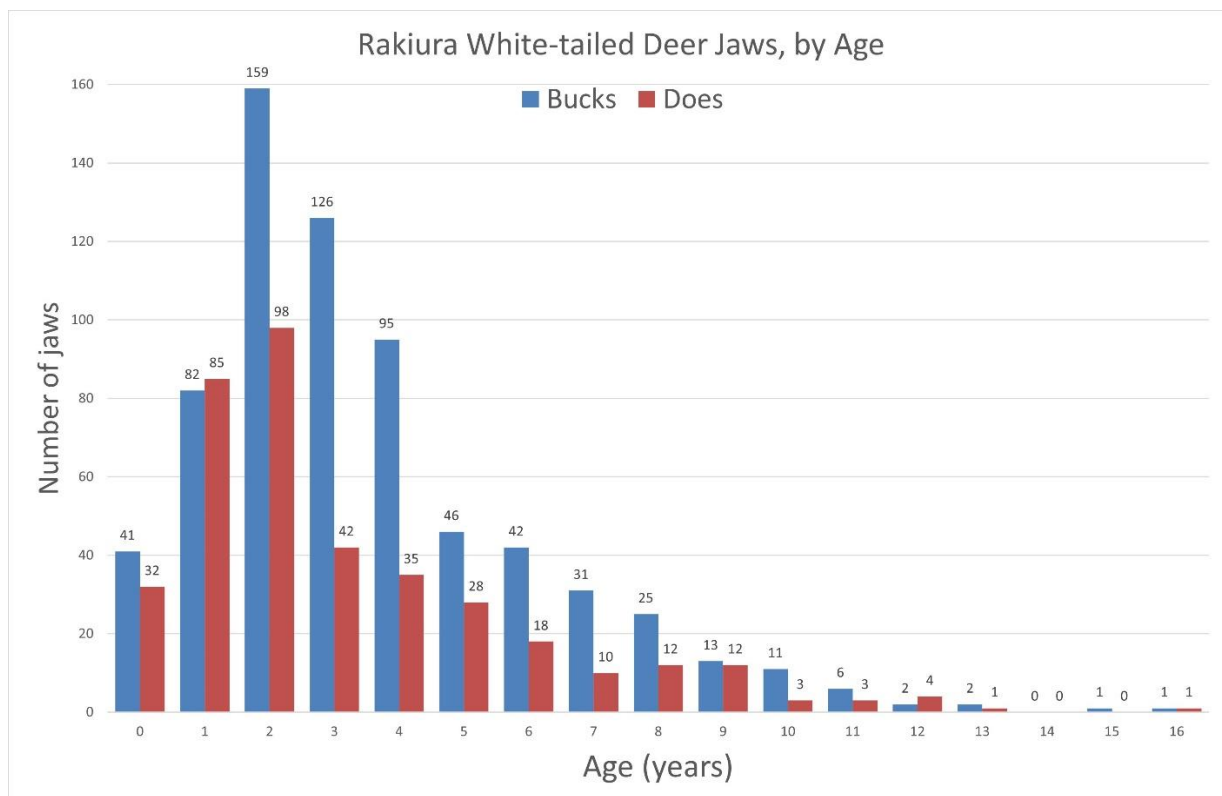
### **Predator Free Rakiura**

Click here for the latest [Predator Free Rakiura Newsletter](#) Both the Project Director and the Assistant Project Director of Predator Free Rakiura have recently resigned.

One of the PFR target pests is hedgehogs. In May a survey using trail cameras was conducted in the vicinity of Halfmoon Bay to determine their prevalence. Only 1 hedgehog was detected from 147 cameras. See [Hedgehog Survey](#) Given that hedgehogs hibernate in the winter you would have to question the merits of conducting such a survey at that time of the year.

### **Whitetail Deer aging**

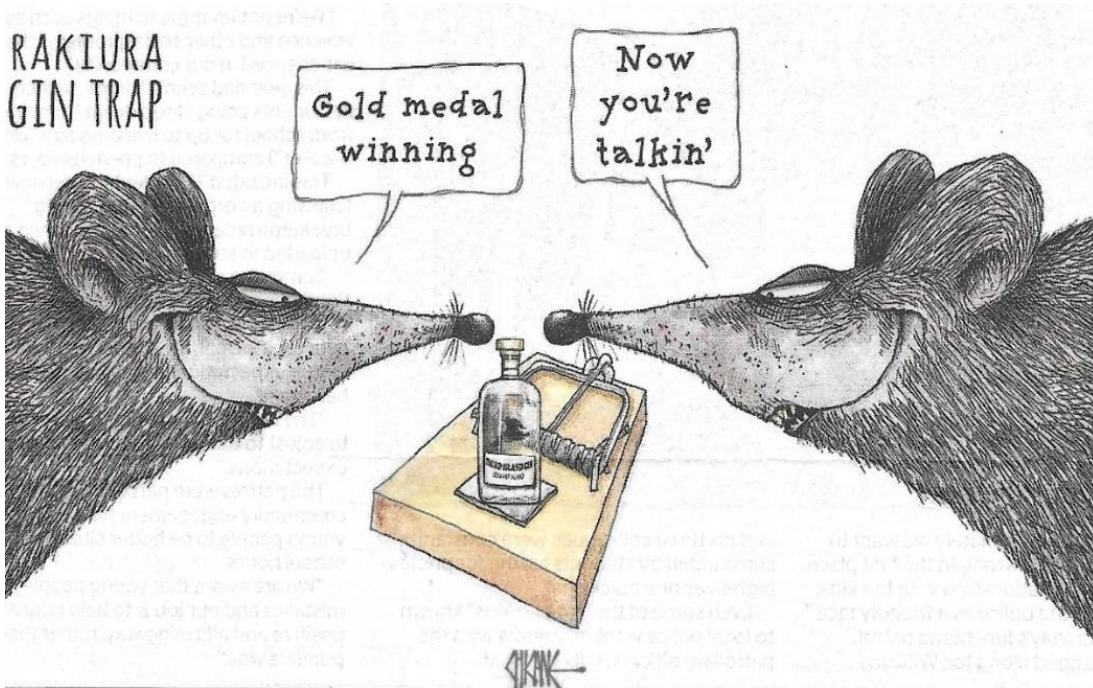
Ever wonder why those mature bucks are hard to find. Part of the answer is that quite simply you cannot get mature animals if you keep shooting the immature ones. The graph below is the first 1000 animals that John and Ray have aged by analysing their jawbones. The taking of bucks as opposed to does is very clear in that 2 – 8-year age grouping.





### New Island Industry

For those who like a drop [Third Island Gin](#) which in 2023 was awarded a Gold medal.



To anyone hunting on the Island this year – the very best of luck. And please – put in a hunter report after your trip. They are also very helpful way to communicate to the Trust managing the Hunter Huts.