



THE OWAHANGA OBSERVER

April 2026

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Culverts and Councils

A practical example of the cooperation between landowners and the regional council we mentioned last month that benefits both.

Horizons were interested in restoring fish passage in this stream which was impeded by an old culvert on private property. The original culvert was approaching its end of life, so Horizons approached the landowner and an agreement was reached.

Horizons designed, provided engineering support and financial assistance towards the new culvert with the addition of a separate fish pass (the lower of the two pipes).



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As you can see, it's a pretty substantial piece of engineering,

Given its size whales will once again be able to migrate up into the ranges should they so wish.

A small notice from our "small council", asking people to consider getting involved in the planning process for the next long term plan.

Councils have as much difficulty with people getting involved as anyone, but ignore these things at your peril as soon the district council may also be the regional one, so maybe consider what's important to you and stick a submission in.

Pest Monitoring program Some photos from the first lot of cameras



The messenger group will have regular updates on progress, tips and tricks etc plus “interesting” pictures sent out on an irregular basis. Also, the marker tape to show where the cameras are in case you lose them is now offered in green and red which are a bit easier to see.

Seems people are as keen to see what the cameras do as the animals are



To the right is an exceptionally photogenic bit of strap blowing in the wind. It does pay to check the camera setup now and then.

Cameras have other limitations such as only having a 12 to 15 metre detection range and not recording activity outside of that and, so it pays to get creative with siting them and to also consider alternative pieces of evidence.

Setting cameras near identified game trails, pig runs or goat holes is a good idea, it isn't cheating as it catches animals as they enter an area before they disperse thereby giving a more accurate count.



Sometimes pests leave evidence like this behind after passing through even if you have no photographic proof of them being there, and pictures like this are also helpful in building the picture.

The following pictures were taken with hand held thermal scanners and show what a camera can't capture, numbers across an area at one time. Counts like this are often done in pest control operations to determine densities of animals and as such would be extremely useful to us.



So, even if you haven't signed up yet or have had your monitor done already, if you have a thermal maybe go out for a few nights

take pictures and send them in with the rough location time and date that would be extremely helpful.



Of course, if you wanted to shoot some while you're out go right ahead, as long as they're on your land or you have permission to be there.

Round 3 will start on the week of the 24th of April give or take a few days and if you're interested but

haven't signed up yet or you want another go round just let us know.

Those who have already had cameras out will shortly be sent a link, so they can view the photographs taken on their properties, and we are starting to assemble a selection of best and most amusing shots which will be shared later with prizes awarded accordingly.

Its a good thing we aren't counting birds!



The **chew cards** are catching activity that the cameras aren't. That's adding to the picture of distribution for cats, possums rats etc, so although they are a bit messy to handle they are an important part of the picture.

These cards are from 4 mile bush. 17 cards were put out and all but 2 were chewed up. Some auto traps are lined up for there and the bushwalk which was worse.



Pongaroar Hunt

Easter weekend as always saw a great turnout with 307 entries and a lot of spectators. The new venue at the domain worked excellently and the committee should be congratulated.

The Catchment Collective sponsored two new class pest bag and Bird bag, and no one quite knew how they would be received.

In the end there were 29 entries and all the pest species named were represented. The bird bags were dominated by turkeys, so much so that there were insinuations the winner worked on a poultry farm.



We had an area assigned to display our pest bag catch, which attracted a lot of interest and quite a few questions about what the catchment was doing.

If anyone's considering it, stoats make terrible air fresheners.

Possums, arguably a major pest have their own category in the junior class so aren't in the pest bag, but 36 were entered by keen little hunters.

In the main competition, total numbers of animals weighed in were Deer: 58 red, fallow 48, Pigs.23, goats 32. Many more were shot but only the best were selected for entry, still it gives a rough indication of what's out there.



The PPCC sponsored class winners

HEAVIEST PEST BAG	BIRD BAG most heads
1 ST Bellamy Groombridge	1 st Angus Kjestrup
2 nd Willie Fontaine	2 nd Mark Baxter
3 rd Jake Ellanson	3 rd Lucy McKinstry

FYI we got three cats and 3 stoats plus a large number of hedgehogs or "land kina" as one lad called them, a lot of rats plus two mice.

Based on the interest shown and now there's a clear understanding of how this class will be advertised and operate in future, I predict it will be a major draw card next year.