



Predator free Havelock group Linton Brown, Liz Mathews and Sandra Currie hope the Havelock community will get behind their trapping initiative.

Let's rid Havelock of rats!

By Bill McElhinney

When Sandra Currie moved from Pelorus to Havelock, she noticed the absence of birdsong.

"There was a lot of birdsong where we used to live," Sandra says.

"Havelock was so quiet by comparison."

It didn't take Sandra long to find out why. Rats, big ones and lots of them, were decimating the local fauna, so Sandra decided to do something about it.

The result is the launch of a new community group, Havelock Bird Song- Waiata Manu, which aims to create a predator free Havelock.

"We want create a predator free

township in which our native species can flourish, so we all get to see and hear more native birds and bird song," Sandra says.

"We think the size and area of Havelock township makes this very achievable."

The group has set up a trap library, where Havelock residents can buy or borrow traps. The trappers are asked to record their catches, which will be entered into a NZ wide data base.

"Our first targeted predator will be rats," Sandra says.

"Chances are they are sneaking onto properties and most nights after you shut the door, big, fat rats come into our garden and feast on

any insects, seeds or birds they can find.

"When we become good at rat catching, we'll move on to other predator species such as possums, stoats, weasels and ferrets," Sandra says.

Eventually the group would like to have traps all along the estuary, in the marina and up the top of Lawrence Street hillside area.

"But we need to get very good at what we are doing and we need to get as much community support as we can," Sandra says.

Havelock Menz Shed are making 100 traps, with 35 ready to go, and Havelock Lions have got behind the project and donated

\$400 for traps.

"And if you don't want to handle dead rodents, we have people who can come and empty traps and re-set them for you," Sandra says.

The Havelock Birdsong committee is being supported by Havelock Vision 20/20, who will handle their administration.

They are also working with The Predator Free NZ 2050 group and Picton Dawn Chorus to share methods and results.

"We are starting small, but we hope to get a lot of local residents involved," Sandra says.

To get involved, contact sandra@pelorusvalley.co.nz or phone 027 229 2486.