

WILDERNESS MAGAZINE
JANUARY 2016 ISSUE Pg 9.

HERO DOG HELPS SAVE SANCTUARY

Orokonui Ecosanctuary has finally captured and killed a family of havoc-wreaking stoats, thanks in no small part to Macca, a stoat detection dog from the Bay of Islands.

Macca, a 20-month old fox terrier who arrived at the Dunedin-based sanctuary with handler Angela Newport, indicated stoats were present at the base of a large totara tree in the very middle of the reserve.

Staff then saw a stoat leaving from one of the entrances before hearing the growling noises of kits (babies) from within the den.

Three of the five entrances were blocked, with traps set in the other two. A female and her baby were caught in one of the traps and, since then, there's been no sign of life in the den.

"It is highly unlikely the kits would have survived alone for very long," said Orokonui conservation manager Elton Smith. "It would seem no adult males are present inside our fence."

But the sanctuary is taking no chances, with another stoat detection dog expected in the new year and the

trap network remaining inside the fence.

A stoat was first discovered inside the sanctuary fence in June last year and the mustelid was responsible for killing every one of Orokonui's 40 saddleback.

Macca is trained to detect mustelid scent and works with Newport mostly on protected islands in the north of the country.



Angela and Macca on their way to another mustelid-detection job