

What happens when you find a weta in your bathroom!

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Eligible for student prize

Prior to 2002 there was limited knowledge of the distribution of cave weta (family Rhabdophoridae) within the Wakatipu basin. In order to determine whether cave weta were living in the area, fifty four weta motels (artificial dwellings) were placed into selected locations/vegetation around the Wakatipu basin. The motels were placed in 2003 covering a variety of habitats within the basin and were monitored over a six year period. Overall, 45 of 54 motels (83%) had cave weta present at some time over the 6 year period. Three motels never recorded cave weta, one motel recorded cave weta once, a number were lost in landslips and one was destroyed in a fire. Our research shows that cave weta are widespread within the basin and that motels are an effective method for monitoring and sampling cave weta populations.

