

Pomona Island Charitable Trust



Annual Report

2014/15





Achievements 2014/15

- Juvenile kiwi pay a visit to Fiordland Kindergarten on their way to their new home on Pomona
- Pomona now home to 19 critically endangered Haast tokoeka
- Volunteers have collectively worked over 10,000 hours on Pomona and Rona Islands
- In 2014/15, over 792 hours worked by 44 different volunteers on 28 working days
- Rats reduced to extremely low numbers on Pomona
- Income in excess of \$15,200
- In-kind donations to the value of over \$36,000

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Introduction

The last year has been one of the quieter years for the Pomona Island Charitable Trust. The trap and bait station networks on Pomona are working well with rat numbers reduced to extremely low levels. In 2014/15 only 16 rats were trapped on the island compared with 373 the previous year. In the last three months of the current financial year a single rat was caught. The hard work of the Trust, its volunteers and contractors over the past two years is clearly paying off. The Trust now has a stable *modus operandi* on Pomona, with contractors servicing the bait station network and volunteers checking the traps.

The Trust has 172 trap sites and 179 bait stations deployed across the island. With so many devices in place, the number of trap checks by volunteers has been reduced resulting in less hours being worked by volunteers on Pomona. Furthermore, due to the nature of the work, the Trust made the decision to use contractors to service the bait station network

The lack of use of Rona Island as a kiwi crèche has also resulted in a reduction in volunteer hours. Following the deaths of seven critically endangered Haast kiwi chicks on Rona in early 2014, the decision was made by DOC staff to stop using the island as a crèche site. This is extremely disappointing for the Trust as it is not clear that the island was a contributing factor in the kiwis' demise as all of the chicks had had health issues prior to arriving on the island. However, DOC has indicated that the island will again be used as a kiwi crèche site as soon as some form of mouse control is in place on Rona. The opportunity for members of our community to have a personal encounter with a kiwi is extremely important to the Trust and we are working on plans to eradicate mice from Rona in 2015/6. With no kiwi chicks on Rona this year, the number of trap checks was reduced, again resulting in fewer volunteer hours for the year.

The Trust is grateful for the on-going support from its volunteers as well as from its financial supporters. Staff at DOC both in Te Anau and Haast continue to assist the Trust in its work to restore both Pomona and Rona Islands.

Organisation

A total of three Trust meetings were held during the 2014/15 year in June and September 2014 and January 2015. In addition, a meeting of the Trust Chair and Secretary with DOC staff from Te Anau and Haast was held in March 2015 to specifically discuss the need for mouse control on Rona before the island can continue to be used as a kiwi crèche.

The AGM was held in June 2014 at which John Whitehead was re-elected to the position of Chair, Viv Shaw to the position of Secretary and John Stevenson to the position of Treasurer. Chris Shaw, Neil Robertson and Harry Bull continued as Trustees. Due to ill health, Hunter Shaw resigned as a Trustee in June 2014. Hunter was involved in the Trust's work right from the start and became a Trustee in 2006. He played an active role in the deer eradication work, track

cutting and trap checking. David Fortune was appointed as a Trustee following Hunter's resignation. Alan Mark continues to be our Patron.

Lindsay Wilson has continued to work with the Trust as its DOC Advisory Trustee. The Trust has an excellent working relationship with DOC in both Southland and Haast. Individual staff provided the Trust with excellent advice on issues such as rat and mouse incursions and dealing with kiwi. The Trust has been employing the services of a local contractors to service the bait station network. This helps reduce the workload for volunteers and ensures the project is sustainable.

The Trust is registered as a charitable entity under the Charities Act 2005 (CC22629). This registration enables the Trust to be exempt from tax, which means that anyone donating money to the Trust can claim the tax back on their donations. The Trust files annual returns which are available for public viewing on the Charities Commission website.

Managing the Project

In 2014/15 the project management of the restoration work on Pomona and Rona Islands was undertaken on an entirely voluntary basis by Trust Secretary, Viv Shaw, with her company Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited donating an estimated \$21,000 of their time and resources to the Trust. Viv's workload has been slightly lower this year with fewer working bees and less data analysis. At the meeting in March 2015, DOC Haast agreed to contract Viv to undertake a scoping exercise for the control/eradication of mice on Rona.

Viv continues to drive the restoration work on Pomona and Rona Islands and the Trust would like to acknowledge the contribution she makes to help the Trust achieve its goals.

Funding

In the 2014/15 financial year the Trust received funding from the following sources:

Source	Purpose	Amount
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	\$711
Friends of Pomona subscriptions and donations	Trapping expenses	\$1,534
Department of Conservation	Kiwi work and quarantine signs	\$9,067
Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund	Radios	\$2,394
Interest	No specific purpose	\$1,534

The Trust is particularly grateful to the Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund for its donation allowing the Trust to purchase radios for volunteers to use on the islands. We also acknowledge the opportunity provided by publisher Random House to purchase copies of the book *Paradise Saved* at wholesale prices for on sale to our Friends of Pomona at the recommended retail price.

In addition to the direct financial support received by the Trust, a significant amount of in-kind support has been received. In-kind support is estimated to be to the value of over \$36,400 and the Trust is grateful to all organisations and individuals who have supported our work in this way.

Monitoring – Pests

Stoats - this year the Trust faced the challenge of a beech mast event, increasing the risk of stoats swimming across to Pomona. But with so many traps on the island, we were well prepared for the two invaders that did make it across to the island (Photo: Viv Shaw). Rona, fortunately managed to remain stoat-free. Stoat numbers opposite Pomona were the same as last year, whilst a small decrease in stoat numbers was recorded on the mainland opposite Rona (see Table 1).



The mainland trap line opposite Pomona continues to be serviced by the Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron and the Trust is grateful to Ross Forrester and Paul Waymouth for taking responsibility for checking the traps regularly.

Table 1: Stoat and rat trap data for 2014/15

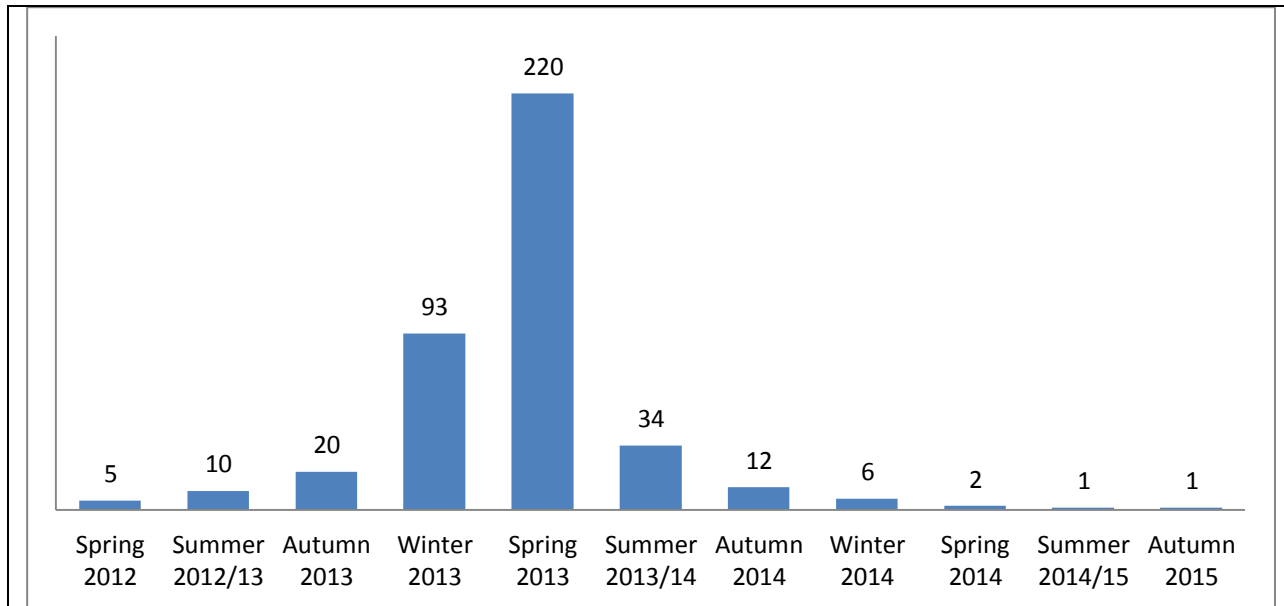
2014/15	Pomona	Rona	Pomona Mainland	Rona Mainland
No times traps checked	11*	5	6	5
Stoats caught	2	0	9	5
Rats caught	16	0	32	24
Mice caught	202	191	1	5

* Some partial trap checks were completed on Pomona as there were not always sufficient volunteers to complete a full trap check in a single day.

Rats - the Trust is extremely pleased with the progress made to keep rats under control on Pomona Island. Our volunteers and contractors have put in a huge amount of work to keep their numbers down with the result that, on average, we are now only catching one rat per trap check (see Figure 1). The level of bait take from our bait stations has also fallen - a further sign that rat numbers have dropped to very low levels on the island. We are hopeful that with the sustained effort Pomona can again become a rat-free sanctuary. In response to the beech mast event, DOC completed an aerial 1080 operation on the mainland opposite Pomona and Rona in winter 2014. The Rona and Pomona mainland trap lines were within the buffer zone between the 1080 operational area and the lake and both the number of rats and stoats caught on our trap lines remained quite high. Around the time of the 1080 operation, the quarantine signs on Pomona Island were forcibly removed. Thankfully DOC has paid for replacement signs to be erected on the island.

The Trust would like to acknowledge the support received from staff at DOC. Particular thanks go to Lindsay Wilson for his on-going confidence in the Trust's ability to restore Pomona and Rona Islands.

Figure 1: Rats trapped on Pomona Island by season (since January 2012)



Mice - mice are an on-going issue on both Pomona and Rona Islands. Although the bait station network on Pomona is targeting rats, it is having some impact on the mouse population. The Trust, however, is not actively seeking to control mice on Pomona at the present time. In contrast, the Trust is taking an active stance against the mice on Rona (Photo: Viv Shaw). Kiwi experts have made it clear to the Haast kiwi team at DOC and the Trust, that no more kiwi chicks should be placed on Rona until some form of mouse control is undertaken.



For this reason the DOC Haast team have provided the funding for the Trust's Secretary to undertake a scoping document to consider the options for mouse control/eradication on Rona. This document will help the Trust to obtain a better understanding of the impacts of mice, the options open to it to control/eradicate the mice from Rona and the costs of removing this pest species from the island. A final decision on the best option for dealing to the mice will be taken by the Trust in consultation with DOC staff and the Island Eradication Advisory Group - a set of experienced scientists who specialise in island eradication operations.

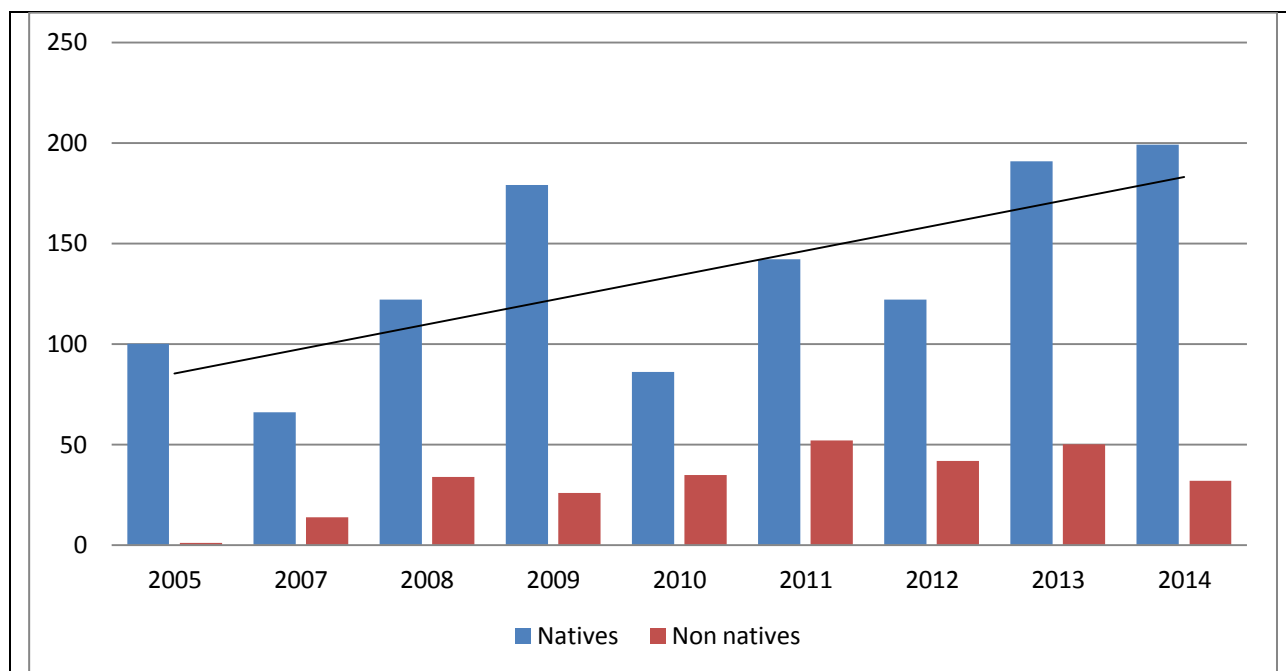


Monitoring - Birds

The Trust undertakes bird counts at baseline count stations on Pomona and Rona Islands once a year. In addition, seasonal counts are undertaken four times a year at 24 count stations on Pomona. The Trust is building up a good database of bird activity on Pomona. Our analysis shows that the quick response implemented by the Trust to the arrival of the rats means that any potential negative effects on the birdlife on Pomona have been averted. Figure 2 shows that native birds on Pomona continue to thrive. The most common native birds on Pomona are bellbirds, grey warblers, tomtits (Photo: Viv Shaw) and

rifleman. By comparison, on Rona the most common native birds are grey warblers, brown creepers, bellbirds and tomtits.

Figure 2: Native versus non-native birds on Pomona 2005 - 2014



Note: Data shown is from the baseline count stations on Pomona

Track Work

The Trust now has a network of nearly 28km of track on Pomona alone. About half of these tracks have been cut and the other half are flagged routes. During the 2014/15 year some progress was made to cut more of the flagged routes on the island. The Trust has however recognised that it may need assistance to cut the tracks and has been applying for funding for this important task.

Haast Kiwi (Tokoea)

Pomona Island - during 2014/15 a further four critically endangered Haast tokoea were transferred to Pomona. The island is now permanent home to 19 kiwi. A highlight of the past year was taking two kiwi into the Fiordland Kindergarten for the pre-schoolers to have their very own kiwi experience. The kiwi were caught on Centre Island and stopped off at the Kindergarten on their way to their new permanent home on Pomona (Photo: John Whitehead). As a taonga species, the kiwi were accompanied to the island by iwi from the Makaawhio and Oraka Aparima Runaka.

The transfer of kiwi to Pomona with the visit to the Fiordland Kindergarten enabled over 35 members of the Te Anau and Manapouri community to have their own personal kiwi experience.



Rona Island - in 2014/15, Rona was not used as a crèche for the critically endangered Haast tokoeka. Hopefully with mouse control in place (see above), Rona will again be used as a temporary home for kiwi chicks in 2016.

Volunteers

Between April 2014 and March 2015 the Trust organised 28 working days. A total of 44 different volunteers completed 792.5 hours work on pest monitoring on the islands and the adjacent mainland. This does not include the significant number of hours of work that go into the administration of the Trust and the time devoted by Trustees to meetings and the preparation of written documentation.

The number of working days and the hours put in on the islands by volunteers has been lower this year compared to the previous year. This is largely because the rat numbers on Pomona are now under control and there has been less work to do on Rona given the absence of kiwi chicks on the island. We thank all of our volunteers over the past year, but would like to acknowledge Hokonui Tramping Club members for their help with a trap check (Photo: Viv Shaw). The following individuals also deserve a special thanks for the number of working days they have completed on both Pomona and Rona Islands in 2014/15:



- ✿ Viv Shaw – 20 working days
- ✿ Chris Shaw – 15 working days
- ✿ John Whitehead – 14 working days
- ✿ Fay Edwards – 9 working days

The Trust would also like to acknowledge the following individual volunteers who have completed five days work: David Fortune, Ross Forrester and Paul Waymouth.

This year, the Trust reached a major milestone. Collectively volunteers have completed over 10,000 hours work on Pomona and Rona Islands.

Communications

Pomona Publicity – in 2014/15 the Trust's work featured in articles in publications such as the Southland Times and the Fiordland Advocate. The Trust's Chair showcased the work on Pomona and Rona at the annual Sanctuaries of New Zealand. The restoration of Pomona and Rona Islands was featured in the new book *Paradise Saved* along with other sanctuaries throughout New Zealand. The Trust also produced two newsletters during the year - in October 2014 and March 2015.



Radios - a grant from the Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund enabled the Trust to purchase UHF radios. The radios mean that volunteers on the islands can now communicate with each other more easily especially in the case of an emergency or in the event that a volunteer is running late for the boat transport home (Photo: Viv Shaw).

Website – Trustee Chris Shaw continued to maintain and update the website during 2014/5. Changes in the systems at our webhosting organisation prevent us from comparing our web traffic with previous years. The website is updated regularly and continues to receive favourable comments from visitors to the site.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Pomona Island Charitable Trust has had a quieter year on both Pomona and Rona. The main focus on Pomona has been servicing the trap and bait station networks on the island. The effort expended by volunteers and contractors has resulted in extremely low numbers of rats on Pomona. This benefits the native bird species present on the island. A major highlight of the year was being able to take two kiwi into the Fiordland Kindergarten. Activity on Rona has been significantly lower than in previous years given the absence of the kiwi chicks on the island. The Trust has plans in place to work towards eradicating the mice from Rona so that it can again be used as a kiwi crèche site.

Last but not least, thank you to everyone who continues to support our work. You give us the motivation to keep working hard to restore Pomona and Rona Islands for future generations.



Velvet Earthstar (Photo: Viv Shaw)

**Trustees of the
Pomona Island Charitable Trust**

June 2015

