

Pomona Island Charitable Trust



Annual Report

2016/17





Achievements 2016/17

- Trust celebrated 10 years of restoration work on Pomona and Rona Islands
- Proud recipient of the 2016 Environment Southland Achiever Award
- Mouse numbers on Rona controlled to very low levels, enabling Rona to be used again as a crèche site for the critically endangered Haast tokoeka
- All 15 of the Haast kiwi chicks hatched during the 2015/16 season spend time on Rona
- Vegetation plots on Pomona and Rona re-surveyed after ten years
- Rat numbers kept to manageable levels on Pomona following a significant beech mast event
- Robins seen in record numbers on Pomona
- In 2016/17, over 1223 hours worked by 49 different volunteers on 44 working days
- Income in excess of \$48,400
- In-kind donations to the value of over \$40,600

Pomona Island Charitable Trust

Annual Report 2016/17

Introduction

The Trust celebrated ten years of restoration of Pomona and Rona Islands in 2016. Over the past year, as in every other year, the Trust has had its successes and has also faced challenges. The Trust faced up to the challenge of controlling mice on Rona Island to very low levels, with the result that the island was again used as a kiwi crèche for 15 critically endangered Haast tokoeka. The effects of yet another beech mast were felt on both Pomona and the adjacent mainland. With rats at extremely high numbers on the mainland, re-invasion was inevitable. The Trust's network of traps and bait stations, however, stood up to the challenge and rat numbers on Pomona were significantly lower than during the previous beech mast. The birds have benefited from lower rat numbers following the beech mast, with record numbers of birds being recorded on both Pomona and Rona Islands. Re-surveying the vegetation plots on both islands after ten years of restoration activity was a further highlight.

The Trust's fundraising efforts in 2016/17 have paid off, as all of the funding applications submitted were successful. This means that the Trust is in a secure financial position to respond to future challenges on the island.

Having the Trust's work on Pomona and Rona recognised with an Environment Southland Environmental Achiever award was a highlight of the year, as was the celebratory event to acknowledge the commitment of our financial supporters and volunteers to the Trust's work.

The achievements of 2016/17 have been tinged with sadness at the tragic loss of our Treasurer, John Stevenson.

Organisation

A total of five Trust meetings were held during the 2016/17 year in April, June, July and October 2016 and February 2017.

The AGM was held in June 2016 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, David Fortune and Harry Bull continued as Trustees. Alan Mark continues to be our Patron. Lindsay Wilson has continued to work with the Trust as its DOC Advisory Trustee.

Sadly, the Trust's Treasurer, John Stevenson, died tragically in September 2016. John not only prepared the Trust's accounts but was a key player in all of the bird transfers to Pomona and Rona. The Treasurer's role has been taken on by David Fortune.

Over the course of the year the Trust has employed the services of local contractors to service the bait station networks on Pomona and Rona. Work to cut tracks on Pomona has also been undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor. This helps reduce the workload for volunteers and ensures the project is sustainable.

The Trust has maintained a good working relationship with DOC staff both in Te Anau and Haast. Volunteers are grateful for the opportunities they get to assist the DOC Haast tokoeka team to release kiwi and to change transmitters on the juvenile birds on Rona. During the 2016/17 financial year, the process to renew the Trust's management agreement with DOC was started with the aim of signing the new agreement in 2017.

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 Services website.

Managing the Project

In 2016/17 the project management of the restoration work on Pomona and Rona Islands was undertaken by Trust Secretary, Viv Shaw, largely on a voluntary basis. Viv, through her company Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited was contracted to provide project management for track cutting on Pomona. The grant from Kiwis for Kiwi included a project management component, the work for which was also undertaken by Viv. In addition to the contract work, Viv through Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited, has donated an estimated \$21,175 in time and resources to the Trust.

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 2016/17 financial year the Trust received funding from the following sources:

Source	Purpose	Amount
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	\$532
Friends of Pomona subscriptions and donations	Pest control/eradication	\$1,039
Department of Conservation (Haast)	Kiwi work	\$8,000
Department of Conservation (Community Partnership Fund)	Track cutting and protecting Pomona from beech mast threat	\$17,280
Lottery Grants Board	Track cutting	\$10,552
Kiwis for Kiwi	Protecting Pomona and Rona Islands for kiwi	\$10,000
Interest	No specific purpose	\$1,094

Over the past year, the Trust successfully applied for a number of grants. The Trust is grateful to Kiwis for Kiwi for supporting its project to protect Pomona and Rona Islands for Haast tokoeka. Funding was also received from the Lottery Grants Board and DOC's Community Partnership Fund to cut tracks on Pomona, making the island a safer working environment for volunteers. As the Trust continues the fight to keep Pomona Island rat-free, a DOC Community Partnership

grant has been awarded to assist with the servicing of the bait stations on the island in the coming year.

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 \$40,637 and the Trust is grateful to all organisations and individuals who have supported our work in this way.

Monitoring – Pests

Stoats - this year both Pomona and Rona remained stoat-free which was good for the birdlife on both islands (see Table 1). Stoat numbers on the mainland opposite both islands have remained at levels similar to those seen in previous years (Photo: Viv Shaw). However, the full effects of the beech mast have not yet been seen and the risk of a stoat incursion on both Pomona and Rona remains high.



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 2016/17

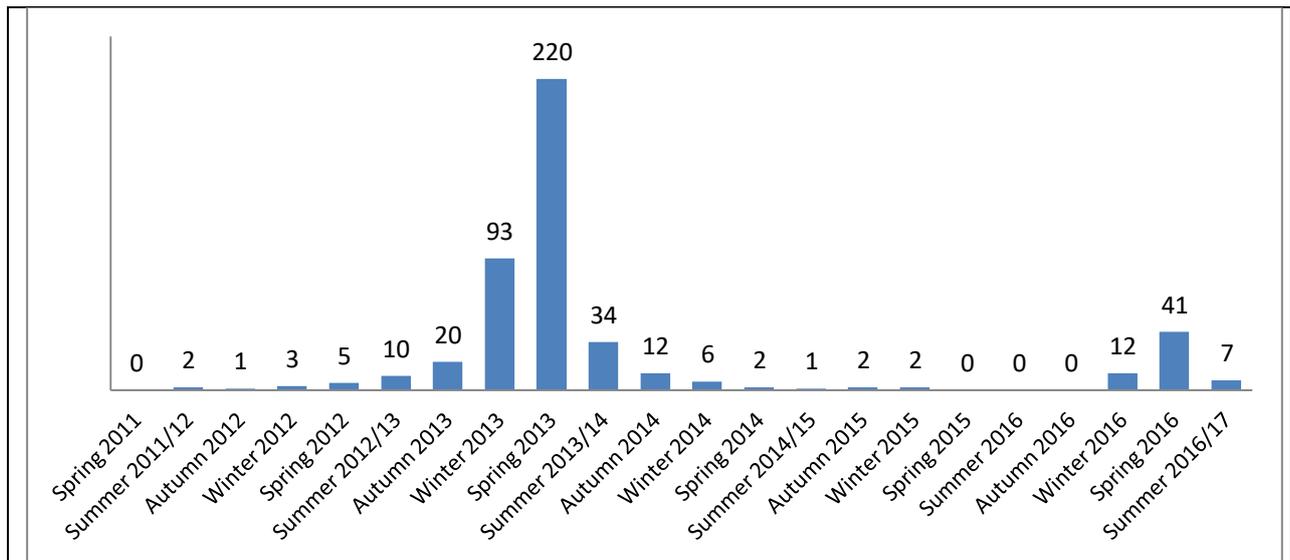
2016/17	Pomona	Rona	Pomona Mainland	Rona Mainland
No. times traps checked	13	6	5	7
Stoats caught	0	0	5	5
Rats caught	60	0	89	73
Mice caught	352	3	16	2

Rats - the full impact of the beech mast has been felt with a significant increase in the number of rats caught on the mainland opposite both islands. A total of 89 rats were trapped opposite Pomona compared with only 10 the previous year. DOC undertook an aerial 1080 operation in September 2016 on the mainland opposite both Pomona and Rona. Unfortunately for the Trust, the fall in rat numbers following the operation was short lived. The number of rats caught post-operation was higher than the number caught before the 1080 operation.

Given the high rat numbers on the mainland, it was inevitable that rats would re-invade Pomona. The deployment of an extensive bait station and trap network on the island has, however, shown its worth. As Figure 1 shows, an increase in the number of trap checks together with the combined trap and bait station network resulted in significantly fewer rats being caught in 2016/17 compared to the last beech mast event in 2012/13. It was during the 2012/13 event that the Trust implemented the full bait station and trap network.

There have been no rat incursions on Rona during the last year.

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



Mice - as reported in last year's annual report, mice on Rona have been a major focus for the Trust. The Kiwi Recovery Group had determined that Rona should not be used as a crèche site for the critically endangered Haast tokoeka unless mice are controlled to low levels. The implementation of an extensive bait station network in 2015/16 showed that it is possible to reduce mice to undetectable levels on the island. No mice were detected on Rona for over 360 consecutive days.



However, with the beech mast, the threat of a mouse incursion was very high. Therefore, following the advice of the Island Eradication Advisory Group, in November 2016 the Trust activated the bait station network on Rona. Throughout most of the 2016/17 year no mice were detected in the tracking tunnel network on the island. Unfortunately in January 2017 two mice were found in traps at two key landing spots on Rona. Mouse prints were found on four tracking cards in February. It is not possible to know whether the mice swam to the island or whether they arrived on a boat. However, by activating the bait station network, the Trust is confident it can keep mouse numbers at very low levels even during a significant beech mast event (Photo: Viv Shaw). Having controlled mice to low or undetectable levels, the Trust achieved its objective for Rona to again be used as a crèche site for the Haast tokoeka (more later).

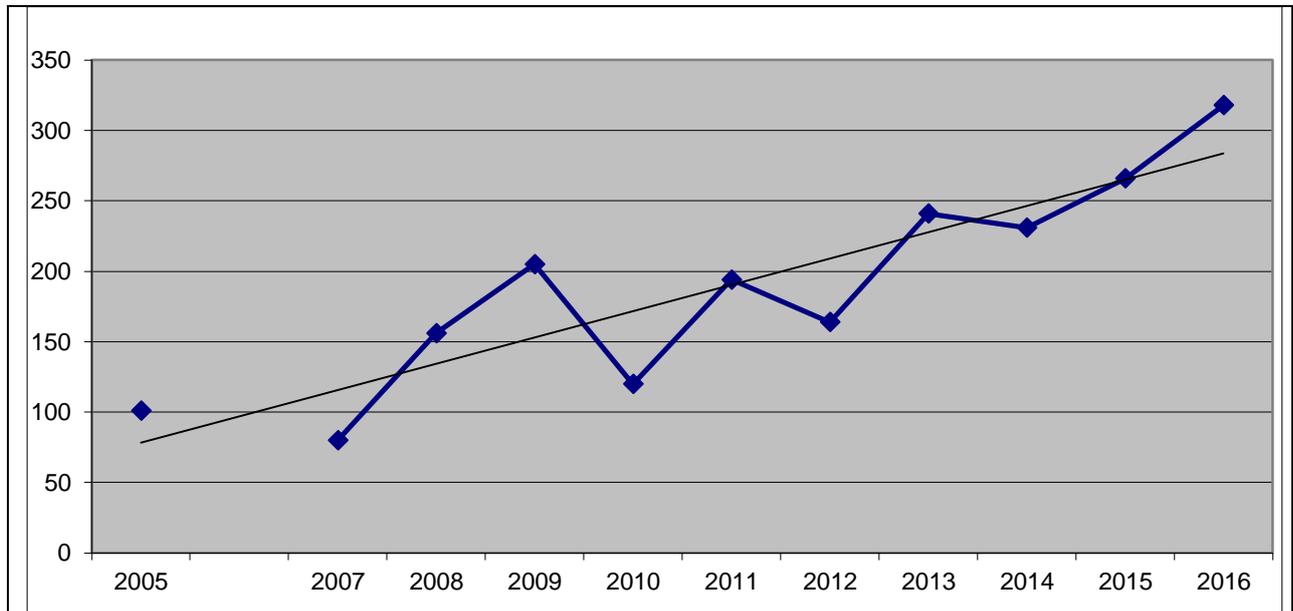
The Trust thanks Kiwis for Kiwi, the Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund and Gary Chisholm for their contribution towards funding the mouse control project on Rona.

Monitoring - Birds

The Trust undertakes bird counts at 10 baseline count stations on Pomona and four count stations on Rona Island once a year. Figure 2 shows that 2016 was a record bird count for the Trust on

Pomona with 318 birds seen or heard. Keeping rat numbers down during the beech mast has highly beneficial to our native birds.

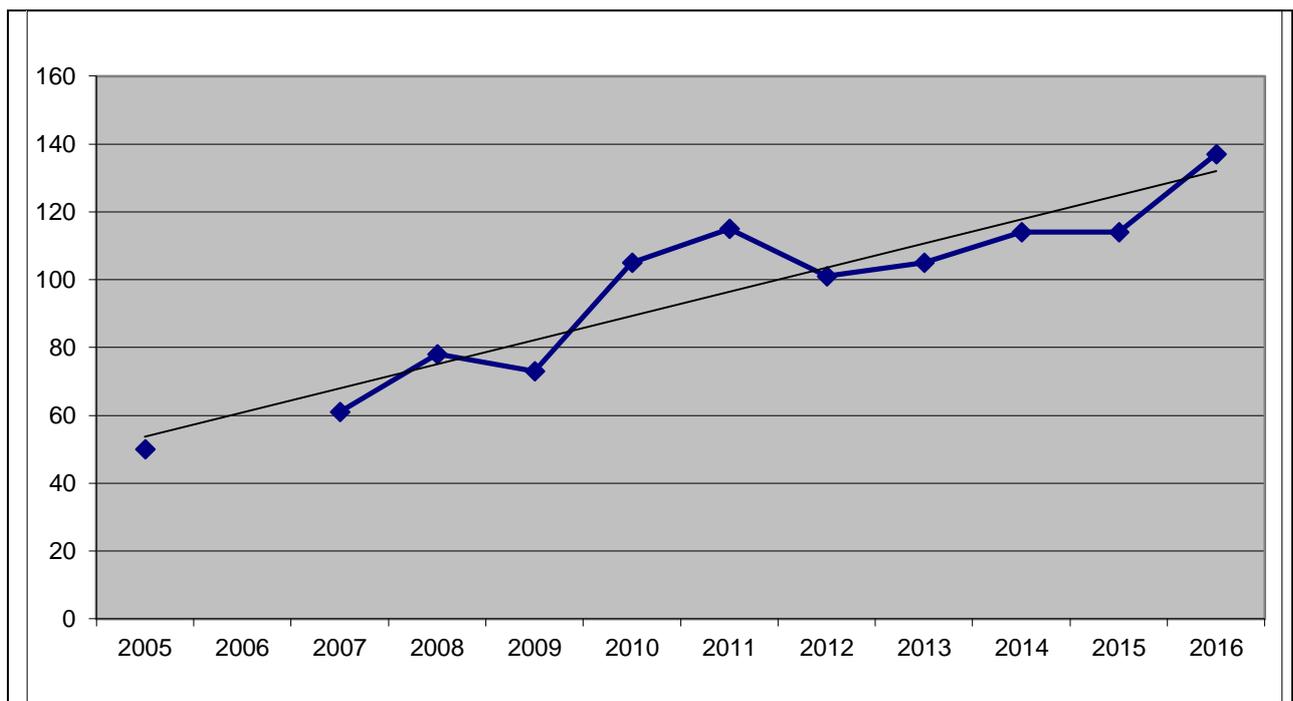
Figure 2: Abundance of birds at the ten baseline bird count stations on Pomona 2005 - 2016



Consistently, on Pomona, the most common birds are bellbird, grey warbler, tomtit and rifleman. Robins, which were released on Pomona in 2009 have taken time to build up, but in 2016 volunteers have reported seeing very high numbers of this inquisitive species.

Rona Island also recorded its best ever annual bird count in 2016 with 137 birds seen or heard at the four count stations on the island (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Abundance of birds at the baseline count stations on Rona 2005 - 2016



Haast tokoeka - following on from the Trust's successful mouse control project on Rona, DOC decided to use the island again as a crèche for the critically endangered Haast tokoeka. In May 2016, the first five kiwi were released on to Rona followed by further releases in November 2016 and January 2017. By the end of the 2016/17 year, all fifteen kiwi chicks that had successfully been hatched that season were on Rona Island (Photo: Viv Shaw).



In April 2016, DOC Haast sent a dog team to Pomona with the aim of determining whether the adult kiwi on the island had started breeding. Whilst no evidence of breeding was found, the kiwi were all in good condition.

Vegetation Surveys

In November 2016, the five permanent vegetation plots on Pomona and the two plot on Rona were re-surveyed. The vegetation plots were set up back in 2005 by the Trust's Patron Alan Mark, alongside DOC staff, with the intention of analysing the level of regeneration after ten years. The removal of the possums and deer from Pomona has made a significant difference to the vegetation on the island, especially the number of seedlings coming through. There is a lot of data to analyse, but the difference over ten years is very noticeable. The Trust would like to say a special thank you to George Ledgard and Sue Lake from DOC for leading the teams that re-surveyed the vegetation plots on the two island. We also acknowledge Trustee David Fortune who took responsibility for ensuring the survey took place, as well as the volunteers who assisted George and Sue with the work on the ground.

Health and Safety

In the ten years that the Trust has been restoring Pomona and Rona Islands, the health and safety of our volunteers has been paramount. With new legislation in place, the Trust undertook a thorough review of its health and safety procedures and has updated its Health and Safety plan in line with new guidelines from DOC for community conservation groups. The Trust acknowledges the work put into the plan by Trustees Viv and Chris Shaw.



A key focus of the Trust's commitment to health and safety has been to cut the tracks on Pomona Island. A grant from the DOC Community Partnership Fund across the current and previous financial year enabled the Trust to employ a local contractor, Huntsman Contracting, to cut 10km of track on Pomona. In 2016/17, a further grant was received from the Lottery Grants Board to cut the remaining five kilometres of track on the island. Once the tracks have been cut, volunteers have been marking them with orange triangles (Photo: Viv Shaw). Trust Chair, John Whitehead, has received accreditation from DOC to be able to clear minor windfalls as part of our on-going track maintenance programme.

Volunteers

Between April 2016 and March 2017 the Trust organised 44 working days. A total of 49 different volunteers completed 1223.5 hours work on pest monitoring on the islands and the adjacent mainland and track marking on Pomona. 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.



We would like to thank all of our volunteers over the past year and in particular those who support us year after year. In 2016/17 we have had a core of volunteers who deserve special acknowledgement for the number of working bees that they have completed on Pomona and Rona Islands and the adjacent mainland in 2016/17:

✻ Viv Shaw	25 working bees
✻ John Whitehead	22 working bees
✻ Chris Shaw	21 working bees
✻ Fay Edwards	20 working bees
✻ David Fortune	17 working bees
✻ Sharon Lake	14 working bees
✻ Liz Scott	6 working bees
✻ Paul Waymouth	5 working bees
✻ Ross Forrester	5 working bees
✻ Scott Simmons	5 working bees

Celebrating Ten Years of Restoration

The Pomona Island Charitable Trust was established in 2005, but started its restoration work on the islands in 2006. To mark the tenth anniversary of its conservation work on Pomona and Rona, the Trust held a celebratory event in August 2016. Financial supporters and regular volunteers joined Patron Alan Mark and Trustees for an evening to share stories from the last ten years.

It was fitting that in the year the Trust celebrated ten years of restoration activity on Pomona and Rona that it was the proud recipient of the 2016 Environmental Achiever award from Environment Southland (Photo: Southern Exposures Photography). Over the years the Trust has faced a number of challenges in keeping Pomona and Rona Islands predator-free and it is motivating for our supporters and volunteers to receive recognition for their dedication and hard work.



As part of the ten-year celebrations, the Trust teamed up with DOC during Conservation Week to host a photography workshop on Pomona Island. The resulting photographs were on display at the Te Anau Library and several of them were featured in the February 2017 edition of Pomona

Post (available on the Trust's website). The Trust wishes to thank Michelle Crouchley from DOC for organising the workshop and Graham Dainty for sharing his extensive knowledge of photography with participants.

Communications

Videos – during the course of the year two videos featuring the work of the Trust appeared on YouTube. As part of the judging process, Environment Southland recorded a short video about the Trust's recent activities on Pomona and Rona. In September 2016, the Morgan Foundation filmed a four-minute video on the Trust's island restoration which was also posted on YouTube. Both videos have helped raise the Trust's profile both locally and nationally.

Pomona Publicity – in 2016/17 the Trust's work featured in articles in publications such as the Southland Times, Advocate South, DOC's Behind the Scenes newsletter, Envirosouth, Environment Southland's newsletter and on the Meridian Energy website. The Trust also produced two newsletters during the year - in September 2016 and February 2017.

Website – Trustee Chris Shaw continued to maintain and update the website during 2016/17. Work has been started to completely revamp the website, a new version of which will be released later in 2017.

Conclusion

Overall 2016/17 has been a successful year for the Pomona Island Charitable Trust, tinged with sadness at the tragic loss of our Treasurer John Stevenson. Celebrating ten years of restoration on Pomona and Rona was a major milestone for the Trust. We thank all of our volunteers and financial supporters for your commitment to our goals and we look forward to your support for the next ten years!

**Trustees of the
Pomona Island Charitable Trust**

May 2017

