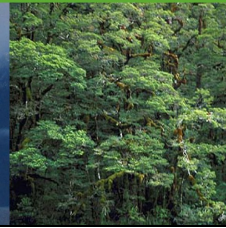
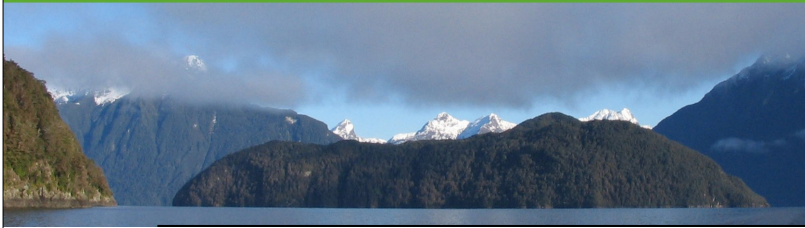


Pomona Post



March 2015



Pomona kiwi population boost

December 2014 saw the kiwi population on Pomona Island boosted to 19 birds. Three juvenile critically endangered Haast tokoeka now call Pomona their permanent home, joining the 16 adult birds already there. "Releasing kiwi onto Pomona is always a special experience" said Trust Chair, John Whitehead, "and it was an honour to have members of the Oraka Aparima Runaka and the West Coast Runaka o Makaawhio present to welcome the Haast tokoeka to their new home".



Sonia Rahiti from the Oraka Aparima Runaka about to release a juvenile Haast tokoeka on Pomona Island (Photo: Viv Shaw)

But before the kiwi can be transferred to their new home they have to be found and caught on the crèche island where they have been living. With the help of DOC staff, John and Trust Secretary, Viv Shaw, tracked into the birds on Centre Island and successfully removed them from their daytime burrows.

Moving kiwi from a crèche island to their



Trust Secretary, Viv Shaw, and a kiwi visit Fiordland Kindergarten (Photo: John Whitehead)

permanent home provides an opportunity for the Trust to do a little bit of kiwi advocacy. This time it was the turn of the Fiordland Kindergarten to play host to the Haast tokoeka. Prior to the visit, Claire Maley-Shaw and her team had spent time talking to the kiddies about kiwi and their behaviours. "When the birds arrived, you could hear a pin drop" said Claire. "The wee ones were so calm and well behaved around the kiwi and asked lots of really good questions".

Fiordland Kindergarten has won a number of awards for its Nature Discovery programme in which the kids spend time outdoors getting to know nature. "It was a great opportunity with this kiwi transfer to bring nature into the classroom" said Viv Shaw.

To add to the excitement, DOC Haast Team Leader, Jacinda Amey, brought her trained kiwi dog to the kindy. "Poppy, took all of the fuss and attention from

the kids in her stride" said Jacinda.

Kiwi monitoring

A lot of people ask us whether the adult kiwi on Pomona have started breeding yet. "There are about ten birds on the island that are of breeding age" explains Jacinda Amey, the Haast Tokoeka Team Leader. "So we would anticipate that some chicks may have hatched". DOC staff plan to undertake a survey on Pomona in the next couple of years to determine how many kiwi pairs are breeding and how many chicks have been born on the island.

Meanwhile on Rona, there are concerns that mice are providing competition for food, so DOC kiwi experts have made the decision not to use the island this year as a crèche site for Haast tokoeka chicks. "Hopefully Rona will be used for



Trained kiwi dog, Poppy, laps up the attention from the kindy kids (Photo: Viv Shaw)

juvenile kiwi later this year” said Viv Shaw. In the meantime, the Trust is working with DOC to put a plan together to control mouse numbers on Rona so that the island can again be used as a crèche for Haast tokoeka chicks.

Rats away

We have been continuing to check both our trap and bait station network on Pomona on a regular basis over the last five months and have only caught two rats. “This is a phenomenal result” said Trust Secretary, Viv Shaw. “We can now dare to hope that we can once again eradicate rats from Pomona”. The Trust is however aware that there could be some trap-shy rats on the island. “With this in mind”, continued Viv “we are planning to run our network of tracking tunnels to see if we pick up any sign of rats”.



John Whitehead servicing a coastal bait station (Photo: Viv Shaw)

In an attempt to make sure that there is complete coverage of bait stations and traps on Pomona, we have also beefed up our network of coastal bait stations. “Given the terrain on the island” explained John, “it is not possible to reach all potential bait station locations on foot”.

With the help of skipper Roddy MacRae, a team of three volunteers skirted the

southern and eastern flanks of Pomona looking for safe places to site new bait stations. “Fortunately the weather was good as some of the locations were interesting enough” said John, putting his climbing skills to good use.

Pomona calling

With so many challenging tracks on Pomona Island, the Trust decided that it was time to invest in radios so that volunteers could communicate with each other in the event of an emergency. “With the health and safety of our volunteers being a high priority for us” said Viv, “we applied to the Meridian Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund to purchase six UHF radios”.

Our application was successful and all volunteer groups working on Pomona and Rona Islands now have a means of communicating with each other. “We have done a number of test transmissions on Pomona” said Trustee Chris Shaw, “and we’ve been really impressed with the way the radios are working given the rugged terrain”.

Stoat swims

Unfortunately during our last trap check, we did pick up one stoat. “We do expect

the odd stoat to swim across to Pomona from time to time” explained Trust Chair, John Whitehead. “But now with such an extensive trap network on the island, we should be able to trap them before they can do any damage”.



A robin inspecting the dead stoat (Photo: Viv Shaw)

When the dead stoat was removed from the trap, a robin came to make sure that this nasty predator really had met a timely death. “At one stage the robin was standing on the stoat pecking madly at it” laughed Viv. “It was as if it was trying to get its own back!”

Robins have been a real success story on Pomona with volunteers reporting sightings of these inquisitive birds at almost every single trap site.



Volunteers Patrick Docherty and Catie Pai Helm try out our new radios on Pomona (Photos: Viv Shaw)