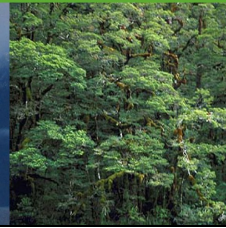
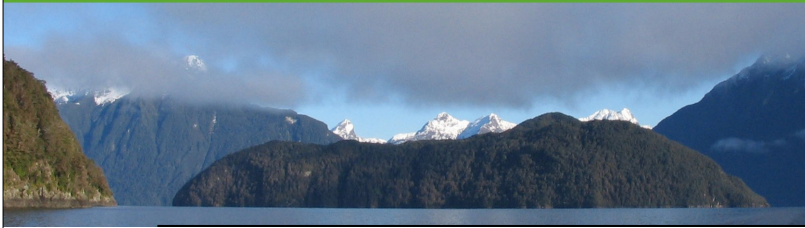


Pomona Post



October 2014



10,000 hour milestone achieved

Volunteers for the Pomona Island Charitable Trust have achieved a major milestone. Collectively they have now put in more than 10,000 hours of good, old fashioned hard graft on Pomona and Rona Islands. Thank you to everyone over the last nine years for your commitment to our vision to create an accessible island sanctuary where people can see, hear and learn about the flora and fauna native to Fiordland.

"Things have not always gone the way we wanted" says Trust Chair, John Whitehead, "but reaching the 10,000 hour mark shows us that we have the ongoing support of the community to continue our work on Pomona and Rona".

And still counting

If you want to contribute to the next 10,000 hours on the island and you haven't yet got your name on our volunteer email list, please send your contact details to pomona.island@ihug.co.nz and we will ensure you receive information on all future working bees. Also, if you are a member of a group or organisation and would like to arrange a day out for your members to help us check our traps contact our Secretary Viv Shaw at the above email address. We have tracks and routes to cater for a range of abilities. One such group that recently took up this challenge was the Hokonui Tramping Club.

Hokonui helpers

In October, the Trust welcomed 10 members of the Hokonui Tramping Club to Pomona. Armed with all their trap checking kit, club members headed off in pairs to check the 172 trap sites across the island. For most club members it was their first time on Pomona, so they did not know what to expect. Seasoned trampler Annabel summed up her day by noting that Pomona was "an assault course that lasted seven hours!" She was laughing when she said this and certainly appeared to have had a good time. "We hope that all of the Hokonui helpers enjoyed their day on Pomona",

said John Whitehead "and that they'll come back again soon".

And the result

Not only were we delighted to have a tramping club help us with the trap check, but the results of that check were really encouraging. Only two rats were trapped across the whole island in October. During the previous trap check only one rat was caught bringing the total rat tally on Pomona since August to three. This compares extremely favourably with the same timeframe last year when a whopping 213 rats were trapped. "This shows that our hard work is paying off"



Peter, Rose and Annabel from the Hokonui Tramping Club comparing notes and relaxing at the end of a day on Pomona (Photo: Viv Shaw)

said Viv Shaw. "Given that we are in the midst of a beech mast event, three rats in three months is a great result"

Making tracks

Most of the Trust's focus on Pomona is on checking traps and servicing bait stations, with the aim of eradicating the rats from the island again. However, many of the traps and bait stations are on flagged routes making servicing the network more challenging for volunteers.



Trust Chair, John Whitehead, cutting tracks on Pomona (Photo: Viv Shaw)

With this in mind, John Whitehead, along with other experienced chainsaw operators, has started cutting tracks. "The Trust did apply to the new DOC Partnerships Fund for financial assistance to employ a contractor to cut the tracks" explained Viv, "but unfortunately we were not successful". At approx. 300m of track cut by one person on a single day, this will take time. "We are, though, committed to undertaking this important task as the health and safety of our volunteers is of great importance to us" continued Viv.

Track cutting opens up new vistas

Whilst the main aim of cutting the tracks is to make things quicker and safer for the volunteers, the activity is having a



View of Hurricane Passage from the "D" line (Photo: Chris Shaw)

very attractive side effect. New view points have opened up on some of the trap lines. One freshly cut section of the "A" line now provides an open vista over the Holmwood Islands. And a short side track from the "D" line leads volunteers to a small bluff with superb views along Hurricane Passage.



View of Holmwood Islands from the "A" line (Photo: Viv Shaw)

"We hope that volunteers servicing these lines will take a short break from their work to enjoy these viewpoints" said Viv Shaw.

Rona update

The update on Rona reported in the last edition of Pomona Post made for some grim reading. However, we are pleased to say that things on the island are now looking much better and the future for

Rona is much brighter. You may remember that, during our routine trap check in January, Trustee Chris Shaw found a dead rat in a motel. We sent the rat away for DNA testing and the result came back that it was a male Norway rat. "This confirmed our suspicions" said Chris, and "highlights the need for boaties to be careful if they visit Rona or Pomona Islands. They need to check their boat for any stowaways before they land."

Whilst it is not a pleasant experience finding a rat on Rona, it was a relief that it was a male Norway rat. It reduced the risk of rats becoming established on the island. "Needless to say we are very pleased to report that we have found no further rats on Rona" said John Whitehead.

The news on the kiwis is that Rona Island is unlikely to have been the cause of their deaths. DOC has undertaken a thorough review of the Haast tokoeka programme from egg lifts right through to placing chicks on crèche islands like Rona. For a range of reasons, the chicks that were taken to Rona earlier this year were not as healthy as in previous years. This affected their behaviour and their ability to fend for themselves and thus

survive on the island. The Trust had input into the review and is committed to working closely with DOC to ensure that Rona can still be used as a crèche island for the critically endangered Haast tokoeka.

Mouse control on Rona

Mice and kiwi both feed on invertebrates. So part of the Trust's on-going commitment to Rona is to implement some mouse control on the island to reduce the competition for valuable food supplies. "If there is no mouse control on Rona, DOC staff have indicated to us that they are unlikely to use Rona as a kiwi crèche this coming season" said Viv Shaw. We did apply for funding both from the DOC partnerships fund and Kiwis for Kiwi to help finance this work, but unfortunately our applications were not successful.

"Our plan is to put a bait station network in place to reduce mouse numbers to manageable levels" explained Viv. The Trust is in discussions with DOC about ways to fund this important work. If you would be interested in sponsoring a bait station line on Rona please contact Viv



Neil Hodges on Rona with a kiwi chick
(Photo: Viv Shaw)

either by phone on 03 249 7112 or by email at pomona.island@ihug.co.nz.

"Having kiwi chicks on Rona has given a large number of people in our community the opportunity to have a personal interaction with our national icon" said Viv "and we are very keen to see that continue".

Trustee news

At our recent AGM, long standing Trustee Hunter Shaw announced his resignation from the Trust. Ill-health and other commitments meant that Hunter was no longer able to dedicate the necessary time to the Trust. Hunter has been involved with the work on Pomona since the Trust's inception. Early on, Hunter was a regular volunteer helping with track cutting, trap checks and with the deer pen on the island. Hunter has been a valued member of the Trust who continues to be passionate about conservation in Fiordland. We wish you well Hunter.

Following Hunter's resignation, a new Trustee was appointed. We welcome David Fortune to the Trust. Over the past year David has been a very active volunteer on Pomona and Rona. We will profile David in our next edition of Pomona Post.

Congratulations are also extended to our Chair, John Whitehead, on his re-appointment to the Southland Conservation Board for a further three years.

Pomona Personalities

This edition of Pomona Post sees the start of a new series of "Pomona personalities" featuring the flora and fauna that makes the island such a special place. Everyone is familiar with the more common bird and flora species, so we start this series with the lesser-known, shy stinkhorn, *Aseroe rubra*.

Stinkhorn Facts

The stinkhorn is one of many species of fungi found on Pomona. Whilst it looks like a flower and is very colourful, we wouldn't advise the men out there to be giving one to their girlfriends or wives. The stinkhorn lives up to its name! Whilst it is highly attractive to flies, it is quite repulsive to humans. The flies are attracted to the meaty colour in the centre of the fungus as well as by the smell of rotten meat that the stinkhorn emits. The stinkhorn produces fruiting bodies that look like soft white eggs. These "eggs" swell in moist conditions, splitting to release their spores thus creating more fungi. Next time you are wandering around Pomona, keep your eye out for this attractive fungus. Just don't get too close unless you like the smell of rotting meat! (Source: Dawson & Lucas, 2000).



Stinkhorn on Pomona Island (Photo: Viv Shaw)