

**Pomona Island
Charitable Trust**



**Annual Report
2019/2020**

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Significant Events 2019/2020

The after-effects of the mega-mast event 2018/2019

Kiwi breed on Pomona

Robin translocated to Rona are breeding

Elusive rat on Rona

Camera monitoring networks set up on Pomona and Rona

Meridian PowerUp fund provides 50 A24's self-setting traps

Elusive stoat on Pomona tracked by stoat dog

Kiwi monitoring project continues by Jane Tansell

Rona used as creche for kiwis

DOC community fund used to kea-proof traps

Tieke continue to breed on Rona

Further Tieke translocation postponed in August due to poor weather on Breaksea Island and the presence of a rat on Rona

Mouse incursion on Rona in January controlled with bait stations

Bird-call counts down on Pomona

New radios purchased as part of DOCCF grant

Introduction

The Pomona Island Charitable Trust has had a remarkable 12 months, with many highs and lows.

The Trust has had to cope with the after-effects of the mega-mast event 2018/2019, together with no access to either Pomona or Rona Islands due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have also recorded many successes, such as robins being established on Rona Island, establishing cameras monitoring networks on both islands, and continued financial support from DOC Community Fund, Kiwis for Kiwi and the Meridian Power Up Fund and Friends of Pomona.

Our highlight has been evidence that Haast Tokoeka are breeding on Pomona.

Our core group of volunteers have put in extra effort to try to keep on top of the continuing rat explosion on Pomona, and we will be trying to restore the normally low -levels of rats on Pomona post-Covid.

The Trust has had two changes in personnel, with Trustees Lynley King and David Fortune resigning during the year.

Organisation

A total of 4 Trust meetings were held in the 2019/2020 year. Trust meetings were held in June 2019, August 2019, December 2019 and January 2020. The AGM was held on June 26th 2019. John Whitehead was re-elected as Chair, Viv Shaw was re-elected as secretary and David Fortune was re-elected as treasurer. Chris Shaw, Neil Robertson, Lynley King and Harry Bull continued as Trustees and Alan Mark continues to be our Patron.

Lynley King resigned as a Trustee in February 2020.

David Fortune resigned as Treasurer in March 2020 and was succeeded by Neil Robertson.

The make-up of the Trust at 31st March 2020 was therefore:

Neil Robertson	Treasurer
Viv Shaw	Secretary
Chris Shaw	Trustee
Harry Bull	Trustee
John Whitehead	Chair



***Ruru seen during daylight hours on Pomona
(Photo: Paul King)***

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 2019/2020 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 kiwi breeding project management funded by Kiwis for Kiwi .

Over the course of the year the Trust has also employed the services of local contractors to service the bait station networks on Pomona and Rona, to catch kiwi and fit transmitters.

Relationship with DOC

A number of DOC staff in Te Anau have assisted the Trust over the past year.

A Technical Advisory Group was set up with DOC and Trustees in October to advise on a Pomona Island stoat incursion. Subsequently, stoat-dog handler Ange Newport and her dog Macca spent 5 days on Pomona Island. They confirmed the presence of a stoat. Tony Preston (Biodiversity, Te Anau) is currently our DOC contact.

DOC staff must be thanked in assisting with the Robin transfer to Rona Island.

Funding

We are really grateful to the DOC Community Fund, Kiwis for Kiwi and the Meridian Power Up Fund and the Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation for their financial support as well as to our Friends of Pomona.

In the 2019/2020 financial year the Trust received funding from the following sources:

Source of funding	Purpose	Amount
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	701
Friends of Pomona subscriptions and donations	Pest control/eradication	3964
Meridian Power Up Fund (A24s)	Purchase of A24s	13200
Department of Conservation, Haast	Kiwi work	8000
Department of Conservation (Community Partnership Fund)	Trap upgrade, radios, trailcams and accessories	16925
Leslie Hutchins Conservation Foundation	Tieke translocation Rona	6930 outstanding from Tieke transfer
Kiwis for Kiwi	Kiwi breeding	5200
Interest	No specific purpose	2046

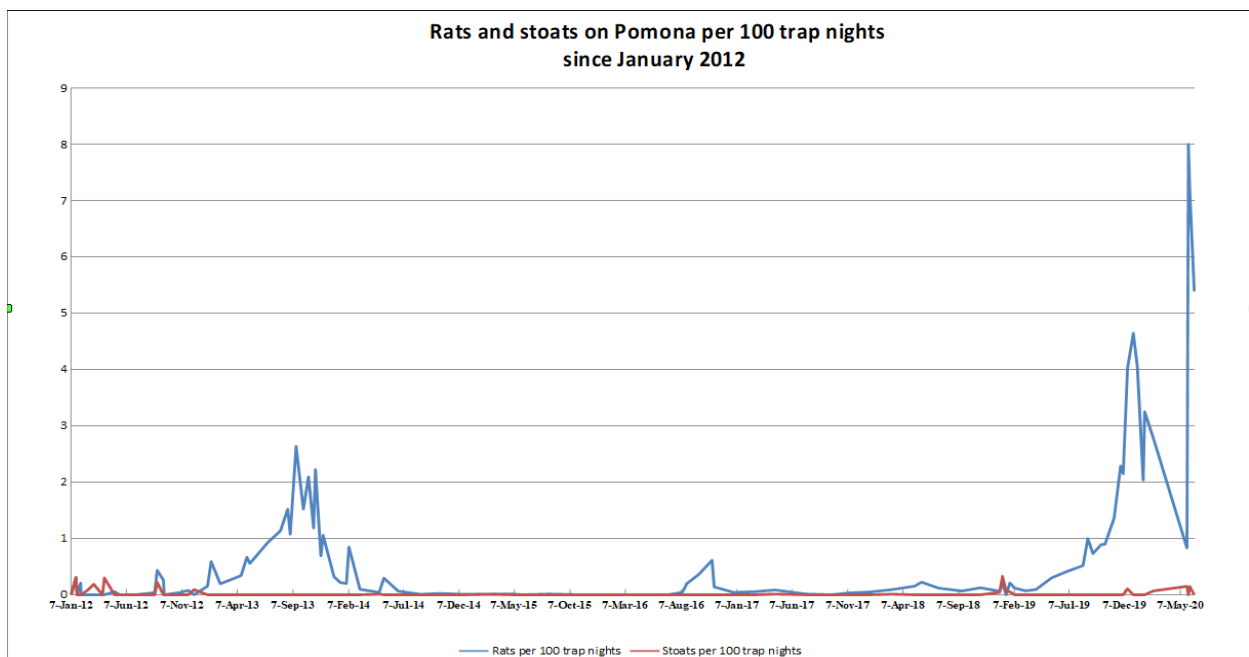
Donations

The Trust has received significant donations from Neil Robertson (\$2000) and Nicky Cobb (\$1000), which have enabled us to purchase cameras for monitoring purposes.

Predator control Pomona

Rats

35 trips to the island have been completed since March 2019, to do pest control and monitoring, kiwi monitoring and track maintenance. This year, Pomona has experienced its worst rat plague ever. Rats have been filling the traps almost as quickly as we can empty them. Volunteers have reported seeing live rats on the island. Rat numbers, according to trap-night data (Graph below) have been increasing since winter 2019.



Trap checks will recommence when lockdown ends, and we can safely return to conservation work.

The Trust has tried to reduce the rat plague in the following ways:

- installation of a total of 100 A24 self-setting traps
- application to use Brodifacoum in bait stations and traps. This was approved in November 2019 and has been extended to September this year (extension due to covid restrictions for 3 months). Brodifacoum has been deployed in bait stations and traps across the island since last Summer
- increased use of cameras for monitoring
- sought advice from pest control experts in DOC through a Technical Advisory Group who met in October 2020

Stoats

Following a stoat incursion on Pomona during the summer of 2018/19, a stoat has intermittently appeared on our cameras and stoat prints have been seen on some beaches. In October DOC stoat-dog handler Ange Newport and her dog Macca spent five full days on the island looking for the elusive stoat. Macca did pick up one set of stoat scents, but no stoat was actually found. The scent picked up suggests that a stoat was living on Pomona during the summer.



Sam Gibson of Goodnature helping install a new A24 trap on Pomona

(photo Lynley King)



Ange and Macca the stoat dog on their tour of duty on Pomona. (Photo: Viv Shaw)

Predator control Rona

26 trips have been completed to Rona since March 2019, to undertake pest control and monitoring, kiwi work and bird monitoring, as well as translocation work.

Rats

A single rat was detected on Rona in August 2019 and rat footprints have been seen intermittently on tracking cards. Cameras were installed in the spring of 2019 to attempt to track the rat, and extra traps were deployed. With so much natural food available, it proved hard to attract the rat to the existing traps, or the 15 extra traps which were placed during Summer 2019/2020.

The rat has not been seen on a camera since summer 2020. With luck, it has been killed by the poison laid, or has died of old age.

Mice

Mouse footprints were detected on tracking cards in February 2020. Brodifacoum was deployed across the island, to suppress this mouse incursion.



Two stoats trapped on the mainland (Photo: Lynley King)

Mainland traps

Predators on the mainland to the north and west of Rona were controlled by the 1080

drop in the Iris Burn area. Rats and mustelids are still a threat to the island, and moderate numbers continue to be caught.

Haast Tokoeka Pomona

A highlight of the year has been the confirmation that kiwi have bred on Pomona Island. Eight Kiwi have been monitored on Pomona island since 2018, the main aim being to determine whether the Haast tokoeka on Pomona are breeding. The first season's monitoring had shown that kiwi in the study were incubating eggs but that none had been successfully hatched. The study was therefore continued for a second year, with additional kiwi recruited.

A network of 14 cameras was placed across Pomona in early 2019 to detect rats and stoats. The cameras also captured photos of kiwi. Photos of three much smaller kiwi than those being monitored have been seen, indicating that the kiwi have bred.

This work was largely undertaken by Viv Shaw, with assistance from Trustees and volunteers. Jane Tansell of DOC assisted with hands-on kiwi work. The Trust acknowledges the financial support for the project from DOC Haast, Kiwis for Kiwi, the Meridian Power-Up Community Fund.



Volunteer Paul King installing extra traps on Rona (Photo: Lynley King)

Rona

Rona has continued to act as a creche and staging post for Haast Tokoeka, either on their way to Haast or other sanctuaries such as Coal Island. Trust members and volunteers have been involved in releases, catching and medical checks for the small number of kiwis on Rona.



Haast Tokoeka (photo: Lynley King)

Tieke

Tieke have been noted in 21 of the 26 trips to Rona since March 2019, and observational evidence indicates that there are good numbers of Jack birds present, and therefore Tieke continue to establish themselves on Rona. The planned translocation of a further 16 birds from Breaksea Island did not go ahead in August 2019 due to poor weather on the West Coast.

Robins

Jenny Ricketts from DOC transferred 16 robins from Anchor Island to Rona Island in May 2019 with John Whitehead organising the release. These robins have since started to breed, as juvenile birds without bands have been spotted regularly in the past 6 months.

Monitoring Cameras

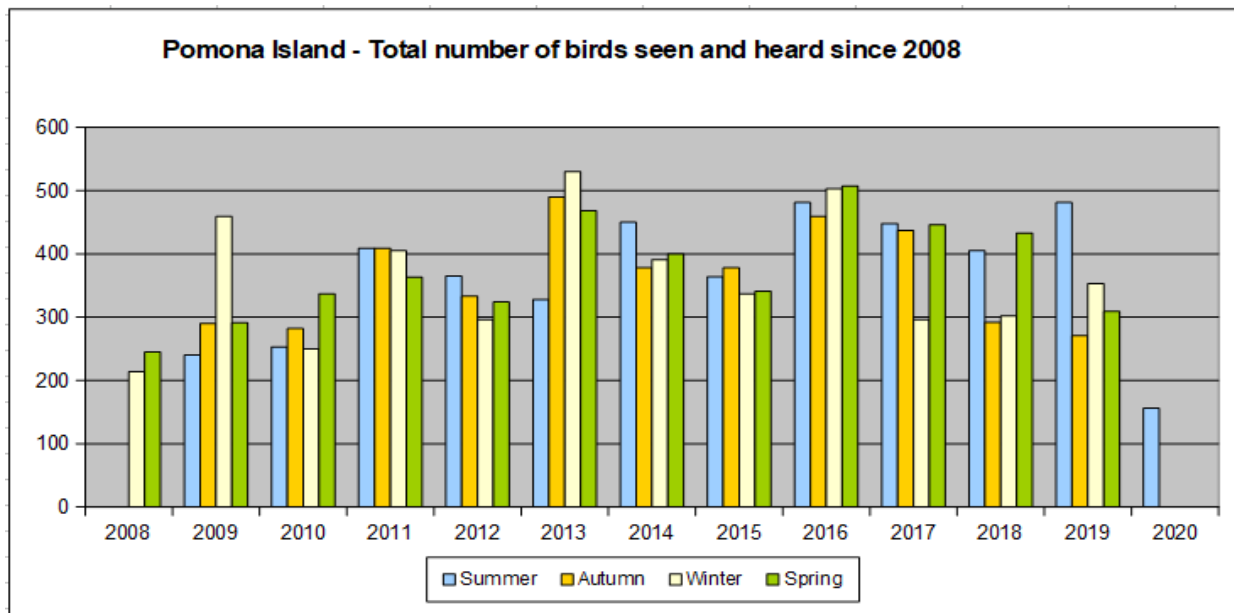
A network of 14 trailcam cameras, on loan from DOC Haast, was set up on Pomona in January 2019 to help monitor pest numbers. This network has been valuable in tracking the rise of rat numbers and help in detecting whether stoats are still present on the island. Funds from the DOCCF and generous donations have enabled the Trust to establish our own camera monitoring networks on both Rona and Pomona.



Camera set-up in the bush with custom-built stand and lure (Photo: Lynley King)

Bird counts

It appears that the beech mast event and subsequent explosion in rat numbers, combined with a stoat incursion in 2019, have significantly reduced bird numbers on Pomona. More data is required, our Autumn count had to be postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions.



Vegetation plots. A draft report on the 2016 remeasurement of vegetation on Pomona has been completed by David Fortune, and has been reviewed by George Ledgard (DOC Te Anau).

Health and safety

The purchase of 8 new UHF radios have improved communications for our Trustees and volunteers when doing fieldwork. These were purchased as part of a DOCCF grant.

Trap Upgrade

Part of our current DOC Community Fund has allowed us to start a major trap upgrade program, to kea-proof our stoat traps. We have purchased hardware and John Whitehead has been building some new traps for the upgrade.

Volunteers

Our loyal volunteers have completed a total of 1711 hours on Pomona and Rona since March 2019. This represents a total of 252 person-days and 59 individual trips to the islands. Viv and Chris Shaw, and David Fortune must be thanked for running several trips to Rona using their own boats to service the traps, tracking cards and cameras on Rona and to empty the mainland traps North and West of Rona. The Trust also thanks the Invercargill Trailer Yacht Squadron for servicing the trap network on the mainland to the north of Pomona Island.



Volunteers on Pomona. (Photo: Lynley King)

Communications

Pomona publicity

The exciting news that kiwi are breeding on Pomona was released in November 2019.

Conclusion

In Conservation, we are always hopefully looking to the future. Our main aims in the coming year are to restore Pomona to its former (nearly) pest-free status. We also hope to rebuild the Trust after this years resignations, and to increase our volunteer base.

Trustees of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust June 2020

