

Pomona Post



Kia ora Volunteers and 'Friends of Pomona'. Here is the latest edition of Pomona Post. Enjoy.

See you on the next trap check!



View from the A line over to the Beehive



NOTES FROM TWO SMALL ISLANDS

Pomona

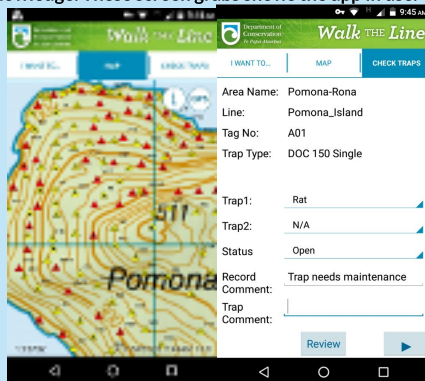
Rona

News brief



Walk THE Line

Trustees and volunteers are now using the trapping app "Walk the Line" on their phones to gather information as they empty the traps. As the trapper "walks the line", they are reminded by a "ping" that they are close to a trap (or monitoring camera / bait station / A24 trap). This works by matching the actual GPS location with the GPS locations of all of our traps in the database. The trapper can then easily enter information such as the pest killed, bait used, any maintenance on the trap required, etc. All data collected is then uploaded to DOC's Animal Pests Trapping national database, which is used to store and analyse the data. In this way, we can contribute to the fund of conservation knowledge. These screen grabs shows the app in use.



Thanks to Gerard Hill for helping to set up the database.

After months of hard work undertaken by our volunteer team since lockdown the rat numbers are down..... Ka pai.

Rat totals from the last 4 trap checks

15th Dec =12, 9th Jan =5, 13th Feb =22, 17th Mar=5

Stoat news.. 2 stoats were caught in the latest trap check on 17th Mar. The last camera sighting was the 19th Feb. so we are constantly vigilant. As well the latest Mainland trap check (13th Feb) by the Invercargill Yacht Squadron, out of 72 traps only 1 stoat was caught. Once again awesome work Yacht Squadron

Interestingly NO mice have been seen on cameras or caught in traps in the last 4 trap checks. The food chain in action.....

Also important to note under the heading 'activities undertaken': on the last 3 trap checks a cherry slice, lemon loaf and a chocolate cake have been eaten with zest. Recipes can be supplied on request.

NEW traps have been installed around the V- line on Pomona. Creating a new trapping line called the P-line. One of the recent stoat catches was in new trap P9. A big thank you to our Chairman John for the recycling of wood from old traps and constructing these 10 new traps. The Trust wanted to put new traps in this area as it has been identified as part of the North/West corner 'Hotspot' of rats captures on the 13th Feb).

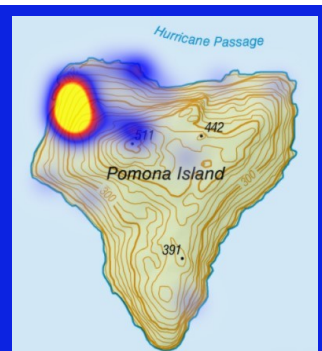


P02 in place and John bringing up the next trap.

Volunteers have been carrying out the 'border' trap checks on the Mainland over the summer to keep the island of Rona safe. The 18th of Feb trap check totals were 5 stoats and 8 rats out of 51 traps.

Monitoring on Rona with the cameras and tracking cards show NO rodents big or small and NO stoats. Therefore the Island maintains its predator and pest free status. However just like managing Covid, on-going vigilance is required.

Trust Secretary Paul King carrying out a Rona trap check this Summer by kayak.



Heat Map of rat captures on Pomona.

SPYING IN THE BUSH WITH SPYPOINT CAMERAS

The network of cameras on Pomona have not only been invaluable for pest monitoring but have proved to be a useful tool to monitor robin numbers. Due to the mega mast rat plague the poor old robin population on Pomona took a real hit.

Camera data (12 hr night period) since lockdown showed NO robins until one seen on the 16/08/20. The month of January (2021) 21 photos were taken and 11 photos in the first week of February and March 35 photos taken.

During recent trap checks the 'small bird with a big voice' is once again making its presence known. So ka pai little fellow.



Robin on the lure at A16



Our very own Christmas Day Robin checking out the lure at T10.

Current Trustees of the

Pomona Island Charitable Trust

John WhiteheadChairperson
Paul KingSecretary
David Fortune Treasurer
Liz ScottTrustee
Gerard Hill.....Trustee
Hannah Edmonds.....Trustee
Harry BullTrustee
Professor Sir Alan Mark..... Patron

VIPP STANDS FOR VERY IMPORTANT POMONA PERSON OR PEOPLE.

This edition of Pomona Post features a group of people who have been involved with the conservation work of the islands right from the beginning.....

The Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron (STYS)

Way back in 2006, Geoff Wells, a passionate yachtie who loved Lake Manapouri and NZ birds, persuaded the STYS to get on board and set up trapping lines on the mainland in Hurricane Passage across from Pomona. The Yacht Squadron approached the Pomona Trust about setting up and adopting a stoat trapping line. 15 years later this great team of yachties are still servicing what is now 70 traps on the mainland and 20 at Stockyard Cove (South of Pomona Is)

Looking back through trip reports by Geoff gives quite an indication of all the work the Squadron members have done over the years..... 20th Nov 2008, 'There are still 2 old Fenn traps which need to be replaced by DOC 150's'

14th March 2009, 'Geoff Wells & 6 members of the STYS went to check stoat traps & cut tracks'

16th April 2009, Geoff (thinking about succession planning) writes 'Ross & Steph Forrester are now trained

up to service the mainland trap line & are now able to provide a good back-up to Geoff.

12 years later with Geoff sadly passing away in 2013, Ross in his 25ft trailer sailer

'Country Boy' & Paul Waymouth with his boat 'Phaedra' & other members of the STYS

are continuing to service 'Geoff's Line'.

Ross acknowledges that the STYS is very good about paying for the meat, eggs and replacement equipment. They recently stumped up money for new traps at Stockyard Cove, replacing the early traps that Geoff set up.

A trip report 11th July 2010 Geoff writes 'we have established a new stoat trap line at Stockyard Cove and are catching quite a few stoats. Last round caught a completely white one.'

In the early years Geoff & the STYS were so keen to reduce pests they headed out to check traps 10 times in 2009.

Geoff writes August 2010, 'Viv had to advise me to reduce the trap checking frequency to 3 monthly until further notice in view of the very low number of pests been caught'. However Geoff, Ross & Paul were all so keen that records show that they still went out every month for the rest of the year & Geoff had 2 trips in December.

Trip reports have observations like..... 'Great weekend on the lake. Robins seen on the mainland'..... 'Rat numbers have dived on the mainland which is good'..... 'Geoff is noticing more bird life'..... 3 falcon seen, one landed on the mast of the boat'



Photo above at Stockyard Cove with Paul Waymouth on deck with very a high lake.

Top right photo shows Country boy in Hurricane Passage high lake levels and the photo to the right has Country Boy in the same spot low lake level

Photos By Ross Forrester



Ross & Paul's biggest difficulty in doing the traps is getting the right weather window of 3 days and high lake levels cause problems accessing and anchors snagging on logs. However, logs and Fiordland weather hasn't put off these hardy yachties. Ross, just like Geoff, thinks to the future and the 3 Grandchildren join him and Steph on board the 'Country Boy' to do the traps. Paul's friend Gianni's grandchildren are also keen. They sleep on the boat gently rocked by the wavelets and listen to the hoot of the Ruru. Thank you Yacht Squadron for your AWESOME EFFORT over the years.

To date pest totals from the 70 Mainland traps on Hurricane Passage....

596 Rats

148 Stoats

1 Weasel

POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

This edition of Pomona Posts 'Plant Hotspot' features one of the largest trees on Pomona and is one of 4 different species of totara.

Podocarpus.laetum: Hall's totara

This very fine giant of a tree can be seen when walking to check one of our new traps (P10). Up high on the old V line. The bait station seen in the photo has since been relocated.

Totara is common throughout the Nth & Sth Islands, occurring from lowland to montane habitats. Totara are members of the Podocarp family, which includes the other emergent trees of the forest: rimu, kahikatea, matai and miro.



For Maori totara is a rakau rangatira - 'a chiefly tree'. This is Pomona's 'chiefly tree' being sized up by Paul.



One of our volunteers out tramping this summer spotted this trap up the Rockburn. Trappers in that part of the country take Kea proofing your traps seriously.



Bark of Podocarpus.laetum.

The name Podocarpus literally means 'foot fruit' from Greek pados (foot) & karpos (fruit) which refers to the fleshy red fruit that sit underneath the seed. That fleshy Podocarp rimu fruit Kakapo devour.

The word Totara is likely a reference to the spiky leaves. Tara in Maori & throughout Polynesia refers to spikes & thorns & spiny things. Totara is a word used across the Pacific to refer to the porcupine fish.

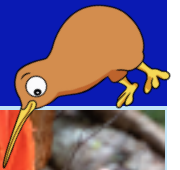
In NZ the word 'totara' is found in other spiky things - the puffer fish koputotara, & the prickly shrub patotara (Leucopogon fraseri).

To read about Totara in NZ there are 2 very good books to refer to. Robert Vennell's excellent book 'The Meaning of Trees' and 'Totara. A Natural and Cultural History' by Philip Sampson.



Kiwi Corner

Haast Tokoeka Release



Heath & Jane early morning tracking
photo by Douglas Thorne

A day or two in the 'Life of a Haast Tokoeka'

The day had arrived for our Rona kiwi. Time to head home. So on Saturday the 7th Nov catching the 'dawn chorus' at 6 am volunteers Simon Marwick and Douglas Thorne joined DOC Kiwi Rangers Heath, Jane and Dennis and Kiwi Conservation dog Si to track and catch 4 kiwis. A morning of following faint beeps on the TR4 kiwi tracker and Si's nose, sneaking up in crackly crown fern resulted in the birds caught and transferred to their pastel green 'Kiwis for Kiwis' boxes. Once safely back across the lake Heath, Dennis and the 4 kiwis, then took a 367 km road trip to Haast



Dennis & a 'caught' kiwi
photo by Douglas Thorne



Kiwi ranger Jane & Si
photo by Douglas Thorne

Meanwhile Trust Secretary Paul & Volunteer Lynley King had driven over to Haast to await the birds arrival and to take part in the 'release ceremony'



Simon carrying out an important task photo by D. T.

By ten that night down at the DOC workshop in Haast the kiwis had arrived and DOC Senior Kiwi Ranger Inge Bolt was demonstrating to rangers Stacey & Hannah on the hydration and care into the kiwis well being. By midnight the birds were settled and the DOC team could get to bed.

Sunday morning down at the Heartland hotel DOC and Te Runanga o Makaawhio had invited the local community to be included in a powhiri to welcome the young kiwi back to the Haast Sanctuary. The birds were blessed with their names and much aroha was shown for these taonga.



Finally for all kiwis involved people and boxes were loaded up on the jet boats for trips up the Arawhata and Waiatoto rivers to the kiwi release sites in the Sanctuary.



Senior Kiwi ranger Inge & helper bringing in the first kiwi.

All four kiwis about to be blessed with their names.



In the Haast Sanctuary loading up for the Waiatoto river journey.

Once at the release sites, the kiwis in their boxes had the final carry and 'pass up the box' to a level shady patch in the forest.



Thank-you DOC.



Ranger Hannah is ready to release this shy and wary, mountain-loving kiwi.

Haast tokoeka with their brown-grey plumage have a distinctive reddish tinge which can be seen in this photo.



Hannah & helper opening the door to the 'Sanctuary'.

To make their release less stressful the kiwis are placed inside another box, this time with a door. After 5 min of quiet time the door gets opened, humans sneak away and the kiwi either stays put until nightfall or sneaks away to explore the big wide world.