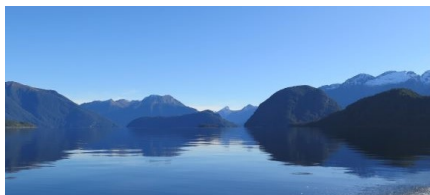


Pomona Post



A spectacular day on Lake Manapouri

Kia ora Volunteers and 'Friends of Pomona'.

This is your Newsletter, which means that the Editor (Hawkeye) welcomes articles, photos, and comments relevant to the life of the Pomona Island Trust. Hawkeye will cast a beady eye over any items submitted.

Please submit items to pomona.rona@gmail.com.

See you on the next trap check!

News brief

At the Trust AGM on the 16th of August, two new trustees were elected. Gerard Hill and Hannah Edmonds will bring a wealth of expertise in conservation to the trust.

Both new trustees have worked for DOC in the Biodiversity team, Te Anau.



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



The new Automatic Lure Dispenser on site at C05



Kiwi checking out the ALD by trap C05

NOTES FROM TWO SMALL ISLANDS

Pomona

Volunteers have been very busy emptying traps, filling up bait stations, servicing the Meridian A24's and sharing yummy cake at the end of the day. There is more on Pomona rats later on in the newsletter.

Trustee David and his boat 'Falcon' were deployed with a crew to service the coastal bait stations around the island. A thank-you to David and his boat as both are invaluable to Pomona & Rona conservation work.

The Invercargill Yacht Squadron crew of Bruce & Lois Conway, Paul Waymouth, Ross Forrester and granddaughter Amelie did the trap check along Hurricane Passage in calm weather. Results from this trap check was: 2 Mice, 10 Rats, 2 Stoats and 1 Weasel.....This is the first time a weasel has been recorded on the Mainland North of Pomona. Again a BIG thank-you to the sailing crew for doing the mahi.



Rona

Trustees and volunteers have been out to Rona checking tracking tunnels, cameras and traps. From camera data the 'sole' Rona rat was last seen on the 26th July. Hopefully this is the last we see of it, as the bait station network was serviced with poison on the 29th August to eliminate our recent mice incursion. So far recent camera data haven't shown any mice or the rat since this date.

The mainland and beehive traps have also been checked and even a small spot of track work was completed.

Our translocated robins (2019) have been busy nesting and raising young as fledgling birds were seen with their parents on the last trap check.

Photo below showing 'Duck in a Hole' taken by Simon Marwick by bait station number 370 on Rona.



SPYING IN THE BUSH WITH SPYPOINT CAMERAS

The Trust is currently trialing an Automatic Lure Dispenser (ALD) at one of our camera locations on Pomona Island.

The ALD has an electric motor and timer which pumps out a small amount of mayonnaise every 24 hours.

This is intended to attract any pests in the vicinity.

The camera data will enable us to estimate more accurately the number of pests in the area. Kiwis are also attracted to the lure, as seen in the photo.

We also have cameras pointed at three traps which have been specially baited with salmon lures and stoat bedding.

This is to try to catch the remaining few stoats which we think are still on the island, as two stoats were seen on cameras during September.

We now have a very effective camera network on Pomona, with 19 active cameras.

VIPP

VIPP stands for.....

Very Important Pomona Person.

This column features a person involved in some way with the conservation work of the islands.. This edition of Pomona Post features.....

Reg Calder



There is nothing quite like the rumble of Reg and his boat 'Adventurer 1' coming across Manapouri at the end of a days trapping. Reg & his partner Jo Wilson are in their 24th season being the owner/operators of Adventure Cruises Manapouri. The work restoring our 2 small islands over 15 years just wouldn't have happened without the water taxi transport and support of Reg&Jo.

As Trust Chair John says 'Reg is a very integral part of the organisation'.

But did you know Reg

- grew & supplied Jersey Bennie seed spuds for Nichols for many years.
- restores vintage tractors(14) back to their original.
- enjoys mountain biking especially Percy Saddle.
- a Reg Calder quote 'Life is where it takes you' so life has taken Reg from farming(21 yrs) then to setting up and running Adventure kayaking in Doubtful Sound (17yrs) and now feeding out to 50 chooks.
- but he still has time to make hay while the sun shines.

AND according to our skipper 'Every day is a Good day'.

POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

This edition of the Pomona Post 'Plant Hotspot' has been chosen by volunteer trapper and trustee Liz Scott. As Liz is familiar with the B line traps she has spotted a tiny orchid flowering by trap number 9. She photographed it in 2019 and has seen it again this year.

So if volunteers are out on the island look out for these tiny spider orchids, with B09 being the hotspot



Spider orchid *Corybas acuminatus* in flower by trap B09. Photos by Liz Scott.

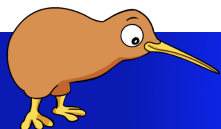
Pomona and Rona islands have a rich orchid flora featuring many species.

Corybas acuminatus commonly called the spider orchid grow on the damp shaded forest floor of NZ. They have a small heart-shaped leaf with the flower displaying four prominent antennae-like wires giving them an alien insect like appearance hence their name. Flowers from September to December across NZ.

Scientists have been investigating why spider orchids in NZ have tiny fungus gnats that seem to be attracted by the mushroom smell of the orchid flowers. This distinct odour helps them fool insects (fungus gnats) who normally lay their eggs on mushrooms on which the gnat larvae can feed and develop. This is a rare NZ example of a specialised pollinator- flower relationship. Apparently humans can't smell the orchid's mushroom fragrance but those tiny gnats can.



Haast Kiwi ranger Hannah Morris at work on Rona.



KIWI CORNER



Pomona Trust was well represented with a 6 person team at this year's National Kiwi Hui held in Queenstown (17,18 Sept).

At the Hui our team listened to wide range of presentations, sang a waitata 'Kiwi Nguturoa' and observed a brief appearance by the Minister of Conservation. As well we networked with other conservation minded folk, enjoyed excellent meals and presented our best smiles for the Hui group photo.

'Know your Enemy - stoats as beautiful animals and difficult pests' was an excellent presentation by Prof Carolyn(Kim) King, Waikato University. She basically explained the reasons why stoats are so difficult to catch.....because of their life cycle.

The Haast Tokoeka, survival, monitoring & discovery presentation by Heath and Jane our Kiwi rangers from Haast featured both Pomona & Rona as important places in Kiwi conservation. Our Chair John in a 5 minute talk showcased the work done by all our volunteers over the years and 'Enabling a new future' was an aspirational presentation by Tom Agnew ZIP Operations Coordinator. After listening to Inge Bolt from Haast DOC give a presentation on Rowi kiwi interactions with goodnature A24 traps & recommendations for their use in a kiwi habitat, the next trap check on Pomona had our volunteers moving our A24's up the tree to a metre. We now hope those rats and stoats have a love of tree climbing to stick their heads into a A24.

It was just a great 2 days and a big thank you to DOC & Kiwis for Kiwis for organising and providing the funding for volunteers to attend.

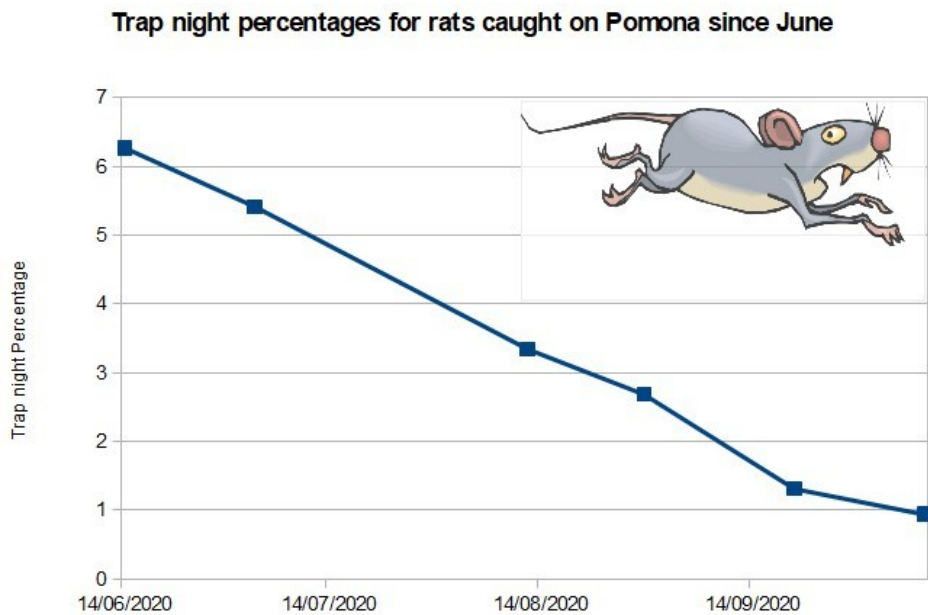
As well as attending the Hui our volunteers have helped out with 2 health checks on Rona with the Haast kiwi team. The birds are doing really well and four birds very soon will be making their way back to the Haast Kiwi Sanctuary to catch up with the whanau.



Ranger Jane Tansell and volunteer Fay on a foggy morning out on the lake kiwi tracking.

Pomona Rats

The team has been busy fighting the rat plague on Pomona Island since lockdown ended. We were able to resume our trapping effort at the end of May, and have completed 11 trap checks since then. We have recently reached the milestone of trapping 1000 rats since lockdown. As we have also been filling the bait stations (and hopefully poisoning a lot more rats), it is clear how many rats were on the island at the peak of the plague last Summer - several thousands! Numbers are now dropping. This graph shows some numbers.....

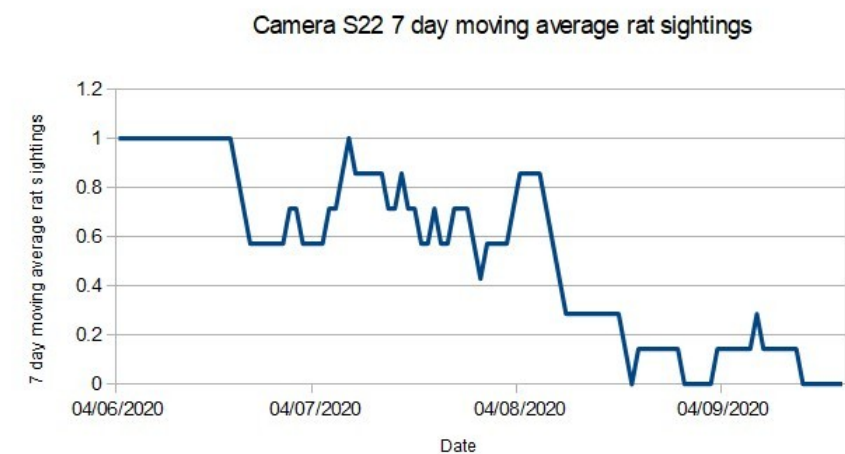


"Trap Night Percentage" indicates the percentage of traps which caught a rat in any one night.

We are down to less than 1%. As there are 180 traps, we are now averaging around 2 rats per night.



Camera monitoring data is also encouraging, with some cameras going for days without seeing a rat. For example, this graph shows that in June, at least one rat was seen every night (index of 1) at this camera. Recently, the index approached zero (no rats seen for several nights).



These encouraging results would not have been possible without our team of volunteers.

Special thanks goes to Fay, who has organised nearly all of the trapping work recently.



RAT number 1,000 !!

Chairman John celebrating our trapping efforts in reducing Pomona pests.

