

Pomona Island Charitable Trust Annual Report 2020/2021



Significant Events 2020/2021

Rat numbers are now under control on Pomona Island after the mega-mast event of 2018-19

Volunteers have made a significant effort with trapping and poisoning to reduce pest numbers

Covid-19 restrictions stopped work on the islands for 3 months in Autumn 2020

Viv Shaw, Chris Shaw and Neil Robertson resigned from the Trust in June 2020

Progress has been made on trap upgrade project funded by a DOC Community Fund grant

Camera monitoring networks have been established and maintained on Pomona and Rona

Rona is free of mice after poison application in August 2020

New Pomona Facebook page set up

Pomona website completely renewed, including an updated logo

Trustees and volunteers attended the National Kiwi hui in Queenstown in September 2020

Paul and Lynley King attend a Haast Tokoeka release at Haast in November 2020

Automatic lure dispenser trialled on Pomona Island

PLBs purchased for volunteer use

Gary Chisholm setting up remote detection system for trap triggers on Pomona



Introduction

This Annual report records the activities of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust over the financial year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

This year, the Pomona Island Charitable Trust has spent most of its time and energy in dealing with massive rat numbers on Pomona Island, following the 2018/2019 mega-mast event. We have worked with DOC to plan and implement a response using Brodifacoum and intensive trapping, and now have the rat numbers down to low levels. This has involved many volunteers from the Te Anau basin and represents over 1000 hours volunteer time. We have run 27 trips to the islands over the past 12 months, including Pomona, Rona and the mainland areas opposite Rona. The Southland Yacht Squadron continues to service traps on the mainland opposite Pomona. We were unable to carry out trap checks due to Covid restrictions for 92 days last year.

Controlling rat and stoat numbers on Pomona has allowed the island to continue to support a breeding population of Haast Tokoeka, and Rona's pest-free status ensures that it is used as a creche site for Haast Tokoeka.

Trustees have continued to liaise with DOC Haast and provide volunteers for kiwi work.

The Trust has improved monitoring on both islands with trailcams, and are carrying out a trial with automatic lure dispensers. We are also completing a kea-proofing trap upgrade project with funds from a DOC Community Fund.
(DOCCF5-044)

Trustees have attended the National Kiwi Hui in Queenstown and a kiwi release at the Haast Tokoeka sanctuary

Translocated robins on Rona are doing well and their numbers are increasing. Where we haven't been so successful is in our translocated Mohua population, which has suffered due to rats.

We have increased our "visibility" in the community with a new Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pomonarona/> and a completely updated website. <https://pomona-island.org.nz/>

Organisation

A total of 5 Trust meetings were held in the 2020/2021 year, in June, August, September October 2020 and Feb 2021.

At the June meeting:

Paul King was appointed as a Trustee and as Secretary,
David Fortune was appointed as a Trustee and as Treasurer.
Liz Scott was appointed as a Trustee

The AGM was held on 16th August 2020.

John Whitehead was re-elected as Chair.

Paul King was re-elected as Secretary

David Fortune was re-elected as Treasurer

Harry Bull continues as a Trustee and Alan Mark continues to be our Patron.

At the August meeting, Hannah Edmonds and Gerard Hill were appointed as Trustees.


The make-up of the Trust at 31st March 2021 was therefore:

John Whitehead	Chair
David Fortune	Treasurer
Paul King	Secretary
Liz Scott	Trustee
Gerard Hill	Trustee
Hannah Edmonds	Trustee
Harry Bull	Trustee


The Trust would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that Viv and Chris Shaw have made to the work of the Pomona Island Trust over the past 15 years. Viv and Chris resigned from the Trust in June 2020. Viv was a founding member and was Secretary from its foundation in 2005. We wish them well in their future pursuits.

We would like to thank Neil Robertson for his contribution as a trustee, who also resigned in June 2020.


Our Trustees




Professor Sir Alan Mark
Patron



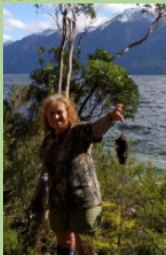
John Whitehead
Chair




Hannah Edmonds
Trustee




David Fortune
Treasurer



Liz Scott
Trustee




Paul King
Secretary



Gerard Hill
Trustee

Harry Bull
Trustee
Iwi representative



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.

Relationship with DOC

Tony Preston (Biodiversity, Te Anau) is currently our DOC contact.

The trust liaises with DOC Haast over kiwi matters

George Ledgard and Chris Birmingham have helped with poison permits and advice over a poison strategy.

Funding

We are grateful to the following for financial support during 2020/2021:

DOC Haast

Donations

In the 2020 / 2021 financial year the Trust received funding from the following sources:

Source of funding	Purpose	Amount (inc. GST)
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	744
Friends of Pomona subscriptions and donations	Pest control/eradication	1052
Department of Conservation, Haast	Kiwi work	9200
Interest	No specific purpose	1351

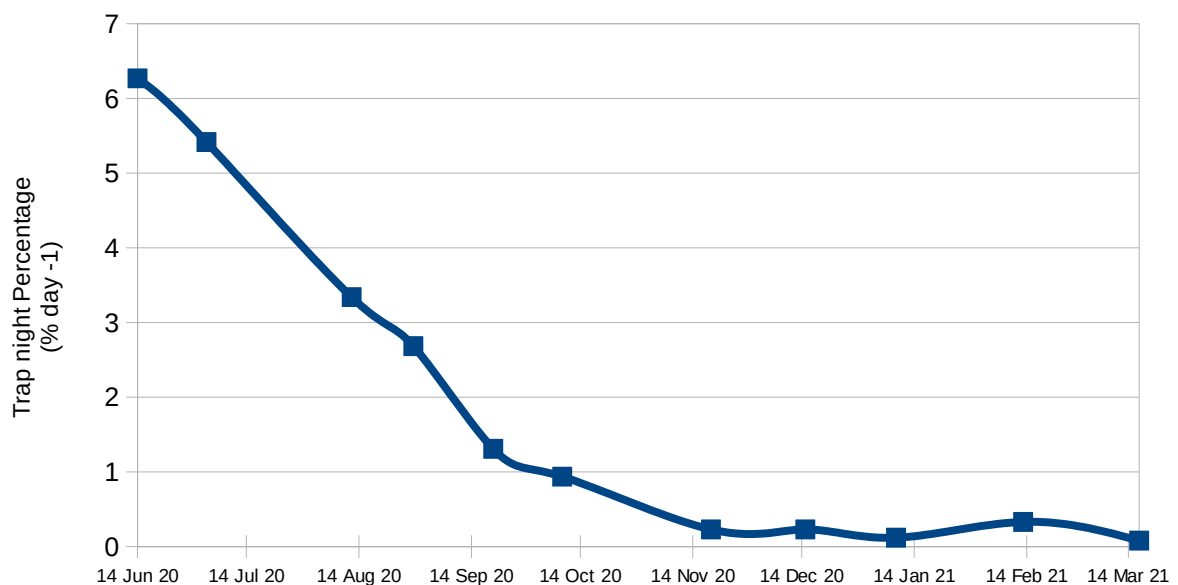
Predator control Pomona Island

Rats

17 trips to Pomona Island have been completed since March 2020, principally to carry out pest control and monitoring. From March to May, we were unable to visit the island due to Covid restrictions. From March 2020 to March 2021, a total of 1096 rats were caught in traditional traps. Unknown numbers have been killed in A24 self-setting traps and by using Brodifacoum in bait stations.

Our last fill of bait stations occurred at the end of August 2020, when our permit expired.

Trap night percentages for rats caught on Pomona since July 2020



Camera monitoring

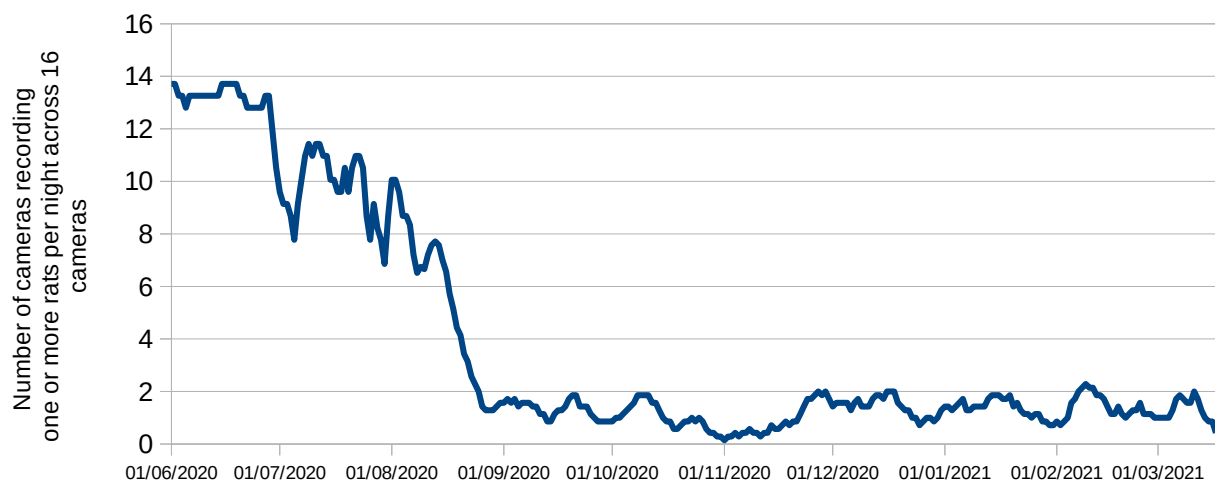
On Pomona Island, there is a network of 16 cameras across the island, and an additional 2 cameras to study rat behaviour around traps.

Each of the 16 cameras have an Erayz lure 2 m in front of the camera, enclosed in a mesh container, to attract any pests in the area. One camera has an automatic lure dispenser which delivers a small amount of mayonnaise lure every 24 hours. This has mainly attracted kiwis so far.

Camera data has shown the decrease in rat sightings, corresponding to the decreases in rat captures since autumn 2020.

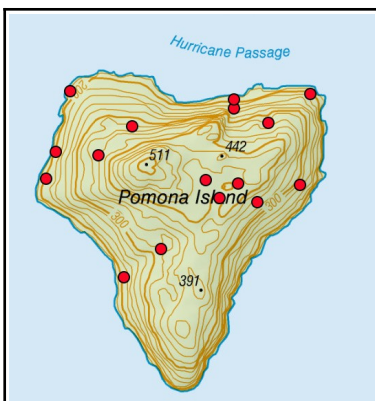


7 day moving average of the number of cameras recording one or more rats per night across 16 cameras



Stoats

16 stoats have been caught on Pomona Island since May 2020. Most of the stoat carcasses were retrieved and examined by trustee Liz Scott and Pete McMurtrie (DOC), to determine sex and age. Camera data has shown that stoats can be present on the island without there being captures, and conversely, stoats can be captured in traps without them appearing on cameras.



There does not appear to be any clear pattern to the locations where stoats were caught.

Pomona Mainland Traps

The Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron serviced the traps to the north of Pomona island every 2 months. They caught 16 rats and 22 stoats in the 70 traps during the year.



Predator control Rona

9 trips have been completed to Rona and the Rona Mainland since March 2020, to undertake pest control and monitoring, kiwi work and bird monitoring.

Rats

The single rat which was detected on Rona in August 2019 has not been seen on a camera since July 2020. We have inferred that the rat is no longer present.

Mice

Mouse footprints were detected on tracking cards in February 2020. Brodifacoum was deployed across the island, to suppress this mouse incursion. Mouse prints were again seen on tracking cards in July 2020, and another Brodifacoum fill of the bait stations was done in August, 2020. Up to March 2021, no mice have been detected on tracking cards or cameras.

Camera Monitoring

We now have an established network of 10 cameras across the island. It is planned to place Automatic Lure Dispensers in front of some cameras to improve monitoring further.

Rona Mainland traps

Rats and mustelids are still a threat to Rona. The mainland traps to the north and west of Rona were serviced regularly and a total of 61 rats and 9 stoats were caught during the year.

Haast Tokoeka

Pomona

Haast Tokoeka are regularly seen on most of the 16 cameras across Pomona island. No obvious juvenile birds have been seen. It is difficult to estimate total numbers based on camera data alone.

Rona

Rona has continued to act as a crèche 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.



Tieke on Rona

Only small numbers of Tieke have been noted recently, and we suspect that the translocated population is under threat, possibly from falcons, which have been seen on Rona in the past year.

Robins on Rona

The small robin population was established in May 2019 appears to be thriving, with young birds being seen regularly.



Bird Monitoring

It appears that the beech mast event and subsequent explosion in rat numbers, combined with a stoat incursion in 2019 and early 2020, have significantly reduced bird numbers on Pomona. Currently, we are reviewing our bird count methods, taking advice from Terry Greene of DOC Biodiversity team.

Health and safety

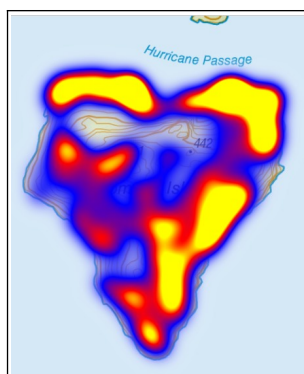
Following a serious injury incident in October, in which a volunteer broke her fibula, DOC initiated a “Full Incident Investigation”. As a result of some recommendations, the Trust has updated their Health and Safety plan to include emergency procedures in the event of a serious incident.

The Trust has also purchased 3 x PLBs for volunteer use. A safety bucket is located at the pick-up beach on Pomona Island, and contains survival equipment.

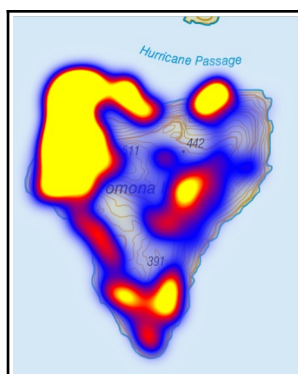


Data collection and analysis

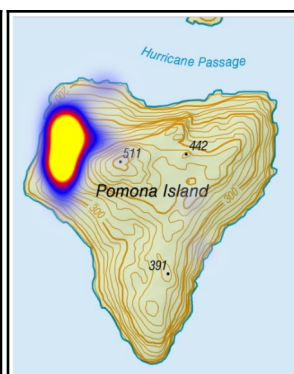
This year, we have all of our trap network, bait stations and monitoring devices on the DOC “Animal Pests – trapping” database which includes a facility to enter trapping data on a cell-phone using the “Walk the Line” app. The software enables storage and analysis of our trapping data. All of our trapping and poisoning data is therefore part of a national database. As an example, we have been able to easily track the changing location of where rats have been caught using heat maps:



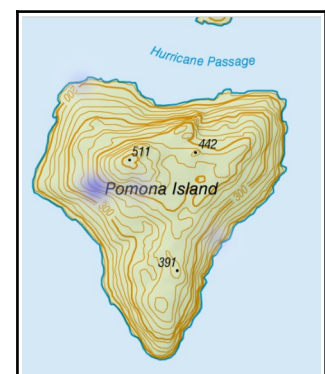
May 2020



August 2020



November 2020



March 2021

Trap Upgrade

We are currently completing a major trap upgrade program, to kea-proof our stoat traps. Funding has come from a DOC Community Fund.

Volunteers

This year, volunteers have completed a total of 1077 hours on Pomona and Rona since March 2020. This represents 26 individual trips to the islands. David Fortune is thanked for running several trips to Rona using his own boat 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.

Boat Transport

Reg Calder of Adventure Kayak and Cruise is thanked for providing reliable and friendly transport to Pomona and Rona islands.

Communications

This year, we have increased our “visibility” in the community by starting a Pomona Facebook page, which has proved popular. Thanks to Hannah and Gerard for posting to our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/pomonarona/>

Thanks to Tim Mann (tim mann design), the trust has also completely upgraded our website <https://pomona-island.org.nz/>

Trustee Liz Scott has made a Pomona Trust display board for the Te Anau Public Library.

Lynley King has produced three issues of the Pomona Post newsletter this year, with a new format and flavour.

Conclusion

The Pomona Island Charitable Trust has a brilliant future. Recovering from resignations and a rat plague, our volunteer base has increased. We now have a clear vision for Pomona and Rona Islands to once again being predator-free sanctuaries for endangered wildlife, using a combination of enthusiastic volunteers and cutting-edge technology.

Trustees of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust June 2021

