

# 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!



Rona Is on a perfect day in summer

## NOTES FROM TWO SMALL ISLANDS



### Pomona

Over the summer 4 trap checks have been undertaken by our great team of volunteers. Traps have been emptied, swims at the pick up beach have taken place and delicious cakes eaten. Thanks Team.

Volunteers over the last 2 trap checks have observed good numbers of robins and fantails. Several family groups with juvenile birds seen.

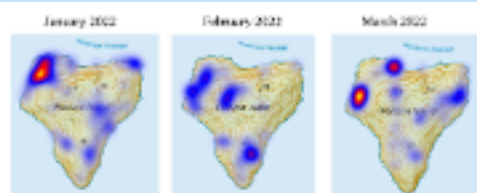
The sweet smelling orchid *Earina autumnalis* has been scenting the air along many of the trapping tracks this autumn. But due to our Fiordland drought the bush on both islands is suffering with kidney ferns all dried & curled up (see photo).



Rat numbers are still higher than what is ideal. The ideal is none !!!  
Results:

18th Dec: 23, 17th Jan: 39, 12th Feb: 26,  
23rd Mar: 33

Most rat catches are still in the NW corner of the island, with a patchy distribution across the rest of the island. Below are heat maps for the last 3 trap checks showing the main areas the rats are caught.



Stoats: None have been caught in traps all summer. But one stoat was seen on camera at G05 on the 6th March.

This is the first sighting of a stoat on camera since the 8th June 2021. One stoat was caught in a trap in October 2021. Due to the warm waters of the lake this summer, this latest stoat could be a swimmer. Four stoats were emptied from traps on the mainland north of Pomona by the Southland Yacht Squadron on their latest trap check (17th March). Ross Forrester took this photo of 'Country Boy' moored at a very shallow Hurricane Passage beach.



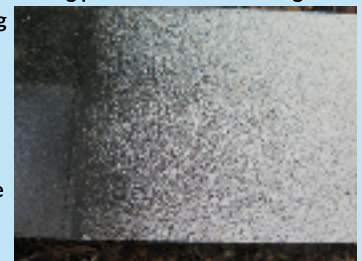
### News brief

The trap trigger detection system on Pomona is back in operation after some tinkering with the buffers. Within a week of the 17th Mar trap check 2 out of the 10 trap triggers have gone off indicating a pest has been caught at N18 and K03. Thank you to Gary Chisholm for his commitment and expertise in getting the system installed and working. Thanks also to volunteer David Cary for spending the day assisting Gary on Pomona.

|            |             |     |
|------------|-------------|-----|
| 05/04/2022 | 12:20:00 pm | K03 |
| 05/04/2022 | 03:46:00 pm | N18 |

### Rona

Rona, just like Pomona, has had unwanted visitors this summer. Over the summer volunteers have been checking the traps and monitoring equipment. Unfortunately the mice have had a summer swim in January and have taken up residence. Rona has been free of mice for 17 months which has been fantastic. However with the ongoing affects of climate change, the water temperature of Lake Manapouri makes it an ideal bath for mice to take a swim. As well as pressures on the mainland (Beehive area) like population and food makes the mice want to seek a new home. Due to Rona being pest free it has amazing invertebrate life ..... seen on this tracking tunnel card. This plus all the seed sources make Rona a pantry store of the finest quality for the mice.



The Trust in consultation with DOC have come up with an eradication plan to deal with this incursion and future ones. These will happen more frequently as a result of our warming climate.

On the good news from Rona..... the kea proofing trap upgrade is now complete. From the camera monitoring a variety of birds have been seen. Lots of ground feeding tui, robins eating the mayonnaise from the ALD's, wee riflemen posing in front of the cameras and large geese taking a wander (see photo).



The robins have had a very good breeding season with numerous adult birds observed feeding their young. Robins have spread right across the island now. Not bad from just 15 translocated birds back in 2019.

The latest 2 mainland trap checks results are:

23rd Jan, 7 rats, 2 stoats 3 mice  
16th Mar, 10 rats, 1stoat, 2mice

Later on in this newsletter will report on the tieke.

Chair John Whitehead has been busy in his workshop recycling old traps into rat snap trap boxes. So far 20 of these have been deployed on the NW corner of Pomona and baited with nutella to lure in a few more rats. This corner now has a hefty mixture of..... DOC 150's, A24's, bait stations & snap traps in order to target the pests.

Thank you to volunteer & trustee Liz Scott for donating \$ to the trust from the sale of the 2 paintings she did of the islands (see last newsletter). And thanks Fay & Sharon for purchasing the art work. Lucky you !



# The tieke/saddleback on Rona

Pomona Post last reported on Rona's tieke back in October 2018. This was just after the successful translocation of 45 birds to the island from Breaksea Island.

The birds settled into their new island habitat, finding their own niches and jack birds (juvenile) were seen in March 2019. This indicated the birds were breeding. Volunteers on trap checks reported on seeing and hearing tieke in good numbers in different locations across Rona through 2019 and 2020. In December 2019 one person saw a group of 6 tieke (adult and jack birds) feeding up on the E tracking tunnel line. You could kayak slowly around Rona and hear that distinctive tieke call from all parts of the island.



Adult tieke/saddleback on Rona



Falcon/karearea on Rona in January 2022

However in the later part of 2020 volunteers observed a decline in tieke sightings. The birds were just not all over the place like they used to be. They were still around but reduced in numbers. So in January 2021 a couple of volunteers kayaked out to Rona and spent a few days doing a trap and tracking tunnel check. They also played an audio of a tieke call in different places to see what response they got.

An interesting and unexpected result. On the western shoreline track opposite the Beehive the audio was played and in flew two falcon/karearea. They were definitely very interested in the audio being played. The falcon appeared again when the audio was played in a different parts of the island.

We know falcon visit both Pomona and Rona and have been seen on our monitoring cameras and their rapid 'kek-kek-kek' call is often heard over at the Beehive. Presumably they nest over on the steep cliffs of the Beehive and use the islands as hunting grounds for feed.

In early January this year falcon have again been sighted on Rona.

As well one of our trustees reported to the Trust in March this year of a couple walking the Kepler track saw tieke between the Moturau and the Iris Burn river mouth. They see and hear tieke often as they live in Wellington next to Zealandia.

So maybe some of our tieke are moving off Rona as well as others getting eaten by karearea. As a result the numbers of tieke on Rona has declined.

On March 16th, 2022 during a trap check to the island all 3 volunteers reported on seeing or hearing some birds and a jack bird was seen. Therefore we still have the saddlebacks breeding on Rona but their numbers are reduced.

What can one do when you have the apex bird predator of NZ eating an endangered bird lower down the food chain. Translocate the falcon ???



Tieke Jack bird on Rona

## POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

This edition of Pomona Post's ..... 'Plant Hotspot' features NZ's tallest ground orchid-the Potato orchid, (*Gastrodia* sp.) Also called pereī by Maori

A strange flower appears under the beech trees as you are doing the trap lines. There is no leaf growth and a very woody looking stalk. You might see the speckled seed pods which appear after flowering as a volunteer did on Pomona while doing the A line traps. The lower K line is also a good place to spot these native orchids. If you see them pause a moment a take a close look at this unusual plant.

These orchids don't have leaves so can't make food from photosynthesis (the sun) and instead use fungi to provide nutrients and sugars. The fungi in turn obtain their nutrition from the orchids tubers.

Commonly called Potato orchids - they form starchy underground tubers. These were regarded as a delicacies by Maori who roasted them in embers or steamed them in a hangi.

The blackish-brown to pale brown streaked or spotted stems are 5-10mm in diameter and up to 1m tall. One species of *Gastrodia* is called "longcolumn" and really are quite stunning to see when in full flower. There can be as many as 70 knobbly flowers per stem and they bloom from December to January.

These Potato orchids are to be found in NZ forests. Beech forests are good places to spot *Gastrodia cunninghamii*. So next summer when you are out and about and see a strange looking plant, it could be a 'spud' orchid.



Photo above shows the long woody looking stalk of the Potato orchid with its seed pods.

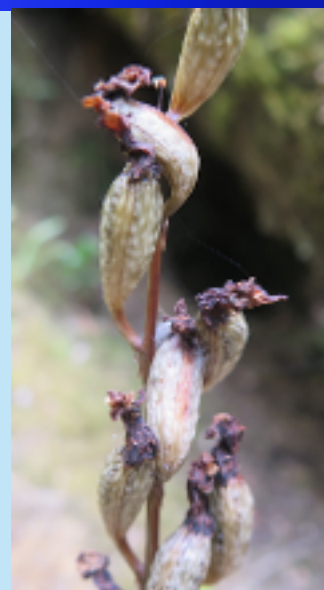


Photo above shows a close up view of the seed pods on the orchids stem after flowering.



# VIPP

## VIPP stands for.....

### VERY IMPORTANT POMONA PERSON

This edition of Pomona Post's VIPP is the  
Trusts Secretary **PAUL KING**

> married to Pomona  
volunteer Lynley

> built the first climbing  
wall in Te Anau (probably  
the South Is) back in the  
1980's in the Gardeners tea  
room at the then THC hotel.

> Still the 'Head Gardener'  
in the family and grows  
extraordinary carrots and  
eggplant for the cook.

> In his Geology career Paul has mapped the rocks of  
different parts of the planet. Places like The Isle of Rhum  
(west coast of Scotland), Stuart Mtns and George Sound  
here in Fiordland.

> In his teaching career Paul helped map out the careers of  
hundreds of students at Southland Girls' High School.

> In his busking career the Hyde Park Corner and various  
locations across Europe were financially beneficial places  
to play the saxophone.

> A winemaking career failed when his only attempt at  
making a red wine vintage blew up in the wash house.

> A writing career produced the first (and only) rock  
climbing guide of Freestone Hill. See Paul if you want a  
copy.

> Now retired from these various careers Paul has climbed  
across the Haute Route of the Pyrenees from the Atlantic  
Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Powered by brie and  
baguettes.



Paul on Pomona in 2021  
helping set up the Base  
Station of the trap trigger  
detection system.

> Now Paul in his retirement  
career being the Secretary for  
the Pomona Trust, is a way he  
sees of giving back to  
conservation and all those wild  
places he has and is still  
exploring.

Ka pai te mahi Paul.



> Paul now has jazz jam  
sessions at home with a  
neighbour. 2 saxophones  
blasting out 'Route 66' in  
the quiet night to all the  
neighbours.

> He once fixed a busted  
suspension on a car  
(Mavora Rd) with a jandal  
and made it all the way  
back to Dunedin.

> In the days before  
mountain bikes were  
around Paul has explored  
by 10 speed all those  
Central Otago ranges like  
the Old Man Range.



# KIWI NEWS

It's been a while since Pomona Post  
has reported on the Island's tokoeka.  
Good news..... The cameras on  
Pomona picked up a very cute young  
kiwi back in early October last year,  
indicating a successful hatching.

Then in February this year at a  
different camera site where there is a  
30cm ruler being used as a size  
measurement, a young kiwi was  
seen. This kiwi is older as its bill is  
longer but still far from adult size.



Another successful chick hatching this season. This camera is  
in another part of the island than the other site, so not  
likely the same kiwi.

Over the summer Pomona has probably been stoat free with  
the cameras not picking up a stoat until March, therefore  
providing a safe haven for the young Haast tokoeka.  
Volunteers will be out shortly on the island to carry out a trap  
check and put out fresh stoat lures to try and catch this  
unwanted summer visitor.

More exciting news with our kiwi is volunteer David Cary  
who has been busy putting out audio moths in various  
locations across the island. These devices are recording kiwi  
calls and David is using software to identify kiwi calls.  
Eventually it might give us an idea of the population as the  
male tokoeka call is different to the female. Thank you David  
for your time, enthusiasm, equipment and skills.

Rona Island was again used as a site for young kiwi to live, eat and grow big enough to fight off stoats for  
when they get released back in the Haast Sanctuary. Three tokoeka came from Centre Is (lake Te Anau)  
at the start of December. After a couple of months running around the island eating lots of  
invertebrates the kiwi reached their safe weight of above 1.5kg. Kiwi catching rangers Jane, Heath and  
Hannah with dogs and volunteers spent a couple of goes catching the trio. The birds have learnt to be  
very wary of people so are good runners. One kiwi was caught then given a final health check before  
being taken to Coal Island for its adult life. The next two at the end of January were finally on their way  
back to Haast leaving their island life. These mountain loving tokoeka will now have a much greater  
landscape to explore.

## Spying in the Bush with Spyoints

The camera network across Rona this summer has been picking up interesting visitors  
(kiwi conservation dog helping find kiwi) and providing photos of what the birds get up to.  
Like 1:am snacks from the ALD



Two Tui checking out the  
camera lure.