

# Pomona Post



Morning views from Rona

*Kia ora Volunteers and 'Friends of Pomona'. Here is the latest edition of Pomona Post. Enjoy. See you on the next trap check!*



## NOTES FROM TWO SMALL ISLANDS



### Pomona

### Rona

#### News brief

The editor of this newsletter apologizes with the delay in getting out this newsletter. She has been waiting for the poison/bait station operation on Pomona to be completed which it has and you can read about it on page 3.

Track work on Pomona by contractors in September have made getting around the Hurricane Passage, Western T, J and P lines so much easier. Thank you Ben Crouchley and team, your work is very much appreciated.

Fraser organised a team to join him at West Arm to replace the display in the visitors shelter.

Thank you to all people involved in the poster board upgrade. The new board looks great and the visitors to the shelter will hopefully donate money for the conservation work undertaken on the islands.



The start of summer has arrived along with a flock of kakas who seem to have taken up residence on Pomona attacking rotten trees (see photo). Their hoots, cackles and melodic calls to each other, are a welcome addition to the biodiversity of Pomona.



Not so welcome is an early summer swimmer..... a sole deer. One of the contractors nearly fell over it while out doing the bait stations on the island recently. The Island has been deer free for 15 years but a young stag decided to have a swim across Hurricane Passage (500m) and make its home on Pomona. There is a plan in place with contractors CWAC to deal with this unwanted pest in the not too distant future.

There has only been 3 trap checks since the last newsletter. All with high rat numbers cleared from the traps. However the recent bait station operation has significantly reduced Pomona's rat population. The stoat was last seen on camera at GO5 back in Sept but hopefully it has been dealt with by secondary poisoning with the bait station operation. With low stoat numbers there would have been a greater success of new kiwi chicks hatching and surviving this season.

The last two trap checks by the Southland trailer yacht squadron were 44 rats, 1 stoat, 1 mouse Oct, 37 rats, 10 stoats 3 mice Dec. High rat numbers on the mainland as well as Pomona this Spring. Thanks team.

Rona is the place to be if you are a young Haast kiwi. The island was home to five recently, all running around, exploring and eating their fill of Rona's insect life. But all good things must come to an end ..... the kiwi rangers come to take them back to their ancestral lands in the Haast Sanctuary.

Kev & Mush have cleared the mainland traps recently helping keep Rona stoat free by trapping as many stoats as possible to stop them taking a swim. -10 stoats and a bunch of rats. Ka pai Kev & Mush

Gecko monitoring for the 2023/2024 season is now under way. Results will probably be disappointing this year due to the presence of mice on the island. The mice will no doubt eat the canned pear lure before the geckos even get a lick.

Plans are well underway for another attempt of eradication of mice on Rona. Watch this space.....



Tieke spotted in the supplejack jungle gyms of Rona

Photo by Fraser Skinner

Trapping work is never finished..... there is always another box or two to be made.



The Trust have recently been successful with a grant application with 'Save the Kiwi'. The allocated money has paid for the recent 1080 poison/bait station operation on Pomona. 'Save the Kiwi', have provided fantastic support over many years with various projects on both Pomona and Rona. This support has enabled the Trust to carry out conservation work to help protect the kiwi habitat on the islands. Thank you 'Save the Kiwi' - we are saving the kiwi !!

Thank you also to Fay Edwards, Henry Grayson, Myell Smith, James and Angela Tittsler who have recently donated money to the Trust. Your support in the work the Trust and volunteers undertake on the islands is awesome. Ka pai !!

The Trust has had a large donation from 'Fiordland Jet', from clients using their boat trips on Lake Manapouri. This generous donation has really helped support the work volunteers do on the islands. For example, just having the funds to carry out trap checks and money to purchase items like tracking cards, replacement monitoring trail cameras and packets of squirty meat lure.

Thank you Fiordland Jet

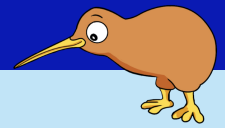


Rainbow light over Hurricane Passage

Photo taken from Pomona by David Cary



# VIP.. Very Important Pomona ... Kiwi project



This edition of Pomona post is featuring..... David Cary's 'Skraak Kiwi Project'

David has been running audio moths in different locations on Pomona for over two years now. To sum up all his hard work maintaining the moths and analysing the data here are a few bullet points.....

The skraak.kiwi project on Pomona Island has now recorded more than 34,000 individual calls. The busiest sites are at C05 and F09/10 where they call around 0.8 times per hour between sunset and sunrise.

The Pomona kiwi seem very social and quite vocal about it all.

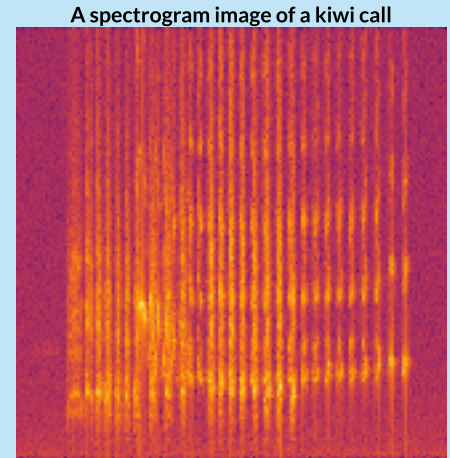
The addition to the 10 audio moths recording at night, there are now 5 on Pomona and 5 on Rona recording 1 minute in every 30, all day and night.

The idea here is to eventually build up a database of all birds calling. What can their behaviour tell us? Are populations increasing or decreasing? Are all birds doing equally well? Is our work (trapping etc) making a difference?

It will take some time to build up enough data and knowledge to begin answering these questions.

In coming years skraak.kiwi hopes to expand knowledge about Haast Tokoeka and general bird life on Pomona, Rona and in other places using bioacoustics and machine learning.

Listen to calls and look at statistics click on [skraak.kiwi](http://skraak.kiwi)



A spectrogram image of a kiwi call



## POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

This edition of Pomona Plant Hotspot is the beautiful orchid which features on the logo-

**Dendrobium cunninghamii**. This orchid has many common names- winika, 'Christmas' orchid, bamboo orchid or ladies slipper orchid.

Winika is the accepted old Maori language name for this orchid. The name Te Winika was given to the sacred war waka of the Tainui people because this orchid grew on the totara tree which was hollowed out to form the hull. The Maori Queen Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu granted consent to use the name Winika, because of its particular cultural significance to her Tainui people

Winika is a species of Epiphytic orchid that is endemic to NZ. It is commonly found growing in rainforest of all four islands of Aotearoa. It flowers at Christmas time with blooms still seen on Rona and Pomona in January. In the photo below, there are heavily flowering *D.cunninghamii* plants on Pomona decorating the Hurricane Passage track.

Always a visual delight while doing the trap checks in summer.



The name Dendrobium comes from the Greek word 'dendron' meaning 'tree' and 'bios' meaning life. So a Dendrobium orchid translates to 'life in a tree'

*D.cunninghamii*- named after the English botanist and explorer Allan Cunningham known for his plant collecting expeditions in Australia. He visited NZ in 1826 but it was his brother Richard Cunningham who collected a specimen on a trip to NZ 1833-34. Which was subsequently named *D.cunninghamii* by orchidologist (yes that is an actual job title !!) Professor John Lindley. These botanists certainly got around naming plants and critters after themselves in the 19th century. In Australia there is not only a *Banksia cunninghamii* but a lizard species named *Egernia cunninghamii*, a Cunningham highway and even a Cunningham memorial obelisk in the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney. These brothers were very cunning writing themselves into the history books.

In their time, orchids have also become an extraordinary symbol for love, refinement, beauty, charm, fertility and thoughtfulness. What more could we want for our Pomona Island logo symbol.



# POMONA RATS PART 2

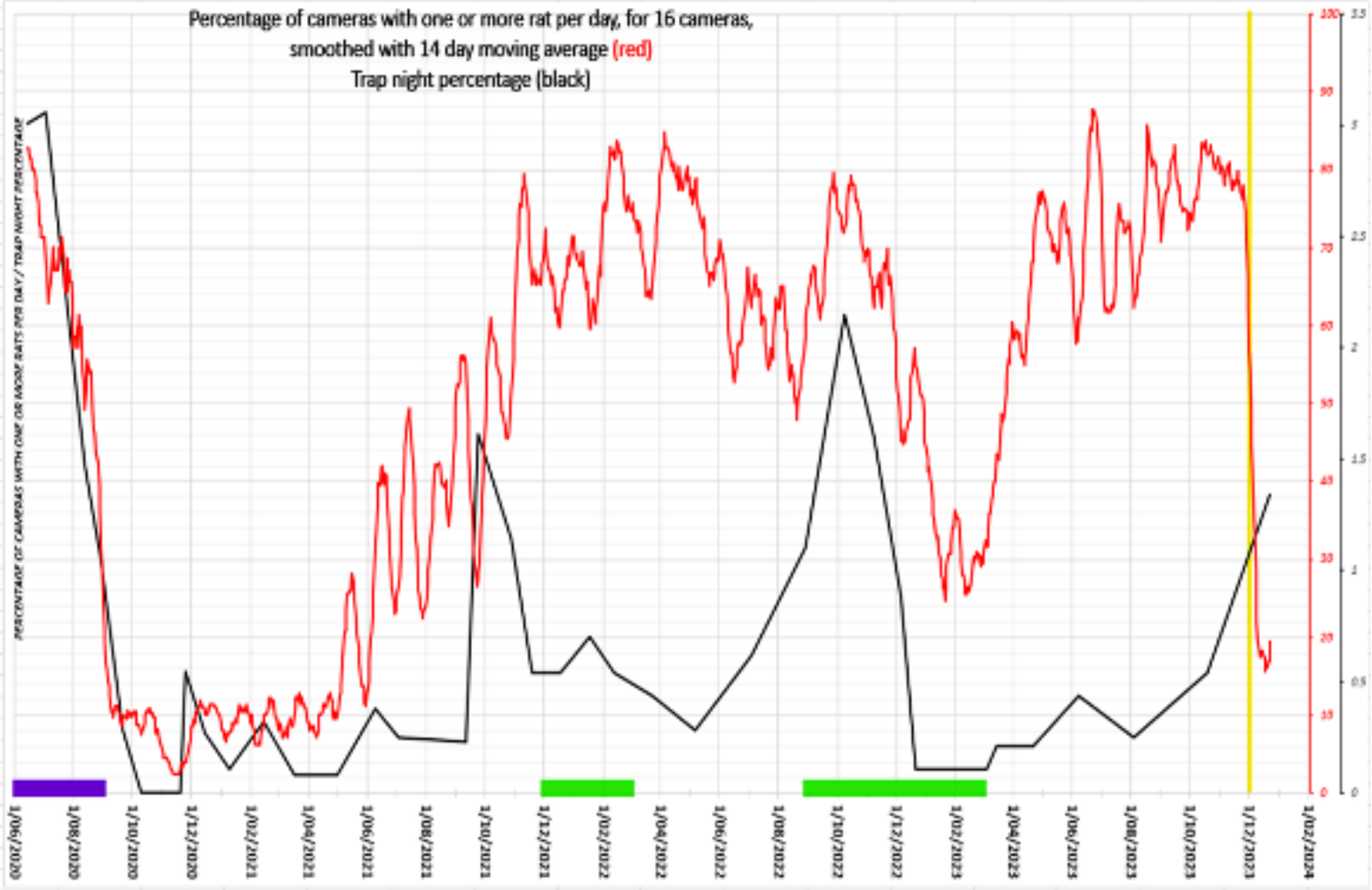


In the May issue of "Pomona Post", the rat situation on Pomona was described using a graph similar to the one below.

To recap: in winter 2020, brodifacoum was used to reduce rat numbers to around 10% of cameras showing one or more rats per day. The purple bar on the graph shows the time period.

A pindone operation during 2021-2022-2023 (two green bars) achieved a minimum of around 30% cameras showing one or more rats per day.

Rat numbers increased steadily after the end of the Pindone operation at the start of 2023. At this point, the Trust realized that a different toxin would be needed.



A 1080 bait station program was planned in early 2023 and CWAC (Contract Wild Animal Control) were contracted to carry out the operation in November 2023.

The results can be seen on the graph, showing a significant knockdown of rat numbers following the 1080 operation. Before the toxin was deployed, there were so many rats that they were chewing the wood on the traps and the plastic on the bait stations. The pre-feed uptake (two rounds) was huge, indicating very hungry rats.

The toxin was deployed on 26th November, topped up on 5th December and removed on 13th December. (Yellow vertical bar on the graph).

The camera data (red line on graph) shows a reduction from around 80% of cameras showing one or more rats per day, to around 20%. Not an eradication though! The toxin was deployed at the yellow vertical line on graph. We will need to do another round of cameras/traps in January to see where the rat numbers settle.

Observations of rat and stoat numbers on the mainland around Pomona and Rona indicate that the pressure on these islands is severe. Combined with recent beech mast conditions, the battle is not yet won!

The Trust was able to pay for the bait station programme using funding from Save the Kiwi

