

# Pomona Post



Leaving Pomona behind after a trap check

*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

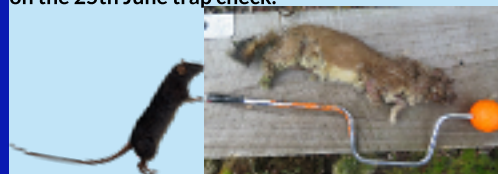
It was Volunteer Week back in June, so as always the Trust would like to acknowledge all the mahi our volunteers do. Whether it involves putting out bait on a cold, foggy morning in July on Rona when it is 2 degrees or scraping out a disgusting, decomposing rat out of a trap on Pomona, or use various forms of watercraft to empty traps on the mainland of both islands, your smiles and ability to tramp, sail or paddle around and to the islands is really appreciated. Ka pai Team ... PS there's always cake at the end.



Our happy volunteer Gary Kirkman clearing a trap at H14 in the sunshine on Pomona.

Over Winter volunteers have re-organised the trail cameras on the island. Choosing 3 new locations, replacing water and kea damaged cameras and putting security boxes on the 4 new cameras which are known to be 'kea hotspots'. Hopefully these might work in keeping the cameras safe and dry. In the last trap check, of the 13 trail cameras now on the island, every camera had multiple kiwi sightings. Our cameras show that the Haast tokoeka kiwi are doing pretty well on Pomona. Just have to stop those stoats from taking their open water swims across Hurricane Passage.

So to keep the kiwi and their food supply safe from those rats and stoats here are the results from the last two trap checks.....25th June 55 rats and 2 stoats, 4th September 88 rats 0 stoats out of 202 traps. The rat numbers are on the rise again. Not much of a respite following the 1080 bait station operation last Nov/Dec. We still know of at least 1 more stoat on the island as it is busy showing off in front of the cameras, especially at G05. A few swimmers from the mainland this autumn. Photo below is one of the 2 stoats caught on the 25th June trap check.



The last two trap checks by the Southland trailer yacht squadron were 13 rats, 4 stoats, 1 mouse, 4th June, 9 rats, 1 stoat 2 mice 4th August. On the last trap check Ross writes 'nearly all of these were caught on the West Track, which is the "dark side of the moon at this time of year".'

#### More News..... Grants & Donations

The Trust were recently successful in getting a grant to purchase new trail cameras from the Meridian Power Up Community Fund. To protect these new cameras from Keas and Fiordland rain, security boxes were also purchased. Cameras are an essential tool for effective monitoring to be carried out on the islands.

Thank you Meridian



**STOP PRESS!** Real NZ have expressed an interest to be more involved in the conservation work of the Trust. Full details in the next newsletter.

Rona has been a busy place over the Winter months. Volunteers have been out to the island carrying on with the mouse incursion response. We have another bait station check to do, then put tracking cards out, to see how successful the operation has been. The good news on the larger predator mammals is that with the latest 3 camera checks no stoats or rats have been detected. Sadly no tieke have been seen or heard on the island over the winter months. Mrs Stoat over the summer did the damage. Thank goodness she got caught back in April and couldn't inflict more damage.

Kev & Mush have been out in the depths of Winter on and off the boat clearing the mainland traps. 15th June 43 rats, 28th July 42 rats out of approx 80 traps. Lots of rats here but no stoats. We will see what Spring and early Summer brings.



A Rona weta

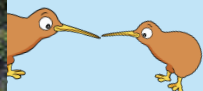
The 'parsley' fern *Botrychium australe* was again spotted on Rona but only a very small single plant this time.



See photo.



Volunteer and Chairman of the Trust - John Whitehead in action clearing the track along Hurricane Passage on Pomona.



Volunteer and Secretary of the Trust - Paul King in action with his highlighters in the 'office'.



Myell Smith you are awesome in supporting the conservation work on the islands with your latest donation. Thank you so much.

Jim Tittsler another awesome supporter of the islands. Your donation will help in the mahi of the islands. Thank you.

Gary Chisholm once again you have donated your time, expertise, equipment and money (for the boat), for the maintenance of the Trap Trigger System on Pomona. Thank you Gary. Ka pai. You three gentlemen are WELCOME anytime to join us on trap checks. Even you Jim over there in Japan.

The donation box at West Arm has collected \$240 in the latest empty. So a big thanks to all the tourists who empty their pockets of coins into the box.

Ruth and Lance Shaw have recently donated a Ultrasonic Bat Detector, know as a 'Bat Box'. So we will put this in use to see if the islands have bats. Thank you Ruth and Lance we will have fun with this.

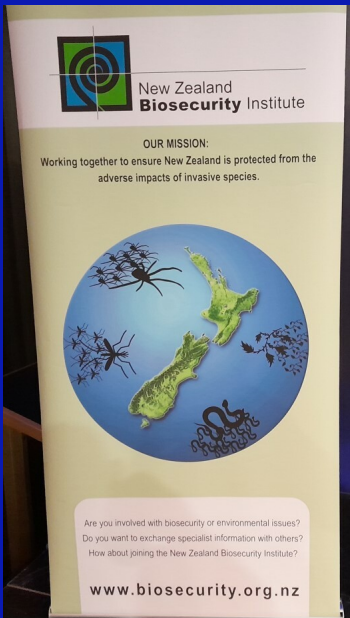
# New Zealand Biosecurity 2024 Award

Back in July John, Paul and Lynley attended the NZ Biosecurity 2024 awards evening in Invercargill to receive a rather amazing award - The Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy for achievement in vertebrate pest management. And it really was a rather amazing trophy. Quite a 'Dali' style work of art. A carved kōkako standing on a stack of flat stones above the skulls of small predatory mammals - namely a mouse, rat, possum and a stoat.

In presenting the award, the assessors said they were impressed with how much physical work the group put in maintaining their trap and bait station lines on a regular basis as well as their collection of trap data and its analysis over many years. So all those years of quiet perseverance and optimism has won the Pomona Island Charitable Trust a prestigious legacy award from the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute.



The trophy in all its glory at the awards dinner. You can tell it was held in Southland.....



The Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy honours Peter Nelson's huge contribution to establishing professionalism within the field of vertebrate pest management in NZ in a career that began in 1967. So in 2024 the award is won by a group of volunteers for their tireless efforts in pest control. Ka pai.

Thank you to all our volunteers, supporters, organisations, funders - Save the Kiwi, DOC, Meridian, Fiordland Jet, Gary Chisholm (to name a few) and Reg then Nick for always being on time with a smile to transport us across to the islands.

## POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

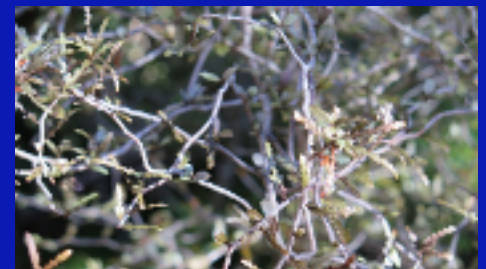
This edition of Pomona Plant Hotspot features a beautiful tree - Pōkākā.

***Elaeocarpus hookerianus*, native oak, Pōkākā.** This cold tolerant, forest tree thrives in various locations, from valleys to mountainous areas and is in abundance on both Pomona and Rona. It has a distinctive juvenile form, as the branches interlace with tiny leaves that become large, light green leaves in its mature form. Pōkākā flowers on the islands early summer with delicate white blossoms hanging in small clusters creating a lacy appearance. This is followed by ripe dark purple oval shaped fleshy fruit resembling an olive.

Hence its name *Elaeocarpus* means olive seed and *hookerianus* is named after Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker a world famous botanist who travelled on the Antarctic expedition in 1839 under the command of Sir James Ross and wrote "Handbook of NZ Flora" published in 1864-67 describing many specimens sent to Kew by collectors. He died in 1911 and you can visit his memorial stone at Westminster Abbey. Early European settlers called this tree 'native oak' as its adult leaves resembled oak leaves on the end of straight branches. On Pomona there is a adult tree near the trap N22 which always decorates the Hurricane Passage track with white petals, followed in autumn with either the hard green unripe fruit or the 'olives'.



The adult leaves of Pōkākā



Close up of the juvenile leaves .



A juvenile Pōkākā tree showing its distinctive form..



Pōkākā blossom (NZ Plant Conservation Network web page photo).

For those of you who have been involved in the re-measurement of vegetation plots, will be familiar with the recording of the 6-letter codes coming from the plants full Latin name. *Elaeocarpus hookerianus* becomes *Ela hoo*. Such a great code to yell out across the forest - *Ela hoo*.....

This beautiful tree is more cold tolerant than hīnau New Zealand's other member of *Elaeocarpus* and should be planted more in the gardens and parks around urban NZ. It is easy to propagate from fresh fruit - though slow to germinate. This ease of propagation then explains why Pomona has zillions of juvenile trees to admire when tramping the trap-lines. Trust Chair John who knows his stuff about all things to do with plants, says that the volunteers always ask 'what plant is this?' Pōkākā of course ... the Māori name for storm. Pomona has a 'storm' of Pōkākā



Pōkākā fruit (NZ Plant Conservation Network web page photo).

# VIPP.. Very Important Pomona People - Kev & Mush ...

This edition of Pomona Post has the spotlight on the two volunteers who service the mainland traps opposite Rona with their boat.

**Kev & Mush** (Kevin and Lesley Schwamm) residents of Manapouri.

Kev & Mush you two do an AWESOME job undertaking some essential trapping around the mainland opposite Rona to try and stop stoats and rats taking the swim across the 'ditch' in search of a better life. The trust really appreciates the mahi you put into this.

Kev & Mush came to a DOC talk where Paul was giving a presentation on Pomona & Rona, which ignited an interest in helping out in some way towards the conservation of the islands. Fraser Skinner the Trusts Treasurer and also a resident of Manapouri, got talking to Kev & Mush one day..... End result - servicing the 80 traps on the mainland with their boat and boosting the number of Manapouri residents involved in conservation work on their beautiful Lake Manapouri from 1 to 3 !!



Kev & Mush with Kiwi handler Jane Tansell on Rona



Mush says " it's good to help the Trust out in protecting the islands and appreciates having the opportunity to have experiences like - being involved with the kiwi".



So Kev & Mush now do 'boating with a purpose' undertaking numerous trips to service the traps. In the past year they have removed a record 8 mice, 229 rats and 37 stoats during 9 trips to the area. We are very fortunate to have these two dedicated volunteers .

Kev & Mush moved to Manapouri from Glenorchy 6 years ago. Brought a bit of land, lived in a tiny house and are currently living in and finishing a bigger house. They are looking forward to having more time in the summer having adventures when this house building phase is over. More time to explore in the mountains as Kev's favourite happy place is the Central Darran mountains and Mush is happy to "just tag along but no early morning 4am alpine starts". They both have a love of the wild landscapes of Fiordland but met each other on the not quite so wild landscape of a commercial ski field where they were working at the time. Mush was at one stage a guide on the Routeburn track and for the last 10 years has worked for the Hollyford Track/Wilderness experience as their Operations manager. Kev was with Real NZ before moving to Manapouri where he now works for Te Anau Earthworks. He sometimes gets a conservation related job with the 'little yellow digger' - like the re-building of the important predator-proof fence on the summer pens for the Takahe at Burwood. Meanwhile on days off Kev also likes to get the boat out to enjoy a spot of fishing. They say that by doing the traps it gives them a reason to get the boat out either doing some fishing before or after the trap check. They both really like the idea of being out there helping protect our 'backyard'.

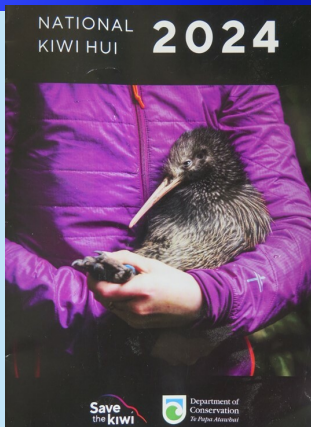
We too really like you 'Taking Action for Nature'. Thank you Kev & Mush.

## THE NATIONAL KIWI HUI 2024



## CONSERVATION WEEK 2024

In June, the National Kiwi Hui was held at the Lakeland Park Christian Camp, Queenstown. Four folk involved in Pomona attended and caught up with all the latest research, trapping tool developments and latest news on kiwi conservation around the motu. Over the shared kai at meal times it was like one big 'Community Conservation Net Working Meet and Greet'. It was good to hear from two people involved with Pomona -David Cary's Bioacoustic Dataset presentation in the Kiwi Pukupuku and Jane Tansells presentation on her PhD, 'Systematic camera trapping for population monitoring. Ka pai you two !



A BIG THANK YOU to DOC and SAVE the KIWI, for funding and organising of the Hui. It is always a real privilege to let our Pomona volunteers attend.

Pomona Trust trustees John, Liz and Paul dressed up in their winter woollies to keep warm while listening to all the presentations.



Pomona Island Trust have recently been involved in a Community Conservation Networking Evening (Te Anau) to support this years Conservation Weeks theme - 'Take Action for Nature'. Well, we certainly do that - 'Take Action' and it was great to hear from lots of other local groups doing their bit 'Taking Action for Nature'. Paul King, keeping to his allocated 15min time slot, started off the evening in fine style with his presentation of the last 2 years -'Taking Action' on Pomona and Rona. Nine presentations later, we all came away with the knowledge that people in the Greater Fiordland area really do - 'Take Action for Nature'. Whether it is Permolat Southland fixing up the huts we visit which never seem to get fixed or the Wairio Hack Club fixing up fences in horse paddocks in the backcountry or Johan & Joyce, Wairaurahiri Jet fixing up the Fiordland coastline by organising rubbish cleanups for rubbish that should not be there in the first place, we are out there doing it.

**Take action for nature**

Conservation Week  
2-8 September 2024  
conservationweek.org.nz

**A BIG THANK YOU to Jo Marsh and the rest of the DOC team for organising the evening and sharing yummy kai with us all.**

A small illustration of a kiwi bird.