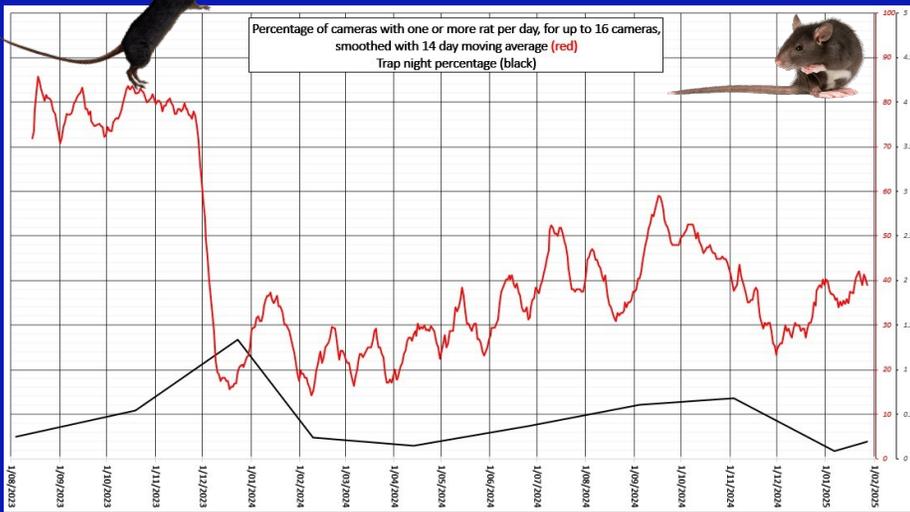


What's up with the Rodents?



Rats on Pomona. Interesting things have been happening with the rat numbers over the summer. The trap total was 83 rats caught in traps on the 3/11/24.... then 7 rats on the 6/01/25 and 8 rats on the 27/01/25. The trail cameras showed the same story.... a marked decline in the number of rats seen on camera. The graph (pictured) shows the story..... there are high numbers of rats, the 1080 bait station operation in Dec 2023 got the numbers down and from about a year ago the rat numbers have been steadily building up until this Summer where the numbers have suddenly dropped. WHY ?? Lets speculate.

..... the stoat(s) on the island have been making a dent in the population. The trail camera data from GO5 support this- as it is one site where very low numbers of rats have been seen on camera. Stoats with their jaws full of rat - hurrying away to stash them someplace- have been caught on camera.

..... The food supply on the island hasn't been plentiful enough for rats to breed in large litters.

..... maybe the rats are waiting until Autumn to breed more as there has been a slight increase in rat activity in front of the cameras this month.

Mice on Rona. Just like on Pomona, interesting things have been happening with the mice on Rona. Following last years bait station operation to deal with the latest incursion, we never quite got the last mouse but got the numbers down low. Therefore we were expecting the mice numbers to increase rapidly over the summer like it has done in past incursions. This has not happened. Very few mice have been caught in traps and the tracking cards for the gecko monitoring have had only 2 cards with mice prints out of 150 cards used over 3 and half months. The same period last year had 150 cards with mice prints. Maybe the mice are going to wait until Autumn to start breeding. The Trust & volunteers are going to run all the 120 tracking tunnels with cards at the end of Autumn to give us idea on the population.



A rat on Pomona caught by trail camera measuring itself against one of the rulers which have been put out for kiwi sizing.



POMONA PLANT HOTSPOT

This edition of Pomona Plant Hotspot features a beautiful filmy fern Kidney fern

Hymenophyllum nephrophyllum, kidney fern, raurenga. I think we all have taken photos of kidney fern shimmering in the dappled forest light on a beautiful Fiordland day. This ferns unique shape sets it apart from any other NZ fern and is not likely to be confused with any other plant. Therefore it is really easy to identify this special endemic plant .

This shiny, translucent green filmy fern grows in mats mainly on the moist forest floor. On both Pomona and Rona there are large banks of kidney ferns to appreciate and photograph. Mature plants have a row of sori crowning the upper margin of their frond, where they resemble a row of small brown pegs. Sori are clusters of sporangia, spore-producing structures, found on the undersides or edges of fertile fern fronds, and their shape and location is important for fern identification.

Little else grows in the mats of kidney fern as the rhizomes produce a chemical inhibiting the germination of other seedlings. Traditional uses to Maori include being a treatment for bowel disorders, a perfume plant and also worn during mourning.



Kidney fern displaying its row of sori crowning the upper margin.

This filmy fern has the ability to curl up tightly during dry conditions in order to reduce moisture loss. This gives the kidney fern one of its Maori names.... kopakopa - which means to wrap or clasp. When the wet returns they open up again, unfurling and the plant recovers from the heat stress. Now that is a pretty smart thing to do a plant siesta.



The shrivelled - and curled up leaves of the kidney fern in dry conditions.



A rata flower clasp in the kidney fern.



A mat of kidney fern on the J line - Pomona.

Hymenophyllum nephrophyllum - from the Greek word nephro which means kidney-shaped and phyllus meaning leaved.



A new Partnership between RealNZ & the Pomona Island Trust

Back in Spring last year the Pomona Island Trust entered the coffee business !! Well.... really they entered into a partnership with RealNZ where 50 cents per coffee supports the Pomona Island Charitable Trust. This is coffee sold from RealNZ's - Manapouri Cafe at Pearl Harbour and on the Patea Explorer out in Doubtful Sound. As it says on the poster promoting the partnership in the cafe and on board the boat.."Every warming cup helps protect the endangered Haast tokoeka (kiwi) and other vulnerable wildlife on Pomona and Rona islands in Lake Manapouri, just a short cruise from here !So what are you waiting for ? Sip, sip, and save !"

Another and most rewarding part of this new partnership is getting RealNZ employees out on island trap checks, getting them walking the tracks, scraping out disgusting rats, watching the RealNZ boats at the end of the day cruise by the island in Hurricane Passage and educating them about 'nature'. As the average age of these great folk is much less than the Trust's average age - it's just great having younger folks enthusiasm, outlook on life and of course their younger legs out with us. Long may it continue. Ka pai.



Realnz

A sip a day helps the kiwi stay

Every warming cup helps protect the endangered Haast tokoeka (kiwi) and other vulnerable wildlife on Pomona and Rona Islands in Lake Manapouri, just a short cruise from here!

50 cents per coffee supports The Pomona Island Charitable Trust in keeping these islands pest-free and creating a sanctuary for taanga (treasured) native species. So what are you waiting for? Sip, sip, and save!



RealNZ's Emma out with the Trust on a recent trap check.



Come to life

RealNZ's Kristen in the Cafe at Pearl Harbour promoting coffee.



RealNZ folk with volunteers & members of the Trust out on a Trap check on Pomona at the end of January.



As a result of all the coffee sales over the Summer and the donation from Fiordland Jet, the Trust were able to employ contractors out to clear a bunch of windfalls from the tracks on both Pomona and Rona. A BIG thank you to both RealNZ, Fiordland Jet for funding the work and Trap & Trigger who carried out the work. The editor can now report she doesn't have to do climbing moves getting over a massive windfall while accessing the Rona Summit track. Ka pai.

Pictured above in the trail cam photo is the team from Trap & Trigger doing the mahi.

However due to the stoat swimmer caught in the trap - (probably about the same time the kiwis arrived) the DOC kiwi team in Haast decided to play safe and take the birds off and put them on Centre Island on Lake Te Anau. Before being taken to their new island lake home the birds had a health check, got weighed (they had put on weight) and their bills measured. So Roto & Awa keep enjoying the island nightlife and we might see you again soon.



On the way to Rona with DOC & the kiwis.



KIWIS

Last month two young Haast kiwis (Roto & Awa) got transported out to Rona and released together in a burrow. The birds for once stayed put in the burrow until nightfall, then out they came to live their nightlife on Rona. These two young kiwi were meant to stay on Rona for several months, growing bigger, until they reached the 'fighting off stoat size' and then they were going back to their Haast Sanctuary.



RealNZ's Heidi holding precious cargo on Rona.