# Pomona Post





Tui spreading its wings for the trail camera

#### **News brief**

Hasn't it been an amazing summer - weather wise after such a rubbish spring. The rata flowering has been magnificent and the 'Easter orchid'- *Earina autumnalis* is in full flower on the

islands at present.

It was a very good summer to view the flowering rata on the islands.



Since the last newsletter Em Oyston & Maddie Van De Wetering from DOC's National Eradication Team have set up a network of Al trail cameras on Pomona. They "want to investigate confidence levels around a) the probability of detecting stoat presence and b) creating stoat population density estimates by using trail camera networks on islands where stoats are present in very low numbers". So it's very exciting to be involved with this research trial which appears to be working well as our last update Em reported this stoat.

Last stoat seen was on the 16/2 on the NE of the island as shown on the map.







Em & Maddie setting up a Sentinel Al trail camera on Pomona

## A.L.

#### **NOTES FROM TWO SMALL ISLANDS**

Kia ora Volunteers and 'Friends of Pomona'. Here is the latest edition of Pomona Post. Enjoy.

See you on the next trap check! Make a secure donation by clicking this link......Donate to Pomona



#### **Pomona**

Here are the results from the trap checks over the last 4 months ..... 83 rats - 3/11/24, 46 rats, 1 stoat - 29/11/24, 7 rats - 6/01/25, 8 rats, 1 stoat - 27/01/25 .....out of 202 traps. The rat numbers will be discussed further on pg 2 of the newsletter. Last month a 'spiker' deer was seen swimming towards Pomona. So hopefully like the last 'spiker' (Dec 2023) it will swim back to the mainland and we can be deer free again.

Despite catching low numbers of stoats, we know we have had at least one successful kiwi hatching this season as the trail cameras have picked up a young bird. The camera network across the island has been very busy picking up kiwis over the island. With this kiwi being the first one captured on camera on New Years Day. Maybe the first in the country!!



Results of trap checks by the Southland trailer yacht squadron were 4 rats, 4 stoats - 1/10/24, 2 rats, 4 stoats - 16/10/24, 0 rats, 1 stoat -7/02/25. On the last trap check Ross writes 'this is an amazingly low catch for this this time of year'.

Thanks team for doing the mahi.

Trap N18 - 589 - 88

Triggered

More News..... Grants & Donations

The donation box at West Arm has collected \$607 over summer. So a BIG thanks to all the tourists who empty their pockets of coins into the box.

Thank you Fiordland Jet for the recent donation - which was put towards getting recent track work done on both islands. As we know the wind always blows here which brings down windfalls on the tracks.

Thank you as well Real NZ for the donations from coffee sales..... More on this on page 3!!

#### Rona

Rona has had lots of visits over the summer, keeping the traps baited with fresh lures for any unwanted swimmers And a good job we did-as a stoat was caught in a shoreline trap last month opposite the mainland. Now that was a good 1 km swim which must have worked up an appetite with the stoat. We think it had the swim, then went straight in the trap as nothing has been seen on the trail camera network. Nice to know our border defence system worked straight away this time unlike last years stoat which took 4 months to catch it.

Kev & Mush have been out on and off the boat clearing the mainland traps. 2 rats, 1 stoat -20/10/24, 6 rats, 6 stoats -16/11/24, 3 rats, 0 stoats - 15/12/24, 2 rats, 0 stoats - 5/03/25 out of approx 80 traps. Thanks team! Just like the Pomona mainland results, the numbers are quite low for this time of year...... What is going on? See pg 2 for Editorial thoughts on this!!

Gecko monitoring has been ongoing over this glorious summer. The geckos really like the weather, the canned fruit salad and the low mice numbers - so the results have been very pleasing.

Now the mice. I will write more about this on pg 2 but we haven't had an eradication this time. The good news is that the numbers haven't increased at an exponential rate like last time. Why ??



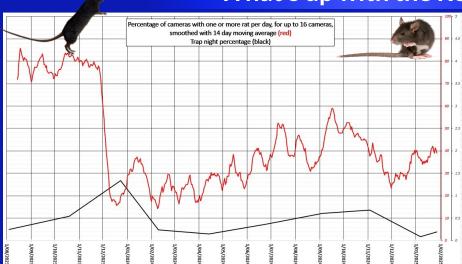
A well dead stoat caught at R19, a shoreline trap on Rona.



Myell Smith- Thank you - once again for your generous donation. This money has been very welcome for buying tracking cards for the geckos and mice and all those cans of fruit salad.



What's up with the Rodents?



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.

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

..... 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.

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



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.

The shrivelled - and curled up leaves of

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.



A rata flower clasped 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



the kidney fern in dry conditions.

### 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.







Come to life

recent trap check.

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.



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.

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.



### **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 falands pest-free and creating a sanctuary for taonga (treasured) native specie: So what are you waiting for? Sip, sip, and save!



Real



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.



