



Significant Events 2024/2025

Mouse control operation continues on Rona Island using brodifacoum in bait stations
Stoat caught on Rona Island in April 2024
Tieke population thought to be decimated by stoat on Rona
Meridian Energy funds new trail cameras for Rona
A24s removed from Pomona
DOC AI camera trial on Pomona Island for stoat monitoring
Deer swims to Pomona Island
Trustees attend kiwi hui in Queenstown
Donation system set up using Giv2 and QR codes
Donation and volunteer partnership formed with RealNZ
Contractors complete track work on Pomona and Rona
Community conservation networking evening in September – Pomona presentation delivered
NZBI Peter Nelson memorial trophy awarded to the Pomona Trust

Introduction

This Annual report records the activities of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust over the financial year from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Organisation

Meetings were held in April, July and November 2024

The AGM was held in July 2024.

At the AGM in July 2024:

John Whitehead was re-elected as Chair.

Paul King was re-elected as Secretary

Fraser Skinner was re-elected as Treasurer

No other changes in officers occurred, therefore the make-up of the Trust at 31st March 2025 was:

John Whitehead Chair

Fraser Skinner Treasurer

Paul King Secretary

Liz Scott Trustee

Gerard Hill Trustee

Simon Marwick Trustee

Professor Sir Alan Mark remains our Patron

Pomona Island Charitable Trust Trustees 2024/2025



Professor Sir Alan Mark
Patron



John Whitehead
Chair



Simon Marwick
Trustee



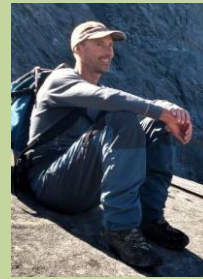
Fraser Skinner
Treasurer



Liz Scott
Trustee



Paul King
Secretary



Gerard Hill
Trustee



Pomona Island

The Trust is registered as a charitable entity under the Charities Act 2005 (CC22629). The Trust files annual returns which are available for public viewing on the Charities Services website.

<https://register.charities.govt.nz/CharitiesRegister/Search?Submitted=True&CharityNameSearchType=Contains&CharityName=Pomona+>

Relationship with DOC

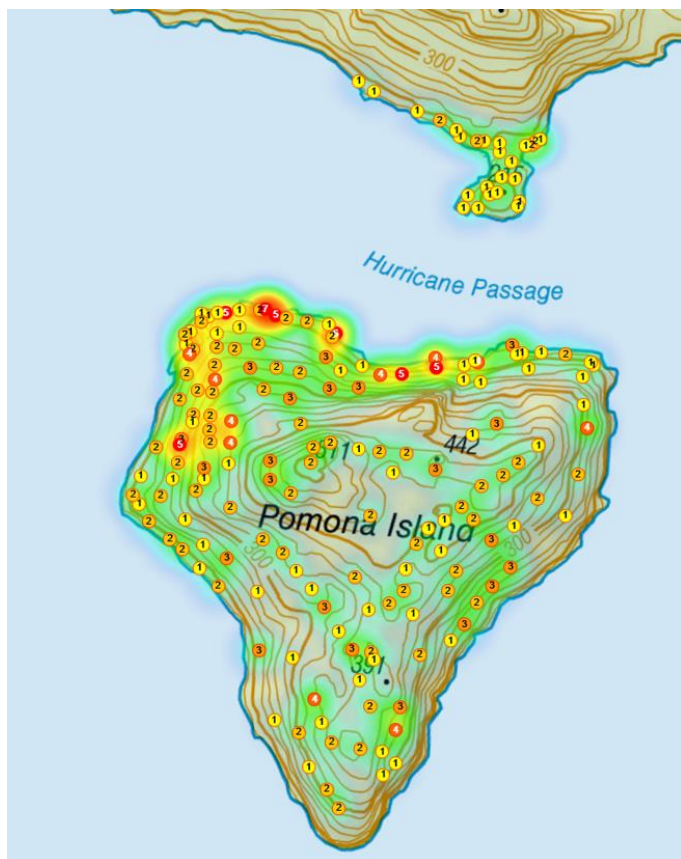
We would like to thank several staff in the DOC Te Anau office who have assisted the Trust this year: Dulkara Martig, Lydia McLean, Jenny Rickett, Crystal Brindle, Jo Marsh. Thanks to Bruce Harvey and Nick Poutu (DOC) for helping with poison permit applications. The trust liaises with DOC Haast over kiwi matters and would like to thank Heath Sinclair and Andree Hickey-Elliot for their help.

Funding

We are grateful to the following for financial support during 2024/2025 (Figures are rounded and exclude GST)

Interest	\$3990
Donations	\$21553
-this includes several significant donations from AAT Kings NZ tourism, through Fiordland Jet and through the partnership with RealNZ, see later.	
West Arm donation box	\$878
Miscellaneous	\$6850
Grant from Meridian to purchase trail cameras	\$4398
Gary Chisholm continues to fund the trap trigger detection system through generous donations.	





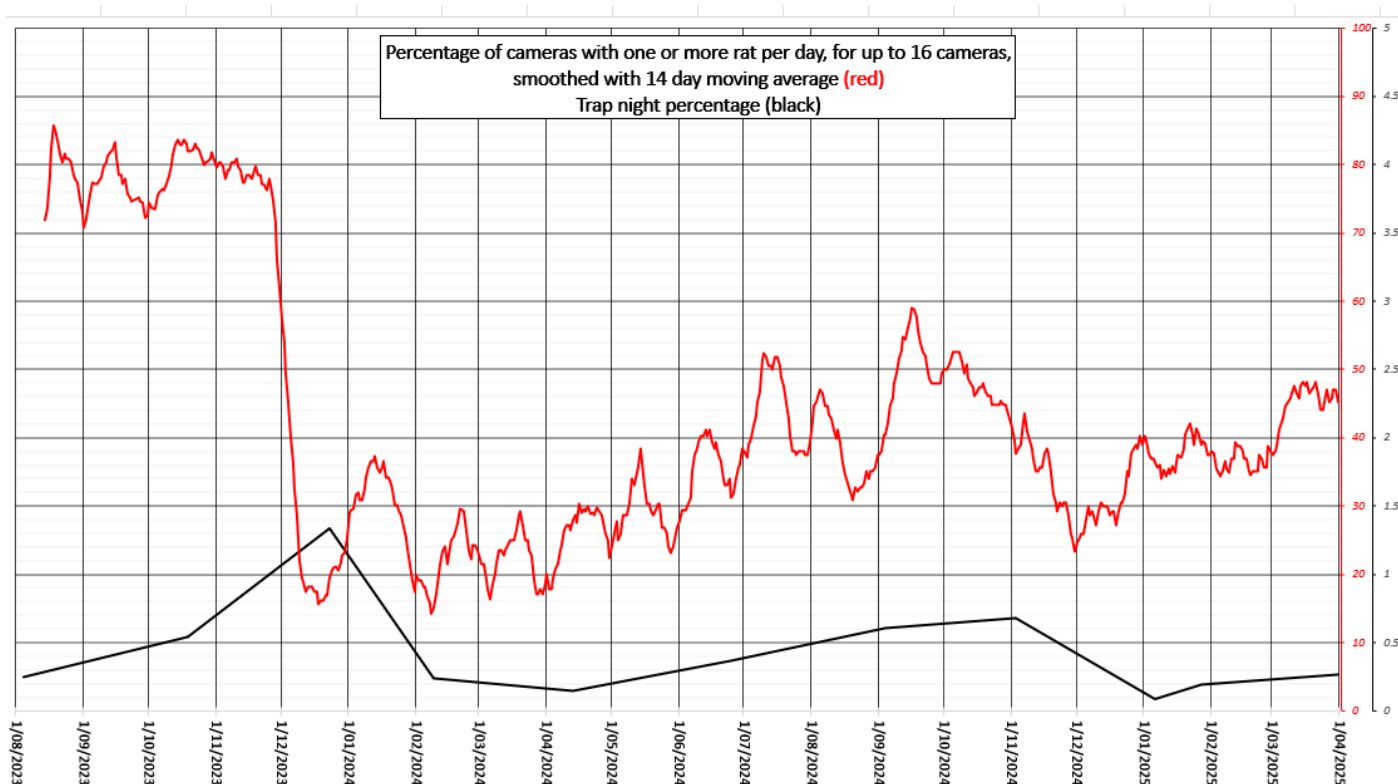
Predator control on Pomona Island

10 trips to Pomona Island have been completed since March 2024, principally to carry out pest control and monitoring.

Rats

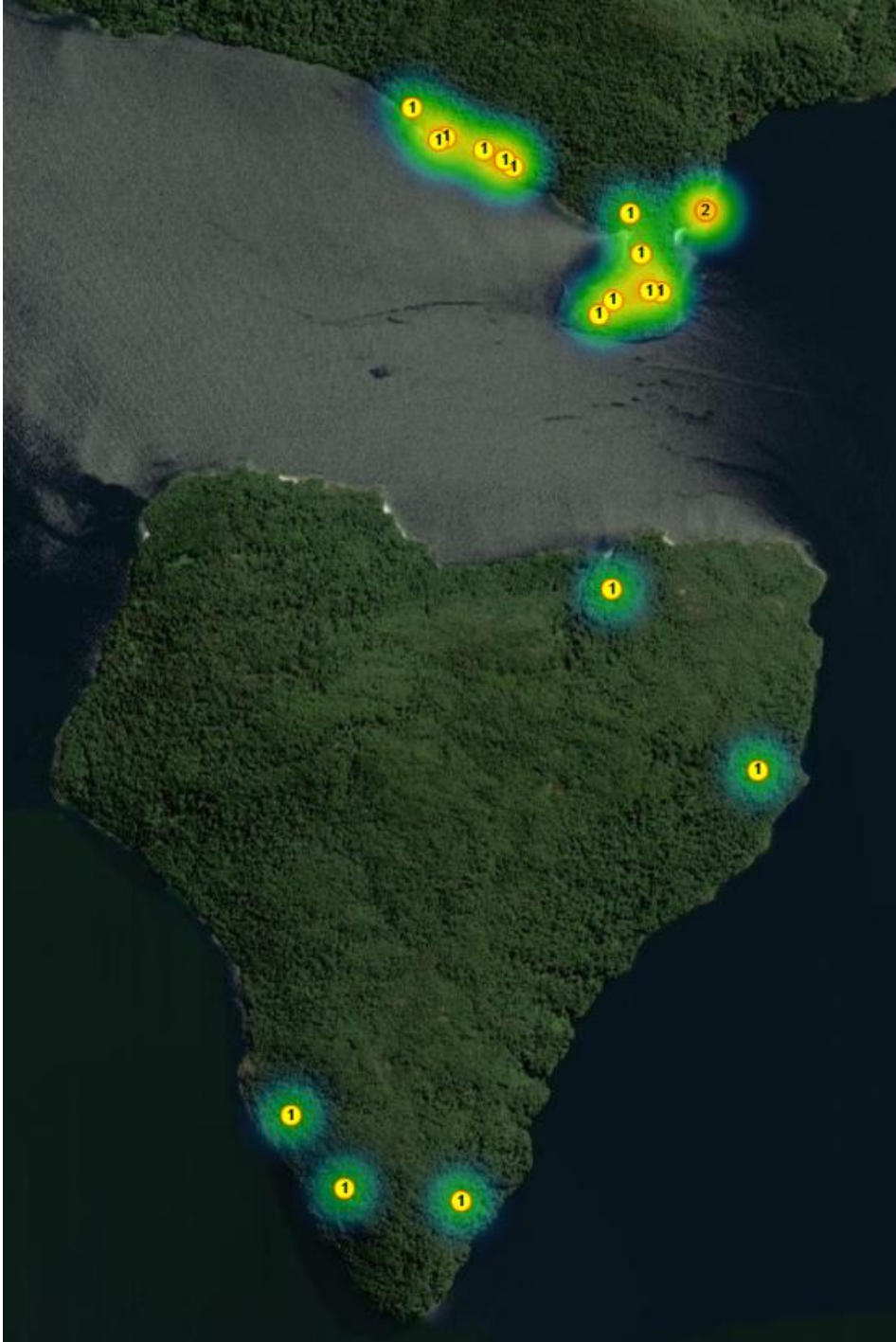
Between April 2024 and March 2025, 338 rats were removed from stoat traps on Pomona Island. The map (left) shows rat catches on Pomona Island and the Pomona Mainland from April 2024 to March 2025

The graph (below) shows rat numbers since the 1080 operation in December 2023. It can be seen that rat activity (broadly related to rat numbers, red line) increased gradually until October 2024, when numbers dropped to a low-point in December 2024. Since then, numbers have increased to the present time when there are nearly 50% of cameras indicating one or more rats per day. This trend is broadly matched by the trap-night percentages (black line).



Stoats

5 stoats were caught in traps between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 on Pomona Island. Note the contrast with the mainland, where 14 stoats were caught in the same interval. There were 77 individual stoat sightings made across around 14 cameras in the same time interval. It is thought that there is at least one stoat still at large on the island as of 31st March 2025.



Left: Stoat catches on Pomona island and the Pomona Mainland April 2024 to March 2025

Deer

Pomona has been free of deer since around 2008. A stag was seen on Pomona Island in December 2023. It is thought to have left the island, as no further sightings have occurred. More recently (mid-February 2025) a spiker or young stag, was seen swimming towards the island by crew and passengers on the Meridian boat. It was subsequently seen on the island. Strategies to deal with the beast are being considered.

Camera monitoring

Our camera network across Pomona has continued to operate well, giving a reliable measure of the rat population, together with detecting stoats. There are now three Automatic Lure Dispensers, which are popular with kiwi. Some cameras which have suffered from kea interference have been placed in security boxes, which has solved the problem. Em Oyston (DOC) has set up an AI camera monitoring system, principally for stoat monitoring.

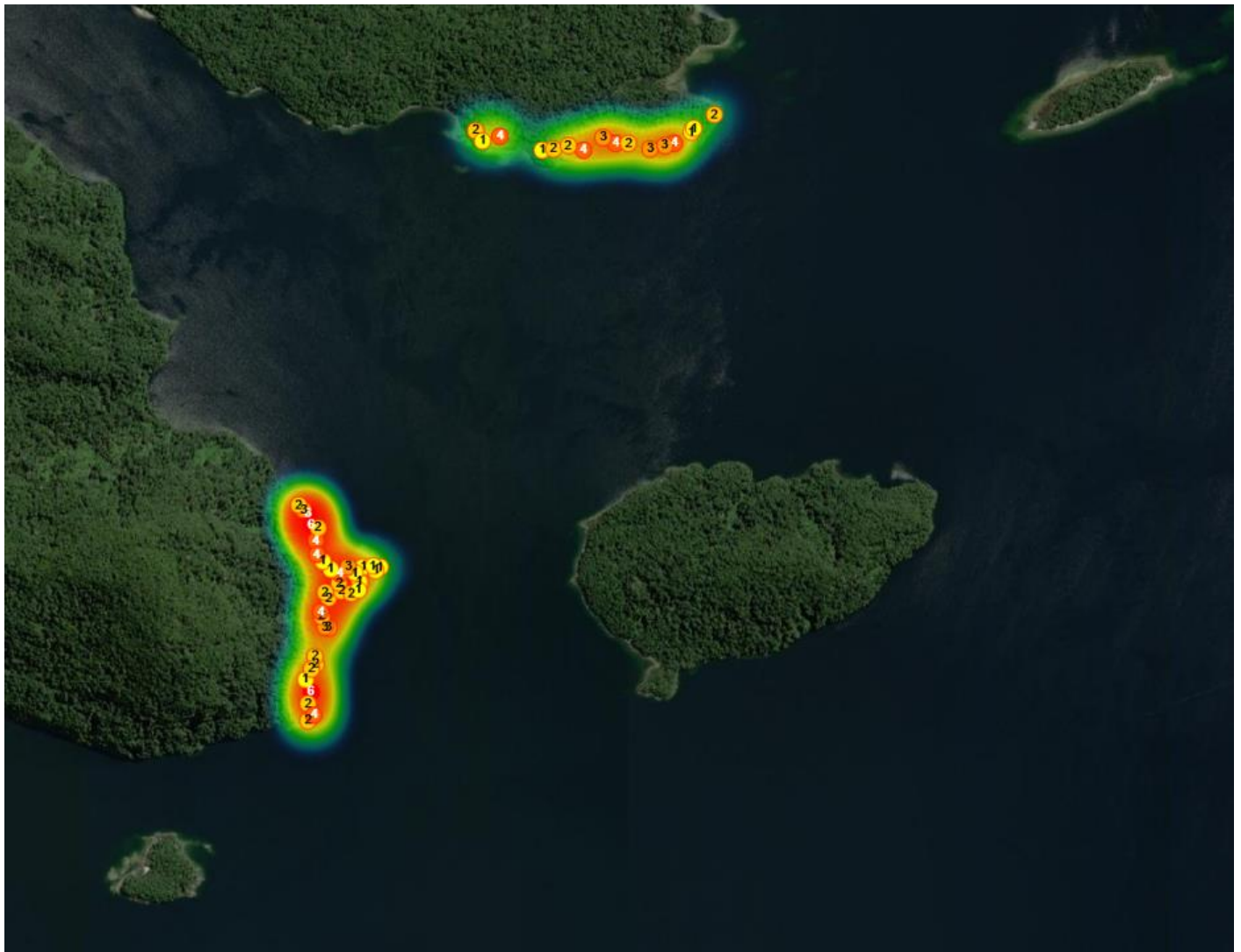
Trap Trigger Detection System

The trap trigger detection system on Pomona Island continued to be modified this year by Gary Chisholm, with help from volunteers. The 14 stoat traps with trigger systems installed now use a repeater on the mainland, together with island-based repeaters. The base station has been upgraded to work through the cell-phone network which is more reliable than the satellite system.

Pomona Mainland Traps

The Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron, led by Ross Forrester, serviced the traps to the north of Pomona Island approximately every 2 months. They sailed out to Hurricane Passage 5 times during the year, and caught 14 stoats, 29 rats and 4 mice in the 72 traps. They also service the traps at Stockyard Cove, to the south of Pomona Island.

Below: Rona and mainland rats



Rona Mainland traps

Rodents and mustelids are an ongoing threat to Rona.

We are fortunate therefore to have two dedicated volunteers from Manapouri (Kevin and Leslie Schwamm) who have emptied the traps on the Rona mainland around every month. They have removed 9 Mice, 125 rats and 8 stoats during 6 trips to the area.

Predator control Rona

14 trips have been completed to Rona since April 2024, to undertake pest control and monitoring.

Rats

No rats were seen on camera or caught on the island since April 2024

Mice

Following the mouse incursion response of 2022, mice had returned to the island by February 2023, and by September of that year, were tracking at essentially 100%. In February 2024, a brodifacoum operation was commenced, using brodifacoum blocks tethered in bait stations. A total of 13.5 kg of brodifacoum blocks were taken by mice. However, by May 2024, after an initial knock-down, mice were again tracking at 100%, so this particular operation was not successful. It was decided to try again over the winter, 2024, starting in July. This turned out to be much more effective and low mouse numbers have persisted up to the present. Obviously, winter operations are to be desired. The winter operation used around 45% of the total bait deployed (450*0.050kg) ie 10 kg. and achieved a near-complete knockdown.

Stoat on Rona

In December 2023, a stoat was seen on a trail camera on Rona. An incursion response was mounted, checking traps and rebaiting with fresh meat. Eventually, the female stoat was caught in a trap in April 2024 following many sightings of the animal since December 2023. It is thought to have swum from the mainland during warm lake temperatures. Another stoat was caught at trap R19 in March 2025. It is thought that this swimmer from the mainland went directly to the trap on arriving on Rona, as it was not seen on any camera.



*A stoat at large on Rona Island
February 2024*



*Simon Marwick holds the Rona stoat.
Photo: Lynley King*

Rona and mainland stoats – catches April 2024 to March 2025



Haast Tokoeka

Pomona

Haast Tokoeka are regularly seen on most of the camera network across Pomona Island. Various estimates of the population give up to 30 individuals.

Volunteer David Cary has continued to run audio monitoring of Haast Tokoeka across Pomona Island. He is using up to 18 audio moths at different locations at a time, although he has used numerous different sites over the course of the project.

There are further details and statistical analysis of his project at <https://skraak.kiwi/>



Rona

Two young Haast tokoeka were brought from the Orokonui Ecosanctuary in Dunedin and released onto Rona Island by DOC Haast staff and volunteers in mid-February. During a trap check in early March, a stoat was found in a shoreline trap. It was decided to move the kiwi to Centre Island, in case other stoats have arrived on the island.

Photos below: Volunteers Lynley and Heidi with translocated Haast tokoeka



Rona Island gecko monitoring

The Kōrero Project- Results from season 2024/25

Volunteer Lynley King has continued her gecko monitoring project which has now run for 4 consecutive seasons. The project aims to determine the distribution and relative abundance of the Kōrero gecko – *Woodworthia* ‘Otago/Southland large on Rona Island.

The 8 semi-permanent monitoring sites on the N/W shoreline on Rona were monitored, together with 3 sites on the SW peninsular.



Sites had between 2-4 tracking tunnels each, and were lured with canned fruit. Sites were checked and re-lured 7 times during the monitoring season. This was more frequent than 2023/24 as mice did not have such an impact on monitoring this season.

Left: Photo showing very busy gecko activity on a card recorded in January at Site 2.

Results

The spreadsheet below shows results from the last two monitoring seasons.

A block of colour indicates that a positive gecko print was recorded on a card.

The salmon pink colour at the bottom indicates the mice incursion and when mice prints are detected on the cards.

Site	Tunnel	New season 2023-24	25/11/2023 3/01/2024	3/01/2024 6/01/2024	6/01/2024 18/01/2024	18/01/2024 9/02/2024	9/02/2024 26/02/2024	New season 2024-2025	22/11/2024 2/12/2024	2/12/2024 19/12/2024	19/12/2024 7/01/2025	7/01/2025 30/01/2025	30/01/2025 6/03/2025	6/03/2025 13/03/2025	13/03/2025 11/04/2025
R16 site	A														
	1 B														
	1 C														
	1 D														
R18 site	A														
	2 B														
	2 C														
	2 D														
R19 site	A														
	3 B														
	3 C														
	3 D														
BS 766 site	A														
	4 B														
	4 C														
R20 site	A														
	5 B														
	5 C														
R22M site	A														
	6 B														
	6 C														
R25M site	A														
	7 B														
	7 C														
	7 D														
R5 site	A														
	8 B														
	8 C														
Mouse incursion															
Mice detected on Tracking card															

Analysis of the monitoring results indicates the following:

- Site 2 (R18) was the hotspot of gecko print recording. Gecko prints were recorded 28 out of the total 28 times (4TT x 7 times the cards were changed =28).
- The impact of mice was very slight this season. This is probably due the excellent knock back in mice numbers across the island due the bait station operation the Trust ran over Spring 2024
- At Site 6 (R22M) there was one card with gecko prints and a live sighting of an adult gecko was seen on the 11/04/25. This was very pleasing as there hasn't been any positive presence of geckos since 2023 at this site.
- Lynley recorded 6 live gecko sightings this season.

The Trust thanks Lynley King for her continued work on this project.



Bird Monitoring

Estimates of the health of bird populations have been made using casual observations by volunteers on both islands, bird hearings and sightings being recorded on trip reports. It is thought that the Tieke on Rona have been eliminated probably due to stoat predation when a stoat was present during Autumn 2024.

Birds seen or heard - Rona	Birds seen or heard - Pomona
Bell bird	Bell bird
brown creeper	brown creeper
grey warbler	grey warbler
kakariki	
	kaka
kea	kea
kereru	kereru
morepork	
rifleman	
robin	robin
shag	
tomtit	tomtit
tui	tui
falcon	
Piwakawaka	Piwakawaka
Haast tokoeka	Haast tokoeka

Health and safety

The Trust has continued with their Safety Toolbox briefings at the start of every trip to the islands. All volunteers are briefed on Emergency Procedures, and have several methods of summoning assistance including PLBs.

Data collection and analysis

All trapping data is stored on the national database trap.nz. <https://www.trap.nz/>
Camera data and bait station information is held separately by the Trust. Trap.nz has also proved to be a useful navigation tool in the field.

Volunteers

This year, volunteers have contributed a total of 1005 hours on Pomona and Rona since April 2024, representing 24 trips to the islands. In addition, Kevin and Leslie Schwamm have continued to service the traps on the mainland North and West of Rona. The Trust also thanks the Invercargill Trailer Yacht Squadron for servicing the trap network on the mainland to the north of Pomona Island. See earlier for catches from these two areas.

Boat Transport

Nick Key of Southern Frontiers Ltd Water Taxi Service is thanked for providing reliable and friendly transport to Pomona and Rona islands.

NZBI Peter Nelson memorial trophy

In July John, Paul and Lynley attended the NZ Biosecurity 2024 awards evening in Invercargill to receive the Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy for achievement in vertebrate pest management. The trophy is a carved kokako standing on a stack of flat stones above the skulls of small predatory mammals: 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.



Communication

Lynley King has produced three issues of the popular "Pomona Post" newsletter this year. These are available on the Trust website <https://pomona-island.org.nz/news>. During a Community conservation networking evening in September, Paul King delivered a presentation on the recent work of the Trust.

Photo below: DOC rangers, volunteers and kiwi dog on their way to release Haast tokoeka on Rona Island

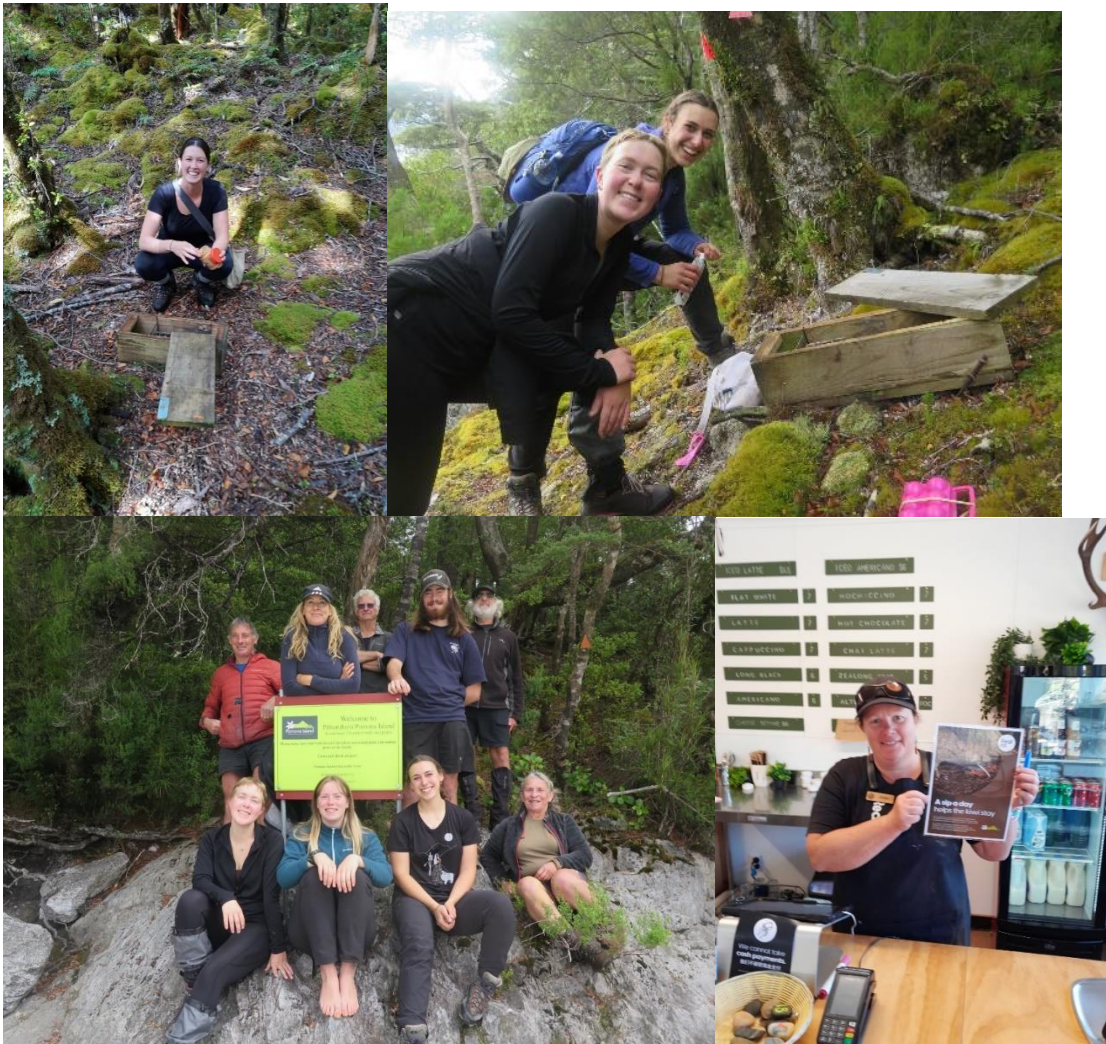


Partnership with RealNZ



During Spring of 2024, Pomona Trust and RealNZ formed a partnership to promote their shared conservation values. RealNZ agreed to donate a proportion of coffee sales, to promote awareness of the aims and activities of the Trust, encourage their staff to volunteer on Pomona Island conservation work, and to promote the Trust through its networks. In return, the Trust has agreed to provide marketing materials to RealNZ and to provide opportunities for RealNZ staff to join volunteer activities. This summer, we have been able to take 10 RealNZ volunteers on two trap checks (January and March). We have also involved RealNZ staff in other activities such as a kiwi release on Rona Island in February.

The Trust thanks Paul Norris of RealNZ for setting up this partnership.



Conclusion

During 2024/25, the Trust has had its fair share of challenges and successes. On Rona, our struggles with mouse incursion have continued, with only partial success. On Pomona, rat and stoat control continues. Luckily, the Trust is in a relatively strong financial position, and volunteers are ready to weather the future storms!

Trustees of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust May 2025

