

Pomona Island Charitable Trust

Annual Report

2007/8





Major Achievements 2007/8

- A total of 36 working bees with 52 volunteers who completed nearly 1000 hours work on the islands
- Removal of over 430 possums from Pomona Island
- Removal of the resident deer population from Pomona Island
- Completion of two aerial poison drops targeting rats and mice on Pomona and Rona Islands
- Total numbers of stoats caught: 10 on Pomona; 2 on Rona and 32 on the mainland
- Launch of a 'Friends of Pomona' scheme to raise money for the restoration of the islands
- Friends of Pomona and donation income to the value of \$50641
- Successful grant applications to the value of \$56,765
- In-kind donations to the value of \$41,000
- Completion of a quarantine plan and production of a quarantine leaflet
- Quarantine measures in place to reduce the risk of re-invasions of stoats, rodents and deer
- Completion of a draft restoration plan
- Significant publicity in local and regional publications
- A Highly Commended Award for Community Groups from Environment Southland

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Introduction

2007/8 has been a great year for the Pomona Island Charitable Trust. With the removal of all animal pest species from both Pomona and Rona Islands we have achieved the first stage in our restoration of the two largest islands in Lake Manapouri. The Trust is now well placed to build on this success as it starts the next phase of its work – to provide a safe habitat for threatened and endangered birds native to Fiordland.

Aims of Trust

This is a good time to reflect on the aims of the Trust as laid out in the Trust Deed:

- To eradicate all mammalian pest species from Pomona Island.
- To ensure a high quality of indigenous biodiversity on the island in terms of flora and fauna
- To provide a safe habitat for indigenous endangered and threatened birds to breed.
- To provide an accessible location for people to see, hear and learn about the flora and fauna native to Fiordland.
- To undertake other activities that will enhance any of these aims.

The Trust is well on the way to achieving its objectives with the focus now moving away from eradicating pests towards restoring the island and creating an accessible island refuge in Fiordland.

Organisation

Since the 2006/7 AGM a total of six Trustees meetings have been held. At the AGM John Whitehead was re-elected Chair, Viv Shaw as Secretary and John Stevenson as Treasurer. Murray Willans was also appointed as a full Trustee and in March 2008 Chris Shaw was invited to become a Trustee. The other Trustees are Hunter Shaw, Kim Hollows, Lance Shaw and Stewart Bull which brings the total number of Trustees to nine. Alan Mark continues to be Patron.




In September 2007 the Trust applied for registration with the Charities Commission. As at the end of March 2008, formal notification of the Trust's registration had not been received.

Managing the Project

At a meeting in April 2005 it was agreed that the whole project should be put on a business footing with the Trust's secretary Viv Shaw, being paid to manage the project once funds were raised. In 2007/8 a small amount of money became available for operations management from the grant from the Community Trust of Southland which was paid to Viv's company, Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited. The grant from Meridian Energy includes funds for administration for the development and implementation of the 'Friends of Pomona' scheme. Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited has formally been contracted to undertake this work on behalf of the Trust. There is still, however, a shortfall in funding for the overall project management of the pest eradication and restoration work on Pomona Island. The Trust is very grateful that Viv, and Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited, are still donating a significant amount of their time and resources to the Trust.

Funding

In 2007/8 the Trust received funding from the following grant awarding bodies:

Source	Purpose	Amount
Transpower	Possum knock-down	\$9,000.00 + GST
 THE COMMUNITY TRUST OF SOUTHLAND Making a difference	Rodent eradication	\$14195.00
 Meridian Energy	The development of a 'Friends of Pomona' scheme	\$20,000.00 + GST
 NZ Lottery Grants Board The Lottery is for Good	Possum mop-up, post aerial poison drop*	\$13,570.00 + GST

* grant to be uplifted in 2008/9

Other funding has been secured from the following sources:

DOC	Planning and research services	\$5,000.00 + GST
Anonymous benefactor	Rodent eradication	\$35,000.00
Family Trust	Deer eradication	\$5,625.00
Family Trust	No specific purpose	\$5,000.00
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	\$1197.00
Friends of Pomona subscriptions	Island restoration	\$2537.78 + GST
Other donations	No specific purpose	\$1,281.25

An unsuccessful funding application was made to Project Crimson. In addition to the direct financial support received by the Trust, a significant amount of in-kind support has been received. This is estimated to be to the value of \$41,000 and the Trust is grateful to all organisations and individuals who have supported our work in this way.

Pest Eradication

The **highlight** of this last year has been the complete removal of all mammalian pests from both Pomona and Rona Islands. The Trust is grateful to all volunteers, financial supporters, sponsors and contractors who have helped us to achieve this **key milestone**. The eradication of pests from the two islands has been driven by a pest management plan. This professional approach to the Trust's work has been a key factor in the successful eradication of pest species from Pomona and Rona Islands.



Pest eradications on Pomona

Stoats

Stoats will constantly be targeted through regular checks of our stoat trap lines on Pomona and Rona Islands and the adjacent mainland. There will always be the ongoing threat of potential re-invasion as both islands are within the known swimming distance of stoats. The table below shows the stoat trap activity for 2007/8

2007/8	Pomona	Rona	Mainland
No times traps checked	9	6	11
Stoats caught	10	2	32
Rats caught	45	0	10
Pests caught since 2006			
Stoats	18	3	53
Rats	312	0	73

Note: No rats have been caught on Pomona since the poison drop in July; last stoat caught on Pomona in October 2007; last stoat caught on Rona in January 2008

Possums

Possum eradication work has been contracted out to Contract Wild Animal Control Limited (CWACL) who have worked alongside volunteers to remove these pests from Pomona Island. Over 250 traps were set on in a grid system across the island. The Trust is particularly grateful to those volunteers who helped set up the grid system and removed dead animals from Pomona as they had to work in very difficult terrain.

In May 2007 over 430 possums were trapped or poisoned prior to the aerial poison operation targeting rodents. A follow-up stage of possum eradication is scheduled for 2008/9 for which funding has been secured from the NZ Lottery Grants Board.

Deer

The deer eradication work on Pomona Island was contracted out to CWACL. In May 2007 five animals were shot and since then no fresh sign of deer browse has been found on the island. Encouragingly regeneration of the vegetation is already clearly visible since the removal of the deer. Volunteers have repaired the deer pen on Pomona Island and it is now fully functional and should catch any deer which swim to the island. The Trust thanks Ruth Dalley for monitoring the radio transmitters each day from Manapouri.

Rodents

In July and August 2007 the rats and mice on Pomona Island and the mice on Rona Island were targeted by means of an aerial application of brodifacoum. The aerial operations aspect of the rodent eradication programme was contracted out to South West Helicopters. The ground-based work, however, was undertaken almost entirely by volunteers with assistance from the Department of Conservation. A resource consent from Environment Southland allowed the Trust to drop 7.5 tonnes of toxic cereal bait on the two islands over two separate days. The first operation was completed on 8 July 2007, followed by a second application on 18 August. The Trust is particularly grateful to Nick Torr who volunteered his time as operations manager for the two aerial drops. The Trust would also like to thank the Department of Conservation in Te Anau for the loan of

equipment and staff. No evidence of rats or mice have been found on either Pomona or Rona Islands following the completion of the rodent eradication operation.

Volunteers



Between April 2007 and March 2008 the Trust organised 36 working bees. A total of 52 different volunteers completed 967.4 hours work on pest eradication and monitoring on the island. These hours do not include the significant number of hours work that go into the administration of the Trust and the time devoted by Trustees to meetings and reading and preparation of written documentation.

The following volunteers deserve a special thanks for the number of working bees they have attended in 2007/8:

- ◆ Viv Shaw – 22 working bees
- ◆ Chris Shaw – 17 working bees
- ◆ Geoff Wells – 13 working bees
- ◆ John Whitehead – 12 working bees
- ◆ Hunter Shaw – 11 working bees
- ◆ John Stevenson – 8 working bees

Most of these volunteers are also Trustees so their overall contribution to the work of the Trust is much higher. Special thanks is given to Geoff Wells – not only did he volunteer his time to help with the two aerial poison drops completed by the Trust, but he has also “adopted” the mainland stoat trap line and once a month heads out to check the traps for us using his own boat for transport.

Monitoring - pests

Since August 2007 the Trust’s focus has changed from pest eradication to monitoring the pest-free status of both Pomona and Rona Islands. The Trust would like to thank Megan Willans for putting together a comprehensive quarantine plan for the islands. The plan provides the Trust with advice on the measures required to keep the islands pest-free as well as advice on what to do in the event of a re-invasion of a particular pest species.



The Trust has implemented a range of measures to ensure that its hard work getting rid of the animal pests pays off. The measures in place to detect and catch any pests that return to the island include maintaining the stoat trap lines on both Pomona and Rona so that any stoats that do swim to the islands are caught as quickly as possible. Trap lines on the mainland aim to reduce the risk of stoats swimming across to the island. There is now a network of bait stations on Pomona and Rona Islands which specifically target any rodents which may get back to the islands. The Trust has also placed chew sticks throughout the

island which can detect not only rats and mice but also possums. These are checked regularly when volunteers do a stoat trap and bait station check on the islands.

The Trust is also engaged in educating the public about the risks of accidentally re-introducing rats and mice to Pomona and Rona. The Trust has produced a quarantine leaflet which is available at the

Te Anau DOC visitor Centre and the two boat ramps in Manapouri. In addition, Trustees have been making presentations to community groups such as boating clubs and Rotary.

Monitoring – regeneration

The Trust is also actively monitoring regeneration of the bush and birdlife on both Pomona and Rona Islands. Three Trustees have attended a DOC-organised training course on conducting 5-minute bird counts in the New Zealand forest. This means that the Trust is well-placed to undertake its own monitoring, with plans to conduct 5 minute bird counts at least four times a year at a number of locations on both Pomona and Rona Islands.



In addition, every time we go to the islands we record the different bird species we see and hear as well as evidence of regeneration of the bush. The absence of deer and possums from Pomona Island is having a huge, positive impact on the vegetation with significant re-growth already evident in plant species such as broadleaf. Overall the numbers of birds being seen and heard is definitely higher than prior to the start of the eradication programme.

Restoration of Pomona and Rona Islands

With the shift in the Trust's focus towards restoring Pomona and Rona Islands, there has been a need for a restoration plan to drive the Trust's future activities. The Trust's Chair, John Whitehead, and Secretary, Viv Shaw, have worked together to complete a draft restoration plan for the two islands. At the end of March the plan was being finalised and circulated to the relevant people within DOC for peer review. As with the pest eradication phase on Pomona and Rona Islands, the Trust is keen to adopt a professional approach to species translocations in order to ensure the on-going success of the project. Implementing this plan will be the main focus of the Trust in the years to come.

In October 2007 the Trust's Chair, John Whitehead, attended the New Zealand Sanctuaries Workshop in Wellington where he gained useful insights into other island restoration projects throughout the country.

Communications

Friends of Pomona – funding was secured from the Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Development Fund to set up a 'Friends of Pomona' scheme. Following extensive research a "membership" scheme for the Trust was established and a brochure professionally designed and produced. Four levels of membership are offered for individuals, families, international visitors and corporate businesses. Friends receive regular newsletters and Corporate Friends are listed on a separate page of the Trust's website. In 2007/8 four newsletters were sent out to Friends and supporters of the Trust.



The scheme was formally launched on 1 September 2007 by Southland District Council Mayor Frana Cardno – who also became our first Friend. Over 60 invited guests including sponsors, volunteers and Trustees enjoyed a cruise on Lake Manapouri courtesy of Real Journeys. Guests were treated to a cruise around both Pomona and Rona Islands, along with a light lunch and suitable liquid refreshments to toast the success of the Trust to date. Heavy rain did not detract from

the event! The Trust received a high level of publicity following the launch of Friends of Pomona. Major news items on the scheme appeared in the Southland Times, Otago Daily Times and Southland Express. It was also featured on local radio.

Website – our website continues to play a major role in keeping the community and volunteers informed of the Trust’s progress. Between April 2007 and March 2008 there were 5710 visits to the website. The website is updated regularly and is a major source of information for ‘Friends of Pomona’.

Pomona Publicity – in 2007/8 the Trust received a high level of publicity with mentions in 27 printed articles in publications such as the Southland Times, Otago Daily Times, Southland Express, Otago Southland Farmer, Southern Rural Life, Fiordland Focus, and the newsletters of Environment Southland, Southland District Council, Meridian Energy Manapouri Te Anau Community Fund. Regular updates on progress have also been provided to the Southland Branch of Forest and Bird, the Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron and the Fiordland Tramping and Outdoor Recreation Club.

Both good and bad publicity was received in the Southland Times for the aerial operation to eradicate rodents. A local hunter had contacted the paper with concerns about the drop and a scare article was duly published. Following the second aerial drop, however, a major positive feature on the operation was included in the Southland Times.

In 2007/8 the Trust was nominated for two awards – the Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon award and the Environment Southland Community Award. The Trust received a Highly Commended award from Environment Southland for its work on Pomona. In August 2007 a letter was received from the then Minister of Conservation, Chris Carter, congratulating the Trust on its ‘excellent progress’.

Exhibitions, Displays and Presentations

In summer 2007 local artist Chris Wilkie spent some time living on Pomona Island and his paintings depicting scenes from the island featured in two exhibitions – one in May in Invercargill and one in July in Wellington. Chris’s exhibitions and discussions of his time spent on Pomona were featured on Radio New Zealand.

The Trust has two display boards. One is permanently located, complete with a donation box, at the West Arm visitor centre. The other has been used at the DOC Te Anau visitor centre, the Te Anau library and the Southland Boat Show.

A second successful ‘Art in the Park’ day was held on Pomona Island in January 2008 as part of the DOC Summer Programme. Nineteen people attended followed by an exhibition of their art and photography in the Te Anau library. The Trust thanks Chris Wilkie, Graham Dainty, Hunter Shaw and Helen Dodson for their input into making this such a successful event.



The Trust’s Chair, John Whitehead, and Secretary, Viv Shaw, hosted a visit to Pomona Island by the Southland Branch of Forest and Bird in April 2007. Presentations were given by Viv during the year to Fiordland Rotary Club, the Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron and as part of the DOC Summer Programme. Staff from Community Relations at DOC in Te Anau also gave

presentations at national events citing the Pomona Island Charitable Trust as a model example of a community-led conservation initiative.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Pomona Island Charitable Trust has had a **very successful** year. We have worked to some tight time frames to fulfil the aims of the Trust and are **proud** of what we have achieved. Finally we would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who have helped fund the Trust this year and in the past. And we would like to thank all the volunteers who have worked so hard to make this project happen.

John Whitehead
Chair
on behalf of the Trust

June 2008