

Pomona Island Charitable Trust

Annual Report

2008/9





Major Achievements 2008/9

- Rona Island selected as a crèche site for the endangered Haast kiwi
- First bird translocation successfully undertaken – 58 robins released on Pomona and 21 on Rona
- Winner of the 2008 Environment Southland Community Group Award
- A total of 45 working bees with 62 volunteers who completed nearly 1137 hours work on the islands
- No stoats caught on Pomona or Rona Islands
- Pomona Island now possum-free
- New trap lines installed on mainland adjacent to Rona Island (4 stoats, 3 rats caught)
- Biggest single working bee in history of the Trust held in September 2008
- Exchanged old Fenn traps for new stainless steel DOC 150 traps
- Launch of Pomona Post – the new-look newsletter of the Pomona Island Charitable Trust
- Pomona featured on TVNZ's 'Meet the Locals' series
- Friends of Pomona and donation income to the value of nearly \$7,900
- Successful grant applications to the value of \$13570
- In-kind donations to the value of nearly \$29,000
- Restoration plan peer-reviewed by DOC
- Significant publicity in local and regional publications

Pomona Island Charitable Trust

Annual Report 2008/9

Introduction

The last year has again seen the Pomona Island Charitable Trust make great progress in achieving its aim of creating an island refuge in Lake Manapouri. No pests at all were caught on the island during the year and our monitoring suggests that the island does appear to be pest-free. However, we have to officially wait for two years following the rodent eradication programme before we can confirm the pest-free status of both Pomona and Rona Islands. This has not stopped the Trust, with the help of the local community, pressing ahead with its restoration plans for the island. A number of very exciting projects have started during the past year making the two islands even more special places. We have seen the focus of the Trust change markedly from pest eradication to restoration and this is reflected in the presentation of our annual report.

Organisation

Since the 2007/8 AGM a total of four Trustees' meetings have been held. At the AGM John Whitehead was re-elected Chair, Viv Shaw as Secretary and John Stevenson as Treasurer. During the year two new Trustees were appointed – Chris Shaw in April 2008 and Neil Robertson in March 2009. 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 our Patron.

In March 2009 Murray Willans, our DOC Advisory Trustee, announced that he was leaving DOC and Lindsay Wilson was appointed to replace him. Murray and his staff at DOC in Te Anau have been hugely supportive of the work of the Trust and we would like to acknowledge the contribution that Murray has made over the last three years. His advice on pest eradication and his willingness to facilitate our conservation work with the minimum amount of fuss has been greatly appreciated. We all wish Murray well for his future in farming. We also look forward to the opportunity to work closely with Lindsay.

In April 2008 the Trust received its certificate of registration as a charitable entity under the Charities Act 2005. This registration enables the Trust to be exempt from tax and means that people donating money to the Trust can claim the tax back on their donations.

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. The NZ Lottery Grants Board paid Topajka Shaw Consulting \$1000 for operations management for the possum mop-up project. In 2007/8 a grant from the Meridian Energy Te Anau Manapouri Community Development Fund included funds for administration for the development and implementation of the 'Friends of Pomona' scheme. In 2008/9 the Trust formally contracted Viv, through Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited, to manage the 'Friends of Pomona' scheme paying a total of \$3,200 for this service. All of the funds raised through the

'Friends of Pomona' scheme go towards the restoration of the islands. None of these funds go towards the administration costs of the Trust.

There was, however, a shortfall in funding for the overall project management of the restoration work on Pomona Island. Viv, and Topajka Shaw Consulting Limited, donated an estimated \$12700 of their time and resources to the Trust. The Trust would like to acknowledge this generous in-kind donation as it has played a significant role in helping the Trust to make a lot of progress, in a short space of time, with its eradication and restoration aims.

Funding

In 2008/9 the Trust received funding from the following sources:

Source	Purpose	Amount
	Possum mop-up, post aerial poison drop	\$13,570
Environment Southland Award	No specific purpose	\$1000
Anonymous benefactor	Robin translocation	\$5,000
Donation boxes	No specific purpose	\$862
Friends of Pomona income	Island restoration	\$1440
Gary Chisholm Family Trust (via the Fiordland Conservation Trust)	Trap replacement and extension project	\$5200
Friends Donations	Island restoration	\$1253
Interest	No specific purpose	\$1967

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 \$28,973 and the Trust is grateful to all organisations and individuals who have supported our work in this way.

Restoration of Pomona and Rona Islands

A restoration plan for Pomona and Rona Islands was completed by Viv Shaw and John Whitehead in June 2008. The plan was reviewed by DOC staff both in Te Anau and at the Southland Conservancy office in Invercargill. The feedback from one DOC staff member was particularly pleasing noting that he "liked the Trust's professional thinking on biota management". The key restoration aims for the islands are:



- to reintroduce birdlife native to Fiordland
- to provide a safe habitat for endangered and threatened birds to breed
- to provide a safe habitat for other endangered and threatened fauna such as reptiles and invertebrates
- to provide an accessible location for people to see, hear and learn about the flora and fauna native to Fiordland
- to ensure community involvement in the restoration of the islands.

This is the really exciting phase of the Trust's work and a number of key milestones have already been achieved in 2008/9.

Species Translocations – Haast Kiwi (Tokoeka)



At the end of 2008, Rona Island was selected as a crèche site for the nationally endangered Haast kiwi. This saw a total of 10 kiwi chicks released on the island over a period of two months. The chicks will remain on Rona Island until they grow to a size where they can fend off predators, such as stoats for themselves. Once they are big enough they will be returned to the kiwi sanctuary at Haast. The selection of Rona as a kiwi crèche site was a very exciting development for the Trust. Members of the local community were present at the release of the chicks and for many this was their first sighting of a kiwi in the wild. Community involvement is on-going as the chicks need to have their transmitter harnesses changed every five weeks. In the short time that the Haast kiwi have been on Rona Island 15 people have already had the opportunity to see these special birds. The birds have been growing well and a good relationship has developed between the Trust and DOC staff from Haast. Publicity for the release has been low key as this is the first time that Rona Island has been used as a kiwi crèche site.

Species Translocation – South Island Robin (Kakarui)

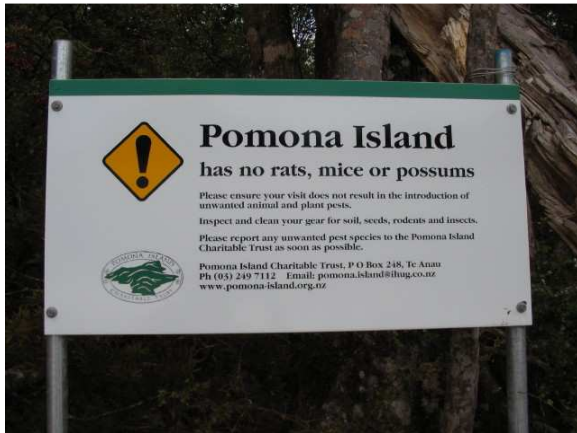
The Trust's first permanent species translocation took place in February 2009 with the release of 51 South Island robins on Pomona and Rona Islands. Five volunteers from the Trust were accompanied to Breaksea Island off the Fiordland Coast by DOC staff on board the Southern Winds, chartered for the project. Three days were spent catching the birds with the first 30 robins transferred by helicopter to Pomona Island where they were released by Trustee Hunter Shaw. A further 10 birds were released on the island during the return boat journey across Lake Manapouri and 11 robins were released on Rona Island.



A significant proportion of the cost of the transfer was met through a donation from an anonymous benefactor.

Since this first release a second transfer of South Island robins has taken place. In April seven volunteers travelled up Lake Te Anau to Glade House, courtesy of Real Journeys. A total of 28 birds caught in the Clinton Valley were released onto Pomona and Rona Islands with the help of local children and families from the Manapouri area. Thanks to Adventure Kayak and Cruise for providing transport to the island. This brings the total number of robins on Pomona Island to 58 with 21 birds on Rona Island. Initial indications show that the robins have settled in well to their new home.

Quarantine



With the Trust's main attention now turning to maintaining Pomona and Rona as pest-free island sanctuaries, the issue of quarantine has become very important. New signs have been permanently sited on both islands advising visitors that Pomona and Rona have no pests and asking them to check their boats and packs for any unwanted stowaways. Quarantine leaflets are available at all boat launching facilities in Manapouri and leaflets have been sent to boat clubs for distribution to their members. The leaflet can also be downloaded from the Trust's website.

The greatest risk of re-invasion of pest species comes from boaties, so education has become a key issue for the Trust.

Monitoring – Regeneration

Over the last year the Trust has put in place a plan to monitor birds on both Pomona and Rona Islands. In 2008/9 four official 5-minute bird counts were conducted by volunteers. When compared with the baseline data collected before all pests were removed from the islands, the data shows a significant increase in the numbers of birds seen and heard on both islands. On Pomona the average number of birds per baseline count station has increased from 10.1 to 15.6 which is an increase of nearly 55%. And on Rona the number of birds has increased by 56% over the baseline data. These increases in bird numbers demonstrate quite clearly how much damage the pests on the islands were doing to the native birds. Bird Counts are being conducted at different times of the year to identify any patterns in the data.

In May 2008 three Trustees (John Whitehead, Viv Shaw and Chris Shaw) attended a DOC-organised 5-minute bird count course in Glenorchy and are now deemed to be competent in the bird count method.

Monitoring – Pests

The Trust's focus on both Pomona and Rona Islands has now shifted away from pest eradication to maintaining the islands as pest-free sanctuaries. However, a key tool in our fight against re-invasions, especially of stoats, is in maintaining an effective mainland trapping programme. Any stoat caught in a mainland trap cannot swim across to the islands. To this end the Trust put in place two new trap lines in October 2008 to offer greater protection to Rona Island. Eleven double trap sets are now in place around the Beehive to the west of Rona and there are 10 double trap sets to the north of the island. In addition, all of the existing old Fenn traps on Pomona and the mainland were replaced with new stainless steel DOC 150 traps. These will not rust and so will last a long time. The trap replacement project took place during Conservation Week 2008 and proved to be



the biggest working bee ever held by the Trust. The project was made possible by a generous donation from the Gary Chisholm Family Trust of Christchurch.

Possums - in June 2008 Contract Wild Animal Control Limited was contracted to undertake the final follow-up stage of possum eradication on Pomona. Funded by the NZ Lottery Grants Board it was extremely pleasing to receive the report that “there is no sign of possums on Pomona”. Possums are not able to swim to the island so our aim of eradication certainly appears to have been achieved. We do, however, have monitoring in place, in the form of chew sticks. In the unlikely event that possums reappear on the island we would be able to detect them very quickly.

Deer - during 2008/9 regular monitoring has shown that there is no sign at all of deer on Pomona Island. There is a deer pen on the island, but electronic monitoring has been hampered by old equipment which may need to be replaced in the future.

Rodents - there has been no sign of rodents on either Pomona or Rona Islands since the aerial applications of brodifacoum in July and August 2007. Again we have monitoring in place which would show us whether a rat or a mouse has got back to the island. The main risk for the re-invasion of rodents is by people accidentally taking a rat or mouse to the islands either on their boat or in their packs.

Stoats - although no stoats have been trapped on Pomona or Rona Islands during 2008/9 there is always a risk that one could swim across to the islands. Regular checks of our stoat trap lines on both islands as well as the adjacent mainland allow us to monitor the situation.

2008/9	Pomona	Rona	Pomona Mainland	Rona Mainland*
No times traps checked	9	6	12	4
Stoats caught	0	0	2	4
Rats caught	0	0	9	3
Pests caught since 2006				
Stoats	18	3	54	4
Rats	312	0	81	3

* Trap line established in October 2008

Volunteers



Between April 2008 and March 2009 the Trust organised 45 working bees. A total of 62 different volunteers completed 1137 hours work on pest eradication and monitoring on the islands and the adjacent mainland. 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 the preparation of written documentation.

The following volunteers deserve a special thanks for the number of working bees they have attended in 2008/9:

- ◆ Viv Shaw – 26 working bees
- ◆ John Whitehead – 26 working bees
- ◆ Chris Shaw – 24 working bees
- ◆ Geoff Wells – 11 working bees
- ◆ Neil Robertson – 10 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 from the Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron who has “adopted” the Pomona mainland stoat trap line and once a month heads out to check the traps for us using his own boat for transport. During 2008/9 the Trust tapped into a new source of volunteers as Meridian Energy staff joined us on two working bees to check the traps on Pomona.

It is pleasing that new volunteers are still coming along all of the time and that they are able to enjoy their time on the island. For many of us who have been involved from the start it is good to see the changes on the islands both in terms of the increased number of birds and also to see the regeneration of the native plants now that they are not being destroyed by possums, deer and rodents.

Communications

Friends of Pomona – during the 2008/9 year the Trust has received income from Friends of Pomona in the form of donations, subscriptions and from the sale of Pomona T-shirts. The Trust’s new-look newsletter – Pomona Post – was launched in April 2008 with three other issues published in August and November 2008 and February 2009.

Website – our website plays a major role in keeping the community and volunteers informed of the Trust’s progress. Between April 2008 and March 2009 there were 9454 visits to the website. This was an increase in visits of over 65% on the previous year. The website is updated regularly and the Trust’s newsletter is available for anyone to download. Copies of the Trust’s annual report are also posted on the website. There are now links from many other websites to the Trust’s homepage.

Pomona Publicity – in 2008/9 the Trust received a high level of publicity with mentions in 64 printed articles in publications such as the Southland Times, Otago Daily Times, Southland Express, Fiordland Advocate, Fiordland Focus, and the newsletters of Environment Southland, Department of Conservation (Southland Conservancy), 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.

All publicity received by the Trust has been positive with the exception of one letter to the editor of the Southland Times about the release of robins on Pomona. The Trust has a policy of not responding to such letters.

Meet the Locals - during 2008/9 the work of the Trust has been seen regularly on TVNZ Channel 7's 'meet the locals' series showing conservation projects from around New Zealand. The four minute video clip shows Trustees Viv Shaw and Hunter Shaw talking about the restoration work on Pomona and also highlights the quarantine measures in place to keep the island pest-free. The video clip can also be viewed on the web via the DOC website. This has provided valuable national exposure for our work on Pomona.

Award-winning Trust - the Trust was nominated for two awards in 2008/9: the Environment Southland Community Award and the DOC Community Conservation Award. The Trust was delighted to be the recipient of the Environment Southland Community Group Award. The award was particularly meaningful as it is judged by an independent panel of councillors from Environment Southland. The Awards were also aired on Cue TV, the Southland TV station.



Displays and Presentations – at the end of 2008 the Trust updated its display board at the West Arm visitor centre to reflect our change in focus from pest eradication to island restoration. The donation box continues to provide a useful source of revenue for the Trust. In November 2008 John Whitehead presented the Trust's restoration plan and robin translocation proposal to Kaitiaki Roopu. Unfortunately the Art in the Park even scheduled for February had to be cancelled due to very poor weather.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Pomona Island Charitable Trust has had a another **very successful** year. We are extremely grateful to the local community for getting behind us and supporting us either financially or by volunteering their time on the island. A number of organisations locally also support our work either through direct sponsorship or by providing in-kind support.

We look forward to your on-going support as we continue restoring Pomona and Rona Islands.

John Whitehead
Chair
on behalf of the Trust

June 2009