



Stewart Island / Rakiura Community & Environment Trust

for people for environment

Finalists in the Green Ribbon Awards



Trustee Al Burns (left) and Brent Beaven, (right) Private Secretary to the Minister for Conservation and long time supporter of SIRCET at the Awards dinner.

We were delighted to be selected as a finalist for the 2017 Green Ribbon Awards, in the Protecting our Biodiversity category. These national awards are held by the Ministry for the Environment to recognise outstanding contributions by individuals, communities and organisations to protect and manage New Zealand's environment, so it is a real honour just to get into the finals.

Congratulations to the winners in the Protecting our Biodiversity category, Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society, who are returning Kokako to Mt Pirongia.

Trustees Di Morris and Al Burns attended the awards dinner in Wellington in June, huge thanks to Real Journeys, Stewart Island Flights, Rakiura Water Taxi and Anita and Ian Herbert for help in sending Di and Al up to the formal award ceremony in Wellington.



Green
Ribbon
Awards

2017 Finalist | Whatungaro te Tangata
Toitu te Whenua

Who are SIRCET?

The Stewart Island/Rakiura Community and Environment Trust (SIRCET), a non-profit organisation, was founded on the 6th March 2003 to promote projects that benefit the community and its environment around the settled parts of Stewart Island/ Rakiura. Our Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration project (HMBHRP) aims to create an open sanctuary in our backyard. This project started as a result of locals becoming concerned about the number of sooty shearwater/tītī and little blue penguin deaths at Ackers Point. Volunteers started to carry out predator control in the area, and with the support of landowners, the project has grown to protect 210 hectares from Ackers point to Golden Bay Road.

SIRCET is able to carry out its work through the hard work of volunteers, and with sponsorship from the community, visitors and local businesses, DOC, Environment Southland, and the generous support of a wide range of funders. For more information or to get involved please check out our Facebook page and newly revamped website:

www.sircet.org.nz

A word from our staff -

Shona Sangster, Project Administrator

There has been a bit of a gap since our newsletter while we worked on a project to re-do our website. Now that our website is looking all shiny and new (go on, check it out) we are able to get back to our regular newsletters. But we've been thinking about how best to make sure we are keeping up with the times. We'd love to have your views—do you like getting the newsletter or would you rather keep up with our news through the website or our Facebook page. Are you happy to get a pdf emailed to you or do you love the traditional feel of paper (you can always light your fire with it afterwards)? Please let me know at my new email address administrator@sircet.org.nz, though mail to the old email addresses will still get to us too. A big thank you to Robin Sallis of Cerulean Web Design for delivering us a wonderful new website, and also thanks to Southland District Council for assisting with the printing of this newsletter.

5 Minute Bird Call Count Results

5 minute bird call counts, conducted by SIRCET since 2004, are one way we monitor the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project's success. The main objective of the project is to protect and enhance the native bird life around the township of Halfmoon Bay, so a count of how many birds can be heard over time gives us a rough picture of the overall trends.

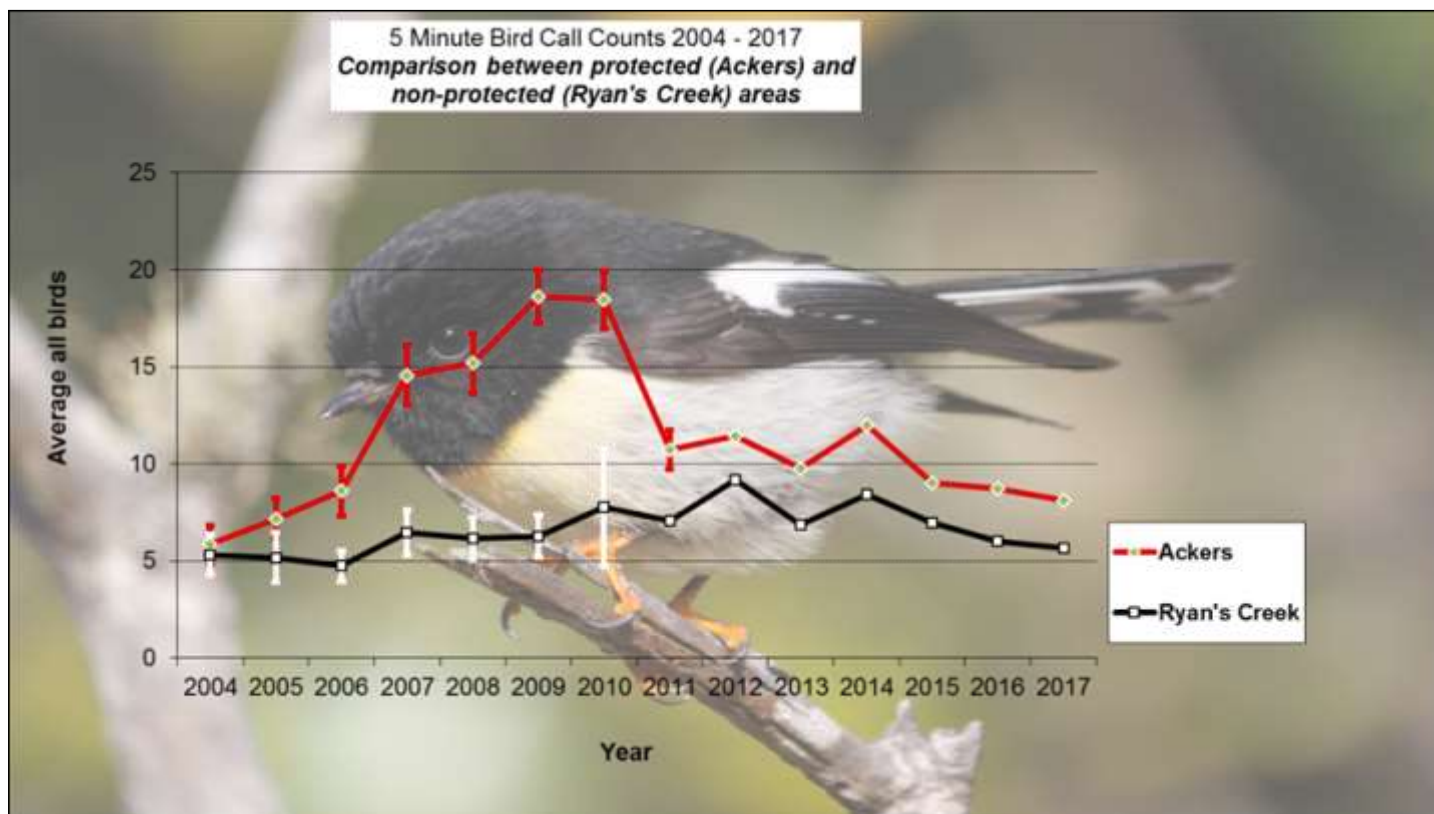
While we have seen a second dip in the year to year data, with this kind of research it is the big picture over many years that is important and it is good to see the number of birds in the project area has remained consistently higher than when we started back in 2004.

5 minute bird counts are carried out by a contractor in April each year, thanks very much to Matt Jones for all the hard work he puts into doing these counts in all weathers!



Matt Jones counting bird calls for SIRCET

A big thank you to the World Wildlife Federation's Habitat Protection Fund, who have helped to fund SIRCET's work this year. The WWF Habitat Protection Fund supports communities to run projects that conserve and restore New Zealand's natural environment - freshwater, coastal, wetlands, forest and dunelands. The WWF Habitat Protection Fund is supported by the Tindall Foundation.



Conservation Art on Tour

The 'Our Island' biodiversity conservation art exhibition Stewart Islanders made in Sept 2015 continued its tour of Otago in 2016! In February and then again in November it was on show during community workshops that combined print-making with different local predator-removal community projects. These communities then also made their own new work, sharing their views and expressing their commitment to biodiversity conservation work. Jenny Rock and Lynn Taylor (and friends, all part of the 'The Sandpit Collective') continue to plan to share the work. Watch this space.



Left: November exhibition and workshop at Pioneer Hall (Port Chalmers) with the Beyond Orokonui Halo Project (www.beyondorokonui.org.nz) Right: exhibition and workshop in Coronation Hall, Portobello, with the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group in February (www.pestfreepeninsula.org.nz)

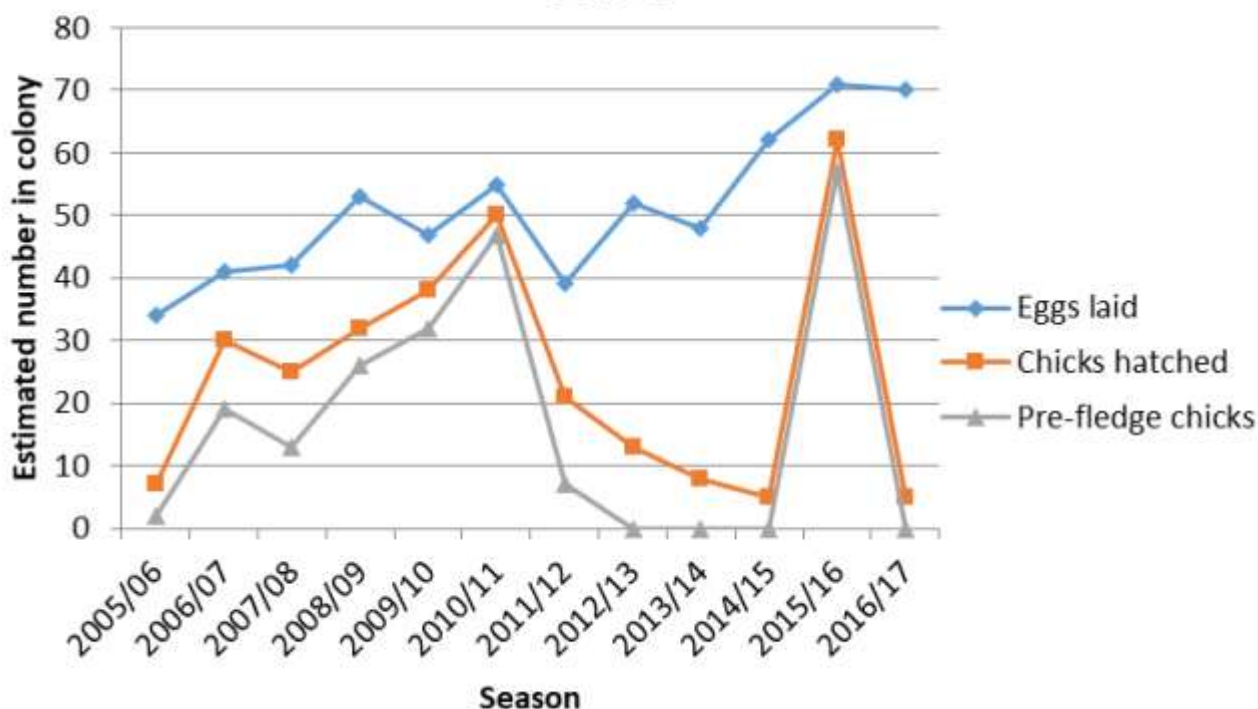


Titi/Sooty Shearwater monitoring

Sadly, no chicks are thought to have fledged from the Ackers Point colony in 2017. Seventy six study plot burrows were investigated which contained an estimated 28 eggs, and from which two chicks hatched but none fledged. No cat sign was noted in the colony area. One rat was seen but otherwise little sign noted. Deer sign was seen throughout the colony area.

Thanks to Sandy King, who conducted the monitoring and Jennifer Ross, a volunteer gave a total of 7.5 hours to the project.

Ackers Point Titi colony breeding 2005-2017



BUSINESS SPONSOR A HECTARE

SIRCET is a large organisation to run, managed by volunteers but we employ one full time and one part time staff member and several contractors.

External funding covers some of our staff and contractor costs but without the generous annual sponsorship from individuals and businesses it would be difficult to fund the Trust's day to day expenses including:

- Management expenses
- Traps
- Rat bait
- Vehicle running costs

HOW ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS GETTING BEHIND OUR STEWART ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS?

A \$250 Business Sponsor-a-Hectare entitles the business to display the SIRCET logo on their website and also have their logo in SIRCET's annual report, the Environment Centre and on our website. A Business Sponsorship for SIRCET supports the restoration of our environment which in turn makes our backyards a better place. Contact administrator@sircet.org.nz to participate

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

A special thanks to those businesses who made a commitment to the Sponsor a Hectare program this year

PETE ROSS AUTOMOTIVE



AURORA CHARTERS



Ulva's Guided Walks
Ulva Island Bird Sanctuary Stewart Island New Zealand



TRAPS FOR SALE

SIRCET have Victor rat traps made up with bases and covers. They are the same design that we have been using and they have caught thousands of rats!

A dab of Peanut Butter, check them once a week and it keeps the rats from living in the ceiling chewing on those yummy wires and means you don't have to use poison.

Traps cost \$20. Contact Willy to purchase one: 0274694504 or pest-manager@sircet.org.nz

