

Stewart Island / Rakiura
Community & Environment Trust



for people for environment

Stewart Island/ Rakiura Community & Environment Trust

Annual Report **1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015**

PO Box 124
Stewart Island 9846
www.sircet.org.nz
info@sircet.org.nz

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Chairperson's Report

We have had a tumultuous year with some significant challenges and achievements. Recruiting a Project Manager took longer than expected and it was December before we welcomed Kelly Bunce to start with the Trust. We were very fortunate to have fantastic support from Nic Shaw in a temporary capacity until Kelly started. Kelly took a short break in May and has returned with newborn Maya and Miguel her partner whom we welcome warmly to the SIRCET family. I continued to live in Invercargill until March this year when I returned to Rakiura. It is great to be back on the island and in closer connection with the work being undertaken.

We have drawn on assistance from DOC whose Community Ranger, Jennifer Ross has been attending our meetings and providing further support with writing up minutes and liaising with the Department on our behalf. This is further strengthening this relationship and bodes well for the future. We have re-ignited our conversations with local iwi through DOC and have attended and informed Kaitiaki Roopu of the current work we are undertaking and discussed ways forward for our work with taonga species.

An ever-present focus on Health and Safety is always on the agenda as we work in slippery, windy, rainy and sometimes sunny environments. The new legislation puts the spotlight on organizations such as ours and we are doing our best to ensure that we are fully compliant. We have been unable to use the Nursery shed this year due to some structural issues which has caused some logistical juggling, however the plants are still coming on and we hope that we will be able to use this great space again next year.

Our work for the coming year will see more Goodnature auto traps trialled in the Core Zone, and we'll be checking closely to see how these are performing when our traditional Victor traps are closed down. This has the potential to save considerable staff time when our funding is getting harder to obtain. Control of deer numbers in the area will continue into the New Year when time allows and visitor numbers are low to ensure safety.

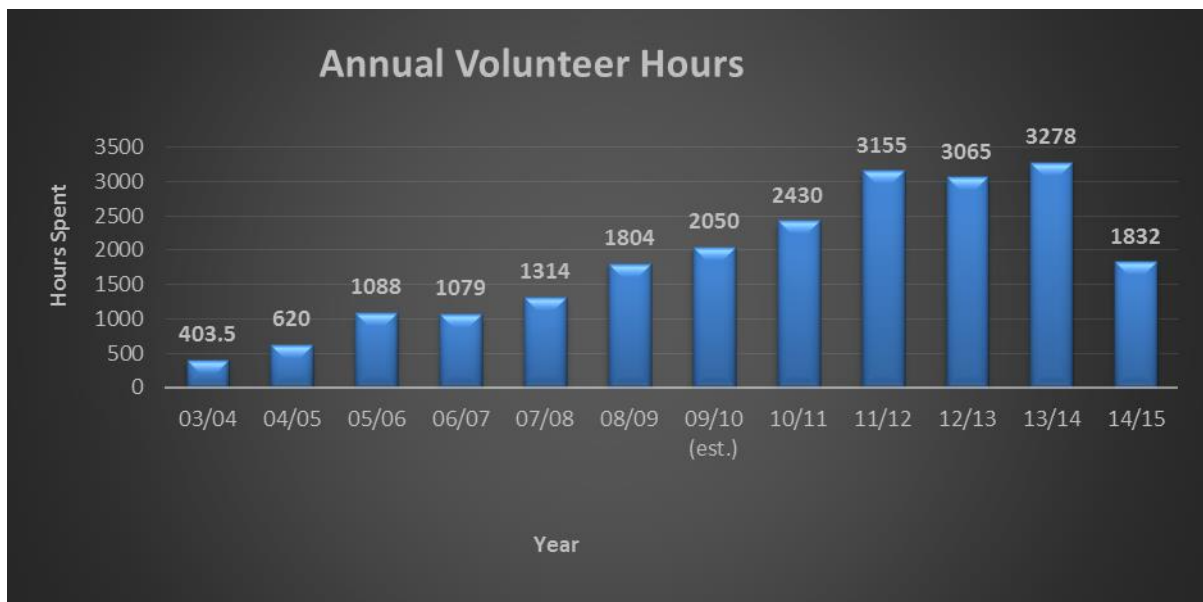
I would like to thank all the work of our many volunteers, including Trustees- (and their spouses) in particular Alina Thiebes who stepped down at our last AGM. Alina has popped back to help from time to time which is great, we wish her all the best with her family and business. Thank you to all who continue to support SIRCET in so many ways.

Di Morris

SIRCET Activities and Community Involvement

Volunteers

During the 2014 - 2015 year over 190 volunteers contributed over 1,832 hours to a variety of SIRCET projects including: animal pest control and monitoring, weed surveillance and control, maintenance of Lonneker's Beach plantings, Trust administration, nursery tasks, species monitoring, and educational workshops. Volunteers ranged from dedicated local residents to visiting volunteers, DOC volunteers, visiting school groups and our own hard-working Trustees. 637 hours were contributed by our small but dedicated local population. The quality of visiting volunteers this year was priceless to the project. A special mention goes to Peta Maidens who was our long term volunteer from January to March and put in a fantastic effort, especially at the nursery and also Sabine Pahl whose hard work and dedication on our community lines was outstanding. Thank you to DOC and E Hayes and Sons for providing accommodation for our visiting volunteers.



Environmental Education

SIRCET hosted a number of visiting school groups again this year. Five groups took part in the Ackers Nature talk and walk. This activity involves a 30-40 minute talk, where the Pest Manager, Kelly Bunce introduces the kids to the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project (HMBHRP) and discusses the various pests SIRCET aims to control, how we control them and why. Kelly then takes the group on a walk to the lighthouse checking rat, possum and cat traps along the way. Five visiting school groups also took part in a session at the Native Plant Nursery at Horseshoe Bay. These sessions give the kids a chance to learn about native plant propagation and growth techniques, as well as the importance of keeping environmental weeds at bay. They are also introduced to a number of rare and threatened native plants. Two

International school groups helped with continued maintenance of the Lonneker's Restoration Project, weeding the area and planting new seedlings that have been propagated at the Community Nursery.

The following community events were held over the year:

September 2014 – Lonneker's Planting Day

December 2014 – Introduction to SIRCET presentation developed and delivered to incoming DOC Summer volunteers

January 2015 – Volunteer Nursery Day

April 2015 – Quiz based on information found in the Environment Centre, with prizes donated by Stewart Island Flights and Glowing Sky.

May 2015 – Participated in community event organised around the visit of Prince Harry

June 2015 – National Volunteer Week event to celebrate our volunteers



Explaining SIRCET's work to Prince Harry



Kelly with Queenstown Primary pupils

Staff Development

SIRCET's Pest Manager Kelly Bunce and Project Administrator Shona Sangster have both taken advantage of courses offered by Nelson/Marlborough Institute of Technology organised for DOC staff. Shona completed a Plant Identification course, and Kelly completed a course on 5 minute Bird Call Counts.

Fundraising

2014-15 was a busy year for SIRCET's fundraising programs. The South Seas Hotel Quiz Night raised \$600 for SIRCET, which went towards much needed repairs to the SIRCET vehicle. Substantial donations have been received from Britt Moore, Ron Morrison, Ship to Shore, Ian Catto and Mr Hollis.

The trust also experienced steady support through the Sponsor-a-Hectare program, raising \$6201 towards the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project. A huge thank you to all our new and long-term sponsors especially those businesses that have joined the Business Sponsor program this year, Church Hill Restaurant and Oyster Bar, Te Anau Helicopter Services Ltd and Little Brown Kiwi.

Donations from plant sales at the nursery, as well as those from donation boxes at the Environment Centre and on the Ackers track have been received. Weka cards continue to be available for sale at businesses around town.

Collaboration

This year, SIRCET have been working closely with Goodnature, in addition to maintaining our relationships with DOC and the Dancing Star Foundation. Goodnature design and manufacture automatic traps that humanely kill rats and possums and then reset themselves, and SIRCET are looking to use their traps within the project area.

Media Releases & Awards

SIRCET News editions were printed in September 2014 and in January, March and June 2015. We are grateful to the Southland District Council for their continuing support in producing this newsletter through professional graphic design and printing.

SIRCET submitted the following articles to the Stewart Island News:

- July 2014: Maori Medicinal Gardens article, Kiwi Advocacy update, farewell to Denise Hayes, Night Bird Call Count results, Nursery feature plant *Linum monogynum*;
- August 2014: Clarification of staff working for SIRCET;
- September 2014: Plant Identification course, SIRCET wins Heritage and Environment section of the Invercargill region Trustpower Community Awards, Nursery feature plant *Carmichaelia williamsii*;
- October 2014: notice of upcoming Kiwi Dog Aversion training, Kiwi Advocacy update
- November 2014: Conservation week, report on Kiwi Dog Aversion training and public talk on Kiwi, Nursery feature plant *Anisotome lyalli*;
- December 2014: Medicinal and Edible Plant Garden article;
- January 2015: Welcome to new Pest Manager Kelly Bunce, thanks to visiting volunteer Peta Maidens, Nursery feature plant *Carex trifida*;
- February 2015: Report on Little Blue Penguin count, Annual report released, Nursery feature plant *Carmichaelia Odorata*;

☐☐March 2015: Kiwi Advocacy update, Medicinal and Edible Gardens article, Environment Centre quiz, thanks to visiting volunteer Claire Simpkin, Nursery feature plant *Metrosideros Umbellata*;

☐☐April 2015: Kiwi aversion training report, Quiz winners, BoP Polytech permanent plot vegetation monitoring report released, Nursery feature plant *Earina autumnalis*;

☐☐May 2015: Kiwi Advocacy update, Pest Manager update, Nursery feature plant *Olearia ilicifolia*;

☐☐June 2015: National Volunteer week event, appeal for new volunteers and trustees, Nursery feature plant *Myosotidium hortensia*.

Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project

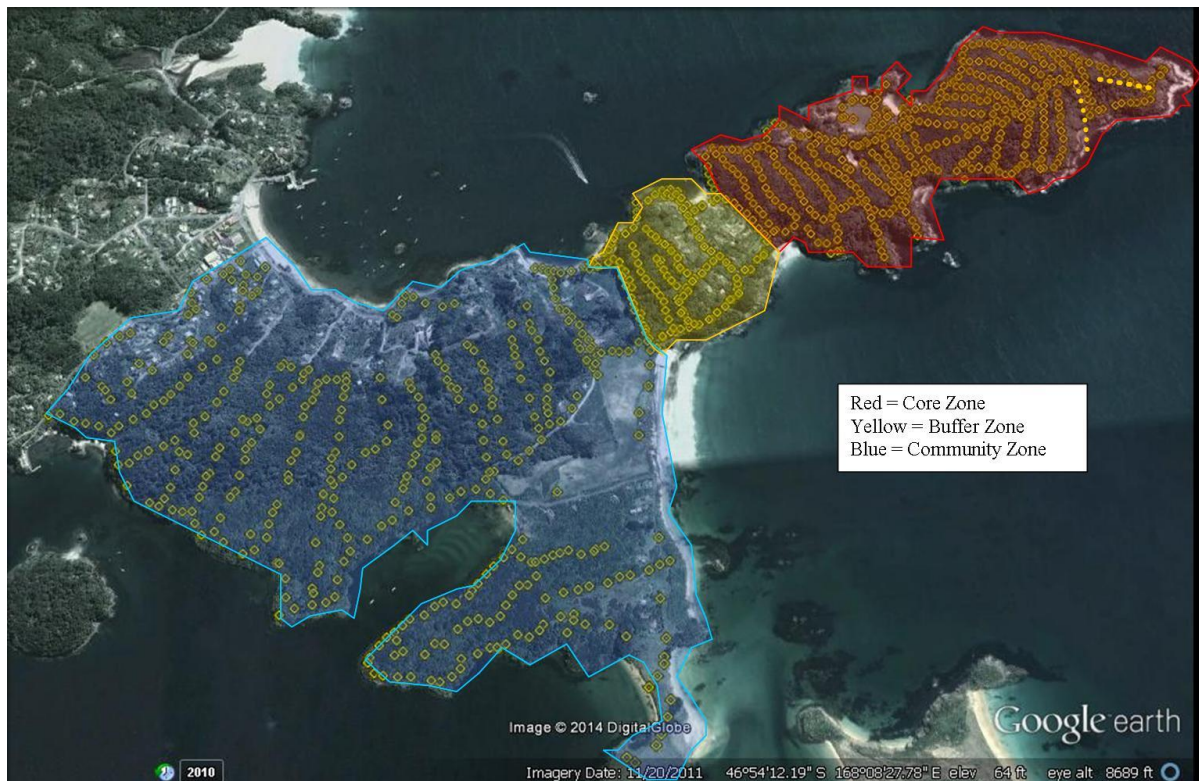
The Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project (HMBHRP) is SIRCET's primary project focusing on pest control and species monitoring on Ackers Peninsula. Pest control initially started in 2003 at Ackers Point to protect sooty shearwater/ tītī and little blue penguin colonies, and has since expanded to protect 210 hectares from Ackers Point to Golden Bay Road, Oban.

The project's recently (June 2013) updated Goals are:

- To increase the native bird population within the Halfmoon Bay project area;
- To provide a safe habitat for re-introduction and survival for Stewart Island species (both plants and animals); and
- To educate and involve the community in conservation activities

Animal Pest Control

The main form of pest control used is trapping, utilising Victor snap traps and an increasing number of Goodnature self resetting traps. Following a formal review of SIRCET's HMBHRP by the Department of Conservation, the Trust made the decision to split the 210ha project area into three zones – the core zone, buffer zone and community zone as shown by the map below. The trap lines within the community zone continue to be checked by local volunteers allowing SIRCET staff to concentrate their efforts within the core and buffer zones. The total number of rat traps across the project area is over 1,000 traps. This year SIRCET have been working to increase the number of automatic Goodnature traps deployed within the core and buffer zones, especially on some of the lines with very challenging terrain. There are now 60 self-resetting A12 Possum traps and 39 A24 self-resetting rat traps deployed in the Core and Buffer zones.



Map of trap lines within the HMBHRP area showing the three zones...note the trap intensification of the buffer and core zones.

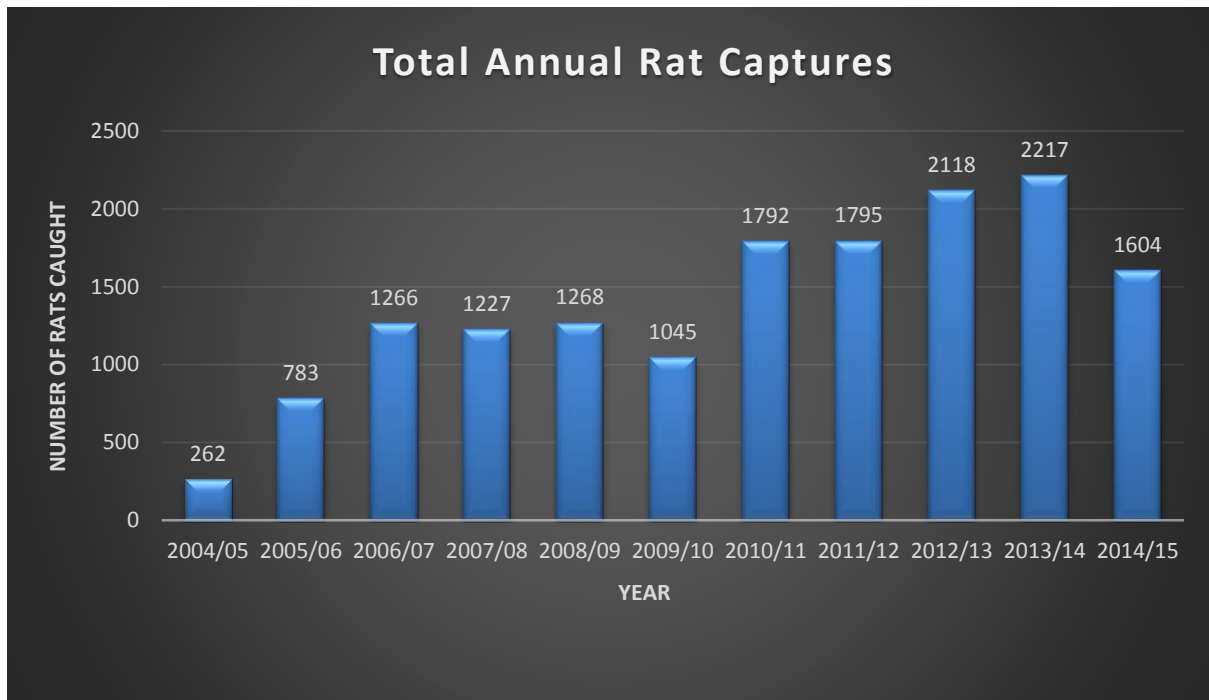
Trapping Results

The total number of pests trapped within the project area in 2014-15 was 1,613.

Target pest	Number trapped
Rats	1,604
Possums	7
Feral Cats	2
Deer	0

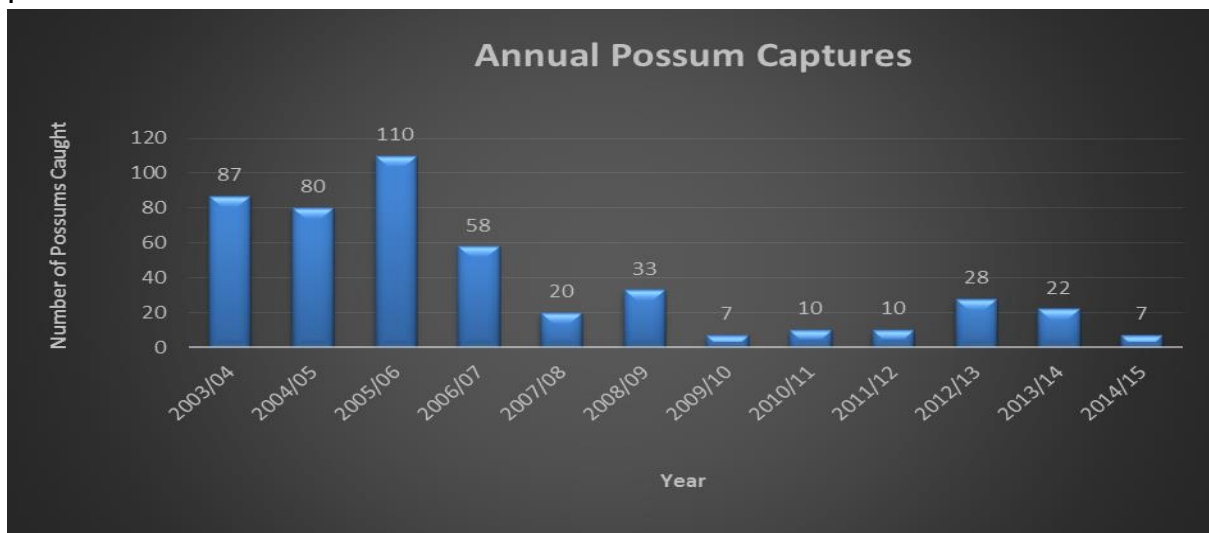
Rats

A total of 1,604 rats were caught during this financial year which is a decrease from previous years. These results are in line with our monitoring results which has shown a decrease of rats being present in the project area.



Possums

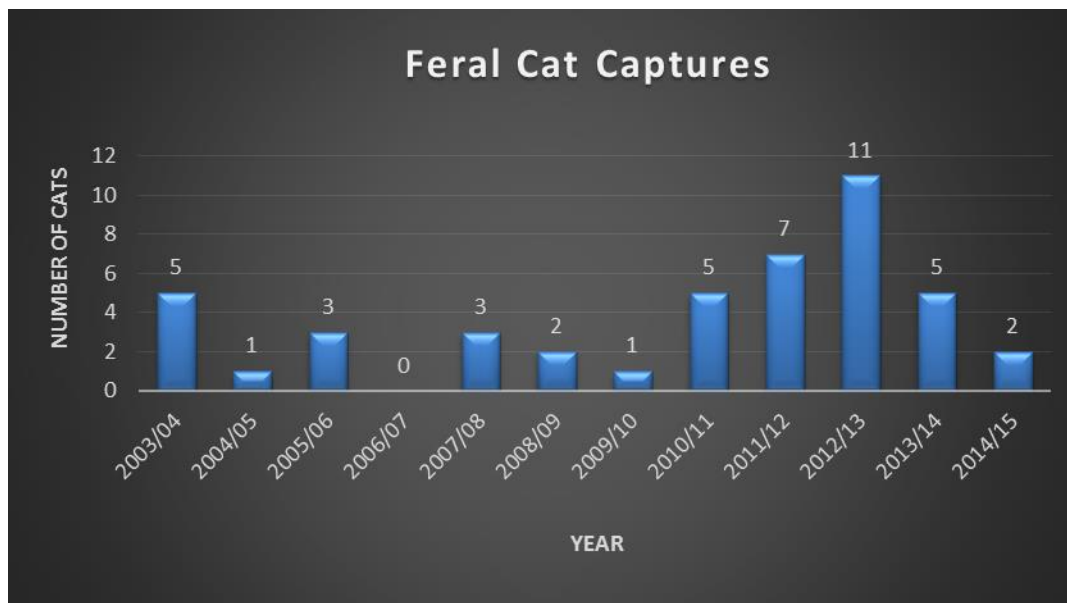
Possum traps have been opened and checked periodically throughout the year and a total of 7 possums were recorded trapped. All were trapped in the warrior kill traps. We also have a number of Goodnature self-setting traps throughout the core and buffer zones which kill numbers are not recorded. Due to the self-setting function of these traps the evidence of a kill may be removed before the trap needs human attention.



Feral Cats

SIRCET have continued to increase the number of live capture cat cages spread across the project area and there are now a total of 20 cages permanently on site. The traps have been periodically opened throughout the year and have succeeded in

trapping two feral cats. A further eight cages are available to respond to individual cat sign and are also lent to residents upon request.

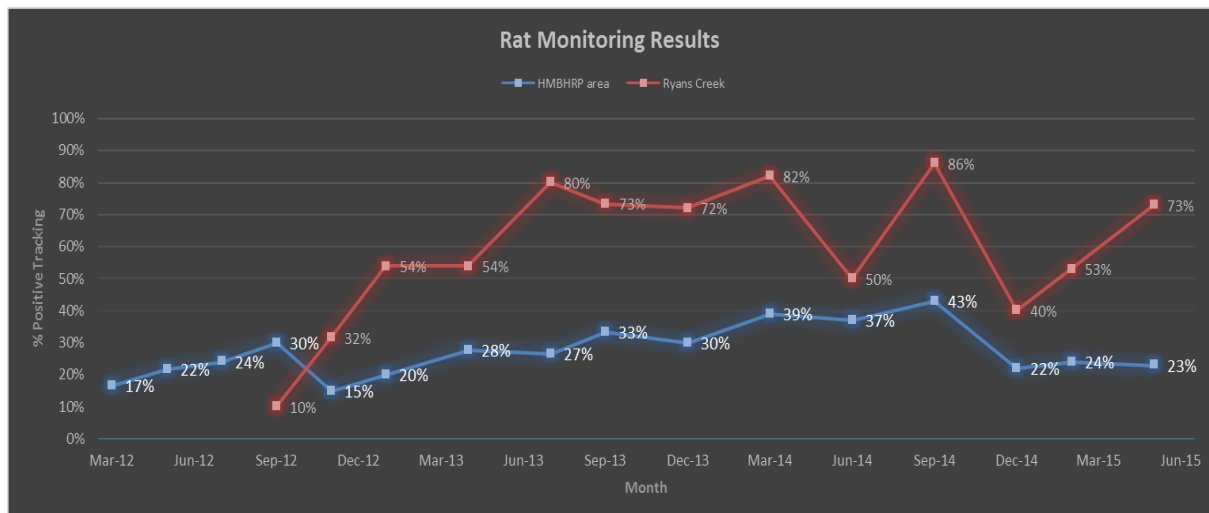


Deer

Historic deer control, consisting of irregular hunting, has not been sufficient to reduce deer numbers to a low enough level to regenerate the forest. Matthew Liddicoat, a student of Bay of Plenty Polytechnic undertook a study of vegetation at Ackers Point using the permanent plot method and reported that while there was a decrease in damage that could be attributed to possums and rats, the “lack of increase in the abundance of saplings may be the result of plant species being heavily retarded by deer browse to the point where they are completely absent from the browse level (30 – 200 cm)”. The report concluded that: “In order to restore natural ecosystems, ensure a natural progression from seedling to trees and create the required habitat for an increase in native bird population, it is recommended that the near total removal of deer should be carried out at Ackers Point Reserve”. Control of deer numbers in the area will continue as time allows and when visitor numbers are low, to ensure safety.

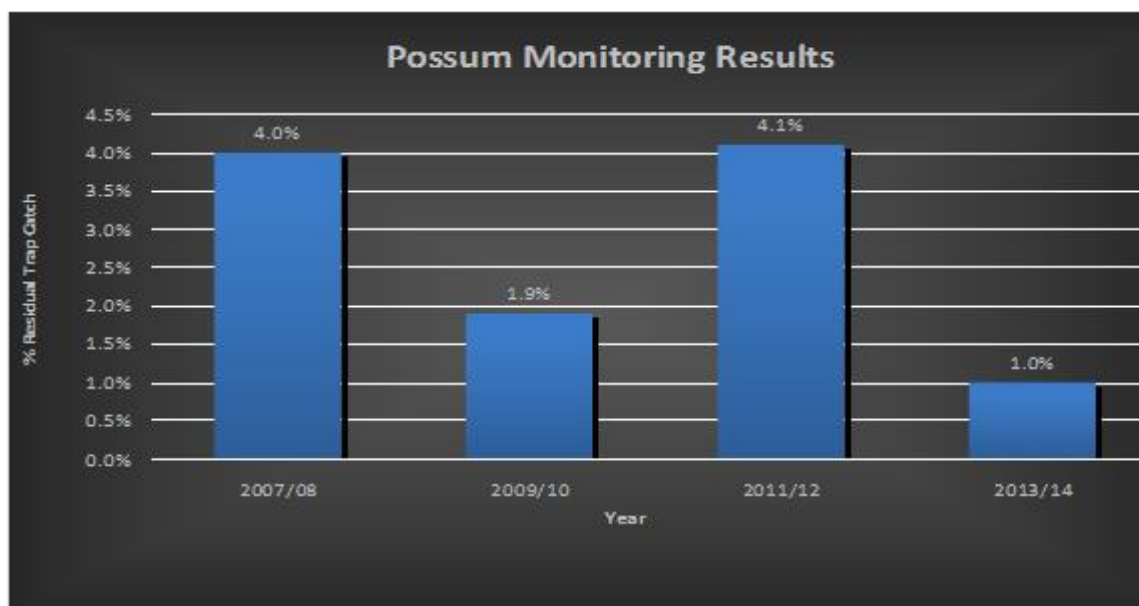
Pest Monitoring

Rat monitoring across the HMBHRP area and the un-trapped Ryans Creek control area was undertaken in September and December 2014 and, March and June 2015. Overall, the results were consistently higher in the Ryans Creek area where, in June 2015 they peaked at 73% compared to 23% in the HMBHRP area this is a fantastic reflection of the success and effect the project’s trapping efforts are having within the HMBHRP area.



Graph showing monitoring results to June 2015

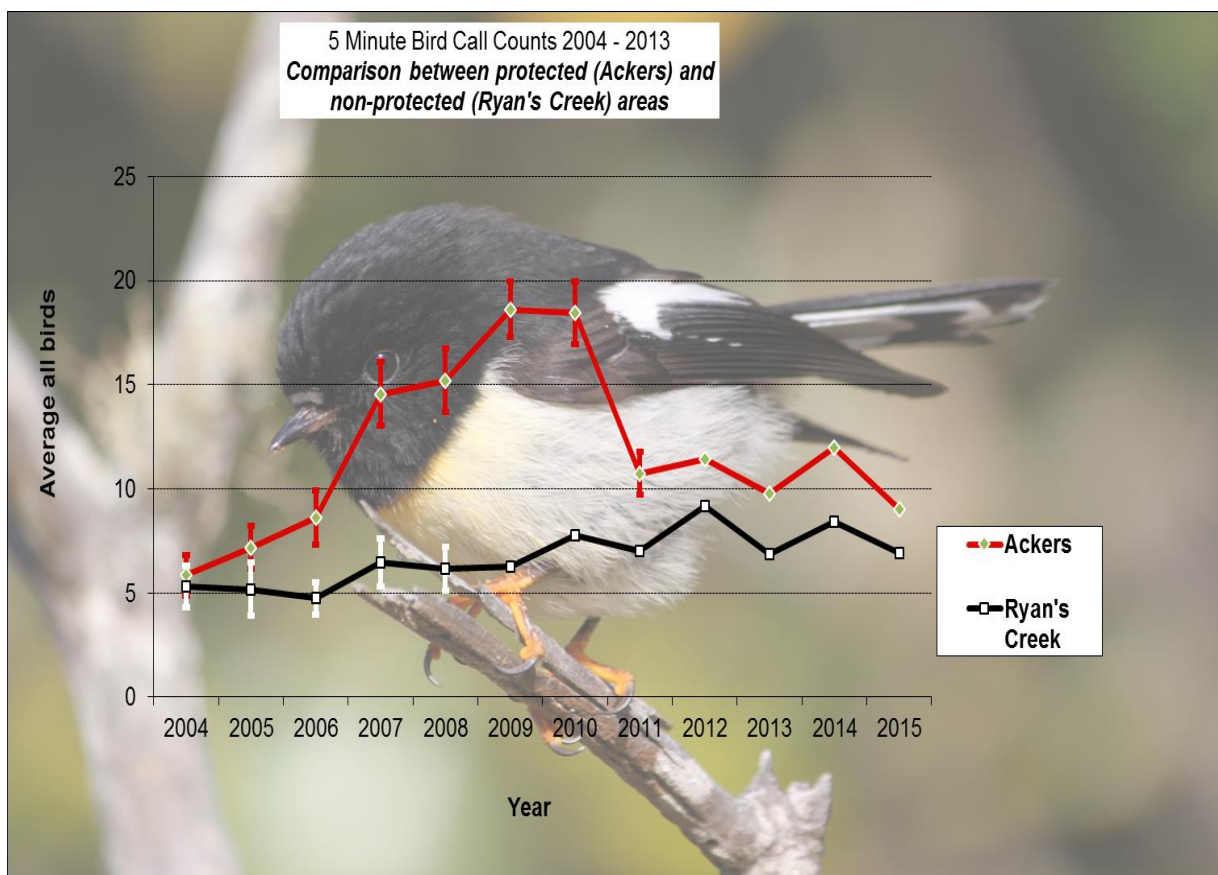
DOC (with assistance from the Pest Manager) run possum monitoring within the HMBHRP area biennially. This was run last year and will be due to be run again in 2015-2016. Monitoring was undertaken according to the National Pest Control Agencies (NPCA) protocol which sets out the standard trap-catch method used across New Zealand. The results were very low at 1% RTC (residual trap catch) which is well within SIRCET's target of 5% or less.



Species Monitoring

5 Minute Forest Bird Call Counts

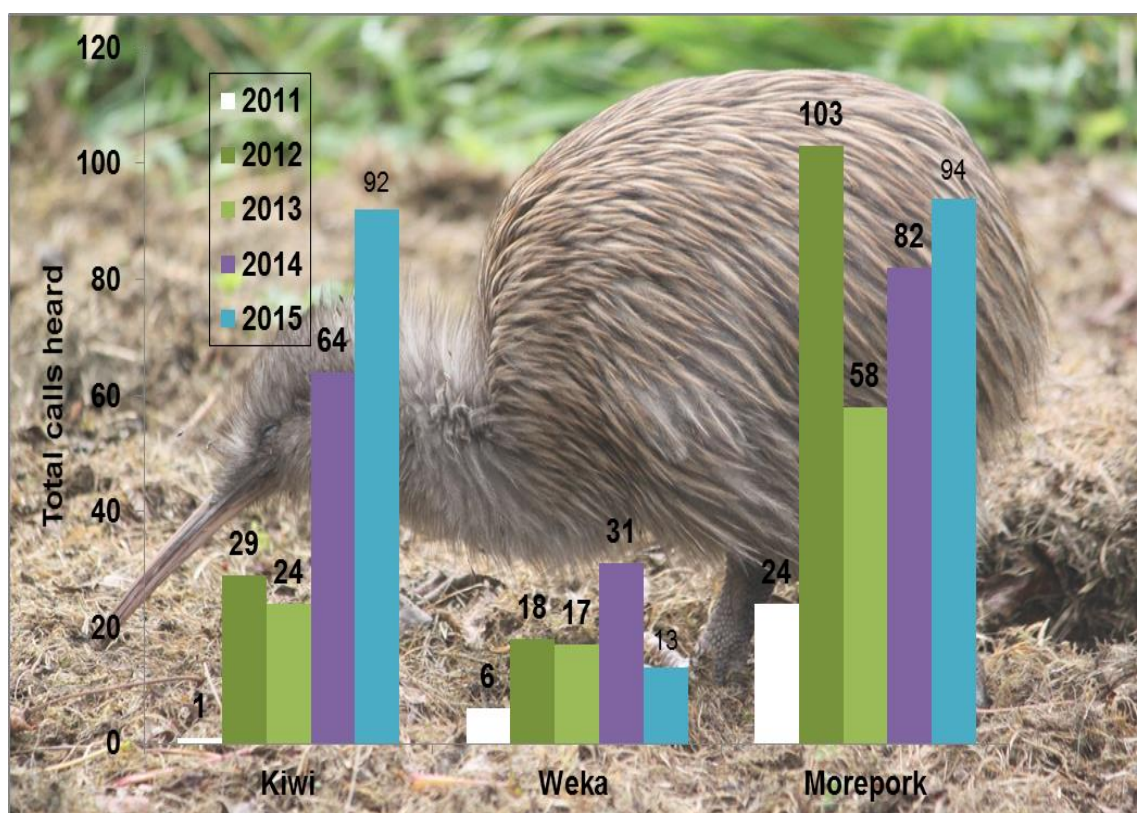
The annual 5 minute bird call count was conducted in April 2015 in the project area at Acker's Point and also in the Ryan's Creek control area. The results indicate a decrease in bird numbers from 2014 in both the project and control areas. However, results over the last four years indicate that we are consistently detecting more birds within the Project Area than outside of it, an indication that our pest control is enhancing the bird population.



5 Minute Bird Call Counts 2004 – 2015 Comparison between protected (Ackers) and non-protected (Ryan's Creek) areas graph

Kiwi, Weka, Morepork/ Ruru

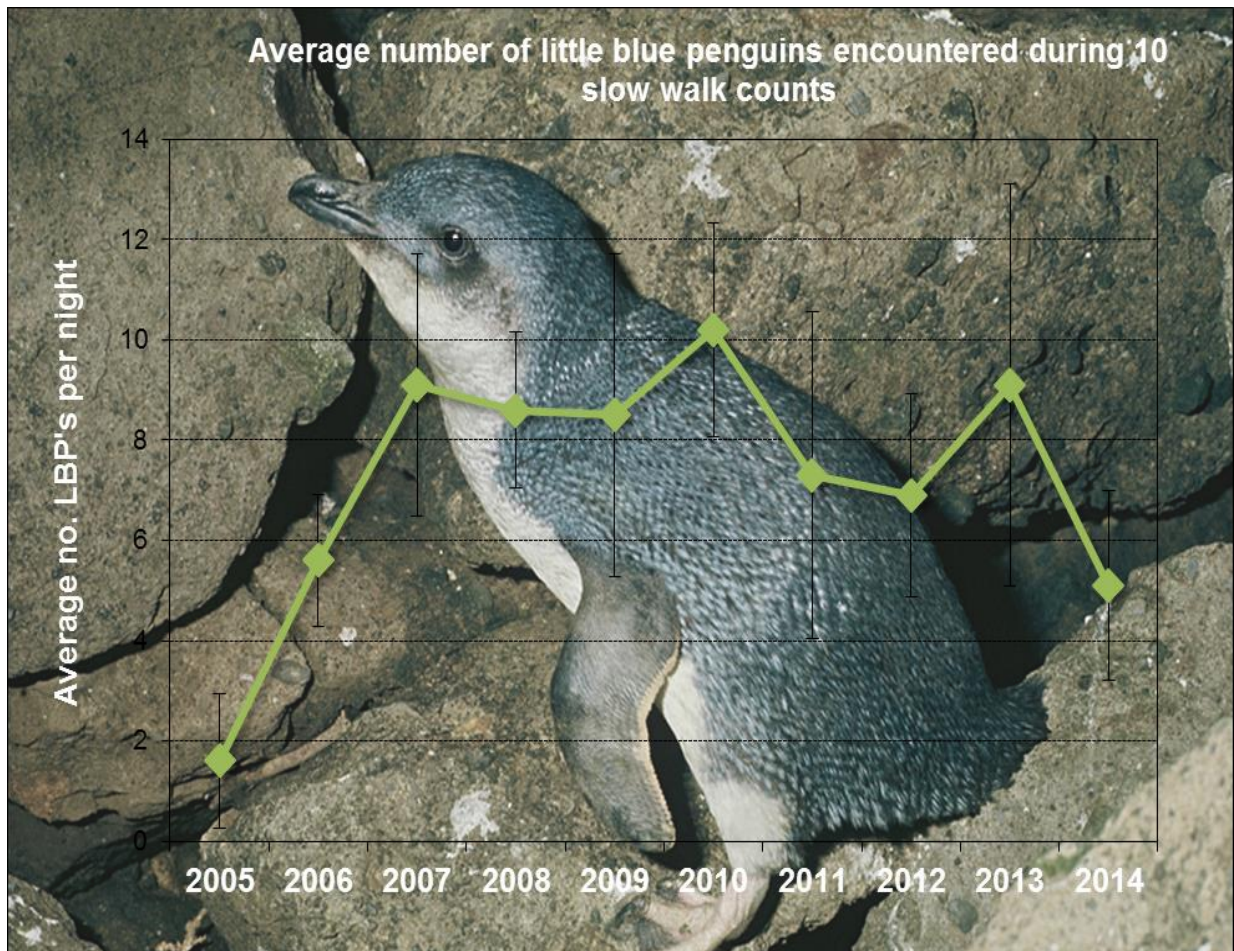
Year 5 of the Kiwi, Weka and Morepork/Ruru monitoring was conducted in June/July 2015 with continued financial support from Kiwis for Kiwi. Kiwi calls have shown another numerical increase from 2014-2015 from 2013-2014 of 120 per cent. Somewhat surprisingly it is in the control area that the count increase is most marked. As there was a decrease in 2012-2013, it is pleasing this further monitoring has shown the current high numbers to have continued. Weka calls have dropped markedly this year from a previous high of 31 to only 12 this year. Ruru/morepork calls are highly variable from year to year, with previously a 354% increase, 43% decrease, and a 41% increase. This year they have shown a further increase of 114 percent.



Total number of bird calls heard, 2011-2015

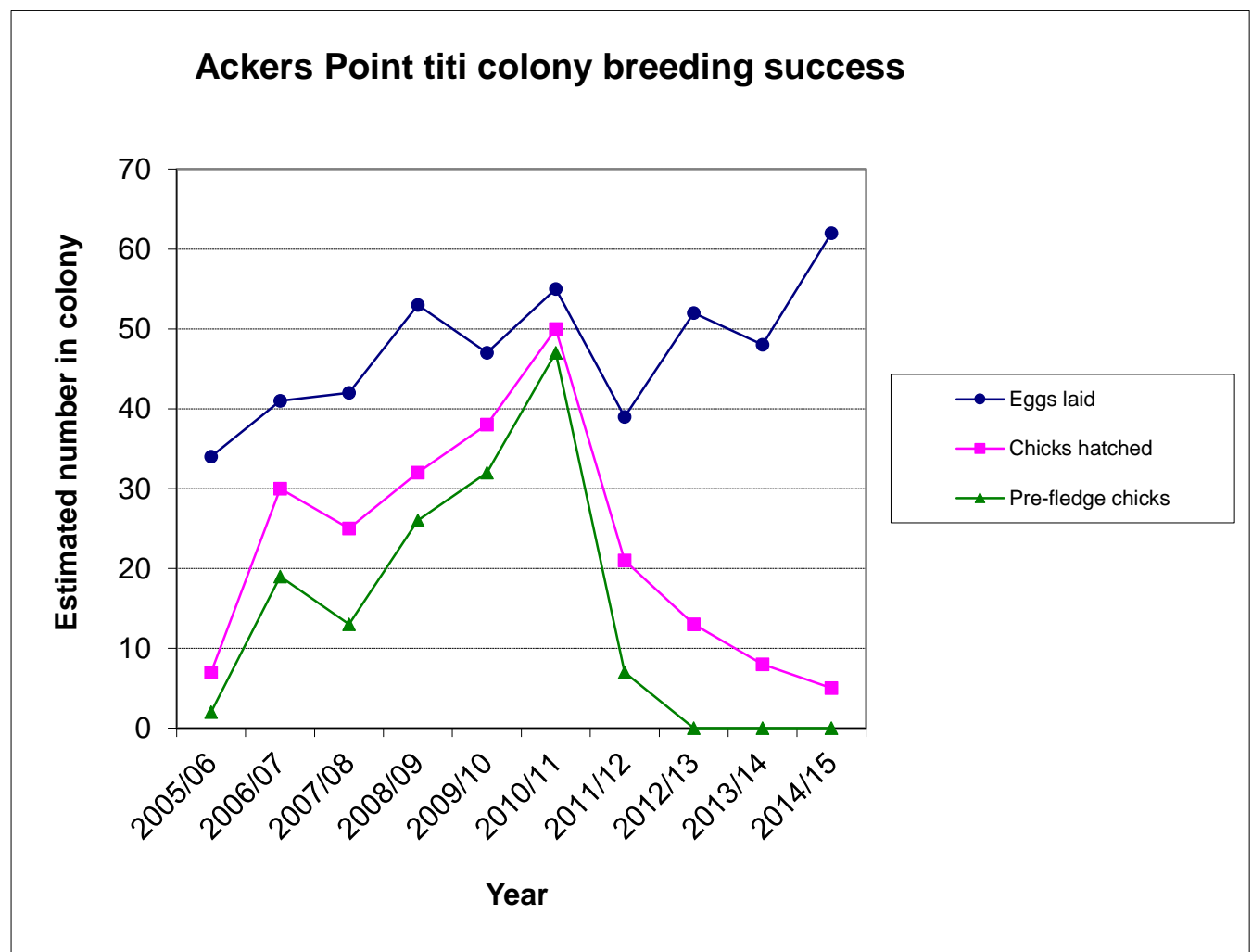
Little Blue Penguins

Environmental consultants SolutionNZ were contracted on behalf of SIRCET to carry out monitoring of the Acker's Point Little Blue Penguin colony. A total of 51 Little Blue Penguins/ Korora were seen and recorded across all ten slow walk counts this year; an average of 5.1 birds per night undertaken by 19 volunteers this year; this is an average of 5.1 birds per night. Seventeen walkers were Stewart Island residents this year, up from eight last year (of thirteen volunteers). The purpose of the monitoring measure is to show changes in the numbers of Little Blue Penguins over a longer period and as such, this year's results continue to build a picture of the colony at Ackers Point.



Sooty Shearwater/Titi Monitoring

This is the first season that monitoring has been carried out by *paws4conservation*. This is the fourth disappointing year in a row for the colony. Eighty burrows and 117 chambers were investigated within the study plots in December 2014 with 30% being occupied by titi (Table 1). Twenty-three eggs were either seen or assumed if an adult titi was present. Fifteen adult titi were recorded in burrows in February 2015 but no chicks were seen. Possible hatch sign (egg shell fragments or membrane) was noted within two burrows, suggesting that at least two chicks had hatched. No adults, chicks, or unhatched eggs were recorded in April 2015, in spite of more thorough investigations of the burrows and chambers.



Lonneker's Beach Revegetation

The Lonneker's Beach Revegetation Project has continued to have major work done with nearly 300 additional plants being planted over the year. A community planting and weeding morning was held in September 2014 where plants were planted and weeds were removed. An educational handout about the plants used at Lonneker's was also distributed. The plants continue to thrive and look good. There is a mixture of 28 different species including the following rare plant varieties – native spreading iris (*Libertia peregrinas*), punui (*Stilbocarpa lyalli*), native ice plant (*Disphayma austral*) and sand spurge (*Euphorbia glauca*).



Sand Spurge and Pingao planted at Lonnekers

Kiwi Advocacy Project

2014-2015 has brought a bedding in of the Kiwi advocacy work undertaken by SIRCET. Monitoring of the birds translocated from Ulva Island has continued with a new contractor employed to undertake monitoring, Sandy King. Pleasing, 2 of the monitored pairs have successfully hatched chicks in the last breeding season. Monthly updates on their movements and breeding behaviour continue to feature in the Stewart Island News.

Two more dog aversion training workshops were held with Sandy King as trainer, increasing our coverage with both locals and visitors to the island.

Community Native Plant Nursery

This year 225 people contributed over 680 hours at the Nursery, including contributions from local and visiting volunteers, volunteer school groups, DOC and SIRCET staff. The majority of this time was spent on various propagation and growth tasks such as putting down new batches of seeds and cuttings, pricking out seedlings and potting up plants. Weeding the plants and the nursery grounds along with general maintenance tasks accounted for the remainder of the time. It is a concern that

volunteer numbers and hours were down again this year, particularly local volunteers and DOC staff.

This year has seen an increase in the number of plants being sold for a small donation compared to recent years. However we were disappointed to find that the nursery donation box had been stolen from over the summer period. The money received from these donations is put back into the running of the nursery to cover materials and equipment. DOC continues to support the nursery with annual funding of \$3,000 towards managing the nursery. The Dancing Star Foundation also continues to very generously provide the physical ground and the 'Barn' which enables this fantastic nursery to continue. Five visiting school groups spent time at the native plant nursery as already reported in the **Environmental Education** section of this report.

Rakiura Environment Centre

The upgraded Environment Centre continues to be an important resource which enables SIRCET to be 'visible' to the local community and the thousands of visitors who come to Stewart Island each year. Glowing Sky Ltd, generously provides this space for the trust to display and inform these visitors of our activities and plans. Information is continually updated and new ideas put forward in this visually stimulating space. Over Easter 2015 a quiz was held in the Environment Centre requiring people to find answers to 5 questions from the information displayed in the Centre and enter to win prizes kindly donated by Stewart Island Flights and Glowing Sky. Many entries were received and the winners were thrilled with their prizes.



Dale Jenkins, local police officer and volunteer drawing the prize with Sharon Pasco, manager of Glowing Sky store and Shona Sangster, Project Administrator

Website

SIRCET's website has continued to act as a tool to provide environmental education and advocacy, as well as information on the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project. The website is regularly updated with news and events and newsletters and annual reports are uploaded after they are produced.

Trustees and Employees

We had great support from Nic Shaw who worked as our Project Manager until we were able to appoint someone permanently to the role. Nic was with us from July to December and then came back in May when Kelly went off island to have baby Maya.

Kelly Bunce, a long time visitor to the island joined us from Peru in December, being thrown in the deep end with visiting volunteers to manage as well as learning the ropes. Kelly has continued to show her dedication to conservation and it is a pleasure to have her working with us. Kelly took a short break in May and will return with newborn Maya and Miguel her partner in the new financial year. Congratulations on Maya's safe arrival and a warm welcome to the SIRCET family.

Our Admin officer, Shona Sangster has remained with us throughout the year and undertook many additional roles to assist with the smooth running of the trust while we were without permanent staff. It is fantastic to have such great people who enjoy this work and go the 'extra mile' to make it all flow.

Jane Everest our accounts assistant has also remained with us for this year providing much appreciated work to relieve our Treasurer from hours and hours of extra work.

Michael Morris has continued as our Auditor in a volunteer capacity for which we are most grateful.

Financial

2014/15 was year two of three years of funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Community Environment Fund. The Community Trust of Southland provided the final year of a three year funding grant and indicated that we would not be successful in any future long term grant applications. The nursery was part funded by the second year of a Lottery Communities Fund grant. Project Crimson also continued to provide support for the nursery. DOC provided financial support towards the nursery manager but have advised that they will be unable to continue this support next year.

Kiwis for Kiwi have once again provided funding for our annual kiwi/weka/morepork monitoring and for our Kiwi Advocacy project. Environment Southland continue to provide SIRCET with a monthly landcare group support funding, which covers some of our administration costs. The Stewart Island Visitor Levy has once again supported the project by funding supplies for the nursery and for trapping.

Funding

Major new funders are actively being sought following the end of our Community Trust of Southland funding. At the time of writing we are waiting to hear the result of applications to the Department of Conservation's Community Conservation Partnerships Fund and to the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust. Year two of the three year funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Community Environment Fund has been provided. Two applications for funding from the Stewart Island Visitor Levy fund have been successful. DOC has continued to support the nursery. Kiwi for Kiwis have provided funding for our annual kiwi/weka/morepork monitoring and for our Kiwi Advocacy project. This project has also received generous funding from the Mazda Foundation. Environment Southland provide SIRCET with a monthly land care group support funding, which covers some of our administration costs.

Statement of Financial Performance

Full financial statements are available upon request.

Statement of Profit or Loss

Stewart Island / Rakiura Community and Environmental Trust
For the year ended 30 June 2015

	NOTES	2015	2014
Operating Income			
Trading revenue			
Possum Traps Income		-	156.52
Trap Sales Income		678.70	104.34
Weka Card Income		103.98	259.13
Total Trading revenue		782.68	519.99
Grants & Donations		70,498.89	92,532.54
Total Operating Income		71,281.57	93,052.53
Less Direct Expenses			
Bait		1,297.61	1,488.10
Employment Expenses		1,260.45	496.33
Field Supplies		2,156.94	4,137.66
Field Work - Contract		11,668.25	11,450.00
Freight		154.88	54.42
Motor Vehicle Expenses		2,631.67	1,657.98
Traps		3,025.14	3,018.63
Wages		44,388.11	63,392.76
Total Less Direct Expenses		66,583.05	85,695.88
Operating Surplus (Deficit)		4,698.52	7,356.65
Other Income			
Interest Received		2,560.53	2,487.74
Total Other Income		2,560.53	2,487.74
Total Income		7,259.05	9,844.39
Administration Expenses			
Acc Levies		173.56	168.41
Accounting Fees		4,064.00	3,021.40
Administration Sundry Expenses		-	10.43
Advertising Expenses		16.00	-
Audit Expenses		240.00	40.00
Bank Charges		-	(5.00)
Computer Expenses		628.02	894.14
Depreciation		6,016.65	4,579.70
Office Expenses		165.97	-
Stationery/Printing/Postage		551.22	976.05
Subscriptions		44.44	44.44
Sundry Expenses		274.89	802.09
Total Administration Expenses		12,174.75	10,531.66
Surplus (Loss) For The Year		(4,915.70)	(687.27)

Thanks to all our Supporters

Volunteers

Alistair Faulknor	Letitia McRitchie
Alasdair Burns	Little Brown Kiwi group
Ann Pullen	Lynn McPherson
Cécilia Mélé	Margaret Hopkins
Charlie Bunce	Matt Jones
Cherie Hemsley	Megan Bogisch
Claire Simpkin	Miguel Rodriguez
Dale Jenkins	Nicola Shaw
Dave Brownley	Otago Girl's School
Emma Hopkins	Queenstown Primary School
Fiona Brownley	Peta Maidens Penman
Gael Gordon	Pete Bain
George Nicholas	Pete Ross
Hilli Maas-Barrett	Phred Dobbins
Jake Osbourne	Ricky Kershaw
Jennifer Ross	Sabine Pahl
Jérôme Joanny	Sacred Heart School
John Foley	Shona Sangster
Jules Retberg	Sophie Conner
Klaartje Van Schie	Timu Moxham
Kylie Bakker	Tommy Dobbins
Lisa Benson	Ty Conner
Leah Rudin-Jones	Winton School

Major Donors, Supporters and Business Sponsors

Logos

