

Stewart Island / Rakiura  
Community & Environment Trust



for people for environment

# **Stewart Island/ Rakiura Community & Environment Trust**

## **Annual Report** 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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## Contents

Chairperson’s Report .....	2
SIRCET Activities and Community Involvement .....	3
Volunteers .....	3
Environmental Education.....	3
Staff Development.....	4
Fundraising .....	4
Collaboration .....	5
Media Releases & Awards.....	5
Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project .....	5
Animal Pest Control .....	6
Trapping Results .....	7
Rats .....	7
Possums.....	8
Feral Cats .....	9
Deer .....	9
Pest Monitoring .....	9
Species Monitoring .....	11
5 Minute Forest Bird Call Counts .....	11
Kiwi, Weka, Morepork/ Ruru .....	11
Little Blue Penguins .....	11
Sooty Shearwater/Titī Monitoring .....	12
Lonneker’s Beach Revegetation.....	13
Kiwi Advocacy Project.....	13
Community Native Plant Nursery .....	14
Rakiura Environment Centre.....	15
Website and Social Media.....	15
Trustees and Employees .....	15
Fundraising .....	16
Funding.....	16
Financial.....	17
Volunteers .....	18
Major Donors, Supporters and Business Sponsors .....	19
Logos.....	19
	1

## Chairperson’s Report

This last year SIRCET has gone from strength to strength. I believe the more diverse a trust and our supporters the stronger we will be. This is certainly the case with SIRCET. When we look at the broad range of skills and backgrounds that our supporters hold this is truly the case for SIRCET. We all pull together no matter what to give the birds and bush the best protection we can muster.

2015-2016 has been a year of renewed hope as we consolidate our position with Kelly Bunce leading the charge as our Project Manager and move forward with renewed vigour.

We have two new trustees to help, and a mapping and reporting tool has also been introduced to reduce the workload. Innovation such as the auto resetting traps which are fully deployed in the core area and the auto cat trap technology ensure that we are continuing to work smarter and keep up with technological advances.

We hosted the Southland Environment Regional Network field day with Environment Southland and it was a great success as we networked with other like-minded volunteers from other conservation groups.

The nursery has soldiered on, showing great returns from plant sales and positive comments from all those who are involved. Visiting schools and volunteers enjoy the challenge and thrill of making something grow!

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 has raised the bar in our dedication to ensure all who are involved with SIRCET can do so safely.

As a surprise for us all, we were nominated for, and were a subsequent finalist in, the “Pride of New Zealand” awards for conservation in the South Island region. What a fantastic accolade to this project and all who support it. I urge us all to take ‘pride’ in our collective achievements which together help to protect this fantastic ‘back yard’ we call home.

Thanks so much to you all for your continued support of SIRCET

Di Morris

## SIRCET Activities and Community Involvement

### Volunteers

During the 2015 - 2016 year over 150 volunteers contributed over 2323 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. 730 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 Fraser Thomason who was our long term volunteer from January to February and Alasdair Burns who volunteered with us at the start of the year and then returned to help out again in the summer months. Both Fraser and Alasdair contributed loads of much needed muscle power that got some of our heavier outstanding work done that was required in our Project zone. Also a huge thank you to Peter Tait for his time and kiwi ingenuity, Peter developed a technology for ten of our live capture wild cat traps. These traps can now be opened for longer periods of time as they now automatically send us a text message when the trap has been triggered and requires attention.



### 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.

The following community events were held over the year:

October 2015 – Kiwi Avoidance Workshop

September 2015 – Printmaking workshop highlighting conservation issues with 'Sandpit' group from the University of Otago

March 2016 – hosted the biennial Southland Environment Regional Network's Landcare networking field day with Environment Southland

May 2016 – Volunteer Nursery Day

June 2016 – National Volunteer Week Mid-winter Christmas event to celebrate our volunteers



Left: Printmaking workshop



Right: Kelly demonstrating text capable cat traps at the SERN Landcare Networking Day

### Staff Development

Kelly attended several training events such as a Senior First Aid course, a Health and Safety Law workshop and meeting Phil Waddington, inventor of the DOC 150/ 200/ 250 traps, learning how to tune and maintain SIRCET's 150's.

Shona has begun a year-long Maori language course which she hopes will assist with writing funding applications and collaboration with local Iwi and groups like Kaitiaki Roopu.

### Fundraising

2015-16 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 \$4969 towards the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project. A huge thank you to all our new and long-term sponsors. 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 reviewed and resigned their Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Conservation. The support provided by DOC has been clarified and the relationship is in good heart.

## Media Releases & Awards

SIRCET News editions were printed in September and December 2015 and in March and June 2016. The size of the newsletter has been reduced this year as the Southland District Council were no longer able to provide us with professional graphic design and printing. We are grateful to the Southland District Council for their continuing support in producing this newsletter by allowing us to print it at the Stewart Island office.

SIRCET submitted the following articles to the Stewart Island News:

• August 2015: Welcome to Jakob and Maya, appeal for volunteers, nomination for TSB Pride of NZ awards, nursery feature plant Sand Coprosma, Kiwi monitoring update by Sandy King;

• September 2015: Notice of Kiwi avoidance workshop, printmaking workshop, won South Island category for TSB Pride of NZ awards, nursery feature plant Tree Fuchsia, Medicinal and Edible Gardens article by Letitia McRitchie, Dogs and Kiwi article by Sandy King;

• October 2015: Pest Manager update by Kelly Bunce, report on printmaking workshop, notice of upcoming Kiwi Dog Aversion training, Project Crimson and Save the Kiwi week;

• December 2015: Welcome to new trustee Anita Herbert, Little Blue Penguin Monitoring, Nursery Feature plant Hebe 'Lavender Lace';

• February 2016: Update on upcoming 'Future of the Nursery' meeting and Landcare Networking Day

• March 2016: Kiwi monitoring update

• April 2016: Update on Kiwi avoidance workshop using new 'e-kiwi'

• May 2016: Pest Manager update on new Goodnature traps and text capable cat traps

• June 2016: Results of 5 minute Bird Call Count, Bill Oddie's visit to the project area

SIRCET were nominated for a TSB Pride of NZ Award in the Environment category. We won the South Island regional category and got through to the national finals, with trustees attending the awards ceremony in Auckland.

## 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 (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

Technology has been keeping us busy this year, SIRCET has purchased another 30 A24 Goodnature automatic re-setting rat traps which brings our total of A24 traps in our Core zone to 115.

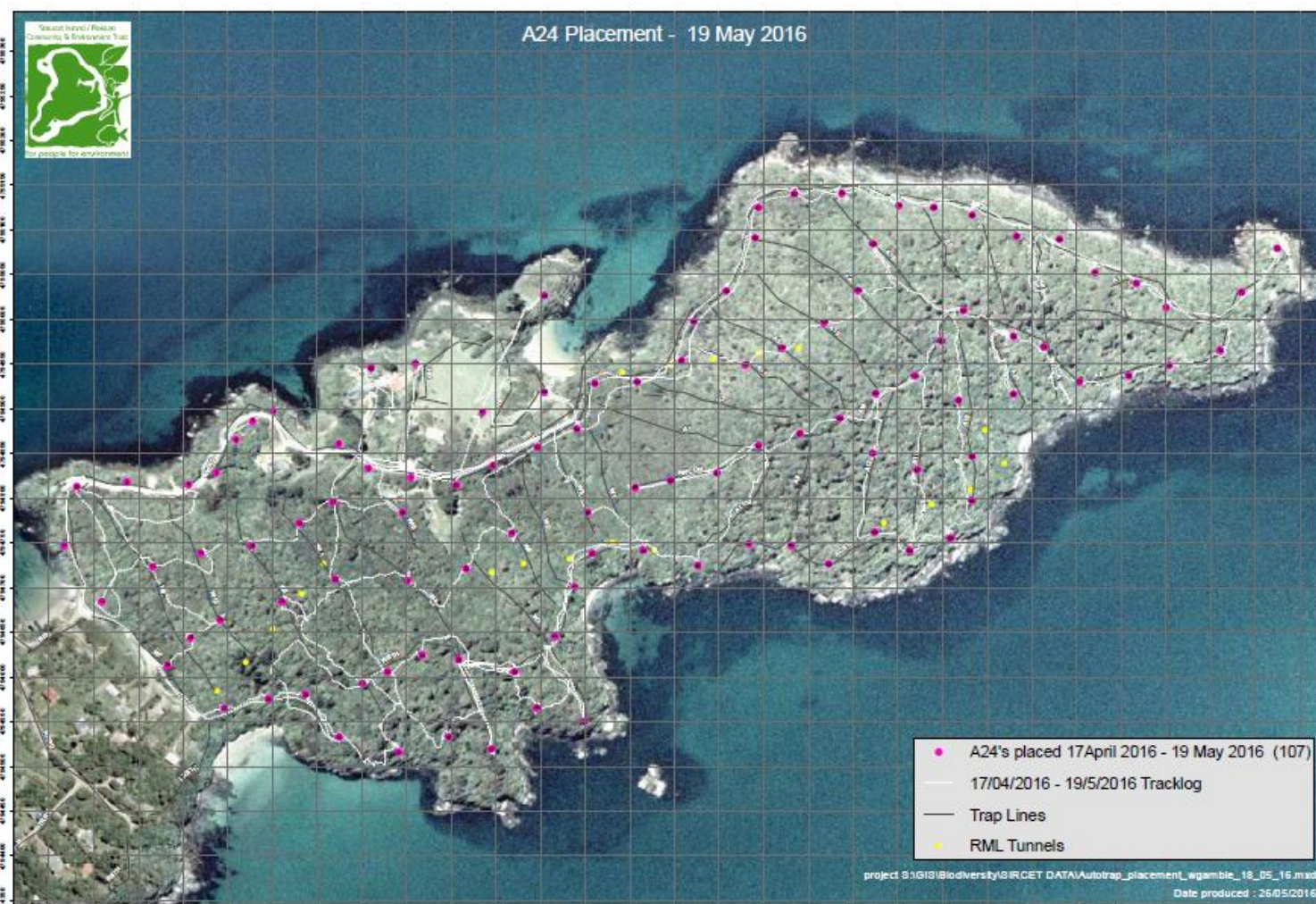
In April, under the guidance from Goodnature and the Department of Conservation we strategically moved around our existing A24's and with the addition of the 30 new traps we have achieved a grid of automatic rat traps that we are hoping will keep rat numbers under control in the Core Project Zone without trapping in this area by other means such as with the Victor Rat traps.

The A24 is a self-resetting multi-species kill trap. It resets itself after each humane kill up to 24 times per CO<sub>2</sub> canister. Goodnature traps kill instantly meaning no suffering and have been tested to meet the highest humane standards. They can now also be baited with 'auto' lure; this lure uses a technology that releases the lure slowly for six months which keeps it fresh. A huge benefit of these traps is saving time, they can be left for six months before servicing is required.

We had our monitoring tunnels open in the Core zone in late April so we could get an idea of rat activity before we closed the Victor traps. Our rat monitoring came back with a fantastic result of 0%, we then closed our Victor traps in the Core zone and two months later opened the monitoring tunnels in the Core zone again with a result of 15% which is an increase of 15% but a decrease of 5% in comparison to monitoring that was completed at the same time the previous year.

We will continue to monitor in the Core Zone to gauge if the A24's can keep rat numbers under control. During this time we continue to trap in our Buffer Zone and the Community Zone with Victor Rat traps.





Map of A24 rat trap placements in the Core Project Zone.

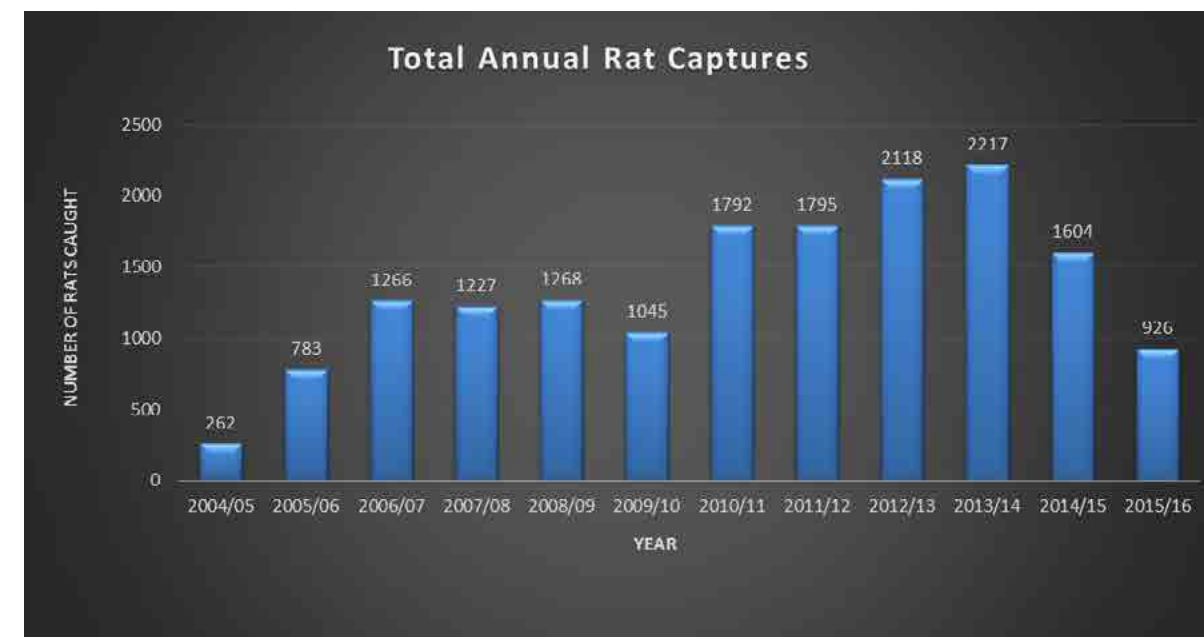
## Trapping Results

The total number of pests trapped within the project area in 2015-16 was 926.

Target pest	Number trapped
Rats	926
Possums	27
Feral Cats	8
Deer	0

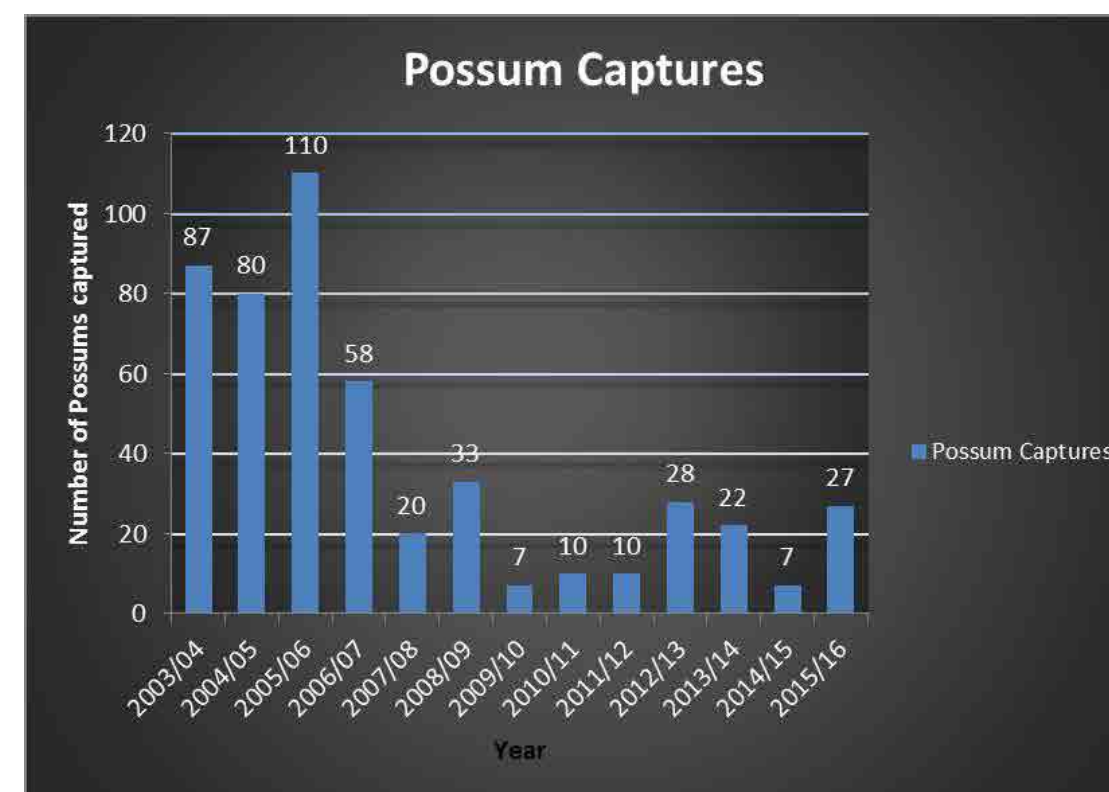
## Rats

A total of 926 trapped rats were recorded 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 and also due to closing down over 400 Victor rat traps in our core project area and opening up 115 A24 Goodnature traps, these traps automatically re-set so each kill the trap makes is unrecorded and not included in our data.



## Possums

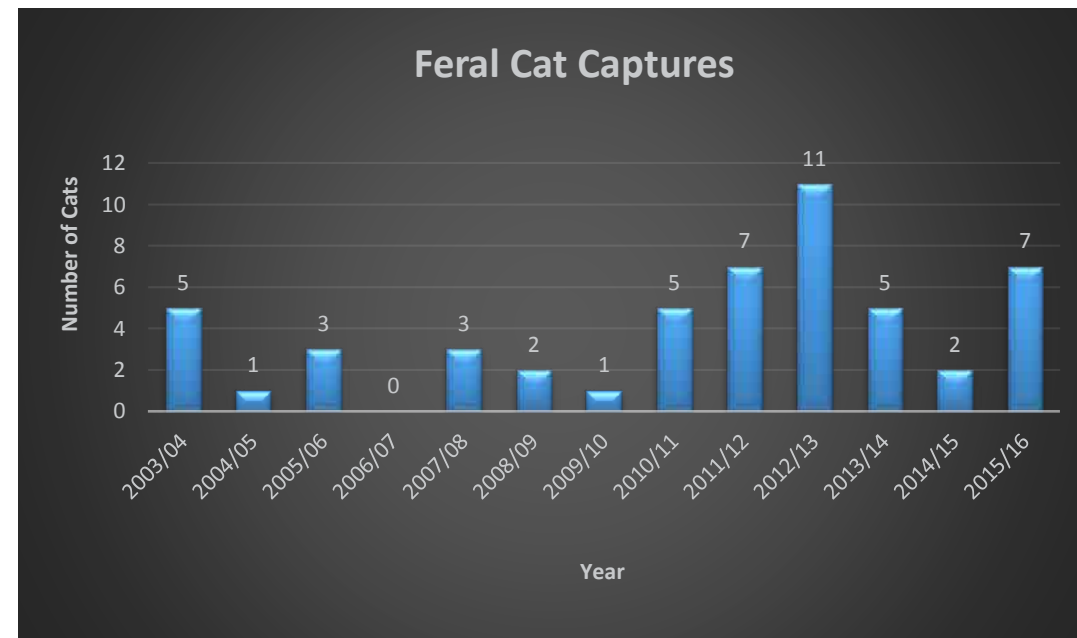
Possum traps have been opened and checked periodically throughout the year and a total of 27 possums were recorded trapped. All were trapped in the Warrior type kill traps. Due to health and safety concerns we have made the decision to stop using the Warrior kill traps for possums. It was decided that the potential to cause harm to someone is too high. To compensate for this we have been increasing the number of our A12 Goodnature possum traps and we are also trialling the Trapinator Possum traps. At this stage trials are in our core project zone but hopefully our trials are successful and trap numbers can be increased and be introduced in to the Community Zone.





## 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 15 cages permanently on site. The traps have been periodically opened throughout the year and have succeeded in trapping seven feral cats. Ten of our cat traps have been upgraded with technology that allows us to have the traps open for longer periods of time with less labour required. When these upgraded traps have been triggered they send us a text message notifying that the trap requires attention.

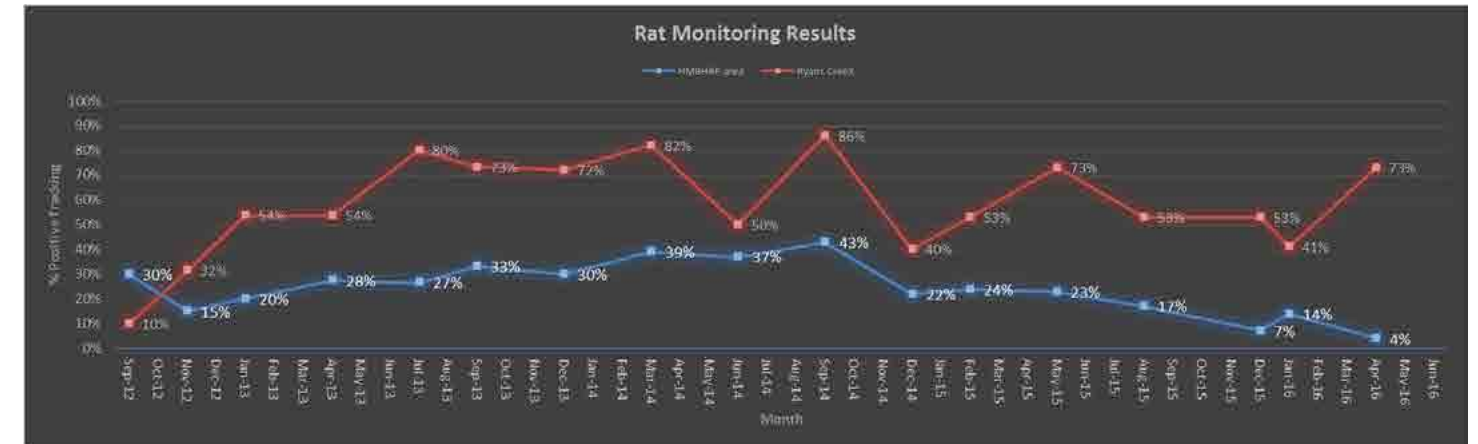


## Deer

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 be a focus for SIRCET in the coming year.

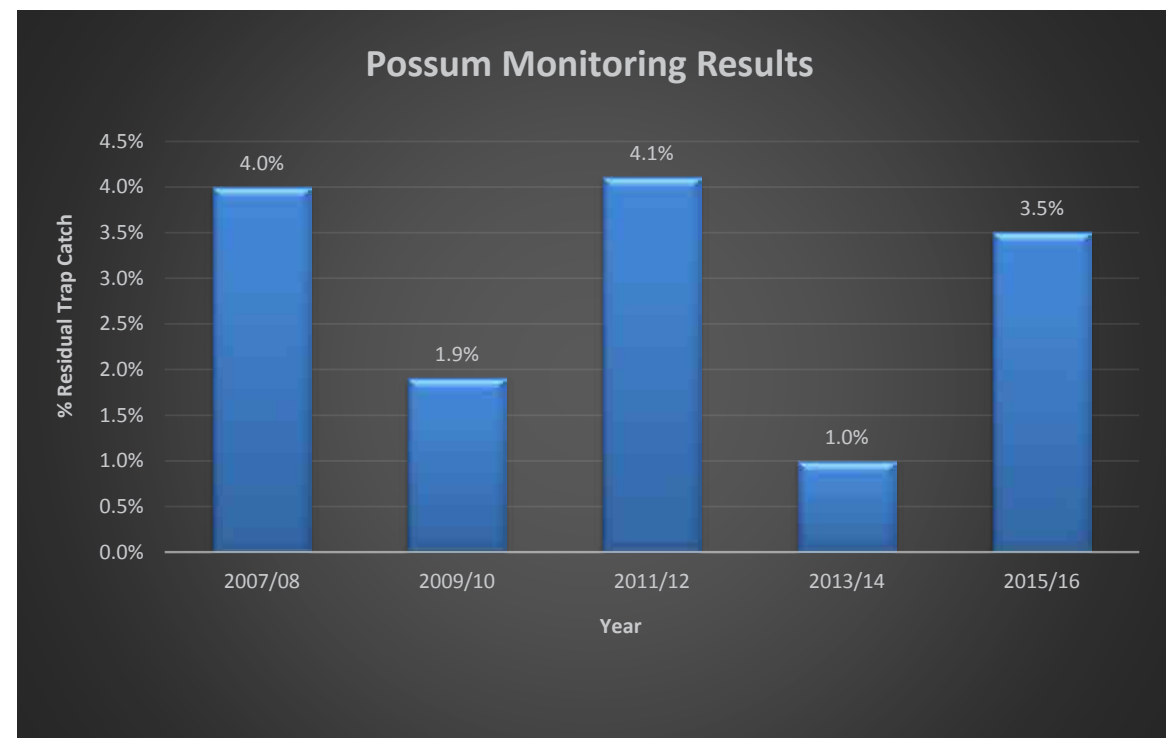
## Pest Monitoring

Rat monitoring across the HMBHRP area and the un-trapped Ryans Creek control area was undertaken in August and December 2015 and, January and April 2016. Overall, the results were consistently higher in the Ryans Creek area, in April 2016 they peaked at 73% compared to 4% 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 rat monitoring results to May 2016

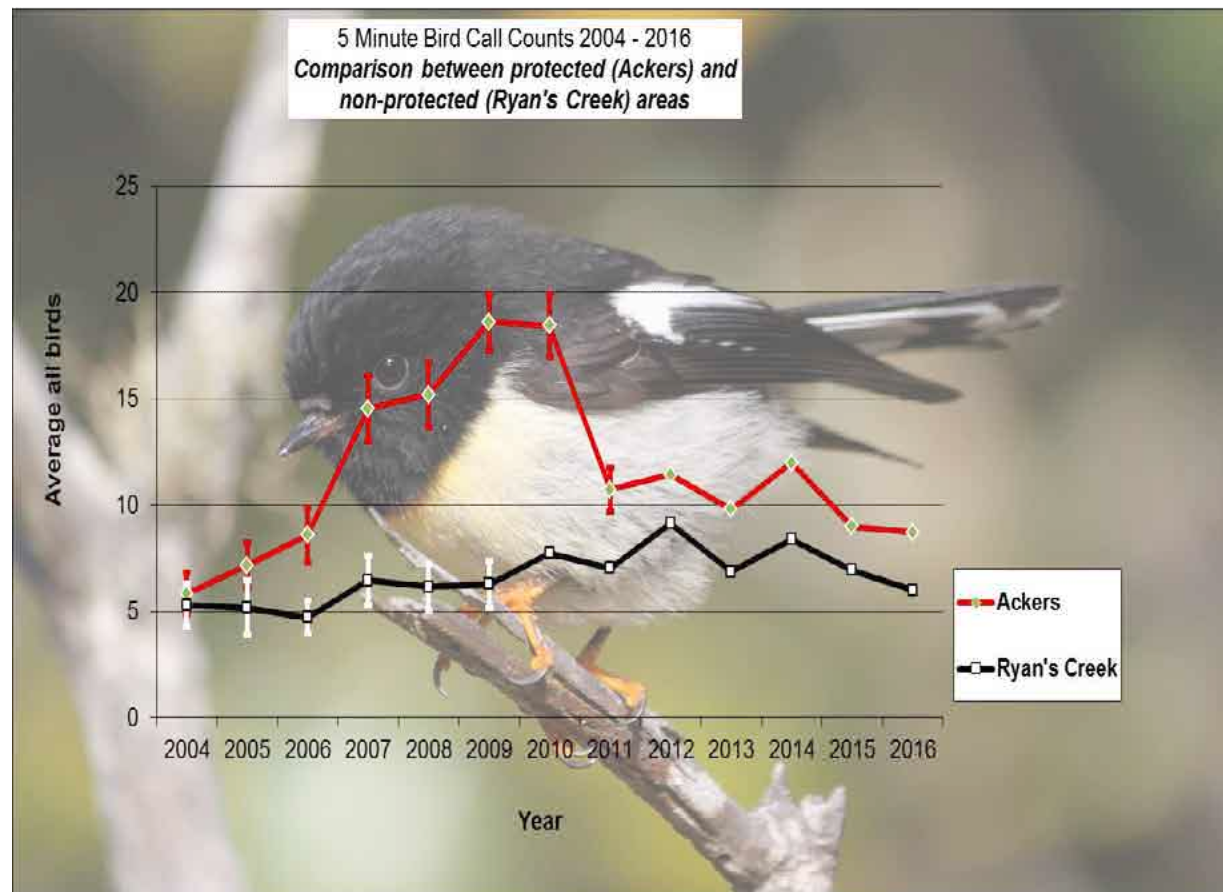
The Department of Conservation (with assistance from SIRCET'S Pest Manager) run possum monitoring within the HMBHRP area biennially. Monitoring was undertaken according to the National Pest Control Agencies (NPCA) protocol which sets out the standard trap-catch method used across New Zealand. The results were low at 3.5% 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 2016 in the project area at Acker's Point and also in the Ryan's Creek control area. The results indicate a slight decrease in bird numbers from 2015 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 – 2016 Comparison between protected (Ackers) and non-protected (Ryan's Creek) areas graph

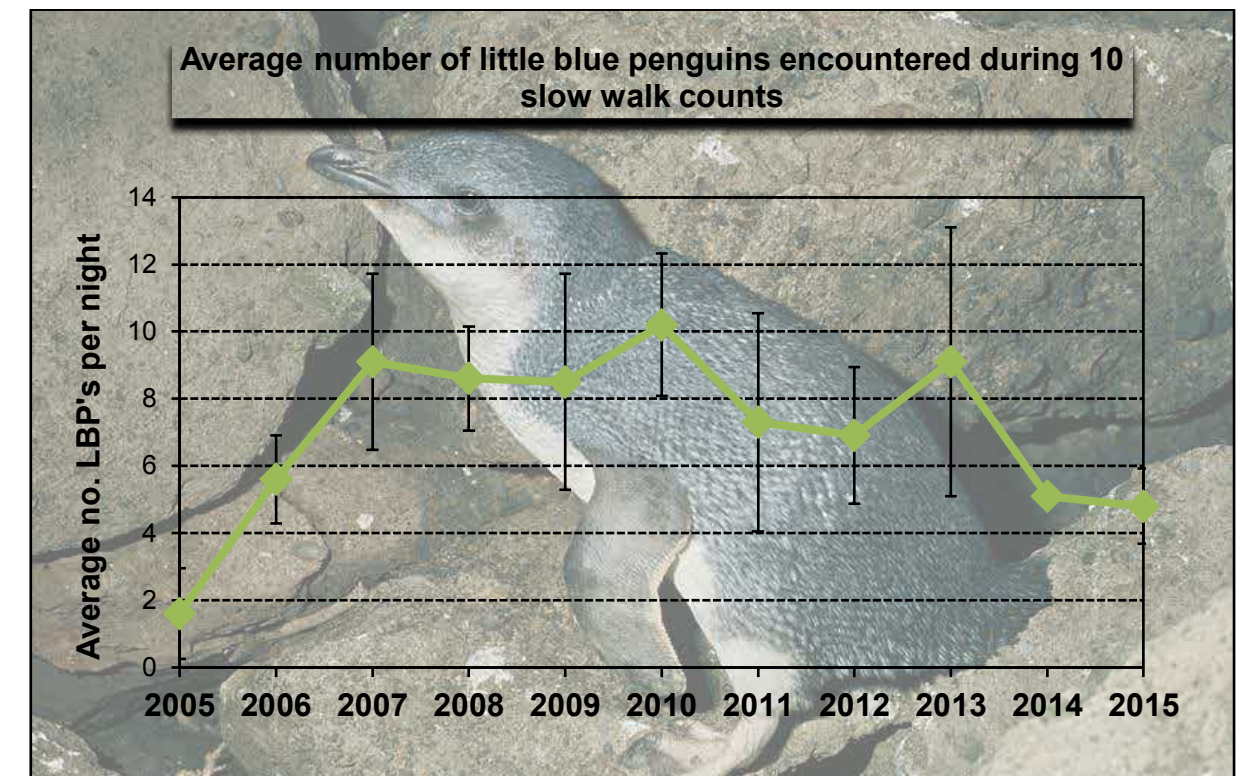
### Kiwi, Weka, Morepork/ Ruru

Monitoring of these species has come to an end. Monitoring was not conducted in the 2015-2016 year, as they were only planned to be a 5 year activity and 2015 marked the fifth year.

### Little Blue Penguins

SIRCET employed contractor Katie Cornish to carry out monitoring of the Acker's Point Little Blue Penguin colony. In total 48 Little Blue Penguins/Korora, 7 chicks and 41 adults were recorded during this year's count. The average number of penguins seen per night was 4.8, with 8 being the highest number counted in one night and 2 being the lowest. In total it was

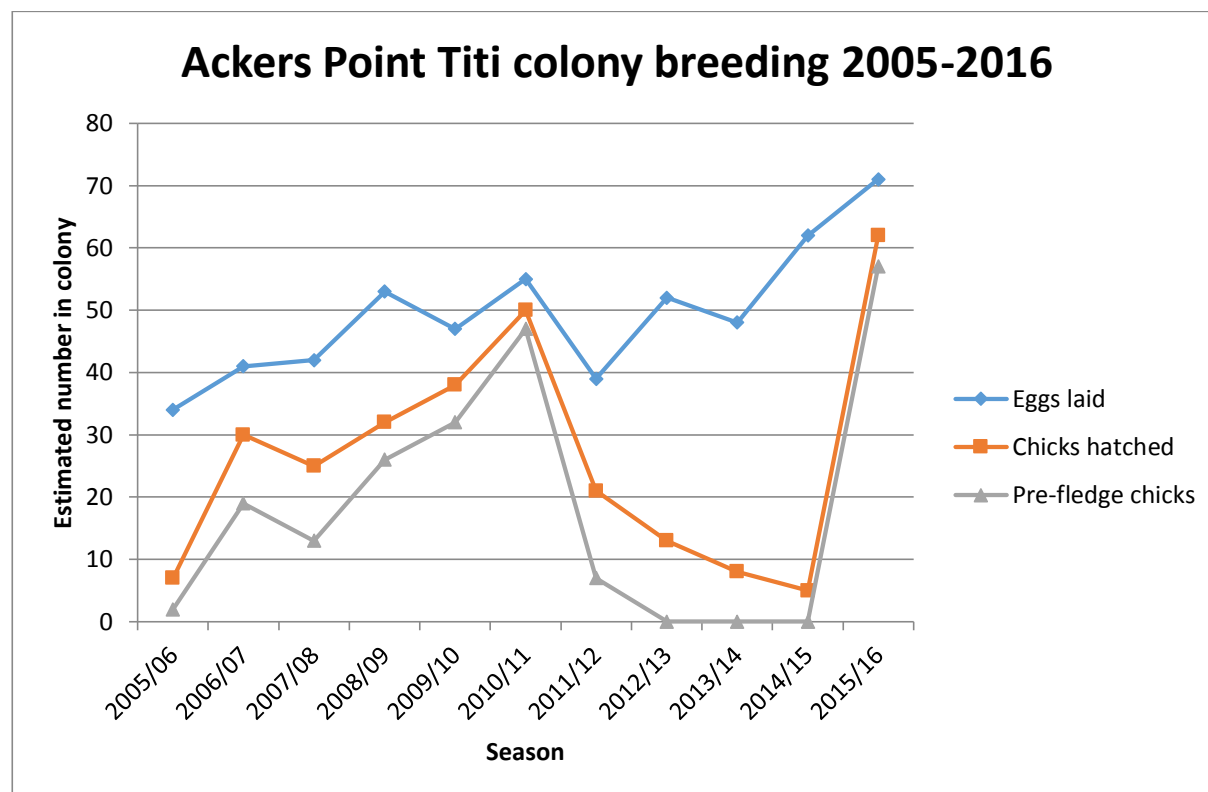
estimated that counters contributed 20 volunteer hours to the project in 2015. The purpose of the monitoring measure is to show changes in the numbers of Little Blue Penguins over a longer period and as such, this year's results continue to build a picture of the colony at Ackers Point. Thanks to Katie for her hard work.



### Sooty Shearwater/Tītī Monitoring

This is the second season that monitoring has been carried out by *paws4conservation*. Results this season are very encouraging, not only because this is the first season in four years when chicks are assumed to have fledged from the colony, but also because the estimated number of breeding pairs is the highest on record, and may be attributable to SIRCET's predator control programme. Predator control this season, especially the control of rats, may have contributed to the increased fledge success by reducing predation on newly hatched chicks. On-going predator control, especially cat control, may have contributed to the increase in breeding pairs by allowing more adult tītī to survive.





## 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. 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*).

## Kiwi Advocacy Project

Monitoring of the birds translocated from Ulva Island has been continued by Sandy King. This breeding season, all 3 of the monitored pairs have successfully hatched chicks. However despite repeated attempts we were not able to tag any of the chicks with transmitters. Updates on their movements and breeding behaviour continued to feature in the Stewart Island News.

Regular twice yearly dog aversion training workshops were held with Sandy King as trainer, increasing our coverage with both locals and visitors to the island. The Easter workshop saw Sandy introduce a new piece of technology – the 'e-kiwi'. The e-kiwi has been designed by a DOC scientist to help with the nationwide effort to protect kiwi by teaching dogs to avoid them. The 'e-kiwi' looks a bit like one of your Grandma's old hats but with thin wire probes sticking out from it. The fake fur covering gives a fairly realistic impression of a feathered kiwi – several owners thought it was covered in real feathers, and kiwi poo is used to make it smell like a kiwi. The e-kiwi helps resolve some of the issues with the electric collar training, and means we don't have to keep using the same frozen dead kiwi.



E-kiwi used for avoidance training

## Community Native Plant Nursery



Meeting to discuss the future of the nursery



This year 120 people contributed over 500 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. A community meeting was held to discuss the future of the nursery and whether it should be moved from its present location at Horseshoe Bay.

This year has seen an increase in the number of plants being sold for a small donation compared to recent years. The money received from these donations is put back into the running of the nursery to cover materials and equipment. The Dancing Star Foundation also continues to very generously provide the physical ground 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.

## Website and Social Media

The Trust has made the decision to refresh the look and feel of SIRCET's website to better act as a tool to provide environmental education and advocacy, as well as information on the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project. The current website is quite old and isn't optimised for mobile viewing, as well as being cumbersome to update and confusing for visitors to navigate. Two quotes have been received for this work and now funding is being sought.

SIRCET has also set up a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SIRCET/>) which is regularly updated with news and events, and has 288 page likes and posts which reach up to 526 people. This has proved a great way to share notification of events and videos, especially those created by other groups about SIRCET.

## Trustees and Employees

Project Manager Kelly Bunce returned to her role in late June 2015 after a well-earned break and has achieved several significant objectives this year including completing GIS mapping of the trap lines for the implementation of a new trapping data tool, and the installation and replacement of A24 traps in the core zone following a newly developed, more efficient plan. Kelly dedicated many hours to trapping wild cats in the core zone, successfully removing four in just three months. Mastering the new text-technology cat traps proved a major challenge.

Shona Sangster has capably continued in her role as Administrator through the year, achieving several major funding goals through the World Wildlife Fund and the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust. The major challenge for Shona in her role as Administrator continues to be sourcing funding for wages.

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

We thank our dedicated and passionate staff who continue to work tirelessly toward the goals of the trust; Kelly and Shona regularly go above and beyond the call of duty and, along with all of our volunteers, form the core of the trust.

Di Morris continued as our Chair, and Letitia McRitchie stayed on in the role of Treasurer, maintaining all accounts and funding.

Alina Atkins continued as Secretary until May 2015 when she again temporarily stepped down, this time to prepare, with husband Matt, for the arrival of their first baby. The role was shared by all Trustees in the interim. Alina and Matt welcomed little Jakob into the world in July, and Alina returned to the Secretary role in November 2015.

Matt Hare has taken a step back from the Trust to focus on the building of his family's new home, and Jim Barrett, who is a founding SIRCET Trustee continues to make an important contribution.

Our Board grew this year when we warmly welcomed Anita Herbert and Willy Gamble to the team, in November and December respectively. Anita has a varied background with past involvement with a number of volunteer organisations including the Mahinepua Radar Hill Landcare Group and a Forest & Bird property, Arethusa, in the Far North, for which she still manages bookings and working bee dates from afar. Willy has a 13-year history working for the Department of Conservation. His main area of expertise is GIS mapping as well as weeds and predator control, and he is an avid gardener especially enjoying plant propagation.

## Fundraising

Fundraising is slightly down this year but has been sufficient to cover expenses. Sponsor a Hectare has continued to be well supported by local business/residents and visitors. Donation boxes in the project area and the Environment Centre continue to collect funds. Phil Turnbull provided a generous donation towards the development of the texting cat traps. The pub quiz provided funding for more Goodnature rat traps, essential with high rat numbers anticipated. Trap sales were also higher, possibly with locals stocking up in advance. Weka cards continue to sell. Donations for nursery plants were down this year but provided funds for the ongoing operation of the nursery

## Funding

Finding funding has been difficult this year with the end of long term funding from one supporter and an unsuccessful application to another major funder. Wages have been funded from the Ministry for the Environment's Community Environment Fund (year three of a three year fund) and a generous donation from the local branch of Forest and Bird. A large portion of wages had to be funded from existing SIRCET funds.

Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project funds were covered by funding from the Stewart Island Visitor Levy and year one of a two year grant from the Pacific Conservation and Development Trust. The kiwi monitoring project once again received funding from Kiwis for Kiwi. The Honda Tree Fund supported plantings at Lonnekers and Project Crimson supported the nursery. Environment Southland continues to provide funding for Trust expenses with monthly Landcare Group support.

## Financial

### 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 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
<b>Operating Income</b>			
Trading revenue			
Trap Sales Income		626	679
Weka Card Income		140	104
<b>Total Trading revenue</b>		<b>766</b>	<b>783</b>
Grants & Donations	4	71,193	70,499
<b>Total Operating Income</b>		<b>71,959</b>	<b>71,282</b>
<b>Less Direct Expenses</b>			
Bait		625	1,298
Employment Expenses		183	1,260
Field Supplies		1,116	2,157
Field Work - Contract		6,930	11,668
Freight		126	155
Motor Vehicle Expenses		1,626	2,632
Traps		2,152	3,025
Wages		45,912	44,388
<b>Total Less Direct Expenses</b>		<b>58,669</b>	<b>66,583</b>
<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>		<b>13,290</b>	<b>4,699</b>
<b>Other Income</b>			
Interest Received		1,437	2,561
<b>Total Other Income</b>		<b>1,437</b>	<b>2,561</b>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>14,726</b>	<b>7,259</b>
<b>Administration Expenses</b>			
Acc Levies		165	174
Accounting Fees		3,332	4,064
Advertising Expenses		267	16
Audit Expenses		40	240
Computer Expenses		514	628
Depreciation		8,125	6,017
Interest - ASB		25	-
Office Expenses		-	166
Stationery/Printing/Postage		593	551
Subscriptions		44	44
Sundry Expenses		1,002	275
<b>Total Administration Expenses</b>		<b>14,109</b>	<b>12,175</b>
<b>Surplus (Loss) For The Year</b>		<b>617</b>	<b>(4,916)</b>

## Volunteers

Thanks to all our supporters!

Alina Atkins	Karin Lewis
Alasdair Burns	Katherine Murphy
Anita Herbert	Katie Cornish
Antoine Cordier	Leah Rudin-Jones
Bethany Stonier	Letitia McRitchie
Blake Dyer	Levi Kohle
Bridget Hunt	Lynn McPherson
Charlie Bunce	Margaret Hopkins
Charlotte Bates	Matt Hare
Cobham School	Matthias Hehl
Dale Jenkins	Miguel Rodriguez
Di Morris	Natalie Jones
Emma Hopkins	Olivia Brandt
Fraser Thomason	Peter Tait
Gillian Grimson	Pierre Duhamel
Ian Gamble	Queenstown Primary School
Isabella Zohrab	Sam Vathorwaz
Isobel Backhouse	Sharon Ross
Jennifer Ross	Shona Sangster
Jenny Gamble	Sophie Hadlum
Jenny Williams	Tamsen Walker
Jim Barrett	Tasha Rabinowitz
John Foley	Willy Gamble
Karen Bowman	Zoe Delesenne



## Major Donors, Supporters and Business Sponsors

### Logos

