

Stewart Island / Rakiura
Community & Environment Trust
for people for environment



Stewart Island/ Rakiura
Community & Environment Trust

Annual Report
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

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Chairperson's Report Letitia McRitchie

2016-17 has seen the Trust go through some changing times. Kelly Bunce resigned partway through the year but we were lucky to have Willy Gamble be appointed to the Pest Manager position immediately. We thank Kelly for her hard work that she put into the role. Willy brings some strong skills to the role and boundless enthusiasm and the Trust are looking forward to working with him to achieve our goals. Shona continues on in the Project Administrator role, doing an awesome job promoting the Trust and securing and managing funding and sponsors.

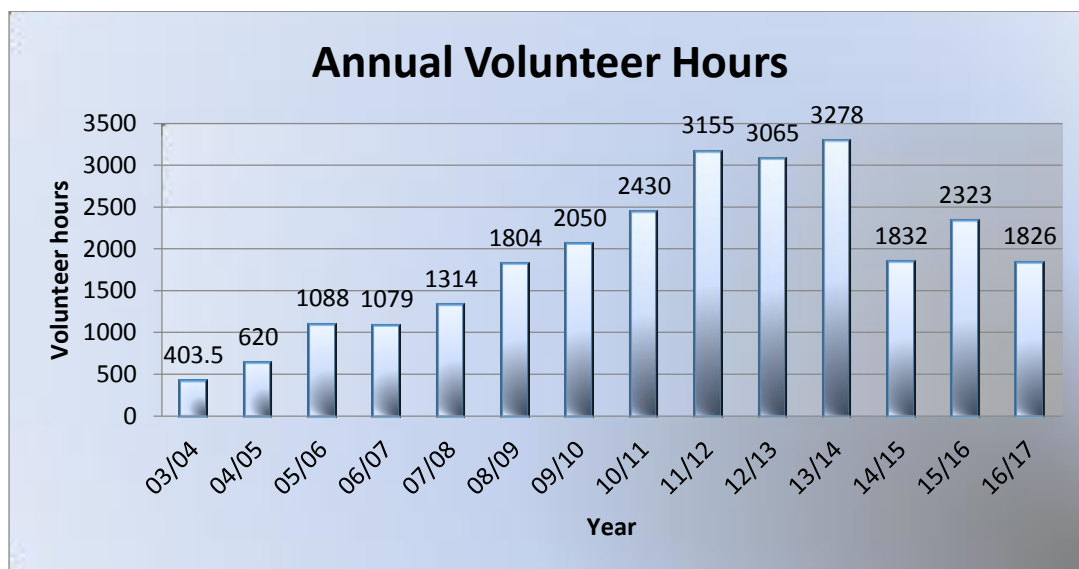
We continue on with a dedicated core of Trustees with some resignations and some new Trustees this year. We always welcome more!

We had a very successful win at the Southland Community Environment Awards in the Innovator Award category. Trustees and staff attended the event and it was inspiring to see the other volunteer organisations

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

Volunteers

During the 2016 - 2017 year more than 150 volunteers contributed over 1800 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.



Environmental Education

SIRCET hosted fewer visiting school groups this year due to groups cancelling because of weather concerns. Queenstown Primary took part in the Ackers Nature talk and walk. Willy and Anita have also led the way in revitalising SIRCET's work with Halfmoon Bay School as part of the Enviroschools program.

The following community events were held over the year:

October 2016 – Kiwi Avoidance Workshop

April 2017 – Kiwi Avoidance Workshop

May 2017 – Volunteer Pot Luck

June 2017 – Planned Food Foraging workshop with Peter Langlands had to be cancelled

Fundraising

2016-2017 was another successful year for fundraising for SIRCET. The South Sea Hotel quiz night donated the funds to purchase a new, more rugged mobile phone for the Pest Manager, which has allowed better use of the trapping app 'Walk the Line'. Trap sales were double our usual amount, a reflection of the community buying more traps to deal with the recent boom in rat numbers. Cash prizes from the 2016 Southland Community Environment Awards and the Green Ribbon Awards were put towards the cost of a new website. We hosted a Kiwis for Kiwi Great Kiwi Morning Tea bake stall, with the funds going towards SIRCET's kiwi protection work. Sponsor a Hectare continues to be popular and funds were also raised from the donation box in the Environment Centre and our "Iron Ranger" donation box at Harrold's Bay. Weka cards are still available for purchase.

Thanks to Real Journeys, who have continued to donate \$5 per person from their guided walks, with funds going towards the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project.

Collaboration

This year, SIRCET have had productive joint meetings with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Environment Southland. The support provided by DOC has been invaluable and the relationship is in good heart. SIRCET have also met with the Predator Free Rakiura group and the Rakiura Māori Land Trust and these relationships are growing in strength.

Media Releases & Awards

SIRCET were proud winners of the Innovator Award (sponsored by the Invercargill Licensing Trust) at the 2016 Southland Community Environment Awards, which were held at Ascot Park Hotel on Thursday 28th July. This award is especially significant as the winner is selected from across all categories, out of 28 nominees in total. Trustees and staff attended the ceremony in Invercargill.

SIRCET were also finalists in the Biodiversity category of the prestigious Green Ribbon Awards, hosted by the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation. Trustees Diana Morris and Alasdair Burns attended the ceremony in Wellington with the support of our sponsors. Although we didn't win, it was an excellent opportunity for networking.



Left to right: Trustee Alasdair Burns with Brent Beaven (Conservation Advisor in the office of the Minister of Conservation) at the Awards dinner.

SIRCET News had a hiatus during the 2016/17 year while we focused on a project to update the SIRCET website.

SIRCET submitted bi-monthly articles to the Stewart Island News.

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 goals are:

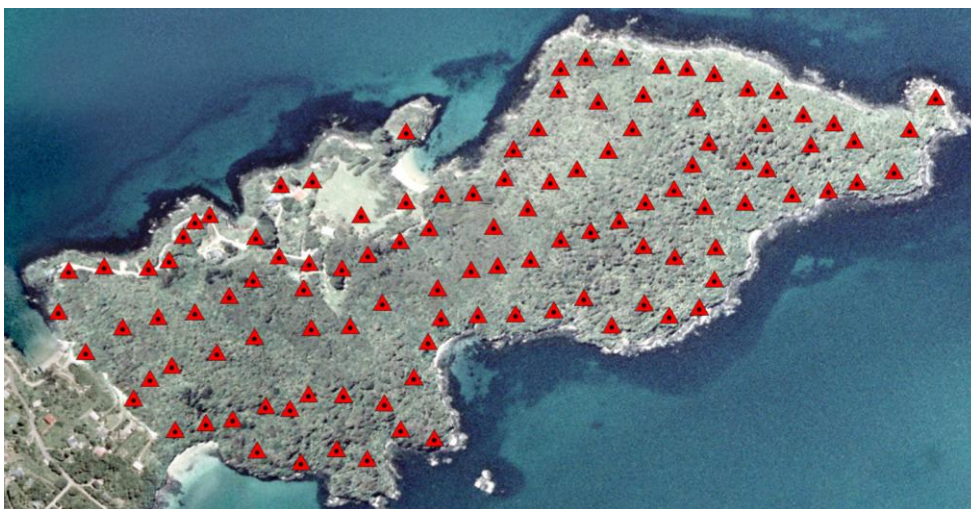
- To increase the native bird population within the Halfmoon Bay project area;
- To provide a safe habitat for re-introduction and survival for Stewart Island species (both plants and animals); and
- To educate and involve the community in conservation activities

Animal Pest Control

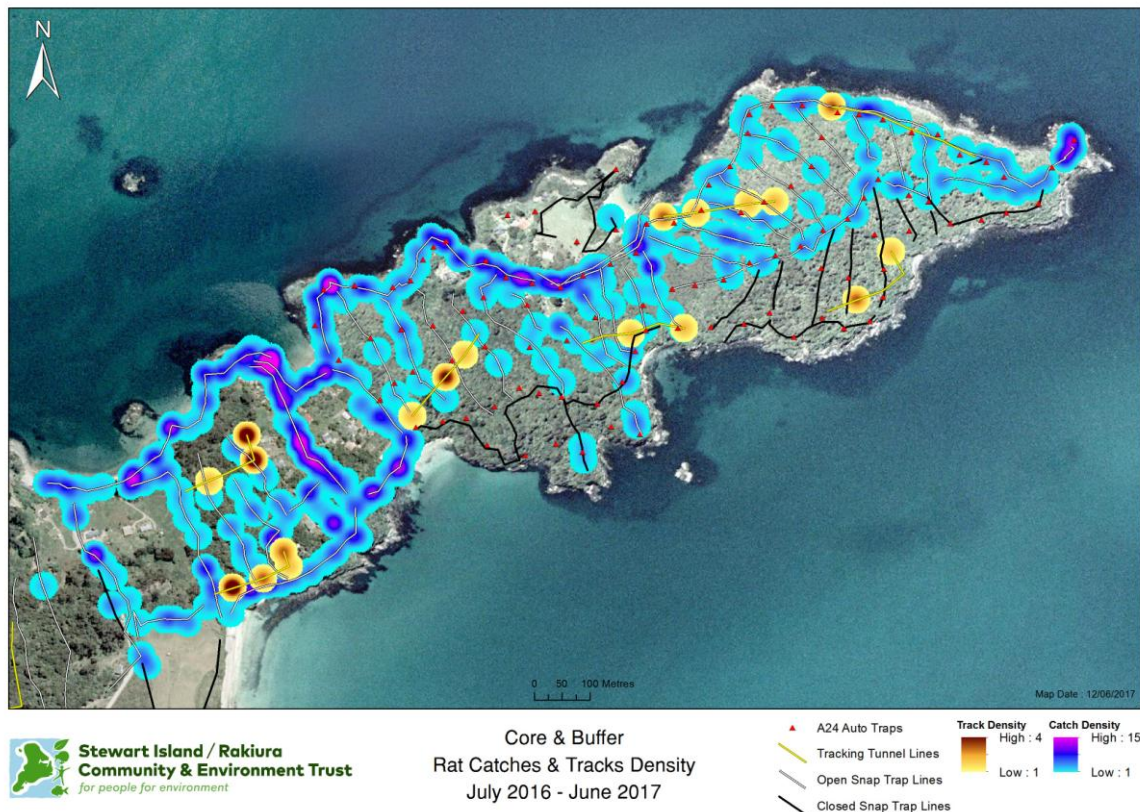
The grid of 107 A24 traps are planned to be re-gassed and rebaited on a six monthly cycle, which occurred in June 2017.

Pest Manager, Willy also joined Good Nature and DOC on Native Island in May 2017 to assist with rebaiting A24's and to learn more about these traps.

The A24 is a self-resetting multi-species kill trap. It resets itself after each humane kill up to 24 times per CO₂ 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.



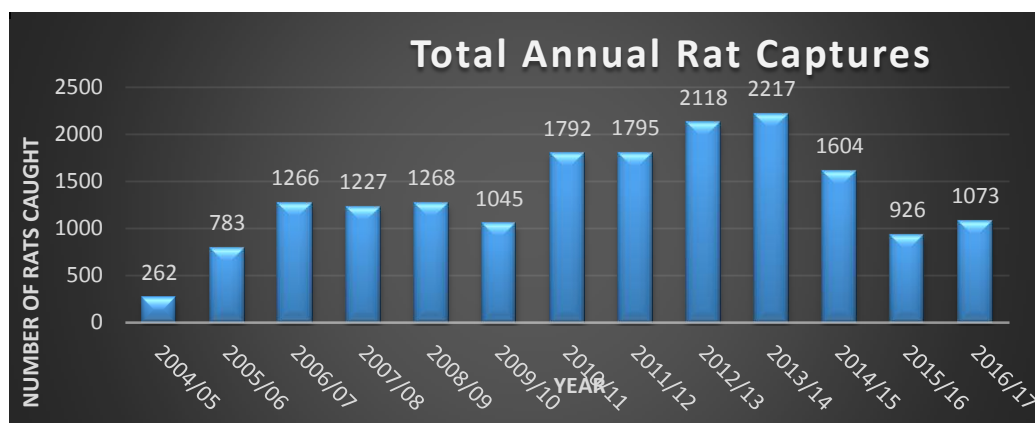
Map of A24 rat trap placements in the Core Project Zone



Trapping Results

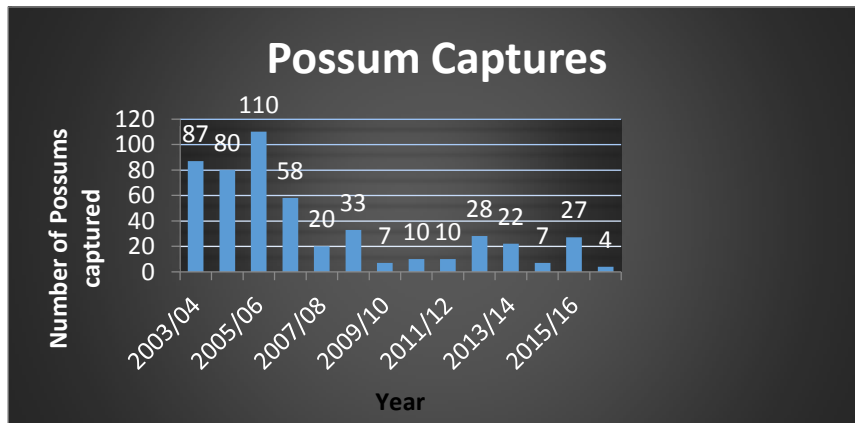
Rats

A total of **1073** trapped rats were recorded during this financial year which is an increase from last year's result of 926. 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 113 A24 Goodnature traps and these traps automatically re-set so each kill the trap makes is unrecorded and not included in our data.



Possums

Approximately 35 Trapinator possum traps have been installed with four possums caught. 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. All Warrior traps are now closed and gradually they are being removed from the project area. Thirty-nine A12 Goodnature self resetting traps are present in the core zone, five in the buffer zone and six in the community zone. We are unable to record how many possums have been killed by the A12 self resetting traps, but two dead possums were observed by volunteers in the community zone.



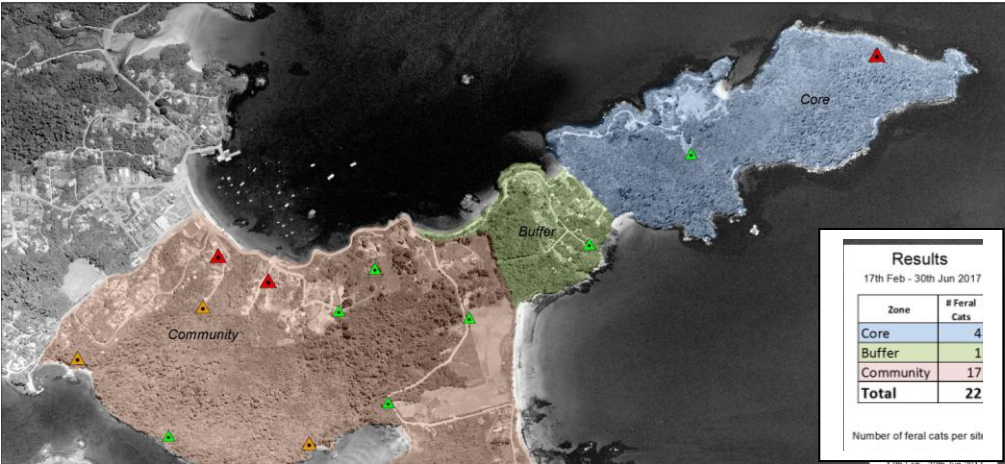
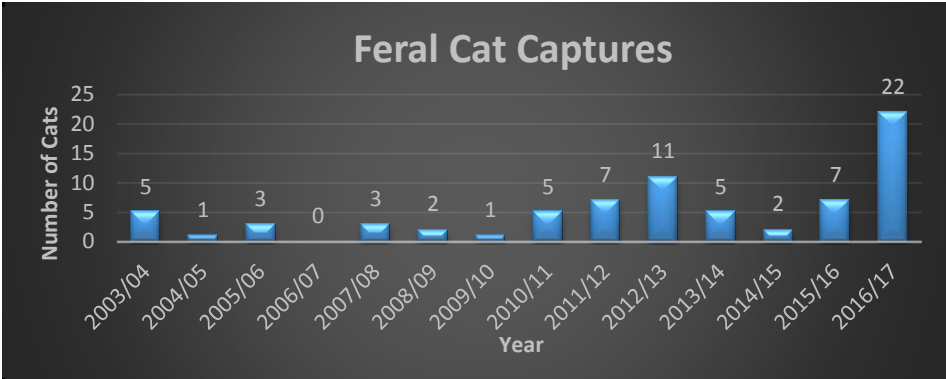
Map of Trapinator possum trap locations (blue), showing four possum kills (green)



Map of A12 Automatic possum traps – fifty traps in total
Feral Cats

An expanded feral cat operation was launched in February 2017 due to increased sightings of feral cats by visitors and residents. Locally sourced fish scraps were mostly used as bait as well as concentrated salmon spray lure from Connovation Ltd.

The total number of cat cages were increased to twenty and three cages were borrowed from Environment Southland for two months from March. A total of 22 feral cats were caught within the project area, which is double that of the previous highest year, 2011/2012. In the 2016 / 2017 season there was a focus on encouraging residents to keep and check cat cages. Of the 22 cats caught 18 were from cages looked after by the community.



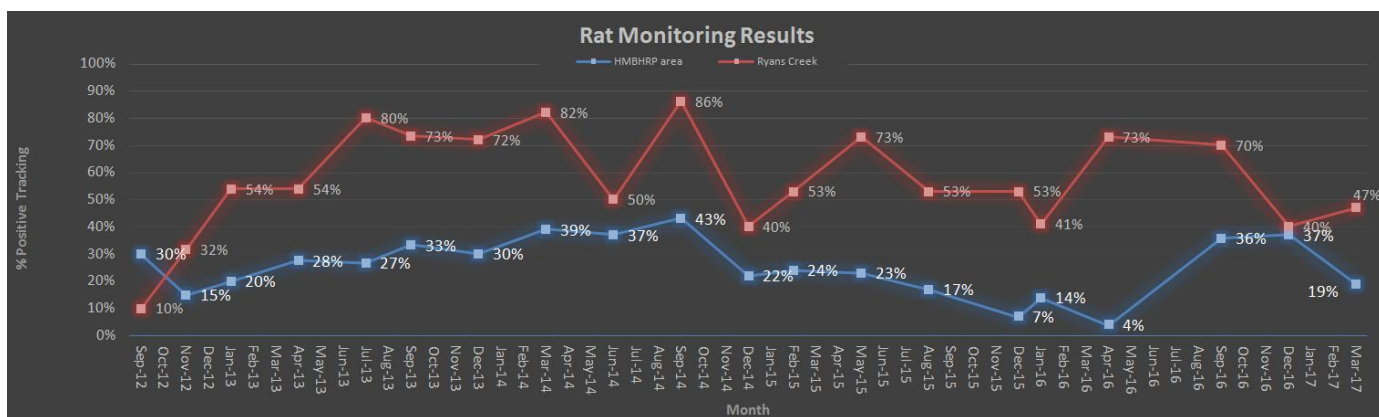
Map showing feral cat capture locations within the project area

Pest Monitoring

Rats

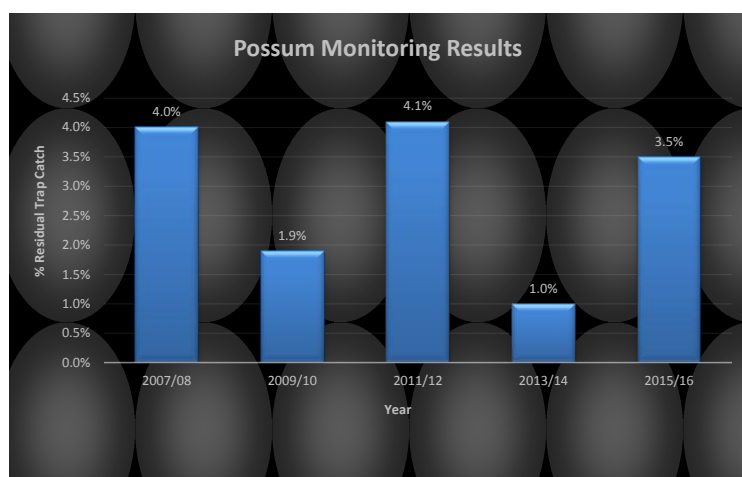
Rat monitoring across the HMBHRP area and the un-trapped Ryan's Creek control area was undertaken in September and December 2016 and March 2017. Overall, the results were consistently higher in the Ryan's Creek area. In September 2016 they peaked at 70% rat tracking compared to 36% tracking in the HMBHRP area. This was during the notable surge in rat numbers we experienced in Spring 2016. These results are 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 March 2017



Possoms

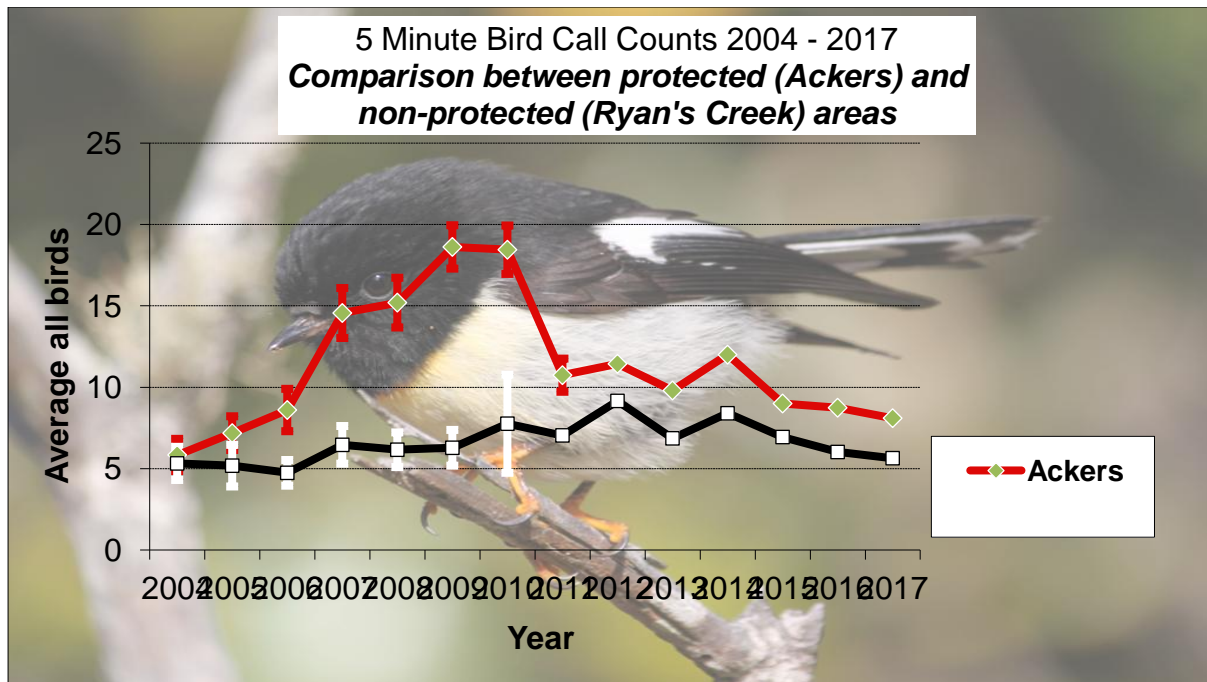
The Department of Conservation (with assistance from SIRCET'S Pest Manager) run possum monitoring within the HMBHRP area biennially. Monitoring was undertaken according to the National Pest Control Agencies (NPCA) protocol which sets out the standard trap-catch method used across New Zealand. Possum monitoring is carried out every two years and was last monitored in 2015/2016. It is next due in the winter of 2017/18. The results were low at 3.5% RTC (residual trap catch) which is well within SIRCET's target of 5% or less.



Species Monitoring

Five Minute Forest Bird Call Counts

The annual 5-minute bird call count was conducted in April 2017 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 2016 in both the Project and control areas.



5 Minute Bird Call Counts 2004 – 2017 Comparison between protected (Ackers) and non-protected (Ryan's Creek) areas graph

Little Blue Penguins

SIRCET did not carry out monitoring of the Ackers Point Little Blue Penguins this year.

Sooty Shearwater/Titi Monitoring

This is the third season that monitoring has been carried out by *paws4conservation*, and twelfth year of monitoring overall. Results this season were sadly very disappointing for the colony. Seventy-six study plot burrows were investigated which contained an estimated 28 eggs, and from which two chicks hatched but none fledged. The total burrow count was not carried out due to contractor injury. 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.

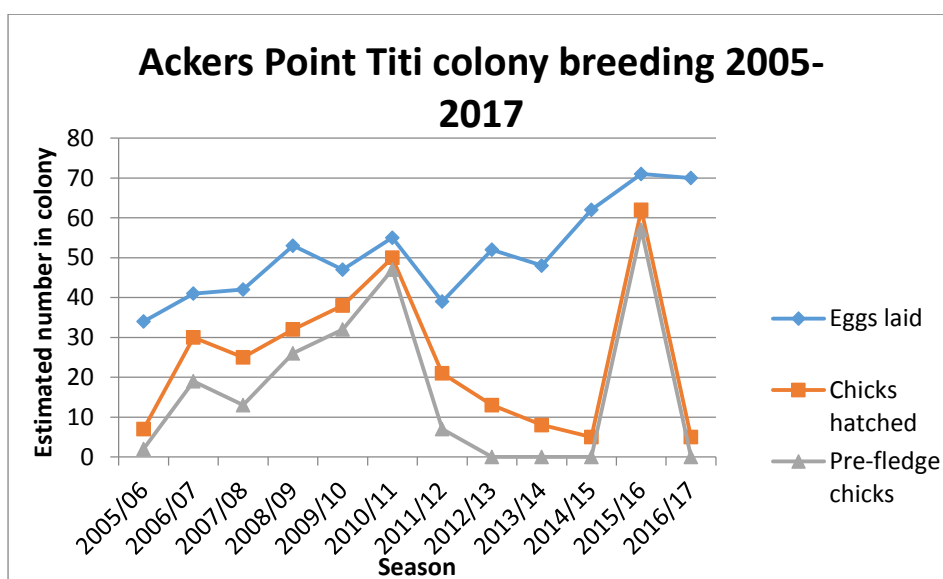


Figure 1. Estimated results at Ackers Point titi colony 2005-2016 based on extrapolation from study plots

Lonneker's Beach Revegetation

The Lonneker's Beach Revegetation Project has continued, with weeding undertaken by volunteers. Conditions for survival of the plantings remain challenging but slowly and steadily natives are filling in the spaces along the beach front. The focus this year has been on creating a pingao/euphorbia front along the lower edge and filling in the bank with shrubs.

Kiwi Advocacy Project

Two dog aversion training workshops were held with Sandy King as trainer, increasing our coverage with both locals and visitors to the island. One of the methods used to simulate a real kiwi is the e-kiwi. The 'e-kiwi' is round and fluffy with thin wire probes sticking out from it and kiwi poo is used to make it smell like a kiwi. No call count monitoring was undertaken this year, with the next scheduled call count monitor due in 2018/19.



E-kiwi used for avoidance training

Community Native Plant Nursery

The nursery continued to be used to grow a selection of native plants. These are available for a small donation and have been used for town garden plantings, restoration planting at Lonnekers Beach and to add native plants to local gardens.



Volunteer Sarah Kilduff at the Nursery

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 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. This project was completed during this year and has resulted in a much improved site, including an online version of the Sponsor a Hectare map which will increase the reach of this programme.

SIRCET's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SIRCET/>) is regularly updated with news and events and has 706 page likes and posts which reach up to 4,000 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

Kelly resigned in November 2016 to take up the role of a full time mother. Kelly decided to stay with us as a Trustee, taking on the Treasurer Role for a few months with Letitia's tuition.

Project Administrator Shona Sangster

Shona has been most successful in a focussed approach to several core aspects of her role ensuring that an increase in Sponsor a Hectare funding has been achieved and an overhaul / upgrade of the SIRCET Website with assistance from Willy. Shona's ongoing commitment to the trust as a volunteer and paid employee is invaluable. Shona willingly gets involved in all activities being undertaken and is a valuable member of our team.

Below is an excerpt from a sponsorship grant acknowledging Shona's work:

Tēnā koe e Shona He mihi nui ki a koutou katoa mai Te Papa Atawhai – greetings from the Department of Conservation.

Thank you for taking the time to submit a full application to the 2016 DOC Community Fund – Pūtea Tautiaki Hapori.

We received a large number of applications, which is very encouraging and an indication of the wide range of community groups and organisations who are passionate about advancing conservation throughout Aotearoa.

We are pleased to advise you that your application for DOCCF3-104 Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project has been approved for funding.

The Department wishes to advise you that your application for the project DOCCF3-104 Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project has been awarded the following funding:

☐ Year 1 2016/17 - \$26,024 (plus GST, if applicable) ☐ Year 2 2017/18 - \$26,024 (plus GST, if applicable) ☐ Year 3 2018/19 - \$26,024 (plus GST, if applicable)

Di Morris

At the AGM Di stepped down as Chair after five yrs to allow the opportunity for others to lead the Trust. Di did 'put her hand up' for the Staff Liaison role which is a mainstay of the trust being able to employ others and keeping in touch with our employees regularly. Leading by

example in her many and varied commitments to the trust, she ensures that Kiwi Avoidance Training workshops are carried out at six month intervals throughout the year.

Letitia McRitchie

As in previous years, Letitia continued in the role as Treasurer (sharing the role briefly with Kelly for several months) in addition to completing numerous funding applications with our administrator throughout the year. This is a crucial contribution to the ongoing success of SIRCET.

Alina Atkins

Having reliably produced minutes for the countless meetings she attended over the years as well as performing the many secretarial duties that arise from this role, Alina resigned in August 2016. The happy news that she and Matt were expecting their second child in Jan 2017 was celebrated.

Anita Herbert

While still involved with building a house on the Island Anita has contributed as she was able to, taking minutes for some of the meetings after Alina's resignation in addition to other secretarial duties. Assisting Willy with several school visits on walks to the lighthouse at Acker's Point.

Willy Gamble

Elected Trustee/Secretary in August 2016 which he took on with much enthusiasm. In November 2016, he resigned, due to being offered and accepting the role of SIRCET Project Manager. Willy has brought great enthusiasm to the role along with his GIS and weed control expertise.

Alasdair Burns

Al has willingly shared the secretarial duties and chairing of meetings when asked. Not only is Al's genuine interest in all aspects of the Trust well regarded by all but his scientific background and general biodiversity knowledge brings much added value and direction to the table at meetings.

Jim Barrett

As in past years, Jim's attention to detail when reading documentation, his accurate recollection of the historical milestones, achievements etc are an invaluable resource and contribution to this organisation.

Sharon Ross

Resigned at the AGM in October. Sharon had been with the Trust for just over two years. We thank Sharon for her contribution to the Trust over this time. Sharon and her husband Pete continue to support us from with Sponsor a Hectare and assistance in keeping our vehicle on the road!

Financial

Statement of Financial Performance

Statement of Profit or Loss

Stewart Island / Rakiura Community and Environmental Trust

For the year ended 30 June 2017

| | NOTES | 2017 | 2016 |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|----------------|
| Operating Income | | | |
| Trading revenue | | | |
| Trap Sales Income | | 1,558 | 626 |
| Weka Card Income | | 122 | 140 |
| Total Trading revenue | | 1,680 | 766 |
| Grants & Donations | 3 | 42,240 | 69,193 |
| Total Operating Income | | 43,921 | 69,959 |
| Less Direct Expenses | | | |
| Bait | | 1,589 | 625 |
| Employment Expenses | | 50 | 183 |
| Field Supplies | | 1,751 | 1,116 |
| Field Work - Contract | | 2,943 | 6,555 |
| Freight | | 30 | 126 |
| Motor Vehicle Expenses | | 1,685 | 1,626 |
| Traps | | 4,427 | 2,152 |
| Wages | | 47,870 | 45,912 |
| Total Less Direct Expenses | | 60,345 | 58,294 |
| Operating Surplus (Deficit) | | (16,424) | 11,665 |
| Other Income | | | |
| Interest Received | | 320 | 1,411 |
| Total Other Income | | 320 | 1,411 |
| Total Income | | (16,104) | 13,076 |
| Administration Expenses | | | |
| Acc Levies | | 88 | 165 |
| Accounting Fees | | 2,213 | 3,332 |
| Advertising Expenses | | - | 267 |
| Audit Expenses | | 40 | 40 |
| Computer Expenses | | 749 | 514 |
| Depreciation | | 9,704 | 8,259 |
| Office Expenses | | 429 | - |
| Phone Expenses | | 483 | - |
| Stationery/Printing/Postage | | 849 | 593 |
| Subscriptions | | 44 | 44 |
| Sundry Expenses | | 72 | 1,002 |
| Website Expenses | | 2,370 | - |
| Total Administration Expenses | | 17,042 | 14,217 |
| Surplus (Loss) For The Year | | (33,146) | (1,141) |

Major Donors, Supporters and Business Sponsors



Volunteers

Thanks to all our supporters!

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Alasdair Burns | Kelly Bunce |
| Alina Atkins | Kevin Carter |
| Anna Stabo and Milly Caley | Margaret Hopkins |
| Anita Herbert | Michael Morris |
| Bec Baxter | Natalie Jones |
| Ben Hopkins | Nicky Nicol |
| Bridget Hunt | Penelope Trevathan |
| Callum Webster & Charlotte Johnson | Peter Goomes |
| Casie Heron, Kay McNeill, John Collins (Omaui Landcare) | Peter Tait |
| Chris and Shane Mcarthy (Chris and Macca) | Phillip Smith |
| Dale Jenkins | Queenstown Primary |
| David Woods | Quiterie Duron |
| Diana Morris | Sabine Pahl |
| Ed Bennet & Zoe Caals | Saffron Lavin |
| Hayley Ricardo | Samuel Mayer |
| Halfmoon Bay School kids | Scott Jarvie |
| Ian Gamble | Sharon Pasco |
| Jeff Bergman | Sharon Ross |
| Jennifer Ross | Shona Sangster |
| Jess Kany | Tash Lundin |
| Jim Barrett | Vivian Knigge |
| John Foley | Wendy Hallett |
| Karl Tiefel | Willy Gamble |