

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



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

Annual Report

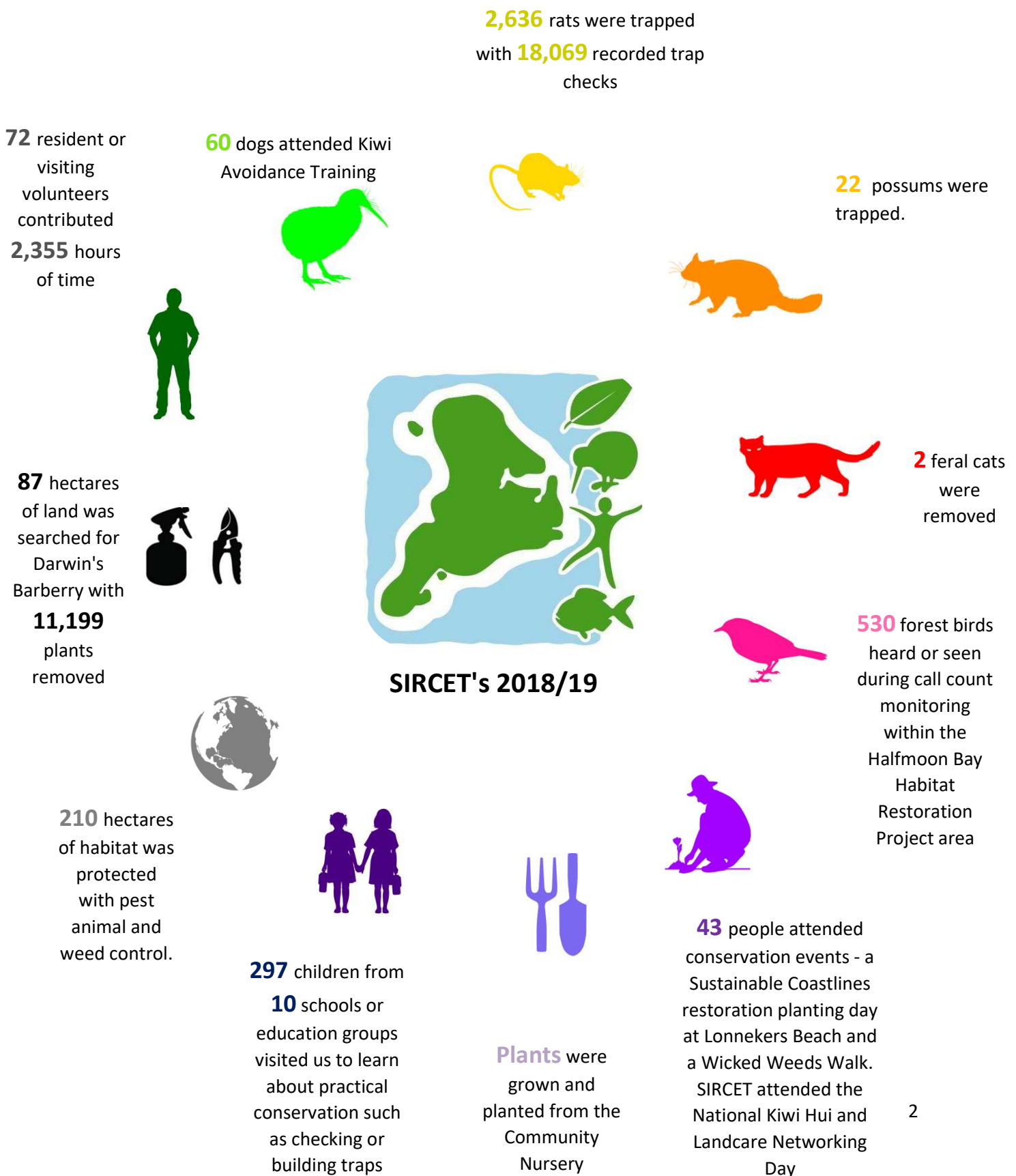
1st July 2018 – 30th June 2019

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SIRCET's 2018/19 Overview



Chairperson's Report

Letitia McRitchie

2018/19 has been a successful year for SIRCET with the trust being fully funded.

Thank you to the trustees who have served well this year: Di Morris for her staff liaison role, organising the successful kiwi aversion program and much more; Anita for her excellent financial management, we are set up well for the future; Al for his interest in the Trusts projects and stepping in where needed; Jim for holding the record of the longest serving trustee and offering practical help where needed; Shona for joining the team and her support: Wayne for offering help, advice and sharing a commitment to a better environment around Oban.

SIRCET have been fortunate to have hardworking staff; Bridget for taking the Project Administrator role to a higher level, then Tanya for maintaining those systems and processes. Willy has continued to show his passion and enthusiasm in the Pest Manager role, being innovative with GIS, improving how we do things and making sure the rats, cats and possums are dealt to.

DOC has continued to support the Trust with the use of a meeting space, and knowledge and enthusiasm of Jen Ross!

Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed to SIRCET over the last year we couldn't do it without you!

In the future I can see that SIRCET may need to change and adapt. As we struggle to attract trustees to join and take on the necessary management roles, we may need to rethink how we operate. I encourage the Trust to consider this over the coming year.

After 10 years as a trustee I am encouraged by what we have achieved: sustained employment and paid contracting for locals, sustained pest control and hundreds of hours of education and community involvement. I look forward to following and supporting SIRCET into the future.

We are all in this together to make Oban's environment a richer place for us to live, to proudly show to others and to improve for the future.

Volunteers

During the 2018-2019 season 72 volunteers contributed over 2,300 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, Kiwi Avoidance Training days 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 and Events

SIRCET hosted three visiting school groups this year:

- Queenstown Primary School
- Lochiel School
- Otago High School

The local Halfmoon Bay School has continued with their trap line maintenance. The line is checked by students weekly.

The following community events were held over the year:

July 2018 – Plant Identification Course

October 2018 – Kiwi Avoidance Workshop

October 2018 - Great Kiwi Morning Tea Bakesale

November 2018 – Release of the NEW UTE from Environment Southland

April 2019 – Trustees attended Predator Free Rakiura community meeting and hosted the PFR leadership group around the Halfmoon Bay project area

April 2019 – Kiwi Avoidance Workshop



Children from Halfmoon Bay School servicing their rat trap line.

Funding and Fundraising

2018 – 19 was a successful year for SIRCET with our largest expense – wages – being fully funded. Wages were funded by Kiwi for kiwis, WWF's Community Conservation Fund, the DOC Community Fund and a grant from DOC's Predator Free 2050. Our War on Weeds team were funded by DOC's Community Fund.

Project costs were covered by a variety of donations, grants and sponsorship. Pub Quiz funded a new phone for our trapping apps. Our applications to the Stewart Island Visitor Levy were successful and covered two projects: vehicle operating and running costs and trapping supplies; and funding towards costs of a new vehicle. Environment Southland kindly donated a truck to replace our one which had come to the end of its life, this generous donation is much appreciated. The Community Initiatives fund covered equipment costs for the War on Weeds team. We also received funding to field trial the Find a Pest app. We ran a successful Trademe auction with funds raised going towards project costs. The Town Gardens contract continued for another year, bringing in valuable income.

We thank those who supported us financially this year, we couldn't run this project without your support!

Collaboration

SIRCET continues to work 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 also continues to correspond with the Predator Free Rakiura group and the Rakiura Māori Land Trust and these relationships are strong. Environment Southland provided additional support by gifting SIRCET

a new 4WD vehicle in November of 2018, they also continue in managing the funding and contract for the War on Weeds project.

Media Releases & Awards

The trustees have agreed that The SIRCET News publication is now surplus and we have ceased to produce it, with June 2018 being the final issue.

SIRCET articles were produced in the Stewart Island News publication throughout the year (in August and November 2018 and in February, April and June 2019). Articles covered updates on events, pest control and weed control work. Advertisements for 'rat traps for sale' were included in additional publications when an article was not produced.

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:

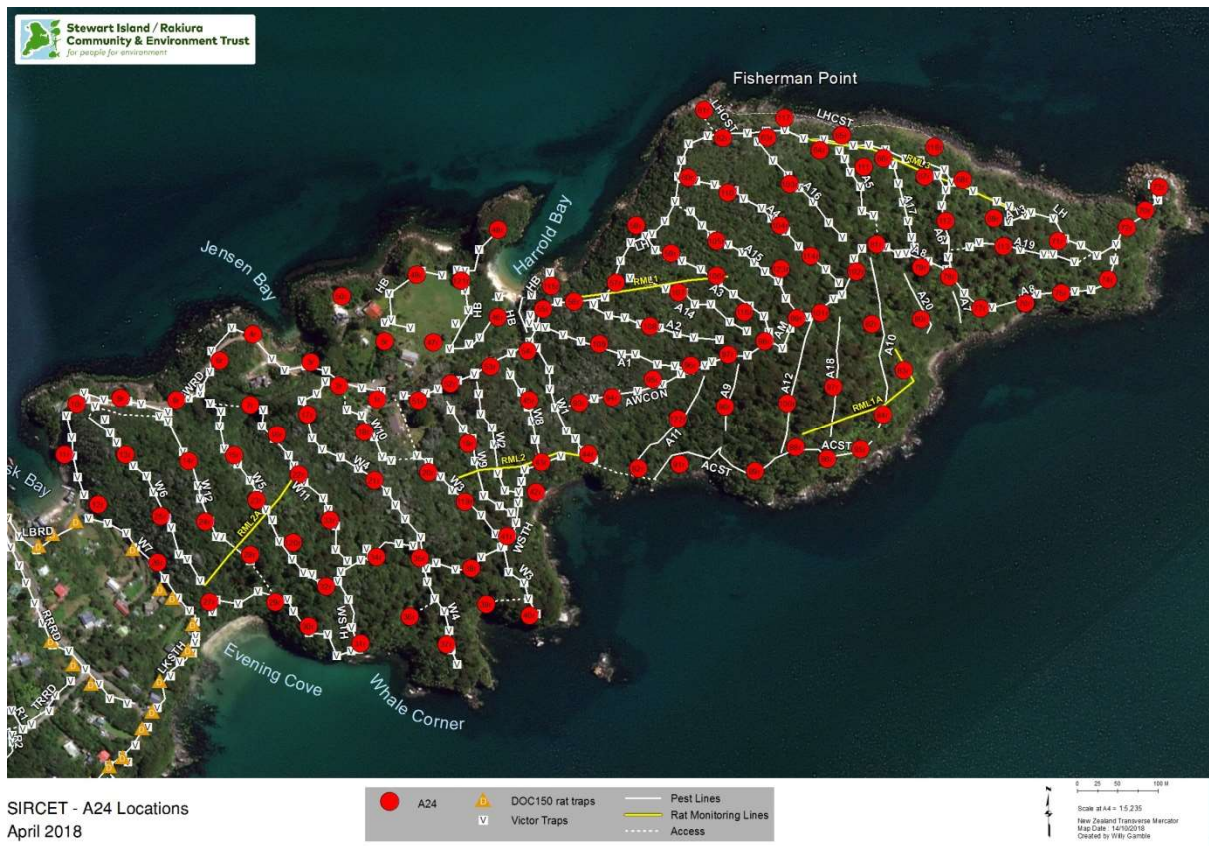
- To increase the native bird population within the Halfmoon Bay project area;
- To provide a safe habitat for re-introduction and survival for Stewart Island species (both plants and animals); and
- To educate and involve the community in conservation activities

Animal Pest Control

The grid of A24 traps are planned to be re-gassed and rebaited on a six-monthly cycle, which occurred in November 2018 and again in May 2019.

In May 2019 – eleven of our a24 traps were identified as faulty and were sent to Goodnature for replacement. We continue to check the status of each trap at every six-monthly cycle.

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.

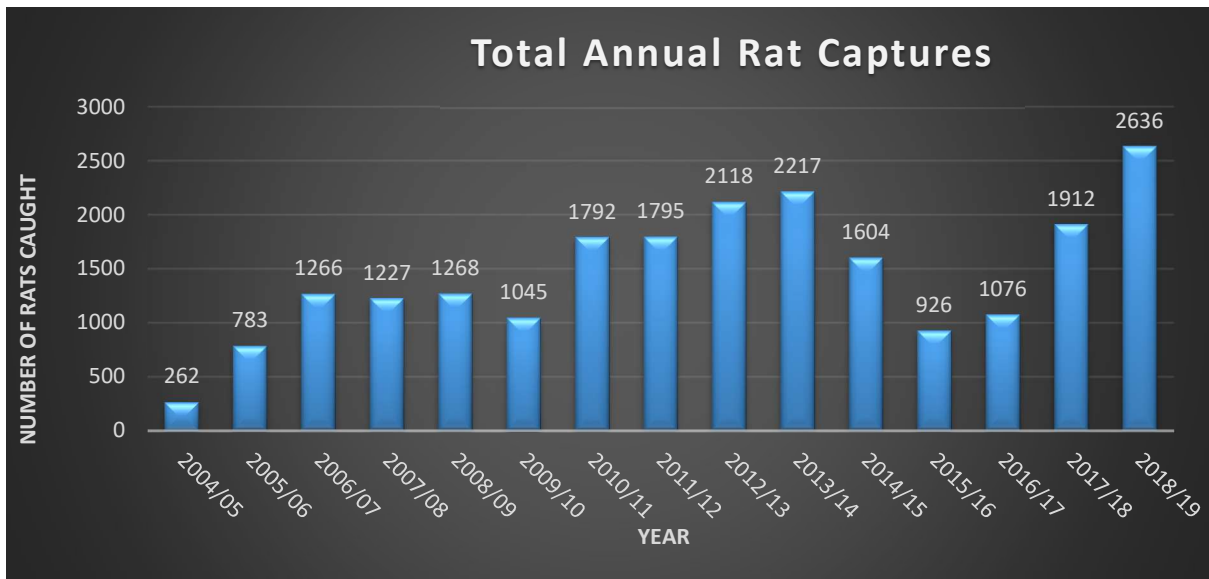


Map of A24 rat trap placements in the Core Project Zone

Trapping Results

Rats

A total of **2,636** trapped rats were recorded during this financial year which is an increase from last year's result of **1,912**. 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 123 A24 Goodnature traps and these traps automatically re-set so each kill the trap makes is unrecorded and not included in our data.



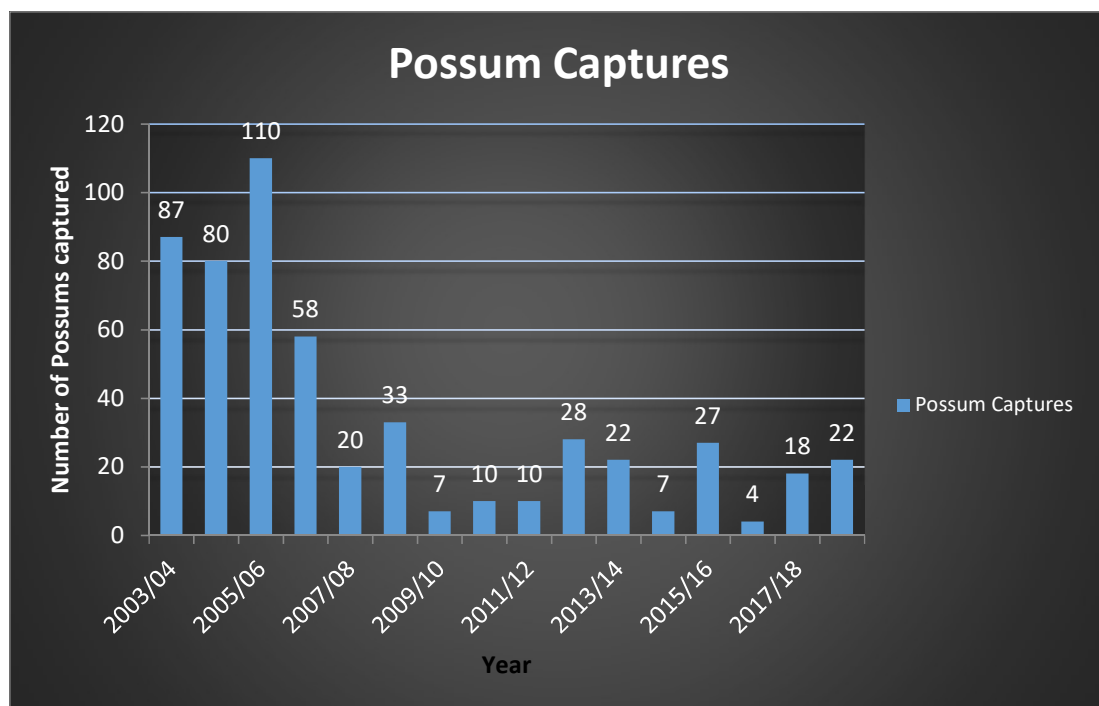
Possums

22 possums were caught in the 2018-2019 season We now have approximately 89 trapinators installed. 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. In November 2017 the A12 Possum traps were distributed more evenly within the project area



Map showing Trapinator Possum Trap locations





Map of possum catches. 1 Caught = Green Triangle. More than 1 = Red Circle



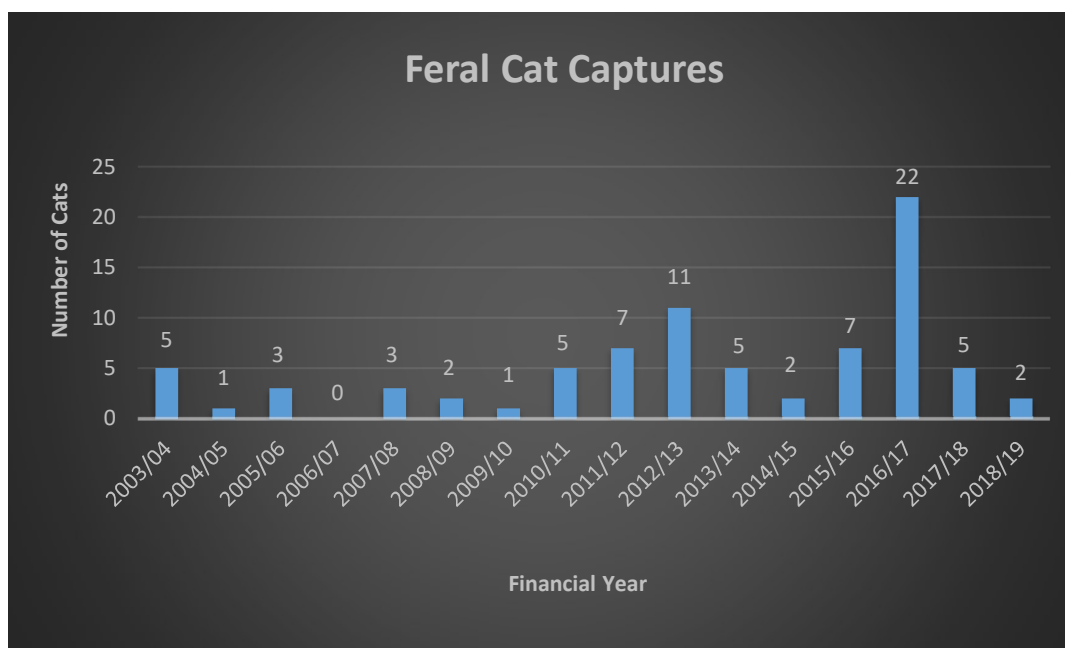
Visiting volunteer Rosie Bowman with a possum caught in a Trapinator on the Golf Course.

Feral Cats

A Total of 2 feral cats were captured in the 2018/2019 season. This is a decrease from the previous season when 5 cats were caught. Locally sourced fish scraps were mostly used as bait as well as concentrated salmon spray lure from Connovation Ltd. In the 2018 / 2019 season there was a continued focus on encouraging residents to keep and check cat cages. Of the 2 cats caught 1 was from cages looked after by the community. Cat cages are now available to the local community outside the project area as part of our trap library.



Map showing feral cat capture locations within the project area – 1 caught = Green Triangle



Graph showing feral cat captures to June 2019

Pest Monitoring

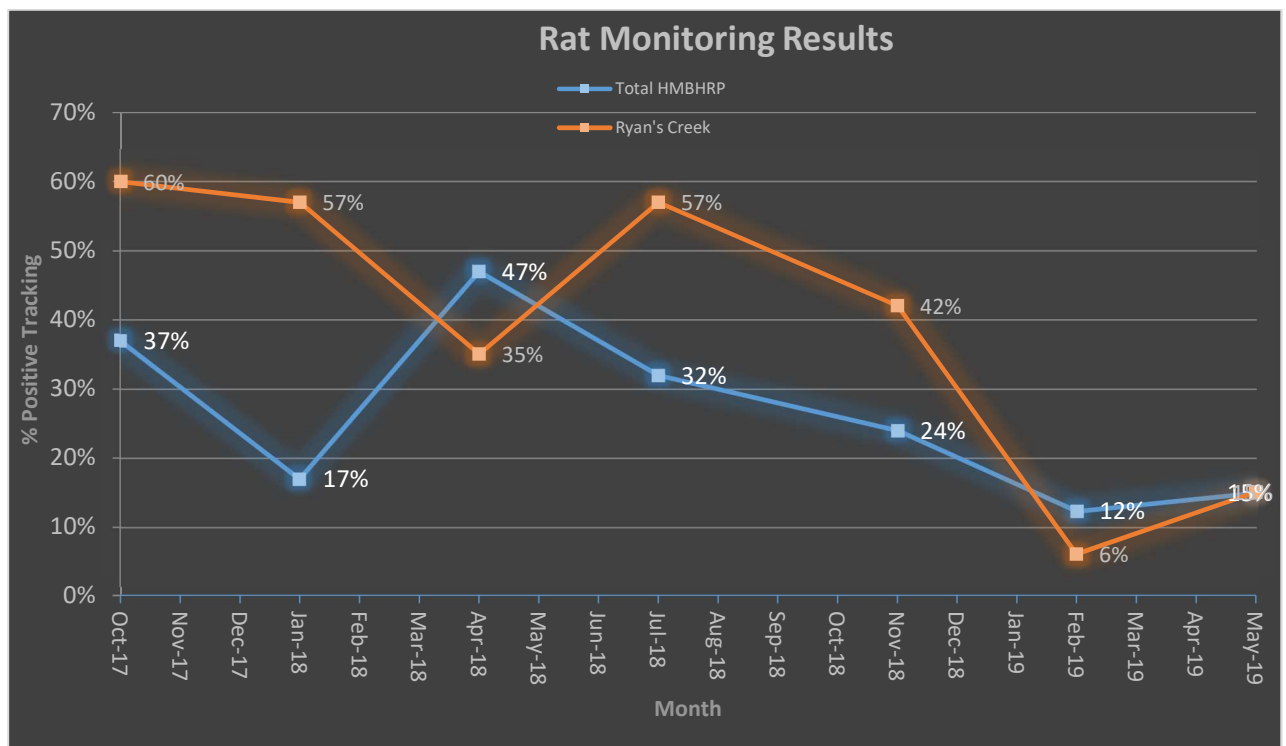
Rats

Rat monitoring across the HMBHRP area and the un-trapped Ryan's Creek control area was undertaken in July and November 2018 and February and May 2019.

Overall, the results were consistently higher in the Ryan's Creek area, but in February 2019 rat tracking was lower in Ryans creek than within the HMBHRP area. High possum disturbance in the untrapped area may have been a factor in this discrepancy. Possum proof tunnels are being investigated.

Rat numbers have been consistently kept below 10% in our core zone throughout the financial year despite having caught more rats than any other season. Rat numbers throughout the entire project area (Core, buffer, and community zones combined) peaked at 32% in July 2018

These results are a fantastic reflection of the success and effect the project's trapping efforts are having within the HMBHRP area.



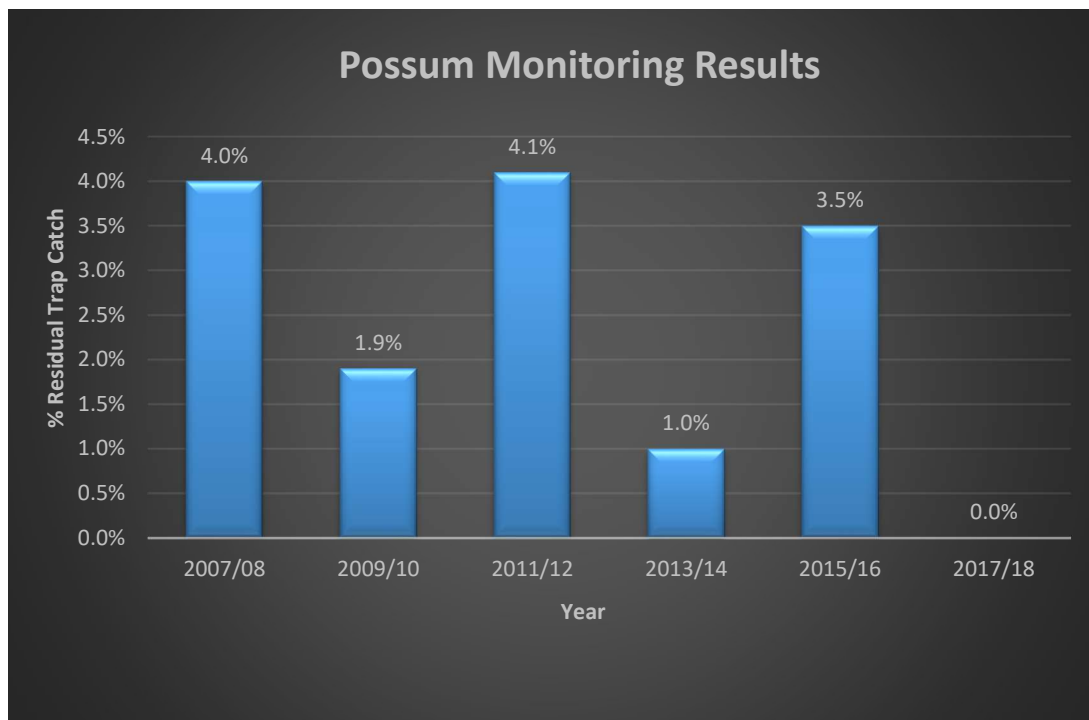
Graph showing rat monitoring results to April 2018



Visiting volunteer Rachael baits a monitoring tunnel in the buffer zone.

Possums

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 in July 2018. The results were low at 0% RTC, (residual trap catch) an outstanding result. SIRCET's RTC target is of 5% or less.

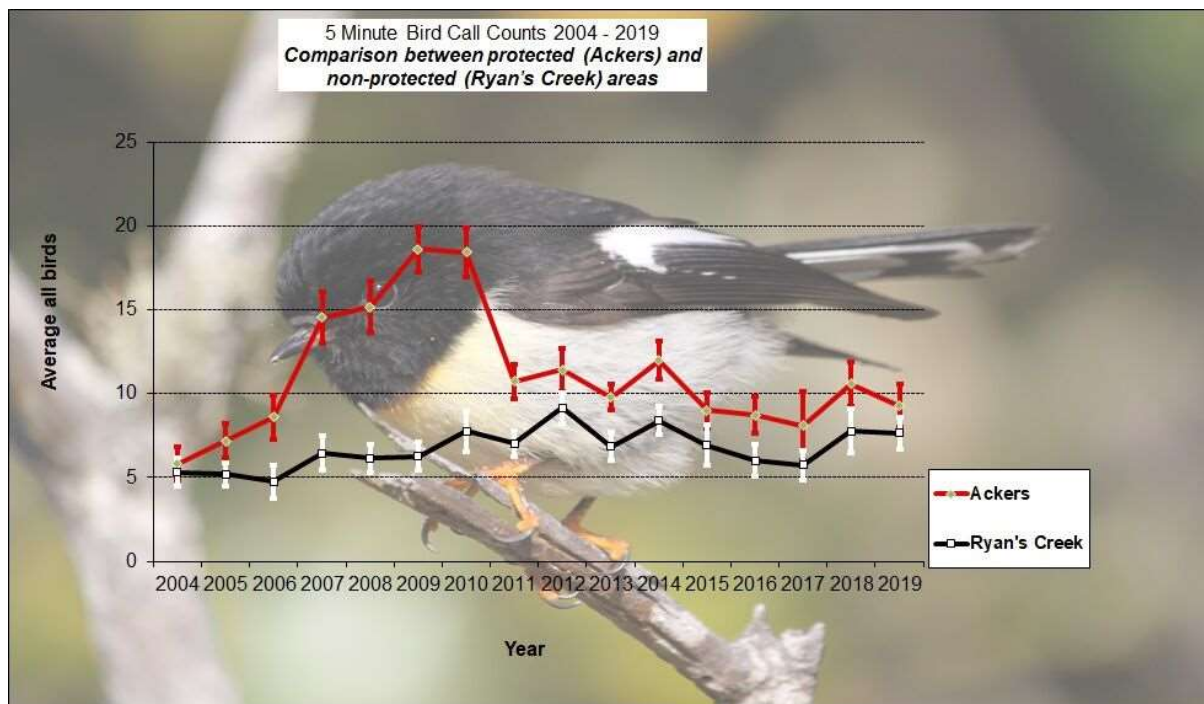


RTC leg hold trap locations July 2018

Species Monitoring

Forest Bird Monitoring

The annual forest bird monitoring (using a five-minute bird call count) was conducted in April 2019 in the Project area (at Ackers Point) also in Ryan's Creek area, where there is less intensive pest control in a fairly similar Stewart Island forest environment. The results show a decrease in the number of birds heard when compared to 2018's counts but still an overall increase in bird call count since records began in 2004. Bellbird and Silvereye remain the birds most encountered followed by Tui and Piwakawaka.



Forest Bird monitoring: 2004 – 2019 Five minute bird call counts at Ackers Point and Ryan's Creek

Night Bird Monitoring (Weka, Kiwi and Ruru)

Weka, Kiwi and Ruru are all present in the Halfmoon Bay Habitat Restoration Project (HMBHRP) area. Kiwi are self-introduced and along with Ruru appear to be increasing in number. An additional 13 Kiwi were translocated from Ulva in 2013. Weka were introduced in 2005 and until 2009 were monitored via transmitter technology. SIRCET undertake call count monitoring of Weka, Kiwi, and Ruru within the Project area, and a control area to provide information on species population health. This monitoring is set up with the aim of recording gross changes in their numbers over time.

In April, May and June of 2019 SIRCET had a contractor undertake night bird call counts at 8 sites: 4 within the project area and 4 outside of the project area. The same listening stations were used in 2011 and 2015 for kiwi call monitoring.

Kiwi call numbers were higher at three of the four sites within the project area and decreased at three of the four control sites. Weka call counts were higher in 2019 than in the last round of monitoring in 2015 and Ruru calls have remained “consistently high from year to year”.

Bat monitoring also took place in 2019 for the first time and SIRCET would like to continue to do this alongside the night bird monitoring to see if any trends or patterns can be seen over time.

Little Blue Penguins

SIRCET did not carry out monitoring of the Acker's Point Little Blue Penguins this year.

Sooty Shearwater/Tītī Monitoring

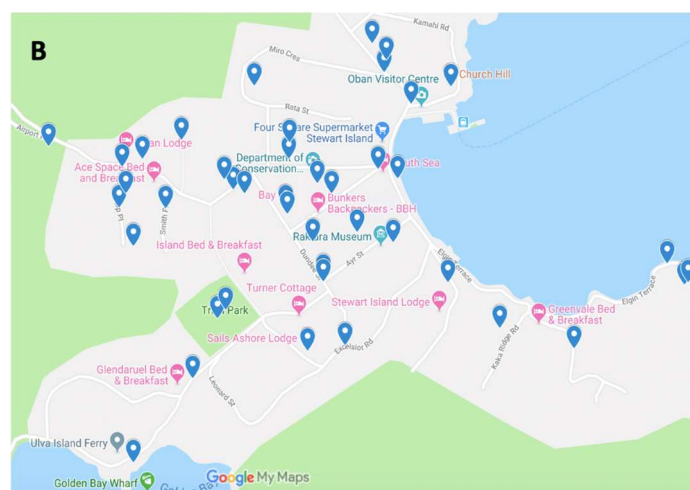
SIRCET has been undertaking monitoring of Sooty Shearwater/ muttonbird/ tītī colony on Ackers Point since 2004. The purpose of the monitoring is to gauge the response of this colony to the community pest control operation in the area, by analysing its population dynamics over time. Nesting success is our main measure of the survival of this colony, and this has been monitored using mark-recapture (banding) and burrow scoping.

In 2018 and 2019 the Board of Trustees chose not to undertake the same monitoring as past years for a couple of reasons: firstly, fledgling success was low, indicating a problem but not bringing the Trust any closer to why. Secondly, there was uncertainty around whether the Trust would seek funding as per the expertise required. It was decided not to engage a contractor and therefore no monitoring of Titi has taken place.

The Trust continues to believe that monitoring Tītī at Acker's Point is important and worthwhile. A review of the Project Outline for this monitoring work would be very helpful and funding for future work is being sought.

Hedgehogs

A survey to collect data on hedgehog sightings and perceptions in the community was undertaken by Kathleen Laylor of University of Otago in June 2019. Using the software Survey Monkey and advertising through Facebook and at the post office, this survey was completed by 89 participants (of the population of ~350). 37 of responders reported seeing hedgehogs on their property in the last year, and 51 had seen hedgehogs in areas other than their property. A map below shows locations of sightings in the main township; hedgehog densities are regularly higher in urban areas because of lower arthropod biomass, easier access to cat food, plus more shelter for variable climate conditions.



Map showing locations of hedgehog sightings in main township area.

The results are a great starting point for future monitoring and eradication projects, with most participants being supportive of control of hedgehogs. However, the recorded positive perceptions of hedgehogs as part of the ecosystem should prompt SIRCET to focus some resources on education to make the issue better understood in the community. Future collaboration with the University of Otago Masters of Wildlife Management students is suggested for future research efforts. Thanks to the Department of Conservation for providing field support and to Mamaku Conservation Trust for providing accommodation.

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. Volunteer / Education groups: Sustainable Coastlines, Little Brown Kiwi and Ornithological Society New Zealand Southland Youth Camp have all put considerable work in here.

Kiwi Advocacy Project

For the last few years Sandy King and Di Morris have been running a training session for local and visiting dogs to avoid kiwi. The aim of the training is to create negative association for the dog toward kiwi.

This is a regular bi-annual calendar event for SIRCET undertaken at Easter and Labour weekend each year since 2014. We encourage all those with dogs in the community or who visit the island to take part. This is a free activity that is endorsed by Kiwis for Kiwi. SIRCET have been very fortunate to have received generous funding for the purchase of the 'E Kiwi' as well as the electric collars which are still used on some dogs. The 'E kiwi' is an electronic device that has been developed by some clever technical folk at DOC in Wellington. Sandy has had training specifically in the use of this tool and we are very grateful for her continued voluntary support of SIRCET. The dog, if interested in the very distinctive smell of the e kiwi, from bedding and /or kiwi poo carefully placed around the device, receives an electric shock through the nose as they go to investigate and touch the fine wires that are surrounding the lump of fluff and smell. This shock reinforces a negative association of kiwi smell – as something to avoid!! The shock for some dogs creates a strong reaction, for other dogs they seem to shrug it off.

In October 2018 44 dogs were seen over the day– it's an all-day affair, with each dog receiving a certificate and a treat! In April 2019 at Ringa ringa golf course, we trained or refreshed and tested 30 dogs.



Trustee Wayne King awards Nonu the dog on completion of Kiwi 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 Lonnekens Beach and to add native plants to local gardens. A selection of plants has been made available at the Rakiura Environment Centre and these have proven very popular. SIRCET intends to relocate the nursery to Traill Park in order to be more central to volunteers / education groups. We wish to thank Mamaku Point Trust, the new owners of the site at Horseshoe Bay for allowing us to operate until we can move to Traill park.



Visiting volunteers propagating native seedlings at community nursery.

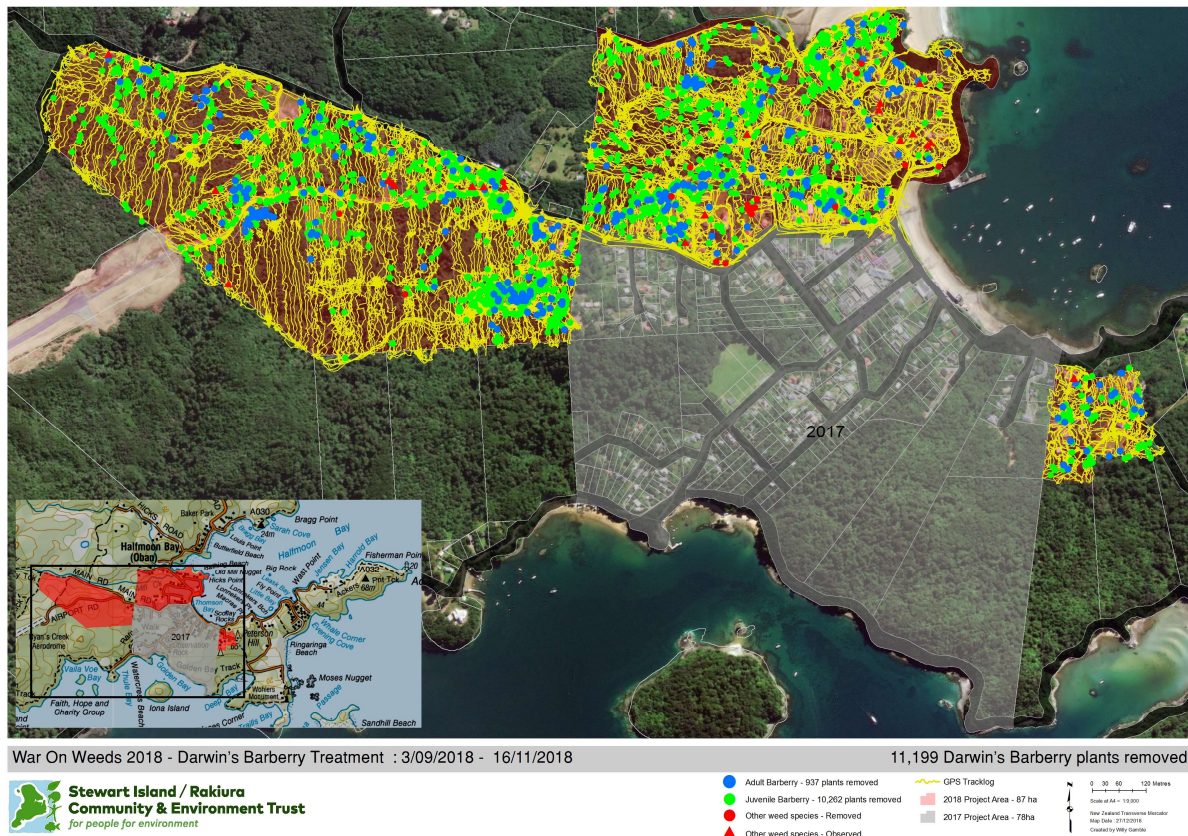
Rakiura Environment Centre

The 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.

War on Weeds Project

Environment Southland received funding from the Department of Conservation to distribute to community groups to undertake weed control. We were fortunate to receive funding to undertake 2 months of Barberry Control. A team of 3 staff were hired, with Willy leading the field team and providing GIS support and Letitia project managing.

The team did an excellent job of covering the ground and we achieved our 87ha target, an excellent result. Further funding was applied for and we were successful in receiving another 2 years of funding from the DOC Community Fund.



Community Trap Library

The Trap Library – In November 2017 we were very fortunate to receive funding from the Predator 2050 DOC Community funding for a Community Trap library. This was a fantastic way to spread the project across a wider geographical area at the same time having the ability of supplying a range of traps that people could be interested in trying a particular trap without having to outlay financially. There is a range of traps available for hire and whilst our initial uptake has been slower than hoped it is anticipated that as the word is spread more people will take up this great offer.



Community Trap Library

Website and Social Media

SIRCET's website (www.sircet.org.nz) has been maintained with project and event updates created. The Sponsor a Hectare map is up to date with sponsor information.

SIRCET's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SIRCET/>) is regularly updated with news and events each week and has over 1,000 page likes (an increase of 120 compared to last year) 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

Pest Manager Willy Gamble

Willy has continued to grow and develop in the roll of Pest Manager. He has a real passion for making every project he works on a success, including developing a robust network of volunteers. We admire his dedication and enthusiasm for SIRCET and for the Island.

Project Administrator Tanya Dann

Tanya resigned from her position as Project Administrator after over a year of great contribution in her role. We wish her well in her future endeavours and thank her for the time she spent with SIRCET.

Project Administrator Emily Barnett

Emily joined us as Project Administrator after Tanya's departure. She brings with her a background in conservation ecology and enthusiasm for Rakiura's conservation story.

War on Weeds Team

Thank you to the staff that undertook the hard work of barberry control, in some trying conditions! Laire Purik, Belinda Dobbins, Wayne King, Rosie Bowman.

Letitia McRitchie

Letitia continued with her role as Chairperson this year. In addition to these duties, she has continued to head the War on Weeds project and oversee funding efforts.

Di Morris

This year Di continued with the role of Staff Liaison. She also organises the Kiwi Avoidance Training, which is held twice yearly with Sandy King and runs the community trap library.

Anita Herbert

Anita took on the role as Treasurer and looks after some of our volunteer traplines. She is always happy to help out where ever needed, for which we are grateful.

Alasdair Burns

Al has revived the Titi monitoring project and in investigating options for hedgehog monitoring. He has willingly supported secretarial duties and looks after the payroll.

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.

Hummingbirds

It has been valuable for us to tuck in under SIRCET's umbrella as we are a budding organisation with limited resources to manage our funds etc. We chose SIRCET as we feel our values align. We really appreciate the support of SIRCET and the impact that they have on the community. We look forward to inviting community action alongside you.

Liz Cave

Balance Sheet

Stewart Island / Rakiura Community and Environmental Trust As at 30 June 2019

	30 Jun 2019	30 Jun 2018
Assets		
Bank		
ASB - Term Deposit	30,000	30,000
ASB Business Saver	10,950	30,443
ASB Cheque Account	50,479	27,323
Total Bank	91,429	87,766
Current Assets		
ASB Term Investment	29,803	-
Total Current Assets	29,803	-
Fixed Assets		
Motor Vehicles	11,196	11,196
Motor Vehicles - Accum Depreciation	(11,196)	(11,196)
Plant & Equipment	81,133	81,133
Plant & Equipment - Accumulated Depreciation	(75,354)	(75,354)
Total Fixed Assets	5,779	5,779
Total Assets	127,011	93,545
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Grants in advance	13,976	13,976
GST	1,639	2,140
Total Current Liabilities	15,615	16,116
Total Liabilities	15,615	16,116
Net Assets	111,395	77,429
Equity		
Current Year Earnings	33,967	11,355
Retained Earnings	77,429	66,073
Total Equity	111,395	77,429

Profit and Loss

Stewart Island / Rakiura Community and Environmental Trust 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

30 Jun 19

Income	
Donation - Sponsor a Hectare	15,762
Donations Received	21,742
Grants Received	86,751
Trap Sales Income	984
Total Income	125,240
Less Cost of Sales	
Bait	3,853
Computer Expenses	1,290
Field Supplies	4,689
Field Work - Contract	4,097
Motor Vehicle Expenses	885
Stationery/Printing/Postage	347
Sundry Expenses	165
Traps	1,128
Travel Expenses	48
Wages	70,698
Total Cost of Sales	87,200
Gross Profit	38,040
Plus Other Income	
Interest Received	1,132
Total Other Income	1,132
Less Operating Expenses	
Acc Levies	166
Accounting Fees	264
Administration Expenses	360
Administration Motor Vehicle Expenses	3,094
Bank Charges	2
Employment Expenses	634
Freight/Courier	87
Phone Expenses	419
Subscriptions	44
Website Expenses	134
Total Operating Expenses	5,205
Net Profit	33,967

Major Donors, Supporters and Business Sponsors



Volunteers

Thanks to all our supporters!

Dana Eyde Mike Douglass Tam Ware Ian Herbert Denise Hayes Daniel Meagher Ollie Peckham Marg Katon Christine Brown, Neil Coaley Marco Tairoa Jenny Gamble Ian Gamble Maggie Ferringa Liz Case Fiordland college Jesse Bythell Sam Jenkinson Lucas Mugnier Manon Billard Bob Klaver Altine de Reus Tracey Bransgrove Lizz White Becky Sampson Rebecca Guest Siobhan Mulhall Kath Johnson Christina Paterson Lee Mackay Christian Baldasarri Wendy Lamb Martin Davids Janice Manwa Dan Asher Julie Asher Rachel Sagar	John Cushen Alcie Hodgkinson Rosie Bowman Tabi Kime Dana Eyde Fran Lynn Mcpherson Bill Watt Anita Herbert Letitia Mcrichie Di Morris Jim Barrett Shona Sangster Wayne King Diane Kenyon Ben Hopkins Carolyn Fortney Chelsea Broom Chris McCarthy Shane McCarthy Emma Jenkinson Jeff Bergman Jen Ross Jess Kany John Foley Margaret Hopkins Mel Miller Pauline Joy Sharon Pasco Shona Sangster Natasha Lundin Peter Goomes Chad Benham Sue Graham
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