

Newsletter of the South West New Zealand Endangered Species Trust

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*Left: Young Explorers and the
Mike Horn Team at Moonlight
Point on Coal Island.*

Photo: © Mike Horn

Mike Horn and the Young Explorers on Coal Island

From May 18th to 20th 2009 people from around the world came together to engage in Coal Island's restoration project

By Simon Streatker from Denmark

As part of the Pangaea Expedition – a four year environmental sailing expedition around the world – founded by modern adventurer Mike Horn, the second Young Explorers Program has been held in Fiordland. The aim of the Pangaea Expedition and its Young Explorers Program is to bring young adults on from all over the world together to take part in various expeditions to the most beautiful places of our earth. Location of these expeditions is the Pangaea vessel, where they actively can participate in the preservation of our planet. For this reason, nine Young Explorers from the United States, Poland, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, China, South Africa, Russia and New Zealand met in Bluff to enter the Pangaea. One day later the experienced Coal Island experts Sue and Allen Higgins joined the boat. We load all the new steel traps and the eggs (those are supposed to attract the stoats) onto the back of the boat and Don from the Trust and Dave from the Department of Conservation gave us an introduction about what we were going to do on Coal Island. So after this presentation we were ready to leave Bluff!

In the morning of 17th May we arrived in Preservation Inlet and anchored in Cuttle Cove. The goal of our mission on Coal Island was to remove the old traps which weren't in good condition and to put some new stainless steel ones that doesn't rust. Also we renewed all the eggs in those boxes.

After a short night we moved over to Coal Island to start our work there. Finally the Young Explorers, some crew member, Sue and Allen, the Mike Horn team and Mike himself were on Coal Island. Previously everybody had to put about 10-15 of the new traps and

some eggs into their backpacks. On the island we divided into three groups, each group got a different route to execute our mission. Fascinated by the beauty of Te Puka-Hereka – a beauty of nature that we've never seen before in our lives – the work was more a great trip than actually work. And especially with helpful cordless screwdrivers the work was easy to do. It took us approximately about five to ten minutes to remove the old trap, install the new one and change the egg. Sometimes it was hard to find the trap box, because they were deeply covered in the bushes. But that was just another interesting challenge for us to find them. About 5 pm in the late afternoon we arrived on Pangaea. So the first day on Coal Island was over. We had done about 100 traps and another 80 were just expecting us for the next day.

The next day there was rough sea and stormy weather. However, after 5 tries with our zodiac, it wasn't possible to land on Coal Island due to the stormy sea, we went back to the Pangaea. So the question occurred: What are we going to do that day? We decided to explore the first and only fiord we've seen at that point. At the very end of Long Sound we discovered just a giant waterfall and Mike had the spontaneous idea to walk to the top of this waterfall. There we discovered a nice lake and finally the day ended up with all of us having a bath in 7°C cold water.

The day later the sea calmed down and we were able to finish our work on Coal Island. After one day more of setting traps, we finished our task in the evening. We didn't even find one dead stoat at this whole project. For me this shows that the project was done very well, over the last couple of years.

You may have a look at a great video that was created during our work on Coal Island:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwkITGvjq0>



Above: New Trustee Ali King getting hand's on experience.
Photo: Don Goodhue

Changes on the Trust

New Administrator and Trustee

Earlier in the year, Trust Administrator Angela McMeekin advised the Trust that she was intending to step down from the position which she has held since the Trust was formed in 2004. In June, Joyce Kolk of Tuatapere offered to take over the position. In her role as Trust Administrator, Angela spent many hours working "behind the scenes" - most significantly on funding applications. Without this support from Angela, the work on the island would simply not have happened. The Trust would like to thank Angela for her contribution to the project.

Joyce takes on the Administrator role having been in the project since 2004 when she and husband Johan worked on the island establishing the alignment of the tracks. Last year Joyce was on the island to help with the mouse bait drops. As well as the Coal Island Project, Joyce and Johan have set up their own stoat trapping project on the Wairaurahiri river supported by their jet boating business.

Joining the Trust as a new Trustee is Ali King, also from Tuatapere. Ali worked on Coal Island on the mouse bait drops and was part of the team that visited Preservation Inlet in June on the "Southern Winds". Ali is also a Trustee for the Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track.

Left: Angela (left) and Joyce at the Trust meeting in June.
Photo: Joyce and Johan



More Mainland Traps

New Trapline from Kisbee Bay to Te Oneroa

During July Trustee Don Goodhue and wife Josy built and installed 40 new trap stations to establish a new trapline from Kisbee Bay to Te Oneroa. The trapline starts at the beach in Kisbee Bay and follows the old miners track that once linked the gold mining townships of Cromarty and Te Oneroa. At its mid-point the track drops down to the shore at Powell's beach. During the mining days, Powell's farm supplied meat to the miners. Closer to Te Oneroa the track follows the water pipe that delivered water to Morning Star mine to drive the mine machinery. With these traps in place the Trust now has a continuous line of traps from Kisbee Bay to Diggers Creek on the Puysegur Point light house road.



The new trapline has been named after the Morning Star mine.

For further information contact:

South West New Zealand
Endangered Species Charitable Trust

C/- PO Box 102
TE ANAU

email
info@tepukahereka.org.nz

phone
03 249 7402

fax
03 249 7409

