

Newsletter of the South West New Zealand Endangered Species Trust



No 16, January 2009

www.tepukahereka.org.nz

Our Mission

“To fund and establish a world class sanctuary on Te Puka-Hereka for rare and endangered native species of flora and fauna that will be jointly developed by private philanthropists and government participants.”

In this edition....

- **December Volunteer Trip**
- **From the archives**
- **Volunteer trips update**



Above: *Green Hooded Orchid*
Right: *Mistletoe flower*
Photos: *Don Goodhue*

December Volunteer Trip

...only six stoats

On the evening before each volunteer trip, volunteers meet with the Trust representative in Tuatapere. This is usually over dinner and a beer at the Waiau Hotel. When the team met on the evening of the 5th of December little did they know they were in for a bit of home grown entertainment. The Waimatuku Pipe band and Tuatapere Highland Dancers marched in after dinner to put on a show for patrons. A good start to the trip.

Trustee Don Goodhue continues the story...

The next morning was fine and calm and after a brief stop at Lake Poteriteri while the helicopter did another job, we were on Coal Island. Other team members were Roger Kilkelly and Ken and Marg Tustin. After a quick briefing at the first trap, Roger headed off on Johans track, Ken and Marg took the Otago Retreat track while I headed up Pratts track..

Although I have spent a lot of time on the island over the last few years, this was only the second time I had been onto the island in late spring so it was a good opportunity to get a feel for how things were going. (My last visit to the island at this time of year was 2 years ago). Of the 3 tracks, Pratts track is the what I would describe as the least interesting. It gently climbs for about 1 1/2 hours and then descends to Moonlight Point. Whereas the other 2 tracks pass through a variety to vegetation, Pratts has less variety, changing little as the track traverses from west to east across the island.

It was a pleasant surprise then to find a great variety of new growth - more than I can recall from previous visits. In many places the ground was a mass of green hooded orchids and new broad leaf growth was abundant at deer browsing height. While there are undoubtedly still deer on the island, the later is possibly a sign that the efforts to



reduce deer numbers are having a positive impact on vegetation..

By 3pm everyone had made it to Moonlight Point for the helicopter pickup.

An early start was made the next morning for the tramp to the Oil Store. There were 36 traps to be checked between the eastern end of Te Oneroa beach and the Oil Store, all of them accessed from the coast. The first 3 hours of the walk was straight forward, following the old miners track that linked the townships of Cromarty and Te Oneroa. From Te Oneroa a short track over the hill brought us to Observation Point and the beginning of the coastal part of the walk. For most of the coastal walk, the going was mostly boulder hopping or scrambling over large sandstone rocks and slabs. Some sections are impassable at high tide so our timing was great as we arrived at the coastal section 2 hours after high tide.

Of all of the traps in the project it is these coastal traps that are probably now the most important as they are our first line of defence against stoats reaching Coal Island from the mainland. Three stoats were found in traps on this section.

Tuesday was fine and with most of the trap work done, it was an opportunity to explore the Puysegur Point and the Sealers beach area. We spent the day walking to the Sealers Beaches (number 1 and number 2), visiting the Puysegur Point lighthouse and scrambling down the steep headland west of the Oil Store to have a look at Southland's first coal mine. Coal was mined briefly in 1867, the only sign now being an old drive into the hill with a few old pit-props.

Our return trip to the Lodge was made easier when Lodge caretakers Pene and Nick arrived by boat to take our extra gear back to the Lodge for us. The route back to the Lodge took us along the top of the escarpment that rises steeply above the south-eastern shore of Otago's Retreat. The weather was again kind to us as we detoured to have a look at the top drive of the Morning Star mine and Alpha Battery mine site. We arrived back at the Lodge 7 hours after leaving the Oil Store.

Along with Roger I spent Thursday afternoon checking traps on Weka Island, Round Island and along the shore north of the Lodge where a further 3 stoats were found. We also

took the opportunity to re-mark some traps stations that had markers missing.

Six days and six stoats after we arrived in the inlet the helicopter arrived to fly us out. It had been a good trip—the weather had been good, the company good (we learnt a lot about Ken and Marg's on going search for moose in Fiordland) and the spring growth on Coal Island was a good sign.



Above: Roger Kilkelly re-marking a trap station
Photo: Don Goodhue

From the Archives

A small cemetery next to the Puysegur Oil Store provides a reminder the hardships and tragedies faced by the early settlers of Preservation Inlet. This article appeared in the Evening Post on the 28th of August, 1914.



SAD DOUBLE DROWNING CASE.

(BY TELEGRAPH, —PRESS ASSOCIATION.)

INVERCARGILL, 27th August.

News of a double drowning fatality in the vicinity of Puysegur lighthouse reached town to-day, but particulars of the occurrence are necessarily meagre. The lighthousekeeper at Puysegur Point announced by telephone that, the wife of one of the keepers being ill, a man named Smith went to Coal Island in an open boat to obtain the services of Mrs. Loudon to nurse the sick woman. As the boat was returning it capsized, and both passengers were drowned. The body of Mrs. Loudon had been recovered when news came through, but there was then no news of the recovery of the body of Smith.

Courtesy National Library "Papers Past" website

Volunteer Trips Update

As a result of recent promotion, there has been a great deal of interest in volunteer trips for this year. Trips are normally scheduled for February, May, September and December. The February and September trips are full, there have been a number of people interested in the May trip and the December trip has 5 spaces available.

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

