



I'm Mark Crompton, and I am a weatherman and have the pleasure of reporting the Coast weather daily to members of The Coasters' Club.

No doubt you might think that all weathermen are boring, stayed and really a bit uninteresting. Well I hope to change this view for you.

I was born in Wellington in 1948 so was born knowing what the wind is. We moved to Christchurch and I joined the Met Service in 1966 when the Beatles were still around. Lots of people have asked me why I joined the Met Service. Well the truth was I had read an article on Campbell Island as a young man and I was fascinated, and all I wanted to do was get there. I asked around as to how I could get to visit the island.

A good friend of mine said if you want to go there you need to join the Met Service and you get to visit. I joined, and three years later in 1969, I did my first tour to Campbell Island with the Met Service

### Campbell Island



Situated 660km south of New Zealand at Latitude 55°5''S, Longitude 169°2''E, Campbell Island was discovered in January 1810 by Captain Frederick Hasselburgh who named the island after Robert Campbell of Campbell & Co., Sydney, in whose ship, the Perseverance, he was sailing. Campbell Island is the most southerly of the five New Zealand sub Antarctic groups. It is best known as the home of the albatross, with six species in residence, including the largest albatross, the Southern Royal.

The Campbell Island/Moutere Ihupuku Marine Reserve was created in 2014. Campbell Island covers 11,300ha and is the main island of the Campbell Island group.

Rats were introduced soon after the island's discovery and were well established at the time of the first scientific expedition to the island in 1840. By this time they had wiped out all the island's land birds. Sheep, goats and pigs had been introduced prior to 1895. However, it was after 1895 that rapid and widespread changes to Campbell Island's vegetation occurred with the advent of farming. Cats, which had been introduced during the farming days, died for an unknown reason prior to the mid-1990s. In 2001 the complete population of Norway rats were eradicated from the island in the world's largest eradication project and the island's rat-free status was confirmed in 2006.

A boatload of poison had been shipped to Campbell Island and three helicopters with GPS poisoned the entire island with outstanding success. The wisdom of this radical approach has been proven, and in my last expedition I was staggered by the increase in albatross and other wildlife. I recall on one of my earlier trips to Campbell Island coming across albatross chicks, often up to 300mm high. The rats had burrowed under the bottom of their nests and eaten out the bottom of the young albatross, they would then fall out of the nest and wander around with their innards spilling on the ground.

I have to say this eradication program worked for the wildlife, it worked for the people, and I congratulate those civil servants of the day that had the courage to see the program through in 2001. Since the eradication, vegetation and invertebrates have been recovering, seabirds have been returning, and the Campbell Island Teal, the world's rarest duck, has been reintroduced, and the snipe and pipit have reintroduced themselves from the predator free outlying islands.

I remember well that wild season of my first visit. The 1969/70 season members were: Peter Julius O.I.C. who was our leader, Harlan Dazeley the mechanic, Clive Brunton was a Tech., Jim Carr worked with me for the Met Service, and Brian D. George our cook fed us so well. Phil Owens, Iono. Other Met Service workers were David Paull (Senior Met), Bob Taylor, Mike O'Donoghue, and of course me. John Rippon worked for D.S.I.R.

God the weather was cold! It was wet, it was windy, and everything that wasn't tied down blew away. The island has a cold, cloudy, wet and windy climate. It receives only 650 hours of bright sunshine annually and it can expect less than an hour's sunshine on 215 days (59%) of the year. Rain falls on an average of 325 days a year, and wind gusts reach over 96km per hour on at least 100 days each year.

Campbell Island taught me how to practice doom and gloom as my role was to do the weather forecasts. A rare fine day became "we will pay for this". A wet day became "well you had better tie everything down its going to get much worse", and it always did.



The living conditions were very good. Great food and great company. On a later season I was made the Postmaster at Campbell Island. I was taken to Wellington to be shown the ins and outs of stamping first day envelopes. This role was something that I become very good and efficient at.

Over the years I served in the RNZAF bases at Wigram, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Ohakia, Wellington, Hokitika, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill plus some.

### 1 year on the Chatham Islands.



750km to the east of New Zealand's South Island lay the Chatham Islands, home to New Zealand's most remote communities. Around 600 people live on two of the 11 islands that make up the Chathams, with incomes largely reliant on farming, fishing, conservation and tourism.

### 3 years on Raoul Island.



The permanently manned Raoul Island Station has been maintained since 1937. It includes a government meteorological and radio station and hostel for Department of Conservation (DOC) officers and volunteers. Raoul Island Station represents the northernmost outpost of New Zealand.

### 7 years on Campbell Island.



### Now in Hokitika



In 1985 I took over from Frank Collier as the OIC in Hokitika.

We had a contract from 1992 right through 2012 to monitor the upper air winds. I would release balloons 3 times a day at midnight, 5am and noon, and track them with the weather radar. We would track them up to 50,000 feet measuring the wind.

Nowadays with the commissioning of the Met Service radar at Blue Spur in Hokitika my contract came to an end and I finished on 31 May 2012.

These days I monitor for NEWA and I have a contract to maintain equipment. This includes equipment for the tectonic plate study in Whataroa and housed in Hokitika.

Over the years I've had two major passions: the love of tramping, and I have walked most of the major tracks in the South Island. I've also been an avid botanist and my joy in studying the plants and fauna on Campbell Island is a highlight of my life.

Over the years as a weatherman I have had lots of funny things happen. One of the funniest has been my reporting the temperatures in Hokitika daily to the radio station in Greymouth. Well parochialism as it is now was alive and well and it was such fun to see it in action. Every day no matter what the temperature was in Hokitika it was always 1° warmer in Greymouth. So one day we had a real cold morning in Hokitika and it was around 3° and I knew that with the barber blowing down the Grey Valley the temperature would be 1° or 2° maximum, so I call the radio station and I said to them the temperature in Hokitika today is 12°. The radio announcer said to me, "are you sure?" and I said, "yes of course it's 12°". He would have been looking out his window at one of Greymouth's coldest days and you know what happened? When I listen to the weather forecast at lunchtime the weather in Hokitika was 12°

and the weather in Greymouth was, you guessed it, 13°! It was a classic example of what a close-knit Coast community is like, but where parochialism is and was at its very best. I'm delighted to be offered the opportunity to give you a daily weather forecast from Karamea to Haast via The Coasters' Club.

For a number of years in my daily practice to consider the local weather, check out the Met Office radar maps, and calculate what I believe will be the outcome on the day, it's been great fun. I don't get it right all the time but I'm pretty good if I do say so myself.

So to all my friends that were on Campbell Island, Raoul Island, the Chathams and the various centres around New Zealand that I've worked in you can catch me on [www.thecoastersclub.co.nz](http://www.thecoastersclub.co.nz) and I'd love to hear from you.

Campbell Island 1969/70 season members:

Peter Julius, O.I.C.	Harlan Dazeley, Mech.	Clive Brunton, Tech.	Jim Carr, Met.
Brian D. George, Cook	Phil Owens, Iono.	David Paull, Senior Met.	Bob Taylor, Met.
Mike O'Donoghue, Met.	Mark Crompton, Met.	John Rippon, D.S.I.R.	

Jim Carr and Bob Taylor departed in March 1970.

1970/71 season members:

Derek J. Laws, O.I.C.	Neville Brown, Senior Met.	Keith Herrick, Met.	Bill Stuart, Mech.
Mike O'Donoghue, Met.	Mark B. Crompton, Met.L	Lindsay Barker, D.S.I.R.	Brian Monks, Met.
Bruce Means, Iono.	Brian D. George, Cook	Bruce Bernstein, Radio	

1971/72 season members:

Vince Sussmilch, O.I.C.	Bruce Mexted, Cook	George Money, Radio	Keith Herrick, Met.
Brian Plummer, Tech.	Chris Glasson, Iono.	Bill Clarke, Mech.	Dave Rowell, Met.
Neville Brown, Senior Met.	John Wilkinson, Met.	Mark Crompton, Senior Met.	

1972/73 season members:

Graham Camfield, O.I.C.	Jim Wade, Cook	Peter Goodman, Radio	Tony Veitch, Met.
Bill Clark, Mech	Roland Van der Staal, Iono	Peter Wood, Senior Met.	Paul Frost,
Met.Brian Plummer, D.S.I.R.	John Wilkinson, Met.	Mark B. Crompton, Senior Met.	

1975/76 season members:

Peter Eddy, O.I.C. (repatriated)	Chris Tucker, Met.	Richard Farley, Iono.	Tony Shaw, Met.
Dick Fergusson, O.I.C., Mech.	John Pettigrew, Cook	Robin Humphrey, Radio	Tim Armitage, Met.
Phil Owens, D.S.I.R., Iono.	Mike Nicholas, Met.	Mark Crompton, Senior Met.	

Bruce Hurley, D.S.I.R. (repatriated)

1976/77 season members:

Noel Winterburn, O.I.C.	Peter Turner, Iono.	Paul Mooney, D.S.I.R.	Gary Innes, Cook
Mark Crompton, Senior Met.	Norm Hill, Mech.	Ray Brown, Radio	Keith Pagel, Met.
Dave Alton, Senior Met.	Martin Murphy, Met.	Wayne Kelliher, Met.	

1983/84 season members:

Mark Crompton, O.I.C.	Brian Hagan, Mech.	Mark Revell, Cook	A.F. Warren
Mark Matthew, Radio	Alan McDougall, Senior Met.	Bill Perry, Iono.	Robert Poole, Met.
Malcolm Saunders, D.S.I.R.	Graham Taylor, Biologist	Peter McCrostie, Senior Met.	Grant Harper, Met.

Grant Unkovich, Met.

1989/90 season members:

Mark Crompton, O.I.C.	Ross Bannister, Met.	Bill Perry, Tech.	Roger Moffat, Mech.
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1990/91 season members:

Mark Crompton, O.I.C.	Roger Moffat, Mech.	Steve Knowles, Met.	Bill Perry, Tech.
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Steve Croasedale, Mech.