



Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust 2012 Annual General Meeting Report

The following report gives a summary of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's activities since our last Annual General Meeting in November 2011 and as Chair of the Trust it gives me great pleasure to present it.

The most significant date was October 20th 2012 which marked 25 years since the founding of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. Again this has been a busy year for the Trust, with expansion of some existing activities, exploration of potential new directions, numerous events and more challenges.

Nursery

In 2012 the Nursery managed to surpass its increased target of 15,000 plants, all of which have found homes. The Nursery operations, including staffing were financially assisted through regular Nursery donors' contributions and intensive volunteer input, combined with income from sales. Grants were received through business support and international associates.

The Nursery continues to undertake extensive community outreach, offering training, working with schools, and providing plants to order, for various groups. The Nursery has become more widely known as a provider of specialised plants sourced from local stock and for varying habitats to meet specific needs.

The South Island Dairy Event (SIDE) gave the Trust an opportunity to hold a stall and prepare material on effective native planting of riparian strips highlighting our connection with Fonterra through Mainland Brands. The Nursery is increasingly being used to supply suitable plants for this activity. We were subsequently surprised and delighted to be presented with a \$1500 cheque from the conference organising committee.

Habitats

Nest Counts:

The 2012 nest counts (October and November 2012) on Trust owned or managed land on the South Island have been completed with the following results (last year's figures in brackets): Okia Reserve 13 (13); Otapahi 19 (20); Tavora 2 (2); Long Point 46 (49), Cosgrove Creek 10 (12). In the Stewart Island area the numbers are Codfish *Whenua Hou* Island 39 (39); Bravo Islands 11 (10), the Neck 8 (6). No survey was carried out on the Anglem Coast.

Other Monitoring Checks:

Between December 2011 and February 2012 all these areas, apart from Codfish *Whenua Hou* Island, had a check on chicks hatched was carried out, and in all areas, including Codfish *Whenua Hou* Island, pre-fledge counts were done and all chicks transpondered.

The Trust is advocating strongly for transponders to replace banding, due to evidence that bands (which theoretically must also be checked annually) lead to increased mortality and negatively affect breeding success.

It had been hoped to do the post hatching check on Codfish *Whenua Hou* Island and combine it with more detailed monitoring and also tracking of where the birds were feeding in order to try and determine why there has been a dramatic decline in this population since we first began monitoring it. However funding sought was not successful and this has had to be postponed.

Habitat Operations

Regular maintenance of all habitats managed by the Trust has continued, with planting at Okia, Long Point, Otapahi and Tavora, further dune restoration (replacing marram with native *pikao*) at Okia and Tavora, partial fence replacement at Okia, and the carpark sign replaced at Tavora - paid for by the Otago Regional Council and the art work donated by AdArt Brand Promotion.

Mustelid trapping has been carried out on all South Island habitats with help on the Otago Peninsula from the Dunedin City Council Community workers. This has led to increased numbers of Little penguins and *titi* (Sooty shearwater) at Otekiho. Thanks to the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group, possum numbers have been considerably reduced at no cost to the Trust. Vegetation and bird monitoring in a section of Okia is also being carried out by this group as part of their measurement of outcomes.

Other Trust habitat work continues with private landowners along the eastern coastline of Otago where yellow-eyed penguins breed. We also continue working with other NGOs & the Department of Conservation.

The Long Point / Irahuka Management Plan has been completed and approved by the Minister of Conservation delegated authority the Department of Conservation. This was a significant milestone for the Trust as it legitimises current and future work at the reserve. Development of the Long Point / Irahuka Implementation Plan is underway. It will guide how future work is undertaken and where and what the emphasis should be for the next few years.

Research

The results of the Stewart Island research done by the Trust on yellow-eyed penguin breeding success, particularly on the Anglem Coast, has now been published as a scientific paper in the Marine Ecology Progress Series.

This past year saw continued research collaboration with University of Otago researchers, Landcare Research, DOC scientists and foreign academics.

Sub-Antarctic - Auckland Islands

An initial survey of the non-weather coast of the Auckland Islands, organised by the Trust, identified where yellow-eyed penguins are nesting and Leith Thomson, our Ranger, is now joining a DoC-led team to try and get a firmer idea on numbers.

External Relations

Merrin Bath of Strategy First resigned as contractor to take up another role, and this led to restructuring with a number of subcontractors for more bounded tasks. A comprehensive Marketing Strategic Plan is still in the process of being developed. As always, Stewart Robertson of Adart Brand Promotion has been a tower of strength, a great advisor and donated many services. Also worth noting is that Trust volunteers, staff and Trustees in addition to maintaining the Trust habitats, shared their expertise with more than twenty other conservation groups and committees, supported ten training institutes and schools and participated in thirty plus events. An outstanding effort.

Richdale Biography

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust joined with the Otago Peninsula Trust to commission Neville Peat to write a biography of Lance Richdale whose initial detailed observation of yellow-eyed penguins and albatrosses not only raised awareness of the vulnerability of these species, leading to greater protection, but also formed the basis of two of the world's longest baseline studies of sea birds. The book, "Seabird Genius: The story of L E Richdale, the royal albatross and the yellow-eyed penguin" is now available and the Lance Richdale Trust is about to be wound up.

Conservation Award

Moiria Parker, a founding member of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust was awarded the 2012 Coastal Otago Conservation Award, in part because of her work for the Trust.

Annual Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium

This continues to be a well attended annual event that allows conservation managers, tourist operators and scientists to share matters relating to the yellow-eyed penguin. The theme topic this year was yellow-eyed penguins and fisheries interactions, with presentations from Ministry for Primary Industries and Department of Conservation Wellington staff, Tourism Dunedin, science advisors and habitat managers.

The Trust also contributed to the bi-annual Penguin Symposium in Oamaru, as well as being represented at several other conservation conferences and workshops.

Trustee changes

The loss of two trustees, who have moved out of Dunedin, and the recruitment of new trustees has meant rethinking and restructuring of tasks and how they can be allocated. In some cases, where skills are no longer available on a voluntary basis in house, the Trust has had to commit to contracting skills.

For instance, the loss of Trustee Pieter Demmers who had so ably (and on a voluntary basis) for a number of years maintained our IT systems – from computers to web pages - led to the decision to employ an IT person. In addition to Pieter, Ruth Littlewood has elected to stand down as a long standing Trustee based in Christchurch. Ruth intends to remain as a Trust member and will continue to follow the Trust with interest. The Trustees would like to thank Pieter and Ruth for their input over the years.

Peter Simkins reluctantly stepped down from the role of chair due to business pressures and I was willing to take on the role, particularly at a time when negotiations with outside agencies such as the Department of Conservation and Dunedin City Council on their relationship with the Trust were beginning. I have unfortunately also found the time commitment to be greater than I can currently contribute and have taken a leave of absence as Chair. We have both continued as Trustees, contributing our expertise and skills as time permits. Thank you Peter for the time and energy you have contributed to the Trust as Chair and for the enthusiasm you continue to contribute.

The Trust has been fortunate to attract two new highly skilled trustees in the form of Hoani Langsbury and Linda Reynolds.

Advocacy and Outreach

The publication by the Ministry of Primary Industries of a “*Draft National Plan of Action to reduce the Incidental Bycatch of Seabirds in NZ*”, which acknowledges the need to reduce seabird bycatch, combined with other research indicating that the proportion of juvenile yellow-eyed penguins returning is decreasing in key locations, has paved the way for the Trust to enter the debate on the impact of inshore fisheries on yellow-eyed penguins.

The Trust has done a number of submissions to local and national government bodies on issues impacting on our areas of interest.

Funding

The long lists of donors and volunteers that appear in each newsletter indicate the level of support that the Trust attracts in donations of time and money and without which the Trust could not operate at the level it does. A sincere thank you to all of you.

It is impossible to mention all of you, but some particularly important long term funding has been received for the following:

- Staff funding for the two important field staff positions which is secure until March 2014 (Field Manager) and September 2014 (Ranger) through DOC's

Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund. This gives us the stability to plan ahead for the coming year.

- Mainland Brands continues to be the Trust's principal sponsor and has renewed their pledge of \$75,000 per annum to 2015. As well, with the assistance of the Trust, they undertook a school on-line project 'Adopt-a- Penguin' which involved the collection of bar codes to watch the penguin egg hatch and chick grow, and helped to maintain awareness.

Business Planning

A strategic workshop in November 2011 involving Trustees and staff, provided the opportunity to review what the Trust does well and where improvements are necessary. The workshop also identified key work areas and funding initiatives to progress during 2012. In addition to this, the Board also looked at its own performance and where it could better engage with staff in terms of business and strategic planning on an annual basis. As a result the Board improved its financial reporting, undertook self-evaluations, revised its business planning process and embarked on the species manager discussions with the Department of Conservation.

Staff Contribution

The Trustees acknowledge the quality of the work of the staff and their delivery of the annual work plan. Volunteers make an important contribution both to the Trust's ability to perform so well and its cost-effectiveness, but it is the staff who drives the work and organise the volunteers to be able to achieve this. Staff are always looking for more efficient and effective methods of achieving the results the Trust is seeking. Thank you.



Mike Morrison

Chair, Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust

20 November 2012