



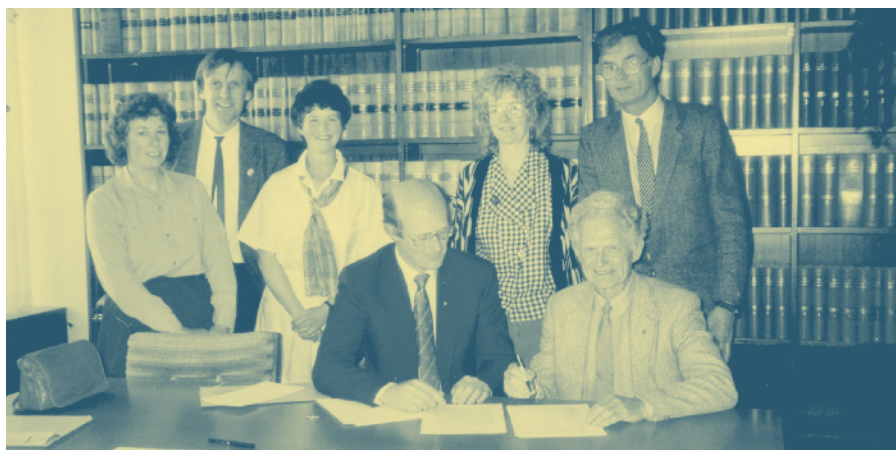
Hoiho

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YEPT's 25th birthday



YEPT's founding Trustees signing the original constitution on 20th of October 1987. Left to right: Lyn Dowsett, Warren Hurley, Moira Parker, Christine Johnston and John Darby. Seated: Bill Armitage (Downie Stewart lawyer) and the late Paul Every. Absent: Lala Frazer and Euan Kennedy.



It's our 25th birthday! And the Trust is going to celebrate it next October by hosting a national conference in Dunedin for trusts like ours and other community conservation interests. We're calling it *Conservation Incorporated – What's ahead for community-based conservation in New Zealand?*

Why a conference instead of a party? Well, the conservation environment is on the threshold of major change. We need to adjust quickly. The weight of effort to protect our natural heritage is shifting radically from the government to communities. Our Trust has more experience than most of working in this field. What better way to celebrate our own achievements than to help others map out a broad path through the new conservation landscape. There are many challenges ahead.

What will it take to make sure groups remain effective as conservation custodians? What works and what doesn't in the way we organise ourselves and our work? How do we ensure that community initiatives meet biodiversity needs? What factors will influence the success and vitality of community-based conservation?

So, what are we celebrating? We've come a very long way since we were prompted to establish the Trust by John Darby's startling prediction of yellow-eyed penguin extinction on Otago Peninsula coasts by 2020. That was the mid-1980s. John's warnings were timely. Over 90% of all penguin chicks hatched at that time perished before going to sea. In some habitats, every chick was predated. This rate of mortality was grievous for a species in which only about one third of the fledglings survive to breed under normal

conditions. Recruitment to the ranks of adult breeders was in jeopardy. Doubly so, because the destruction of forest habitat, trampling of nests by livestock, and many other forms of disturbance were denying the few survivors suitable areas in which to breed.

Back then, members of Save The Otago Peninsula (STOP) determined that John's dire warnings needed a concerted, purposeful organisation dedicated to the penguins themselves. It was they who took the courageous step to form the Trust, a pioneering advance for species conservation in New Zealand.

STOP member Moira Parker offered to work full time unpaid for a year. Amongst other activities, her generosity was recognised this year when she received the 2012 Coastal Otago Conservation Award. Founding Trustees loaned and donated initial seeding

Continued on page 2 >>

money, some by mortgaging their houses. From our very beginnings, Trustees voluntarily worked countless hours to run the Trust, until finally we could afford to employ permanent staff. This was a stepwise advance in Trust fortunes and effectiveness, made possible in very large measure by our landmark association with Mainland Products (now Mainland Brand of Fonterra Brands NZ Ltd). Today, the Trust employs six full- and part-time staff in the field, in our widely admired plant nursery and in our downtown office. Other fixed-term specialists work on projects such as our ground-breaking Stewart Island population census.

It's been quite a journey. What's abundantly clear is that we have succeeded in safeguarding coastal breeding habitats in a competent, professional manner. We have ensured that predator control maximises nesting success. And we have been able to find the funding necessary for what we do and for the critically important research which guides us. None of this could have been possible without our cherished employees and our many, many dedicated volunteers.

We remain dependent on grants, sponsorships and donations. Thus we are

vulnerable, like other Trusts, to funding reductions, changes in funding criteria and competition for resources. We expect these challenges to increase as our working environment is populated with new community organisations motivated like us to be effective, enduring custodians of our natural heritage. Our conference will address these challenges as we stand on the threshold of our next 25 years.

To be kept informed about the conference, please check our website and/or email conference@yeptrust.org.nz

Penguin bycatch in set nets

– realising the problem and finding solutions



Yellow-eyed penguins face many challenges today. But while the long-standing efforts to restore habitat, control terrestrial predators, and manage visitors have greatly improved their life on land, there is little we know and do about the threats they face at sea.

Is their lunch table on the ocean floor still as reliably rich and rewarding as it used to be? What about the looming sharks and sea lions they can co-exist with so nicely around the sub-Antarctic Islands? How have we altered their marine ecosystem via changes in farming practices or fisheries competition? Do we really want to risk deep sea oil exploration?

One sea-based problem, however, can be addressed immediately: bycatch.

Seabird mortality in fishing gear is a globally recognised problem and responsible for population declines in many species. The initial focus of mitigation efforts has been to reduce seabird bycatch in the long-line and trawl fisheries in a desperate and on-going struggle to save albatrosses and petrels (17 of 22 albatross species are currently threatened with extinction).

The threat posed by set net fisheries to diving and pursuit-foraging birds is increasingly being recognised internationally. Set nets (or set

gillnets) are panels of a single netting wall kept vertical by a line of floaters and a weighted ground line. Set nets are stationary, i.e. anchored to the ground, and can be deployed at any depth depending on target species.

If diving birds encounter fishing nets they can get entangled and drown, ending up as unintentional catch – so called “bycatch”. This unnecessary and avoidable mortality of otherwise long-lived seabirds can dramatically increase the risk of extinction, particularly in species that are already rare and threatened.

Many governments and organisations, particularly in Europe and America, are currently involved in finding and implementing effective mitigation measures to reduce bycatch in set nets. Here in New Zealand we have long realised that there is a problem – yet we still struggle to find solutions. Maui and Hector's dolphins, sea lions and other marine mammals, turtles, and sharks, as well as a range of diving seabirds (particularly shags and penguins) are at risk of being caught in set nets.

More than a decade ago, John Darby and Steve Dawson raised concerns about the mortality of yellow-eyed penguins in set nets and

documented the disappearance of at least one penguin colony due to set net bycatch. The inshore observer programme initiated in 2005, although spatially and temporally limited, continues to record yellow-eyed penguins as bycatch in commercial set nets.

In 2008 the Ministry of Fisheries implemented a four nautical mile (nmi) set net ban around much of the South Island to protect Hector's dolphins. This ban may reduce the risk of bycatch of inshore species, as long as it is adhered to. For yellow-eyed penguins that regularly forage some 20km (10.8 nmi) off the coast and can travel up to 50km (27 nmi) from their breeding sites (even during chick-rearing), the four mile ban will reduce the risk of bycatch in the vicinity of their breeding areas. However, the ban will not eliminate bycatch, particularly in the commercial set net fisheries that operate further offshore.

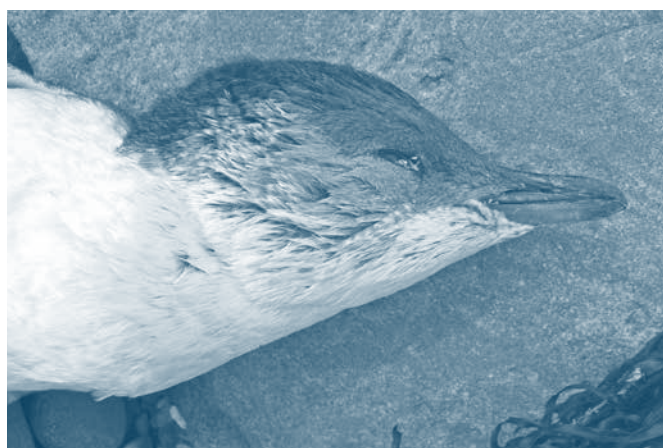
There is no doubt that yellow-eyed penguins and many other species continue to drown in set nets along our coasts. Unfortunately, there is currently little incentive for unobserved fishermen to report bycatch. Hence, comprehensive independent observer coverage is needed in order to quantify numbers caught and document the operational details affecting bycatch risk. Such data is essential for the development of effective mitigation measures to reduce bycatch.

It is unacceptable, however, to ignore the existing evidence and wait until more data about the detailed extent of the problem becomes available. Given the limited funds available for the inshore observer programme this may take more time than we can spare.

The way forward is to engage with local fishermen, learn from their experiences, and aim at finding viable solutions for both humans and penguins.

Ursula Ellenberg

Eudyptes EcoConsulting Limited



Set netting poses a serious risk to Buller's mollyhawks and northern royal albatross, as well as several species of penguins.

What's happening IN THE COMMUNITY

AUCKLAND ISLANDS BECKON AGAIN

In November the Trust will be supporting a Department of Conservation-led expedition to survey the yellow-eyed penguins at the Auckland Islands. The trip will be aiming to build on the distribution survey carried out by the Trust and DOC in 2009, and repeat beach counts last carried out in 1989 by Peter Moore. A team will stay on Enderby Island to nest search, mark the breeding birds, and carry out beach counts to help interpret the data collected by the rest of the team.

The team of 12 will be made up of DOC staff, YEPT staff and six volunteers who are contributing to the cost of the expedition. They will be based off the yacht 'Evohe'. With just 11 days for the survey, including travel time to the island, it is expected that beach counts will be carried out every morning. The boat will be repositioned in

the afternoons and the next site scouted for locations in preparation for the next morning's beach count.

STEWART ISLAND UPDATE

In the upcoming yellow-eyed penguin monitoring season on Stewart Island and Whenua Hou, only the bare bones of monitoring will be undertaken. This includes the Bravos Group, Whenua Hou and probably the Neck.

Unfortunately, due to the failure of two funding applications, we are unable to proceed with an important foraging study of yellow-eyed penguins and Fiordland crested penguins on Whenua Hou.

We plan to launch an appeal in 2013 for funds to commence this foraging work and carry out a further nest search on the Anglem Coast.

YEPT Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 20 November at 5:30pm

Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Office
Level 3 Queens Building
109 Princes Street, Dunedin

All welcome

Please remember us in your Will

Managing and/or purchasing penguin breeding habitat and controlling predators such as stoats and ferrets are some of our ongoing tasks. Saving the yellow-eyed penguin is a long-term task. Bequests will help secure the hoiho's survival. Please remember the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust in your Will.

Charities Commission Registration Number CC22822

People passion

Daffodil sales blooming brilliant for YEPT

The Rotary Club of Dunedin has selected the Trust to be a recipient of some of the funds generated from their annual sale of fresh daffodils.

Volunteers from the Trust enjoyed this fun and different activity at the spectacular Cleveland Park. At the end of writing this article, the amount donated was not known, so watch for the update in the next *Hoiho* newsletter.



Alison Cunningham



Josie Fraser



Rosemary Clarkson

Balmacewen Intermediate restores native dunes



As part of their breeding cycle, yellow-eyed penguins have to loaf around and socialise. To do this, they need the right environment. In 2007, Room 14 of Balmacewen Intermediate visited the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust reserve at Tavora where they planted pikao and other native species on the dunes to make them a special place for the penguins.

Since then, Room 14 has been back every year to help restore the natural ecosystems stretching from the road to the sea – the riparian area, a totara dune forest and the pikao dunes.

The Trust is thrilled with the Balmacewen Intermediate group who have come to Tavora, no matter what the weather. The pupils have worked really hard, planting, weeding out marram grass, cleaning the beach, and even making a human chain to ferry plants from the truck when it was too wet to go any further.

Room 14 has benefited too. Trust staff have shown the pupils some rare and precious native dune plants. That was not the only bonus. The work is carried out when yellow-eyed penguins aren't usually around, so what a thrill and delight when a penguin appears walking up the beach.

Over the years, the pupils have returned to Tavora with families and friends. So they, too, have become aware of the restoration work and enjoy seeing the dune the way the coast used to look before humans settled the area.

It has been a privilege for the Trust to work with the energetic and enthusiastic Room 14 pupils of Balmacewen Intermediate, and we hope to see them back for many years to come.

Focused on the task



Jonathan Lewis checking traps at Okia Reserve

For the Dunedin City Council's Task Force Green team the upcoming 2012-2013 trapping season will be a special milestone – their 10th anniversary season.

Led by Jonathon Lewis, the team includes Stew, Mel and Norm. Every Wednesday from October to April, they follow a well-worn path around the Otago Peninsula hills, flats and inlets checking the trap lines, rebaiting and clearing traps as required. They have trap lines at Otekiho Reserve overlooking the harbour near Taiaaroa Head and at Okia Reserve on the seaward side of the peninsula, as well as the twin inlets of Papanui and Hooper's, trapping predators not only threatening yellow-eyed penguins, but also little blues, titi (sooty shearwaters), and many other native birds. Since this regular trapping has been in place, there has not been any instances of the wide spread chick predation noted on the peninsula in the 1990s.

Long Point / Irahuka planting days



Knapdale School pupils and Janet Gregory, NZ Landcare Trust



South Otago Forest & Bird Branch committee members Jane Young and Roy Johnstone with volunteer Guy Blakely

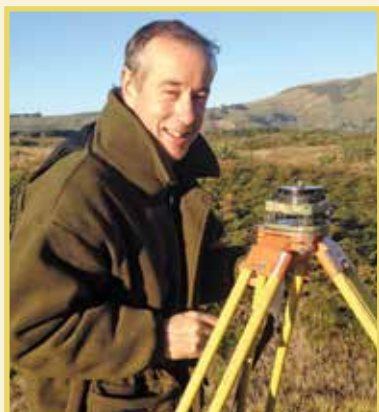
One down and one to go; the Catlins Community Planting Day (26 September) has also been called the "Great Escape" as the weather forecast seemed ready to stymie the participation of the Catlins Area School yet again for the second year in a row. However miraculously, as we crested the last hill before the descent to Long Point, the rain cleared and we enjoyed a cloudy but mild and dry planting day.

Sixty students, teachers and parents from the local school, four from Knapdale School in Southland, Janet Gregory of the NZ Landcare Trust, and members of South Otago Forest & Bird helped plant 350 hebe and pittosporum, and 900 flax at the head of Manuka Beach. Previous plantings have begun to show above the grass, and it is becoming possible to imagine a beach that will eventually be enclosed by native shrublands.

The Trust values the relationship with the local school and it is hoped, as more conservation initiatives get underway at Long Point, that there will be opportunities for their involvement with aspects of the seabird conservation programme itself.

Our second planting day this season at Long Point is with Fonterra staff from Edendale and Stirling in early November. It will be their third planting day.

Surveying at Okia Reserve



Over the last few years the deteriorating condition of part of the reserve's northern boundary fence has been of concern. When it became apparent that it needed replacement, a survey was also required as the fence was not on the legal line.

The Trust has had a relationship with local Dunedin firm TL Survey Services since their involvement with the surveying of Long Point Reserve in 2009. Again they generously donated their time, equipment and expertise.

Surveyor Bruce Soper spent a day at the reserve, marking an indicative line, and the fencing was completed by the end of July. His least favourite part of the job was battling through the native stinging nettle, onga onga, in the Taiaaroa Bush section of the fence line!



Bruce Soper marks boundary between Okia Reserve and Taiaaroa Bush

Making a difference on the Peninsula



Rik Wilson, OPBG Project Manager, checking out a recent possum catch on Otago Peninsula

Since May 2010 the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group has been planning and implementing possum control operations and environmental monitoring projects on the Otago Peninsula. This group was formed as an outcome of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's 20th Anniversary Conference in 2007.

Summary of OPBG activities to date:

- The completion of two years of possum control in Sectors 1-3 (Cape Saunders, Taiaoroa Head, Clarks/Sheppard's Hill) with over 4,000 possums now removed. This represents an average reduction in possum numbers of 82% across the three areas.
- The establishment of 23 one kilometre bird monitoring transects that are walked by volunteer bird monitors several times a year. The objective is to measure increases/decreases in bird numbers and species after possum control operations have been implemented.
- Fourteen vegetation monitoring sites have been established with the help of a consultant ecologist. This involves using foliar browse index, permanent vegetation plots and photo points. Each site consists of a 10m by 10m plot. The objective is to measure changes in vegetation, species, growth and foliage, both before and after possum control operations.
- Ten rodent monitoring lines established on the peninsula offer different habitats. Each line consists of 10 tracking tunnels spaced at 50m intervals over a 500m transect. The objective of the rodent monitoring is to measure increases or decreases in rat numbers after possum control operations.
- We currently have 56 volunteers. In 2011-12 approximately 3,000 volunteer hours were contributed to the project.
- The Speight's Bait Station/ Trap Line was established in Sector 3 from September 2011. The line, with 45 KK bait stations (Feratox) and traps, extends across rural farmland approximately 2.3km from the head of Hooper's Inlet to above the school at Portobello. This line is crucial as it acts to protect Sectors 1, 2 and 3 from re-invasion of possums from the yet to be controlled Sector 4. Traps, extended into the buffer as part of this protection plan, have been responsible for taking out further possums. The low numbers caught with the maintenance programme is very encouraging and means that the buffer is starting to do its job well.
- Community trapping in urban areas using Timms traps (yellow boxes) began from July 6th 2011. Over 140 Timms Traps are currently out and these have accounted for over 250 possums to date. This represents a great effort from people trapping in their back yards and is a real bonus to our progress.
- Amy Adams (University of Otago PhD candidate) has completed her first season's fieldwork investigating the 'Spatial Movement of Possums in Urban Environments'. Her research into identifying how possums use urban habitats is the first in NZ. This will enable us to tailor management strategies to urban environments in the suburbs that comprise the buffer between the city and the peninsula and the suburbs on the peninsula itself. It will also inform on likely rates and directions of re-invasion. She has also been provided with 30 possum ears from each sector for her peninsula possum genetic study.
- Contractors are currently implementing possum control with the peninsula communities of Harrington Point, Otakou, Harwood, Portobello, Broad Bay, Company Bay, Macandrew Bay and south of the city.
- Possum control in rural land from Portobello back towards the city will begin after lambing at the end of October.
- Successful fundraising continues to provide momentum for the project's work. There is no cost to landholders as we progress towards a peninsula free from possums.



Mainland Update Support extended

Since 1989, Mainland has been the principle sponsor of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. In August, this sponsorship agreement was extended for another three years!

The association between Mainland and the Trust has become much more than just another sponsorship arrangement. It has become a very special relationship. Mainland's further three year commitment shows the on-going dedication it has to the plight of this endangered bird, and ensures the Trust can continue its work to help save our native yellow-eyed penguin.

In addition to the huge financial contributions over the past 23 years, Mainland has invested a substantial amount of resources into raising the profile of the Trust and the plight of the yellow-eyed penguin. The Mainland Adopt a Penguin Programme was launched nationwide in April this year, in an effort to educate young New Zealanders about the importance of conservation and how we can all help to create a safe environment for our native birds.

Over 2000 primary school children signed up to the ten-week programme run during Term Two of the school calendar, allowing classes to watch their adopted penguin grow from a newly hatched chick to a parent, incubating their own eggs. With curriculums and activities provided each week by Mainland and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, the students were able to learn all about the life cycle of the yellow-eyed penguin and how they can help to protect the species.

Mainland congratulates Class L3 at Whangaparaoa Primary School, which won the top prize of \$5,000 for their school after collecting over 650 Mainland yellow-eyed penguin labels. Whangaparaoa also won an additional \$3,000 cash prize for the highest number of labels collected per student in the class, which brought them to a whopping grand total of \$8,000 for their school.

Class 15 at Parawai School won a \$2,000 cash prize after submitting an outstanding creative photo gallery that showcased the range of yellow-eyed penguin related activities the class participated in over the term. The response from New Zealand schools towards the Adopt a Penguin programme was fantastic, and we were highly impressed with all the entries submitted.



Botany Downs Primary School, room 19 pupil



Parawai School, class 15



Gleniti Primary School, room 5

Mainland's going digital

The ongoing support of this endangered bird is incredibly important to Mainland, which is why we are upgrading the barcode collection scheme to a digital format. The launch of the new Mainland website will bring the creation of the Yellow-eyed Penguin digital redemption programme. This will enable our loyal supporters to login, enter their Mainland barcode details and create their very own personalised digital wall chart. For every wall chart created, Mainland will donate \$10 to the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, up to \$75,000 a year.

Simply visit our website at www.mainland.co.nz/yellow-eyedpenguin after 1st November 2012 and follow the instructions.

So don't forget to keep supporting the barcode redemption scheme and help support the great work of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.

Digital redemption after 1 November

Go to www.mainland.co.nz/yellow-eyedpenguin

- Follow the instructions
- Create your own digital wall chart with the Mainland barcode details
- For every wall chart created, Mainland will donate \$10 to the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, up to \$75,000 a year.

Cut-out redemption after 1 January 2013

- Mainland will no longer accept cut-out coupons after 1 January 2013
- Please return any coupons not redeemed online to **Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, PO Box 5409, Dunedin 9058** and a trust volunteer will enter them digitally for you.



A note from the Chair

As another financial year draws to a close it is useful to take the time to reflect on some of the achievements made over the last 12 months.

The year started with a strategic workshop in Nov 2011 and the opportunity to review what the Trust does well and where improvements are necessary. We also took the opportunity to identify key work areas and funding initiatives to progress during 2012.

We have achieved some of these initiatives with great success; notably securing the Mainland sponsorship until 2015 was a real highlight and we are very appreciative of Mainland's continued support to the Trust and the work it undertakes. Other highlights include an invitation to join the Department of Conservation 2012 Auckland Islands expedition to progress the much needed yellow-eyed penguin population census, gaining attention on the plight of yellow-eyed penguin interacting with commercial inshore fishing practices; the production and placement of 15,000 plants from our Nursery; and 2000 plus hours of volunteer contribution. Also, at a recent business planning workshop, it was noted 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, participated in thirty-plus events and provided submissions on a number of planning proposals affecting penguins – an outstanding effort.

On another matter there has been another change to the Trust Board with Ruth Littlewood electing to stand down as Trustee. Ruth has been a long standing Trust member and of recent times a Trustee based in Christchurch. Ruth intends to remain as a Trust member and will continue to follow the Trust with interest. On behalf of the Trust Board I would like to thank Ruth for her input over the years.

Looking forward to 2013 there are a number of key initiatives already underway. These include the Trust's 25th Anniversary Celebrations, hosting the "Conservation Incorporated" – an NGO (non-governmental organisation) conference in Dunedin; attending an international penguin conference in Bristol UK; and progressing the Long Point Implementation Plan now that the management plan has been approved and signed by the Department of Conservation.



Certainly enough to keep volunteers, staff and Trustees busy.

On a more sobering note, the conservation cause does not get any easier. It has been said that conservation only happens when we can afford it, and these economic times certainly bear testimony to that with funding continuing to be a challenge. Whilst conservation NGOs are extremely grateful to their sponsors and supporters, it is the government's spending for conservation that is disturbing. For example, health spends the annual conservation budget every nine days. Whilst I do not begrudge the size and necessity of the health budget, it is the disparity between the two budgets that is alarming, particularly when you take into consideration that 30% of New Zealand's land, 7% of the marine environment and an estimated 90,000 species rely on the ever-decreasing conservation budget.

Mike Morrison

Chair, Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board

Thank you to our regular supporters:

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DOC Southland Conservancy
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Downie Stewart
Kieran Read, Ambassador
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Millers Studios
NHNZ
Otago Polytechnic Horticulture, Arbor & Landscape Depts
Pikao Recovery Group

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South Island Dairy Event - 2012 conference

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Mercure Dunedin staff

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Omni Trees Ltd
Schools: Balmacewen, Broad Bay, Catlins Area, Opoho
Sean Spencer, Fonterra Edendale
South Otago Branch Forest & Bird
Taylor's Lime (Holcim NZ)
Thought Planters

Thank you to:

All the landowners who have contributed to our habitat protection work.

Thank you to all Volunteers:

We are tremendously grateful to all the other volunteers, including the regular Nursery workers and the Habitat Volunteer Team for their valuable contributions to our work.

The Hoiho newsletter is printed on Royal Offset Hi-Brite paper which passes the green test.

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