



# Hoiho

November 2015

[www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz](http://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz)

ISSN 1179-2981



## Our not so “Great” Flood

**They called it a “one in one hundred year” flood as two months’ worth of rain fell in 24 hours on 3rd and 4th June, flooding hundreds of homes in South Dunedin, and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust’s Plant Nursery at Company Bay on the Otago Peninsula.**

Situated in a quiet street, away from tourists travelling to visit our unique peninsula, the flood was completely unexpected. The creek, running down a gully on the top side of the property we lease from the Dunedin City Council, filled with debris from further up the hill, and eventually breached its banks. YEPT Ranger Leith Thomson was greeted with a torrent flowing through our nurtured plants and buildings and out to the other side of the property, down the road and into the sea at Company Bay. He could do nothing but watch in disbelief and despair.

The next morning the full extent of the damage started to become evident – plants buried sometimes under half-a-metre of silt, others washed into the ocean 500m away; seedlings entirely covered in silt and unrecognisable; labels washed from most plants so we no longer know their provenance; plants out of their containers and twisted and knotted on fences and the boundary hedge; the access road gouged out and footpaths all but washed away. In one pothole we even had kokopu, a native fish, alive and swimming!

Many of the plants lost or damaged were ready to go into penguin habitats over the winter; the seedlings were to become next year’s plants.

And so to the clean-up – firstly the site was checked for any contamination, being a decommissioned sewage treatment plant,

followed by plumbing and drainage checks, and finally ensuring all electrical connections were safe. And then the real work got under way.

It is hard to describe the process as much of it was complicated by the land being leased and no one sure of who had responsibility for what. Eventually, when these details were sorted, work began in earnest.

Delta was contracted to use their earthmoving machinery to remove silt and repair much of the infrastructure. Teams of willing and eager volunteers removed yet more of the silt, washed plants, salvaged other parts of the infrastructure, sorted the plants and pots, gathered the rubbish and tidied up the grounds.

Along the way, the Trust Board made a strategic decision to downsize plant propagation to only that required for our own needs and some other local projects.

*Continued in page 2 >>>*



## Plants

We had been growing plants for both our own needs and for associate groups' coastal projects. Production has now been set at 5,000 per annum, the number we believe we can easily both plant and maintain each year. There was unanimous agreement that our eco-sourcing policy should not be compromised by planting any trees and shrubs of unknown ecological origin into any Trust reserves, and so began phase two of the clean-up – on-selling the plants of unknown provenance.

Today when visiting the Nursery, you would hardly be aware of what happened only a few short months ago. There remains debris in netting and some plants are still being unearthed from their tiny hiding places, but generally we are fully operational and a functioning Nursery once more.

The Trust is indebted to many for their assistance over these months. Businesses, associates, groups and individuals all gave willingly and supported us in practical tasks, written support, and even hugs and welcome cups of coffee. A huge thanks to each and every one for helping us through this difficult time. It proved to us that our motto **Penguins – Plants – People – Passion** is totally apt for the organisation.

For the record...

- 175mm of rain fell in 23 hours
- 60 tonnes of silt was removed
- 20 tonnes of gravel were used to replace that washed away
- 2000 flood-damaged plants have been sold
- 94 days of equivalent volunteer labour were used to clean up.



## Thank you!

Our special thanks go to:

- Blackhead Quarries
- Delta
- Department of Conservation
- Dunedin Amenities Society
- Dunedin City Council
- Dunedin Naturalists Field Club
- Green Hut Volunteers
- Orokonui staff and volunteers
- Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
- Otago Peninsula Community Board
- Otago Peninsula residents
- Sinclair Wetlands staff and volunteers
- Volunteers – too numerous to list







## Collapse in yellow-eyed penguin nest numbers

**Despite hopes for a bounce back in nesting numbers, the latest nest searches on Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust reserves have revealed a disturbing picture of plummeting nest numbers.**

Previous articles in this newsletter since 2012/13 have documented season after season of challenging and problematic breeding success for the species.

Indeed, in the May 2014 newsletter, we questioned the continued survival of yellow-eyed penguins on the south-east coast of the South Island.

Despite ongoing protection on land, including reserve purchases, trapping and revegetation programmes, the cumulative effect of poor foraging years, an adult mortality event, disease and last year's barracouta injuries have seriously impacted on the adult breeding population.

**At Trust reserves from Tavora in the north to Long Point in the south, nest numbers have halved compared with 2014/2015 which itself was a very poor season.**

At Okia and Otapahi reserves on the Otago Peninsula, nest numbers were reduced to three and four nests respectively, down from highs of the mid-teens and high twenties in the last few years and at Long Point only 17 nests were found compared with 29 and 48 in the preceding two seasons.

We are still awaiting the results of the Codfish Island and Stewart Island nest searching which is being conducted as this newsletter goes to press.

Population monitoring over the last 30 years has identified similar collapses in the numbers of breeding pairs on the South Island coast, e.g. 1988/89 to 1990/91, with a low point of around 150 nesting pairs in 1990/91.

It is likely that when nest search monitoring data is finalised, nest numbers will fall somewhere between 150 and 200 nesting pairs.

The big question is when and will there be a recovery? After 1990/91 there was a strong increase in nest numbers for the following ten years.

A silver lining amongst the gloom may be the presence of non-breeding adults onshore during the nest searches. Trust staff observed several adults at Otapahi and Long Point reserves hanging out ashore but with no nests. It is recognised that in times of foraging stress or other difficulties some birds will opt out of breeding for a season.

The Trust is planning to carry out beach counts at selected reserves to try and quantify the number of non-breeding adults present on the beaches.

**Cover photo: YEPT Ranger Luke Johnston finds a rare nest during the search at Long Point/Irahuka Reserve.**

## Conservation Science Adviser for the Trust

**The Trust has been externally resourced to employ its own Conservation Adviser, a new role and one that will help us advance the aims of the organisation.**

It is timely that funding will allow for this appointment to begin in the New Year, given the serious concerns for the yellow-eyed penguin breeding success and the uncertainty surrounding the cause of such low breeding numbers this season.

The Trust is delighted to announce that funding has been secured from Otago Regional Council (70%) and the balance from Otago Museum, for a three-year term of appointment.

Based both at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and Otago Museum, the scientist also will stimulate, broker and analyse research that investigates the marine environment and factors affecting the productivity and sustainability of the yellow-eyed penguin.

The recruitment for this appointment will be full steam ahead when this newsletter goes to print, so we look forward to introducing the successful candidate in our next edition of *Hoiho*, May 2016.







# Hoiho stocktake of conservation effort

**In Hoiho May 2015 edition, we told you about a review of yellow-eyed penguin recovery being undertaken, with terms of reference developed jointly by the Department of Conservation, Ngai Tahu and the Trust.**

The terms of reference identified the need to split the review into two stages. Stage 1 (the stocktake) is to report on progress against species recovery objectives began earlier this year. This stocktake is about documenting how well conservation management and research for hoiho is meeting the objectives set out in the *Yellow-eyed Penguin Threatened Species Recovery Plan*. It is focussed on the objectives of the plan (nine objectives and 31 actions) and associated kaitiakitanga and conservation of this species.

Additionally, the stocktake is about reviewing the appropriateness of the recovery objectives/actions and identifying gaps, with a view to developing a revised strategy for recovery of the species.

The stocktake must be fit-for-purpose to inform Stage 2 of the review, i.e. a revision of the management strategy/recovery plan.

The stocktake is being led by DOC, its Treaty Partner Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu, and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, with group representation on the stocktake team having been set by the Minister of Conservation.

Hoiho are recognised as a taonga species within terms of the *Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998*. At a national and iwi level, Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu has been recognised as having a particular relationship with hoiho. The fifteen Ngai Tahu Papatipu Runanga along the geographic range of hoiho have contributed to Stage 1 of the review.

Submissions (written and oral) were received from more than 80 individuals within the stakeholder penguin communities and these are currently being summarised to prepare a draft report.

The geographic range of hoiho was arguably not fully recognised in the original *Yellow-eyed*

*Penguin Threatened Species Recovery Plan*. Additionally, community involvement has hugely increased since the early 2000s.

The penguin is the focus of much community-based activity – from site specific predator control through to species-wide advocacy and management activities, as well as rehabilitation services. These birds live on a range of types of land from old growth forest in Sub Antarctic nature reserves through to open grazed mid-latitude privately-owned farms. A significant part of the range is within easy access of humans and as such, this access engenders a sense of engagement and commitment.

The scale of this review has been challenging for the review team, but its members are determined that a robust and accurate assessment of the current status is correctly recorded to enable them to advise on a revised plan/strategy.



A hoiho's tell-tale 'doorway' into the sand dunes, on a beach on Stewart Island's Anglem Coast. Left: Map showing Hoiho reserves.





the more common coastal species, but she became well respected for the rarer species she learnt to also propagate. Over the years she became an expert in native plants, often assisting with identification.

Over and above her role as Nursery Manager, Anita often assisted the Trust with other tasks. We have captured a few memories in these photos.

## Anita hangs up her trowel

### The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust farewells Plant Nursery Manager, Anita Pillai.

Anita started way back in 1999 as a volunteer. She quickly becoming co-opted onto the Trust Board, only to give up her Trustee role to step into managing the nursery with her friend, Margaret Suman, for the then-manager, Jim Ellison, who was taking extended leave. Ultimately, through

successful fundraising, this turned into a sole-manager position as firstly Jim retired, and then Margaret left Dunedin.

But how do you summarise 16 years in a few sentences or paragraphs to capture the essence of such a major contribution to the Trust? Not easily! Of course, most of you who knew Anita knew of her skill in plant propagation techniques, not only with

As you will see, Anita's contribution and dedication to the Trust has been enormous. Of course, her ultimate legacy is knowing that penguins are now nesting under plants she has propagated. Thank you Anita. The two words "thank you" seem insufficient and yet we sincerely thank Anita for these wonderful 16 years.

*Thank you!*



Anita enjoyed sharing her knowledge with our younger generation and often spoke to school groups either at the nursery, in their own classroom or engaged with them on YEPT reserves.



Anita had a wonderful rapport with her team of dedicated Wednesday volunteers and visitors.





Anita with Jim Ellison, 2002



Anita with Margaret Suman, 2003



Anita tending her beloved plants at the Nursery.



Anita was never afraid to dress-up for events where 'penguins' were required. That's her on the right – we think.



Out in the field, collecting eco-sourced seeds and removing unwanted fencing materials.





# A cruise for our cause

**Doubtful Sound came up trumps yet again for August's Real Journeys Cruise-for-a-Cause and its chosen charity, the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.**

The persistent drizzle – Fiordland is a rain forest after all – was just what was needed to produce a totally memorable atmosphere for this shake-down cruise in preparation for the start of the new tourist season. Everything went according to plan and the full complement of 72 guests revelled in the sublime natural setting.

Those on board had heard about the trip through the Trust's networks, some having come from as far away as Auckland and the Manawatu.

The trip began in Manapouri where the guests gathered to board a Real Journeys' vessel to take them across the lake, followed by a coach ride over Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove. There, they boarded *Fiordland Navigator* for the start of a truly spectacular 24-hour trip in one of NZ's most remarkable places.

This trip was the final preparation for Real Journeys' staff before the tourism season begins. And what a team! Their enthusiasm for the wonders of the fiords, wildlife, weather and even the sandflies (not that they were too bad) was infectious.

Saturday's clearing skies provided a different appreciation of the splendour of the area. Afternoon activities included an optional kayak, small boat cruise or even a polar

plunge, which about a dozen brave souls took on in mere 8.9° waters! Hot showers and soup immediately after were welcome revivers.

Due to the calm sea conditions, we were able to view not only the seal colony at the entrance to Doubtful Sound, but also to do a bit of a trawl around in the Tasman Sea. We appreciated the grandeur of this fiord as we re-entered in the fading light at day's end. Shortly afterwards, we enjoyed a banquet of all sorts of wonderful dishes, beautifully prepared by the on-board chef and his team. Wines and juices flowed, as did the conversations, and the evening ended with a nature presentation by the on-board guide.

Sunday drizzle greeted the morning which provided wonderful reflections and misty scenes like paintings as yet unfinished. At the top of Hall Arm the Captain turned off the engines and we appreciated hearing bird

song floating from the shore, the fierceness of the water as it fell sometimes from 600m above us, and generally enjoying Zen moments.

Other highlights included the captain manoeuvring *Fiordland Navigator* so close to the cliff that we were able to fill our glasses with water cascading off the sheer rock faces, filtered by the overhanging vegetation. He was also able to bring the boat close enough to shore for us to view Fiordland crested penguins roosting near their cave.

More than \$15,000 was raised from the sale of tickets to support the Trust's continued monitoring of yellow-eyed penguins on Rakiura/Stewart Island over this breeding season.

The Trust thanks Real Journeys for this wonderful opportunity both to raise funds and to appreciate this world class location.







Peter Hillary and YEPT Trustee, Linda Reynolds



YEPT General Manager, Sue Murray, with the brand new, framed \$5 note from the Reserve Bank of New Zealand. Photo: Otago Daily Times

## Trust given clean bill

**“Hoiho, hoiho, its raising cash we go” was the quirky title in the local paper announcing the Reserve Bank’s donation to the Trust of a new, uncirculated Series 7 \$5 note mounted in a frame for auction.**

The new notes still feature the same fauna and flora as Series 6, but with much advanced technology. For example, the colour of the bird changes when the note is tilted with a rolling bar going diagonally across the bird.

About 345,000 new notes will be introduced to banks progressively, and it is estimated it may take up to three years to remove all 45 million of the old notes which have been printed since 1999. The yellow-eyed penguin has featured on the reverse side of these notes since then, and Sir Edmund Hillary on the obverse side.



In September, YEPT Trustee Linda Reynolds attended a function in Wellington to launch the new notes. She was delighted to preview the new notes and to meet Sir Edmund Hillary’s son, Peter.

The Trust plans to auction the framed \$5 note, so watch for this announcement in the near future. In the meantime, you could help the Trust by encouraging your own friends, family and workmates to collect their old \$5 notes for donating to the Trust.



## Leave something in paradise

Please remember the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust in your Will. Your bequest can be invested in restoring penguin habitats and controlling predators to help secure the hoihos’ survival.

Charities Commission Registration Number CC22822





# CONSERVATION INC 18–20 May 2016 Make it a date!

You, me and a couple of hundred other passionate conservationists will be getting together in beautiful Dunedin for our **Conservation Inc2** conference. Hopefully it's already in your calendar but if not, fetch a pen and paper or pick up your device now and get it locked and loaded.

The conference will follow up on themes which made *Conservation Inc*, back in 2013, so successful. *Conservation Inc2* will focus on critical resourcing issues and we'll be discussing how DOC's new partnerships arrangements are fitting in the rapidly evolving world of community-led conservation.

It's being held at the Dunedin Centre which is located in The Octagon, Dunedin. The centre gives delegates and exhibitors easy access to and from hotels and parking, as well as to the CBD and surrounding cafes and restaurants. Several venues were considered to host the conference. However, the Dunedin Centre's central location, its recent upgrade and range of spaces made it the logical choice.

There will be an opportunity for a limited number of exhibitors to support our conference through reserving exhibition space which will enable promotion of their work or business.

The conference programme for delegates is currently being developed by the conference organising committee with the main themes focusing on these questions:

- Where are we with community-based conservation effort?
- How do we build on success?
- What is the future of community-based conservation effort?

There will be opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues and to do some great networking with others who share your passion for ensuring that the conservation work we are doing remains sustainable and relevant.

For more information and to register go to:

[www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservation-inc-conference-2016](http://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservation-inc-conference-2016)



A scene from the first *Conservation Inc* conference held in Dunedin in 2013



Margaret Davidson of Mainstay Hotels with Ecowai director, Barry Hillyer.

## New partner

**Mainstay New Zealand Hotels is a proud supporter of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and its partnering with EcoWai bottled water enables the hotel group to connect with its environmental responsibilities.**

"We are delighted with how the relationship has evolved and how our member properties have embraced support for this unique project," commented Margaret Davidson of Mainstay.

"Our hotels see immense value in supporting and protecting the yellow-eyed penguins and are proactively displaying, promoting and selling the EcoWai product in the knowledge that every sale generates a return for the Trust."

Mainstay is a collection of 36 privately- owned and operated hotels throughout New Zealand. The hotels are located in key tourist locations, including Invercargill, Dunedin and Oamaru, each home to yellow-eyed penguins. Given Mainstay's close connection and commercial viability to tourism, the group is committed to providing a guest experience that does not adversely affect the environment.

The Trust appreciates this support and urges readers to in turn support Mainstay. Visit [www.mainstay.co.nz](http://www.mainstay.co.nz)







# Mainland support

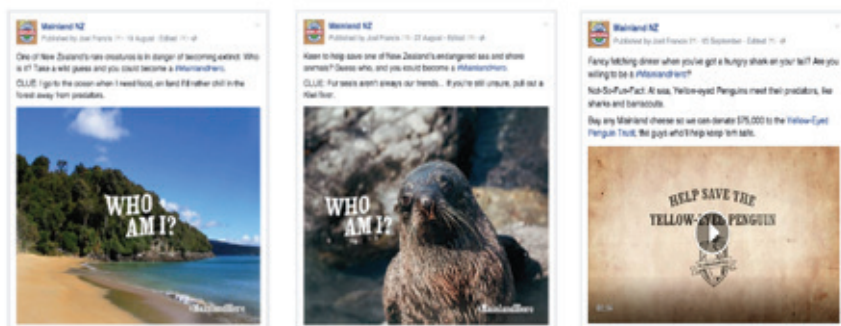
Mainland is proud to continue its support of our yellow-eyed penguin, but we realised that there was a big opportunity to drive consumer awareness of the plight of the yellow-eyed penguin and highlight some of its daily survival challenges.

We launched a social campaign via Mainland Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mainlandnz>) which involved initially, a series of clue posts to invite engagement around who the endangered species was. This was then followed up by a series of videos which briefly highlighted some of the interesting aspects of life as a yellow-eyed penguin along

with some brutally honest "not so fun facts" to bring consumers back to reality on the issues that surround our penguin.

The campaign was highly successful, reaching nearly 1 million people and creating nearly 8000 post engagements. Some of the post examples are shown below. Mainland will continue to drive awareness for the yellow-eyed penguin as we believe this is an ongoing story to share.

**The Mainland team**  
**0800 CHEESE (0800-243-373)**



## Remembering Alan McConnon

Alan McConnon died as the result of a motor accident in October. He is remembered by the Trust as a supporter and friend dating back to 1989 when Mainland became our first significant funder after only two years. Founding trustees Lala Frazer and Euan Kennedy remember the early days of negotiating the first donation and subsequent annual sponsorship with the McConnon family. This sponsorship continues today with the Mainland Brand now being owned by Fonterra NZ Ltd, and is now considered to be the longest running cause-related marketing sponsorship in the southern hemisphere.

Alan (and family) had the foresight to back a great cause. The yellow-eyed penguin quickly captured the hearts and minds of all New Zealanders, and people visiting Auckland regularly saw cars with the Mainland bumper stickers dutifully attached. They invested in the penguin through our Trust and their marketing campaigns went far beyond what the Trust could have alone achieved. A recent marketing survey showed that 62% of New Zealanders still align the Mainland Brand with the penguin, an outstanding reputation. "Good things take time" is upheld today.

After the sale of Mainland to Fonterra, Alan was still available to the Trust staff and trustees who met him on several different occasions when he offered business mentoring and support. He always was interested in our achievements and took personal pride in knowing his company's support is the very reason we have grown to be the organisation we are today.

Alan appeared humble in his business achievements, and yet the Trust always felt his advice was offered with strategic foresight and clear thinking on how he could assist.

The Board and staff were represented at his funeral to say farewell.





## A note from the Chair



Recently, I travelled by bus from Hamilton to Auckland and, being elevated, I could appreciate more clearly the thousands of native trees and shrubs along the Expressway; with many more still to be planted. This move to using natives in highway amenity planting is spreading throughout the country and inadvertently is supplying one of the cornerstones of ecosystem production; corridors along which native birds may feed and then, some distance away, later disperse the ingredients of propagation.

The Great Kereru Count ([www.kererudiscovery.org.nz/get-counting/](http://www.kererudiscovery.org.nz/get-counting/)) showed there are increasing numbers of at least one such vector for distribution, kereru. The sheer scale of highway plantings so far has precluded the use of only eco-sourced plants and, sometime in the future, these urban and peri-urban amenity plantings may play a significant role as a seed source in various aspects of conservation. However, what are the issues generated by, say, the seeds of a plant supplied from Christchurch turning up on a yellow-eyed penguin habitat on Otago Peninsula via a highway amenity planting in Dunedin and a peripatetic pigeon? The environments in which we operate are changing constantly.

The recent inundation of our nursery forced us to confront this issue of eco-sourcing head-on. It has long been the Trust's policy, when restoring our habitats, to use only eco-sourced seed for propagation. The flood mixed-up our stock and removed almost all our labels so we were forced to sell at a discounted price those plants whose provenance suddenly had become uncertain.

In all the conservation activities we undertake we try as far as possible to be informed by science and often over the

years we have purchased any scientific expertise as required. Obtaining good science will become even more important as we expand our focus by 'turning to face the sea' and fortunately we are now in a position of being able to appoint our own Conservation Science Adviser, commencing duties in early 2016. This is a three-year externally-funded post, the details of which we will put in our next newsletter.

Meanwhile, we are busier than ever with various projects; reorganising the Nursery, organising a major conference for May next year; continuing to work with Ngai Tahu and DOC on the yellow-eyed penguin review; hosting two Ministers; and collaborating with other conservation-minded organisations both nationally and internationally.

It can be argued that by our conservation effort we provide the raw material for the ecotourism industry and so should have a voice within the business community. To that end, as a significant ENGO, we have joined the local Chamber of Commerce with the intention and expectation of sharing knowledge and expertise.

**Eric J. Shelton**  
*Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board Chair*



## Totally awesome!

Everyone here at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust congratulates Trust ambassador Kieran Read on his role in the All Blacks' wonderful World Rugby Cup victory in London.

*Photo: DeRugby.net*

### Thank you to our regular supporters:

Supporters Group  
Nursery supporters  
AdArt Brand Promotion  
Anton Oliver, Patron  
Blackhead Quarries  
Canon NZ  
Department of Conservation  
Downie Stewart  
DCC (Task Force Green team)  
Foote Haulage (Woodlands)  
Kieran Read, Ambassador  
Mainland Brand  
Malcam Trust Conservation Corps  
Otago Polytechnic Horticulture & Arboriculture Depts  
Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group  
South Otago Branch Forest & Bird

### Thank you for funding from:

Bendigo Valley Foundation  
DOC Community Conservation Partnerships Fund  
EcoWai and partners to the programme  
Ministry for Culture & Heritage (NZ Oral History Award)  
NZ Association of Pharmacy Students  
Otago Peninsula Lions Club  
Real Journey's Cruise-for-a-Cause

### 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 production of this Hoiho newsletter by  
AdArt Brand Promotion ticks all the green boxes*

*Penguins. Plants. People. Passion.*

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Charities Commission Registration Number CC22822