



Hoiho

May 2017

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“In the beginning it is always dark”

Empress Moonchild, 'The NeverEnding Story'

Photo: shutterstock.com / Naruedom Yaempongsai

Some positive signs after recent population declines

The 2016-17 hoiho season turned out to be a little like the 1984 children's epic movie *The NeverEnding Story*.

Beginning as usual in October with nest searching, the season has been intense and drawn out with outbreaks of avian diptheria, mainly in North Otago in November; a recurrence of unexplained adult mortality; monitoring of moulting birds in mid-March; and finishing (almost at the time of going to print) with soft releasing of chicks taken in for rehabilitation.

As described previously in *Hoiho* there has been a significant change in our yellow-eyed penguin work over the last five years, with a dramatic increase in monitoring and associated work. Alongside the traditional

three checks (nest searching, chick check and fledging) much effort was put into intervening checks for disease, injuries and starvation, beach searches for the victims of the unexplained mortality and moulting checks.

It is perhaps with a little relief that we can report overall results suggest that nest numbers have not declined further (in most areas) and that chick and adult weights are reasonable.

The 2016-17 season also saw the Trust take part in the DOC Catlins five-yearly nest monitoring survey. The survey visits out of the way and isolated hoiho breeding sites and unfortunately all these infrequently visited sites were down compared with the last survey in 2011.

We also witnessed another unexplained mortality event (similar to, although smaller than the 2013 event). Nine unexplained dead hoiho were found; two at Moeraki, five at Boulder Beach (Otago Peninsula) and one each from Hina Hina and Penguin Bay in the Catlins. Based on post-mortems carried out by Massey University, the destruction of red blood cells that was found and the temporal and spatial spread of mortalities is thought to be suggestive of a toxin rather than disease.

This season is almost complete with the final few rehabilitated penguins to release and then we will undertake the habitat preparation ahead of next season.



Stewart Island update

This season nest searches were conducted on Codfish Island/Whenua Hou, the Anglem Coast of Stewart Island/Rakiura, the Bravo Islands group and The Neck. Results were mixed and are of concern for the future viability of the penguin population in this area.

On Codfish Island/Whenua Hou, 24 nests were found, 14 chicks are thought to have fledged and the breeding success was slightly more than last year. The constant downward trend in nest numbers is very concerning and if the decline continues at the current rate by 2030 there will be no yellow-eyed penguins nesting on Codfish.

On the Anglem Coast 13 nests were found and 14 chicks fledged. However, this result was from only two of the five breeding sites monitored in the past – Golden Beach and Rollers Beach. There was only one nest found in October 2016 between three other sites (Long Harry, East Smoky, and Yankee River) and we didn't return to them this season. Twenty-two nests were found between these five sites in 2008 compared to 14 in 2016.

On the Bravo Islands 17 nests produced 15 chicks. The number of nests on the Bravo Islands has also been slowly declining, from 23 in 2008 to 17 in 2016.

Our thanks again to Sandy King for managing this work, ably assisted by several volunteers who donated their time – Dean Nelson, Bridget Hunt, Tommy Dobbins, Cheyanne Carey, Raphael Karnuth and Dave Houston.

We also acknowledge the businesses and organisations that helped out, donated or discounted their services – the Department of Conservation, Stewart Island Flights, Rakiura Charters, Sanford, Tio Operations; and those who made a direct financial contribution – Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust members and Real Journeys.

A very special thanks to Real Journeys who chose the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust to be the charity for their inaugural Cruise-for-a-Cause trip on Doubtful Sound in 2015, the funds raised being for this project on Stewart Island/Rakiura.



Ben Goldsworthy (pictured left) with the Jade Solutions team at Okia Reserve.

Department of Conservation Community Fund

The Trust was awarded \$80,000 over three years to employ staff to undertake work on Okia Reserve with the emphasis on weed control and some yellow-eyed penguin monitoring and predator control.

This equates to a 0.5FTE position plus five hours per week for the Field Manager. This grant is for work only on Okia Reserve. The Trust decided to top-up the funding of the position to full-time to enable work on other reserves to be undertaken.

In April Ben Goldsworthy was appointed to our team as the ranger to undertake this work. Ben comes with a Master of Wildlife Management gained at the University of Otago which included a stint of volunteering with yellow-eyed penguin monitoring. From there he worked at various locations for DOC as a ranger on weeds and pests.

On only his second day in the job Ben was thrown into helping release yellow-eyed penguins that had been successfully rehabbed. Carrying a 9kg adult bird down a steep hillside to release it on the beach was no easy task, so well done Ben.

The rest of his first week was involved in weed and pest control, helping soft-release chicks and supervising corporates at various reserves who were contributing staff hours to help us in our core tasks. This role is certainly variable!

A big welcome to Ben and we look forward to seeing greater weed control at Okia Reserve in the future.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Just what the doctor ordered

During the summer and autumn seasons of 2016 and 2017, the Trust funded the operational expenses of a temporary “pop-up” Penguin Hospital to care for, in particular, sick and injured yellow-eyed penguins. The hospital was hosted by the Otago Polytechnic School of Veterinary Nursing and St Kilda Veterinary Clinic provided some equipment and services free of charge.

Treatment of the wildlife was again undertaken by avian wildlife veterinarian Dr Lisa Argilla, contracted by the Trust for nine weeks following her six week contract in the summer/autumn of 2016 (see *Hoiho* May 2016).

Lisa was ably supported by veterinary nurses Angelina Martelli, Samantha Hector and Nik Hurring and many volunteers donated their time, not only at the hospital, but also transporting penguins from remote locations to the hospital or to rehabilitation centres.

In 2017, 65 patients were admitted. Yellow-eyed penguins made up the bulk of these admissions, with 20 adults, 16 juveniles and 11 chicks being treated. Other penguin species and a harrier were also treated.

Of the 47 yellow-eyed penguins treated, 36 were successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild.

Penguin Place provided the majority of the rehabilitation for these birds, and the hospital would not have had such a success rate without this post-operative care being available.

Our sincere thanks again to everyone for this fantastic collaborative venture to help give each of these birds a better chance to survive. A special thanks to Lisa for all the



Dr Lisa Argilla operating on a sedated hoiho

work she did over and above her contract, and the dedication she has to caring for these special patients.

Thank you for Penguin Hospital funding

The funding for the hospital came from our supporters and we could not have run this facility to help the penguins without your generosity. The success of the campaign was such that there was some funding remaining at the end of the six weeks in 2016, to again contract specialist veterinary services in 2017. But first the shortfall had to be met.

Once again, you, our supporters stepped up. In particular we would like to thank **Quality Hotel Parnell** who donated generously to the ‘Vet – Urgent Appeal’ in 2015 and to our general work in 2016. The Directors of this company acknowledge “the fantastic work the Trust performs in caring for these birds” and we encourage you to support their hotel in return.

We also received two very generous donations from **New Zealand Oil & Gas (NZO&G)** in response to the recommendation of their Southern

Community Panel, the group of Otago and Southland-based community representatives set up to support long-term engagement with the company. NZO&G has a strong commitment to making positive contributions to the communities in which it operates. Their community investment focus is to make contributions to environmental stewardship, energy efficiency and education initiatives that are valued and supported by the local community.

Andrew Jefferies, CEO, and other members of NZO&G saw first hand the work of the wildlife hospital, including a number of penguins and other

birds in recovery from various injuries.

Andrew – “The veterinary services provided by Lisa and the team is an important addition to the Trust’s work. We’re happy to have the chance to support the care of these well-loved birds.”

These generous donations enabled the Trust to contract veterinary services for a further nine weeks in 2017, and to cover the costs of transport, consumables and some other operational costs. Our sincere thanks to you all.



**NEW ZEALAND
OIL & GAS**



New Zealand Deerstalkers Association members help to lay traps at Otapahi reserve



YEPT chair Eric Shelton signing-up the MOU to support a Pest-Free Dunedin

Trapping critical to species' survival

Trapping to protect hoiho from mammalian predators continues to be a priority for the Trust as any additional penguin mortality must be avoided at all costs.

A few highlights over the last year include the 13th season of Okia trap checking by the Dunedin City Council Task Force Green Team, and generous support for trap purchases from Graymont (NZ) and the Clutha District Council.

Volunteers contribute to many aspects of our work and are now assisting with our trap checking, a time consuming and somewhat onerous but essential task. Andy and Melissa Moore, neighbours of Tavora Reserve in East Otago, are checking the reserve traps, while the NZ Deerstalkers Association (Dunedin)

members are maintaining the trap line at Otapahi on Otago Peninsula. In both cases we are making use of the new trapping app developed by WWF (www.trap.nz), enabling trapping data collection on a smart phone and then later uploading and analysis, avoiding the burden of paper recording.

In a new initiative the Trust was one of 21 groups that recently signed up to Predator-Free Dunedin as part of the government's Predator Free NZ 2050 goal.

The function was at Orokonui Ecosanctuary where Prime Minister Bill English, Minister of Conservation Maggie Barry and Revenue Minister Michael Woodhouse were present to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Predator-Free Dunedin Partners include:

- Kati Huirapa Runaka ki Puketeraki
- Te Runanga o Otakou
- Department of Conservation
- Dunedin City Council
- Endangered Species Foundation
- Forest & Bird Dunedin
- Landcare Research
- Landscapes Connections Trust – Halo Project
- OSPRI
- Otago Chamber of Commerce
- Otago Natural Heritage Trust
- Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
- Otago Peninsula Trust
- Otago Polytechnic
- Otago Regional Council
- Pukekura Trust
- Quarantine Island/Kamau Taurua Community STOP
- University of Otago
- Wild Dunedin Trust
- Yellow-eyed Penguin 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





Soft release of hoiho chicks

The Trust has a permit issued by the Department of Conservation under the Wildlife Act that allows us to “catch, transfer and liberate yellow-eyed penguins”.

This means that we can pick up underweight or injured chicks and transfer them to a rehabilitation centre, for example Penguin Place, where they receive the best care. At the end of this process we release the birds as close to their natal site as possible.

In March, four chicks from the Catlins that had been rehabbed were soft-released at our Long Point Reserve, followed by a further seven birds in April. Our science advisor Trudi spent a couple of weeks at Long Point staying with our neighbours and local farmers, the Afflecks.

Soft release involves holding the chicks in a large enclosure at the release location for

at least 48 hours prior to their release. The pen is close to the ocean and allows birds to familiarise themselves with the local area and watch other penguins coming and going. The pen is then opened and it is hoped the birds will naturally leave to go to sea.

The first group of chicks (two from Penguin Bay, one from Nugget Point and one from Long Point) were placed in their new enclosure. A shaded area was provided at the back of the pen, as well as fresh seawater for the birds to drink. The birds didn't feed for the first 24 hours and took time to settle – probably due to the stress of travel and change of site and routine. They ate well over the next few days – each bird consuming about 8-10 fish daily. The pen was opened after three nights and, within an hour, all chicks had left together, hopping their way across rocks to the sea.

The second release was a slightly different story. Again, the penguins (one from Long Point, two from Te Rere, one from Penguin Bay and three from Nugget Point) were placed in the enclosure and two days later three birds had already departed. The remaining four penguins took a bit more coaxing before they too swam out to sea.

The site was checked for a couple of days following each release, but there was no sign of the birds in the surrounding area. Good news – hopefully the birds had remained at sea.

The chances of a yellow-eyed penguin surviving its first year at sea are pretty low – learning to catch fish and dodge predators is not easy. Each of the birds has its own unique transponder code – so fingers crossed we find these birds again next year and can start to investigate how effective soft release is.

Businesses helping out

Dunedin AIRPORT

In 2016, when the Trust was approached by Dunedin Airport's General Manager Marketing and Communications, Megan Crawford, with the question "what we can do together to bring the penguins into the airport?", we got thinking.

A few weeks later, with their creative team's expertise, new penguin walls appeared in the foyers of the airport with two catch phrases:

Seeing a yellow-eyed penguin makes catching the red eye well worth it' – Auckland businessman.

Dunedin's yellow-eyed penguins always return to where they were born. I guess this place gets under their skin too' – local conservationist.

Keep watching at the airport as new things will be appearing regularly.

OPF

Otago Pellet Fires

A year ago, Otago Pellet Fires approached the Trust with the offer that for each pellet fire sold, \$20 would be donated to the Trust to enable us to plant two trees in penguin habitats. During the first year of this contribution, \$2863 has been raised.

Based in Dunedin, Otago Pellet Fires is the place to go for specialist service and pellet fire technical support. We encourage our supporters to consider a pellet fire as we approach the winter months and home heating becomes essential.



The local Scenic Hotel Dunedin City has not only supported the Trust with accommodation for events and visitors, but also through the sale of soft-toy penguins and more recently, penguin biscuits.

These items sit prominently near reception and the proceeds from the sale of each comes to the Trust. Since this programme began almost \$7500 has been raised. That equates to the sale of several hundred soft toys! These donations have been used to help purchase equipment and to further our

hoiho monitoring programme on Stewart Island.

We encourage visitors to Dunedin to support this hotel for their accommodation needs.

HealthPost

• Better You, Better World •

Established in 1988, HealthPost is a New Zealand online supplier of natural health, skincare and household products. They supply not just natural health supplements, but also a range of superfoods and organic products free from harmful ingredients and that haven't been tested on animals.

HealthPost believes that the wellness of the individual is always connected to the health of the broader community and the natural environment. Charities that have an established record of supporting these broad aims are most likely to be chosen as part of their 'Better World Donation Programme'. Through this programme \$1 is donated for every web order received.

HealthPost nominated the Trust to be the recipients of this programme for the month of November 2016, raising \$7805. Thank you to everyone who chose the Trust to be the recipient for this campaign.



EcoWai continues to be a supporter of the Trust and directors Barry and Pam Hillyer are passionate about raising money to help this iconic species. Through the sales of the bottled EcoWai water donations are regularly being made and some of the partner companies have made additional donations to specific projects.

More recently Barry is spearheading a new fundraising campaign involving selling trips with Hauraki Blue Cruises aboard MV *Ipipiri*. This overnight cruise departs from Auckland's Viaduct Harbour and sails around the islands of Hauraki Gulf. For one particular trip a substantial donation will be made to the Trust.

Many thanks to Barry and Pam who passionately continue to promote our cause.



It's been another busy time for the team at Mainland, with the launch of our new brand campaign that centres around the theme of "It's good to try new things".

Given Mainland has the greatest range of any cheese and butter brand in New Zealand, we wanted to encourage our consumers to try a greater selection of delicious products. Our core brand essence of "Good things take time" is still at the heart of everything we do and is a message that aligns well with the work and support of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust – after all we've been big supporters for over 27 years now.

This year we've been actively supporting the Trust through our social and digital platforms and the social media post shared prior to Christmas generated an extra 136 donations of trees, which the penguins will appreciate.

We've got more activity planned for the upcoming months that should be a lot of fun so make sure you follow the Mainland facebook page www.facebook.com/mainlandnz/

And remember to be a Mainland Hero – keep purchasing any of our fine Mainland products as it directly helps us support yellow-eyed penguins.

The Mainland Team



Donate the cost of just one cup of coffee (\$5) per week and help YEPT gain a level of financial independence!

We encourage you to join the Hoiho Supporters' Group, or ask a family member or friend to join, and help the Trust continue to protect our endangered hoiho. See the form posted with this newsletter.

YEPT has moved office

In 2013 the Trust relocated to shared office accommodation with the Department of Conservation, a move that has strengthened our working relationship to that of a true partnership.

So, when the Department's lease expired on premises they had rented for 28 years, it was time for them to relocate and they invited us to move with them.

In late March we all settled into our newly refurbished offices in John Wickliffe House, the same building where DOC was born in April 1987 from the merger of the conservation aspects of the Forest Service, the Department of Lands and Survey and the Wildlife Service.

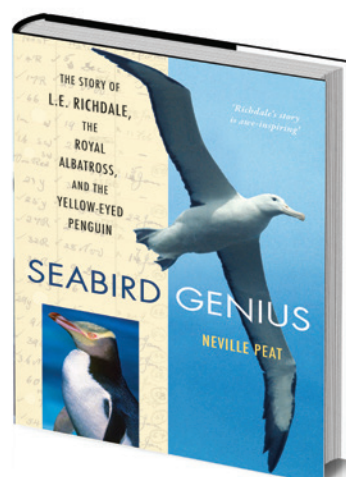
A recent DOC press release said that the creation of DOC 30 years ago, was a national declaration that New Zealand was a country that valued its nature, its wildlife and its remaining wild places, and that we were committed to protecting it for future generations.

At the time of DOC's formation, New Zealand's relationship with its environment was changing. The prevailing philosophy of resource management and development was challenged by a grass-roots swell of activism reflecting the public's opposition to the ongoing destruction of irreplaceable natural heritage in the name of short-term development.

Today, DOC acknowledges that despite a fundamental change in public attitude to protecting our natural environment, they cannot do that alone. They now foster many relationships with both grass-root community groups and commercial partnerships, as well as their Treaty Partners, to further the conservation effort in New Zealand.

Our Trust is one such partner, recognised as a Key Programme Partner with DOC and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu for our work with the yellow-eyed penguin, hoiho. We look forward to working with these partners over the next thirty years, and acknowledge the privilege it is to work alongside them and locally, to be co-located with DOC.

Sue Murray
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust General Manager



Hocken Richdale collection gains UNESCO honour

From University of Otago Bulletin, November 2016

An early 20th Century University of Otago alumnus has received an international honour for his ground-breaking research into New Zealand seabirds, recognising the historical significance of his dedication toward Otago's albatross and penguin conservation.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) yesterday inscribed Lancelot Eric Richdale's archived research material into its Memory of the World New Zealand documentary heritage register at a ceremony in Wellington.

"This extensive and unique collection documents Lance Richdale's meticulous and internationally recognised research... receiving this honour is one way we can publicise these important holdings."

The honour recognises Richdale's unique and ground-breaking contribution to understanding the behaviour of New Zealand's royal albatross, yellow-eyed penguins and the petrel and prions of Whero Island, and is a boon for the University's Hocken Library which holds this material.

Hocken Head Curator – Archives Anna Blackman says receiving the honour of the Memory of the World inscription highlights the national significance of the Richdale archives.

"This extensive and unique collection documents Lance Richdale's meticulous and internationally recognised research into the

lives of New Zealand seabirds, in particular the northern royal albatross at Taiaroa Head, the yellow-eyed penguin on the Otago Peninsula and the petrels and prions of Whero Island. Receiving this honour is one way we can publicise these important holdings."

UNESCO recognition draws attention to the significance of documentary heritage and the institutions that are their custodians. Inscription on the register raises awareness of the historical and cultural importance of archived materials and helps ensure the inscribed items are protected, preserved and accessible.

Lance Richdale (1900-1983) was a world authority on seabirds and a pioneer of Dunedin's albatross colony.

He was introduced to the study of birds on a trip to Taiaroa Head, where he came across a male albatross incubating an egg. Unfortunately, as albatrosses and their eggs were often eaten or the subject of vandalism, the egg was stolen before it could hatch.

This had a profound effect on Richdale, who recognised the detrimental effects that people and predatory wildlife were having on the albatross, and he dedicated the next 47 years of his life to protecting and studying albatross and other South Island sea birds.

The collection of his research at the Hocken Library includes diaries, manuscripts, field notes, publications, and photographic material relating to his studies of penguins, albatrosses and petrels.

A note from the Chair



One of the valuable aspects of our Trust is that, over very nearly 30 years, we have built up an extensive store of knowledge; an organisational memory. This organisational memory helps us put into context developments in conservation theory and practice, and guides our responses to such developments.

A current focus is the notion of scale. Originally, the Trust was designed to act urgently for the benefit of one species, the yellow-eyed penguin. Gradually, as resources have allowed, we have moved to a 'whole of ecosystem' approach to delivering our conservation effort, while never losing track of our species of major interest. It is worth noting that everything we do for the yellow-eyed penguin directly and indirectly benefits other native and endemic flora and fauna; a restored wetland that hosts penguins now also hosts fernbirds, for example.

Other, larger, conservation organisations routinely deliver their conservation effort, for instance on water quality, at a national scale. Right now, Birdlife International has launched a penguin protection strategy on a global scale. Conservation activities at these different scales of intervention; local, regional, national and global, need to be negotiated to ensure the very best possible outcomes are achieved. To put it crudely, bigger bucks should be used to bring bigger bangs! The Trust is committed to engaging wholeheartedly in such negotiations.

Usually, I avoid naming any particular one of our many supporters but, today, I will make an exception. Elsewhere in the newsletter mention is made of Quality Hotel Parnell and how they have very generously supported us. What intrigues me is the business model this hotel follows; it is owned and operated by the

Norman F B Barry Foundation and all profits are disbursed throughout the country in aid of good causes. This national scale of donation separates this hotel from those owned and operated by licensing trusts, which use their profits to support local community endeavours. I learned this over lunch hosted by John Smith, Chair; and Wayne Darbyshire, the GM of the hotel. It is always gratifying to learn more about the intricacies of the funding environment we operate within, just as it is rewarding to meet donors and have an opportunity to explain in detail what we do.

Eric J. Shelton
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board Chair

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)
Forest & Bird, South Otago Branch
Kieran Read, Ambassador
Mainland Brand
Malcam Trust Conservation Corps
Otago Polytechnic Horticulture & Arboriculture Depts
Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group.

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NZ Oil & Gas Southern Community Panel
Otago Museum
Otago Pellet Fires
Otago Regional Council
Quality Hotel Parnell
Scenic Hotel Dunedin City



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Stu & Jen Affleck
Tony Stewart

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.



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

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