



Hoiho

November 2016

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Sightings of juvenile hoiho a positive sign

Nest searching is completed on Trust reserves and monitored sites along the Otago Coast and on Trust-monitored sites on Rakiura/Stewart Island.

While it is too early to get a complete picture of yellow-eyed penguin productivity this season, it appears that numbers are similar to last year. So not good – or if we were to be kind “could do better”. But, more importantly, have we reached the bottom of the down turn?

Some positive signs are apparent with several juvenile yellow-eyed penguins observed at Trust reserves and the possibility, based on the amount of sign at some beaches, that additional nests may yet be discovered.

It is with some hope for unravelling the causes of the yellow-eyed penguin decline that Trust Conservation Science Advisor

Trudi Webster has been accompanying the Trust nest searching teams. This has been the first opportunity for Trudi to take part and is helping with her understanding of the terrestrial breeding habitat of the penguin, alongside her primary focus on the marine environment where they spend most of their time.

Further south, Sandy King, the Trust staff member on Rakiura/Stewart Island, has re-visited the north-eastern Anglem coast area, the first nest search since 2008/09. She has found 12 nests on the 50km stretch of coast, a decline of almost 50% from the last survey (22 nests) and a significant decline since the first survey in 1999/2000 when 32 nests were found – a trend which, while probably expected based on the long-term trajectory, is still very disappointing.

On the Bravos Islands Group in Paterson Inlet

nest numbers are down to 15 compared with 25 nesting pairs in recent years.

Sandy and long-term Trust nest searching volunteer, Dean Nelson, also visited Whenua Hou/Codfish Island for the yellow-eyed penguin nest search. This is another population of penguins that is experiencing a long-term decline in nest numbers despite this being a predator-free island. The number of breeding pairs has declined from 61 in 2001, 39 in 2011 and now 22 in 2016.

For Dean, this is probably his sixth or seventh visit to the island over the last ten years, and once again his commitment and contribution is typical of volunteers to the conservation work of the Trust.

Pictured above: Craig McKenzie and Trudi Webster on Cicily Beach at Otapahi Reserve on Otago Peninsula.



Slope Point on the often inhospitable Catlins Coast

Catlins Coast survey underway

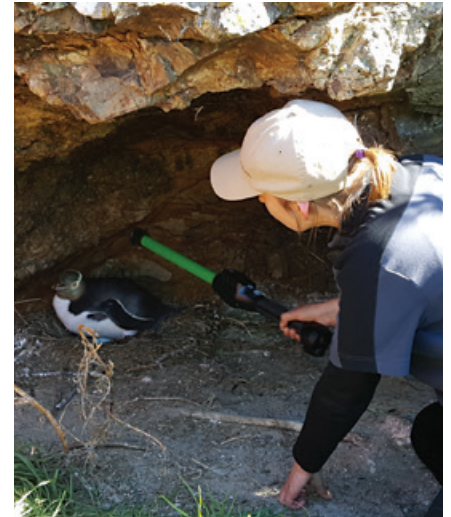
Dave McFarlane, YEPT

Every five years or so since 1997 the Department of Conservation has conducted a Catlins Coast yellow-eyed penguin survey which determines the number of breeding pairs present at sites that are not monitored annually.

For Trust staff, DOC staff and volunteers taking part in the fifth survey (early November 2016) this is an opportunity to explore some of the most wild and least frequented parts of the Catlins Coast and get an idea of what is happening with the penguins. At the last survey in 2011 the threat posed by feral pigs was identified,

with nesting having been abandoned at some sites.

The terrain is often rugged and, if not exposed to the elements, is cloaked in coastal forest and dense shrublands and flax. I have painful memories of being caught with two DOC staff members in the 2007 search in an intense hail shower as a front moved through. Literally caught out on a bare headland we huddled under our back packs for some protection from the driving hail stones. These kinds of experiences, as well as being a talking point that night with the rest of the team, help to reinforce the shared commitment to yellow-eyed penguin conservation.



Trudi Webster using a new Allflex RS420 microchip reader (pictured below)

Improved monitoring

All of the yellow-eyed penguins found on Trust reserves are marked with a small microchip (or transponder). This allows us to keep track of the movements of individuals, work out who is breeding with who and examine their breeding success.

Each time a penguin is sighted, a transponder reader is waved over the back of the bird's neck (where the microchip is implanted) to obtain a unique 15 digit code.

Recent research by a University of Otago Wildlife Management student Eden Gray compared the effectiveness of different microchip readers. Eden found that the yellow wand readers (Allflex RS320) detected a microchip 86% of the time, but that the green stick readers (Allflex RS420) are 92% effective. This means that the green wand is much more reliable and likely to detect a microchip.

The Trust has now purchased three new improved readers for our penguin monitoring work thanks to our generous funders Bendigo Valley Sports and Charity Foundation, New Zealand Oil & Gas Southern Community Panel and The Lou and Ian Fisher Charitable Trust.



Nursery progresses



The final part of the cleanup after the "Not So Great Flood" in early June 2015 has happened, and now all that remains of the damage is minor debris still trapped in vegetation or fencing around the area.

Many thanks to our many volunteers and to Blackhead Quarries and Clearwater Transport for donating the gravel and transporting it on site. In-kind support such as this is fantastic to receive and we are indebted to their businesses.



Specialist wildlife vet Dr Lisa Argilla

Vet Appeal update

Dr Lisa Argilla, specialist wildlife vet, is returning in 2017!

In 2015 we successfully ran an appeal to raise money to employ Lisa to treat sick or injured yellow-eyed penguins. This was reported on in the last edition of *Hoiho*.

The success of the campaign was so great that we had funds to carry over to again employ her in January-March 2017. Thanks to significant additional funding from New Zealand Oil & Gas Southern Community Panel, all expenses are now covered for the 2016/17 season.

Watch this space for a full story in our next edition of *Hoiho*. In the meantime, visit southern.communitypanel.org.nz

Of course, extra donations for our work are always welcome!

Otago Polytechnic and St Kilda Vets will again donate facilities free-of-charge which is a fantastic endorsement of the need for this work. Lisa has just won an AMP scholarship which will enable her to undertake a feasibility study on setting up a permanent wildlife hospital facility based in Dunedin.

The Trust wishes her well and fully supports this wonderful concept.



Jenny Winter



Allison Wallace



Leith Thomson monitoring hoiho

Trust staffing changes

Administration Assistant **Jenny Winter** retired after six years working for the Trust. Thanks Jenny for your years of loyalty and dedication to the Trust and ultimately, the penguins!

By the time you receive this newsletter **Allison Wallace** will have started as the Trust's Administrator. Allison comes with a depth of experience in administration, particularly accounting, and we welcome her to our team.

Senior Ranger **Leith Thomson** has left the Trust after ten years employment to further develop his career. Leith's job involved the maintenance of Trust-owned reserves, working with landowners and monitoring the penguins during their breeding season. He has represented the Trust on the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group, and worked with many community and educational organisations advocating for yellow-eyed penguin conservation.

Thank you Leith for the skills you brought to the Trust, for your dry sense of humour and for being a friend to everyone!



OUR SEA YOUR SAY
KEI A KOE TE TIKANGA

SOUTH-EAST MARINE PROTECTION FORUM

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The South-East Marine Protection Forum seeks submissions on proposed areas for a possible network of marine protected areas along the south-east coast of the South Island from Timaru to Waipapa Point. A public consultation document is available now for comment.

This is available online at south-eastmarine.org.nz, or you can call 0800 OUR SEA (0800 687 729) to request a copy.



**SOUTH-EAST
MARINE PROTECTION
FORUM**
ROOPU MANAAKI
KI TE TOKA

**SUBMISSIONS CLOSE AT 5PM
ON 20 DECEMBER 2016**

People



Thanks to the many volunteers from our community who assist the Trust in a variety of ways. Here are just a few examples from the last six months. Thanks heaps to each and everyone of you who help us with multiple tasks, from the office to the habitats.

Pictured clockwise from the top

Weeding at Otapahi

Contact Call Centre staff assisted us again this year, this time at Otapahi Reserve where they took to the weeds with enthusiasm and energy, releasing the native plantings from invasive plants.

DOC planting day

The local DOC permissions team assisted the Trust at Okia Reserve as part of Conservation Week. DOCs 'War on Weeds' campaign was undertaken with gusto in penguin habitat.

Mark Clarke of DOC clearing elderberry.

GIS Advisor

Tony Stewart assists the Trust with GIS work (geographic information system). In this photo he is helping Senior Ranger Leith Thomson with some technical issues of this system. This system allows users to create interactive queries, edit data on maps and analyse spatial information. Initially the Trust will use this system to monitor trapping and planting records.

Fence repairs

Fences at Okia Reserve were repaired after sheep damage with the help of volunteer and ex-farmer Jeff Cleugh. It is great to have volunteers with expertise such as fencing.

Planting in the rain

At Tavora Reserve volunteers completed the planting of the 'Marshall' area on a very damp and murky day.

Gareth Morgan Foundation

Morgan Foundation's Nick Tansley was in Dunedin as part of Conservation Week and interviewed the Trust's general manager and field manager as a feature story on Gareth Morgan's blog. Nick got out to one of the Trust's reserves, but unfortunately didn't see a yellow-eyed penguin. Next time!

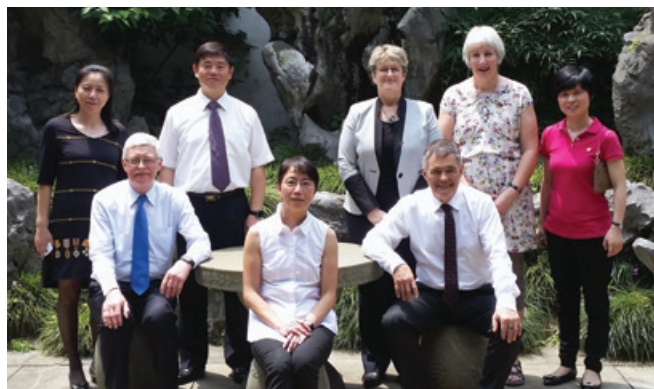
Rata forest in the making

Jane Young from Forest and Bird South Otago Branch talks to Nursery Supervisor Louise Ashton about the plants she has grown in her private nursery. Jane donates rata to the Trust for the Long Point/Irahuka Reserve in the Catlins. These plants are now thriving and we are hopeful our own grandchildren may see a rata forest one day.

Planting at Okia Reserve

Otago Polytechnic Horticulture students helped plant native trees and shrubs in a newly cleared area of Okia Reserve.





L to R: Ms Liu Qun (Secretary of the Branch Department of the Communist Party) Chris Staynes (Dunedin Deputy Mayor), Mr Zang Ling (Director Yu Gardens), Teresa Chan (Chair, Dunedin Shanghai Association), Sue Bidrose (Dunedin City Council Chief Executive), Dave Cull (Dunedin Mayor), Sue Murray, and our interpreter from the Foreign Affairs Office.

CITY OF DUNEDIN DELEGATION TO CHINA

In June General Manager Sue Murray represented the Trust on a joint trade and education visit to China with the Otago Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Dunedin, University of Otago, and Otago Polytechnic.

Also joining the delegation were four inbound tourist operators and two local businesses. This visit was part of the Dunedin Economic Development Strategy, Project China, convened by the Chamber as part of the Grow Dunedin Partnership.

Sue joined the trip for 10 days visiting the cities of Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Qingyuan, and finally flying home from Hong Kong.

The project aims to promote Dunedin's tourism, trade, technology, business and education as well as environmental and investment opportunities. It is also charged with supporting, and being supported by, cultural and civic activities.

Chinese tourism continues to be one of the fastest growth sectors with more taking up the free and independent travel option, which includes more bed nights for the City. A recent trend in education tourism continues to grow, with families talking the opportunity to visit the country while looking for future education prospects for their child.

Otago has a number of significant businesses engaged in the China market. It is these delegations that open the doors for many of our businesses and the city as a whole. The key now is to try and maximise the benefits of these opportunities and leverage conservation outcomes from them. The Trust is committed to seeking funding that promotes our financial independence.

This was an amazing experience for Sue personally and professionally as she had never been to China before. It was educational for her to see how this culture directs relationships and what is required to develop these. It opened up opportunities and introductions to people who the Trust would never have the privilege to meet had this trip not been centred on the Mayor of Dunedin City.

It was also an opportunity to build on relationships with the various organisations represented on this trip, and this can only help us positively into the future.



African Penguins at Boulder Beach, Cape Peninsula. Despite the crowd in this photograph, the yellow-eyed penguin's African cousins are also in decline.

INTERNATIONAL PENGUIN CONFERENCE IN CAPETOWN

Conservation Science Advisor, Trudi Webster, recently represented the Trust at the 9th International Penguin Congress in Cape Town, South Africa.

As an invited member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Penguin Specialist Group, Trudi attended a two day workshop ahead of the main conference. The purpose of the workshop was to provide information for the IUCN Red List assessments, which are accepted as the most comprehensive method for evaluating the conservation status of animal species across the globe.

The group worked hard to evaluate all eighteen species of penguin and provide recommendations and information to update the species' status. Watch this space for the new updates.

The main conference provided a fantastic opportunity for Trudi to meet and build relationships with researchers, scientists and conservation practitioners from all corners of the world. The latest research on penguins was showcased at the conference through a variety of well-presented talks, posters and workshop sessions on topics ranging from foraging habitats, to predation by ravens, and de-oiling feathers, to vocal behaviour.

Trudi also attended a fisheries bycatch workshop where scientists discussed the common research and monitoring needs in different countries. A variety of mitigation measures and incentives to help minimise and/or prevent bycatch were also discussed. The challenge and aspiration for the group was how to address bycatch issues in a positive way so that fishermen can continue fishing without harming penguins.

Dunedin announced as venue of 10th Congress

Provisional dates for the 10th International Penguin Congress were announced as 26-30 August 2019. We look forward to seeing everybody in Dunedin for this event!



Support made simpler

The Mainland Brand is the founding sponsor of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, beginning our cause-related sponsorship way back in 1989.

Over the years, we have supported the Trust in numerous ways, which has resulted in over \$1.6 million worth of support for this great cause.

We wanted to let you know that we are just as committed as ever to our little flightless friends and will continue to support them through the work of the Trust, and we have been exploring new ways to do so.

You may have noticed our redemption message has been removed from our new packs. Previously we made a donation for every barcode that you entered online.



The cost of a coffee

Who's addicted to coffee but could give up one cup per week? Could you? If so, maybe you'd consider joining our Hoiho Supporters' Group.

Since 2003, the Department of Conservation (DOC) has generously supported the Trust's field operations through grants primarily to employ our field team. In recent years DOC itself has had to adapt to its own budget limitations to deliver conservation in New Zealand and we think you would agree DOC is underfunded for this core work of helping keep NZ green and clean.

The DOC Community Fund (previously called Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund and more recently, Community Conservation Partnership Fund) is insufficient

We figure your life's busy enough without cutting out barcodes though, so we have decided we are going to save you the trouble and simply donate \$75,000 per year on behalf of ourselves and our customers. We hope you approve.

If you're not already a Mainland Hero, why not become one by purchasing any Mainland cheese and butter. It's another way that you can directly help the yellow-eyed penguin.

To see our full range of cheeses and recipe ideas, and to keep an eye out for new ways to support the penguins please visit mainland.co.nz

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

Be a
Mainland hero

Help Mainland raise
\$75,000 to save hoiho



Buy Mainland cheese and butter with the Mainland Hero logo on the labels and you are helping to save the endangered yellow-eyed penguin.

to meet the demands of the communities who are also delivering core conservation effort throughout New Zealand. The number of community groups is increasing and the number of projects is also increasing.

The Trust believes we need to become financially independent of funding sources such as grants. As part of our plan to achieve this, we now remind you about our monthly automatic payment scheme.

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

We encourage you to join this 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.



A note from the Chair



I wanted to begin this column with a little wordplay morphing “rust never sleeps” into “(the) Trust never sleeps” and then go on to discuss how important it is for us always to be vigilant.

From memory, I thought the term came from a TV ad promoting a rust-killing coating but Google is silent on the matter, apart from one other person in the blogosphere who agrees the line pre-dates Neil Young and Crazy Horse’s 1979 album *Rust Never Sleeps*. My point being, as noted in an earlier column, the current conservation environment is changing more and more rapidly and conservation NGOs need to keep up, both operationally and in terms of governance.

Our conservation effort needs to be evidence-based and targeted to produce the conservation outcomes we seek. Also, the Boards of conservation NGOs need to stay abreast of changes in the legislative and regulatory environment.

Currently, we are preparing a submission to the South-East Marine Protection Forum, supporting the creation of a number of various kinds of marine protected areas, including no-take reserves. The preparation and writing of the submission involves our Conservation Scientist so we are confident any claims we may make will be robust enough to withstand scrutiny.

This time round – the issue has been debated before – there has been a significant positive shift in position by some in the fishing community. Now, “not everyone was anti-marine reserves... there are areas, though, that the commercial and recreational sector support as marine reserves” (Simon Gilmour; Otago Rock Lobster Industry,

Otago Daily Times, 31st October 2016, p.3). Finally, after years of inhabiting parallel universes, fishers and conservation NGOs, through the Forum, may have a starting point for negotiation. Yellow-eyed penguins can only but benefit from this development. A win-win outcome still is only the stuff of dreams but, until recently, so was protection for the Ross Sea, recently secured.

This issue of our newsletter is jam-packed with interesting stuff and, we hope, marks the beginning of a transition to a digital future. We must wait and see. Meanwhile, vigilant as ever in protecting our charges, the Trust never sleeps.

Eric J. Shelton

Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board Chair

*Until recently, the
Ross Sea Marine
Protection Area
was the stuff of
dreams*



Thank you to our regular supporters:

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Malcam Trust Conservation Corps
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Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
South Otago Branch Forest & Bird

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Penguin Place
Penguin Rescue
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.

Special thanks to the team at AdArt Brand Promotion for the design of this newsletter.



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

Penguins. Plants. People. Passion.

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