



# Hoiho

December 2013

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

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## Conservation Inc. watershed



*The Minister of Conservation, Hon Dr Nick Smith addressing Conservation Inc.*

**To mark its 25th birthday, the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust initiated and hosted Conservation Inc. in October.**

Wonderfully successful, the conference explored how people can meet the new challenges faced under a new Department of Conservation (DOC) structure in which the responsibility for looking after New Zealand's biodiversity is increasingly falling on the community. Two hundred and twenty-five people, representing government and local body agencies and community groups, attended from all over New Zealand.

Pre-workshop conferences included governance, fundraising and predator control, and they left delegates buzzing.

The conference itself explored four themes: 'Connecting', 'Staying Viable', 'Responding to Need', and 'What's Feasible?'. For further details of papers, including audio files, look at the conference site on the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust website: [yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservationinc](http://yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservationinc)

The following are some of the most important and recurring themes and issues raised.

### **DOC restructuring**

In the aims for its restructuring, the Minister of Conservation, Hon Dr Nick Smith, felt that DOC should become more outward looking and engage with community organisations; be more nationally consistent and effective; and have staff who can engage with the

*“This conference is a really significant gift by the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust to the community and New Zealand to explore and learn from each other about how to work together for the next 25 years”*

*Conference delegate*

community and get people engaged in partnerships. This theme was reiterated by the speakers from DOC: Lou Sanson, Director-General of DOC; Barry Hanson, Director Conservation Partnerships; Paula Wilson, Manager Biodiversity Fund; and Tim Fraser, Commercial Manager Partnerships.

### **Marine conservation**

“Marine conservation is the new frontier of conservation challenge.” New Zealand's marine environment is twenty times the size of the terrestrial environment, but we have few reserves. The Minister of Conservation challenged the audience to take on board the competent management of ocean conservation. “New Zealand should be a superpower in terms of ocean management.”

*Continued on page 2 >>*

He told delegates to make some progress on marine protection in Otago which is one of the few areas to have no marine reserves.

"The way to advance marine protection is to get all stakeholders together and talk about the issues.

"Establish an Otago collaborative forum on marine protection.

"Involve the conservation movement, the scientific community, Kai Tahu, those with a recreational fishing background, and those who are commercial fishers.

"Work together to find an appropriate place on the Otago coast and report back to the government in 2015."

This is already under way with a forum being assembled of interested parties.

### Funding

Searching questions and debate during the fundraising workshop reflected the need NGOs have for certainty in resourcing. This was a recurring harmonic throughout the conference. Building and sustaining capacity are dominating concerns of NGOs, regardless of their histories. Capacity will be the single most important determinant of effectiveness in community-based conservation.

Likewise, delegates spoke often of the need for untapped funding to pay the salaries and overheads of frontline staff. This is a critical problem for NGOs.

Dr Smith told the conference the government would not step back from funding conservation as a result of its new focus on partnerships and community.

He challenged the conference: "With this huge growth in community conservation, how does government engage to provide funding to work better for community organisations?"

He suggested that consideration was being given to a concept of community funding, now allocated nationally, to be divided between regions and allocated by boards, depending on community need. However this suggestion has not been endorsed at meetings and in submissions.

Paula Wilson of Biodiversity Funds said that a close look was being taken at how funds were distributed and how DOC could

connect community groups with other sources of available government funding.

"Bio Funds are seeding funds (i.e. they won't fund continuity work). They encourage community groups to share, rationalise their resources, think of synergies, and make suggestions." Again this raises questions about funding assurance for staffing.

### Conservation alliance

The creation of a single voice for community groups (referred to presently as the Conservation Alliance) was a key outcome of the conference. It coincided with the Minister's own suggestion that such an organisation would make it easier for the government to negotiate the conduct of conservation with the NGO community.

The Alliance's establishment group is already busy defining roles and expectations. Success will depend on well supported mandates to speak for the interests of community-based conservation.

For more information on this, contact [conservationalliancenz@gmail.com](mailto:conservationalliancenz@gmail.com) or Julian Fitter, Chair of the Maketu Ongatiro Wetland Society, phone (07) 533-2040.

See a conference snapshot on pages 4 and 5 >>>

## Conference comments

*"It is really heartening for us all to be here together – policy people and doers."*

*"I've grabbed ideas from this speaker and that speaker, which I'm going to try out. So many good ideas."*

*"The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust is a true trailblazer for organising the conference"*

– Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister of Conservation.



*Founding YEPT Trustees Lala Frazer and Euan Kennedy cutting the conference cake, resplendent with penguin lollies with yellow icing eye bands. The cake was created by the YEPT team.*



*The conference venue was splendidly decorated with plants from the YEPT Nursery. The plants have since been planted out into Trust reserves to offset the carbon footprints of those travelling to Dunedin for the conference. Hoani Langsbury, YEPT Trustee (pictured above): "These plants take mauri from all of us... to join the soils."*

# Showcasing the Trust in the UK

Sue Murray, General Manager of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, and Field Manager David McFarlane attended the 8th International Penguin Conference in Bristol, United Kingdom and visited other UK-based conservation groups in September.

One of the highlights was their being hosted by the RSPB (the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), a UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife, and visiting its reserves at Thatcham (67 hectares built on a flooded gravel quarry) and Newport (restored from the ash pits of a derelict power company).

RSPB headquarters is home to 500 staff and 180,000 volunteers. Sue and Dave met with the funding, marketing, futurescapes, seabird and conservation teams, all of whom gave sound ideas to put into practice here in New Zealand.

But the strongest message of all was that no matter what the size or the geographic location, the issues facing NGOs with funding, competitors and membership are the same.

Another highlight was visiting the Eden Project in Cornwall, a charity and social

enterprise project set in an old quarry with artificial biomes housing plants from all around the world, including the largest rainforest in captivity. Mischievously, our Kiwi icon, the *Cordyline australis* (cabbage tree), was named as a "Cornish palm"!

During the conference Sue gave three presentations: 'An Overview of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust – A Community Conservation Organisation'; 'Richdale's 1939/40 Cine Film of Yellow-eyed Penguin Breeding'; and 'The Model of Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust – an Example of a Model that Lasts'.

Sue and Dave enjoyed conversations with many conservationists, including well-known Antarctic penguin researcher and author Bernard Sonehouse and his wife, Sally.

The conference was attended by 220 people, with a delegation of 16 from NZ. Other countries represented included South Africa, Australia, USA, Europe, Japan and the UK.

In part the trip was funded with grants from the Leiden Conservation Foundation, New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women (Otago Branch) and the Penguin Fund of Japan. Our sincere thanks to all of the funders.



Dave and Sue with Tom Leiden of the Leiden Conservation Foundation

## Auckland Islands revisited

### YEPT Ranger Leith Thomson's subantarctic island trip

We headed off from Bluff on board *Evohe* on the 11th of November, 12 people made up of volunteers and Department of Conservation staff, plus six crew. We made it down to the Auckland Islands in 30+ hours in lumpy seas. First job was to drop off two people on Enderby Island to set up cameras on a yellow-eyed penguin landing site, doing morning beach counts and searching for nests.

The rest of us headed off on *Evohe* and did morning beach counts on islands and harbours around Enderby (4am starts to be on shore by 5am, but often we could not see until dawn around 5.30am). We were all

rewarded by the sight of yellow-eyed penguins and I think everyone now can join me in having a sea lion story (don't we Ranger Ray!). The scavenging skuas often landed next to us so we covered our eyes as we'd heard they target the eyes of their prey first.

A DOC worker and I swapped over with the two people on Enderby half way through the trip and we carried on the nest searching trying to verify numbers (double counts) and did a few morning beach counts.

*Evohe* then sailed on down the coast to Carnley Harbour at the bottom of the main island.

We all got to visit historic sites throughout the trip – the *Grafton* wreck, a coastwatcher building and the Hardwicke settlement.

The wildlife is great with many birds to see, including albatross, snipe, teal and the Auckland Island banded dotterel and chicks. The megaherbs were in flower too, with fields of yellow bulbinella.

We all finished off on the last morning with a beach count on the eastern side of Enderby. This meant a 2.30am wake to be on the beach at 3.30am to walk to drop off points along the coast. It turned out to be a great day.



**Conference Inc. had 225 attendees  
representing the following groups:**

A Rocha Aotearoa NZ.  
Ahika Consulting.  
Aramoana Conservation  
Charitable Trust.  
Arthurs Pass Wildlife Trust.  
Ashburton Community  
Conservation Trust.  
Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare  
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Brook Waimarama  
Sanctuary Trust  
Canterbury Environmental  
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Catlins Café.  
Catlins Coast Inc.  
Catlins Wildlife Trackers.  
Centre for Science  
Communication.  
Christchurch City Council.  
Christchurch Penguin  
Rehabilitation.  
Clutha District Council.  
Conservation Consultancy  
Limited.  
Conservation Volunteers  
New Zealand.  
DataMap Limited.  
Department of  
Conservation.  
Dunedin Amenities Society.  
Dunedin City Council.  
Dunedin Environment  
Centre Trust.  
Earth Partners Trust.  
East Coast Bay of Plenty  
Conservation Board.  
Eastern Falcon  
Conservation Trust.  
East Taranaki Environment  
Trust.  
EcoGecko Consultants.  
Fiordland Conservation  
Trust.  
Fonterra Brands NZ.  
Fonterra Edendale.  
Forest & Bird Dunedin.  
Forest & Bird Kivi  
Conservation.  
Forest & Bird North  
Taranaki.  
Forest & Bird South  
Otago.  
Forest & Bird Southland.  
Forest & Bird Waitaki.  
Great Barrier Island  
Environmental Trust.  
Greater Wellington  
Regional Council.  
Hawkes Bay Regional  
Council.  
Herbert Heritage  
Wetlands Waianakarua.  
Howick Local Board.  
Auckland Council.  
Hurunui District Council.  
Hutton's Shearwater  
Charitable Trust.  
Landcare Research.  
Mahinepua Radar Hill  
Landcare Group Inc.  
Maketu Ongatoro  
Wetland Society Inc.  
Massey University.  
Maungatautari Ecological  
Island Trust.  
Ministry of Primary  
Industries.  
Mohua Charitable Trust.

Mountains to Sea  
Conservation Trust.  
NatureWatch NZ.  
Nelson Marlborough  
Conservation Board.  
New Plymouth District  
Council.  
NZ Fairy Tern Charitable  
Trust.  
NZ Landcare Trust.  
NZ Native Forests  
Restoration Trust.  
NZ Sea Lion Trust.  
NZ Transport Authority.  
Northland Conservation  
Board.  
Opus International  
Consultants.  
Orokonui Ecosanctuary.  
Otago Natural History  
Trust.  
Otago Peninsula  
Biodiversity Group.  
Otago Peninsula Trust.  
Otago Regional Council.  
Paparoa Wildlife Trust.  
Penguin Place.  
Project Planet Aotearoa.  
QEII National Trust.  
Quail Island Ecological  
Restoration Trust.  
Real Journeys.  
Royal Forest & Bird  
Protection Society.  
Save the Otago Peninsula  
Inc.  
South Catlins Development  
& Environmental  
Charitable Trust.  
Southern Seabird Solutions  
Trust.  
Southland Community  
Nursery.  
Southland Conservation  
Board.  
Stewart Island/Rakiura  
Community and  
Environmental Trust.  
Tahakopa Kakariki  
Protection &  
Enhancement Project.  
Taranaki Regional Council.  
Taranaki Tree Trust.  
Taranaki/Whanganui  
Conservation Board.  
Tasman Environmental  
Trust.  
Te Ara Kakariki.  
Te Kakano Aotearoa Trust.  
The Issac Conservation  
and Wildlife Trust.  
Tui 2000.  
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West Coast Tai Poutini  
Conservation Board.  
Wetlands NZ.  
Wildland Consultants.  
Working Waters Trust.  
WWF-New Zealand.  
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.



**Dunedin Centre 16-18 October 2013**





# Thank you

Our thanks to the following companies for sponsorship, support and donations to Conservation Inc.



# from...

The 'helping hands' behind Conservation Inc. Left to right: Sue Murray (General Manager), Craig McKenzie (Conference IT support), Toby Bulow (Nursery Assistant), Lala Frazer (founding and current Trustee), Eric Shelton (Trustee), Linda Reynolds (Trustee), Pat Mark (Trustee), Nigel Stirling (Trustee), Hoani Langsbury (Trustee), Luke Gardener (Emerging Leader Trustee), Anita Pillai (Nursery Manager), Jesse James (Emerging Leader Trustee), Margaret Murrell (Trustee), Tim Mephram (Trustee), Leith Thomson (Ranger), Euan Kennedy (founding and current Trustee), Peter Simkins (Trustee), David McFarlane (Field Manager), Jenny Winter (Admin Assistant), Mike Morrison (Board Chair), Jasmine Chin (Conference Volunteer) and Cindy Pang (Conference Photographer).



So what's feasible?

PHOTO BY DEBBIE FLUECK



# Breeding season update and effect of adult mortality event

Even while the Trust celebrates 25 years of conservation work, the consequences of the death of around 60 adult yellow-eyed penguins on Otago Peninsula in January and February of this year due to a suspected, but still unconfirmed biotoxin, has become apparent.

Nest searches by Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust staff and volunteers have shown significant declines in the number of nests at Okia and Otapahi reserves.

Okia Reserve at Victory Beach is normally home to around 15 breeding pairs, but searches have so far located only five pairs. Similarly, Otapahi adjacent to Allans Beach has declined from 20 pairs to eight.

As some small consolation, breeding pairs at Trust reserves elsewhere are either up or only slightly down, with the agent seemingly not affecting these areas. Tavora in East Otago has jumped from two to four breeding pairs, Long Point down from 49 to 47 and Cosgrove Creek down one, from 11 to 10.

While the drop in nest numbers is of serious concern, it may not mean that all the missing adults were killed, but instead are not breeding this season due to the loss of a mate. Crucially, some other important Otago Peninsula breeding sites such as Boulder Beach have not been affected as badly.

It is hoped that the Otago Peninsula population will bounce back as it did following a similar adult mortality event in 1990-91.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ODT

*DOC, University of Otago and the Trust members discuss the impact of the penguin deaths earlier this year.*

## Codfish Island/Whenua Hou penguin numbers also down

The latest survey of nest numbers on Whenua Hou/Codfish Island revealed 37 active nests. This is a minor decline on the 2011/12 seasons when 39 nests were found, but significantly down on the 61 nests present in the first survey in 2001.

Work by the Trust has shown that breeding success and chick weights are reasonable so with no predators on the island there should be plenty of recruitment. However, sightings of juvenile birds have been rare (one was seen this year and none in 2009, 2011 or 2012) indicating that poor juvenile survival is the primary cause of recruitment failure.

Just why juvenile survival is so poor is unknown: however marine productivity is likely to be a factor. Despite poor years there has been some recruitment with two birds marked as chicks with transponders in 2008 and 2010 found breeding for the first time.



*The search team of Dave Houston, Dean Nelson and Bruce McKinlay head off for the day*

# Technology assists understanding

## Forget the GCSB... spying is rife in the Catlins

**Fergus Sutherland**  
**Caretaker, Te Rere Reserve**

Remote camera observations of wildlife are providing us with wonderful opportunities to pry into the private lives of our fellow creatures.

Cameras at Te Rere, the Forest & Bird Society's penguin reserve in The Catlins, recorded the comings, goings and night time activities of yellow-eyed penguins, little blue penguins and even one sealion over the month of September 2013.

Information gathered showed that there are about 72 yellow-eyed and 18 little penguins at Te Rere. The birds share eight well-defined pathways from the rocky shore.

During September the yellow-eyed penguin movements conformed to a fairly consistent pattern of going to sea between 05:00 and 09:00 hours and coming in between 14:30 and 24:00 hours (Figure 1).

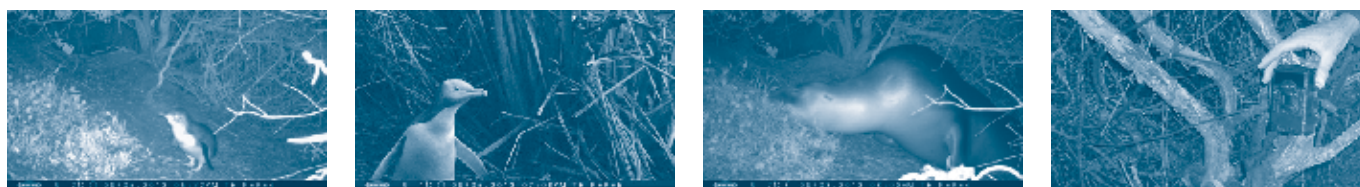
One publicity conscious yellow-eyed penguin chose to spend the night in front of the camera where it spent a remarkable amount

of time attending to personal grooming (Figure 2).

The little penguins at Te Rere went out to sea earlier and returned later than the yellow-eyed penguins. They also engaged in more night-time activities such as mating.

Fergus may be emailed at [catlinw@ihug.co.nz](mailto:catlinw@ihug.co.nz)

QR code for a YouTube video about Te Rere:



**All movements, 24 hour time on vertical axis**

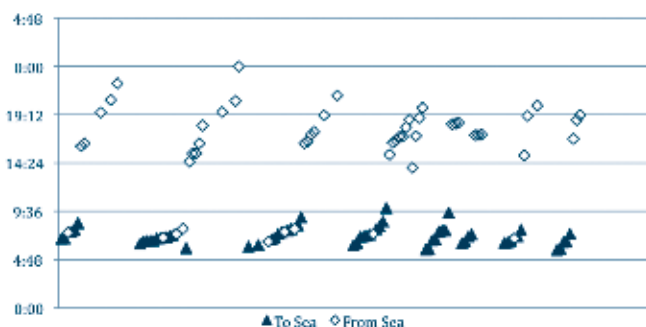


Figure 1: Te Rere Yellow-eyed Penguin Movements

**Time in hours and minutes**

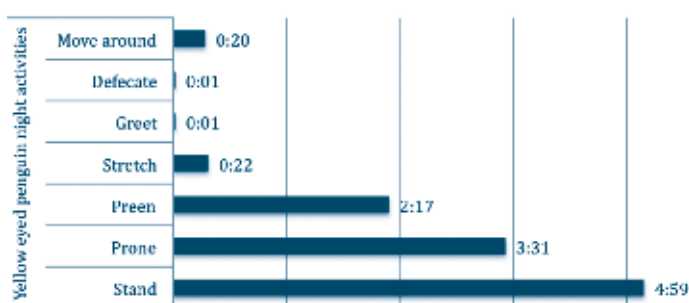


Figure 2: Te Rere Yellow-eyed Penguin Night Activities

## Annual General Meeting

In accordance with changes to our constitution dated November 2012 stating "An Annual General Meeting shall be held within 6 months of the closing of the financial year [30 September] to which it relates", the 2013 Annual General Meeting will be held in **early March 2014**.

### Please remember hoihos 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



## A note from the Chair

Our year is almost at an end again, and what a year dominated by events it has been. You will remember it started off in Jan/Feb with the mortality event which saw more than 60 adult yellow-eyed penguins die of still unknown cause. This was a devastating start and made us realise in our 25th anniversary year that the vulnerability of this species is still apparent.

In April our Trust office moved to Conservation House, a move that has proven extremely rewarding as we have settled in alongside the Department of Conservation.

Part of our intent this year was to invest in sending people offshore, and so in August and September two staff travelled to the UK to showcase the Trust to other conservation groups at the 8th International Penguin Conference held in Bristol. The networking opportunities have been very fruitful.

October was our biggest month with the hosting of *Conservation Inc.* to celebrate our 25th anniversary year. With 225 delegates from every region of NZ attending, we were delighted with both this representation and again the networking that evolved in the conservation community. DOC was able to share their new vision following their recent restructure and we look forward to working with them in the future under this new model. One person summed up the conference and the Trust's involvement as follows: "Some good messages about how to do it and what makes a successful conservation organisation. Not only does it take time but it takes perseverance. You showed what successful strategic alliances look like and how long term relationships deliver support in many ways."

For those of you that could not attend the conference, most of the presentations and audio files are on our website: [www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservationinc/speaker-abstracts](http://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz/conservationinc/speaker-abstracts)

**Mike Morrison**  
Trust Board Chair



## Digital redemption

Go to [www.mainland.co.nz/yellow-eyedpenguin](http://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

- Mainland no longer accept cut-out coupons
- If you are unable to redeem your barcodes online, please return them to **Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, PO Box 5409, Dunedin 9058** and a trust volunteer will count them to ensure they are included in the monthly returns.



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Otago Peninsula Lions Club  
Penguin Fund of Japan  
Scenic Hotel Dunedin City

### Thank you to:

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

### Special thanks in this issue to:

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

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