



Hoiho

November 2018

www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz

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Dogs kill penguins!

This message is very clear: dogs – all breeds – kill penguins! If you wish to take your dog for a run on a beach, avoid penguin beaches, obey local bylaws and if you see wildlife on the beach put your dog on its lead. Simple!

Earlier this year, in the Catlins, two yellow-eyed penguins/hoiho were found dead as a result of injuries from dogs.

A routine check of moulting yellow-eyed penguins/hoiho at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's Long Point/Irahuka Reserve in the Catlins revealed another blow to a species battling multiple threats from disease, starvation and climate change.

Trust Ranger Ben Goldsworthy discovered a bloody and recently killed adult yellow-eyed penguin next to dog tracks. A subsequent necropsy of the penguin at Massey University confirmed that the wounds were consistent with a dog attack.

"I was looking for moulting penguins and checking their condition and the last thing I expected to find was a bird killed by a dog. We've had a big decline in the numbers of

hoiho at Long Point and can't afford to lose animals to dog attacks."

When a penguin moults, it remains ashore for three to four weeks while its feathers are replaced all at once. During this time the birds are particularly vulnerable.

A few weeks prior to this, another bird was found dead and was also sent to Massey University where it was confirmed it had received wounds inflicted by a dog. In February, a Snares crested penguin was killed by a dog at Kakanui, North Otago.

In a press release, Trust General Manager Sue Murray said dog control was in the hands of animal owners and urged the public to take more care as all of these deaths were avoidable.

As we enter another breeding season, the Trust and others in the penguin community, are concerned about what this season will hold for hoiho survival. Despite signage and reminders about the impact of dogs in sensitive breeding areas, incidents like that described above are simply careless behaviour and are avoidable.

As summer approaches, and if you are taking your dog to the beach, please make sure you know the bylaws for your area as wildlife can turn up anywhere. If you do see any wildlife on the beach and you have your dog, simply put it on the leash and make sure it is under control.

If you wish to be better prepared for the beach this summer, keep an eye out for the new DOC initiative 'Lead the Way' which enables dog owners to become wildlife-certified. This education tool teaches you easy ways to be better prepared for interacting with our spectacular coastal wildlife while limiting any risk.

Species such as the yellow-eyed penguin battle numerous threats every year, but our dogs should not be one of them. Becoming a wildlife-certified dog owner helps keep our yellow-eyed penguins safe, and keeps our dogs safe too.

If you are concerned about any inappropriate behaviour you observe, please ring the DOC Hotline on 0800 DOC HOT (0800 362 468).



Photo: Frank Fichtmuelle, shutterstock.com

Breeding season stats presented to Symposium

As a follow-up to the 2017/2018 hoiho breeding season, a summary was prepared and presented at the Annual Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium in August.

Organised jointly by YEPT and DOC, the Symposium was attended by over 100 people who have an interest in penguins,

including conservationists, DOC rangers and leaders, rehabbers, vets, researchers and their students, tourism operators, landowners, other NGOs, local and central governments, and many volunteers.

Some findings from this year's Symposium were:

- > Over the 2017/2018 season there were **254** breeding pairs on mainland NZ (compared with 252 in the 2016/17 season). Of these, there were:
 - **52** nests in North Otago (20% of the total number);
 - **91** nests on Otago Peninsula (36% of the total number);
 - **111** nests in the Catlins (44% of the total number);
 - For all sites combined there was just under **one** chick fledged per nest.
- > Avian diphtheria was again a problem in North Otago and on Otago Peninsula.
- > **30** birds died from avian malaria later in the season.
- > **4** hoiho deaths in the Catlins were attributed to dog attacks.
- > **75** sick or injured birds were seen by the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital
 - 34 required surgery;
 - 86% of the total seen survived to be rehabilitated.
- > **111** hoiho (plus another **18** penguins of varying species) stayed in the rehab facility at Penguin Place on Otago Peninsula:
 - The main reasons for birds requiring rehab were underweight moulting adult birds (43.3%), underweight chicks (17.8%) and injuries (23.3%);
 - **94%** of the birds were released back into the wild.
- > Other hoiho were rehabbed by Penguin Rescue, North Otago.
- > YEPT volunteers travelled **2877km** to pick up sick or injured birds or release them back to where they were found.

Nest numbers

Our teams have almost completed the first stage of monitoring yellow-eyed penguins/hoiho for the 2018/19 breeding season, the nest search.

Nest searches are carried out by staff and volunteers at all of YEPT's reserves and at other hoiho breeding locations which are monitored by the Trust.

At the moment nest numbers are looking similar to those found last season, and sometimes (fingers crossed) we find additional nests when we do follow-up searches and chick checks. A slight reduction in numbers at some sites can be explained by the loss of breeding birds to malaria or unexplained mortality events, e.g. Otapahi and Omihi.

The nest search is the first time since the moult (which ended in April) to check on the health of adults. As each bird has been marked with a unique transponder or microchip, it can be tracked through the previous sighting records in the database. It is often a time when juveniles are spotted hanging about which is a good sign for the future as these birds may start breeding next year.

The team also check up on any non-breeding birds that are present – this may be because they have no mate due to a fatality or they are just having a year off.



Mosquitoes are the vector for the incurable disease, avian malaria



Trudi Webster checking the wellbeing of chicks

Trust responds to disease issues

The Trust played a major role in developing strategies for dealing with disease issues for hoiho ahead of the coming breeding season.

As part of a wider management plan for 2018-19 the Trust, in association with vets and Department of Conservation staff, wrote a 'Diphtheria Treatment Protocol and Avian Malaria Response Plan.'

Last season a large number of hoiho chicks across North Otago and Otago Peninsula died due to avian diphtheria. Characteristic

of the disease are ulcerative lesions that form in the mouth, resulting in the production of plaques which can be inhaled, causing aspiration pneumonia, or a physical blockage which prevents breathing and/or feeding. It is hoped that increased monitoring by trained personnel, and improved treatment of diphtheria will help to ensure the survival of future generations.

An increased prevalence of avian malaria was a major problem for hoiho last season, likely due to an increase in the number of mosquitoes (the vector for the disease).

Thirty cases were confirmed through necropsies of dead birds by vets at Massey University's Wildbase facility. Similar to human malaria, there is no cure for avian malaria.

The best way to prevent its spread is to protect hoiho from mosquitoes and to reduce mosquito numbers. These and other topics such as mosquito monitoring and the treatment of hoiho are tackled in the malaria response plan.

Preparation is key for dealing with malaria and diphtheria disease events.



Clinton O'Brien of Recreation Reconstruction and Trust Board Chair, Eric Shelton measure the profile of the containers at Long Point

Long Point development

The Trust has successfully fundraised to build a field/research base at Long Point/Irahuka Reserve in the Catlins.

This base will provide accommodation and facilities for our staff, volunteers and researchers to undertake various tasks, including more intensive monitoring of hoiho and soft-releasing of hoiho chicks.

The base will comprise four containers which are currently being refurbished to our specifications by Metal Works Otago, with the whole project being managed by Clinton O'Brien of Recreation Construction Limited in Oamaru. Clint has years of experience in building huts, bridges, tracks etc in the remote conservation lands

administered by the Department of Conservation. However, the harsh coastal climate at Long Point is offering him a new set of challenges.

Funding for this project has been received from Otago Community Trust, Audrey Reid Charitable Trust, Alexander McMillan Trust, ANZ Staff Foundation, Clutha District Council, Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust, AAW Jones Charitable Trust and the Heseltine Trust.

We look forward to keeping you posted about this development and hope to show you photos of the completed base in the next edition of *Hoiho*.

Strategic review

In the May edition of *Hoiho* we reported on the establishment of a Hoiho Governance Group (HGG) and a Hoiho Technical Group (HTG), previously called the Hoiho Specialist Working Group, to develop a revised strategy for hoiho recovery. These groups comprise four partner organisations: DOC, Fisheries NZ, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and YEPT.

Progress to date was reported back to the community at the Annual Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium and in person to the Minister of Conservation, Hon Eugenie Sage, during her recent visit.

An overarching strategy to set the boundaries of a 'Threat Management and Recovery Plan mandated under the Conservation and Fisheries Acts' has been established:

1. **100-year vision:** To work in partnership to ensure self-sustaining, thriving hoiho.
2. **20-year high level objectives:** The hoiho population is increasing in both the northern (mainland New Zealand, Stewart Island/Rakiura and outliers) and southern populations (sub-Antarctic islands).
3. **5-year objective:** The decline of the hoiho population is halted.
4. **0-5 year objectives:**
 - a. Monitoring/evaluation: effective monitoring to provide the state/trend information to inform progress towards achieving objectives.
 - b. Human behaviour: minimising damaging human interactions and behaviours, whilst maximising positive human appreciation.
 - c. Biology threats: understand the relative levels of the risk of threats for the northern and southern populations.
 - d. Communication: stakeholders stay well informed about their part in hoiho recovery and understand/deliver required actions.
 - e. Intervention: designs optimal interventions.
 - f. Industry: other users of coastal marine environment are not contributing to hoiho decline (fisheries, tourism, farming).
 - g. Information: weaving together knowledge to enhance the mauri of hoiho (biology, ecology, threats, etc.).

This high level strategy will aim to provide direction for the work underway (both internal and external to our four partners). It is unlikely to be a one-stop report which captures everything in one place, as was the case for the original 'Hoiho Recovery Plan 2000-2025'. It is more likely that this high-level strategy will guide a series of action plans or topic-specific documents or processes, following the agreed strategic direction of the HGG and HTG.

The detail of this revised strategy is still being developed and in the meantime the HGG and HTG are focused on an immediate action plan for the 2018/19 breeding season. This plan includes several specifically written guides for field operators to aid them in delivering hoiho conservation work, including:

- > Avian malaria response plan: covering vector monitoring, mosquito prevention, and monitoring and treatment of birds.
- > Diphtheritic stomatitis treatment protocol: detailing two treatment strategies, antibiotics and lesion removal.
- > Unexplained mortality response plan: split into different levels based on the severity of event. Level 1 is small-scale event, level 2 is a medium-scale event with confirmed necropsy results and level 3 is a large-scale event affecting multiple birds in a defined area.

For more information and to be kept up-to-date visit the website at <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds/birds-a-z/penguins/yellow-eyed-penguin-hoiho/hoiho-threat-management-and-recovery-plan/>



Ben Goldsworthy with DOC's John Barkla inspecting weed control at Okia Reserve on Otago Peninsula

Creating rich

Hoiho and other coastal species need quality habitats free of weeds and predators.

Trapping of introduced predators is an ongoing pre-occupation of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and as we described in the May newsletter, control of weeds is also assuming much greater importance.

Supported by the Department of Conservation's Community Fund, our ranger Ben Goldsworthy has led the weed control programme along with help from many individuals and groups, and has made a huge impact on the weeds at Okia Reserve.

Ben has completed a first systematic sweep of the reserve targeting all the weeds found, but with a priority on gorse and broom. He has just begun a second sweep to pick up the next crop of weed seedlings appearing through the bracken fern.

Elder is also a notable and widespread weed in the reserve and has been a focus around the Pyramids and southern end of the reserve.



h habitats

The volunteer contribution to the Okia weed control programme has been significant with many individuals and groups, including our own Habitat volunteers and DOC's War on Weeds team.

As with numerous conservation projects the contribution of volunteers is the key to their success and certainly Okia has benefited greatly from their hard work.



Bill and Diana's niece Jane Cox (left) inspects the plaque with YEPT General Manager, Sue Murray



WE REMEMBER

Bill and Diana Wilson

There are volunteers, and there are volunteers; each and every one of them is vital to the Trust's delivery of conservation effort.

Two in the "awesome" category are the late Bill and Diana Wilson who assisted the Trust from 2000 until their deaths, Bill in 2014 and Diana in 2016. Both were 73 years old. Now their memory will live on in the lasting gift they have given the Trust – a portion of their estate dedicated to the future benefit of the Trust's Nursery at Company Bay, Dunedin.

Bill and Diana were school teachers from Kaitia who enjoyed tramping, photography and looking at wildlife. They had made many trips to the South Island to enjoy the outdoor life and opportunities offered in that part of New Zealand. So after living for 30 years in one of New Zealand's remote parts, they decided to shift to Dunedin – a university city known for its friendliness, ease of getting around and changeable seasons.

They followed the actions of the Trust through the newsletters, and supported our work by regularly returning Mainland cheese and butter labels, an activity which fuelled their initial interest in penguins. On their settlement in Dunedin, Diana and Bill approached the Trust to see how they could take a more active role in an organisation they had always supported.

They started off helping with the planting programme, and working in both the office and the nursery assisting with a variety of tasks. Back then, the office filing system was in a range of folders on open shelves, so they would come in weekly and file all sorts of documents. Then a year or so later we realised this was a fairly archaic system, so they came in and 'unfiled' everything into storage boxes to be archived.

Very early on Bill and Diana found their passion was at the Trust's plant nursery, helping to grow plants for penguins. They regularly came – no matter what the weather or the task.

One manager at the time reported that there wouldn't be Volunteer Wednesdays over the winter months as it was just too cold down at the site, but every Wednesday Bill and Diana would turn up wrapped in their winter woollies and quietly get on with a task or two.

Bill became known as the 'peg and cage making guru', making these to protect our plants from mammalian predators. He manufactured hundreds of cages and thousands of pegs from No 8 wire – he used a whole range of tools from a homemade wire straightener to hedge clippers to quickly cut the soft netting to length. It was estimated that Bill made at least 10,000 cages and 30,000 pegs.

Bill once said "Yellow-eyed penguins have so much against them, and yet plug on so determinedly, that we feel particularly happy to help their survival in any way we can".

We now thank Bill and Diana for their "plugging-on" with the Trust, and in particular recognising our work through this bequest. This generosity is amazing and will see that planting for penguins continues for many years to come.



How many sides has a banana?

The Trust was asked to host a Charity Quiz night on 19th September as part of Conservation Week. What a night!

We held the quiz at a local bar, CBK (Craft Bar and Kitchen) in the centre of Dunedin, and this was offered free of charge. When we told owner John that entries were flooding in, he closed the bar for the night to accommodate our private function!

In fact, two hundred people, or 31 teams entered, many from businesses that provide services to the Trust. Other businesses and individuals donated 53 items for the raffle prizes (see below). Together we raised \$4458 which far exceeded our expectations.

There were seven rounds of 10 questions, each question and answer with a "nature" theme. These were written specifically for this event by quiz master Stew Robertson

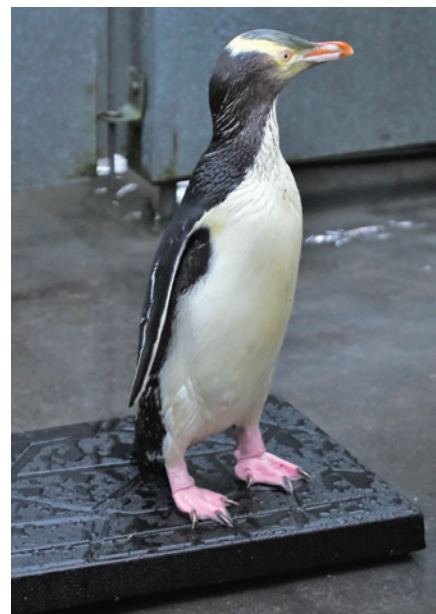
(also designer of this newsletter) and our Trust Board Chair, Eric Shelton.

One round was a set of pictures of New Zealand town icons and all other rounds each contained one question from the following categories: food and drink, sport, music, multiple choice, TV and movies, local stuff, history, odds and sods, and two conservation questions.

For example, an odds and sods question was, "How many sides has a banana?"

The feedback was really positive with lots of encouragement to make this an annual event. Thanks heaps to all the businesses and individuals who made this night such a success.

P.S. the answer to the banana question is a bananas has five sides.



"Have I put on weight?" A hoiho checks out the weigh platform developed by Ian MacDowall of Otago Polytechnic Design School

Scaling new heights

Ian MacDowall of Otago Polytechnic Design School has completed his project developing a weigh platform for hoiho.

The weigh station is the next stage in the development of a remote penguin monitoring system and part of a long-term collaboration between Machiko Niimi, a lecturer at the Design School, and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's science advisor, Trudi Webster.

The staff and penguins at Penguin Place kindly assisted with the trialling of the system. The weather gods also played their part and ensured some rigorous testing in the southerly rain and hail.

The future is bright, and the ongoing partnership with Otago Polytechnic hopes to develop a complete system for weighing and simultaneous identification of individual hoiho.

This system would allow for remote monitoring of hoiho in reserves, thus reducing stress, including that of handling of birds. The set up would also mean that weighing to monitor the progress of rehabilitated birds would be swift and hands off, and could be easily achieved during daily feeding routines.

Ian and fellow design student Francis Bingham were selected as finalists in the New Zealand Institute of Design Best Awards for this innovative system.



Our thanks to the following companies for support of this Quiz night



Private donors:
Pat Mark, Lala
Frazer, Emma
Burns, Helen Dent

10th International Penguin Conference

International Penguin Conferences (IPC) are the leading meetings of people involved in all aspects of working with and for penguins.

In 2019 the 10th meeting (10 IPC) will take place in Dunedin (August 24-28th). The first event was held there back in 1988.

The meeting, which lasts for five days (Saturday to Wednesday) attracts around 250 delegates, and is one of the few meetings which brings people working with penguins on all seven continents.

Penguin populations are barometers of the health of the planet. The populations of most species are experiencing serious declines throughout their range. Unless scientists, governments, conservation groups and the public take immediate action to reduce the threats to penguins, their populations may continue to plummet – with many facing extinction.

The International Penguin Conference provides a forum for all concerned to create a strategic global effort on behalf of these threatened species. IPC is the primary gathering of the world's leading scientists, research managers and policy makers working on penguin biology, ecology, health and behaviour to discuss ongoing



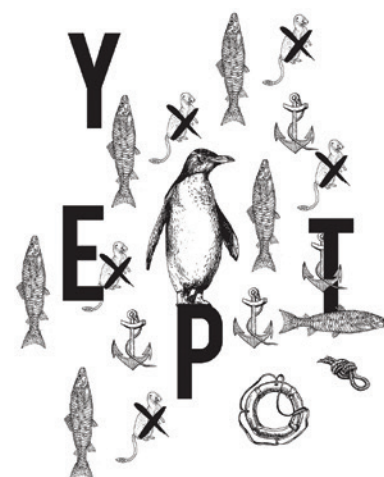
10th International Penguin Conference

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research, identify current and emerging conservation issues and create action plans. The conference provides a unique opportunity to bring together disparate groups of people with a common interest in penguins. The connections they make have often proved most fruitful and have led to some exciting collaborations.

As well as the main scientific meeting there will be a public event where the delegates share their passion for penguins with members of the public.

Keep up to date as planning for this conference proceeds at www.penguin-conference.com or follow us on www.facebook.com/PenguinConference



Many thanks to local Dunedin artist Emma Francesca for designing the artwork for this tee-shirt.

Produced by NZ company Little Yellow Bird, these great tees are made from organic rainfed cotton and they proved a great fundraiser for the Trust last month.

For more information:
www.littleyellowbird.co.nz
www.emmafrancesca.net



Join the Club

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 Coffee Club, 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



Recently, the Trust has experienced two development events that made us excited.

First, Otago Regional Council has renewed our scientist position for another three years. This position allows us to operate in a scientific, evidence-based manner, essential if we are effectively to tackle the numerous conservation challenges our penguins face.

The second development we experienced is that we have now taken delivery of four shipping containers, ready to be refurbished into a field/research base at Irahuka/Long Point, thus giving our scientist, staff and volunteers a place from which to launch their conservation efforts without unproductive travel and lacking accommodation and storage facilities.

Thinking about Irahuka/Long Point, every now and then it is useful to go back over all the documentation relevant to a particular project. Being an environmental NGO, and a charity, means we are accountable for every dollar raised and every dollar spent; there must be a rationale for the expenditure and a paper trail available to be audited. Irahuka/Long Point, the location of our largest project, the development of a sustainable penguin colony and biodiversity hotspot for coastal reintroductions, has now reached a level of complexity that requires careful attention and action.

Project Management becomes crucial. Roughly translated, by people in the Business School, it means that "when you're up to your neck in alligators it's easy to forget the goal was to drain the swamp." The Irahuka/Long Point development now involves us working closely with the Department of Conservation/Te Papa Atawhai, other NGO's (e.g. Forest and Bird's Bring Back the Seabirds project), two territorial authorities (Clutha District Council and Dunedin City Council), numerous funders with differing reporting requirements, iwi, the local community, local landholders and volunteers; not forgetting our staff!

The four containers that will constitute the field/research base are 'A' grade, meaning they have had only one voyage, from China to New Zealand. Even so, they will be two-pot

spray-painted while they are in the workshop of Metalworks Otago, having doors and windows fitted. Fixed Price Plumbing from Auckland has offered to sponsor all the internal plumbing and gas-fitting. Volunteers and the neighbouring farmer already have erected a 200m fence to form the boundary of the septic system. And students from Catlins Area School have begun planting flaxes and other eco-sourced native plants. These will act as a filter so that by the time waste (toilet) and grey-water (shower, hand-basin, kitchen-sink, laundry) have been passed through a bacteria-rich septic tank, and then dispersed by pressure-pump across the fenced-off and

planted dispersal field, the final result will be a clear liquid that is more-or-less free from bugs. Southern Plumbing & Heating from Balclutha will install the system and we are all looking forward to seeing it in action.

We hope that by the time of the next newsletter, two truck-and-trailer units will have delivered the four containers onto the site that will be ready and waiting for them. There is lots to do before then but that excitement I mentioned is spreading. The photo in this issue shows the beginning of the process; watch this space!

Eric J. Shelton
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board Chair

Thank you to our regular supporters:

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Downie Stewart
DCC (Task Force Green team)
Foote Haulage (Woodlands)
Forest & Bird South Otago Branch
Mainland Brand
NZ Deer Stalkers Association (Dunedin Branch)
Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
Richard Roberts
The Malcam Charitable Trust

Thank you for funding from:

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AAW Jones Charitable Trust
Bendigo Valley Sports & Charity Foundation
City Forests
Clutha District Council
Distinction Dunedin Hotel
DOC Community Fund
Dunedin Airport
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Otago Museum
Otago Regional Council
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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 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.

Te Tautiaki Hoiho

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