



Hoiho

December 2019

www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz

ISSN 1179-2981

Population decline is a real concern

Photo courtesy of 'Otago Daily Times'

Nest searches for hoiho along the eastern coast of the South Island and parts of Stewart Island / Rakiura are now completed. Results show a devastating decline in numbers in the Catlins and on the Bravo Islands (Rakiura).

For example, at the Trust's Long Point Irahuka Reserve there are only six nests, down from 16 last season, and on the Bravo Islands there are only eight nests, down from 15.

Despite intensive searches last season, many breeding females in the Catlins were not sighted during moult. This season they have not returned to breed. It is likely that they were also affected by starvation, which resulted in large numbers of birds in rehab last season. The same decline was not

observed on Otago Peninsula or North Otago where nest numbers are similar to last season.

The 2018/19 breeding season was complex with major starvation events which also impacted this year's breeding population. There was a significant reduction in the weight of chicks at fledging and adults entering the moult. The cause of starvation events are complex and unable to be resolved with certainty, but are likely a combination of manmade changes including fisheries impacts, climate change and sedimentation. Major flooding in November contributed with large amounts of sediment being discharged from the Taieri and Clutha rivers. Hoiho are visual hunters so murky waters make it more difficult to see prey.

For the 2019/20 season the Trust, along with DOC and other site managers, are increasing on the ground effort to ensure at risk adults and their chicks receive a high level of care. Already as this newsletter goes to print, chicks are showing signs of diphtheria which causes plaques in their mouths which can cause physical blockages preventing breathing and feeding.

Once the data are collated from all sources, the total number of nests for the mainland this season is likely to be less than 200. This is almost as low as the number of nests in the 1990/91 which followed a huge unexplained mortality event (potentially related to a toxin) in the previous season. Back then the population recovered, but the Trust and others have concerns that this time full recovery is less likely with the numerous pressures now affecting the penguins' survival.



Screenshot of Mayor Hawkins giving video in support of Hoiho, and Team Hoiho's promotional graphic



And the winner is...

Hoiho has made history, being the first seabird to be voted Bird of the Year in Forest and Bird's 2019 campaign.

The nation was inspired by Team Hoiho (a collective of conservationists, science communicators and students) swamping social media with posts, stories, various events and engaging well known people to support their campaign. Dunedin's new Mayor Aaron Hawkins and previous Mayor Dave Cull, the University of Otago, Sustainable Coastlines, Elm Wildlife Tours, Dive Otago, The Chills and Otago University Students' Association were just a few of those well-known personalities or organisations to vote hoiho.

Mayor Hawkins, decked in mayoral robes outside the Council Chambers, announced that his allegiance to kereru, the 2018 Bird of the Year, was now changing to be with "our own precious megachonk, the hoiho, as it is in such a parlous state".

A few days before the final vote was announced, hoiho were being robbed of the title. Under the new STV voting system introduced this year, hoiho were winning with the #1 votes. But under the STV system of ranking, hoiho became #2 behind kakapo which won the title in 2008. However, on hearing this, Team Hoiho picked up the challenge, posted even more ferociously and all the seabirds banded together. The "penguin coalition" encouraged their own voters to put hoiho at #1 ahead of their own penguins (korora, rockhopper, tawaki) to ensure that a seabird would reign supreme. The northern royal albatross also changed allegiance and endorsed hoiho. As they say, the rest is history.

Congratulations to Team Hoiho for the great social media campaign that engaged everyone to vote in this campaign and ultimately raised awareness about the plight of this endangered penguin.



Te Kaweka

The submission period for Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho, the Draft Strategy to support the ecological and cultural health of hoiho, and Te Mahere Rima Tau, the five-year action plan, closed in September.

The Hoiho Technical Group has considered all 105 submissions, collated responses and analysed them with particular focus on actions that the strategy and action plan had not addressed or not addressed adequately. A report was presented to the Hoiho Governance Group focusing on the substantive issues and comments. It is hoped the final strategy will be released before Christmas.

The submissions endorsed how complex the issues facing hoiho are, especially in the marine environment. Serious decisions need to be made with urgency and may include ministerial input. Fortunately for hoiho, one of their strongest advocates is the current Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage, who also has stated that more emphasis needs to be put on reducing marine threats. The action plan will take considerable editing and is unlikely to be released until early 2020.

While we are waiting for plans to be finalised and agreed, this does not mean an absence of action. The Trust have taken on an extra rangers in the Catlins and a summer ranger for Otago, funded disease research, worked with the fishing industry and will continue to undertake further actions.

The Hoiho Governance and Technical Groups comprise members from the Trust, DOC, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Fisheries New Zealand.



10th International Penguin Conference

DUNEDIN | NEW ZEALAND – AOTEAROA 24 – 28 AUGUST 2019

Penguin Conference returned to roots

Where did the world's leading penguin scientists, research managers, policy makers and conservationists meet?

In August at the 10th International Penguin Conference (IPC10) held at facilities provided by the University of Otago. The first event was held here back in 1988. It is one of the few meetings which attracts people working on all seven continents.

IPC10 attracted over 270 delegates, all concerned about the state of penguin species globally. People working on penguin biology, ecology, health and behaviour came to discuss ongoing research, identify current and emerging conservation issues and create action plans. Many left with new or renewed connections as well as some exciting collaborations.

During the five days, the various subjects (genetics, conservation, diet, foraging, physiology, captive management, rehabilitation, demography, climate change, diseases, fossil penguins and evolution) were covered by 69 oral presentations and 93 poster presentations.

But it wasn't all about sitting in a lecture theatre listening to presentations. There were pre-conference workshops, a mid-conference field trip, a conference dinner and post-conference field trip. All were attended by at least half of the delegates attending the conference, so it was a great opportunity to show our international visitors some unique parts of the South Island.

Pre-conference workshops included an

International Penguin Early Career Scientists meeting to hear from others undertaking research and conservation and how this may assist with their own career paths. The 'Penguin Mortality Workshop' was hosted in part by the Trust's Scientist Trudi Webster and discussed how best to respond to mass mortality events. The IUCN Penguin Specialist Group met to further discuss the conservation status of penguin species and how to inform policy and effective conservation action.

Mid-conference, delegates departed on a Dunedin Railways' train to Oamaru to visit the historic precinct, followed by a tour to see the little penguins, hosted by the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony.

The conference dinner was at Larnach Castle (Otago Peninsula), a stunning venue decked out in a Scottish theme, including a haggis ceremony which both thrilled and scared some delegates! The food and atmosphere were simply amazing.

The final event was a post-conference field trip to Milford Sound. While delayed at the gates to Milford due to avalanche work, delegates were delighted to be entertained by a kea and their usual antics. The trip on the sound itself into Harrison Cove was courtesy of Southern Discoveries, and delegates dined on a scrumptious smorgasbord while others went to the Underwater Observatory.

Two aspects highlighted by the conference were (i) the significance of genetics for penguin research, and (ii) the importance of understanding what is happening to

penguins at sea to fully understand their breeding biology and the threats they face.

The local organising committee comprised members from the University of Otago's Zoology Department, Global Penguin Society, Department of Conservation, Pukekura Trust, Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's general manager Sue Murray who also chaired this committee. They were thrilled with the number of delegates who attended, the research presented and the noticeable and high standard of the oral presentations from the many students and early career penguin researchers.

The Trust was hugely involved in all aspects of this event. Trudi was chosen to present, staff and volunteers made sure the event ran smoothly including managing the registration desk, ringing a bell to call for the start of each session, answering all kinds of queries and generally just being on hand with a smile and friendly approach to the delegates.

Another interesting event during the conference was the panel discussion on the 'Role of visible Penguin / Human Interactions in conservation'. Facilitated by Dr Mike King from the University of Otago's Bioethics Centre, panellists included Hoani Langsburry (Manager of Ecotourism, Pukekura Trust), Philippa Agnew (Research Scientist, Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony), Phil Seddon (Director Postgraduate Wildlife Management Programme, Department of Zoology at University of Otago), Helen Beattie (NZ Veterinary Association, Chief Veterinary

People



The Local Organising Committee were gifted socks from WaddleOn (South Africa). Pictured left to right: Phil Seddon, Yolanda van Heezik, Philippa Agnew, Sue Murray, Alejandro Simeone (Chair IPC I I), Hoani Langsubury, Bruce McKinlay, Erin Graham, Lloyd Davis, Thomas Mattern.

Officer), Jeff Dalley (Social Science Manager, Department of Conservation, Wellington) and Nicola Craddock (Executive Director, Zoo & Aquarium Association based in Sydney, Australia).

The panel discussion came about following an internal debate around whether or not to accept sponsorship from an institution that has an active programme encouraging a paying public to handle captive penguins



(the offer of sponsorship was declined). The Local Organising Committee decided to add a section into the conference programme dealing with the conservation implications of visible human-wildlife interactions in all fields (animal ambassador programmes in zoos, wildlife selfies published online by the public, photos of animal handling by researchers and managers, tourism and other businesses promoting animal encounters). Following a presentation framing the subject, a panel discussion followed. This also resulted in a high degree of media attention.

Of course, like all events, we were delighted and extremely grateful to all the sponsors who helped make this conference such a success. Each member organisation of the local organising committee was listed as a founding sponsor and we are indebted to each of these organisations for their contribution both in-kind and staff time.

This 'baton' made of greenstone (pounamu) and native timber was created for IPC10 as a symbol to be handed from conference to conference, country to country, representing the ongoing links between each. The stone itself was found in the Arahua River on the West Coast and was carved by Traditional Jade of Hokitika.

Platinum Sponsors: University of Otago, Global Penguin Society, Otago Community Trust and the Department of Conservation.

Gold Sponsors: NHNZ, Phillip Island (Australia), Blue Penguins Pukekura, Scenic Hotel Dunedin City and Southern Clams

Silver Sponsors: Elm Wildlife, Association of Zoos & Aquaria Taxon Advisory Group (USA), Detroit Zoological Society (USA), Pohatu Penguins, NZ Oil and Gas Ltd, International Antarctic Centre, and the Penguin Fund of Japan.

Bronze Sponsors: Forsyth Barr, Penguin Corner (UK), Larnach Castle, Mainland Brands NZ Ltd, and Penguin Conference Japan.

Others: Southern Discoveries, Downie Stewart, Amisfield Estates Limited, TANZ, Emerson's Brewery, and the Exhibitors (TechnoSmArt, Wildlife Computers, and Lotek).

Passion



Volunteers from Orokonui Ecosanctuary and the Trust at Okia Reserve on Otago Peninsula



David Dalley, Canon at Okia Reserve



Marie Johnstone, Cons Week and Dinah Wakelin, DOC



Otago Polytechnic volunteers planting at Tavora Reserve



Penguin Place volleys at Omihi Reserve

Winter plantings

The Trust plants thousands of native trees, shrubs and flaxes on its reserves every year, with four objectives: providing nesting habitat for hoiho, restoring native biodiversity, reducing run off into streams and coastal water and doing our bit to help buffer the effects of climate change.

In the winter months of 2019 we enjoyed working with many different groups and individuals in eight planting days held on Trust reserves from Tavora in North Otago down to Long Point in the Catlins.



Volunteers from Orokonui Ecosanctuary and the Trust at Okia Reserve



DOC staff at Tavora Reserve



Arbor Day planters at Tavora



Otago Polytechnic volunteers at Tavora Reserve



Catlins Area School students at Irahuka Reserve

OKIA RESERVE:

7th August: Orokonui volunteers and Trust habitat volunteers enjoyed a day out on the peninsula at Okia, planting on the old dune field at the northern end of the reserve.

26th September: David Dalley (Canon Manager) helped with planting several hundred flax on the Hazel Slope at Okia Reserve, with the aim of providing a nursery cover to facilitate the natural spread of native trees and shrubs from adjacent forest.

25th October: Every year, the good people from Monarch Wildlife Cruises offset their carbon emissions by way of a planting day at one of our reserves. A team of ten, plus a horticulture student from Otago Polytechnic and our Nursery Supervisor Louise Ashton, met at Okia Reserve on Otago Peninsula to plant 200 native trees grown at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Nursery. The site was a continuation of the plantings of the last three years, in the back dunes of the middle beach.

Ranger Ben had prepared the site, delivered the plants and Combi guards. These sleeves and coconut fibre mats protect the saplings from rabbits and the weather, and help suppress weeds.

Many thanks to Neil, the rest Monarch team, for a great morning's effort. They are a wonderful bunch of enthusiastic nature lovers, who give their time to help the penguins, and all biodiversity of Okia.

TAVORA RESERVE:

Over two days during Conservation Week (18th & 19th September) Trust staff worked with Dunedin DOC rangers and the public to plant on a particularly stony hill side at Tavora Reserve. Earlier in June (5th & 12th June), another couple of plantings with Otago Polytechnic horticulture students and the public on Arbor Day, completed our planting on the flatter areas closer to the Tavora Stream.

OMIHI RESERVE:

25th June: Staff from Penguin Place, alongside the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and a few volunteers, ran a planting day at the reserve located at the back of Penguin Place, Otago Peninsula.

Although it was the middle of winter the weather was on our side, the day remained sunny and warm meaning we were able to plant a total of 200 plants.

LONG POINT / IRAHUKA RESERVE:

25th October: Catlins Area School Years 7 and 8 students braved the wild weather to help dig in about 100 new plants at Long Point. They arrived armed with spades, warm wet weather gear, and a great attitude — with no intention of letting the strong winds and showers dampen their spirits. There was lots of good digging, heaps of laughs and a bit of fun catching the plant bags before they took off in the wind. Well done team!



A pupil from Catlins Area School with Sarah Irvine, YEPT Ranger (Catlins)



Wandering hoiho (top) and dipping and checking for mosquito larvae

Keira does the hard yards

Volunteer Keira Edwards is a Year 10 student at The Catlins Area School.

During the last school holidays, Keira got stuck in and helped rangers search for and find some of the Catlins nest sites. It was hard work, with a lot of time crawling through mud and tracking penguins in wet and windy weather, but Keira was an enthusiastic and valuable member of the search team. Keira has also been helping with other hoiho conservation efforts in the Catlins and collecting penguin poo and mosquito larvae for researchers.

\$312K funding boost for Trust from DOC

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust is one of the recipients of the latest funding distribution from DOC's Community Fund. The Trust will receive \$312,180 over three years to increase the conservation effort for hoiho by employing additional field staff.

This new funding allows us to employ an Operations Manager and a Catlins Ranger to ensure our conservation work is maximised to benefit hoiho.

In total, Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage announced that 169 community conservation projects have been granted DOC Community Funding of \$7.9million. She said that "the Fund is designed to support practical on-the-ground projects that maintain and restore the diversity of our native plants and wildlife and encourage people to get involved in conservation and take part in recreation in our natural areas.

The Trust is delighted to also announce that Amanda Salt has been appointed to the role of Operations Manager; a revised position replacing the original Field Manager role. Dave McFarlane, the current Field Manager will take on a new role of managing the development of Long Point / Irahuka Reserve, and he will be assisted by the newly appointed Catlins Ranger Sarah Irvine.

Last summer, Sarah worked on a part-time contract for the Trust and was instrumental in bringing lots of starving or injured hoiho adults and chicks into the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital and Penguin Place rehabilitation centre. We also have appointed Steph Bennington as an Assistant Ranger for 20 weeks to help around the Coastal Otago region. We look forward to welcoming these additions to our team early in 2020.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



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 survival of hoiho.

Charities Commission Registration Number CC22822





Mainland coming our way soon

It's been an exciting time for the team at Mainland. We've been busy working on the next chapter of our advertising campaigns, and have launched the first of a series of new commercials during the Rugby World Cup event.

The new commercials once again feature Cheesemakers, sharing stories about taking the time to craft and age our cheese, along with a little bit of humour about streaming the World Cup Rugby matches via a phone. Plus we also created a little commercial about supporting the YEP Trust for 30 years which will feature across media channels for most of November. Keep a look out for our favourite bird on a screen in your home soon.

These initial ads were just the first in a series, and the team will be heading off to the South Island shortly to capture some

more fantastic stories out and about in the iconic Mainland landscapes.

The team have also stepped up the game on raising awareness of the Hoiho in the office, and also out in the market place with consumers.

In September we held a small fundraising event in the office, selling off some sample cheese to staff which raised a handy \$600 for the Trust.

Then this month we have partnered with the AM show, to feature a couple of stories about the plight of the Hoiho. The first item went to air in early November, and the second will be in February.

We also have an outdoor campaign featuring the penguins, with a call to donate to the Trust that will be promoted across bus shelters in the main metropolitan areas.



Rewardhub

We're excited to share a way to raise funds that costs nothing and can even save you money!

With Christmas right around the corner, if you're planning to do your shopping online, why not support the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and even save some money.

Rewardhub is a new website where more than 100 leading brands will reward us with free donations at no extra cost to you. There is something there for everyone from food to fashion, travel to technology, dining out to department stores and everything in between.

To learn more and sign up to our page, please visit Rewardhub.co.nz/yellow-eyed-penguin-trust

Let's make this another successful fundraiser for the Trust and ultimately the penguins.

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.



Cheers for that

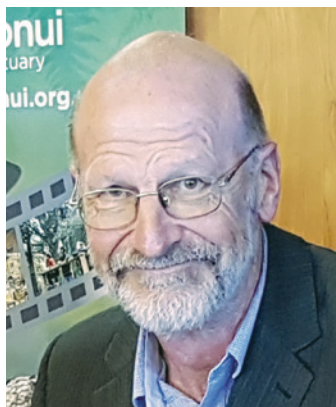
The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust was chosen to be this year's Festival Charity for the 2019 Dunedin Craft Beer and Food Festival held annually in November and presented by Liquorland. The Otago University Students' Association staff and volunteers run the event on the day.

The event showcases beverage offerings from all around New Zealand. Complementing the thirsty work, there was an extensive range of delectable food, and all of this accompanied by a line-up of entertainers.

This is a cashless event. Patrons are given electronic wrist bands which they top up throughout the day. Any remaining credit on the wristbands can be refunded, or people can donate it to the Festival Charity – that's us.

Through the help of volunteers, thousands of these wrist bands were cut off patrons leaving the venue on both Friday and Saturday nights. Scanning the barcodes has revealed the Trust will receive more than \$16,000 in donations. That is a fantastic contribution that will be used to support several projects that require funding. Read the Chair's Column on page 8 for more about this.

A note from the Chair



As you will have read on page one of this newsletter, penguin numbers are almost at their lowest since the Trust was formed. This is devastating to everyone at the Trust and the wider penguin community who work tirelessly to save this endangered species.

Earlier this month when hoiho was voted Bird of the Year, the Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage stated on her Facebook page "With birds that live on land and in the sea it's important that both threats are addressed – so yes much more emphasis needs to put on reducing marine threats. That includes reducing bykill in fishing nets and ensuring hoiho have enough of their preferred fish species to feed on. Starvation events have had a real impact".

We welcome the Minister's recognition that issues in the marine environment need to be addressed. This supports comments by the University of Otago's Professor Phil Seddon and Associate Professor Yolanda van Heezik (Otago Daily Times online 11 November).

Hoiho face numerous threats both in the terrestrial and marine environments, but the latter is complex and not fully understood. This includes the impacts from warming oceans leading to changes in food availability, bottom trawling damaging feeding grounds, being caught in fishing nets, and other effects of humans.

Professor Seddon states "This is clearly not some unfortunate and unmanageable consequence of unexpected weather conditions. There are things we can manage, but we need to take action now. Our research indicates that the decline in mainland hoiho is not attributable to climate change alone. Management of regional issues including fisheries bycatch, benthic disturbance in areas where hoiho forage at sea, and sedimentation are completely within the government's power to regulate."

The Trust endorses Professor Seddon's concerns about the impact of marine threats on the

survival of hoiho on mainland NZ. We will not give up with our conservation management in the ongoing hope that the population may recover. The dire straits of the population challenges the Trust and others to integrate even more conservation effort in both environments. Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho will drive actions for better marine protection but it is a complex field and may involve legislative changes.

As well as increasing conservation effort on the ground, and advocacy, the Trust has invested some unexpected income in technical support

and research projects. This includes funding a transponder wand for Penguin Rescue (rehabilitation centre) and two University of Otago studies into avian malaria and diseases. We are also investing in GIS marine spatial mapping, data analysis and redoing an island-wide survey of Rakiura and outlying islands in 2020.

We will continue to fight for the future of this endangered species.

Eric J. Shelton
Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Board Chair

Our thanks

Thank you to our regular supporters:

Supporters Group
Nursery supporters
AdArt Brand Promotion
Blackhead Quarries
Canon NZ
Coffee Club supporters
Department of Conservation
DOC Community Fund
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
Otago Regional Council
Richard Roberts, Dunedin Airport
The Malcam Charitable Trust

Thank you for funding from:

City Forests
EcoWai and partners to the programme
Heseltine Trust
Holiday Parks Association NZ
Kokonga
Scenic Hotel Dunedin City
Sheila Coombes
Southern Institute of Technology
Te Uru Rākau /Forestry NZ
Top 10 Holiday Parks group
Victoria Brown
Woodland Eggs
WWF NZ Habitat Protection Fund
Estates:
J B Mackinlay
M E Rigg
J Parker
A P Reed

Special thanks this issue to:

Alan Coster
Andy and Melissa Moore
Catlins Area School
DOC Owaka
Don Early
Dunedin Wildlife Hospital
Guy Blakely
Jeff Cleugh
Jane and Jim Young
Keira Edwards
Max Affleck
Penguin Place
Penguin Rescue
Roy Johnstone
Stu and Jen Affleck
Trevor Hewson

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.

Thank you to all the Volunteers who assisted with this year's soft release of hoiho chicks. There were too many names to list here.

Thank you to:

All the landowners who have contributed to our habitat protection 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.

Te Tautiaki Hoiho

Level 1, John Wickliffe House
265 Princes Street, Dunedin
New Zealand 9016

Phone +64 3 479-0011

E-mail enquiries@yeptrust.org.nz

Web www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz

Charities Commission Registration Number CC22822