



Hoiho

November 2020

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Monitoring and intervention showing positive outcomes

Starting in early October, it was great to see our field team out nest searching and our fingers and toes were crossed for a positive season despite recent poor years.

It feels like we are sitting at the cusp of a season that could go either way with a La Nina climate pattern predicted for the summer: La Nina conditions mean warmer than average sea surface temperatures and more storms which often result in greater stratification in the marine environment.

La Nina years are not optimal for the yellow-eyed penguins as their prey and foraging conditions are adversely affected.

Nest searches were carried out at our own reserves and managed areas, and overall,

we found that in North Otago and on the Otago Peninsula, numbers are similar to last year: At our Long Point / Irahuka Reserve in the Catlins, comprising several breeding habitats along this piece of coastline, numbers have increased. In fact, in one area they have doubled, returning to the number of nests found there in 2018. What a relief!

In part, we put this down to the intensity of monitoring and intervening with supplementary feeding during the moult (March/April) when many birds were underweight. Now we have again got our fingers and toes crossed that this seasons' chicks will fledge successfully in early 2021.

Other areas in the Catlins did not see the same positive results which is concerning.

Hatching started early at a few sites in North

Otago and Otago Peninsula, but at other sites generally began at a similar time to last year. Diphtheria was observed in the young chicks almost immediately after hatch and treatment at the nests with antibiotics has started. The Dunedin Wildlife Hospital is again busy with young chicks that require more intensive treatment than is practical to administer in-situ.

These chicks are returned to their nest where a dummy egg has been 'keeping their spot warm'. Adult hoiho seem to cope with the removal and replacement of chicks in situations like this.

For the first time since 2008, teams also conducted an island-wide survey of the hoiho population on Stewart Island / Rakiura and some of the outlying islands.

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Penguins

Rakiura is important for hoiho and in 2008 represented a third of the northern population. The aim of the survey was to repeat the efforts in the previous survey to allow a comparison, prioritising areas where hoiho colonies were known to exist.

A large team of personnel were involved, which included five staff from the Trust and others from NZ Penguin Initiative, various DOC regions (Coastal Otago, Murihiku, Rakiura, Twizel and Auckland), Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, DOC Kakapo Recovery Team, contractors and a conservation species dog.

Preliminary results show some declines across the island, but on Whenua Hou/ Codfish Island nest numbers were found to be similar to last season. At some locations single hoiho were observed guarding neatly maintained nests, occasionally calling to attract a mate. Unfortunately, no mates came.

A detailed article about the Rakiura survey will be in the next edition of *Hoiho* (May 2021) after all the results have been collated and analysed.

On a positive note for penguins around Rakiura, the field teams reported good numbers of little penguins / korora and large numbers of Fiordland crested penguins / tawaki along the coast.

ORC Ecofund support for Trust trapping

To protect hoiho the Trust has long trapped introduced predators such as ferrets and stoats. In a recent successful application to the Otago Regional Council ECO Fund we received funding for the purchase of 45 new DOC 200/250 traps and three cage traps for our Otapahi and Long Point / Irahuka reserves.

The new traps are replacing worn-out traps and old technology Fenn traps as well as adding additional traps to the trapping networks at both sites. Reducing the risk of predation is vital to ensure the survival of hoiho whose numbers have declined significantly to only 168 breeding pairs on the South Island mainland, as well as benefiting other species such as titi and korora that also live in the trapping area.



All hands on deck



Team YEPT bird counters – top photo at Okia Reserve: Dave McFarlane, Sarah Irvine and Caitlin Bowie. Middle photo at Otapahi (from left) Steph Bennington, Amanda Salt, Trudi Webster, James Tweed (Trustee) and Ben Goldsworthy. Bottom photo at Long Point / Irahuka Ben Goldsworthy, Amanda Salt, Trudi Webster and Steph Bennington.



Matariki planting at Tavora

The Trust was able to plant a further 610 trees and shrubs into the steep hillsides of Tavora Reserve in East Otago for slope stabilisation, thanks to further funding from the Matariki Tu Rākau programme administered by the Te Uru Rākau – Forestry NZ (MPI). This extended the area of planting funded by other grants received from MPI in both 2018 and 2019.

Assisted by Otago Polytechnic students, University of Otago Ecology students, and MPI, the Trust was able to get all plants in the ground over two days. Noteworthy about these days was the terrible weather with high winds, making working on a steep hillside even more challenging. Fortunately, with a young group of volunteers they managed exceedingly well, but it reminded us that we cannot plant on this hillside without first checking on volunteers' levels of fitness.

The plants were all propagated at the Trust's Nursery from eco-sourced seeds and included ti kouka cabbage tree, kowhai, totara, kapuka broadleaf, tarata lemonwood, rautāwhiri black mapou, manatu lowland ribbonwood and ngaio.

Due to the possibility of an increase in the abundance of rabbits in the area, each plant had a plant protector placed around it.

Revised hoiho strategy

In August 2020, a revised strategy on how to deliver conservation effort for the survival of hoiho, an endangered taonga species, was released at the Annual Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium.

Te Kaweka mō Te Hoiho (hoiho strategy) and Te Mahere Rima Tau (five-year action plan) were prepared by four partner agencies: Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Department of Conservation, Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Te Tauraki Moio and Fisheries New Zealand.

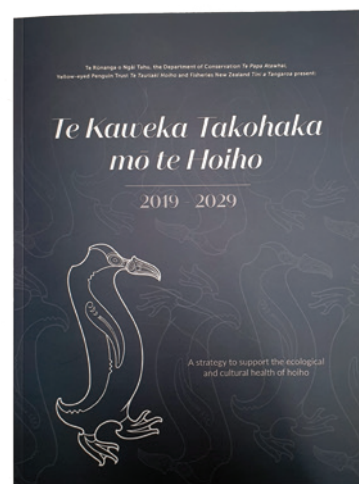
The strategy sets out the strategic priorities needed to support the health and wellbeing of hoiho across the marine and terrestrial ecosystems they inhabit. Te Kaweka has five strategic priorities: Health, Survival and Productivity; Marine Habitat; Human Disturbance; Terrestrial Habitat; and Working Together. Te Mahere provides direction and guidance for all parties undertaking hoiho

conservation.

Contributions to these documents were received from a wide range of people including the wider penguin community comprising several NGOs, DOC, private landowners, and researchers. Other contributors included the various recreational and commercial fishing groups, environmental NGOs, other government agencies, Papatipu runaka and anyone else with a strong interest in hoiho recovery.

To maintain the long-term benefit, the revised strategy and action plan must continue to guide day to day practice and be annually reviewed and updated.

The Trust's operational plans have been revised to ensure they are aligned to both the strategy and action plan ensuring the delivery of conservation effort. These actions will be reviewed annually.





Alan Clearwater loads up a trailer with a variety of plants destined for his Cape Saunders farm.

Finding a new home

Lockdown gave us a chance to reflect on our planting needs and, more importantly, what was possible to achieve given that our staff are all now heavily involved in the management of penguins.

So, after some deliberations, it was agreed to sell off the surplus plants that we had not been able to get planted into penguin habitats. In fairness to us, when they were grown on, we always knew they were likely to be surplus to our requirements.

On Friday 25 September we held a plant sale, advertising this widely to the local community and other associated conservation groups, especially those wanting to plant for penguin habitat.

Of the 3000 trees and shrubs from both Otago Peninsula and North Otago, nearly two thirds were sold on the day. Those who came enjoyed getting these plants at reduced prices while also knowing the funding would help further penguin conservation.

The day was hectic! Some people pre-ordered. Others arrived before the opening time. Some came with their extended family and made a day of enjoying the Nursery. We even had some come expecting expecting to find treasures leftover from the 2015 flood!

It was a fantastic day and all five staff present were run off their feet to keep up with the demand. It was a great one-off event, and we are delighted to know that these plants will help extend other conservation projects.



Alan (right) ticks off the list with a Bunnings staffer and YEPT Long Point / Irahuka Project Manager Dave McFarlane (left)

Tools for the job

Thanks to the efforts of volunteer Alan Coster, the Trust has received a welcome donation of tools from Bunnings Dunedin for the Long Point / Irahuka Field Base workshop.

The Trust put out a request on social media for donations of tools for the workshop and field operations at our new base. Alan picked up on this and approached Bunnings. They have a strong commitment to community involvement and were delighted to donate several vital pieces.

Cheques to end

Banks are soon to phase out cheques. Major banks operating in New Zealand are working with their customers and stakeholders to ensure they have alternative ways to access banking services as cheques will be phased out between now and the middle of 2021. Also, some banks will not receive foreign cheques unless the deposit is over NZ\$500.

Banks are aware that this may be restrictive for charities and are working with them for solutions.

As the Trust still receives donations by cheque, we want to make sure you have the right information for continuing to support us, but in a more direct way.

Here are some simple ways to do this:

- One-off donations directly to our bank account (see details below);
- Donate via the website (you will need a credit card);
- Donate regularly through direct debits (these can be set up weekly, monthly, or annually);
- Join our 'Coffee Club' or 'Donate-a-Tree' scheme and give regularly through automatic payments.

Bank account details:

Bank: SBS Bank

Bank address: Dunedin Branch, George Street, Dunedin

Account name: Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust

Account number: 031355 0549558 00

For overseas donations, use the Swift Code: WPACNZ2W

And remember, all donations over \$5 are tax deductible!

Thank you for your ongoing support.





Long Point / Irahuka — it's a beauty!



Since its opening in February this year the new Long Point / Irahuka Field Base has supported many parts of the Trust's work programme.

Most importantly, the base kitchen and fridge-freezer provided the storage and preparation space for the fish needed for the hoiho chick soft releasing in March. The kitchen smelled like fish for several months afterwards!

The base has recently accommodated the Trust hoiho nest searching team and was the focus for a visit by Catlins Area School pupils in September who learnt about predator tracking using ink tunnels and trap cameras, and planted native trees and shrubs nearby.

In between time our Catlins Ranger, Sarah Irvine, drops into the base almost daily, finding it both a refuge from storms and to use the wi-fi to complete penguin data entry and other reporting tasks.

A rather unexpected event took place at the field base in October that demonstrates the amazing biodiversity present on or passing by the Catlins coast. We hadn't thought that the base would also serve to monitor seabirds, but this came to pass when a black-bellied storm petrel was attracted by the lights of the shower room and paid a visit. It was unharmed and released safely.

The Trust expects that the base will continue to provide ideal facilities to support the increasingly demanding hoiho conservation work, as well as the restoration developments planned at Long Point.



Pictured on this page: A September sunset after a stormy day at the field base looking south to Papatowai and Tautuku.

*Catlins Area School pupils working on their tracking tunnels at the base.
A fence post wears the brunt of an unusually-late September snowfall.*

The Trust sadly farewells friends

Since the last newsletter went to print, the Trust has said farewell to several long-standing friends and associates. We acknowledge the respective roles and relationships that each of them had with us.

Mervyn Cranefield QSM (87) died on 25 June

In 1990 Mervyn responded to an advertisement in the Accounting Journal seeking an accountant to assist what was then a newly formed Trust. This was a vulnerable, uncertain time for the Trust. We were NZ's pioneering single-species conservation organisation, in need of good people and stable guidance as we navigated unknown waters. He retained this position for 14 years. Mervyn's contributions extended well beyond the daily mechanics of accounting for income and expenditure. By setting up robust cashflow systems, he consolidated the Trust's confidence in matters of land purchase and other forms of investment. He became the bedrock on which the Trust depended for financial governance at critical thresholds in its mission. It was a mark of his efficiency and dedication to quality that we could always submit our accounts confidently to annual audit. Mervyn was recognised with a QSM in 2019 for services to Scouting and the community. The current Trust Board considers that Mervyn's contribution to the Trust helped raise our success and profile to now be recognised both nationally and internationally for our conservation effort of hoiho the yellow-eyed penguin, and as a senior NGO in NZ.



Mervyn Cranefield



Sherry Thurlow



Chuck Landis



Connie Wright



Aileen Clarke



Susan Shannon

Sherry Thurlow (68) died on 25 June

Sherry and husband Graham were neighbours at Tavora Reserve for many years and leased the non-covenanted area adjacent to the reserve itself. They were very active members on the Tavora Reserve committee. Not only did they host meetings at their house with wonderful homemade treats, but actively undertook many tasks on the reserve. These included predator control work, planting and plant maintenance and all sorts of jobs to maintain and enhance the area. When they moved to Dunedin, they kept an interest in the Trust and were keen to continue volunteering when time and Sherry's failing health allowed.

Chuck Landis (82) died on 11 July

Chuck was also a member of the Tavora Committee. He and his late wife Carol were very active on the committee and also undertook tasks such as planting and plant maintenance. In 2007 a plaque in Carol's name was erected above South Beach at the reserve to recognize her contribution. She died in 2006. Chuck's geological knowledge was appreciated and brought a whole new understanding to the values of this reserve. Chuck died after a brief illness during the COVID-19 restricted period. A totara has been planted in his memory near the plaque remembering Carol.

Connie Wright (94) died 10 August

Connie was married to Alan, a trustee from 1988 to 2007 and a ranger at Taiaroa Heads under the Wildlife Service. Connie equally had a passion for birds with her interest starting as a child, and then learning more through Alan when they lived firstly at Pleasant Flat (on way to Haast), Broad Bay (1968), Te Anau and back to Broad Bay in 1988 until a few years after Alan's death in 2008. Her interest in birds continued even though for the last four years she lived at Montecillo, as did her tradition of giving us historical context and knowledge of the peninsula community.

Aileen Clarke (56) died on 18 September

Aileen and Steve owned the Owaka Café in the years covering the Trust's investigation into and eventual purchase of Long Point Irahuka Reserve. Travelling up and down between Dunedin and the reserve, often at least once per week, required the essential coffee stop at their Café. Aileen would greet us with a warm smile and hearty conversation, and was always interested in what the Trust was doing and how the penguins were faring. More recently we were delighted when her daughter Abby became one of the Trust's Emerging Leader Trustees, a role where the Trust enjoys a young person's perspective in governance and in return the person learns governance. Aileen contributed enormously to the local community sitting on numerous committees and advocating for the Catlins as a prime place for increased tourism. Her enthusiastic advocacy for the area will be a real loss to the community she loved.

Susan Shannon (55) died 25 September

From an early age Susan had a special interest in conservation and wildlife. Susan trained as a vet specialising in diagnostic animal handling skills. She worked with the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust helping them relocate tui from the Marlborough Sounds to Hinewai Reserve. From 2008 she was based at the Hornby Veterinary Centre, but before her move to Christchurch, she spent some time working elsewhere, including in Balclutha, where her love of hoiho began as she was asked to triage sick or injured birds. While based in Christchurch she worked closely with the Christchurch City Council to monitor the small population of hoiho on Banks Peninsula and also treated hoiho at the Christchurch Penguin Rehabilitation centre. She was a registered bird rehabber with Wildlife Rehabilitators Network of NZ working solely with native bird species and was known to sometimes use her backyard greenhouse aviary as a rehab centre for hoiho in need of care. Susan will be greatly missed by the penguin community, especially in Canterbury.



Sponsorship worth \$1.6 million



Manually processed barcodes and posters have now been consigned to history

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has been sponsored by Mainland Brands (now owned by Fonterra Brands NZ Ltd) since 1989. This is the longest standing cause-related sponsorship in the southern hemisphere!

Over the years' supporters have mailed in their cheese and butter barcodes as part of the Mainland barcode redemption scheme. YEPT would like to thank you for each and every one of these barcodes. Together with Mainland over \$1.6 million has been donated to this great cause.

You will have noticed the redemption message has been removed from the new Mainland packs. Mainland figured your life is busy enough without cutting out barcodes, so now they simply donate \$75,000 per year on behalf of themselves and their customers.

By continuing to purchase Mainland products you will still be directly helping the precious hoiho / yellow-eyed penguin.

Our thanks

Where there's a Will...

Have you considered how you could best leave something in paradise?

A long-standing supporter of our work, who donated on a regular basis both personally and from her family trust, recently made this choice. She was passionate about the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's work and the yellow-eyed penguin / hoiho. Over the years she has donated, YEPT has kept the trustees updated about how her donations benefited hoiho conservation and the wider conservation programme.

Recently, the surviving trustee decided to wind up the family trust within her lifetime, donating the money to various charities that had been supported over the years. This then gave her the opportunity to both gift more significantly and also the ability to see the charities enjoy the benefit of the funds they received.

This example of gifting serves as a reminder, that should you too feel passionate, you may like to consider gifting a "Living Gift" – a portion of your estate which allows you to see, within your lifetime, how this benefits the Trust's work with hoiho and makes a lasting difference.

You may also like to consider remembering the Trust in your Will and help make a difference beyond your lifetime. We have enclosed our brochure "Leave something in paradise" outlining how to do this.

We understand that these gifts are very personal, and we are exceedingly grateful when people make the thoughtful decision to gift the Trust. Sue Murray (General Manager) is here to speak with you in confidence and to answer any questions you may have. You can email Sue at generalmanager@yeptrust.org.nz or call her on 021-488-285.



The Trust's recently-updated bequeathment brochure



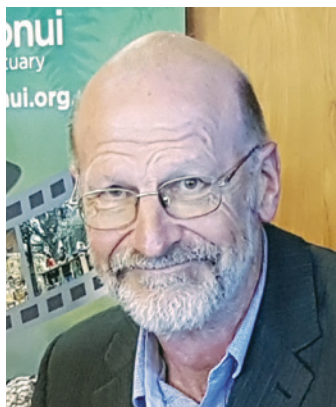
Leave something in paradise

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



A note from the Chair



On Monday, 9th November, we wrote to the new Minister of Conservation, Kiri Allan, congratulating her on being appointed to this post. The previous week, we had written to Kiri's predecessor, Eugenie Sage, thanking her for the quality of the working relationship we had enjoyed during her tenure as Minister, particularly the advice she proffered as we worked with our partners on developing Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho (hoiho strategy) and Te Mahere Rima Tau (five year action plan).

Such positive relationships are crucial in facilitating the delivery of conservation effort. There are several key kinds of relationships within conservation more generally; for example, personal relationships between individual members of ENGOs, the so-called grass roots of any charitable organisation. Debate at this level can be intense, often passionate and usually articulate.

One rung up the ladder are volunteer trustees who have taken on formal roles within the organisations of which they are members and often who are tasked to initiate work on a strategic plan or to provide financial expertise. Board meetings, usually monthly, and annual meetings are times set aside for Trustees to make decisions involving governance.

The minutes of these meetings are official documents and should align well with how the organisation meets its goals. There may be board-level discussion about possible changes to policy and management. For example, is it still the case that every plant be eco-sourced as it says in the plan; how about compromising with some tree-lucerne until the kowhai matures? What do we do if expanding gannet habitat might in the future threaten existing turf plant habitat?

Answering these, and many other pressing questions, may require asking the Department of Conservation for advice on how to navigate our way through the legislative and regulatory environment within which we operate. Some conservation effort needs DOC approval, and some doesn't.

The final step up the ladder involves the Minister of Conservation who, from time to time, announces developments in policy settings.

In order to make our own organisation nimble in its response to all kinds of change we work using a no-surprises approach; that means

we strive to establish and maintain good relationships with all the organisations we work with in the conservation world so we can keep up to date with those issues we all face and those that are more specific to hoiho.

As soon as possible, we will introduce ourselves to the new Minister and work toward giving her an appreciation of where the implementation of Te Kaweka will take us.

Ngā mihi

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)
Dunedin Wildlife Hospital
Foote Haulage (Woodlands)
Forest & Bird South Otago Branch
Mainland Brand
NZ Deerstalkers Association (Otago Branch)
Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
Otago Regional Council
Penguin Place
Penguin Rescue
Richard Roberts, Dunedin Airport

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Woodland Eggs
WWF NZ Community Conservation Fund

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Jase, Agricrates
Keira Edwards
Lyn Dowsett
Otago Polytechnic Horticulture students
Roy Johnstone
Roy Swailes
Scott Bourke
Stewart Ashton
Tim Mephram
Trevor Hewson
University of Otago Ecology students
Zoetis NZ

Thank you to all the YEPT and DOC staff, contractors, volunteers, and assistants who assisted with the recent Stewart Island / Rakiura survey this year. A list of those involved will be included in a full report in the next edition of Hoiho.

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.

Te Tautiaki Hoiho

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