



Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Annual Report 2015/16

Reporting period 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Trust's activities for the year 2015-2016. As always, the year has been challenging, frustrating and rewarding. The appointment of a Conservation Science Advisor, one of our high priority objectives for several years was especially noteworthy, of which, more below.

Habitats

Intensely managing our own and others' habitats was a focus of our conservation effort over the year; here are some highlights.

Long Point

Implementation Plan

The Long Point Irahuka Implementation Plan, funded by \$10 000 from the William J Gall Charitable Trust, was received from Wildland Consultants. The report proves there will be some very hard decisions to be made about implementation and is a great document to use as a basis for planning in the future. This will enable YEPT to make a big leap forward with planning and the document is a building block for ongoing funding applications.

Workbase

On 16th April trustees attended an onsite meeting with landscape architect Philip Blakely (Blakely Wallace Associates) to discuss where such a workbase could be located. Two options were scoped, with preference given to one site in particular. Clinton O'Brien (Reconstruction Services, Oamaru) has agreed to Project Manage the development of the Long Point workbase.

Filming 'Human Traces'

Trustees met representatives from the film company about filming near the house on the rocky platform (western bay of LP) during November /December 2015 and discussed the yellow-eyed penguin disturbance issues and what logistics the company required. An agreement was reached for the filming, and provision of security of the site by YEPT volunteers during the period 23rd November – 13th December, with a payment of \$2000 offered to the Trust for this, together with \$2000 for film location.

During filming, penguins showed some inquisitiveness about the process, as did a New Zealand sea lion which serendipitously invaded the set and was used as part of the final cut of the film.

Okia

Classification of Okia as a Regionally Significant Wetland has had implications for its management; for example the current use of herbicides and pesticides must be reviewed. Leith, our Ranger, went out with a TV crew to film the 'discovery of the waka' story at Victory beach and Okia more generally.

After several years' delay the last remaining crib has been removed from the reserve. Otago Polytechnic Horticulture students planted on Arbor Day and again later but hares have pulled out many of the newly planted flax.

Otapahi

This reserve continues to be part of the Trust's penguin monitoring regime, and revegetation work. We have been supported by Contact Call Centre staff who for the third year have assisted with plant releasing.

Tavora

The Tavora Committee met on 20th May and co-opted Melissa Moore as a new member. The 2nd of July Marshall planting day at Tavora Reserve was attended by about 30 people and was a great morning (See: last year's report for the background to this planting). Unfortunately, the new rabbit netting on the reserve extension at Tavora has been stolen. Concerns were expressed about the weeds in the reserve and the general appearance of neglect. The creek had backed up and flooded out onto the 4WD track and into the Marshall area, so it did look unkempt. Due to this flooding, several of the tall saltmarsh ribbonwoods have died. The signs in the carpark had fallen off their mountings. All of these issues have been resolved; the track was tidied and recut prior to Xmas and the sign has been erected again.

Omihi

It was noted during a site visit on 8th Feb, the south fence (paid for by YEPT and to be installed by the landowner) was marked 'urgent' in 2015 but was still not erected. This concern has been followed up with the landowner.

Otekiho

Following on from 2014, Monarch Wildlife Cruises donated a further \$1000 for 103 plants, with protectors, to partially offset their carbon footprint.

Stewart Island

As we have guaranteed funding through the Real Journeys trip to Doubtful Sound (see below) it was agreed to proceed with this work – Codfish Island / Whenua Hou, The Neck and the Bravo Group of islands.

Sandy King confirmed her contract for the 2015/16 season and started nest searches of the Bravo Islands followed by a nest count on Codfish Island/Whenua Hou with Dave Houston. On Codfish Island numbers were the same as last year, but chick fledging weights were the poorest ever recorded. Unfortunately we were unable to make contact with the Rakiura Maori Land Trust so The Neck was not searched.

Other Habitats

Staff assisted with nest searches on Banks Peninsula with the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, Christchurch City Council and DOC.

Staff also nest-searched Dicks Bush and Fuchsia Gully on Otago Peninsula (landowner Kay Dickson), and liaised with landowner Judy Weedon at Sandy Bay in the Catlins about penguins on her land.

The Trust and DOC investigated a report of penguins nesting at Whareakeake (previously known as Murdering Beach), finding one nest. This is the first time a nest has been recorded at this site. DOC declined the Trust's request to search Little Beach (South Catlins).

Nursery

The big event was on Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th June; heavy rain fell in the Dunedin area, 175mm in 23 hours, and the creek behind the site of the nursery breached, bursting its banks, and a 'river' flowed through the Nursery, down the road and into the sea at Company Bay itself.

The next morning the full extent of the damage started to become evident – plants buried sometimes under half a metre of silt, others washed into the ocean 500m away; seedlings entirely covered in silt no longer recognisable; labels washed from most plants so their provenance was unknown; plants no longer in their containers but twisted and knotted in fences and boundary hedge; the access road gouged out and footpaths all but washed away. In one road hole we even had kōkopu, a native fish, swimming!

Many of the plants lost or damaged were ready to go into penguin habitats over the winter, the seedlings were to become next year's plants.

And so to the clean-up – firstly the site was checked for any contamination, being a decommissioned sewage treatment plant, followed by plumbing and drainage checks, and finally ensuring all electrical connections were safe. And then the real work got under way.

It is hard to describe the process as much of it was complicated by the land being leased and no one sure of who had responsibility for what. Eventually when these details were sorted, work began in earnest.

Delta was contracted to use their earthmoving machinery to remove silt and repair much of the infrastructure. Teams of willing and eager volunteers removed yet more of the silt, washed plants, salvaged other parts of the infrastructure, sorted the plants and pots, gathered the rubbish and tidied up the grounds.

Along the way, the Trust Board made a strategic decision to downsize plant propagation to only that required for our own needs and some other local projects. We had been growing plants for both our own needs and for associate groups' own coastal projects. Production has now been set at 5,000 per annum, the number we believe we can easily both plant and maintain each year. There was unanimous agreement that our eco-sourcing policy should not be compromised by planting any trees and shrubs of unknown ecological origin into any Trust reserves, and so began phase two of the clean-up – on-selling the plants of unknown provenance.

Today when visiting the Nursery, you would hardly be aware of what happened only a few short months ago. There remains some debris in netting and, some plants are still being unearthed from those tiny hiding places, but generally we are fully operational and a functioning Nursery once more.

The Trust is indebted to many for their assistance over these months. Businesses, associates, groups and individuals all gave willingly and supported us in practical tasks, written support, and even hugs and welcome cups of coffee. A huge thanks to each and every one for helping us through this difficult time. It proved to us that our motto *Penguins – Plants – People – Passion* is totally apt for the organisation.

After being heavily involved in getting the nursery back up and running, Anita Pillai, the nursery manager, resigned to pursue other opportunities and Louise Ashton was appointed to the

restructured role of Nursery Supervisor working 20 hours per week, including Volunteer Wednesdays. There are now some new people attending, as well as a few of the more established group of volunteers.

Louise, assisted by Kate Tanner (volunteering), ran a stall at the Botanical Garden Sale and sold many of these damaged plants earning \$547 for the Nursery.

Penguin numbers

Beach counts were undertaken both at Okia and Otapahi reserves with results showing similar numbers to 2014/15 counts. This means there are birds about, just not breeding, and they appeared to be in good health. Ongoing chick deaths were observed during regular monitoring. Some chicks received supplementary feeding or hydration on the nest. Low numbers of penguins have been found up and down the coast and nest searches in the Trust's reserves revealed only the following numbers of nesting pairs:

- Okia 3
- Otapahi 5
- Tavora 1
- Long Point 19
- Cosgrove Creek 8

Sandy Bay in the Catlins had 3 nests, Fuschia Gully 3. Whareakeake had 1 and there were none at Aramoana.

Funding

The Trust acknowledges the ongoing support received through discounted and in-kind products and services. There are too many to name but our sincere thanks to them all.

Founding Sponsor

The sponsorship from Fonterra Brands NZ Ltd which owns the Mainland Brand has continued, and is highly valued by YEPT. As part of this they ran a new campaign through social media titled "Who Am I?" with very pleasing results.

Clare Morgan was appointed the new Director of Marketing for Fonterra, replacing Tim Deane, and in November Margaret O'Sullivan was appointed as the brand manager. Her title is "Group Marketing Manager Local Jewels - Mainland & Symbio", replacing Rachel Kelly who had been in the position for several years and who YEPT enjoyed working with over this time.

MAJOR DONATIONS

EcoWai

Barry Hillyer, director of EcoWai, has continued to extend the partnership programme through the sale of bottled water. Unfortunately Sudima Hotels withdrew from the programme; the owners' interests are now solely offshore, with a departing gift donation of \$1500.

Real Journeys

An application was submitted to the competition Cruise-for-a-Cause, which the Trust won. The prize was an overnight Doubtful Sound cruise aboard the *Fiordland Navigator* on Saturday 29

August. 72 people bought tickets, coming from as far away as Auckland and the Manawatu. More than \$15,000 was raised to support the continued monitoring of yellow-eyed penguins on Rakiura / Stewart Island over this breeding season. Thank you Real Journeys for this wonderful opportunity both to raise funds and to appreciate this world class location.

OTHER DONATIONS

Gilmour Motors donated \$250 as part of their newly launched 'Giving Back' programme where customers vote for a charity each month.

Otago Peninsula Community Board donated \$600 for drain covers for the nursery, the old ones being damaged in the flood.

Bendigo Valley Foundation awarded \$1000 out of a total application for \$6229.96 to purchase 100 transponders and a Garmin Alpha tracking system. After discussion with the field team, only the transponders were purchased.

NHNZ (Linda Farrelly; later to become a Trustee) hosted Dunedin Chamber of Commerce companies and as part of that had donation boxes out to raise funds for our Trust.

Queen's High School Young Enterprise Group supported the Trust through their fundraising initiative (Jemma Clydesdale)

Art Exhibition (Kelly Lynch, Amazing Travel) donated 10% of the profit for 10 yellow-eyed penguin images sold at her exhibition as part of the greater Auckland Festival of Photography.

Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust (administered by Perpetual Guardian) donated \$10,000 towards the 2016 conference costs.

MPI Afforestation Project, a joint project between DCC, YEPT and STOP was successful, and we will be paid \$1300 for planting trees on one hectare of Okia Reserve.

ESTATES

The Trust has again been the recipient of several bequests, and we are extremely grateful for this legacy and to the families for honoring such gifting.

CONFERENCES / SYMPOSIA

EDS Conference (Auckland) Sue Murray represented YEPT at this national conference, making several new key connections and renewing other connections with conservation bodies from throughout NZ.

Annual Symposium was held on 1st August, was a great success with 75+ people attending. The Trust presented a report of their work during the previous penguin breeding season.

NETs Conference – Biodiversity and Biosecurity 26-28 August. Lala Frazer represented several organisations including the Trust together with Euan Kennedy, and Leith Thompson attended at Okia Reserve on Thursday afternoon for the field trips.

Conservation Inc 2

During the year it was agreed to host a sequel to the 2013 conference *Conservation Inc.*, the sequel to be held in May 2016. The planning of this conference is now well advanced; the programme has been finalized, speakers confirmed and registrations are arriving. The event itself will be reported on in next year's Annual Report.

ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

YEP Review

The Hoiho Recovery Plan 2000-2025 was published by the Department of Conservation in 2000. The long-term goal for the duration of this recovery plan is: "*Hoiho populations have increased and the community is actively involved in their conservation.*"

In 2014, a grant from DOC's Community Conservation Partnerships Fund was allocated to yellow-eyed penguin recovery. The grant was given to the Trust contingent upon "a review of yellow-eyed penguin recovery with Terms of Reference to be developed jointly by Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Ngāi Tahu, and the Department of Conservation". The review would be undertaken in two stages: Stage 1 a stock-take of progress against species recovery objectives, and Stage 2, a revised strategy for hoiho recovery.

The stocktake team was appointed: Bruce McKinlay (as YEP Recovery Group Leader), Kerri-Anne Edge (on contract to DOC), Yvette Couch-Lewis (Ngai Tahu rep), and Sue Murray for YEPT. The overall management of this process was by Avi Holzapfel (now replaced by Oliver Overdyck from Terrestrial Ecosystems team). The report is in its final stages of editing and should be released to the penguin community very soon. It is as yet unknown what Stage 2 will encompass or look like as no Terms of Reference have been discussed.

Otago Southland Employers Association - an article about the Trust was included in their monthly magazine.

Urgent Appeal for Assistance with 'Barracouta Bites'

This appeal was launched on 4 March 2015 through Facebook and a Mailchimp email and raised enough money to distribute to various agencies providing penguin rehabilitation services to birds injured through barracouta bites. The funds were distributed as follows:

- a. Penguin Place \$1500
- b. Penguin Rescue (Katiki) \$750
- c. DOC \$500
- d. St Kilda Vets – morning tea shout (\$50)
- e. New Friends of Bushy Beach \$200
- f. Air NZ – media article
- g. Wildbase (Massey University) \$1000
- h. YEPT \$1000
- i. Wellington Zoo \$1500

The location of rehabilitated penguins provided several news stories shown on TVONE and Dunedin Television and in the Otago Daily Times as well as several online sites.

Media: Each year the Trust submits stories to various media to gain public attention. This year has been no different with main stories appearing in all forms of media about the barracouta

appeal, subsequent low fish supplies at rehabilitation centres, followed by the contracting of a specialist vet in early 2016, and the appointment of a Conservation Science Advisor.

Newsletters 'Hoiho' was again published in May and November 2015, and the Nursery supporters' newsletter in Autumn and Spring. There were lots of positive comments received about this year's editions of Hoiho, so thanks must in part go to graphic design company AdArt Brand Promotion for pulling these together into such an appealing format.

South Eastern Marine Protection Forum. We presented to Forum members (Chris Hepburn and Philippa Agnew) about marine protection benefitting yeps, and followed up with a submission and map of known yellow-eyed penguin foraging areas.

DOC Otago and Southland. The Trust has enjoyed the continued good relationships with staff from DOC throughout Otago (Annie Wallace, Operations Manager) and Southland (Tony Preston, Operations Manager, previously Ros Cole) who lead these teams. The co-location of our office with DOC in 2014 has been well received by both parties, and access to work together on many penguin issues has gone from strength to strength.

Mike Morrison (Partnerships Senior Ranger) presented to the Trust Board, the changes that have occurred in the DOC staffing; effective in Coastal Otago from October 2015.

Eric Shelton met with Michael English, DOC's new Deputy Director General Strategy and Innovation, and Sue Murray enjoyed meeting the newly appointed Threatened Species Ambassador, Nik Toki, a face familiar to many through other roles she has held outside of DOC.

Southern Institute of Technology has continued to support the work on Stewart Island by sending an environmental management student to assist with the field work.

Forest and Bird Dunedin Branch ran a workshop 'Dunedin Biodiversity Crisis' attended by some YEPT staff. There was an excellent turnout of conservation/environmentalists (70+) from the local area.

DCC environment strategy launch at Otakou Marae was attended.

Presentations to local social and service clubs as well as schools continued through the year as requested.

External contract. The Trust's reputation as a semi-professional organisation saw an external contract to advise on the formation of a new local trust with emphasis on governance and management considerations.

\$5 - Banknote launch (Wellington). The Reserve Bank invited the Trust to this launch. Trustee Linda Reynolds attended and had some photos taken with Peter Hillary and the new \$5 note. The new note still features the yellow-eyed penguin and Sir Edmund Hillary.

Otago Chamber of Commerce training course "Courageous Conversations" was attended by both Sue Murray and Eric Shelton, facilitated by Linzi Ebbage-Thomas, Career Steps. The Trust was accepted as a member of the Chamber, a first for a conservation NGO.

Ngai Tahu Hui a Iwi. We participated in a joint stall as part of Ngai Tahu's annual meeting.

NZ Oil and Gas. The Trust continues to have representation on their community group through trustee David Smith.

VISITORS / VISITED

Minister of Conservation Hon Maggie Barry's visit was on a spectacular day in May 2015. She visited both the Nursery and Otapahi Reserve and was rewarded with views of penguins.

Associate Minister of Conservation Hon Peter Dunne's visit followed, also in May. At the office he met Trust staff as well as DOC reps, then he visited the Nursery and Otapahi Reserve and enjoyed learning about the work of the Trust.

Fonterra Edendale continue to support the work of the Trust, in particular at Long Point where they annually partake in planting days. This year has seen the appointment of new staff Richard Gray (CE) and Vijai Lal (Environmental Team Lead).

Forest and Bird and Birdlife International reps Sue Maturin and Karen Baird (respectively).BLI have a 'Global Penguin Campaign (or strategy), and Karen was in Dunedin to talk to the Trust, DOC and local researchers about NZ penguins. We conveyed our knowledge of yeps and how the Trust could be involved.

Trustees and Staff

Staff

Anita's contribution and dedication to the Trust has been enormous, starting in 1999 as a volunteer, then a trustee and eventually to manage the Nursery. Her skills in plant propagation techniques, not only with the more common coastal species, but also for rarer species, were well respected. Over the years she became an expert in native plants, often assisting with identification. As stated in the November issues of Hoiho, her ultimate legacy is knowing that penguins are now nesting under plants she has propagated.

Following Anita's resignation in June, the Nursery Manager position was disestablished, and a new position of Nursery Supervisor created. Louise Ashton accepted this role, and the Trust, through assistance from DCC Botanic Garden and the NZPCN conference, will upskill her.

Luke Johnston filled a Ranger (Habitats) position from May until April 2016; previously held by Aviva Stein.

We wish them all well for their future.

Conservation Science Advisor

For several years now the Trust has been attempting to secure the services of a conservation science advisor and this time, thanks in part to the efforts of the Mayor and Deputy-Mayor, we were successful. The position will be based at the Trust and funded by the Otago Regional Council (70%) and Otago Museum (30%). Trudi Webster was appointed and started in her role on 15 February 2016 with a welcome function the following evening attended by ORC, Otago Museum and the DCC. Trudi has a PhD in Marine Science and will work to develop a research agenda both for terrestrial and marine aspects of penguin conservation.

Wildlife Veterinarian

Lisa Argilla, specialist wildlife vet, was employed over the summer and treated 22 yellow-eyed penguins, as well as numerous little penguins and a few Fiordland crested penguins.

She was allowed free access to the Otago Polytechnic surgical unit as it is not being used for training purposes this summer. Quality Hotel Parnell, an EcoWai partner, donated \$3500 specifically to this appeal.

Trustees

Nigel Stirling resigned from the Trust Board due to increased work demands on his farm but he is still available for media advice.

Caitlin Irwin resigned from the board and moved to Melbourne.

Linda Farrelly became a Trustee. Linda's background is 25 years within media (TV3, Television NZ, latterly NHNZ), bringing to the board fundraising and marketing skills, as well as assessment of the feasibility of projects.

Conclusion

This year has produced a critical situation for yellow-eyed penguins on mainland New Zealand and Stewart Island; it has been many years since the number of breeding pairs has been so low. This situation has forced the Trust to focus its activities much more than usual on maintaining the welfare of individual birds and intervening as necessary to treat injured or starving penguins. These interventions stem from our belief that currently there is a suite of marine based factors adversely affecting the birds that eventually we may better understand and perhaps help the penguins manage. Until then we will continue to direct as much conservation effort as we can towards the penguins' survival.

Our organisation reflects the efforts and enthusiasm of people who love the natural world and wish to see it prosper. Our trustees provide effective governance of the trust and our staff and volunteers happily go the extra mile, challenge-by-challenge. Our thanks go to all these staff, volunteers and supporters without whom the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust could not succeed. As always our thanks go to Sue Murray, our General Manager, for such effective leadership over a particularly trying year.



Eric J. Shelton
Chair