

Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Annual Report 2020/21

Reporting period 1st April 2020 – 22nd March 2021



Tēnā koutou katoa.

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's (YEPT) activities for the year 2020-2021. This year's Annual Report focuses on the admirable work the organisations we work with have delivered over the past 25 years. This last year also has demonstrated again just how complex it is to operate a not-for-profit organisation and to receive a favourable audit. If there's ever a lesson to be learned from 2020, it is understanding the importance of being adaptable. Being nimble was a recent organisational goal; pivoting quickly when required is this year's version of what adaptability looks like.

As described below, we now are applying the widest range of conservation management tools ever used by the Trust to save the hoiho population. The details of our effort follow, contributed by Sue Murray (SM), Trudi Webster (TW), Amanda Salt (AS) and Dave McFarlane (DM).

The year's highlights again included our ongoing collaboration with the Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Fisheries New Zealand and also the release of Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho (the Hoiho strategy) and Te Mahere Rima Tau (the Hoiho 5-year action plan).

One example of the complexity within which we work is that of our COVID-19 response which impacted our Operational plans which were re-written to enable the Trust's core work to continue during COVID-19 under the essential business criteria which enabled the *maintenance of animal health or welfare standards (including the short-term survival of a species)*. Our plans ensured that strict measures were adhered to in line with Government regulations at each of the different alert levels (e.g. social distancing, increased health and safety, contact tracing). A temporary alteration to our Wildlife Act permit (during Alert Level 4) allowed 72 hoiho to be released directly from rehab at Penguin Place (instead of from their uplift location). Twenty five underweight moulting hoiho were uplifted by YEPT rangers for rehab during lockdown. Office staff were enabled to work at home during Alert Levels 4 and 3, and meetings continued with staff and externals using online communication platforms. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, rangers were able to resume additional habitat work, including predator trapping.

Please spend some time reading this Annual Report which describes the year 2020-2021 and presents a slice-of-life in an ENGO.

YELLOW-EYED PENGUINS / HOIHO (TW)

There are now fewer than 200 nests (or breeding pairs) now remain on the South Island, a decline of **69%** since 2008.

This season **c.180** pairs bred across Canterbury, Otago and Southland slightly up from **171** pairs last year. The number of nests in the wider Long Point area (including Cosgrove Creek, Helena Falls and Harts Rock) more than doubled from 12 nests in 2019/20 to 25 in 2020/21. A survey of the known breeding sites on Rakiura (Stewart Island) and Whenua Hou (Codfish Island) was carried out in October/November for the first time since 2008/09, which was a prioritised action from Te Mahere Rima Tau (five-year action plan). The survey (a collaborative effort between YEPT, Kāi tahu, DOC, University of Otago and contractors) found **c.40** pairs (compared to **153** pairs in 2008), a decline of **74%** (over the same period as the mainland decline).

Overall nest productivity was low on Otago Peninsula this season due to chick disease soon after hatching, but was higher in North Otago and higher still in the Catlins due to fewer disease issues. Breeding success was relatively low on the Bravo Islands and Whenua Hou, but was higher than last year.

Summary of the season

Hatching at sites that YEPT manages was between 27 October and 14 November, very slightly earlier than last season (30 October to 21 November). Chick interventions have again been very high due to disease issues and with such low numbers every bird counts.

Diphtheritic stomatitis (diphtheria) was prevalent in the majority of hatched chicks in North Otago and Otago Peninsula, as well as many in the Catlins. Unfortunately, the successes that the team had last season with antibiotics delivered at the nest (c.70% of cases recovered) were not able to be repeated due to respiratory complications. A decision was made instead to uplift chicks with any sign of disease to the **Wildlife Hospital Dunedin**. A huge thank you to the hospital for their sterling efforts during this stressful and demanding time. Of the 34 chicks uplifted, three were returned subsequently for further treatment (underweight, lethargy, respiratory complications). Twenty eight were returned to the wild, the majority of which went back to their natal nests; five chicks were fostered. Regular monitoring checks were carried out post-treatment at 24 hours and 48 hours, and then weekly (if no issues were observed), and between times with the aid of trail cameras.

Unfortunately, a respiratory condition caused significant mortality issues across the mainland this season with 43 chicks dying. Post-mortems showed identical lung congestion; many of the birds also had diphtheria, although this was not cause of death. A handful of similar cases were documented last season. Investigations continue into the cause of death in conjunction with vets from the Department of Conservation, Wildlife Hospital Dunedin, Massey University and Ministry of Primary Industries.

Supplementary feeding was carried out at some nests through the season to ensure that chicks thrive, but was minimised to avoid any issues with imprinting. Chicks received top up feeds at the nest if there was a large disparity between the weight of siblings or if they were less than 75% of their estimated mean mass for age. Feeding was mostly carried out by the YEPT team on the mainland, but was also carried out by **Sandy King** and **DOC Rakiura** at a couple of sites on the Bravo Islands during fledge. Seventeen chicks were uplifted to rehab by YEPT rangers either because they continued to be low weight (12 chicks), a parent was injured (3 chicks) or a parent died (2 chicks). Thanks to **Penguin Place** for doing an amazing job at supplementary feeding these chicks until they fledge and are soft-released.

Twenty-two chicks from across all of the Catlin's sites were soft-released at Long Point this season. The first ten chicks were released from the soft release enclosures on 5 March, and the second group of twelve were released on 17 March. In positive news several juveniles were sighted this season which means that marine resources were sufficient to sustain chicks that fledged last season during their first year at sea. Let's hope these birds survive to breed.

Twenty five adults and eight juveniles uplifted from the wild were taken to **Penguin Place** by YEPT staff for supplementary feeding to ensure that they survived the moult. Most of the birds heading into moult were in good condition, but the birds that were uplifted were mostly slightly underweight (we were being very conservative to ensure survival), or were moulting in a location at risk from dogs. Once again **Penguin Place** had their work cut out for them feeding and ensuring the care of squadrons of hungry juveniles and adult hoiho, as well as all of the chicks. We also acknowledge and appreciate the hard mahi of **Penguin Rescue** who rehabilitate significant numbers of hoiho from around the Moeraki area, as well as the **Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony** and the **Christchurch Penguin Rehabilitation centre**.

A total of nine adult birds were uplifted by YEPT staff for treatment at the **Wildlife Hospital Dunedin**. Five had wounds to the legs or lower abdomen, one had an eye injury, one had flipper wounds, one had a lump on its back and one was in respiratory distress. Unfortunately, one bird with an injured leg had to be euthanised, and one bird remains in hospital, but all of the others have either been moved to rehab or have been released.

There was one death from avian malaria this season (a chick at Sandymount, 4 February) and one death from unexplained mortality (breeding female from Sandymount, 2 March). This type of information can only be determined because of the important post-mortem detective work carried out by **Stu Hunter** at **Wildbase, Massey University**.

The majority of hoiho monitoring on the mainland throughout the season was carried out by YEPT Rangers Ben, Sarah and Steph, with assistance from staff members Dave, Amanda and Trudi as required.

The Rakiura nest surveys were a big undertaking this season, and the crawling, climbing and hiking to find nests was carried out by Trudi, Ben, Steph, Thomas Mattern, Thor Elley, Leith Thomson and Sniper, Megan Abbott and Andrew Eastwood. Logistics and planning for the surveys was carried out by Trudi with support and assistance from Sue Murray, Phred Dobbins, Kev Carter and Sandy King. Access to sites was kindly granted by the Rakiura Māori Land Trust and the Department of Conservation. An iwi led search was carried out simultaneously by Ros Cole and team on some of the Tītī Islands and other Rakiura sites. Regular volunteers Dave Houston and Dean Nelson again completed a nest search of Whenua Hou. Following the nest searches, monitoring on Rakiura continued to be undertaken by Sandy King and several volunteers, with additional support from Thomas Mattern and Ursula Ellenberg this season (during their Conservation Services Programme tracking work). In addition to the usual surveys on Whenua Hou, the Anglem Coast, Bravo Islands and the Neck, fledge checks were also carried out at Little Glory and Steep Head.

Summary of hoiho breeding

North Otago

- Tavora: **3 nests** (3 in 2019/20), 6 eggs, 4 hatched, 3 fledged, **1.0 chicks per nest (cpn)**

Otago Peninsula

- Okia: **4 nests** (3 in 2019/20), 8 eggs, 7 hatched, 2 fledged, **0.5 cpn**
- Otapahi: **6 nests** (6 in 2019/20), 12 eggs, 11 hatched, 3 fledged, **0.5 cpn**
- Fuchsia Gully: not searched during 2020/21 (2 in 2019/20)
- Papanui (part): **1 nest** (3 in 2019/20), 2 eggs, 0 hatched, **0 cpn**
- Omihi, Dicks Bush, Otekiho, Allans Beach, Whareakeake & Kaikai: 0 nests (0 in 2018/19)

Catlins

- Long Point: **9 nests**, (6 in 2019/20), 18 eggs, 16 hatched, 15 fledged (6 rehab), **1.67 cpn**
- Cosgrove Creek: **11 nests** (5 in 2019/20), 20 eggs, 14 hatched, 11 fledged (6 rehab, 2 foster), **1.0 cpn**
- Helena Falls: **3 nests** (1 in 2019/20), 5 eggs, 4 hatched, 3 fledged, **1.0 cpn**
- Harts Rock: **2 nests** (0 in 2019/20), 4 eggs, 3 hatched, 2 fledged (2 rehab), **1.0 cpn**
- Purakaunui: 0 nests (0 in 2019/20)

Stewart Island

- Anglem Coast: Rollers: **2 nests** (4 in 2019/20), 2 eggs, 0 hatched, **0 cpn**
Golden: 0 nests (6 in 2019/20)
- The Neck: 0 nests (0 nest in 2019/20)
- Little Glory: **4 nests** (unknown 2019/20), 8 eggs (2 unhatched), 4 fledged, **1.0 cpn**
- Steep Head: **3 nests** (unknown 2019/20), 6 eggs (2 unhatched), 4 fledged, **1.3 cpn**

- Bravo Islands: **9 nests** (8 in 2019/20), 15 eggs, 11 hatched, 7 fledged, **0.78 cpn**
 Tommy: 2 nests (2 in 2019/20), 4 eggs, 2 hatched, 1 fledged, 0.5 cpn
 Crayfish: 1 nest (1 in 2019/20), 2 eggs, 2 hatched, 0 fledged, 0 cpn
 Goat: 2 nests (2 in 2019/20), 3 eggs, 2 hatched, 2 fledged, 1.0 cpn
 Groper: 4 nests (4 in 2019/20), 8 eggs, 5 hatched, 4 fledged, 1.0 cpn
 Refuge: 0 nests (0 in 2019/20)
- Whenua Hou: **12 nests** (12 in 2019/20), 24 eggs, (no hatch check), 7 fledged, **0.58 cpn**
 Penguin Bay: 1 nest (0 in 2019/20), 2 eggs, 2 fledged, 2.0 cpn
 Sealers Bay: 4 nests (4 in 2019/20), 8 eggs, 2 fledged, 0.5 cpn
 Roderiques: 0 nests (0 in 2019/20)
 Northwest Bay: 3 nests (6 in 2019/20), 6 eggs, 1 fledged, 0.33 cpn
 Alphonse: 4 nests (2 in 2019/20), 8 eggs, 2 fledged, 0.5 cpn

Three chicks were successfully fostered to nests at Otapahi from the Catlins (represented in stats above from their natal sites, not foster sites).

Science and Research

Ongoing technical support and advice on hoiho species management continues alongside various conservation organisations. A review was conducted at the end of last season highlighting aspects of operational work, challenges, lessons learned and potential improvements for the future. Following on from this was a post-season debrief with other organisations. Reviews were also conducted of the standard operating procedure for transponder application, the diphtheritic stomatitis treatment protocol and the avian malaria response plan.

Trudi accepted an invitation to join the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Penguin Specialist Group for a 4-year term.

Work continues with MSc student Mel Hayden and Dr. Brendon Dunphy at Auckland University on a project to analyse feather samples for Stable Isotopes and corticosterone for stress.

Work continues with Antoine Filion, a PhD student in Zoology, University of Otago and Dr Chris Niebuhr, Landcare Research on avian malaria including mosquito abundance, parasite prevalence and implications for hoiho.

A project was completed by a Craig MacDonnell MSc student from Surveying, University of Otago which characterised spatio-temporal coastal sensitivity and susceptibility to climate change at Okia.

Information has been provided to Kerry Lukies at the Northern NZ Seabird Trust for a literature review on the effects of sedimentation on seabirds.

Contributions were made to a review paper on the unusual mortalities of penguins lead by Ralph Vanstreels, Institute of Research and Rehabilitation of Marine Animals, Brazil.

Funding was secured for additional technical support work and has been progressed by Steph including spatial mapping, chick growth curves and mark-recapture.

Development of a weigh station specifically for hoiho started by students at the Otago Polytechnic was completed by Biotronics Otago. It is hoped that it will be trialled at Penguin Place to aid rehab work and may be used as part of a student project.

STRATEGY AND POLICY (TW)

We are delighted to report that strategy to support the ecological and cultural health of hoiho *Te Kaweka Takohaka mō te Hoiho* and the 5-year action plan *Te Mahere Rima Tau* were launched at the Annual YEP Symposium by the Minister of Conservation, the Hon. Eugenie Sage. These documents were jointly produced by the Trust and its partners – the Department of Conservation, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and Fisheries NZ. The Hoiho Governance Group, which Eric and Sue sit on, oversees the delivery of the actions, and the Hoiho Technical Group, which Trudi sits on, implements the actions. Work as part of this partnership has continued throughout the year to progress and prioritise actions, and complete a strategic framework detailing business planning and funding opportunities.

The Trust continues to represent the interests of hoiho at fisheries meetings including Aquatic Environment Working Group, Biodiversity Research (BRAG) and Technical Working Group. The latest hoiho population data and other information was provided to Fisheries NZ as part of the review of the seabird chapter of the Aquatic Environment Biodiversity Review (AEBR) which contains bycatch risk modelling. Feedback was also provided on various fisheries research projects relating to hoiho (i.e. spatial distribution modelling, preparation of the hoiho database, and characterization of fishing activity that overlaps with hoiho). The Trust also inputs each year into the Conservation Services Programme including observer coverage, fisheries mitigation and hoiho related projects. This season a contract was undertaken by Thomas Mattern to track hoiho around Rakiura to improve knowledge of foraging.

Liaison work was carried out with Fisheries NZ, Chisolm Associates and Cando Fishing Ltd around potential impacts on hoiho and mitigation options for setnetting around Rakiura.

The Trust continues to submit on relevant environmental and policy matters. A submission was completed on the proposed Southeast Marine Protection network in support of all of the proposed sites, as well as recommending extensions to some of the areas, and expressing disappointment at the exclusion of any Catlins based protection. A submission to Clutha District Council on freedom camping in the Catlins and specifically Long Point was included in recommendations as a 'Freedom Camping Exclusion Zone' in the proposed bylaw.

YEPT also undertakes work to support local authorities. This year this has included membership of the ORC Regional Policy Statement (RPS) reference group for the coastal environment which assisted with the review and development of the RPS which sets the direction for future management of Otago's natural resources, and provides guidance for regional and district plans. Information was also provided to the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) who are contracted to Environment Southland to map and document biodiversity in the region, and Wildlands who are doing the same for the Otago Regional Council. We also met with the Dunedin City Council to discuss water quality and monitoring.

A report was completed to support DOC's 2021 review of the NZ Threat Classification status for hoiho, and included the latest hoiho population numbers, estimates of population change, pressures and threats, and information on data qualifiers.

HABITATS (AS)

Long Point (DM)

Field Base Development

Code Compliance Certificates for the base have been received from both the Dunedin City Council (24 August 2020) and Clutha District Council (18 November 2020).

In other development work at the field base, around 100 trees and shrubs were planted in pockets alongside the deer fence boundary which is designed to both screen and shelter the base from the west

and views from the top carpark access track. Additional trees were also added to the sheltering flax planted mound on the south west side of the field base.

Habitat/Revegetation

Catlins Area School (3 September), Fonterra Edendale staff (27 November) and volunteers (16-17 December) completed planting out of the dispersal gully for the Field Base, with a total of 600 trees and shrubs planted.

Long Point restoration (revegetation) planning got underway with a focus on planting for hoiho conservation (Area 2 – western side of Long Point), another smaller area (Area 4 – eastern side of Long Point, extension south of Waterfall Bay) as well for Cosgrove Creek. Fencing is required to exclude stock from the proposed areas and enable native planting.

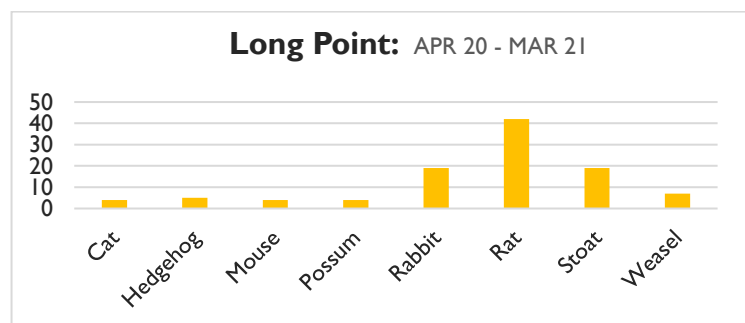
Two meetings were held at Long Point (17/18 August) with Brian Rance (DOC botanist) to look at potential implications of fencing on the turf plants and also Aaron Sutherland (Kaka Point fencing contractor) to get a quote for the proposed fencing.

A funding application to the ORC Eco Fund was submitted (12 March) for the Long Point fencing totalling \$25,676, with a supporting contribution of \$10,000 from the Department of Conservation. The proposed fencing will allow the planting of part of the prominent headland, beginning the transformation into a thriving native ecosystem, protecting and enhancing coastal biodiversity.

Tiī fledging monitoring in March/April on Long Point was affected by COVID-19 and did not proceed. Forest & Bird which is undertaking this work, carried out burrow searching in December and the Trust Catlins Ranger serviced trap cameras in the tiī area.

Trapping

Many thanks again to Roy Johnstone and Jim Young from Forest and Bird South Otago Branch for their efforts in continuing to monitor trap lines on and around the Reserve. Recorded catch total 104 pests:



Eighteen new DOC 200 traps targeting stoats and rats were installed at Long Point in July. These traps were purchased from the successful **Otago Regional Council's ECO Fund** application in April for traps for Long Point and Otapahi.

Other

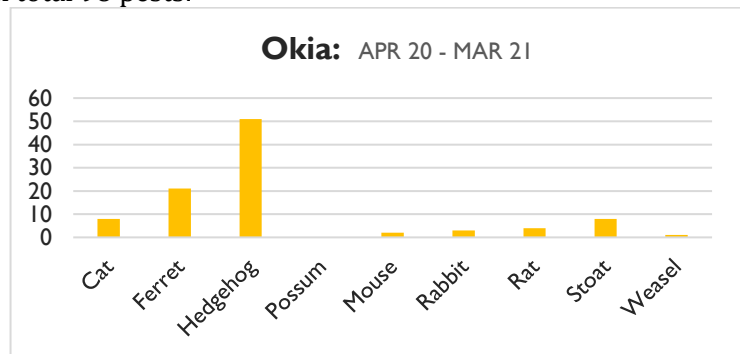
The Long Point Irahuka Advisory Group met on the 23 November at the Field Base.

Okia Reserve

Predator Control

Dunedin City Council's Task Force Green volunteers continued trapping Okia during December-June as part of their wider Otago Peninsula trapping program, with Trust staff supporting their efforts

through maintenance of the trapping access tracks, vegetation-clearance around traps, general quality control and carrying out the trap-checking during July-November. DCC/TFG volunteers are unable to resume/carry out trapping unless we are at Alert Level 1, therefore Trust staff stepped in ensure this critical work was carried out. Recorded catch total 98 pests:



Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group commenced the next stage of their possum eradication programme for 2020-21 in Okia Reserve. Contractors began pre-feeding bait stations at Okia in Jul 2020 followed by the toxin application. By September, most of the bait-take at Okia had been in the Victory pines with a small amount in the bush at the Taiaroa Bush end and no take on the flats. Currently post-monitoring, this involves OPBG monitoring three traps with transmitters over the next 12-24 months.

Habitat/Revegetation

Throughout the year we continued working on the wide variety of work and responsibilities we have at Okia, especially weed control. Ranger Ben Goldsworthy's continued efforts with gorse, broom and elder control are stand-out, and, as usual this mahi is carried out around an increasing amount of hoiho monitoring/management work.

Existing combi-guarded plantings were spray-released and considerable effort this year has gone into releasing some of those older plantings that can get overcome by meuhlenbeckia, lupin and bracken. Other regular general tasks around the Reserve include maintaining the walking tracks for visitors, 4wd tracks, signage, fences, etc.

Planting days at the Reserve were limited with those having been organised, such as for Dunedin Airport staff, cancelled due to the pandemic. Despite this, on 25 June, 16 **Otago Polytechnic Horticulture students** and staff planted c300 trees and shrubs and, in our endeavours to improve survival rates at this site, the soil was enriched with donated potting mix.

Other

The mitigation of fire danger continues to be high-priority and, as agreed with the Okia Reserve Management Committee, in liaison with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), the Trust has updated the tactical fire plan with the outline location of hoiho nests and established early warning notifications of high-extreme fire conditions.

On 29/30 June, following the fall of a large macrocarpa across the inlet at the south, the access track was diverted inland exposing a hazardous pile of old wood with protruding nails. Over two days this was all removed and the track made safe for both wildlife (sea lions) and humans.

On 25 October a couple with their Rottweiler heading up the track to the Little Pyramid were eventually turned around by public pressure, having resisted initially. The vehicle details and description of dog reported to us were sent to DCC Animal Control for their further action. Owners and the dog walkers (different parties) were tracked down spoken to by DCC; resolved through advocacy. We continue to be especially vigilant in his area.

On 9 November, a new track counter was installed by Department of Conservation staff by the Dick Rd car park stile.

In December, **Paul Guy, University of Otago Botany student** completed field studies from Okia on the presence and effects of viruses in certain grasses; concluding none of the tussocks (*Chionochloa* spp) were infected with viruses and only one species (Yorkshire Fog, *Holcus lanatus*) at Okia Flat was infected with Barley yellow dwarf virus, with there being no detrimental effects.

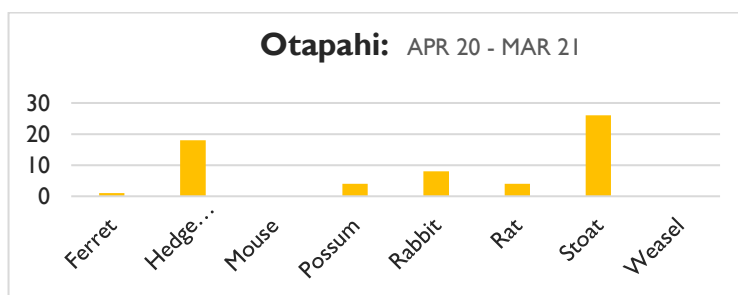
In January-March **Sheri Johnson, University of Otago** supervised a study of grasshopper behaviour; two local species, the short-horned grasshopper and the field grasshopper.

We continued to support archaeologists, historians and local rūnanga, led by Shar Briden and Rachel Wesley, with information and logistical assistance in the management of the Papanui site foreshore and the archaeological recovery of artefacts.

Otapahi Reserve

Predator Control

NZ Deerstalkers Association volunteers continue to carry out the trapping every two weeks for us, except for the 2/3 months when Des Neill is lambing. Recorded catch total 61 pests:



In October 25 new traps were installed (17 DOC 200s and 8 DOC 250s). These replaced Fenns and some of the older DOC 200 galvanised traps that had rusted out. The traps were purchased from a successful application to **Otago Regional Council's ECO Fund** in April for traps for both Otapahi and Long Point.

Habitat/Revegetation

In winter, some of the mature flaxes were split and planted in gully and, following observations of some lambs in the Reserve, the source of the breach was located the fencing repaired.

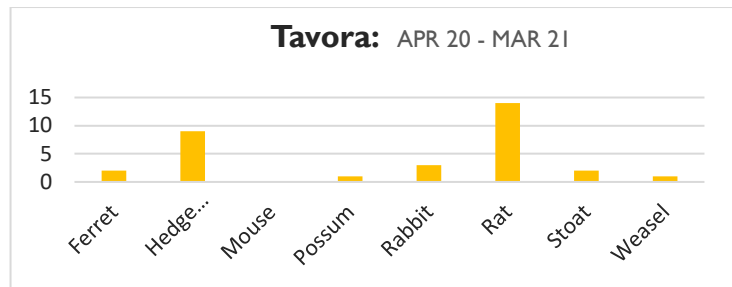
Other

In January, **Ayla Stenning, PhD student, University of Otago** conducted a small piece of geological mapping at Otapahi for her study of Otago volcanism following on from Rachael Baxter's earlier studies.

Tavora Reserve

Predator Control

Volunteers **Andy and Melissa Moore** continued to check the trap lines. In November, on suggestion from Andy a couple of possum traps were placed in the bush behind the northern beach and one immediately caught. Recorded catch total 32 pests:



Habitat/Revegetation

Planting at the Reserve:

- On 16 and 17 September another 600 native trees and shrubs funded by MPI were planted on the slope, adjacent to earlier plantings. Erica Smith, Forest and Land Use Advisor, MPI assisted for both days together with volunteers from Otago Polytechnic - Horticulture, University of Otago - Ecology and trustee Tim Mephram.
- On 30 September 300 flaxes were planted at top of planted slope and in fill near nesting area.
- On 3 December a small amount of pingao and euphorbia was planted.

Throughout the year existing plantings have all been spray-released and some combi-guards removed from well-established plantings. Weed control has included marram grass, blackberry and banana passionfruit. Other general tasks around the Reserve include maintaining the walking tracks for visitors and signage. The Tavora loop walk information leaflet was refreshed with updated information and our latest YEPT branding.

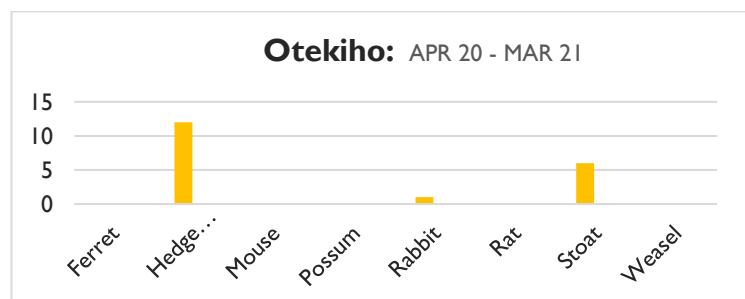
Other

The Reserve was again closed over the critical hoiho breeding period, from 1 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. We received one report of non-compliance of a party of people and up to three dogs on the beach in front of the hoiho nesting area on Christmas Eve. Despite our efforts that day and afterwards, we were unable to identify the offenders. As always, it was difficult to assess the level of compliance with the Reserve closure but encouragingly, rangers see visitors arrive and have noted them depart shortly after reading the signage.

In July, **Amelia Wilson, Masters' student, University of Otago** undertook part of her research in the north-east ngaio paddock area, assessing whether sustained predator control influences the behaviour of brushtail possums.

Otekiho

Previous plantings were spray-released in July. In September fences were cleared of vegetation and weed control carried out for banana passionfruit and gorse. Dave and Tom did a beach clean-up on 8 Oct. DCC/Task Force Green volunteers continue to assist with predator trapping at this site. Recorded catch total 19 pests:



Omihi

The Trust continued to assist with the management of other habitats where hoiho breed or have been found previously and at Omihi we will sometimes work together with staff from **Penguin Place**. The plantings from last year suffered some rabbit browsing and in winter Ben caged these to prevent further damage.

Other habitats

We continued our work with **Cape Saunders Farm** on conservation initiatives at part of Papanui Beach including the penguin monitoring work and advice on DOC's mustelid trapping program. Unfortunately, further around the Cape Saunders headland, despite much effort, we were unable to obtain landowner permission to nest search at **Fuchsia Gully** (2 nests 2019/20) and **Dick's Bush** (0 nests 2019/20) this season. Entry was made into Fuchsia Gully on 7 March for a moult check and three birds were seen, two of which were a breeding pair from last season.

Nursery

The Nursery achieved its target in producing c.5,000 plants this year covering our requirements from North Otago to Long Point. The main direction of the Nursery is firmly on increasing plant numbers for Long Point now and efforts commenced towards that in 2020 with a couple of successful seed-collecting missions and seed-sowing underway. It is important to acknowledge the time lag from seed collection to plants in the ground though - good seed collection in Autumn 2021 is vital. Nursery output delivered during the reporting period is:

APR 20-MAR 21	TAVORA	OKIA	LONG POINT	PRIVATE SALES	TOTAL
Trees & shrubs planted:	630	Otago Poly 300	600	Various 1,750 Nursery sale 1,650	4,930
Flax & pingao planted:	340	0	0	Nursery sale 800	1,140
TOTAL:	970	300	600	4,200	6,070

Following a comprehensive stocktake of plants on 18 August, a 'Nursery Sale' took place on 25 September. c.3,500 trees and shrubs and c.1,200 flax were put up for sale at a reduced price to the general public, with preference going to those planting for penguins, followed by conservation and local community projects. On the day, 1,650 plants and 23 trays of flaxes were sold and income of c\$8,500 was received. The sale has made the nursery more manageable and the remaining poorer quality plants in the 'sale section' (mainly *C. acerosa*, *C. propinqua* and *Hebe elliptica*.) were donated for community plantings.

YEPT continues to provide opportunities for organisations, such as with **Altrusa Club** members who volunteered at the nursery on 23 October. Together with the **Otago Polytechnic**, YEPT help provide horticulture students with experience which will increase their chances of employment. In September, two students worked at the Nursery for two weeks which also included some fieldwork at Tavora. In June, 14 horticulture students and two staff planted with the Trust, gaining experience of planting in the challenging coastal ecological environment of Okia.

CONFERENCES / SYMPOSIA (SM & TW)

Yellow-eyed Penguin Annual Symposium 4 Aug 2020 was organized by YEPT and DOC and was attended by 98 people. The opening address was given by the Minister of Conservation who launched the hoiho

strategy and five-year action plan. Presentations were also contributed to and delivered by YEPT staff on a variety of subjects including population numbers, disease, uplifts / rehabilitation as well as the hoiho strategy and action plan.

Several meetings and conferences were cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19 including the Birds NZ Conference, Oamaru Penguin Symposium and the joint Australian Marine Sciences Association and NZ Marine Sciences Society Conference.

ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH (SM)

Health and Safety

Staff had minor accidents through the year which is always a timely reminder to ensure our Health and Safety practices are current. There were no major incidents. Health and Safety plans have been rewritten and are operational.

Iwi consultation

The Trust continues to liaise with iwi on all hoiho related matters. Our relationships with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the papatipu runaka across the rohe of hoiho are greatly valued. Throughout the year presentations were made to Kaitiaki Roopu Murihiku (Invercargill) and O Araiteuru (Dunedin) and the Whenua Hou Committee, and advice and feedback was sought on different projects.

Local authority engagement

The Trust continues to build relationships with local authorities at a district and regional level, in particular with new staff within the biodiversity team at Otago Regional Council. A presentation was given at the ORC committee meeting on the declining hoiho population, impacts faced by hoiho, the science role, and how our work relates to the ORC and rate payers. The ORC also receive quarterly reports from the Trust.

Community

A presentation was given to the South Otago Ladies Friendship Club on hoiho and the work that the Trust carries out. The Catlins Ranger worked closely with several local groups, Catlins Area School and communities relating to Long Point and also further afield, such as with the crib owners at Jacks Bay.

Compliance

Following last year's verification of each trustee to comply with the new Anti-Money Laundering legislation, it was timely to check other compliance. As part of our Policies and Procedures Manual we now have a Compliance Register of all the legislation. This comprehensive list includes ~30 Acts that must be adhered to, and many others that we refer to.

Events

Due to COVID-19 Alert Level concerns, the only event held through the year was the Annual Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium. Instead, we increased our engagement via social media and were rewarded with an increased interest in our work.

Media

Several joint media statements were released with DOC and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu during the hoiho season. In addition, interviews have been conducted for the Otago Daily Times (decline on Rakiura), Radio New Zealand and the Christchurch Press (respiratory disease).

YEPT newsletters

We again produced two newsletters (May and November) however the May edition was only sent electronically due to the restrictions of getting it printed when NZ was in lockdown. We also produced an Autumn and Spring Nursery News distributed to those regular donors of the nursery.

Social media

The Trust's social media profiles on Facebook and Instagram are now ably managed by Caitlin Bowie to promote and advocate for hoiho.

Other newsletters

Contributions about activities at Long Point were supplied to the Catlins Coast Newsletter (June 2020, September 2020, March 2021). YEPT also contributes to the Stewart Island Newsletter.

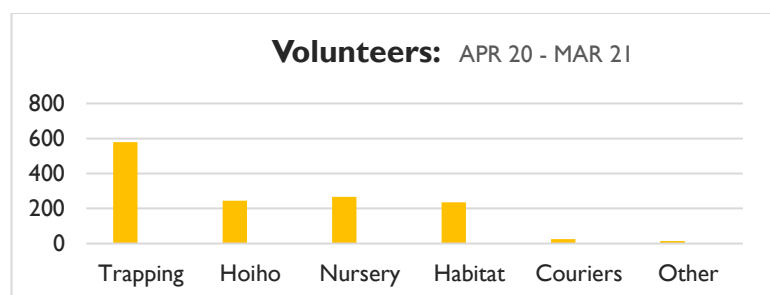
Other advocacy work

The Trust supported the Pop-up Penguins education and advocacy initiative which brought a yellow-eyed penguin sculpture trail to Christchurch and raised money for the Cholmondeley Children's Centre. YEPT also contributed to a review of DOC's web pages relating to hoiho.

VOLUNTEERS (AS)

Volunteers are used in many aspects of our work: nursery, office, penguin monitoring, habitats, penguin transporting and governance. The support offered by each individual contributes to the Trust delivering the various programmes of work. We are indebted to these people and sincerely thank them for supporting our work.

2020-2021 brought challenges in terms how we integrated our volunteers into our work programmes as COVID-19 Alert Level restrictions moved through levels: 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1. This meant Dunedin City Council's Task Force Green predator trappers were/are not permitted to operate above Alert Level 1; Nursery volunteer Wednesdays ceased and penguin couriers/transporters stayed home; so this work was picked up by YEPT staff across the board. In addition, throughout the 'down time' for volunteers, Trust staff ensured regular contact was maintained so they were fully informed of how the restrictions applied to the Trust and their involvement. As expected, the overall volunteer effort for 1 April 2020-16 March 2021 is less than in previous years, totalling 1,366 hours:



Nursery

Volunteer numbers are increasing at the nursery and these volunteers are invaluable with assisting at the Nursery to propagate all the plants required for our Reserves. Currently there are eight 'regulars' – (five of whom attend every week) and a number of casuals who drop in when they are in the district. As we moved up and down the Alert levels nursery volunteers were the most affected and we are grateful of their patience as 'nursery volunteer Wednesdays' stopped and started frequently throughout the year. Again, during times when volunteers were not permitted, Trust staff picked up nursery work.

Penguin Courier Volunteers/Transporters

Our volunteer transporters continued to assist us, DOC, Penguin Place and Wildlife Hospital in transporting sick and injured penguins, where possible. Unfortunately, this year, there were a couple of extended periods where we were unable to mobilise them, both times when our work programme was the most heavy: 1. during COVID-19 Alert Level 2-4 restrictions which happened right at the moult, especially for Catlins birds, 2. during the unprecedented difficult hatching period for the significant amount of chicks requiring hospital treatment in Dunedin - keeping these very sick, very young chicks alive during these journeys is complex requires specialised skill. The deployment of our courier volunteers should not be under-estimated as each trip frees up between 3.5-6 hours, which, otherwise staff would be required to drop other critical hoiho tasks to prioritise. Between 1 April 2020 and 16 March 2021, penguin couriers travelled approx. 1,160 km and contributed 25 hours of their time.

Blake Ambassadors

Two **Blake Ambassadors, Giverny Forbes and Wednesday Davis**, joined YEPT for a week, 1-5 Feb 2021, as part of their three-week partnership with DOC. The Blake Trust provides selected young leaders an opportunity to participate in conservation, environmental and science-based projects. Based in the Catlins, they worked with Sarah to gain an insight into hoiho management and Dave with some general conservation activities at Long Point. In Wednesday's own words: "One of the biggest things I learnt while on my ambassadorship was the importance of community in the monitoring and surveillance of these critical species."

FUNDING (SM)

FOUNDING SPONSOR

The Mainland Brand, owned by Fonterra Brands NZ Ltd, continues to sponsor the Trust.

During the year, we farewelled our key contact Margaret O'Sullivan (Group Marketing Manager – Cheese & Spreads) who had supported the relationship since 2015 and welcomed our new contact Kate Hughes.

Prior to departure, Margaret commented that sales of cheese and butter increased during the COVID-19 lockdown as families stayed at home, cooking and baking more to provide at least three meals per day!

GRANTS & DONATIONS

City Forest not only maintained their annual donation but doubled it this year. We are extremely grateful for this recognition of our work.

DOC Funds: The Community Fund: This grant, awarded in 2019, continues to fund both the Operations Manager and Ranger (Catlins) positions. **Additional grants** were received (total \$40k) to assist with the technical support work.

Distinction Hotel provides car-parking within their facility directly opposite the Trust Office for the Board Chair's use. This continues to work well and saves us hundreds of dollars in parking fees each year. They also manage the distribution of the key to a 4WD used by volunteers transporting sick or injured penguins. This central point of contact means staff are not required to spend time collecting and returning vehicles to the storage yard.

Dunedin Airport donated \$10,000, the fifth such donation. As well as this, donation boxes at the airport have realised a further \$5,460. The Airport now hosts a Tap and Point machine for guests to support YEPT.

Dunedin City Council continues to contribute to the annual costs of Okia Reserve, with \$15,000 now being paid annually.

Fish: We are grateful to suppliers of fish for feeding to the chicks at the soft release pens in March. **Sanfords**, Kaitangata again donated salmon smolt (as much as we want), **Penguin Place** donated silverside and **Harbour Fish**, Dunedin donated 40kg trevally.

Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust continue to support us through an annual application, this one being for \$20,000 in support of the Ranger position.

International Antarctic Centre have donated almost \$2,000 through their attractions and sale of soft toys.

Jewel Beetle: donations have been received from the sale of their penguin jewellery.

Otago Regional Council: continues to fund the Conservation Science Advisor role.

Otago Regional Council ECO Fund awarded \$5,727 for the purchase of new traps (DOC 200s and DOC 250s) for both Otapahi and Long Point/Irahuka Reserves.

Noopii®: Through the sales of the penguin nappy packs, \$1,600 has been donated to the Trust.

Penguin Fund of Japan again gifted their annual donation of ¥50,000 (~\$640).

Riverton Fishermans' Co-op donated \$2,000 for Rakiura work.

SBS: Each month, SBS donates \$1,000 to charities who bank with them, and in April we were the chosen charity.

Several members have generously gifted large donations to the Trust during the year, and again, we are extremely grateful for this support.

Several large donations were also received through the **online portal, Swipe** (originally Everydayhero). We are extremely grateful for these donations, often from international people interested in our work and hoiho.

Talley's Fisheries donated \$2,000 for Rakiura work.

Te Uru Rakau / Ministry of Forestry continue to support the slope stabilisation work at Tavora Reserve with a donation of \$10,000 for trees and shrubs.

Top 10 Holiday Park donated \$7,950 from various fundraisers including donation boxes and selling products at their national conference.

Woodland eggs, owned by Zeagold, a company of Mainland Poultry increased the amount of eggs donated for predator control to 1,200 eggs.

Zoetis provided a box of arm protectors for all our staff working with hoiho, for which our poor arms are extremely grateful.

The **Rakiura / Stewart Island-wide hoiho survey** was supported with financial help or significant discounts from the following companies:

Awesome Charters
Back Country Foods
Department of Conservation, Rakiura Office
Otago Pellet Fires
Sheila Coombs / Heseltine Trust
Southern Institute of Technology

Stewart Island Experience
Topmaq
YEPT member donations
Vega Holdings Ltd (Urwin & Co)
Rakiura Water Taxi

To our **regular supporters**, and those of the **Coffee Club** and **Donate-a-Tree** schemes, our sincere thanks. Your regular donations are really appreciated.

Currently a lot of donations are still made by cheque posted to the office. The Trust is concerned about a possible decrease in future donations as banks begin to phase cheques out in mid-2021. Donors are encouraged to continue their support via online donations, credit card, or direct banking.

ESTATES

Legacies for the financial year 01 October 2019 – 30 September 2020 amounted to \$90,450. This support continues to leave the Trust in a very secure financial position moving forward, one that is quite different to the last few years.

We sincerely acknowledge estate donations from Ivy Doreen More, A P Reed, and J Parker.

We also sincerely acknowledge families who chose their funeral donations to be gifted to the Trust.

DONATIONS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Through the year, the Trust donated \$5,000 to Penguin Place in recognition of their efforts in the rehabilitation of hoiho.

PERSONNEL

Staff in 2020/21

Sue Murray, General Manager (FTE)
Amanda Salt, Operations Manager (FTE)
Trudi Webster, Conservation Science Advisor (FTE)
David McFarlane, Long Point Projects Manager (0.5FTE)
Ben Goldsworthy, Ranger (FTE)
Sarah Irvine, Catlins Ranger (FTE)
Julia Rata-TeRaki (until end April 2020), Caitlin Bowie, Administrator (0.6FTE)
Louise Ashton, Nursery Supervisor (0.5FTE)
Steph Bennington, Assistant Ranger (0.5FTE)
Sandy King, Rakiura (Contractor)

During the year we had few changes in personnel as outlined below:

- ***Assistant Ranger*** Thanks to a specific grant we were able to extend Steph Bennington's contract beyond May 2020 and have enjoyed her assistance both with the penguin monitoring and technical support.
- ***Administrator*** We welcomed Julia Rata-Te Raki for a few months, followed by Caitlin Bowie who started as Administrator in June 2020.

Building capability of Staff

With a larger team, we focus on achieving a whole-team approach to align our resources to the work required. Field staff regularly worked between sites with Sarah helping out on the Peninsula and Ben, Steph, Trudi and Amanda working at the Catlins sites. The aim is to improve outcomes for hoiho by:

- achieving (and maintaining) a high level of skill and expertise and upskilling team members by sharing skills and learning from each other,
- operating consistently across the team,
- covering leave and/or sickness, should the need arise.

Trustees

We have had a stable Board this year, with no farewells or recruits. I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their dedication: Abby Clarke, Euan Kennedy, Helen Dent, Hoani Langsbury, James Tweed, Lala Frazer, Margaret Murrell, Meg Houseman, Murray Brass, Olaf Nilsen, Peter Simkins, and Tim Mephram.

Department of Conservation

The Trust works closely with the Department of Conservation including Banks Peninsula, Otago, Southland, Rakiura and National Office. We are co-located with DOC Otago and work closely with the operations teams particularly in Otago and in Southland. We enjoy the open working relationship, the key contacts and the respect we receive from all at DOC.

Bereavements

The Trust acknowledged the passing of several people through the year, a loss to the penguin and conservation community. More information about each person's role can be found in the November 2020 and/or the upcoming May 2021 newsletters.

- **Mervyn Cranefield** QSM (87) died on 25 June 2020, Trust Treasurer for 14 years
- **Sherry Thurlow** (68) died on 25 June 2020, valued volunteer and sub-committee member
- **Chuck Landis** (82) died on 11 July 2020, valued volunteer and sub-committee member
- **Connie Wright** (94) died 10 August 2020, valued volunteer and supporter
- **Aileen Clarke** (56) died on 18 September 2020, valued volunteer and supporter
- **Susan Shannon** (55) died 25 September 2020, veterinarian based in South Otago and then Christchurch
- **Jim Ellison** (83) died on 23 January 2021, YEPT's first Nursery Manager 1989–2020

CONCLUSION

The 2020-2021 year has proved to be another challenging one for our organisation. This Report, and the material in our biannual newsletters, provides details of our day-to-day responses to COVID-19 and to our conservation effort; they have been comprehensive.

Last year, we studied the government's then recently-launched response package designed to ameliorate the economic effects of COVID-19. This year, at time of writing, the government seems close to launching an Australian travel bubble. We can only guess what such a development might mean for the Trust's conservation effort? Domestic tourists, of the kind who engage in wildlife viewing, have taken advantage of cheap rental campervans and reasonably liberal travel restrictions to explore

penguin habitat. Evaluating the role of human disturbance in such exploration continues to be challenging, especially now that many birds, as part of their management, are subject to repeated scientific monitoring and intervention as well as being the subject of the tourist gaze.

Listed above are some of the individuals and organisations who have supported us over the year. What came as a pleasant surprise was the ongoing support we received from the hospitality industry, the one hardest hit by COVID-19. It is clear that decision-makers in this industry are adhering to their existing patterns of funding behaviour and hanging-on for renewed safe travel; we applaud such generosity of spirit. In our turn, we donated essential items to other organisations and provided staff time, always in demand. The penguin community is collaborative and the role of volunteers is critical, contributing time and expertise.

Over this demanding year, our staff have performed their challenging roles in an exemplary manner; the Trust could not otherwise have functioned. On behalf of the Board, thank you. From a strictly numerical perspective, some of the content of this Annual Report is harrowing, as was that of its predecessor but, in this organisation, optimism prevails and we look forward to the beginning of the annual cycle of yellow-eyed penguin existence.

Nga mai



Eric J. Shelton
Chair