



Hoiho

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The perfect picture, but....

During October, nest numbers from across the mainland and Rakiura sites came in thick and fast as field teams began the first stage of monitoring hoiho through their breeding cycle.

Early indications are that the 'minimum number of pairs estimate' for the northern population will likely be slightly down compared to last season.

There are 26 breeding pairs at YEPT sites on the mainland compared to 29 last season (a 10.3% decline). Reduced numbers were expected; two breeding females died last season (one from malaria and another from unknown causes), and two females from the

Catlins were not found during the moult. Thankfully other young females have been recruited. There have also been movements between sites observed in the Catlins where two females decided to try different nearby breeding sites this year.

More drastic is the decline this year on Rakiura and its outlying islands. At Whenua Hou the number of breeding pairs has plummeted to an all-time low of seven; a 50% drop compared to last year and a 90% decline compared to the original estimate of 61 breeding pairs in 2001.

The Bravo Islands has fared similarly badly; a low of five nests with minimal sign of birds

this year (down from nine nests last season).

Once again there were no nests and no sign of any birds at Golden Beach on the Anglem coast. Although there are no nests at the Neck, there are still at least two birds regularly using the area around the predator fence.

There are however glimmers of hope – the hoiho network of hospitals, rehab centres and fieldworkers have been working hard over the last few years to improve disease treatment for small chicks, and fostering of eggs and chicks.

Watch out in the next edition of Hoiho for more detail about how the season went.



Our YEPT Ranger team (from left): Max Harvey, Euan Whitton, Cat Lea and Ben Goldsworthy

Hoiho comes first

“It is all about the penguin” is what the Trust’s General Manager Sue Murray can often be heard reminding people when it comes to prioritising resources.

This season, with four Rangers in our employment, we have seen huge progress in habitat work and now with the hoiho monitoring underway, we have the luxury to be able to choose certain aspects of how we deliver this programme of work.

People are key to delivering conservation. Now when we intensely monitor hoiho from egg laying, through to disease identification in chicks, to fledging chicks and finally moulting adults, every person is vital to ensuring individual penguins can be monitored. This year, with the Trust’s extra capacity, we have also been able to assist DOC in some areas where more effort is required.

The funding of these four Rangers has been made possible through grants, particularly grants from DOC itself. Since 2003 the Trust has been the recipient of several DOC grants, the first being from the Biodiversity and Advice Fund now called the Community Fund and most recently from Jobs for Nature.

The Community Fund awarded a three-year (2019 – 2022) grant to employ both the Operations Manager and a Ranger, and this funding finished in September.

The Jobs for Nature grant allowed us to employ three full time equivalent staff for two years, September 2021 - August 2023. These staff were 2.5 full time ranger positions and a half time Long Point Project Manager.

These significant grants have been both amazing to receive and have allowed us the time to plan future work programmes including focusing entirely on what is best for the survival of hoiho. However, now with both these funds maturing within the space of twelve months it leaves us in quite an unknown position. We have been fortunate to receive other grants from the Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust and WWF-NZ Community Fund. Anyone involved in funding knows that salaries are the most difficult aspect of any project to get externally funded and yet the irony is for conservation it is peoplepower on the ground that makes all the difference.

The Trust too believes ‘it is all about the penguin’ but in order to continue to deliver this intense monitoring programme to help save the species, we need people on the ground beyond August 2023. We are working on it! Let us know if you have any great funding ideas.



It’s all in the name

Tauhihi Basketball Aotearoa is New Zealand’s new premier Women’s Basketball League, and starting this winter, was set to change the face of women’s basketball in Aotearoa. It created an aspirational pathway for kiwi women to come home and play, and, for the first time in NZ basketball history, female athletes will be paid at the same level as the men’s league.

Southern Hoiho is one of five franchises included in this new competition with team members from Otago, Southland and this year, three imports from Australia and the United States.

Why did they name their side after the iconic hoiho?

Team manager Angela Ruske told the Trust: “It was important for us to find a name that linked our team to the Lower South region. Hoiho did so much more than that for us, including giving us an opportunity to link with our local community. Not only does the hoiho naturally represent our region, but its distinctive yellow eye is a colour that features in all three of the main basketball associations in the Lower South region – Otago, Central Otago, and Southland.

“We have used the distinctive features of the Hoiho in our logo. The agility, speed, and power of the Hoiho “soaring” through the ocean as well as its fight for survival is the reason behind the shape of the eye.”

She also said they felt very privileged to be able to use their presence in this league to help raise awareness of the plight of hoiho.

As part of the franchise’s community link, they worked with YEPT to help raise funds and awareness. At each home game, YEPT provided volunteers who collected donations and had information about the plight of hoiho available to give to the spectators.

Team members recently enjoyed a day at the Trust’s Nursery when they painted hoiho nest boxes with their team colours and numbers (see some of the masterpieces on the facing page 3). Given artistic licence to create whatever they wanted, the results were very impressive. The decorated boxes have been installed into various habitats.

Hoiho nesting boxes



Matariki Tu Rākau Planting at Tavora Reserve

During September, Trust volunteers, staff and trustees planted 570 native trees at the Trust's Tavora Reserve, North Otago and completed a five-year planting partnership with Ministry of Primary Industries through the Matariki Tu Rākau fund.

While we have been planting and restoring Tavora since purchasing it in 1993, this funding from the Matariki Tu Rākau during 2018-2022 has funded 3,130 native trees.

Matariki Tu Rākau was established in 2018 to provide financial support for memorial tree planting.

Originally 'One Billion Trees,' this planting programme was part of a celebration to commemorate the 100th year after World War I, a nationwide project recognising the service of members of the NZ Defence Force. Mounted on a macrocarpa post, a plaque was erected by the Trust at the first planting site in 2018 to memorialise this.

The native trees selected for planting at Tavora are seed-sourced from this site with the seeds being collected when the conditions are right. Trees such as tōtara, kōwhai, mānuka, ngaio, kānuka, lemonwood, cabbage tree, black māpou and broadleaf have been raised for two-to-three years in the Trust's Nursery on the Otago Peninsula by staff and volunteers. By the time the trees are ready for planting, many hours of labour have gone into each tree.

Planting success rates are high at Tavora. The soil is rich and well-draining, and the micro-climate in this area is favourable.

Combi Guards are used to protect the plants from wind and foraging pests for the first few years. With a recyclable sleeve, a natural mulch mat and bamboo stakes, the guards provide protection and enable fast growth, high survival rates and easy maintenance.

Once planted, the trees go straight into YEPT's weed-control programme at the site, and over the coming years, staff and volunteers will tend them regularly, releasing them from weeds and grasses to ensure they have every chance to establish and go on to thrive.

This completed a five-year planting partnership with Ministry of Primary Industries through the Matariki Tu Rākau funding which also covers the maintenance costs for each tree planted for the first three years in the ground.

The planting site this year was near the top of the hill that adjoins and extends the area planted since 2018. In addition to the above, the Trust has supplemented this native tree planting by planting hundreds of harakeke throughout the planted area at different times.

Restoring native plant habitat such as this is essential to preserving New Zealand's biodiversity and we look forward to continuing our work restoring this special place over the coming years.

Tavora Reserve reopens on 1 March 2023 after completion of the hoiho breeding season.

Thank you for your 19 years of dedication *Nga mihi Dave*

Dave McFarlane, currently the Trust's Long Point Project Manager, is retiring at the end of the year after 19 years employment at the Trust.

Over the years Dave did it all! He held several roles starting in 2003 when he became the Trust's first-ever Ranger. He stepped up to the role of Field Manager in 2006 and finally, a couple of years ago, he moved into the part-time role managing the development of Long Point Irahuka, a keystone project for Dave.

The Trust acknowledges Dave's commitment to this cause, his dedication to helping hoiho and his comradeship with trustees, staff, volunteers and so many people associated with the Trust.

His farewell presentation showcased many aspects of the work he has done over the years. We share some of these with you here.



2003 | In the beginning there was Dave – with his cap – and his first manager, David Blair in a pensive mood



2004 | Planting ti kouka cabbage tree at Otekiho Reserve



2007 | Hoiho, hoiho it's off to work we go. Waving the conservation flag are Dave on the left, with Trust general manager Sue Murray and Trust supporter Merrin Bath



2012 | Dave talking-up penguins and conservation with school children as part of the Enviroschools Programme



2013 | Talking the talk at the 11th International Penguin Conference in Bristol UK, with Sally Stonehouse, renowned polar scientist (the late) Bernard Stonehouse, and Sue Murray



2017 | Monitoring adult hoiho for signs of mosquito



2013 | Between a rock and a hard place while transpondering hoiho at Long Point Irahuka



2018 | Nest searching – it's gotta be in here somewhere



2015 | Knee deep in muck. Helping with the clean up after the devastating flood at the Trust's Company Bay Plant Nursery



2021 | Dave with an enthusiastic team of planters at Tavora Reserve



2015 | Always a great day – hoiho release



2022 | Different cap, same Dave. With his team mates at Trust HQ



YEPT Ranger Cat Lea being showed around the fish hatchery by Sanford Hatchery Operations Manager, Trevor Slattery.

Trap servicing

An important part of predator control is ensuring the traps are functioning correctly in order to do the job right.

Recently, YEPT undertook trap calibration and servicing at Long Point Irahuka. We tested the trigger weight of our DOC 200 and DOC 250 model traps. It is recommended that these traps are tested annually using 50g and 100g weights, with the latter weight causing the trap to fire.

If a trap fires at 100g, we know it is set to go off at the minimum weight of the target predator which, for us, is rats and mustelids.

Traps that were not firing at the correct weight are adjusted where possible. Some traps were found to be well past being able to be recalibrated and these were replaced.

Thanks to the Dunedin City Council loaning us some traps, we were able to shuffle around existing traps at other reserves to ensure there were replacements to go in at Long Point Irahuka. This loan also meant we were able to remove the last of the Fenn traps we had been phasing out at Okia Reserve. We now have a full network of DOC 200s and DOC 250s at Okia.

Thanks to Gavin White (Forest & Bird South Otago) for showing YEPT Ranger Cat Lea the calibration techniques, and to Mel Lawless from Dunedin City Council/ Department of Conservation for the loan of the traps used at Okia Reserve.

For more information on trap weight testing and calibration visit www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/pf2050/pf2050-trapping-guide.pdf



Meanwhile, during his lunch break, our ever-vigilant newest Ranger, Euan Whitton, used his lightning speed and agility to singlehandedly catch a mouse running through the bracket!

Vital donations of fish

As part of YEPT's work during the breeding season, we are increasingly required to supplementary-feed hoiho chicks which are underweight and not receiving sufficient nutrition from their parents to sustain them.

One reason we may need to provide this support to the parents is when wild food may be temporarily unavailable, e.g. after a storm event. Without this intervention, those chicks would not survive.

By supplementary feeding underweight chicks at the nest, this keeps them in the wild so that they continue to develop and learn normal behaviours from their parents.

The type of fish we feed a chick is dependent upon age, weight, and nutritional requirements. We try to match the fish as closely as possible to that which their parents would be catching in the oceans and feeding to their offspring.

Sanford kindly donates smolt for us to feed hoiho from North Otago, Otago Peninsula, Catlins and even on Rakiura at the new rehab facility.

We also feed silverside, a large deeper-water white-fleshed fish, which kindly comes to us from Penguin Place, originally donated by Sanford.

Recently YEPT Ranger Cat Lea met Trevor Slattery, Hatchery Operations Manager (Kaitangata) to pick up a supply for this season. She also got to take a look around the hatchery.

Other fish such as sardines and anchovies, are donated by Nelson-based company Solander Gourmet Seafood. The anchovies are smaller and good for younger chicks, sardines for older chicks. Using different species also provide a wider range of nutrients, although we are limited by availability.

Fish is couriered by chiller trucks, and we now have a few freezers installed in locations within our operational area to store the fish. Previously staff members used their own freezers.

An adult hoiho can each consume up to a kilogram of fish per day, so you can imagine a fair few kilos of fish are required over a season.

Penguin Place, Penguin Rescue and Wildlife Hospital Dunedin also enjoy relationships with fishing companies that donate fish for their needs. The support from all of these companies is outstanding and a vital part of ensuring hoiho has the best chance of survival into the future. We are grateful for their continued support.





The excitement doesn't stop here at Mainland, especially at this time of the year!

By now you will have seen our fresh new packaging on shelf featuring the iconic Southern Alps – but that's not all there is to spot in store! We keep searching for new ways to bring our Mainland goodness



to you, and our friends at Huntly & Palmers have helped us to combine our classic Tasty cheese flavour with their deliciously crafted crispbread by baking the

cheese straight into the cracker! Look out for the Mainland and Huntly & Palmers

collaboration in store. We hope you love them as much as we do.

The 2022 New Zealand Champions of Cheese Trophies were announced in June, and Mainland was fortunate enough to take home the trophies for best Retail Cheddar for our Tasty Light. On top of our 11 medals this is a great point of pride for us at Mainland and shows that Good Things Take Time.

Mainland has supported the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust since 1989. We get excited every time there is a chance to see the great work the Trust does to protect our little feathered friends.

The Mainland team headed down to Dunedin in November and after seeing the yellow-eyed penguin so many times on our packs, we think we will be pros at spotting them in person too!



The YEPT team showing our Mainland friends at a local hoiho habitat. From left: Amanda Salt, YEPT Operations Manager; Rosie Cotton, Fonterra Head of Sustainability; Manisha Abeyesekera, Mainland Marketing Manager; Kate Hughes, Fonterra Brands Group Marketing Manager-Cheese & Spreads; and Sue Murray, YEPT General Manager.

Your gifts are special and truly appreciated

As mentioned in previous editions of 'Hoiho', legacies are one of the gifts that live on after someone's passing and are real treasures to the organisation bequeathed.

The Trust receives these treasures from time to time, and of course we never know when they will arrive, so adding these into any budget forecast is very unreliable. It makes the excitement of receiving these gifts all the more special when there is that additional element of surprise.

Back in September we were notified of a large bequest from a supporter who, for nearly twenty years, had donated both

personally and through a family trust. A few years ago this family trust was wound-up, preferring to donate the funds to various organisations in their lifetime so they could observe the difference it made. We wrote to them regularly, updating them on how this generous donation from their family trust was being used to help save hoiho.

So, our joy at learning about a substantial bequest was even more of a surprise, given we had understood the estate to only be the family trust mentioned above. We were duly told the amount we could expect to inherit, but on final settlement this amount increased a further 30% as more money was 'found' by the lawyers.

This particular gift will help the Trust fund the field staff and science positions beyond mid-2023 when, until now, no more funding was available.

No matter how big or small a legacy to the Trust, it is a gift that will always be treasured, appreciated and used wisely to further our mission. As the financial pressures increase for all of us, philanthropic giving can be less of a priority, so we would like to acknowledge everyone that supports our work, as well as those who have pledged a bequest, and the families of those who have made a bequest. Thank you and please know these gifts are special and are truly appreciated.



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

Tēnā koutou katoa

One of the pleasures of working in the charitable sector of society is being given the opportunity of sharing the experiences of governance and operational matters. We have touched on this subject in previous newsletters, but it struck me again recently when the local body elections resulted in Tim Mephram, one of our Trustees, being elected to Otago Regional Council.

This is the kind of Trustee's environmental governance experience that is so welcome. Jenna Sinclair, one of this year's Emerging Leader Trustees, also works for Otago Regional Council and two others are employed by the Department of Conservation. Other trustees volunteer for multiple charities.

Monthly completion of the Trust's Conflict of Interest Register ensures any possible conflicts are dealt with effectively. Aotearoa is so small, and its conservation community even smaller. It is impossible wholly to avoid finding oneself in potentially compromising situations involving privileged information.

The ability to deal ethically and effectively with such situations is a skill that develops with practice. Over the years, different staff members and various Trustees have come to possess expertise in specific fields of action, expertise that has moved our organisation from being a small player to one of significance.

Lala Frazer, a founding Trustee, provided guidance on our purchase of Long Point/Irahuka with Sue Murray and Dave McFarlane and then worked together with others, to project-manage the construction of the associated Field Base. Dave's retirement begs the question of succession, as noted previously; and it is only when looking back at what has been achieved we may begin again to look forward at what we may still achieve.

The daunting situation currently facing hoiho calls for the same kind of boldness we have shown before. Trudi Webster's (YEPT's own conservation scientist) work at the conservation/science interface is one such endeavour. Scientific research holds the key to the future of hoiho and advances can't come fast enough.

Meanwhile the hard work of all invested partners in conservation efforts, including the Trust's dedicated staff team, continues with passion and an extraordinary effort thanks to very committed people.

Nga mai
Eric J. Shelton
Chair

Our thanks

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Southern Hoiho (basketball team)
Southern Insulation
Top 10 Holiday Park
Victoria Brown
WWF Community Conservation Fund

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The production of this Hoiho
newsletter by AdArt Brand Promotion
ticks all the green boxes

Penguins. Plants. People. Passion.

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