

## Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Annual Report 2013/14



It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Trust's activities for the eighteen-month period between October 2012 and March 2014. This extended period is in response to our adoption of an adjusted financial year.

### Conferences

Over the past eighteen months a major focus of the Trust's activities has been conferences. In October 2013 we celebrated the Trust's 25th Anniversary by organising *Conservation Inc*, a conference opened by the Minister of Conservation and attended by senior managers from Department of Conservation and 225 registrants. Feedback from those attending was that the conference was very well received and had positioned the Trust nationally as a high-profile conservation NGO. Jasmine Chin worked ably as a volunteer to help with marketing the conference registrations.

Sue Murray and David McFarlane attended, and Sue presented at, the 8th International Penguin Conference in Bristol, United Kingdom (September 2013). Conference attendance has since been identified as a key activity for Trust staff and now is part of the annual budget. Sue & David visited UK conservation organisations in August, before their conference attendance. These included visits to RSPB headquarters and two of its reserves, Birdlife International, Avon Wildlife Trust, and The Eden Project

In February 2013, Sue Murray and Linda Reynolds attended a Not for Profit conference, Sustaining Real Community Value in Tough Times, in Wellington. In March 2013, Pat Mark attended the NZ Dune Restoration Trust conference in Nelson and also in March Sue Murray, invited by DOC, attended the Flaxroots Conference, Tauranga.

In April 2013, David McFarlane, Field Manager attended a DOC Information Technology conference in Wellington and in May 2013 Anita Pillai, Nursery Manager, attended the NZ Plant Conservation Network Conference in Auckland. The Annual YEP Symposium was held in August and in 2013 it was the best attended symposium for some years.

In December, at the Society for Marine Mammalogy conference we were invited to sell trees to offset carbon footprints and this raised over \$4000.

### Habitats

#### *Long Point*

This habitat is the subject of ongoing planning in preparation for the implementation of a management plan.

Wildland Consultants, partially funded through WWF-NZ Habitat Protection Fund, have GIS mapped the reserve, completing their field work in January 2014, and submitting their report in March. This report will allow us to plan for the reintroduction of seabird species historically resident at this site.

A UK tourism operator has partnered with a NZ tourism operator in offering a substantial donation to develop a workbase at Long Point, and visited in August 2013. We are now in the process of investigating options for the design of a workbase.

During the year there were planting days attended by the Catlins community, including 60 pupils and teachers from Catlins Area School, and Fonterra staff. Part of Long Point was used for the Catlins Coastal Walk in April 2013. The Grazing Lease with the adjoining farmer was signed in July 2013.

#### *Okia*

Okia continues to be a well-visited habitat and the subject of intermittent undesirable behaviour. There have been continuing incidents with dogs and we are working with DCC Animal Control in order to manage these. A kayaker's fire on the beach posed a threat to the habitat but was extinguished without incident. The protracted discussions over the removal of the last remaining crib have reached a conclusion and the structure awaits supervised demolition.

Contact Call Centre staff, Malcam Trust personnel, Otago Polytechnic students and CY&F pupils all were involved in weeding and planting and there was an Arbor Day planting with volunteers.

#### *Sub-Antarctic Islands*

Over the last eighteen months the Trust has been involved in in penguin counting and monitoring work on some sub-Antarctic islands.

##### *Auckland Islands*

Leith Thomson, as part of a DOC project, worked here in Nov 2012 and Nov 2013 and, in December 2013 Luke Gardener visited, again with DOC. The Trust contributed Leith's salary, while Luke, a recent Trustee, volunteered.

##### *Campbell Island*

The Trust supported Sandy King's work on Campbell Island, during November 2013.

#### *Otapahi*

Contact Call Centre staff volunteered at this Trust habitat and, in June 2013, the hide blew down in very strong winds.

#### *Tavora*

We offer our thanks to Graham and Sherry Thurlow for years of assistance with predator control, track maintenance, general maintenance, committee involvement and being great neighbours; their farm has been sold and we welcomed the new owners, Simon & Kirsten

Engelbrecht in May 2013. Balmacewen Intermediate School and Holcim Taylors Lime carried out planting at this habitat.

### *Omihi*

As a consequence of negotiated changes in responsibilities, the Trust has re-established a presence at Omihi, after several years' absence. Various tasks will be incorporated into the work plans of Trust staff.

### *Stewart Island*

The collaboration as listed below, indicates how the Trust is fully integrated with the broader penguin conservation effort. Nest counts were undertaken in the Stewart Island area:

- 2012/13 season:
  - DOC Stewart Island Field Centre staff checked Bravo Island group and The Neck (October);
  - Codfish / Whenua Hou were searched by Dean Nelson (October), and fledging check by David McFarlane & Leith Thomson (January).
  - Southern Institute of Technology again offered a placement to an Environmental Management student contributing \$2000 to the Trust
- 2013/14 season:
  - Sandy King checked Bravo Island group and The Neck (October and December)
  - Dean Nelson, Dave Houston & Bruce McKinlay searched Codfish Island /Whenua Hou (October)
  - All fledging checks in January and February were undertaken by Sandy King.
  - This season we were also assisted by a Massey University veterinary student
  - Southern Institute of Technology again offered a placement to an Environmental Management student contributing \$2000 to the Trust

## **Nursery**

In both 2012/13 and 2013/14 the Nursery has succeeded in producing more than 15,000 native trees and shrubs, exceeding its business plan target of 15,000. Approximately 60% were sold to other conservation projects to help fund our core work. The functioning of the nursery was reviewed during Dec 2013 – Feb 2014, and this has led to the allocation of more resources.

In anticipation of a visit by delegates attending the Botanic Garden Congress in October 2013 we funded a major nursery cleanup which lasted from July to November.

During the year, our regular nursery volunteers continued to contribute significantly to the work there and, in addition, other groups volunteered their time. Specifically, a Work Experience student, Broad Bay School staff and students potting-up, the Youth Development Trust, St Brigid's School, and those who worked at the Botanic Garden plant sale. All of these involvements demonstrate how well the nursery is managed to be integrated into the community.

## Penguin numbers

The 2013/14 nest counts on Trust owned or managed land on the South Island have been completed, with the following results (the previous year's results in brackets):

- Okia Reserve 5 (13)
- Otapahi 8 (19)
- Tavora 4 (2)
- Long Point 43 (53)
- Cosgrove Creek 10 (11)
- Stewart Island area:
  - Codfish / Whenua Hou 37 (39)
  - Bravo Islands 20 (11)
  - The Neck 5 (8)

## Mortality event January – March 2013

These last eighteen months have involved the Trust in a major mortality event and a subsequent very poor breeding season. Field Manager, David McFarlane's report is worth quoting extensively.

*"After the mass mortality of adult yellow-eyed penguins on the Otago Peninsula in January – February 2013, we had hoped for a successful breeding season throughout the mainland range of the bird, but unfortunately this was not to be.*

*Following an unusually extended and late egg laying period, indications of trouble appeared at transpondering time in mid- to late-January, when the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust marks fledging chicks at its reserves with microchips. Many chicks were still small and down-covered, while others although older were light weight and did not have a sufficient fat roll to safely inject the transponder.*

*At the Trust's Long Point/Irahuka Reserve, the monitoring results say it all; while a similar number of eggs hatched – 77 compared with 80 in 2012-2013 season, the average weight was 3.9kg, down from 4.95 the previous year.*

*In total 26 Long Point chicks were removed from Long Point reserve for rehabilitation by Lisa King and her staff at Penguin Place on Otago Peninsula, where the facilities were strained to the limit coping with between 60-70 chicks. Chicks are fed morning and night and consume about a kilo of fish a day, and it is hoped most of the chicks under care will be released in the next month.*

*Removal from the wild both offers the chicks a chance of survival as well as freeing up the parents from feeding duties. This enables the adults to forage and build up their own energy reserves for the moult, which is currently underway.*

*Unlike the previous adult mortality event, which was confined to the Otago Peninsula, the experience at Long Point was reflected up and down the coast, with the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's Okia and Otapahi Reserves on Otago Peninsula having their worst season for 15 years or more. As to the cause there is a lot of conjecture but little hard evidence,*

*with more research urgently needed to identify the factors in the marine environment causing the reduction in food availability.*

*The continued survival of yellow-eyed penguins on the south-east coast of the South Island may very well be in question if the birds continue to suffer such poor breeding seasons and unexplained occurrences like the adult mortality event.”*

## **Funding**

The long list of donors supporting the Trust is from a wide variety of sources. A sincere thank you to everyone. Without such donations the Trust would be unable to function as successfully as it does

Some of particular interest to note include:

- Mainland Brand, our founding sponsor, continued their annual sponsorship of \$75,000. As well, they launched a new online barcode redemption scheme for cheese and butter, from which we further benefit.
- DOC's Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund has continued to fund two important field staff positions, Field Manager (until March 2014) and Ranger (until September 2014). The Trust is proactively seeking funding to secure these positions but as yet no new source of funds has been received.
- Care for the Wild International donated \$3400 for the nursery in 2012.
- WWF- Habitat Protection Fund, donated \$4000 for the Long Point Mapping Project.
- The Leiden Conservation Foundation funded a diet analysis-foraging study (\$9000) and seafloor mapping project \$(4000), and travel to Bristol to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> International Penguin conference (\$1767).
- Travel to Bristol was also funded through grants or donations from the Federation of Graduate Women (\$2000), the Penguin Fund of Japan (\$647), and David McFarlane (\$3470)
- The Conservation Inc conference sponsors/funders included Adart Brand Promotion, Banrock Station wines, B J Ball Papers, Datacom, Downie Stewart Lawyers, DOC, Dunedin City Council, Global Penguin Society, Mainland Brand, Minaret Peaks, Naylor Love, Office Products Depot, Penguin Books, Scenic Circle Dunedin City Hotel, Speedprint Shop, The Otago Community Trust and the University Bookshop.
- Scenic Circle Dunedin City Hotel have donated a total of \$3000 from the sale of soft toy penguins.
- We also received proceeds from daffodil picking at Cleveland Park with the Rotary Club of Dunedin (October 2012, \$1700), Zoo & Aquarium Association conference auction (June 2013, \$1411), Otago Museum staff street collection (October 2013, \$740), Otago Peninsula Lions Club donated a portion from the Otago Peninsula Challenge race (May 2013, \$1500), The Penguin Fund of Japan (annual donation of 50,000Yen), Andre Bishop's beard-shaving fundraiser (\$660), anonymous member donated \$1000 toward assistance with this year's underweight penguin chicks.
- Bequests or memorial donations have also been received from several families, as have several large donations from Trust members. Our sincere thanks to you all.

The Trust was delighted to announce a new partner in 2013. EcoWai, New Zealand bottled spring water (a subsidiary of UGP Design), have partnered with Holiday Parks Association of NZ to sell bottled water and the proceeds will come to the Trust. The spring water is bottled at and from one single, sustainable source, in 50% post-consumer recycled plastic bottles with no ecologically damaging slipper tops and all packaging is 100% recyclable under current mainstream recycling methods. EcoWai water bottles are only supplied to organisations that are committed to recycling and sustainable practices.

## **Advocacy and Outreach**

The 2013/14 year was dominated by conferences. During this time the Trust also launched a new website and Facebook page to help facilitate donations and to better deliver information. Our sincere thanks in particular to Adart Brand Promotion and Core Development for the design and implementation of the new site.

A large part of the Trust's activity is to submit our position on various conservation-related proposals where we believe there may be an impact on the wider ecosystem, and yellow-eyed penguins in particular. This round, we have made submissions on the Draft National Plan of Action – Seabirds, the CSP Draft Annual Work Plan, DOC Recovery Group's "Bats and Birds" future, the Conservation Management Strategy – Otago, Southland and Canterbury and the Draft National Plan of Action – Inshore Implementation Plan. These submissions are time-consuming but are essential.

## **Relationships**

The Trust works to foster good relationships with other organisations, not only those with whom we have a natural affinity, but also those with whom it is more challenging to find common ground.

Over the past eighteen months, staff and trustees have been involved formally with the following organisations:

- NZ Federation of Commercial Fishermen
- Port Chalmers Fishermens' Co-operative Society
- Aquatic Environment Working Group (Ursula Ellenberg represented YEPT)
- Ministry for Primary Industries and MPI Inshore Environmental Engagement Forum
- DCC (2012 presentation to executive management team - Mayor Cull, Paul Orders, Mick Reece, and 2014 presentation to Dr Sue Bidrose and Mick Reece)
- Tourism Dunedin
- The Lance Richdale Trust
- Department of Conservation (the new Services and Partnerships divisions)
- Ngai Tahu celebration at Otakou Marae, February 2014, and Moeraki Runanga, met February 2014.

In addition, staff and trustees collaborated with other individuals and organisations when serving on habitat management committees.

## **Visitors / Visited**

Over the last eighteen months we have invited people to visit the Trust office, nursery, or habitats and staff and trustees have visited others. We have hosted:

- Peter Bodeker, the new CEO of Otago Regional Council, on a trip to the nursery and Otapahi.
- John Cockrem, a penguin researcher from Massey University visited Long Point and Pukekura Trust's new venture at Taiaroa Head.
- Avon Adams, DOC media and communications manager from Wellington.
- Karen Rothwell, ex-RSPB Marketing & Communications Manager visited.
- We presented to
  - Grey Power, Balclutha and to South Otago Forest & Bird about Long Point.
  - Waitaki Branch Forest & Bird about the changing role of conservation
  - Otago University ecology students at Boulder Beach
- Staff and trustees attended 'Love DOC day' to show support during the restructure.
- An American film student filmed Arbor Day planting and the role of our Ranger.
- We attended Environment Southland and DOC Southland Conservation Awards evening.
- Columba College and Dunedin North Intermediate (Enviroschools) worked in Trust habitats.
- Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club and delegates from the Botanic Garden Congress visited the Nursery and Tavora.

## **Other activities and events**

In July 2013 we purchased a DOC ex-fleet Toyota Hilux and Miller Studios donated the extensive sign writing.

Contact with DOC has been facilitated by the Trust moving offices to Conservation House after 19 years in the Queen's Building.

The Trust transferred their accounting system to the online package Xero, with assistance to transfer historical information and accounts from Deloitte.

A Draft Paper gave rise to concerns about the accuracy of transponders or the readers, leading to discussion with DOC about double marking of birds. It was agreed the Trust can continue to only transponder birds until the full report is released and discussed further.

Southern Seabird Solutions Trust began fundraising to create a DVD linking seabirds off the Otago coast with the fishing industry to give a better understanding and foster cooperative working relationships between conservation and the fishing industry. The Trust pledged \$1000.

We commissioned an impressive penguin skeleton articulation undertaken by George Holley of Skulls Down Under, Wellington.

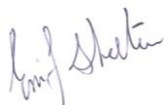
## **Trustees / Staff / Consultants**

The Trust is conscious of the importance of building our brand. Our marketing team in 2012/13 was: Stew Robertson from Adart Brand Promotion, Blair Hughson from Core Development, Rosemarie Paterson (writer) and Kimberley Collins (social media). In 2014 we farewelled Rosemarie and Kimberley who have taken up new responsibilities.

An innovation has been to encourage young people to become Trustees and as a result, Emerging Leader trustees Jesse James and Luke Gardener joined the Board in July 2013. We advertised specifically for young people to gain governance experience and offer a different perspective on issues. David Kelly-Hedrick, American volunteer, assisted us in putting together the Emerging Leader proposal. Adrian Christie resigned as Treasurer in November 2012 and Tim Mepham was co-opted on to the Trust Board, in the role of treasurer, in March 2013. Nigel Stirling joined the Trust Board in April 2013. Nursery Assistant Toby Bulow resigned in December 2013 having worked for us since March 2011. Thanks to both Adrian and Toby for their efforts.

During the eighteen months the role of Chair initially was filled by Mike Morrison, then assumed by Lala Frazer while Mike took leave and, since January 2014, I have filled the role.

So, as Chair, I extend a warm thank you to everyone associated with the Trust, especially our staff, each of whom operates as a self-managing professional, and without whom nothing would happen. In particular, Sue Murray, our General Manager, has dealt with the extraordinary demands of the last eighteen months with conspicuous competence. Trustees have brought a wide range of skills to the governance of the organisation and generated lively debate. Jenny and Sue have guided me on how to report the Trust's activities, and I have attempted to follow their suggestions. If anyone's contribution has gone unacknowledged the responsibility for that omission is mine alone. This coming financial year will be challenging and will require making some difficult strategic decisions involving the allocation of resources but, as anyone reading this document will attest, the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust thrives on challenges.



**Eric J. Shelton**  
**Chair**