

Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Annual Report 2014/15



It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Trust's activities for the year 2014-2015. This year has been particularly challenging and frustrating, but also has presented opportunities that may come to fruition over the rest of 2015.

Habitats

As always, managing our habitats has been the focus of much of our conservation effort over the last 12 months. The highlights are listed below.

Long Point

- The Wildland Consultants report *Seabird Re-establishment and Habitat Restoration at Long Point / Irahuka, Catlins* was accepted in April. This local plan fits with the national focus of *New Zealand Seabirds: Important bird areas and conservation* (Gaskin, 2014) and contributes to our 'best practice' and 'whole of ecosystem' approaches to the production and management of coastal habitat.
- The penguin nest search in October was assisted by volunteers and guests – Bronwen Golder of The PEW Charitable Trusts and Chris Wright of Fonterra Edendale; chick check in December assisted by volunteers; and the fledging check in February by Massey University 2nd year veterinary student Siobhan Ellis, and Wellington Zoo vet Lisa Argilla and her assistant vet nurse.
- A predator brainstorming workshop was held in May, attended by Deb Wilson (Landcare Research), Alastair Bramley (DOC Research and Development), Darren Peters (DOC trapping expert), Paul Carberry (UK), Fergus and Mary Sutherland.
- Other visitors to the reserve included Denise Fastier (DOC Hawkes Bay) who has extensive experience with petrel translocations.
- The neighbouring farmers completed the replacement of netting on the eastern bays fence, supplied to them by the Trust. This section of fence was originally funded by YEPT in the 1990s and erected by DOC and local Conservation Corps.
- The *Long Point Advisory Group* met in December. These meetings are invaluable for maintaining effective communication between the Trust and local stakeholders. The minutes are available in the Trust Office and illustrate the kinds of management issues that crop up.
- There is work under way on completing a business case for construction of a workbase/accommodation facility. We are working to find a major sponsor for this project.

Okia

- The highlight of the year was the discovery at Victory Beach of a several-hundred-year-old waka, since removed to undergo a preservation process.

- Planting and maintenance in the reserve has continued and been ably assisted by many individuals and volunteer groups including Cumberland College students, Malcam Trust, Dunedin City Council staff (Building Consents, Health, Parks and Reserves and Botanic Gardens), Task Force Green, Dunedin North Intermediate and Bayfield High Schools.
- Entomologist John Nunn monitored beetle fauna from penguin nests in the reserve with an exciting discovery of a rare beetle of the species *Zeonidicola* which live exclusively in birds' nests and have been rarely collected.

Otapahi

- Planting, habitat maintenance and trapping regimes have continued throughout the year.
- Trustees enjoyed a trip to the reserve in early 2015 to view the area.

Tavora

- The fence along the paddock side of the riparian strip/vehicle access was extended for the creation of a new planting area. This will be planted out in 2015 in memory of Emily Marshall who was tragically killed in a motor accident in January 2012. Donations in her memory have enabled this reserve extension to proceed.
- Planting continued through the assistance of Taylors Lime but unfortunately this year's public planting day in July only attracted six people due to the dire weather. Planting of pikao was again with the assistance of Balmacewan Intermediate School.

Omihi

- Fencing materials were purchased for a new fence on the south side of the reserve, to be erected by Penguin Place staff.
- The Trust and Penguin Place staff jointly monitored the penguins through the season, finding one nest in the *Stan Sharpe* planting of flaxes for the first time in many years.
- Planting and gorse clearing continued with help from Otago Polytechnic Arboriculture students.

Otekiho

- Monarch Wildlife Cruises offset the company's carbon footprint through purchasing and planting trees in Otekiho. This Reserve is visible from their boat tours of the Otago Harbour.

Stewart Island

- The commissioned Wildland Consultants report *Review of yellow-eyed penguin monitoring on Stewart Island/Rakiura*, again spelled out what science is required to gain robust conclusions about penguin numbers at specific sites.
- The 2014/15 season was managed by contractor Sandy King, assisted on Codfish Island for the nest count by Ranger Aviva Stein, and volunteers Dean Nelson and Dave Houston. The fledging check in February was assisted by Southern Institute of Technology Environmental Management student (Riki Parata) and two Sir Peter Blake Trust Conservation Ambassadors (Dannie Cullen and Samantha Collings). This year saw

minimal work on both the Bravo Island Group and the Anglem Coast but The Neck was monitored at the usual level with support from the Rakiura Maori Land Trust, volunteer Timu Moxham and DOC staff.

- On Codfish / Whenua Hou a double count nest search was completed with 32 nests found, a 14% reduction on the previous year and 48% since 2001.
- Trustees enjoyed a visit to the Island in February 2015 to view the logistics of working in this area and renew relationships with key supporters.

Sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands

- In November 2014 YEPT Rangers Leith Thomson and Aviva Stein, and trustee David Smith as a crew member assisted on the DOC-led trip to count penguins.
- On Enderby Island, Leith trained a Massey University student about penguins to enable her to undertake a potential 3-month study next season, including how to conduct daily beach counts.

Other Habitats

- Staff assisted with the nest search on Banks Peninsula with the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, Christchurch City Council and DOC.
- Staff also nest searched Dicks Bush and Fuchsia Gully on the 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 (aka Murdering Beach), finding one nest. This is the first time a nest has been recorded at this site.

Nursery

Plants produced (Summary End of Financial Year 1/10/ 13 – 30/9/14)

- Plants into Trust reserves - 4362
- Plants sold - 8688
- Plants donated - 699
- Total plants produced 13,749

- Goods and supplies have been donated throughout the year, in particular by Herbaceous Borders Nursery, Blackhead Quarries, and Woodland Products.
- Seeds have been collected by Moira Parker and Alf Webb, as well as staff and trustees.
- This year has seen an issue with rabbits eating our plants, so protection with shade cloth has been introduced but this also inhibits plant growth.
- After a wet and cold start to the season there was very little rain in late December and most of January. The irrigation system was inadequate to cope with the hot temperatures and sun. Some plants were lost (5% estimated) during the summer break despite extra effort in watering.

- Volunteer Bob Clarkson made bird covers for the seedlings out of old pallets and shade cloth offcuts. He also designed and made new potting mix bin lids that are lighter and easier for the volunteers to use.
- The Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group cleared an area at the nursery for a container to store their field gear.
- Long term volunteer Bill Wilson died in March 2014. Bill was the guru of peg and cage making, having made thousands of both to protect the plants in the habitats. His wit, comradeship and assistance is missed by all at the Trust, especially the Nursery staff and volunteers.

Penguin numbers

The 2014/15 nest counts on Trust owned or managed land on the South Island have been completed, with the following results:

YEPT Reserve	Chicks alive close to fledging 2014/15	Chicks fledged 2013/14 and 2012/13	Av. weight (kg) 2014/15	Av. weight 2013/14 and 2012/13
Long Point	28	60 / 71	4.76	3.99 / 4.95
Cosgrove Creek	14	10 / 18	4.47	4.55 / 5.13
Okia	6	3 / 17	5.23	4.35 / 5.01
Otapahi	13	7 / 22	5.04	4.15 / 4.88
Tavora	4	6 / 4	4.77	5.0 / 5.3

During the 2014 fledging period, underweight chicks were removed from habitats for rehabilitation at Penguin Place. For example, a total of 26 chicks were removed from Long Point and several others from Cosgrove Creek.

This season the Trust has assisted the Department of Conservation, University of Otago and Ministry for Primary Industries in a research project to study the avian diphtheria impact in penguins, and trial treatment regimes. This support was through the appointment of a Ranger to assist with the field work and data gathering, and Trust Reserves were used as control sites where no treatment occurred for comparison. Lesions were removed but no treatment was given. In all areas some chicks died in the first four weeks of the project, others survived despite showing early lesions which were removed. It will be interesting to see if any of the treatments that were trialled were successful. A report is expected around the middle of the year.

In another twist to the season there have also been many adults presenting with barracouta bites in the Catlins and on Otago Peninsula. Over 40 adults have presented with bites to feet, legs and lower abdomen and have required veterinary treatment in Dunedin and rehabilitation. Thanks to Massey Wildbase, St Kilda Vets (Tony Malthus), Wellington Zoo (Lisa Argilla) and Penguin Place (Lisa King and team), to date most of these birds have been successfully rehabilitated and released.

Funding

Usually, only a sample of our sponsors, donors and benefactors are presented in the Annual Report but this time I have included a longer list to illustrate just how widespread are our sources of funding, other than memberships and individual donations, often anonymous.

- Mainland Brand, our founding sponsor, continued their annual sponsorship of \$75,000. The Trust has also enjoyed a visit to Auckland to meet Mainland Brand staff and Craig Irwin, the new General Manager of Marketing (April). In November we hosted both Tim Deane, Managing Director of Fonterra Brands (NZ) Ltd and Steve Anderson, Managing Director of Foodstuffs NZ Ltd on a dawn trip to view yellow-eyed penguins.
- DOC's Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund continued to fund our Ranger position (until September 2014). This fund has now been discontinued.
- We applied to DOC's Community Conservation Partnerships Fund where we presented 5 components: the Core work (inclusive of salaries for 2.4FTE) and four areas of growth - Species Conservation Leader Role, in-house conservation scientist role, Development of Long Point and Focus on the Marine Environment. In July the Minister of Conservation announced a grant to the Trust of \$200,000 over two years. The funding was dependent on a tripartite review of yellow-eyed penguin recovery; Ngai Tahu, DOC and YEPT. We are enjoying this opportunity to engage with both DOC Services and Partnerships in the review process.
- We expended considerable resources on our planned *Next Foundation* applications around our anticipated focus on the marine environment, and the concept of an Otago Peninsula-wide centre of biodiversity, but decided not to submit the latter concept. The Expression of Interest on the Marine Research focus was submitted in July, but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the collaboration and documentation was useful in cementing ideas for the future.
- The Otago Community Trust donated \$7000 through the year; \$4000 for a contribution towards the production of the Southern Seabird Solutions DVD, and \$3000 toward the purchase of a Grillo 4WD mower.
- The Grillo 4WD mower was purchased with donations from The Alexander McMillan Trust (\$5000), The Otago Community Trust (\$3000), and the Heseltine Trust (\$1000), and received a discount (\$454) on the purchase from Blueskin Mowers and Chainsaws.
- EcoWai partners now include New Zealand Holiday Parks Association members, DOC visitor centres, Sudima Hotels, Mangapapa Petit Hotel, THL Motorhomes, CQ Quality Hotel Wellington, and Quality Hotel Parnell. In 2015 monies from the sale of this bottled water will be realised and reported back on in the 2016 report.
- Wesptac funded \$14,500 for the production of donation boxes to be placed in the 300 nation-wide holiday parks of the group New Zealand Holiday Parks Association.
- The Pacific Development and Conservation Trust donated \$16,320 towards employment of Rangers in 2014/15.
- The Grumitt Sisters Charitable Trust donated \$16,500 for the 2014/15 Stewart Island work programme.
- DOC Southern Islands contributed \$5000 for the Wildland Consultants report on Stewart Island work.

- The William J Gall Charitable Trust gave \$10,000 for a Long Point/Irahuka implementation plan to be written (planned for completion in 2015).
- Through the sale of soft toy penguins, Dunedin City Scenic Hotel donated a further \$1000. The total donated through these sales since 2013 is now \$4000.
- The Penguin Fund of Japan annual donation of 50,000 YEN (\$560) was again received.
- Project Crimson donated \$600 for rata trees.
- Local company Gilberts Fine Foods donated 20c for every 'Pie of the Month' sold in May and attracted a lot of attention on Facebook for this promotion.
- The Botanic Gardens Congress donated \$1000 for services to the Congress in 2013.
- The Otago Peninsula Lions Club donated \$1000 from the Peninsula Challenge bike race in May.
- The Trust registered with the Charities Aid Foundation of America, which will allow donations from USA citizens to be tax deductible at source.

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

Conferences / Symposia

This year there were two very successful penguin conservation gatherings; one, of the wider penguin community at the Oamaru Penguin Symposium 10-11 July and our usual Annual YEP Symposium held on 2nd August, where 65 people attended.

Field staff also attended the Sanctuaries of New Zealand conference held in Karitane.

Also, we are working on a sequel to our 2013 *Conservation Inc* conference, proposed for 2016 and intended to follow up on the post-DOC-restructuring state of conservation in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Watch this space.

Advocacy and Outreach

- Southern Seabird Solutions Trust produced the DVD *Sharing Worlds – Seabirds and Fishing* in conjunction with the Trust, DOC and local fishermen. This highlighted the relationship between conservationists and the fishing industry. Launched by the Minister of Conservation in July, the DVD showcased the Trust working with fishermen at Long Point.
- The Trust continues to work with the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group on possum eradication on Otago Peninsula, in particular at the Trust's reserves Otekiho, Okia and Otapahi.
- World Ranger Day was held on 31 July at Okia Reserve with supporters and pupils from the Otago Peninsula schools.
- Media appearances continued throughout the year, with articles in print, on radio and television.

- The Trust assisted in the planning and logistics for the company Two Bearded Men to film an Air NZ Christmas commercial featuring the small pyramid on Okia Reserve. This was broadcast online on the Air NZ website to attract ex-pats home for Christmas.
- Staff volunteered their time to assist the Seaweed Cleanup on 2 March.
- Field Manager David McFarlane attended *Seabirds, Shearwaters, Science and Sea Week* meeting in Kaikoura in April.
- West Coast Penguin Trust has donated surplus bait stations and tunnels for the Trust's use at Long Point, and trustee Inger Perkins spent a day at the Trust to learn about the administration of our organisation.
- The Trust newsletter *Hoiho* was produced in May and November, and the Nursery Newsletter in Autumn and Spring.
- The Trust donated plants to the Sinclair Wetlands and then assisted with planting them (30 April).
- Submissions:
 - CSP submission on 2014/15 Draft Plan.
 - Environment Southland supporting Southland District Council and South Catlins Development Trust consent for a water treatment facility at Curio Bay.
 - Liaison with Venture Southland, Southland District Council, South Catlins Development Trust, including a submission in support of a new sewage scheme for the camping ground, and another supporting the recently notified resource consent from South Catlins Development Trust for a heritage centre in the Curio Bay camping ground.
- We worked with Protect Our Penguins (Brighton, south of Dunedin) over dog issues and blue penguins and donated plants for restoration of penguin habitat on Barney's Island.
- The Trust continued to have representation on the Te Rere Reserve Management Committee.
- We submitted articles to the Penguin Taxon Advisory Group, publisher of online Penguin Conservation Newsletter, on yellow-eyed penguin breeding season and craniofacial/scissor bills.
- Thanks to volunteer Jordana Whyte and trustee Lala Frazer for representing the Trust at the St Kilda beach *Dogs Breakfast* on the 9 November, and Jordana alone at the Brighton Beach *Dogs Breakfast*. These were events to educate the public about dog walking practices on local beaches where wildlife can be found.
- The Trust held a stall at the Botanic Garden Plant Sale in October, with assistance from volunteers Josie Frazer (dressing up as a penguin) and Diana Wilson.
- The Trust has continued to expand our relationship with the Ministry for Primary Industries, meeting on issues of mutual concern.
- The Trust also continues to expand our relationship with iwi, in particular this year with Te Rūnanga O Ōtākou, Awarua and Waikoau.

Visitors / Visited

- Long-time lessees of grazing land at Tavora Reserve, Graeme and Sherry Thurlow, were farewelled from the area and the new owners Simon and Kirsten Engelbrecht welcomed.
- In June Dunedin conservationists were invited on a trip with Dame Jane Goodall including YEPT General Manager Sue Murray.
- Forest and Bird's new General Manager Hone McGregor visited in August.
- SANCCOB's Marguerite de Preez (Volunteer Coordinator) visited in October and shared ideas and comparisons of their work with the African penguin.
- In November The PEW Charitable Trusts' New Zealand representative Bronwen Golder (Director of Kermadec Initiative based in Wellington), and USA representatives Liz Karan (Officer, Global Penguin Conservation Campaign based in Washington DC) and Ryan Dolan (Senior Associate, Southern Ocean Sanctuaries also based in Washington DC) enjoyed a trip around Otago Peninsula sites with the Trust.
- Sir Peter Blake Trust Conservation Ambassadors Dannie Cullen and Samantha Collings spent a month in the south undertaking a variety of penguin related tasks, including assisting the Trust on Codfish Island, at the nursery and other habitat work in February.

Volunteer Hours

(Note: these figures are for the calendar year Jan – Dec 2014).

	Nursery	Habitats	Board Mtgs	CMC	ERC	Total hrs	# per month	# weeks
TOTAL	1312	1299	244.25	93.00	81.75	1718.00	143.17	42.95

Sincere thanks to all our dedicated volunteers who assist in every aspect of the Trust's work.

The effort and commitment to this assistance is hugely appreciated by the Trust.

The Nursery volunteers contribute significantly to plant production and offer skills such as electrical and building to maintain the functioning of the Nursery.

The Field team are ably assisted by volunteers with the annual penguin monitoring and habitat maintenance tasks.

Trustees and Staff

- During the year Mike Morrison resigned from the Trust Board due to a conflict of interest with his new role at DOC. Sincere thanks to Mike for his contribution to the Board during the four years he was a member.
- Caitlin Irwin was welcomed as an Emerging Leader Trustee in November.
- Aviva Stein was appointed as Ranger in May and is working two days in the habitats and two days at the nursery.
- Casual employment contracts were awarded to Anne Yang and Charles Frazer who both assisted at the Nursery while field staff were away on both Codfish and Auckland Island trips.

- Jim Watts was employed in November 2014 to March 2015 to assist with the avian diphtheria research programme. The Trust thought this work to be sufficiently important we funded it out of reserves.

Last year, through a significant quote from Dave McFarlane's report, I emphasised the dire position of the yellow-eyed penguin population. This year I have concentrated more on the day-to-day operation of the Trust. What has been happening in our habitats has received excellent coverage in local newspapers, Stuff, TV ONE and TV3, and *Our Changing World* on Radio New Zealand National. Such publicity is important in maintaining our profile and in drawing attention to the penguin conservation cause.

As with all successful organisations, ours runs on the efforts and enthusiasm of the people involved. Our full complement of trustees strives to provide effective governance of the trust. As always our thanks go to Sue Murray, our General Manager, for such effective leadership, and to our staff, all of whom are unstinting in their efforts to deliver the kinds of conservation outcomes we all share. Also, our thanks go to all our volunteers and supporters, without whom the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust could not succeed.



Eric J. Shelton
Chair