

# SEABIRD GENIUS

## The story of L.E. Richdale, the Royal Albatross and the Yellow-eyed Penguin

Neville Peat

---

The first biography of Lance Richdale, who achieved international fame as the father of Otago's albatross colony from 1936 and for his research on the behaviour of the yellow-eyed penguin – Time magazine dubbed him 'The Dr Kinsey of the penguin world' – and the sooty shearwater, or muttonbird.

Richdale grew up in Wanganui, took a tertiary course in agriculture in New South Wales, and returned to New Zealand to teach mainly in rural schools in the North Island for several years, eventually taking up a position with the Otago Education Board in 1928 as an inspiring itinerant agricultural instructor and nature study teacher.

Richdale never gave up his day job and incredibly in the weekends, holidays and evenings undertook major, meticulous and time-consuming research on penguins, albatrosses and several petrel species. His study of the muttonbird was achieved during prolonged solo camps on tiny Whero Island in stormy Foveaux Strait, where the wind blew straight from Antarctica.

Neville Peat's biography searches the traces left by this shy and obsessed man for some answers to two questions: why? and what drove him? Richdale's legacy is a nature tourism industry in Dunedin worth \$100 million a year, and the longest-running seabird population study in the world.

### About the Author

**Neville Peat** is the author or co-author of more than 30 books that explore themes of geography, natural history, environment and biography. He has been a finalist in the Montana New Zealand Book Awards three times and once in the New Zealand Post Children Book Awards. His most recent biography of Sir Tim Wallis was a bestseller.

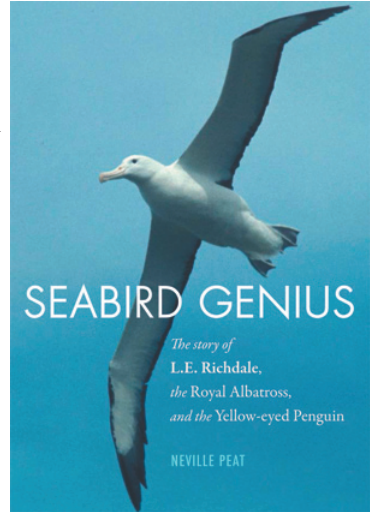
---

### SEABIRD GENIUS

The story of L.E. Richdale, the Royal Albatross and the Yellow-eyed Penguin  
Neville Peat

Biography/Ornithology/Conservation

240 x 170 mm, 240 pp, ISBN 978 1 877578 11 3, \$45.00



# Contents

- 1 '... a rising gale among trees'
- 2 Head Boy
- 3 Nature Study Man
- 4 Communing with Penguins
- 5 The Frenetic Forties
- 6 Whero – 'Treasure island'
- 7 America
- 8 Honoured
- 9 O, to be in England
- 10 Farewell to Father, Whero and Classrooms
- 11 Petrel Pressure
- 12 The Auckland Years
- 13 Legacy



Available at good booksellers from November 2011 or please use the order form below

---

## ORDER FORM

Yes, please send me (indicate number of copies). Prices include p&p within New Zealand  
..... **Seabird Genius @ NZ\$45.00 including GST**

Yes, I would like to receive regular Otago University Press Newsletters

Electronic copy (please provide email address below)

Please charge my credit card  Visa  Mastercard

Card No 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry date 

--	--

 month/year Signature.....

A Cheque for..... is enclosed

Name on card.....

Send to.....

Email.....

Send to: Otago University Press, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand  
email: [booksales@otago.ac.nz](mailto:booksales@otago.ac.nz). Phone (03) 479 8807. Fax (03) 479 8385  
GST No. 11-163-831

[www.otago.ac.nz/press](http://www.otago.ac.nz/press)