

# YELLOW-EYED PENGUIN TRUST NEWS

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The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, A charity working to save our penguins forever for everyone!

## Celebrating our 20th Anniversary - October 2007



What does the Otago Peninsula mean to people? To David Bellamy, it is “the finest example of eco-tourism in the world”. To you, it may be a place to live, or a place to visit with friends and relatives for a day out. It may be spiritually significant, or your source of income. You may love it for its island-like isolation, or you may enjoy the company of unique bird species visible all over the peninsula.

To us at the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, the Otago Peninsula represents a unique geographical situation, and a place where we have concentrated time, resources and energy over the past 20 years. As a conservation organisation, it is a special place where we can work to ensure the yellow-eyed penguin lives and breeds successfully.

Now, we feel that the time is right to celebrate the Peninsula itself, discuss the values it represents to different groups of people – past and present, and to debate the future uses of peninsula land, people and wildlife.

You may already be aware that 2007 marks the 20th Anniversary of the existence of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. Whether you're an “original” 1987 supporter or a more recent member, you are warmly invited to participate in a weekend of celebration, reflection, and discussion.

Our main 20th Anniversary event is a conference, scheduled for 12th - 13th October, with other public events planned on either side of the conference. The conference is called **Almost an Island: Valuing Otago Peninsula**, and will be opened by the

### Habitat Purchase

The result of our ‘Urgent Appeal’ to purchase an area of Otago coastline is imminent. Please watch our website as updates will be posted here as soon as possible.

Our sincere thanks for your patience, and we repeat the words of our main sponsor Mainland Brand “Good things take time”.



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### YEPT

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At a charity auction held in Auckland by the NZ National Parks and Conservation Foundation, the Hunt family bid and won a trip to Dunedin sponsored by Tourism Dunedin and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.

## Penguin dawn patrol

It was a real thrill for me as Patron of the Trust to be taken down to Otapahi for my first dawn penguin experience. An early start of 4.00am was not a problem with the knowledge that an amazing experience awaited me. Dunedin did its part as well. It was a marvelous morning, mild, warm even, still and cloudless; the stars were still out and the moon was a magnificent pale white orb. The Hunt family was a brave bunch, deciding to leave the safety of Northern climes to the unknown of the South and a 4.00am start! Good on them.

I drove the Hunt's three kids along the harbour road then up and over to the coast at Portobello. Sophia (little girl) even asked me if the sun was coming up, and assured me that while I didn't want to be too cocky I felt there was a good chance it would.

Out of the cars and into the long grass and flax and we sit and wait. The day is even better on the coast as pre dawn light reveals plenty of plucky penguins off for their daily meals. I say plucky as there were two sea lions patrolling the beach frontage and we almost witnessed a three-penguin massacre as the sea lions suddenly changed direction and headed for our little penguins. I've never seen Hoiho move so quickly, with a kind of fast shuffle/pogo type movement all three belly flopped themselves onto the rocks, and safety, and not before time! An impasse then ensued and was still employed as we said goodbye to the beach and made our way back for a wonderful decadent breakfast at Captain Eady's Lookout hosted by Ana & Richard Good. I was the first to leave as I had training to attend to (on an impossibly full belly I might add!!). And as I drove back, already up for five hours with all of the day ahead of me and having just experienced something rare and treasured I couldn't help but think;

Thank goodness I live here, and  
Hooray for belly flops  
Regards



Anton Oliver



## RESEARCH / STEWART ISLAND

### Disease investigation in yellow-eyed penguin chicks

Andrew Hill / Maurice Alley

NZ Wildlife Health Centre  
Massey University - April 2007

New evidence is emerging that disease is playing a significant role in the poor fledging success of penguin chicks on Stewart Island. A combined investigation into two diseases, *Diphtheritic Stomatitis* and *Leucocytozoon*, affecting yellow-eyed penguins was conducted by Massey University during the 2006/07 season.

#### *Leucocytozoon*

The blood parasite *Leucocytozoon* was first seen in 4 chicks submitted for post mortem examination in 2005. This is a malaria-like parasite that forms cysts in organs such as the liver and spleen, and destroys blood cells leading to anaemia and weakness. It is spread by sandflies which are plentiful on Stewart Island

To examine what was unfolding during the last breeding season, Dr Andrew Hill joined with Thomas and Tiffany at Rollers and Golden Beaches for two weeks in November. Chicks and adults were monitored for signs of illness and blood samples taken to determine the presence of blood parasites.

Initially, the chicks appeared poorly developed, weighing only 100-200g at 10 days of age, and were in poor condition with minimal down growth. Unfortunately, we saw these chicks become progressively more weak and pale with bulging eyes and mouths, and many developed oral diphtheria lesions. This was the height of an outbreak of deaths that was to claim most of the Anglem coast's chicks.

Blood testing revealed that despite their healthy appearance, 10 of 11 adults were

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## Foraging of penguins from Stewart and Codfish Island 2006/07

### Further indications of a sea-based problem

Last year's successful deployments of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's GPS data loggers on breeding penguins on Stewart Island and Codfish Island delivered lots of new insights into the penguins' behaviour at-sea. Yet the results also raised more questions. How could it be that the high foraging effort observed in Codfish Island penguins suggested a poor food situation at

harbouring the *leucocytozoon* parasite. Fortunately this did not seem to affect these adults with a healthy immune system. Samples taken from chicks which had died showed that 7 of 7 chicks were infected with leucocytozoon, indicating that infection was far more widespread than initially realised. It is possible that adults may be a reservoir for infections to spread to chicks.

Testing was also conducted throughout populations on the Otago Peninsula, Katiki Point and the Catlins to determine the spread of leucocytozoon. At this stage there does not appear to be an easy method of treating or preventing infection with this parasite, however, we have only just started to realise it is a problem and learn how it infects and interacts with penguin chicks.

#### *Diphtheritic stomatitis*

This disease syndrome continued to be a major cause of death over the past breeding season with lesions seen in about 32% of dead chicks. Although it was found on the Otago Peninsula early in the season, it was not as bad here as previous seasons and appeared to be more common in chicks from further south including Bravo and Stewart Islands.

Detailed histological studies have shown that the lesions could be divided into 2 types, a severe type associated with large numbers of *Corynebacterium* organisms and a mild type with few bacteria and occasional cellular inclusions suggesting a viral cause. However, the electron microscope and PCR studies that have been undertaken at Massey University to date have failed to confirm the presence of any recognised virus in the affected tissues. Further studies to look for a wider variety of agents are planned in collaboration with other Institutes.

their foraging sites while their chicks seemed to flourish? And why was it exactly the opposite on Stewart Island, where chicks were dying of starvation and disease while their parents' foraging behaviour suggested an adequate food supply in the vicinity of their breeding sites? The phenomenon which since has become known as the "Stewart Island Paradox" warranted further research. The key question this time was whether the differences between the Codfish and Stewart Island penguins had more to do with food quality rather than quantity. In November and December 2006 we deployed GPS loggers on adult penguins from both sites to study their foraging ranges and diving behaviour. At the same time we examined the penguins' prey composition.

Although the analysis of the data is still ongoing the preliminary results already shed new light on the "paradox". At first, the foraging patterns recorded on penguins did not reveal any major differences from those observed in the previous season; both Stewart Island and Codfish Island birds foraged in the same areas while performing mainly dives to the seafloor. However, on Codfish Island the penguins started to perform long foraging trips to Te Waewae Bay earlier than the year before. In 2005/06 penguins only crossed Foveaux Strait during the post-guard stage of breeding; this season they did so when chicks were still small – an indication that food closer to the island was scarce. In retrospect, this was quite possibly a result of El Niño which was probably also responsible for the poor breeding outcome in the entire region.

While the Codfish Island birds adjusted their foraging behaviour by foraging longer at an earlier breeding stage, the foraging patterns of Stewart Island birds revealed no apparent response to food scarcity. However, considering the foraging patterns we recorded on Stewart Island birds since early 2005 – which all look identical – it seems likely that these patterns are due to a limitation of suitable foraging grounds within range rather than "reluctance" of the penguins to change their behaviour.

The preliminary analysis of diet samples supports this notion. Of the 12 penguins that were sampled on Stewart Island several had hardly any food in their stomachs and only three birds regurgitated diagnostic remains that consisted chiefly of blue cod. In contrast, diet samples obtained from 16 Codfish Island birds appeared more voluminous and more diverse with opalfish, blue cod, arrow squid and sprat being commonly found. All this suggests that the feeding conditions yellow-eyed penguins encounter along the Stewart Island coast are insufficient and – quite obviously – inadequate to successfully rear chicks. We are currently investigating what might cause such a situation for the penguins. The degradation of the benthic environment due to oyster extraction off Stewart Island is one possible explanation – but this needs further substantiation.

Thomas Mattern &  
Tiffany Browne,  
Department of Zoology,  
University of Otago,  
Dunedin



## Stewart Island Update, May 2007

Sandy King

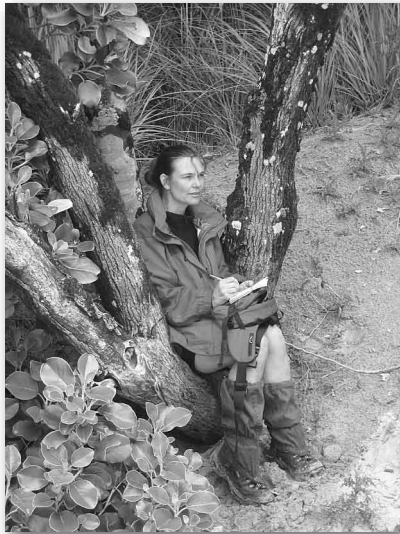
The fourth season of the Trust's 5-year study on Stewart Island has taken everyone by surprise. Breeding success in the monitored area on Stewart Island this season is 0%, with all 32 of the chicks hatched dying. Most of the deaths occurred when the chicks were less than 3 weeks old, with the average age at death being 10 days. By mid-December only one chick survived and Joanna and I packed up our field gear and returned to civilization in time for Christmas. The surviving chick was monitored by volunteers until early January by which time it was no longer being guarded by its parents. After that I checked it weekly, and it continued to grow and develop as normal, apparently oblivious to and unaffected by the fate of

its contemporaries. It was weighed in early February and topped the scales at 6.2kg – 600gm heavier than the next heaviest chick which was on Codfish Island. Needless to say I was completely surprised to find it dead on 28 February, at 109 days old and probably very close to fledging. Thanks to Ian Wilson, a local water taxi operator and long-time supporter of the Trust's work on Stewart Island who made a special trip to collect me and the freshly dead chick, I was able to send the carcass off to Massey that same day. A post mortem examination confirmed that the chick had been killed by a blood parasite called leucocytozoon, that it had died suddenly and had been in good condition before it died.

In comparison, 52 chicks hatched and 29 chicks fledged from monitored nests on Codfish Island, and 31 chicks hatched and 10 fledged from the Bravo islands. Breeding

## A Christmas like no other

FIN BUCHANAN



**Carol Nanning writes about her experience as a volunteer for the Stewart Island monitoring project. December 2006**

I had never monitored yellow-eyed penguins before but had experience monitoring forest, rats, bait and birds in mud, and had grovelled through, over, and under kiekie, mingimingi and supplejack in thick Coromandel bush. Great preparation for my short volunteer stint on the Anglem Coast, Stewart Island!

Sadly, just prior to leaving the Coromandel, Sandy King and The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust sent news that of the 32 chicks monitored, only one chick ('Big Fluffy') had survived.

Nevertheless, Bungaree Hut became home-base. Joanna, outgoing field assistant, showed me the ropes. I was introduced to 'Big Fluffy' and the sound of yellow-eyed penguin calling within hours of arriving (It sounded to me like Little Spotted Kiwi at first). Getting to the nest entailed a bit of a walk followed by a grovel though coastal forest where we arrived at a site where twisted and gnarled tree roots were thick with penguin sign. A strong fishy smell indicated we were close to the nest site. On hands, knees and belly I quietly made my way to where 'Big Fluffy', in a small patch of watery light, was sleeping. Mum or dad had moved a metre or so away and stood motionless. At forty days old, Joanna believed 'Big Fluffy' was entering the post guard stage and this proved true as mum and dad began to leave the nest together to fish to satisfy the appetite of their baby.

Subsequent visits to check on 'Big Fluffy' found me a few metres from an upright, alert, looking chick wearing a fur coat that ended at the ankle, sitting very still amongst the vines. In a short time, like those before me, fondness for 'Big Fluffy' created an attitude and after leaving the island I was thrilled to get news of 'my' chick's progress. 'Big Fluffy' became 'Big Scruffy', taking on the punk rocker look before I received a delightful photo of 'my chick' as a bird, glorious in waterproof plumage.

Despite the sadness of hearing of 'Big Fluffy's' subsequent death, the experience and pleasure of working in such a beautiful environment for and with such dedicated people was a treat. As was experiencing the generosity of Islanders, not only the 'real' locals (fifth generation) but also the newbie's and transients. My grateful thanks for the experience and I look forward to seeing more of the charms of Stewart Island in the future.

success on these islands is lower than it has been in the previous three seasons, but it is still much better than nothing! As another quick comparison, in mid-January I visited another area on Stewart Island where good numbers of yeps were recorded in the Trust's census in 1999-2000. I quickly found seven nest sites from this season, of which six were still active and contained a total of 10 healthy looking chicks. This suggested to me that whatever had happened in our monitored area on the Anglem coast was fortunately not an island wide event.

So what is happening on the Anglem coast? At the end of last season we concluded that we needed to understand more about the roles of disease and food supply in relation to starvation and chick mortality. Put simply the question was "Are chicks starving because they are ill, or are they ill because they are starving?" We also concluded that this question couldn't be answered by the Trust's monitoring project alone, and that more detailed research would be required. This season Andrew Hill from Massey University has been looking at the role of disease in the population. Thomas Mattern, who recently completed his PhD study on foraging behaviour of yellow-eyed penguins (YEPT News Issues 34 & 35), was contracted by the Trust to continue working on the Stewart Island and Codfish birds, and Tiffany Browne, a student at Otago University, has begun looking at the effect of food supply on breeding success of yellow-eyed penguins in the same areas (see article this issue by Mattern & Browne). It will be exciting when

we can sit down and look at results from all three studies, put the pieces of information together and hopefully get an overview of what has been happening. That should give us some direction for the up-coming fifth and final year of this study.

**Joanna Wright** joined the Trust in 2006 to assist with the Stewart Island monitoring project. Due to the disasterous season when all the chicks died, she joined our Dunedin based team and quickly became an integral part of the field work – trapping, planting, spraying and plant propagation at the Nursery. All tasks were carried out no matter how mundane or specialized and we thank Joanna for her 6 months work with us.



### 'I Bake for Penguins'

#### Where have 1500 eggs, 1312 kg flour and 937kg butter gone?

The Church Hill Café on Stewart Island, owned and operated by Annett Eiselt, supports the Trust's Stewart Island penguin study by way of their unique 'I Bake for Penguins' fundraising campaign. Whilst on the Island in February, Annett presented the Trust with a further cheque bringing the total donations to the Trust since April 2006 of \$2733. This figure would have been over \$3000 had the Café not been robbed in June of 2006. This unfortunate incident has not fazed Annett, and she continues to bake for penguins.

Annett says: "Baking for penguins started in April 2006, my home-made most popular apple cake got the name Penguin Apple Cake and is \$1 dearer than the other desserts. This \$1 and another \$1 from Church Hill business go towards the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust with each customer having this dessert (\$2 per each person)."

So since April 2006, Annett has sold approximately 1500 desserts or 125 whole cakes, which stacked on top of each other, would reach 8.75 metres high.



*125 Whole cakes if stacked would reach 8.75 metres high!*

## 'Cruise for Conservation':

Sue Murray reports on her trip with Heritage Expeditions to the Sub-Antarctic Islands



*My fears of seasickness or falling overboard and being eaten by some large predator (mind you I was chased by a sea lion!) were unfounded. I had the most amazing trip aboard the Spirit of Enderby to our sub-Antarctic Islands in January - what a way to start a New Year.*

*Heritage Expeditions run a very professional business, and life on board the boat could be compared to that of a very good hotel - only with a bit more rocking and rolling! Their chefs turned out exceptional food - how on earth they were able to prepare it in some of the conditions still baffles me, but for those that remained vertical it was very much appreciated. We were encouraged to mingle with the 24 Russian crew including those on the bridge which was a wonderful lookout post, even though most conversations with the crew were very limited due to the language barrier.*

*Whilst we traveled south the weather conditions at sea were a little rough. At one stage the 1st Mate very proudly showed me the chart which summed up the conditions as a "severe gale" - winds of 40 knots and swells up to 8 metres. As a totally inexperienced sailor, I had complete faith in them to get us safely south, and just enjoyed the views of crashing seas and birds appearing to be in slow motion as they too struggled against the conditions. Seeing land appear on the horizon after 36+ hours was an amazing feeling, and gave one an unexpected appreciation of how the early sailors must have rejoiced. And their amazing finds were unaided by our modern means such as navigational tools and satellite communications.*

*During the course of the week we spent days on Campbell Island, the main Auckland Island, and Enderby Island. The three trips were quite different as each had some of its own unique flora and fauna. Walking amongst the megaherb fields and the breeding Southern Royal Albatross was a magical experience - the grace of the birds and the colour of the megaherbs is an image that will never be forgotten.*

*However the highlight for me had to be Enderby Island where we were taken ashore in a naiaid, landing on a rocky platform in the midst of kelp and only 50m away was our welcoming party - a group of six yellow-eyed penguins who were quickly joined by a further three - nine in total. What an awesome sight. I walked the circumference of the Island and saw yellow-eyed penguins constantly throughout the day: adults, juveniles and chicks. They were everywhere - on nests, basking in the sun, waddling across rocky outcrops, lying in the shade of the rata forest, nestling into the biddi-bid carpets, or calling to their mates.*

*Early estimates of the population in the 1990's has Enderby Island at approximately 600 breeding pairs and I could well believe it. They were unafraid of our presence (as was all the other wildlife), watching us*

*It was the trip*





as curiously as we watched them. Even one poor injured bird allowed us a closer look to determine the extent of its injury - two puncture wounds to the stomach area by a large predator. The trip back to Bluff was hindered by poor weather, however the crew did some chumming off the back of the ship, drawing large numbers of seabirds close by for all to enjoy. What an experience - what a trip. Thank you Heritage Expeditions, and thank you to my Trust Board for nominating me to go as their advocate.



*trip of a lifetime!*



Heritage  
Expeditions

[www.heritage-expeditions.com](http://www.heritage-expeditions.com)



## Fabiane Fonseca

Every winter the Magellanic penguin migrates from Patagonia in (south Argentina) where they breed, to north Argentina, Uruguay and south Brazil and several oiled penguins are found on the beaches in these 3 countries. The oil comes from oil-contaminated ballast water spills and tank washing oil splits.

My interest in the penguin problem started in 2001 when I was studying at Veterinary University in Brazil and I attended a course about rehabilitation of oiled birds. In the next winter I worked as volunteer in a rehabilitation center, Centro de Recuperação de Animais Marinhos – CRAM, on the recuperation of oiled penguins. At the end of the same season I went to Piriapolis, Uruguay to do the same work. Since then I have been working with penguins and other marine animals at Centro de Estudos Costeiros Limnológicos e Marinhos do Rio Grande do Sul – CECLIMAR. After finishing my graduation I started to do research on penguin virology as a project for a master thesis.

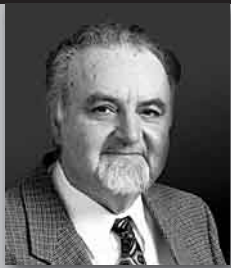
Last year my husband received a scholarship to come to Dunedin to work as a research visitor for his PHD. Before we left Brazil I found the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust webpage and got very interested in their work. Arriving here I looked for them and started to work as



Fabiane pots on at the Nursery with fellow volunteers, Gaileen Alex

volunteer at the nursery and also searching for penguin nests on the beaches.

The greatest thing about working at YEPT is getting to know a different conservation problem, and a different way to work it out, totally new for me. Also working with such nice people and in such a great environment.



**Professor Tisdell** first visited the Otago Peninsula in 1987 to study the economic potential of the wildlife on it, particularly the yellow-eyed penguin. He returns 20 years later to review and update his original work, and to speak about the economic return of Otago Peninsula's indigenous biodiversity to Dunedin City."

## Conference

Continued from page 1

Hon. Damien O'Connor, Minister of Tourism, and Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin.

The conference will feature speakers from Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand and Australia. They will represent Otago Peninsula interests such as ecotourism, environmental economics, conservation organisations, local and regional government, iwi, and farmers.

The keynote speaker will be **Professor Clem Tisdell**, an internationally respected expert in environmental economics from the University of Queensland. Additional speakers will discuss models successfully combining conservation and eco-tourism, including Dr Peter Dann of the Phillip Island Nature Park in Victoria, Australia. He is zoologist and research manager for this non-profit organisation, which provides a research facility for little blue penguins and other animals, an education programme for schools, and a tourism destination.

Finally, speakers closer to home will bring alternative perspectives on the Peninsula and what the future priorities and potential should be. These include:

- **Tahu Potiki**, Chief Executive of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu representing Ngai Tahu Tourism and Otakou Runanga,

- **Neville Peat**, natural history writer and Deputy Chair of the Otago Regional Council,
- **Jeff Connell**, Conservator for Department of Conservation Otago,
- **Dave Hawkey**, CEO of Real Journeys in Te Anau,
- **Jan Hindson**, Chief Executive of Tourism Dunedin, and
- Representatives from farming, local government and Peninsula community groups.

In addition to the conference, plans include a public lecture, open days with Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust staff and trustees, eco-tourism opportunities, and possibly even an exhibition.

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has always been a conservation organisation. However, we recognise that conservation and values have changed and will continue to change over the next twenty years. We therefore hope this conference, and the 20th Anniversary celebrations, will help to raise awareness of conservation and biodiversity issues on the Otago Peninsula, explore changing uses and values, and prepare us for the future. We hope you will join us!

Watch our website for updates and information about registrations, programme etc: [www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz](http://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz)



# Adventure race: First Flight - span the Peninsula



## Leith Thomson, YEPT Ranger

The race day started off quite cold and looked like it was going to rain. People and their bikes everywhere, and the portaloos were in hot demand - a few last minute nerves maybe. The call was made, riders and their bikes went to the road to start the race. The starter went at 8am and we were off, up towards Taiaroa Heads. The start seemed to go well for most people but a few were fixing punctures and pumping up tyres within a few kms. Our first real obstacle was a fence, this started to sort a few race positions when some of us found out there was still power running through it. The track carried on for some time before dropping down to the east coast into Okia Reserve, where there was a drinks station.

The day was starting to warm up and the riders were well spread out as we went up hill again with some great views of the coast. Going over lots of farm land past many stunning views around Hoopers Inlet then up another hill, the legs starting to feel it. We headed down the coast through some sand traps, up grass hills and back down again where we made it to Macrocarpa cottage. Looking up from there it was one long hill ahead of us, Paradise Track. As for me I was off my bike and pushing. After about half an hour up hill I made it. Paradise it certainly wasn't - I had other names for it. Now onto Highcliff Rd and tarseal slightly up hill but feeling better with the end near, one more grind up a grass hill past the radio mast, off down hill on grass and gravel then hitting clay with some big ruts in it. I was sure there

would be some bikes lost in the ruts, but a great down hill, and there was the Tautoku fishing lodge - the end. It took me around three and half hours and seemed to me to be about 50km, a few more than I'd trained for.

This has to be one of the most scenic off road rides in New Zealand and everyone I spoke to had a great time. It was my first bike race and I hope to be back next year.

## Pieter Demmers, YEPT Trustee

We were off! The crowd of cyclists raced off like a float of hungry penguins. It was soon strung out as we hit the first hill at Taiaroa Head - it seemed much too early to be slogging up a hill on a Saturday morning. But I was soon rewarded with a magnificent view over the peninsula and it was a beautifully clear and crisp Dunedin morning. Did I say magnificent? Magnificently terrifying when I looked at the ruggedness of the terrain and the size of the hills....

I soon found myself cycling through Okia Reserve and was encouraged by the enthusiastic support of the YEPT staff manning the stations. The ride around Mt Charles was a highlight for me - passing through Sam Neill's land, it was hard to tear your eyes away from the beautiful coastline and concentrate on the track to avoid all the hazards. I had also fallen into a nice rhythm. Into Hoopers inlet - one

of the rare flat pieces - I managed to get into a small peloton which was fun, fast and tiring!

By the time I hit Sandfly Bay I was running low on energy - the sand made it difficult and sometimes

impossible to ride and I found it impossible to ride up Paradise track - it was too steep and my legs too tired! It was a relief to reach Highcliff Road - I had spent the last hour or so with a 'Veteran' who was in his 60's and kept me going, though my legs were now beginning to cramp up. Finally at the top with the end in sight we cruised down towards Smaill's beach. Hooray - no more hills! Unfortunately my mobile decided to fall out of my bag at 60kmh and I had to ride a few hundred metres back up the hill to retrieve it - grrr!

Overall what struck me was the friendliness of all the riders, helpers and landowners along the way as well as the beauty of the peninsula - for me it was a great challenge and a great ride!

This inaugural event was held on February 3rd and attended by 430 bikers, runners and walkers. The route took the participants from Taiaroa Head to Smaill's Beach over both public and private land. Part of the course went through our Okia Reserve where staff and trustees marshalled the area and held a drinks station. Staff and trustees also took part; Leith and Pieter rode, Karen ran and Lala walked. A big thank you to the organisers who contributed several peninsula groups and charities, the Trust being one of them.

*This has to be one of the most scenic off road rides in New Zealand and everyone I spoke to had a great time.*



## From the bright lights of the Mainland to the bright stars of Stewart Island

Stephen Buckingham  
– Mainland, Fonterra  
Brands NZ Ltd

On the 17th February 2007, I had the privilege of accompanying a small contingent from the Trust on an expedition to Stewart Island to witness, first hand, the impact of Mainland's recently renewed sponsorship (\$50,000 per year through the Mainland barcode redemption scheme).

Now, I am quick to claim my heritage in the deep south but I must admit I have also become rather accustomed to the warm climate of the far north and the creature comforts of home (of course I speak of a cold drink and the TV coverage of a certain Chappell-Hadlee Cricket Series). Although it was 'always sunny and hardly ever rained' when I lived in Southland, of course I was expecting to notice a drop in the temperature, and a few days of rain, low visibility and "I think that's a penguin over there, did you see it? Oh, it's gone now." Quite the contrary.



I flew into Stewart Island in a small ten-seater plane, complete with full sheep skin upholstery I might add, onto what Karen so elegantly described as "a runway in the middle of the bush". The weather was perfect, the water was crystal clear, and for a second I thought I had boarded the wrong plane in Christchurch and had somehow ended up in Fiji.

The next day we took a short boat ride to Ulva Island, an 'idyllic, predator-free bird sanctuary for rare and endangered bird and plant species'. True to the tales of the Trustees the bird life was fantastic - I lost count of how many bird species they were able to identify. Sadly, we only managed to spot some kiwi footprints for Sue. Back on the boat we visited a salmon farm, some mussel buoys, and even came within a few metres of two yellow-eyed penguins out on a casual sight-seeing trip just off the coast.

That night we took second place in the local pub quiz before enjoying a fantastic meal at the Church Hill Café - the café on top of Church Hill - including the 'special' apple cake

dessert (for every dessert sold the owner donates \$2 to the Trust).

On day three we took 'The Jester' (a 30 year old crayfish boat) around the coast to Bungaree Hut where we would stay that night. Those of us with strong stomachs decided to test our sea legs and venture out into open waters with a dive camera. The waves tossed the boat around like a rubber duck in a 2 year old's bath - it felt like we were on a never ending theme park ride. Sadly, Murphy's Law of technology came into effect and the camera decided not to work, meaning all we had to look at were a few breeds of ALBATROSS gliding around the boat (those of you who watch Monty Python will know what I'm on about).

Back on terra firma a party of four decided to make the intrepid journey to Golden Beach to catch a glimpse of 'Big Scruffy'. It wasn't the 45 minutes each way through dense bush blindly following a map that had been drawn on an old Georgie Pie menu. It even wasn't the mud that swallowed your leg whole and was reluctant to spit it out... it was the blood-thirsty sandflies on the beach that forced me to keep my jacket firmly fastened while I slowly cooked in the 28 degree heat. On the bright side we did manage to see a penguin to make it all worthwhile.

On the final day, Peter and I visited the local museum and even managed to find my old phone number in a 1983 Invercargill phone book that was on display before flying back up north.

A big thank you to locals, Sandy King, Phred Dobbins, and Philippa and Ian Wilson for also looking after me when I was on the island and providing me with jackets, boots etc when I arrived with only a sleeping bag (courtesy of our national carrier); and a big thank you to the Trustees for inviting me and putting up with my antics and crazy sense of humour over the four days.

To order your  
Mainland Chart call:  
0800 243 373



# KIDS' PAGE

May 2007

The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, A charity working to save our penguins forever for everyone!

## Technology meets conservation and we're all winners

Early in 2005 the students from Pine Hill School were fortunate to spend the day out at Okia Reserve with Margaret and Anita from the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Nursery.

The students in Room 5 had researched the different problems affecting our local wildlife in Otago. Groups of students put together ideas for how the class could make a difference. Students voted on the ideas and the winning suggestions were to plant trees to make a safe habitat for animals such as penguins, and to do a beach clean up. This was how our journey started. We had a great day out at the Margaret Hazel Reserve at Okia planting 80 trees, it was hard work but we really felt like we were making a difference.

This learning experience had a lasting effect. In 2006 Room 5 entered a web site building competition called Web Challenge hosted by TVNZ Netguide magazine. The students could choose any topic they liked and a group of three students decided to build a web page about the plight of the New Zealand endangered animals. They had completed the research the year before and got their hands dirty trying to make a difference, and now they could see the power of technology to spread this important message.

Kimberly, Leishan and Sarah put together an award winning page. We were very excited to be informed that they had won a place in the competition and the teachers quickly set about raising money for these students to attend the awards ceremony in Auckland. After three days contacting sponsors these three students and their teacher hopped on the plane to Auckland. For the students this was their first plane ride and an event of a lifetime.

They were awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place! Let's not underestimate the power of our students. They can and are making a difference for our world. Well done to these three girls who truly have a heart for conservation.



## Yellow-eyed penguins help launch school nature club!

Each year, St John's Church of England invites children from year 2 (6 years old) to join in after school activities based on hands-on fun science and nature.

Following a successful birdwatching session in the school's grounds, which include a considerable cover of trees and shrubs, club members learned about another bird, but this time a flightless one, and one that also needs lots of vegetation!

The choice of yellow-eyed penguin was simple: I wanted to share my love of this highly unusual bird with the children for a few reasons. Many of them know that I am from New Zealand and that this is a country far away over the seas from the United Kingdom, but have no concept about the wonderful, endemic wildlife that calls these islands home. Introducing the yellow-eyed penguin to them was a perfect way to discuss some of the animals and the many threats they face.

Being the beginning of the International

Polar Year (2007 and 2008) we looked and compared the penguins of the world and saw just how different they were from each other - especially our littlest bar one (the blue), the yellow-eyed! The threats this small penguin faced were many and huge by comparison.

Few of the children for example, realised that a dog, that best friend of theirs, was capable of injuring or even killing a penguin or that a chick might be vulnerable if it strayed. They can appreciate this in the frozen icy conditions of Antarctica, but surely not supposedly sunny New Zealand!

The children then created their own penguin masks, with only minimal support from helpful parents. Next we will work on a penguin dance! Watch this space!

**Henricus Peters, Club Coordinator and School Environment Officer, an overseas member of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.**



## Many thanks to...

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### Thank you to our Volunteers:

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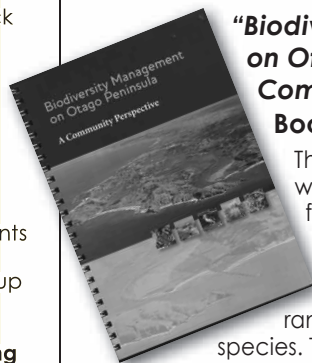
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### Thank you to:

All the Landowners who have contributed to our habitat protection work.



(R to L) Jonathan Lewis, Dunedin City Council TFG Supervisor with Stewart Henry and Norm Carr checking mustelid traps at the Otekiho Reserve, near the mouth of Otago Harbour. This is the fourth season that they have checked trap lines around Otago Peninsula as part of a co-operative trapping programme, in association with the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. Trapping at Otekiho, which borders Pilots Beach and the Tairaroa Head albatross colony has assisted titi or mutton birds in recolonising the area.



### "Biodiversity Management on Otago Peninsula: A Community Perspective" Booklet

The Otago Peninsula is well known as a key site for the conservation of yellow-eyed penguins on mainland New Zealand and a range of other native species. The Yellow-eyed Penguin

Trust welcomes the recent publication "Biodiversity Management on Otago Peninsula: A Community Perspective" by Ka'i Tahu ki Otago Ltd.

The Trust was involved in the project team that produced the booklet, which is intended as an educational resource for people who live on or visit the peninsula. As well as discussing biodiversity, the history of settlement and threats to Otago Peninsula, it offers a series of exciting visions for the future management of this very special place.

Copies are available from Lorraine Nelson, at the KTKO Ltd Office 03 477 0071, or on email [lorraine@ktkold.co.nz](mailto:lorraine@ktkold.co.nz)

### The Trust would like to welcome our newest Trustee...

A new trustee has joined the board. Dr Karen Hartshorn (33) is a development manager at Otago University's Dunedin's Multidisciplinary Health & Development Research Unit. Karen who has a PhD in Geology from Cambridge University in England, also attended Harvard in Boston, USA. She came to Dunedin in 2005 as festival director for the



NZ International Science Festival so ideally qualified, she has taken on the organising of our 20th Anniversary Conference in October. In her spare time you will find her pounding the tracks and roads around Dunedin as she is a keen cross country and marathon runner. Welcome Karen, it's great to have you on board.



### Yellow-eyed penguin Annual Symposium

The Yellow-eyed penguin Consultative Group supported by the Trust and the Department of Conservation is holding its annual symposium on Saturday 4th August 2007 at ground floor meeting room at University College (same place as last year).

The format will be the same as previous years with report backs during the morning. The afternoon session's topic is still to be confirmed.

All Welcome

For further information and registrations, contact the Trust Office or Bruce McKinlay, Secretary of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Consultative Group [bmckinlay@doc.govt.nz](mailto:bmckinlay@doc.govt.nz)

### Please remember us in your Will

Managing and/or purchasing penguin breeding habitat and controlling predators such as stoats and ferrets are some of our ongoing tasks.

Saving the yellow-eyed penguin is a long-term task.

Bequests will help secure its survival.

**Please remember us in your Will.**



BRUCE FITZGERALD