



YELLOW-EYED PENGUIN TRUST NEWS

PENGUINS
PLANTS
PEOPLE
PASSION

November 2008

International conservation award for the Trust



The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust was placed firmly on the international conservation map when we were awarded the prestigious BirdLife International Conservation Achievement Award for innovative conservation work. We are the first New Zealand conservation organisation to receive this award. Her Imperial Highness, Princess Takamodo of Japan, Honorary President to BirdLife International, presented the award on September 27th during BirdLife International's World Conference in Buenos Aires.

The awards are presented in recognition of outstanding international achievement in bird conservation. Ten awards were made in total; five to BirdLife International partners and five to individuals or organisations world-wide who are making a significant difference for bird conservation in the wild. Our thanks must go to the Royal For-

"Congratulations. I am aware that this significant accomplishment is the result of over 20 years of committed work by staff & trustees."

Hon Steve Chadwick, Minister of Conservation

est and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand who nominated us for the award and to Mike Britton, their General Manager, who accepted the award on our behalf at the conference.

We've had a sackful of congratulatory emails - thank you to everyone who wrote in, but it has been down to you that we have managed to do the work. Chris Earl, Brand Manager for Mainland summed it up when he said, "We are thrilled the Trust's great work has been recognised internationally. We also wish to thank the thousands of New Zealanders who have sent in their Mainland barcodes, which has allowed us to donate over \$1 million to the Trust".

Quite coincidentally, earlier this year our patron, Anton Oliver, in preparation for his Masters course at Oxford University on 'Biodiversity, Conservation and Management' worked with BirdLife International in Fiji's outlying Ringgold Islands where he is studying the link between biodiversity and economic security.



Mike Britton accepts Award on behalf of the Trust from Her Imperial Highness.



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The New Zealand Threat classification system and its relevance to yellow-eyed penguins

Bruce McKinlay,
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 Conservation

Yellow-eyed penguins are sometimes described as a rare penguin or the world's rarest penguin, but what does this mean? Alternately yellow-eyed penguins are declining in numbers or are becoming more endangered so what does this mean? The recently completed exercise by the Department of Conservation to review the threat classification of New Zealand's fauna and flora is an opportunity to reflect on these words and how

effort when based on an archipelago as opposed to a continent.

The system was first published in 2002 and was redesigned in 2008. The redesign was undertaken because the system is a relatively new tool and needed a quality check. Also there were issues relating to the system's underlying logic and methodology. In particular the system had an undue emphasis on population size rather than trends in population, and the categories didn't reflect reality as well as should be expected.

The new structure (see figure) makes a clear distinction between the truly threatened species and those that are at risk because of restricted distributions (such as seabirds on islands) or those which are recovering from management actions.

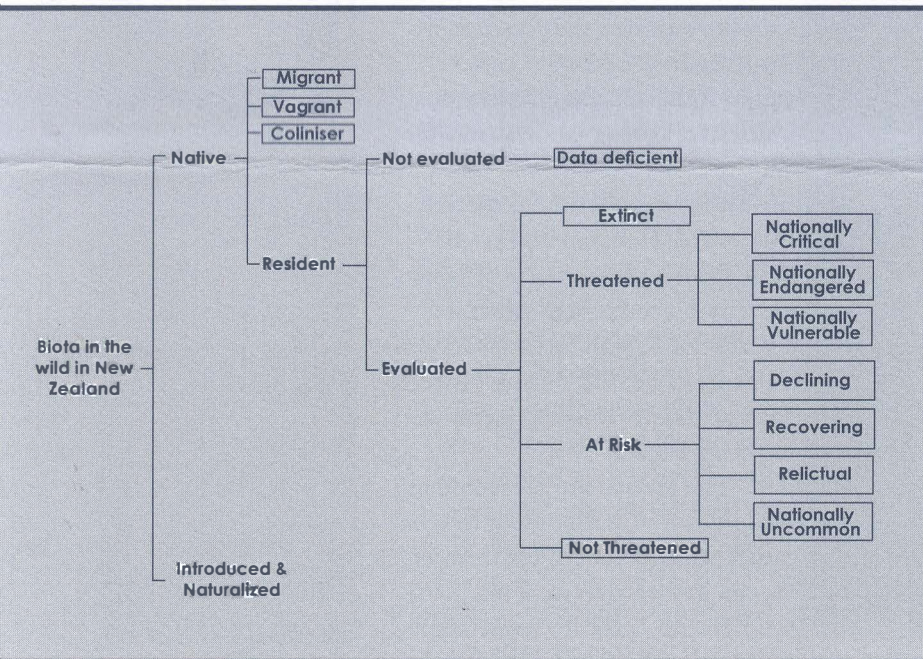
When thinking about threat classifications a key concept to keep in mind is the difference between rarity and an actual decline.

Rarity is a natural situation. Most animals and plants are rare in a global sense, in that they live in a particular place in the world, not all over it. In determining rarity a sense of scale is appropriate. For species restricted to islands and which are naturally rare, invasion by predators is a key risk. On the other hand a decline in a species leads to extinction and while such a process might be an evolutionary certainty, conservation is about working to reduce or eliminate human induced declines whether it be by disease, habitat loss, predation or something else.

So where do penguins in New Zealand sit in the NZ Threat Classification System? Of the penguins for which New Zealand is an important part of their range, blue penguins are ranked as declining; Fiordland crested and yellow-eyed are nationally vulnerable and eastern rockhopper is nationally critical. The ranking for the rockhoppers is based on the ongoing dramatic declines observed at Campbell Island and the knowledge that such declines are happening elsewhere in the species range.

Although listed in the same category, yellow-eyed penguin and Fiordland crested penguin are assessed for different reasons.

Fiordland Crested are considered vulnerable because: they have a moderate sized population with a declining population trend. In particular:



 = threat classification categories

Figure: New Zealand threat classification system 2008.

they impact on management priorities for yellow-eyed penguins.

Threat classification systems are a tool to allow managers, conservation groups, and others to assess the conservation status of species on a global scale and determine which are common or rare or are declining because of natural or human induced threats. Managers can use this information to assign priorities for work, while bodies such as the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust can use the assessments to promote the conservation work they do.

There are a number of systems in use. The most well known is the red list prepared and managed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature¹ (IUCN).

In New Zealand the Department of Conservation has designed a Threat Classification System as a tool to assess risk of extinction for a NZ species². The NZ Threat Classification System complements the IUCN Red Lists by providing a local view and more closely reflects the reality of conservation

- The total population is between 1-5000 mature individuals and;
- There is an ongoing or predicted decline of 10-50% in the total population over the next 10 years due to existing threats.

Yellow-eyed penguins are considered to be nationally vulnerable because they have a moderate stable population which is unnatural in extent. In particular:

- Total population is between 1-5000 mature individuals and;
- The population is stable +/- 10% and is predicted to remain stable over the next 10 years


Yellow-eyed penguins are probably the rarest penguin in New Zealand. They have an estimated total population of breeding pairs of 1600-1800 in 2006/07. Compared to this in 1985 there were still estimated to be 51,000 pairs of eastern rockhopper on Campbell Island, (although recent resurveys indicate further dramatic declines). Fiordland crested penguins have an estimated 2500-3000 breeding pairs but there are declines recorded. In 2000 Snares crested were estimated to have 28,800 breeding pairs. (Rockhopper and Fiordland crested figures are from the IUCN Red List³; Snares crested are an unpublished estimate by Dave Houston).

However yellow-eyed penguins are not the most threatened penguin in New Zealand. Because of ongoing documented declines that sad honour remains with the eastern rockhopper penguin.

An up to date threat classification system enables managers to prioritise. In the case of yellow-eyed penguin the assessment provides some challenges for managers, in that, although the total population is not insignificant, the potential for this to change as a result of fluctuations is a real and present threat. Maintaining up to date monitoring of breeding numbers is the only way in which managers and conservation organisations will know if a problem has arisen and that there is a need for a further management response.

STEWART ISLAND UPDATE

Stewart Island re-survey to go ahead.....



The end of the 2007/08 breeding season saw the conclusion of the Trust's 5-year project on Stewart Island, almost. At April's de-brief meeting there was unanimous support for a repeat of the Trust's 1999 – 2000 whole island census, ideally to be carried out as soon as funding permitted. We are therefore very pleased to say that over half of the required amount is now in the bank, and very grateful to the Southern Islands Area of DOC's Southland Conservancy for its donation and commitment to underwrite the remaining shortfall, thus enabling the repeat census to go ahead this summer. Special thanks to those Trust members who have donated towards this project.

The survey will be undertaken by Trust staff Sandy King (Projects Officer Southern Islands); Joanna Wright who is returning for her third summer as Field Assistant; Phred Dobbins (DOC Stewart Island Field Centre) and Paul Johnston, an Island resident and part time DOC contractor who has plenty of past experience of this type of work. Both Phred and Paul carried out surveys of remote parts of the Stewart Island coast in the early 1990's, and have been involved with the recent project, so their knowledge of the coast and experience will be invaluable. The survey will begin in November, with the team systematically working around sections of coastline checking sites where breeding has been previously recorded, and other accessible sites that have potential for birds to land and breed. As access to most places is by boat, weather and sea conditions will influence which sites can be visited. Weather permitting, we hope to round off the survey in January by visiting the rugged south western coast, which was omitted from the initial survey.

Results of the survey should answer questions about whether the rapid decline in the number of breeding pairs observed on the Anglem coast (down from 32 pairs in 1999 to 16 pairs in 2007) has occurred in other parts of the island or is confined to just that area. This in turn may help narrow down answers about why the decline has occurred, and guide future research and management, but is equally likely to raise new questions!

"...many Islanders are extremely appreciative of the investment the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has made in the health of Rakiura..."

Dill Belworthy, Glowing Sky Clothing Ltd and trustee of Ulva Island Trust

¹ www.iucnredlist.org/

² www.doc.govt.nz/templates/

MultiPageDocumentTOC.aspx?id=45785

³ www.iucnredlist.org/



LONG POINT UPDATE

Work at Long Point slowed down through the winter, but there were a couple of visits, including one by Chris Earl (Mainland Brand Manager) in August being a notable exception. Despite our best efforts the local yellow-eyed penguins remained elusive, but

Chris still enjoyed the magnificent coastal scenery. In a scene reminiscent of Fiordland, a stream flowing over the cliff edge near Cosgrove Creek was blown skywards in the gale force southerly blast.

The Community Trust of Otago were the other winter visitors to Long Point, with a whistle-stop inspection by Trustees and staff in June, to view Long Point and discuss future initiatives.

TL Surveying Ltd has completed the boundary survey work and with this done we expect that the final exchange of titles will take place before Christmas. Also before Christmas we hope to have the first meeting

of the Long Point Advisory Group.

Membership of the group is made up of Trust representatives; Max, Stewart & Jen Affleck (Long Point farm), Alan Burgess (local farming leader), Janet Ledingham (Chair – Dunedin Branch, Forest & Bird), Cheryl Pullar (DOC – Owaka), Gail Thompson (Awarua Runanga), Kevin Thompson (Councillor – Clutha District Council) and Maureen Wylie (Wakoau Runanga, Balclutha). The group will offer an important connection to the Catlins and wider South Otago community, and facilitate local input.

In other Long Point news, Otago Department of Conservation Conservator, Jeff Connell has reclassified the existing Long Point Recreation Reserve as a Scenic Reserve and vested it in the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust for that purpose. This will allow coherent management of the whole of Long Point.

Thank you to Hoiho PCB



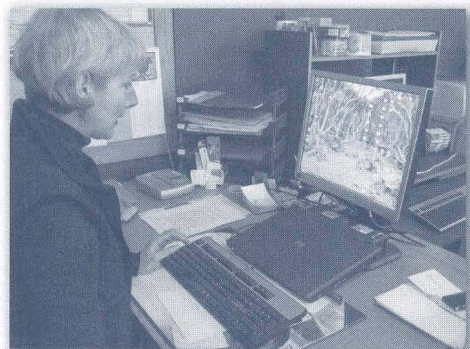
HOIHO PCB 凯豪天星

Just once in a while something out of the blue turns up that really makes a difference. We were alerted to the fact that a company called Hoiho PCB had chosen to use the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust logo as their icon and company name. We were very impressed and wrote and told the company just that. It's not often one finds another organization as passionate about our penguin as we are.



Hoiho PCB are world leaders in the manufacture of printed circuit boards used in computers and other electronic goods. They have factories in China, Malaysia, Singapore and Europe. On their website they explain that the Chairman and founder of the Group, Mr. K.F. Ho named the company after this extraordinary bird, which travels up to 15 km on its daily journeys to the feeding grounds in order to secure survival of its species. It is with the same dedication and effort that Hoiho PCB is servicing its customers in order to become and remain a world-class PCB manufacturer.

We struck up a dialogue with them and told them all about our work. Soon after, Hoiho PCB made us an extremely generous donation for capital items. It allowed us to buy our Truck which had been on loan from Cooke Howlison Toyota. We also replaced our station wagon with a newer one, had a trailer custom made and purchased a new office computer system. All the vehicles have been beautifully signwritten thanks to Miller Studios and Advertising and Art. Thanks also to Bei Yu from NHNZ who did all the translations and phone calls with China. But of course our biggest thanks must go to Hoiho PCB who made everything possible.



MESSAGE FROM MAINLAND

In early August I had the pleasure of visiting the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust in Dunedin to learn more about the Trust's work and to hopefully see a yellow-eyed penguin with my own pair of eyes.

I joined the Mainland team as a Brand Manager in late 2007. Mainland has had a long standing relationship with the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust so it was long overdue that I travel to Dunedin to see the passion of the Trust and the great work that it does to help save the yellow-eyed penguin.

The trip was spread over two days. Day one was a trek out to Long Point, the piece of land the Trust has purchased for new conservation projects. It certainly is an impressive piece of land with great potential to be a world leading conservation location and its future development is in great hands with the Trust. Day two was a trip out to the Otago Peninsula. While my experience of the yellow-eyed penguin was sadly limited to their droppings and tracks, I more importantly saw the work the Trust does to help save the penguin. Trapping pests and planting thousands of native plants to provide shelter for the penguin is key to their survival. I was also very impressed with the number of volunteers helping out at the plant nursery and the great work that is done there.

Thanks to Sue, Dave and the rest of the team for their great hospitality. And I also urge you to keep sending in your Mainland barcodes – the money we donate to the Trust comes directly from these barcodes. With your help we can continue to support the Trust and keep the yellow-eyed penguin population thriving.

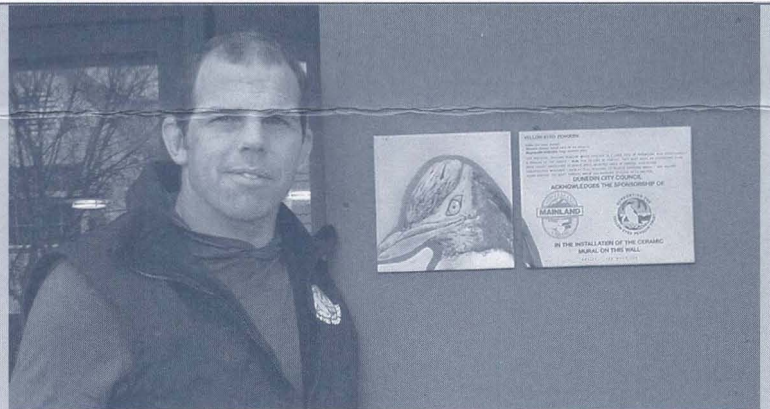
Chris Earl, Brand Manager – Mainland

Top right: Chris looks at yellow-eyed penguin tracks. Below: General Manager, Sue Murray, and Trustee, Piet Demmers with Chris.



Good things take time

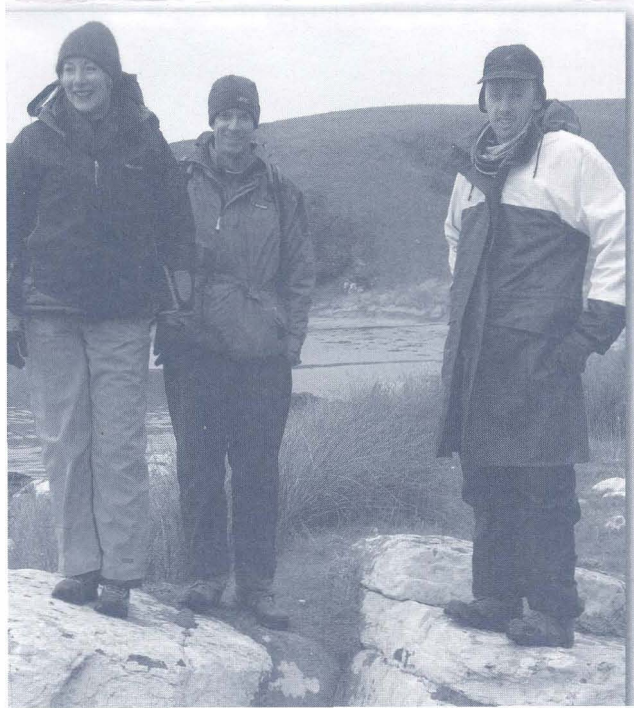
To order your Mainland Chart call 0800 243 373



Well plenty has happened in my life in less than a year. This time last year I had just arrived in France with the All Blacks for the Rugby World Cup: the less said about this the better! After our quarterfinal loss to France in Cardiff we flew straight home to 'face the music' and then in less than two weeks I found myself back on a plane off to France where I had signed a two year deal with French rugby club Toulon. I went there with no preconceptions. In fact I was a little apprehensive as I had a deep down suspicion that I would struggle to find the motivation to play for a team I had no history or connection with: to play for money. After a few brief months it turned out that my gut feeling was correct and I simply couldn't play any longer, even though the money offered to me to stay was dizzying. When I looked in the mirror I knew I would be living a lie and be deeply unhappy, so I left professional football behind for good and took up the pen instead. I got accepted to study at the prestigious Oxford University in England. The course is a one year Masters in Biodiversity, Conservation and Management after which I have absolutely no idea what I shall be doing, which is both exciting and a little scary. In the meantime I continue to stay connected with geopolitical issues in NZ and specifically those that affect the deep south and our beloved penguins. I hope everyone has a engaging and rewarding year.

Kindest Regards

Anton Oliver





Alan Wright

2007 was a very significant year in the history of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. Not only did the Trust commemorate 20 years of penguin protection but it also marked the end of an era for significant board member, Alan Wright.

Alan joined the Trust Board in 1989 initially to share his extensive knowledge of seabirds gained through his work as a lighthouse keeper and then ranger with the Wildlife Service. However it soon became apparent that his skills stretched beyond that. During his time as the Wildlife Service Ranger at Taiaroa Head and living within the Otago Peninsula community, Alan got to know a few people. In essence he was at that time the public face of wildlife management in Dunedin. When the Trust first formed in 1987 Alan quickly became an important link between the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and the locals of Otago Peninsula.

Alan is a dedicated community man and has always worked to serve it. Over the years he has assisted with countless organizations including The Portobello Volunteer Fire Brigade, Otago Peninsula Lions and as a voluntary Fisheries Officer with Fish & Game Otago. Through his interactions with people on many levels he has been able to publicise the plight that yellow-eyed penguins are facing and the measures the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust is undertaking to help them. Being a true "people person" Alan has time for everyone and shares his knowledge generously. One



Connie and Alan Wright (front row left) surrounded by volunteers, friends, and trustees at the YEPT Nursery Christmas 07 Volunteer Lunch.

Trustee admits it was Alan's infectious enthusiasm for wildlife conservation that influenced a change of career direction and now life time involvement in NZ seabird conservation. Powerful testimony to the strength of Alan's dedication.

Alan has also provided the Trust with a link to the past. As a wildlife Ranger he worked with Stan Sharpe who was for many years Lance Richdale's assistant. This has given the Trust a unique window into the pioneering work of some of the original conservationists that it might not otherwise had.

As a pragmatist he is always looking for solutions and where he sees he can help, he does. Over the years the Trust has benefited greatly from that attitude. He was instrumental in securing a shade house for the Trust Nursery that was so good that after 13 years and a little refurbishment, it is still going strong. He also put up his hand to oversee the Nursery and plant production when the Trust started to employ the equivalent of a fulltime Nursery Manager.

Unfortunately Alan's health has started to fail over recent years and as a result Alan has had to relinquish many roles within the Trust. However he has still been able to assist in running the Nursery. His good nature and sense of humour have made him popular with the Wednesday volunteers when Alan makes his weekly visits.

Alan's gift is his love for both wildlife and people, and by using this combination, his contribution to saving New Zealand wildlife has been huge. Credit must also go to Connie, Alan's wife who has supported Alan in his work both in conservation and in the community. This dynamic couple will be remembered for a very, very long time.

Thanks Alan and Connie.

AGM Meeting

The Yellow-eyed Trust will hold their Annual General meeting on

Tuesday, 25 November at the Trust office, Level 3, Queens Building, 109 Princes Street, Dunedin 5.30 pm

For further information contact the Trust Office: 03 479 0011 or by e-mail: yeptrust@gmail.com



Views from Tavora Reserve

A recent planting at Tavora Reserve by staff, volunteers and supporters of the Trust on Sunday 20 July saw over 400 native trees planted. The trees are being planted to help restore the natural coastal habitat to ensure the survival of endangered yellow-eyed penguins and encourage them to continue to breed in this area.

A recent bequest left to the Trust by Miss Marie Neverman, from Auckland who passed away in September 2007 has allowed the Trust to dedicate funding to the nursery. To recognise her contribution and thank her and her family for their support, the Trust has dedicated a special seat and plaque in the reserve, which faces toward the north of the reserve with views over the beach.



Friends enjoy the breathtaking view from the Neverman seat at Tavora.

Two other seats in the reserve also recognise former members of the Trust, Mrs Florence Grono, from Wellington who left a bequest to the Trust in 2003 and Mrs Carol Landis, from Warrington who was a strong supporter of the Trust and on the Tavora Reserve Committee for over eight years. Her husband, Chuck Landis, has taken on her role in the committee and is also a great volunteer to the Trust.

Funding from bequests will allow the Trust to maintain the new plantings for at least three years, spraying competing exotic grasses and ensuring the protective wire cages are secure, to stop possums, rabbits and hares from damaging the trees.

The Tavora reserve near Palmerston, was purchased by the Trust in 1993 and much of the natural vegetation had been destroyed. The south beach is now possibly the best example of restored dune vegetation sequence on the southeast coast of the South Island with native pingao and shore spurge.

Field Manager, David McFarlane said the planting day was a huge success with new supporters and families coming to support the event alongside Trustees and staff.

“The Trust will be running more public planting days in the future and new supporters are always encouraged to come and assist. It’s great fun and very rewarding to think that you can make a difference to the coastal habitats so that yellow-eyed penguins can thrive”, he said.

Anyone interested in leaving a bequest to the Trust, or getting involved with Trust planting days can contact the Trust directly by email, phone or by visiting the website: www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz.

Thank you

The Staff and Trustees would like to thank all those that have made this year’s planting a success. With lots of rainfall and sunshine it has got to be good for the penguin habitats.

Thanks to our regular Wednesday Nursery volunteers, GE Finance, Otago Polytech Horticulture Students, DoC Conservation Corps, DCC Planning Department, Balmacewen School, Room 14, Adventure Development Ltd, and Members of the public that came to the Tavora planting day as well as the World Environment Day public planting at Okia.



*Sincere thanks to
our bequestors and
their families.*



Congratulations

Congratulations to the Department of Conservation Coastal Otago for a successful Conservation week held 6 - 14 September.

The theme this year was “Meet the Locals”. Trustees Eric Shelton and Peter Simkins give out information about the Trust with help from penguins...Josie Frazer, Clem Smart, Riley Symon, and Molly Parker at the Octagon.

Many thanks to...

Thank you to our regular supporters:

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Horticulture
Pikao Recovery Group

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Kevin Allen, ORC
Dunedin Host Lions Club
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Lisa Ryalls
John Ingrams
Colin Emslie
Ornithological Society
(Otago)
Nick Smart
DCC Animal Control
Hoiho PCB
Royal Forest and Bird
Protection Society of NZ
The Neverman Estate
DCC Planning Dept
GE Finance
Balmacewen School
Adventure Develop Ltd
Akapatiki "A" Block
Fulton & Hogan Ltd,
Dunedin

Thank you to:

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

Thank you to all Volunteers:

We are tremendously grateful to all the other volunteers, including the regular Nursery workers and co-opted sub-committee members for their valuable contributions to our work.



2008 and beyond! Looking forward to the next five years

by Karen Hartshorn, Chair, Board of Trustees

After the whirlwind of activity that was 2007 (see Special Edition *YEPT News*, Nov 2007), this year offered us a chance to sit down and have a breather. We decided it would be an ideal year to reflect and review. Several issues were immediately clear, among them a realisation that the purchase of Long Point accomplished a major goal of the working strategic plan a few years early, and that the organisational structure was not adequately reflecting how the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust actually operates.

In order to address these, 2008 has become a year of internal restructure, the results of which will hopefully bear fruit over the next five years.

The Trust was originally founded on the principles of community, volunteerism and active conservation. While these core values have not changed, the reality of running the Trust has. We currently employ seven people and between them they run an office, a nursery, several habitats and a major research project on Stewart Island. We own, co-own or manage coastal habitat ranging from Tavora in the north to Long Point in the Catlins. We handle incoming grants and sponsorship and outgoing accounts. In other words, we run a medium-sized business, even though any "profits" go straight to penguin and coastal habitat conservation.

The first decision made was to re-introduce the idea of a Chair of the Board of Trustees, a role I have been asked to fill for the first phase. I accepted, with the proviso that the Board could review at the end of the first six months and find someone better if it wasn't working! So far they haven't sacked me...

Secondly, we dusted off the old strategic plan and decided it was time to rewrite it, the result being the Strategic Plan 2009-2014. The focus of the next five years shifts to "consolidation" rather than expansion, and to the development of world-leading conservation management practices. This will be accomplished through building a capital fund, focussing efforts on conservation management, and maintaining good relations with all external organisations and individuals. We will take the necessary time to create and implement a development plan for Long Point that reflects global best-practice and is a world leader in conservation management practices. We leave the door open to future visions, including those around new research, habitat management and education projects.

Thirdly, we re-organised the internal committee structure to better divide governance, management and operational duties, and to simplify the web of committees and sub-committees that had existed at various times. The new structure went into effect on the 1st October, and a complete diagram is available from the YEPT.

Finally, we also altered the roles of certain staff members, and are delighted that David McFarlane and Sue Murray have "upgraded" their positions to Field Manager and General Manager respectively as of the 1st October.

Now we look forward to the next five years and beyond!!



BRUCE FITZGERALD

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.