



NUMBER 18

May 1998

Yellow-eyed Penguin News

Another Successful Breeding Season

A parent and chicks wait for the other parent to return with a belly full of fish for the chicks (Dean Schneider)



Even after the death of over 100 birds at the end of last year's breeding season, the Yellow-eyed penguins have enjoyed yet another successful year. As yet, researchers have not been able to discover the reason behind so many deaths, although it is known that a good many birds suffered severe foot lacerations from barracuda and shark attacks. These often prove fatal due to infections and the severing of extensor tendons that are very close to the surface of the bird's ankle.

Zoologist John Darby, predicted that losing so many adults would not impact severely on long term population numbers. This proved to be correct with almost 600 breeding pairs being recorded nesting on the South Island this year.

The Trust's Okia Reserve produced 17 chicks, Tavora Reserve, 10 chicks and Omihi another 10.

The high rate of recruitment of new birds to the Otago Peninsula in particular is almost certainly a function of the effective predator control that has been carried out in so many places over the last ten years. The success of this campaign begs the question as to how we are going to fit all the penguins into the small amount of space available to enable them to breed.

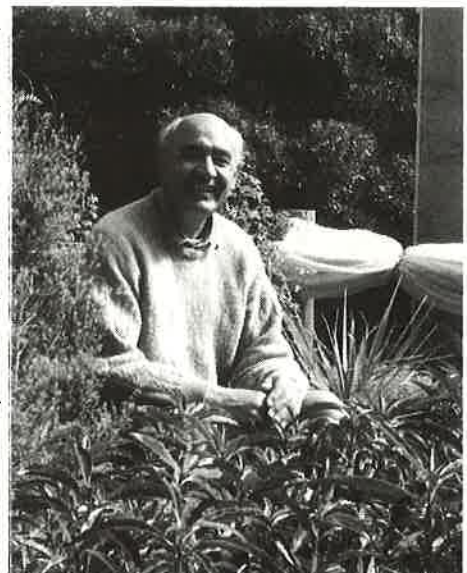
This is a challenge worth taking up. However, it brings even more pressure onto the Trust which must push ahead with revegetation with a great deal of urgency.

Donate-a-Tree

Enclosed with this newsletter is an invitation to join the Trust's Donate-a-Tree scheme.

As a tree donor you make a regular automatic payment that goes straight to the plant nursery where trees are grown for penguins to nest under.

You choose the number of trees you



Jim Ellison, Trust Field Officer, at the nursery with trees ready to plant for penguins (Clare Fraser)

would like to donate. One tree costs \$3 to produce. To create a good penguin nest site takes 10 plants, a mixture of flax and trees. To donate a penguin nest each month would cost \$30.

If you would like to become a tree donor please return the automatic payment form inside the brochure or contact the Trust for a copy of the brochure. We would love to hear from you.

Tree planters please

Volunteers are the backbone of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and we need some more volunteers with backbone - to plant trees. We have about 3000 trees and flax to plant this season and with help, they should grow into future nests for penguins.



Tree planters (Moira Parker)

Dramatic coastal scenery, new people to meet and the opportunity to do something practical for conservation are just some of the attractions of tree planting. No special qualifications are needed. Just bring old work clothes, boots or strong shoes, a raincoat, some work gloves and lunch and a drink. Come and be involved in the first year of planting at the Trust's



Tree planters (Moira Parker) newest reserve.

Saturday 23 May, Sunday 25 May and Saturday 27 June are tree planting days set aside especially for members of the Trust. We have other days arranged for other groups but members would be more than welcome to attend, so please contact us if the above days don't suit. To enrol as a tree planter please



Volunteers prepare wire mesh guards to protect trees from rabbit and possum teeth.

contact the Trust, phone 479-0011. Your help would be most appreciated.

Education Kit available

From the time it was launched in June last year, the Trust's education kit was constantly in demand until the end of the school year. To control demand, the kit was initially made available to only Otago and Southland schools but now it is being advertised to the rest of the South Island as well. It will be advertised throughout the rest of New Zealand later but in the meantime, Trust members from anywhere in the country are more than welcome to borrow the kit. It has something for every age.

It contains:

17 posters

Overhead projector talk

Information pack

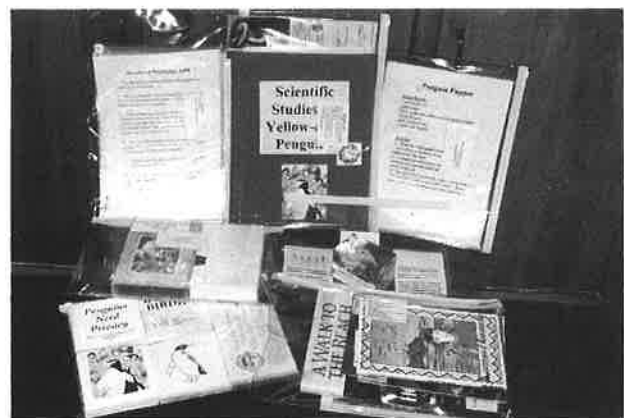
Books

Touch pack

Brochures to keep

Puppet play

Videos



Contents of the Trust's portable education kit (Clare Fraser)

A school can borrow the kit for 3 weeks. Because there is only one kit and most items are irreplaceable, there is a deposit of \$50 which is fully refundable unless any items are lost. Total postage is payable beforehand and costs \$14 for South Islanders and \$22 for North Islanders.

If you would like to borrow the kit please contact Clare Fraser at the Trust.

Fence Erected

Our new reserve on the Otago Peninsula is shaping up, thanks to the labour donated by young people from the Conservation Corps. Members of four Conservation Corps, a six month employment scheme, erected the fence on the reserve.

Co-ordinated by David Blair of the Department of Conservation, the members carried material across rugged terrain, dug holes for fence posts by hand and strained wire between the posts to erect a 2.5 kilometre long fence. According to David, it was "sheer hard work" for the Corps members.

Trustbank Community Trust generously assisted financially with the purchase of fencing materials. Thank you to both the Trust and the hardworking Conservation Corps. The fence is a great asset for the reserve, protecting penguin nests from neighbouring stock.



Holes for fence posts were dug by hand (David Blair)

Japanese Visit

Members of Penguin Conference Japan paid the Trust a visit in April. Some were children who had won a trip to New Zealand in a competition to draw a penguin.

The visit to the Trust started with a tour of the plant nursery. Children helped transfer manuka seedlings from trays into larger planter bags. The adults thought this looked like fun so joined in as well.

A bus trip took the group to overlook Okia Reserve and see the final resting place for trees from the nursery. A highlight for some of the children was Allan's Beach, where once again they put their skills to use by drawing penguins in the sand.

Penguin Conference Japan made a very generous donation to the Trust of \$1,400 for which the Trust is very grateful. One of the young artists, Takaya, made his own donation, a picture of penguins in action, shown below.



Takaya presents his picture to Alan Wright, trustee. (Clare Fraser)



Over 500 New Members

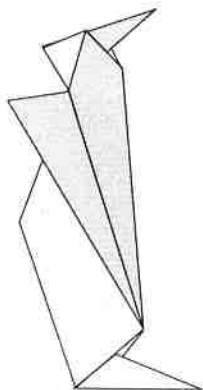
Last year the Trust ran a membership drive, in conjunction with Mainland Products. We sent a letter to over 7000 people who have supported Mainland's sponsorship of the penguin by returning their cheese barcodes to Mainland Products.

Membership of the Trust has been slowly decreasing for a few years, perhaps a reflection on the fact that penguin conservationists' successful work is increasing the population of the penguin. But if people stopped this work, the penguins would be back to square one very quickly.

Our rationale was that the cheese-eating penguin supporters might not know about membership of the Trust. We thought they might be interested in supporting the penguin further by joining the Trust and fortunately, we were right. Over 500 people became members and numerous others made separate donations totalling nearly \$4000. If our new members continue to renew their membership the Trust can look forward to nearly \$8000 of membership fees each year.

Thank you very much and a big, warm welcome to our new members. Your support of penguin conservation is very much appreciated. You have halted a worrying decline in membership of the Trust. Your contribution means that we can together carry on the crucial work of planting trees for penguins and protecting them from predators. Many of you are children so as a special thank you we have included a pattern for an origami penguin.

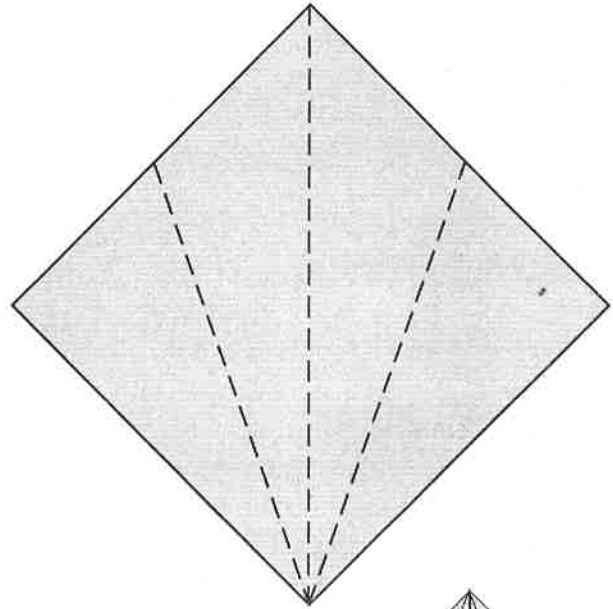
From "Earthkids" by Andrew Crowe



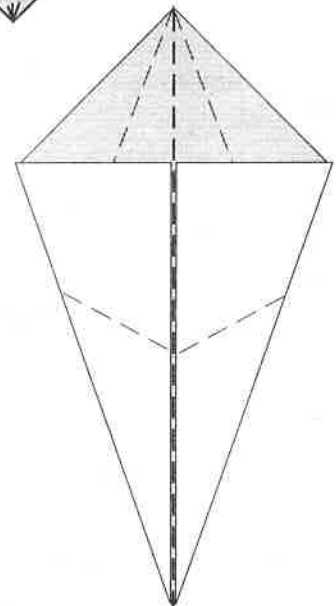
How to make an origami penguin

Start with a perfectly square piece of plain paper - about 15 x 15 centimetres is a good size.

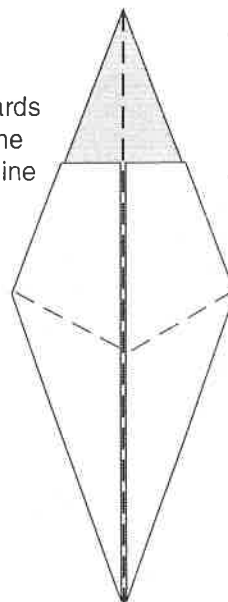
- 1 Fold along one diagonal and then fold the other corners to the centre line as shown.



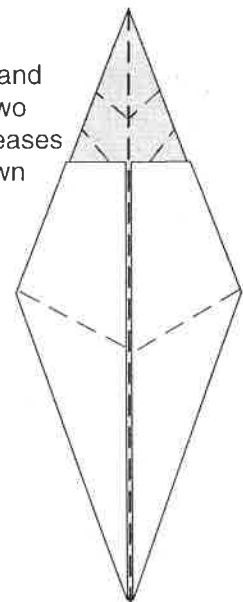
- 2 Fold the sides backwards to the centre line.



- 3a Fold backwards along the centre line

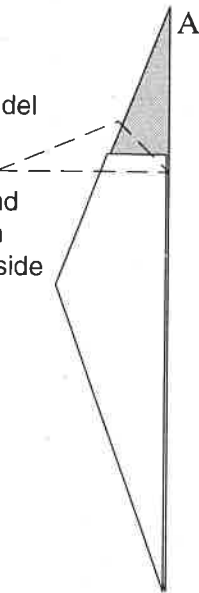


- 3b Unfold and make two new creases as shown



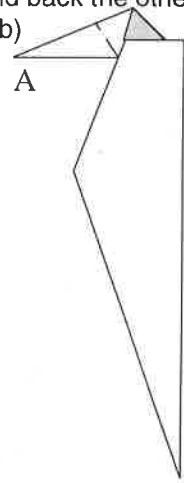
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Fold the whole model along the centre crease and then push point A inside and back

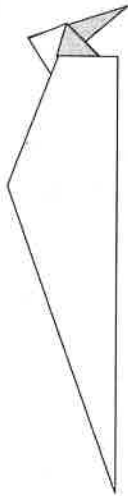


5a

Now push point A inside and back the other way. (5b)



5b

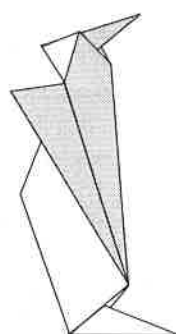
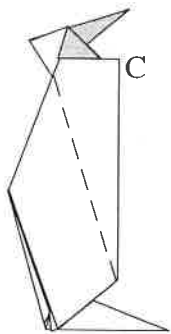


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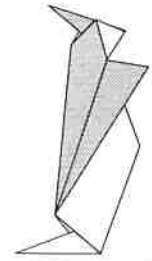
Make the two creases shown and push B inside and back, then inside and forward again, exactly as before. This forms the feet.



7



Fold C back along the dotted line. Turn the model over and make the same fold on the other side. Now your penguin's got wings.



You may have to adjust the feet a little to help the penguin stand up.

People for Penguins



"Moira Parker at Okia Reserve" (Geoff Chandler)

Moira Parker is a dedicated conservationist and our most active trustee. In fact, there is no aspect of the Trust where Moira has not been involved. 10 years ago, when the Trust was set up Moira volunteered to work unpaid as the full time administrator for a year. That year stretched on for longer and after that she made another commitment to working on the Trust's revegetation programme. Since then Moira has seldom done less than ten hours voluntary work a week and generally at least twenty. She has been involved in everything from seed gathering to weeding and watering planted trees.

Honorary life memberships of the Trust are not conferred lightly. They are only given to workers who have had a major effect on realising the vision of the Trust.

At the recent Annual General Meeting Moira was awarded with an honorary life membership in recognition of her great contribution. Much of the Trust's success is due to her. If the penguins could talk they would say:





Butter Saves Penguins

Mainland Products' generous sponsorship of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has been possible with the support of the New Zealand public. For the last 7 years thousands of cheese eaters have collected their Mainland cheese wrappers as part of Mainland's campaign to help save the Yellow-eyed penguin. For each wrapper received, Mainland donates \$1 to the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust - up to \$75,000 each year.

Mainland have extended this campaign to include their butter range which is now available nationwide. "We chose to extend the campaign to butter because of the past success of the programme and also to help widen the public awareness of Hoiho", says Sean Guildford, Product Manager for Mainland Products Limited. "We should all be concerned about nature conservation and this is something practical that people can do to help save one of the rarest penguins in the world. A big thank you to everyone who supports our campaign."



Mainland's butter packet now features a returnable bar code

 "You say goodbye,
I say hello" 

Goodbye Carol, our office manager and thank you for your efficient, cheery service. Welcome to Stephanie, the new office manager, a loyal Trust member since 1989!

STOP PRESS

9 adult penguins at the Trust's Tavora reserve were recently killed by ferrets. Predation by ferrets is nothing new for defenceless penguin chicks but virtually unheard of for adult penguins, which are five times larger than ferrets.

Traps were immediately laid and caught 5 ferrets and 1 cat. This was in addition to the 20 ferrets caught during the summer breeding season.

There has been speculation that the deaths might be due to the effects of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD). Perhaps hungry ferrets were missing their normal diet of rabbits and switching to native birds. Trust Public Awareness Officer, Clare Fraser said, "It's too early to say what is causing ferrets to attack adult penguins. But this does fit a pattern that conservationists predicted RCD may have."

STOP PRESS

Thank you

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Ron Greenwood Environmental Trust
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Dave Blair and his Conservation Corps
Trustbank Community Trust
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Helen Taw
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D Hallett
A Masters
J Crespi
P & A Schwartz
H & R Wenisch
Dean Schneider, photographer
Those who responded to our letter requesting support
John Hodgkins

