



NUMBER 21

NOVEMBER 1999

## Yellow-eyed Penguin News

### “Mr Penguin”

**J**ohn Darby, well known penguin researcher and zoologist, retired from his position of Assistant Director at the Otago Museum in July. John's enthusiasm and dedication stimulated others to become involved in the work of protecting the future well-being of the yellow-eyed penguin, leading to the Trust being established in 1987.

John's research of the penguin began in 1980 when he conducted a study on the behaviour of the yellow-eyed penguin and a survey of Otago Peninsula penguin numbers. What he discovered was hugely reduced numbers compared to the 1940 observations of naturalist Lance Richdale's. John alerted government departments and the community to this, suggesting action needed to be taken to protect this species from further decline. He broadened his research to include his own trapping programme on the Otago Peninsula to see if human help would prevent or reduce the large number of penguin deaths. He researched the genetic make up of isolated populations of penguins in the subantarctic and compared them to mainland species of penguins.

John was a founding trustee of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust and Lala Frazer, another founding trustee says, “John's extensive knowledge of the yellow-eyed penguin biology and life cycle was heavily relied on in those early days to formulate the Trust's direction and habitat management policy. His extensive network of landowners and penguin managers was also invaluable in beginning the work of dialogue leading to protection of habitats”.

Of particular importance, in the days before the Trust had become known in its own right, John's high personal profile especially made him “The Penguin Man”. He therefore was the perfect person to be the spokesperson for the Trust in the media.

Retirement for John will not mean a time of leisure. He is looking forward to getting ‘back to work’ editing a book on the natural history of southern New Zealand;

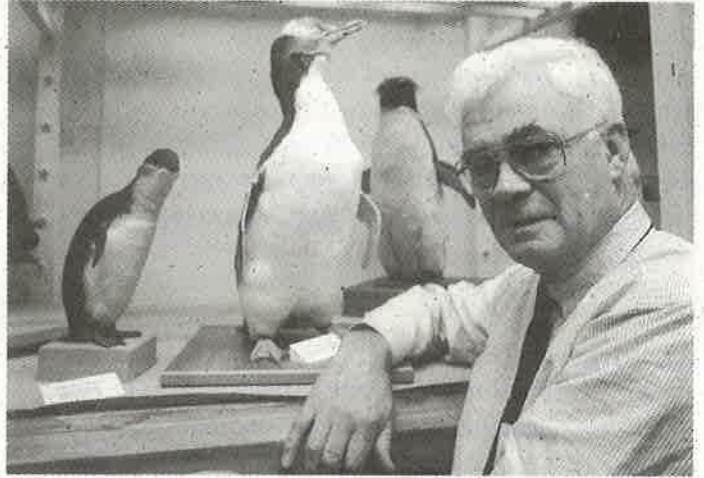


Photo: courtesy of Otago Daily Times

writing a book about the yellow-eyed penguin and collating all his years of penguin notes.

We wish him well in his retirement, look forward to continuing working with him and thank him for his dedication to improving the future of the yellow-eyed penguin.

### Yellow-eyed Penguin loyalty is now rewarded



**M**ainland Products Ltd are now rewarding their loyal Yellow-eyed Penguin supporters. A wall plaque depicting the Mainland logo alongside the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust logo, and thanking them for their valued support, is sent out to food service outlets who continually support this worthwhile cause.

“We believe this is one way to encourage loyalty to the Mainland brand, while at the same time helping to save one of the rarest penguins in the world,” says Harriett Bryden, Product Manager for Cheese & Butter at Mainland Products Ltd. “Since we introduced this idea to the food service trade, we have had an overwhelming number of requests for these wall plaques”.

Display of these wall plaques shows their customers that they are giving something back to the environment.

## Habitat Planting

**M**oira Parker reports on the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust's planting programme this year. The nursery run by field officer Jim Ellison produced a number of well grown plant species which were planted at the following habitat sites this season: See table.

Otapahi	Owaka Head	Kaimataitai	Tavora	N. Otago	Total 1999
2,127	575	180	423	150	3,455

### Catlins

The Trust has contributed to the restoration of old mahoe forest, with protected status, at Owaka Heads, with pittosporum, coprosma, and hebe species. The Trust has enjoyed working with Cheryl Mudford, Field Officer Department of Conservation (DoC) Owaka, who ably assisted by DoC (Owaka) staff, coordinated the planting.

Trustees, Habitat Helpers, and the DoC Dunedin Conservation Corps all assisted to plant nearly 600 plants and protected these with weed mats and wire mesh cylinders. The Trust is grateful to Mrs Lorraine Pepperell for support and access to the site.

### Kaimataitai (Nuggets)

Negotiations with the Clutha District Council and Bruce Murray neighbour, have resulted in protection fencing being installed by DoC Owaka staff. The Trust has supplied 180 plants which will eventually provide the yellow-eyed penguins with more cover between the shore and their forest habitat areas. The Trust nursery will provide plants for future planned planting at Kaimataitai in an initiative involving the Clutha District

Council, DoC, the land owner, local interested parties including Kai Tahu and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.

### Tavora.

Graeme and Carolyn Youngman have been responsible for the planting of a large number of trees in this reserve. Hundreds of cabbage trees have been planted along the creek; and cabbage trees and totara have been added to the slope above the beach where pine trees were felled several years ago.

### Otapahi

The 1998 plantings have established well and some ngaio have made spectacular growth despite the drought last summer. Jim Ellison, Mike and Margaret Hazel (volunteers) and Shane Appleton (Task Force Green), and Trust members, have added 1,250 trees and 870 flaxes to this habitat. A total of 17 different plant species including 170 broadleaf and 190 ribbonwood were added to Otapahi. The Pacific Conservation and Development Trust provided funds for this year's plant production for Otapahi.



Photo: Justine Ragg

## Other Ways of Managing Penguin Predators

Review by David Blair.

**I**n the May Newsletter an article outlining ways of dealing with mammalian predators of yellow-eyed penguins featured. It discussed the potential for secondary poisoning as a method for dealing with stoats, ferrets and cats which play a large part in yellow-eyed penguin deaths, especially juveniles. This method is to target prey species such as rabbits, rats, and mice which would ingest a quantity of slow

acting poison and then in a weakened state or soon after death be in turn eaten by cats, stoat and ferrets which would in turn be affected by the poison (Alterio 1996). This is one of the experimental methods which is being tried to keep introduced predators and important native species such as the yellow-eyed penguin from meeting.

Managing the habitat of the predator species was a method looked at in the early 1990's. It involved the concept of 'vegetation buffer' zones. The Department of Conservation was interested in supporting this concept, and in 1991, retired land at Boulder Beach (Otago Peninsula) from grazing by domestic stock. The

reason for this was to allow the growth of rank grass with the intention of discouraging both the rabbit and their natural predators from (stoat, ferret and domestic cat) visiting these areas, and the adjoining penguin nesting sites. Alterio (1994) however found that 'vegetation buffers' probably increase rabbit numbers and are indeed host to mice musculus and small birds who undoubtedly utilise the seed source of these areas. It was found, Alterio and Moller (1996) that the predominant composition of cat, stoat and ferret diet was mice with rabbit next. Birds featured in all three predators diets, but most strongly in the cat diet. As the vegetation buffer increased rather than reduced the abundance of prey species for cats and mustelids, researchers reviewed their focus.

The physical barrier that a 'vegetation buffer' might present in impeding or deterring predators from reaching hoiho nests was termed the 'grass wall' hypothesis by Alterio(1991) and Dymond(1991). If the exclusion was not complete then it was thought that vegetation buffer areas might still work if predators used them less often than grazed pasture. This was termed 'reduced intensity of use' hypothesis by Alterio.

Preliminary radio-tracking studies during the winter found that cats and ferrets entered the 'vegetation buffer zones', and cats used these areas more than the farmland, Alterio (1991). Because cats appeared to focus their activity in the outer margins (fringe) in winter rather than in the central (core) areas, Alterio needed to investigate the possibility that this behaviour would continue into the spring at the critical nesting times for hoiho.

The study site was the Boulder Beach area and the method was to catch and release a number of radio collared predators. Six ferrets, four stoats and four cats were radio-tracked, although several ferrets damaged their radio-transmitter aerials, limiting the data.

In summarising the results, of this study it is clear that that the 'grass wall' and the 'reduced intensity of use' hypotheses are refuted as all predator species freely

entered and used the 'vegetation buffers', and there was no significant difference in the use by the predators of the fringe and core areas within the buffer area.

There may be a case to revisit the 'grass wall' hypothesis at a location where perhaps the impact of human visitation is not so great. DoC staff visited all of the nest sites several times during the breeding season, thus creating trails which may give feral cats and ferrets easy access to the hoiho nests. The restoration of coastal habitat will inevitably create more grassed areas in the short term as new plantings are fenced to exclude livestock, so the question of managing predators of hoiho by eliminating long grass and other cover which would seem to attract penguin predators, by providing a food source and cover, is likely to be raised. There are other issues to be considered within the habitat of yellow-eyed penguins:

(1)Predators will travel long distances, especially at night to reach a food source, and will utilise cover such as fences, buildings, hedgerows and natural forest cover, being attracted to similar conditions to what the yellow-eyed penguin needs to successfully breed; that is secluded nest sites.

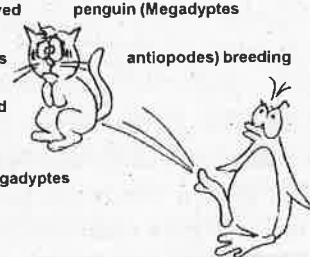
(2)Much yellow-eyed penguin habitat is associated with dune systems which have high mouse populations and can provide the predator with easy access along open beaches.

(3)The abundance of accustomed prey carries no guarantee that the predator will not attack yellow-eyed penguins. There are recorded instances of multiple killings of hoiho chicks which have been killed but not eaten. Alterio et al (1998) draw attention to the phenomenon of mass killings by mustelids; the 'surplus killing' phenomenon (reviewed by King 1989) in events that are normally interpreted as a response to a food surplus, not shortage. It is not known what triggers these unpredictable killing episodes, or change of prey in times of plenty.

In conclusion, the removal of penguin predators at critical times by poisoning and trapping is still important for all mainland habitats.

References:

- Alterio, N. Moller, H. Ratz, H. Movements and habitat use of feral house cats *Felis catus*, stoats *Mustela erminea* and ferrets *Mustela furo* in grassland surrounding yellow-eyed penguin *Megadyptes antipodes* breeding areas in spring. *Biological Conservation* Vol. 83, No. 2, pp. 187-194, 1998. Copyright 1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. Great Britain.
- Alterio, N. (1996) Secondary poisoning of stoats, feral ferrets, and feral house cats by the anticoagulant poison, brodifacoum. *NZ Journal of Zoology* (23) pp.331-338.
- Alterio, N. (1994) Diet and movements of carnivores and the distribution of their prey in grassland around Yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) breeding colonies. M.Sc. Thesis, Otago University.
- Alterio, N. (1991) Feral cat (*Felis catus*) use of vegetation buffer zones surrounding Yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) breeding areas in winter. University of Otago Wildlife Management Report, No. 11.
- Alterio, N. and Moller, H. (in press) Diet of feral house cats *Felis catus*, ferrets *Mustela furo*, and stoats *M. erminea* in grassland surrounding Yellow-eyed penguin *Megadyptes antipodes* breeding areas, South Island, New Zealand. *Journal of Zoology* (London).
- Dymond, S.J. (1991) Winter use by ferrets (*Mustela furo*) of vegetation buffer zones surrounding Yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*) breeding areas. University of Otago Wildlife Management Report, No.15.
- King, C.M.(1989) *The Natural History of Weasels and Stoats*. Christopher Helm, London.



# Yellow-eyed Penguin Breeding Success.

Breeding success of YEP on mainland South Island sites 1998/99 (1997/1998)				
Location	North Otago	Peninsula * 7 main habitats	Catlins	Te Rere
No. of Nests/Breeding Prs.	46 (47)	197 (193)	127 (158)	16 (23)
Chicks fledged per nest	1.11 (1.45)	1.15 (1.28)	1.36 (1.41)	
Fledging Success %	84% (93%)	61% (82%)	88.6% (93.7%)	80% (80%)

\* Estimates of breeding pairs on Otago Peninsula 98/99 season : Total nests 343

## Southland:

A report presented at the Yellow-eyed penguin symposium outlined attempts by the Department of Conservation (DoC) to census penguins from North Head Waikawa south to Slope Point. At one of the fenced sites on private land disappointment was expressed that the number of nests had fallen to very low numbers since the early nineties. At other sites within the area there are a small number of nesting birds, and it is suspected that breeding success is down on previous years.

Stoats have been a problem at Curio Bay and it was reported that a line of Fenn traps have been set. Since September last year in excess of 20 stoats and weasels have been caught.

## Banks Peninsula:

The Trust Projects Officer recently visited Banks Peninsula to meet with DoC Canterbury staff and with landowners of penguin habitat. There are small colonies of yellow-eyed penguins on Banks Peninsula and the Trust expects to be more involved with protection and habitat work over the next few years. In the absence of a recent census not much is known about the breeding success, but evidence of a number of birds including a healthy looking pair was seen at Flea Bay.

## General:

DoC staff and others operating in penguin areas report that the season was a poor one on the whole. Predictably the global weather patterns have caused a general warming of the ocean, which had a downstream effect on the numbers of spawning fish. Dean Nelson (DoC Coastal Otago) reports a lower average banding weight of fledged chicks.

Average Banding Weight	
1998/99	1997/98
4.96kg	5.3kg

Dean reports that quite a large number of chicks were under weight and late fledging with the consequence that quite a number of potential breeding adults were late or in poor condition going into the moult. The full

effects of this will not be known until the upcoming breeding season when nesting pairs are checked.

Nest numbers were down on the last season, although Dean reports that there are notable exceptions: Sandymount (Otago Peninsula) is back up to 12 nests from a low of 6 in recent seasons, and Green Island (off the Dunedin coast) had 36 nests, when generally there are only 25-30.

## Other Issues:

There has been no obvious predation on the Otago Peninsula this past season, although predation has been a problem at the Nuggets and Curio Bay (stoats) and Long Point and Owaka Heads (cats). From time to time problems arise over dogs on public beaches threatening penguins and people moving too close to the birds.

## Penguin Symposia

### Blue Penguin Symposium, Oamaru 18 June 1999

A highlight of the symposium was the presentation by Professor Euan Fordyce on the giant ancestors of our modern penguins, incidentally found in the rocks of North Otago. Six other papers were presented by various speakers notably Dr Chris Challies an authority on white-flipped penguins. Mr Tony Hocken fascinated the large gathering with a presentation on the autopsy of 200 Oamaru birds. The symposium included four population reports from Oamaru, Taiaroa Head, Motunau Canterbury and Wellington Harbour.

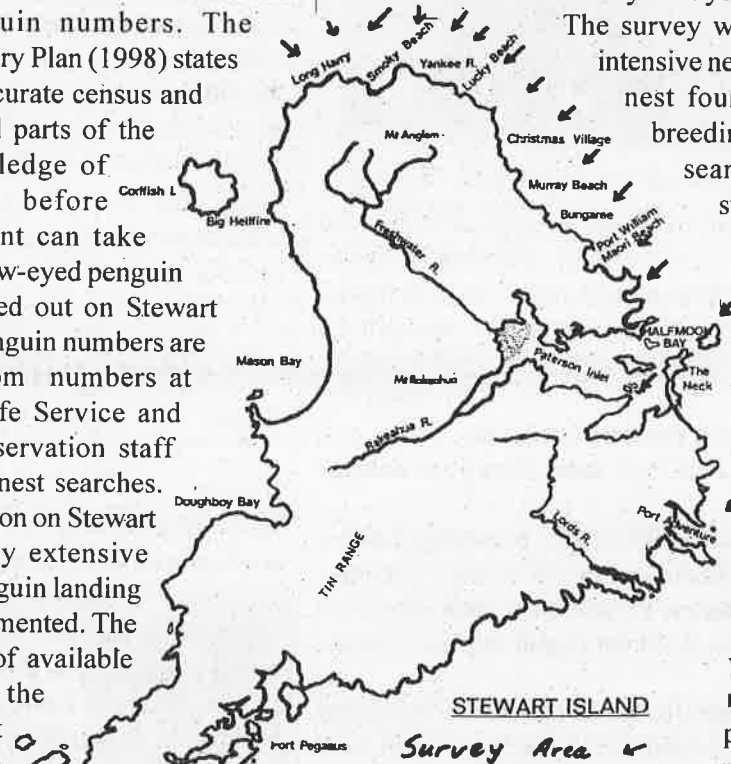
### Yellow-eyed Penguin Symposium, Dunedin 31 July 1999

This symposium attended by thirty people, was an opportunity to report back on the year's activities which are outlined throughout the newsletter. A feature of the symposium was the need for support by local bodies of the wildlife resource and the work being carried out and its worth to the economy of Dunedin.

# How Many Yellow-eyed Penguins on Stewart Island?

The Trust will finance a preliminary survey on Stewart Island this summer to establish yellow-eyed penguin numbers. The Yellow-eyed Penguin Recovery Plan (1998) states as its first objective; that accurate census and trend data is required for all parts of the species range. The knowledge of population is essential before monitoring and management can take place. A comprehensive yellow-eyed penguin survey has never been carried out on Stewart Island, and all estimates of penguin numbers are based on extrapolations from numbers at habitat sites, where Wildlife Service and latterly Department of Conservation staff have carried out counts and nest searches. The Department of Conservation on Stewart Island has carried out fairly extensive searches for yellow-eyed penguin landing places and these are well documented. The Trust feels that in the absence of available resources for this work by the Department of Conservation, it has a mandate to help determine yellow-eyed penguin numbers so steps can be taken to ensure that we are not losing this population on Stewart Island, to known threats such as cats. The Trust has the support of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Consultative Committee in this initiative, and the

Department of Conservation, Southland has agreed to issue the necessary permits and authorities for this work which will begin mid November for four weeks. The area to be surveyed this year will be the North Coast of Stewart Island from Long Harry to Halfmoon Bay, and the Bench and Weka Islands, and the Bravo Island group. The Trust has committed resources to continuing the survey next year.



The survey will take the form of intensive nest searching and each nest found will equate to a breeding pair. As the nest search is at the guard stage of the breeding season, that is when the chicks have hatched, it is hoped that there will be more penguin signs (tracks, droppings) to guide searchers to the nest sites.

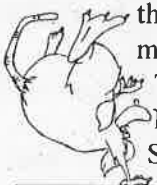
A local co-ordinator will be contracted to manage the programme, and a number of experienced volunteers will assist in the work. Because of the nature of the terrain, the often inclement weather and the need to use a small craft to gain access to isolated beaches the volunteers selected will need to have boating and bushcraft experience. We hope to be able to report on our initial findings in the May newsletter.

## Penguin Benefits from Yowie Power.



Earlier this year the Trust received \$A 15,000 for being voted New Zealand's favourite animal project in the recent Yowie Power Environmental Awards.

The Australasian awards, sponsored by Cadbury Confectionery Ltd, featured in the children's Yowie Power magazine. Children were asked to vote for their favourite animal projects and to write in and say why they deserved some of the \$50,000 prize money.

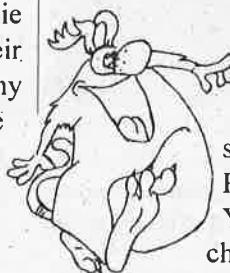


The Australian organisation WIRES - NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, received first prize of \$25,000 for

its work in looking after thousands of sick and injured animals and helping to release them back in to the environment.



The Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust was voted second in the competition for its work in recreating the penguins' natural habitat and protecting the penguins from predators.



Michelle Irving, Brand Manager, Cadbury Confectionery Ltd, said that Cadbury New Zealand thoroughly supported the work of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. "Cadbury, through the Yowie brand, is committed to helping children to increase their knowledge and

respect of the environment", said Ms Irving. For us at the Trust it came as a complete surprise as we had no idea we had even been

nominated. A big thank you to all who voted for us and gave the Yellow-eyed Penguin "Yowie Power"!



## Bronze Penguins in the Exchange.

**A**s a result of a joint approach by the Dunedin City Council, Edinburgh Holdings and Speedprint Shop, three sculpted penguins have waddled into the historic precinct of John Wickliffe Square in the Exchange.

Weighing in at 130 kg each, and standing 700mm tall, they are slightly heavier and taller than your average natural penguin!

The penguins, three years in the planning, were a recognition of the vital link between the city's heritage buildings and the natural environment, and are part of the Dunedin City Council's art in public places policy.

Sculpted by Parry Jones, designed and cast by Advanced Fibreglass and Robinson Bell, each penguin cost approximately \$5,500 to hatch. It is hoped other businesses will sponsor more chicks to create a larger colony in the Exchange.



Photo: Elizabeth Goddard,  
Photo Insert: Alan Wright

The penguins were officially unveiled by Dunedin Mayor Sukhi Turner, to a gathering of approximately 100 people. Trustee Peter Simkins said the Trust thoroughly endorsed the initiative. The statues would play an important part in protecting the penguin by promoting public awareness.

In his speech, Peter reminded citizens of Dunedin that the Dunedin City Council's recently published 'Direction for Dunedin - a blueprint for the future', had not included any goals relating to wildlife conservation or ecotourism despite Dunedin being promoted as the wildlife capital of New Zealand. He urged them to respond to the "Open Letter" from the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust published in the local newspaper. This letter asked residents to write to the Dunedin City Council, stating that the right direction for Dunedin should be to include the protection of wildlife habitats as part of its environmental management.

Does your local Council actively support wildlife conservation and ecotourism? Check it out now - a good election issue!

## Penguins in cyberspace

Email: [yept@clear.net.nz](mailto:yept@clear.net.nz)

Internet:

[www.deepsouth.co.nz/yeptnz](http://www.deepsouth.co.nz/yeptnz)

[www.converge.org.nz/hoiho/helping.html](http://www.converge.org.nz/hoiho/helping.html)

Penguins surf the waves but you can surf the net in search of penguins. If you search for Penguin on the Internet you are likely to come up with hundreds of pages, but here are a few that are interesting - not all relate to yellow-eyed penguins, in fact most don't. But if you enjoy penguins, take some time out and surf the net without getting wet!

Great stories and penguin trivia:

<http://www.galactic.co.uk/iainf/pengtriv.html>

A lovely song - great for younger children:

<http://www.bright.net/~getmetz/penguin.htm>

News brief about penguin communication:

<http://www.discovery.com/news/briefs/brief4.html>

Everything you wanted to know about NZ penguins, including some games!:

<http://www.penguin.net.nz>

Everything you wanted to know about all penguin species:

<http://www.capu.net/~kwelch/penguins/>

This site is great because it has links to loads of other sites and one you really ought to bookmark:

<http://www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=spheniscus&list>

# People for Penguins

## Task Force Green Employees

For nine weeks this winter we have been fortunate to employ under the Task Force Green programme, three very enthusiastic and capable workers to do a wide variety of revegetation and maintenance projects.

At Tavora, Graeme and Carolyn Youngman of Hampden, have planted, weeded, tidied, removed protectors (an unenviable task), fenced and sprayed. The reserve is now in good condition despite the earlier drought.

Shane Appleton has worked mostly with Jim at the nursery and on the Otago Peninsula, but he has worked at other sites too. His youthful enthusiasm, hard work and wicked sense of humour has made work days with him a fun time.

All three workers showed an obvious enthusiasm for the work of the Trust and we thank them and Jim (for the extra hours needed for supervision and organisation) for the job well done.



Photo: Jim Ellison. Shane, Carolyn & Graeme

## Lady Reeves

It is with great pleasure we acknowledge the continued Patronage from Lady Beverley Reeves, who has been our Patron since the Trust formed in 1987.

Lady Reeves would like to help with the planting programme, so look at your neighbouring planter when you are helping the Trust next year!

## Staff at the Trust Office

*"We say good-bye....." to:*

**Clare Fraser**, Public Awareness Officer. In her four years with the Trust, Clare completed a number of projects including the provision of signs at the Okia Reserve walking track; the collation of an education kit, now sent to schools around New Zealand; other signage and one-off projects; and fund-raising for the Trust.



"Who has grown the most in the last ten years?" asked Trustee Pat Mark. (David, Sue, Jim or the cabbage trees?)

**Stephanie Wade**, Administration Officer has resigned from her part time position with the Trust to take up a full time position. Stephanie's dedication and organisational abilities were greatly appreciated by the Trustees.

*".....And you say Hello" to the current part-time staff of:*

**Jim Ellison**, our Field Officer who oversees the Trust's nursery at Company Bay producing the plants used for the habitat revegetation work. Jim has been a dedicated worker for the Trust over the last ten years.

**David Blair**, our Project Officer, who prioritises tasks that the Trust needs to undertake, be it research (currently looking at a Stewart Island census), conservation projects, or habitat protection.

**Sue Murray**, our new Administration Officer, who receipts your donation, answers all the member enquiries plus all the other enquiries from Trustees, sponsors, volunteers, school children, fellow conservationists, and the general public.



Photo courtesy of Otago Daily Times.

Clare Fraser (2nd left), designer of the Okia interpretation panels, shows the sign on the top of a small Pyramid to Dunedin Mayor Sukhi Turner, Regional Conservator Jeff Connell, Trustee and Okia Management Committee members Moira Parker and Lala Frazer (far left).

## Receipts

Remember that your membership receipt will be sent out with your next newsletter rather than separately.

Saves heaps on postage!



## Christmas gifts

We are trialing a small Christmas gift catalogue this year - see the enclosed list of goods for sale;

OR,

you may like to join up a 'Penguin Mate' for Christmas. Why not pay for a family or friend's membership for a year as their unique Christmas gift, and receive for yourself a beautiful A2 poster of the yellow-eyed penguins. Your 'Penguin Mate' will receive our introductory package and our NEW membership certificate.

**Remember each purchase helps save the Yellow-eyed Penguin!**

## Annual accounts

The audited accounts are available from the Trust Office on request - to save trees we do not send these out to everyone!

## Office hours

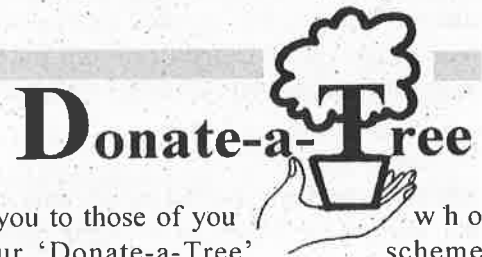
Located on the 3rd floor of the Queens Building, 109 Princes Street, Dunedin, the office is open from 10am - 1pm weekdays. Visitors always welcome!

## Annual general meeting

This meeting will be held on Tuesday 30 November at 7:30pm, in the Otago Art Society Rooms, Great King Street, Dunedin.

Guest speaker this year is Allison Ballance from Natural History NZ.

Members, friends and families all welcome.



A big thank you to those of you who donate to our 'Donate-a-Tree' scheme on a regular basis.

Have you ever considered being part of this scheme? People donate anything from \$3.00 to \$30.00 per month by automatic payment, which means you don't have to remember when to send us your regular donation.

To join up, contact the Trust Office and Sue will explain how easy it is to become part of this programme.

**Remember, one-off donations are also appreciated.**

## Thank you.

A big thank you to our members, Donate-a-Tree supporters and financial donors. It is always a great pleasure to record thanks for support received from others:

Cadbury Confectionery Australia - Yowie brand  
Dianne Calvert  
Canon Copiers  
Community Trust of Otago  
Converge  
Cooke Howlison Toyota  
DoC - Coastal Otago  
DoC Dunedin Conservation Corps  
Downie Stewart, solicitors  
Dunedin City Council  
Elizabeth Goodall  
Edinburgh Holdings  
Mike and Margaret Hazel  
John Hodgkins  
Impact Studio  
Kanako Ohashi



Maree Johnstone  
Mathew Blair  
Mike Legge  
Mainland Products  
Hazel McLeod  
Catriona Matheson  
Natural History New Zealand  
Denis Paterson  
Otago Polytechnic  
Paul Pedofski  
Brian Rance  
Southlight Wildlife  
Speedprint  
Fergus Sutherland  
Taylor McLachlan, accountants

Our new policy is not to acknowledge individual financial supporters unless prior permission is granted.





# Herbie the Hoiho

## (Adventure Competition)

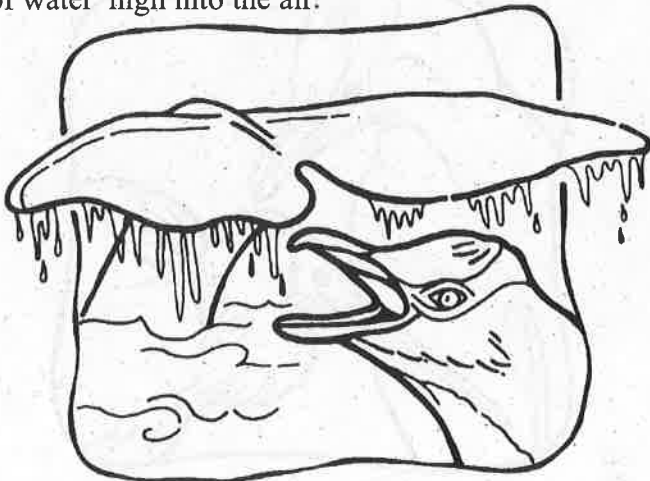
You might have read about Solo who turned up in Wellington Harbour, and was taken to Bank's Peninsula and then a few days later swam the 400 kilometres back to Wellington again. I think Herbie must be related to Solo as he is very adventurous. See if you can work out where Herbie has been from his adventures. Show Herbie's adventures on an illustrated map A4 size, and send it to the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust Office before February 2000, and a prize will be awarded the best entry. Don't forget to include your age and address.

**H**erbie was the sleekest and most handsome Hoiho in the Southern Hemisphere. His yellow eye was amazing. For a two year old it was well developed and one or two of the girl penguins were extremely attracted to Herbie, but Herbie was an adventurer.

Herbie wanted to see the world. He wanted to go down to the depths with the whales and he wanted to go north to the warmer water and south to the cold currents. He was interested in everything, and he wasn't interested in settling down to raise a family with all that sitting on eggs and fishing for his kids just yet.

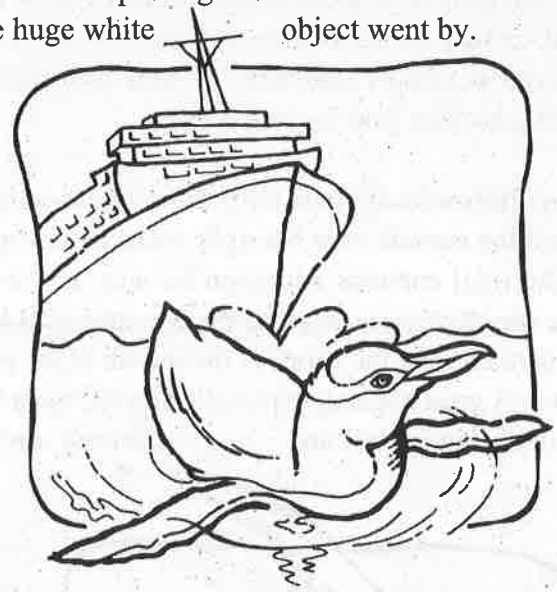
At the end of his second moult Herbie was lucky enough to get on to a really good supply of fish and he put on weight incredibly fast. He was bulging at the seams and one or two of his friends remarked that he should watch his weight. Herbie was a bit miffed about their unkind comments so he told them that he was off to find new friends that would accept him as he was.

Herbie began to swim along the coast line until he felt a strong urge to follow an interesting current that drew him along with it. He was fortunate that down in the depths of this current, young squid were also being carried along. Herbie found that he could grab his lunch on the swim, and he didn't stop for anything. While he was diving to great depths to catch his food he saw the shapes of immense sperm whales, and when he surfaced they were there also, blowing huge spouts of water high into the air.

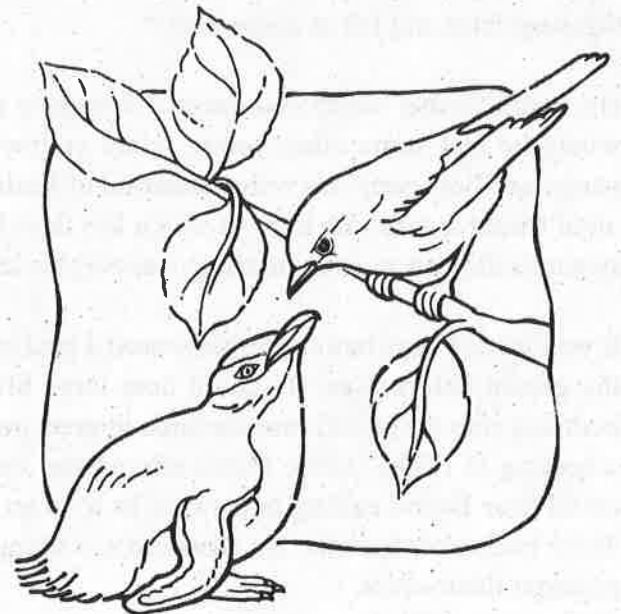


By David Blair.  
Illustrations Dianne Calvert.

It was just after daylight one day when Herbie was lolling on top of the water, trying to catch the scents of the coast and hear the sound of Hoiho when he was shaken by the sight of a monstrous white object bearing down on him. Herbie dived out of the way just in time. He heard a pulsing sound in the water and watched as the huge white object went by.

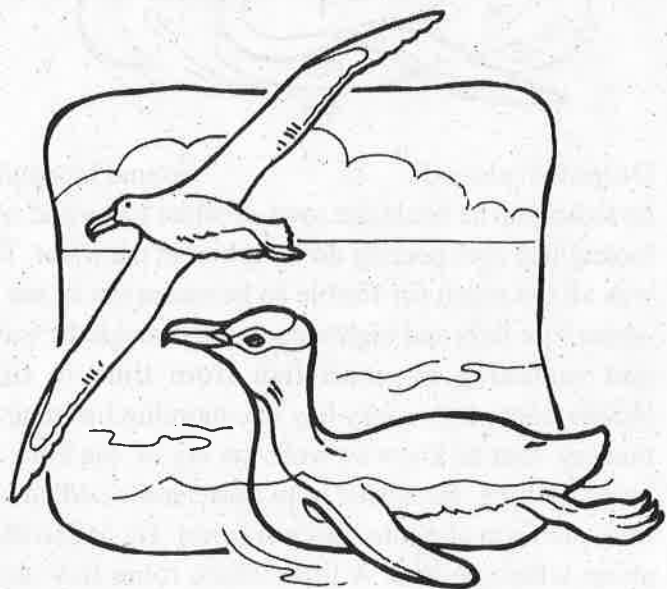


Dolphins played around him and as he looked up he could see rows of white blobs and what looked like eyes peering down at him in the water. That was all too much for Herbie so he swam out to sea for about four days and nights, zooming through the waves and snatching at small fish from time to time. Herbie came into rocky bay one morning listening for that cry that he knew so well, the cry of his kind. He heard nothing. He surfed in to shore and waddled up a rock platform and into the cool forest. He had to think about where he was. A little black robin flew down from a branch and twittered around his face.



This alarmed Herbie, not used to territorial challenges, so he headed back down to the sea where he was glared at by shore plovers and dived on by skuas. Herbie had met skuas before and wasn't impressed by their bullying tactics, so he dived, and only surfaced for air when he had to, swimming strongly toward the setting sun. Herbie was drawn to a series of bays where a small grey and white dolphin called Hector lived. Herbie could sense that there were some of his kind here but he wasn't drawn to stay as there were myriads of small white flippered penguins that hassled and pestered him, mocking his size and his bright eyes..

Herbie followed the land with the sunrises in his left eye and the sunsets over his right shoulder, swimming into the tidal currents and soon he was at the place where the albatrosses nest. In the previous year he had been here chasing the sprats at the mouth of the narrow harbour. A great ungainly bird settled on the water beside him clattering its bill and flicking drops of



water everywhere. Somehow Herbie wasn't afraid of this huge bird and felt at home here.

He swam further south and spent a few days ashore where he met some other young male yellow-eyed penguins. These penguins were disdainful of Herbie and didn't want to talk with him, so after a few days Herbie swam swiftly away with the rising sun over his left eye.

It was several days before Herbie sensed a land mass in the gloom before him. He could hear large breakers booming into cliffs, and saw sea birds in great numbers wheeling in flight. As he swam around the shore he could hear Hoiho calling and swam in to greet them. These birds were friendly, but chattered in a strange way amongst themselves.

Herbie spent the night under giant stilbocarpa plants, and all around him the flowers and leaves were larger than he had ever seen before.



Herbie knew that this beautiful place, although the Hoiho were friendly, wasn't for him, so he bid goodbye to his new friends while out feeding in very cold but productive water, and swam with the early morning sun behind him until he had soon left the others behind. Westward through the cold seas with the tugging currents and plentiful food Herbie swam. He had a lucky escape one morning when he was leaving a rocky outcrop where he had spent the night. A leopard seal lunged at him and Herbie knew instinctively that he had to dive deep to escape. It was close, and Herbie was more careful when he entered the water during the dawns following. One day Herbie could smell familiar smells. The sour smell of forest and the smell of decomposing sea weeds and he could hear familiar sounds. He could hear oystercatchers peeping along the tide line. A Hoiho swished past him, then another and another. He followed them ashore onto a sandy beach. At the high tide mark the birds all stood and preened. They peered at Herbie. One or two birds waddled over, extended their flippers, arched their backs and called the strident call of the Hoiho. A large kiwi was scratching in the sand nearby and a whitetail deer flicked its tail as it browsed on the seaweed along the shore line. Herbie knew this was the place he wanted to stay.

