



THE Hutton's Shearwater CHARITABLE TRUST

September 2015 • Issue 16 • ISSN 1179-5646

NEWSLETTER

In This Issue



Sponsor-A-Chick!

• 2 •



Month long Hutton's
Farewell Event

• 3 •



ParrotDog
RareBird Series

• 6 •

Kia Ora Koutou

The last few months have seen a number of changes to the Trust, with some long-standing Trustees resigning, withdrawing in availability, changing roles and new Trustees taking on new responsibilities. The Trust is therefore presently in a restructuring phase. We farewell Jodie Denton, who has been with the Trust since its inception in 2008. Jodie played a pivotal role as Secretary, being an exceptionally hard worker and frequently being a public voice for the Trust. We also acknowledge the significant and time-consuming contribution that Elspeth Wingham has made as Chairperson of the Trust. We are extremely grateful.

Ailsa Howard, one of our new Trustees, is currently acting Secretary. Ailsa is a long time Kaikoura resident and passionate supporter of the Trust.

Lindsay Rowe, our extremely long serving Treasurer has indicated that he will be retiring from the role, but is kindly continuing in a reduced capacity until a replacement is found, in order to ensure essential responsibilities are met.

These changes presently leave the Trust with two vacant positions and the need for a new Treasurer and Chairperson. Members of these roles will be sought at the next AGM. I encourage interested and appropriately skilled readers to join us in the important role of supporting the Hutton's Shearwater conservation programme.

Sabrina Luecht, the new Project Coordinator has been busy working on a wide variety of projects. These include:

•Working with the Kaikoura District

Council and Trustee Nicky McArthur to find seabird friendly street light solutions, which are less likely to interfere with the ability of fledging birds to find their way to the sea from their mountain colonies.

•Working with the Department of Conservation to update the Hutton's shearwater component of their website.

•Development of a new brochure to publicise the presence, characteristics and status of Hutton's shearwater.

•Seeking sponsors and long-term funding to support the Trust's operations and Hutton's shearwater conservation management.

•Developing and maintaining the public face of the Trust through social media, the newsletter and the website. This has involved extensive updating on Facebook and content development on the Trust's website.

For those readers with an interest in Hutton's shearwater research, Lindsay Rowe has published a bibliography that is now available on the website.

For those of you who walk the Kaikoura Peninsula track, you will now have the benefit of a new display panel that provides fresh information about Hutton's shearwater and the secure translocated colony, Te Rae O Atiu, located within a short distance of the main track. This panel is the third to be installed along the track.

I conclude by again acknowledging the significant contribution to the Trust by Jodie Denton and Elspeth Wingham, you will be missed.

Patrick Aldwell, Acting Chairperson

Become A Friend

JOIN US! We offer a structured membership: individual (\$20), family (\$30), school (\$30), corporate (\$120) or life (\$300).

Membership benefits include being the first to be invited to volunteer projects (at the Kaikoura Peninsula/Te Rae o Atiu colony or with crash landed birds), receiving newsletters before they are publically available, and knowing you are making a difference!

Your contribution assists conservation management of this endangered species, both at the Kaikoura Peninsula colony, and at the only two remaining wild colonies in the world.

You can become a Friend on our website: www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz, or request a membership form from Sabrina Luecht, Project Coordinator, Email: admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz



Sponsor-A-Chick!

The Trust will be implementing a Sponsor-A-Chick campaign for the 2015/16 breeding season.

The Hutton's shearwater is one of New Zealand's few mainland breeding seabirds, and the only alpine breeding seabird globally. The species is regarded as Nationally Endangered because of past declines (evident from extinct colonies) and the threats still faced.

Kaikoura is the official home to Hutton's shearwater, their last place on earth, with only two wild breeding colonies remaining in the mountainous Seaward Kaikoura Range. The artificial Kaikoura Peninsula colony consists of translocated birds from the mountain colonies, protected by a predator-proof fence. This translocated colony was initiated to provide an insurance population for this unique seabird species.

The Trust is a charitable entity, driven by dedicated voluntary Trustees, and supported by volunteers, the local community, businesses, and sponsors – to enable conservation management of Hutton's shearwater.

The Trust, with the support of the Department of Conservation aims to save Hutton's shearwater from extinction. Conservation management to date has focused on extensive research, translocations, and predator control. Translocations have involved flying chicks from mountain colonies to the Kaikoura Peninsula colony, housing them in artificial burrow nest boxes, hand feeding chicks with sardine smoothies, taking measurements daily, until chicks fledge. Fledglings migrate to the warm fish-rich coastal waters off Australia, remaining there for their first 3-4 years, then return as immature birds

ready to breed at Kaikoura colonies.

Sponsoring a Hutton's shearwater chick will help to save the species from extinction.

Your donation will help to fund ongoing operation and research costs. Your sponsorship means a lot to Hutton's shearwater, the Trust, the Department of Conservation and the Kaikoura community.



\$100 Package:

- A photo and information sheet about one of our newly hatched chicks.
- Brochure and newsletter.

\$250 Package:

- A photo and information sheet about one of our newly hatched chicks.
- Brochure and newsletter.
- Naming rights for one of our newly hatched chicks (to be confirmed).



CHICK SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES:

A great gift idea available as of December 2015, once chicks hatch!

Hutton's Farewell Event

March-April 2016

Objective:

To reduce the number of Hutton's shearwaters that are injured or killed from crash landings around the Kaikoura township during the fledging period each March and April.

Increase Awareness:

- Turn the Hutton's Shearwater Farewell into a month long event to increase focus on crash landed birds.
- Period: 10 March to 10 April 2015.
- During this month there will be:
 - A Hutton's Hotline.
 - “Have You Seen This Bird?” posters distributed by email and throughout Kaikoura.
 - Article in the Kaikoura Star each week.
 - Social media blitz, with Facebook posts every few days.
 - Deployment of Hutton's shearwater road signs by the Department of Conservation.
 - A central hub/drop-off point for crash-landed birds at the Department of Conservation.
 - Volunteers to help search for and collect crash-landed birds.
 - Public presentations.

Coordinate Efforts:

- Farewell Coordinator delegated/hired by the end of January to prepare media, train and coordinate volunteers, manage the Hutton's Hotline, and bird processing.
- Central hub/dedicated site to drop-off collected birds at all hours, where they can be weighed, measured, banded and released. A shed will be utilized adjacent to Department of Conservation building equipped with weigh bags, Pesora scales, rulers, banding equipment, rubbermaid tubs, boxes, lights, datasheets, clipboard, and eventual iPad etc.
- For each bird that is collected, information to be recorded in logs. Statistics to be processed by Kaikoura High School.

Strategic Plan:

- Kaikoura township lighting causing disorientation and crash landings of birds.
- Develop recovery strategy for disorientated birds.
- Prepare a manual or awareness material, guidelines for collection, handling and release of disorientated birds.
- Develop procedure for collection of dead birds.
- Lack of community awareness of the unique nature of Hutton's shearwater and their vulnerability.
- Develop education and awareness programme to deal with disorientated birds. A manual to be presented at schools, businesses and public presentations etc.

Jody Weir-Judkins

Trustee



A huge **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers who give up their time to help our special seabird during fledgling time. Without you we would be unable to collect and save anywhere near as many crash landed fledglings. You are all **AMAZING!**

Major Sponsorship Opportunity

Since 2008 the Trust has undertaken official conservation management of endangered Hutton's shearwater, essentially taking on the role of the former Department of Conservation Hutton's Shearwater Recovery Group.

Surviving at just two wild colonies globally, the Kaikoura mountains remain their last breeding grounds. Hutton's shearwaters therefore currently fly a fine line between survival and extinction. A chance event such as a major slip, disease outbreak or pest explosion, could lead to the disappearance of this remarkable bird.

To improve the odds for Hutton's shearwater a strategic plan has been

developed. The goal is to secure remaining wild populations from foreseeable threats, increase the translocated population on the Kaikoura Peninsula, assess abandoned colonies, decrease light pollution to minimise crash landings, further research and extend awareness campaigns.

To achieve these goals and to ensure a brighter future, the Trust is completely reliant on funding, through sponsorships and grants. An opportunity therefore exists to become a major sponsor for Hutton's shearwater.

The Trust is open to ideas on how the returns for a sponsor could be maximised. Promote your support

of Hutton's shearwaters through direct marketing to clients, positive media exposure, promotional opportunities, recognition by the local and national community, interactions with related conservation organisations, recognition by the scientific community, and worldwide recognition as a supporter of an endangered species.

The Trust envisions a sponsorship partnership much like Mitre10 with takahe, Rio Tinto with kakapo, Mainland cheese with yellow-eyed penguin, and Air New Zealand with the Department of Conservation.

Are you or a business you know interested? Please contact: Sabrina Luecht, Project Coordinator, Email: admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz.

Light Disorientation

Several months ago the Trust made a submission to the Kaikoura District Council on the Kaikoura Long Term Plan (2015-2025).

Outdoor lighting is required for reasons such as street lighting, security and general amenity at night. For conservation reasons regarding the impact on endangered Hutton's shearwaters, outdoor lighting must be limited to the extent necessary to avoid light pollution (light spill, glare and illumination).

Artificial light sources severely affect Hutton's shearwaters by causing light attraction, disorientation and crash landings. This is of enormous ongoing concern, considering that the Kaikoura District is home to the only remaining breeding colonies globally. Fatal seabird light attraction can be mitigated by ensuring correct lighting type usage and minimising light

spill. This includes lights used by the Kaikoura District Council (e.g. street lights), businesses (e.g. commercial carpark flood lights), home owners (e.g. outdoor lights) and rural entities (e.g. dairy farms).

Residential and commercial lighting must therefore be addressed as a whole. However the major point at this point in time is residential street lighting, being the most significant producer of light pollution. There are currently a mixture of street lights being phased out in the Kaikoura District - old high pressure mercury vapour lights, as well as high and low pressure sodium vapour lights. These are being replaced with LED lights (a general industry and energy efficiency move). The Trust is in favour of LED lights, but seeks to ensure the correct type is implemented in plans and strategies.

Light and seabirds explained: The



night sky is increasingly illuminated by artificial light sources, creating ecological light pollution that is damaging ecosystems throughout the world. Many nocturnal seabirds and migrating birds die or lose a large amount of energy reserves as a result of encountering artificial light sources.

Artificial light interferes with the magnetic compass of nocturnal seabirds, one of several orientation mechanisms, which is especially important during overcast nights.

Light Disorientation... Continued

Overall aims: To avoid unnecessary light pollution negatively impacting endangered Hutton's shearwaters, which breed in only one region globally, the Kaikoura District.

Seabird responses to light conditions are therefore strongest on overcast nights when moon and starlight are unavailable as orientation cues. The magnetic compass is wavelength dependent, with seabirds requiring light from the blue-green part of the spectrum for magnetic compass orientation. Reactions of seabirds to artificial light are thus largely determined by the wavelength characteristics of the light source. Seabirds react strongest to white and red light (visible long wavelength), little to green light (shorter wavelength); while blue light (short wavelength) has no observable effect.

By changing the colour or spectral composition (eliminating white and red light) of lights for roads and on structures, the casualties of nocturnal seabirds can be significantly decreased. This can be achieved by filtering longer wavelengths until mainly ultraviolet light remains (300-400 nm). However ultraviolet light is invisible to the human eye thus is not an option in regards to safety - green light being the most viable option. This can be achieved by placing

a filter on low wattage LED lights.

Bulb brightness and colour: Low wattage amber light is considered acceptable, resulting in minimal light attraction; while high wattage white light results in significant light attraction, disorientation and crash landings. The recommendation is the lowest LED brightness level (2,700 K) and 1,000-2,000 Kelvin Colour Temperature ("candle"). Programmable LED lights would further eliminate the effects of light, by reducing lights to only 50% brightness during fledging time in March-April, or dimming lights when there are no pedestrians/traffic and brightening lights when sensors detect movement. Changing to programmable low wattage LED is the most immediate and cost-effective solution.

Filters: Use of LED lighting with filters to create seabird friendly lighting, by filtering out white and red light, resulting in green light.

Shielding: Use of fully shielded fittings and reflectors which direct light straight

down, decreasing upward light spill, reducing seabird light attraction and light pollution. This results in vertical light only and no horizontal light spill.

Duration, time and frequency: No aesthetic outdoor lighting should be in use between 11pm and sunrise within the flight path of Hutton's shearwaters during the breeding season (August to April).

Kaikoura is considered to be the seabird (and marine mammal) capital of New Zealand, with its tourism industry being highly dependent on an abundance of endemic species in high concentrations and in close proximity. The Kaikoura District can demonstrate its commitment to endemic species and the environment by taking on board these vital provisions, to ensure its very own seabird persists into the future. The Trust recommended that relevant sections in the Long Term Plan and Infrastructure Strategy are amended, to address all existing and future lighting (residential, commercial, industrial and rural) within the flight path of endangered Hutton's shearwaters.



ParrotDog - Rare Bird

The Trust undertook an exciting partnership with ParrotDog brewery this year, which released a one-off Puffinus huttoni (Hutton's shearwater) craft beer, as part of their new RareBird series.

Prompted by the interesting tales of rare birds, RareBird is a collaboration from ParrotDog working with conservationists to share unique stories. This series is about creativity in brewing and celebrating our endemic birdlife. Keep your eyes peeled for RareBirds in special edition 650 ml bottles.

For more information please see their website: www.parrotdog.co.nz

Puffinus Huttoni: 5.1% ABV, Boysenberry Sour Beer.

"In 1965, Kaikoura, legend told of a vagrant seabird colony high in the snowy mountains. Keen mountaineer and amateur ornithologist, Geoff Harrow, took his sleeping bag up to the tussocks of the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges in search of the mystery bird. A fruitless venture, so it seemed, when in serendipity — Geoff discovered three carcasses and sent them to the bird experts in Wellington. Three days later, a telegram: Indeed, Hutton's shearwater.

Easily disoriented by artificial lights and flimsy on the ground, the lilac-footed

birds are excellent in flight, launching from their burrows set on steep mountain slopes, under cover of darkness, down the Kowhai River and Shearwater Stream valleys: to sea.

Each year the birds ditch winter and migrate to Australia, always returning to the Kaikoura mountains to breed. Of eight colonies only two remain today. Treasured as a Taonga among locals, their efforts to keep this bird going have been tireless. Hand whizzing sardine smoothies for the chicks and creating a translocated predator-free colony.

Soured from Lactobacillus and aged on Nelson boysenberries — we took a chance on this one in dedication to our little Trans-Tasman seabird."

Trustees Wanted

Due to the departure of three Trustees, we are currently recruiting to fill these roles.

We are seeking passionate, motivated and enthusiastic individuals, who have the time available to make a difference in Hutton's shearwater conservation management.

The Trust consists of 12 voluntary Trustee roles, mostly based in Kaikoura.

We are particularly seeking to fill Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary roles.

New Trustees would ideally be based in Kaikoura, and attend four meetings/events per year.

Could this be you?

Please submit an application to: Sabrina Luecht, Project Coordinator, Email: admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz

Saving An Endangered Species

What does it take? Funding, funding, funding...Operational funding through donations is essential, assisting in securing populations (threat mitigation, translocations, research and education) and increasing public awareness and outreach (advocacy via educational resources, social media, websites, brochures, and media releases). Without funding none of this is possible. The Trust currently has insufficient resources to achieve all of its aims, and wishes it could do so much more...

Aims:

- 1) To foster secure flourishing populations of endangered Hutton's shearwater.
- 2) To support research that underpins vital conservation management.
- 3) Necessity for community education and awareness of the unique nature of Hutton's shearwater and their vulnerability.

Concerns:

- The only two remaining natural



colonies are extremely vulnerable to trampling from ungulates, predation and natural disasters (erosion, slips, earthquakes, avalanches, fire, storms and disease outbreak).

- Lack of knowledge - in particular adult mortality rates, population size and trends, population growth, diet, seasonal variation and feeding grounds.

- Light attraction and disorientation causes vast numbers of crash landings each breeding season – resulting in hundreds if not thousands of unecessary injuries and deaths.

Help Us To Help Hutton's Shearwaters:

<http://www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz/how-you-can-help/>

Bronze Hutton's

Artist Sam Mahon has created a stunning bronze Hutton's shearwater sculpture as a Trust fundraiser. Ten **limited edition pieces** are for sale at a set price of \$5,500 each and will be commissioned upon ordering. To order contact Lindsay Rowe at treasurer@huttonsshearwater.org.nz



Threats

Artificial lights: As young birds fledge, many fail to make the maiden flight to sea, with overcast nights increasing light disorientation and causing crash landings. Grounded birds are unable to take-off again, and are at risk of starvation, being hit by vehicles, or being predated upon. Many, but not all, of these birds are rescued and released at sea by dedicated volunteers during March and April.

Fisheries: Adult birds are occasionally killed in set nets along the Kaikoura coast.

Food supply: Studies of breeding success have indicated significant changes between breeding years, presumably due to fluctuations in the availability of food at sea.

Soil instability: Soil mobility at the two remaining wild colonies in the Seaward Kaikoura Range poses a real threat in wiping out breeding habitat and/or breeding birds in burrows.

Pests: Studies have indicated that the two remaining mountain colonies are large enough not to be adversely affected by stoat predation.

The greater threat is from predation by wild pigs or burrow trampling by ungulates. All the colonies which have become extinct in the last century have been destroyed by pigs, with six known colonies having gone extinct since the 1960s. Pig, ungulate and predator control therefore remains one of the top management priorities.

Kaikoura Peninsula / Te Rae O Atiu Colony

The first Hutton's shearwaters are expected back at the Kaikoura Peninsula colony early September. Several rafts of 50-100 birds have already been sighted at sea south of the Kaikoura township, just north of Barney's Rock/Panau Island. As well as our breeding birds we should see more immatures returning (chicks of the 2012 translocation).

Mike Morrissey from the Department of Conservation has been undertaking colony maintenance over the winter months, checking the predator-proof fence, clearing the strip along the edge of the fenceline, removing weeds and clearing long grass from the nest box entrances. The speaker system has now been on for a four week period, playing call lures to attract potential breeders. Mouse poisoning is still in progress and the majority of bait stations will be removed over the next few weeks.

I have been out to the colony to clear out snails from nest box tunnels (burrows) and put dry grass in the nest boxes where the soil is wet and cold. The "toothpick" indicators at the top and bottom entrances of the tunnels have been reset, so that we know when birds are prospecting nest boxes. Microchip readers have been reinstalled on the nest boxes where birds were very active last season, so that we can know which birds are visiting them.

I am about to begin weekly visits to the colony to monitor bird activity. It would be nice to think that we could have more chicks fledge this breeding season than last year (7 chicks fledged from 16 eggs).

Please contact me if you are wanting to 'adopt' a returning Hutton's shearwater adult (\$100 per year and renewable on request), and remember that you can also Sponsor-A-Chick as of December!

Lindsay Rowe, Treasurer
Email: treasurer@huttonsshearwater.org.nz

VOTE FOR

HUTTON'S!

Forest & Bird's annual **Bird Of The Year** competition has been confirmed for 5-25 October 2015.

The Trust will be representing Hutton's shearwater. We are hoping to bring on board a well-known New Zealander who can act as a biodiversity hero for Hutton's shearwater. Please make sure you vote for our endangered seabird when the competition opens.

