



THE Hutton's Shearwater CHARITABLE TRUST

NEWSLETTER

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Kia ora.

It is translocation time again, and another 100 chicks have been transferred from the Kowhai colony in the mountains to the peninsula colony, Te Rae o Atiu. The goal is to handfeed these chicks for the minimum time required before they fledge, while leaving enough time for them to imprint their new home. This season the task of tracking each chick's progress, co-ordinating the volunteers and writing up the results is being managed by Mike Bell of Wildlife Management International Limited (WMIL). The company was selected from the range of individuals and companies throughout New Zealand who expressed interest in the work

For the translocation we need interested and competent volunteers. Some of our local members of the Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater group are old hands, having helped with the previous translocations. If feeding chicks, reading bands and helping a threatened species appeals to you, please let us know. Full training will be given to new volunteers. Mike has the roster now so please follow this up without delay.

Our Chairman, Paul McGahan, stood down mid-year. We accepted his resignation reluctantly and thank him for his enormous contribution as Chairman over the very busy establishment stages of the trust. We hope Paul will return to the trust when his work load at the Historic Places Trust lightens.

I was elected as Chair at the September 2012 meeting. I have a PhD in seabird ornithology and currently run a shop in Culverden as well as growing flowers at Conway Flat.

Jodie Denton, has temporarily stood down from her role as Secretary, following the arrival of her second child, a daughter. Our congratulations go to Jodie and family. In the meantime Teri Sonal has taken on the secretarial role. Many thanks, Teri.

In September the trust held the annual Welcome Home celebrations for the Hutton's shearwater. It was a fun event as usual (more on this on page 4) and it was very heartening to see the community involvement.

The North Canterbury sculptor Sam Mahon is to produce two new fundraiser artworks for the trust. One will be a bronze of the Hutton's shearwater. Aimed at the corporate market, there will be a limited edition of 10. The other will be a painting of Hutton's shearwater on the snow. A limited run of signed prints will be for sale, as was done for the Austen Deans print.

On the scientific front, Geoff Harrow has been communicating with the Canterbury University Zoology Department, and an Honours student, under the supervision of Dr Marie Hale, will analyse blood samples taken from birds at the two mountain colonies. This will show how much interbreeding occurs between the two. The samples were collected by Phil Bradfield (DoC employee and a trustee) in November, when the burrow-scoping of nests was done to check on the status of the colonies.

As always, being a volunteer group, the trust has many helpers in the community. To everyone who has contributed to the trust, and especially to the Welcome Home celebration, our sincere thanks. We need and value your support.

Elsbeth Wingham, Chair



The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust is a Charities Commission registered entity CC37979.

Donations to the Trust attract tax credits.

Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, PO Box 58, Kaikoura 7340. www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz

Farewell to the **Hutton's Shearwaters** “Haere Ra Nga Titi” Sunday 7th April 2013

6.45 am Gather at South Bay Reserve

7.00 am Walk to Peninsula Colony for farewell ceremony

- Return to South Bay Coastguard building for a BBQ breakfast of bacon butties, tea and coffee
- Short presentation and scientific updates
- Mid morning finish



All Welcome

For catering, if possible please RSVP to:
PO Box 58 Kaikoura 7340 or admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz
by Friday 29th March



The Hutton's Shearwater
CHARITABLE TRUST

Translocation

Tuesday, 26 February 2013 saw the arrival of 17 fat and fluffy Hutton's shearwater chicks to the Kaikoura peninsula colony, Te Rae O Atiu. This marks the beginning of the 2013 translocation programme.

The chicks were greeted by around 50 fans, young and old, who blessed the birds and helped get them watered and tucked into their new burrows. It was a great turn out and thanks go to Brett Cowan and Gina Solomon for arranging the blessing.

The chicks will be handfed for the next five or so weeks, until they are of a good body weight and have fledged. It was intended that 100 chicks would be collected from the DoC Kowhai colony; unfortunately, despite the burrow-scoping data, the season seems to be late this year compared to last year's collection dates, and the bulk of the birds were too small to transfer. So only 17 birds were initially brought down to the peninsula; however, the collection crew headed back into the hills to repeat the exercise in early March to fill the quota of 100 chicks and it is hoped that by the time this newsletter reaches our readers a full feeding programme will be in action, with six to seven volunteers spending a good part of the day to feed the 100 or so chicks with sardine smoothies.

A big thank you in advance to our capable project leader and his team of hardy volunteers.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact Mike Bell on 021552768 or visit www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz

Jodie Denton, Trustee



Left—Local DoC staff member and Te Runanga o Takahanga representative Brett Cowan and Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trustee Gina Solomon (Runanga representative) provide a karakia (blessing) for the new arrivals.

Middle—Brett Cowan with one of the fat fluffy Hutton's chicks.

Right—Translocation project manager Mike Bell (Trustee) giving one of the chicks water to rehydrate before taking the bird to its new burrow.

Colony Report Te Rae O Atiu

The 2012–13 season began when the first birds were seen off the Kaikoura coast in late August, with large rafts off the Kaikoura Peninsula, in South Bay and further south. At the new colony, monitoring pins had been moved outside three nestboxes as early as the end of August (earlier than 2012), there were signs birds had entered the nestboxes on 3 September, and the first bird was seen in a box on 15 September.

Up to 18 nestboxes have been visited at some time during observation intervals of 4–7 nights, half as many nestboxes again as last year. In 2012 the first two eggs were laid about 1 November and we had 14 eggs laid so far (four last season). Seven pairs were incubating eggs on a continuous basis and from this three chicks hatched. The first chick that hatched died within a few days but two more are very healthy and do not appear to need feeding, as we had to for last year's single chick.

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Twenty-one birds have had microchip transponders inserted, and readers have been installed on 18 nestboxes. This will allow us to closely monitor the chick-feeding by the parents and help in deciding if any intervention is needed. The nestbox monitors will also provide some information as to the birds' behaviour — we seem to have had birds move to or found in different boxes with the same or different mates.

Lindsay Rowe, Trustee

Welcome Home Event

On 22 September 2012 the trust had a stall at the street market on the village green in Kaikoura as part of the Kaikoura Cruise weekend. We had decided to attach our Welcome Home celebrations for the returning Hutton's shearwaters to the cruise festivities.

The stall was in a prime position and we were able to watch the procession of young people, some of whom had amazing bird models that flapped their wings. DoC's Community Relations Ranger Brett Cowan's imagination and creativity were clearly involved here. Other youngsters also had banners with 'welcome back' messages and some of the young-at-heart (Nicky McArthur, Phil Bradfield and a number of Forest and Birders) were dressed as birds. They fluttered on the fringes, co-ordinating, talking with the public and getting the Hutton's message out to new ears. A brief message from Phil Bradfield and Nicky McArthur on behalf of the trust let people know that some shearwater were back and that more will be returning. A big thank you was given to the teachers and their pupils for their participation, and for the energy and fun they bring.

Special thanks go to Lorraine Hawke and the kapa haka group for a really memorable performance. There were also a number of musical items, local choirs of all ages, solo performers and a band — a very diverse and entertaining line-up. About 150 to 200 people were listening and the village green fairly bustling. The Lions' chocolate wheel did a vigorous trade and sold out quite quickly; and some artistic person made a great job of face painting a small Hutton's shearwater in flight. It was lovely to see so many of these images on people by the late afternoon.

At our stall we had T-shirts, information on membership and our Hutton's burgers (no bird flesh involved). Many thanks go to the Kaikoura New World supermarket, regular supporters of the trust's events, who had generously donated the hamburger buns.

For the more intellectually inclined, Teri Sonal had devised a quiz about the shearwater, which involved visiting a number of stalls to find the answers. The winner, with all answers correct, won a Hutton's T-shirt.

It was heartening to see so many local people wearing their Hutton's T-shirts at the event. It made us feel well supported and that Kaikoura people are taking ownership of the Hutton's shearwater.

Elsbeth Wingham, Chair

Inset—Geoff Harrow getting his face painted

Kapa Haka performance



Hutton's History

December 2010 at the Kowhai Hutton's Shearwater Research hut found me sweeping out the building after a successful burrow-scoping expedition. To my great concern I found large quantities of droppings that appeared to be from rats — or very large mice! There have always been low levels of mice on the Hutton's shearwater colonies and they were not thought to be a big problem. Rats, however, would be a serious danger to the birds.

I collected about 100 droppings and sent them to Trustee and DoC Biodiversity Manager Phil Bradfield and DoC Manager Peter Gaze for their opinion. To my great relief they both agreed that as the droppings were striated, sweet smelling and not musty, they had to be from the two Kaikoura giant weta (*Deinacrida*).

Kaikoura giant weta are common on all the Hutton's shearwater colonies, where they graze on a wide variety of alpine plants. These huge weta, heavier than the average mouse, have an interesting parasitic predator — the Gordian worm (*Nematomorpha*), so named because if it is disturbed in the many small streams that run throughout burrowed areas, they whip themselves into tangled knots like a lump of spaghetti. You may have heard of the Gordian knot.

The worms crawl to the edge of the water and lay strips of eggs on the nearby plants. A giant weta ingests the eggs while grazing. The Gordian egg hatches in the weta and slowly consumes the insect. Just before the weta dies, the Gordian worm, now about 20cm long, somehow 'persuades' the weta to go to water to drink. The moment the weta touches water, the Gordian worm splits the weta's hard shell open, leaving a dying insect. And so begins the worm's lifecycle all over again.

Geoff Harrow, Trustee

Auction Prize Dinner

On Canterbury Show Day (16 November 2012) I drove from Culverden to Yaldhurst to meet Nicky McArthur and to help her prepare a three-course cordon bleu meal for the Christchurch Women Walk Group, the successful bidders for this prize at our Hutton's Farewell Charity Auction. Pauline Cara had organised the group to travel to Kaikoura for the Hutton's Farewell and to attend the auction.

We arrived at our hostess Norma Porter's home at 5.00pm in preparation for the guests' arrival at 6.00pm. We were catering for eight women, including two vegetarians. I had volunteered to support Nicky, a trained cordon bleu chef, whose business, Kaikoura Wilderness Walks, had donated the prize. I enjoy cooking and was looking forward to a totally new experience, as well as expecting to learn a lot by working alongside her.

When the first guests arrived I was looking after the West Coast whitebait patties (fortuitously, my brother has a whitebait stand on the Paringa River). Nicky had prepared the stuffed and wrapped chicken breasts, done wonderful things with vegetables (new potatoes, honey-glazed carrots, green beans and baked tomatoes) and had made a tray of crunchy hors-d'oeuvres and a fantastic aperitif for the ladies. While they caught up with each other's news, we served the whitebait patties, which Nicky had presented beautifully — each plate had a small pink rosebud sitting on a carrot frond that looked like a fern.

Shortly afterwards, Nicky plated up a beautifully designed serving of the main course, which I then followed for the other servings, learning not to fill the whole plate and to work fast, so as to get the heated plates onto the table quickly and to keep the food hot. For the vegetarians I had prepared a main dish with avocados, tofu, red peppers and peas in a sesame and tahini sauce. Everyone made appreciative murmurings.

While the guests were eating and talking, Nicky and I caught our breath before preparing Nicky's piece de resistance — the dessert. Each plate had a small serve of a very rich, dark-chocolate mousse, a hazelnut and coffee meringue, orange rounds in Cointreau syrup, a scoop of rich vanilla ice-cream and some whipped cream. The plates were decorated with strawberries and a dusting of icing sugar.

Once the women had finished dining, they invited us to join them. We were thanked heartily; and, as I'd hoped, I had learnt heaps. All in all, it was a very successful evening on so many levels.

Elsbeth Wingham, Chair

Working Bee At Te Rae O Atiu

Saturday, 22 September 2012 kicked into gear with some great weather and a working bee at the peninsula colony on Te Rae o Atiu. It was also the start of a busy weekend for the trust and the community with the annual Welcome Home to the Hutton's Shearwater event – this year a community street party, combined with the Kaikoura Hop hot rod, muscle car and classic car event. (See page 4.)

The purpose of the working bee was to complete some important tasks at the colony site a) before the birds returned to nest on site for this season and b) before the next translocation of chicks, planned for Feb/Mar 2013.

Around a dozen eager volunteers arrived to offer their time and energy for the morning's tasks. After Trustee Phil Bradfield had introduced us to the trust, to the Hutton's shearwater and to the peninsula project, we headed in through the predator proof fence to see what was in store.

Volunteers made great progress in the sunshine, adding sand pads to burrow entrances, clearing and releasing around native plantings, grubbing thistles, levelling off two sections of new pathway and backfilling steps leading up the colony face. It was hard work, but not without a bit of banter and friendly chatter, and of course lots of talk about the birds. Our volunteers were rewarded with an outstanding view, homemade banana cake and juice, and a 'Free Hutton's hamburger' ticket for the street party later on that day.

The trust is very grateful for the work done by the volunteers. We hope you enjoyed your morning and we look forward to seeing you again another day.

Jodie Denton, Trustee



'The Hutton's Golden Oldies'

Long-time Hutton supporter Lloyd Johnson; Geoff Harrow — the man behind it all; and Ella Hislop, whose husband Ivan we can thank for starting Geoff on his Hutton's quest many years ago. (Ella's 10 year old grandson Mark Parkinson also came along for the morning.)

Project Sponsors

We would like to thank the following for their financial contribution to the trust's latest projects.

2012 Translocation—Geoff Harrow, Roland Stead, WWF New Zealand, Encounter Kaikoura, Lions Club of Kaikoura

2013 Translocation—Encounter Foundation, Ron and Edna Greenwood Environmental Trust, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Kaikoura Vet Care

2012–13 Kowhai Colony Research—Air Rescue Services Ltd, The Lion Foundation

This newsletter is a combined effort of Trustees, Jess Bailey of Whale Watch Kaikoura and Carolyn Catt.

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Trust contact details

Phone: 03 319 7211 (Treasurer)
 Phone: 03 319 7723 (Acting Secretary)
 E-mail: admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz
 PO Box 58
 Kaikoura 7300

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust

established 2008: *Aim, encourage and promote the preservation, conservation, research, public education, and sustainable management of the Hutton's shearwater.*