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Kia ora,

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust is pleased to launch its inaugural newsletter. It will be published three times a year to keep you informed about the Trust's activities. The initiative for the Trust came from longtime Hutton's Shearwater advocate Geoff Harrow who has championed the cause of this amazing endangered seabird that breeds only in the Kaikoura Mountains for almost 50 years. As it breeds only near Kaikoura and is an endangered species, it makes it very special to Kaikoura. The purpose of the Trust is to support the protection of this species through fundraising, education, research and by other means that will protect and help secure the future of Hutton's Shearwater.

The Trust was formed late last year in the first five months of 2009 succeeded in raising over \$200,000 for a predator proof fence to be constructed on the Kaikoura Peninsula. This is the site where a third colony is being established through the cooperative efforts of the Department of Conservation, Te Runanga o Kaikoura, Whalewatch, and the community including the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of NZ, numerous committed individuals, and this Trust. It is planned to have a fence in place by the end of the year to protect returning birds that were translocated to this site between 2006-08. I thank all of those who have supported this exciting conservation programme. Without Whalewatch making the 2.1 hectare area of land available on the Peninsula, none of this would be possible. The plan to create a third colony of Hutton's Shearwater on the Kaikoura Peninsula is a great example of what is possible through the spirit of partnership. We know it will succeed as some of the first birds translocated to the Peninsula site returned in December 2008, after two and a half years at sea in Australian waters.

The response from funding agencies and individuals for funds to build a predator proof fence on the Peninsula has been extraordinary and as a Trust we have been humbled by that support. The key funders who have supported the fence project are noted later in this newsletter. Now that the funds for the fence have been secured, the Trust is now planning research for this species so that we can learn more about this amazing bird.

Another exciting milestone is that we are also launching the "*Friends of Hutton's Shearwater*". This will be at the Champagne Breakfast and Charity Auction being so kindly put on for us by the ladies of the Lions Club of Seaward Kaikoura (thank you so much ladies for that act of generosity) at Donegal House on the 15th August. By becoming a member of the Friends, you can continue to support and follow the work of our Trust. More about this on page 2 of this newsletter.

I acknowledge the fantastic support of all who have contributed to the predator proof fence project and the Kaikoura community for getting in behind this important conservation work that will provide significant benefits for the future of this species and for Kaikoura.

Paul McGahan
 Chairman





Geoff Harrow assisting with feeding chicks 'sardine smoothies' during the 2008 translocation of chicks from the Kowhai colony to the Kaikoura Peninsula.

“It all began with a chance conversation with a Kaikoura deerstalker.....”

45 years of discovery & commitment

What a flight of discovery I have had over the past 45 years studying Hutton's shearwater (*Puffinus huttoni*), known as titi or pakaha to Ngai Tahu, or simply muttonbird to most New Zealanders. Birds had always interested me having joined the NZ Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society in 1936 as a 10 year old but it has been this particular species that has resulted in my lifelong quest to ensure their preservation.

It all began with a chance conversation with a Kaikoura deerstalker, Ivan Hislop in 1964. On autumn deer shooting expeditions before World War II he had come across masses of burrows with muttonbird carcasses at over 1800 metres above sea level in the Kowhai Colony. I was intrigued by Hislop's story. I was an experienced mountaineer and deerstalker and I thought I should follow this up. I had hoped that these birds might be the mysterious, elusive Hutton's shearwater, about which little was known. Expert ornithologists seemed to be unaware that shearwaters bred at such high altitudes in the Seaward Kaikoura mountains.

Over the next 10 years I found a further seven colonies in widely scattered, remote sites in the Kaikoura Ranges. The furthest colony might take up

to 15 hours of difficult climbing to reach.

Despite the fact that stoats are known to be predators of eggs, chicks and adults, the colonies remained in good health.

Years later when I revisited some of the breeding colonies, it was found that pigs had totally destroyed six of the eight breeding sites I had earlier described. This was alarming. It became apparent that the only reason the last two breeding sites remained was that they were guarded by a series of massive waterfalls. As these were the only remaining breeding sites in the world, action was urgently required. The Department of Conservation (DoC) and the University of Otago commissioned Richard Cuthbert to do a doctoral thesis and come up with a management plan to save the now endangered species. It was to be a critical point for the fate of the shearwaters

Amongst other recommendations, Cuthbert made a strong plea for a third colony to be established near the township of Kaikoura by translocating chicks to artificial burrows, feeding them until they fledged. The aim was that they would 'imprint'

on the site and thus think it was home for when returning to NZ from Australia to breed a few years later. Creating an artificial colony meant Hutton's shearwater could be managed safely behind a predator proof fence.

DoC could not fund a predator proof fence so I offered to establish a "Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust". Its purpose is to raise sufficient funds to pay for a full predator proof fence around the new colony and ongoing research.

In 10 short months our Shearwater Trust has been registered and incorporated. We have 10 hard working trustees appointed, have obtained charitable status and raised about \$200,000. This money will be used for the predator proof fence, research and the protection of this special bird. Many thanks to the hundreds of people who have helped us along our way.

Anyone wanting to donate to this worthy cause to ensure the future of this endangered species can send a cheque to: Lindsay Rowe, Treasurer, Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, PO Box 58, Kaikoura.

Geoff Harrow
Settlor/Trustee



Approximate location of predator proof fence surrounding the peninsula translocation colony.

Predator proof fence for Peninsula

The predator-proof fence selected will be made from stainless steel micro-woven mouse proof chain link mesh to a height of 700mm above ground level with 12.5mm aperture Long Life Wire Plus galvanised coated rat proof mesh above. The meshes are joined with a 150mm overhanging flashing that stops mice

climbing from the mouse mesh and onto the larger aperture mesh. The use of robust chain link woven products for the upper and lower sections of the fence gives a high degree of strength and durability. The finished height of the fence will be about 1.9m above ground to stop jumping and climbing

possums and cats. The mesh will be buried underground to stop burrowing predators such as rats from entering the enclosure. The fence will be topped with a capping of similar design as that at the Karori Sanctuary, Wellington.

Lindsay Rowe
Treasurer

Become a Friend of the Hutton's Shearwater

On 15th August 2009 the Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater will be launched at a Champagne breakfast being hosted by the Lions Club of Seaward Kaikoura, at Donegal House, Kaikoura.

We see the "Friends" as being a group of individuals who wish to support the Hutton's Shearwater, and the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust.

The vision for the "Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater" is the dissemination of information to all interested 'Friends' not only in the local community, but also a much wider community, throughout New

Zealand and internationally.

Newsletters will be published 3 times a year, updating our members on what the trust is driving and what is happening at 'the 3 colonies'. The intention is to also have relevant events from time to time to raise awareness of the various endeavors being undertaken by the different parties involved in these exciting projects.

This will include an annual ceremony to mark the arrival of Hutton's Shearwater back from Australia in late August each year. More about that in our next newsletter.

Individual membership is to be set at \$15 and family membership at \$20.

We hope you will consider joining us to help improve the long term outlook for the Hutton's Shearwater.

To become a Friend please send us your name, address, and email to PO Box 58, Kaikoura.

Nicky McArthur
Convenor.

Friends of the Hutton's
Shearwater.



Local volunteer Bev Elliot and the Trust's Chairman Paul McGahan during feeding work at the Peninsula.

A 'must have' - Austen Deans print

Austen Deans aged 94, a renowned mountain landscape painter agreed to paint Hutton's Shearwater flying at sea level with the Kaikoura mountains as a background. Painting the snow covered Seaward Kaikoura range was a breeze for such an experienced artist. The Shearwaters were a new challenge for Austen, so he painted several birds in different poses onto templates. He moved these around his land/seascape to find the most satisfying placement. The end result is this brilliant painting which Austen has agreed to allow the Trust to copy as a fund raiser. Austen has personally numbered and signed fifty prints which makes them so much more valuable. Most of Austen's original paintings sell for many thousands of dollars. You can purchase your own signed print for just \$250 from Trustee Geoff Harrow (9 Alderson Ave, Chch 8022, 03 332 4534 or by emailing lindsay.jan.rowe@xtra.co.nz). This will assist in the ongoing fundraising for the protection of the shearwaters.



Signed Austen Deans print are available for purchase from the Trust. The print measures at 620mm x 420mm.

Geoff Harrow
Settlor/Trustee





Mike Morrissey of DoC burowscoping in the Shearwater Stream December 2008.

2008/09 breeding season in wild colonies

This past season has seen two new and significant management actions initiated in the two colonies located in the Seaward Kaikoura ranges. The first a substantial walk-in pig trap on the only access route in to the upper Kowhai catchment breeding grounds. The rationale behind this project was based on one of Richard's Cuthbert's key recommendations; that ungulates, especially pigs, should be controlled to lessen their impact on Hutton's populations. There is strong evidence that pigs led to the extinction of at least six Hutton's colonies over the past 40 years.

The trap construction was carried out over a week in March 2009 by a team of DOC staff and volunteers. The trap will be regularly checked for captures but so

far has caught nothing, which is good news.

The second exciting project to get underway is the establishment of a very systematic stoat trapping programme in the Shearwater Stream colony to determine whether stoats are having an impact on the breeding success of Hutton's at that site. This project has been funded through the DoC Biodiversity Condition Fund and Environment Canterbury. Mike Morrissey from the DOC, Kaikoura Field Centre has led this project and has done a sterling job of establishing and checking new traps.

There are now 115 traps throughout the colony. These were checked and re-baited between mid-October 2008 and end of March 2009 at approximately 3 week intervals. Eight stoats were caught

during the season. This new project has been very actively supported by the new land owner, Nicky McArthur, her family, and Manager Lance Godfrey.

In tandem with this new trapping project, DoC continues to measure breeding success in both colonies using a burrow scope. Burrows are checked at the beginning of the breeding season and again just prior to fledging to determine breeding success. Breeding success in sub-colonies of both Kowhai and Shearwater Stream colonies was variable last season.

It will take at least three more years of research to determine the level of impact stoats may be having on the two mountain colonies of Hutton's Shearwater.

Phil Bradfield.
Trustee

“...head back out to sea, about two hours before dawn, they have been tracked at speeds of up to 150kph...”

Hutton's shearwater is an endangered seabird, endemic to Kaikoura. The only place in the world that this species breeds is high in the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges at elevations between 1200 to 1800 metres.

Hutton's shearwater do not breed until they are 6-7 years old and are thought to live to in excess of 30 years. They have been recorded diving to depths of 36 metres for food with an average dive depth of 23m.

The only time they come to land is to breed and the adults migrate annually to feed in the waters off Australia during the cooler winter months.

Once chicks fledge they also leave for Australia but do not return until 2-3 years later.

In pre-European times, the titi (chick) was a sustainable food source for Maori. The birds were preserved in a poha (kelp bag) for up to two years. They

were also traded amongst different Ngai Tahu Hapu.

The introduction of predators and changes due to land development brought an end to the customary harvest. Hutton's shearwater is a 'taonga species' for Ngai Tahu and Te Runanga o Kaikoura.

They can gain altitude at speeds of up to 45km/hr to reach their mountain burrows while carrying semi-digested fish for their chicks. They only fly to and from their burrows in cover of darkness.

On leaving their burrows to head back out to sea before dawn, they have been tracked at speeds of up to 150kph.

The birds gather food for their chicks as far south as Otago Peninsula and often fish around Banks Peninsula bays. Kapiti Island and Cook Strait are common feeding areas to the north, and they have been

recorded near the Chatham Islands.

Research into feeding patterns using pressure gauges attached to the legs of these birds has shown they often dive 25 metres below the surface of the sea, and one shearwater was recorded foraging as deep as 36.6m.

These shearwaters have often become entangled and drowned in set nets along the Kaikoura coastline with sometimes as many as 80 having perished in a single net. With the banning of set nets to protect Hector's dolphins this hazard has been reduced.

Historically before the arrival of humans in New Zealand, Hutton's shearwaters are thought to have nested in their millions.

Jodie Denton
Secretary

Funding update

At its inaugural meeting in October 2008 the Trust decided that a predator-proof fence around the new Peninsula colony was imperative and our No 1 priority. Experience during the translocation project had shown that this colony was very susceptible to predators; one cat managed to get into the site and killed 8 chicks in one night. This was despite extensive trapping and shooting in adjacent scrub and farmland, and attempts to thwart predators using fishing net strung over the fence.

The Trust lodged its first funding application to the Canterbury Community Trust in December 2008

followed by a comprehensive campaign in early 2009 applying to 15 different funding agencies. We additionally received significant funds from individuals, donations and a raffle. While we contemplated other fund-raising activities we were overwhelmed by the response from these agencies and received welcome contributions from 11 of them: Lions Club of Kaikoura, Canterbury Community Trust, Pub Charity, Eureka Trust, Kaikoura District Council Biodiversity Fund, Environment Canterbury, Ron and Edna Greenwood Environmental Trust, Kaikoura and North Can-

terbury branches of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of NZ, World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Lottery Environment and Heritage Fund.

Sufficient funds have been received or promised to enable us to select a contractor to build the fence. To all the agencies and the individuals and businesses in Kaikoura and elsewhere who made contributions to our cause, we are extremely grateful and know that your efforts will make the success of the new colony possible.

Lindsay Rowe
Treasurer



Mike Bell, one of the Trustees during the many weeks of feeding translocated chicks—sardine smoothie anyone?

Website has gone live

We now have a website (www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz) which went live on the 16th July 2009. While still under construction, the website provides information about the activities and projects of the Kaikoura Hutton's Shearwater Trust.

Currently the major project is the construction of the predator proof fence and this is outlined on the website under Trust Projects. You can also read about the initial project where the Hutton's chicks were relocated to their new

colony on the Peninsula.

As mentioned the website is still under construction and new features and photos will be updated as time goes on. The website also features a page called 'Learn how you can help'. Here you can view the different ways of making a contribution toward this very worthwhile project. We would welcome you joining the 'Friends of Hutton's Shearwater' to be a part of our exciting conservation work.

Dennis Buurman
Trustee

Trust members

The Trust members are:

Geoff Harrow—Settlor (Founder)

Paul McGahan—Chairman

Jodie Denton—Secretary

Nicky McArthur—Trustee

Lindsay Rowe—Treasurer

Dennis Buurman—Trustee

Tim Manawatu—Trustee

Mike Bell—Trustee

Philip Bradfield—Trustee

Teri Sonal—Trustee





Did you know—

Hutton's Shearwater is the only NZ seabird that nests in a sub alpine environment.

Species protection—a word from DoC

The 2008/2009 year has been a landmark year for the conservation of the Endangered Hutton's shearwater in Kaikoura. A number of new initiatives over the past breeding season; from the formation of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust to the setting up of robust pest control programmes in the two remaining wild colonies signi-

fies that the future survival of this iconic seabird, only found at Kaikoura, is looking very promising. This season's most exciting news has been the confirmed return of the first transferred birds. This news means that this ground-breaking conservation initiative is going to be a success.

It is very exciting for DOC to be part of this local community conservation initiative and it is especially heartening to see so many locals getting behind this really exciting conservation work.

Phil Bradfield
Trustee

Our main sponsors—many thanks

World Wildlife Fund for Nature New Zealand

NZ Lottery Grants Board and.....



**Environment
Canterbury**
Your regional council



**FOREST
& BIRD**

Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust

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E-mail: admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz
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Kaikoura 7340

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust was established in 2008 to: **encourage and promote the preservation, conservation, research, public education, and sustainable management of the Hutton's shearwater.**