



THE Hutton's Shearwater CHARITABLE TRUST

NEWSLETTER

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And more.

Special points of interest:

- Celebration a success
- The Laughing Owl that wasn't
- Birds are coming home early
- Predator free
- Special treat for our Friends of

Kia ora,

On Saturday 28 August the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust held a public celebration to mark the completion of the Peninsula predator proof fence. The fence project has been the key priority for the Trust since its inception, raising the necessary funds, negotiating a licence to occupy the 2.1ha peninsula site and getting the fence built.

Minister of Conservation, the Hon. Kate Wilkinson was guest speaker at the celebration. She not only praised the work of the Trust and the Kaikoura community who have got in behind the project but also demonstrated her willingness to get in hands and all at a tree planting ceremony on the Peninsula colony.

The celebration started at the Takahanga Marae with more than 80 visitors welcomed onto the marae. This was followed by an afternoon tea, speeches and an acknowledgement of those who have been involved in the project.

The Minister also presented a Kaikoura District community service award to Trustee and treasurer Lindsay Rowe for the outstanding effort he had put in to fundraising and project managing the fence development on behalf of the Trust.

Framed prints of Austen Dean's "Hutton's shearwater and the Kaikoura Ranges" were also presented to groups and individuals who have played a key role in assisting the Trust in its goal to establish the fence including the Kaikoura Charitable Trust (received on behalf by Kauahi Ngapora of Whale Watch) and Simon Ford of Mortlock McCormack Law. Although absent on the day, prints are also to be presented to Simon Mortlock of Mortlock McCormack Law and Michael Trotter who undertook an archaeological investigation of the site for the Trust at no cost. A print was also presented to the Minister of Conservation in recognition of the Department of Conservation's major role in initiating the project to create a third colony of Hutton's shearwater on the Kaikoura Peninsula.

Chairman Paul McGahan praised the efforts of all who had been involved in this project including all of the Trustees who he described as an amazing and committed group of people, The Kaikoura Charitable Trust without whose amazing generosity in providing the land, none of this would have been possible, the DoC for their vision in initiating a third colony, Te Runanga o Kaikoura and the Kaikoura District Council for their ongoing support and partnership in the project. He also acknowledged all of the funders including: the Lotteries Commission, Canterbury Community Trust, ECan, KDC, Pub Charity, The Eureka Foundation, WWF, both Kaikoura Lions Clubs, the North Canterbury and Kaikoura Branches of the NZ Royal Forest & Bird Society and the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund.....Continued over page.



Celebration continued

Following celebrations at Takahanga Marae, a tree planting ceremony was held at the colony site on the Peninsula. The Minister of Conservation, Trustee Geoff Harrow and youngster Nico Ford – all representing different generations planted trees to mark the future development of the site as a colony for this remarkable bird.

A special thanks to those who helped on the day including Te Runanga o Kaikoura, Major and Angela Timms and their catering team, and Barney

Thomas and Brett Cowan from the Department of Conservation.

Although the fence is complete, there is still a lot of work to do to maintain it and the site and to ensure returning birds are carefully monitored. DoC also continues to be involved with site maintenance with Mike Morrissey in particular undertaking ongoing predator control work in the surrounding area which is much appreciated by the Trust.

The Trust is now working on research projects led by Mike Bell, Lindsay Rowe and Phil Bradfield.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the work of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust.

Paul McGahan
Chairman



Front page, left to right— Minister Kate Wilkinson, Joshua, Nico, Simon & Meg Ford of Christchurch; Trust settlor Geoff Harrow speaking at the celebration; Brett Cowan (DOC) and Phyllis Papworth, both of Te Runanga o Kaikoura, welcoming everyone on site.

Above—Geoff Harrow planting a young cabbage tree within the colony during the celebration visit.

Below left to right —Minister Kate Wilkinson & Trust Chair, Paul McGahan; Minister Kate Wilkinson acknowledging Trustee Lindsay Rowe with a Kaikoura Community award; the group of supporters, Friends of, trustees out on site at the colony celebrating the



Finding stranded Hutton's?

Some folk around Kaikoura are already starting to find stray Hutton's Shearwaters in random places around their houses and surrounding areas. It tends to happen each year when the birds start returning to the colonies from their 'overseas' journeys. They can become disorientated at night by various light sources from town, when heading back to the colonies at night. This may be from your outdoor house and shed lights, street lights, car park lights and so on.

Once again the Department of Conservation are operating a drop off box for birds found grounded around town. The box is located downstairs at the DoC Office on Ludstone Road adjacent to the Kaikoura High School. It's simply a matter of opening the lid and placing the bird gently in the space provided.

Leave a short note on the pad provided, stating where you found it and if you want to be contacted. Upon finding a bird and you are confident it's not injured and you wish to release it yourself, then do so by taking it to a beach, and gently throw it into the air and out to sea. If for some reason it doesn't fly away and washes up, then please return it to the drop off box so that it can be further examined.

Mike Morrissey, Department of Conservation.

PS: A big thanks from the Trust to the local Department of Conservation's Mike Morrissey for all the work he does with stranded birds and also to local vets, Rebecca and Dan Fleming and their staff of Kaikoura Vet Care.



Pest eradication programme—Peninsula

With the fence completed one might think that all the work was finished. However, a predator proof fence needs all the predators removed from within to ensure the protection the completed fence promises. Hence, as soon as the fence was completed, an eradication programme within was initiated.

Removing predators from a small 2.1ha predator proof fence seems like it would be an easy task. However the smallest pest, mice, can give the most trouble. Mice are known to attack seabirds as large as albatross and they reduce the possibility in the future, of introducing endangered invertebrates into the en-

closure. Mice are one of the toughest predators to eradicate due to their small home range. This requires bait stations to be set up every ten metres throughout the entire enclosure. Rodent baits were put in bait stations for a month to knock down numbers when monitoring began and to determine if any continued to survive.

Monitoring for rodents used tracking tunnels (ink pads in tunnels where rats and mice would leave their footprints as they walked through the tunnels) and wax tag chew sticks (rodents love to chew wax and leave tell tale teeth marks in wax markers). Despite bait stations placed

every ten metres only two mice were detected and a tighter grid of bait stations was needed in these areas to deal to these persistent few. Two weeks later there was no further sign of mice, and touch wood they have been successfully eradicated.

There was no evidence that cats or stoats were present within the fence following its completion, however there were a number of rabbits within the fence which were controlled with poison and fumigating burrows. Along with threatening the strength of the fence by undermining it, rabbits can interfere with breeding shearwaters in burrows. Rabbits also set

back the re-vegetation programmes by eating newly planted trees and shrubs. It was vital to remove all of these pests.

With removal of predators from within the fence, this area is truly a safe haven for the transferred Hutton's shearwaters to return and breed. In fact this will be the only predator free site for this species, and a major milestone for the recovery of this charismatic bird.

Mike Bell
Trustee



Hutton's shearwater back home in Kaikoura

We have had news from a number of very reliable sources that many Hutton's shearwaters are back home after their brief four month break overseas. Large flocks have been observed "rafted-up" at sea in the vicinity of the Kaikoura Peninsula during the day. In addition, Mike Morrissey (DOC, Kaikoura) and Jodie Denton flew in to the Kowhai colony on 16th September to check on the pig trap, hut and sub-colonies. It is always a great fear of ours that a substantial earthquake could dislodge many of the sub-colonies/burrows from their precarious perches high on the mountain slopes. They noted that in the lower colonies (not covered by deep snow) there was a lot of soil and debris excavated from bur-

rows which means that there are birds flying up at night and starting to prepare burrows for nesting. Even more exciting is the news that several of the artificial burrows on the new colony site have been visited by returning shearwaters. Two burrows have even had fresh grass taken in to them; this is often a sign that birds are prospecting for a place to breed! We will be watching activity here with baited breath.

The biggest change for us all now is that we can be more relaxed about breeding attempts being successful as we do not have the constant threat of predation looming over these new residents.

We are currently planning a busy field season in the wild colonies.

Mike Morrissey will once again be running the stoat control programme in the Shearwater Stream colony with help from Nicky McArthur and Lance Godfrey. This work will start at the end of September/early October, weather permitting. In November, we are planning extended trips to the Kowhai colony to download data from the 20 Geolocators that we put on birds in January in collaboration with a team from Oxford University (UK). We are hopeful of retrieving a good percentage of these devices. Maps that are produced will tell us for the first time in Hutton's history exactly where these birds go in the winter months. We are very excited by the prospect of learning this

link in the Hutton's story.

On this same trip we will be attaching GPS tracking devices to different birds to learn about local foraging trips (how far, how long etc).

We will continue with our burrow scoping work to determine breeding success in the Kowhai and Shearwater Stream colonies. It will be interesting to see how they do this year after such a bumper season last year.

Watch this space for updates on some of this research in the next newsletter.

Phil Bradfield (DOC, South Marlborough)



Exclusive offer for our *Friends of*

The 'Friends of HSCT' are planning a mini event in Labour weekend.

Encounter Kaikoura have very generously offered the Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater a trip on their Albatross Encounter at the reduced rate of \$80 (normally \$110) They require a minimum number of 5 people and confirmation five days in advance is essential. The 9.00am tour on both

Sunday 24th and Monday 25th Oct is available (boat capacity is 12). A HSCT member will accompany the trip and be available to talk about the work of the Trust and the life of the birds.

To make a booking please contact Albatross Encounter on 03 3196777 and use the reference 'Friends of Hutton's Shearwater Labour Weekend Special'. A huge thank you to the team at Encounter Kaikoura for facilitating this great

opportunity. We hope our Friends will take advantage of this offer to see the great rafts of shearwaters out on the ocean, an extraordinary sight to behold.

Book your spot now and encourage new members to join the Friends of Hutton's Shearwater.



The Laughing Owl that wasn't!

Hutton's History' by Geoff Harrow.

Stay tuned for Geoff's often amusing recollections of the 'earlier days' in the world of the Hutton's.

Below— Puhī Peaks Station.

Sam Pilbrow (an earlier owner of Puhī Peaks Station) was riding his horse along a bush track on what was called the run on Puhī Peaks Station. It was near dusk in September 1968.

A large bird that Sam thought was an owl, swooped past at head height, startling both horse and rider. Sam was well acquainted with Morepork Owls, but this bird was much bigger.

When he told me about this encounter, I thought as this is limestone landscape, it might be the last refuge of

the Laughing Owl, considered extinct by experts.

Sam and Teresa Pilbrow offered to pack me and my family out to the run the next month on Labour weekend to hunt for this rare owl.

My daughter Belinda was 6 at the time and she and her brother Paul were highly excited to be going out in this wild country by horse and pack horse. My wife Lyndsey was less enthusiastic, especially camping under a tent fly. Her fears were well founded because that night, was intensely cold, and by next morning 10cm of snow had the sagging tent fly touching our faces.

The weather had cleared to a cloudless sunny day. No owls had been heard during the night but Sam's strange big bird was quickly identified. Less than 200m from where Sam was startled on his horse, I found a pair of Falcons nesting in the face of a cliff. My family retreated out of harms way while I

went to investigate the Falcons nest. Both birds kept up a barrage of attacks which I fended off with my ice axe. Near the nest I spotted some bones I was sure were from a Hutton's Shearwater. I was about to scoop them into my hat when I felt a sharp pain in my scalp as a falcon came out of the sun at tremendous speed. The incision was five centimetres long and blood oozed over my eyes and around my ears. A hasty withdrawal was made to my family, where my wife took over the falcons assault verbally, strongly suggesting that I ought to be ashamed of myself for disturbing nesting birds!

I wasn't worried for I had confirmed that Laughing Owls were still most likely extinct, that Falcons do attack Shearwaters, and that Falcons are superb surgeons!

Geoff Harrow
Trustee



Friends of Hutton's shearwater—Update

The Hutton's are home; its wonderful to have them back on the water in Kaikoura once again.

Our main focus over the winter months has been the celebration of the completion of the predator proof fence. It was very rewarding to have the Minister of Conservation present. Thank you also to the Friends and volunteers who were able to attend and receive recognition for the many hours of hard work and commitment finally coming to fruition. The Kaikoura Peninsula site and new colony is a true jewel in the crown of Kaikoura. It is a genuine attraction for Kaikoura, and will benefit all in the community. It has acted as a catalyst for people from

all walks of life, and because of its accessibility and the visibility of this project, it has drawn people together in a common conservation cause. People have been able to see an opportunity where they can help represent a species in decline and make a huge contribution; this therefore helps promote conservation in a very visible way. Special thanks to all the 'Friends of the HSCT' who have helped make this happen.

Now that our birds are safely protected in their new colony, perhaps it is a good moment to reflect on our mission statement "*Encourage and promote the preservation, conservation, research, public education, and sustainable management of the*

Hutton's shearwater".

To this end we are moving forward with education and awareness wherever we see a possibility. In line with our vision of ongoing education, Trustee Phil Bradfield visited Kaikoura High School and gave a presentation to the Eco Council. His talk covered information on our plucky Shearwater but also the role of the Trust which has only been in existence since October 2008. We believe it is incredibly important for the community to understand our role and education in our schools will play a huge part in the long term preservation and conservation of Hutton's shearwater. Trustee Lindsay Rowe has also given a talk to the Suburban School including a walk out to the peninsula

colony site.

To our current 'Friends', thank you for your support, it is very much appreciated. We have recently introduced a 'Friends' Life Membership at a cost of \$250 for those who would prefer this option. Please encourage your friends to join our worthy cause, and then they will be able to join us at sea over Labour weekend.

PS: Watch out for the Hutton's shearwater article in the November edition of 'Forest and Bird'.

Nicky McArthur
Convenor *Friends of Hutton's Shearwater*

Obituary—Dr John Warham

Dr John Warham Ph.D, Dr.Sc, Member of NZ Order of Merit.

It is appropriate that our Trust record the passing of Dr John Warham on 12 May 2010, aged 90. He ranks amongst New Zealand's most notable ornithologists. He was one of the few scientists to be awarded Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to ornithology. He was also a world authority on seabirds, and his publication '*The Handbook of Australian Seabird*' and '*The Petrels*' are still the standard references for oceanic birds of our region.

Within a month of John taking up his post as lecturer in Zoology at Canterbury University, he made contact and arranged to come with me to investigate and research Hutton's. He joined me on expeditions into the mountain breeding colonies in the 1960's. He gave much helpful, practical advice on how to carry out investigations and keep records. During the preparation of my paper for the OSNZ Journal 'Notornis' recording my 10 years of Hutton's shearwater research, John Warham spent some time

in offering expert criticism that greatly improved my writing.

He was always interested to hear about how the Hutton's were doing in the mountain colonies.

In 1981 John Warham published a paper in *Emu* 81:44 entitled 'Does Hutton's shearwater circumnavigate Australia?'. John had gathered all Australian records and offered a plausible theory that these shearwaters may encircle Australian coastal waters during the birds winter absence from the New Zealand breeding

grounds. As a Trust we are appreciative for all the hard work he carried out over many years. Our condolences to the family.

Geoff Harrow
Trustee



Hutton's house keeping

Now that we have accomplished our celebration event (Sept 28th), focus will be aimed on a welcome and/or farewell annual event for the Hutton's. Watch this space for more details. Other things on the go:

NZ Association of Resource Management Conference, September 22nd, Kaikoura—Trustees Geoff Harrow and Phil Bradfield were guest speakers at the evening dinner session of this conference. They were of course speaking on the Hutton's shearwater and the work the Trust is doing.

Planting at the peninsula colony—in July 2010 a group of volunteers under the programme International Student Volunteers (Hosted by Kaikoura District Council) assisted project manager Lindsay Rowe and nurseryman Doug Hockey to plant several hundred trees, flaxes and tussocks. The remaining native plants will be planted by a group who come to Kaikoura, called Creation Care Study Programme (CCSP). CCSP have helped out with many community based projects around town, often involving beach clean ups. They are a willing and enthusiastic crew with often around 20 or

so students. Thank you CCSP for your help.

New steps within the colony—The internal part of the colony now has a set of wooden steps and path leading down the slopes through the centre of the colony—thanks to the local Lions group and the Periodic Detention gang. This allows safe access throughout the colony, particularly when showing groups through the site and it keeps people out of the actual burrow areas. A big thanks to Pete McInnes and Tony Davies of Lions Kaikoura.

New interpretation panels for colony site—if you haven't been there already, the Peninsula shearwater colony sits adjacent to the very popular Peninsula walkway. Currently there are no interpretation panels where the new predator proof fence meets the walkway—hence lots of questions if someone is on site and/or lots of bewildered walkers. New interpretation panels are planned in conjunction with Department of Conservation. We look forward to getting these up in the near future.

Another season in the Shearwater Stream—late September to March/April provides the only opportunity (weather wise), for pest control (stoats) in the Shearwater Stream

colony. This colony is accessed by helicopter. We are very grateful for the experience and steady hands of the pilots at Kaikoura Helicopters, who have been involved with this colony for years. We look forward to another safe season with them.

Pest control for stoats has been ongoing over the last few years in this colony and is currently funded by Environment Canterbury's Biosecurity team of Amberley. We thank them for their ongoing involvement and assistance in this project.



Austen Deans Prints—get yours while they last. Purchase your signed print for just \$250 from Trustee Geoff Harrow (9 Alderson Ave, CHCH 8022, (03) 332 4534 or by emailing admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz

Next newsletter—end of January 2011.

Our main sponsors—many thanks

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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.*