



# THE Hutton's Shearwater CHARITABLE TRUST

## NEWSLETTER

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Kia ora,

There is no shortage of activity and exciting projects taking place within the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust. The big news is that two shearwater translocated from the Kowhai Valley to the Peninsula colony site laid eggs during the season. This was much earlier than expected and confirms that these birds have imprinted on the new site and will continue to return to the peninsula colony. Both eggs have been lost and while disappointing it is not unexpected. First year breeders often lack the experience successfully hatch an egg and bird experts are not surprised about this turn of events. The Trust expects that these birds will try again next season. Read about this on page 2 of the newsletter.

Equally exciting is the research work being undertaken that is starting to yield results on the flight paths and directions taken by this species in undertaking their annual migration to Australia and back. The Trust also recently agreed to a documentary being made on Hutton's shearwater by Claire Clements and Sean Griffin, students studying for their Masters in Natural History Film Making at Otago University. A glimpse of the first filming at a recent Trust meeting highlighted fantastic footage of birds at the Kowhai Colony. It is expected the documentary will be completed toward the end of 2011. Television NZ also recently visited and filmed the Peninsula and Kowhai colonies. Two four minute programmes are expected to appear on the TVNZ 6 programme "Meet the Locals" in March. Keep an eye out for that.

Many thanks for your assistance and interest to date. We look forward to another busy year and hopefully meeting more of our supporters along the way.

Paul McGahan

Chairman, Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust

P.s. For full chairman reports from our annual general meetings, visit our website.

### Photos below:

*Left— Film maker, Claire Clements appreciates the rare Kaikoura Giant Weta (Deinacrida parva) in the Kowhai River Hutton's shearwater colony.*

*Kaikoura Suburban School children with DOC officer Brett Cowan at the Maori Festival coordinated by the children & the school. The Trust attended with a stand on the day to spread the Hutton's story.*

*Band of the first bird to return to the Peninsula colony late 2010.*

*Right—Kaikoura Helicopters on the heli pad high in the Pubi Pubi Shearwater Stream colony.*



The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust is a Charities Commission registered entity CC37979. Donations to the Trust attract tax credits.

## First egg for Peninsula colony



In the September 2010 newsletter Trustee Phil Bradfield noted that large flocks of Hutton's shearwaters had been observed "rafted-up" at sea in the vicinity of the Kaikoura Peninsula following return from Australian waters. It was also noted that several of the artificial burrows on the new colony site had been visited by returning shearwaters. Since that report, visits to the colony have been at one to nine day intervals. Each nest box has three pins outside the entrance tunnel and another three pins at the chamber entrance.

If the inner pins are moved we know that birds have been in the chamber and not just moving around outside.

Up until mid-November between three and ten boxes were visited between checks. Although only two burrows were visited for the rest of November, these were the source of great excitement as both birds and eggs were present. X17115 (part of the 2007 translocation) was seen in Box 95 with an egg on 17 November and its mate seen in early December, was one of the 2006 chicks.

On 25 November an egg but no bird was seen in burrow 93; later we were to find another 2006 bird

and an un-banded bird which may have been attracted to the site by the calls being played each night over the sound system installed exactly for that purpose.

Unfortunately, both these attempts have failed which was not unexpected from first time breeders, but there is real hope for the future development of the colony.

Since the beginning of December, there has been an influx of birds with up to 15 burrows having been frequented between visits – it is likely that many of these have been from 2008 birds but none have been seen yet as we allow them to familiarise themselves with the site.

Since September we have undertaken some development work on the site. A set of steps and a pathway have been constructed using local labour and more will be completed this winter once the birds have left the site. These will allow controlled access for visitors and researchers through the site. It also reduces the potential for injury on the uneven ground as rabbit burrows and cattle hoof prints hidden in the long grass present a health and safety risk.

The Trust was fortunate to have a group from the Creation Care Study Programme volunteer their time to plant tussocks and low shrubs around the colony site. These were supplied through funding from the WWF programme and planted under the supervision of local nurseryman Doug Hockey. Mike Morrissey (DOC) and Peter Hockey (local volunteer), have also been busy on site watering and looking after plants in the hot dry summer conditions (although this recent rain has been a welcome reprieve).

Lindsay Rowe, Trustee

## Education in schools

Vision and goal:

- To ensure that each of our Kaikoura children are aware of, knowledgeable about and proud of the Hutton's Shearwater; Kaikoura being their last place on earth.
- That we ensure each student is exposed to a formal learning process in their school curriculum twice during their education, once at Year 6 level and once at Year 9 level.

For primary school children, Hutton's will be introduced into the curriculum in Semester 3, 2011 culminating in a trip with Encounter Kaikoura to view the Hutton's Shearwaters at sea in late September.

Kaikoura High School has embraced the concept enthusiastically and learning about Hutton's Shearwaters is being introduced at year 9 level into the departments of English, Social Studies, Maths curricular and hopefully Art.

Many thanks to the schools for their enthusiasm to date. We look forward to continuing this relationship in the community.

# Studying Hutton's shearwater migration

Each autumn the entire population of Hutton's shearwaters leaves New Zealand waters. From the recovery of banded birds we know that they are spending the winter in Australia, but the precise overwintering area and migration route has been unknown.

In collaboration with **Oxford University and Microsoft Research**, the Trust has spent the last year investigating the migration of Hutton's shearwater by attaching tiny geo-locators to the leg bands of shearwaters. These devices record the timing of sunrise and sunset and following computer analysis, give a daily loca-

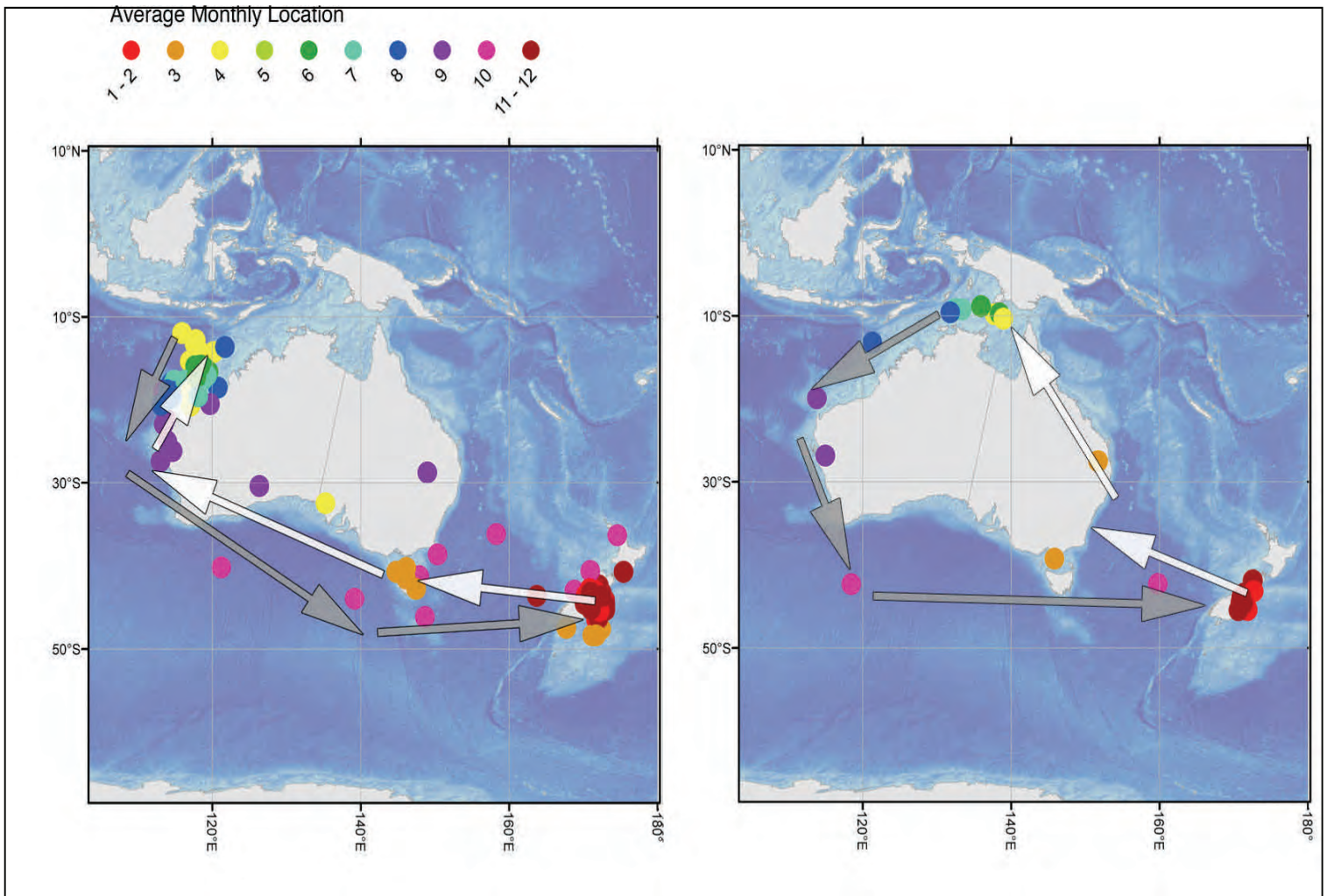
tion for that bird. This new technology has opened up the study of bird migration. In January 2010, twenty of these devices were put on breeding shearwaters in the Kowhai colony. Following the fledging of their chicks, these birds departed New Zealand waters with the rest of the population in March; returning the following spring to meet up with partners and beginning the breeding process again. Birds with geo-locators will have stored data from their entire migration, and if they could be caught this data could be downloaded to reveal their movements. Last December a three week field trip was under-

taken to try and recapture these birds. Many long nights spent in the colony paid off when all twenty birds were captured, with only two birds losing the device. The 18 tracks recovered showed for the first time, the migration route and wintering over areas of Hutton's shearwater. Interestingly Hutton's shearwater show differing migration patterns. Most birds flew south around Australia to overwinter in the Timor Sea. These birds then returned to New Zealand the same way. However a small number of birds took a different route, with the birds going north through Torres Strait to get to the same wintering grounds; these birds followed the main group home south, around the bottom of Australia.

Why the population would have different migration patterns is unknown, and it will be interesting to see if the same birds show the same migration patterns in successive years. This research is planned to continue for the next few years to gain a full understanding of Hutton's shearwater migration.

Mike Bell  
Trustee.

*Maps below—winter migration routes for Hutton's shearwaters, as determined by the recent geolocator study.*



## Thank you Suburban School

The local Suburban Primary School children have been very industrious and generous of late.

The Hutton's shearwater class created an entry in the under 15 category of the "MyBiodiversity Film Competition" run last year by the Regional Biodiversity Coordinator and Environment Canterbury. Their entry was of course on Hutton's shearwater and to their credit won the under 15 category. Their prize package was a brand new camera worth \$400 and \$500 towards the conservation project of their choice. Luckily for our Hutton's, the children without hesitation (or prompting!) offered their donation to the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust. Three of our trustees attended the end of year ceremony where the children donated the cheque. But it doesn't stop there—the shearwater class also ran an end of term fundraising lunch at their school raising \$134, again offered to the Trust.

A huge thank you from all our Trustees to the children of the Hutton's shearwater class. Their enthusiasm and passion for the Hutton's shearwaters is to be commended.

You can view their winning video clip at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) searching under 'Biodiversity by The Fyffe Force' or [www.canterburybiodiversity.org.nz](http://www.canterburybiodiversity.org.nz) under "2010 year of Biodiversity".



## Messrs Blank & Co

### *Hutton's History* by Geoff Harrow.

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

*Below: Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku photographed from the Awatere valley.*

When Graham Wragg was researching his thesis on the comparative biology of Fluttering and Hutton's Shearwaters he showed me a fascinating 1883 article photocopied from the Marlborough Express. It was written about an ascent of Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku, probably the fourth or fifth successful climb. What captured our attention was the statement that as they left their camp above the bush line at the head of the Dee Stream and

I quote '...starting away at 4.30am, we made up a long spur, and it was on this spur of rich loamy soil that we came across the breeding places of the Mutton Birds. They burrow in the ground like a rabbit, remaining out of sight all day, but at night venture out and set up a terrible row'.

Graham and I immediately organised an expedition into the head of the Dee Stream in 1984 and found the same site as described in 1883, but

there were no longer active shearwater burrows. The long spur with its rich loamy soil was quite lumpy, suggesting ancient burrowing. There was evidence of old fires and pigs could have reached this area with the usual catastrophic disaster for burrowing shearwaters.

On this visit Graham and I found the wreck of a crashed air force aeroplane not far below the mutton bird area, and we found later that the pilots had survived.

Of interest in the 1883 article was the number of Blue Mountain Ducks encountered, in those days.

The 1883 party found a bottle on the summit of Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku with 'a National Bank' cheque in it dated April 9th 1874, filled out for a small sum of 1,000,000,000.00 pounds. It was signed Messrs Blank & Co!

Geoff Harrow  
Trustee



## Austen Dean prints—a must have.

Renowned mountain landscape painter, Austen Deans in his mid 90's, agreed to paint Hutton's Shearwater flying at sea level with the Kaikoura mountains in the background.

The end result is this brilliant painting which Austen agreed to allow the Trust to copy as a fund raiser. Austen 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 at 9 Alderson Ave, Christchurch 8022, (03) 332 4534 or by emailing [admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz](mailto:admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz)

Prints size 620mm x 420mm.

This assists greatly in the ongoing fundraising for the protection of the shearwaters.

**50 prints were personally signed by Austen Deans .**

**There are only 6 left—be in quick!**



## Hutton's shearwater documentary

Claire Clements and Sean Giffin are two young students studying for their Masters in Natural History Film Making at Otago University.

They presented a proposal to the Trust to make a documentary on this species at the November meeting of the Trust. Trustees were unanimous in their decision to support this initiative, to enable the amazing story of the Hutton's shearwater to be presented to a far wider audience than at present. It will also the Trust with valuable ongoing resources.

After advising Claire and Sean about some of the logistics involved in our Hutton's field work, they were able to join us for a 10 day field trip to

to recover geolocators and deploy GPS trackers to shearwaters in the Kowhai River catchment in early December. They put in long hours filming the birds and interviewing the people involved. Those of us on the trip have already had a sneak preview of some of the footage they shot and it is very good quality indeed. So far my particular favorite is slow-motion footage of birds taking off from a high point into some strong winds at night.....quite spectacular! I think we can all look forward to seeing a very polished documentary later this year. We have even had

preliminary discussions about the Trust hosting a special showing at the Mayfair in Kaikoura towards the end of 2011.

Phil Bradfield, Trustee (DOC, South Marlborough)

*Documentary makers, Sean Giffin & Claire Clements with Trust Chairman Paul McGaban following the Trusts November meeting where Claire & Sean presented their documentary proposal.*



## First time “Farewell to the Hutton’s”


**New**

The Hutton’s Shearwater Charitable Trust would like to offer for the first time, a community **‘Farewell to the Hutton’s’** Event.

Hutton’s shearwater leave Kaikoura every year for Australian waters and we like the idea of everyone helping us to farewell them on a safe journey. We like even better, the idea of making this an annual event (as is done in Christchurch and Motueka for the Godwits) with a farewell in April and a welcome home in September. They are after all, Kaikoura’s very own—Kaikoura being their only place in the world they breed.

Please come along and join us:

- **Date: Sunday 3rd April**
- **Time: 7am—11am (day light saving)**
- **Where: South Bay Recreation Reserve (entrance to the Peninsula walkway)**

**Plan of action:**

- **Guided walk along the spectacular and very popular Kaikoura Peninsula walkway to the Hutton’s shearwater colony for a farewell ceremony.**
- **Time for sustenance—we will wander back along the track to South Bay to the local Coastguard building. We will serve piping hot bacon butties off the Barbie for breakfast followed by tea and coffee. We can mix and mingle and then take a seat to hear/see an update on where the Hutton’s go (research update) and various other exciting things on the go for the Hutton’s and the Trust.**

More details will come as the planning progresses, but pop this date in your diary. We look forward to having you join us.

## An offer for our *Friends of Hutton’s* shearwater


**New**

**Kaikoura Night Sky** have very generously offered the *‘Friends of Hutton’s Shearwater’* a discounted trip on their **Night Sky** tour. The tour is designed to introduce you to the spectacular southern hemisphere night sky over Kaikoura & NZ. Using practical knowledge, science, Maori history and stories, you will be lead on a journey from one horizon to the next.

Details:

**Saturday 2nd April 2011 at 8.00pm**

\$40 per person (this is child rate, adults normally \$50)

Tour duration—1—1.5 hrs

Confirmation by 28th March please.

**Please remember April can get chilly so bring some warm layers with you and wear practical shoes.**

See more detail about Kaikoura Night sky tours at [www.kaikouranightsky.co.nz](http://www.kaikouranightsky.co.nz)

Please book direct with the Hutton’s Shearwater Charitable Trust on either : [admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz](mailto:admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz), Lindsay on (03) 319 7211; or ask for Teri on (03) 319 7723.

P.S. if you are not a *‘Friend of’* already but would like to join, it’s quick and easy—visit our website or ring Lindsay Rowe on (03) 3197211.

*This is a great opportunity to combine two new events on offer by the Trust - the Night Sky tour and the first ‘Farewell to the Hutton’s’ as noted above.*

*See our website for more details.*

*[www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz](http://www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz)*

*P.S. Trust members will be having a casual dinner before the night sky trip and would love ‘Friends of’ to join us at Tuti’s, Beach Road, at 6.30pm.*

*Dinner numbers please to Nicky McArthur on 021351355 or [nicky\\_mcarthur@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nicky_mcarthur@xtra.co.nz)*

## Hutton's housekeeping



For those looking for a colour to brighten up the wardrobe, then the Trust has these great cerise pink **t-shirts for sale.**

Woman's sizes S, M, L & XL. Available from Trustee Lindsay Rowe 03 319 7211 or admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz. Also available in white, navy and khaki green for just \$25.

**Hutton's Friends of numbers** as at January 2011:

Single—77

Family—56

Corporate—2

Life members—9

Thank you for your support to date and remember to keep spreading the word about joining up as a *friends of*—the more the merrier!

P.S. The Trust secretary is having a baby soon—your new secretary is Trustee Teri Sonal. Her contact details are listed below. Also the next newsletter due out end of May 2011.

Following on from the article on page 3, 'Studying Hutton's Shearwater migration', the burrowscope put to good use up in the mountain colonies as part of the productivity programme, was funded by the **Sargood Trust**. It helped to find birds in burrows that had geolocators and GPS loggers fitted.

The GPS loggers fitted to the birds to determine the local feeding grounds, were funded by the **Pacific Development and Conservation Fund** and made for us by our **Oxford University/Microsoft Research** colleagues.

Many thanks for this assistance—it has given the Trust a huge step forward in knowing more about the Hutton's and therefore their ongoing protection.

## Project partners and sponsors

NZ Lottery Grants Board, Pacific Development & Conservation Trust, Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and.....



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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.*

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust is a Charities Commission registered entity CC37979. Donations to the Trust attract tax credits.