



# THE Hutton's Shearwater CHARITABLE TRUST

## NEWSLETTER

July 2011, Issue 6, ISSN 1179-5646.

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### Special points of interest:

- Hutton's Film
- Peninsula Update
- Breeding Season



Kia ora,

Winter draws in and the shearwaters have departed for feeding grounds off Australia until their return in spring. The last season has been rewarding for the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust. The recent farewell to Hutton's shearwater was held on the 3 April, celebrating what this species means to the community of Kaikoura. I was unfortunately unable to make the celebration due to a prior commitment but judging by the numbers attending, the weather and the programme organised, it was a successful day. Thanks to all of those Trustees that made this day happen and to those businesses and volunteers who supported the day. It is planned to hold a welcoming ceremony for the return of the shearwaters in spring.

The real surprise this season was the discovery of two eggs having been laid by returning birds. Although the eggs were both un-hatched (not unusual for seabirds in their first attempts at breeding) and the laying of eggs at this site is well before anyone predicted this would occur, it reinforced that birds translocated from the Kowhai Colony have imprinted on this site. This bodes well for future success at this new colony.

Research over the summer continued with geolocators recovered from 19 shearwaters returning to the Kowhai colony, giving a picture of the flight paths and feeding grounds of these birds when they migrate to Australian waters for the winter. This work is being conducted in cooperation with Oxford University and once the results are finalised, this will provide further scientific data on Hutton's shearwater. Burrowscope work conducted by DoC to assess the breeding success of this species in the two wild colonies this last season indicated another successful breeding year, similar to the previous year, another indicator showing that these shearwaters appear to be holding their own and perhaps increasing in numbers at present.

The documentary film being produced by student film makers Claire Clements and Sean Giffin is progressing well and a brief article by Claire can be found within this newsletter. They have filmed extensively in the mountain colonies over the summer months and at sea and will be attempting to do some filming of Hutton's shearwater in western Australian waters during June. Their passion and commitment to making this film is to be applauded and it will provide further coverage and awareness for this species. The premier of the film will be held at the Regent theatre, Dunedin on the 16th November. The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust hopes that it will be able to host a showing of the film in Kaikoura sometime reasonably soon after the premier.

Also featuring in this newsletter is an article by Trustee Gina Solomon highlighting the importance of this species to Ngati Kuri and their long association with Hutton's shearwater or "Titi" as they were formerly known prior to being scientifically described as Hutton's shearwater.

Paul McGahan  
Chairman



## Sam Pilbrow Remembers....

Sam and Sweet Pilbrow purchased the Puhi Peaks Station in the late 1940s and farmed there for over thirty years. The homestead was 2200 feet above sea level and 21 miles from Kaikoura. They were aware that birds, flying in from the sea at dusk, made their summer home high on the hills of the property. When they were sleeping out during mustering noisy bird calls in a variety of pitch upset the dogs and caused much barking although the horses took no notice. One day Geoff Harrow drove up to Puhi Station and asked if they had seen any shearwaters. It was only when he imitated their call, which he could do per-

fectly, that Sam knew that was what he had been hearing when he was night shooting. Geoff then asked about the direction of flight of the birds and was shown an area but warned of avalanche danger particularly caused by chamois running across the barren fan. The intrepid bird hunter proceeded regardless and found the colony of Hutton's Shearwater.

Thereafter Geoff appeared regularly accompanied by various interested people. The birds always flew high over the homestead to their nesting place until the new house was built and had an outside light which attracted them and threw them off their flight path.

They then often thumped against the house and lay stunned and placid while Sam and Sweet caught and ringed them quickly as when they started to recover their hooked beak gave a vicious bite.

When released the birds ran down the steep slope in front of the house and took off in flight. Regardless of all the interest in this part of the property neither Sam nor Sweet ever went to the colony. Perhaps they had seen too many avalanches coming from that direction and one in particular that Sam recalled was when they were sitting outdoors on their veranda on a clear fine day when a huge dust cloud appeared over the shear-

water territory as a honeycomb of burrows collapsed and the whole face slid down.

Shirley MacEwan

*Friend of Hutton's Shearwater*



*Hutton's History*

Above— Puhi Peaks Station.

## Breeding season for Hutton's Shearwater



*Above*— Phil Bradfield from DOC and Sean Griffin, documentary film maker, inspect one of this seasons Hutton Shearwater chicks in the Kowhai River colony.

We have been conducting intensive monitoring of breeding success in both the Kowhai and Shearwater stream for five years now. Breeding success is ascertained by determining the percentage of incubated eggs that develop into chicks about to fledge from the burrows at the seasons end.

This work is done by using a burrow scope to find 100 burrows with eggs being incubated in mid-

November in both colonies (just after the peak of egg laying, then returning in late February/early March (just before fledging) to see how many of those eggs have turned into chicks.

Breeding success was very poor (in the 4-30% range for both colonies) for the first three years of this study. Last year was an incredibly productive year with a breeding success of 81% in both colonies. This season the breeding success was 72% in Shearwater

Stream and 70% in the Kowhai. This is yet another very successful breeding result for both colonies.

The fact that we have now recorded two very successful years in a row, bodes very well for the future of our unique Kaikoura seabird, as it means that as long as survival at sea is normal then there will be plenty of recruitment of young birds back in to the mountain colonies over the next ten years.

We will continue with this breeding success study and build a picture of population dynamics in tandem with regular censuses of the adult population.

Phil Bradfield, Trustee

*To the right*— Claire Clements holds one of this years bumper crop in the Kowhai, Phil Bradfield looks on.



## Kaikoura Peninsula Colony Update

In the February newsletter I reported that the two nesting attempts had failed but that it was not unexpected as they were very young birds breeding for the first time. There has been more activity at the site with shearwaters visiting artificial burrows up until mid-March.

As we have not visited the site at night to avoid disturbing the birds, we do not know how old they were.

However, we do know that at least one bird from the 2008, and last, translocation has been seen at the site.. We look forward with excitement as the new season approaches to an increase in the number of birds and nests, and even a chick.

Mike Morrissey has been continuing to carry out the major maintenance at the site and Peter Hockey has been assisting with watering and looking after the plantings. Some progress

has been made with steps and paths, and we hope to complete these and the plantings over the coming winter in time for the new season.

Lindsay Rowe, Treasurer/Trustee



## Hutton's and Ngati Kuri

Ngati Kuri, Tangata Whenua of this area, have a long association with Hutton's Shearwater.

"Titi" is the Maori name for a number of different shearwater species, especially when in the downy chick stage.

In pre-European times, there was little in the way of red meat for the indigenous inhabitants, and Titi were a major sustainable food source for Maori. The birds could be preserved in a poha (kelp bag) for up to two years. If not eaten, they could also be traded amongst different Ngāi Tahu hapu (greenstone etc). The feathers would have been used for clothing and decoration. The fat, burrow living chicks of the seafaring shearwaters – both Hutton's and Sooty's shearwaters in other parts of the country – were easy to harvest. The introduction of predators and changes due to land development brought an end to the customary harvest.

Ngati Kuri has actively supported the conservation of Hutton's shearwater and in the beginning were keen to work with DOC and Whale Watch to create a new colony on Whale Watch owned land on the Kaikoura Peninsula.

The name of Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia Conservation Park, which incorporates the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges (and the mountain colonies), comes from Ngati Kuri history and the Hutton's shearwater.

Rakaihautu according to oral histories, landed around the Nelson area and walked up and down the interior of the South Island creating the lakes.

His son Rakihouia brought the Uruao canoe down the east coast of the South Island. They spent some time in Kaikoura and witnessed the feeding frenzy of the Titi and noticed the flight pattern of the Huttons going to and from the mountains. His wife was pregnant, had a craving for bird's eggs. Rakihouia sent his men to investigate and they duly arrived

back with many eggs and birds. He then named the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges "Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia" (The Standing Stores of Rakihouia).

Titi are an important taonga species and Mahinga Kai . Mahinga Kai refers to the sustainable gathering of food and resources, the places where they are gathered and the practices used in doing so. Along with whakapapa (genealogy), Mahinga Kai is the main hinge upon which Ngāi Tahu identify with the whenua (land) and the moana (sea) revolves.

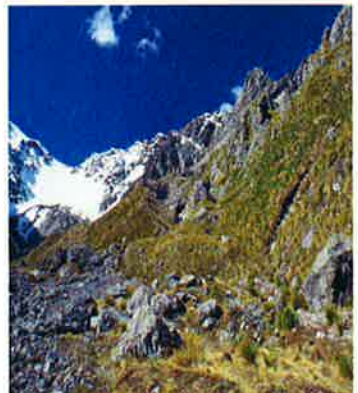
Mahinga Kai customs emphasize Ngāi Tahu culture and are central to the relationships of people with places and resources and to the ongoing culture, economic, social and spiritual wellbeing of Ngāi Tahu whanui and is also the major vehicle for the transfer of traditional knowledge about the natural environment from generation to generation.

This gathering of food and resources from our natural environment and the impor-

tance of this for Ngāi Tahu culture requires a pristine environment, by its very nature Mahinga Kai requires that the natural environment, our rivers, beaches, oceans, forests are "good enough to eat off". Furthermore it requires that the species that make their home in these places and which have an interdependent relationship with are maintained and upheld to continue to provide for our people, our manuhiri, now and in the future

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei (For us and our children after us)

Gina Solomon, Trustee



## Friends of Hutton's shearwater—Update

The Hutton's Shearwaters were ceremonially farewelled for winter on Sunday 3rd April by 80 keen supporters from Kaikoura and beyond. The weather was kind to us and white feathers were released to symbolise the departing birds at the Hutton's shearwater colony on the Peninsula in early morning sun during a karakia led by DOC ranger and Te Runanga O Kaikoura member Brett Cowan.

The inaugural farewell ceremony was the first to be organized by the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust to celebrate the successful relocation of the birds from their sub-alpine home in the Kowhai River Valley to the new colony on the peninsula. After walking out to the colony, supporters were treated to

a breakfast and an update from the trust.

This is set to become an annual event and it was pleasing to see the inaugural celebration so well supported by both the local community and visitors and friends from further a field. Following the ceremony, the Kaikoura Coast Guard, South Bay became the venue for a delicious breakfast of Bacon Butties (sponsored by Hutton's!!) along with sausages, and welcome cups of hot tea and coffee. An update from the Trust announced the launch of Hutton's education in the Kaikoura community whereby each of our children will receive formal education about "our bird" in Year 6 and Year 9. It is fantastic that the school principals and

braced our vision so willingly and enthusiastically. A trip to sea in September to view the extraordinary site of Hutton's in their mass rafts on the water will be a highlight for the students thanks to the generosity of Encounter Kaikoura.

Trustee Lindsay Rowe presented a talk explaining the latest scientific data that has become available thanks to the ability we now have to attach GPS trackers and GEO loggers to some of the birds. The insight these are giving us, is a fantastic leap forward in our knowledge of the habits of our amazing Hutton's Shearwater.

Thank you to those who got out of bed early to support us at this inaugural event.

On the Saturday evening prior, a special "Friends of" event saw 25 or so people

gather for an informal meal at Tuti's restaurant, before heading out into the dark Kaikoura evening to experience "The Night Sky" with Hussein Burra. We were spoilt with clear skies, kind weather and powerful telescopes that allowed an insight into the world of galaxies. Great knowledge combined with a well explained and informed commentary made this an outstanding activity. We came home much wiser about the stunning sky under which we live. The trust is now eagerly planning our "Welcome Home Hutton's" event. This will take place on the afternoon of Saturday the 24th September, so please put this date in your diary and watch for further details. We look forward to you joining us for this celebration.

Nicky McArthur, Trustee

## Hutton's Shearwater Film

As many of you already know, Sean Giffin and myself are making a documentary about the Hutton's Shearwater. We have been filming now since December 2010 and have seen some amazing places around Kaikoura.

We have been up to the Kowhai colony filming the birds at night and the surrounding environments by day. We have spent time out on the ocean filming the birds and other ocean life. We have filmed the full moon from Mt Fyffe and the sun rising over the township of Kaikoura. It is all looking very visually stunning!

We were also at the farewell and couldn't have asked for better filming conditions – no wind and blue skies. And the farewell itself was amazing – it was lovely to see so many people come out and farewell the birds and be so interested in learning about them. At the moment we are in the initial edit stage. The story is starting to take shape and we are starting to put clips together. We are heading off to Australia for two weeks in June to attempt to film the Hutton's in Western Australia. We have some very interested ornithologists who we are going to interview and even if we don't

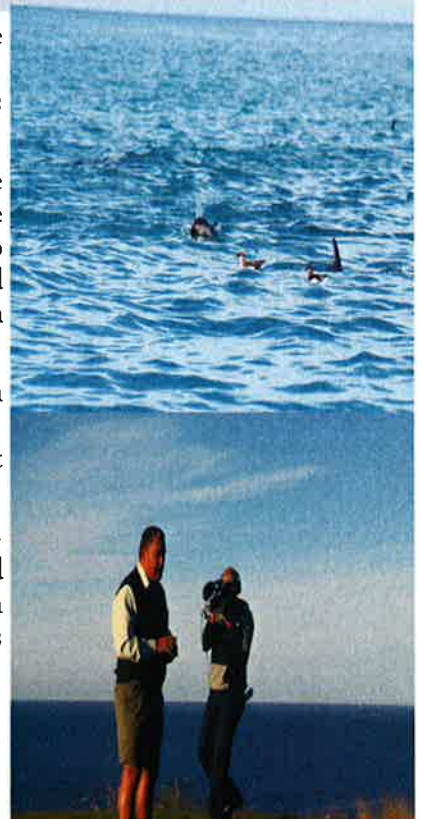
find the birds we will come back with some real contrast shots of the Hutton's wintering environment.

We are very grateful to the Trust, DOC and all the local business owners who have given their time and equipment to help us film the Hutton's Shearwaters.

The film will premiere in Dunedin on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at the Regent Theatre. All welcome!

We also have set up a website about the film and have a small video clip on there and lots of photos [www.huttonsfilm.com](http://www.huttonsfilm.com)

Claire Clements,  
Documentary Creator



# Nau Mai Hoki Mai Ngā Manu Titi Welcome Home Hutton's Shearwater

**SATURDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2011**

**2:00pm – Assemble South Bay Recreational Reserve**

**Welcome by Te Runanga O Kaikoura**

**School community performance**

**Kite flying festival**

**Music**

**Sausage Sizzle & refreshments**

**6:30pm – showing of a wildlife film**



THE  
**Hutton's**  
**Shearwater**  
CHARITABLE TRUST

Please vote for Kaikoura's very own bird in September

[www.forestandbird.org.nz/poll](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/poll)

## Exclusive offer for our *friends of*

Following our Welcome Home Hutton's Event on Saturday 24th September there will be an opportunity for friends of Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust to experience the Albatross Encounter at the reduced rate of \$80.

Please book directly with Encounter Kaikoura on 03 319 6777 or freephone 0800 733 365.

We thank them for supporting Hutton's Shearwater Trust.

We look forward to having you with us for this Hutton's weekend.

## Become a *friend of* the Hutton's Shearwater

Individual membership is to be set at \$20 and family membership and schools at \$30. Corporate membership is \$125 and life membership is \$300.

We hope you 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 e-mail to PO Box 58, Kaikoura.



Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, PO Box 58, Kaikoura 7340. [www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz](http://www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz)

## Hutton's Housekeeping

We have been fortunate to obtain a grant from the Sargood Bequest to purchase an inverter and storage batteries for us at the Kowhai base. This will ensure the research teams will have an adequate power source to charge computers for downloading and processing data from the geolocators and GPS loggers, and provide better lighting for night work.

Without generous grants such as these, the Trust would not be able to carry out monitoring and research to our full potential and build up our knowledge of the habits of this unique bird.

Sistema Plastics have been extremely generous donating us 150 large Klip It plastic boxes. These boxes will house the batteries and data loggers to monitor the movements of birds in and out of burrows.

Thank you Sargood Bequest and Sistema Plastics.

Lindsay Rowe, Treasurer/Trustee

## Project partners and sponsors

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



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### Trust contact details

Phone: 03 319 7211 (Treasurer)  
Phone: 03 319 7344 or 0276107574 (Secretary)  
E-mail: [admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz](mailto:admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz)  
PO Box 58  
Kaikoura 7300

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.

Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, PO Box 58, Kaikoura 7340. [www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz](http://www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz)