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The stuff of legends

The man credited with the rediscovery of Kaikoura's unique bird, the Hutton's shearwater, has been recognised for five decades of tireless work.

Geoff Harrow was joined by more than 80 colleagues, friends and family members on February 21 in a celebration of 50 years. This was a celebration not only for him but for the bird's survival and increase in population, as he was quick to point out.

With his work with this bird spanning half a century, it is little wonder so many organizations and individuals were keen to share this success with Geoff and congratulate him as he takes a step back - the 89 year old has decided to bow out of his active role on the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust (HSCT), and finally embrace retirement.

As well as farewelling Geoff, new Trustees Jody Weir, Sabrina Leucht, Ailsa Howard and Patrick Aldwell were welcomed onto the Trust at the celebration.

Although stepping down from the trust, Geoff will forever be an integral part of the Hutton's Shearwater recovery story and so it was fitting that he was welcomed as a Kaumatua of the trust and presented with a stunning korowai depicting the mountains to the sea - the domain of the Hutton's Shearwater.

HSCT Trustee Phil Bradfield's address, which was read out on his behalf, spoke of Geoff's energy, persistence and determination, and generosity.

He had contributed enormously to the translocation of 500 chicks since the man-made colony on the Kaikoura Peninsula was established - the biggest transfer of any seabird species anywhere in the world.

Geoff was leaving a huge legacy for the trust to carry on, he said.

Representing the Department of Conservation,

Conservation Partnerships Manager Dave Hayes said Geoff had remained committed to the ongoing protection and recovery of the Hutton's shearwater.



The department was very aware that ensuring the security of native species and ecosystems was a far bigger task than any Government department could achieve on its own. The half century Geoff had dedicated to the Hutton's shearwater was the epitome of what could be achieved by DOC working with others, he said.

"Your contribution to conservation over the last 50 years is regarded by DOC as being extremely valuable and it is a personal honour to be a part of these celebrations," he said. "I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work of all the trustees on the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust. The time and energy that you all contribute is outstanding and your results really do speak for themselves."

Conservation Minister Maggie Barry was unable to attend the celebration but wrote to Geoff to pass on her appreciation for all his efforts.

His tireless search for colonies in the Kaikoura ranges was the stuff of legend, she said. It was his unique set of skills and devotion to the cause which led to the first discoveries of the colonies, which alone was worthy of recognition.

FULL TEAM OF TRUSTEES

We have not had a full team of trustees for about two years now; the Trust needed new Trustees to share the workload and provide new energy and expertise.

We identified the skills we needed and advertised in our newsletter and on the website. We were very excited with the people who replied and the new skills, experience and enthusiasm they bring to the Trust.

The new trustees are; Jody Weir, Sabrina Luecht, Patrick Aldwell, Ailsa Howard and Courtney Wilson. Welcome and we look forward to working with you all.

*Elspeth Wingham,
Chairperson*

.....the new skills, experience and enthusiasm they bring to the Trust....

.....Geoff's energy, persistence, determination, and generosity....

Right - Geoff Harrow and Ivan & Ella Hislop recount stories of 'where it all began', at the '50 years of Hutton's celebrations in January.

Photo courtesy of Sabrina Luecht.

The stuff of legends.....

Continued over the page.....

By continuing to contribute significantly to the work carried out over subsequent decades, Geoff's involvement was an outstanding example of community service for conservation, she said.

The man himself said the occasion was a wonderful moment to share the bird's success. He was overwhelmed by the cultural welcome he received as well as the number of people who had travelled from all over New Zealand, and even France, to share it with him.

In spite of his 89 years, Geoff's passion for the Hutton's shearwater remains as vivid now as when he first embarked on his remarkable journey.

It was while holidaying at Peketa in the 1960s that Geoff Harrow met local man Ivan Hislop who was very knowledgeable about the Hutton's Shearwater as well as the locations of burrows.

This was back in 1964, and the conversation sparked an interest for bird-lover Geoff - exactly 50 years ago he set off up the Kowhai River to begin his quest.

Geoff was lucky enough to have come across not only a specimen carcass but also some burrows on that very first adventure. This was the start of a great many expeditions to the head of the Kowhai.

Further studies of the bird were introduced in the 1980s, with the Government now aware of its plight, and a student from the University of Otago conducted the first in-depth study from 1996 to 1999. Geoff assisted him and joined him on several visits, no doubt imparting valuable knowledge along the way. As a result of this study, DOC changed tack on their view of how best to secure the Hutton's future, and a man-made colony was proposed, which would be an addition to the two existing colonies.

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust (HSCT) was formed in 2008 and following 13 months of earnest fundraising, a predator-proof fence was erected at the new colony, Te Rae o Atiu.

Five years on and this third colony is a real success story, with translocated birds laying eggs which has resulted in several chicks hatched over the past three years.

And while it is thanks to a collaboration of many parties over the years, there is no doubt that this story would not have been as successful without the passion, time and commitment of Geoff Harrow. He will long be remembered by the Trust and further afield for his legacy to the species, a true success story for Kaikoura and for all bird lovers wherever they may be.

Emma Dangerfield on behalf of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable trust. Photo courtesy of Sabrina Luecht.



Korowai for our Kaumatua

In 2014 Jodie Denton, then Secretary of the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust, asked me if I would make a Korowai for the 50th anniversary of Geoff Harrow's rediscovery of the Hutton's Shearwaters. The Trust wanted a special koha for Geoff Harrow while recognizing him as the Trusts kaumatua.

I discussed ideas with Jodie regarding the design of the korowai. She said the Trust wanted it to represent their Trust motto "from the mountains to the sea". I said to her that what I knew of Geoff was that he was primarily a man of the mountains with a passion for birds & not a bird man with a passion for the mountains.

So the korowai design has a narrow blue band of dyed rooster feathers regularly interspersed with white wandering Albatross feathers to represent white caps on the waves. The albatross feathers came from the local Department of Conservation office from a storm wrecked bird.

The bulk of the korowai is in a dark 'pounamu green' colour – again they are dyed rooster feathers. This green area is also regularly interspersed with white wandering albatross feathers, to represent a flurry of snow in the mountains.

The korowai is capped with white chicken feathers to represent snow capping the mountains and of course right at the summit there is a band of Hutton's feathers popping out of the 'snow'.



The taniko band at the top of the korowai is a stylized representation of ocean waves and white caps. It is called Tukemata Aramoana and refers to the beauty to behold in the ocean.

So Geoff Harrow's korowai, gifted to him by the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust along with his 'kaumatua' status, truly represents his 50 year journey with the Hutton's shearwater – a journey from the mountains to the sea.

Jackie Bradshaw, Friend of Hutton's shearwater.

Photo courtesy of Sabrina Luecht



Interesting info.....

- Hutton's shearwaters can dive to depths of 20-30 m.
- Hutton's shearwaters are generally silent at sea, but noisy at colonies, with loud cackling calls similar to those of fluttering shearwaters.
- Hutton's shearwaters have a longer chick rearing period than other Puffinus species. This may be due to difficulties in obtaining sufficient food or the energetic costs associated with colonies 1200 m above sea level.

Photo courtesy of Lisa Bond, Whale Watch.

Orientation weekend 2015

In late January the Trust held an orientation weekend for its trustees including the four "newbies" Ailsa Howard, Sabrina Luecht, Patrick Aldwell and Jody Weir. The highlight of the programme was a helicopter trip up to the Kowhai Stream colony where we spent half an hour on a guided visit of the research site and the well-appointed hut at 1200m above sea level, before doing a fly-by of the Shearwater Stream colony on Puhi Peaks Station. The steep challenging terrain and altitude served as a strong reminder of the conditions Geoff Harrow endured while looking for these colonies in the early 1960s. It was wonderful to see these two surviving colonies and to understand better the importance of having established a third colony – Te Rae O Atiu near sea level. Ongoing large scale erosion and other threats in the mountain colonies point to the need for further colony site diversification.

The next morning; following a round of introductions for the new trustees, we went out to Te Rae O Atiu where we were introduced to the significance of the site for tangata whenua and for the survival of the Hutton's shearwater. We were shown some of the seven chicks in residence and heard about the science behind the new colony. Senior trustees did an excellent job of handing over existing knowledge as a foundation for the newbies.

Patrick Aldwell
Trustee



Above - Weigh in time for a younger chick at Te Rae o Atiu.

Left - The Department of Conservation research hut at the head of the Kowhai Stream Hutton's shearwater colony. Again, a remarkable location for such a structure.

Below - The very strategically placed heli pad at the Shearwater Stream Hutton's shearwater colony. A remarkable location indeed. For many years Dave & Leigh Armstrong of Kaikoura Helicopters tested out their incredible flying skills landing very precariously without a pad at all! Photos all courtesy of Patrick Aldwell.



ITS PROMO TIME

Our local supporters 'Kaikoura Top Ten Holiday Park' are offering a very special deal for travellers to Kaikoura during the months of April 31st to October 1st 2015. If you would like to visit Kaikoura during this time Gerald Nolan and his team will give you 25% off your stay - just quote 'Hutton's shearwater' - its that easy. Give their friendly staff a call on 0800 36 36 38 (within New Zealand)

www.kaikouratop10.co.nz

Thankyou Gerald & your friendly team for the ongoing support to the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust.

PROJECT

COORDINATOR

We are happy to announce that Sabrina Luecht is our new Project Coordinator. She is already energising the Trust with her enthusiasm and communication skills. She will be working for the Trust approximately one and a half days a week and her focus will be on securing long-term funding. We had some outstanding applicants one of which whom has volunteered to work for the Trust even though she was unsuccessful for the position. The selection process took longer than expected but we are very happy with the outcome. Teri Sonal, Patrick Aldwell and Chairman Elspeth Wingham were responsible for the selection and hiring of Sabrina. Special thanks to Teri Sonal with her Human Resources skills who guided us through the process.

A huge thank you to the Department of Conservation for allowing the Trust this opportunity, with funds from the 'Community Conservation Partnership Fund'.

Elspeth Wingham, Chairman

'...Super happy to be the Project Coordinator for the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust; cannot wait to make a difference for this incredible and endangered seabird species....'



This photo - night retrieval of a time/depth logger off a Hutton's shearwater adult after it had fed it's chick during the egg incubation period.

The second photo, below, shows downloading data from a time/depth logger attached to an adult Hutton's shearwater.

Photos courtesy of Sherin Marriott.

Foraging behaviour

Research thesis on the foraging behaviour of the Hutton's shearwater.

Understanding seabird foraging is particularly important for the conservation and management of a species, especially during the breeding season. Food (prey) availability is dependent on environmental conditions that can affect the temporal and spatial distribution of prey species and in turn affect breeding and chick rearing. The monitoring of seabird species such as the Hutton's Shearwater, creates a lot of challenges as they spend their life predominantly at sea, which means that novel techniques are required to gather data about their migration, moult and diet.

During the summer, I have collected Hutton's Shearwater adult and chick feathers from the alpine and peninsula colonies. These feathers will be analysed, along with potential prey collected from the plankton, for their isotopic composition. Carbon and nitrogen are basic building blocks of life and their isotopic ratio in an organism can be used to map the food web and to estimate the preferred diet of a species, and potentially their foraging locations.



These samples will provide an indication of what the Hutton's Shearwater adults are eating and feeding their chicks. I have also deployed time and depth loggers on adult birds to capture their diving depth.

Della Bennet

M.Sc student, University of Canterbury

Harae Ra Nga Titi

Sunday 29 March 2015 began with a gorgeous pink sunrise for the annual 'Haere Ra Nga Titi', Farewell celebration. This event celebrates, highlights and profiles our special taonga Titi species and the work of the Huttons' Shearwater Charitable Trust.

Brett Cowan (Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura) gathered Trust members, community and friends together at South Bay for a dawn welcome and Karakia. The group set off up the Peninsular Walkway to meet with Rūnanga members to begin the Farewell Celebrations within the colony. With the appropriate blessings and thanks shared, the group stripped off coats to enjoy the warm weather and to begin Oruorua Whakaoriori (Maori Tai Chi). Thanks were given to the gods, we stretched, leaned, bent over and offered thanks and joy, before releasing some feathers to the four winds. This ended the cultural component.

Within the peninsular enclosure we had chicks that had not yet fledged, so a couple of these were brought out of their burrows for their weekly weigh in, discussion and photo opportunity with those present. After a general discussion about the peninsular colony, the hungry group headed down the track to the Coastguard building for a delicious bacon butty kai and a korero about the work of the Trust.

The Trust would like to thank Brett Cowan, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, Whale Watch Kaikoura, New World Supermarket, Kaikoura Community, our Friends and our new Friends that attended. We look forward to you keeping up to date with our Titi and the work of the Trust. We hope you can join us when we 'Welcome Home' our Titi in September – look out for this and more, via our website: www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz or our facebook page.



Ready, steady, go! Attendees poised to let go of their Hutton's shearwaters feathers.

Photos all courtesy of Sabrina Luecht.



Convening at the Hutton's shearwater panel (the first encountered when entering from South Bay), to listen to Lindsay Rowe's wisdom.



Trustee Sabrina Luecht clutching Hutton's shearwater feathers (lest they fly off in the wind before they are supposed to)!

Trustee Phil Bradfield letting go of Hutton's shearwater feathers at the end of the Farewell ceremony.





Above - One of three downy Hutton's shearwater chicks which remained at the Kaikoura Peninsula / Te Rae o Atiu colony at the time of the Farewell. All have fledged now.



Left - Brett Cowan of Takahanga Marae addressing Farewell attendees in front of a beautiful sunrise.

Positions to fill

The Trust is seeking to replace its voluntary Secretary and Treasury roles.

Secretary role:

- Maintaining communication, correspondence, administration and records.
- Ensuring Trust meetings are effectively organised and minuted.

Treasury role:

- Financial oversight, planning, budgeting and reporting.
- Banking, book-keeping and record-keeping.

Please contact the Chairman if you are interested, email: elspeth.wingham@gmail.com

Become a friend

We are always looking for new friends to join us in the journey of these amazing seabirds. If you are not already, it would be great to have you on board.

We have structured the membership so as to make it feasible for everyone. You could join as an individual(\$20), a family (\$30), as a school (\$30), a corporate(\$120) or for life (\$300).

Your contribution will assist in the conservation of this endangered species, both at the newly established colony on the Kaikoura Peninsula, Te Rae o Atiu, and at the only other two remaining colonies (in the world) in the Seaward Kaikoura mountains.

You can find a membership form on the back page of this newsletter, on our website www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz or contact our Project Coordinator, Sabrina Luecht on 021585586 or luecht.sabrina@gmail.com.

Support us

Being a charitable Trust, we rely on ongoing funding to maintain our operations. You can help secure the future of endangered Hutton's Shearwater by becoming a Friend, making a donation, or purchasing exclusive merchandise.

Your support ensures continued conservation management at the Te Rae o Atiu/ Kaikoura Peninsula colony and the only two remaining wild colonies in the Seaward Kaikoura Range. You will help facilitate predator-proof fence maintenance, chick translocations, predator control, native planting, equipment purchases, research projects, education and outreach.

Merchandise:

Clothing: Kids, ladies and unisex t-shirts and polo shirts, made from 100% cotton with a shearwater print design. T-shirts are available in black, blue, green, white and pink. Polo shirts are available in dark blue and pink. Prices range from \$20 to \$45.

Prints: Renowned landscape artist Austen Deans was commissioned to paint Hutton's shearwaters with the Kaikoura mountains. Three prints remain for sale, size: 54 x 34 cm, price: \$175.00 each. Prints can be purchased from our website: <http://www.huttonsshearwater.org>.

[nz/.../a.../austen-deans-print/](http://www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz/.../a.../austen-deans-print/)



Make a donation via our website or Givealittle:

www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz/merchandise/donation/donate/

www.givealittle.co.nz/donate/org/huttonsshearwater



Beautiful Bronze Sculpture

Well known artist Sam Mahon has created a stunning bronze Hutton's shearwater sculpture as a fundraiser for the Trust.

Ten one-off pieces are for sale at a set price, and will be commissioned when an order is placed.

Please contact the Chairman on 03 745 8101.

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust acknowledges the following for the production of our newsletters.

Creator: Jodie Denton (Trustee)

Editor: Julie Buunk (DOC Renwick)

Contributors: A number of our Trustees.

Printing: Whale Watch Kaikoura

Please share this newsletter by email where possible to reduce paper use.

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Back in the old days



Photo courtesy of Geoff Harrow.

In the early period of working with Hutton's shearwaters, information was gathered equally at night as in the day. Birds were only out in the open at night. During calm warm summer darkness, it was a joy to be moving amongst thousands of cackling shearwaters. On clear nights at Shearwater Stream in the nineteen sixties, the Lyttelton - Wellington ferries could be seen passing each other out from the Clarence River mouth. You knew that the time was 1.30am and a lot of birds had been checked and banded. It was very satisfying.

What a difference in the colder months when atrocious weather often swept over the colonies. Sometimes snow covered our parkas, and we must have looked like the abominable snowman. Our hands and feet often ached with the extreme cold.

In August and September burrows were frequently buried by a meter or more of frozen snow and ice. Shearwaters were able to steadfastly settle on these hazardous icy slopes with great ease by engaging their sharp claws. The only way we could reach those birds on near vertical slopes was with ice axe and crampons. Even Ed Hillary might have hesitated going after them! Paired Hutton's shearwaters snuggling together on a meter of snow know that they are directly above their usual breeding burrow!

Our shelter was a tent fly in the summer, and in spring and autumn we upgraded to a tent.

Geoff Harrow

Te Rae O Atiu update

2014-15 was a good season at Te Rae o Atiu. Most of the adult birds that were present last year returned to breed, but were no new unbanded birds called in by the sound system to supplement the population. We had 17 eggs laid in 16 boxes but serious incubation of the eggs only took place in 10 boxes. This resulted in seven chicks hatching between 20 December and about 15 January; last season we had eight. All these chicks had good weight gains as the adults become more experienced as parents; the heaviest chick reached 625 gm and supplementary feeding was not required for any of the chicks.

By 10 March most birds were gradually losing weight so they could reach a point where their fast-growing wings were large enough to support them for flight. The first chicks left about 20 March and all seven had gone by 7 April. All going well, one or more might be back in 2017-18.

I saw one of the 100 chicks that fledged from the March 2012 translocation; there may have been more but checks on our nestbox data loggers will confirm that, or not. We did not see either of the two "homegrown" chicks that fledged in 2012.

Lindsay Rowe, Trustee

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

We would love to hear your feedback so feel free to contact us. We are also on Facebook, so please "like" our page and follow our updates!

THE HUTTON'S SHEARWATER TRUST
WAS ESTABLISHED 2008

To encourage and promote the preservation, conservation, research, public education and sustainable management of the Hutton's Shearwater.



Friends of the HUTTON'S SHEARWATER CHARITABLE TRUST

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Become a "Friend of the Hutton's Shearwater"

Your contribution will assist in the conservation of this endangered species, both at the newly established colony on the Kaikoura Peninsula and at the only other two remaining colonies (in the world) in the Seaward Kaikoura mountains.

Annual Subscription

Individual	\$20 Incl. GST
Family	\$30
Corporate	\$125
Life	\$300
School	\$30

Please fill in your details and post to the address below:

Donation (Tax deductible) \$

Bank direct to: Westpac 03 1586 0065067 00

Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Dr / Prof. /
Name

Address (including post code):

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Email:

Receipt: Yes

No

Newsletters by (circle): post email off web

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Thank you for becoming a "Friend of the Hutton's Shearwater", we will be in touch soon.