

# **Forest and Bird Dunedin Branch Newsletter**

## **June 2008**

**PO Box 5793, Dunedin**

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### **Dunedin Branch, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of N.Z. (Inc) Annual Report 2007-2008**

It has been another busy year for the Branch with a number of submissions being made on various conservation issues as well as our programme of field trips and monthly indoor meetings. We have been disappointed with attendance at both the talks and field trips on occasion and we would urge you to support these activities whenever possible. Our end of January weekend with a Saturday visit to Michael Peak, a recent 'whole property purchase' for Conservation and the trip to Shortlands Station on the Sunday were well attended by Dunedin and Upper Clutha members, our President Peter Maddison and three overseas ecologists and I believe was enjoyed by all participants.

Please note that with the start of the new programme in August we will be changing the monthly meeting venue to the Benham Theatre in the new Zoology Building on Gt. King St. This will save us having to change venues from time to time as has happened this last year. Please be on time as we have to hold the door open,

There was a Southern Regional Meeting in Methven in November which included a day trip to the nearby Hakatere Conservation Park and a local meeting of Upper Clutha, Southland, South Otago and Dunedin Branch reps was held in May which gave us all a chance to catch up with local issues. We were pleased to have the South island Co-ordinator, Chris Todd, here for that.

Work on the reserves that the branch is involved with has continued; work has been done at Moore's Bush with the help of an enthusiastic student group from SEA and a planting workday was held at the Caversham Reserve last winter with another such day planned for July. Ken Mason has continued to work with a student group on Quarantine Island.

The wilding pine activity has been reduced in this last year but Jane Pearson, our co-ordinator has organised a few trips including one with Upper Clutha to Glendene Station, Lake Hawea. Jane has now decided to stand down and we have just appointed a new Co-ordinator, Rhys Millar, who was with us at Lake Ohau this weekend when a group of 18 from Dunedin, including four from Oamaru, joined Ohau Conservation Trust members and we dealt with a large number of trees of all sizes. Members of the Branch committee have made submissions on the ORC Annual Plan, the review of Deer, Chamois, Thar and Pig Management and on Hector's and Maui's Dolphin management plans and our thanks to all other members who submitted on these topics.

Tenure review assessments and submissions have continued. On behalf of the Branch I have made submissions on the proposal to return the Soldier's Syndicate Pastoral Occupation Lease in the Maniototo to the Crown, and on a preliminary proposal for Greenvale/Allandale at the Kingston end of Lake Wakatipu. In January Sue Maturin and myself attended the function to mark the purchase of Twinburn Station, adjoining Michael Peak, and these two runs now form part of the proposed Oteake Conservation Park which also incorporates designated conservation land arising from tenure review of adjoining leases. The Oteake proposal is now open for public comment. We have also submitted on a proposal for a Hawea Conservation Park. We wish to thank Mr Tony Perrett from DOC for briefing the Branch Committee on these two Park proposals before they were open for public comment. We have also recently heard that several other preliminary proposals in the Danseys and Upper Clutha area will be out for public comment shortly and that a number of other leases have completed the tenure review process.

The Branch has been invited by DOC to comment on the proposed realignment of the Leith Saddle track and we are involved with STOP and DOC in planning the future management of the Every Reserve on the peninsula where we have some Barclay Trust funds available to

help with ongoing maintenance and also hope to provide some volunteer labour to work on the Reserve.

We were very disappointed over the Windfarm consents granted for both the Trustpower Mahinerangi Project and for Meridian's Project Hayes. We entered into mediation over Mahinerangi to see if we could achieve the exclusion of the Thomas Block valuable tussock area, but this was unsuccessful and we withdrew from the Environment Court Appeal which would have been very costly. After much deliberation we did not appeal Project Hayes, largely on costs grounds, but instead gave a substantial donation to the Save Central Group (Maniototo Environmental Society) towards legal costs of their appeal and I have been working both with the Save Central Group and the Upland Landscape Society to give what help we can to both appeals on ecological and landscape matters. We have looked at the site of a proposed Maungatua Windfarm site, much smaller than Hayes, but still with some problems as it will be in ecologically sensitive areas, but we will be unlikely to appeal another smaller project under consideration for Mt Stuart, between Lawrence and Milton, as it seems to have minor landscape effects and is on cultivated farmland.

We are grateful to the Marjorie Barclay Trust for their continuing support for our projects. The Branch has used Barclay Trust funds to provide a second aviary for Nik Hurring and her assistants who run the kereru recovery project. Nik continues to put major effort into looking after the rescued Kereru and it was good to hear her talk about her work with them at an evening meeting last year. It was a significant anniversary of the Trust this year, and the Governor General handed out the annual cheques at a function at the Museum and had a long chat to Nik about the kereru on that occasion. Barclay Trust Funds have also been used to fund one of the Orokonui Ecosanctuary long tracks and more is likely to be allocated towards the viewing deck at the end of the track.

Our research grant for a student project has gone this year to Graham Parker for his work with the native robins and he will speak at one of our monthly meetings about his project. The significant expenditure for the year (just too late to be in this year's accounts), was the donation of \$125,000 from our bequest funds towards the purchase of the Long Point Reserve in the Catlins masterminded by the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust. We were delighted to be a part of this process and we hope many will join us on the field trip down to Long Point later in the year. It is a stunning piece of coastline with sealions and seals as well as the penguins and other birds.

We have just appointed a KCC Co-ordinator, Simon Clearwater, who will begin work in July and hopes to have the KCC up and running again. His contact details are on the new programme. It will be good to have the KCC group active once more.

Finally, I wish to thank all the Branch Management Committee members for all their time and hard work, particularly our secretary Mark Hanger, Francie Beggs our very able treasurer, Janet York and Bill Wilson for their work on the Lenz Reserve Management committee, Bill also for his involvement with the workdays and weekend at Moore's Bush and the Lenz Reserve respectively and Alan Mark for all his input and continual vigilance in picking up on conservation issues that arise. Thanks are also due to Sue Maturin, our Regional Field officer for all her work with and for us. Sincere thanks also to Jane Smith who is managing our website; we plan to provide Jane with some material for a site update very shortly.

For and on behalf of the Branch Management Committee, *Janet Ledingham*, Chairperson

#### **Coming event**

##### **Caversham Bush Planting July 12th,**

Start time 9-0am at the Reserve, transport from Botany Dept at 8-45am, contact Rhys Millar, trip co-ordinator, beforehand if you need a ride. Rhys Millar: [rhysmillar@inspire.net.nz](mailto:rhysmillar@inspire.net.nz), 454 5111. We have 500 trees to plant and expect to finish by lunchtime given there are a good number of volunteers on the job.

##### **Trip and indoor meeting reports**

##### **Field trip to Papanui Inlet with Dr Candida Savage, May 30th**

This trip took place on a fine Sunday and we were joined by some members of the Peninsula conservation group, STOP. We walked for some distance round one side of the inlet towards the Coast. Candida explained the ecology of the inlet and we discussed the clam harvesting

venture that operates beyond where we were. We were entertained at one point by a young sealion scattering the wading birds in all directions. Thanks to Candida for an informative and enjoyable Field Trip.

#### **Moore's Bush Working Bee- Sat March 15th.**

The aim was to put in 200 trees on the grassy area near the South entrance and also by the stream further North. As well as this we hoped to demolish the old shed which had become something of a hazard. However most of all we wanted to engage with volunteers from Otago University Students for Environmental Action so as to encourage future participation in environmental projects. Everything went well.

The trees, provided by the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust Nursery, thanks to Margaret Suman and Anita Pillai, were all put in under Margaret's direction and marked. The shed was demolished by Timm Döbert and Graham Parker and the wreckage removed to be recycled or made landfill. A very pleasant warm spell helped our enjoyment of lunch and the enthusiasm of our helpers bodes well for future joint projects. 19 people attended. Many thanks to all who took part.

#### **April 15th. Indoor Meeting. Rosmarie Müller- Jewelled Gekkos- Jewels of New Zealand.**

Rosalie kindly stood in for Liz Slooten who was unable to give a talk on Hector's Dolphins due to a family crisis.

Rosalie has worked with Gekkos in Iceland and is trying to develop a system of using ultrasonics to detect the presence of the jewelled gekkos whose camouflage makes them very difficult to find. The Jewelled Gekko has been found on the Banks Peninsula, Mount Cook Area, Southland and the Otago Peninsula and though not classified as endangered is in decline. Their habitat has been destroyed and they suffer from poaching to an extent that Rosalie was reluctant to reveal the area of those she is studying.

As part of her studies she has been building artificial foliar retreats for them which unfortunately have proved irresistible to horses that chew them - despite the chilli sauce put on them as an inhibitor.

*Bill Wilson*

#### **April 19th.-20th. Lenz Reserve Working Bee**

The Otago branch had been neglecting its duty to maintain and improve the Long Track so we decided to rectify this as well as making use of student enthusiasm for the benefit of the reserve. Mark Hanger provided the transport, Bill Wilson brought the food and timber and Timm Döbert and Josie Howitt organised the muscle. We even had a few older volunteers to add wisdom and dignity to the proceedings.

Threats of snow to low levels and a malfunctioning heat pump added a little hardship to the opening night but we all survived and Saturday's weather was much less threatening. While a small group worked on the upper track the main group hauled the lumber and tools about an hour in and built a truly magnificent (small) bridge as well as doing repairs to the track.

On Sunday we went sightseeing. The Cathedral Caves were closed due to beach surge but we got to McLean Falls, Papatowai and Picnic Point as well as Nugget Point.

Everyone seemed to have a good time and missions were accomplished.

*Bill Wilson*

#### **Wilding Tree Co-ordinator – new appointment**

Rhys Millar has just been appointed to this post, replacing Jane Pearson, who has decided to stand down. Rhys will be coming on the Wilding Pine Group Trip to Ohau this weekend June 14-15 and we look forward to working with him. Our thanks to Jane for the work done while she

was with us and our best wishes to her for the future.

Rhys grew up in the Marlborough Sounds but now lives on the Otago Peninsula where he and his partner Sally have a revegetation project underway, propagating and planting around 2000 plants / annum. He is a Trustee and active member of the local Tomahawk-Smaills Beachcare Trust, and also a Trustee of the Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust. This latter group has recently received significant funding to remove wilding pines in the Queen

Charlotte Sound. Rhys is involved in a number of projects in the field of integrated land management. This currently includes assessing opportunities for native vegetation carbon sequestration, assessing the barriers to New Zealand forest growers of entering eco-certification schemes, and practical advice on biodiversity restoration at a farmscape level.

#### **KCC Co-ordinator**

We are also delighted to announce that Simon Clearwater will be taking on the role of KCC Coordinator, a post which has been vacant for some time. Simon will be starting in July and we hope will soon have the KCC Branch members organized and enjoying themselves once more. His contact details are also listed on the new programme and on the website.

#### **KAIKOURA PARK JOINS SIX PACK**

A new conservation park in the Kaikoura ranges opened on 7 June. Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia park covers an area proposed by Forest & Bird and FMC as one of its Six Pack of South Island high country parks. The 90,000-hectare park includes the Seaward Kaikoura range and parts of the Inland Kaikoura range. It's home to more than 500 plant species, including dryland plants such as the Marlborough rock daisy, and 12 species of lizard. The area is the only nesting area for Hutton's shearwaters.

Conservation Minister Steve Chadwick opened the park in a dawn ceremony on the slopes of Mt Fyffe. About 100 people were at the ceremony, which included a blessing, speeches and tree planting. Kaikoura is the first park among Forest & Bird's priority parks to be opened. The Six Pack of parks campaign began in 2005, and so far four other parks have been opened and two others been formally proposed: Eyre Mountains/Taka Ra Haka, Ruataniwha, Molesworth, Hakatere and the proposed Hawea and Oteake Conservation Parks in Otago.

#### **HECTOR'S DOLPHINS – WELL DONE EVERYONE**

Thanks to you all for your hard work and persistence in pressuring the Government to bring in measures to protect our endangered Hector's and Maui's dolphins. Without your thousands of submissions, letters and cards, the dolphins would be heading closer to extinction.

On 29 May the Government announced a package of measures, including four new marine mammal sanctuaries, extending the sanctuary off Banks Peninsula, regional bans on set net fishing, sand mining and mineral extraction, and restrictions on trawling. An extra \$6 million over the next three years will pay for observers on all commercial fishing vessels operating where the dolphins live. The protection is not as comprehensive as called for by Forest & Bird but the new measures are nevertheless a very significant step forward for Hector's and Maui's dolphins and show the effect environmental NGOs can have when working together.

The Forest & Bird team extends wide congratulations to all of you who wrote submissions, sent letters and postcards, held events and lobbied MPs. Special recognition goes to the branch Hector's and Maui's campaign team members, to the Central Auckland branch for part-funding the campaign, plus the many scientists who have dedicated many years to protecting these special animals.

The Government's response to the overwhelming public call to protect Hector's and Maui's dolphins should be supported. We also need to show our support for the proposed Marine Mammal Sanctuaries and more regulation for dolphins left unprotected. You can:

1. **Send letters of congratulations** to the Ministers of Conservation and Fisheries (Freepost, Parliament Buildings, Wellington) and express support for sanctuaries and further protection measures.
2. **Write to the editor** of your local paper supporting the decisions, the extension to Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary and the new sanctuaries.
3. **Make a submission** in support of the new Marine Mammal Sanctuaries and extension of Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary.

Visit the website or contact : [k.knowles@forestandbird.org.nz](mailto:k.knowles@forestandbird.org.nz) for more information

**Newsletter prepared by Dunedin Branch Chairperson, Janet Ledingham.**

**Visit our website :** [www.dunedinfostandbird.org.nz](http://www.dunedinfostandbird.org.nz) for up-to date information on Field Trips and Indoor Meetings and other activities.