



Forest & Bird

DUNEDIN BRANCH | *Giving Nature a Voice*



BRANCH NEWSLETTER

April 2018

Dunedin Branch Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on **Tuesday, April 24th at 5:30 pm**

Benham Seminar Room, 2nd Floor, Room 215, Zoology Benham Building, Otago University, Great King St.

Following the AGM we have a real treat for you: a talk by **Anton Van Helden**, Forest & Bird Marine Conservation Advocate, who will speak on '**Whales, tales and marine conservation**'.

Whales: Will we ever learn?

Whales loom large in our minds, revered as creatures of mythology and mystery. And yet whales are elusive, we still know so very little about them and their lives. Even the most commonly seen species defy our ability to study them. Technological advances have provided insights that have challenged our perceptions of them, and force us to rethink how we manage their world. New discoveries show us that however remarkable we thought they were, they are only more so.

Exploited by whaling, impacted by pollution and fisheries, collisions with ships, and new threats we are only just beginning to appreciate. Noise in our oceans, and the very real threat of impacts from climate change. What can we do?



Anton van Helden has spent most of his life working with whales and for 24 years was the marine mammal specialist at the National Museum.

In that time, he managed the New Zealand Whale Stranding Database for the Department of Conservation, collected specimens, and researched and developed what has become one of the largest collections of marine mammals in the world. He was intimately involved in the creation of the "Whales Tohorä" exhibition, that has been touring North America since 2008, with over 2 million visitors having viewed it. Anton is now one of Forest & Bird's marine advocates.

He is an outstanding speaker and we hope you will join us for this occasion. Nibbles and drinks will be available, with a gold-coin-minimum donation requested from attendees. Please be on time as we have to hold the door open.

Nominations for the Branch Management Committee (for Chairperson(s) and/or Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members) are welcome and should be sent by April 18th to the secretary, Janet Ledingham, at dunedin.branch@forestandbird.org.nz (ph. 03 467 2960) or posted to Forest & Bird Dunedin Branch, PO Box 5793, Moray Place, Dunedin 9058.

Otago Marine protection now in the hands of the Ministers

The Minister of Conservation Eugenie Sage and Minister of Fisheries Stuart Nash are now considering which, if any, of the recommendations by the SE Marine Protected Areas Forum they will accept and put forward for a further round of consultation under a statutory process. Forest & Bird is calling on the Government to implement the largest amount of protection recommended by the Forum.

Two networks have been recommended:

- **Network 1** – covers 14.2% (1,267 km²) of the region and includes six Marine Reserves (4.5% of the region) and five Type 2 MPAs (9.7% of the region). Network 1 was supported by the Forum’s environment, tourism, community and science representatives, as well as one of the two recreational fishing representatives.
- **Network 2** – covers 4.1% (366 km²) of the Forum region and includes three Marine Reserves (2.35% of the region) and two Type 2 MPAs (1.75% of the region). It was supported by the commercial fishing.

Bobby’s Head – Network 1 recommended a 96km² marine reserve around Bobby’s Head and including the Pleasant River Estuary and Stony Creek Lagoon. This could be New Zealand’s largest inshore marine reserve.



Neither of the networks meet New Zealand’s marine policy requirements or the Forum’s terms of reference as they fail to provide a comprehensive network of marine protected areas that represents all the habitats found in Otago. Sadly, consensus was not able to be reached on a marine reserve in the Catlins. A reserve at Long Point was supported by the proponents of Network One, but was opposed by Kāi Tahu. The local whānau opposed Long

Point on the grounds that this would be a breach of their treaty rights. The area encompasses a number of traditional fishing grounds that are used today to manaaki the manuhiri on the marae and uphold the mana of whānau.

The proposals have also failed the region’s penguins, dolphins and sea lions which are on a knife edge and need protection from fishing.

Thank you to all of you who wrote a submission to the SE Marine Protected Areas Forum supporting marine protection in Otago and we hope you will be keen to be involved in the next round, once the Ministers have decided which areas will be formally proposed for protection.

The Forum received 2,803 Submissions—with 1,225 submissions reflecting Forest & Bird’s and Fish Forever viewpoints. **The majority of public and science submissions overwhelmingly supported more protection in larger reserves.**

Fit for purpose

A chance to be part of designing Forest & Bird for beyond 2020

On **14-15 April** at the **Dunedin Public Art Gallery**

Start and finish times each day are 10am – 4pm

Board members and staff are holding workshops with Forest & Bird branch committee members and members to discuss the future state of Forest & Bird. **Is Forest & Bird "Fit for Purpose"?** You may like to come for both days or part of the time.

Day one is the nuts and bolts day about how we can strengthen Forest & Bird, how should we be structured to create multiple opportunities for members to join, support and engage with the organisation at all levels and more.

Day two has three workshops: (1) Tips and tricks on lobbying, (2) Iwi engagement for Forest & Bird and (3) How to participate effectively in Resource Management Planning.

Find the program at <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/about-us/governance/fit-purpose>

[Please register here](#) for a workshop near you—it is free. We really look forward to seeing you there.

Morning tea, a buffet lunch and afternoon tea provided, and while some vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free options will be available, if you have specific requirements please bring your own food along.

Urban tui (and bellbirds)

On March 20th, Dr Murray Efford spoke to the Branch on the above topic and arising from his talk, which was much appreciated by the large audience, we hope that members will be able to respond to his request as set out below.



Sightings of colour-banded tui and bellbirds:

Please report sightings of colour-banded tui and bellbirds to Murray Efford at murray.elford@otago.ac.nz. Each bird has one coloured band and a metal band on the left leg and two coloured bands on the right leg. **The full combination, in order, is needed to be sure which bird you've seen.** Possible colours are blue, red, green (various shades, treated the same), yellow, orange, white, pale blue, black (tui only), grey (tui only), and purple (bellbird only). Take special care to distinguish white from pale blue.

Details of observer, address and date are appreciated. Birds at feeders can often be photographed to confirm the record. Even fuzzy photos are useful!

Sea Lion Summer at Aramoana 2018

By Janet Ledingham

Christmas came early for me in 2017 as on December 18th I found the first sea lion pup of the 2017-2018 season with her mother Gail as I walked on the Peninsula.



December 18th, Gail & pup 5 days old

Up until then we, the Aramoana Conservation Trust, Bradley Curnow, Adrian Hall and friends and myself, had been checking the beaches there as we had observed at least two pregnant Mums visiting.



I carried on checking Gail and pup for some days and then we got the news that Lynette Scott had been at Aramoana on New Years Day and reported to the Sea Lion Trust that *'I was with my kids at Aramoana beach yesterday and we stumbled across a mum and her new pup around halfway up the sand slope.'* The slope that Lynette referred to was the one on the far side of Keyhole/Bear Rock. Mum Patti and the pup were tucked in under the big rocks about halfway up on the left as you ascend. The first thing was

to check it out and on the 2nd Adrian of the Conservation Trust managed to get up high enough to see them in spite of a troublesome hip. That was the end of my Peninsula visits for a while. Some people may remember that Mum Patti had a pup, Janet, at Aramoana in late December 2015 in a different spot towards the end of Big Beach.

The next day Jim Fyfe put up a 'fence' to close off access to them and we embarked on the task of keeping an eye on the spot at low tide to ensure that people and dogs left them in peace.

January 4. I went down at 7:30am, Patti obligingly lifted her head a bit from time to time but pup did not oblige me by climbing up on her back to give me a view.

January 5. Patti went fishing leaving Pup in the cave.

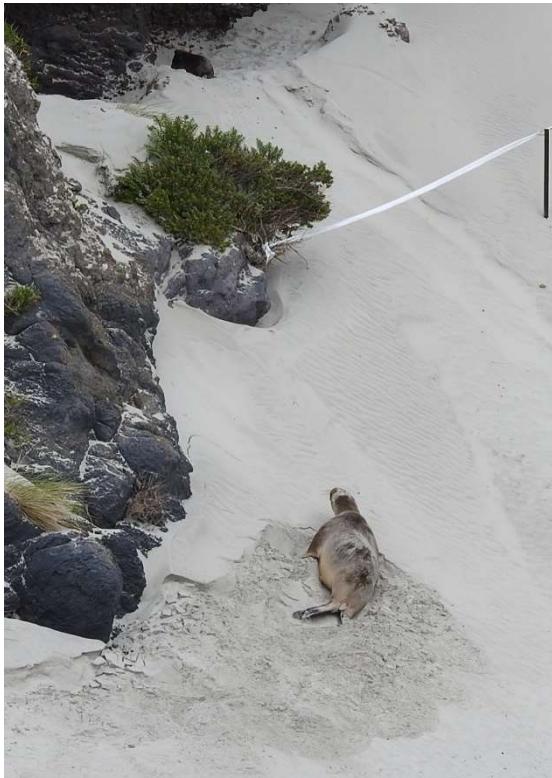
January 7. I went down at 1:30pm and climbed up the dune saddle and noted they were both still there. Then walked along the beach a bit.



I got back in time to see a lad letting his big dog loose to climb up the dune with him—he kept to the right but the dog headed straight for Patti's patch. I called and got him to get the dog down and had a talk to him and he got the message. I hung around for a while as it was busy and turned 2 other dogs back and persuaded a few people not to go up on the sea lion side of the dune which all went well.

photos had to be taken from the top of an adjoining dune (see above photo by Adrian Hall).

January 9. They were both asleep in the sun at the edge of their cave -



Swimming up the dune and then a 'meet and greet'

January 10. Around 9:00am I witnessed Patti come ashore after a brief trip to sea and I watched her laboriously climb the dune back to the pup.

I was then told by some walkers that a mum and pup were a bit along the beach back towards the Mole so I investigated and found Nuki, a pregnant female and female Lena with a pup who we think was born in the dunes there (see photo). Lena was of course herself born at Aramoana, right by the steps leading up from Shelly Beach in the 2007/2008 season.



January 13th Before 7:00am Patti was asleep at the foot of the dune, pup still up above. However, mid-morning as I was going from the Mole along to where Lena was I saw Patti and pup coming out of the dunes and along at speed and when I got to them I found Nuki asleep and the two Mums with their pups. I regretted missing the sight of the pup coming down the dune! Anyway they settled there on the beach with Nuki visiting occasionally. The pups invented some great games with logs, sticks and seaweed.



Patti and pup greeting Lena and pup



The two pups playing

This state of affairs continued until the 19th when Adrian's Grandsons found Zoe was with her pup along towards the end of Big Beach (see photo below), at the spot where Patti had pupped 2 years ago. We suspect she may have had the pup elsewhere and then come visiting. **So it had become 3 pups at Aramoana.** They stayed there for 2 days and then swam along to a hidey hole



very close to the Mole where they stayed 2 more days before heading away to the Peninsula.

All was then quiet relatively speaking until the 25th. We continued to monitor the beach at low tide to make sure the sea lions were left in

peace, especially the pups when their Mums were away fishing. **We did a lot of advocacy re keeping the right distance from them and having dogs under control and at least 20m away from the sealions.** It was hot weather and there were many people around. Most were very good and many enjoyed the chance to observe the Mums and pups—with the exception of several dog-owners and one group of young Chinese visitors who were found stroking the pups!

Then on the 25th, a hot Sunday, with many people about Patti decided to end all that. What a morning. At 11:45am I could see from the mole that Patti was near the water and pup running round, then eventually it was swim time and they cruised along parallel to the beach until they reached the Mole.

A little dally on the sand and then it was up the track and onto the road and that was when the fun started.

I managed to stop a couple of cars coming along the road and when Patti stopped for a little rest that gave me chance to get past her and talk to the cars that were trying to come along. Several of them kindly backed back to the Shelly beach end and were really enjoying the spectacle of the trek.



End of the road trek and onto the beach. Lots of admiring fans around the Shelly beach carpark who were really delighted to see mum and pup—and 4 of them thanked me for the shepherding which was really nice.

After a rest by the water they swam along to the pilot houses and we thought they would stay a few days, but no, they were gone by morning and next seen on the peninsula where they now are. Lena and pup looked to be missing their friends on the 26th but on the 27th they too had gone. Pup was seen having a swimming lesson on the 26th. They initially went over to Long Beach where some days later I assisted in the pup tagging process. They are now on the Peninsula.



*Above: Pup rests in the shade of the bin.
Right: Down onto Shelly beach and a rest.
"I bet I've lost some weight today with all
this swimming and the route march!"*



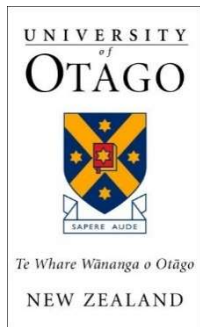
A stressful time for the minders, but well worth the effort and the rewards of watching these animals—and how those pups can play—are ample compensation for the stress moments!



Lena and pup, last sighting at Aramoana for me

An important message from Mel Young

Re sightings of Yellow-Eyed penguins with transmitters



ON THE MOVE: PLEASE REPORT SIGHTINGS OF YELLOW-EYED PENGUINS (HOIHO) WITH TRANSMITTERS ON THEIR BACKS

The University of Otago are tracking fledgling hoiho (yellow-eyed penguins) from their natal locations using satellite tags and GSM-GPS. This is part of a wider study into foraging ecology and management of mainland hoiho. This research is approved by the Department of Conservation and the University of Otago.

We expect juvenile hoiho to disperse towards the Canterbury Bight, possibly making landfall in South Canterbury or Banks Peninsula. Juvenile hoiho can also turn up in North Canterbury, Kaikōura, Marlborough Sounds, Golden Bay and on the south and west coasts of Wellington, between February and August.



Juvenile hoiho are knee-high, weigh around 5kg, and do not have a yellow band on the back of their head. The transmitters they are equipped with are 70mm long, and some of them have antennae. They are attached to the birds' feathers using black tape and cable ties on their lower back. Each bird has been marked with a microchip prior to fledging.

If you have seen any juvenile hoiho with a transmitter attached, we would like to hear from you as soon as possible.

SIGHTINGS OF LIVE HOIHO WITH TRANSMITTERS ATTACHED

Please do not cause unnecessary distress to the bird by approaching it too closely – Please take photographs of the attachment, and the condition of the bird (e.g. photographs from the front, and profile). Photos and location information can be sent to: youngmjf@gmail.com or call/text Mel Young on 0211 389 528. Please make immediate contact with Mel.

SIGHTINGS OF DEAD HOIHO WITH TRANSMITTERS ATTACHED

If you are unlucky enough to encounter a dead hoiho with a transmitter attached to its back, please immediately contact your local DOC office or call the DOC hotline on 0800 362 468 (free from cell phones). All dead hoiho are sent to Massey University for post mortem, and your local DOC office can arrange this. If the transmitter can be easily detached, please take it to your nearest DOC office and let them know where you found it.

Please send photographs of any live or dead hoiho encountered with satellite tags to Mel Young (youngmjf@gmail.com, 0211 389 528) as soon as possible.



For more information, please email Mel Young – youngmjf@gmail.com

Greetings Members

We hope you have found the Newsletter of interest and that you will join us in the coming months for the events listed in the new programme which is a part of this mailing.

The article on the Aramoana sea lions isn't just 'light relief' but is to remind people that **although the Forest & Bird Sea Lion campaign perhaps concentrates on the wider issues in the management of these precious Hookers Sea Lions we have an increasing population of these animals along the Otago Coast which we should all be aware of.** The events at Aramoana are just a small part of the season's events along the Otago Coast and the Peninsula and we are very privileged to be able to see and enjoy them on our beaches.

So please keep your distance from them, have dogs on leads and a good distance away especially from the young animals and report any harrassment episodes to DOC without delay. Watching at a distance can be very rewarding.

Please join us at the AGM and hear Anton tell us about whales and other matters—and remember we are always on the lookout for new committee members.

Janet Ledingham, Secretary, on behalf of the Branch Mangement Committee

This Newsletter was compiled by Janet Ledingham and formatted by Alzira Alaniz