



Forest & Bird

GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Southland Branch Newsletter

May 2018

An Opening word from our Chair:

As I write this the world is marking Earth Day in many different ways. Here in New Zealand we have much to celebrate in the way we seek to protect and enhance our environment. However, recent information from Statistics New Zealand reveals a sobering picture of continuing loss of soil, native ecosystems, wetlands, endemic species and water quality and quantity. Climate change is the result of we, as a species, treating the natural capital of our Planet as if it endless. We are now confronted with the reality of all our actions and many of us are doing what we can to turn back the tide of negative environmental impacts we have created.

Earth Day, and the 364 other Earth Days we have, are our opportunities to be the change we need to ensure a future that is as diverse and wonderful as the one we have at present. Fortunately we have people who constantly inspire and actively participate in many activities that are making a difference here in Southland and around New Zealand.

Our Winter programme, beginning with our AGM this Month features many speakers who will inspire us to keep working or get involved in the many diverse aspects of conservation. We are also now supported by Ministers of Conservation and Environment who share our aspirations and are prepared to enact legislation to improve the many areas of concern. We have work to do, but together there has never been a better time in our recent history to make good things happen!

My thanks to Gay, Amy, Chris and the rest of our team for this Winter programme and newsletter for Southland Forest and Bird. We would also like to thank SIT for graciously making their rooms available again this year.

Christine Henderson
Chair, Southland Branch

Southland Branch Committee:

Chair: Christine Henderson, Lumsden (03 2487605)

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Ruth Dalley (Te Anau) 032496664

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Chris and Brian Rance 2131161

Marie Lockie 2178720

Jenny Campbell (Mossburn) 032486398

Margaret Hopkins (Stewart Island) 032191126

Amy Neal-Duffill 0276926839

If you haven't received this newsletter on email then it means Head Office Membership team do not have your email address. Please contact the Branch or Membership Team directly membership@forestandbird.org.nz and give them your email if you want to receive emails from the Branch about changes to the programme of events.

Forest and Bird Addresses:

Southland Branch PO Box 1155, Invercargill

Southern Region Office – Sue Maturin PO Box 364, Dunedin

Central Office – PO Box 631, Wellington

www.forest-bird.org.nz



Our committee is keen to hear from any member who can help out with a variety of tasks.

If you are good with technology we could do with help setting up the monthly talk equipment, if you like design maybe you could help with Newsletters or facebook page, or help with trips, submissions, stalls, events, Te Rere, Tautuku or something new for the

Branch email Chris– rances@ihug.co.nz

Is this familiar?



Penguins in crisis Roy Johnstone

Yellow-eyed Penguins In Crisis

- Yellow-eyed penguin nest numbers on Otago Coast now 220, down from 520 in 2012.
- Nest numbers at Long Point in the Catlins just 17, down from 53 in 2012.
- Catlins starvation events 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- Barracoota and/or shark attacks on Yellow-eyed Penguins have been seen, with birds dying on the beaches and at sea.
- If no action: Yellow-eyed Penguins will be extinct on the mainland by 2060, or SOONER.

Yellow-eyed Penguins Are Up For Grabs

- Yellow-eyed Penguins are being sacrificed for private profit.
- Fishing industry is plundering the sea leading to penguin starvation.
- Catch limits for recreational fishers are too high.
- Bycatch of Yellow-eyed Penguins under reported. Only 3% observer coverage NZ-wide.
- Fishing industry and some recreational fishers blocking the formation

Keen to advocate for Yellow-eyed Penguins?

Join South Otago Forest & Bird's march in Balclutha.

No?

Then maybe you're not on the mailing list...

If you haven't received a Kārearea it means F&B doesn't have your email address – so if you want to receive this newsletter and regular updates on Southland's F&B events please send National Office your email address - membership@forestandbird.org.nz. By doing this you also save the Branch the cost of printing and posting your newsletters. Of course if you prefer to receive hard copy of the branch newsletters that is fine too, but the monthly Kārearea is only available on email and the best way to notify you about changes to the programme is by email.

What is it?

Kārearea is a newsletter full of southern conservation stories and events. It is edited by Jane Young of South Otago F&B Branch and every month we send it around our Southland members promoting Southlands upcoming events.

Earth Day 2018

Earth Day 2018 is focusing on ending plastic pollution – remember your recyclable bags when you go shopping, buy in bulk where you can, grow your own vegetables, give kids a KCC subscription instead of another plastic toy.



World Wetland Day Recognised at Waituna Lagoon

Learning more about the health and wildlife of Waituna Lagoon and the Mokotua area was the reason for members of Southland Forest and Bird, Southland Natural History Field Club and Southland Tramping Club members to gather the first Saturday in February to mark World Wetland day.

The group walked along the north edge of the lagoon, observing special plants such as endangered *Ruppia* and New Zealand musk (*Mimulus*) which was in full flower and being visited by bumble bees for nectar.



Photo – Ron Munro. With low water levels in Waituna Lagoon, this was a good year for the *Mimulus* flowering along the north side of this coastal lake.

“When lake levels get high and affect farm drainage then the lagoon is opened to allow water to drain out to sea, and if the lagoon stays open over summer months, the *Ruppia* dies back affecting the health of the lagoon,” organiser Gay Munro said. “It has been 18 months since it was tidal.”

Members of the group were keen bird watchers so there were frequent stops to observe and identify such species as banded dotterel, pied stilt, grey teal duck, black fronted tern, shoveler duck and turnstone.



Photo- Jenny Campbell.
Members of Southland Forest and Bird, Southland Natural History Field Club and Southland Tramping Club members at Waituna Lagoon in early February.

"One godwit was spotted on a sand bar and the group was very fortunate to see a usually secretive fernbird in the shrubs along the shore," Munro said. "World Wetland day on Friday, 2 February commemorates the signing of the Ramsar Convention and is celebrated around the world on that day."

A growing awareness of the value of wetlands brought people together in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 where the Convention was established, with 138 countries as signatories at present. Waituna was recognised as a wetland of national importance in 1976 and by 2006 it was one of only six Ramsar sites in New Zealand.

Interpretation signs there state that for Maori, Waituna provided a traditionally rich mahinga kai (food gathering area). They also recognised the importance of wetlands in filtering impurities from water, likening their role to vital organs that cleanse the body, like the kidneys and liver. Waituna Wetland is recognised as an important kohanga (spawning ground) of indigenous fish species along with other natural resources such as harakeke (flax) and pingao which are regularly harvested as cultural materials.

A Deed of Recognition has been signed which recognises Ngaitahu's historic, spiritual and traditional relationships with Waituna Wetland and manawhenua status which results from this relationship.

"With high nutrient levels of concern along with high sediment loads brought down by the river, in 2001 concerned local farmers formed the Waituna Landcare Group," Munro said. "They work closely with Environment Southland and Department of Conservation, presently working with the local Gorge Road School and encouraging riparian planting on farms."

The group moved on to Ron and Gay Munro's property at Mokotua to have lunch and go for a bush walk in their QE 11 Covenant area. This was followed by a visit to Garry and Angela Christie's farm to observe the difference fencing and pest control can make to an area of native bush.

"We started trapping in 2010 and in the first two years we caught 300 possums and 44 cats as well as stoats, ferrets and rats, with very few being caught now in our on-going programme and we have noticed a great increase in bird life," G Christie said. "We used to be able to see through the bush to the other side as there was no ground cover but the fence has meant revegetation with ferns now covering the ground along with lots of different native seedlings which means we are winning."

"The day was very informative and everyone agreed the conditions had been excellent for the field trip to a very special area," G Munro said.

Jenny Campbell

Kiwi Conservation Club Southland

KCC Bug house building – 22 April 2018



It wasn't that great for being outside exploring so instead we built insect houses for around the Southland Community Nursery – a great way for KCC to give back to the nursery where we hold a lot of our events. We camouflaged the insect homes finding nature to stick on. We also did some bug hunting, bug identification, bug classification and colouring in! A break in the weather after our building allowed a walk around the pond, finding homes for the newly built insect houses. We are looking forward to revisiting these in time to see who has moved in!





Southland Community Nursery and Education Centre

- it's a happening place!

A native plant nursery, with volunteer mornings every Friday, School groups and other groups by arrangement, a series of workshops throughout the year, a venue for meetings and corporate get-togethers – To find out more check out www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz Or Email Chris rances@ihug.co.nz

In the last year the Education Centre has been visited by over **1000** school children! See what they got up to at:
<http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/news-and-events/>



For further information on workshops and booking details see the following link. We will be adding new workshops so keep checking
<http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/education-centre/activities/workshops/>



Like us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Southland-Community-Nursery-1824134004516199/?ref=nf>

Tautuku – A hidden gem of the South



Credit: Dawn Patterson

Enjoy the 20 minute gravelled nature trail, the new short walk leading to or from the Trail Tractor site, or try the longer more challenging three hour "Long Track" all on site. The native bush features extensive kamahi/rimu forest - bush birds - bellbird, tui, kereru, fernbirds in wetlands, glow worms. Learn about logging history by walking to the adjacent Historic Sawmill site with interpretation and the restored Traill Engine.

The Tautuku Forest Cabins make a good base for discovering the Catlins – spend a few days visiting the wider area – five minutes drive to Tautuku Beach, Cathedral Caves or Lake Wilkie. A bit longer to Maclean, Matai, and Purakaunui Falls, each one different. Papatowai Walking Tracks, Estuary and Wetland Boardwalks are all nearby. Ten minutes drive takes you to Papatowai with its shop, beaches and bush walks. Visit the Whistling Frog at the Maclean Falls for a coffee or meal.



The Coutts Cabin

Location: Chaslands Highway, Southern Scenic Route, 32km south of Owaka (south-east Otago).

Price (per night): Adults \$20 - 25, School Age \$5, Under 5 No Charge. Discounts for Forest & Bird members. Group and long term bookings at members rates.

The Tautuku Forest Cabins are situated in the [Lenz Reserve](#), a 550ha conservation land owned and managed by Forest & Bird. They are set within walking distance of beaches, wetlands and forest tracks and provide a good base for exploring the beautiful Catlins and observing the local native wildlife including sea lions, Hector's dolphins and yellow-eyed penguins.

The main lodge, the Coutts cabin (pictured) and the A-frame cabin sleep 8-10, 4 and 2 respectively.

Please, note that dogs and other animals are prohibited.

Feel free to [download our detailed brochure](#) for additional information and photos.

Check availability or make a booking:

» Book now

To book a stay at this special spot just google **Tautuku Forest Cabins**, click on the Forest & Bird website and you will get this page



Just click the **Book Now** on the website page and your holiday is underway!



The Lodge (sleeps 10)



The Coutts Cabin (4)



The A Frame (2)



Tautuku Forest Cabins



Coutts Cabin

Location: Lenz Reserve, Southern Scenic Route, 72 km south of Balclutha

Accommodation:

Cottage (sleeps 8-10) ♦ **Coutts Cabin** (4) ♦ **A-Frame** (2)
(Guests need to provide own bedding and towels.)

Rates per person per night (Discounts for F&B members):
Adults \$20-30 ♦ School-age \$5 ♦ Under 5 No charge

Bookings: Keith Olsen Ph: 03 415 8244
diana-keith@yrless.co.nz Mirren St, Papatowai (You will need to collect a key from this address.)



A passion for penguins!

On Sunday 18th February a group of 7 members of Southland Forest and Bird were privileged to join Mel Young and 3 Otago University colleagues at Long Point in the Catlins.

Mel is doing her PHD on yellow-eyed penguins (YEP's) and the trip was aimed at locating two large fledglings to attach transmitters onto. Southland and South Otago Branches had paid for transmitters as part of Mel's wider YEP study to see where the juveniles disperse to once they go to sea for the first time. Other parts of the study involved foraging behaviour and diet studies. With declines in YEP's over recent years what is happening at sea remains the biggest unanswered question for penguin survival.



Mel has wide experience working with YEP's having previously worked for the Department of Conservation, and she made the whole procedure look easy as she methodically attached a transmitter to the back of the first bird. Mel also seemed instinctively to know when to place the poo bottle in position before getting covered in quite foul smelling penguin goo! Analysis of the poo would give a good indication of what the adults were feeding the chicks this year. But first, a few stats were collected – weight, size, condition and to do that the penguin was put into a bag to restrict movement. Ron Munro was put in charge of the

pointy end to calm the bird and prevent it from doing any damage with its sharp beak. He gained a few bloody mementos (but nothing compared to the scratches and bruises on Mel's arms!). With various members of us helping – holding the bird, writing notes, cutting tape, mixing glue, it was amazing to know that Mel had done all this on her own the previous day!

As the transmitters cost a few thousand dollars each, Mel is meticulous in attaching it to the feathers on the penguins back with a combination of very adhesive tape, cable ties, pva glue – it sounds messy, but experience has given Mel the confidence to do a very thorough and tidy job and the finished article sits very neatly on its back. The transmitter is expected to fall off in a few months. After more than half an hour the job is done and the penguin is released to wander back to its nest in the forest undergrowth and await an adult returning from the sea with food. Meanwhile, Mel is constantly in touch by radio with her colleagues who are locating other nests, weighing chicks and reporting back on their condition – some chicks have already fledged and gone to sea.



A second healthy heavy chick was located and fittingly it was nesting in the original John Darby hide at Hina Hina Cove. The same procedure was followed and eventually the team walked up the steep hill back to the 4WD's and back through the locked access gate and home.

The Southland group consisted of Chris and Brian Rance, Ron and Gay Munro, Peggy Snoep, Lori Johnston and Christine McKenzie and all were inspired by Mel's passion and skill.

Chris Rance

Moving on from Oil and Gas

The Petroleum Conference, held over the week 26 to 30 March in Wellington, may have been the focus for people rallying in the capital, however the Sunday 'Moving on from Oil and Gas' seminar and speaker event was an educational and bonding time increasing networking across many climate change focused groups, with about 60 attending. This led on to the 350.org organised opening ceremony on Monday with speeches and art focused around the large sunflower known for its symbolism of 'out of the shadows and in to the sun' with numbers attending showing there would be great support for the action on Tuesday.

That was definitely true on Tuesday morning when activists were called to be at TSB Arena at 5am, as opposed to the previous planned time of 6am because the Petroleum Conference delegates had got wind of that and were gathering at 6am. Imagine their dismay when they arrived at TSB Arena to find all the entrances blockaded by barriers of people all locked together and seated in the way! Most got in eventually but 100 did not make it so had to be accommodated at an adjacent venue. Then the 'music' began outside with the loud noise generated being quite disconcerting and annoying inside apparently!

The Oil and Gas companies must have got the message by now that they are not welcome here. There was support from people from all over the country, of all ages, from students who had not gone to school, families with their children, University students, those who had taken time off work, and of course the super-grans who were easily identifiable with their bright yellow capes and bandanas all with messages about the impact of climate change on future generations of not only people.



Photos – Jenny Campbell. Left; Super-grans at 'Moving on from Oil & Gas' Rally for Climate Justice, organised by Frack Free Network, on Sunday with their messages all ready for the action on Tuesday. Right: Torfrida Wainwright's super-gran cape carrying the message while other super grandmothers and grandfathers maintain the blockade at the TSB Arena front entrance not allowing anyone in or out.

The very well organised event was marked by care for each other, support, music, gifts of food and drinks, being kept up to date about what was happening at other doors and shifting people if necessary to be more effective and of course all of this accompanied by bonding as we talked, laughed and cried together, sharing our hopes and dreams for urgent change.

Jenny Campbell

Bush Haven - For Sale

Bush Haven, a home as well as a rehabilitation and display sanctuary for native birds, is for sale. Located in Otatara.

May and Russell Evans have been operating Bush Haven Native Bird Rehabilitation Trust as a rehabilitation and display sanctuary for several years and are having to sell up due to health reasons. It is their hope that someone who is dedicated and passionate about continuing the native bird rehabilitation will buy the property. The main birds coming into care are kereru, tui, bellbird, kingfisher and native falcon [karearea]. There are initial care facilities [hospital] incorporated into the house and various rehabilitation aviaries outside for ongoing care with soft release on the property.



For further details,
contact May Evans,
03-2130530,
027-8138693 or
bush.haven@kinect.co.nz



Our Calendar



Winter Events:

Tuesday 8 May – AGM and speakers – **Brian Rance** – Setting the Scene on Southland Wetlands, followed by, **Jane Bowen/Sarah Crump**, DOC Arawai Kakariki – Awarua/Waituna Wetlands - 10 years on and where to from here?
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.00pm – AGM, Speakers – 7.30pm.

Weekend 19/20 May – Tautuku Working weekend – with free accommodation – contact Dawn - dpatt@xtra.co.nz

Tuesday 12 June - Richard Bowman – My life and times as a Biosecurity Manager, as well as other things.
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.30pm.

Saturday 23 June Kiwi Conservation Club - Matariki Night Celebration and BYO Supper to share at Community Nursery Education Centre – 6pm KCC then 7pm-9pm - park 183 Grant Road (ph Chris 2131161). www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz.

Tuesday 10 July – Anna Palliser – Climate Change Action in Paris
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.30pm.

Saturday 14 July – Te Rere Penguin Colony main planting day – leader Brian Rance (20131161). Bookings essential for transport.

Tuesday 14 August - Mark Sutton, Waiau Trust – Wonderful wetlands in the Waiau Catchment.
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.30pm.

Saturday 18 August - Kiwi Conservation Club Children's Exploration Trip – Southland Community Nursery Education Centre – 2-4pm. Leaders Chris Rance 2131161, Contact Bronwyn at southland@kcc.org.nz

Saturday 8 September - Otatara Landcare Group - Big tree planting day for families at Bushy Point (ph Barry 2131500). Combined with Kiwi Conservation Club. Contact Bronwyn at southland@kcc.org.nz

Tuesday 11 September – Mel Young – Hoiho on the Edge
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.30pm.

Saturday 6/Sunday 7 October - Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) Trip TBC. Contact Bronwyn at southland@kcc.org.nz

Tuesday 9 October – DOC Kakapo/Takahe Team – Bringing Species back from the Brink – the latest story.
SIT Room B1-10 – 7.30pm.



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