

# *Kārearea*

## *Protecting a southern land*

May 2019



Image: Craig McKenzie

## **Dummy penguin no laughing matter**



**D**on't they look cute? Well, yes. And no. These yellow-eyed penguins at Long Point in the Catlins are just a few of the dozens of starving birds that had to be taken in for rehabilitation during the 2018–19 breeding season.

Normally the parents will encourage their fledgling chicks to take to the water, but when these youngsters were released back into the wild they had to figure it out for themselves. Their carers – of the human variety – hoped that the model penguin would encourage them to make their way down to the beach from the ledge where they has been kept for a few days on 'soft release'. Most of them finally got the message, but a few had to be taken back into care because they had lost too much weight.

There is absolutely no doubt that penguins are starving. Nothing cute about that. But maybe the outcome of the South-East Marine Protection Forum (SEMPF) will provide the population with some hope for the future?

On 11 May, after a lengthy delay, the Ministers of Conservation and of Fisheries announced that they would progress the Network 1 option put forward by the Forum. You can see the proposed areas for protection (there will be yet another round of consultation) at: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/marine-and-coastal/semf/network-1-map.pdf>.

You may notice that, except for a small part of the Tahakopa estuary, marine areas in the Catlins will receive no protection whatsoever.

Good luck, little guys.

# Bird news from the Deep South

## Sooty shearwaters hang on at Long Point

South Otago Forest & Bird members have run a predator trapping programme at Long Point in the Catlins for almost ten years. They were encouraged recently by discovering that tītī have nested successfully in the 2019 season. (Sadly, other sites have not fared well.) Tītī are especially vulnerable to predators because not only do the birds live in burrows, but the chicks are left alone while their parents go out to sea to feed. The tītī are being studied by biologist Graeme Loh who banded some of the chicks and checked their health.



**Every Kākāpō counts** The world's fattest species of parrot has had a record-breaking breeding season with scientists saying the fortunes of the critically-endangered bird are finally turning around. There are only 147 adult kākāpō alive today, although a few hundred years ago they were one of New Zealand's most common birds, before being hunted to the brink of extinction, killed by introduced pests, and losing their forest homes.

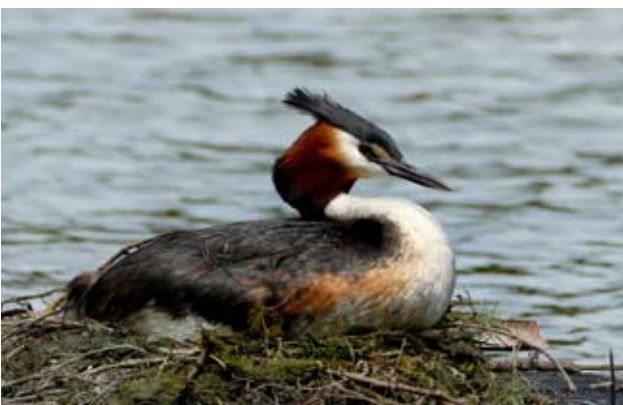
This year 76 chicks hatched, and 60 are expected to make it to adulthood, the result of a heavy rimu masting event that produced an abundance of the bird's favourite food. The two chicks shown above, however, probably wouldn't have survived without human intervention. Little Espy had ground-breaking brain surgery at Wildbase and then convalesced at Dunedin Wildlife Hospital in the company of Queenie who had an injured leg. [www.facebook.com/Dunedinwildlifehospital/](http://www.facebook.com/Dunedinwildlifehospital/) [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/17/critically-endangered-kakapo-the-worlds-fattest-parrot-has-record-breeding-season](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/17/critically-endangered-kakapo-the-worlds-fattest-parrot-has-record-breeding-season)

## Destruction of grebe habitat at Lake Hayes

Well-known zoologist and conservationist John Darby has given many years of his life to encouraging grebes to breed successfully on Lake Wanaka. He was "astonished and dismayed" when he discovered the amount of damage done to their breeding habitat at the southern end of nearby Lake Hayes where private developers are constructing a board walk. "The impact is huge, not only by way of habitat, but also the disturbance this will cause when it is used by humans, dogs and predators alike," said Darby. He describes the birds as timid and easily disturbed.

The local council, with the approval of DOC, permitted clearance of a significant block of wetlands. The application was non-notified, meaning that organisations such as Friends of Lake Hayes or Forest & Bird were unable to have any say in the process.

[www.thewanakasun.co.nz/news/8862-destruction-of-grebe-ecosystem-dismaying.html](http://www.thewanakasun.co.nz/news/8862-destruction-of-grebe-ecosystem-dismaying.html) 09 May 2019



Australasian crested grebe *Bernard Spragg*



**Silent foot steps** Looks like Te Papa needs to check its facebook page more often. Tractor driver Michael Johnston, who discovered the first-ever South Island moa footprints, had very little response from the national museum when he reported his find via messenger. The footprints (between 1–11 million years old) have now been recovered from a clay bank of the Kyeburn River near Ranfurly and are being conserved at Otago Museum. Read about the recovery process at: <https://otagomuseum.nz/blog/ara-moa-an-update-and-some-faqs/> 14 May 2019

# Climate Action



## School Strike for Climate

More New Zealand-wide events will be held on **Friday 24 May**

For details see:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/schoolstrike4climatenz/events/>



Invercargill School Strike 4 Climate Friday 15 March *Jim Young*

## Coal in Aotearoa

### Discussion Day in Dunedin

9:30–4pm Sunday 26 May

9 The Octagon

Step One on the road to stopping a climate emergency? Get informed!

Join us for an update on the state of coal in Aotearoa NZ and a discussion on coal's connection to:

- \* Climate breakdown
- \* Fonterra
- \* Coal in Dunedin and the region (there's lots of it)
- \* Coal and Just Transitions
- \* The upcoming Minerals Forum at the Dunedin Centre

And, most importantly - we'll talk what we can do about it. It's time to connect the dots and end dirty coal in Aotearoa.

**Free entry.** Potluck lunch - bring food to share if you can.

**Speakers include:** Jeanette Fitzsimons, Cindy Baxter, Rosemary Penwarden, and other members of Coal Action Network Aotearoa.

Please email [zelladowning@gmail.com](mailto:zelladowning@gmail.com) to register your interest. Or sign up on the Facebook event page:

[www.facebook.com/events/342235466436184/](https://www.facebook.com/events/342235466436184/)

Following on from the info day - Join us in Dunedin on **Tuesday May 28 to Rally against the Minerals Forum.**

Details here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/333099857390071/>

[www.stopcoal.co.nz/register](http://www.stopcoal.co.nz/register)

To find out more about the Minerals Forum see Rosemary's piece at: [www.odt.co.nz/opinion/time-turning-back-using-coal](http://www.odt.co.nz/opinion/time-turning-back-using-coal)



Te Kuha coal *Neil Silverwood*

# Foulden Maar – Otago's fossil treasure trove



Foulden Maar Pit 1 Kimberley Collins Inset Ant fossil Kaulfuss Antweb.org

## Foulden Maar – FAQs

**Q: What's a maar?**

**A:** A low, broad volcanic crater, which often fills up with water to form a shallow lake.

**Q: What's so special about Foulden Maar?**

**A:** The crater gradually filled with layers of microscopic algae to form diatomite, made up almost entirely of silica. Lack of oxygen in the bottom of the lake meant that other things that lived in the lake or fell in were preserved, often in amazing detail. This fossil record spans about 130,000 years.

**Q: What sort of living things?**

**A:** You name it. Fish, flowers, fruit, fungi, bark, heaps of different insects and other invertebrates. There are probably moa fossils waiting to be discovered, and maybe even crocodiles. This site is unique.

**Q: Suppose you're going to drag climate change into it somehow?**

**A:** Well, yes. Foulden Maar is the only site in the Southern Hemisphere that has such high-quality data about the last major period of de-glaciation in Antarctica, at a time when CO<sub>2</sub> levels spiked.

**Q: Has it ever been mined?**

**A:** Yes, but only on a small scale, and in cooperation with scientific researchers.

**Q: So what's different now?**

**A:** Overseas company Plaman Resources now owns the mining rights and 80% of the land that overlays the diatomite, but in order to make mining economically worthwhile they need Overseas Investment Office permission to buy the surrounding farm.

**Q: What do they plan to do with the diatomite (and the fossils that it contains)?**

**A:** Grind it up for feed for industrially-farmed animals, though its nutritional benefits have been questioned. Possibly also use it in fertilisers or cement.

**Q: What action can opponents take?**

**A:** Ask the Overseas Investment Office not to let Plaman buy the land. Sign up to Action Station's petition at <https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/save-foulden-maar>. Contact local councillors. Find out more at the Dunedin public meeting on 28 May.

PUBLIC MEETING

7:30pm, Tues, 28 May 2019



Castle Two Theatre  
University of Otago

**IMPACTS OF THE MINING / MINERAL INDUSTRY**

**FOULDEN MAAR**  
Fossil treasures, climate record and mining issues  
Assoc Prof. Daphne Lee, Geology Dept., University of Otago.  
Dr Nic Rawlence, Palaeogenetics Lab., Zoology Dept., Univ. of Otago.

**GLOBAL WARMING & TRANSITIONAL ENGINEERING**  
What do we do?  
Dr Susan Krumdieck, Prof. of Mechanical Engineering, Univ. of Canterbury.

Co-sponsored: Wise Response Soc. & Dunedin Br, EngNZ Young Engineers

 **YOUNG ENGINEERS**  **open forum all welcome**  **wiseresponse.org.nz**

## Contact Details

### South Otago Forest & Bird

[www.facebook.com/ForestAndBirdSouthOtago](http://www.facebook.com/ForestAndBirdSouthOtago)  
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### South Otago KCC

KCC coordinator 0274180044 [southotago@kcc.org.nz](mailto:southotago@kcc.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/southotagokcc/](http://www.facebook.com/southotagokcc/)

### Southland Forest & Bird

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### Southland KCC Bronwyn KCC 2130017

### The Catlins Bat Project

Catriona Gower 0223 914 698 [catlinsbats@gmail.com](mailto:catlinsbats@gmail.com)

### Coal Action Murihiku (CAM)

Jenny Campbell 027 351 0180 [jennycam@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jennycam@xtra.co.nz)

### Conservation Volunteers Coastal Otago

[volunteerscoastalota@doc.govt.nz](mailto:volunteerscoastalota@doc.govt.nz)

### Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust

[www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz](http://www.yellow-eyedpenguin.org.nz)

**New Zealand Sea Lion Trust** [www.sealiontrust.org.nz](http://www.sealiontrust.org.nz)

### Kārearea: protecting a southern land

Contributions welcome. Copy for July is due on 30 June.

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