



Entoloma canoconicum at Lenz Reserve.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to our newsletter and programme for the first half of 2020.

Thank you to our Branch volunteers, financial supporters, members and committee members, for your various contributions to our collective work in aid of the local environment and our Dunedin branch projects. Thank you for your submissions and for your input into national Forest and Bird campaigns.

Thanks to our Otago Projects Officer and other paid staff for your continued efforts on the seabird restoration and predator control fronts.

Our 2019 indoor meetings included some exceptional talks. Our field trips and volunteer events once again provided opportunities to see rare flora and fauna, and to maintain the environments in which they live. And, as usual, there was the opportunity to see landscapes "off the beaten track".

Sadly, the year saw major fires in Otago tussock landscapes. A fire swept through 5000 ha of the eastern Lammermoor Range/Black Rock Scientific Reserve area, which had been recently visited on a branch field trip. Locally, on Flagstaff, there was similar tragedy. This year, we will explore post-fire regeneration in our field trips.

In September, the Dunedin, South Otago, and Southland branches celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Lenz Reserve in the Catlins. Short walks to some spots of special interest rounded out the day.

Finally, the number of migratory arctic waders spending time on our local estuaries was up from the previous year's count.

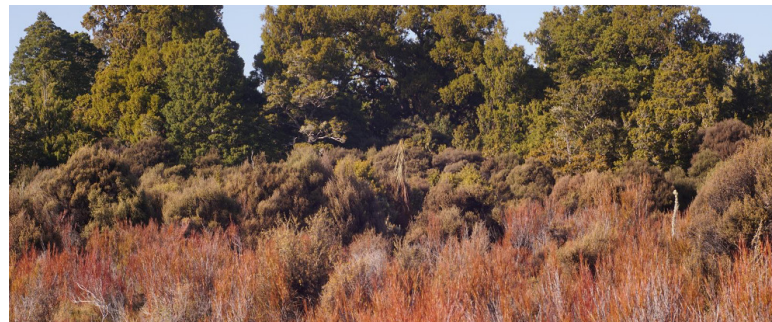
Paul Smale



Kōtuku (white heron) at an East Otago estuary.



The Lammermoor landscape before the fire.



Peat dome with podocarp backdrop.



Three of a flock of 800 waders.

THE CONTINUING STORY OF PATTI, ARAMOANA'S FAVOURITE SEA LION MUM



From late December we noticed that Patti, looking very pregnant, was visiting the Aramoana Beaches once more and wondered where she would have her next pup.

I saw her early on Christmas Day but not on Boxing Day. On the 27th in the early morning, I was coming back past Keyhole Rock when I spied part of a sea lion head at the top of the smaller dune on the Mole side of Keyhole Rock. I scrambled up to where I could just overlook it and saw that she had indeed given birth to a pup, probably on Boxing Day. By the 29th there were 2 heads visible at the top of the dune.

Patti stayed with pup for 9 days before she left to go fishing and we arranged some volunteers to make sure no humans or dogs climbed up to where pup was while Patti was away. This was quite hard on the minders as it often coincided with wind and rain.

On the 31st, they both came down from the dune but the weather worsened with strong

wind and flying sand. After 24 hours Patti decided to take Pup back up the dune once more.

Finally, on January 11th Patti fetched Pup down from the dune and they took up residence further along the beach back towards the Mole.

Their first night was spent on the surfers track down from the carpark, then they moved further along the beach and Patti would hide pup in the marram before she left on fishing trips.

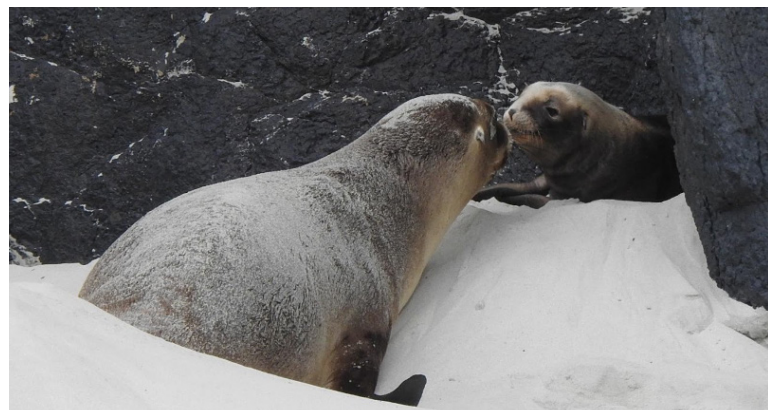
Patti and Pup eventually met up with 2 other females and their pups, also born at Aramoana this year and they are all hanging out together. The Pups enjoy playing together while their mums are away. We expect they will all swim round to the Peninsula beaches shortly.

People may remember that 2 years ago Patti had her pup halfway up the big dune on Keyhole Rock. Where will she pick next?

Continued on next page...



Patti and pup!



Time to climb down! The first stop on the beach was much more fun for the Volunteers to keep our distance but still enjoy the antics.

Grateful thanks to the Volunteers from the Aramoana Conservation Trust and friends, the Sea Lion Trust and others who helped make sure they were safe on the dune and the Beach. It all takes time but Sea Lion watching can be very rewarding.

Remember when you meet them, keep 10 metres away, ideally 20 metres, dogs on leads 20 metres. Give them space and you can be rewarded by seeing natural entertaining

and endearing sea lion behaviour. They are endangered animals and we do want to keep them coming to our Otago Coast to breed.

Please report any instances of sea lion harassment to DOC 027 4320777

Dog issues with sea lions contact Animal Control DCC on 03 477 4000

Janet Ledingham



Typical scenes on the beach with Pup hunting for her food supply.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE BRANCH COMMITTEE?

We are looking for enthusiastic members to join the branch committee.

Whether you can contribute two hours or 20 hours a month, we welcome anyone who wants to contribute.

We're especially looking for someone to take on the role of secretary. After many years of service, Janet Ledingham is stepping down from the branch committee.

This position involves vital tasks such as helping to develop our events calendar, managing branch emails and welcoming new members.

If you are interested or have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me on 027 384 5738 or dunedin.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Paul Smale

KIA ORA FROM KCC!

In the last wee while, Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) in Dunedin has been out to the coast.

We have been learning about nature, raising a bit of awareness and joining in with some campaigning. And we're about to do a bit more service for nature over Seaweeek (29 Feb - 8 Mar).

In December we met at Sandymount on the Otago Peninsula to visit and learn about the tītī. It was a gorgeous day to be there, and we were very happy practicing making seabird sandcastles on the beach while we waited for Franny Cunninghame to join us as guide.

However, unbeknownst to us at the time, her wee boy Nico had knocked a tooth out on the way down to us, so they headed back to town. We worked this out later in the day. Hopefully your teeth are settled down now, Nico!

We decided to explore for ourselves. First we came across an old craypot stuck in the sand on the beach. We carried it up to high tide, for the Department of Conservation to come and retrieve so it couldn't accidentally catch any more wildlife if it was washed out to sea again.

We carefully negotiated the tītī area, noting the trapping efforts and the signs of tītī in residence.

Finding our way over to the huge sand dunes, we went back down to the beach and re-encountered a massive sealion, who had moved but was presently coming thundering back towards us! Luckily it wasn't us he was interested in – a sandy coloured female was 'galloping' out towards the sea as fast as she could. The male headed out too, popping up frequently to try and spot her, but the sea is a good hiding place. This bull really impressed us – I don't think we could have run as fast as he could gallop!

In January, Sue Maturin organized a seabird sculpting event on St Kilda beach, as part of a nationwide awareness campaign for seabird conservation. Some of us KCCers joined in, plus about 30 other Forest and Bird members



Caroline and her girls Leana and Lucia made a beautiful sandcastle shaped like an albatross and chick.

and members of the public, to try our hand at sculpting. It was good to join in some campaigning for the things we care about.

Finally, with Seaweeek about to happen at the end of February (Saturday 29th) go along to see KCC grandmother Kaitrin McMullan's seaweeek themed storytelling at the Dunedin Public Library, on Sunday 1st March, at 2pm. Kaitrin is a fabulous storyteller for primary and preschool aged children, and well worth going to see.

A big thank you to the families who support KCC by coming along, I really enjoy the enthusiasm and support for nature that you all have.

Finally, look out in the ODT Resilient weekend insert for the profile of one of our KCC kids – it's in the pipeline as we speak.

Beatrice Lee

JOIN KCC ON FACEBOOK

KCC mum Ruth Topliss has set up a Facebook group for Dunedin KCC to share trip reports, conservation stuff, and anything else of interest.

We would love to see this platform grow, so please feel free to join!

Already, Ruth has shared some wonderful trip photos and other articles in there to inspire us. Thank, Ruth!

Go to www.bit.ly/kccdunedinfb to join!



*A kererū nesting on the Loop Track at Moore's Bush.
Photo by Nik Hurring.*



An adult male Tautuku gecko (Mokopiriakau) found in the Tautuku Restoration project area in 2019. Photo by S Purdie.

MOORE'S BUSH

There has been plenty happening at Moore's Bush over summer, with more planned for 2020.

In August, we had a planting day with Students for Environmental Action that saw around 60 people help to plant the open area where we have been working hard to remove blackberry.

Graeme Loh has set up climbing ropes in one of the rimu trees. He will use these to teach tree climbing and explore the canopy.

In September, a kererū was seen nesting on the Loop Track. It had at least one egg but despite keeping an eye on how it progressed, we're not sure whether the chick hatched or fledged.

Special thanks to Bruce Lambie who has been regularly keeping the track clear, making it easier for people to use. Also to Pat Dean who has been working hard to remove blackberry, sometimes visiting three times a week!

This year, we hope to re-establish the sub-committee and host a monthly working bee on the third Saturday of every month from 1pm.

If you're interested in being involved, please email the branch (dunedin.branch@forestandbird.org.nz) or join our new Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/mooresbush).

Francie Beggs

The Moore's Bush project on iNaturalist NZ now has 54 observations of 33 different species! Visit www.bit.ly/mooresbush to see for yourself.

Kimberley Collins

TAUTUKU RESTORATION

This summer, we have maintained predator control efforts at Tautuku. Our capture rate has been low and few predators were recorded in ink tracking tunnel surveys. This shows the effectiveness of the Department of Conservation's Tiakina Ngā Manu (Battle for our Birds) 1080 drop in the spring.

In the Fleming River Valley, a pair of New Zealand falcon/kārearea successfully fledged three chicks., although some predators were observed on a nest camera.

At Iris Creek, nest monitoring revealed a successful breeding season for the kororā/little penguin colony.

Francesca Cunningham



The kārearea nest in the Fleming River Valley. Photos by F Cunningham, G White and trail camera.

BRING BACK THE SEABIRDS



The conservation dog survey team at Sandymount in December. L-R: Sarah Fordar, Ela Tripn, Jorge Jimenez, Graeme Loh, Max Harvey, Finn Harvey, Paul Gasson, Dillan the conservation dog. Photo by F Cunningham.

We have been busy with field work at all our project sites. The tītī (sooty shearwater) breeding season is well underway with it being nearly a month since chicks started hatching.

Thank you to our regular volunteers who continue to do great work.

SANDYMOUNT

The 23 traps around the tītī colony have been checked fortnightly. In the past three months, we have caught one rat, one stoat, two weasels, one hedgehog, and 12 mice.

Thanks to a visit from Paul Gasson and his conservation dog Dillan, we identified 17 active tītī burrows. Cameras were set on five of these to help determine their success. So far, one burrow has failed - though no cause has been identified.

ST CLAIR CLIFFS

Seven tītī laid eggs inside the nest boxes. One did not hatch but six chicks have been recorded.

No fairy prions laid eggs in the nest boxes inside the fence although the ones in the cliff face below the fence fledged chicks.

Traps, bait stations and ink tunnels in and

around the fence continue to be checked regularly.

LAWYER'S HEAD

The red-billed gulls at Lawyers Head finished their breeding season with mixed success. All up, we observed 18 nests, but only six successfully fledged any chicks.

Volunteers continue to check traps in this area, though nothing has been caught. This is despite baits being refreshed regularly. A tracking tunnel survey showed rats and mice.

Francesca Cunningham



A pair of tītī (sooty shearwater) recorded by remote camera monitoring at Sandymount in November 2019.

PROJECT KERERŪ



A kererū stretches its wings in the aviary. Photo by Nik Hurring.

Over 100 injured kererū have now been restored to health and released back to the wild.

Currently, there are 13 birds in the aviaries. Seven are ready for release and the Wildlife

PERCHES AND RAMPS

Many of the kererū I care for are missing flight feathers when they first come to rehab. This is due to the nature of their injuries and having to have wings bandaged while fractures heal. Kererū drop their feathers quite easily and they often fall out when a bandage is removed.

Because of this, they need perches at various heights and “ramps” in order to get off the ground and get around while these feathers regrow. I use natural perches (gum tree branches) and bungy cords in order to suspend them from varying heights so they move as a tree would, but also to stop them falling over. This way, kererū can also access the tree lucerne that’s always in the aviaries as a natural source of food.

Nik Hurring

www.facebook.com/projectkererudunedin

Hospital has nine more patients that will eventually join them. Busy times ahead! Some of these birds have come from as far as Queenstown, Te Anau, Twizel and Invercargill, with a few locals in the mix too.

Since April, Nik and Troy have caught 11 stoats and one weasel.

The branch continues its regular working bees at the aviary. If you’re interested in joining these, please send us an email at dunedin.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Francie Beggs



Photos by Nik Hurring

STAY IN TOUCH

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