



help save a piece
forever...

● ● www.fiordlandconservationtrust.org.nz

jigsaw

issue **03** volume **01**

april 2012



The trust aims to be:

- community based • independent • professional • transparent
- accountable • active and agile

welcome to the third Fiordland Conservation Trust newsletter

2012 – 4 years on

The vision: to be an independent Trust inspiring the community to protect the special natural values in Fiordland and the Southland region.

This is achieved because each year the Trust:

- identifies conservation projects, provides full costing information, matches potential clients to projects, develops and manages relationships between clients and those working on projects
- informs the community of Trust activities, encourages support, promotes successes
- involves and supports young people, funding conservation focused education projects.

Current key partnerships

1. Southern Discoveries Sinbad Sanctuary
2. Peregrine Wines Mohua and Tieke
3. Chalky Digits Kakaruai/S I robin
4. Ultimate Hikes Pateke/Brown Teal
5. Fiordland Ecology Holidays Indian Island
6. Kids Restore NZ Kids Restore the Kepler
7. Distinction Hotels Kepler Bat Roost project

And how can you become involved?

The Trust focuses on two kinds of projects:

long term projects which require long term commitment and more than one sponsor or funding source e.g. Sinbad Sanctuary has a 5 year commitment from Southern Discoveries. The Kepler Backyard Birdsong Project has both Kids Restore NZ and the Community Trust of Southland as main sources of funding for Stage 1, Kids Restore the Kepler. Plus, Distinction Hotels are funding research to locate bat roost sites which will help determine where to put rat traps. The Kepler Challenge Committee is continuing to fund the trap line that encircles the Track. As the 3 stages of the Kepler project unfold, further funding will be needed. E.g. there is potential for adopting trap lines, where your sponsorship pays for checking and rebaiting traps every 6-8 weeks.

Successful pest eradication leads to the Trust's **one-off projects** e.g. transfers of threatened or at risk species to predator-free areas or where pests are controlled to low-levels. Peregrine Wines and Chalky Digits sponsor bird transfers to offshore islands. Ultimate Hikes is involved in the pateke recovery, in the Arthur Valley.

Contact us if you also want to be involved.

background information

The route from the head of Lake Te Anau over the Pass to the Arthur River Valley on the Milford side, was first put to human use by Katimamoe, it being one of their greenstone trails. European tourists began negotiating the rugged terrain in the 1890s after explorers, prospectors, surveyors and prisoners had all made their mark, creating what became the iconic Milford Track.



Trust Manager Rachel releasing pateke

Pateke/brown teal happily dabbled the waters of the Arthur River Valley, for all these users of the area to enjoy. But the infamous stoats also found their way into the valley and, as was happening throughout the country, decimated the pateke population.

Once New Zealand's most abundant endemic water fowl, cross breeding and habitat loss added to the pateke moving to the status of nationally endangered with as few as 660 in 2001. The DOC Pateke Recovery Group swung into action setting up a captive breeding programme.

As part of this nation-wide effort, Peacock Springs in Christchurch condition, band and radio tag the pateke prior to the birds being released into selected areas.

Arthur River Valley – the Milford Track

www.ultimatehikes.co.nz/en/about-ultimate-hikes/fund-raising



pateke - brown teal

Pateke Recovery project – Ultimate Hikes

With the Arthur River catchment once being a natural habitat for the pateke and it being in the area of existing stoat trapping programmes, it was logical that it be selected as the South Island site for re-establishing a secure pateke population.

Two releases into the valley totalling 59 birds took place in 2009 and 2010. Success meant releasing a further 80 pateke in March 2011. Since 2010 Ultimate Hikes who operate the guided walks on the Milford Track, in partnership with DOC, the Otago Community Trust and Fiordland Conservation Trust, have funded this work. Another 80 birds let loose in February brought to 219 the total number of pateke so far released back into the Arthur River Valley as part of the nationwide recovery programme. Sponsoring Ultimate Hikes staff in the 32 km Routeburn Classic on 28 April will contribute to the project.

The exciting news in January was that on a monitoring and stoat trapping trip in the Lake Ada area of the Arthur Valley, a 'naked' fluffy duck was seen. DOC ranger Erina Loe saw its unbanded legs, confirming the first successful breeding of the captive-reared pateke released back into Fiordland. Andrew Smart, DOC biodiversity ranger said at the time 'it is likely that we have had additional successful breeding over this summer' and indeed three fully feathered fledglings have been seen in total so far on the monitoring trips.

Nationally, their status is now 'recovering', with 2000-2500 pateke in the wild. The aim is that the Fiordland group will become once again a self-sustaining population of happily dabbling ducks, for all users of the Milford Track and Arthur Valley to enjoy.



Indian Island – Fiordland Ecology Holidays & others

It was with sadness that we learned of the death of one of the project's sponsors. An overseas traveller to New Zealand for many years, he fell in love with the Dusky area, contributing financially to the restoration work on Indian Island. The Trust passes on their condolences to the family and thanks them very much for their continued support.

Such support is essential with both rats and stoats being trapped on nearby islands during summer.



Pekapeka-tou-roa – long tailed bat



Warren Simpson holding a bat from the Kepler

Bat Roost Project – Distinction Hotels

When you walked the Kepler Track descending alongside the Iris Burn, you were possibly tramping alongside only the second known Fiordland colony of our very handsome long tailed bats/pekapeka-tou-roa. Being in the nationally critical category of threatened species, finding a population of up to 100 in a previously unknown location along with eight maternity roost trees is as exciting as it gets in the bat kingdom. But rats love them too so rat traps are being set in place to give these cute little critters a fighting chance. As is Distinction Hotels. In partnership with the Trust and DOC they have funded this research.

Admittedly beauty is in the eye of the beholder but these and the short-tailed bats are our only remaining native land mammals. They need our help. As DOC bio-diversity ranger Jo Whitehead explained, once gone from the Kepler, that's it. We don't know how to translocate bats yet.

For more detailed information, google search: rare bats discovered in the Kepler mountains.



ongoing projects bats and skinks

Sinbad Sanctuary project - Southern Discoveries

Removing the pests: successful trips in January and February saw more stoats and rats captured than in most full years. The good news is we are getting them. Also traps of a different kind were set - to catch beech seeds. Monitoring trays are laid out to catch the seeds. The density of seed production in autumn is a useful predictor of likely pest densities next summer. Forewarned is forearmed.



Oligosoma pikitanga – the mountain climber

Researching the native inhabitants: rock climbing and abseiling skills essential. The Sinbad skink (oligosoma pikitanga - mountain climber) is living up to its Maori name. Having been first discovered at the base of the rock wall at the head of Sinbad Gully, Hannah Edmonds, DOC biodiversity ranger, excitedly told us that Abseil Access staff found more of them, way, way, way above, just 100-150m down from the top of the sheer rock wall. 15 minute observation sets were done during the day as part of the monitoring to determine population change and to find the exact weather parameters needed to detect the skinks. Dr Reardon reports 'ecological observations suggest that microclimate ... may dictate their microbiogeography'.

This new discovery means the population estimate of this mountain climber is now perhaps around 1000. Great news for all concerned and thanks to Southern Discoveries for helping with this southern discovery of a different kind.

www.southerndiscoveries.co.nz/sinbad-sanctuary-project



The sheer rock wall at the head of Sinbad Gully, under survey.

Stage 1 updates – Education coordinator appointed

Fiordland is set to lead the way in conservation education as the 'Kids Restore the Kepler' project enters a new phase. The Fiordland Conservation Trust have this month appointed an education coordinator to fully integrate the project into the curriculum, beginning at pre-school and continuing through to Year 13. This role is partially funded by Kids Restore NZ, a programme under the Air NZ Environment Trust, in addition to their current sponsorship of the project.

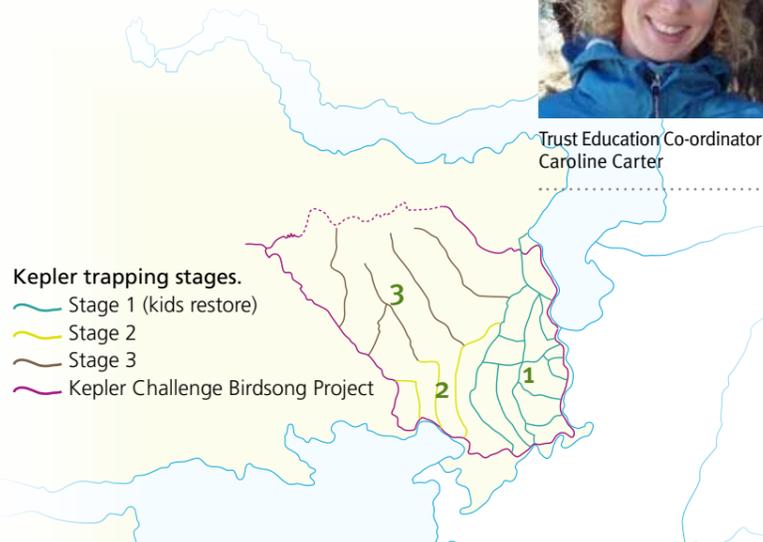


Trust Education Co-ordinator
Caroline Carter

With a background in teaching and conservation work, Caroline Carter will take up this role in April. Caroline has lived in Te Anau for the past 12 years and has been involved with this project since the outset.

While the Department of Conservation, under contract to the FCT, oversee the operational work in the Kepler area, the education programme is a collaborative effort involving students, teachers and parents from across Fiordland's education facilities, and the wider community.

If you would like to know more about the Kids Restore the Kepler project visit www.fiordlandconservationtrust.org.nz or contact Caroline Carter at: kepler@fiordlandconservationtrust.org.nz



the Kepler peninsula

→ knowledge
 → reflection

→ connection
 → restoration



Stage 1 updates – Pest eradication with help from the kids

Stoat (and some rat) tunnels were bundled up and flown into the Kepler block. With heaps of help from volunteers, scouts / venturers and Fiordland college students, the tunnels were then taken to the trap locations and pre-baited. The eggs are disappearing! The experience elsewhere is that pests are then tempted into visiting the traps when the traps are first set thus effecting that essential initial knockdown.

The Outdoor Education class has been laying out the traps on the newly cut tracks with other students putting up triangles to mark trap locations. This will continue over the coming weeks, the students working with Pete McMurtrie, the DOC Kepler project manager. Another group of students are working on a short film showing the trap layout, with the intention of entering the film into Environment Southland Green Screen Awards.

The next stage is that DOC will set the traps and check them later in April. The contractors employed will then take up the job, checking and rebaiting traps at regular 6-8 weekly intervals.

In addition, the Bee Gees, a local community group will be funding and working a line of 56 traps. Yes the name will ring bells for some of you and bring a distinctive image to mind. The original singing group from across the Tasman have endorsed its use and are very keen to be kept updated on the project. So thanks to the Breaksea girls, aka the Bee Gees!



Some of the kids at the chalkface of the project.

Gareth Morgan announces "Million Dollar Mouse" pest busting campaign

Fresh from his Our Far South expedition to Antarctica and the SubAntarctics, Gareth Morgan announced a major pest eradication initiative to remove mice from New Zealand's Antipodes Islands. The intention is to raise \$1 million for the project, and Gareth & Jo Morgan will match public contributions, dollar for dollar.

These ecological treasures lie 800km southeast of Bluff. The project, to be carried out by the Department of Conservation (DOC), will secure the only home of the Antipodes Island snipe, Pipit and the Antipodes Island and riescheck parakeets. The islands are also critical breeding habitats for Antipodean albatross, and a variety of petrel. There are also at least 20 insect species and at least 3 plants that are unique to the Antipodes.

Mice are the only introduced species on the island. They eat the eggs and chicks of seabirds such as petrels and have been implicated in the deaths of albatross chicks. Mice also eat huge numbers of insects and the seeds of plants that are critical to the health of the islands.

The funds will be raised by a partnership that includes The Morgan Foundation, The Department of Conservation, World Wildlife Fund, Fiordland Conservation Trust, Heritage Expeditions (on whose ship the group of 50 New Zealanders ventured south) and Kiwibank.

Speaking for the Morgan Foundation, Gareth Morgan said "these subantarctic islands of ours are like life-rafts in the vast Southern Ocean. Seals, elephant seals and sea lions haul themselves up on them, penguins retreat to their shore line, while the great flying birds like albatross, shearwaters and petrels establish nests and breed here. It's offensive really to think that New Zealanders, having exhausted short-lived commercial opportunities down here, then abandoned the islands but left their garbage, in the form of introduced pests, to smother the native fauna".

Tim Flannery has commented, "New Zealand's greatest achievement as a nation is not rugby or dairy but the pest eradication on Campbell Island".

We can be proud that DOC has an outstanding record in removing pests and the idea to fund the Antipodes Island project acknowledges those achievements. This represents a fantastic opportunity to make a one-off investment to clear these islands of the last remaining pests. This project will make a huge difference to the survival of birds of the Southern Ocean, so we need to do it", Dr Morgan said.

Andy Roberts, DOC's Southern Islands Area Manager, notes the success of pest eradication projects on New Zealand's Enderby and Campbell Islands, and on Australia's Macquarie Island. Andy said "This is a great opportunity to work with the public and a group of donors to achieve important conservation benefits. The target of removing every mouse from the islands is achievable."



The Fiordland Conservation Trust to assist DOC in managing the project.

Details of the Million Dollar Mouse Project are available at www.milliondollarmouse.org.nz where online donations can be made.

Alternatively you can make your donation at any branch of Kiwibank by depositing to the "Million Dollar Mouse" account.

Million dollar mouse website: www.milliondollarmouse.org.nz

Donate online at: www.milliondollarmouse.org.nz

Text MOUSE to 4419 to donate \$3, charged to your mobile phone

Walk into any Kiwibank and make a donation over the counter.

"New Zealand's greatest achievement as a nation is not rugby or dairy but the pest eradication on Campbell Island"

→ 1. Roger McNaughton 2. Frana Cardno 3. Kim Hollows 4. Ron Peacock
5. Mark Peychers 6. Viv Shaw 7. Mark Sutton 8. Nick Torr
9. Murray Willans

→ 10. Rachel Cockburn (Trust Manager)



Meet the people behind the Fiordland Conservation Trust

Meet the trustees – part 3

6 Viv Shaw - Trustee

Viv has a professional background in marketing, business, research, environmental and conservation project management. After 15 years as an academic, Viv moved to Te Anau, setting up as a consultant. 2008-11 she led the research on a project looking into sustainable competitive advantage for New Zealand service firms in Asia.

Viv's strong interest in conservation led in 2007 to her appointment on the Southland Conservation Board including time as Chair. She is Secretary of Pomona Island Charitable Trust and, largely on a voluntary basis, its project manager. She has gained valuable experience in managing the eradication of pests such as stoats, possums, deer and rodents and in obtaining the necessary resource consents. Viv has completed consultancy projects with e.g. DOC, Fiordland College, South West NZ Endangered Species Charitable Trust and Fiordland Trails Trust.

7 Mark Sutton - Trustee

Mark is a born and bred Southlander, a keen fisherman, golfer and game bird hunter. He was for 34 years one of Fish and Game NZ's Southland field officers.

Mark is the field officer for the Waiiau Habitat Enhancement Trust and the QEII representative for the Waiiau catchment. He has assisted landowners with more than 90 covenants involving over 2000 ha and is particularly skilled at developing wetlands and protecting riparian margins. The Rakatu Wetlands in the Waiiau Valley and his place on the Trust are testament to this and to his commitment to conservation.

8 Nick Torr - Trustee

A long time resident of Te Anau, Nick has had a 34-year career in conservation management. This began with a 4-year traineeship with the NZ Wildlife Service (now DOC), followed by a move to Te Anau to work mainly on takahe but also kakapo, whio and kiwi. In 1998 Nick left DOC to become an independent contractor/consultant in threatened species management and island restoration, specialising particularly in clearing invasive species from islands.

Nick has had major involvement with many such projects throughout NZ from the Sub Antarctic Islands to the Kermadecs. Internationally, conservation organisations are using his considerable experience and expertise to assess feasibility, draw up operational plans and help manage island eradication programmes. In 2011 Nick took part in a programme to eradicate rats from part of South Georgia Island in the South Atlantic before joining a multi-agency voyage through the Pacific to eradicate rats from Palmyra Island in the Northern Line Islands, Enderbury and Birnie Islands in the Phoenix Group and Henderson Island in the Pitcairn Group.

Such unique expertise means all 3 trustees add considerably to the Trust's ability to take on its island and mainland projects, with confidence.



To find out how to donate [click here](#) or visit the Trust's website

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behind the scenes

The Fiordland Conservation Trust

→ is a registered charitable trust with 'donee' status, (Reg.#CC 24563), supported by:

→ Department of Conservation – technical advice, assistance in planning and undertaking projects

→ Southland District Council – accounting/banking

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