



Otago Peninsula Annual Report

Biodiversity Trust

It is with pleasure I present this second annual report of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust for the year ending 31st July 2011.

We started the year with strong community support for the vision of a “Pest Free Peninsula”, also a strong commitment to the control of possums as our first priority.

A two day visit in October by the Island Eradication Advisory Group from Department of Conservation reviewed our project and provided technical expertise. I would like to thank them for the time they gave for discussion, their input and shared knowledge. The conclusion was reached from this review process that to achieve our aim of enhancing the biodiversity on the Otago Peninsula we must get possum numbers down to negligible levels and the programme as we had it planned was a sensible manner in which to achieve this.

With funding secured from the NZ Lotteries Grants Board (Environment and Heritage Fund) and the leadership of Rik Wilson our Project Manager, phase one of the possum control programme commenced.

A comprehensive fact sheet was produced and distributed, and land access permission gained. Safety information was presented to schools and community information meetings were held in Harwood, Portobello and at Otakou Marae

After a successful tender process contractors were employed in Sectors 1, 2 and 3. Possum numbers were reduced to residual trap catch of below one percent. In total over 3000 possums were removed. All statutory requirements were met and no issues arose.

Trap lines are now in place to protect these sectors from reinvasion. The knock down phase of these three sectors has been completed and follow up of hot spots is commencing.

Community involvement in the form of volunteers has increased significantly during the year. 17 volunteers are doing Bird counts on one kilometre transects distributed between Pipikaretu Road and Tomahawk.. I would like to acknowledge the time and effort put in by Moira Parker and Sharyn Broni, in getting these systems established and to Derek Onley and Marcia Dale for providing the training.

Vegetation monitoring is commencing with an ecologist having set up 14 permanent plots and is soon to train volunteers to undertake annual monitoring.

Following the purchase of 300 Timms traps, (thank you CRT for the significant discount), the Community trapping programme has started. This involves 12 community co-ordinators each taking responsibility for an area, thus allowing members of our community to borrow traps from the trust. At a meeting in Macandrew Bay to launch this programme 55 people attended and an initial 58 traps were loaned.

The Trust has continued to raise wider community awareness by keeping in contact with media. During the year Radio, TV and print media have all detailed aspects of our project.

I would like now to acknowledge our grateful appreciation to those who are supporting our vision by providing funds during the year, Department of Conservation Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund, NZ Lotteries Grants Board (Environment and Heritage Fund), Otago Peninsula Community Board, Dunedin City Council Biodiversity Fund, Speight's Brewery Environment Fund, and the Otago Peninsula Lions,

We are extremely grateful for all the local support and some work in kind from Dunedin City Council, Dunedin Conservancy Department of Conservation, Bruce McKinley and Andy Cox. We thank them for their time and enthusiasm for the project

I would like to acknowledge the work of Rik Wilson our Project Manager. I thank you Rik for the way you have presented our programme to the Community and the professional way you have dealt with the possum knock down. I acknowledge your wide range of skills in this field and thank you for working with such enthusiasm in the Community on our behalf.

I would like to thank the Trustees for the commitment and time you give to progressing the aims of the Trust. With special thanks to Luke McClelland for accepting the task of Treasurer, a task that has grown, and to Moira Parker who has been secretary and archivist. To all Trustees thank you for the time you give and the support you have given me, but mostly for the energy you put in to progressing our vision of bringing about a "Pest Free Peninsula".

Irene Scurr

Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust Chairperson

25th August 2011