



## Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust Annual Report

It is with pleasure I present this third annual report of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

I would firstly like to acknowledge the hard work and vision of our founding chair Irene Scurr. Regrettably Irene was forced to resign from the trust this year. Irene was instrumental in getting this project off the ground and we are indebted to her contribution. The project as it is today is a result of her hard work and commitment. As a trust we will look to build on her good work and on behalf of all involved we wish her well for the future.

The last year has seen continued progress with the project as we continue with strong community support towards the long term vision of a “Pest Free Peninsula”. This has been due in no small way to the efforts of our current Trustees and the many volunteers involved with the project in its various forms. There are over 3,000 pest control/ ecological community projects ongoing throughout NZ and it is important to recognise our local focus, on our own patch of kiwi paradise, is a small component of a much larger national effort.

Highlights over the last 12 months have been-

1) Successful fundraising of \$76,000 from the Environment and Heritage Fund of NZ Lottery Grants Board. This money was tagged for possum control “Mop- Up” in Sectors 1, 2 and 3. \$67,500 has been allocated to us from the Ministry for the Environment (Community Environment Fund). This money is tagged to the initial knockdown of possums in Sector 4 as too is \$40,000 from the Department of Conservation which is part of its allocation for managing pests in its reserves on the Peninsula. \$8,500 was received from the Lion Foundation and together with \$2,000 from the Otago Peninsula Community Board, funds have contributed to the purchase of a quad bike and trailer. \$1,200 (DCC Biodiversity Fund) has been received for the Rat Monitoring Project, with another \$4,000 from the DCC towards the Community Trapping Project. \$17,866 has also been granted to the project by Lion Nathans “Speight’s Environment Fund” for the Community Trapping Project.

I would like now to acknowledge our grateful appreciation to those who have supported our vision by providing funds during the past year [rapturous applause]. We are also extremely grateful for all the local support that the work is receiving. We thank them for their time and enthusiasm for the project.

2) Cape Saunders (Sector 1) has now undergone its second year of possum control with a huge amount of effort undertaken for the sum total of 80 possums, down from 350+ sixteen months ago. Taiaroa Head (Sector 2) has also undergone its second hit of possum control with 450 possums caught in July/ August 2012 (2,500+ in May 2011). The buffer (Sector 3) continues to do its job well with 12 possums caught in July 2012 (down from 390) in the previous year.

3) The Environmental Monitoring Project is running well with the aid of numerous volunteers. 23 one km Bird Monitoring Transects are walked by volunteer bird monitors several times a year. The objective is to measure increases/ decreases in bird numbers and species after possum control operations have been implemented. 14 Vegetation Monitoring sites have been established with the help of a consultant ecologist. This involves using Foliar Browse Index, Permanent Vegetation Plots and Photo points. Each site consists of a 10m by 10m plot. The objective is to measure changes in vegetation, species, growth, foliage, both before and after possum control operations. There are 10 Rodent Monitoring lines established on the Peninsula over different habitats. Each line consists of 10 tracking tunnels spaced at 50m intervals over a 500m transect. The objective of the rat monitoring is to measure increases or decreases in rat numbers after possum control operations.

4) Community trapping in urban areas using Timms Traps (yellow boxes) began from July 6<sup>th</sup> 2011. Over 140 Timms Traps are currently out with people and these have accounted for 220 possums as at 1 August. This represents a great effort from people trapping in their backyards and reflects wider community support for the project. The long term success of the work will require their continued involvement.

The Trust has continued to raise wider community awareness through local communication channels and the media. During the past year the ODT and Straight Furrow have each profiled in detail aspects of our project. The NZ Lottery Board has also indicated its interest in promoting our work as one of its flagship projects.

I would like now to acknowledge the support we have received from the land owners, we are very grateful for the ongoing access on to landowners property so we can carry out the work/monitoring intended.

I would also like to thank the Trustees for your commitment and time. With special thanks to Matt Anderson for accepting the task of Treasurer, a task that has grown; to Moira Parker who has been secretary and archivist; and to Sam Neill who intends stepping down from his role as trustee . To all Trustees, again thank you for the time you have given to progressing our vision of bringing about a “Pest Free Peninsula”.

Finally, I would particularly like to thank our Project Manager Richard Wilson, his commitment to the project is plain for all to see. I would like to acknowledge all the work Rik does for the trust above and beyond his job description to make our vision a success.

Brendon Cross  
Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Trust Chairperson

29<sup>h</sup> August 2012