

## Volunteer Coordinator – Farewell to Kate

Kate joined OPBG as our Volunteer Coordinator in early 2018 and, in a little more than a year, has increased the participation rate of our community volunteers many times over. She initiated the Sector 5 volunteer group, the Guardians of the Peninsula, who are still attracting new members and are now independently running their own chew card and trap lines. She has coordinated regular track clearing field days in conjunction with Catherine Hosted (DOC) and her group of Unicrew volunteers. She was getting to know the rest of the Peninsula well and spent a lot of time keeping in contact with our community.

Alas, living on the other side of the Harbour and working on the Peninsula was not sustainable long-term and she decided to accept the position of Project Coordinator for the Halo Project. This is also one of the delivery partners for the Predator Free Dunedin initiative, so she will not be lost to us completely, as there will be close cooperation between the partners. We would like to wish her all the best in her new role, the West Harbour is her backyard and living closer will make combining work and family life a lot easier. All that said, she will be missed!



*Cheeky chew carding crew - Kate, Catherine, Marita and Moira*

## A message from Kate

The past year with OPBG has been amazing. I have met some truly incredible and talented Peninsula people and made lasting connections with many of you. I have learned much from some field experts and I feel exceptionally grateful for the whole OPBG experience. Living on the West Harbour and working on the Peninsula has been logistically tough at times for my daughter and I, hence the decision to take on a new role, closer to home and in my community. I know OPBG will achieve its goals of becoming possum free by 2023. The Trust, staff and volunteers go the extra mile and are 110% committed which is something I feel proud to be part of. Ngā mihi and thank you all for your support.

In terms of who to contact regarding volunteering for OPBG from here on in, the volunteer email and phone contacts remain the same. For all other queries please contact [info@opbg.nz](mailto:info@opbg.nz)

## Operations Update

After a summer break, the Operations Team is back in full action. The possums are migrating, and Bruce and his operations assistants are busy tackling dense bush areas at Taiaroa Bush and Sandymount. More bait stations are continuously being installed on a number of tracks, achieving good coverage of a very large area of the Peninsula. A number of possum master traps are being run at the seaward side which is thought to provide access to Okia Flats. The close to 30 possums caught so far points to a fair bit of reinvasion into previously cleared areas.

The Grand Total for the group as of now stands at **17,678 possums** removed from the Peninsula both through community trapping and our own operations.



*Large, white female caught by Trustee, Dave Chalmers at Te Rauone. As far as we know this is not an albino as first thought, but a different genetic mutation. It is so far only one of two white possums caught on the Peninsula.*

We all know people go heli-skiing or heli-mountainbiking, but our Operations team is going a step further. They have had the opportunity to get up to the top of Mt Charles for a spot of heli-possumtrapping.

Magnificent view from the top.





## Volunteers

The first few months of 2019 have been really busy and rewarding for OPBG. Volunteer track cutting crews have managed to clear several overgrown tracks, University students have packaged up hundreds of chew cards and organised our OPBG first aid kits. We have had a volunteer leader GPS training session, held an information stall at the University's Orientation week, and celebrated OPBG's volunteers with our Summer BBQ.

The Guardians of the Otago Peninsula continue to hold the front line at the gateway to the Peninsula with their network of permanent trap lines threaded throughout Sector 5. Possums are on the move now and with that the trap catch is beginning to increase in Sector 5. Now is the time to make sure traps are well baited and enticing lures are concocted to attract the possums. For information about trapping best practice including lures and blazes, please contact [info@opbg.nz](mailto:info@opbg.nz)

As we gear up for our winter operations there is still much work to be done. Defining the possum hotspot areas will be one of our next priorities whilst continuing to maintain our 'Off the Beaten Track' track clearing days. Possum monitoring events will be advertised on our FB events page. If you are keen on lending a hand, please contact [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz)



## Thank You – Sharyn Broni

Sharyn Broni has been a long time OPBG volunteer. She offered to take on the data entry at our very first training day for bird monitoring volunteers, beginning in November 2010 and she has continued ever since. We are very grateful to her for continuing the data entry even after leaving the Otago Peninsula and moving to St Leonards. In addition to all that Sharyn had her own bird transect on the Cape Saunders Rd. We would like to thank her for the huge contribution she has made in collating the data on Peninsula birds for over 8 years.

Taking over from her will be Anne Ryan, another long-time OPBG volunteer, who has her own bird count line at Tomahawk Lagoon and has offered to continue the date entry.

A big "Thank You" to you both.

## Website & OPBG History Project on StoryMap

We are now in the final stages of our new website development – [www.predatorfreepeninsula.nz](http://www.predatorfreepeninsula.nz). A couple of changes have included changing our motto from Pest-Free Peninsula to Predator Free Peninsula to align with Predator Free Dunedin. We continue to have easy to use online contact forms and some really helpful FAQs. The 'official' launch of the website will be announced via our Facebook page.



[Home](#) [About us](#) [Contact us](#)



### TOWARDS A PREDATOR FREE PENINSULA

The Otago Peninsula is a wonderland of wildlife, scenery and heritage. Many of the creatures and plants that give Dunedin the reputation of New Zealand's Wildlife Capital live and breed on the Peninsula or in surrounding waters.

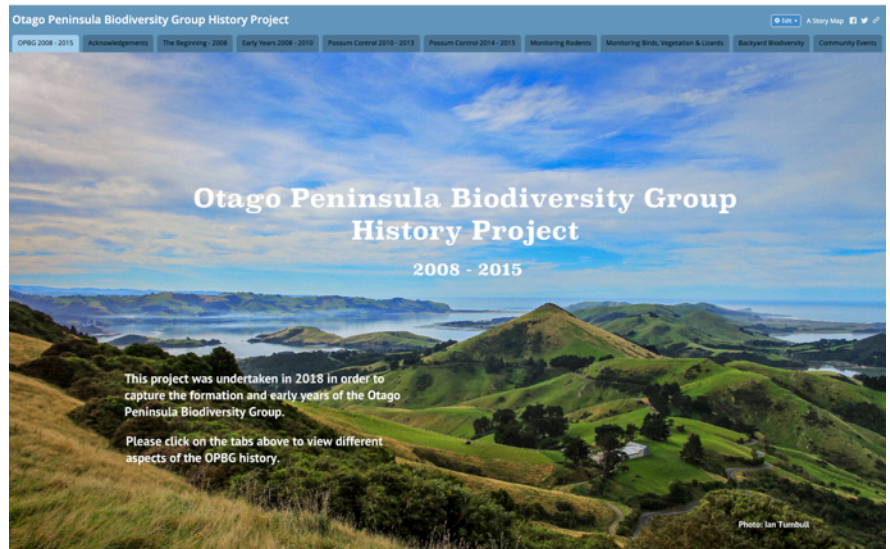
In 2008, a group of keen Peninsula residents formed the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group (OPBG) with the vision of protecting the area's biodiversity, lifestyle, and economic values by removing introduced mammalian predators. Since then, the OPBG has grown enormously, with over 100 volunteers undertaking a variety of activities.

### Facebook posts



We are also excited to share with you the link to the **OPBG History Project** on StoryMap, which came about as a semester project from two Science Communication students at the University of Otago and which was supervised by former OPBG Trustee, Moira Parker. It chronicles the history and early years of the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group from its inception in 2008 and then the formation of the Trust in 2010 until 2015. It is based on an interactive ArcGIS platform and features maps, photos, reports and most important of all a series of interviews with the people who were there at the beginning.

You will find the link on the Home page of our new site once it is live.





## Wild Dunedin Festival of Nature

Preparations and planning for this year's Wild Dunedin Festival of Nature, which will take place from 22-28<sup>th</sup> April 2019, are in full swing. You can follow this if you register to receive their newsletters or follow them on Facebook.

OPBG is proud to be hosting a couple of events:

### The Kākā are Coming Yeah, Right!

#### WILD DUNEDIN & OTAGO PENINSULA BIODIVERSITY GROUP — APRIL 25, 2019

Will the Halo effect from Orokonui Ecosanctuary mean there will soon be kākā on the Otago Peninsula? Find out at **Coronation Hall, Portobello** on **Thursday 25 April ANZAC at 5.30pm** with the help of experts on kākā from West Harbour hosted by Peter Hayden and Rod Morris. *Start the evening with an OPBG sausage sizzle at 5pm.*

Guest speakers include Elton Smith – Conservation Manager of Orokonui Ecosanctuary.

We thank Rachel McGregor of [Port to Port Cruises & Wildlife Tours](#) who will ferry the West Harbour guests over to Portobello.

Thanks also to Graham McArthur of [The Video Factory](#) for providing the video projection and sound equipment and to the Coronation Hall Committee who have for a second year given us the hall for free.

Cost: **FREE** (sausages gold coin donation please)



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### Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group BIO-BLITZ

#### OTAGO PENINSULA BIODIVERSITY GROUP — APRIL 26, 2019

Drop in to the OPBG Bio-Blitz headquarters in Waverley on **Friday 26 April from 1-4pm** to get excited about the hidden biodiversity at the gateway to the Otago Peninsula. Get plants and bugs identified by experts, learn to identify some critters and plants that we have brought for you and make your own "pocket herbarium".

**All are welcome to OPBG Bio-Blitz headquarters at St Nicholas Church Hall, 65 Dunrobin St, Waverley**

**Children attending this event can earn a Kiwi Guardian Wild Dunedin Medal. Your OPBG hosts will give you the information on how to claim your medal on [www.wilddunedin.nz](http://www.wilddunedin.nz)**

Cost: **FREE**

No booking required



## Volunteer Field Day

A group of volunteers from all over New Zealand met up on the Peninsula for a field day of track cutting and deploying chew cards. A very productive day and a big thank you to all participants.



*Volunteer crew and OPBG staff admiring the view from Peggy's Hill.*

## OPBG Summer BBQ

Our annual Summer BBQ was held in February again to say thank you to all our volunteers without whom we would have no chance to achieve our aim of a predator free peninsula. Again, the weather played along, and we gathered at Hoopers Inlet hall to enjoy an afternoon of food and catching up. A big thank you to Brendon Cross and Dave Chalmers who provided the BBQs and Bruce and Brendon for a generous donation of meat and sausages.



We took the opportunity to acknowledge one of our stalwarts of the Peninsula conservation community, who has decided that it is time to turn her attention a little bit more onto her own home patch at Varleys Hill. We all know that Moira does not like attention, so we had to be a bit sneaky and took her by surprise. She has put an enormous amount of time and effort into our work over the many years that she took part in the group as a Trustee and a volunteer and we felt that this was a good opportunity to say thank you.



## OPBG Activities & Events 2019

The main events coming up in April will be our contributions to the Wild Dunedin Festival of Nature. Both events are child friendly!

Our regular track cutting days are Tuesdays and Thursdays, so if you are keen on lending a hand contact [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz)

Date	Time	Location	Activity
Thursday 25 April	5pm-8.30pm	Coronation Hall, Portobello	The Kākā are Coming Yeah, Right!
Friday, 26 April	1pm – 4pm	St Nicholas Church Hall, 65 Dunrobin St, Waverley	OPBG BioBlitz

## Possums on the Move – what are possums doing at the moment?

### February to April:

Dispersal time: male possums are starting their move to find mates and juveniles are leaving their birth territories. Get your chew cards out to find them – tracks, tree lanes, ridges and gullies are often ‘corridors’, and exotic gardens close to bush are simply irresistible to them.

Fruit and nut trees are much-loved by possums and rats but have your traps out *before* they ripen, otherwise possums will ignore the bait in favour of the real deal.

Autumn is mating time; female possums can be carrying a back-rider from last season plus an embryo inside them. Use chew cards to quickly home-in on their whereabouts.

***For those of you walking or working in the more remote areas of the Peninsula, we would very much welcome if you could keep your eyes open for any possum signs or even be prepared to set a line of chew cards. With possum numbers down in a lot of places the last remaining ones are getting more elusive and harder to detect and even catch. So we are ever more relying on help from the community.***

***If you think you could help please let us know: [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz) or [info@opbg.nz](mailto:info@opbg.nz)***

**Remember our new email to Report-A-Peninsula-Possum –**  
**[possums@opbg.nz](mailto:possums@opbg.nz)**

### Contact Us

For more information visit our website:

 [predatorfreepeninsula.nz](http://predatorfreepeninsula.nz)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:



[predatorfreepeninsula](https://www.facebook.com/predatorfreepeninsula)




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For general enquiries:

 [info@opbg.nz](mailto:info@opbg.nz)

To report a possum:

 [possums@opbg.nz](mailto:possums@opbg.nz)

To find out more about becoming a volunteer:

 [volunteers@opbg.nz](mailto:volunteers@opbg.nz)



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