

Introducing Nathan McNally



OPBG would like to introduce **Nathan McNally, new OPBG Manager**. Nathan is originally from Dunedin and studied Marine Science and Zoology at Otago. He has been previously involved with mainly sea lion related work on the Peninsula. He joins us after several years away from the south, most recently based in Whangarei as a Biosecurity Officer for the regional council and a 2.5 years stint on the Falkland Islands where he worked on a wide range of projects such as penguin and albatross monitoring to deploying and retrieving tracking devices. Nathan worked for DOC for several years on the Chatham Islands and Pitt Island, sub-Antarctic Auckland and Campbell Islands and at Macraes Flat. At DOC he was involved in a variety of projects from petrel and black robin translocations, mammal eradications, species monitoring and protection (sea birds, pinnipeds, shore birds, forest birds and skinks), community engagement, island biosecurity. He ran the field

component of the successful landscape scale mammal pest control operation Macraes Flat, controlling introduced mammalian pests through trapping, shooting across around 10,000 ha and use of mammal proof exclusion fencing. Nathan joined the project early August and is accompanied by his partner Amélie and new baby Aléric and their springer spaniel Kopi.

PFD Update

The latest Predator Free Dunedin newsletter was sent out recently with a focus on OPBG's activities on the Peninsula and an overview of what else is happening in the wider Dunedin area. If you scroll to the bottom of the page the link will take you to a more detailed update on OPBG and an interview with OPBG Chair Hoani Langsbury:

<https://www.predatorfreedunedin.org/news/2019/9/16/uut1xioo7cne3cvkczb6qtfp52ndba>

Bird Call Workshop

In preparation for this year's bird monitoring season OPBG held another very successful Bird Call Workshop at the Marine Studies Centre. A big Thank You to Rod Morris, former OPBG Chair and Trustee, to hold the workshop again. Not only for his outstanding bird photos and call display, but he is also a treasure trove of natural history stories to put it all into context and showcase their place in the Peninsula biodiversity. It was well attended and a few new people joined up for their own monitoring transects. Thank you to all and well done.



Getting to know the birds

Following up on all the good intentions were a group of new bird monitors (Ione, Alison and Fiona), who were taken on a bird walk along Leith Walk behind Hoopers Inlet by our experienced twitchers Brenda and Marcia. Well done, Ladies and thank you for coming on board.



Guardians News with Marcia

The Guardians in our Peninsula buffer zone in the wider Waverley area have had another busy winter period. To date they have removed 220 possums from Sector 5. Congratulations to David Smith for catching the 200th of these possums.

A big thank you and congratulations also to Barbara Smith for her outstanding efforts over the years monitoring bird numbers on her Greenacres Street Transect. Starting in April 2011 Barbara has completed 100 counts, earning her the OPBG's equivalent of the Queen's letter! Her total number of birds recorded is 10,439, with the most common bird being silvereyes at 1608. She was presented with a certificate and a beautiful drawing of a silvereye by our very own artist Marcia Dale.



Moira Parker presenting Barbara with her certificate

John Nunn



There are a few people who over the years have made their own important contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the Peninsula Biodiversity. John Nunn is an amateur entomologist, who devoted his life to the study of beetles. Over the past 20 years, John has collected and identified an impressive list of 233 different species of beetle that live on the Otago Peninsula. He estimates 9/10 of these beetles are native to New Zealand.

John has sampled as many different Peninsula locations as possible. On occasions he accompanied OPBG volunteers undertaking vegetation monitoring on Peggy's Hill, Varley's Hill and Taiaroa Bush, where he collected bags of forest leaf litter and decaying wood to take home to investigate. However, beetles live in a variety of habitats and John has found many other species in the soil, below tree bark, under the carcass of a dead seal and even in the debris of abandoned yellow-eyed penguin nests.

Boulder Beach has been his most productive Peninsula site, where beetles blown out to sea by a Westerly wind are then washed inshore by the tide and stranded on the sand. One of the highlights of John's career was finding *Kenodactylus audouini*, a carabid, known from one specimen from Boulder Beach. This is the only mainland record of a species otherwise known only from Stewart Island, the Sub Antarctic Islands and the Falkland Islands.



In 2016, OPBG undertook lizard monitoring along lines that included pitfall traps, at 9 Peninsula sites. Invertebrates fall into the traps, as well as lizards, and John identified and recorded the relative abundance of beetles at each sampling station on 9 different monitoring lines.

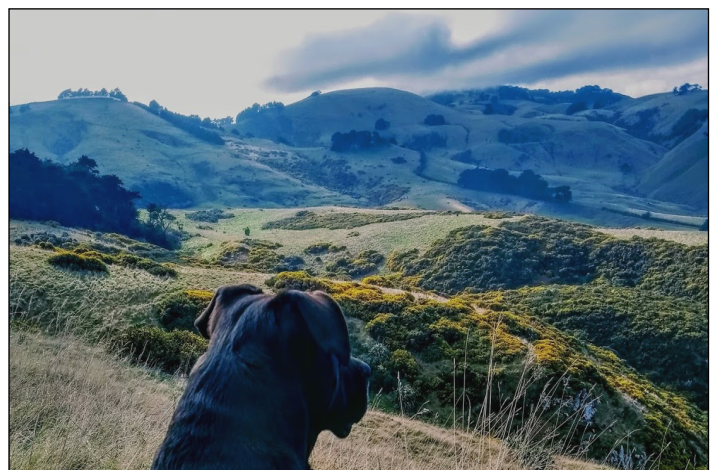
As a result of his patient work and expertise over 20 years, we have considerably more knowledge of the diversity of beetles. John's beetle species inventory of Peninsula habitats is unique and represents a valuable source of invertebrate information for the OPBG.

Due to changing circumstances John and his wife needed to downsize and he has donated his extensive collection to several New Zealand institutions. His legacy also includes a total of 23 beetle species, that have been named after him, such as *Paradiglotta nunni* - a rove beetle from Aramoana. We wish him well for the future.

Operations update

The operations team have been kept busy with their usual work of checking and filling bait stations, trap deployments, track cutting and adding stations on new gridlines.

It appears that reporting possum numbers, either as sightings or catches, is declining and we are not yet sure what the reasons are. As we get down in overall numbers of possums, it becomes more and more important to let us know if you see, hear or have caught a possum anywhere around your property. There are still plenty of possums around, they are moving about at the moment and they can cover ever larger areas, which makes it harder to pin them down.



So please let us know, through our dedicated possum email below or any of our other emails.

Cumulative Grand Total (31/8/2019) = 18,396

Events coming up

The **Sandymount Spring Stomp** is being held on Saturday 19th October from 10am, sausage sizzle included. The Sandymount area is a hotspot of peninsula possums, with thick vegetation providing abundant breeding habitat and shelter for the furry wee beasties. We've poured a lot of time and resources into opening up new tracks into

A poster for the Sandymount Spring Stomp event. The background is a scenic view of a coastline with mountains and a bay. The title 'Sandymount Spring Stomp' is written in a large, stylized, cursive font. Below the title, there is a white box with black text containing event details. At the bottom of the poster, there are logos for 'Predator Free Dunedin' and 'OTAGO PENINSULA BIODIVERSITY GROUP'.

the inaccessible areas of the reserve and now we need to keep those lines open. The Sandymount Spring Stomp day will be a wee taster of what the new tracks are like; with an estimated 42km of new tracks we won't be giving you the full tour! Instead we'll have some easy loops through the forested slopes, a slightly longer loop that passes through a range of vegetation types and a long walk for the truly intrepid amongst us. Non-walkers are welcome to pop into the base at the Woolshed and join us for a cuppa and a chat about the project.

So please get your boots ready and join us for our OPBG Sandymount Spring Stomp. This is a chance to get off the beaten path and beat a new path into shape!

Please register your interest via the Facebook Event Page (<https://www.facebook.com/events/765599143895006/>) or email volunteers@opbg.nz

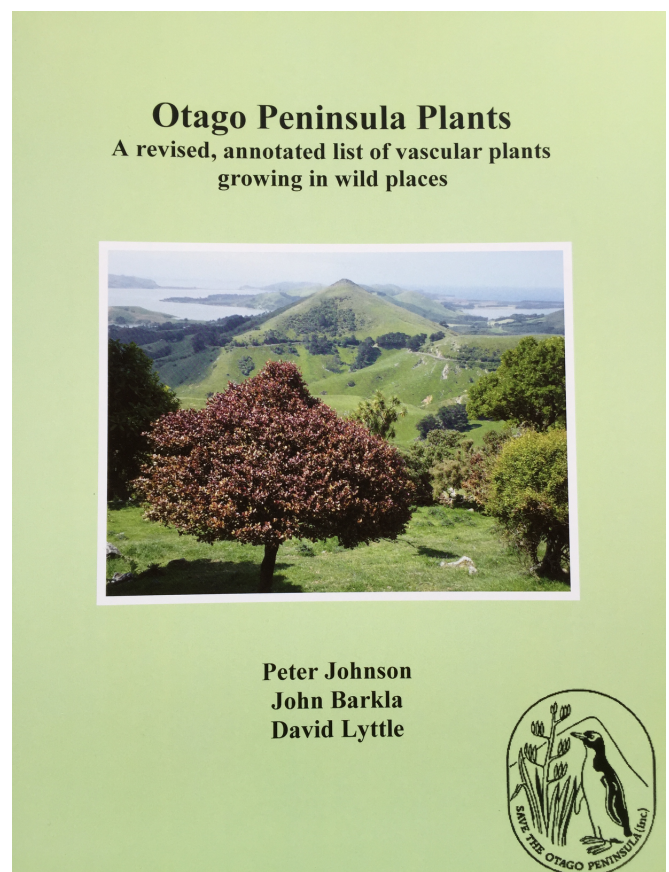
STOP

Save The Otago Peninsula are offering this new publication for sale:

Plants on the Otago Peninsula include trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses and ferns, both native and naturalized. STOP's new publication lists 764 plants, together with detailed notes on their locations, habitats, abundance and for some plants their threat status. This is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the Peninsula flora.

If you would like a copy of Otago Peninsula Plants, price \$15.00, either email stopincsoc@gmail.com or alternatively contact Jenny Winter, Lala Frazer or Moira Parker.

To have a copy posted to you, price \$20.00 incl. postage, email stopincsoc@gmail.com with your name and address and deposit \$20.00 in STOP A/C 03 0903 0595631 01
Particulars – your Name Reference - Book

The cover of the book 'Otago Peninsula Plants'. The title is in a bold, serif font. Below the title is the subtitle 'A revised, annotated list of vascular plants growing in wild places'. In the center is a photograph of a large, leafy tree in a grassy field with hills in the background. Below the photo, the authors' names are listed: Peter Johnson, John Barkla, and David Lyttle. In the bottom right corner is a circular logo featuring a penguin and the text 'SAVE THE OTAGO PENINSULA (Inc)'.

Health & Safety

“Get Home Safe” is an app that was developed in Queenstown for people working in remote areas by themselves. It appears to be quite user friendly and easy to set up and operate. OPBG is trialling this at the moment and we are hoping to have it in use for our operations team and volunteers in the near future. We'll keep you posted.

Remind yourself to check out the relevant Health & Safety plans for your OPBG volunteer activity. You can find them all on our website under:

<https://www.predatorfreepeninsula.nz/health-and-safety/>

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

October

What is a possum hotspot? An area of favourable habitat with good, safe den sites, seasonal food resources, and free from roaming dogs. High numbers of possums can aggregate in these locations.

“Once a hotspot, always a hotspot”.

November

Remember to wear gloves when handling possums. Their claws are very sharp, and possums can carry tuberculosis, leptospirosis, salmonella, giardia and liverfluke... among other things.

December

Possums use at least 22 different calls for communication, you can learn some of these to guide your trapping, e.g. females ‘click’ when talking to their young and use ‘zuk-zuk’ when appeasing neighbours.

For those of you walking or working in the more remote areas of the Peninsula, we would very much welcome it 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 reliant on help from the community. If you think you could help please let us know: volunteers@opbg.nz or info@opbg.nz

Remember to Report-A-Peninsula-Possum –

possums@opbg.nz

Contact Us

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 predatorfreepeninsula.nz

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[OPBG11](https://twitter.com/OPBG11)

For general enquiries:

 info@opbg.nz

To report a possum:

 possums@opbg.nz

To find out more about becoming a volunteer:

 volunteers@opbg.nz



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