

# Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2011

To: The Chairman, New Zealand Conservation Authority, Wellington

This is the thirteenth annual report from the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board, as required under Section 6 of the Conservation Act 1987.

## Introduction

The Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board is a twelve-member citizen body appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Conservation Act 1987, Part IIA and Section 6. It is a policy-making and advisory body for a range of activities on public conservation land and all other functions of the Department of Conservation.

The roles of the conservation board are set out in the Conservation Act 1987 as follows:

- To recommend the approval of conservation management strategies (in particular the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy)
- To approve conservation management plans
- To advise on how conservation management strategies and management plans will be put into practice
- To advise on proposed changes to the status of land areas of national and international significance
- To advise on proposals for new walkways
- To liaise with Fish and Game Councils on conservation matters
- To carry out other powers delegated to it by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act 1987 or any other act of parliament

The board is serviced by the Department of Conservation.

## 1. Membership

Board member	Attendance at meetings (max 5)	From
Stephen Lowndes (Chairman)	5	Banks Peninsula
Wiki Baker	4	Arowhenua
Joseph Hullen	3	Kaiapoi
Fiona Musson	1	Taumutu
Dr. John Keoghan	5	Rolleston
Mal Clarbrough	4	Christchurch
Mandy Waaka-Home	1	Arowhenua
Jimmy Wallace	5	Geraldine
Jan Finlayson	5	Geraldine
David Round	5	Christchurch
Neil Hamilton	2	Loburn
Alan Grey	2	Christchurch

Neil Hamilton and Alan Grey attended their first meeting of the board in January 2011.

In accordance with section 273 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, four members are nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. They are Wiki Baker, Joseph Hullen, Mandy Waaka-Home and Fiona Musson.

## **2. Board budget**

The board kept within its budget for the 2010/11 financial year. This was made possible through a reduction in the number of board meetings from six down to five. The board undertook two field trips.

Because of its large geographical area, a large component of the board's budget is spent on travel costs incurred in bringing members together for meetings.

Because of the size and complexity of Canterbury Conservancy, additional work is often given to the board to undertake and no additional resourcing is provided. Requests for additional work come from the Department of Conservation and the Minister of Conservation for work associated with national park management plans and conservation management strategies.

The board acknowledges its budget is considerable in comparison with other boards. However, Canterbury is one of the largest conservancies in the country and the cost of providing good advice, coupled with on-the-ground inspections, is high. Board members are selected from throughout Canterbury to provide a conservancy-wide perspective and have to travel long distances to meetings.

## **3. Board district**

The board's area of jurisdiction extends from the Conway and Clarence rivers in the north, and west to the main divide, including all of the Arthur's Pass National Park. The southern boundary is the catchment of the Waitaki River at Kurow, along the river to the east coast. The coastal boundary is the twelve-mile limit for marine reserves and the Exclusive Economic Zone for marine mammals.

The main features of public conservation land within the board's boundaries are:

- Two national parks (Aoraki/Mount Cook and Arthur's Pass)
- Part of one national reserve (Lewis Pass)
- Eight conservation parks (Craigieburn, Lake Sumner, Hanmer, Ahuriri, Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park, Ruataniwha, Hakatere and Te Kahui Kaupeka, part of Hawea and part of Oteake.
- Hurunui and Hawdon predator-controlled areas (formerly part of Operation Ark)
- One marine reserve (Pōhatu) and one marine mammal sanctuary (Banks Peninsula)
- One gazetted walkway and 23 un-gazetted walkways
- A large number of recreation, scenic and historic reserves and stewardship areas
- Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere joint management with Ngāi Tahu

The Canterbury Conservancy directly administers 1,029,325 hectares including the 215 hectare Pōhatu Marine Reserve. This is 24 per cent of the Canterbury region.

### Conservation board meetings/field inspections

The board conducted four meetings during the year as follows:

Date	Location
July 2010	Canterbury Conservancy Office, Christchurch
September 2010	Hot Springs Lodge Conference Centre, 2 Fraser Close, Hanmer Springs
November 2010	The Mackenzie Country Inn, Wairepo Road, Twizel
January 2011	Waimakariri Area Office, Rangiora
April 2011	Waimakariri Area Office, Rangiora

### Field inspections

Two field inspections were conducted during the year as follows:

#### September 2010: Waimakariri Area

Board members visited the newly laid out car park at Kura Tāwhiti which the department was able to establish following a land swap between Castle Hill Ltd and DOC.

The board then visited Porters Ski Area to view and discuss with Michael Sleigh the land that was the subject of a proposed land swap between Blackfish and the Department of Conservation.

#### November 2010: Mahaanui Area

The board visited land that is the subject of a proposal for a land exchange on Banks Peninsula between the Department of Conservation and Blackfish Ltd. Board members also visited Birdlings Flat to inspect 'canal works' from Wairewa to the ocean.

Committee	Members
<b>Planning:</b> (includes conservation management strategies and plans, advocacy, resource consents, business planning and management planning.	<b>Jimmy Wallace (convenor)</b> Dr. John Keoghan David Round Neil Hamilton Stephen Lowndes
<b>Visitor Management/Concessions:</b> (includes recreation, commercial tourism, historic, cultural, iwi)	<b>Mal Clarbrough (convenor)</b> Wiki Baker Dr John Keoghan Stephen Lowndes
<b>Water:</b> (includes marine reserves, marine mammals, coastal pollution, taiāpure, marine farms, wetlands, general ecological stability, freshwater).	<b>Joseph Hullen(convenor)</b> Mandy Waaka-Home Jan Finlayson Alan Grey Stephen Lowndes

<p><b>Land:</b> (includes weeds and pests, wild animals, tenure review, general ecological stability)</p>	<p><b>Dr John Keoghan (convenor)</b>  Mal Clarbrough  David Round  Jan Finlayson  Alan Grey  Stephen Lowndes</p>
<p><b>CMS Priority Setting Committee</b></p>	<p><u>Board:</u>  Full Board  <u>DOC staff:</u>  Poma Palmer  Norm Thornley  Andrew Grant  Cheryl Colley</p>

The Chairman, Stephen Lowndes, is an ex-officio member of each committee.

In addition to the above, one ministerial-appointed advisory committee was in operation during the year, the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee, which is ongoing. The Chairman of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board is the board's representative on this committee.

#### 4. **Board functions under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987**

The work carried out during the year under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987 was as follows:

##### 5.1 **Conservation management strategies**

*“To recommend the approval by the Conservation Authority of Conservation Management Strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies under the relevant enactment.” – 6M(1)(a)*

The 2010/2011 year has seen further preparatory work on a review of the operative Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy. Work on the CMS was interrupted by the 4 September 2010 and the 22 February 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. Work on a review of the Canterbury CMS will continue as time and resources allow.

##### 5.2 **Conservation management plans**

*“To approve Conservation Management Plans, and the review and amendment of such Plans, under the relevant enactments.” – 6M(1)(b).*

No management plans were reviewed, amended or approved during the 2010/2011 period.

##### 5.3 **Implementation**

*“To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director General on the implementation of Conservation Management Strategy and Conservation Management Plans for areas within the jurisdiction of the board.” – 6M(1)(c).*

##### a) **Conservation management strategy reporting**

The board has appointed a separate committee made up of board members and DOC staff to identify key priorities and improve reporting on those priorities. A report on identified priorities is completed each year by the department, which the board then comments on. This report is separate from the annual report.

The purpose of these action points is to identify any particular concerns board members may have. Over time it is envisaged that this type of reporting will provide evidence of the success or otherwise of the Conservation Management Strategy. Of concern to the board is the lack of hard data available that would provide an indication of progress made or ground lost in the department's work to conserve the native flora and fauna for all New Zealanders.

The priority action points are listed below:

1. Freshwater
2. Plant pests
3. Animal pests
3. Treaty issues
4. Visitor services
5. Visitor asset management programme
6. Endangered species
7. Ecological monitoring
8. Tenure review

**b) Management plans**

The implementation of reserve management plans has been generally superseded by the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy.

**5.4 Change of status**

*“To advise the Conservation Authority or the Director General on any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance”. 6M(1)(d)(i)”*

**Castle Hill**

Work is proceeding towards the gazettal of former pastoral lease land at Castle Hill as a conservation area, although there are a number of related matters to be worked through prior to that being completed.

**St James Station**

St James Station was purchased by the Crown in October 2008. Following the department's release of a discussion paper on St James Station, the board provided advice to the department, with particular reference to recreational opportunities available on this land.

**Redcliffe Station**

7,731 hectares of new conservation land from Redcliffe Station in the Rakaia was gazetted on 30 July 2009.

**Barrosa Station**

4,840 hectares from Barrosa Station at the entrance to Ō Tū Wharekai, Hakatere Conservation Park, was gazetted on 24 June 2010.

## 5.5 Conservation advice

*“Any other conservation matter relating to any areas within the jurisdiction of the Board”.*  
6M(i)(d)(ii).

In all previous reports, the issue of government funding for the department has always featured. This year is no exception. Biodiversity funding was once again available, although most of this is tagged for specific work, such as animal pests, weed control, species work and public awareness. The board fully supports the injection of more funding for this work.

Weed and pest issues are still evident in many areas, and the board’s real concern about escalating wilding-tree infestation in the high-country areas still remains.

The board has voiced concern about predator control on a number of occasions. It was pleasing to see that Operation Ark continued to fund predator-control work in the Hawdon and Poulter valleys (Arthur’s Pass National Park) and in the South Branch of the Hurunui River (Lake Sumner Forest Park).

Other conservation matters the board has given advice on to the department or NZCA are:

- Concessions
- Draft Aircraft Guidelines
- Use of 1080 poison
- Visitor Asset Management Programme
- Recreation management
- Tenure review – advice to the department; advocacy to LINZ
- Management plans
- Resource management issues – Mt Cass wind farm proposal, Hurunui Water Conservation Order, Hurunui Water Group’s application to erect a dam on the south branch of the Hurunui River and a weir on Lake Sumner.
- Draft Canterbury Water Management Strategy
- Proposal to establish a Game Animal Council
- Schedule 4 of the Conservation Act – mining on conservation land
- Biodiversity – pest control
- Land exchanges

## 5.6 Walkways

*“To advise the Conservation Authority and the Director-General on proposals for new walkways in any area within the jurisdiction of the Board”.* (Section 6M(1)(e) Conservation Act 1987).

*“A board may recommend that a walkway be declared over public or private land, after it has consulted with the owner/administrator and the occupier of the land”.* (Section 6(1) and 8(1) New Zealand Walkways Act 1990).

The passage of the Walking Access Act 2008 led to the establishment of the Walking Access Commission and repealed the board’s walkways function. A memorandum of understanding was entered into on Wednesday 24 June 2009 between the department

and the Walking Access Commission. Extracts from the memorandum of understanding explain the new situation as follows:

### **Background**

*“A specific function of the Commission is the administration of walkways, which were formerly the responsibility of the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC) under the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990. DOC remains responsible for informal walkways that were never formalised. Warranted officers under the Conservation Act are also deemed to be enforcement officers for the purposes of the Act.”*

### **Preliminary**

*“Responsibility for walkways has been transferred to the New Zealand Walkways Access Commission. This was achieved by incorporating provisions of the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990 into the Walking Access Act 2008.”*

3.2 *“The roles of the Director General of Conservation, Conservation Boards and the new Zealand Conservation Authority, other than that of controlling authority for specific walkways, have passed to the Commission. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the monitoring department for the Commission, but will have no operational responsibilities under the legislation.”*

### **Actions**

7.2 *“The Commission acknowledges that it will not have any responsibility for tracks described as walkways that have not been gazetted under the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990 or its predecessor. These may continue to be described as walkways and use the walkways logo, subject to any review that DOC or the Commission may undertake. DOC will advise the Commission of any intention to discontinue the use of the term walkway. The administrator of these un-gazetted walkways will continue to be the responsibility of DOC.”*

Canterbury has one gazetted walkway, the Waihao River Walkway, which has passed to the Commission. Operational management of that walkway remains with the Waimate District Council.

### **Liaison with Fish and Game Councils**

*“To liaise with Fish and Game Councils on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board” – (Section 6M(1)(f) Conservation Act 1987).*

Communication with the North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish and Game Councils has continued during the year with the exchange of agenda and minutes. Fiona Musson and Wiki Baker were appointed to liaise with each game council and keep the board informed on issues. The main issues of common interest have been Central Plains Water’s proposal to dam the Waianiwaniwa valley for irrigation purposes, Meridian Energy’s proposal for a tunnel on the north bank of the Waitaki River, the Hunter Downs irrigation proposal, ECan’s Natural Resources Regional Plan, Hurunui Water Conservation Order and the water-consent applications for the upper and lower Waitaki River.

## 5.7 Delegated functions

*“To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act”.* (Section 6M(1)(g) Conservation Act 1987)

The Minister has not delegated powers or functions under this sub-section.

## 5.8 Other functions

*“Every board shall have such other functions as are conferred on it by or under this Act or any other Act”.* – 6M(2)

The board ensures that its decisions and recommendations are consistent with the requirements of section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987.

## 6 Powers of the board under Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987

6.1 *“Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions”.* 6N(1).

The board has focused its efforts during the year on:

- Tenure review
- Recreation concession applications
- Weed and pest control
- Blackfish proposal to exchange Steep Head Gully and part of Porters ski lease for Crystal Basin northern terrace
- Meridian’s proposal for a wind farm at Mt Cass
- Preparation of the Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy for review
- Canterbury Water Management Strategy
- Heli-hunting
- Resource Management Act interface with the Conservation Act
- Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO)

The department and board have worked together throughout the year and tried to address each of the aforementioned issues, as dictated by available resourcing.

The board has tried to focus on policy issues and became involved in management issues only when comments or advice were requested by the department.

6.2 *“Without limiting the generality of sub-section (1) of this section each board may”* 6N(2).

6.2.1 *“Advocate its interest at any public forum or in any statutory planning process”.* 6N(2)(a).

There are 10 district plans within the board’s area of jurisdiction.

The relevant committees continually monitor resource consents and take appropriate action if conservation values are threatened.

The board made submissions or commented on:

- Heli-hunting
- The proposal to exchange Steep Head Gully and part of the Porters Ski Lease for Crystal Basin, northern terrace.



- Thar Control Management Plan
- Proposal to exchange land between the department and Fernwood Daries
- The Poulter Valley Mountain Bike Trial
- Aoraki Mount Cook National Park Management Plan amendments
- Arthurs Pass National Park Management Plan amendments
- Tenure review
- Water consent applications for the upper and lower Waitaki River
- Wild animal control
- Concession applications
- Heli-hunting
- Mining on public conservation land
- Mt Cass wind farm proposal by Mainpower
- The Draft Canterbury Water Management Strategy
- Proposed realignment of the Tasman Road at Aoraki Mount Cook

6.2.2 “*Appoint committees from members and other suitable persons and delegate to them functions and powers*”.

Each committee of the board has the power to act on behalf of the board in accordance with its delegation, and any decisions made are ratified at the following board meeting.

One advisory committee has been appointed by the Minister of Conservation to operate under the agency of the board. This is the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee, which is a joint Section 6N(2)(b) and 56(2) Conservation Act committee. That committee is chaired by the Chairman of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board, Stephen Lowndes.

#### **Functions delegated from the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board**

The Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee holds the status of a committee of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board and has delegated to it the following functions and powers of the board in relation to the Pōhatu Marine Reserve.

- (i) Section 6M(1)(b) of the Conservation Act 1987, subject to the committee liaising with the full board regarding the content of any proposed Conservation Plan for Pōhatu Marine Reserve, before exercise of that function. (For avoidance of doubt, this is to be taken to also include the other options specified in subsection 17G(2)(b) and (c) of the Act, and subsection 17G(3)(a) and (c) shall also apply to the committee in the exercise of this section);
- (ii) Section 6M(1)(c) of the Act;
- (iii) Section 6M(1)(d)(ii) of the Act;
- (iv) Section 6N(2)(a) of the Act, except for participation in statutory planning processes;
- (v) Section 17G(1) in relation to the procedure for the preparation of the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Conservation Management Plan.

<b>Committee Members</b>	
<b>Steve Lowndes (Chairman)</b>	Chair of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board. Appointed to the committee upon the retirement of Murray Parsons, the previous chair of the board and committee.
<b>George Tikao</b>	Ōnuku Marae
<b>Nigel Scott</b>	Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

<b>Graeme Grennell</b>	Koukourārata Rūnanga
<b>Kath Reid</b>	Akaroa Harbour Marine Protection Society
<b>Shireen Helps</b>	Landowner in Flea Bay, adjacent to the Pōhatu Marine Reserve.
<b>Peter Langlands</b>	Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society's representative
<b>Bob Meikle</b>	Akaroa Harbour Recreational Fishers Club. The club, supported by the local Māori community and commercial fishers, was the applicant for this marine reserve.
<b>Alan Reid</b>	Commercial fisher
<b>Ray Voller</b>	Ministry of Fisheries
<b>Rei Simon</b>	Wairewa Rūnanga
<b>Eric Ryder</b>	Banks Peninsula Community Board

### **Rohe/Iwi links**

Pōhatu Pā or Flea Bay was the traditional home to Tūtakāhīkura and his people in pre-European times. The rich flora and fauna was a good source for mahinga kai – food gathering. Māori people gathered fish, seabirds, shellfish and freshwater fish.

Today's descendants of Tūtakāhīkura are Kāi Tahu, Te Rūnaka o Koukourārata (Port Levy). They actively support Pōhatu as a marine reserve adjoining Banks Peninsula (Horomaka)

Pōhatu acts as a nest (kōhanga) for replenishing fish stocks, providing a key element in the integrated sustainable management of fish resources on Banks Peninsula.

### **Committee meetings**

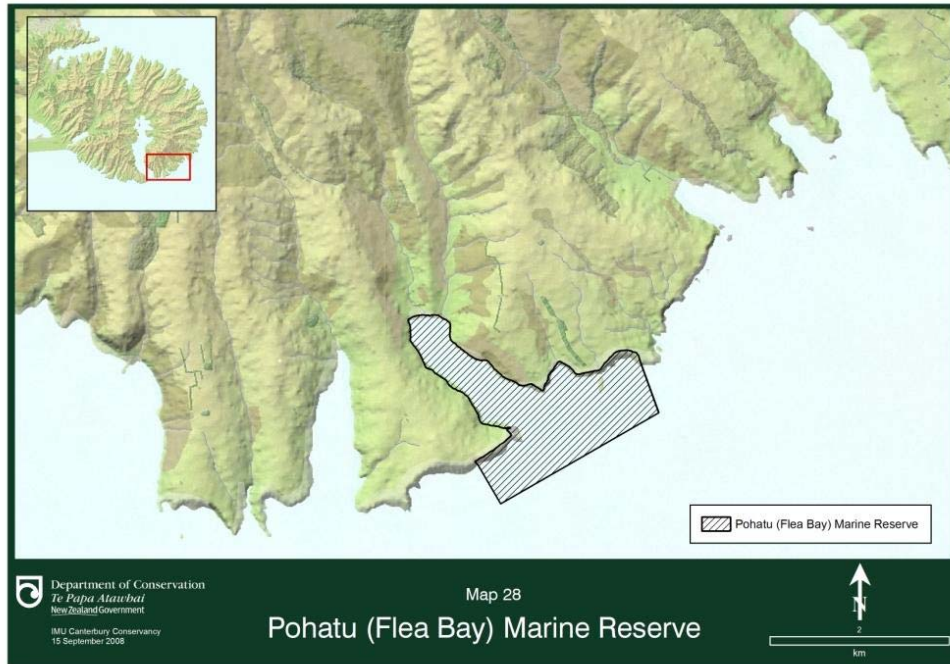
The committee did not hold a meeting this year.

### **Management of the reserve**

Pōhatu Marine Reserve is situated on the south-eastern side of Banks Peninsula at Flea Bay. Pōhatu Marine Reserve was established in May 1999. It comprises 215 hectares and stretches from Redcliffe Point to Ounu-hau Point (south of Duke Head) (Refer to figure 1). Hector's dolphin/upokohue, yellow-eyed penguin/hoiho, white-flipped penguin/kororā and New Zealand fur seal/kekeno either live within the reserve or visit the reserve and so have been included in this report.

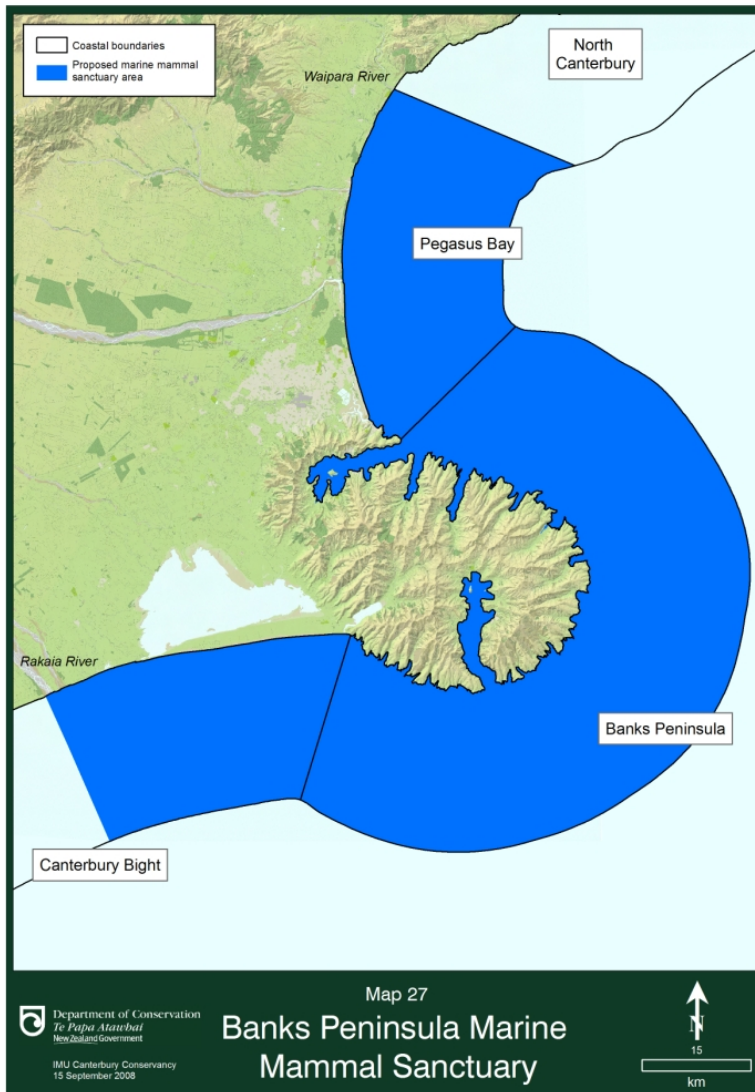
Flea Bay is approximately 30 metres deep at the heads and 5-6 metres deep further in. The bottom of the bay is filled with one metre of silt. The bay is exposed to southerlies, and the water is often murky.

*Figure 1: Pōhatu Marine Reserve*



The reserve is surrounded by a Marine Mammal Sanctuary (MMS), which extends from Waipara River to the Rakaia River, and out to a distance of twelve nautical miles. The MMS was altered in November 2008 and the area contained within the reserve increased over four-fold (figure 2). New Zealand's first marine mammal sanctuary, it was created around Banks Peninsula in 1988, to protect Hector's dolphins/upokohue (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) from bycatch in set nets.

Figure 2: Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary



(Note: the area contained within the MMS in blue is now in effect, i.e. not proposed).

Current restrictions inside the marine mammal sanctuary relate to seismic surveying, which will reduce the impact from any prospecting and provide for improved protection. Fisheries regulations are also in place along the east coast of the South Island (see the section below, under threat management plan, for more information).

The set-net ban also helps reduce the risk of entanglement of other marine species, such as the endangered yellow-eyed penguin, white-flipped penguin and New Zealand fur seal.

### **Pōhatu Marine Reserve Biological Monitoring Plan**

Glen Carbines has been contracted to carry out an assessment of blue cod in the reserve, in April 2012. He will use baited pots to gain information on the abundance and size distribution of cod inside the reserve compared with fished areas. The project will also involve tagging cod to assess local-scale movement, and to determine if, and how, the reserve is protecting cod.

Unfortunately, the weather prevented the planned lobster survey work being carried out during the 09/10 year. The project has been postponed until September/October 2011 when the weather and temperature improve.

### **Shorelife**

Visible at low tide:

- Mussels/kūtai, limpets/ngākihi, chiton, sea tulips/kāeo, whelks, crabs/pāpaka, cats eyes/pūpū, barnacles/koromāungaunga, periwinkles/ngaeti, tubeworms, brown, green and red seaweed/rimurimu.
- Spotted shags/kawau, terns/tara, tītī and gulls/tara.

### **Threatened species**

#### **(a) Hector's dolphin**

Hector's dolphin/upokohue is the smallest marine dolphin in the world (maximum length 145 cm) and is found only in New Zealand's inshore waters. It is naturally inquisitive and people-friendly and loves to bow ride and play in the wake of boats.

#### **Threat management plan**

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) jointly developed a non-statutory Hector's and Maui's Dolphin Threat Management Plan (TMP) to address the national decline in these dolphins. Certain fishing activities were identified as the most significant threat to Hector's dolphins; thus measures were taken to minimise these risks. The plan came into force on 1 October 2008 and considerably restricts both recreational and commercial set-netting activities along the east coast of the South Island.

For the South Island east coast (Cape Jackson in the Marlborough Sounds to Slope Point in the Catlins), commercial and amateur set netting is now banned out to four nautical miles offshore, with the following exceptions:

- commercial and recreational set netting allowed to one nautical mile offshore around the Kaikoura Canyon;
- set netting for flounder permitted between 1 April and 30 September in existing defined flounder areas around Banks Peninsula and Queen Charlotte Sound, using defined nets.

Trawling is also banned to two nautical miles offshore. (Flatfish nets with defined low-headline heights are still permitted).

New boundaries for the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary (see figure 2) also came into effect on 4 November 2008. The new area of the Marine Mammal Sanctuary now encompasses approximately 413,000 hectares and covers 389.31 km of coastline and includes restrictions on seismic surveying.

#### **Moratorium on Hector's dolphin permits**

Because of the current lack of information about the effects of tourism on Hector's dolphins and the need to adequately protect dolphins, a moratorium on Hector's dolphin permits for the Lyttelton and Akaroa Harbour Operational Areas is in place until 1 May 2012.

A new round of marine-mammal-watching permits has begun, with invitations to apply for permits being sent to existing operators.

Emmanuella Martinez, a PhD candidate from Massey University, has completed a four-year project to help address the need for information on the effects of tourism on Hector's dolphin in Akaroa Harbour. Her report indicates that while there is no evidence of any displacement of Hector's dolphin from the harbour, there is evidence of short-term behavioural changes in the presence of vessels in the harbour. In short, the dolphins are displaying more milling and socialising behaviour and less diving and feeding behaviour in the presence of vessels 86% of the time between 6.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Of this, commercial vessels comprise 22% of the traffic and 70% of the encounters, which last, on average, 14 minutes. Recreational vessels make up 73% of the traffic and 25% of the encounters, lasting an average of 8 minutes. Akaroa has by far the highest marine-mammal permitted activity in New Zealand.

**(b) Yellow-eyed penguin/hoiho and white-flipped penguin/kororā**

Pōhatu (Flea) Bay is a natural breeding site for both penguin species. The remoteness and steep bluffs provide some protection from disturbance and predators.

White-flipped penguin/kororā are a strong sub-species of *Endyptula minor* (little blue penguin) that is endemic to the Canterbury coast. They are in decline on Banks Peninsula and are under threat from ferrets, cats and stoats.

It is estimated that there are 893 pair in Pōhatu Pa – Flea Bay – (2004 census, Cashman). In a 2000-02 survey undertaken by Challies and Burleigh, the total Banks Peninsula population was estimated at 2112 pairs.

Pōhatu and neighbouring Stony Bay are the only sites on Banks Peninsula where kororā nest on hillsides, up to 200 metres in altitude. The remainder are confined to debris slopes and caves at the foot of cliffs or on shorelines.

Hoiho are less common, mostly breeding further south on the Otago Peninsula and in the Catlins. There are only a few breeding pairs on Banks Peninsula and most are in the Pōhatu Marine Reserve. Being small (they stand around 50 cm tall) and flightless they are at risk from predators, such as cats, stoats and ferrets.

**Other marine life**

- Massive crayfish/kōura – up to five kilograms (ten pounds) take sanctuary in the deep volcanic rocks;
- Blue moki – some up to six kilograms;
- Forty species of reef fish – such as wrasse, trumpeter, blue cod/rāwaru, and leather jackets/kōkiri;
- Groper/hāpuku;
- Butterfish/mararī (a vegetarian seaweed eater) and large banded wrasse swim amongst the kelp forests
- Pāua and rockfish

The Pōhatu Marine Reserve continues its important role in preserving the marine biodiversity of the region. The focus of the committee has been to implement sound management practices for the reserve. Public awareness of the seaward boundary continues to create the biggest problem for the Department of Conservation.

Increased surveillance, a multi-agency response to compliance issues, increased public awareness and education on the positive effects of the reserve on biodiversity, and increased fish stocks in the surrounding waters, are all important outcomes for the committee.

### **Seal-diet study**

Area and conservancy staff completed a project to gain information on the diet of NZ fur seals around Banks Peninsula. The project was carried out to help the department understand the interaction between fur seals and fisheries, as diet analysis has not been carried out on Banks Peninsula fur seals to date.

Over 100 fresh scats and any regurgitants from two fur-seal breeding colonies, Te Oka and Otanerito Bay, were collected twice each season during 2008 (all seasons covered). The results have confirmed that the majority of the fur seals' diet consists of species located off the continental shelf, with arrow squid and lantern fish forming >80% of the diet in all seasons. This is good news for fishermen, as lantern fish has no commercial value and arrow squid is not targeted by recreational fishers. The full report is yet to be written but should be completed by 2009.

### **Update on the Akaroa Marine Reserve application**

Departmental staff have been busy preparing the departmental report to the Minister on the Akaroa marine reserve application. The report has undergone countless reviews within the department and with the Ministry of Fisheries. It is currently under its final review process and should soon be ready to send to the Minister for her decision.

### **Coastal –Marine Area Resource Information Project**

The department's Canterbury Conservancy has undertaken an enormous data-gathering exercise over the last two years, to collate scientific reports pertaining to the Canterbury Coastal-Marine Area (CMA). The CMA extends from the Conway River in the north, to the Waitaki River in the south, and between the Mean High Water Mark and the 12-nautical-mile territorial limit.

A total of 1250 reports were collected, relating to three categories in the coastal marine area: physical processes, ecology, and human use. This information was entered into an easy-to-use database (Excel format). Where possible, reports were analysed in a general manner with text summaries provided for each category. In addition, many original maps and graphs were compiled (over 50) to better summarise the data.

All of the information (covering report, photographs, analytical graphs and database) was compiled onto a web-based CD. The CD titled, Canterbury Marine Resource: a tool for marine planning, conservation and education, was distributed to interested parties. The CD was successfully launched at an event held at the Southern Ocean Aquarium during Seaweek 1- 8 March 2009.

### **Comment from the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee**

This was the eleventh year of the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee's existence. Due to a number of extenuating circumstances, including the Christchurch earthquakes, the Pōhatu Marine Reserve Advisory Committee has not met this year.

### **6.3 Draft general policies**

*“The Conservation Authority may consult any conservation board about the draft of a general policy after receiving submissions on it”* (Section 17b(3)(1)(ii) Conservation Act 1987).

The General Policy for National Parks and the Conservation General Policy were adopted in May 2005.

### **6.4 Freshwater fisheries management plans**

Draft freshwater fisheries management plans are to be prepared by the department *“in consultation with the Conservation Boards affected by them”* (Section 17K(1)(a) Conservation Act 1987).

No such plans affecting the board’s district are in preparation at this time.

### **6.5 Reduction of width of, or exemption from, marginal strips**

*“The Minister of Conservation shall consult the relevant Conservation Board about any proposal made by a Crown Land disposal agency to reduce the width of, or provide an exemption from, a marginal strip, and on being satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so, the relevant conservation board...may request the Minister to publicly notify the proposal”*. (Section 24BA Conservation Act 1987).

No applications were considered.

## **7 Responsibilities under other sections of the Conservation Act 1987**

### **7.1 “Co-opting members of the Board” 6Q(1)**

No one was co-opted onto the board during this financial year.

### **7.2 “Advice on granting lease or licence in the absence of a CMS or CMP”**

No advice was given during the year.

## **8 Board functions under the National Parks Act 1980**

### **8.1 “The board is responsible, in conjunction with the Department, for preparing draft reviews of management plans, for hearing and deciding on public submissions on any draft review and for recommending any review to the New Zealand Conservation Authority for approval”.** Sections 30(a) and 45-47.

There are two national parks in the board’s area of jurisdiction. Each national park has a management plan which is reviewed at 10-year intervals.

The Arthur’s Pass National Park Management Plan has been reviewed and was approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority on 13 December 2007.

The Aoraki Mt Cook National Park Management Plan was approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority on 14 April 2004.

### **8.2 “Advise on any other matter relating to National Parks [Section 30(f)(iii)].**



#### **a) Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park**

The board has taken a keen interest in the Aoraki/Mount Cook Visitor Centre re-development work. Work began in February 2008 and the new Visitor Centre was opened by the Associate Minister Kate Wilkinson (as she was then) on 11 Sept 2009.

The project has seen the original building gutted and increased in size by almost half.

Visitors enter through the original doors. The layout of the building now encourages people to walk through a series of interpretative areas, moving towards a new picture window with views of the mountains.

A feature of the new building is a memorial kiosk on the west side, featuring stained glass windows. The memorial book recording fatalities in the park is kept in this area.

Interpretive panels in the kiosk portray the history of climbing.

The lower level of the building covers the natural history of the region and includes an education area for visiting groups.

Some exhibits from the previous information centre, including the diorama of the mountain ranges, have been restored and are retained in a new setting.

An interpretive walkway from the building leads to an area planted out to show the range of vegetation in the park. The former Empress Hut, which was replaced in 1994, has been set up near the building, giving visitors a taste of an historic mountain hut.

Arowhenua Rūnanga has worked in a practical and advisory capacity with the department in relation to the carvings and interpretive panels installed in the new building.

The board continues to advise the department on the issuing of guiding, tramping, heli-skiing, hunting and other concessions in the park.

#### **b) Arthur's Pass National Park**

The board has an ongoing interest in the Arthur's Pass National Park and the activities and facilities there, especially the visitor services, recreational facilities and opportunities. It also receives regular reports from West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy on the portion of the park that it manages and is often alerted to any negative impacts on conservation values within the park by the Arthur's Pass Association, which acts as a public 'watchdog' for the park.

### **9 Liaison**

The board has appointed various members to liaise with outside agencies and the department's Canterbury Conservancy Area offices as follows:

## Liaison Persons

Organisation	Liaison Person
Otago Conservation Board	David Round
West Coast Conservation Board	Dr John Keoghan
Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Board	Joseph Hullen
Fish and Game (1) North Canterbury	Fiona Musson
Fish and Game (2) Central South Island	Wiki Baker
Mount Cook Museum Trust	Wiki Baker
Ngāi Tahu	Stephen Lowndes (Chairman)
Environment Canterbury	Stephen Lowndes (Chairman)
New Zealand Conservation Authority	Stephen Lowndes (Chairman)
Aoraki and Twizel Areas	Mandy Waaka-Home
Raukapuka Area	Jan Finlayson
Mahaanui Area	Joseph Hullen
Waimakariri Area	Joseph Hullen
Himalayan Tahr Control Plan Implementation Group	Dr. John Keoghan

### 9.1 Other conservation boards

The conservancy's immediate neighbours are the Otago, West Coast *Tai Poutini* and Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Boards. The chairman and liaison members monitor minutes of the various boards for issues of common interest.

### 9.2 Community

The board has continued to involve the community in its work. It holds meetings around the Canterbury area and the public is encouraged to participate in public forums at these meetings. This is seen as successful, with a number of people from local communities taking the opportunity to bring their concerns to the board. The board seeks to represent the public interest and continues to strive to learn the views of the public. It would like to encourage more people to take advantage of the opportunity to address the board during the public forum at its meetings.

During field inspections the board also takes the opportunity to meet members of local communities in their own environments and to observe and discuss issues. This is seen as an essential part of the board's work to forge good-neighbour relationships with the community, board and department.

### 9.3 District and regional councils

The board has continued to develop a good relationship with councils. Councillors and district mayors are invited to attend meetings and local issues often appear on the board's agenda.

### 9.4 Iwi

Ngāi Tahu nominates four members of the board. They are individually selected by their Papatipu Rūnanga, and their status as representatives of local hapū is endorsed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Board minutes are circulated and conservation issues of concern feature regularly on meeting agenda of both organisations. The Ngāi Tahu-nominated members of the board ensure a Ngāi Tahu perspective is considered before any final conclusions are reached.

### **9.5 Non-governmental organisations**

The board has continued to foster regular meetings with non-governmental organisations, when appropriate.

During the 2010/2011 year two Southern Associates Meetings were held in Timaru on 24 August 2009 and 25 May 2010. A good number of people from conservation and recreation organisations attended these meetings.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.**

The huge tragedy and dislocations that have taken place in Christchurch over the last twelve months mean that this annual report is being written six months after the end of the reporting year.

We live in a working environment where rapid change is now endemic so it seems reasonable to present this report up to the time of writing. As I am no longer chair of the Board, the report will be co-authored by Jan Finlayson, the new Chair, and John Keoghan, the Deputy Chair and Chair between September and November.

The Conservancy is working under extreme pressure. The fate of the Hereford Street building still hangs in the balance and staff are working without paper files, in temporary offices at the airport. A new building on Moorhouse Avenue has been identified and another move will be required next year. At the same time an ongoing employment review is taking place which is taking its toll in terms of redundancies and disestablished positions. It should be noted that both the Board Support Officer, Brenda Preston, and the Community Relations Manager, Cheryl Colley, have lost their jobs.

Some things, however, have not changed significantly.

Drafting of the second generation Canterbury Conservation Management Strategy continues to lurch on its way in fits and starts. Despite all the delays, the document seems likely to retain its integrity and some sensible decisions have been made around a national matrix. The key to the strategy's effectiveness will be found in the precise use of language employed and the Board will need to pay close attention to the ramification of every phrase.

In August we submitted our advice to the Minister with regard to the Crystal Valley/Steep Head Gully land swap proposal. Our advice was that the proposal should proceed by way of a lease rather than freeholding publicly owned conservation land. Our advice was not followed by the Minister and the applicants, Blackfish Limited, immediately sold out to a Russian consortium for \$6.9 million. In order to proceed, the developers must secure a plan change to the Selwyn District Council Plan (Plan Change 25) This process is currently held up by Ngāi Tahu who question the Crown's right to alienate itself of Crown Land without giving Ngāi Tahu first right of refusal under the Deed of Settlement Act.

With the sweep of a pen the issue which has taken up so much of the Conservancy's time over the last three years appears to be settled. Peter Dunne, as part of his confidence and supply agreement with the newly elected National Government, has stipulated an end to heli-hunting on the conservation land. It will be very interesting to see how the powerful heli-hunting lobby copes with this setback. Board member Mal Clarbrough will no doubt continue to follow events closely.

Another ramification of the return of United Future to parliament is the likelihood that it will be full steam ahead with the controversial proposal to establish a Game Animal Council – which effectively puts hunters in charge of game animals.

Tenure review continues to deliver outcomes of varying quality. While some proposals are fair and a true reflection of the land in question, many give the Board concern. Analysis of proposals reveals some flaws inherent in the process. These include: an apparently disproportionate leaseholder influence in the design of some proposals, which can disadvantage the public;

minimal or no recommendations for protection by the Department; lack of consideration of the wider conservation land picture when proposing conservation areas, and scant attention to landscape values and flow-on effects of the intensification of land use as a result of freeholding.

Initial decisions on the Waitaki water extraction applications are encouraging. The Mt Cass wind farm application from Mainpower was granted by the Environment Court today. This application was initially opposed by the Department but they withdrew when they considered that they had achieved sufficient gains in mitigation. The mitigation process was complex and extensive and it has been closely monitored by Board member Jimmy Wallace.

The Canterbury/Aoraki Conservation Board Award, 'Te Waka o Aoraki' is awarded annually to recognise and encourage conservation efforts and achievements in Canterbury. This year was no exception and each of the three finalists was profiled in a well attended ceremony held at the Department's Waimakariri Area Office in Rangiora. The spirit and significance of the Award was captured beautifully at the ceremony launch by long-standing Ngāi Tahu Board member, Wikitoria Baker, who has been a passionate advocate of the Award since its inception in 1996.

The 2011 winner, the community based Ohau Conservation Trust, was represented at the ceremony by father and son Trust members, Mike and Hamish Darling. The Award was presented by Hon Kate Wilkinson, Minister of Conservation. Members of the Trust have been enhancing the natural environment along the west shore of Lake Ohau for seven years. Their focus has been on weed control (especially wilding pines) and more recently on native plant restoration with increasing school-group involvement.

Other finalists, also deserving their high profile, were the Hurunui College Nina Valley Restoration Group and the Aoraki/Mt Cook Local Body Solid Waste Programme. Departing Board member, Fiona Sloane, delivered a moving speech at her final meeting. She talked of her own learning whilst on the board and the way her role in the lives of her mokopuna has developed as a result.

Steve Lowndes accompanied the Board to Aoraki for the November meeting. He was very sadly farewelled by John Keoghan and responded with a hard hitting speech about the importance of conservation and attitudes toward it.

New members Te Awhina Rangimaire Arahana and David Matheson were warmly welcomed at the same meeting. Both bring considerable experience and new perspectives and we look forward to their contributions to Board activities.

Thanks go to all Board members for the work they have done throughout the year and also to Brenda and Cheryl, who have supported the Board through thick and thin. They will both be missed when they finish next year, but it is the Conservancy which will lose their invaluable dedication, experience and knowledge.

Steve Lowndes et al.  
15.12.11