

--- SUMMER 2014 ---

# Subantarctic Scribe ...

*Conservation in New Zealand's  
subantarctic islands*



## WELCOME TO SUMMER IN THE SUBS!

We are well and truly into the season, with some projects and information below relevant to your operations so please check these out. We hope that you all have a great Christmas and a safe and happy season in the deep south.



Southern Rata, Enderby Island



Bulbinella rossii, Campbell Island.  
Photo John Barkla



White-capped Albatross on nest

## CONSERVATION SERVICES PROGRAMME AKA 'CSP'

This season there are six research projects on the islands under the direction of the DOC Conservation Services Programme.

Together they monitor protected species known to be impacted by commercial fisheries, through research projects to work out if populations are in decline and, if so, why. In New Zealand the protected species that are subject to research include all marine mammals and reptiles; sea birds (except black-backed gulls); seven species of fish; all black corals, gorgonian corals, stony corals and hydrocorals.

All work is either partially or fully funded by fishing industry levies with

contributions from DOC. Briefly outlined below are the projects being undertaken on the New Zealand subantarctic islands this year. For more detailed information on the programme please go to our website at <http://www.doc.govt.nz/csp/>

The white-capped albatross or mollymawk is endemic to New Zealand and breeds mainly on the Auckland Islands, with most on Disappointment Island (95%), the remainder on Adams Island, and some at Bollons Island in the Antipodes group. Recent population estimates vary between 74,000 and 93,000 annual breeding pairs at the Auckland Islands. This species is one of the most commonly recorded bycatch species, yet very little is known about the birds. This year's research

Top: New Zealand sea lions, Sandy Bay Enderby Island.  
Photo: Stephen Jaquiere Otago Daily Times

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on Disappointment Island is focused on providing an updated estimate of the population, to test aerial survey methods and investigate the logistics of establishing a mark and recapture study to investigate adult survival.

Salvin's albatross is also endemic to New Zealand, with breeding populations at the Snares and Bounty islands. There is little known about this species yet so this year's research project aims to determine an estimate of the population and to look at adult survival and other demographic parameters at the Snares Islands.

Gibson's albatross is endemic to New Zealand and 95% of the birds breed only on Adams Island. Their population is in decline and they are classified as Nationally Critical. These birds have been studied for 23 years. The research continues this year to determine a population estimate and to look at adult survival and other demographic parameters at the Auckland Islands.

Research to estimate the Southern Buller's albatross population at the Solander Islands will add to population data obtained from the Snares in early 2014. This will update



Buller's albatross. Photo Barry Baker

estimates of adult survival and other demographic parameters for these birds at the Snares.

New Zealand sea lions are classified as Nationally Critical with 73% breeding on the Auckland Islands and 27% on Campbell Island. Since 2001, pup production at the Auckland Islands has declined substantially and the number of adults returning to breed has also fallen. The overall population size is thought to be about 10,000.

A 5-year Threat Management Plan for the New Zealand sea lion is being developed and, as part of this, the planned Conservation Services Programme research is being expanded with additional funding from DOC, the fishing industry, WWF and the Ministry for Primary Industries. The research projects are based on Campbell Island from mid-December to the end of January and on Enderby Island from the end of December to the end of March. There will be some staff changeover so please be aware that other vessels could be in the area.

This research will provide more information to build on the current understanding of the causes of population decline. This year the focus will be on the pup production at Enderby, Figure of 8 and Dundas islands, marking the pups and updating all data on previously marked sea lions into the database. There will also be a focus on better understanding pup mortality and developing management actions to improve their survival. These results will feed into other research projects and management plans being developed. The vision of the threat management plan is to promote the recovery and ensure the long-term viability of New Zealand sea lions. ■



## LINZ HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY, AUCKLAND ISLANDS

Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) has tendered for a hydrographic survey to improve the safety of navigation on the east coast of the Auckland Islands and update all current data. The successful supplier to undertake this survey is IXSURVEY from Australia.

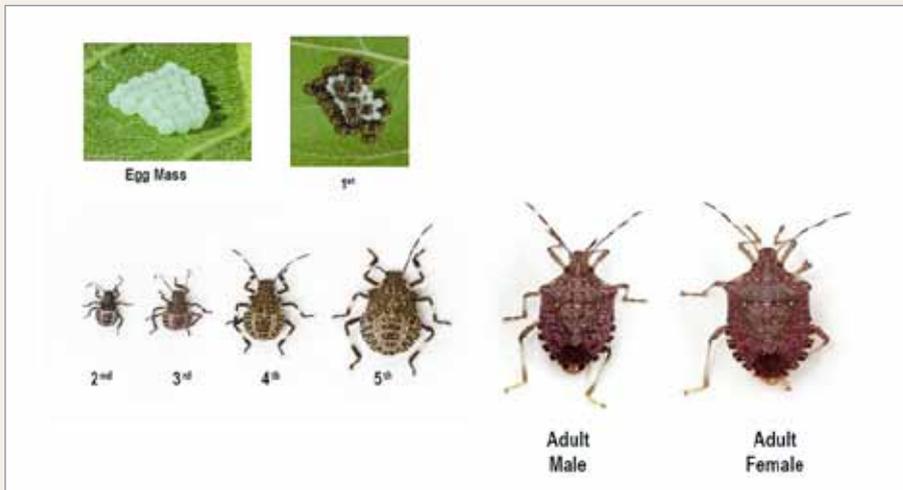
IXSURVEY will begin the survey in January 2015 and all work is due to be completed at the end of March. Two dedicated vessels are being used, MV *Tranquil Image* and MV *Star Keys* with a third vessel, the *Marine Countess*, for resupply. Survey staff will be based onboard the vessels and most of the work will be offshore – between 50 m and 3 km off the eastern coast of the islands.

Bathymetric data (underwater topographical mapping of the seafloor) will be produced of the entire area, using a multi-beam echo sounder. Control points will be established ashore where necessary. The land-based work will be to establish temporary control points, which may be seen by visitors to the islands during this period. Tidal stations are part of the survey and enable the hydrographic survey to take tidal effects into consideration. To accurately map this and due to the complexity of tides in the Aucklands, up to six stations may be established. These would be located at Ranui Cove, Smith Harbour, Waterfall Inlet, Flagstaff Pont, and possibly Laurie Harbour and North Arm.

Every 20 days the two IXSURVEY vessels will be resupplied with fuel, personnel and food. All re-fuelling will take place outside the 12 nm limit of the Auckland Islands - Motu Maha Marine Reserve, yet the transfer of food and personnel will be undertaken in the safe confines of the islands. ■

## SUBANTARCTIC RETAIL

Six postcards and a quirky 'Manky Map' – that's a double sided microfibre map and hanky combined, are available for sale from our office. They have been created by DOC as a functional, fun and educational souvenir for visitors of their time at the Subantarctics. For more information and orders for the six fantastic postcards and manky maps, please email Di at [dilmorris@doc.govt.nz](mailto:dilmorris@doc.govt.nz).



## STINK BUGS!

The Brown marmorated stink bug is making its way around the world, causing havoc where it establishes. New Zealand has some indigenous and introduced species already here, but **this** species poses a huge environmental 'stink' – quite literally. Please be aware of this risk and for more information on the bug and how to avoid bringing this nasty into New Zealand, go to: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/brown-marmorated-stink-bug>

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*We look forward to hearing from you with comments and suggestions for anything you would like to see or read about.*

**Southern Islands team**

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