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Friend of the River and Estuary Care: Waikouaiti – Karitane.

Please post your contribution to H. Bradbury, 126 Coast Road, Karitane
or leave it at the Karitane Store.

Birdwatching Guides Now Available

We have been able to get a special price on excellent field guides from the publisher - and are able to offer them to you at a reduced price - and also for a bit of fundraising for our projects.

River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane Special Price Field Guide Order Form

Handguide to the Birds of New Zealand, Revised edition (Robertson/Onley) Price: \$35.00

I want to order _____ copies and am including cash/cheque for the amount of \$ _____

Please send the book(s) to: _____

Send this order form and payment to: *River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane
H Bradbury, 126 Coast Road, Karitane*

All profits will be used for our conservation projects in revegetation, monitoring, information/education/advocacy.

Contact for the Birdwatching guide is now Helen Bradbury, ph 4658334.

Note Card Order Form

Fundraiser for River-Estuary Care : Waikouaiti-Karitane Projects

Elegant Note Cards with Watercolours by Derek Onley
Packet of 5 cards / \$7.50 - Two types available



Black Oystercatchers



Banded Dotterel

I would like to support River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane through the purchase of note cards:

Type	No. of Packets	Cost (\$7.50/packet)
Black Oyster catchers	_____	_____
Banded Dotterel	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____

Please send notecards to: (Name) _____

(Address) _____

Send payment and order to: *H Bradbury, 126 Coast Road, Karitane*

River Estuary Watch

River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti - Karitane

www.landcare.org.nz/karitane



December 2007

Allan Anderson's Column

Hector's Dolphins are not only the world's smallest dolphin they are also endemic to New Zealand. Right now their numbers are declining at a rate that will see them join other species around the globe that have perished into extinction.

The big problem for the Hector's is that they reproduce at a rate similar to man, producing only 1 or 2 offspring in their life and, with dwindling numbers of pods around New Zealand, this can also mean genetic problems. One of the things that make the Hector's unique is that they don't roam the wide open blue seas as most dolphins do, but prefer to live in shallow waters. The shallow bays, harbours, rivers and estuaries where the coloured water meets the ocean offer food and protection for these small mammals.

There is a belief that the main threat to the Hector's Dolphin comes from fishing and, due to mounting pressure, the Minister of Fisheries has proposed drastic set net and trawl bans around most of NZ inshore waters. The truth is that only a handful of Hector's Dolphins has ever been caught in nets throughout the country but, never the less, even 1 is too many by all accounts.

My belief is that loss of habitat is the true No.1 killer of Hector's Dolphins and that the decay of our rivers and estuaries is having a profound impact on them and their food source. The problem with pollution is that you can't see it, whereas a dead dolphin in a net is indisputable.

As I have said before, our estuarine waters are the building blocks of many of our fisheries and these are under threat as well. To be honest I am frustrated - the Hector's Dolphin and our inshore fisheries are both under threat and all the Minister Mr Anderton can do to save them, is to poke the stick at the fisherman.

Fishermen do have a role to play and will continue to do so, but this alone will not save the Hector's Dolphins. The Minister needs to look at the big picture. For instance, in the local Hector's domain here we have 4 Dunedin City Council (DCC) consents to discharge sewage onto land where it may enter water as well as DCC consents for land fill on estuary, farming run off, and industrial run off. Numerous dead Hector's Dolphins have washed up on local beaches and autopsies have shown high levels of PCBs, heavy metals, and even the presence of Brucellosis. It's not just nets that kill, so why not look at the big picture if the government really wants to save this endemic dolphin, or is it just to be seen to be doing something for political purposes?

Its simple - if we want a healthy marine environment, we must stop using it as a dumping ground for all our waste

as, bit by bit, it moves though the food chain back to the dolphins and eventually to us though seafood. The problem we are told by industry is, "We know what we do is not healthy, but we can't afford to make the necessary changes." So to do the right thing it is just MONEY. So much money is being spent on the problem of global warming here in NZ and we all will be made to conform one way or another but, let's be honest, even if we get to 0 emissions we will probably solve 1% of the world's problems. Let's focus on what is achievable and would be an invaluable asset for not only our friend the Hector's Dolphin, but for the sustainability of New Zealand. Clean rivers, means clean estuaries and clean seas.

by Allan Anderson

The Hector's Dolphins are endangered and we need your help!!

My name is Jennie Upton. I have lived on the kilmog for the past 3 years and in Waitati for the 21 years before that. I have received a Teaching Fellowship for 2008 which enables me to work with Associate Professor Liz Slooten from the University of Otago, documenting the population of Hector's Dolphins. We are keen to hear of sightings of the dolphins along the coast from Oamaru to Dunedin which is why we are asking for your help. We have survey forms available for you to fill out to help Liz and myself know where to look for the Hector's dolphin when we are doing our field work. The survey forms are an easy way for your information to be collated. Survey forms are on a monthly basis and we would like to collect data over the next 12 months. New/extra forms are available from me. There is an information sheet to accompany the survey form to help you identify the Hector's dolphin. For those of you with longer memories I am also keen to hear of historical sightings. Look forward to hearing from you.

Jennie Upton



Ph 465 8318 or check out my wiki site
<http://DolphinsDownSouth.wikispaces.com>

Produced with assistance of the Otago Regional Council



Summer by the Wharf

Which birds would you expect to see on the estuary in front of the car-park over the coming summer?

The Karitane birdwatchers have now been counting the estuary birds for nearly 6 years and we can finally reasonably predict what you might expect to see when you go for a walk along the river (with about as much confidence as flighty birds will allow.) From late November to January the boat ramp and wharf is a busy area, popular for boating, collecting cockles, picnicking and messing around in the sand and mud, but it still manages to attract some birds.

Below is a list of the species we have seen during our surveys at low tide over summer and the maximum number seen.

Banded Dotterel	2
Bar-tailed Godwit	7
Black Oystercatcher	5
Black Shag	1
Black-backed Gull	10
Black-billed Gull	35
Black-fronted Tern	2
Caspian Tern	2
Kingfisher	3
Little Shag	3
Mallard x Grey Duck	7
Pied Oystercatcher	20
Pied Stilt	3
Red-billed Gull	110
Royal Spoonbill	2
Spotted Shag	1
Stewart Is Shag	3
Welcome Swallow	5
White-faced Heron	2
White-fronted Tern	124

Over on the sand-spit the 2 or 3 pairs of Black Oystercatchers will have eggs by late November and young by Christmas. They will search for cockles on the estuary and will carry them, neatly removed from their shells, to the young on the sand-spit. A few, maybe 20, Pied Oystercatchers will be feeding there as well after nesting much earlier, way back in August, in paddocks as far away as central Otago. With them will be a couple of Pied Stilts that will also have nested earlier – either from

as far away as the Taieri or in the local nesting colonies alongside the road into the village or near Merton. A few of the 100-200 or so Bar-tailed Godwits that spend the summer on the estuary may be feeding in the muddier areas and there are likely to be a couple of Royal Spoonbills nearby.

If the kingfishers have nested in the bank above the boat sheds then the adults and young ones may well be sitting on the old wharf while, beneath the new wharf, swallows will still be feeding young in the nest, as long as the high tides haven’t coincided with rough weather to wash the nests away.

In calm weather there will be the usual bunch of Red-billed Gulls hassling picnickers for food but, if the weather is rough, there will be a flock of a hundred or so gulls and White-fronted Terns out on the sand bar awaiting calmer conditions to return to feed at sea. With them after Christmas may be the first Caspian Terns and the first Black-billed Gulls to return from their nesting areas in Southland and if you are lucky, a couple of small greyish terns amongst the flock will be juvenile Black-fronted Terns from the braided rivers of Central Otago.

Competing with the kids fishing for spotties off the wharf will be Little Shags swimming barely submerged in the shallows and a White-faced Heron or two stalking slowly along the channel edges. The big Black Shag at the end of the sand-spit will either be a dark phase Stewart Island Shag or indeed a Black Shag and the small brown wader scurrying along the gravely sand and picking tiny, almost invisible food off the surface is likely to be a Banded Dotterel.

20 different species in a small, well used area of estuary is not a bad total for New Zealand.

If you do see anything else, especially something you cannot identify, we would like to know - phone Ailsa on 4657419 or Derek on 4822831 and **please could you point out the nesting Black Oystercatchers to picnickers, swimmers and dog owners.** Gulls will swoop in and eat eggs and young if their parents are unable to protect them and dogs have been seen to eat young oystercatchers on more than one Christmas afternoon.

by Derek Onley

Report From Taiapure

Taiapure Committee

You may or may not know that the East Otago Taiapure Committee is involved in a project called “Tiaki Mahinga Kai”, a collaboration of tangata whenua representatives, scientists, kaumatua and other interested groups, designed to give us all a better understanding of our fisheries and to assist our Kaitiaki in making informed decisions in a changing world.

A MoU has now been agreed in principle by the Committee and with a few possible changes should be agreed upon by Tiaki Mahinga Kai at the hui at Onuku (Akaroa) on 12th and 13th November. This project will also enable our Taiapure to access research funding from a wider pool of resources.

East Otago Taiapure Management Committee Management Plan

The final draft of the management plan has been accepted by the committee members and will now be taken back to the stakeholders for comment. This plan has been two years in the making and is a much abridged version of the original.

Set net restriction

The East Otago Taiapure has a regulation in place regarding the use of set nets within the Taiapure area, it basically requires fishers to stay with their nets at all times. This regulation came into force on 1 October 2007 and is the first regulation made in NZ from a Taiapure.

Hectors Dolphins

Recently a dead Hectors dolphin was found in the Waikouaiti River. The post mortem showed the female dolphin had died of disease rather than by fishing practices.

It has been asked that if there are any sightings of Hectors dolphins that these be reported. Please contact Jim Fyfe at the Department of Conservation – 474 6946.

Tuaki

On Thursday 11 October, some members of the East Otago Taiapure Committee went to Blueskin Bay to see the Southern Clams tuaki harvest. Onlookers witnessed the take of around 5 tons of tuaki from the estuary. The visit gave the Taiapure much to ponder on, particularly in regards to the commercial pressure on this fishery and also the impact of any possible future commercial harvesting of tuaki in the Otago Harbour.

Southern Shellfish Management Plan

Taiapure is also represented in the MFish driven “Southern Shellfish Management Plan”. This roopu is made up of MFish representatives, tangata tiaki, commercial, customary and recreational representatives. The meetings are held monthly to formulate a management plan to ensure the sustainable management of this important treasure. The Taiapure has two representatives they are Warren Lewis and Brendan Flack.

by Brendon Flack

River-Estuary Care Waikouaiti - Karitane

Active since 1999 - Incorporated in 2001
Coastal Otago Conservation Award for 2005

Objectives

- To restore balance to Papatuanuku (Mother Earth).
- To have a well informed community about our river and estuary.
- To have our community participating in sustainable resource practices.
- To have a healthy, productive river and estuary eco-system (fishing, biodiversity, general health).
- To promote an understanding of the interrelatedness of our river and estuary ecosystem with adjacent ecosystems.

Anyone interested in supporting the above objectives may join!
Would you like to help with a project this year?

- Newsletter - Hilary Yeoman ph 4657687.
- Revegetation Project - contact Andy Barratt ph 021 890 048.
- Education, Information and Advocacy Project - contact Patti Vanderburg ph 465-8113.
- Birdwatching - contact current convenor Kathy Halliwell ph 465 8118, or Ailsa Johnston ph 465-7419.

Great Progress on Revegetation

The Revegetation Group held its major annual planting day on September 25th. In most respects, this was a repeat performance of last year's effort to establish a significant planting on the river bank by the Hursts' dairy farm. There were, however, two significant differences: first, we were unable to be joined by the children of the Karitane School (we slipped up by organizing the event during the school holidays!); second, the ground was wonderfully moist, thanks to the abundant rains of this spring (last year was extremely dry, by contrast).

Despite the dry (and the gale force winds that coincided with our work last year), the survival rate of the plants put in the ground last September was remarkably good. There were some clear lessons, though. The manuka and kanuka generally did not fare well, with very few plants making it past establishment. Whether this can be attributed to the frailty of the species (we have found both to be quite fickle on our own property), to the dry season, or the planting environment, is difficult to say. Other species – especially the cabbage trees, flaxes and toi toi – have coped pretty well. Bear in mind, too, that the entire area was totally submerged during the recent flood event. Survival rates were also due in some part to the use of plastic buckets as tree protectors. (We are trying to build up our stocks of these, so that as many plants as possible have their own individual protection.)

Our experience helped us greatly in preparing for this year's planting. We decided to concentrate on the hardy pioneers – flax, cabbage tree and toi toi – getting a solid, dense group of these as a first line of defence along

the water's edge. In future floods or high waters, these plants should serve to hold back the snag that washes down the river when it is in flood. We also interplanted with pittosporum, which also seems to be coping well with the conditions at this site.

Once again, we were fortunate this year to have the help of some community service workers, who dug a huge number of planting holes for us. Some of the boys also found time at the end of the day to erect some decorative arrangements from snag wood! On the planting day itself, the Conservation Corps were on hand to help us get the plants in the ground. It was an excellent effort, with the result that the area is now effectively planted out in full. The main job now will be maintenance. With luck, we should start to see some signs of our handiwork from SH1 in a season or two.

Just towards the end of the day, the Conservation Corps cadets helped us do a bit more work on the "triangle" block just before the railway bridge on Coast Road. This is where we will erect the RECWK sign when time and energy permit.

On behalf of the Revegetation Group, I would like to thank all those who turned out on the day. Thanks are also due to the Hurst family, for their continuing support, and to Patti, for organizing the food that sustained us in our labours.

by Andy Barratt

Karitane then and now...

Railway crossing at PUKETERAKI.

1906 ↘



2007 ↘



Karitane School

Welcome from Karitane School. This year has been very busy with our focus on water. We have been looking at water use and conservation within the school and the quality of our drinking water. Consequently we are bringing in spring water for the children to fill their bottles with as the standard of the water coming out of the drinking fountain is variable and it is difficult to keep up with the boil water notices in the area.



The vegetable garden has been rather neglected so far this year and we have just begun replanting for the spring/summer season. Thankfully the fruit trees and native garden have grown despite this and are both looking great! We have had a lot of blossom and there is early fruit on some trees already. The cherry, quince, and plum seem to be the best in these conditions although the apple trees are making good progress considering they were planted with bare roots.

This term we have started our major design projects and they are very ambitious! In the pipe line we have huts, bird houses, feeders, baths, new strawberry beds to cope with the ever increasing number of plants, our native garden seat and many more. Keep your eyes out for these new additions to the school ground before the end of the year.

Today we also heard from the Crimson Foundation which has chosen Karitane School as the winners of its 'makeover' competition. This was applied for to enhance our front fence line with planting and a new fence to protect children from wind and noise/exhaust pollution from the road.

Looking forward to next year our focus is again on water and we will be looking at the local community and the importance of water to people here from pre European times to the present day. How exciting to think about Karitane and life way back then compared to now.

We have had 2 new students start this term and are cramming everything in before the Christmas break. Look out for our end of year picnic in December. See you there!



Te Reo Maori lessons with Rua Puke are able to be outside on sunny days so that the children get to enjoy our grounds.

by Helen Carter

Newsletter News

Many thanks to Ami Kindler for her good work in coordinating River Estuary Watch Newsletter over the last few years. Ami and family are off to the North Island and will be missed. All the best to Ami, Rob and Theo!

Hilary Yeoman is our new coordinator for the newsletter. She's been active with River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane for years, working with estuary and bird monitoring and mucking in on planting days. Great to have her agree to work on the newsletter!

If you have any ideas or articles for future newsletters contact her at dhyeoman@xtra.co.nz or ph 4657687.

River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane AGM

- Saturday, 15 December, 2007
- 4pm
- Karitane School

Short meeting followed by wine and nibbles to celebrate a very successful year

**Everyone welcome, bring a friend
Nibbles contributions please**

Heaps of Help

We had heaps of help on Community Planting Day 2007. It was great to complete the planting on a large whitebait enhancement habitat restoration area on the north side of the Waikouaiti River. Nearly 4 km of fencing was in place from last season with biodiversity grant funds through the Department of Conservation. With the stock excluded from the river 1400 native plantings have gone in with lots of help from volunteers, supported by a grant from the Honda Tree Fund. Thanks to help from the Conservation Corps, Corrections Department community workers, and a lot of folks from the community we have completed the planting part of this project. The St Kilda Marine Environment Trust donated \$1000.00 to our revegetation efforts.

The plants have been hugely successful in establishing themselves despite drought, high winds and recent flooding. That's probably why they are called "natives"! We've also learned that surrounding each plant with a bottomless big plastic bucket gives them a good start,

keeping the worst of the winds and those pesty rabbits at bay. The good folks at Bush Road salads have donated hundreds of plastic buckets to our planting project as part of their business waste minimisation effort. We mark the site of each plant with a tall wooden stake. Local timber yard, Hewvan Timber in Palmerston, provides these at a reasonable cost. Many of our native plants are sheltered for a season or two while they grow to good size in the shade house at the Karitane School. Over the years the school kids have gotten to think playing in a school yard that doubles as a nursery as something to expect.

We've all kicked into a yearly routine of growing, planting, weeding and dreaming of the next planting project. Thanks to everyone who has helped!

Patti Vanderburg

