

## 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 465 7687.
- Revegetation Project – contact Andy Barratt ph 021 890 048.
- Education, Information and Advocacy Project – contact Patti Vanderburg ph 465 8113.
- Birdwatching – contact current convener Allan Hilner 465 8411.

*To become a*

**Friend of the River and Estuary Care: Waikouaiti—Karitane**

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

**Contact for the Birdwatching guide is Brad, phone 465 8334**

### Note Card Order Form

#### Fundraiser for River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane Projects

Elegant Note Cards with Watercolours by Derek Onley

Packet of 5 cards / \$8.00 – Three types available

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

Type	No. of Packets	Cost (\$8.00/pkt)
Black Oystercatchers		
Banded Dotterel		
Gotwit		
Total		

Please send note cards to: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Send payment and order to: H Bradbury (Brad), 126 Coast Road, Karitane



Produced with assistance from the Otago Regional Council

## River Estuary Watch

**River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti – Karitane**

www.landcare.org.nz/karitane

December 2010

### Taiapure Report

2010 will be remembered for 3 significant events which could potentially impact upon our East Otago coastline and fisheries.

Firstly, there was the application by Port Otago to dump over 7 million cubic metres of silt, sand and dead shellfish just off our beaches north of Taiaroa Head. Thankfully, there were over 150 private submissions received by the Otago Regional Council (who incidentally own Port Otago) in opposition to this ill-conceived and destructive plan. This has resulted in Port Otago having to ask for an extension to its RMA hearing process so that they could do more homework on the environmental effects on the fragile reef systems in our area and how they could survive being smothered. Would the port company have looked harder at their science if so many individuals hadn't taken the time to submit on this important issue?

Secondly, On October 1<sup>st</sup> the Taiapure's voluntary regulations came into fisheries law. This marks a turning point for our fishing community and reflects a world that has changed since the introduction, over 30 years ago, of the quota management system and recreational bag limits. The philosophy behind the reduced bag limits for taking fish and shellfish within the Taiapure is one of planning for the future by re-creating a healthy fishery for the generations to come. Signage around our area explains the new rules and closed areas. Such regulations are most successful when the community is behind the changes and is proactive in the care of its resources.

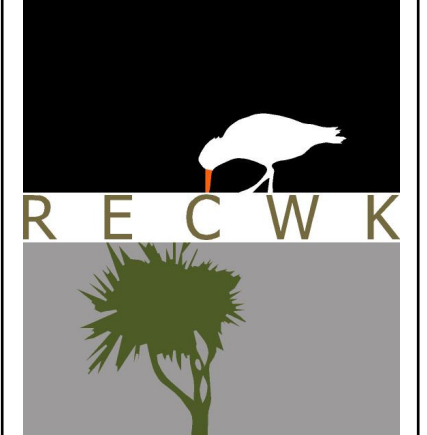
The 3<sup>rd</sup> item of interest is the recent appalling decision by the Minister of Fisheries, Mr Phil Heatley, to introduce bladder kelp into the quota management system. Despite his admission that little information is available on the adverse effects of harvesting bladder kelp in NZ and despite the importance of kelp forests as habitat to fish and shellfish, the minister decided that the best course of action should be to allow over 1200 tons to be cut each year from the kelp forests around

our coastline. Not a particularly conservative approach to fisheries management, more a commercial decision to make a few dollars from one of the last remaining un-fished species. Once the forest is gone, will sand and rocks will be next in the firing line?

All in all, this year has been a mixed bag of good and bad news for the Taiapure's community fishery area and its future.

**Brendan Flack**

River - Estuary Care



Waikouaiti - Karitane

**RESTRICTED DAILY BAG LIMITS**

In the East Otago Taiapure area there is a combined daily bag limit of 50 shellfish per person, consisting of any combination of the species listed in the following table, as long as the individual species limits are not exceeded.

Shellfish Species	Maximum Daily Limit per person	Minimum Size
Cockles	50	none
Cooks Turban	50	none
Crabs	50	none
Kina	10	none
Mussels	50	none
Oysters	50	none
Paua - Ordinary	5	125mm
Paua - Yellow foot	5	80mm
Pipi	50	none
Rock Lobster	6	Female – Tail width 60mm Male – Tail width 54mm
Tuatua	50	none

NB: The maximum combined daily number of shellfish of any species that maybe taken or possessed within the East Otago Taiapure is 50.  
The maximum combined daily number of shellfish applies to all species not specifically named above and includes all crabs, limpets, periwinkles, whelks, barnacles and freshwater crayfish.

**Finfish**

Within the East Otago Taiapure between Huriawa Peninsula and Potato Point, the combined daily bag limit is 10 finfish per person (includes all species). Additionally, no person may possess more than (6) Eels / (5) Groper / (5) Elephant / (5) School Shark / (5) Rig within the combined daily bag limit.

For further information visit: [www.fish.govt.nz](http://www.fish.govt.nz)  
0800 4 FIDACHER  
0800 4762 2437 to report illegal poaching



## High Value Volunteers

At the end of each year we develop a report to quantify the “real” work of project teams, community members, and others – showing all the volunteer hours devoted to the objectives of River-Estuary Care:Waikouaiti-Karitane.

We are especially proud of this reporting method as it gives credit where credit is due as a community based conservation group. Of course, we produce the usual project reports and financial reports – but the volunteer hours report is a stunner.

We’ve just completed our largest habitat restoration project to date – a 2 hectare section of land along the Merton Tidal Arm of the Waikouaiti River Estuary near the Coast Rd turnoff to Karitane along Highway 1. Many of you will have noticed the gorse clearing and planting activities all through the winter months. 6000 native bushes and trees were planted. This was only possible due to a generous \$21,800 grant from the Department of Conservation Community Conservation fund and an incredible 1967 volunteer hours. Volunteers

were from our community, our project teams, Karitane School, Contact Energy staff, Correction Department Community Workers, Mercure Hotel staff, Enviroschools Secondary Schools hui participants, Task Force Green workers, the Department of Conservation Youth Development Programme, and University of Otago Outdoor Education students. We couldn’t have done it without the “real” spade-in-hand help of all of these good people. Our project got a good variety of people of all ages, from a range of backgrounds, from corporates to kids - all working together with a fabulous result.



This was the BIG project of the year. Other ongoing projects like the newsletter, information and advocacy work, and the 6 weekly bird monitoring added yet more volunteer hours. The grand total for all our work was 2,689 volunteer hours. Given a reasonable monetary value (at \$15/hr) this is equivalent to \$40,335. SPECTACULAR!!!!

If you or your group, company, or family would like to volunteer next season please contact Andy Barratt: [asbarratt@farmside.co.nz](mailto:asbarratt@farmside.co.nz) or Joel Vanderburg: [zburg@es.co.nz](mailto:zburg@es.co.nz)

**Patti Vanderburg**

**Information/Education/Advocacy Project**

## East Otago—the new eco capital?

Six thousand plants. Phew! As reported elsewhere in the newsletter, our big project for the year is now complete. And what a job it was. For River-Estuary Care this was by far the most ambitious planting we have undertaken and we can take particular pride in reflecting on a job well done. The only shame is that the Department of Conservation fund that paid for it is no longer available.

Although getting this many plants into the ground was a major physical effort, this was, above all, a huge exercise in logistics. And for this we have to thank Joel Vanderburg. Joel was who wrote the original grant application (a task which would have deterred even the stoutest of heart); and it was Joel too who made sure that we kept on track, organizing the various groups of workers who did the manual work, keeping the books and running back and forth between the nursery and the planting site with plants and materials. We are all in his debt.

In terms of the planting itself, it is good, I feel, that what we have done will, in time, be so visible from the main highway. Like the work we did on the Ritchie property the year before, the planting



Brendan Flack, Hinerangi Ferrall-Heath, Greg Kerr and George Meikle trial their hand-built waka unna in the Karitane estuary on 19/11/2010. It is made out of stripped plank Kahikatea and they plan to add a deck and sail as well as bow and stem carvings before its official launch and naming, which will be in the near future.

## Upper Catchment Field Trip

We are planning a day trip from Karitane all the way up the Waikouaiti River Catchment for March 2011. The trip will be by road with information stops along the way to help everyone understand the nature of the river, its history and contemporary challenges. Watch for notices. Limited spaces. No cost. If you would like to receive a personal reminder send your contact information to Patti Vanderburg, [zburg@es.co.nz](mailto:zburg@es.co.nz) or ring 465-8113.

**Allan**

## Otago Regional Council meetings in Waikouaiti

The second public workshop on setting a minimum flow for the Waikouaiti catchment was held in September. A minimum flow stops consented water takes at times of low flow, providing for aquatic ecosystems and the natural character of the river, while allowing for economic, environmental, recreational and social values. Workshop participants discussed various possible minimum flows, and their potential effect on the river and its values. It was a productive gathering, generating useful information for setting a minimum flow. The key themes from the workshop can be viewed on the ORC website [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz), along with other background information. A third workshop is planned for early 2011, where a recommended minimum flow will be discussed.

For further information contact Anja McAlevey, Policy Analyst, 0800 474 082 or [policy@orc.govt.nz](mailto:policy@orc.govt.nz)

A public meeting was also held in August, as part of a series around Otago on regionally significant wetlands. Proposed Plan Change 2 to the Regional Plan: Water was discussed, which seeks to better maintain and enhance Otago's regionally significant wetlands. The meeting was well attended, and valuable feedback was received. The ORC is currently reviewing the comments provided and intends to notify the proposed plan change over the coming months. At that time formal submissions on the changes can be made by members of the public.

For further information see the ORC website [www.orc.govt.nz](http://www.orc.govt.nz), or contact Andrew Sullivan, Policy Analyst, 0800 474 082 or [policy@orc.govt.nz](mailto:policy@orc.govt.nz).



# WAIKOUAITI RIVER ESTUARY HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT 2010



*River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane is working to improve water quality and enhance the biodiversity of the Waikouaiti River and Estuary in Coastal Otago.*

*Two large areas totalling 2 hectares along the Merton Tidal arm of the estuary was cleared of much of the exotic bush and over 6000 native trees, bushes and grasses were planted to begin the restoration of this natural wetland environment. Nearly 2000 hours of volunteer work went into making the project possible!*

## Thanks to the following groups

- Karitane School
- Community volunteers
- Task Force Green
- Enviroschools Secondary Schools Hui
- Kati Huirapa Runaka
- University of Otago Outdoor Education Students
- Correction Department Community Workers
- Mercure Hotel Staff
- Contact Energy Staff
- Gregg's Coffee
- Blueskin Nurseries
- Department of Conservation Youth Development Programme
- Otago Regional Council

## Project Sponsors

- Department of Conservation
- Community Conservation Grant
- Karitane Community Book Sale

For further information contact  
Patti Vanderburg [vburlg@es.co.nz](mailto:vburlg@es.co.nz)  
or 03-465-8113



will have a significant impact on local amenity as well as estuary restoration. This can only be good for our public profile.

It is only natural, of course, that we should dwell on our own achievement, but we should not forget that ours was not the only DoC-funded project to be undertaken in our locality. In fact, ours was only one of three such projects. The other two were the plantings on the Huriawa Peninsula and the restoration work at the Hawksbury Lagoon. Taken together, these three projects must surely count as one of the most outstanding efforts in ecological protection anywhere in the region, if not the entire country.

But wait, as the cheesy infomercials say, there's more. As we all know, the recent opening and continuing development of the Ecosanctuary at Orokonui means that we are now on the map internationally. Add to this the Mt Watkin/Hikaroroa Scenic Reserve, which now has a Management Plan and will open to the public in about a year or so and we have even more reason to take pride in our region. And don't forget the Tavora Reserve at Bobby's Head which offers spectacular proof of what can be achieved by a well-organized grass-roots organization (in this case, the Yellow-Eyed Penguin Trust).

So, even as we react glumly to the depressing news that comes our way every day – climate change, peak oil, water quality, etc. – it is all the more important that we take note of the things which can at least give us some glimmer of hope what often seems to be an ever-increasing gloom. To finish, then, I call on you all to join me in a rousing chorus of the Fred Dagg classic, "We don't know how lucky we are".

Andy Barratt

## Ngai Tahu Hui aTau



Marquees on the foreshore in preparation for Ngai Tahu Hui aTau 19 November



## Memories of the river

Probably my earliest memory of the river is when I learnt to row. My brothers got sick of me trailing round behind them so they paddled me out to the middle of the river in the old flattie and threw the anchor out as far as they could get it and left me with just a pair of little paddles. I was stuck out there until the tide went out again and the only thing I could do was try and row – so I did. When I could, I walked ashore but I couldn't lift the oars so I had to drag them home by the handles and Dad ticked me off for ruining the blades.

On another occasion the brothers made a sail for the flattie out of coal sacks and attached it to an oar. We had just got off the shore when the sou'wester came up. It just went whoof! Caught the boat and whooshed it right over the river. I got scared and started to howl and, when we got to the other side, I was still bawling and they put me in a sack and tied the top and left me lying on the beach because I wouldn't shut up! I remember they were both looking pretty scared themselves - they were only about 8 and 10. Dad raced over in a dinghy to rescue us and picked up the sack with me in it and dropped it into the boat. I was just glad to be safe- I can still remember how terrified I was!

We often went up the river and picnicked on a sandy beach next to the railway bridge. All the picnic stuff was piled into the boat and Dad rowed up there while the rest of us walked along the river bank and across the bridge and settled down there for the day. Mum had her 'picnic pots' and in the early days she filled them with the water from the river and she'd do all the spuds and peas there over an open fire and we'd have cold meat too – a proper meal. That was before Cherry Farm and I think most of the land was used by Seadiff Hospital for potatoes, wheat and other crops- there weren't many animals grazing. Later on, when the water got dirty, we took our own flagons of water.

A lot of people swam in the river – the water was good and clear and you could see right down to the bottom. On summer nights, all the young people gathered at the king hole, jumping off the wall. It's not really a king hole now, but the original king hole was a great big place and when the tide was ripping out it whirl-pooled and you couldn't swim in it. When I was about 14, I went down there with our diving helmet on and it was wonderful. Stewart made the diving helmet out of a wartime gas mask. He took the filter off the front and attached an air hose and then

soldered a copper pipe off to the side so that when you breathed out the bubbles didn't go in your face. I took the anchor over my shoulder as I got into the water and that weighted me down so I could sink to the bottom. Meanwhile, up at the top, the pumping crew were in the boat with an old fire brigade pump attached to the mask by a garden hose and, as I walked along on the bottom I was pulling the boat along behind with the pump. It was great! The day I went down to the bottom of the king hole there were wee fish all around – they weren't scared at all they just brushed past. Wee Butter fish and all sorts and nice big fat Flounders around my feet. The worst thing that happened there was a bit later on, in the 1950s, when a school group from town was out here and a young boy drowned. One of the fishermen went home and got a net and dragged the hole and they pulled him up in the net – it was just awful.

There were always boats out on the river – people out rowing, paddling canoes and sailing. There were lots of fishing boats too and, after the war when all the men came back, there were over 20 boats working out of here. When they came back in, they left their boats on the moorings and brought all the fish ashore in punts and deaned it on the beach by the old wharf. You could go down there and get a great big groper for about 2 shillings- straight out of the water- it was brilliant! Lots of people used to do that on the weekends - you could pick out which fish you wanted and they would prepare it for you.

I think that it was in the 1940s or 50s that the water began to get dirty. It wasn't the septic tanks because they were strictly regulated, but, if you walked along the Karitane front after dark, you were likely to see someone with a big tin can pouring stuff out. There was lots of general rubbish tipping as well as the toilet stuff. Rusty roofing iron, broken bottles and tin cans and ashes which went into a yucky sludge.

I remember masses of birds. The sandbanks were white with gulls in February and March when they were getting ready to go. There were White Herons every summer but no Spoonbills –when the Spoonbills turned up the herons disappeared. Oystercatchers and shags were thick on the ground and there was a bad time for a while after the war when the Acclimatisation Society started handing out half a crown a head for Black Shags because they said they were getting up the river and taking the trout. People were knocking off the Black Shags and chopping their heads off just to get their half crown! One of the nicest things I can remember about the birds was once when I was rowing back down the river. The fog rolled in and it was flat calm and deathly silent and I couldn't even see the sides of the river. Then I saw a wee gull sitting on the water with his head tucked in, then another and another. I shipped the oars and sat as still as I could and was drifting down the river and before long I was totally surrounded by wee birds all sleeping on the water, drifting along with me. There were hundreds of them and it was just beautiful. It was lovely.



Donnie Mackay

## Yellow Eyed Penguins seen at Karitane

There have been several recent sightings of 2 yellow eyed penguins on Karitane beach and local dog owners are asked to keep their dogs well controlled.

