



Spring newsletter

November 2021



Pohatu bay/Marine Reserve in Spring

Let's be honest... at Pohatu Penguins we love spring! Season of new beginnings, trees blooming and babies appearing in every corner of the farm and the penguin colony. Each day at work brings new discoveries...

Spring is a busy time: we get back into our weekly monitoring of the penguin colony – we don't want to miss that 1st egg laid! We also have to make sure our precious flightless feathered friends are protected from predation on the land at this crucial time of the year. From then it's an intensive guard: penguin parents guarding their eggs and chicks, and us guarding the very fragile eco-system they depend on.



Breeding season 2021

A rather later start

The first eggs of the season – which marks the official start of the breeding season - were spotted late August. A late start if we compare to previous years: usually starting around mid-August, we had an exceptionally early start last year at the end of July.

At the time you are reading this newsletter the first chicks of the season have fledged... Most of the colony has chicks all ages and we are expecting to have chicks in the colony until late December at least...



Our new monitoring device

In our [last newsletter](#), we announced our **collaboration with NZ Penguin Initiative** and our modernisation using a monitoring App!

So how does that work? Well, each nesting box in the colony has an ID. Every time we do a new monitoring on the nest, we can see the history of the nest with photo of the occupants. Great to follow the growth of the chicks for example!

This is actually a **big step in our research project** as this will allow to analyse data faster and more efficiently.



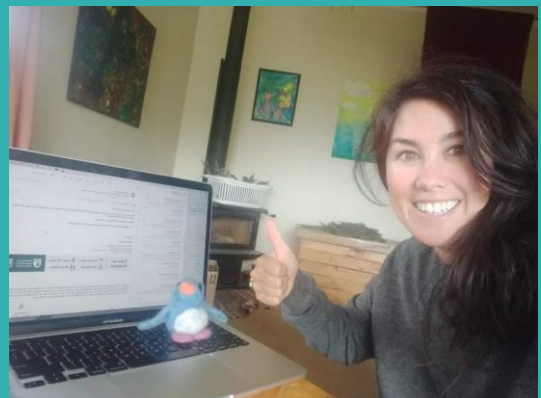
On our training day... baby and lambs tagging along!!

Research

Good news, the permit

We were so pleased to finally receive a few weeks ago the answer from the Department of Conservation that our application for research was granted. Micro-chipping and GPS tracking of penguins at sea will be taking place for the next 10 years. Hooray!!

A huge step for the Helps Pohatu Conservation Trust!



Predator control

The ferret terror!

In September, a dubious dropping on one of our traps led us to think that it could have been a sign of a potential ferret in the colony!

We rapidly got in touch with **Banks Peninsula Predator free** and very quickly we were lent 10 tunnel live traps. After weeks of daily monitoring we only caught a few rats... and never spotted a ferret!

With our weekly trapping run, using 150 traps - DOC150, DOC200 and Timm's Traps – we have managed to catch 17 mustelids (stoat, weasel), 100 rats, 111 hedgehogs, 36 possums over the past year.



Ferrets, from the mustelid family, are a huge threat to our native wildlife – including ground dwelling penguins.

Photo credit: predatorfreenz.org



Children help us check and rebait the tunnel live traps during the Conservation club holiday program

Penguin survey - round 2

Banks peninsula/Horomaka Korora survey 2020-2021

Started last year in October 2020, [Horomaka Korora](http://www.pohatu.co.nz) also known as “The big little penguin survey on Banks Peninsula” re-started in October 2021. Averil, coordinator of the survey, plans to have the survey be finished by December 2021 if sea conditions allow as most of the remaining sites to be surveyed are accessible by boat and kayaks only.

https://www.pohatu.co.nz/Our+blog/penguin_survey.html



After accessing the site by kayak, Caro is recording a penguin nest in the survey app



Can you spot the penguin chick?

Little penguins are on TV !!

Two documentaries about our conservation work and farming style are aired this S

Korora movie:

During the penguin survey last year, Averil and her enthusiastic team of volunteers w assisted by the **Blue Cradle Foundation**, an ocean science and conservation no organization. A movie-doc “Korora” was made by James Nikitine, co-founder director Cradle and Kerepeti Paraone following the team of surveyors in action. It was released in 2021 for a movie premiere at the Antarctic Centre in Christchurch, then screened cinemas “Lumière” in Lyttleton and “Ethel’s Cinema” in Akaroa.

The movie is now available on RNZ and Youtube. Feel free to share far and wide!



Country Calendar : 7th of November 2021

We were thrilled when last winter the “Country Calendar” team contacted us to come and film the crew on our daily life and work in Pohatu. Last time the crew came to Pohatu to film a documentary about Shireen & Francis was 15 years ago... Since then, a few things might have changed like some new faces in the team but the passion and dedication is still intact...

If you have missed this episode, you can watch it on [TVNZ On Demand](https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/country-calendar/episos2021-e34):
<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/country-calendar/episos2021-e34>



Very excited to be featuring on one of NZ's most popular program!



The Country Calendar filming crew follows Joey and the Conservation club

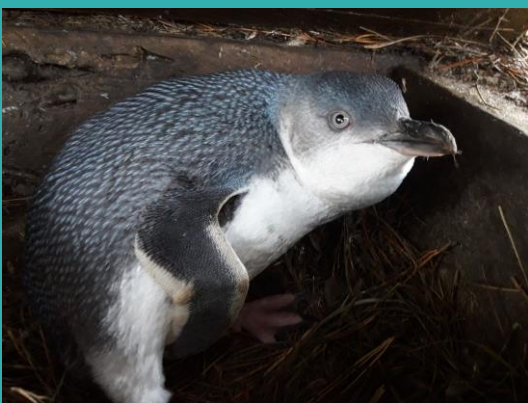
Adopt a penguin

Lots of renewals and new adoptions - thank you for the support!

Country Calendar has put us on the spot and we are extremely thankful for that! Since watching the program many of you have adopted a penguin or renewed their existing adoption.

We are touched by the on-going support from many of you. It is heart-warming to see your engagement with conservation efforts and with our beautiful wildlife. We know that many had to put their visit on hold due to the current situation, so in the meantime the least we can do is to connect you with news from your adopted penguin.

Sponsoring a little penguin in the colony has indeed become a popular gift for any occasion. If you intend to adopt for a Xmas present please do not wait the 24th of December, even for a Digital pack!



Raphael has been designated Penguin of the month... for his funny postures!



Pohatu Korora Kaitiaki Program

Spring holiday session

During the last school holiday, Joey and Averil took the children on conservation adventures again. This time, the kids could trial some equipment lent by Alice Webster from Bank Peninsula Conservation Trust to do **water testing from the creek**.

Predator control, penguin nests monitoring, hike and beach art were also on the program.

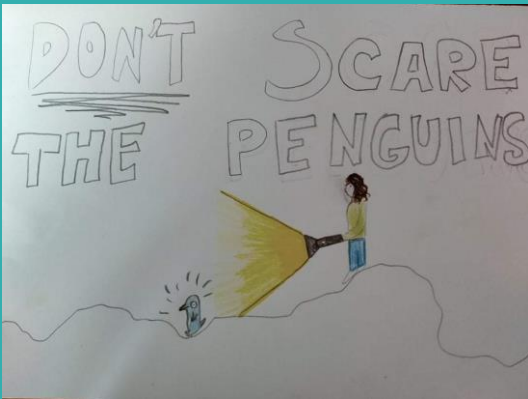


Our little conservationists loved watching the little creatures that live in water and by the number of organisms found in the creek we can say that the stream is healthy!





Days in Pohatu are pretty cool for our little Kaitiaki...



*The children got also very inspired in educating visitors by making their own signage.
Well done Kaitiaki!!*

Rare breed sheep

A good lambing season on the Valais side. 14 new F1 (first cross) from Ruben the Remarkable et 7 F2 (2nd cross between F1 hoggets from Bobby and Ruben). A pretty good descendance so far from our Valais Black Nose ram!



Bye Bye Old Baa baa...

It is with great sadness that we saw our old Romney Baa Baa "pass on the other side of the fence". It wasn't long after she gave birth to a beautiful cross Valais Black Nose ewe named

Ambaa that she suddenly became unwell. An amazing character this one, she was the friendliest of all sheep, always coming for a pat and a few sheep nuts. She gave birth to many healthy lambs during her long life until the last.

Goodbye old Baa Baa, you are sorely missed.

