

# BIRD CALL

December 2015 Issue 23



oroKonui  
ecosanctuary

## Chris's Column

Prince Charles and Camilla Duchess of Cornwall spent an hour at Orokonui Ecosanctuary during their visit to Dunedin recently. The Minister of Conservation, Maggie Barry, accompanied them on their tour where they had close encounters with tuatara, Otago skinks and native frogs, saw numerous bird species and our rare plants garden. Prince Charles then spoke to a group of 40 and said that New Zealand was making a world-leading effort in nature conservation and Orokonui had an important role as a haven for many endangered species. The media associated with the royal visit should give a major boost to our international profile.

*Kind Regards, Chris - General Manager*



*Elton and Neville shows Prince Charles and the Hon. Maggie Barry around the Ecosanctuary. Photo credit Paul Sorrell.*

## Elton's Army

The stoat saga continues with a detection dog finding an active den on 5th November. Kelly and I managed to trap the female and 2 kits the following day. As the den was at the base of our largest totara it was impossible to excavate to retrieve the remaining kits. An autopsy by Landcare scientists showed that none of the 3 were in good condition and any surviving kits were very unlikely to survive without mum. This once again shows the value of having better access to a stoat detection dog.

Life goes on and our takahe family continues to flourish with both parents now feeding the one chick. As they are back into their core home range around the mown area it is hoped they will start to relax around humans more.



*Stoat and 1 kit trapped abandoning the den.*

# Forest of Knowledge

The education team has been very busy with 523 students visiting this month!

We are excited to announce our first jaunt with the “Lab in a box”, a traveling shipping container lab, to meet the learning needs of rural and low decile schools on the west coast. Thanks to our wonderful Sofie for leading this expedition!

We have enjoyed working with Megan Brasel Jones and her wonderful students from Otago Polytech Communication Design department, creating resources for Takahe Awareness Month, November 2015.

We are overjoyed to be working with Quinn Berentson, author of the award winning “Moa” and NZ on Air funded team “Wild Eyes” to host an interactive Moa discovery workshop on Sunday 22nd.

We are also very honoured to take part in the Huia a Iwi tamariki day at Dunedin Public Library from 2.30pm on Saturday 21st November.



*Lab in a Box.*

## Volunteers' Voices

With over 1100 volunteer hours for October things have been ticking along nicely. The sign upgrade along the public walking tracks will be completed shortly with some of the new signage already in place.

A big thanks to all our volunteers who helped in preparation of the Royal visit. This was a momentous occasion for Orokonui and the place looked fantastic.

The Otago skinks particularly enjoyed the spring cleaning of their enclosure as many invertebrates were uncovered which they then promptly tried to eat.



*Otago skinks supervising the work of volunteer Hilary Phillips'*

## A big thanks to

- The DOC Community Fund for contributing to our biodiversity conservation staff salaries.
- The Ministry of Education for continuing to support our Education Programme.
- Hope and Sons for their ongoing sponsorship.
- The Nellie Milnes Charitable Trust for contributing to our walking track signage update.
- The Callis Charitable Trust for supporting the participation of low decile schools in our education programme.
- Ralph Allen and Lidy Riestra for supporting equipment needs for our biodiversity work.

## Shop

For Christmas gifts that give twice with the sales supporting our work:

- New 2016 Orokonui calendars
- Orokonui gift vouchers for; annual passes, fence post plaques, membership...
- Orokonui caps, beanies, bird feeders, coffee mugs...

We also have toys, books and new in stock beautiful bird clocks that chime with different bird calls.



Open Daily 9.30am-4.30pm for Guided Tours and Self Guided Walks  
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