

Nominations for new Trustees

Otago Natural History Trust Board

October 2020

Carey Knox

I am a herpetologist, currently with Wildland Consultants, based in Dunedin. I studied Zoology, Ecology, and Wildlife Management (BSc, PgDip, MSc) at the University of Otago graduating in 2010. I work on a wide range of lizard-focused projects relevant to the management and conservation of New Zealand lizards. My main focus is assisting the Department of Conservation with improving the understanding of endangered and data-deficient lizard taxa in southern New Zealand. I have also undertaken a number of lizard translocations including green skinks and jewelled geckos to Ōrokonui Ecosanctuary. My other interests include nature photography and family time.

Geoff Plunket

I started volunteering, as part of the operations team, at Orokonui Ecosanctuary in 2017 after retiring from my full-time role at Port Otago. I joined the Orokonui Ecosanctuary Board in late 2018. With Ross Smith's retirement from the Otago Natural History Trust I am stepping up to help the Trust to manage its finances. I have a Bachelor of Commerce from Otago University. After graduating I worked for Price Waterhouse Coopers in Dunedin and in Birmingham, England before joining Port Otago in 1988 as their Chief Financial Officer. I held a variety of roles at Port Otago before being appointed CEO in 2004. It is a pleasure to be able to support the Orokonui conservation project and to continue the hard work from everyone who has contributed to Orokonui's success.

Yolanda van Heezik

Yolanda van Heezik is a Professor in the Zoology Department at the University of Otago, where she teaches wildlife management, harvest management, and conservation biology. Her research interests include mammalian invasive species, wildlife in urban areas, biodiversity of private gardens and urban green spaces, and people's attitudes, motivations and knowledge about biodiversity and their connection to nature. She is also involved in research on marine bird ecology with a focus on penguins.

Georgeina Pickerell

I have a background in research and monitoring to protect biodiversity, with a focus on birds. Nowadays, I primarily work as a teaching fellow in the Zoology Department at the University. I first became involved with Orokonui in 2005 when I joined Derek's bird counting team. I am a current member of the Orokonui Knowledge Group (OKG) and have played an active part in updating Orokonui's Restoration Plan and advising Orokonui staff on kākā research. I would like to help Orokonui succeed in restoring indigenous biodiversity back to the region.

John Barkla

I grew up on a dairy farm in Taranaki before studying at Massey University. I joined the New Zealand Forest Service in the mid-1980s then DOC from 1987, working initially on wild animal /pest control issues in the lower North Island. I then moved to Dunedin in 1987 and was the Otago Conservancy botanist for about 15 years. Later I worked alongside community groups to help them achieve their aims and was heavily involved in setting up predator free Dunedin. Before retiring in April I was a senior ranger helping manage the work of the Coastal Otago District. I have particular interests in the outdoors, plant conservation, and citizen science. I am married to Marilyn and have two grown-up daughters.