

OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD



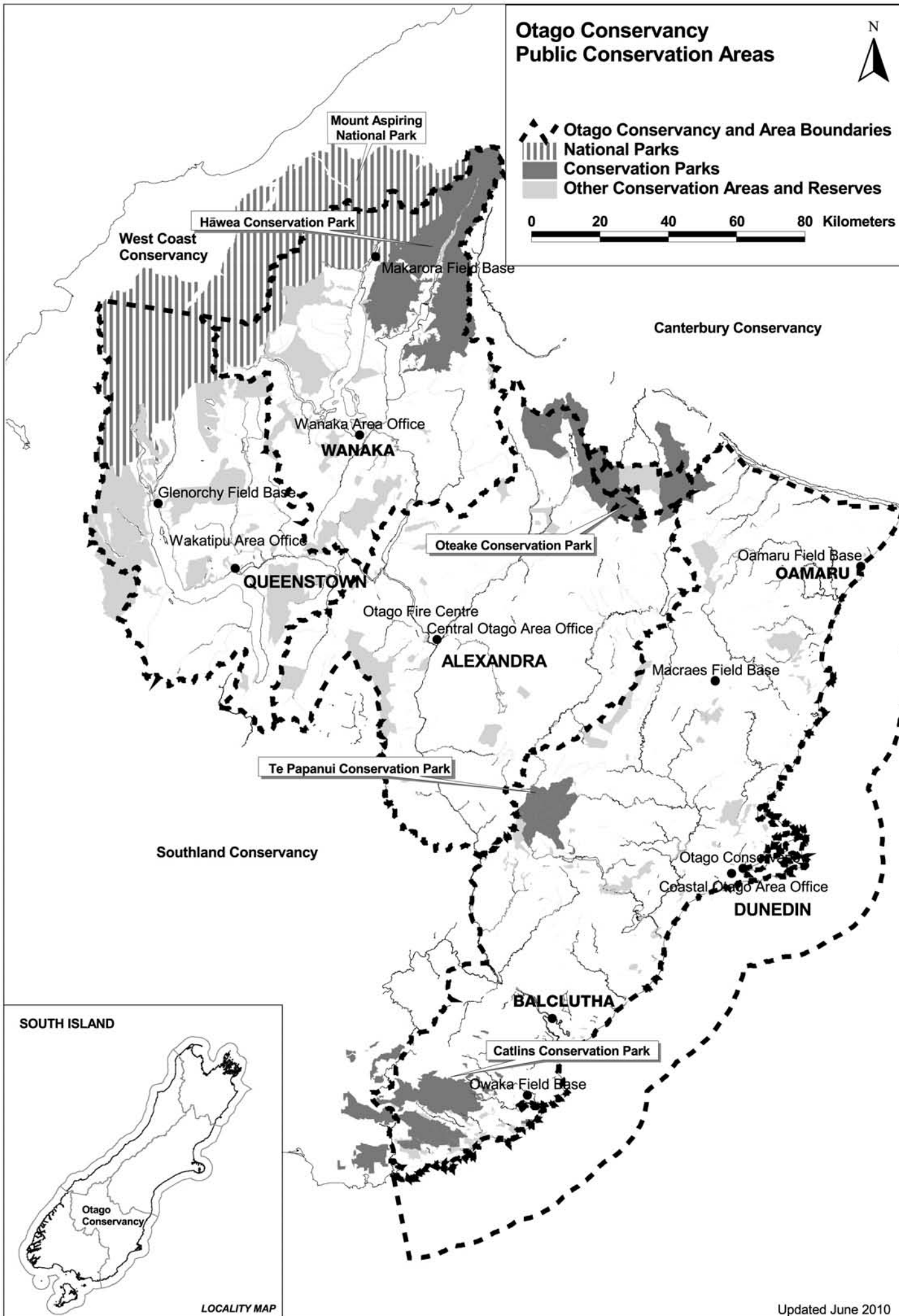
2010/2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Otago Conservancy
Public Conservation Areas



- Otago Conservancy and Area Boundaries
- National Parks
- Conservation Parks
- Other Conservation Areas and Reserves

0 20 40 60 80 Kilometers



Otago Conservation Board Annual Report for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011

*Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority
pursuant to Section 6(0) of the Conservation Act 1987*

Photograph : Front Cover

Members of the Otago Conservation Board, with the Otago Conservator and other Department of Conservation staff who support the Board, in the Kopuwai Conservation Area at the southern end of the Old Man Range on 5 February 2011. Flower heads of the speargrass, Golden Spaniard (*Aciphylla aurea*), can be seen emerging from the surrounding narrow-leaved-red tussock grassland.

[Photograph by Mike Tubbs]

Photograph : Back Cover

Hon Kate Wilkinson, the Minister of Conservation, helping to release a Haast tokoeka (*Apteryx australis 'Haast'*) in the Orokonui Ecosanctuary near Dunedin - one of eight that were transferred from crèche islands in Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau on 30 October 2010. Their parents and most of the other remaining wild Haast tokoeka live in the Haast Tokoeka Kiwi Sanctuary in South Westland, which includes the northern part of the Haast Range in Mount Aspiring National Park. The new Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan, approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority on 23 June 2011, gives special recognition to the Haast Tokoeka Kiwi Sanctuary as one of three priority places for threatened species programmes in the park.

As one of New Zealand's rarest kiwi, Haast tokeka were defined as a separate sub-species from other southern tokoeka species in Fiordland and Stewart Island in 1993. They have a brown/grey plumage with a reddish tinge, pale-coloured legs and claws, long whiskers, and down-curved bills that can be from around 135 mm long for females and 110 mm long for males. Typical weights of adult birds are around 3 kg for females and 2.3 kg for males.

[Photograph by Claudia Babirat]

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OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD

2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT

This report has been prepared for the New Zealand Conservation Authority pursuant to section 6(O) of the Conservation Act 1987. Copies of the report have been circulated to individuals and organizations with an interest in the Board's activities.

1 INTRODUCTION TO BOARD MEMBERS

From 1 July 2010 to 22 December 2010, the members of the Board were as follows: (The official Board term expiry dates which applied during that period and the number of full Board meetings attended between 1 July 2010 and 22 December 2010 are shown in the final two columns. Those Board members whose terms officially ended on 31 August 2010 continued in the role until new Board members were appointed.)

Hoani S Langsbury (Chair)	Otakou	31 August 2010	1
Ross Allan	Dunedin	31 August 2010	2
Dr David Holdsworth	Dunedin	30 June 2012	2
Chas Morris	Wanaka	31 August 2011	0
Dr Garry H Nixon	Alexandra	31 August 2010	2
Andrew Penniket	Wanaka	31 August 2009	2
Iris Scott	Glenorchy	31 August 2010	2
Assoc Prof Abigail M Smith	Dunedin	31 August 2011	2
Chas F Tanner	Purakanui	31 August 2011	2
Dr Jim E Williams	Dunedin	30 June 2012	2

The present members of the Otago Conservation Board were appointed by the Minister of Conservation for terms commencing on 22 December 2010 or earlier, and ending on the dates listed below. The number of full Board meetings attended between 22 December 2010 and 30 June 2011 is given in the final column.

Assoc Prof Abigail M Smith (Chair)	Dunedin	31 August 2011	2
Gordon Bailey	Queenstown	30 June 2013	2
Francie Diver	Alexandra	30 June 2013	2
Dr David Holdsworth	Dunedin	30 June 2012	2
Chas Morris	Wanaka	31 August 2011	1
Dr Garry H Nixon	Alexandra	31 August 2010	2
Andrew Penniket	Wanaka	30 June 2012	2
Iris Scott	Glenorchy	31 August 2010	2
Chas F Tanner*	Purakaunui	31 August 2011	1
Dr Jim E Williams	Dunedin	30 June 2012	1

* (Chas F Tanner resigned from the Board in February 2011 and was not replaced.)

2 INTRODUCTION TO BOARD DISTRICT

The boundaries of the Board's area of jurisdiction correspond roughly with those of the Otago Conservancy of the Department of Conservation (see map inside front cover).

However, both Mount Aspiring National Park and the Catlins Conservation Park (which comprises the major inland portion of the Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park) are wholly within the Board's district, even though parts of these parks are managed by the West Coast and Southland Conservancies of the Department, respectively. This was done to ensure a single approach with regard to policy and planning for these parks.

The marine boundary is the Twelve Mile Limit in relation to marine reserve issues and the Exclusive Economic Zone in relation to marine mammal issues.

Significant protected areas within the Board's area of jurisdiction include:

- **Mount Aspiring National Park**
355,531 ha (192,855 ha in the Otago Conservancy, 162,676 ha in the West Coast Conservancy)
- **Catlins Coastal Rainforest Park**
This is a collective name for the Catlins Conservation Park of 50,693 ha (32,933 ha in the Otago Conservancy, 17,760 ha in the Southland Conservancy) and numerous reserves and conservation areas which are located along or near the Catlins coast.
- **Te Papanui Conservation Park**
This park comprises 20,591 ha of tussock grassland, wetlands, shrubland and silver beech forest remnants on the Lammermoor and Lammerlaw Ranges northwest of Lake Mahinerangi near Lawrence.
- **Hāwea Conservation Park**
The Hāwea Conservation Park covers about 105,000 ha of public conservation land around Lake Hawea and the Hunter River, as well as areas on the McKerrow Range near Makarora. Large areas in the park are covered with native beech forest and shrublands.
- **Oteake Conservation Park**
About 65,000 ha of public conservation land on the St Bathans, Hawkdun, Ida, Ewe and St Marys Ranges to the north of Ranfurly and St Bathans have been included in this new conservation park. Its vegetation is dominated by tussock grasslands.
- **Otago Central Rail Trail**
A very popular recreational facility for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders, which follows the route of the former Otago Central Branch railway line for 150 kilometres between Clyde and Middlemarch.
- **Coronet Peak / Remarkables / Treble Cone**
Parts of the public conservation land at these sites are occupied by commercial skifields that are well-known for winter recreational activities, but are popular summer destinations too.
- **Morning Star Beach Recreation Reserve**
Adjoining the Shotover River at Arthurs Point near Queenstown, this recreation reserve is the site of major commercial jetboating, rafting and giant swing operations. The DOC Wakatipu Area office relocated to a building in the reserve during the reporting period.

Populations of the following significant or well-known indigenous species can be found within the Board's area of jurisdiction (including the western part of Mount Aspiring National Park):

- **Lizards** (Otago skink/mokomoko, grand skink/mokomoko, jewelled gecko/moko kākāriki)
- **Birds** (Royal albatross/toroa, Haast tokoeka, yellow-eyed penguin/hōiho, buff weka, mōhua/yellowhead, South Island robin/kakaruai, Stewart Island shag/kōau)
- **Marine Mammals** (New Zealand sea lion/pakake, Hectors dolphin/upokohue, New Zealand fur seal/kekeno, southern right whale/tohorā)
- **Invertebrates** (Cromwell chafer beetle *Prodontria lewisii*, *Peripatus* species)
- **Freshwater Fish** (Gollum galaxias *Galaxias gollumoides*, kōura/freshwater crayfish, lowland longjaw galaxid *Galaxias cobitinis*)
- **Plants** (Hectors tree daisy *Olearia hectorii*, rare grass *Simplicia laxa*, rare cresses *Lepidium kirkii* and *Lepidium sisymbrioides*, *Pittosporum patulum*)

Otago is the southern limit for naturally-occurring stands of beech forest (i.e. *Nothofagus menziesii* in the Catlins) and a number of other native plants, including ngāio/kāio (*Myoporum laetum*), akiraho (*Olearia paniculata*), and some plants found only on rocky scree slopes.

3 CONSERVATION BOARD MEETINGS

The following Board meetings were held in the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011:

- **Full Board Meetings**

17 September 2010	Orokonui
26 November 2010	Owaka
4 February 2011	Alexandra
13 May 2011	Lawrence

- **Public Forums**

The Board set aside an hour for a public forum during each of the four Board meetings listed above. Up to 18 members of the public attended each of these sessions and many of them shared their comments and views on local conservation issues with the Board.

- **Field Inspections**

17 September 2010	Orokonui Ecosanctuary
26 November 2010	Nugget Point/Tokatā Reserve, Surat Bay Scenic Reserve, Pounaweia Scenic Reserve
5 February 2011	Bain Block (Old Man Range) Conservation Area, Kopuwai Conservation Area, Mitchells Cottage Historic Reserve
14 May 2011	Gabriels Gully Historic Reserve

In addition to participating in formal inspections, individual members often visit sites on existing and proposed public conservation land to update themselves on values and management issues.

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan Review Working Party Meeting | 2-3 November 2010 (involving a field trip to key sites in the park and discussions with NZCA representatives) |
| - Scientific Advisory Group Meeting | 18 November 2010 |

4 BOARD FUNCTIONS UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Section 6M(1)(a) Approval of Conservation Management Strategies

The Board was not involved in any statutory actions associated with the approval of conservation management strategies (CMS) during the reporting period.

Towards the end of 2010, the Department of Conservation provided Board members with detailed background information on the proposed 'new generation' of CMS documents, and examples of how the main sections of the documents should be presented.

Large parts of the Board meetings held in February and May 2011 were devoted to discussions on the following aspects of the CMS review process:

- the features and conservation values that make Otago distinctive;
- the identification and organization of 'Places' (including high country conservation parks) for a new Draft Otago CMS;
- the importance of consultation with key interest groups;
- the timing of Board input, so that the Department can meet the deadlines of public notification by May 2012 and New Zealand Conservation Authority approval by March 2013.

Section 6M(1)(b) Conservation Management Plans

In April 2011, the Board was given the opportunity to comment on a preliminary version of the **Draft Pukekura Reserves Management Plan**. This draft plan, developed jointly by the Korako Kareta Trust, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou, the Department of Conservation and the Dunedin City Council, addresses the future management of the **Taiaroa Head Nature Reserve** and other land at Taiaroa Head (Pukekura) at the northern end of the Otago Peninsula. The Board has a statutory role to fulfil in connection with the approval of this draft management plan because it will be a conservation management plan in respect of the nature reserve.

The Board notes that management policies for the **Nugget Point/Tokatā Reserve**, the **Otago Goldfields Park**, and the **four conservation parks in Otago** (viz. **Catlins Conservation Park**, **Te Papanui Conservation Park**, **Hāwea Conservation Park**, **Oteake Conservation Park**) will be formulated during the preparation of the next Otago CMS.

Section 6M(1)(c) Advice on Implementation of Conservation Management Strategies and Plans

a Otago CMS

The Board has collated and summarized advice given to the Department on the implementation of the Otago CMS since August 1998, when the document was approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority. This advice has been presented in the form of questions on specific management issues which need to be addressed as the Department prepares a new Draft Otago CMS. Topics have been listed under the four Areas in the DOC Otago Conservancy (i.e. Coastal Otago Area, Central Otago Area, Wakatipu Area and Wanaka Area), in harmony with the 'place-based' approach being used for the review of CMS documents.

The Board is very pleased with the Otago Conservancy's following achievements and other conservation highlights in relation to the relevant key objectives in the Otago CMS e.g.,

- close co-operation between conservancy staff and the Gibbston Community Association (with Susan Stevens as project leader) and many other organizations, companies and individuals, in connection with the successful completion of the **Gibbston River Trail** and its opening in December 2010. The spectacular new 8 km walking and cycling trail runs eastward alongside the Kawarau River from the historic Kawarau Bridge (with its well-known commercial bungy operation);
- the opening of the 18 km long **Breast Hill Track** above Lake Hawea in March 2011 following the completion of tenure review on Lake Hawea Station, with the new **Pakituhi Hut** and the refurbished **Stodys Hut** providing shelter for overnight trips;
- the opening of the **Mt Kyeburn Track** - a new 4WD track in the Oteake Conservation Park which forms a loop from the Danseys Pass Road to the Mt Buster Road;
- the upgrading of the 5.4 km public access road from the Old Dunstan Road to the **Te Papanui Conservation Park**, as a result of an agreement between DOC and TrustPower relating to the Mahinerangi wind farm resource consent process;
- the construction of a toilet block and shelter for visitors at the Clyde Railhead terminus of the **Otago Central Rail Trail** and the upgrading of the trail's surface between Middlemarch and Hyde;
- the reforming and stabilization of the **Bushy Beach** track near Oamaru, following significant damage by a landslide last year. This means that the public again have access to the popular yellow-eyed penguin viewing hide, which has also been upgraded;
- the restoration of the damaged **Outlet Track** near Wanaka before the Challenge Wanaka triathlon, allowing 1200 athletes from 27 countries to use the track - a highlight of the running course;

- the upgrading of the very popular **12 Mile campsite and day use area** on the shore of Lake Wakatipu near Queenstown and part of the **McKellar Saddle track** between the Greenstone and Caples valleys near Glenorchy;
- numerous other contributions by conservancy staff to projects involving improved **public access in Otago**, e.g. the proposed Clutha Gold Trail (Beaumont to Roxburgh) and Roxburgh Gorge Trail (Roxburgh to Alexandra), the proposed Arrow River Trail, work towards linking the separate parts of Te Araroa in Otago, etc;
- the discovery of four baby **Otago skinks** in the Mokomoko Dryland Sanctuary near Alexandra - a significant milestone for the Central Otago Ecological Trust as well as for the Department, which authorized the establishment of the sanctuary in the Aldinga Conservation Area;
- significant increases in the number of **grand and Otago skink** numbers within the mammal-proof enclosure at Macraes;
- the launch of the **Jewelled gecko/Moko-kākāriki Management Plan** on 18 February 2011 - a community-owned species management plan that has been developed by the Department and the local community over the past two years, with sponsorship by Setpoint Solutions;
- the successful apprehension and prosecution, in co-operation with other agencies, of two people who attempted to smuggle **jewelled geckos** from the Otago Peninsula out of New Zealand;
- the survival of 24 **albatross/toroa chicks** at the Taiaroa Head Nature Reserve from 26 eggs that hatched, with DOC and Otago Peninsula Trust staff working closely together to minimize threats and disturbances;
- high numbers of **mohua/yellowheads** and an abundance of **scarlet mistletoe** in Catlins beech forest, following large-scale aerial 1080 operations and other ongoing pest control efforts;
- the success of the **South Island robin** translocation from the Dart Valley to the West Matukituki Valley, with 17 of the 22 birds transferred since 2008 being sighted;
- the successful location and monitoring of native **long-tailed bat/pekapeka** roosts near Glenorchy involving valuable assistance from local residents;
- the successful implementation of the **Kiwi Ranger Programme** in Wanaka, involving the launch of the Mount Aspiring National Park Kiwi Ranger booklet and participation by dozens of local children. This programme is a non-profit joint venture between the University of Otago and Otago Polytechnic;
- close co-operation with the local community in connection with the successful **Gabriels Gully Goldrush 150th** celebrations in March 2011;
- the production and wide distribution of the '**Good as Gold**' Otago Conservancy quarterly newsletter, with its informative updates on conservation developments in Otago;
- the restoration and maintenance of historic structures, including the **Skippers Schoolhouse**, the historic **Earnslaw Hut**, the **Serpentine Church**, and a stone wall extension to protect the **Young Australian Waterwheel** near Bannockburn;
- the development of techniques which significantly improve the efficiency of **wilding conifer control** efforts;

- the success of **community conservation events**, including two **Conservation Award evenings** during **Conservation Week**, **Sea Week** and several **Volunteer Projects**.

As the above list shows, there has been much to celebrate in terms of improved recreational facilities, community involvement and species protection on the land in Otago. Once again however, the Board is deeply disappointed with the very slow progress being made with **Marine Protected Areas Policy Implementation**. The national 'gaps analysis' work that should have been completed in mid-2009 had apparently still not been finished as at 30 June 2011. As a result, the relevant priority statement in the Otago CMS 1998, page 526 ("*obtaining approval for a marine reserve in Otago, and establishing appropriate management for it*"), seems unlikely to be achieved before the current Otago CMS has been reviewed and a new Otago CMS has been approved. In expressing its concerns on this topic, the Board acknowledges that the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Fisheries (now part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) are jointly responsible for achieving the objectives associated with the Marine Protected Areas Policy.

b Mainland Southland/West Otago CMS

The Board has previously reached an agreement with the Southland Conservator regarding occasional Departmental reports on the implementation of those parts of the Mainland Southland/West Otago CMS which relate to areas of the Catlins Conservation Park in the Southland Conservancy. The Board appreciates the work carried out by the DOC Southland Conservancy in these areas and does not have any particular concerns.

c West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS

The Board has an interest in the West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS because it covers those parts of Mount Aspiring National Park which are administered by the DOC West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy. The Board is satisfied that the West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS approved by the New Zealand Conservation Authority on 15 April 2010 is consistent with the new Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan.

Section 6M(1)(d)(i) Advice on Proposed Changes of Status or Classification

The Board supported the addition of the adjoining coastal strip to the **Long Point Scenic Reserve**, its classification as scenic reserve, and the vesting of both areas in the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust.

A proposal to authorize some existing activities on the **marginal strip associated with the Queenstown Steamer Wharf Complex** was also supported by the Board.

Section 6M(1)(d)(ii) Advice on Conservation Matters

The Board was consulted by or gave advice to the New Zealand Conservation Authority and the Department on a number of topics, including the following:

- proposed changes to the **WARO (Wild Animal Recovery Operation) framework**;
- the proposed **transfer of Haast tokoeka** (kiwi) to the Orokonui Ecosanctuary near Dunedin;
- the presentation of annual **Coastal Otago and Inland Otago Conservation Awards** for notable conservation achievements in Otago;
- nominations for the **2011 Loder Cup Award**.

The Board advised the Department to decline the following triggered **Concession Application**:

- an application by Robert and Sandy Brown (Nevis Snowmobile Adventure) for **snowmobile trips** through part of the Old Woman Range Conservation Area (- a part zoned as 'Wilderness' in the Otago CMS).

(Other applications involving **Mount Aspiring National Park** are mentioned separately on page 11 of this report, since they involved Board advice given under the National Parks Act 1980.)

Section 6M(1)(f) Liaison with Fish and Game Councils

R Allan (to December 2010) and F Diver (from February 2011) maintained informal liaison with Fish and Game Otago and Fish and Game Central South Island, respectively.

Section 4 Giving Effect to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi

In accordance with a previous agreement, the Board has relied on the Department to carry out Section 4 consultation in connection with the significant conservation issues raised at Board meetings. It is not aware of any substantive issues for which the Department has not already undertaken Section 4 consultation.

5 POWERS OF BOARD UNDER SECTION 6N CONSERVATION ACT 1987

Section 6N(2)(a) and 6N(3) Advocacy and Statutory Planning Processes

The Board formally advocated its views by lodging or following up on written submissions on the following documents and issues, among others:

- Preliminary proposal for the tenure review of the Crown land known as the **Soldiers Syndicate**;
- Proposed Plan Changes 5A-5W to the Central Otago District Plan;
- Project Next Generation, involving resource consent applications by Port Otago Limited to dredge parts of Otago Harbour and dump large amounts of spoil offshore;
- Draft New Zealand Energy Strategy.

Tenure Review

The Board fully supports the continuation of voluntary tenure review involving pastoral leases in the Otago high country – a process administered by Land Information New Zealand rather than by the Department of Conservation. Some valuable new areas of public conservation land and exciting new opportunities for public recreation have been or are in the process of being established following tenure review on **Mt Aspiring, Lake Hawea, Cloudy Peak, Allandale, Greenvale, Cambrian Hills** Stations, and some other pastoral leases. It is encouraging for the Board to see that there is still a lot of interest in tenure review, with the lessees of several properties recently expressing interest in either entering or re-entering the process.

Proposed Plan Changes 5A-5W to the Central Otago District Plan

Board members generally support the recent decisions made by the Central Otago District Council in connection with these proposed plan changes. The Board is heartened to see an increasing recognition by the Council that the extensive and iconic natural landscapes of Central Otago need protection from unsympathetic development.

Project Next Generation

This proposal by Port Otago Ltd involves the dredging of large amounts of material from parts of Otago Harbour and its dumping a short distance offshore. The Board acknowledges the potential economic benefits associated with a deeper shipping channel, and it hopes that if the proposal is approved, any adverse effects on the Aramoana saltmarsh, coastal wildlife and marine life can be minimized through the application of appropriate conditions.

Freedom camping

The problem of unauthorized waste disposal by tourists along the sides of roads and highways (e.g. the Haast Pass/Tioripatea Haast Pass Highway) has been brought to the Board's attention by members of the public for many years. Board advocacy supporting the provision of better signage and more detailed information on the locations of dump stations for campervans achieved some success, but did not prevent the overall situation from worsening. After much publicity and public

discussion on this issue, it is pleasing to see that the Government, the New Zealand Freedom Camping Forum, the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIANZ), district councils, and others are taking the problem seriously by means of a range of measures, including legislation, targeted education, prevention, and the enforcement of bylaws.

Section 6N(2)(b) Board Committees

The Board has decided that it no longer needs a separate **Planning Committee**, because email communication enables all Board members to be involved in any significant decisions and recommendations that are needed between full Board meetings.

The **Scientific Advisory Group** is a panel of advisers who can provide the Board with specialized information on topical conservation issues. The Board appreciates the willingness of these experts to provide input as the need arises. Electronic communication means that actual meetings of the group are no longer necessary. The Group currently comprises the following people:

A Smith (Convenor), and the following 14 specialists:

Dr Barbara Barratt (entomologist)	Dr Carolyn Burns (limnologist)
Dr Alison Cree (herpetologist)	Dr Cecile de Klein (soil scientist)
Dr Kath Dickinson (plant ecologist)	Dr Jill Hamel (archaeologist)
Dr John Jillett (marine biologist)	Dr Peter Johnson (botanist)
Dr Brent Lovelock (tourism specialist)	Emeritus Professor Sir Alan Mark (plant ecologist)
Mr Brian Patrick (entomologist)	Prof Hamish Spencer (zoologist)
Dr Ian Turnbull (geologist)	Ms Nicola Wheen (environmental law)

6 BOARD FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

Sections 30(a), 45 - 47 Review of National Park Management Plans

After working closely with the Director-General of Conservation and his staff on the public submission and hearing phase of the plan review process, the Board formally presented the amended draft **Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan** to the New Zealand Conservation Authority at the Authority's meeting in Wellington on 11 August 2010. A field trip to key sites in the park on 2-3 November 2010 by some Authority members and members of the Board's Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan Review Working Party helped to clarify aspects of the draft plan, including the proposed addition of part of the Lower Dart Conservation Area to the park.

The Board is pleased that it was able to reach agreement with the Director-General of Conservation on all but one matter. The unresolved matter related to aerial trophy hunting (commonly referred to as 'heli-hunting') in the park. The Board believes that that this activity is inappropriate in the park. It contributes little to animal control and may have adverse effects on existing recreational uses and the opportunities of other park users to experience natural quiet. The Board was also mindful of submissions, the majority of which supported the stance taken in the notified plan, viz. that this activity should not be permitted.

The Director-General's view is that applications for aerial trophy hunting concessions may be appropriate in some zones, having regard to the specific criteria for activities in each zone.

After considering both views carefully, the New Zealand Conservation Authority formally approved the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan on 23 June 2011, allowing for limited aerial trophy hunting in the park subject to conditions.

The Board sincerely thanks those Board members, Department of Conservation staff members and members of the public who have contributed to the review of the park management plan over the past few years. A lot of effort by a lot of different people has produced an impressive document that should help the Department to manage the park effectively for the next decade or so.

Section 30(b) Priorities for National Park Management Plan Implementation

The Department has implemented the following objectives and policy statements (among others) in the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan during the reporting period:

- the ongoing monitoring of Haast Tokoeka (Kiwi) chicks in the **Haast Tokoeka (Kiwi) Sanctuary** (much of which is located on the Haast Range within Mount Aspiring National Park) and the translocation of healthy chicks into the sanctuary under the Operation Nest Egg (ONE) programme, as well as the translocation of 8 juvenile birds from crèche islands to the Orokonui Ecosanctuary near Dunedin on 30 October 2010 (page 51, 8.7);
- continuing successful **tahr** and **goat control** operations (pages 53-55, 8.9);
- extensive remedial work on **Colin Todd Hut** (pages 70-72, 8.20).

Section 30(f) Advice on Interpretation of National Park Management Plan

In May 2011, the Board considered an amended version of a previous concession application by **Milford Dart Limited**, to construct a short road and a tunnel entrance near the Routeburn Roadend. The Board's advice to the Department was that the policy statement "*There will be no increase in the extent of formed park roads within the existing park boundaries*" (Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan (1994), page 60, 8.14 Access, Policy Statement 1) should be upheld in connection with the decision-making process relating to this application.

The Board advised the Department to decline the following triggered **Concession Applications**:

- an application for **commercial eeling** in Mount Aspiring National Park (- an activity which both the new and former Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plans prohibit);
- applications from three commercial helicopter companies to conduct **helihunting** in parts of Mount Aspiring National Park (- an activity that the Board has consistently opposed within the park on the grounds that it has unacceptable impacts on other park users).

7 LIAISON

Other Conservation Boards

C Morris, A Penniket and D Holdsworth (who replaced C Tanner in the role early in 2011) have been liaising with the West Coast Tai Poutini, Southland and Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Boards, respectively. The Board believes that it is helpful for one or more representatives of the four southernmost conservation boards to occasionally attend meetings of the neighbouring boards, since a number of significant conservation issues are common to all four regions. Southland Conservation Board member Helen McPhail regularly attends meetings of the Otago Conservation Board. On 16 June 2011, G Bailey and I Scott attended a meeting of the Southland Conservation Board in Tuatapere to discuss each Board's approach to the concept of 'Places' in the new CMS documents.

New Zealand Conservation Authority

There has been much more liaison and communication with the New Zealand Conservation Authority during the reporting period than usual, as the review of the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan reached its final stages. Those Board members who participated in the Authority meeting in Wellington on 11 August 2010 and the joint field trip near Glenorchy on 2-3 November 2010 appreciated the opportunity to interact directly with Authority members. In addition, the minutes of NZCA meetings, the NZCA annual report, and the Authority Chairperson's written summaries of the meetings kept the Board updated on the Authority's views and actions.

Takata Whenua

H Langsbury (to December 2010), F Diver (from December 2010), and J Williams, were appointed on the nomination of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Section 6P(7B), Conservation Act 1987 refers). The DOC Otago Conservancy Pou Kura Taiao, Matapura Ellison, assists the Board to liaise with all of the Kāi Tahu papatipu rūnaka in its area of jurisdiction (i.e. Ōtākou, Moeraki, Huirapa, Makaawhio, Hokonui, Awarua, Waihopai and Oraka Aparima) as required, and helps to keep the Board updated on conservation issues of interest to takata whenua.

Local Government

The Board seeks to maintain a good working relationship with the Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council, Dunedin City Council, and Waitaki District Council, since all of those councils have significant responsibilities for the protection of conservation values outside public conservation lands. Tony Lepper, the Central Otago District Mayor, and Bryan Cadogan, the Clutha District Mayor, attended parts of the Board meetings held on 4 February 2011 and 13 May 2011, respectively. Some Board members have also met representatives of the councils between formal Board meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Local Communities

The Board held a public forum in connection with each of its four formal Board meetings during the reporting period. The public forums at Owaka on 26 November 2010 and at Alexandra on 4 February 2011 were attended by 18 and 14 members of the public, respectively, showing that there is considerable interest in local conservation issues throughout Otago. The Board receives valuable community feedback on local conservation issues from those who take part in these forums. Many Board members also regularly liaise with members of the public on conservation-related issues in the course of their professional work or as a result of personal interests.

Media

Reporters representing the Otago Daily Times and/or the Southland Times attended several meetings during the year, and the Board received generally good coverage in these newspapers. .

Conservation and Other Interest Groups

The Board is fortunate to have members who already participate actively in organizations such as Federated Farmers, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) and others. Some of these organizations send reports, meeting minutes and newsletters which are circulated to Board members.

Community Contributions to Conservation

The Board is happy to acknowledge and recognize the impressive achievements of the many local organizations, councils, community groups and enthusiastic individuals throughout Otago who involve themselves in conservation projects.

One way in which the Board participates in the recognition of such organizations and people is by choosing the winners and runners-up for the annual Otago Conservation Awards. Separate awards are presented for Coastal Otago and for Inland Otago during Conservation Week every year. In 2010, the winner of the **Conservation Award for Coastal Otago** was Lala Frazer, with the Lake Waipori Waihola Wetlands Society and Carey Knox as the runners-up. The winner of the 2010 **Conservation Award for Inland Otago** was the Central Otago Ecological Trust, and the runners-up were the Upper Clutha Tracks Trust, Jan Kelly, and Susan Stevens.

8 CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

In the course of this year the Otago Conservation Board has considered very deeply just what it is that makes Otago so special, and we keep coming back to the importance of the journey. People travelled far to get to Otago. Captivated by its dark rocky coast, golden hills, and sharp mountains, people made it their home. We are among the luckiest who live in Otago, as our work takes us all over the province, from the sea to the hills, and into local communities.

Our field trips this year began with a tramp through the bush at Orokonui Ecosanctuary, where we could see what the future might be like there. Later we ventured up high on the Old Man Range, and down to the wind and waves at Nugget Point. Then a trip to the past, walking Gabriel's Gully and pondering what life in the goldfields might have been like.

Just as we get to see the best of Otago's outdoors, we get to meet many of Otago's people. We have greatly appreciated hearing from the public at all our meetings. It takes courage to stand up and say what you think, and we appreciate the guidance and criticism we receive when we're on the road.

This year marked the end of Hoani Langsbury's chairing of the Otago Conservation Board, as well as the departure of Chas Tanner and Ross Allan. We thank them all for the years of hard work and effort they have put into conservation in Otago, and wish them well. At the same time, we welcome Francie Diver and Gordon Bailey. Good to have you on board, making a difference.

We are partway into another journey, now, towards a new Conservation Management Strategy. The Board is trying to find a way to put the hopes and dreams of Otago's people about our land, our heritage, and our outdoor pursuits into a single paper document. It's not easy, and as we work we are coming to appreciate even more the excellent relationship we have with the Otago Conservancy and its staff. The Conservator, the planners, the managers, and especially the Board Support Officer all work closely with us, and give us all the support we need. Thank you to all of you.

Best wishes for another good year for conservation



Associate Professor Abigail M. Smith
Chairperson

28 July 2011