

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

Image courtesy of skyworks uas

Contents

- I Chair's Report**
- 3 Board and Staff**
- 4 Community Outreach**
- 6 Biodiversity Restoration**
- 9 Trapping & Monitoring**
- I4 Social Enterprise**
- I6 Financial Reports**
- I8 Gratitude Report**

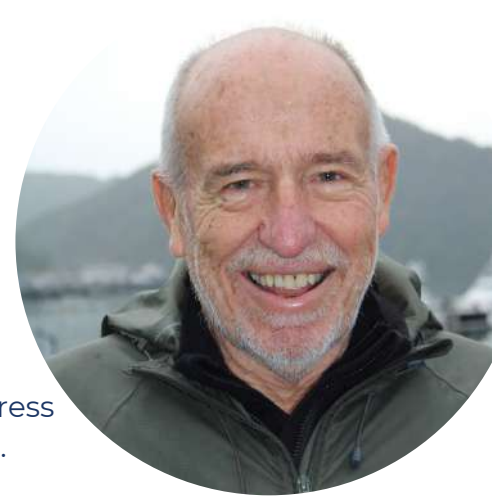


Image courtesy of Toya Heatley



CHAIR'S REPORT

by Bryn Evans



The Year In Retrospect

Our Society has made many significant achievements and progress in the 2023/24 year. I wish to mention three noteworthy matters.

TRAPPING NETWORK

The trapping network specified by ecological consultant Andrew Macalister in his Operational Plan 2020-2025, covering a total area of 4,815ha, has been achieved a year ahead of the plan. Further work is now being done to increase the network's density in selected areas. Congratulations to Lee Crosswell and all the bush trappers who have worked hard to create and maintain this network.

Readers of our trapping report, which covers trapping activity in Kaipūpū Sanctuary, the surrounding bush, and urban trapping by householders, will enjoy the wealth of interesting detail covering many aspects of our trapping activities and the related statistics.

MERGER

During the year, Picton Dawn Chorus and Kaipūpū Point Mainland Island Society merged organisations under the PDC 'umbrella'. After special meetings of the two societies held in May 2023, at which the members approved the merger, we proceeded with the work needed to amalgamate successfully as a single organisation. All merger tasks have been completed, and I am happy to state that the new organisational structure has been widely accepted and works well.

Our General Manager, Pip Macfarlane, has worked with our staff members to re-evaluate their roles and to spread their job responsibilities across both societies. Our staff have fitted into their new roles remarkably well.

JOBS FOR NATURE

In recent months, it has become apparent that the Jobs For Nature employment funding programme has ended and will not be replaced. It was formally cancelled in the Government's 2024 Budget. The programme provided \$700,000 spread over three years to fund staff wages.

As a consequence, we are now seeking replacement funds from other sources. At the time of writing, we await responses from the Marlborough District Council, Rātā Foundation, and other donors to our funding applications. Once we know the outcomes, further decisions will be taken to balance our 2024/25 budget.

Financial Statements

The financial statements of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2024 are provided in a summary format on page 16 of the annual report. While we have managed our limited finances carefully, our results show a deficit of \$(62,428). The cessation of Jobs For Nature funding, as noted above, was the principal cause of the deficit.

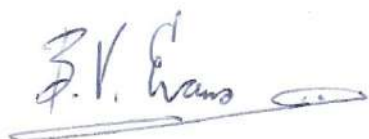
Acknowledgement to Donors

Our donors and sponsors provided 90% of our income in 2023/24. We continue to work towards becoming self-sufficient by generating sustainable forms of revenue. Until that day arises, we can only achieve our objectives with the continuing generosity of our donors.

We acknowledge and thank the Marlborough District Council, Rātā Foundation, Port Marlborough New Zealand, Lyn Talbot, Marlborough Lines, Bluebridge, New Zealand King Salmon, Lions Club of Picton, Accolade Wines, Tiraki Ltd, Ake Ake Fund, Redwood Trust, and Summit Real Estate. Our members and friends have given many smaller donations too numerous to mention,

Our Members, Volunteers & Friends

I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone involved with PDC for your exceptional dedication and contributions to the rewilding of our natural environment and the recovery of our birdlife. The hard work and unwavering commitment of our members, volunteers, and employees have been instrumental in the remarkable successes achieved by our Society over the past financial year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. V. Evans", with a horizontal line underneath it.



Picton Dawn Chorus Board Members



Bryn Evans
Chair



Claire Welch



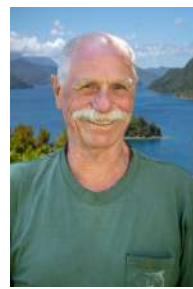
Ed Pitts



Gerald Harper



Greg Billington



Ross McGerty



Tony Plummer



Picton Dawn Chorus Staff Members

Our staff members, under the capable leadership of our General Manager Pip Macfarlane, are absolutely invaluable to our Society in enabling us to achieve our goals.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our employees, whose professionalism and expertise have been key to the success of our Society. Your hard work, creativity, and tireless efforts have ensured the smooth functioning of our organisation and the implementation of our conservation initiatives. We are fortunate to have such a talented team.



Pip Macfarlane
General Manager



Hazel Ross
Biodiversity Coordinator



Lee Crosswell
Field Coordinator



Zoe Aitchison
Administration Coordinator



Anna Polson
Community Outreach Coordinator



Jen Dunlop
Volunteers & Urban Trapping Coordinator



Alison Williams
PEC Premises Coordinator



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

by Anna Polson

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

At the heart of every great community organisation, there is a team of passionate volunteers. The exponential growth and ongoing success of Picton Dawn Chorus would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers along with our members and supporters.

OUR SOCIETY METRICS

Members of the Society

262

Active volunteers

170

Volunteer hours

11,024 p.a, (212 p.w.)



Local organisations and businesses have also provided hands-on support for which we are extremely grateful.

Royal New Zealand Air Force, Port Marlborough, and the team from the **Downer/HEB Joint Venture** working on the I-Rex project have put in some considerable work days on Kaipūpū Sanctuary. **The Graeme Dingle Foundation** helped us to establish a new trapline and **Vector Free Marlborough Ltd** provided staff free of charge for several days throughout the year.



Rodger Jones
Waterfront and Residential



We have also received considerable support by way of premises donations from both **Rodger Jones of Bayleys** and **Port Marlborough**.

Historian Heather Fryer has donated her time to work on The Kaipūpū History Project. She has interviewed many people who have been involved with Kaipūpū since the beginning and has relayed their info onto the [Kaipūpū Story on Digital NZ](#). A huge thanks must go to Heather for her hard work on this project.

EDUCATION

Environmental or conservation-based education plays a vital role in engaging and inspiring our community to take action in their own backyard.

It bodes well for our future that our local schools have a curriculum that focuses on the natural environment. We collaborate with both of the primary schools in Picton who advocate Kaitiaki Groups. This provides ample opportunities for us to be involved and share our local environmental knowledge.

Beyond the classroom Picton Dawn Chorus offers The Kaipūpū Experience. This is an environmental education programme that introduces children to endemic species, food chains, threats and conservation methods and includes a visit to Kaipūpū Sanctuary. We presented The Kaipūpū Experience and other classroom sessions to 685 students this past year - up from 552 last year.



We are passionate about providing learning opportunities to people of all ages. Our community have been able to develop their knowledge and skills by attending events such as:

- Cawthron Awards Field Day
- Plant/Tree Identification workshop
- Plant and Protect Workshop - co-hosted with Daltons
- Bird ID workshop / Bird Surveys
- Stream Health Workshop
- Community Native Planting Days
- Wattle removal

The Picton Dawn Chorus team were also invited to speak at the annual Conservation Board meeting, the Biodiversity Forum and at the monthly Forest & Bird meeting.



BIODIVERSITY RESTORATION

by Hazel Ross

FLORA

NGAHERE PLANTING

The Picton Dawn Chorus Ngahere planting group has been hard at work in an inspiring project to restore native plants which will provide year-round food for birds and thereby contribute to the restoration of both native plant and animal biodiversity.

This year we submitted our planting plan to Marlborough District Council to partner with them in restoring the community land along Victoria Domain. MDC generously donated plants and a \$5,000 grant to cover initial tools and equipment.

The community engagement for this new project has been exciting with over 50 volunteers expressing support or participating in planting and volunteer days. This collective effort has resulted in the successful planting of 370 native trees and more than 400 carex plants, marking a significant step towards our goal of fostering native biodiversity.

Volunteers have started to meet fortnightly, caring for the newly planted seedlings, ensuring their growth and survival over the dry summer we had this past year. A dedicated group carries out watering, maintenance and weeding around new plants, demonstrating a deep-rooted sense of stewardship towards the environment.

Landcare Trust led a workshop with our volunteers to learn about measuring and monitoring stream health through our planting areas. We are hopeful we will see an improvement over time as our seedlings grow up providing shade, pushing out aquatic weeds and improving aquatic life.

This winter we are excited to make more progress with an additional 800 trees planned to be planted in the coming months.

NATIVE NURSERY

The Picton Dawn Chorus native nursery has celebrated its third year. The nursery is led by a core group of volunteers with green fingers who have completed 132 hours of work in the nursery.

It has been a productive year, the sown seedlings have been growing extremely well and now the nursery is bursting with plants from wall to wall. As the plants get big enough, we have been planting them out into the bush during our working bees and selling extras through the shop.

The group's focus for the future is growing species which should be in our local bush, but due to browsing from pests or land clearing, have now become rare and missing from our landscape. It is our focus to return these missing species to our forests so they can provide essential habitat and food for our native birds and invertebrates.



WEED CONTROL

Weed control has expanded this year and now includes work on both Kaipūpū Sanctuary and Mabel Island, along with weeding around the new native planting on Victoria Domain. Weeding on Kaipūpū Sanctuary is now in the surveillance and maintenance stage. Key weeds such as old man's beard, banana passionfruit, climbing dock and inkweed are suppressed and any new pest seedlings are removed as part of our ongoing maintenance weeding sweeps. While we still find the occasional mature vine, these are quickly removed once discovered.

Wattle control is a new venture we have begun this year. Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) have grown into a thick band along the hills behind Picton and Waikawa. Wattles are invasive, growing rapidly and capable of surviving in poor soils and on exposed hillsides. They push out our native species, preventing our bush from regenerating and change our native habitat dynamics.

To control wattles, we poison them by treating each tree trunk. The tree will die standing and rot away with its branches slowly falling to the ground in pieces. This gives the native understory time to grow up replacing the wattles and providing more habitat for our native birds.



Image courtesy of Toya Heatley

FAUNA

KORORĀ/ LITTLE PENGUIN

Kororā are the smallest penguin in the world, and we are lucky enough to have them nesting on Kaipūpū where they are protected from mammalian predators and off leash dogs. This year we have continued to work with Port Marlborough and Wildlife Management International. We continue to monitor nesting success and provide additional nest boxes for breeding across the Sanctuary.

BAT SURVEYS

In recent years there have been a number of reported sightings and anecdotal reports of bats around Picton and the near sounds. This has prompted a new study in our rohe led by bat ecologist Dr Gillian Dennis and supported by Picton Dawn Chorus. Acoustic recorders are equipped with sensitive microphones, which capture the high-frequency echolocation calls emitted by bats as they navigate and forage in their surroundings. Long tailed bats can travel great distances potentially having home ranges up to 100km². This study will shed greater light on bats in the sounds and give a more understanding of the local population of this nationally critically threatened species. We are interested to hear of any sightings or historic reporting from within the Sounds.

BIRD SURVEYS

Bird surveys are one of the key indicators we can use to measure our conservation impact. Birds rely on having suitable habitat and food sources as well as safety away from predators to thrive.

We have been recording bird populations since 2007 following the same 5-minute bird count methodology. In 2016 we expanded this survey to include additional stations around Picton. We now carry out 192 bird surveys across Picton each year between September and November. This provides a significant data set which shows trends over time. It is expected that it can take between five to seven years to see a significant increase in bird population.



Image courtesy of Toya Heatley

These bird counts show that many bird species, including bellbirds and tūi have significantly increased across some survey sites. Bellbirds are used as one of our indicator species because they show a rapid recovery when pest numbers are kept low and they have sufficient habitat and food sources.

TRAPPING & MONITORING

Bush Trapping & Monitoring Report - by Lee Crosswell

The Operational Plan adopted in 2020 has identified seven separate management areas within the total 4,815ha, Picton Dawn Chorus (PDC) operational area.

The bush trapping zone includes all of the organisation's trapping areas outside of Kaipūpū Sanctuary and Picton and Waikawa's urban boundaries. This bush trapping report relates to activities across Victoria Domain, Shakespeare Bay, Wedge Point, the Whenuanui Point extension and the outlying extension areas. Specific bush trapping blocks and their control priorities are shown in *Figure 1* below.

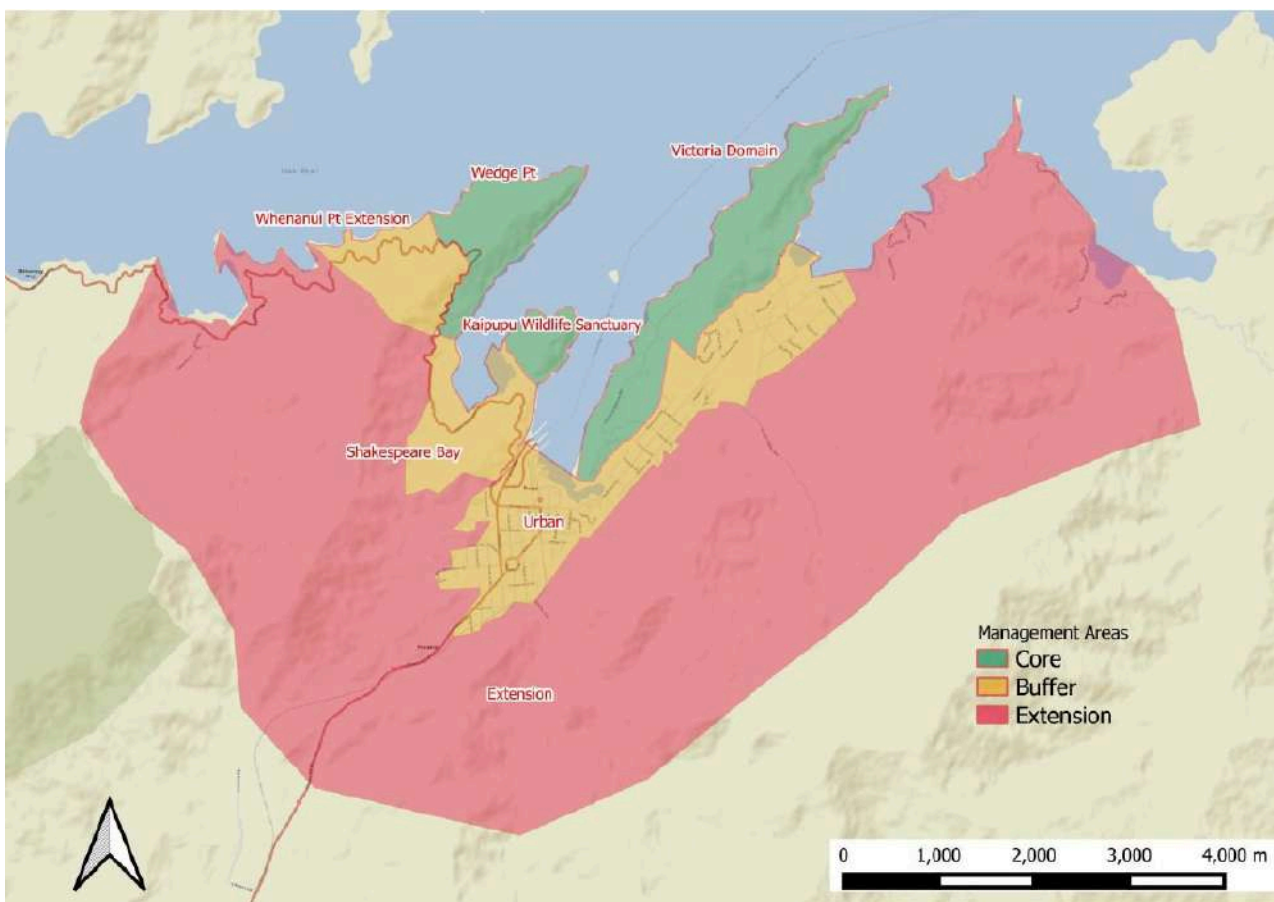


Figure 1: Picton Dawn Chorus management areas as identified within the Operational Plan

Bush Trapping Predator Control Works Summary

During the 2023-2024 year, the PDC trapping network was expanded further. This has included increasing the density of trap spacings in areas already being trapped and increasing our traps targeting mustelids. With the support of surrounding landowners, we have been able to set up all of the lines proposed in our original plan. These were described as opportunistic in the plan, but are now installed and working.

The Picton Dawn Chorus/Kaipūpū combined project area, is now a true landscape-scale predator control operation.



As at 31st March 2024, Picton Dawn Chorus had 3,013 traps recorded on TrapNZ. 1,009 of these are set out in the key priority area of Victoria Domain, being a land area of approximately 200 ha, owned largely by Marlborough District Council. The Wedge now has 265 traps set out over approximately 90 ha of land owned by DOC and Port Marlborough. The Whenuanui block now has 303 traps in place. The main focus of PDC trapping efforts is dedicated towards rats, stoats and possums, but we also report on catches of mice, hedgehogs and other mustelids. PDC has recorded the following catches on the TrapNZ database, outside of the urban areas, between April 1st 2023 and March 31st 2024.

Rat	Mouse	Possum	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Hedgehog	Unspecified	Total
2239	789	571	15	26	1	37	37	3769

Table 1: Bush Trapping Area Catches, April 1st 2023 - March 31st 2024

Rat catches show seasonal variations with low catches characteristic of summer (when natural food supplies are abundant) and higher catches in autumn and winter (when natural food is less abundant and our non-toxic trap lure is more appealing). It should be noted that Picton Dawn Chorus has a number of A24 devices that do not have counters or chirps attached. It was decided early on that the funds were more usefully spent on additional traps, rather than the chirps. As a result a number of rat captures and potentially mustelids are not reported in *Table 1* above. Another common area of underreporting occurs where pigs take possums from traps with no remains left in the trap.

During the reported year additional trap types have been implemented, including the trial of undated models of the AT220 trap and smart cages. The AT220's are automatic and in theory should have the ability to target possums and rats without being checked for six months. The smart cages have sensors that link into TrapNZ, when the doors close, any member on trapNZ who has the trap assigned to them will be notified.

Output Monitoring

Monitoring has continued with six monitoring lines for possums and rats on the Victoria Domain and five lines on the Wedge. For rat monitoring, inked cards are placed (for 24 hours) in tracking tunnels set out through our trapping areas. The "Rat Tracking %" shown, in *Table 2*, is the percentage of cards that show rat footprints.

Rat tracking tunnel monitoring was again carried out in November 2023 and repeated in April 2024. The results are summarised against recent annual monitoring results in *Table 2* below.

Victoria Domain	Rat Tracking %
November 2021	23%
April 2022	43%
November 2022	27%
April 2023	23%
November 2023	20%
April 2024	30%
The Wedge	Rat Tracking %
November 2021	8%
April 2022	16%
November 2022	20%
April 2023	48%
November 2023	8%
April 2024	28%

Table 2: Tracking Tunnel Monitoring Results for Victoria Domain and the Wedge.

PDC operational Plan suggests an output target of maintaining a Rat Tracking Index of less than 20% for Victoria Domain and less than 25% for the Wedge strata.

Monitoring suggests that output targets for rat control are regularly being achieved, with the exception of the autumn tracking tunnel index often fluctuating above the target levels. This was notable on the Wedge last year following an anticipated beech tree mast event.

Possum Monitoring is conducted to standard practice with wax tags in the field for a seven night survey. Our Operational Plan suggests an output target for possums of less than 15% for Victoria Domain and less than 22% for The Wedge. The plan also suggests that if the Victoria Domain target is achieved then monitoring should take place every two years. Given this, the next possum monitor for Victoria Domain is due in June 2024. Wax tag monitoring for possum assessment suggests possums are being maintained below targeted levels in the priority peninsula sites.

Victoria Domain	Possum WTI %
June 2022	10%
The Wedge	Possum WTI %
June 2022	10%
June 2023	6%

Table 3: Wax Tag Index Monitoring Results for Victoria Domain and The Wedge

Image courtesy of Skyworks UAS



Kaipūpū Trapping & Monitoring Report - by Hazel Ross

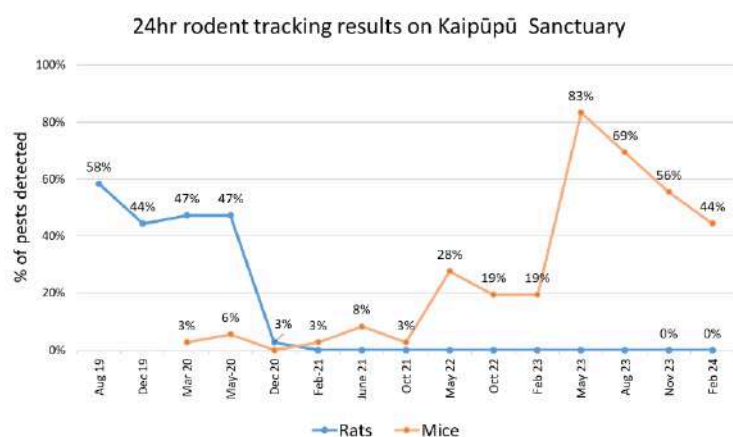
Picton Dawn Chorus has extremely rigorous predator control targets in place to protect the native biodiversity of Kaipūpū Sanctuary. The predator-proof fence, and trapping halo around Kaipūpū, provide an incredible line of defence but we are still vulnerable to predators swimming out to the sanctuary or hitching a ride on visiting vessels.

As at 31st March 2024, there are 680 traps on Kaipūpū Sanctuary targeting rats, mice and mustelids. If a possum is sighted or scat is spotted then a live capture cage is used.

Rat	Mouse	Possum	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Total
15	1453	6	0	0	0	1474

Table 4: Kaipūpū Catches, April 1st 2023 - March 31st 2024.

Rat and possum catch numbers have stayed very low with no more than four being caught in one month across the Sanctuary. Mouse catches continue to be high, while following seasonal food trends.



Output Monitoring

The operational targets state that we must keep rats below 5% monitoring. We carry out constant monitoring to detect if any pest reaches Kaipūpū. There are 36 standard tracking tunnels across the sanctuary.

Tunnels are surveyed overnight every three months following DOC best practice for rodent detection. We also use trail cameras, rodent detection conservation dogs and additional footprint monitoring where the tunnels are left active for up to two weeks.

After using bait stations to remove trap-shy rats in December 2020, **we have kept the rat tracking index at 0% for three consecutive years.** With the removal of rats, the mouse population has grown. To control this there is a mouse trap every 25m along our traplines.



Urban Trapping Report - by Jen Dunlop

As stated in our Operational Plan the urban area includes the suburban gardens and the parks and reserves within Picton and Waikawa. The urban area plays an important role by providing a diverse habitat and an abundant food supply for native species, working as a spillover site from Kaipūpū Sanctuary and Victoria Domain, and providing an immigration buffer for pests.

There have been some fascinating things happening in Urban Trapping over the past 12 months, starting with refining our database to see which homes are still trapping and sharing data. Although some of this process is still to be completed, and will always be ongoing, what we have discovered is this.



We are still achieving our goal of 1 in 4 trapping households in the Picton/Waikawa urban area. There are roughly 2,065 homes in Picton with 544 traps as of May 2024. We are receiving catch data from approximately 95 active households mostly through our website submission form. This shows that we don't necessarily have a clear picture of what is going on in the urban area, although through heatmap reporting on the limited data we have collected, we can see where more intense trapping is required.

The table below shows our recorded catch data from households and for our traplines that fall within the urban boundary.

Rat	Mouse	Possum	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Hedgehog	Unspecified	Total
331	446	194	1	2	0	39	2	1035

Table 5: Urban Catches, April 1st 2023 - March 31st 2024.

The Urban Trapping Working Group has developed several initiatives to encourage household trapping and data reporting. We hope that this will have a favourable impact on the quantity of active urban trappers and submitted data for the coming year.



DAWN CHORUS TRAPPING ENTERPRISE

The Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise (DCTE) have had a reasonably busy year selling over 800 trap boxes.

Outside of our own project, DCTE have provided trap boxes to approximately nine predator control groups which took just over half of their production. Their intention for this year is to focus more on external sales by upgrading the DCTE website and increasing promotion.

Other income came from the sale of surplus equipment that we were gifted from the Edwin Fox Museum. These items along with other tools gifted by our community were sold at a very successful tool sale.



PICTON ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

It has been another good year for our shop at the Picton Environment Centre. We are always going to struggle a little with visibility due to our location but we have seen an increase in people coming in and asking for information about traps and trapping techniques.



It is great to have a place where our community can drop in for some expert advice.

Sales were boosted this year thanks to Ali Williams who took the shop to 23 cruise ship markets. A huge thanks to Ali and her team of helpers for doing that. It is a big job!

KAIPŪPŪ GUIDED WALKS



Tourism bounced back in Marlborough in 2023-24 which resulted in a great season for Kaipūpū Sanctuary visitor numbers.

It was wonderful to see so many of our volunteer guides return for another season and we managed to recruit a couple of new guides too. The weather this season was more favourable than last year with much fewer cruise ship cancellations and tour group numbers were higher.

We guided 485 walkers around the Sanctuary this year - up from 346 last year.

There were some very enjoyable trips with the feedback being overwhelmingly positive. The most common comments were how much people loved the native forest, the peaceful surroundings, and the history of Kaipūpū, and it made all the guides realise, on a regular basis, how lucky we are to have this treasure in our backyard.

We are waiting to hear what next summer's ship numbers are looking like, but the Kaipūpū offering is proving to be a very popular one with the cruise ship market and we are already taking bookings.





FINANCIAL REPORTS

Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Year ended 31 March 2024	Year ended 31 March 2023
Income	\$	\$
Grants & Sponsorships Received	330,725	374,471
Membership, Donations & Interest Income	86,401	8,691
Shop Sales	16,072	7,346
Guided Tours Income	7,679	-
DCTE Surplus (Deficit)		
Sales - Traps	32,398	33,758
Purchases - Trap Materials	(18,224)	(11,426)
Overhead Expenses	(9,737)	(3,502)
Total DCTE Surplus (Deficit)	4,437	18,830
Total Income	445,314	409,338
Expenditure	\$	\$
Wages, Salaries & Employment Costs	401,642	316,942
Product Purchases & Operating Costs	82,803	41,703
Office Overheads	23,297	16,592
Total Operating Costs & Overheads	507,742	375,237
Net Surplus (deficit)	(62,428)	34,101



FINANCIAL REPORTS

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2024

	Year ended 31 March 2024	Year ended 31 March 2023
Assets	\$	\$
Bank	393,948	163,970
Total Bank	393,948	163,970
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	5,750	845
Inventory	6,159	2,353
Total Current Assets	11,909	3,198
Non-Current Assets		
Fixed Assets	78,415	5,237
Total Non-Current Assets	78,415	5,237
Total Assets	484,272	172,405
Current Liabilities	\$	\$
2024/25 Membership Subscriptions Paid In Advance	655	-
GST	277	23,970
Holiday Pay Owing to Staff	10,948	10,877
Total Current Liabilities	11,880	34,847
Total Liabilities	11,880	34,847
Net Assets	472,392	137,558
Equity	\$	\$
Current Year Earnings	(62,428)	34,101
Equity Transferred From Kaipūpū Society	397,261	-
Retained Earnings	137,559	103,458
Total Equity	472,392	137,559



GRATITUDE REPORT

The success of Picton Dawn Chorus as a community conservation group would not be possible without the generosity of our funders, donors and sponsors. We would like to express our deep gratitude and thanks to the many individuals, organisations, charitable trusts and businesses throughout Marlborough, who choose to contribute to Picton Dawn Chorus.

FOUNDATION PARTNERS



GRANTING AGENCIES



KAIPŪPŪ

RIMU SPONSORS

Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferry
Mud House (Accolade) Wines
New Zealand King Salmon

KAIPŪPŪ

KOHEKOHE SPONSORS

Core Advice
Summit Real Estate

MAJOR DONORS

Jordan Family Trust
Lyn Talbot
Tiraki
Lions Club Picton
Ake Ake Fund

OTHER SUPPORTERS

BP Computers
Sounds Net
Fresh Choice Picton
Te Kotahitanga o Te Ātiawa Trust
Scenic Hotel Marlborough
Pic's Peanut Butter
Queen Charlotte Yacht Club

Edwin Fox Museum
Moa Brewing
Signs Now
Springbrook
Lundons Law
Pics Peanut Butter
Vector Free Marlborough Ltd

Yealands
Daltons
Cougar Line
Goldpine
Big Barrel

Rewilding Kaipūpū and beyond



THANK YOU FOR READING