

**OTAGO
CONSERVATION
BOARD**

2008/2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Otago Conservation Board Annual Report for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009

*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 and Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust representatives at Long Point on the Catlins Coast on 18 April 2009.

[Photograph by Mark Clark]

Photograph : Back Cover

DOC Coastal Otago Area Manager Robin Thomas pointing out the Sutton Salt Lake Scenic Reserve to members of the Otago Conservation Board and the New Zealand Conservation Authority in the tor-studded landscape near Middlemarch on 12 February 2009.

[Photograph by Mark Clark]

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OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD

2008-2009 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 2008 to 31 August 2008, 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 2008 and 31 August 2008 are shown in the final two columns.)

Hoani S Langsbury (Chair)	Otakou	31 August 2010	1
Ross Allan	Dunedin	31 August 2010	1
Edna McAtamney	Kyeburn	31 August 2009	0
Chas Morris	Wanaka	31 August 2008	0
Garry H Nixon	Alexandra	31 August 2010	1
Bruce J Parker	Ngapara	31 August 2009	1
Andrew Penniket	Wanaka	31 August 2009	1
Mark J Planner	Cromwell	31 August 2008	0
Iris Scott	Glenorchy	31 August 2010	1
Dr Abigail M Smith	Dunedin	31 August 2008	1
Chas F Tanner	Purakanui	31 August 2008	0
Jim E Williams	Dunedin	31 August 2009	1

The present members of the Otago Conservation Board were appointed by the Minister of Conservation for terms commencing on 1 September 2008 and ending on the dates listed below. The number of full board meetings attended between 1 September 2008 and 30 June 2009 is given in the final column.

Hoani S Langsbury (Chair)	Otakou	31 August 2010	3
Ross Allan	Dunedin	31 August 2010	4
Edna McAtamney*	Kyeburn	31 August 2009	3
Chas Morris	Wanaka	31 August 2011	2
Garry H Nixon	Alexandra	31 August 2010	4
Bruce J Parker	Ngapara	31 August 2009	4
Andrew Penniket	Wanaka	31 August 2009	3
Mark J Planner	Cromwell	31 August 2011	2
Iris Scott	Glenorchy	31 August 2010	4
Dr Abigail M Smith	Dunedin	31 August 2011	4
Chas F Tanner	Purakanui	31 August 2011	3
Jim E Williams	Dunedin	31 August 2009	3

* (Edna McAtamney resigned from the board in March 2009 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 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.
- **Otago Goldfields Park**
A collection of 21 historic sites (e.g. Arrowtown Chinese Settlement, Gabriels Gully, St Bathans, Bendigo) which have links with the gold rushes of the 1800s.
- **Remarkables Conservation Area**
Incorporating one of New Zealand's best known scenic landmarks.
- **Reserves and marginal strips along the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers**
The scene of a variety of popular recreational activities which cater primarily for tourists (e.g. rafting, jetboating, bungy jumping, giant swing etc).

3 CONSERVATION BOARD MEETINGS

The following board meetings were held in the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009:

- **Full board Meetings**

25 July 2008	Dunedin
26 September 2008	Haast
28 November 2008	Danseys Pass
13 February 2009	Dunedin
17 April 2009	Owaka

- **Public Forums**

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

- **Field Inspections**

25-27 September 2008	Parts of Mount Aspiring National Park adjoining the Haast Pass Highway (e.g. Haast Pass Lookout Track)
28-29 November 2008	Sites in the Kakanui Mountains
12 February 2009	Te Papanui Conservation Park, Sutton Salt Lake Scenic Reserve, Grand and Otago skink habitat near Macraes
18 April 2008	Long Point, Purakaunui Bay, Purakaunui Falls

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.

- **Planning Committee Meetings** None held (Board advice on conservation issues was either obtained at formal board meetings or via email between board meetings.)
- **Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan Review Working Party Meetings** None held (The draft plan was being prepared for public notification.)
- **Scientific Advisory Group Meeting** None held (Comments on conservation issues were obtained via email.)

4 **BOARD FUNCTIONS UNDER THE CONSERVATION ACT 1987**

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

The board was not involved in any actions associated with the approval of conservation management strategies during the reporting period.

In early 2008, the **Draft Bay of Plenty CMS** was released for public comment. Although the document was seen by some as a model for the 'new generation' of CMS documents, the board believed that the contents were too generalized to provide helpful guidance to conservation managers. The board's submission drew attention to what it regarded as the lack of clear goals and measurable outcomes in the document.

The **Draft Canterbury CMS** is seen by the board as potentially a better precedent for a **Draft Otago CMS**, because Canterbury and Otago incorporate a similar broad range of protected areas and share many of the same conservation management issues. Board members are following the progress of the Draft Canterbury CMS with great interest as they prepare to work with the department on the preparation of a new Draft Otago CMS.

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

No work was done on any conservation management plans during the reporting period. The board notes that management planning for the **Taiaroa Head Reserves**, the **Nugget Point Reserve**, the **Otago Goldfields Park**, and **new conservation parks** will be addressed 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 and the Otago Conservator have agreed on an annual process for the provision of board advice on the implementation of the Otago CMS, which is compatible with the relevant standard operating procedure. A report on the Otago Conservancy's achievements relating to 19 key topics was discussed during the board meeting held on 26 September 2008.

In addition to this, board members choose to review specified sections of the CMS between board meetings, and are given the opportunity to comment on the implementation associated with these sections at each meeting.

Generally speaking, the board is very pleased with the conservancy's achievements in relation to the relevant key objectives in the Otago CMS e.g.,

- the establishment of the **Hāwea Conservation Park** and the **Oteake Conservation Park** following high country tenure review outcomes and other land transactions over the past decade or so;
- continuing progress with other forms of implementation associated with the **tenure review of pastoral leases** by Land Information New Zealand under the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 - including the preparation of publicity brochures and the placement of signs and interpretation panels which draw the attention of the public to new areas of public conservation land (e.g. Whakaari Conservation Area near Glenorchy, Hawea Conservation Park by Lake Hawea, Matatiaho Conservation Area between Lakes Wanaka and Hawea; Kopuwai Conservation Area near Alexandra);
- successful efforts by the department and the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust to purchase and protect key areas of coastal land around **Long Point** in the Catlins;
- the ongoing success of **Operation Ark** in the Lower Dart/Caples and the Catlins, with significant measurable benefits to threatened mohua/yellowhead populations in areas where intensive predator control is carried out;
- the continuing successful management, in partnership with Kāi Tahu, of **buff weka** populations on Te Peka Karara (Stevensons Island), Mou Waho (Harwich Island) and Mou Tapu (Crescent Island) in Lake Wanaka; and Wāwāhi Waka (Pigeon Island) and Mātau (Pig Island) in Lake Wakatipu;
- the survival of 19 **albatross/toroa chicks** at the Taiaroa Head Nature Reserve;
- the ongoing maintenance and promotion of the **Otago Central Rail Trail** in co-operation with the Otago Central Rail Trail Charitable Trust and local communities;
- the construction of the **Fern Burn Hut** on the Motatapu Track, bringing the number of huts on this challenging track to three;
- the upgrading of the **Mt Crichton (Sam Summers) Track** near Queenstown, the **Leith Saddle Track** near Dunedin, and the **Sandfly Bay Road End** on the Otago Peninsula;
- new visitor facilities at **Nugget Point/Tokatā** and **Purakaunui Bay** in South Otago;
- the opening of the new **Queenstown Regional Visitor Centre**;
- landscaping work at the **Clyde Railhead** on the **Otago Central Rail Trail**;

- the restoration and maintenance of historic structures, including the restoration and stabilisation work carried out on the **Alexandra Courthouse, Mitchells Cottage, the St Bathans Hall, the Arrowtown Chinese Settlement, the McIntyre Hut and Jean Hut in the Whakaari Conservation Area, and two huts in the Upper Manuherikia;**
- effective **goat, pig, tahr, possum, rabbit and predator control** at key sites and as required by the relevant departmental and regional control plans;
- impressive results from successful **wilding conifer control** at Skippers, as well as work to control other weeds such as gorse, broom and Spanish heath;
- good evidence of positive population trends for **grand and Otago skinks** near Macraes Flat following intensive trapping and monitoring, and the transfer of Otago skinks from the Awa Nohoaka Conservation Area to Christchurch as part of the captive breeding programme;
- further **monitoring of concession activity** throughout Otago during the busy summer season, showing concessionaires that the department is serious about concession-related compliance, as well as raising the department's profile among visitors in general;
- the success of **community conservation events**, including two **Conservation Award evenings** during **Conservation Week, Sea Week** and several **Volunteer Projects**.

The board's main concern is the disappointingly slow progress with the implementation of the **Marine Protected Areas Policy**, which requires close co-operation between the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Fisheries. In recording its frustration at the ongoing delays associated with this implementation, the board acknowledges the work done by the Department of Conservation towards the establishment of a Marine Protection Planning Forum for the Southern Coastal Biogeographic Region.

Otago is one of the only regions in New Zealand without a marine reserve, placing the people and fisheries of Otago at a decided disadvantage with regard to marine conservation. The Nugget Point/Tokatā Marine Reserve Proposal, for which there was considerable support in the community (and, admittedly, opposition from a very vocal minority), was on the verge of being announced as a formal proposal in December 2005, when the government of the day declared a moratorium on marine reserve proposals in favour of the concept of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). At the time, the board was informed that Otago would be one of the first regions to benefit from MPA implementation.

This was followed by a prolonged process to determine Guidelines and Standards for MPAs. The Guidelines and Standards were eventually released in April 2008, and the board understands that MPA forums have been initiated in two regions - but not yet in Otago.

Although it is now well over three years since the delay of the Nugget Point/Tokatā Marine Reserve Proposal was announced, and 18 years since it was first mooted, there is still no mechanism to even initiate discussion or identify areas for possible protection in Otago.

b Mainland Southland/West Otago CMS

The board has 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 which was carried out by the Southland Conservancy in these areas and does not have any particular concerns.

c Draft West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS

The board has an interest in this draft CMS document because it covers those parts of Mount Aspiring National Park which are administered by the DOC West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy. The focus of the board's input has been to ensure consistency between the Draft West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini* CMS and the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan.

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

The board was very pleased to see the **Hāwea Conservation Park** and the **Oteake Conservation Park** formally established during the reporting period. The board had previously expressed its support for the establishment of both parks, and it followed this up with written submissions supporting the draft proposals. The formation of these parks has implemented key parts of the Otago CMS.

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

The board was consulted by or gave advice to the conservation authority and the department on a number of topics, including the following:

- eight **concession applications** (including applications for helicopter landings on public conservation land outside Mount Aspiring National Park, an easement associated with the Gibbston Valley Station Resort Development, and the replacement of Leaning Lodge on the Rock and Pillar Range);
- two proposed **land exchanges** relating to the Craigroy tenure review and the Lake Dispute Scenic Reserve;
- the proposed vesting of the **Long Point Recreation Reserve** in the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust;
- the proposed closure of **Boulder Beach Conservation Area**;
- a proposed right of way easement through the **Otanomomo Scientific Reserve**;
- the proposed **Gates of Haast bridge replacement**;
- proposed changes to the Dart Caples Operational Plan associated with Operation Ark;
- the proposed translocation of **lowland longjaw galaxias** from the Kauru River to the Waiainakarua River;
- proposed changes to the **WARO (Wild Animal Recovery Operation) framework**;
- **2009 Loder Cup Award**;
- annual **Coastal Otago and Inland Otago Conservation Awards** for notable conservation achievements in Otago.

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

R Allan and B Parker represented the board at some meetings of Fish and Game Otago and Fish and Game Central South Island, respectively. Otherwise, informal liaison was maintained with both organizations.

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 proposals for the tenure review of the Cloudy Peak, The Larches, Mt Alexander, Shingley Creek, Riverslea, Cambrian Hills, Cluden, Glenfellan, Mt Aspiring, Carrick, Deep Creek, and Long Gully pastoral leases;
- Proposed National Environmental Standard on Ecological Flows and Water Levels;
- Proposed National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management;
- Proposed National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation;
- Proposed Plan Changes 5A-5W to Central Otago District Plan;

- Draft Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Strategy;
- Proposed Changes to Regional Plan : Water for Otago;
- Proposed Mount Watkin Scenic Reserve Management Plan;
- Draft Okia Reserve Management Plan;
- Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill.

Litigation associated with **Project Hayes** (Proposed Lammermoor Wind Farm) continued during the reporting period. The board became a section 274 party to appeals by the Maniototo Environmental Society Incorporated and Upland Landscape Protection in order to gain legal clarification of the rules in the Central Otago District Plan which pertain to land over 900 metres. In the board's view, areas above 900 metres in altitude (including much of the land directly affected by **Project Hayes**) are the least modified, the most valuable, and the most sensitive landscapes in the Central Otago District.

An Environment Court Consent Order (RMA 518/00) altered the Central Otago District Plan in recognition of these values following several years of negotiation involving the board and the department. As a result, the same rules relating to the protection of outstanding landscapes were applied to all land over 900 metres. However, the council's decision on **Project Hayes** showed that its view regarding the application of these rules differed from that of the board. Some clarification of the matter by the Environment Court would be helpful, because large areas of Central Otago above 900 metres could potentially be affected by future developments along the lines of **Project Hayes**.

Despite its submissions opposing **Project Hayes** and the **Proposed Mahinerangi Wind Farm**, the board supports in principle wind farms and other sustainable energy generation systems, providing the adverse visual and environmental effects associated with them can be reduced to a satisfactory extent. In the board's view, a **National Energy Strategy** should be produced before decisions are made on major power generation developments - a strategy which determines appropriate energy types; locations of demand; transmission impacts and constraints; and prioritised sitings of generation systems to minimise effects on visual and amenity values. It is very difficult for territorial local authorities to make decisions which have nationally-important implications in the absence of an overarching national policy on wind farm and hydro dam location priorities.

Sewage disposal at Moeraki

Following a field trip to the Moeraki Boulders/Kaihinaki in 2007, the board contacted the Otago Regional Council and the Waitaki District Council to communicate its concerns about the discharge from the Moeraki Sewage Scheme. This discharge, which does not currently comply with the conditions of the relevant resource consent, flows into the south branch of Waiwherowhero Creek. After entering an estuary near the sea, the creek often spills across the beach between the Moeraki Boulders Car Park Recreation Reserve and the Moeraki Boulders Scenic Reserve. Thousands of visitors a year, including young children, cross the overflow to see the Moeraki Boulders/Kaihinaki, unaware that the water could pose a health risk to them.

The board believes that this is unacceptable for a major tourist site, and it is disappointed that the local councils have not acted promptly to remedy the situation. In the absence of council action, the board has asked the department to communicate with Public Health South on this issue, and to arrange for a suitable warning sign to be placed in the car park of the Moeraki Boulders Carpark Recreation Reserve.

Section 6N(2)(b) Board Committees

While the following committees or working groups have continued to function as the need arises, email communication has significantly reduced the need for actual meetings:

- Planning Committee

R Allan (Convenor), B Parker, A Smith, C Tanner, J Williams, H Langsbury (ex officio)

The Planning Committee was established to study planning documents and other planning matters relating to the board's jurisdiction and formulate detailed recommendations for

ratification by the full board. In practice, email communication has usually enabled all board members to become involved in such matters.

Scientific Advisory Group

A Smith (Convenor), R Allan (Convenor), H Langsbury (ex officio), and the following 13 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 Alan Mark	plant ecologist
Dr Jan Mosedale	tourism specialist
Mr Brian Patrick	entomologist
Prof Hamish Spencer	zoologist
Dr Ian Turnbull	geologist

The Scientific Advisory Group is not a board committee, but a panel of advisers who can supply the board with specialized information and make recommendations for consideration by the board. The board appreciates the willingness of these experts to provide input on topical conservation issues. All board members are invited to attend meetings of the Scientific Advisory Group, but electronic communication means that actual meetings are usually not necessary.

6 BOARD FUNCTIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS ACT

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

Following extensive consultation with board members, Kāi Tahu and a wide range of interest groups during the reporting period, the department released the **Draft Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan** for public comment in April 2009. Board members will be taking part in the hearings of written submissions soon after the closing date of 30 June 2009, and will then work through the board's other statutory functions under these sections.

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 monitoring of 16 Haast Tokoeka (Kiwi) chicks in the **Haast Tokoeka (Kiwi) Sanctuary** (much of which is located on the Haast Range in Mount Aspiring National Park) and the ongoing efforts to translocate healthy chicks into the sanctuary under the Operation Nest Egg (ONE) programme (page 51, 8.7);
- effective **tahr** and **goat control** operations (pages 53-55, 8.9);
- the construction of a **new track and suspension bridge linking the Blue Pools and Young Tracks** (page 68, 8.18);
- the upgrading of the **Harris Basin section of the Routeburn Track** (pages 69-70, 8.19);
- the upgrading of the **Liverpool Hut** in the West Matukituki (pages 70-72, 8.20).

7 BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE NEW ZEALAND WALKWAYS ACT 1990

No actions were taken under sections 6, 8, 25(1)(b) or 29(1) of the Act during the reporting period.

With the passing of the **Walking Access Act 2008** on 30 September 2008, the **New Zealand Walking Access Commission (Te Ara o Papatuanuku)** assumed all of the statutory responsibilities relating to New Zealand Walkways which were previously held by conservation boards.

Since there are already numerous public walking opportunities on land managed by the Department of Conservation and territorial local authorities in Otago, the board looks forward to the development of productive working relationships between these agencies and the new commission.

8 LIAISON

Other Conservation Boards

C Morris, A Penniket and B Parker have continued to liaise with the West Coast Tai Poutini, Southland and Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Boards, respectively.

New Zealand Conservation Authority

The board enjoyed a combined field trip and a meeting with the New Zealand Conservation Authority in connection with the latter's visit to Dunedin in February 2009. 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 during the rest of the reporting period.

Takata Whenua

H Langsbury, who is affiliated to Te Rūnanga Ōtākou, and J Williams, who is affiliated to Kati Huirapa Runaka ki Puketeraki, were appointed on the nomination of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Section 6P(7B), Conservation Act 1987 refers). The 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. Some board members have 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 five formal board meetings during the reporting period. The public forum at the Danseys Pass Coach Inn on 28 November 2008 was attended by 18 members of the public, as a result of some local conservation issues which were of considerable public interest. The board receives valuable community feedback on local conservation issues from those who take part in these forums, and it proposes to continue the practice. 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.

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.

9 GENERAL

Some significant items considered by the board during the reporting period but not covered fully in the earlier sections of the report include:

Community Contributions to Conservation

The board recognizes the impressive achievements of the many local organizations, councils, community groups and enthusiastic individuals throughout Otago who involve themselves in conservation projects. It is pleasing to see that conservation and concern for the environment are woven into the lives of an increasing number of local people.

One small way the board participates in the recognition of such 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 2008, the winner of the Conservation Award for Coastal Otago was Nik Hurring, with the Sinclair Wetlands Technical Committee and Shaun McConkey as the runners-up. The winner of the 2008 Conservation Award for Inland Otago was Ross McMillan, and the runners-up were the St Bathans Community Association and Eco Wanaka Adventures.

Reducing the Board's Carbon Footprint

By planting trees or shrubs at most board meetings and by using electronic communications as much as possible, board members are continuing to make an effort to reduce the board's carbon footprint.

10 CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

It has been an exceptionally busy year for the Otago Conservation Board. The members of the board have been challenged by a range of RMA, planning and advocacy issues. The conscientious work of the board members over the last year has continued to provide the region with effective conservation governance.

The review of the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan has been a strong focus for the board. Board members have been genuinely excited by the opportunity to undertake this important statutory planning role. We are very pleased with the progress of this work to date, and look forward to completing it in the next year.

The board, driven by the passion of its members, has participated in many RMA processes, and it continued to be involved in the Project Hayes wind farm appeals. The board continues to be frustrated by All of Government approaches, which impact on the ability of the department to support the board. However, we have persisted and continued to advocate for landscape protection in Central Otago. The board is

presently concerned about any further limiting of its role by the proposed streamlining of the Resource Management Act.

Otago Conservation Board members are strong advocates for marine protection, but are becoming disillusioned with progress on the "Marine Protected Area Process". The board will continue to advocate for progress with regard to the protection of a range of representative marine ecosystems until it has been achieved.

On behalf of the board, I take the opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Otago Conservancy team and specifically, the work of the Conservator. The board and the Conservator have not always agreed on all issues and this has provided some invigorating debates over the years. The board takes this opportunity to farewell the retiring conservator, Jeff Connell, a visionary and dedicated conservationist, who has gone beyond what we would expect of a public servant - he will be missed.

In closing, I take the opportunity to thank all members of the board and its committees for their contributions to our decision making process. These contributions are recognized both for the commitment shown and the contribution made to the outcomes of the board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Langsbury', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Hoani Langsbury
Chairperson

3 July 2009