



**Picton
Dawn
Chorus**

Annual Report 2023



Image courtesy of Colin Aitchison

Contents

Chair's Report	1
Board and Staff	5
Bush Trapping Report	6
Urban Trapping Report	11
DCTE Report	13
Financial Reports.....	15
Recognition Highlights	17
Gratitude Report	18





Bryn Evans

Chair's Report



The Year in Retrospect

I am honoured to present the Chair's report for the 2022/23 financial year, highlighting the significant achievements and progress made by Picton Dawn Chorus ("PDC"). It has been a remarkable year filled with notable accomplishments, all of which have contributed to our mission of restoring and preserving our precious birdlife and natural environment.

Trapping Network

The core of our work is our trapping activity to combat bird predators and thus restore our birdlife. This is hard work, and at times may seem unrewarding and repetitive to those volunteers checking our traplines every week, but it is essential to our mission.

I acknowledge the tremendous progress that has been made in extending and intensifying our trapping network, not only throughout the bush areas surrounding the township, but also within the urban areas of Picton Waitohi. Readers of the Bush Trapping and Urban Trapping reports will be rewarded with a wealth of interesting detail covering the many aspects of our trapping activities, and the related statistics for the year.

Habitat Restoration

During the year our Ngahere Planting Group, comprising of a group of volunteers keen to plant natives, has gradually developed impetus and I am confident that they will become the leading habitat restoration project in the Picton region.

To support this initiative, we have made a submission to Council's 2023 Annual Plan, in which we propose to enter a long-term partnership with Council by engaging in the planting and maintenance of native trees and plants throughout the Council-owned community land in the Picton basin. At the time of writing, the Council's response is unknown.

Over time, and subject of course to satisfactory performance, we want our Ngahere Planting Group to become the Council's preferred workforce for native planting on community-owned land spaces.

By providing an improved habitat, with safe spaces for nesting, breeding, feeding, and migration, the bird population will thrive. A healthy bird population will also contribute to the resilience of local ecosystems by enhancing seed germination, promoting forest regeneration and regulating populations of other organisms such as insects. The biodiversity benefits may emerge slowly, but in time will become exponential.

Dawn Chorus Trading Enterprise (“DCTE”)

In their report, the leaders of DCTE, our social trading enterprise, commented on a significant increase in 2022 in their manufacturing of traps, trapping mechanisms, and other field equipment. This was reflected in an increase in total DCTE sales from \$19,000 in the 2021/22 year to \$33,700 in the 2022/23 year, an increase of over 77% - an amazing achievement by a team of 23 volunteers.

DCTE provides the leading source of sustainable revenue for PDC, a source of funds that helps to alleviate our dependence on external sources of funding.

The 2022/23 surplus has been applied to fund an off-road electric motorbike for use by our bush trappers, thus making their work in remote locations easier and more efficient. Our thanks and appreciation to the DCTE group, and in particular to their leaders Mark, Trev, Don, Neil, Brian, and Joe for this notable achievement.

PEC Shop

Our shop is a shared space at the Picton Environment Centre, premises which is kindly provided by Port Marlborough. Three charities share the space which is used as an eco- shop, as well as for education and as offices.

Our very capable shop coordinator is Alison Williams, who is aided by a team of approximately 15 volunteers. They have worked hard on increasing our profile by being involved in events such as Garden Marlborough, the Maritime Festival, the Marina 2 Marina event, Earth Day and the cruise ship market days.

Financial Statements

The financial statements of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2023 are provided in a summary format on page 15 and 16 of the annual report. Once again, I can report that we have managed our limited finances prudently, and have a small surplus to carry forward. My thanks go to Steve Hall for his capable and thorough independent review of the annual accounts.

Acknowledgement to Donors

Our donors provided 88% of our total income in 2022/23. While our long-term goal is to become self-sufficient in financial terms by generating sustainable forms of revenue, we simply cannot continue to operate at a high level, and achieve our objectives, without our donors' generosity.

We believe that our donors need to clearly see where their money is being spent, so they can be confident that the results being achieved are both ecologically meaningful and strategically important. We are continually striving to be more efficient with the resources we have, and to increase the transparency of the results of our work.

Our gratitude is owed to the Department of Conservation, Marlborough District Council, Rata Foundation, Yealands Sustainability Initiative, Pelorus Trust, Pub Charity, Two Rivers, The Blue Door and Redwood Trust. We thank you all.

Merger with Kaipupu Point Mainland Island Society

Discussions with Kaipupu Point Mainland Island Society during the year have resulted in a recent decision made by the members of both societies to complete a full merger in the 23/24 financial year. The work needed to unite our two societies is progressing well at the time of writing this report.

Strategic and Operational Planning

It is also timely that we take an opportunity to reconsider our pathway forward. Accordingly, we have recently commenced a planning process that will result in a Strategic and Operational Plan to provide us with a detailed blueprint to govern our future strategy and activities, and how we shall carry out those activities. The planning process is being led by Board member Greg Billington, and takes in the views and ideas of members, group leaders, staff and Board to ensure that there has been the widest possible consultation with our community.

The finalised plan will guide and direct all the Society's activities and projects, and the allocation of our resources. Our goals may be aspirational, but they are achievable if we all work together, and the plan is used to guide conservation and environmental management across our rohe (region).

While critical to our work, the plan is not an end in itself; it is the means to achieving our aspirational goals. And these include the restoration of the ecological health of our local environment for the benefit of our children, and their children. We want to help make Picton Waitohi a healthy, abundant, and interconnected place where people respect and value our unique landscape and biodiversity. A place where the thriving biodiversity of the surrounding bush 'spills over' into the township.

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge and thank everyone involved with PDC for your exceptional dedication and contributions to the protection of birds, and to the restoration of our natural environment. The hard work and unwavering commitment of our members, volunteers, and employees has been instrumental in the remarkable successes achieved by our Society over the past financial year.

J. V. Evans



Picton Dawn Chorus Board Members



Bryn Evans
Chair



Claire Welch



James Wilson



Ed Pitts



Greg Billington

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. Your passion for bird protection has been evident in every task you have undertaken, and we are fortunate to have such a talented team.



Pip Macfarlane
General
Manager



Zoe Aitchison
Administration
Coordinator



Esther Verhoef
Volunteers
Coordinator



Alison Williams
PEC Premises
Coordinator



Lee Crosswell
Bush Trapping
Coordinator



Jen Dunlop
Urban Trapping
Coordinator



Jack Bailey
Predator Control
Field Assistant



Lee Crosswell



Bush Trapping Report

The Operational Plan, adopted in 2020, has identified seven separate management areas within the total 4,815ha of the Picton Dawn Chorus (PDC) project scope. Various levels of predator control, methodologies and priority levels have been assigned to achieve the desired control outcomes within each of these blocks. The ultimate outcome being, to improve local birdlife and the abundance of other native species.

Our bush trapping zone includes all of the organisation's trapping areas outside of Picton and Waikawa's urban boundaries; the latter areas are managed by our urban trapping group. This bush trapping report relates to activities across Victoria Domain, Shakespeare Bay, Wedge Point, the Whenuanui Point Extension and the outlying Extension areas. The Kaipupu Point area is managed separately by its own society. These specific blocks and their control priorities are shown in Figure 1.

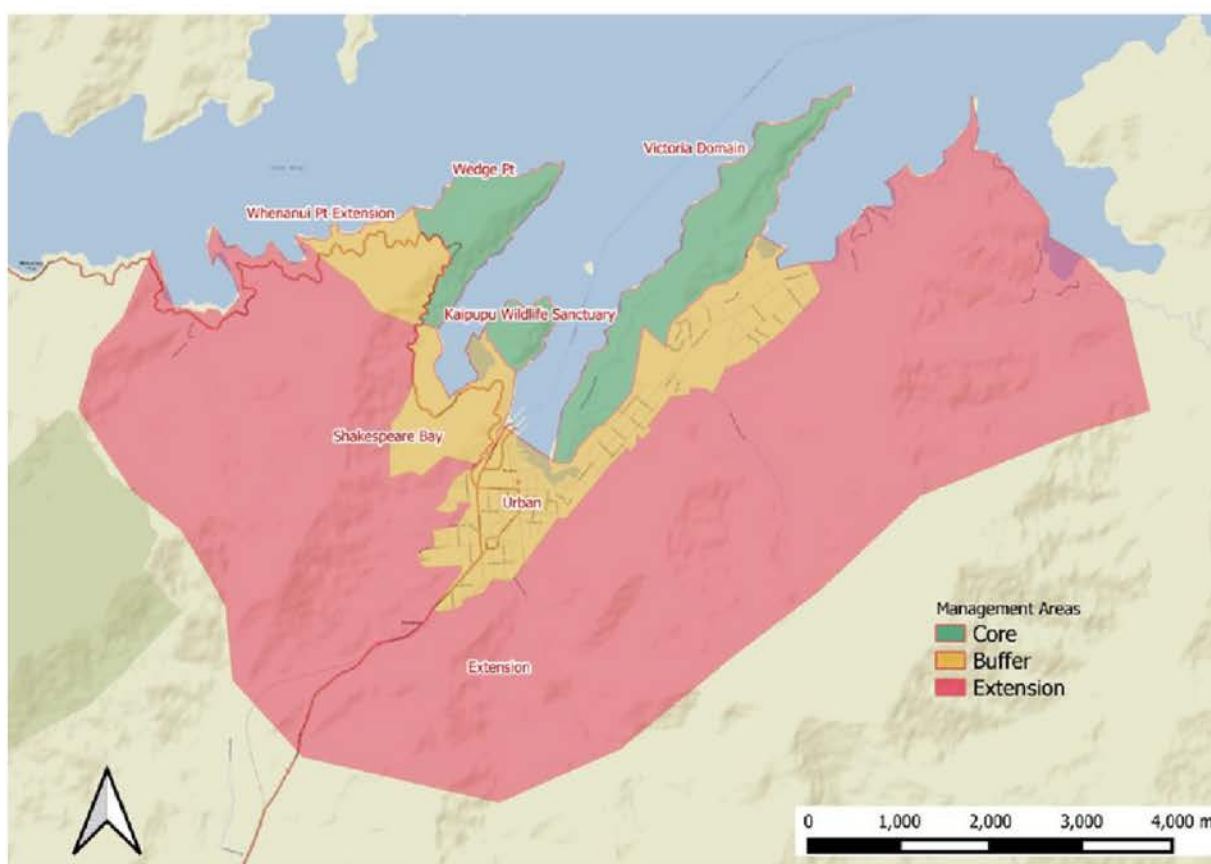


Figure 1: Picton Dawn Chorus Management Areas as identified within the Operational Plan.

In past years, much of the trapping effort was carried out across Victoria Domain and the easily accessible sections of Shakespeare Bay and The Wedge, being the Link Pathway and Queen Charlotte Drive. More difficult-to-access coastal habitat was also trapped with Goodnature A24s at this time. In subsequent years more off-trail lines were installed, including coverage of Wedge Point by 2021. The Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust established control on the northern side of the Wedge, while contractors set up much of the south eastern side. Off-track lines in all areas are now maintained by Picton Dawn Chorus field staff.

Bush Trapping Predator Control Works Summary for the Year Ending 31st March 2023

PDC volunteers have again, this past year, contributed a large number of hours checking traps across a number of volunteer lines, enabling a high number of effective trap nights. Work by volunteers over the past year towards PDC bush trapping efforts extends across a number of activities. These include operational planning discussions, trap design/building, trap trials, auditing processes, fixing traps, bait trials and trapping data analysis.

There have also been volunteer group days from local organisations for the reported period, notably a large group of Yealands staff in June 2022 and several days from local pest control contractors Vector Free Marlborough Ltd. Both organisations provided a number of staff free of charge. These events were very useful for clearing new traplines and carrying in additional traps.



Figure 2 below shows PDC trapping coverage at 31st March 2022 for comparison, while Figure 3 shows the trapping coverage on the TrapNZ database, as of 31st March 2023.

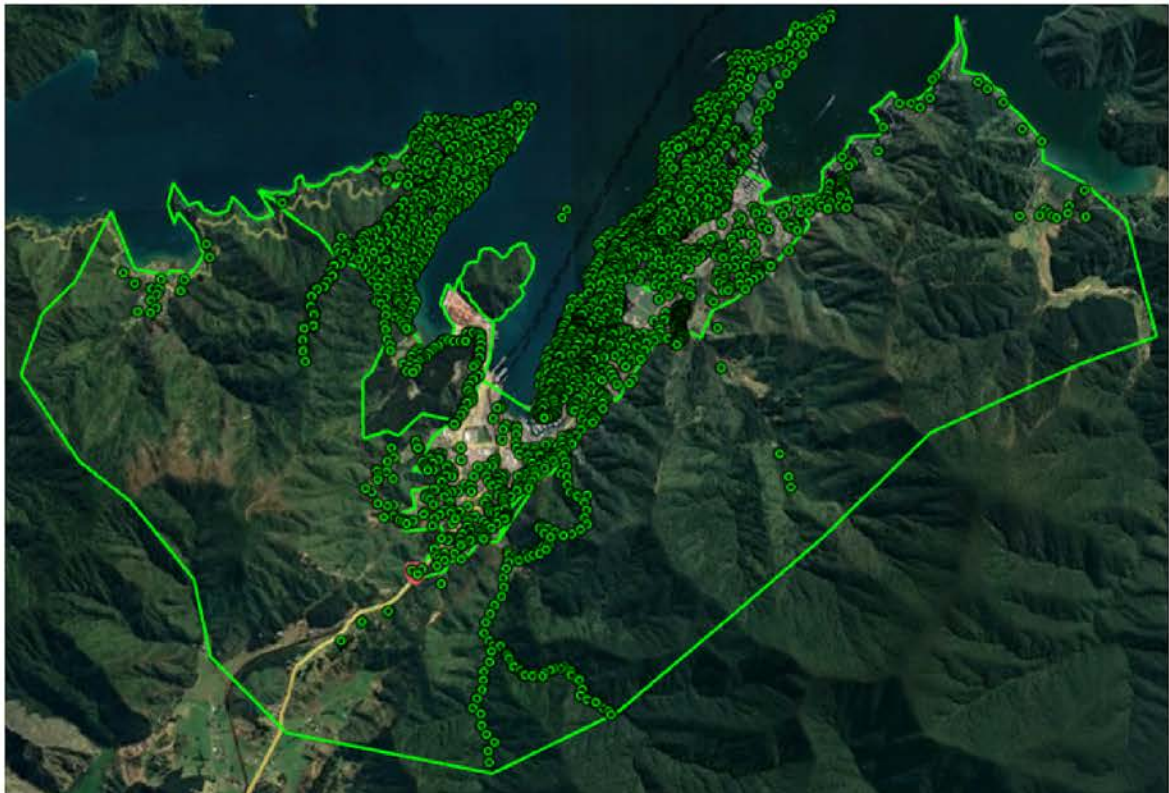


Figure 2: PDC trapping coverage 31st March 2022.



Figure 3: PDC current trapping coverage as of 31st March 2023.

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 2022 - March 31st 2023.

Bush Trapping Area Catches, April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023

Rat	Mouse	Possum	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Hedgehog	Unspecified	TOTAL
924	637	263	13	2	0	25	306	2170

Table 1

Rat catches show seasonal variations with low catches characteristic of summer (when natural food supplies are abundant) and much higher catches in autumn and winter (when natural food is less abundant and our non-toxic trap lure is more appealing). The seasonal pattern has been visible in both bush trapping and garden trapping. Bush trapping catches have a confounding factor, caused by the increasing number of traps over the reporting period.

Output Monitoring

Monitoring has continued with 6 monitoring lines for possums and rats on the Victoria Domain and 5 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 is the percentage of cards that show rat footprints. Rat tracking tunnel monitoring was again carried out in November 2022 and repeated in April 2023.



Rat Monitoring 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%
The Wedge	Rat Tracking %
November 2021	8%
April 2022	16%
November 2022	20%
April 2023	To be completed April 2023

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

*Note: 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.

Possum Monitoring is conducted to standard practice with wax tags in the field for a seven night survey.

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

Table 3: Wax Tag Index Monitoring Results for Victoria Domain and The Wedge, June 2022.

*Note: PDC Operational Plan suggests an output target of maintaining a wax tag index of less than 15% for Victoria Domain and less than 22% for The Wedge strata.

Monitoring suggests that output targets are largely being achieved for the period, with the exception of the Victoria Domain Tracking Tunnel Index running above the target level of 20%. The planned addition of further trapping devices should contribute towards reaching this goal.

For the year ahead we will continue to intensify our trapping network within the core priority areas, while continuing to grow the network further, with additional stoat lines to be added to the wider extension area. We will focus on refining our methods and continue to improve our trapping effectiveness.

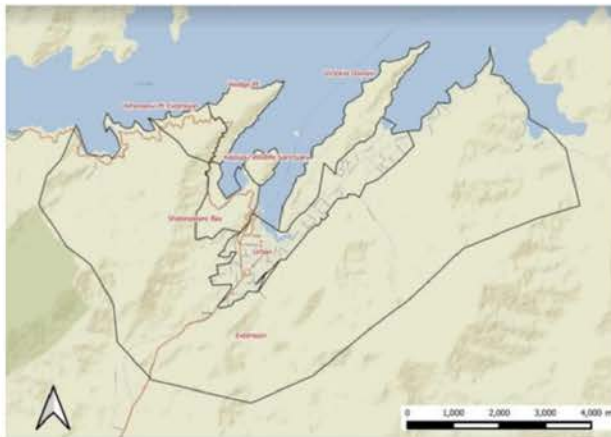


Jen Dunlop



Urban Trapping Report

In the Operational Plan, urban trapping in Picton and Waikawa is included in the “buffer block” protecting the “core block” of Kaipupu Sanctuary. The urban area includes the suburban gardens, 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 Kaipupu Sanctuary and Victoria Domain, and providing an immigration buffer for pests.



The urban area is approximately 402ha in size and contains approximately 2,500 resident households. The local community is enthusiastic in their efforts and it is now a matter of spreading our message. Whakahou Ngātahi tō tātau manu taketake, meaning restoring our native birdlife together.

To encourage community engagement we have several initiatives. He toki a Tāne (Nature’s Champion), in partnership with Daltons, is designed to reward those within the operational plan area who are putting in the work to support our native species. Residents and businesses of Picton/Waikawa can nominate themselves and/or others as He toki a Tāne (Nature’s Champion).

An ideal candidate will be doing the work to help make our area predator free, by providing a safe, healthy and thriving environment for native species, whether that be through urban (garden) trapping or planting native species and food sources for native bird populations. Nominations are open for three months, and winners are awarded quarterly, receiving a \$200 Daltons product pack.



Neighbourhood Trap Leader Programme. This initiative started with a single pilot programme launched on and around Matai Place. The Matai Place programme is currently the only one running with a more concentrated effort needed on growing this and spreading out to other areas. The goal is to get more households in targeted neighbourhoods, trapping by offering the support, services, and advice of an experienced and knowledgeable Neighbourhood Trapping Leader.

The launch of the **Bait, set, check & win** competition in March has already greatly increased community participation. This simple initiative rewards participants, by way of a monthly prize draw, for entering their catch data. All entries for the specified time period are then entered into an overall draw to win a trip for two to Motuara Island courtesy of Cougarline.

We are hoping to see a continued trend of data recording in our community.

Urban Trapping Area Catches, April 1st 2022 - March 31st 2023

Rat	Mouse	Possum	Stoat	Weasel	Ferret	Hedgehog	Unspecified	TOTAL
145	238	89	0	1	0	15	0	488

**Many catches are likely not being submitted for urban areas*

*** Volunteer lines in urban areas have been included in the Bush Trapping report*

Plans for the year ahead include, increasing participation in high need areas, growing these existing programmes and the submission of urban catch data. We continue to strive to get closer to our goal of consistent urban trapping and regular reporting in 1 of every 4 households in the Picton/Waikawa area.





Mark Altoft

DCTE REPORT



Purpose

Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise (DCTE) manufactures, repairs and recycles traps and trapping mechanisms for sale and supply to Picton Dawn Chorus, and other trapping organisations. Many of the materials we have used in our production thus far have been materials which have been abandoned (eg traps, timber and other items from the ZIP project at Resolution Bay), or donated as discard offcuts from a timber mill.

Any profits made are owned by PDC and are specifically tagged to projects/items identifiable to DCTE volunteers.

Trap Development, Trial and Innovation

As well as making trap boxes DCTE has spent some time on developing and trialling new trap designs and refurbishing previously used traps. The following are some of our activities:

- The Wilson Blind Box was developed to replace the exposed in-tree traps which are now being phased out to prevent by-catch. These boxes can also be used on the ground.
- DOC 200 long box and run thru designs
- Mouse trapping within our standard long box trap to reduce bait theft.



Volunteer Base

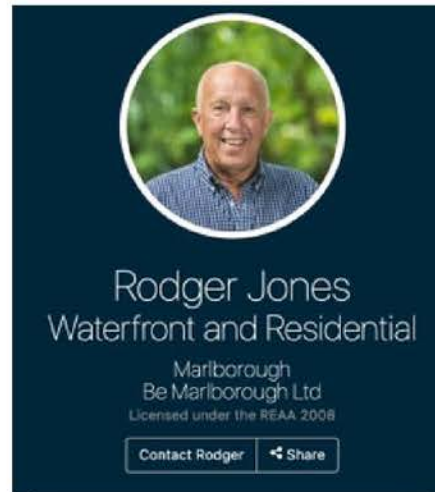
The work done by DCTE is all on a voluntary basis. We have about 23 volunteers currently with a wide range of skill sets, who donate their time as regularly as they can as a “sweat equity” contribution. In 2022 DCTE experienced a significant increase in activity and so we expanded our lead team of four to a team of six. Roles were more closely defined and this has spread the workload out to a greater extent.

Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise Donors

DCTE are fortunate to have the ongoing support of several entities and companies in Marlborough.

We would like to give thanks to Rodger Jones for donating our current premises "The Rock" and "The Pebble ". It is the heart and hub for all of our DCTE and trapline volunteers.

We must also give thanks to the companies below for their donations of materials and fastenings used in trap construction.



During the last year we have received generous gifts of tools and plant on extended loan from a number of individuals:

- Paul Macfarlane loaned a bench saw
- Phil Chandler donated a combination saw and a Cobra table saw
- Picton Mens Shed donated a Makita skill saw

we thank you all !

Statement of Financial Performance

for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Year ended 31 March 2023	Year ended 31 March 2022
Income		
Grants Received	\$374,471	\$246,313
Membership, Donations & Interest Income	\$8,691	\$7,316
Shop Sales	\$7,346	\$9,038
DCTE Surplus (Deficit)		
Sales - DCTE Products	\$33,758	\$19,041
DCTE Purchases - Trap Materials	(11,426)	(12,124)
Office Expenses DCTE	(3,502)	(2,192)
Total DCTE Surplus (Deficit)	\$18,830	\$4,725
Total Income	\$409,338	\$267,392
Wages, Salaries & Employment Costs	\$316,942	\$219,688
Product Purchases	\$41,703	\$52,921
Office Overheads	\$16,592	\$12,242
Total Operating Costs & Overheads	\$375,237	\$284,851
Net Surplus (deficit)	\$34,101	(17,459)

Statement of Financial Position

as of 31 March 2023

	Year ended 31 March 2023	Year ended 31 March 2022
Assets		
Bank	\$163,970	\$109,673
Total Bank	\$163,970	\$109,673
Current Assets		
Accounts Receivable	\$845	\$924
Inventory	\$2,353	\$1,790
Total Current Assets	\$3,198	\$2,714
Non-Current Assets		
Fixed Assets	\$5,237	\$8,857
Total Non-Current Assets	\$5,237	\$8,857
Total Assets	\$172,405	\$121,244
Current Liabilities		
GST	\$23,970	\$11,359
Holiday Pay Owing to Staff	\$10,877	\$6,427
Total Current Liabilities	\$34,847	\$17,786
Total Liabilities	\$34,847	\$17,786
Net Assets	\$137,559	\$103,458
Equity		
Current Year Earnings	\$34,101	(17,459)
Retained Earnings	\$103,458	120,917
Total Equity	\$137,559	\$103,458



Recognition Highlights

The past financial year included a number of highlights that provided some welcome recognition for our hard work:

- Participation by our Administrator, Zoe Aitchison, in a BBC short film in the Our Frozen Planet series called "Can Restoring Nature Save Our Planet?"
- 2023 Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards - we were the winner of the Community Innovation prize. The judges applauded our community-driven response to deal with a degraded environment, and the results we've achieved.
- Marlborough Community Awards 2022 - second in the environmental and conservation category.
- Marlborough District Council - recognised our efforts in 2022 by awarding us \$100,000 to support our trapping work on Council-owned community land within our rohe in the Picton basin.



Image donated by Toya Heatley



Gratitude Report

The exponential growth of Picton Dawn Chorus, and all the achievements that have been shared within this annual report, 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.



Grants



Donations

Sponsorship



Sponsorship via product or service donation



Picton Dawn Chorus

Restoring our native birdlife together.

Whakahou ngātahi tō tātau manu taketake.