

# PDC NEWS

*Restoring our bird life together*

## Picton Dawn Chorus is poised to grow.

### **Our Chairman writes...**

The stumblings, as we matured into a group with defined separation between management and governance, and the hiccups due to Covid are now well behind us.


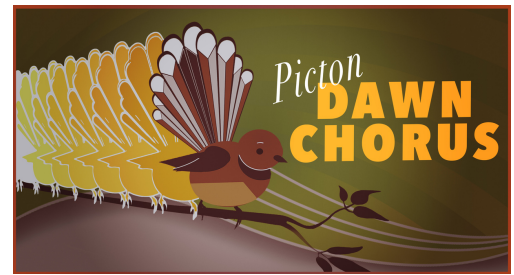
We are ready to implement the bold plan put together by Andrew Macalister, where we intensify the trapping layout we already have and expand to more than 4,500 ha around Picton

We are also ready to give another boost to our urban trapping efforts by providing more incentives for householders to maintain a constant trapping regime.

We have nearly reached our target for funding the first stages and feel confident that we will achieve our goal of Picton town being predator-free by 2030. We are also confident that this will lead to Victoria Domain also being predator-free, with the town belt providing a virtual fence between the hinterland and the Domain. A significant number of willing volunteers carrying out a broader range of activities, all in support of our objectives. Mostly the work is monitoring trap lines, but we offer many more interesting activities for those who don't particularly want to do trapping. If you would like to contribute to the PDC effort please contact our Administrator, Pip; we will match your interests to our needs.

The latest good news story is the gifting of the use of a large garage to allow our Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise to continue its excellent work in building and selling traps throughout the South Island. Another cause for excitement is the work being done with Garden Marlborough, where visitors to the event will be taken to Picton gardens where trapping is being carried out and native birds and their preferred trees are being nurtured and protected.

It is indeed an exciting time for PDC but then there have been a number of exciting milestones on our journey to becoming predator-free.

## Garden Trapping

By Dianne John



The rats and mice are getting hungry as the summer feast is over. Now they are looking for a warm, dry spot for winter so it is important to have your traps baited and set to catch them before they find your home to their liking. Peanut butter remains a cheap and effective bait but it should be checked weekly to maintain its aroma. Mice can often clean out the bait without being caught so, in order to lure rats, the bait needs to be regularly refreshed.

## PDC Membership

Membership is now due for the April 21 to March 22 financial year.

Our society's mission is "the community working together to restore our native birds by removing introduced predators". Without the valued members of our Society, we could not possibly increase our birdlife. We thank you for your continued membership and assure you that your contribution will be used wisely.

Membership is Ten Dollars per person and can be paid into our bank account or dropped into the Picton Environment Centre, 14 Auckland Street.

Picton Dawn Chorus Incorporated  
0317100051798-00

Please put 'Membership' and your name as a reference.

## CAWTHRON AWARDS EVENING

*By Robyn Richards*

Picton Dawn Chorus is proud to have been a finalist in the 2021 Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards.

Having submitted an entry in the Community Innovation section of the annual environmental competition, our organisation was well-represented at the awards dinner at the Marlborough Events Centre last Friday evening.

The Dawn Chorus entry focused on community involvement, with special mention of the successful garden trapping programme, Project 7220, which now sees one in four Picton and Waikawa houses geared up to trap rats and mice. As a way of measuring the success of the garden trapping scheme, Picton Dawn Chorus volunteers have devised and implemented a five-minute urban bird count – a practice now being used in other New Zealand towns.

The top award in this section went to the Marlborough Community Gardens. However, the judges praised PDC for the way in which it carried out its aim of involving the local community in an urban trapping programme.

“PDC had a vision for a predator-free environment well before others and before the establishment of Predator Free NZ,” the judging report noted. “They have been innovative forerunners in the area of pest control and associated activities. In five years, this energetic, skilled and focused group has developed a recognised and well-supported initiative in Picton resulting in a measurable increase in the bird population and a significant improvement in regenerating native trees in and around the town.”

In the words of the Cawthron award application, “We get pleasure not only from seeing and hearing more native birds in town, but also from people telling us that they, too, have seen and heard more birds, telling us we are doing a good job.

“We are proud of generating a community-led initiative.”



## White Heron residing at Waikawa

*This beautiful bird has been nicknamed Big Bird by the Waikawa stream locals. We understand it's a young bird that's decided to take up residence for the winter.*

*It first arrived about 7 weeks ago and has flown in most days to chill out in the sun and hunt in the stream. It also frequents the marina and occasionally other properties in the area.*

## Volunteer Training Evening

We will be holding an informal volunteer training session at 6pm on Friday 21 May at the Little Theatre. The aim is to have a refresher about trap setting, trap placement and data collection as well as to learn about some new trap types that we will be rolling out. Please RSVP to [siobain@pictondawnchorus.nz](mailto:siobain@pictondawnchorus.nz)

*Representing Picton Dawn Chorus at the Cawthron Awards: from left, Claire Welch, Pip Macfarlane, James Wilson & Dianne John.*





## Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise (DCTE)

### Resolution Mission

I have been checking rat traps for a few years and really enjoy getting out in the bush and feeling I am dealing to the rats. However, it is a lonely task and sometimes I enjoy getting out and working with like-minded people.

One of the joys of being retired is that when someone rings and says "I know it is short notice, but are you available to help tomorrow?" you can say "Yes". So when the call came for a trip to Resolution Bay, we were happy to be on board, no matter the early start, heavy lifting and late finish, perhaps it was the offer of "good-humoured banter" that swung it.

Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP), an NZ organisation which develops tools and techniques to control predators, had a trial site at Bottle Rock in Queen Charlotte Sound/Tōtaranui, where they tested a range of traps. Just over a year ago when their trial was complete, they went on to other projects. As the trapping was not suitable for locals to take on, a huge pile of trapping gear was left at Resolution Bay. The locals were becoming concerned about the unsightly dump, so close to the walking track. Never wanting any useful gear to go to waste, after consulting ZIP, our group was to recover some useful items, particularly the DOC-200 rat/stoat traps.

Cougar Line had offered transport and Resolution Bay Cabins loaned us a quad bike complete with trailer. When we arrived at Resolution we started by looking at the abandoned gear. In amongst the debris there was treasure, so we set to work separating the treasure from the trash. The quad bike was great for moving recovered gear from the site to the wharf, where it was stacked ready for the return trip to Picton. As the stack grew we were unsure about how much the boat could take. As the afternoon became decidedly cool, we were grateful to see the boat and, with help from the crew managed to get everything loaded.

Back at Picton, there was another PDC crew waiting with trailers to transport the gear to the shed, where it was unloaded for the final time. We successfully liberated over 100 double set DOC-200 traps, which certainly made the trip worthwhile. There were short lengths of timber, which will come in very handy, also interesting items like tea infuser balls (I never knew these can be used as bait containers). We left Resolution still with a large pile of trapping leftovers, mostly rubbish, but I hope it will not be too long before the rest of this eyesore is removed.

The whole operation ran very smoothly, thanks to those who organised it and also to Cougar Line, Resolution Bay Cabins and all the volunteers involved.



**Bags of old parts and rubbish**



**Broken trap boxes and parts**



**All hands at work**

*By Helen Braithwaite*





## Rodger Jones Waterfront and Residential

Marlborough  
Be Marlborough Ltd  
Licensed under the REAA 2008

Contact Rodger 

Mobile: +64 21 341 323  
Office: +64 3 578 7700  
rodger.jones@bayleys.co.nz

# Generous support gives DCTE a home

The Dawn Chorus Trapping Enterprise now has a garage/workshop space of its own, thanks to the generosity of a local businessman. Rodger Jones has given PDC the use of a spacious garage at the back of a residential section in town. With access to power and water, the shed at last provides the group with a secure workspace to ensure the future of their trap-building enterprise. It also means that various items of equipment and building materials can be brought together under one roof. Up until now, DCTE has relied on the generosity of a number of people to provide the necessary storage.

A recent working bee saw plenty of volunteers and helpers converge on the property to tidy it up. A neighbour with a digger also joined in, clearing vegetation away from the shed. "Heaps of people pitched in," said DCTE's Trev Easton. "We've been very fortunate."

Once set up, the new premises will have three separate spaces: a dedicated storage area, a workshop and a smoko/meeting room. Work benches have been built and specialist tools have been donated to equip the shed.

Sam Cloughton from Papatuanuku Trust is pictured receiving the 'Most Enthusiastic Trapper' award at our volunteers' get-together at the end of last year. Sam is a regular trapper, turning out every week, in all weathers, with Mark and Sue Altoft to do his bit for Picton Dawn Chorus.

*PDC volunteers swing into action, clearing the section to make their new workshop more accessible.*



We wish to thank our sponsors for their ongoing support of Picton Dawn Chorus.

