



Above: Casting a shadow along an Otago beach in the evening twilight, a lone yellow-eyed strides inland after a long day's fishing.

Left: A handsome juvenile during preening.

Peninsula; and Nugget Point, Hina Hina Cove and Kings Rocks in the Catlins district of South Otago.

In North Otago, Bob and Janice Jones have developed a reputation as the "penguin people". Living in the house attached to the now unmanned Moeraki lighthouse, they rescue birds hurt at sea, often after being caught in nets, and nurse them back to health before releasing them again. They are honorary rangers in charge of the penguin reserves at Shag Point and Katiki Beach where chick survival has risen dramatically since their work began. On the Otago Peninsula, where the greatest concentration of mainland penguins is found, replanting of part of the Highcliff Reserve has started with the help of school children. Schools have also raised funds for hoiho through mufti days and other fund raising

projects. Most important, privately-owned penguin areas desperately need fencing but financial and legal difficulties are preventing progress. The newly formed Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust has set out to remedy this situation.

In the Catlins, where farmer pressure for land has been less and where there are already several reserves on land occupied by hoiho, progress on protection is being made. A programme for fencing of reserves by the Department of Conservation is nearly completed and important colonies on private land at Penguin Bay and at Te Rere have been partly fenced.

It was near Te Rere that I spoke to the American about penguins. It is this area that I have been involved with most closely. Possibly the most important in the Catlins district, it presently supports some 40 pairs of

breeding birds and has a great potential for expansion. Some of the best and most well known photos of hoiho have come from Te Rere as seen through the lens of local photographer, Dean Schneider. Here the forest has been cleared only very recently and a substantial area still remains bush-covered close to the coast. The Forest and Bird Society has successfully negotiated to buy some 60 hectares, most of which is still in forest. The coastal fringe however has largely been cleared, and a major replanting programme will be needed. Replanting has already started on five hectares fenced by the Southland Branch of the Society between 1980 and 1985. We in Southland are now running a fundraising campaign to recover the cost of fencing, surveying and replanting the land. This is estimated to cost some \$40,000.

The people of the south are working together to save the world's rarest penguin from disappearing from the mainland. Many areas where hoiho nests on reserves are now protected by fencing, but the most important areas remain unprotected on private land. If the effort to save the bird is to be successful over the next few years, assistance from all over the country will be needed.

The greatest need is for funds to fence land and to buy it where necessary, for only with adequate protection from stock, predators, and the sun, will the yellow-eyed penguin survive. It is not a great deal to ask: it is the least we owe this unique bird. 🐧

For more information on the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, write to the Secretary, PO Box 5409, Dunedin.