



### **GPS foraging assessment of West Coast blue penguins to inform conservation management**

The West Coast Penguin Trust was established in 2006 and exists to conserve penguins, other seabirds and their habitat on New Zealand's West Coast through research, advocacy and practical projects.

The Trust has historically undertaken monitoring of blue penguin foraging in the central Buller region (2015, 2016 and 2017) using GPS trackers, and added depth data collection for a small number of foraging trips during the 2019 season with the support of the NZ Penguin Initiative (NZPI).

Our intention is to regularise the approach to collecting spatial foraging data annually. Ideally, this will cover the four key stages of the breeding season: incubation, chick rearing, pre and post moult. This will contribute to the understanding of the marine ecology of blue penguins for the central Buller region and support understanding of blue penguin foraging on the West Coast and across New Zealand. It would be part of a wider programme coordinated by the New Zealand Penguin Initiative and, in 2020, we will establish processes and protocols for the annual collection of data to ensure consistency in future years.

We aim to analyse and report on findings to the NZPI, the wider penguin community and to Birds NZ, including reference to changes in sea conditions and environmental variables including water depth, ocean currents and conditions, as well as any potential overlap with inshore fisheries operations/zones. This latter knowledge will enable us to have a dialogue and work with local fin fish operators to discuss, develop and target any necessary mitigation efforts.



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