

# Yellow-eyed penguins

## Digging deeper...

### True locals!

Many species of penguins only return to their nesting sites for the breeding season. Yellow-eyed penguins are true locals, returning to their nests most nights.

## Local lingo

### Hōiho

The Māori name for the Yellow-eyed penguin is 'hōiho'. This means 'noisy-shouter', a reference to the piercing call of this bird that can be heard over the often noisy roar of waves crashing into the shore.

## Local nuggets

Yellow-eyed penguins can be viewed for free at Sandfly Bay on the Otago Peninsula, at Roaring Bay in the Catlins and further up the coast at Oamaru and Shag Point. Use the specially built hides when spotting these birds as they do not like to be disturbed.

Not every bird has its own charitable trust, dedicated to protecting and restoring its nesting grounds and controlling introduced predators. However, the Yellow-eyed penguin is not just any bird.

Yellow-eyed penguins nest on the eastern shores of New Zealand, on Stewart Island and on the subantarctic Auckland and Campbell Islands. They nest in forest or scrub near the coasts of these areas. Unlike many Antarctic penguins, which nest in massive colonies, Yellow-eyed penguins have individual nest sites in localised habitats. They are very private birds, and modest to a fault – they fail to breed if their nest is within sight of another pair!

Several Yellow-eyed penguin habitats are set up for viewing from Oamaru to the Otago Peninsula and down into the Catlins. The best viewing times are at sunrise, when the penguins head out to sea, and after 3pm in the afternoon when they return. Their shy nature has led people to build hides from which to view them without them spotting you. Five such hides that are free to use are dotted down the Otago coastline.

Yellow-eyed penguins are endangered and one of the world's rarest penguins, with an estimated population of 4,000. They are the fourth largest penguin in the world, standing up to 75cm tall and weighing around 6kg. They get their name from the distinctive yellow band of feathers running from their eyes around to the back of their heads.



Heading out to sea for another day's fishing



A Yellow-eyed penguin with its distinctive yellow head band

