



oikonos
Ecosystem Knowledge



IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023

www.oikonos.org

PROTECTING IMPERILED ECOSYSTEMS

MISSION:

**WE STUDY AND PROTECT
IMPERILED ECOSYSTEMS
BY ENGAGING DIVERSE
COMMUNITIES THROUGH
INNOVATIVE SCIENTIFIC AND
ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS**

Oikonos was founded in 2002 with the mission to implement innovative conservation actions to reverse environmental problems. We began by studying threats to seabirds and riparian songbirds in California, and

soon expanded our impact in the Pacific, including research and restoration projects in New Zealand, Chile, and Hawai'i.

We have led hundreds of collaborative conservation projects and carried out conservation-focused research for bird, plant, mammal, amphibian, and fish species living in 16 major ecoregions, from Chile's Valdivian temperate forests to Alaska's Bering Sea.

We design and carry out science-driven solutions to conserve biodiversity and inspire others to protect wildlife and ecosystems that need our help. We believe success comes from working, sharing, and learning together with you and our diverse partners, volunteers, and community groups.



OUR IMPACT

© Ilana Nimz



Conservation solutions

We design and implement on-the-ground solutions with local communities, designers, and ecologists to reduce threats to wildlife and ecosystems.



Threatened species

We protect species in five diverse ecoregions - ranging from the Bering Sea, inland saline lakes, and the oceanic islands of Chile. We study over 50 species of birds, mammals, and plants.



Fisheries

We encourage sustainable fishing practices by conducting research and facilitating dialogue about the impacts of fisheries on seabird populations.



Ocean pollution

We contribute to reducing marine pollution by investigating plastic ingestion and toxicity in marine animals.

We seek to leave a positive footprint on the planet by working on science-based conservation solutions that are sustainable over time.



Education

We create formal lessons and hands-on activities for students to engage in science, math, ocean literacy, arts, and stewardship.



Management policies and plans

We work with government agencies, universities, indigenous groups, and non-profit organizations to develop conservation plans and tools at national and local scales.



Community

We collaborate with and learn from the diverse communities where we operate to identify needs, priorities, and approaches that improve the lives of people and wildlife.

WHERE WE WORK

● ARGENTINA

Mar Chiquita Lagoon National Park

● CANADA

Saskatchewan

● CALIFORNIA

Santa Cruz
Año Nuevo Island
Mono Lake

● CHILE

Mocha Island
Juan Fernández Archipelago
High Andes
Humboldt Penguin National Reserve

● HAWAII

Preserves on O'ahu & Maui
Northwestern Hawaiian Archipelago
Pelagicos Lab at Oceanic Institute

● WASHINGTON

Islands of the Outer Coast
Islands of the Salish Sea
University of Puget Sound



OUR TEAM

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Chile Program Director & Co-President

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Senior Advisor of Chile Programs & Director

Trinidad Mena

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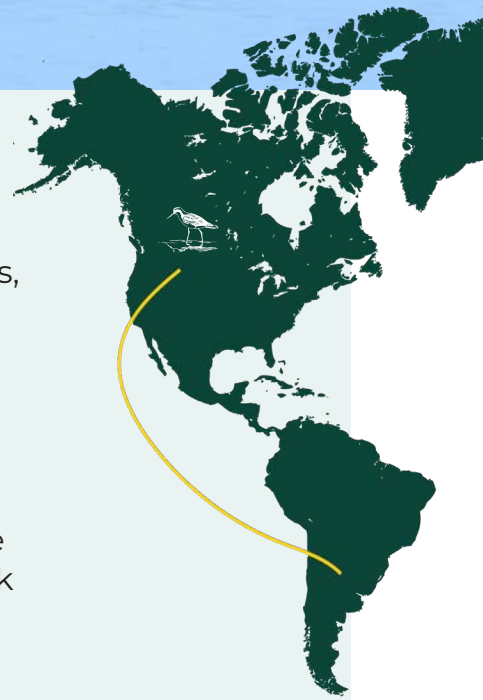


Conservation Solutions

PROTECTING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST THREATENED ECOSYSTEMS

© David Carle

Saline lakes are one of the most threatened ecosystems worldwide due to diversion of their freshwater inputs and climate change. They provide critical habitat for bird species, including Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes—tiny sandpipers that spend most of their time swimming. The initial goal of our saline lakes program was to understand the phalarope population and movements. The program quickly expanded into an international network focused on conserving vital saline lake habitats from Canada to Argentina. Phalaropes have become a potent symbol of the urgent need to protect the delicate interconnected network of saline lakes.





We formed the International Phalarope Working Group, a network dedicated to conserving saline lakes.



We tracked the migration of 25 Wilson's Phalaropes with nanotags in 2023, the first time for this species.



We initiated a proposal, informed by our research, to list the Wilson's Phalarope as Endangered in the U.S.

PHALAROPES UNITE US BY PROMPTING INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Forging bonds among saline lake communities through shared phalaropes and ecosystems is an important aspect of our effort. In 2019, we established the International Phalarope Working Group to build collaborative connections and advance work across the hemisphere. A particularly strong connection has been formed between Mono Lake, California, and Laguna Mar Chiquita, Argentina—"sister" saline lakes linked by migrating phalaropes. In 2023, we commemorated this connection with beautiful phalarope murals painted at both locations by the Argentinian muralist Franco Cervato. Additionally, we held a community Phalarope Festival at Mono Lake, attended by visitors from Mar Chiquita. Teenagers from Argentina will be visiting Mono Lake in the summer of 2024 as part of an educational exchange between the communities.



Education and Community

ISLA MOCHA: AN INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY CHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT



Isla Mocha is a unique territory due to its exceptional biodiversity and valuable cultural heritage. At Oikonos, we have been working since 2010 on the conservation of the Pink-footed Shearwater (*Ardenna creatopus*) and the fragile ecosystem of this island that constitutes its home. We provide knowledge for decision-making based on science and research. In addition, we collaborate with the local community to empower its representatives to safeguard the extraordinary natural and cultural treasures of this small island in southern Chile.





We implemented an environmental education program at the kindergarten and school, engaging all the children of the island (70 children).



To celebrate the arrival of shearwaters, we established the annual sports event "Fardela Cup", which has been a cherished local tradition for 13 consecutive years.



We have promoted responsible pet ownership since 2014 and achieved the sterilization of 50% of dogs and cats, reducing threats to local biodiversity.

FOSTERING LOVE FOR NATURE IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

At Mocha Island, we have worked in close collaboration with the local community since 2010. Through joint efforts with the school and pre-school, we engage children in educational activities in nature. Creative disciplines such as art, music, and theater cultivate a deep love for the island and its species and encourage learning about natural heritage conservation. Both institutions proudly display murals portraying the island's diverse flora and fauna. The children's growing affection for the surrounding nature gives us hope for the future of Chile's biodiversity.





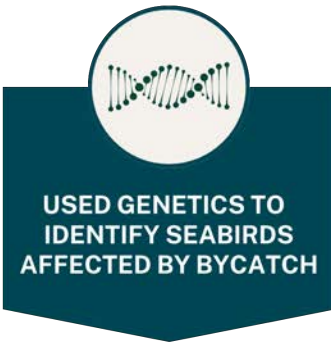
Studying and Improving Fisheries

SEABIRD BYCATCH: TWO DECADES OF LEADERSHIP

© Melinda Conner

One of the biggest threats to seabirds is bycatch in fisheries: birds get accidentally caught on hooks or in nets of fishing boats, which often results in the death of the birds. For over two decades, we have been leaders in documenting the impacts of seabird bycatch and finding mutually beneficial solutions for both birds and fishers. Now, we are focused on protecting endangered Humboldt Penguins from a serious threat—drowning in underwater gill nets in Chile. To address this issue, we conducted interviews with fishers in northern Chile this year, exploring their interactions with birds. Additionally, we started registering the foraging sites of penguins at sea in relation to the placement of the fishing nets.





Using cutting-edge genetics, we identified the breeding colonies of the Black-footed Albatross severely affected by bycatch.



Informed in part by our research, NOAA is pursuing regulatory changes to authorize the use of streamers - a highly effective tool to prevent seabird bycatch - in Hawaii-based longline tuna fisheries.



We have advised Chile in the International Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels for three consecutive years.

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL MIGRATORY BIRD FEDERAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

For 15 years we have worked with NOAA to understand the impacts of fisheries bycatch on seabirds in Alaska, the U.S. West Coast, and Hawaii. This year, we have been granted the U.S. Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award for our collaboration with NOAA on bycatch issues. Jessie Beck, one of the leaders of our seabird bycatch work, will travel to Washington, D.C., to receive the honor. Over many years, our program has cooperated with NOAA's observer programs and science centers to evaluate the impacts of bycatch. This involves documenting the species, age, and sex of the captured birds. Our team is currently employing genetic techniques to deepen our understanding of impacts and target conservation strategies.



Studying and Protecting Threatened Species

HUMBOLDT PENGUIN: A SPECIAL CONSERVATION INITIATIVE



The Humboldt Penguin is an endangered species that relies on our efforts and capacity to facilitate discussions and agreements promoting its research and conservation. Humboldt Penguins inhabit the coastal areas of Chile and Peru, where they face various threats, including fisheries bycatch, invasive species in nesting sites, and food scarcity due to overfishing. We are committed to facilitate research and conservation solutions focused on protecting this species.





We expanded our conservation efforts to include Humboldt Penguins nesting along the west coast of South America.



We established new partnerships with public and private institutions working on Humboldt Penguins in Chile and Peru.



We facilitated a dialogue to standardize monitoring methods between Chile and Peru, aiding in the assessment of the penguin conservation needs.

EXPANDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND IMPACT THROUGH VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Paulina Arce has dedicated her life to studying Humboldt penguin populations on the coastal islands of Chile. Since she started her veterinary medicine studies, Paulina has gained the unwavering support of her mentor, Dr. Alejandro Simeone, who has entrusted her with leadership and collaborations crucial for the conservation of this species she deeply cares about. Throughout the years, Paulina has visited nearly every nesting colony, conducting monitoring and studies that reveal the count of breeding adults and the interactions of these birds with the fishing industry. Paulina has been a vital partner in Oikonos' new projects, providing training to our team and strengthening alliances. Her inspiring story encourages Oikonos' commitment to long-term initiatives for the safeguarding of the Humboldt Penguin.



Conservation Solutions

PROTECTING CHILE'S ENDANGERED SPECIES



Robinson Crusoe Island, situated in the Juan Fernández Archipelago (Chile), is one of the main breeding grounds of the Pink-footed Shearwater—a seabird exclusively breeding on three of Chile's islands. The Piedra Agujereada breeding colony on Robinson Crusoe Island faces threats from introduced mammal species, such as cows, rabbits, and coati, which destroy breeding habitat and prey on shearwaters. Between 2019 and 2023, we worked to build a 969 meter fence to exclude these exotic mammals. This barrier protects 3.54 hectares of land and mitigates the threats to this globally significant nesting colony of shearwaters.





We advanced global seabird conservation with cost-effective solutions for inaccessible remote colonies.



The mammal exclusion fence safeguards one of the largest breeding colonies of Robinson Crusoe, representing more than 20% of the population on this island.



The exclusion of introduced rabbits is expected to significantly increase the shearwater breeding population by eliminating competition for burrowing space.

RESILIENCY THROUGH COLLABORATION

The implementation of the exclusion fence provided significant insights and lessons for future projects. In 2021, a part of the fence was damaged by hurricane winds, emphasizing the need for constant adaptive management to deal with unforeseen weather events. Proactive planning that considers different scenarios is essential, given the extreme and changing conditions on Robinson Crusoe Island. Moreover, this event highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary teams. Collaboration among architects, local builders, biologists, ornithologists, fence experts, and park rangers resulted in an improved and more resilient fence layout.



On behalf of the entire Oikonos team, we extend our deepest gratitude for your steadfast support over the years. Your dedication is invaluable and essential to the success of our initiatives. Thank you for believing in our cause and contributing to a positive impact. Together, we create meaningful waves of change in the places we serve.



Volunteers joined the Hawai'i team to help restore the 'Ua'u Kani's (Wedge-tailed Shearwater) nesting habitat at the Freeman Seabird Preserve. **The population of shearwaters has quadrupled in size since the beginning of our efforts in 2008!**

Gabriela Fonseca with a Rhinoceros Auklet chick at Año Nuevo Island, CA. **Over 70 early-career conservationists have received hands-on training in seabird monitoring and restoration techniques at Año Nuevo Island.**



Curious Western Gull chicks examining our Año Nuevo Island research team. 2023 marks the **31st year of seabird research and conservation** on the island, the largest seabird breeding colony in Monterey Bay.

The Juan Fernández community in Chile has played a crucial role in protecting the endemic species of the island. In 2023, **our monitoring showed that 79% of the trees previously planted in the restoration projects are thriving!**



FOUNDATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

CA Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Sierra District

Christine Stevens Wildlife Award

Clif Bar Family Foundation

Community Foundation Santa Cruz County

Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation

Dechambeau Creek Foundation

Disney Conservation Fund

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Fondation Franklinia

Goodman Family Foundation

Hawai'i Community Foundation

Jeff Maurer Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua Research Grant

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

NOAA: Alaska Fisheries Science Center;
National Seabird Program

October Hill Foundation

Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

Regina Bauer Frankenberg Foundation

Revive and Restore

The Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation

Tracy Aviary Conservation Fund

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Forest Service International Program

Wallace Research Foundation

Weeden Foundation

Western Pacific Regional Fishery
Management Council

Wildlife Conservation Society Climate
Adaptation Fund

World Wildlife Fund Chile



PARTNERS AND ADVISORS

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)

Alejandro Simeone, Universidad Andrés Bello

American Bird Conservancy

Colegio Insular Robinson Crusoe y Anexo Alejandro Selkirk

Armada de Chile

Audubon chapters: Eastern Sierra, East Cascades, Hawai'i

BirdLife International

California Institute of Environmental Studies

California State Parks

Center for Marine Debris Research

Channel Islands National Park

Comité de Adelanto Isla Alejandro Selkirk

Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF)

Daniela Melian

Escuela Armando Arancibia Olivos (Isla Mocha)

Fishers in Hawai'i, West Coast and Alaska federally-managed fisheries

Go Native Inc.

Ilustre Municipalidad de Juan Fernández

Ilustre Municipalidad de Lebu

Instituto de Fomento Pesquero (IFOP)

Iolani School

Island Conservation

Jardín Infantil Fardelita Blanca

Kure Atoll Conservancy

Manomet, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Executive Office

Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, Chile

Mono Lake Committee

Nathan Lynch, California College of the Arts

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

National Audubon, Salines Lakes and Audubon Americas Program

Oceana Chile

Oficina de Protección de la Calidad del Cielo del Norte de Chile (OPCC)

Pacific Islands Region Observer Program in Hawai'i

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Point Blue Conservation Science

ProDelphinus

Red de Observadores de Aves y Vida Silvestre de Chile (ROC)

Fundación Regenerativa

Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (SAG)

Servicio Nacional de Pesca y Acuicultura (SERNAPESCA)

State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Subsecretaría de Pesca y Acuicultura (SUBPESCA)

The Hummingbird Society

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S.G.S. Western Ecological Research Center

Utah Division of Wildlife

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

FACILITY PARTNERSHIPS HOSTING OIKONOS PROGRAMS

Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center, CDFW-OSPR, California

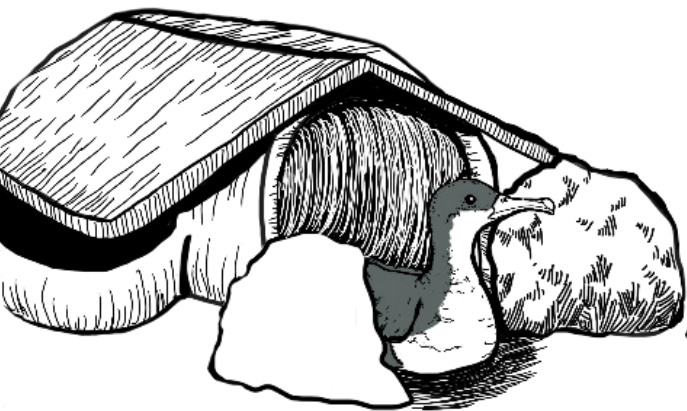
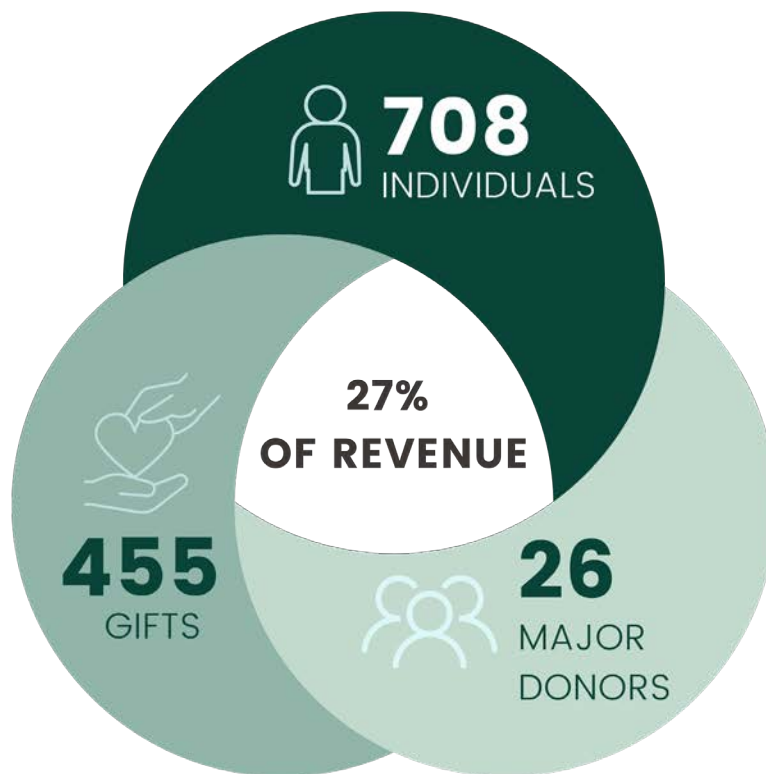
Año Nuevo Island UC Natural Reserve, California

Hawai'i Pacific University at Oceanic Institute

Freeman Seabird Preserve, Hawai'i Audubon Society

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Your belief in our mission is inspiring. The generosity of individuals like you make it possible to drive positive change and find lasting conservation solutions. We believe in the power of collective effort. Your contribution to Oikonos is part of our collective success. We are honored to have you as a valuable member of the nest.



THANK YOU!
And please keep
supporting us

Oikonos has been finding solutions to environmental challenges for **over 20 years**.

You are the heart of what we do and what we've accomplished.

Your contribution has an impact. It creates solutions, knowledge, and action. **How you can help:**

You can provide **Critical Funding** towards the protection and restoration of threatened ecosystems.



ONLINE DONATIONS

Please visit **oikonos.org/donate**

Checks can be sent to:

P.O. Box 1918

Kailua, HI 96734

Questions call: (808) 228 4463

or email michelle@oikonos.org

We welcome gifts of stocks and other securities!

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