



History of the New Zealand Penguin Initiative

NZPI was established by the New Zealand T-Gear Charitable Trust in 2019. The T-Gear Trust, which also has a Canadian counterpart, has been in existence for 17 years and supports a range of existing charities in conservation, education, and social initiatives. T-Gear has supported bird conservation in Aotearoa through the Birds New Zealand Research Fund (www.birdsnz.org.nz/funding/birds-nz-research-fund) since 2013, and has funded and supported many projects including with penguins.

A report in 2016 identified a need for coordinated penguin advocacy, research and conservation and T-Gear funded a database of known penguin colonies in New Zealand and population monitoring of Tawaki/Fiordland penguins. Furthermore, human impact on penguins and national monitoring of little penguin/kororā by community groups were identified as an important component for penguin conservation and this inspired the creation of the NZPI in 2019 which later became part of the Environmental Law Initiative (www.eli.org.nz) in 2021.

NZPI's core priority is the conservation of kororā by supporting community conservation groups throughout New Zealand to monitor and protect their local penguin populations by identifying and mitigating threats. The data they collect, and share contributes to the NZPI national database that provides crucial nationwide population trends for kororā to inform decision making and policies to ensure a better future of the species.