

1 **Proposed Strategic Plan for the Friends of Low Head Penguin Colony (FOLHPC) Wildcare Group.**

2 vers 0.3 as of 4 May 2022, by Dr Eric J Woehler, BirdLife Tasmania.

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4 1. Timeline

5 The draft Strategic Plan is for an initial period of 4 years, to commence in the last three months of 2021 and end June 2025.

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7 2. Area of interest

8 The area of interest will be the Low Head Peninsula, northwest of East Beach Road between Pilots Bay and East Beach. An increase in this area may be  
9 warranted or considered by the FOLHPC Executive in discussions with PWS and other stakeholders.

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1 3. Relationship with NRET Little Penguin Survey and Monitoring Toolkit

2 All data collected by the FOLHPC in their efforts at Low Head within the proposed (or extended) Area of Interest will be consistent with the NRET Little Penguin  
3 Survey and Monitoring Toolkit, available online at [https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/marine-conservation-program/little-penguins-in-](https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/marine-conservation-program/little-penguins-in-tasmania/monitoring-and-protection)  
4 [tasmania/monitoring-and-protection](https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/marine-conservation-program/little-penguins-in-tasmania/monitoring-and-protection)

5 The Toolkit's 'decision tree is shown overleaf on page 4.

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7 4. Strategic Plan Stakeholders

8 Stakeholders involved with the Strategic Plan comprise NRET, PWS, George Town Council, FOLHPC, members of the local communities of Low Head and  
9 George Town, and BirdLife Tasmania.

1 **5. Priority tasks and projects**

2 The following tasks and projects have been identified as priorities by the FOLHPC. The tasks/projects are numbered alphabetically to identify them, with no  
3 implied priority or importance.

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Task/project	Key personnel	Requirements	Timeframe
a. Replacement of Little Penguin wooden nesting boxes ( <u>minimum</u> known: 30) from Low Head	FOLHPC, PWS, NRET, BirdLife Tasmania, 2x George Town High School, Dept Education?	PWS approvals for removal of derelict nest boxes and installation of new nest boxes on Crown Land, including the Low Head Historic Site and the Low Head Conservation Area.  Current <i>Working with Vulnerable People</i> cards.  Nest boxes to be numbered and locations mapped with GPS in conjunction with BirdLife Tasmania.	Ideally penguin nest boxes will be installed ASAP once permits approved and nest boxes constructed. Aim for November 2021.
b. Removal of derelict Little Penguin concrete igloos ( <u>minimum</u> known: 10) from Low Head	FOLHPC, BirdLife Tasmania, PWS.	PWS approvals for removal of derelict igloos from Crown Land, including the Low Head Historic Site and the Low Head Conservation Area.  One day for FOLHPC/locals to assist with a trailer and wheelbarrow to remove derelict igloos from Crown Land.  Are PWS permits required to remove derelict igloos?	ASAP.
c. Community engagement and education	FOLHPC, BirdLife Tasmania, George Town Council.	Community fora for engagement with members of the community.  Other options comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• library display</li> <li>• community newsletter to ratepayers</li> <li>• “dog’s breakfasts” events</li> </ul>	Ongoing.
d. Installation of camera traps at selected sites at Low Head to assess penguin utilisation of specific habitats	PWS, FOLHPC and local community.	PWS approvals for installation of cameras on Crown Land, including the Low Head Historic Site and the Low Head Conservation Area.  Members of the community to liaise with FOLHPC, BirdLife Tasmania re interpretation, curation of images and derived data	Ideally ASAP then ongoing.
e. Field surveys, mapping and monitoring	Dr Eric Woehler, BirdLife Tasmania, potential	NRET Scientific Research permit and associated Animal Ethics Committee Approval	Ongoing.

Task/project	Key personnel	Requirements	Timeframe
	involvement of higher-degree students, members of the local community and local students.		
<b>f.</b> Staged removal of African Boxthorn <i>Lycium ferocissimum</i> from Low Head	FOLHPC, local community.	PWS permits and liaison to conform to internal PWS Low Head Vegetation Management Plan. Other invasive species should also be removed, such as Sea Spurge <i>Euphorbia paralias</i> .	Initiate staged removal (10 – 20%) ASAP once PWS permits and discussions/approvals have been given.
<b>g.</b> Fundraising for consumables (wood for nest boxes, concrete for igloos etc)	FOLHPC.		Ongoing.
<b>h.</b> Letterbox drop to survey Low Head residents/property owners to investigate distribution of Little Penguins in residential areas on Low Head (and potentially south of East Beach Road).	FOLHPC, local community.	Preparation of letter inviting residents to inform FOLHPC whether penguins are present on their property, and potentially to allow BirdLife Tasmania to map using GPS.	Summer 21/22 to coincide with summer holidays, highest density of human residents and visitors to Low Head.

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Question		Data sought	Methods	Permits, skills and training required
1.	Are penguins present in an area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence (yes)/ absence (no).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence or absence</li> <li>Penguin track counts</li> <li>Carcasses on foreshore</li> </ul>	See table below for detailed method-specific requirements.
2.	If present, how many are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spatial extent (area) of penguin burrows/colony.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penguin track counts</li> <li>Regular counts at designated areas</li> <li>Colony counts</li> <li>Wildlife camera monitoring</li> </ul>	See table below for a detailed description of surveys methods, objectives and specific requirements.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GPS mapping of colony extent</li> <li>GPS mapping of burrows</li> </ul>	Discuss with PWS/DPIPWE before commencing any field studies.
3.	If present, when are they here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporal data – timing of colony/nest attendance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penguin track counts</li> <li>Regular counts at designated areas</li> <li>Colony counts</li> <li>Wildlife camera monitoring</li> </ul>	See table below for a detailed description of surveys methods, objectives and specific requirements.
4.	If present, what are they doing when they are here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data on ecological aspects (breeding, phenology, foraging ecology, burrow occupancy and species composition in colony etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focussed ecological studies by accredited researchers, MCP, PWS, IMAS, BirdLife Tasmania etc.</li> </ul>	Discuss with PWS/DPIPWE before commencing any field studies.

NB: Boxes in yellow indicate Animal Ethics and scientific permits are required and qualified biologists are involved.

**Box 1.** Decision tree from the NRET Little Penguin Survey and Monitoring Toolkit [<https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/marine-conservation-program/little-penguins-in-tasmania/monitoring-and-protection>]

**[Note that the current state of knowledge for Low Head straddles Questions 2 and 3.]**

### Community-based survey methods that may be used at different habitat types and locations

Number	Survey method	Sandy beach	Rocky beach	Viewing area
5.1	Presence or absence	✓	✓	✓
5.2	Penguin track counts	✓		
5.3	Regular counts at designated areas			✓
5.4	Colony counts	✓	✓	
5.5	Wildlife camera monitoring	✓	✓	
6	Threat assessment	✓	✓	✓
7	Habitat site assessment	✓	✓	✓

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**Box 2.** Survey protocols for various coastal habitats, from NRET Little Penguin Survey and Monitoring Toolkit [<https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/marine-conservation-program/little-penguins-in-tasmania/monitoring-and-protection>]