



Title: *“Low Tide Landscape with Seal”*

Description: Seal making his way through the shallows

Photographer: Trevor Douglas

Where, when: Doctor’s Point, Blueskin Bay, Dunedin, June 2019.

Sustainability? I was flying my drone over Blueskin Bay near Dunedin, when I spotted these abstract patterns in the sand left by the receding tide.

Ecologists share the photographers' love for nature's patterns. I took this photo to show the patterns in the sand and water because they are aesthetically pleasing. Ecologists observe recurring patterns for clues about the forces of nature that affect local distributions and abundance of species.

On loading the images to my computer, I then noticed the seal passing through the top of the image. It's great when a surprise appears at the photograph processing stage! Photography is also a way to capture "the moment", a unique and often thrilling snip-bit that may not ever happen that way again.

Rising seal numbers on the Otago coast are a source of frustration to some fishers. Reeling in a prize salmon that has been bitten in half by a seal can be aggravating! Several fishers also believe that the seals attract sharks. Many conservationists set targets for restoration from historical bench-marks – i.e. they wish to get nature back to where it was before human "interference". Rising seal numbers is just the start of a long trajectory – basically the early sealers wiped out 99% of the seals in around 40 years of sporadic visits from the other side of the planet, so there is a long way to go to recover numbers now that seals are protected. Some ecologists call these exploiters "Roving Bandits" – people who come from far away with no sense of commitment to a local place and its future and so are intent on ripping it off ecologically. That's the very opposite of *ahi kā roa* ("keeping the fires burning"), a Māori metaphor for continuous occupation supported by sustainable and local resource use.

I have no wish to hunt or eat a seal, but I was thrilled to find one swimming through my image and leaving beautiful ripples in it's wake. Photography from a drone is often the only practical way of capturing these natural patterns and moments.

Photo notes: Exposure 1/100s at 8 mm focal length, f/6 aperture and ISO-100.

Digital specs: 4,864 x 3,648 pixels (18 MP).

Key words: Seal, Low tide, Abstract, Sand, Patterns, Wildlife, Drone, Doctors Point Beach, Blueskin Bay, Trevor Douglas, Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sustainability.

Price: \$200 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

Visit www.ecosystemsphotography/sales for details & to order, and to get a quote if you want a high-quality print.

Donation: The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for *the Orokonui Ecosanctuary* <https://orokonui.nz/>.

I recommend that the donation goes to *Orokonui Ecosanctuary* to support their ecosystem restoration work near where this image was taken. Their predator-proof fence is building local bird populations to the point where the birds are spilling out into the surrounding landscape – the so-called "Halo effect".

Image Ref: TD#005 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence).

Trevor Douglas, 23 November 2021.