



# Southern Bird

No. 32 December 2007 • ISSN 1175-1916

What to Study

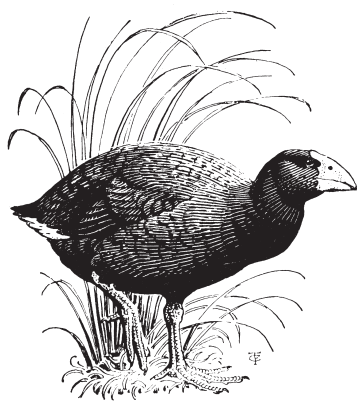
How I Ended Up Here!

Beach Patrol Scheme

Bird-Racing







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## QUOTATION

Hail Bishop Valentine, whose day this is,  
All the air is thy Diocese,  
And all the chirping choristers  
And other birds are thy parishioners,  
Thou marryest ever year  
The lyric Lark, and the grave whispering Dove,  
The Sparrow that neglects his life for love,  
The household bird, with the red stomacher;  
Thou mak'st the black bird speed as soon,  
As doth the Goldfinch, or the Halycon;  
The husband cock looks out, and straight is sped,  
And meets his wife, which brings her feather-bed.  
This day more cheerfully than ever shine,  
This day, which might enflame thy self, old Valentine.

An Epithalamion or Wedding Song for Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine's wedding on St. Valentine's Day by John Donne (1572-1631).

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## COVER PHOTOS

Front cover: A friendly Stewart Island Robin takes an interest in the photographer's boots and laces

Back cover: An over-familiar Kea at the Homer Tunnel  
Both photos by Wynston Cooper

We welcome advertising enquiries. Free classified ads are available to members at the editor's discretion.

Articles for inclusion in Southern Bird are welcome in any form, though electronic is preferred. Material should be related to birds, birdwatchers, or ornithologists in the New Zealand and Pacific region, and can include news on birds, members, activities and bird study, literature/product reviews, letters to the editor, birdwatching sites, and identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp. Copy deadlines are 10th February, May and August, and 1st November.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DECK...

It has been a busy year, and one in which OSNZ has made significant progress. As usual, some of that has been behind the scenes, and there are some exciting new developments in the pipeline, including *New Zealand Bird Report* and an on-line bird-recording system. Some old favourites such as annual Field Study Courses will return too in due course. Membership participation is the key to the continued development and expansion of such schemes. There are many ways in which members can contribute to the growth and wellbeing of OSNZ, from your vital membership subscription to putting your name forward for election to Council. There are several vacancies this coming year and hopefully, for the health of OSNZ, the positions will be keenly contested.

The big 'event' of the year was the launch of the *Atlas*, covered in detail in the September *Southern Bird*. It is a magnificent tribute to the power of voluntary commitment to a well-organised project and the book sets the standard for first-class, scientifically robust documentation of the natural world and the changes humans are making to it. Even better, it is beautifully presented, using state-of-the-art computer-mapping software: the Society has much to be proud of! Christopher Robertson's Fellowship of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, conferred at the *Atlas* launch at Government House, recognised not only his efforts, which 'made' the *Atlas* and made it what it is, but also his contributions over many years to the Society and to ornithology in New Zealand and globally, including his part in the previous atlases, IOC 1990, and gannet and albatross research.

Another significant step along the way of implementing the Strategic Plan was taken this year, with the appointment of Ingrid Hutzler as Executive Officer. This is the first time OSNZ has committed its funds to a position of support for the membership and the Society's activities. Ingrid has introduced herself to the membership via email, but I hope you will all soon have a chance to meet her at AGMs and meetings and events throughout the country. She is developing the nerve centre for OSNZ activities and her efforts will allow Council, the Society Committees, and, especially, the membership to concentrate on studying and enjoying birds and moving the Society forward.

One way of applying OSNZ's knowledge and expertise to identifying issues and framing responses is the series *State of New Zealand's Birds*, which is distributed not only to our membership but also to Ministers, MPs, regional councils, universities, Crown Research Institutes, DoC, and other organisations. The special issue on seabirds was a most timely statement of the plight of many species and avenues for expanding our knowledge: the next



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## Publisher

Published on behalf of the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc),

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will deal with the implications of the *Atlas* and its potential for framing future research.

Of course, no worthwhile activity is entirely without its problems. For example, Council has been dealing with the knotty one of how far OSNZ can and should go, in light of our Constitution and our limited financial and logistic means, in providing information underpinning responses to increasing number of threats to bird habitats and individual species. Just providing personnel for long-running series of wader counts, for example, places great strain on regions involved. Working groups have been, and are being, established, to find and implement solutions to these problems.

Not least of the problems this year, and one which reaches right to the heart of OSNZ's existence and purpose (set out as a major aim of the Society in our Constitution) has been the delays in processing and publishing *Notornis*. The journal is essential as the premier outlet for research on birds in New Zealand and the South Pacific. Its arrival is awaited eagerly (even it is not always read!) and for the past several years it, and *Southern bird*, have been OSNZ to many members. I apologise unreservedly to members and authors for the delays in production and correspondence that have plagued the journal over the past year, and which can all be laid at the Editor's door. The problem has been in large part a result of my unexpected success in gaining significant research finding after accepting the Presidency on top of the Editorship. Partly, too, it has resulted from developments in producing the journal. These have saved enough money to pay for the publication of *New Zealand Bird Report*, which is now under development, so that part of the process, at least, has a silver lining. The main reason lay, however, outside the ambit of the Society's activities, in the manner of an opportunity given once in a lifetime and which I was unable to resist. What that was may become apparent before too long and I hope its value to ornithology in the end will be seen to merit the costs.

*Notornis* is an international scientific journal, but it has also to serve our mostly amateur supporting membership. The Editor can – and should – expect to spend time helping first-time, amateur authors see their worthwhile observations and research reach the pages of *Notornis*. It is not always easy, but it is perhaps, along with serving actively on Council, one of the most satisfying ways of contributing to your Society. It is therefore even more painful to admit that I have not been able to fulfil my responsibilities in the position. A new Editor will be progressively taking the reins from the New Year; their appointment just requires Council's final approval. I will ensure that the 'missing' issues are brought forth as soon as possible so that the Editorial desk is clear for a smooth transition. In the meantime, I thank members and authors alike for their patience and understanding during what has been a rather difficult time.

Have a very Happy Christmas.

*Richard*

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2008 Annual General Meeting will be held in Kaikoura on **Saturday 31st May 2008**.

Claudia Duncan  
Secretary  
P.O. Box 12397  
Wellington



## REQUEST FOR ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Dear OSNZ Members,

As you may know, OSNZ is in the process of developing a comprehensive archive for ornithological records. The archival material will be catalogued and made accessible as a living resource for future reference and studies. If you hold any archival material, or know of any material, can you please send us the following information:

- 1) What type is the material (old note books, local survey photos etc)?
- 2) Where is it held (physical location)?
- 3) What is the size (e.g. A4 Folder, 5 cm depth)?
- 4) Who holds the material?

If you don't have any archival material do you know of anyone that does? Your help in tracking down this information is much appreciated.

Kind regards

INGRID HUTZLER

Executive Officer

Ornithological Society of New Zealand, Inc.

PO Box 1022

NELSON 7040

Email [osnzo@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:osnzo@slingshot.co.nz)



## NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 2008 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before **28th February 2008** and be in writing and signed by a mover and seconder who shall be financial members of the Society.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR SECRETARY AND COUNCIL

Claudia Duncan has sadly decided to step down as Secretary at the conclusion of the 2008 Annual General Meeting, so nominations are called for this important position. Six positions on Council will also become vacant at the same time as a consequence of the end of the one year co-option terms of Phil Battley and Bruce McKinlay, the end of the three-year terms of Paul Scofield, David Melville and Stuart Nicholson, and the stepping down of David Pye. Co-opted members are, of course, eligible to stand, as are Council members at the end of their three-year terms.

Nominations will close with the Secretary on **28th February 2008**. Nomination papers must be signed by two financial members of the Society and be consented to in writing by the person nominated who must also be a financial member of the Society. Would nominators please include a brief curriculum vitae of the nominated person if that person is not already a member of Council.

## OSNZ SALES TABLE

Items on sale from the OSNZ are a good way of keeping up with the society and identifying yourself as an OSNZ member. Keep those lists ticking over with a Ticklist. Look up all those old *Notornis* articles with a fifty year index (1939-1989), and then check out the Chatham Islands and wander through the waders in the special editions of *Notornis*. Read up about our Society in *A Flying Start*, your essential introduction to the ins and outs of why we are here as birdwatchers!

<i>Atlas of Bird Distribution in NZ 1999-2004</i> .....	\$98
(within NZ only – overseas purchasers should enquire below for a quote)	
<i>Atlas of Bird Distribution in N.Z. (1985)</i> .....	\$14
<i>Chatham Islands Ornithology</i> .....	\$19
<i>Fifty Years of Bird Study in New Zealand (Index to Notornis 1939-1989)</i> .....	\$14
<i>Wader Studies in New Zealand</i> .....	\$24
<i>Birds of Hawke's Bay</i> .....	\$10
<i>A Flying Start</i> .....	\$14
Stickers - Pied Stilt (specify outside glass/bumper or inside glass only) .....	\$3
<i>Notornis</i> .....	\$3
Ticklist .....	\$1
Checklist (1990 edition) .....	\$9

### Send orders to:

Paul Cuming, OSNZ Sales, 2/7 Robins Road, Judea, Tauranga  
Tel. (07) 571 5125, fax (07) 571 5126, email [birddo@post.com](mailto:birddo@post.com)

## VOLUNTEER TO MAKE HISTORY?

An international team will be conducting a state-of-the-art excavation at the iconic fossil site of Pyramid Valley, near Waikari, North Canterbury, from 15th January to 15th February 2008. The site is available for excavation only once in a generation, and the team will be developing new techniques and using new technologies aimed at gaining as much information as possible about the deposit and the lives and times of the moa, eagles, and other animals preserved there.

Volunteers will be able to contribute to the programme by dissecting their own small blocks of history. Training will be provided: the job is 'boring' and exciting at the same time! Unfortunately, funding levels this year will mean that it will be a pay-your-own-bills contribution, but you will be part of a major undertaking and be able to rub shoulders with experts from all over the world and partake of the amazing North Canterbury weather, landscape, and hospitality.

We are also planning an impromptu bird survey of the Hawarden Basin and Annandale plateau as a first stage in reviving the national field courses. Great birds and amazing scenery: we will be investigating places to establish constant effort sites to monitor changes in the local avifauna.

So, if you have made no plans for the holidays, or are passing through, please let us know at [piopio@paradise.net.nz](mailto:piopio@paradise.net.nz).

## What to Study

AND HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

*The following is a presentation given by the late Peter Bull given in 1980 as part of a course. Most of it still applies today and it seems highly appropriate that Peter's admonitions on studying birds should appear in the year the latest Atlas was published; the final manifestation of his crowning achievement in doing just that.*

### INTRODUCTION

Although birds can be enjoyed without studying them, the winning of new knowledge brings a special satisfaction all its own. The study of birds should be fun and if you find it otherwise perhaps you are going about it the wrong way. The purpose of this talk is to help you discover what sort of bird study will be fun for you.

The short answer to the question "what to study" is "study anything that interests you". Most of you are amateurs, which implies NOT some inferior status, but merely the happy fact that, within broad limits, you can study whatever interests you and forget about cost/benefit analyses. Depending on its nature the study may involve you in trudging over mudflats in search of a rare species, crouching in a hide for that special photograph or sound recording, reclining in a garden chair (refreshments to hand) while you record activity at a nest,

inventing workshop gadgetry to do the recording for you, digging bones of extinct birds from a swamp or, detective-like, searching through old documents for clues on the past distribution of a species or man's effect on it.

The 'broad limits' referred to above are mainly those imposed by the law (particularly with regard to endangered species) and by your own good conscience in the avoidance of cruelty or unjustifiable disturbance of the birds. Other limitations will stem mainly from your own circumstances; for instance, you must consider the amount and seasonal distribution of the time you are prepared to spend with your birds (affected by their location and your mobility) and your access to any special equipment or skills that may be needed (some studies, but by no means all, require physical fitness and/or keen sight and hearing).

Now let us consider how to find a suitable project. There are two main options: (1) to join an existing co-operative project or (2) to plan your own study.





## CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS

These are mostly sponsored by the Ornithological Society though a few are initiated from time to time by Government departments, universities, museums and, occasionally, by private individuals. Some are continuing activities, others run for only a short time, and new ones start as others terminate. Some examples are:

### *(i) Nest Records Scheme*

Contributors are supplied with special cards on which they are asked to enter details of any nests they find. The completed cards are returned to the Society and, when sufficient have been accumulated, they provide valuable information on regional and yearly differences in laying dates, clutch size and breeding success; other data provide information on nest building, incubation and rearing periods, how clutch size and breeding success change during the breeding season and on the roles of the sexes in nest building, incubating eggs and feeding young.

### *(ii) Beach Patrol Scheme*

Again, contributors are asked to forward special cards recording information on the kinds and numbers of dead birds on beaches. The beach patrols reveal the frequency of wrecks of sea birds (a step towards determining their cause) and occasionally yield specimens of species that are rare or new to New Zealand (such specimens are required by the National Museum), or birds that have been banded overseas and may reveal exciting new information on migrations or longevity.

### *(iii) Harbour Surveys*

These are usually run by regional groups of the Ornithological Society (occasionally by the Wildlife Service) and aim to record the numbers of shore birds present in various parts of New Zealand each year (valuable information for purposes of conservation). Except for minor changes determined by the time of high tide the counts are made at the same time each year (preferably the time when bird numbers should be near their annual maximum). The use of several observers allows simultaneous counts at all the places where the birds gather at high tide, thereby reducing the possibility of counting the same birds twice. Such surveys have been undertaken in Manukau Harbour and Firth of Thames for many years and, more recently at several other places (e.g. Manawatu Estuary, Wellington Harbour and Farewell Spit). Somewhat similar surveys have been undertaken in river beds to record the spread of an invading species (e.g. Black-fronted Dotterel) or to assess conservation problems posed by the building of dams.

### *(iv) Species Surveys*

Such surveys, usually of limited duration, are sometimes organised to obtain a national picture of the numbers or breeding distribution of some species of particular interest. They may involve simultaneous counts throughout New Zealand of a conspicuous species (Cattle Egrets, for instance) or the more gradual accumulation of data on the location of breeding colonies of colonial species such as Caspian Terns or Black Shags. There has recently been a national survey of Reef Herons to check the possibility that they are being displaced by White-faced Herons. On a more local scale, Wellington observers have been documenting seasonal changes in the numbers of New Zealand Dabchicks, a species which seems to be adapting to the increasing prevalence of sewage ponds.

One of the biggest co-operative surveys ever launched by the Ornithological Society was the bird mapping scheme which has just ended. It involved the compilation of species lists from each of 3,675 ten-thousand-yard squares, covering the whole of New Zealand. Over 600 people took part in this

work, and some of the results are presented in the Provisional Atlas, a few copies of which are still available.

### *(v) Classified Summarised Notes*

The Society runs a scheme for the annual publication of miscellaneous snippets of ornithological information contributed by members. Each year the observations are first sorted by Regional Representatives and then sent to Mr Sibson who collates them and arranges publication in *Notornis*. The Classified Summarised Notes for 1978-79 were contributed by more than 120 observers and cover such topics as breeding, distribution, behaviour, diet, flocking, beach combing and migration. The existence of this scheme means that even people with very limited time for bird watching can nevertheless make a worthwhile contribution. Though the notes provided by any particular observer may be modest, the combined data, covering as they do a period of many years, are of immense value as a source of information for students of particular topics or to authors of books.

### *(vi) Minor Projects*

Many so-called private studies are not really so. They rely on the help of other people to make simultaneous observations elsewhere (e.g. on breeding Starlings), to seek and report banded birds (e.g. Silvereyes, Red-billed Gulls, oystercatchers, and Black Swans, to name but a few) or to extend the search for rare species such as the Chatham Island Taiko. All these projects offer opportunities for people to participate in what are really cooperative studies; the amount of special training required is often quite small.

### *(vii) Co-operative Studies in General.*

Some of the studies mentioned above will be discussed in detail by other speakers later in the course (e.g. Nest Records, Beach Patrols and Banding). Information about these and other studies also appears in *Notornis* from time to time, usually in the form of annual progress reports, but sometimes as requests from individuals seeking help with their studies. For further information, ask the project leader concerned or, if you don't know their name or address, consult your Regional Representative.

Some cooperative studies (e.g. harbour surveys) require the simultaneous presence of all participants, but it is possible to contribute to others (Nest Records, for instance) even if you are isolated, without transport and with only the odd hour or two to spare.

Co-operative research deserves special support because it often yields results that would be quite impossible to achieve if the individuals worked alone. This is especially true when observations have to be made simultaneously in several different places or if they have to extend over many years or a very large part of New Zealand. Co-operative projects also have special advantages for the beginner. They introduce him or her to people with similar interests, provide experience in study techniques and allow good use to be made of even quite short periods of time since, hopefully, the objectives and study methods will have been well thought out before the study started.

Sooner or later, however, you may wish to have your own project and, if it is to be enjoyable and productive, you will need to give careful consideration to its selection, definition and methods of study. The following section is designed to help with this.

➤ >>> CONTINUED OVER PAGE



# AGM

## ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND CANTERBURY REGION

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held in Kaikoura during Queen's Birthday weekend 2008.

**FRIDAY 30TH MAY**

*Registration, Council &  
Regional Rep meetings*

**SATURDAY 31ST MAY**

*Scientific day  
Dinner and AGM*

**SUNDAY 1ST JUNE**

*Field trips  
Conference dinner*

**MONDAY 2ND JUNE**

*Morning field trip*

Please refer to your registration form with this issue of *Southern Bird* for more details

Conference address: OSNZ AGM, PO Box 36-515, Merivale, Christchurch.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Subscriptions are due on 1st January. Those members with email should have received a membership renewal form via that medium. Those members who do not have email (or those where the Membership Secretary has not been informed of an email address) should receive a renewal form as an insert with this issue of *Southern Bird*. Please endeavour to pay close to the due date – the Society depends greatly on your subscription to continue the furtherance of its objects in encouraging and supporting the study and enjoyment of birds in the New Zealand region. If you have not received a renewal form please contact the Membership Secretary, Roger Sharp, P.O. Box 12-1039, Henderson, Auckland, phone 09 836 9931, email Roger.Sharp@xtra.co.nz.

## PERSONAL PROJECTS

### (i) *Developing an interest*

The research interests of amateurs are not normally selected in cold blood – they just grow out of some fortuitous happening such as the arrival of a new bird in your district. The important thing is to be out and about with birds and bird people and thus expose yourself to the risk of catching an interest. Reading will help you recognise a good opportunity for study when you meet it, but so will an imaginative mind. Once you have 'caught' an interest you would be well advised to think carefully before you embark on a major study. 'Collect data now and think later' is a safe prescription for subsequent frustration and disappointment.

The questions and considerations listed below will apply more to some studies than to others and it is not suggested that they be followed blindly. In general, the bigger and

the longer-term the study, the more important it is to think carefully before starting, and to assess progress at regular intervals thereafter.

### (ii) *What is already known about your topic?*

Unless you check this point first, you may overlook some technique which would make your task much easier, or worse, discover later that you have merely duplicated what someone else did years before.

A good starting point is a recent text book or review which will probably contain references to original papers which you should then consult. Each of these papers in turn will probably list references to yet earlier papers. If your search is to be really thorough, however, you should consult the 'Aves' section of the *Zoological Record* which is the best index to all but the most recent of the world's literature on ornithology. *Biological Abstracts* and *Wildlife Review* are, among others, also useful; they appear more quickly than the *Zoological Record* and are more widely available. Many ornithological journals, *Auk*, *Ibis* and *Emu* for instance, regularly carry abstracts of recent ornithological papers printed in other journals.

The Ornithological Society's library has a good set of ornithological journals, and abstracting journals are available in the specialist libraries of government departments, universities and museums. The Wildlife Service and Ecology Division librarians (and the research staff too) are usually glad to help people locate papers relevant to particular ornithological topics.

### (iii) *What further contributions do you hope to make?*

Your answer to this question decides how you will go about your work so you need to be quite specific. For instance, perhaps you have observed or read that Song Thrushes eat blackberries and you have decided to discover if the birds are important in spreading the seed. Although this may appear a fairly clear objective, it is in fact too general to allow you to assess exactly what is involved. Several other objectives must first be attained – e.g. to find out: (a) how many thrushes there are, (b) how many droppings they produce, (c) if they also regurgitate seeds, (d) how often and over what season do viable seeds occur in the droppings or pellets, (e) where the droppings are deposited and (f) how many of these places are suitable sites for blackberries to grow in. Unless you can obtain clear answers to all of these questions, you may be unable to answer your main question.

### (iv) *How will you achieve your aims?*

You will need some way of counting the thrushes and recording their movements (trapping and marking?), finding the droppings (observation from a hide or collecting droppings from netted birds?), testing the viability of seeds (grow them in pots of sterile soil), and so on. Some of these ideas may not work, e.g. the birds may quickly learn to avoid the nets, or they may spend most of their time in bushes where they can't be seen. It is therefore often useful to carry out a pilot study the first year just to be sure your techniques do work.

### (v) *What are the requirements of the study?*

First, you obviously need a study area containing both blackberries and Song Thrushes, and large enough to include the home ranges of several thrushes. It must also be reasonably close to where you live or work, and you will need some assurance that the blackberries are not going to be sprayed. You may also need traps, nets, marking gear, containers for droppings, a microscope for identifying seeds, pots of sterile soil to test their viability and, above all, a great deal of time, especially during the blackberry season. When you consider all this, it may be obvious that the requirements of the study are far beyond your resources. You might be





better to concentrate on just one of the sub projects (e.g. testing whether the seeds germinate better or worse after passing through the birds), or perhaps switch to some quite different project that is more manageable and perhaps more interesting (plotting the current distribution in your district of a rare or newly arrived species for instance).

#### (vi) Recording the data.

Whatever your project, you will find it helpful to decide in advance just what data you are going to collect and how you will record them (some of the co-operative projects have special forms or cards printed to ensure the data are recorded in a convenient and uniform manner). With your own project, the recording procedure is one of the things that should be tested in the pilot study, and it should be related to the way in which you intend eventually to present the material for publication.

For instance, if you want to study where different kinds of birds feed, you will need to decide in advance on the feeding stations you are going to recognise and to define them in terms of height and location (e.g. trunk, branch, twigs, leaves). Field recording is then merely a matter of putting a stroke in the appropriate column of your notebook each time you see a feeding bird. This is much easier than having later to wade through pages of field notes and make decisions in retrospect as to what category each record should go in. This type of planning is appropriate to almost every project – even to the way you tabulate measurements so they can be easily added and averaged later on. Where possible, avoid making unnecessary fair copies – making copies always leads to errors unless you use carbon paper.

#### (vii) Publication

The end point of your research should be a publication, however brief, which tells other people what you have found, and you should have this in mind right from the outset (including the possible need for photographs).

Dick Sibson, long time editor of *Notornis* and happily with us today, always asked himself two simple questions before accepting material for publications “is it true?” and “is it new?” I recommend you to ask these same questions of your own work. Ways of ensuring that your study does not merely duplicate someone else's earlier work were discussed in section (ii) above, and we will now briefly consider the question “is it true?”

Although ornithological history contains a few notable examples of hoaxes and deceptions, authors rarely set out to deceive – they just fall into traps and deceive themselves. The first and most obvious requirement is to be sure of your identification, and there is to be a special talk on this later in the course. Most of us have heard of people who have failed correctly to identify a bird before banding it (a special hazard with chicks), who have carried out quite meticulous observations at a nest without correctly identifying the owners, or who have incorrectly assumed that because the first 20 prions they picked up were *P. turtur*, the 21st was likewise.

There are two ways to reduce errors of identifications (i) by careful observation and rigorous checking of any feature (even a small one) that seems unusual and (ii) by seeking a second opinion if this is at all possible (it almost always is possible with dead specimens, and even live birds are often to be found in the same place on successive days).

Another cause of untruths is the failure to differentiate fact from interpretation. It may be a fact that each of a series of nest record cards shows the first egg appearing in November or later. To say, on this basis, that the species does not start laying until November is, however, an interpretation which may be false – perhaps no one looked for nests in October.

Numerical data are especially liable to faulty interpretation unless subjected to appropriate treatment – hence the three degrees of deception ‘lies, damn lies and statistics’.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO AUDREY EAGLE

It was with great pleasure that we learnt that the Montana Medal for non-fiction had been awarded to Audrey Eagle, one of our valued OSNZ members in Dunedin. This award is truly a well-deserved honour for her masterpiece, *Eagle's Complete Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand* (Te Papa Press), which is the



Caption: Audrey watching Chestnut-breasted Shelducks on Otago Peninsula.

Photo by: Peter Schweigman

culmination of over 50 years work.

The two volumes contain hand-painted plates of every tree and shrub species in New Zealand, and as the judges commented, “the monumental work is a magnificent tribute to Audrey's vision, perseverance and consummate skill as a botanical artist”. Many Otago OSNZ members enjoyed being present at the launch of the book in October 2007 and having the opportunity to view the exhibition of some of her original paintings. These exquisite botanical paintings are each also delightful works of art in their own right.

OSNZ members will be pleased to learn that Audrey's enjoyment of the natural world includes not only plants but also birds and is combined with her commitment to conservation. Audrey puts her considerable energies and enthusiasm into involvements with the Botanical Society, Forest and Bird and OSNZ. Audrey is a regular participant in OSNZ activities and we have spent many happy hours with Audrey, from weekend field trips for Atlas surveys to counting waders in blustery Otago conditions.

MARY THOMPSON

Regional Representative, Otago

#### (viii) Statistics and all that

The statistical testing of numerical data is a science in its own right, and I have no competence to go into this in more than a very superficial way. Suffice it to say that the purpose of the tests is usually to show whether or not it is likely that the difference you observed between your various counts or measurements could have been due to chance. If the tests show there is less than one chance in a hundred that the difference you observed was due to chance, it is then conventional to accept that the difference is real or, in the jargon, ‘significant’ (remember, though, you may have encountered that one chance).

There are many kinds of statistical tests each appropriate to some particular kind of data or purpose. If your results rest on statistical data and you have little training in statistics yourself, you would be wise to consult someone competent in this field (preferably before you collect the data). Appropriate statistical treatment can greatly add to the value of your observations (indeed, some observations are worthless without it), but be sure the treatment is appropriate. We should not use statistics as a drunken man uses a lamp post – ‘more for support than illumination’.

THE LATE PETER BULL  
Ecology Division, DSIR 10th January 1980





# Bird News

*This feature contains unchecked reports. Some sightings require confirmation by the OSNZ Rare Birds Committee.*

A **Southern Tokoeka** was found killed by a dog at Traill Park, Halfmoon Bay on Stewart Island in July. The bird was part of a small but expanding population living around the township, often foraging in residents' gardens, and highlights the need to keep dogs under close control at all times in kiwi areas.

Routine transmitter changes and checks of transmitted **Great Spotted Kiwi** from the introduced population in Nelson Lakes National Park provided a pleasant surprise in the form of an untransmitted bird sharing a burrow with a recently translocated individual. From the shiny appearance of its legs and claws it is thought the bird hatched in late 2005, and by its size may be a female. It is the third known chick to be raised in the Rotoiti Mainland Island since re-introduction of the species there, and according to good adult and chick survival statistics the birds are doing well in the area.

According to results from a recent survey **Little Spotted Kiwi** are doing well on Tiritiri Matangi Island with a two-fold increase in numbers from 30 to 60-80 individuals over the past five years. According to DoC scientist Hugh Robertson, who led the survey, the birds "seem to grow faster on Tiritiri than on other islands due to the rich soils and lack of rats."

A small transponder placed in a steelhead (a young salmon about 7 cm long) in April 2005 at a hatchery on the Columbia River, USA turned up in a young **Sooty Shearwater** harvested on Big Moggy Island off Stewart Island this autumn. It is not known how the transponder, which was about the size of a grain of rice, got from fish to bird – whether the bird swallowed the whole fish or part of the fish as a fishery discard, but after swallowing it it must have lodged in a fold of the bird's stomach for over a year before being regurgitated into the chick.

Marking the end of a 23-year captive breeding programme at Mount Bruce the last 10 **Campbell Island Teal** involved in the programme were released on Codfish Island in late October. Twenty pairs remain in captivity in various institutions on public display for protected species and island protection advocacy.

In a first for the species three **Takahe** were taken from the pest-free Tiritiri Matangi Island in late May in order to be released in their last remaining natural range in the Murchison Mountains. This leaves space on Tiritiri Matangi for new gene-stock, with the hope that greater genetic diversity will boost breeding rates on the island.

**Rimatara Lorikeets** have returned to Atiu in the Cook Islands after a gap of nearly 200 years with the translocation of 27 birds from Rimatara in French Polynesia. The original population was hunted to extinction in the 1820s, primarily for the species' brilliant red feathers which were used in ceremonial attire. Since then black rats have invaded most of the islands making them unsuitable for re-introductions of the species, though thankfully Atiu has escaped this fate. The species is a beneficiary of the 2006 British Birdfair, which raised GBP 215,000 for the BirdLife International programme 'Saving the Pacific's Parrots'.

**Stitchbirds** translocated into the Ark in the Park in the Waitakere Ranges west of Auckland earlier in 2007 have bred and successfully fledged chicks this spring, demonstrating that this is possible in an unfenced pest-controlled area.

In an attempt to diversify the genetics of the Tiritiri Matangi **Kokako** population. Eleven birds were removed from the island recently, to be replaced by three birds from Mount Bruce all containing genes from the now lost Taranaki

population, and two birds from Waipapa in the King Country. It is hoped that in this way birds with Taranaki ancestry can be bred up, possibly for re-introduction in that area in the future.

## SHORT REPORTS

Among eight species of albatrosses seen on a pelagic trip out of Kaikoura on 27/7 was a **Yellow-nosed Mollymawk**. The long-staying Waikanae Estuary **Little Egret** was present on and off throughout winter and early spring. The regular wintering **Glossy Ibis** was seen intermittently at Travis Wetland (Christchurch) into early spring. The regular individual at the Wairau Lagoons went missing for a few months, returning in late September. On 7th July a male **Chestnut Teal** in full breeding plumage was seen in the company of a female Brown Teal at the Waikanae Estuary. A **Brown Teal** graced the Stilt Pools at Miranda on 17/11, and another in the less salubrious surroundings of a canal beside Island Road in Manukau on 25/11. The seemingly ever-present Waihopai **Black Kite** was reported on 21/8 and 16/10.

Up to three **Large Sand Dotterels** were present in the South Manukau Harbour this spring. A **Mongolian Dotterel** was at Big Sand Island (Kaipara Harbour) on 27/10. **Shore Plovers** from a population recently translocated to Mana Island have been commuting between there and the adjacent mainland, with up to six seen at Green Point near Titahi Bay in July, and smaller numbers on Petone Beach. Individuals from the Mana Island translocation made it as far as Henley Lake in the Wairarapa (this bird later returned to its former home at Mount Bruce) and the Wairau Lagoons (near Blenheim). A **Sanderling** was found in Awarua Bay on the winter wader census (with three there in late October), another individual was on the Manawatu Estuary on 22/7. The Waimea Inlet produced a briefly-staying probable **Ruff** on 1/11. Two **Black-tailed Godwits** were in the Avon-Heathcote Estuary (Christchurch) in late November. Lake Ellesmere was again graced by a **Hudsonian Godwit**, with an individual found on 22/9 and seen regularly after this, another was at the Manawatu Estuary on 28/10, and another was regular at Miranda. The Kaikoura Peninsula held a **Wandering Tattler** on 29/11, as did Brooklands Lagoon (Christchurch) on 3/12, whilst another was reported from the South Manukau Harbour this spring, along with two **Siberian Tattlers**. A **Greenshank** was reported from Miranda on 30/8. Another bird found on a winter wader census was a **Marsh Sandpiper**, at Lake Ellesmere on 24/6. It was then seen occasionally through winter and spring. A probable **Spotted Redshank** was reported from Lake Grassmere (Marlborough) on 3/11. This would constitute a first for New Zealand if accepted. Single Terek Sandpipers were reported from Big Sand Island on 27/10 and the South Manukau Harbour. The long-staying Lake Grassmere male **Red-necked Phalarope** stayed throughout the period.

A Black-fronted Tern colony on the Rakaia River (Canterbury) played host to an immature **Arctic Tern** in late November, with three **White-winged Black Terns** in the same general area, two in full breeding plumage. A **Common Tern** was present in the Kaipara Harbour on 24/11, and possibly the month prior. Three **Crested Pigeons** were reported from the Oakura to Tutaematai area of Northland in October, possibly blown over in gales or escapees, though the caged bird club in the area expressed no knowledge of the birds being kept locally. A report of a possible sighting in the same area in 2006 may point to a small population being there. Finally a member of the public reported a **Spine-tailed Swift** over the Christchurch suburb of St Martins on 12/9.

Sources: What's Up DoC email newsletter, Birding-NZ email group, BirdLife News Alert, The Oregonian (27/9/07).



## REVIEW

**Wilson, Kerry-Jayne. 2007. *A Checklist to New Zealand Birds, Frogs, Reptiles, Mammals and Butterflies*. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch. ISBN 978 877257 51 3, 64pp softback.**

A White-capped Mollymawk graces the cover of this recent publication compiled by Lincoln University ecologist and OSNZ member Kerry-Jayne Wilson. The booklet is a pocket checklist, measuring 105 x 160 mm with a flexible but sturdy cover, designed for field use. It lists all of New Zealand's native and introduced birds, bats, frogs, and butterflies along with terrestrial and marine mammals and reptiles. The lists are comprehensive and include accredited vagrant species recorded in New Zealand during the last 25 years as well as the species found on particular islands. The author's worthy aim is to spread popular awareness of this country's diversity of wildlife. To this end the booklet lays claim to be a first of its kind for groups other than avian, while for birds the changes in taxonomy (and usage in the matter of common names) subsequent to the 1990 OSNZ Checklist are taken into account.

An introduction nicely sets out sources and references for more detailed information, and is followed by useful keys to status and abundance. The abundance label is a subjective indication of 'sightability' by letters C, LC, U, UC, R, S and V, each explained to amplify their explicit meaning (e.g. S = restricted to sanctuaries without public access). The status key employs 15 letters, again carefully defined. A notable feature is the distinction between N (native to the New Zealand region but also occurs elsewhere) and H (colonised New Zealand by its own powers of dispersal since human contact). The latter category marks recent arrivals (Black-fronted Dotterel, Nankeen Night Heron) along with others of much longer standing (Little Black Shag, Australasian Shoveler, Australasian Harrier and Pied Stilt, for instance, besides Welcome Swallow and Silvereye).

The lists, which form the gist of the booklet, include both common and scientific names and are subdivided into orders and families. New Zealand has 18 orders of birds, of which Passeriformes, the widest, recently gained its 23rd family with the separation of the Hihi from the Honeyeaters (Meliphagidae). Within this framework, family relationships are liable to change; I was interested to find the Australian Magpie, which occurs in the OSNZ Checklist within the Family Cracticidae (Bell Magpies), listed here under Artamidae in company with the Woodswallows.

Maori names have come to the fore in the entries for Kereru (New Zealand pigeon), Hihi (Stitchbird), Mohua (Yellowhead), and the southern races of Brown Kiwi: Tokoeka and Rowi. These incidentally are almost the only birds for which an alternative name appears; the booklet is unequivocal in respect of South Island Pied Oystercatcher, for example, while making a suitable distinction by putting Northern New Zealand Dotterel and Southern New Zealand Dotterel on separate lines.

Alongside the species lists are five columns of boxes for field notes to be ticked for records of locality, date and habitat. The Checklist is awkward for this purpose, if only because of its comprehensiveness. Thus the Eastern Rosella space which sits among ten boxes for 'other parrots' is the only one likely to be ticked on most land-based field trips in the north. I suspect these columns are better suited to compiling one's own New Zealand life list, or a set of year lists.

The other checklists bring an assortment of creatures to our notice as naturalists: amphibians (four native and three introduced frogs); reptiles (five turtles, three tuataras,

numerous skinks and geckos, and two sea snakes); mammals (the four bats endemic to New Zealand are accompanied by the vagrant Little Red Flying Fox, beside six wallabies, the Brush-tailed Possum and the remainder of the usual suspects which include feral members of most domestic and farm stock). Even the Moose *Alces alces* retains its place. The marine mammals of New Zealand waters are a rich assortment of seals, whales, dolphins and a lone porpoise. Finally come the butterflies: 25 are listed, of which the Japanese Swallowtail is a vagrant addition to the set depicted on the Entomological Society wall chart of 1989.

The topic of common names is endlessly fascinating and the booklet affords an opportunity for debate beyond the confines of the present bird checklist. Thus, when is a Skylark not a Skylark? Answer: When it's a Lark, Sky (which is how it appears now in the index of English names for birds of Britain approved by the BTO). Similarly, the little bird I once knew as a Hedge Sparrow, but accept in New Zealand as a Dunnock, has become in its original haunts the Hedge Accentor, alongside its Alpine cousin. In similar vein, common usage differs across the Tasman. We prefer to call our gerygone the Grey Warbler. Off-track migrants, noted here as Spine-tailed Swifts, are reported elsewhere as White-throated Needletails and that adventitious Australian the Masked Lapwing appears in the checklist under review as the Spur-winged Plover (although the Third Edition of the OSNZ Checklist had earlier gone halfway with 'Masked Plover'). Incidentally, the author opts for lower case 'plover' which begs the question of the confusion set by an uncommon common tern.

In conclusion, the publication of this Checklist should be welcomed by OSNZ members. No true naturalist's home should be without one.

MICHAEL TAYLOR

## LORD HOWE ISLAND

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## *How I ended up here!*

*In 1985 my wife Julie and I were looking for a piece of land to settle on. She wanted the mountain and I wanted the sea. We finally found it at the end of Brown Road, Waiongana where she could see the mountain and I could reach the beach; not a great beach but, apart from whitebaiters and the occasional fisherman, generally unpopulated which is how I like my beaches.*

We built a house and planted shelter trees which grew tall and hid the mountain, but not the beach. Life continued along as usual until 1997 when I went on a DoC summer scene trip entitled 'The Robins of Moki Forest'. On this occasion there was a middle-aged chap, black cap on backwards, smoking and wearing an Ornithological Society of New Zealand jersey. He seemed to know what he was talking about so I hung around him hoping to increase my meagre knowledge. Eventually we got chatting and I expressed an interest in the bush and birds.

He invited me along to the next OSNZ branch meeting. I turned up not knowing quite what to expect and was completely blown away! When I introduced myself and said where I lived one gentleman, whom I now know to be Bill Messenger, asked with a slight quiver in his voice "Did I visit the beach much". I said "Occasionally".

By the end of the meeting I knew I had found where I belonged. I had never realised that there existed such a group of people with so much knowledge and interest in the flora, fauna and in particular the avifauna of New Zealand. My life had changed. As my knowledge increased so did my trips to the beach.

The beach itself, approximately 14 km north of New Plymouth, is a typical North Taranaki beach with a river running parallel to the coast then turning 90° and out to sea. This all changed in March 1990 when, during a big flood, the river pushed straight out to sea adding a new dimension to the landscape; a lagoon fed by drainage channels from the land and occasionally inundated by the sea. This is now a home for Black Swans (breeding successfully), Grey Duck, Grey Teal, Little Shag, Little Black Shag and Black Shag, all of which use the river as well. New Zealand Dabchick and Scaup have also been seen on occasion.

When the tide is out a wide expanse of sandy, stony beach is exposed, a bit like the surface of the moon, but providing a feeding ground for many birds and a roost area for others. A large flock of small active shorebirds has always been present. I soon learnt these were Banded Dotterels, their numbers peaking in the 80's. I was determined to learn the names of all the birds I saw by species and genus but the learning curve was steep. As I recognised more species I struggled to remember them all.

Then that mid-September along came a whole new range of birds, migratory waders and I was really hooked on birding. I was amazed that these birds flew such huge distances and ended up on a beach 10 minutes walk from my house. Over the years I have found that Turnstones are generally the first to arrive followed closely by Pacific Golden Plovers a smattering of Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots and of course some rarer species. At first I didn't know the names of even the common waders, and trying to identify birds in non-breeding plumage was a real challenge. Bar-tailed Godwits obviously weren't hard to identify. Lesser Knots are a more irregular visitor so each season if they turn up the first one always gets a good going over. In the beginning Skylarks sitting amongst the rocks got the twice over.

On 29th February 2004 after some rough weather around the country Julie and I saw an orange-flagged Lesser Knot, a first record for Taranaki. Weather events tend to stir the birds up so it's always worth a visit to see if anything new has turned up.

In 1997 one OSNZ member, whose identity shall remain secret, turned up a week late for an organised trip. The weather was a bit grotty, but he said I'm here now we may as well go and have a look. We donned wet weather gear and headed off. There was nothing new on the beach but over the lagoon a small tern-shaped bird was working up and down dipping occasionally to pick something off the surface. Later this was identified as a White-winged Black Tern.

On another occasion when it was blowing a howling southerly, while most other birds I saw were walking, one bird was revelling in the conditions and actually making headway. A report of the sighting was sent to the Rare Birds Committee and Spine-tailed Swift was added to my list.

It is often sheer luck to see rare visitors, as it was with a quick trip to gather seaweed when I saw what I later learned to be a Greenshank. It was probably only present for a few hours. I had a similar experience with a Terek Sandpiper; just a brief glimpse and it flew off. Others species like Marsh Sandpiper, Whimbrel and Siberian Tattler have stayed longer.

On the 25th October 2004 during another trip when the weather was again a bit 'patchy', two tiny birds were spied. With the aid of a cell phone to ring Julie at home to check the field guide, and the photos that Barry Hartley took, we later



identify them as Red-necked Stints. I was stunned that such tiny birds had flown such a huge distance to end up here. The next evening Julie and I saw three individuals of the species, then no more until 2006/7.

After a generally hectic mid September/October the birds find their summering areas with the Pacific Golden Plover moulting out of their breeding plumage and settling in. The number that spends time here is usually around nine to eleven, although one year it was fourteen. I once saw a flock of thirty-plus circling around, and had it not been high tide I'm sure they would have landed. The Banded Dotterels head off to their breeding grounds. Where that was I didn't know until 2004 when a male returned with bands on its legs from the Tasman River in the South Island; so now I know where at least one goes.

So it goes on from tattlers to Turnstones and everything in between, I try not to dwell on what may be there when I'm not. One afternoon sitting quietly amongst the driftwood with Barry I said it would be nice if someone would pay me to spend more time down here. He replied that if I was lucky it might happen in my lifetime. As we packed our gear up we looked up and saw eleven Royal Spoonbills flying over. The next evening there were eight on the beach. Spoonbills are an irregular visitor with usually one or two at the most.

On December 28th 1999 Julie and I were on our usual walk to the beach when I spotted what I thought was a Black-fronted Dotterel, a species which we had seen before in January 1998. It was feeding busily around and over the rocks which was good as I could see the bands on both legs and get some photos. I checked the field guide when we got home just to refresh my memory and soon realised that it was in fact a Shore Plover on a tour of the country after being released onto Portland Island. It was seen at Manawatu estuary a couple of days later, but it was here first.

So from mid September to Easter I try to get down to the beach every day and twice a day on the weekends, the two hours around high tide are best. The worst time is when I get home at night to find the field guide open at migratory waders and Julie says "I saw a little bird" or worse still when she rings me at work and says "I just saw a Whimbrel". Work tends to suffer for the rest of the day. However, it's not only waders and rarities that turn up in summer. White-fronted Terns come ashore to rest up during fishing trips, sometimes only a handful, sometimes hundreds, and it always pays to look around the edges of the flock. I have seen Black-fronted Terns and one evening a juvenile Black-fronted Tern which I mistook for a juvenile Arctic Tern. David Medway soon put me right.

Around November there is the occasional Wrybill or two, then from late December through to January flocks of Pied Oystercatchers flying north and keeping close to the coast. Out at sea there are Gannets, White-fronted Terns being harassed by skuas, Sooty Shearwaters, Fluttering Shearwaters, prions, and during a good southerly albatrosses, giant petrels and other pelagic species. On the afternoon of 28th May 2005 I stood on the sand hills at the back of the beach and watched innumerable giant petrels drifting by.

Then there are the beach wrecks from tiny Common Diving Petrels to giant petrels and a small albatross species that Julie,

once described by Barry as "my faithful Labrador", dragged home because she knew she would be in trouble if she didn't. During the great prion wreck of July 2002 I picked up two hundred and seventy of the poor things but had a great crop of tomatoes that year.

As I meander homeward across the paddocks on a lovely summer morning or evening listening to the Skylarks singing and keeping an eye out for Dunnock, Goldfinch, Greenfinch and sometimes a covey of California Quail, Welcome Swallows are darting about, and the occasional Pheasant erupts in startled flight scaring me more than it. There used to be a mob of Pukeko, now gone, which is a pity – their calls at night were a reminder that we weren't living in town.

Our slice of Taranaki now twenty years on with mature shelter trees, orchard and patch of native garden attracts Grey Warbler, Fantail, Silvereye, Shining Cuckoo (and even a Long-tailed Cuckoo once) but best of all for the past two winters a Morepork. Other winter visitors are Kingfishers taking worms from the paddocks and a Tui or two in the Puriri. A Falcon was seen once briefly, Cattle Egrets have graced paddocks near our house, also a possible Little Egret. In 2002 a Ruff was present in a pond on our neighbour's paddock and a White Heron was seen in 2006 by the river's edge.

But it's not just birds. Sometimes it's nice to just sit on the beach and enjoy it, with binoculars and tape recorder handy just in case. I also keep a record of beach-wrecked fish and am trying to learn the names of the seaweed and seashells. We have seen seals on the beach, dolphins surfing the waves (including a small pod of Maui's) and one gorgeous warm Easter Monday we stood and watched a pod of Orcas making their way across the bay towards New Plymouth.

When we first moved to Waiongana I thought we had paid too much for our piece of land but now we consider it priceless. Sure it isn't paradise, there are footprints on the beach and in the paddocks that shouldn't be there, but I have some stoat traps scattered around and have had some success with these. Feral cats are less of a problem now that more people have moved in but of course they bring their own domestic cats.

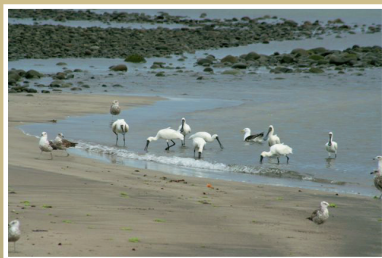
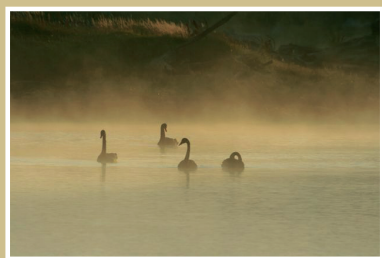
Weeds are also a big problem especially pampas and gorse. Cleared areas get overrun with marram and spinifex making it hard for the birds to find a clear space to roost. I do what I can, but have to go to work, so time is of the essence. Some sort of protection for the whole area would be ideal, but that's a mammoth undertaking, maybe a retirement project.

I would like to thank the members of the local OSNZ region, especially David Medway and Barry Hartley for their encouragement, also particularly my wife as I wasn't this way inclined when we married, but she has put up with me disappearing to the beach whenever I can and my bringing home in bags of smelly beach wrecks.

Birding at Waiongana is not a pastime it is a passion and I love it. With apologies to the poet John Masefield:

*I must go down to the sea again  
The lonely sea and sky  
I saw some migratory  
waders there  
I hope they did not fly*

PETER FRYER





# Beach Patrol Scheme

## PRELIMINARY REPORTS FOR THE YEARS 2002 TO 2006

### 2002

The report is based on 595 cards. In this year 3711.8 km were travelled and dead seabirds found totalled 23,171, a large number of which were five species of prions. Of the coastal sections (districts on the cards) where greater than 100 km were covered in 2002, Southland had the highest rate of recovery at 22.60 birds per kilometre, followed by Taranaki at 10.21 birds per kilometre.

#### *Significant wrecks occurred for the following species:*

- Prion spp, of which some 15,000 were recovered during the year. The peak recoveries were made in June (710), July (13,580) and August (150). By beach patrol district the figures for July were:
 

Northland West	5,830
Auckland West	4,420
Taranaki	2,980
Wellington West	250

Only two Fulmar Prions were recovered, these being on 8th July at Paraparaumu Beach (WW), and 11th August near the Orongorongo River mouth (WS).

- Sooty Shearwaters: Mason Bay, Stewart Island (SD) 1,834 on 5/6th May; Oreti Beach (SD) 550 in early May; Doughboy Bay (SD) 400 on 2nd June; West Coast off Dargaville (NW) 183 on 11th May; Ninety Mile Beach (NW) 534 on 2nd June.
- Australasian Gannets: West Coast Dargaville (NW) (26); Ninety Mile Beach (NW) (21); Muriwai Beach (AW) (26 on 9th February).

#### *Unusual bird recoveries comprised:*

##### Sea Birds

- Long-tailed Skua: Ninety Mile Beach, Ahipara (NW) 7th January.
- Southern Skua: Waikanae Beach (WW) 16th June.
- Common Noddy: Otaraoa (TA) 17th June.
- Crested Tern: Petone (WS) 30th August.

##### Land Birds

- Morepork: Ruapuke (AW) 22nd April and Ocean Beach (NE) 31st December.
- Spine-tailed Swift: Tipoka (TA) 10th December.
- Oriental Cuckoo: Muriwai Beach (AW) 14th December.

## WANTED

### PAPERS ON NEW ZEALAND BIRD SPECIES

All citations, reprint copies or photocopies of papers on, or relating to, any New Zealand bird species that have been published in a scientific journal or general magazine other than *Notornis*. These papers or citations will be made available to all members, and a list of these publications will be published annually in *Notornis*.

Please send to the Secretary, Claudia Duncan, PO Box 12397, Wellington, or c.duncan@clear.net.nz

#### *Birds recovered with bands totalled seven;*

- Flesh-footed Shearwater, Muriwai Beach (AW) 11th May.
- Sooty Shearwater, Farewell Spit (NC) 25th May, Muriwai Beach (AW) 14th December.
- Grey-faced Petrel, Bethells Beach (AW) 12th July.
- Australasian Gannet, Muriwai (AW) 8th June and Kawhia (AW) 30th October.
- Caspian Tern, Ruapuke (AW) August.

### 2003

The report is based on 509 cards. In this year 3211.7 km were travelled and dead seabirds totalled 6,340, 46% of which were Sooty Shearwaters from the wrecks that occurred during May and November. Of the coastal sections (districts on the scheme's report cards) where greater than 100 km were covered in 2003, Southland yet again had the highest rate of recovery at 9.04 birds per kilometre, followed by Auckland West at 2.68 birds per kilometre. Auckland West recovered the most birds at 1,789.

There were only two significant wrecks during the year, both of Sooty Shearwaters. These were, in the South Island in May, when 800 were recovered (587 from Stewart Island) and in the North Island in November and early December with the following recorded:

Northland West	951
Auckland West	1025
Taranaki	128
Wellington West	30
Total	2134

#### *Unusual bird recoveries:*

A Sooty Tern was recovered from the West Coast at Dargaville on 1st November, and on 1st December a banded Arctic Tern was recovered at Masons Bay, Stewart Island. The latter is believed to represent a world record for the distance between banding location and recovery location.

From the non-seabird group five New Zealand Pigeons were recorded.

#### *Birds recovered with bands and reported on the cards, totalled 11, being:*

- A Flesh-footed Shearwater at Muriwai (AW) on 10th May.
- Blue Penguins at Kaikoura (CN) on 18th January and 12th April, and Red-billed Gulls also at Kaikoura on 27th September and 25th October.
- A Blue Penguin at Kaitorete Spit (CS) on 6th September.
- A Red-billed Gull at Awatoto South (EC) on 14th July.
- A Sooty Shearwater on Ninety Mile Beach (NW) on 16th November, banded at the Snares Islands on 1st May 1999, and a Grey-faced Petrel also from Ninety Mile Beach on the same day banded at Mt Maunganui on 18th May 2003.
- A Buller's Mollymawk on Petone Beach (WS) on 11th June, banded on the Snares Islands on 7th May 1997.
- An Arctic Tern on Mason Bay, Stewart Island, banded in Sweden on 27th June 2003.

### 2004

The report is based on 408 cards. In this year 2,843.1 km were travelled and dead seabirds totalled 2,320, little more than one third of the number recovered the previous year. The only significant wreck occurred on Mason Bay, Stewart Island when in the first part of September 55 juvenile Buller's Mollymawks were recovered. An additional nine were found



on Southland's Oreti Beach in late September and early October. Southland yet again had the highest rate of recovery of those sections that recorded more than 100 km patrolled, at 6 per kilometre. The comparative rate for New Zealand for the year was 0.85 per km.

On 26th August, 58 Australasian Gannets were recovered at Taharoa Beach (AW). The same region recorded a Long-tailed Skua on 17th January and a Brown Skua on 25th August, both at Ruapuke.

The low numbers of seabirds recovered was also reflected in that of non-seabirds; a total of 88 were found, almost half the normal total. This figure includes six New Zealand pigeons.

Eight band recoveries were reported: five Red-billed Gulls from the Kaikoura Coast (CN), two Black-backed Gulls from Petone Beach (WS) (one of which was banded at Matiu/Somes Island on 7th December 1990) and one Blue Penguin from the same island.

## 2005

The report is based on 346 cards. In this year 2,551.7 km were travelled and dead seabirds reported totalled 3,137, a figure which is the second-lowest in the last six years. To a certain extent the lower patrolling distance reflects the number of birds recovered. Seven sections had no patrols reported, these being Canterbury South, East Coast North Island, Fiordland, Outlying Islands, Otago, Wairarapa, and Westland.

Northland West had the highest rate of recovery of those sections that recorded more than 100 km patrolled, at 1.2 per kilometre. Southland, with only 83km covered, had the highest overall recovery rate of 4.7 per kilometre. The comparative rate for New Zealand for the year was 1.23 per km.

### *The following small seabird wrecks occurred during the year:*

- Blue Penguins: 498 spread across both east and west coasts from Auckland north in late July, August and early September.
- Common Diving Petrels: Farewell Spit (NC), 76 birds in June.
- Sooty Shearwaters: Oreti Beach and Mason Bay (SD), 255 birds in May.
- White-headed Petrel, 68 in mid November on Auckland West and Northland West district coasts.

Three interesting recoveries were, Pegasus Bay (CN), a Juan Fernandez Petrel in June, a Brown Skua at Oreti Beach (SD) in October and a Stejneger's Petrel from Ninety Mile Beach (AW) on 13th November.

## 2006

This report is based on 346 cards received as at 15th August 2007. In 2006, 2,223.4 km were travelled and dead seabirds totalled 3,117. Exactly the same number of cards was received as in 2005, with slightly fewer birds recovered and a few less kilometres tramped. Five sections had no patrols done - North Coast South Island, Fiordland, Outlying Islands, Otago and Wairarapa.

Southland had the highest rate of recovery of those sections that recorded 100 km or more patrolled, at 3.05 per kilometre. Bay of Plenty, with only 6 km covered in two patrols, had the highest overall recovery rate of 7.2 per kilometre. The comparative rate for New Zealand for the year was 1.4 per km.

There was one significant seabird wreck during the year, of Blue Penguins with 335 in Northland East (NE) between January and June.

### *Interesting recoveries were:*

- Royal Spoonbill: seven juveniles on Oreti Beach (SD) in January, casualties from a storm striking the colony on Omaui Island offshore
- Wedge-tailed Shearwater: Muriwai (AW) two on 11th November

- Light-mantled Sooty Albatross: Karioitahi (AW) on 27th August
- Antarctic Petrel: Hamiltons Gap (AW) on 25th August
- Gould's Petrel: Port Waikato (AW) on 2nd May
- Kerguelen Petrel: Muriwai (AW) on 6th May
- Streaked Shearwater: Kawhia (AW) on 25th February
- Grey Ternlet: Bayleys Beach (NW) on 24th June
- White-tailed Tropicbird: Ninety Mile Beach (NW) on 22nd April
- Black-winged Petrel: Opoutere Beach (BP) on 4th February
- New Zealand Falcon: New Brighton (CN) on 8th April
- Soft-plumaged Petrel: Kaitorete Spit (CS) on 10th June
- Kaka: Waipu River (NE) on 3rd June

Three band recoveries were recorded during the year: a Fluttering Shearwater at Ruapuke (AW) on 20th January, banded on Long Island in the Marlborough Sounds (NC) on 19th August 2003; a Hutton's shearwater at Awatoto N (HB) on 16th January, banded in the Kaikoura Ranges 1989-90; and a Black-backed Gull at Petone (WS) on 6th March banded on Somes Island (WS) on 28th December 2005.

### *The provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2002:*

Section of Coast	No of Cards	No of Birds	km Covered
Auckland East (AE)	12	37	34.0
Auckland West (AW)	76	5738	570.7
Bay of Plenty (BP)	14	82	34.0
Canterbury N (CN)	25	149	237.3
Canterbury S (CS)	10	303	23.4
East Coast NI (EC)	26	43	67.5
Fiordland (FD)	-	-	-
North Coast SI (NC)	35	122	76.3
Northland East (NE)	92	835	644.8
Northland West (NW)	40	8259	1038.4
Outlying Islands (OI)	2	10	13.5
Otago (OT)	10	67	11.5
Southland (SD)	53	3293	145.7
Taranaki (TA)	90	3394	332.3
Wairarapa (WA)	7	26	14.5
Westland (WD)	2	-	2.5
Wellington S (WS)	34	205	113.2
Wellington W (WW)	67	608	127.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>23,171</b>	<b>3,475.8</b>

### *The provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2003:*

Section of Coast	No of Cards	No of Birds	km Covered
Auckland East (AE)	10	22	23.6
Auckland West (AW)	79	1789	668.3
Bay of Plenty (BP)	19	42	47.6
Canterbury N (CN)	25	245	205.2
Canterbury S (CS)	4	45	20.0
East Coast NI (EC)	32	59	71.1
Fiordland (FD)	-	-	-
North Coast SI (NC)	65	82	164.7
Northland East (NE)	61	443	512.2
Northland West (NW)	24	1702	691.0
Outlying Islands (OI)	-	-	-
Otago (OT)	4	25	11.5
Southland (SD)	40	1151	127.3
Taranaki (TA)	70	452	338.3
Wairarapa (WA)	1	5	4.0
Westland (WD)	2	15	24.0
Wellington S (WS)	16	63	68.0
Wellington W (WW)	57	214	95.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>6354</b>	<b>3072.7</b>

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*The provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2004:*

Section of Coast	No of Cards	No of Birds	km Covered
Auckland East (AE)	10	58	44.7
Auckland West (AW)	73	500	610.5
Bay of Plenty (BP)	8	11	17.5
Canterbury N (CN)	25	258	237.8
Canterbury S (CS)	1	6	0.5
East Coast NI (EC)	11	13	14.0
Fiordland (FD)	-	-	-
North Coast SI (NC)	8	36	33.7
Northland East (NE)	47	244	454.5
Northland West (NW)	22	562	538.0
Outlying Islands (OI)	-	-	-
Otago (OT)	1	4	1.0
Southland (SD)	34	646	107.5
Taranaki (TA)	59	254	296.4
Wairarapa (WA)	1	9	3.3
Westland (WD)	10	46	154.6
Wellington S (WS)	21	83	68.7
Wellington W (WW)	75	390	147.3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>2,730.0</b>

*The provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2005:*

Section of Coast	No of Cards	No of Birds	km Covered
Auckland East (AE)	15	271	76.3
Auckland West (AW)	86	592	658.1
Bay of Plenty (BP)	24	94	70.5
Canterbury N (CN)	20	104	132.3
Canterbury S (CS)	-	-	-
East Coast NI (EC)	-	-	-
Fiordland (FD)	-	-	-
North Coast SI (NC)	2	77	5.6
Northland East (NE)	66	611	550.5
Northland West (NW)	18	651	540.0
Outlying Islands (OI)	-	-	-
Otago (OT)	-	-	-
Southland (SD)	15	391	83.0
Taranaki (TA)	52	224	289.9
Wairarapa (WA)	-	-	-
Westland (WD)	-	-	-
Wellington S (WS)	14	53	51.0
Wellington W (WW)	34	69	94.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>3,137</b>	<b>2,551.7</b>

*The provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2006:*

Section of Coast	No of Cards	No of Birds	km Covered
Auckland East (AE)	6	33	15.5
Auckland West (AW)	109	705	727.6
Bay of Plenty (BP)	2	43	6
Canterbury N (CN)	13	170	109.7
Canterbury S (CS)	3	84	17.5
East Coast NI (EC)	6	3	18
Fiordland (FD)	-	-	-
North Coast SI (NC)	-	-	-
Northland East (NE)	26	598	243
Northland West (NW)	21	643	589.8
Outlying Islands (OI)	-	-	-
Otago (OT)	-	-	-
Southland (SD)	28	305	100
Taranaki (TA)	50	159	144.8
Wairarapa (WA)	-	-	-
Westland (WD)	1	1	1
Wellington S (WS)	16	103	60
Wellington W (WW)	65	270	190.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>3,117</b>	<b>2,223.4</b>

The continued success of the Beach Patrol Scheme is due to the dedication of those hardy souls who brave all manner of weather conditions and other inconvenience to trudge the weary miles in search of decaying corpses. Keep up the good work! A special mention needs to be made of the Cotters who single-handedly did all the patrolling for Wellington West for the year 2003.

*Who will be the first to send in a card for Fiordland?*

LAURIE HOWELL and LLOYD ESLER

## HARASSMENT OF A REEF HERON BY RED-BILLED GULLS

In early June 2006 whilst I was walking along the Wellington City waterfront, a Reef Heron was seen flying over the small artificial lagoon in front of the 'Boatshed'. The bird landed on a small rocky point and was easily identified at close range as being that species. While it is unusual to see a Reef Heron so close to busy city roads and the industrial waterfront area in Wellington Harbour, it is what happened next that is more unusual. As I watched the heron a group of 10 to 15 Red-billed Gulls commenced swooping around it and within a minute of it landing it flew off, actively harassed by the gulls.

The hapless heron attempted to circle the lagoon and land a second time, only to be harassed yet again by the gulls. It attempted to settle on the rocky point for a third time but persistent harassment caused it to give up and it flew out across the harbour. The gulls then abandoned their pursuit. I wonder if other members have observed this behaviour of harassment of herons by Red-billed Gulls. It is the first time I have seen it.

JIM COX

## OF BLACKBIRDS, WORMS AND A KINGFISHER

The garden of my home in Orakei, Auckland, is thin on birds, however the lawn does provide periods of special interest such as on the morning of 16th August 2007 when a New Zealand Kingfisher was present for several hours. During its stay it would swoop from a low branch to pick up worms from the wet grass or dispute catches with the resident pair of Blackbirds. In one five-minute spell the Kingfisher first stole a large worm pulled up by the female Blackbird, then swooped again for her next find, securing only half the worm which it battered against a branch and swallowed while the Blackbird cut up and ate the other half. The female Blackbird found another large worm almost at once, but this time grasped it by one end and flew away with the worm dangling from her bill. Except to convey food to a nest or fledgling, I don't recall seeing Blackbirds flying with worms (although they dodge Sparrows in competition for bread). With the worm score level at 1.5-all, I thought the Blackbird might have learnt a useful lesson. However she returned half-an-hour later only to be robbed again of her prey by the same watchful Kingfisher.

MICHAEL TAYLOR



## RANGER TEAM BREAKS THE NEW ZEALAND RECORD FOR THE **'EXTREME SPORT'** OF BIRD-RACING

*What extreme sporting event involves a 24-hour,  
non-stop, 1,340 km marathon from the east coast to the west coast and back?*

Which sport starts in the seas off Kaikoura; charges through rivers, swamps and estuaries; does circuits around oxidation ponds; visits a haunted house inhabited by owls; climbs over mountain passes; up boulder-strewn cascades; through West Coast rainforest in the dead of night and alpine beech forests in the mists of morning; then charges on a cannonball run across the plains; trudging through acres of mud on the shores of Lake Ellesmere and ends up in a valley on Banks Peninsula? Surely there's no more extreme a sport than a bird race, a competition a bit like orienteering except that the distances covered often exceed 1,000 km and the controls are free-thinking, flying creatures that can be much, much harder to find than a white post with a red number painted on it.

Our team going by the name of 'The Far Rangers' and comprising OSNZers and Christchurch City Council park rangers, Andrew Crossland and Phil Crutchley with CCC Regional Parks summer worker Brendon Kircher and Environment Canterbury park ranger and Irish ornithologist extraordinaire, Niall Mugan decided to go for the South Island (95 species) and New Zealand (100 species) records this year. The rules were basically to see as many wild bird species within a 24-hour period during the month of January, and for at least two team members to see and satisfactorily identify each new bird.

Going into our challenge we had a fair idea of what was needed; we had planned a marathon 17-stop route through the central South Island which potentially could pick up 136 species, and two of the members were veterans of winning bird race teams in Ireland and Singapore respectively. But, the sheer energy and concentration required, the lack of sleep, the ever-building time pressure towards the final hour, and the contingencies needed to make up for unexpectedly missed species (such as Shining Cuckoo, Reef Heron, Falcon and Feral Chicken) made this bird-race one heck of a big challenge!

Starting with a Grey-faced Petrel 10 miles off the Kaikoura coast at 1.42 pm on Friday 12th January and ending with a flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in a Eucalyptus tree on Banks Peninsula at 1.40 pm on Saturday 13th January, the team went non-stop for 24 hours, crossing the South Island twice on a quest to beat 100 species and set a new record.

The team started out in an Albatross Encounter boat off Kaikoura where they spotted more than 25 different seabirds, including five different types of albatross. Next was a speedy search along the Kaikoura coastline, followed by a visit to Donegal pub to pick up a number of waterbirds and for Brendon to finish a pint of Kilkenney he'd left on the bar earlier. Next was a road trip back towards Christchurch, stopping at St Anne's Lagoon for Cape Barren Geese and at the Waipara River for Black-fronted Dotterel. A detour to the Ashley Estuary near Waikuku at 7.40 pm struck gold with a trio of rare waders; Black Stilt, Whimbrel and Eastern Curlew, bringing the total to 75. Not bad for the first six hours' effort!

Next stop was Christchurch's Bromley Oxidation Ponds and the Avon-Heathcote Estuary for a few useful additions,

then a trip across town to Halswell Quarry where the target Little Owl was spotted in torch light at 10.45. From there another long road trip lead up to Arthur's Pass where Great Spotted Kiwi were searched for in the wee hours of the morning but missed. However perseverance paid off and at 4.00 am on a bush track near Okarito the team had increased to five members, the four 'Far Rangers' and an Okarito Brown Kiwi that spent 15 minutes walking around our feet!

The 5.30 am early dawn light at Okarito Beach failed to provide any new seabirds passing offshore, but it did give us Tui, White Heron, Tomtit, Robin and Fernbird, bringing the tally up to 88.

With the sun rising, the clock ticking and the car almost out of gas with the service station proprietors at Whataroa and Harihari still fast asleep, a new species was picked up along the road; Kea and another, Kaka, was dipped, because only one team member was confident with the ID. Arrival at Ross at 8.01 am gave the petrol station its first customer of the morning and the search was on for Falcon, Kaka, Long-tailed Cuckoo and Blue Duck, none of which materialised.

The rain-drenched forests around Otira and Arthur's Pass provided Weka, Brown Creeper and Rifleman with a 12.05 pm stop at Lake Pearson adding species number 94; Crested Grebe.

One hour and 36 minutes left and still six species needed to equal the record and seven to pass it; the pressure was on! Species 95, Kingfisher, was sighted perched on a power line near Coes Ford at 12.55. Ten minutes later the gate at the end of Jarvis Road on the edge Lake Ellesmere was reached and 2,000 hectares of mudflat and salt meadow lay before us. The task was simple, spend 20 minutes and find five little needles in a very big haystack. The patron saint of the bird race was smiling on us: we found seven species, all rare migratory waders from Siberia and Alaska, and we did it inside 15 minutes.

The tally stood at 102 with 26 minutes to go and a new record in hand! Team member Phil Crutchley telephoned his wife at their house in Motukarara to ask if she'd seen any Pheasants. The reply was that one was walking through the paddock beside the house as they spoke! At 1.30 pm we had enough of a glimpse of a male pheasant crouching amongst a sea of grass to raise the tally to 103. With the last few minutes counting down, the team raced up to Prices Valley on Banks Peninsula, checking every passing tree for one covered in white dots. Just on 1.38 pm such a tree appeared, an old man eucalypt with 12 noisy Sulphur-crested Cockatoos clinging to its branches: species number 104; four past the mark and a new record in the extreme sport of the New Zealand bird race. Let's see who accepts the challenge to build an even bigger total next year. The Wide Rangers will certainly be riding again and our target will be 110 or bust!

ANDREW CROSSLAND





## Far North

The size of our area and spread of members made it an attractive idea to have an indoor meeting away from Kerikeri. In late October we had our first meeting at Cable Bay, hosted by Bill Campbell. It was also a change of topic as he and Kevin Matthews gave a talk on rare plants of the Far North. The message for birders was that if there is a lull in birding, look down at the ground and spot plants like the tiny orchid, *Corybas cheesemanii* instead. Of the 16 people present, most were non-members, some of whom were tempted to join.

The day after the meeting came the news that a White-necked Heron had been seen by State Highway 10 south of Pakaraka. Those who went to see the bird realised it was something strange and it was later identified as a partial albino White-faced Heron.

November's wader count coincided with a visit to our region by Rob Schuckard and Willie Cook and by our new EO, Ingrid Hutzler. This meant that we had a thorough count over four days, and about 12,000 waders were involved. Counting and band-spotting were combined at all the sites and Rob reported some findings in a recent email message. Of the 12 godwits banded in Parengarenga last summer, five full readings were recorded, two of these on East Beach. Bird 4RRYR, better known locally as 'Nga-te Kuri', had clearly recovered well after being released with some cramp. Over 3% of the 3,850 Bar-tailed Godwits were juveniles and banded birds included two from Yalu Jiang and one from Shanghai.

We are pleased to report that Aroha Island, well known in our area as a birding destination, particularly for North Island Brown Kiwi, is due to re-open again before Christmas after a period of closure during negotiations over its future. The newly formed Aroha Island Charitable Trust, which has been promised a five year lease, is hard at work restoring the place to a high standard for future visitors.

DETLEF DAVIES

## South Auckland

Since our previous report one of our long-standing members, John Brown, has died. John was the husband of a past president of the Society, Beth Brown, and an active member since the early 1970s. He was still active with regional activities until his 87th year when he was participating in beach patrols and on our regular census counts. In later years John was always a bit mystified as to why members would not travel with him in his car, but I can confirm that it was nothing to do with the quality of the car!

On a brighter note the bulk of the waders have now returned and there are a number of good birds presently located in either the Manukau Harbour or the Firth of Thames. There is generally a chance of seeing a satellite-transmitted Bar-tailed Godwit on the roost at Miranda. A Hudsonian Godwit is also present along with at least two Little Terns and a large number of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. The Black-billed Gulls that were well advanced with their nesting on the outer shell bank had their nests washed away in a storm recently.

In the Manukau Harbour there are at least three Large Sand Dotterels, two Siberian Tattlers, a Wandering Tattler, a Terek Sandpiper, seven Eastern Curlews, and 33 Red-necked Stints. There have also been several reports of a Great Knot. An unusual occurrence on the shell banks early in November was four Cattle Egrets in full breeding plumage heading west and perhaps ready for the final takeoff back to Australia.

Meetings have continued at the usual venue although this location may be in jeopardy so if you are intending to visit this region make sure you check the website in case there has been a change of venue.

In October Adrian Riegen gave us a summary of the work that he had assisted within Alaska on the breeding grounds of the Bar-tailed Godwit and other shorebirds with Bob Gill earlier in the year. The speaker in November was Jason Roxburgh giving us an update on the Brown Teal programme at Port Charles which looks to be establishing a viable population.

The next event on our calendar is a Christmas barbecue where we hope to combine some wader watching with Weka watching, an unusual combination, and that is before we even start on the wine.

DAVID LAWRIE

## Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

The region's highlights included a 65-strong meeting on 31st October, when Keith Woodley, self-described 'filter feeder', presented an incredible story of E7 (Bar-tailed Godwit), and fellow transmitted godwits. These birds have provided a final piece to the jigsaw of journeying – a journey that drove birdwatchers worldwide nuts working out their flight patterns over the years. Keith endearingly described fat, pre-journey godwits as

'bricks with wings', and sprinkled his talk with ingredients to bake the cake of migration to perfection. The talk stretched from Alaska to Yalu Jiang, China, to Saemangeum, Korea. This was, in essence, a saga not too far from any classic war film, complete with cannons, secret telemetry, data-loggers and the intense tracking of routes all playing a part. The room was holding its collective breath! Well done Keith. The man is further up the food chain than filter feeder for sure.

Other speakers on the night were David Lawrie, who provided the audience with a heads-up on the organisation of the telemetry study and the aims and make-up of the members. Keith Owen then provided us with a background to wader counts in the Bay of Plenty, with an angle of trying to drum up enough people on the ground for an upcoming harbour census. Keith and Eila have done an excellent job, and as this is written, all the groundwork for a census this weekend is done. Results next issue!

Eila Lawton organised the night with the able assistance of Cynthia Carter. Thank you both. There is another meeting pencilled in for 5th December – Greg Moorcroft speaking on the 'Urewera Project'. I'll keep you posted.

Bird sightings have been varied, with Tim Barnard getting decent views of Spotless Crane in the north arm of Lake Ohakuri, Rotorua. The mid-November visit also gleaned sightings of Australasian Bittern and two Royal Spoonbills, quite a find so far inland. Murray Smith and I scored a couple of colour-flagged and banded godwits out of a flock of over 400 last week off the Sewage Ponds at Te Maunga – we have yet to receive the results of where they were banded; watch this space! Murray has been seeing all sorts of gems since he has been checking here more regularly, namely Pacific Golden Plovers. More Pacific Golden Plovers that can be seen at the moment at include 10 at Ohiwa, 24 at Little Waihi, and three at Maketu. Tim Barnard has also recorded good numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits – 1,090 over both estuaries, and 23 Royal Spoonbills with a sprinkling of Cattle Egrets for good measure.

Kaka have had great fun at people's nut and fruit trees in Tauranga city this spring. I have been inundated with sightings too numerous to list here, and some pictures of a bird making short work of an avocado – going for the good cholesterol. Five Whimbrels are to be seen on Tern Island, Ohiwa Harbour. Tim's travels up north netted a white-necked White-faced Heron, with a large part of the upper bird white instead of grey. Speaking of grey, Grey-faced Petrel chicks are due to fledge next month. We have three in artificial burrows this year, and I am about to do some house calls...

PAUL CUMING

## Taranaki

The September meeting was a quiet affair. Our trip organiser Bill Messenger requested ideas for future destinations, ending up with a reasonable list, the main problem being Taranaki's somewhat hilly terrain and the decrepitude of our ageing but erudite members. Hopefully there were enough suggestions to keep everyone happy. From members' reports we heard that Tui are plentiful around New Plymouth city and a pair of New Zealand Scaup seen on the main lake at Pukekura Park were a bit of a rarity. Also Eastern Rosellas have been seen feeding from or on the flowers of Puriri and *Prunus campanulata*.

To the north of New Plymouth four Royal Spoonbills were seen at a man-made lake, and at Mokau there were seven, possibly the most ever. From Waiongana three small flocks of Pied Oystercatchers heading down the coast were the most seen going that way. There have been no reports of Cattle Egrets in North Taranaki this winter.

September's field trip to the Rerekapa Track was on a lovely day, and the track goes through a large area of native bush. However, the birds were very quiet with few introduced birds seen. New Zealand's bird of the year, the Grey Warbler, was the most noticeable species.

David and the enigmatic Carole Medway won this year's 'Heard the first Shining Cuckoo' contest with a bird in full song at 10.15 am Friday the 21st September. No one else even came close.

At the October meeting a brief discussion took place regarding a regional oil spill contingency plan. This topic has arisen before and we are still none the wiser as to whether one exists. It was quite prophetic as not long after a small oil slick associated with some offshore wells washed up on some South Taranaki beaches. Apparently no birds were caught up in it.

David Medway led a discussion on the magnificent tome that is the *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. He also produced the previous edition and showed how comparisons of bird distribution can be made between the two, but stipulated that it is an atlas of distribution not abundance.

Ian Dudding counted forty Tui along the Te Henui Walkway in central New Plymouth. Two New Zealand Scaup seen on a small pond at the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust property are a first record for the site. The first migratory wader for the season, a Bar-tailed Godwit, was seen, as per usual, by Julie Fryer, as were the first two Pacific Golden Plovers. In addition four Grey Teal on Waiongana Lagoon were uncommon visitors.



We headed south on a fine but very windy day for the October field trip. The sight of waterfowl bobbing up and down on the Hawera oxidation ponds had some of us feeling a little seasick. Further south the Waitotara River Mouth and surrounds were quiet apart from a Royal Spoonbill and numerous New Zealand Pipits.

At the November meeting Carol Keight recounted her so-called holiday at Noosa in Australia. She had us all exhausted but envious seeing everything from whales to Eastern Whipbird, fruit bats to a black Dingo and even a snake, but when she revealed that some mornings she was up at 4.30 to 5 am listening to the dawn chorus cries of shock and awe echoed around the room. David Medway produced a copy of the latest journal from the British Ornithologists' Club in which was reported a discussion on why do some birds hop and some walk. This august group reached the same conclusion we had some time earlier that more research is needed. David also told us that a pair of Canada Geese was breeding in Pukekura Park, a first record for him, and he produced a list of eighteen species of birds seen in the park over two hours.

During a period of very windy weather many giant petrels and albatrosses were seen offshore from Waiongana. Rosemary Messenger has been noting odd bird behaviour around her home and Shining Cuckoos had been heard over a wide area.

The field trip into Egmont National Park to look and listen for Rifleman was successful, with Shining and Long-tailed Cuckoos, Tui, Bellbird, Whitehead and Grey Warbler a bonus.

PETER FRYER

## Hawkes Bay

Our small group continues to meet for monthly field trips. In July Jim Hamilton led an afternoon outing to Lake Hurimoana. It was good to record 40 New Zealand Scaup and 10 New Zealand Dabchicks there, as well as all the expected species. In August a small group went down to Mount Bruce where we were expertly guided by Colin Scadden and had an enjoyable day.

Our September field outing was replaced by a very well-attended indoor meeting. Brent Stephenson gave an excellent illustrated presentation of his most recent travels. This covered his guiding activities on a cruise ship in and around Alaska. He had many interesting tales to tell and great photos of both the wildlife and scenery of the region.

In October a small group went to Yeoman's Track in the Gwava's Forest. Disappointingly few birds were found in that area, but there were plenty of interesting plants to divert our attention. Thanks to Jim Hamilton for arranging access.

At Ahuriri the first of the returning waders were spotted on 15th September with 41 Bar-tailed Godwits and two Lesser Knots present. By 13th October the number of godwits had built up to 182. At Waitangi the new wetland area beside the railway line continues to be a good place to spot Australasian Bittern. Over winter a White Heron was frequently reported from there.

MARGARET TWYDLE

## Wellington

Murray Williams presented a talk in September on how wildfowl have adapted to life on subantarctic islands. When we think of the Subantarctic we usually think of penguins and seabirds, but lots of wildfowl species have made these islands home. The number of wildfowl species on these islands depends on the size of the island and the distance to the nearest major land mass.

Not all wildfowl have colonised these islands, for a number of reasons. To get to the islands in the first place the birds need to be good flyers, dispersive and/or migratory. On arrival they need to adapt to new habitats and food sources. Most wildfowl are herbivorous, eating insects during breeding time, and adapted to freshwater environments. There is little, if any, fresh water on these islands, so the birds have had to adapt to a saltwater existence. Having got to an island and adapted to a coastal existence dispersion and/or migration is less likely, so these birds fly less, and then can save energy by having smaller breast muscles. The extreme result is flightlessness as seen in subantarctic teal.

On these cold islands chicks need to be able to keep warm on hatching. The result is smaller clutch sizes, longer incubation times, and proportionally larger egg weights. In the Campbell Island Teal the egg is 18% of the adult body weight, and newly hatched chicks weigh about 10% of adult weight. As coastline is in short supply the birds become territorial and aggressive. Many species have developed calcified stubs on their wings, used in fighting. Males bulk up for fighting, so dimorphism in size is more pronounced than in mainland counterparts. Juveniles kicked out of the home range on fledging have to act very furtively to avoid fights and have very poor survival rates in contrast to high adult survival rates. In effect, the islands are at carrying capacity.

Murray then went on to discuss an enigmatic member of the subantarctic waterfowl, the Auckland Islands Merganser. This bird was first recorded in 1840, and last recorded in 1902. Only 26 specimens exist in museums worldwide, including four ducklings. The specimens and contemporary illustrations and accounts all contradict each other as to male, female and juvenile plumage and size. The bird's origin is a

mystery; the nearest mergansers are in Brazil and China, not New Zealand. The records from the Auckland Islands were from harbours, and the bird was recorded in New Zealand and from the Chatham Islands. European mergansers spend summers on rivers and move to harbours in winter. They are hole-nesters, and one cave on the Chathams has yielded 100 sets of merganser bones, suggesting that this bird too was a hole-nester. There is very little suitable habitat on the Auckland islands, so it is likely that the population was always low. Lord Ranfurly personally shot seven mergansers which undoubtedly contributed to their demise, along with the arrival of cats and pigs to the islands.

Chris Robertson, one of the co-authors of the recently released *Atlas of New Zealand Birds*, gave us some background and posed questions about future directions at our October meeting. Previous atlases did not include habitat data, whereas the new one does and throws up many interesting points, such as the 'bird deserts' in dairying regions. Chris pointed out that residential areas have a wide range of habitats and thus a wide range of birds. Pine forests, especially older ones near native bush, often have high diversity. Chris challenged us to tell him what was wrong with the latest atlas. The small size of the maps showing comparative data from the old atlas was a common complaint, as was poor contrast in some of the maps.

It is hoped that the atlas leads to publicity for the society and more members. Of the observers submitting information about 370 were not OSNZ members, but few have since joined. The atlas could serve as the basis for any number of research projects, trying to explain population patterns and changes. About 50% of the taxa had changed their distribution since the last atlas, some increasing some decreasing. A number of introduced species have retreated.

The atlas project raised several challenges and questions for the society. Some OSNZ regions chose not to participate at all ('we know what birds we have'); some sites, such as Karori Sanctuary, were almost over-surveyed whilst others were under-surveyed. Inevitably some birds are more visible and/or audible than others; how do we correct for that? A large project such as this is easy to start but much harder to finish. Were all those observing hours taken from other projects? As about 20 teams of observers supplied about 50% of the records, and one individual covered about one third of the country, would it be more effective next time to pay a small team to cover the country, at a cost of \$400-500,000? Would that lead to a more thorough geographical and temporal coverage? Should there be a next time? If so, when? Would it make more sense to select say 50 to 100 national monitoring sites and concentrate on those, or move to an ongoing on-line reporting system?

Future use of the data depends on who owns it, what it cost to gather, collate and print, and whether the Society wants to recoup those costs. Some agencies have already asked for the data for free and been surprised to be asked to pay for it. Should the information be freely available? If so, does the Society bear the costs? These are ongoing issues which will return in the future if/when the atlas project is repeated.

Kerry-Jayne Wilson made the trip north from Lincoln University to speak to us in December on 'Seabirds, Biological Constraints and Conservation Concerns'. New Zealand truly is Seabird Central: one third of our native species are seabirds; roughly one quarter of the world's seabird species breed or occur in the New Zealand region; and we have 38 endemic species. We don't have any alcids (Northern hemisphere puffins etc) or sea ducks. Many of our seabirds are tubenoses, which leads to specific issues for seabird conservation in New Zealand. The New Zealand region is a very productive marine ecosystem, supporting a huge biomass of seabirds. That productivity comes from a number of factors: the mixing of warm and cold water; a range of depths and topographies with complex currents and hydrology; and the sheer size of the New Zealand region.

It is tough being a seabird. Only around 3% of the world's bird species are seabirds, yet two thirds of the planet is ocean. Why the disparity? The oceans are huge wet deserts, with food spread patchily geographically and in time. Breeding has to take place on land, sometimes very long distances from suitable feeding places. In some cases the availability of suitable breeding sites, i.e. predator-free sites, restricts seabird populations. To get to their food these birds need to get underwater, so being dense and heavy is a good idea, but to fly long distances they need to be buoyant and light. Thus penguins dive well, but at the expense of flight and must feed relatively close to land. Albatrosses are the supreme flyers, but cannot dive and must pick food up from the surface of the ocean. Somehow shearwaters have found the middle ground. Sooty Shearwaters migrate to the Northern Pacific each year, and can dive to 60m. Carrying food back long distances can be a problem. Tubenoses convert their wet heavy food into proventricular oil, a lightweight calorie-dense food with about the same heat content as diesel.



# Regional Roundup



The difficulties in finding food typically lead to long breeding cycles, single egg clutches with no capacity to re-lay, and the need for both parents to fetch food. This leaves the chick unprotected for long times and loss of one parent usually leads to the death of the chick. Seabirds face threats on two fronts: on land at their breeding grounds and at sea. On land predators are the main issue with habitat loss, disturbance and overcrowding the other main problems. Muttonbirding currently has little effect but any future increase in harvests could cause problems.

At sea fisheries interaction is the main issue, with surface scavengers such as albatrosses particularly susceptible. Long-range feeding and migration trips mean that our birds spend a lot of their time in other jurisdictions where attitudes may differ. Plastic waste at sea is currently more of a northern hemisphere issue. Climate change may be having an impact, for example the decline of Rockhopper Penguins on Campbell Island might be due to the Antarctic Front and associated feeding grounds moving south.

Kerry-Jayne's final point was how little we know about these birds and how poorly represented they are. DoC no longer has any seabird specialists, and apart from cute penguins and albatrosses on Otago Peninsula they don't appear on the public's radar.

## Recent Sightings

The Shore Plovers transferred to Mana Island seem to have vacated Green Point, south of Titahi Bay, with none seen there for several weeks. Individuals have turned up on Petone Beach and the Rangitikei Estuary. Further afield one has returned to Mount Bruce and one has been seen near Blenheim. Bar-tailed Godwits have been cropping up in unusual places: Petone again, also the Waikanae Estuary and Eastbourne Beach. At Pauatahanui the usual godwits have been joined by three Lesser Knots.

ANDY FALSHAW

## Nelson

At the September meeting Mike Ogle Department of Conservation in Takaka gave an illustrated talk on his four years experience on the Chatham Islands as the protection officer for the Taiko study.

In October Rob Schuckard reported on southern migrating Bar-tailed Godwits in moult in New Caledonia, his photographs were something totally unexpected. This was at the same time ZO had made landfall in this area, but was unsighted.

Peter Gaze in November gave an update on the Black-fronted Tern survey on the Wairau River. Unfortunately high flows prevented any work being done by volunteers over a planned weekend.

Peter Field observed the buildup of returning Bar-tailed Godwits in Nelson Haven over a five day period in early October from 271 to 527 birds. Peter also recorded a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on the Wakapuaka Wetland followed a few days later by a Pied Stilt with a band from the 1990 Pied Stilt survey. The bird had been banded in Lower Queen Street Richmond and was reportedly seen only about twice in the following two years. This is an extraordinary length of time for the bird to have gone unnoticed.

Pauline Samways, with the assistance of three teams, was able to complete the November annual bird count along the Flora Track with perfect weather on each of the planned days. For the first time Kaka were seen and heard, also a New Zealand Falcon was present. Bellbirds were dominant at many of the counting stations and the figures this year could be some of the best in the three years this project has been in operation. From the Motueka Sandspit Pauline reported the White-fronted Tern colony had 200-300 birds present.

From Golden Bay Chris Petyt has been able to access newly-formed islands just out from Collingwood and included them in the latest census currently being undertaken.

Sarah Loviband from Tasmania, on assignment in New Zealand for the USGS Shorebird Project, joined local members for the recent Farewell Spit census. Sarah spent five months in Alaska during the summer of 2006 assisting with many facets of the Bar-tailed Godwit programme. Here in New Zealand she is trying to find godwits with black flags denoting a satellite study bird. Farewell Spit winds made conditions very unpleasant and at the time of writing no returning birds had been seen.

Reports of Banded Rails and possibly Marsh Crakes have been in the Mapua area and we look forward confirming this in the near future.

DON COOPER

## Otago

Spring made only a few appearances in Otago, but despite this there have been some good bird encounters. A field trip to the Sinclair Wetlands early in September rewarded ten of us with excellent close-up views of several Fernbirds, which emerged out of the depths of flax and tussock to look at us and sing from the top of Coprosma bushes for minutes on end. Several Otago OSNZ members, at the invitation of DoC, took part in a fairly arduous but satisfying survey of the Dart and Rees braided rivers at the head of Lake Wakatipu. Highlights were Wrybill and Banded Dotterel nests and a Black-fronted Tern colony.

Indoor meetings continue to be full of interest. In September Jamie Newman described the detailed information that has been obtained on Sooty Shearwaters by attaching data loggers to birds caught at their breeding sites. Their migration feats are spectacular; the longest round trip migration has been logged at 64,000 km. The birds return in early October from their northern feeding grounds directly to New Zealand, making the return trip at a rate of 1,000 km/day. From their breeding burrows some of the birds travel 2,400 km on foraging trips, making up to 500 dives to depths as great as 70 m. Some of us were lucky enough to witness the returning of Sooty Shearwaters as they passed the Dunedin coast; on some days during the first half of October the sea off St Kilda and St Clair beaches was black with hundreds of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters feeding just beyond the breakers.

In October Phil Seddon explained the results of research into the effects of unregulated tourism on penguins. This was particularly apparent for Yellow-eyed Penguins where presence of people on the beach delays landing. At Sandfly Bay on the Otago Peninsula, which now has over 4,000 visitors per month at the height of the season, the fledging weight and number fledged was lower than at nearby sites that are visitor-free.

Otago OSNZ members have made a concerted effort to make a complete census of the Bar-tailed Godwits in all our estuaries from Karitane in the north to Tahakopa in the south, with totals still to be collated. The spring survey of the Hawksbury Lagoon was done by five members, who enjoyed good weather and had good views of Australasian Shovelers, Grey Teal, Paradise Shelducks and ducklings, Black Swans, and numerous versions of Mallards. A lone Wrybill was seen at Aramoana, probably a first record for that site.

MARY THOMPSON

## Southland

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jamie Wood for his time as Southland Regional Representative, not easy when you are based in Dunedin; all the best for the future, Jamie. Also congratulations to Lloyd Esler who has once again taken on the RR position for Southland.

Our big news for September was when a Turnstone banded at Awarua Bay in November 2006 was photographed on September 15th 2007 at Roebuck Bay, Northwest Australia. This is the first New Zealand colour-banded wader seen in the Northwest.

We had our best-supported wader census in November when five spotters visited the main roosting areas for the migrant waders. A large number of godwits were counted but very few bands spotted. Ian Southey spotted some of the most interesting birds with Large Sand Dotterel, Curlew Sandpiper and a white Pied Oystercatcher on his list. He also noted an Arctic Tern at the New River Estuary. Our resident Wrybill was recorded in the winter wader count at Awarua Bay but was not seen during the November count.

A Kaka has wintered over in Bluff, much to the delight of the locals in a certain street, although they get woken quite early on Sunday mornings with the usual Kaka screeches and calls. It seems the bird has a New Zealand Pigeon as a constant companion and we think maybe the Kaka followed the pigeon from Stewart Island.

The weather recently has been awful. Just ask Rob Schuckard, who was down here in October for some wader band spotting. The only weather he didn't experience was snow! We promise better weather for January and February, Rob.

PHIL RHODES



# Regional Reps and What's On



## Far North

Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 0470. Ph (09) 407 3874. Email detlefdavies@yahoo.com

## Northland

Katrina Hansen, 3 Harbour View Road, Onerahi, Whangarei. Ph (09) 430 2133. Email katrina.hansen@xtra.co.nz

Evening meetings, second Thursday of the month, ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954. West coast beach patrols ph. Prue Cozens (09) 437 7760. East coast beach patrols ph. Pauline Smith (09) 435 3060. Whangarei Harbour wader count ph. Tony Beauchamp (09) 436 2661. North Kaipara wader count ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

## Auckland

Suzi Phillips, 36 Beulah Avenue, Rothesay Bay, North Shore City, Auckland. Phone (09) 479 5395, mobile 021 271 2527. Email aucklandosnz@gmail.com

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at 7.45pm at Natural Science Building 23, Unitec, Point Chevalier.

## South Auckland

David Lawrie, 52 Mill Road, R D 2, Pukekohe, Auckland. Ph (09) 238 8407. Email lawrie@ps.gen.nz

Evening meetings are held at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms, 5 Chapel Street, Papakura, on the second Tuesday of each month (Feb-Nov) at 7.45 pm. Beach patrols ph. Wendy Goad (09) 292 7838. Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

## Waikato

Dai Morgan, 78 Grey Street, Cambridge. Ph (07) 823 1990. Email d.k.morgan@massey.ac.nz

Evening meetings, every third Wednesday 7.30pm, DoC Area Office, 5 Northway Street (off Te Rapa Road), Hamilton.

Beach Patrols and Cambridge Lake census, Hugh Clifford ph (07) 855 3751. Hamilton Lake Census, Barry Friend ph (07) 843 6729. Forest Lake Census, Brian Challinor ph (07) 855 2561. Kakepuku Bird Counts and West Coast Harbour Censuses, Laurie Hoverd ph (07) 871 8071. Bird Sightings, Dai Morgan

## Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Tim Barnard, 23 Tennyson Drive, Owata, Rotorua. Ph (07) 345 3433. Email tim.barnard@xtra.co.nz

## Gisborne/Wairoa

RR's position vacant.

## Hawke's Bay

Helen Andrews, 254 Mangatahi Rd, RD1, Hastings 4171. Ph (06) 874 9426.

Email helenandrews@xtra.co.nz

Indoor meetings are held on an irregular basis, but field trips are organised regularly. Please contact Helen Andrews for details.

## Taranaki

Barry Hartley, 12a Ronald Street, New Plymouth. Ph (06) 757 8644. Email Barry\_Hartley@clear.net.nz

Evening meetings – first Tuesday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30 pm. Field trips on first conducive weekend thereafter.

## Wanganui

Tom Teasdale, 33 Paterson Street, Aramoho, Wanganui 4500. Ph (06) 343 9992. Email teasdale.family@clear.net.nz

Evening meetings – on hold at present.

## Manawatu

Ian Saville, 23 Duke Street, Feilding. Ph (06) 323 1441. Email binzsav@clear.net.nz

Evening meetings – second Wednesday of Feb, May, Aug and

Nov, Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8pm. Beach patrols – first Wednesday of each month and also at other irregular times.

## Wairarapa

Barbara Lovatt, 4 Clara Anne Grove, Greytown. Ph (06) 304 9948. Email barbara.lovatt@slingshot.co.nz

Evening meetings held on the second Thursday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30 pm, venue alternating between Masterton and Greytown. Field trips are the following weekend. Contact Miles King for further details.

## Wellington

Ian Armitage, 50 Ranui Terrace, Tawa, Wellington. Ph (04) 232 7470. Email ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz

Evening meetings - first Monday of the month, Head Office of DoC, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington, meet 7.30 pm for a 7:45 pm start, ph. Ian Armitage (04) 232 7470.

East Harbour Regional Park bird survey, Reg Cotter (04) 568 6960. Fluttering Shearwater chick transfers, Colin Miskelly (04) 479 1662. Beach patrols, Sharon Alderson (04) 298 3707. Mana Island robins & sooty shearwaters, Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929. Mist-netting and passerine banding, Peter Reese (04) 387 7387. Rock pigeon nesting project, Ralph Powlesland (04) 386 3323.

## Nelson

Steve Wood, Hursthouse Street, Lower Moutere, R D 2 Upper Moutere, Nelson 7152. Ph 03 528 6438. Email utopia.landscapes@clear.net.nz

Evening meetings – usually first Monday of the month, 7.15 pm Solander/Aurora Fisheries Board Room. The Solander/Aurora building is on the right hand side of Cross Street, just beyond Dickson's Boat Repair and more or less opposite the 'red shed' - the Tasman Bay Cruising Club, Nelson. Ph. Steve Wood (03) 528 6438 or Don Cooper (03) 544 8109.

## Marlborough

Mike Bell, 42 Vickerman Street, Grovetown 7321. Phone (03) 577 9818 or 021 734 602. Email mikeandnoz@slingshot.co.nz

Lake Grassmere count – third Sunday of month. Ph Brian Bell (03) 570 2230. Passerine banding, each weekend during February and March, at Jack Taylor's farm, Ward, contact Mike Bell Ph (03) 577 9818.

## Canterbury/West Coast

Jan Walker, 305 Kennedys Bush Road, Halswell, Christchurch. Ph (03) 322 7187. Email shesagreen@gmail.com

Evening meetings last Monday of the month, Spreydon Bowling Club, Domain Terrace, Christchurch. Monthly field trips – dates vary. Ph. Nick Allen (03) 312 7183.

## Otago

Mary Thompson, 197 Balmacewen Road, Balmacewen, Dunedin. Ph (03) 464 0787. Email mary.thompson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Evening meetings monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 8.00pm in Benham Seminar Room, Zoology Department, 340 Great King Street. Contact Mary Thompson (03) 464 0787

## Southland

Lloyd Esler, 15 Mahuri Road, Otatara, RD9 Invercargill 9879. Email esler@southnet.co.nz

Evening meetings (in conjunction with Field Club) held second Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm. Please phone numbers below for venue and further information, field trip usually on Saturday following. Beach Patrols on a casual basis, phone Phil Rhodes (03) 213 1228 or Lloyd Esler (03) 213 0404.



