

The Wrybill

Newsletter of the Canterbury Region,
Ornithological Society of New Zealand

Regional representative: Sandra Wallace
31 Westmont Street, Christchurch 8041
Ph 03 358 5706. Email: sandraw67@gmail.com



November 2018

What's on at OSNZ Canterbury:
November 2018

Field Trips

17 November - Ashley River Count. Be prepared to get your feet wet as you walk a section of the river, counting birds as you go. Meet at the picnic area, just before the bridge to Loburn, at 8:30am. Please let Bev know if you intend on coming - birdiebev@xtra.co.nz or 03 313 7009.

25 November - Summer Wader Count at Lake Ellesmere. Many hands make light work and we're happy to pair you with a more experienced birder if you are unfamiliar with the lake or with waders. Please contact Sandra by 18 November since she needs time to organise everyone into groups to ensure the whole lake is counted.

16 February 2019 - Mark your diaries and calendars now. This is the date of the annual bird survey conducted by the Waihora Ellesmere Trust in conjunction with a variety of other groups like Department of Conservation and Birds NZ. More details will be coming closer to the time.

Rambles

13 November - Travis Wetlands. Meet in the carpark on Beach Road at 9:30am. Contact Bev (birdiebev@xtra.co.nz or 03 313 7009) if you plan on attending.

Indoor Meetings

Evening Meetings take place at 7.30 pm on the last Monday of the month at Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking is available.

26 November - This is our last event for the year. John Dowding will be talking on lessons learnt from the Chatham Islands Oystercatcher programme.

Mackenzie Basin Trip Report

Myself and Mike Ashbee headed down to the Mackenzie basin yesterday (7th August 2018) with the intention of getting photos of Chukor and anything else at Mount John, and then carrying on to Glentanner to view the Black Stilt juveniles that were released on Monday (6/08/18). Originally they had planned on releasing the birds on Tuesday so we were intending to be down there for that! However weather decided to change plans.

We left bleary eyed at 6:15 from Christchurch, in the dark, misty and frankly rather dreary looking morning; hoping that the weather would improve as we headed south. And boy did it ever. It was beautiful and clear by the time we arrived in Tekapo. We stopped briefly to check the small wetland on the edge of the lake just as you come down the hill into the Tekapo township and were rewarded with distant views of our first pair of Kaki, along with 5 Banded Dotterels, some Spur-winged Plover and large numbers of Skylarks. Unfortunately the ponds were frozen solid so the Kaki were hanging out on the lake shore, over 300m away. Steve Attwood has reported 5 birds here previously, and apparently bandies have bred here in the past, so worth checking as the spring arrives.

We carried on to Mount John, hoping to avoid paying the toll and walking up the road on foot. Unfortunately they aren't able to let you do that, due to health and safety reasons I assume? So we got in (thanks student card) and drove up the hill towards the cafe, pulling off to the side shortly after it flattens out and you can get properly off the road. We heard the Chukor well before we saw them, with at least three males calling across the rocky and scrub covered slopes that face towards Mount Cook and the Southern Alps. We were treated to views within 10m of a single male, who was confiding enough for a few photos. Mine pale in comparison to Mike's obviously but I was happy enough as Chukor is my 200th bird species in New Zealand! (I apologise to purists for not getting an endemic for my 200th! I had aimed for Rowi or Great

Spotted Kiwi but this was just how it worked out, not being a fan of being alone in the wop wops in the dark certainly contributes!) We managed to get relatively close to another individual but he just refused to stand on a rock and call like we both wished he would! We had a lovely flyby of a male New Zealand Falcon twice, who posed beautifully on a rocky outcrop with mountains in the background, but proved too elusive for photos.



Chukor at Mount John Observatory. Photo by David Thomas.

Bouyed by our fantastic success thus far we carried on to Glentanner and the 71 juvenile Kaki. The weather had gotten decidedly moody by this point, with dark clouds, and heavy fog at the base of Lake Pukaki, but it opened up nicely when we arrived at the Glentanner airport. We had a long chat with the friendly DoC staff member and two volunteers charged with feeding the ravenous freshly released juveniles who ran around our feet like gorgeous critically endangered chickens. Lighting was tough, especially for a photography novice such as myself, and most photos were decidedly soft in the dim cloud. I managed a couple of relatively nice photos over the two odd hours we spent with the birds. We were lucky enough to have in close proximity 48 Kaki, of which 8 were the beautiful black adults previously released and now resident in this gorgeous part of the country. Along with these gorgeous waders, were at least 4 SIPO, 6 parries, 50+ Banded Dotterel, and probably over 100 Pipits feeding in the exposed mud where the lake once reached.

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Juvenile Kaki. Photo by David Thomas.

Thanks to Mike Ashbee for the kind lend of his camera gear! I feel like I've gotten an expensive habit...

By David Thomas (from Birding NZ Forum)

Chatham Islands Birding Tour 2010

[This account is based largely on one written by Marion Macbeth in 2011, edited and enlarged by Jan Walker in 2018 and with bird lists by Bev Alexander on eBird.

Bev, Jan and Marion did this 5-day trip with Wrybill Tours which despite a delayed start proved excitingly bird-filled and very productive. The flight at 1pm was delayed until early the next morning due to heavy rain at the Chathams. We spent the night at an airport hotel in Christchurch and got to know the other travellers; Ros, Michael and Brian from UK and Sav and Duncan from Wellington. Flights to the Chathams are very relaxed, there's no fixed seat numbers; although boarding passes are issued,

you can sit where you like and animals like dogs in crates and produce like crayfish are allowed in the cabin.

On arrival it was fine but overcast. Sav picked up an 8-seater van and drove us out to Waitangi West to find the first of our endemic birds, the Chatham Island Oystercatcher. There were 5 birds along the beach, including a female on a nest. A pair of Chatham Island Pipits were feeding along the roadside. A fine picnic lunch provided by our hotel was much appreciated, as we had missed breakfast. On the way back to Waitangi there was a wrecked fishing boat in a rocky cove on which Pitt Island Shags were nesting [8]. First sighting of another endemic CI bird. We met a couple whose vehicle had broken down and squeezed 2 more in to get them some help. Among other birds that morning were a Weka, 20 Skylark, 1 White-fronted Tern and more common species.

Back at Waitangi we checked in to the lovely Hotel Chathams where we had palatial rooms overlooking Waitangi Bay. CI Oystercatchers could be seen flying up and down the beach and fishing boats came and went. Marion and Brian were travelling as singles, so they had rooms of massive proportions with huge stand-alone baths of equal size! Sav had a 'cupboard' on the ground floor.



View from Hotel Chathams. Photo by Jan Walker.

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We had a brief rest before setting out on a late-afternoon pelagic trip around the south-west of the main island, looking for albatross, petrels, shearwaters and hopefully the elusive Taiko. The water was very choppy, but the birds were cooperative and we were all very excited to see the special bird at dusk, about 9.30pm. The dark grey, narrow-winged elegant Taiko showed up well against the grey sky and circled the boat several times giving us all a great view.

Apparently this was only the third time they had been seen at sea in the modern era. Taiko, one of the gadfly petrels, was only rediscovered in 1978 by Davy Crockett and others and the first burrow wasn't found in the Tuku valley until 10 years later. The population is still very small but has increased to about 150 birds. The crew of our boat caught blue cod on lines while we waited for dusk and the return of the birds up the valley which Sav had surmised they must use to reach their burrows. Unfortunately most of us were too nauseous to enjoy the fishy feast served from a frying pan on the deck. A terrible memory which I [Jan] regret to this day.

Other birds seen on this voyage: 15 White-fronted Tern, 2 Buller's Mollymawk, 1 Northern Royal Alb., 1 White-faced Storm Petrel, 5 Northern Giant Petrel, 5 Cape Petrel, 2 Taiko, 20 Sooty Shearwater, 20 Pitt Island Shag, 22 Chatham Island Shag.

On day 2 we went over to Pitt Island in the same boat, which we boarded at Owenga on the other coast of Main Chatham. Marion was pleased that we could go up a ladder from the beach instead of hauling ourselves over the wharf piles as we had at Waitangi. We were met on the island by Bernie Mallinson (nee Lanauze), our guide for the day who, with her husband Brent, was building a 2-storey timber lodge for up to 10 guests. We were most impressed by the initiative and sheer hard work of such a build, not to mention the difficulties and expense of freighting the building materials and supplies to such a remote place.

Bernie drove us to a D.O.C. hut at Caravan Bush. There are several areas of covenanted native

forest totalling around 50 acres. We walked along tracks from the hut where the indigenous bush (Ellen Elizabeth Preece Conservation covenant) had a predator-proof fence designed to keep out cats and mice – the island is free of rats and possums.

In a clearing we saw 60-odd artificial nest-box lids set into the ground, each with a rock on top and its own disguised tunnel entrance. These have been created to encourage translocated newly-fledged Chatham Petrel chicks to return here when adult to breed. Birds seen during this walk included Chatham Island Warbler or gerygone, tomtits, Tuis, Red-crowned Parakeets, and a Broad-billed Prion beside the track.



Chatham Petrel boxes and speaker on Pitt Island.
Photo by Jan Walker.



Chatham Island Tomtit. Photo by Duncan Watson.

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Bernie provided a wonderful home-grown lunch of cold roast mutton, salad, home-made bread, beetroot chutney, paua patties and cake – what a feast! The hotel meals also were excellent – on several nights we were treated to Christmas dinner, as various groups of locals were holding their end-of-year functions at the pub. The smorgasbord-style dinners included the roast of the day, a glazed ham, chicken drumsticks, salads, new potatoes, peas, seafood and green vegetables, followed by cheesecake, pavlova, and fruit salad. Between courses we would go over our bird lists with Sav, happily ticking off the day's sightings.



The hut at Caravan Bush on Pitt Island where we had a fantastic lunch made by Bernie. Photo by Duncan Watson.

The lists that day included 4 Brown Skua, 3 Buller's M., 2 Chatham Petrel, 1 Broad-billed Prion, 5 Pitt Island Shag, 7 Chatham Is. Shag, 3 Chatham Is. Red-crowned Parakeet, 7 Chatham Is. Tui, 20 Chatham Is. Warbler, 15 Chatham Is. Tomtit, 20 Skylark, 1 Blackbird [the only one seen all trip].

On day 3 it was the full-day pelagic trip. Marion had been checked out by Brian, a retired British Army Doctor and told her aches and pains wouldn't benefit from another thumping around in a small boat and Duncan opted to give it a miss as well. They walked to Point Weeding and saw colonies of 31 Chatham Is. Shags and 9 Pitt Is. Shags as well as incubating Kelp Gulls, Red-billed Gulls, WFTerns and lots of Skylarks. The rest of us embarked again at Owenga and travelled via the coasts of Rangatira and Mangere Islands over to the Pyramid and back.



Chatham Island Shag colony. Photo by Jan Walker.



The Pyramid. Photo by Jan Walker.

It was a very exciting day though we dipped on Black Robin despite loitering, if that's possible in a boat, as close as possible to the bushy shore of Mangere Is., where we squeaked and pissed vigorously, all in vain. Chatham Is. Snipe also eluded us but we weren't allowed to land anywhere, and these birds, like Black Robin, are not seen on the coast as a rule. Our total ticks were increased a great deal by Chatham Is. Blue Penguin, Shore Plover, Forbes Parakeet (the C. Is version of Yellow-crowned Parakeet) and the huge colony of Chatham Is Mollymawk. We saw 8 Shore Plover in all; they were on the wave-cut platforms around Rangatira, poking around the seaweed like little black and white tonsured monk-birds with red and black beaks. Forbes Parakeets, 8 in all, were visible in the coastal low forest, with 6 Chatham Is. Red-crowned P., 6 Chatham Is. Tui and 4 Chatham Is. Warbler. The Pyramid is an island shaped just like its name and entirely rocky with only scraps of vegetation. The perfect seabird breeding site it has 1000s of albatross and prions. We saw

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Chatham Is. Albatross [1000] and no Chatham Is. Fulmar Prion. Other birds on our list were: 20 Brown/Southern Skua, 20 Red-billed Gull, 30 WFTern, 50 Chatham Is. Blue Penguin, 50 Bullers' M., 2 Shy M., 2 Salvin's M., 4 Srn/Nrn Royal Alb., 10 Northern Giant Petrel, 20 Cape Petrel, 1 Fairy Prion, 15 Sooty Shearwater, 4 Sub-antarctic Little Shearwater, 50 Common Diving-Petrel, 1 A Gannet, 100 Pitt Is. Shag, and 100 Chatham Is. Shag.



Chatham Island Albatross and Cape Petrel off the Pyramid. Photo by Jan Walker.

On day 4, we drove south on Main Chatham Island to the Awatotara River and Tuku Reserve, the most significant original bush on the main island. We were met by Liz Tuanui (nee Gregory-Hunt), who with her husband Bruce has established several conservation covenants on their family land. They are also foundation members of the Chatham Island Taiko Trust. Liz directed us to a track where we might spot the Parea (C.I. Pigeon), similar to but larger than our Kereru, and one of the heaviest pigeons in the world. We did see one roosting on a branch, and one or two flying, but the best views were had of two birds feeding in a paddock near the homestead. As in mainland New Zealand, native pigeons are very important in the dispersal of seeds. Hoho, lancewood and other berries are favourite foods of the parea. We also saw greenhood and other orchids along this track.

We then drove along dusty roads towards

Kaiangaroa, looking for shorebirds along Te Whanga Lagoon. We stopped numerous times to look at Pied Stilts, Buff Weka, Black Swan, Grey Duck, Pukeko, Banded Dotterel and 26 Ruddy Turnstones. We found a wetland walk with a convenient grassy carpark, so stopped there for lunch. Sav had brought along an ancient square 10 litre thermette which, fed with dry twigs, provided boiling water within minutes, and we had hot drinks for lunch for the first time.

This day's list has: 7 Parea [Chatham Is. Pigeon], 1 Cls. R-C Parakeet, 2 Cls Tui, 3 Chatham Is. Fantails, 3000 Black Swan, 10 Grey Duck, 10 Weka, 2 Cl Oystercatcher, 26 Turnstone, 15 Black Cormorant, 4 Cls Pipit.

On day 5 we headed towards Kaitangata again, a tiny fishing village, still unsuccessfully looking for godwits. We visited the J. M. Barker National Historic Reserve, where we were able to see several dendroglyphs or tree carvings. Legend has it that these were made on living kopi (karaka) trees by the Moriori in memory of their ancestors. The Moriori arrived from New Zealand about 500 years ago, and settled here until invaded by Taranaki Maori in 1835.



Dendroglyph at a reserve near Kaiangaroa. Photo by Jan Walker.

We made a brief visit to Kaitangata, a run-down fishing village in the north-eastern corner of the main island. It was first discovered by Europeans in 1791, and the first meeting of the two cultures is commemorated in a tablet in the village. It appears to have a viable school, although many houses have been abandoned, and the population may be only about 35. We had a picnic lunch at a nearby beach lay-by. It was sunny, but very windy, and the lagoon was quite choppy. We looked for fossilised sharks' teeth on the way home, and stopped off at the Admiral Butterfly Garden, where there were no humans at home, but some butterflies were admired.

Another short walk led to a patch of Chatham aster bushes. This is a handsome, shoulderhigh shrub with large clusters of pinkish-purple daisy-like flowers. It was good to find them, as we had not seen much in the way of colourful flowers. I looked in vain for Chatham Island forget-me-nots, but their season must have been over. In fact I didn't even see it growing wild, only in gardens.

Finally we detoured to look at some striking basalt columns. The piles of rectangular black rocks against a cobalt sea were quite spectacular. There was a howling gale, which made photography difficult. We went out for our last dinner at the local Lakeside Cafe because the hotel kitchen is closed on Sundays. Packed up for an early start – and guess what? In the morning it was raining! However, thankfully we were not held up by the weather, and as a bonus, we finally found the godwits, 200+ visible from the aerodrome, on the lagoon mudflats.

In conclusion, we had a great time although it was rather short, a lot was packed in. All thanks to Sav Saville for his excellent leading of a very comfortable and well arranged little expedition.

By Jan Walker

Some Birding Misadventures

Several weeks ago three local birders (who wish to remain anonymous for reasons that will become obvious) planned a day out. The first port of call was Lake Ellesmere - Jarvis Road to be precise. The weather was cool but overcast, seemingly ideal in many ways since neither haze nor heatstroke were going to be problems. However it only took a few steps from the car before we realised that conditions were not ideal. They were far from ideal. Midges. A plague of midges. I'd never seen so many midges. They were everywhere. Try to breathe and they were in your nose. Try to talk and they were in your mouth. Try to look at anything and they were in your eyes and all over the lenses of scopes and binoculars. However, we were a hardy threesome and so we persevered.

A couple of hours later we were back at the car congratulating ourselves. Not only had we survived the midges and successfully multi-tasked by consuming our protein quota for the day, albeit unwillingly - but we'd seen a nice variety of birds including several Bar-tailed Godwits and a Marsh Sandpiper, which had been the reason for the trip. It also appeared that our timing had been impeccable since the overcast conditions were just giving way to drizzle.

After reversing a little way up the track the decision was made to execute a three point turn. A fatal and flawed decision as it turns out. Reversing off the track onto a flat(tish) patch of grass was fine, but the attempt to then drive forward was not. The car would not move. It would not go forward and it would not go back. Passengers were exhorted to get out and push. No joy. Stones and sticks and other paraphernalia were gathered and placed under wheels in an attempt to gain more traction. But that too was fruitless. Attempts were made to dig out some of the mud under the belly of the car, but little progress was made. Some believed the tool (a child's plastic spade) was not fit for purpose. Reluctantly the decision was made to seek help at a nearby farmhouse. Except the people at the nearby farmhouse were not at

home. More walking. Did I mention the drizzle had by now developed into full blown rain? Thankfully the next house was only hundreds not thousands of meters away and it was occupied. The lovely owner drove two of our intrepid birders back (someone had had to stay behind to guard the car) and - with the aid of an adult sized metal spade and a woosack for extra traction - we were soon on our way.

Refusing to be put off by the morning misadventure, we continued on to Lake Forsyth in search of a Glossy Ibis that had been reported there a day or two earlier. As we climbed the fence we were surprised and alarmed by the presence of a massive bull wandering freely by the rail trail. We were thankful this was not an official field trip since no-one was sure what the health and safety policies have to say about bulls. Your fearless author was mentally composing accounts of three birders attempting to outspurt lumbering bulls and testing their ability to quickly vault fences. Thankfully for us, but possibly sadly for readers who are seeking more excitement, the bull continued going about his business seemingly unaware of our existence. The lake level was low and the eastern end was positively teeming with birds. Unfortunately the sought-after ibis was not one of them.

A couple of weeks later our three intrepid birders, accompanied by one other, set off once again. The stop at St Anne's Lagoon was very successful - with the Australasian Little Grebe showing itself within a minute of our arrival and a Cape Barren Goose following suit shortly thereafter. A diversion down to the Hurunui River Mouth was next on the agenda. Just after turning off State Highway 1 there was a definite clunking sound and the car veered across the road. "Bother," thought the driver. Or possibly something more colourful. "I must have a flat tyre." However, inspection of the car revealed all tyres were fully inflated and four pairs of eyes couldn't see any problems. So the driver decided to drive slowly down the road while the three passengers observed from outside. In only a second much handwaving ensued. Somehow

all of us had missed the fact that one wheel was missing not just one, but two lug nuts . Obviously observation skills honed on birds do not automatically transfer to more mechanical objects. A call was placed to the AA, but after an hour's wait, not only did the technician not have any suitable lug nuts but he would not have been able to fit them if he had since two of the wheel struts had sheered right off.

So we drove slowly, very slowly, back to Cheviot, hazard lights flashing, where we abandoned the car to the care of the local mechanics when they arrived at work on Monday and awaited the arrival of our knight in shining armour - or to be more accurate our knight in his dusty Subaru Impreza.

Given they say that things go in three the question that needs answering is this. Should our three birders ever go out again? And would you be brave enough to go with them?

Otira Valley Field Trip Report

A trip to the upper Otira Valley was planned to look for Rock Wrens in the area where it was believed we were likely to spot them.

As we left Christchurch independently early in the morning, the weather didn't look too promising but the forecast had suggested that we had a chance of a reasonable, if cool, day without rain.

By the appointed time of 9:30 we had 13 members assembled at the car park just west of the top of Arthur's Pass. The wind was very cold and there was decided dampness in the air. Undeterred, we set off in a group with Russell in the lead as he has had experience in alpine

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conditions and me at the back. There is a steady climb up the valley through lovely alpine vegetation on a clearly defined track which is far from smooth underfoot. This valley is high alpine with fairly rugged terrain and great care was required crossing some small streams. All the while we were keeping an eye and an ear out for sightings of any birds and Whio in particular which we had hoped to spot in the fast flowing water of the Otira River. There were none to be seen though.

Eventually, we all arrived at the wooden bridge across the main river and after a brief stop we continued up the valley across rocky shingle slides heading for a narrow part of the valley beyond which was our planned destination. I was plodding slowly up the path when I caught up with the rest of the group who were looking intently down into the river and watching a pair of Rock Wrens hopping about in and out of sight amongst the rocks and crevices. I believe that William was the first to hear the birds as he was walking along – young ears definitely help. Everyone else stopped, and the birds were soon observed by all for a while until they moved on and we lost sight of them. They reappeared a short time later when Sandra and Eleanor waited a bit longer than the rest of the party. William has taken some very good photographs of the two birds.



The female Rock Wren. Photo by William Harland.



The pair of Rock Wren. Photo by William Harland.

At this point, several of us decided to begin our walk back down the valley while the others continued to the “boulder garden”, the planned destination. They remained in that area for a while, enjoying their lunches and watching for more wrens but no others were seen. During that time, at least two Kea were heard and seen flying high above and when the rain started in earnest a decision was made to retreat down valley. The rain thinned to a light drizzle and we walked out of it before too long. We saw two Tomtits in the bushy scrub about halfway down below the bridge but no other birds were noted by anyone.

Everyone had gathered back at the cars by early afternoon and agreed that it had been a successful and enjoyable trip.

By Jill West

Recent Happenings

August's field trip was supposed to involve us walking along a section of the rail trail, observing the birds of Lake Ellesmere as we went. However, the rather brisk wind and cold temperature put paid to that idea. Instead as much birding as possible was done from inside the cars, with short periods outside where necessary. Sticking vaguely to the original planned location we ventured up Kaituna Valley, stopped at Kaituna Lagoon where the air was thick with midges, and also visited Prices Valley Road. Birds were a little thin on the ground but the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in Prices Valley Road were a highlight for some who hadn't seen them before. Many thanks to Bev for taking over the leadership of this trip at the last minute.

In September we were supposed to visit Hinewai Reserve on Banks Peninsula. However, nobody had expressed any interest by the deadline so Sandra made other plans for the day. Those who tried to book at the last minute were unfortunately disappointed. If you'd like to attend a trip please, please, please make the effort to book by the deadline. Not only will it make life much easier for the trip organiser but it will also ensure you are not disappointed in the future.

As well as our monthly field trips, typically held on a Saturday, we're fortunate to be able to offer mid-week rambles, ably led by Bev Alexander. These tend to be a little shorter, closer to home and a little more sedate. In the past three months we've visited Otukaikino Reserve, Sandy Point and Hart's Creek. As well as a good variety of expected birds, pleasant company, and Bev's helpful commentary and ID tips, the rambles, like any birding trip, often turn up an unexpected surprise. Recently these have included a Pukeko nest with a very cute chick on the walk to Sandy Point, not to mention the booming of a Australasian Bittern heard near the end of the boardwalk to the Hart's Creek bird hide.



The Pukeko nest seen on our ramble to Sandy Point.
Photo by Anne Gillanders.

We were fortunate to be able to hear four speakers in the past three months. Lorna Deppe and Laura Young pooled their expertise and spoke on two of our mountain species - the Kea and the Huttons Shearwater. Lorna told us that while 40% of the Huttons habitat was lost in the Kaikoura earthquake, population estimates for the bird have actually risen. This seeming perversity is due to a change in modelling methods which now provides a more accurate estimate of the land area used by the birds. Post-earthquake the estimate is 200,000 breeding pairs whereas pre-earthquake it was 100,000. The new modelling system, which better accounts for the steepness of the terrain, suggested 300,000 breeding pairs before the earthquake, and it is hoped the population will eventually recover to this level. Laura then spoke on several facets of Kea behaviour, including their key role in seed dispersal of native alpine plants, plus the main threats these birds face. She also spoke on the citizen science project aiming to connect people to Kea and generate more reports of sightings. Visit keadatabase.com to learn more, including some of the life history of the next Kea you spot.

September's speaker Luke Martin's work with birds has taken him to some remote spots including the Hawdon Valley, Chathams and Norfolk Island. Now he is based at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens working with New

Zealand plants. He manages to fit bird observations in among his other duties, which has given him an excellent insight into how and when native species such as Kereru and Korimako exploit the varied food sources which the gardens have to offer.

In October, Helen Taylor spoke on the importance of genetics in conservation, pointing out that relying solely on numbers as a measure of conservation success is problematic. A fascinating example she gave involved the Little Spotted Kiwi, whose population today is all descended from just five birds. A population on Long Island is based on just two translocated birds. At first glance this appears to be a success story with an increasing population, plenty of two egg nests and birds laying two clutches per season. However, many eggs were not hatching and the embryos all had problems, indicative of inbreeding. In addition it was found that most of the birds on the island are first generation birds, produced directly by the two founders. It seems these first generation birds, all siblings, are unable to successfully reproduce. Once the two original birds die the Long Island population will begin a slow decline. Contrast this with Zealandia where the Little Spotted Kiwi population was established with forty translocated birds. The population is growing slowly with most nests just containing a single egg. But those eggs are likely to hatch and subsequent generations seem able to find a mate and successfully breed without being hampered by inbreeding.

An interesting video

An interesting video from the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, focusing on work by the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative relative to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. To find the video, either search "Our Shared Heritage: Arctic breeding birds in the Yellow Sea", or use this link: <https://youtu.be/8HLPgy3hvCk>.

Fantail and Tui Awards



In August, Peter Reese was awarded the Tui for his use of eBird. Peter regularly submits lists when he is out and about in his local area in Christchurch, and also when he travels to Queenstown.



William Harland was awarded the Fantail for contributing his photos for use in *The Wrybill*, which are very much appreciated.



In September, Jill West was presented with the Tui award for her continued use of eBird, with her submissions ranging from around Christchurch to down in Twizel.



October's Tui was awarded to Annette Ching, who while having recently started using eBird has a wide variety of lists up, including from down in Otago and over on the West Coast.

Russell Lupin Removal

If anyone is interested, a number of environmental organisations are planning working bees from 10-18 November to help rid the riverbeds around Arthur's Pass of Russell Lupin. Working bees will take place 10am - 12noon & 2pm - 4pm daily and will involve removing the flower/seed spikes from the lupins by hand. Meet at the Arthur's Pass DOC office 30mins before the start time for health and safety briefing and to travel to the work site. Other activities, including guided walks and kiwi listening are also on the agenda outside the working bee times. Participants are expected to bring their own food and drink, and can participate for as long as they like, one working bee, one day or more. Some accommodation is available at a cost of \$10per night, though numbers are limited so bookings are necessary. Please contact Marion(marion@apwt.org.nz) for accommodation queries. Contact Colleen (colleen@apwt.org.nz) with travel queries, including carpooling opportunities and to register that you will be attending.

Recent Sightings

Canterbury and West Coast Bird Report August to October 2018

This report covers the period 1st August to 31st October 2018 and is compiled from reports posted onto eBird, the Birding NZ internet discussion site, and New Zealand Birders Facebook page. Your regional recorder would welcome news of any interesting bird sighting, unusual behaviour or searchable sources of other sightings. Email christchurchnzbirder@gmail.com.

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Key to letters after bird names:

A = all reported occurrences (for rare/scarce species or escaped/released species etc)

S = significant numbers/occurrences (for species regularly encountered in the regions)

V = vagrant

Great Spotted Kiwi (A) Arthur's Pass village: 1 9/9 JGr, WH. Greyneys Shelter: 2 10/9 JT.

Cape Barren Goose (A) St Anne's Lagoon: 1 21/8 JG, 20/9 PS, VdP, 22/9 BA, 28/9 MB, 6/10 NM. Bridle Path Riding School, Ferrymead: 4 5/8 BD.

Mute Swan (A) Ashley Estuary: 1 5/10 ACh, 6/10 BA, NM, 8/10 ACh, 23/10 BA. Taranaki Stream Lagoon, Waikuku: 2 12/8 NA, 1 8/9 BA. Pegasus Wetlands: 2 3/8 BA, 2 13/8 BA, 6 8/9 BA 5 19/9 BA, JB, 6 11/10 BA. Radcliffe Road Ponds: 1 4/8 SLLT Bird. Bromley WTP: 1 10/10 PC, 20/10 DT, PG. Lincoln Wetlands: 1 27/8 PR, 2 16/10 PR. Kaituna Lagoon: 1 9/10 ACh. Irwell RM: 3 21/10 BA. Harts Creek: 2 3/8 JB, 1 5/9 PR, 2 16/9 NA, 2 2/10 BA.

Muscovy Duck (A) The Groynes: 2 14/8 BA, JB, 16/10 BA. Riccarton Bush: 1 17/9 JGI. Westlake Reserve: 2 7/8 PR, 1 4/9 PR, 1 4/10 BA. Lincoln Wetlands: 2 16/10 PR.

New Zealand Scaup (S) Bromley Sewage Ponds: approx. 240 3/9 EG, GH. Wairepo Arm, Lake Ruataniwha: 221 19/8 JW.

Peafowl (A) Factory Road, Sefton: 7 12/8 BA. Living Earth, Bromley: 2m 'have been here for at least 5 if not more years' 10/10 PC

Chukor (A) Mount John: 3 7/8 DT, MA, 1 23/8 BA, 5 26/8 DN, 4 26/9 D&RA.

Lady Amhurst's Pheasant (A) Arnold Valley Road between Moana and Stillwater: 1m 20/10 via JB.

Australian Little Grebe (V) St Anne's Lagoon: 1 22/9 BA.

Australasian Crested Grebe (A) Taranaki Stream Lagoon, Waikuku: 2 8/9 BA, 2 6/10 BA. Kaiapoi Lakes: 2 24/8 BA. Roto Kohatu: 5 30/8 EG, GH, 5 5/9 JB, 4 23/9 BA. Lake Lyndon: 2 Birds NZ, JB. Kaituna Lagoon: 3 23/8 JG, 12 25/8 Birds NZ, BA, JB. Harts Creek: 3 2/9 BA, 8 5/9 PR, 2 16/9 NA. Taumutu Point: 1 28/10 KiR. Lake Tekapo south end: 4 23/8 BA, 2 29/8 AH, 2 31/8 AH, 4 26/9 D&RA, 1 27/10 MS.

Lake Alexandrina: 2 23/8 BA. Lake McGregor: 6 30/10 TB. Lake Tekapo McGregor Stream inlet bay: 2 20/10 MAy,CR,TD. Wairepo Arm, Lake Ruataniwha: 2 27/9 D&RA.

Yellow-eyed Penguin (A) Off Kaikoura Peninsula: 1 "Same banded individual present for last 10 years" 18/9 PSc.

Little Penguin (S) Flea Bay/Pohatu penguin colony: 150 "There are apparently over 1300 breeding pairs in the colony with 300 in artificial nest boxes" 29/8 JW.

Antarctic Fulmar (A) Albatross Encounter, Kaikoura: 1 17/8 SB.

Short-tailed Shearwater (S) Albatross Encounter, Kaikoura: 200 22/8 AE.

Little Black Shag (A) Ashley RM: 1 28/8 KW. Harts Creek: 3 3/8 JB, 2 16/9 NA.

Otago Shag (A) Waitaki RM: 14 (mostly bronze phase) 22/8 BA.

Spotted Shag (S) South Bay Harbour, Kaikoura: 450 22/8 JG.

White Heron (A) Tulls Road, Waikuku: 1 12/8 BA, 16/8 BA, 4/9 BA. Ashley Estuary: 1 7/8 BA, 20/8 BA 11/9 JGr, WH, 28/9 BA, 6/10 BA, 20/10 ACh, 26/10 BA. Pegasus Wetlands: 1 8/9 BA. Ferrymead: 1 4/10 CL. Kaituna Lagoon: 1 23/8 JG, 25/8 Birds NZ, BA, JB 2 9/9 PD, 3 9/10 ACh.

Reef Heron (A) Kaikoura Peninsula Walkway: 1 22/8 JG.

Cattle Egret (A) SH6 just south of Arahura River: 4-5 early Sept DT. Tulls Road, Waikuku: 2 1/8 BA, 16/8 BA, 18/8 BA, EG, 30/8 EG, GH, 1/9 BA, 19/9 BA, JB, 6/10 BA, 13/10 BA. Lower Lake Road, Lakeside: 10 26/9 BA.

Glossy Ibis (A) Lake Forsyth: 1 27/8 JH.

Royal Spoonbill (S) Kaikoura Lookout, Scarborough Street, Kaikoura: 1 on edge of small pool 26/10 CE.

Australian Coot (S) Wairepo Arm, Lake Ruataniwha: 163 19/8 JW.

Black Stilt (A) Waiau R S of SH1 bridge: 1 (banded KR/GY?) and a further 2 further downstream 26/10 via PaC. Ashley Estuary: 1 7/8 BA, 12/8 NA, 18/8 EG, 20/8 BA, 23/8 JG, 10/9 EW, 11/9 JGr, WH, 25/9 BA, 27/9 ACh, 6/10 BA. Lake Tekapo SE corner: 2 7/8 MA, DT, 2 23/8 BA, 3 29/8 AH, 2 31/8 AH, 2 25/9 D&RA, 2

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26/9 D&RA, 2 27/10 MS. Lake Tekapo McGregor Stream inlet bay: 2 20/10 MAy,CR,TD. Tasman Fan: 8 ads 40 imms (71 imms had recently been released) 7/8 MA, DT. 2 30/10 TB. Kaki Lagoons: 2 21/10 MAy,CR,TD.

Pacific Golden Plover (A) Jarvis Road: 15 31/10 'Wazzagonewild'.

Black-fronted Dotterel (A) Ashley River halfway Tulls Road: 2 'the first I have seen here' 31/10 BA. Washdyke Lagoon: 2 20/9 PS.

Wrybill (S) Ashley Estuary: 13 (most observer had seen this spring, 9 seen to fly S) 7/8 BA, 15-20 (settled briefly then flew at height inland) 12/8 BD, 87 28/8 KW, 11 9/9 NK, 10 10/9 EW, 30 5/10 ACh, 40 6/10 NM, 23 18/10 BA, 21 26/10 BA. Jarvis Road: 10 29/8 BA. Embankment Road: 12 22/10 KiR. Tasman Fan: 3 30/10 TB. Washdyke Lagoon: 4 22/8 BA, 1 27/8 PS, 4 20/9 PS.

Wandering Tattler (V) Waitangi West Beach Rocks: 1 6/10 DB, KW.

Marsh Sandpiper (V) Jarvis Road: 1 27/8 'Wazzagonewild', 29/8 BA. Embankment Road: 1 22/10 KiR.

Eastern Curlew (A) Ashley Estuary: 1 27/9 ACh.

Hudsonian Godwit (V) Hokitika RM: 1 13/10 CSt.

Bar-tailed Godwit (S) Ashley Est: 11 30/8 EG, GH, 51 17/9 BA, 56 27/9 ACh, 74 6/10 NM, 103 26/10 BA. Avon-Heathcote Estuary: '80 new arrivals' 14/9 AC, 530 28/9 JWa, SW.

Turnstone (A) Esplanade east, Kaikoura: 7 24/10 CE. Washdyke Lagoon: 1 20/9 PS.

Lesser Knot (A) Ashley Est: 2 17/9 BA, 1 6/10 NM.

Red-necked Stint (A) Embankment Road: 6 30/8 'Wazzagonewild', 1 22/10 KiR, 1 26/10 'Wazzagonewild'.

Pectoral Sandpiper (A) Embankment Road: 2 22/10 KiR, 1 23/10 DT, 1 26/10 'Wazzagonewild'.

White-winged Black Tern (A) Bromley Sewage Ponds: 1 3/8 GB, 4/8 DT, 5/8 BA.

Barbary Dove (A) Lamb & Hayward, Kippenberger Ave, Rangiora: 1 5/9 BA.

Shining Cuckoo (S) Victoria Park: 1 9/10 PC was first of year reported on eBird for Canterbury. Only three records had been posted on eBird by the end of October for the whole area of Canterbury, West

Coast and the Chatham Islands.

Long-tailed Cuckoo (S) Pororari River Track, Punakaiki: 1 19/10 MS.

New Zealand Falcon (A) Fyffe/Palmer Reserve, Kaikoura: 1 13/10 RN. Jollies Pass Road approx. half way between Hanmer & Acheron R/H: 1 6/8 PaC. Hawdon Shelter: 2 25/9 D&RA. Avon-Heathcote Estuary windsurf car park: 1 30/9 WM. Mount John: 1m 7/8 MA, DT. Peak Viewpoint, Fox Glacier: 1 6/9 PD. Mount Cook Village: 1 9/8 PS. Lake Moeraki Wilderness Lodge: 1 9/10 CS. Knights Point, Lake Moeraki: 1 28/9 PDU.

Kea (S) Shearwater Hut, Upper Kowhai Valley: 1 16/9 NM. Callery Gorge Walk, Franz Josef: 2 24/8 JM.

Kaka (A) Forks-Okarito Road: 1 20/10 MS. Monro Beach Walk, Lake Moeraki: 1 28/9 PDU.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (A) Prices Valley: 21 25/8 Birds NZ, BA, JB, 20 29/8 JW, 40 'residents of this area have told me there are over 100 in that valley' 9/10 ACh.

Rock Wren (A) Otira Valley Track: 2 11/9 JT, 1 23/10 ACh.

Tui (S) Twizel: 2 coming into feeder: 2 8/10 KR.

Tomtit (S) Harts Creek (outside usual range): 1 3/8 JB.

Common Myna (V) Hardy Street, Christchurch: 1 22/8, 27/9, 28/9 JS, 16/10 PG, 29/10 JS. Grantley Street 2/10 via JS.

Australasian Pipit (S) Tasman Fan: 'probably over 100' feeding on exposed mud 7/8 MA, DT.

Cirl Bunting (A) South Bay, Kaikoura: 4 19/8 SB, 1 10/9 JGr, WH. Halswell Quarry Park: 1m 1f 30/8 EG, GH, SW, NA, 1m 1f 8/9 PR, 1m 28/9 PR, 1m 5/10 JWa, 2m 1f 18/10 NA. Putiki Road, Port Levy: 4 26/9 PC.

Observers: D&RA David & Rebecca Adrian, BA Bev Alexander, NA Nick Allen, MA Mike Ashbee, MAy Mark Ayre, SB Sarah Beavis, GB Grahame Bell, MB Mike Bell, TB Todd Boland, JB Janet Burton, DB Danielle Butler, ACh Annette Ching, AC Andrew Crossland, PaC Patrick Crowe, PC Philip Crutchley, BD Brian Darlow, VdP Vanesa de Pietri, PD Peter Desmet, TD Tom Driscoll, PDU Petrina Duncan, AE Albatross

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Encounter, CE Christopher Escott, JG Jeff Gerbracht,
JGI Josh Glue, PG Paul Godolphin, JGr Jessica Greer,
EG Eleanor Gunby, JH Jill Hanna, AH Aaron
Heimann, GH George Hobson, WH William
Hemstrom, NK Nyil Khwaja, CL Carol Lavery, NM
Nikki McArthur, WM William Mahoney, JM Jeffrey
Miner, DN Dean Nelson, RN Richard Nichol, CR Craig
Rasmussen, PR Peter Reese, KR Kenny Rose, KiR
Kieran Rowe, PS Paul Sagar, PSc Paul Scofield, CS
Craig Simmons, MS Matt Slaymaker, CSt
'CMKMStephens', JS John Stewart, DT David
Thomas, JT Jeremiah Trimble, JWa Jan Walker, SW
Sandra Wallace, JW Jill West, EW Edin Whitehead,
KW Kailash Willis.

Canterbury Region Contacts

Regional Representative: Sandra
Wallace
31 Westmont Street, Christchurch 8041
Ph 358 5706
Email: sandraw67@gmail.com

Regional Recorder: Nick Allen
11 Seagrave Place, Christchurch 8041
Ph 03 358 5994
Email: nick_allen@xtra.co.nz

Education and Outings Officer: Bev
Alexander
63 Golding Ave, Rangiora 7400
Ph 03 313 7009
Email: birdiebev@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: John Allan
67 Clifton Terrace, Christchurch 8081
Ph 326 4966
Email: johnruth@xtra.co.nz

The Wrybill Editor: Eleanor Gunby
31 Westmont Street, Christchurch 8041
Ph 358 5706
Email: eleanor.gunby@gmail.com