



July 2018 Amokura 122

(Published in February, July and October of each year)

MEETINGS of the Northland Branch of the O.S.N.Z. are held each month on the second Thursday, for the period FEBRUARY to DECEMBER. TIME: 7-30p.m.

VENUE: Founders Room, Alzheimer's Society, 148 Corks Road, Tikipunga, Whangarei.
COST: A donation of \$3-00 per person per meeting is requested toward the cost of Hall hire, supper and the production and distribution of "Amokura".

ALL WELCOME

PROGRAMME TO October 2018

JULY

- 12 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Contact Prue Cozens Ph 09 4377760
17 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

AUGUST

- 9 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Contact Prue Cozens Ph 09 4377760
14 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

SEPTEMBER

- 13 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Contact Prue Cozens Ph 09 4377760
18 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

OCTOBER

- 11 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Contact Prue Cozens Ph 09 4377760
16 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE	Anne McCracken	438-1145
SECRETARY	Ruth Crockett	435-0954
TREASURER	Kevin Hayes	437-6470
REGIONAL RECORDER	Tony Beauchamp	436-2224
REGIONAL REPORTER	Vacant	
AMOKURA EDITOR	Hilton Ward	946-0074

Previous Issues of Amokura - <http://www.osnz.org.nz/regnews.htm>

FEBRUARY

AT the February meeting Dayna Davies spoke of her activity with the Fairy Tern Charitable Trust fish survey in the estuary at Mangawhai. The survey is carried out regularly to in an attempt to correlate fish numbers with Fairy Tern Health.

Heather Obrien presented some of her photos taken over the summer of a variety of activities. They were Te Whara five minute bird counts, summer birds, Muruwai Gannets, Whau Valley Kukupa eating Totoro berries.

The Ngunguru Shore Bird count on February 17th had some interesting results with the steady declining



number of Oyster catchers from 86 in 2011 to 35 in 2018. White Fronted Terns were also below the February average of 24 with only one seen. That was offset by the highest recorded number of Banded Dotterels at 20 and New Zealand Dotterels at 38. See the attached sheet for results.

Above are the Pi Manu counting crew: From Left – Dayna Davies, Wendy Ambury, Anne McCracken, Adrian Gilbert and Scott Brooks. Thank you Adrian for the use of your dinghy.

A Request from Stefan Seitzer

Subject: Falcon and Barn owl survey

I am gathering information on any NZ falcon and barn owl sightings in Northland and the Far North. Any evidence of sightings, anecdotal, photographic or otherwise would be most helpful and appreciated.

The information should be passed on to:

Stefan Seitzer

Email info@maungaiti.com

Ph. 09 43 43 108

Mobile 0274 450 850

MARCH

2018-03-08 Regional Representative's Report to Annual General Meeting

The Northland Branch of OSNZ/Birds New Zealand continue to be held 7.30pm on the second Thursday monthly at the Alzheimer's Society rooms, Tikipunga, Whangarei.

In 2017 there has been an average of 12 people attending meetings, with 1 new member joining at the end of 2017.

At the end of November 2017, three members and Mike Bell of the Taiko Trust joined a small team to assist OSNZ stalwarts David and Ruth Crockett to box up the Chatham Island Expedition records covering many years of the Crockett's involvement there. David and Ruth are now permanent residents in Puriri Court Rest Home, but still attend meetings as able, and maintain their strong interest in all things birding. Ruth has continued as Secretary, but has stated she is ready to stand down, after many years of meticulous minute-taking at our meetings. We are very grateful to both David and Ruth for their dedicated service to our branch over many years.

Pauline Smith has for many years collected and sent data from our monthly beach patrols to Convenor Llyod Esser and has stated she is happy now to stand down. We are very grateful to Pauline who, with Kevin's technical help, has filled this role for so many years.

The 2017 East Coast Beach Patrols again have yielded very low numbers of wrecked seabirds. This changed after the 5th January 2018 storm. Through the combined efforts of five members on six different days ranging from Mangawhai to Ngunguru, a total of 759 wrecked seabirds were recorded. Of concern is the dwindling number of people available to manage the regular beach patrols now, and it is helpful to receive reports from recorders who do individual ad-hoc patrols as they happen, which can then be sent to the beach Patrol Convenor.

Of concern also is the dwindling number of people available for our Whangarei and North Kaipara Harbour shorebird counts. The last two North Kaipara counts were severely weather affected, with much lower bird numbers counted at all the counting sites.

Branch meetings in 2017 have mainly featured short presentations by members about the various field work activities, surveys, or birding trips they have been involved in. This has also included notable observations during regular beach patrols and Harbour counts. These often are centred around Heather O'Brien's excellent photos, which generate lively discussion around bird identifications or observed bird behaviour.

Many of these reports and photos from members are featured in our colourful and informative Amokura newsletter, published by Hilton Ward.

A special slot at our meetings is now the Young Birder report from Dayna Davies bringing highlights from her field work activities of the previous month...

These have included Dayna's involvement in the whitehead translocation on Bream Head, projects on Motuora Island, the fish surveys with the Fairy Tern Trust, monitoring the Taurawhata grey Faced Petrel colony, the 5MBcounts on Bream Head, and her participation in two Young Birder Field Camps. Dayna, with Hilton Ward also set up the Northland Birds Facebook page, which is being regularly updated.

Outside speakers were Ian Southey speaking on his survey of Banded Rail in mangroves near his home in Papakura, Steve Tonnies from the Brynderwyn Marunui Conservation Trust, and Adam Willetts from Bream Head Conservation Trust. Four of us have been regularly working with the BHCT 5MBcount Team through 2017 and are now responsible for the Te Wharo/Peach Cove lines four times a year. With the 2018 OSNZ Conference due to be held at Waitangi by the Far North Branch, 3 of us have regularly attended the Far North monthly meetings and have assisted in various tasks preparing for the Conference.

At our November meeting, Wendy Ambury and Dayna instigated a members' vote for their 12 favourite bird photos for publishing in the Northland Birds 2018 calendar in time for our Christmas meeting. We plan the calendars to become a yearly fundraiser. Wendy's technical and administrative know-how has been much appreciated throughout this year by the whole group.

As the in-coming RR I am very grateful for everyone's contributions in various roles, especially Janet Snell passing on her many years' experience in the role.

Fairy Tern Recovery Plan Workshop – March 21st & 22nd.

Report from Janet Snell.

As a representative of the Fairy Tern Trust I attended a two day Fairy Tern Recovery Plan Workshop at the Kaiwaka Sports complex with John Ewan, Senior Research Fellow Institute of Zoology ZSL, as a spectator. A written report of the two days will be circulated to all participants at a later date.

Guide notes were given as we were sorted into groups and asked to discuss issues stated and report back to the whole group later. Many of the ideas overlapped from one group to another as we all worked

towards saving the Fairy Tern from extinction.

These issues and ideas are to be presented to a select group from those who attended on the 21st and 22nd March. Regular updates will be given and feedback requested, so the group will need time to explore and package a reasonable range of ideas from which a realistic choice can be made and put into practice to help save the Fairy Tern.

APRIL

At our April meeting Tony Beauchamp gave an enlightening presentation about Weka at Kawakawa Bay. The Weka are the result of a release more than 10 years ago. Tony explained that despite the dry conditions that can happen the Weka continue to survive there. He explained what is a sustainable and healthy Weka population and why it is so. The Weka are cared for by Weka Watch Kawakawa Bay Inc. A small incorporated society set up to study and protect the rare North Island Weka living in the area.

MAY

Dayna Davies gave a presentation of the Young Birders Easter trip to Southland and Stewart Island which she attended followed by another of the eBird Global Big Day. The team of Michael Burton-Smith, Adi-Grace Mooar and Dayna Davies recorded 71 Species. This was the highest equal for all the New Zealand reports on the day. Well done. A full report from Michael is below.

At this meeting Ann McCracken asked all to think seriously about what we want from our Northland Branch of Birds New Zealand and what directions should we be taking with regard to addressing our goals for the future. Questionnaires were handed out, discussed and ideas written for future discussion. In the meantime we are asked to think about this.

JUNE

It was moved and passed at the June meeting that an Annual Fee of \$30.00 be implemented instead of the \$3.00 door charge for members. The \$30.00 will be payable within 90 days after the AGM. The account for members to pay to is **ASB 123099 06141 00**
Those wishing to pay \$3.00 at the door instead of the annual fee can still do so.

Dayna Davies introduced us all to *Bird Search*; a web based learning tool she is developing primarily targeting young birders to help them identify birds and get excited about birding. Bird Search areas will be created with lists of birds they are likely to find there with links to more information. Exciting.

Stories - Adventures – Yarns – Sightings

Moturua – Bay of Islands

On a short trip to the Bay of Islands Hilton and Melva visited Moturua. This island is part of the *Bringing Back The Birdsong* project. The project seems to be working as we spotted or heard Red Crowned Kakariki, Piwakawaka, North Island Robin, many Tui, Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Saddlebacks, Male and female Kiwi and lots of Ruru.

Hilton managed to catch a couple of shots of a North Island Robin.



Ngunguru Discoveries

On Sunday March 25th Heather, Anne, Keith Woodley, Hilton and Melva visited the Ngunguru Waste Water Treatment Ponds for some exciting bird watching. Thankyou Heather for letting us into the area. Here are a couple of Heathers shots. At the Ngunguru ponds we found 10 male Shovelers and 9 female, around 30 Partake, various mallard, plovers, pied stilts in the paddock before the ponds with a number of white faced herons and of course rather a large number of Parrys.



Fernbirds at Old Mill Ln.

Anne McCracken and Heather O'Brian visited Hilton and Melva Wards wetland at Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru for some Fernbird (Mātātā) spotting on Monday 2nd April, 06:30am. The birds were waiting with lots of calls over the wetland but hard to spot at first. However, they did oblige and Heather managed some good shots from the boardwalk.



We don't know how many there are on this small half hectare wetland but we believe it has reached saturation as birds are now resident up the valley and in giant club moss patches in the Hugh Crawford DOC Reserve as well as our garden. (Hilton Ward.)

There is



certainly no mistaking that tail on the right. Mātātā

Dayna Davies Adventures E-Bird Global Big Day

Our Northland Big Day

May 05 2018

Two weeks ago, I'd arrived back from Stewart Island feeling lost without my birding compadres. Not knowing what to do with myself, I began planning for the eBird Global Big Day which was to be held on May the fifth. The eBird Global Big Day is an event held each year in May in which people all around the world go out and spend 24 hours trying to see birds. Some people just eBird from the house, while others undertake huge voyages chasing immense records.

As the event is organised in America, it unfortunately clashes with the first day of duck-shooting and is in our Autumn, so the Arctic migrants have mostly left. This makes the event harder to plan, but I still wanted to do something big. So I jumped on my phone, and began chatting to Dayna Davies, a young birder from Tutukaka about going for the Northland big day record.

We invited Adi-Grace Mooar from Raglan and Charlie 'Steve' Thomas from Orewa. Unfortunately, Steve had to pull out at the last moment due to tonsillitis, so it was just Dayna, Adi and I going after that record. The Northland record stood at 74 species, held by David Howes, Russell Cannings and David

Thomas. This meant that a huge amount of planning would be needed to take the title, and so I knuckled on down with a 1B5 and started writing.

Then, on Friday last week, Adi and I clambered aboard our Intercity coach from Hamilton to Auckland, enjoying a day off school for the sake of the seeing birds - dream life! We had a brief wait in Auckland, before catching our service northward to Whangarei. At 7:05, we finally rolled into town and met-up with Dayna, and her mother Wendy. A brief drive back to Tutukaka, and we resumed planning and discussing for the day ahead.

The next morning, my alarm of Blue Danube Waltz sounded at 5:30, and we 'leapt' into action. A top-notch breakfast of Weet-Bix and tea had us rearing to go. I popped the bathroom, and upon coming out to wash my hands heard a loud "SKARRRK". I ran out of the house to the sight of five Kaka wheeling overhead - what a way to start the day! By the time we'd left, we had five species under our belt and were ready to get far, far more.

TARAWHATA AT SUNRISE



We pulled into Tarawhata, a headland just north of Tutukaka at ten to seven, and the birds kept flowing! The main reason we'd come here was the view over the sea, but winds prevented anything exciting. Good numbers of Fluttering Shearwater and five Buller's Shearwater were feeding just offshore. There was a single Dunnock calling, and we began to tick off most of the common passerines.

quickly started rolling in. Such excitements as Mallard, White-Faced Heron, and Skylark were complimented by two Reef Heron and four New Zealand Dotterel.

From there it was off to Ngunguru Sandspit, which we pulled into just a tick after eight, and the good birds

From there, we'd planned to go to Ngunguru Sewage Ponds, but lo and behold, of course we had picked the time the farmer was moving his cattle right along the path. Discontent with wasting time waiting, we

changed tactics and headed to Lake Waro. Lake Waro is a well-known Scaup lake in Northland, but for the eBird Big Day they had made an exit. We did, however, add Peafowl, Dabchick and Coot, among other species.



THE TEAM AT BREAM HEAD

We moved south to Peach Cove Track on Bream Head. Whilst we were behind schedule, we knew we

could make up the time that afternoon when we wouldn't have to drive to Lake Waro. We had Spoonbill, SIPO and Pied Stilt from the car as we rounded the north Whangarei Harbour. The bush at Bream Head, however, was shockingly quiet. Dayna and I heard Bellbird, Tomtit were common and there was one brief encounter with three Whitehead. The regular Robin, however, was not to be found. Time was of the essence though, so we had to kiss our robin chances goodbye and hit the road.

Next stop was Papich Road, where we quickly located the sewage ponds at the back of the track. These revealed 164 Paradise Shelduck, 6 Grey Duck, 55 Mallard, 18 Grey Teal, 19 Little Shag, 2 Little Black Shag and 5 Caspian Terns. After a thorough search for anything odd in the ducks, we left to find the Industrial Estate. A drive-by looking for the local dotterel flock failed, however, and so we pushed up to Wilson Dam. Here, we found Black Swan, 29 Paradise Shelduck and a Dunnock. The high duck-shooting activity on the lake appeared to have scared off the resident Canada Goose, much to our disappointment.

Our next stop was Ormiston Road, now 1:45 in the afternoon. Much to my delight, we were rewarded with gorgeous views of Australian Little Grebe, as well as more Pacific Black Duck and Dabchick. A half-hour stop at Waipu gave us Brown Quail, Banded Dotterel and Bar-Tailed Godwit, as well as good numbers of Variable Oystercatcher (85), Fluttering Shearwater (18) and NZ Dotterel (17).

A few stops on the way back up to Ngunguru Sewage Ponds added little, though we did get Barbary Dove in Whangarei. The Ngunguru Sewage Ponds (the third sewage ponds we'd visited that day!) had 40 Brown Teal and 16 California Quail, both handy birds for the day list.

It was half-past five by the time we pulled into Old Mill Lane, which is a marshland in Tutukaka. Almost straight away we added Fernbird, and slightly further along the boardwalk we got Spotless Crake and Banded Rail. Time was not on our side anymore though, as we were now sitting on 68 species and the sun was fast setting. We raced around trying desperately to find Kukupa (or Kereru to those south of Auckland), but failed.

As darkness set, we headed back to Tarawhata, where we added Morepork and Grey-Faced Petrel to our day list. The Grey-Faced Petrel were awesome, as heaps of them squawked and whistled from the forest floor in pitch black. Now a little hungry, we headed off for pizza and a brief break from birding.

We were now on 70 species, and the record seemed to be just slipping from reach. Determined, we struck out for Matapouri in the hope of Little Blue Penguins coming ashore. We dipped. Desperate, we tried Sandy Bay for Barn Owl. We dipped. We raced to Old Mill Lane - our last chance. To our relief, two North Island Brown Kiwi were rustling at the end of the boardwalk. On 71, the record was still just beyond reach. We had no luck attracting Marsh Crake or Bittern, and so walked out just four species short of holding that Northland record.

Despite missing out on the title, we all really enjoyed our big day. We also know that when we try again in summer, this route has all the potential to cross the line - watch this space!

(Editors Note) – 71 species was the highest recording on the day for New Zealand shared with Wildlife Management International Ltd. – For interests sake you can check it all out here at eBird.

https://ebird.org/region/NZ?yr=BIGDAY_2018a&changeDate=Set

Michael

[Michael Burton-Smith Comment](#)
[Trip Report](#)
[Big Day, Bird, Northland](#)

Oi at Taurawhata

At about 5:45pm on the 22nd May Dayna Davies, Myself, Melva Ward and Nan and Malcolm Pullman assembled near the Oi colony on the Tutukaka Coast to watch the spectacular aerial courtship chases over the colony. Action started on the dot at 6pm and got busier and busier over the next hour with many Oi circling. We knew what time they would arrive after viewing the many trail camera videos we have of the birds at the burrows. They were not affected by Malcolm's camera flash or us being there as they often flew within a metre of our heads. One shot past Dayna's face at speed so close she felt the wind from its wingtip. The most seen in a group at any one time was seven, but pairs and three were common. All the time there was much calling from the flying birds and those on the ground. We noted three distinctly different calls; they were (1) birds inbound to the site, (2) Circling and chasing, (3) Birds on the ground at the burrows.

(Article submitted by Hilton Ward)



Dayna and Hilton setting up a trail camera above the launch pad.

Photo by Malcolm Pullman <https://photosnz.co.nz/>



Photo by Malcolm Pullman <https://photosnz.co.nz/>

Photo by Malcolm Pullman <https://photosnz.co.nz/>



Thank you Malcolm Pullman for these four photos taken on the night.
Visit his website at <https://photosnz.co.nz/>



Sightings Count Sheet

Bird	Number	Place	date	Name
Blackbird		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Tui		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Morepork		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Fantail		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Silvereye		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Pied Stilt		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Red Billed Gull		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
White Faced Heron		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Pied Shag		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Magpai		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Sparrow		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Duck - Mallard / Grey Cross		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Myna		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
Siouth Is Pied Oystercatcher		Pahi	20~23/4/18	Janet & Michael Snell
New Zealand Dotterels	69	Johnson Pt	19-Mar-18	
Variable Oystercatchers	118	Johnson Pt	19-Mar-18	
Godwit	19	Johnson Pt	19-Mar-18	
Spoonbills	14	Johnson Pt	19-Mar-18	
Kaka		Pacific Bay	8~9/5/18	Dayna Davies
Kaka	5	Pacific Bay	5-May-18	Dayna Davies
Red Billed Gulls	600	Onerahi Foreshore	24-Apr-18	Janet & Michael Snell
BBG	125	Waikaraka Foreshore	24-Apr-18	Janet & Michael Snell
Australasian Bittern	1	Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru	25-Apr-18	Melva & Hilton Ward
Pateke	1	Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru	25-Apr-18	Melva & Hilton Ward
Australasian Bittern	1	Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru	9-May-18	Melva & Hilton Ward
Spotless Crake	1	Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru	14-Apr-18	Hilton Ward
Grey Duckling (1 Day Old)	1	17 Tatton Rd - On roadside	30-Apr-18	Terry Toohill
Pipit	2	Top of Pompallier Estate Drv, Maunu	28-May-18	Anne McCracken
Royal Spoonbill	?	Rocky islet in upper Ngunguru Estuary	10-Jun-18	Janet Snell

Ngunguru Shorebird Count results below.

OSNZ REGION	Northland				MAIN SITE	Ngunguru				
YEAR	2018				COMPILER	Hilton Ward				
MONTH	November				Tide Height,	Time,	Weather			
CENSUS DATE	17-Feb-18				2.6m	9:30am	Fine NE 5Kn			
	TIDE TIME >	09:44 at Marsden Pt								
LOCAL SITES >	Sandspit - NW	Sandspit - NE	Sandspit - SE	Sandspit - SW	Ngunguru Shore	Papaka Rd	Te Maika Rd	Te Maika Spit / Est	Tongatu Rd	
SITE TOTALS >	48	0	0	0	0	0	92	80	0	
SPECIES v TOTALS										
Banded Dotterel	20							20		
Bar-tailed Godwit	27						27			
Black Stilt/Hybrid										
New Zealand Dotterel	38						31	7		
Spur-winged Plover	2	1						1		
Variable Oystercatcher	35	14					6	15		
Whimbrel	1						1			
OTHERS										
Black-backed Gull	4	4								
Caspian Tern	3	3								
Goldfinch	14	4						10		
Harrier Hawk	1							1		
Mynah	2						2			
Paradise Shellduck	3						3			
Pied Shag	4	4								
Red-billed Gull	23	8					15			
Silverege	3	3								
Skylark	5	3						2		
Sparrow	4	1					3			
White-faced Heron	3	3								
Site Total	220									

EAST COAST BEACH PATROL – SUMMARY – Code NE

Compiled by P. R. SMITH – Period Jan to Jun 2018

MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	TOTAL
FROM	NGUNGUR	Ruakaka	Ruakaka River	Ruakaka Riv.	Ruakaka Riv..	Nth of daypark	
TO	SANDSPIT	Sth of tip	Sth of Tip.	Sth of Tip	Sth of Tip.	Sth of Tip.	
DISTANCE	3.5km	7.5 km	7.5 km	km	7.5 km	7.5 km	
PATROLLERS	S. Brooks	J Snell	P. Cozens	A. McCracken	“Visitor”		
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)							
Grey-headed Mollymawk							
Buller’s Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh-footed Shearwater	2						2
Buller’s Shearwater	5		2	NO			7
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater				PATROL			
Fluttering Shearwater	20	13	9 + 3			4	49
Hutton’s Shearwater				DONE			

Little Shearwater		1					1
Common Diving Petrel	2	8	2			1	13
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel							
Kerguelen Petrel							
Cape Pigeon							
Antarctic Fulmar							
Northern Giant Petrel							
Fairy Prion	11					1	12
Thin-billed Prion							
Antarctic Prion							
Broad-billed Prion							
Lesser Broad-billed Prion							
Prion sp							
Shearwater Sp.		1					1
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel		3	1 + 3				7
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel	7					1	8
White-faced Storm Petrel							
N.Z. Storm Petrel							
Blue Penguin	1	14	15 + 115		1		146
Australasian Gannet	1	3	1 + 1		1	1	8
Pied Shag			1				1
Wedge-tailed Shearwater							
Petrel Sp.							
Variable Oystercatcher							
Southern Black-backed Gull						1	1
Red-billed Gull							
Caspian Tern							
White-fronted Tern		1					1
Unidentified species	16						16
Tui	1						1
Blackbird							
Grey Duck							
TOTALS	66	44	153	Nil	2	9	274