

Hello all

The [Lake Wairarapa Wader Survey](#) (winter count) was conducted on June 17th in perfect conditions i.e calm, mild weather and good, low lake levels. Despite this being the middle of the duck-shooting season, good numbers of birds were recorded, including three *critically-endangered* species:

White heron (kotuku) x1, **Australasian bittern** x 3 and **Black-billed gull** x 429! Clearly, this gull count shows we have an influx of birds from other regions over-wintering at the lake.

Other birds of note seen during the survey were **Banded dotterels** x 443, **Black-fronted dotterels** x 99, **Royal spoonbills** x 23,andmost surprisingly, a very large flock (260!) of **NZ Dabchicks** on the water in the Oporua Spillway.

That was a sight to see indeed, especially when they shot across the water en masse, creating a great flurry of wings and foaming water!



Cook Strait Pelagic trip (June 18th)



That was a great trip indeed! Four of us from the Wairarapa Branch joined 16 Wellington Branch members for a very interesting and well-run trip.

We had “up-close and personal” views of 7 different **Albatross** species, 3 different **Petrel** species as well as a gulls, terns and 1 shearwater. The generous amount of “chumming” done by the crew meant the seabirds stayed very close for a long time and we were able to get marvellous views of them.

(Buller's albatross)

GARDEN BIRD 2017 SURVEY (all BirdsNZ members should participate surely??)



This year's survey: 24 June - 2 July 2017

Birds are important indicators of the health of New Zealand's environment, and to help us discover and learn more about NZ garden birds, participate in this citizen science project.

All you need to know to take part: how to do the survey, submit your observations and identify birds.

<http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/birds/garden-bird-surveys/taking-part>

Coming Up.....

- **July 13 meeting:** Come and hear Paul Shortis talk about his recent South Island trip – the birds he encountered along the way and the highlights from the [BirdsNZ Conference](#) held at Te Anau.
Where: Oliver Druce's place, Greytown

15th July Trip : Henley Lake. You may be surprised at what you find there! Mid-winter ducklings? Our own banded Black-billed gulls??

- **August 10th meeting:** tbc

August 12th Trip: Oporua Spillway (eastern Lake Wairarapa shoreline). Colin Shore will take you across the farmland to a part of the lake normally inaccessible to the public to look for some of the birds we see there during the wader surveys.

- **September 14th meeting:** “Show & Tell” - come along and tell us about some interesting bird sighting you may have seen on holiday.....around home....on a trip to the beach or bush. Alternatively, why not swot up on a bird species which interests you and tell us about that? In the past, these meetings have been a lot of fun and full of interesting snippets.
Where: Oliver Druce's place, Greytown

September 16th Trip: East Pukaha or Mt Bruce/Pukaha Loop Track – Paul's report from a recent recce explains:

“ This offers a tremendous opportunity to see (and hear) some of our rarer native bush birds. For those more adventurous you can branch off on the Bruce Hill track that eventually leads over to Mauriceville West. The first half of this track is a relatively steep climb up to the summit of Bruce Hill. It takes about two hours and, of course, you don't have to go all the way to the top. Indeed, most of the best birding is on the lower half of the track.

The track wends its way through magnificent stands of native bush. On a trip last week I sighted tomtits, whitehead, rifleman and kaka low down. Further up the track I watched a family group of kokako then was surrounded by bellbirds while I sat and had my lunch. This is a good time of the year to tackle this less travelled area as the birds are very busy foraging and tend to ignore strangers with binoculars!”

- **October 12th meeting:** A Journey to the Arctic. Paul Shortis will tell us about his August/September Heritage Expeditions trip to the Arctic Ocean, including the Wrangel Island Nature Reserve off the northeast coast of Siberia,

home to Polar bear and Arctic fox as well as 50 species of Arctic birds and last landfall for over 100 species of migratory birds.

October 14th Trip: *Rewa Reserve (east Stronvar Forest)*. This is a landlocked piece of beech forest accessible through a private forestry block. We will be looking for whitehead, long-tailed cuckoo, bellbirds, tomtits

Note: Paul has stepped down as Secretary/Treasurer. In the interim Colin Shore will be acting treasurer and I will be acting secretary.

Regards and hope to see you at the meetings and trips!

Joanna McVeagh (Regional Recorder)

Photo below: Long-tailed Cuckoo
(all images taken from NZ Birds Online)

