THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

Wellington Region Newsletter

OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

March 2018

http://osnz.org.nz/ and
http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/

Greetings

The 79th Annual Meeting of Birds New Zealand will be held over Queens Birthday weekend in the Bay of Islands. I will be attending the Regional Representatives meeting which is held immediately prior to the NZ Bird conference and AGM and will represent Wellington. The agenda for the RR meeting will be determined by concerns raised by RRs. An issue I will raise at this meeting is the problem with the disturbance of shorebird nesting by various human activities. If members have other issues that they think should be discussed at the RR's meeting would they please contact me.

Geoff de Lisle
Wellington Regional Representative, Birds New Zealand (OSNZ)

Upcoming Monthly Meetings WHERE and WHEN

Meetings are held at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps/ramp and across the carpark.
First Monday of the month, 7.45pm.

April Monday 2nd. Taxonomic status, ecology, and conservation of the South Georgian Diving Petrel in New Zealand**, Johannes Fischer**

May Monday 7th. **Ellen Irwin** will talk on her research on Kakariki at Zealandia and **Latu Clark** on her work on the behaviour of robins.

June, there will not be a meeting in June as the NZ Bird Conference and 79th AGM will be held in Waitangi, Bay of Islands over Queens Birthday weekend.

Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 or osnzwelly@gmail.com
Regional Recorder: Nikki McArthur nikki.mcarthur.101@gmail.com
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Shag Survey - Geoff de Lisle
Mist netting – Matu Both, manager@ngamanu.co.nz Nga Manu, Waikanae
Ross Pickard ross.pickard@hexagonsi.com Wellington Zoo

February Meeting. Member's Meeting 12th of February.
Four short talks:
John Flux described some of his ongoing studies on starlings. These studies started in 1970 and are continuing. The study site is the bunkers on Belmont Hills and over the years has included 1700 females and 4500 chicks. One of John's studies was the selection of clutch size where he showed that the clutch-size of the selected group was greater than the control birds.
Further information on John's studies can be found at the following link; https://www.bou.org.uk/flux-starlings/

Andrew Hawke reported on his work monitoring hihi nests at Zealandia. A total of 100 nest boxes for hihi have been erected in the sanctuary. The majority of the hihi at Zealandia use nest boxes because the vegetation provides limited opportunities for nesting in tree cavities. By monitoring nests it is possible to identify the productivity of the birds and identify when the chicks are the optimal age for them to be banded before they fledge.

David Cornick presented an update of the survey of the fernbirds at Pauatahanui details of which are presented on Page 10 of this newsletter. A further transfer of fernbirds is planned for April, 2018.

George Hobson summarised the Birds New Zealand Youth Banding Camp which was held in 2017 at the Pukorokoro (Miranda) Shorebird Centre. This initiative was in addition to the Annual Youth Camp and part of Birds New Zealand's ongoing programme to stimulate interest in birds in young adults.

Ian Armitage gave a short summary of the 2017 Australasian Ornithological Conference held in Geelong and attracted ~250 attendees. Ian noted a number of features of the conference, such as keynote presentations, poster presentations, photo competition and short 3 minute talks, which could be used at the 2018 Birds New Zealand Annual conference which is being held in Wellington.

March meeting. South-West Pacific Odyssey – Heritage Expeditions, Michael Szabo.

Michael described his trip from Tauranga to Rabaul, New Britain on the Spirit of Enderby from 1-17th April, 2017. This trip was run by Heritage Expeditions and followed a route that passed a number of islands, including Norfolk Island, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands. Michael showed pictures of seabirds he encountered as well as many endemics present on the islands he visited. A detailed bird list by the Heritage Bird Guide Chris Collins, can be found on the following link.
https://www.heritage-expeditions.com/media/news_downloads/Species_List_South_West_Pacific_Odyssey_1780.pdf
Birds New Zealand members are offered discounts on some Heritage Expeditions – details are presented in the Bird New Zealand magazine.

Pictures from Heritage Expeditions trip to the sub-Antarctic Islands were shown of the recent trip that Janice Woon and Allan Munro went on.

Cook Strait Pelagic Trips – 2018

Wellington Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) will run three Cook Strait Pelagic trips - 1st April, 1st July and 1st September (7am-1pm trips as previously). The first 2018 trip is fully booked. Notices regarding the arrangements for the July and September trips will be sent out at a later date.

Avian Botulism – Pharazyn Reserve

"Avian botulism is thought to be behind the deaths of up to 400 mainly mallard ducks at Waikanae beach's Pharazyn Reserve, Kāpiti Coast District Council parks and recreation manager Alison Law said."

Carcases were removed from the Reserve, a measure that is the only practical action that can be taken to limit an outbreak.

https://i.stuff.co.nz/environment/101619817/mass-bird-deaths-at-kpiti-coast-lagoon-blamed-on-avian-botulism
21 Feb 2018.

Avian botulism is caused by the ingestion of botulism toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* Type C. The toxin causes paralysis with affected birds showing flaccidity of the legs, wings and neck. The bacterium is widespread and outbreaks occur under the conditions of warm temperatures, a protein source and an anaerobic (no oxygen) environment in order to become active and produce toxin. There is a carcase – maggot cycle in avian botulism. Rotting carcases are an ideal substrate for the multiplication of the *C. botulinum* and the production of toxin. Maggots and invertebrates ingest the rotting flesh but are unaffected by the toxin. Ingestion of these toxin-laden invertebrates by waterfowl leads to an outbreak of botulism. Mallards, grey ducks and grey teal as well as gulls are most commonly affected in New Zealand as they are the species that ingest macro-invertebrates. In contrast benthic feeding waterfowl such as scaup and dabchick, as well as shovelers appear to be rare casualties.

This summer avian botulism has been reported has been reported throughout New Zealand, including;

Te Aroha waste treatment plant – 50 deaths reported
Christchurch, Bromley oxidation ponds, 300 deaths, mostly paradise ducks and some mallards
Lake Rotokawa, Rotorua, swans affected.
Auckland, 160 deaths

Acknowledgements; Murray Williams for his comments.

Ebird Submission, 4th March – Post Botulism

Greylag goose 12,
Canada goose 8
Black swan 24
Paradise shelduck
Australian shoveler 91
New Zealand scaup 203
New Zealand dabchick 54
Little shag 6 (minimum count)
Black shag 3
Pied shag 22 (Did not appear to be any active nests on tree above North pond).
White-faced heron 1
Royal spoonbill 4
Australasian harrier 1
Pukeko 1
Spur-winged plover 4
Grey warbler 1
Australian magpie 2
Welcome swallow 9
Silvereye 2
European starling 21
House sparrow 1

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle

Waimanu Lagoon Waikanae Domestic (greylag) Geese

"At least 30 of the feral domestic geese at Waimanu Lagoon would be rounded up and sent to pastures and ponds afresh, Kāpiti Coast District Council spokesman Max Pederson said.

Carolyn Press McKenzie, founder of animal charity HUHA, said homes had been found for more than 30 geese, and the organisation was ready to help catch the birds as soon as the council gave the go-ahead."

https://i.stuff.co.nz/national/100641366/there-goes-the-neighbourhood-kpiti-residents-complain-of-growing-goose-numbers

Canada Geese – Pharazyn Reserve, Waikanae

Pharazyn Reserve, 8 January 2018.

Ebird Submissions; Viola Palmer 444, David Irving, 200 (Noted, very conservative estimate).

In January/February large number of Canada geese move to the Pharazyn Reserve for their annual moult when they replace their flight feathers.

The following are extracts from the Waikato Regional Council website - https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/services/regional-services/plant-and-animal-pests/animal-pests/canada-goose/

In June 2011 the Canada goose was moved from schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1953 to schedule 5. This means this species is no longer recognised as a game bird, and that Fish & Game councils no longer have any legal responsibility for its management.

Therefore all landowners/occupiers in the Waikato who wish to may control Canada goose on their properties. Control can be done at any time, by any humane means, although no poisons have been registered for goose control.

Moult culls

Usually in January or February, the Canada goose loses its primary and secondary wing feathers and become flightless for up to three weeks. During this time they congregate on safe water bodies as a resting place. They depend on available food sources which they frequently overgraze and destroy.

Culling involves herding them off the water along hessian or shade cloth fencing, and funnelling them into pens to be humanely euthanised.

It is important to attempt to capture all flightless individuals in a moult cull. Any which escape may become wary and more difficult to cull the following season, and may also seek new moult sites.

Consider using discreet locations for culls and disposal of carcasses. Well run moult culls significantly reduce Canada goose populations.

Hunting

Disciplined, coordinated hunting will reduce populations

In the Discussion Document for proposed pest management plan starting 2018, the Greater Wellington Regional Council has undertaken to carry out a cost/benefit analysis to determine whether this species meets the minimum criteria for inclusion in the Regional Pest Management Strategy.

The Great Hihi Sperm Race

Helen Taylor, from Otago University is putting some competition into conservation by pitting male hihi against each other to see who has the fastest sperm. Bet on the male with the sperm that go the distance and you could win some fantastic prizes! Details can be found at https://www.hihispermrace.nz/

During the 2017/18 breeding season, Helen collected sperm samples from 128 male hihi across four sites (Tiritiri Matangi, Hauturu (Little Barrier), Bushy Park and Zealandia). Using her handy mobile sperm lab, she was able to video hihi sperm to calculate how fast they swim. Helen is currently analyzing the sperm videos to figure out which male has the speediest swimmers, but we want you to guess which male is the fittest. All the money raised from the race will go towards sustaining and building new populations of this cheeky little bird.

Target amount: $10,000 | Amount raised so far: $3429 | Days till end of race: 24

Quiz - Bird Feather Identification

The following email was sent to me with the accompanying picture. The feather did not look like it came from any bird I had seen in Days Bay. See Colin Miskelly's reply on Page 14. Geoff de Lisle

"On Sunday morning I found this feather on our bush track at 44 Ferry Road Days Bay. It measures 80mm x 230mm. I would love to know what bird/duck has such an attractive feather. I have tried to trace it without success.

I look forward to hearing from you."

Nigel, Mana Island Gannet's death mourned throughout the world

A colony of concrete gannets, together with a sound system playing gannet calls was established on Mana Island in 1997. In recent years the colony was shifted and a gannet named Nigel, was attracted to one of the concrete gannets. Early this year Nigel died and the following is an example of the publicity following his death.

Nigel the lonely gannet dies as he lived, surrounded by concrete birds, Guardian International Edition, 2nd Feb, 18. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/02/nigel-lonely-new-zealand-gannet-dies-concrete-replica-birds

Tragic end for seabird who spent four years courting a decoy: Nigel the gannet dies without ever finding romance (and is found next to fake bird he worshipped in the love nest he'd built her). Daily Mail, Australia, 2nd Feb, 18 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5339795/Tragic-end-seabird-spent-years-courting-decoy.html#ixzz5AxgpEblO

New Zealand gannet 'no mates Nigel' dies alongside fake partner. BBC, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42916451 2nd Feb, 18

The Life and Death of Nigel, the World's Loneliest Seabird, New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/04/world/asia/nigel-gannet-mana-island.html 4th Feb, 18.

Te Papa Blogs

Wildlife highlights of Disappointment Island

9 February 2018 by Colin Miskelly

Bird expert Colin Miskelly recently joined an albatross research team on the rarely visited Disappointment Island in the subantarctic Auckland Islands. But he was on a separate mission to research the more secretive species on this misnamed gem of an island.
http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/09/wildlife-highlights-of-disappointment-island/

The 'eww' factor: Gruesome finds in seabird feeding study

13 February 2018 by Susan Waugh

Elements of biology entail a certain 'eww' factor – and studying the diet of seabirds certainly fits that description. In research into the foraging habits of Buller's albatross, a threatened endemic species from southern New Zealand, published in the journal *Plos one* in 2017, scientist Dr Susan Waugh and colleagues discovered more than they bargained for, when examining the regurgitates of young albatrosses at the nest.
http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/13/the-eww-factor-gruesome-finds-in-seabird-feeding-study/

12,000 images on New Zealand Birds Online – with help from Hungary

15 February 2018 by Colin Miskelly

The 12,000th image loaded on New Zealand Birds Online was of a cute fluffy baby goose, taken in Hungary. Bird expert Colin Miskelly explains how this image ended up on a New Zealand website.
http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/15/12000-images-on-new-zealand-birds-online-with-help-from-hungary/

Albatrosses and petrels of the Auckland Islands

Posted 20 February 2018 by Colin Miskelly

The remote Auckland Islands 370 km south of Stewart Island are tiny specks of land in the middle of a vast ocean. This makes them important breeding grounds for many species of seabirds and seals that forage in surrounding seas.
Bird experts Colin Miskelly and Alan Tennyson visited the islands in late January, and here they document some of the extraordinary diversity of seabirds that breed on these little-known islands.
http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/20/albatrosses-and-petrels-of-the-auckland-islands/

A sniper in the subantarctic

26 February 2018 by Colin Miskelly

Te Papa bird expert Colin Miskelly has recently returned from the subantarctic Auckland Islands, far south of Stewart Island. Here, he tells us about his ongoing research on a little-known bird that he's been fixated with for the past 35 years.
http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/02/26/a-sniper-in-the-subantarctic/

Furtive fauna of the Auckland Islands

2 March 2018 by Colin Miskelly

Sea lions, albatrosses, and penguins usually grab the attention of visitors to the remote Auckland Islands south of New Zealand. But when Te Papa curators Colin Miskelly and Alan Tennyson explored the islands recently, they were focused on species that are easily overlooked, and particularly those that come out after dark…http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2018/03/02/the-furtive-fauna-of-the-auckland-islands/

Bird Snippets

Red-billed gulls Waurika Rock - Pieria Bay

Gillian Candler » Fri Nov 10, 2017. Last year the red-billed gulls disappeared from Waurika Rock around the coast from Pieria Bay, this spring they are back nesting on the rock, although I think smaller numbers than in 2015. Around 80 pairs are visible from the shore, also around the same number of white-fronted terns. Two harrier hawks were circling high up above the rock. BirdingNZ.net.

Jim » Fri Dec 29, 2017. Colony still active 29 December.BirdingNZ.net

Cook Strait – mix of northern and southern birds

Colin MI skelly » Fri Jan 05, 2018
An interesting mix of species today, including a couple that I have not seen from the ferry previously. The following list is from the exit from Tory Channel to where the ferry turned into the entrance to Wellington Harbour.

Little penguin 2
Northern royal albatross 1
White-capped mollymawk 2
Salving's mollymawk 2
Northern giant petrel 2
Grey-faced petrel 2
Cook's petrel 1
Antarctic or Salving's prion 1
Fairy prion 150
Westland petrel 1
Buller's shearwater 8
Flesh-footed shearwater 4
Sooty shearwater 2
Fluttering shearwater 56
Hutton's shearwater 2
Grey-backed storm petrel 1
White-faced storm petrel 6
Australasian gannet 1
Southern black-backed gull 1
White-fronted tern 2
BirdingNZ.net

David Thomas » Tue Jan 09, 2018
To follow up from your post we were on the ferry Saturday morning during the middle of the storm with 5-5.5m swells and a serious wind blowing. I managed a very similar list although missing grey backed storm petrel! Much to my disappointment.

I had
2 young southern Royals,
1 Northern Royal albatross,
2 black browed/Campbell's
4 Salving,
10 or so White capped albatross
2 northern giant petrels
4 Westland petrels
6 sooty shearwaters
1 short tailed shear (probable)
6 bulkers shearwaters
1-2 Flesh footed shearwater (probable)
100+ fluttering shearwaters
5+ hut tons shearwaters
4 white faced storm petrels with a possible grey backed that zoomed past way too quickly to get my binoculars on it
150+ fairy prions, with a couple of possible Antarctic/Salving
And at least one cooks petrel but again with the wind they were scooting past so quickly you'd blink and miss them.
Three little blue penguins,
Half a dozen gannets,
White fronted tern,
Red billed Gull

And four king shags at the roost mentioned in your other post. BirdingNZ.net

Long-tailed cuckoo arrivals

CMKMStephens » Sun Jan 28, 2018 Heard Long-tailed Cuckoo's for the first time (though no sightings or photos unfortunately). Heard two or more calling from opposite sides of Reikorangi valley, Wellington. Heard also when walking the possuming track towards Maunganui. Was staying at a block owned by father and godfather at the foothills of the forest. BirdingNZ.net

Rifleman / Tomtit Days Bay

ledzep » Sun Jan 28, 2018 Found Rifleman and Tomtit today up the Kereru Road track above but not far from the area where the nest was. GPS 174.917800 -41.284969. 3 Rifleman feeding, with Fantail and Silvereye's nearby, Bellbirds calling more distant, and a pair of Tomtit about 20 metres further up. Seems that when you find one bush bird, you find lots. BirdingNZ.net

Photo, Duncan Watson

Rifleman, Keith George Memorial Park, Upper Hutt

ledzep » Sat Feb 03, 2018
Whiteheads in Keith George Memorial Park at 174.979565 -41.145886 on the 4WD road at a bend beside a small bridge over the creek. Also Rosellas and lots of Silvereyes and Fantails. I still haven't seen a Tomtit in Keith George Memorial reserve, but I've heard that they are around. Further up the 4WD road is a horse float with a group of about 12 domestic geese - the horse float is set up as their home with straw and water. BirdingNZ.net

Reef Heron Owhiro Bay

ledzep » Sat Feb 24, 2018
Dianne and I had good views of a Reef Heron today at Owhiro Bay, high tide. Near the Happy Valley Road intersection. Quite a number of dolphins offshore around Taputeranga island, with a Gannet and Albatross offshore. BirdingNZ.net

Photo – Duncan Watson

Re: Wellington City biodiversity

Peter Hodge » Sat Feb 10, 2018 9:
This afternoon we were diving out on the west coast of Mana Island, Cook Strait, and from the boat spotted two Reef Herons flying to the cliffs at the north end of the island. BirdingNZ.net

Long-tailed cuckoo Matiu Somes Island

Joanna10 » Sat Feb 24, 2018.
Quite surprised to encounter 2 Long-tailed cuckoos on Matiu Somes Island Feb 16th. As there do not seem to be any Whitehead on the island, I presume these birds must be on passage from their breeding grounds. BirdingNZ.net

George Hobson » Sun Feb 25, 2018

They were also reported on the 11th of Feb.... Maybe they're hanging about on the island? BirdingNZ.net

Spotless Crake – Pauatahanui -

Duncan Watson 04/3/2018. Duncan Watson and Dianne Parker saw a spotless crake and heard two just before dusk. .

Photo, Duncan Watson

Taupata

There are extensive plantings of Taupata (*Coprosma repens*) on Matiu / Somes Island. On a visit to the island on the 6th March we observed large quantities of ripe Taupata berries which were being eaten by birds. A female blackbird was seen feeding Taupata berries to a fledgling. Large quantities of digested seeds were seen on the track below two kereru, most probably the entire population of this species on the island. In addition, a couple of recently fledged black-backed gulls were seen eating the berries. No adult gulls were observed consuming the berries. Heather and Robertson (2015) report that black-backed gulls have a varied diet including offal, refuse, carrion, marine invertebrates and shellfish, fish, frogs, lizards, birds, eggs, mammals and even small fruit and other plant material.

Taupata with ripe, orange berries

Kereru faeces with digested Taupata berries

Juvenile black-backed gull eating Taupata berries

Reference; Heather B, Robertson H. (2015) The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand. Penguin Books.

Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop

Pauatahanui Fernbirds – Update

At the February meeting of Wellington Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) David Cornick reported the presence of 9 juvenile fernbirds in the Pauatahanui Reserve – identified as juveniles by the absence of bands. The number of juveniles was estimated by the identification of unbanded birds at different areas of the Reserve. The majority of the unbanded birds were found in the Reserve north of Grays Road. David reported that the best time to see fernbirds was late afternoon / dusk. In March further observations by Duncan Watson and Dianne Parker (4 & 11th March) and Geoff and Dallas (9th March) revealed unbanded fernbirds north of Grays Road but no banded birds were observed.

David reports in recent times he has seen three banded fernbirds, in addition to the unbanded juveniles.

Unbanded fernbirds, March 2018 – date observed

Sunbathing / Sunning

The summer of 2017/18 has been notable for above average temperatures. The question arises as to whether bird behaviour in New Zealand is affected by warm summer temperatures. While temperatures have been above average this year it should be noted that normal body temperatures of birds is greater than mammals and greater than those usually experienced in New Zealand, even on "hot" summer's days. This is in contrast to temperatures experienced overseas, such as the Kalahari Desert, where ambient temperatures can and do exceed those of birds. In these extreme situations birds actively avoid hyperthermia by reduced activity, increased shade seeking and actively seeking water. Physical adaptions to aid cooling include increasing respiration rate / panting, bare skin on necks and legs where heat loss is greater than from feathered areas and bill size in birds such as toucans. Birds do not have sweat glands.

In New Zealand birds show behaviour changes to warm temperatures. One notable behaviour is sun bathing where birds position themselves to ensure maximum expose of feathers to the sun.

Different species will sunbath in different ways, but common sunning postures include:

- Standing with the back to the sun
- Fluffing feathers on the head and back to expose skin
- Stretching, spreading or drooping wings
- Spreading the tail
- Raising wings to expose underparts or flanks.

A range of different bird species in New Zealand sunbath, including blackbirds, kereru, robin and tui (accompanying pictures).

Why do birds sunbath?

Birds in New Zealand that sunbath in the heat of the day do not appear to do this regulate their temperature. A possible explanation is that birds sunbath as an aid to maintain feather health. The raised temperatures from sunbathing is thought to cause parasites to move to outer portions of the feathers making them easier for birds to remove them by preening.

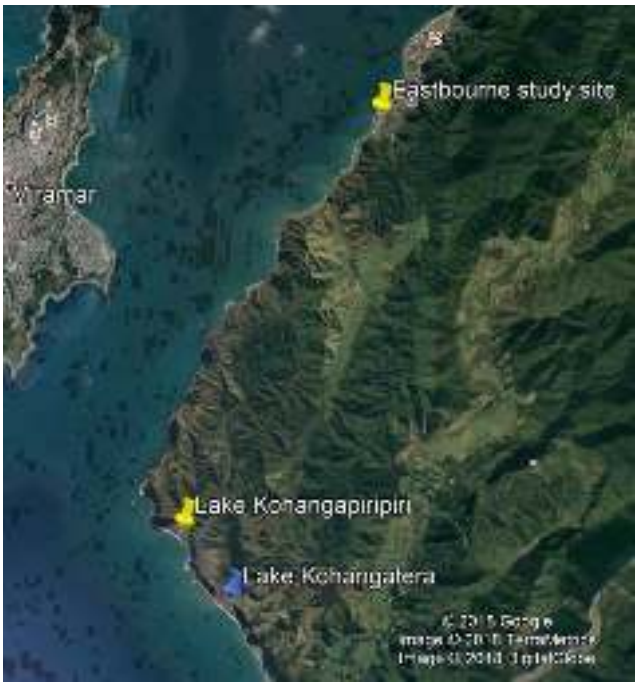
Panting is a method birds and other animals use to dissipate heat on hot days. As the temperature gets hotter the respiration rate may increase and birds may open their bills wider for greater cooling. A local example of panting birds is nesting pied shags in New Zealand.

Bathing has been suggested as a method for cooling in birds. However, birds in New Zealand bath all year round indicating that in addition to cooling, bathing is carried out for other purposes, most likely to aid and maintain feather health.

Photo, Weka bathing, Kapiti Island, Dallas Bishop

East Harbour Banded Dotterels – Update

The MIRO study on banded dotterels has two major study sites, the beach at the south end of the sea wall at Eastbourne and the area at the outfall of Lake Kohangapiripiri. Banded dotterels also nest on the area at the outfall of the second Pencarrow Lake, Kohangatera. The banded dotterels breeding season for 2017/18 has finished with the birds first leaving the Eastbourne study site and were last seen at Lake Kohangapiripiri on the 23rd of February.



Banding and flagging of banded dotterels commenced in the 2016/17 breeding season when only two birds were banded/flagged. On the 22 November 2016, a pre-fledged chick (DVT) was banded/flagged on Eastbourne beach and an adult male (DVU) was banded/flagged at the Lake Kohangapiripiri site. DVU was seen regularly throughout the 2016/17 breeding season and it returned to the same area for the following 2017/18 season. In contrast, DVT was not seen again after it fledged until March 2018. There was concern that the flags used in the 2016/17 season were slightly too large and no further birds were banded that season. In the 2017/18 season 8 adults were banded/flagged at each of the Eastbourne and Lake Kohangapiripiri sites. A total of 4 chicks were banded (1 metal only and 3 metal/flagged) at Eastbourne and 11 (8 metal only and 3 metal/flag) at Lake Kohangapiripiri.

Photo – Jorge Jimenez

Banded dotterels are also known to nest on the beach at the outlet of Lake Kohangatera. This area has not been included in the survey because the additional work for including Lake Kohangatera was beyond the limited resources of MIRO. Visits to Lake Kohangatera in February – March revealed 50 to 60 banded dotterels, including flagged birds. On the 10th of March, Parker Jones, Dallas Bishop, Geoff de Lisle and a visiting ornithologist from the UK surveyed the study site (Lake Kohangapiripiri) as well as the area at the outfall of Lake Kohangatera. No banded dotterel were seen at Lake Kohangapiripiri but at the latter site, the combinations of 5 flagged birds were identified from photographs. The most significant finding was the discovery of DVT which had not been seen 2016. Birds which had been banded/flagged at Eastbourne and Lake Kohangapiripiri were included in the birds identified.

Important findings from the banding/flagging include;

(1) The one adult DVU which was banded/flagged at Lake Kohangapiripiri in 2016/17 returned to the same area the 2017/18 breeding season.
(2) Adults banded/flagged at Eastbourne have been seen at Lake Kohangapiripiri.
(3) Adults banded at both study sites were present at the end of the breeding season at Lake Kohangatera.
(4) The one pre-fledgling bird that was banded at Eastbourne in the 2016/17 breeding season not only survived but either remained in the general area or returned to the area a year later.
(5) The GIS programme used in this study have proved to be excellent for recording the location and history of banded dotterel nests.

There are a number of interesting questions still to be answered.

- Do the birds from the two study areas remain at the Pencarrow Lakes (Lake Kohangatera) during the non-breeding season or do some or all move out of the region?
- Do some of the birds move out of the Pencarrow Lakes area to the Wairarapa or beyond? In previous years small numbers (~12) of birds have remained at Lake Kohangatera throughout the winter.
- Will the birds that were banded/flagged as adults return to the sites where they were banded?
- Will the birds banded as pre-fledglings return to the sites where they were banded?
- At what age do banded dotterels start breeding?

Given the findings from this breeding season it is likely more time will be spent surveying the banded dotterels at Lake Kohangatera as well as those at the two study sites. The success of this MIRO study depends not only good control of predators and human activity but also on a band of volunteers to locate the nests, band/flag birds, and record the birds present at the different locations. Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) members are most welcome to help with this project in the next breeding season. Calls for volunteers will be made later in the year.

GIC NEW ZEALAND GIS IN CONSERVATION

Murals - Chimp

In March 2018 a new mural in Upper Hutt by Ash Sissons, alias Chimp was officially opened. The series of pictures of birds adorn the walls of the underpass linking the railway station to the city centre. Chimp took three months to complete the murals and consumed 300 spray cans of paint. Other examples of Chimp's work can be seen at Gracefield School, the basement of Parliament House and the Pateke Room at Zealandia.

Gracefield School

Upper Hutt Mural

Feather Identification

"Your feather looks like a turkey feather, which seems a bit unlikely for Days Bay. eBird does not reveal any wild turkey sightings in the Wellington region (there are a few in the Wairarapa). It is possible that someone near you has domestic turkeys, but it is more likely that the feather was dropped by someone who had it as e.g. a hat ornament."

Colin Miskelly