

This booklet was sponsored by:



RON GREENWOOD
ENVIRONMENTAL
TRUST



WHERE TO FIND BIRDS of the

W
A
I
R
A
R
A
P
A



ISBN: 0-476-00089-0



Birds of the Wairarapa

and

Where to Find Them

INDEX

	PAGE	SITE
Lake Reserve & Tauherenikau Estuary	2	1
Oporua Floodway	3	2
Boggy Pond & Matthews Lagoon	4	3
Onoke Spit	5	4
Lake Ferry & Palliser Bay	7	5
Putangarua Pinnacles	8	6
Ngawi & Cape Palliser	8	7
Riversdale Beach	9	8
Castlepoint	10	9
Mataikona	11	10
Kourarau Dam	13	11
Henley Lake	14	12
Waiohine Gorge	15	13
Holdsworth Lodge	16	14
Kiriwhakapapa	17	15
National Wildlife Centre, Mt Bruce	18	16
Greytown Park	19	17
Gladstone Bridge	20	18
Morisons Bush	21	19
National Wildlife Centre history	22	
Our Changing Bird Population	23	
Pelagic Birds of the Wairarapa	24	
NZ Ornithological Society	25	
Bird watching for beginners	27	
Check List of Wairarapa Birds	29	

**Tenick Dennison,
Colin Scadden
and
Betty Watt.**

Cover photograph by J L Kendrick.

ISBN: 0-476-00089-0

Introduction

This booklet is a simple guide to bird watching in the Wairarapa and describes where birds are most readily seen. Nineteen well known sites have been chosen, and instructions are given, by text and map, on how to reach them from Highway 2. All locations are on public land so no permission from land owners is required.

The bird lists provided for each location do not include every possible bird sighting but give an indication of the species most associated with that particular area.

This booklet does not attempt to help with bird identification or give information on their behaviour or breeding. The "Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand" by Heather and Robertson, which is readily available in bookshops, will provide all that and is worth buying.

The Wairarapa, although small in size, has a great diversity of habitats. Its attraction "birdwise:" is that it is possible to see a wide range of bird species in a relatively short time without travelling excessive distances.

The information presented here has all been gathered over the years by local members of the Wairarapa branch of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand. Not every bird on the Wairarapa list is included. For the serious bird watcher, keen to see some of the more elusive species, local OSNZ members can at times offer personal assistance and these can be contacted through the Masterton Visitor Centre.

1 Lake Reserve and Tauherenikau Estuary

This location is situated at the northern end of Lake Wairarapa where the Tauherenikau River enters the lake. This is a good place to view waterfowl and shorebirds. Bring a canoe or small boat and explore the array of backwaters and sandbars.

How to get there

When coming from the south it can be reached by turning right into Murphy's Line some 2 kilometres north of Featherston.

Approaching from the north Murphy's Line is second on your left after crossing the Tauherenikau River Bridge. Follow Murphy's Line straight for 3kms. Turn right where it terminates at a T junction. A further 2kms. on take the left hand turn at the T junction and Lake Wairarapa is reached in about 0.5km. where the tar-seal runs out. Pass through a cattlestop on your left and follow gravel road along the lake edge for about 2 kms. until it terminates at the Tauherenikau Delta.



Birds to See

Black Shag, Little Shag, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel, Black Fronted Dotterel, Black Swan, Canada Goose, Caspian Tern, Variable Oystercatcher, Mallard and occasionally Royal Spoonbill. In the backwaters look for **Dabchick and Australasian Bittern.**



Black Swan. R Wasley.

2 Oporua Floodway

The lake shore of the Oporua Floodway provides marshy lakeside habitat favoured by shorebirds and in the late summer to autumn is the one place in the Wairarapa where migratory Arctic waders may be seen. These are never in large numbers but over the years a wide range of species have been recorded. Commonest are **Bar-tailed Godwit, Lesser Knot and Pacific Golden Plover.** Others which have been seen include **Sharp Tailed, Curlew and Pectoral Sandpipers** and **Turnstone,** and rare sightings have been **Greenshank, Lesser Yellow Legs, and Marsh Sandpiper.**

On your way along the embankment as you pass raupo and open water keep a close watch out for the elusive **Australasian Bittern** standing statue like with beak pointed skywards.

How to get there.

Approaching from the north take a half left turn into No 1 Line about 1 km. short of the Tauherenikau Hotel (also known as the Tin Hut) continuing on this until you cross the main Featherston-Martinborough Rd and follow in direction marked Lake Ferry.



From the south take a half right turn from Highway 2 in Featherston onto the main Martinborough Rd. 6 kms further on take right hand turn into Lake Ferry Rd. Continue on this road until after some 15kms. a sign **Oporua Floodway** appears. Cross to right hand side of road and follow a track which leads to first of 7 gates on top of embankment.

Leave all 7 gates as you find them on this grass-metal track. You park in a paddock at the end and walk across it to the lake edge.

Birds to See



Godwits. D.Cornick

As well as shorebirds above look for **Banded Dotterel, Black Fronted Dotterel, Spur-winged Plover, Pied Stilt, Pukeko, Black Swan, Canada Goose, Royal Spoonbill, Mallard, Paradise Shelduck, Caspian Tern, Black Shag, Skylark and Pipit.**

3 Boggy Pond and Matthew's Lagoon

Boggy Pond and Matthew's Lagoon are adjacent to one another and although they hold good numbers and varieties of water birds, because of profuse willow growth, it can be difficult to view them. There is a breeding colony of **Little Black Shags** at the southern end of Matthew's Lagoon and with binoculars you may be able to see their nests in willow trees.

Spotless Crake and **Marsh Crake** are known to inhabit the raupo here but will only usually be seen when tapes

of their calls are played...especially in the breeding season.

In Sept-Nov. breeding season the "booming" calls of the **Australasian Bittern** may sometimes be heard.

How to get There.

Follow the instructions given above for the Oporua Floodway. Between one and two kms. past the Oporua Floodway sign turn right into the gravel Parera Rd. 1kilometre along this on your left you will see a farm gate close to a large eucalyptus tree. From here you will be



able to see the open water of Matthew's Lagoon through a gap in the willows. Park your car on the roadside, and walk down through the grass paddock through a second gate and onto the waters edge.

For Boggy Pond continue another 1.3kms. along Parera Road until the notice "Boggy Pond" appears on your left. A track on an embankment skirts the pond but recently because of willow growth good views are hard to obtain.

Birds to See.



Canada Goose. C Scadden

Black Shag, Little Black Shag, Little Shag, Dabchick, Black Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Scaup, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveller, Pukeko, Kingfisher, Harrier, Spur-winged Plover, Welcome Swallow, Skylark.

4 Onoke Spit

This 5 km. long 500 metre wide spit extends from the Western Lake Road towards Lake Ferry separating the open sea of Palliser Bay from the waters of Lake Onoke. The outlet of the Ruamahanga River system is at the eastern end. When the outflow is low and a southerly blowing, tidal action may close the outlet. The Spit,

perhaps because of its relative isolation from a lot of human activity, has breeding colonies of **Black Backed Gulls**, **Caspian Terns**, **Red Billed Gulls** and **White Fronted Tern**. Members of the OSNZ have been banding chicks of the two former birds for some years. Keep a watch out for banded birds. If visiting in the breeding season please observe colonies from a distance and try not to disturb the sitting birds

Black Backed Gulls will quickly predate unguarded eggs or chicks.

How to get There

Turn off Highway 2 at the western entrance to Featherston into Western Lake Rd. Continue south past the turn off on your right to the old railway settlement of Cross Creek. En-route you encounter some good birdwatching in the bush at Western Lake Reserve. In



spring the many kowhais attract large numbers of **Tuis**. Other bush birds present are **Grey Warbler**, **Pied Fantail**, **Whitehead**, **Silvereye**, **NZ Pigeon** and **Bellbird**. **Shining Cuckoo** may be heard in the spring.

The road continues past the tiny Waiorongomai Church past the east-west access road on your left with the tarseal running out 5 kms. before the road ends. Be sure to take the left hand fork where the sign says Lake Onoke. The road ends at a small stream draining a swamp. Leave your car here and walk across to the base of the Spit.

Thirty minutes walk will bring you to the first nests of the scattered **Black Backed Gulls**. The more compact **Caspian Tern**, **Red Billed Gull** and **White Fronted Tern** colonies are further on.

Birds to see



Caspian Tern. TC Dennison

Black Backed Gull, **Red Billed Gull**, **Caspian Tern**, **White Fronted Tern**, **Black Shag**, **White Faced Heron**, **Banded Dotterel**, **Skylark**, **Pipit**, with good views of **Australasian Gannet** flying and diving off shore. Along the lake shore.

Variable Oystercatcher, **Lesser Knot**, **Turnstone** and **Royal Spoonbill** may be seen. In winter at the end of the Spit look for **Black Billed Gull** and **Black Fronted Tern** in eclipse plumage without its full glossy black cap.

5 Lake Ferry and Palliser Bay

Lake Ferry is a small seaside village nestling under the hill at the eastern side of the Lake Onoke outlet. In the 19th century when pioneers were droving stock around the coast and the outlet was open, it was one of the obligations of the hotel licensee to provide boat transport for both drover and stock.... hence the name Lake Ferry. Lake Ferry is a fisherman's resort with surf casting off the open beach, white-baiting around the lake outlet and flounder netting in the lake.

How to get there.

From Highway 2 follow same instructions as for Oporua Floodway but continue on south on main Lake Ferry Road passing through Pirinoa reaching Lake Ferry some 8 kms further on. Pass the hotel on your left and follow road to its end on the beach. The holes in the high cliffs shelter **Feral Pigeons**. Around the shallow lagoons close to the cliffs you may see **Banded Dotterel** and **Pipit**.



Birds to see.

Black Backed Gull, **Red Billed Gull**, **Caspian Tern**, **White Fronted Tern**, **Black Shag**, **Little Shag**, and in winter look for **Black Fronted Tern** with its black cap incomplete. Off shore **Australasian Gannets** are often seen patrolling and diving.

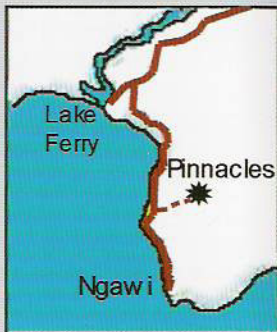


White Fronted Tern. Rod Morris.

6 Putangirua Pinnacles

These remarkable obelisks protected by a cap of harder rock have attained their shapes by selective erosion over the years. They may be explored and viewed from three tracks well described in the car park signboard.

From Lake Ferry travel back about 3 kms to the Ngawi-Cape Palliser turn off on your right. Some 15 kms. along this road you will come to turn off into car park. There are excellent well maintained toilets here.



Birds to see.

In the gorse and scrub along the small stream coming from Pinnacles you may encounter or hear the whirring flight of the **California Quail** together with **Blackbird**, **Redpoll** and **Yellowhammer**.

Follow the tracks into the bush and look and listen for **Bellbird**, **Tui**, **Grey Warbler**, **Pied Fantail** and **Silvereye**. As you ascend and get closer to main pinnacles watch in the open for **New Zealand Falcon**. These are known to nest here.



NZ Falcon. M Wong.

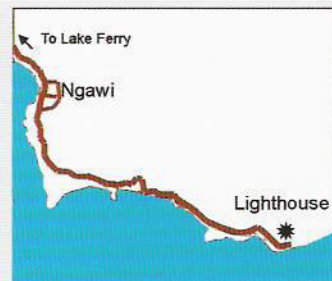
7 Ngawi and Cape Palliser

Ngawi is a small commercial fishing village perched close to the southern tip of the North Island between the open sea and the steeply rising foot hills of the Aorangi Ranges. There is no protected harbour here, and the fishing boats are launched directly into the surf from their trailers with the help of some old rusty tractors.

Cape Palliser, dominated by its lighthouse which may be reached by a climb of 250 steps is a further 5kms. on. The rocky coast here is home to a large breeding colony of Fur Seals and these are readily seen basking on the rocks or swimming in the surf.

How to get there.

Ngawi is approximately 15kms. further along the road from the Pinnacles and Cape Palliser is reached a further 5kms. on from Ngawi.



Birds to see.

Black Backed Gull, **Red Billed Gull**, **Caspian Tern**, **White Fronted Tern**, **Black Shag**, **Spur-winged Plover**, **Banded Dotterel**, **Pied Stilt**, **Pipit**, **Skylark**.

With glasses or telescope **Royal Albatross** may be seen, and around Labour weekend **Sooty Shearwaters** fly south in their millions heading towards their southern breeding islands. Ngawi has some fishermen who will take charter tours (fishing or birdwatching) and some 4-5kms. off shore great pelagic bird viewing may be experienced. Both



Gannet. Peter Blok.

Royal and Wandering Albatross, **Giant Petrels**, **Flesh Footed Shearwaters**, **Fluttering Shearwaters**, **Sooty Shearwaters** and several **Mollymawk species**.

8 Riversdale Beach

Riversdale, although Wairarapa's most popular and populous beach resort is not the most rewarding for birdwatching. The beach, which is at least 3 kms. long is open, sandy and exposed with only low sand hills and open farmland behind.

How to get there.

From Highway 2 in Masterton, approaching from the south take the Te Ore Ore Rd on your right immediately you have crossed the Waipoua River. From the north Te Ore



Ore Rd is the 5th street on left after entering the town. Continue east along this road past the hospital and Henley Lake, both on your right cross the Ruamahanga River and after 24kms. of easy rolling country take the right hand Riversdale turn off at Blairlogie. A further 31 kms. will bring you to Riversdale Beach. This resort has quite a large permanent population, a store, snack bar, golf course, camping ground. public toilets etc.

Birds to see.



Black Backed Gull, Red Billed Gull, Caspian Tern, White Fronted Tern, Black Shag, Little Shag, Variable Oystercatcher, Banded Dotterel, Pied Stilt, White Faced Heron and Australasian Gannet off shore.

Banded Dotterel. T C Dennison

9 Castlepoint

This picturesque resort together with the huge rock to the south, Castle Rock, were both named by Captain Cook. The 74 foot fully automated lighthouse which stands 170 feet above sea level sends three quick flashes every 45 seconds and is visible for 19 miles. Follow the track, which starts by St. Peter by the Sea Church, which provides good views of the reef and lagoon and can eventually lead you to the 526 foot summit of Castle Rock. The views north and south are magnificent and with a telescope, especially on a windy day you are almost certain to see **Albatross** and other pelagic species.

A large mixed colony of **Red Billed Gulls** and **White Fronted Terns** occupies the southern end of the reef over summer.

How to get there

From Highway 2 in Masterton approaching from the south take the Te Ore Ore Rd. which is first on your right after crossing the Waipoua River bridge. From the



north Te Ore Ore Rd is the 5th street on your left after entering the town. Continue east passing Henley Lake on your right, cross the Ruamahanga River following Castlepoint/Riversdale Rd. for 20kms. and at Blairlogie take left hand fork (right hand fork leads to Riversdale) Take right hand turn in Tinui and follow on to Whakataki Hotel.....approx.1 km. further on take right hand fork to roads end at Castlepoint. Drive down "main street" to a car park by the church which overlooks the walkway to lighthouse, and provides easy access to fishing reef, the lagoon and the beginning of the Castle Rock track.

Birds to see.

On road leading in from Whakataki look for: **Magpie, Spur-winged Plover, Mallard and Paradise Shelducks, (on farm ponds) Skylark and Harrier.**



Around the settlement look for **Welcome Swallow, House Sparrow, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Starling Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Silveryeye and Goldfinch.**

Around the reef, lagoon and off shore look for: **Variable Oystercatcher, Reef Heron (rare) Black Backed Gulls, Red Billed Gulls, White Fronted Terns Caspian Terns,** and often **Australasian Gannet** diving in the bay.

Red Billed Gull. Peter Morrison.

10 Mataikona

Take the left hand fork 1 km. beyond the Whakataki Hotel and follow the rocky windswept coastline to the mouth of the Mataikona River some 11 kms. further on. At low tide the tilted rock strata in parallel lines emerging almost vertically out of the sea in places looks most spectacular. The beach is mostly rocky with a few sandy stretches. Rock pools are a feature and should be scanned carefully. This stretch of beach provides the best opportunity in the region to see the elusive **Reef Heron**. It can be easy to spot if in flight but its dull brown colouration and hunched posture make it difficult to see among the rocks.

This coast has been a traditional sea-food gathering area for the Maori. Fire sites and shell deposits exposed by the wind erosion in the sand dunes indicate old camp

sites and middens. Fragments of **Moa** egg shells can often be collected from the surface of the dunes at these spots.

How to get there.

Follow instructions as for Castlepoint but take left hand fork in the road 1km. beyond Whakataki Hotel. Apart from the sealed first two km. it is a gravel road but quite safe. Caution, however, should be exercised on some of the more narrow blind corners. and after 11 kms. you will come to the sandy driftwood strewn beach at the Mataikona River mouth.



Birds to see.

Along the rocky coast: **Black Backed Gulls, Red Billed Gulls, White Fronted Terns, Caspian Terns, Black Shags, Little Shags, White Faced Herons, Sacred Kingfisher** (feeding in rock pools in winter) **Reef Heron, Variable Oystercatcher....**

At the river mouth: **Spur-winged Plover, Pied Stilt, White Faced Heron, Black Shag, Little Shag, Black Fronted Dotterel, Banded Dotterel, Variable Oystercatcher, White Fronted Terns, Caspian Terns, Black Backed Gull, Red Billed Gull, Harrier, Welcome Swallow.....**

In the coastal scrub: **Californian Quail, Yellowhammer Starling, Magpie,.....**

In the native bush on seaward slopes of hills: **Grey Warbler, Pied Fantail, Tui, Bellbird, NZ Pigeon, Silvereeye, Blackbird, Chaffinch.....**



Variable Oystercatcher. D Cornick

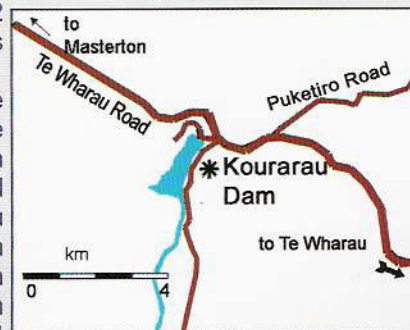
Little Blue Penguins nest in hollow driftwood logs and under beach cottages.....may be seen coming ashore in the evenings but perhaps more often heard when they return to mate on nest.

11 Kourarau Dam

This man made dam, high in the Maungarakis, was developed in the 1920s by the Wairarapa Electric Power Board to supply water for two small power stations which still, with their original machinery produce electricity to this day. **Dabchick** are present year round and here you have perhaps your best opportunity of seeing them. The dam is some 20 hectares in extent and 6 metres at its deepest. The southern end where the feeding stream enters is shallow and rushes and other vegetation provide good shelter for nesting waterfowl. This is a popular fishing spot for both Rainbow and Brown Trout. There is also duck shooting here and it is best to avoid visiting in the season May-June.

How to get there.

From Highway 2 follow instructions as for Gladstone Bridge. Cross the bridge passing the Gladstone Inn on your left, and continue until you come to a T junction with the Longbush Rd, and here turn left. Continue past



the Admiral Rd. turn off, continue past the Gladstone School and turn right into road marked Te Wharau, Flatpoint, Glenburn. Climb up through the gorge passing first surge tower on your left and soon after passing second one on your right cross a small bridge and turn right into a cattle-stop gateway marked Kourarau Dam Lake. 200 metres along this gravel road is a parking area on the lake side.

Birds to see.



Dabchick. D Cornick

Black Swan, Canada Goose, Dabchick, Black Shag, Little Shag, Little Black Shag (less common) **Mallard, Australasian Shoveller, Grey Teal, Paradise Shelduck, Pied Stilt, Spur-winged Plover, Australasian Harrier, Welcome Swallow, Australian Magpie.**

12 Henley Lake

This artificial lake came into being in 1987 and has since become one of the best birding areas in the Wairarapa. 43 birds species have been recorded here and the list continues to grow. It has become one of Masterton's major leisure areas with canoeing, kayaking, dragon boat racing, fishing, dog walking, etc.

To the south between the confluence of the Waipoua and Ruamahanga Rivers is a wilderness wetland area with shallow ponds designed to attract waders.

How to get there

From Highway 2 approaching from the north turn left into Te Ore Ore Road which is the 5th street on your left after entering the town. Approaching from the south the Te Ore Ore turn-off is first on the right after crossing the Waipoua River bridge.



Continue along Te Ore Ore Road for about one kilometre and the lake will come into view on your right. Good roadside parking is available

Birds to see.

Black Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Scaup, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveller, Paradise Shelduck, Australian Coot, NZ Dabchick, Black Shag, Little Shag, Little Black Shag (occasionally) Welcome Swallow, Black Billed Gull, Black Backed Gull, Spur-winged Plover, Kingfisher.

In the wetlands look for **Pied Stilt, Pukeko, White Faced Heron, Black Fronted and Banded Dotterels.**

Among the trees and in open spaces look for: **Tui, Grey**



Scaup. R Powlesland.

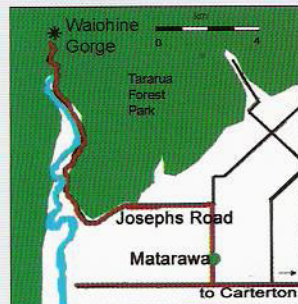
Warbler, Pied Fantail, Silvereeye, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Yellowhammer, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Starling, Skylark, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Magpie, Australasian Harrier.

13 Waiohine Gorge

The Waiohine Gorge is one of the entrances to the Tararua Forest Park and the road into it terminates at Wall's Whare, a popular picnic spot, camping area and set off point for trampers. The 1.5 hour Loop Track traverses both exotic and native forest and can introduce you to New Zealand's smallest bird the **Rifleman**, our bush canary the **Whitehead**, and the **Tomtit**. The Waiohine River is here crossed by a spectacular swing bridge, said to be the longest of its kind in New Zealand.

How to get there.

The turn-off to the gorge from Highway 2 is just a little north of the Waiohine River Bridge on the west side. It is Swamp Road and well sign posted. Continue on this till you turn into Moffat's Road on your right. You will soon encounter a railway crossing with no bells or lights (**beware**) Next turn left into Joseph's Road and follow this until you reach Wall's Whare.



The first 8 km. are sealed, the remainder is gravel. This is still a good road and perfectly adequate for ordinary cars but in wet conditions some of the fords (which are concreted) may carry quite a lot of water and be a little difficult.

Birds to see.

As you are en-route driving through open farmland look for: **Australasian Harrier, Magpie, Spur-winged Plover, Pukeko, Kingfisher**, often perched on power lines, **Mallard, Paradise Shelduck, Pied Stilt, White Faced**



Bellbird. R Wasley

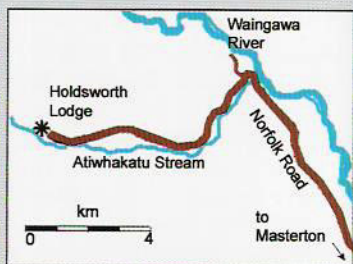
Heron, Californian Quail, Yellowhammer and Starling. In the bush: **Pied Fantail, Grey Warbler, Tomtit, Tui, Bellbird, NZ Pigeon, Rifleman, Silvereeye, Whitehead, Eastern Rosella, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Chaffinch and Dunnock.**

14 Holdsworth Lodge

This is perhaps the main gateway to the Tararua Forest Park with tracks leading directly to Powell Hut and Holdsworth summit (1470 metres), and beyond. The forest is primarily Beech giving way to alpine meadows studded with flowers over the late spring and summer. There are a number of easy walks, well sign posted by the car park and all are good for bird watching. Donnelly Flat is an easy 30 minute walk. Holdsworth Lookout Track is a much steeper 30 minute hike which leads you to a good lookout site above the lodge area. The Atiwhakatu Valley Track follows the course of the Atiwhakatu Stream and the circuit takes 2 hours.

How to get there.

Coming from the south at about 9kms. from Carterton take the Norfolk Road turn off on your left at the Jukon Nisshu timber mill. From the north the Norfolk Road corner is on your right 1 km. south of the Waingawa River Bridge. Follow Norfolk Road for 15kms. and you will reach Holdsworth Lodge parking area.



Birds to see.

Pied Fantail, Grey Warbler, Whitehead, Tomtit, Tui, Silvereye, Bellbird, NZ Pigeon, Rifleman, Eastern Rosella, Chaffinch, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Dunnock, Kingfisher, Australasian Harrier with possible early



Rifleman. T C Dennison.

morning sightings of Falcon, Kaka, and Red Crowned Parakeet are more likely to be heard than seen. Remember that early morning is the best time to see birds here as they are more active and more vocal at that time. However quite a number of species can be attracted even in the heat of the day by "squeaking" some polystyrene on a "licked" glass bottle.

15 Kiriwhakapapa

This picnic/camping spot is located some 16 kms north of Masterton in the foothills of the Tararuas. In the two previous centuries this area was logged and the foundations of two old timber tram-lines are still present. There are several well sign posted walking tracks all good for bird watching. The Loop Track is the shortest and easiest returning you to the car park in about 30 minutes.

How to get there.

The Kiriwhakapapa Road comes off Highway 2 some 16.6 kms. from Masterton and 5.5 kms. south of the Ruamahanga River Bridge as you come down off Mt. Bruce. The road is sealed for the first 3 km. The remaining 4.5kms. of gravel is good but in places the road is narrow and care is required on blind corners. There is a large car park and camping area with cooking and toilet facilities.



Birds to see.

On your way in look out for :Australasian Harrier, Magpie, Spur-winged Plover, Paradise Shelduck, Starling, Yellowhammer, Skylark, Pipit, and Eastern Rosella.

In the bush: Tui, Bellbird, NZ Pigeon, Pied Fantail, Grey Warbler, Whitehead, Tomtit, Rifleman, Kingfisher, Silvereye, Chaffinch, Blackbird and more likely to be heard than seen. Kaka and Kakariki or Red Crowned Parakeet.



Whitehead. J L Kendrick

16 National Wildlife Centre and Mt. Bruce Forests.

The National Wildlife Centre is a breeding centre for endangered birds and is run in partnership by a board of Trustees who look after the educational and visitor side of it, and the Dept. of Conservation who look after the birds and the bush. Originally established in 1963 in an attempt to breed the highly endangered **Takahe** which had been rediscovered in 1948 in an isolated area in Fiordland. **Takahe** breeding was never successful but a lot was learnt about it which has later helped breeding in other centres. Other endangered birds: **Kokako**, **Stitchbird**, **North Island Saddleback**, **Campbell Island Teal**, **Black Stilt**, **Shore Plover** and **Kaka** have all been bred successfully. See Mt. Bruce section in booklet.

How to get there.

Mt. Bruce Reserve is adjacent to Highway 2 about 11 kms. south of Eketahuna and 28 kms. north of Masterton. It is well sign posted and the Visitor Centre is easily seen from the road.



Birds to see.

From the tracks in the forest reserve look for: **Pied** and **Black Fantail**, **Grey Warbler**, **Tomtit**, **Tui**, **Silvereye**, **NZ Pigeon**, **Bellbird**, **Rifleman**, **Whitehead**, **Eastern Rosella**, **Kaka**, **Kokako** (recently released) **Shining Cuckoo**, (heard more often than seen from September to March). **Blackbird**, **Song thrush**, **Dunnock**, **Chaffinch**. **Brown Kiwi** also recently released in the bush are much more likely to be heard in the evening rather than seen.

In captivity the following species can be seen: **Brown Kiwi** (nocturnal house) **Takahe**, **Stitchbird**, **Kokako**, **Kaka**,



Takahe. DoC.

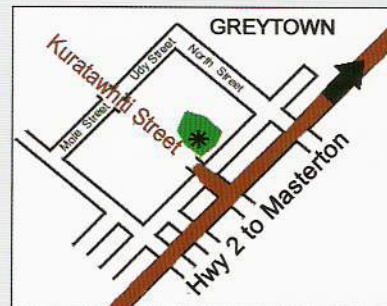
Campbell Island Teal and possibly **Shore Plover** (but these may be off limits). These however and some other selected species may in the breeding season be viewed live on video.

17 Greytown Park

This is New Zealand's first planned inland town, established in 1853 from land purchased from the Maori by Governor George Grey. It has retained a delightful colonial village character with New Zealand's most complete main street of wooden Victorian buildings. Greytown Park consists of native and exotic bush, playing fields and camping ground. **NZ Pigeon** are commonly seen and it is not unusual to see a **Kaka** or a **Falcon**.

How to get there.

Highway 2 runs through the Main Street of Greytown and the park is accessed at its northern end by turning west into Kuratawhiti Street. Approximately 0.7 km. along this is the park on your right hand side with street parking available close to the entrance.



Birds to see.



Look for native species: **Silvereye**, **Pied Fantail**, **Grey Warbler**, **Tui**, **NZ Pigeon**, and some times **Kaka** and **NZ Falcon**.

Introduced species include: **House Sparrow**, **Starling**, **Blackbird**, **Song Thrush**, **Dunnock**, **Goldfinch**, **Greenfinch**, **Chaffinch**, **Redpoll**, **Eastern Rosella**, **Magpie**, **Yellowhammer**.

NZ Pigeon. **R Wasley**

18 Gladstone Bridge

The Ruamahanga River at Gladstone has become wide and relatively languid. Exploring here means hiking the shingle and then periodically "river-hopping" to cross a channel to the next shingle bed. Or, you can stick to the

river banks and brave the gorse, blackberry, and dense willow thickets.

How to get there.

Approaching from the south from Highway 2 after leaving Carterton turn right into Somerset Rd. Keep on this for 5.5 kms. until it ends at a T junction with Bristol Road. Turn left in direction marked Gladstone.

Continue north on this road taking the first turn

again on your right marked Gladstone Road/Vineyards. Approaching from the north from Highway 2 turn left into the East Taratahi Road 2.8 kms. south of the Waingawa River Bridge. Continue along this for 5 kms till you reach Bristol Road where you turn right in direction marked Gladstone A further 4 kms. on you come to road on your left marked Gladstone Road/Vineyards.

Follow Gladstone Road passing Gladstone and Fairmont Vineyards and further on ,on your right Hurunui-O-Ranghi Marae At 5.8 kms. from the turn off you cross a small bridge and just before coming to the main bridge turn into an open gateway on your left. This gravel road runs down to a gravel storage area and then follows the Ruamahanga River up-stream for some distance. Access to the river is possible at several points through the willows.

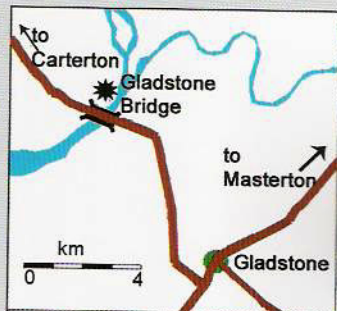
Birds to see.

This is one of the best sites for seeing **Black Fronted Dotterels**. also, **Banded Dotterels**, **Spur-winged Plover** **Pied Stilt**, **Black Shag**, **Black Backed Gull**, **Black Billed Gull** (occasionally) **Welcome Swallow**, **Mallard**, **Paradise Shelduck**, **Skylark**, **Pipit**, and **Californian Quail** (in broom

and blackberry along rivers edge). Roosting and nesting under the bridge are **Feral Pigeons**. In the farmland are **Australasian Harrier**, **Magpie**, **Skylark**, and **Yellowhammer**.



Black Fronted Dotterel. J L Kendrick.



19 Morison's Bush

Morison's Bush is named for the original settlers who farmed here from the 1850s. This popular picnic, camping and trout fishing spot provides birdwatching for both bush and river birds.

How to get there.

From Highway 2 take the Martinborough Road just at the southern end of Greytown. About 3.4 kms. on at the Electricity Substation the road veers left and at a further 2 kms. you will pass the historic Bush House on your left. One km on you drive into the gravel road marked Glenmorven Road, and a further 2 kms. you come to a sign and turn-off for Morison's Bush picnic and camping area.

Follow this gravel road through farmland to the gate leading to the Ruamahanga River and camp ground.



Birds to see.

Grey Warbler, **Pied Fantail**, **Silvereye**, **Tui**, **Chaffinch**, **Blackbird**, among the trees. Along the river look for: **Black Fronted Dotterel**, **Banded Dotterel**, **Pied Stilt**, **Mallard**, **Kingfisher**.

Pied Stilt. TC Dennison.

Mt. Bruce National Wildlife Centre.

This centre owes its beginnings to the rediscovery of the **Takahe** in 1948. Soon after this it was decided to engage in a captive breeding programme in order to save the bird from extinction.

Elwyn Welch, a local farmer who lived two kms south of the Centre was entrusted with the care of birds and eggs taken from the wild in Fiordland. When he went overseas some years later the Wild-Life Service set up the present facility at its current site in 1963. After many years of

frustration **Takahe** eggs were hatched but chicks never successfully reared .

Over the years other endangered species have been introduced to captive breeding programmes. The offspring from these have been released onto off shore islands and new populations have been established. Visitors to the Centre are able to see **Stitchbird, Kokako, Kaka, Campbell Island Teal**, (the rarest duck in the world), as well as **Brown Kiwi** and **Kakariki**. More recently a concerted predator control programme has been introduced in an effort to restore the forest. As a result of this effort, **Kaka**, which have been absent from the forest for over 60 years have been re-introduced and are already successfully breeding. Supplementary food is put out each day at 3 pm when the "wild" **Kaka** come in to feed. This is a great opportunity for visitors to see the birds close up.

Kokako and **Brown Kiwi** are also being released into the adjacent forest. As the predator control proceeds greater numbers of existing bush birds will be present including **Tomtit, Rifleman, Grey Warbler, Tui, Bellbird, Whitehead, NZ Pigeon** and **Shining Cuckoo**.



Our Changing Bird Population.

Since settlement began the number of native bird species has dwindled and many more have come under threat. The introduction of an array of predators and the gradual reduction of habitats has meant that some species have disappeared altogether.

As the Wairarapa forests were cleared and burnt a notable casualty was the **Huia**. Its favoured habitat was the Seventy Mile Bush and as that was cleared the **Huia**

finally disappeared with the last being "collected" in the early 1900s. As the forest declined and alien predators, stoats, weasels, ferrets, rats, cats and possums increased other species to suffer were **Kaka, Kokako** and **Brown Kiwi**. Fortunately these are all now being re-introduced back into a last remnant of the old original Seventy Mile Bush.the bush adjacent to the Mt Bruce Reserve.

Wetland habitats have been altered just as drastically as our forests by drainage and conversion to pasture.

Fernbird has not been seen for well over half a century whilst, **Marsh Crake, Spotless Crake** and **Banded Rail** have all but disappeared. The elusive **Australasian Bittern** is now rarely seen. **Pipits** used to be seen on almost every road but as gravel has been replaced with bitumen they are now uncommon. The native **Grey Duck** is also much less common than the introduced **Mallard** which has interbred with it and perhaps has also displaced it.

While we may despair about the species lost, we rejoice in the arrival and dispersal of many new species. In the 1960s the **Black Fronted Dotterel** arrived on our riverbeds from Australia and has thrived. About the same time the **Welcome Swallow** first appeared locally and as it occupied an unclaimed feeding niche its numbers exploded. Fears that it might compete with the **Fantail** for insect prey were soon dispelled and the latter are also very common. **Spur-winged Plovers** entered the Wairarapa around the 1970s and these have also become exceedingly common. **Royal Spoonbill**, present in New Zealand perhaps since pre-European times are now being seen in increasing numbers in the Wairarapa around Lakes Onoke and Wairarapa. **White Faced Heron** numbers are also well up perhaps due to the increased irrigation on dairy farms. There is some debate as to how **Eastern Rosella** got to be here but large numbers are present in the Tararua foothills and they have now spread far east into the Wairarapa.

Pelagic Birds of the Wairarapa.

The sea off Palliser Bay and the East Coast of the Wairarapa provides great opportunities for watching pelagic birds, and the best way to do this is to join them in their own habitat at sea. This can be arranged by contacting the charter boat owners listed in the Wairarapa Yellow Pages.

Pelagic birds spend most of their life at sea coming ashore only to breed. They are sometimes referred



Buller's and Shy Mollymawks.
Rod Morris.

to as "tube-noses" because of the often prominent tube like nostrils positioned on their bill. These ocean going birds are really robust as they have to survive in a frequently inhospitable environment.

In extreme storm conditions they are known to even rest on the wing until the storm abates. During the non-breeding period most of this group of birds travel vast distances. Oceans cover 75% of the earth surface, hence this is indeed a vast habitat. In the breeding season large birds such as **Albatross** species return to the same nesting sites where take off and landing can be easily achieved. The smaller species such as **Shearwaters** etc. return to nesting burrows, usually on off-shore islands, and do this at night in order to evade predation by large hawk-like birds called **Skuas**. All these breeding sites have been used by a huge number of generations and are now largely confined to uninhabited, isolated islands.

Species frequently observed at sea from fishing boats include: **Royal Albatross, Wandering Albatross, Shy Mollymawk, Buller's Mollymawk, Northern Giant Petrel, Cape Pigeon, Flesh Footed Shearwater, Fluttering Shearwater** and **Sooty Shearwater**. On occasions **Common Diving Petrels, Hutton's Shearwaters** and **Fairy Prion** may be added to the list.

By picking up and identifying dead storm-wrecked birds on the beaches we know of a lot of other less common pelagic birds which at certain seasons frequent our off shore waters.

Charter boat owners prepared to take groups out bird watching may be contacted through the Yellow Pages of the phone book under heading of "Fishing Trips".

Ornithological Society of NZ.

The society has been in existence for 64 years and organises its members, who are all interested in birds but not all scientists, to gather data about all aspects of bird study. This is then published in a quarterly journal called the 'Notornis'.



The movement of sea birds is often impeded by storms and results in large wrecks of birds being washed up onto beaches, so 'Beach Patrols' have been carried out regularly for over 60 years and gives ornithologists the chance to examine birds without having to first capture them. Sometimes this entails the remains of birds being taken away for closer inspection, so that identification and measurements can be accurately recorded.

The OSNZ also runs bird-banding courses, which include mist netting birds, and teaching people how to handle them before they are weighed, measured, banded and released again.

The banding of birds allows individuals to be recognised and studied, and also allows their migration to be followed. The 'Atlas' scheme, which is being run at present, is to discover where and when all the different bird species are spread throughout the country.

A seasonal census is done of 10 kms squares over 5 years. The results will then be compared to a similar scheme that was done 25 yrs ago.

The OSNZ also maintains a national database on NZ birds as well as a lending library of books and slides. The 'Notornis' is of more scientific interest but there is also the 'Southern Bird' magazine, which conveys more of the human interest of bird watching.

Members have a chance to meet at the AGM, which is held in a different region each year. This allows members to visit the prime regional bird watching spots with local experts to point out any rarities. Another highlight of the meeting is the scientific day, where scientists and amateurs present papers, outlining the work that they have done in the past year. For more information - write to:

Ornithological Society of NZ,
PO Box 12397,
Wellington.

NZ is split into 20 regions. In each region there is a regional representative who co-ordinates activities at the local level. In this area a committee does this.

The Wairarapa region stretches from Woodville in the North and Ngawi in the South and is bounded by the sea at the East and South and the ranges at the West. With these diverse habitats we are able to see a wide variety of birds within a relatively short distance.

This region has been very active for many years and produces a quarterly programme of meetings and field trips, which are held monthly and are usually very friendly and informal affairs. To make it more convenient for everyone we hold the meetings alternately in the north and south of the region.

We usually manage to get an interesting speaker for our meetings and rely heavily on the contacts that our founder members have made over the years.

Field trips are a great chance to learn from the experts, and make friends with like-minded people who come from all walks of life. Learning where to look for birds and listen for birdcalls makes any outing far more interesting.

Annual 'Twitchathons' - to see the most species in one day - brings out the competitive side of the region's members. Participants go to great lengths and distances to see the most species.

We are also lucky to have the National Wildlife Centre in our region and are able to call on the bird staff sometimes to give us talks about the interesting work they do there.

For more information please contact:

The Wairarapa Branch of OSNZ,
Masteron Visitor Centre
316 Queen Street,
Masterton.

Bird watching for beginners.

Bird watching is something you can enjoy all your life and can add another dimension to travel.

A few things can make this activity a lot more rewarding and interesting.

Buy a copy of the "Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand" by Heather and Robertson. This well illustrated handbook covers all the birds of New Zealand and can help with rapid identification. The accompanying text provides interesting information on distribution, behaviour and breeding.

A pair of binoculars helps enormously.....8 x 30 is a useful size. 8 refers to the magnification and 30 to the size of the lens. Larger magnification, with its extra weight, is not necessarily a practical advantage as hand holding can create tremor causing blurring of the image.

A small note book will allow you to record field observations on size, colour, leg and bill length etc. facts that will greatly assist you later when you refer to your reference books for definitive identification

Birds are most easily observed when they are unaware of your presence. Watching garden birds through a window can teach you a lot. Watching birds from the comfort of your car often allows quite close observation as a vehicle is often not considered a threat.

Birds like any other wild creature are quick to detect and react to movement, so remain still or move slowly. Avoid conspicuous clothing.

In the bush the birds are a lot more active and vocal in the cool of the morning and this can be the best time to visit. As the day progresses and gets warmer the bush can become a very quiet place. However the birds are still there and just need attracting.

You can buy a number of sophisticated "bird callers" but the home made version is just as effective and infinitely cheaper.

Get a small wide necked glass pill bottle which will hold some pieces of polystyrene. Rub a piece of polystyrene on the licked glass and an amazing range of squeaks

and calls can be produced. Bush birds are readily attracted to the "squeaking". The first arrivals will usually be **Grey Warblers**, and **Fantails**. The many other varieties that will be attracted include, **Tomtit**, **Bellbird**, **Tui**, **Whitehead**, **Silvereye** and **Chaffinch**.

Nests are a great attraction and there is always the tendency to either look or feel inside for eggs. In the early stages of incubation birds will readily abandon a nest that has been interfered with. This is a tragedy that should never happen.

Seabird colonies are noisy exciting places to visit but again interference should be kept to a minimum. The nests are open and obvious and unguarded eggs (especially of **White Fronted Terns**) are readily predated by marauding **Gulls**. Disturbing small chicks within the colony can also result in disaster as a chick wandering away from its nest site can be attacked and killed by members of its own species. So refrain from wandering into **Gull** and **Tern** colonies and view them from the periphery.

Try and follow these simple guides and your bird watching will be interesting and eco-friendly.

Acknowledgements.

The articles in this booklet are all derived from work of local members of the Wairarapa Branch of the Ornithological Society. Thanks go to the members for their contributions.

Our thanks to Jenn Falconer for supplying many of the original maps and to Peter Hargreaves for modifying these for this publication, and for his cover designs and general formatting of the booklet.

Photo credits go to : Roger Wasley, Ralph Powlesland, David Cornick, Colin Scadden, Matthew Wong, Tenick Dennison, Peter Blok, Peter Morrison and Dept. of Conservation Library.

Our thanks to Mike Dennison and Alej. Lynch of Hopscotch Interactive Inc. for all their work on the website of "Birds of the Wairarapa and where to see

them" and on this booklet which is essentially a condensed version of that website.

Thanks are also due to Ralph Powlesland and David Medway for their helpful comments on the editing of this publication.

Checklist of Wairarapa Birds

- and pages where they may be found.

Bellbird	6,8,12,16,18
Australasian Bittern	3,5,23
Blackbird	8,11,12,13,19
Chil Bunting*	
Chaffinch	11,12,14,19,21
Sulphur Crested Cockatoo*	
Australian Coot	14
Marsh Crake*	4,23
Spotless Crake*	4,23
Shining Cuckoo	6,22
Long-tailed Cuckoo*	
Eastern Curlew*	
NZ Dabchick	3,5,13,14
Banded Dotterel	3,4,6,7,9,10,12,14,20,21
Black Fronted Dotterel	3,4,12,14,20,21,23
Grey Duck	23
Dunnock	15,16,18
Cattle Egret*	
NZ Falcon	8,16,19
Black Fantail	18
Pied Fantail	6,8,12,14,18
Australasian Gannet	6,10,11
Bar-tailed Godwit	3
Goldfinch	11,14,19
Canada Goose	3,4,5,13,14
Cape Barren Goose*	
Feral Goose	
Greenfinch	14,19
Black Backed Gull	6,9,10,20
Black Billed Gull	7,14,20
Red Billed Gull	6,9,10
Australasian Harrier	5,11,15,20
White Heron*	
White Faced Heron	6,10,12,14,23
Reef Heron*	11,12
Glossy Ibis*	
Kaka	17,18,19,22
Brown Kiwi	18,22,23
Sacred Kingfisher	5,12,14,16,21
Lesser Knot*	3,7
North Island Kokako*	18,22,23
Australian Magpie	11,12,15,20
Mallard	3,4,5,11,13,21,23

Morepork	
Myna*	
Variable Oystercatcher	3,7,10,11,12
Red Crowned Parakeet	16,17,22
Yellow Crowned Parakeet	
Little Blue Penguin	12
Ring Necked Pheasant	
Feral Pigeon	7,21
NZ Pigeon	6,12,16,18,19,22
NZ Pipit	4,6,7,9,20,23
Pacific Golden Plover*	3
Spur-winged Plover	4,5,9,11,12,14,20,23
Pukeko	4,5,14,15
California Quail	8,12,15,26
Redpoll	8
Rifleman	15,16,17,22
Rook	
Eastern Rosella	16,17,18,19,23
Curlew Sandpiper*	3
Pectoral Sandpiper*	3
Sharp Tailed Sandpiper*	3
NZ Scaup	5,14
Black Shag	3,5,6,7,9,10,12,13
Little Black Shag	3,5,13
Little Shag	4,5,7,10,13
Paradise Shelduck	4,11,13,14,20
Australasian Shoveller	13
Silvereye	6,8,11,12,14,16
Skylark	4,5,6,9,11,15,20
House Sparrow	11,15,19
Royal Spoonbill	3,4,7,21
Starling	11,12,15,19
Pied Stilt	4,9,10,12,13,20,21
Black Stilt*	
Welcome Swallow	5,11,14,20,23
Black Swan	3,4,5,13,14
Mute Swan*	
Grey Teal	5,13,16
Black Fronted Tern	7
Caspian Tern	3,4,6,9,10
White Fronted Tern	6,9,10
Song Thrush	11,15,18,19
Tomtit	15,17,18,22
Tui	6,8,12,14,15,18,21
Feral Turkey	
Turnstone*	3,7
Grey Warbler	6,8,12,14,21
Whitehead.	6,15,16,17,18,27
Wrybill*	
Yellowhammer	8,11,12,14,15,19,20

* Rare, seasonal or localised - contact local OSNZ member for locality information.



NOTES