

# TARA

Newsletter of Auckland Region OSNZ

May 2007



*A group of birders visited Great Barrier Island this Easter, and for two Auckland OSNZ members, it was their first trip back since several Easter birding visits in the 1980s. The group are from left to right, Ken Bond, Mark Eller, John Staniland, Gillian Eller, Eila Lawton (rear), Mary Thompson (Dunedin), Karen Staniland, Peter Maddison, and Suzi Phillips. (Absent is our photographer and Auckland OSNZ member, John Woods).*

## Birding the Barrier - 24 years on

In the early 1980s, birding trips to Great Barrier Island became popular with Auckland birders, as the island's rich birdlife and forests came to their attention.

The Easter 1983 trip was reported in the Auckland media, as that of a "group of eccentrics". That trip included present members Ken Bond and Gillian Eller, (see edited report on page 10).

This Easter, Ken Bond and Gillian Eller joined another "group of eccentrics" for a chance to bird the Barrier again for the first time in more than 20 years. It was a memorable trip for the group, not least for the birds, the botany, the fantastic weather, and the banter from the back of the van!

We left early Friday morning on the slow, but steady

Sealink car ferry from Wynyard Wharf. Our group in order of appearance at the wharf included; Mary Thompson (OSNZ regional rep from Dunedin), John Woods (OSNZ Auckland), Gillian Eller (OSNZ Auckland), and her son Mark Eller, Ken Bond (OSNZ Auckland), John and Karen Staniland (OSNZ Auckland), Eila Lawton (OSNZ BOP), Peter Maddison (Forest and Bird president), and Suzi Phillips (OSNZ Ak). Although slow, our boat trip over was a good opportunity to spot seabirds in this part of the Hauraki Gulf. We travelled a line past Rangitoto, Motutapu, the Waiheke channel, past Rakino and the Noises, past the Firth of Thames, close to Moehau on the Coromandel Peninsula, and then across the channel

**Continued on page 9**

## TARA - Newsletter of the Auckland Branch of OSNZ

Auckland Branch OSNZ meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in the **Environmental Sciences Building** in the grounds of **Unitec on Carrington Road in Point Chevalier**. Enter via Gate 1 or 3 and follow signs to building 23. There is ample free parking. (Map available from Suzi). Admission by donation.

### VISITORS AND FRIENDS ALWAYS WELCOME

#### Regional Representative and 'TARA' Editor:

Suzi Phillips, Ph 09-479-5395 or  
email [suzi@dialogue.co.nz](mailto:suzi@dialogue.co.nz)

#### Regional Recorders :

##### **Landbirds, Waterfowl & Rails;**

Mel Galbraith, Ph 480-1958 (a/hours) or  
email [melgar@ihug.co.nz](mailto:melgar@ihug.co.nz)  
62 Holyoake Place, Birkenhead.

##### **Waders, Herons, Spoonbill & Egrets;**

Adrian Riegen, Ph 814-9741 or  
Email [riegen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:riegen@xtra.co.nz)  
231 Forest Hill Rd, R.D.1, Henderson.

##### **Seabirds, Gulls, Terns & Shags;**

John Simmons, Ph 828-8642 or  
email [johnsimmons@clear.net.nz](mailto:johnsimmons@clear.net.nz)  
4 Bamford Place, Avondale.

#### Census and Surveys

All members are invited to take part in the OSNZ Auckland branch census and surveys that take place during the year. There are always experienced regulars on these trips and they welcome new members to get involved in identifying and recording the birds. For wader and shorebird counts, the group usually meets about two hours before high tide. Contact the organiser (whose name and phone number appears alongside the survey or census date) to find out what time and where to meet. (See programme Pg 7).

## Regional Newsletters

If you would like to read newsletters from other OSNZ regions, have a look at those on the OSNZ website at [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz) and select the Regional Reports page. You can read them on the web, or download them to your own computer for printing. If you don't have a computer, most libraries have computers with free web access available for 1 - 2 hours per day.

## Satellites track Godwits

Members may have heard of the 16 Bar-tailed Godwits that have had satellite transmitters fitted in New Zealand to track their autumn migration to Alaska this season. Several of the Godwits have already reached their first staging post in the Yellow Sea coastal area of China and Korea. Three have been traced to Yalu Jiang where OSNZ's Adrian Riegen is one of a group from NZ, hoping to locate some of the satellite tracked birds. To follow the progress of these Godwits you can go to [www.nzshorebirds.com](http://www.nzshorebirds.com) and select the 'Godwits on migration' link.

## Birding Conferences 2007

This year there are two birding conferences that involve OSNZ.

In June is the annual **OSNZ conference and AGM**, hosted by Taranaki region branch and held in New Plymouth, from June 1-4.

Later in the year, there is the **Australasian Ornithological Conference** in Perth, Western Australia, from December 2-5. Both these conferences involve field trips and scientific days. For more information go the links at [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz) or contact Suzi Phillips for more details.

## Help needed for Auckland Conference in 2009

The 2009 Annual Conference of OSNZ is in Auckland and we have tentatively proposed Orewa as the locale.

In the next few months, we will be starting to plan and book the conference venue and accommodation.

We will then need to put together a scientific day(s) and field trips.

Orewa was chosen for its proximity to lots of good birding in the Auckland region with easy access for field trips to Tiritiri Matangi Island, Wenderholm and Shakespear Parks, Waiwera estuary and Strakas Wetland, and possibly a Hauraki Gulf pelagic.

***We need Auckland OSNZ members to help organise the conference to make it a success worthy of our branch.***

Please don't leave it to just a few dedicated members to organise, but come along and get involved in the fun. There will be many different ways people will be needed to help with both the organising of the conference and hospitality on Queen's Birthday weekend 2009.

If you would like to help, please email or phone Suzi asap. Phone 4795395 or email [suzi@dialogue.co.nz](mailto:suzi@dialogue.co.nz).





*A group of keen Waikato OSNZ birders led by Betty Seddon (above left), joined Auckland members at the Mangere Ponds area in February to view the waders and waterbirds present. On the pond by the causeway were Royal Spoonbill, Little Shags and Dabchick, and on the shell islands were good numbers of Godwit, SIPO and Wrybill. (Photo S. Phillips).*

## Stop Press - Egret seen again at Waiaatarua Wetland

An Intermediate Egret was seen late morning Sunday 22 April at the Waiaatarua Wetland during Auckland OSNZ's Wetland and Waterbirds Walk, led by Chris Bindon. The Intermediate Egret is very similar to the one there last year. It is feeding in the same area as last year - to the right of the main open water as viewed from Towle Place. Seen feeding vigorously on small fish and then roosting and preening. Has breeding plumes extending on breast and back. Bill yellow with reddish tinge. Line of gape ends just level with eye. Facial skin lores greyish green. Up-

per legs reddish brown, lower legs black.

Its appearance at the Waiaatarua Wetland is at the same time as last year - late April. The Intermediate Egret last year stayed until about October.

Birds also at Waiaatarua included; Aus. Shoveler, Grey Teal, Grey Duck, Mallard, NZ Scaup, Pied Stilt, Little Shag (Pied phase), Aus. Harrier Hawk, and Pukeko. The Wetlands Walk started at Tahuna Torea in West Tamaki where there were also good numbers of birds including; Grey Teal, Pied Stilt, Caspian Tern, VOC, SIPO, Kingfisher, White-faced Heron and Mallards.



*Hihi (Photo: S. Phillips)*

## Hihi monitoring help

The Ark in the Park is keen to contact people who can help with Hihi/Stitchbird monitoring.

Hihi were translocated from Tiritiri Matangi Island to the park earlier this year.

OSNZ members are invited to join the "Hihi Watch" in the Cascades area of the Waitakeres Regional Park. This involves sitting quietly near one of the seven feeder stations (similar to the ones on Tiri) to watch and record visits by Hihi over a half hour period, including their band combination if possible.

This could be done at two or three or more feeder stations per visit. It is a key tool to monitoring these special newcomers and in June there will be even more of a need with the second half of the translocation (another 30 birds from the island) scheduled to be released soon.

If anyone can help with this monitoring, please contact Sandra Jack, either on 632 0202 or email [arkinthepark@paradise.net.nz](mailto:arkinthepark@paradise.net.nz)



Fairy Terns at Pakiri Beach

*A juvenile NZ Fairy Tern begs for food from its father at the Pakiri River mouth in March. The juvenile is from an egg laid at Pakiri Beach at the beginning of January. There were two eggs in the clutch, and they were transferred to Auckland Zoo for artificial incubation (due to concern about high tides). Before they hatched the eggs were taken back to Pakiri. They hatched in late January, but one of the chicks died about 10 days later. The adult on the left is the father. He and his partner have nested at Pakiri for the last four summers now, and have fledged two chicks (this one, and another one last summer). The female parent was seen up the river fishing. (Photo: Suzi Phillips. Thanks for background information from David Wilson, DOC/OSNZ).*

## Sightings from around Auckland

**January 16** - I have lived on a 10-acre block just north of Albany for two years now and on Sunday had my first kaka overhead, noisily mobbed by three tui. Why do tui mob kaka?? I also have a singing dunnoek, another new bird for the property - although I did find a dead one not long after I got here. Alan Emmerson.

**April 6** - Gwenda Pulham and Phil Hammond went to **Big Sand Island** (Manukapua on the Kaipara Harbour), on Good Friday and although it was only a 3.9m tide there was still plenty of interest, 12.00 noon at Causeway Bay: Wrybill 192, Banded Dotterel 320, NZ Dotterel 12, Turnstone 6, Red-necked Stint 11, Mongolian Dotterel (Lesser Sand Plover) 1, (the latter was quite distinguishable from the bandies with greyer dorsal colour, bigger bill, whiter under-parts big "eye" and different facial marking. 1.00pm slightly south of causeway bay roost site: Paradise Shelduck 285, Black-backed Gull 27, Red-billed Gull 10, Caspian Tern 3, Far-eastern Curlew 2 flying over, Terek Sandpiper 1. Straka's Wetland (before BSI), flock of c.70 Little Black Shags arriving, 3 adult Dabchicks and one large juvenile still with head striation, (there was another adult on the pond down the road). Five or six Grey Duck that looked pure with very bold head marking and bright light green speculum with no hint of blue or purple - these are so scarce or even rare around Auckland these days that I guess they are worth mentioning when seen. **Phil Hammond.**

**April 19 - Big Sand Island (Manukapua).** Just glorious on big high tide on 19-4-07. Gordon Gorbey and Gwenda Pulham scored their highest ever count of Red-necked Stint for that site. Found 18 among c300 Banded Dotterels. Easy to see as all birds in un-vegetated inland pan rather than on sarcocornia. Other birds in inland pan were; c100 Godwit (no breeding plumage/ bands); c200 Knot (3x O flags, 1x W flag, 90% no b.p); NZ Dotterels 13; Wrybill 161; Terek Sandpipers 1, Sharp-tail Sandpipers 1. Scattered over un-vegetated fore-dunes were; SIPO 900, BB Gull 19, SBB Gull 8, White-fronted Tern 4, Red-billed Gull 4, NZ Fairy Tern 12, Caspian Tern 5, Pied Stilt c 70. Plenty of pipit seen and fernbird heard as usual. On return walk to car noticed hundreds and hundreds of White-fronted Tern in foraging frenzy just west of Moturemu Island, so no surprise that 2 Pomarine Skuas flew over, heading in that direction. Plus Mongolian Dotterel female, (even further into bp) seen foraging on dropping tide. **Gwenda Pulham.**

**April 18 - Shakespear Regional Park** - Brief look at the wetland areas. Species seen were; Royal Spoonbill 1, Keriheru 2, Paradise Ducks 6, Mallard 2, Welcome Swallow 7, Chaffinch 3, Goldfinch 10+, White-faced Heron 4, Pied Stilts 11, Kingfisher 2, Pukeko 30+, Blackbird. Gulf Harbour - Little Shag 1, VOC 12, SBBG 3, RB Gull 2. **Tiritiri Matangi Island highlights** - Takahē 3, Little Penguin 3, Bellbirds 30+, Saddleback 10+, Stitchbird 20+, Tui 10+, Whitehead 5, Kakariki 7+, Brown Teal 4, Kokako 2, NI Robin 2, VOC 2, Fantail 6, Buller's Shearwater 4, Fluttering Shearwater 10+, White-fronted Tern 2. **Suzi Phillips and Barbara Hughes.**



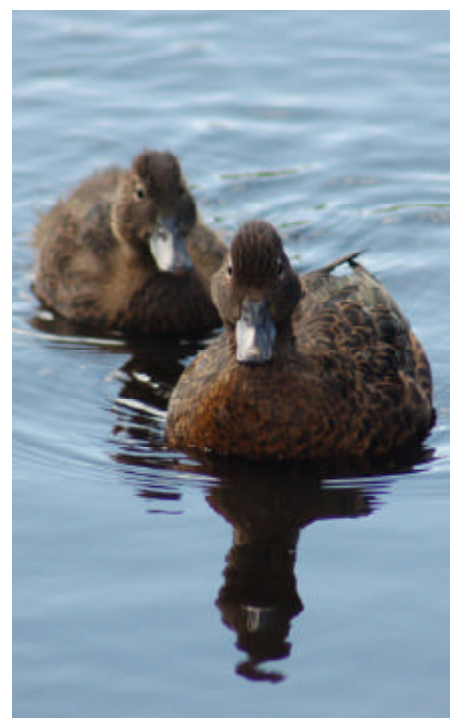


# Wonderful waterbirds

*After a long dry summer, these birds were enjoying the water in their various habitats recently.*

*At left, a lone juvenile Royal Spoonbill poses in the still waters of the Shakespear Regional Park wetland at the far end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).*

*Below left, a Reef Heron fishing at Huia. (Photo: Mike Wilcox). Below right, a pair of Brown Teal, female and duckling, on the upper dam in the Sinclair Wetland on Tiritiri Matangi Island. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).*



# Students inspired by

***The 2006 winners of Auckland OSNZ's inaugural Student Prize - a week on the Miranda Naturalists' Trust summer field course - were delighted with their experience there and the knowledge they gained. They also won a year's OSNZ membership each, sponsored by the OSNZ national council. On these pages, Elizabeth Job and Rosemarie Keen, share some of the highlights of the course and the impact it had on them.***

By Rosemarie Keen

I was lucky enough to attend the Miranda Field Course from the 18th-24th of January this year.

My week was a fantastic scholarship donated kindly to myself and another secondary school student by the Auckland branch of the OSNZ.

Throughout the week I explored a variety of topics in ecology and conservation with the help of a variety of inspiring tutors and people involved heavily in the Miranda Shorebird Centre.

These topics included shorebirds and waders, marine biology, insects, botany, the Firth of Thames ecosystem, mist and canon netting, anatomy of a typical bird, data recording, moult, plumage, optics and banding the birds.

My aim for the week was to learn in more depth issues and skills in ecology and conservation, and this was easily achieved with the knowledge provided by these people.

The two topics that had the greatest impact on me were bird anatomy and canon netting carried out on the final day. Both of these activities, especially the canon netting, pulled together all of the knowledge learnt throughout the week and brought bird conservation, ecology and anatomy into a clearer perspective.

The bird anatomy topic was covered by Andrew Hill who originally studied veterinary science in Sydney, but is now in New Zealand working for DOC and for Massey University in Palmerston North as a lecturer. A Bar-Tailed Godwit was dissected by Andrew for the group to see, and the different parts of this bird's anatomy were explored in great detail.

The respiratory system of the Bar-Tailed Godwit was extremely intriguing, discovering the lungs and the extra areas of air sacs where the bird can store oxygen while flying for long distances.

It was very interesting to discover the area of fat directly underneath the bird's feathers and skin, used as nourishment and sustenance during their long migration for breeding in Alaska.

These amazing adaptations show just how complex these birds are and the need for these adaptations to endure a tough migratory flight.

Learning that each Godwit at the age of four weeks undertakes a journey 11,000km long back to New

Zealand from the breeding grounds in the Arctic made me appreciate just how unique and precious this species and all the other migratory birds that visit Miranda are.

Canon netting was undertaken on the last day and led by Adrian Riegen and Stephen Davies.

Setting up the canons occurred early in the morning, where the canons were dug into the ground and the net laid across the shell-banks carefully in the right position.

Everything had to be placed perfectly to ensure the net would be fired out and land in the correct position. The first attempt at firing was not successful, so the net was moved over to the pond area.

A small number of Wrybill were caught as the majority were able to react quickly to the sound and fly off. The Wrybill were placed into already prepared 'bird bins' and taken to be examined and recorded under the gazebo on the shore. Here, the weight, bill length, moult, primary feather length, age and sex was established after a band was attached firmly with pliers to a leg of each Wrybill.

All of this vital information was recorded on a data sheet and then the Wrybill was released on the shell mound to go and rejoin its other mates.

It was incredible to be able to handle such a delicate, interesting and fascinating bird while on the course. Both the anatomy of a bird and canon netting really highlighted the rewards a career in science could provide me once I begin my tertiary education next year. It was fascinating to learn so much about shorebirds, ecology and conservation in the space of just five days and appreciate the importance of sharing this knowledge and continuing the research that has already begun in these areas.

I thoroughly enjoyed my week and am extremely grateful for all that I learnt and experienced.

Thank you to the OSNZ for this fantastic opportunity to attend this course and to all the tutors who made the week possible.

The student prize that provided me the opportunity to participate in the course is a fantastic idea as it allows young people who have a strong interest in conservation and the environment to experience the issues surrounding these fields.

# field studies prize

By Elizabeth Job

My first meeting of the people at the Miranda Shorebird Centre, both other participants in the course and the course directors, Elia Lawton and Keith Woodley, put me at ease as they were all open, welcoming and helpful.

The highlights for me were definitely the mist netting and the cannon netting which we were told was always a very popular part of the course and this year proved no exception. The mist nets were put up in an orchard and we caught, banded, weighed and measured a variety of birds with mostly young blackbirds, some sparrows, six greenfinches, a couple of white-eyes, two unbanded kingfishers, a fantail and a grey warbler, with the last three providing some great photo opportunities.

The course itself I soon found to be both interesting and informative, with sessions on a variety of topics, from the migration routes of the Bar-tailed Godwit to cannon netting and the banding of the Wrybills. There were also sessions on insect life in the Miranda area and a night bush insect walk led by Peter Maddison. The

course timetable was well organised, but flexible enough to accommodate some setbacks with the cannon netting and also to take advantage of the timely early arrival of some experts in their fields who led some of the afternoon sessions held in the conference room.

The cannon netting was also a wonderful highlight despite some setbacks. After a brief break for lunch, during which the nets were reset elsewhere, we managed to catch about 30 Wrybill. It was a wonderful learning experience and the fewer numbers meant that more time could be spent on the banding, bill measurements and weighing.

A very large and interesting part of the field course was the morning and evening wader watch sessions down at the shellbank. They were in some ways the hardest part due to both the early start time of 6:30am to catch the low tide, and having to put into practice our newly (for some people) learned skills of bird identification. Learning the names and identifiable features of the birds gave a great sense of achievement however and by the end of the course we had all learned a great deal about the art of bird spotting.

The greatest part of the course was the experience and information I gained from doing it, with the experiences of handling both shorebird and perching birds and of bird watching and identifying birds being invaluable in the type of career I would like to pursue. The information we learned about migration and bird behaviours is already useful in the biology course I am taking at school and many of the other topics such as anatomy and behaviour are sure to be handy in the future.

The student prize is a fantastic idea as it helps those students who would otherwise be unable to go on the course because of financial reasons to be able to have the experience. The prize meant I was able to have an invaluable and exciting experience that I will very much endeavour to repeat in the future, and would recommend to other students who are also interested in wildlife.



**Successful Student Prize winners, Rosemarie Keen (left) and Elizabeth Job, with the certificates they were awarded at the December meeting of Auckland OSNZ.**

**Entries now open for the 2007 Auckland OSNZ Student Prize - deadline September 30**



# Significant increase in Cornwall Park birds

The total of 1471 birds of 30 species in the February 2007 Cornwall Park Survey is substantially greater than the 1996 result (749 of 17 species).

It compares with 1038 of 24 species we found last October. Much of the seasonal increase comes from flocks of Sparrows, Starlings and feral Pigeons present at this time of year. The lower numbers of Blackbirds and Thrushes are to be expected when the open ground is dry and hard.

Additional species in the February count were Yellowhammer, Harrier, Spur-winged Plover, Pied Stilt and both Red-billed and Black-backed Gulls. Of species recorded in the October 2006 survey only the Fantail was not found this time. Since 1996 Tui have multiplied, while Swallows, Plovers and Paradise Shelducks have increased as part of a spread into Auckland as a whole. It is good to find that the park has not lost any birds, native or introduced, during the past ten years.

These results will be incorporated in the Cornwall Park Birds brochure which is to be reprinted shortly.

Saturday 24 February 2007 turned on a beautiful summer morning for the survey, organised by Auckland branch member, Michael Taylor. Those involved were Richard Baker and Brian Gill, Geoff Arnold and John Simmons, Ken Bond and Chris Thompson, Barbara Hughes, Mick Cleland and **Michael Taylor**.

NATIVE SPECIES (15)			
	<u>28 Oct 2006</u>	<u>24 Feb 2007</u>	<u>24 Feb 1996</u>
Fantail	2	--	2
Grey Warbler	13	13	26
Gull, Black-backed	--	9	--
Gull, Red-billed	--	21	--
Harrier	--	1	--
Kingfisher	11	11	6
NZ Pigeon	8	4	--
Paradise Shelduck	8	6	--
Pied Stilt	--	1	--
Shining Cuckoo	3	1	--
Silvereye	27	63	37
Spur-winged Plover	--	10	--
Tui	39	44	5
Welcome Swallow	39	35	12
White-faced Heron	--	1	--
TOTAL	150	220	88
NON-NATIVES (16)			
Blackbird	352	229	172
Californian Quail	15	35	--
Chaffinch	26	7	49
Goldfinch	16	91	42
Greenfinch	21	3	40
House Sparrow	99	215	209
Magpie	14	19	21
Myna	31	75	17
Pheasant	12	12	--
Rock Pigeon	57	244	35
Rosella	72	61	33
Skylark	4	2	--
Song Thrush	84	33	10
Spotted Dove	3	25	--
Starling	82	196	33
Yellowhammer	--	4	--
TOTAL	888	1251	661



## Birding the Barrier - 24 years on *Continued from page 1*

with Cuvier on our right, to the Barrier.

On the crossing we saw large rafts of Fluttering Shearwaters, smaller groups of Buller's Shearwaters, several Caspian Terns and White-fronted Terns, Little Penguins, an Arctic Skua, Black Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, and a Fairy Prion, as well as the usual Australasian Gannets, Southern Black-backed Gulls and Red-billed Gulls. As we arrived at Tryphena, our first birds were Variable Oystercatchers, Pied Shag, Little Shag, Black Shag and Kereru.

We picked up our 10-seater hire van at Tryphena wharf and set off for Orama Lodge at the other end of the island. Along the rocky harbour coast were several White-faced Heron, and in the gardens we picked up Blackbird, Myna, House Sparrow, and Starling.

Not far over the hill from Tryphena we stopped at the first one-way bridge and had our first treat - a group of about 40 Brown Teal, basking on the bank just up stream from the bridge. There was also our first sighting of one of the many Banded Rail that are so easily seen around the island. Also in this area we added Welcome Swallow, Mallard, Paradise Duck, Pukeko, Kingfisher and Harrier Hawk.

We stopped at Medlands Beach and had a break, enjoying the sun and taking photos of this stunning beach in case the weather cracked up over the weekend. On the way via brief stops at Claris, and Whangapoua, and across Mt Hobson, we also ticked Chaffinch, Grey Warbler, and Silvereye.

Next morning at Orama - a peaceful, bush-fringed cove - we also had Tui, Kaka and Fantail as well as the less popular Magpies and Spur-winged Plover. A group of resident Brown Teal (up to 12 at one time), also kept us entertained there. They had an amusing evening gambol when they would run around the lawn chasing each other. Most of the time they were dabbling on the tide edge, or in the nearby stream and avoiding the large eels that lived there.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher were spotted sev-



**Banded Rail are seen out and about in many areas of Great Barrier Island. (Photo S. Phillips)**



**Kaka eating Kauri cone on the peak of Mt Hobson at Easter (Photo: John Woods)**

eral times on our visit. Once at Orama with a group of VOC, and once on the Whangapoua sandspit, also with a large group of VOC. Each time, these were carefully distinguished from the variable form of the VOC. Morepork were heard by those who had difficulty sleeping the first night.

The next day we covered both the walk to Mt Hobson and a quick look at Whangapoua estuary. Birds seen included Robin, Tomtit, Kakariki, Kaka, and Fernbird (Mt Hobson), and New Zealand Dotterel, Pied Stilt, New Zealand Pipit, Skylark and Goldfinch.

The walk to Mt Hobson and back was as much a botanical treat as a birding one. As well as the stunning rock formations and canyons, some of the botanical highlights included *Pseudopanax discolor*, *Dracophyllum patens*, *Olearia alomii*, *Halocarpus kirkii*, *kunzia sinclairii* and flowering *Earina autumnalis* (on Mt Hobson), the mistletoe *Ileostylus micranthus*, and many other interesting plants, ferns and fern allies.

After our Easter Sunday breakfast, we departed for Whangapoua sandspit and enjoyed a day out on the dunes. Our tally for that day included several new birds for our species list. My list for the beach and sandspit had NZDotterel 18 (1x band MBW-WG), VOC 52, Banded Dotterel 22, Caspian Terns 10, White-fronted Terns 38, Pied Stilt 12, Golden Plover 2, Bar-tailed Godwit 9, Wrybill 8, SIPO 1, Pied Shag

***Continued on page 10***

## Birding the Barrier - 24 years On *Continued from pages 1 and 9*

1, BBG 2, Greenfinch 4. Beach wrecked birds at Whangapoua (all C), included Buller's Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Little Penguins 3, Red-billed Gull juvenile, Black-backed Gull juvenile.

After Whangapoua we visited beautiful Harataonga Bay, but were prevented from getting to the beach as the English reality TV show "Castaways" was being filmed there. The security people were very polite, allowing us access to the campground and giving the group a tour through the film editing facilities set up there. We added Yellowhammer and Californian Quail on the way back to Orama. On Easter Monday we had a full day's birding with a bush walk at Fitzroy, and at Kaitoke and Medlands Beaches before catching the ferry from Tryphena at 7.30pm. The last new bird species we added to our list were Feral Pigeon and Grey Duck. It was a long evening with the slow trip back on the ferry, but it was memorable for two creatures. The first was a large Morepork that was perched and calling from the glowing light-stand right at the wharf and above all the hustle and bustle of loading the ferry. The second were the Common Dolphins that escorted us across the middle of the Gulf. In the dark waters around the bow, they were only visible because of the glistening silver fringe of phosphorescence that lit their topline as they surfed the bow wave back towards Auckland. (Report by **Suzi Phillips**).

**Checklist of Bird Species** - 59 - Pomarine Skua, Arctic Skua, Fluttering Shearwater, White-fronted Tern, Southern Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Buller's Shearwater, Fairy Prion, Caspian Tern, Black Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Little Penguin, Australasian Gannet, Pied Shag, Black Shag, Little Shag, White-faced Heron, Kereru, Banded Rail, Welcome Swallow, Brown Teal, Mallard, Paradise Duck, Pukeko, Kingfisher, Harrier Hawk, Starling, Myna, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Tui, Kaka, Fantail, Spur-wing Plover, Variable Oystercatcher, SIPO, Skylark, Magpie, Blackbird, NZ Dotterel, Pied Stilt, NZ Pipit, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Fernbird, NI Robin, Tomtit, Kakariki, Morepork, Banded Dotterel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Wrybill, Yellowhammer, Golden Plover, Californian Quail, Feral Pigeon, Grey Duck.

### **Birding Great Barrier Island (Edited version, from Tara No.30, June 1983)**

A party of 11 OSNZ members, described as "11 eccentrics" by a correspondent in the following Saturday's Auckland Star, spent Easter Weekend 1983 on Great Barrier Island.

The main objective of the expedition was to hunt for Kokako on the north-western bush-clad tip of the island, (Rod Hay had spent eight days exploring there in January 1983 and had informed Ken Bond that he had located 12 Kokako). The party only managed to spend one day, Easter Saturday, in this area. It was a warm, sunny day. We started on an old track that ran out from the road along the tops of the ridges to the old copper mine on the coast, at about 9am. The bush all along was disappointing, mostly manuka with a mixture of taraire, rewarewa and rimu, and some good stands of Puriri which provided food for the good numbers of Tuis and Kereru. Apart from these two species, the party noted Goldfinch, Grey Warbler, Chaffinch, Silvereye, Fantail, Thrush and Blackbird. Unfortunately, no Kokako were seen or heard ... any future expeditions to this part of the island should plan to camp out overnight or longer...

The rest of the weekend was spent walking around parts of the coastline at the northern end of the island - Katherine Bay on the western side on Good Friday afternoon and Whangapoua Beach on the eastern side on Easter Sunday - and on Kaitoke Beach near Claris at the south-eastern end of the island on Easter Monday while waiting for the plane. (See checklists). Highlights were the flocks of Wrybill, NZ Dotterel, and Banded Dotterel on the river flats at the southern end of Whangapoua Beach, along with a Reef Heron; large flocks of Brown Teal on rivers at the back of Whangapoua and Kaitoke Beaches; and a Banded Rail from the bus in a swamp near Claris...

**Checklist of Bird Species** - 41 - Gannet, Caspian Tern, White-fronted Tern, Red-billed Gull, Black-backed Gull, Pied Shag, Black Shag, VOC, White-faced Heron, Reef Heron, Pied Stilt, Wrybill, NZ Dotterel, Banded Dotterel, Mallard, Brown Teal, Paradise Duck, Banded Rail, Pukeko, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Blackbird, Thrush, Starling, Myna, Welcome Swallow, Pipit, Pheasant, Harrier Hawk, Yellowhammer, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Kingfisher, Fantail, Silvereye, Tui, Grey Warbler, Kereru, Morepork.

This was eight fewer birds than the number seen by the party which visited Great Barrier at the same time last year when they also had Little Shag, Little Black Shag (sic), Feral Geese, Skylark, Kaka, and Red-crowned Parakeet. **Checklist of Beach Wrecks:** Katherine Bay: Cook's Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Little Penguin. Whangapoua Beach: Buller's Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Pied Shag, Black Petrel. Kaitoke Beach: Buller's Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Black Petrel, Cook's Petrel.

**Checklist of Eccentrics** - Ken Bond, Mike Hemingway, Linda Cunningham, Ronald Lockley, Claire Exley, Margaret Bishop, Betty Binning, Nan Rothwell, Alicia Warren, Gillian Eller and Brigid Pike. (**Report by Gillian Eller and Brigid Pike.**)



# Auckland OSNZ Activities for 2007

- May 1** Tuesday 7.30pm. **"Birding in Australia" by Simon Fordham.**  
May 12 Muriwai Beach Patrol with John Simmons, Ph 828-8642
- June 1-4 OSNZ Conference and AGM, New Plymouth.  
**June 5** Tuesday 7.30pm. **"Motu Kaikoura" with Mel Galbraith.**  
June 9 Muriwai Beach Patrol, 9.15am with John Simmons.  
June 9 Mangawhai Wader Census HT 10.30am, contact Adrian Riegen.  
June 10 Firth of Thames Wader Census, HT 2.30pm, as above, Ph 814-9741.  
June 16 Kaipara Wader Census, HT 11.20am, contact Adrian, as above.  
June 17 Manukau Wader Census, HT 12.10, contact Adrian Riegen Ph 814-9741.
- July 3** Tuesday 7.30pm. **"Hihi-related forest research" with John Staniland.**  
July 7 Muriwai Beach Patrol, 9.15am with John Simmons, Ph 828-8642.
- Aug 7** Tuesday 7.30pm. **"Cerulean Warbler and habitat" with John Carpenter.**  
Aug 4 Muriwai Beach Patrol with John Simmons, contact as above.
- Sept 4** Tuesday 7.30pm, **"From Nelson Lakes to Tawharanui" with Matt Maitland, new ARC manager at Tawharanui Regional Park.**  
Sept 8 Muriwai Beach Patrol with John Simmons, Ph 828-8642.
- Oct. 2** Tuesday 7.30pm, **"Charles Fleming's Cape Expedition Diary; Auckland Islands 1942-43: Albatrosses, mollymawks and other distractions" with special guest speaker, author Mary McEwen.**  
Oct 6 Muriwai Beach Patrol, 9.15am with John Simmons, contact as above.  
Oct 14 Shakespear Park Bird Survey, meet 7am. Details from Michael Taylor.
- Nov. 6** Tuesday 7.30pm, **"Wildlife Enforcement Group" speaker TBC.**  
Nov 3 Muriwai Beach Patrol, 9.15am with John Simmons, Ph 828-8642.  
Nov 24 Kaipara Harbour Wader Census, contact Adrian Riegen, 814-9741  
Nov 24/25, Tiritiri Matangi Island Census, contact Sharen Graham on 817-5537.  
November - Wader Census at Manukau/Waitemata Harbours, dates TBC.
- Dec 1 Muriwai Beach Patrol 9.15am with John Simmons, Ph 828-8642.  
Dec 2-5 Australasian Ornithological Conference, Perth, Western Australia.  
**Dec 4** Tuesday 7.30pm, **Christmas Gathering.**

***For updated information on contacts, speakers and venue locations, email Suzi Phillips at [suzi@dialogue.co.nz](mailto:suzi@dialogue.co.nz) or phone 0212712527.***



***Wrybills on sarcocornia at Manukapua on the Kaipara Harbour (Photo:Suzi Phillips)***



## Dotterel Protection Workshop in September

A course on management and protection of NZ Dotterels is to be held at the Miranda Shorebird Centre from September 11 to 13. John Dowding will tutor the course, along with a guest tutor with experience in practical predator control. This course is suitable for Department of Conservation shorebird wardens, regional council staff managing shorebirds, and community groups and individuals protecting dotterels. Topics to be covered include basic information about endemic shorebirds, monitoring dotterels and other shorebirds, as well as information about advocacy and protecting habitats. While focused primarily on dotterels, much of the course content will be applicable to other coastal species such as terns, gulls and Variable Oystercatchers.

Accommodation is in comfortable bunkrooms at the Miranda Shorebird Centre. Please register with the Centre Manager, Keith Woodley, by phone or email [shorebird@xtra.co.nz](mailto:shorebird@xtra.co.nz) or 09 232 2781. Participant numbers are strictly limited.



**A NZ Dotterel on the sand at Pakiri Beach in March. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).**



**Tawharanui birds ... Recently the ARC has translocated Brown Kiwi, NI Robins, and Whiteheads to the park. Bellbirds have also self-introduced from Haururu. Ecology Bush now resounds with bird song. (Photo: Suzi Phillips).**

**Contributions Wanted - please send in your bird sightings, snippets, articles and photographs for use in the next issue of TARA to; Suzi Phillips, Auckland OSNZ, Private Bag 1, Helensville 0840, or email to [suzi@dialogue.co.nz](mailto:suzi@dialogue.co.nz)**