

“ANOTHER UNUSUAL BIRD REPORT FROM AUCKLAND MUSEUM”

Over three days in November 2018, Paul Garner-Richards and I spent time in the Reading Room of Auckland Museum going through the archived Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) Records Appraisal Committee (formerly Rare Birds Committee) historic submissions and correspondence. The aim is to create an electronic searchable database of all submissions and final decisions for the OSNZ RAC. This follows on from a week-long trip in 2013.

This type of electronic database will enable members to have access to earlier submissions for scientific investigation or resubmission without having to access Auckland Museum. It will also allow the RAC Convenor, Checklist Committee or any OSNZ member to determine the number of unusual sightings and range of species that have reached New Zealand (or specifically their regions).

This has been fascinating work - going through the old records and seeing who saw what and when. There have been some amazing sightings – buff-breasted sandpiper, Manx shearwater as well as terns and penguins of all shapes and sizes. There is plenty of controversy with laughing owl, bush wren, South Island kokako and even Haast’s eagle reports.

Martin Collett (Auckland Museum) was a huge help by providing space in the Reading Room, introducing us to all the relevant staff and making sure all the archived boxes were available to us. Martin checked in with us daily to make sure that the work was progressing well.

Now I have over 500 files to catalogue and turn into PDF files. We have a few more submissions to track down, but we are getting there and shortly there should be a fantastic database for the membership to be able to check up on all those weird and wonderful birds that various observers have been reporting around New Zealand since the first one (Upland (Bartram's) sandpiper) was accepted in 1967.

Elizabeth (Biz) Bell
RAC Secretary