

The Wrybill

Newsletter of the Canterbury Region,
Ornithological Society of New Zealand

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February 2013

To members on e-mail:

This issue of The Wrybill will a be sent by postal mail to members not having an e-mail address. If you would prefer a paper copy please ask. The newsletter will also be placed on the OSNZ website.

**What's on at OSNZ Canterbury:
February to June 2013**

Indoor Meetings

Evening Meetings take place at 7.30 pm on the last Monday of the month at the Mahaanui Area DOC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Drive, off Blenheim Road, Sockburn. Plenty of parking is available.

MONDAY 25th Feb: Report on Great Lake Ellesmere Bird Count 2013. Several speakers from the group organizing this new event will do a light-hearted debrief and there will be prizes for the most interesting happenings/results/sightings during the count.

MONDAY 25th March: Members night, when short items are presented by members, max 10min each. And the short AGM is held.

MONDAY 29th April: Nick Ledgard, chair of the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group and of BR-aid Inc., a group dedicated to improving the environment of braided rivers in general, will talk about the aims and achievements of both groups.

MONDAY 27th May: Phil Bradfield, a committee member of the Hutton's Shearwater Trust at Kaikoura, presents an update on the situation with the birds at Kaikoura.

MONDAY 24th June: Niall Mughan talking about his fabulous jobs as an RSPB warden on several coastal reserves around Britain.

Field Meetings

SATURDAY 9th February with back up day on SUNDAY 10th: Intensive bird count of Lake Ellesmere. Start at 9am at near end of Embankment Rd. or, if you want to get a lift, from the DOC Area Office in Sockburn [where we have our meetings] at 8.30am. This first ever event of

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the Modern Era, as opposed to the 1980s, has the aim of getting an accurate census of all bird species around the lake with the exception of small perching birds. Ecan, DOC, Fish and Game, WET [Waihora Ellesmere Trust], Federated Farmers, City Council, Selwyn Council and others will all provide extra staff and observers to help us do the mammoth task. The usual areas will be surveyed in the manner we usually do, but other people will be allocated to different species. Even if you don't usually come, you can provide help by being a counter of large birds or a writer for someone counting or just a learner-birder, so please consider coming. Contact Nick Allen nick_allen@xtra.co.nz, Tel: 358 5994 or Bev Alexander birdiebev@xtra.co.nz, Tel: 03 313 7009

WEDNESDAY 13th February: "OSNZ Ramblers" trip to Riccarton Bush. Meet 9.30 a.m. in main carpark. Please contact Bev to confirm final meet up details or if there is doubt about the weather. Tel: 03 313 7009; Email birdiebev@xtra.co.nz

LONG WEEKEND 8th/9th/10th March: Repeat weekend at Arthurs Pass, staying at 'The Sanctuary' a bach in the village. This is already booked and is cheap. We hope to do one day up the Otira valley looking again for Rock Wrens and the other with John Kearvell up the Hawdon or thereabouts looking for OFParakeets. Travel up Friday afternoon/evening and back Sunday afternoon. Contact Bev birdiebev@xtra.co.nz or 03 313 7009

TUESDAY 12th March: "OSNZ Ramblers", Avon Estuary, 9.30 a.m. Contact Bev (see Feb 13 above).

SATURDAY 13th April: Banks Peninsula Bush Reserves Survey. With help from Rachel of the Trust who has areas in mind that need looking at. Contact Jan shesagreen@gmail.com or 322 7187

WEDNESDAY 17th April: "OSNZ Ramblers", Botanic Gardens, 9.30 a.m. Contact Bev as above.

TUESDAY 14th May: "OSNZ Ramblers", Styx Mill Reserve, 9.30 a.m. Contact Bev as above.

SATURDAY 18th May: Late afternoon at Ashley Estuary: Marsh Crake hunt. To be followed by a meal out at a local restaurant. Contact Bev birdiebev@xtra.co.nz 03 313 7009

WEDNESDAY 12th June: "OSNZ Ramblers", Halswell Quarry, 9.30 a.m. Contact Bev as above.

SATURDAY 29th June [30th back up]: Winter wader count at Lake Ellesmere, and other local wetlands. For Lake Ellesmere meet at the far end of Embankment Rd at 9.30am to divide into groups for parts of the shore survey. Gumboots, telescopes, warm clothes, drinks and hats. Hopefully just for the morning and only waders this time. If you don't want to come to Lake Ellesmere, we need volunteers for Ki-Wainono near Timaru, Washdyke and Normanby lagoons in Timaru, the rivermouths of all the rivers south of Christchurch and for the Waipara, Waiiau and Hurunui rivers in the North. Contact Jan shesagreen@gmail.com or 322 7187

TUESDAY 16th July: "OSNZ Ramblers", The Groynes, 9.30 a.m. Contact Bev as above.

Exciting Sighting!

In late August I was at Travis Wetland by the lookout seat just down from Burwood Hospital, watching a couple of sparrows having a mud bath. The next minute a shadow swooped from nowhere. It just missed the sparrows and soared up straight at my head. Although my knees were knocking I managed to get a few photos as it circled over me. It then put on the afterburners and just roared away, out of sight within a couple of seconds.

I have never seen anything so fast and although it was an absolutely magnificent creature there was also something sinister in the way it was so silent and swift throughout the whole thing. I actually thought it might be going to attack me for a second. I was absolutely buzzing with the experience, which is something I'll never forget.

Gail Wafer



Photo: Gail Wafer
NZ Falcon, Travis Wetland

The Unnatural History of the Kakapo

Scott Mouat

Members watched this beautiful film at the evening meeting in August. Between 2006 and 2008 Scott accompanied Dr Ron Moorhouse and the Kakapo Recovery Team to document their work on Codfish Island. The result is a beautiful film which reveals the frustrations, failures and successes of the present team, as well as the work done in the past.

The film has a haunting sound track with

original music by Leyton featuring Ariana Tikao singing a song called Kakapo. There is a voice over narration of the story by Sean, and magnificent images of the mountainous terrain and dense scrub habitat of the kakapo. Sean makes excellent use of historical footage to bring the kakapo's story up to the present – the effects of Maori and European settlement, which forced the birds into the highest mountaintops; the first efforts by Richard Henry to save the species by relocating birds to islands in Fiordland, which failed but sowed the seeds of conservation; very interesting footage and interviews with Don Merton and his team as they searched for kakapo in Fiordland, once Ron Nilsson had found the first signs of birds in 1974, and the translocation and efforts to widen the gene pool by breeding the one male found in Fiordland with birds from Stewart Island.

The many difficulties involved in rescuing the kakapo from extinction continued in 2006-8. The low levels of genetic diversity and the reasons numerous chicks failed to survive are explained. Efforts to collect semen from viable birds did not meet with success until 2006, when a Spanish vet and avian artificial insemination expert, described as a kind of “bird whisperer”, worked with the team. He massaged the birds' backs and successfully collected sperm from several birds which indicated problems with badly mutated or inadequate sperm. However, this is a film of hope. Later sperm collection produced excellent quality and viable amounts of sperm from sexually mature males and in 2009, after the death of one very old bird, younger males bred successfully. 33 chicks were produced by natural and artificial means and 22 of these fledged, a large number of them female. The kakapo population since 2009 stands at 124 and this unique bird is safer now because of the ratio of males and females and a diverse age range within the population. They will require intense management for some time in a predator free environment but there is optimism for the first time that the population will be flourishing in several hundred years.

Sean won four awards for this film in the Documentary Edge Festival 2010. It is a visual delight as well as an important and informative

record. The DVD is available for \$25 from www.elwin.co.nz, and 20% of the profits go to the Kakapo Recovery Programme.

Ann Sherlock

As a postscript to the above, many people will have read Nikki Macdonald's article "Boom or Bust" in The Press's Your Weekend of 22 September 2012, which reported that Rio Tinto would like to pull out of its sponsorship of the Kakapo Recovery programme. Their contribution (which has amounted to \$4 million since 1990) includes funding one-fifth of the programme's annual budget and valuable staff volunteer and engineering support. The company's wish to end their sponsorship is a worrying development and shows the vulnerability of our conservation efforts when large amounts of funding come from industries subject to economic downturn. DOC is fighting to continue the partnership and discussions are ongoing. But as the article pointed out, "whatever happens with Rio Tinto's kakapo sponsorship, conservation of our special species should be non-negotiable." For those who did not see the article, it ended with a remarkable quote from the late Don Merton -

Kakapo "are our national monuments. They are our Tower of London, our Arc de Triomphe, our pyramids. We don't have this ancient architecture that we can be proud of and swoon over in wonder but what we do have is something that is far, far older. No-one else has kiwi, no-one else has kakapo... once they are gone, they are gone forever. And it's up to us to make sure they never die out."

Sheila Petch – A Profile

Sheila became interested in birds after she moved to New Zealand about 46 years ago. Initially Sheila joined Forest and Bird because of an interest in plants. It was here that she met Kathleen Harrison (see photo p9), who was to become her companion birder for many years. After starting work as a part time cleaner at the University, Sheila met Phil Howell. He became a member of OSNZ and got her interested in birds, and she later joined the Society.

As she became more involved Sheila was keen to learn all she could and she attended courses

at the Extension Studies Department at the University of Canterbury. Members of our Society (some of them students), put on excellent bird courses, sometimes with field trips. Sheila's husband, Dennis, accompanied her and they gradually learned to identify species. Often they visited the "bird museum" to check on the birds they had seen that day.

Trips to Lake Ellesmere introduced Sheila to the migratory waders and she was hooked. So much more of a challenge! They had no scopes in those days and were just using binos. Going weekly, Sheila gradually improved (with the help of books and then the purchase of a scope) until she was able to identify a wader which was the first sighting of a Little Stint in New Zealand. Sheila's husband, Dennis, developed an eye problem and was ordered not to use binoculars again, but he accompanied Kathleen and Sheila, taking them in their 10ft dinghy down the L11 river to the mouth, where they could observe the birds on the south side of the river, or across the Lake to the bottom of the spit.

After Phill Howell passed away Kathleen and Sheila birded together every week. Sheila recalls many an outing when they got lost on the way to the birding spot in the confusing network of roads on the approach to Lake Ellesmere. And of several occasions when she got stuck in the greasy mud around the Lake with Peter Reese, Blue Booth and Don Hadden.

Sheila says "I have found that to get proficient



Photo: Bev Alexander
Sheila birding 26.1.13

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at identifying waders you have to regularly visit them. The rewards are to ID by yourself a bird that has not been seen before.” Her observations at Lake Ellesmere, a key area in New Zealand for waders, include identifying birds such as Little Stint (twice), Little Whimbrel, Long-toed Stint (another first sighting in NZ), Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope and Pratincole on the same day, Greenshank, Black-tailed and Hudsonian Godwits and Little Terns. Sadly Sheila has documented a decline of Red-necked Stints at the Lake. Her diary of 20th January 1985 indicated 56 birds were seen; on 26th January 2013 the count was 2, with the Lake being the lowest she has ever seen it. But on a happier note she is excited at the increase of Crested Grebes on Lake Forsyth and their breeding on or near Lake Ellesmere.

Sheila spent 4 years as Regional Representative of the Society. She helped organise OSNZ Conferences in Christchurch twice and the International Congress in 1990. With her strong interest in waders, Sheila, along with Jan Walker, regularly check on the Bar-tailed Godwits at Avon Heathcote Estuary for any birds with colour bands, birds which Sheila had originally helped to band during David Melville and Rob Schuckard's banding trips to Christchurch. This banding of Godwits commenced in 2005 and is ongoing. She has been involved in banding Silvereyes at Horitani Valley and banding Black-billed Gulls on the Ashley River and Peacock Springs, helped with surveys of nesting colonies on local braided rivers and even had a trip to Stephen's Island to band Fairy Prions.

With Tony Crocker, Sheila conducted an important study on the inter-breeding of Variable and Pied Oystercatchers at Ashworth's Beach, with a view to finding out whether the offspring of these birds were capable of breeding. Interbreeding pairs were banded, as were their chicks, which enabled them to establish the offspring were breeding. The results of the study were published in *Notornis* Vol 49 2002 Short Notes.

Birders pay tribute to Sheila's endless patience. She is happy to share her knowledge and experience with new and young birders. Andrew Crossland and Peter Langlands, both

men who now have a career involved with birds, are just two of the many who have benefitted from time spent birding with Sheila. Another example of her willingness to help other people was on beach patrols when she was always prepared to explain to less experienced birders the way in which to identify birds found.

Sheila hasn't kept a life list of her New Zealand sightings but there are not many birds on the NZ Checklist of Birds that she has not seen. Her early diaries reveal the interesting people she has met and exciting outings enjoyed, accounts of biking to the Estuary or taking her scooter to Lake Ellesmere.

Sheila is a remarkable person. For a lady in her mid-80's she still has an amazing enthusiasm and energy and is able to don her gumboots and walk considerable distances, carrying scope and pack, in pursuit of the next sighting.

Bev Alexander

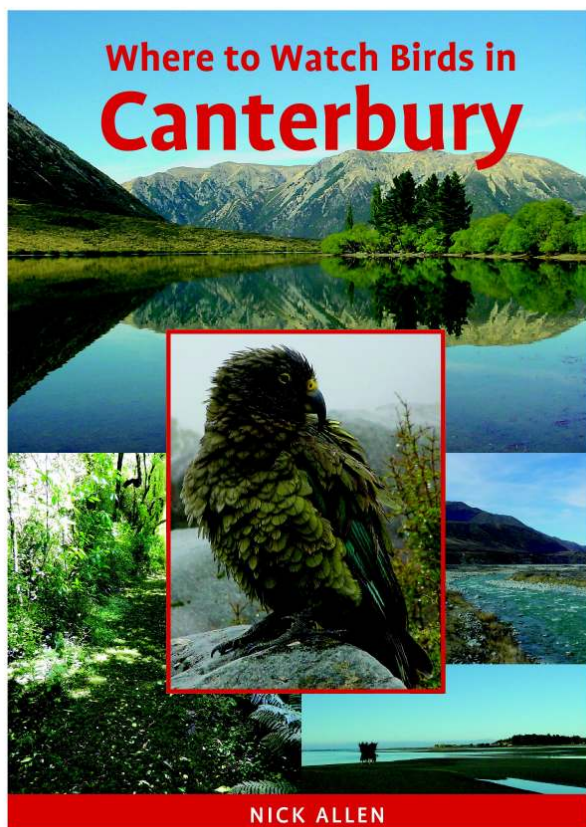


Photo: Jill Hanna
Adult offspring of Variable and Pied Oystercatchers with their young.

“OSNZ Ramblers”

Bev will again run a weekday field trip each month to view our local birds. The excursions are to important (and very attractive) local birding spots and are aimed at beginner birders and weekday enthusiasts. This year the monthly trips will take place on alternate Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the hope this will make it convenient for more people to attend.

The trips are included in the Field Meetings information, pages 1-2. Meet-up time is 9.30 a.m. in the main carpark of each venue, but to avoid uncertainty over this Bev asks that people contact her - Tel. 03 313 7009; Email birdiebev@xtra.co.nz



About the author

Born in Sheffield, England, Nick Allen first got interested in birds at the age of five, watching the few species that visited his back garden, then as he got older moved on to the greater number of species in local fields and woods. Interest in birds grew whilst at university in Birmingham and afterwards, with visits to migration hotspots, some twitching trips and other great places for birds throughout the UK, especially with local bird clubs. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1997, living for many years at Waikuku Beach close to the Ashley Estuary. In 1999 he took on the job of Regional Representative for the Canterbury Region of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, holding this post until 2006. He has edited Southern Bird, the magazine of the Ornithological Society since 2003. Now living in Christchurch he is married with one daughter.



Nick Allen's 'Where to Watch Birds in Canterbury' covers a vast area of New Zealand from the Clarence River in the north to the Waitaki and Ahuriri Rivers in the south, with the Main Divide forming the western boundary. Organised into 14 Chapters based on different regions – Kaikoura, The Hurunui, Lewis Pass, The Waimakariri and so on, the book covers a large number of habitats and the different bird species associated with them.

There is a map of the region at the start of each Chapter and a nice introduction to the area which includes things like its geography, topography, flora and fauna, accommodation, shopping, availability of fuel and transportation, much of this very useful for visitors. The Chapters are then divided into numbered sections covering important birding sites with detailed instructions and maps so that sites can be easily found. A description of the habitat is given, and birds which could be seen, listed under the headings Usual, Probable, Possible, Vagrant/occasional.

At the end of the book is a useful annotated list of the birds of Canterbury in the order in which they appear in 'The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand' by Heather and Robertson. The list is indexed to show in which chapter and section of the guide they are mentioned, enabling someone with a target species to quickly find the most likely sites to visit.

The book is in A5 format, the 175 pages being spiral bound and protected by a laminated card cover, making it easy for field use. The layout is simple and the text and maps are clear and easy to read.

Nick's guide is long-overdue. It contains important and useful information for local and NZ birders in general, and for overseas visitors with an interest in birds, who will now have a thorough and clearly written book to enable them to make the most of their visit to Canterbury.

Price: \$25 from Sheila Petch 03-348-1889; Nick Allen 03-358-5994; John Allen 03- 326-4966; Jan Walker 03-322-7187 and Bev Alexander 03-313-7009. Price: \$30 from Scorpio Books.

Ann Sherlock

Recent Sightings

May: 31st Jan, Bev and Sheila, Drains Road - Lake Road - 17-18 Cattle Egrets with 100 W-f herons, 20+ Stilts, 1 Sp-winged Plover; Coopers Lagoon - White-winged Black Tern in breeding plumage; Lake Ellesmere - remarkable number of Black Cormorant, crests and flanks obvious, 3 White Herons, 13 Turkeys (Timberyards).

June: 12th Andrew Crossland, Travis Wetland - Glossy Ibis and recent sightings of 1 Cattle Egret, 1 White Heron, 1 Bl-fronted Dotterel. 16th Russell Langdon, Riverbridge inland from Ashburton - 2 Bl-fronted Dotterels. 21st Jan, Sheila, Tom, Davidsons and Days Road - 1 Cattle Egret; Timberyards to Johnstons Bay - 3 White Herons. 30th Andrew, Lake Forsyth - at least 2 Gull-billed Terns; Kaitorete Spit - 1 Gull-billed Tern and 12+ Crested Grebes.

July: 10th Jan, Bev, Clem, Taumutu, Lake Ellesmere - 1 Bl-billed Gull in flock of gulls banded by Sheila Petch, Ashley River, 1998; in paddock on return to Christchurch - 3 Gull-billed Terns, 2 hawking among Bl-billed Gulls, SIPO and Starlings. Report from an eel fisherman at Taumutu of a Cape Petrel following his boat since the beginning of the month and a spell of rough weather. 11th Grahame, Bexley Wetland, 1 Bittern. First confirmed sighting of Bittern at Avon Heathcote Estuary for at least 15 years. 12th Rosco, Mimimoto Lagoon, Amberley Beach, NZ Falcon. 13th Jan and Bev, Harts Creek, 9 Cr Grebes, 1 Marsh Crake. 15th Andrew reported early arriving SIPO at Clearwater Golfcourse for past week and others seen on farmland around periphery of Christchurch. Birds which wintered over in city had been leaving A-H estuary flying W or SW for 2-3 weeks. John Dowding saw 2 groups, first of 8 and second of 14-15 arriving on the afternoon of 15th July - these are the first records seen by Ian Southey of birds arriving in Christchurch. Jan saw 110 SIPO in paddock near Greenpark Huts and a pair in early July on A & P paddocks, Canterbury Park, Wigram. 16th Andrew made a systematic search for Bittern through Bexley, Avon, Heathcote area as this bird is one of the threatened species monitored for Chch

Biodiversity Strategy. He found a minimum of 6 birds, a very unusual event. Peter Langlands found another on Lower Heathcote making 7 birds and according to him possibly 1/5th of Canterbury's bittern population at one site. 21st July Asburton Lakes Census - large count of Scaups, Crested Grebes, some getting ready to nest, 2 Bitterns at Maori Lakes, 12 Grey Ducks, now quite a rarity. 26th Andrew saw a few arctic waders on the Spit on a recent wader count. Anita Spence, Kaitorete Spit, 1 Nankeen Kestrel. 30th, Colin and Steve, Embankment - 5 Mute Swans, 1 White Heron, 7 Stilts, 5 Bandies; Jarvis - 29 Wrybills (none 1 month before), 3 R-n Stints, 65 Bandies, 40 Stilts. Peter Howden, Mayfield irrigation ponds - 15 NZ Shoveller, first time seen in the area; Geraldine - 1 Tui; Peel Forest - 1 Tui. Tui may be reaching Canterbury Foothills as Bev had been told of 4 Tui seen in Wooded Gully, Mt Thomas; Paddy West, Loburn - 1 Tui. Grant Bowden, Ainslee Terrace in City - 1 Crimson Rosella.

August: 8th John Goodrich, Waterford Reserve, Northwood - 30 Bl-billed Gulls just departed, which had been present all winter. 13th Colin and Steve, Lake Ellesmere - 10 Caspian Terns, 2 Bandies, 11 Stilts, 1 White Heron. 14th Bev and Janet, Ashley Estuary - 21 Wrybills and first Banded Dotterel nest. 15th Jan, Timberyards, 19-20 Cattle Egrets. Jan also reported that a Spotless Crake found in the road at Diamond Harbour had been taken into care with a broken leg. A very significant sighting for a bird not known on Banks Peninsula before. (Released into The Groynes Recreation Reserve on Sept 10th); 23rd Kelvin McMillan, Akaroa Harbour - 1 Crested Grebe; 26th, "ledzep" Travis Wetland - Glossy Ibis. Duncan, Kaituna - 4 White Herons. 28th Dianne, Lower Waimak opposite Miner's Bank - several hundred Bl-billed Gulls forming a colony. 27th Evening Meeting reports from: Bev, Ashley Estuary, 31 Wrybills, 4 with colour bands, 1 Lesser Knot, 5 Godwits, 1 Turnstone. Janet had heard of another Tui seen at Springbank, near Cust. Peter and Jim found the biggest Pied Cormorant colony (17) this far south at South Timaru, Jan had heard of a pair of Crested Grebes at Tutaitapu Lagoon, Woodend. The Spoonbill Count found only 44 birds in our area compared to 60 birds 10 years ago. Nial,

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Duncan, Dianne reported 15 Spoonbills back at Lake Ellesmere in the area where breeding occurred last year. Peter found 5 Bitterns at a recent count in Bexley, Heathcote, Avon and one dismembered bird some time after the initial count.

September: 2nd, Colin and Steve, Embankment – 1 Bl Stilt, 41 Godwits, 51 Wrybills, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 22 P Os, 25 Bandies. 3rd, Anita, Jones Rd, Kaitorete Spit - 42 S-C Cockatoos, 1 Banded Dotterel nest on beach. 6th Brett, Travis Wetland – 1 Brown Teal; 9th Steve and Colin – Jarvis, 1 Bandie; Yarrs – 1 Bl Stilt, 165 Stilts, 75 Wrybills, 40 Bandies, 3 Mute Swan, 2 Caspian Terns, 55 Godwits (potential first arrivals, all pale); 18th Grahame Bell, Avon Heathcote - first identifiable returned Godwit (flagged) with several others. 22nd Grant, Yarrs Jarvis Embankment - ~ 70 Godwits, 3 Curlew Sps, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 1 P G Plover. 23rd Andrew, Avon Heathcote – 140+ Godwits now back – later than previous 2 years, possibly because of unfavourable weather but consistent with period they traditionally arrived in 1980's and 1990's, 1 Red Knot. 26th Grahame, Travis Wetland – 4 male Brown Teals. 27th Colin and Steve, Embankment – 3 Wrybills, 6 Bandies, 2 Curlew Sps, 29 Stilts. Peter, Timberyard, 2 Gull-billed Terns.

October: 1st Colin and Steve, Yarr's – 110 Godwits, 30 Stilts; Embankment – 52 Wrybills, 4 Bandies. Andrew, Kaitorete Spit - Shining Cuckoo, feeding on ground – seen again 3.5 hours later – probably exhausted on migration by severe storm night before. 3rd Geoff Swailes, Ashley River near Groyne 2, - Shore Plover (bird hatched at Peacock Springs Jan 4 2012, banded by John Dowding March 5 and released Mana Island April 6) (This bird was reported back at Peacock Springs on 1.12.12). Grahame, Avon/Heathcote Estuary, juvenile Godwits. 4th Colin and Steve, Kaitorete Spit – 1 Greenshank – uncommon NZ visitor, 16 R-n Stints, 3 Curlew Sps, 10 Ruddy Turnstones, 23 Wrybills, 6 Caspian Terns, 14 Bandies. John Dowding and John Winters, Waimakariri River near Thompsons Road, Shining Cuckoo calling loudly, 2 Wrybills on nests and 2-3 day old Banded Dotterel chick, first seen this season. 6th Ann, The Groynes - Shining Cuckoo heard. 8th Colin and Steve took Alison Balance (Radio NZ Our Changing World), to Yarrs – 229

Godwits, 133 Wrybills, 3 Red Knots, 1 Gull-billed Tern. 12th Jan, Sheila, Tom, Bev, Drain Road – 24 Cattle Egrets, 20 in breeding plumage; Harts Creek - Bittern booming, Shining Cuckoos heard, 1 White Heron, 1 Cr Grebe and nesting swallows, fantails, chaffinches and a Grey Warbler; Garibaldi Island – at least 100 nests of cormorants of all 3 species of inland cormorants; Lake Road – 2 Gull-billed Terns hawking, one mobbed by a Banded Dotterel, probably nesting in the field and a SIPO nest with 2 eggs seen in a new blackcurrant paddock in a scrape in harrowed earth. 13th Sue, Matua Gardens, Tui gathering twigs for nest. 18th Sue, Robinsons Bay Valley, Banks Pen – NZ Falcon swooped through group of 5 Harrier Hawks headed towards Okains Bay Rd. Next day half-way up Hilltop from Little River – NZ Falcon. Anecdotal evidence from Okains Bay Road of pair mating recently. 21st Steve, Harts Creek – four pairs Cr Grebes and several bitterns calling. 22nd Andrew, Victoria Park - 4 Cirl Buntings (3M, 1F); Colin and Steve, Greenpark – 14 Bandies, 2 Gull-billed Terns; Yars – 23 Wrybills, 171 Godwits, 20 P Os, 2 Red Knots, ~100 Stilts, 3 Gull-billed Terns. 23rd Andrew, Kaitorete Spit – 1 Common Greenshank, 9 R-n Stints, 1 Sanderling (1st this season at lake), 1 Godwit, 1 Red Knot, 2 Curlew Sps, 3 Turnstones, 18 Bandies, 14 Stilts, 1 SIPO, 58 Caspian Terns (looking ready to nest) 150+ W-fronted Terns. 24th Andrew, Drain Rd, Ellesmere – 22 Cattle Egrets feeding with 24 W-f Herons. 27th Sheila, Jarvis Rd – 18 Golden Plovers, a lot of Caspian Terns and 2 R-n Stints. 29th Colin and Steve, Embankment – 3 Wrybills, 8 Godwits, 48 Stilts, 1 Bandie; Yarr's – 23 Stilts; Clark's Road – 144 Stilts, 2 Gull-billed Terns, 61 Wrybills, 4 Godwits; Greenpark – 3 Caspian Terns, 13 Bandies, 4 Spoonbills; Richard, Takamatua Valley, possible Rook. 31st Jan, Jarvis Rd - 130 Godwits, 4 Red Knots, 4 Turnstones, 6 R-n Stints, 3 Sharpies, 1 P G Plover, ~100 Stilts, ~100 Wrybills.

November: 4th Andrew, Seafeld Lagoon, White Heron regular visitor since September. 6th Jim Jolly and 7th Jan, Bealey – Weka. 10th David Hallet, Jarvis Road – Shore Plover feeding with Wrybill. 10th, Steve, Jarvis Road - ~ 6 Sharpies. 11th, Bev, Rob and Keith, Spit end of Birdlings Flat – 6 R-n Stints, 1 Curlew Sp, 1 Wrybill, 3 Gull-billed Terns, 2 in breeding plumage, Caspian and WF Terns; Jarvis Road –

The Wrybill - February 2013

36 Godwits, 4 Lesser Knots, 26 P G Plovers, 1 Greenshank, 1 Sanderling, 8 R-n Stints, 7 Turnstones, 7 Sharp-tailed Sps, 1 Pectoral Sps, 4 Curlew Sps, ~100 Wrybills – Sheila Petch comments: “Bev and Rob (and Keith) must hold the record for the number of migratory species seen in one day and at one place – 10.” 14th, Jan et al, Jarvis Road – 17 R-n Stints, 3 Sharpies, 6 G Ps, many Wrybills, Stilts, Bl-billed Gulls and Bandies, 1 Pectoral Sp and 3 Gull-billed Terns. 16th Steve, Poynter Track, Kaiapoi Island – Bittern heard. 19th Colin and Steve, Greenpark – 10 Bandies, 10 Stilts; Jarvis/Embankment – 2 Bandies, 66 Wrybills, 117 Stilts, 10 P Os, 2 R-n Stints, 133 Godwits, 17 Red Knot, 4 Gull-billed and 4 Caspian Terns. 21st Jan, Crocodile Track, Halswell Quarry, pair of Cirl Buntings. 26th Colin and Steve, Jarvis to Embankment – 1 Shore Plover (not one previously seen but one bred at Mount Bruce and released on Mana Island Apl 2011), 16 Godwits, 3 Turnstones, 19 P Os, 1 Spoonbill, 7 Pectoral Sps, 296 Stilts, 6 Wrybills, 10 Bandies.

December: 1st Brian, Udo, Grant, Clarke's Road – 469 Stilts, 125 Godwits, 59 Bandies, 33 Wrybills, 13 R-n Stints, 13 Knots, 2 Curlew Sps, 2 Pectoral Sps, 3 Sharpies, 1 Turnstone, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 1 Caspian Tern. 9th Colin, Steve, Laslo and Michael, Greenpark-Jarvis – 2 Pectoral Sps, 2 Gull-billed Terns, 3 Godwits; Embankment – 2 Gull-billed Terns, 4 Caspian Terns, 8 R-n Stints, 5 Wrybills. 11th Jan, Sheila, Detlef and Carol, Jarvis to Clarke's – 7 Sharpies, 5 R-n Stints, 1 Wrybill, 51 Godwits, 1 Lesser Knot, 4 Gull-billed Terns, great numbers of Stilts. 15th Colin and Steve, Embankment – 40 Herons, 1 Variable and 4 P Os, 52 Bandies, 27 R-n Stints, 1 Curlew Sp, 156 Stilts, 2 Sharpies; Jarvis – 210 Stilts; Greenpark – 50 Bandies, 35 Spoonbills. 17th Bev, Sheila and Fred, Leithfield to Ashley River – 16 pairs assorted Oystercatchers – 4 black variables, 3 PO and the rest an assortment of hybrids. 11 chicks altogether. 1 Curlew; Waikuku – Black Stilt has arrived – Bev says bird was a little early this year. 18th, Gmckinlay, Harts Creek – 5 Bitterns, 2 Mute Swans, 11 Cr Grebes. 24th Hagley Park – Little Owl; Cave Stream, near Arthur's Pass – Falcon chasing Harrier. 29th, Colin and Steve, Spit – 50 Bandies, 1 Stilt, 20 Spoonbills; Kaituna Lagoon – c. 160 Stilts; Embankment – 60 Bandies, 2 Curlew Sps, 17 R-n Stints, 10 Wrybills, 2 Gull-billed Terns.

January: 4th Sheila, Bev and Jan, Embankment to Yarrs – 150 Wrybills, c. 70 Bandies, 13-14 R-n Stints; Selwyn Huts and Johnstone's Bay – Stilts en masse. 9th Andrew, Kaitorete Spit Tip – 147 Bandies, 141 Wrybills, 6 R-n Stints, 1 Sanderling, 1 Godwit, 1 Curlew Sp. 16th Colin and Steve, Yarrs – 3 Godwits, 101 Stilts, 52 Bandies, 26 Wrybills; Embankment Road – 6 R-n Stints, 2 Wrybills, 45 Bandies; East of Embankment – 48 Bandies, 4 Wrybills; Halswell Rivermouth – 184 Bandies, 4 Wrybills, 46 Stilts, 1 P O, 12 Caspian Terns, 25 Spoonbills. 17th Andrew, Brooklands Lagoon, 1 Godwit (banded Yalu Jiang by Jimmy Choi). 19th, Dave Hallett, Port Hills, Huntsbury – 1 Kookaburra. 23rd, Steve2, Lake Lyndon – pair Cr Grebe building new nest with juvenile Grebe in attendance. Youngster did not contribute to collection of nesting material but watched intently and was “seemingly mimicking the parents' actions of pushing weed into place.” 24th, Colin and Steve, Embankment – 150 Bandies, 33 R-n Stints, 28 Wrybills, Curlew Sps, 1 Gull-billed Tern, 1 NZ Pipit; West of Embankment – 335 Bandies, 3 Wrybills, 1 R-n Stint; Yarrs – 1 Hybrid Stilt, 25 Godwits, 1 Curlew Sp, 6 Wrybills, 40 Stilts; Greenpark – 19 Bandies; West of Greenpark – 240 Stilts, 10 Spoonbills, 4 Bandies. 26th, Steve2, Lake Forsyth – 16-18 Cr Grebes, at least one nesting. Ann, Glentui Carpark, Mt Richardson – NZ Falcon calling repeatedly. 27th Colin and Steve, Yarrs – 34 Stilts, 6 Bandies; Halswell River – 46 Spoonbills, 11 Caspian Terns. 31st John, Waterford Reserve, Northwood – 31 Bl-billed Gulls back – about same number as were around most of last winter.



Photo: Hyeza Kim
Members took Kathleen Harrison, long term active OSOC member, to dinner to say goodbye prior to her leaving to live in Rotorua to be near her son.

Kathleen, in her late 80's, has already joined Forest and Bird. We all wish her

Contacts:

For Canterbury Region Contacts please see previous issues of The Wrybill.

Ashburton Lakes Wetland Bird Census 21 July 2012

	<i>Heron</i>	<i>Emily</i>	<i>E Maori</i>	<i>W Maori</i>	<i>Trinity</i>	<i>Denny</i>	<i>Emma</i>	<i>Roundabout</i>	<i>Spider/Donne</i>	<i>Nursery</i>	<i>Camp</i>	<i>Clearwater</i>	<i>Lambies</i>	<i>Barrosa paddock</i>	<i>Totals</i>
%Ice															
Crested grebe	8			1							1	5	0		15
Black shag	2		1						1			3			7
Little shag	43			1			19				1	4			68
White-faced heron	5	1													6
Bittern				2											2
White heron									1						1
Black swan	138	31	9	16		2	131	188				9			524
Canada goose	205	1		159	22	6	168	44				59			664
Paradise shelduck	44	6	4		92			8	2		2	2			160
Mallard	85	13	15	18			103		24			23			281
Grey duck	8	2			4										14
NZ shoveler	23							6							29
Duck spp															0
NZ scaup	1476			40		28	140	184				448			2316
Grey teal	48		7												55
Pukeko			12												12
Coot	148											39			187
Pied oystercatcher	1			1											2
Pied stilt	1								1						2
Spur-winger plover	5			7										2	14
Banded dotterel															0
Black-fronted tern	2														2
White-fronted tern															0
Black-billed gull															0
Back-backed gull	3			1	3							2			9
Falcon															0
HARRIER		2		3											5
Kingfisher															0
Swallow															0
NZ pipit				12											12
Totals	2245	56	48	261	121	36	561	430	29	0	4	594	0	2	4375

Weather: