

APTERYX

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Photos:

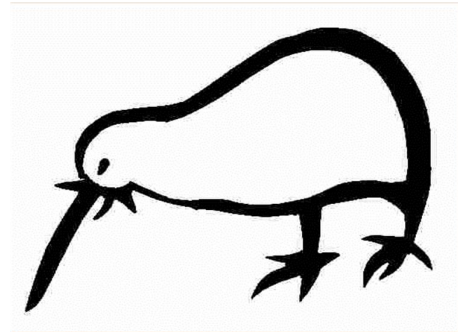
Detlef Davies (DD)

Kevin Matthews (KM)

Paul Asquith

Brian Candy

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NEWSLETTER OF THE FAR NORTH REGION OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Although we have received rather few bird records in our area over the last 3 months, there have been 2 special rarities, both probably still present. A Nankeen Kestrel has frequented a farmland valley in Church Road between Kaitia and Kaingaroa for several weeks (possibly undetected for longer than this) and many birders have travelled up there to see it. Attracting more public attention is the Australian Pelican which has been in Kerikeri Inlet since at least 7th August. This bird has also had many admirers. We have had no pre-organised wader counts or pelagics but a weekend Spoonbill census has shown a big increase in numbers of non-breeding birds.



I am sure you weren't expecting anything else on the front page of this newsletter . this is the Australian Pelican which has been resident in Kerikeri Inlet for the last month (DD)

The Far North Regional Officers are:

Regional Representative & 'Apteryx' Editor Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com	Treasurer Isabella Godbert, 67 Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8058 godbert@xtra.co.nz
Regional Recorder Laureen Alston, 48a Riverview Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8747 lm.alston@actrix.co.nz	Secretary & Publicity Carol Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 carolanndavies@yahoo.com

RECENT EVENTS

Fri 27 July . Indoor meeting at Mangonui. Kevin Matthews gave a great presentation on his week on the Chatham Islands. Thanks to Bill Campbell for organising this event and getting 13 people to attend.

Fri 17 August . Indoor meeting in Kerikeri. Detlef & Carol showed a DVD produced by Duncan Watson from Wellington with photos and video footage taken on the first of our 2 tours in North Peru. More such tours are planned, see later.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Detlef Davies

We have had rather little reported this time as several active members have been abroad during the New Zealand winter. These records cover the period from mid-April to the end of August 2012 and early Sept. Contributors include Anthea Goodwin (AG), Kevin Matthews (KM), Detlef & Carol Davies (DCD), Phil Hammond & Brian Candy.

North Island Brown Kiwi . 2 chicks already seen on Purerua early Sept.

SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL . a white morph bird and a normal plumaged bird seen together & photographed c.2 miles off Stephenson Island on 25 August (Brian Candy) . see page 6.

Fluttering Shearwater . dozens moving across Rangaunu Bay on 8 July, some so tame as to feed from the hand (KM).

Little Penguin . 6 in Rangaunu Bay on 8 July

White-faced Heron . a very pale grey one in Quarry road, Kaitaia.

Reef Heron . reported from Houhora estuary mouth, Bluff on Ninety Mile Beach & Mill Bay.

Cattle Egret . 3 at Houhora opposite Sale Yard Road 17 July, 1 roosting with Unahi Road Spoonbills 20 July (KM), 5 by Te Pua Point on 25 August (AG).

LITTLE EGRET . one near the Spoonbills at Te Hapua 25 August (AG).

Royal Spoonbill . census at various sites, mainly over weekend 18 . 19 August produced a total of 1,055 birds. See report on page 5.

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN . One in Kerikeri Inlet, originally found on 7 August by Glenda & John Neil but subsequently seen by many people at least to the end of the month. Further details on page 6.

Grey Teal . 40 roosting with stilts, Caspian Terns and Pied Shags at Walker Island in July (KM).

Australasian Shoveler . 12 with the Grey Teal et al (KM).

NANKEEN KESTREL . A female or imm in Church Road between Kaitaia & Kaingaroa at least since May but perhaps earlier (KM) . see page 6.

Shorebirds: - Kevin did some counts in Rangaunu Harbour and on Walker Island in July and recorded maxima of 110 **South Island Pied Oystercatchers**, 12 **Variable Oystercatchers**, 500 **Pied Stilts**, 593 **Bar-tailed Godwits** and 130 **Lesser Knots**. 167 **SIPOs** on 90 Mile Beach on 15 July feeding on tuatua, one dead one being eaten by a Harrier. These are high numbers of waders for the winter period.



Fluttering Shearwater (KM)

New Zealand Dotterel . No specific reports apart from 10 birds at Kaitia Airport in August (KM)
Banded Dotterel . 13 on paddock by Paua Road 25 August
Wrybill . One 3 kms north of Waipapakauri Ramp, 90 Mile Beach, 8 Sept (KM).
Caspian Tern . 2 Paihia 21 Aug, hope there are more than this as we will be counting them soon.
White-fronted Tern . c.40 Paihia 21 Aug.
KAKA . one seen in Kendall Road on 9 August (Phil Hammond).
Shining Cuckoo . heard in our region early Sept but no specific details.
Fernbird . 2 Skudders Beach Reserve 21 August.

PROGRAMME

Our indoor meetings usually take place on the second Friday of each month either at the Community Room at the side of Proctor Library in Kerikeri or at the Davies home at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri but in April, July and October they will be in the Christian Centre on SH10 between Mangonui and Coopers Beach. Details will be communicated nearer the time by email.

Friday 14 Sept – SAIL ROUND IRELAND

Indoor Meeting at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri, 7.30 pm. Robin Booth will give a talk on birds, other wildlife and scenery from his trip to the UK and sail around Ireland.



Fri to Sun 21st to 23rd Sept – PARENGARENGA HARBOUR

Join us for the weekend at this famous shorebird site at the top end of our region. We hope to stay at Mother Jimmie's, a comfortable place to stay on the Paua Road itself, so on the spot for the birds. We hope to cross to the sandspit on at least one of the days. Godwits and other Arctic migrants should be back in good numbers. If you can't stay the whole weekend, come for part of the time. Organisers: Anthea (09 406 1533) & Detlef & Carol (09 407 3874).

Friday 12 October . Indoor meeting at the Christian Centre, Mangonui, topic to be decided.

KIWI SURVEY – MOTUROA ISLAND – 2nd June

Paul Asquith

On a clear still, not too chilly, moonlit night on Saturday 2nd June 2012, a group of 22 listeners set out to monitor the number of kiwis on Moturoa Island. The group was composed of island shareholder family members, friends and our 2 caretakers, generously and ably assisted by 6 members of the Far North Branch of OSNZ.

The group assembled in the Woolshed at 7.15pm for a briefing, allocation of posts, call familiarisation by listening to taped calls of both male and female kiwis, and instructions on how to record any calls heard by direction, distance and sex.

Utilising several quad bikes and mules (motorised style), all were in place just before the 8pm start. Much discussion had occurred over the effect that the fairly bright nearly full moon might have and would we be wasting our time.

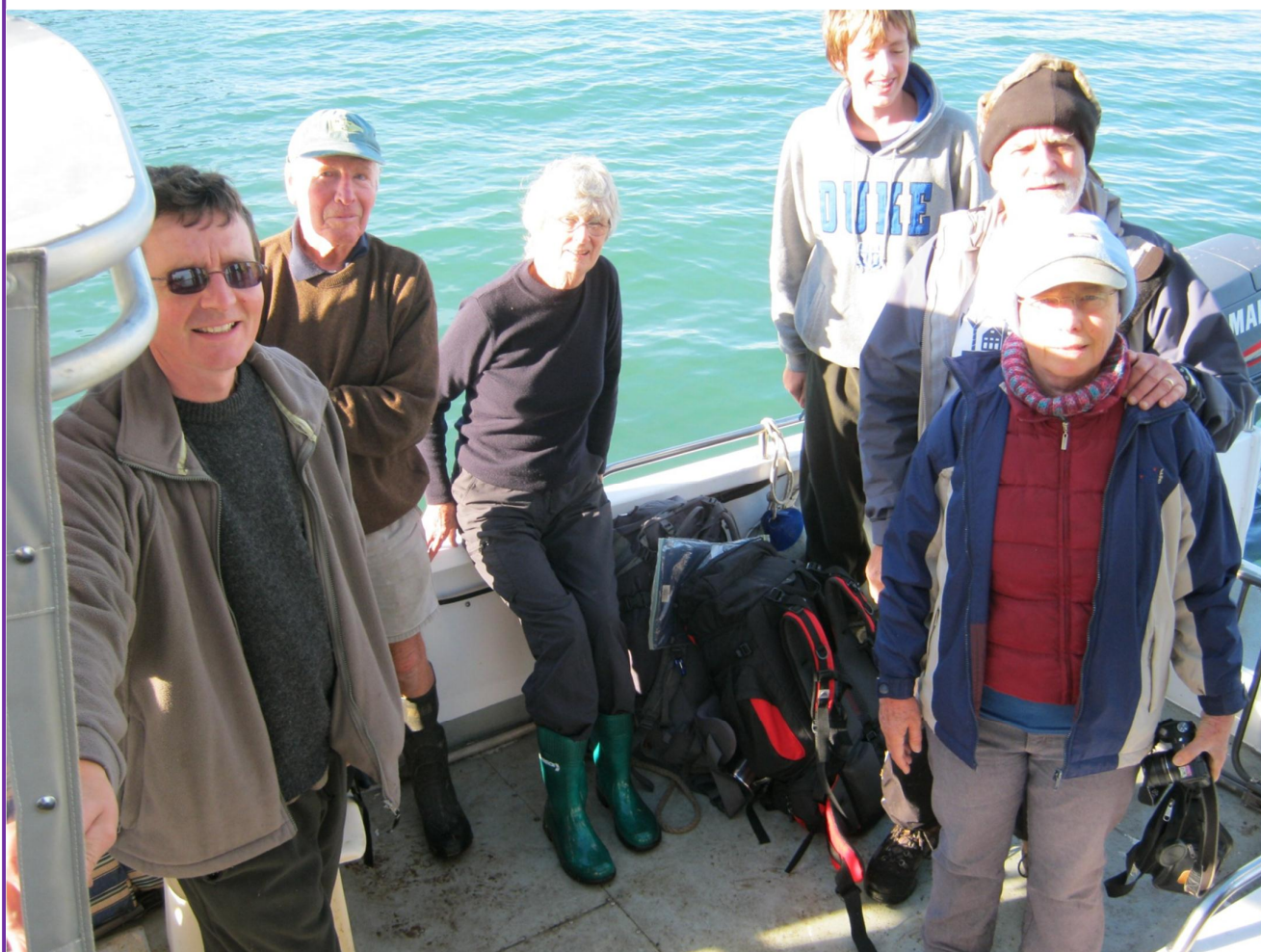
To our surprise kiwis were heard calling as many of us got into position and then called regularly throughout the listening two hour period. One OSNZ member observer was fortunate enough to see what he presumed to be the same bird twice as it foraged along the edge of the open paddock. Calls of both male and females were heard along the length and breadth of the island, many birds recorded as calling repeatedly over shortish periods.

Analysis of all the call sheets gave the overall results as follows:

	Males	Females	Total
Calls recorded	84	24	108
Individual birds	30	17	47
Estimated island total			<u>55 . 60</u>
Last count May 2003	17	12	29

This was a pleasing increase over the 2003 count figures which reflects what people have been seeing and hearing over recent years.

Many thanks to all of the participants, especially the 6 visitors from Far North OSNZ, we are glad you enjoyed your stay, your contribution was much appreciated.



The happy band of Far North OSNZ depart Moturoa on a beautiful Sunday morning.

ROYAL SPOONBILL CENSUS

Most of this census took place nationwide over the weekend of 18 . 19 August 2012 in spite of less than perfect weather conditions; some counts were done within the following 2 weeks or so. The well-known Far North wintering sites were visited, some more than once as birds were not always in places where counting was easy. The results for our area were as follows:

SITE	NUMBER
Te Hapua	361
Houhora	39
Unahi Road	610
Pupuhe River Mouth	23
Aroha Island	15
Waitangi Estuary	1
Horeke Wharf	6
TOTAL	1055

The following assisted with the count:

Anthea Goodwin
Mike Bryan
Marcia Body
Peter Ladd
Kevin Matthews
Mike Rowledge
Russell Thomas
Wikarena Wihapi
Detlef & Carol Davies

Out of interest, these are the totals for our region on previous censuses. There have been no counts in the last 11 years but numbers of spoonbills have increased greatly in that time and some of our present sites have been recently colonised. We will discover in due course whether the increase in spoonbills is reflected throughout the country.

PREVIOUS YEARS	PREVIOUS TOTALS
1991	54
1992	104
1993	102
1994	144
1995	159
1996	156
2000	175

Thanks to Anthea Goodwin for arranging this census. Details have been forwarded to the national co-ordinator, Peter Schweigman.

CASPIAN TERNS and PIED SHAGS

Detlef Davies

The OSNZ is carrying out censuses of both these species. I recently sent out a 4 page sheet with full details and instructions for Caspian Terns by email. If anyone is interested in taking part but does not have the forms, please let me know. There is no set time for the Caspian Tern count as breeding birds will be sedentary but the prime period is between September and December. There is concern that this species, although widespread worldwide, is declining in New Zealand. The known sites in our region are on Walker Island (Rangaunu), Parengarenga and in Hokianga Harbour but the Hokianga site may have been abandoned between the 1970s & the 1990s.

I have no particular instructions for Pied Shags but you have breeding colonies in your area, a count of the birds would be very useful. They usually nest in large trees along the coast, especially in pohutukawa.



FAR NORTH RECENT RARITIES

Detlef Davies

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN

On Tuesday 7th August I received a phone call from Jo at the Kerikeri Department of Conservation office who said that a Pelican had been seen that morning in Kerikeri Inlet. Carol and I went round to Fuller Terrace off Reinga Road and spoke to Glenda and John Neil who had seen the bird swimming upriver from their house. We checked various possible places including the Stone Store and eventually found the bird perched on a post by the wharf at the end of the footpath leading down from the end of Kendall Road.

This is a very exciting occurrence as it is the first Australian Pelican known to have wandered to New Zealand since 1977 to 1978 when 3 or 4 birds spent some months in South Canterbury. In Australia pelicans are nomadic and their movements are weather-related. They



sometimes reach New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Over the following few weeks the Pelican has been spotted from several places such as Aroha Island and Rangitane Loop Road; it may stay in the area for some time. We hear that a flock of 14 Pelicans turned up on the Wairoa River south of Dargaville at about the same time as the Kerikeri bird and in the last few days one has been seen at Mangawhai. With an influx this size, there is no reason why this species should not start to breed in New Zealand.



NANKEEN KESTREL

The common Kestrel of Australia turns up in New Zealand at least every few years. The one which is near Kaitia is not the first for that area as one was present near the airport about 5 years ago. Like the previous one, it is faithful to a small area of farmland, watchfully looking for prey from a vantage point on roadside cables, retreating to farm buildings in windy or rainy weather.

SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL

Although a regular bird at sea around southern parts of New Zealand, this large aggressive seabird is unusual in the Far North and the odd white morph even more so. Where the species is common e.g around the subantarctic islands, it is usual to see a few pure white ones. Brian Candy reported a blond bird from his boat on 2 separate dates so it may have been off our east coast for the winter. If anyone fancies a spring pelagic and help fill a boat, please let me know.



Southern Giant Petrel – typical & white morph (Brian Candy)

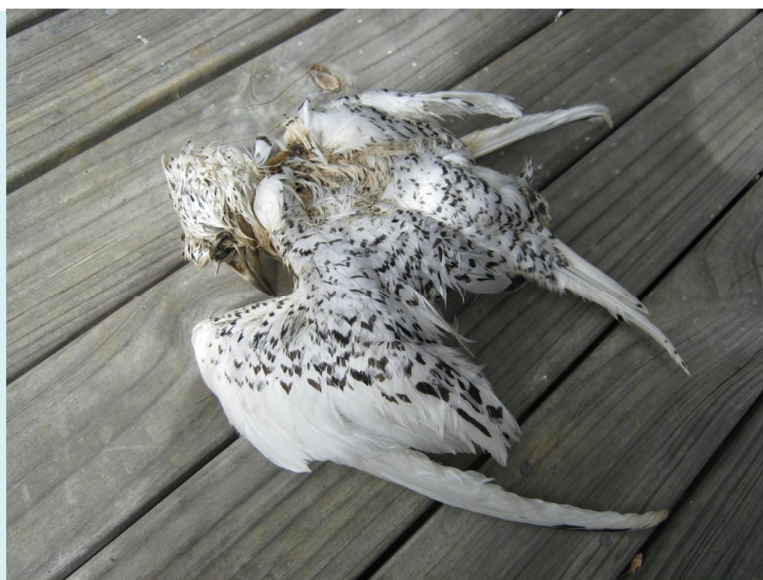
MISCELLANEOUS

Detlef Davies

White-tailed Tropicbird

A beach-wrecked juvenile White-tailed Tropicbird found at Chuck's Cove near Coopers Beach in October 2011 has come to our notice and the photo here shows the pale bill and the extent of the black bar on the wing-tips which distinguish it from Red-tailed. It was stained on the underparts suggesting that it had been oiled.

White-tailed is a much rarer visitor to New Zealand than Red-tailed, its nearest breeding areas being in New Caledonia, Tonga & the Cook Islands.



Garden Bird Survey

Some Far North members took part in this year's survey in July. More than 3,000 survey forms were sent in, about 1,000 more than in 2011. Final results are not yet available but indications are that House sparrow is again the top species with an average of 12.4 per garden with Silvereye second with 9.7. House Sparrow is down slightly but Silvereye is well up, perhaps because winter came early forcing the birds to seek food in gardens. The only 2 other native species in the top ten were Tui and Fantail.

Beach Groomer update

Following on from the article in the April 2012 issue of Apteryx, there is now more to report. Carol had lodged an appeal to the Environment Court to have part of Te Tii Beach removed from those for which consent had been given to groom. Rather than let this case go further, effective liaison was made with Focus Paihia to try and reach a compromise. As we were away over the winter, Carol engaged the help of Bay Bush Action to negotiate an acceptable result and we are pleased to report that the court made a consent order releasing half of Te Tii Beach from grooming.

Brown Teal back on Urupukapuka

Project Island Song recently announced the plan to reintroduce Brown Teal to Urupukapuka Island in the Bay. This took place on Wednesday 5th September when 12 birds, 6 males and 6 females, arrived here from Christchurch where the birds had been bred in captivity. We also hear that seabirds including Grey-faced Petrels have been heard on the cliffs along the north and east of the island. We hope to report more on seabird breeding in the Bay area in due course.

Nest Record Scheme

With spring hopefully on the way, I remind members of the Society's Nest Record Scheme. Data obtained from members and non-members will be compiled and will assist in establishing trends in the success or otherwise of our breeding birds. For further information see the link below:

<http://osnz.org.nz/nest-record-scheme>

OSNZ Annual Conference – 2012

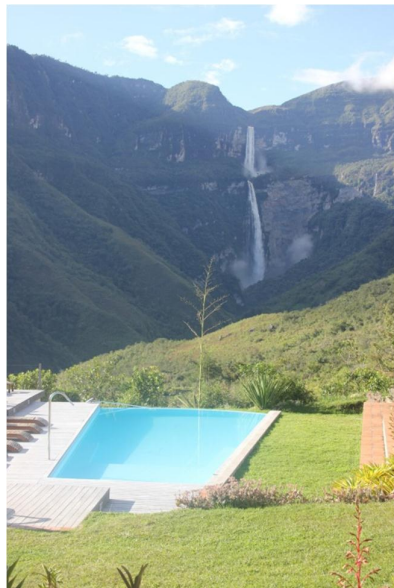
I wish to thank Russell Thomas for filling in for me at the Conference in June and attending the annual Regional Reps meeting. The minutes of that meeting may be of interest to some members and I will have it printed and available at the next couple of indoor meetings. The 2013 Conference & AGM will be held in Otago over Queens Birthday weekend.

SOUTH AMERICA

Detlef & Carol Davies

As many readers know, we are regular visitors to South America and this is a summary of our 2012 visit. From May to July we based ourselves in Tarapoto in north Peru and incorporated 2 three week tours during which we guided 14 guests from New Zealand and Australia (5 on the 1st and 9 on the 2nd). Our route extended from Pumarini Lodge in the east to northern Andes and the Marañon valley in the west. The success of these tours has led to the creation of North Peru Bird Tours and we expect to be leading similar tours in 2013. We are also involved in a school programme in Peru.

One area featured in the tours which has yet to be found by many bird tour groups is Gocta Falls near Chachapoyas and these are some of the species we found.



Lulu's Tody-Tyrant, Marvellous Spatuletail, White-eared Solitaire & Rusty-winged Barbtail



Later, in July and August, we joined a group from the United Kingdom on a mammal tour of the Pantanal in Brazil with a special interest in seeing a Jaguar. We were surprised to find that these majestic animals are not hard to locate now that local boatmen on the Cuiabá River have become aware of the popularity of the treasure on their doorstep. Beginning in the southern Brazilian town of Cuiabá, we travelled for most of the tour on a safari truck enabling panoramic views over the largest wetland in the world so that we were able to enjoy many of the large birds like Jabirus, Bare-faced Curassows, Sun Bitterns and many large birds of prey; also mammals like Capybaras, anteaters and even an Ocelot from the comfort of the vehicle. (Below: Black & White Hawk-Eagle and Jaguar (DD))



