

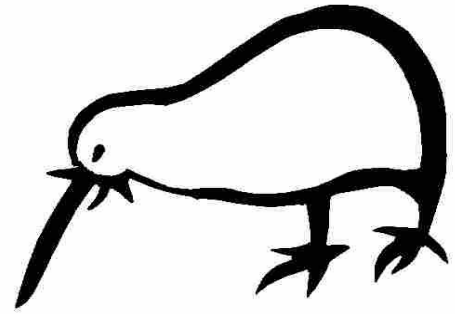
APTERYX

Issue 34

December 2012

Photos:
Detlef Davies (DD)
Carol Davies
Kevin Matthews
Jenny Atkins

www.osnz.org.nz



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

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A cool wet spring predominated in the latter part of 2012 but January has started with real summer weather. The wet spring is bound to have affected our birds, some of which may have been forced to nest in drier than usual places. I suspect that some of our shorebirds and marshland species may have lost broods to high water levels. On our recent trip to the South Island we struggled to find Black Stilts as they all bred in dry paddocks which are of course everywhere and the birds few and far between.

We have run 2 more seabird trips from Whangaroa, some shorebird counting at Parengarenga and we have carried out a local Morepork census – these are all reported in this newsletter.

We welcome David Bergum of Kerikeri as a new Far North member, already a regular on our pelagics.



New Zealand Dabchick on a lake in Ormiston Road near Ruakaka, the only place where I could get near enough (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 to Sun 21st to 23rd Sept – PARENGARENGA HARBOUR

This was a gallant attempt in difficult conditions to count shorebirds at one of our favourite sites and is reported on page 4.

Fri 12 October – 10 members met at the Christian Centre in Mangonui and we showed the wonderful DVD 'Emperors on Ice'.

Nov and Dec - There were no further indoor meetings up to the end of the year but two pelagic trips left Whangaroa Harbour with boatman, Brian Candy on 14th November and 19th December. These are reported on pages 7 - 10.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Compiled by Detlef Davies

These records cover the period from August to December 2012 unless otherwise stated. Contributors include Anthea Goodwin (AG), Kevin Matthews (KM), Detlef & Carol Davies (DCD), Laureen Alston (LA), Isabella & Derry Godbert (IDG), Jenny Atkins (JA), Reuben Booth, Sheila McCallum, Ann Canning, Peter Sewell.

WP = Whangaroa Pelagic

North Island Brown Kiwi – Regular reports from usual sites, 2 roosting together in a burrow on Moturoa Island. Heard Doves Bay 3 & 4 Dec.

New Zealand Dabchick (left below) – Reports from usual sites, 6 on Lake Waiporohita in October.



Kevin Matthews



Detlef Davies

Australian Little Grebe (right above) – Often on same lakes as Dabchicks. Interesting record of one on a tiny pond not far from the Stone Store in Kerikeri in October. By mid-December both bird and pond had gone, the latter had completely dried up (Reuben Booth, DD)

Wandering Albatross – 4 on WP 14 Nov.

White-capped Albatross – 1 on WP 14 Nov.

Buller's Albatross – 2 seen from Surville Cliffs on 19 Oct (KM)

Northern Giant Petrel – 4 on WP 14 Nov.

Buller's Shearwater – Common on both pelagics

Sooty Shearwater – 1 on Nov WP, 5+ on Dec WP

Cape Barren Geese (Detlef Davies)



Flesh-footed Shearwater – Common on both pelagics
Fluttering Shearwater – Numerous on both pelagics
Little Shearwater – 2 on WP 14 Nov.
Common Diving Petrel – c.6 on WP 14 Nov & 3 on WP 19 Dec.
Black (Parkinson's) Petrel – 2+ on WP 19 Dec.
Fairy Prion – 200+ on WP 14 Nov.
Cook's Petrel – up to 20 on both pelagics
Pycroft's Petrel – A few identified from photos taken on both pelagics.
Wilson's Storm Petrel – one on Dec WP
White-faced Storm Petrel – Numerous on both pelagics
New Zealand Storm Petrel – WP – 2 briefly on 14 Nov, several seen well on 19 Dec.
Little Penguin – a few around Stephenson Island on both pelagics
Australian Gannet – Seen at usual sites & on both pelagics

Little Shag – 14 together on Lake Waiporohita 6 Oct
Reef Heron – One in paddocks at high tide on 6 Oct, 2 Stephenson Island 14 Nov.

Cattle Egret – The 5 birds seen in March still at Paua, now in breeding plumage.

White-faced Heron – 64 counted at Skudders Beach, Kerikeri on 20 Dec, an almost all white one still near Pakaraka on 1 Jan.

Australasian Bittern – 1 in roadside ditch at Karapona 7 Oct, flying off carrying a large eel (DCD, DG), 1 Lake Rotorua (Aupouri) 16 Oct (KM), 2 flushed from marsh at Skudders Beach, Kerikeri 13 Nov (CD)

AUSTRALIAN PELICAN – After being seen frequently in Kerikeri Inlet in August, sightings tailed off in Sept. Has anyone seen it (or others) recently?

Royal Spoonbill – 273 at Te Hapua 6 Oct, still c.50 Unahi Road 7 Oct.

CAPE BARREN GOOSE - 7 seen on a headland at the east end of Stephenson Island, viewed from boat on 14 Nov (DCD, JA et al)

Brown Teal – 3 on a private lake near Ngaiotonga on 17 Dec (DCD, Shane & Julia)

NANKEEN KESTREL – The female or imm in Church Road between Kaitaia & Kaingaroa still present 2 Nov when seen from road on distant gate (DCD).

Weka – 3 or more heard & 1 seen Orongo Bay 22 Oct (DCD); this species is now common on the Russell Peninsula & spreading. They have been seen swimming . . .

Banded Rail – 1 from mangrove boardwalk between Paihia & Opua 25 Nov, pair with 5 chicks seen passing CJ & Carol's house, Moturoa Island over Christmas.

Spotless Crake – Heard Skudders Beach marsh reserve & at lake by Marsden Cross track on several dates.

Variable Oystercatcher – Breeding at many usual sites. Well-watched pair at Otehei Bay, Urupukapuka Is had 3 eggs under a pohutukawa tree.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher - Flocks of up to 100 Parengarenga 6/7 Oct.

Banded Dotterel – 1 Kokota Sandspit 7 Oct.

New Zealand Dotterel – Several well-watched pairs, some with chicks, Urupukapuka Is & Motumaire Island (off Paihia).

Lesser Knot – 974 Parengarenga 7 Oct.

Wrybill – 1 in breeding plumage Tokerau Beach 6 Oct.

Turnstone – 163 Parengarenga 7 Oct, 1 or 2 seen on Te Tii Beach, Waitangi.

Bar-tailed Godwit – 1674 Parengarenga 7 Oct, 14 Waitangi Estuary in Sept, still up to 10 in that area on 10 Nov, 22 Taipa Estuary 3 Nov, 1 Urupukapuka Bay 3 Nov.



Weka by Russell Walkway (Detlef Davies)



Leucistic White-faced Heron (Kevin Matthews)

Arctic Skua – 6 on Dec WP

White-fronted Tern – c.90 at end of Unahi Road, some breeding on derelict boat 7 Oct; up to 40 Waitangi Boat Club.

Caspian Tern – Good numbers of sightings. We will try and put these together to assist the census.

KAKA – 2 coming to Geoff Knight's tui feeders in Kerikeri & claiming superiority (Peter Sewell)

Shining Cuckoo – Heard Kohumaru Road (Mangonui) 29 Sept (AG), often heard (& seen) Kerikeri up to Dec & into Jan. Young bird in Kerikeri evicted 2 young Starlings from nest & was subsequently fed by various other birds (Ann Canning).

Morepork – Widely reported (see Census on page 11). Well-grown chick in one of the 2 nesting boxes in the fenced bush at Taumarumaru Reserve (Gerald Messenger).

Laughing Kookaburra – One seen in Silkwood Road, Kerikeri on 9 Oct (Sheila McCallum).

New Zealand Pipit – Recorded from Parengarenga, Tapotupotu (where taking crumbs under picnic table) & Marsden Cross track.

Fernbird – Heard at many sites, regular sightings in the marsh at Skudders Beach, Kerikeri.

Tomtit – Recorded on Urupukapuka & Moturua Islands during census, as well as usual mainland sites.

Bellbird – Although not seen by members, reliable reports from the Ngaiotonga area (edge of Russell Forest); searched for in the area on 17 Dec.

Redpoll – 2 Kokota Sandspit 7 Oct.



Shining Cuckoo (Carol Davies)

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.

Tuesday 5 February - OK, this isn't a Friday but tonight we will meet at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri at 7.30 pm & hear Dr CJ Ralph give a talk on '**Bird Observatories in Europe**'.

WADER COUNT – PARENGARENGA, 21-23 SEPT

Detlef Davies

Four of us plus 2 DOC staff & a young couple took part in a wader trip this weekend. We picked up Derry Godbert & left Kerikeri at 9.45 am on Saturday. We joined Anthea at Mother Jimmies in Paua Road (our lodgings for Saturday night) around 12.30 & the others joined us on Sunday.

On the journey up on the Saturday we stopped to have a look at the Taipa Estuary, then Tokerau Beach & Lake Waiporohita on the Karikari Peninsula, finding a selection of our commoner coastal birds, most notable being a Wrybill in breeding plumage on Tokerau Beach and 6 NZ Dabchicks on Lake Waiporohita.

We could not get a boat on the Saturday but in the late afternoon (4 – 5 pm) we scanned the waders in the harbour, viewing from Paua on an outgoing tide. There was a strong west wind. The following birds were counted in the paddocks by the large barn:

SIPO - c.50	Pied Stilt - 2	Reef Heron - 1
Bar-tailed Godwit - 3	Spur-winged Plover - 2	White-faced Heron – 20+
Starling - c.20	Cattle Egret - 5	

The Cattle Egrets were assumed to be the same 5 which were present in March but were now in breeding plumage. On Ahiaruhe Shellbank & the surrounding exposed mud were:

Bar-tailed Godwit - c.1000	Turnstone – 20+	Gulls, terns, shags
Lesser Knot – 100+	White-faced Heron – 20+	

We drove round to Te Hapua & viewed the estuary from the road from c.5.45 pm. Here there were:

Royal Spoonbill - 273	Mallards, Paradise Shelducks, etc.
White-faced Heron – 50+	

Anthea in her dinghy



On the Sunday, high tide was not until 2.30 pm and the DOC boat not due until 12 noon. From 10 am we birded the paddocks around the barn, counting 99 **SIPOs**, 22 **VOCs** & 2 **NZ Dotterels**. Flocks of shorebirds were moving together on the incoming tide and a large flock appeared on the eel-grass beds which we thought would be accessible in Anthea's dinghy, an excellent idea to bring this.

Carol & I came ashore there and the birds were loosely flocked and reasonably approachable. We estimated c.3000 birds altogether, perhaps 1800 **Godwits**, 1000 **Knot** & 200 **Turnstones**. Carol spotted the following flags: white flag on Godwit, orange flag on (female) Godwit, white flag on Knot & 2 flags, & white above orange, on a Godwit. This last one may have been one flagged in South Korea in 2004, not having been seen in NZ since 2006.

As the incoming tide started to swirl around our feet, I took a succession of 23 photos which were used to count the birds on the computer later. This showed our estimates to be not far from correct:

Bar-tailed Godwit – 1674

Lesser Knot – 974

Turnstone – 163

At 12 noon Lester & Evan from DOC arrived with the boat, also with Carolyn's niece Shonagh & her partner, Ian. We crossed to the Sandspit & spent from 1 to 3.30 pm there. There was no sign of the high tide roost of birds. Very little seen, 4 **Caspian Terns**, 1 **Gannet**, 3 **New Zealand Pipits**, 2 **Redpolls**, 81 **SIPOs**, 24 **VOCs** & Carol had a **Banded Dotterel**.



Passing the Shellbank at 4 pm, we counted 35 **SIPOs**, 52 **Spoonbills**, 10 **Caspian Terns**, 5 **Cattle Egrets**, shags, etc.

Left for home c.4.30. Looked at the Unahi road **Spoonbill** site and found c.50 birds still present, also c.90 **White-fronted Terns**.

On the way back 3 of us saw an **Australian Bittern** perched in the ditch near Karaponia, struggling with a large eel; it soon took off carrying the eel, landing out of sight.



EASTERN BAY OF ISLANDS BIRD CENSUS

Laureen Alston



Dawn mist from Otehei Bay (Detlef Davies)

On Thursday 8th November 2012, Bruce Collett from the Far Far North arrived in Kerikeri with his SUV to transport Kerikeri members Carol, Detlef and Laureen to Paihia for the start of our Spring 2012 OZNZ Bird Survey of the now predator free Ipipiri Islands. Here we boarded the Explore NZ tour ferry and travelled over to Russell where our final member Lindsay joined us.

The trip out was pleasant with various sea birds sighted and a bonus excursion, for the tourists aboard through the Hole In the Rock at Cape Brett before returning to Otehei Bay on Urupukapuka Island. We disembarked and made ourselves at home in the bunk-rooms and camp kitchen before some of us stretched our legs with walks on the tracks and paddocks, finding a New Zealand Dotterel family on the beach and the pair of Variable Oystercatchers which for the last 4 years have nested between the roots of a pohutukawa tree up on the grass above the beach, busy again incubating their 3 eggs, turn and turn about.

It was early to bed for us that night as Adrian from DoC would be at the wharf to take us to our survey areas at 6am. This was successfully accomplished with Carol and Bruce setting off on the two Urupukapuka tracks, Lindsay and Laureen being off-loaded on Moturua Island to do the 2 tracks there. Detlef went to Waewaetorea and Adrian to Okahu.



NZ Dotterel chick, Otehei Bay (DD)

It was very cold to start with on Friday, but the sun soon appeared and warmed us up. Conditions for listening were ideal with very little wind. Pick-ups at the end of the surveys went according to plan and we gathered in the kitchen to check over our sheets and pack up to await the 4.30pm ferry. It was out to the Hole in the Rock again but the swell had increased, so this lot of tourists had to make do with just a look through before we set off for Russell. Most of us were home between 6 and 7pm, well satisfied with our efforts.

Increases and decreases in the numbers of various species are now being collated and will be advised in our next edition. We noted that our present surveyors are all getting older - do you know of any members or friends who would be interested in being trained in our survey methods to add to our numbers? If so please advise Detlef or Carol on 407-3874 or Laureen on 407-8747.

Many thanks to all those involved, especially Bruce and Adrian - and their families!

WHANGAROA PELAGIC REPORTS

14th November, reported by Jenny Atkins

Detlef and Carol, Kjell Svensson & Lennart Lander from Sweden, Bruce Collett and Jenny Atkins set out at 7am from Whangaroa Harbour aboard Brian Candy's 'Kuri II'. On the lookout for Little Blue Penguins near the harbour entrance, we were not disappointed. We spotted seven Cape Barren Geese on a grassy slope on an eastern headland of Stephenson's Island and managed to get a good look at them. Paired off for breeding season, one couple put on a fine courtship display.

At the first reef two miles out it was birds galore. Fluttering Shearwater, Little Shearwater, Diving Petrel, Fairy Prion and White-faced Storm Petrel. Oh, to be in a rubber duckie in the middle of that lot with one's camera for a couple of hours!!!!!!!



Wandering Albatross (Jenny Atkins)



Northern Giant Petrel (Jenny Atkins)

We had a short chumming session which produced some Flesh-footed (100+) and Buller's Shearwater (10+) and 10+ White-faced Storm Petrels.

Moving on northwards to our 12 mile reef we chummed from 10.30 till noon. We weren't disappointed. Numerous Flesh-footed and Buller's Shearwater, a White-capped Albatross flew by. Four Northern Giant Petrels came in one by one and swam around the boat feeding. Over 100 White-faced Storm Petrels danced on the waves - such a pretty little bird and a couple of brief sightings of New Zealand Storm Petrels. One Sooty Shearwater was spotted and five Cook's Petrels - or maybe Pycroft's. A group of Common Dolphins including a mother and calf encircled the boat for a while.

The highlight for me was the four Wandering Albatrosses that came in one by one, stayed and followed us. Absolutely beautiful and graceful. One had a tag that I managed to get a close up of - Q35. I have had fun trying to track the bird.



Common Dolphin & calf (Jenny Atkins)

This from Andy Wood (UK)

Hi Jenny,

Your photographs of an albatross has been passed on to me to deal with. At Bird Island, South Georgia we do indeed have a marked population of Wandering Albatross, and they carry coloured plastic rings very similar to the bird in your photograph. With regard to the number on the ring, I would doubt very much whether the first letter is a "Q" - this is too similar to an "O" or a zero, and very difficult to distinguish in the field (we would never use a "Q"). More likely it is a zero, and we do indeed have yellow 035 in our database. However, from the plumage, your bird looks like a female, and our Y035 was a male. Also our Y035 was last seen at Bird Island in 1988, so is more than likely not alive now.



So unfortunately your bird is unlikely to be from Bird Island, however it could be a French ringed one from Crozet, and to check out that possibility contact Henri Weimerskirch (henriw@cebc.cnrs.fr)

I guess you had an interesting time trying to photograph a white bird on a sunny day - I have struggled with this for many years! Great birds to photograph though!

Best wishes.
Andy.

This from Karen Baird - Forest and Bird

Hi there Jenny,

Photos of the banded Wandering Albatross by Jenny Atkins

Thanks so much for taking the time to report this. I have forwarded your email to Kath Walker who studies these birds in the sub-antarctic (although she may be down there now, so not able to respond immediately), also Alan Tennyson curator of birds at the National Museum and Graeme Taylor – seabird scientist with DOC. I am sure one of them will be able to help you. It is so important to get information on the location of these birds, and to return tags if any dead ones are found as it helps to build up information about their distribution, survival and behaviour.

From my limited knowledge this bird looks like a Gibson's Albatross which breeds on the Auckland Islands. That is a magnificent head shot as well. When we hear some details on this bird I would love to put it on our F&B facebook page with your permission.

Kind regards
Karen Baird
Kermadec and Global Seabird
Programme Advocate
(Birdlife International)
p. 09 4226868
mob. 021 911 068
skype. Karenkermadec

Hopefully will be able to report a little more in the next newsletter....

Was a bit of a bumpy trip back which put the sea legs to test!!!!
Arrived back at 2:15pm.



19th December, reported by Detlef Davies (but lacking that inimitable Atkins style . . .)

7 of us – myself, Carol, Phil & Viola Palmer, Stephen & Penny Palmer and David Bergum – left Whangaroa Harbour at 7 am for a part-day pelagic returning c.2 pm.

Warm & sunny with very light NW wind.

Harbour & crossing to Stephenson Island, 7 to 8 am.

Little Penguin – 6 including 3 together.

Red-billed & Black-backed Gulls & White-fronted Terns: Variable Oystercatcher (1), Pied Shags, Australasian Gannet.

Fluttering Shearwater – 6+

Stephenson Island northwards to chumming spot, 8 – 9.45 am

Common Diving Petrel – 3

Australasian Gannet – 4+

Fluttering Shearwater – raft of c.500; more for the first half hour or so.

Buller's Shearwater – 200+ spread over the distance

Flesh-footed Shearwater – 4+

Sooty Shearwater – 1

Arctic Skua – 1 light phase

White-faced Storm Petrel – 30+

Cook's / Pycroft's Petrel – 2+

White-faced &
New Zealand
Storm Petrels
(DD)

Chumming site – 9.45 to 11.30 am

Black Petrel – 2 birds were the first to arrive and species present throughout but not clear how many individuals. Never more than 2 together.

Flesh-footed Shearwater – 100+ estimated and unlike some previous trips, much more numerous than Black Petrels.

Buller's Shearwater – 50+

White-faced Storm Petrel – 50+, a great showing by this species.

New Zealand Storm Petrel – one seen soon after 10 am and this or others gave great views for the next hour or more. Two seen together and thought to be between 6 & 10 birds present.

Wilson's Storm Petrel – one seen well early on.

Cook's Petrel – 8+

Pycroft's Petrel – 2+

Cook's / Pycroft's Petrel – 20+. As always, these species were difficult, seldom coming near enough for conclusive ID. Those which were identified were done so later from photos.

Sooty Shearwater – 4+

Return to Whangaroa – 11.30 to 2 pm.

Cook's/Pycroft's Petrel – 4; **White-faced Storm Petrel** – 10+; common **shearwaters, Gannets. Arctic Skua** – 5 flying high among flock of **Red-billed Gulls**.

Enormous mass of fish feeding at surface, accompanied by **Fluttering** (c.2000), **Buller's** (c.30), **White-faced Storm Petrels** (c.100) & couple of **Gannets**.

Little Penguin – 3

Unusual to see no albatrosses but wind extremely light today so chum smell probably not carrying far enough.





These 2 photos taken by DD on 19 December show what we consider to be **Pycroft's Petrels**. Note short head protrusion, thick neck, long tail & dark breast sides on left picture & steeper border between dark cheeks & white throat (than Cook's) on right picture. Comments & discussion are welcome and invited.

2012 AGM Minutes

Detlef Davies

Our AGM last year took place on Friday 11th May 2012 at the Community Room, Proctor Library, Kerikeri at 7.45 pm. We regret the late publication of this.

Present were: Detlef & Carol Davies (DD, CD), Isabella & Derry Godbert (IG, DG), Anthea Goodwin (AG), Peter Ladd (PL) & Laureen Alston (LA). Apologies from Bill Campbell, Russell Thomas, Kerry & Jane Walshe.

The minutes of the previous AGM on Fri 22 July 2011 were read (but were set out in the August 2011 newsletter). It was noted that they were wrongly dated 2012. Those minutes were proposed approved by IG & seconded by DG.

Matters arising – it was noted that the second venue in Mangonui had been a success and would continue.

DD gave an oral report of the events of the past year, mentioning that despite a slightly falling membership, events had been frequent and reasonably well attended. He gave a run-down of the subjects of the meetings and field trips; that hosted by CJ & Carol Ralph on Moturoa Island had been the best attended for a long time. We had run successful sea trips from Whangaroa & had presented a display at the Envirofest in Kerikeri.

Report: proposed CD, seconded LA.

Laureen as Regional Recorder reported on progress with the record-keeping. She now had a database for all the Far North bird records & had 188 entries from 20 observers.

Proposed DD seconded AG.

Isabella gave the Treasurers Report and went through the detail on the latest statement. We had a healthy balance & able to offer some contribution to field trips in addition to central funds which paid towards the Dotterel census.

Proposed DD, seconded LA.

There followed a combined Publicity Report and a discussion about meetings during June & July when Detlef & Carol will be away. News from the region included the return of 40 Brown Teal to Urupukapuka, annual Kiwi listening was imminent & Garden Bird Survey coming soon. The members email list was provided to Isabella & Anthea with a view to distributing news and arranging meetings.

All current officers were willing to stand again for the time being and were duly re-elected – proposed DG, seconded LA.

The next project was the Spoonbill Census in August which Anthea will organise. There was no other business and the meeting closed at 9 pm.

MOREPORK CENSUS – OCT 2012

Carol & Detlef Davies

We had the idea to conduct a Morepork Census when we heard that one was taking place in other regions, particularly in Waikato. We liaised with Dai Morgan from that region who was co-ordinating the census. His interest was in the numbers of Morepork in urban areas but nevertheless, it was a new idea for us even in our rural landscape.

The Morepork, our only surviving native owl, has distinctive calls known to most of us so it was easy to take part. Volunteers were asked to devote an hour after dark to listen for calls, ideally close to where they live, repeat the procedure for up to another 4 nights if possible and indicate roughly how far away the calls were and the direction.

We received 33 completed sheets from 13 people. We have prepared a chart below which is not intended to be the end result but just a summary of how we got on. There was inconsistency in how listeners interpreted what constituted a call and some repeated calls were not noted separately. For this reason we have not tried to count the calls – they varied from 0 to 39. We have spent some time trying to guess how many birds were involved in each hourly session. Where we have more than one result sheet from any locality, we have estimated numbers of birds on each sheet and given the highest of those estimates in the last column. Estimating the numbers is very difficult to do from a mixture of distances and directions because the birds are active at night and cover some distance when hunting (but are breeding at present). We will seek further advice on this at a later date.



Urupukapuka, Nov 2012 (DD)

Listener(s)	Locality	Date or date range	Average start time	Count time	Max. no. of birds estimated
Anthea Goodwin	Kohumaru Road, Mangonui	22 – 26 Oct (5 nights)	20.35	One hour	5
Ian Wilson	Waihoanga Gorge Kauri Walk, Puketi	22 – 26 Oct (5 nights)	20.20	One hour	6
Gary Little & Asta Wistrand	Diggers Valley Road, Kaitia	11 – 14 & 16 Nov (5 nights)	20.25	One hour (one night 35 mins)	6
Brad Windust	Kaopatiki Farm, Opuia	26 Oct	20.30	One hour	4
Craig Salmon	Opuia Forest	26 Oct	20.30	One hour	5
Peter Ladd	36 Inlet Road, Kerikeri	24 – 26 Oct (3 nights)	20.30	One hour	4
Jan & Kevin O'Boyle	6 Bedgood Road, Waima	19 Nov	20.30	One hour	6
Robin Booth	25 Landing Road, Kerikeri	17 – 19 Oct (3 nights)	20.15	One hour	3
Margaret Cooper	Rangitane Hill near Kerikeri	23 – 26 Oct (4 nights)	20.30	One hour	2
Carol & Detlef Davies	180 Landing Road, Kerikeri	10 – 13 Nov (4 nights)	21.07	One hour	5

This chart does not include all the variables. Listeners were asked to note any noise which might have affected the ability to hear distant, or even nearby calls. Weather is also a factor but no rain was noted apart from a little one night at Diggers Valley Road. Calls were very prominent in Opuia Forest on 26 Oct where they were noted from 700 metres away; other results noted 'very distant' on occasion but generally not estimated beyond c.500 m.

Many thanks to all those who took part and obviously we should repeat the census, perhaps later this year, in order to find any signs of population trends.

In between other commitments we made short notice flight bookings to Christchurch on 2nd December with a view to trying to see some South Island endemic specialities, in particular, Great Spotted Kiwi and Orange-fronted Parakeet. It was a very early flight and we began by visiting Nick Allen for breakfast and purchased his new site guide to the birds of Canterbury, a very handy book with detailed directions to many birding places we would otherwise not have found.

After a mornings shorebird watching on the shores of Lake Ellesmere (finding **Sharp-tailed & Pectoral Sandpipers**), we travelled inland to Arthurs Pass. On a lovely dry sunny day we paddled across the cold braided river to the trail on the west side of the Hawdon River where we eventually managed to get a close view of one **Orange-fronted Parakeet**. Over the next couple of days the weather deteriorated, Kiwis were thin on the ground, even the calls, and two rental cars broke down on us! When we finally left the Pass in our third vehicle, we headed all the way to Karamea and having settled into the Village Hotel, had a meal & some sleep before heading out to the car park at the start of the Heaphy Track well after dark.

It was a dry and dark night as we walked up the trail and we got to Scotts Peak not long before midnight. Walking on down in the direction of the beach, a Kiwi ran across the track. We tried playing a tape of the female call and the bird returned to the track 4 more times, giving great views, our first **Great Spotted Kiwi**. Peering up the bank, we just caught sight of 2 of them together. Definitely the highlight of the trip.

Our third destination was Lake Tekapo & Twizel in the McKenzie country. We stayed in Twizel and birded the Ohau Delta area close to the hydro-electric power stations where with luck you can find the very elusive **Marsh Crake**. We had 2 reasonable flight views of them but longer looks would have been nice for the amount of time spent there. Likewise, **Black Stilts** were difficult this year but there were 3 birds, including a breeding pair on the west side of Lake Tekapo.

Our final day was spent looking at shorebirds again, with Christchurch members Jan Walker & Sheila Petch.



Tussock Butterfly – Lake Sarah near Cass, 8.12.12 (DD)



Black Stilt – Lake Tekapo, 10.12.12 (DD)

JANUARY 2013 – latest news and announcements

After a health blip in December, Detlef wishes to stand down as Regional Representative and seeks a successor as soon as possible. Please consider this and let the Society know if you would like to take over. It is not a one person job - the tasks undertaken over the last 8 years can be distributed between a number of members and there are already some ideas as to how continuity will be achieved. Full support will be given to all those wishing to assist and Detlef will continue to be Newsletter Editor for the time being.

This news has come in from Gerald Messenger via Anthea:

Morepork - In Dec/12 A Morepork reared a chick from a nest box in Taumarumaru Recreation Reserve at Coopers Beach. As at 8/1/13 it was still sitting with its parent and had lost most of its down.

Banded Rail - 1 seen in the mangroves at Chucks Cove on 7/1/13.

Pied Shag - Nest, with chick, in puriri on Mangonui waterfront near the Old Oak.