

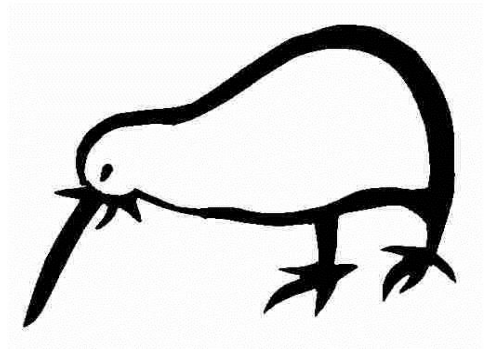
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Issue 42

September 2015

Photos:

Les Feasey (LF)
Dettef Davies (DD)
Carol Davies
Kevin Matthews



BIRDS NEW ZEALAND

FAR NORTH REGION NEWSLETTER

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

www.osnz.org.nz

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

It is now early October and as indicated to members, newsletters will from now on be produced in September, January and May. The September issue will in effect be a winter report and the other 2 will cover spring to autumn which is our whole summer season. Weather is getting warmer and Shining Cuckoos are back in many places. We welcome the arrival of our Arctic shorebirds and look forward to opportunities to do some counts in the next few months. One winter count on Walker Island is reported here with good numbers of birds but some winter visits have turned up very few. With a 5 month period since the last newsletter, there is quite a lot to report, even during an unusually cold winter.



A splash of colour for the front page photo in this issue – 2 Eastern Rosellas, there have been many of these Australian beauties around Kerikeri over the winter (DD).

The Far North Regional Officers are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Regional Representative Les Feasey, 54 Oromahoe Road, Opua 09 402 8917 lfeasey@mac.com | Treasurer Isabella Godbert, 67 Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8058 godbert@xtra.co.nz |
| Regional Recorder Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com | Newsletter Editor Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com |

RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

Beach patrols – 1st March, 15th May and 12th September. Report on page 12.

18th March – **Meeting at the Christian Centre**, Mangonui. A general members night when we found lots to discuss and plenty of exchanges of information, so that Detlef's presentation on Antarctica was postponed until another night.

12th August – **Far North AGM** – Minutes on page 6

Other events have taken place separately from the Society but nonetheless of interest, such as the **Walker Island survey** and a **North Cape Pelagic**.

17 – 18 October – Spring bird survey on Eastern Bay of Islands, organised by Project Island Song. Great opportunity to see the recently translocated Saddlebacks and Whiteheads. Contact Les Feasey for details.

November – Spring wader count at Parengarenga & Rangaunu Harbours and Kowhai Beach. Les Feasey will arrange dates depending on suitable tides.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Compiled by Detlef Davies

These records cover the period from May to September 2015 unless otherwise stated. Contributors include Les Feasey (LF), Anthea Goodwin (AJG), Isabella & Derry Godbert, Kevin Matthews (KM), Detlef & Carol Davies (DD, CD), Gary Little & Asta Wistrand (GL, AW), Mike Bryan (MB), Bill Campbell (BC), Angela Armitage (AA), Gerry Messenger (GM), Ian Wilson (IW).

Waders seen on the Walker Island survey (page 7) and seabirds on the North Cape pelagic (page 9) are not included here, to avoid duplicity.

North Island Brown Kiwi – Several heard at Herbert Bismarck Matthews Reserve in Herekino Forest (MB)

White-capped Albatross – One near the Pinnacles in the Bay of Islands on 8 Sept (LF)

Fairy Prion – 15 in Bay of Islands on 8 Sept (LF)

Common Diving Petrel – 12 in Bay of Islands on 8 Sept (LF)

Little Penguin – first calls for season on 10 April at Mangonui Harbour (AJG), 18 recorded here on 5 May (LF). Sign of use of rabbit burrow for nesting near summit of Taumarumaru (GM). See nest box project and latest news on pages 3 & 4.

Little Black Shag – c.40 close inshore in a flock at Mangonui on 30 June (AJG)

White-faced Heron – One albino and one near-albino at Horeke (Ian Wilson's son, David)



CATTLE EGRETS

Houhora (both photos: LF)

White Heron (Great Egret) – 2 Unahi on 30 July

Little Egret – 1 Houhora Harbour on 30 July (LF, KM) 1 of 5 heron species seen that day.

Cattle Egret – Flock of 33 along Unahi Road on 30 July (LF, KM)

Reef Heron – Mangonui on 9 June, Houhora on 30 July, Waitangi on 15 Sept.





LITTLE EGRET with Pied Stilts & Caspian Tern – Houhora Harbour (Kevin Matthews)

Royal Spoonbill – 42 Houhora & 510 at Unahi on 30 July (LF, KM), 12 at Mangonui on 17 Aug & 11 at Kaeo rivermouth, Whangaroa on 15 Aug. (BC)

Brown Teal – pair at Orongo Holiday Park, Russell on 18 Sept (but regular here) (AA)

New Zealand Scaup – outside our area but at least 2 are back at Waro Lake, Hikurangi from Sept after a long absence. (DD, LF)

Weka – now very common on the Russell side of Bay

New Zealand Dotterel – Flocks on Te Tii Beach, Waitangi into April, breeding reports consist of some failed territories.



Shining Cuckoo (Carol Davies)

Banded Dotterel – 21 at Houhora on 30 July (LF)

Bar-tailed Godwit – Waitangi Yacht Club, 3 on 27 Sept, 6 on 28 sept (LF)

Spotted Dove – 1 at Wharepuke on 27 Sept (LF)

Shining Cuckoo – Heard Opuia on 12 August (LF), Mangonui on 29 August (AJG), heard and seen Kerikeri 12 Sept, then widespread.

Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike – one reported from the vicinity of Wharepuke Cottages in Kerikeri in late September, not seen by birders but well described by Tania Booth. Still being searched for.

New Zealand Fantail – a flock of c.50 seen feeding on insects at the top of Cable Bay Block Road in the evening of 12 July (GM)

Tomtit – reports from Diggers Valley Road (GL, AW), Opuia, Puketi, Mataraua, etc.

Fernbird – Reports from Orongo area, Russell (AA)

North Island Robin – Ian Wilson (& 11 volunteers) reports 42 sites in Puketi Forest along 11.925 kms of trap-lines between 25 July & 1 August, a very encouraging number. Just 6 birds were banded.

New Zealand Pipit – reported from Orongo Bay (AA)

North Island Saddleback – 5 (2 pairs) on Urupukapuka on 2 July (LF). The translocation of this species earlier this year has been widely publicised and we propose to write an update in the next newsletter.

Kokako – 5 seen in Mataraua Forest on 19 Sept (LF), outside our area but a special bird in its original native habitat, within our reach.

Redpoll – One at Taupo Bay on 18 July, feeding on Knobby Club-rush (AJG) and 2 on Ian Wilson's farm at Puketi during August (IW). Although apparently scarce in the Far North, Redpolls are probably often overlooked.



Redpolls at Wairoa Lagoons near Blenheim in May 2015 (DD)

STOP PRESS: 6th October

Gerald Messenger found a Penguin in one of the boxes installed by the children on Pink Beach near Taumarumaru.



Little Blue Penguins Committee

Kia Ora Parents

Last week our penguin committee spent a busy morning with Glen Bradbury measuring and cutting wood donated by Far North ITM for our penguin box kitsets. 30 lucky kids from Taniwha class will be helping us to build 10 boxes.

Some local bird watchers have confirmed that the little blue penguins have been using the boxes that we have put in various place around Mangonui harbour. If you walk along the road between the Police station and the Mangonui Fish shop around dusk, you can hear the penguins and if you're really lucky, spot them scrambling out of the water and up the rocks to find their beds for the night! Brenna and several other keen 'penguin hunters' saw four of them within twenty minutes of watching and listening. Just remember if you do see them, they look really cute, but please don't try to touch them!!





FAR NORTH AGM – 12th AUGUST

Far North Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 12th August 2015 at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri at 7.40 pm.

Present: Les Feasey, Detlef and Carol Davies, Anthea Goodwin, Lois Wagener, Isabella and Derry Godbert.
Apologies for absence: Susie Lindauer, Trudy Crerar, Kevin Matthews, Russell Thomas, Bill Campbell, Peter Ladd, Bruce & Alison Collett.

This was considered an AGM but lacked a prior Agenda – it was regarded as an opportunity to discuss any topics which those present felt the need to talk about.

Les Feasey, the Regional Rep outlined the events at the Society's Conference & AGM in Blenheim on Queens Birthday weekend. Les had attended the Regional Reps meeting at which a Strategic Plan was discussed. It seems that most RRs felt that refinements were needed. In spite of these concerns, the Strategic Plan was adopted by the Regional Reps. Les felt that a clear strategy outlining a transition to modern information technology was required, and the document lacked a clearly enunciated strategy to attracting new members.

Although use of E-bird was increasing and Far North is high in the rankings of numbers of species posted, eBird may need some refinements. Some observers regard their observations as private and do not want them to be posted publically on eBird, but are willing to have them used for scientific enquiry. Some people wished their sightings to remain private; and would post them on eBird if they had control over who accessed them. Additional access controls in eBird would resolve these difficulties.

Beach Patrols – a long-standing project for the Far North – had continued as regularly as ever. Isabella agreed to continue in the role of coordinator.

Communication with Forest and Bird – a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed and celebrated at the AGM. Les has met with Marianna Young, secretary of Forest and Bird (Far North) and we have agreed to jointly arrange expeditions. We had not succeeded so far in making any meaningful expeditions, although the good-will is there. We should soon be holding some joint events, both indoor and in the field.

Les had set up a project to encourage young members and a young student from Kaitaia had taken up the challenge to get an article in 'Notornis'.

Far North funds were at a very low level with the latest account showing a balance of \$700.68. Carol pointed out that she felt the branch was doing far too much by way of assistance to those paid by other organisations who were in effect taking our ornithological knowledge for free. We need to see that those coming to our area to study birds need to communicate with the group in advance.

Les gave us an update on a Pest Control Seminar he attended in Whangarei. He reported as follows:

Ngaire Tyson from Northland Kiwi Landcare presented a view of Northland from Whangarei to the Mangonui area with at least 59 organisations, all partners in the Kiwi Coast Project: www.kiwicoast.org.nz The Kiwi Coast project is part of a larger effort, Reconnecting Northland. <http://www.landcare.org.nz/Regional-Focus/Whangarei-Office/Reconnecting-Northland>

The aim is to have a pest free Northland. Sir Paul Callaghan's vision of a pest free New Zealand moving from stronghold to stronghold might have jumped from Zealandia, but the attitude here is that we have a great chance to do something special. There were about 100 people at the Whangarei meeting, landowners, conservationists, trappers, rangers, and ornithologists, and some research scientists. There were about 50 people at the Paihia meeting, held in Waitangi, and about 50 at the Bay Bush Action meeting for supporters of the Opua Forest at the same venue. Next month will see a similar meeting in Kaitaia.

After the Whangarei meeting I was invited by Adam Willetts, the Head Ranger of Bream Head, to visit the site. Adam explained that Bellbird had been plentiful along the Peach Cove track for a number of years, and speculated that the particularly dry summer of 2010 had caused a significant number of bellbird to decamp from the Hen and Chickens Islands and move to Bream Head, significantly increasing the population. Five-minute bird counts conducted by DoC from 1993 through 2006 indicated that more bellbird were being seen up to when the surveys were discontinued in 2006. It may be that we have the first natural population on the mainland north of Auckland in many years. I plan to add to the DoC data by doing surveys along the same routes in the near future. Wouldn't it be special if the Bellbird moved up the predator free Kiwi Coast to Paihia and the Bay of Islands in time for our 2018 AGM?

In the Oxford Journal BioScience, August 1, 2015 65 (8) James C. Russell et al discuss a Predator-Free New Zealand: Conservation Country. You can find it on line. The vision is a predator free New Zealand in 50 years. It's well worth the read.

Project Island Song – there had been 2 releases of Saddleback onto Moturua and Urupukapuka Island earlier this year, first 40 birds from Lady Alice Island at the end of March, then 40 from Tiritiri in May. Surveys since then indicate that birds are still present but that the 2 populations do not mix, also that the first birds released took all the best territories. A cat found to have escaped from a passing boat landed on the island earlier this year and remained for several months – it is not clear how much predation took place. Whiteheads were also released onto Moturua.

Shorebird counts during the winter produced very few birds and a general feeling of an ongoing deterioration of coastal habitat, particularly on the Aupouri Peninsula. Walker Island is hardly able to support a high tide roost of shorebirds now. Shorebird counts are to resume from September onwards including the regular weekend in November. Les may be able to assist with boats, he may buy one himself. The suggestion of using a drone in order to survey difficult sites like Parengarenga Harbour was an interesting idea.

Carol announced the idea of Far North OSNZ having a stall at the Farmers Market to publicise the activities of the group as well as to offer goods for sale (such as nest-boxes, books, photos, calendars, etc). Peter Frost from the Projects and Activities Committee had indicated that this is a suitable project for funding. The Penguin Box project in Mangonui is doing well with many youngsters showing interest.

Les suggested a mixed group meeting at the Dukes Head in Russell in the near future.

Detlef requested articles, bird records and photos for the next newsletter.

Meeting ended 9.20 pm.

WALKER ISLAND SURVEY – 4th MARCH

Les Feasey

Kevin and I managed to get a survey of Walker Island on 4th March.

A few Spoonbills, White-faced herons and a Reef Heron were nesting at Unahi but there were no White Herons. Spur-winged Plover, Pied Stilt, VOC and White-faced Heron were feeding on the sand bar in front of the wharf and Red-billed Gulls were coming in to roost on the old fish-processing shed. A couple of White-fronted Terns and Black-backed Gulls were roosting on pilings. When Kevin arrived it started to rain (much to his delight, the farm needed the rain) so we put plastic bags over the camera bags and they didn't see light during the trip.

We left Unahi wharf at 5:45pm and went by Zodiac (inflatable) to Walker Island up the channel. High Tide was at 8:00pm and Kevin predicted that Walker Is would be pretty well covered by then so that's why we went out early, arriving at 6:30pm. We saw masses of waders as we approached and

Shorebirds and terns on Walker Island DD)



gingerly anchored, not wanting to spook the waders. Using the shell-bank for cover we crept ashore and got a count of the Godwits. The forecast had predicted rain for the last 3 days and it hadn't rained, so I was lightly clad. Bad idea. By then, the rain was pelting down and it was impossible to keep the binoculars dry enough to use. My one lens-cleaner had to be wrung out. When I stood up the waders took flight (they are very spooked) and settled about 220m away.

Kevin checked out the closest groups of terns and gulls for vagrants but didn't see any, so we pulled up anchor and toured through the mangroves counting nesting shags. The rain finally eased off and stopped and the ride home was better.

It was exciting to see such large numbers of waders in the harbour, but also even more exciting to see the very vibrant ecosystem. Stingray, kawhai, piper, and baitfish were plentiful. Black Swan, Canada Geese, and ducks were abundant. As you can see from the counts, there were plenty of migrant waders as well. The snapper fishermen were also doing well. A great expedition. I could easily spend a day touring through the area, as Kevin has done often on his fishing trips.

Walker Island, Far North District, NZ-NTL

Mar 4, 2015 6:30 PM - 7:10 PM

Protocol: Stationary

Comments: Rapidly rising high tide. Driving rain, heavy at times. Optics became useless. Coming on dusk limiting visibility. Census includes travel through mangrove to view nesting shags and herons, though waders were only on Walker Island.

22 species

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*) 600 Limited visibility but saw 300 with another 300 imputed.

Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) 250 Returning in flight to roost on inland lakes.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 220 Flocks returning from feeding to inland lakes. Species undetermined. (Ducks sp?)

Australasian Gannet (*Morus serrator*) 14 Fishing in the harbor waters, singly or in pairs. Flying or feeding on the water.

Little Black Shag (*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*) 150 Walker IS to Unahi thru mangroves. LBS nesting in large numbers in mangroves.

Black Shag (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) 4

Pied Shag (*Phalacrocorax varius*) 3 In flight.

White-faced Heron (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) 7

Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra*) 2 Roosting at Unahi Wharf.

Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) 12 Unahi wharf. Nesting in macrocarpa pine. Non-nesting young - there are usually up to 300 birds.

Pied Stilt (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) 7

South Island Pied Oystercatcher (SIPO) (*Haematopus finschi*) 260 Walker Is population roosting with VOC, RBG, WFT and BBG.

Variable Oystercatcher (*Haematopus unicolor*) 40 Walker Is population roosting with VOC, RBG, WFT and BBG.

Spur-winged Plover (*Vanellus miles*) 5

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) 2

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) 3000 Got a pretty good count from 100m by hiding behind sandbar and counting with binoculars before heavy rain started. When we stood up they took to flight and settled 300m away. When the rain really started binoculars were useless.

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) 150 Turnstone took to flight and got a good view. Probably more on the ground.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) 300

Red-billed Gull (*Chroicocephalus scopulinus*) 120

South Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) 60

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) 40 Roosting at Walker Is. Have been there nesting all summer.

White-fronted Tern (*Sterna striata*) 49 Adults with young roosting on Walker Is.

View this checklist online at <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S22174064>

This report was generated automatically by eBird v3 (/content/newzealand)

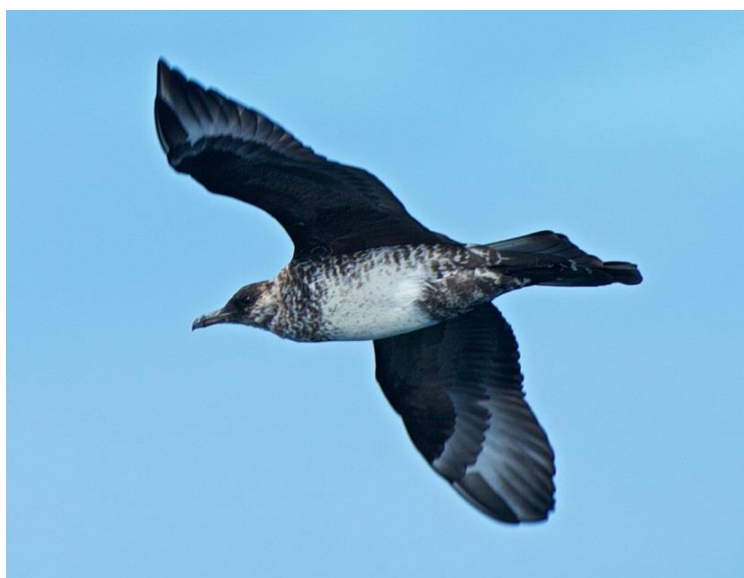
NORTH CAPE PELAGIC – 23 to 25 MARCH

Les Feasey was one of the 8 people to take part in Wrybill Tours annual Far North pelagic from Houhora. The restrictions on the boat's allowed distance offshore prevented it from getting to the Three Kings this time but chumming spots in reach of North Cape produced a good spread of enviable seabirds. I have listed below the species seen on the 3 days from Les's entry on E-bird:

| 23 rd March | 24 th March | 25 th March |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Buller's Albatross - 1 | Buller's Albatross - 1 | Little Penguin - 1 |
| White-capped Albatross - 2 | White-capped Albatross - 1 | Campbell Albatross - 2 |
| Campbell Albatross - 3 | Campbell Albatross - 2 | Wandering Albatross - 4 |
| Northern Royal Albatross - 1 | Wandering Albatross - 5 | Grey-faced Petrel - 1 |
| Wandering Albatross - 3 | Grey-faced Petrel - 3 | Cook's Petrel - 1 |
| Grey-faced Petrel - 4 | Kermadec Petrel - 1 | Fairy Prion - 17 |
| KERMADEC PETREL - 3 | PROVIDENCE PETREL - 1 | Black (Parkinson's) Petrel - 3 |
| White-naped Petrel - 1 | Black-winged Petrel - 1 | Flesh-footed Shearwater - 2 |
| Black-winged Petrel - 10 | Cook's Petrel - 2 | Buller's Shearwater - 3 |
| Cook's Petrel - 6 | Fairy Prion - 4 | Fluttering Shearwater - 13 |
| Fairy Prion - 3 | Black (Parkinson's) Petrel - 18 | Little Shearwater - 1 |
| Black (Parkinson's) Petrel - 2 | Flesh-footed Shearwater - 10 | Common Diving Petrel - 1 |
| Flesh-footed Shearwater - 7 | Buller's Shearwater - 7 | White-faced Storm Petrel - 2 |
| Buller's Shearwater - 4 | Fluttering Shearwater - 4 | |
| Wilson's Storm Petrel - 1 | Wilson's Storm Petrel - 3 | |
| White-faced Storm Petrel - 1 | White-faced Storm Petrel - 1 | |
| Australasian Gannet – c.50 | NEW ZEALAND STORM PETREL - 1 | |
| Pied Shag - 8 | Australasian Gannet – 15 | |
| POMARINE SKUA - 2 | Pied Shag - 9 | |
| Skua sp (Arctic or Long-tailed) - 2 | Reef Heron - 3 | |
| Red-billed Gull – c.30 | Arctic Skua - 5 | |
| Black-backed Gull - 3 | LONG-TAILED SKUA - 17 | |
| Caspian Tern - 2 | Red-billed Gull – c.20 | |
| | Black-backed Gull - 3 | |
| | GREY TERNLET - 1 | |
| | White-fronted Tern - 3 | |

Conditions were clear. Choppy seas created some interesting moments on the first two days. Wandering seabirds from the north were fewer than usual. However, the **Providence Petrel** was a real bonus and the first record for some years (2 were seen in Great Exhibition Bay in 2006 on one of Chris Gaskin's trips); Kermadec and White-naped Petrels are always good to see and seldom recorded further south than here. 17 Long-tailed

Skuas coming past in small groups and 5 Arctic Skuas were exciting as were the 2 Poms. [Photos below of a White-naped Petrel and an imm Pomarine Skua were taken by Les Feasey.](#)



FAR NORTH SCIENCE FAIR

Les Feasey

For the second year running, Birds New Zealand (Far North) offered a prize to the Far North Science and Technology Fair student who produced the best bird related project. The Fair was held in the Turner Center, Kerikeri on 26 August 2015 and prize giving, attended by 150 students, relatives, teachers and sponsors was on Friday 28 August 2015.

This year the binoculars, donated by Hunting and Fishing Kerikeri, were won by Max Hart for his project "Blue Birds the Word". Max tested how color affected the consumption of grain by birds. Natural color won, and blue was the least consumed. An interesting result, as the Department of Conservation colors pest bait blue so birds don't eat it.



In his remarks at the Prize Giving, Les Feasey, Regional Representative for the Far North, Birds New Zealand, congratulated Max for his project. He also mentioned that Birds New Zealand (Far North) in addition to offering the Fair prize again next year, is offering a \$1,000 prize for the best article published in Notornis, the Societies quarterly Journal. Tools available to students to select projects are a web site www.FarNorthBirds.org (under construction) and an app for iPhone and Android called eBird, where bird observations can be entered as part of bird population and movement studies.

The Top Energy Far North Science and Technology continues to amaze and impress. The number of entries increased from 120 to 150 and the quality of projects continues to improve. This year's top prize was won by students Kiani Pou and Nathan Tarawa from Northland College, Kaikohe.

In 2013 three students, Clara Autet, Melanie Jones and Jesse Prendergast were selected from the Far North to participate in the Realise the Dream event, the National Fair. For the first time ever all three students received major prizes. This success has built on previous successes and indicates the respect and validity of our Fair to students of the Far North.

In 2014 a record of 4 students, Alex Edwards Year 9, Lucy Ellingham, Jason Leaming and Georgia Putt from Year 13 were selected from the Far North Fair to participate in Realize the Dream. For the first time ever, three students received major prizes. This result builds on previous successes and indicates the respect and validity of the Far North Fair. Birds New Zealand (Far North) are proud to be sponsors of this event.



OPINION : INEQUALITY IN BIRDS

I have fond memories of listening to my Gran reading her Dad's letters to me. I still recall her emotional voice and the tears running down her face when she spoke about her Dad who had been in New Zealand. In 1912 he had jumped onto a ship heading for the southern lands, in search of opportunities for him and his family, working his passage. In 1914 he was returning to the UK to sign up for WW1 when the ship was torpedoed and all on board were lost. The family struggled so much in Scotland that my great-grandmother had to be buried in a pauper's grave.

I was to grow up experiencing inequality first hand. But 1999 was a year which changed my life. I was awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to study issues involving Social Policy & Inequality, and in the course of those travels I met my future husband. Events led to a move to New Zealand where I found inequality of a different kind. Opportunities are limited if you are a BIRD in New Zealand. This 'Land of Birds' is also the 'Extinction Capital of the World'. Through the years of trying to get involved in conservation projects in the Far North, where we live, I soon found OSNZ as the saving grace. After attending a course at Miranda Shorebird Centre, I decided to focus on the plight of the New Zealand Dotterel, a particularly attractive species, highly range-restricted and endangered. I concentrated on the birds which gather in flocks in the Paihia area. All odds seemed to be against it, first they wanted to groom the beaches where it was trying to breed, then I found dogs allowed illegally to run loose on those beaches, and finally a large number of cats roaming loose in the area. All bad news for the dotterel, how unequal is this?



I was not without like-minded colleagues who are keen to protect birds. Project Island Song have taken on a major task on the eastern Bay of Islands. However, their dotterels do not stay there, it is these birds which come to the highly dangerous and unprotected beaches at Paihia and join the local breeding birds.

I have had some success. I saved 2 & a half beaches from a Beach Groomer by applying to the Environment Court. But the dogs and cats are still there and it is getting worse. I hear that there are 23 Far North organisations focussed on some aspect of conservation and I expect they do well in their endeavours.

None have the extra time to devote to assist in my special project which is to prevent predation by introduced predators. I was horrified to discover that cats are kept in 'colonies' and encouraged to roam free, without 'belonging' to anyone. I had another success – after 4 years of effort, I closed one such colony down. Then I found that there was a 'cat sanctuary' applied for and approved, just 10 metres from the beach where the flock of dotterels were. Not only is this inequality in the extreme, it is a complete reversal of the desired trend to reduce predation. A dotterel protects itself successfully against predation by a harrier by its cryptic plumage so chances can be considered as equal but what hope is there against a cat which hunts by smell? Dolphins, so precious in the Bay, would be a match against the occasional visit by a pod of Orcas but how do they prevent themselves from being infected by toxoplasmosis which will flow into the bay in quantity in cat faeces? This cat-borne disease is now being reported in literature from Massey University researchers, as affecting other endemic species like Kiwi, NZ Pigeon and Kaka. This is a real concern and a global problem.

We need a bird sanctuary in the Bay of Islands, not a cat sanctuary. A request has been made to reconsider the cat sanctuary to the controlling Council. Attitudes need to change in the Far North, and in New Zealand as a whole. We need to educate the future generations, urgently. In the meantime, our precious NZ Dotterel will continue to have 'odds against'. When will it get its 1999?



Carol Davies
Churchill Fellow
F/1999

WINSTON
CHURCHILL
MEMORIAL
TRUST

Travel to make a difference

BEACH PATROLS 2015

Isabella Godbert

Beach Patrollers: Isabella & Derry Godbert, Kevin Matthews, Catherine McDiarmid, Maggie Aslund, Les Feasey, Lois Wagener.

| DATE | 1 st March | 15 th May | 12 th Sept |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Distance | 37.5 km by car | 37 km car, 12 on foot | 36 km car, 15 on foot |
| Beach | 90 mile Beach | 90 mile Beach | 90 mile Beach |
| Species | | | |
| Buller's Mollymawk | | | 1 |
| Black-browed Mollymawk | | | 1 |
| Mollymawk sp. | | | 1 |
| Sooty Shearwater | | | 1 |
| Fluttering Shearwater | | | 1 |
| Common Diving Petrel | | | 1 |
| Fairy Prion | | | 3 |
| Little Blue Penguin | | | 1 |
| Australian Gannet | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Black-backed Gull | 7 | | 2 |
| TOTAL | 9 | 3 | 18 |

PERU ON OFFER!

For those interested in seeing tropical birds in spectacular quantity, North Peru is a very good choice. Dates for **2016** are **16 August** and **9 September**. Both have spaces.

In conjunction with our ground agent in Tarapoto, we have put together various other options with a combination of other interests including other wildlife, archaeological sites, trekking, mountain biking and opportunities for children.

detlef@davies@yahoo.com

www.birdersrest.com

www.birdingnorthperu.com

**NORTH
PERU
BIRD
TOURS**

**2016
2017**



Detlef & Carol - 09 407 3874

INDONESIA TOO! - 2016!

ECOLOGES INDONESIA has lodges in Bali, Flores, Kalimantan & Sumatra. We visited these in April and were amazed by the variety of birds and wildlife. From 2016 we will be running tours to these parts of Indonesia. First itinerary is to Flores for Komodo Dragons and Kalimantan for Orang Utans, and lots of endemic birds in both places. Provisional date is **3rd March 2016**, 2 weeks, provisional price **US\$3900**. Watch this space for Sumatra too.

Look at www.ecologesindonesia.com



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIRDING ABROAD

In the course of our travels abroad, we are gathering much useful information about bird sites and local guides who would be well able to arrange birding or wildlife tours without the necessity to use large, expensive tour companies. Very often a group of 4 or 6 people could easily arrange an economical trip arranged almost entirely in the destination country.

Contact us for information on Fiji, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, Ecuador, Cambodia, Scotland, Brazil, Argentina, Europe, parts of Africa, Madagascar and a number of other places. A group of us wanting to do a birding cruise might get a good price by block-booking places on the ship. We are open to all such ideas.