



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS

OSNZ®

NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER

JULY 2011

Regional Representative

Stuart Wood
24 Olympus Way
Richmond
Nelson 7020

Ph (03) 5443932
Stuartwood38@yahoo.co.nz

Regional Recorder

Don Cooper
1/26 William Street
Richmond
Nelson 7020

Ph (03) 5448109
doncooper@actrix.co.nz

Thanks to Peter G for keeping the news reel rolling during June, with heaps of interesting notes and activities from birds and birders alike. While I was basking in the glory of seabird watching at stunning UK breeding colonies some of our tube noses were having a rough time. TV news and local papers have covered the prions plight fairly well. Black swan and weka have also made the papers.

SHOW AND TELL

A popular night out.

From Don.

Eighteen people attended the June meeting to hear David Melville give an illustrated talk on his recent three month visit with his daughter Julia to the northern area of the Yellow Sea in China.

The purpose of this visit was in connection with studies on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway particularly in Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve.

David was familiar with this area from previous visits and was keen to see how well the Reserve Protection was working.

The growing pressure for more development along the coastal estuaries was having an impact greater than anticipated.

The National Nature Reserve is not an exclusion zone and some harvesting practices are permitted for i.e.molluscs and crabs and the northern migrating godwits along with other wader species have to share this resource.

Some spectacular photos of godwit flocks were seen but on a darker side we saw eight lane highways complete with lighting finishing at the tidal edge with nothing else in sight. Cont..

While David and his Chinese counterparts checked out birds with flags and investigated the food source in the mud, Chinese TV thought these foreigners were a good subject for a programme. This resulted in the authorities placing signs declaring a NO GO area for the public to avoid the birds, the signs were removed once the filming was completed.

One positive aspect came when a group of schoolchildren arrived on a bus and the teacher inquired what was of interest. David explained about the birds and the significance of the estuary as part of their lifeline.

The bus returned many times that day with different students to view the birds they didn't know existed. David also visited in the Southern Yellow Sea region and intends to present more on this topic at a future date.

Please note a new feature to our evening meetings. See last page.

SPRINGING AHEAD

From Pauline psamways@clear.net.nz Ph 03 5287257

The Motueka **Welcome to the Godwits** Celebration is being held on Fri 23 and Sat 24 September in the Motueka Memorial Hall, 10am - 4pm.

David Melville will be speaking on the Friday afternoon (1 o'clock) and **Nicola Vallance** on the Saturday afternoon. The public viewing of the godwits from the old wharf, Motueka (near the Janie Seddon wreck) is on Sunday 25 Sept, 2pm. We would like as many OS members as possible to come and help out with their telescopes.

Golden Bay is holding their celebration the weekend before, 17/18 September.

AND, A TALK TO GO TO

Keith Woodley, author of *Godwits: Long Haul Champions*, and director of the Miranda Shore Bird Centre is speaking in **Motueka**, Thursday 15 September, at Top 10 Holiday Park Conference Centre, Fearon St Motueka. And he will also be speaking in **Golden Bay** on Saturday 17 September.

WITH NETS, FLAGS AND CALLIPERS

From Rob

Very successful oystercatcher catch in Nelson Haven.

At 5th July 2011, a team of eight local OSNZ members went out for an oystercatcher catch in Nelson Haven near Neale Park at the end of Trafalgar Street. A significant group of 46 variable oystercatchers was recorded at 2nd of July and at the day of catching the same group was still there. Also a small increase in pied oystercatcher number created a nice mixed catch of both species. We fired at 11:30 and caught **10 pied oystercatchers** and **20 variable oystercatchers** under the net. Of great interest was a pied oystercatcher with smudgy characteristics of possible hybridization with a variable oystercatcher. Measurements were all within the realm of pied oystercatcher though. This bird is now flying around with yellow flag CA2. None of the birds caught had any sign of moult.

BEAUTY AND THE FREAK

From Rebecca

Photo taken from her garden



And from Don



Last week I was requested to follow up a report of a double headed sparrow in Stoke. I duly went to the house where an elderly couple fed sparrows on a regular basis and had recently seen what they believed to be a two headed bird. I had to be present between 08.45 and 09.00 hours to witness the daily feeding ritual when this 'freak' would arrive.

Armed with video camera the bird arrived on cue and from the kitchen window I was able to follow it through the group pecking at the bread. The very rapid

movements certainly had what looked like a solid growth on its head flopping from side to side.

On replay it was clear to see that the growth was a cluster of feathers near what looked like a bald patch.

In the three weeks from first noticing this bird they admitted the size of the growth had diminished, this may explain the bald patch.

If and when it goes off the 'radar' I requested they let me know. Expert comments think an Avian Pox could be a cause.

The Roving Birder

Thousands of British pounds must be spent each year on bird feed. Farm shops, pet shops, garden shops, RSPB shops, and I guess other shops, have shelves groaning with bags of different size seeds and nuts. Most self-respecting gardens have a swanky bird feeder or two, topped up each morning. Little passerines, mostly finches and tits swing from the mesh, bigger birds, (hawfinch and great spotted woodpecker when you're lucky) clean up the spillage on shelves. From the ground even bigger birds (a moorhen in Lancashire) take the left-overs and squirrels tuck in where they can. The British weekly TV show, *Spring Watch* generates much interest in nature watching. Snippets of daytime conversation can be heard in the community referring to the previous night's show. One episode briefly mentioned an ornithological study showing feed supplementation for garden birds may have a negative outcome. I'm not sure if that story was followed up, and given the commercial ramifications, perhaps not!!

In our own backyards we can get away with a saucer of sugar water, a few apples impaled onto twigs, and a handful of sultanas - (yes, I have had a go at mixing up bird pudding, with differing popularity results, the family didn't like it, but some of my garden birds did.) **GDQ**

PARISH NOTICES

Another reminder for my change of email stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz

And please let me know any amendments to your addresses.

Thursday 15 September

Keith Woodley talk in Motueka

Saturday 17 September

Keith Woodley talk in G. Bay

PROGRAMME 2011

We meet usually on the 1st Monday of the month, at **7.15 pm** in the "Solander Building", Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). All birders are welcome! Contact: Don Cooper 03-544 8109 or Peter Gaze wk 03-5463161.

Our new feature is a security issue.

DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT 7.30pm

(You will still be able to leave when you wish!!)

Monday 1 August

Evening Meeting
'To Fly or Not to Fly'
The Life of Birds DVD
Episode one
Narrated by Sir David Attenborough

Monday 5 September

Ralph Powlesland
Shags of Mainland NZ: How
are they Coping in the Present
Environment.

Saturday, Sunday
18/19 September

Golden Bay Godwit Welcome

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
23/24/25 September

Motueka Godwit Welcome

Monday 3 October

Evening meeting

Thanks to all who contributed.

Contributions for the August newsletter: please email or phone me by 20 August. Gail 03 5450456 stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz

