



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS

OSNZ®

NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2011

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With a lull in numbers of caught predators in winter trapping lines, now seems a good time to acknowledge the wonderful work of the many **volunteers** in our local community tirelessly spending their time (and often resources) on the never ending job of **pest busting**. Our estuaries, forest parks etc are noticeably becoming richer in bird life thanks to the work of these stalwarts. Thank you, guys and gals.

SHOW AND TELL

As well as the main event, our evening meetings present a good opportunity to discuss the well being of birds and their habitats, and to show off members' video clips from home and away. At our last meeting we saw local footage of wader banding from Don, Fiji birding shots from Graeme Wright, and from David, heard about European rescue efforts for spoonbill sandpiper.

Ralph Powlesland will head line September's meeting with his presentation: 'Shags of Mainland NZ: How are they Coping in the Present Environment?'. Ralph recently retired from Doc where he was a scientist leading the work on many endangered species and associated issues. He also managed to work closely with the society, particularly in Wellington, and fostered members' studies in a wide range of species.

AN OLDIE BUT A GOODIE

During the winter wader census on Farewell Spit Rob recorded a banded **SIPO**, and part of its history has now been revealed through Paul Sagar. Banded as an adult male at Valetta, mid-Canterbury on 19 Sept 1992, it has previously been recorded on the Spit in Jan and March 1994 and July 1996. Not the oldest banded oystercatcher on record though, ones in the UK have notched up over 30 years.

BIRDS SCENE

Just as well we didn't get the recent thick snow falls, the spoonbills and cattle egret would have been harder to see, especially the **spoonbill** Steve Wood saw feeding in a roadside ditch in Riwaka. Waimea and Motueka estuaries, Collingwood and Parapara and even Nelson Haven are all good places to spot these royal birds right now. On Tuesday two birds flew to the sewer ponds, alighted on the rim for a few moments, then headed back towards town. Sightings of **cattle egret** have been coming in since autumn and true to their name a number have spent the winter in Appleby paddocks (c12), and over in Golden Bay (c9). Also in Golden Bay Tom Kroos reported a **blue duck** at Devils Boot in the Aorere River in May. A **black-fronted dotterel** has been seen in Appleby and **weka** are being heard in Puponga by Tim Rowe.

Willie noted **little black shags** in the Waimea in May and recently Peter F and David M have both counted, on separate occasions, 120 birds feeding in the channel off Rough Island. It seems wintering little blacks are increasing in our region.

Henk has had **cirl buntings** in breeding plumage in Marsden Valley, they've been seen around coastal Motueka and I saw a well dressed male and suspect others off Boulderbank Drive. The rough grass/sand flats is a traditional feeding area for finchs, buntings and skylarks over the winter months but I haven't seen a cirl bunting for over ten years,(maybe because I haven't been seriously looking for them!) The Nelson sewer ponds are supporting a great array of wildfowl, including **shovelers**, mostly males, **grey teal**, several pair of pure looking **grey ducks**, and **scaup** (also making increased appearances around our coastal areas). Don noted waterfowl had vacated Bell's Island ponds for a spell a week or so ago.

Mid August Peter Field had an excellent sighting of an **Antarctic Fulmer** off Tahuna Beach (airport end), and Don suspects '3 graceful silver/grey birds flying just above the tide line on central Rabbit Island' in early August were the same. A bigger thrill than finding them as beach wrecks.

From Don - cattle egret going to roost at Collingwood.



WRYBILL WATCHING IN THE WAIMEA

From Don.

Wrybill numbers on the Shellbank have been observed frequently by Til Mellis which have highlighted the migration trend at this time of the year. A group of 50 birds plus a separate group of 10 in which Til noted and photographed a colour banded bird. John Dowding was informed and it transpired the banded bird was a female from the Upper Rakaia, Nov. 2010. Within a couple of days the shellbank birds had moved on and as John commented probably a bit too soon as the icy polar blast that hit the country coincided with their move.

AND OVER IN THE OTHER BAY

At Parapara Inlet on 23 August Don noted amongst feeding birds, one white heron, and 12 Royal Spoonbills, while back in May Tom K noted eight cattle egret and three white herons.

.WELCOME TO THE GODWITS CELEBRATION 2011

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS.

Friday 23 Sept 10am-4pm: Motueka Memorial Hall open to view displays
11am: Church bells ring

11.15 - 11.45: Opening Ceremony with MC David Ogilvie

~Karakia with Rev. Gladys Taingahue

~Waiata with Parklands Whanau class

~Official Launch with Hon. Kate Wilkinson, Minister of Conservation; and
TDC Mayor, Richard Kempthorne

~Godwit Song with Paul Bond and The Ukes of Hazzard

~Chairperson of Motueka Arts Council, Shirley Frater

1.30pm: Speaker, David Melville, ornithologist, Godwit Research in New Zealand and Alaska

Saturday 24 Sept 10am-4pm: Memorial Hall open to view displays

11am: Mask and Dress-up Parade

2pm: Competition winners prize-giving

Sunday 25 Sept 2pm: Viewing of godwits from Motueka Quay with Pauline Samways and members of the Nelson Ornithological Society.

Free entry for all events, further information from
www.motuekaonline.org.nz/godwits

A TALK TO GO TO

From Pauline

Keith Woodley, manager of the Miranda Shorebird Centre on the Firth of Thames, will be speaking at the Top 10 Holiday Park, Fearon St, Motueka, at 4pm, Thursday 15 September. Keith is the author of the book "*Godwits: Long Haul Champions*," and has an intensive knowledge of the shorebird migration flyway having visited key sites in Australia, Alaska, China and Korea.

And Directions to Get There

When coming from Nelson, drive through Motueka and turn right into Fearon St at the old stone church. The Top 10 Holiday Park is a short way down on the left. There is some parking on the grounds, otherwise park on the street. A gold coin donation will help cover costs.

He is also speaking the next day in Takaka, Friday 16 September, 7.30pm at the Senior Citizen Hall.

The Roving Birder

In the UK the first barn swallow of the year is eagerly looked for, heralding the welcome warmer weather. Our welcome swallows are enjoyed throughout all weathers. I like to take the telescope down to the shores of L Benmore, just below Ohau C powerstation any time from late autumn to spring. That's when the freedom campers, increasing in alarming numbers, have packed up with their mobile showers and tv satellite dishes and gone back to their towns and cities. The 'No Camping' notices are a joke. But a few fishermen linger on and brave the elements. Through the scope last year at the beginning of June, I spotted a small flock of welcome swallows hawking over a concentrated area above the lake. Just to one side of them were a couple of guys up to their thighs fly fishing. Both swallows and fishermen utilising nature's bounty. One lot getting an actual meal from the rise, and the other using an artificial lure, hoping to get a meal. Welcome swallows are becoming more noticeable around Twizel. Last year on 30 September, I spotted a pair collecting mud and making a nest in a culvert near L. Poaka.

Closer to home a gang of swallows made a bit of a nuisance of themselves by setting up a cluster of nests in a back porch area on my sister's farm at Tea Pot Valley. The pile of swallow guano was rather impressive. Almost opposite on the other side of the house is the front porch and when both doors were open birds would fly through the house, rather than around or over. I had a delightful nest under the eaves of my veranda some years ago, breeding rate with their very successful rearing strategies, 100%. Guano wasn't a problem at my place and I did collect several tiny black disgorged pellets from adults, still waiting to be analysed. But where do they roost during winter months? My sister had 20 or so trying to cram into her porch, the late comers used the ledges of the trampoline, and I've seen a good many on cliff faces out at Cable Bay. The OSNZ Field Guide suggests raupo beds, but doesn't say where. GDQ

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 5 September	Monthly Meeting Ralph Powlesland Shags of Mainland NZ: How are they Coping in the Present Environment
Thursday 15 September	Keith Woodley talk Motueka 4.00pm Top 10 Holiday Park
Friday 16 September	Keith Woodley talk Takaka 7.30pm Senior Citizen Hall
Saturday, Sunday 17/18 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 September newsletter: please email or phone me by 24 September. Gail 03 5450456 stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz