



Studying NEW ZEALAND'S BIRDS

OSNZ®

NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2011

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I have one eye on the computer screen, and the other out the window watching the goings-on of avian families. Garden detritus is being picked up for nesting and garden crawlies are being picked up to feed hungry young. I just wish more green caterpillars of the white butterfly kind are taken and that my paths are kept swept.

CONGRATULATIONS

With Pauline S. at the helm of the *Welcome the Godwits* celebration, Motueka Arts Council landed the community groups award from the annual Tasman Nelson Environment Awards. Two great occasions, the weekend itself and the recognition.

SHOW AND TELL

What the media didn't say

We were fortunate for our November meeting that David M arrived back from the *Rena* disaster in time to give us the inside story on bird rescue. Up on the screen was projected images of blobs of oil along the strand line of beaches and clumped around the feet of waders, and volunteers in high viz jackets and plastic gloves. At times a bit of NZ No. 8 wire mentality had to be resorted to for clean-up operations but the Massey University Oiled Wildlife Response Unit is world class and well set up and received praise from a visiting international. **NZ Dotterel** (c60) mainly from Little Waihi Estuary have been caught, banded and housed in a purpose built aviary. They will be there for several months and unfortunately this breeding season will net zilch for them, hopefully the population can withstand this. Other than dotterel, the tally as at 7 Nov was 1402 dead birds and about 500 rescued to be cleaned. One surprise was the posthumous identification of **blue petrel**. Go to maritimenz.govt.nz for up to the minute facts and figures on the 'Tauranga Incident'.

BIRDS SCENE

Luckily for Nelson coastal birds, they can rear young relatively unhindered. From Pauline S - Seen near the spit at Marahau - a pair of **voc** and 2 chicks and a pair of **Canada Geese** with 5 young. (22/11/11)

On Motueka spit - 18/11/11 - **banded dotterel** pair and chick opposite golf course, **voc** nest with 3 eggs opposite Talley's house, a seal swimming south along the coast, and **no rats or stoats** in my traps for the past 7 months.

I wonder if it was the same seal I saw just off the coast at Ruby Bay recently. **Scaup** have a brood of ducklings on the fresh water Moutere embayment, the **black swan** cygnets were prominent there earlier on, and young **pukeko** are commonly seen on and off the roads.

Who else has seen the brooding **VOC** on the newish landscaped area opposite Higgs Bridge No 1, the Mapua turn-off? I'd be interested to see how the family manages to cross the road to the estuary later on.

THROUGH THE BUSH TELEGRAPH

If at first you don't succeed (kea perspective)

Recently it was learnt that **kea** were causing damage to logging machinery and vehicles on a Pinus radiata block in the Upper Motueka catchment. Help was sought from DOC who were able to catch nine offending birds and remove them from the site and taken back to more alpine habitat. Within days the 'gang' had returned plus two others!! Little wonder, the old dead timber littering site was full of big fat huhu grubs, these birds know where the best and fast food is available.

From Chris Petyt.

Notes from a One-eyed Bird-watcher in Mongolia (June-July 2011)

I stopped off in Hong Kong en route to Mongolia and made a visit to Mai Po marshes though summer is not the best time to visit this reserve. Birds of interest were Great & Little Egrets, Black-winged Stilts and a small flock of waders, possibly Marsh Sandpipers. A Dabchick was a bit of a surprise and there were some strange bird noises coming from the reeds. Returning through HK on the return trip Black Kites at Aberdeen harbour was another surprise.

Ulan Bator had Swifts screaming overhead. We set off on our horse trek at Terelj on 15th June. Common birds of the countryside included crows, occasional Ravens, wheatears (Desert, but maybe others), larks (including the Skylark from its song) Eurasian Magpie, Black Kites, and Cuckoos calling in a variety of habitats. Choughs were the smallest corvid, but later I saw what seemed to be Jackdaws but without the grey nape. The name Daurian Jackdaw somehow came to mind but checking on the internet found they have more grey still, almost like a Hooded Crow. So what were the greyless jackdaws – juvenile Daurians?

On 18th June we reached Gun Galoot Lake which provided water for hundreds of sheep, goats, cattle and horses with the latter two species cooling themselves in the water. Not a lot of room left for birds, which were concentrated in a NW corner (which should be fenced off for them). An interesting mixture of birds here – lots of Ruddy Shelduck but also 3 or more

Shelduck, an estuary species in my experience, like the pair of Avocets. A pair of Whooper Swans had 3-4 cygnets, a pair of Great Crested Grebes had a nest and there were numbers of smaller ducks. A party of 4 Spotted (Dusky) Redshank in full black breeding plumage should surely have been in the Arctic by then but 30+ cranes (probably Demoiselle) were more expected. Gun Galut, an area of steppe, rolling hills, river and small wetlands had another pair of Whoopers, pair of Tufted Duck, a few cranes, Gull-billed Terns, Lesser Sandplover and a probable Swan Goose. A trip up the hills produced about 20 Argali wild sheep.

Back to U.B. then off to Manshir Monastery area for a couple of nights in a ger camp – forested hills and mountains, steppe and valleys with lovely streams. A few Grey Wagtails, cuckoo, pigeon and woodpecker heard, a small falcon and a Great Tit. Sparrows seen well proved to be Tree Sparrow, perhaps they all are. A fox carrying some prey in its jaws was exciting and I finally saw a marmot which seem to call from their burrow entrance, just out of sight.

On 27th June I set off on a week's trip to the west – lots of wide-open steppe with plenty of stock but few birds, but a couple of lakes where birds were concentrated. The river at Karakorum had the usual Ruddy Shelduck, Black Kites and a pair of Whooper Swans. At the hot springs towards Tsetseleg, the next night's stop, a White Wagtail had its nest in the rocky surround of the pool, and a Pine or Rustic Bunting seen briefly in the woods. We stopped two nights at White Lake, a large Lake surrounded by hills. More White Wagtails, possible Greenshank, lots of Redshank and Greater Sandplover, and Herring Gulls, a long way from the coast. On the morning of 29th a pair of Black-throated Divers close in, preening and calling, was exciting and two pairs of Velvet Scoter and lots of Common Terns created a real Arctic atmosphere. About 15 Lapwings provided a nostalgic thrill in an environment so different to the civilised farmland where I was familiar with them in England. Cranes were heard flying overhead, Isabelline Wheatear and Rock Doves seen and a small falcon calling like the NZ falcon.

Next stop was Ogii Lake with the first Bar-headed Geese which I'd previously seen in India. There were more Ruddy and Common Shelduck, Redshank and Lesser Sandplover (aka as Mongolian Dotterel) Common Terns and Herring Gulls. A smaller black-headed gull I took to be the intriguingly named Relict Gull but found later there were a couple of other possibilities. A pair of Demoiselle Cranes had a pair of half-grown young out on a barren hillside. A night at Hustein national Park was rewarded with sightings of about 20 Takhi or Prezalski-s horse, including a small family group with a foal. The stallion raced off to see another stallion didn't get too close.

Back to U.B. then out to the Teralj area again, this time in the river valley across the river and downstream from the village itself. The river provided two new birds – Common Sandpiper and a female Goosander, both familiar from Yorkshire waterways. It was here that the Daurian Jackdaw was finally seen, as well as Blackbird, Great Tit and Hoopoe heard. Another trip to the Manshir area produced a deer and dark-coloured squirrel.

Altogether an interesting and to some extent unexpected collection of birds.

Continue on for Parish Notices:

OSNZ pre-Festive Season get-together

You are cordially invited to a pre-Festive Season get-together at the Melville residence Dovedale on MONDAY 5 December – from 1800h.

Vicky will be in Australia with the NZ Para-Equestrian group so the hospitality may not be quite as flash as usual but I very much look forward to welcoming you.

I will provide venue, BBQ, sausages and chops and strawberries and cream/ice cream.

I would welcome the provision of salads, bread, other deserts etc. and whatever you would like to drink.

PLEASE COULD YOU LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU PLAN TO BRING to avoid 6 green salads and nothing else!

IF ANYONE HAS SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

METVUW suggests that there may be a little precipitation on Monday evening so you may need to bring a rain coat, but we have plenty of room indoors if things get too wet!

I look forward to seeing you on Monday!

David

HOW TO FIND

1. DAVID, VICKY and JULIA MELVILLE

**Dovedale, R.D. 2 Wakefield, Nelson 7096
Tel. (03) 5433628**

Follow **ROUTE 6** from Nelson, south to Richmond (Waimea Inlet is on the right of the road).

On the outskirts of **RICHMOND** (you do not go through the town centre) you come to a roundabout – carry straight over. You then reach a crossroads with two sets of traffic lights in quick succession – carry straight through on Route 6, signposted towards ‘Collingwood/Westport’.

About 1.5 km after the traffic lights you come a roundabout at which you **turn RIGHT** on to **ROUTE 60**, signposted ‘**Motueka/Collingwood**’ and labelled ‘**Appleby Highway**’.

Carry along the Appleby Highway for about 6 km - crossing the 'Appleby Bridge' over the Wai-iti River. About 6 km after joining Route 60 from Route 6 there is a sign on the left about the 'Historic Village of Sarau' and a sign for the 'Moutere Highway', with a 200m warning. The Moutere Highway turns off to the left from Route 60 at a minor crossroads with a timber-clad building on the right (Pea viner corner).

TURN LEFT onto the **MOUTERE HIGHWAY**. After 1.5km there is a 'crossroads' with the main road turning to the right, signposted 'Motueka/Upper Moutere/Kart Club Track'. Follow the main road to the right and continue on the main road (usually signposted 'Motueka'), past the Redwood Wine Cellars (on left). The road winds somewhat up a hill with a sign 'Moutere Forest' on the right (the plantation pines have been felled) and passes the Kahurangi Vineyard (on the left).

Then you reach **UPPER MOUTERE**, which also has a sign on the left welcoming you to the Historic Village of Sarau. Upper Moutere has a shop, petrol station and pub (Moutere Inn – the oldest pub in NZ). Keep on the main road towards **Motueka**.

The road goes round a large dog-leg with the Moutere sports ground and community hall on the left. About 2.5 km after leaving Upper Moutere you reach **PRICES CORNER** – there is a very large gum tree on the left and a single street light! **TURN LEFT** – signposted '**Dovedale**/Thorpe/Orinoko' with a blue sign 'Neudorf Road'.

Follow the Neudorf Road, which remains the main road, towards **Dovedale**. Shortly after passing the 'Mud Castle' on the right the road goes up to the crest of Neudorf Saddle from which you look down into Dovedale and across to the Mt. Arthur Range and the Kahurangi National Park in the distance.

Continue on the Neudorf Road, past Thorn Road which runs off to the left, over the bridge across the Dove River until, 12 km after Prices Corner, you reach Dovedale and a 'T' junction.

Turn right and travel 200m until you come to a 2-storey house on the left, partly hidden behind a *Pittosporum* hedge with a large gum tree – cream walls and dark green roof with 'Melville' on the letterbox, and ESN 1261 on the fence post.

YOU HAVE ARRIVED!

Distance Central Nelson – Dovedale 50 km. Travel time about 1 hour.

Thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Gail D. Quayle
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