



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER APRIL 2013

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Technology in this modern age has given naturalists the advanced and ever developing medium of photography to capture the amazing scenes in our natural world. At our April meeting we saw wonderful sights of **Snares Is** taken by **Dave Buckton**. Dave was part of a research team as a volunteer and got up close to sea lions and some of the special birds that inhabit the Snares. Willie showed sequence shots of a juvenile black shag grappling with and finally swallowing a good sized eel watched by a parent. I'm not sure if the parent's face showed consternation, admiration or envy!!

Come along to our next meeting Monday 6 May. Show your photos, swap bird notes, and we may have time to watch one of David Attenborough's videos in the series '*Life of Birds*'.

IN JUNE we have a talk from Jonathon Banks. Jonathon has transferred to Nelson from the Waikato OSNZ branch and has conducted research using the latest genetic techniques on birds from NZ and around the world. More on that later, but mark your dairies now.

A CHARM OF FINCHES

(*Fringilla coelebs*) Known as spink, pinkie, and a host of other names including chaffinch. Perhaps you say chaff as in 'MAF' (in the days before fashionable rebranding) or perhaps chaff as in 'staff' for its habit of feeding on grain in farmyards or in the cornfields. Not many cornfields around here but out at the sand flats off Boulder Bank Drive in the winter months chaffinches feed in flocks of mixed finches, with a noticeably higher proportion of males to females at times, sometimes exclusively. According to Wikipedia, '*coelebs*' means 'bachelor' and in Sweden, the home country of Linnaeus the females depart in winter, but the males often remain. When a pair or two are in my neighbourhood I put out apple cores for them, they love the pips, and let pine cones ripen in the sun for them to peck out the pine seeds. Unfortunately for the latter they have to compete with sparrows.

Goldfinchs are feeding on the heads of dandelion, catsear and hawkbit in my rough lawn, and Don sent in this photo of a goldie feeding on cosmos in his garden. White heron photo by Andrew Gibson.



HEARD ABOUT BUT NOT SEEN

Royal Spoonbill have extended their Marlborough presence and have started breeding in Havelock. My neighbour didn't wake me up early the other morning to show me the **white heron** perched on the top branches of a lemonwood outside my kitchen, (Atawhai), but did snap the above pic.

SEEN BUT NOT HEARD

Willy spotted a **golden plover** off Rabbit Is early April, I was surprised to see a **pipit** foraging on the footpath and up a driveway in a modern coastal subdivision in Motueka, Don watched a male adult **dabchick** feeding on L Killarney and successfully ousting out a pair of scaup from its patch. The scaup were actually harassed enough to leave the lake. I thought my March sighting of a **shining cuckoo** was late enough but on 15 April I watched an individual feeding on caterpillars in the same hedge.

METROPOLITAN WEKA

Reports are coming in regularly of weka co-habiting closer with city folk, and the local newspapers have run stories on a couple of sightings. Hopefully reports on their somewhat destructive behaviour especially around veg gardens won't be as regular!

WATCH OUT FOR BANDS (including the marauding sort)

Getting feedback results from sighted bands and tags is more interesting than just seeing the bands, so report your sightings. Willie spotted a **spoonbill** in the WaimeaEst that was banded in the Wairau Lagoon 18 years ago, and Don photographed three **blackbilled gulls** on Rabbit Is front beach 7 April, two, colour coded white were banded on Wairau R Dec '11, and the other, colour coded yellow came from the Clarence R, banded Dec '12. They were in amongst red bills and white-fronted terns.

BIRD OF THE MONTH: WELCOME SWALLOW

Have you any tales to accompany this stunning photo by Rebecca Bowater.



World Migratory Bird Day 2013 Trailer Launched

The World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2013 campaign team is excited to announce the release of the campaign trailer! The two-minute animated video is inspired by this year's World Migratory Bird Day theme "**Networking for migratory birds**" (www.worldmigratorybirdday.org). The trailer aims to show the importance of ecological networks for the survival of migratory birds as well as to encourage the international community - governments, conservation organizations and dedicated individuals alike – to work together to conserve migratory birds around the world.

About World Migratory Bird Day

World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats. World Migratory Bird Day is organized by the Secretariats of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals ([CMS](#)) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds ([AEWA](#)) – Programme ([UNEP](#)) – and a growing number of [main partners](#).

Pauline sent in the above.

AUTUMN BIRDS SCENE

Take your binoculars to Waimea Est for wintering terns. Willie counted 73 **black-fronted terns** off Rabbit Is early April, five off Bell's Is on 18 April and two **little terns** the same day. Also five **wrybills**. He also reports 43 **scaup** on the Bell's Is oxidation ponds and 12 on water on Best's Is. They are also present on the Wakapuaka oxidation ponds and wetland and on the freshwater Moutere Inlet Eastman's pond. Quite a different scenario to 25-30 years ago. **Falcons** are being noticed more too. I wonder if the falcon seen near The Grape Escape on 5 April was the same one spotted near the defunct Appleby research orchard on the side of the road a week or so later as a hit and run victim?

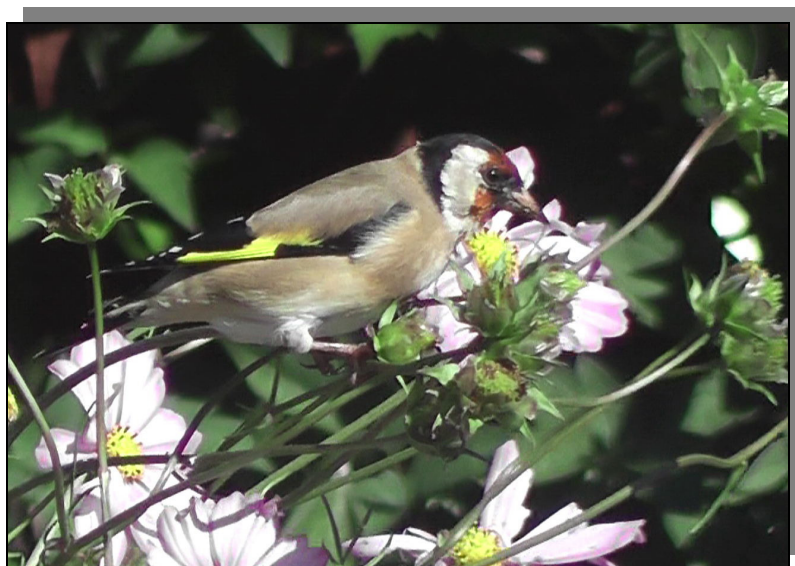


Photo by Don Cooper

PROGRAMME 2013

We meet **usually** on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7.15 pm in the "Solander Fisheries Building", Cross Quay, off Akersten Street, Port Nelson (opposite the red Cruising Club building). All birders are welcome! Contact: Don Cooper 03-544 8109 or Gail 03-5450456.

Monday, 6 May
Indoor meeting

Monthly update of
birds seen and heard
Bring your photos

Queen's Birthday weekend
OZNZ AGM and Conference
Dunedin. 1-3 June

"NZ Bird Conference"

Monday 10 June
(2nd Monday)

Speaker:
Jonathon Banks

Wader Count
June/July

Golden Bay and
Tasman Bay

Monday, 1 July
Indoor Meeting

Speaker to be advised

2013 Garden Bird Survey

29 June – 7 July

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for the May newsletter please email or phone by 26 May

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