



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2013

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There wasn't much time to talk amongst ourselves at the last evening meeting. We saw photos from Graeme M of the marsh crane around Wakapuaka Settling Ponds, (**fernbird** sightings have now been added to the glorious mix out there), and with Sandy at the helm we saw photos from Robin and Sandy's visit to the Falkland Islands. Penguins predominated. I've put the Falklands on my bucket list, while a handful of other folk in the audience have already ticked that one off. Dave Kelly gave us a run down on the 5min bird counts coming up in Kahurangi NP to monitor birds after a 1080 droop.

Coming up on **2 Sept** is '**An evening of R and R**'. Rob S and Rebecca B will show off Alaska from their separate trips there.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to our evening meetings.

ROYAL BABIES

At the June RR meeting in Dunedin, it was decided to count the number of **Royal Spoonbill nests** at all the colonies that can be found this coming breeding season, December 2013 – January 2014. Mary Thompson RR for Dunedin OSNZ is co-ordinator.

From Mary:

'The aim is to document the locations, habitat used, and active nest numbers nationwide as a baseline for any future studies. Island colonies will probably need to be counted from the sea or a distant high point as we need to keep disturbance to a minimum. Southland, Otago, Canterbury, Marlborough, Wellington, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay are key Regions, where colonies are already known to exist, but all regions should plan to explore their areas for colonies as definite negative records for those areas searched is also important.'

Marlborough has had a breeding colony at Wairau Lagoon for some years now and a new colony has been discovered in Havelock.

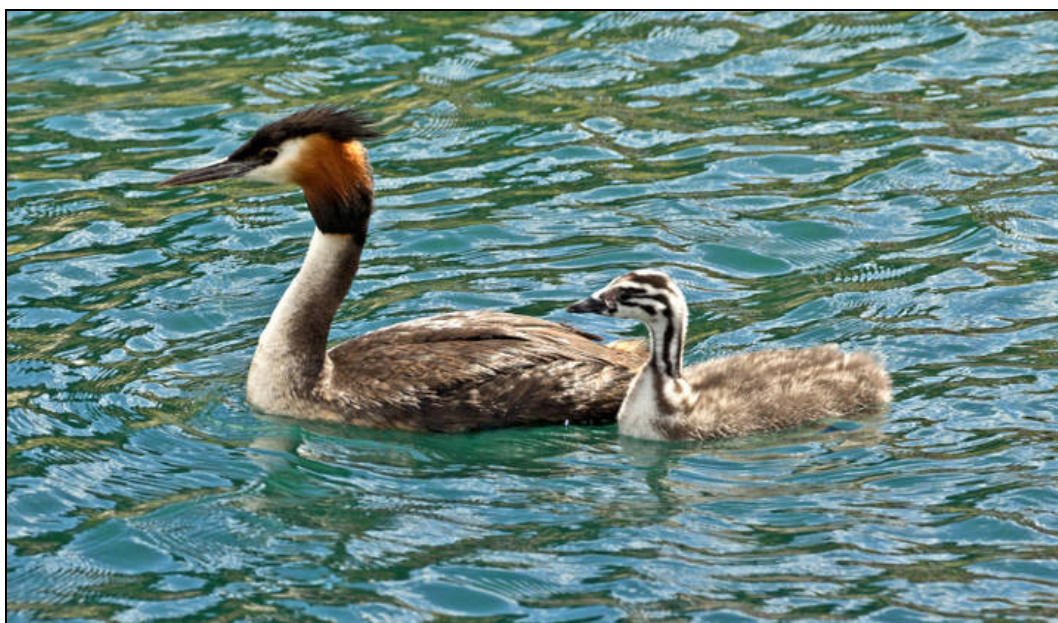
Nesting colonies aren't known in our region but courting behaviour has been observed at times.

Now is a good time to notice breeding plumage on our birds and if or when they disappear from our estuaries. Spoonbill are normally counted during wader counts, (summer wader count is coming up in Nov) so that should be an opportunity to cast your eyes around for any sign of nesting. But any time you're out near the coast with your binocs, please think spoonbills! Good breeding notes can be found on nzbirdsonline.org.nz.

YOUR GARDEN IN AUGUST/SEPT

Don't clean up your backyard. Leave spider webs on fences, moss in cracks, long grass seed heads, muddy puddles, skeleton leaves, chooks' feathers, encourage lichen on your fruit trees. Collect sheep's wool and horsehair on your walks and attach them to your own railings. **Do** clear away previous passerine nests in buildings and winter bushes while you can still see them, they were probably good sites and may be chosen again by an avian pair this season. Then step back and watch others do the gathering and clean-up for you and turn it all into those amazing creations that will keep eggs and nestlings snug.

Crested Grebe, Wanaka, Jan 2013, Photo Rebecca Bowater



Closer to home, Ken G saw an individual in a bay beside Kaikoura Wharf in July. In recent years birds have been noted in coastal areas in winter, especially Canterbury and Dunedin. In former times found in the Nelson Lakes area, West Coast/Westland lakes, and Southland but with very few sightings over the past 60 years or so, their stronghold now seems to be around some of the South Island Hydro schemes and Canterbury, moving into Marlborough.

OUT AND ABOUT

Willie has kept tabs on the **wrybills** in the Waimea Est. About 50 or so hung around for June/July, then August numbers suggests movement through our area – 28; 111; 62; 23; 43; 17.

A little tern was spotted in the Waimea Est on 10 and 26 August, WC,DC,GDQ. Neil D reported 2 **blackfronted dotterels** in the Eves Valley area in July. One or two sightings are made most years of these little ground birds, especially from the Appleby area or Boulder Bank Drive areas.

Ducklings and **Spur Winged Plover** chicks are being noticed around the countryside.

Willie has seen **huge** flocks of **female chaffinches** recently, feeding on apple pomace near Best's Island. The Rev Gilbert White made remarks in his '*Natural History of Selborne*' 1760/70s of flocks of solely hen chaffinches and was baffled by the occurrence.

RECOVERY DISCOVERIES

Recent sightings and recoveries of bands, tags and flags.

NZ Dotterel photographed by Craig M on Motueka Sandspit end of May, banded as... "probable juvenile", sex unknown, on Table Hill, Stewart Island on 22 January 2013.

Black fronted tern, on Waimea Est, 10 August, Z70 on yellow band, a chick banded on the Upper Clarence River in December 2012.

Caspian Tern, juvenile seen with adults on 20 March, Waitemata Harbour, banded at Bell's Is on 21 January 2013.

Two Wrybills on Waimea Est , early August

Photo: Willie Cook



RYO-M banded as an adult female in the lower Tasman River in October 2003.
M-RGO banded as an adult male in the lower Tasman River in September 1999.
And a comment from John Dowding: "Haven't had a report of this bird for some years (and don't know where it spends the winter), so an excellent sighting."

Photographs are a great way to clear up any confusion of combinations.

CIRL BUNTINGS are out there, so pay close attention to details when looking at finches and buntings. This year, sightings have come from the airport area, Boulder Bank Drive area and recently I spotted a pair feeding with other finches on the Wakapuaka lawn cemetery area.

SPRING ROUND THE CORNER CUCKOO STUDY

For more info on this one, please see our web site osnz.org.nz

WELCOME THE GODWITS

Come and enjoy a day's outing at the Old Wharf, Motueka Quay, next to the wreck of the *Janie Seddon*, for all things godwit, Sunday 29 September, 9am – 12noon. Please bring telescopes to share. Godwits not on the menu.

HOUSEKEEPING (PART 2)

At the June conference and meetings in Dunedin, changes were decided, to take effect from January 2014.

Subscriptions are due **By** 1 January every year.

- Renewal Notices are: emailed in Sept, or sent with *Southern Bird*
- Members with subs unpaid as at 1 Jan will remain in the system as 'grace' members and receive March Journals.
- Members with subs unpaid as at 30 April will 'expire' Well, their membership will expire anyway.

Answers to

SHAG WATCH

Spotted Shags, - Pepin Island has been a night roost for many years. In the past 20 years pairs have started breeding on Ngawhiti Island, one of the Tata Islands, ATNP.

Pied Shags - From the 2 or 3 breeding sites recorded some years ago, c7 smallish colonies are now known. Haulashore Is, Old pine tree Boulder Bank, (current nesting not confirmed), Delaware Bay, Kaiteriteri, Rabbit Is/ Rough Is and coastal Abel Tasman NP.

Little black shags - Few sightings have been made this winter, previous years gregarious groups have been of numbers way less than 100.

Little shags - Many colonies of Pied Shags contain little shags.

Black shags - In the past, colonies have been established along the Buller and Motueka rivers, current status is unknown.

King Shags – From nzbirdsonline.org.nz : 'There are 8-10 breeding sites per annum, but over 90% of the population breeds at four sites: Trio Islands, Duffers Reef, White Rock, and Sentinel Rock'. No, we can't claim them in our region!

THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Guess what was seen out in the Waimea Est today? (27/8) Scroll down to the bottom of the next page.

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, 2 September
Indoor meeting
Alaska

Hear about 2 different visits.

Sunday, 29 September
Motueka

Welcome the Godwits
9.00am – 12.00 noon

Monday, 7 October
Indoor Meeting

November
Wader Count

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for the September newsletter please email or phone by 23 Sept.
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Photo: Willie Cook

