



## NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2013

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**Recently** my concrete paths have been littered with the remains of snail shells. I'm glad the thrushes know where to find them, as I haven't had much luck, and I hope my neighbours are pleased I have a starling nest in a cavity in a brick column holding up my veranda. The parents are working overtime to feed their young, gathering green caterpillars, grubs etc from around the neighbourhood but perhaps, dropping faecal sacs onto parked cars is not so welcome!

**It seems** to be trendy these days to have impromptu pop-up shops, cafes, bars, you name it, but at our last meeting we were lucky to have a pop-up speaker. Euan Young gave a description of his forthcoming book, '*Birds of the Ross Sea*' including a fascinating account of some of his work with skuas on the Chathams and Antarctica.

### THIS MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Whose feet are these, and no, they're not mine!



Photo by Rebecca Bowater

**Thanks** to those who took telescopes and binoculars to estuaries recently, counting waders for ongoing research on population trends.

Rob sent in this report.

**'OSNZ spring census 2013.** Conditions were excellent, not too warm, dry and not much wind.

A total of 28,637 shorebirds have been counted; 84% migratory and 16 % endemic. About 85% of the birds occurred at three sites, 66% at Farewell Spit, 10% at Motueka Sandspit and 9% in Waimea East.

Red Knots in Tasman Bay and Golden Bay were low or not present (Westhaven Inlet). Red Knots and Godwits on Farewell Spit were just a bit lower compared to the average.

A good list of less common shorebirds or vagrants were observed:

Motueka Sandspit – **Terek Sandpiper**

Farewell Spit – **Great Knot, Greater Sandplover, Oriental Plover, Red-necked Stint, Far-eastern Curlew, Sanderling.**

### **NOT ONLY BUT ALSO**

As well as the above interest on our estuaries, three **golden plover** and two **little terns** were in the Waimea in Oct; two **grey tattler** were spotted out from Bell's Is just about a year to the day from last year's sighting, end Oct; four **wrybills** were still in the area, on Motueka sandspit on 20 Oct; and nesting **banded dotterel** have been spotted on the Boulder Bank and at Delaware. Dabchick sightings at Wakapuaka have been few since winter. WC,CM,DC,PF.



Green flagged godwit, Motueka Sandspit, 20 Oct, photo Craig Martin.

## RECOVERIES AND DISCOVERIES

The above sighting was the highlight of several marked birds well spotted. This individual was banded at Geoff Skinner Reserve in Australia in 2009 aged 2+. It has also been spotted at Bell's Is, Aug 2010; Motueka Sandspit Oct 2011 & March 2012.

A washed up Caspian Tern was also found on Motueka Sandspit, banded on Bells Is as a chick, Jan 2009.

## IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN

As in recent years at this time, bait fish are swarming close to shore with attendant sea birds. Birders may have to jostle amongst the fisherfolk around Tahuna to get a look, but today I was able to observe red billed gulls, black billed gulls, SBBG, and white-fronted terns just off QE2 Drive, from the comfort of the car at the Marybank turn-off. A skua was hanging around the periphery, not coming in too close to suburbia.

## 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.

**December's meeting, day and time to be advised.**



Turnstones on Motueka Sandspit 19 October. Photo Rebecca Bowater.

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for the November/December newsletter please email or phone by 7 December.

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