



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2014

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PICNICS WITH BINOCULARS

I **enjoy** a picnic any time of the year but picnics with a gurgling stream and cicadas clacking in the trees can be some of the best. A few years back my daughter sent me a swanee whistle bird caller from London. I like to call in South Island robins. It's worked at Lewis Pass, and at the Lyall on a picnic stop one trip I actioned the gadget between mouthfuls. Almost instantly I heard a response, but turned round to see a grinning TQ holding a new phone. Agh! One of these new fangled bird-call apps! I managed to banish the devise on threat of no more bacon and egg pie, and I carried on with my acoustic toy. Yes, a robin did come in and showed itself well.

THINKING ABOUT TRAVEL

Godwits and their fellow migratory companions are busy consuming calories without regret around the ~~waistline~~ coastline, and birders are busy up and down the country making catches of marked birds, deciphering flags and bands and unloading data from previously fitted geo-locators etc. It'll be time soon for these amazing long distance travellers and other continent hoppers to leave our shores.

Time too for cuckoos to start considering their wintering grounds. Amber C had a juvenile **shining cuckoo** in her garden recently at Tophouse, and over another hill Rosemary J sent in this cute photo from Golden Bay. Rosemary also had one in her garden last year, 8 March 2013. A latish sighting.



28 January 2014 Photo Rosemary Jorgensen

AND MORE AMAZING TRAVEL

Peter B sent in a cutting from the Guardian, *"IN PRAISE OF THE RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.But the red-neck's achievement, announced last week, of notching the longest ever migration journey for a European breeding bird is more remarkable still. With an RSPB tracking device on its leg, one male red-neck has returned to the Shetland island of Fetlar after a 25,750km migration that took it to Peru, via Greenland and the Caribbean. It's the sort of thing that may even give migration a good name, not to mention red-necks."*

HOUSE AND GARDEN

Peter Gaze reports >60 **weka** have been removed from Puangiangi Is in the Sounds, to the mainland, and 16 **sooty shearwater** chicks might have a better home life, and other reports have come in of weka and chicks in a Farleigh St garden (Atawhai) Dec, and single birds during 2013 in a garden in Woodstock with two in a house in Dec.

INTO THE BUSH

Recently we set up an evening picnic in Wilton's Bush, Wellington and was thrilled to see kaka going about their daily business, but closer to home **Amber Calman**, one of our recent junior members, has **2-4 kaka** fly over her place regularly, near Tophouse.

Thanks to the counters for the Flora 5MBCs, and Robin and Sandy note from their frequent visits to the area, that observations suggest **kaka** are becoming more abundant. The counts also included brown creeper, rifleman, parakeet, weka, and whio. Get ready to put your name down for further counts.

ALONG RIVERS AND LAKESIDES

Many more helpers were out on the Wairau River banks at the end of last year and c300 **black-billed gull** chicks were banded. I understand inclement weather gave them a bit of a thumping after that though, with colonies being washed out.

Amber recorded this individual at Lake Rotoiti with its ID.



Photo by Amber Calman

Lake Killarnie Takaka

The locals are keeping a good watch on this fascinating little lake. Noted on 1 Jan (via Chris P and Murray G) were 5 **dabchicks**. Two parents, a spring hatched juvenile with a striking pink breast, and two fluffy chicks. Four **scaup** overwintered, one pair produced 5 ducklings and the other pair, 2 young. A single **coot** has been seen too.

AT THE COAST AND IN THE ESTUARIES

If you visit Rough Island, not for equestrian manoeuvres but with your binoculars, you're bound to see something of avian interest. Willie reported **3 golden plover, c150 black-fronted terns, 12 spoonbill and 5 little black shags** on 30 Jan. The last sighting is perhaps an early one or have they been here all summer. Very few sightings were noted last year.

While Ingrid spotted an early white heron in the region Jan 2013 and I spotted one in a Moutere embayment on 12 Jan this year, Rebecca has been away to see several trees full.

Westcoast, Nov 2013. photo Rebecca Bowater



PARISH NOTICES

Ingrid has uploaded two recent news items onto the OSNZ website: The Conservation Minister's press statement, Battle of our Birds and OSNZ press release on the use of 1080. If unable to access these, give me a call 5450456.

Monday 10 Feb

Come along to our first evening meeting for the year and tell us your summer birding highlights, (and or any disheartening observations), show your favourite holiday snap shots and hear **David Melville** talk on updated **godwit** news from here and there. The latest from the Farewell Spit gannets will also be on the agenda.

To help me compile the programme for the year I'm calling on members who would like to hold the floor for an hour or so while waxing lyrical on their favourite topic or trip. Photographers welcome too. Please consider this and let me know topic and best available month.

PROGRAMME 2014

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.

February indoor meeting Monday 10th David Melville

Wader Count between 14-17 February. Please contact Rob rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

March indoor meeting Monday 3rd

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for February newsletter by 20th please email, snailmail, or phone:
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