



## NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2014

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A short month this time round and nearly time for another meeting. Last meeting, the bird chat and camaraderie was very pleasant and we saw an encouraging short video of a kiwi chick in the Kahurangi NP from Robin and Sandy. Not many birding holidays were gloated about and David gave us a rather glum look at kilometre upon kilometre of reclamation in China, all valuable habitat for staging migrants including our godwits and red knots. Still, marsh crake are still out at Sewerside settling ponds and a white heron. The latter has been seen exercising territory rights over a royal spoonbill's arrival on the same piece of bund wall.

Who guessed the answer 'wrybill' to December's photo? I know Gillian did.

### WILLIE'S WANDERINGS

One or more **grey tattlers** keep popping up in Willie's sightings around the Waimea and I read in the latest Dunedin newsletter he had seen a **grey tattler** at Karitane on a recent trip down there. What he didn't see were the 2 ibis and nankeen night heron that others have reported in Otago recently. **But** Willie has kindly offered to show us great photos of birds and bird projects from around the Top of the South, with perhaps a few from elsewhere. So, join us for our evening meeting on Monday 3 March to see what he's been up to.

### This Month's Mystery Photo by Ingrid Hutzler 2014



## WHEW WHIO

**Summer** holidays were good opportunities to spot **blue duck**.

Jonathan Banks and his son Johan sent in a report, and Chris P had friends who reported sightings.

8 Feb, 'J and J saw 7 blue ducks (presumably 2 adults and 5 fledged chicks) in the Flora Stream, Kahurangi National Park where the track to Lower Junction crosses Flora stream. The birds were very active and they were able to watch the birds feeding for quite some time.' The Banks family.

'7 Feb, 'Tramping (and floating) friends saw at least 5, maybe 7 pairs of whio (including one three plus one or two singles) from Waingaro Forks downriver to farmland. No ducklings but still good numbers of birds.' Chris Petyt.

## Also from Chris over in Golden Bay

### A few lines recollecting a past trip.

"Your mention of migrating **Red-necked phalaropes** prompts me to submit this. In 2007 when thinking of going to England I realised it was 50 years since I started bird-watching so I thought I should go somewhere special. I decided on the Shetlands. On the ferry from Aberdeen I met a birder whom I'd met on Stewart Island a few months previously and who knew and had worked with the guy who'd got me started bird-watching. Lots of good birds, especially sea-birds. A spell on Fair Isle didn't produce a lot of migrants but I found an Icterine Warbler and caught some Collared Doves, a new bird ringed by the observatory ringer. Having seen **Red-necked Phalaropes** on two years on Swan Lake, Farewell Spit, I wanted to see them in breeding plumage so spent a few days on Fetlar. Great views of a Long-tailed Duck though this species is probably more spectacular in winter plumage. There was a pair of Turnstones in fine plumage making me wonder if they might breed. The **phalaropes** were said to arrive in the third week in May but to my disappointment none were there on 18<sup>th</sup> May when I had to leave. Still, if they travel the distances the bird you mentioned did one can forgive them for being a little late."

**Amber** sent in this handsome head shot of a duck at St Arnaud. Grey duck or hybrid? Go to [nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz) grey duck, to learn more about the mallard influence on our native duck.



## **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.

**Monday 3 March**  
Indoor meeting

**Local birding shots from Willie**

**Monday 7 April**  
Indoor meeting

**Jonathan Banks**  
**A Tour around McMurdo Sound**  
**And Dry Valleys**

**Monday 5 May**  
Indoor meeting

**Richard Wells**  
**A trip to the Snares**

**Queen's Birthday Weekend Conference in Palmerston North.**

**Monday 9 June**  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> Monday)**  
Indoor meeting

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for March newsletter by 28th please email, snailmail, or phone:  
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