



## **NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER NOV/DEC 2014**

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Another year is coming to a close but not a lot from me in this month's newsletter. There's some interesting reports and true to the season several advertisements!

Holiday shots have started coming in already. From Rebecca in Florida:  
'What a place for birds. This is a burrowing owl in Cape Coral, they are on people's lawns sitting by their burrows.



Photo Rebecca Bowater Nov 2014

**But** closer to home Robin and Sandy sent in the following notes and 5MBC report from the Flora.

### **Wekas harassing kiwi**

Friends of Flora's kiwi programme has been picking up some amazing video footage of weka harassing kiwi in their nest burrows. Wekas seem to return to the kiwis nests many times and eventually the kiwi is provoked into chasing them off - in broad daylight. One weka was such a nuisance the kiwi had to chase it off 5 days out of a 10 day period and in one particularly persistent period, 6 times in 1.5 h. The concern is, I guess, that the weka may itself break the egg, or the kiwi may do so by accident. We compiled a video of a different weka harassing a different kiwi and posted it at: <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=888726041137504&set=vb.393395000670613&type=2&theater>.

### **Whio ducklings**

At least 2 clutches of whio ducklings have already hatched in the Flora. The 4 ducklings belonging to the pair at Aitkens Crossing are often visible from the swingbridge and there is another family at Gridiron.

### **5MBC**

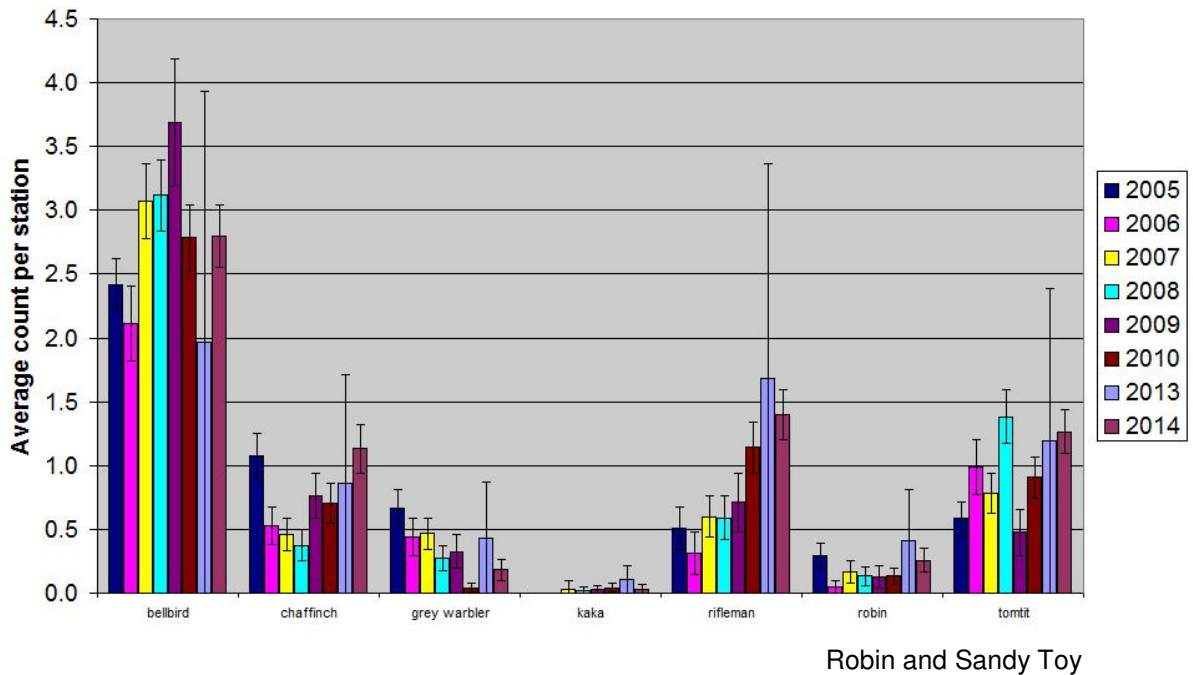
We've completed the 5MBC in the Flora and the results for the commoner species are shown below. My take on these commoner species is no change over the years, I don't think the data warrant any stats. Rifleman looks a bit like an increase, but given the difficulty of surveying this high-pitched bird, I think this is more likely due to a change in observers - if we break the data into two time periods 'up to 2009' and 'after 2009', it looks like no change within either time period, and Sandy and I got involved in 2010. Grey warbler could be a decline, but I'd like another year's counts before looking at the significance of the trend. The Flora had a 1080 application in August, but even so we are seeing increased rat numbers in trapping results and are capturing more rodents on video in our kiwi nest cams, so its good to see the passerine numbers holding up.....so far.

Highlight of this year's counts were a pair of falcons displaying overhead - we're pretty confident we know where they are nesting after one of the Canterbury University lads who was working up there was aggressively mobbed.

The complete bird list for this year is shown below and has one addition to that from previous years - goldfinch! A few AWOL species seen in previous years are, weka, kereru, kea, cuckoos but these species don't turn up every year, so not very significant.

bellbird	goldfinch	silvereye
blackbird	grey warbler	tomtit
chaffinch	kaka	whio
brown creeper	parakeet	
fantail	robin	

## Flora 5MBC



**FROM ROB:** Spring Wader Census of the top of South Island. 15 people covered the area between Westhaven Inlet and Delaware Bay in a record time of 5 days. Most birds were counted at 7, 8, 9 and 11 November. Weather was very favourable, sunny and modest wind conditions.

A total of 33,500 birds were counted, 86% migratory (29,000) and 14% endemic (4,500). Migratory species were higher compared to long term average of 25,000 and endemic species were lower compared to long term average of 5,000.

### **Farewell Spit:**

A number of less common shorebirds were recorded from the spit: Lesser Sandplover, Red necked Stint and Pacific Golden Plover.

Bar-tailed Godwit were just under 10,000, Ruddy Turnstone numbers were high (no surprise with the high wintering juveniles of last year's season) and Red Knot numbers were exceptionally high. A total of 11,692 birds were counted. The last year that happened was in 2008. Where every year we expect a steep decline in the numbers, Farewell Spit seems to attract a significant portion (11 %!!) of the overall flyway population. It will be very interesting what numbers will be reported from other areas of NZ. At Farewell Spit, also two Red Kots of the subspecies *piersmai* were recorded in meticulous dark red breeding plumage. These are the highest arctic breeders from the New Siberian Islands.

### **Golden Bay:**

One Whimbrel was reported from Westhaven Inlet. Average number of birds recorded with a zero count for Banded Dotterel.

### **Tasman Bay:**

Bell Island and Sand Island were counted at the same time thanks to availability of David's boat. Average numbers recorded for most birds from everywhere but similar high numbers of godwit and knot as Farewell Spit.

Thanks for all your time and effort, a very successful survey overall. Thanks to Department of Conservation for accommodation and car transport to Farewell Spit. Rob Schuckard.

### **Mystery Photo**

Last month's photos caused a bit of interest. Mandarin ducks are known in waterfowl collections here in NZ, Amber's observation at Lake Rotoiti must have been one that flew the coup. I haven't heard of anyone locally missing one so from how far away did it come? The other uncomfortable looking bird was A young Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*) photographed on Niuafo'ou Tonga by Dave Butler. The family of pigeon was guessed correctly.

A hint for this one - was taken on Farewell Spit



Photo Willie Cook Nov 2014

### **OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY**

#### **Ongoing regional survey of red-billed gull colonies, Part of a national scheme.**

Banded birds from some years back are still being spotted. Willie found A/Bk G/B/G- E203737 in a flock of 210, and it's history was reported back from the banding office via Jim Mills as a female banded as a chick on 23.11.09.

## **An Invitation From Elizabeth (Biz) Bell:**

'As part of the long-term research I have been undertaking on black petrels since 1995, I am doing a range of work on black petrels this season both on Hauturu/Little Barrier and Great Barrier (Aotea) including acoustic monitoring, burrow monitoring, GPS tracking and TDR deployment and random surveying. I am keen to get a few OSNZ members involved and out to both locations to help and trained up on seabird work.

Firstly, I am looking for at least two people at very short notice – a trip from 1-6 December for LBI – people for this trip must be very fit as we are racing around the hills placing out acoustic recorders. (Apologies, this one has gone Ed)

Other trips that I would be happy to have OSNZ helpers on are:

6-15 December – GBI (Hmm, possibly this one too! Ed)

12-28 January – LBI

28 January to 23 February – GBI

Please note that some of these dates may vary (and there is going to be another trip to LBI later in April/May as well, but we have to confirm the dates for that trip). I will give further details when people get in touch.

mail: [biz@wmil.co.nz](mailto:biz@wmil.co.nz) Website: [www.wmil.co.nz](http://www.wmil.co.nz)

It would be good to have some people that have experience with seabirds, but anyone who is keen and fit would be great.' Biz Bell

## **Advertisement No 1**

From Ingrid: our hard working EO

- 'have just uploaded a couple of great news items on our website':
  - Craig Potton Publishing has just announced a 20% discount and free delivery within NZ to Birds NZ members for 3 bird books. Check our website for details: <http://osnz.org.nz/node/569>
  - The perfect Christmas gift: a Birds NZ subscription voucher for 2015! Check our website for details: <http://osnz.org.nz/node/560>

## Advertisement No 2

From Detlef Davies, Regional Recorder, Far North

'As one of very few operators of birding tours abroad from New Zealand we would like to sound out interest among OSNZ members in our continuing tours to North Peru and our plans for 2015. Next year's departure dates are:

6 June - 3 week tour

26 June - 3 day extension

29 June - 2 week tour

13 Oct - 3 week tour

2 Nov - 3 day extension

5 Nov - 2 week tour

Further details available from me, current prices held until end of January.'

Detlef Davies.

( I have a report of this year's recent tour Ed)

For those of you who didn't name the bird on page 4, here's the rest of the bird.



Photo Willie Cook Nov 2014.

**Monday 8 December**

**End of Year Gathering see email of 25 November.**

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for January newsletter by 20 Jan, please email, snailmail, or phone:

Gail 035450456, [stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz](mailto:stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz)

