



NELSON REGION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2016

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THERE must be something wrong with my garden. I don't have cats, or chickens, but nor do I have **weka**. They've been reported from the adjacent street south and the next street north but no sign of them around my patch. Throughout our region members have recorded young ones throughout most months of the year. (See also woeful weka tale page 3). But, my patch is alive with the sound of juvenile passerines soliciting food from parents.

Whose feet are these?



Photo: Rebecca Bowater 2016

FURTHER to **blue duck** sightings from over the hill, Mac Harwood writes:
"We live 800 metres from Aarons Creek Bridge. Last autumn a duck was sitting in the long autumn grass in a paddock 150 metres from our house and didn't shift around. A few paradise ducks came and went. After a few days I went over to see if it was Ok. It flew into the air, I then realised it was a blue duck. It hung around for 6-8 weeks, probably the same one that Jeroen Lurling saw, They breed up the Waitai stream, about 5km from Upper Takaka."

FOR HISTORICAL snippets of ornithological interest Alec Milne sent through the following links.

“those interested in early bird observations can listen to AP Harper's radio interviews (1949) at these links.”

http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=218451

http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=208084

http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=208961

http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=207843

Harper was Charlie Douglas' side-kick in the 1890's on the West Coast. They lived off birds when in the hills, so took a very keen interest in them.

WADERS springing round the estuaries

Our estuaries now have the main new influx of godwits and their migrant colleagues, Motueka recently held a dawn blessing for their arrival, and SIPO and wrybills have returned to the southern riverbeds.

From Australia, mid September, Don Haddon sent in a couple of his shots of early arriving migrants in the Northern Territory. Yellow over blue flags are birds banded in Darwin.

Greater Sand Plover, Lee Point (NT, Aus)



Photo: Don Haddon, 2016

BACKYARD RAID. A Cautionary Tale from Motueka from Robin and Sandy.
“**A blackbird** nested in our broad beans, the nest about a metre off the ground. The female's been sitting quietly even while we garden around her. Yesterday the male blackbird was alarm calling frantically and several other species came and squawked as well. We went to look and a weka stalked out with the female blackbird dead in its bill. The nest was still intact, though one egg was broken. It's a bit of a mystery how the weka dislodged the female sufficiently to kill her, but presumably it climbed the bean plants which have been knocked about a bit by the wind and probably the weka. Within an hour the weka had returned and broken all the remaining eggs, one well developed embryo was all we found. Today the weka, or a mate of his, was stalking around stomping on our tomato plants with 4 chicks in tow. “

If there is a family of weka in your backyard, don't build your nest in broad beans!

SHINING EXAMPLE?

Reports of shining cuckoo came in round the beginning of October. Did anyone hear our harbinger of spring during the end of September.? Te Papa has an interesting blog: 'Shining cuckoos, toxic caterpillars, citizen science and cinerarias.' Mentions monarch butterfly caterpillars being taken by shining cuckoos.

Greater Sand Plover, Lee Point (NT Aus)
White over blue flags, banded Taiwan



Photo Don Haddon, 2016

DUCKING round the corner

Wood ducks have found a very amenable neighbourhood. On a private small holding with three small fenced ponds near Tasman, a pair was recently seen with eleven ducklings over two to three weeks. Another adult or was it one of last year's brood was also in the vicinity.

TURN to higher ground

The lovely little rare **black-fronted tern** has a lot to contend with. Competition with white baiters for prime real estate near the Motueka River Mouth, and recent flooding of their chosen raised bank on the Waimea R, unfortunately not raised enough. Egg laying was reported to have started. They are tenacious enough and will probably try again. But good news from the Bells Island shell banks. The **Caspian Terns** are back in residence and **white-fronted terns** have moved in with them. The first time ever noted.

And whose are these feet?



Photo Rebecca Bowater 2016

Rebecca is giving a photography evening 'Wildlife of the Galapagos Islands' on Thursday 17 Nov, at Atawhai Community Church, Todd Bush Road, 7.30pm. \$10. All invited.

PARISH NOTICES

From Biz Bell:

I am in need of a volunteer for the **black petrel** research on Great Barrier Island/Aotea this December. I know a few Birds NZ members have been keen previously and would like to offer the chance to be involved to members again.

The dates are **Monday 28 November to Wednesday 14 December**. Travel to the island and food/accommodation on the island would be covered by the project. The work focusses on monitoring the study burrows during the day, some night work to catch birds on the surface and ground surveys (random transects through the forest study site).

I am happy to answer more questions from anyone who is interested – please email. biz@wmil.co.nz

National Black-billed Gull Census.

Claudia is looking for people who are keen to help with the upcoming "National Black-billed Gull Census". Please spread the word! claudiamischler@gmail.com
The file is also available on <http://www.osnz.org.nz/National-Census-Black-billed-Gulls>

PROGRAMME 2016

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 7 Nov
Indoor Meeting

David Melville: Spoonbilled Sandpipers and
Kakapo & forensic ornithology

TOP OF THE SOUTH WADER CENSUS

Next Spring Census will be between **17 and 21 November** 2016. Spring tide is not exactly in the weekend so the team for Farewell Spit is 17-19. Please contact Rob - rschckrd@xtra.co.nz

December get-together to be advised.

January no indoor meeting

February, due to long weekends, first indoor meeting to be advised.

Thank you to this month's contributors.

Contributions for Dec newsletter by 10 December please, email, snail mail or phone, Gail 035450456, stagefrightmusic@xtra.co.nz.