



*Newsletter of the Northland Region of the
Ornithological Society of New Zealand - trading as **Birds New Zealand***

October 2014 Amokura 111

(Published in February, July and October of each year)

MEETINGS of the Northland Branch of the O.S.N.Z. are held each month on the second Thursday, for the period FEBRUARY to DECEMBER.

TIME: 7-30p.m.

VENUE: Founders Room, Alzheimers Society, 148 Corks Road, Tikipunga, Whangarei.

COST: A donation of \$3-00 per person per meeting is requested toward the cost of Hall hire, supper and the production and distribution of "Amokura".

ALL WELCOME

PROGRAMME TO February 2015

OCTOBER		AMOKURA 111
	4	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	9	MEETING – 7-30p.m
	14	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
NOVEMBER	01	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	13	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	18	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
	22	Kaipara Wader Census - High Tide 11:16am 4.1m
	29	Whangarei Wader Census – High Tide 1:46pm 2.7m
DECEMBER	06	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	11	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	16	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
	22	Caspian Tern nesting survey
JANUARY	08	No Meeting
	13	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	17	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE	Janet Snell	438-5737
SECRETARY	Ruth Crockett	435-0954
TREASURER	Kevin Hayes	437-6470
REGIONAL RECORDER	Tony Beauchamp	436-2224
REGIONAL REPORTER	Vacant	
AMOKURA EDITOR	Hilton Ward	946-0074

Upcoming Surveys:

MEMBERS: Please note.

- **RED-BILLED GULLS** O.S.N.Z, in conjunction with D.O.C., is anxious to conduct a scoping survey during the 2014 and 2015 breeding seasons aimed at determining the location of current red-billed gull colonies. This means locating and recording breeding sites so that pairs can be counted during the 2015-16 season. CAN YOU HELP? If so, please contact Janet (438-5737), Tony Beauchamp (436-2224) or Kevin (437-6470). This matter is urgent! Information and data sheets are available at <http://osnz.org.nz/node/538>
- **KERERU** The Kiwi Conservation Club is holding a "GREAT KERERU COUNT" from 22nd September until 5th October this year. Again, if you see a Kereru, please note the time, date and place and let Janet know.
- **DUCK PONDS** Our friends at Fish and Game are running a pond survey project to determine what pond habitat features provide the best breeding attractions for Mallard and other species of waterfowl. N.Z. has lost some 90% of its wetland during the past 150 years so this citizen-science project will use volunteers to monitor a wetland of their choice. Volunteers will be given a set of simple instructions on how to go about the monitoring and a manual telling them how to run the survey. They will start by filling out a pond characteristics datasheet and then count waterfowl four times over a four month period from September. If you can help, please contact Janet or Kevin for more details.

News: A comment from Ngaire Tyson from the New Zealand Landcare Trust after her June talk at the Northland OSNZ meeting.

She states that the idea of forming a Kiwi Corridor was thought about by Dr. Ray Pierce.

There are over 30 Landcare groups between Whangarei Heads and Whangarei Harbour. The groups come together for "Kiwi Coast" think tanks with goals to reconnect Northland.

As the Kiwi chicks are not fed by the parents they are very vulnerable up to one year old. Stoats are the main predator of kiwi. Stoats range over 100 hectares. If these predators can be reduced there will be more kiwi.

Kiwi listening to establish kiwi numbers is a good

idea. Survey results are analysed by D.O.C. and Kiwi Coast.

There are many traps set over the Kiwi Corridor but many more are needed. Bird numbers have greatly improved where predator traps are set.

So ---

- How do we win people's hearts and minds.
- Show kiwi to the public.
- Win them over.

Devices to be employed next year.

- Communication and linkages with the community
- Advocacy and engagement with the community.

Some places to do this ---

- A & P. Shows.
- Workshops.
- Kiwi releases.
- Forums.

To conclude ----

What's on the horizon? Ongoing *Kopiti* Conservation. For Kiwi matters phone Ngaire 09 4300954

NZ Birds Online blogs - the first year

Colin Miskelly sent these links to a couple of blogs derived from New Zealand Birds Online viewer statistics (as presented at the conference) These are very interesting and worth a visit:

New Zealand's favourite

bird? <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2014/06/06/new-zealands-favourite-bird/>

Who is [most] interested in New Zealand's

birds? <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2014/06/06/who-is-most-interested-in-new-zealands-birds/>

JULY

We did not have a Guest speaker at our July meeting but we had a good old fashioned natter about birds, interesting observations, places we had all been and all kinds of newsy notes.

AUGUST

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Our Branch held its first meeting at the new venue,

148 Corks Road, Whangarei on Thursday 14th August. Because of “works in progress” in the Boardroom and in other parts of the premises, we were a little cramped for space but a dozen of us who braved the weather, enjoyed a talk by Tony Beauchamp. Tony has been observing Myna at several roosts for some seasons now and a local pattern is emerging. His PowerPoint presentation showed the accepted roosting patterns in the Indian “homeland” of the cheeky Myna which has a long-time association with human habitation, but there appears to be a developing variation in the bird’s roosting habits in the Whangarei region.

If you regularly see flocks of Myna near your place, please let Tony know, as it may be another group that is of interest to him. One thing that I had not realised, is that Myna’s flock at night to roost at a different place from their nest site. Thank you Tony for an intriguing introduction to this much-maligned passerine.

Kevin Hayes.

NORTHLAND

The dream of a “Kiwi Coast” is now a reality! Ngaire Tyson, co-ordinator of the N.Z. Landcare Trust, was the guest speaker at our June meeting and her enlightening presentation detailed the vision and the project plan of several groups whose aim is to create a corridor for Kiwi on the East Coast of Northland from Mangonui down to Bream Head near Whangarei. The groups are community led and are supportive of each other.

Following the rough easterly weather that we had in June, the numbers of birds collected on our Beach Patrols were very low, and still are. The large sand bar on the Ruakaka River has almost disappeared and numbers observed during the Whangarei Harbour survey were also lower than usual. Blackbirds however, seem to be out and about in good numbers in most parts of the city, with a group of nine birds seen together hopping around under a tree – maybe sorting out partnerships? I have seen a pair of Blackbirds flying in and out of a neighbour’s Camellia tree, but no nesting materials as yet so I will continue to monitor their movements from the kitchen window.

Talking of kitchen windows, one of our members saw a Tui clinging to a window sill while peering into her

kitchen - she’s a good cook, so perhaps he was hoping for some lunch. A large number of Red-billed Gulls – 500+ - were counted in a group in a small paddock near Onerahi on a very wet morning in June, and 17 Brown Teal were seen near Teal Bay on 28th June.

Two members of our Branch continue to monitor Pied Shag colonies in the north and have noted that a colony near Teal Bay has shifted and is now settled at the north end of the bay with some 34 adults, nests and young. Another fairly new colony has been located in Pohutukawa trees overhanging the water, close to the northern end of the Tutukaka Marina car-park. There are about 12 adult birds, nests and young chicks. Finally, we have moved with our landlord, to a brand-new building at 148 Corks Road, Tikipunga, for our monthly meetings where we have better access, parking and facilities.

Janet Snell & Kevin Hayes

SEPTEMBER

At our September meeting we hosted Detlef and Carol Davies and Les Feasey from the Far North Branch. The weather was wet and windy -- setting the tone for the marine topic which was in two parts the first, hosted by Detlef and Carol featured seabirds seen on various pelagic trips from Whangaroa. As usual, the photography was superb, allowing us to appreciate what are otherwise minor differences in plumage to aid in the identification of the various species that occur off our coast. For many of us the only time that we have seen some of them, was when they are dead, bedraggled and decidedly not fresh when recovered by our Beach Patrollers. Detlef also introduced the Revised edition of his book *Where to Find Birds in Far North New Zealand*. Again fitting the theme of his presentation by including ways to view pelagic species.

The second presentation, from Les Feasey, included the benefits of loading data to eBird as well as material from the Palmerston North A.G.M. depicting new techniques and the technology available for monitoring and tracking seabirds. Recent advances allow scientists to establish flight patterns, food ingested, depth to which the bird dived and the span of time spent under the water hunting. Again, the excellent photographs and schematics shown, allowed those of us who were not able to get to the

A.G.M. to appreciate the vast scale of the scientific work being done from N.Z.

Among species depicted and discussed, Pauline managed, in the darkened room, to note down the following

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Flesh-footed Shearwater
Short-tailed Shearwater
Wandering Albatross (Juv)
Fluttering Shearwater
Bullers Shearwater
Huttons Shearwater
Sooty Shearwater
Black Petrel
White-faced Storm Petrel
N.Z. Storm Petrel
Wilson's Storm Petrel
Wandering Albatross (Ad.)
White-capped
Albatross Campbell Is. Albatross Bullers Albatross
Royal Albatross
Northern Giant Petrel
Cooks Petrel

.....

Pycrofts Petrel
Black-winged Petrel
White-naped Petrel
Grey-faced Petrel
Kermadec Petrel
Wedge-tailed Shearwater
Little Shearwater
Fairy Prion
Common Diving Petrel
Cape Petrel (Snares)
Arctic Skua
South Polar Skua
Bottle-nosed Dolphin
Brydes (?) Whale
Cape Barren Geese
Etc.

Stories - Adventures - Yarns - Sightings

Shark attack? No. Pied Shag attack! By Janet Snell.

Ever heard of a Pied Shag attack? I have. When Julie and I were walking slowly along Helena Bay on Saturday 28th June on a mission to locate and check a pied shag colony we noticed a lone pied shag standing quietly in front of us. We stopped and watched for a while to see if we could determine what, if anything, was wrong. On closer observation it appeared to be slightly smaller than an adult but with normal colouring. The yellow spot in front of the eye was quite distinctive. It was standing with its head up and was quite alert. I stepped a little closer but still did not notice anything wrong. The bird was watching us and we were watching the bird. We were quite close. Only about two metres away then Julie stepped up beside me and the bird attacked Julie's shoes, wings outstretched and pecking hard at her shoes. Well! This was too much! She yelled "Stop that and "What are you doing?" then jumped behind me for protection. With this the bird waddled off to about four metres away and looking out to sea. We walked slowly off down the beach back to the car looking behind us every few minutes to make sure we were not followed. Did we invade this birds

territory and he strongly objected? Had it been reared locally and expected a feed? This we will never know. In the distance we observed the bird waddle to a higher patch of and stopped but continued to look out to sea. We did locate a Pied Shag colony in the next bay south at Teal Bay where we were able to get a good count of adult birds 24. Nests 19, young 8~10.

Observation from Madelaine Reid.

I attach photos of 3 nests from my property 15 minutes from town. The first is a sparrow nest, the second a Waxeye and the third a blackbird.

I could see the activity in the sparrow nest and had a pair of jandals on hand to make 'gunshot' sounds when the mynah birds were on the prowl. The

Waxeyes were hidden in the Japanese maple tree foliage, but the blackbirds were easy to view from the house. There were 4 chicks. Hopefully some of them escaped, but when they seemed just about ready to fly, the nest was attacked - mynah, cat or rat? I'm not sure.

Editors note- We have seen Mynas attack a Thrush's nest killing all chicks.



Trevor Storr and Royal Spoonbills:

Hi, I thought this may be of interest to some members. A few weeks ago after the big storm we had in July I was out trying to get a few snaps of spoonbills near the mangroves. There was about forty in the flock I came across. I noticed that quite a few of the birds were injured. A couple had leg injuries and quite a few with wing damage, and the rest appeared to have weathered the storm alright. I tried to get shots showing the damaged birds but only managed this one. You could see the bones of the wing through the large wound. I hope it survives but would not take bets on the ones with broken legs. I noticed one with leg rings. It had a red one above a white one. This may be helpful to whoever banded them so I thought I would mention it. Can anyone tell me when the spoonbills leave the harbour to return to their nesting sites?



EAST COAST BEACH PATROL – SUMMARY – Code NE - SUMMARY

Compiled by P. R. SMITH – Period JANUARY to JUNE 2014

MONTH	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE.	TOTAL
FROM	Surf Club	Ruakaka	Ruakaka River	Ruakaka Riv.	Ruakaka Riv..	Mair Rd.	
TO	Uretiti Tip	Waipu R.	3.5 Sth.Uretiti	Waipu Tip	Waipu Tip.	Ruakaka Riv.	
DISTANCE	0km	8.5 km	8.5 km	9.0 km	9.0 km	0 km	
PATROLLERS		M. Robinson J Snell	P. Cozens J Hudson	A. McCracken	J. Hawken M. Robinson		
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)							
Grey-headed Mollymawk							
Buller's Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh –footed Shearwater							
Buller's Shearwater		6					6
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater							
Fluttering Shearwater		16	5				21
Hutton's Shearwater						NO	
Little Shearwater							
Common Diving Petrel		5				PATROL	5
Black Petrel			1				1
White-chinned Petrel						DONE	
Kerguelen Petrel							
Cape Pigeon	NO						
Antarctic Fulmar	PATROL						
Northern Giant Petrel	DONE						
Fairy Prion		1					1
Thin-billed Prion							
Antarctic Prion							
Broad-billed Prion							
Lesser Broad-billed Prion							
Prion sp							
Blue Petrel							
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel				1			1
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel		3					3
White-headed Petrel							
White-faced Storm Petrel		1					1
Blue Penguin		1		#			1
Australasian Gannet		1					1
Pied Shag							
Tui							
Petrel Sp.				1			1
Variable Oystercatcher					1		1
Southern Black-backed Gull							
Red-billed Gull		1		1			2
Caspian Tern							
White-fronted Tern							
Blackbird							
Mallard		1					1
Australasian Harrier		1					1

N.Z. Wood Pigeon							
TOTALS		37	6	3	1	Nil	47

NORTHLAND WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Code NW - SUMMARY

Compiled by Prue Cozens – Period JANUARY to JUNE 2014

MONTH	11-01-14	22-02-14	29-03-14	-04-14	-05-14	-06-14	
FROM	3.5k Nth Bayley	Bayleys	Bayleys	Mahuta	Mahuta Gap	Mahuta Gap	
TO	Mahuta	Mahuta Gap.	Mahuta Gap	3.5k Nth.Bayl	3k Nth.Chases	3k Nth.Chase	
DISTANCE	11.5km.	11.5km	11.5km.	0km.	0km.	0km.	TOTAL
PATROLLERS:	<i>J. Snell</i>	<i>A. McCracken</i>	<i>P. Cozens</i>	<i>J. O'Malley</i>	<i>J. Ballinger</i>		
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)			1				1
Storm Petrel Sp.							
Buller's Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh –footed Shearwater							
Buller's Shearwater	2						2
Sooty Shearwater	3						3
Short-tailed Shearwater	7	1					8
Fluttering Shearwater	3	1	1		NO		5
Hutton's Shearwater					PATROL		
Little Shearwater					DONE		
Common Diving Petrel	4						4
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel							
Kerguelen Petrel							
Cape Pigeon							
Antarctic Fulmar							
Northern Giant Petrel							
Fairy Prion							
Thin-billed Prion							
Antarctic Prion							
Broad-billed Prion							
Lesser Broad-billed Prion							
Prion sp							
Blue Petrel							
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel			2				2
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel							
White-headed Petrel	3						3
White-faced Storm Petrel							
Blue Penguin	3	1	1				5
Australasian Gannet		4	1				5
Pied Shag							
Grey-headed Mollymawk	1						1
Shearwater Sp.	5	1	2				8
Paradise Duck		1					1
Southern Black-backed Gull		2	1				3
Gull Sp.			1				1
Grey Duck.			1				1
White Fronted Tern							
TOTAL	31	11	11	Nil	Nil	Nil	53

Recent Sightings

Bird	number	Place	date	Name
Kukupu (Juv 2~3 weeks old)	1	Whangarei Bird Recovery Centre	July	Prue Cozens
Brown teal	17	Teal Bay Creek	28-Jun-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
NZ Dotterel	4	Helena Bay	28-Jun-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
Red Billed Gull	500+	Paddocks near Onerahi	10-Jul-14	Janet Snell
Pied Shag Colony	34	Teal Bay (Northern end)	28-Jun-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
Reef Heron	2	Johnson Point shell bank	15-Jun-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
Pied Shag	1	Helena Bay	28-Jun-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
White Faced Heron	1	port Road on power line	May	Janet Snell
White Faced Heron	19	Jordan Valley Road - During flood	21-Jul-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Spotted Dove	20+	Maungatapere	Daily	T Toohill
Tomtit	1	End of Waiotoi Road	19-Aug-14	Karen Miller
Rock Pigeons	6~8	Under bridge at Town Basin-High tide	14-Aug-14	Karen Miller
Pied Shags	12	Shag Colony. Just past end of Tutukaka Marina carpark	5-Aug-14	Janet Snell, Julie Hudson
Mallard Duck	10	Lake Waro - Hikurangi	8-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Paradise Duck	6	Lake Waro - Hikurangi	8-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
White Faced Heron	1	Lake Waro - Hikurangi	8-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Black Shag	1	Lake Waro - Hikurangi	8-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Royal Spoonbill	3	Beach Road - Onerahi	10-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
White Faced Heron	2	Beach Road - Onerahi	10-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Black Shag	1	Beach Road - Onerahi	10-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
White Throated Shag	1	Beach Road - Onerahi	10-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Variable Oyster Catcher	2	Beach Road - Onerahi	10-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
White Heron	1	Pahi	2-Sep-14	Janet Snell
Royal Spoonbill	74	Behind the Hotel - Houhora Harbour.	7-Sep-14	Janet Snell
Royal Spoonbill	6	Ngunguru Estuary	6-Sep-14	Joyce
Australasian Brown Quail	2	Old Mill Lane	9-Sep-14	Melva Ward