



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

## **February 2015      Amokura 112**

(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 JUNE 2015**

FEBRUARY		AMOKURA 112
	14	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	12	MEETING – 7-30p.m
	17	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
	21	Kaipara Wader Census - High Tide 1:13pm 3.6m
	22	Whangarei Wader Census – High Tide 10:14am 3.0m
MARCH		
	14	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	12	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	17	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
APRIL		
	18	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	9	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	14	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
MAY		
	14	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	16	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	19	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL
JUNE		
	11	MEETING – 7-30p.m.
	13	WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
	16	EAST COAST BEACH PATROL

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

## OCTOBER

### LOCAL HAPPENINGS

A healthy number of 13 attended the October OSNZ Branch meeting. As usual there was lively talk about interesting sightings.

A Press Release regarding the Migration of Shorebirds under Threat was tabled. The President of Birds NZ, David Lawrie, recently attended the 9th conference of the Australasian Wader Study Group in Darwin. This is a meeting of researchers and interested people associated with shorebirds from Australia and New Zealand. Following the two days of interesting talks and discussions the conference adopted the following resolution. See below for the full release.

We were also reminded of the National Red Billed Gull Survey 2014 ~ 2016 by the tabling of a flyer. See the flyer below and the list of known colonies in 1965. There are unlisted colonies in our area. These do need documenting.

We then viewed an interesting video *Earth flight*. It is a British nature documentary that shows a flight from the view of the wings of birds across six continents, showing some of the world's greatest natural spectacles from a bird's-eye view. One can only be intrigued with the technology required to create a video like this.

## NOVEMBER

### LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Our Branch held its meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Janet presented some of the outcomes from the Conference relating to the new Strategy Plan; Some key points are to encourage use and growth of:

- NZ Birds Online and NZ Ebird
- Must strive to get new members
- Aim to make more the OSNZ relevant

After the formalities were over Allan and Sheila Ford gave an inspiring and often humorous talk and photographic presentation about their travels across large tracts of Australia. Waterfalls, desert, wildlife and wide open spaces. They travelled thousands of kilometers over apparently desolate country "with plenty to see if one looks."

## DECEMBER

### LOCAL HAPPENINGS

The December Branch meeting typically was a good natter about sightings and bird topics in general followed by an excellent spread of platters to celebrate Christmas and the end of year. The ice cream, pavlova and strawberries were certainly a treat.

## Stories - Adventures – Yarns - Sightings

**Gerry Brackenbury** : - I can never get to the OSNZ meetings because it clashes with my Pukenui Forest Trust meetings, and, as Chair, I can't really duck them! I thought the team might be interested in a mob of birds I noted along Church Road, Ngararatunua. In a regular winter flooded paddock half way along that road in August I saw seven dabchick, one grey teal, about four scaup, two black swans, several Mallard, a pair of parries and the usual pukeko. I was a little surprised I didn't see a partridge in a pear tree!

And from Madelaine Reid :- Many thanks for including my observations in the October issue of Amokura. In case you are after something for an upcoming edition, I attach a photo of a pure white oyster catcher I

recently saw near the Onerahi jetty. I was wondering if this was juvenile colouring, but it seems they generally have brownish feathers at least, so I have concluded that it must be an albino. I read that Oyster Catchers leave their eggs to be hatched by other birds, so maybe this one was reared by the local Spoonbills?



### **Old Mill Lane Wetland**

We have had a great summer at 12 Old Mill Ln. We have found one Fernbird nest and caught our elusive Spotless Crakes on camera.

The Fernbird nest is high in the Oioi under a canopy of leaning Oioi. The four eggs were laid between 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> December, Hatched on the 15<sup>th</sup> January and fledged 30<sup>th</sup> January. The chicks were popping out of the nest onto the rushes to be fed a couple of days prior to the 30<sup>th</sup>.

It has been interesting observing. When the sitting bird wanted a changeover it gave one loud shrill call. Its mate answered from another part of the wetland and started its way over to the nest. The pair kept a conversation going and when the far bird was within about 20m of the nest the sitting bird hopped off the nest and scurries about 3m away through the Oioi before flying off and its mate moving in by scurrying through the Oioi. From anywhere on our property we could hear this exchange and knew what they were up to. It has got a bit confusing of late as there seems to be about three nests. The chatter became much less after the chicks hatched.





The end result; there is a lot of fern bird activity at our place. With the very high number and concentration of birds it is easy to spot one. The best times being early morning and evening but we do see them at any time.



We bought a Trail Camera that we can now leave set up in the wetland taking videos or photos day and night.

It was nice to capture the Spotless Crake parent with two chicks on video. We also discovered that the pair of ducks we are seeing are Grey Ducks.

The camera found that we still have the odd rat even with all our baiting and trapping!



## Recent Sightings

Bird	number	Place	date	Name
Kereru	2	Taheke St - Twice daily feeding	28th Sept to 5th Oct	P Smith & K Hayes
Shining Cuckoo	1	Heard in Tikipunga	2nd & 4th Oct	P Smith & K Hayes
Shining Cuckoo	1	Kamo	7-Oct-14	J Hudson
Tomtit	1	Donnelly's Crossing. Bridge to Nowhere Track	5-Oct-14	K Miller
Kereru	Plenty	Donnelly's Crossing. Bridge to Nowhere Track	5-Oct-14	K Miller
Kereru	3	Silverstream. Eats Loquats from tree	Sept	K Miller
Mixed Shag Colony	?	Small lake beside road near main Kaiwi Lake	5-Oct-14	K Miller
Australasian Bittern	1	Flew over Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru	2-Oct-14	Melva & Hilton Ward
Kiwi calling (Male)	1	Old Mill Ln	8-Oct-14	Melva & Hilton Ward
Fairy Terns	2	Johnson Pt shell bank	1-Oct-14	Janet Snell & Les Feasey
Crested Tern	1	Rock wall at Johnson Pt	1-Oct-14	Les Feasey
Big Black Shag	2	By the river on Tauraroa Rd	5-Oct-14	Janet Snell
White Capped Mollymawk	1	Bird Recovery Centre (From Dargavile West Coast)	6-Oct-14	Pru Cozens
Grey Duck & 10 Ducklings	11	Crossing Tauraroa Rd	5-Oct-14	Janet Snell
Sanderling	1	Shell Bank, Johnson Pt	1-Oct-14	Janet Snell & Les Feasey
Shining Cuckoo	1	Heard. Collingwood St	mid Sept	Janet Snell
Swan & 5 Sygnets	6	Lake Humahuma	Early Oct	Logan Forest
Tomtits	?	Poutu	Sept	Logan Forest
Shining Cuckoo	1	Whau Valley Rd	15-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Shining Cuckoo	1	Mc Millan Ave, Kamo	16-Sep-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Paradise Duck	pair, 7 Juv	Whau Valley Rd	3-Nov-14	Ruth & David Crockett
Spoonbills	10	Stables Landing. Port Albert		Janet & Kathie, Julie & Karen
Godwits	28	Johnson Pt Rd, Waipu	17-Oct-14	Janet Snell & Julie Hudson
Turnstones	4	Johnson Pt Rd, Waipu	17-Nov-14	Janet Snell & Julie Hudson
NZ Dotterels	4	"	"	"
Little Shag	1	"	"	"
Little Black Shag	1	"	"	"
Pied Shag	10	"	"	"
Variable Oystercatchers	24	"	"	"
Black Billed Gulls	15	"	"	"
Fairy Terns	4	"	"	"
Bittern	1	Jack Bisset Wetland, Carruth Rd	3-Nov-14	Karen Miller
Dabchick	1	Jack Bisset Wetland, Carruth Rd	3-Nov-14	Karen Miller

Bellbird	2	Pinnacles area	9-Nov-14	Karen Miller
Tomtit	2	Pinnacles area	9-Nov-14	Karen Miller
Banded Rail	1	Old Mill Ln wetland	28-Oct-14	Melva & Hilton Ward
Spotless Crake	1	Old Mill Ln wetland	28-Oct-14	Melva & Hilton Ward
NZ Scaup	pair	Lake Waro, Hikurangi	25-Aug-14	Thalia
NZ Scaup	pair	Lake Waro, Hikurangi	9-Nov-14	Thalia
Fairy Terns	2	Waipu Spit	10-Nov-14	Julie & Vic
Takehe		Tawharanui	2-Nov-14	Sheila & Allan Ford
Bellbirds		"	"	"
Tui		"	"	"
Saddlebacks		"	"	"
Pateke		"	"	"
Wood Pigeons		"	"	"
Robins		"	"	"
Murepork		"	"	"
Grey Duck & 4 Ducklings	5	71 Tatton Rd, Maungataoere.	6-Nov-14	Terry Toohill
Wood Pigeons	7	Raumanga Valley Rd (Flying in a line)	13-Nov-14	Ruth & David Crockett





# ***Birds New Zealand***

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[www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz)

1 October 2014

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Migration of Shorebirds under Threat**

The President of Birds NZ, David Lawrie, recently attended the 9<sup>th</sup> conference of the Australasian Wader Study Group in Darwin. This is a meeting of researchers and interested people associated with shorebirds from Australia and New Zealand.

Following the two days of interesting talks and discussions the conference adopted the following resolution.

#### ***Our Disappearing Shorebirds***

*One of the world's great natural wonders is the migration of shorebirds between their breeding grounds in Alaska and Siberia and their non-breeding grounds in Australia and New Zealand using the East Asian Australasian Flyway. This amazing phenomenon is in danger of imminent collapse because vital staging sites on the migration route are being lost.*

*This was the conclusion reached at the 9th Australasian Shorebird Conference held in Darwin on the weekend.*

*The Flyway's 23 countries include nearly half the world's human population and some of its fastest growing economies. The combination is applying extraordinary development pressure on tidal flats and wetlands where the birds find food to fuel their journeys.*

*Paper after paper described accelerating losses to aquaculture, agriculture and urban or industrial infrastructure, particularly in the Yellow Sea. Hunting, pollution and disturbance through recreational pursuits are also significant issues along the length of the Flyway.*

*Projects aiming to protect shorebird habitat and reduce its loss through remediation and/or restoration were highlighted but the sheer scale and rate of change is overwhelming these efforts.*

*Traditional livelihoods of the many people in the Flyway who depend on coastal wetlands and tidal flats are also disappearing.*

*In view of the dire situation facing shorebirds, delegates of the 9th Australasian Shorebird Conference:*

- *Express their deep concern about the alarming decline in shorebird numbers in the Flyway.*
- *Encourage national governments to work in the spirit of international agreements to protect wetlands and coastal habitat for future generations.*
- *Call on governments at all levels, the business sector and the community to work together to protect shorebirds and their habitat to prevent further losses.*
- *Recognise and acknowledge the important role of the East Asian Australasian-Flyway Partnership as a framework to collaborate in the protection of shorebirds and their habitats.*

The findings to support the above conference resolution were only possible to be determined because of the long term population counting of shorebirds that takes place in Australia and New Zealand on a biannual basis. This count data has been analysed by researchers at the Queensland University and the results have shown that there has been a steady decline in populations of most of the migratory shorebirds.

The shorebird data is collected by amateur bird watchers on an organised basis in each of the countries and these counts have taken place since the 1970s. The important outcomes that have been reached show the value of long term count data and the necessity to continue this into the future.

The details surrounding shorebird migration is one of the natural wonders of the world and it is essential that governments throughout the flyway take appropriate action to ensure that this can continue into the future.



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President

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# EAST COAST BEACH PATROL – SUMMARY – Code NE

Compiled by P. R. SMITH – Period JULY to DECEMBER 2014

MONTH	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER.	TOTAL
FROM	Ruakaka Riv	Ruakaka	Ruakaka River	Ruakaka Riv.	Ruakaka Riv..	Mair Rd.	
TO	Uretiti Tip	Waipu	Uretiti Tip.	Waipu Tip	Waipu Tip.	Ruakaka Riv.	
DISTANCE	8.5km	8.5 km	8.5 km	8.5 km	9.0 km	0 km	
<b>PATROLLERS</b>	M.Robinson	J Snell	P. Cozens J Hudson	A. McCracken	J. Hawken K. Miller		
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							
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater							
Fluttering Shearwater	1		2	1			4
Hutton's Shearwater					<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	
Little Shearwater							
Common Diving Petrel	1	<b>6</b>	3	2	<b>PATROL</b>	<b>PATROL</b>	12
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel					<b>DONE</b>	<b>DONE</b>	
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			1				1
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel							
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel							
White-headed Petrel		1					1
White-faced Storm Petrel							
Blue Penguin	1		1	1			3
Australasian Gannet		1	3	2			6
Pied Shag							
Tui							
Petrel Sp.							
Variable Oystercatcher							
Southern Black-backed Gull							
Red-billed Gull							
Caspian Tern							
White-fronted Tern							
Blackbird							
Mallard							
Australasian Harrier							
N.Z. Wood Pigeon		1					1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>28</b>

# NORTHLAND WEST COAST BEACH PATROL – Code NW - SUMMARY

Compiled by Prue Cozens – Period JULY to DECEMBER 2014

MONTH	27-07-14	-08-14	-09-14	-10-14	-11-14	-12-14	
FROM	3.5k Nth Bayleys	Bayleys	Bayleys	Mahuta	Mahuta Gap	Mahuta Gap	
TO		Mahuta Gap.	Mahuta Gap	3.5k Nth.Bayleys	3k Nth.Chases	3k Nth.Chases	
DISTANCE	3.5km.	km	km.	0km.	0km.	0km.	TOTAL
<b>PATROLLERS:</b>			<i>P. Cozens</i>				
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)							
Storm Petrel Sp.							
Buller's Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh –footed Shearwater							
Buller's Shearwater							
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater							
Fluttering Shearwater	3	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	3
Hutton's Shearwater		PATROL	PATROL	PATROL	PATROL	PATROL	
Little Shearwater		DONE	DONE	<b>DONE</b>	DONE	DONE	
Common Diving Petrel	1						1
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel							
Kerguelen Petrel							
Cape Pigeon							
Antarctic Fulmar							
Northern Giant Petrel							
Fairy Prion	2						2
Thin-billed Prion							
Antarctic Prion							
Broad-billed Prion							
Lesser Broad-billed Prion							
Prion sp	2						2
Blue Petrel							
Pycroft's Petrel							
Cook's Petrel							
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel							
White-headed Petrel							
White-faced Storm Petrel							
Blue Penguin							
Australasian Gannet							
Pied Shag							
Grey-headed Mollymawk							
Shearwater Sp.							
Paradise Duck							
Southern Black-backed Gull							
Gull Sp.							
Grey Duck.							
White Fronted Tern							
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>8</b>

## IN WHAT WAYS IS THE RED-BILLED GULL (*Larus novaehollandiae*) POPULATION IN NEW ZEALAND CHANGING?

In the mid-1960s, about 40,000 breeding pairs of red-billed gull were present at 166 colonies in New Zealand (excluding the Chatham and sub-Antarctic Is).

Over the past 20 years or more, numbers at the largest colonies have declined markedly, whereas in other areas, notably Otago, the numbers of both breeding birds and colonies have increased. What is the overall trend in numbers?

Is the population declining, despite some local increases, or is it stable, but with the main population centres shifting, perhaps tracking changes in food supply? Are a few large breeding colonies being replaced by many smaller, more dispersed ones?

This survey is aimed at answering these questions. The first part, being carried out this breeding season (October 2014–January 2015), is designed to check the present status of those colonies reported in 1965 (see right), and to locate new ones, assumed to have established since 1965.



### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Check the status of colonies known to be active up to 1965. Are breeding birds present or not? You can get a list of these colonies and their locations from Peter Frost ([birds.wanganui@osnz.org.nz](mailto:birds.wanganui@osnz.org.nz)).

We do not need counts of the number of breeding pairs at this stage, but some indication of size would be useful, along the following lines: < 10; 10 < 100; 100 < 1000; 1000 < 10,000; and > 10,000 pairs.

Note any obvious features that might account for any change in status (e.g. disturbance; land development).

- Look for and record details of any new colonies (e.g. location; estimated size).

Report what you find to Peter Frost, Graeme Taylor ([gtaylor@doc.govt.nz](mailto:gtaylor@doc.govt.nz)), or the appropriate Birds NZ regional representative (see <http://osnz.org.nz/contact-us/regional-representatives> for contact details).

### THANK YOU

photos: © Ormond Torr; Peter Frost 2014



NATIONAL RED-BILLED GULL SURVEY,  
2014-2016





Location of Red-billed Gull breeding sites up to 1965 as summarised by Gurr & Kinsky (Notornis 12: 223-240, 1965). The site numbers correspond to those given on the accompanying Google Earth images (Far North\_RBG\_sites.pdf and Northland\_RBG\_sites.pdf). Maps of the location of these sites are also available, but the overall file is 4.5 Mb.

Site No.	Location	Latitude	Longitude	Easting	Northing	Situation	Number of breeding pairs
N1	West I. [Three Kings]	-34.185210	172.033586	1510946	6216886	rocky slopes and cliffs of islands	>1000
N2	Great I. [Three Kings]	-34.151120	172.146884	1521355	6220759	above SE Bay	>10,000
N3	Great I. [Three Kings]	-34.164616	172.144268	1521127	6219261	above Tasman Bay	300
N4	Great I. [Three Kings]	-34.159058	172.146077	1521288	6219878	"east coast"	500
N5	South-West I. [Three Kings]	-34.179463	172.075404	1514794	6217559	lower slopes SE end	>1000
N6	Princes I. [Three Kings]	-34.175971	172.048159	1512280	6217923	top plateau and down slopes	1000
N7	North Cape	-34.394650	173.014927	1601372	6194085	rocky coast; "on rocky north coast" (Watt 1947)	<10
N8	Scott Point (Far Nth)	-34.519220	172.702238	1572671	6180231	on small rock	12
N9	Kaimaumau	-34.918953	173.265916	1624289	6135912	shelly bank	20
N10	Wai-iti Bay	-35.006889	173.935554	1685365	6125793	inland shore	48
N11	Motukawaiti	-35.027743	173.955194	1687135	6123463	inland shore	"a few"
N12	Black Rocks	-35.205466	174.111697	1701192	6103605	rocky island	
N13	Tapaka Point	-35.239075	174.121956	1702084	6099867	headland	
N14	Urupukapuka I	-35.215988	174.223899	1711391	6102318	rocky pinnacle islets in bay	150
N15	Cape Brett (a)	-35.170097	174.333540	1721439	6107279	rocky headland	
N16	Cape Brett (b)	-35.172852	174.328828	1721006	6106980	rocky headland	>300
N17	Whangaruru Sth.	-35.377840	174.347222	1722372	6084222	isolated rock	20
N18	Sugar Loaf	-35.566561	174.705649	1754570	6062786	cliffs and ledges	>500
N19	High Peak Rocks (Pinnacle)	-35.547090	174.724743	1756339	6064915	cliffs and ledges	>500
N20	Tutukaka	-35.608918	174.527359	1738339	6058353		"small"
N21	Taiharuru Rock	-35.714759	174.560839	1741185	6046565	steep slopes, some vegetation	600<700
N22	Pataua I	-35.717516	174.553338	1740502	6046270	rocky side of hill and on small islet	
N23	Awarua Rock	-35.785088	174.556383	1740658	6038771	small offshore rock	250
N24	Parua Bay	-35.791129	174.448618	1730908	6038250	small rocky island	
N25	McLeod Bay (Robbs I.)	-35.800690	174.487714	1734426	6037137	island	
N26	Reotahi (Aubreys I.)	-35.830025	174.497239	1735237	6033870	island	
N27	Bream Head	-35.853780	174.590525	1743620	6031102	rocky shore	250
N28	Frenchman I.	-35.860616	174.527586	1737925	6030434	island	
N29	Taranga I. (Hen I.)	-36.001913	174.698054	1753045	6014506	small offshore rock	
N30	Taranga I. (Hen I.)	-35.965837	174.744715	1757322	6018434	small corner of mainland	20
N31	Mokohinau I. (Burgess I.)	-35.905409	175.113612	1790736	6024479	cliff tops, slopes, and offshore rocks	5000<10000