



## **October 2015      Amokura 114**

(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 114

- 8 MEETING – 7-30p.m. Speaker – Vivian Lepper – DoC Employee, Fairy Terns and Pateke.
- 10 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
- 13 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark)

#### **NOVEMBER**

- 7 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
- 12 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
- 17 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)
- 28 KAIPARA CENSUS - 12:57 hw at Poutu Pt

#### **DECEMBER**

- 5 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
- 10 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
- 15 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

#### **JANUARY**

- 14 NO MEETING
- 16 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
- 19 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

#### **FEBRUARY**

- 11 MEETING – 7-30p.m.
- 13 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL
- 16 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

**REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

**SECRETARY**

**TREASURER**

**REGIONAL RECORDER**

**REGIONAL REPORTER**

**AMOKURA EDITOR**

<b>Janet Snell</b>	<b>438-5737</b>
<b>Ruth Crockett</b>	<b>435-0954</b>
<b>Kevin Hayes</b>	<b>437-6470</b>
<b>Tony Beauchamp</b>	<b>436-2224</b>
<b>Vacant</b>	
<b>Hilton Ward</b>	<b>946-0074</b>

**Please note:** There are links in this PDF that will take you to other sites and files. These can only be accessed via the internet or contacting the responsible person directly.

## **JULY**

### **LOCAL HAPPENINGS**

#### ***Wader Bird Count at Ngunguru - 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015***

A Wader Bird count at Ngunguru sand spit and lower estuary was undertaken by a group of 3 enthusiasts on Saturday July 11th. This is part of a seasonal inventory of wader birds in New Zealand conducted by the Ornithological Society and for the Ngunguru Sandspit Society. This count recorded a total of 141 birds. It was a stunning, fine winter day on the Sandspit with a light southerly breeze.



Bird counting is generally done on the same day, near the high tide, throughout the region. At high tide the birds gather together on the small beaches. At lower tide levels, the birds are out feeding on the sand/mud flats and it's more difficult to get an accurate count. The vacant roost spot on Te Maika spit left by the godwits was filled with Variable Oyster Catchers. Variable Oyster Catchers (indigenous, regionally significant) are the most abundant birds sharing our bit of coast; 64 stood still to be counted this July. The average is 68. They were mostly clustered on Te Maika Spit and the North West tip of Pi Manu. New Zealand Dotterels (indigenous, nationally vulnerable) are also resident and 18 were found around the tip of the sand spit and on Te Maika spit opposite the school. About average for this time of year. Other birds seen include: Black Backed Gull (4). Red Billed Gull (45). 2 Paradise Shell-ducks.

Missing on this count were and Caspian terns of which at this time of year we have always seen two. Also we did not see any White Faced Herons.

We are fortunate to share our beaches and estuary with so many species of indigenous and native birds.

Thank you to everyone: Hilton and Melva Ward and Denise Whitburn who took part in this count.

Submitted by: Hilton Ward  
11th July 2015

## **AUGUST**

At our monthly meeting the idea of some form of reimbursement for vehicle owners where their cars are used undertaking OSNZ work. After much discussion it was *moved that Vehicles involved in harbour counts and beach patrols be subsidised towards the cost of running their vehicles and that drivers keep a record of kilometres to be presented at meetings so that a fair subsidy can be calculated.*

Sadly our guest speakers were unavailable for our monthly meeting. Tony Beauchamp talked instead on a variety of topics appropriate to our Northland area. They were as follows:

After a discussion with David Melville, Nelson ecologist and ornithologist, regarding the prediction that New Zealand's bar-tailed godwit population will halve in the next 10 years with research pointing to China's massive habitat destruction along its coastline and collapse of food in the China Sea as a cause. Tony stressed the importance of accurate counts of migratory birds. If their numbers are declining it is important that the decline can be demonstrated

Tony is conducting upper harbour counts at low tide in an effort to establish patterns that can be useful in the future. E.g. oil spill. He is requesting assistance with these counts. If you can help please contact Tony.

Currently samples of anthropods are being collected from the dunes near Waipu to detect residual pindone levels after pindone drops on the dunes to control rabbits.

Please contact Tony with any pelican sightings. It seems that most of the numbers that arrived in 2013 have now moved on.

Tony also suggested that members observe and count spotted doves in order to understand the spread of the local population in the urban environment.

He also commented that it would be useful to count dunnocks. They are in our region but quite scarce as their preference is for colder areas. Go to <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/dunnock> to listen to their calls.

## SEPTEMBER

At the September meeting we welcomed new members Ria Kemp and Paul then settled down to an enthusiastic presentation by Bernie Buhler, The Matakohē Limestone Island Ranger.

He talked of its history back in pre European times prior to 1830, flax processing, quarrying limestone, farming, and up to the present day as a sanctuary in the heart of Whangarei Harbour. He explained how input has transformed Matakohē-Limestone Island from degraded pasture into a regenerating forest habitat – 155,000 trees planted and counting. The island has been the focus of restoration efforts since 1989, with a mission to restore Matakohē to a functioning coastal broadleaf forest ecosystem.



Mammalian predators have been eradicated from the island, meaning this 'new' forest is now a safe home for a growing variety of threatened native fauna that have been re-introduced, including kiwi, banded rail, New Zealand dotterel, moko skink and forest gecko. Fernbirds are everywhere.

The island is also the site of Matakohē pa and once extensive kumara gardens, as well as the impressive ruins of one of Whangarei's earliest industrial sites - the Limestone Island cement works, founded in 1856.

Restoration efforts are coordinated by members of the community, the Friends of Matakohē-Limestone Island Society (FOMLI), in partnership with Whangarei District Council, made possible thanks to the support of numerous partners and sponsors such as Golden Bay Cement.





## Stories - Adventures – Yarns – Sightings

### *Trail Camera at Old Mill Ln - by Hilton Ward*

The trail camera in our wetland by the boardwalk continues to surprise us. It has to date filmed banded rail – adult and chicks, spotless crane – adult and chicks, grey duck pair, white faced heron, Pateke - adults and ducklings, Australasian bittern. We are looking forward to installing a second camera on the property. We have even found a kiwi investigating a hole in the Hugh Crawford Reserve.



From top left clockwise – Pateke duckling, Australasian Bittern, Kiwi.



## ***AN AMAZING SIGHT IN NATURE by Pauline Smith***

During a recent visit to Masterton we observed a Spur-winged Plover from close range, approach a ewe in a paddock and stand under her lower jaw. The ewe was standing quite still as her lamb was suckling, and was fully aware of the Plover that stared intently at the sheep, before quickly picking ticks from the under-jaw area of the wool. Once the lamb finished its feed it moved forward to stare at the Plover which ignored it and kept up its vigil looking for more “treats”. This behaviour continued for at least 15 minutes as we watched through the window. This happened on Sunday 9th August 2015 and the landowner confirmed that this was not an isolated incident.

## ***PIWAKAWAKA by Melva Ward***

Just about the sweetest bird we will find in the bush and garden.

As it is a small insect eater it is hard to look after if found injured.

My friend Pi (short for piwakawaka) has been at our property for 5 summers and this will be his 6th.

It started with a pi bird when we first moved here but he passed on the next year and then while working away in the garden area sometime later a piwakawaka sat in the coprosma chatting to me and after a short time I started a conversation and it wasn't long before I decided it might like the bin



opened. That bird flew to the bin along-side me and sure enough it flew into the bin when I opened it.

How it knew about the bin I don't know but the world of creatures is more complicated than we can appreciate and so all these years later this little bird still has me under his control.

Working quietly in the garden I will become aware that there is a presence near-by making wee noises. We have a chat about “waiting a minute, I am busy” to “Oh alright, come on lets go to the bin,” and off we go, Pi flying beside me or just behind. I guess flying behind me means he can pick up the odd bug that I might disturb.

Windy days keep him in the bush and I get a lot more done in the vegetable patch.

Working along-side this wee bird has made me curious about the life of piwakwaka. Just how long do they live, what size territory do they need.

We are quite sure Pi only has two broods a year as by the time December ends he has the tattiest tale and is well into his moult, and seems to stop breeding. Which would make sense, moulting is not an easy time. We have been up close when the fledglings leave the nest and sadly we witnessed the demise of the youngest of the four chicks, just a bit too young to fly, it seems it was left to fend for itself, as it was on the ground, needless to say it probably did not live long, it was a bit distressing but we have to be real about life.

Winter can be a rough time for these little birds so we keep our compost bin well stocked so the vinegar flies breed, leaving the lid open just a little bit keeps Pi well fed when I am not here.

## **Other News**

Kia ora tatou,

You all contributed, directly or indirectly, to the results of the scoping survey of red-billed gull breeding colonies that was carried out last year, or expressed an interest in contributing.

We are now gearing up to do the actual census of those colonies that you reported last season, as well as any present at past-known sites that were not checked. I attach guidelines on how to do this. To help locate the colonies, I also attach an Excel file containing details of each known colony, past and present, and a .kml file that, when opened in Google Earth, will show just where they are. In some cases, the exact locations are uncertain but I'm sure that once you are in the area, locating the colony, if it is active, will be straightforward.

The list of sites that need checking also includes some additional sites that were identified subsequently through a review of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand's Classified Summarised Notes (many thanks to Emma Rowell for extracting these). The attached documentation indicates the sources of information for each site. I've given information on the order-of-magnitude size of the sites that were visited last year, based on your inputs (or simply note that the site was active if no figures were provided). Obviously, censusing the larger colonies is the priority. If you know of any colonies that are not on this list, please let me know and try to census it, also as a priority. If there are any queries about these sites, I'll be happy to address them.

I'm hoping that you will be willing to help us again this year, not only to census those colonies that you've previously reported but perhaps to cover some of those that were not visited. What we want to know is the number of active breeding pairs. That means counting birds on nests (either incubating eggs or brooding young chicks): in other words, a breeding pair = one nest (both members of the pair incubate). If you want to report the number of other individuals present, please submit this figure separately. The variable presence of non-breeders and off-duty partners hanging around the colony means that the total numbers present varies through time, making it difficult to get an accurate count, whereas the numbers of birds on nests will be constant, at least on the day of the count.

Please try to get good quality digital photographs of each colony, preferably also with overlapping close-ups of subsections across the colony. This will allow us later to review the counts made in the field and make adjustments, if necessary. You should photograph the colony first, before starting the count, particularly if you are planning to do a ground count. If high quality photographs are not possible, then any others will do. These photographs will form a permanent record of the colony.

Please map accurately the location of the colonies either with a GPS, from Google Earth or from [www.topomap.co.nz](http://www.topomap.co.nz) (go to 'More' then to the 'Coordinates' tab). I can provide more detail if you want. If you cannot locate the site on a map and do not have a GPS, then please write down as much detail as possible so we can identify the site later.

If you plan to approach a colony on conservation land, and particularly if you are intending to do a ground count, please contact your local DOC office. Graeme has informed all DOC offices of the census so there shouldn't be any barriers. Likewise, if you want to census a colony on private land, please get permission first.

Red-billed gulls should now be pairing-up at colonies. We can expect egg laying any time from early Oct through to December. Ideally, we want to count the colonies at the peak of egg laying. This can be determined by visiting a colony a number of times, something that may not always be practical. A count at any stage of the breeding season is better than none at all, in which case please note what the majority of birds seem to be doing (incubating eggs; brooding young chicks; feeding chicks in or out of the nest).

We are making arrangements for censusing those colonies on offshore islands and stacks, or in more remote regions, and finding the resources to do this. We may approach some of you individually once we've worked out options and logistics.

As before, please send any information (and photographs) to me or Graeme Taylor [gtaylor@doc.govt.nz](mailto:gtaylor@doc.govt.nz). All inputs will be acknowledged in the final report and subsequent publications. Thank you all for your support.

All the best,

Peter

Peter Frost (BirdsNZ/OSNZ Project & Activities Committee)

[pghfrost@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pghfrost@xtra.co.nz)

Click on the link below to view the files mentioned above or contact Peter Frost.

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B28FIHTUJZG-WEFtUmhiWkdSbVt&usp=sharing>

## Member observations

Bird	Number	Place	date	Name
Dabchick	2	Whau Valley Dam	21-Jun-15	David Crocket
Dabchick	1	Waro Lake	03-Jul-15	David Crocket
Variable Oyster Catchers	69	Port Nikau boat ramp (1 Albino)	05-Jul-15	David Crocket
South Is Pied Oystercatchers	9	Port Nikau boat ramp	05-Jul-15	David Crocket
Pied Shags	2	Port Nikau boat ramp	05-Jul-15	David Crocket
Black Backed Gull	2	Port Nikau boat ramp	05-Jul-15	David Crocket
Red Billed Gulls	3	Port Nikau boat ramp	05-Jul-15	David Crocket
Fantail	1	Kamo Rd	Regularly	Janet Hudson
Tomtit	1	Hugh Crawford Reserve	25-Jul-15	Hilton Ward
White Faced Heron	1	On wetland boardwalk - 1711 Ngunguru Rd	25-Jul-15	Hilton & Melva Ward
Pateke	2	Old Mill Ln Wetland	09-Jul-15	Hilton & Melva Ward
Pateke & 4 ducklings	5	Old Mill Ln Wetland	22-Jul-15	Hilton & Melva Ward
Pateke & 4 ducklings	5	Old Mill Ln Wetland	23-Jul-15	Hilton & Melva Ward
Royal Spoonbill	1	Waipu Estuary	05-Jul-15	Thalia & Nathan
Royal Spoonbill	1	Hatea River	08-Jul-15	Thalia & Nathan
NZ Falcon	1	Jordan Valley Rd	01-Aug-15	Thalia & Nathan
Scaup	2	Waro Lake	04-Aug-15	Thalia & Nathan
NZ Dotterel	35	Johnson Pt	23-Jul-15	Janet Snell
Variable Oyster Catchers	85	Johnson Pt	23-Jul-15	Janet Snell
Turnstones	4	Johnson Pt	23-Jul-15	Janet Snell
White Faced Heron	1	Port Rd Whangarei	05-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Australasian Harrier	1	Port Rd Whangarei	05-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Spur Winged Plover	2	Port Rd Whangarei	05-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Paradise Duck	3	Port Rd Whangarei	05-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Dabchick	3	Port Rd Whangarei	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
White Throated Shags	2	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Black Shag	2	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Goldfinch	5	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Welcome Swallow	3	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Red Billed Gulls	1	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Kingfisher	1	Waro Lake	24-Jul-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Dabchick	2	Waro Lake	07-Sep-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Pied Shags	1	Waro Lake	07-Sep-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Pukeko	1	Waro Lake	07-Sep-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Welcome Swallow	12	Waro Lake	07-Sep-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Barbary Dove	1	McMillan Ave, Kamo	14-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Welcome Swallow	4	Waro Lake	17-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
White Faced Heron	1	Waro Lake	17-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Scaup	2	Waro Lake	17-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Dabchick	2	Waro Lake	17-Aug-15	David & Ruth Crocket
Spotted Dove	20	Maungatapere Common	daily	Terry Toohill
Kukupu	2	Maungatapere Common	daily	Terry Toohill
Little Grebe	1	Limeburners Wetlands	10-Sep-15	Ria

Spotless Crane	1	Wetland. 12 Old Mill Ln	20-Aug-15	Melva Ward
Tomtit	2	Male and female 12 Old Mill Ln.	04-Sep-15	Melva Ward
Pied Stilt	20~25	Paddock adjacent to Hikurangi Sport field	01-Sep-15	Thalia & Nathan
Black Shag	1	Wairua River, Tanekaha pumping station ponds	09-Sep-15	Nathan
Aus. Shoveler	6	Mill Rd Kawakawa	02-Sep-15	Nathan
Fernbirds	6	Wairua River Reserve	08-Sep-15	Nathan
Royal Spoonbills	10	Parua Bay - Waikaraka	03-Sep-15	Allan Willis
Eastern Rosellas	2	Just South of Waipu Cove by Road	10-Sep-15	Janet
White Fronted Terns	4	2 pair. On old wharf near fish hook bridge	Aug ` Sept 2015	Viv



# EAST COAST BEACH PATROL – SUMMARY – Code NE

Compiled by P. R. SMITH – Period JAN to JUNE 2015

MONTH	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE.	TOTALS
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	7.5 km	8.5 km	8.5 km	
PATROLLERS	M.Robinson	J Snell	P. Cozens J Hudson	A. McCracken	J. Hawken K. Miller	D. Snell	
Wandering Albatross							
Royal Albatross							
Black-browed Mollymawk							
White-capped (shy mollymawk)							
Grey-headed Mollymawk							
Buller's Mollymawk							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross							
Flesh –footed Shearwater		1	2				3
Buller's Shearwater		3	1				4
Sooty Shearwater							
Short-tailed Shearwater		1					1
Fluttering Shearwater		5	2		2		9
Hutton's Shearwater	NO						
Little Shearwater							
Common Diving Petrel	PATROL	2					2
Black Petrel							
White-chinned Petrel	DONE						
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		1			1		2
Black-winged Petrel							
Mottled Petrel							
Grey-faced Petrel		2					2
White-headed Petrel							
White-faced Storm Petrel							
Blue Penguin				1		1	2
Australasian Gannet							
Pied Shag					1		1
Tui							
Petrel Sp.							
Variable Oystercatcher							
Southern Black-backed Gull				1	1		2
Red-billed Gull		1			1		2
Caspian Tern							
White-fronted Tern							
Blackbird							
Mallard							
Australasian Harrier							
N.Z. Wood Pigeon							
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>

**Compiled by David Crockett**

Time: 14.09

Time: 14.09

Weather: Clear, sunny.

light wind.

Birds	Oneriri	Ngamotu	Batley-Tanoa	Tinopal	Pahi-Whakapirau	Ruwai	Tangahae-Kellys Bay	Okaro Creek	TOTAL
Black shag						1		7	8
Pied shag			4	2	15	2		12	35
Little black shag									
White-faced heron			5	1	50	69		19	143
Reef heron									
Royal spoonbill			13		12				25
Sf pied oystercatcher	190	247	223	376	330	39004	430	320	6116
Variable oystercatcher		5	4		4				13
Pied stilt	55		33		120	504	100	50	443
NZ dotterel				1			12	22	35
Banded dotterel									
Wrybill									
Pacific golden plover									
Spur winged plover						16		20	36
Turnstone									
Lesser knot									
Far-eastern curlew									
Asiatic whimbrel									
Bar-tailed godwit							30	100	130
Black-backed gull			13	4	20		9	20	66
Red-billed gull			12	35			8	9	64
Caspian tern			7		2		2	13	24
White-fronted tern				2004			6	7	213
Fairy tern									
Little tern									
Cattle egret						26			26
Black swan			2						2
TOTAL	245	252	321	619	603	4064	697	598	7399

### Participants:

M Bellingham  
J Hudson

P Cozens  
J Pyke

L Forrest  
Smith

J  
J Snell

4564 611 518  
Hargreaves and Son  
P. yardley

## Ngunguru Shorebird Count

OSNZ REGION	Northland					MAIN SITE	Ngunguru		
YEAR	2015					COMPILER	Hilton Ward		
MONTH	February	Tide Height, Time, Weather			Fine				
CENSUS DATE	11-Jul-15	2.5	3:22pm	Marsden Pt					
	TIME >	3:00pm ~ 3:45pm							
LOCAL SITES >		Sandspit - NW	Sandspit - NE	Sandspit - SE	Sandspit - SW	Ngunguru Shore	Papaka Rd	Te Maika Rd	Te Maika Spit / Est
SITE TOTALS >		33	21	0	0	29	0	18	42
SPECIES v TOTALS									
Banded Dotterel	1		1	Not Counted	Not Counted		Not Counted		
Bar-tailed Godwit									
Black Stilt/Hybrid									
Black-fronted Dotterel									
Black-tailed Godwit									
Curlew Sandpiper									
Far-eastern Curlew									
Grey-tailed Tattler									
Lesser Knot									
Marsh Sandpiper									
New Zealand Dotterel	18	10	8						
Pacific Golden Plover									
Pectoral Sandpiper									
Pied Oystercatcher									
Pied Stilt									
Red-necked Stint									
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper									
Spur-winged Plover									
Terek Sandpiper									
Turnstone									
Variable Oystercatcher	64	15	10						39
Whimbrel									
Wrybill									
OTHERS									
Black bird	2					2			
Black Shag									
Black-backed Gull	4	4							
Black-billed Gull									
Caspian Tern									
Chaffinch									
Fairy Tern									
Gannet									
Greenfinch									
Grey Duck									



Harrier Hawk									
Little Black Shag									
Little Shag									
Little Tern									
Mallard									
Mynah									
Paradise Shelduck	2								2
Pied Shag	5	3	2						
Pipit	2	1							1
Pukeko									
Quail									
Red-billed Gull	45					27		18	
Reef Heron									
Site Total	143								