



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

July 2016 Amokura 116

(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 OCTOBER 2016

JULY

AMOKURA 116

14 MEETING – 7-30p.m. Speaker – Heather O'Brian - Rifleman and Falcon

16 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL

19 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

AUGUST

11 MEETING – 7-30p.m.

13 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL

16 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

SEPTEMBER

8 MEETING – 7-30p.m.

10 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL

13 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

OCTOBER

6 MEETING – 7-30p.m.

8 WEST COAST BEACH PATROL

11 EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

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

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.

Previous Issues of Amokura - <http://www.osnz.org.nz/regnews.htm>

FEBRUARY

Fellow members,

The following is a suggestion from the Northern Region OSNZ February meeting:

If you find it difficult to get to meetings and would like a lift feel free to reply to me and we will attempt to match you to a driver in your area.

There are a number of new members who have joined in the past year and others that we rarely see at the monthly meetings. We would like to see you and have your input.

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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE ANNUAL REPORT (for Jan-Dec 2015)

REGION: NORTHLAND

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE (name): JANET SNELL

REGIONAL RECORDER (name): TONY BEAUCHAMP

NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 31

NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD: 10 AVERAGE ATTENDANCE : 14

NUMBER OF FIELD TRIPS: - AVERAGE ATTENDANCE :

FIELD TRIPS (list with brief comments):

BEACH PATROLS – Monthly – (Weather and personnel permitting)

EAST COAST – Ruakaka River-mouth to Waipu River-mouth, 8.5km

WEST COAST – Glinks Gully to 3km north of Baylys Beach

REGIONAL PROJECTS (list with brief description & comments):

WHANGAREI HARBOUR – Wader counts – Two per year

NORTH KAIPARA HARBOUR – Wader counts – Two per year

RED BILLED GULL COLONIES – General observations in preparation for next years count

CASPIAN TERN SURVEY – Nesting success on Knight Island, Whangarei Harbour

SHAG COLONIES – Weekend camp to observe and count birds at Taupiri Bay

REGIONAL NEWSLETTER (number of issues): 3

RR FOR 2016/17 (name): **JANET SNELL**

(address): **1/17 Collingwood Street, Whangarei 0110**

REGIONAL RECORDER FOR 2015/16 (name) : **TONY BEAUCHAMP**

(address): **17 Bellbird Avenue, Onerahi, Whangarei 0110**

(phone number): **09 4362224** (text address): **0274 203 333**

WHO WILL BE ATTENDING THE NEXT RR MEETING? **JANET SNELL**

GENERAL COMMENTS ON HEALTH OF REGION (enthusiasm, finance, etc.)

Enthusiasm, Finance and meeting attendances are all sound, but we do not seem able to retain the interest of younger people.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

NORTHLAND - Copy for BirdsNZ

One of our members Tony Beauchamp, told those present at our October meeting, of variations in the diet of both Kukupu and of Tui in the vicinity of the Mansion House, Kawau Island. The study area consisted of 22 hectares and spanned the period from 1992 to 2008. He also showed some interesting photo's from the discovery of a colony of Hochstetters Frogs in a small pond near the Brynderwyn Hills, just south of Whangarei. Apparently these little frogs have no tadpole stage and the photos showed the egg mass and young emerging frogs; it was fascinating to see just how small this creature is and to learn how rare it is.

Hilton Ward, publisher of our newsletter AMOKURA, spoke at the following meeting and showed video-clips captured on a "trail camera" which he had set up at night on the Matata Boardwalk which crosses a swampy estuary area near his home. We saw White-faced Heron, Bittern, Banded Rail, Pateke and Fern Birds going about their nocturnal business.

The November 2015 wader count was done on the North Kaipara Harbour on a day when there was an extremely high tide, but all counts in the area were very low! Where were the birds that day? – I guess that they had found areas of short grass close to their usual high tide roosts. Two calendar months later down Metcalf Road, Tinopai, on another high tide day I counted over 300 Pied Stilt enjoying a calm sunny day in a paddock near the waters edge.

Following the easterly storms on January 1st & 2nd we decided to do a Beach Patrol on the 7th when we covered 8.5km between the Ruakaka and the Waipu Rivers. This produced 45 birds from some 14 species and included one that we think is a N.Z. Storm Petrel-(I still have this bird with most of its feathers on and would like it positively identified – any offers?) The biggest colony of nesting Red-Billed Gulls in our area are within the perimeter security fence of the Marsden Point oil refinery. Because of recent construction work and internal safety requirements we are not able to access the nesting area, but Refining N.Z. staff have counted over 3000 birds present at any one time and advise that most are nesting couples.

At the end of December there were 17 N.Z. Pigeons feeding in the Moreton Bay fig tree at Pahi on the Kaipara Harbour, but a month later the birds had all moved on. Four of our members helped with the monitoring of the Fairy Tern which were nesting on the Waipu sand-spit where two chicks have reached the fledging stage and a further two have been seen at the Mangawhai sand-spit. They are learning to feed themselves by watching and copying their parents here on the eastern Ruakaka, Waipu and Mangawhai rivers where they hover and dive for their food which is mainly little fish, before they head off to the Kaipara Harbour on the western side of the island. There, they will winter over until the spring, when they will return to the eastern sand-spits to nest later in 2016.

On 26th October 2013 we counted 45 Little Shags roosting and nesting among some dying mangrove trees on Lake Kai Iwi north/west of Dargaville, but a visit by us on 27th December 2015 showed only 3 birds left of the colony and no sign of nesting. We now have to find where they have moved to!

Janet Snell

MARCH

The Northland Branch of OSNZ held its AGM on March 10th. There is no change to the elected officers or convenors.

Kevin Hayes raised discussion on reimbursement for drivers using their vehicles for OSNZ business with some suggestions for us to consider for the next the next meeting.

Janet Snell also tabled a list of suggested activities for our members to consider and add to prior to the April Meeting.

Birding Activities - January and February 2016

An Interesting Discovery - Presented by Janet Snell

Although we don't usually do beach patrol in January, Vivian and I decided to do one because thought there maybe birds washed up after the easterly storm of January 1st-2nd. So on January 7th. We took off and walked from the Uretiti dump to the Waipu river mouth and back. We found ten species and a total of thirty seven birds. Sixteen of those were fluttering shearwaters.

A few days later on January 10th while I was camping at Uretiti for the weekend I walked from the camp to the dump. I found seventeen birds; eight species. I made an interesting find of a little bird very dried with most of its feathers intact. A storm petrel I thought after looking at the long delicate legs and overall colouring. Maybe it was a rare [New Zealand Storm Petrel](#). I decided to take this bird home and get it checked out. I showed it to Tony Beauchamp. Yes, he thought it could be. Then I showed it to David Crocket who also thought it could be. He suggested I contact Paul Scofield who is a well-known authority on New Zealand birds and works at the Canterbury Museum. I rang Paul and he suggested I post it down to him. A couple of days later he rang, very excited, to say "Yes it was a New Zealand storm petrel and a first to be found on a beach patrol." After our discussion I said I would donate it to



Image © Philip Griffin by Philip Griffin Philip Griffin © 2012

the Canterbury Museum where it will be sent to a taxidermist and eventually be put on display with data of the place where it was found, when it was found and by whom. The only other New Zealand storm petrels on display are one in a museum in France, and one in an English museum. These little Storm Petrels were thought to be extinct but in 2003 were rediscovered in the Hauraki Gulf and found to be nesting on Little Barrier Island. Now that Little Barrier is predator free it may have a better chance of survival. Let's hope so.

POUTO LAKES SURVEY 20TH FEBRUARY 2016

After phone call from Logan Forrest, a resident at Pouto with an interest in birds, who was looking for volunteers to help count birds on the lakes at Pouto on Saturday February 20th. Julie, Wendy Matthews, (my niece and a potential new member) and I headed off to the Pouto camping ground on Friday morning 19th February stopping for lunch at Kellys Bay and looking forward to an interesting weekend. Neither Julie or Wendy had been to Pouto before so it was especially interesting for them. The road from Kellys bay to Pouto was very badly corrugated and very dusty so it was a slow trip.

This count used to be a once a year, weekend activity organised by the Northland region of O.S.N.Z. . We stayed as a group at the now derelict school, then changed to an outdoor education centre at Pouto. It is some years now since we last counted the birds on the lakes in this area, so Logan decided 2016 was the year the lakes would be counted again and hopefully each year hereafter. He gathered together

representatives from Forest and Bird, Northland Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, Forestry, O.S.N.Z. and some local identities who organised which lakes they were to do. It was a beautiful fine weekend which made scoping the lakes easier. We drove over in style in Wendy's big four wheel drive which was a bonus as we were able to drive right to lakes Humuhumu and Swan which were the lakes we counted.

Although we saw nothing unusual in our lakes, overall there were some interesting sightings, like two Bittern on Lake Wainui, four [Australasian Shoveler](#) on lake Karaka and 104 [New Zealand Scaup](#) over six lakes. Lake Kanono had the largest variety and the greatest number of birds. The greatest number of one species overall was the Paradise duck with approximately 1956 birds counted over 14 lakes.

The final count and print out of all birds and all lakes will appear in the next Amokura. Logan hopes to do another lakes count in late February in 2017.

Janet Snell

APRIL

At the April meeting after some discussion it was moved and passed that members using their cars for Ornithological business would be reimbursed by \$0.10 per kilometer travelled, providing that they presented the start and end odometer readings, the date and reason to travel to the next meeting where a cheque would be made out to the driver.

We had a very interesting meeting in April. Phil Collins, a local resident brought a fine specimen of a juvenile long Tailed Cuckoo to the meeting. It is unusual to have one in the hand and was a first for us all. He stated that it appeared to have flown into the large glass windows at the rear of the Whangarei Hospital. The bird is about 32cm long.

This was followed by Ann McCracken doing an enlightening slide presentation of her recent visit bird watching to Cambodia. Of particular interest was the lack of bird life except in the reserves where they were abundant, not only in numbers but also variety. Of particular interest to Ann and one of the reasons for her trip was to see the Sarus Cranes. These are the tallest of the flying birds, standing at a height of up to 1.8 m

MAY

Jack Craw was the guest speaker at the May meeting. He spoke of his stay on Pitcairn Island where he managed a goat eradication programme. It was particularly interesting to see the incredible devastation that the goats were doing to the Island. It is not often we hear much of this interesting remote island.

JUNE

Mike Camm gave an enthusiastic presentation at the June meeting about the Tutukaka Landcare Coalition and the exciting work they do reintroducing Kiwi and Pateke to the Tutukaka coastal area. He commented on the success they have had in these expanding and increasing populations.

Fairy Terns

The Fairy Tern Charitable Trust forwarded the following summary of the past two breeding seasons.



NEW ZEALAND
FAIRY TERN
CHARITABLE TRUST
TAKA-TU

No. 1: 2016

7th. March, 2016

P.O. Box 401072
Mangawhai Heads 0541

Our website: www.fairytern.org.nz

Email: info@fairytern.org.nz

Dear Members,

In this issue: Fairy tern news; Mangawhai mangrove meeting 19 March; For Sale; Advocacy; Thanks; Volunteers; Website; Easter.

First, welcome to new members: Matt Wilkins and family of Auckland.

Fairy Tern News

Summary of breeding results for 2015-16 season

(2014-15 season in brackets)

TOTALS:	Eggs laid: 14 (31)	Eggs hatched: 7 (11)	Chicks fledged: 4 (6)
Waipu:	Eggs laid: 2 (6)	Eggs hatched: 2 (2)	Chicks fledged: 2 (0)
Mangawhai:	Eggs laid: 5 (18)	Eggs hatched: 3 (8)	Chicks fledged: 2 (5)
	<i>(1 egg went to the Zoo, failed to hatch; 1 chick died after hatching)</i>		
Te Arai:	Eggs laid: 1 (0)	Eggs hatched: 0 (0)	Chicks fledged: 0 (0)
	<i>(Infertile egg – removed)</i>		
Pakiri:	Eggs laid: 0 (2)	Eggs hatched: 0 (0)	Chicks fledged: 0 (0)
Papakanui:	Eggs laid: 6 (5)	Eggs hatched: 2 (1)	Chicks fledged: 0 (1)
	<i>(First nest abandoned – eggs probably infertile; second nest covered by sand; third nest chicks hatched then died)</i>		

A disappointing breeding season, with only four chicks fledging. All four have been sighted recently, roosting at Te Arai Stream mouth and foraging at Port Albert on the Kaipara Harbour.

The eggs at Papakanui, reported in STOP PRESS in the previous newsletter, hatched but then died on the night of 18 January, probably as a result of very heavy rain that night.

At Te Arai, a one egg nest was confirmed on 19 December. It was candled on 28 December, found to be infertile and removed by DoC Ranger, David Wilson.

There will be more detail about each site when extracts from the wardens' reports are available in the next newsletter

Stories - Adventures – Yarns – Sightings

On the 16th April Dayna, an enthusiastic 13 year old birder and nature lover and now OSNZ member, arrived at the Matata Boardwalk in Old Mill Lane, Ngunguru, early in the morning with her mother Wendy to observe Fernbirds.



The boardwalk crosses this estuarine wetland giving access to the Hugh Crawford bush reserve as well as providing an excellent viewing platform for the wetland birds.

It was a grey, windy morning and the birds seemed reluctant to show although we could hear them in many places over the wetland. Dayna's camera, always poised for the shot but it did not happen. Some scampered in the rushes and also up into the saltmarsh ribbonwood for a look at us but not venturing into the open. We then moved to another site bordering the wetland where I had



often seen the Fernbirds. This time they performed well and Dayna managed some great shots of an adult bird. We also observed a juvenile, so young it had not yet grown a tail and I managed to get a blurry shot. There was much calling, tisking and beak clicking. This was the first time Dayna had seen a Fernbird. Very exciting. It is encouraging to see younger folk so enthusiastic about, and amongst our nature.

Other News

20-2-16		1994		1994	
Group	Lake No.	Group	Lake No.	Group	Lake No.
Lake Name	1	POUNO EAST	1	POUNO WEST	1
	2	POUNO EAST	2	POUNO WEST	2
	3	POUNO EAST	3	POUNO WEST	3
	4	POUNO EAST	4	POUNO WEST	4
	9	POUNO EAST	9	POUNO WEST	9
	10	POUNO EAST	10	POUNO WEST	10
	13	POUNO EAST	13	POUNO WEST	13
	14	POUNO EAST	14	POUNO WEST	14
	15	POUNO EAST	15	POUNO WEST	15
	16	POUNO EAST	16	POUNO WEST	16
Grid Reference	683182	Kahupere	683182	Kahupere	683182
	668190	Kanono	668190	Kanono	668190
	680193	West Twin	680193	West Twin	680193
	683194	East Twin	683194	East Twin	683194
	676203	Waingata	676203	Waingata	676203
	671209	Roto Kawanu	671209	Roto Kawanu	671209
	666223	Swan's Egg	666223	Swan's Egg	666223
	665228	Swan Lake	665228	Swan Lake	665228
	654232	Humuhumu	654232	Humuhumu	654232
	634247	Rotopua	634247	Rotopua	634247
Lake Name	27	POUNO WEST	27	POUNO WEST	27
	26	POUNO WEST	26	POUNO WEST	26
	5	POUNO WEST	5	POUNO WEST	5
	7	POUNO WEST	7	POUNO WEST	7
	6	POUNO WEST	6	POUNO WEST	6
	8	POUNO WEST	8	POUNO WEST	8
	17	POUNO WEST	17	POUNO WEST	17
	19	POUNO WEST	19	POUNO WEST	19
	21	POUNO WEST	21	POUNO WEST	21
	22	POUNO WEST	22	POUNO WEST	22
Grid Reference	553266	Round Hill S.2	553266	Round Hill S.2	553266
	553271	Round Hill S.1	553271	Round Hill S.1	553271
	542292	Round Hill	542292	Round Hill	542292
	536304	Round Hill N.1 West	536304	Round Hill N.1 West	536304
	535304	Round Hill N.2	535304	Round Hill N.2	535304
	411501	Sth Wainui	411501	Sth Wainui	411501
	410502	Nth Wainui	410502	Nth Wainui	410502
	407503	Wainui	407503	Wainui	407503
	392532	Glinks Gully	392532	Glinks Gully	392532
	383539	Lendrums	383539	Lendrums	383539
Lake Name	46	POUNO WEST	46	POUNO WEST	46
	48	POUNO WEST	48	POUNO WEST	48
	49	POUNO WEST	49	POUNO WEST	49
	44	POUNO WEST	44	POUNO WEST	44
	45	POUNO WEST	45	POUNO WEST	45
	46	POUNO WEST	46	POUNO WEST	46
	48	POUNO WEST	48	POUNO WEST	48
	49	POUNO WEST	49	POUNO WEST	49
	44	POUNO WEST	44	POUNO WEST	44
	45	POUNO WEST	45	POUNO WEST	45
Grid Reference	374550	Parawanui	374550	Parawanui	374550
	357571	Kapoi	357571	Kapoi	357571
	348581	Nth Kapoi	348581	Nth Kapoi	348581
		Babylon Coast		Babylon Coast	
		Kainui Lakes		Kainui Lakes	
Lake Name	1	POUNO EAST	1	POUNO EAST	1
	2	POUNO EAST	2	POUNO EAST	2
	3	POUNO EAST	3	POUNO EAST	3
	4	POUNO EAST	4	POUNO EAST	4
	9	POUNO EAST	9	POUNO EAST	9
	10	POUNO EAST	10	POUNO EAST	10
	13	POUNO EAST	13	POUNO EAST	13
	14	POUNO EAST	14	POUNO EAST	14
	15	POUNO EAST	15	POUNO EAST	15
	16	POUNO EAST	16	POUNO EAST	16
Grid Reference	601165	Lighthouse Coast	601165	Lighthouse Coast	601165
	589182	Whakaneke	589182	Whakaneke	589182
	590184	Mokeno South	590184	Mokeno South	590184
	600193	Crescent	600193	Crescent	600193
	589207	Mokeno	589207	Mokeno	589207
	576236	South Karaka	576236	South Karaka	576236
	566248	Karaka	566248	Karaka	566248
	607261	Karaka Track	607261	Karaka Track	607261
		Karaka-West		Karaka-West	

Recent Sightings By Members

Bird	Number	Place	date	Name
White Fronted Terns (1 Chick)	23	Langs Beach	3-Dec-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Red Billed Gulls	30	Langs Beach	3-Dec-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Black Backed Gulls	2	Langs Beach	3-Dec-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Variable Oyster Catchers	4	Langs Beach	3-Dec-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Welcome Swallows	2	Langs Beach	3-Dec-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Pied Stilts	4	Kissing Pt, Onerahi	11-Nov-15	K Hayes & P Smith
White Faced Heron	4	Parua Bay	26-Nov-16	K Hayes & P Smith
Caspian tern	1	Parua Bay	26-Nov-15	K Hayes & P Smith
Californian Quail (Pair & 6 chicks)	8	Tutukaka	20-Dec-15	K Hayes & P Smith
Fantail Family (2 Adults & 2 Chicks)	4	Takahe St, Whangarei	20-Jan-16	K Hayes & P Smith
Black Backed Gulls	78	Matawhi Bay, Russell	9-Mar-19	Janet & Donna Snell
Brown Teal	26	Creek near Helena Bay	Feb. 2016	Janet Snell
New Zealand Dotterel	43	Johnsom Pt	Feb. 2016	Janet Snell @ Julie Hudson
Keruru	3	Takahe St, Whangarei	10-Apr-16	K Hayes & P Smith
Australasian Bittern	1	12 Old Mill Ln	9 & 10th April	Hilton Ward
Black Shag	1	13 Old Mill Ln	14-Apr-16	Hilton Ward
Matata	Common	14 Old Mill Ln - seen daily	April	Hilton Ward
NZ Dotterel	54	Johnson Pt	27-Feb-16	Janet Snell
Variable Oyster Catchers	156	Johnson Pt	27-Feb-16	Julie Hudson
Black Backed Gulls	96	Matawhi Bay - Russell	8-Mar-16	Julie Hudson
Pied Oyster Catchers	480	Pahi	25-Mar-16	Julie Hudson
Royal Spoonbill	9	Ranginui Bridge near Pt Curtis	28-Mar-16	Julie Hudson / Allan & Shiela Ford
Little Black Shag	25	Ranginui Bridge near Pt Curtis	28-Mar-16	Julie Hudson / Allan & Shiela Ford
Pied Stilts	88	Ranginui Bridge near Pt Curtis	28-Mar-16	Julie Hudson / Allan & Shiela Ford
White Fronted Tern	53	Ruawai Wharf	29-Mar-16	Julie Hudson / Allan & Shiela Ford
Red Billed Gulls	82	Ruawai Wharf	29-Mar-16	Julie Hudson / Allan & Shiela Ford
Reef Heron	1	Whangaruru South Beach	4-Apr-16	Janet Snell & Kathy Whiting
Australasian Bittern	1	12 Old Mill Ln	13-May-16	Hilton Ward
Spur Winged Plover	5	Whau Valley Parklands	8-May-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Keruru	2	Whau Valley Parklands	9-May-16	Ruth & David Crockett
Keruru	1	Whau Valley Parklands	11-May-16	Ruth & David Crockett

Variable Oyster Catchers	135	Waipu River side of rock groin at Johnson Pt	18-Apr-16	Janet Snell
Reef Heron	1	Johnson Pt	18-Apr-16	Janet Snell
Royal Spoonbills	28	Waipu Creek past the Waipu Fishing Club building	21-Apr-16	Janet Snell
Kaka	1	Pacific Bay, Tutukaka Coast	4-May-16	Dayna Davies
Royal Spoonbills	200	Waikaraka	1-May-16	Dob Goodall

Compiled by David Crockett

NATIONAL WADER CENSUS - NORTH KAIPARA

Date: 28 November 2015 Tide Height: 3-1 Time: 13:09 Weather: Fine. Light wind.

	Borcks	Oreoni	Ngamotu	Batley-Tanoa	Tinopai	Pali-Whakapirau	Ruawai	Tangahae-Kellys Bay	Okaro Creek	TOTAL
Black shag										
Pied shag			5							5
Little black shag										
Little shag			2							2
White-faced heron			1	35	1					37
White heron										
Reef heron										
Royal spoonbill										
SI pied oystercatcher		40						40		80
Variable oystercatcher			2	4	10					16
Pied stilt		53		3						56
NZ dotterel										
Banded dotterel										
Wrybill										
Pacific golden plover					2					2
Spur winged plover										
Turnstone										
Lesser knot										
Far-eastern curlew										
Asiatic whimbrel										
Bar-tailed godwit		39								39
Black-backed gull			1	3	4					8
Red-billed gull								1		1
Caspian tern										
White-fronted tern			1	1	46		7			54
Fairy tern										
Little tern										
Cattle egret										
Black swan										
TOTAL	132	12	46	63	8	40				301

Participants:

M Bellingham P Cozens J Hawken J Hargreaves J Hudson
J Pyke P Smith J Snell C Yardley P Yardley