



# THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND



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## **Ornithological Snippets**

Shawn Herron from Te Anau reports good views of a male **Cirl Bunting** on 9 June near the bridge over the Whitestone River on the Hillside-Manapouri Road. This is the first **Cirl Bunting** we have on record from the Te Anau/Manapouri area.

A few **Royal Spoonbills** have elected to brave the Otago winter rather than head north. Mary Thompson counted 19 at Hooper's Inlet on 9 June and the bird at Tomahawk Lagoon was still there on 13 June.

Also unseasonal were a couple of juvenile **Gannets** around Port Chalmers and a couple more off Aramoana Mole on 10 June; they should really be in Australia by now. Also at the Mole were the usual dozen or so **Buller's Mollymawks**, half a dozen **Shy** plus a single **Salvin's Mollymawk** and a couple of immature **Northern Giant Petrels**. Three **Dunnocks** seemed to be managing well enough on the rocks at the end of the Mole

A **Coot** was still paddling around in the Warrington water treatment ponds and over 200 **Song Thrushes** were feeding in a heavily grazed muddy paddock on 19 June at Waitati, along with 65 **Pied Oystercatchers**, 16 **White-faced Herons**, about 40 **Blackbirds** and the usual large flocks of **Starlings**.

## Winter Wader Count.



Species	Karitane	Blueskin Bay	Aramoana	West Harbour	East Harbour	Papanui Inlet	Hooper's Inlet	Catlins	Total 2013	Total 2012
Pied Oystercatcher		569	89	210	19	124	44	309	1364	1070
Variable Oystercatcher	2	34		11	38	25	4	43	157	84
Pied Stilt	16	27	5		2	56	13	21	140	103
Banded Dotterel	58	80						63	201	153
Bar-tailed Godwit	29	2	2	7	3	2	4	41	90	127
Spur-winged Plover		68	193					25	286	61
Grey-tailed Tattler		1							1	1

Numbers of Pied Oystercatcher were up from last year mainly due to increases in Blueskin Bay and the Catlins. The Banded Dotterel count increased but as usual the birds appeared to change their roosting sites or were just not co-operating; there were 56 at Aramoana last year, none this year but 80 were present at Blueskin Bay compared with none in 2012.

Bar-tailed Godwit counts continue to decrease from 179 in 2011, 127 in 2012 to a mere 90 this year. One Grey-tailed/Siberian Tattler was seen: at Blueskin Bay this year rather than the Catlins.

Thanks to all those who took part, especially Derek Onley, Sue Odlin, Maree Johnstone, Lala Frazer, Craig McKenzie, Mary Thompson and Richard Schofield.

**Peter Schweigman**

## OSNZ Conference & AGM

Mayor, Dave Cull, got the weekend off to a good start, with a warm welcome for the conference participants. The first session of oral presentations began, with Bruce McKinlay in the chair to set the tone for the conference – friendly but firm. I asked Mary to help with grouping the oral presentations, and the first four speakers under the heading of systematics, had the conference buzzing. Local OSNZ members, from the university and the community, presented a diverse range of interesting papers. All the abstracts for the posters and presentations are available online at <http://osnz.org.nz/publications/2013-conference-abstracts-dunedin>. Over the weekend there was an informal dinner on Saturday night at Technique, and a formal dinner at Cargill's on Sunday with Neville Peat as the entertaining after dinner speaker.

Sunday morning we held a wide range of well-attended workshops: e-bird, photography, drawing birds, mist netting and project planning. The final event Sunday afternoon saw the launch of the digital encyclopaedia of New Zealand birds. ([www.newzealandbirdsonline.org.nz](http://www.newzealandbirdsonline.org.nz)) Monday came, and some of us relaxed, while tours whisked people to the Catlins, Orokonui, the Peninsula and the Museum.

Thanks to the sponsors: DOC, Te Papa, UBS, SBS, Topflite and OSNZ.

We organised a memorable conference!!

**Sue Odlin**



The organisers made sure that there were ample opportunities for serious ornithological discussion, gossip and scandal over lunch, morning and afternoon tea. Vegetarians had to forage carefully in order to avoid ingesting unsuitable prey items.



The ageing population distribution of the society members has always led to worries about its future viability so it was good to see evidence of recruitment of younger individuals.



The organisers survived the ordeal relatively unscathed, the tensest moments occurring when attempting to recall participants from the social feeding frenzies to the serious scientific business of the society.



Workshops varied from seriously scientific project planning, through high tech ebird and photography to practical outdoorsy mist netting and low tech arty drawing requiring little more than a pencil and paper.



The Catlins River field trip was a winner. The weather turned fine and the 3hr spent in the Catlins beech forest following a scrummy lunch at Mohua Park with Fergus and Mary Sutherland, were very productive. Three groups of mohua were encountered on sunny slopes just above the track in the 2 kilometres above the Franks Creek swing bridge. There appeared to be between 4 and 6 birds in each group. The nine field trip participants all got views of the birds and some managed to get reasonable images of mohua feeding vigorously on the beech tree trunks. Other birds included good numbers of brown creeper; plus bellbird, tomtit and fantail.



Unfortunately no photos are available of the field trips to Otago Peninsula and the depths of the Museum (Maybe next newsletter?) and only one has surfaced from the Orokonui traverse. It shows that the participants had interests other than birds and wore suitably stout footwear for the gruelling muddy conditions.

**Fergus Sutherland (Catlins trip) and Derek Onley**

## Notices and Business

### Regional recorder's position

For some time I have been wondering if the position of regional recorder is of any use, now that Classified Summarised Notes are a distant memory. During the Queen's Birthday Weekend conference, I attended the eBird workshop, where I found out that the position is now very much linked with eBird. In particular, the present eBird reviewer, who assesses any records referred to him by the system as needing confirmation, would like regional recorders to take on that task. That is not something I want to do, as I don't have a home computer. Would anyone reading this like the position? We were assured that it would not be onerous. Presumably the requirements are a computer and a good knowledge of Otago birds.

Please contact Mary if you are interested.

**Alan Baker**

### BIRDS New Zealand

This is the new brand name of OSNZ! From now on, after a unanimous vote at the OSNZ AGM, Birds NZ will be the brand name of the Ornithological Society of NZ. Southern Bird will also be re-named Birds NZ. We hope this will widen the appeal of our group as more people will easily understand that Birds NZ is about enjoying and studying birds and that identify Birds NZ is the primary source of information about NZ birds and their conservation. So let others know you belong to Birds New Zealand!

### Report of Regional Representatives Annual Meeting

Mary Thompson chaired the RR's meeting held prior to the NZ Bird Conference. RRs from 14 regions from Far North to Southland attended.

The following were some of the items discussed.

**eBird:** OSNZ now endorses and maintains this database as the main way for collecting and storing bird sightings; please enter your bird sightings to make this a useful resource; further eBird training will be available.

**National Project on Abundance:** plans are underway to develop user-friendly protocols for bird abundance surveys to provide data for long-term trends and to supplement the distribution data of the Atlas. We noted some

aspects such as waders, garden birds and wetlands are already well-covered so this survey may concentrate on rural areas.

### **National Royal Spoonbill colony and nest count, 2102/2014**

RRs agreed to find colonies in their regions and count active nests next breeding season. In Otago there are at least 12 colonies, but we do not know the number of nests. This will be a major task for us over December and January and we will need a small group to get together to work on logistics, costings, transport requirements as we may apply to the Project Assistance fund for fuel and boat costs. Anyone keen contact Mary.

**National Urban Morepork Survey:** The annual census of urban moreporks is likely to continue, although a week in October is proposed rather than November.

**Ornithology for beginners, training material:** Council member Sarah Jamieson, is producing a set of 6 powerpoint presentations with notes on biology, behaviour, conservation etc. for us to use for community education, outreach, schools etc. should be available 2014.

**Publicity:** OSNZ/Birds NZ needs more exposure in local newspapers; volunteers to write articles/liaise with reporters for the Otago region would be valuable; please talk to Mary if interested.

**2014 NZ Bird Conference** will be held in Palmerston North on Queens Birthday weekend.

**Mary Thompson**

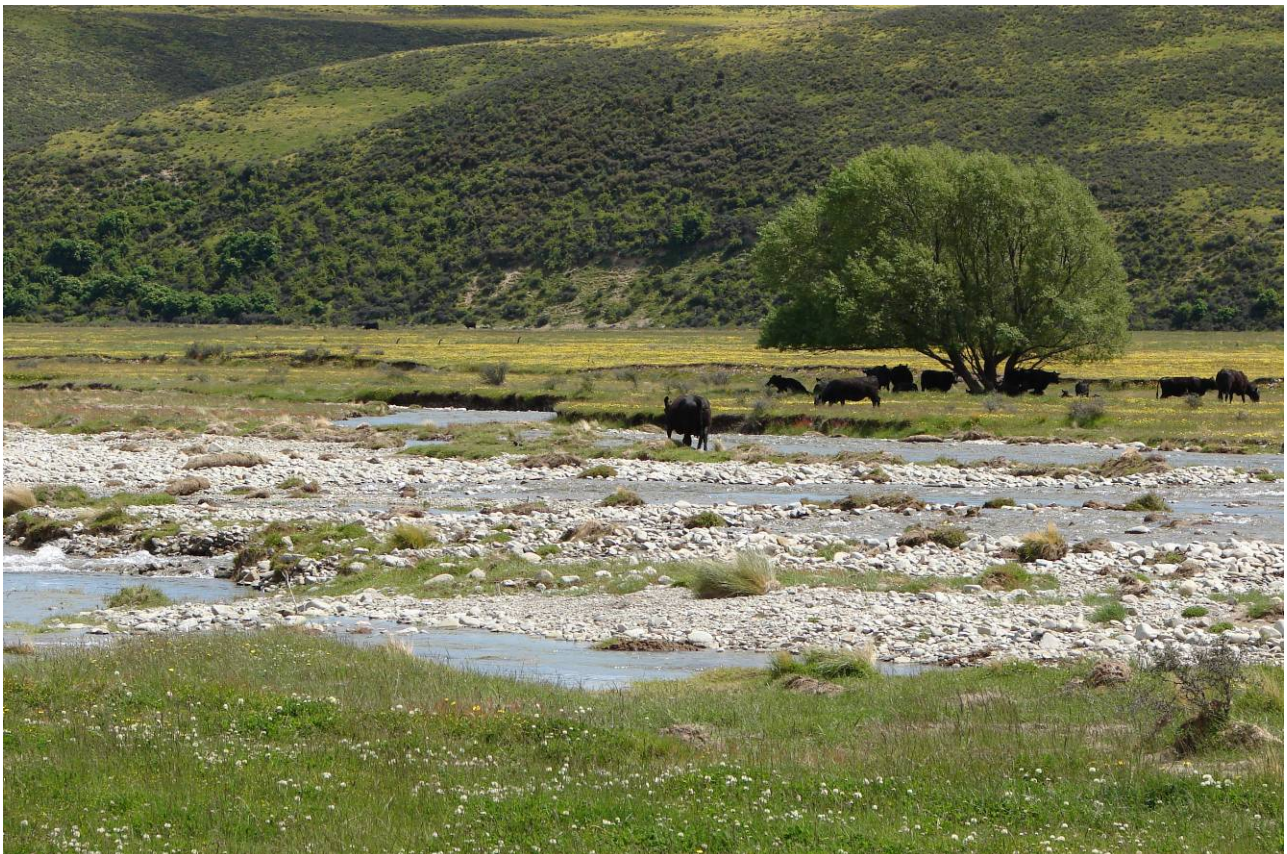
### **Banded Tui and Bellbirds**

Murray Efford has been busy again this summer and autumn and has banded another 100 tui and bellbird at his place in Helensburgh. It is crucial for the project that re-sightings are made and recorded. The tui and bellbirds will be starting to come to feeders soon so keep a good look out. Please send information of any banded birds to Murray Efford email [murray.efford@otago.ac.nz](mailto:murray.efford@otago.ac.nz); or leave phone message on 476 4668 or post to 60 Helensburgh Road, Dunedin 9010. Include location, date, time, left leg: colour over metal; right leg: top colour over bottom colour. Also take a digital photo if at all possible.

**Conservation management course**  
**Native birds in braided rivers.**  
**Glentui, Oxford, 24th -26th Sept 2013**

The South Island's braided rivers are home to a disproportionate number of threatened bird species. Regional and district councils, community groups, and individual volunteers are increasingly becoming involved in managing these birds. BRaid Incorporated is an umbrella organisation set up in 2006 to protect braided river ecosystems. Many of the species in these riverbeds are endemic and highly specialised for life in braided rivers; many are also highly threatened. BRaid believes that training courses for community groups would be beneficial, and is offering a course on management of birds in braided rivers.

The course is primarily aimed at members of community groups and individuals involved in (or wishing to undertake) protection of birds in braided rivers. The course will be limited to 20 participants; cost approx. \$120. If you are interested in attending in 2013, please email the course coordinator (Val Clemens; [val.clemens@xtra.co.nz](mailto:val.clemens@xtra.co.nz)). More information from RR, Mary Thompson.



Cattle grazing amongst oystercatchers and dotterels in the Manuherikia R.



## Programme 2013

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m.

Wed. June 26	<b>Change of topic</b> to NZ Birds online and more.
Sunday July 7	Hawksbury Lagoon Survey. Meet 10.30am. Stewart St.
Wed. July 24	Alan Baker      Food of NZ Pigeons in Otago.
Wed. August 28	Moira Pryde      Morepork Research
Wed. Sept. 25	Kate Hand      Important Bird Areas, Otago
Wed. October 23	Bruce McKinlay      Alaskan Birds.
Wed. Nov. 27	Nic Rawlence      Ancient DNA research on Moa

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Many thanks to all who contributed.

Final date for copy for next Newsletter 17 July.