



Birds New Zealand
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Birds New Zealand

Otago Region Newsletter 10/2016 October 2016

Sinclair Wetlands Spring Survey.



There was a great turnout of 15 counters for this survey on a lovely spring Saturday, mild and sunny with only a slight breeze. We welcomed several new people to the team. We divided up into groups to do the 5 minute bird counts, the waterfowl counts, placing acoustic recorders for set for recording any bittern booms over the next two weeks, and looking for fernbirds. The numbers of waterbirds on the ponds were very low (82),

with scaup being the most numerous (78% of all waterbirds seen). Surprisingly there were only two black swan. We expect that many ducks were breeding secretly so missed being counted in the survey. This is similar to what we found last spring.

Some fernbirds responded rapidly and noisily to play-back of fernbird calls; however along the km stretch of wetland surveyed only 2 birds were seen but on the return trip a further 7 birds were seen; we discussed whether these could be added to our official tally? 19 were seen in the spring count last year- possibly birds had moved their territories away from the track. We all had great close-up views of fernbirds-some for the first time! Two birds were preening and seemed quite unaware of us and two pairs in neighbouring territories that flew between the top of coprosma bushes that seemed to be around the edges of the territories, and another that crept along through the rushes and popped up on the top of a close bush to have a good look at us.

The total number of species seen was 31; no tui and only one bellbird spotted; three harrier hawks-possibly parents with young were calling and displaying beautifully in the light wind up-draughts; the redpolls (more than last year) had startling rose-red bibs and crowns, and brown creeper were again picked up during the 5 minute bird counts. Glen, the manager at the wetlands, thought he heard a spotless crane recently so this was an enticing report- we played calls but did not get a reply. The morning finished with lunch near the Education Centre with nearby a pair of Pied Oystercatchers with two young fluffy chicks; last year there was also a breeding pair of oystercatchers-are they the same birds?

Ornithological snippets

A pair of **Australasian Crested Grebe** were seen nesting at The Neck, Lake Hawea on 26th September; photographs can be seen on Ebird. The Brooks family (Scott, Helen, Ollie, Zef and Jay), who are currently birding their way around New Zealand, found four **Cattle Egrets** near Owaka on 25th September.

A **Southern Giant Petrel** was reported from the Otago Peninsula on 12th October by Kate La Plante, who also saw a **Common Diving Petrel** the following day at Katiki Point, near Moeraki. Suzanne & Annie Schofield came across two **Black-fronted Terns**, at least one of which was an

immature, in Balclutha on 8th October. Finally, **Shining Cuckoos** are back, with the first ones being at Cabbage Point (Catlins) on 29th September (Richard Schofield), and one heard by Alan Baker at Mount Cargill on 1st October. Derek Onley didn't hear any at Waitati however until 14th October, two weeks later than usual. Any observations to richard@pcconnect.co.nz, please compiled by **Richard Schofield**

Notices and Business

Field Trip: Looking for Robins on Mopanui next to Orokonui

Saturday, 5 November, starting at 9.00 am (meet at the Orokonui Carpark; carpool leaving Dunedin from Woodhaugh gardens at 8.40am, contact Mary 464 0787 maryt@actrix.co.nz)

Jill Hamel is keen to have a team survey her 5 hectares of forest on Mopanui for the presence of robins that may have come over from Orokonui and taken up residence. This patch also has predator control. Several sightings have been made already. We plan to spend the morning locating any robins and marking the site by GPS. We will be following benched cleared tracks and for the more agile, the marked routes for the bait stations. If birds are found, then in coming weeks we would like some volunteers who could go back regularly to these marked sites and look for fledgling robins, so hopefully confirm successful breeding outside the Orokonui fence. Contact Jill if you would like to volunteer for follow-up monitoring-she can offer transport, weekdays or weekends jhamel@xtra.co.nz

Seabird Watch Field Trip.

Saturday November 12th starting at 8.00pm.

This is a very special opportunity to spend an evening on the St Clair Cliffs to watch and listen for Shearwaters and Fairy Prions coming ashore. Graeme Loh will lead us from Highgrove, St Clair, at start of the walkway. Warm clothes, sturdy shoes and walking sticks recommended as the track is steep. Contact gloh@earthlight.co.nz for more information.

Tomahawk Lagoon Bird Counts

This is our ongoing project to get as many counts as possible throughout the year entered on eBird so that this data will be available for analysis for years to come and contribute to knowledge of changes of bird numbers and distribution over time.

So whenever you find you have time, the weather is nice, and you want to do some birdwatching, head to Tomahawk; the large lagoon can easily be observed from the road (Tomahawk Road just past the bridge) and the smaller lagoon is reached down Oregon Street (further along on the left), then down a driveway to “Walkway”. There have been only 4 recent visits recorded on eBird so get birding. There are very few ever for January to April.

How to enter your bird observations on eBird. Go to eBird NZ website <http://ebird.org/content/newzealand/>

Submit Observations. You will need to create an account (if you haven't yet registered)

Sign In

Identify the Location. Find it on a Map. Enter New Zealand (NZ) (choose from drop-down box). A map of NZ appears; Where did you bird? Enter Tomahawk Lagoon. Select Tomahawk Lagoon, Dunedin, Otago from Drop-down box

A map showing Birding Hotspots at lagoon will appear (you may need to zoom in or out to get a good view. Click on the Birding Hotspot in the middle of the large lagoon. Chosen location: Dunedin –Tomahawk Lagoon [OR Click on Birding hotspot in middle of smaller lagoon;\Chosen location Upper Tomahawk Lagoon] {For subsequent submissions you will find Dunedin Tomahawk Lagoon in the drop down box in your Choose from Your Locations}

Click Continue

Complete Date and Effort

(usually stationary count for a set amount of time for a total count of all waterbirds). Put Birds NZ survey in the comments box. Click Continue

Complete checklists with numbers of all the species you saw. You are asked, "Are you submitting a complete checklist of all the birds you were able to identify? Click Yes (or No if there were a lot of ducks miles away or you didn't count everything). Click Submit. Make any corrections or additional information as prompted)

Mary Thompson

Offer to members: Black petrel volunteering on Great Barrier Island!



One Birds New NZ member is invited to volunteer for the Black petrel project on Great Barrier Island/Aotea from 28 November to 14 December. Travel to the island and food/accommodation on the island will be covered by the project. The field work involves monitoring study burrows during the day, as well

as some night work for ground surveys and catching birds on the surface.

If you are interested, please contact Biz: biz@wmil.co.nz or phone 0212010541.

eBird Otago

In the latest edition of the eBird news they carried this article on eBird Mobile and I thought it worth bring it to everyone attention. If you want any support with eBird please get in touch.

Getting Started with eBird Mobile

Want to keep track of your sightings on eBird, but don't have the time to enter them on the computer after birding? No worries—eBird Mobile makes it easy to record the birds you see in the field, and seamlessly link these observations with eBird—a global online database of bird records used by hundreds of thousands of birders around the world. This free resource makes it easy to keep track of what you see, while making your data openly available for scientific research, education, and conservation.

eBird Mobile is the only app that passes information directly from iOS and Android devices to your eBird account on the web. It should be easy to use (we think so!), but we've authored this comprehensive guide that should help with any questions. The app is available for free on both the Google Play and App Stores.

Tweeting gets the word out about birds via Twitter

If you have had any interesting bird encounters, please remember to email Helen Taylor as soon as possible at helen.taylor@otago.ac.nz. Helen is on the council and is also running the Birds NZ twitter feed. She can take your news and tweet it out to all our followers.

Birds NZ would like to be able to tweet out interesting bird sightings to illustrate the knowledge and expertise within the society, and to encourage our followers to get out there with a pair of binos or a scope and track down some exciting species.

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We are the official ornithological society of Aotearoa New Zealand. Join us to learn about birding, bird research, and all things feathered!

New Zealand
osnz.org.nz
Joined June 2016

19 Photos and videos

TWEETS 100 FOLLOWING 120 FOLLOWERS 201 LIKES 36 Edit profile

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Birds New Zealand @OSNZBirdsNZ · 14h
You might not be able to make it to the National American Ornithological Conference in Washington, but you can follow along using [#NAOC2016](https://twitter.com/hashtag/NAOC2016)

Birds New Zealand @OSNZBirdsNZ · Aug 16
Got a few mins to kill? Check out this great new [@hihinews](https://twitter.com/hihinews) video on the hiihi conservation work on Tiritiri Matangi:

Tiritiri Matangi Island's Hiihi Story
Tiritiri Matangi hiihi recovery project overview
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@WoodlandTrust is Tweeting about this

[#ObesityStrategy](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ObesityStrategy)
1,693 Tweets

[#alevelresults](https://twitter.com/hashtag/alevelresults)
@angrysunbird is Tweeting about this

Programme 2016

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held at 7.30pm in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street.

- Wed October 26th** Murray Efford on "Urban tui, bellbirds and more."
- Sat November 5th** Field Trip: Robin Survey at Mopanui. Meet at the Orokonui Carpark at 9am. Carpool leaving Dunedin from Woodhaugh Gardens, George Street 8.40am. Contact Mary 464 0787 maryt@actrix.co.nz
- Sat November 12th** Seabird Watch Field Trip. Graeme Loh will lead us to the St Clair Cliffs to watch and listen for Shearwaters and Fairy Prions coming ashore. Meet at 8pm at Highgrove, St Clair, at start of the walkway. Warm clothes, sturdy shoes and walking sticks recommended. Contact gloh@earthlight.co.nz for more information.
- Wed November 23** Nic Rawlence and Martyn Kennedy. "Identification of the Otago Shag".
- Sun November 27th** Summer Wader Count. High tide 15.27 at 2m. Contact Peter Schweigman <peter.schweigman@xtra.co.nz>

Newsletter editor: Derek Onley, derekonley@yahoo.com

Many thanks to all who contributed.

Final date for contributions to next newsletter: Nov 17.