

## BIRDS NEW ZEALAND

### THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

## Wellington Region Newsletter

October 2013

<http://osnz.org.nz/> and <http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/>

<facebook.com/OrnithologicalSocietyNewZealand>

#### Greetings

The Newsletter will no doubt evolve with time in response to members' comments. Thus your on-going comments about the Newsletter will be encouraged and gratefully received. In this edition there is a new section Bird Snippets which is a summary of recent bird sightings in the Wellington region. Hopefully this will become a permanent feature of the Newsletter. For this to happen members need to send their interesting sightings to our regional recorder Delia Small whose contact details are listed in the end of the Newsletter. Some of the Snippets in this Newsletter were first reported in the website, BirdingNZ.net.

My thanks to all those who contributed to the Newsletter.

Geoff de Lisle  
Wellington Regional Representative

### Upcoming Monthly Meetings

WHERE and WHEN:  
Meetings are held at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps and across the parking area to the door. Starting 7.45pm on the first Monday of the month.

#### October Meeting - Monday 7<sup>th</sup>

##### **"Birds, bugs and biosecurity" by Dr Allen Heath, AgResearch.**

An insight into avian parasites. Allen is an expert parasitologist who has a special interest in ectoparasites, particularly ticks and mites.

#### November Meeting - Monday 4<sup>th</sup>

Dr Leigh Bull will talk on monitoring the potential effects of wind farms on birds. Leigh is an ecologist who works for Boffa Miskell, a leading New Zealand environmental planning and design consultancy.

#### December Meeting – Christmas Special, Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Geoff Norman will talk on Keulemans and Buller who arguably have produced the most famous book on New Zealand birds. Geoff has recently published the very impressive book, Buller's Birds of New Zealand, the complete works of JG Keulemans.

## Report of Monthly Meetings

**August 5 Wildlife Veterinarians ~ Wellington Zoo and Massey University.** A wildlife veterinarian, Baukje Lenting summarised the activities of The Nest, Wellington Zoo's animal hospital and centre for native wildlife while Sarah Michael covered the activities of Wildbase, the wildlife health centre at Massey University. A feature of these two wildlife veterinary centres is their close working relationship, with wildlife interns from Massey working on rotation at the Zoo. Activities of these two centres include the care and rehabilitation of injured and sick birds, post mortem examinations, disease screening and research into diseases of native birds.

For further information visit the following websites The Nest, Wellington Zoo  
<http://www.wellingtonzoo.com/content/nest/default.aspx>

Wildbase, Massey University  
<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/d>

### Too early for Christmas?

<http://www.tiritirimatangi.org.nz/miscellaneous>



[epartments/centres-research/wildbase/wildbase\\_home.cfm](#)

### September 2 "New Zealand Birds Online - looking back, and looking forward" by Dr Colin Miskelly, Te Papa

Colin presented a summary of the development of the new website and what additions have occurred since its launch at the OSNZ meeting in Dunedin in June. The latter includes more photographs of birds that were not well covered when the website was launched. An exciting addition which will take place in the near future is the addition of links to information from the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB). This 7 volume (9 books) work is a treasure trove of information but the book is very expensive and not readily available to many bird enthusiasts. Another addition that will occur shortly will be the inclusion of bird lists for more localities. If you have not yet looked at this website do check it out!

<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/>



## Vince Waanders

23-03-1970 – 18-08-2013

“With great sadness I learnt of Vince’s untimely death in mid August 2013.

Vince had a long history of enjoyment in the outdoors – with his family he tramped, skied, fished and camped. But becoming involved with working-bees on Paekakariki escarpment project, and then part of the weed team for Nga Uruora restoration project led to his career in conservation work.



Vince worked with many seabird transfers on/from various islands – Mana, Matiu/Somes, Long and Red Mercury Islands. On the Chatham Islands he worked with the translocation of Chatham petrel and Taiko chicks to the Sweetwater Covenant, as well as a stint working with “the lights” at Taiko Camp. He participated in a black robin survey on Mangere Island.

A highlight was an invitation to join a trip to Antipodes and Bounty Islands to conduct a survey of Erect-crested penguins. The travel to these remote islands was by yacht – not something that he enjoyed but the excitement of being on these islands was worth the travel.

Vince was a hugely valuable and capable member of the little penguin project team on Matiu/Somes Island. He was the best nest finder in the team and on every trip would find some new nest sites. When working on the stoat trapping programme on Kapiti Island he would arrange his time off to coincide with a penguin trip – simply leaving one island to travel to the next. Such was his enthusiasm, and the pleasure he derived from these trips was obvious.

He worked at Mt Bruce in the captive breeding programme, undertook weeding contracts on various islands and spent many months trapping/monitoring for stoats in Kapiti Island. Most of his work with birds was voluntary, with both the Department of Conservation and community groups.

With his extensive knowledge of electronics and his general handyman abilities Vince was always an asset on any project.

Vince was a quiet, thoughtful man. He would consider a problem, idea or situation, then give his viewpoint, which he would ably



defend. He was particular, with attention to detail, and always took great care with whatever he did. His large hands would gently hold a bird while he banded, measured, weighed or fed it.

He was at the peak of his career with a full summer of work to look forward to – a weeding contract on Mana Island, a trip to Long Island to select birds for the Fluttering shearwater transfer to Mātīu/Somes Island, then to be part of the feeding team. This was to be followed by leading the transfer of

Pycroft petrels from Red Mercury Island to Motuora Island.

The list of his achievements is too long to fit here, but what he crammed into the last few years is truly amazing.

Vince will be greatly missed by so many people.”

Ros Batcheler (on behalf of many OSNZ members)

David Cornick – photographs.



Paul Dibble

Next time you pass through Upper Hutt take time to look at the two bronze sculptures in Main Street. The sculptor, Paul Dibble has received numerous commissions, including a monument commemorating the New Zealand servicemen who fought in armed conflict alongside Britain, which was unveiled at London's Hyde Park corner in 2006.

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## Bird snippets – Wellington Region

The most intriguing sighting in the last few weeks has been that of a Marsh Crane seen at Waikanae estuary. Given the bird was photographed there is no doubt about the identity of this sighting. The following is the report from BirdingNZ.

### Marsh Crane

by [imogen](#) » Sat Aug 03, 2013 BirdingNZ.net

*I was on the bridges at the Waikanae boardwalks looking for the fernbird when I saw this gorgeous chap right below me. I nearly dropped my camera but managed to get a couple of blurry shots. I'm fairly certain it's a marsh crane. Can someone please confirm if it is. Fingers crossed as it will be another life first for me*



Imogen

I am unaware that there have been any subsequent sightings of Marsh Crane at Waikanae. However, Duncan Watson did on August 4 see 3 fernbirds, including a pair just a little further on from previous sightings, where the boardwalk twists like a snake across the wetlands.



Duncan Watson

[Alan Tennyson](#) » Mon Sep 23, 2013  
BirdingNZ.net

*I made a brief visit to the oxbow area of the Waikanae Estuary on Sunday (22nd Sept) at 430pm and heard 3 pairs of fernbirds calling (I saw only 2 birds). So they seem to be doing well here.*

[Fluttering Shearwaters](#) off Kapiti Coast  
(BirdingNZ)

by [Alan Tennyson](#) » Sun Aug 18, 2013 12:37 pm

*Last Sunday (11 Aug) I was counting fluttering shearwaters flying south off the Waikanae coast - there was a continuous stream for at least 1 hr 20 mins from 1230 and I estimated that at least 6,500 passed. I don't know how many had already gone by before I first noticed them. The total population size of fluttering shearwaters is very uncertain but a new estimate is c.100,000 breeding pairs (Waugh et al. 2013 Tuhinga = Te Papa Museum records), which equates to roughly 400,000 individuals. So perhaps 2% of the world population flew past that day. The largest known colony is Long Island in the Marlborough Sounds with about 5,000 breeding pairs, so they could all have come from the sounds.*

### Dabchick – Upper Hutt

6/9/2013 – Pair of dabchicks seen on the duck pond in Maoribank, Upper Hutt. They appear to be permanent residents. Is this a new sighting for the Hutt Valley?



### White-winged black tern at Lake Horowhenua

Sun Aug 18, 2013

In late August an immature white-winged black tern was seen on a number of occasions. Colin Miskelly (reported on BirdingNZ)

### Red-legged partridge – Kapiti

Seen in Kapiti in September – how common are they?



Dave and Jenny Mason

### Beach patrol

Sara Moylan was running tracking tunnels at Baring Head last week (August), and discovered the remains of a banded yellow-eyed penguin on the beach. The bird was banded as a chick in a nest at Boulder Beach on Otago Peninsula on the 24th of January this year, and was 9-10 months old when it died and was washed ashore at Baring Head, some 600km north of where it was banded (Information supplied by Nikki McArthur).

### Cuckoo arrival dates

[Michael Anderson](#) I am a postdoctoral fellow at Massey University. I'm interested in finding out more about the arrival dates of our two species of migratory cuckoos; the Long-tailed Cuckoo and Shining Cuckoo. I have created a google form for interested parties to fill out when they hear or see the first cuckoos arrive for the spring. Little is known about the migration patterns of either species, so I'm keen to find out a bit of information about the dates they arrive at each part of the country. If you hear or see one of these birds, please help by reporting it using one of the Google forms (links below).

If you need further information about these species, please have a look at their pages on the birds online website, which has a lot of useful photos and sounds to aid with correctly identifying them (Long-tailed cuckoo:

<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/long-tailed-cuckoo>, Shining Cuckoo: <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/shining-cuckoo>).

Long-tailed Cuckoo spring migration form, <http://goo.gl/CIBMWZ>

Shining Cuckoo spring migration form, <http://goo.gl/CDjbuH>



## Cuckoo arrival dates

by [chef](#) » Wed Aug 21, 2013 10:08 am, Heard the first one yesterday afternoon in Meadowbank Auckland, early this year I don't normally hear them till around the second week of September. BirdingNZ.net

## Shining Cuckoo heard at Wainuiomata

by [Nikki McArthur](#) » Mon Sep 16, 2013 4:54 pm, Grant Timlin, a park ranger at Greater Wellington Regional Council reported hearing his first shining cuckoo for the season today (16/9). He heard it on the gums loop track at the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area, near Wellington. BirdingNZ.

[Shining Cuckoo head at Melling by Allan Munro](#). 24<sup>th</sup> September.

[Shining Cuckoo heard at Blue Mountains Road, Upper Hutt](#), by [Dallas Bishop](#). 27<sup>th</sup> September, 10.07am.

## Field Activities

1. *Pauatahanui Inlet Survey*. A two year study where a census is taken once a month of all the birds on the inlet. The survey usually takes place on the first Sunday of each month. Please contact Ian Armitage if you are interested in participating in this survey.
2. *Mist netting and passerine banding at the Wellington Zoo*. Peter Reese reports  
“The Zoo are about to start their next exciting development which unfortunately for our banding will involve the old bird enclosure area where we have been based for several years. This area will be a construction site for some time which will restrict our activities so there will be no banding at the Zoo until next year. In the new year, probably in February, I will check things out and after consulting with Zoo staff see if we can find suitable sites and recommence banding. There are several potential net lanes on the western side of the Zoo, although the possible down side of some of these sites is that they are exposed to the northerly wind (which tends to blow on about 99% of our banding days, or so it seems).

We will be doing some banding over the summer months mostly at stream sites. If you are interested in coming along let me know and I will send you details as and when the possibility occurs. Several of the sites have limited space so numbers might be limited and due to weather requirements notification time might be short.

In the last couple of days we have had two interesting recoveries of Blackbirds reported from the Zoo. One was of a bird eaten by the Meerkats, not an old bird but interesting in a bizarre way. A European bird eaten by an African mammal from the other side of the world in New Zealand. The other bird was perhaps more significant as it was banded 3 August 2003 and at 3696 days is our second oldest Blackbird recovery at any site. Our oldest Blackbird recovery at 4024 days was also reported by Zoo staff which reinforces the fact that we are very fortunate to have them taking an interest in our banding and reporting the recoveries”.

Check out the blog for mist netting in Wellington – lots of great photographs and a summary of recent activities. <http://wgtznbanders.blogspot.co.nz/>.

3. *Zealandia / Karori Sanctuary five minute bird counts*  
These counts are being carried out every 3 months. This is a great opportunity to learn the five minute bird counting technique. Please contact Colin Miskelly for details.

## FREE COURSES ON PLANT IDENTIFICATION & FIVE MINUTE BIRD COUNTS

Peter Frost, Regional Rep for Wanganui, drew our attention on BirdingNZ to these courses:

Kia ora (again),

As with my previous message, please could you bring these courses (see below) to the attention of your members, especially those in Taranaki and neighbouring regions. Both courses will be held in Taranaki (plant identification 5-6 November; 5MBC, 7-8 November) but there is no clarity yet on just where. I imagine that they will be held at Konini Lodge, Dawson Falls, Egmont National Park. I've written to NMIT and DOC Training for further information and I'll pass it on when I have it. As mentioned earlier, the ability to identify both native and alien plants is a useful adjunct to studying birds, and 5-minute bird counts is the adopted means of monitoring bird populations in many sites across NZ.

Many thanks,  
Peter

**Plant Identification** The Plant Identification course was developed in conjunction with the NZ Plant Conservation Network with funding from the Government's Advice Fund. This course introduces the broad spectrum of New Zealand plants (both native and exotic), and how to identify them. This course assesses for unit standard 27189.

- > START: 5-6 November
- > WHERE: Taranaki
- > FEE: Free

**Five Minute Bird Count** The five-minute bird count technique (5MBC) monitors the abundance of forest birds over time. The 5MBC course is based on the Dawson and Bull field method. This course uses innovative techniques, such as an online programme and pre-recorded bird calls, to help you identify common forest bird species. This course covers unit standard 26373.

- > START: 7-8 November
- > WHERE: Taranaki
- > FEE: Free





## Greater Wellington Regional Council North Island Robin Translocation

After two postponements due to unfavourable weather, the transfer of North Island robins from Kapiti Island to the Wainuiomata Water Catchment Area took place on the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. The transfer was managed by Kim Broad (GWRC) the Kapiti Co-ordinator, Nikki McArthur (GWRC) the banding team leader and Annette Harvey who was the catching team leader. The army of volunteer helpers included a number of OSNZ members.

In contrast to 2012, the 2013 transfer had measures which were taken to enhance their detectability and to train them to respond to the cue of clapping. Some of the robins transferred in 2012 dispersed out of the Mainland Island with one unbanded bird being seen on the Rimutaka Incline. Prior to the 2013 transfer Annette trained pairs of robins to clapping and rewards of meal worms.



On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> of August, 60 robins were caught in clap traps in the area round Rangatira. Priority was given to catching the pairs of birds identified and trained by Annette. After banding the birds were placed in cat boxes and regularly fed and watered. On Sunday morning a helicopter arrived at Kapiti with kaumatua from Te Atiawa and Ngati Toa who blessed the birds. The helicopter flew directly to the release site in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area where the robins were released.



An important part of any bird transfer is the monitoring post release. Of the 60 birds transferred one had the unfortunate fate of being killed by a morepork within 30 minutes of being released at the transfer site. Annette spent the week following the transfer locating and training the birds in their new home, with clapping and bribes of mealworms. For a couple of days she was ably assisted by volunteers from the Hutt Valley, Tararua and Kaumatua Tramping clubs. By the end of the week, 40 of the 59 robins potentially still alive in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area had been re-sighted and many of them on more than one occasion. Many of the birds seen were still concentrated near the release site in the lower West Branch valley and surrounding slopes. Several birds have moved further afield with some having been seen in Skull Gully, on the Drummond Ridge and in the head of the West Branch valley. All these areas are within the boundary of the Mainland Island. However, a few birds have

moved a short distance into the “non-treatment” area despite Annette’s valiant efforts to lure them back into the Mainland Island using their favourite mealworm food as bait.

Further monitoring will be required to see if any robins have settled and formed breeding pairs in the Wainuiomata Mainland Island.

The ultimate question to be determined by monitoring is has the transfer succeeded in creating a permanent, self-sustaining robin population?

**Stop Press:** There are some very recent indications of nest building!



The transfer team overnights

Photo David Cornick

## Wellington Region Contacts

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Regional Recorder	Delia Small <a href="mailto:smalldelia@gmail.com">smalldelia@gmail.com</a>
Southern Bird Regional Roundup	Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929 <a href="mailto:osnzwelly@gmail.com">osnzwelly@gmail.com</a>
Pauatahanui Inlet Survey	Ian Armitage (04) 232 7470 <a href="mailto:ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz">ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz</a>
Mist netting and passerine banding	Peter Reese (04) 387 7387 <a href="mailto:ruth.peterr@actrix.co.nz">ruth.peterr@actrix.co.nz</a>
Zealandia 5 minute counts	Colin Miskelly <a href="mailto:Hakawai@xtra.co.nz">Hakawai@xtra.co.nz</a>