

# THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

## Wellington Region Newsletter

December 2013

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

<facebook.com/OrnithologicalSocietyNewZealand>

### Greetings

2013 is fast coming to a close. Dallas and I have just returned from a three-week holiday in Sri Lanka. We managed to see a good selection of 'new' birds including endemics and some northern migrants. Shortly after our return we had a great reminder on Kapiti Island of what a special group of birds we have in New Zealand. The photo of the kaka was taken feeding on yellow pohutukawa flowers at Waiorua.



There will not be a Wellington OSNZ meeting in January 2014. The meeting in February will return to the tradition of having multiple contributions by local members. Please contact me if you want to present.

Very best wishes for 2014

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 carpark.

**There will not be a meeting in January, 2014.**

**February Meeting – Monday 03 February.**

#### "Members' Night"

There will be a series of short talks given by members on regional studies. Details to be announced.

### Report of Monthly Meetings

**October 7. Birds, bugs and biosecurity. Dr Allen Heath, AgResearch, Wallaceville, Upper Hutt.**

Allen gave a comprehensive, illustrated talk on the parasites found on New Zealand birds. While many of the parasites do not affect the well-being of their avian hosts, some have the potential to cause serious disease. Important messages from this talk were the considerable gaps in the knowledge of parasites of New Zealand birds and the biosecurity threats from the introduction of new parasites. OSNZ members were urged to be mindful of parasites when working with birds. Allen is interested in looking at more parasites from

native birds – his contact details are available from Geoff de Lisle.

*At the Annual Conference of the Parasitological Society in October the following papers were presented on parasites of New Zealand birds. For further details please contact Geoff de Lisle*

**Epizootic mange in kakariki** – Bethamy Jackson, Allen Heath, Cathy Harvey, Kris Warren, Carly Holyoake, Richard Jakobhoff, Arvind Varsani – Auckland Zoo

**Avian malaria in New Zealand robins and other passerines in the Waimarino Forest** – Danielle Sijbranda, Laryssa Howe, Brett Gartrell – IVABS, Massey University

**Avian malaria in New Zealand** – Ellen Schöner, I. Castro, L. Howe, K. Parker, D. Tompkins – Massey University

**Four cases of fatal toxoplasmosis in three species of endemic New Zealand birds** – Laryssa Howe et al. – IVABS, Massey University

**Kiwi “zoonosis”** – Isabel Castro, Maurice Alley, Ellen Schöner, Laryssa Howe – Institute of Agriculture and Environment, Massey University

**The effect of season and habitats on abundance of the tick, *Ixodes anatis*, a North Island Brown Kiwi ectoparasite** – Natasha Bansal, Isabel Castro – Institute of Agriculture and Environment, Massey University

#### **November 4. Dr Leigh Bull**

##### **“Project West Wind - Post Construction Avian Monitoring of a Wind Farm”**

There has been considerable comment in the international press on deaths of birds caused by wind farms. The death of raptors caused by wind farms in North America has received a considerable amount of attention. Leigh’s talk gave a comprehensive summary of the

investigations carried out prior to the building of the wind farm at Makara (West Wind), on the possible effects of wind turbines on birds. These investigations were important in defining the placement of the turbines and where turbines should not be erected due to possible effects on birds. As a result of the investigations turbines were not placed round the Makara inlet to avoid possible interference with pied shags. Post construction monitoring documented a limited number of bird deaths from the turbines, with harrier hawks being the most commonly killed bird. The level of bird mortalities was ~6 birds/turbine/year which is relatively minor compared with other causes of bird mortality. Importantly there was no evidence of mortalities from turbines of important native species such as kaka, kereru, falcon and bats. More information on the possible effects of wind farms on wildlife can be found in Issue 1, volume 40 (2013) of the New Zealand Journal of Zoology.

#### **December 2. Geoff Norman**

##### **“Buller’s birds of New Zealand – the complete works of J.G. Keulemans”**

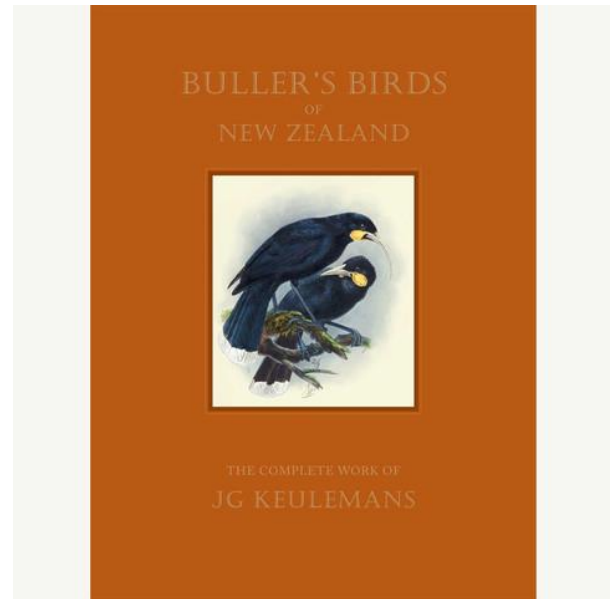
In the final talk for 2013 Geoff Norman gave a fascinating talk on John Gerrard Keulemans, the Dutch artist who drew and printed the colour plates for Walter Buller’s book, “A history of the birds of New Zealand”. In addition to Keulemans work on New Zealand birds he produced large numbers of images for books and other publications. The volume of his work reflects that art was his only source of income. Keuleman’s images are well known in New Zealand as they have been widely used. For example, they were included on New Zealand’s first pictorial stamps in 1898, bank notes, posters and school writing pads. Geoff has produced a highly acclaimed and highly successful book entitled, “Buller’s Birds of New Zealand, the complete work of JG Keulemans”.

## Te Papa Press – Special Offer

**Note: There is a Special Christmas Offer for the Ornithological Society – 20% discount on all Buller's Birds products. This offer is valid until Christmas 2013. If you require an order form I can email to one to you (Geoff de Lisle).**

**Buller's Birds of New Zealand: The complete work of JG Keulemans, by Geoff Norman**

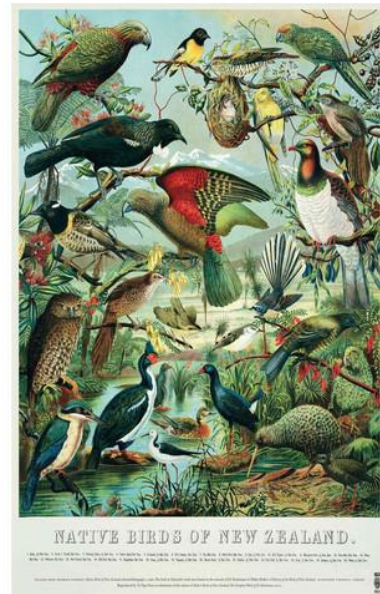
RRP. \$150, Special offer price \$130.00



The image used in this poster is a chromolithograph (c. 1900) by William Shaw Diedrich Schmidt. The birds in Schmidt's work were based on the artwork of J.G Keulemans in Walter Buller's A History of the Birds of New Zealand. - See more at:

<http://www.tepapastore.co.nz/collections/bullers-birds/products/native-birds-of-new-zealand-poster#sthash.xed0PdwL.dpuf>. [This is a poster that I have admired for many years. My grandmother had a framed copy of the original poster which was published as a Supplement to the Christmas issue of the New Zealand Graphic, December 19, 1900 (Geoff de Lisle).]

RRP. \$24.99, Special offer price \$20.00



## 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. If you are interested in participating in this survey please contact Ian Armitage by email. [ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz)
2. *Mist netting and passerine banding* – Peter Reese reports.

Banding over the summer.

Wellington Zoo

Due to work being done in the area that we normally band in there is currently no banding inside the Zoo grounds. Hopefully we will be able to have a regular session in February 2014. We are however hoping to do some banding at a small stream over the fence from the Zoo. Sessions will be on warm days when there has been no rain for several days.

Because of the small area the numbers of people are restricted to 3-4.

#### Island Bay

Monthly sessions are held at a private property in Freeling St. I am hoping to hold one in mid-January but this will depend on our hosts. Once again numbers are restricted due to space, 4-5 people max.

#### Houghton Bay

Another stream site which is usually successful during dry periods when sessions are held almost weekly.

#### Prince of Wales Park

Also a stream site but with more space. We started to band there last

summer and caught reasonable numbers of birds, mostly finches.

If anyone would like to be involved at any of these sites please contact Peter Reese at [ruth.peterr@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ruth.peterr@xtra.co.nz). Frequently, controlled by the weather, I hold sessions at very short notice. Sessions are sometimes held on week days.

#### 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. [Hakawai@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Hakawai@xtra.co.nz)



## New Zealand Birds Online

The digital encyclopaedia of New Zealand birds

NZ Birds Online now contains the major addition of entries from the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB). HANZAB is a seven volume reference work produced in stages from 1990 to 2006. Warning, some of the HANZAB files are large.

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

Wellington OSNZ has copies of some of the volumes of HANZAB – contact Geoff de Lisle if you want to borrow them.

### Upper Hutt Leader, November 6, 2013 – Island in need of good friends

***“We had committed some money for the fluffy shearwater translocation project”***

Note: The Upper Hutt Leader and the Hutt News are to be commended for their recent articles on Nikki McArthur and colleagues work on banded dotterels on the Pencarrow coast.

#### OSNZ Subscription renewal – Gentle Reminder

Subscriptions are due by 1 January every year.

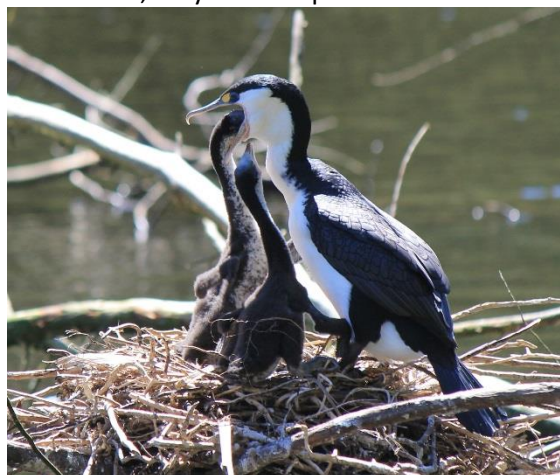
- Renewal Notices are: emailed in September, or sent with Southern Bird
- Members with subs unpaid as at 1 January will remain in the system as ‘grace’ members and receive March Journals.
- Members with subs unpaid as at 30 April will ‘expire’  
Well, their membership will expire anyway!

## Bird Snippets – Wellington Region

### Pied shags – Zealandia / Karori Sanctuary

17<sup>th</sup> October.

Lower dam, very close to public track.



### Pheasant – Blue Mountains Road, Upper Hutt

Dallas Bishop, 24<sup>th</sup> October

This is our first home record of pheasants (2) in the 10 years we have been here.

P.S. The picture taken on the cell phone was not up to publication standard.

### Turnstone, Wainuiomata River mouth

by [Nikki McArthur](#) » Wed Oct 30, 2013 1:15 pm

There was a turnstone present on the shingle spit at the Wainuiomata River mouth this morning, feeding along the high tide line. This is the first one I've seen here in 2-3 years of regular visits, and I almost missed it too, lazily assuming from a distance that it was one of the banded dotterels we are monitoring at the site!

BirdingNZ.net

### Kotuku – white heron, Otaki River mouth

Viola and Phil Palmer, 5 November. One seen.

6<sup>th</sup> November - Today we saw a spoonbill, and witnessed a feeding frenzy off shore of (presumably) fluttering shearwaters and black backed gulls with pied shags, black shags and white fronted terns joining in. The first two were present in hundreds. We had the telescope handy which helped.

### Cirl buntings around Wellington

by [ledzep](#) » Sun Nov 10, 2013 2:22 pm

Went looking for Cirl Buntings today round at Open Bay past Green Point south of Titahi Bay (Porirua, Wellington). Had a brief sighting of a nice male at GPS -41.121560, 174.803403 and possibly a female nearby. One male heard calling briefly. They do seem to be in the hills around Open Bay as reported by David Angus, but really hard to spot. Didn't manage to get any photo evidence this time.

BirdingNZ.net



Duncan Watson

### Whimbrel at Green Point, Porirua

by [ledzep](#) » Sun Nov 10, 2013 2:13 pm

On my way round the coast from Titahi Bay (Porirua) south past Green Point towards Open Bay, I surprised what I initially thought was a Godwit on the rocks, which seemed well out of place. I disturbed the bird a couple of times but it didn't fly far. Whitish rump, supercilium and downturned bill should



identify it as an Asiatic Whimbrel. I did hear it call and it was that of a Whimbrel, not a Bristle-thighed Curlew. Probably still in the vicinity of Green Point along the rocky shoreline for any other Wellingtonians that want to see it - we don't often get Whimbrels down this way. Seems to be a number of waders turning up in odd places this year (eg Turnstones at Waikanae and south coast by Orongorongo river, NZ Dotterel Ohau, etc.) - maybe the recent strong winds have blown them a little off course.



Duncan Watson



Duncan Watson

BirdingNZ.net

## NZ dotterels - they are coming closer

### Riversdale – update

Ros & Derek Batcheler, December, 2013

The pair of NZ dotterel who successfully raised 2 chicks last year have had bad luck this season - the first nest disappeared after a night of gale winds, the second nest, also with 2 eggs, was washed away after very heavy rain as it was very close to the river. The nest had been raised successfully on to a tyre, with

## Red knot, Hutt Estuary

November 24, Olwen

Red knot in winter plumage, Hutt Estuary

BirdingNZ.net

## Probable Common Tern, Waikanae Estuary

by [GrahamB](#) » Wed Nov 27, 2013 4:56 pm

A probable/possible Common Tern along with many (almost all adult) White-fronted Terns at Waikanae Estuary - river mouth this afternoon. An immature (not juvenile), slightly smaller and more gracile, especially at the rear end (wing projection), with a distinct carpal bar, blackish primaries and a somewhat more delicate bill (thinner, shorter?). WFT quite busy with display and copulation and some close-inshore fish schools getting a beating too.

A Chestnut or Brown Teal at Otaki settlement ponds but I need to go back and have another look at this one.

BirdingNZ.net

the birds returning to incubate. This pair look like they are going to have another try.

The second pair laid a three egg clutch, 2 eggs disappeared but the remaining egg has hatched.

Eggs are disappearing during the day time, so dogs are suspected, in spite of signs asking owners to keep them on a lead.

The birds are being checked at least once a week by Greater Wellington staff, who are in the area for other duties. There is a large area of beach fenced off, but so far the birds haven't quite caught on to this being a safer

area. Both the NZ and banded dotterel have nested outside the fence, but these nests have all been surrounded by mini-fences.

There is an ongoing trapping programme along the inland side of the fenced area. There are numerous signs explaining the significance of the birds.

## **NZ dotterel, Ohau Estuary**

by [Nikki McArthur](#) » Mon Oct 28, 2013 10:47 pm

Admittedly not as exciting as the American golden plover getting all the attention just up the road, but there was a NZ dotterel present at the Ohau Estuary (just north of Otaki) this afternoon. Other waders present included:

3 Banded dotterels  
105 BT godwit (none banded)  
2 SIPO  
17 VOC  
33 Pied stilts  
4 SWP  
5 Caspian terns

---

## **White-faced storm petrels breeding on Mana Island**

by [Colin Miskelly](#) » Tue Nov 05, 2013 12:04 pm

I was out on Mana yesterday and overnight, mainly to band this year's cohort of diving petrel chicks (7 banded, 3 pairs still on eggs, one burrow too deep to reach chamber).

Three fairy prions were also found on eggs, and laying may yet occur in 2-3 other burrows.

The highlight was a white-faced storm petrel found on an egg. On my last visit (30 Sep - 1 Oct), my son and I completed a check of all 105 old artificial burrows, and noted fresh digging in one that has never shown signs of activity before. On reaching into the burrow yesterday afternoon I felt a pair of long spindly legs and an egg, so already knew what it was before I extracted the bird - Mana

31 Royal spoonbills  
2 WF herons

Also, two barbery doves in the pines inland from the estuary (including one juvenile lacking the black "collar") and close views of three shining cuckoos chasing each other around (and being chased by a couple of fantails) in the same pines. Also picked up eight dead short-tailed shearwaters along ca. 600m of Kuku Beach, including one really fresh specimen.

## **New Zealand dotterels at Tora, south Wairarapa**

by [Nikki McArthur](#) » Thu Nov 28, 2013 4:18 pm

Joanna McVeagh has reported encountering a pair of NZ dotterels on the south Wairarapa coastline near Tora yesterday. These birds are now the southernmost known pair on the east coast of the North Island, being some 60km further south than the two pairs currently nesting at Riversdale Beach.

---

Island's first breeding record for the species, and the fifth species of petrel breeding on the island. [Sooty shearwaters occur naturally, and diving petrels, fairy prions and fluttering shearwaters have been translocated, plus diving petrels colonised other parts of the island naturally.]

Note that storm petrels have not been translocated to Mana Island. The sound system where the bird was found has been playing white-faced storm petrels calls mixed in with those of three other petrel species



Colin Miskelly

since 1993, and two storm petrels have been caught at night in the area before (2 Nov 2000 & 20 Sep 2001). A newer sound system plays only white-faced storm petrels calls, about 100 m away through dense vegetation. There

were storm petrels present at the new site on 1 October (seen in flight and heard on the ground), but I did not see or hear any there last night.

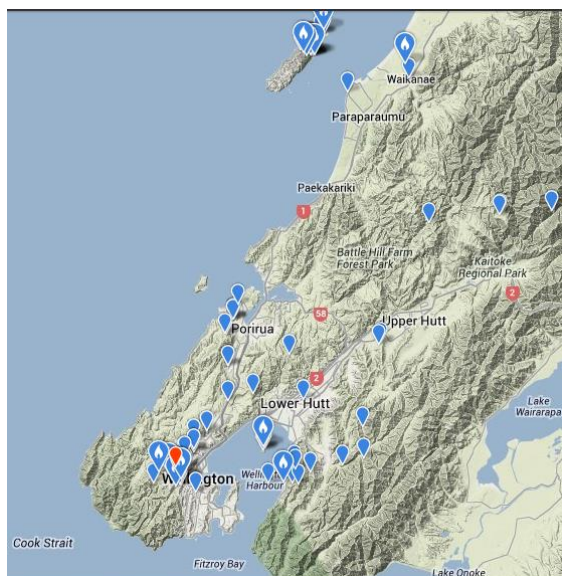
## Bird Recording Scheme – Wellington Region

**Regional Recorder – Delia Small** [smalldelia@gmail.com](mailto:smalldelia@gmail.com)

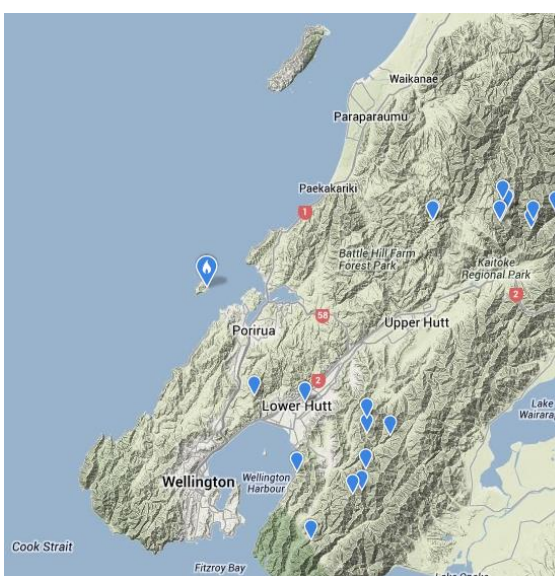
The Recording Scheme started in 1940. Miscellaneous field records sent in by members, but not suitable for publication as Short Notes in Notornis were summarised and published once a year as Classified Summarised Notes (CSN). This scheme was stopped in the 1960s, but was reactivated in the 1970s.

Today, Regional Recorders prepare a summary of observations from each region, and these are sent to the New Zealand Bird Report Editor for publication in the yearly "New Zealand Bird Report". Sightings can be reported directly to me by email or by entering into the recording sheet at the monthly meeting. I enter all significant sightings supplied by members at the meetings into [eBird](#).

An example of the type of information stored in ebird is presented below.



**Red-crowned parakeets, 2008-2013**



**Yellow-crowned parakeets, 2008-2013**

[Regional Recorders](#) use a set of guidelines to select observations that are suitable for national publication. There is however a wealth of local information that is worth extracting from notebooks and storing in regional archives. Information to be sent to regional recorders includes unpublished locality lists, unusual distribution records, bird counts especially of waders and nesting seabirds, observations on foods eaten by birds, dates when first and last songs of passerines are heard each year, movements and migrations of seabirds, waders and cuckoos, behaviour of birds including flocking and roosting patterns, causes of mortality and locations of any seabird colonies. However, all



information on nests, moult and beached birds should be placed on the appropriate cards and sent to Scheme Organisers or RR's.

Otherwise members should extract information from notebooks and send it directly to their regional recorders. The reporting year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Before or soon after 31 December members should make sure that all observations that they wish to submit have been sent to regional recorders, no later than 31 March each year.

It is important to extract as much useful information as possible from field notebooks, diaries and files. These may be lost, mislaid or destroyed. The Recording Scheme also provides a repository for notebooks if members leave the Society or become inactive at some stage of their life. If members so choose, they should inform family members or place instructions in their will that they wish their notebooks to be made available to the Society after they pass away.

## **Kapiti Observer – October 31, 2013 - Te Papa tickled by Fiordland Feathers**

Eileen Tiller handed over to Te Papa family history dating back 135 years on Friday, including valuable genetic data packed into four shoe boxes. Mrs Tiller has donated the feathers of 19<sup>th</sup> century kakapo, kaka and kiwi passed down from her grandparents who were lighthouse keepers at Puysegur Point, Fiordland. Colin Miskelly from Te Papa said that because the feathers were likely plucked after the birds were killed for eating, they could still have tissue for genetic testing. He pointed out that none of the birds were protected at the time they were given to the Hansens, Eileen Tiller's grandparents. The full article can be sourced from the following link.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/kapiti-observer/9327999/Valuable-feathers-saved-from-pillow>

### **Wellington Region Contacts**

Regional Representative	Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 <a href="mailto:osnzwelly@gmail.com">osnzwelly@gmail.com</a>
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.peter@actrix.co.nz">Ruth.peter@actrix.co.nz</a>
Zealandia 5 minute counts	Colin Miskelly <a href="mailto:Hakawai@xtra.co.nz">Hakawai@xtra.co.nz</a>