

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

Wellington Region Newsletter

OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

July 2014

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

Greetings

There has been a slight delay in producing this newsletter as Dallas and I have just returned from three weeks overseas. While the principle reason for the trip was to attend a couple of scientific conferences we did take the opportunity to do a little bit of birding. The most enjoyable birding was a day spent cycling in the Po River delta in Italy and seeing a range of different birds, including large numbers of greater flamingos.

A number of members enjoyed the OSNZ Annual Meeting in Palmerston North. There was a suggestion that OSNZ carry out a national red-billed gull survey. This has been prompted by the concern that the number of red-billed gulls may be decreasing.

Their survey will take place during the breeding season and Wellington members will need to count the birds in our region.

In the near future I will send out details of a new local initiative to survey shags in our region. A considerable amount of time has been spent discussing with various members how best to carry out such a survey. The initial survey will be a compromise between what is practical and the ideal survey.

Once again I encourage members to send me material for inclusion in the newsletter. My thanks to those who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter.

Geoff de Lisle

Regional Representative, Wellington OSNZ



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.

First Monday of the month, 7.30pm.

Monday 4th of August. Lara Shepherd, Te Papa will talk on her recent studies on the genetics of pions.

Monday 1st of September. James Griffiths, Department of Conservation will provide a summary of the results of Project Kaka.

Monday 6th of October. Helen Gummer, Department of Conservation will present an update of the seabird transfers to Mana Island.

Monday 3rd of November. Heidy Kikillus, Victoria University, will describe her work on cats as potential predators of birds.

Report of Monthly Meetings

April Meeting - **Why do Godwits migrate when they do?** - **Dr Phil Battley**, Senior Lecturer in Ecology / Zoology, Massey University, Palmerston North. Phil addressed this question based on his own studies and those of his PhD student, Jessie Conklin. The studies were principally carried out at the Manawatu estuary by detailed observation of banded birds as they prepared to set off on their northward migration.

Their studies have shown that the darker godwits migrate to the North Slope of Alaska while the pale birds go to the Yukon, indicating a genetic component to where they migrate. Geography also influences the timing of migration with the early birds going to the Yukon and 'northern' birds migrating later. Weather has been shown to influence the departure dates with birds avoiding head winds and disliking rain. Birds migrate when they are in the 'right' nutritional (condition) state. Birds that leave late on their migration often have had a delayed wing moult. An important message of Phil's talk was that detailed observations of marked birds using a telescope can provide valuable insights into our understanding of birds.

May Meeting – **In the Footsteps of Edgar Stead**. **Colin Miskelly**, Te Papa, presented further information on the life of Edgar Stead (1881-1949) who was the son of a wealthy grain and export merchant. Following the death of Stead's father in 1908 he devoted the remainder of his life to ornithology, horticulture, fishing and shooting. As part of his ornithological studies Stead visited many of the islands off the coast of Stewart Island. Some of his exploits are described in the book, *Bird Islands of New Zealand*, written by his close friend Robert Wilson. Approximately 70 years later, Colin has retraced the steps of Stead and visited the same islands. During the last 70 years there has been some major changes to the islands. The most well-known change was the invasion of Big South Cape Island by rats and the loss of the Stewart Island snipe, bush wren and the greater short-tailed bat. Fortunately, the South Island Saddleback was saved by transferring it to rat-free islands. Rats have subsequently been eradicated from Big South Cape Island. The introduction of weka to some of the mutton bird islands has also had an adverse effect on bird life. They were introduced to Kundy Island after Stead's visit and have eliminated banded rail and fern bird. Colin has retaken Stead's photographs from the same of photo-points to illustrate the changes that have occurred over the last 70 years. Further details of Colin's research into the life of Edgar Stead can be found on the Te Papa blog website, <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/>

Field Activities

Pauatahanui Inlet Survey. This survey has been completed with the last count being held in June. Ian Armitage presented a summary of the findings of the survey at the Annual OSNZ meeting in Palmerston North.

Mist netting and passerine banding – Peter Reese reports.

"We had a relatively quiet day at the Zoo on Sunday (June 22) with a catch of 55 birds of 7 species with 33 new and 22 recaptures. Although there was a cold southerly blowing the Zoo is reasonably sheltered and conditions were fairly good. There was a good turnout of banders with a good mixture of experienced and newer folk. A feature of the day was the large number of birds caught for a 2nd or 3rd time so the actual number of handlings would have been much higher than the 55 recorded. The most significant birds of the day were 3 colour banded Tui with 1 banded at Houghton Bay in June 07 another at the Zoo in June 06 and the other at the Zoo in Sept 04.

This morning (Monday) Annette and I returned and were joined by Emma and Shannon from DoC in an effort to catch Tui so they could get video footage for the video

they are making on mist netting. We were unsuccessful with catching any Tui but we did catch 19 other birds of 4 species with 6 new and 13 recaps.

The combined total for the 2 days is – (recaps in brackets)

Blackbird – 3 (0)

Dunnoek – 1 (1)

Chaffinch – 1 (1)

Greenfinch – 4 (4)

House Sparrow – 11 (8)

Silvereye – 19 (20) The oldest recap was banded in Jan 2008.

Tui – 0 (1)

There is a bit more info and some photos on our blog - <http://wgtnnzbanders.blogspot.co.nz/>

We plan to have the next banding session at the Zoo this Sunday 13 July

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. Haka-wai@xtra.co.nz

Bird Snippets – Wellington Region

Coots on Whitby Lakes

Owen Hughes, May 2014, reports there are three – four resident coots on the Whitby Lakes. Note, they are very rarely reported at Pauatahanui Inlet.



Mana Island/Shore Plover

[Jim J](#) » Sat May 10, 2014 BirdingNZ.net

Had a trip to Mana Island today - good numbers of all the introduced birds (y/c parakeet, bellbird, whitehead, takahe) and numerous tui.

There was also a falcon and at least 2 harrier patrolling the island.

Apparently the 5-6 Shore Plover now at Plimmerton were the last birds left there.

Previously the birds apparently deserted the island due to rat predation but it was suggested they may have left this time due to the presence of the falcon (and harriers?). (A woman was on the island with two rodent dogs and had found no sign of rats at that stage)

Shore Plovers back at Plimmerton

[ledzep](#) » Sat May 10, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

One Shore Plover at Plimmerton Fire Station at 1.45 pm today, feeding actively. Band: Yellow/Red (left), White Orange (right).

Bar-tailed Godwits Waikanae

[Graham B](#) » Sun Jun 01, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Nothing to shout about either the species or the count generally, but 8 Bar-tailed Godwits (non-breeding plumage) together at Waikanae Estuary this afternoon was somewhat unexpected for the season and the most I've ever seen here together (or as an estuary total) in eight years (previous 'best' was 4).

White Heron at Hutt River Estuary

[Shane Cotter](#) » Sun May 25, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

This morning between 8am and 8.30am there was a white heron in the boat harbour at the Hutt River Estuary. It was chasing away white faced herons that arrived in the boat harbour. It was still there when I left. Low tide was at 7.40am. It was also sitting inside the green boat which is pulled up it's boat ramp. Boatshed owners said there was one there regularly up until November last year but this is the first time I have seen one at the estuary.

[ledzep](#) » Sat Jun 21, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Found the White Heron today sheltering from the weather near the boat sheds. Had a WF Heron mate to keep him/her

company.

Photographs – Duncan Watson. Note string round the left leg.



White Heron at Waikanae Estuary

[Petrolhead](#) » Wed May 07, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Spotted near the boat ramp and also in the Waimea lagoon yesterday.

[Alan Tennyson](#) » Sat May 10, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

I saw 2 together fly over Waikanae township, heading north on 24 April. I can't remember ever seeing more than 1 around Waikanae before

Canada Geese – Pauatahanui

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle, June 2, 2014.

On the last count of the Pauatahanui survey, a large number (>100) Canada geese were seen on the paddock close to the Pauatahanui roundabout. Excessive numbers of these birds has become a local issue in Whitby as it has in Palmerston North with a large number of Canada geese on the ponds at Hokowhitu.



Wairarapa winter wader count

Nikki McArthur » Wed Jun 25, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Steve Playle, Hugh Robertson and myself took advantage of the excellent weather conditions last Friday to carry out a winter shorebird census at Lake Wairarapa. The water level was relatively high (10.3 metres above datum), which meant that most of the mudflats were under water and in turn influenced some of our species counts. By the end of the day however, we had counted a total of 22 species of shorebirds and waterfowl, totalling 5647 birds. Highlights of the day included four Australasian bittern, two white herons and a little egret. Hugh also encountered a flock of 122 red-billed gulls at the Oporua Floodway, which is exceedingly unusual for this site. Believe it or not, red-billed gulls are extremely rare visitors to Lake Wairarapa itself, having been reported only a handful of times previously (11 birds in February 1948, “irregularly” between 1982-1983, 2 birds in April 1992 and 1 bird in February 2012). A full list of the species counted during last Friday’s census is as follows:

38 dabchicks	5 variable oyster-catchers
74 black shags	1000 pied stilts (yes, this is a count rather than an estimate!)
38 little black shags	42 banded dotterels
15 little shags	66 black-fronted dotterels
21 white-faced herons	39 spur-winged plovers
2 white herons	136 black-backed gulls
1 little egret	122 red-billed gulls
4 bitterns	176 black-billed gulls
10 royal spoonbills	11 Caspian terns
2174 black swans	
1448 Canada geese	
97 paradise shelducks	

Note, we don't count some of the more common duck spp. (mallard, shoveler & grey teal), hence their absence from the above list.

RC Parakeet Otari-Wilton's Bush

ledzep » Sat Jun 28, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

At least 3 Red-crowned Parakeet hanging around the information centre and canopy walk area near the main carpark entrance at Otari-Wilton's Bush on Wilton Road. Chattering calls and seen flying between the trees. Good to see them spreading from Karori Sanctuary.

Alan Tennyson » Sun Jun 29, 2014 7:44 pm

I saw 2 at the Wgtn Botanic Gardens on 14 June.

Nikki McArthur » Mon Jun 30, 2014 10:45 am

Coincidentally I came across a pair of red-crowned parakeets in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area over the weekend as well. Our encounter rates for both red- and yellow-crowned parakeets have been gradually increasing in this catchment over the past 2-3 years. This is probably due to a local recovery in numbers as a consequence of local pest control, although I wonder whether the red-crowns are getting a bit of a boost with immigrants from Matiu/Somes.

ashercook » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

When I visited Otari-Wilton in early May there seemed to be quite a few around (at least 5 individuals but probably more). I have also heard them on my last two visits to the upper Orongorongo and the Wellington botans.

I wonder if there has been any record of them breeding successfully in the Wellington region outside of Zealandia and Matiu-Somes or are these locations (Otari-Wilton, Orongorongo, Eastbourne etc.) acting as 'sink' populations?

Nikki McArthur » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

I've had a report of a fledgling kakariki seen being fed by an adult in the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area a couple of months ago, so there's definitely some successful breeding happening on the mainland outside of Zealandia. Kakariki are present (and apparently increasing in abundance/conspicuousness) at a number of sites receiving intensive predator control, including the Wainuiomata Mainland Island, East Harbour Regional Park, Belmont Regional Park (Korokoro Valley) and Porirua Scenic Reserve (in addition to the sites already mentioned above), so chances are they're breeding successfully at these sites as well. It would be great to get some records to confirm this though, so there's a challenge for local birders!

Harrier attempts to grab penguin at sea

Michael Szabo » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

A boatie friend today reported to me seeing harrier trying to grab a little blue penguin off the point near Howard wharf about 300m offshore in Wellington harbour on Sunday. He said the harrier nearly got the penguin several times but eventually gave up. This is new to me but perhaps others have seen or heard of this behaviour in harriers before?

Brown teal Lower Hutt

Storkbrain100 » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Yesterday at Percy's scenic reserve in Lower Hutt at the duck pond I spotted a brown teal among the mallards. (Also reported in 2013).

Finch spp. In beech forest

Nikki McArthur » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Just wondering if anyone has noticed any unusual concentrations of finches in areas of beech forest in recent weeks/months? In the Wellington Region I've been noticing (& been told of) some large flocks feeding on the abundant supply of beech seed that's around at the moment.

This weekend I was in the Rimutaka/Orongorongo Ranges and came across several large flocks of goldfinches (low hundreds of birds) feeding in the canopy of silver beech forest, and some smaller flocks of chaffinches (several dozen birds) feeding on the forest floor beneath a closed canopy.

I've also been told of a large flock of redpolls (several hundred birds) seen feeding on black beech seed on the forest floor in

Gollan's Valley (East Harbour Regional Park) a few weeks back.

These concentrations are pretty unusual in my experience, although I fairly regularly hear the odd finch flying across overhead when working in the bush I seldom come across them in the forest itself (apart from the ubiquitous chaffinches of course!), and certainly not in the concentrations I'm seeing

Nikki McArthur » Mon Jun 30, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

Thanks for the quick replies & additional observations - really interesting. The goldfinch & chaffinch flocks I encountered were well into the forest, up to 2km from the nearest "edge", so very similar to ashercook's observations from the Aorangis. I was also quite taken by the volume of "chatter" I was hearing - never heard anything like it in the bush either.

Parakeets are also relatively conspicuous - I've seen small flocks of up to 6 feeding on rimu fruit in the Wainuiomata WCA in recent months, but they seem to have switched onto Pseudowintera fruit now - this is fantastic because it means they're now foraging in the subcanopy/understorey, making it much easier to get a good look at them (& ID to species). The Pseudowintera is also attracting good numbers of bellbirds, tui and kereru, so a great time to be in the bush at the moment!

LOCAL BIRDLIFE

The banded dotterel is our most commonly seen plover.

Around Kapiti there is a small resident population at the Waikanae River estuary, where they can be observed feeding on the mudflats and at the edges of tidal waterways.

When approached, they will often walk or run away, but will take flight if you get too close.

They nest among the driftwood during early spring, at this time being most vulnerable to human and dog disturbance.

The bird in the picture has a missing foot, but this has not stopped him nesting and raising chicks for at least the last two years. We nicknamed him "Stumpy".

— Roger Smith



Captain IKA P22004 040 P1000000

BIRD'S EYE VIEW: A banded dotterel called Stumpy.

Kapiti News—Wednesday, April 30, 2014

Garden Bird Survey— Independent Herald, 9 July, 2014

Check out page 6—local members doing the survey in style.

[http://issuu.com/the.star/docs/214190ih?viewMode=magazine&mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fdark%](http://issuu.com/the.star/docs/214190ih?viewMode=magazine&mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fdark%2F)

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Obituaries

Island Bay Falcon

Colin Miskelly » Tue Apr 29, 2014, BirdingNZ.net

I have just been sent photographs of a pristine adult New Zealand falcon that flew into a window at Island Bay and died on 18 April. The bird was buried in the garden before being brought to our attention 11 days later...

The question arises as to whether this bird was one of the pair of falcons that have been successfully nesting at Zealandia.

Otautahi, kiwi killed by dog in Rimutaka

Forest Park; a blow to volunteers

Press Release – Greater Wellington Regional Council, May 9, 2014

One of a kiwi re-introduced by the community in parkland near Wainuiomata has been killed by a dog, and with his death his potential to produce anywhere upward of 20 chicks in his life time.

Otautahi was released into the Rimutaka Forest Park in July 2012 and had been monitored by volunteer trackers since then. He was important to the population as he was a young male of breeding age, and was probably killed while searching for a mate.

The death of Otautahi is a blow to volunteers of the Rimutaka Forest Park Trust, which reintroduced kiwi to the park with support from the Department of Conservation.

Greater Wellington Regional Council, which manages the adjoining Wainuiomata Water Collection and Recreation Areas, strongly supported the initiative and will provide more signs in

the area to remind dog walkers of their responsibilities.

“Kiwi are synonymous with what makes us New Zealanders, they are resilient birds provided we control introduced predators such as stoat and ferret and man’s best friend, our dogs,” said trust spokesperson Melody McLaughlin. “If the dog had been kept on a lead Otautahi would still be alive.”

It only takes seconds for a dog to crush a kiwi. While most people see them as secretive animals, they frequently nest near paths, putting them in harm’s way and making them vulnerable to dogs.

Otautahi was found beside the track leading into the Recreation Area, where dogs are often walked.

“Most owners would never expect a kiwi to be around paths or their dog to be capable of killing one, but the reality is a kiwi’s scent is irresistible to dogs, and kiwi cannot escape them. Owners need to know where their dogs are at all times and keep them inside or contained at night”, said Ms McLaughlin.

Greater Wellington Regional Council Parks Manager Amanda Cox said that in Wainuiomata we have the only place near urban Wellington where kiwi exist in the wild.

“We need dog walkers to help us look after kiwis, take note of the signs and keep their dogs on leads at all times in the Wainuiomata Recreation Area. Some people don’t and have been used to letting their dogs run free but we think keeping kiwis safe is worth it.”

The kiwi, a three old male, was born in Christchurch a week after the February 2011 earthquake and given the Maori name for Christchurch, Otautahi.

“His death will be a loss to the region’s natural environment and to the memory of the Christchurch earthquake. It’s such a sad end,” said Ms McLaughlin.

Birds NZ Research Fund

The "Birds New Zealand Research Fund" is a national fund administered by Birds New Zealand on behalf of a charitable trust.

Applications will be accepted from organisations or individuals prepared to make a difference through ornithological research, with outcomes likely to provide for better management of New Zealand birds or their environment. Approved applications will be funded retrospective for a 12 month period only.

CRITERIA:

- provide independent assessment of the sound scientific method behind the research
- involve research with a measurable outcome and a commitment to have the results published
- involve people learning as well as being involved
- have been successful in the previous year and performed well

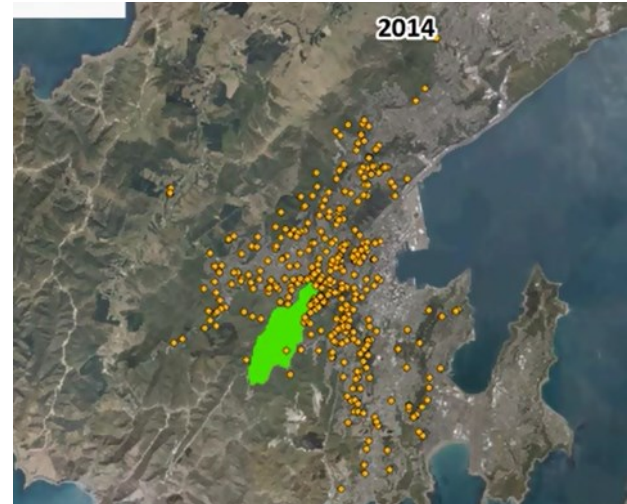
More details on the OSNZ website - <http://osnz.org.nz/studies-and-schemes/birds-nz-research-fund>

eBird – Kaka distribution in Wellington City

Nikki McArthur

Kaka were first introduced into Zealandia in 2002 and by 2011 the 300th chick had been banded. As the population of kaka expanded in the sanctuary there have been increasing reports of them outside the fence in various parts of Wellington. The following maps in a short video show the distribution/habitat use of North Island kaka in Wellington City between 2004-2014 (click on links below). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwzRyYwyfY0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?>



This is my first attempt at creating an animated map using a composite dataset of NI kaka sightings that has been put together using the New Zealand eBird database. Each orange dot on the map represents a single sighting of one or more kaka, with the sightings accumulating over time between 2004-2014.

About 80% of the data consists of kaka sightings supplied by Zealandia and have been collected either by Zealandia staff or volunteers or by members of the public reporting kaka sightings in the wider city via the “report a bird” web form on Zealandia’s website. Another 15% of the data consists of records collected by Greater Wellington Regional Council contractors during five-minute bird counts carried out in Wellington City Council parks and reserves as part of the annual WCC/GWRC bird monitoring programme. A further 5% or so of the data include records collected by OSNZ members that have been submitted either directly to eBird or to the Wellington Regional Recorder of OSNZ.

Creating this map was only possible by combining the data from all these sources and has resulted in a detailed picture of the occurrence of kaka around Wellington City that no one dataset alone could provide. This is a great example to illustrate the value of submitting your bird observations to eBird, or to your regional recorder. Once these sightings have been entered onto eBird, they are then combined with bird data collected from other observers and in time can be used to detect changes in bird distribution. This data is being increasingly used by agencies responsible for managing birds and their habitats in New Zealand, meaning that once on eBird,

your observations have the potential to make an ongoing contribution to bird conservation.

When viewing the map careful thought needs to be given to whether this expansion in kaka sightings reflects a true expansion in kaka distribution or simply a gradual improvement in search effort or reporting. Most of the change appears to be caused by the former as there is no plausible reason why in the earlier years people living closer to Zealandia would be more likely to report kaka than those living further away. Kaka seem to be the one species that most people are able to recognise and are inclined to report. Over the last 2-3 years that Raewyn Empson has been passing records on to me they have been trickling in at a fairly consistent rate from all across the city. I would be interested to hear whether anyone recalls noticing any changes in search effort/recording in the earlier years. One search effort-related feature current distribution of sightings in 2014 is that the southern and western limits of kaka sightings is likely to be artificial. These limits coincide with an abrupt drop in human population density (and therefore reporting) at the city limits. The northern and eastern limits of sightings are more likely to be real as they do not coincide with any major change in human population density.

It is likely that kaka are going to continue to spread in Wellington City and its environs for the foreseeable future. For that reason, I would like to encourage all Wellington OSNZ members to keep their eyes and ears out for kaka around Wellington, and to either record your sightings on eBird or send them directly to me (nikki.mcarthur@gw.govt.nz).

That way you too can help us to record the re-establishment of kaka in Wellington City as it unfolds.

Acknowledgements: Thank you very much to Charlie Hopkins for all his hard work entering most of the 1100 kaka records into eBird. Special mention should also go to Raewyn Empson and Zealandia staff and volunteers for collecting and sharing the vast bulk of the kaka sightings with which this map was constructed. Greater Wellington Regional Council contractors Annette Harvey, Mark McAlpine and Ian Flux collected the majority of the kaka records from non-surburban habitats.

What was New Zealand's first fully protected bird?

This is the title of a intriguing Te Papa blog written by Colin Miskelly. Colin presented at the OSNZ Annual Meeting, a summary of his investigations into this subject. Check out the blog to what is really is a fascinating story.

<http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2014/07/03/what-was-new-zealands-first-fully-protected-native-bird/>

Answer: Tui

Nelson Marlborough Institute of

Technology (NMIT) has the following monitoring and bio-security workshops scheduled in **August**.

Introduction to Natural Heritage

This course will introduce various terms and concepts of biodiversity. Students will learn about why New Zealand's unique biodiversity needs protecting, what management practices are used and the principles behind those practices.
> START: 4-29 August, > WHERE: Online, > FEE: Free

Māori Perspectives in Conservation

In this course students will learn about the meanings of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), demonstrating knowledge of the relevance of article 2 in te ao tūroa. Students will also develop an understanding of land lore in accordance with tikanga-a-iwi and tikanga-a-hapu, as well as explore kaitiakitanga according to tikanga Māori and conservation protocols. This course assesses for unit standards 16078 and 26037.
> START: 11-15 August, > WHERE: Nelson
> FEE: \$446.00 (not including marae food or accommodation costs)

Animal Pest Control

The course provides an overview of animal pests, their impacts and control methods (including the principles these are based on, and the task specifications DOC has developed). All the legal requirements for animal welfare and handling toxins is covered. Working within the law is vital to allow pest control agencies and community groups continued access to the full suite of animal pest control methods. This course assesses for unit standard 26372.

> START: 19-22 August, > WHERE: Thames, > FEE: \$446.00

More information about the course can be found at the [DOC website](#).

The courses are part of the **Conservation Biological Assets Training Scheme** as well as the **Conservation Bush Assessment Training Scheme**. Please visit our [website](#) for more information on programme structure and cost.

We have a limited number of spaces available. If interested, enrol soon or contact the Information and Enrolment Centre team on 0800 422 733 for an application pack today.

[Download our 2014 Prospectus](#)

[Apply online at nmit.ac.nz](#)

Wellington Region Contacts

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osnzwelly@gmail.com

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Birds New Zealand Regional Roundup: Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929

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Mist netting and passerine banding Peter Reese (04) 387 7387

Ruth.peter@actrix.co.nz

Zealandia 5 minute counts Colin Miskelly

Hakawai@xtra.co.nz

Backyard Bird Feeding

Our property at the top of Blue Mountains Road, in Upper Hutt is semi-rural with close-by areas of regenerating bush, pine forest and fragments of beech forest. In our district we have a good selection of birds, including tui, bellbird, whitehead, tomtit, silvereye and New Zealand pigeon which have been seen either regularly or occasionally on our property. Since 2006 Dallas has been feeding birds sugar water on the balustrade of our deck. Silvereyes started feeding on sugar water with hours (minutes) of it being made available. They have retained their sweet tooth and use it at varying levels throughout the year. Tui did not start feeding on sugar water until 2 years after it was first made available. They are the top of pecking order of bird species using the feeders but they have not deterred other species from feeding. Sparrows did not start using the sugar feeders until 2011 even though they have been eating other food such as bread prior to that. May the 28th, 2014 was a momentous day with the first recorded sighting of a bellbird drinking sugar water. The male bellbird is now a regular feeder and appears to dislike sparrows.

The reason why some species took longer than others to use the sugar water feeders is not clear. Silvereyes, tui and sparrows have been resident on our property since sugar water feeding commenced with bellbirds close by and occasional visitors. As can be seen from the photographs we principally use “chook” feeders in preference to the “hummingbird” type feeder. These feeders allow multiple birds and species to feed at the same time. The main disadvantage with this type of feeder is that wasps can be a problem in the summer. Silvereyes do not have long enough tongues to use our hummingbird feeders.

The recipe used for sugar water is 1 level cup of brown sugar per litre of water.

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle
Blue Mountains Road, Upper Hutt



Silvereyes, 2006-2014



Tui, 2008-2014



Sparrows – 2011-2014



Bellbirds- 28th May, 2014

Sandra Wong - Wairarapa Artist

During a recent stay in Greytown we came across Sandra Wong, an artist who is passionate about birds and who has her own distinctive style. One of her interests is owls and a couple of examples of her owl paintings are shown below. The first painting is entitled "Trans-Tasman Family Reunion", whilst the second painting is called "The Usual Suspects".



There is a large mural of hers in the main street of Carterton which is shown below.



Sandra is based at The St John's Hall, 73 Main Street, Greytown, open most Sundays & Mondays from 10.30am - 4pm or when the sign is out. Her work is also available at the gallery at 103 Main Street in Greytown next to New Zealand Birds.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/local-art-by-sandra-wong>