

Wellington Region Newsletter

OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

September 2015

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

Greetings

Spring is here! All sorts of birds are thinking about nesting or have actually nested. A pair of spur-winged plovers started nesting in July and have produced a couple of chicks close to a busy road in Trentham and on our recent trip to Auckland Dallas and I heard the repeated calling of the normally silent harrier.

I have started compiling a list of potential speakers for our 2016 meetings. If you have any suggestions as to topics or speakers you would like for our monthly meetings please let me know. I am looking for volunteers to present the findings of "local projects" at our February meeting.

Special thanks to Sharon Alderson for organising the event for young birders and for the Te Papa staff for showing them some of the wonders of museum bird collection.

Geoff de Lisle

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, 7.45pm.

October Meeting

Monday 5th of October, Helen Gummer and Shane Cotter will speak on the progress of the seabird translocations to Mana and Mātū/Somes Islands.

November Meeting

Monday 2nd November, Amelia Geary will speak on the conservation of the spoon-billed sandpiper.

December Meeting – Christmas Special

Monday 7th of December, Paul Gibson, "New Zealand's Remote Islands - Antipodes, Bounties & Chathams". Paul resides in Wanganui and has published a couple of books of photographs of New Zealand birds. Christmas cake and drinks will be served at this meeting.

Report of Monthly Meetings

July Meeting. "Habitat Use of Primarily Forest-Dwelling Brown Teal, Pāteke (*Anas chlorotis*) at Zealandia". Katie Sheridan.

Eighteen captive-bred brown teal were released in Zealandia between 2000 and 2001, with breeding confirmed in 2002 and every year since then. This population of brown teal has been for the past 18 months the focus of a study by Katie Sheridan, a post graduate student from Queens College, New York. Through tracking birds with transmitters and the use of trail cameras she has been able to define the home ranges and roosting sites of brown teal in Zealandia. Some birds could be

defined as “lake ducks” which had home ranges centred on a lake as well as roosting by a lake. In contrast, other birds could be defined as “forest ducks” which had home ranges that were centred in the forest and not a lake. Furthermore, these birds roosted in the forest rather than by a lake. This is an important finding with the implication that Zealandia can support many more brown teal by inhabiting both the lake and forest habitats. Determining the number of brown teal in Zealandia is not part of Katie’s study but she estimates approximately 40 birds are currently present in the sanctuary. Her findings should be taken into account when assessing the suitability of habitats for establishing new populations of brown teal as well as carrying out surveys.

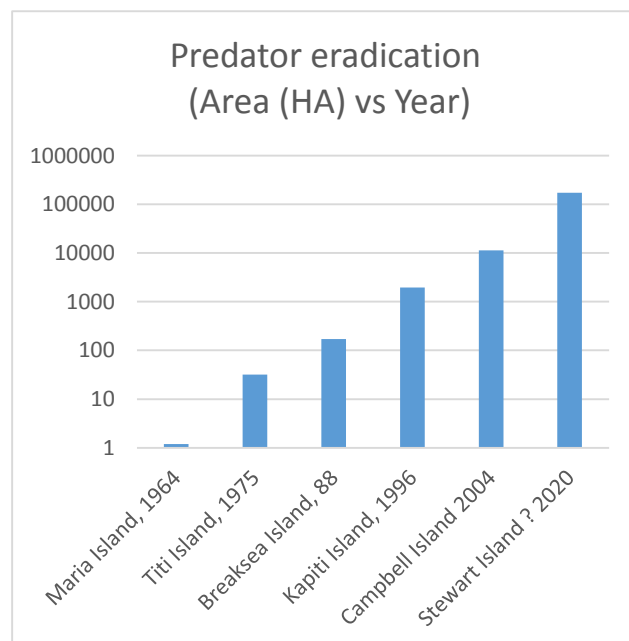
August Meeting, Cognition and foraging behaviour of kaka. Julia Loepelt.

Corvids and parrots are remarkable for their relatively large brains and have been the focus of studies of cognition in birds. Cognition is the set of all mental abilities and processes related to knowledge, memory, problem solving and decision making. Julia Loepelt a doctoral student from Victoria University presented results of her studies on the cognition and foraging behaviour of kaka at Zealandia. Her investigations included two tests (lid opening and string pulling) and social learning. Interestingly, juvenile kakas were better at lid opening tasks than adults. This may reflect a degree of neophobia in adults and the presence of food at other feeders. There was no age difference in the ability to complete the string pulling task. In comparison with kea, kaka were as good, if not better at the lid opening and string pulling tasks. Preliminary results indicate that kaka, like kea did not show high levels of social learning.

September Meeting, Predator-Free New Zealand, Kevin Hackwell.

Kevin Hackwell presented the case for the establishment of a predator-free New Zealand and likened it to the American moon programme. When the Americans announced the programme to put a man on the moon all the necessary technologies were available and what was required was to obtain the resources to assemble them to achieve the ultimate goal. Kevin and others argue that the necessary technologies are already available to eradicate (kill) predators and what is required is the resources to apply these technologies over larger and larger areas. There has been remarkable progress in eradicating pests from islands in New Zealand. Maria Island in the Hauraki Gulf in 1964 was the first island in New Zealand to be cleared of rats. Subsequently, there has been a major improvement in the techniques for eradicating pests from islands with a 10 fold increase each decade in the size of the islands cleared of predators. If this rate of progress continues then it is possible to envisage an island the size of Stewart Island being cleared of predators by the end of the current decade. Currently, the largest island undergoing predator eradication in the world is South Georgia which is approximately twice the area of Stewart Island. By the middle of the century it should be possible to achieve eradication of predators from the entire country. To achieve this goal not only requires the necessary resources but also public acceptance of a predator-free New Zealand.

<http://predatorfreenz.org/>



Field Activities

- (1) *Mist netting and passerine banding* – Peter Reese
For those interested in mist netting / passerine banding please contact Peter Reese. Recent banding activities are summarised in the blog, <http://wgtnnzbanders.blogspot.co.nz/>

(2) *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

(3) *Shag and Red-billed gull surveys*

Summaries of the last 12 months results are included in this newsletter.

Hornsey Rd Sunday 2 August - An old bird

Peter Reese reports: The big highlight of the day was a Silvereeye that had been banded on 11 Feb 2005. This bird is now at 3824 days the oldest Silvereeye that we have caught at any site. It passed the old record of 3817 days which was held by a bird last caught in November 2007. This bird is also now the second oldest bird of any species only surpassed by a Blackbird recovered at the Zoo after 4021 days. Peter Reese.

Note; Heather & Robertson (2015) report that the oldest banded silvereeye in New Zealand was at least 11.5 years (4198 days) and the oldest blackbird 15 years (5475 days).

Te Papa "Indoor Field Trip" for Young Birders

On Thursday 9 July 8 keen young birders met at the Te Papa Collection building for a guided tour of the collection led by Colin Miskelly.

Colin enthralled the audience with specimens and stories for the next 90 minutes. Highlights included; a falcon in flight, one of the earliest specimens of Takahe, "spot the mutant" in the tray of sparrows, some specimens of extinct birds, and the massive albatross specimens. After refuelling we moved down to Te Papa itself to sketch the specimens there. Sarah Jamieson joined the crew and described features and behaviours of many of the birds on display, prior to the artistic endeavours. Colin and Sarah deserve a round of applause (at minimum!) for their engaging efforts.

Thanks also to Andrea & Julia (parents) who provided additional support. Sharon Alderson.



Photo, Sharon Alderson

Bird Snippets – Wellington

White Heron at Hutt River Estuary, Charlotte

Sat Jun 27, 2015 White Heron seen this afternoon in a boat that appears to have been neglected. Lots of preening happening and we also saw it with what looked to be an old flax leaf that also made its way into the boat. We wondered whether repairs to a nest might've been underway. BirdingNZ.net



Photo, Duncan Watson

Reef Heron Plimmerton Fire Station, [Jim J](#) »

Tue Jul 07, 2015. Reef Heron further along the coast today - hunting off rocks just off the parking area about 500m before the Plimmerton Boating Club. BirdingNZ.net



Reef Heron Plimmerton Fire Station, [ledzep](#)

» Tue Jul 07, 2015. And I saw one way further down the coast from Makara Beach at Opau Bay on Sunday. Photo, Duncan Watson. BirdingNZ.net

White morph southern giant petrel, Cook Strait, [Colin Miskelly](#) » Sun Jul 12,

An interesting crossing from Wellington to Picton this morning. Calm and almost no birds until clear of the Wellington south coast, then reasonable diversity of Procellariiformes before Tory Channel, including six albatross species, though none unexpected. The highlight was a white morph southern giant petrel, but there were also some surprises after exiting Tory Channel into Queen Charlotte Sound, including a Cape petrel and a diving petrel (I had seen none of the latter in Cook Strait) and a king shag closer to Picton than I have seen one before - about a km north of Allports Island.

Cook Strait

Northern royal albatross 1
Southern royal albatross 2
Black-browed mollymawk 20 (all seen well were melanophrys)
Buller's mollymawk 1
White-capped mollymawk 4
Salvin's mollymawk 4
Northern giant petrel 1
Southern giant petrel 1
Cape petrel 30
Westland petrel 2
Fairy prion 5
Fluttering shearwater 200
Black-fronted tern 15
White-fronted tern 1
Southern black-backed gull 6
Red-billed gull 200

Queen Charlotte Sound

Above 3 species (one of each) plus 5 gannets and 2 spotted shags. BirdingNZ.net

Black phase fantails, Wellington, [Nikki McArthur](#) » Mon Jul 13, 2015.

I have received three reports of black phase fantails seen around Wellington over the past week and a half. One bird seen at Otari Botanical Gardens by Ros Batcheler on the 2nd of July, another

bird seen by Owen Spearpoint in his backyard at Eastbourne on the 4th of July, and another seen by Robyn Smith in her backyard at Titahi Bay during the last couple of days.

Could just be coincidence of course, but I wonder whether we've had an influx of birds from across Cook Strait? BrdingNZ.net

White morph southern giant petrel - Kaikoura, Michael Szabo » Wed Jul 29, 2015.

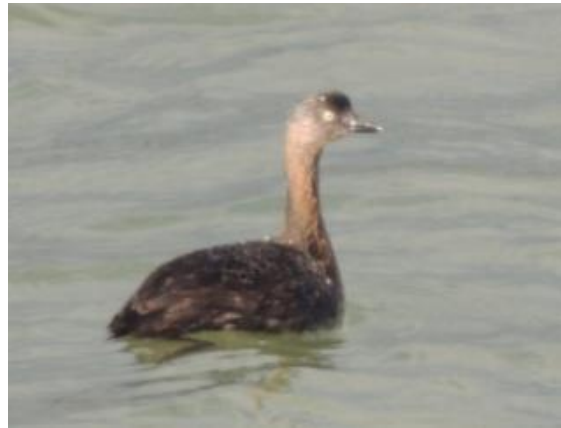
A photo has been posted of a white morph southern giant petrel seen off Kaikoura last Saturday. BirdingNZ.net. (This could well be the same bird that Colin Miskelly saw while crossing Cook Strait). BirdingNZ.net

<https://fbcdn-sphotos-c-a.akamaihd.net/.../377ec84fc2> Link to photo.

Inner city biodiversity, janep » Thu Jul 16, 2015. I saw a dozen kakas every morning while walking through Wellington Botanic Garden this week. Tui are everywhere. There is a Tui pub/tree on Kinross Street if anyone's interested. Four or so wood pigeons napping in trees at noon. A kingfisher was in my backyard yesterday. A pair of rosellas were hanging around in Bolton cemetery on a big pine tree. Could be nesting?

Also have reports of rosellas in Wilton, Upper Hutt, Stokes Valley, Waikanae Beach while looking for my lost pet. The most interesting report was a green parrot with blue on the wing and yellow patch on the head in Brooklyn. I've never seen yellow crowned kakariki in Wellington.

Dabchick, Porirua Harbour, Ian Armitage, 19th July, 2015. "I was astonished yesterday afternoon when driving to Porirua from Titahi Bay to see a dabchick swimming and diving in Porirua Harbour, yes, in the sea!! It dived often and was finding food too. Dabchicks are uncommon in the Porirua – Pauatahanui locality and as far as I am aware are seen in fresh water habitats."



Photo, Ian Armitage.

Rifleman, Eastbourne, imogen Tue Jul 21, 2015 8:30. Good on you George. Last weekend I walked over the ridge to Butterfly Creek and saw 2 pairs near the top. I first for me too. Fantastic sightings. No decent photos but I'll be back. BirdingNZ.net. Originally reported by George Hobson 21 July, 2015

Inner city biodiversity, andyf » Wed Jul 22, 2015. On Monday I was walking down Cuba Mall in Wellington when I heard the squeak of a fantail. I looked up and sure enough, there was a fantail, flitting about under an awning over a shop front, on the spiky bits supposed to deter pigeons. It was a very incongruous sight and sound, and no-one else seemed to notice. There are trees in the mall but it is mostly concrete.

Inner city biodiversity, ledzep » Sun Jul 26, 2015. Saw 3 Pukeko's on Saturday morning on Hutt Road between Kaiwharawhara Road and Placemakers, on the bushy bank. Unusual to see them in the middle of the city near a main highway. I also saw a couple of Pukeko's last time I went to Happy Valley landfill. BirdingNZ.net

Inner city biodiversity, ashercook » Tue Jul 28, 2015. Just saw a single NZ falcon eating some prey in the middle of Kelburn park. Nice little lunchtime sighting. BirdingNZ.net

Inner city biodiversity, ledzep » Wed Jul 29, 2015. On the way to work this morning walking through Wellington Botanic Gardens at about 8 am, we saw a Falcon come out of a

tree just above the Lady Norwood Rose Gardens and fly off west across the gardens. It was chased out by a Magpie, and there was a pair of Magpies in the tall pine tree by the changing sheds for the sports field. And of course lots of Tui and Kaka. BirdingNZ.net

Spur-winged plover, Trentham, Upper Hutt, Geoff de Lisle, 29th July, 2015.

Nested with 3 eggs, in open grass ~12m from the side of busy road by the rifle range.



8th of August – 2 chicks seen. One chick in photo disappearing under parent. Falcon flew in while I was looking for the spur-wing plovers. They responded to the falcon in their typical noisy fashion.



7th September. One chick remaining, another 2 weeks to fledging.



Inner city biodiversity, ledzep » Thu Jul 30, 2015. Also an observation from the sports fields by the Lady Norwood Rose gardens. In winter there are lots of Blackbirds on the sports field, I have counted over 90. And if I am lucky, 1 Thrush. The ratio of Blackbirds to Thrushes is very high. I was in Totora Park a few weeks ago and noticed how many Thrushes they had feeding out on the open fields. In summer most of the Blackbirds disappear somewhere, there are hardly any feeding on the sports fields. BirdingNZ.net

Inner city biodiversity, Olwen » Thu Jul 30, 2015. My daughter reports 4 or 5 pukekos on the bank on The Old Hutt Rd today - she saw 2 the day before further up the bank. It seems an odd place for them to choose, it is not marshy. BirdingNZ.net

Inner city biodiversity, ledzep » Mon Aug 03, 2015. A lone Fluttering Shearwater just a few metres off the Esplanade between Queens Wharf and Te Papa, having fun in the heavy northerly wind. After diving, it just lifts its wings and gets carried a metre or two up or down-wind and then dives again. BirdingNZ.net

Re: Inner city biodiversity, ashercook Aug 04, 2015. Saw a single bellbird at Victoria Uni's Kelburn campus today. Though I used to regularly hear them just down the road at the botanic gardens it's the first time I've seen a bellbird on campus.

Morepork, Island Bay, Wellington Michael Szabo Aug 05, 2015. Saw a morepork roosting in a karaka tree in Island Bay this morning: BirdingNZ.net



Photo, Michael Szabo

Kakariki Wilton, ledzep Mon Aug 10, 2015. A friend who lives in Wilton (Wellington) sent me a short video he has monitoring a rat trap in his back garden. It recorded a bird that he could identify (he knew it wasn't a Starling or Sparrow), and it clearly shows a Red-crowned Parakeet briefly land and feed in his back garden. BirdingNZ.net

Kaka at Paraparaumu Beach, Petrolhead Sun Aug 16, 2015. First time I have seen a Kaka up this way. Spotted yesterday flying high over our house yesterday morning. Wondered if it was from the island or Zealandia.

Spotted Shag Green Point, ledzep » Sun Aug 16, 2015. 1 Spotted Shag out on the rocks from Green Point (Titahi Bay, Wellington) showing breeding plumage. Unusual to see one round there. Also a Kingfisher, pair of Rosellas, Pied and Little Shag, pair of Pipits on the beach, 1 x Caspian Tern, and some Fluttering Shearwater out near Mana Is. BirdingNZ.net

Wellington City biodiversity, Charlotte Aug 23, 2015. Saw a falcon heading towards Zealandia this afternoon about 1.30pm as I was driving down Tinakori Rd. BirdingNZ.net

Wellington City biodiversity, Colin Miskelly » Sep 03, 2015. Two unusual sightings out my office window this morning. For those who know Wellington, the view is over the new Pukeahu War Memorial Park, between the Basin Reserve and the Carillon. The first was a falcon in lazy flight, pursued half-heartedly by a black-backed gull (a territorial pair nests on a flat roof 100 metres away, and I guess this made a change from pursuing drones used to film the cricket at the Basin Reserve). Next I was alerted by loud oystercatcher calls in time to see a pair of variable oystercatchers fly over the park and behind the Carillon before disappearing over the old Dominion Museum building heading for Island Bay. BirdingNZ.net

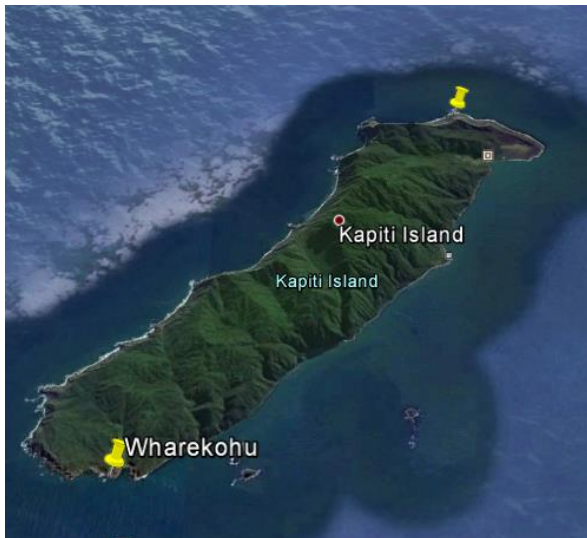
Nesting white-fronted terns Wellington

Last spring / summer white-fronted terns were observed nesting in a number of different locations in the Wellington region.

- Kapiti Island – Wharekoku. 14/11/2014. Nesting in small numbers (<10) on rock on the southern entrance to the bay at Wharekoku. No nesting red-billed gulls seen.
- Kapiti Island – North. 6/12/2015. Twelve nests and 18 birds. Nesting next to nesting red-billed gulls.
- By quarry between Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay. 23/12/2014. At least 5 nests, 2 with chicks. No nesting red-billed gulls observed.
- The eastern end of Breaker Bay, Miramar Peninsula, the area known as Point Dorset / the Pinnacles. A year later, on 20th October 2014, I counted 13 nests on the southeast side of the crag at the end of the beach, with possibly several more nests on two of the offshore pinnacles. Peter Hodge.

- North coast, Mana Island. Nikki McArthur noted terns possibly nested during the OSNZ trip, last October.
- Makaro/Ward Island, nesting on rocks on the western end of the island, recorded in previous years. No observations from last spring / summer. Susanne Govella, Reg Cotter.

Please let me know if there are any additions to this list. I will collect data on white-fronted terns this coming spring / summer and any information from the coming nesting season would be greatly appreciated. Geoff de Lisle.



"I first observed terns nesting there on 29th November 2013. I took a photo of a chick there on 4th December:" Peter Hodge.

Meritorious Service Award – Julia White

At the last Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) Conference Julia White, a Wellington member was awarded a Meritorious Service Award for serving as the membership secretary for the last four years. This is a very important role in OSNZ and Julia is most deserving recipient of the award. The new membership secretary is Jill West from Canterbury.

Days Bay Penguin Colony – Little Penguin Haven

While Matiu/Somes is the stronghold for nesting little penguins in Wellington harbour they also nest, albeit in small numbers, on the shores of the mainland. The Eastern Bays Little Blue Foundation was established in 1994. The penguin nesting site near Days Bay was established in 1997 and run by Viv Hextall, a local identity who was well known for rehabilitation of distressed, injured and diseased birds. After Viv passed away maintenance stopped and the site gradually fell into disrepair. The major storm in June 2013 caused serious damage to the penguin sanctuary and made the neighbouring house uninhabitable. The only penguin nests to survive undamaged were a small number of original underground chambers. The damaged house was demolished and the owner approached the Hutt City Council asking for permission to use the strip of land of the penguin colony for access for a crane to bring in a concrete wall. The house owner offered to help rebuild the damaged penguin sanctuary. A plan was established after discussions between the Department of Conservation and Mike Rumble who has a wealth of experience working with penguins on



Matiu/Somes Island. The plan to rebuild the site from the ground up and install a large number of nest boxes was supported by Hutt City, DOC, the neighbours and interested members of the public. Hutt City paid for the timber, Placemakers cut it into box components, the MenzShed helped trim the pieces, prepared box packs, and helped with building the boxes. Pupils from Wesley College helped assemble them. This project is succeeding because of volunteer

efforts and very generous donations of time, materials and machinery.

The rehabilitation of the site continues with the new nesting boxes in place and some new plantings. Some of the boxes are already being used by penguins. Pupils from Wellesley College will continue to study and monitor the penguins as they go through the breeding season. Sally Bain, an eastern bays resident is helping set up an Eastern Bays equivalent to Places for Penguins. . This group will collect information on little penguins in the eastern bays in order to get an estimate of the number of birds in the area. They also nest outside the Days Bay sanctuary but the numbers of birds is unknown. Investigations will also be carried out to see what can be done to maintain and hopefully increase the penguin population. Some penguins nest under houses which is not always welcomed. The information on the East Harbour penguins will complement the investigations on Matiu/Somes Island and the Places for Penguins project investigating birds on the western side of the harbour where weed control, fencing, dune plantings and the provision of nest boxes has been done by Forest and Bird and other organisations



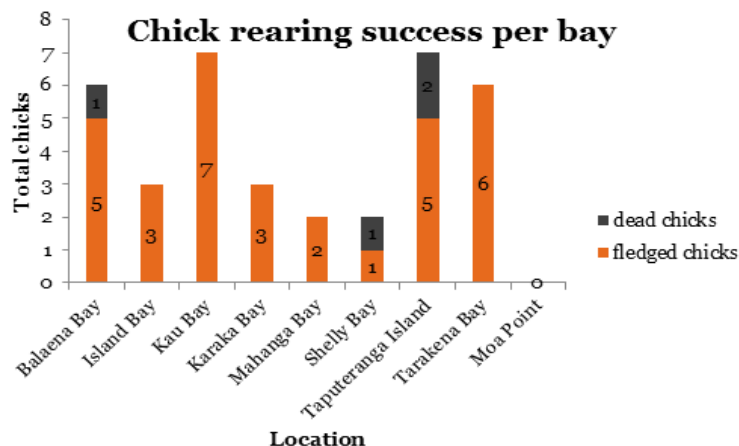
An 8 year study conducted by Reg Cotter, Mike Rumble and Ros Batcheler on penguins on Mitiu/Somes Island has just been completed. It is hoped that universities will supplement the good work on Mitiu/Somes, by Places for Penguins, and by the Eastern Bays team by conducting more detailed research into the little penguin

<https://www.facebook.com/PlacesforPenguins>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Places-for-Penguins-Easternbays>

Places for Penguins – results for 2014 / 15 nesting season

In total 36 chicks hatched in the 2014/2015 breeding season. Four of those were found dead in or near their nest boxes. When the chicks were not found in their nest boxes after they have lost most



of their down, it was assumed that they had successfully fledged, unless a carcass was found. Based on this assumption 32 young penguins were successfully raised in the nest boxes that were monitored this season. Moa point was the only bay where no chicks were seen in the nest boxes.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/PlacesforPenguins/photos/pb.278967502166600.-2207520000.1441174351./936946799701997/?type=3&theater>

Grace Suckling, 2/1/1992 – 20/7/2015

On the 20th of July, Grace Suckling, a Wellington OSNZ member, passed away in Waikanae. She trained as a dentist in Dundee, Scotland and practised in the United Kingdom before moving to New Zealand in 1956. After raising a family she began working at the Dental Research Unit in Wellington. A major focus of her research was the investigation of developmental defects of enamel and included the use of sheep as an experimental model. The sheep studies were carried out at the Wallaceville Animal Research Centre in Upper Hutt. In recognition of the quality of Grace's research she was awarded a Doctor of Dental Science. After moving to Waikanae she became an active volunteer of Nga Manu. Throughout her life Grace had a deep interest in the natural environment. The Te Papa museum has two specimens submitted by a Grace, a mounted dunnock collected by her (Baton Valley, Nelson, Sep 1978) and a Salvin's prion she collected found on Waikanae Beach (Nov 2002).

Feather loss in parrots and parakeets

The photograph of an eastern rosella was taken in August 2015, during a visit to Shakespeare Park at the end of the Whangaparoa peninsula in Auckland. A notable feature of the picture is the loss of feathers round the eye. The cause of the feather loss is unknown but is unlikely to be feather and beak disease which is a viral infection of parrots and parakeets. Feather and beak disease virus has been commonly found in aviary-kept parrots throughout New Zealand. In the North Island, infection with feather and beak disease virus is widespread in wild eastern rosellas and sulphur-crested cockatoos. The virus has also been detected in wild red-crowned parakeets in the North Island and yellow-crowned parakeets in Fiordland. No evidence of feather and beak disease has been found in kaka, kea or kakapo. In susceptible parrots species the virus attacks the cells responsible for growing feathers and the beak, causing feather loss and abnormal beak growth. In other species birds may be infected without any visible signs of clinical disease. Recent studies indicate feather and beak disease virus is not highly virulent in native parakeets in New Zealand and they probably act as dead-end or spill-over hosts (Jackson et al., 2015). The susceptibility of kaka, kea and kakapo to feather and beak disease virus is unknown and an ongoing concern.



A more likely cause of the feather loss in the pictured rosella is mange, an infection with mites. The feather loss in the picture of the rosella is consistent with the ectoparasitic mange found in red-crowned parakeets caused by the mite, *Procnemidoptes janssensi* (pictured) which was recently reported by Bethany Jackson and colleagues (2015). An outbreak of feather loss was observed in red-crowned parakeets between 2011 and 2013 when birds on Tiritiri Matangi and Little Barrier were examined as part of a health survey. Some degree of feather loss was found in 47/142 birds while mites were found in 79/142 skin biopsies. There is a limited amount of information of mite infestation in eastern rosellas from either Australia or New Zealand. A *Harpyrhynchus* mite was found in a rosella in Australia but this mite has not been reported in New Zealand (Lawrence, 1959). There are some preliminary observations of mite infestation in New Zealand rosellas.



A possibility that cannot be excluded is that the pictured rosella had a mite infection and feather and beak disease. There is a need for further studies on the causes of feather loss in New Zealand parrots and parakeets. Until more is known about the causes of feather loss considerable care

needs to be taken in translocating birds and that measures are taken to ensure the potentially vulnerable species such as kaka, kea and kakapo are not exposed to these agents. OSNZers are requested to keep an eye out for feather loss in eastern rosellas and parakeets in the Wellington region. If you do see any affected birds please send me an email as additional specimens are required to better define mites in these bird species.

Geoff de Lisle

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Bethany Jackson and Allen Health for their expert comments and the photograph of the mite.

Jackson B, Varsani A, Holyoake C, Jakob-Hoff R, Robertson I, McInnes K, Empson R, Gray R, Nakagawa K, Warren K. (2015) Emerging infectious disease or evidence of endemicity? A multi-season study of beak and feather disease virus in wild red-crowned parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae*). Arch Virol. 160(9):2283-92

Jackson B, Heath A, Harvey C, Holyoake C, Jakob-Hoff R, Varsani A, Robertson I, Warren K. (2015) Knemidokoptinid (Epidermoptidae: Knemidokoptinae) mite infestation in wild red-crowned parakeets (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae*): correlations between macroscopic and microscopic findings. J Wildl Dis. 51(3):651-63.

Lawrence RF. (1959) A new mite parasite (*Hypirhynchus*) from the rosella parakeet (*Trombidiformes acris*). Proc Linn NSW. 84:238-41.



Pinehaven School Mural on the side of the school.

Shag Survey - 1 year Summary

The shag survey is about to enter the second year of data collection. The following is a summary of the observations collected in the first year. Black shags, pied shags, little shags and spotted shags nest in our region. Little black shags do not nest in the Wellington region but are regular winter visitors. The nearest nesting colony of little black shags is in the Wairarapa.

Pied shag, nesting colonies

Pied shags first started nesting at Makara in 1996 and it is still an active nesting site. From 2007 to the present day, a further 7 nesting colonies of pied shags established in our region. The most northerly colony is at Waikawa Beach. The following table lists the location of the pied shag nesting colonies and the maximum number of nests recorded in any observation. The average maximum of nests / colony was 16.

Location	No. nests (month)
Makara	10-12 (October)
Zealandia	26 (March)
Mana Island	13 (October)
Pauatahanui Inlet (A)	8 (January)
Pauatahanui Inlet (B)	6 (January)
Pukerua Bay	3 (October)
Waikanae (Waimanu Lagoon)	37 (November)
Pharazyn Reserve	21 (December)
Waikawa Beach	18 (January)

Spotted shags

Spotted shags were first recorded nesting on Matiu / Somes Island in 1972. In 2014, 113 nests were recorded on Matiu / Somes and Mokopuna Islands. Nesting was also observed on Makaro / Ward Island (2 nests) and Breaker Bay (3 nests). Spotted shags were first observed nesting on Kapiti Island in 1999. The nesting site on Kapiti Island has changed a number of times and they currently nest on a large rock at Te Mimi which is on the east

coast, south of the DOC houses at Rangatira. In 2014 13 nests were recorded on Kapiti Island.



Spotted shags, Matiu / Somes Island, Sept, 2015.

Multi-species colonies

A notable feature of the first year of the shag survey was the finding of multiple shag species nesting at the same colony. These are summarised in the following table with the number of nests in bracket

Location	Shag species		
Zealandia	Pied (26)	Little (11)	Black
Makara	Pied (10-12)	Little (4)	
Pauatahanui (A)	Pied (7)	Little (2)	
Waikanae	Pied (37)	Little (3)	
Matiu / Somes Island	Spotted (113)	Little (3)	

Little shags

In addition to the little shag nests listed above there is a nesting colony at Williams Park in Days Bay. In October, 2014 there were ~20 active nests. The status of the nesting colony at BRANZ, New Judgeford was not determined.

Black shags

Currently Black shags nest at Lake Kohangatera (Pencarrow's Lake), Zealandia, Melling, Te Marua and Otaki. More observations are required on the Black shag

colonies but the preliminary results indicate only small numbers (<10 nests) in all of the colonies.

Little black shags

While Little black shags do not nest in the Wellington region they do nest in the Wairarapa. In November, 2014 John Cheyne surveyed the shags at Matthews Lagoon, by Lake Wairarapa.

Little black shags, 36 nests

Black shags, 39 nests

Little shags, 101 nests

Second Year of the survey

Would members please let me know of any other nesting colonies in our region so that they can be included in the second year of the

survey. Members wishing to participate in this survey should contact me.

Geoff de Lisle

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THE WELLINGTON AIRPORT SEASON

FOR THE BIRDS

Mark Anderson, Jony Easterby, Kathy Hinde, Ulf Pedersen, Esther Tew, et al (England/Wales/New Zealand, Otari-Wilton's Bush, 3 – 19 Mar 2016)

The New Zealand Festival has announced *For the Birds* for its 2016 line up. As dusk falls, gather the whānau together for an adventure in the bush, at this celebration of flight, light and birdsong from the team behind 2014 Festival hit *Power Plant*. The squawk and chirrup, the flutter of feathers and the twinkle of light – inspired by all things avian, artists from Britain and New Zealand have created this enchanting walk-through art experience in the native forest of Otari-Wilton's Bush in Wellington. Take some time out from the madness of modern life to rediscover birds as the wonders of nature they are.

The following link provides further details and how to book tickets;

<http://www.festival.co.nz/2016/events/for-the-birds/>