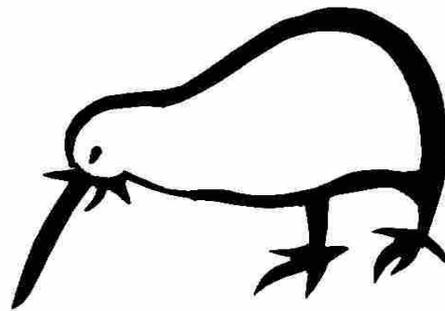


APTERYX

Issue 17

April 2007



NEWSLETTER OF THE FAR NORTH REGION OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND



Glossy Ibis
Awanui Wharf
22 March

(All photos by
Detlef & Carol
Davies)



REGIONAL REP'S REFLECTIONS

It has been an eventful summer with some well attended field trips and wader counts, extended pelagics and indoor meetings. We have also had a number of guests taking an interest in our society and who would be welcome as members.

Our newsletters are now on the OSNZ website and I have been emailing them in pdf form to the other Regional Reps. I propose to mail hard copies of 'Apteryx' just to Far North members and some Northland members and local guests who are likely to be able to participate in our events but am happy to email copies further afield. Some local members have indicated that they too would be happy with emailed copies but I hope that recipients will actually print them. All guests attending our meetings are regarded as prospective members to whom I am happy to mail the next 2 copies while they decide whether or not to take up membership.

Warawara Forest, 4 March



We welcome Ruth Marsh as a new OSNZ member in our region and Barry Stevens as a newcomer to the area. Please contact me if you need a membership form. The membership secretary is Roger Sharp, PO Box 12 – 1039, Henderson, Auckland, 09 413 8580, roger.sharp@xtra.co.nz.

From time to time I circularise news by email such as programme changes, confirmation of times and meeting places of events, etc. If you do not have email, please give me a phone number so I can contact you with this information.

The Far North Regional Officers are as follows:

Regional Representative & 'Apteryx' Editor

Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri
09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com

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Laureen Alston, 48a Riverview Road, Kerikeri
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RECENT EVENTS

Whimbrel
Shetland, 1989

19 – 28 Jan Wader Mist-netting Part 2

Rob Schuckard reported as follows on Birding NZ (yahoo group):

Members of OSNZ Far North, Auckland and Nelson participated in the second expedition to Parengarenga Harbour, Kowhai Beach and Rangaunu Harbour. The expedition was aiming for a mid summer census and to catch birds for the OSNZ / DoC migratory wader movement project.

The expedition was a great success, where at Kokota Sandspit, Kowhai Beach and Rangaunu Harbour about 5500 waders of 18 species were counted, about 80% migratory.

Highlights were about 1000 Turnstones, 3300 Red Knot and almost 5000 Bar-tailed Godwits. We also found about 150 Wrybill, 114 NZ Dotterel, 60 Golden Plover, 3 Grey Plover, 22 Red-necked Stint, 1 Curlew Sandpiper, a few Sharpies, 1 Eastern Curlew, 103(!!!!)Whimbrel, 1 Grey-tailed Tattler, 1 Wandering Tattler.

With the knowledge of our initial catching trial in September 2006, we were very successful in catching and colourbanding all three species of the project. We caught 10 Bar-tailed Godwit, 38 Red Knot (including one from SE Australia) and 13 Turnstone. Also, the first ever Whimbrel was caught and banded.



Kokota Sandspit
Jan 2007

We owe many thanks to the local Iwi who have been instrumental in the success of this trip. They provided us with crucial boat transport during the day and also with catching in the middle of the night. In many ways, a fantastic trip. Also thanks to all the participants and members of OSNZ in the Far North.



New Zealand Dotterel
Matauri Bay, 17 March

Walker Island, 23 Jan

Those who were present from 20 – 22 Jan assisted with the regular count and results appear in the charts on pages 8 & 9. At least 17 flagged or banded birds were spotted.

Fri 16 March A month later than originally scheduled we had the pleasure of Adrian Riegen's presentation on wader migration, a topical subject after the January wader week. No matter how much we protect our wader sites in New Zealand, once they leave our shores they are in the hands of the Chinese, the Koreans, the Russians and the Alaskans on whom we have to rely to safeguard their resting and breeding areas.

For those interested in how the 16 Godwits fitted with radio transmitters are getting on, I am copying below a message from Adrian dated 1 April:

As of 1 April 2007 the following situation exists with the 16 transmitted Godwits:

4 are on the ground in Asia, 2 in South Korea and 2 in China. All are in suitable habitat and at known Godwit sites.

1 is on the tiny island of Yap in the north west Pacific. Yap seems to have some suitable feeding habitat.

1 is in the air flying north having left Miranda at about 13:00 on 31 March. The first suitable day for at least 10 days.

3 are still on the ground in NZ and are transmitting well – one at Farewell Spit and 2 at Miranda.

5 are missing on route to Asia, 3 over the ocean, one landed near Port Douglas in north Queensland but is silent and one near the Philippines coast. We don't know at this stage if something has happened to the birds or if the transmitters have failed.

2 are missing at Miranda. One has been seen alive and well but the fate of the other is unclear.

To check the up-to-date situation go to <http://www.werc.usgs.gov/sattrack/shorebirds/overall.html> where at the time of writing there is news up to 12 April.

Weekend 3 – 4 March Warawara Forest

As most of you know, we had a very successful weekend here. On Saturday ten of us including 3 DoC employees and 3 4WD vehicles got into the centre of the forest where most of the kauri trees are, to search for Riflemen. After hearing the distinctive high-pitched call we managed to see 10 birds. They were usually quite high in the trees, feeding at the main trunks and large branches, particularly where there are mosses and epiphytes. Seven of us went into the forest again on the Sunday and after climbing to a spectacular viewpoint we returned to yesterday's area and saw 4 Riflemen at a spot closer to the main track so these were probably different birds.



Immature Rifleman

Apart from a few on Great Barrier and Little Barrier Islands, this is the only known site for Rifleman north of Auckland. Nobody got a photo so this is one taken at Glenorchy a couple of years ago. Many thanks to Lester, Patrick and Fiona from DoC in Kaitaia for assisting with access, vehicles and guiding and to Heather and Robb Campbell from Waitawa Farmstay in Broadwood for their hospitality.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

This covers the Far North region since December.

North Island Brown Kiwi Frequent sightings from Purerua and Moturoa Island, heard early March at Te Angamate Bay & Matauwhi Bay (Russell) & Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri in April.

New Zealand Dabchick Up to 4 at Lake Rotokawau (near Lake Ngatu), 2 further north at lake near Forestry HQ

Australian Little Grebe Up to 11 at Lake Rotokawau on several dates.

Flesh-footed Shearwater 4 off Paihia on 24 Feb, 2 there on 9 March.

Buller's Shearwater Some well into the Bay on 9 March.

Fluttering Shearwater Many off East Beach & off Tokerau Beach during March.

Blue Penguin 2 seen in burrows Moturoa Island 25 Dec.

Reef Heron Reported Parengarenga, Walker Island, Taipa & Aroha Island.

Australasian Bittern Two seen at lake north of Henderson Bay Road on 20 Jan, one there on 14 & 22 March, one in flight beside SH1 south of Puketi Forest on 14 April.

Royal Spoonbill Colony at Awanui increased from 7 on 11 March to 22 on 22 Mar & 94 on 2 April
2 Maori Point, Mangonui Harbour, 29 March.

Glossy Ibis One with the Spoonbills at Awanui Wharf on 22 March, present into April.

Australasian Shoveler 1 Henderson Bay Road 22 March

Grey Teal 2 Henderson Bay Road, 20 Jan, 3 Lake Waiporohita 22 March.

Brown Teal See Moturoa Island update

Brown Quail 1 Warawara Forest 3 March

Weka Heard Matauwhi Bay, Russell on 6 March

Spotless Crake Several heard Marsden Cross in March

Variable Oystercatcher Breeding records received include pair with well grown chicks at Urupukapuka Bay on 24 Jan, 2 pairs there on 22 Feb, one with well-grown



Imm Variable Oystercatcher
Urupukapuka Island, 31 March

chicks & one with younger chicks (all well grown by 31 March), pair with one young Onewhero Bay on 6 Dec.

'Smudgy' Stilt One Te Haumi 24 Jan

Banded Dotterel Highest count 79 Paua on 20 Jan.

New Zealand Dotterel Highest count 66 Kowhai Beach 23 Jan. December breeding records: Onewhero Bay, 15 incl 2 young; Motuarohia, pair with 3 egg nest & pair with tiny chick; Paraenui Beach (near Orakawa), pair with 2 egg nest.

Pacific Golden Plover Highest count 52 at Kokota Sandspit 21 Jan

Grey Plover 2 Kokota Sandspit 22 Jan, one on East Beach 23 Jan.

Curlew Sandpiper 1 Paua 21 Jan, seen later in week on Kokota.

Wrybill Highest counts 51 Kokota 22 Jan, 88 Kowhai Beach 23 Jan.

Turnstone High counts of 500 Kokota 21 Jan & 440 East Beach 23 Jan, 250 there on 17 March.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Up to 4 during wader week

Lesser Knot See wader count results. Still c.500 at Kaimaumau on 17 March.

Red-necked Stint 8 East Beach 23 Jan, few elsewhere.

Bar-tailed Godwit See wader count results. Still c.2000 Kaimaumau 17 March.

Far Eastern Curlew 1 Walker Island 23 Jan

Whimbrel High counts of 60 Kokota 22 Jan & 43 Walker Island 23 Jan

Greenshank One Awanui Wharf 30 March (Steve Wood, Tim Barnard et al.)

Wandering Tattler 1 Kokota 25 Jan

Grey-tailed Tattler 1 throughout wader week, seen both at Paua & on Kokota

Caspian Tern Good count of 121 (incl 11 juvs) on Walker Island on 23 Jan.

White-fronted Tern Good counts of 190 on Walker Island on 23 Jan & 120 on Tokerau Beach on 22 March.

Little Tern 17 East Beach on 23 Jan, 14 there on 11 March & 8 on 17 March.

Long-tailed Cuckoo One on Kerikeri Golf Course on 5 March (Arnold Lenton via Russell Thomas)

Rifleman 10 Warawara Forest 3 March, another 4 there on 4 March

Fernbird Seen along Opuia to Kawakawa road on several dates, heard along Oruaiti River, Mangonui 14 April.

Tomtit Up to 10 each day Warawara Forest 3 & 4 March.

New Zealand Robin Moturoa Island, see update.

As the ocean between Cape Reinga and the Three Kings is also part of our region, please note that a pelagic trip to the vicinity of these islands from 31 March to 3 April organized by Wrybill Tours reported the following (among numerous commoner seabirds):

Northern Buller's Albatross 35

White-naped Petrel 27

Gould's Petrel 4

Red-tailed Tropicbird 1

Black-winged Petrel 75

4 Skua species including **Long-tailed**

Kermadec Petrel 18

White Tern 1

It's on again next year so book now, it will be popular.

PROGRAMME

All OSNZ indoor meetings take place at Detlef & Carol's house at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri unless otherwise stated, 7 pm for 7.30. We provide drinks & nibbles but contributions welcome.

May - Kiwi Monitoring

From mid-May the local Kiwi population will be monitored by regular two hour listening periods. If you can take part for however little or large amount of time, please contact Greg or Gay Blunden on 09 407 5243.

Sat 19 May Kiwi Foundation AGM at Aroha Island, no doubt Greg or Gay will confirm the time, 09 407 5243.

Friday 25 May ‘A Little Boat on a Big Sea’

Detlef & Carol will give an illustrated talk on their recent trip to the Chathams, Bounties & Antipodes Islands; 2 other Far North members were also on board. There is a ‘sample’ later in this newsletter.

1 – 4 June OSNZ Conference and AGM, New Plymouth

Just a reminder for those planning to go. We will only be able to go for part of it this year but please contact us for further details, application form, etc.

Friday 22 June. Far North AGM followed by a presentation by **somebody other than us**. We have laptop, powerpoint projector and slide projector available. Offers invited.

June / July There will probably be a wader count around this time. We will be away between 17 July & 12 August so may need some back-up. Forest and Bird expect to have another of their series of lectures some time in July but details are still to be decided.

Thurs 30 August. Puketi Forest Trust’s AGM at Proctor Library Community Meeting Room in Kerikeri at 7 pm.

Looking further ahead

Ray Pierce who found Riflemen in Warawara Forest in 1994 has agreed to give a talk to our group some time from late August. His subject will probably be the Phoenix Islands which lie between Western Samoa & the Equator and hold some special endangered birds.

After the success of the Warawara trip, we hope to arrange an extended visit later in the year to Waipoua Forest which has several pairs of Kokako.

BEACH PATROLS

These take place every 4th Sunday at 90 Mile Beach and less frequently on Karikari Peninsular. More volunteers would be welcome. Contact Isabella Godbert on 09 407 8058 or John Dawn on 09 407 8658 for details. We hope to publish some 2007 results in the August newsletter.

A TUI TALE

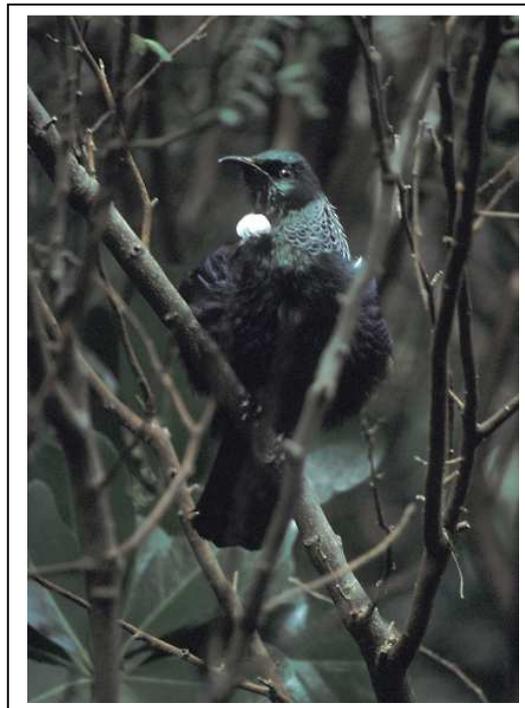
By David Fisher, Forest & Bird member of Kerikeri

My wife, Winsome, and I have just 1400 square metres near the Stone Store basin. Amongst other things we have a fine plane tree at the front of the house, a pin oak close by the deck (one floor up) at the back of the house and some strelitzia nicolai (giant bird-of-paradise palms) over 20 metres high at the back of the garden. Currently we also have a resident Tui and a pair of Barbary Doves that roost in the plane tree, often to be heard “singing” at 3 in the morning.

The strelitzia draw many TuIs to the garden, but to help our resident maintain possession, he has developed a boring “song” of just one clear note repeated two, three or four times. (We know of another Tui in Kohukohu that has developed the same song) Of late he has added a few typical crackles, usually at the start of the string of notes, sometimes at the end. It still remains a boring song, and his frequent repetitions got on Winsome’s nerves. Thus one lunchtime when we were sitting on the deck, she whistled back the same note three times in imitation of the bird’s song. She got the timing and the pitch absolutely perfect, and the effect was instantaneous. The Tui flew

straight out of the strelitzia and into the pin oak, dropped down the trunk, and hopped out on a branch where he had a good close view of the source of the rival sound. Winsome and the bird exchanged a few whistles and then he shot off into the distance where he dashed into display mode, zooming high and then dropping steeply from the stall point, repeating the exercise two or three times before flying back to the strelitzia.

We have exchanged whistles many times since. The Tui now spends a lot of time in the pin oak, but he must have accepted us as harmless, because none of the exchanges have driven him back into display mode.



BAY OF ISLANDS – MOTUROA ISLAND UPDATE

By Paul Asquith

The disappointing news is that we have had to further delay our planned transfer of Bellbirds from Tiritiri Matangi. The new and uncertain scale and costs requirements for disease screening, quarantining and monitoring have put the project beyond our resources and funding at the present time.

We hope to be able to reactivate the transfer once DoC and the other agencies involved in the approvals process have clearly agreed and established what are the long term transfer criteria and screening protocols for Tiri or other locations and how to minimize the associated costs so that groups such as ours are able to continue the transfers.

Meanwhile there is better news on Moturoa itself. After a couple of years of a bit of a downturn in our NI Robin population, most likely resulting from a rat reinvasion and two stoats getting ashore, we are pleased that to report that, after considerable predator control efforts, this year they seem to have done much better in spite of the cold and late start to spring and summer.

Similarly too, NI Brown Kiwi and Banded Rails are thriving with the Kiwi population being put at over 40, 7 in one paddock on one night.



Brown Teal, Moturoa Is. 25 Dec

Brown Teal maintain their long established presence of 4 - 5 breeding pairs although successful fledging rates seemed to have fallen over the last few years from 3 - 4 to 1 - 2.

A pair of Red-crowned Parakeets have raised 5 youngsters this year which is really good news; this is the first recorded breeding success for about 5 years. We only hope we can persuade them to stay rather than fly off to bright lights around Kerikeri!! If you see them send them back!!

WADER COUNTS – JAN 2007

Ornithological Society of New Zealand - WADER CENSUSES 2004 - 2009

OSNZ REGION	FAR NORTH	MAIN SITE	Parengarenga Harbour
YEAR	2007	COMPILER	DETLEF DAVIES
MONTH	January		
CENSUS DATES	20, 21, 22		

Tide Height, Time, Weather etc

Warm, sunny, light wind, low tide late p.m, high tide mid-a.m.					
20-Jan	21-Jan	21/22 Jan	21-Jan	22-Jan	20,21,22
1 - 5 pm	10 - 2 pm	11.30am	5 - 6 pm	10 - 3.30	
Paua	Kokota Sandspit	Ahiaaruhe Shellbank	Paua	Kokota Sandspit	AREA ESTIMATE
2281	3161	170	361	3612	5646

DATE >
TIME >
LOCAL SITES >

SITE TOTALS >

SPECIES DAY TOTALS v

Pied Oystercatcher	92, 152, 220
Variable Oystercatcher	25, 8, 4
Pied Stilt	50, 38, 0
New Zealand Dotterel	7, 11, 22
Banded Dotterel	79, 10, 50
Black-fronted Dotterel	
Wrybill	1, 6, 51
Pacific Golden Plover	0, 52, 8
Spur-winged Plover	0, 4, 0
Turnstone	61, 520, 87
Lesser Knot	310, 654,
	1,900
Curlew Sandpiper	0, 1, 0
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	2, 4, 1
Pectoral Sandpiper	
Red-necked Stint	2, 2, 22
Far-eastern Curlew	
Whimbrel	1, 1, 60
Bar-tailed Godwit	1650, 2200,
	1357
Black-tailed Godwit	
Grey-tailed Tattler	1, 0, 0
Wandering Tattler	
Terek Sandpiper	

92		142/170	10	50	220
25	8			4	33
50	18		20		68
7	6		5	22	28
79			10	50	80
1	2		4	51	55
	52			8	52
			4		?
61	500		20	87	520
310	474		180	1900	2000
			1		1
2			4	1	6
2			2	22	22
1	1		1	60	60
1650	2100		100	1357	2500
1					1
					1

OTHERS

Reef Heron	2, 0, 0
White-fronted Tern	0, 35, 0
Caspian Tern	0, 0, 6
Grey Plover	0, 0, 2
Pied Shag	?, 50, 50
Little Black Shag	0, 1, 0

2					2+
	15	20			35+
				6	6+
				2	2
		50			50+
		1			?

MAIN SITE TOTAL > 5211

COMMENTS As counting spanned 3 days over a wide area and at different tide heights, an area estimate was considered useful. Gulls were not counted, some terns and Spur-winged Plovers may have been missed. Species day totals & site totals do not include 'others' (i.e. only waders).
 Counters: Detlef & Carol Davies, Rob & Anneke Schuckard, Isabella & Derry Godbert, Anthea Goodwin, Nick Dunnett.

Ornithological Society of New Zealand - WADER CENSUSES 2004 - 2009

OSNZ REGION	FAR NORTH	MAIN SITE	Rangaunu Hbr to Kowhai B
YEAR	2006	COMPILER	DETLEF DAVIES
MONTH	January		
CENSUS DATE	23rd		

Tide Height, Time, Weather etc

Warm & sunny, light wind, high tide c.12.30					
23-Jan	23-Jan	23-Jan			
10 - 10.30	11.30 -12	12.30 - 2			
DD	DD	CD			
Walker Island	East Beach	Kowhai Beach			
92	3935	1508			

DATE >
TIME >
PRINCIPAL COUNTER>
LOCAL SITES >
SITE TOTALS >
SPECIES TOTALS v

Pied Oystercatcher	230
Variable Oystercatcher	52
Pied Stilt	29
New Zealand Dotterel	91
Banded Dotterel	59
Black-fronted Dotterel	
Wrybill	88
Pacific Golden Plover	16
Spur-winged Plover	
Turnstone	493
Lesser Knot	1300
Curlew Sandpiper	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	
Pectoral Sandpiper	
Red-necked Stint	8
Far-eastern Curlew	1
Whimbrel	43
Bar-tailed Godwit	3125
Black-tailed Godwit	
Grey-tailed Tattler	
Marsh Sandpiper	
Terek Sandpiper	

	230				
14	28	10			
29					
5	20	66			
	9	50			
		88			
		16			
	440	53			
	600	700			
	8				
1					
43					
	2600	525			

OTHERS

Caspian Tern	121
Reef Heron	1
White-fronted Tern	190
Little Tern	17
Grey Plover	1

121					
1					
190					
	17				
	1				

MAIN SITE TOTAL > 5535

COMMENTS

Site totals & main site total do not include 'others'. (i.e. waders only). Counters: Detlef Davies, Rob Schuckard, Isabella Godbert & Kevin Matthews (Walker Island & East Beach), Carol Davies, Anneke Schuckard, Nick Dunnett, Mike Bryan & Rissy (Kowhai Beach).

CHATHAMS, BOUNTIES & ANTIPODES, Dec 2006 – Jan 2007

Seventeen of us including 4 Far North members and 4 crew set off from Lyttleton, Christchurch aboard the Clan McLeod and headed for the Chatham Islands via the little group of icebergs which were drifting north at that time. We spent 2 days ashore on the islands in unusually warm sunny weather and enjoyed finding the endemic island birds like Chatham and Pitt Island Shags, Chatham Island Warblers, Chatham Oystercatchers and the highly endangered Shore Plover and Black Robin. From there we cruised south via Pyramid Rock with its amazing colony of Chatham Island Albatrosses, to the Bounty and Antipodes Islands in increasingly rough seas; however, the zodiac trips to the rocky shores of both groups of islands allowed us a close approach to the impressive colonies of Erect-crested and Rockhopper Penguins, Bounty Island Shags and Salvin's & Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses. A single Sooty Albatross was a surprise rarity.

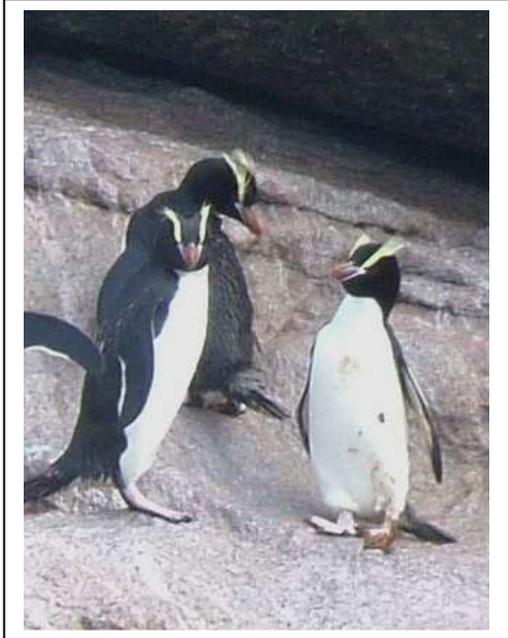
Seabirds were in abundance throughout and these included Mottled, Soft-plumaged and White-headed Petrels, Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm Petrels, Broad-billed, Antarctic and Fulmar Prions and a plethora of albatrosses.

Rough weather prevented us from getting to the Snares Islands but we landed at Pegasus Bay on Stewart Island on the final morning before returning to Bluff.

This trip is the topic for our meeting on 25 May but here is a small selection of our photos.



Northern Buller's Albatross



Erect-crested Penguins

