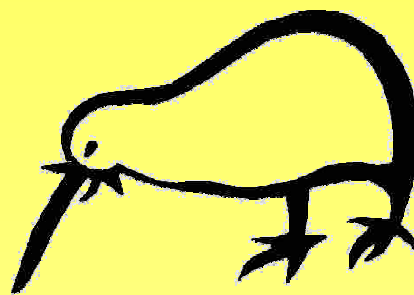


APTERYX

Issue 24

August 2009



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

SPONSORED BY
KERIKERI



PHOTOS

by
Detlef Davies (DD)
Kevin Matthews (KM)
Sue Buxton
David Craig



Little Shag Katikati, 12 August (DD)

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Many thanks for the variety of contributions to this newsletter and apologies to Paul Asquith for omitting his Moturoa Meanderings article from the last issue so please pretend it is last April when reading it! Rather than squeeze too much into these comments, there is a general news section on page 6. We have not been informed of any new members to the region recently but if you are aware of any, please let us know.

As this is my 5th year as Regional Rep, I am considering offering the position to another enthusiast next year. Carol may also step down and hopefully the region will continue to thrive under new leadership.

I often 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.

Pied & Little Shags & Reef Herons – Ahiaruhe Shellbank, 26 July. (DD)



The Far North Regional Officers are:

Regional Representative & 'Apteryx' Editor Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com	Treasurer Isabella Godbert, 67 Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8058 godbert@xtra.co.nz
Regional Recorder Laureen Alston, 48a Riverview Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8747 lm.alston@actrix.co.nz	Secretary & Publicity Carol Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 carolanndavies@yahoo.com

RECENT EVENTS

Weekend 29 – 31 May - OSNZ Conference & AGM, Orewa

An enjoyable weekend attended by Detlef, Carol & Laureen from our region. It was good to meet up with a crowd of like-minded people and listen to high quality presentations. Many attendees boarded the coach to Tawharanui for a very pleasant afternoon hosted by Tim Lovegrove, Sharon Kast & Alison Stanes. Brown Teal, Bellbirds, Whiteheads and Robins were in good numbers.

Friday 19 June - Evening Meeting & Far North AGM, Kerikeri

Our AGM was followed by Detlef & Carol's presentation on their expedition to Codfish Island to volunteer with the Kakapo supplementary feeding programme.

Minutes of Far North AGM

The meeting opened at 7.52 pm. Far North members present were: Detlef & Carol Davies, Laureen Alston, Anthea Goodwin, Margaret Cooper, Kerry & Jane Walshe, Chris & Maria Lamens, Michael Winch & Kevin Matthews. Also present were joint speaker, Suzi Phillips, and Ruth Marsh, Caitlin Arden & Helene Fredrikson & Michelle Cramse.

Apologies: Isabella & Derry Godbert, Paul & Enid Asquith, Ian Wilson, Bill Campbell, Bruce Collett, Dave Panckhurst.

The minutes of last year's meeting were produced, approved & passed (DD, KW).

DD gave verbal Regional Rep's report outlining the events of the past 12 months, covering all the indoor meetings, field events, wader counts & beach patrols. Approved & passed (CD, LA).

Isabella was unable to attend, DD gave Treasurer's Report. Latest figures produced showed balance of \$381.12 to which the annual contribution of \$350 could now be added, totalling \$731.12. Whole balance was now our own, having distributed the allocated wader count money as appropriate.

The 4 current officers: DD as Regional Rep, IG as Treasurer, LA as Regional Recorder & CD as Secretary & Publicity were all willing to stand again and there were no other nominations. Re-election of the 4 was proposed by AG & seconded by KM.

LA indicated that guidelines for the Regional Recorder as to what was reportable & to what extent was now available. The region needed to advance towards recording by e-bird; eventually someone will have time to peruse it.

CD spoke about the coming year's programme. Possible speakers were being approached with a view to having meetings nearly every month.

The region has been provided with nest record and moult record cards. Somebody needs to volunteer to receive and take charge of this. AG volunteered to take on nest monitoring but there were no takers for moult cards.

Other business included a reminder of the Garden Bird Survey in July, it was noted that Aroha Island finally had a signed lease, Robins had been released in Puketū last Sunday & needed help with monitoring, Kerry Walshe had found a dead female Kiwi thought to be at least 12 years old.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Weekend 26 – 27 July Winter Wader Count See page 7 for details.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Laureen Alston & Detlef Davies

This covers the Far North region from May 09. Contributors include Anthea Goodwin, Laureen Alston, Kevin Matthews (KM), Detlef Davies (DD), Carol Davies (CD), Willie Cook, Peter Ladd, John Metcalfe, Steve Hart, Stella & John Rowe, Fiona Craig, Dave Pankhurst, Sue Buxton(SB), Heather & Ray Peat (HRP).

North Island Brown Kiwi A successful Kiwi monitoring programme took place in the Kerikeri area in May. Average to good figures for calls heard were recorded at most sites. Some birds heard or seen at other regular locations.

New Zealand Dabchick 1 Lake Waiporohita (Karikari) & 5 Lake Rotokawau on 5 Aug.

Australasian Little Grebe 1 Lake Waiporohita on 25 July, 9 Lake Rotokawau on 5 Aug.

Northern Giant Petrel Juvenile found alive on 90 mile beach on 19 June (KM)

Shearwater sp. A dead shearwater found on 90 mile beach by Kevin Matthews had a thin bill typical of Sooty or Short-tailed but was all black with no paler areas on the underwing. Christmas Island Shearwater was considered but a harrier carried off the corpse before the bird could be checked further!



Northern Giant Petrel – 90 mile beach (KM)

Flesh-footed Shearwater Regularly seen in Bay of Islands and along adjoining coasts.

Buller's Shearwater Small numbers regularly in the Bay and along adjoining coasts.

Fluttering Shearwater Small numbers regularly seen in Bay of Islands area, some sizeable flocks & movements in Doubtless Bay & Rangaunu Harbour.

Common Diving Petrel 30+ seen from Kowhai Beach on 27 July.

White-faced Storm Petrel No reports this winter

Blue Penguin Six seen in the Te Puna Inlet on 18 May, 1 off Kowhai Beach on 27 July.

Australasian Gannet One seen in Kerikeri Inlet on 18 May. Otherwise common along coasts throughout the region.

Shags One Black seen on Taipa Spit on 4 May, one at Norwegian Bay, Bay of Islands, on 18 May. Pied: c.48 at Urupukapuka Bay colony on 22 June, 18 at Otaio Bay colony on 18 May, usual numbers at Urupukapuka Bay colony, 1 with nesting material on 4 Aug.

White-faced Heron The strange leucistic bird seen in 2006 in the Pakaraka area has been seen again recently by Steve Hart who now lives in that area. A total of 62 in Wallace Road paddocks on 27 July (AG).

Spoonbills Awanui 7 Aug. (KM)



White Heron Flock of c.100 reported from Awanui at Easter by Fiona Craig who is sure they were not Spoonbills. Although not unknown in the area, this number is surprisingly high.

Reef Heron One at Waipoa Bay, Moturua on May 1, one at Taipa 25 July, 1 East Beach 5 August. Two birds together on Ahiahuhe Shellbank (Parengarenga) on 25 July was unusual.

Australasian Bittern One landed in mangroves in Houhora on 21 June (KM)

Royal Spoonbill 17 Awanui (Unahi Road) on 25 July, increasing to spectacular total of c.475 there on 5 Aug. 4 Parengarenga Harbour on 26 July & 44 Houhora Harbour on 21 June.

Australasian Shoveler Pair on Lake Waiporohita on 25 July.

Brown Teal Recorded in early August on the lakes near Marsden Cross (DD, CD).

Grey Teal 4 Lake Waiporohita 25 July.

Cape Barren Goose

The 4 reported from the beach west of Cape Reinga in early May have been seen in the area subsequently but although these birds are flying (unlike the regular birds at Hokitika Oxidation Ponds in the South Island), they are still likely to be escapes.

Brown Quail 4 in garden in Landing Road 20, 22, and 23 August.



Brown Quail. Kerikeri, 22 Aug. (DD)

Spotless Crake 3 seen in swamp area along Marsden Cross footpath 20 May (CD).

Banded Rail No records this time but surely present in usual sites.

North Island Weka One seen at Matai Bay, Karikari Peninsula on 10 Jun by visiting birders, Stella and John Rowe. KM comments that this species was in this area a few years ago and although rarely recorded, it is good to know that a few are still there. See Dave Panckhurst's article on page 13. The birds introduced to the Russell area have spread considerably but seldom seen, this subspecies being much more skulking than those occurring on the South Island.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher 46 on Taipa Spit on 4 May, 10 there on 25 July, c.400 in Parengarenga on 25 July & c.80 in roadside paddocks on Karikari on 5 August.

Variable Oystercatcher 32 flocking on Opito Bay on 7 April, 8 on Matauri Bay campground, 1 on Matauri Bay north beach, 2 at west end of main beach, 2 on Te Ngaere spit, 1 pair with 1 young & 2 others on Tauranga Bay Spit, all on 1 May. One on Taupo Bay, 18 on Taipa Spit on 4 May. 7 on Opito Bay on 5 May. 4 at Motuarohia, 2 on Mangahewa Beach, Moturua, 2 on East Beach, Waewaetorea Island on 18 May.

Pied Stilt 450 Parengarenga & 480 Wallace Road paddocks were largest counts.

New Zealand Dotterel 8 on Matauri Bay campground, one on Te Ngaere spit, 2 mid beach, 2 on Pia Pia reserve beach, Wainui, 8 on Tauranga Bay spit including M-, all on 1 May. 2 on Taipa Spit on 4 May. A dotterel survey conducted by the Guardians of the Bay of Islands & DoC on the Islands undergoing pest control found 13 birds present on the various beaches on 18 May.

Wrybill Kowhai Beach, 27 July (DD)



8 near mouth of Ngairoa Stream, Motuhakaha Bay (Paradise Bay) Akatere, off Taupo Bay Road, 4 on small beach to the east, on 28 June. On wader count weekend 8 on Kokota Sandspit, 9 on Kowhai Beach & 3 on East Beach; 8 at north end of 90 mile beach on 21 June. 3 egg nest on Tauranga Bay spit recently (HRP)

Banded Dotterel 4 on Kokota Sandspit, 8 on Kowhai Beach & 5 on East Beach (wader count weekend), 33 at north end of 90 mile beach on 21 June.

Wrybill 3 north end of 90 mile Beach (betw Scots Point & Bluff) on 21 June; 21 Kokota Sandspit, 51 Kowhai Beach & 7 on East Beach during wader count; 6 East Bch 5 Aug.

Turnstone 1 Kokota Sandspit, 13 East Beach, 1 at Wallace Road during wader count.

Lesser Knot 4 on Kokota Sandspit & 34 in Wallace Road paddocks during wader count.

Red-necked Stint One at Kokota Sandspit on 26 July (wader count) was only record.

Bar-tailed Godwit 10 on Taipa estuary on 4 May. Low numbers, even by winter standards, on wader count; 670 on Kokota Sandspit & Paua paddocks, 232 in Wallace Road paddocks, none at Kowhai or East Beach.

Caspian Tern 1 on Taipa spit on 4 May & other dates; 14 on Ahiaruhe Shellbank on wader count, smaller numbers elsewhere.

White-fronted Tern 10 on Tauranga Bay spit including 2 young, 20 at Cable Bay, including 1 juvenile on 1 May.

New Zealand Pigeon Common in the region but notable sighting by KM in isolated kahikatea forest in Awanui floodplain 22 May.

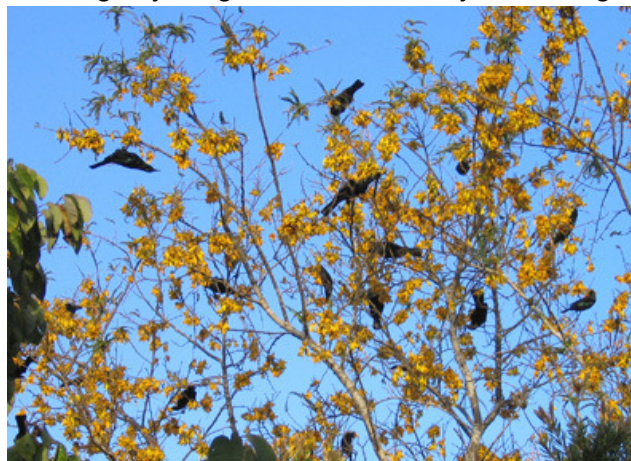
Shining Cuckoo One heard 23 August, Kohumaru, Mangonui (SB) another heard in Doves Bay Road, Kerikeri on 31 August (CD).

Morepork Regular sightings at Rangitane & garden in Landing Rd, Kerikeri

Barn Owl 2 birds still present south of Kaitaia have fledged chicks (KM).

New Zealand Pipit Recorded at several sites around Far North beaches & dunes.

Fernbird One photographed at Pukewhau (SW Rangaunu) 20 June (KM). At least 4 birds showing well along the road between Opua & Kawakawa on 6 August.



14 Tufts in
Kowhai tree
Sue Buxton



Yellowhammer Cape Reinga (DD)

Tui Susan Buxton saw 14 in one Kowhai tree.

Tomtit One juvenile male at Waterfall, Moturua island on April. Male singing in Manginangina Boardwalk car park in July & August. Pair in Herekino Range.

North Island Robin The birds translocated to Puketi Forest are being heard regularly by visitors and a monitoring programme is in place. 2 heard calling from stream track on Moturua on 3 Aug. One singing on north headland of Otupoho Bay, Moturua early morning of 4 Aug.

Greenfinch Flock of 15+ at Tokerau Beach in July & August, smaller numbers elsewhere.

Yellowhammer Flock of at least 30 at Maitai Beach carpark on 25 July.

PROGRAMME

All Far North OSNZ evening meetings take place at Detlef & Carol's house at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri unless otherwise stated, 7 pm for 7.30. We provide soft drinks & nibbles, entry free to members, \$2 requested from guests. From now on we hope to make these meetings at least bi-monthly but cannot really make the day consistent, it will usually be Thursday or Friday.

Friday 18 September Evening meeting – 'Tiritiri, What Next?'. [Anne Rimmer](#), author of the lovely illustrated book on Tiritiri Island will give a presentation on this very special place.

Sept & Oct Waima Forest We have recently made contact with [Matt Calder](#) who has welcomed us back for another overnight visit to encounter Kokako which are very vocal at the moment. On **Sat 26 Sept** we will be meeting him for some health & safety information as we will

be helping to repair trails while we are there. Email us or phone 09 407 3874 if you would like to come that day or for more information but we will be let loose at the site one weekend in **October**.

Friday 27 November Evening meeting – ‘Conservation on Limestone Island’. Tonight **Gerry Brackenbury** from Northland region and regular contributor to the Bay Report will tell us about his pursuits on Limestone Island in Whangarei Harbour.

Weekend 7 – 8 November Spring wader count. Join us at the Far North harbours looking at shorebirds. High tide is late morning so ideal to get to Kokota Sandspit. If you haven't been before, come and learn your shorebirds from those who are familiar with them.

Thursday 17 December Evening meeting & Christmas Social. **CJ Ralph** will choose his subject for a presentation tonight; more details nearer the time.

February 2010 One weekend this month we have invited **Simon Fordham** to the region. Simon was involved with the translocation of Riflemen onto Tiritiri Island last year and we hope to combine his presentation with a visit to Warawara Forest.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Caspian Tern & chick
(Survey from 2010) DD

Garden Bird Survey – We hope many results were sent in. Our total of 23 species included 18 California Quail but over 150 Mynas

Atlas still available – The OSNZ Atlas of Bird Distribution is still available free to new members while stocks last.

Caspian Terns – A countrywide survey of Caspian Tern colonies over the next 3 years begins early in 2010. The Far North has good numbers of this lovely bird so look out for them.

Possible Bay of Islands Pelagics – We have made contact with a fishing boat owner from Opuia who is prepared to try and get us out to the deep water 12+ nm beyond Cape Brett with a view to finding some pelagic seabirds, such as albatrosses, which are seldom seen offshore in this area. More news will follow by email.

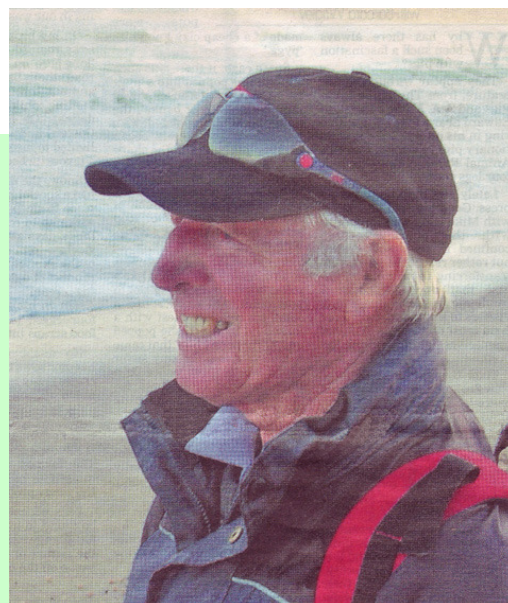
Nest Records Any records of active nests in our area should be sent to Anthea Goodwin with full details – bushcrank@actrix.co.nz or 09 406 1533.



Queen's Honours for Derry Godbert

Congratulations to Far North member, Derry Godbert who has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to yachting. Derry and his wife Isabella are stalwart OSNZ members. They began doing beach patrols in the early eighties and are still regularly walk the 90 mile and Karikari beaches. Seems like they have given as much voluntary time between them to Far North birding as Derry has to yachting. Well done, Derry, you deserve it. But behind every good man is a good woman!

Carol Davies



WINTER WADER COUNT

Finally a weekend was found when all requirements for this regular event were in place. 6 of us took part. Numbers of shorebirds were quite low but if we are optimistic then hopefully high numbers are breeding in the northern hemisphere.

Ornithological Society of New Zealand - WADER CENSUSES 2004 - 2009

OSNZ REGION **FAR NORTH** MAIN SITE **Parengarenga & Rangaunu Harbours**
 YEAR **2009** COMPILER **Detlef Davies**

MONTH **July**

CENSUS DATE **26 - 27 July**

Tide Height, Time, Weather etc

HT - Parengarenga 9.55 am, 1.02m; Kowhai 11.38 am 0.94m; E Beach 11.36 am, 0.95m

Weather sunny & dry, little wind.

DATE >	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	27-Jul	27-Jul	27-Jul			
TIME >	9.45-10.10	10.15	10.20-15.0	11.0 - 13.0	HT	HT			
PRINCIPAL COUNTER >	DD	DD	DD	DD	KM	AG			
LOCAL SITES >	Paua paddocks	Ahiauhe Shellbank	Kokota Sandspit	Kowhai Beach	E Beach & Kaimaumu paddocks	Wallace Rd			
SITE TOTALS >	463	523	750	87	30	749			
SPECIES TOTALS >									

Pied Oystercatcher	404
Variable Oystercatcher	91
Pied Stilt	1030
New Zealand Dotterel	20
Banded Dotterel	17
Black-fronted Dotterel	
Wrybill	79
Pacific Golden Plover	
Spur-winged Plover	5
Turnstone	15
Lesser Knot	38
Curlew Sandpiper	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	
Pectoral Sandpiper	
Red-necked Stint	1
Far-eastern Curlew	
Whimbrel	
Bar-tailed Godwit	902
Black-tailed Godwit	
Grey-tailed Tattler	
Marsh Sandpiper	
Terek Sandpiper	

300		104						
	70		19	2				
100	450				480			
		8	9	3				
		4	8	5				
		21	51	7				
3					2			
		1		13	1			
		4			34			
		1						
60	3	607			232			

OTHERS

Black-backed Gull	113+
Red-billed Gull	300+
Caspian Tern	25
White-faced Heron	63+
Reef Heron	2
Australian Gannet	2
Fluttering Shearwater	32+
Common Diving Petrel	30+
Little Penguin	1
Royal Spoonbill	4

#	70	30	#		13			
#	300		#					
	14	5	2		4			
#	1				62			
		1	1					
		2	30+					
			30+					
			1					
	4							

MAIN SITE TOTAL > 2604

Return June sheet by 31 August to Adrian Riegen. riegen@xtra.co.nz Fax 09-814-9741

COMMENTS

To avoid confusion, site totals & main site total do not include 'others' (some were not counted at every site).

No flags or bands seen on any birds (many Godwits were near enough to see).

Counters were Detlef & Carol Davies, Isabella & Derry Godbert, Anthea Goodwin & Kevin Matthews.

MOTUROA ISLAND SUMMER MEANDERINGS

Paul Asquith

Great to have some of the members visiting either to the island or in some cases both to and around, transport options were widened this year from the normal water taxi fizz boat to kayak, yacht, and sedate launch; yet to have anybody windsurf or swim!! Now there is a challenge for you – although Bill Smith and a couple of his early morning rowing pals did row over a couple of years ago before breakfast!!

Bird breeding has been in full swing with the numbers of some land birds appearing to be a little up on recent years or at least maintaining their own. Adult numbers have been of the following order:



Brown Teal Moturoa Is. (DD)

NZ Dotterels	10
VOC	10 – 12
Brown Teal	12
NI Robins	20
RC Parakeet	5 plus a recent hatching of 3

Most of the above have successfully raised at least part of one brood. At least one pair of **Brown Teal** have raised two broods.

Californian and **Brown Quail** have not had a successful rearing season; whilst we have seen many new families of up to 10 of the young 'bumble bee' like chicks; within a couple of days they are down to 2 or even nil. We know a **stoat** has arrived but we haven't trapped it yet; also **Banded Rails** have bred very successfully this season and have been observed taking Quail chicks and feeding them to their young.

No **Tomtit** visitors have been recorded this year for the first time for several years, but we have had the strange arrival of a very large and very much alive **Hare!!!** Not known to be enthusiastic swimmers as far as we know.

Occupied **Little Blue Penguin** burrows were towards the bottom side of the norm with only 16 being located, whereas we had 26/27 in 05 and 06.

Only 3 **Grey-faced Petrels** burrows showed signs of breeding, but we hope a Landcare Lincoln Project studying the DNA of GFP will give us a better numbers indication.

Seabird presence and breeding on the other hand seem to be down dramatically with very few nests on the Atoll or any of the Black Rocks, other than **Black-backed Gulls**. Is it cyclic or is it just a lack of feed?



Grey-faced Petrel
Hauraki Gulf, 21 Dec 08 (DD)

Only one **Norway Rat** has been trapped since July and this was in the trap lines at the western end of the island so that is quite good news.

Mothplant continues to be our major weed threat and problem with it colonising on some of the northern cliff faces. Aerial attack is proving to be the most cost effective and this may be endorsed by Carol and Detlef who spent an energetic 'volunteered' half day or so trying so get rid of it by hand and then still had to paddle home the same evening!!

The island wharf cottage has been refurbished and is available for members of Far North OSNZ to rent. It is fully self contained and sleeps 5 easily. Cost is \$125 per night irrespective of the number using it. No pets. For more information contact:

Sharon Lyon: 021337000, email lyoness@ihug.co.nz

Sue Hollis: 095755502, email: sue.hollis@xtra.co.nz

"IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK ON MOTUROA ISLAND"

Paul Asquith

In late January 2009 staff of the DoC Office in Kerikeri called Moturoa Island to say they had received a telephone report from a member of the public about a 'trapped Kiwi' in the Gun Emplacements at the eastern end of Moturoa Island.

A team of 5, Paul and Enid Asquith, Phil and Debbie Bunce and David Craig, (a visitor of CJ & Carol Ralph), quickly assembled with all possible gear requirements such as torches, ropes, jemmy, blanket to capture, net, carry bags, gloves and cameras and proceeded down the island on quad and mountain bikes.

Our expectation was that it had probably fallen into one of the deeper holes in one of the old buildings (this has happened before) and that we might have to climb down to get to it.



Kiwi sleeping with head tucked under wing

To our pleasant surprise this was not the case, it had simply fallen into the main open gun pit area of the eastern emplacement, a fall of about 500mm, but this would be too high a jump for it to get back out on its own and Enid found it fast asleep having obviously exhausted itself trying to get out – after all it was late afternoon when we found him. It was quite difficult to see deep in shadow and well camouflaged against the lichen - covered concrete.

With gloves on and a small blanket in hand it was easy for Paul to capture it before it even was aware of our presence – it awoke with a bit of a start and struggle once uncovered but was then happy to rest safely and quietly at first.

After a photo session and a good inspection to check for injuries that its ears were free of ticks and fleas, (Enid's hand lens came in useful here), it seemed none the worse for the fall and was making definite indications that it would much prefer to be released.

We took it down into low manuka scrub on the southern side some 20m down from the Gun Emplacements up on the ridge and released it on to the grass – with no hesitation and to our surprise it immediately raced back up the hill passed the site of its recent imprisonment and into the bush line on the northern side of the island.- obviously a 'northface resident'!!



Its first view of its captors

Many thanks to - Phil Bunce and Eric Spurr who have put some concrete blocks to provide 'kiwi escape steps' from both gun pits, - DoC for passing on the information so quickly which produced a good outcome and - David Craig for the photos.



Checking the ears for a clean bill of health



Antarctic Fulmar (Kaikoura, June 08) (DD) One found on beach patrol in August

FAR NORTH BEACH PATROLS

Isabella Godbert

These take place every other Sunday and alternately at **Ninety Mile Beach** and **Karikari Peninsula**. Chart for results so far this year is set out below. Please phone **Isabella Godbert** on 09 407 8058 or **John Dawn** on 09 407 8658 for further information.

BEACH PATROL WEST COAST (Ninety Mile Beach) Jan – August 2009

MONTH	Jan-09	27-Feb	Mar-09	May-09	29-Jul	16-Aug	MONTH	Jan-09	27-Feb	Mar-09	May-09	29-Jul	16-Aug
DISTANCE	25 kms	27 kms	21 kms	26 kms	28 kms	28 kms	DISTANCE	25 kms	27 kms	21 kms	26 kms	28 kms	28 kms
Light-mantled Sooty Alb.					1		Common Diving Petrel					19	4
Buller's Albatross						1	Fairy Prion					11	4
Yellow-nosed Albatross				1			Prion sp.					2	1
Shy Albatross				1			Mottled Petrel			1	1		
Mollymawk sp.	1				1		White-chinned Petrel	1					
Southern Giant Petrel					3	1	White-headed Petrel				1		
Cape Petrel				1			Blue Penguin	20	3	1	3	11	5
Hutton's Shearwater	2				1		Australasian Gannet	28	2	2	7	4	2
Buller's Shearwater				1			Stern Black-backed Gull	1	10	6	4	1	3
Sooty Shearwater	2	1	1	9			BBG Juv	1		3			
Short-tailed Shearwater					1		Caspian Tern					2	
Fluttering Shearwater	3			2	57	11	Pied Shag		1				
Flesh-footed Shearwater					1		Total	9	17	1	15	65	14
Little Shearwater	1						Duck	1				1	
Antarctic Fulmar						1							

Patrollers: J Dawn, B Couper, I & D Godbert, C MacDiarmid, P Gardner

THE BUSHLAND TRUST

Kevin Matthews

The following is a brief outline of The Bushland Trust's work in progress by the Trust Chairperson, Kevin Matthews.

Grey Ducks, Lake Rotokawau, 27 July. KM



The Bushland Trust was set up and incorporated in 1990; initially in response to a dire need to protect the Sweetwater Dune Lakes on the Aupouri Peninsula from further degradation. The Trust has initiated and completed many kilometres of fencing allowing natural regeneration of the once grazed shallow lake margins; this now provides great habitat for nesting birds like the **NZ Dabchick**, **Australian Little Grebe**, **Grey Duck**, **Fernbird**, **Bittern**, **Teal spp**, **Banded Rail**, **Spotless Crake** . . . and possible **Marsh Crake**. The vegetation also helps bind up sediment that was otherwise propelled into the water body by wave action. As a result we have much improved water quality and our aim is to keep the lake water quality to a recreational standard.

The Trust also runs a nursery growing eco sourced plants to help re-establish and enhance the areas around the dune lakes. Weeds are our biggest bug bear particularly the highly invasive Sydney Golden Wattle, a real scourge in our heath and wetlands. Currently we are bringing an isolated Moth Plant infestation under control that is threatening to disperse itself north. We are very grateful to NRC for their help and financial contributions to help get on top of this particularly nasty wind blown and smothering climber.

Aquatic weeds have become a focus in the last few years; these threaten to overrun the lakes water column and eventually cause a fall-off in available oxygen and the eventual collapse of the lakes. Currently we have one lake in the Sweetwater area that has a high level infestation of Hornwort, most likely transported by fragments in eel nets unknowingly by Eel Fishermen farming on Eels. This in any case is a highly undesirable practice; quite simply it upsets the biodiversity in these land-locked lakes. It's extremely important that this weed is not transported into neighbouring lakes and we are well advanced with options with NRC for dealing to this pest before this eventuates. Hornwort in my experience is the worst aquatic weed that I've encountered in the North, multiplying its biomass in slow moving rivers within a few weeks with the onset of summer; it's certainly one to familiarise yourself with and to keep a lookout for.

The Trust has developed a now well used track around Lake Ngatu ; if you walk it keep an eye out for the **Caspian Tern**, **Shag spp.**, **Aussie Grebes** and **NZ Dabchicks** that frequent the lake. We also have another track in from Sand Hills Road that takes you into Lake Rotoroa and Lake Heather and on to Lake Ngatu; this requires further upgrade to now isolate some parts of the track from stock for safety reasons.

The Trust is very grateful for the support it receives from NRC and the Department of Conservation and other funders; we also work closely with local schools and the community who join us happily for Arbour Day plantings. The work, not to mention the learning, is on going with new challenges constantly rearing themselves and of course we are always keen to add new volunteers to our ranks. You are welcome to contact me on 09 406 7655 or kble@xtra.co.nz.

CONSERVATION ROUND-UP

Puketi Forest Trust After many years of effort in predator control in Puketi, 30 North Island Robins (21 males & 9 females) were introduced to the core area of the forest on 14 June. This is a major milestone for the forest and we hope the birds will spread and thrive. Volunteers will be sought to monitor the birds and information on this is available from Ian Wilson (09 401 9056) or Patricia Hodgson (09 407 6239).



North Island Robin (DD)

Guardians of the Bay It's good news here too and on 1 & 22 June poison drops took place on 6 islands: Urupukapuka, Waewaetoria, Okahu, Moturua, Motukiki & Motuarohia, also on outlying rocks. A prompt clean-up of the beaches was then necessary to minimise the danger to shore wildlife. Plans to bring special species to these islands comes a step closer & Urupukapuka has now reopened for camping. More information from Laureen on 09 407 8747.

Forest & Bird There was a good turnout at a Moth Plant eradication session recently at Rangitane Reserve and a trailer-load of 2000 pods left the site. Working bees have taken place monthly at Arethusa (Pukenui) & at Matthews Reserve & planting on Waewaetoria Island. A walk in Puketi on Sunday 6 Sept will be over by the time this reaches you but more such walks will be arranged. Contact Michael Winch on 09 401 7401.

Kiwi Foundation Widespread Kiwi call monitoring took place in May & June. The results compared with previous years still needs to be assessed but those who took part were quite optimistic. The acquisition by the Trust of an area of steep gradient land close to Russell is moving nearer and both Kiwi and Weka have been recorded there recently. More information from Peter Ladd on 09 407 1421.

Aroha Island The Trustees have finally signed the lease. The Visitor Centre shop is being reorganised for the summer and a raised bed is being made for native plant propagation & sales to the community. Phone: 09 407 5243.

OBITUARY – BARRY STEVENS

We are sorry to announce the death of Barry Stevens on 26th August. Barry was a keen OSNZ member from Dargaville but a regular guest at our Far North meetings and he joined in some of our wader counts. He was a member of Miranda Naturalisit Trust & a regular visitor to Miranda Shorebird Centre. Barry was also a Lieutenant Commander in the British Navy and an accomplished artist; his talents outside birding began to come to light in conversation at our meetings and he will be sadly missed.

Detlef Davies

Barry & Denise Stevens
with Golden Eagle painting



Miranda Courses 2009 and 2010

We hope these are of interest to some readers.



19 - 20 September 2009 **Photography Course**

A mix of lecture, entertainment with images, practical sessions, discussion about suitable equipment, and the practicalities of bird photography in general. Includes instruction on setting up a hide and how to approach birds. Start Friday night with a very early start the next morning. Course fee includes all materials, teaching, food and accommodation. **Cost: \$270**

24 - 25 October 2009 **Wader Identification Course**

Learn how to sort out those tricky shorebirds. Two intensive days with expert tutors. A mix of theory and practice, but we aim to spend as much time as possible in the field. Course fee includes all materials, teaching, food and accommodation. **Cost: \$200**

November 2009 **Date TBA Field Sketching**

Learn how to sort out those tricky shorebirds. Two intensive days with expert tutors. A mix of theory and practice, but we aim to spend as much time as possible in the field. Course fee includes all materials, teaching, food and accommodation. **Cost: \$200**

13 - 19 January 2010 **The Miranda Field Course.**

Now in its twelfth year the Miranda Field Course is perfect for any naturalist. Topics covered in past courses have included geology, botany, and entomology, but with a focus on birds, identification, catching, and details on ecology of some of our shorebirds. Course fee includes all materials, teaching, food and accommodation. Limited to 12 students (age range so far 14 to 82 on previous courses). **Cost: \$800**

For further details of any of the above courses contact the centre - phone/fax 09 232 2781 or check website: www.miranda-shorebirds.org.nz or email shorebird@xtra.co.nz **All tutors experts in their fields.**

Miranda Lectures

Sunday 20 September: Miranda Shorebird Centre from 4.30 p.m

The annual cycle of a field biologist on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

Bring items to share for a BBQ followed by an informal presentation. During the spring and summer field season, a field biologist will be mostly in the field. But what happens for the rest of the year in snowbound Bethel?

Wednesday 23 September: Public Lecture, Unitec. Auckland 6.30 p.m *Godwits and their future.*

We now know much about the annual migration cycle of the bar-tailed godwit population breeding in Alaska and migrating to New Zealand and eastern Australia. But how secure is this migration system? What do we know about the population itself – is it stable or declining? How can we find out? What is then needed to secure the future for this population?

Saturday 26 September: Miranda Shorebird Centre. 10.00 a.m

Wildlife resources of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta: An illustrated overview of this prodigiously productive region, drawing on 30 years of field seasons of a wildlife biologist.

THE FAR NORTH WEKA MYSTERY

Dave Panckhurst

Weka disappeared from the North Island in the 1920's; the causes of this are not clear but habitat changes, conversion of forests to farmland, poison baits and predators may have contributed (Heather and Robertson *Field guide*). They were reintroduced to the Bay of Islands in 1969 – 71 at Rawhiti (141 birds). This population spread widely but seems to have disappeared. A more recent reintroduction by the Russell Landcare group of 38 birds at Paroa Bay south of Russell in 2002 seems to be thriving and Lindsay Alexander informed me recently that this population could be around 1000 birds.

A number of unconfirmed sightings from Doubtless Bay and north have come to light. Kevin Matthews recalls that about 20 years ago he saw a Weka crossing the Kaimaumau road and about 10 years ago he saw another bird just past Ramp Road turnoff on the Inland Road to

Whatuwhiwhi. He also had a more recent report from road workers that they had seen a Weka on the roadside just north of Te Paki. Other sightings (2007-08) have been noted by Gordon Hammond and Paul Hockenhull on wet land, rough pasture and pine forest margins on Taemaro Road not far from the intersection with the Hihi Road.

Buff Weka on Chatham Island. Those on the North Island are seldom as confiding as this (DD)

John and Christine McBain who live at Te Ngaire saw a single Weka several times about 2 years ago and took a photo of it in their garden which I have not seen. Christine also saw 3 birds feeding in long grass about a month ago – 2 of them flew and she recognized these as hen Pheasants but the third bird ran away and was the same bird they had seen in their garden.



The manager of the Taipa transfer station, Mike Bentley, told me that he had seen a Weka with 6 young close to the station and on the roads nearby several times about 18 months ago. One of these was run over by a car and he correctly identified Weka from several books I showed him. In March 2007 Dale Morris saw what he thought was a Weka on Kenana Road and reported this to Anthea Goodwin.

On 10th June this year Stella and John Rowe (OSNZ members) while staying on the upper camp ground at Maitai Bay saw a Weka close to their camper van.

All these unconfirmed sightings raise the question 'Are Weka making a comeback in the Far North'? The only possible birds to my knowledge that could be mistaken for Weka by inexperienced observers are hen Pheasant (long tail), young Pheasant (shorter tail) and Banded Rail (much smaller, but in some lights may be mistaken for Weka). Perhaps there has been an indiscriminate release of Weka well north of the Bay of Islands or is it possible that birds have made their way north from there?

It would be interesting for members to keep ears and eyes open for more information, perhaps add to this list and eventually shed some light on this mystery.

'The Chance of a Lifetime'

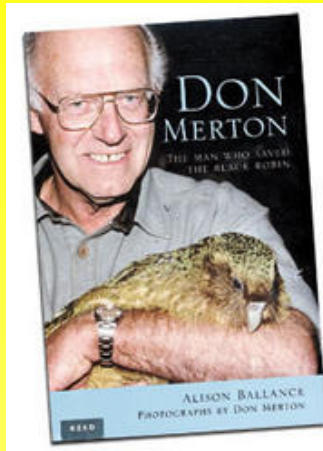
Carol Davies

As a UK Winston Churchill fellow I have taken an interest in corresponding fellowships in New Zealand which have been obtained by some well-known wildlife and conservation enthusiasts. In the UK application to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust www.wcmt.org.uk is open to all UK citizens from any background or job/profession. The Trust was set up as a living memorial to Sir Winston Churchill to provide travelling fellowships funding an experience of a lifetime through travel which will benefit recipients, their work and their community. Travelling fellowships are also obtainable in Australia and New Zealand. The Churchill Trust website in New Zealand is at www.dia.govt.nz. Here are 3 well-known New Zealand Fellows:

DON MERTON

Several years ago we met Don at a Forest & Bird group meeting in Kerikeri and have kept in touch ever since. Recently Detlef and I had the great pleasure to do a talk about the Kakapo on Codfish Island to a Bay of Plenty region meeting with an audience of 78 including Don. In 1973 he was

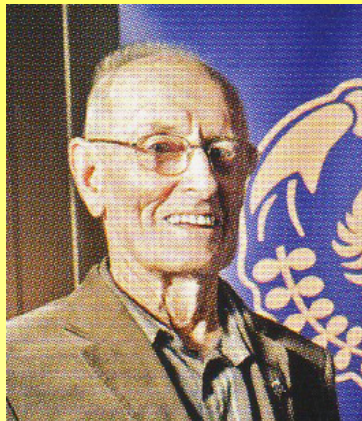
awarded a Churchill Fellowship. This was an opportunity for me to talk about his experience of what fellows often refer to as the 'Chance of a Lifetime'. This is an excerpt from Alison Ballance's Book: *Don Merton – The Man who saved the Black Robin*.



....The concepts of formal threatened species recovery planning, of the recovery group approach and of a national threatened species unit loomed large among ideas I brought back to NZ and which I was later instrumental in having implemented by the NZ Department of Conservation. In retrospect, the knowledge I gained and contacts I made on that memorable trip have proved of immense value to the many critically-endangered species I've since been involved in. In fact, without the crucial & timely input by the many dedicated folk that I spent time with - Gerald Durrell, Jeremy Mallinson, John Hartley, Sir Peter Scott, K.C.Lint of San Diego Zoo, Cam Kepler & Glen Smart of US Endangered Species Unit and many, many others, the conservation stories in my biography may never have been told!



Black Robin Pitt Island, Chathams (DD)
Still on the planet, thanks to Don



JOHN KENDRICK

In 1976 Wildlife film maker and sound recordist, John Kendrick was given a Churchill Fellowship to go and work with the BBC Natural History Unit where he met David Attenborough and later John was to do work further with the BBC team in New Zealand. John pioneered natural sound recording in NZ with colleagues like Don Merton – a mere trainee when John first met him. His recordings were used to capture the endangered birds before translocation on predator free islands. He is one of a few people to have heard the extinct Piopio and claims to have the last sight record of the North Island Bush Wren. John was recently given the Forest & Bird Old Blue award. **What took them so long!** Many will know John's work from National Radio. He has the only footage of the extinct Greater Short-tailed Bat and rediscovered the Auckland Island Snipe, last seen 102 years before. John now lives in Waipu.

IAN ST. GEORGE

Dr Ian St. George was awarded a travelling fellowship in 2009. Many will know his books/reports on NZ native orchids and botanical history. He is currently working on Colenso's collections, the publication of the letters and plant lists sent by the Rev William Colenso to Kew in the 19th century. The fellowship will enable Ian to visit the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and visit the British Museum (Natural History).

In the UK I was affiliated to the Scottish and East Anglian branches of the Trust. In 1999 my submission put to the Trust involved undertaking a comparative study of the UK, NZ and Australian government pension provision for the impending Ageing Society. After two stages of application and interview in London I was thrilled to be told that I was successful and I would be travelling downunder. As I was a long term advice volunteer at Forfar Citizens Advice Bureau specializing in the elderly and disabilities, I was to discover I was the first ever volunteer at national level to be given this award. I felt it was appropriate to link with the NZACAB (New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux). The Wellington Office was a tremendous help circulating my request to visit CABx the length and breadth of NZ. I was impressed by the quality of the offices I visited. My Fellowship exceeded all my hopes and expectations but I was even luckier, I not only got a Fellowship, I came back with a husband called Detlef!

From what I can see from the past recipients there have only been a handful of ornithologists/scientists awarded this opportunity. The answer may be that people are unaware of this Travelling Fellowship opportunity. So go on, give to it a go! Apply for your **Chance of Lifetime**.

References: www.dia.govt.nz. 2009 recipients
Bream Bay News www.breambay.co.nz/blog/tag/john-kendrick/
Don Merton – The Man who saved the Black Robin. Alison Ballance 2007

HOME AND AWAY

MID-WINTER IN FIJI

Detlef & Carol Davies

New Zealanders go to Fiji for a hot weather break in winter and warm seas to swim in and of course some of us go for birding. We found all three of these in June this year, yet the Fijians told us that to them this is cold! Clearly they don't experience the Far North ground frost!

At the end of the Conference in Orewa we went straight to the airport and were soon in Nadi on route to 3 destinations. After one night in Nadi we took a flight to Kadavu to the south, popular among birders as it has 4 endemic species. Primitive, still fairly well forested and almost lacking in



tourism, we realised why we were the only ones on the plane! But we found the birds and the strange **Whistling Dove** was Detlef's 4,000th species, a nice milestone to reach; also **Kadavu Honeyeater**, **Kadavu Fantail** and **Crimson Shining Parrot**. Accommodation was in a bunk in a tin hut a short walk from the airport and meals were provided by its 86 year old owner & his family.



Returning to Viti Levu, we boarded a coach to Raintree Lodge N of Suva from where we explored more forest with the assistance of a bird guide. Specialities like **Giant Forest Honeyeater**, **Golden Dove** & **Black-faced Shrikebill** and a good variety of commoner birds were seen well but the 2 rarest species would require another visit as their sites are too remote for the short time we had. The shy Viti Levu race of the **Island Thrush** emerged once for a good but brief view.

We spent the last 3 days on Taveuni and with the assistance of the Telecom van we managed to get to the top of De Voeux Peak, right in the clouds. To our delight a **Silktail** preened very close to the road for ages and the local race of the **Island Thrush** was quite easy to see unlike the races on the other islands.



We were dropped off at a little islet offshore from Taveuni for a couple of hours snorkelling before returning to Nadi & our flight home.

Orange-breasted Honeyeater & Vanikoro Flycatcher
on Kadavu (above).
De Voeux Peak, Taveuni & view to Vanua Levu (left) (DD)