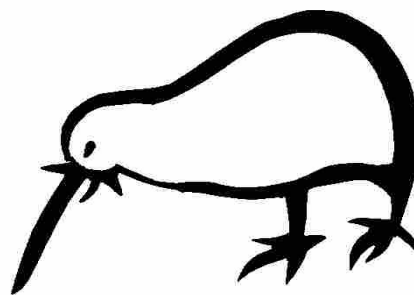


APTERYX

Issue 28

December 2010



Photos:
Detlef Davies (DD)
Jenny Atkins

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



EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Waders on Kowhai Beach: Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots,
Turnstones & Pacific Golden Plovers
(11 Dec, DD)

As the August issue of Apteryx was early and this one is late, it does seem like a long gap since you last heard from your local bird people. New Year has passed and hopefully we have all made New Year resolutions to enjoy more local birding. We welcome Jenny Atkins as a new Far North member.

Our regular features include the first wader count for nearly a year and the last 12 months beach patrol results; there has been a profusion of beached corpses recently. As it is now mid-January, I have included a report on the very productive Whangaroa Pelagic and I hope that more such trips will follow.

The Society's Annual Conference & AGM will be held at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt, Wellington over the weekend 3 to 6 June. Please let me know if you would like to attend in case arrangements can be made to travel together.

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.

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

12 Nov - Simon Fordham gave us a lecture and expertly illustrated presentation on the recent relocation of Riflemen to Tiritiri. Many of us are members of the Friends of Tiritiri and follow the progress of work on the island in their newsletter 'Dawn Chorus'.

11 – 12 Dec - Wader Count at Far North harbours. See page 7.

23 Dec - CJ Ralph came to give us an update on several Bird Observatories in Costa Rica (some set up by him) and asked the question 'what about a Bird Observatory in New Zealand?'. The feasibility of this provided interesting discussion.

The coastal bird trip for beginners on 6 Nov attracted no takers. It may have been an unsuitable date but we will publicise any intended ad hoc local birding trips and hope we may generate some interest.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

Laureen Alston & Detlef Davies

This covers the Far North region from late August 2010 to the end of the year & up to 17 Jan 2011. An impressive list of contributors include: Laureen Alston (LA), Detlef & Carol Davies (DCD), Gary Little (GL) & Asta Wistrand (AW), Kevin Matthews (KM), Anthea Goodwin (AG), Isabella & Derry Godbert, Michael Winch (MW), Theresa Vucich (TV), Kyte Wikaira, Sheila McCallum, Heather & Ray Peat, Bet & Frank Jacques (BFJ), Peter Ladd (PL), Terri Cottier, Ross Lockyer (RL), Leah Watson, Gay Blunden, George Watola, Lynn Gillett (LG) & Erik Forsyth.

WP relates to the Whangaroa Pelagic on 5 Jan, this is reported in full on page 8

North Island Brown Kiwi – Up to 6 calling Aroha / Rangitane area, small chick present mid-Jan. Good numbers on Purerua but no chicks recently. 4 were found roosting in penguin boxes and between tree roots on Moturoa Island during the day on 25 Dec. 4 birds (both sexes) calling on Motuarohia Island on 23 Oct.

New Zealand Dabchick – Recorded on several dates from Lake Rotokawau (max 11), Lake Ngatu, Lake Waiporohita. Also 1 or 2 south of our area on Waro Lake, Hikurangi

Roosting Kiwi, Moturoa Is. (DD)



Australian Little Grebe – Recorded on same lakes as above, max 12 on Lake Rotokawau.

Wandering Albatross – Adult flew past on Whangaroa Pelagic (WP) on 5 Jan 2011

Flesh-footed Shearwater – c.60 on WP, many in the Bay of Islands mid-Jan.

Sooty Shearwater – one on WP

Fluttering Shearwater – Many seen at long range in Doubtless Bay, viewable from Cable Bay & Tokerau Beach

Hutton's Shearwater – One picked up dead on beach patrol on 28 Nov was banded, see note later.



Black (Parkinson's) Petrel – c.20 on WP

Fairy Prion – c.18 on WP, photo opposite by Jenny Atkins

Cook's Petrel – c.30 on WP, often close to boat. Among the photos was a possible Pycroft's but it may not show enough features to be sure.

Black-winged Petrel – Featured very well on the WP with about 80 birds seen, giving great views and opportunities to distinguish from Cook's. On 7 Jan one was seen flying along the beach at Spirits Bay (DCD), suggesting a local breeding population. There is a colony at Cape Maria Van Diemen, no doubt seldom visited. Unlike most petrels, this species often visits the breeding burrows in the daytime.

White-naped (White-necked) Petrel – Following one seen a year ago, 3 recorded on the WP, suggesting that this species could be regular off this part of the Far North coast.

Grey-faced Petrel – 11 counted on WP, often joining the feeding flocks behind the boat. A well-grown chick found in a burrow on Moturoa Island on 25 Dec.

White-faced Storm Petrel – Featured prominently on the WP, estimated at least 90 & an entertaining flock of at least 20 was beside the boat in the late afternoon.

Little Penguin – Apart from many seen around the coasts, large numbers of dead ones found recently. Death probably due to starvation resulting from warm seas, 'La Nina' phenomenon & therefore less available food.

Black Shag – regularly by Lake Waiporohita.

Reef Heron – 2 on Black Rocks (ad & juv) on 26 Dec, 1 Parengarenga 6 Jan, 2 Waitangi mid-Jan.

Cattle Egret – At least 3 in with the Spoonbills at Awanui Wharf on 20 Nov. 12 roosting in a mangrove upstream from Riverview, Kerikeri in July last year (reported to us recently)(MW).

Australasian Bittern – One in Diggers Valley Road, Herekino on 16 Aug (GL, AW), pair in reedy margin of Lake Ngakapua on 6 Nov & one in flight over Kaimaumau Wetlands on 12 Nov (KM).

Royal Spoonbill – Numbers of birds roosting in the trees at Awanui Wharf reached over 500 but tailed off during December. None present early January. Small roosting flock in Kerikeri Inlet at least until November (BFJ).



Royal Spoonbills in the wind at Awanui (DD)

Canada Goose – 7 by lake north of Henderson Bay Road on 7 Jan.

Cape Barren Goose – A surprise sighting of 2 birds which flew from Stephenson Island south to the mainland c.7.30 am on the WP. There will be a short article about the occurrence of this species in the Far North in the April 'Apteryx'.

Grey (Pacific Black) Duck – Pure birds now very hard to detect but some resembling them on Lake Waiporohita.

Grey Teal – 2 Parengarenga Harbour on 6 Jan.

New Zealand Scaup – The regular trio on Waro Lake seems to have gone but a few seen on the first lake on south side of Henderson Bay Road on 7 Jan.

Brown Quail – At least 20 at Lagoon Bay, Motuarohia Island on 23 Oct (LA)

Red-legged Partridge – a report of one seen in a garden in Kerikeri late last year (BFJ). There was another in Kerikeri a few years ago, presumably from a local collection.



Wrybill – Tokerau Beach, Oct 2010 (DD)

Golden Pheasant – male seen at entrance to Aroha Island in October (DD)

Weka – several reports of birds heard and seen in the Russell area and south-eastwards from there.

Banded Rail – Pair with 3 small chicks on Aroha Island causeway mid-Jan.

Bar-tailed Godwit – in good numbers at the local estuaries, see Wader Count results.

Whimbrel – 1 Rangaunu Harbour on 8 Nov.

Turnstone - in good numbers at the local estuaries, see Wader Count results

Lesser Knot - in good numbers at the local estuaries, see Wader Count results

Variable Oystercatcher – Pair with 3 eggs & later 3 young at Urupukapuka Bay. 16 (8 pairs) counted on Kowhai Beach on 11 Dec, the same number as a year ago. Noted at a number of other sites.

Pied Stilt – suspected breeding in several inland sites including Lake Omapere.

Pacific Golden Plover – 12 Kowhai Beach 11 Dec.

New Zealand Dotterel – Breeding reported from Tauranga Bay (total of 15 eggs), Taipa spit (display), Urupukapuka Bay - 2 egg nest at north end, 20 Oct; another nest with 3 chicks on 6 Nov; 11 birds on 17 Nov. 8 on beach at Waitangi mid-Jan.

Banded Dotterel – Only a few reported, 3 Kowhai Beach 11 Dec, 3 Parengarenga 12 Dec, 3 Waitangi Beach mid-Jan.

Wrybill – 2 on Tokerau Beach on 30 Oct, one there on 3 Nov, none by 20 Oct.

Caspian Tern – 141 on & around Walker Island during count on 11 Dec.

White-fronted Tern – Several pairs breeding on a derelict boat at Awanui Wharf.

White-faced Herons & White-fronted Terns nesting on derelict boat at Awanui (DD)

Common Tern – One identified by Kevin Matthews with White-fronted Terns on Walker Island on 11 Dec.

Little Tern – 3 on Walker Island on 12 Dec.

Grey Ternlet – 2 seen on the WP on 5 Jan, another pelagic species which may prove to be regular locally, they breed on the Mokohinaus & on the Three Kings.

Spotted Dove – one reported on 28 Dec in Kerikeri by George Watola

Kaka – Well recorded recently. 2 feeding on kowhai flowers regularly in Stone Store area, Kerikeri (TV), the one reported earlier from Kaitaia is thought to be still in the area. 4 or more regularly seen during November at Rangitane, Takou Bay & Doves Bay, presumably the same mobile group (PL, RL).



Shining Cuckoo – Earliest song reported are Te Hapua on 2 Sept & Kerikeri Golf Course on 5 Sept. Subsequently common in the area. One hit a window in Opuia on 14 Nov but flew off unharmed (LG).

Morepork – Common & visible lately in several places.

Barn Owl – there are probably 2 family parties now in the Kaitaia area.

New Zealand Pipit – often overlooked but recorded recently on Purerua, Tokerau Beach, Cape Reinga & Spirits Bay.

Dunnock – Heard Kohumaru Road 21 Aug & seen on Taumarumaru Reserve 19 Sept (AG). Recorded on the Urupukapuka bird census in November.

Fernbird – recorded from Aroha Island, Whangae River basin, the swamps east of Russell and recently on the south side of Lake Omapere.

North Island Tomtit – Reports from Puketi Forest & Moturoa Island, one Herekino forest on 8 Jan.

North Island Robin – Puketi Forest introduced birds are doing quite well, we hope to have an update for the April newsletter. 3 imms seen on Moturoa Island on 25 Dec.

Cirl Bunting – a report from Matai Bay is being investigated.

Redpoll – 2 on Urupukapuka Island on 17 Nov may be a first record for the island (CD).



North Island Robin – Moturoa Island, 25 Dec (DD)

PROGRAMME – INDOORS and OUTDOORS

All indoor meetings take place at 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri at c.7.30 unless otherwise arranged. At this stage we do not have a programme of speakers. We will endeavour to hold meetings on the 3rd Friday of each month beginning on 18th February. Details will be communicated by email.

5 or 6 Feb – Pelagic trip from Opuia

19 or 20 March – Pelagic trip from Whangaroa.

Seabirding in our area is becoming very popular. Phone or email Detlef to book your place.

BEACH PATROLS - RESULTS FOR 2010

Isabella Godbert

Beach Patrollers: J Dawn, I & D Godbert, C McDiarmid, M Aslund, G Quaid, S Wilson.

If you are interested in taking part in this regular activity, please contact Isabella Godbert on 09 407 8058.

EAST COAST – Nov & Dec 2010

MONTH	Nov 17th	Dec 1st	MONTH	Nov 17th	Dec 1st
Beach	Rawara	Karekare	Beach	Rawara	Karekare
Buller's Albatross	1		Common Diving Petrel	1	6
Shy Albatross	1		Little Penguin		99
Buller's Shearwater	1		Australasian Gannet		3
Sooty Shearwater	7	3	Sthern Black backed Gull		1
Fluttering Shearwater	1	1	Little Black Shag		1
Short-tailed Shearwater	1	2	Total	13	6
White-faced Storm Petrel	1				

NINETY MILE BEACH – Jan to Dec 2010

MONTH	Jan 10th	Feb 7th	Mar 28th	Jun 13th	Aug 8th	Sep 5th	Oct 3rd	Oct 31st	Nov 28th
DISTANCE	32 kms	28 kms	20 kms	25 kms	27 kms	29 kms	35 kms	26 kms	37 kms
Wandering Albatross						1	1		
Grey-headed Albatross			2	1					
Buller's Albatross				1		1			
Yellow-nosed Albatross					1				
Shy Albatross				1	1	6	2		
Black-browed Albatross						1			
Small albatross sp.						1	1	1	
Southern Giant Petrel				1	1	1			
Cape Petrel	1					1			
Hutton's Shearwater	3								1
Buller's Shearwater	2	2					1	1	12
Sooty Shearwater	5	7						13	32
Short-tailed Shearwater								2	
Fluttering Shearwater		1			2			2	9
Flesh-footed Shearwater	1				1	1			1
Antarctic Fulmar	2								
Common Diving Petrel	1			1	3				
Broad-billed Prion		1							
Thin-billed Prion							2		1
Fairy Prion			1			1	3	2	3
Blue Petrel								1	
Black Petrel	1								
Grey-faced Petrel									1
Mottled Petrel				1	1				
White-chinned Petrel	1								
White-headed Petrel		1				1	1		
White-faced Storm Petrel	2				1				1
Blue Penguin	1	3		1	3		2	1	5
Australasian Gannet	3	1			2	9	4	7	3
Brown Skua					1				
Southern Black-backed Gull	1	2	2		1		1	1	
SBBGull Juv	1		1	1					
Red-billed Gull			1					1	
White-fronted tern		2	1		1				
Caspian Tern		1							
Spur-winged Plover						1			
Pied Shag	1				1				
Total	26	21	8	8	20	25	18	32	69
Duck sp.	1								

On 28th November 2010 Isabella Godbert picked up the corpse of a banded Hutton's Shearwater on 90 mile Beach. Enquiries revealed that the bird had been banded as an adult on 24th Oct 1997 in the Kaikoura Range in the north-east of the South Island, the only breeding area known for the species.

Hutton's Shearwaters probably occur regularly this far north. Kevin Matthews has identified some in the Fluttering Shearwater flock in Doubtless Bay on the rare occasions when the 2 species are near enough to separate.

George Watola found 2 Sooty, 1 Buller's & a Little Shearwater at Waipapakauri Beach on 22 Dec.



WADER COUNT – DEC 2010

Ornithological Society of New Zealand - WADER CENSUSES 2004 - 2010

OSNZ REGION

YEAR

MONTH

CENSUS DATES

Far North

2010

December

11 & 12 Dec

MAIN SITE Rangaunu Harbour, Kowhai Beach, Parengarenga Harbour

COMPILER Detlef Davies

COUNTERS Detlef & Carol Davies, Kevin Matthews, Isabella & Derry Godbert, Gary Little

& Asta Wistrand, Anthea Goodwin, Maggie Aslund & Catherine McDiarmid

DATES

COUNTERS>

LOCAL SITES >

SITE TOTALS >

Arctic Migratory Waders

Australasian Endemic Waders

SPECIES v TOTALS

Pied Oystercatcher	168
Variable Oystercatcher	111
Pied Stilt	15
New Zealand Dotterel	42
Banded Dotterel	7
Pacific Golden Plover	22
Spur-winged Plover	5
Turnstone	315
Red Knot	627++
Whimbrel	1
Bar-tailed Godwit	7905

OTHERS

Paradise Shelduck	60
White-faced Heron	12
Black-backed Gull	1
Caspian Tern	149
White-fronted Tern	166
Common Tern	1
Reef Heron	1
Little Tern	6

MAIN SITE TOTAL > 9614

WADERS ONLY > 9218

NOTES:

Bands: Kowhai - 4 orange flags on Godwits (one with the letters HN or similar), one orange flag on a Knot & one yellow flag on a Knot.

Rangaunu: 1 orange-flagged godwit on Walker Island; Parengarenga - none

Many 'others' listed above not counted.

Knot at Parengarenga probably well exceed the 100 shown.

High tide was between midday & 1 pm, all counts were between 10.30 am & 4 pm.

11-Dec-10	11-Dec-10	12-Dec-10	12-Dec-10	12-Dec-10
KM, IG, AG	D&CD, GL, AW	KM, DG	AG, MA, CM	
Rangaunu Harbour	Kowhai Beach	Parengarenga Harbour	Karekare & Tokerau	Matai Beach
3153	1805	4569	71	16
2791	1757	4322	0	0
57	44	183	46	15

20		148		
33 + 4 chicks	16	29	23	6
			15	
	24	1	8	6 + 3 chicks
	4	3		
	12	10		
	3	2		
120	45	150		
127	400	100++		
1				
2543	1300	4062		

		60		
			12	
	1			
141		4	4	
160 nesting			6	
1				
				1
3			3	

BANDING NEWS

"Flagged" Godwit on Kowhai Beach (DD)

Adrian Riegen reports:

1. One Red Knot was sighted in a flock of 450 birds by Carol and Detlef Davies et al at Kowhai Beach - Hohoura, Far North, NI, New Zealand 34deg 55min 0sec S, 173deg 16min 0sec E on 11/12/2010 with flag(s) as follows:

LEFT leg: nothing/unknown on tibia (upper leg) above nothing/unknown on tarsus
RIGHT leg: yellow flag on tibia (upper leg) above nothing/unknown on tarsus

This bird was flagged in North-west Australia, approximate co-ordinates 19deg 0min S, 122deg 0min E, which uses the flag combination Yellow, sometime since August 1992. The resighting was a distance of approximately 5318 km, with a bearing of 120 degrees, from the marking location.



2. One Bar-tailed Godwit was sighted by Carol and Detlef Davies et al at: Kowhai Beach - Hohoura, Far North, NI, New Zealand 34deg 55min 0sec S, 173deg 16min 0sec E on 11/12/2010 with flag(s) as follows:

LEFT leg: nothing/unknown on tibia (upper leg) above nothing/unknown on tarsus

RIGHT leg: orange engraved flag on tibia (upper leg) above nothing/unknown on tarsus

This bird was flagged Off Mann's Beach, Corner Inlet, approximate co-ordinates 38deg 41min S, 146deg 50min E, which uses the flag combination Orange Engraved, on 26/06/2010. The resighting was a distance of approximately 2382 km, with a bearing of 88 degrees, from the marking location.

3. One of our orange-flagged Godwits with the letters HN from Kowhai Beach was relocated at Kidds, south of Auckland by Phil Hammond on 5 Jan 2011.

Rob Schuckard reported recently that of the 12 Bar-tailed Godwits banded at Parengarenga in Nov 2007, 6 have been resighted at Yalu Jiang in China. in (the northern) autumn 2010.



WHANGAROA PELAGIC – 5 JAN 2011

Detlef Davies

Nine keen people set off from the harbour at 6.50 am, Detlef, Kevin Matthews, CJ Ralph, Jenny Atkins, Shane & Mia McPherson, Michael Szabo, Iain & Tejas Ewing + skipper Brian Candy. We were quickly out of the



harbour leaving the gulls, terns & shags behind and motoring through flocks of **Fluttering & Buller's Shearwaters**. To our amazement 2 **Cape Barren Geese** took off from Stephenson Island and flew past the boat heading for the mainland!

As we left land behind in a fresh north-easterly wind, we began spotting **Cook's** and **Black-winged Petrels**, even **Grey-faced Petrels** went by much sooner than expected. **Flesh-footed Shearwaters** and (later) **Black Petrels** started following the boat, especially after we tempted them with our freshly caught skipjack tuna! We had one **Wandering (Gibson's) Albatross** fly-by but despite the tasty morsels, it did not linger. There were no other albatrosses but this was more than compensated by 3 close sightings of **White-naped Petrel** and one (or 2?) **Grey Ternlets**. Catch of the day was a metre long Mahimahi shared for supper!

The sea became rougher in the afternoon and it became uncomfortable for some; however, watching the dancing groups of **White-faced Storm Petrels** with a few attendant **Fairy Prions** helped to divert our thoughts of possible sickness. We enjoyed a pod of about 8 **Common Dolphins** alongside the boat & a single **Sooty Shearwater** completed the day's marine tally.

Species list with approx numbers as follows:

Pied Shag 7	Little Penguin 10+	GREY TERNLET 1 or 2
Red-billed Gull c.25	Flesh-footed Shearwater 60+	White-faced Storm Petrel c.90
Black-backed Gull c.12	Cook's Petrel c.30	Fairy Prion c.18
White-fronted Tern c.13	BLACK-WINGED PETREL C.80	Sooty Shearwater 1
Australasian Gannet c.20	Grey-faced Petrel 11	Common Dolphin c.8
Fluttering Shearwater 35+	Black Petrel c.20	Australasian Harrier 2
Buller's Shearwater 100s	WHITE-NAPED PETREL 3	Caspian Tern 1
CAPE BARREN GOOSE 2	Wandering Albatross 1	White-faced Heron 1



The intended trip from Opuia on 15 Jan was postponed through unreliable weather. Next trips are planned for 5 or 6 Feb (Opuia) and 19 or 20 March (Whangaroa).

Photos:
Black-winged Petrel
Cook's Petrel
White-faced Storm Petrels (DD)