



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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Otago Region Newsletter 9/2009 September 2009



Spot the Ornithologist. Photo by Sue Maturin

Congratulations to Graeme Loh. He was a finalist in the 2009 Coastal Otago Conservation Awards for his work on the Fairy Prions way down the cliffs below the golf course at St Clair.

Graeme is all too happy to take others down the cliff. At the presentation in the Art Gallery last week he mentioned that over 100 have done so already, though he failed to add how many had done so more than once. If you are keen, contact Graeme at the Dunedin office of the Department of Conservation.

Ross Creek Survey August Results

Mary Thompson, Sue Galloway, Len Buchanan, Alan Baker and Bruce McKinlay contributed section bird lists. Most lists included numbers, either transect counts or the greatest number seen at one time. The table below gives the highest numbers reported for each section. Where no numbers were given:

S = seen; H = heard only; B = indication of breeding.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Little Shag				2			
Paradise Duck				2			
Mallard				35			
Harrier			1				
Black-backed Gull				2	1	1	
NZ Pigeon	1	1	3	4	3	2	2
Rosella		1		2		2	
Rifleman		1		3	2	2	
Welcome Swallow				1			1
Dunnock	4	4	1	3	3	S	1
Blackbird	3	6	S	12	6	2	3
Song Thrush	2	1	S	2	2	1	
Brown Creeper		3			2	3	
Grey Warbler	4	3	2	8	5	3	3
Fantail	2	4	2	2	2	3B	1
Tomtit	1						2
Silvereye	6	6	2	4	4	c40	5
Bellbird	7	3	8	10	10	4	4
Tui	2	1	1	7	2	1	
Yellowhammer					S		
Chaffinch	2	1	3	3	3	1	1
Greenfinch	1			H			
Goldfinch				1			
Redpoll	2					1	
House Sparrow				1			
Starling	1		S	1	1		
Magpie				1			
Species Total 27	14	13	12	22	15	15	10

Please send all September results to me by October 7.

Alan Baker 4675180 48 Pacific St.,
Dunedin 9010



Ornithological Snippets

Len Buchanan saw a **Royal Spoonbill** on 29 August at Brighton and Lesley Gowans saw presumably the same one there on 2 September and commented that her usual first sighting is not until the middle of the month.

Len also reports a **Black Stilt** at Brighton on the 29th. Presumably the same one that has returned to breed there over the last few years. .

In the Catlins Graeme Loh had not heard any **Shining Cuckoos** by the middle of September but says that **parakeets** (Yellow-crowned?) are in good numbers as they have bred well in response to the beech mast and huge flocks, thousands probably, of **Redpolls** were feeding on the forest floor, presumably on beech seed or sprouts.



Derek Onley and Rosemary Penwarden counted 82 **Bar-tailed Godwits** at the high tide roost at Warrington Spit on 15 September and 94 on 17th, including some with fading breeding plumage and one with a single white flag on its tibia. This compared to 14 in July and 1 in mid August. In Christchurch there were 316 at the Avon/Heathcote estuary on 14th but Andrew Crossland has pointed out that numbers drop over early spring: 268 on 24/8, 232 on 9/9, 241 on 10/9, and 190 on 13/9!

Richard Schofield reports: “On 7th September, at about 8 30am, I was watching a mixed feeding flock about 1.5km off Nugget Point. About 30 **Buller's Albatross**, 3 **Australasian Gannets**, 30-40 **Spotted Shags**, and numerous **Black-backed and Red-billed Gulls** were present, along with a single **Yellow-eyed Penguin**. As the birds started to drift away in the almost windless conditions, I noticed a small group of **Yellow-eyed Penguins** on the surface. Initially I counted 8 birds, but scoping them about 5 minutes later, the tally had risen to 15. They were in a relatively tight group (probably all within 10-15m of each other), and some were preening. Presumably they had been feeding underwater while the other birds were on the surface. Is anyone aware of such a gathering? Previously I had considered 2 YEPs to be a flock! Also seen the same morning, one black-and-white shearwater, possibly **Little Shearwater**?”

God Works in Mysterious Ways.

Graeme Loh did a rare thing this spring. He went to church to celebrate 150 years since Henry Torlesse established an Anglican Church on Banks Peninsula. (Sue Maturin is 1/4 Torlesse). At the Duvauchelle service it was announced that the first Shining Cuckoo “back from China” had been heard on Friday 11 September and that the bells would be rung to celebrate this harbinger of spring at a service on the coming Wednesday.

Mohua Update

In the Catlins, 1080 was fed to the rats on 30 August as part of efforts to protect the Mohua this coming breeding season.

The Mohua Recovery Group is planning to catch up to forty Mohua in the Catlins for transfer to the Hurunui Ark area to bolster the surviving Canterbury Mohua and last spring’s transfer of twenty birds from Breaksea Island. They are looking for a good spell of weather in the first half of October. This will be the second transfer into a mainland site for Mohua. A few of last year’s transfer bred successfully; some mating with the locals. They intend to radio track some of this year’s release to test this technique. If successful, more transfers into mainland predator managed sites are scheduled, with Orokonui listed at a later stage.

Graeme Loh

Kereru and Silvereyes

DOC has received several calls from people to the south of Dunedin about their regular seasonal kereru being absent from Kaitangata and Outram and Balclutha. Maybe they have all gone to Elton's place (see August newsletter). They have also been seen in large numbers feeding on budding willows in the Rongahere Gorge and the Catlins at this time of year. At this stage there is no cause for alarm but it would be interesting to have more notes of what kereru are doing at present.

Nic Hurring of the Kereru hospital has been putting jesses (flags) on the legs of kereru released after rehabilitation. She has had no reports of these flagged birds from members of the public and is considering not putting the jesses on, just banding them. Are there any sightings out there unreported?

Many people have also remarked on the lack of Silvereyes on their bird feeders this winter. Up above Waitati, Valerie Fay has seen just 2 or 3 birds over winter but up to 30 or so returned to the feeder in the first week of September. Numbers last autumn and this spring in the Orokonui appear to be much the same as usual, so perhaps, rather than Silvereyes being in low numbers this winter, enough food was available so they did not need to resort to the fast food outlets in gardens?

Graeme Loh & Derek Onley

Notices and Business

Harbour Survey More Volunteers Needed

The Moro Marathon took precedence over the Harbour Count planned for September 13, although I didn't spot that many OSNZ members amongst the runners.

The first survey has now been moved to Sunday 27 September.

The dates, start times and high tides are as follows:-

Date	Start Time	High Tide	Ht m
Sept 27	10 30 am	1237	2.0
Oct 18	3 30 pm	1738	2.2
Nov 15	2 30 pm	1629	2.1
Dec 13	1 20 pm	1519	2.0
Jan 10	12 00	1407	1.9
Feb 07	10 45 am	1246	1.9
Mar 14	3 00 pm	1700	1.9
Apr 14	11 45 am	1348	1.9
May 23	9 45 am	1147	2.1
June 20	8 30 am	1029	2.1
July 11	1 15 pm	1517	2.2
Aug 22	12 15 pm	1417	2.0

For instructions and map contact Bruce McKinlay mckinlaywakelin@actrix.co.nz
(Derek will be away next week)

Lala Frazer and John Burke did a test run on 28 August, covering section 4 from Broad Bay to Portobello and came up with the following:-

Little Shag	31
White-faced Heron	4
Black-backed Gull	6
Red-billed Gull	86
Pied Oystercatcher	4
Variable Oystercatcher (black phase)	2
Spur-winged Plover	1
Black Swan	2
Paradise Shelduck	8
Feral Goose	2
Mallard	2
Mallard/Grey cross	15
Blackbird	3
Starling	2
House Sparrow	2
Magpie	2
Hen	2



Falcon Study Group

Steve Lawrence will update us at the next Indoor Meeting. The Ford Falcon and Fairlane Club have donated an additional \$100.00 towards the cost of speakers and amplifiers for the nesting falcon survey. A huge thank you to the club for thinking of 'falcons'. **Contact: Steve Lawrence. E-mail: falco1@xtra.co.nz Ph 03 486 2569**

Godwit Cannon Netting

Rob Schuckard and his cannon netting team will be in Dunedin again to try for more godwits to colour band. The dates for this are 14 and 15 November and 5 and 6 December.

If you would like to be involved in this please give your name to **Peter Schweigman. Ph 03 4552790**

Colour-banded Bellbirds and Tui

Bellbirds and tui colour banded by Murray Efford in the autumn have been seen regularly around Wakari and adjoining suburbs (Halfway Bush and Glen Ross). A few tui have made it further afield, at least as far as Opoho and Abbotsford. Murray reports that almost all the bellbirds coming to his feeder just now are colour-banded males, but there seems to have been a turnover in the tui so most are unbanded. Bellbirds are now appearing with fuchsia pollen caps. Please email sightings to murray.efford@clear.net.nz or phone Murray at 476 4668. When recording bands it helps to know what to expect: the left leg has a colour over a metal (silver) band and the right leg two colours (although one bellbird seems to have removed two of its colour bands). The colours are blue, white, yellow, orange, red and various shades of green (one rather dark and not easy to pick).

Absconders from the Orokonui Ecosanctuary

Bryce Masuda is interested in any sightings of Saddleback outside the sanctuary.

Please note the change of email address to bryce.masuda@otago.ac.nz.

You are much more likely however to see a wandering Kaka. One bird from Invercargill, known only as 60 after its radio channel (-2 if you have a radio tracker, band no L34281 if you get close enough) has not been seen or heard of for months. All birds have aerials sticking out of their backs and metal bands, except for the chick which has no fashion accessories. Any sightings please to Sue Hensley 03 4822687 or sue.hensley@gmail.com.

Email Newsletters are in glorious colour!

It is quite a big job to photocopy, collate, address and post the newsletters so if you are happy to receive the newsletter **only by email**, or if you would like to but do not, please send your email address with your request to:

mary.thompson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Programme 2009

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street at 8 p.m.
Please be on time: the door will be locked after 8 p.m.

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|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 23 Sept. | Indoor Meeting John Barkla “Birds and plants of the Kermadec Islands” |
| Sunday 27 Sept | Harbour Survey High Tide 12 37, Start time 10 30am
Contact Bruce McKinlay mckinlaywakelin@actrix.co.nz |
| Sunday 11 October | Spring survey of Hawksbury Lagoon.
Contact Derek Onley 03 4822831 derekonley@yahoo.com |
| Sunday 18 Oct | Harbour Survey High Tide 17 38, Start time 3 30 pm
(note time corrected for daylight saving) |
| Wednesday 28 October | Indoor Meeting Dave Bell “ Results of the national survey of NZ Falcon” |
| Sunday 1 November | Ross Creek Survey. Meet at 1.00 pm end of Cannington Road. Contact Alan Baker, phone 467 5180 |
| Sunday 15 Nov | Harbour Survey High Tide 16 29, Start time 2 30 pm |
| Wednesday 25 Nov. | Indoor Meeting TBA |
| Saturday 28 November | Summer Wader Count. High tide at Dunedin 13.22. |

Newsletter editor: Derek Onley, c/o Blueskin Store, Waitati, 9060
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Many thanks to all who contributed,
Final date for copy for next newsletter: 21 October