

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

Wellington Region Newsletter

June 2010

www.osnz.org.nz and www.notornis.org.nz

Reminders of two local meetings

Monday, 21st June – Paraparaumu: *“Critical critters: how urban gardeners can contribute to regional recovery of birds”*. Ms. Lynn Adams, Biodiversity Conservation Manager, Poneke Office, DOC. Lynn will describe a project aimed at encouraging suburban gardeners to establish suitable plants to support native birds, lizards and invertebrates in our gardens.

The venue is the Paraparaumu Public Library Meeting Room, 179 Rimu Road, Paraparaumu, commencing at 7.30 pm. Ample car parking is available. Tea and coffee are served before the meeting. If you are late please telephone (027) 230-8454 and someone will come to the door to let you in.

An invitation to the meeting has been extended to the Kapiti Coast Branch of the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and it is expected that several Forest and Bird members will arrive.

Monday, 5th July – Wellington: *“Progress in the establishment of North Island brown kiwi in the Rimutaka Forest Park”*. Ms. Melody McLaughlin, Kiwi Project Coordinator, Rimutaka Forest Park Charitable Trust will outline recent achievements leading towards the establishment of a small brown kiwi population in the Rimutaka Forest Park.

We meet at the Head Office of the Department of Conservation (DOC) (“Conservation House” – Te Whare Atawhai), 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington (located between Manners Mall and Willis Street). Please wait outside the glass entrance doors for a DOC staff member / OSNZ member to admit you through the entrance security system and to the meeting room on the 4th floor. Access is available between 7:20 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. Meetings commence at 7:45 p.m. If you are late please telephone (027) 230-8454 and someone will come to the door to let you in.

Annual General Meeting & Conference, Nelson

The recent society conference and AGM held in Nelson was well attended and enjoyed by all, including field trips despite wet weather on Sunday 6th June. A wide range of presentations were made at the scientific day on Saturday 5th June and a feature was the launch of the fourth edition of the Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand, published by Te Papa Press in association with the Ornithological Society. At 500 pages it is substantially larger than the third edition and

now includes extinct and fossil birds of New Zealand, failed introductions and Maori names of birds. The new checklist is available for purchase from Paul Cuming, OSNZ Publication Sales, Unit 2/7 Robins Road, Judea, Tauranga. email:<birddo@post.com> From now on the naming of birds in this newsletter will follow the 2010 Checklist nomenclature.

Congratulations to two Wellington members were elected to Council, Dr. Murray Williams and Dr. Colin Miskelly.



Two views of a field trip at Torrent Bay, Able Tasman National Park, 5th June. The rain did clear at times and we enjoyed hearing and seeing a few bellbirds and brown creepers in the bush. (photos: Ian Armitage)

Wellington Region is hosting the 2011 conference and it has been agreed that the event next year will comprise two scientific days and will include at least two workshops on topics of broad interest to society members.

Recent Bird Sightings and Activities

Recent sightings include five **red-crowned parakeets** at Horokiwi (from Enfys Graham), also one bird seen recently in Gollan's Valley, East Harbour Regional Park, 17 **royal spoonbill** at

Pauatahanui (from Ian Armitage), at least three **shore plovers** at Whitireia Park, Porirua (from Janet Levy, non-member) and two records of **New Zealand falcons** in central Wellington. At least 2,000 **fluttering shearwaters** were counted by several members last Sunday during the Wellington Harbour bird survey, many near Lowry Bay and also near the Interislander ferry terminal. A **giant petrel** (species unclear) was also recorded during the survey on the South Wellington coast (from Sue Freitag and Barry Dent).



A banded **shore plover** at Whitireia Park on 7th June. This and at least two other banded birds are well known and are from the Mana Island shore plover population (photo: Janet Levy).



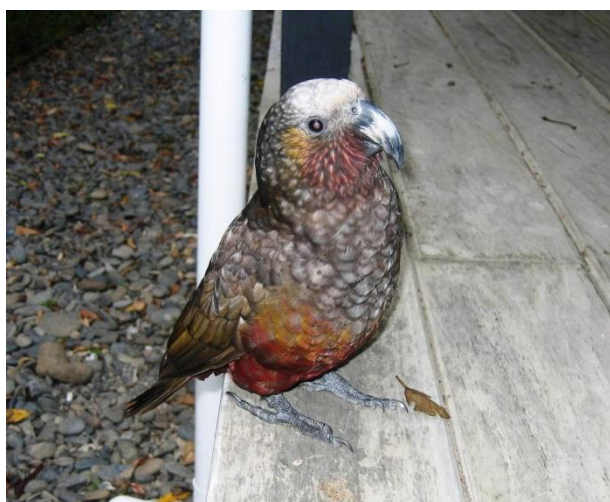
Part of a large flock of **fluttering shearwaters** near Lowry Bay, Wellington Harbour on 13th June (photo: Dallas Bishop).

Several members enjoyed the mid-April series of bird counts on Kapiti Island. The weather was great and the dinner and company was much enjoyed by us all. The next series of counts is planned for mid-July; more volunteers are welcome but remember the work is physically demanding. Please contact Colin Miskelly for details. Three photos show some of the fun,

including a cheeky but likeable kaka that insisted on coming inside the whare for pre-dinner snacks!



At dinner in the Whare on Kapiti Island. From left, Rob Cross, Shauna Baillie, Colin Miskelly, Allan Munro, Delia Small and Rod Orange (photo: Ian Armitage).



A cheeky kaka near the front door of the Whare and sharp-eyed weka on the path outside (photos: Ian Armitage).

Garden Bird Survey 2010

The National Garden Bird Survey will be held this year between **26th June 2010** and **4th July 2010**. **DO NOT START THE SURVEY BEFORE 26 JUNE** (reports dated before 26 June are invalid and will not be counted). The survey is once again being arranged by Landcare Research Ltd, in association with the OSNZ and Royal Forest & Bird Protection

Society. Details, including the recording form, can be read and downloaded from the Landcare Research Ltd website, <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/> The RR also has a supply of recording forms – please ask if you wish to use one.

What is a garden bird survey?

The basic format of the garden bird survey is that people spend 1 hour during a specified week in winter watching birds in their home gardens, public parks, or school grounds, and recording the largest number of each species they see at once. When repeated over a number of years this will provide valuable information on changes in distribution and population trends of birds in our urban environment. If enough rural gardens are sampled, the survey will also provide information on birds in the rural environment as well.

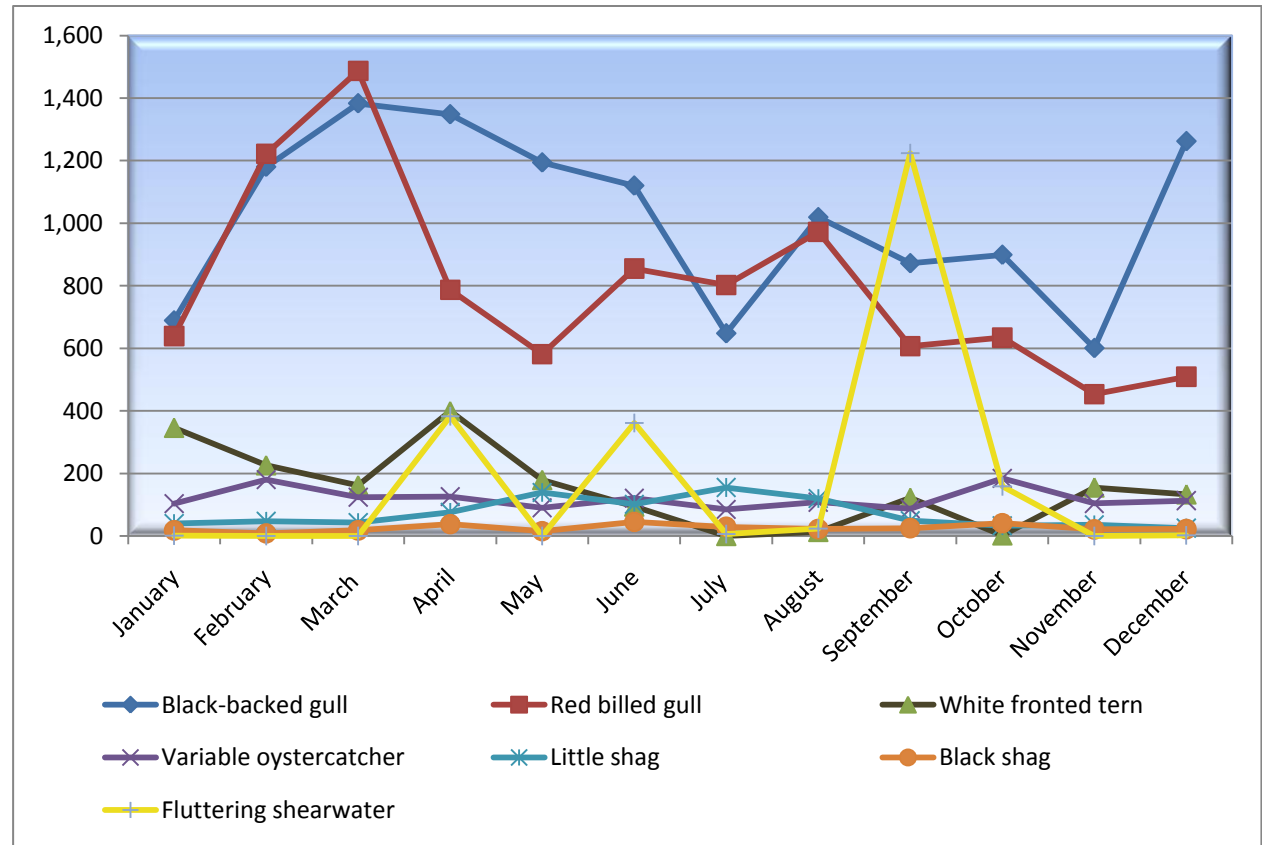
Why do a garden bird survey?

The New Zealand Garden Bird Surveys seek to answer the question, “Are common bird populations increasing or decreasing?” New Zealand has a number of rare native bird species that are declining, but we do not know the population trends of our more common native or introduced bird species. Some native birds occur in towns and cities (e.g. bellbird, fantail, grey warbler, kereru or wood pigeon, silvereye, and tui). Measuring the population trends of these species is an enormous task, and that’s why we need your help to achieve this. Overseas Garden Bird Survey’s have been vital in tracking the fortunes of both urban and rural bird species, and in some cases have helped to highlight alarming declines in certain birds, that might never have been identified were it not for the public’s help.

Wellington Harbour Bird Survey

Good progress continues with the Wellington Harbour Bird Survey. A plot of monthly counts for 2009 for seven well known species is shown below. The two gulls continue to be the most frequently

counted birds on the harbour. Offers from other members to assist in the survey during 2010 are be welcome.



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As always, contributions from members to this Newsletter are most welcome.