THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)



OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

June 2019

http://osnz.org.nz/ and http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/

Greetings

Many thanks to all the Wellington members who helped with the organisation and running of the Birds New Zealand Conference which was held at the Brentwood Hotel over Queen's Birthday weekend. In addition, there was great support from Wellington members with 60 attending the Conference. Two long–serving members, Derek Batcheler and Reg Cotter received meritorious services awards. Their citations are included in this newsletter.

A highlight of the Conference was the launching of the new Atlas scheme. This scheme will provide very valuable information on the current status of the birds of New Zealand and will be critical in developing more effective measures for their conservation. The Atlas scheme is one in which all members can participate, including those who are new to birding or have not joined the digital revolution of smart phones and computers. Training will be given on how to participate in the Atlas scheme. The next monthly Wellington meeting will be devoted to the Atlas scheme.

Geoff de Lisle

Regional Representative, Wellington Birds New Zealand (OSNZ)

Wellington Birds New Zealand – help required

Treasurer: A treasurer is required for the Wellington branch. Stephen Sharp has carried out this role for many years and is standing down once the Conference Accounts are finalised. This role has now been made considerably easier with the switch to electronic banking. All transactions and the annual report can be carried out at home over an internet connection. The number of transactions per year, excluding those from running the conference is less than 20.

Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle is standing down at the end of this year. He has carried out this role for 7 years, the longest serving Wellington Regional Representative for the last 30 years. There is a need for a change in the running of the Wellington branch. There is a recommendation that the various tasks currently undertaken should be shared amongst the Wellington members and thus markedly reducing the commitments for the Regional Representative. These tasks include;

- Writing the Wellington Regional Newsletter
- Writing the Wellington Report for the Birds New Zealand magazine.
- Organising the speakers for the monthly meetings.
- Organising local and national projects.

Would members who can help with the running of the Wellington region please contact Geoff de Lisle.

Upcoming Monthly Meetings WHERE and WHEN

WHERE and WHEN:

The meeting is held on the first Monday of the month at Te Papa's collections building, 169 Tory Street. Go up the steps and across the parking area to the door.

July Meeting, Monday 1st. The New Zealand Birds Atlas. This meeting will be devoted to the new Atlas scheme and will cover how people can participate, what needs to be done and what progress has been made.

August Meeting, Monday 5th. Puangiangi Island. Barry Dent and Sue Freitag. Puangiangi Island is part of the Rangitoto chain in the Marlborough Sounds islands which is in the process of being restored to its former ecological state by Wellington-based charitable trust Fauna Recovery New Zealand, run by Sue Freitag and Barry Dent.

September Meeting, Monday 2nd. To be confirmed.

April Meeting, Monday 1st An update of the Whenua Hou Diving Petrel project: Responses to invasive predator eradications and interactions with unrelated species groups - Johannes Fischer.

Johannes is carrying out studies on the Whenua Hou diving petrel, formerly called the South Georgian diving petrel on Codfish Island (Whenua Hou). The population of Whenua Hou diving petrels is in the order of 150 birds which nest in a 1km strip of sand dunes. A major aim of his studies is to determine what steps can be undertaken to ensure the survival of this highly endangered bird. The nesting site is vulnerable to erosion which is likely to be exacerbated by sea level rises as a result of global warming. Part of Johannes's studies included investigation of whether the removal of potential predators of the diving petrel has resulted in an increase in the number of birds. Weka were removed from Whenua Hou in 1984 and rats in 2000. Using an imperfect data set Johannes developed a population model of the Whenua Hou diving petrel. No increase in the very slow growth of the population could be attributed to the removal of potential predators.

May Meeting Monday 6th Birds of Remutaka Forest Park and the use of acoustic monitoring - Susan Ellis The major project of the Remutaka Conversation Trust, formerly the Rimutaka Forest Trust was the establishment of a population of brown kiwi in the park in 2006. The aim of the project is to establish a self-sustaining population of kiwi. A total of 30 kiwi were introduced into the park and the population is now over 100. An integral part of this project has been the extensive and ongoing predator control programme with ~600 traps. Much of Susan's talk was devoted to the monitoring of the birds. The initial monitoring from 2006-2011 was carried out using radio-tracking of birds carrying transmitters. The principal finding of this monitoring was that there was limited spread of kiwi from their release site. The population has grown with time and helped by the use of operation nest egg (ONE) whereby eggs are removed into captivity and the chicks reared in protected environments until they are large enough (~1kg) before being released back into the park. In 2011 saw the beginning of monitoring the population using acoustic monitors. The change in monitoring was made because of the increase in the number of kiwi and the difficulties of monitoring such numbers by radio tracking. In 2018 30 recorders were used spread 400 m apart. Acoustic monitoring has documented the slow spread of kiwi from the release site as the number of birds increases. Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 or osnzwelly@gmail.com Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge, peter.hodgenz@gmail.com Birds New Zealand Regional Roundup: Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929 osnzwelly@gmail.com Wellington Harbour Survey Geoff de Lisle, Stuart Nicholson Mist netting – Matu Both, manager@ngamanu.co.nz Nga Manu, Waikanae Ross Pickard, ross.pickard@hexagonsi.com Wellington Zoo

Kakapo

One of the highlights of the Conference was the keynote talk by Andrew Digby on Kakapo. While some, maybe many, are justifiably wary of social media it has been an important vehicle for getting the latest news on the recent kakapo breeding season. You do not have to be signed up to twitter to view this site, just click on the link and enjoy. Key sites for the latest information are:

Andrew Digby's twitter account https://twitter.com/takapodigs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Kakapo Recovery Facebook - <u>https://www.facebook.com/KakapoRecovery/</u>

Alison Ballance – Our Changing World https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ourchangingworld.R6S

Aspergillosis

2019 has been a phenomenal breeding season for kakapo with large numbers of chicks being produced on Whenua Hou (Codfish Island) and Anchor Island. Unfortunately there has been an outbreak of aspergillosis which has resulted in the deaths of two adult female kakapo and five chicks. One of adult deaths was Hoki which was the subject of a book by Gideon Climo. Other birds have been affected and are being intensively treated in Dunedin and Auckland. To date, all cases of aspergillosis have been in birds from Whenua Hou and none of the other birds have been affected.

Aspergillosis is a fungal disease caused by member of the genus *Aspergillus*. A number of different species of *Aspergillus* have been associated with disease, most commonly with *Aspergillus fumigatus*. These fungi are very widespread in the environment and practically all birds and mammals will come in contact with them without causing disease.

Serious, often fatal disease can occur when there is exposure to very high numbers of *Aspergillus* and the affected animal is highly susceptible due to a pre-existing condition. In humans, acute aspergillosis occurs in patients with severely compromised immune systems such as those undergoing bone marrow transplantation. Increased concentration of fungal spores occur with warm temperatures, high humidity and poor conditions. Such conditions appear to have occurred in the kakapo nests on Whenua Hou. It is important to note that aspergillosis is not a contagious disease.

Aspergillosis is a relatively common disease in birds, especially in caged and domestic birds and less so in freeliving birds. In New Zealand it has notably occurred in hihi on both Mokoia and Tiritiri Matangi islands. In birds aspergillosis most commonly presents as a respiratory infection. The disease can be difficult to diagnose particularly in its early stages. There are no good, simple diagnostic tests for aspergillosis. An ideal diagnostic test would be able to accurately detect aspergillosis in its early stages which would allow for the implementation of antimicrobial therapy when it is most likely to be effective. A variety of diagnostic procedures have been used to diagnose aspergillosis in kakapo including the use of CT scans. The chance of successful treatment with antimicrobials is greatly improved by an early diagnosis. Kakapo with aspergillosis are being treated at Dunedin and Auckland.

References

Beernaert LA, Pasmans F, Van Waeyenberghe L, Haesebrouck F, Martel A (2010) **Aspergillus infections in birds: a review** Avian Pathol. 39(5):325-31

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03079457.2010.506210

Masha G. Savelieff, Lucia Pappalardo, Panagiotis Azmanis (2018) **The current status of avian aspergillosis diagnoses:** Veterinary practice to novel research avenues. Veterinary Clinical Pathology, 47:342-62. <u>https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/vcp.12644</u>

Derek Batcheler

Derek has been a dedicated and quiet achiever in the society for more than 20 years, in the Wellington Region and nationally. He made an exacting and valuable contribution towards the compilation of the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999 – 2004 through the entry of observer, time and location data from more than 30,000 field forms. Between 2015 and 2017, Derek contributed to the transcription of information into a new database for the Beach Patrol Scheme and was one of only five members who accurately transcribed field records from more than 6,000 Beach Patrol cards. Derek contributed to field studies of little penguins on Matiu/Somes Island and assisted with the loading and checking of data, texts and captions onto 'NZBirds-Online' website.

Recognition of Derek's dedicated contribution to the Society is handsomely deserved with a **Meritorious Service Award**.

Reg Cotter

An enthusiasm for bird watching and bird studies by Reg Cotter, and his strong commitment to field activities in the Wellington Region for 30 years are well known to local members. Reg was Wellington RR for several years and was inspirational in the field work he led and encouraged other members to follow. He has been involved in the long-term Wellington Harbour bird survey, a bird survey of the Pencarrow lakes and, most recently, his leadership in studies of the movements and breeding behaviour of little penguins on Matiu/Somes Island. Reg worked for many years with other society members to locate and study the Chatham Island Taiko. His contribution to our knowledge about



this elusive seabird is considerable, yet his contribution is largely unknown. Reg co-authored four papers on seabirds published in Notornis between 1994 and 2013 and provided Te Papa Tongarewa-National Museum with 73 bird specimens from 1972 to 2011 for the its collections. At various times Reg provided valuable assistance to Richard Holdaway during fossil excavations.

Recognition of Reg's dedicated and significant contribution to the Society is richly deserved with a **Meritorious Service Award**.



Nanogirl's Great Science Adventures

Can we bring dinosaurs back to life? Alan Tennyson & Lara Shepherd, Te Papa

https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/nanogirls-great-science-adventures/story/2018694754/can-we-bringdinosaurs-back-to-life

How High Can Birds Fly?* Colin MIskelly https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018694760

*The answer to this question is 37,000 feet. A Ruppells Griffon vulture (*Gyps ruppellii*)in 1973 collided with an aircraft over Abijan, Ivory Coast, West Africa. The collision damaged an engine which was shut down. The plane landed safely and 15 partial feathers were recovered from the aircraft. The Wilson Bulletin (1974) 86:461-2.

Snarge - The residue smeared on an airplane after a bird/plane collision. Etymology – blend of snot and garbage.

New Zealand Bird Atlas

The New Zealand Bird Atlas was officially launched at the Birds New Zealand Conference over Queen's Birthday weekend. For those who were not at the Conference there is a wonderful video that was part of the launch of the Atlas. This video can be seen on YouTube <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcqWSAIj8gI</u>

The exciting aspect of the Atlas is that it is **an activity that all members can take part in**. The Atlas is based on the use of modern technologies including cell phones and eBird. However, you do not need to have a cell phone or even a computer to participate. You can enter your observations onto an Atlas Observation sheet and post it for others to enter into eBird (see 3 below). You do not have to be a "bird expert" to participate and beginner birders are encouraged to participate. You are encouraged to read the New Zealand Bird Atlas Handbook which can be found at the following weblink <u>https://birdatlas.co.nz/assets/0ee293e775/New-Zealand-Bird-Atlas-Handbook-version-1.pdf</u>. Other useful information can be found on the New Zealand Bird Atlas website <u>https://birdatlas.co.nz</u>

Atlas entries need to be entered into the Atlas portal of eBird which can be found at <u>https://ebird.org/atlasnz/home</u> Note: all your Atlas eBird entries will also be entered into your normal eBird account.

Please note that there are a number of different ways in which you can participate;

- (1) Direct entry of observations into a cell phone using the eBird smart app.
- (2) Noting observations in a notebook and at a later date enter them into eBird Atlas portal.
- (3) Noting observations into the eBird Excel spreadsheet and emailing them to <u>nzbirdatlas@wmil.co.nz</u> or entering them into eBird.
- (4) Noting observations on an Atlas observation sheet and posting to NZ Bird Atlas, PO Box 607, Blenheim 7240 or emailing them to <u>nzbirdatlas@wmil.co.nz</u>.

The rules for the Atlas are simple:

- (a) The preferred observations are complete checklists with a record of all the birds you can see and hear. Complete checklists provide the most valuable information. Incidental findings (incomplete checklists) are of lesser value but do provide information on the distribution of species. Note, complete checklists provide information on not only what birds are present but most importantly what birds are absent.
- (b) The checklists should be done within the 10 x 10 km squares and within the same habitat. For each checklist there is a need to identify the location in the square where the checklist was done. This can be done by:
 - a. Using the eBird phone application
 - b. Using a GPS
 - c. Identifying the location on the eBIrd map
 - d. Identifying the location on a physical map.
- (c) You do not have to identify the habitat type. This will be done by the group analysing the data. There are habitat maps for the entire country.
- (d) The method for making observations is up to the observer. Recommended methods include;
 - a. A stationary count – minimum of 5 minutes.
 - Travelling count these should be a maximum of 1km and within the same habitat and b. within the same 10 x 10 km square.

Note: The aim is to have for each 10 x 10 km square a minimum of a count of each major habitat surveyed for spring, summer, autumn and winter. Ideally, the more checklists for a given square, the better.

Wellington Update -For the Atlas scheme, Wellington includes the Wairarapa.





Fast Harbour banded dotterel

The MIRO led banded dotterel project continues with the expectation that the birds will shortly return to the study sites at Eastbourne beach and at the outlet of Lake Kohangapiripiri. The project will once again be focused on the breeding success of banded dotterels at the two study sites. Investigations will be undertaken to see how nest predation by domestic cats on the Eastbourne beach can be eliminated. Of interest will be to see how many of the banded/flagged birds return to the study sites. Further banding/flagging will be carried out this year. Monitoring of the birds will take place during the week. Members who wish to help with the monitoring should contact Geoff de Lisle.

Homecoming for Rare Rowi

"A small population of our rarest kiwi returned to their traditional West Coast home on 9th May after growing up on Mana Island.

These seven rowi, or Ōkārito brown kiwi, were all wild-hatched on predator free Mana Island and are part of a kiwi *kōhanga initiative."* (Department of Conservation, 17th May, 2019)

Rowi / Okarito brown kiwi is New Zealand's rarest kiwi. They are a separate species, Apteryx rowi which is most closely related to brown kiwi, Apteryx mantelli (Jason et al., 2016). The diagram from this study shows the genetic relationships between the different kiwi.

In 1995 the rowi population in Okarito was only ~160 and declining. The number has subsequently increased through intensive pest control and the implementation of Operation Nest Egg where eggs and young chicks from the wild are reared in captivity and subsequently on Motuara Island, until large enough (1.2 kg) to cope with the presence of stoats. By 2012 the population had risen to 375 and currently the population is 675.

In 2012 as part of the conservation programme for rowi, 20 juvenile birds were raised to maturity on Motuara Island, in the Marlborough Sounds and then transferred to Mana Island. Since 2012 these birds have developed into a breeding population allowing in 2019 the first translocation of 7 birds back to the South Island. The Mana birds went to a new area for rowi at Lake Gault, near Fox Glacier which was established last year with the original translocation of 27 birds. This new area was established because the Okartito Forest area had reached capacity for rowi.



https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2012/return-of-kiwi-to-north-island-after-hundreds-of-yearsabsence/rowi-transfer-to-mana-island-photo-gallery/

https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/rare-rowi-kiwi-chick-relocated-mana-island

http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1206/S00037/return-of-kiwi-to-north-island-after-100s-of-yearsabsence.htm

https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2019/home-coming-for-rare-rowi/

Translocation of Fernbird to Mana Island

On the 16th of April this year 16 fernbirds were released on Mana Island. This is a Friends of Mana Island (FOMI) project run in conjunction with the Department of Conservation. The translocation was managed by Kevin Parker, of Parker Conservation who previously carried out the transfer of fernbirds to Pauatahanui Wildlife reserve and the successful



with territories. Three of the territories are located in or near the Waikoko wetland, two on the shingle flats just north of the woolshed and a pair at the top of Aston valley. All the translocated birds are colour banded with a red/metal band on the right leg and a unique 2 colour combination on the left leg. One bird has a black/metal combination on the right leg.

relocation of them to Tiritiri Matangi. The birds for Mana Island were caught in mist nets at Lake Rotokare, Taranaki which is a predator-free, fenced reserve with good numbers of fernbirds. Lake Rotokare was also the source of fernbirds for the transfers to Pauatahanui in 2017 and 2018. Three shipments totalling 40 birds have been translocated to Mana Island and they were all released to the Waikoko wetland.

The expectation is that the fernbirds will find suitable habitat not only in the area of the wetland but further afield. As part of the consent approval for the translocation there is a requirement for the birds to be monitored. Preliminary monitoring of the fernbirds has identified six pairs of birds





Visitors to the island keep a look out for fernbirds and record where you see them and if possible the band combinations. Records to be sent to <u>osnzwelly@gmail.com</u>

Pauatahanui Wildlife Reserve - Fernbirds

Fernbirds bred again during the last spring / summer and now locally bred birds predominate. The locally bred birds are unbanded while the transferred birds are all colour banded. The population of fernbirds at Pauatahanui in April was thought to be at least 25.

How to visit Mana Island

Mana Island is a Department of Conservation scientific reserve and unlike Kapiti Island no permit is required to visit it. If you have a boat you can visit Mana Island between 8am and 5pm daily. The public landing area is between the Woolshed and the old wharf. Kayaks and other small open craft can be pulled up on to the beach, all other vessels must use the mooring or anchor at least 100m off shore after dropping off visitors. The island is predator free so before visiting make sure to check your gear and vessel for any plant material (sticks, seeds, soil), invertebrates or mammalian stowaways. More information on visiting Mana:

https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/wellington-kapiti/places/mana-island-scientific-reserve/

https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/wellington/mana-island-factsheet.pdf

There are no regular public trips to Mana Island run by concessionaires. However, Friends of Mana Island (FOMI) run organised trips to the island which are available to the general public as well as FOMI members. See the schedule on the their website - <u>http://www.manaisland.org.nz/visitors-2/</u>

Waikoko Wetland Changes – Mana Island

Friends of Mana Island (FOMI) and DOC have recently created a new track through the Waikoko wetland on Mana Island. The other major addition by FOMI is a bird hide, which is on the new track and overlooks one of the ponds in the wetland. This pond retains water for most of the



summer whilst a number of the other ponds in the wetland dry out. Consequently this pond is a favourite with brown teal. In February this year Shane Cotter recorded 21 brown teal on this pond.



https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S53694970

New homes for white-faced storm petrels on Mana Island

FOMI have been busy preparing accommodation for white-faced storm petrels. The burrows for these birds have a wooden nesting chamber connected to the outside by plastic piping. They have been placed under low trees / scrub which is similar conditions to where they nest on the Chatham Islands. The burrows are for the eventual return of the chicks which were translocated to Mana this year and feed until they fledged. Further translocations are planned for the following two years. Banded young are expected to first return to the colony at 3 years of age or older but may not breed for another 2-3 years (HANZAB, 1990). Additional birds may be attracted to the colony by the calls being broadcast at the



colony as evidenced by the following BirdingNZ.net post by Colin Miskelly in November, 2013.

"The highlight was a white-faced storm petrel found on an egg. On my last visit (30 Sep - 1 Oct), my son and I completed a check of all 105 old artificial burrows, and noted fresh digging in one that has never shown signs of activity before. On reaching into the burrow yesterday afternoon I felt a pair of long spindly legs and an egg, so already knew what it was before I extracted the bird - Mana Island's first breeding record for the species, and the



fifth species of petrel breeding on the island. [Sooty shearwaters occur naturally, and diving petrels, fairy prions and fluttering shearwaters have been translocated, plus diving petrels colonised other parts of the island naturally.]

Note that storm petrels have not been translocated to Mana Island. The sound system where the bird was found has been playing white-faced storm petrels calls mixed in with those of three other petrel species since 1993, and two storm

petrels have been caught at night in the area before (2 Nov 2000 & 20 Sep 2001). A newer sound system plays only white-faced storm petrels calls, about 100 m away through dense vegetation. There were storm petrels present at the new site on 1 October (seen in flight and heard on the ground), but I did not see or hear any there last night."

Soft-plumaged petrel

Colin Miskelly, from Te Papa reports - We have today received via DOC a freshly dead soft-plumaged petrel picked up on the Johnsonville-Tawa back-road, nearer the Tawa end. It looks like a juvenile in fresh plumage (recently fledged).

Te Papa holds 6 previous 'Wellington' specimens from Petone Beach or Lower Hutt (mainly courtesy of the Cotters) all found in May or June between 1971 and 2006. May/June matches expected fledging timing on Antipodes Island.

Note: Soft plumage petrels breed in small colonies on the Antipodes Island with a total number of breeding pairs of ~2500-5000 pairs. The largest population of them is on Gough Island in the Atlantic Ocean with millions of birds. The soft-plumaged petrel is a medium-sized dark-grey-and-white gadfly petrel (tube-nosed seabird) with narrow wings and a pointed tail in flight.

http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/soft-plumaged-petrel



This year's survey: 29 June - 7 July 2019

https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/science/plants-animals-fungi/animals/birds/garden-bird-surveys/taking-part

Backyard beats | What are our birds telling us?

Birds act as 'backyard barometers' - telling us about the health of the environment we live in. Landcare Research reports on 10 years of Garden Bird Surveys.

Birds are signalling significant changes in our environment over the last 10 and 5 years, according to the State of NZ Garden Birds 2018 | Te Āhua o ngā Manu o te Kāri i Aotearoa 2018 report just released by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. Using cutting-edge techniques, researchers have distilled a large information base – bird counts gathered by New Zealanders from over 34,000 garden surveys since 2008 – into simple but powerful metrics.

Positive signals are emerging for four native species:

• A moderate increase in kererū counts (56%) over 10 years, accelerating to a rapid increase in the last five years – a pattern that is visible across all regions.

- The long-term trend for a shallow increase in tūī (kōkō) counts (27% over 10 years) continues, with the rate of increase also accelerating nationally for this species in the last five years.
- An emerging trend for a shallow increase in fantail (pīwaiwaka) counts (15% over 10 years), with the rate of increase also accelerating in Canterbury, Otago and Southland in the short term.
- The moderate decline in silvereye (tauhou) counts (28% over the last 10 years) is still apparent, but this rate of decline has slowed nationally (to 2%) in the last five years.

For introduced species, which also act environmental indicators, the key signals are:

- Consistent with last year's observations, shallow or moderate declines in counts (14-32% over 10 years) were detected for dunnock, song thrush, goldfinch and starling.
- Although myna counts show little or no change in the long term, an early warning has been raised with a shallow increase in their counts nationally. Of particular concern are the moderate increases observed in Bay of Plenty (71% and 29% over 10- and 5-year periods respectively).



Te Papa Blogs

A nature wonderland at Norfolk Island, By: Susan Waugh

On: 12 Apr 2019

A nature wonderland at Norfolk Island

Our region's biodiversity is fragile, and held in trust as many tiny sites like Phillip Island, Australia. With changing climate and many other pressures, we should be aiming to make the species more resilient to withstand the coming stormy weather, says Head of Science Susan Waugh.

https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/04/12/a-nature-wonderland-at-norfolk-island/

Over-looked for a century: Macquarie Island shag added to the New Zealand list, By: <u>Colin Miskelly</u>

On: 10 Jun 2019

'Presumably no-one bothered to check till now whether Ogilvie-Grant knew one shag from another.' Curator Colin Miskelly shares his research resulting in the addition of a new (or old) bird to the official New Zealand bird list.

https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/06/10/over-looked-for-a-century-macquarie-island-shag-added-to-thenew-zealand-list/

Cook Strait pelagic - 23 May

Phil Battley Saturday May 25, 2019

We had a great trip in perfect weather into Cook Strait on Thursday with a bunch of Massey University ornithology students and associated uni hanger-ons, with Colin Miskelly joining us from Wellington. We headed out into the strait and tailed a trawler that had a long line of albatrosses spread over a km or so behind it, and had a fabulous time picking up species. The birds weren't that interested in hanging around our boat, even with fish scraps heading their way, but later in the day we had a good selection behind the boat. 18



tubenose taxa were seen if you count forms of Wandering Albatross separately, with the bird of the day undoubtedly being an **Antarctic Fulmar (pictured)**. It was hard to get a good gauge on numbers, but with 200+ albatrosses, 100-odd Cape Petrels and 500+ Westland Petrels over the day, there was no shortage of birds. The same skipper will be taking out the Birds NZ conference trip on Queens Birthday Monday, so it augurs well for a great trip.

Antipodean Wandering Albatross (1) Gibson's Wandering Albatross (2) Northern Royal Albatross (5+) Southern Royal Albatross (1) Salvin's Albatross (1; only Colin saw it) Buller's Albatross (1) White-capped Albatross (uncountable, but c. 200) Black-browed Albatross (1) Northern Giant Petrel (2+) Cape Petrel (100+) Antarctic Fulmar (1 - spotted sleeping with Cape Petrels, then awesome views when it came behind the boat) Westland Petrel (500+; plenty behind the trawler, but bigger groups sitting as we headed back towards land.

Grey-faced Petrel (2; again spotted by Colin) Fairy Prion (2, including one that winged around behind the boat for a bit) Fluttering Shearwater (groups inside Wellington Harbour) Sooty Shearwater (half a dozen?) Short-tailed Shearwater (a couple, including one that swam up behind the boat) Common Diving Petrel (10+)

Also 40-odd Little Blue Penguins in the harbour, Little, Little Black, Pied and Black Shags, Red-billed and Black-backed Gulls, White-fronted Terns and several Blackfronted Terns crossing the strait, including one with a leg-flag just visible!

Was really great to have so many giant albatrosses in view at one time, and I even got some sound recordings of chattering Cape Petrels and a grunting Wandering Albatross! Plus a big Sperm Whale photobombed the birds...

NZBirding.net. Photo – Phil Battley.

Bird Snippets

Wellington City Biodiversity

Peter Hodge » Sun Mar 31, 2019 I had a great close up view of a Falcon at Seatoun beach on Thursday. I was getting ready for a late afternoon swim, and standing at the carpark above the beach. The bird flew past at eye level, about ten metres away, briefly harassed but unperturbed by a smaller bird. It flew low over Ferry Street and the houses beyond. BirdingNZ.net

More Falcon – Porirua

bsd1 » Wed Apr 03, 2019 Pushing the limits of Wellington a little here. 3 times over the past week or so I've seen a single falcon in Porirua. Once flying over the motorway opposite the Porirua train station carpark, once flying over Jasmine Underhill Reserve in Aotea and this last Sunday at the top of the newly opened roads in Aotea. Just a youngster, perhaps searching for a new territory in the vicinity of Bothamley Park. BirdingNZ.net

Spring is coming

Colin Miskelly » Tue Apr 30, 2019

A song thrush was singing (though a bit croaky) on my walk to work this morning - first I have heard this season.

Falcon Mana Island

Colin Miskelly, 15th June, 2019. Immature falcon seen 3 times during FOMI volunteer weekend. Note; previous eBird observations of falcon on Mana Island, include 2012, 2014 and 2016.

Morepork Mana Island

Helen Gummer & Dave Alderman 15th June, 2019.

Heard morepork at 9.00pm above the hole in the rock. Note, also reported in EBird in November, 2009 in the Forest Valley. This was the first record of morepork for approximately 10 years.

White heron Petone

Nina Wortman 16th June, 2019. Seen at 11.30am at High Street Petone for about an hour.

Note; this is likely to be the same bird that visited this area, including the Hutt River, in previous years.

Photo – Nina Wortman.



More Mana Island Observations

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle 21-26 June, 2019.

A kereru was seen in the Forest Valley on the 24th of June. A kereru was in residence on Mana Island from June to November 2018. They have not been reported on eBird since November 2018.

We saw a falcon on two occasions during our stay but did not find the morepork reported earlier in June. Had great views of two rowi on the No Access track and managed to capture them on a trail camera outside House 3.