



Birds New Zealand
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Out-of-this-world trip to Glentanner

On 26th of August Janet Ledingham and I set off in drizzly weather from Dunedin and arrived at Glentanner/Tasman River delta about 2 pm. We found ourselves transported to a different world – calm and slightly overcast and towards the lake was a DOC truck and black birds swirling around. We had arrived at feeding time for the newly released juvenile black stilts. We spent the next 2 hours surrounded by between 50 and 60 black stilts – I counted 20 totally black ones, which were from last year's release also come for free food. The older black stilts were very possessive

about their tray of mince and fought off the younger birds so the ranger was very busy organising things so the younger ones got a look in. She also had to fend off black-billed gulls.



We were in a world of rare/threatened endemic species: many banded dotterel were feeding in the streams and 4 wrybill actively foraging nearby. With every sweep of the binoculars we would see endemic or native species, 14 in all, and entered into eBird Atlas. It was a magical time.



We have hundreds of photos.

Mary Thompson

More Black and White

As I was compiling this newsletter, Nic Beckwith sent me several photos of a pair of oystercatchers on Warrington Spit and asked if the "pied" one was a "variable" because they were acting like a couple intent on settling down in a territory.



Some few years ago (UK English for quite a lot at my age) there was a similar pied Variable Oystercatcher hanging out on Warrington Spit with the non-breeding teens/flock. I wonder if it has now graduated to the property/territory owner couple stage of life? Or is it a hybrid pied/variable from Oamaru or heaven forbid a refugee from the Auckland rat race?

Look we really don't want Aucklanders down here muscling in on the limited real estate and sending the property values through the roof. We need to moan about how terrible the climate is down here and wear our dour black attire at every facebook opportunity.



But maybe I should calm down, for looking at the similarity in size and the somewhat scruffy transition from black to white breast, I reckon we may have nothing to worry about in this case; our pied is a locally bred variable and we should embrace diversity?

.....Derek Onley

Ornithological Snippets

The previously reported **NZ Falcon** in Balclutha was still present on 16th September, when Suzanne Schofield saw it at its usual haunt by the airfield. On a nearby island in the river were 2 **Caspian Terns** on the same day, this being a late date for the species here. Away from the coast, a **Pied Shag** was reported from Ross Creek Reservoir on 7th September, while rather more unexpected was one on the same day at Dublin Bay, Wanaka, seen by Paul & Joy Sagar. There are very few reports of **Spoonbills** back in the south, with the first being 1 on the Catlins Lake on 1st September (Phil Rhodes), with the only other reports 2 at Papatowai on 10th (Pen Gillette) and 1 on 19th at Goodwood (Nick Beckwith). Finally a couple of passerines: the **South Island Robin** was seen at Ross Creek on 7th September, and a roost at South Otago High School contained at least 958 birds early in the month. (That's a lot of **Robins** - another successful community predator control project? Or maybe? Answer next month -ed.)

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

Graeme's Snippets



Bobby's Head/Tavora 22 August 2019. The spotted shags here had only just started nesting but further up the coast on the cliffs south of the Shag River Mouth there were some on chicks.

First of September was a spring day. A walk down the little visited Akatore coast to "Lobsters", a point break for surfers. This coast is one of the proposed sites for a marine reserve that we are asking this government will implement. The variable oystercatchers were not yet nesting.



Silvereyes were seen disappearing into deep dark crevices in the rocks at the high tide mark where lots of bull kelp was rotting. After some diligent watching they were caught in the act re-appearing and beating large juicy maggots before eating them. Must enter those squares in the atlas!

Polaris Water Sampling transect. Franny Cunningham and I had a beautiful day out to observe the low number of birds typical of the winter season. Southern Royals, and Buller's mollymawks and Cape pigeons predominated with grey petrels further offshore. There were feeding congregations dominated by red-billed gulls ten kms off Taiaroa. A hundred fairy prions were present there in the morning. One dark shearwater was glimpsed as it swept past, perhaps a flesh-footed shearwater, and one small black and white shearwater also not properly apprehended by good observation. Other species to make the list of twenty: Northern Royal, Shy and Salvin's mollymawks, one Black-browed, northern giant petrel, a couple of white-chinned petrels (photo confirmed), flashes of one White-headed petrel, soft-plumaged petrel and black-bellied storm petrel, white-fronted tern, Black-backed Gull and an Otago shag out in 120m deep water.



Left. A gaggle of seabirds attending a seal, fur or Hooker, five km offshore. in the evening.

Anne Schlesselmann spotted kereru sitting on nest in Moores Bush 10th Sept. Still sitting on 20th. Moores Bush is the Forest and Bird Scenic Reserve in the top of Leith Valley on the junction of Thompson Rd (only sign on junction "No Exit". The nest is in a leaning mahoe over a

little gully, under a big spreading rimu that you can see ahead from the big rimu at the top of the Loop track. Please text updates to Graeme 0211322436.



The cameras are set to record the return of sooty shearwaters to their breeding grounds at St Clair and Sandymount. At the prion fence there is plenty of prion activity. Hopefully an egg will be laid this year.

Sunday 15 Sept. A Forest and Bird wilding pine party were rewarded with seeing a pair of wrybill just above the Manuherikia delta into Falls Dam. Also present were 14 black-fronted terns. I hope they settle to nest. Only one black-billed gull was seen. None of the banded dotterels and Pied Oystercatcher seen were confirmed to be nesting yet, which seems a little late.

Graeme Loh

Mary's Snippet



On 27th August, collecting and presenting colourful seaweeds to nest-building partners was the order of the day for the Otago Shags at Oamaru Wharf. Every bird returning to the wharf – and it was a constant stream – was carrying a seaweed donation. Half the wharf was densely packed with birds.

Mary Thompson

A Stroll in Spring



42 birdwatchers and 14 Birds NZ guides turned up on a glorious Dunedin spring morning for our annual Conservation Week event in the Botanic Garden on 15 September.



This year we were also celebrating the launch of the brand new Dunedin Botanic Garden Wild Bird Guide, written by Mary Thompson, with photos by Craig McKenzie, Nick Beckwith and Paul Sorrell. The guide contains descriptions and photos of 27 birds likely to be found in the gardens and around Dunedin, plus useful background information. A big thank you to Mary for all her hard work producing this very useful guide with the Botanic Garden staff, and also to the photographers for the use of their images. You can pick up copies of the guide at the Information Centre in the Botanic Garden, and they will also be available at our next meeting.

The teams of birdwatchers headed out in various directions from the Information Centre so pretty much covered the whole of the lower gardens and some of the hillside. 22 species reported; 11 native and 11 introduced. Dunnock were everywhere foraging nearby as well as singing from vantage posts. House sparrows were active collecting dried grasses for

nests, so most folk had a chance to compare house sparrows and dunnock. We all saw chaffinch and some hunted down goldfinch and greenfinch as

well. Tui were very vocal and actively courting. Up the hill one team saw bellbirds coming and going from a presumed nest site. Kereru were sunning themselves high in the trees. We heard grey warbler but didn't manage to actually see one. A kingfisher was heard calling in the lower garden near the Leith Stream.

A couple of the guides waited at the Information Centre for any stragglers, but as none turned up, they enjoyed a coffee and a chat with Birds NZ supporters, enjoying the antics of the red billed gulls that were hanging out in the spouting of the Information Centre.



Thank you to Rowena, Maureen, Cam, Maree, Nick, Ivan, Yue, Lie, Bruce, Karthic, Mary, Lesley and Sue.

Suzanne Middleton

Atlas Field Trip 1 September 2019

1st September 2019 marked a day of many firsts. It was the first day of spring, our first official atlas field trip as a group, and my first time using the eBird mobile app. After a small group of us had gathered at Mary's place at 9am, we met the rest of the contingent at Four Square Mitchells in Outram at 9.30am. From there, we split into 2 groups, each taking a 10km square grid to explore doing bird surveys in the various habitats within that grid. Mary, Francie and Sue went off to survey the grid in Momona, while Richard, Maree, Row and I targeted the grid covering the hills on Taioma Road.

It was a beautiful morning with brilliant sunshine, and I thoroughly enjoyed the teamwork within our group. Row was our kind driver while

Richard navigated our way. Maree was the ‘ears’ of the group, and I helped in entering our data onto the eBird mobile app live during our bird survey whilst standing or walking with the group. I ensured that I kept close to the group as a whole, and as each group member spotted birds and provided feedback to me, I took care not to duplicate the entries as far as possible. The coordination within the group allowed us to complete 5 checklists in 3 different habitats in one morning involving both stationary and travelling counts.

At the freshly replanted pine plantations at Taioma Road, we spotted 2 bellbirds, 2 grey warblers, 1 fantail, 2 blackbirds, 2 dunnock, 3 chaffinches and 2 goldfinches on our 8 minutes stationary count, and 2 paradise shelducks, 2 kererus, 2 harriers, 2 welcome swallows, 2 bellbirds, 1 grey warbler, a skylark and a possible tui on our 540m long travelling count. We then drove to another spot on Taioma Road where the pine growth was much denser, and added 2 brown creepers and 2 silvereyes amongst other birds to our list after a 6 minutes stationary count. Our group subsequently moved on to 2 sites in farmland habitat to do travelling counts, and we found a variety of birds in the open paddock, including 2 eastern rosella, 6 spur-winged plovers (a pair on our first farmland site, and 4 on another), 1 white-faced heron, 4 mallards, 1 harrier and 2 black-backed gulls.

We met Mary’s group back at Four Square Mitchells at 12noon, and I managed to share my checklists with the rest of my group members after obtaining their eBird username or email. On the whole, I found the use of the eBird app really convenient and time-saving as I had uploaded the checklists the moment they were completed on-site, with all key details including location, duration and distance travelled all captured automatically by the app. The sharing could also be done on the spot with other group members, with no need for further data entry after returning home from the trip. In addition, the eBird app allowed for submitted checklists to be edited to make changes to certain parameters, including the birds and numbers surveyed, number of observers, and the duration and distance travelled. The feedback from Mary’s group was that the use of the eBird app took up more time for them as Mary had to key in the checklist at the end of each count after it was completed, and the checklists were possibly prone to having duplicate entries from different group members sighting the same bird.

After our lunch which was topped off with an ice-cream each to celebrate the glorious warm weather, we headed off to Outram Glen Scenic Reserve along the Taieri River to finish off our trip with one more checklist. Additions to our bird species for the day included 1 black shag and 1 sacred kingfisher. Mary and Sue did not join the main group at Outram Glen, but went off in pursuit of the elusive NZ falcon, albeit with no sighting. Overall, it was mission accomplished for the day in terms of our 1st formal atlas field trip, with valuable lessons gleaned for the many more trips to come.

Ivan Lin

Notices and Business

Banded spoonbills are still turning up occasionally.



Two reports this month of birds banded at Wairau Lagoon in 1995 being sighted alive. One at Bell Island Waimea Inlet, Nelson and the other at Wairau lagoons. So please be on the lookout for banded spoonbills around Otago estuaries to see if we can't find an older bird. Take photographs as sometimes the numbers on the band can be deciphered. The photo above was taken on 30 August 2019 by Bill Cash who actually banded the bird 25 years ago.

Bruce McKinlay

Dunedin Town Belt Survey Update for Spring 2019

Spring is sprung

The grass is riz,

I wonder where the birdee is?

The bird is on the wing.

Don't be absurd the wing is on the bird and waiting to be counted in the town belt.

(With apologies to some lost poet)

Yes it's time for everybody to be out and about in the town belt refining counting skills and gathering data about the spring pattern of birds in the town belt.

The instructions remain the same as last year. They are contained in the down load of the instruction form below. Essentially this is a five minute bird study on fixed points. I've heard that some see it as a good day out with a bus ride at the end back to your car and others are cycling along enjoying the town belt and counting birds. Whatever, it's a great opportunity to get out among a good range of birds and to enjoy the town belt.

I'm happy to accept data in whatever form you want to give it to me but getting it electronically is best. Here is an example of the headings I'm using in the core data sheet. If you use these then that makes my life much easier.

Date	Observer	Cloud.Cover	Wind	Precipitation	Location	Start.Time	Comments	Cars	Species	Count
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	None	MaoriRoad	8:25	.	0	Blackbird	1
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	None	MaoriRoad	8:25	.	1	Dunnock	2
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	None	MaoriRoad	8:25	.	3	House Sparrow	2
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	None	MaoriRoad	8:25	.	4	Silvereye	3
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	0	B-backed Gull	1
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	10	Brown Creeper	1
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	0	Dunnock	1
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	2	Grey Warbler	1
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	3	House Sparrow	2
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	4	Silvereye	5
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_5	8:45	.	5	Song Thrush	2
04-Oct-17	Francie/Pat	overcast	calm	Nil	QueensDr_4	9:00	Noise from cars	6	Bellbird	1

Birds NZ Dunedin Town Belt Bird Survey						Species	TALLY	TOTAL
Observer:						Bellbird		
Count station Number:						Black Backed Gull		
Date:						Blackbird		
Time	Start					Brown creeper		
						Cars		
	cloud cover		wind			Chaffinch		
circle one	clear skies		calm			Dunnock		
or bold type	partly cloudy		light breeze			Fantail		
	overcast		moderate wind			Goldfinch		
						Greenfinch		
	precipitation					Grey Warbler		
	nil					House Sparrow		
	fog					Kereru (NZ Pigeon)		
	drizzle					Kingfisher		
						Redpoll		
Noise (eg wind, cars, the sea, etc.) NOT Cars count them under species list						Rosella		
When to survey						Shining cuckoo		
Between 1 October- 1 December						Silvereye		
Do as many counts as you can fit in during this period.						Song thrush		
(However surveys at other times are also useful and welcome)						Starling		
						Tui		
Please do a 5 minute bird count						Welcome swallow		
a) Please record all species you observe (hear or see).						Yellowhammer		
b) Do not worry if you cannot identify one - count under "unidentified"								
c) Record birds seen or heard up to 100m away. Where this is						Unidentified		
inconvenient or silly decide on your boundaries but stay consistent.								
d) Count all birds seen or heard								
e) At the end please complete the total column for each species								
f) Please also complete a count of the cars that drove past you while counting								
In the morning before 12 pm, but after the dawn chorus - about 1 hour after sunrise.								
PLEASE, ONLY RECORD THE BIRDS THAT YOU ARE SURE OF								
(place all others under "unidentified" for a total count of birds observed)								
AND ABOVE ALL BE CONSISTENT								
Please send your records to Bruce McKinlay 97 Tomahawk Road, Dunedin or email to: bruce.mckinlay@osnz.org.nz								
Thank you!								

So what did we get last year and what's the overall pattern look like?

Well for the details you'll have to come along to the talk next Wednesday. But to summarise: We have completed 805 counts with 431 completed in 2018. We have recorded 30 species; with two new ones being recorded in 2018. Silvereyes are still the most common species on both years. There's been a significant increase in blackbirds and grey warblers have displaced bell birds as the fourth most counted species.

So the 2019 Town Belt survey starts on 1 October and runs until 30 November. It's to be done in the morning and we can't get enough counts.

Bruce McKinlay

Extra Field trip

Sunday 29 September 9:00am DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME-ie 8am yesterday's time. Earlier than you think. Meet at the Botany Department carpark and join Forest & Bird's Dunedin Branch to explore rock pools while hearing about proposed marine protection off Otago's coast. Exact site weather dependent. Either Watsons Beach/Akatore or Bobby's Head. Extreme tides are forecast for this day. **Graeme Loh.**

Birds NZ Youth Camp, Oct. 5 -11, 2019, at Aka Aka, Waikato.

An introduction to project birding; planning, fieldwork, analysis, and write-up of results. A focus on swamp birds. For further information on applications email Ian at iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz

Programme 2019

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held at 7.30pm in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street.

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| Wed 25 Sept | Indoor Meeting. Bruce McKinlay on “Birds of the Dunedin Town Belt”, when he will up-date us on our project and findings so far. |
| Sun 6 October | Atlas Field Trip. We will try to cover several 10km squares, down the coast to Brighton, Taieri Mouth and Akatore. Bring lunch and refreshments (probably will be out til about 3pm). Meet at 9 am at Otaki St. outside Bunnings to car pool. Let Mary know if you plan to come. Ph 464 0787 or maryt@actrix.co.nz |
| Wed 23 October | Indoor Meeting. Francesca Cunninghame on “The Galapagos Hawk”. |
| Sun 3 November | Atlas Field Trip. Survey areas to be confirmed. |
| Sun 24 November | Summer Wader Count; High tide 14.42, 2.2m |
| Wed 27 November | Raphael Richter-Gravier on “Birds in Maori and other Polynesian traditions.” Followed by an end-of-year supper; please bring along some festive food to share if you can. |
| Sun 1 December | Atlas Field Trip. Survey areas to be confirmed. |

Many thanks to all who contributed. Articles, photos etc for next newsletter to Derek Onley, derekonley@yahoo.com by 18 October