



Birds New Zealand
PO Box 834, Nelson. osnz.org.nz

Regional Representative: Mary Thompson
197 Balmacewen Rd, Dunedin.
maryt@actrix.co.nz 03 4640787

Regional Recorder: Richard Schofield,
64 Frances Street, Balclutha 9230.
cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Otago Region Newsletter 10/2019 .October 2019

October Atlasing



Blue Shouldered Giant Petrel flying over Watson's?

October's bird Atlas excursion on Sunday 6th was to the Taieri Mouth/ Akatore area. Six of us met at 9am at Bunnings' carpark, Otaki St. We took two cars, both 4WD, which would hopefully handle expected dirt

roads. We decided to stay together as a group as we were unfamiliar with the area.

Our first stop was at Akatore Bridge where 13 species were tallied, including a very vocal kingfisher. From there we headed to Watson's Bay. On Watson Rd, a group of 30 redpolls seemed a good reason to stop and do a 5 minute count. In the distance there was a belt of trees including some native species. Sure enough a grey warbler sang and a couple of tui were spotted.

Unfortunately access to Watson Bay was prevented by a locked gate; lambing time I guess. It's a very attractive place and we spent the next half hour leaning on the gate, enjoying the sun and the scenery and wondering why we hadn't 'got' a variable oystercatcher. It pays to be patient though; as we were about to leave, a flock of VOCs flew from a neighbouring field! An unusual sight. At sea, a 5 minute count yielded approximately 400 sooty shearwaters and a juvenile giant petrel flew very close to shore. Lunch was enjoyed sitting on a scruffy wood pile in a recently cut and newly re-planted pine forest close to the road, speculating on the possibility of seeing a falcon. No luck though.

On the return journey at Akatore estuary would we find a fernbird? The vegetation was scruffy and we called and waited and waited. But nothing. Then thanks to some serendipitous parking and Nick's hearing aids, as the car door was shutting he heard the familiar call of a fernbird. A very obliging bird it was, giving us several good views. Gotcha!

Nineteen species were recorded at the Livingstone Wetland including Australian shoveler (21), grey teal (11), New Zealand scaup (2) and most entertaining, thirteen chaffinches hawked for insects over the water.

On the beach at Taieri Mouth there were few birds, some dogs and people. Plenty of gulls on Motutapu and one spoonbill in a tree. It was worth the visit though for flying over, heading up river presumably to the Taieri plains, were 16 spoonbills wing-tip to wing-tip and two following playing catch-up. The collective nouns for spoonbills (canteen, measurement, runcible, service), listed in nzbirds.com, somehow didn't seem appropriate. A wonderful sight and a beautiful day's birding!

Maree Johnstone

Robins outside Orokonui: 2019 update



We are half-way through the robin monitoring season as I write this, and have some exciting firsts to report.

The robin team have been visiting the mixed native and plantation forest block adjacent to the Ecosanctuary every two weeks since mid-August. It seems there are a similar number of robin pairs as last year – about 6 – in approximately the same locations. Probably this indicates that at least some of last year's territory holders survived over winter. There are a few extra birds about this year also, but we have yet to establish whether they are just one or two mobile individuals or a few different ones.



Exciting first #1: We have now banded two robins at the site: a male, black-orange/blue-metal (above left) and a female, pale green-pale green/blue-metal. Both birds are part of breeding pairs. We continue to train other robins to get used to the trap and hope to band more before the end of the year.

Similarly to last year, we found the first nest at the end of August. We could not see inside the nest despite it being less than 2m off the ground because it was built in the flimsiest of coprosmas.

Exciting first #2: This first nest survived to produce at least 2 fledglings, which were seen relatively-recently fledged on 5 October. (Working backwards, this would mean the eggs were laid around 25 August.) This is the first time we have monitored a nest through to fledging! Although we knew at least one nest had produced fledglings last year, we hadn't been able to find and monitor that nest.

In total, we now know of 4 nests this year. One nest remains unfound, one nest was 5m up in a Coprosma and failed for unknown reasons, and one nest is about 15m up in a macrocarpa. The robins really do not seem fussy about where they choose to nest.

As usual, this knowledge would not be possible without the help of many amazingly dedicated Birds NZ members. But there are always more robins to monitor than people to do it. If you would like to give it a go, we're always happy to welcome new members onto the team. No previous experience required.

Photos **Nick Beckwith**

George Pickerell

Unusual visitor



On The 3rd October at lunchtime, my friend, Leah, was at her kitchen window in Preston Crescent, Belleknowes, when a small jet black bird with a yellow breast alighted on the fence just outside her window. This little chap looked right back at her for some time. She had never seen a tomtit before but recognised what it was because she had read the article in the ODT about the wild birds of the Botanic Garden and this bird matched Craig's photo exactly.

This is a very rare event to see a tomtit in an urban garden; however, it is only a few blocks from the Town Belt so please can 5-minute bird counters keep a look out for tomtits!

Mary Thompson

Ornithological Snippets



Nick Beckwith found a **Whimbrel** on Warrington Beach on 30th Sep, and saw (& photographed) it until 5th October. The compiler can confirm that it was not showing on 10th! Suzanne Schofield heard, and saw briefly, a dotterel sp. over the river in Balclutha on 20th Sep; possibly the same bird was seen by the nearby causeway 8 days later and gave good views as a **Black-fronted Dotterel**. Rising river levels over subsequent days meant that it was not seen again. And on a good day at Cabbage Point (Catlins River Estuary), 2 **Wrybill**, and single **Red-necked Stint**, **Grey-tailed Tattler** & **Turnstone** were all present around the high tide roost on 29th Sep

2 **Caspian Terns** in Balclutha on 16th Sep were rather late in the season, while 2 **Black-fronted Terns** there on 16th Oct were also unexpected (both records from Suzanne Schofield)

On 28th Sep the ODT reported several albatross being blown inland by strong winds over the previous few days

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/albatrosses-swept-inland-wild-wind-buffets-region>.

Nick Foster counted **Sooty Shearwaters** passing Taiaroa Head at the rate of 150-170 per minute on the morning 12th Oct, while the following day he photographed a white phase **Southern Giant Petrel** from Aramoana.



An **Australasian Bittern** was seen in the upper reaches of the Dart River on 18th Sep by Torea Scott-Fyfe.

The only **Shining Cuckoos** so far have been singles at Taieri Mouth on 6th October (Pete McLennan), and at Waitati on 13th & 15th October (Derek Onley)

Finally an apparently albino, or more likely leucistic, **House Sparrow** has been present in Maryhill for the last few months, reported by Bryce Gray.

Erratum Last month's report mentioned a large roost at South Otago High School, without mentioning a species. As it was still not properly light, I confirm that they were indeed birds, but it is highly likely that the 958 birds referred to were **House Sparrows** rather than Robins! Apologies for the oversight.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

Notices and Business

November Atlas Trip

As Mary is away Bruce McKinlay is leading the November Atlas field trip on **Saturday 2 November**. "We are going to head north and inland so it will be a great opportunity to get records for falcon, pipits and oystercatchers and get to grips with the country around MacCraes Flat. We'll probably end up for coffee at Hyde. Bring lunch and a hot drink as well as warm clothes (normal weather is expected).

We will meet at Woodhaugh gardens at 8:30am to get an early start and a full day. We'll try and share as many cars as we can to make everybody have a partner or carload to go with. If you haven't already then please load the atlas app onto your phone so things are easier to load up, otherwise bring a notebook.

If you want to talk it over then give me a ring on 0273891477."

Bruce McKinlay

Ebird Atlas News

We're now halfway through the spring period (apparently it is spring), and coverage is good, with almost 28% of squares with some coverage. This compares with 29% for the whole of winter, so we're definitely on the right track. The total number of species is up to 96.

There will be a further Atlasing field trip on Sunday 3rd November, with the location to be advised. Anyone who is interested please contact me by email or phone 03 418 4415.

Not specifically Atlas related, but there have been a couple of small changes to eBird recently. Firstly, if you are adding media to your checklists, this is now done after you have submitted the checklist, rather than during. And sharp-eyed eBirders will have noticed that submitted lists now show the total number of individual birds (excluding Xs) at the top of the page.

Richard Schofield

Birdy Books for Sale or to a Good Home

We are building a small house in the next few months and we have to get rid of some stuff in order to be able to move around in it easily. If anyone would like any of the following books they are welcome to them and if anyone would like to offer a few dollars for them then any proceeds will go towards the house warming party, no I mean planting trees on our 10 acres above Waitati.

Field Guides

Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica; M. de la Pena, M Rumboll. Collins 1998

Birds of Hong Kong & South China; C. Viney, K. Phillipps & Lam Chiu Ying. 2005.

A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America. S.N.G.Howell & S. Webb. Oxford. 2001.

Birds of East Asia. M. Brazil. Helm Field Guides 2009.

Birds of Chile. A. Jaramillo. Princeton University Press.. 2003.

Birds of Jamaica. A. Hayes-Sutton, A. Downer, R. Sutton. Christopher Helm. 2009.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. G. Pizzey. R. Doyle. Collins. 1980. (Very used and battered.)

The Shell Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe. J. Ferguson-Lees, I. Willis. J.T.R. Sharrock. Michael Joseph. 1994.

Hawaii's Birds. Hawaii Audubon Society. 1997.

Guia de Campo de las Aves de Chile. Braulio Araya Modinger, Guillermo Millie Holman. Editorial Universitaria. 1998.

Field Guide to Australian Birds. Michael Morcombe.

Seabirds of the World. Peter Harrison. Christopher Helm 1987.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. Simpson & Day. Viking O'Neil.. 1993.

Birds of Europe with North Africa & the Middle East. L. Jonsson.. Christopher Helm 1992.

Field Guide to New Zealand Seabirds. B. Parkinson. New Holland 2000.

Seabirds an identification guide. Peter Harrison. Croom Helm 1983.

Field Guide to the Animals & Plants of Tristan da Cunha. Peter Ryan ed. Pisces Publications. 2007.

Birds & Mammals of the Falkland Islands. R.W. & A. Woods. WildGuides 2006.

The MacMillan Field Guide to Bird Identification. A. Harris, L. Tucker, K. Vinicombe. MacMillan 1990.

Not Quite Fieldguides

Collins British Birds. J. Gooders, T. Lambert. Collins 1987.

Rare Birds of Britain & Europe. I. Lewington, P. Alstrom, P. Colston. Harper Collins. 1991.

Where to Watch Birds in Mexico. S.N.G. Howell. Christopher Helm. 1990.

Reference, Photos, etc

Guide to the Identification & Ageing of Holarctic Waders. A.J. Prater, J.H. Marchant, J. Vuorinen. British Trust for Ornithology. 1977.

Swallows and Martins of the World. A. Turner, C. Rose. Christopher Helm. 1989.

Bird Navigation, the solution of a mystery? R.R. Baker. Hodder & Stoughton. 1984.

The British Bird. E.A.R. Ennion. Oxford University Press. 1949.

Best Days with British Birds. M. Ogilvie, S. Winter eds. British Birds Ltd. 1989.

Redbreast. The Robin in Life & Literature. A. Lack. SMH books. 2008.

More New Zealand Bird Portraits. M.F. Spoer. Whitcombe & Tombs. 1965.

Ducks of the World. J. Kear. Weldon. 1991.

Bird Behaviour. R. Burton. Granada. 1985.

New Zealand Birds in Focus. G. Moon. Weldon. 1988.

New Zealand Birds. D. Brathwaite, D. Haddon, J. Warham.. Kowhai Publishing. 1983.

The Birds of Papua New Guinea. B.J. Coates. Dove Publications. 1985.

Eric Hosking's Waders. E. Hoskings & W.G. Hale. Pelham Books. 1983.

Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds. 2003.

The Reed Field Guide to New Zealand Birds. Geoff Moon. Reed. 1984.

Arty

Thorburn's Birds. James Fisher. Mermaid Books. 1982.

Thorburn's Landscape. The Major Natural History Paintings. J. Southern. Guild Publishing. 1981.

A Sketchbook of Birds. C.F Tunncliffe. Ian Niall. Victor Gollancz. Ltd. 1984.

Tunncliffe's Birdlife. Noel Cusa. Clive Holloway Books 1985.

The Silvery Tay. Keith Brockie. J.M. Dent & Sons. 1988.
 A Bird Artist in Scotland. D. Watson. H.F & G. Witherby. 1988.
 The Living Birds of Eric Ennion. J. Busby. Victor Gollancz. 1982.
 Shorelines. Birds at the Water's Edge. Michael Warren. Hodder &
 Stoughton. 1984.
 Bruno Liljefors. The Peerless Eye. Martha Hill. Allen Publishing Co. Ltd.
 1987.
 Drawing Birds. John Busby. RSPB. 1987.

contact derekonley@yahoo.com**Derek Onley**

Stand in Newsletter Editor Required

Another consequence of the move, see above, is that I am likely to be living in a caravan for a while and won't have internet. It looks like I will be able to put together the November newsletter but it would be good to announce in that newsletter who will take over as editor for the first few 2020 editions. Any volunteers?**Derek Onley**

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.

- Wed 23 October** Indoor Meeting. Francesca Cunninghame on “ The Galapagos Hawk”.
- Sat 2 November** Atlas Field Trip. We are going to head north and inland so it will be a great opportunity to get records of falcon, pipits and oystercatchers and get to grips with the country around MacCraes Flat. Bring lunch and a hot drink as well as warm clothes Meet Woodhaugh gardens at 8:30 Any questions call Bruce McKinlay 0273891477.
- Sun 24 November** Summer Wader Count; High tide 14.42, 2.2m. Counters needed for all main estuaries or any places you expect godwits; to join a team contact Maree mareej@kinect.co.nz
- 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 20 November.