THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

September 2019

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

Greetings

Spring has arrived! The first shining cuckoo records from Wellington noted in eBird for spring were from Zealandia on the 9th and 11th of September (Robert James & Ben Bell). The first season (winter) for the New Zealand Bird Atlas has been completed. We are now into the spring season for the Atlas.

The last three months has been notable for the reporting of some important bird findings from New Zealand's ancient past. This includes a tiny albatross, a giant parrot, a very large penguin and perhaps the most fascinating discovery, a pseudotoothed bird characterized by unique bony projections along the cutting edges of the beak. At 62 million-years-old, the newly-discovered pseudotoothed *Protodontopteryx ruthae*, is one of the oldest named bird species in the world. It lived in New Zealand soon after the dinosaurs died out. A fascinating feature of the discovery of the tiny albatross and the pseudotoothed bird was that they were both made by amateur palaeontologists who worked in conjunction with professional scientists.

In the last newsletter I announced that I was stepping down at the end of the year from being the Regional Representative for Wellington Birds New Zealand (OSNZ). Over the next three months there needs to be a plan for how the region will be run in 2020 and beyond. I am firmly of the belief that there should be greater sharing of the duties for running the region. Furthermore, it is important that the duties, including that of the Regional Representative are for a fixed term.

Geoff de Lisle, Regional Representative, Wellington Birds New Zealand.

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.

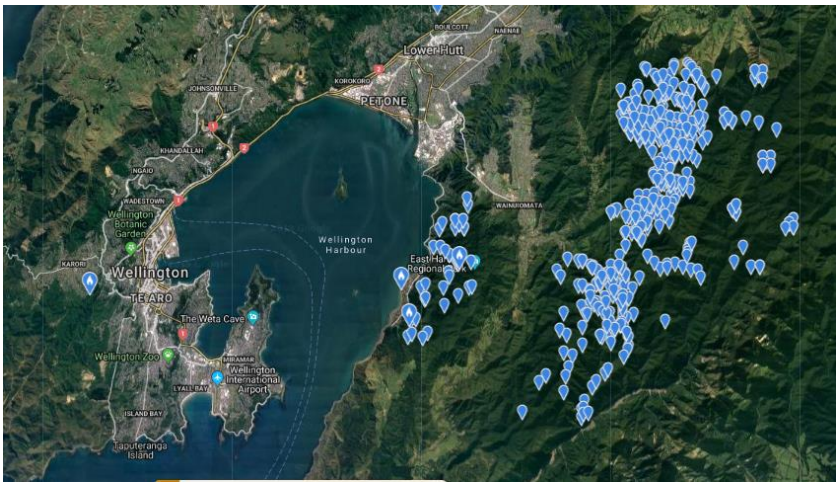
October Meeting, Monday 7th. Good Nature Traps, Robert van Dam.

November Meeting, Monday 4th. Museum Photographer, Jean-Claude Stahl. Examples of Jean-Claude's work can be seen in the recently published, "100 Natural History Treasures of Te Papa".

December Meeting, Monday 2nd. Kakapo. Alison Ballance will talk on her extensive experience and knowledge of kakapo. Alison has a blog, The Kakapo Files on the recent kakapo breeding season - https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/kakapo-files. Current population has hit a new high of 213.

July. **The New Zealand Birds Atlas**. This meeting was devoted to the New Zealand Bird Atlas.

August. Puangiangi, Barry Dent. Puangiangi is a 69 hectare island which is part of the Rangitoto Islands situated off the east coast of D'Urville Island. Barry described the history of the island from its early beginnings, to being farmed, to the eradication of rats in 1999 and entering its current phase from 2012 with the purchase and transfer to a trust and the restoration programme to a Cook Strait seabird island. Barry emphasised that the restoration plan was not to develop a zoo. The restoration programme is following a series of sound principles starting with a biosecurity plan. There is an ongoing weeding project with the removal of pines, broom, wattle, and tree lucerne. The island is undergoing natural revegetation without replanting. Weka are being removed as they predate nesting seabirds – 108 weka have been removed from the island since 2012. Following the installation of solar powered speaker system and visual cues sooty shearwaters are now nesting on Puangiangi with 28 active burrows in the last breeding season. An interesting new arrival to Puangiangi is fernbird which self introduced from D'Urville Island. Barry's blog on Puangiangi is highly recommended.
https://faunarecovery.org.nz/author/barrydent/



September. Rifleman Transfer, Kari Beaven. Kari's talk described Zealandia's project to restore rifleman to western Wellington. This is illustrated from the eBird observations, 1990-2018 (left). Kari summarised her 20 years of experience with translocating birds and related how the process of re-introducing birds had changed over this time. The translocation of rifleman to Zealandia is part of the plan to restore the balance to the ecosystem of the sanctuary. A considerable amount of planning took place before the transfer – a source population was identified (GWRC mainland island Wainuiomata), the biosecurity risks assessed and a catching/transport team organised. A major feature of the transfer was allowing them to feed before capture and then not holding them for more than 5 hours. Fortunately the source population was only a 30 minute drive from Zealandia which was an important factor in ensuring a successful transfer. A total of 60 birds were transferred and each bird was uniquely colour banded. Currently 40 of the birds have been identified post release. Nesting activity has been identified which is an encouraging sign of establishing rifleman at Zealandia and western Wellington.

Regional Representative: Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929 or osnzwelly@gmail.com

Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge, peter.hodgenz@gmail.com

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Wellington Harbour Survey Geoff de Lisle, Stuart Nicholson

Mist netting – Matu Booth, manager@ngamanu.co.nz Nga Manu, Waikanae

Ross Pickard, ross.pickard@hexagonsi.com Wellington Zoo

Te Papa Blogs

Moa vs Superman: Poignant extinction lessons via a 1970s comic

Rodrigo Salvador , 14 Jun 2019

'This Superman story is actually a great portrayal of an extinct species and its tragic fate at the hands of humankind.'

Lots of us can list a handful of Superman's foes – Lex Luthor, General Zod, Doomsday – but few know of the time that Superman fought a giant moa. That's right, New Zealand's own moa! Science researcher Rodrigo Salvador tells us more.

The last moa on Earth!'
Superman vs moa happened back in 1973, on *Action Comics* #425. The story is called 'The last moa on Earth!'

https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/06/14/moa-vs-superman-poignant-extinction-lessons-via-a-1970s-comic/

Extinct tiny albatross species discovered in Taranaki

Alan Tennyson On: 18 Jul 2019

In 2011, Alastair Johnson was hunting for fossils on a remote beach in Taranaki. Three-million-year-old fossil oysters and scallops are common here, but remains of vertebrates are much rarer. On this occasion, something magical appeared out of the rock – the most complete fossil albatross skull ever found. Curator of vertebrates Alan Tennyson tells us more.

https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/07/18/extinct-tiny-albatross-species-discovered-in-taranaki/

A small, narrow-beaked albatross from the Pliocene of New Zealand demonstrates a higher past diversity in the feeding ecology of the Diomedeidae (2019) Gerald Mayr Alan J. D. Tennyson
https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12757

Read the full text
PDF
Abstract

We describe a nearly complete, three-dimensionally preserved skull of a new albatross species from the late Pliocene (3.0–3.4 million years ago) Tangahoe Formation of New Zealand. Aldiomedes angustirostris, n. gen. et sp. has only about 90% of the length of the skull of the smallest extant albatross and is the geologically youngest record of a small-sized albatross known to date. The new species is characterized by a mediolaterally compressed beak, which is not found in any living albatross. The small size and some cranial features of A. angustirostris indicate that, in spite of its comparatively young geological age, the new species was not part of crown group Diomedeidae. We hypothesize that A. angustirostris was more piscivorous than extant albatrosses, which predominantly feed on squid. The reasons for the extinction of smaller-sized albatrosses are elusive but may be related to changes in seabird fauna during the Pliocene epoch, which witnessed the radiation of various non-procellariiform seabird groups.

A new bird for New Zealand – collared petrel

Colin Miskelly On: 11 Jul 2019

In March 2011 a group of keen bird-watchers boarded a vessel at Houhora in New Zealand's Far North and set off on a multi-day pelagic seabirding trip. Their quest was rare seabirds that may have strayed south from tropical seas, and their dreams were exceeded with the discovery of a new bird for New Zealand.

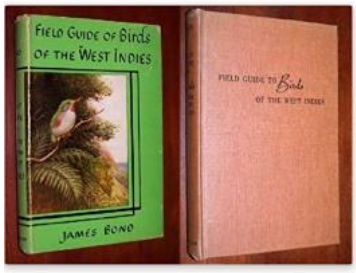
But why did it take eight years for their sighting to be accepted? Te Papa curator Colin Miskelly tells the story of New Zealand's first collared petrel.
https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/07/11/a-new-bird-for-new-zealand-collared-petrel/
http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/collared-petrel

How James Bond got his name: Ornithologist to superspy

Rodrigo Salvador **On: 22 Aug 2019**

There's a new James Bond movie on the horizon, and with the 007 baton being passed to the first female lead, it's likely the name James Bond won't feature as heavily from now on.

But how was the name James Bond originally chosen? Curator Invertebrates Rodrigo Salvador tells an unlikely story involving the 'Father of Caribbean Ornithology'.
https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/08/22/how-james-bond-got-his-name-ornithologist-to-superspy/



Field guide to birds of the West Indies: a guide to all the species of birds known from the Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles and Bahama Islands Hardcover – 1947

by James Bond (Author), Earl Poole (Illustrator)

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from $815.97

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"James Bond was born in Philadelphia and worked at the Academy of Natural Sciences in the same city as the curator of the local bird collection. He became an expert in the field of Caribbean birds and in 1936 published the first edition of his book "Birds of the West Indies", which today is still considered a standard work. Until the publication of "A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies" in 1998, Bond's was the only book that dealt with Caribbean birds. Bond was awarded the Musgrave Medal of the Institute of Jamaica (1952), the William Brewster Medal from the American Ornithological Union (1954) for his magnum opus "Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies: A Guide to All the Species of Birds Known From the Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles and Bahama Islands", and the Leidy Medal from the Academy of Natural Sciences (1975). He died at the age of 89 years after a long battle with cancer. Ian Fleming, creator of 007, was an avid bird watcher and knew James Bond when they both lived in Jamaica. He chose the name for the protagonist of his first book, "Casino Royale", and a legend was born!"

Evidence for a giant parrot from the Early Miocene of New Zealand

Trevor H. Worthy, Suzanne J. Hand, Michael Archer, R. Paul Scofield and Vanesa L. De Pietri
Biology Letters: Published: **07 August 2019** **https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2019.0467**

Abstract

Insular avifaunas have repeatedly spawned evolutionary novelties in the form of unusually large, often flightless species. We report fossils from the Early Miocene St Bathans Fauna of New Zealand that attests to the former existence of a giant psittaciform, which is described as a new genus and species. The fossils are two incomplete tibiotarsi from a bird with an estimated mass of 7 kg, double that of the heaviest known parrot, the kakapo *Strigops habroptila*. These psittaciform fossils show that parrots join the growing group of avian taxa prone to giantism in insular species, currently restricted to palaeognaths, anatids, sylviornithids, columbids, aptornithids, ciconiids, tytonids, falconids and accipitrids.

Leg bones of a new penguin species from the Waipara Greensand add to the diversity of very large-sized Sphenisciformes in the Paleocene of New Zealand

Gerald Mayr, Vanesa L. De Pietri, Leigh Love,Al Mannering & R. Paul Scofield (2019) Alcheringa: An Australasian Journal of Palaeontology, DOI: 10.1080/03115518.2019.1641619

ABSTRACT: We describe a new large-sized species of the Sphenisciformes (penguins) from Paleocene strata of the Waipara Greensand in New Zealand. Crossvallia waiparensis, sp. nov. is represented by leg bones of a single individual as well as two tentatively referred proximal humeri and resembles Crossvallia unienwillia from the late Paleocene of Antarctica in size and morphology. The new species is the fifth published species of stem group Sphenisciformes from the Waipara Greensand and the fourth one, which has been formally named. It is distinguished from a recently reported tarsometatarsus of an unnamed large-sized penguin species from the Waipara Greensand and is the oldest well-represented giant penguin. C. waiparensis approaches the size of the Eocene taxa Anthropornis and Palaeeudyptes and provides further evidence that penguins attained a very large size early in their evolutionary history.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03115518.2019.1641619

Picture – University of Canterbury, https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/a-life-size-model-of-crossvallia-waiparensis-7e37685b949f4805861d49e5b2c27490

East Harbour Banded Dotterels

The MIRO led project on banded dotterels is entering the 4th breeding season. Nesting has started on both the Eastbourne and Lake Kohangapiripiri study sites. A number of birds flagged in the previous season have returned to the study sites. DVU which was banded as an adult at Lake Kohangapiripiri during the 16/17 breeding season has returned to this site. The only other bird DVT, which was banded as a chick on the same date on Eastbourne beach, has been seen recently on the beach at Lake Kohangatera. DVT has been seen each year at this location but has never been seen on the Eastbourne beach or at Lake Kohangapiripiri. Once again measures are being taken to increase the success of nests through trapping of predators, the erection of temporary fences and notices.

Members who wish to help with the monitoring of the nests should contact Geoff de Lisle. A summary of the MIRO led project can be found on the following website. https://predatorfreenz.org/miro-banded-dotterel/

Oldest, smallest and phylogenetically most basal pelagornithid, from the early Paleocene of New Zealand, sheds light on the evolutionary history of the largest flying birds.

Gerald Mayr, Vanesa L. De Pietri,Leigh Love,Al Mannering, Richard Paul Scofield

First published: 17 September 2019 . Papers in Palaeontology, **https://doi.org/10.1002/spp2.1284**

Abstract

The Cenozoic Pelagornithidae, or pseudotoothed birds, are characterized by unique bony projections along the cutting edges of the beak. These birds were previously known from late Paleocene to Pliocene fossil sites and some species reached wingspans up to 6.4 m. Here we describe a partial skeleton of a small-sized pelagornithid from the early Paleocene of New Zealand. *Protodontopteryx ruthae* gen. et sp. nov. is the oldest record of the clade, the smallest known species, and the first pre-Eocene pelagornithid from the Southern Hemisphere. The skull of the new species exhibits the characteristic pelagornithid morphology, but the postcranial skeleton distinctly differs from other pelagornithids, and various plesiomorphic features indicate that it is the earliest-diverging representative of the Pelagornithidae. The much stouter humerus suggests that the new species was less adapted to sustained soaring than previously known pelagornithids. Pseudoteeth therefore evolved before pelagornithids became highly specialized gliders. Unlike the giant Neogene pelagornithid species, which presumably were skimmers, early Paleocene pelagornithids are likely to have targeted selected prey items and may have been predominantly piscivorous. The new species furthermore suggests that pelagornithids evolved in the Southern Hemisphere and documents a very early radiation of neornithine seabirds, which may have been triggered by changes in marine ecosystems around the K–Pg boundary.

Protodontopteryx ruthae. Illustration by Derek Onley. Image available CC BY NC and for News and Current Affairs Use

https://www.canterburymuseum.com/about-us/media-releases/scientists-discover-one-of-worlds-oldest-bird-species-at-waipara/

Little Owl Eastbourne Wellington?

The following was published in BirdingNZ.net. The subsequent correspondence in response to the submission indicates that it was most likely a morepork and not a little owl. The submission highlights the importance of keeping in mind possible out-of-towners when birding. Little owls were introduced to New Zealand in 1907-1910 for the control of small introduced birds in orchards. While a pair little owls was released in Rotorua they did not become established in the North Island. Little owls are widespread in the South Island including Marlborough. Consequently at some stage they may move into the North Island.

kengeorge *» Fri Aug 23, 2019*
Are there any records for Little Owl in Eastbourne in Wellington? I arrived in Eastbourne couple of nights ago for a 10 day visit and was pretty sure I heard Little Owl calling as I unloaded the car outside the house in Muritai Rd just after dusk. I'm familiar with the call from the small population of Little Owl we have at home in Golden Bay. When I checked on eBird for Eastbourne Little Owl records- nothing. (User error on my part possible). I know there are Morepork in the area from previous visits, but I'm pretty sure this call was Little Owl. Anybody seen/heard them round here? BirdingNZ.net

Birds New Zealand Records Appraisal Committee
Little owl (*Athene noctua*) One reported heard at Silverstream, Upper Hutt, on 1 May 2016 (UBR 2016/26) was considered more likely to have been a morepork (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*). Notornis, 2017, Vol. 64: 57-67

New Zealand Bird Atlas

The New Zealand Bird Atlas has now been going for three months and the first of the Winter season (June to August) has been completed. There has been excellent participation by Wellington Birds New Zealand members. As of the 20th of September 94 participants had spent 633.397 hours collecting 1918 checklists in the Wellington region. The following are summaries of the Wellington submission for the first winter period. The Wellington Bird area includes both the Wellington and Wairarapa Birds New Zealand districts.

Atlas Summary

	Wellington		New Zealand	
	Winter (July-August)	**Total – July to 20/9/2019**	**Winter (July to August)**	**Total – July to 20/9/2019**
Checklists	1619	1918	11,202	13,394
Participants	90	94	364	394
Species	94	96	168	175
Squares with data	78 (74.29%)	78 (74.29%)	1344 (42.58%)	1422 (44%)

The busiest regions in the Wellington Region are the four squares which cover the majority of the city and inner suburbs. This reflects that members were busy doing checklists close to their home. The following table is a summary of the Winter season for these four squares. As of 20th of September 67 species had been recorded in BZ66.

BY66 **179 checklists** **59 species** **79.87 hours**	**BY67** 143 checklists 48 species 36.34 hours
BZ66 **264 checklists** **64 species** **83.89 hours**	**BZ67** **221 checklists** **57 species** **60.33 hours**

		SPECIES	EFFORT HOURS
1	Carterton District	41	20.67
2	Kapiti Coast District	67	43.9
3	Lower Hutt City	58	49.00
4	Masterton District	60	33.70
5	Porirua City	62	42.4
6	South Wairarapa District	60	42.6
7	Tararua District		
8	Upper Hutt City	39	21.623
9	Wellington City	78	271.284

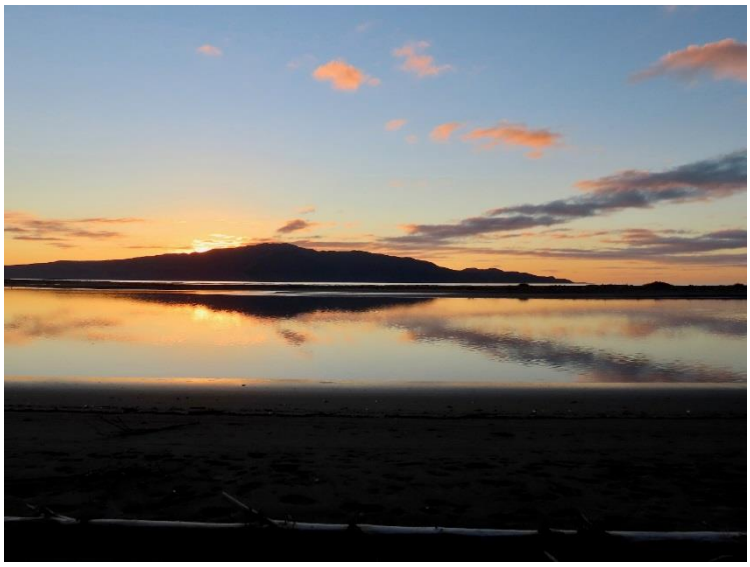
The table right is a summary of the number of species and effort in hours recorded on the winter season.

The following table shows the distribution in Wellington and the entire country of species during the three winter months. Points to note that half of the birds in the Wellington list were introduced. There is a marked difference in the percentage of squares occupied, with the occupany of the highest ranked birds in Wellington squares being over twice that of the entire country.

Species	**Wellington**		**New Zealand**	
	Number (%) squares	**Rank**	**Number (%) squares**	**Rank**
Magpie	67(63.8%)	1	906(29.7%)	7
Blackbird	63(60.0%)	2	1045(32.3%)	1
Spur-winged plover	59(56.2%)	3	828(25.6%0	10
Starling	58(55.2%)	4	911(28.2%)	5
Fantail	58(55.2%)	4	1021(31.6%)	2
Chaffinch	57(54.3%)	6	960(29.7%)	3
Harrier	57(54.3%)	6	911(28.2%)	5
Welcome swallow	56(53.3%)	8	815(25.2%)	11
Grey warbler	56(53.3%)	8	915(28.3%)	4
House sparrow	54(51.4%)	10	841(26%)	9
Paradise shelduck	53(50.5%)	11	813(25.1%)	12
Song thrush	52(49.5%)	12	882(27.3%)	8
Yellowhammer	48(45.7%)	13	613(18.9%)	18
Black-backed gull	47(44.8%)	14	791(24.4%)	14
Goldfinch	44(41.9%)	15	738(22.8%)	15
Bellbird	43(40.9%)	16	584(18.1%)	20
Tui	43(40.9%)	16	623(19.3%)	17
Dunnock	41(39%)	18	574(17.8%)	21
Mallard	39(37.1)	19	625(19.3%)	16
Silvereye	37(35.2%)	20	793(24.5%)	13

Atlas Experiences

The New Zealand Bird Atlas scheme has caught the imagination of a number of Wellington Birds New Zealand members. Raewyn Empson has provided the only checklists from Port Pegasus in Stewart Island which she visited while there on holiday. Stuart Nicholson managed a series of 26 checklists from the Fox Glacier region while he was volunteering for DOC to help pick up rubbish.



"Great evening walk in the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve last Saturday, where I came home through calling fernbirds in the reeds by the Otaihanga boardwalk in the late dusk. I couldn't see them, but I did record them. The estuary is always a delight. I thought I saw a pateke there, but it turned out to be a brown mallard hybrid, according to Murray Williams. No NZ dotterels that evening, but they are back according to Pam Stevenson of the Waikanae Estuary Care Group. DoC has put in new

signs saying no cars on the sand spit and this seems to be working this whitebaiting season, which is great." Jean Fleming. [Photograph – Jean Fleming]

"Balancing spread of effort to new squares against repeat visits to same sites is of interest – I've certainly found repeat visits to coastal and wetland sites has produced markedly different results with some species regular but others far less often – e.g. reef heron." Ben Bell.

"The **Effort Map** was a great help in suggesting where I could direct my enthusiasm for road trips. I did a road trip up to and around the East Cape area (anti-clockwise) and, finishing earlier than expected, I did four unsurveyed squares in the Wairarapa on the way home on the last day of winter.

Lovely weather (fine in the day and frosty cold in the nights). Most motor camps had cabins at $50-60/night. First night, in Tokomaru Bay, I slept in a tent for $8. VERY COLD and I had a leaky lilo that needed pumping up to keep me off the cold ground. No more tenting on frosty nights!

I bunged the car when I hit a hard rock embedded in the centre of the road in the back of beyond. Just before Opotiki a bump on the main (and sealed) SH35 ripped the plate off. No more scraping after that - "a merciful release"! The AA Roadside Technician at Opotiki said it shouldn't be a problem but I should keep off the dust and stones as much as possible - I tried but couldn't resist the enticing remote squares to explore. However, I eventually got back to Welly OK.

If we are to get out and do these back country squares some **recovery of expenses** (petrol and accommodation) would be helpful.

Paying for the rental of **a 4WD with high road clearance** would be even better. e.g. a ute with a canopy on the back and a mattress thrown in would be useful and more suitable for backcountry roads. All the Locals drive them. Maybe some could lend one? Insurance issues?

You may recall I (#1300) did some of this for the 1999-2004 Atlas. I eventually picked out **random squares in unexplored areas** and tried to spend **1-3 hours** in each one per season. The dark dots on the Effort Map show we need to get out of town and into the Regions where there are not so many members Atlasing - usually vast expanses of beautiful countryside to boot.

The **Mobile eBird** was easy to use for entering results at night in a town but useless in the backcountry as there was seldom cell phone service to be had. I found the pen & notebook method best, accompanied by my trusty GPS and 1:250,000 topo map set. Be warned, cellphones don't talk to satellites, only to cellphone towers." Stuart Nicholson

Dallas Bishop and I have been spending time on Mana Island as volunteers for DOC. This is a great opportunity to do checklists while we are doing our bit for DOC. We have done a few nocturnal checklists and regularly record rowi. In our most recent spring nocturnal we had a rowi which was in touching distance. Transient birds that have appeared in our Mana checklists include an eastern rosella, a magpie, kereru and a falcon – none of which currently appear to be on the island. Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop.

Atlasing – Health and Safety

The risks associated with most Atlasing are low but members should be mindful of potential hazards. This is especially important when going to more remote areas with challenging terrain, particularly when associated with extreme weather conditions. Members should consult the following Health and Safety guidelines;

https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/DRAFT-Health-Safety-Guidelines-for-Field-Trips-May-2018.pdf

https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Hazards-Risks-Assessment-and-Form.pdf

eBird Taxonomy

"The eBird Taxonomy is a hierarchical approach to creating a species list for data entry and listing purposes across the world." Details of "eBird Taxonomy" can be found at https://ebird.org/science/the-ebird-taxonomy . In August this year eBird users will have seen to some changes in bird names a notable one being the common name for red-billed gulls being changed to silver gulls. This change was part of the suite of changes made by eBird (Cornell) as part of its annual review. The full list of changes can be found at the link https://ebird.org/news/2019-ebird-taxonomy-update and include changes to a number of New Zealand species. The comment regarding red-billed gulls is

"Two subtly different gulls, the ***Red-billed Gull*** **Chroicocephalus scopulinus** *and* ***Silver Gull*** **Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae** *are lumped as a single species known as* ***Silver Gull*** **Chroicocephalus scopulinus***. The two are retained as identifiable subspecies groups, but as is the case with many subspecies of gulls, the two are barely identifiable and only the extreme "larophiles" claim they can separate them reliably."*

eBird notes; **A work in progress**

"Both the Clements taxonomy and the eBird taxonomy are works in progress. If you notice any species, subspecies, hybrid, or "spuh" that is conspicuously absent, please let us know with an email to ebird@cornell.edu. Furthermore, should you find any errors in spelling, nomenclature, taxonomy, or sequence, please do let us know as well."

Wellington Harbour Survey

The Wellington Harbour survey is entering into its second and final year. The survey is carried out between 1 and 3pm on the second Sunday of each month. There are 17 sections from the sewer outfall at Pencarrow to Owhiro Bay. We welcome more help with the survey. You do not have to be an expert in identifying birds as training will be provided. There is no need to commit to participating every month as we are often looking for surveyors to fill in gaps when the regular surveyors are not available. If you are interested in helping please contact Geoff de Lisle – osnzwelly@gmail.com

Wellington Birds New Zealand Chambers Book Auction

Auction Closes on Saturday 5th of October at 4.00 pm.

For further details contact Geoff de Lisle, osnzwelly@gmail.com

Sean Duffell – Street artist http://seanduffell.com/

Recently Duncan Watson and Dianne Parker have had a mural painted of a tui painted on their garage door (pictured). The artist was Sean Duffell who is based in Wellington and has been a full time artist since 2003. Sean paints abstract murals which are often based on native fauna and flora. There are examples of his work throughout Wellington as well as in most large cities throughout New Zealand. A notable example of his work is the large mural of a Rita Angus "Rutu" painting commissioned by The Angus family & Bolton Hotel Wellington. More examples of his work can be seen on his website http://seanduffell.com/

Photographs, Duncan Watson

Mana Island Fernbirds

In April this year 40 fernbirds were transferred from Rotokare in Taranaki to Mana Island. The birds were released in the wetlands close to the boatshed/houses. They have spread throughout the island and many pairs have established territories. There is a concentration of pairs in the vicinity of the release site which was on the new track through the Waikoko wetland. The expectation is that the birds will have started to breed. All the released birds were individually colour banded. Mana Island bred birds will be recognisable by being unbanded. Friends of Mana Island (FOMI) are monitoring the birds and the locations are being recorded on a map in the Lockwood on Mana Island. The picture (left) is of the map showing location of birds in the vicinity of the wetland. As of the 29th of September 27 different birds have been identified since they were released. In the last 10 days 7 new birds have been identified.

Acknowledgements: David Cornick and Dallas Bishop for their fernbird observations.

Little penguins – Wellington Harbour

Little penguins have recently been in the news with a pair visiting on two occasions the sushi shop outside the Wellington railway station. The most likely explanation that this was a pair of birds looking for a nesting site. The stronghold for penguins in Wellington harbour is Matiu / Somes Island where approximately ~300 pairs nest. The majority of the penguins on Matiu / Somes Island nest in wooden nest boxes. Matiu / Somes Island has been free of mammalian predators since the late 1980s. Smaller numbers of penguins nest on the shores of Wellington harbour where they have to contend with mammalian predators, dogs and human interference. Places for Penguins was a project established in 2007 by Wellington Forest and Bird and initially focused on restoring Tarakena Bay (next to Moa Point) through planting and weed control. On the eastern side of the harbour is Penguin Haven at Days Bay. The Eastern Harbour Penguin project has provided nest boxes for the small colony at Days Bay.

https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/projects/places-penguins-wellington?gclid=Cj0KCQjwzozsBRCNARIsAEM9kBMvs_ixOUQvvRcwuDj96olV_PbqzzmOAUrQ0MRhh4E36vs8na6fMlIaAlDIEALw_wcB

https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2019/09/little-blue-penguins-continue-wellington-city-invasion.html

Bird Snippets

Possible magpie-lark, Waikanae

Colin Miskelly » Wed Jul 03, 2019 3:39 pm

I have been sent the following email from a Waikanae birder:

"On 3 July my wife was walking down the Waikanae river track when she saw a very unusual black and white bird. It was about the size of a blackbird but she is familiar with pied black birds and unlike blackbirds this one fanned its tail in flight. (She is an experienced birder and is very observant of detail). She also said it had considerable more white on the body and head and was not a magpie.

I showed her a Magpie Lark image and she confirmed the bird she saw was very similar. BirdingNZ.net

New Zealand records

"An adult male photographed at the mouth of Gorge River (75 km southwest of Haast) on 29 April 2008 is the sole accepted New Zealand vagrant record. Magpie-larks were introduced to multiple locations in the North Island during 1898-1900, but failed to establish."
NZBirdsOnline

Long-tailed Cuckoo Waikanae

GrahamB » Sun Aug 11, 2019
A loud Long-tailed Cuckoo was calling in our small piece of bush in Waikanae, about 7.30. Claire was up and heard it several times (familiar with call from our Dawson Falls trip, and she listened to a recording on the internet). I heard it once. Perhaps these strong northerlies/northwesterlies have pushed it down. Birdingnz.net

NZ Falcon outside Te Papa

Michael Szabo » Mon Aug 19, 2019

Stephanie Cossens has posted a photo of an immature NZ Falcon in a cabbage tree outside Te Papa, to Facebook. She took the photo yesterday:

https://scontent.fpmr1-1.fna.fbcdn.net/ ... e=5E0F8550

Wellington City biodiversity

ledzep » Fri Aug 23, 2019
Flock of four parakeets (presumably red-crowned but I couldn't be certain) flying over Awarua St railway station about 7.45 am. Flew north and settled in a tree not far from the station, then a few minutes later flew back south and settled in a tree somewhere in the vicinity of the park behind Ngaio shops. NZBirding.net

: NZ dotterels at Waikanae River estuary

Imogen Warren
31 Aug, 2019.

Pair observed foraging on sand and surf. Reported eBird
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59385551

Alan Tennyson » Sun Sep 08, 2019 5:39 pm
2 adults back at the estuary this morning. Birdingnz.net

https://ebird.org/atlasnz/view/checklist/S59598356

Banded dotterels Petone Beach

Graeme Lyon Sun 8 Sep, 2019
Four banded dotterels observed on Petone beach include a bird with a flag PCA. This bird was banded on Eastbourne beach during the 17/18 breeding season. This bird was observed on the Eastbourne beach in August and has now returned there. On the 22nd of September 2 male, banded dotterel were observed near Patrick street.

Note: There are three eBird records for banded dotterels, 1 bird, August 2004, 7 birds Hutt Estuary September, 2014 and 1 bird November 2018.

NZ dotterels at Waikanae River estuary

GrahamB » Wed Sep 11, 2019
Both on the mud in the slight embayment on the Eastern/Southern bank at about 11.30 AM today. I thought it would be a struggle to find them (sheltering) on the spit with the southerly blowing hard, especially as I did not get to see them last year. One stood out at long range because of the glowing breeding plumage. Birdingnz.net

Note: Viola Palmer reported a single NZ Dotterel at the Waikanae Reserve on 26th July https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58456220

Shining cuckoo, Zealandia

Ben Bell Wed Sep 11th, 2019
Shining cuckoo heard twice on track, at either end, so possibly two birds or an active new arrival.

Northern shoveler at Otaki sewage pond

Colin Miskelly » Mon Sep 16, 2019
A third-hand report from Hugh Robertson that there was a bird that appears to be a northern shoveler at Otaki sewage ponds today. BirdingNZ.net

troymakan » Thu Sep 19, 2019
Was still there on Tuesday. BirdingNZ.net

Waikanae Scientific Reserve

Duncan Watson Sat Sep 21, 2019. On his way back from the Otaki oxidation ponds where he did not see a northern shoveler, Duncan reports the presence of 2 New Zealand dotterel and unusually a couple of wrybill.

Photographs, Duncan Watson, top; wrybill, bottom two, New Zealand dotterel.