



Birds New Zealand
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Otago Region Newsletter 7 /2020 July 2020

Ornithological Snippets

Lala Frazer reported that a **Great Crested Grebe** (re)appeared at Broad Bay at the end of May, after up to 3 were seen there last winter. Fergus Sutherland and Diana Noonan have both observed a **Royal Spoonbill** overwintering on the Papatowai estuary; a further 3 were roosting by the Owaka Yacht Club during the wader count on 5th July. An intermediate bronze/pied phase **Stewart Island (Otago) Shag** was seen at the Sumpter Wharf colony in Oamaru in early July, with another being seen by Oscar Thomas at Taiaroa Head in June.

Lala Frazer has also noticed that the **Silvereyes** return en masse to here garden during the same week each year, for the last 4 years. Jon Bailey reports seeing a **Tomtit** by the path leading down the pyramids at Okia on 14th June. It was perched on a fence post then flew into bushes on the heathland side of the track, about 50 metres from the pyramids.



Lei Zhu saw and photographed a leucistic **House Sparrow** in Chingford Park on 2nd July; this was also reported in the ODT a few days earlier <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/rare-bird-left-out-cold>

Also in the ODT, coverage of roosting Fantails in Mosgiel; up to 31 were photographed huddled together in a shed. <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/proverb-loving-fantails-take-flocking-together-seriously>

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

Anyone who has used My eBird recently will have noticed that it has been significantly upgraded. Not only is it easier on the eye, and hopefully easier to use, but it also has more features than before. All recent checklists and media uploads are displayed on the home page, along with comparative statistics for recent years, and all management options for your data in one place.

The new My eBird design gives you more ways to explore your eBird observations. The default region displayed will match the region you selected for your eBird Profile. Tap “Change region” at the top to summarize your eBird submissions for any region from a single county to the entire world. Any blue text or number on the page is clickable and will open new ways to filter, sort, and explore your observations.

For full details of the new layout, see <https://ebird.org/news/updated-my-ebird>, and try it out.

Richard Schofield cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Atlasing Field Trip

We will have a further attempt at a field trip to the Taieri Mouth area on **Saturday 1st August**, with **Sunday 2nd** as back-up. Meet at Bunnings in Otaki St at 9am for car sharing, then at the parking area by the bridge at Taieri Mouth at 9.45. Please contact me (cluthaphotos@gmail.com 027 281 8701) if you are interested in coming along.

Richard Schofield

Silver eyes return dates

The silver eyes generally stay in the bush most of the year but return to the feeders in our gardens in time for the Garden Birds Survey. While 1 or 2 may return occasionally in the 3 weeks prior I was very surprised to see from my bird diary that for the last 4 years they have returned en masse **during the same week**.

These are the return dates in my garden of more than 5 returnees (quickly rising up to 16-36 in the following days) counted at one time. Coincidence?

(Note I know from the year that they had lesions on their beaks or round their eyes which meant I could identify individual birds, that different groups come at different times of the day [observed at breakfast, lunch and early evening] instead of them being the same groups returning as I had previously presumed, so a group of 16 may mean actually more than 48.)

26 May 2017
 23 May 2018
 22 May 2019
 24 May 2020

I did not note the weather at the time but would find it surprising that the weather was the same in that week each year, so I wonder what food source maybe ceases at about that time.

I shall begin noting when they leave and see if the same pattern exists there.

Lala Frazer



Otago Winter Wader Count 5th July 2020

	Karitane	Blueskin Bay	Aramoana	Harbour west	Harbour east	Papanui Inlet	Hoopers Inlet	Catlins	Total 2020	Total 2019	Total 2018
Pied Oystercatcher	4	390	264	120	46	266	59	221	1370	1320	942
Variable Oystercatcher	17	38	3		78	12	1	11	160	278	99
Pied Stilt	28	25	22		4	11	38	24	152	309	188
Banded Dotterel		64					42	49	155	242	294
Spur-winged Plover	14			2		9	12	66	103	144	168
Bar-tailed Godwit		231	19				95	43	388	133	135

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this year's winter count, particularly first timers and new members. The weather was shaping up to be extremely miserable at the end of the week but Sunday proved to be a day eminently suitable for bird counting. High tide was perhaps a little late, as visibility was poor in the late afternoon.

As can be seen from the above table the number of godwits is almost three times the number counted in each of the previous two years.

Maree Johnstone

Programme 2020

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

At the meeting shared cups will be available to use but you are welcome and perhaps encouraged to bring your own mug for tea or coffee.

Wed 22 July **Hamish Spencer** Birding in Panama
Followed by AGM

Saturday 1 August
Sunday 2 as back-up.

Atlas Field Trip to the Taieri Mouth area. Meet at Bunnings in Otaki St at 9am for car sharing, then at the parking area by the bridge at Taieri Mouth at 9.45. Please contact Richard (cluthaphotos@gmail.com 027 281 8701) if you are interested in coming along.

Wed 26 August **Georgina Pickerell**
 An up-date on findings from the study of Robins of Mopanui

Sun13 September **Birdwatching Walks at Botanic Garden, 10 to 11am**
 We will be guiding groups of 10 or so, helping members of the public to spot and identify birds. Contact: Suzanne Middleton smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz ph 022 601 8579 if you can help

Wed 23 September **Bruce McKinlay**
 Findings from the Town Belt bird survey

Wed 28 October **Susan Walker** from Landcare
 Insights for native bird conservation from the Bird Atlas projects

November **Summer Wader Count**, date to be confirmed.

Offers and suggestions for talks or topics for Indoor Meetings would really be appreciated, please contact Mary maryt@actrix.co.nz

Please send all contributions for the August newsletter to: Sue Odlin
sodlin@gmail.com

Many thanks to all who contributed.

Final date for copy for next newsletter: **19 August**