



GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

The following suggestions are to be read as **guidelines** and are designed to assist RRs, especially those new to the job, in managing their regions. While some regions may implement all or most of the suggestions, others will manage what they can reasonably achieve with the resources and manpower available to them.

The operation of the Society, especially communication with members, meetings, local projects and other field activities, depends largely on the leadership of the Regional Representatives.

The time and effort RRs devote to helping members to achieve more and gain more satisfaction from their interests is always appreciated, and ornithological research in New Zealand and the enjoyment of birds generally would be much poorer without the effort of the RRs. Education of the members, their contribution to the Society's schemes and projects, and their original research are usually conducted within the region. The RR's leadership in organising, encouraging and taking interest in group and individual activities is vital.

These guidelines may help you by outlining the structure of the Society, how it operates, and the services it can offer to you and to other members. The responsibilities of the RR are mentioned and suggestions offered for carrying them out, depending on the nature of the region. As an RR, you are in a strong and influential position to improve our public relations by talking to school children, giving adult education lectures or providing topical information to the public. A word of caution though: beware of letting your own personal views appear to be those of the Society; there is a need to keep your own views separate from those of the society.

1. The Society's Structure

The Society was formed in 1939 and was incorporated in 1953. The objectives of the society are set out in the Constitution (a copy is in this Manual).

In meeting the objectives, the society may act in cooperation with government, local bodies or other societies. It thus has the power to set up studies and to provide information on ornithological matters, but as a matter of policy so that its information is seen to be objective, it does not associate itself officially with measures that argue directly for the protection of birds. A specific aim of the society however can be to assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information from which sound management decisions can be derived (a copy of the Society's Conservation Policy is included in this Manual). As a nationwide study group Birds New Zealand maintains close liaison with museums, universities, and relevant government departments, and with kindred societies in New Zealand and overseas.

2. Council

The names and addresses of the members of Council are listed inside the front cover of *Notornis*. Each Councillor is elected to office for a three year term and may be re-elected on the expiry of that term. Nominations are called for in the December issue of *Birds New Zealand*.

Council manages the routine affairs of the Society on behalf of the members. Usually two meetings are held per year, on the day before the AGM and again in September/October. Council whenever appropriate, advertises in *Birds New Zealand* and appoints the convenors in charge of various subcommittees, schemes and activities.

Council appoints the Regional Representatives who are nominated by each region. If no nomination is received from a region, Council will contact the RR to see if that person wishes to continue in that role, before they appoint an RR for the following year.

3. Regional Representatives

The representatives of the 20 regions are listed with their addresses inside the back cover of *Notornis*. The rules for nominating and appointing the Regional Representatives are set out in the Constitution.

4. Regional Committees

All regions should have a committee elected annually at the AGM for that region. Even small regions should as a minimum have a Regional Recorder and Treasurer in addition to the RR. The number of committee members elected in a region will depend on the size of the region. The committee should meet perhaps only once a year, and its members should help plan and lead local projects and field trips, suggest speakers, contact members via phoning lists/email. Some may take turns at writing columns for *Birds New Zealand* and the local newsletter. Sharing the jobs gives others the opportunity to learn how the Society functions, and provides training for future office holders.

5. Annual RR Meetings

RRs usually have one meeting per year, and a joint meeting with Council, before the AGM. The meetings are reasonably informal and enable all RRs to make recommendations to Council, to discuss progress or problems within regions, and to suggest priorities, questions or suggest matters of bird study policy.

An external facilitator, who shall be a financial member of the society, may be appointed by Council to chair an RR meeting. If no facilitator is appointed, the RRs shall elect a chairperson to run the meeting. A minute taker shall be appointed at the start of the RR meeting. The chairperson cannot reasonably be expected to lead the RR meeting and to take notes as well.

A draft agenda, based on suggested items in the annual RR reports, will be provided by the Executive Officer. The minute taker and/or chairperson from the previous year's meeting will help set the agenda for the upcoming meeting. Suggestions for the agenda may also be made by Council.

All RRs (or their deputies) who attend the RR meeting and AGM are entitled to claim their expenses. Refer to the guidelines "Reimbursement of expenses".

6. Field Trips and Studies

Popular field trips include visits to local habitats, beach patrols, regular surveys of say a particular river bed or estuary. Your region may wish to establish a specific project or investigation, such as five minute bird counts in a particular piece of bush, and local members can be invited to

contribute towards field work for national projects of the society. Help may be sought from the Birds New Zealand Scientific Committee in planning and designing studies. DOC and local Regional Councils may also be of assistance.

The organisation of activities, the collection and disposal of data is very much your concern, but members will be encouraged to participate if they see positive results for their efforts. Council therefore encourages local members to write up and publish the results of their projects in *Notornis* and *Birds New Zealand* as appropriate.

7. Evening Meetings

It is the responsibility of the RR to arrange meetings and to inform members of them. Committee members can be appointed to share the phoning of members on a regular basis before meetings, although the wider use of email now allows easy and quick communication with most members. Many, especially new members, appreciate the reminder and personal contact.

Through these meetings member interest is maintained and an opportunity is provided to discuss matters of local ornithological interest and to meet fellow members. Some regions with a small group meet in members homes, others with a larger attendance meet in any hall or seminar room that can be used free or at a low rental. It is usual for meetings to include discussion, education and planning;

Discussion: Local bird sightings, places of birding interest, queries, help for beginners, notices of coming events, items for sale etc.

Education: This is largely dependent on resources and the size of a region. Talks on trips and expeditions, particular species, identification, moult, breeding, distribution, photography, beach wrecks, workshops, special studies, recording observations, films, videos etc.

If finding guest speakers is a problem, contact Council who will be pleased to assist.

8. Regional Newsletters

The aim is to keep members informed of past and planned activities in the region. Copies of regional newsletters should be sent where possible to neighbouring RRs, the President, and to Editors of *Notornis* and *Birds New Zealand*. Regional newsletters will be posted on the society's website. On receipt of their annual report, regions receive an annual grant of \$100 per year to help with administrative costs such as printing and postage of newsletters. Because of financial constraints some regions accept donations from members to cover newsletter costs. However, there should be no obligation on members to pay. At least one newsletter containing a summary of the planned activities for at least the next six months should be sent free of charge to all members, thus giving all the opportunity to participate in local activities.

9. Funding and Equipment

A Capitation Grant of \$3.00 per member, with a minimum of \$350 per region, is made annually to regions to support field projects. Additional funds may be obtained from the sale of society goods.

Council maintains a national assets register that includes equipment held by, or on loan to regions and individuals. A list of equipment (including books) held in your region, but belonging to Birds New Zealand is held by RRs. Application to borrow available equipment and books may be made by emailing the Executive Officer.

Where regional finances are limited and equipment is not available elsewhere, application for funding for equipment purchases may be made to:

- (a) the Projects Assistance Fund: Administered by Birds New Zealand, the fund exists to help regions or individuals undertake research where finance is the limiting factor. Details of how to make an application and the Application Form are included in this Manual.
- (b) various Trusts etc: Guidelines for seeking funding are included in this Manual.

10. Society Committees

Committee members are appointed by Council. The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees. Details of all currently active committees and their convenors are published on the website.

11. Publications

One of the principle functions of the Society is the recording and dissemination of information and studies about birds. RRs fulfil a key role in two ways - directing the observer or recorder of results and observations to the most appropriate place for publication, validation or depositing of the information, and soliciting, encouraging and promoting the dissemination of information.

A great deal of valuable information languishes forever in notebooks, or even in the heads of observers. The RR can assist the functioning of the Society and the furtherance of its aims by facilitating the most appropriate means of making this information available to others, researchers and other members, and reducing the amount of material which is important but destined never to see the light of day. Members are often either reluctant to write up their material for publication, or it does not occur to them to do so in the first place.

- ***Notornis*** - publishes, among other things, fully refereed scientific and other papers and short notes. These are normally based on original research or important new information concerning the distribution, ecology or other aspects of bird study. Guidelines for authors are published in *Notornis* annually. Items can be submitted at any time.
- ***Birds New Zealand*** - publishes material of a newsworthy nature concerning any aspects of ornithology in New Zealand, including activities of members and others, and including material which is not deemed to be 'scientific', or which represents original observations of a noteworthy nature more suitable for *Notornis*. As *Birds New Zealand* is the magazine of the Society, such important new material should not be published in *Birds New Zealand*, as it is not refereed and therefore not citable, and does not therefore form part of the body of scientific literature on ornithology. (If material of this sort is submitted to the editor of *Birds New Zealand*, it is normally forwarded to the *Notornis* editor for consideration, which will usually involve rewriting into a suitable format). Please bear in mind that the magazine is for the dissemination of material of a newsworthy nature concerning birds and birding activity of the New Zealand region only, or which in some way relates to it.

Items for *Birds New Zealand* can be received in any format, electronic or not, by publication deadlines of 10 February, May, August and 1 November. Hand written submissions are welcome, style is not important as it can be improved in the editing process, and photographs are particularly welcome.