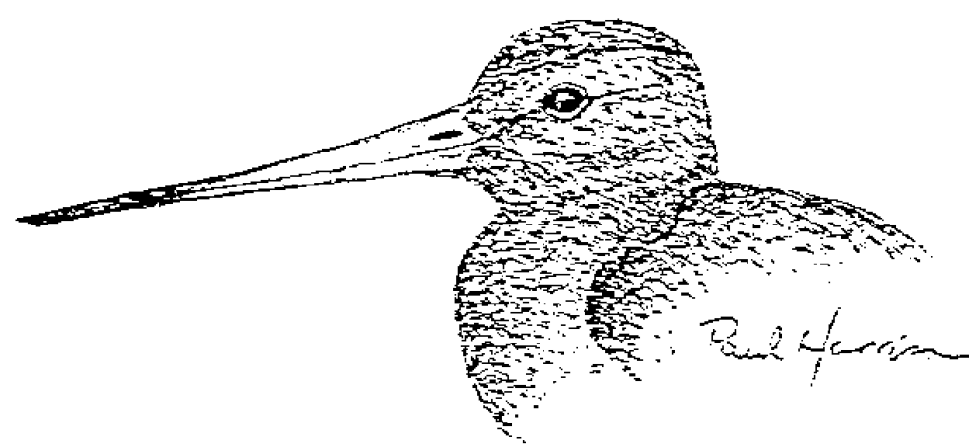


KUAKA

Newsletter of
South Auckland Branch
Birds New Zealand
Te Kahui Matai Manu o Aotearoa

November 2020

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Tena koutou whanau, welcome to the November newsletter.

MONTHLY MEETING There were 11 people present to hear a really interesting talk by Matt Rayner from the Auckland Museum about the state of the Spotted Shags in the Hauraki Gulf.

This group of birds has seriously declined over the past 30 years and there are estimated to be only 700-900 individuals remaining. These are concentrated on only two breeding islands compared to the 25 colonies 30 years ago.

A lot has been learnt in recent times because for the first time they have been studied. It has now been proven that there are two breeding periods throughout the year but it is unknown at this stage whether the same individuals breed twice or whether the population is split. These birds have been found to be closely related to the Pitt Island Shag. An attempt has been made to use dummies to establish another breeding colony without success so far.

Early this year 10 birds were captured and fitted with satellite tracking devices that has now allowed the movements of the birds in the Hauraki Gulf to be studied for the first time. A major surprise was that the concentration of feeding effort was around the mussel farms along the west Coromandel coast and around Matingarahi but it is unknown at this stage whether this is related to the breeding period or whether this behaviour applies all year round. It is hoped that further tracking will be completed to answer that query in the coming months.

NEXT MEETING

David and Lynne offered their house for a xmas bbq and this will be held on **Saturday 12 December**, gathering at 12pm for a lunch. Bring your own everything to share.

SIGHTINGS since the last meeting included:

Sue, Wendy, Anna, Ted and Ian travelled to the top of Awhitu Peninsula in October and as well as Sue seeing her first reef heron at Wattle Bay, we noted a pair of VOC and two pair of NZ Dotterel. Sue noted that one of the dotterel had a flag; Adrian R subsequently confirmed that this was CHJ – banded at Karekare on 18 Feb 2018 as a chick.

Following a tip off from Karen Opie, David and Tony visited Port Waikato on Monday the 9th to check the banded Dotterel situation. Two pairs of Dotterels were found in the usual areas, one pair had chicks approximately 5 days old, while the other pair appeared to also have chicks but they were not discovered before darkness fell. So that is the best breeding effort with absolutely no input or help from us or the community. A worrying aspect however was that a car with two free running dogs moved through within 10m of the brooding female with chicks but the birds survived this time but that probably defines why breeding success is so low.

Gillian and Ian reported that a new development in Walters Road, Papakura has a pair of NZ Dotterel with two chicks and that there are also approximately 10 pairs of Pied Stilts obviously breeding.

Phil Hammond - the Mongolian Dotterel was present at Taramarie on the day of the meeting and also three Curlews at the bird hide at Miranda. He also reported that there were 370 Black billed Gulls gathered at the Radio Mast roost at Mangere.

Tony saw the Marsh Sandpiper at the Piako roost which has stunning plumage and is worth viewing.

Tony reported that at his work a pair of pigeons were attempting to re-nest for the third time in the same nest this breeding season.

BEACH PATROL There was no beach patrol in October and its unlikely there will be one this month either due to people being away on holiday.

If anyone is interested in joining the Beach Patrol team please contact us

FACEBOOK. Some of the posts since our last newsletter are shown on the attached. Go to the Facebook page, @birdsnzsa, to find the links to follow for any particular posting that interests you.

If you have some good photos, information, or links that you think would be suitable for our site send Wendy or David an email with the photo or link.

ATLAS REPORT.

Only 25% of Birds NZ members are participating in the Atlas, so it would obviously be good to get more people involved. Not everyone needs to go out birding, **but I'm hoping that some of our members can help with their local knowledge or do some short day or night counts at their homes.**

I would like to ask if each of you could reply to me and let me know the following:

- Where do you live?
- Are there any special habitats near to where you live, e.g. wetland, beach
- What is your 'home' square? (I can work this out if I know your address)
- Are you doing regular bird counts?
- Do you load your bird counts into the Atlas program?
- Which other squares or locations do you count at on a regular basis?

For those who are not Atlasing, MY CHALLENGE TO YOU IS to spend 15 minutes (or more) in your garden counting all of the birds that you see or hear Don't forget to record the date and the time you start and finish, then send the details through to me so I can load them into the Atlas

For everyone, please also try to do a night count. This is one that starts earlier than 40 minutes before sunrise, or later than 20 minutes after sunset – even if you see or hear nothing, please make a note of this. The aim is to determine if there are nocturnal species such as morepork or kiwi in your neighbourhood, as well as anything else that might be around after dark.

Happy birding, everyone!

Sue

THIS MONTHS FINAL PHOTO (I know, it's a bit scary!!)



New Zealand Bird Atlas

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We recently got in touch with David Lawrie to feature his birding story as our next featured Atlaser Profile!

<https://ebird.org/atlasnz/news/david-la...> See More



Happy birding! Wendy, Sue & David