

# KUAKA

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

December 2020

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Greetings everyone, no meeting this month so this newsletter highlights our Facebook posts for the past month, a few sightings that have been reported, and the Atlas report.

We won't produce a newsletter in January but you can look forward to its return in February. Have a great Christmas and New Year and we look forward to catching up in a couple of months.

- ✚ **Don't forget the BYO BBQ at David's place this Saturday**
- ✚ If you take up the December Atlas Challenge – see below- and win the T-shirt, send us a photo of you wearing it!
- ✚ **Have a great Christmas everyone and happy birding over the festive season.**

**SIGHTINGS** since the last meeting included:

- ✚ Banded rail and chicks at Pahurehure
- ✚ Near Westport airport recently Wendy watched a male paradise shelduck engaging in mid-air combat with a white faced heron. The duck chased the heron whilst making lots of noise and body slammed it a couple of times. The chase went on for several minutes before the duck pulled away and landed back in the paddock. No chicks or female were spotted.
- ✚ Sue recently spotted an injured juvenile godwit at Pahurehure, and contacted Tony H, who managed to catch it and take to the zoo vet. Unfortunately, it had a broken wing which the vet thought had been like that for about 2 weeks, so the decision was made to euthanize the bird.
- ✚ On a happier note, Anna reports that there are oystercatcher chicks and 2 dotterel chicks at Wattle Bay, and 2 more at Big Bay.

## BEACH PATROL

There was a Karioitahi beach patrol in November and the haul was comprised of: 1 sooty shearwater, 5 bullers shearwater, 1 little shearwater, 1 white fronted tern and 1 gannet

There won't be a beach patrol in December or January unless someone would like to volunteer to do a walk along the beach and let me (Wendy) know what you find.

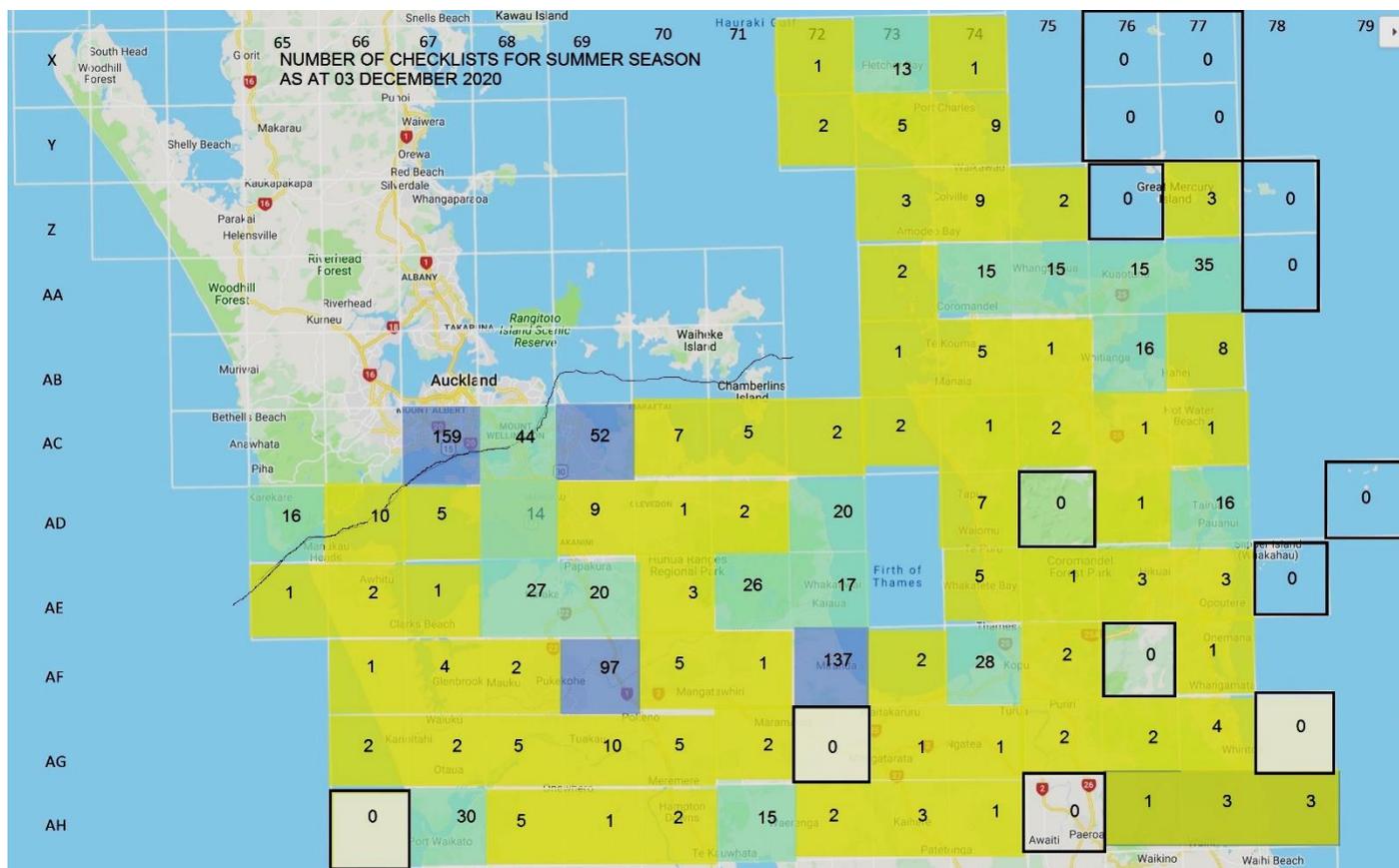
**FACEBOOK** There were 51 posts to our Facebook page since the last newsletter. Some of the posts are shown on the attached. Go to the Facebook page, @birdsnzsa, to find the links to follow for any particular posting that interests you.

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 December 2020

Summer is officially here; the days are getting longer and it is warming up. Hopefully more of you will be getting out and about on holiday over the Christmas/New Year break, or at least getting to spend more time at home. A great time to be watching and counting birds!

With this in mind, I have attached the atlas map for summer, with the number of checklists shown for each square. I will send a final map for spring at a later date.



Please note:

- the figures now include summer 2019 and 2020 checklists
- The yellow squares have had between 1 and 10 checklists submitted. The green squares have had 11 to 50 and the blue squares have had 51 or more.

As you can see, we do have a number of squares with more than 10 checklists, **but the majority of squares have had 10 or less**, so for those of you who are atlasing, please focus your attention on the blank and yellow squares. If you need more details or a topo map of a particular square, let me know.

Most squares with no checklists submitted so far are around offshore islands (plus AG78 square is a small corner of the southern headland at Mataora Bay), so if you have access to a boat, you might consider trying to approach these. Checklists done at sea will only be included in the atlas statistics if they are done within 10 kms of land. Surprisingly, there are still a few blank squares on land:

AD75 Tapu-Coroglen Rd and bush tracks

AF76 part of Kopu-Hikuai Rd, some minor roads and bush tracks

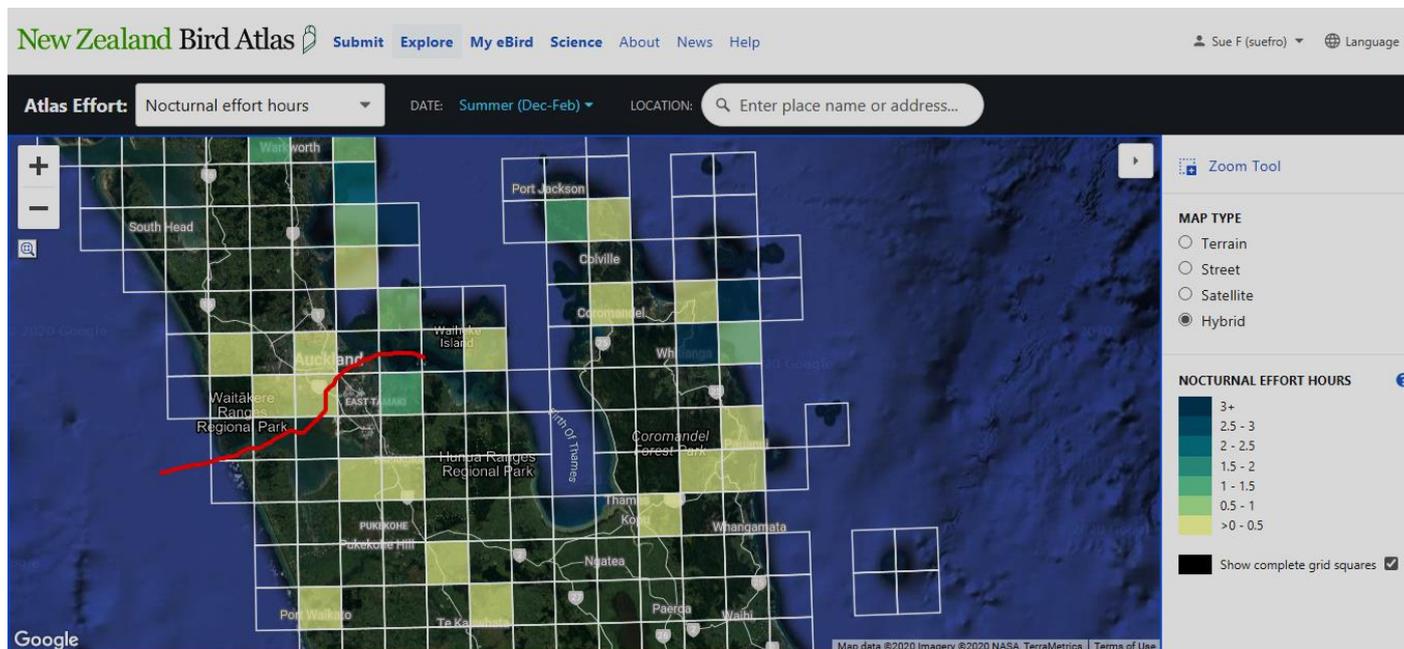
AG72 parts of SH2, Back Miranda Rd, Monument Rd and Okaeria Rd

AH66 a small corner of Karioitahi Beach

AH75 Paeroa, Netherpton, Awaiti

I recently had a query about complete squares which I referred to the NZ Bird Atlas team. They are the ones who decide if squares are complete and they have confirmed that after 18 months, they have not yet marked any complete squares. Squares with lots of checklists can still have counts done, but the focus should be on those with low or no counts as above.

Just a reminder that more night counts are also needed (see map attached). Although we now have daylight saving, the warmer evenings may encourage many of you to stay outdoors until dusk (or later!) A night count 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. It can be from 5 minutes to 1 hour. 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.



The atlas team have issued a new challenge for December – follow the link below for details.

**December Atlas Challenge!**  
By NZ Bird Atlas Team | December 1, 2020

**It is time for our second Atlas Challenge!**

During December one lucky Atlaser has the **chance to win a NZ Bird Atlas T-shirt by simply contributing to the New Zealand Bird Atlas**. All you have to do is **submit complete checklists into at least 10 different grid squares during the month of December**. These checklists

[December Atlas Challenge! - New Zealand Bird Atlas \(ebird.org\)](http://ebird.org)

Keep sending in your interesting or unusual sightings over the next month or so. For those of you who do not load your checklists into EBird, if you do advise a sighting of an interesting or unusual bird, or do a count of all the birds you can identify at a particular location, please send me (Sue) the following details:

Exact location of sighting; Date; Time; Species; Number of birds seen

I will miss the club picnic this weekend, so will take the opportunity now to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and hope that you enjoy the birdlife over the next couple of months.

Sue

#### THIS MONTHS FINAL PHOTO



Happy birding!

Wendy and Sue



