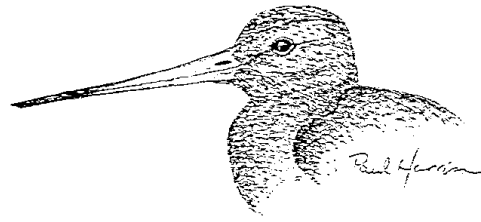


KUAKA

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

March 2021

Regional Representative Ian Southey
iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz 092982500
www.birdsnz.org.nz
Facebook @birdsnzsa



Tena koutou whanau, a little later than usual but here is your March newsletter.

MONTHLY MEETING: If you were unable to join us at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms last week, here is a synopsis of what you missed

- ✚ The godwits have started migration and one with a tag was taking a break in New Caledonia
- ✚ There was a general discussion about progress towards the National Conference that we are organising in Thames. David reported that over 110 registrations had been received to date. The organising committee has a meeting this coming Sunday to discuss several outstanding matters.

SIGHTINGS included:

- ✚ Report of a barn owl in Camerontown Rd near Pukekohe
- ✚ Petrel Sandpiper on the disused basin at Mangere
- ✚ Black fronted dotterel at Mangere
- ✚ Curlew sandpiper at Mangere

SPEAKER

Natalie Fosdick (previously of Otago Uni) gave a very interesting overview of her work on the genomics (as opposed to the genetics) of the kaki flock in the South Island.

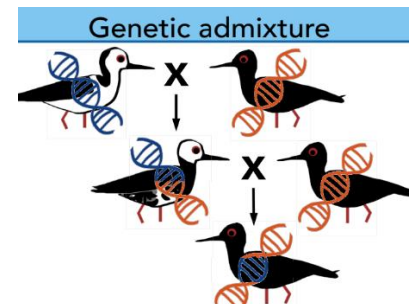
DNA work suggests that kaki diverged from poaka over 1.5Mya. It is assumed that kaki had NZ to themselves, or at least they were the dominant species, until the poaka began to flourish as the environment in NZ began to change with European settlement.

In 1981 there were 23 adult kaki, leading to major concerns regarding in-breeding, and cross-breeding with poaka. It was then that the captive breeding programme was initiated, together with habitat restoration and predator control.

Natalie's project was to establish the 'purity' of the kaki population using large numbers of genomic markers to assess the impacts of interspecific hybridisation. Genomics involves the sequencing of the whole genome and the use of 1000s of markers compared with 10 or so used in genetics. This gives greater power to detect differences/similarities. Her work confirmed that the management strategy of captive breeding has minimised hybridisation.

There are 169 wild adults today but Natalie pointed out that over 2000 chicks have been produced during the time of the management programme.

The problem of predation (especially on naïve juveniles) remains.

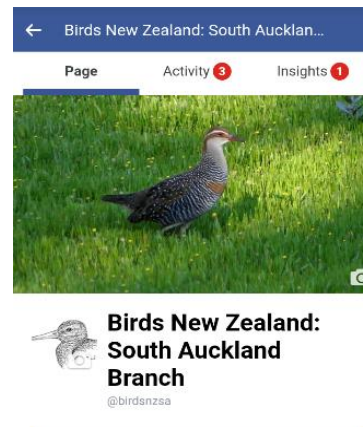


BEACH PATROLS recommenced in February with some success - white faced heron, black backed gull juv., mottled petrel, and a fluttering shearwater.

Our next outing is on March 26. We go out rain-or-shine.

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

FACEBOOK We now have 253 followers of our Facebook page. Many of these people are not 'birders' as such so hopefully they are learning something from our posts. Go have a look if you haven't already done so. We post an eclectic range of birding related material including photos, scientific articles, news reports, cartoons, and notices of events. There were 60 posts over the past four weeks – you could probably find something to interest you.

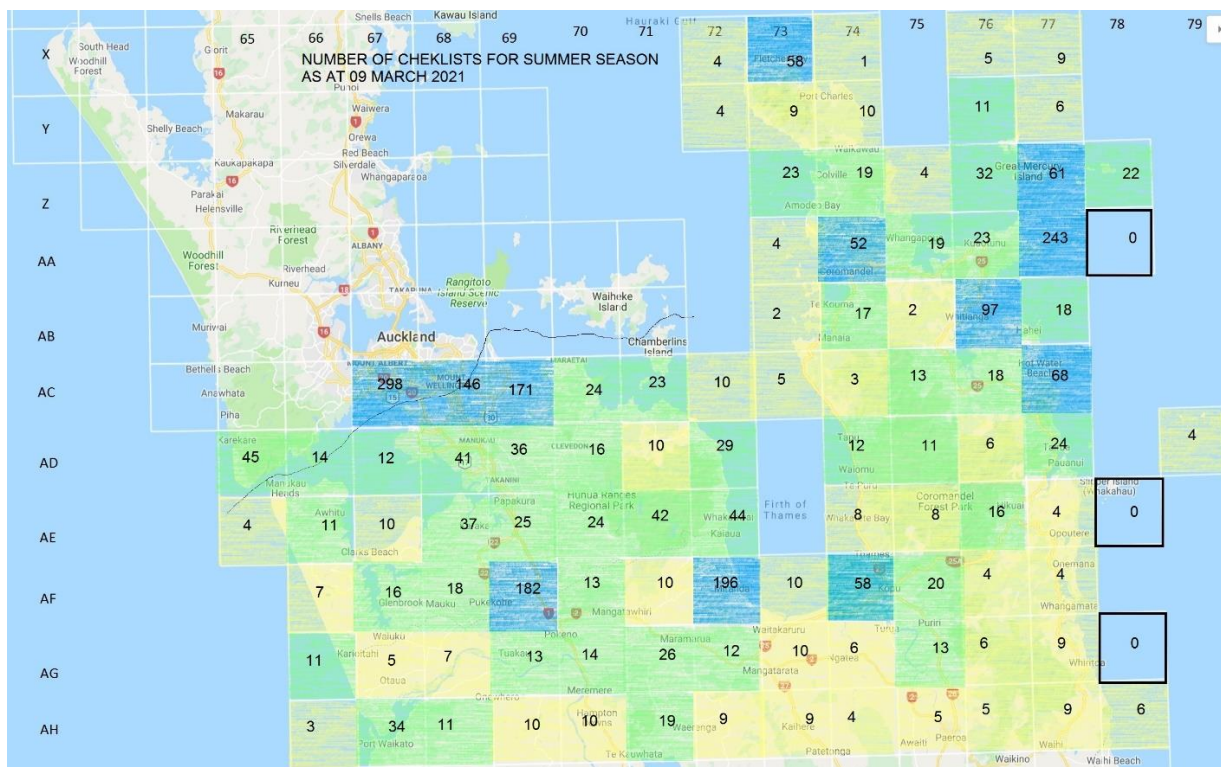


If you have some good photos, information, or links that you believe would be suitable for our site send Wendy or David an email with the photo or link.

ATLAS REPORT This is the final map for the summer season, and it is pleasing to see that 7 more blank squares had some checklists submitted, leaving only 3 with no counts for the last 2 summers.

Please note:

- the figures include summer 2020 and 2021 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 have a good number of green squares and a few blue squares, so there was a good effort made. I have also attached charts showing the top birders for several of our districts over summer.

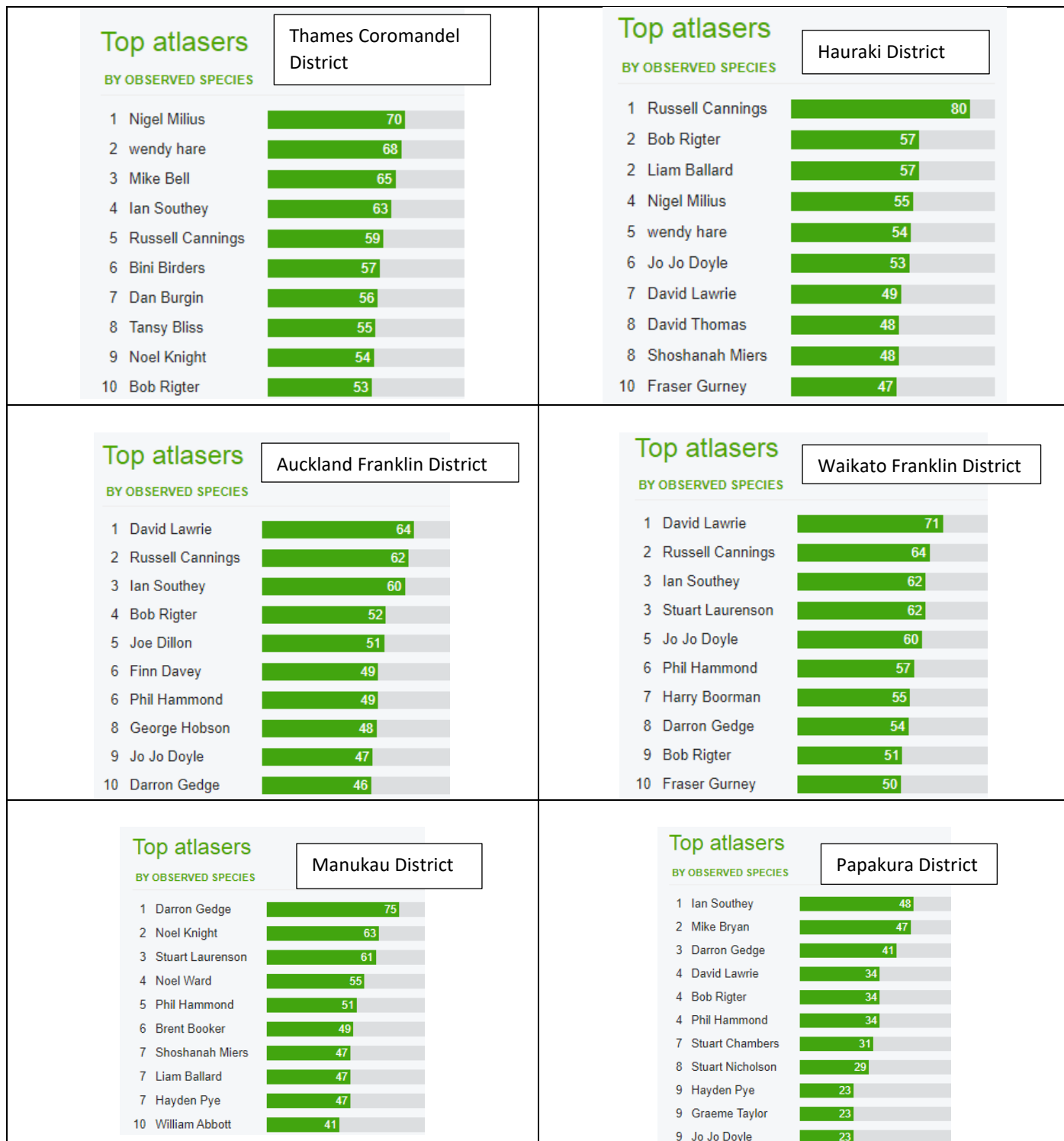
We have now moved into the autumn season, and you may recall that I attached an Atlas map for this with last month's newsletter. I have already tackled a few of the yellow squares, and I see that other birders have also been out counting this month. We have quite a few squares that have had no counts for autumn, and 3 that have had no counts at all. These are:

AA78 Whale Rock

AG78 Mataora Bay headland

AH81 bottom right of Mayor Island

Thanks to Noel, Nigel and the other birders who did a pelagic last weekend and submitted some checklists for Slipper Island and other areas east of the Coromandel.



Note that Jo Jo is a top atlaser even though Covid has kept her out of the country for over 12 months. Come on people – lets get busy!!

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.

Keep sending in your interesting or unusual sightings over the next month or so. Also, there is still a need to do night counts. This only needs to be a minimum of 5 minutes, and even if you see or hear no birds, it is still important to record this.

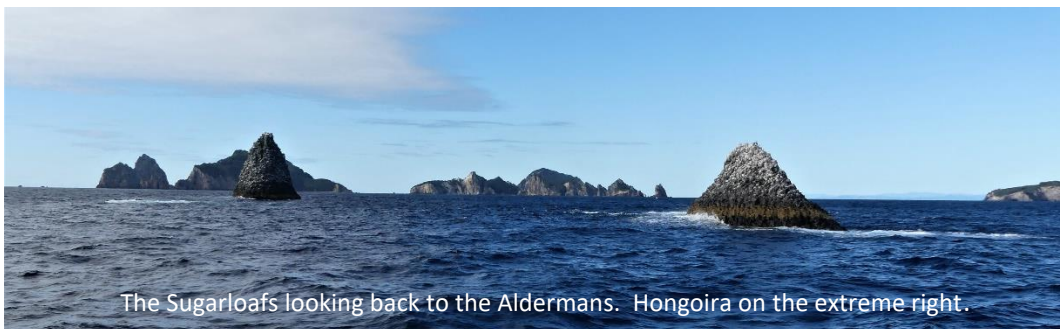
For those of you who do not load your checklists into EBird, if you do advise a sighting of an interesting or unusual bird, or do a count of all the birds you can identify at a particular location, please provide the following details:

Exact location of sighting, Date, Time. Species, Number of birds seen

Happy birding! Sue

PELAGIC TRIP Recently Noel joined a trip from Whangamata and this is his trip report. On the trip up to the Aldermans, we passed through square AE78 Slipper Island but we were some distance away from the Island itself. There were 4 counts done in this square giving us the following birds: southern black backed gull, black petrel (Parkinson's), flesh footed shearwater, fluttering shearwater, Australasian gannet, silver gull (red bill), little shearwater.

We then crossed into AD79 which is the square for the Aldermans. There was quite a chop running from the SE so we only stopped at the Aldermans for about 30 minutes in the lee of Hongiora Island the most easterly of the Aldermans. We did 2 counts before the Islands and 1 at the island - black petrel, flesh footed shearwater, Bullers shearwater, silver gull (rb), fluttering shearwater, little shearwater and gannet. the fluttering shearwater count was 620.



The Sugarloafs looking back to the Aldermans. Hongiora on the extreme right.

At Hongiora we saw, silver gull (rb), white fronted tern, flesh footed shearwater, Bullers shearwater, gannet, pied shag, aust. harrier, welcome swallow, starling, house sparrow and heard silvereye. there was also a flyby from a northern giant petrel, the first of the large oceanic birds.

At about 11.00 we started to head out to the 12 Nautical Mile limit the boat was licensed to go out to with passengers aboard. This took until 12.30. Once out to this area which was about 600 metre depth, we started laying a berley trail with salmon berley and dropping chopped up Pilchard to attract birds to the boat. Our drift line was well outside any squares so data is not included into the Bird Atlas but is most likely recorded in E Bird.

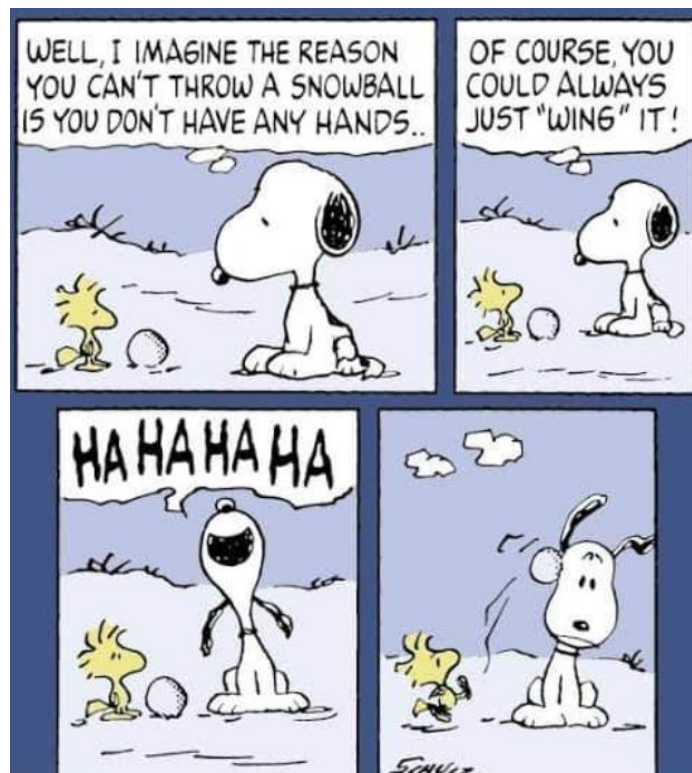
Birds seen were: shy mollymawk, black petrel, Bullers shearwater, fluttering shearwater, Campbells mollymawk, fleshfooted shearwater, cooks petrel, Pycrofts petrel, Salvins mollymawk, black browed mollymawk and gannet. also sighted was a fairy prion. Quite cool to have at one stage 6 large Mollymawks following our chumming line.

At about 15.00, we started to head back to Whangamata where we arrived about 17.45. A long day on the water but the reward was many birds which are not normally sighted by us.

Also seen through the day were two pods of dolphin plus a couple of seals. We trolled for skip jack tuna on the way out and caught one, although by the time it got boated a large chunk of the tail had been devoured by a larger fish probably shark. Cheers, Noel.



FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:





Avian Conservation & Education Network
Inca Terns (*Larosterna inca*), Peru by Greg Home.

Happy birding! Wendy and Sue