

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)



OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

March 2021

<http://osnz.org.nz/> and <http://notornis.osnz.org.nz/>

Greetings

2020 will be remembered for the Covid 19 pandemic and its world-wide effects. Although New Zealand escaped the worst of the pandemic, it did not avoid a major dislocation to life in the country. Not only did many lose their jobs but many organisations, including Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) were adversely affected. Fortunately, life in 2021 is showing good signs of returning to normal. The Conference / Annual meeting will be held over Queens Birthday in Thames this year following its cancellation due to Covid 19 in 2020. The re-organisation of the Wellington Branch will be re-instigated with an allocation of tasks including the down-sizing of the role of the Regional Representative.

This edition of the newsletter notes the recent passing of two of our local members, Bice Tennyson and Phil Palmer.

Geoff de Lisle

Monthly Meetings

Monday April 5th. **Migration timing in a changing world: insights from New Zealand-wintering Bar-tailed Godwits and Red Knots, Phil Battley, Massey University**

The Zoom meeting will be held at the Te Papa Collections building and shown on the big screen, 169 Tory Street, as well as being available anywhere through the internet.

February Meeting – Members Night

This was the traditional meeting where members gave short talks.

Colin Miskelly summarised his data of falcon and kereru observed in Wellington City. There has been a marked increase in the sightings of both these species over the years. These changes were probably the combined result of the effects of predator control and spill-over from Zealandia. Colin also summarised the sighting of an Oriental Cuckoo by Cashy Yates at Prince of Wales Park in Wellington on the 13th January. The sighting has been submitted to the Records Appraisal Committee

George Hobson summarised his Covid-interrupted birding year.

Annemieke Hendriks summarised her Covid interrupted volunteer work on the orange-fronted parakeet.

Ian Armitage summarised the substantial project to transfer all the beach patrol data from a paper-based system to an electronic data base. This project has very nearly been completed and the valuable resource will soon be readily available for research investigations.

Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop summarised their birding year starting with the failed translocation of shore plover to Mana Island and finishing with a trip to the Chatham Islands.

March Meeting: New Zealand Threat Classification System for Birds Hugh Robertson, Graeme Taylor, Rod Hitchmough, Pascale Michel

An important function of the Department of Conservation is to determine the risk status of fauna and flora so that finite resources can be allocated to most threatened species. Recently, the New Zealand Threat Classification System bird expert panel met to review the current threat status of birds. The outcome of the meeting will be summarised in a document to update the publication, Conservation status of New Zealand birds, 2016 <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/nztcs19entire.pdf>

Members of the panel summarised the process used to establish the threat classification of birds and some of the factors affecting the changes in threats affecting birds. An important consideration for the panel is to take into account changes in the taxonomic status of some bird species and sub-species. These changes have often occurred as a result DNA studies.

Regional Representative: This position is vacant. For any enquiries contact osnzwelly@gmail.com

Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge peter.hodge@gmail.com

Birds New Zealand Regional Roundup: Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop (04) 527 0929 osnzwelly@gmail.com

Wellington Harbour Survey: Geoff de Lisle & Stuart Nicholson

Mist Netting Matu Booth, manager@ngamanu.co.nz Nga Manu, Waikanae

Ross Pickard ross.pickard@hexagonsi.com

Cook Strait Pelagic Trip

The following is Colin Miskelly's report of the trip first published in BirdingNZ.net

Wellington Branch of Birds New Zealand organised a pelagic trip from Seaview marina out to Nicholson Canyon (Cook Strait) today. Thanks to Michael Szabo, Geoff de Lisle, and skipper Jonathan Delich (Cook Strait Fishing Charters) for their organising.

The trip was fully-booked by 20 Birds New Zealand members (or should-be members), 14 of whom signed up to shared eBird/Atlas checklists (three checklists submitted for different sections of the route taken).

Birds-of-the-day were two Cook's petrels (too distant for photography). Otherwise, the species were all typical, but in different proportions to what I have experienced on several March and April trips on the same vessel to the same site. Notable absences were black-browed mollymawk, Buller's mollymawk and Gibson's wandering albatross, while Westland petrel, Cape petrel and fairy prion were in low numbers. There were notably high numbers of flesh-footed shearwater and northern royal albatross.



The following list is from the outermost (Nicholson Canyon) sector.

4 southern black-backed gull
1 white-fronted tern
7 white-capped mollymawk
27 Salvin's mollymawk
4 southern royal albatross
7 northern royal albatross
1 southern giant petrel
3 northern giant petrel
3 Cape petrel
2 Cook's petrel

1 fairy prion
3 white-chinned petrel
5 Westland petrel
14 flesh-footed shearwater
2 Buller's shearwater
5 sooty shearwater
2 Australasian gannet

30 common dolphins
1 distant whale blow (probably sperm whale)

Sharing eBird Checklists

One of the features of this pelagic trip was the sharing of eBird checklists. Colin Miskelly shared a couple of checklists with others on the trip. The share function on eBird is very easy to use and the instructions can be found on the following link.

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000625567-editing-and-sharing-checklists>

Thanks to George Hobson for the photographs. Common dolphin (previous page), left, white-capped and salvin's mollymawks squabbling over fish scraps; right, Northern Royal albatrosses.



Next Cook Strait Pelagic Trip

Another Cook Strait Pelagic trip is planned for late July. Details will be advertised in April with a call for expressions of interest.

eBird Pelagic Protocol

Ahoy! The pelagic protocol applies to checklists that are made farther than two miles offshore on oceans, seas, or large lakes. Choose the Pelagic Protocol option from the 'Other' menu of Observation Types. Please note that we still have much to learn about seabird distribution, so we encourage you to [add photos](#) and notes to [document your sightings](#) on your checklists!

If you're moving: Count for up to 60 minutes on each checklist; stopping at the 1-hour mark. Record distance travelled (ideally with [eBird Mobile Tracks](#)), adjust the distance estimate for backtracking as you would a [traveling checklist](#), and choose a location on the map for where you started that checklist period. Repeat this process throughout the trip until you return to within two miles of shore.

If you're anchored: Keep a checklist for as long as you're anchored, and then follow the above instructions once you start to move again. eBird

Note: Pelagic Hotspots are for aggregating historical pelagic data; they should NOT be used with the pelagic protocol.



Salvin's Mollymawk – Wildbase Massey University

Facebook post – February 10th,
<https://www.facebook.com/masseywildbase/>

Andrew McEwen

I think this bird is the one that a woman called Katherine found just in the sea near the mouth of the Waimeha Stream at Waikanae Beach on Tuesday afternoon. She had her dog with her so could not do much to help. Mary & I were walking by and she asked us to help. This resulted in us putting the bird covered in my sweatshirt to stop it snapping at us, in a large box in the back of our car and heading to Wildbase. We had a new EV and this was our longest journey to date - talk about range anxiety, but luckily it was fully charged. The albatross survived the journey and we are very grateful for the care being given by Wildbase. They are such magnificent birds, even if one of the smaller species of albatross

Photo – Wildbase, Facebook.

Rifleman - Zealandia

This season, the conservation team at Zealandia have banded 58 rifleman (titipounamu). The banded birds were those that were in nest boxes and relatively accessible. A similar number of birds were probably produced in natural nests and not accessible for banding. Rifleman were only relocated to Zealandia in April 2019.

Peafowl - Wellington

17th February – 1 News

'Council on the hunt for owner after 'friendly' bird found strutting its stuff in Wellington suburb'

A peacock was found wandering around Newlands today.

Note: Indian peafowl have been recorded in 5 different squares in the Wellington (includes the Wairarapa) Atlas region. The accompanying photograph was taken on the 30th December 2007 from Dallas and my home in Silverstream and is the only record of this species on our property Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop

Peafowl <http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/peafowl>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/home-to-roost-rogue-wellington-peacocks-owners-have-been-found/B5CZ7KWOOF2TTCNDYCYZ2PY3ZDE/>



Peafowl were deliberately introduced to New Zealand from 1843. They are now widespread in New Zealand and have been recorded in 221 different Atlas squares.



**Friends of Mana Island
NEWS**

White-faced storm petrel chicks are being fed on Mana Island

100 white-faced storm petrel chicks were translocated to Mana Island on Friday 19 February 2021. This is a FOMI project being carried out in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and is the third transfer of white-faced storm petrels to Mana Island. The first 50 in 2019, and 100 in each of the following two years. The transfer was summarised on the FOMI Facebook page ([Follow their progress on our Facebook page](#)) as the feeding team cared for them, ready for fledging from the island.

March 12th, Listing. Friends of Mana Island is 😊 feeling happy.

Good news - all the white-faced storm petrels / takahikare-moana have now fledged! The last four left Mana last night. Go well little birds! A big thank you to everyone who contributed to this project over the last 5+ years. It's been an enormous task. Now we wait to see which birds return to breed and start a new colony. 😊 Big thanks to our sponsor OMV NZ.

The recent transfer was the subject of a blog by Alison Balance - <https://www.rnz.co.nz/.../more-seabirds-for-mana-island>

Colin James Ryder

Colin Ryder died on the 9th of March, 2021 as the result of an accident at home. He made major contributions to a number of conservation projects in the Wellington Region. Of particular note was the work he did on multiple projects over many years on Mana Island and he was the first president of FOMI. Colin was a supporter of the Taputeranga marine reserve. More recently Colin has led a community effort to protect the land at Baring Head as a regional park. He helped raise over \$400,000 to support the restoration of the lighthouse complex as well being involved in running a trapline and painting buildings.



Te Papa Blogs

Storm petrels in the spotlight

By: [Colin Miskelly](#)

On: 2 Dec 2020

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/12/02/storm-petrels-in-the-spotlight/>

Five Te Papa staff recently joined Department of Conservation colleagues on a boat-based survey of islands in central and northern Fiordland. One of the species they were hoping to learn more about was the mysterious grey-backed storm petrel. Vertebrates curator Colin Miskelly explains why this tiny bird was on their radar, and what they found and more about the mysterious grey-backed storm petrel. Vertebrates curator Colin Miskelly explains why this tiny bird was on their radar, and what they found. Prior to the Fiordland surveys the grey-backed storm petrel have never been found breeding near the New Zealand mainland. However, there is now overwhelming evidence that that they probably breed at scattered sites throughout Fiordland.

A plethora of islands – surveying breeding seabirds in Fiordland

By: [Colin Miskelly](#)

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/12/09/a-plethora-of-islands-surveying-breeding-seabirds-in-fiordland/>

On: 9 Dec 2020

A team comprised of staff from Te Papa and the Department of Conservation (DOC) recently spent a week surveying islands in northern Fiordland. In this second blog based on the trip, vertebrates curator Colin Miskelly describes some of the sites visited and discoveries made.

Before we started the surveys in 2016, there were only about a dozen Fiordland islands where petrels were known to breed, and no population estimates for any site.



Mottled petrel in spotlight beam, Doubtful Sound, November 2020. Photograph: Jean-Claude Stahl, Te Papa

After landing on 217 islands, we now know that there are at least 165 petrel colonies in Fiordland, and probably more than 66,000 breeding pairs. This is far more than anyone expected and provides a great springboard for these populations to recover as rats and stoats are cleared from more and larger islands, and from the adjacent mainland.

BICE TENNYSON

5 March 1927 – 26 April 2020

Bice Tennyson was a long-time member of the Wellington Branch of Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) for many years. An obituary for Bice will be published in the next edition of the Birds New Zealand magazine. In the latter years of her life she lived on the Kapiti Coast and was an avid beach patroller.

The photo of Bice and Alan was taken during the announcement in 2017 of the discovery of the ancient, colossal penguin which was named *Kumimanu biceae*. Kuminanu meaning monster bird in Maori, and biceae honouring Bice, Alan's mother who fostered his interest in natural history.



Alan and his mother Bice looking at the penguin bones, 2017.
Photograph by Rachael Hockridge. Te Papa

Philip Harry Palmer

3 February 1935 – 3 January 2021

A memorial service for Phil was held on the 16th of January, 2021 at the Nga Manu Nature Reserve. Following his retirement some 20 years ago, Phil and Viola Palmer moved from the Bay of Plenty to the Kapiti Coast. They have been members of Birds New Zealand for many years. Notably they have played a major role in the revegetation of the Greendale Reserve on the Kapiti Coast. Recognition of their contribution to the restoration of the reserve was recently acknowledged by the naming of a track after them. The developers of Camelot in Otaihangā gifted to the Kāpiti Coast District Council a piece of low lying, wet and boggy paddock with a stream running through it. Phil and Viola had a vision for that land as a bush reserve, planted with native trees and providing part of a bird corridor from sea, up the Waikanae River to the Tararua. The picture of Phil was taken in 2012 in North Peru on the first trip organised by Detlef and Carol Davies to South America.



Canada Geese

Earlier this year concerns were raised about the large number of Canada geese on the Kapiti Coast, especially at Waterstone. A flock of over 100 birds have been recorded at the Waterstone Lake this year and have been fouling the lake surrounds. Waterstone Lake is a popular venue with the model boat fraternity. In response to the large number of Canada geese local resident Geoff Amos has launched a petition to

“request the authorities to introduce an appropriate status to these animals and to introduce culling (euthanasia) to remove or reduce to manageable numbers them permanently from urban ponds within the Kāpiti Area. And to continue a regular cull to keep the population away or reduced from said waterways.”

The petition can be found on the following link <https://www.change.org/p/k%C4%81piti-coast-district-council-manage-canadian-geese-off-k%C4%81piti-coast-waterways?redirect=false>



The Kapiti District Council has acknowledged the problem of large numbers of Canada geese at the Awatea Lakes (includes Waterstone) and the significant contamination of lake surrounds with large quantities of goose excrement. The Council has been investigating the use of the bird repellent Flock Off whose active ingredient is methyl anthranilate. This compound smells like commercial grape juice. *“A series of studies confirmed that methyl anthranilate (and related compounds such as dimethyl anthranilate), when applied to seeds or grass, inhibits birds from feeding. Methyl anthranilate repels a variety of birds, such as red-winged blackbirds, starlings, pigeons, jungle fowl, herring gulls, ring-necked pheasants, and Canada geese. This repellent may play an important role in protecting feed grain on farms from bird predation.”*

The use of Flock Off is expected to have only temporary effects and other longer-term solutions will be necessary. Consideration needs to be given to tackling the problem on a regional basis however for this to occur the Wellington Regional Council would need to include Canada geese as a pest in its Pest Management Plan.

The problem of excessive numbers of Canada geese is not unique to the Kapiti Coast. Large numbers (70 plus) have been recorded on the Hokowhitu Lagoon in Palmerston North. A cull of birds in Palmerston North occurred in 2018 and resulted in complaints regarding the humanness of the operation. A further cull of Canada geese was planned for last August but was postponed following concerns raised by the public.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/kapiti/119012272/problem-geese-should-be-sent-to-trump-says-kpiti-coast-mayor>

28/1/2021

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/123870510/fancy-canadian-geese-for-your-roast-A>

13/1/2021

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/100911011/canada-geese-cull-distresses-onlookers>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/300251739/culling-of-canada-geese-to-continue-at-palmerston-north-lagoon?cid=app>

Feeding Ducks

Feeding ducks at the local duck pond is a popular family pastime. This activity results in large numbers of birds present at local duck ponds whose populations are sustained by supplementary feeding. Recently, the Hutt City has erected signs on duck ponds asking people not to feed bread. The signs say that feeding bread causes disease and is not a balanced diet for ducks. This prompted me to look for evidence to support this statement. When consulting google it is apparent that there are numerous reports, mostly anecdotal, of linking feeding bread to the wing deformity, angel wing.

Angel Wing

An angel wing deformity, also known as slipped wing or carpometacarpal deformity, is a disease that mainly but not exclusively affects waterfowl. One or both wings initially droop and turn outwards later. The condition is permanent, if not corrected in the early stages.

There is general consensus that angel wing is caused by an unbalanced high protein and or carbohydrate diet. While this has been demonstrated in feeding trials with domestic birds or captive wild birds there is very little scientific literature relating to studies of angel wing in wild birds. An excellent summary of the question of the links between bread feeding and wing deformities. <https://corvid-isle.co.uk/thoughts-bread-angel-wing-wild-birds>

The conclusions from this article are;

- There are no definitive answers concerning feeding bread to wildbirds.
- Bread and other high energy foods should not exclusively be fed to waterfowl, especially in the first four weeks of their lives.
- Bread can be safely fed as part of a balanced diet that also includes wheat, cereals, grains, leafy greens and dried grass.
- Birds should not be overfed.
- Never feed mouldy bread.



Bird Snippets

Coot at Pharazyn Reserve

ledzep » Tue Jan 05, 2021

Stopped in at Pharazyn Reserve (Waikanae) today, at least 3 Australasian Coot there (may have been 5, or maybe I counted one pair twice). First time I have seen Coot there. In the pond south of the hide. BirdingNZ.net

Reported in eBird in November 2018 and twice in early January 2021.

Banded Wrybill, Waikanae Estuary

jfmbirds » Sun Jan 17, 2021 8:58 pm

I enjoyed a stroll to the Waikanae River mouth, very low tide, Saturday 16 January, still, warm, late evening. I had been keeping an eye out for the 3 Dotterel chicks, - reported here about Christmas. Saw an adult bird at about the northern end of the fenced area, but no young birds - chicks. Returning from the mouth, a large group of White Fronted Terns working the waters, - spotted 3 young birds, presumably the December chicks, by the water's edge, 100 metres plus from the fenced "home paddock". Very confident, very mobile, all about same size. Not until I had the images on the screen did I notice the bands on one bird. The band colour code to my eye are - - Left, - Black above Green. - - Right, - Silver above knee. Lower, yellow above yellow. BirdingNZ.net

Banded Wrybill, Waikanae Estuary

Alan Tennyson » Mon Jan 18, 2021

The banded wrybill - I saw it today also (there were 3 wrybills in total). There seems to be only 1 NZ dotterel chick left alive. BirdingNZ.net

NZ Dotterels Waikanae

GrahamB » Wed Feb 03, 2021

Noon. Still there. Pair of adults and a juvenile next to the river channel, perpendicular to the central protected area. Pair of Variable Oystercatchers and brood of three about 50m away. BirdingNZ.net

NZ falcon pair breeding on Mt Victoria

Michael Szabo » Tue Feb 09, 2021

A pair of NZ Falcons/Karearea currently have a nest in the Matairangi/Mt Victoria Reserve town belt with a juvenile that is starting to attempt to fly.

Photo link https://scontent.fpmr1-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.0-9/146356360_3611102392278523_6641092118854457242_o.jpg?nc_cat=110&ccb=2&nc_sid=730e14&nc_ohc=G9W1AZD2qQ4AX-AcPWK&nc_ht=scontent.fpmr1-1.fna&oh=77578208e90aa6a9b453c572eb021357&oe=6047AEA7 BirdingNZ.net

Wellington City Biodiversity

ledzep » Sat Feb 20, 2021

A juvenile looking Tomtit and a pair of Rifleman up the Ferry Road track behind Days Bay, at a location close to where I have seen both in the past (last year). GPS - 41.272207, 174.914327. It is at the start of the steepish bits, so reasonably accessible with only a short walk (15 - 20 mins from the carpark at end of Ferry Road). BirdingNZ.net

Myna, Ascot Park, Porirua

Elise Bailey, 3 March, 2021,

Adult was on footpath then fence. Very near a large football field, playground & bush path through a suburb. iNaturalistNZ

Wellington City biodiversity

ledzep » Sun Mar 21, 2021

4 Peacocks (all males) on farmland on the left of SH1 (travelling north) at Te Horo north of Wellington. BirdingNZ.net

Wrybill, Lyall Bay, Wellington

Michael Szabo » Fri Mar 26, 2021

There was a Wrybill on the beach in Lyall Bay, Wellington, this morning. First reported by local resident Michelle Wilhem, she was told by another local that it had been there for a few days. BirdingNZ.net



Photo, Michael Szabo

Wrybill, Lyall Bay, Wellington

26th March. The wrybill population on Lyall Bay has doubled with the arrival of a second bird.

New Zealand Bird Atlas

25 March 2021	Wellington*	New Zealand
Atlasers	244	896
Total squares	105	3232
Squares with data	103 (98.1%)	2764 (85.6%)
Total Species	132**	260
Total checklists	15,658 149.1 checklists / square***	120754 37.4 checklists / square

* Includes the Wairarapa and Wellington.

** The most “species” recorded in a square is 88 observed in BU68 which includes part of Kapiti Island and the Paraparaumu beach.

*** There is a wide variation in the number of checklists / square. The most intensively surveyed square (BZ66) has 2832 submitted checklists.

Reminder – Banded and Flagged Birds

The banded dotterels at Eastbourne and Pencarrow Lakes are now dispersed from their nesting areas. There is limited data on where these birds go in the winter. The pictured bird was observed at Pauatahanui on the 2nd of March having spent the breeding season on

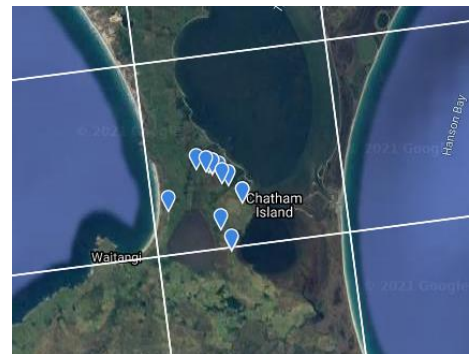


Eastbourne beach. Last year one of the East Harbour flagged birds was observed in New Caledonia. Please record the details (date, location and species, band description) of uniquely banded / flagged birds and send the information to the DOC banding Office. Details can be found at the following link.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/non-gamebird-band-report-form>

Emu – Chatham Islands

During our recent visits to the Chatham Islands we observed feral emu as had a number of other



Atlasers. This population of feral emu was established in the mid -1990s and numbers may now be 70-100 birds (see map). The 4th Edition of the Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand (2010) classified emu under the category of “Failed Introductions of Foreign Birds” and referred to the failed introduction to Kawau Island in 1868. Documentation of the Chatham Islands emu population is required for it to be recognised as a self-sustaining feral population.



Geoff de Lisle & Dallas Bishop