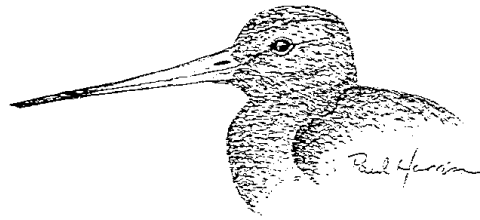


# KUAKA

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

May 2021

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Hi everyone, trust your birding is going well and that you have been getting out while the weather remains good.

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

- ✚ There have been reports of aggregations of little black shags/kawau tui in various places on the Manukau. Ted suggested that the birds migrate up from the Rotorua Lakes area for the winter and aggregate into large flocks – Sue counted 150 in a flock at Wattle Downs last week. Tony H reminded us that the birds are very mobile, moving from the Manukau to the Firth to the Waitemata so it is hard to say just how many there are in the region at any one time (not helped by the Manukau and Firth censuses being held in different weeks).
- ✚ Barn owls. David reported that we still have not had a verifiable barn owl report from our region.
- ✚ Auckland Council has passed a bylaw banning the keeping, breeding, and selling of several parrot species from September 2022. This includes cockatoo, galah, eastern rosella, ring-necked, monk, and rainbow lorikeets. The NZ Parrot Society is outraged that they were not consulted.
- ✚ Currently Auckland Council is considering a ban on driving on Muriwai Beach – maybe Karioitahi could be added to that ban. There was a meeting last week in Waiuku hosted by the Beach Care group; the theme was the damage to the dunes and danger to people on the beach created by vehicles and motor bikes.
- ✚ We were asked to watch for and report sightings of banded/flagged SIPO. Red flags are from Miranda, orange from Rangitara River, there are also yellow flags (your correspondent missed where they are from!).
- ✚ John and Rosemary from Kawakawa Bay have reported that there were at least 3 weka pairs in the Te Papa Rd area. It appears that most of the pairs nested more than once and that chick survival has been good.

## SIGHTINGS included:

- ✚ 15 galah seen at Mangatawhiri
- ✚ Small flock of cockatoo at Miranda
- ✚ Little egret at Pararakau Is
- ✚ Spoonbill roost at Waipipi Rd

## SPEAKER

Jacques De Satge from Massey Uni was our speaker. Jacques is working on his PhD – *The function of NZ mangrove forests as wildlife habitats and the effect of mangrove removal on banded rails*. The objective of his study is to understand mangrove/avifauna relations in NZ. His concern is that mangroves are 'managed' in the absence of

ecological understanding; the impact on NZ fauna that use the mangroves is poorly understood leading to the willy-nilly mangrove removal that we have seen around the Manukau and other areas.

All rail species are classified as at risk/declining and on the mainland banded rails/moho pereru are generally associated with mangroves. The goal of the study was to establish if mangroves are key to their survival on the mainland.

There is only one species of mangrove/manawa – *Avicennia marina* in NZ, it is a native we share with SE Australia. They currently cover ~26,000ha from Northland to Ohiwa and Raglan harbours. The area they cover continues to expand due to the silting of harbours and sheltered coasts, the wealth of nutrients (including nitrates) delivered to the coasts by rivers and the altered hydrodynamics of the coast bought about by the creation of marinas, the building of bridges, and the like.



Using the mangroves and salt marshes of Managwhai Harbour as his study site Jacques has spent many hours noting how banded rails/moho pereru spend their days, and nights. He has ascertained that at Mangawhai the birds spend their days amongst the mangroves and retreat to the denser sedges/grasses/reeds of the adjoining saltmarsh at night and during high tides.

Having established that banded rails forage for food in the mangroves and use the thicker vegetated marshes for roosting and, probably, nesting, Jacques was somewhat perplexed to learn of the bandies in Pahurehure who have adapted to the loss of the mangroves! He intends to undertake similar research, to that already completed, in an area on the mainland where bandies thrive without mangroves, such as Marakopa on the west coast south of Kawhia

**BEACH PATROLS:** The last beach patrol was in late April and we found 1 white headed petrel, a grey faced petrel, and a hutton's shearwater – they looked at little worse for wear than birds in these photos!!



White headed petrel



Grey faced petrel



Huttons shearwater

The next beach patrol is scheduled for May 20th.

**If anyone is interested in joining the Beach Patrol team, even just on a one-off basis, please contact us.**

We go out rain-or-shine.

## ATLAS REPORT

The autumn season finishes at the end of May. Sue is busy trying to increase the number of counts per square to 10. To this end Sue, myself, Michael and Noel spent a day or two over in Paeroa driving up rough roads into the ranges in an attempt to cover as many habitats as possible over four squares. Lucky for us the weather stayed good (apart from a downpour on Friday night which made walking in long grass the next day a rather wet affair!).

You have seen the maps which Sue puts up each month but you may not be aware that Sth Ak branch has a total of 100 squares, located from south of the Auckland Isthmus to a line running from Port Waikato to Waihi; coast to coast, including the Coromandel and offshore islands. Whilst some squares, e.g. Miranda and Bombay, receive plenty of attention, unfortunately the same cannot be said for the majority of them!

The winter season starts on June 1 and any help you can give Sue to add to the counts in our 100 squares would be appreciated.

If you go out looking at birds but do not load your checklists onto EBird please provide the following details so that we can add your observation to the Atlas:

Exact location of count, Date, Time, Species seen, and number of birds per species

And don't forget, some counts after dark of spur winged plover, ruru, pukeko and whatever else is calling would be much appreciated.

Happy bird counting

## BIRD ID

Tony H shared some clues on how to ID a black-billed gull v a red-billed gull

" After the breeding season and onset of moulting, their bare parts change colour. The bill loses its black and becomes bi-coloured – black tip with red base, slowly returning to black bill thru winter.

This bird has already progressed back towards a black bill.

Their legs become red often starting when rearing chicks, so onset of change is earlier than bill and takes longer to return to black.

Late summer autumn is when many people get confused between the two species as the black-billed gull appears to change the most.

I have seen changes in red-billed gulls bare parts also where they lose the intense reds of spring summer, but do not acquire a bi-coloured bill ".



This black-billed gull is 16 years 3.5 months old.

## FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:

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.





**Birds New Zealand** 15 April at 06:49 · 🌐

This 22-year-old Black-billed Gull with leg band photographed yesterday by the Avon River in Christchurch by Peter Langlands is one of the oldest recorded (the oldest was 24 years).







**Lisa Lavender** ▶ **Birdography** 24 April at 07:06 · 🌐

All bushveld lovers should know this special bird!  
Can you identify it correctly? 🐦



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## Lunch on the Wing: Mantises Snack on Birds



**Kevin Hedge** ▶ **Leucistic Birds New Zealand** 4 May  
at 21:21 · 🌐

A white Pukeko seen near Oamaru





**Avian Conservation & Education Network** 25 April at 16:17 · 🌐

Goodmorning world

Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) in Australia by Milo Burcham.





**Department of Conservation** ✓ 4 May at 10:52 · 🌐

A 9 centimetre plastic pony was found in a toroa/northern royal albatross nest by staff weighing chicks last Tuesday morning. Our rangers believe it was regurgitated by the chick's parent during a feed.... [More](#)





**Avian Conservation & Education Network** 1 May at

16:28 · 🌐

Goodmorning world

Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxii*) in Ecuador by  
Libor Vaicenbacher

Goodness me - look at those nails!



**Karamea Wild** 9 May at 07:33 · Facebook for Android · 🌐

A little Skylark out around the estuary, with some extra large nails.....doesn't seem to have hindered him thus far..

**Happy birding!**

**Wendy and Sue**