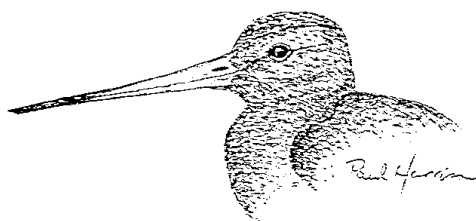


KUAKA

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

August 2021

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Hello *Kuaka* readers. This month, in addition to an overview of the last meeting and a review of progress on the NZBird Atlas, we will hopefully enthuse you, or your grandchildren, to get involved in the Nest Record Scheme.

MONTHLY MEETING: Here is a synopsis of what you missed by not joining us at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms last Tuesday.

- Sue and Bruce joined David on the field trip to Tuakau WTP where they saw 231 Shoveler, 35 Grey Teal, 286 Canada Geese, 58 Mallard, 4 Grey Duck, 11 Dabchicks, 59 Black Swans (some with young), 5 Paradise Shelduck, 11 Little Black Shag, 8 Black Shag. Most of the shoveler had paired up.
- Further to our discussion on scaup at the last meeting, John Dyer recorded 82 at the Mangere WTP ponds over the weekend, compared to 11 last year, and noted that numbers at other sites were also well up.
- Sue recently visited the Christchurch city site where black-billed gulls have nested for the last couple of years and advised that the flooded foundations had been drained and demolition of remaining pillars and beams had begun. It is hoped the birds will move to a new site at Bexley – see recent article: *The Black-billed Gull: When the world's most endangered gull comes to town* | RNZ News

SIGHTINGS reported included:

- ✚ Banded dotterels pairing up at Port Waikato.
- ✚ Tony H also saw a bandie from Kaikoura at Kidd's shellbanks, which has now returned to Kaikoura.
- ✚ He also saw a curlew sandpiper at Kidds.
- ✚ Terry saw 40 kereru at Patumahoe.
- ✚ A banded rail is now well-established at Anna and Ian's property in Kohekohe and is not disturbed by the quad bike.
- ✚ Barbary doves are regularly seen at various locations.

SPEAKER Kerry Lukies from the Northern NZ Seabird Trust gave a talk on "Korora of the Hauraki Gulf".

At least 70 species of seabird visit the Gulf and 27 of those species breed there, mainly on the offshore islands. The little blue penguin is classified as 'at risk' in NZ, and in the Gulf it breeds on offshore islands and at Leigh and Tawharanui. Tony H and Gwen also mentioned that there had been colonies in Auckland Harbour west of the bridge.

The penguins forage at sea during the day and come on land at night and during breeding and moulting seasons. Threats to this species include dogs, cats, stoats and rats, as well as humans, pollution and climate change. For her Masters Degree, Kerry studied penguins at 3 sites – Tawharanui, the Noises, and Lady Ellis Island in the Hen and Chickens group. She took feather samples to test for a stress hormone, and was surprised to find this was higher in birds from



Kerry Lukies Photo: Supplied / Spencer McIntyre

Lady Ellis Island, which is further away from the city than the other locations. Possible reasons for this could be competition for nest sites at that location, or competition for fish from the fishery at Bream Bay.

Trackers were attached to eight birds for 1-4 days, which showed that they foraged back towards the mainland at Bream Bay, preferring shallow waters to a maximum depth of 50 metres. Dredging of the Whangarei Harbour and the disposal of its sediment could prove a threat to these birds. Kerry concluded that while korora can reflect the health of the local marine environment more study of their breeding habits was required.

BEACH PATROL: Our July beach patrol yielded four species: 3 fairy prion; 3 diving petrel; 2 huttons shearwater; 2 little shearwater; and an unidentifiable piece of prion.

The next beach patrol is scheduled for August 19

**Come join the Beach Patrol team for a pleasant walk up the beach, even just on a one-off basis
If you are interested, please contact us.
We go out rain-or-shine.**



A further reminder that Matuku Link are developing a database of boom onset with the goal of establishing whether there is a regional difference in onset of booming but over time may also increase awareness of matuku presence generally and add to knowledge of their site preferences.

When and where did you hear the first bittern of the 2021 season?

Email your first boom to matukulink@gmail.com

OSNZ NEST RECORD SCHEME You will find the full details on how to take part in this citizen-science project on the BIRDSNZ website.

If possible, searches for nests should be made from the earliest time that birds are thought likely to be nesting right through the season until all species have stopped breeding. Contributions from rural, forest and island habitats are very useful because most records are from around people's homes.

Although cards are needed for all nests regardless of the number of visits, the most valuable information is from nests visited more than once. Even two observations on a nest have more than twice the value of a single one, even if the nest is totally destroyed the day after it was first found. It is not necessary to visit nests daily, especially if no change in contents is expected.










A few well-planned visits can provide maximum information. For instance, for most birds, two afternoon visits during laying enables one to get the date of the first egg and the laying sequence (not necessarily every day); a visit during incubation gives the clutch size, after which a couple of visits around hatching time will give the approximate incubation period and hatching success. A few visits during the nestling stage will give details of growth, nesting success and fledging periods. If you can, try to follow the successive nesting attempts of each pair as far as possible throughout the whole breeding season.

Each observer must exercise a sense of responsibility, always putting the welfare of the bird first if a visit might endanger the nest. Basically, there are three potential risks: a) accidentally damaging the nest; b) **causing desertion or premature fledging of young**; c) revealing the nest to predators. So, take care.

There are some helpful guidelines in a PDF entitled OSNZ Nest Record Scheme, available on line with a search for "osnz nest record card". The Nest Record Cards are also available online, along with guidelines on completing them.

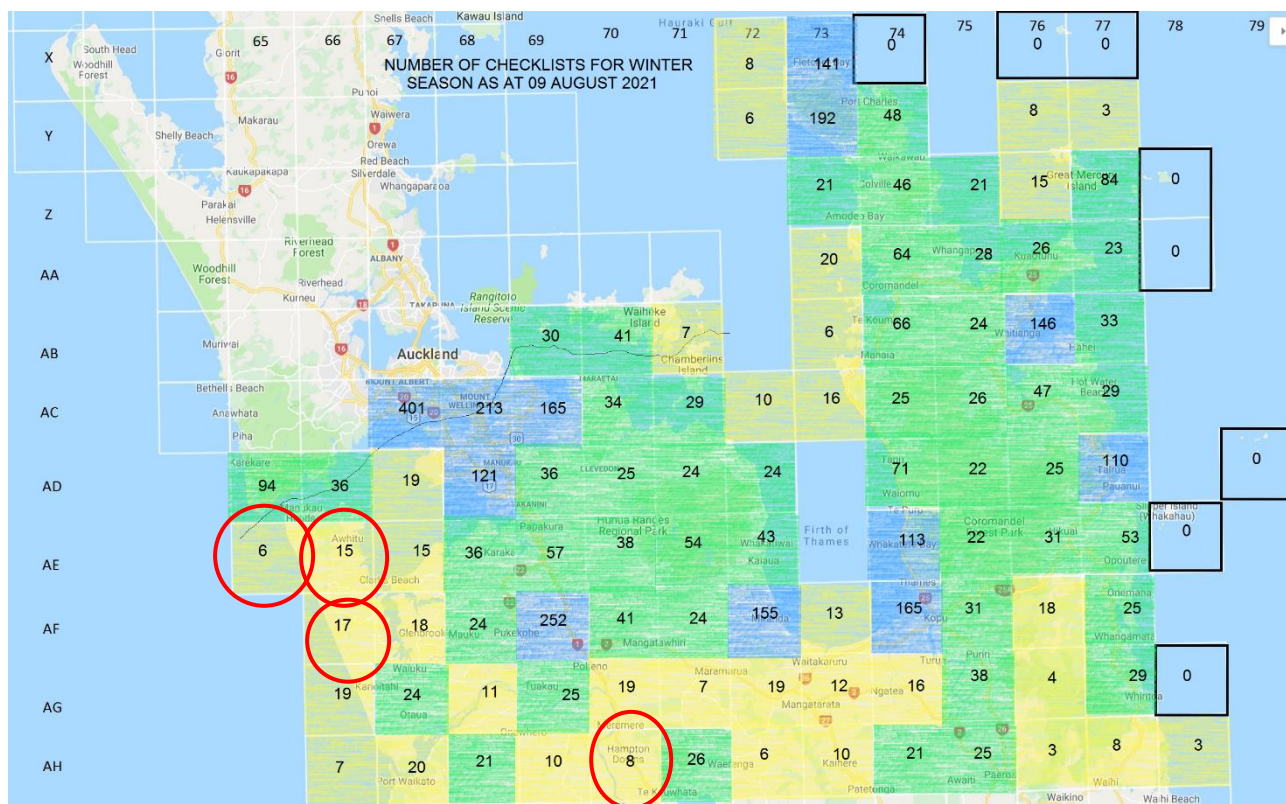
There are also guidelines for completing cards for bird colonies

Give it a go, several species are breeding now, including including a blackbird in my feijoa tree.

 Nest Identification Chart		
Bird	Nest Style	Nest Materials
 Blackbird		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moss • Dried Grass • Mud
 Goldfinch		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moss • Thistle-Down • Wool
 House Sparrow		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass • Straw • Feathers
 Chaffinch		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moss • Lichens • Cobwebs • Wool

ATLAS REPORT

In the last month, we have been able to boost the numbers of checklists in our region.



We have managed to change 12 squares from yellow to green, but still have 35 squares with 1-20 checklists. I am hoping to get to some of these before the end of August, but if you can help, the following are not too far away and need more effort:

AE65 and AE66 – near top of Awhitu peninsula AF66 – Awhitu peninsula AH69 – Onewhero/Pukekawa

Please note:

- the figures include winter 2019, 2020 and 2021 checklists
- The yellow squares have had between 1 and 20 checklists submitted; the green squares have had 21 to 50; the blue squares 51 or more
- Blank squares are now confined to the islands, and a small headland. These all require boat access. David has found a contact for Slipper Island (AE78), so we hope to have a field trip over there in spring.

If you need some suggested locations or a topo map of a particular square, let me know.

If you know you have morepork in your area, stand outside for 5 minutes or more and let me know the date, time and place that you hear them (and any other birds that might be squawking!)

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 me with the following details: Exact location of sighting, Date, Time, Species, Number of birds seen.

Happy birding! Sue

PROGRAMME FOR THE REST OF 2021

Monthly Meetings: held on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Papakura Croquet Club, 1 Chapel Street Papakura. Meetings start at 7:30. Visitors welcome. \$3.00 donation to cover costs.

September 14	Daria Erastova	Feeding sugar water in urban gardens
October 12	Mick Clout	Kereru – a keystone species
November 9	Tony Crocker	Birds of the South Pacific

CHRISTMAS BARBEQUE: December 4 Kindly hosted this year by Terry and Pam Hatch, Pukekohe East, phone 09 2389129. Arrive from 11:00 am for lunch. BYO meat, drink and something to share.

SUMMER WADER CENSUS: Contact Tony Habraken 09 2385284

Manukau Harbour, **November 21**

Firth of Thames, **November 7**



FIELD TRIPS

September 25 Kidd's Shellbanks. Meet outside Karaka Bloodstock on Hinau Rd, Karaka Lakes at 11.00 am, high tide at 1.00 pm. Contact David Lawrie 09 2388407.

FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:

If you don't follow our page here are some of the posts that may be of interest.

If you have some good photos, information, or links that you believe would be suitable for our site send Wendy G or David an email with the photo or link (the piece about Wendy H and Nigel came to us in this manner).



AUDUBON.ORG

Are Birds Actually Government-Issued Drones? So Says a New Conspiracy Theory Making Waves (and...



Photograph with Wendy Hare and Nigel Milius were spotted in Puriri bird watching as part of NZ Bird Alive. Free your project. Photo: TERESA RAMSEY

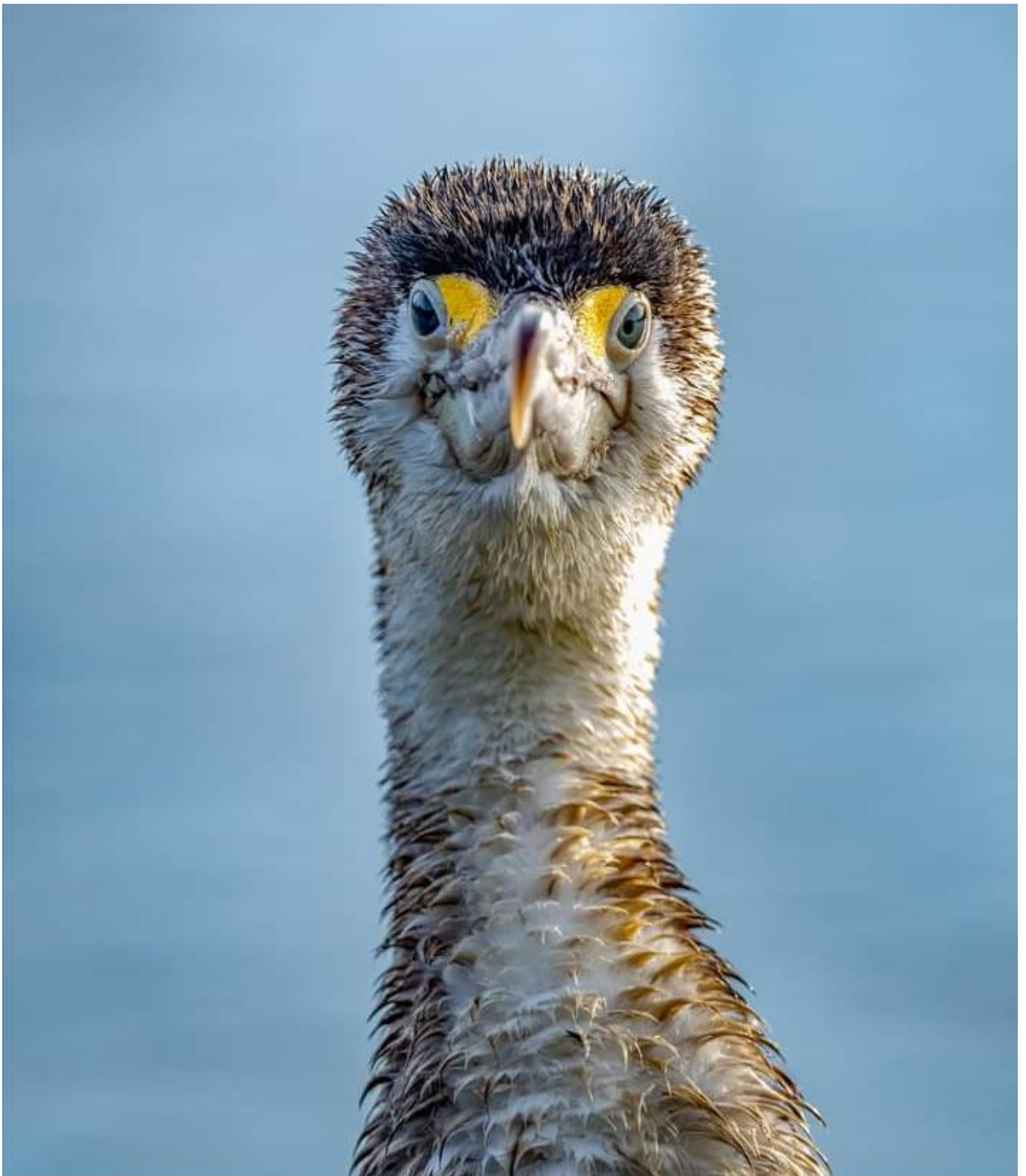
9 August at 18:29 · 🌐

Birds are where it's at' for roaming couple: Walking along rural roads, staring through binoculars, and peering down at their phones means Wendy Hare and Nigel Milius are always asked the question: are you... [More](#)



7 August at 20:54 · 🌐

has anyone heard or seen a shining cuckoo this season? it's a little early yet but they will be on their way back to NZ, in fact someone from Wellington reported hearing one a week or so ago. if you see or hear one please comment to this page with details of place, Date, and time. thanks



Geoff Shepherd ► **Birds Auckland** Yesterday at 16:01 ·



A very wet Western springs Shag.



SCIENCEMAG.ORG

Dark wings supercharge seabird flight

Coloration helps the animals fly faster and longer



STUFF.CO.NZ

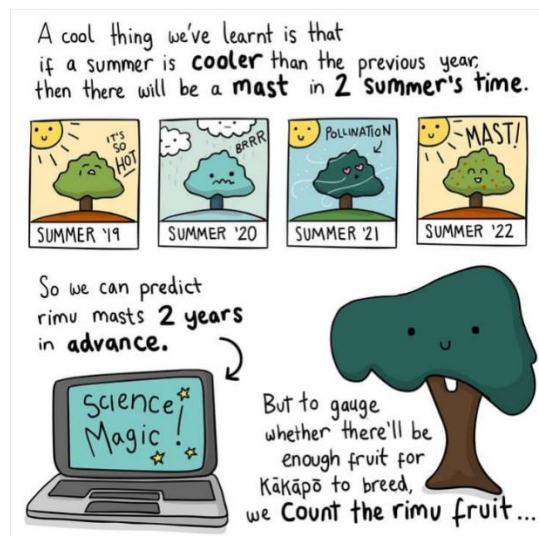
Rare mutant brown tui being seen more regularly in Hamilton



BirdLife Australia 14 July at 12:58 · 🌐

The many colours of the robin rainbow!

Australia's robins are some of our brightest and best-loved birds, found everywhere from the snow-capped mountains to the tropical rainforest, from mangrove swamps to... [More](#)



Kākāpō Recovery 4 June at 08:38 · 🌐



NZGEO.COM

Kōkako boost 'insurance population' on Kāpiti Island

The first translocation of kōkako has taken place to predator-f...



STUFF.CO.NZ

New study reveals why some New Zealand birds are disappearing faster than others



Tiritiri Matangi Island 3 August at 18:00 · 🌐

Kākāriki are great at playing hide and seek.

Kākāriki/red-crowned parakeets hide their nests in holes in trees, crevices in cliffs, between rocks, in burrows in the ground, or in densely matted vegetation.... [More](#)

Happy birding!

Wendy and Sue