



Birds New Zealand
PO Box 834, Nelson 7040
<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz>

Regional Representative: Mary Thompson
197 Balmacewen Road, Dunedin 9010
birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz 03 464 0787

Regional Recorder: Richard Schofield
64 Frances Street, Balclutha 9230
cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Otago Region Newsletter 8/2021

August 2021

Due to the uncertainty around lockdown levels,
the meeting on
Wednesday 25 August has been cancelled

Unite
against
COVID-19

Ornithological Snippets

Marsh Crakes continue to be seen at both Tomahawk Lagoon and Lake Hayes, with several sightings over the last month or so. An **Erect-crested Penguin** was reported from Taieri Mouth on 19 July, but not seen subsequently. On 19 August, Hamish Spencer saw a female **Bellbird** gathering twigs, presumably as nesting material. He notes that although male Bellbirds are occasionally attracted to the sugar water, females are rarely seen. Finally, a male **Cirl Bunting**, seen briefly but well, was an unexpected find on the outskirts of Balclutha on 5 August.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com **Richard Schofield**

eBird News

New feature

Users of the eBird app on Android may have noticed an alert that warns you when you are approaching an Atlas grid square boundary. When you are within 100m of a boundary, a warning flashes up on the screen; it also notifies you when you have left the square. Even if the device is in sleep mode, there is still a notification. Currently this feature is only available on Android, but hopefully it will be on IOS devices soon.

eBird Taxonomic update

The annual (apart from last year) eBird taxonomic review has recently taken place, and it has to be said there is little change in New Zealand. Two new 'slash' options are now available - Tui/Bellbird, mainly for birds identified on call, and also Black-billed/Silver Gull; also, kiwi sp. is now an option (though you are not very likely to need this in Otago!) Otherwise, Stewart Island Shags, along with King, Bounty, Campbell, Auckland & Chatham Shags, are now *Leucocarbo* instead of *Phalacrocorax*, in line with existing NZ usage.

Use of subspecies

Some users may have noticed that records are flagged when submitting records identified to the subspecies level, for instance Black Shag (*novaeollandiae*), or Australasian Pipit (New Zealand). These have been removed from the Otago checklists as it is recommended to use subspecific names only when the bird can be positively identified to subspecific level, rather than just based on range. Admittedly this is not too much of an issue in New Zealand, as in the vast majority of cases there is only one subspecies likely to be found here. I think the sole exception is Stewart Island Shag, where the only realistic way to separate Otago from Foveaux Shags is by location. Also Silver Gull (Red-billed) remains an option, as most users seem to prefer the familiar name.

Audio recordings

It's not too late to take part in [August's Atlas Challenge](#). This involves submitting audio recordings of species on the wanted list as part of your eBird checklists. It may sound a bit daunting if you haven't done it before, but I downloaded Rec Forge II a couple of days ago, and found it very straightforward to use. Within a few minutes I had a surprisingly (to me) high quality recording of a Tui. Further information can be found on the eBird help pages, or the Atlas Facebook page for details of the required species.

Motatapu Atlasing

We have been invited to visit Motatapu Station, near Wanaka, to provide coverage for the Atlas. This area is not normally accessible to the public, so this is a great opportunity to go off the beaten track and cover some new ground. I visited with Dawn Palmer & Ivan Lin last year, and it is a stunning area, with spectacular views and a few birds as well! The plan is to spend one weekend in each of the four seasons – we will have the use of a hut which sleeps 4. At this stage it would be good to know if anyone is keen to take part, and when we have dates set I will get in touch with those interested. Places will be available on a first come, first served basis, and a reasonable level of fitness will be required.

Contact Richard 027 281 8701 or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

BirdsNZ National News

Citizen Science challenge! Colour-flagged SIPOs

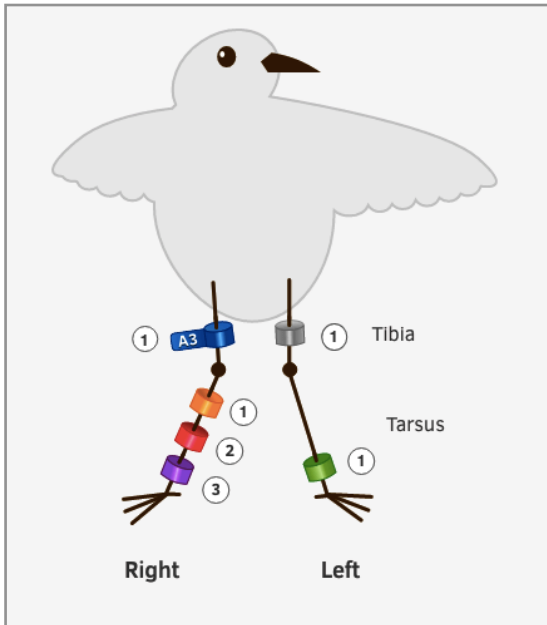
A collaborative study between the Department of Conservation, Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research, and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand is focusing on the movements of South Island Pied Oystercatchers (SIPO) to identify nationwide flyways and stopover sites. We would like to put out a call for any sightings of SIPO (or other oystercatchers) wearing flags of various colours that have letters and numbers engraved on them. They have been colour-coded by the region where they were caught, and we are particularly interested in any birds that have moved between regions.

Colour codes for engraved flags on SIPO:

- RED flag: North Island
- BLUE flag: South Island
- GREEN flag: Rakaia
- ORANGE flag: Rangitata
- YELLOW flag: Nelson / Golden Bay

If the flag only has two letters or numbers, the bird was marked as a chick, and if there are three letters/numbers, then it was marked as an adult.

Bruce McKinlay



Please check all SIPOs for coloured flags and photograph them if at all possible. Report your sightings on the DOC banding website.

DOC banding office is encouraging the reporting of resighted/recaptured/recovered marked birds via our public Sightings form:

<https://app.birdbanding.doc.govt.nz/sightings>
(open this link in Chrome etc, NOT Internet explorer).

Example of a bird with bands
Numbers refer to band placement (configuration)

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

Otago Branch AGM

The AGM was originally scheduled for Wednesday, 25 August. It will now be held at a later date. In the meantime, some reading material.

Notes from AGM held on Wed 22 July 2020

Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street, Dunedin

Meeting opened 7.30

Mary was nominated to continue as RR for 2021.

Advisory group: Bruce, Nick, Georgina, Graeme, Richard, Sue O. Oscar Thomas appointed to represent the younger members.

Finances: Sue O. presented the accounts. We have some funds in reserve that we may use to subsidise costs of Atlas Trips. Proposed that \$50 be used for refreshments at meetings rather than asking for a gold coin donation each time. Thanks to Francie for organising refreshments for us.

Newsletter: Thanks to Sue O. for compiling, Hamish for emailing, Susan for mailing printed copies. Those who wish to receive printed copies by mail are asked to pay \$25 towards costs; contact Sue O. for bank account number for direct credit.

Projects:

Robins outside Orokonui; led by Georgina. Monitoring and banding will continue during August to December.

Wader Counts: coordinated by Maree

Town Belt 5MBC: October and November; coordinated by Bruce

Botanic Garden Birdwatching Walks; coordinated by Suzanne

Wild Dunedin – Tomahawk bird watch; coordinated by Andrew (cancelled due to covid)

Atlas Trips coordinated by Richard.

Planning a weekend field trip at Labour Weekend, based at Wanaka.

Day field trips: suggest passengers contribute \$5 to driver towards petrol costs.

Atlas publicity posters available for distribution at various community venues. If you know a spot for one ask Mary for a poster.

Any ideas and suggestions for programme and activities would be greatly appreciated, particularly for involvement of student members.

Annual Report of Otago Birds NZ activities 2021

Who helps keep our branch running?

Regional Rep. Mary Thompson

Regional Recorder/Atlas coordinator: Richard Schofield

Treasurer: Sue Odlin

Advisory Group: Bruce, Nick, Sue, Richard, Graeme, Georgina, Oscar)

Newsletter editor/compiler: Sue Odlin

Newsletter distribution: Hamish Spencer; Susan Schweigman

Refreshments: Francie Beggs

Regional Round-up for Birds NZ: Franny Cunneen

Everyone who attends meetings, comes on field trips, and records bird sightings on eBird.

How are our finances looking?

See annual statement.

We received funding from Wild Dunedin Festival.

Hoping to offer grants to students attending Birds NZ Conference 2022.

What projects do we have underway?

Robins: Georgina Pickerell

Wader Counts: Maree Johnstone

Town Belt: Bruce McKinlay

Tomahawk Lagoon: Mary Thompson

Atlas: Richard Schofield

Wild Dunedin Festival (annual): Andrew Austin

Guided Birdwatching at Botanic Garden (annual): Suzanne Middleton

What other projects or events should we embark on?

What would you like to be involved in?


Can you lead an Atlassing trip?

Should we be more pro-active in liaising with ODT/Star about bird stories?

Should we use zoom for out-of-town members? Or for speakers?

Is there any interest in a birding weekend at Makaroa in spring next year?

Could/should Otago Branch of Birds NZ hold a Youth Birding Camp?

		OTAGO BRANCH	
Accounting Period	1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021		
Opening Balance		\$5,202.26	
Closing Balance		\$5,900.32	
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Particulars	Amount	Particulars	Amount
Interest	\$2.23		
Donations	\$364.65	F Beggs - Refreshments	\$50.00
Donations from books	\$165.00	G Pickerell - Robin Project	\$120.85
Dunedin Wildlife	\$1,000.00	Allied Press - advertising Wild Dunedin	\$345.00
Wanaka Accommodation	\$592.10	S Odlin - Wanaka Accommodation	\$1,156.68
OSNZ Capitation	\$350.00	M Thompson - wine / Atlas posters & info	\$103.39
TOTAL	\$2,473.98	TOTAL	\$1,775.92
<p>Funds committed</p> <p>Robin project \$2,307.08</p> <p>Student travel \$165.00</p> <p>\$2,472.08</p> <p>BALANCE AVAILABLE \$3,428.24</p>			



White Faced Heron
Beaumont Highway Siding Sep 2020

Martine Darrou

Guides needed for Birdwatching Walks at Dunedin Botanic Garden Sunday 12 September, starting at 10 am

We are again holding guided bird-watching walks in the Dunedin Botanic Garden.

Members of Birds NZ will guide small groups around the Botanic Garden, helping to spot and identify introduced and native birds. We will spend about an hour slowly walking around several parts of the gardens looking and listening for birds. Other years we have had about 50 members of the public turn up so we will need as many guides as possible (at least 10). You don't need to be an expert ornithologist, just an enthusiast. We also need a couple of people to stay at the Information Centre to look after things there.

It is a fun morning and a valuable opportunity to advertise Birds NZ and get other folk enthused with birds.

So please all those keen to help, let Suzanne know: smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz or ph 022 601 8579.

Guides will meet at the Visitor Information Centre at 9.30 am for a Health and Safety briefing, and the public should arrive by 10 am.

The walks will be cancelled if the weather is bad.

Weekend Atlas Trip to Alexandra, Labour Weekend Friday 22 October to Monday 25 October.

Possibilities of chukar and ciril bunting!

Last year's trip to Wanaka was a great success and a lot of fun. This is a great chance to get out of town for a few days and spend it birding with friends in the Atlas grid squares around the Alexandra area. Some folk may like to bird on the way to Alex on the Friday. We will have full days birding on Saturday and Sunday and allocate squares for the trips home on Monday. Hopefully some of our Central Otago members will be able to join in these field trips too.

Accommodation

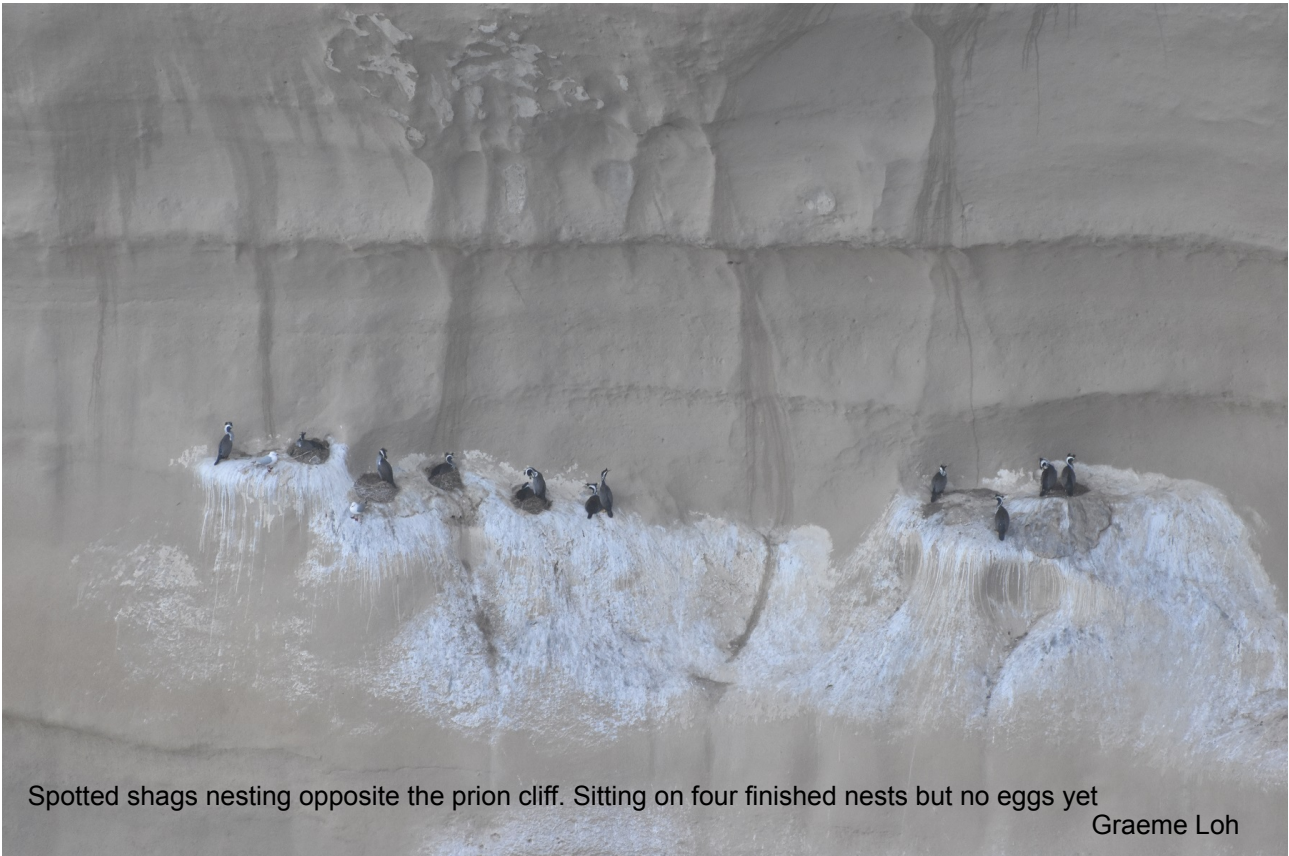
A Tourist Unit with 3 bedrooms with single beds to sleep 7 - 8 comfortably has been booked at the Alexandra Holiday Park, 44 Manuhirikia Road. <https://www.ahp.nz/> The cost will be about \$40/night per person. There is a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom and toilet facilities in the unit. Also from what we can see there is a lounge area where all fieldtrip participants can gather to get briefed and allocated Atlas squares, and to discuss the best birds of the day in the evenings. We assume folk will organise their own transport and food requirements. (A shared meal or Chinese takeaways are options we will explore.)

Some folk may want to organise their own accommodation. There is camping at the Holiday Park as well so you could bring a tent or campervan.

Birds NZ Otago is applying for funds to help towards expenses but these cannot be counted on at this stage.

This field trip is coming up fast so now is the time to put it in your diary and let Richard know if you are interested in coming and whether you want to have a place in the Tourist flat (and who you want to share a room with, and anything else pertinent). Places will be allocated on first-in first-come basis. **Please register your interest as soon as possible, with Richard** cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Even if you are arranging your own accommodation, please also let Richard know so we can include you in our planning.



Spotted shags nesting opposite the prion cliff. Sitting on four finished nests but no eggs yet

Graeme Loh

Mobile Threatened Birds

One of the most motivating presentations of the Thames conference was that of Emma Williams (of DOC tech staff) on Mobile Species Priorities. These are the birds that inconveniently fly around a lot and are missed in the priorities that the regionalised DOC area offices are set. You can see that their priority order is different from their threat category, and that some are cosmopolitan species. It is set by the addition of the urgency, knowledge and study scores. Looking how Australia is neglecting and abusing its people I guess we cannot rely on Kotuku and its cosmopolitan friends having a safe future there.

Part of Emmas work is flagging and tracking the SIPO that Nick and others are doing good work spotting. There is an app that you can follow the birds with gps loggers on. (Sorry I have failed to connect. iPhone y'know)

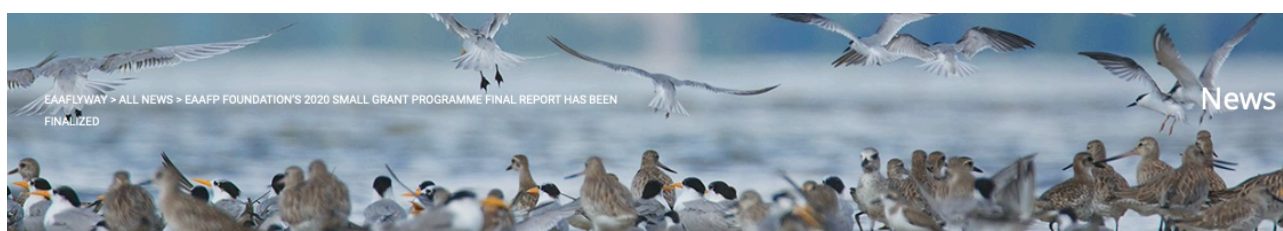
At number four is the NZ fairy tern whose existence is on a knife edge. The bird most likely to go extinct on my watch! I found the remains of one on the wetland at the neck of the Mahia Peninsula in 1984.

I have summarised the list so people can see if any favourites of theirs are present and can benefit from their attention.

For me it is the banded dotterel. Are there any still breeding on our beaches, estuaries and lowland wetlands? Been decades since I have seen any on our shores in early Summer and most of the 'scabweed terraces' in the Upper Clutha have had their merinos removed by our sprawling extravagant lifestyles and centre pivots.

Graeme Loh

Mobile Threatened Species Priority		Urgency	Knowledge	Past Study
White heron	Nationally Critical	5	3	5
Australasian bittern	Nationally Critical	5	3	5
Reef heron	Nationally Endangered	4	3	5
New Zealand fairy tern	Nationally Critical	5	2	5
Grey duck	Nationally Critical	5	3	4
Stewart Island fernbird	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	5
Southern NZ dotterel	Nationally Critical	5	2	4
Southern falcon	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	5
N lesser ST Bat	Nationally Endangered	4	2	5
Kea	Nationally Endangered	4	3	4
Black-fronted tern	Nationally Endangered	4	3	4
Black-billed gull	Nationally Critical	5	3	3
Wrybill	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	4
White-fronted tern	Declining	2	3	5
Spotless crake	Declining	2	3	5
Southern crested grebe	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	4
South Island kākā	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	4
South Island fernbird	Declining	2	3	5
North Island fernbird	Declining	2	3	5
Marsh crake	Declining	2	3	5
Long-tailed bat	Nationally Critical	5	2	3
Caspian tern	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	4
Banded rail	Declining	2	3	5
Banded dotterel	Nationally Vulnerable	3	3	4





I want to share with you a link to a podcast I'm producing. The first episode is about Tahu Mackenzie and Orokonui Eco Sanctuary with recordings of the Orokonui dawn chorus. Do give it a listen.

Here's the link to the show on Otago Access Radio - <https://oar.org.nz/tune-in-to-nature/>

There's a Facebook page to follow the series - <https://www.facebook.com/tuneintonature>

And an option to receive fortnightly emails on new episodes by signing up here - <http://eepurl.com/hF-GZH>

Karthic SS



Sitting on the fence

Mary Thompson

EAAF Shorebird Tracking Group

WEBINAR

Speakers:



Jimmy Choi

The commuting behavior of wintering shorebirds in southeast China using GPS Bluetooth trackers

26th August 2021 (Thu)

18:00 GMT +12 (New Zealand)

16:00 GMT +10 (Queensland)

14:00 GMT +8

(West Australia, Philippines, China, Mongolia)

12:00 GMT +6 (Bangladesh)

08:00 GMT +2 (Central Europe Summer)

25th Aug 22:00 GMT -8 (Alaska Summer)

Duration: 1 hour



Misha Zhemchuzhnikov

Food supply for Arctic waders in Siberian breeding grounds: Arthropod phenology and abundance



Join this webinar organized by the EAAF #Shorebird #Tracking Group to hear about recent research

Register at <https://bit.ly/3softwx>

[@GlobalFlyway](#)

[@vwsq_web](#)

Wader Study Group Conference



The IWSG Annual Conference will be held ONLINE from the 8th until the 10th of October 2021.

Registration Dates 21/06/21 — 10/10/21

Abstract Submission Dates 21/06/21 — 16/08/21

Attendance Fees Members / Non-Members €20.00

For more information, please visit: [https://waderstudygroup.org/conferences/2021-virtual-conference/...](https://waderstudygroup.org/conferences/2021-virtual-conference/)

The ongoing uncertainties regarding the health emergency have made the decision for us: the IWSG annual conference 2021 will be held online. We will use the Zoom Webinar to host the meeting and ask presenters to submit pre-

Programme for 2021

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held on the 4th Wed at 7.30pm in the Benham Seminar Room, Benham Building, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street.

- Wed 25 August Graeme Loh Focus on Seabirds. Followed by AGM (agenda to follow)
THIS IS NOW POSTPONED TO A DATE TO BE ADVISED
- Sun 12 September **Dunedin Botanic Garden Guided Birdwatching Walk**, starting 10am.
 We will be guiding groups of 10 or so, helping members of the public to spot and identify birds. Contact: Suzanne Middleton
 smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz ph 022 601 8579 if you can help.
- Wed 22 September Bruce McKinlay
 What 5 years of Town Belt Bird Counts tell us, plus plans for the October and November surveys.
- 23-25 October **Weekend Atlas Field Trip**, Labour weekend based at Alexandra. We have booked accommodation for 8 people (twin share, \$45 each per night) and this will be our base at the Alexandra Holiday Park. You may wish to book other accommodation at the park or in town.
 More info from Richard cluthaphotos@gmail.com
- Wed 27 October Rachel Hickcox.
 Where hoiho go foraging at sea and why – results of research mapping and modelling hoiho presence and preferences.
- Wed 24 November **Members night..**

Suggestions of locations for field trips and atlassing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Mary birds.otago@birdsnnz.org.nz

Please send all contributions for the September newsletter to:
 Sue Odlin sodlin@gmail.com

Final date for copy for next newsletter: **15 September**



Morten Ingemann

<https://www.hungarianbirdwatching.com>