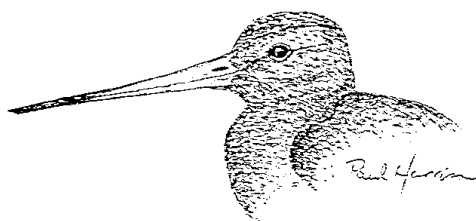


KUAKA

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

October 2021

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Hello *Kuaka* readers. This month, we have an overview of the last Zoom meeting and a review of progress on the NZBird Atlas. Unfortunately, there were no field trips and only limited sightings during the month, thanks to lockdown.

MONTHLY MEETING: Here is a synopsis of what you missed by not joining us on the Zoom meeting last Tuesday.

- ✚ All field trips are cancelled until further notice
- ✚ Only a handful of those present on the zoom had participated in the EBird Big Day Out on Saturday 9 Oct
- ✚ Awhitu Coastcare have adopted the NZ dotterel for their logo (see page 3 below)
- ✚ There was no beach patrol in September. We are hopeful of being able to get out there this month

SIGHTINGS Due to lockdown sightings have been somewhat limited.

- ✚ Wendy and Sue have both heard several shining cuckoo whilst out-and-about over the past couple of weeks
- ✚ Sue and Gwen have seen NZ dott's and pied stilts nesting on open ground in Pavilion Dr near the airport
- ✚ Ian reported a pipit nest near
- ✚ Noel reported a male weka at Kawakawa Bay
- ✚ Sue reported from the ponds at Wattle Downs that a large clutch of black swan cygnets has slowly reduced in numbers but she has yet to see any bodies lying around. There are plenty of goslings appearing recently.

SPEAKER



This month our scheduled speaker was unable to join us. In his place Adrian Riegan entertained us with an overview of the godwit satellite tracking programme that he is involved with.

In 2019 trackers were fitted to 40 juvenile and 20 adult godwit. The objective of the project was/is to monitor the movement of adults on the flyway to Alaska and back. At the time it was believed that the juv's remained in NZ for 2-3 years and tracking would provide a picture of where they went while here.

As it turned out, whilst the majority of the banded juv's did indeed stay in NZ, two moved to OZ, one to PNG, one to New Caledonia and, to Adrians surprise, one took off to Alaska and back to NZ – a 33,600 km round-trip!

The tracking has shown that when returning to NZ the majority of birds fly non-stop; Alaska to NZ - a trip of around 13,050 kms that takes around 239 hours (10 days). They don't stop to refuel and have to flap the whole time (no gliding). Occasionally they get driven of course by bad weather and may stop in Fiji or New Caledonia.

In late September a NZ banded godwit arrived in NSW (perhaps driven there by strong winds at the time) looking very skinny. It is expected that the bird will refuel and regain condition before continuing its flight to NZ.

Adrian would like to see the monitoring extended to give details of how high the birds fly on their migration.

Black-tailed godwits flying from Western Europe to southern Africa have been recorded flying at up to 6000masl on their migration.

Adrian is leading a webinar on his godwit research and if you go to the BirdsNZ website you can register to attend.



www.birdsnz.org.nz



← back

Webinar: Gob-Smacking Godwits



Join our Webinar on **Tuesday, 19 October at 8pm**

Adrian Riegen will follow the story of the 2021 godwit tracking project. The marathon migrations of these extraordinary birds continue to amaze and surprise us. If you have been following our regular updates, join us to discover the inside story and have your questions answered.

Go to the BirdsNZ website to register www.birdsnz.org.nz

NZ DOTTERAL: Some local organisations have the dott' in their logo. The most recent is Awhitu Coastcare, but they aren't the only ones. The CREST project from the Southern Manukau Harbour also has a dotterel logo.



If you are intending to vote for this year's Bird of the Year you might want to consider the Dott'



**NZ Dotterel /
Tūturiwhatu for Bird of
the Year**
Community



NZ Dotterel / Tūturiwhatu for Bird of the Year
26 September 2019 at 10:46 · 🌐

No better way to get the word out there about the New Zealand dotterel / tūturiwhatu and #TeamDotters than to use this frame featuring some fabulous dotters 😊





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

HAS ANYONE HEARD A BITTERN YET?

LET WENDY OR SUE KNOW

EBIRD BIG DAY OUT You may recall that this event took place a couple of weekends ago.



Whilst it was a worldwide event, the challenge was to increase the number of counts done here in NZ. Last year 650 checklists were completed. This year, despite lockdown in Auckland, this figure increased to 869 with 130 species observed. An excellent result.

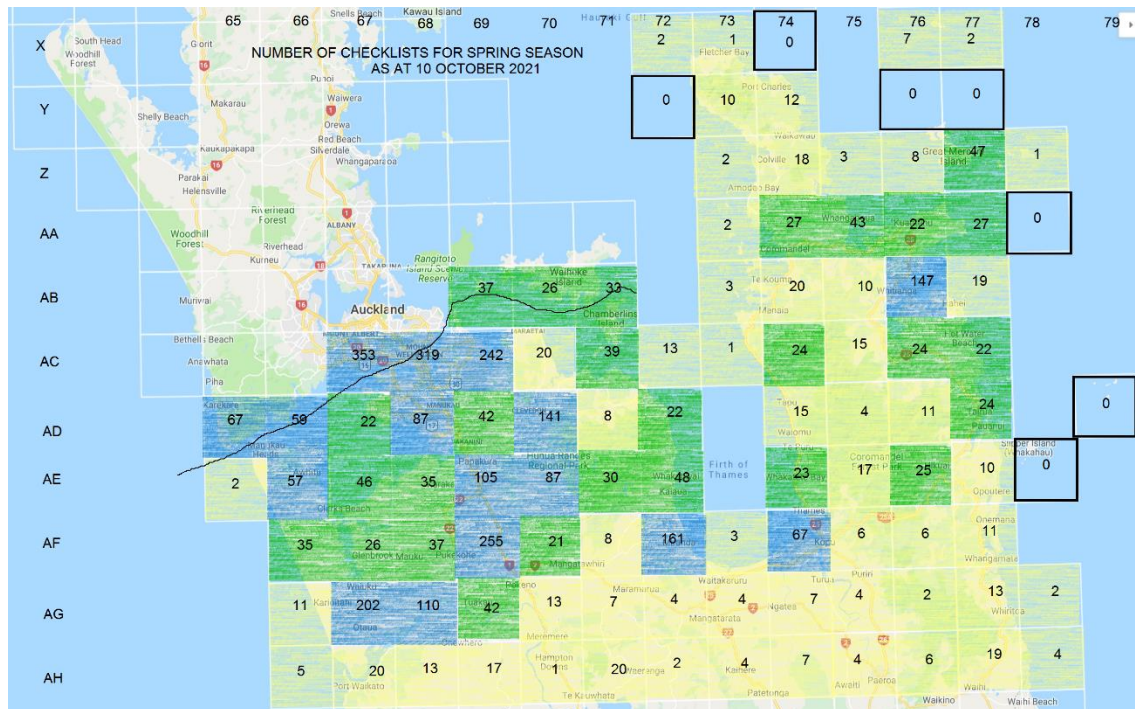


Lynne Atkins ► **Birds Auckland** 2 October at 22:30 · 🌐

Rare and endangered Pitt Island Shag at Point Munning DOC reserve NE Chathams.

ATLAS REPORT

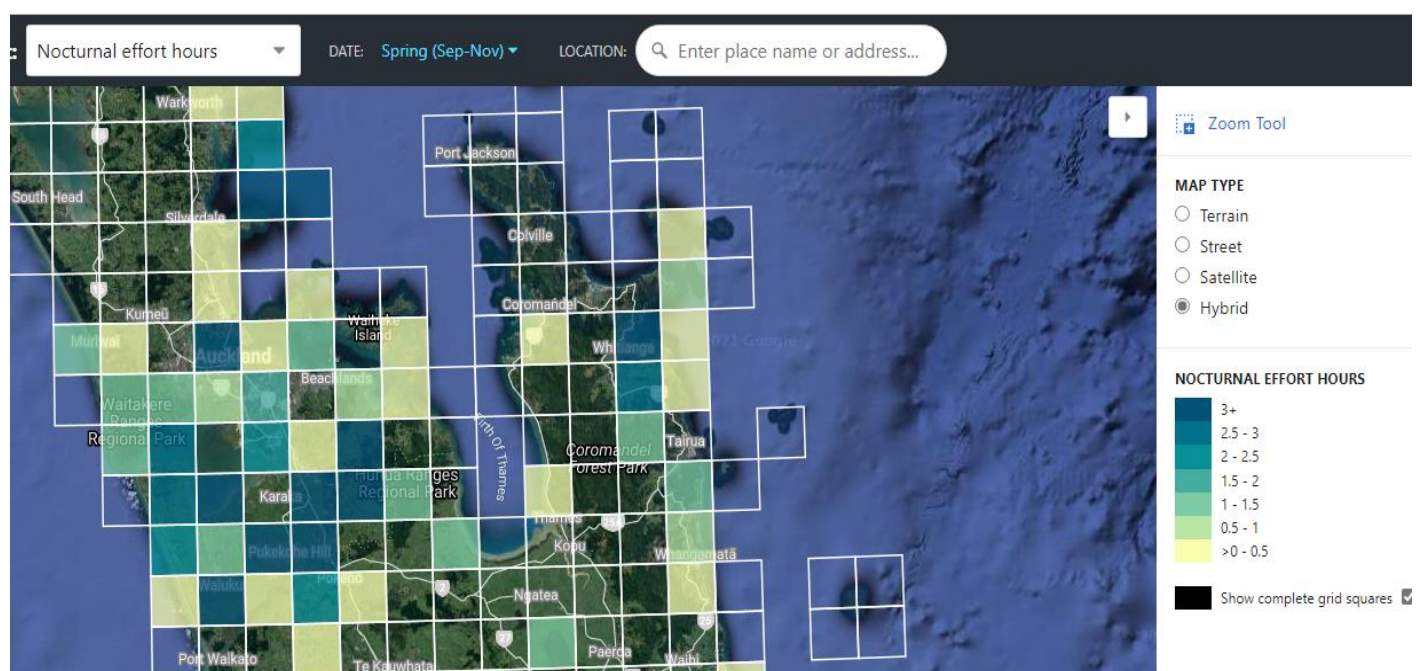
We are almost half way through spring, and the attached atlas map shows our progress.



Please note:

- the figures include spring 2019 to 2021 checklists
- The yellow squares have had between 1 and 20 checklists submitted, the green squares have had 21 to 50 and the blue squares have had 51 or more
- 4 squares that were previously blank have now had some counts done – Y73 near the top of the Coromandel, X76 and 77 Cuvier Island and AG78 near Whiritoa

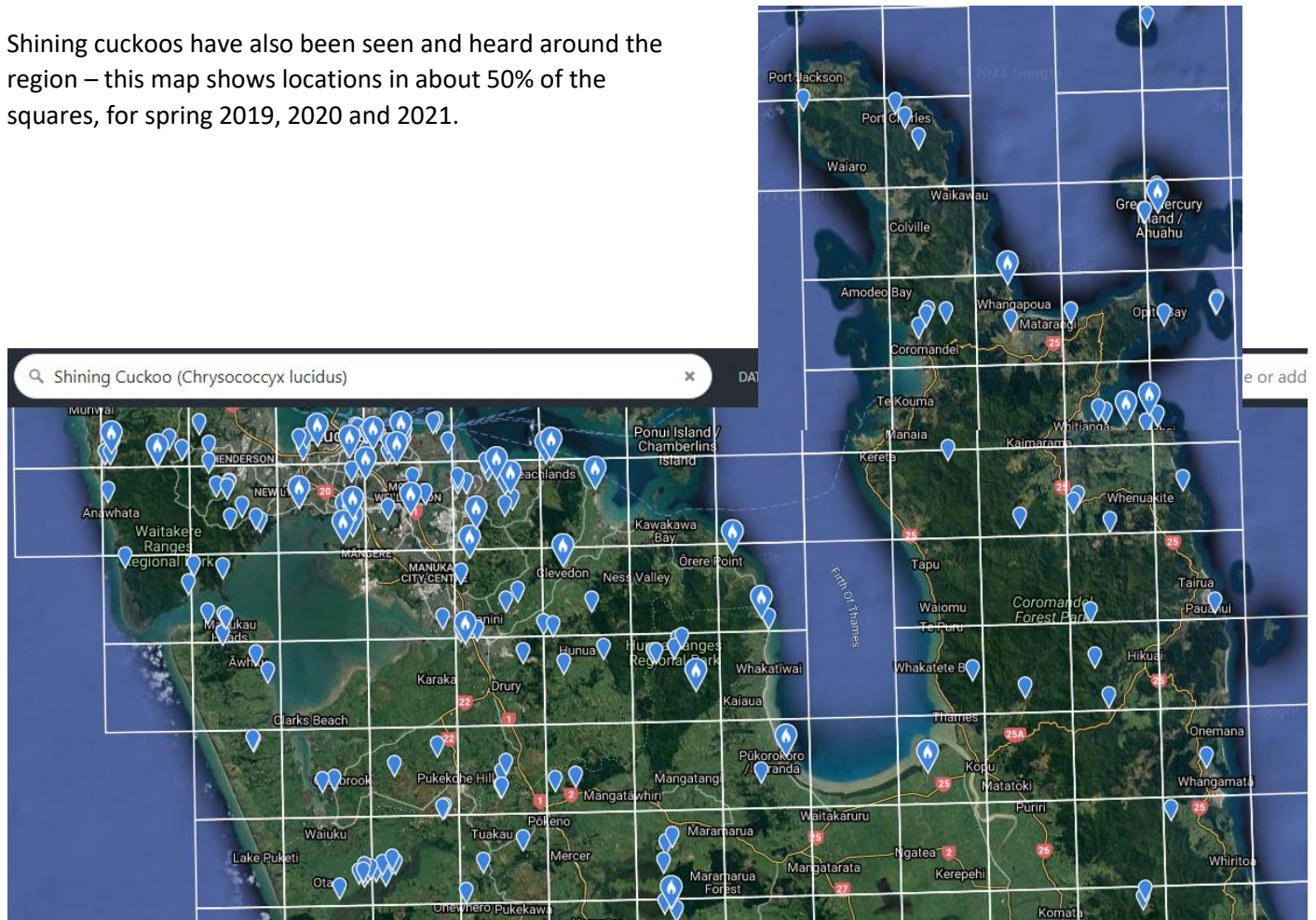
There has been a big jump in the checklist numbers in some squares as a result of the ruru survey that was done in early September by members from our own branch, plus Predator Free Franklin landowners. This has definitely boosted the night count hours in some of our squares as shown below.



We received 72 completed ruru report cards. 143 ruru sightings from 72 locations were reported. Other birds counted were: plover, pukeko, geese, VOC, stilts, mallard, pheasant, quail, silvereye, peafowl, one kaka (Twilight Rd), and a grey teal.

The ability to travel further within the Auckland region over the last week has also enabled some of us to put some daytime effort into other squares further from our homes. I have been hearing a lot of skylarks (37 locations) and pheasants (35 locations) when I have been out this month.

Shining cuckoos have also been seen and heard around the region – this map shows locations in about 50% of the squares, for spring 2019, 2020 and 2021.



Squares inside the Auckland Level 3 boundary that need more effort are:

AC72 – Orere Pt – look out for NZ Dotterel and VOC nesting on the other side of the river

AD71 – Ness Valley and Kawakawa-Orere Rd

AE65 – near the top of Awhitu – not much land and only a few roads

AG66 – Karioitahi Beach

AH68 – Wairamarama and Klondyke Rd (watch out for logging trucks)

AH69 – northern half around Onewhero and Pukekawa – there is a police checkpoint by the golf club on Highway 22/Churchill Rd

As you can see on the first map above, **there are lots of yellow squares south of the Auckland boundary and on the Coromandel**, so if any of you are lucky enough to live there, take your pick of any of those squares.

For the atlasers among us, check out the October challenge to count cryptic wetland species:

[October Atlas Challenge - New Zealand Bird Atlas \(ebird.org\)](https://ebird.org/australia/challenge/october)

The August atlas challenge is over, but some of you may be interested in checking out this page [August's Atlas Challenge - New Zealand Bird Atlas \(ebird.org\)](https://ebird.org/australia/challenge/august) which has some great resources for recording and uploading audio files to EBird. More files are needed so that Sound ID can be added to the Merlin Bird app for NZ. I have done a few files myself and it is quite a straightforward process.

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

As the weather warms up, think about doing some night counts at or nearby your home and let me know what you see or hear, with the details above.

Hopefully we can start to travel 'south of the border' to do some birding in the near future.

Sue

TE WIKI O TE REO MAORI

When last month's newsletter was published it was Te Wiki o te Reo Maori and we gave you the challenge of using Te Reo to name some of the features of a manu/bird. Here are the answers:



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.

November 9 Tony Crocker Birds of the South Pacific

If we are still unable to meet in November, we will run another zoom meeting. If you have not joined us on zoom yet because you think it is difficult then do give Wendy or Sue a call to help you install the app' on your device, be it a desk top; lap top; tablet; or smartphone, and then we can run a short meeting to make sure all is working as it should. Believe me, once you have downloaded the app' its quite straightforward to set up and operate. and it's nice to be able to talk to people who are not wearing a mask!



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**



Try counting this lot!

Godwits at Ambury 9 Oct 2021 (photo: Stefan Marks)

FIELD TRIPS

No further field trips are planned for this year, let's hope we have better luck next year.

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.



Jason Etherington ▸ **Birds Auckland** 2 October at 08:09 · 🌐

Spoonbill not happy with the turtles taking his spot at western springs
Look at the size of those turtles!



Imogen Warren Photography 25 September at 19:57 · 🌐

What a great day. Difficult conditions in the Marlborough Sounds but we found the King Shag. One of the rarest cormorant species and only found here. The birds are larger than the more common shags and very striking with pied plumage and bright eyes.



Avian Conservation & Education Network 6

September at 17:48 · 🌐

Goodmorning world

The smallest bird on the planet!

Bee Hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*) endemic to Cuba by Dustin Chen.



Geoff Shepherd ▸ Birds Auckland 9 October at 10:13 ·



Scratching my tiny head with my huge foot 😊 .
This morning at Western springs.

Happy birding!

Wendy and Sue