



BIRDS

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Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa

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COVER IMAGE

Sacred Kingfisher or Kōtare. Photo by Mike Ashbee.
www.mikeashbeephotography.com



▲ Ruru/Morepork photo by Adam Clarke.

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New Zealand birds greetings cards

A set of 12 new full-colour greetings cards were offered for sale at the June Birds New Zealand AGM in Wellington. The attractive new cards depict 12 different New Zealand bird species photographs and the new Society logo, and are blank inside.

Since they proved to be so popular with many of them sold at the conference they are now also being offered for sale by mail order. They cost \$3 each, \$10 for any four, and \$25 for a set of 12. Please add \$3 to cover postage and packing for orders of up to 24 cards. Postage costs can be advised for larger orders.

Please send your order by email or through the post. Email ian.armitage@osnz.org.nz or write to Ian Armitage, 50 Ranui Terrace, Tawa, Wellington 5028.

Payments can be made by cheque or via online banking to bank account number: 02 - 0552 - 0146083 - 00. Please include your surname in the online 'Particulars' field, and BirdCards in the 'Reference' field.



▲ Bruce McKinlay presents Johannes Fischer with his *Notornis* student award.



▲ Ian Armitage presents Helen Taylor with her Meritorious Service Award.



▲ Bruce McKinlay presents Derek Bachelor with his Meritorious Service Award. All photos by Les Feasey.

From the President's Desk

From The President's Desk

Although it is now over two months ago, I'm still reveling in catching up with you all at the Society's 80th Annual General Meeting and 2019 New Zealand Bird Conference in Wellington. Once again, I would like to acknowledge Geoff de Lisle, Ian Armitage and their hard-working team for such a well organised and exciting weekend. Being able to celebrate 80 years of passionate ornithological activity was, for me as President, a privilege and confirmed that the Society's members are in good health for the next 80 years.

Council Meeting

At its June meeting, Council once again updated Health and Safety resources and continued to develop tools to support members in carrying out Society activities enjoyably and safely. Good progress was reported on two special editions of *Notornis*, focusing on the Ornithology of the Auckland Islands and Waders. Council was pleased to note that financial memberships increased by 6% over the last year. We expect to build on this in future years. We also reviewed reports from Scheme Conveners, Office Holders and Regional Representatives which gave a picture of a very active Society.

Applications to the various funds the Society manages remain popular, and so Council has an ongoing workload supporting the Scientific Committee in reviewing and approving recommendations. Also, while in Wellington, Council and the Society's Regional Representatives met together and discussed issues relating to Health and Safety, the Atlas scheme, Conferences, strategies for recruiting new members, and ongoing expectations for the website and membership database.

Society Secretary

I'm pleased to be able to welcome Lynne Anderson from Hawke's Bay as the Society's new Secretary. I'm looking forward to working with her on Council.

Constitutional Changes

Council continues to monitor the impact of the rebranding of the Society. We have received feedback that the adoption of a popular name and a corresponding Te Reo name of the Society are not consistently applied. Equally we have now invested in these different names and Council wants to provide clarity for members and the wider public about who we are into the future. Council is seeking feedback on proposed changes to the Constitution to reflect the use of a Te Reo name and a popular name.

Currently the Constitution of Society states that: "*The name of the Society shall be The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Incorporated*" (Rule 1). In the interpretation clause of the Constitution the word "Society" is defined as: "*In this Constitution, unless a contrary intention appears (the word) Society means The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Incorporated.*"

There are a number of options and Council wants to balance the existing and traditional name of the Society with adoption of new alternate names. At this stage Council is proposing a change in Rule 1. The changes that Council has considered and wish to have feedback from Members on are below highlighted in italics. There is no need, or intention, to change the legally registered name of the Society but this needs to be clarified through

insertion of the words, "legally registered" to precede the word "name".

The legally registered name of the Society shall be **The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Incorporated**. *The popular operating name for the Society shall be Birds New Zealand. The Te Reo name of the Society shall be Te Kāhui Mātai o Aotearoa.*

Council discussed this with the Regional Representatives in June, so further details and comments from that meeting on this topic can be obtained from your RR.

I now invite comments from members and, depending on this feedback, will propose a notice of motion for the AGM to be held June 2020.

Membership Secretary

We are now searching for a new Membership Secretary because our highly efficient Membership Secretary, Jill West, is moving on to greener pastures. A notice in this magazine gives more details. If you are interested in this role, please contact Jill or Ingrid Hutzler for more information.

New Zealand Bird Atlas

A highlight of the June Conference was the launch of the New Zealand Bird Atlas by myself, Mike Bell and Nikki McArthur. This was the culmination of 18 months of hard design work by Wildlife Management International in distilling ideas and choices into a project which ensures that there will be comparable data with the previous two atlas projects, but also incorporates current best practise with technology and online tools. Nikki and Mike have worked hard to make it as easy as possible for you all to be out there undertaking lists and uploading them to eBird.

As of mid-July, 219 participants had submitted 3,597 complete checklists since 1st June. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird submission rates from New Zealand for June 2019 are nearly double those in June 2018, so the launch of the Atlas has resulted in a major surge in eBird usage in New Zealand.

The resources to see where people have been and where there are gaps that need to be covered are available and very easy to use. Although we've had a great start, we still need more members and your friends out there recording where they are seeing birds. If you haven't yet become involved in the Atlas project, please visit www.birdatlas.co.nz or contact your Regional Representatives to find out how to take part. If you want to keep up with the action the Atlas project team are producing a regular newsletter.

MOU with Young Birders NZ

At the June conference I signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Society with George Hobson on behalf of Young Birders NZ. Details can be found here.

Finally, I was in Christchurch recently and it was a pleasure to catch up with Sandra Wallace and her members. We were able to share reports of activities and what's coming up in the spring. It was good to see the interest building from everybody about the New Zealand Bird Atlas and there was a good discussion about how to organise covering the grid squares.

BRUCE MCKINLAY, PRESIDENT

New website

The Society's [website](#) is our interface with members and the wider community of people who are yet to become members. It is our institutional memory, contains the details of our membership, and is essential to the Society. After nearly a decade, the website had reached its limits and was ready for a fresh look and new platform. Council engaged with a Wellington web designer (MarkCreative) and worked on a total refresh, adding new tools with more intuitive and interactive functions. The core website (Phase 1) has been completed and we have switched from the old site to the new. We will be following this up with a refresh and design of the Membership database, transfer existing member records (Phase 2), and will then make some strategic decisions about the *Notornis* database (Phase 3). I'm pleased to be able to recognise the contribution from the T-Gear Charitable Trust which partially funded this work. I also want to recognise the hard work of Councillor Helen Taylor providing the leadership to get this project up and running, and of Ingrid Hutzler on transferring contents from the previous website and getting Phase 1 underway. I hope you enjoy using this website as much as I am.

BRUCE MCKINLAY, PRESIDENT

Falla Memorial Award, A.T. Edgar Junior Award and Meritorious Service Awards

Nominations are called for these awards and should be with the OSNZ Secretary (secretary@osnz.org.nz) or (P.O. Box 834, Nelson, 7040) by 31st December 2019. Nominations should be on the standard forms which can be found on online [here](#) or obtained from your Regional Representative (RR) or the OSNZ Secretary. The Awards Committee will consider all nominations and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration at its summer meeting. Further information on OSNZ award procedures is available from your RR, the OSNZ Secretary or the website [here](#).

Remarkable band recoveries!

Every band tells a story, but sometimes the details remain a mystery. The Banding Office recently received a report via our online form from a member of the Russian Bird Conservation Union and Latvian Ornithological Society. He reported a New Zealand bird band that a friend found on a beach about ten years ago... somewhere in the Russian Far East! Our records indicate that this band (19-35456) was placed on a juvenile male swan by D. Sutherland in Wairarapa in 1979. Another band (13-70808) mysteriously emerged from a second-hand couch in Wynne, Arkansas (USA), 30 years after being used to band a Paradise Shelduck in Otago. The most intriguing, however, is the gannet band (28702) recovered from a Tiger Shark in 1957, as reported in *Notornis*. These and other remarkable recoveries are being rediscovered as we delve into data archives as part of the banding database redevelopment and data migration process.

MICHELLE BRADSHAW

New Nest Recording Scheme

Birds New Zealand needs your help to increase our knowledge of nesting. Are you able to observe birds nesting in your garden or neighbourhood park? Or are you already undertaking valuable research on a species that could be reported? For more information about the scheme, please visit <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/schemes/nest-record-scheme/> or contact Roger Sharp via blunty52@outlook.com. Any contribution would be much appreciated.

2019 Membership Renewals

Subscriptions are due on 1st January 2019. Renewal invoices will be emailed or posted in November 2018. If you have not already done so, please notify the Membership Secretary of your email address (membership@osnz.org.nz). Please pay on time because we depend on your subscription to continue our work to encourage and support the study and enjoyment of birds.

The Gift of Birds

Are you looking for a Christmas gift? You can gift someone a 2019 Birds New Zealand subscription for just over a dollar a week to help foster a lifetime of study, knowledge and enjoyment of birds. Please send an email to eo@osnz.org.nz and we will send you the Gift Voucher, or visit our website for more details: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/join/donate/>

Waikato Youth Camp October 2019

The next Birds New Zealand Youth Camp will be held at Aka Aka on the Waikato River from Saturday 5th October to Friday 11th October. This one will be an introduction to project birding with a focus on swamp bird surveys and is designed for ages 15-18. For details contact please contact Chelsea Ralls via chelsearalls@gmail.com or Ian Southey via iansouthey@yahoo.co.nz

Review of penguin research priorities

New Zealand is home to six of the world's 18 recognised penguin species. Four of these are endemic, only occurring in New Zealand. Very little is actually known about our penguins. With five of our six species believed to be in decline, this lack of knowledge stands in the way of evidence-based conservation. To identify actual rather than perceived threats, research is essential. To this end, Birds New Zealand tasked Thomas Mattern and Kerry-Jayne Wilson with compiling a comprehensive review of current knowledge of New Zealand penguins and establishing research priorities to improve our ability to preserve these species. The final draft of the peer-reviewed report has recently been made available online [here](#). A synopsis of the report will be published in a future issue of *Notornis* and the full report will be converted into an interactive website later this year, which is to be indexed in scientific databases.

New members

Birds New Zealand warmly welcomes the following new members: Vaughan Turner, Ariel Heswell, Carmen Astudillo-Garcia, Sophie Futter, Carolina Stavert, Enzo Reyes, William Perry, Brian Rae, Andre Bellve, David Evans, Alastair Judkins, Stefanie Rixecker (Auckland); Sarah O'Sullivan (Bay of Plenty); Adria Ayguade, Tony Doy, Grant Maslowski (Canterbury); Melanie Miller (Far North); Catalina Amaya-Perilla, Syd King (Hawke's Bay); Karen Mason (Manawatu); Dan Burgin, Baylee Connor-McClean, Rachel Russell (Marlborough); Kath Walker, Sheila Wilson, Tony Entwistle (Nelson); Cathy Mitchell, Cheri Crosby (Northland); Beverley Rodwell, Karthic S, Eleanor Linscott, Herusha Bennett, Antione Fillion, Scott Forrest, Allison Miller (Otago); Priscilla San Juan (Other Countries); Amanda French, Andee Hickey-Elliott (Waikato); Sharon King, Catherine Lamont (Whanganui); Rachael Shaw, Douglas Rands, Regan MacKinlay, Daniel Grant-Richie, Grace Tocker, Lisa Fraser, Clare Stringer, Jon Terry, Cherie Balls, Janice Molloy, Annemieke Lona Hedi Hendriks (Wellington); Inger Perkins (West Coast); Andrew King (USA); Library (Landcare Research).

Donations

Birds New Zealand warmly thanks the following members for their generous donations: Lois Wagener; Chris Foreman; Sandy Winterton; EnviroResearch; Niall Mugan, Greg Moorcroft, K.W. Potter, Kathryn Jones, Martin Sanders.

Birds New Zealand Awards 2019

The following awards were presented at the June AGM:

Robert A. Falla Award – Andrew Crossland: Andrew has been a committed contributor to ornithology in Canterbury for 35 years. He is first and foremost a dedicated field observer who has meticulously recorded his observations and published much of his work in *Notornis*. A notable feature of his fieldwork has been to use his data to benefit birds. One example has been his determination to collect observations at Travis Wetland that have contributed to its preservation. It is a tribute to his drive to see this important site protected.

Andrew has been a stalwart of the Society's wader counts, submitting counts from Christchurch and Banks Peninsula since 1984, and other locations since 2004. He was also instrumental in convincing the Christchurch City Council to participate in counts at Lake Ellesmere. He organised counts of Spotted Shags around Banks Peninsula and has regularly surveyed river mouths in Canterbury.

Andrew has been a dedicated and enthusiastic contributor to the Society's Beach Patrol Scheme. He contributed over 1,100 records between 1990 and 2017, including records of several unusual species. He has provided over 25 years of sustained service through volunteering in a variety of roles for the Society. For five years prior to 1992 he was Regional Recorder in Canterbury. Since 1998 he has been the South Island Coordinator of the National Wader Counts and since 2011 has served as a member of the Records Appraisal Committee. Andrew has taken a key role in educating the public about birds through newspaper articles. He has had over 20 papers published in *Notornis*, and he has always encouraged others to conduct fieldwork and publish.

Meritorious Service Award – Reg Cotter: Reg's enthusiasm for birdwatching and bird studies, and his strong commitment to field activities in the Wellington Region over the past 30 years are well known to local Society members. Reg was Wellington Regional Representative for several years and was inspirational in the field work he led and encouraged other members to follow. He has been involved in the long-term Wellington Harbour bird survey, a bird survey of the Pencarrow Lakes and his leadership in studies of the movements and breeding behaviour of Little Penguins on Mātū/Somes Island. Reg worked for many years with other Society members to locate and study the Chatham Island Taiko. His contribution to our knowledge about this elusive seabird is considerable, yet his contribution is largely unknown. Reg has also co-authored four papers on seabirds published in *Notornis* and provided Te Papa with 73 bird specimens for its collections.

Meritorious Service Award – Derek Batcheler: Derek has been a dedicated and quiet achiever in the Society for over 20 years. He made a valuable contribution towards the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999–2004 through the entry of observer, time and location data from more than 30,000 field forms. Between 2015 and 2017, Derek contributed to the transcription of information into a new database for the Beach Patrol Scheme and was one of five members who accurately transcribed field records from more than 6,000 Beach Patrol cards. Working with his wife, Ros Batcheler, Derek contributed to field studies of Little Penguins on Mātū/Somes Island, assisted with the loading and checking of data, texts and captions onto the 'New Zealand Birds Online' website, and supported Ros as Wellington Regional Representative and later as a Councillor.

Meritorious Service Award – Jan Walker: Jan was Canterbury Regional Representative for ten years. Organising speakers and field trips and other tasks associated with a large region is a big commitment, but Jan did more than the basics. She was heavily involved in organising the 2008 OSNZ Conference in Kaikoura; co-ordinated beach patrols; undertook 5MBCs for Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust; and spent plenty of time looking for colour-banded godwits for an OSNZ study of the movements of Arctic-breeding migrant waders in NZ. She also contributed to the

governance of several Regional Representative meetings by acting as a Minutes Secretary and making accurate and helpful records of the discussions.

Meritorious Service Award – Chris Petyt: Chris has been a staunch member of the Society for more than 40 years. He has either organised or been a key participant in all of the ornithological work in Golden Bay during this period. Until recently he led the Friends of Cobb which works with a population of Rock Wren in Henderson Basin and has 35 active participants servicing traplines in the Cobb and Takaka catchments. His active support of the Society's work on Farewell Spit led to his classic book on the area, followed by one on the Heaphy Track. In 1995 he published a comprehensive paper summarising his observations as an observer on commercial fishing vessels. Humble but ever competent, he has encouraged others in the interest of birds and their enquiry into greater knowledge.

Meritorious Service Award – Helen Taylor: Since arriving in New Zealand to study at Victoria and Otago Universities, Helen has been an enthusiastic member of the Society. She was elected to Council in 2016 and with boundless energy engaged in debates on all aspects of Council business. Two significant activities stand out, both likely to be of enduring value to the Society. She supported the rebranding of the Society as Birds New Zealand, showed leadership in working with designers of our new logo, and guided its launch in 2018. Helen also shouldered the huge task of leading the redesign and reconstruction of the Society's website. That it was designed, built and launched within six months in 2019 is a tribute to her commitment and determination to see this project succeed. She has also made a noteworthy contribution to ornithological research during her years in New Zealand, spanning avian conservation genetics, ecology, behaviour and reproductive biology, notably on Little Spotted Kiwi and Hihi.

Notornis Student Award – Johannes Fischer: *Burrowing in sand and urupā: lessons learned from a breeding biology study of the Whenua Hou Diving Petrel.* Johannes Fischer, Igor Debski, Graeme Taylor, Brooke Tucker, Rosalind Cole, Tane Davis and Heiko U. Wittmer (Victoria University of Wellington; Department of Conservation).

Notornis New Author Award – Sarah Busbridge: *A video camera assessment of Morepork diet and breeding success on Tiritiri Matangi Island.* S. Busbridge and J.R. Stewart (2018. *Notornis* 65: 187-195).

Conference Student Talk Award – Clio Reid: *Understanding attacks by Kea on sheep in the South Island high country.* Clio Reid, B.D. Gartrell, E.O. Minot and K.J. Stafford (Wildbase, School of Veterinary Science, Massey University).

Amendments to the Constitution of OSNZ NZ Inc.

At the 2019 AGM, five amendments were endorsed and now form a part of the Society's Constitution. A list of the five amendments is available online at: <https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/about-us/>

Pacific Golden Plovers tracked from NZ to Arctic

Three Pacific Golden Plovers (Kuriri) fitted with satellite tags at Pūkorokoro Miranda in New Zealand in April have been successfully tracked across the Pacific Ocean to their Arctic breeding grounds in Siberia and Alaska via Guam, Japan and China. It is hoped the satellite tags will also enable researchers to see if they fly back via the Central Pacific or Asia.



☒ Birds New Zealand Council members and Regional Representatives - L-R standing: Paul Garner-Richards, Geoff De Lisle, Colin Miskelly, Phil Battley, Bruce McKinlay, Mary Thompson, Neil Robertson, Bruce Postill, Sandra Wallace, Keith Woodley, Ian Armitage, Anne McCracken, Oliver Druce, Mel Galbraith, Peter Fryer, Paul Cuming, Paul Shortis, Gail D. Quayle, Bernie Kelly, Ian Southey.
L-R kneeling: David Lawrie, Eleanor Gunby, Josie Galbraith, Natalie Forsdick, Heather Davies, Ingrid Hutzler, Ian McLean. All photos by Les Feasey.

Minutes of the 80th Annual General Meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand

Held in Wellington on 1 June 2019 at 4pm.

Present

More than 120 members and friends.

Welcome

The President, Bruce McKinlay, welcomed all to the AGM with special recognition of former presidents and fellows of the Society who were present.

Apologies

Chris Robertson, Willie Cook, Delia Small, Geoff Forman, Raewyn Foreman, Biz Bell, John & Stella Rowe, Jill West, Gwenda Fulham, Sharon Alderson, Gillian Allen, Betty Seddon, Karen Baird.

Motion: That the apologies be accepted. Bruce McKinlay/Les Feasey. Carried.

Recent Deaths

The meeting recalled with sadness the recent deaths of: Ashley Cunningham, Carol Davies, John Simmons, Colin Hill and Trevor Trought.

Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Motion: That the minutes of the last AGM, as circulated, be accepted as a true record. Bruce McKinlay/John Stewart. Carried.

Matters Arising

A motion had been passed at the 2018 AGM requiring Council to review and rewrite the Society's Conservation Policy. While this had been done, and published in the December 2018 issue of *Birds New Zealand*, there was discussion on whether it was sufficiently proactive.

Motion: That Council establish a conservation sub-committee that identifies and explores ways in which Society activities can contribute to the conservation of NZ birds. Peter Frost/Viola Palmer.

The motion was supported by arguments that the current policy does not go far enough to advocate for conservation and that this was also necessary to grow membership. On the other side a case was made for objectivity, but noting the need to work up our data and to publicise our achievements. The President noted that the motion had not been notified and therefore could not be put to the vote, however the issues would be referred back to Council.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was read by Paul Garner-Richards.

Motion: That the Treasurer's Report and financial statements be accepted and that Council arrange for them to be independently reviewed and then published. Paul Garner-Richards/Keith Woodley. Carried.

President's Report

Council: In 2018 Council met three times through the year. Council continues to work on the preparation of Health and Safety Resources to ensure that field trips are safe for members. The Society's Policy is now completed and we have continued to develop a hazard register for regions to use as part of the preparation for trips. We have continued our work to increase the profile of the Society, and to develop relationships with partners. The development of the New Zealand Bird Atlas scheme has been the result of a very productive relationship with Wildlife Management International Limited.

Helen Taylor has stood down from Council and I wish to recognise Helen's hard work and leadership on the Council to develop the rebranding of the Society and to lead the development of a new website. Also, Sharon Alderson has been equally industrious in developing the resources for Youth Camps and has shown that good quality resources for our young people can be created and implemented around the country.

Partners: The key partners of the Society, the T-Gear Charitable Trust and Goodness Kitchen, have continued their considerable support of our work.

Te Reo name for the Society: Council has agreed to adopt *Te Kōhui Mōtai Manu o Aotearoa* as an alternate name for the Society in the Maori language.

Notornis: Council is continuing to promote two special editions of *Notornis* in the next two years. Keith Woodley is leading an update on the shorebird study and Colin Miskelly is developing a significant summary of the ornithology of the Auckland Islands, which is the subject of a symposium at this Conference. *Notornis* continues to be published on time which is a significant priority. As a result of this regularity we have received a 2018 Impact Factor for the journal which is 0.351. While this is relatively low at an international comparison, it emphasises the local scale at which *Notornis* is relevant.

The recipients of the *Notornis* and Conference awards presented at the 2018 NZ Bird Conference in Waitangi were:

- *Notornis* Student Award: Lauren Little
- *Notornis* New Author Award: Ann-Kathrin Schlesselmann
- Conference Student Talk Award: Rebecca French



- Conference Student Poster Award: Lyndsay Rankin
- Conference People's Poster Choice Award: Megan Friesen



Financial Matters

The accounts for the 2018 year are with the reviewer and it appears that the review will not be completed before this AGM. The 2018 accounts will be considered as far as we can under the Treasurer's Report. Council has long term concerns about the financial sustainability of the Society. To be able to have a better picture of what the long-term state of our funds is and to be able to ensure that we are making good use of our funds, Council has resolved to establish a Finance sub-committee.

Regional Representatives

One of the highlights of my year as a Councillor for Birds New Zealand and now as President is to read the annual reports from the Regional Representatives. Collectively these show the wide range of activities that are happening across New Zealand. These are all a direct result of the work of the Regional Representatives. Council recognises that the Society would not work without the ongoing work of the Regional Representatives, and so on behalf of Council; thank you.

Motion: *That the meeting thank the President for such a full account of the Society's activities.* Peter Gaze/David Melville. Carried.

Matters Arising from the President's Report

Several queries were raised and answered as follows:

- Are health and safety guidelines available for those leading field trips? - Yes
- Is there a contract with WMIL to lead the new Atlas project? - In negotiation
- Is mentoring support available for potential submitters to *Notornis*? - Yes

Election of Officers

The President noted that there was an outstanding vacancy on Council for the position of Secretary. Three councillor positions were also vacant and had been filled uncontested by the nomination of Colin Miskelly for a further three-year term and the nominations of Josie Galbraith and Eleanor Gunby.

Amendments to the Constitution

A notice of motion had previously been published with regard to the following:

New Rule 5.2.6: "Honorary Member may be awarded by Council to any member of the Society in its sole discretion on the resolution of not less than eight Councillors in recognition of an outstanding and specific physical contribution made to the Society that does not qualify for election as a Fellow. An Honorary Member shall be entitled to the full rights of Ordinary

Membership without the obligation to pay a subscription."

New Rule 5.2.8: "Young Birders is a membership category for young people linked to and supported by the Society through a Memorandum of Understanding with Young Birders New Zealand. Young Birders New Zealand aims to encourage the study of birds and their habitat use amongst young people and to support other activities that are consistent with the objectives of the Society. Members of Young Birders New Zealand will be non-financial members of the Society."

New Rules 8.7.1 and 8.7.2:

8.7.1: "The positions of President, Secretary, Treasurer, plus seven other Councillors shall be elected from the membership of the Society following the calling for nominations by the Secretary."

8.7.2: "The position of Vice-President shall be elected by Council from a member who has been elected as a Councillor. Election of the Vice-President shall be at the resolution of a majority of Councillors, excluding the nominees."

Amendments to Rules 9.1 and 9.9:

9.1: "Councillors shall be persons who are financial members of the Society and shall be proposed, seconded and elected by members by postal or electronic ballot, the result of which shall be announced at the Annual General Meeting."

9.9: "The Secretary shall announce the names of the elected Councillors at the Annual General Meeting and move a motion requiring the ballot papers including, where appropriate, the entire electronic records of ballots to be destroyed."

Amendment to Rule 14.15:

"Each region shall elect or appoint a regional Treasurer and such other regional officers as the activities of the region require."

Motion: *That the meeting accept all constitutional amendments as proposed.* Bruce McKinlay/Peter Gaze. Carried.

Young Birders Memorandum of Understanding

The President of the Society and George Hobson from Young Birders NZ formally signed an MOU between the two groups.

Society Awards

The President read out the citation acknowledging the work of Andrew Crossland and his contributions to ornithology in Canterbury. He was granted the Robert Falla Memorial Award with acclamation from the meeting. The Society's Meritorious Service Award was granted to Chris Petyt, Derek Batcheler, Helen Taylor, Jan Walker and Reg Cotter. Citations for each were read out.

General Business

There was no general business and the meeting closed at 5pm.



President Bruce McKinlay opens the Conference.



▲ Kākāriki Karaka on Blumine Island/George Hobson.



▲ Participants at the Youth Camp. Photo by Kristin Ruwhiu.

Birds New Zealand April 2019

Youth Camp in Marlborough

In April 2019, 16 lucky young birders met in Marlborough for a Youth Camp. Day one (for me) started with an enjoyable trip from Wellington to Picton on the Cook Strait ferry with other Wellingtonians (plus Ian Southey); we picked up species such as Sooty Shearwater and White-capped Albatross. Arriving in Picton, we drove to our first destination, the Marlborough Falcon Trust, where we had spectacular views of Kārearea/NZ Falcon and Little Owl. Then, on the way to our accommodation, we also stopped to see some New Zealand Dabchicks.

Day two dawned on a brisk, glorious morning. Today, bird banding was on the agenda. We drove to a local vineyard where the mistnets were ready to go when we arrived. Unfortunately, the songbirds weren't having it, so we only caught a handful of them. Amazingly, however, we all had the chance to hold two Australasian Harriers that had been caught in a funnel trap. That afternoon we visited Wairau Lagoons and saw White Herons, a nice addition to the *eBird* lists.

Day three was our day to visit Blumine Island in the Sounds, a stronghold of (translocated) Orange-fronted Kākāriki! We took a water taxi from Picton to Blumine Island where the cacophony of Bellbirds was at times deafening, accompanied by a chorus of South Island Saddleback, New Zealand Tomtit, Tūī and other species.

In the afternoon, we gathered at the best site for Orange-fronted Parakeet or Karaka Kākāriki, hopeful that we'd catch a glimpse of this elusive critically endangered species. Waiting with bated breath, we at first heard the chatter of kākāriki. This was followed by more chattering, and then finally a beautiful family group of Karaka Kākāriki appeared. We were privileged to watch them on and off until we left for Picton. On the boat trip back, we detoured and saw some New Zealand King Shags, another incredible species to round off a fantastic day.

Day four had us heading to Cape Campbell which turned up a good variety of beach-wrecked seabirds. The Cape also provided a good sea-watch opportunity, with the usual Cook Strait species picked out easily offshore. Afterwards, we pulled into Lake Elterwater, where we spotted a Hoary-headed Grebe.

Day five saw us spend the morning reading Black-billed Gull bands in and around Picton, and then in the afternoon we explored Kaipupu Wildlife Reserve, a local reserve that is secured with a predator-proof fence. Early the next morning we all bid each other bittersweet farewells and went our separate ways, excited already for what the next Youth Camp will have to offer.

I'd like to acknowledge and give huge thanks to the organising team from Birds New Zealand in Marlborough, especially Kristin Ruwhiu. Huge thanks also to all the adults who gave up their week to make this camp the success that it was, and to the people and organisations that hosted us.

GEORGE HOBSON

The Marlborough Branch held a Youth Camp from 11th to 20th April with 16 teenage students participating from as far north as Tutukaka and as far south as Dunedin. On our first afternoon we visited Brancott Estate Falcon Trust to see NZ Falcons up close and meet Dianne from the Trust, who is a superb advocate for their recovery and rehabilitation.

Our day trip to Blumine Island with Bill Cash and Willie Cook was another highlight, where we saw Orange-fronted Parakeet, South Island Saddleback and Rowi Kiwi. Bill and Willie have many years' experience between them of translocations and conservation work on Blumine, so it was a privilege to have them accompany us there.

On our day trip we walked from Marfells Beach to Cape Campbell, Grace and Finn especially enjoyed collecting and studying beach wrecks. We also walked up to the lighthouse where we used scopes to watch shearwaters and albatross offshore. On our way home we visited Lake Elterwater to see Hoary-headed Grebe with Jack Taylor, the person who first recorded them breeding there.

Our half-day excursions included bird banding, band-reading and harrier handling, and visits to Wairau Lagoon, Taylor Dam and Kaipupu Point Sanctuary. Our evening guest speakers were Nick Dillon (painting birds), Willie Cook (Caspian Terns and Australasian Gannets), Samantha Rowe (*eBird*), Tamzin Henderson (bird photography), and Dave Barker (Lake Elterwater ecology).

It was great to have some local members assist with the camp. Shiree Murray applied for funding. Jan and Dave Roxburgh had perfect timing with a huge pot of soup one evening. Patrick Crowe taught about bird handling and banding, along with L3 banders Willie Cook, Jack Taylor and Paul Bell. Thanks also to Sue Bell for allowing us to set up mist nets at her place and providing morning tea.

Willie Cook joined us from Nelson for the week. He has a wonderful ability to communicate with all age-groups and his enthusiasm, knowledge and humour were appreciated by all. Ian Southey also joined us from Auckland to share his considerable expertise. All the organisers here (Bill Cash, Heather Davies, Chris and Shiree Murray, Kristin Ruwhiu) consider that the camp was a success.

We enjoyed everyone's company, especially Grace Richards – for her constant enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning; Bradley Shields – a quiet and respectful young ornithologist; Finn Davey – totally engrossed in dissecting beach wrecks; Oscar Robinson – for his zest for life and swimming; Max Cunninghame – for his politeness and eagerness to learn; and Hunter Murray. Although as a local he had seen and done most of the activities before, he was always enthusiastic and constantly absorbing information.

KRISTIN RUWHIU



▲ Whenua Hou Diving Petrel fledgling/Jinty McTavish.

Whenua Hou Diving Petrel

The recently-described and 'Nationally Critical' Whenua Hou Diving Petrel (WHDP) is one of the most threatened seabird species in the world, as only one colony (~200 adults) remains in the dunes of Whenua Hou/Codfish Island. Invasive predators have been eradicated there, but the recovery of the WHDP remained limited. Threats inhibiting population recovery have been identified: erosion of the breeding habitat in sand dunes, caused by storms and climate change. However, conservation measures, such as translocations, are yet to be developed and implemented. Before the impact and success of translocations can be assessed, WHDP population dynamics need to be quantified. I have compiled historic data on WHDP nest counts and banding data. However, this data is of varying quality. I have increased monitoring intensity, continued nest counts, monitored >120 nests, banded >50% of fledglings, and banded >95% of the adult population. In 2019/20, I aim to (1) further quantify population dynamics, (2) construct an integrated population model, and (3) identify a suitable future translocation site.

I will monitor >66% of WHDP nests to assess fecundity, egg survival, and chick survival, recapture >90% of the returning banded fledglings to assess juvenile survival, and recapture >90% of the banded adults to assess adult survival. I will then construct an integrated population model (IPM), which fuses count (nest surveys) and demographic data (capture-mark-recapture studies) into a single modelling framework. I will use this IPM to simulate the impact of "harvesting" WHDP chicks on the source colony (Whenua Hou), and the likelihood of success of a translocation. Once this has been assessed and the adequate translocation size identified, a translocation site will be required. I will visit predator-free Rarotoka/Centre Island (25km north of Whenua Hou). On Rarotoka, I will compare dune parameters with parameters measured on Whenua Hou, and quantify the seabird community to assess the island's suitability for WHDP translocations. Achieving all three objectives will allow me to guide conservation management to rescue the WHDP from extinction and reinstate the ecosystem services provided by this unique species.

JOHANNES H. FISCHER,
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Subantarctic Hoiho foraging

This study represents the most comprehensive investigation of Yellow-eyed Penguin or Hoiho diet and foraging in the Subantarctic. Stable isotope analysis provided valuable information on diet. Combined with information from dive and GPS loggers attached to breeding penguins, this provided insights on wider foraging behaviour, including distances and depths travelled during foraging trips. Better knowledge of Subantarctic foraging allows improved estimation of the effort required to obtain food and provision chicks, and whether food availability or quality might be a limiting factor for successful breeding for these populations. In addition, this research will help to highlight any differences in foraging and breeding success between the Subantarctic and mainland New Zealand, and whether there are any unique concerns for Hoiho in the isolated Subantarctic areas. This study was funded by the 2018 Birds New Zealand Research Fund.

CHRIS MULLER (PhD candidate), MASSEY UNIVERSITY



▲ North Island Tikee photo by Mike Ashbee.

Birds New Zealand Research Fund 2019

The following 12 research projects have been selected to receive funds in this year's funding round. Please see the Birds New Zealand website for full details: Banded Rail habitat use (Jacques de Satge); Bar-tailed Godwit satellite tracking (Dr. Phil Battley, Massey University); Brown kiwi gut biome (Dr. Manpreet Dhama, Landcare Research); Diving petrel translocation (Johannes Fischer, Victoria University, PhD); Diving petrel diet and trophics (Grace Tocker, Victoria University, MSc); Fiordland Crested Penguin/Tawaki habitat use (Dr. Thomas Mattern, University of Otago); Fluttering Shearwater health (Edin Whitehead, University of Auckland, PhD); Kiwi monitoring methods (Emma Feenstra, Massey University, PhD); Rifleman dialects (Ines Moran, University of Auckland, PhD); Spotted Shag foraging biology (Dr. Matt Rayner, Auckland Museum); Tikee/Saddleback song, personality, parasites (Dr. Isabel Castro, Massey University); and White-fronted Tern survey (Chris Gaskin, NNZST).

Restored urban forests and native birds

There is a growing conviction that urban green spaces may provide habitat for a diversity of native species, including those of conservation concern. Urban native forests, however, are overwhelmingly comprised of small, isolated patches. Habitat restoration could increase the quantity and quality of habitat available to native birds in New Zealand cities. The ability of native birds to utilise restoration plantings will be influenced by a complex interplay of landscape variables, vegetation structure and composition, and competition and predation from introduced mammals.

The purpose of my ongoing PhD research is to investigate factors influencing native forest bird site occupancy and use in urban restored forests and the time it takes for conditions to become suitable. I evaluated restoration success by investigating how species richness, abundance, diversity and community composition of native forest birds vary along a restoration time sequence, representing 71 years of forest development. I compared restored areas with two target reference systems - lowland, temperate native forest remnants within the city and beyond the city limits, as well as with a control system - unrestored urban forest.

Finally, I used structural equation modelling to investigate the relative importance of vegetation diversity and structure, landscape pattern and composition, and pest relative abundance to native forest bird species richness and abundance. I will report my findings once the analyses are complete and provide recommendations on best practice to increase native bird populations. I am grateful for the generous support of Birds New Zealand through the 2019 David Medway Scholarship.

ELIZABETH ELLIOT NOE, UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO



▲ Tui on flax.

New Zealand Bird Atlas off to a flying start

Written by Nikki McArthur. Photos by Mike Ashbee.

The New Zealand Bird Atlas project has now been underway for just over three months, and it has been exciting to see that hundreds of Birds New Zealand members have already thrown their support behind this ambitious new project by getting involved and collecting an impressive number of atlas checklists.

By August, almost 8,200 bird checklists had been submitted by over 300 participants, from over 1,100 of our 3,229 grid squares, which is a phenomenal effort! (see map on page 12). At current submission rates, we're on track to accumulate more than three million bird observations over the five-year lifespan of this project and more than double the number of observations collected during Birds New Zealand's second five-year atlas scheme (1999-2004).

The [Atlas effort map](#) on *eBird* has been lighting up in response to all of this early survey effort, with checklists pouring in from all over New Zealand, including from as far north as the [Three Kings Islands](#) (grid square ZY44), as far south as [Preservation Inlet on Stewart Island](#) (EO11) and as far east as the [Tuku Nature Reserve on Chatham Island](#) (RK23). Congratulations to all of our observers who have managed to get themselves to such far-flung parts of New Zealand!

Since the launch, a close four-way race has emerged between Auckland, Wellington, Marlborough and Canterbury regions for the highest total accumulated survey effort per region, with a total of 360-375 hours of atlas effort accumulated in each of these regions by early August. The Auckland region is leading the charge when it comes to spatial coverage however, with 75% of Auckland region grid squares now containing atlas data.

The launch of the New Zealand Bird Atlas has also had a substantial impact on bird observation submission rates to the New Zealand *eBird* database, as can be seen in the graphs on page 12 (red arrow marks the date of the Atlas launch). For example, bird observation submission rates for July 2019 were 181% higher than July 2018, the largest annual increase for a calendar month that we've ever recorded in New Zealand.

Over the first three months, Mike, Pat, Dan, Sam and Nikki from the National Atlas Team in Blenheim have also been hard at work behind the scenes to keep the project running as smoothly as possible. The team has fielded a large number of questions and enquiries from Atlas participants via email, phone and social media, and has done a great job at responding to the vast majority of enquiries within 24-48 hours.

The team has also put in a substantial amount of work maintaining and improving the project's infrastructure, including updating the project website and social media pages, and

working with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to solve a number of glitches that came to light once data began pouring in to the atlas *eBird* portal.

The National Atlas Team has also delivered several atlas workshops around the country, including in Marlborough, Taranaki and Gisborne, and are busy planning further workshops and field trips over the spring and summer months. In addition to this, team members have been determined to lead from the front, spending significant amounts of their spare time out 'atlasing' themselves. Some stiff competition has arisen between team members as we each vie for a prominent spot on the ['Top 100' Atlasers](#) list on *eBird*!

Although the project has got off to a terrific start, it still needs more help to ensure that it achieves near-complete survey coverage of the country over the next five years. If you haven't yet had the chance to get involved in this ground-breaking new project, as the days begin to lengthen again as we head towards spring, we'd like to encourage all Birds New Zealand members to contribute their bird checklists to the atlas. All checklists are of equal value, regardless of where or when you go out surveying. For more information on how to get started, you can visit the New Zealand Bird Atlas website (www.birdatlas.co.nz), or contact the National Atlas Team by email: nzbirdatlas@wmiil.co.nz

By the end of August, we will have finished our first winter season of the New Zealand Bird Atlas, and will be entering our first spring survey season, which begins on 1st September. Because we're aiming to carry out a complete survey of each grid square for each of the *four seasons of the year* over the next five years, the beginning of spring means that we'll need to 'reset' our survey efforts, and get back out to re-survey much of the ground that we've already covered in winter. This is important, as bird occupancy and bird detection rates will change as the days warm and lengthen, as our migrant shorebirds and cuckoos begin to move, and some of our more sedentary land birds begin to sing in the lead-up to the summer breeding season.

Another upcoming date to mark in your diaries is 19th October, which is the date for *eBird*'s next Global Big Day event – a 24-hour global effort to record observations for as many of the world's bird species as possible, on a single calendar day. Worldwide, tens of thousands of birders take part in these events each year, recording sightings of a large proportion of the world's bird species and raising awareness for bird conservation worldwide. How many species will New Zealand atlasers be able to contribute to this global effort? You can visit <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-19-october-2019> for more information on how to get involved.



▲ Silvereye eating *Coprosma* fruit.

Climate Change: New Zealand birds are suffering from a “thermal squeeze”

A major new analysis of data from Birds New Zealand's 1969-1979 and 1999-2004 bird atlas datasets has found that a number of New Zealand's endemic birds are already feeling the impact of climate change, as mammal predator populations expand in colder, higher-altitude habitats. The study, *Thermal squeeze will exacerbate declines in New Zealand's endemic forest birds*, was published recently by Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research scientists Susan Walker, Adrian Monks and John Innes in *Biological Conservation* [237: 166-174].

The authors used Birds New Zealand atlas data to model changes in bird occupancy between the first and second atlas projects, finding that many of our endemic forest birds have suffered a 'double whammy' from lowland habitat loss, and the expansion of predators into cooler, upland 'refugia' habitat. They conclude that "climate warming is likely to exacerbate declines in wild-living populations of predator-vulnerable forest birds" in New Zealand, unless there is a substantial expansion in predator management across the country, focusing in particular on managing predators in New Zealand's cooler, upland forests.

This study illustrates the huge value of Birds New Zealand's atlas datasets, and the role that they can play in identifying large-scale changes in bird occupancy in New Zealand, and the mechanisms driving those changes. These results in turn can provide important insights into future conservation priorities that are required to prevent further species declines and extinctions. The third New Zealand Bird Atlas project, launched on 1st June, seeks to examine the changes in bird occupancy that have occurred in New Zealand since the early 2000s, creating the opportunity for future researchers to build on and update the work described in this landmark paper. Birds New Zealand members can contribute to this important and timely project, and by doing so help to inform the conservation management of our unique endemic birds.

NIKKI McARTHUR



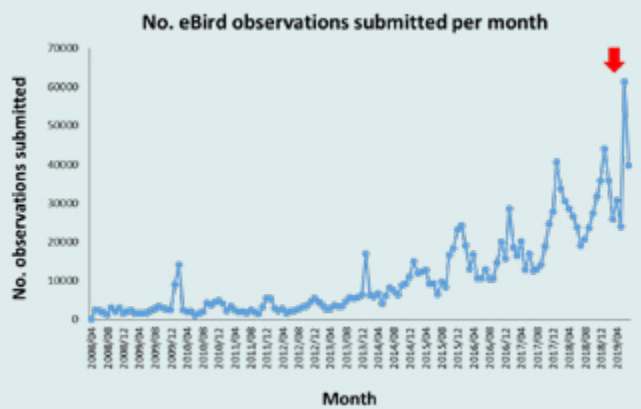
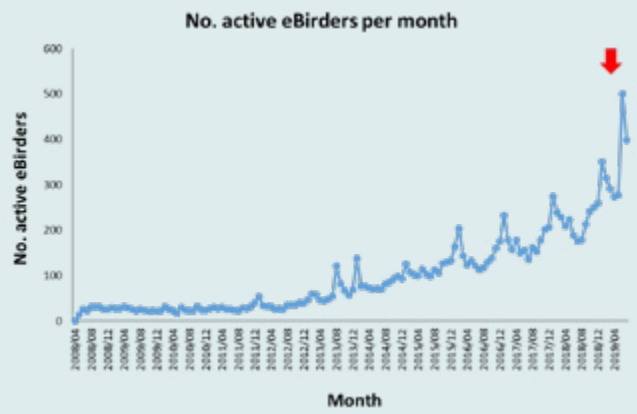
▲ Shining Cuckoo.



Dark morph New Zealand Fantail.



New Zealand Bird Atlas survey effort map, 10th August 2019. Coloured squares represent those containing Atlas data.





▲ A reconstruction of *Heracles inexpectatus*. Image by Brian Choo/Flinders University.

New extinct giant parrot fossils found in Otago

Fossils of the largest extinct parrot species ever recorded have been identified from St Bathans in Otago. Estimated to have weighed about 7kg, it would have been more than twice as heavy as the Kākāpō is today, according to a new study published in *Biology Letters* in August. Study authors Prof Trevor Worthy of Flinders University (Australia) and Dr Paul Scofield, senior curator of natural history at Canterbury Museum, said the fossil had been excavated in 2008 and was eventually identified as a new species of parrot which they have named *Heracles inexpectatus*.

The bones, which will go on display at an exhibition in November, were found in a fossil deposit from the early Miocene, from 19 million-years-ago. Scofield said the climate at the time meant the parrot would have lived near a giant lake in a diverse subtropical forest. "Back then, it was a subtropical environment quite similar to northern New South Wales today, and even had similar vegetation," he said. He also said the parrot's weight meant there was a possibility that it had been flightless. *Evidence for a giant parrot from the Early Miocene of New Zealand*. Trevor H. Worthy, Suzanne J. Hand, Michael Archer, R. Paul Scofield and Vanesa L. De Pietri. *Biology Letters*. 07 August 2019.

150 Kākāriki Karaka chicks

Kākāriki Karaka or Orange-fronted Parakeet had its best breeding season in decades this year due to a beech seed bonanza, Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage announced in July. She said there were more than three times the number of nests in the wild compared to previous years and at least 150 'wild-born' chicks produced, which could potentially double the current population which is estimated to be 100-300. She acknowledged the crucial role of the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust in Christchurch in producing captive-bred birds for release into the wild. This year 62 Kākāriki Karaka were released into the Hurunui South Branch. Most of those birds survived and are showing signs of pairing up to breed.

New Zealand Scaup research

Changes in the population distribution and status of New Zealand Scaup have the potential to be an indicator of environmental change across a broad range of shallow freshwater and estuarine environments which are increasingly under threat. With support from the Birds New Zealand Projects Assistance Fund, NZ Scaup records from the New Zealand Bird Atlas, CSN, iNaturalist, eBird, grey literature, published literature and individuals will be collated to determine the distribution, population status and trends. Relationships between counts and environmental factors will be investigated and a national population estimate will be made. Recommendations will be made for a monitoring protocol and a national sampling design, and a paper will be published in *Notornis*.

BRENDA GREENE



▲ Approximate height of extinct giant penguin next to an adult human. Canterbury Museum/AP.

New extinct giant penguin fossils found in Waipara

A new extinct giant penguin species 1.6 metres tall and weighing up to 80kg has been identified from fossil leg bones found by amateur palaeontologist Leigh Love at Waipara in North Canterbury. The new species, *Crossvallia waiparensis*, was four times as heavy and 40cm taller than the Emperor Penguin, the largest living penguin species. The new species was identified by a team from Canterbury Museum and Senckenberg Natural History Museum in Germany after bones were found at Waipara. It is the fifth ancient penguin species described from fossils uncovered at Waipara, where a river cuts into a cliff of greensand.

Dr Vanesa De Pietri, a natural history curator at Canterbury Museum, said the discovery of a second giant *Crossvallia* penguin species from the Palaeocene was further evidence of the large size of ancient penguins. "It further reinforces our theory that penguins attained a giant size very early in their evolution."

Dr Paul Scofield, the senior curator of natural history at Canterbury Museum, said finding closely related species in New Zealand and Antarctica showed the connections between the now-separated land masses. "When the *Crossvallia* species were alive, New Zealand and Antarctica were very different from today - Antarctica was covered in forest and both had much warmer climates."

Shining Cuckoo tracking

Two adult Shining Cuckoos were fitted with geolocator (GLS) units at Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura, and recovered in their following breeding season at the same site. Both birds migrated to the Bismarck Archipelago in Papua New Guinea. Each made two non-stop trans-oceanic flights of 2,500+ kilometres in both their northward and southward migrations. Maximum and minimum temperatures recorded at four-hour intervals for one bird allowed the times and dates of departure and arrival to be defined, recorded the timing of movements near the Equinoxes when GLS accuracy is poor, and supported GLS evidence for significant, non-migratory movements at other times.

Carbon and nitrogen stable isotope ratios of feathers from other birds showed that individuals returned to the same isotopic space at their non-breeding area, within a wide species' isotopic niche. Data from one breeding site do not record the full range of migration directions and timing for Shining Cuckoos but provide the first direct evidence for the migration tracks and other movements of these small, and often cryptic, birds.

Richard N. Holdaway, Paul M. Sagar & James V. Briskie, Palaeocol Research Ltd and University of Canterbury (presented at the Birds New Zealand Conference, Wellington, 2/6)

200 Kākāpō

Kākāpō have reached a major milestone, with their population now totalling 200. When Kākāpō chicks turn 150-days-old they become juveniles and are officially counted as part of the population, which *Esperance* did in August.

Role of the Scientific Committee

From time-to-time members ask 'what is the role of the Scientific Committee in Birds New Zealand?' The Scientific Committee was established by Council many years ago to ensure that any bird studies that are endorsed or funded by the Society, and are undertaken by members of Birds New Zealand, are scientifically robust and meets the standards suitable for future publication. The Scientific Committee is an important pillar in the governance of Birds New Zealand. It supports the implementation of two prominent objectives of the Society, namely, "To encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use particularly within the New Zealand region", and "to promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations".

Examples of long-term research that have been reviewed and endorsed by the Scientific Committee are National Wader Counts, National Banding Scheme, Beach Patrol Project Scheme and Moulting Recording Scheme. The Scientific Committee regularly reviews funding applications and makes recommendations for new projects to be financed from the Projects Assistance Fund, Scholarships, or the Birds New Zealand Research Fund. The committee has no oversight over private studies conducted by individuals, or groups of individuals.

The Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committee are:

1. To ensure the scientific rigour of studies undertaken by the Society.
2. To oversee the establishment of a national database for the Society.
3. To generally oversee Society studies of New Zealand birds and their habitats.
4. To ensure the appropriate and effective dissemination of information about the New Zealand birds and their habitats.
5. To provide critical assessment and overview of the Society's schemes and projects to ensure that they have clearly defined purposes and contribute effectively to knowledge of New Zealand birds.
6. To maintain effective contact and appropriate collaboration with the Scientific or Research Committees of similar societies in the South Pacific Region.
7. Generally, to do all such things as are considered by the Committee or Council to be conducive to the attainment of any or all of the foregoing terms of reference.

The Scientific Committee comprises six members of the Society, five of whom are scientists having professional knowledge and experience in ornithological research. Graeme Taylor (Wellington) presently leads the committee. The other members are Ralph Powlesland, Paul Sagar, David Melville, Ilse Corkery and the President (an ex officio member). The committee aims to replace one member annually with suitably skilled new members. People who are interested in joining should contact Graeme for advice. The Scientific Committee reports to Council annually on its activities. It may make recommendations to changes in the manner of its working and to the Terms of Reference.

IAN ARMITAGE, VICE-PRESIDENT

First NZ record of Collared Petrel

In July 2019, the Records Appraisal Committee unanimously accepted a 2011 record of Collared Petrel as the first New Zealand record of the species. The bird was seen and photographed off the Three Kings Islands by Brent Stephenson, Sav Saville, Steve Wood, Matt Jones, Detlef Davies, Ian Smith, and Igor Debski on 4 March 2011 during a pelagic trip there from Houhora in the Far North.

New Council Members

The following new members were elected to the Society's Council at the June AGM in Wellington:

Josie Galbraith: Kia ora! Ko Josie Galbraith tōku ingoa. I happened to be a self-confessed nature geek, with birds sitting pretty on the podium of my favourite taxa. I grew up with family trips to Tiritiri Matangi Island, Pōkorokoro Miranda, Tongariro National Park, and anywhere else there were birds to be seen and trails to tramp. It may well have been inevitable that I followed the path to bird-nerdery and nature-geekery, but I am glad of it nonetheless.

I am currently the Project Curator for Natural Sciences at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum. My role involves curating content for new galleries, helping share our important natural science stories with the public, and working with communities to tell these stories. In my research life, I am principally an avian ecologist, with a research focus on urban ecology. My research interests encompass invasive species impacts, conservation, animal behaviour, disease, and human-wildlife interactions.

My PhD research focused on the impacts of bird feeding in urban New Zealand, and my Masters looked at the ecology and impact of Eastern Rosella in New Zealand. I have also spent a summer researching Kāki/Black Stilt at the Department of Conservation captive breeding facility in Twizel and been involved in numerous translocations including Red-crowned Kākāriki and Pōpokatea/Whitehead.

Eleanor Gunby: Kia ora, I'm Eleanor Gunby. While I'd had a vague interest in birds for a few years prior, it was when I joined Birds New Zealand when I was 12 that I became totally hooked by all things bird-related. My passion for birds and ecology has led to my first year of a BSc in Ecology and Environmental Science at the University of Canterbury. This past summer, I was lucky enough to be involved in bird monitoring on the Waimakariri River. Currently, I'm part of a local project banding passerines at Halswell Quarry. Since joining the Society, I've been co-opted onto the Canterbury committee, become the editor of our region's newsletter, and a regular face on field trips and at meetings. I've also become a member of the Young Birders NZ executive team.

While I've had a lot of great experiences as a Birds New Zealand member, the Society's youth camps have been among the highlights. These have given me the opportunity to go birding around the county, learn from experienced birders and ornithologists, and of course meet other young birders. I want to make sure everyone, including young birders, enjoy birding and being a member of Birds New Zealand as much as I do.

New Regional Representatives

Three new regional representatives were announced at the AGM. Peter Fryer (Taranaki, replacing Barry Hartley), Phil Battley (Manawatu, role was vacant) and Geoff Foreman (Gisborne/Wairoa, role was vacant).

Unusual Soft-plumaged Petrel record

Colin Miskelly of Te Papa reports receiving a freshly dead Soft-plumaged Petrel on 10th June that was found on a Johnsonville-Tawa back-road (closer to Tawa end), that looked like a recently fledged juvenile bird in fresh plumage. He also reports that Te Papa holds six previous 'Wellington' specimens of this species from Petone Beach or Lower Hutt (mainly courtesy of the Cotters), all found in May or June between 1971 and 2006. May/June matches expected fledging timing on Antipodes Island.



▲ Glenda Rees' gold medal and William C. Davies Memorial Trophy winning photograph of a Rifleman.

Moa footprints found in Otago

A local man walking his dog found strange markings in the Kyeburn River in Otago in March. After contacting Otago Museum about them, museum staff visited the river and found seven well-preserved moa footprints in the clay river bed underwater. The footprints, each 30cm by 30cm wide, were removed and will be put on public display at the museum. **Moa footprints photo by Ian Griffin/Otago Museum.**

South Island Robins in Dunedin

South Island Robins were reintroduced into the fenced pest-free Orokonui Ecosanctuary in Dunedin in 2010, and the population has grown rapidly so that now there are many sightings in areas outside the fence. For several years, Birds New Zealand Otago Branch has systematically surveyed a block of regenerating native forest near Orokonui where mammal predator control is carried out. There were four birds in 2016, six birds (including one pair) in 2017, and at least 12 birds (including five pairs) in 2018. However, there is currently no way of knowing if this population in the study area persists as a result of annual dispersal of Orokonui juveniles, or whether individual robins survive to hold territories and breed from year-to-year.

Our project, with funding from the Birds New Zealand Project Assistance Fund, aims to band the robins and any chicks fledged in this study area with unique colour combinations for identification of individual birds. We aim to monitor these colour-banded birds to find out whether (1) a population of robins has successfully established outside Orokonui's fence; i.e. that individual robins persist over multiple years, breed and successfully raise young; young may recruit back into the population; and (2) the level of predator control undertaken on this block is sufficient to allow a robin population to persist and breed successfully. In addition, the banded population will allow us to estimate survival rate and discover any new (un-banded) birds immigrating from Orokonui.

GEORGINA PICKERELL

New Secretary Lynne Anderson

Thank you for my co-option onto the Birds New Zealand Council. Originally from Seatoun in Wellington, for the last 35 years I have called Hawke's Bay home. Recently 'retired', my background is in nursing, farming and tertiary studies, including social sciences (anthropology), tropical diseases and nursing. I have always had a great passion and respect for the natural world but it is only in more recent years that 'birding' has become a part of my repertoire. When on safari in Africa in 2013 our guide was a keen birder, and something just sort of clicked with me and has stayed clicked! When I got back home, I looked at my photos and then, with camera in hand, I decided to have a closer look at what was in my own back yard (Ahuriri Estuary). I am also Secretary of the Napier Branch of Forest and Bird, and I believe that involvement with both organisations will be complementary. I look forward to working with the inspiring people on the Birds New Zealand Council.

LYNNE ANDERSON

Glenda Rees wins national photography awards

Congratulations to Birds New Zealand Southland member Glenda Rees for winning the gold and silver medal Nature Prints awards and William C. Davies Memorial Trophy for the best Nature Print of New Zealand Wildlife at the Photographic Society of New Zealand National Exhibition in April.

SCBO 2019 student paper prize

Congratulations to Birds New Zealand Councillor Natalie Forsdick for winning the 2019 Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO) Student Paper Prize with her co-author Stephanie Galla in July for their paper focusing on conservation genomics for the critically endangered Kakī or Black Stilt.

Seabirds that eat plastic have major health problems

Seabirds that swallow any amount of plastic have major health problems, a new study of Flesh-footed Shearwaters on Lord Howe Island in the Tasman Sea has found. The young birds in the study were found to have impaired kidney function, raised cholesterol levels, and reduced body mass, wing length, head and bill length. Numbers of Flesh-footed Shearwaters, which breed in southern Australia and northern New Zealand, have fallen by 29% in recent years. *Clinical Pathology of Plastic Ingestion in Marine Birds and Relationships with Blood Chemistry. J.L. Lavers et al. Environmental Science & Technology 2019 53 (15), 9224-9231.*

Epic journeys of Tawaki

Tawaki breed in the temperate region of the New Zealand mainland. Breeding Tawaki stay remarkably close to their breeding colonies when raising chicks due to the highly productive coastal waters. Satellite tracking has revealed that once Tawaki chicks fledge, they undertake epic southward journeys to forage beyond the Subantarctic front, some 2000 km southwest of the mainland, despite having only 8-10 weeks before entering annual moult.

What is particularly puzzling about this behaviour is that breeding concludes in late spring when coastal productivity around the mainland reaches its peak, so that in theory there should be plenty of food for the penguins to prepare to moult. After the moult, the penguins leave on 4-month long winter journeys. Colleagues and I are currently using satellite transmitters to follow the penguins' movements through their winter dispersal. Available data indicates that Tawaki target the Subantarctic and even the Polar frontal systems. Tradition rather than necessity could be one explanation for this behaviour. We propose that, fundamentally, Tawaki remain Subantarctic penguins that, by breeding in the temperate regions of New Zealand, are avoiding the general trend of declining crested penguin populations observed elsewhere.

Presented by Dr Thomas Mattern at the Birds New Zealand Conference, Wellington, 2/6.

NORTHLAND

In May and June, Ngunguru birders observed up to 20 Royal Spoonbills and the arrival of 5 SIPO. Hilton Ward reported on the winter Ngunguru Beach and Sandspit count (6/7). Of particular note were some very coloured-up NZ Dotterel (34) and the highest July count there of Banded Dotterel (10). The following counts for other species were recorded: Pied Shag 20; Little Black Shag 4; Australasian Gannet 3; White-faced Heron 1; Pukeko 1; VOC 29; Spur-winged Plover 2; Sth Black-backed Gull 23; Red-billed Gull 51; Caspian Tern 3; White-fronted Tern 11; Spotted Dove 3; Sacred Kingfisher 1; Welcome Swallow 11; Silvereye 43; NZ Pipit 2; Common Myna 6.

The results of the North Kaipara shorebird census (8/6) were once again affected by the weather with very low numbers of birds recorded at most sites. The weather was better for the Whangarei Harbour census 2 weeks later. At the Portland Wharf site the following counts were recorded: Pied Shag 27; Little Shag 4; Pukeko 1; Variable Oystercatcher 1; Sth Black-backed Gull 260; Red-billed Gull 3,500; Caspian Tern 2; Sacred Kingfisher 1; Grey Warbler 1. At the 585 Cove Rd Waipu site: Black Swan 52; Paradise Shelduck 2; Pied Stilt 6; VOC 4; Spur-winged Plover 2; Sth Black-backed Gull 61; Caspian Tern 4; Little Black Shag 1; Pied Shag 18; Royal Spoonbill 20; Swamp Harrier 1; Sacred Kingfisher 1; Tui 1; Skylark 2; Welcome Swallow 1; Silvereye 2.

At the Johnson's Point site near Waipu the following counts were recorded: VOC 16; Spur-winged Plover 3; NZ Dotterel 12; Ruddy Turnstone 2; Red-billed Gull 15; Sth Black-backed Gull 61; Caspian Tern 3; White-fronted Tern 233; Little Shag 6; Pied Shag 5; White-Faced Heron 1; Swamp Harrier 1; Sacred Kingfisher 7; Tui 1; Skylark 1; Welcome Swallow 10; Silvereye 3.
- ANNE McCracken

AUCKLAND

The annual South Kaipara Lakes Survey was well attended on 25/4 with 40 participants. Counts of notable species seen were 29 NZ Dabchick, 9 Australasian Little Grebe, 1 Australasian Bittern, 11 NZ Scaup and 14 Australasian Shoveler. The South Kaipara Wader Census on 8/6 had an impressive total of 24 participants. Totals included 260 Northern NZ Dotterel, 811 Banded Dotterel, 138 Wrybill, 678 Bar-tailed Godwit, 7 Red-necked Stint, 221 Royal Spoonbill, 171 Black-billed Gull and 3 NZ Fairy Tern.

Our Pakiri Beach patrol on 28/4 found 30 birds from at least 12 taxa, including 2 Kaka that were identified as a male and a female from their different bill profiles, and found circa 1 km apart with an identical level of composition indicating they had died at the same time. Although Kaka often travel between offshore islands and the mainland, they appear to handle these flights well and it is unusual to find them beach-wrecked. Foul play was suspected, so the remains of the 2 birds were delivered to DOC and taken to Massey University in Palmerston North for a post-mortem analysis, but no cause of death could be identified.

Unusual birds found on our 8/6 Muriwai Beach patrols included 1 Grey-headed Albatross, 1 Northern Giant Petrel, 1 Antarctic

Fulmar and 1 Little Shearwater, with the latter found entangled in nylon fishing line. An Antarctic Fulmar was found alive on Muriwai Beach on 7/6 and taken into care at Bird Rescue.

The NZ Bird Atlas counts came in handy in regard to a controversy surrounding feral geese at Western Springs in July. An Auckland Council plan allows for a limit of 28 feral geese at the park, but very poor management and members of the public feeding them bread have meant that the number increased to a reported 120-160. This was an underestimate, as the NZ Bird Atlas count by Phil Hammond there recorded 219 feral geese on 15/7.

Interesting regional sightings have included an Arctic Skua at Tahuna Torea in the Tamaki River Estuary during our field trip on 22/4, and a Red-legged Partridge seen in Torbay by Jeremy Hillman several times during June. Tiritiri Matangi sightings included a male NZ Tomtit (17/5) and a juvenile NZ Falcon in residence from 19/5. An Australasian Little Grebe was seen at the Millwater Ponds near Orewa from 1/7. Four Pateke (Brown Teal) were seen at Waiatarua wetland in Remuera on 15/7 by Jacquix Geux, which is an excellent record so close to the Auckland City CBD. Waiatarua is an historical collection site of an Auckland Museum Pateke specimen that was collected prior to the 1920s. Lastly, a juvenile Brown Booby was seen by Harry Boorman at the Muriwai gannet colony on 5/8 - perhaps a harbinger of spring!
- IAN McLEAN

WAIKATO

At our May meeting, Kristal van Houte from the Karioi Maunga ki te Moana gave a very interesting talk about the diverse aspects of her studies. The Karioi project includes thousands of traps over hundreds of kilometres of tracks. At the moment a marine plastics survey is being undertaken in the harbour/beach. Grey-faced Petrel (Oi) nest in localities around the mountain. Fourteen chicks were monitored last season, 7 of which were killed by stoats and 7 fledged. The overall project is a credit to all involved.

The June meeting featured Andrew Thomas, currently with Waikato Regional Council and prior to that the Wingspan Trust. He gave us an authoritative presentation on the current situation for NZ Falcon. At the July meeting Bruce Postill, our Regional Representative, reported on the Conference held in Wellington. Then we watched the video on the NZ Bird Atlas. Our beach patrollers found 2 interesting beach-wrecked birds at Ruapuke: Antarctic Fulmar and White-headed Petrel.

Latest news from Maungatautari is that 14 Takahe chicks have been raised to date. Seven of these have been moved to other breeding programmes where they have added another 26 chicks to the overall total. The current total population stands at 376 birds with hopes of reaching 400+ very soon.
- KEN WEDGWOOD

BAY OF PLENTY/VOLCANIC PLATEAU

We packed out our venue for award-winning Canadian photographer Marie Bilodeau's illustrated talk. Dr Liza Schneider from the

Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Trust will be our next speaker. Local birders have been inside more often than usual this winter, but it didn't stop us going out to see 5 Rifleman shooting through the canopy up at Aongatete for the *Breakfast with the Birds* event in May. This year, Kaka were first up at 6am, even beating a late Morepork to bed.

I've been taking groups of Scouts to see the bush at Otanewainuku, teaching them about birds for their wildlife badges. Despite the over-eager Scouts competing with the birds for volume, we still gathered NI Robins, Kaka and 13 other species of birds for our lists. Three petrel pairs are nesting at the Mauao Grey-faced Petrel study burrows this year. It would have been more but some lids had been left off by some feral humans during the break in monitoring. In October we will go up and band the chicks.

Five NI Robins were reported by Erik Forsyth at a mountain bike track through a Rotorua Redwood forest. Raewyn Adams spotted a 'white egret' at Maketu in July. The area had an Intermediate Egret the previous year, spotted by Tim Barnard, and also supports Kotuku and Cattle Egret. Those with 'big white bird' leanings could do well to visit the area, and also Ohiwa, where another 'big white bird' was seen the same month. Raewyn also visited Thornton Beach looking for wintering Black-fronted Terns. She picked up 5, which is 3 more than Mike Vincent saw the month previous. - PAUL CUMING

TARANAKI

The May field trip to Lake Rotomanu came about after we received a photo and report of a Black-fronted Dotterel there, which is a rare visitor to Taranaki. The lake had been substantially lowered for maintenance and the stony bottom was exposed creating some new but ephemeral habitat. The smaller body of water also concentrated the introduced fish, making them easier for fish-eating birds to catch. On a fine sunny morning there was a good turnout of keen birders. We saw 3 species of shag including a flock of 7 Little Black Shag fishing in a group; Caspian Tern also fishing; Pied Stilt around the edges; Red-billed Gull and Sth Black-backed Gulls, and White-faced Heron roosting on exposed gravel.

There were also Mallard, Paradise Shelduck, Australasian Shoveler, NZ Scaup and Black Swan on the water, and a large flock of Canada Geese in a nearby paddock. Present on the small island were 4 Cattle Egret, another species not often seen in North Taranaki. On the nearby golf course and in the vegetation, we saw vocal Tui in coastal banksias, Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Blackbird, Song Thrush and Common Pheasant. Those who walked to the river mouth and beach saw the resident pair of VOC. In the following weeks a pair of Pied Shag and a Royal Spoonbill were seen, bringing the total species list to a remarkable 31. The lake has since been returned to its original level. Lastly, a Kaka was heard and seen at Barrett Lagoon and 1 was also at Owae Marae in Waitara.
- PETER FRYER

HAWKE'S BAY

Twelve of us visited the Mohi Bush forest



remnant in April where we were rewarded with close views of North Island Robin, but did not see any of the local Rifleman. In early May, a small group gathered in perfect conditions to take part in the *eBird* Global Big Day. It started off really well when Alastair Thompson spotted a NZ Falcon perched on a power pole in the Westshore car park! We covered the Westshore scrapes and part of the estuary, then headed to the Cape Sanctuary where we saw some bush birds including Red-crowned Parakeet and Pateke (Brown Teal). From there it was back to Waitangi and the Horseshoe Wetland where an Australasian Bittern was added to the day's tally. Denise finished the day off at Anderson Park where she found the long-staying Plumed Whistling Duck to bring the final number of bird species recorded on *eBird* to 56. Well done everyone who took part, it was a very interesting day.

An indoor meeting was held in July at which various issues were covered and the new NZ Bird Atlas video was shown. Thalia Sachtleben has taken over from Ian Smith as the Regional Recorder for Hawke's Bay, Bernie Kelly continues as Regional Representative and Lynne Anderson has been co-opted as the Society's new Council Secretary. Bernie and Lynne are again offering the 6-week Introduction to Ornithology Course.
- IAN SMITH & BERNIE KELLY

WHANGANUI

Gordon Park is a 12.5-hectare scenic reserve situated 2 km from the edge of Whanganui. It is the last remnant of the Kahikatea-dominated swamp forest that once covered the lower Whanganui River floodplain. A local community group, Friends of Gordon Park, led by Colin Ogle, one of Birds New Zealand's longest serving members in Whanganui, working in collaboration with the Department of Conservation, go out bi-weekly to remove non-native vegetation and re-establish or reinforce populations of native plants. While doing so, they take the opportunity to observe the birdlife around them and, over the years, have recorded several species that appear as local vagrants.

What we don't know is whether these islands of native vegetation are 'sinks' for individuals dispersing from their natal areas, or 'stepping-stones' that facilitate the birds' movements among areas of more-permanently livable habitat. Among the species they've recorded have been North Island Robin, Fernbird, and up to 2 melanistic New Zealand Fantail, a form that is extremely rare in the North Island. The NI Robins and Fernbird are probably dispersing birds but for the black morph NZ Fantails, seen on several occasions in recent years, there could be a different explanation.

Colin pointed out that 50 years ago, the late Graeme Caughley, writing in *Notornis*, suggested that the gene for melanism in the NZ Fantail was dominant but that its frequency was held in equilibrium by heterosis, in which birds that contain copies of both genes (heterozygotes) have some advantage over pure-bred individuals, those having 2 copies of either the dominant 'black' or recessive 'pied' genes, not both. In this scenario, breeding must also be random, which can be achieved in large connected

populations, but what happens when populations become more-or-less isolated, perhaps such as at Gordon Park?

There has been an apparent increasing number of reports recently of the black morph NZ Fantails in the southern North Island. Is the NZ Fantail population becoming increasingly fragmented (possibly leading to less random breeding)? Maybe data from the New Zealand Bird Atlas will help answer this. It would help if your *eBird* observations note whether the NZ Fantails you see are all normal-coloured birds ('pied' morph), melanistic birds only (black morph), or a mix of both (recording the numbers of each).

Notable observations of other species during the past 3 months include a Buller's Mollmawk being harassed by Southern Black-backed Gulls on the Whanganui River in the middle of town in early June. It was blowing a gale at sea at the time. A White Heron was seen on a farm dam near Waitotara in late July, along with 149 Canada Geese, 122 Grey Teal and substantial numbers of other waterfowl. Cattle Egrets were reported both from near Waitotara and at a long-used wintering site near Whangaehu in both July and August. - PETER FROST

WAIRARAPA

In May, 6 of us visited Kiriwhakapapa in the Tararua Range. We heard 1 NZ tomtit and saw Tui, Kereru and Bellbirds. NZ Fantails and Grey Warblers were ubiquitous, prompting us to question why these 2 are so successful, compared to other species.

Our June field trip to Mataikona and Castlepoint tested our atlas skills. We met at Mataikona Lagoon where we saw a pair of Variable Oystercatchers, Red-billed Gulls, White-faced Herons, a solitary Black-fronted Dotterel and Black Shags. Sacred Kingfishers were active around the mudbanks and there was a range of songbirds including NZ Fantail, Grey Warbler, Australian Magpie and a single Rook.

We then drove slowly back to Castlepoint and scanned the impressive reefs. We were hoping to see a Reef Heron but our luck was out. Back at Castlepoint the weather had deteriorated but we still added checklists for the Lighthouse walk and the southern lagoon. Birds encountered included NZ Pipit, Caspian Tern, Little Shag and Australasian Gannet. On the Lighthouse rock there were numerous Chaffinches and, resting on the island, 17 Black Shags, but no Reef Herons!

Prolonged high-water levels at Lake Wairarapa meant we were unable to conduct the June wader survey in its usual format, so a series of spot-surveys from various points was done instead. This revealed 123 Banded Dotterel on an adjacent muddy paddock and in other wet paddocks large groups of Black-billed Gulls feeding. The size of this population indicates that Black-billed Gulls from other regions seem to be over-wintering in this area.

Inspired by the Birds New Zealand Conference, we decided to run a few in-house training sessions on 'atlasing' and bird ID skills. The launch of the NZ Bird Atlas means we have a new perspective on birding trips: instead of "where can we go to find something interesting?" it's now, "what square and habitat-type shall we target this time?"

Knowing that everything we see - or don't see - adds to the tapestry of bird knowledge and the value that has for environmental management. Our latest atlas foray was into the eastern Wairarapa hill-country where Stronvar pine forest yielded good numbers of Whitehead and NZ Tomtit along with Bellbird and NZ Fantail. More of the same species were observed in the adjacent Rewa Reserve (mature native bush) with Bellbird numbers being plentiful - far more so than Tui. It was satisfying to have 2 atlas grid squares surveyed with three habitat-types.
- OLIVER DRUCE & JOANNA McVEAGH

WELLINGTON

A major highlight of the Birds New Zealand Conference in Wellington was the launch of the New Zealand Bird Atlas. A growing band of atlasers, now numbering 82, have been busy in the Wellington atlas district which includes the Wairarapa region. By 11/8, 1,230 checklists covering 70 (66.6%) of regional grid squares had been submitted. These checklists were recorded over 369 hours which compares very favourably with the rest of New Zealand. Our most surveyed square covers the western suburbs of the city from which 208 checklists have been submitted. While this is a great start to the atlas project there are many exciting challenges with the need to survey more habitats and 35 of our remoter squares still have to be visited. Furthermore, next month we move into spring with the need to re-survey squares.

Little Penguins featured in the national and international news in July with two birds reported under a sushi bar by the Wellington railway station. This pair were discouraged from nesting at the station and avoiding the dangers of crossing a very busy, 4-lane road, but they turned up again in August. The stronghold for Little Penguins in Wellington is Matiu/Somes Island where circa 300 pairs nest, mostly in wooden nest boxes. Breeding is just starting on Matiu/Somes Island with the first eggs being laid in late July. Smaller numbers of Little Penguins nest on the mainland of the harbour and on the south coast where there is the added danger of predators, un-restrained dogs, cars and human interference. - GEOFF DE LISLE

NELSON

The Top of the South *eBird* atlas squares are colouring-up nicely with the amount of 'effort' going into it. Our region is currently ranking high on the geographical participation list, with enthusiastic members out and about, and, I suspect some visiting ornithologists (mostly from Marlborough!). Along with all this data entry, a successful hands-on wader catching day was held on 4/7 at Rabbit Island in Waimea Estuary, led by David Melville. SIPO were the targets, along with a handful of VOCs hanging around the perimeter. Seventy-eight newly banded SIPO were processed with 2 recaptures, from a flock of several hundred. A very worn metal band on 1 was a bird that had been marked on Bell Island, Waimea Inlet, on 21/9/01, in its second year of life.

Cattle Egret haven't been recorded in Tasman Bay this winter but several have been seen in Golden Bay.

Rob Schuckard reports that the OSNZ Top of the South winter shorebird census during the first week of July 2019 went very well with good weather. Even Farewell Spit was a T-shirt job. About 20,000 birds have been counted, 91% endemic species and the rest migratory. About 73% of all shorebirds were SIPO. Golden Bay, Farewell Spit and Tasman Bay had about 6,500 shorebirds.

In total, 12 shorebird species were recorded. Steve Wood and Paul Griffith recorded a Great Knot, 3 Sanderling, a Red-necked Stint and a Whimbrel on Farewell Spit. Motueka Sandspit had higher than usual numbers of Ruddy Turnstones and a Gull-billed Tern. Farewell Spit had 80% of all the migratory shorebirds from the census areas. SIPO at the Spit had their lowest number recorded since 1996. Only 4,000 could be counted. All other species were recorded in average numbers.

Golden Bay also had good numbers of SIPO. Some previously mentioned logistical problems counting birds at Totara Avenue Sandbar and Collingwood Island were dealt with this time. A jet-ski was used, starting at Paton's Rock. Both Collingwood Island and Totara Bar have now been fully surveyed. Three Hector's Dolphins were also seen. In Tasman Bay, all shorebirds were recorded in average numbers. - GAIL D. QUAYLE

MARLBOROUGH

The winter wader counts were uneventful, with not so many waders around. We have seen a lot of finches along the east coast though, and recently a Northern Shoveler has been visiting Lake Elterwater. Royal Spoonbill are in full breeding plumage, and there is a White Heron sharing the Lower Opawa with them. Banded Dotterel are already getting established in their breeding territories along the coast near Cape Campbell. Unfortunately, there is a lot of human disturbance in this area which increases the challenges they, and the Variable Oystercatchers, face in attempting to fledge chicks. Education of the public is a long process and highlights the need for good information on bird distribution and numbers, and how a species fits as part of the greater ecosystem. People often view a bird in isolation, not making the connection with food webs, habitats, seasons, or the dependence of multiple species on each other.

Wildlife Management International Ltd treated us to a workshop on the NZ Bird Atlas. Some of us have learned some new skills to improve the records we keep of the birds we encounter. They have done a wonderful job of putting together the systems to include all levels of technical knowledge, and encourage everyone to be involved.

The other news we have is very sad, the passing of Nelson North. Mike Bell has written the following: "Nelson and Bev have been lifelong members of Birds New Zealand, and I remember as a junior member coming over to Blenheim from Wellington, and they being part of the local group. Birding was part of a wider interest Nelson and Bev had in the outdoors, and they particularly liked being involved in projects that collected data for the Society's national schemes, such as Wader Counts and the last Atlas project. Nelson enjoyed people, and talking to people, and he always made efforts to spend time with

people on the various trips to chat and catch up. Nelson and Bev also opened up their house and their back for evening meetings and field trips, providing a warm welcome to everyone who wanted to attend." - HEATHER DAVIES

CANTERBURY

Following the launch of the NZ Bird Atlas, it has been great to see so many previous *eBird* users increasing their efforts, plus some new users getting started. At our June meeting, we talked about the atlas scheme and gave members a refresher on using *eBird*. The following month, we held 2 atlasing field trips to encourage everyone to put in practice what they had learned. So far, just over 40% of Canterbury grid squares have at least some data in them. Over on the West Coast, around 12% of squares have some checklists. Hopefully this momentum carries on as the Atlas progresses.

Our annual Winter Wader Count at Lake Ellesmere was held in June. The lake was very high, but the weather was uncooperative with fog early on and rain and hail at the end. However, thanks to the fantastic turnout from members and non-members alike, we managed to get the whole lake surveyed. The Christchurch City Council ranger team had some of the most interesting birds in their section of the lake, including a Northern Shoveler at Halswell Flats and 4 Red-necked Stints at Kaitorete Spit.

Several notable sightings these past few months have come from just north of Christchurch. A Marsh Crake has been frequently seen at the Waimakariri River in Kaiapoi, often coming out into the open to feed. At the Ashley Estuary, a Sanderling continues to be seen, along with a long-staying Kaki (Black Stilt). Nearby in the Taranaki Paddocks, up to five Black-fronted Dotterels have been regularly seen. Other reports of Black-fronted Dotterels come from the Waipara River Mouth, Washdyke Lagoon and Ashworth's Lagoon. One final, particularly unexpected sighting was a female Grey Phalarope, seen in full breeding plumage at sea during a pelagic trip off Kaikoura on 17/7. - ELEANOR GUNBY

OTAGO

Prior to snowy weather in early August, it had been a mild winter around Otago with a warmer than average June. In Dunedin, July was the second warmest since records began. This warming trend is alarming; what sort of impacts are we going to see on New Zealand's bird species?

Otago is off to a "very satisfactory" start contributing to the NZ Bird Atlas according to our regional atlas coordinator Richard Schofield, with over 25% of the Otago grid squares having at least partial coverage. We are planning monthly field trips to take groups through priority squares and for those who need it, to provide training on how to conduct counts. Unfortunately, the only serious cold front which brought snow to much of the region resulted in our August field trip having to be cancelled.

Interesting records from around Otago during winter included large flocks of waterfowl (Black Swan, Australasian

Shoveler), finches and Welcome Swallows. A Brown Skua was seen at St Clair in Dunedin and Great Crested Grebes were seen in the Otago Harbour by several members. A South Island Robin singing in a town reserve twice made the front page of the Otago Daily Times, although this bird had been seen several weeks earlier by Birds New Zealand members Murray Efford and Mary Thompson. Two Cirl Buntings (1 dead) were recorded near Alexandra, a White Heron was seen at Shag River and a Reef Heron and 2 Sulphur Crested Cockatoos at Jacks Bay.

Regular trips to Tomahawk Lagoon turned up the first record of a Marsh Crake and Andrew Austin made careful observations of a possible Australian origin Pacific Black Duck. SIPO topped the list of the winter wader count (1,023 recorded regionally) and 2 Grey-tailed Tattler were seen in the Catlins. Only 36 Banded Dotterels were recorded in total, however a week later Derek Onley counted over 50 at Karitane.

The Otago AGM was a success and our long-term local projects will continue (wader counts, SI Robins beyond Orokonui, and Town Belt surveys). Our winter indoor meetings were varied and entertaining. - FRANCESCA CUNNINGHAME

SOUTHLAND

Winter has finally arrived with thunder, heavy rain and now snow falling in Invercargill. Hopefully there are some Southland birders taking part in the NZ Bird Atlas scheme. Southland has the second highest number of grid squares (and some of the most remote) so we will be dependent on birders from further north also contributing to our checklists.

The resident Gull-billed Tern pair were seen hunting among a large flock of Redpoll at the Tiwai Bridge sandspit on 30/4 and again further up the coast at Waituna Lagoon during an atlas count on 11/7. A field trip to Dummy's Beach near Waikawa on 28/4 turned up two Australasian Gannets (not common in Southland) and a giant petrel.

In May, Wynston Cooper reported seeing a NZ Falcon in the Invercargill suburbs, possibly the same bird that has been hanging around Queens Park. It was also seen in the CBD being chased by an assortment of smaller songbirds.

Sean Jacques spotted a White Heron near Athol on 28/5, possibly a first in this location. A leucistic Grey Teal was spotted at Daffodil Bay by Lloyd Esler and an albino House Sparrow was photographed in a garden.

On 17/6 a wayward Light-mantled Albatross was picked up on the Bluff highway and taken to a vet clinic where it was checked and released near Tiwai Point the next day. Stirling Point at Bluff is a good place to watch for albatrosses as they often follow fishing boats into the harbor. On 22/6 Sean Jacques saw a Black-browed and Northern Royal at this location.

Lloyd Blakie photographed 4 juvenile Pacific Golden Plover overwintering at the Riverton Estuary on 22/7 which is not a common occurrence in Southland.

- PHIL RHODES



Australasian Ornithological Conference 2019

I was one of about 300 people lucky enough to attend the Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC) in June at Charles Darwin University in Darwin. My thanks go to the Birds New Zealand "AOC 2019 Student Travel Grant", which helped me get there.

The sunny dry season in Darwin welcomed Australasian delegates, as well as the attendees and speakers who had travelled from China, South Africa, USA and Lithuania. Before the conference, my colleagues and I attended a series of pre-conference activities. I found the workshop on best practice methods and advances in tagging birds for research the most useful. The talks started on Wednesday 3rd July and continued for three days, intermixed with poster sessions, brainstorming meetings over lunch time and on-campus birdwatching during tea breaks.

Helen Taylor, alumni of the University of Otago, gave a great talk on the genetics of threatened birds and highlighted the importance of popularisation of genetics among non-DNA scientists for better interdisciplinary co-operation. Kristal Cain from the University of Auckland gave a stunning talk on female ornamentation; it was amazing to learn that conspicuous plumage does not increase predation risk. Clancy Hall from the University of the Sunshine Coast fascinated the auditorium with her talk on sex reversal in birds and its implications for conservation. Number one on my list was the absolutely fabulous and humorous talk on avian invasion risk from the pet trade in New Zealand given by Josie Galbraith from Auckland War Memorial Museum.

I was very proud to represent the University of Auckland and share some findings from my PhD project. I presented a poster and talked with interested participants about my research on the effect of sugar-water feeding on health and behaviour of native New Zealand birds. My poster focused on the online survey of popular sugar-water feeding practices among urban New Zealanders and which bird species benefit.

I also enjoyed the post-conference field trips. The first I joined was the Corroboree Billabong Sunrise Birding Cruise in Mary River National Park where we saw a great many Australian bird species, including Black-necked Stork, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Azure Kingfisher, Striated Heron and many other species. The second was to Darwin Harbour where our best sightings were Beach Stone Curlew and Chestnut Rail. By the end I had 100 species on my list!

The next AOC will be held in Auckland in 2021. It will be so exciting to host all the visitors and share the latest results! I can't wait to contribute to the conference organisation and see you at the next AOC!

DARIA ERASTOVA

The 2019 Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC) held at Charles Darwin University campus in Darwin started with warm and thoughtful welcomes by the Larrakia people of the land and minister Lauren Moss. Across three days in early July, more than 300 attendees were offered almost 150 talks on a wide range of topics. Across the span of topics, the constant underlying feeling was that all this acquiring and sharing of knowledge will help us preserve our bird diversity for the future.

This was evident during the symposium called "Conservation success among Australia's threatened birds", which was the one that attracted the greatest audience. Two long symposia titled "Beyond bird surveys: new ways to collect and analyse bird data" and "Advances in ornithology through new technologies and citizen science", were also among the best attended. Along the same lines, a very popular pre-conference workshop had the title "Best practice methods and advances in tagging birds for research".

In summary, the speakers made it evident that new technology such as smartphones, thermal imagery, 3D printing, remote sensing, artificial intelligence, smart loggers and trackers and better equipment to record video and audio will all have (and are already having) big impacts on how we conduct bird research and monitoring.

One area of discussion centered around the fact that these new technologies open both opportunities and needs for method validation. Several talks hence described projects focusing on those important systematic comparisons of methods, for example audio recorders versus two-hectare surveys for species diversity surveys, cameras and recorders versus radio telemetry for kiwi density- and territory mapping, and fecal DNA analyses versus stomach flushing for penguin diet studies.

Another eye-opening example was a study using cameras to validate the current best practice for finch surveys, which showed that the current methodology has much room - and probably need - for improvement.

During the post-conference field trips, I managed to increase my life list with sightings of almost 100 species. One of my favourite birds from the conference was the Tawny Frogmouth that spent two days sitting in a tree next to the path between the lecture halls and the lunch area.

Looking back, I think we should not underestimate the role of the location of the AOC. I am sure that the birding potential of Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia was a major contributing factor to making this the best attended AOC so far, and the more people who are there to share the knowledge and participate in the discussion, the faster we will increase our chances of a future that continues to be full of amazing birding for generations to come.

MALIN UNDIN

SOUTH PACIFIC BIRDING

Voyage into the South Pacific where exceptional birdwatching meets idyllic beaches, time-honoured cultures and the chance to spot rarely seen, once-in-a-lifetime species and endemic birdlife on remote islands. Expedition cruises to the South Pacific and further South into New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands range from 8 – 19 days and are aboard recently refurbished former polar research vessel *Spirit of Enderby*. With only 50 passengers per expedition, they fill quickly.



BEYOND FIORDLAND: NEW ZEALAND'S WILDEST ISLANDS

13 DEC 2019

Explore the untamed wilderness of Fiordland's ice-carved mountains, forests and fiords; encounter threatened native species flourishing on Stewart Island's Ulva Island and discover the remote, rugged beauty of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. We will be on the lookout for numerous albatross species; Snares Crested, Rockhopper and Yellow-eyed Penguins, Campbell Island Snipe and more. A donation from each fare helps ensure the ongoing preservation of these precious regions.



GALAPAGOS OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

3 DEC 2019, 30 NOV & 11 DEC 2020

Journey through the spectacular wildlife haven of Australia's Macquarie Island and the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands, home to a vast array of albatross, petrel, elephant seals and more. Be captivated by 'penguin city' – where endemic Royal Penguin chicks feed ravenously and fierce territorial disputes unfold among lounging seals – and marvel at endemic birdlife.



MELANESIA DISCOVERER

12 OCT 2019 & 10 OCT 2020

Uncover the hidden gems of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. For birders this itinerary offers once-in-a-lifetime species on remote islands with many highlights including the Manus Friarbird, Mussau Monarch and the Paradise drongo. Endemic to the Solomon Islands, we will be on the lookout for the Roviana Rail and Solomon Sea Eagle. A specialised birding programme allows birders to maximise the opportunities available to them.



SECRETS OF MELANESIA

24 OCT 2019 & 22 OCT 2020

Sail from Honiara to Port Vila visiting islands including Malaita, Santa Cruz, Vanikoro, Vanua Lava and Espirito Santo. Customised daily birding excursions led by our world-class birding expert ensure all birding opportunities are maximised. This is an excellent opportunity to see many of the region's difficult to see endemics including Malaita and Vanikoro White-Eye, Vanuatu Honeyeater plus many myzomelas, monarch species and more.



FROM US\$675 PER PERSON PER DAY

CONTACT US ON 0800 262 8873

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