

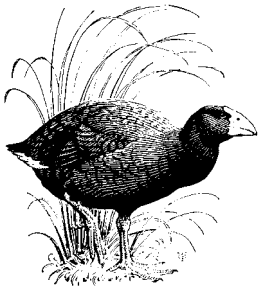


No. 2 June 2014

Birds New Zealand



The Magazine of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand



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NO. 2 JUNE 2014



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Are you missing March's *Notornis* and *Birds New Zealand*?

If you find you still haven't received your March 2014 publications, please send the Membership Officer, Julia White, an email or letter and she will post them to you.

Julia White, P.O. Box 35150, Naenae, Lower Hutt 5041.
email: membership@osnz.org.nz

PUBLISHERS

Published on behalf of the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc), P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040, New Zealand.
Email: secretary@osnz.org.nz
Website: www.osnz.org.nz
Edited by Nick Allen, 11 Seagrave Place, Ilam, Christchurch 8041.
Phone (03) 358 5994, fax (03) 358 5997,
Email southernbird@osnz.org.nz
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We welcome advertising enquiries. Free classified ads are available to members at the editor's discretion.

Articles for inclusion in *Birds New Zealand* are welcome in any form, though electronic is preferred. Material should be related to birds, birdwatchers, or ornithologists in the New Zealand and Pacific region, and can include news on birds, members, activities and bird study, literature/product reviews, letters to the editor, birdwatching sites, and identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp. Copy deadlines are 10th February, May and August, and 1st November. The views expressed by the contributors to this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc.

COVER PHOTOS

Front and Back Covers: Australasian Gannets at Farewell Spit. Both photos by Richard Young. Visit the Richard Young Photography website www.richardyoung.net for more of his stunning photos.

QUOTE

..My Muse hath done. A voider for the nonce,
I wrong the devil should I pick their bones.
That dish is his; for when the Scots decease,
Hell, like their nation, feeds on barnacles.
A Scot, when from the gallow-tree got loose,
Drops into Styx and turns a solan goose.

The Rebel Scot by John Cleveland (1613-1658)



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Annual Report on Behalf of Council for 2013

Century for Fellow

It has been brought to my attention that one of the foundation members and a Fellow of the Society has just reached 100 years of age. This is Graham Turbott from Auckland. To the best of my knowledge he would be the only centurion that we have, but I stand to be corrected. My advice is that he is currently studying a family of Welcome Swallows out of his lounge window. Our congratulations to Graham and we hope that he had a happy birthday on the 27th May.

Deceased Members

It is with sadness that I record below the names of the members of whom I am aware have passed away during the previous 12 months: Peter Dunstan (Wellington), Don Binney (Auckland), Ann McCallum (Canterbury), Dorothy Alloo (Otago), John Kendrick (Northland), Vince Waanders (Wellington), Mark Nee (Auckland), Claire Burt (Northland), James Murray (Wellington), David Medway (Taranaki), Mary Skinner (Waikato), Eila Lawton (Bay of Plenty)

As will be seen from this list there are some distinguished members who had major roles in the Society. However all members are important as a source of information and contact in the wider community and all of them leave a gap within their regions and families. Our thoughts go out to the families and to those who knew these members in their respective regions.

Council

During the year under review Council had two formal meetings. The first was in Dunedin on the 30th May 2013, held just prior to the AGM weekend. The second meeting was in Wellington on the 9th November 2013.

These face to face meetings are an ideal opportunity to debate issues and future directions of the Society but because of the cost of getting the group together only two meetings are held annually. The Council will consider the use of technology such as Skype for future meetings.

This is a limiting factor in advancing many topics, however there is much discussion that takes place by the email medium. This does of course have limitations but is a useful means of keeping activities going between the formal meetings.

The important issues raised at these meetings are covered elsewhere in this report.

Council Elections

The Annual General Meeting this year will see the retirement of Secretary, Peter Gaze and Councillor David Melville. Stefanie Grosser's term of co-option also expires at the end of this term. Stefanie has allowed her name to be put forward to the election but the retirement of Peter and David will see the Society lose a great deal of corporate knowledge and a pair of tireless workers.

Peter has been Secretary for the last six years but he also served in the same position for six years in the 1970s. During both terms he has quietly and efficiently gone about the business of Secretary and has provided a great deal of support to the Council during that time.

David Melville has been on Council since June 2002 and has served four terms. With his wealth of experience from overseas and his ability to research topics, he has provided a great deal of wisdom around the Council table.

Stefanie has now served her term of co-option and is standing for Council at these elections. While she has only been on the Council for approximately six months she has brought the enthusiasm of youth and also a student perspective to our deliberations.

At the time of writing this report the results of the election are not available but I can confirm that Delia Small was the only nomination for Secretary. She will therefore be duly appointed at the AGM. We welcome Delia to our small team.

Publications

The publication of *Notornis* has continued on schedule throughout this year. This is largely thanks to the efforts of Jim Briskie and the support that he is receiving from authors. Jim has advised Council that manuscripts are flowing through sufficiently to enable journals to be put together in a timely manner.

While Jim does not have a large backlog he is confident of printing full journals over the next 12-month period. I would encourage students and authors to continue submitting articles as it is only by publishing their work that we can educate and inform our readers and the wider community.

Peter Gaze, on behalf of Council, has been pursuing the issue of obtaining an impact factor, which I understand is important, particularly for students wishing to publish papers. It is essential however that the editor has sufficient papers to publish on time over a two year period.

Nick Allen has continued to produce *Southern Bird* (now *Birds New Zealand*) on time throughout the year. It will be seen that the layout and content has been slightly changed over the last year as Nick has responded to comments from the RRs Meeting in 2013. It is essential however, that members take the opportunity to submit articles and comments to Nick so that he does not have to waste time chasing articles.

The section on places to see birds is a good opportunity to publicise your local areas so that visiting birders can appreciate new areas as they travel around the country. I notice my report in 2012 called for regions to provide reports of projects that they are undertaking. That is a suggestion that has not been taken advantage of, which I think is a great pity. Reading the regional newsletters through the year there are some very interesting local projects and I believe it is worthwhile bringing these to the attention of the membership at large.

Website

During this year Bruce McKinlay and Ingrid Hutzler have continued to liaise with Bluetwist (the developers of the website) to deal with issues as they arose. This has been a frustrating exercise but it is part of undertaking a major upgrade on this important communication tool. The member's page appeared to be operating satisfactorily during the year, although there are still some issues associated with access for Regional Representatives.

Further to this point, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Julia White who undertakes the task of membership secretary. Her task however has been eased by members able to update their own address information directly on the website. I also wish to thank Roger Sharp who has been providing assistance and advice to Julia and is gradually taking over the web support role.

Book Review Editor

Trish Wells has continued in this role through the year and is enjoying her task of reading the books that are provided to the Society as well as arranging for book reviews to be published. This is another of the roles within the Society which is out of the public eye but is still providing a useful outcome for the membership.

Bander Certification

During the past 12 month period David Melville has been very active in working closely with the Department of Conservation's Banding Office in relation to the certification and training of bird banders. An important step forward this year has been the implementation of bander certification, which is something that the Society has been promoting for a number of years. David will continue working with DOC in the coming year to further develop training opportunities for banders, both to enable certified banders to increase their level of certification and to introduce new banders into the system.

The Society wishes to express its appreciation to Don Newman from DOC for his assistance in these discussions. The Department

is currently considering options for the banding office and for a replacement for Don, who will be retiring shortly. The discussions over the banding issue have resulted in closer working relationships with organisations such as Fish and Game, the museums, Crown Research Institutes, the Tiritiri Matangi Supporters Group and the universities who utilise banding for bird studies.

Projects and Activity Committee

The Projects and Activities Committee has been largely in recess during the past year as the terms of reference of this committee are being reviewed following recommendations by the convenor, Peter Frost.

There are a number of suggestions that Peter has put forward to review how this committee may operate more efficiently in the future and these are still being considered by Council. One of the principle reasons this review is necessary is because of the very low usage that the regions have made of this committee and uncertainty over the best method of achieving successful outcomes. This lack of activity by the committee is through no fault of the members of the committee who have tried valiantly over the past few years to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Birds New Zealand Research Fund

In last year's report I mentioned that a generous trust wished to establish a fund that would provide annual grants for ornithological research. This relationship has now been formally recognised as being the Birds New Zealand Research Fund. Council has established a small committee who are running this programme of receiving applications and allocating the grants and monitoring the outcomes, and the fund is administered by Ingrid.

The following is a progress overview of projects that received grants in the 2013 funding year:

- **HANZAB digitisation for NZ Birds Online website (Te Papa)**
The Birds New Zealand Research fund supported the scanning of all HANZAB text and plates (seven volumes) to ensure Birds Online is the definitive site for information on birdlife in New Zealand. The project was successfully completed in November 2013 with all HANZAB extracts available live on the New Zealand Birds Online website. A summary article was published in *Southern Bird* December 2013 and is also available on our website. Te Papa reported no undue problems. The total digitisation process including website modification for loading PDFs came to \$27,529, so the fund contribution of \$18,400 was fully expended.
- **Transfer of Chatham Albatrosses to Chatham Islands (Taiko Trust)**
This fund was to help establish a second colony of Chatham Island Albatross on Main Chatham as part of their five-year project. In particular, the grant was towards the purchase of equipment for chick translocations, which will be beneficial for the entire length of the project. Having the right gear (for chicks to be shifted safely and measured properly, and food to be prepared and kept hygienic) has ensured a safe and effective operation, which resulted in a 100% fledging success. The first year's targets have been achieved and the grant of \$10,000 was used up with actual purchase costs \$10,020. The project has not only helped establish albatrosses on Main Chatham, but also increased the profile of seabird conservation and the plight of threatened seabirds, both at local and national levels. In terms of advocating for better protection of seabirds, this project is unrivalled! An overview article was included in *Southern Bird* (September 2013) and a summary article will be published in *Birds New Zealand* later this year - both will be available on our website.
- **Monitor movements of Hutton's Shearwater (Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust)**
The fund was to help gain a better understanding of the Hutton's Shearwater biology and allow better management of the Kaikoura colony. Unfortunately, the project has not gone to plan and no dataloggers were deployed. The main obstacles were unsuitable weather (a very wet spring/early summer), helicopter access issues and unavailability of Department of Conservation staff. Later deployment of loggers would have been possible but the value of data would be diminished without the early season information. Therefore the field work for 2013-14 was cancelled.

Based on these reasonable and understandable obstacles, and a good chance that the next season will be more favorable, the request to carry the fund over to 2014-15 was granted.

David Medway Scholarship

During the past year Council has been in discussions with George Mason from the Taranaki region regarding the establishment of a scholarship fund to commemorate the work that David Medway undertook for birds and the Taranaki region. The terms of this scholarship have now been agreed.

This scholarship will also be administered by the Birds New Zealand Research Fund Committee with assistance from Phil Battley as the University Liaison Person. The call for applications for this scholarship will be announced towards the end of this year, although the conditions can be found on the website.

We thank the George Mason Trust for this wonderful gift to commemorate a Past President of the Society and from my discussions with George he also worked with David on the National Parks and Reserves Authority.

New Zealand Birds Online

One of the highlights of 2013 was the launch of the New Zealand Birds Online website at our Dunedin conference. This three-year project was a collaboration between Te Papa, the Department of Conservation and the Society, and involved many society members as contributing authors and photographers. Funds for the website development were obtained from the Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information Systems Programme Fund, and Te Papa made a major contribution through their support of the project manager and editor (Colin Miskelly) and members of the Te Papa website team. DOC's contribution (in addition to administration of the TFBIS fund) included text contributions from many staff, and access to a large and important archive of New Zealand bird images. A total of 111 authors contributed texts for the 457 species, and 256 photographers contributed 6,592 images before the launch. The pool of photographers and images has grown considerably since the launch, with the image archive now exceeding 7,200. The website also contains sound files of almost all New Zealand birds, over 90% of which were sourced from the vast archive that Les McPherson has built up over more than 40 years.

It is a tribute to all involved that the website was delivered on time and on budget, as well as proving to be a magnificent resource that makes high quality information on New Zealand's birds readily available to anyone with an internet connection. The website has been accessed more than a quarter of a million times in its first year of use. I look forward to hearing from the branches whether this heightened interest in New Zealand birds has translated into increased interest in, and membership of, the Society. And I challenge you all to use the New Zealand Birds Online website to promote both the society and the study of New Zealand birds. I am aware that a number of projects around the country quote the website as the source of their information.

Educational Material

Sarah Jamieson is currently working on a set of guidance notes that would be readily available as educational material. The main intention of this material is to be used as reference material for an interactive lecture series which can be utilised at community night classes or can be run through the regions as a way of introducing people to the study of birds. I can advise that Sarah is in the final stages of this project and we look forward to the launch in the near future. This is a step towards providing a means of introducing new people to the Society.

Brand Name Introduction

At the annual meeting in 2013 the membership voted to introduce a brand name for the Society and the implementation of that is now well advanced. Council moved slowly on this introduction to ensure that the implications and the benefits were maximised. Ian Armitage and Ingrid Hutzler led this process with Ian providing to the Council a strategy for achieving an improved public understanding and acceptance of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand including the use of the brand name Birds New Zealand.

Council is still in the process of implementing the suggestions in this strategy and some of the opportunities will form part of the joint meeting with Regional Representatives prior to this Annual General Meeting taking place.

Field Guide

The preparation of an update of the *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand* is now well advanced. Hugh Robertson has now completed the text for the updated version, largely rewriting most of the previous guide. Derek Onley has also finished the additional illustrations which include 14 new plates as well as a number of additions to the previous plates. This is a major undertaking by the Society and it is hoped that this new version will be available before the end of this year.

The Society is grateful to the Canterbury Region for agreeing to fund the artwork for the field guide from part of the legacy left by Marj Davis, who was a long-standing active Canterbury member. This is a very generous gift to the Society and will be suitably acknowledged within the field guide itself.

Australasian Ornithological Conference

During this year the Auckland Region organised the bi-annual Australasian Ornithological Conference on behalf of the AOC Committee. This was a wonderful event with a very wide range of speakers, many of whom were students showcasing work that they have been undertaking in the two countries.

The Society partially funded two students to the conference; Jimmy Choi and Kyle Morrison. The Society also approved a resolution to continue funding student attendance at future conferences. On behalf of the Society I wish to thank Mel Galbraith and his team in Auckland for their efforts in organising this event; only the second time it has been held in New Zealand.

eBird

Over recent years there has been debate about the system that the Society should adopt for recording field observations. It has been accepted that eBird is the Society's official recording scheme for all bird records within New Zealand.

During the year the Society has investigated ways to undertake training to encourage more people to record their observations to assist in compiling the most useful monitoring data over a long period. It is hoped that this can be implemented in the coming year.

75th Celebrations

The Marlborough Region has offered to host next year's AGM weekend, which will also be used to celebrate the end of our 75th year since the original meeting. The theme for this conference will be along the lines of 'The People and The Birds'.

Final details are still being determined and no doubt there will be discussion during the gathering in June this year. However the intention is to celebrate the people who have been involved in the organisation over these 75 years. This is always one of my key themes that it is the people that make our organisation and this is our chance to recognise the many people who have contributed over the years. We look forward to this event and the participation of as many people as possible.

Regional Representatives

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the regional representatives who are the backbone of our organisation. I have looked through all of the regional reports that have been provided to the Council and I am amazed at the diversity of activities that take place in the various regions.

Often I hear comments from members that they do not have projects or activities to participate in, but it should be remembered that your representatives are also busy people in their own right. I would urge those people who have ideas, to offer their services to the representatives, who I am sure, would be grateful for the assistance.

During the year I have been made aware of several changes, firstly in the Bay of Plenty where Paul Cuming has replaced Eila Lawton. I have just been advised that Eila has passed away after a short illness; a real loss to the organisation. In the Wairapapa region

Robin List has taken over from Peggy Duncan, who served for a number of years.

Librarian and Archivist

Kathy Barrow has been the librarian based at the Auckland Museum for many years. Michael Taylor has also volunteered for the Society by archiving the huge collection of information that the Society holds at the Museum.

Both of these people have provided outstanding service to the Society in their respective roles but both have resigned from these positions. I would therefore invite any members, particularly those in the Auckland area who wish to have interesting tasks on a part time basis to either contact me, or Kathy or Michael directly to get more information.

Acknowledgements

I would take this opportunity to thank all of the people involved in running our organisation. Many of the key people I have already mentioned in this report but there are many others throughout the organisation who undertake numerous smaller tasks that all add up to what I consider to be a successful whole.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the work of our Executive Officer, Ingrid Hutzler, who provides outstanding support to the Council and Regional Representatives and other office holders throughout the year. This year she has also put in considerable extra effort in assisting with the brand name adoption and the website updates. Her efforts play a key role in ensuring that the Society's basic functions perform well for members and is a constant source of information for the President and Council.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the members of Council who I believe have led the Society responsibly and well over the past 12 months. Every Council member has provided input and has led aspects of the Society's work in which they have expertise. I believe that the membership can and should be proud of the efforts of this small group of volunteers.

I have pleasure in presenting this report on the activities of the Society over the past year on behalf of the Council and I look forward to the future with confidence. I still get great pleasure and enjoyment out of watching birds and I hope that you all take the opportunity to do the same.

DAVID LAWRIE, President



Call for applications for Birds New Zealand Research Fund

The Birds New Zealand Research Fund is a national fund administered by Birds New Zealand on behalf of a charitable trust. Applications will be accepted from organisations prepared to make a difference through ornithological research, with outcomes likely to provide for better management of New Zealand birds or their environment. Approved applications will be funded retrospectively for a 12 month period only.

Criteria

- provide independent assessment of the sound scientific method behind the research
- involve research with a measurable outcome and a commitment to have the results published and available
- involve people learning as well as being involved
- have been successful in the previous year and performed well

How to Apply

Download the application form at <http://osnz.org.nz/studies-and-schemes/birds-nz-research-fund> and email your complete application to our Executive Officer: eo@osnz.org.nz.

Note: we prefer typed and emailed applications. Applications need to be received by 1st September 2014.



Kaikoura Seabirds, Shearwaters, Science and Sea Weekend

All photos by Nicky McArthur

Notes on a Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust celebration through partnerships, community education and research.

On the weekend of April 5-6th this year over ninety participants and 16 (plus) speakers, enjoyed a programme of seabird science, a photography course and opportunities to observe seabirds, including the Hutton's Shearwater, from vantage points on land and sea in Kaikoura.

The weekend coincided with the end of summer departure of the Hutton's Shearwater for their winter feeding grounds off the coast of Australia (Onley and Scofield, 2007) – an occasion that has been celebrated by an annual early Sunday morning farewell for the last five years.

Programme

On the first morning participants had the option of a Maori tour, a photography workshop run by Peter Langlands and two bird watching trips – one from Point Kean led by Department of Conservation (DOC) Programme Manager, Biodiversity, Phil Bradfield and the other a sea-based trip with the world-renowned Albatross Encounter team. That afternoon there were four scientific presentations, chaired by Ruud Kleinpaste the well-known 'Bugman, Birdman and Ecologist', on national and international seabird conservation programmes. President of Forest & Bird, Andrew Cutler, spoke on ocean governance, the need to break the denial barrier with respect to fisheries by-catch and called for greater effort to increase marine reserves from the current 1% of coast to the targeted 10%. Andrew noted that when marine reserves have been created there is a huge amount of local pride in them. That evening Brett Cowan (DOC) of Takanga Marae hosted presentations by the Kaikoura mayor Winston Gray, local MP Colin King and Ruud Kleinpaste. The evening concluded with the documentary film *The Mystery Bird* featuring Geoff Harrow and the Hutton's Shearwater (<http://vimeo.com/55560605>).

Early on Sunday morning participants walked to the new colony to farewell 'the Huttons' before enjoying a warm breakfast prior to presentations by Trust members Phil Bradfield, Nicky McArthur, Lindsay Rowe and by Gina Solomon. As a member of Te Korowai, Gina outlined the need for a suite of tools to meet their sustainability goals – not just coastal reserves, Ruud Kleinpaste spoke on natural capital associated with insects, and the concluding speaker, Lou Sanson, Director General, DOC spoke about the importance of community conservation projects.

Lou noted the recent establishment of Te Korowai, a system of protected marine areas along the Kaikoura coast, his desire for conservation to be as important as education and health, the importance of partnerships in DOC's (and New Zealand's) conservation future and legislative change so that OSNZ will no longer be charged a fee for the use of DOC staff in bird banding programmes.

Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust

In 1964 a skilled mountaineer, Geoff Harrow, with an interest in birds found eight Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni* colonies high in the Seaward Kaikoura ranges on the northern east coast of New Zealand's South Island. Maori had known of the existence of the birds breeding in the mountains for centuries and they were also familiar to run holders and hunters. By the year 2000 the number of colonies had collapsed from eight to two. This rapid loss led to the Hutton's Shearwater being listed



■ The new Te Rae o Atiu colony on Kaikoura Peninsula.

as endangered. After a period of intensive research a new colony and the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust (HSCT) were formed. The 2.4 ha colony (Te Rae o Atiu) was established at the seaward end of Kaikoura Peninsula in 2010.

The HSCT was established in 2008. Its mission is "To encourage and promote the preservation, conservation, research, public education and sustainable management of the Hutton's Shearwater." Its vision links the goal of a flourishing Hutton's Shearwater population with the land, the people and the sea. The weekend, through the presenters, participants and the early success of the new colony demonstrated the Trust's effectiveness and commitment of its members and sponsors to achieving its mission and vision.

The Trust, the Community and the next generation

As Lou Sanson noted, increasingly conservation projects require partnerships between government and non-government organisations and, in this case, involvement of the wider community. Many organisations and individuals have contributed to the new colony's establishment. They include those who gave access to land, others with technical expertise, the many donors and sponsors and importantly a commitment to the Trust from the local community, including the local schools. The site of Te Rae o Atiu has use under a licence to occupy awarded by the Tuteke Charitable Trust (the land owners). Access to the colony at Shearwater Stream is provided by the private owner of the 1618 ha Puhi Peaks Station which has 866 ha in two covenanted areas for conservation purposes (Walls, 2013). The other colony, a nature reserve in Kowhai River headwaters, is on DOC land.

Nicky McArthur, HSCT trustee, liaison person and Shearwater Stream landowner, outlined the involvement of the Trust with the local school children who do a study of the Hutton's Shearwater from both land and sea. All year six and year nine classes from the local school go on sea trips with Albatross Encounter. On land, the children use an education pack developed by DOC and are shown the *Mystery Bird* film. Year nine children survey the local population and the tourists to determine their awareness of the species and a University of Canterbury student is studying the extent of crash landings by fledgling birds confused by local street lighting. The school children also learn about the Little Penguins that nest in South Bay.

Thus there is a significant effort by the Trust to encourage community awareness through education, participation and citizen science.



▲ Hutton's Shearwaters at sea off Kaikoura.

Hutton's Shearwater and other seabirds

Phil Bradfield (DOC), gave the first of a series of presentations about the Hutton's Shearwater and other sea birds.

The two surviving natural colonies, Kowhai River catchment with 106,000 pairs, the other at Shearwater Stream with 8,000 pairs, are estimated to total 460,000 birds. Both colonies are at 1200-1800 m ASL, high above the snowline on the steep slopes of the Seaward Kaikoura Range. The first census was conducted in 2002 using a mark and recapture technique where birds were sprayed with a red or yellow marker and the frequency of coloured/non coloured birds counted in rafts off the coast. Recent analysis of the blood taken from birds in these two colonies shows that they are homogeneous. A second census is planned for September 2014.

The reason for the decline between 1964 and 2000 is still unclear but the existing risks include landslides, mustelids, trampling by deer, goats and chamois, avalanches, predation by pigs (which can destroy a colony at a rate of about 0.5 ha a night) and more recently, pressure on food stocks. In 2013, 13 pigs were caught in a live trap in the upper Kowhai catchment, just below the colony. Surprisingly the size of the Kowhai River colony may be large enough to withstand pressure from mustelids (Cuthbert and Sommer, 2009). Mustelids may however be more of a problem than has been ascertained to date, especially in the Shearwater Stream colony where there is ongoing assessment and trapping.

Because of these pressures, the new colony is an important insurance policy for the species. Before the predator-proof fence was completed in 2010 quite a few chicks were lost to predators, mainly cats. From 496 translocations 473 birds are assumed to have fledged (Table 1). At present the colony contains 160 artificial burrows. Forty birds returned in the 2013/14 season, 15 were breeding pairs.

A few birds from the Kowhai catchment were fitted with GPS trackers for short periods during the breeding season. Two of these birds travelled approximately 600 km over six days for

a 70 gram crop full of food for their chicks. There is growing concern about whether there is sufficient food available—on some muttonbird islands 100% of shearwater chicks were lost this year (Rowe, pers com).

Phil acknowledged the importance of community support of the Trust's activities. Community support occurs at so many levels including tangata whenua, schools, individuals, local and national government, many Kaikoura businesses and of course the land owners.

Chris Gaskin (seabird conservation advocate) talked about the Kaikoura Coast being an Important Bird Area (Forest & Bird, 2014) or IBA and about Hutton's Shearwaters' main local feeding area being off the Chatham Rise, Kaikoura and Banks Peninsula. With some concern about a new threat to the species, he too noted that Hutton's Shearwater are seen more and more frequently in the Hauraki Gulf, suggesting that they are having to go further afield to feed.

Graeme Taylor (DOC) discussed the risks to Hutton's Shearwater of recreational fishing, especially set netting and line fishing off the Kaikoura Coast. One person reported 80 Hutton's Shearwaters being caught in a net in one day – including a colour-marked bird. Other major threats to seabirds in general include declining feed stocks, plastics and wind turbine collisions. However growing public interest, new fishing techniques, new pest management techniques and new monitoring tools were having a positive effect. Examples include burrow scopes, mark and capture techniques and tracking technology using geo-location devices, micro-chips and data-loggers. Apart from tracking migration patterns, this technology is also used to monitor diving behaviour. Using depth gauges, the Hutton's Shearwater has been shown to dive to 36 m. This compares with the Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* (70 m), the Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* (29 m) and the Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator* (14m).

Karen Baird (Forest & Bird) noted that fisheries by-catch continues to be the biggest threat to seabird populations. She



▲ Translocated Hutton's Shearwater chick.

Table 1: Effects of translocations to the new Hutton's Shearwater colony (Te Rae o Atiu) on the Kaikoura Peninsula

Event / Date	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Translocations	10	86	95	100				102	103	
Presumed fledging of translocated chicks	10	79	83	98				101	102	
Eggs laid at new colony						2	4	14	14	
No. fledged from new natal colony								1	2	8

Sources: HSWT and DOC translocation reports, HSWT members and newsletters.

Notes: Table shows translocations from March 2005 to April 2014. There were no translocations in the years 2009-2011 inclusive.

also offered some hope in that the level of by catch off the New Zealand coast has reduced considerably. However, because many seabirds migrate to the South American coast where controls are not so effective or prevalent, the global situation remains serious. Karen called for the establishment of a global seabird conservation programme. The need for such an approach became even more apparent in Paul Scofield's presentation.

Paul Scofield's (Canterbury Museum) address focussed on albatrosses off the Chatham Islands, principally the Chatham Island Albatross *Thalassarche eremita* found on two groups of small and exposed islands, The Pyramid and the Sisters and Forty-fours, with a population of 5,000 breeding pairs. He noted that although the by-catch situation may be improving with New Zealand boats, while conducting research on these islands, he found hooks from Chile and Peru. On one boat seven Chatham Island Albatrosses were killed in one day. Despite the by-catch this population seems to be stable.

Little Penguin research

Lindsay Rowe and Jody Weir (HSCT) outlined their study of Little Penguins in South Bay.

Five species of penguin have been seen in Kaikoura, mainly in South Bay, particularly around the marina. The main species is the Little Penguin of which there are about 40 birds. Most of these have been micro-chipped. Their movements to and from the colony are timed by data loggers and some are being tracked using GPS trackers.

A study of pairing fidelity among the Little Penguin population suggests that they tend to "move around" with one pair having three partners in eight years. There is evidence including blood and fights between males that have led to a change in pairings. Jody Weir, a PhD student who is monitoring the breeding biology of 11 pairs of Little Penguin, noted that of the 21 eggs laid in the 2013 season, 19 chicks fledged. They began nesting in August with the first egg laid on September 4th. They incubated for 35 days with the last egg hatching on November 23rd. In their first two days the chicks increased in weight from 48 g to 75 g.

Jody also discussed PEAP (Penguins Education and Awareness Programme) a community engagement programme established in 2012. PEAP has set up an information centre for visitors and school children and encourages sponsorship of individual penguins (17 sponsored to date). The Kaikoura District Council has assisted with funding for the building of nest boxes for the project. Like the Hutton's Shearwater programme, PEAP is engaged with the local community.

Summary

This was a very successful weekend that brought together many interest groups and individuals to share their knowledge of the Hutton's Shearwater and other seabirds on the Kaikoura coast. Questions still remain regarding the long term status of the translocated population, the cause of the collapse of the failed natural colonies, impacts of climate change and other agents on feed stocks and indeed on the total Hutton's Shearwater population.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Hutton's Shearwater Conservation Trust members: Nicky McArthur and Lindsay Rowe for commenting on a first draft of these notes and Paul McGahan for providing some additional data and reports on the translocations. Any remaining errors are mine.

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Hutton's Shearwater News 2013-14

The Hutton's Shearwater Te Rae o Atiu (Kaikoura Peninsula) colony has gone from strength to strength this season. In the last four seasons we have progressed from two eggs to one chick to two chicks and now eight chicks fledged (from 15 eggs). Over 40 adults were seen this season including eight not seen before, and another unbanded bird called in by the sound-system. There must have been others, as we see partners of some birds and did not visit at night to check them all out. We should be seeing the first of the birds translocated in 2012 back next season.

From late-March 2014 the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust and students from the University of Canterbury undertook a project to learn more about newly-fledged birds crash-landing around Kaikoura on their first flight to

the ocean from their breeding colonies in the mountains. Logs for recording finds were in offices around Kaikoura and over 60 reports have been forwarded to the students. Many birds were found in Churchill Street, Beach Road, Mill Road, Inland Road, Torquay Street and the Esplanade, and the last was found on 13th April 2014. The survey results are currently being collated and analysed at the University.

Many birds were taken to Encounter Kaikoura and, before release at sea, they were weighed, had their wing lengths measured and were fitted with a numbered metal band. The shearwater banded X19805 had been found in Torquay Street on 25th March. After banding it was released in South Bay that afternoon, its first taste of the sea and having to find its own food for the

first time. X19805 has since been found sick at Nambucca Heads, New South Wales where it was taken into care on 1st April, seven days after release at South Bay. It was rehabilitated and released at Scots Head, south of Nambucca Heads, on 22nd April 2014. If this bird headed through Cook Strait and took a straight line to NSW it had covered 2,400 km; the alternative route up the east coast and passing North Cape would have been over 3,300 km. This was a lightweight, small bird and might not have survived the trip to its probable destination in the Indian Ocean near Broome if there had not been the rehabilitation efforts, but we are unlikely to know.

LINDSAY ROWE
Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust
(admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz)

Top Ten Wellington Birding Sites

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GEOFF DE LISLE



The Wellington OSNZ region is one of the smallest in the country yet has a large OSNZ membership. Unlike our northern and eastern neighbours Manawatu and Wairarapa we lack a prime location for waders but do have some first class birding sites, including several which have been intensively studied by OSNZ members over many years. The following are my personal picks for the top ten Wellington birding sites. Without doubt, others would select different sites and discard some of my selection. A feature of many of these selected sites is that a substantial amount of resources over many years has been spent in improving their habitat by predator control and in some cases predator eradication, and extensive plantings/weeding/re-afforestation. The upgrading of the habitats have provided the necessary conditions for translocations of a variety of bird species, including seabirds. The Department of Conservation and the Greater Wellington Regional Council have played a major part in the restoration of birding areas in the Wellington region and have been greatly assisted by a large army of volunteers from a number of different organisations. Some of the sites have an organisation dedicated to their ecological enhancement. Historical and botanical features are an added attraction of many of the sites. Complete bird lists for Matiu/Somes Island, Zealandia, Mana Island, Kapiti Island and Waikanae Estuary are available on nzbirdsonline.org.nz.

East Harbour Regional Reserve

Location/Access: On the eastern side of Wellington Harbour. Accessed by the road to Eastbourne or the coast road from Wainuiomata. The Pencarrow Lakes can be reached via a two-hour walk or 25-minute cycle ride along the flat coastal road from the locked Burdan's Gate at the end of Muritai Road, Eastbourne.

Area: The reserve covers 2,000 ha encompassing the beech/rata forest of Butterfly Creek, Paranganau (Pencarrow) Lakes and Baring Head. The Pencarrow wetlands are home to a wealth of native plants and wildlife, including some rare and threatened species.

Features: The Pencarrow Lakes and Baring Head are the only areas in the Wellington region where Banded Dotterels nest on the open sand and the lakes are the southernmost location of New Zealand Dabchick in the North Island. Forest birds in Butterfly Creek include Rifleman. The area around the lakes incorporates some unique cultural features, including evidence of early Maori occupation and the first lighthouse in New Zealand. The reserve is administered by Wellington Regional Council.

Volunteer Groups: East Harbour Environmental Association and Mainland Island Restoration (MIRO): www.miro.org.nz

▣ Kapiti Island as seen from Mana Island.

Rimutaka Forest Park

Location/Access: Take the hill road to Wainuiomata and follow the signs to the Coast Road/Rimutaka Forest Park and then turn left at the Catchpool Stream access road into the Park.

Area: Covers 22,000 ha of Rimutaka Range. Beech forest dominates much of the range, joined by podocarps at lower altitudes, and Kamahi, a predominant canopy tree (with emergent trees like Rimu, Rata, Miro, Hinau, Rewarewa and Maire in some areas).

Features: An area of about 3,000 ha where stoats are controlled by volunteer groups. The Rimutaka Forest Park Trust began releasing North Island Brown Kiwi into the park in May 2006. The population of Kiwi now numbers about 100, with more than half of them born and raised in the park. Forest birds in the park include Rifleman, Tomtit, Bellbird, Tui, Whitehead and Long-Tailed Cuckoo. A large population of New Zealand Pigeons congregates in the Catchpool Valley in the winter.

Volunteer Groups: The Rimutaka Forest Park Trust was formed in October 1988 to stimulate public interest in the fullest development of the Park: www.rimutakatrust.org.nz



▣ Matiu/Somes Island.

Matiu/Somes Island

Location/Access: Situated in Wellington Harbour about 5 km from the city centre. The East by West Ferry departs daily to the island from Wellington City and Days Bay, check www.eastbywest.co.nz/ timetables.

Area: A 24.9 ha island. A re-vegetation effort, initiated by Forest and Bird Lower Hutt and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1981, has fostered the regeneration of native plants and returned the island's landscape from livestock paddocks to the native bush that existed on the island before the arrival of European settlers. Rats were successfully eradicated from the island during the late 1980s.

Features: An important nesting site for Little Penguins and Spotted Shags, Red-crowned Parakeets were transferred to Matiu/Somes in 2003/4 and have flourished. During the last three years Fluttering Shearwater chicks from Long Island in the Marlborough Sounds have been released on Matiu/Somes as part of a project to establish a colony on the island.

Volunteer Groups: Following a Treaty settlement the island is now owned by local Iwi (Te Atiawa) but managed by DOC. While still protected by its reserve status, accessible to the public, its future is directed by a joint governance board composed of members from the Iwi, the wider community, and DOC: www.halo.org.nz/matiusomes-island-charitable-trust/

Zealandia/Karori Wildlife Sanctuary

Location/Access: Waiapu Road, on the way to Karori and just over 2 km from central Wellington. A free shuttle picks up Zealandia visitors from outside the city i-SITE and the top of the Cable Car. Details are available on www.visitzealandia.com. Night tours are available to see Little Spotted Kiwi.

Area: 225 ha of regenerating forest,

lakes and wetlands encircled by a predator-proof fence.

Features: The pioneer mainland island sanctuary in New Zealand with a special fence that excludes all mammalian pests with the exception of mice. The sanctuary has been populated by the introduction of a range of birds, reptiles and insects. Many of them including Little Spotted Kiwi, Robins, Kaka, Whiteheads and Saddlebacks are now present in large numbers. There is a growing population of Red-crowned Parakeets and Stitchbirds. The visitor centre houses a shop, café and 'The Exhibition', the first facility fully-dedicated to showcasing New Zealand's unique natural history and world-famous conservation.

Volunteer Groups: A crucial component of the success of Zealandia is the large army of volunteers. With around 450 active volunteers, Zealandia is one of the largest volunteer-supported conservation organisations in New Zealand. Volunteers participate in a very wide range of activities, from track and fence maintenance, gardening, conservation, bird feeding, and guiding and hosting.

Te Papa Museum

Location/Access: 55 Cable Street, on the Wellington waterfront.

Area: The National Museum of New Zealand. Inside the building are six floors of exhibitions, cafés and gift shops dedicated to New Zealand's culture and environment. The museum also incorporates outdoor



▣ The lower reservoir at Zealandia.

areas with artificial caves, native bushes and wetlands. A second building on Tory Street is a scientific research facility and storage area, and is not open to the public.

Features: While not a traditional birding area the museum is a great place to visit on occasions when the Wellington weather is not conducive to outdoor activities. The museum not only has great displays of extant birds but also the extensive extinct fauna, including moa and Haast's Eagle.

Pauatahanui Inlet

Location/Access: Pauatahanui Inlet is an east-west running arm of Porirua Harbour, 30 km north of Wellington. Public access to the Pauatahanui Wildlife Management Reserve is via the Forest and Bird reserve at Pauatahanui village from State Highway 58.

Area: Pauatahanui Inlet is the most extensive relatively unmodified estuarine area in the southern part of the North Island.

Features: Forest and Bird have over a number of years carried out a restoration programme on the



▣ Pauatahanui Inlet.



▲ Concrete Gannets to attract the real thing to nest, Mana Island.

Pauatahanui Wildlife Management Reserve. The reserve contains bird hides for viewing shore birds. Birds New Zealand has been monitoring changes in the occurrence and populations of birds in Pauatahanui Inlet since 1982.

Volunteer Groups: Forest and Bird and Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet: www.gopi.org.nz

Mana Island

Location/Access: The island lies only 2.5 km from the mainland at its closest point. Access to Mana Island is difficult as currently there are no commercial operators offering regular trips to the island.

Area: A 217 ha island, which up to the 1980s was a quarantine sheep farm. Subsequently the administration has passed to the Department of Conservation. A very extensive re-forestation programme with over 500,000 trees planted has transformed the island to a valuable site for bird conservation.

Features: Since the eradication of mice a range of different birds and other wildlife have been translocated to Mana Island. They include not only forest birds, such as Robin, Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Bellbird and Whitehead, but also Takahe, Brown Teal, Shore Plover, and recently, Rowi. Mana Island is the site of the world's most complex sea bird translocation project. As part of the project to establish new colonies, Fairy Prion, Fluttering Shearwater and Common Diving Petrel chicks have been transferred to artificial burrows on Mana Island and reared until they fledged.

Volunteer Groups: Friends of Mana Island (FOMI): www.manaisland.org.nz



▲ One of the former oxidation ponds in Pharazyn Reserve.

Kapiti Island

Location/Access. Approximately 5 km off the West Coast. There are three commercial operators offering transport to Kapiti Island from the beach at Paraparaumu. Overnight accommodation is available at the north end of the island. Contact details of the operators are available on the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz

Area: 1,965 hectares—the island's vegetation is dominated by scrub and forest of Kohekohe, Tawa, and Kanuka. Most of the forest is naturally regenerating after years of burn-offs and farming, but some areas of original bush remain.

Features: The first of the larger islands in New Zealand to be cleared of all mammalian predators. Good populations of forest birds including Robin, Whitehead, Kaka, New Zealand Pigeon, Tui, Bellbird, Red-crowned Parakeet, Saddleback and Weka. There is an expanding number of Kokako and a population of supplementary-fed Stitchbird. Kapiti Island is the home of the Little Spotted Kiwi and the source for all other translocated populations of this species.

Waikanae Estuary

Location/Access: Waikanae Estuary is located between Paraparaumu and Waikanae on the Kapiti Coast north of Wellington. The main entry points into the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve are on Manly Street North, Paraparaumu Beach. One track leads out onto the seaward side of the lagoon and the other follows the inland side of the estuary.

Area: At Waikanae Estuary, freshwater from the Tararua Ranges meets the saltwater of the Kapiti Coast. This mixing of the waters and the ever shifting river mouth create an environment of rich plant and animal communities.

Features: More species of coastal and aquatic birds visit Waikanae Estuary than any other site on the Wellington coast. Recently Fernbirds have been found at the estuary.

Volunteer Groups: Waikanae Care Group: www.gw.govt.nz/Waikanae-Estuary/

Pharazyn Reserve

Location/Access: Drive north out of Waikanae Beach along Rutherford Drive. The route is also on the Kapiti Coast Cycle Way.

Area: Previously fenced off to the public, the old Waikanae oxidation ponds are now open for recreation purposes. A short track goes in for about 300 m from Rutherford Drive, and then along the western edge of the ponds. There are tracks around the ponds but currently these are closed to the public. There is a wide grassy area, and work is underway to re-vegetate the lake edges.

Features: The least well-known of the top birding sites in Wellington. The reserve has a good selection of water birds, including large numbers of New Zealand Dabchicks. It is a likely spot for the rarer water birds, as is evidenced by the recent appearance of an Australasian Little Grebe. I recommend taking a telescope as access is not permitted to all parts of the ponds.

Beach Patrol Scheme 2012 Preliminary Report

This report is based on 324 cards for 2012 received as at 30th January 2014. This compares to 352 cards in 2011, 315 in 2010, 385 in 2009, 381 in 2008 and 403 in 2007. In 2012 1,625 km were patrolled (1,846 km in 2011, 3,210 km in 2010, 4,470 km in 2009, 2,524 km in 2008 and 2,307 km in 2007). Dead seabirds found in 2012 totalled 1,924 (57,920 in 2011, 3,266 in 2010, 4,763 in 2009, 3,906 in 2008, 3,786 in 2007 and 3,117 in 2006). There were no significant wrecks in the year in contrast to 2011 which had two major events; the prion wreck and the oil spill that resulted from the grounding of the *MV Rena*. A preliminary look through the 2013 cards suggests a major wreck of Sooty Shearwaters in May and a major wreck of Short-tailed Shearwaters from October to December.

The region with the highest birds per kilometre total was Bay of Plenty with five birds per kilometre. Two districts had no patrols done: Offshore Islands and East Coast North Island.

The average recovery rate for the whole country was around 1.8 birds per kilometre, contrasting with the 2011 average of 31 birds per kilometre.

Tables of numbers of each species recovered and recoveries per recording area are available on the Birds New Zealand website, www.osnz.org.nz.

2012 banded birds

During the year five banded seabirds were noted on the cards. These are:

- 1) Gannet M72567 – banded as a chick on White Island on 1/2/1998, recovered 24/11/12 on Ruapuke Beach, Waikato
- 2) Red-billed Gull E183532 – banded on 03/12/00 at Kaikoura, recovered Kaikoura 01/11/12
- 3) White-flipped Penguin recovered Kaitorete Spit, Canterbury 09/04/12
- 4) Black-backed Gull recovered Matiu/Somes Island 11/02/12
- 5) Little Penguin recovered Matiu/Somes Island 11/02/12

There was also a racing pigeon found on Ruapuke Beach, Waikato on 28/11/12. It had been liberated at Masterton on 3/11/12 for a race to Christchurch. So why was it there?

The cause of death was noted for several birds. One Little Penguin was killed by a stoat while moulting, six Paradise Shelducks were victims of the shooting season, as were two Mallards and a Grey Duck. Nine Spotted Shags were shot at the Waiau River Mouth in Southland and a Shy Albatross was found with a dogfish stuck in its throat.

The continued success of the Beach Patrol Scheme is due to the dedication of those hardy souls who brave all manner of weather conditions to trudge the weary miles in search of decaying corpses. Please note any banded birds on the forms or cards and please note any obvious cause of death. Keep up the good work!

LLOYD ESLER



Tony Whitaker

Tony died unexpectedly in February this year.

This sudden and tragic loss is being felt deeply by family and friends.

A memorial afternoon at 'Craigholm', the home and gardens that he and Viv built in the Motueka Valley, was evidence of



this. Biologists and conservationists arrived from throughout the country to join family, neighbours and other friends. While many were herpetologists, all had treasured their friendship with Tony over the years.

Anthony Hume Whitaker (1944–2014) grew up in Pinehaven in the Hutt Valley. His passion and scientific interest in natural history was well established long before he went to Victoria University. It was the lizard fauna of New Zealand that he specialised in: developing techniques, revising the taxonomy, long-term population studies, clarifying the distribution and inevitably guiding the management of any lizard species which became threatened. All of this work was influenced by his wide field experience and it was trips with both Ecology Division of DSIR (where he was employed) and the Wildlife Service that led to his most influential paper on the impact of rats as predators of lizards. The subsequent acceptance of this by wildlife managers and the development of eradication techniques have been pivotal in our current legacy of rat-free islands which are the havens for the native fauna we cherish.

In 1971 I was employed by Peter Bull at Ecology Division to work on the first Atlas of Bird Distribution. It was Tony who arranged for me to spend a week each month helping him with a mist net study of forest birds in the Orongorongos. I learnt an awful lot more than how to take birds from his six tier net rigs! The mentoring continued right through to early February this year when I sought his advice (again) on a transfer of Duvaucel's Gecko in the Marlborough Sounds, and this advice was always given in a collegial manner—as friends. I mention this personal relationship only because it was so typical of Tony's connections with anyone who had half an interest in the natural world around them. That memorial afternoon at Craigholm was packed with others who had also received such a generous and wise influence from Tony on their lives.

If we can be encouraged by Tony's example to share our knowledge with a similar friendship and generosity of time then the species we love and our fellow young ornithologists will all benefit.

The Society extends its sympathy to Viv and the family.

PETER GAZE

Victims of Imprinting

One day in the late Seventies, a Ruff was reported to have been seen near Bluff, causing much excitement and overheating of telegraph wires; but was later found to be a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) in the company of three Pectoral Sandpipers (*C. melanotos* - the Sharp-tail's American counterpart), much as is described below. This account of the event proposes a possible explanation as to why such a misidentification may not have been so bad after all.

Tapping with his egg-tooth, the sandpiper chick broke through,
And poked his head out to enjoy the fresh air and the view.
He heard the strangest noises and stood up and craned his neck,
To see fine Ruffs displaying to their ladies at the lek.
'When I grow up, I'll be like that,' he swelled his chest with pride,
And lost his equilibrium and fell down on his side.

His mother fully understood his innocent romance,
And picked him up by what would be his seat, if he wore pants.
She said, 'my son you will become an *acuminata* ,
A smaller, soberer member of the tundra's social strata;
You will fly the world's great flyways, navigating at a glance,
But never will you join with Ruffs in foolish, foppish dance.'

He soon forgot that things are not always what they seem,
So never really did forget that early Ruffish dream.
And oft, when all alone he stood on moonlit mere's cold shore;
With neck stretched out and chest puffed up, a shade of
Ruff he saw,
And dreamed of pleasures quite beyond his role in tundra life:
The Highland Fling midst heath and ling; a Reeve perhaps for wife.

Then as the wind grew colder, and food and light ran short;
Conditioning forgotten, and with one instinctive thought;
The sandpipers forgathered, Polaris at their back,
Set celestial compasses to steer a southward track;
And took off to show the novices, the latest fledgling brood,
Another spring, a longer day, a fresher source of food.

Kamchatka, Honshu, Formosa and Luzon,
And countless weary ocean miles, and countless hours had gone;
They crossed the great Equator, Celebes at their feet,
Hot and tired and thirsty, and with fatty stores deplete;
When the hurricane-force cyclone howled down from the
western side,
Broke up their loose formation, and flung them far and wide.

Some reached the coast of Guinea, and rest on coral strand;
Some crossed the Arafura to the shores of Arnhem Land;
But the youngest and the hindmost, too spent to stay their fate,
Were swept to the Sea of Corals through the open Torres Strait.
On atolls, reefs and islets, the lucky made escape;
And some, exhausted, landfall made on Zealand's Northern Cape.

They met, whilst growing fatter at the North's rich feeding sites,
Three spoiled Nearctic cousins from the New World's
northern lights,
Who said, 'the food's abundant here, but lacks the subtle flavour
That the cultivated palate of an epicure should savour;
Let us seek the southern mudflats where the choicest
sand-shrimps dwell,
Near where the warm Pacific meets Antarctic's icy swell.'

But only one young Sharp-tail followed at their wings,
Still sure that he was destined for more exciting things,
And when they reached their Mecca, the nutritious muds of Bluff,
He still was not completely sure he wasn't born a Ruff.
He stood again on tiptoe, stretched out his neck once more,
Just as an ornithologist came walking down the shore.

This learned academic, with pressing thoughts profound,
Overlooked three *melanotos*, feeding from the fertile ground;
His eye at once distracted by what, quite off the cuff,
He tentatively labelled as, The Reeve or Female Ruff.
Careful, copious notes he took, and dreamed of wide acclaim
From authoritative papers, when published in his name.

Bird-watchers of distinction came hurrying in scores,
Affecting airs of sacrifice for scientific cause;
But in truth they dreamed of glory, and that folk in years ahead
Would call a feast day after them and then, when they were dead,
That their children's children's children, in voices hushed with awe,
Would tell their children of that day and what their forebears saw.

But fame was to escape them, as a child's voice rang clear:
'Sandpipers four I surely saw; there is no Ruff I fear.'
At that young impertinent those sages looked aghast,
That, upon their expertise, aspersions should be cast;
And so to sort the matter out, and put the upstart down,
Took up their wader monographs by authors of renown.

The evidence suggested, and they'd evidence enough,
A sandpiper was mimicking the posture of a Ruff!
By way of explanation someone had a bright idea ---
None could dispute its logic --- and the fog began to clear ----
With lowered head, and faces red, enlightenment came glinting,
And all averred they, like the bird, were victims of imprinting.

JOHN SQUIRE

Nominations for Regional Representatives 2015

Each RR serves for a one-year term, starting 1st January, though incumbents can be re-nominated for an unlimited number of terms.

Nominations for the RR of each region close with the Secretary (P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040) on 31st July 2014.

The nomination paper for each RR must be signed by two financial members of the Society from that region and must be consented to in writing by the person nominated, who must also be a member of the Society.

If the Secretary receives more than one valid nomination a postal ballot will be held among the financial members of the region. If no nomination is received from a region, Council may appoint an RR for the 2015 year.

Black-fronted Terns at Lake Stream



▣ Adult Black-fronted Tern and fledgling on Lake Stream. Photo by the author.

I studied a nesting colony of Black-fronted Terns for five days on Lake Stream at Lake Heron, Canterbury, where, to my knowledge, they have not been studied before. From 7th to 11th December 2013 I performed daily observations and attempted counts. The tern nests were mainly on an island in the river but also at its sides. The terrain was undulating, so observation of 'what's on the other side' was difficult. Access on one side of the stream is difficult.

There were about 20 nests, some with chicks. I estimated the adult population at 60 to 80 birds. No banded birds were seen. I and one other person put out 10 predator traps, but did not catch anything. Two Black-backed Gulls visited daily. On one occasion about 20 terns flew up and chased the gulls away. It did not stop them returning. The terns also mobbed a Paradise Shelduck on one occasion.

VIOLA PALMER

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Steve Attwood (Canterbury), Emma Bardsley (Waikato), Emil Bennett (Wairarapa), Sabine Bernert (France), Rhys Burns (Bay of Plenty), David and Jackie Cockeram (Taranaki), Wendy Crane (Wairarapa), Sylvain Dromzee (Auckland), Iryll Findlay (Auckland), Diane Gorton (Wellington), Todd Landers (Auckland), Richard Mairs (Auckland), Shanti Morgan (Auckland), Audrey Rendle (Wellington), Kalinka Rexter-Huber (Otago), Anna Louise Ryken (Auckland), Heather Rogers (Auckland), Levana Sietzes (Auckland), Joanna Sim (Manawatu), Florence Thame (Bay of Plenty), Wendy Thomas (Wairarapa), Tony Wall (Hawkes Bay) David Watts (Manawatu)

Donations

We thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society:

Keith Bell, Steve Braunias, David and Ruth Crockett, Philip Crutchley, Michael Fitzgerald, Jean Fleming, Chris Foreman, Mel Galbraith, Jim Jolly, Kevin Parker, David Pye, Anna Louise Ryken, Rob Schuckard, Kath Varcoe, Lois Wagener.

Hutton's Shearwater Colour-marking Census

The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust is planning to carry out a repeat of the census of Hutton's Shearwaters carried out in 2002 using 'mark-recapture' techniques to determine population trends. Graeme Taylor of DOC and Paul Scofield of the Canterbury Museum will be leading the science. Weather permitting, we will have a team going into the Kowhai River colony from 15th to 20th September to paint the underneath of 2-3,000 birds bright red. From 21st-30th September the interesting work begins when we will have observers on four boats cruising slowly through the rafts of Hutton's Shearwaters found in South Bay and nearby waters. Each boat will have two pairs of observers with one of each pair counting red and non-coloured birds and the other recording the data. With each pair looking out different sides of the boats we will get two observations without counting the same birds twice at the same time. If you are interested in volunteering as an observer for part of the counting work, please contact Lindsay Rowe at admin@huttonsshearwater.org.nz. Note that the boats are likely to be at sea for several hours at a time, the sea can be quite lumpy, and the counters should be experienced in making observations using binoculars as the coloured birds can be difficult to distinguish from non-coloured birds in some lights.

LINDSAY ROWE, *Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust*

Bizarre Behaviour from a Spotted Shag

On the morning of 18th of February 2014 Tim McKergow and two English visitors were motoring his yacht, *Seeker 1*, out of Greville Harbour, D'Urville Island, between Perano Point and the Boulder Bank channel when they witnessed amazing behaviour by a Spotted Shag. This bird flew up to the yacht from astern, rose over the yacht, hit the rigging and fell into the sea. The bird drifted back until about 50 m behind the yacht when it repeated the behaviour with the same unfortunate consequence. On the third occasion the bird managed to negotiate the rigging and then seized the tail of a small pennant flying from the beneath the crosstrees. This pennant was of the Pelorus Boating Club and shows a white dolphin on a black background. Unsurprisingly the shag was unable to achieve much while holding the pennant in its bill with legs and wings flapping in mid-air. The bird again fell into the water and once more drifted astern. This bizarre behaviour continued for approximately six more attempts, sometimes seizing the pennant and sometimes hitting rigging wires, each 'attack' ending with the bird then falling into the water. Eventually the bird let the yacht (and its pennant) sail away without further attention.

The pennant is about 40 cm long and was flying underneath a similar sized blue pennant. Only the black flag was attacked. There may be up to 500 other boats that fly the same pennant in the Sounds and have done each year for many years but this is the first instance we have heard of this behaviour.

TIM MCKERGOW and PETER GAZE

▣ The pennants that attracted the Spotted Shag



FAR NORTH

The main event here so far this year is a change of Regional Representative. After 10 years in the position, I have handed the job over to Les Feasey, an enthusiastic and fast-learning birder, and great photographer. So this may be my last Round-up but we will both be attending the Conference shortly, after which he will officially take over.

What the region hopes to achieve in the near future is much more communication and co-operation between us and our local conservation organisations of which there are many, each with a slightly different focus. However, they appear to operate in isolation while so much could be achieved by mutual events and sharing of information and expertise.

In our last roundup we mentioned the project involving the construction of nest boxes for Brown Kiwi and Little Penguins. This is not new, however, as local charitable trust Bay Bush Action has been behind the construction of these for some time, and many are now in place around the Bay of Islands. A new aspect, however, is the proposal to have schoolchildren involved and the sponsoring of individual birds; the region will be taking this further.

An Erect-crested Penguin was found on the rocks at Deep Water Cove near Cape Brett on 22nd February by those on an Ecocruz boat tour in the Bay of Islands. As it was being harassed by Black-backed Gulls it was taken into care by the Bird Recovery Centre in Whangarei, from where it was released in Otago in mid-March after completing its moult.

The Wrybill Tours annual pelagic trip to the Three Kings produced more interesting species from the south than from the north, including a Snowy Albatross and a Mottled Petrel. Pomarine and Long-tailed Skuas were also seen. No Far North members were on board this time. Interesting sightings on land include a few White Herons which lingered at Unahi Road, Awanui into March and a few Wrybills back on Tokerau Beach, but in smaller numbers than usual. A dead immature White-tailed Tropicbird was found on the beach at Great Exhibition Bay in April. An Australasian Bittern has been seen again at Skudders Beach wetland near Kerikeri (and three Cattle Egrets nearby the same day) and there is a recent report of an Intermediate Egret near Kohukohu - *DETLEF DAVIES*

NORTHLAND

The Whangarei region has enjoyed a real Indian summer for over a month now. We have basked in beautiful calm, warm, sunny weather, which means that there have been very few birds found on our recent patrols of both the East and the West coasts.

We usually have about 16-20 people at our monthly meetings and a lot of 'bird talk' goes on before, during and after supper time which usually fills a page of recent sightings each time. Robert Webb, the Director of the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre told our April meeting of some of the interesting and, for our area, unusual birds referred to them for assistance. These have ranged from an Erect-crested Penguin recovered from a beach at Russell in the Bay of Islands, to a Wandering Albatross recovered from a beach at Dargaville.

Although none of our members have sighted the Australian Pelicans recently, there are still about a dozen of them which fly up and

down the Wairoa River at Dargaville. Around 20 Royal Spoonbills have arrived on the Whangarei Harbour and we guess that they will soon have plenty of company.

Nigel Miller, of the community partnership group at DOC, emphasised to our May meeting, the importance of the effort - both physical and monetary - made by such regional groups as Fish and Game, Bream Bay Trust, Brown Teal restoration group, the Fairy Tern Trust and many others. By working together with shared knowledge for the welfare of wildlife, birds and habitat, a real difference can be made. Using the resources of local businesses, the conservation of threatened species by techniques such as effective predator control, aids the recovery of flora and fauna. Nigel stressed the difficulty experienced by the Department in prioritising competing demands upon the limited and diminishing resources available to DOC.

Although it will be cooler, we hope that our window of 'golden weather' continues for the rapidly approaching surveys of the Whangarei and Kaipara Harbours during June - *JANET SNELL*

AUCKLAND

Highpoint of the summer's birding for Auckland was the sighting of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Waionui Inlet at the southern entrance to the Kaipara Harbour. This was spotted by Helen Smith and Gwen Pulham, and is the first record of the species for New Zealand. The sighting has been submitted to the Records Appraisal Committee for consideration.

Post-breeding counts of the four major northern New Zealand Dotterel flock in our region took place in March. Omaha continues to climb, most probably reflecting a good breeding season at the Pakiri River Mouth site. Mangawhai Sandspit was down on the previous two years. Most encouraging were the increases in our two regular southern Kaipara Harbour flocks. Local pest and predator control by DOC, Auckland Council, individual landowners and the South Kaipara and Taporā Landcare groups could well be contributing to nesting success for this species. Special thanks to Auckland member Helen Smith for facilitating a thorough search of the historically difficult Papakanui Spit (and thus being in the right place to spot the afore-mentioned Buff-breasted Sandpiper!).

As is usual for February and March, good numbers of Fairy Terns were recorded at the mouth of the Te Arai Canal (just south of Mangawhai), and they have been seen foraging over dune lakes inland. Fairy Terns also roost regularly at Papakanui Spit on the Kaipara Harbour, and have been seen foraging at Puharakeke Creek in the southern Kaipara (more than 20 seen on 10th February). Autumn is traditionally good for tern species on the Kaipara Harbour - Black-fronted Terns have been seen at both Shelly Beach (10th February) and Papakanui Spit (1st April).

The Anzac Day survey of New Zealand Dabchicks on the South Kaipara dune lakes returned a concerning drop in numbers. This may be due to low water levels, thought to be caused by the growth of pines close to most of the lakes. On a positive note, however, Chris Bindon reported a flock of 10 Cattle Egrets near Parakai (southern Kaipara) at the beginning of May. This is the annual showing of the species that migrates here from Australia - *MEL GALBRAITH*

SOUTH AUCKLAND

The South Auckland region has continued in the usual manner with monthly meetings and beach patrols. A field trip to the heart of the Kokako area in April enabled participants to see five birds including a territorial interaction with prolonged singing.

Two juvenile Fairy Terns that touched down briefly at Port Waikato on February 16th were seen by Karen Opie. A Shining Cuckoo seen by Terry Hatch at Pukekohe East during the last weekend of March seemed remarkably late. In the forest the good fruiting and flowering has continued. Perhaps related to this have been sightings of a stray Red-crowned Parakeet made by Ian Southey behind Mangatawhiri Dam in April and May. Lately there also seem to be a few more Kokako records from this area than there have been. Tui seemed to have largely deserted Papakura, but as the summer has ended numbers have been building up again. Tony Habraken has had the good fortune of finding the Tui nest in his garden at Pukekohe East and several members reported a good year for Californian Quail.

The end of summer brings the departure of the northern hemisphere waders and the godwits were fawelled at Miranda and Mangere. A few members helped out with one of Phil Battley's projects at Miranda trying to identify departure dates of individually marked birds. This was a good excuse to follow the flocks, seeing the birds at their best and catching some of the excitement that precedes departure; also a good chance to see the other birds, with two young Great Knots roosting among the other waders. Not all of the birds will leave and it is good to see several Curlew Sandpipers have not coloured up; young birds after a good breeding season.

Some members helped with the Weka counts at Kawakawa Bay in March and April. These birds have not done well, showing a second year of decline after their second drought year in a row. A kinder summer next year could allow substantial recovery but the population is now small and vulnerable to any set back.

With some surprise we recently found out that the incorrigible Tom Harty has turned 80. Not just a ready source of questionable humour, Tom and Hazel have worked hard for the Society, both nationally and locally, and we hope Tom continues in fine form for a good while yet - *IAN SOUTHEY*

TARANAKI

Two more unusual visitors turned up in Taranaki in mid-February, Carol Keight saw and photographed a pair of Cape Barren Geese in a paddock just west of New Plymouth. Some of us, both rural and residential, have had the pleasure of hearing Morepork calling at night. Alas the winter-visiting Morepork at Waiongana has never been heard. Barry Hartley and I have been looking out to sea along the north Taranaki coastline and have seen thousands of Fluttering Shearwaters passing by. Barry also counted approximately 250 Australasian Gannets feeding over a work-up off the Awakino River Mouth. There have also been large numbers of White-fronted Terns accompanied by ever-present Arctic Skuas.

We had two great outings in March and April, both held in lovely fine conditions. The

first, to Waitaanga on the eastern Taranaki boundary, was, as ever, dominated by Robins. A stroll along 2 km of bush-clad roadside produced a count of ten seen, with others heard. This area has always been a Robin stronghold, quite why we don't know. There has also been a very heavy fruiting of a number of native trees and shrubs, particularly Kahikatea and Rimu, but also some smaller divaricating shrubs. Bill Messenger was so excited he kept putting things down then forgetting to pick them up. Three New Zealand Dabchicks were seen on a nearby pond and a Falcon was seen. Bellbirds were calling and most other bush birds were quite conspicuous. A drive up and down a couple of nearby gravel roads was also most interesting as we saw and heard Fernbird in two or three places we have never recorded them before. The first was a large healthy wetland that needs further inspection, and the other a badly-degraded *Carex secta* swamp.

The next trip along the Rerekapa track, not far as the Robin flies from Waitaanga, was also a delight. Once again the trees were heavily in fruit, with some Kahikatea and Coprosmas looking more orange than green. A flock of seven very vocal Bellbirds chasing each other around had us mesmerised. Others were seen along the track. Tui were also numerous and vocal and Tomtit was seen as well.

Lake Rotokare is soon to be the new home for some relocated Saddlebacks and Whiteheads. We have been asked to assist in monitoring their progress. The Saddlebacks are coming from Bushy Park and Little Barrier Island.

We have also been contacted by Friends of Pukekura Park regarding some bird counts, since pest control is underway and they think bird numbers are increasing, but want some way of measuring whether it is or not. New Plymouth District Council also contacted us regarding the Little Shag colony in the park, which David Medway had been monitoring since 1998. The council is "concerned" about the increasing numbers of nests and bird activity and feels "something" may need to be done. We are all worried as to what the "something" may be as this is the only known Little Shag nesting colony in North Taranaki.

Beach patrolling has been quiet; one giant petrel and one albatross constituting the main interest. Barry Hartley and Kay Rodbard saw one or two White-winged Black Terns at Sandy Bay. Barry managed a reasonable photo of one of them. The Black Stilt is back at Mokau.

Dave West from Taranaki Regional Council is running a possum control programme through the Waiwhakaiho Valley, which is part urban, part rural. He approached us for ideas about monitoring bird numbers before and during the programme. Garden bird surveys along the lines of the Landcare Research survey have been suggested.

There are now five New Zealand Dotterels on the beach at Waiongana in various plumage phases from eclipse to breeding. I suppose they know what they are doing even if I'm confused
- PETER FRYER

HAWKE'S BAY

A meeting was held on the banks of the Clive River to plan activities for the first half of the year. Unfortunately, due to weather and other constraints neither of the first two trips took place. So there is not much to report from our area this time.

One activity that is in fact happening, is OSNZ participation in the 2014 autumn "Walk and Talk" series. This is a joint initiative by Department of Conservation and Hawke's Bay Regional Council to showcase local conservation areas and their wildlife. Our RR, Bernie Kelly, talks on birdlife at each area, as well as an OSNZ and its rebranding as Birds New Zealand. Other members from the region also attend and bring along telescopes. Venues visited so far include the recently rehabilitated Pekapeka Wetland south of Hastings and the Ahuriri Estuary, Napier. At the Ahuriri event we were able to give participants scope views of a variety of waterbirds, including two White Herons and a flock of Royal Spoonbills as well as the usual ducks, geese and swans. It is great to see how this enhances people's awareness of their natural heritage, and we hope to recruit at least one or two new members for the Society as a result - IAN SMITH

WAIRARAPA

A few days after the AGM, February's trip was mounded with the intention of checking up on Royal Spoonbills on a private lagoon. Clearly the Spoonbills hadn't read their email, because they weren't home. The New Zealand Dabchicks there put on a fine display of their skills, so that cheered us up. Lunch at the Lake Wairarapa Domain was cheerful too, as we could see 65-70 Royal Spoonbills gathered on the Tauheranikau Delta along with other usual suspects, including an abundance of Spur-winged Plovers and a surfeit of Canada Geese.

The guest speaker for March was from the Greater Wellington Regional Council. He explained the work that is being carried out at the Wairio Wetlands, Boggy Pond and adjacent areas. The GWRC is a very supportive and significant player on behalf of wildlife in the Wairarapa. If you are thinking of a birding holiday somewhere new the Wairarapa may provide you with some delightful surprises and comfortable billets. That said, we went to the estuary of the Manawatu River for that month's trip. It was definitely worthwhile as we met some of the local birders by pre-arrangement. One Bar-tailed Godwit was in breeding plumage and made a great sight for those used to seeing only the drabber non-breeding turn-out.

Our April guests were from an inspiring group of South Wairarapa people who have created an umbrella group for the many initiatives that are taking place on public and private land, mostly along the coast. As a follow up we planned a two day trip: visiting a large private restoration project, staying overnight in DOC accommodation, then seeing what birds were out and about in the Cape Palliser area. We had to postpone that one as the wind was driving the rain right at the places we would want to see; postponed, not cancelled.

May's field trip was to Mataikona, north of Castle Point. It offered us fascinating geology as well as a dozen species of birds within a

stone's throw of each other. The New Zealand and Banded Dotterels weren't in evidence, though they do frequent the beach. Castle Point offered one Black-billed Gull, a few Black and Pied Shags, some Black-backed Gulls and a wet and windy change in the weather. It was good to see that DOC's work of replacing exotic grasses with native Pingao and Spinifex is stabilising the dunes and making their profile less vulnerable. This can only be good for birds like the New Zealand Dotterel.

In addition to all this high living, we are negotiating with the Masterton District Council to do monthly counts on the new oxidation ponds. It's a restricted area and those granted access have to be vaccinated beforehand. That's no deterrent to aspiring members, six of whom have joined with us in the last few weeks, either formally or as fellow travellers to see if they like us and what we're up to - ROBIN LIST

WELLINGTON

Some birds are rarely reported in the Wellington region, which is partly due to their cryptic nature. Recently there have been two reports of Spotless Crane. One bird was found in the Postie Plus shop at the Coastlands shopping centre at Paraparaumu. There is a stream close to the shopping centre and was the most likely source of this bird. New plantings on the banks of this stream has increased its attractiveness to wetland birds. The other Spotless Crane was seen in the Pauatahanui Inlet and was identified from a cell-phone picture as being a juvenile bird. Spotless Cranes were not identified in the Wellington region in the 1999-2004 Atlas and subsequently have not been recorded in eBird. In April an Australasian Bittern was seen in the Waimeha Lagoon on the Kapiti Coast. While there have been previous records of Bitterns in this area they are rarely reported in our region. These recent observations of Spotless Crane and Bittern are a prompt to investigate other wetlands in our region for these secretive species.

As OSNZ comes to the end of our two-year survey of birds on the Pautahanui Inlet one notable feature has been the huge increase in the number of Canada Geese. Recently over 140 Canada Geese were counted in paddocks next to the inlet and they now have reached numbers where they have become a nuisance. A proposed cull of the geese has generated some debate in the local community newspaper - GEOFF DE LISLE

NELSON

'Projects' over the summer months have included the Top of the South wader count in which 46,000 shorebirds were counted, 54% migratory species and 46% endemic species. Notable were three Grey-tailed Tattlers; a high number for New Zealand. Numbers were average for most species at most sites with the exception of low Banded Dotterel numbers on Farewell Spit and in Golden Bay, possibly indicating that migration to the coast had not fully started at the time of the census and low godwit numbers in Golden Bay.

The region provided a stand at a 'Dogs' Breakfast' event at Motueka Sandspit. The event aims to educate dog owners as to the impacts their pets can have on birdlife on the spit.

Members had starring roles in a documentary being filmed on expat Germans by Siegel TV (a well-known German TV company) on the waders of Tasman Bay. Filmed over two, long, wild, wet and windy days the birders gained new respect for the patience of wildlife filming. The final film is expected to last only a few minutes.

Great sightings include a colour-banded godwit seen at Catlins Lake until the morning of 24th March, which turned up at Port Waikato the evening of 25th March, then back down to our area at Nelson Haven on 31st March and 27th April. Photographers from the region have captured some interesting altercations; a Falcon and White-faced Heron at Bark Bay and a Royal Spoonbill and White Heron at the Sewerside settling ponds. But perhaps the strangest behaviour reported was of a young Red-billed Gull lying upside down on a cliff/steep bank ringed by 20-30 other gulls all making a huge noise. The young bird's wing fell over showing it was either dead or dying while the surrounding birds, without touching the victim, continued to scream with that characteristic lowered head - *ROBIN TOY*

MARLBOROUGH

Lake Grassmere counts have continued each month with the March outing causing some excitement with a large number, for our region, of Turnstones (56) and about 300 Black-fronted Terns.

During February-March a couple of our members spent six weeks as volunteers with the Chatham Island Albatross translocation project, on the main Chatham Island.

In April Rob Schuckard gave a talk, in Blenheim, about results of years studying the behaviour of King Shags in the Marlborough Sounds. This was a very interesting and enlightening talk.

Members have been on the look-out for banded Black-billed Gulls. It is always exciting to spot one and know a bit about its history. The birds spent the early part of the year with Red-billed Gulls around the coast, but by March were no longer seen in any number along the foreshore. If you see a banded Black-billed Gull anywhere, Claudia, who is running the project, would love to hear from you at claudia@wmil.co.nz - *DIANNE JOHN*

CANTERBURY

The equinoctial gales which started about November continued throughout the summer. An endless procession of strong winds, together with very unsettled weather, frequently made outdoor activities hard work. However, the second Lake Ellesmere Big Bird Count on 22nd February was blessed with a sunny day and the violent winds early in the morning dropped to allow a very successful survey of the Lake. Eight of our members joined forces with others from a wide range of interested organisations. Congratulations are due to those who organised the survey with military precision.

Unusual bird observations around Lake Ellesmere in January were 14 Curlew Sandpipers, the biggest group seen for many years, a Common Greenshank, two Sanderlings, at least seven Gull-billed Terns, two Little Terns and three Pectoral Sandpipers.

Lots of Caspian Terns were seen flying with juveniles at Crescent Island. Elsewhere, a Shining Cuckoo was still singing in a Halswell garden. A Bulwer's Petrel found in the surf at North Brighton Beach was the first live record of this bird in New Zealand. At least 100 White-capped, Salvin's and Northern Royal Albatrosses were seen close to shore on the eastern side of Banks Peninsula, an unusually large number. In the Port Hills a banded Tui caused excitement as it is hoped these birds will return to the city after their successful reintroduction on Banks Peninsula. A Kea, a long way from its usual terrain, was seen at Motukarara.

Two Whimbrels were at Saltwater Creek in March and 28 Golden Plovers, some in beautiful plumage, were seen at Jarvis Road, Lake Ellesmere. In April there was a reliable sighting of three roosting Arctic Terns on the Waimakariri River downstream from the Waimakariri Gorge Bridge. A Bittern and two Black Stilt hybrids were seen at Bexley Wetland. Two New Zealand Falcons were reported at Lake Lyndon, near Porter's Pass and another was seen at Canterbury University.

At a well-attended AGM the generous legacy left to the region by Marj Davis was discussed. The committee announced that an initial payment will be made in Marj's name for the cost of the new plates Derek Onley is producing for the next edition of Heather and Robertson's *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*. This will be acknowledged in the book and will be a way of commemorating Marj. It is proposed the remainder of the bequest be invested and the interest used to capture and encourage young people's interest in birds. Branch members have been given the opportunity to contribute their ideas on this matter, which will be discussed at the next monthly meeting - *ANN SHERLOCK*

OTAGO

This summer has been focussed on searching out Royal Spoonbill Colonies in the Otago area. Otago members have made expeditions to Green Island, Taieri Island, and various sites down the Otago coast. The counts are still to be collated with the national nest counts.

Otago members had a field trip at the end of November to Wainono Lagoon, on the coast just north of the Waitaki River. A magnificent array of water birds was present, including nearly 2,000 Black Swans, hundreds of Paradise Shelducks, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveler and New Zealand Scaup. The maimais there were checked and nests of Royal Spoonbill, Black Shag, Black-backed Gull and Feral Pigeon were found with eggs or chicks. A new colony of Royal Spoonbills was discovered in dead willows in a hidden corner of the lagoon where the Hook River enters it. About 20 nests were present, but none with chicks. A Gull-billed Tern was also spotted. On a subsequent trip in December two Glossy Ibises were roosting with the Spoonbills and an Australasian Bittern was flushed from behind the colony.

A Nankeen Night Heron was seen for a couple of days in a creek near Sawyers Bay, Dunedin. Up to three White Herons have remained at Tomahawk lagoon at least until the middle of January. A Royal Spoonbill crashed into the backyard of a house in South Dunedin

at midnight in January; the occupants were very surprised to see this large white bird just about on their doorstep and called the SPCA, who collected it at 2 am and handed it over to DOC next day. Unfortunately its wing was too damaged and the bird had to be put down. This bird turned out to be colour-banded; it had been banded in December 1998, 15 years ago. It had regurgitated four small fish, so it had probably been foraging in the Otago Harbour and was heading back to Green Island when it crashed - *MARY THOMPSON*

SOUTHLAND

Our Bird Week held in March was moderately successful. The most popular event was an evening owl hunt in Queens Park, where a large number of kids and their parents turned up. No owls were found but great fun was had by all. We need to tweak a few events, as we look to repeat the Bird Week in November 2015.

White Herons have been making appearances at the Tip Lagoon in March and also at Lake Lochie and Lake Fergus in the Milford Road area; possibly the same bird.

A juvenile Black Stilt was photographed and this was published in *The Southland Times* recently. The bird was feeding on the Mataura River, although where on the river was not mentioned; a bit frustrating as no follow-up could take place. During Southland Bird Week 60 New Zealand Scaup were counted at the Tip Lagoon. This is the biggest flock so far reported from the area and three days later they had all disappeared.

Other species reported were a Pacific Heron feeding in a paddock near the Mavora Lakes road on April 22nd spotted by Neil Robertson. It was still there on April 27th seen again by Neil and also Shawn Herron. This may be the bird photographed by a tourist at Clifden earlier this year. Neil also says he is sure he saw this bird flying over the Te Anau-Mossburn highway in January. A report of a Nankeen Kestrel in the Groveburn area near Tuatapere sent a few keen birders racing around the area in search of the bird. This created a bit of interest for locals as they were intrigued to see three blokes with binoculars scanning paddocks and fence posts around the area. One local thought they were checking out the deer, possibly hinting poaching was on their minds! Other reported birds of interest were a Large Sand Dotterel at Awarua Bay (between the Tiwai Bridge and Joeys Island) and also a Gould's Petrel reported from a pelagic trip off Stewart Island. Glenda Rees photographed a Terek Sandpiper at the head of Awarua Bay. This bird seems to have been around for several years. A report on the Birding NZ website of a possible Darter from the Cascade River area would be a first for Southland and only the 5th reported in New Zealand. It is unconfirmed as yet, but we hope the bird shows up again and gets photographed - *PHIL RHODES*

Survey Details

Physical address where you did the survey:

Number & Street

Suburb

Town/City

Postcode

Region

Description of survey area (please tick one)

Urban garden

Urban Park

Urban School

Rural garden

Rural Park

Rural School

Area searched for birds (except birds flying overhead)

Up to 100 m² (e.g. up to 10×10m)

100-200 m² (e.g. up to 10×20m)

200-400 m² (e.g. up to 20×20m)

400-600 m² (e.g. up to 20×30m)

More than 600 m²

Was search area

Lawn & flower or vege garden

Lawn, garden, shrubs <5m

Lawn, garden, shrubs, trees >5m

Other

Describe

How many took part?

Adults

Children (<18)

Contact Details

Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Master (circle)

First name

Surname

Tel

Email

Please note: we will not give or sell your details to anyone else, we require them so we can contact you if necessary to clarify your results. If you prefer us not to contact you again, please tick here

Please re-fold leaflet and tape along edge before posting

Fix
Stamp
here

Eric Spurr
New Zealand Garden Bird Survey
47 Brixton Rd
Manly
Whangaparaoa 0930



Please do the survey for 1 hour only,
sometime between 28 Jun & 6 Jul 2014

Survey Date

Start Time

For each species record the largest number seen (or heard) at the same time – NOT the total number over the hour – do not enter zeros

Bellbird

Blackbird

Magpie

Black-backed Gull

Blackbird

Myna

Red-billed Gull

Black-backed Gull

Red-billed Gull

Chaffinch

Dunnock

Rock Pigeon

Fantail

Goldfinch

Rosella (Eastern)

Greenfinch

House Sparrow

Silvereye

Grey Warbler

Kereru

Song Thrush

Other species counted during the hour (give number)

Starling

Tui

House Sparrow

Kereru

Welcome Swallow

Yellowhammer

Yellowhammer

Do you feed birds? (please tick)

If yes, what? (please tick)

Bread

Fat

Fruit

Seeds

Sugar-water

Other (please describe)

Did your survey area include the area where you feed birds? (please tick)

N/A

Do you have a water-bath for birds?

Yes

Photographs by:
 Andrew Walmsley
 Tom Marshall
 Craig MacKenzie
 Brian Massa
 Roger South
 www.istock.com



New Zealand  Aotearoa
GARDEN BIRD
SURVEY 2014
28 June - 6 July



Landcare Research and the Ornithological Society are asking for the public's help again this year in spotting birds in New Zealand gardens. Taking part is easy – spend just 1 hour (that's 1 hour only) sometime between **28 June and 6 July** looking for birds in your garden, parks or school grounds. For each species you detect, record the largest number you see (or hear) at the same time. Please *count* not just tick the species you observe. The easy to follow guide below will help you identify most birds you are likely to see.

Then fill in and return the survey form opposite or enter your results online (which helps us to process the results faster and more easily) at:

[http://gardenbirdsurvey.landcareresearch.co.nz](http://gardenbirdssurvey.landcareresearch.co.nz)

Regularly updated survey results will be available on the same website, and will provide valuable information about bird populations, giving scientists an indication of which species may be in decline, helping guide conservation efforts for the future.

Bird Guide (not to scale)

Small birds
 15cm or less

Medium-sized birds
 Up to 30cm

Large birds
 Over 30cm



House Sparrow (m) House Sparrow (f) Yellowhammer (m) Yellowhammer (f)



Eastern Rosella Tui



Kereru



Greenfinch (m) Greenfinch (f) Goldfinch Dunnock



Song Thrush Bellbird



Magpie



Chaffinch (m) Chaffinch (f) Redpoll Fantail



Myna Starling



Red-billed Gull



Silvereve Welcome Swallow Grey Warbler



Blackbird (f) Blackbird (m)



Black-backed Gull



Birds New Zealand

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc.

P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040, New Zealand.

Website: www.osnz.org.nz

Email: editorbirdsNZ@osnz.org.nz