

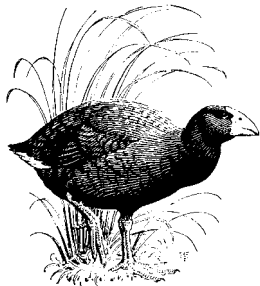


No. 3 September 2014

# *Birds New Zealand*



The Magazine of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand



# Birds New Zealand

||||| NO. 3 SEPTEMBER 2014 |||||

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## QUOTE

Within a churchyard, on a recent grave,  
I saw a little cage  
That jailed a goldfinch. All was silence save  
Its hops from stage to stage.

There was inquiry in its wistful eye,  
And once it tried to sing;  
Of him or her who placed it there, and why,  
No one knew anything.

*The Caged Goldfinch*  
by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

## COVER PHOTOS

Front and Back Covers: Both photos by  
Paul Gibson. See the advert for his latest  
book, *Birds New Zealand Beauty Like No  
Other*, full of other impressive photos like  
these, below.

## PUBLISHERS

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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.




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# President's Report

## Returning Migrants

I have been advised that the first of the migrating Godwits and Knots have started arriving back into New Zealand. This must mean that spring is arriving and any excuses about the cold and wet weather stopping us getting out and about have been removed.

Recently I was on holiday at Rotorua, and while it was not a birding holiday I managed to check some of the local areas. What really amazed me was the number of Scaup that are now present on the Rotorua Lakes. I am not sure where they breed but there must be extremely good breeding areas around those lakes. It would be interesting if a local could describe where they breed because there are many thousands and they must do so in large numbers in suitable habitat.

I also took the opportunity to check the gulls breeding near the Polynesian Spa, on the lakefront. This is usually a mixed colony of some Black-billed Gulls with mainly Red-billed. At the end of August it appeared that there were no Black-billed present and the Red-billed were starting to pair up and show signs of collecting nesting material. That colony is easily accessible as a telescope can be set up in an adjacent car park and the birds are only several metres away. It is well worth a visit if you are ever in Rotorua.

## Strategic Direction

Ian Armitage, on behalf of the Council, has prepared a draft strategic direction for the Society to build on work already undertaken. This material has been circulated to the Regional Representatives to discuss at regional meetings to obtain any feedback before the end of September. If you have not seen or heard of this document contact either Ingrid (eo@osnz.org.nz) or myself (president@osnz.org.nz) and we will forward it to you as we seek as wide a range of views as possible.

Following the close of comments at the end of September Ian will incorporate these comments into a further document that will be considered by the Council at their meeting on 6th December. Once that draft has been signed off by the Council it will be recirculated with a view to adopting it at the annual meeting in 2015.

Council considers that it is important that the Society Council be proactive in promoting the aims of the Organisation rather than reacting to circumstances as they occur.

## Youth Recruitment

We have identified youth recruitment as an area where the Society needs to be active in encouraging young people to join the Organisation.

I am pleased that there are signs that this policy is starting to be implemented with several younger people now elected to the Council. Stefanie Grosser in particular is active amongst university students and is providing advice on methods of encouraging students to join the Society.

I am also aware of several regional initiatives that have been implemented or are in the planning stages. In South Auckland Ian Southey and Wendy Goad, in conjunction with Auckland Council, have arranged several bird walks around the Auckland Botanic Gardens. The intention of these walks is to introduce the public and young people in particular to the birds around the park and to encourage observations. The first two of these walks proved to be so popular that much of their good efforts were lost in the crowds that wanted to participate. This is an activity that any region could implement and I would encourage people to contact Ian to get further details.

Sharon Alderson has recently submitted a draft proposal to the Council for comments to run a field camp for teenagers in the April school holidays. While the planning for this course is in its very early stages the current intention is to run a one week camp on Mana Island. The programme would include bird

identification and observation, data collection and introduction to research topics with some mist-netting and banding. Sharon is proposing to enlist a number of helpers from throughout the country but if anyone wishes to help they should contact her.

Another proposal that I have just been made aware of is from Les Feasey from the Far North Region. He is looking to establish a scholarship to encourage school children to undertake studies of birds and to join *Birds New Zealand* activities. The planning for this scholarship scheme is also in the very early stages and Les is investigating national sponsorship for this programme.

I am sure that there are other activities taking place in the regions and these need to be encouraged and promoted. I would urge members who are undertaking similar activities to contact me so that I can be aware of all those initiatives or better still promote them with articles in *Birds New Zealand* magazine.

## Conference 2015

The planning for the 2015 conference in Blenheim is now well under way. Members will be aware that this is being acknowledged as the 75th Anniversary of the Organisation and the organisers are intending that this be an event worthy of the occasion. I remind members to watch the website for updates and registration details in the near future, or contact your local regional representative.

It is also worthwhile for people to keep checking the website which is regularly updated with newsletters and news items and is the best means of obtaining current information. If you have events or activities that are worthy of displaying in this forum I would recommend that you contact Ingrid with the details so that she can provide the necessary update.

## Battle for Our Birds

On behalf of the Society I have released a press release providing our support to the activities that are being undertaken by the Department of Conservation to try to protect some of our birds during the predicted mast year of beech trees. While some people have seen this release as support for the use of poison and in particular 1080, that is not my intention. While that is the tool that is currently being used I feel that the Society needs to make people aware of the research that has been undertaken under our name which has clearly shown the benefits of well-timed predator control programs.

There have also been questions that we are breaching our non-conservation ethos but again I am trying to emphasise the importance of utilising the research that is available and the many observations that our members have undertaken showing the effects of uncontrolled predators on bird populations, and the benefits of control programs.

If you disagree with my stance on these issues that would be a good comment to make as part of the strategic review mentioned earlier.

## Librarian and Archivist

I have mentioned before the vacancies that currently exist for a librarian and archivist to replace Kathy Barrow and Michael Taylor, respectively. While the material for both of those roles is held at the Auckland Museum it may be possible for the librarian to not actually reside in Auckland.

The work that Michael Taylor has undertaken in organising the archived material has proved to be a real asset to Biz Bell who is digitising the rare bird reports and was able to easily locate them in Michael's system.

If anybody has an interest in either task I would encourage you to contact Ingrid (eo@osnz.org.nz) for further details. At the present time these tasks are completed by two people, and these are separate types of tasks.

## David Medway Memorial Scholarship

I also take this opportunity to remind students in particular of the David Medway Memorial Scholarship that will be available in the New Year. The terms and conditions relating to this scholarship are on the OSNZ website but if further details are required do not hesitate to contact me.

This scholarship is available through the generous donation by the George Mason Charitable Trust. I thank the donors for their support of bird research and the scholarship in memory of our past president.

DAVID LAWRIE, President  
(president@osnz.org.nz)

## Donations

We thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society: Sharon Alderson, Peter Ladd, Katherine Morris, Michael Pickett, Genevieve Spargo.

## New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members: Lorraine Abbott (Nelson), Alice Baranyovits (Auckland), Mike Britton (Wellington), Anna Burrows (Wairarapa), Natalie Butler (Taranaki), Adam Clarke (Hawkes Bay), Oliver Druce (Wairarapa), Er Orhan (Auckland), Pieter Fransen (Bay of Plenty), Ann Freckleton (Auckland), Brain Gidley (Auckland), Dr Duane Harland and William Harland (Canterbury), James Hilton (West Coast), Charlotte Hinton (Wellington), Kathryn Jones (Auckland), Ria Kemp (Northland), Benjamin Kennard (Nelson), Sara Larcombe (Otago), Sarah Mussett (Auckland), Judy Nicholson (Auckland), Dion Pou (Auckland), Carine Roelens (Wellington), John Tacon (Auckland), Tom Waterhouse (Canterbury).

## Treasurer's Report

The audited accounts for the 2013 financial year follow this report. The Society's finances are still in good shape. Council continues to look into ways of increasing our revenue and decreasing expenditure.

General Account income was down from last year with expenditure exceeding the income over the year. Donations were slightly increased from the previous year, with \$1,520 received in memory of David Medway. Income through the sale of data was less than in 2012.

The income from annual subscriptions remains similar to last year. Around \$1,100 of subscription income was lost to PayPal fees. New Zealand members can help by paying for membership with online banking rather than by credit card via PayPal. The income from *Southern Bird* adverts decreased in 2013. However, a new advertiser has been signed on for 2014. The printing costs for *Notornis* and *Southern Bird* have increased. The large increase in the cost of *Notornis* printing is due to printing four issues, and also includes the printing of indexes.

The main expenditure from the Project Assistance Fund was for regional allowances. The Fund was also used for funding the continued updating of the Society's website and training in its use. The money for this is from the annual grant from T-Gear Charitable Trust.

The Life Membership Fund received three new members this year. The Contracts Account received funds from the DOC King Shag Survey. Two new funds were added to the accounts this year: the New Zealand Bird Research Fund and New Zealand Birds Online.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors, the EO, the Membership Secretary and the members for all the assistance and support that they have given me over the last year.

PAUL GARNER-RICHARDS

## JOHN KHOURI

8 KINGSVIEW RD, MT EDEN  
P O BOX 8905, SYMONDS ST, AUCKLAND 1150  
TELEPHONE : 579-7686 FAX : 526-4960 E-MAIL : johnkhouri@xtra.co.nz

### TO THE READERS OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INC

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

#### Scope

I have reviewed the financial statements that provide information regarding the financial performance of the Society and its financial position as at Balance date.

My engagement instructions are to perform a limited assurance review which provides a level of assurance that is less than an audit engagement.

#### Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for the preparation of financial statements which fairly reflect the financial position of the Society as at 31 December 2013 and the results of its operations for the year ended 31 December 2013.

It is my responsibility to express an independent opinion on the financial statements and to report my opinion to you.

#### Basis of opinion

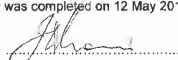
A limited assurance review includes examination on a test basis, evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes a review of accounting systems and procedures to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements, whether caused by fraud or error. Other than in my capacity as reviewer, I have no relationship with or interests in the Society.

#### Qualified Opinion

Control over cash income, prior to it being banked is limited, and there are no practical audit procedures to determine the effect of this limited control.

As a result of my review, I have concluded that nothing has come to my attention that would cause me to believe that the financial statements do not present a true and fair view of the operating activities of the Society during the year ended 31 December 2013 and its financial position as at 31 December 2013.

My review was completed on 12 May 2014 and my qualified opinion is expressed as at that date.

  
(Signature)

John Khouri, B Com, ACA  
(Name)

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
		2013	2012
GENERAL ACCOUNT			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Annual Subscriptions NZ		\$41,224	\$45,190
Annual Subscriptions Overseas		\$12,503	\$13,890
Donations		\$3,955	\$2,772
Donation - T Gear Trust		\$5,000	\$5,000
Donations - In memory of David Medway		\$1,520	\$0
Sales General		\$20	\$31
Sales Atlas		\$135	\$251
Sales Data		\$1,425	\$5,400
Notornis & Southern Bird Refunds		\$4,899	\$5,073
Copyright Licensing Fund Payment		\$748	\$613
GST Claim		\$0	\$11,297
Interest		\$289	\$329
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>		\$71,718	\$89,846
Transfers from	1. Life Membership Reserve Annual Contribution	\$1,865	\$1,997
	2. Projects Assistance Fund		
	i. Royalties	\$1,638	\$1,855
	ii. Grant Operating Costs	\$2,000	\$0
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>		\$5,503	\$3,852
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$77,221</b>	<b>\$93,698</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Audit		\$800	\$800
Annual Return Fee		\$44	\$44
Atlas Storage		\$663	\$658
Bank Fees		\$266	\$174
Conference & Meetings Expenses		\$9,772	\$8,448
eBird Hosting & Maintenance		\$0	\$0
Executive Officer Contract Fees		\$19,684	\$15,673
Insurance		\$500	\$525
Internet		\$396	\$335
Investment writedown		\$0	\$4,741
Journal Subscriptions		\$198	\$195
PayPal Fees		\$1,090	\$1,171
Postage		\$767	\$1,399
Postage - Atlas		\$1,103	\$790
Postage - International		\$655	\$508
Postage - Notornis & Southern Bird		\$8,808	\$3,944
Printing - Notornis		\$29,092	\$13,459
Printing - Southern Bird		\$16,664	\$16,212
Printing - OSNZ Brochures		\$0	\$1,380
Printing & Stationery - General		\$2,939	\$1,827
Telephone		\$0	\$17
Training Course Notes		\$5,000	\$0
Website Domains Renewals		\$0	\$100
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>\$98,441</b>	<b>\$72,400</b>
Surplus/Deficit		-\$21,220	\$21,298
Plus Balance as at 1st January		\$21,910	\$612
<b>Balance as at 31st December</b>		<b>\$690</b>	<b>\$21,910</b>

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
	2013	2012	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Interest	\$1,158	\$682	
New Life Members	\$3,600	\$0	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$4,758</b>	<b>\$682</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Transfer to General Funds	\$1,865	\$1,997	
Surplus/Deficit	\$2,893	-\$1,315	
Plus Balance as at 1st January	\$18,654	\$19,968	
<b>Balance as at 31st December</b>	<b>\$21,547</b>	<b>\$18,654</b>	
<b>LIBRARY ASSET ACCOUNT</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Library Exchanges	\$1,700	\$1,700	
Surplus/Deficit	\$1,700	\$1,700	
Plus Balance as at 1st January	\$43,563	\$41,863	
<b>Balance as at 31st December</b>	<b>\$45,263</b>	<b>\$43,563</b>	
<b>PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
AGM Profit	\$5,665	\$0	
Royalties Penguin Field Guide	\$1,638	\$1,855	
Sponsorship - T Gear Trust (for new website)	\$3,240	\$3,240	
OSNZ Otago - 2013 Conference Float Repayment	\$1,000	\$0	
Payment from BDO Investment	\$435	\$0	
Interest	\$4,341	\$3,251	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$16,319</b>	<b>\$8,346</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Regional Allowances	\$6,664	\$6,920	
AOC Scholarships	\$1,000	\$0	
Website Update & Training	\$9,867	\$2,505	
National Spoonbill Survey	\$1,856	\$0	
Willie Cook - Tern Project	\$0	\$376	
Mike Bell - Tern Project	\$0	\$194	
OSNZ Otago - 2013 Conference Float	\$0	\$1,000	
Biz Bell - RAC - Scanning of Submissions at Auckland Museum	\$871	\$0	
Conference Banner	\$368	\$0	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,626</b>	<b>\$10,995</b>	
Transfers to General Account			
I. Royalties	\$1,638	\$1,855	
II. Grant Operating Costs	\$2,000	\$0	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,638</b>	<b>\$1,855</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$24,264</b>	<b>\$12,850</b>	
Surplus/Deficit	-\$7,945	-\$4,504	
Plus Balance as at 1st January	\$76,145	\$80,649	
<b>Balance as at 31st December</b>	<b>\$68,200</b>	<b>\$76,145</b>	

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
<b>General Accounting Principles</b>			
The general accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of earnings under the historical cost method of accounting have been adopted by the Society			
<b>Particular Accounting Policies</b>			
<b>a. Subscription Income</b>			
Subscriptions in arrears have not been included in income.			
Subscriptions in advance have been included in income.			
<b>b. Royalty Income</b>			
Royalties from the Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand (Heather & Robertson) are credited to the Project Assistance Fund.			
<b>c. Interest Earned</b>			
Interest earned by investments of funds have been credited to respective funds by apportioning the total interest received over Restricted and General Funds			
<b>d. Goods &amp; Service Tax</b>			
Income and expenditure are stated exclusive of goods and services tax			
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
	2013	2012	
<b>1. RESERVES</b>			
1. The Life Membership Reserve consists of life membership subscriptions and interest less annual transfer of 10% of balance to General Funds			
<b>2. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE</b>			
AGM Profit	\$5,665	\$0	
Payment from BDO Investment	\$435	\$0	
Copyright Licencing Fund Payment	\$482	\$0	
Donation	\$40	\$0	
Interest BNZ	\$0	\$636	
OSNZ Otago - Conference Float Repayment	\$1,000	\$0	
Southern Bird Advert	\$0	\$335	
Sales Data	\$0	\$2,500	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,622</b>	<b>\$3,471</b>	
<b>3. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE</b>			
Audit Fee Accrued	\$800	\$800	
Annual Return Fees	\$44	\$44	
Notornis & Southern Bird	\$7,744	\$11,028	
Atlas Storage	\$64	\$62	
Expenses	\$418	\$576	
PayPal Fees	\$0	\$12	
Postage	\$0	\$48	
Printing	\$859	\$0	
Project Assistance Fund Grant	\$0	\$194	
Website Maintenance	\$2,289	\$1,305	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,218</b>	<b>\$14,070</b>	

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
	2013	2012	
<b>CONTRACTS ACCOUNT</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
DOC - King Shag Survey	\$5,000	\$0	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Boat Hire - King Shag Survey	\$1,628	\$0	
Equipment - King Shag Survey	\$141	\$0	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$1,769</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
Surplus/Deficit	\$3,231	\$0	
Balance as at 1 January	\$126,300	\$126,300	
<b>Balance as at 31 December</b>	<b>\$129,531</b>	<b>\$126,300</b>	
<b>NZ BIRD RESEARCH FUND</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Grant	\$40,000	\$0	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Grant - Chatham Islands Taiko Trust	\$10,000	\$0	
Grant - Huttons Shearwater Trust	\$6,447	\$0	
Grant - Te Papa	\$16,000	\$0	
Administration Costs	\$1,063	\$0	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$33,510</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
Surplus/Deficit	\$6,490	\$0	
Balance as at 1 January	\$0	\$0	
<b>Balance as at 31 December</b>	<b>\$6,490</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>NZ BIRDS ONLINE</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Takahe Page Sponsorship - Mitre 10	\$2,609	\$0	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2,609</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
Surplus/Deficit	\$2,609	\$0	
Balance as at 1 January	\$0	\$0	
<b>Balance as at 31 December</b>	<b>\$2,609</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
	2013	2012	
<b>STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31st DECEMBER</b>			
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS</b>			
General Account	\$690	\$21,910	
Life Membership Fund	\$21,547	\$18,654	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,237</b>	<b>\$40,564</b>	
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>			
Project Assistance Funds	\$68,200	\$76,145	
Contracts Fund	\$129,531	\$126,300	
NZ Bird Research Fund	\$6,490	\$0	
NZ Birds Online	\$2,609	\$0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$206,829</b>	<b>\$202,444</b>	
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS &amp; RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$229,066</b>	<b>\$243,008</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Bank	\$19,922	\$23,049	
Investments BNZ	\$170,647	\$182,579	
Investments Auckland Mortgage Trust	\$2,059	\$2,059	
Accounts Receivable	\$7,622	\$3,471	
Library Account	\$45,263	\$43,563	
GST	\$5,477	\$13,163	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$250,990</b>	<b>\$267,884</b>	
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts Payable	\$12,218	\$14,070	
Subscriptions in Advance	\$9,706	\$10,805	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$21,924</b>	<b>\$24,875</b>	
<b>NET TOTAL OF ASSETS</b>	<b>\$229,066</b>	<b>\$243,008</b>	

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND			
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2013			
	2013	2012	
<b>4. NOTORNIS &amp; SOUTHERN BIRD REFUNDS</b>			
Notornis/Library Exchanges	\$1,700	\$1,700	
Papers in Notornis	\$2,200	\$2,200	
Southern Bird Adverts	\$335	\$1,173	
Notornis - Colour Photo for Paper	\$664	\$0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,899</b>	<b>\$5,073</b>	
<b>5. PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND GRANTS MADE</b>			
Regional Payments	\$6,664	\$6,920	
AOC Scholarships	\$1,000	\$0	
Website Update & Training	\$9,867	\$2,505	
National Spoonbill Survey	\$1,856	\$0	
Willie Cook - Tern Project	\$0	\$376	
Mike Bell - Tern Project	\$0	\$194	
OSNZ Otago - 2013 Conference Float	\$0	\$1,000	
Biz Bell - RAC - Scanning of Submissions at Auckland Museum	\$871	\$0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,258</b>	<b>\$10,995</b>	
<b>6. AUCKLAND MORTGAGE TRUST INVESTMENT</b>			
<b>OPENING BALANCE</b>	<b>\$2,059</b>	<b>\$9,800</b>	
Writedown 31/3/2011	\$0	\$2,635	
Writedown 31/3/2013	\$0	\$2,106	
Capital Payments	\$0	\$3,000	
<b>CLOSING BALANCE</b>	<b>\$2,059</b>	<b>\$2,059</b>	
<b>7. CASHFLOW STATEMENT</b>			
A cashflow statement has not been prepared. The provisions for differential reporting under Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, specifically Exposure Draft No. 62 "Framework for Differential Reporting" allows entities of the size of The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc be exempt from the completion of a Statement of Cashflow			





▲ Council and Regional Reps on their meeting day before the conference.

# Minutes of the 75th Annual General Meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc)

held in Palmerston North on 31st May 2014

## Present

76 members and friends

## Apologies

Paul Sagar, Bev and Brian Woolley, Mike Bell, Paul Garner-Richards, Sarah Jamieson, Chris Thompson, Stuart and Alison Chambers, Julia Melville, Claudia Mischler, Christopher Robertson, Peter Langlands.

*That the apologies be accepted*  
Betty Seddon/Stella Rowe Accepted

## Minutes of the 2013 AGM

*"That the minutes of the last AGM, having been circulated, be accepted as a true record of that meeting."* Bruce Postill/John Rowe Accepted. There were no matters arising.

## Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was read by Bruce McKinlay. The audited accounts and report from the auditor had been circulated to the meeting.

*"That the Treasurer's Report, accounts and Auditor's report be accepted and that the auditor, John Khouri, be re-appointed."* Bruce McKinlay/Tony Beauchamp Accepted.

## President's Report

The President, David Lawrie, firstly asked if members would stand for a moment

and remember those from the society who had died over the past year. He then reported on the recent election of officers for Council noting that David Melville and Peter Gaze (sec) were retiring at the end of their current terms; that Delia Small had been appointed as the new secretary and that Mel Galbraith, Keith Woodley and Stefanie Grosser had been elected to Council after a postal ballot.

The President reported on all Society activities over the past year (as since published in *Birds New Zealand*). Scheme convenors, who were present at the meeting, spoke to their reports.

The meeting recorded its thanks to all scheme convenors and to elected officers, retiring officers as well as the continuing services of the executive officer.

*That the meeting accept the President's report David Lawrie/ Peter Gaze* Accepted.

## Society Awards

Michael Taylor was awarded a Meritorious Services Award for his decades of work for the society in many different roles. Nick Allen was awarded the prestigious Falla Award, the citation being read by the President, noting that Nick has been committed to making ornithology more accessible to people, both in the field and through his continuing editorship of *Southern Bird/ Birds New Zealand*.

## Forest and Bird speaker

John Wenham spoke to the meeting, endorsing the close relationship between the two organisations. He gave particular attention to the recently published work on Important Bird Areas for seabirds which OSNZ had contributed to.

## General Business

No major matters were raised other than votes of thanks to the out-going Council and to the Palmerston North members who had worked to make this annual conference so successful.

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.



▲ Michael Taylor receiving his Meritorious Service Award from the President David Lawrie.



▲ Nick Allen receiving the Falla Memorial Award from the President David Lawrie.

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

Nominations are called for the above awards and should be with the OSNZ Secretary (P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040) by 31st December 2014.

Nominations should be on the standard forms, which are available from RRs, or the Secretary [secretary@osnz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@osnz.org.nz)

The Awards Committee will consider all nominations, and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

Further information on OSNZ award procedures is available from your RR or the OSNZ Secretary.

# Putting a Cat Amongst the Wood Pigeons

The reaction of cat lovers and the SPCA to Gareth Morgan's campaign on cats has been predictable: denial. This article will look at a few of the myths that they have propagated in response, and why they are false. Hopefully *Birds New Zealand* members will then be armed to handle the water cooler conversations that seem to be happening all over the country.

First up, how bad is the cat carnage? Most studies of the impacts of cats on birds rely on data that the cat dragged in, literally. People keep track of what their cat brings home. These data consistently show the same thing – that around one third of cats kill a lot, one third kill a bit, and one third don't kill at all. On average a cat brings home about 13 pieces of prey each year.

That doesn't sound too catastrophic until you think about how many cats there are in cities. According to modelling done by Otago University, in settled areas cats kill native birds far faster than they can breed. Birds are constantly being imported from surrounding bush, and disappear when they reach towns and cities. We also see this in Wellington with birds coming from Zealandia.

There goes our myth #1 – *my cat doesn't kill native birds*. It doesn't kill native birds because there aren't any around. Cats are opportunistic hunters, they will kill whatever prey is most prevalent in an area. Cats cause local extinctions of native birds – and in some cases (like the Stephen Island Wren) a local extinction meant a total extinction.

The trouble with data on cat kills is that they rely on the cat bringing home the prey. It turns out that this is actually the exception rather than the rule. Several cat camera studies have now shown that cats only bring home about one in five things they kill (i.e. more like 65 things a year, rather than 13). They eat a third, and leave the rest (half) to rot. There goes myth #2 – *a well-fed cat doesn't kill*. Well-fed cats kill less, but they still kill. It is their instinct.

These camera studies are a profound insight into the lives of cats. The results mean all the impacts on native birds we talked about above are far worse than we ever thought. And the plight of our poor native lizards is even worse than that. It turns out cats particularly love to eat these critters, so cats are killing them in far bigger numbers than we ever thought (especially at night, when they are sitting ducks in the cold).

Which brings us to the much-loved myth #3 – *cats kill rats, so on the whole cats are good for native wildlife*. It was this sort of flawed logic that saw the cat, stoat, ferret and weasel introduced to New Zealand in the first place. And sadly it is no truer today than it was in the 19th Century. Rats breed 20-30 times faster than native birds, so food supply is a much bigger limitation on their population than cats are. We can see this in action with the mast season of the beech forests – if cats were doing such a great job why would there be an explosion of rats? Cats can cause local extinctions of native birds, but they have never managed the same with rats. The fact is that in many major towns and cities rats are already controlled far more effectively by humans than they are by cats.

The final myth propagated by the SPCA is that *Trap Neuter Return (TNR) is an effective way to manage stray cat populations*. This is a popular method of dealing with unowned cats – to neuter them and put them back into the environment. The idea is that the colony will keep other cats out of the area and will slowly dwindle over time. Sadly neither of these theories has played out in practice. In the meantime these colonies of cats still slaughter native wildlife. After all, we aren't worried about cats mating with native birds, so how will neutering help! The question confronting the SPCA is whether they are against cruelty to all animals or just their beloved cats? Sadly, cat lovers are the majority of their donors, so this is unlikely to change soon.

We must all keep the pressure on the SPCA to stop TNR, and on local Councils to manage cats like dogs. We have identified a legal path for Councils to take on this role, all that is needed is public pressure to force their hand. Owners should be responsible for stopping their cats wandering, as they are for dogs. Then the unowned cat population can be humanely euthanised. Only then will New Zealand towns and cities be safe for our native birds and lizards, and we will take a step closer to a Predator Free New Zealand.

GARETH MORGAN and GEOFF SIMMONS



## New Zealand Pigeon feeding 2.5 metres above busy central city footpath

As I crossed Christchurch's Rolleston Avenue from Canterbury Museum at lunchtime on 15th October 2013, a New Zealand Pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) flew over me from the Christchurch Botanic Gardens and landed in the shrubbery bordering the footpath and Christchurch City Council car park next to the Rolleston House Youth Hostel.

It was feeding on young leaves in the crown of a 4 m-high Golden Chain (*Laburnum anagyroides*, Fabaceae), which I had thought of as a poisonous plant. On checking, it appears that the black seeds are the most poisonous part; in spring only fresh foliage and the distinctive pendulous racemes of yellow flowers are present.

For 10 minutes I observed the pigeon eating leaves, entirely unmoved by passing cars and trucks, or pedestrians passing within a couple of metres on the footpath below. It was a tidy eater, with no crumbs (leaf fragments) dropped, and moved just over 50 cm 'up' the near horizontal part of the branch on which it had landed, into obscuring denser foliage. It gradually sidled back to its landing position and a further 70 cm down the branch, eating all along the way, to end up hanging on to the branch tip. This was severely bent down to within one metre of oblivious passers-by. The bird was still munching as I headed off to get my own lunch.

Over the following two weeks I saw a single New Zealand Pigeon, presumably the same bird, feeding on the same tree around the middle of the day on several occasions. Other colleagues at the Museum report seeing the same phenomenon – including in preceding years. A month on from my first sighting of the pigeon, it is clear that all the upper emergent branches of this Golden Chain tree are heavily browsed – indeed shorn – by the feeding activity.

Dr Paul Scofield has drawn my attention to P.L. Dunn's 1981 unpublished University of Otago MSc thesis which noted that in urban Dunedin young *Laburnum* leaves were a significant food for kereru.

ANTHONY WRIGHT

Canterbury Museum, awright@canterburymuseum.com



■ New Zealand Pigeon on branch of *Laburnum anagyroides*; large European Lime (*Tilia europea*) and tower of Canterbury Museum in background on other side of Rolleston Avenue.

## Supporting the Science Behind the “Battle for our Birds”

*Birds New Zealand* congratulates the Department of Conservation for the considerable efforts it is making to defuse an impending plague of rats and stoats in New Zealand's beech forests. “This campaign will benefit many threatened native bird species, and we hope that it will lead to support and funding for more extensive predator control in the future” says *Birds New Zealand* president David Lawrie.

The recognition of the links between summer temperatures, heavy beech seedfall, rodent and stoat population peaks, and the threat that ship rats and stoats pose to hole-nesting and ground-nesting native birds is based on decades of detailed ecological studies. Fortunately this threat can be met by wise use of aerially-applied baits laced with the toxin 1080, specifically through using an initial drop of non-toxic baits to overcome bait shyness by rats, and timing the two drops just before the birds' breeding season. This ensures high bird breeding success at the very time when an unprotected forest would be suffering devastating losses of breeding female birds and their eggs and chicks through rat and stoat predation.

Understanding the effectiveness of 1080 for rat and stoat control is relatively new information, derived from monitoring the outcomes of possum control operations. The toxin has long been used to control slow-breeding possums (which can produce only one or two young per breeding female per year). Use of 1080 to control fast-breeding rats and stoats requires more precise timing of application. It needs to be applied in those years when the predators are predicted to be reaching plague levels, and just before birds start to breed, to ensure that the predators don't have time to re-invade.

“Many of our society's professional members have contributed to the underlying science as scientists, field workers and advisors” says Lawrie. “Bringing all the strands of this research and analysis together into effective management offers real hope for the long-term survival of threatened bird species in mainland forests. We challenge DOC to ensure adequate monitoring of both managed and unmanaged forests and their birdlife. The community is exposed to much misinformation about the risks of 1080 use. The best way to overcome this is to show how effective the wise use of 1080 is at maintaining healthy bird populations.”

DAVID LAWRIE, M.N.Z.M.

## *Birds New Zealand* 75th Anniversary

Conference and AGM • May 30th – June 1st • Blenheim

*“The People and the Birds”*

Join us for this milestone and celebrate both our country's unique birds, but also the people who have shaped our organisation over the last 75 years. This conference will not only look at our birds, but also at the people, projects, activities and history of the Society and its members, and then take a peek at our future direction.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Top of The South for what should be a fantastic weekend to mark this historical occasion.

Marlborough 75th anniversary conference team  
conference@osnz.org.nz

## Call for nominations

### Records Appraisal Committee

The *Birds New Zealand* Records Appraisal Committee (RAC) assesses the veracity of reported sightings of unusual birds in New Zealand – either rarely-occurring vagrants from overseas, or New Zealand breeding species seen outside their usual range. The RAC Terms of Reference requires turnover in RAC membership at least once every three years. In compliance with this, we seek nominations for one place on the RAC.

Applicants must have expert New Zealand bird identification skills, and must be current members of *Birds New Zealand*. All nominations must be supported by a second member of the Society, preferably an office-holder. Nominations should include a brief summary of the applicant's bird identification expertise, and must be received via email by the RAC secretary before 5 pm on Friday 31 October 2014 (email address: racsecretary@osnz.org.nz). Nominations may be submitted by either the applicant or their nominator, but must be cc'd to the other party and include specific mention of their support or willingness to be nominated.

Please address any enquiries to the RAC secretary Biz Bell at the email address above.  
COLIN MISKELLY, RAC convenor

## Rodger Wasley

Members of the Manawatu recently farewelled Rodger Wasley, who sadly passed away in June. Rodger was a loyal member of OSNZ having become a member of the Society in the late 1960s.

A keen photographer of birds and wildlife for many years, Rodger took hundreds of photos, sitting in his hide for hours on end. He was asked numerous times to give talks and show slides of his birds and had photographs published in books in New Zealand and Norfolk Island. Wherever he travelled in the world his binoculars and camera accompanied him to watch the birds there and take photos.

Rodger was a keen volunteer member of the Taiko Expedition and participated from 1991-2013. He helped in many ways at Taiko Camp catching Taiko, and building over 100 artificial burrows for the Taiko and Chatham Petrel for the predator-free area. He was able to see a Chatham Petrel chick in its burrow in 2012 while working at Taiko Camp. In 1996 he spent time on Mokoia Island with Brent Stephenson helping with his Morepork project.

As an example of his dedication to being involved in wader counts, in 1992 he snapped his Achilles tendon and was in plaster, but this did not stop him from going to Porangahau for the whole day and going up the beaches on his crutches with the Manawatu team looking for waders. He often went to the Manawatu Estuary to count and watch the waders there. In 1996 he helped with the Manawatu AGM at Foxton Beach and took teams of people up the beach to do beach patrols in his Land Rover.

We wish to acknowledge all the work Rodger has put into birding in New Zealand. He will be sadly missed.

CRAIG STEED



▲ Rodger on the Chatham Islands.



# New Zealand Bird Conference 2014

It had been a few years since the last Manawatu OSNZ conference and AGM held at Foxton but as the sun shone warmly so too did the atmosphere at what proved to be an excellent New Zealand Bird Conference 2014. Based at the conveniently located Copthorne Steeple Conference Centre the venue provided a suitable central location for delegates (though getting that temperature just right did prove a challenge).

The first day of conference was kicked off Kerri Morgan providing an overview of the work of Wildbase (the wildlife veterinary centre at Massey University) and the exciting initiative being undertaken to develop Wildbase Recovery – a uniquely designed wildlife rehabilitation area in the Palmerston North Esplanade. Talk guidelines had been shortened to 12 minutes for the talk, three minutes for questions and, following on from the key note by Kerri, speakers rose to the challenge of these shorter talks, offering a punchy series of presentations under a variety of topics such as: *diseases, infection and physiology; management; and evolution.*

A large number of students spoke on the first day, including the winner of the best student presentation Jessica Hiscox. Jessica's talk was on her investigations into the presence of microbes on both the shells and contents of North Island Brown kiwi eggs and their potential impact on their eggs. Breaks throughout the day allowed for the all-important catching up and reconnecting between delegates and the making of new friendship and contacts. The AGM followed the conclusion of the first day's presentations and was seamlessly led by David Lawrie and team. Conference delegates were able to then kick back and

enjoy a Thai banquet at the nearby Thai Orchid Restaurant.

Sunday morning started with a range of workshops. Photographer Paul Gummer led an excellent photography and Photoshop workshop. Alan Tennyson and Colin Miskelly talked those interested in identifying beach-wrecked birds through the key techniques and had a range of beach-wrecked birds in varying stages of degradation to work through. Bruce McKinlay took a group of delegates through the intricacies of eBird at one of the Massey computing labs and this workshop continued to stress the importance of eBird as a recording place for all of our sightings. David Melville, Phil Battley and Isabel Castro took a group out mist-netting early Sunday morning and were able to lead a range of delegates through this process.

Following morning workshops the second day of talks began with Graeme Taylor providing the key note for the day and providing a fascinating presentation on remote tracking and monitoring of seabirds. This keynote set the scene for another day of exceptionally high quality presentations. The day concluded with Colin Miskelly providing some reflections on the release of New Zealand Birds Online, launched a year ago at the Dunedin Conference. The conference dinner followed; a low key but enjoyable evening.

Monday was fieldtrip day and three successful trips took place. The first was to Bushy Park where Peter Frost, together with Bushy Park educator Terry O'Connor gave delegates a guided tour around this successful sanctuary. Good numbers of Saddlebacks, Robins and Stitchbirds were seen over the day, but unfortunately Nankeen Night Herons were keeping themselves well hidden at



▲ Mary up close with a Kaka.

the Upokongaro café later in the day. The trip to Foxton Estuary was led by Phil Battley and Lindsay Davies and enabled participants to quickly see Fernbird, in good numbers, and then all were surprised by the presence of two Glossy Ibises at the estuary itself. Meanwhile, across the other side of the Tararua Ranges a group had a behind the scenes tour of Pukaha/Mt Bruce and were given the opportunity to see the white Kiwi and to quietly see the Shore Plover there; usually out of sight to public. Kaka were making themselves well known however, and the noisy Kaka feed was an enjoyable way to finish the day.

All up, a very positive weekend and I would like to take the opportunity to thank the organising committee (Pam, Phil, Lindsay, Jennifer and Roger) for pulling together and enabling a successful conference to take place.

CRAIG STEED  
(Conference convenor and RR Manawatu)



▲ Enjoying a cuppa.



▲ Conference committee.

# Why are migratory shorebirds declining so rapidly and what should we do about it?

Dedicated members of ornithological societies across Australia and New Zealand have been counting migratory shorebirds for decades, and excellent analyses of these data have been published for individual sites on both sides of the Tasman. Many published analyses of local trends reveal declines but so far there is no clear picture as to whether these trends are widespread and what this means for the future of our migratory shorebirds. Financial support from the Queensland Wader Study Group, the Australian federal and state governments and the Port of Brisbane, has enabled our project team at the University of Queensland to bring together shorebird count data generously contributed by dozens of organisations and thousands of counters to answer this big question.

The results, I am sad to report, are truly shocking. Analyses of migratory shorebird population data from Australia and New Zealand by Colin Studds and Rob Clemens reveal declines of staggering severity and rapidity, with some migratory shorebird populations crashing by up to 80% in 20 years. Curlew Sandpiper is one the most heavily impacted species, showing a steep decline across much of its distribution. Fortunately it remains less impacted in other flyways around the world. For some species, such as the Red Knot, the decline is quite consistent in various parts of its non-breeding range, while for others such as the Bar-tailed Godwit, the decline is much more pronounced in some regions than others.

In the case of the godwit, the eastern *baueri* population is declining at about 1% per year in eastern Australia and New

Zealand. This is fast, but nowhere near as dramatic as the western *menzbieri* population, which is declining at something like 6% per year in western Australia. *Menzbieri* godwits pass through the Yellow Sea each year on both their northward and southward migrations, while the New Zealand birds fly straight over the Pacific on their return journey from the Arctic and are thus less dependent on stopover sites. Could this be the reason for the difference in decline? We don't know, but we are trying to establish whether dependence on the Yellow Sea explains how quickly different shorebird populations have declined.

Using satellite data we have documented rapid losses of tidal flats in eastern Asia, a region known to be of critical importance as stopover habitat for many migratory shorebirds. PhD student Nick Murray developed a remote sensing method to assess change over about 4,000 kilometres of the Yellow Sea coastline and discovered extensive losses of tidal flats, driven primarily by urban, industrial and agricultural land reclamations.

Nick's analysis revealed that 28% of tidal flats existing in the 1980s had disappeared by the late-2000s. Moreover, reference to historical maps suggests that up to 65% of Yellow Sea tidal flats were lost since the 1950s. As well as land reclamation, large declines in sediment flows carried by the region's major rivers could be having a big impact, with some tidal flats simply disappearing over the past few decades.

With the Yellow Sea region forecast to be a global hotspot of urban expansion, coastal development must urgently



▲ Bar-tailed Godwits roosting on an area being reclaimed at Yalujiang. Photo by David Melville.

pursue a course that minimises ecosystem loss and protects remaining coastal ecosystems.

Modelling work carried out by PhD students Takuya Iwamura and Kiran Dhanjal-Adams is suggesting that habitat loss in the Yellow Sea region could have profound implications for shorebird populations at a flyway level. For example, sea-level rise represents an additional emerging threat, in which coastal wetlands are placed under further pressure across the flyway. For migratory species, the impact of habitat loss will depend not only on its extent, but also on where it occurs. We developed a novel mathematical approach to measure how vulnerable migratory species are to habitat loss through sea-level rise. We discovered that sea-level rise will inundate 23–40% of intertidal habitat area along our shorebirds' migration routes, but cause a reduction in population size of up to 72% because of the loss of important migration bottlenecks.

We believe that an effective conservation strategy must manage the complex economic, social and economic trade-offs that drive coastal development. This means conserving natural ecosystems alongside appropriate coastal development to protect and enhance coastal settlements. We urge decision-making that simultaneously plans for coastal development and coastal conservation along the world's most rapidly developing shores. For example, places subject to near-intractable threats, such as sediment depletion and coastal subsidence, could be prioritised for development in regions where such development must occur. If carefully planned, this could ease



▲ The sea wall at Yalujiang NNR by Bruce McKinlay.





▲ Dunlins being forced onto higher mudflats by the tide, Yalujiang NNR, by Bruce McKinlay.

pressure on coastal protected areas and avert catastrophic extinctions of coastal biodiversity.

Migratory shorebirds fly across international borders, and there is an urgent need for countries to work together to solve this problem before it is

too late. We are enormously excited by the actions already underway around the flyway and our research group is trying to engage with decision-makers to help build momentum for change. We have attended meetings of government and non-government members of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership

in Cambodia, Sumatra and Alaska over the past four years to discuss the conservation actions required to keep one of the World's largest and most threatened migratory bird flyways functioning. The Partnership is a dynamic collaboration among 14 governments across the region, together with three intergovernmental agencies, nine international NGOs and an international corporation (Rio Tinto). Prospective PhD student Eduardo Gallo-Cajiao will soon commence an internship with the Flyway Partnership to better understand the policy environment across the routes that our migratory shorebirds take to establish how best to achieve positive change.

Ultimately, without data from you, the foot soldiers of field ornithology, we would be unable to understand what is happening to our shorebirds, and unable to present compelling data to decision makers that something needs to be done. For your hard work in counting shorebirds, keep it up, and THANK YOU!

To keep up to date with our work, or download any of our papers, visit our website at <http://www.fullerlab.org> or follow us at <http://www.facebook.com/fullerlab>.

RICHARD FULLER  
University of Queensland

## Book Review

### Bird Facts For Everyone

Kerry Atkinson, 2014, Outskirts Press  
ISBN: 978-1-4787-2484-1. Soft cover, 210 pages

What is the commonest bird in the world? This is one of the brain teasers to be answered.

Here is a book that could not have been written before the internet gave ready access to instant knowledge. Kerry Atkinson, by profession a physician and cell biologist who has worked and travelled in the UK, USA and Australia where he now lives, has put together an intriguing assortment of information about birds. "Facts" may sometimes be too strong a word for a given snippet but this really doesn't matter since part of the fun of the book is its capacity to generate enthusiasm and promote discussion.

The content is divided into 30 sections, many of which deal with aspects of appearance or behaviour. The text is well written and broken up by sub-headings to draw attention to the facts being presented. The longest section, entitled the classification of birds (18 pages) includes a discussion on the subject of species, subspecies and races of birds with illustrative examples. Extinct birds are also treated and some recently discovered species are mentioned. There are the inevitable claims of largest, smallest, heaviest, lightest, fastest, slowest, etc. Those who enjoy word botching nearly as much as bird watching will welcome the piece on strange bird names, and the couple of pages on collective nouns for groups of birds.

The book is pleasant to handle and copiously illustrated. The striking cover picture shows a pair of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos facing away from one another as if they have just quarrelled, with one bird thinking "Well I didn't really want that peanut anyway".

Small colour photographs taken by the author are sprinkled throughout the text which is generally free of faults such as typos, though proof checking must have been a formidable task.

One amusing slip on page 2 refers to the Purple Swamphen "pictured below left" whereas it actually appears above right, alongside the text for endemic species which it is not: Pukeko are notoriously hard to control!

Besides informing and passing the time, Bird Facts for Everyone should provide a valuable source of quiz questions, both serious and light-hearted. For instance: How many of the world's 10,400 bird species bear the name of a person, e.g. Buller's Shearwater? Answer; about 525. The person to claim the most is Edward Blyth, a 19th century English zoologist, with 12 birds to his name. Further down the list with six namings we find Shelley, whose entitlement is actually split between two nephews of the poet: not many people know that. This neat little book could perhaps have been sub-titled "A bird lover's guide to ornithology: 1001 things about birds you should know before you die". It would make a nice gift to give or receive.

The commonest bird in the world? Apparently this is the Red-billed Quelea, an African member of the weaver family with 1.5 billion pairs, and not America's candidate the Red-winged Blackbird which numbers a mere 200 million.

MICHAEL TAYLOR







Colony in dead willows, Wainono Lagoon, South Canterbury. Image: Mary Thompson

## Results of Royal Spoonbill Colony and Nest Census, 2013/2014

Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) is an Australian species that has successfully naturally colonised New Zealand since the 1950s. The Ornithological Society has been involved in studying spoonbills for several decades. The number of Royal Spoonbills in New Zealand has increased markedly over the last few decades from only 26 in 1979 to 2,360 in the 2012 winter census. It is likely that much of this growth is due to increased breeding in New Zealand, although further influxes of Australian birds cannot be ruled out.

During this last 2013/2014 breeding season *Birds New Zealand* undertook the first systematic, co-ordinated count of all the Royal Spoonbill colonies and active nests in New Zealand. The survey methodology was approved by the OSNZ Scientific Committee and was supported by grants from the OSNZ Project Assistance Fund. Many of the colonies are in fairly inaccessible places so a good deal of planning logistics and perseverance was needed by members to get to the colonies. Walking and all kinds of water transport – canoes, kayaks, inflatables, dinghies – as well as aeroplanes, were employed. Our thanks go to private landowners and Department of Conservation for facilitating access to some locations.

The total number of colonies now stands at 19 (see graph). The new colonies are at Porangahau River Mouth (Hawke's Bay), Havelock Harbour (Marlborough), Lake Ellesmere (Canterbury), False Islet (The Catlins), and two on islets in Bluff Harbour and at Waituna Wetlands (Southland). Earlier small colonies at Parengarenga (Far North) and Heyward Point (Otago) do not appear to have persisted. The newly-discovered colonies are surprisingly large, which suggests that they may have existed unnoticed for several years prior to this census. The large one at Lake Ellesmere was first seen the previous season. The only known colonies in the North Island are on the northern tip of Kapiti Island in the scrub between Okupe Lagoon and the sea, and on a small island in the Porangahau River estuary on the east coast of Hawke's Bay.

The total number of nests counted in the 2013/2014 breeding season was 614 (see table). This is probably a minimum number as the number of nests at some colonies could only be estimated because of difficulty of access or to avoid disturbance of the birds. Most of the previously known colonies have increased in size since they were first observed. The original colonies in the Wairau Lagoons were on islands in the lagoons and often associated with Pied Shag colonies – they even used old shag nests. Now the main colony is on an island in the middle of the Blenheim Oxidation Ponds and is the second largest in New Zealand.

The largest colony is now at Lake Ellesmere with 134 nests counted this season. Nesting occurred over a prolonged period as pairs were sitting on eggs while others had already fledged chicks in mid-November. There were at least twice as many birds in the area as those involved in breeding.

The first nests at Wainono Lagoon were found in 2003 on maimais – one maimai had seven nests. An Otago Branch field trip in November 2013 discovered another colony in dead willows overhanging the Hook Stream where it enters the lagoon, although there are still nests on the maimais and on isolated willows at the northwest end of the lagoon.

The large colony in the wetlands of Waituna/Awarua Bay, Southland was found from an aerial survey of the area on 22nd December 2013; an early Christmas present for the Southland Branch. This colony cannot be accessed by foot or boat! A Black-backed Gull colony was nearby.

From this census it is clear that Royal Spoonbill colonies are invariably located in sites particularly inaccessible to humans and so would experience very little disturbance. They are usually surrounded by or above water. They are on islands, small islets, rock stacks off the coast, islands within river estuaries, or deep within wetland areas, including the dense kahikatea swamps of Westland.

The colonies are often associated with Black-backed Gull colonies (Porangahau, Kapiti, Blenheim, and Waituna) and it is of interest whether the gulls offer some sort of protection or are actually predators of eggs and chicks. Some colonies have Stewart Island Shag colonies nearby (Maukiekie, Green Island), and at Wainono two Glossy Ibises in breeding plumage were present at the colony.

The site of the nest ranges from on the ground to many metres high in trees. The type of nest ranges from simply flattened grasses without much nest material to large loose constructions of interwoven sticks and twigs. At Lake Ellesmere and Havelock many nests were on the ground on flattened tussocks or rushes, and some built a nest, making a mound of sticks directly on the ground, or placed on driftwood. At Kapiti Island the nests are hidden among low scrub, *Coprosma prostrata* (mingimingi) and *Muehlenbeckia complexa* (pohuehue). On the rock stacks off the

■ Nest in taupata canopy, Taieri Island. Image Philip Pointon.



Otago coast there are patches of 1-2.5 m high *Coprosma repens* (taupata) and large stick nest were built about a metre below the canopy of these trees. At Wainono the nests were built in willows at sites from 0.5 to 5 m above the water.

It is intriguing to speculate about what has contributed to the recent successful expansion of the number and size of colonies in New Zealand. From 1949 until 1980 the only known breeding colony of Royal Spoonbills in New Zealand was at Waitangiroti near Okarito, alongside the White Heron colony. It is presumed that the breeding colony at Okarito established following persistent arrival of vagrants from Australia, yet this colony has remained small and no more colonies became established in New Zealand until 1980. Richard Holdaway discovered the first nests away from Okarito on islands in the Wairau lagoons near Blenheim in the 1979/1980 breeding season. Since then the number of colonies has steadily increased, with most of them being located on the east coast of the South Island. Were the first of the new colonies founded by birds from Okarito or from new influxes of Australian birds? What changes have occurred since 1980 that would favour Royal Spoonbills and contribute towards the expansion that we have witnessed? In contrast to the success of Royal Spoonbills, White Herons still breed only at one location – Okarito, despite regular influxes from Australia. And Cattle Egrets, which have essentially colonised most of the world, have not succeeded in New Zealand as far as we know, despite being scarce winter visitors from Australia.

It will be interesting to see whether the Royal Spoonbills continue to extend their breeding areas. It is puzzling why breeding colonies have not yet established in the north of New Zealand, which is where 80% of the birds spend the winter. Why do birds spend winter in the far north but return in summer to southern areas to breed, rather than breeding in northern areas? One small colony was found at Parengarenga in 1992, but this does not appear to have persisted. There are many extensive harbours with infrequently visited inlets remote from human habitation so there may be colonies we are unaware of. We received a photograph of a Royal Spoonbill carrying sticks between pine trees on Rabbit Island, Nelson, so this will be a location to investigate next season.

MARY THOMPSON and PETER SCHWEIGMAN  
Co-ordinators of the census

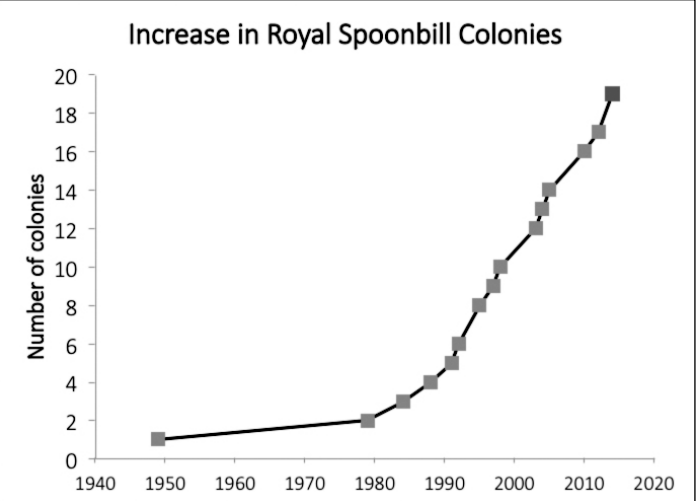
Location	Number of nests 2013/2014 season	Number of nests when first established
Porangahau River Estuary *	8	
Kapiti Island	(20)	3
Blenheim Sewage Ponds	64	5
Havelock Harbour*	5	
Okarito	(7)	2
Lake Ellesmere*	134	84
Wainono Lagoon (Sth Cant.)	34	14
Maukiekie Island	30	7
Taiaroa Head	28	3
Green Island	37	4
Taieri Island	(15)	25
Nugget Point	22	4
False Islet*	25	
Rainbow Isle	5	4
Omaui	18	25
Bluff Harbour-Tikore Island*	40	
Bluff Harbour-islet*	17	
Waituna wetlands*	60	
Pig Island-Riverton	(45)	2
<b>Total number of nests</b>	<b>614</b>	

Key:

\* recently discovered colonies;

# data from Schweigman P. (2006) Southern Bird 27: 10-11;

Counts in parentheses denote conservative estimates.



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## Graham Turbott

Many congratulations to Graham Turbott, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday. Brian Gill and Roy Clare (director of Auckland Museum) visited him recently to wish him many happy returns on reaching his century.

- Graham Turbott (left) with Roy Clare, director of Auckland Museum, nine days after Graham's 100th birthday. Roy is holding the card signed by Her Majesty The Queen.  
Photo by Brian Gill.



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## Donations and Bequests

We are working hard ensuring a better future for birds across New Zealand, but to do this we need your help!

### Make a donation

- The Society is a registered charitable entity (CC 41020) and tax credits are available for donations made in New Zealand. You can donate in several ways:
- Posting a cheque to our Membership Secretary
  - Depositing funds into our BNZ bank account 02-0290-0164715-00
  - By credit card via PayPal (send payments to membership@osnz.org.nz)

### Leave a gift in your will

- No matter how small, leaving something to us in your will really makes a difference.
- We will channel every dollar we receive into our Projects Assistance Fund, so you can be confident that your gift will have a real impact, both now and in the future. By remembering *Birds New Zealand* in your will, you will ensure that birds have a voice for years to come.
- It is important to consult your solicitor, Guardian Trust or Public Trust office for advice in drawing up your will. A general gift gives us the flexibility to direct funds where they are needed, but we are also very happy to discuss options if you would like to leave a gift in your will towards a specific purpose.
- There are a couple of ways of supporting us in your will:
- Specific Legacy. You may wish to leave a specific amount of money, shares, bonds, items or a nominated gift to the Society.
  - Residuary Legacy. You may wish to leave a gift of all or part of your net estate (what remains after all taxes, specific gifts to family and friends and the cost of administering the estate have been paid). This type of legacy should be expressed as a percentage or share of your estate.



# National Red-billed Gull Survey, 2014-2016

In 1965, Lou Gurr and Fred Kinsky published a review of the known colonies of the Red-billed Gull (Gurr, L. and Kinsky F. 1965. The distribution of breeding colonies and status of the red-billed gull in New Zealand and its outlying islands. *Notornis* 12: 223-240). The review covered all sites that had been reported between 1889 and 1965, many of them either in the OSNZ's Consolidated Short Notes published in *Notornis* or through personal communications. In the end they conservatively estimated about 40,000 breeding pairs at 166 different localities, including some small colonies in New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands.

What is the current status of this species? Jim Mills, our leading authority on Red-billed Gulls, has reported that the numbers of birds breeding in our largest colonies, at Kaikoura and on the Three Kings and Mokohinau islands, have declined markedly over the last 20 years (Mills, J.A. 2013. Red-billed gull. In Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online*. [www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz)). The decline at Kaikoura at least has been attributed to a reduction in marine productivity and therefore to food availability. Conversely, Lyndon Perriman and Chris Lalas (Perriman, L. and Lalas, C. 2012. Recent increase in population size of red-billed gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) at Otago, southern New Zealand. *Notornis* 59: 138-147) have reported an increase of 6-10% over the same period along the Otago coastline, especially where there have been concerted efforts to control predation and disturbance.

What therefore is the current status of the Red-billed Gull in New Zealand? Have numbers declined overall, or has there been a redistribution of the population (and perhaps a change in the size of colonies from a few large ones to many smaller ones), or both? *Birds New Zealand* will be conducting a national survey of Red-billed Gull colonies over at least the next two years, and you are encouraged to take part, if you can. The information from this survey will allow the Department of Conservation to evaluate more precisely

the species' conservation status. At present, the Red-billed Gull is classified as Nationally Vulnerable, based on a predicted decline of 50-70% over three generations despite an apparently large population of 20,000-100,000 mature individuals (Robertson, H.A. et al. 2013. Conservation status of New Zealand birds, 2012. New Zealand Threat Classification Series 4, Department of Conservation, Wellington. <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/science-and-technical/nztcs4entire.pdf>).

The survey will be in two parts. The first is a scoping survey, to be carried out during the coming breeding season, between October 2014 and January 2015. The aim is to locate all current Red-billed Gull breeding colonies, irrespective of their size (some can be as small as two or three pairs). At this stage, we do not need to know precisely how many breeding pairs there are, just a general indication along the lines of "less than 10 pairs", "10-100 pairs", "100-1,000 pairs", or "more than 1,000 pairs". Estimating the size of these colonies will be the focus of the second part of the study, currently scheduled for the 2015-16 breeding season. Given that many colonies are likely to be on offshore islands, stacks, or sea-facing cliffs, surveying them will require careful planning and special resources, including probably photographic surveys from aircraft and boats. We also do not want to disturb the breeding birds, and so will need to organise the surveys well to avoid or minimise this.

As a starting point, we need to check all those localities where Gurr and Kinsky reported Red-billed Gulls breeding. Accordingly, each site has been located, where possible, and mapped on Google Earth. Half of the 166 sites listed had no specific coordinates, or were only allocated to a map sheet. In these cases, we tracked down the locality and mapped the site at the point that most closely matched its description, in some cases having to make a judgement call as to what locality was being referred to, based on other information. This material has been circulated to the *Birds New Zealand* regional representatives, with the request that they

encourage branch members to check these sites and establish if they are being used. Undoubtedly some of the original sites have disappeared (at least one seems to have been overtaken by the development of a marina), but are the others still active? We need information on both.

At the same time, we would like people to look for and document any additional sites, either through their own observations or from information gleaned from offshore fishermen, divers, tour-boat operators and others. The minimum information required for each site is its geographic position (latitude/longitude or NZTM2000 coordinates, ideally accompanied by a map or Google earth image showing the location of the colony), together with some indication of the size of the colony, along the lines suggested above. In the first instance, that information should be sent to your regional recorders (you can find their contact details at <http://osnz.org.nz/contact-us/regional-recorders>). If you can include photographs of the site or any other information that you consider will be useful in planning the second stage of the survey please do so (for example, the names and contact details of people who know the sites, or who control access to it, and people, such as boat-owners or skippers, who might be prepared to assist logistically in surveying the sites).

Finally, Claudia Mischler (Wildlife Management International Ltd) is carrying out a parallel survey of Black-billed Gulls. She is particularly keen to have information on the locations and sizes of any Black-billed Gull colonies in the North Island. If you come across any such colonies, please pass the information on to Claudia (email: [claudia@wmil.co.nz](mailto:claudia@wmil.co.nz)), and copy it to the relevant *Birds New Zealand* regional recorder.

PETER FROST, Convenor, *Birds New Zealand* Projects and Activities Committee, 87 Ikitara Road, Wanganui 4500 (email: [birds.wanganui@osnz.org.nz](mailto:birds.wanganui@osnz.org.nz))

GRAEME TAYLOR, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10420, Wellington 6143 (email: [gtaylor@doc.govt.nz](mailto:gtaylor@doc.govt.nz))



■ Red-billed Gull colony Katiki Point, Moeraki. This is one of the colonies in Otago currently expanding. Photo by Nick Allen



## FAR NORTH

At the OSNZ meeting in Palmerston North Detlef Davies handed the reins to me after 10 years in the job as the Far North Regional Representative. Detlef will continue as Regional Recorder and editor of *Apteryx*, the Far North newsletter. A huge thanks is due to Detlef and Carol for their efforts over the past 10 years.

I have been struggling since then to emerge from a deluge of Regional Representative responsibilities crashing on me at the same time as the weather provided torrential downpours and floods, high winds and crashing waves.

Saturday 12 July 2014 was the scheduled day for our winter meeting in Mangonui. The plan was to do a beach patrol during the day of some of the eastern beaches exposed to the storms, and gather at 5:30pm in Mangonui for the meeting. Those with 4WDs who lived in the area had an advantage. The Kerikeri/Opua contingent dealt with flooded roads, slips and downed trees to get there, which everybody eventually did. In spite of the weather, the beach patrol turned up fewer birds than normal, and on the subsequent beach patrol on the West Coast, 15 of the usual birds in our regular 26 kilometre stretch was a very low count.

Also in spite of the weather, bird flocks in the Far North have been healthy. At last count, at least 200 Royal Spoonbills and 120 Black Swans were at Parengarenga, at least 350 Canada Geese were at Kowhai, and 300 Royal Spoonbills at Unahi Road. Flocks of up to 2,000 Fluttering Shearwaters were seen on pelagics and counted from the coast, and 600-1,200 Fairy Prions on pelagics and fishing trips. A rumoured 2,000 Weka are now established in the Russell area (not an OSNZ count). Pukeko, Myra bird and Red-Billed Gulls are so common that many times they aren't even counted, and it seems as if every field has its resident Paradise Shelduck pair on a drive from anywhere to anywhere.

Winter pelagics in the Far North are rare: storms, high seas, and high winds cancel most scheduled trips, but we were lucky to have two stunning sunny, flat calm, no wind days for two of our trips; single days sandwiched between storms and high seas. The June 23rd pelagic departed at 1pm, a variance from our normal 7am departure. The highlight of the trip was listening to the sounds of Grey-faced Petrel, Little Penguin, and Cook's Petrel coming in the roost/nest on Stephenson Island, after the sun had set in a brilliant glow. The highlight of the second trip on July 28th was the feeding frenzy of an estimated 650 Fairy Prions encountered as we were returning to shore.

Barn Owls seem to be prospering at Kaiaia. Reliable reports put the population in excess of 12 birds now, and the original pair are nesting twice a year. Kevin Mathews and his team have installed owl nesting boxes at a number of sites, to date with little success. The plan is to install a camera at one of the sites.

I had reports from the owner of Wairere Boulders that Riflemen were to be seen from time to time at the site; an unusual report. Other unusual sightings include Australian Pelican at Parengarenga, and a Brown Teal pair observed and photographed in the Russell area. A Buller's Mollymawk was sighted and photographed on one of the pelagics, the second such sighting since January 2010. New Zealand Dotterel "flocked up" earlier in the year (we counted 44 birds on several occasions).

Since the OSNZ Conference and Bruce McKinley's kind instruction on eBird,

observations have been recorded in eBird for Far North sightings. Attempts to use the automated update feature from an Excel spreadsheet of observations going back to 2009 failed, so I'm laboriously entering the data by hand, one observer at a time. It's a learning process, as locations can't always (read rarely) be found on Google Earth. So be patient, Shining Cuckoo aficionados, the data will arrive.

From a strategic perspective, membership is an issue, with 27 paying members in the Far North. To create interest OSNZ made a donation to the Far North Science and Technology Fair for a bird-related topic; the prize, a year's student subscription to OSNZ. DOC Kerikeri has offered to add a web page to their web site on OSNZ: an offer that will be complete this weekend. We have a number of topics under discussion with DOC, and they are anxious to be involved in our projects and assist where appropriate. We especially need their help in wader counts at Parengarenga and Walker Island.

I'm starting a more serious scholarship (\$1,000) for the Far North High School students to get a more sustained interest generated, but the form is still being discussed. It won't start until the next school year. The concept is 25 points for participation in an OSNZ event (beach patrol, garden bird survey, shorebird survey, pelagic, five-minute bird count survey, etc.). One point for each bird registered on eBird during the year, and five points for each legitimate observation posted on eBird. The student with the most points wins at the judge's discretion. Parents will necessarily have to be committed to the student's aims, and some parent participation will be required. A Regional Representative's Blog on the web site would be a useful place to discuss such concepts. This is a topic for the future. - LES FEASEY

## NORTHLAND

The dream of a "Kiwi Coast" is now a reality! Ngaire Tyson, co-ordinator of the New Zealand Landcare Trust, was the guest speaker at our June meeting and her enlightening presentation detailed the vision and the project plan of several groups whose aim is to create a corridor for Kiwi on the east coast of Northland from Mangonui down to Bream Head near Whangarei. The groups are community led and are supportive of each other.

Following the rough easterly weather that we had in June, the numbers of birds collected on our Beach Patrols were very low, and still are. The large sand bar on the Ruakaka River has almost disappeared and numbers observed during the Whangarei Harbour survey were also lower than usual. Blackbirds, however, seem to be out and about in good numbers in most parts of the city, with a group of nine birds seen together hopping around under a tree; maybe sorting out partnerships?

Talking of kitchen windows, one of our members saw a Tui clinging to a window sill while peering into her kitchen. She is a good cook, so perhaps it was hoping for some lunch. A large number of Red-billed Gulls, over 500, were counted in a group in a small paddock near Onerahi on a very wet morning in June, and 17 Brown Teal were seen near Teal Bay on 28th June.

Two members of our Branch continue to monitor Pied Shag colonies in the north and have noted that a colony near Teal Bay has shifted and is now settled at the north end of

the bay with some 34 adults, nests and young. Another fairly new colony has been located in Pohutukawa trees overhanging the water close to the northern end of the Tutukaka Marina car-park. There are about 12 adult birds, nests and young chicks.

Finally, we have moved with our landlord, to a brand-new building at 148 Corks Road, Tikipunga, for our monthly meetings where we have better access, parking and facilities. - JANET SNELL and KEVIN HAYES

## TARANAKI

As usual in June the Taranaki branch held its AGM and re-election of officers, and as usual all incumbents were re-elected before they had a chance to do any electioneering. Oh that national elections could be completed so speedily! The end of autumn and beginning of winter heralds the usual influx of Tui and New Zealand Pigeon into town. Ron Lambert had two Tui sipping water from hollowed out apples in his orchard. There were five New Zealand Pigeons at Ian Dudding's eating Pseudopanax fruit. At the Messenger's rural home up to five Tui were performing aerobatics. Finally, Marie Mitchell has a pair of Tui checking out her Kowhai tree.

After the June field trip to Ratapihipihi, Barry Hartley took the Cockerams down the south Taranaki coast to Sandy Bay, where amongst other shore birds they saw Banded and New Zealand Dotterel. The Cockerams have also seen a Falcon around their home, which is close to Egmont National Park. We have also had a Falcon at Waiongana. I first saw it one morning flying over paddocks with a Magpie close behind, then on two other occasions in early July, once sheltering in the cross arms of a power pole as two Magpies harassed it. Also in early July a White Heron flew in and has been around for a couple of months. Our group had a discussion on "Places to see birds in Taranaki" and after some hesitation quite a long list was produced. I believe Barry Hartley is going to shorten it a bit then write a brief outline of the chosen places. We will then decide whether to put out some sort of publication, or just an article in *Birds New Zealand*.

In July members headed off to Lake Rotokare to check out the newly introduced Whitehead and Saddleback but they proved elusive, and along with Robin and Spotless Crane went unreported, or maybe it is just an aging group of people with failing eyesight and diminished hearing. Anyway, the Cockerams returned later in the month and saw a flock of about 12 Whiteheads along with Fernbird and a pair of Black Swan with a cygnet.

Beach patrolling over the last few months has been entirely for the exercise with no birds picked up. However, a 12-metre very dead Blue Whale washed up on a beach just to the west of New Plymouth. As often happens during winter some of us have been housebound and doing birding from indoors, which in itself can be very interesting at times. Two members had been whiling away the days with some reading, in particular a book titled *Birds Do It Too* apparently about the sexual behaviour of birds. One of the pair was shocked by the behaviour of the Dunnock, which she described in explicit detail to our attentive ears. Someone described it as ornithological voyeurism.

In early August there were seven New Zealand Dabchicks and 102 Canada Geese

on the Opunake oxidation ponds, amongst the other waterfowl. There was a total of six Royal Spoonbills at Mokau and two around Waiongana. The month's field trip, an evening visit to the Rapanui Grey-faced Petrel colony in perfect weather, had six of us ducking and diving as birds flew low overhead. Although none were seen on the ground there was enough aerial activity to make the trip more than worthwhile. – PETER FRYER

### HAWKE'S BAY

On 27th July branch members visited A'Deane's Bush, a privately-owned 40 ha area of lowland podocarp forest near Waipukurau. A group comprising landowners, neighbours and the local school are putting in a lot of effort into pest plant and animal control, planting and setting up monitoring of species responses to the work. Rifleman were transferred earlier this year from the population at Boundary Stream mainland island. We were shown round by Kay Griffiths who has been closely involved with this translocation and other conservation work at the site. A number of Rifleman were seen and they have obviously settled in well.

Eastern Rosella were present at A'Deane's Bush, and their numbers have been increasing there and at other inland areas in Hawke's Bay. It also appears that another introduced species has started moving into the region. In October last year our RR, Bernie Kelly, confirmed a Spotted Dove near the Tukituki River south of Napier. More recently there have been a couple of sightings close to Havelock North. The spread of these exotic species from their strongholds around Auckland is perhaps inevitable, but disappointing nonetheless.

Fortunately native birds are doing well in many parts of the region. There have been two cases recently where people near a hen house have seen a Falcon swoop in and snatch up a bird. However in both cases the prey was not a chook, but a Myna! Thanks to Jim Hamilton for this information on an iconic indigenous species benefitting from "foreign" birds.

A planned trip to the Cape Sanctuary, where a major programme of native species reintroduction has been operating for a number of years, had to be postponed due to lambing. Instead, a mini-survey of Banded Dotterel was done around the Clive River mouth and adjacent Muddy Creek area. About 20 were located, some giving indications that breeding may have started. – IAN SMITH

### MANAWATU

Manawatu was very pleased to have hosted a very successful New Zealand Bird Conference over Queen's birthday weekend. It was great to have over 120 delegates at the conference from all around the country. The group that went to Manawatu Estuary were fortunate to spot two Glossy Ibises on the fieldtrip there, I am unaware of any further reports beyond the couple of days following the conference, so that was a great bonus for those involved. Sightings of Fernbird on the trip were also numerous.

Some delegates were able to see a Little Egret at Lake Horowhenua and regular reports have been received of two birds being there for over recent months. Lake Omana in Foxton is also proving an interesting spot to visit with three White Herons being recently seen as well as an earlier report of a Little Egret also.

Winter wader counts revealed lower than usual numbers of waders at both Foxton and Kuku Beach, but hopefully that's just an anomaly of the day's count. Manawatu activities have been otherwise quiet as we regroup post conference but we look forward to moving things ahead again as we enter the second half of the year. – CRAIG STEED

### WAIRARAPA

Birding in the Wairarapa has continued to be interesting, at times exciting, and always warmly collegial. Despite the fluctuating fortunes of the weather our meeting nights have all been well attended. The field trips on the following Saturdays have tended to reflect the weather conditions and the travel plans of retired members, though we do have members who are not retired. These factors are not the sole property of *Birds New Zealand* branches as I'm sure everyone who belongs to any other voluntary organisation knows.

In June we discussed outcomes of the AGM and selections from conference papers. We are still of the belief that a multi-tiered membership is a realistic way to grow a broader, subscription-paying, membership. It has been a tradition of the branch to not have a field trip in June so we celebrated that with a walk through the older forested part of Fensham Reserve, behind Carterton, noting 17 species of birds as we went on our way to a pleasant cafe for lunch.

July marked the end of a significant era in the life of the Society in our region. We meet on alternate months in Greytown and Masterton, and for many years the Masterton meetings have been held in the warm and welcoming home of Tenick and Janet Dennison. However, that is no longer possible. While we were able to fit all who came to Yuri Forbes' talk on NI Brown Kiwi into the largest mezzanine in our home, it was just as well we had several apologies for colds and flu. With no other offers of space we are moving to the DOC training/meeting rooms which certainly have all the audio-visual gear and will hold our numbers. That month's trip was designated Boggy Pond, but the tripees couldn't resist the lure of the new hide near the mouth of the Oporua Floodway into Lake Wairarapa. When they got over gawping at the Bittern they noticed the 19 New Zealand Dabchicks. And I was in Auckland...

Braving a furious cross wind, Geoff de Lisle took the ferry from Matiu/Somes Island in Wellington Harbour and crossed the Rimutakas to present us with the plans for a joint Wellington-Wairarapa study of shag nesting sites. We are under way already! Provided these things aren't left to RRs alone they are quite manageable and can in fact be fun. The trip was the annual wander around Henley Lake and wetland counting birds and trying not to step in goose poo as we went. Nothing unusual was seen other than the absence of our resident small flock of Black-billed Gulls. If they were called Buller's Gulls once more there might be less shorthand confusion in eBird notebooks.

A couple of sightings of interest: Colin Shore saw and photographed a Bittern at Tukuramuri; a first for that location. A few of us have been keeping an eye on a pair of New Zealand Falcons that are currently hanging about in Masterton's QEII Park, handy to the paddle boats. There are some potential nesting sites

there too. Hmmmm. Any ideas/experience on good neighbour relations between councils and raptors? – ROBIN LIST

### WELLINGTON

While the New Zealand Falcon is listed as Nationally Vulnerable, there have over recent times been numerous sightings of them in the Wellington region. A notable feature of these sightings is that they include many observations of birds in suburban areas, both in the closer Wellington suburbs and the Hutt Valley. Falcons appear to appreciate access to an abundant food source of introduced birds such as Feral Pigeons. Since 2009 a pair of Falcons have been successfully nesting in Zealandia and some of the sightings from Wellington city were undoubtedly these birds. Unfortunately, two Falcons have recently been found dead in Wellington. In April a Falcon in Island Bay died after flying into a window and in July an immature bird died from flying into power lines. The question arises as to how many Falcons are present in our region. OSNZ members play an important role in addressing this question by recording their observations which are being entered in eBird. Our regional recorder Nikki McArthur has been a champion for eBird and this is reflected in the large number of entries from Wellington compared with other regions. Even though eBird New Zealand was only established in 2008 it has already documented some interesting changes in the distribution of birds in the Wellington region. Furthermore, eBird has proved valuable tool for Nikki's work with the Greater Wellington Regional Council. Although Falcons have relatively large home ranges the distribution of sightings on eBird indicate the presence of multiple pairs in our region. Records of Falcon nests confirm this contention.

On the 16th of July Bill Watters (1926–2014), a long standing OSNZ member from the Wellington region passed away. Bill was a geologist who worked for his entire career at Geological Survey, DSIR. He had a broad interest in the environment and was an active member of Forest and Bird as well as OSNZ. He wrote a number of articles for *Notornis* and *Southern Bird* and his first paper was published in 1959. This preceded his extensive writings on geology. – GEOFF DE LISLE



▲ Falcon sightings, 2010-2014.

## NELSON

Nelson's July meeting featured Leone Plaiser who gave an enthralling, dramatically-illustrated account of living on Macquarie Island for 13 months with her two rodent-sniffing dogs. Macquarie Island is now considered rabbit-, rat- and mouse-free. Cats, horses, stray dogs and Weka were previously removed.

In May, Richard Wells gave a highly entertaining and fabulously illustrated presentation of his trip earlier this year to The Snares to census Southern Buller's Albatrosses with Paul Sagar. The whole island count was the fifth since 1969 and numbers were similar to those in 2002.

In the second week of June members conducted the winter wader count. A total of about 20,000 shorebirds were counted: 2,500 migratory and 17,500 endemic. Highlights were three New Zealand Dotterels, 50 Wrybills, one Grey Plover, four Red-necked Stints and one Sanderling.

Exciting sightings this quarter included a Pacific Heron in mid-May at Wakefield and Reef Herons at several sites. – ROBIN TOY

## MARLBOROUGH

June was wader count month so we were out and about counting waders at Grassmere, Havelock and Anakiwa/Grove Arm. There were not many birds to count but it is always nice to be out looking and a good excuse to avoid chores!

We had a large turnout for June's monthly meeting at Grassmere with new members joining with many of our regulars. Another beautiful Marlborough day for a picnic lunch at Marfells Beach.

In July Mike Bell was guest speaker at the local Forest and Bird meeting, giving a talk on the Chatham Island Albatross project's first, successful, year.

Later in the month we held our annual pot-luck mid-winter dinner which has become a popular event on our calendar. Between courses one of our members is given the opportunity to share photos of birds or places overseas. This year Claudia Mischler showed photos of the various far away islands she has worked on, especially with various albatross species.

– DIANNE JOHN

## CANTERBURY

The sightings of a White-winged Black Tern, four Gull-billed Terns, 12 Red-necked Stints, six Curlew Sandpipers, an Australasian Bittern and 13 White Herons were the highlights of the region's winter wader count held in June. Although there were a small number of observers the region was well covered and a large number of waders were recorded.

The Ashburton Lakes annual count was held in July. After being postponed because of an unfavourable weather forecast, it was held a week later in perfect conditions and with an abundance of observers. There was a very high count of waterbirds at the lakes due mainly to this year's mild winter.

Australasian Crested Grebe counts were down at Lakes Forsyth and Ellesmere, with only 109 seen, and most of the birds were at Kaituna Lagoon, rather than Lake Forsyth, which held a paltry seven. This was probably also due to the mild weather.

A White-winged Black Tern at Bromley oxidation ponds and the regular Glossy Ibis at

Travis Wetland have captured the attention of a number of birders. 14 Cattle Egrets at Irwell and a Little Egret at Lake Forsyth have also been a feature of the winter's birds.

It is pleasing to see a number of members recording their sightings on eBird, and hopefully after a talk by Paul Scofield at our last indoor meeting there will be some more.

A visit was made to Peacock Springs in May to see at first hand the breeding programme that is helping several of our endemic species.

The highlight for the region was the awarding of the Robert Falla Memorial Award to Nick Allen at the national AGM for his valuable contributions to the study of birds in the New Zealand region and sustained service to *Birds New Zealand*. Nick has given countless hours to birding in New Zealand, and Canterbury in particular. He is a past RR for Canterbury, has written a bird site guide (*Where to Watch Birds in Canterbury*) and is editor of *Birds New Zealand*. Congratulations Nick.

– BEV ALEXANDER

# Birds New Zealand Personnel Changes

Les Feasey took over from Detlef Davies as Regional Rep for the Far North in June. Many thanks to Detlef for the hard work he did in the region during the ten years he held the post.

There have been a number of recent changes in office holders on Council:

- Delia Small took over from Peter Gaze as secretary.
- Mel Galbraith was elected to take over a position on Council previously held by David Melville.
- Keith Woodley was elected to fill a vacant position on Council.
- Stefanie Grosser was co-opted onto Council last year and was successfully elected this year.

## Biographies of new Council members:

Delia Small joined OSNZ in 2002 while studying North Island Robins at Zealandia for her Master's degree and held the OSNZ Wellington Regional Recorder role for two years (2011-2013). Delia's professional background is conservation focused with experience in both the field and office capacity and has worked for various conservation organisations, the current being Terra Moana (Sustainable Business). Delia enjoys spending time in South Taranaki as a co-founder of the Mt Hiwi Charitable Trust, which is dedicated to preserving 411 ha of native forest in that district.

Mel Galbraith has been a member of OSNZ since 1970, and is currently the Regional Representative for Auckland. He is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Natural Sciences, Unitec Institute of Technology (Auckland), teaching ecology, biodiversity, biosecurity and restoration ecology within the Biodiversity Management major of an applied science degree. Mel has been an active participant in the ecological restoration of Tiritiri Matangi Island since the project's initiation in 1984, and he also contributes to a number of other ecological projects, particularly the Miranda Naturalists' Trust and Motu Kaikoura Trust. Mel is also active in the New Zealand Ecological Society, and is currently serving on their Council as its Immediate Past President.

Keith Woodley joined OSNZ in 1990 and credits membership of the Society with opening significant birding and conservation doors. He has been resident manager at the Pukorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre since 1993 and is the author of *Godwits: Long-haul Champions* (Raupo/Penguin) 2009 and *Shorebirds of New Zealand: Sharing the Margins* (Penguin) 2012.



▲ Delia Small



▲ Mel Galbraith



▲ Keith Woodley



## OSNZ National Wader Censuses

June–July 2013

November–December 2013 and  
January–February 2014

A total of 107,439 waders of 21 species was counted during the June-July 2013 wader census, down from 124,741 in June-July 2012. There was good national coverage with only the Far North, Gisborne/Wairoa, Kaikoura/Marlborough and the West Coast regions not counted. The Far North was not counted in 2012 either. Numbers of Red Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit were around 1,000 lower than in 2012 and about 10,000 fewer South Island Pied Oystercatcher were counted. Rarities included a Large Sand Plover, a Marsh Sandpiper and two Terek Sandpipers.

A total of 141,761 waders of 28 species was counted during the November-December 2013 wader census, up from 129,850 in 2012 and down from 148,662 in 2011. National coverage was excellent, with only Rangaunu in the Far North and Gisborne/Wairoa not counted. The differences were approximately 4,000 more Godwits and 4,000 more Knots than in 2012, accounted for by the Far North in 2013. Pied Stilt numbers were up and Turnstone numbers were 2,001 in 2013, which more than doubled the 2012 count of 914. The Far North accounted for 688 of them in 2013. Rarities this census included a Greater Sand Plover, an Oriental Plover (a first for a census day), three Great Knots, a Black-tailed Godwit, a Marsh Sandpiper and a Terek Sandpiper.

There was incomplete nationwide coverage in January-February 2014 but counts from Lake Wairarapa, Nelson, Marlborough, Canterbury, Otago and Southland were received.

Tables of counts showing numbers of each species counted and the sites with the largest counts are available on the *Birds New Zealand* website, [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz).

ADRIAN RIEGEN

## Membership Renewals

Subscriptions are due on 1st January. Those members with email will receive a membership renewal form via that medium. Those members who do not have email (or those where the Membership Secretary has not been informed of an email address) will receive a renewal form as an insert with this posting of *Birds New Zealand* and *Notornis*. Please endeavour to pay close to the due date – the Society depends greatly on your subscription to continue the furtherance of its objectives in encouraging and supporting the study and enjoyment of birds in the New Zealand region.

# Bird News

This feature contains news of sightings that have not received official acceptance by the Records Appraisal Committee of the OSNZ. Period covered: 1st March to 31st August 2014

**New Zealand Storm Petrels** seen off Queensland are not now thought to be such but a separate taxon dubbed the "Coral Sea Storm Petrel" or "New Caledonian Storm Petrel". A number have also been seen to the south of the latter archipelago.

In a probable extension of range several **Nankeen Night Herons** have been seen in the Turakina Valley, a neighbouring water course to the south of their stronghold of the Whanganui River.

The **Barn Owl** population near Kaitia has grown and now numbers about 12 individuals, all stemming from a single pair which settled several years ago. The provision of nest boxes is being tried, but so far no owls have taken up residence.

A **Black Robin** census undertaken by DOC in April found 229 adults and 70 juveniles on Rangitira Island and 45 adults and nine juveniles on Mangere Island.

Forty **North Island Saddlebacks** were translocated to the predator-fenced Lake Rotokare (Taranaki) in May.

**Tahiti Monarchs** have had their best breeding season on record with several pairs rearing twice as many broods as usual but recent heavy rain and the discovery of fire ants on the edge of the valley where the birds live pose new threats, as does the drying up of funds to continue conservation work.

### Short Reports

The two long-staying **Plumed Whistling Ducks** remained in Anderson Park, Taradale (Hawke's Bay) throughout though there are few records these days and sometimes the birds are seemingly absent from their usual pond.

A couple of presumed escape or feral **Cape Barren Geese** were at Ohoka (Canterbury) on 9/5. A **Brown Teal** was seen at Percy's Reserve, Lower Hutt (Wellington) on 29/6 and 12/7. An amazing group of three **Hoary-headed Grebes** turned up on Lake Elterwater (Marlborough) on 11/8, being seen again on 19/8, with two present on 21/8 and 27/8. Away from the species' usual northern North Island haunt an **Australian Little Grebe** found in February at the Pharazyn Reserve (Kapiti Coast, Wellington) stayed until 23/3.

An emaciated **Kerguelen Petrel** was found in the unlikely surrounds of Palmerston North (Manawatu) on 30/6 and handed to the fortuitously close team of vets at Wildbase, Massey University for them to care for it. About a dozen **Australian Pelicans** were still around the Wairoa River arm of the Kaipara Harbour on 7/6, with six reported 31/7 or 1/8. Sightings from the area are becoming very few and far between, with the birds seemingly staying hidden up side creeks. Elsewhere four were seen off Whangarei on 21/3, and maybe the same four were a little further north at Waipu Cove (Northland) on 22/3. Two were reported from the southern side of Omokoroa Peninsula (Bay of Plenty) on 29/4. Possible/probable **Darters** were reported from the Auckland area with singles at Shoal Bay, Bayswater in May and Strakas Wetland on 2/8. A **Greater Frigatebird** was reported off Kereta (Coromandel Peninsula) on 19/3.

The Clifton **Pacific Heron** mentioned in the previous report was seen again a little further to the west in the Oreti River Valley (Southland) between 21 and 27/4. Another was in the Eighty-

eight Valley (Nelson) on 14 and 15/5. A **Plumed Egret** was reported from near Kohukohu in the upper Hokianga Harbour (Far North) on 12/5. **Little Egrets** continue to be seen in larger than usual numbers. One was at Lake Forsyth (Canterbury) on 12/6 and 20/6, with presumably the same bird at the nearby Kaituna Lagoon on 10/8. One was seen at Balclutha (Otago) on 17 and 23/3. Two were at the Ambury Farm Park (Auckland) on 13/6 with one there on 30/5 and 16/6. The adjacent estuarine area near the Mangere sewage works held one on 26/7 and two on 15/8, no doubt the same birds as at Ambury. One was at Kuku Beach (Manawatu) on 18/6 and 9/8, probably one of the long-staying birds that has graced nearby Lake Horowhenua, where one was seen on 18/5 and 2/8, and two on 21/5 and 2/6. A little further north one was on Lake Omana near Foxton on 9/8. Across the Tararua another was seen on a Lake Wairarapa census on 21/6. The usual stronghold for the species in recent years near Napier (Hawke's Bay) could only produce a single record, that of a bird in flight near the Ahuriri River on 19/6. Another flight record concerned a bird seen flying between islands in the Three Kings group in early March. A late report was received of an extremely rarely recorded mixed phase (largely white) **Reef Heron** at Kohukohu on 1/1.

**Glossy Ibis** records mostly featured the regular two resident at the Wairau Lagoons (Marlborough) and the regular wintering individual at Travis Wetland (Canterbury). Another semi-regular couple of birds were seen at the Manawatu RM (Manawatu) on 2/6 and 14/6. The long-term resident **Black Kite** was seen again at its regular haunt of Waihopai Valley Road, Renwick (Marlborough) on 17/8.

Wader watchers in the Auckland area have been treated to a reasonable number of scarce and rare species, whilst pickings elsewhere have been rather lean. Two **Great Knots** were at Miranda (South Auckland) on 13-14/3 and 21/6, with one on the Southern Manukau Harbour on 10/8. **Sanderlings** were recorded from the South Head of the Kaipara Harbour (Auckland) with one there on 20/3 and two on 24/3, and another bird was on Farewell Spit (Golden Bay) on the June wader census there. Two **Black-tailed Godwits** were at Miranda on 13 and 14/3 and 21/6. Maybe the same two moved to Mangere, being reported on 25-27/7 and 15/8. No doubt the best rare bird of autumn for many birds was the **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** that graced the dunes of Waionui Inlet, South Head of the Kaipara Harbour from 20/3 to 25/4. This bird will constitute the first record for New Zealand if accepted by the RAC. A **Marsh Sandpiper** was reported from the regular site of Miranda on 6/6. In the South Island a **Terek Sandpiper** was found on Motueka Sandspit (Nelson) on 19/3, and the regular bird was seen on the wader census at Awarua Bay (Southland) in June.

Mangere held a **Grey Plover** on 10/3, maybe present again on 22/3 but not allowing good views. Others were on the South Head of the Kaipara Harbour on 25/4 and Farewell Spit on the June wader census. A wayward **Southern New Zealand Dotterel** was at the Motueka Sandspit on 19/3. Three were also seen on the Farewell Spit wader count in June. Southland's Awarua Bay held a **Greater Sand Plover** on 25/3. One was at South Head (Kaipara) a day earlier

on 24/3. The regular Plimmerton (Wellington) winter **Shore Plover** flock numbered six on 10/4, five on 6/7, six on 25/5, one on 21/7, and one on 23/8. The sudden fall in numbers was due to most of the birds from the Mana Island re-introduction being taken back into captivity at Pukaha/Mount Bruce. A very off-course **Spur-winged Plover** was on Enderby I, Auckland Is on 6/3.

Single **Pomarine** and **Long-tailed Skuas** were seen from a Three Kings Islands pelagic in early March. A **Sooty Tern** found at Tutukaka (Northland) in late July was rescued from gulls and taken into care but succumbed. Small numbers of **Gull-billed Terns** from their recent influx remain, with four seen on a Lake Ellesmere (Canterbury) wader census on 21/6, and one on Motueka Sandspit on 19/3. Lake Ellesmere also held a possible **Whiskered Tern** in March. Three **Arctic Terns** were reported

well inland near the Sheffield Gorge Bridge, Waimakariri River (Canterbury) on 1/4. A long-staying **Crested Tern** at the Waipu RM (Northland) from 25/3 to 29/8 at least was enjoyed by many birdwatchers, though sometimes it wandered a little, being seen at Langs Beach to the south on 31/7.

A probably escaped **Crested Pigeon** was reported from north of Tokomaru Bay (Gisborne) on 7/5. This is well away from the small population in Northland. Also well away from any established populations a **Laughing Kookaburra** was near Rangiora (Canterbury) on 5-6/4.

The single passerine species featuring in this rare bird report, probable/possible **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** were reported from Northwood, Christchurch on 2/3, south of Kariotahi Beach (South Auckland) on 27/5 and Wharepuke Gardens, Kerikeri (Far North) on 1/6.



▲ One of the Hoary-headed Grebes at Lake Elterwater. Photo by Ian Williams.

Sources: Birding NZ, Birding-NZ Email group, BirdLife Top News, What's Up DOC? website newsletter, regional roundups.



▲ The Waipu Crested Tern. Photo © Simon Fordham/NaturePix.



▲ Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Waionui Inlet. Photo by Bill Abbott.

## Garden Bird Survey Results 2013

In total, 138,423 birds and 75 species were counted in the 2013 garden bird survey, with an average of 39.4 birds and 7.5 species per garden. House Sparrow was again the most numerous species counted nationally (12.9 per garden). It was also the most numerous species counted in gardens in the UK (see [www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch)). The second most numerous, and most numerous native species, nationally was Silvereye (7.5 per garden). These two species are by far the most commonly counted in our gardens.

Counts of different species varied in different regions of the country. For example, House Sparrow was much more numerous in Auckland than in Otago, while Silvereye was much more numerous in Otago than in Auckland. Tui was fifth most numerous species (and second most numerous native species)

nationally but was rare in Canterbury. The introduced Myna was sixth most numerous nationally and third most numerous in Auckland but wasn't recorded south of Wellington. Bellbird, the 17th most numerous species nationally (not shown in the table above), was the fifth most numerous in Southland and Otago but did not occur in the top 10 (or even top 20) in Auckland and Northland.

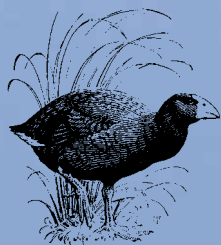
As well as varying between regions, counts varied between urban and rural gardens, and between gardens with and without the provision of supplementary food, as in previous years. Further results from the 2013 garden bird survey are available on the Web at <http://gardenbirds survey.landcareresearch.co.nz>

ERIC SPURR

Table of the top 10 birds in 2013 nationally and in the five main regions (average number per garden).

National averages were calculated from 16 regional averages weighted by the regional proportions of households.

Species	National	Auckland	Waikato	Wellington	Canterbury	Otago
House Sparrow	12.9	11.6	13.4	14.3	12.0	9.6
Silvereye	7.5	4.1	7.4	6.5	12.8	20.5
Starling	2.3	1.3	2.8	2.6	3.1	2.0
Blackbird	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.3	2.1
Tui	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.7	0.1	1.9
Myna	1.4	2.5	2.1	0.01	0	0
Fantail	1.2	1.1	1.6	0.9	0.5	0.5
Greenfinch	1.1	0.8	1.2	0.9	2.4	1.9
Chaffinch	1.0	0.6	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.0
Goldfinch	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.8



## ***Birds New Zealand***

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