



OSNZ news

No. 13 December, 1979

NOTE: Deadline for the March issue will be 9th February.

Edited by PAUL SAGAR, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 4, for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

Please note that sightings recorded in this Newsletter are subject to confirmation.

Change of Secretary

The President has received a resignation from the Secretary, Hugh Best, who has been forced to give up because of pressure of work in his field of research. Council is pleased to announce that R. S. (Roy) Slack has agreed to be co-opted onto Council as Secretary. His appointment will be confirmed at the next A.G.M.

The new Secretary's address is: R. S. Slack, 31 Wyndham Road, Pinehaven, Upper Hutt. Phone: Wellington 288-288 (home); Wellington 729-929 (work).

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Spur-winged Plovers

Spur-winged Plovers are spreading in South Auckland, although no breeding has been reported yet. In the Firth of Thames, two were seen at the old Lime-works on 12 August and four on 30 August. A pair seems to have settled at Kaiarau having been seen there at various times from 28 August to 7 November. A new record is of a pair at Netherton, seen by Wyn Gillespie and John Berry on 27 October. On the Manukau Harbour side, a single bird was seen by George Urquhart near the Hingaia Bridge, Karaka in September. After a brief stay this one seems to have disappeared.

BETH BROWN

Shag Study

This spring the shag colony at Hobson Bay, Auckland, has seen a further influx of Pied Shags with some 20 pairs joining the present 55 pairs of Little Shags. Weekly checks showed the first young to have left the nest early in November and observations will be continued through the season by MICHAEL TAYLOR and GILLIAN ELLER. Other members joined in a whole day vigil on 13 October which added considerably to the detailed behaviour records being collected from this colony.

MICHAEL TAYLOR

New Wildlife Director

Mr Ralph Adams has been appointed Director of the New Zealand Wildlife Service to replace Dr Gordon Williams, who has taken up a position as Professor of Agricultural Zoology at Lincoln University.

Mr Adams has been Deputy Director of the service for the last seven years. He joined it in 1955 as the first wildlife trainee and has worked in almost every district in New Zealand with special

experience in freshwater fisheries, game management and protected fauna activities. He was leader of the expedition which caught the first Kakapo in Fiordland in 1962. For a period he was advisory officer for the Nature Conservation Council before becoming Deputy Director.

He is the fifth Director, following Major Skipper Yerex, Mr Henry Kelly, Mr Frank Newcombe and Dr Gordon Williams.

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution the following four Council Members retire in May 1980, and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

- B. D. BELL
- P. C. BULL
- D. E. CROCKETT
- M. L. FALCONER
- F. C. KINSKY

Thus, vacancies occur for the positions of President, Vice-President, and three Members of Council.

Nominations close with the Secretary on 29 February 1980, and nominations must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who should also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring officers are eligible for re-election.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1980 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 29 February 1980, in writing and signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1980 Annual General Meeting will be held in Palmerston North on Saturday, 24th May.

R. S. SLACK, Hon. Secretary

31 Wyndham Road,
Silverstream

Whitianga member ALAN JONES writes that the shellbank on which Caspian Terns nest in Whangapoua Harbour, had built up well after a great wash-out in July 1978. Birds were nesting there on 18 October 1979. Now the worst has happened again. DAVID WALTER reports that the bank has washed out once more during recent bad weather. It is to be hoped that the birds will persevere and have better luck next try.

Beach Patrol Scheme

The Beach Patrol year ends on 31 December and all cards should be completed and sent to me as soon as possible after this date. This allows time for an interim report to be prepared to be presented to the AGM in May.

At present all Beach Patrol data are written up and should appear in the next few issues of *Notornis*.

C. R. VEITCH

JENNY HAWKINS reports that on a recent trip around D'Urville Island she saw a Reef Heron, 4 Pied Stilts and many Spotted Shags and White-fronted Terns in Port Hardy. While out beyond Stephens Island there were 6-8 Westland Black Petrels and several Shy Mollymawks, King Shags were nesting on Trios and there was a large colony of Red-billed Gulls on Jags.

Black Swans

Collar banding of Black Swans has been discontinued this year after the project has run for five years. MURRAY WILLIAMS believes that he has sufficient data to satisfy the initial aims of the project, however, he will be happy to receive reports about existing collar-banded swans, especially from the *estuarine* areas of N.Z. and in particular Tauranga Harbour, Vernon Lagoon (Marlborough) and Invercargill areas.

Cirl Buntings in Canterbury

Phil Howell and Kathleen Harrison report that Cirl Buntings were seen in several localities in Canterbury this winter. One was seen at the Waipara Rivermouth on 29 June, several pairs in a paddock near Spencer Park on 7 and 14 July, a pair at the Ashley Rivermouth on 20 July, a pair at the Heathcote-Avon Estuary on 4 August and three at Motunau Beach on 18 August.

In early September HAZEL NEWTON was interested to see a pair of Welcome Swallows flying low over her muddy drive, near Wanganui. The pair landed beside a muddy puddle and one bird was seen to be holding some pieces of dried grass in its bill. This bird proceeded to dip the grass into the puddle, presumably to coat it with mud for nest building.

A large wet paddock immediately north of the Power Station at Meremere is worth a hard look for members travelling between Hamilton and Auckland. In addition to the usual ducks, swans and large numbers of Pied Stilts a Glossy Ibis was present from June to about mid-October. Cattle Egrets are seen there sometimes and the latest interesting sightings are of two Spur-winged Plovers reported by Ian Southey on 7 October and Anthea Goodwin and Maxine McKenzie on 8 and 10 November.

BETH BROWN

Miranda is not just for the birds! Bearing this in mind the Miranda Naturalists' Trust plans an Open Day for 24 February 1980 from 10.30 a.m. Specialists in plants, shells and other areas of natural history will be there to talk and answer questions. Wildlife photography and sketching in the field will also be covered. Of course the birds won't be forgotten entirely and queries about these will be welcomed as well.

Mount Cook National Park

The Mount Cook National Park bird survey will draw to a close at the end of next winter. It has run for the past 4½ years and in that time OSNZ members have contributed to the bird distribution studies within the Park.

This summer and autumn will be an important opportunity to finish the survey. Interim maps and notes are at Park Headquarters Mount Cook and OSNZ members are invited to call in to discuss them and contribute further observations and records.

On 15 September a White Heron arrived at Mount Cook village following a light southerly snow storm. The heron spent the day standing on top of various buildings in the village and was put to flight several times by the local Keas. Late in the day the heron took flight and circled for about two hours gaining height up into the Hooker Valley towards the West Coast, but a thick cloud layer probably prevented access across the Main Divide. The

following day a White Heron was seen at Ferintosh Station, some 40 km back down the Tasman Valley. Presumably it was the same bird although its preference for buildings had changed. The station fowl house was the choice here; possibly it thought it was a White Leghorn!

If members have any records of White Herons crossing the Main Divide I would be pleased to hear from them.

MARTIN HEINE

Farewell Spit

In the grey dawn the raucous cry of the Wekas. The sun rising slowly out of the sea. The wild call of Curlew flighting from their vast feeding grounds, before the rising tide.

Farewell Spit at its best.

On a recent visit we saw this wonderful place in many moods. Among thousands of Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits there were some exciting finds. These included a pale Sanderling; a lone Wrybill; and a Grey-tailed Tattler among the Knots. Also, there were three Golden Plovers with puzzling size and plumage variations.

Fourteen Red-necked Stints jinked swiftly past a flock of Knots. Eight watchful Whimbrel with heads raised, were on the beach as were five Long-billed Curlews. Turnstones were in their thousands, adding colour to the big roosting flocks.

Caspian Terns were nesting on the far shell banks, some with two eggs. These were washed out completely by the storm of 7 October but by next morning some had already re-laid in damp sand scrapes.

It was a privilege to be able to visit this wild place, always so full of surprises.

JOHN and BETTY SEDDON

Harrier Attacks Hare

While driving along the motorway near Christchurch on 16 August RICHARD HOLDAWAY and PAUL SAGAR saw a Harrier carrying a full-grown hare over a nearby paddock. After coming to a quick stop they saw the hare, which was being held by the head, fall to the ground. Before the Harrier could recover its prey the hare sprang to life and reared up onto its hind legs and jumped at the Harrier as it swooped down. This was repeated twice before the Harrier gave up and flew off to quarter a nearby paddock. The hare was last seen crouched in the middle of the paddock.

PAUL SAGAR

University of Auckland

The following ornithological MSc theses were completed at the University of Auckland and deposited in the library there during 1978, and are available for consultation.

Bissett, J. E. *Aspects of the song and social behaviour of the tomtit, Petroica macrocephala.*

Cox, G. J. *Utilization of New Zealand mangrove swamps by birds.*

Galbraith, M. P. *Variation in the song of the chaffinch, Fringilla coelebs, with particular reference to dialectical patterns.*

Jones, G. *The little blue penguin (Eudyptula minor) on Tiritiri Matanga Island.*

Williams, P. C. *Aspects of the biology of blackbirds and thrushes.*

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PETER CHILD reports that on 27 October, while surveying a square on the south end of the Old Man Range in Central Otago for the Bird Mapping Scheme, they chanced across a handsome cock Pheasant in the snow tussock at c. 1160 m (3800'). Pheasants have not been liberated in the Coal Creek (Roxburgh) area for at least two winters, so this one must have been a wary bird that evaded the shooters' guns. I wonder if this is a N.Z. altitude record for Pheasant?

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The Foxton Estuary count of 9 September produced 15 Black Shag, 1 Little Shag, 2 White-faced Heron, 8 Royal Spoonbill, 23 Bar-tailed Godwit, 1 Knot, 1 Curlew, 9 SIPO, 6 VOC, 15 Wrybill, 43 Pukeko, 8 Mallard, 47 Black-backed Gull, 44 Black-billed Gull and 2 Caspian Tern.

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Magpie Study

My Ph.D. study is provisionally titled *The Use of Space by Magpies* and my study area is at Linton (Manawatu). There are 150 here and two-thirds of these defend territories, while the remainder are non-territorial flock birds. The magpies are trapped using live decoys and colour-banded for easy recognition.

The study aims to discover how magpies distribute themselves spatially and temporarily in relation to environmental resources. Accordingly time-activity and distribution data are being collected. Also, the phenomenon of territorial defence by groups of unrelated individuals raises the question of what reward does an individual receive for its contribution towards territorial defence. To answer

this details of breeding are needed. Territorial birds began nest building on 17 June this year and breeding is well under way now. Clutch-size, hatching success and fledgling growth rates will be recorded from each nest. A census of free-flying young is planned for February.

The question of the specific status of magpies is still unclear, a recent suggestion being that White-backed and Black-backed Magpies are extreme forms of a single species. Blood samples are being taken from trapped birds in the hope of finding plasma protein differences between the two types.

Members might like to contribute towards this scheme by keeping an eye out for colour-banded birds. Such help would be gratefully received.

CLARE VELTMAN

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Fifth Pan-African Ornithological Congress

Venue: Lilongwe, Malawi. Date: 23-30 August 1980. Theme: Current State of Knowledge of African Birds (with pointers to future research).

Pre- and post-Congress excursions to indigenous forests, mountain areas, lake shore, Game Parks and Nature Reserves offering a variety of habitat with ornithological interest within Malawi. Registration fees are due on 31 March 1980, with a discount if paid before 31 January 1980. There will be a late fee if paid after 31 March 1980.

Application forms and brochure are available from: Len Gillard, Executive Secretary, 5th Pan-African Ornithological Congress, P.O. Box 84394, Green-side, Johannesburg 2034, South Africa.

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Publications

Foods of the Silvereye (Zosterops lateralis; Aves) near Nelson, New Zealand, Abdul Moeed, New Zealand Journal of Zoology 6: 475-479. The foods of Silvereyes collected in winter from an orchard near Nelson were examined. Insects and the skin and pulp of apple were the most favoured foods. Among the insects, plant bugs were eaten most frequently, mainly the woolly apple aphid.

Food and foraging behaviour of the Snares fernbird, H. A. Best, New Zealand Journal of Zoology 6: 481-488. The diet and foraging behaviour of the Snares fernbird were studied on N.E. Island. This species is an opportunistic insectivore; birds forage over a wide variety of sites and prey upon a wide type of insects.

The breeding biologies of the sooty albatrosses Phoebastria fusca and P. palpebrata, Aldo Berruti, The Emu 79: 161-175. The breeding biologies of the two species are similar. However, there are differences in the pelagic distribution and prey composition of the two species.

The status and management of black swans (Cygnus atratus Latham) at Lake Ellesmere since the 'Wahine' storm, April 1968, Murray Williams, New Zealand Journal of Ecology 2: 34-41. The storm destroyed the aquatic weed beds in Lake Ellesmere and the resident population of black swans has since declined by 75%. Reasons for this are discussed, along with past and future management methods.

How the Macquarie Island parakeet became extinct, R. H. Taylor, New Zealand Journal of Ecology 2: 42-45. It is proposed that the successful liberation of rabbits was the crucial factor in the bird's disappearance. This led to great increases in the feral cat and weka populations and thus greatly intensified predation on parakeets.

A theoretical assessment of the ability of bird species to recover from an imposed reduction in numbers, with particular reference to 1080 poisoning, E. B. Spurr, New Zealand Journal of Ecology 2: 46-63. The reproductive and dispersal capacities of species are considered in conjunction with 1080 poison trials. The implications of this are discussed in relation to forest management practice.

Artificial nest structures used by Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, G. Vernon Byrd, Elepaio 40. These were readily accepted; of 18 artificial structures positioned all except one were used. Nesting success was higher than in natural burrows.

Poisoning of wildlife, Alan Morris, The Bird Observer 574. 1080, properly used, has minimal effect on wildlife while other easily obtainable poisons, notably stock drenches, cause widespread damage.

Long-toed Stints, Sanderlings and other waders at Lake Violet, central West Australia, in midsummer, Peter J. Curry, Western Australian Naturalist 14. Illustrations of Red-necked Stints compared with Long-toed and detailed description of latter.

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The Ashley Estuary continues to attract migratory waders. On 25 November JOHN and JUNE FENNEL saw two Asiatic Black-tailed Godwits in a flock of Bar-tailed Godwits and the birds have been reported by several observers since. Knots, Turnstones, Golden Plovers and Whimbrels have been recorded from this area in recent weeks.

On 2 June we took the opportunity of counting species at Okarito Lagoon, South Westland, and noted three Black-fronted Terns with a flock of about 30 White-fronted Terns. There was also a flock of 16 Banded Dotterels in breeding plumage, together with several Pipits (we have seen these two species associating in mixed flocks previously, especially near the Selwyn Huts, Canterbury).

KATHLEEN HARRISON and PHIL HOWELL

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Labour Weekend on the Cass River saw Margaret and Peter Child and Ray Pierce overcome sunburn, snow showers and hailstones to carry out a census of riverbed birds. The 32 km length of riverbed was divided into eight sections of 4 km each. As with most rivers of the MacKenzie Basin, the lower reaches were the most productive; the 3.5 km long delta supported over 50% of total bird numbers. The only species that were absent from the delta but present farther upstream were Canada Goose and Pipit. Easily the most common species was the Banded Dotterel (770 counted representing 50% of all non-passerines), followed by Black-fronted Tern (217). Only 10 Black-billed Gulls were seen, probably due to the scarcity of their usual riverbed food over the past two years. Black-backed Gulls occurred in four widely-separated colonies, and numbered only 128; over the past ten years they have increased at a slower rate than on the Tekapo River and other lower altitude rivers.

RAY PIERCE

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DON BRATHWAITE and I spent from 9-11 November at the Cass River area, Lake Tekapo, assisting RAY PIERCE with his Black Stilt study. Several tape recordings were made on 10 November starting with an unidentified Cicada, then a SIPO, followed by a pair of Black Stilts and a hybrid stilt. At Lake Alexandrina, Song Thrush, Starling territorial calls, Spur-winged Plovers, Banded Dotterel and Pied Stilt were taped.

A discussion with DONALD GEDDES on the evening of 9 November about a peculiar sound from a raupo bed at Lake Alexandrina led me to making a recording of Marsh Crakes in this raupo bed at 10 p.m. the next evening. A most profitable recording session from my point of view.

L. B. McPHERSON

Mauri Ora

The University of Canterbury's Biological Society has just published a special issue of their journal *Mauri Ora* entitled *Ecology of Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura*. Compiled and edited by Diane Hunt and Brian Gill the booklet describes the history and features of Kowhai Bush and summarises past research there by a series of abstracts solicited from the ecologists concerned. There are sections about the vegetation, inter-relationships of kanuka and manuka, and on tardigrades. Six sections deal with forests birds and there are sections on mammals and on predation by mammals on eggs and nestlings of birds. The booklet runs to 54 pages and contains a foldout vegetation map, a bibliography of Kowhai Bush, and checklists of the plants (280 species), birds and mammals. Copies are obtainable at \$1.50 each from: The Editor of Mauri Ora, Department of Zoology, University of Canterbury, Private Bag, Christchurch 1.

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Paradise Ducks

Murray Williams' observations of the nest sites of Paradise Duck recorded in the September *Notornis* have prompted me to mention a recent nest that I discovered about 4.5 m up in a Silver Beech tree. The nest cavity had been formed where a large branch had fallen away, causing rotting of the timber inside the trunk on that side. The female was in residence but unfortunately the trunk was too smooth for me to scale to determine the state of the clutch. Do Paradise Ducks often nest as high as this?

PETER CHILD

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Sound Library

The following recordings have been added to the McPherson Natural History Sound Library since October 1974 (see *Notornis* 21: 390 for earlier list): Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Crested Grebe, South Island Rifleman, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pacific Golden Plover, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Upland Plover, Wandering Tattler, Hudsonian Godwit, Red-necked Phalarope, Black-footed Albatross, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Long-billed Curlew, Pectoral Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Northern Phalarope, Chatham Island Fantail, Buff Weka, Black-backed Gull, Pitt Island Shag, Silvereye, Emperor Penguin, Dunlin, Little Owl, Goldfinch, Westland Black Petrel, Bellbird, Cape Barren Goose, Chatham Island Shag, Chatham Island

Mollymawk, Northern Giant Petrel, Northern Royal Albatross, Fairy Prion, Yellow-breasted Tomtit, N.Z. Shoveler, Banded Dotterel, Black-fronted Tern, Australian Coot, Black Petrel, Cook's Petrel, Banded Rail, Kingfisher, Pied Stilt, Brown Creeper, N.Z. Pigeon, Pied Shag, Wrybill, Welcome Swallow, Little Shag, North Island Fernbird, Stitchbird, Whitehead, North Island Rifleman, Long-tailed Cuckoo, North Island Brown Kiwi, Great Spotted Kiwi, Little Spotted Kiwi, Australian Little Grebe, Kookaburra, Brolga, Nankeen Night Heron, N.Z. Dotterel, Caspian Tern, Stewart Island Kiwi, N.Z. Falcon, Broad-billed Prion, Chatham Island Blue Penguin, Wattled Honeyeater, Yellow-eyed Penguin, Leach's Storm Petrel, Chatham Island Tui, Chatham Island Pipit, King Penguin, Gentoo Penguin, Macaroni Penguin, Black-browed Mollymawk, Masked Booby, Sanderling, Little Tern, Common Noddy, White Tern, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Barn Owl, Fork-tailed Swift, Broad-billed Roller, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Red Wattlebird, Black-backed Magpie, Brown Teal, Grey Teal, Forbes Parakeet, Black Shag, Grey-faced Petrel, Hybrid Stilts and Marsh Crake.

L. B. McPHERSON

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Shining Cuckoos

Shining Cuckoos seem to have put in an early appearance this year. FRANK BOYCE reports hearing two calls in his Nelson garden on 21 July and STEWART LAUDER and MIKE JONES heard the unmistakable call in the Arahura Valley on 4 August and DAVE MURRAY reports that the calls were heard in South Westland a week or two before that.

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Still on the subject of cuckoos comes this tale from ROB GUEST. Dawn. Him: ZZZZ, snore, ZZZ, ZZZ. An ear twitches, a droopy eyelid struggles to squint. A drowsy mind struggles to contemplate. Could it be? Get serious, you're in Christchurch. Unconsciousness is rapidly regained. ZZZ, snore, ZZZ, ZZZ.

Noon. Her: Strange noises come from the greengage tree in the Christchurch garden. The kitchen sink and dirty nappies are forsaken to investigate. Blackbirds, Starlings and House Sparrows are causing a commotion in there. A restricted view through the branches reveals the brown back and barred underparts of a Long-tailed Cuckoo, which, resenting this intrusion to its sanctuary, flies off rapidly.

Dusk. Her: 'You'll never guess what I saw in the garden today.' Him: 'Who said dreams never come true.'

Dabchicks

In June Wairarapa, Manawatu and Wellington regions combined to repeat the June 1978 count of Dabchicks (see *OSNZ news* 7). Results showed that numbers of Dabchicks in the Wairarapa, Manawatu and Lake Horowhenua were similar to those of 1978. South of Horowhenua the numbers were down on those of June 1978. However, they had been higher (especially at Waikanāe) earlier in 1979.

Recently TENICK DENNISON, COLIN SCADDEN and HUGH ROBERTSON launched two small islands in the Masterton Sewage Pond in the hope of creating suitable nesting habitat for Dabchicks.

These rafts (based on a design described in *British Birds* January 1979) were constructed of empty five and ten gallon plastic drench containers held together by surrounding wire netting. On top of this was placed a platform of straw, rushes and turf and finally another layer of wire netting to keep everything in place. Heavy concrete anchors were used to hold the islands about 30 m offshore. When the second island was launched nine Dabchicks were present nearby so the builders are hopeful that the islands will be used.

HUGH ROBERTSON

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Canterbury branch members' evenings are the place to learn the latest ornithological happenings. At their November meeting RICHARD HOLDAWAY showed slides of Royal Spoonbills breeding alongside Pied Shags at a northern coastal lagoon (more about this later) and LES McPHERSON played the first-known tape recording of a Marsh Crake.

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Reef Heron Behaviour

I have seen a heron bathing only once, and in a manner so different from the active splashing performance of passerines and gulls that I wonder if this is the typical heron pattern. On 2 October, near Opononi, I was watching a Reef Heron wading in a freshwater stream which crosses the beach. Suddenly it crouched down in the water, leaving only the head, neck and top of shoulders out of the water. It remained absolutely still for at least a minute, then ducked head and shoulders under once, briefly preened a few feathers, walked several steps then repeated the performance. Over about 10 minutes the same pattern of behaviour was repeated three times in the stream and twice in the sea. After this the bird

flew along the beach to join a feeding heron.

I have always considered Reef Herons to have rather conservative behaviour. However, one at Opononi has learned to associate the sight of fish being cleaned on the beach, with food. During the summer of 1978-79 it would turn up regularly soon after the gulls, not to feed on fish offal, but on the small fish swarming about any offal thrown into the sea.

DEREK BETTESWORTH

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A Large Sand Dotterel was back at Karaka on 6 October and a month later it was joined by a second bird. As usual there is a Mongolian Dotterel, which seems to prefer an area close to the mouth of the small creek. Two Terek Sandpipers were seen on 5 November and on 18 November a Dunlin was reported again, now in non-breeding plumage and possibly lame in one leg. One Long-billed Curlew over-wintered and became remarkably tame to the pleasure of P. D. Gaze, visiting there with Beth Brown recently. The bird's plumage showed beautifully as it preened at the edge of the shellbank in slanting late afternoon sunlight. Also seen were eight Red-necked Stints, two or three Little Terns and a small scatter of Wrybills in amongst a large flock of Godwits, Knots and SIPO which roosted out the tide in the shallows at the end of the big No. 3 bank.

BETH BROWN

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Mapping Scheme

Since the September *OSNZ news*, Council has heard that OSNZ have failed in their application for grants for bird mapping. Consequently the \$2,000 grant from the OSNZ Projects Assistance Fund is the only money available to help complete the field work for the scheme. However, Peter Gaze reports that cards are pouring in and that many members are helping to get as complete a coverage as possible.

Labour Weekend saw several Wellington members travelling into the Wairarapa. As a result many squares now have fuller lists. Max Falconer reports that one in the 1-15 species category now has 35! Gavin Woodward visited the area north of Eketahuna and Hugh Robertson covered north east of Masterton. General impressions indicated that Grey Warblers were extremely widespread and finches and Yellowhammers very numerous. Spur-winged Plovers were recorded in many squares of south east Wairarapa but were less common in the north. Pairs of Paradise Ducks

were noted in many paddocks in the area from Masterton to Castlepoint. One card from Phil and Ruth Rider listed a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo near Martinborough.

Canterbury members also were out in force square-bashing during Labour Weekend. Fifteen members gathered at Pleasant Valley, near Geraldine, to survey some of the birds of South Canterbury. The Saturday was spent covering four new squares and several with short lists in the foothills. While no unexpected species were recorded much useful work was completed. Sunday was spent surveying several of the local lagoons and rivermouths. Sightings included Black-fronted Dotterels at Spider Lagoon and the Opihi Rivermouth and a Bittern and a Black Stilt at Washdyke Lagoon. A search for Blue Ducks in the Te Moana Gorge area the following day was unsuccessful. However, the usefulness of Murray Williams' note about Blue Duck sign (*Notornis* 26: 306-7) was illustrated when some 'little black jobs' were found on a rock in mid-stream.

Not content with an average of 40 species per square in Northland, Sandy Edgar has been urging members to revisit squares. It appears that species such as Fernbirds, Kiwis, Morepork, rails and Tomtits have not been recorded from all squares where they may be expected.

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Ron Scarlett Honoured

OSNZ members will be pleased to know that RON SCARLETT was honoured by the N.Z. Archaeological Society at a ceremony in Otago early in November. To commemorate the occasion a volume of osteological and archaeological papers from the South Pacific has been published in Ron's honour. *Birds of a Feather* is a volume of 17 papers contributed by osteologists, archaeologists and anthropologists who live, or have worked in the South Pacific, especially New Zealand. Their papers describe aspects of recent fieldwork, advances in analytical techniques, and include up-to-date reviews of previous research. There are several papers of an ornithological nature, including one about the intriguing subject of the breeding ecology of moas.

This recognition of Ron's osteological work is both well deserved and well earned.

Copies of *Birds of a Feather*, papers in honour of R. J. Scarlett, edited by Atholl Anderson, are available from: The Sales Manager, Auckland Museum, Private Bag, Auckland. Price: \$2.00 per copy, plus \$1.05 postage.