



# OSNZ news

No. 22 March, 1982

NOTE: Deadline for the June issue will be 21st May.

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.

## Fiordland bird notes

In October 1981 we visited 29 islands in Breaksea and Dusky Sounds. On Breaksea Island Robins were still flourishing with the Norway rats as they were in 1974. Bellbirds, Tomiits and Grey Warblers were common on the Gilbert and John Island groups but Brown Creepers were seen only on two inshore islands. Wekas were not found on any island though a possible old nest was found. Parties of Kakas flew near Sunday Cove at dusk and a group of six visited one of the John Islands.

Fiordland Crested Penguins had large downy chicks on Breaksea Island and the smaller John Islands. A pair of Southern Skuas frequented nests on one Gilbert Island and Entry Island (Dusky Sound). Sooty Shearwaters had been cleaning out burrows on Breaksea Island and Gilbert Island and birds were heard in burrows on an islet near Woodhen Cove. In early November Mottled Petrels were calling after dark as they came into a breeding islet in Isthmus Sound. Several families of Fiordland Crested Penguins were together in a cave on Coal Island, Preservation Inlet.

Several species bred successfully in the lower Eglinton Valley. Banded Dotterel chicks appeared in November and December and we found young SIPOs and Spur-winged Plovers. Several broods of Grey Ducks and Paradise Shelducks were reared. Black-billed Gulls were nesting at Walker Creek on 12 September but the birds later abandoned the area for a new site downstream, which had 122 adults and 59 well-grown young on 6 December. Black-fronted Terns were only found breeding at Dunton Creek where 12 adults and 3 large chicks were present on 6 December. A female Banded Dotterel vigorously attacked a tern chick which had wandered into its territory.

Scattered groups of Fernbirds have

been seen along the upper Waiiau River and in Back Valley near Lake Manapouri.

KIM & JENNY MORRISON

## Nankeen Kestrel

In late afternoon of 9 January 1982 a Nankeen Kestrel was seen for half an hour beside Lake Evelyn (one of the Lake Coleridge group). When first seen the kestrel was hovering 5m over a large area of raupo and maintaining a relatively fixed position facing into a light wind. Once or twice a minute the bird would dive into the raupo but always return immediately to the base hovering position. Throughout this time the bird uttered a series of strong single calls. Twice within 15 minutes the kestrel rested from this activity, landing on grass bordering the raupo for a minute or two. Finally the kestrel took off and could be seen flying about 800m away over a hill behind the lake. An Australian Brown Bittern was then seen to fly out of the vicinity previously covered by the kestrel and fly to another area of raupo near the lake. Within a very short while the kestrel was back and swooped down several times on the bittern's new position before tiring of this and returning to the hills.

RICHARD & CHRISTINA JONES

## Roosting Starlings

Members perhaps may be interested in a slight item of ornithological history, and some may even remember taking part in it. This dates back to the early 1940s when a group of us were taking an interest in the Starling roosts of Dunedin, one of which was in the trees of the Museum Reserve. We would sit on the roof of the Museum and count the birds arriving in each five-minute interval, sometimes also observing a light meter borrowed from the Physics Department. On one occasion, when we were up there, Dunedin put on one of its very infrequent earthquakes, but it was only a slight jolt and not very alarming.

On 14 January 1945 there was a

partial eclipse of the sun between about the hours of 1700 and 2000, almost at roosting time. One hears stories of birds going to roost during a total eclipse, and this seemed a chance for us to try our luck. A larger roost, near the Southern Cemetery was watched and 3313 birds were recorded coming in between 1820 and 2030. The light records for the three days 14, 15 and 17 January showed that after 1840 dusk fell at the same rate each day. While before that time, owing to the eclipse, the evening of 14 January was darker than on any of the other two days. When the counts of the arrivals of the birds are plotted there is a very distinct peak at 1940-1945, during which period 549 birds arrived. The graph does show a slight additional peak at about 1910 which might possibly be due to birds which started their journey earlier than usual owing to the eclipse. A very inconclusive result, but it was entertaining to try to combine astronomy with ornithology.

B. J. MARPLES

## Nest Record Scheme for the S.W. Pacific

The School of Natural Resources at the University of the South Pacific has started a nest record scheme. The object of the scheme is to collect details of the breeding biology of local birds. Up till now, most of the information on breeding of Pacific birds is fragmentary or sadly lacking. Where breeding records have been made they tend to have been published in specialist journals, or lost in birdwatchers' notebooks.

Nest record schemes have been successful in many countries. It is hoped that interested persons from New Zealand who have the opportunity to make observations on the breeding of Pacific birds, both native and introduced species, will help to make this scheme a success.

Cards have been prepared to assist in the recording of observations and should be returned when completed. These can be obtained from: The Secretary, School of Natural Resources, University of the South Pacific, P.O. Box 1168, Suva, Fiji.

## Regional Roundup

**Far North/Northland:** Mark Bellingham and Alison Davis report that on 6/2/82 a Marsh Crane was startled beneath low mangroves in front of a stream beside the Houhora Tavern, Houhora Harbour. It crouched beneath a mangrove for a few seconds, then flew off rapidly in to rushes and mangrove on the far side of the stream. Five minutes later it was heard calling and this continued intermittently for about 10 minutes. With the disappearance of most of Northland's swamps, mangroves fringing harbours may soon be the only habitat remaining for Marsh Crakes.

**South Auckland:** Beth Brown reports that the Firth of Thames summer census was taken on 15/11/81 in a north-east gale. A great inland sea formed immediately north of the old Limeworks at Miranda. Ducks and gulls swam on it and there was even a small waterfall! Birds were driven inland when some high tide roosts were covered by the wind driven tide. In spite of the vile conditions 29 Auckland and South Auckland members managed to get a reasonable count. It was necessary to check two days later, when the wind had abated, to find the small sandpipers. Census totals were: Black Shag-5; Pied Shag-20; Little Black Shag-2; Spotted Shag-107; White-faced Heron-58; Bittern-1; Black Swan-8; Paradise Shelduck-2; Mallard-413; Grey Teal-3; Harrier-1; Pukeko-10; SIPO-1919; N.Z. Dotterel-4; Banded Dotterel-2; Wrybill-312; Far Eastern Curlew-5; Bar-tailed Godwit-4950; Terek Sandpiper-1; Marsh Sandpiper-1; Turnstone-80; Knot-7500; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper-7; Curlew Sandpiper-20; Red-necked Stint-3; Pied Stilt-1160; Black-backed Gull-1015; Red-billed Gull-238; Black-billed Gull-50; Caspian Tern-44; Little Tern-3; White-fronted Tern-192; White-winged Black Tern-1; Welcome Swallow-70; Rook-55.

A second White-winged Black Tern has been recorded several times, as has an American Pectoral Sandpiper. There have been two sightings of a Large Sand Dotterel and numerous reports of a Mongolian Dotterel. One tagged Curlew Sandpiper is back (4 were tagged by Tony Habraken) and the solitary Red-necked Stint tagged has returned. These birds were netted in December 1980 and January 1981. Nine Far Eastern Curlews have been seen. Black-billed Gulls and White-fronted Terns have had breeding setbacks on Access Bay spit, due to human interference.

Manukau Harbour has a Grey-tailed Tattler, an American Pectoral Sandpiper, at least 30 Red-necked Stints and a record 18000 Knots — all at Karaka.

Elsewhere in the harbour were a further 5200 Knots and an Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit at Puketutu.

Summer census totals for Manukau were: Gannet-1; Black Shag-21; Pied Shag-216; Little Black Shag-44; Little Shag-26; White-faced Heron-431; Reef Heron-1; Black Swan-48; Paradise Shelduck-4; Mallard-359; Grey Duck-8; Grey Teal-136; Shoveler-128; Harrier-1; Pukeko-11; SIPO-3085; VOC-4; Golden Plover-12; N.Z. Dotterel-25; Mongolian Dotterel-3; Large Sand Dotterel-2; Banded Dotterel-2; Wrybill-32; Far Eastern Curlew-4; Asiatic Whimbrel-2; Whimbrel sp.-1; Bar-tailed Godwit-14275; Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit-1; Turnstone-264; Knot-23200; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper-5; Red-necked Stint-24; Pied Stilt-1899; Black-backed Gull-479; Red-billed Gull-0; Caspian Tern-86; Little Tern-8; White-fronted Tern-133; Welcome Swallow-33.

**Waikato:** L. Silcock has reported a group of 59 N.Z. Dotterel at Aotea Lagoon and now there are rumours of a group of 100.

**Taranaki:** Two visits have been made recently to the Waititara Rivermouth, just north of Wanganui. D. G. & J. C. Medway visited the area on 21/11/81 and D. G. Medway and R. E. Lambert on 14/2/82. No migratory waders were seen on either occasion although observations over many previous years indicate that an interesting variety of migratory waders do visit the area. Of particular interest from these two visits were four groups of Spur-winged Plovers (total 21) seen on 22/11/81 but none on 14/2/82 and a dark skua, probably Arctic, following a flock of about 30 White-fronted Terns on 14/2/82.

**Manawatu:** The spring count at the Manawatu Estuary was held on 15/11/81 and the following birds were counted: Black Shag-6; White-faced Heron-27; Royal Spoonbill-1; Mallard-19; Harrier-2; Pukeko-36; SIPO-2; Golden Plover-25; Wrybill-3; Turnstone-1; Far Eastern Curlew-2; Bar-tailed Godwit-382; Knot-105; Sharp-tailed Sandpiper-2; Pied Stilt-117; Black-backed Gull-65; Caspian Tern-1. The most interesting feature of this list is the high Knot count, which continues the trend started in 1980/81. Before 1980 Knot counts seldom exceeded 60.

**Wellington:** A Crested Tern has been in the Wellington Harbour area since at least December 1981 and local members now have the bird so accustomed to being observed that visitors have to back off to get the bird in focus.

The Black-billed Gulls that have been a regular feature at Lake Horowhenua

appear to be increasing. Barrie Heather noted 200 in late January, including a banded bird that had been banded by Jack Cowie in the South Island during 1976.

**Marlborough:** There were 40 Royal Spoonbills at the Wairau Lagoons in February. It was a late breeding season after early nests were washed out by floods. However, the birds nested again, with nests well spaced out on the ground. About 9 young have been raised this season and there was still one nest with 5 eggs.

**Nelson:** At the beginning of January, Beris & John Butt and Jean & Charlie Barnhill attracted 8 Yellow-crowned Parakeets with a tape at the Mt. Arthur car park. They also saw 9 Keas and 2 Kakas farther up the mountain.

**West Coast:** During December 1981 Stewart & Pauline Lauder and Alvin Brett visited Okarito Lagoon and found the effort well worthwhile. They located some 200 Bar-tailed Godwits on a shingle bar and among them were 4 Knot and an Asiatic Whimbrel. The tide was receding and there was much movement among the waders but they did manage to count the following as well: SIPO-20+; VOC-5; White-faced Heron-1; White Heron-2; White-fronted Tern-55; Caspian Tern-1; Black-billed Gull-1. At Whataroa there was a field with 500+ Black-billed Gulls.

**Canterbury:** The number of Marsh Sandpipers at Lake Ellesmere continues to increase with 3, probably 4, birds now present. Other species seen there recently include Turnstone, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Golden Plover, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Mongolian Dotterel, Wrybill, SIPO, Pied Stilt and Black Stilt. Small numbers of Black-fronted Terns have begun to appear over the lake, presumably having completed breeding.

Compiled by PAUL SAGAR

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## OSNZ brochures

The Society has produced a small brochure outlining the activities of OSNZ. If you have a friend who may be interested in joining, or if you are perhaps giving a talk to groups which may have prospective members and would like brochures to hand out, supplies are available from your Regional Representative or from the National Secretary (address on cover of *Notornis*).

R. S. SLACK, Hon. Secretary

## Starling nesting behaviour — a new disc-covery?

My friend installed a wooden Starling box close to his lounge windows. A pair of inquisitive Starlings soon inspected the box and spent days near, in, on and out. Eventually much time was spent inside the box when continuous rattling, knocking, scraping and other percussion noises were made. Although several weeks of this activity occurred, nesting was not seen. The following season saw similar activity and noises, again without actual nesting. This year the Starlings returned, commenced the activity with even more determination and accompanied sounds.

One day my friend noticed one bird outside the box, knocking and scraping noises of another bird inside the box, and the circular entrance hole completely closed. Close inspection revealed a circular disc, cut out by drilling during box construction, which had been lifted successfully by both birds from the bottom of the box, and during laborious attempts to eject the disc had lodged it firmly in the entrance hole. My friend removed the disc and nesting material was soon brought to the box and nesting began in real earnest. The well known Starling habit of clearing out former nesting material had taken this determined pair three years.

MIKE KEARNS

## Chatham Island notes

I spent the last week of November 1981 on the main Chatham Island. Most of this time was spent in the northern half of the island and I only visited the southern tableland once. However, on a trip round the Taiko Camp I had a glimpse of a Chatham Island Pigeon as it flew past me, and there were many Chatham Island Warblers and Fantails in the bush. Unfortunately the bush has had cattle through it for over 80 years, and although this makes foot access relatively easy, it is unlikely to survive for very much longer.

Three Spur-winged Plovers were seen on the shores of Tennants Lake on 25 November. On 26 November three were seen feeding at Hapupu on the eastern side of Te Whanga Lagoon. These were probably the same birds as none were seen at Tennants Lake later in the day. However, on 30 November 3 birds were seen again at Tennants Lake, about 100m away from the area of the first sighting. At a small lake near Hapupu 3 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were feeding where four had been seen the previous week by F. J. Taylor.

One excellent locality for waders was

the shore of Te Whanga Lagoon just north of the lagoon entrance. Feeding along the water's edge was a flock of 20 Knots and 8 Bar-tailed Godwits. Six Banded Dotterels were seen on the sandy flats, all showing distraction displays though no nests were found. However, 2 Southern Black-backed Gull nests were found, one with three eggs and the other with three newly hatched chicks.

Te Whanga Lagoon supports a large population of Black Swans which tend to congregate on the western shores to roost. The accumulation of their droppings and washed-up seaweed here results in an overpowering smell. No nests were found and breeding was probably over for the year. White-faced Herons seemed to congregate round the shores of the lagoon, being rarely seen elsewhere. A nest was seen near Hapupu.

Small numbers of Chatham Island and Pitt Island Shags were seen at several places and Black Shags were common along the lagoon shore.

A visit to Tapurangi-Monau Reef in the north-west on 25 November was interesting. There were about 40 White-fronted Terns and several had nests. However, there were only one or two eggs in the nests, which were sited in little grassy patches between rocks. Just outside the ternery there were three Southern Black-backed Gull nests. On the rocks there were 7 Chatham Island Shags, 5 Pitt Island Shags and 1 Black Shag while on the sandy shore close to the reef were about 50 Turnstones and some Banded Dotterels.

Taupeka Point also yielded a large flock of terns, though they did not appear to be nesting, 8 Pitt Island Shags, 2 immature Chatham Island Shags and a flock of 75+ Knots.

Although a careful watch was kept for Chatham Island Oystercatchers they were seen only twice — 2 birds flying across Kaingaroa Beach and 2 more on Tahatika Beach. This last pair were displaying.

One other bird note of interest is that a Broad-billed Prion (called a Blue Billy on the Chathams) flew into the bar of the hotel one night. The local occupants of the bar gently collected it and released it outside, taking great care not to harm it because it is regarded there as a bringer of sickness.

KEVIN J. TAYLOR

## Band and Tag

A new year has started and first of all we would like to extend the best wishes of the Banding Staff to you all. The banding year is running out fast and

thus we would like to remind you that schedules for *all* birds banded between 1 March 1981 and 28 February 1982 are now due. Please forward all outstanding schedules as soon as possible so that we can make a start with the 1981-82 banding summary.

As from 1 January 1982 Chris Robertson retired from the position of Banding Officer, after 17½ years in the Banding Office. However, besides his activities as a full time Wildlife scientist, he will act as a general adviser on policy and direct special projects like the Land and Seabird mapping schemes and the re-activation of the Banding Computer System.

Work on the Bird Atlas is progressing. The process of punching data and entering these in the relevant computer files is in full swing and it is expected that this phase will be completed by the end of April. The next step will be to correct faulty entries, a laborious task. There are still some innovative problems as to format etc. to be solved when final mapping is commenced.

*Species Permits* — A new permit for Pied Shags in the Auckland area has been issued, as well as one for all passerines on Moturoa Island (Bay of Plenty) and immediate adjacent mainland areas. A permit for Stitchbird, Bellbird and Tui on Little Barrier and Hen Islands was granted too. After this update of our former summaries we will continue with a summary of the permits issued for the northern part of the South Island.

Westland Black Petrel (Punakaiki and at sea). All seabirds and waders (Marlborough and Canterbury). Hutton's Shearwater (Seaward Kaikouras and at sea). Australasian Harrier (Marlborough and Canterbury). Banded Rail, Weka, Spotless Crake, Marsh Crake (Nelson and Marlborough). Black-backed Gull and Variable Oystercatcher (Maud Island). Red-billed Gull (Kaikoura peninsula). White-fronted Tern (Boulderbank, Nelson and Kaikoura Peninsula). New Zealand Pigeon and Rock Pigeon (Nelson). Welcome Swallow (Marlborough and Canterbury). Brown Creeper, Rifleman and Fantail (Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura). South Island Robin (Outer Chetwodes, Motuara, Long and Allports Islands and Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura). Silvereye, Yellow-breasted Tit, Grey Warbler (Westland, Marlborough and Canterbury). All passerines (Little Totara River, Westport; Reefton, Nelson and Canterbury).

The remaining species permits for the South Island will be summarised in the next issue.

R. O. COSSEE

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1981

<u>GENERAL INCOME</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1980</u>
Subscriptions	\$17,023	\$16,372
Transfer from Life Subscriptions Reserve	377	319
Donations	332	340
Profit from sale of Christmas Cards	4,371	2,757
Profit from sale of Back Numbers	138	455
Profit from sale of Car Stickers	19	22
Profit from sale of Society Ties	49	78
Profit from sale of Biology of Birds	40	52
Surplus on Summer Study Course	-	2
Surplus from Annual General Meeting	-	94
Total General Income	22,349	20,491
<u>INVESTMENT &amp; OTHER INCOME</u>		
Interest earned by all funds	5,429	3,569
Royalties on Field Guide to N.Z. Birds	5,063	4,983
Subsidy from Dept. of Internal Affairs	-	1,500
Sales of Provisional Atlas	192	114
	10,684	10,166
<u>Less: Royalties credited to Projects Assistance Reserve</u>	5,063	4,983
Interest credited to Reserves	1,864	1,065
Atlas sales credited to Atlas Reserve	192	114
	7,119	6,162
Investment and other income retained in General Funds	3,565	4,004
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	<u>\$25,914</u>	<u>\$24,495</u>
<u>COSTS AND EXPENSES</u>		
Printing and distribution of "Notornis" & "OSNZ" News	\$16,551	\$18,491
Amendments to 1970 Check List	-	1,418
Audit Fee	300	175
Beach Patrol Scheme	-	171
Cost of Annual General Meeting	52	-
Donations	-	20
General Expenses	100	207
Library Expenses	132	54
Nest Record Scheme	144	127
Postages	576	562
Printing and Stationery	565	798
Purchase of Back Numbers	145	-
Royal Society Affiliation	87	70
Regional Representatives Allowance	120	-
Travelling Expenses	537	995
<u>TOTAL COSTS &amp; EXPENSES</u>	<u>19,309</u>	<u>23,088</u>
Excess of Income over Expenditure transferred to Accumulated Funds	\$ 6,605	\$ 1,407

The accompanying notes form part of and should be read in conjunction with these financial statements.

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

31 DECEMBER 1981

GENERAL ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

The general accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of results and financial position under the historical cost method of accounting have been adopted by the Society.

PARTICULAR ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

Particular accounting principles which materially affect the measurement of excess of income over expenditure and financial position have been applied as follows:-

- SUBSCRIPTION INCOME  
No subscriptions in arrears have been included in income. Subscriptions in advance have been excluded from income. Life Subscriptions received are included in the Life Subscriptions Reserve, from which 10% of the closing balance is annually transferred to current income.
- ROYALTY INCOME  
Royalties on the sale of Field Guide to N.Z. Birds are deducted from income and credited to the Projects Assistance Reserve.
- SALES OF BIRD DISTRIBUTION IN N.Z. ATLAS  
Proceeds from the sale of the Provisional Atlas are deducted from income and credited to the Atlas Reserve.
- INTEREST EARNED  
Interest earned by investment of Reserve Funds is credited to those Reserves.

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.)

BALANCE SHEET

31 DECEMBER 1981

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1980</u>
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Cash at Bank of New Zealand	\$ 9,448	\$ 2,788
Amounts owing to the Society	56	-
Deposits at Bank of New Zealand	-	11,500
Short-term Secured Debenture Stock (Note 1)	20,000	-
Stock of "Notornis" (Note 2)	100	100
Total Current Assets	29,604	14,388
<u>Investments</u>		
<u>Life Subscriptions Reserve:</u>		
Bank of New Zealand Savings Account	64	76
Deposits at Bank of New Zealand (11.5%)	2,600	2,800
Marac - Secured Debenture Stock (16.5%)	400	-
A.G.C. Secured Debenture Stock (15.75%)	330	-
	3,394	2,876
<u>Robert Falla Memorial Reserve:</u>		
Broadlands Secured Debenture Stock (17.25%)	1,000	-
Cash at Bank of New Zealand	142	100
	1,142	100
<u>General Investments</u>		
N.Z. Government Savings Stock (11%)	5,000	5,000
Local Body Stocks (9.5%)	3,000	3,000
B.N.Z. Finance Co. Ltd - Secured Debenture Stock (15%)	8,000	7,954
Dvlt Finance Corpn - Secured Debenture Stock (14%)	3,000	5,000
	19,000	20,954
Total Investments	23,536	23,930
Library - at valuation (Note 2)	1,000	1,000
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>\$54,140</u>	<u>\$39,318</u>
<u>LIABILITIES, RESERVES &amp; ACCUMULATED FUNDS</u>		
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Amounts Owed by the Society	\$ 4,522	\$ 3,464
Subscriptions paid in advance	1,403	2,229
Total Liabilities	5,925	5,693
<u>Reserves</u>		
Life Subscriptions Reserve (Note 3)	3,394	2,876
Robert Falla Memorial Reserve (Note 4)	1,142	100
Projects Assistance Reserve (Note 5)	18,929	12,743
Bird Distribution in N.Z. Atlas Reserve (Note 6)	650	411
Publications Reserve	1,000	1,000
Total Reserves	25,115	17,130
<u>Accumulated Funds</u>		
Balance at beginning of year	16,495	15,088
Excess of Income over Expenditure for Year	6,605	1,407
Balance at End of Year	23,100	16,495
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES, RESERVES &amp; ACCUMULATED FUNDS</u>	<u>\$54,140</u>	<u>\$39,318</u>

The Members  
The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc)

In our opinion, the financial statements on pages 2 to 5 fairly present the financial position of the Society at 31 December 1981 and the results of its activities for the year ended on that date.

*William Wilberford, Auditor*

Auckland, New Zealand  
22 January 1982

31 DECEMBER 1981

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1981

## 1. Short-Term Secured Debenture Stock

This item comprises:

Marac Holdings Limited	@ 13.5% p.a.	\$ 5,000
U.D.C. Group Holdings Limited	@ 13.0% p.a.	5,000
Australian Guarantee Corporation Limited	@ 13.5% p.a.	5,000
Broadlands Finance Limited	@ 13.0% p.a.	5,000
		<u>\$20,000</u>

## 2. Stocks of "Notornis" Library

These stocks together with the Library, are included at a nominal value.

## 3. Life Subscriptions Reserve

	1981	1980
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 2,876	\$ 2,890
Life subscriptions received	560	-
Interest earned	335	305
	<u>3,771</u>	<u>3,195</u>
Less Transfer to Current Income, 10% of balance	377	319
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 3,394</u>	<u>\$ 2,876</u>

## 4. Robert Falla Memorial Reserve

	1981	1980
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 100	\$ -
Contributions received	1,075	100
Interest earned	17	-
	<u>1,192</u>	<u>100</u>
Less Grant to Mr H.R. McKenzie	50	-
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 1,142</u>	<u>\$ 100</u>

## 5. Projects Assistance Reserve

	1981	1980
Balance at beginning of year	\$12,743	\$ 7,239
Royalties on Field Guide	5,063	4,983
Interest earned	1,465	760
	<u>19,271</u>	<u>12,982</u>
Less grants made:		
Miranda Naturalists' Trust - Travel	342	-
Bird mapping expeditions	-	239
Balance at end of year	<u>\$18,929</u>	<u>\$12,743</u>

## 6. Bird Distribution in N.Z. Atlas Reserve

	1981	1980
Balance at beginning of year	\$ 411	\$ 297
Atlas sales during the year	192	114
Interest earned	47	-
Balance at end of year	<u>\$ 650</u>	<u>\$ 411</u>

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

	31.12.81	31.12.80	Increase (Decrease)
N.Z. Ordinary	818	737	81
N.Z. Husband and Wife	232	232	-
N.Z. Junior	59	57	2
N.Z. Family	12	16	(4)
N.Z. Institutions	49	49	-
N.Z. Life Members	57	62	(5)
N.Z. Honorary Life Member	1	1	-
Overseas Individuals	83	80	3
Overseas Institutions	70	74	(4)
Overseas Life Members	20	19	1
	<u>1,401</u>	<u>1,327</u>	<u>74</u>

During the year 184 new members were admitted, 51 left and 59 were struck off as unfinancial, a net increase of 74.

## 2. INCOME

The excess of income over expenditure, after transfers to Reserve Funds, was \$6,605, an increase of \$5,198 over the previous year. Subscription income exceeded the cost of printing and distributing "Notornis" and "OSNZ News", enabling the profit from the sale of Christmas cards to become an increase in general funds. The cost of "Notornis" and "News" was less than in the previous year. This was achieved mainly by reducing the size of the March and September issues. The cost of "Notornis" and "News" represented \$11.81 per member compared with \$13.93 in 1980.

## 3. INVESTMENTS

The accounts show details of investments and how the Reserves are invested. The \$20,000 invested in short-term debentures represents monies held for possible expenditure on the Bird Atlas in 1983.

## 4. ROBERT FALLA MEMORIAL RESERVE

Since balance date contributions to this Reserve have reached \$1,200. Annual interest should approximate \$200 enabling a worthwhile annual award to be made. The Reserve will be maintained at a minimum of \$1,200 with the award paid out of interest income.

## 5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Using membership figures at 31.12.81 subscription income should approximate \$25,300 in each of 1982 and 1983. The cost of "Notornis" and "News" in each of these years should approximate \$19,000 and \$22,000 leaving a surplus to meet operating costs of \$6,300 in 1982 and \$3,300 in 1983. This indicates that current subscription rates can be maintained at least until the end of 1983.

G.M.H. PETERSON, Hon. Treasurer

**Wildlife research liaison group**

At the request of the Minister of Science and Technology a Wildlife Research Liason Group has been established to promote wildlife research in New Zealand. It is hoped to do this by (a) facilitating and encouraging communication amongst wildlife research agencies, amongst all scientists involved in wildlife research, amongst such scientists and those responsible for wildlife management and between scientists and groups interested in any aspects of wildlife biology; and (b) by regularly reviewing current wildlife research programmes.

Wildlife research is defined as research carried out on any aspects of the biology of all animals which live in a wild state in New Zealand, including marine mammals but excluding fish.

Currently the group includes representatives from the Wildlife Service,

Ecology Division (DSIR), Lands & Survey, Forest Service, Royal Society and Acclimatisation Societies.

\* \* \* \*

**Crested Grebes on the Ashburton Lakes**

Two surveys of the Ashburton Lakes were carried out during early and late February 1982. Crested Grebe numbers were much lower than those recorded during the three previous summers with 33 and 37 adults being counted compared with 50-60 previously. However, judging by the number of young seen, breeding success was much higher. All young were 4-6 weeks old and had a good chance of reaching independence.

Each summer for the past 7 years a pair of grebes has bred under the same willow by the camping ground at Lake

Clearwater. In the 1981-82 breeding season a second pair tried to breed under the same willow. This second pair of grebes completed their nest and laid one egg but were eventually driven out by the first pair. This first pair produced two clutches. The first clutch of 4 eggs having been vandalised during Labour Weekend, a second clutch was laid by the end of November. This contained 5 eggs but 3 were infertile and the remaining 2 hatched by 29 December. On 17 February both chicks and the adults were seen on the lake and the young were diving on their own but were still being fed by their parents. At this time another pair of grebes was seen on a nest under the willow by the camping ground (possibly the pair that had been driven out earlier). The nest was newly built and had not been there on 5 February when a pair had been loafing under the willow.

COLIN &amp; HEIDI O'DONNELL

## Banding Mailbag

Not many interesting recoveries came to our attention during the past three months, so you will find an older, unpublished recovery as well.

Y-1391 Indian Myna, banded as a chick in the DSIR Orchard, Havelock North, on 9/2/70. The bird was found dead (possibly cat-killed) near the place of banding on 26/11/81. Age 11 years 9 months and 17 days.

A-53621 Grey Warbler, banded as an adult in Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura, on 27/6/76. The bird was captured and released again on 23/11/81 in Kowhai Bush.

L-6445 Antarctic Skua, banded as an adult at Cape Royds, Antarctica, on 20/11/65. The bird was found dead (apparently for some time) at Cape Bird, Antarctica, on 18/12/81.

R-38713 Southern Royal Albatross, banded as a pullus on Campbell Island on 31/8/80, was shot as a specimen on 1/2/81 in the sea channel N.E. of Bartolome Island, Diego Ramirez Islands, Chile (56°30'S, 68°42'W).

M-14465 Australasian Gannet, banded initially as a pullus at Cape Kidnappers on 18/2/56 and since rebanded several times. It was recovered dead on Ohope Beach on 26/10/81.

R. O. COSSEE

## Roof of the North Island

When the Council met in May 1981, the suggestion was made that ambitious though it might seem, some sort of survey of the Tongariro National Park and its environs was both possible and desirable. The challenge was accepted by the two RRs most geographically concerned, Lindsay Davies and John Innes. Planning soon started and ultimately there was a gratifying response from members, who began arriving at Erua Ski Lodge on the afternoon of 10 January, for what was to prove a strenuous and stimulating six days.

The participants were: Bert and Joan Axell, John and Beth Brown, Bob and Sybil Creswell, Bill and Norah Peachman, Phil and Ruth Rider, Amyas and Marcelle Ringer, Dick and Joan Sibson, John and Karen Staniland, Betty Binning, Margaret Bishop, Lenva Calcott, Linda Conygham, Monica Daly, Gillian Eller, Bev Elliott, Dr Elsie Gibbons, Anthea Goodwin, Dr Jennifer Grace, Maria Hansby, Joan Howes, Kate Molloy, Gwenda Pulham, Brigid Pike, Connie Schischka, Bettly Searle, David Baker, Donald Bates, Don Blair, Ken Bond, Kingsley Brown, Simon Chamberlain, Lindsay Davies, Barrie Heather, Graham

Hunt, John Innes, Ronald Lockley, Robert Peachman, Ralph Sylvester and Roy Weston.

The areas which working parties were able to cover by car and on foot were wide and varied and made up roughly of (a) forests and wooded gorges, (b) lakes and swamps, (c) open country, including grassland, tussock, fellfield and desert. Of course there were overlaps, e.g. lakes such as Rotopounamu and Rotokuru are ringed by forests which contain a rich diversity of plants and birds.

Since we enjoyed perfect weather, every day small groups, making allowance for youthful enterprise and geriatric plodding, scoured the various habitats between about 600 and 1300m a.s.l. After six days the list of species logged was all the more satisfactory because it contained not a few of the ancient endemics such as Dabchick, Scaup, Blue Duck, Falcon, Kaka, Fernbird, Robin etc. On Lake Rotaira Spotless Crakes were quick to respond to the playing of taped calls. Paradise Shelducks now use the sewage ponds near Ohakune as a marae when they are moulting. Our editor, fretting about meaningless dotterels and unidentifiable terns down on the coast, was delighted when his Desert Rangers located many Banded Dotterels, justifying their old name of Mountain Plover, in the battle-scarred wilderness which lies to the south-east of Ruapehu. He was less happy when blundering blindly through spiny thickets of Hall's totara.

To find that four recent Australian colonists, White-faced Heron, Spur-winged Plover, Welcome Swallow and Coot, have 'hit the roof' and now seem to be established there, was not altogether surprising. Like the multitudinous Chaffinches, where do they go in winter?

One very successful example of Lone Wolfing deserves mention. Donald Bates hired a boat and with the help of Simon Chamberlain explored the likely looking Pouto Estuary on Lake Rotoaira. In addition to the expected waterfowl, including Spotless Crane, he also notched up Bittern, Caspian Tern and Yellow-crowned Parakeet. Enterprise still earns its rewards. We now expect startling discoveries when Donald paddles his canoe from Blenheim to the Wairau Estuary.

John Innes had arranged a full programme. Evening talks were given by Mr R. A. L. Batley of Moawhango on local aspects of cultural and ornithological history; by Mr Bill Cooper, Senior Ranger, on Lands and Survey mapping schemes for the distribution of plants and birds; by David Johnson, Wildlife Service, on the birds of the Tongariro

National Park and by Hugh Lusk, landscape architect for N.Z.E.D., on landscape management. A special bonus was a lecture by Bert Axell on wildlife sanctuaries and the complex problems of control. The accompanying illustrations were superb! John Innes kept us up to the mark. When we were not enjoying evening talks, we were busy filling in cards and comparing lists. The large maps became brightly studded with drawing pins and the pile of cards deepened.

Among the participants there was whole-hearted agreement that the exercise was an exhilarating success. The vitality of any society depends upon the initiative of its members. If anyone had misgivings about the vigour of OSNZ those doubts would have been dispelled smartly by the activities of this week, the purposeful team-work and the sense of fun.

To the organisers, Lindsay Davies and John Innes, who so carefully prepared the ground; and to the staff of Erua Ski Lodge who so amply catered for our inner needs — for montane ornithology can be a hungry occupation — we offer a resounding 'Thank you.'

R. B. SIBSON

## Black-fronted Tern survey

There has been a good response to this survey (see *OSNZ news* 20 for details) but there is still room for more effort, particularly in the south of the South Island.

In the North Island the well-known Black-fronted Tern areas are being surveyed regularly with Paddy Latham covering the Bay of Plenty, Kathleen Todd Hawkes Bay and David Sim making daily checks of Lake Onoke. In addition Wellington and Manawatu members are keeping a look-out for birds around Waikanae and the Manawatu Estuary. Perhaps the only remaining areas that need to be checked in the North Island are Kaipara and Kawhia Harbours.

In the South Island, Nelson and Marlborough members have been particularly active and are maintaining a steady flow of records. In Canterbury regular checks of the Ashley Estuary, Lake Ellesmere and the Ashburton Rivermouth are being made and there have been other useful records, especially from North Canterbury rivermouths. However, because large numbers of Black-fronted Terns are found at Canterbury rivermouths during winter it is important to establish checks at more areas, particularly in South Canterbury. Stewart Lauder reports that despite checking

almost every rivermouth on the West Coast he has yet to find a Black-fronted Tern. His efforts are still well worthwhile as negative reports, i.e. where the birds are not found, are just as important as positive reports.

With the exception of some useful information from the Te Anau and Alexandra areas there have been no reports from Otago and Southland which is very disappointing. Also, it would be very interesting to know just how many terns are found in Stewart Island during the winter.

How many Black-fronted Terns are there? Where are the important areas for them to roost and feed? Do juveniles winter in different areas from adults? If we are to answer some of these questions we need to get as many reports as possible from as many areas as possible. Don't delay, visit your local estuary, lagoon, lake today.

Survey forms are available from RRs and the organisers.

PAUL SAGAR & BARRIE HEATHER

## Birdnotes from Great Barrier Island

Since Auckland members of OSNZ plan to visit Great Barrier Island later this year, we thought sharing our notebook may be useful to potential visitors. We have also included our visit checklist as a target, as something that can be added to, and as a quick guide to the locally common birds. We were on Great Barrier from 27 December 1981 to 9 January 1982, exactly 14 days, and established our camp at the southern end of Kaitoke Beach near Claris. Most time was spent on the eastern side of the island, although we did venture out to Tryphena, Whangaparapara, and Port Fitzroy to home via Mount Hobson and the Peach Tree Hot Springs. Anthea Goodwin kindly organised a ride for us on the Te Aroha scow between Whangaparapara and Port Fitzroy, and since a devious route was followed we saw more west coast than ever anticipated. Our efforts were concentrated therefore in the centre of the island, with the northern and southern extremities ignored because of time, inaccessibility, and the fact that we were on holiday and not a Marine Corps training exercise.

The east coast has a number of very long, and very beautiful surf beaches. We conducted five beach patrols, three on Kaitoke and two on Medlands Beach. The best patrol was on New Years Day after three days of blustery weather from the east. We patrolled Kaitoke Beach and found 41 birds of 14 species as

follows: 4 Little Blue Penguins, 1 Buller's Shearwater, 1 Allied Shearwater, 3 Fluttering Shearwaters, 5 Short-tailed Shearwaters, 12 Sooty Shearwaters, 5 Black Petrels, 1 Grey-faced Petrel, 3 Fairy Prions, 2 White-faced Storm Petrels, 1 Little Shag, 1 Pied Shag, 1 Red-billed Gull and 1 juvenile White-fronted Tern.

One of the Black Petrels we found with a hook and fishing line caught firmly in its mouth. A Wilson's Storm Petrel was also found on Kaitoke Beach, and we identified it positively from the books we always carried, which is more than we could say for the juvenile White-fronted Tern on the above list. We recorded it as such on the grounds of probability — there is a small breeding colony on a small island no more than 400m offshore — and White-fronted Terns are common. Nevertheless we still have doubts. Too dark, too heavy and angular in the bill. Gull-billed Tern? A patrol the next day of Medlands Beach yielded 11 birds of 10 species. Add to the list 1 Gannet and 1 Starling and one has a grand total of 52 birds and 16 species. Seven Black Petrels and 13 Sooty Shearwaters were worst hit, closely followed by 6 Short-tailed Shearwaters and 4 Fluttering Shearwaters, then 5 Little Blue Penguins.

Remaining on the beaches, we found that pairs of Variable Oystercatchers had breeding 'sections' of roughly 750m frontage. Kaitoke Beach therefore had 4 breeding pairs, while Medlands Beach had only 2 pairs. New Zealand Dotterels were harder to sort out, as the areas they would defend vigorously were very much smaller. However, we think that 14 pairs occupied the 3km of Kaitoke Beach. At the extreme south, 2 family groups each consisting of 2 adults and 2 young, lived within 50m of each other. The 4 juveniles were often found together. Later a similar family group lived near Claris airstrip, and a final pair were found near Kaitoke Creek. None was banded. Banded Dotterels were also found breeding, but they were not as common as the New Zealand Dotterel. Of interest is that on our first day we found a pair of Banded Dotterel with 3 newly-hatched young. In company of the adult birds was also a single fully-fledged juvenile. There was no aggression shown towards this young bird, and although we did not see it being fed, the overall impression was that this was a member of an earlier brood. Finally, on the beach near the camp, were 2 Caspian Terns, an adult plus a fully-fledged juvenile. The latter was colour-banded and this proved a real find as on checking later with Maurice Field, we were able to ascertain

that it had hatched last October at the Maniwhai Heads Colony. We believe it may be the first colour-banded Caspian Tern reported from Great Barrier. On our travels we have reported the odd New Zealand Dotterel and Caspian Tern we have noticed with colour bands. The news is always so well received, it is always interesting to us to learn the origin of our sighting. We urge other birdwatchers to look closely at these birds, for generally the bands are not that easy to see.

We recorded 140 Brown Teal in 9 separate groups in completely different places. The largest gathering was 49 birds on the creek at the southern end of Kaitoke Beach. By contrast we shared a swimming hole by the Port Fitzroy N.Z.F.S. hut with a single bird. We noticed several fully grown juveniles and a female with 5 very young ducklings.

Kaka were very common on the western side of the island, particularly at Whangaparapara where the pohutukawa were in full flower. The Kakas and many Tuis provided non-stop action throughout both day and night. We neither saw nor heard Bellbird, which local farmers report being in very small numbers in the far south. In our opinion lack of plant food species due to early forest exploitation, combined with fierce competition from active and substantial Kaka and Tui populations is the general reason for the low Bellbird population. Life for Bellbirds is much easier on the Coromandel Peninsula.

We were extremely pleased to see Redpoll in small numbers along the road to Whangaparapara from Claris, and along this same route we made several records of both Pipit and Fernbird.

Cook's Petrels continue to breed on the summit of Mount Hobson. On our way up we met some trampers who had been obliged to spend a night on the summit. They told an eerie tale of 'seagulls' swooping down on them out of the night, then having the gall to waddle across their sleeping bags as they went to their burrows. Perhaps luckily for all there were some Forest and Bird members present, who identified the birds and explained. The trampers assessed numbers as 'dozens not hundreds,' and this tallied well with the number of occupied burrows we found later.

We took breeding records for 22 species. One pair out of a group of 6 Caspian Terns had taken the trouble to lay a single egg on Kaitoke Beach near Claris airstrip. We witnessed the absurd sight of 2 Grey Warblers feeding an outsize Shining Cuckoo. We watched 3 different lots of Kingfishers at nest burrows, one pair still excavating. We

found 2 nests of New Zealand Dotterel, each with 3 eggs. The undoubted high-light was at one of the Variable Oystercatcher nests, where the frantic parents were protecting 1 ten minute-old chick that was still unsteady on its feet, 1 chick that had just hatched and a remaining egg that was very close to hatching. We returned to this nest several times later. After three days 1 chick had gone, but the other 2 remained strong at least until our departure.

Checklist from Great Barrier Island, 27 December 1981-9 January 1982. Little Blue Penguin, Cook's Petrel (B), Grey-faced Petrel (W), Black Petrel (B), Buller's Shearwater (W), Flesh-footed Shearwater (W), Sooty Shearwater (W), Short-tailed Shearwater (W), Fluttering Shearwater, Allied Shearwater (W), Fairy Prion (W), Wilson's Storm Petrel (W), White-faced Storm Petrel (W), Little Shag, Pied Shag (B), Little Black Shag, Bittern, White-faced Heron, Mallard, Grey Duck, Paradise Duck, Brown Teal (B), Gannet, Harrier, Pheasant, Banded Rail, Pukeko (B), Variable Oystercatcher (B), Banded Dotterel (B), New Zealand Dotterel (B), Pied Stilt, Black-backed Gull (B), Red-billed Gull (B), Caspian Tern (B), White-fronted Tern (B), New Zealand Pigeon, Kaka, Shining Cuckoo (B), Morepork, Kingfisher (B), Welcome Swallow (B), Grey Warbler (B), Fantail, Silvereye, Skylark, Song Thrush (B), Blackbird (B), Hedge Sparrow, Pipit, Tui, Fernbird, Redpoll, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Chaffinch (B), Yellowhammer, Myna (B), House Sparrow (B), Starling (B).

59 positively identified species; (B) = found breeding, (W) = only found as beach wrecks.

MIKE & SHAREN GRAHAM

### 1982 Chatham Island Taiko Expedition

*Work party* — During January 1982 a work party consisting of David and Ruth Crockett, Alastair and Audrey Gordon, Prue Cozens, John Ballantyne, Russell Thomas and Kathy Parkinson prepared the Taiko Base Camp for mid-winter occupation.

Supplies of water, wood, fuel, food and equipment were stored in the camp as it will be impossible for vehicles to have access to the area when members of the first team arrive in July. I am grateful for the continuing support of Sir William Gilbert and World Wildlife Fund/New Zealand for supplying sponsored materials to complete the Base Camp facilities.

*Wader survey* — During the period 18-22 January the members of the work party

were based at Wharekauri, a Department of Lands and Survey property. Assisted by a grant from the OSNZ Projects Assistance Fund members carried out surveys of the Chatham Island Oystercatcher and other waders along the northern coast of the main Chatham Island.

Points worthy of note from this survey include the spread of Spur-winged Plover and the widespread distribution of large numbers of Turnstone.

Chatham Island Pigeon — Although we were unable to attempt a full census of the Chatham Island Pigeon spot checks indicate that the total population of this species has increased from 32 to 40. John McCormack, manager of Wharekauri, reports that for the first time in many years 3 pigeons wintered at Wharekauri.

*Major expedition* — The next phase in the search for the breeding ground of the Chatham Island Taiko commences in July 1982 when a team enters the field under the leadership of Derek Bettesworth. The main objective of this team will be to monitor the return of the Taiko to the breeding grounds, which is thought to occur between mid-July and mid-September. At this time the birds should be active and vociferous in aerial display.

If this can be done it should be possible to localise an area for intensive burrow searching in the latter phase of the expedition. It is planned to intensify expedition activities during the November-January period when more personnel should be available.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, Expedition Leader.

### Help wanted

Colour-banded White-fronted Terns — Nelson RR Jenny Hawkins advises that 350 White-fronted Tern chicks have been banded on the Boulder Bank, Nelson, this summer. The birds have a metal band on the right leg and a yellow band on the left leg. These birds could visit your district so please check White-fronted Terns for bands. Any records should be sent to Jenny Hawkins, 772 Atawhai Drive, Nelson.

Colour-banded Red-billed Gulls — As advised in the last issue, Dr Jim Mills has colour-banded Red-billed Gulls breeding at Kaikoura during the 1981-82 summer. One of the aims of this project is to find out how many gulls remain with their partners during the winter. Please send any records to Dr Jim Mills, Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington.

### Wanted: Nest Record Cards

The report on the cards received during the 1981-82 breeding season is being prepared. A considerable number of cards has already been received but more are required if the effort of 1980-81 is to be equalled.

Members who are holding completed Nest Record Cards are asked to please forward them to the Convenor as soon as possible so that a report can be compiled for the A.G.M. in May and for publication in the June *Notornis*.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, Nest Record Convenor, 21 McMillan Avenue, Kamo, Northland.

### Audubon Society visitors

Two groups of Audubon Society members visited the Firth of Thames in late November and early December. The first contingent of 18 came with Peter Alden, who is no stranger to South Auckland members. Their bus driver took the rich, thick mud in the Firth too lightly and got his bus well and truly stuck. It took a long time to get out and this was only effected by the determination of a local farmer with a big tractor. The group was delighted with Wrybills, N.Z. Dotterels and Banded Dotterels. Later several South Auckland and Auckland members went with the party on a boat trip to the Horuhoru Gannet colony where 5000+ birds were admired and photographed from the boat in perfect weather. Peter, who has an astonishingly long life list, even added a new species, a White-faced Storm Petrel. Fluttering and Flesh-footed Shearwaters were seen but we could not raise a Buller's Shearwater in the mill-pond conditions which prevailed.

BETH BROWN

### Piscivorous pipit

While at the South Ashburton River on 29/8/81 I saw a Pipit with an object which at first appeared to be a skink. The Pipit was picking the object up and shaking it violently. Waiting for the right moment, I managed to chase the bird off and closer examination of the object revealed it to be a bully 42mm long and minus its tail and most of its head. While I was examining the bully the Pipit approached to within 2.5m and when I tossed the bully in its direction it promptly darted in, picked it up and flew off with it. I have not seen any reports of Pipits taking small fish.

DONALD GEDDES