



OSNZ news

No. 23

June, 1982

NOTE: Deadline for the September issue will be 20th August.

TANE

TANE, the Journal of the Auckland University Field Club, deals with aspects of the archaeology, botany, geology, herpetology, marine biology and ornithology from northern New Zealand, particularly the offshore islands.

TANE 26 is available and includes papers on the geology, vegetation, reptiles, birds, marine fauna and archaeology of the Mokohinau Islands; lichens, birds and marine fauna of the eastern Bay of Islands Group; birds, kiore, foraminifera and macrobenthos of the Cavalli Islands; coastal landforms of Kawerau; flora of North Cape; and archaeology of Motu-ihe Island (249 pp.).

Articles of ornithological interest in recent volumes include: Birds of Ponui Island; Birds and terrestrial vertebrates of Farewell Spit, Nelson; Evidence of moas at Kawerau; Birds of the Moturoa Islands; Birds of Great Mercury Island; Records of birds from the Leigh district; Distribution and abundance of birds at Kawerau; Birds of Shoe and Slipper Islands; Birds of the Alderman Islands.

Copies of TANE 26 (at \$5.00 per copy) as well as contents of available back-issues are obtainable from: The Editor, TANE, c/- Botany Department, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland.

Australian Tree Martin on the Taeri

On 3/12/81 a white flash flying against low grey cloud caught my eye. There were many Welcome Swallows flying low that morning, including several newly-fledged young, but the stranger was easy to pick out with its white rump and slightly different flight. During the day the Tree Martin frequently settled on the woolshed roof, where we were able to observe it closely through binoculars. It was slightly plumper, though perhaps shorter than the swal-

lows. The white underparts extended from the chin (lack of rufous colour on the face made it easier to identify) and some way round the side of the neck and of course right across the rump. The black on the back and head seemed more intense than the blue-black of the swallows. While on the roof, with the swallows landing nearby, the Tree Martin would put its head down and approach the swallows in a somewhat aggressive way. This usually made the swallow move away.

We saw the bird several times over the next few days but it was not until 14/1/82 that we had the next definite sighting. Since then it was seen regularly, getting quite used to us approaching the wire, where it carried on preening among the swallows and was often the last to leave. Then on 21/2/82 we had the first definite sighting of 2 Tree Martins on the wire at one time. I would be interested to know of any other sightings of Tree Martins this summer.

ALISON NEVILL

Red-headed Flaxbirds

The summer of 1981/82 has been excellent for the flowering of flax and there have been many reports of unusual and mysterious red-headed birds throughout the country. At the National Museum Sandy Bartle almost had to install an automatic answering service to deal with the flood of calls about red-capped mysteries. The list of species known by me to feed on flax nectar includes House Sparrow, Starling, Tui, Bellbird, Silvereye and Myna but no doubt members have others to add. The following are two interesting reports of birds feeding on flax nectar:

(1) In the Normandale area (Wellington) at least this has been a very prolific flowering season for flax. This has brought lots of birds to our many flax bushes. We have had visits from a few TuIs, and, though they seem ill-equipped for the task, the Silvereyes have mounted quite an offensive. However, Starlings have been the most common customers at the 'Nectar Bar.'

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.

It is hard to gauge but I am sure that there are larger numbers feeding on the flax flowers and consequently sporting orange crowns, and entering the lists as new species.

On 3 January a male House Sparrow was observed on the flax flowers outside our kitchen window with a splendid orange crown. Again on 23 January both a male and a female House Sparrow were observed working our flax flowers. It would be interesting to know whether the sparrows have developed a taste for nectar, or whether they have discovered a new source of trapped insects.

MAX FALCONER

(2) On 1 December 1981 I was staying in the lodge at Waipoua State Forest. A lawn bordered by a line of flax bushes slopes down from the lodge to the single men's camp and the Waipoua River. After tea I was watching the TuIs come and go from the flax flowers when I noticed a Myna also feeding on the nectar. Never having heard of this before, I wondered if only one bird was involved. However, on 7 December I was back at Waipoua and this time saw 3 or 4 Mynas feeding off the flax flowers. A Tui chased off one Myna; following this incident no further aggression was seen.

RAY JACKSON

Seabird Conference

The Pacific Seabird Group and Australasian Seabird Group will host a joint meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, during the period 1-3 December 1982. In addition to general paper sessions, there will be symposia on (1) the ecology of tropical seabirds and (2) human and other animal impacts on seabirds.

Interested participants may contact Craig Harrison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 50167, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 U.S.A. for further information.

CRAIG HARRISON

Publications

The ornithology of the Ross Sea. E. C. Young. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 11: 287-315. 1981. Ornithological research in the area is reviewed. Most recent work has been largely of descriptive and experimental field studies during the summer months of the breeding biology, and of adaptation to antarctic conditions by the Adelie Penguin and skuas. There has been little research on petrels in the region.

Morphological and behavioural evolution in populations of the Gerygone fusca complex. Julian Ford. *Emu* 81: 57-81. 1981. Of interest mainly because the possible derivations of the New Zealand subspecies *igata* are mentioned.

Breeding of the Banded and Masked Lapwings in southern Victoria. P. Dann. *Emu* 81: 121-127. 1981. The breeding of these two species was investigated in southern Victoria in 1975. Comparisons are made between the species and with breeding information on Masked Lapwings (Spur-winged Plover) in Tasmania and New Zealand.

Evolution, distribution and stage of speciation in the Rhipidura fuliginosa complex in Australia. Julian Ford. *Emu* 81: 128-144. 1981. Australian populations of the complex provide an example of various stages of speciation. Now it would be interesting to compare populations in New Zealand.

The pelagic feeding ecology of the Short-tailed Shearwater Puffinus tenuirostris in the subarctic Pacific region. Haru Ogi, Tsunemi Kubodera and Kazue Nakamura. *Journal of the Yamashina Institute of Ornithology* 12: 157-181. 1980. Stomach contents were collected from birds caught in fishing nets in order to determine the food and feeding habits of this seabird. The diet varied according to sea area. Overall it consisted mainly of small organisms such as larval and juvenile fish and squid, euphausiids, amphipods, copepods, shrimp and thecosomata, all of which are abundant in the surface waters. This high adaptability in prey and pelagic environment enable this species to maintain large numbers in the Northern Hemisphere.

Flightlessness and fear of flying in island species. Jared M. Diamond. *Nature* 293: 507-508. While some (most?) birds, insects and plants have achieved flightlessness by morphological change, other animals have achieved it behaviourally, through fear of flying. Especially in tropical rainforests, hundreds of bird species that fly over land refuse to cross water gaps of even a few hundred metres. The only islands on which such species occur are ones that were formerly

connected to continents by land bridges. The short message is that for diverse animals and plants, the anatomical and behavioural bases of dispersal are subject to natural selection and may differ enormously between species within the same genus.

Notes on the Black-winged Petrel. J. Klapste. *Australian Bird Watcher* 9: 2 (1981) 35-40. Observations on Norfolk Island. 3 plates.

Field Identification of the "Curve-billed sandpipers." J. A. Kiesen & A. J. Tree. *Bokmakierie* 33: 4 (1981) 89-92. Comparison between Curlew Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper & Dunlin. Includes details of juvenile and winter plumage.

Le Noddie Bleu des iles Gambier. J. L. Mougin et R. de Naurois. *L'Oiseau et La Revue Francaise* 51: 3 (1981) 201-204. A proposed new subspecies.

Differences in habitat requirements and distribution patterns of plovers and sandpipers as investigated by studies of feeding behaviour. M. W. Plenkowski. *Verhandlungen der Ornith. Gesell. in Bayern*. 23: 2/3 (1978/79) 105-124. Feeding strategies based on detailed studies at Lindesfarne, N.E. England.

Role of winter food supplies in the population ecology of common British wading birds. J. D. Goss-Custard. *Verh. orn. Ges. Bayern* 23: 2/3 (1978/79) 125-146. Examines factors which limit production of breeding pairs and subsequent mortality of juveniles and adults.

Reclamation of intertidal land: some effects on Shelduck and wader populations in the Tees estuary. P. R. Evans. *Verh. orn. Ges. Bayern* 23: 2/3 (1978/79) 147-168. Documents the effect of the loss of about 60% of an important shorebird feeding area on the river Tees, N.E. England.

Asiatic Dowitcher at Moitaka settling ponds: second record for the New Guinea region. B. W. Finch. *P.N.G. Bird Soc. Newsletter* No. 181-182 (1981) 36-39.

The bird is compared in the field with Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, with which it associated.

Notes on the birds of the Weddell Sea, Antarctica. R. M. Zink. *Le Gerfaut*: 71: 1 (1981) 59-74. Observations made between 9-26 February 1976. 22 species tabulated and 12 discussed in some detail.

PAUL SAGAR & ANTHEA GOODWIN

Ornithological guides

The Society has received a request from the Tahoma Audubon Society, USA, for names of people in New Zea-

land who would be prepared to guide visitors to New Zealand on bird-watching or nature tours. The OSNZ Secretary receives a regular flow of requests from round the world for New Zealand contacts or guides and would like to know of any members who might like to help out on the odd occasion.

Any member prepared to act as a guide is invited to write to the OSNZ Secretary with details of name, address, phone number, and specifying any limitations such as 'weekends only,' 'immediate home town area only.' If you would like to be listed in the Audubon Society's listing *Nature Guide*, please advise the Secretary as soon as possible.

R. S. SLACK, Hon. Secretary

Recent alien incursions into Mount Aspiring National Park

Since I completed the bird survey of the park exotic species have continued to invade the sacred precincts, as was anticipated. The following are worthy of note:

Canada Goose: A flock of 80+ on Sylvan Lake (near Glenorchy) on 2/1/80. Another flock of 41 feeding on the valley floor grassland at Shovel Flat, West Matukituki on 18/12/81.

White-backed Magpie: Birds gradually spread up the Matukituki Valley from the Wanaka area, and by 1972 the first three had reached Cameron Flat at the junction of the east and west branches of the river. A very slow build-up followed, with the occasional pair entering the beech forest margins (which is the Park boundary) about 1977, and reaching up the west branch to the vicinity of Cascade Hut by about 1979. On 18/12/81 a pair was recorded for the first time at Shovel Flat, about 4km beyond Aspiring Hut.

Starling: A cheeky pair of Starlings were busily feeding a hungry and noisy brood in the roof of Aspiring Hut on 15/12/81, the first record for this vicinity.

PETER CHILD

Classified Summarised Notes

Members are reminded that the CSN year closes on 30 June and observations made up to that date should be sent to the Recorder as soon as possible for inclusion in the report for the 1981/82 year.

Please note that observations should be in the order of species as detailed in the Checklist and should follow the same format as the Notes for last year (refer to *Notornis* 29, Part 1, March 1982).

DOUG. BOOTH, Convener

Far North Anniversary Weekend Survey, 1982

A 25-strong team from Auckland, Whangarei and various points north gathered at Paua at the end of January for what is now regarded as the regular Anniversary Weekend Far North Survey. The Department of Lands and Survey kindly made 'Mother Jimmie's' available and by Friday evening the cottage was bustling with activity as carloads of migratory birdwatchers secured a sleeping place, pitched a tent in the paddock, produced a quick meal, greeted friends or immediately disappeared to a nearby harbour roost to renew acquaintance with the wader population. Well known human and avian individuals were greeted for yet another year, whilst new and strange arrivals caused frequent comparison of notes, references to data and confirmation by experts. We were fortunate in having Lola Broadhurst from West Australia with us as many of our unusual birds are regular inhabitants of her area and some rarities were quickly spotted.

The usual hot summer weather again prevailed and the odd wet boat trip or tidal immersion were easily borne. There was a slight change in emphasis for this year's activities. After several years' surveillance, the dunelakes were given a rest and the shoreline of Parengarenga Harbour was investigated, as preparation for a more detailed future survey. Sectors of the harbour were reached by foot, boat and four-wheel drive vehicle and about 120 km of shoreline was covered. Notes on access, habitat, wader feeding and roosts were recorded and produced a great amount of valuable data. Much of this will be utilised by the Wildlife Service. By the end of the survey about 11,000 birds of 40 species had been recorded.

On 31 January, beach patrols were made on Great Exhibition Bay (25 km) and 194 dead birds were collected. By courtesy of Star Mini Tours, beach patrollers were transported along 68 km of Ninety Mile Beach and a further 291 dead birds were noted. A wide range of species included significant numbers of Little Blue Penguins and Fluttering Shearwaters.

A follow-up of earlier sightings of Black-winged Petrels, which are frequently heard calling near Cape Maria van Dieman and seen in flight off Far North beaches, was made on 1 February. Many Black-winged Petrel carcasses were found on and near a rocky knoll to the north of Twilight Beach but there was no evidence of petrel burrows. This species is known to breed on the Three Kings Islands and most probably on

Motuopao Island, a short distance from Cape Maria van Dieman but there is no evidence of a mainland breeding site yet. Feral cats are observed on the sand dunes and are probably responsible for preying on the birds.

Much of the success of the weekend was due to the enthusiastic participants, especially those who travelled from Auckland, and our vital 'man-on-the-spot,' Vic Hensley.

MIKE KEARNS

Golden Plovers banded

The ecology and behaviour of Golden Plovers wintering in Hawaii are being studied by a group from Moorhead State University, Minnesota, U.S.A. To assist with this study birds are being colour-banded and during the past two years about 80% of marked birds have returned each autumn to reoccupy the same territories held previously. However, whether birds from our study population ever migrate farther south is unknown. Since this might be happening, observers are asked to check flocks for banded birds. Each bird banded wears a metal band on one leg and one or more colour bands on the other. Observers are asked to note which leg is colour-banded and the exact sequence of colours. Please send this information to: Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland 20811 U.S.A., and to Oscar W. Johnson, Department of Biology, Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota 56560 U.S.A.

OSCAR JOHNSON

Nest Record Scheme

There are now 14,703 Nest Record Cards covering 150 species. This year 58 members contributed 424 cards covering 60 species.

Fifty-seven colonial cards were received for the following ten species: Black Shag, Pied Shag, Little Shag, Black Swan, Pied Stilt, Southern Black-backed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Black-fronted Tern, Caspian Tern and White-fronted Tern.

Colin O'Donnell of Christchurch was the major contributor and completed 90 cards for 27 species. Paul Sagar (46 cards) and David Crouchley (23 cards) also made valuable contributions. The 47 cards received from Wildlife Officers working on Mangere Island, Chatham Islands, contained detailed information on the Chatham Island Warbler.

The Nest Record Scheme provides an ideal opportunity for individual members to contribute information to a permanent store of facts that are avail-

able at anytime to members and research workers. Cards of many species have been used by authors preparing for the forthcoming Reader's Digest Book of New Zealand Birds.

My sincere thanks to all contributors to the scheme and to those who have encouraged members to take part, and to my wife Ruth, whose assistance has been most valuable.

List of Contributors

L. Barea, D. J. Bettesworth, K. Billot, D. Buzan, B. Chudleigh, P. Cook, J. Coster, J. A. Cowie, M. Craven, T. Crocker, R. Crockett, D. Crouchley, J. B. Cunningham, L. J. Davies, M. L. Falconer, P. D. Gaze, R. Giblin, A. F. Gordon, D. Graham, A. Habraken, J. Hastie, M. Hastie, B. Heather, R. N. Holdaway, J. Innes, J. R. Jackson, P. Jenkins, B. Johnson, M. P. Kearns, M. Lane, T. G. Lovegrove, J. Lloyd, R. J. Lusk, N. B. MacKenzie, B. W. H. MacMillan, D. V. Merton, C. Miskelly, R. O. Morris, C. & H. O'Donnell, G. M. H. Peterson, M. H. & R. G. Powlesland, S. M. Reed, C. H. B. Robinson, P. M. Sagar, C. Saxby, B. Searle, L. Silcock, R. R. Sutton, N. Tanner, B. Taylor, G. Taylor, B. W. Thomas, K. V. Todd, P. W. & M. Twydale and K. Wright.

List of Species

Southern Blue Penguin (3), Southern Crested Grebe (4), New Zealand Dabchick (2), Grey-faced Petrel (1), Black Shag (3), Pied Shag (4), Little Shag (5), White-faced Heron (1), Mute Swan (1), Black Swan (9), Canada Goose (3), Paradise Duck (1), Mallard (12), Grey Duck (1), Grey Teal (1), Black Teal (1), Harrier (3), N.Z. Falcon (2), Pukeko (5), Australian Coot (6), Variable Oystercatcher (6), Spur-winged Plover (8), New Zealand Dotterel (11), Banded Dotterel (12), Black-fronted Dotterel (7), Pied Stilt (12), Southern Black-backed Gull (26), Black-billed Gull (16), Black-fronted Tern (23), Caspian Tern (31), White-fronted Tern (2), New Zealand Pigeon (1), Rock Pigeon (1), Kea (4), Little Owl (1), Kingfisher (4), Skylark (3), Welcome Swallow (7), New Zealand Pipit (2), Hedge Sparrow (2), North Island Fernbird (2), Grey Warbler (6), Chatham Island Warbler (47), North Island Fantail (9), South Island Fantail (6), Song Thrush (9), Blackbird (20), Silveryeye (9), Bellbird (25), Tui (1), Yellowhammer (1), Cirl Bunting (1), Chaffinch (3), Greenfinch (5), Goldfinch (11), Redpoll (1), Starling (12), White-backed Magpie (2).

DAVID E. CROCKETT

Bird watching classes

This autumn several ornithology courses have been running in Auckland. At the University Centre for Continuing Education, Dick Sibson, assisted by Geoff Moon and Tim Lovegrove, has again taught bird studies, while Derek Russell and Michael Taylor have each taken series of evening institute classes. Interest has been high in all these groups, with field trips well supported, and from the 60 or so participants O.S.N.Z. will undoubtedly gain some keen fresh members.

MICHAEL TAYLOR

New release of Brown Teal in the Manawatu

Over the past few months a record number of rare Brown Teal have been released onto lagoons in the Manawatu.

During December, January and February, Ducks Unlimited released a total of 67 Brown Teal at Puke Puke Lagoon near Foxton, while the Wildlife Service released 49 Brown Teal at Kopatara Lagoon also near Foxton.

The release of Brown Teal is all part of Ducks Unlimited's operation 'Pateke' which aims to save the endangered and endemic Brown Teal from extinction by breeding birds in captivity and releasing them into suitable wild areas.

During the past breeding season Ducks Unlimited members reared nearly 80 Brown Teal in captivity and the Wildlife Service reared over 50 Brown Teal at the Mt. Bruce Native Bird Reserve.

With a total of 130 birds being reared in one season hopes are high that operation 'Pateke' will soon be able to reverse the decline of Brown Teal in the wild. Currently only about 1,000 Brown Teal survive in the wild and these are confined to two main areas — North Auckland and Great Barrier Island.

Brown Teal were once widespread throughout the Manawatu and Ducks Unlimited believes that with large scale releases the Brown Teal will eventually re-establish itself on many of the coastal lagoons in the Manawatu.

NEIL HAYES

Black-fronted Terns in Nelson

There have been recent records of Black-fronted Terns nesting at a small colony in Nelson. If anyone has further records of confirmed breeding in this region would they please send details to me c/o Zoology Department, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, so that I can collate all the present information.

G. S. DUMBELL

Muriwai Gannets to be protected

The Gannets which nest off Auckland's west coast on Oaia Island and close to shore atop a rock stack at Maori Bay have long been an attraction for local birders. Nesting has also been attempted on the mainland cliff and it is now proposed to erect a protective fence on the landward side to keep sightseers and dogs out of harm's way. This is part of the plans of the regional authority which controls Muriwai Domain and which is taking commendable heed of the opportunities to protect wildlife in preparing the statutory schemes for park management. The rock stack colony held over 50 young birds with accompanying adults in early February — a great sight.

MICHAEL TAYLOR

Kawhia Harbour summer census - February 27th, 1982

This year's summer census was completed in calm sunny conditions much to the relief of the personnel in the dinghies. Four boats were launched in different parts of the harbour and converged on the main high tide roost at Te Motu Island sandbank. A land party covered the Ocean Beach and North Head Lagoon thus giving a good coverage. Birds seen included — Bar-tailed Godwit (2700), South Island Pied Oystercatcher (2280), Variable Oystercatcher (7), Caspian Tern (110), Long-billed Curlew (1), Arctic Skua (1), Banded Dotterel (11), Pied Stilt (318) and Black Stilt (8).

A possible sighting of 117 N.Z. Dotterel on the Ocean Beach is still being checked out.

A complete absence of Eastern Knot and White-fronted Tern was noted. Census figures since 1976 show small numbers of Knot seen on three occasions and White-fronted Terns seen only twice.

Black Stilt numbers on Kawhia appear to be rising — Why do Black Stilts come to Kawhia so regularly?

BETTY SEDDON

Cook's Petrel in Hamilton

In early April an injured Cook's Petrel (*Pterodroma cooki*) was handed to Waikato member, Folkert Nieuwland, at his veterinary clinic in Hamilton.

This species breeds on Little and Great Barrier Islands and is known to migrate northwards to the South American coast, Mexico and California. This bird was a little off course in the middle of the Waikato. It later died.

BETTY SEDDON

Card Committee Report

Janet Marshall's painting of the Welcome Swallow and Kingfisher were in great demand this year, with the Swallow cards completely selling out and only very few of the Kingfishers now remain in stock. On behalf of the Society I extend to her our grateful thanks.

Over 2000 orders were processed, 8000 packs were sold and almost \$4400 profit realised for the Society. I must thank Dr Elizabeth Bowie for handling the bulk of the distribution during my absence overseas.

The 1982 cards featuring the Antipodes Island Parakeets — "unicolor" and "novaezelandiae" (5 cards of each design per pack) have been printed and paid for already. As we have so few different designs of cards from previous years left in stock, we are now going to reprint some of the ever popular mixed packs. Kingfisher, Swallow and Fantail have been given a facelift and we will be using some new paintings of Yellowhead, Yellow-breasted Tomtit and Rifleman. You will be interested to know that these three paintings are also to be incorporated in a large poster of bush birds all painted by Janet Marshall. Again all of the cards will not have any printing inside so that they can be used for any occasion.

Unfortunately we must also contend with rising printing and postal charges, necessitating an increase to \$2.25 per pack plus the additional levy of 75 cents per order to cover postage and handling costs.

The Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and our Wellington members are thanked for the addressing and distribution of the brochures and I must add that if Marshall Prints had not paid the full cost of postage for our brochures, we would not have reaped any profit from the year's trading. I thank them for their generosity and also express my appreciation to all those Auckland members who have been so helpful during the year.

R. N. THOMAS

Beach Patrols 1981 - Interim Report

During 1981, 3090 km of coast were covered by 181 OSNZ members and their friends on a total of 521 patrols. 5249 dead seabirds were found. A wreck of 265 Kerguelen and 317 Blue Petrels occurred mainly in September and October along the North Island west coast.

RALPH POWLESLAND

News from the A.G.M.

The annual meeting was held in the Royal Society Rooms in Wellington on 21-22 May. An enthusiastic attendance by members of all ages and from most regions was evidence of the healthy state of the Society.

Councillors met on the Friday and worked their way through an agenda with more than 40 items. An important and exciting topic was the allocation of funds from the Projects Assistance account to assist two ornithological oceanic voyages. The S.R.V. "Totorore" sails in October for southern Chile and the sloop "Derwent" with its crew of local ornithologists left in early May for islands in the S.W. Pacific. Further funds are being reserved to subsidise travel for Junior Members to the study course at Farewell Spit in January. A proposal for a national wader census was discussed and although a worthy venture many logistical problems were envisaged. Comments from Regional Representatives will be sought before proceeding further. The national study on Black-fronted Terns has made good progress over the last year under the guidance of Barrie Heather and Paul Sagar and it is now suggested that work begin on Whiteheads, Brown Creeper and Yellowheads. Ideas on how this could best be organised will be welcomed by Peter Gaze.

Two new Regional Representatives were appointed; Dr Michael Taylor, Auckland, and Miss Kathleen Todd, Hawkes Bay.

While the Regional Representatives were meeting on Saturday morning several carloads visited the southern coastline. Few will have ornithological memories of this trip as torrential rain reinforced prejudices about Wellington weather. However, hospitality typical of the region turned on hot showers and a feed before the afternoon's programme.

The three speakers dealt with a diversity of topics, all interesting and relevant. Dr Peter Bull outlined his analysis of cards in the Society's Nest Record Scheme, particularly those introduced passerines. This work emphasised the valuable data within the Scheme but also pointed to the need for more work and the importance of keeping accurate records. Tony Beauchamp delivered an impressive account of his study of that controversial species, the weka, on Kapiti Island. Sir Charles Fleming provided a fascinating summary of his research into the history of the Lodge paintings of New Zealand birds. This work will culminate in their eventual publication in the near future.

The Annual General Meeting resulted

in the re-election of Dr Ben Bell and Brian Bell to Council and the election of Jenny Hawkins. The President, R. B. Sibson presented the Junior Member Award to Maria Hansby from Auckland and Donald Bates from Marlborough. The prestigious Falla Memorial Award was presented to Archie Blackburn, a long-serving and highly regarded member of the Society. Judging by the prolonged acclamation, election results and the awards were well received by those present.

On Sunday twenty members who could afford the time went on a relaxed field trip to the west coast estuaries. The tour began with morning tea provided by Roy Slack at Pauatahanui, progressed to Waimeha Lagoon and those obliging Dabchicks and culminated at the Felmings for afternoon tea.

PETER GAZE

Field trip to the Rangitoto Ranges - 20th March 1982

Situated south-east of Otorohanga in the Waikato-King Country, this range of hills proved to be full of interest for a group of Waikato O.S.N.Z. members.

As most of the access is through private property, and much of the bush is privately owned, we were grateful to Mr Arthur Cowan for leading the party and for arranging the 4WD vehicles to take us there. This made it possible to see more of the country and to reach the top of the range at about 3000 feet.

Although March is a quiet time in the bush, a good variety of birds were seen, these included many Tomtit, Grey Warbler, Fantail, Tui, Bellbird and Pigeon. Rifleman, Robin and Whitehead were also seen.

One pair of Whitehead were feeding three young.

We plan a return visit in early October to search for more Whitehead and to check very reliable Kokako sightings in the area.

BETTY SEDDON

S.W. Pacific Recording Scheme

The initial response to the announcement of the S.W. Pacific Recording Scheme in September 1981 has been good but it is still too early to assess the long-term level of input. Contributions have been received from Fiji, Samoa, Nauru and Norfolk Islands. Members with records from this area are urged to support the Scheme.

JIM MOORE

Interesting summer records from South Auckland

At Karaka — a Grey Plover found by Ian Southey on 14/3 still present on 28/3; 3 Mongolian Dotterels recorded on summer census seen again by Bruce Keeley on 14/4 and a Large Sand Dotterel seen fleetingly during summer by several members; 1 Pectoral Sandpiper seen similarly with Sharp-tails; a Grey-tailed Tattler which had wintered stayed on for the summer and 1 Sanderling was found by Robin Child on 22/5.

In the Firth of Thames the White-winged Black Tern which was first seen on 27/11/80 was joined by another on 1/2/82. The latter did not stay. The Marsh Sandpiper found on 7/5/80 was still present on 18/4/82. A Royal Albatross came ashore at Whakatiwai and was taking food on 28/2 but although taken to Auckland Zoo did not survive. Anthea Goodwin found a flock of 31 N.Z. Dotterels at Mataitai on 19/3/82, the largest flock seen in South Auckland Region since I counted 48 at Port Waikato on 28/6/72. At least one Pectoral Sandpiper summered in the Firth. Ron Cometti found a Black Stilt at Puhinui, Manukau Harbour, in the first week of May, probably the same bird seen earlier a little further south around Waimahia Inlet.

At Puni, on the Waikato River near Pukekohe, 9 Grass Whistling Ducks were identified by David Lawrie on 7/4 after they had been reported by quarry workers there.

At Rangiriri on 2/5 a total of 38 Cattle Egrets were seen in flocks of 27, 7 and 4; 2 Cattle Egrets were near Port Waikato on 9/5.

BETH BROWN

Labour Weekend Residential Wader Course, 23-25 October 1982

A combined Auckland/South Auckland Wader Study Course will be based at Camp Morley, between Waiiau Pa and Clark's Beach, southern Manukau Harbour. Meals and comfortable accommodation will be supplied at reasonable cost. Bring sleeping bag, pillow case and personal effects. Gumboots recommended. Morning discussions will be followed by afternoon field work including identification, stalking, counting, note-taking, habitat preferences and affinities between species.

Names and \$10 booking fee by 30 September please to: Beth Brown, 39 Red Hill Road, Papakura, ph. 298 8157.

Members from other Regions welcome.

Band and Tag

When the Banding Office was moved to Borthwick House early in 1981 it was supposed to be on a long term basis. Not surprisingly it did not work out that way. Early in April we got the message that another shift was in the air and within a fortnight we found ourselves in new premises. This time in the National Mutual Building, 153 Featherston Street, where we occupy part of the seventh floor. Fortunately we had quite a lot of help with packing and unpacking so disruptions were kept to a minimum. That does not take away the fact that shifting our office with its tonnes of materials, files, computer cards, desks, etc., is a massive task. To think that we have been told that we will be here for about three months only . . . ! Anyway, we are more or less settled again and as far as we are concerned, we won't be grumpy if we are still here in a year or two.

By the way, our phone number is now 738300 (Education Department); extensions 733 and 734.

A major part of the Banding Manual is now printed and hopefully will have reached you by the time this newsletter is published. Other parts will be added when they become available.

The Bird Atlas is another step closer to its emergence. The process of punching and editing is finished and now we are correcting faulty entries. A job that will keep us busy for some time.

Our programme is now testing the Banding Computer System and if all goes well we hope to reactivate the system towards the end of this year. Once that far, we will have to go through all the data to check and correct faulty entries. A big task.

Species Permits

Unfortunately the entry for all passerines on Moturoa Island in the March issue read Moturoa Island (Bay of Plenty). This of course should have been Bay of Islands.

Since the last issue several new permits have been granted. One for Australasian Gannets on Waiheke and Muriwai (Auckland), one for all wader species in the Bay of Plenty estuaries and the Rotorua Lake district and a general permit for Petrel species in New Zealand. Also for Pycroft's Petrels on Stephensons Island, Aorangi, Hen and Chicken Islands and Mercury Island.

Back to our permit summary and this time we will conclude the list of current permits with those issued for the southern part of the South Island.

Caspian Tern (Invercargill Estuary).

South Island Fernbird (Otatara, Invercargill). Kakapo, Stewart Island Kiwi (Stewart Island, Wildlife permit). All native and introduced passerines (Canterbury). White-flipped Blue Penguin (Banks Peninsula, Christchurch). Fiordland Crested Penguin (Jackson Head, South Westland). Erect-crested and Snares Crested Penguins (Christchurch area). White-flipped Blue Penguin (Motuinua Island, Banks Peninsula). Weka (Lake Haupiri area, Westland). Yellow-eyed Penguin (Otago Peninsula). Fairy Prion, White-faced Storm Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, White-flipped Blue Penguin, Black-backed Gull (Motunau Island). All wader species (Canterbury). Rook (Banks Peninsula). S.I. Fernbird (Lakes Waihola and Waipori areas). Yellow-breasted Tits, introduced and native passerines (Banks Peninsula). Kea, Western Weka (Murchison Mountains). Wrybill (Rakaia River). Stewart Island Robin (Stewart Island). S.I. Fernbird (Gorge Road area, Invercargill). Passerines, Gulls, Harriers (Southland). All bird species (Big Island). Takahe, S.I. Kiwi (Murchison Mountains, Wildlife permit). Weka (Milnthorpe, Golden Bay). Grey Partridge (North Canterbury). Black-backed Gull (Ashley River). Chukor (Taieri Ridge). Mallard, Grey Duck (Taieri Plains). Black Stilt, Pied Stilt, Banded Dotterel, Caspian Tern (MacKenzie Country). All species (Canterbury). Banded Dotterel, Wrybill, Oystercatcher, Black-backed Gull, Fairy Prion, White-faced Storm Petrel, Sooty Shearwater (Motunau Island and Canterbury rivers). Pukeko (Christchurch area). Black-billed Gull (Southern Lakes District). Rifleman, Brown Creeper, Grey Warbler, Fantail, Yellow-breasted Tit, Silvereye, Bellbird (Craigieburn State Forest, Rangiora Borough, Ashley State Forest, Christchurch). Black-billed Gull, Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, Spur-winged Plover, Banded Dotterel, Black-fronted Tern (Lake Te Anau and Whitestone River).

There are some general permits issued, mainly for Wildlife Service projects, and some permits for special research on outlying islands and the Antarctic. These are —

All bird species as directed by the Wildlife Service (Campbell Island). Chatham Island Taiko, White-faced Storm Petrel, Grey-backed Storm Petrel, Broad-billed Prion (Chatham Islands). All petrel species at sea. Chatham Island Warbler (Mangere and South East Island, The Chathams). Brown Teal (Whole country). Fairy Prion and all petrels from which blood samples are taken for biochemical analyses (Whole country). All Petrel and Storm Petrel species (New Zealand offshore islands).

All Kiwi species (Whole country). Black-winged Petrel (New Zealand and offshore islands). Black Robin, Shore Plover, Chatham Island Oystercatcher, White-fronted Tern (Chatham Islands). Yellow-eyed Penguin (Codfish Island). Yellow-crowned Parakeet (Whole country). Orange-fronted Parakeet (South Islands). Auckland Island Teal (Auckland Islands). Adelie Penguin, Antarctic Skua (Ross Dependency).

This concludes our summary of existing permits. We will keep you informed on all new permits issued though.

Storm on Little Barrier

When cyclone "Bernie" hit Little Barrier on 9 April, 34 Welcome Swallows clustered on the Ranger's rotary clothesline for a time. They took to the ground, seeming to cling to the grass, as conditions worsened. Storm force winds from the south uprooted or broke many large kanukas up to 18m in height and next day a probable Wandering Albatross was seen close inshore. The island's lone poplar was uprooted, as were most of the kanukas around the grave of Robert Hunter-Blair, Little Barrier's first caretaker. Remarkably, the white-painted cross was untouched and only one paling was knocked from the neat picket fence which surrounds the grave.

BETH BROWN

Bird Mapping Scheme

All the data collected during 1977-79 have now been punched and fed into the master computer file where they are merged with the earlier data used for the Provisional Atlas. The next stage is to correct a few errors found in the Provisional Atlas and also any other errors introduced during the coding and punching of the new data. It had been hoped to produce a summarised file of all these data in time for the A.G.M. but the sudden and urgent moving of the Banding Office to new headquarters made this impossible.

Chris Robertson informed the Council that the computer can now produce correctly shaped maps directly onto microfiche. It appears that this technique may enable production of an atlas at a reasonable cost and with the advantage of additional detailed information being available on accompanying microfiche.

The Atlas Committee expects to put a firm proposal to Council in November.

P. C. BULL

Library Report

It has been a busy year with 143 items going out to members and 49 on inter-loan.

The journal circulation scheme continues to operate satisfactorily and the original one dollar per journal charge is still covering costs to date, plus replacement of one missing item.

We have been given 40 books this year, including a very valuable collection from Sylvia Reed's estate. These will be listed in new additions to the catalogue, and should be available in July.

One issue of Emu has been replaced and some xeroxed copies of articles from missing journals have been added to the collection.

Patricia Fooks has very kindly offered to help with the backload of cataloguing and re-organising of material. Many thanks to Mr Thwaites and his staff for the unfailing help at the Auckland Museum and Institute Library.

Anyone wishing to join the journal circulation scheme can find details in *OSNZ news* No. 16, or send an SAE for a copy. You may borrow sample copies before making your final decision.

A list of additions to the library catalogue will also be available shortly, including gifts from the following — Auckland Museum and Institute, H. E. Axell, E. G. Turbott, H. L. Secker, J. E. Squire, C. R. Veitch and estate Sylvia Reed.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

Letters

Sir,

South Island Kokako and Related Matters

It was most heartening to read of the Kokako in the Teal Valley near Lake Wanaka, McBride K. (1981) "Sighting of South Island Kokako (*Calleas cinerea cinerea*) in Mount Aspiring National Park," *Notornis* 28 (4) 255-258, but disappointing to consider the slow follow-up by the Society (O.S.N.Z.). Really the story begins on 15 February 1958, when Chapman Ann (1959) "Kokako Reported from Wilkin Valley Lake Wanaka," *Notornis* V111/6 177-178. She carefully described the location — "This incident occurred in the first patch of bush, which was mixed beech forest on the Wanaka side of the valley, and on the track which follows the river."

Perhaps this location's grid reference on the map, N.Z.M.S. 18 Haast Sheet 19, was S.24-9765 whereas that of McBride can be rewritten S.25-968657, estimated

to an extra decimal place. These two localities are five kilometer (5 Km) apart.

The Wilkin Valley has been well tracked since before the last war, and the tributaries known from 1945. There had been no previous published reports of the Kokako in the Wilkin Valley; it continued to have a heavy traffic of shepherds, trampers and mountaineers, many aware of the report but no sightings were made. It seems probable Chapman's Kokako was a bird of the year dispersing from its natal area, not the Wilkin Valley. The hillsides downstream of the Wilkin Valley were and are of second growth and indeed are also upstream of the Teal Valley. It would have warranted a search in 1959, though probably Mt. Albert shepherds were already aware of Kokako there.

Similarly I have seen robins (*Petroica australis*), 13 kilometers from their nearest and probable origin. Twice in the last 26 years I have seen a single robin in the Hawdon Valley, Grid Square 5262. Their nearest origin would have been in the west branch of the Otehake River, $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometer upstream of the Fork G.S. 5163. The terrain between is badly damaged and eroded forest and tussock grassland up the East Otehake River until over Walker Pass, 4 kilometer and then more suitable forest in the Hawdon Valley.

Clout M. N. and Hay J. R. (1981) South Island Kokako (*Calleas cinerea cinerea*) in Nothofagus Forest, *Notornis* 28 (4) 256-259 are correct most historical and recent reports of the Kokako are from beech forest.

For instance three "Crow Valley's" are shown on the N.Z.M.S. 18 series of maps.

1. Crow River, Karamea, G.S. 5982
2. Crow River, Arthurs Pass, G.S. 5062
3. Crow Creek, Haast, G.S. 3050

Or during the last 30 years I have received 4 reports, three direct and good, and the fourth indirectly.

1. On the Maungatapu on the Pelorus side of Saddle Hill G.S. 6782, the indirect report
2. About Seddonville, most recently north of the Mokihinui Mouth, G.S. 5480
3. Twelve Mile Bluff, Greymouth, and a poorer sighting in Thirteen Mile Creek, G.S. 4770
4. Beside the road between Bruce Bay and the Mahitahi River, G.S. 3354.

These and similar reports are most encouraging in the search for rare and possibly extinct forest birds, and specific-

ally the Kokako. Negative reports are worth little for the O.S.N.Z. seems to lack good bushmen, able to identify forest birds, usually initially by sound. A study of Bull P. C., Case P. D., and Robertson C. J. R. (1978) "Bird Distribution in New Zealand: A Provisional Atlas 1967-1976" O.S.N.Z. quickly shows the failure of leading members when searching readily accessible Grid Squares near centres of population, or beside well-used highways to notice conspicuous birds as the Weka (*Gallirallus* sp.), Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*), Kea (*Nestor notabilis*), and Robin; or where abundant the Bush Canary (*Mohoua ochrocephala*). Of the possibly extinct forest birds only three would seem difficult to distinguish:— The orange crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus malherbi*), the bush wren (*Xenicus longipes*) and the New Zealand thrush (*Turnagra capensis*).

The proposal of Heather B. D. (1981) "Rare Birds Committee," *OSNZ news*, supplement to *Notornis* 28 (4) 3-4, could result in correct reports not being published and checked. Weak colonies of these rare birds could become extinct as the Teal Valley Kokakos because of the slow follow-up on the initial find.

For rare birds any report is interesting. The least the committee may do is to delay publication, but also it may well prevent publication.

J. R. JACKSON

Sir,

Opinions expressed in the latter part of Mr Jackson's letter call for a reply on behalf of the Rare Birds Committee.

The "proposal of Heather B.D." referred to is a summary of what is now accepted Society policy, from which I quote:

"The Regional Recorder . . . will . . . encourage accurate and detailed recording and prompt reporting of unusual birds, arrange immediate aid if necessary, and see that as many people see and comment on the bird as is reasonable."

"The R.B.C. hopes to be regarded as a sympathetic and helpful body and to conduct its affairs with a minimum of formality. It will . . . inform the observer of its decision, discuss it constructively, and advise on the report's publication. . . . Inform the . . . Editor of *Notornis* of all records worthy of publication. Send copies of reports . . . to the Organiser of the Recording Scheme . . ."

"The R.B.C. Secretary . . . will . . . acknowledge reports, communicate with observers as necessary, keep them informed of progress, and take all possible

steps to minimise delay in the Committee reaching a decision."

I hope this is sufficient to belie the insinuation that the R.B.C. is in any way obstructive and to demonstrate that the allegations that its activities could result in slow follow-up, reports not being checked, and publication being prevented are unfounded. In fact, the Committee's policy is demonstrably to encourage and facilitate accurate recording and dissemination of knowledge of rare birds (except possibly that which is not in the best interests of the birds themselves). The inevitable delay of reaching a decision on a record cannot affect what takes place in the Regions and in the field following an interesting sighting.

J. E. SQUIRE, Secretary, Rare Birds Committee

Sir,

Although Dick Jackson seems to have some valuable comments and reports about South Island Kokako and his comment about OSNZ's lacking good bushmen may be true, I am rather alarmed at the meaning he seems to have taken from my explanation in *OSNZ news* of last December of the revised ways of dealing with rare and unusual birds. Please read again what I said about the Rare Birds Committee, and compare that with the comments in Dick's last two paragraphs. I cannot for the life of me see how he has taken from what I said the notion that the RBC can lead to correct reports being delayed or prevented from publication or, even worse, that the RBC could cause a slow follow-up of reports. These points are just not true, and I am worried lest other members have reacted in a similar way.

Dick seem to think that a report of a rare bird is not followed up by others until the report has been *published*. Things just don't work that way, and if they did, delays would indeed become fantastic. One of the new Committee's aims is, by having a two-tier system of reporting, to encourage members to get immediate local help and to correspond informally with Committee members when they encounter a bird they do not know or that they know is rare in NZ, or if they hear of a fresh report from a non-member. So many reports have to be set aside not just because they are one-person sightings but mainly because no one else has been told until weeks, months, even years later. The case of Mr McBride and the Teal Valley Kokakos is a good example of a splendid report that could not be followed up because no one knowledgeable was told. He saw and heard his birds in 1964-67, and yet no OSNZ member was told until

Clout and Hay were told in, presumably, 1980. Meanwhile, Peter Child, hearing about it indirectly in 1970, immediately began a series of thorough searches, but to no avail.

The moral, as always when you see something difficult, is to get help immediately. Most birds return to a place repeatedly for a few days at least.

Dick is right to say "For rare birds any report is interesting," but I don't agree that *any* report is worth publishing. Follow-up is vital, and it must be rapid, using the resources of local membership in regions lucky enough to be well and keenly organised, or, for remote forest areas, perhaps calling on the resources of the Wildlife Service. But it serves no purpose to blame OSNZ for a slow follow-up when a sighting has not been reported.

B. D. HEATHER

South Pacific Expedition

The sailing research vessel 'Totorore' is being prepared for an ornithological expedition across the southern Pacific close to the Antarctic Convergence, and to spend a year making a survey of the avifauna of the little known windward islands of the Chilean Archipelago as far as Cape Horn. She is due to sail from New Zealand in mid October of this year.

On completion of the work in Chile, S.R.V. 'Totorore' will continue her circumnavigation in the Subantarctic, making a study of birds on many of the less accessible islands en route. Suggestions, advice, or assistance will be welcomed, and the expedition still needs some experienced seabird observers for parts of the voyage. Anybody interested should contact the leader of the expedition, Gerry Clark, at Homelands Organic Orchard, Kemp Road, Kerikeri, who will be pleased to send a prospectus and any other information which may be requested.

Banding Mail Bag

Just today we received a very interesting recovery via the New Zealand Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. As a matter of interest we give you some parts of the letter from a Dutch Parish Priest in Wendu (near Merauke), West Irian.

"Dear Friend,

I think we have a nice message for you!

A small bird was captured here by a young fellow Alexander Asoy Mahuse and he found a ring on his ankle: C-22521 Dom. Museum, New Zealand. The bird was caught 20 kilometer from

Merauke, the capital of this area on 4 April 1982.

By the Marind people, living here along the South coast of Irian Jaya, this little bird is named: 'Tebatub.' These birds are coming here after the season of heavy rains at the beginning of the dry season (March-April) and they stay here until August-September.

The people here are very happy with this guest from far away!

Greetings from here.

Signed: A. Vriens, MSC,
R.C. Parish Priest, Wendu."

Unfortunately the letter did not say whether the bird was killed or not, but the band was taken off and returned to this office.

The bird, a Knot, was banded as an adult of unknown age on 8 June 1980 at Taramaire, Firth of Thames, by Dick Veitch and recovered at Wendu (Lat. 8°47'S Lon. 140°60'E) on 4 April 1982 roughly 5000 kilometers from the Banding Site.

Gannets are still our most frequent, banded Trans-tasman travellers.

M-39444 banded on 31 January 1982 as a juvenile of unknown age on White Island, Bay of Plenty, was found dead on Aireys Beach, 100 kilometers west of Melbourne, Victoria (Lat. 38°20', Long. 144°00'), on 14 March 1982.

M-39460 banded on 31 January 1982 as a juvenile on the same colony was found dead on 11 April 1982 on the beach near Lake Tabouri, South of Ulladulla, New South Wales (Lat. 35°20', Long. 150°20').

A Giant Petrel of respectable age was reported dead. Originally banded 0-1780 as a breeding adult of unknown age on 19 October 1963 on Campbell Island, it was rebanded 0-12284 on the same island on 14 September 1968. The bird was found dead near Waipapu lighthouse (Southland) on the beach on 28 March 1982. Actual age at least 21 years.

L-10846, Antarctic Skua banded 18 December 1966 as an adult of unknown sex on Cape Hallett, Antarctica was found breeding on Possession Island, Antarctica, on 9 January 1982, over sixteen years old.

RODERICK O. COSSEE