



OSNZ news

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.

No. 27

June, 1983

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

Eastern Bay of Plenty coastal survey

From 18-20 January, I surveyed estuaries and beaches from Ohiwa east to Cape Runaway in the Bay of Plenty. Near Opotiki, 40 dead seabirds were recovered from 11 km of sandy flat beach. These included 6 Grey-faced Petrels and 1 White-faced Storm Petrel. At the eastern end of the beach is the Waiau Estuary and birds seen at this small rivermouth included 1 Golden Plover, 6 N.Z. Dotterels, 1 SIPO and 8 VOC. However, the biggest surprise was 5 adult Black-billed Gulls which were herding 9 fully-fledged chicks to the river. This is the first coastal breeding area of this species that I know in the Bay of Plenty.

East of Waiau, the beaches and rivers are mainly shingle and beach patrolling was less successful. The Motu Rivermouth has breeding colonies of White-fronted Terns and Red-billed Gulls. No migrant waders were seen along this coast. However, large numbers of Buller's Shearwaters and Fluttering Shearwaters, with the occasional Short-tailed and Flesh-footed Shearwaters were observed flying north-east along the coast.

Whangaparaoa Beach proved the 'find' of the survey, the highlight being the discovery of 2 pairs of breeding N.Z. Dotterels. This greatly extends the known range of the species in the Bay of Plenty. A patrol of the 2.7 km sandy flat beach yielded 44 birds, including yet another Wilson's Storm Petrel, and 1 probable immature Long-tailed Skua. Fourteen species were recovered in total.

In general, beach patrolling has been unproductive in the Bay of Plenty this spring and summer, probably due to the strong offshore winds. Regular patrolling by Ron Bourne at Waiotahi/Ohiwa has brought rewards. A Blue Petrel and a Gannet, banded in January 1966 at White Island, are two of the birds he has recovered.

GRAEME TAYLOR

North-west Australia wader expedition

Readers will remember the request I placed in *OSNZ news* 24, for people to report sightings of colour-dyed waders to the Australasian Wader Studies group or to CSIRO in Canberra, Australia. These birds were banded on the A.W.-S.G. North-west Australia Wader Study Expedition, between 17 August and 10 September 1982. The dye on the underparts will have faded by now but may still be conspicuous on the birds' underwing coverts.

As a result of the expedition valuable count data were collected on wader arrival between Broome and Port Hedland, Western Australia. The expedition arrived only three days before the first major influx of migrant waders from the north. From an initial overwintering population of about 40,000 birds, numbers had increased to nearly 300,000 by the end of the expedition in mid-September. A short trip in November yielded a total of 564,000 birds on this stretch of coast. Of the species counted, Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers, Large Sand Plovers, Great Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits made up the largest numbers. As well, there were significant numbers of Grey-tailed Tattler,

Greenshank, Oriental Plover and Red Knot.

Cannon-netting and mist-netting in August/September resulted in 3,674 waders being caught, banded and colour-dyed. Twenty-two species were involved, including Red-necked Stint (996), Curlew Sandpiper (863), Large Sand Plover (582), Great Knot (429), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (165), Red-capped Plover (145) and Terek Sandpiper (98). Lesser numbers of birds caught included Red Knot, Grey-tailed Tattler, Oriental and Mongolian Plovers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Broad-billed Sandpipers.

Of the birds colour-dyed, 17 were resighted away from the Broome-Port Hedland area: 2 unexpectedly further north on Adele Island; a bird originally caught in Tasmania, retrapped in the north-west and subsequently resighted and actually caught in Tasmania again; and 14 in mid-southern Victoria. This demonstrates that waders which spend the southern summer in south-eastern Australia pass through the north-west of the continent. Another expedition is planned for October/November 1983 and New Zealand wader enthusiasts are very welcome to participate.

BRETT LANE, *Australasian Wader Studies Group Co-ordinator*

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the Annual General Meeting held in Christchurch on 21 May 1983 called for a Special General Meeting of the Society. This Special General Meeting will consider raising the 1984 subscription for ordinary membership to \$20.00, with *pro rata* increases for other forms of membership.

The Special General Meeting will be held in the School Room, Auckland Museum, at 7.45 p.m. on Tuesday 6 September 1983

R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

Obituary — A. T. Edgar

We regret to record the death of Mr Sandy Edgar on 6th June, and our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs Edgar and her family. An obituary will be published in the September issue of *Notornis*.

Far North Anniversary Weekend Survey, 1983

Brilliant weather and strong south-westerly winds brought migrant observers to the Far North for the annual Anniversary Weekend survey at the end of January.

The first communal roost was in the Herekino State Forest at Larmer's Road Bush Camp near Kaitia, where 53 eager ornithologists spent the night before dispersing to dune lakes, estuaries, beaches and other interesting habitats in the southern part of the Aupouri Peninsula for the first day's activities.

Moving northwards during the day, the observers converged upon Parengarenga Harbour where flocking took place at Mother Jimmie's Cottage for the following two nights. Local residents were interested to observe nesting arrangements when in addition to the cottage, 25 tents, one campervan, two vans and a station wagon were arranged around nearby paddocks. During the next two days the far-northern peninsula received attention.

Thirty-nine dune lakes were surveyed and the following notable data were obtained (1981 survey data for comparison): Black Swan 207 (122), Paradise Shelduck 1816 (2038), Dabchick 42 on 7 lakes (35 on 15 lakes) and Australian Little Grebe 25 on 4 lakes (2 on 1 lake).

A feature of this year was the incessant strong westerly wind and low water levels, with some dry lakes.

Spur-winged Plovers were observed on three new locations, making five known areas for this species on the Aupouri Peninsula.

All the northern beaches were patrolled, except Tom Bowling Bay and Waikuku, which were visited in early January. Ninety Mile, Twilight, Te Werahi, Pandora, Spirits, Gt. Exhibition Bay, Rarawa, Hendersons and Kowhai Beaches were visited and 137 km patrolled. In general, the westerly beaches produced most birds. A notable feature was the collection of 39 species from a total of 328 birds. One banded *Diomedea* sp. was found. The total also included 5 *Diomedea* spp., 2 *Procellaria*

spp. and 8 *Puffinus* spp. Also, one Fiordland Crested Penguin was found at Scott's Point, Ninety Mile Beach. However, the most exciting finds were 15 Long-tailed Skuas.

The survey was most successful and appreciation goes to all participants for working so hard, joining in so well (experienced birders and first-timers) and making this so much of a worthwhile ornithological achievement and a 'fun' weekend.

MIKE KEARNS, *Convenor*

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More Red-headed Flaxbirds

I read with much interest the reports about Red-headed Flaxbirds by Max Falconer and Ray Jackson (*OSNZ news* 23) and can confirm that when flowering flax is plentiful Bellbirds, Tuis, Silvereyes, House Sparrows and Starlings all feed on the nectar. In addition I can report that House Sparrows, Starlings and Silvereyes will feed on eucalypt flowers. It is very interesting that the normally non-nectivorous birds do occasionally partake of what they see other species feeding on. During the hard frosts this winter I observed House Sparrows try an unusual diet, as they attacked silverbeet, cabbage and cauliflower plants.

PERCY PRICHARD

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19th International Ornithological Congress

At the 18th International Ornithological Congress in Moscow the International Ornithological Committee accepted the invitation of the National Museum of Natural Sciences of Canada and of the Canadian ornithological societies to hold the 19th Congress in Canada. The Congress will be held in Ottawa, Canada, from 22-29 June 1986. It elected Prof. Klaus Immelmann (Federal Republic of Germany) as President of the Congress.

Details about the general and scientific programmes, field excursions and other activities during the Congress will be available later. Those interested in participating in the Congress are urged to inform the Secretary-General in order to obtain announcements and application forms. Correspondence should be addressed to: The Secretary-General, Dr Henri Ouellet, 19th IOC, National Museum of Natural Sciences, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8, Canada.

World inventory of museum material

World Inventory of Avian Skeletal Specimens, 1982 by D. Scott Wood, Richard L. Zusi and Marion Anne Jenkinson plus the *World Inventory of Avian Spirit Specimens, 1982* by the same authors have been published by the American Ornithologists' Union and the Oklahoma Biological Survey. The cost of each inventory is US\$25.00, including surface mail postage. For air mail postage, add US\$22.00 (Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Africa). Make cheque or money order payable to University of Oklahoma. Order from: Dr Gary D. Schnell, Oklahoma Biological Survey, Sutton Hall, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73019, U.S.A.

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Was it a Laughing Owl (or an 'owling larf) ?

In October 1982 a friend rang to say that he had some unusually large bird pellets collected from a farmer's haystack (in an open field). The farmer in question had actually seen the bird sitting on the stack one morning during his lambing round, but unfortunately for us all did not examine it with his binoculars. Barn Owl is ruled out.

We hot-footed it to the vicinity and sat out 3 dawn (0500-0800 hours) and 2 dusk (1800-2000 hours) vigils but with negative results. Nothing has been seen or found since.

The terrain, steep, rough, rocky gullies with remnants of manuka and beech behind developed farmland and tussocky hillsides, looked ideal habitat for the Laughing Owl. Our haystack owner may have been the last person to see this species alive!

P.S. 0530 hour vigils generate more 'owling than larfing.

PETER CHILD

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Falcon chased by magpies

On 23/3/83 we were tramping up the East Matukituki Valley when suddenly a female Falcon appeared out of the murk and swooped upon a small bird (probably a Pipit) about 50 m away. The Falcon then flew off across the valley with the prey in its talons and was pursued and attacked by 4 White-backed Magpies. The magpie is beginning to encroach into the forest margins of the Mt Aspiring National Park in this area.

PETER CHILD

Band and Tag

At the time of writing this contribution we are almost two months into the new banding year and there is a slight suspicion that not all the outstanding schedules for 1982/83 have been sent to us yet. Please make sure that we receive them post haste.

Also, some operators' banding permits have expired and we request that they forward their banding material to the Banding Office. Failure to do so may jeopardise future permits.

Some copies of the summary report on bird banding in New Zealand are still available. Free copies may be obtained by writing to the Banding Office, Wildlife Research Section, Department of Internal Affairs, Private Bag, Wellington, or pick up your copy from the Banding Office, 7th Floor, N.M.L. Building, 153 Featherston Street, Wellington.

With the shooting season well under way there may be some delays in processing orders and correspondence. Please understand that as per standing policy all the incoming waterfowl and non-game recoveries must be processed and/or acknowledged within one week of receipt in our office.

In April the Banding Computer System was transferred from the Ministry of Works' computer centre to the State Services Cumberland Centre. This move facilitates access to the files for updates and corrections. The updating of the scheme progresses well.

RODERICK O. COSSEE

Banding Mail Bag

During the period 1 February to 19 May 1983 a total of 568 banded birds were reported dead by the public. These recoveries involved: Canada Goose (203), Grey Duck and Mallard (107), Black Swan (63), Paradise Duck (42), Shoveler (20), Pheasant (5), Little Blue Penguin (10), Yellow-eyed Penguin (2), Black-browed Mollymawk (3), Wandering Albatross (1), Royal Albatross (1), Gannet (5), Scaup (1), Wrybill (1), N.Z. Dotterel (2), Variable Oystercatcher (2), Western Weka (2), Australasian Harrier (2), Black Shag (1), Spotted Shag (2), Pied Shag (1), Little Black Shag (1), White-fronted Tern (3), Caspian Tern (2), Black-backed Gull (42), Red-billed Gull (37), Black-billed Gull (3), Fairy Prion (1) and Starling (1).

The following species were recaptured or seen alive: Southern Blue Penguin (3), N.Z. Dotterel (2), Caspian Tern (1), Red-billed Gull (9), Black-backed Gull (1), Starling (1) and House Sparrow (1).

Some interesting recoveries included: 18-30352 (ex 18-01173) Canada Goose, banded as a male of unknown age while moulting on Lake Ellesmere on 9/1/58. The bird was recovered alive and healthy, moulting again on Lake Ellesmere on 8/1/83. This time at the ripe age of 25+ years.

20184 (no prefix) White-fronted Tern, banded as a juvenile of unknown sex on 20/1/57 at Wrybill Beach (between Miranda and Waitakaruru), Firth of Thames. The bird was found dead (about a week) on the beach at Omokoroa, Tauranga Harbour, on 11/3/83, 26+ years later.

46090 (no prefix) Royal Albatross, banded as a pullus at Campbell Island on 18/5/58, was found as a breeding female at the place of banding on 14/1/83.

BS 7051 Wandering Albatross, banded by the French on Ile de la Possession, Crozet Archipelago, Antarctica on 19/9/76. It was recovered dead at Muriwai Beach on 19/1/83.

M-32220 Black-browed Mollymawk, banded on 24/3/82 as a pullus on Campbell Island. A fisherman found the bird dead, floating in the sea about 40 km SW of Beachport, South Australia on 2/4/83.

The following recovery was reported to us by the Australian Bird Banding Scheme.

131-31372 Black Cormorant, banded at Lake Menindee, New South Wales, as a pullus on 9/7/76. This bird was found dead near Charleston (Westport) in September or October 1977, about 2850 km from 'home.'

RODERICK O. COSSEE

Library Report 1982/83

Once again there has been an increase in use by members, with 200 items being borrowed during the year. Interloan requests also were up, at 61. In addition 85 copies of journals and newsletters were circulated to members and a further 54 to Ecology Division, DSIR. I would like to thank those participating for the care and consideration they have shown.

Twenty-five new books and 21 other items were catalogued. We now receive *Australian Birds* from the NSW Field Ornithologists' Club.

Our immediate need is for more shelving to take advantage of the space that the Auckland Institute and Museum kindly makes available to us.

I would like to thank L. A. Hedley, D. J. Medway, M. J. Taylor and K. Wodzicki for their donations to the

library; Patricia Fooks for her help; and the staff of the Auckland Institute and Museum for their help and advice.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

Beach Patrol Scheme 1982 — interim report

During 1982 3296 km of coast were covered (3654 km in 1981) by 215 OSNZ members and their friends on a total of 588 patrols. 6965 dead seabirds were found (5627 in 1981). 1557 of the birds were Sooty Shearwaters, two thirds of which were found on Auckland West beaches in November and December.

The following are provisional totals for each region of coast patrolled.

Region	Km	Birds
Auckland West	1324	3500
Taranaki	119	284
Wellington West	241	493
Auckland East	720	1460
Bay of Plenty	302	278
East Coast N.I.	54	31
Wairarapa	16	7
Wellington South	29	26
North Coast S.I.	5	6
Westland	33	23
Canterbury North	117	124
Canterbury South	167	263
Otago	44	19
Southland	85	413
Outlying Islands (Chatham Is.)	40	38

The continued success of the Beach Patrol Scheme is due to the efforts of the many members and their friends who took part in patrols during 1982.

RALPH POWLESLAND, Convener

Checklist Committee Report 1983

The Committee's main aim in discussions so far has been to reach the point of a draft format acceptable to all Committee members — it is hoped that from this point members undertaking specific groups will be able to proceed effectively with their portions of a first draft. Perhaps the most important aspect requiring the Committee's decision was the style to be adopted in recording the now very extensive amount of material on New Zealand subfossil birds — two Committee members are, of course, directly concerned with the subfossil records, Mr R. J. Scarlett and Dr P. R. Millener. A format is now proposed which includes subfossil distribution records as far as possible in the main entry, rather than as an addendum.

The Committee is aware that care must be taken that the rapidly changing

state of our knowledge of subfossil distribution is clarified in the *Checklist*; however, with the extensive subfossil information now available, we believe that the new *Checklist* will be able to indicate, perhaps for the first time in any regional avian *Checklist*, changes in the periods following, and immediately preceding, human settlement.

Further discussion is still required on the practicality of including a full synonymy if the list is to be completed within a reasonable time, and it is hoped that the Committee can discuss this during the AGM period.

Comments which will be useful at a later stage in the project have been received from several OSNZ members, and are gratefully acknowledged. During the year Dr B. J. Gill was appointed to the Committee.

E. G. TURBOTT, Convener

Bird Mapping Scheme 1982/83

Work on the production of the Atlas has progressed satisfactorily even if more slowly than had been hoped. In October 1982 we received a quote of \$11,400 as the likely cost of producing 1000 copies of a 216-page atlas (the Provisional Atlas, with 253 pages, cost \$4700 in 1978). The smaller number of pages in the new version resulted from a suggestion to delete the habitat and seasonal maps, but this is now being reconsidered.

The advantages of the proposed new atlas over the old one are that the maps will be based on nearly twice as many observations, the map outlines will be free of distortion, and the atlas will contain an envelope of microfiches. The microfiches, when enlarged, will provide readers with all the details that at present are available only by consulting the main reference file held in Wellington. It will be possible for example, for a reader to find out how often a given species has been recorded in any particular square, and also the reference numbers of the cards held for that square.

Proof maps showing all the distribution records (those of the Provisional Atlas plus those received since) became available last December and are being checked for any obvious coding errors and the like (comfortingly few to date). To save time and expense, the proof maps have no outlines and the computer-induced distortions of shape have not been corrected. Current hopes are for the corrected maps (with adjusted outlines and revised text) to be ready by

mid-July, and the new Atlas published by Christmas 1983.

P. C. BULL, Convener, Atlas Committee

Nest Record Scheme

This year 73 members contributed 1086 cards covering 69 species, the largest ever total contributed in any year since the scheme was started. There are now 15,790 cards covering 150 species.

Two major contributions were received, from Brian Chudleigh of Kaitiaki with 155 cards of 16 species and from Derek Onley of Punakaiki with 139 cards of 9 species. Ralph Powlesland continues his regular and substantial contributions to the scheme, with 105 cards covering 6 species this year.

Other significant contributions were received from: C. Adams (16), M. Bellingham (18), D. Buzan (18), W. F. Cash (48), P. Child (13), P. Cook (11), D. Crouchley (47), A. Davis (18), M. Dennison (40), K. Drew (52), G. S. Dumbell (11), K. F. D. Hughey (27), M. Lane (17), A. MacDonald (11), D. V. Merton (24), A. Munn (54), F. Nieuland (12), J. Richards (20), P. Sagar (10), M. K. Tarburton (19), G. Taylor (17), M. J. Taylor (14), R. Thorpe (12), K. V. Todd (20), P. W. & M. Twydale (49), C. R. Veitch (15), and P. Wilson (12).

Eighty-two colonial cards were received covering the following 11 species: Gannet, Black Shag, Pied Shag, Little Black Shag, Little Shag, Spotted Shag, Black-backed Gull, Red-billed Gull, Black-billed Gull, Caspian Tern and White-fronted Tern.

The Nest Record Scheme provides an ideal opportunity for individual members to contribute valuable information to a permanent store of facts that are available at any time to members and research workers.

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: C. Adams, D. G. Baker, D. Bate, B. D. Bell, P. Bell, M. Bellingham, D. Bertram, D. Buzan, B. Cairns, W. F. Cash, P. Child, B. Chudleigh, P. Clerke, P. Cook, W. Cooper, A. Cox, M. Craven, D. Crouchley, A. Davis, M. Dennison, K. Drew, G. S. Dumbell, B. Elliott, P. Fitzsimmons, J. Flux, G. Foreman, P. Gandar, D. G. Geddes, A. R. Giblin, B. J. Gill, A. F. Gordon, G. P. Guest, R. Guest, A. L. Hodgson, R. N. Holdaway, K. F. D. Hughey, P. Jenkins, C. Jowett, E. Ken nedy, M. Lane, P. Langlands, A. Mc-

Donald, A. McDougall, D. V. Merton, G. Moon, R. Morris, A. Munn, N.Z. Wildlife Service, F. Nieuland, I. A. Nicholson, D. J. Onlyey, M. H. Powlesland, R. G. Powlesland, M. A. Ramshaw, J. Richards, P. M. Sagar, A. C. Saxby, B. Searle, J. E. Staniland, M. K. Tarburton, B. M. Taylor, G. Taylor, M. J. Taylor, R. Thorpe, K. V. Todd, M. Twydale, P. W. Twydale, C. R. Veitch, D. M. Walter, N. J. Ward, P. Wilson. *List of species contributed during 1982/83:* Yellow-eyed Penguin 4, Southern Crested Grebe 2, Dabchick 1, Gannet 2, Black Shag 1, Pied Shag 9, Little Black Shag 3, Little Shag 4, Spotted Shag 28, White-faced Heron 1, Canada Goose 1, Mute Swan 1, Black Swan 1, Grey Duck 2, Mallard 7, Black Teal 2, Harrier 1, N.Z. Falcon 1, Californian Quail 1, Banded Rail 1, Pukeko 17, Australian Coot 1, SIPO 12, VOC 17, Spur-winged Plover 15, Banded Dotterel 22, N.Z. Dotterel 7, Black-fronted Dotterel 13, N.Z. Shore Plover 22, Wrybill 23, Chatham Island Snipe 1, Pied Stilt 14, Black-backed Gull 29, Red-billed Gull 12, Black-billed Gull 3, Black-fronted Tern 7, Caspian Tern 78, Fairy Tern 1, White-fronted Tern 14, Rock Pigeon 1, Red-crowned Parakeet 1, Morepork 1, Kingfisher 4, Skylark 8, Welcome Swallow 27, South Island Fantail 8, North Island Fantail 7, South Island Tomtit 2, Chatham Island Tit 52, South Island Robin 95, Hedge Sparrow 8, Grey Warbler 11, Chatham Island Warbler 107, Song Thrush 146, Blackbird 84, Silvereye 18, Bellbird 2, Tui 1, Yellowhammer 1, Chaffinch 16, Greenfinch 17, Goldfinch 30, Redpoll 4, House Sparrow 10, Starling 30, Myna 2, Magpie 1.

DAVID E. CROCKETT, Convener

Moult Recording Scheme — Annual Report 1983

The moult recording scheme got off to a slow but encouraging start following its launching in 1981 (see OSNZ news 19). To date 520 cards have been received covering 22 species. However, this effort is the result of only four observers: B. D. Bell 388 cards, R. Guest 17 cards, D. S. Melville 23 cards and D. J. Onley 92 cards. Support from many more members is clearly desirable to add to our knowledge of this little-known aspect of New Zealand ornithology. We need to record data on birds in active moult and on birds *not in active moult*. There are many opportunities to collect relevant information from banding studies, beach patrols, museum collections, road casualties, etc.

Currently interim moult cards, based on a former British Trust for Ornithol-

ogy design, are in use: slightly different cards are supplied for passerines and non-passerines. As an alternative to using cards, a summary sheet is now also available for listing records of birds *not* in active moult, as well as those in moult.

A summary of cards received to date is given below; for each species the first number refers to cards of birds in active moult, while the number in brackets refers to records of birds not in moult: Broad-billed Prion 0(1), Magenta Petrel 0(3), Grey-backed Storm Petrel 0(10), White-faced Storm Petrel 0(5), Buff Weka 0(1), Southern Black-backed Gull 1(0), Chatham Island Pigeon 0(1), N.Z. Pipit 0(1), Hedge Sparrow 1(0), South Island Fernbird 1(0), Brown Creeper 1(0), Grey Warbler 10(0), North Island Fantail 0(1), South Island Fantail 3(0), Yellow-breasted Tit 4(0), Song Thrush 5(0), Blackbird 2(1), Silvereye 63(0), Bellbird 2(0), Chaffinch 5(0), Greenfinch 2(0), House Sparrow 288(107), Starling 1(0).

Overall 388 cards were received for birds in active moult, and 132 for birds not in moult. Only 45 cards (9%) were received for endemic species, the remaining 475 coming from introduced or self-introduced species — especially House Sparrow (395) and Silvereye (63). Clearly there is a need to get better representation from a wider range of species and especially to obtain data on endemic New Zealand species.

A detailed study of moult of the Weka on Kapiti Island has been completed by A. J. Beauchamp and his data will be deposited with the OSNZ scheme once his analyses are completed. Over 1979-83 he collected about 800 records from 260 individual birds — a major contribution to our knowledge of moult in New Zealand birds. Hopefully others who have accumulated moult data from population studies will similarly deposit records with the national recording scheme.

On a recent visit to Britain I discussed methods of moult recording and analysis with staff of the BTO and with Dr Derek Thomas of Swansea University, who is analysing much of the BTO data. Once recommendations for card format and analysis have been received from them, a standard NZ moult card will be adopted. In the meantime the interim cards will be quite satisfactory.

I shall be pleased to supply information and record cards to any member interested in contributing to the scheme. We all have opportunities to handle birds — dead or alive — and most of these are golden opportunities for recording moult data. Remember, information on both moulting and non-moulting

birds is needed, so most birds you handle should provide useful information. Write to me for more details or contact your RR.

BEN D. BELL, Zoology Department,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Private Bag, Wellington

Banding Liason Officer — Annual Report 1983

This year I have received no complaints either written or verbal, from members. A local member, who is a very active bander, did tell me that he has had very prompt attention when new bands were required and is very satisfied with the service provided.

I am assured that computerisation of the records is progressing and that it is hoped a retrieval system will be working in the coming year. This has been awaited for a long time and will be a major achievement when it does eventually.

L. GURR, *Banding Liason Officer*

Classified Summarised Notes — Guidelines for members

Would members sending in reports please use the format of the March issue of *Notornis*:

(a) Separate your notes into species, and then list them in the order of species as in the Checklist and previously published CSN.

(b) With each species, put the records in geographical sequence from north to south.

(c) Dates should be in sequence from July to June, e.g. 1/7, 1/12, 1/1, etc.

(d) Examples of notes: (1) Paua, 1 on 6/6, 2 on 8/6. (2) Ward, 1 on 7/9 stalking fish at edge of lagoon.

(e) Give your full initials — DLM and not DM (other people may have the initials DM).

(f) Type or clearly print your notes, especially dates and place names.

(g) The period for notes is 1 July to 30 June and should be in your RR's hands not later than 30 July. If notes are from previous years, include year with the date and put them first in the entry for each species.

(h) ALL material must go to your RR, who will prepare a regional summary. If you have visited another region, send your notes on the visit to that region's RR.

Remember that our observations build up over the years and provide valuable information for the future. Don't keep your observations to yourself. Send them in promptly, but make the job of compiling them easier; please follow these guidelines.

D. F. BOOTH, CSN Compiler

Fiordland bird notes

In November 1982 we had a very wet trip to Martins Bay, Hollyford Valley. Fiordland Crested Penguins were with large chicks in shore scrub at Long Reef; Fernbirds were seen near Long Reef, Martins Bay airstrip and McKenzie Lagoon. 4 Bitterns were seen at McKenzie Lagoon but we had no response to tapes of Spotless Crake and Banded Rail.

At Balloon Loop, Waiiau River, 600 Black-billed Gulls had eggs hatching and 48 small chicks on 14/11/82. Near Dunton Creek, lower Eglinton Valley, 316 Black-billed Gulls were incubating eggs on 12/12/82. Two pairs of Banded Dotterels and 3 pairs of Black-fronted Terns were incubating eggs close by. By 25/12/82 all these birds had been washed out by floodwaters. Paradise Shelducks, Canada Geese and Spur-winged Plovers all bred successfully in the lower Eglinton.

January was almost constantly wet and cold in Fiordland. However, during guided walks run by the Fiordland National Park the following species were seen: Robins at Back Valley, Shallow Bay, Lake Hauroko and Island Lake; Yellowheads on Routeburn Track, the upper Waiiau, Takahe Valley Track and Lake Hauroko.

On 4/2/83 Mottled Petrels were occupying burrows on the Front Islands and Shag Islands, Dusky Sound. One burrow contained a very young chick.

KIM & JANNY MORRISON

Long-tailed Cuckoo and Whitehead Survey

So far about 80 cards have been received, most of them from the Volcanic Plateau, but a few from other regions. We plan to continue this survey for another year to gather more information. The up-to-date distribution map for Whiteheads is significantly better than that in the Provisional Atlas, so information on abundance (encounters per unit time) and flocking are more valuable to us. To achieve this, persistent observations in one forest where Whiteheads occur are most useful.

The up-to-date distribution map for Long-tailed Cuckoos is strikingly similar to that for Whiteheads — with one region being a glaring exception. A challenge to Aucklanders and Northlanders! Do cuckoos breed in this Whitehead-free zone? If so, which species hatches their eggs?

Analysis of the Long-tailed Cuckoo mapping data reveals a trend of earlier arrival in the North Island than in the South Island, and more North Island

cards reported Long-tailed Cuckoos in March (very late in the cuckoo's stay) than did South Island cards. We hypothesise that these are very intelligent birds which appreciate the warm beaches, varied scenery and hearty hospitality so characteristic of the North Island; they probably go south when all the North Island Whiteheads have 'No Vacancy' signs up.

Whitehead/Long-tailed Cuckoo cards are available from John Innes, Loop Road, Lake Okareka, Rotorua; and Rob Guest, 20 Ailsa Street, Te Kuiti.

ROB GUEST & JOHN INNES

Black Stilts at Makarao

On 31/1/83 while searching the wetland areas at the head of Lake Wanaka we found one 'smudgy' Black Stilt roosting among 27 Pied Stilts. It had whitish cheeks, forehead, flanks and around the vent. The belly was speckled, otherwise the plumage was black. Mr Wattie Cameron, who farms the area, reported a pure Black Stilt there during November/December 1982.

This is the first record known to me in this vicinity since 1972.

PETER CHILD

Little Black Shags at Rotorua

Over the past summer Volcanic Plateau members studied the breeding biology of Little Black Shags at Sulphur Bay, Rotorua. In 1982 breeding on the island colony started in October and the first chicks hatched in November. By late January nearly 1000 nests were occupied but numbers declined thereafter until in 7/4/83 only 142 nests were in use. During the following week the birds apparently lost interest in breeding and only 2 occupied nests were found on 14/4/83.

Two important factors helped make this study possible. (1) The islet on which the birds bred was accessible, being only 100 m offshore and could be waded to. (2) All but 50 of the nests were on the ground, consequently weekly visits could be made to examine nest contents. During the breeding season about 650 chicks were banded (all metal band on the *left* leg). Previously only 20 Little Black Shags had been banded, 15 of these by Dave Sim in the Wairarapa.

The Sulphur Bay population peaked at about 2500 adults in January and began to decline in March. By mid-April about 1100 shags were present, and this included many brownish plumaged juveniles. However, by 9/5/83 only 34

Little Black Shags remained in Sulphur Bay. Where had the rest gone?

On 12/4/83, Pam Howlett reported 2 banded Little Black Shags at Panmure Basin, Auckland. These were confirmed by Michael Taylor and myself on 4/5/83 and in addition at least 4 of the 70 Little Black Shags roosting at Orakei Creek, Auckland, were banded. These birds had travelled 200 km from their breeding colony.

Many districts report flocks of Little Black Shags occurring during winter. Therefore it seems worthwhile for members to check any Little Black Shag flock for birds banded on the left leg. Birds from Rotorua may be dispersing throughout the North Island after breeding.

I thank all members whom I have contacted about Little Black Shags and who have replied generously with notes about the species in their region. If anyone has unpublished information about Little Black Shags, please could they send it to: Graeme Taylor, 43 Springfield Road, Rotorua. All information will be acknowledged.

The following information is needed particularly: (1) Breeding localities, number of pairs, nest sites, etc. (2) Seasonal movements, e.g. numbers, localities, dates. (3) Historical information about the species at Lake Rotorua and environs. When did breeding first occur? Numbers seen? Counts or records for the years 1977-79 would be most useful.

GRAEME TAYLOR

Birdwatching beneath the waves

While exploring a cave in the Leigh Marine Reserve a diver friend was surprised to meet a shag, the more so as his depth at the time was 13 m. The plumage was black and white but we were unable to ascertain the species. He has promised to report any further underwater sightings.

PAM HOWLETT

Hamilton Lake survey

Since April 1982 Waikato members have completed counts of birds on Hamilton Lake on 17/4/82, 19/9/82, 27/2/83 and 16/4/83. There are four shag roosts in gum and pine trees around the lake and counts of Black Shags have ranged from 14 to 47, the highest total being on 27/2/83. Smaller numbers of Little Black Shag (highest count of 5) and Little Shag (highest count of 17) occur. The highest count of Black Swans recorded to date is 70 on 27/2/83, and this included 4 cygnets.

Mallard numbers vary considerably, with up to 2600 being estimated. Very few Grey Ducks occur on the lake, except during the game shooting season when Shovelers are also seen occasionally. Pukekos nest around the lake and up to 15 have been counted. Australian Coots are well established with up to 77 being counted. Occasional visitors include Black-backed and Red-billed Gulls, Pied Stilts and White-faced Heron. We hope that regular surveys will enable us to build up a pattern of the movements of wildfowl in the area throughout the year.

MERCIA BARNES

Harrier versus rabbit

In mid-afternoon on 20/7/83 my brother and I were travelling along the Blind River Road, just north of Lake Grassmere, when we noticed a peculiar sight. Skidding to a halt we focussed our binoculars on a Harrier standing face to face with a rabbit. They were in the middle of a large, dry, thistle-speckled paddock and quite motionless, less than a metre apart. Soon the Harrier moved forward but the rabbit reacted rapidly, raising itself upon its hind legs and like a boxer, defending itself with rotating forepaws. After a second or two both adversaries became motionless again. End of Round 1.

Round 2 continued as a staring match, both completely motionless. Unfortunately after about a minute the Harrier suddenly took off, possibly disturbed by our presence. Meanwhile the rabbit withdrew under a thistle bush.

Lake Whakamaru Camp

Twenty-nine members from South Auckland, Auckland, Waikato and Volcanic Plateau regions met at the Lake Whakamaru Christian Camp for the weekend of 25-27/3/83. Organised by RRs Betty Seddon and John Innes, this was a first intensive look at this steep-sided Waikato hydro lake. Yet another Australian Chestnut-breasted Shelduck stole the show but Spotless Crakes and Ferbirds were quite common in raupo and scrub margins to the main watercourse. Most members obtained excellent views of Bittern; the Blue Duck was still present (at least 3½ years since its first sighting) near the Whakamaru Dam; 5 Spur-winged Plovers frequented adjacent paddocks and a black Fantail lived in the pine trees near the lake.

It was a happy weekend and everyone was kept orderly by the island's pleasant full-time hosts.

JOHN INNES

Regional Roundup

Auckland: Michael Taylor reports that a number of local members attended and very much enjoyed the Offshore Islands of Northern NZ Symposium held at the University of Auckland, 10-13 May. Among many valuable contacts, an encounter with Mike Imber led to the re-examination of a White-faced Storm Petrel found during the previous weekend's beach patrol at Muriwai, which may prove to be the first record of the Australian subspecies in NZ.

The first Cattle Egret for the winter was recorded from Silverdale on 14/4/83 and by mid-May Claire Exley had located a flock of 40 in their usual haunt near Evans Road, Helensville. Claire has also noticed 4 Rooks in the Kaipara district. The Little Black Shag flocks around the Auckland Harbours currently have about 200 birds and include some banded juveniles from the Lake Rotorua colony. The bander responsible, Graeme Taylor, was thrilled to see these when he visited Auckland to attend the branch meeting in May.

South Auckland: The most notable record recently was the Barn Owl. Other rare visitors were a Sanderling on 31/3 and a Greenshank on 15/5, both at Karaka. Two Large Sand Dotterels and at least 2, possibly 4, Mongolian Dotterels have been seen there also, as well as 43 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and 26 Red-necked Stints.

In the Firth of Thames, Access Bay remains the most rewarding place for shorebirds. About 50 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were noted during the Christmas period and 42 were still present in early April. 30+ Curlew Sandpipers were noted here on 8/5. At Whareka, a pair of Spur-winged Plovers had 3 small chicks on 3/5.

South Auckland seems rather out-of-it as far as national surveys currently in progress are concerned. Whitehead records are almost non-existent, apart from 1 or 2 in the extreme SE of the region. None of these has been recorded during the survey. Black-fronted Terns are equally rare, though 1 in breeding plumage was seen at Access Bay on 3/5. Long-tailed Cuckoos are scarce too though 1 crashed and killed itself by hitting a glasshouse at Pukekohe East in February.

Bay of Plenty: Graeme Taylor reports the following waders at Kaituna/Maketu Estuary/L. Waihi Estuary. On 27/3/83 there were 487 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1 Terek Sandpiper, 36+ Golden Plovers, 30+ Knots, 13+ Turnstones, 1 Whimbrel, 24 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and 2 Pectoral Sandpipers. By 16/4/84

1 Terek Sandpiper, 16+ Turnstones, 2 Pectoral Sandpipers, 5 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and the Whimbrel remained, with 22 Red-necked Stints joining them. However, by 14/5/83 only 73 Bar-tailed Godwits, 6 Red-necked Stints, 10 Turnstones and 1 Curlew Sandpiper remained for the winter.

Volcanic Plateau: Chestnut-breasted Shelducks have appeared on a number of lakes in the region. 4 were seen at Sulphur Bay, Lake Rotorua; 1 at Lake Rotoheu; 1 at Lake Whakamaru and finally 1 seen at Lake Aniwhenua by Malcolm Hutton.

Manawatu: 12 members, including 4 from Wellington, enjoyed good weather and great birdwatching on census day 27/2/83. The census produced one of the best ever counts in terms of number of species and total number of birds. Results were: 320 Bar-tailed Godwits, 3 Far Eastern Curlews, 140 Knots, 1 Turnstone, 23 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 2 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Terek Sandpiper, 4 Red-necked Stints, 39 Golden Plovers, 75 Banded Dotterels, 25 Wrybills, 98 SIPOs, 8 VOCs, 194 Pied Stilts, 3 Cattle Egrets, 7 Royal Spoonbills, 45 White-faced Herons, 51 Caspian Terns, 61 White-fronted Terns, 41 Black-backed Gulls, 13 Black Shags, 22 Mallard, 21 Pukeko and 3 Harriers.

The only sighting of Chestnut-breasted Shelducks in the region comes from Lake Papaitonga near Levin, where Barrie Heather saw 2 in the first week of April.

Wellington: The storm during the weekend of 21/22 May caused an increase of unusual records. 300+ Black-fronted Terns were seen at Pauatahanui by Alan Gollop and Alan Tennyson, and the latter recorded 82 at Waikanae the following day. A further report of Black-fronted Terns comes from Gavin Woodward, who saw 170 at Onoke Spit. Other unusual records during this period include a live Soft-plumaged Petrel, now being cared for by the Wildlife Service, and a Diving Petrel and a Mottled Petrel flying just off Petone Beach.

West Coast: A migrant wader found exhausted on Kumara Beach by Bevan Alexander was later identified as a Sanderling.

Canterbury: Australian species seem to be holding the limelight in Canterbury. During April local members saw 1 Chestnut-breasted Shelduck and 6 Australian Little Grebes at St. Annes Lagoon. However, North Island members en route to the AGM also found a Hoary-headed Grebe there on 19/5/83. Don Brathwaite and Dean Buzan found 2 Hoary-headed Grebes at the Bromley Sewage Ponds on 28/5/83. Finally, a

Kookaburra was seen near Rangiora on 6/6/83.

Compiled by PAUL SAGAR

Beach Patrols in Far North

Regular monthly beach patrols are now being carried out on 90 Mile Beach in the Far North. The projected dates for the rest of 1983 are: 9 July, 20 August, 17 September, 15 October, 5 November, 3 December and 31 December.

Visitors able to join these patrols should contact Laurie or Alison Howell, 31 Grigg Street, Kaitaia, phone Kaitaia 283-R.

Unpaid subscriptions

The Treasurer urges those members who have not paid their subscriptions for 1983 to do so without delay. Members who have not paid within due course will be removed from the register of members. Subscription rates are published inside the front cover of *Notornis*. GRAEME PETERSON, *Hon. Treasurer*

Fairy Terns

On 26/11/82 we visited the Waipu Estuary to count the birds which use the area at low tide and to investigate the Fairy Terns reported by Marion Wallis on 14/11/82. We sat patiently on a wind-blown dune near the edge of the area being defended by the Fairy Tern and were rewarded eventually by seeing a VOC cross the area. At first the terns harrassed the VOC by diving at it and twittering but as the VOC approached an area of broken shell and sand the harrassment became outright aggression. The Fairy Terns dived at, and struck, the VOC on the head and back until the VOC was forced to lower its head and crouch low as it moved slowly out of the area.

When we moved into the area where the VOC had been we were attacked as well. However, after a few minutes of careful searching we saw a nest with 2 eggs. Curiously we found only one nest but were harrassed by 3 Fairy Terns.

On 9/12/82 Jean Hawken joined us in a return visit to the Waipu Estuary. The Fairy Tern nest was soon found and contained 2 very small chicks, not much larger than the eggs which had contained them. The chicks remained motionless while the adults pressed home their vigorous and smelly attacks. The 3 Fairy Terns eventually escorted us away until we were about 80 m from the nest.

ALISTAIR & AUDREY GORDON

Rare Birds Committee

There have been a few changes in the Rare Birds Committee lately. The former Secretary, John Squire, has moved to the largest of New Zealand's offshore islands — Australia. Our new President, Beth Brown, is welcomed to the Committee and Dick Sibson has been co-opted to remain on the Committee. Their combined talents will be a good addition to the Committee. The remaining Committee members are Ben Bell, Brian Bell, Barrie Heather, Paul Sagar and the Secretary.

Some interesting records have been received in recent months, including an old record sent to us by Roger Sutton. This was of a Chinstrap Penguin found near Invercargill on 1/12/80. The bird weighed only 2.7 kg and Dr John Warham has advised that the normal weight should be 3.5-4.0 kg. There will always be a slight doubt as to whether the bird got to NZ without assistance but the good photographic evidence supplied made acceptance of the identification an easy task.

Similarly, photographs taken of a King Penguin at Broad Bay, Stewart Island, on 10/2/83 provided another good record. The Australian Tree Martins recorded previously from Berwick were joined by 2 Fairy Martins in February and March 1983. This record was also accepted.

There are a number of other sightings still under consideration. These include a small wader seen at the Drainage Board Ponds in Auckland on 12/1/83, which may have been a Semi-Palmated Sandpiper. Small waders are notoriously difficult to identify but the observer has provided a very full description for us to study. A report of a possible Black Falcon from the South Island's West Coast in early March, and a Fork-tailed Swift seen briefly near Te Anau on 10/5/83 are recent submissions.

JOHN FENNELL, *Secretary*

News from the AGM

The AGM was held at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, on the weekend of 21/22 May. Despite the atrocious weather conditions about 90 members came from as far afield as Whangarei and Invercargill and enjoyed a varied and interesting programme.

Council met on the Friday and considered a full agenda before the end of a long day. This included consideration of committee and scheme annual reports, most of which are produced elsewhere in this issue. The proposed national wader census was discussed and it was agreed that all regions should be encouraged to

complete wader counts during November 1983. Following this, further comment will be sought from RRs. National surveys of Black-fronted Terns, Yellowheads and Whiteheads/Long-tailed Cuckoos have made good progress and some results will be available soon.

It was proposed that a Field Study Course be held in South Canterbury in January 1984 (full details in the next issue). A revised issue of the Field Guide is planned for 1985.

Two new Regional Representatives were appointed: Paddy Latham in the Bay of Plenty and Russell Thomas in Wellington. Paddy replaces Roy Weston who retired after 20+ years as RR, a remarkable achievement.

While Regional Representatives met on Saturday morning several carloads of brave souls ventured into the murk to catch glimpses of waterfowl through the driving rain. Anyone would have been forgiven for thinking that they were attending a Wellington AGM!

The afternoon programme began with Dr John Warham presenting the seabirds of Midway Island to a fascinated audience. Sue Michelsen followed with some intriguing facts about the biology of our endemic Rock Wrens. After a short break, Dr Ben Bell told us a little about his trip to the Moscow IOC. The final speaker was Sandy Bartle, who presented an impressive and convincing account of his continuing long-term study of Westland Black Petrels.

The Annual General Meeting resulted in the election of Beth Brown as President and the re-election of Dr P. C. Bull, D. E. Crockett and P. M. Sagar to Council. The President, Mr R. B. Sibson, announced that the 1983 Falla Memorial Award had been awarded to Mr A. T. (Sandy) Edgar for his nearly 20 years of active ornithology in NZ and especially for his stimulation of group activity among OSNZ members. The Junior Member Award was presented to Roger Mayhill of Waikato. Both announcements were received with acclamation.

The continuing bad weather caused the cancellation of the field trip planned for Sunday but instead members were able to attend further talks, a moult workshop, watch natural history films and spend time talking birds. Don Hadden provided an excellent slide show and talk about the birds of Bougainville and David Melville stimulated a lot of interest in the newly-organised moult recording scheme. In fact there was such interest in recording moult that a workshop was organised after some specimens were borrowed from the Canterbury Museum. Thanks are

due to Peter Harper for making the facilities of the Department of Extension Studies available to us for these activities.

PAUL SAGAR

Antarctic Research — 1984/85 programme

The Ross Dependency Research Committee (RDRC) invites proposals for research projects to be considered for inclusion in the 1984/85 NZ Antarctic Research Programme. Research proposals can cover any of the earth, life or atmospheric sciences and be directed to a better understanding of the unique Antarctic environment, its geological and geophysical structure, or those natural phenomena most suited to research from southern latitudes.

Research proposals can be either short or long term, and based at NZ's Antarctic stations or in the field, depending on the logistic support required. Proposals should include a detailed outline of past research in the topic, biographical notes on team members, an outline of anticipated work, and details of required logistic support.

Applications are reviewed by the biological, physical or earth sciences working groups of RDRC, and applicants will be informed of the status of their proposals in late December 1983.

An information package on research directions, available facilities and how to prepare a proposal is available along with a support information form from: The Secretary, RDRC, DSIR Head Office, Private Bag, Wellington.

Please note that applications close 31 August 1983.

Royal Spoonbill count 1980

The count of Royal Spoonbills in November/December 1980 produced a total of about 42 birds, 35 at Okarito and about 7 at Wairau Lagoons. It appears that during the count period the population was largely at the 'old' colony on the Waitangiroto, Westland. These birds left in early January 1981 and numbers apparently increased about this time at the Wairau Lagoons, with at least 4 pairs nesting there on 26/1/81 and 24 birds being present on 21/2/81.

Thanks are due to all those who have taken part in this survey, and in Royal Spoonbill counts over the years. It is hoped that all these reports can be collated and the results published in the near future.

R. N. HOLDAWAY