



OSNZ news

No. 29 December, 1983

NOTE: Deadline for the March issue will be 10th February.

Totorore Expedition

Following close on a wonderful farewell from Kerikeri, a small gathering saw S.R.V. *Totorore* on her way from Auckland on 26/2/83, at the start of her 2½ year round-the-world expedition studying seabirds in the Southern Oceans and islands.

The highlight of the 9 day passage to the Chatham Islands was the probable sighting of a Taiko. David Crockett is corresponding with Gerry Clark over this and tells us that the only other person to sight the Taiko at sea is Sir Peter Scott. This was 2 years ago and in an almost identical location, 90km north of Kaingaroa. During the passage to the Chathams the boat also proved herself in her first Force 10 gale.

Totorore left the Chathams for Valparaiso on 23/3/83. Favourable weather during the first fortnight of the Southern Ocean crossing gave way to adverse winds, during which they sailed down to the Antarctic Convergence. Trouble with the electrics made it necessary, among other things, to hand start the engine daily in temperatures down to 4°C. The Juan Fernandez Islands were reached in 45 days, a little ahead of schedule.

After unloading stores at Masatierra, and leaving Mike Hurst in charge, *Totorore* proceeded to Valparaiso. Returning to the Juan Fernandez Islands to begin survey work, a party, including Dr W. R. P. Bourne, spent a week ashore on the rugged Masafuera. Here they camped in the clouds at 1800m and were well satisfied with their results. We look forward with great interest to hearing what these results were but we do know that a small passerine, not seen since 1928, was one of the finds.

Landings were also made on Santa Clara and several smaller rocky islets. The weather conditions in the 'Robinson Crusoe Islands' were far from ideal and two hefty anchors were bent.

Consequently Gerry spent most of his time sailing off and on while the others were ashore.

Since returning to Valparaiso they have sailed south, doing transects across the Humbolt Current and photographing waders during visits to the port. In late August they were to call at Puerto Montt before heading further south.

The research programme of the team aboard *Totorore* includes making at least six 10-minute observations of seabirds and associated information daily.

The data will be collated to provide background information on the distribution of many species. The expedition is first making a 12-month study of birds along the outlying islands of the southern coast of Chile. Expedition members to date include: Gerry Clark, Master, Kerikeri — on; Ken Back, Kerikeri-Chathams; Mike Hurst, Chathams-Valparaiso; Bill Bourne and John Atkinson, Valparaiso-Juan Fernandez and return; Jim Watt, Valparaiso-south.

ANTHEA GOODWIN

The Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Under the provisions of the Constitution, the following five Council members retire in May 1984 and nominations are hereby called for, to fill the vacancies created:

- Mr B. D. Heather (Editor)
- Mr G. M. H. Peterson (Treasurer)
- Mr R. S. Slack (Secretary)
- Mr R. B. Sibson (Vice-President)
- Mr P. D. Gaze (Council)

The positions of Editor, Treasurer, Secretary and Council member are for three-year terms. The position of Vice-President is for a one-year term only.

Nominations close with the Secretary on 29 February 1984 and must be signed by two financial members and consented to by the person nominated, who must also be a financial member of the Society. Please also submit two or three lines on the work and interests of the nominee. Retiring officers are eligible for re-election.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 1984 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before 29 February 1984, in writing and signed by the mover and seconder.

The 1984 Annual General Meeting will be held in Nelson on Saturday, 19 May.

R. S. SLACK,
Hon. Secretary, OSNZ

C/- Post Office,
Pauatahanui,
Wellington

Cattle Egrets in Marlborough

In late autumn Cattle Egrets returned to Grovetown and in May a banded bird was reported from the sewage pond area east of Blenheim. However, the egret apparently moved on as several unsuccessful checks were made, including one on the day of the big flood, when the paddocks usually frequented by the egrets were under a metre or so of water.

At the end of August a report of a tree covered with white birds was investigated. On 29 August a paddock was being ploughed in the vicinity of the tree in question. A big flock of Red-billed Gulls was following the plough, as was a Black-fronted Tern, while further away a big flock of Black-backed Gulls fed on ground ploughed earlier. Further away still were 16 Cattle Egrets, two of which seemed smaller than the rest. However, all the birds lifted and flew away when the observers were still some distance away. The Cattle Egrets returned as we prepared to depart, and this time there were 26, with some preening and some feeding while the others just stood.

There have been three at Rai Valley during the winter as well.

PAULINE JENKINS

White-fronted Terns

White-fronted Terns nest regularly on the exposed point of Goat Island near Leigh, North Auckland. The site is exposed to the north and east and when there is a bad storm from these directions the terns retreat and roost on rocky ground in Goat Island Bay. On 19/10/82 a storm drove about 150 terns to roost in Goat Island Bay, where they were joined by 10 Red-billed Gulls. The terns remained there for the whole day and returned to their nesting site either late on 19/10/82, or early on 20/10/82. They had all left the bay roost by 0830 hours on 20/10/82. However, they left behind 21 eggs which had apparently been laid on 19/10/82. It would appear that the physiological urge to lay could not be postponed when they left the nest site, but since the bad weather roost was not associated with the nest site, the eggs were abandoned.

F. J. TAYLOR

Wildlife Research Liason Group activities

The first annual report of the Wildlife Research Liason Group reviews the activities of the group since its inception. At its first meeting it was decided that to perform its task of liason

and research review it would be necessary:

(1) to contact universities, museums, and all organisations with an interest in wildlife to inform them of the Liason Group's existence, purpose and interests; to gain information about research or management projects; and to solicit views on any aspect of wildlife biology or on the role of the Liason Group itself;

(2) to compile a computer listing of all current wildlife research projects in New Zealand; this to be done by providing project summary sheets for all organisations carrying out research and requesting their co-operation in completing them. Data requested: title, key words, objectives, study areas, leader, organisation, manpower, source of funding, reports and publications, potential application;

(3) to carry out research reviews (on the basis of subjects and taxonomic groups, rather than on the work of research agencies) by appointing *ad hoc* sub-committees of experts to report on the state of knowledge in their specialist fields and to identify future research needs.

Considerable progress has been made with all these endeavours. All universities and museums were contacted and most have responded admirably by commenting on the role of the Liason Group and on wildlife research, and also furnishing details of research projects for the computer listing. Eighty-eight organisations and societies of various kinds with an identifiable interest in wildlife were contacted of which about half responded.

A deadline of 31/12/82 was set for receipt of information for the computer listing of current research projects. The response from universities, museums and government departments has been good and work has begun on compiling the list. When complete, the information will be made available on request to all interested persons.

Forty research review topics have been listed in priority order for investigation by Research Review sub-committees. The first two sub-committees were established in October 1981, to report on Amphibians & Reptiles, and on Game Birds. Their reports were received in September 1982 and accepted by the Liason Group in December. It is intended that the two reports will be produced as the first two issues of a Liason Group Research Review series, to be available to all interested persons.

In December 1982, five new Research Review sub-committees were established to investigate: parakeets and parrots;

kiwis; mustelids and cats; rodents, and possums. Reports from these sub-committees were required by 31/7/83.

In 1983/84 the Liason Group will continue to carry out its liason and research functions in the same manner so that it will be in a position to comment authoritatively on wildlife research in New Zealand. Possession of an up-to-date list of wildlife research projects and specialist reports on specific topics and taxonomic groups will enable the Liason Group to make recommendations to departments on future research requirements.

Wildlife Research Liason Group, P.O. Box 2038, Wellington

White Heron at home

At the beginning of the August holidays a White Heron landed in the garden of the Heatherbell family and proceeded to devour the goldfish in their pond. Later, it followed Christine (daughter) when she was carrying a bucket containing the remaining goldfish into a shed.

After three days the heron was waiting on the terrace in the early morning and when the ranchslider was opened it walked inside, ate some gurnard pieces, and perched on a chair! This has now continued for five days and if the door is shut to keep out the cold, the heron will bang on the glass with its bill. It spends hours perched on the terrace wall preening, which enables a very close study to be made. Its bill is yellow with a small amount of black on the tip, and the legs are entirely slaty grey. The skin, which is obvious when the heron is preening its head and neck, is quite black.

There have been other White Herons at nearby farms but none has accompanied this bird into the house and garden.

JENNY HAWKINS

A wily (or wirey) old magpie

On 1/9/83 we were shown an old magpie's nest near the top of a 20 m pine tree near Alexandra. The bulk of the rather flimsy structure consisted of an estimated 20 to 30 pieces of wire, varying in gauge from lacing wire to about No. 10, all interwoven into a fascinating tangle. The rather small amount of lining material was small grass tufts with a few pine needles.

These birds are obviously keen on recycling!

PETER CHILD

OSNZ Rare Bird Recording Scheme

Unusual bird sightings are reviewed at two levels in New Zealand. Records of species of national rarity are examined by the Rare Birds Committee, the members of which have a wide knowledge of field identification. Where sufficient expertise among the Committee members is not available, assistance is sought from authorities both in New Zealand and overseas. Records of species of local rarity are handled by the RRs.

In both instances it is preferred that records are submitted by completing an 'Unusual Bird Report,' which is available from your RR. This form is designed to help an observer submit a complete description, and is constantly evolving and improving.

The completed form should be submitted to your RR, who will pass it on to the Secretary of the Rare Birds Committee immediately if the species concerned is on the national list, or with a recommendation for acceptance or non-acceptance if referring to a locally rare species.

In recent years it is pleasing to note that an increasing number of records submitted have been accepted and this is due largely to an awareness of the need to record a bird's characteristics in detail. Those records not accepted in the past often have been due to the submission of an inadequate description

Records recently reviewed and accepted were:

Common Sandpiper	November 1980	Lake Wainono
Long-tailed Skua	October 1981	Taupo
Grass Whistling-duck (9)	April 1982	Waikato River near Pukekohe
Tree Martin	November 1982	Nelson
Wood Duck	December 1982	Snares Is.
King Penguin	January 1983	Snares Is.
Spine-tailed Swift (2)	January 1983	Snares Is.
Chatham Is. Mollymawk	January 1983	Snares Western Chain
Oriental Dotterel	January 1983	Lake Wainono
Lesser Yellowlegs	February 1983	Hawkes Bay
Nankeen Night Heron	March 1983	Collingwood
Barn Owl (dead)	March 1983	Papatoetoe
Broad-billed Roller	March 1983	Westhaven Inlet
Fork-tailed Swift	May 1983	Te Anau
Kookaburra	June 1983	Rangiora
Fork-tailed Swift (2)	July 1983	Napier
Masked Booby (died)	July 1983	Hamilton

We look forward to receiving records from you.

JOHN FENNELL, *Secretary, Rare Birds Committee*

for the Committee or RR to make a valid judgement.

Remember that your RR and Rare Birds Committee Secretary can be contacted to provide whatever assistance they can with the submission of records. We are here to help. Another important thing is to submit your observation as quickly as possible to your RR. If another observer can visit the location and see the bird in question they may record additional features to assist a positive identification.

The Committee files all records, whether accepted or not accepted, for both national and local level species. It is hoped that over a period of years it will be possible to examine the occurrence of certain species with respect to season and location. This can only be done if records are complete. Where very detailed descriptions are provided, hopefully in the majority of reports, it will be possible to also analyse records with respect to plumage characteristics of rare species occurring in New Zealand.

Therefore these reports are not just a system for judging the validity of sightings but a way of collecting and collating data at a national level which would otherwise only be recorded and dispersed in members' field notebooks.

After detailed consideration, both by the committee and by three overseas authorities, it was decided that the Stint sp. seen near Auckland in January 1983 could not be specifically identified.

Beach Patrollers

Recently I have been going through the Beach Patrol Card collection in order to summarise some of the information they contain. With regard to Gannet records, I had hoped to show when and where juveniles were found in comparison with similar information for adults. However, for most Gannet records there is no mention of whether the birds recovered were adult or juvenile. Thus my plea is that when specimens of species that have different adult and juvenile plumage are found, the number of each age group be noted on the beach patrol card. Once the present supply of cards has been used, the new cards will be printed with a column for this information.

RALPH POWLESLAND, *Convener*

Marlborough Sounds bird survey

The Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park Board is starting a 5-year bird survey in the Sounds. This survey is being carried out in conjunction with a scheme that is administered from the Lands & Survey Head Office in Wellington and will become part of the nationwide bird mapping scheme for national parks and reserves.

During the survey we hope to gain a clear indication of the distribution of various species that visit the Sounds and observe any changes in population or distribution.

Anyone interested in participating in the survey should contact either Elaine Murphy (Field Assistant) or Bob Ryan (Ranger), Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park Board, Mahakipawa Road, RD, Havelock, phone Havelock 42-159.

ELAINE MURPHY

Rare birds in Australia

Several sightings of interest to OSNZ members were reported in the RAOU Newsletter for June 1983. Most of these involved seabirds, including the first Australian records of a White-necked Petrel — seen off Point Lookout on 20/2/83, and off Sydney on 26/2/83. Other sightings included up to 15 Long-tailed Skuas, 2 Westland Black Petrels, 1 Buller's Shearwater, and a Hutton's Shearwater — all between 16 and 24km offshore and in about 60 fathoms.

Meanwhile back on shore, the reports included up to 59 Oriental Dotterels in Victoria on 19/2/83 and 9 Red-rumped Swallows (first Australian record) in Queensland on 12/2/83.

Watch for Chiggers!

Chiggers is the name applied to the mites of the family Trombiculidae. Adult and nymph forms are free living while their larvae are ectoparasitic on a wide range of hosts: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects. In New Zealand very few species have been found, probably because of their particular life cycle, or perhaps because they have not been looked for properly. In a recent publication, Loomis & Goff (1983. *Journal of Medical Entomology* 20: 87-89) described a new species from 5 chiggers found on a North Island Brown Kiwi from Taranaki. This new species belongs to a genus (*Guntheria*) which had never been recorded in New Zealand, and also is the first chigger ever found from a kiwi, despite the large number of kiwis searched for ectoparasites in the last few years. According to the literature, chiggers can be found mainly under the wings, on the thighs, and anal regions of birds.

While we want to draw the attention of the reader to these little greeblies, we would like to make an appeal to those animal lovers who are likely to handle live or dead birds (and mammals, reptiles, etc.) to keep an eye open for chiggers. The ectoparasitic larvae are orange-yellow to light-red, very small (around 0.5mm), round, hairy and have 6 legs.

The free living nymphs and adults are bigger, usually pink or red and have 8 legs. Also they have a marked constriction in their bodies. They can be found associated with plants, leaf litter and nests.

Techniques for collecting parasitic larvae are similar to those used for lice from birds and mammals (see *OSNZ news* No. 19). Adults can be found in any leaf litter sample or nest processed through a Berlese funnel. Specimens can be best sent in spirit (ethanol or menthanol 70%, whisky etc.) to the National Museum, Private Bag, Wellington, including the relevant collecting data.

Many thanks!

R. L. PALMA & A. C. G. HEATH

Winter count of Crested Grebes

Following the success of the inaugural winter count of Crested Grebes in Canterbury during July 1981, local members decided to repeat the count during 1983. Consequently the weekend of 16-17 July found several carloads of members heading for the high country lakes. While deep snow had character-

ised the 1981 count, rather muddy conditions prevailed this year, following the heavy rain of the previous week and road access to two lakes was impassable. However, despite the conditions, the results were well worth the efforts of everyone involved.

A total of 117 grebes were located, 22 fewer than in 1981. Once again Lake Alexandrina topped the list with 81, confirming it as New Zealand's most important lake for Crested Grebes. The next highest total came from Lake Coleridge (12). Once again the high grebe population on the Ashburton Lakes had moved elsewhere, as most of these lakes were frozen over. Waterfowl were also counted on all lakes and the most interesting records were 1028 Scaup on Alexandrina and 124 Australian Coots on Lake Heron.

The full counts were:

Pearson Group — L. Letitia — 5 Crested Grebes, 11 Black Shags, 1 Little Shag, 4 Black Swans, 30 Canada Geese, 5 Paradise Shelducks, 16 Mallards, 12 Grey Ducks, 88 Scaup. L. Grassmere — 1 Crested Grebe, 1 Little Shag, 6 Black Swans (including 1 cygnet), 215 Canada Geese, 7 Paradise Shelducks, 13 Mallards, 11 Grey Ducks, 119 Scaup. L. Sarah (half frozen over) — 2 Black Swans, 4 Paradise Shelducks.

Coleridge Group — L. Lyndon (90% frozen over) — 3 Black Swans, 5 Mallards. L. Georgina — 2 Black Shags, 2 Paradise Shelducks. L. Evelyn — 6 Little Shags, 1 Black Swan, 2 Paradise Shelducks, 5 Scaup. L. Selfe — 4 Crested Grebes, 2 Black Shags, 2 Mallards, 5 Scaup. L. Henrietta — 2 Black Swans, 6 Canada Geese, 20-30 Mallards. L. Catherine — 2 Black Swans, 2 Paradise Shelducks, 11 Mallards. L. Ida (frozen over). L. Coleridge — 12 Crested Grebes, 2 Black Swans, 15 Canada Geese, 2 Paradise Shelducks, 4 Mallards, 3 Scaup.

Ashburton Lakes — L. Clearwater (frozen over) — 50 Canada Geese flying over and 2 Paradise Shelducks on ice. L. Camp (frozen over). L. Roundabout (frozen over) — 3 Paradise Shelducks. L. Emma (frozen over) — 26 ducks flying over. Maori Lakes (mostly frozen over) — 46 Black Swans, 16 Canada Geese, 1 Paradise Shelduck, 2 Pukekos. L. Heron (50% frozen over) — 8 Crested Grebes, 4 Little Shags, 150 Black Swans, 35 Canada Geese, 28 Mallards, 6 Grey Ducks, 451 Scaup, 124 Australian Coots.

Alexandrina Group — L. McGregor — 2 Crested Grebes, 3 Little Shags, 7 Black Swans, 42 Canada Geese, 11 Mallards, 3 Grey Ducks, 7 Scaup. L. Alex-

andrina — 81 Crested Grebes, 60 Little Shags, 78 Black Swans, 81 Canada Geese, 1 NZ Shoveler, 100 Mallards, 31 Grey Ducks, 1028 Scaup.

Thanks to all the participants — Barry Armstrong, Dean Buzan, Peter Dilks, John Fennell, Donald Geddes, Enfy's Graham, Dominic Graham, Jenny Grindall, Peter Howden, Jason Hopkinson, Timothy Jordan, Roos & Marion Lane, Peter Langlands, Stephen Leitch, Les McPherson, Roger Mayhill, Colin O'Donnell, P. Pearson, Joy & Paul Sagar.

PAUL SAGAR

Birds in the Chalky Inlet area, Fiordland

I kept bird notes during archaeological site surveys in the Chalky Inlet area in February/March 1982 and July 1983. Bellbirds, Tits, Grey Warblers, Fantails, Dunnocks and Silvereyes were widespread in coastal beech-rata-podocarp forest. These species, plus Chaffinches and Blackbirds, were present on Chalky Island and the Passage Islands. Few N.Z. Pigeons were seen. Occasionally, Brown Creeper flocks appeared at sea level in the tall forest. Single N.Z. Falcons occurred at South Port, Landing Bay, Small Craft Harbour Islands (diving on a Red-billed Gull), and Chalky Island.

Some Fiordland Crested Penguins were still ashore moulting at the beginning of March, and ashore again in July 1983 as small groups at nest sites in damp, dark tunnels. Black-backed Gulls, Red-billed Gulls and Pied Shags were found in small numbers throughout Chalky Inlet, and Edwardson and Cunaris Sounds. Variable Oystercatchers, though locally common at Small Craft Harbour Islands (53 seen), favoured reefs on the outer islands, also the haunt of a few Reef Herons and Paradise Shelducks.

Between West Cape and Cape Providence in July 1983 Bellbirds, Silvereyes, Dunnocks and Chaffinches were numerous on sunny, coastal faces with *Olearia-Dracophyllum* scrub. Silvereye flocks fed on vegetated inshore stacks, while Dunnocks and N.Z. Pipits picked insects on coastal reefs and amongst the tide wrack. Pairs of Paradise Shelducks were regularly spaced along this coast.

Of ground birds throughout the Chalky Inlet area, no Kiwis were heard but their tracks were seen on a coastal sand dune south of the Newton River; Wekas were recorded only on the two Passage Islands.

KIM MORRISON

Wildlife Conservation Award to Ducks Unlimited

At its 9th Annual Meeting, held at the THC Tokaanu in July, Ducks Unlimited was presented with the coveted 'Wildlife Conservation Award.' This Wildlife Service Award was presented by Mr T. A. Caithness of the Wildlife Service — in recognition of Ducks Unlimited's efforts in making a significant contribution to the conservation of New Zealand wildlife.

Ducks Unlimited's main project, Operation 'Pateke,' which aims to save the rare Brown Teal from possible extinction by breeding birds in captivity and releasing them into suitable wild areas, made outstanding progress during the past breeding season and a record total of 112 Brown Teal were reared by members. This brings the total to over 300 reared during the past 3 years. These efforts, together with the activities of members in erecting over 650 Grey Teal nest boxes in many areas of New Zealand, have duly been recognised by the Wildlife Service and its prestigious award made to the Hamilton based conservation group.

Ducks Unlimited plans further important expansions of its conservation efforts and during this year will commence its first work in waterfowl habitat. With the financing of major Grey Teal habitat development work on a private property in the Waikato.

Finance is also being made available to assist a University of Auckland Ph.D. student to carry out Brown Teal research on Great Barrier Island. The study will be of 3 years' duration and Ducks Unlimited will contribute \$2,000 towards the cost of the study.

NEIL HAYES & PAUL PIRANI

Grey Warblers mobbing Shining Cuckoos

On 15/10/83 I visited a SIPO nest on a shingle bank in the bed of the Orangipuku River, which flows along the base of the Hohonu Range at Inchbonnie, Westland. I was shown the nest by Craig Adams. However, the nest was empty and evidence of a broken egg led us to believe that the nest had been visited by predators. Harrier and Pukeko are plentiful, as are Black-backed Gulls, and no doubt there are stoats in the area too. The nest site was used last year, but no young birds were seen then.

When we returned to the car our attention was drawn by the noisy flight and strong whistling calls of two Shining Cuckoos as they flew across the road

and into the willows beside us. Within a few seconds a pair of Grey Warblers flew over our heads and each landed no more than a metre away from a cuckoo. The roadside is well covered with blackberry and the cuckoos moved over this and some small *Coprosma*, and back into the willows, all the while being closely attended by the Grey Warblers. The cuckoos called occasionally but nothing was heard from the warblers, which seemed intent only on keeping close to the nest parasites. Neither species was observed to feed.

None of the birds seemed to notice us and the whole time the birds did not move more than 15 m from us. Craig moved around the willows to try photographing the birds and managed to move within 5 m without causing any disturbance. A NZ Pigeon dropped in on the scene but none of the other birds even noticed it.

After 10 minutes or so the cuckoos left for another patch of willow about 50 m away, and the warblers returned across the road. While observing the cuckoos, we noticed that one was more prominently marked than the other. The barring across the neck and breast being particularly paler on one bird than the other.

This is the first time that I have seen what would appear to be a pair of Shining Cuckoos and also what amounts to a mild form of mobbing by potential hosts. Many Shining Cuckoos were calling all around the area but no others were seen.

Have others observed this type of response to cuckoos by warblers and other small birds?

C. S. LAUDER

Kawhia & Aotea Harbours summer census

As part of the National Wader Count, Waikato members completed a comprehensive count of wading and shore birds of the west coast harbours of Kawhia and Aotea on 9/11/83. Members used four dinghies to reach the main wader roosts while other members covered the northern beach and shoreline of Kawhia Harbour.

Bar-tailed Godwit numbers were well up on the previous year's count and Knots were present on both harbours, a rare occurrence. Among the species found at Kawhia, with 1982 figures in brackets, were: Bar-tailed Godwit 4575 (2514); Knot 14 (0); SIPO 544 (480); Turnstone 4 (9); NZ Dotterel 8 (10). On Aotea Harbour there were Bar-tailed Godwit 1100 (900); and Knot 14 (3).
BETTY SEDDON

Falla Memorial Award

Nominations for the above award should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, OSNZ, c/- Post Office, Pauatahanui, Wellington, by 30 April 1984. Nominations must be signed by at least two financial members of OSNZ and should state clearly the claims of the nominee on a national scale, together with a brief ornithological vitae.

The basic requirements of the award are detailed in *OSNZ news* 19.

R. S. SLACK, *Hon. Secretary*

Waders and spiders on RAOU field trip

During the RAOU Congress in Auckland field trips to Tiritiri Matangi Island, and to the Firth of Thames and Manukau Harbour were arranged. The weather was less than kind but a group of 12 braved wind and rain in true wader enthusiast's fashion. Among these was Brett Lane, co-ordinator of the Australian Wader Studies Group.

We took the coast road via Clevedon and Kawakawa Bay where the visitors saw their first NZ Dotterel and Variable Oystercatcher. Orere gave them Tuis feeding on scarlet *Erythrina* flowers and Tarata Point brought good views of another new species, Spotted Shags on rocks just offshore. Katipo spiders received wary attention at the Limeworks and after finding Wrybills at Access Bay, a welcome hot lunch from Kaiaua's famed fish and chip establishment was eaten out of doors in sunny conditions.

Finally a quick trip was made to Karaka to take advantage of the Manukau's high tide, 3½ hours after that of the Firth of Thames. Here the very strong northerly had whipped up the water and waves were crashing onto the edges of paddocks. The birds had left the shellbanks for the shore and hundreds of SIPOs were scattered about. Highlights here were a Whimbrel, which after careful watching was pronounced to be an Asiatic, and later a Terek Sandpiper. All enjoyed the day and the accompanying bird talk.

BETH BROWN

Westland Black Petrel off Chile

Sandy Bartle reports that a Westland Black Petrel he banded as a chick at Punakaiki in November 1981 has been recovered, by fishermen, off the coast of Chile during October 1983. This is the first record of this species outside New Zealand and eastern Australian waters.

OSNZ Conservation Policy

At its meeting in May 1983 the following Conservation Statement was adopted by Council. This followed considerable debate at Council meetings over the past few years. However, the adoption of the statement was opposed by Dr Ben D. Bell and P. D. Gaze, who felt the Society should be taking a more active role in conservation matters, and they asked that these details be published.

The Conservation Statement adopted by Council is:

Historically the OSNZ has not been active in conservation issues. When established it made it clear to its sister organisation, the Forest and Bird Protection Society, that it had no intention of taking over any of that Society's functions. The societies would be complementary not competitive. When the Constitution was prepared and adopted it was specifically written in that the OSNZ would not become involved in conservation issues. Under that original Constitution it was not legal to provide factual information on habitats or bird populations in areas where environmental issues were at stake. The new Constitution amended this because it prevented the supply of factual information often requested by other organisations. However, it was never intended the Society become actively involved in Conservation issues. The role was spelt out in the Policy Statement, published in *Notornis* 20: 298-299 (1973). There is no reason why this statement should not be accepted today.

The OSNZ was formed to study birds and this continues to be its objective. Other societies have the primary role of conservation, for example, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Forest Action Council, Environmental Defence Society. If a member's main interest is conservation, their efforts should be put into one of these other societies. All members of OSNZ are sympathetic to conservation issues and often wear two hats but their primary reason for belonging to OSNZ is to study birds.

All the societies involved in conservation issues have full-time staff, either paid or voluntary, whereas OSNZ depends entirely on amateur effort, from executive and council level, through regional representatives, and to scheme organisers. It is difficult to find enough people for all the positions we need at present — we lack several RRs and have few people willing to organise and direct national schemes. Most of those actively involved ('most'), do not want

to be involved in the conservation issues. They have more than enough to do with their present functions.

Whenever members want their executives and RRs to become involved in issues, they seem to want to push others into doing what they themselves want done. If these people do feel strongly about issues, they should be active themselves in existing groups established specially for this (i.e. not push others in to do their work for them).

Threats to habitats are best handled by specialist groups which individuals can join and actively support. As a society, OSNZ is small, and many of its members already support other organisations. Further involvement of the OSNZ would put the society under stresses which have become apparent in other scientific societies and could at some time expose it to takeover bids by conservation interests. Neither would be good for the primary objective of bird study.

The OSNZ under its current constitution can provide factual information on matters of environmental concern. This approach, rather than involvement in the political issues, has given the OSNZ considerable standing as a source of unbiased information. It therefore has a much higher standing and influence than its membership could otherwise expect. This standing must be preserved so that the society will always be regarded as a reliable authority and can continue with its objective to study birds.

BRIAN D. BELL, *for Council OSNZ*

Penguin Research

The Wildlife Research Liaison Group, formed in 1981 to promote wildlife research in New Zealand, has established a sub-committee to examine past, current and possible future research on PENGUINS. OSNZ members who are currently working on these birds or planning to do that in New Zealand, or who have suggestions on the directions future research might take, are invited to contact the sub-committee chairman — Dr John Warham — at the Zoology Department, University of Canterbury, Private Bag, Christchurch.

JOHN WARHAM

Classified Summarised Notes

Members are reminded that if they are visiting another region, notes made during the visit should be sent to the Regional Representative of that region.

D. F. BOOTH, *CSN Compiler*

Poor Knights Islands

A nine day expedition to the Poor Knights Islands (30 April-9 May), to continue a long-term study of Bellbirds and to band Buller's Shearwater chicks, was organised by Paul Sagar.

A slight oversight on Paul's part meant that we had brought only 600 Bellbird bands with us. A mere 4½ days of mist netting at Tuatara Pool made short shift of these, and in addition 122 recaptures of birds banded on previous expeditions were made. These provided very useful survival and population composition information. Tigers for punishment, John Fennell and Colin Miskelly reset a net lower in the valley for three consecutive mornings in order to band and measure Red-crowned Parakeets. 78 parakeets and several sore fingers later, there was general agreement that parakeets are decidedly less endearing when in the hand.

However, our nocturnal activities made the parakeets appear docile by comparison with the 110 Buller's Shearwater chicks which were removed from their burrows for banding and weighing. Although many burrows contained chicks ready to fledge, the apparently deserted surface of the colonies suggested that Buller's Shearwaters do not exercise their wings prior to fledging.

The other expedition members, Graham Wragg and Peter Jackson, spent their time observing Spotless Crakes and mapping the distribution of a new fern species respectively.

The most vocal petrel species in the evenings on Aorangi was the Grey-faced Petrel, apparently the first recorded there since the mid-1960s. Eventually a few were located on the ground. However, expedition members were even more delighted on the return voyage, when we had close views of 2 adult Yellow-nosed Mollymawks. These obliging birds remained on the water long enough for all four ornithologists to decide that they had taken enough photographs!

COLIN MISKELLY

Postal news

Did you know that SIPO stands for 'South Island Passerine Oystercatcher' or 'Sometime Itinerant Post Occupant'?

At Taieri Lake on 1/8/83, we observed two oystercatchers perched on fence posts beside this well-known 'flood meadow.' They stayed on one post for some considerable time, and when next observed were perched on a different one. Only one per post, of course!

PETER CHILD

Regional Roundup

Auckland: Spring field work included coastal searches for NZ Dotterels, Variable Oystercatchers, and Reef Herons to be correlated with the Far North/Northland counts, and some 15 of the individually colour-banded NZ Dotterels were located in the process. A Grey-tailed Tattler, 2 Black Stilts and 1, perhaps 2, Royal Spoonbills have been recorded at the South Kaipara wader roosts, and Spur-winged Plovers appear to be continuing their spread into this region.

An inspection of the Rangitoto Island Black-backed Gull colony by intrepid members on 30/10/83 disclosed 340 nests. Nesting of Caspian Terns, initially delayed by stormy weather, was well underway on 19/11/83, when the Mangawhai Spit colony contained 97 nests (88 with eggs and 9 with small chicks). A four-hour watch of the colony revealed 18 colour-banded birds, 16 proved to be Mangawhai-bred birds with representatives of each year's colonial banding from 1977 to 1981. Interestingly, the other two were birds banded as chicks at South Kaipara Head in 1978 and 1979.

South Auckland: The winter wader censuses went off well with good support from members. Manukau Harbour's SIPO flock hit a new high with a grand total of 25,587 birds. A notable sight was that of the long-lived NZ Dotterel 'Wimble.' His name was coined by the late Sylvia Reed, who usually did this with birds she had banded, by taking the initials of the colours of the bands and thinking of a suitable name. This bird was first banded by Ross McKenzie on 26/12/50 at Mataitai. When trapped on the nest at Seagrove the original band was worn and replaced with its current combination on 10/11/76. Thus 'Wimble' is now just on 35 years old. This may well be a record for a wader.

The August field trip to Waharau Reserve was successful in that Bellbirds were still present. Later trips have been to Tawhitokino Beach and to Wairoa Gorge as well as the usual beach patrolling of the Karioitahi to Waikato Heads section of the west coast. A total of 29 Cattle Egrets were seen at Piako on 28/8/83.

Waikato: The Hamilton Lake census of 16/10/83 revealed a large increase in the Australian Coot population, with 98 adults and 20 chicks present. Other birds breeding at the lake were Black Swan, Mallard and probably Pukeko.

During the weekend of 12-13/11/83, some Waikato members camped in a cut-over bush block of the Rangitoto

Range, east of Otorohanga, to study Whiteheads, and search for Kokako. A good population of Whiteheads was found, and some were feeding fledged young. A few Long-tailed Cuckoos were heard. No Kokako were heard but at least 5 pairs were seen and heard in the area during September-October 1983. A further search is planned in February-March 1984, when the birds will be more vocal.

Manawatu/Wanganui: The Manawatu Estuary continues to attract a good selection of migratory waders. On 25/9/83 J. L. Moore and M. K. Tarburton recorded 1 Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit, 103 Bar-tailed Godwits, 14 Knots, 1 Sanderling, 1 Red-necked Stint, 1 Wilson's Phalarope, 54 Wrybills, 4 SIPO and 12 Variable Oystercatchers.

17 members and friends completed a 32 km beach patrol from Tangimona in the north to Hokio Beach and recorded 103 birds in the process. This total included 2 Little Blue Penguins, 3 Grey-faced Petrel, 7 Fluttering Shearwaters, 1 Buller's Shearwater, 3 Diving Petrels, 37 Fairy Prions and 1 Blue Petrel.

Shining Cuckoos appeared to arrive in the region during mid-September. Richard Law observed a group of 6 Shining Cuckoos in a bush area of the upper Shannon on 18/9/83. By the following day these birds had separated. **Wellington:** Michael Turner reports a possible Northern Shoveler on the Wai-kanāe sewage ponds. A Crested Tern has been seen again on Wellington Harbour, where it frequents the area between the Container Terminal and Petone.

The beach from Waitarere to the Otaki Rivermouth (28 km) was patrolled on 13/11/83 and 54 birds of 10 species were found. These included 35 Fairy Prions, 6 Sooty Shearwaters and 1 White-headed Petrel.

West Coast: At Hokitika on 17/9/83 Noel Ward observed a selection of waders and gulls, which included: 1 Far Eastern Curlew, 4 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1 Golden Plover, 1 Turnstone, about 200 SIPOs and about 300 Black-billed Gulls.

Canterbury: Cattle Egrets remained at Taumutu at least until 16/11/83, when 9 were seen in full breeding plumage. On the same day 2 Royal Spoonbills were seen at Kaituna, where possible nest building activity occurred last summer.

A female Chestnut-breasted Shelduck, the first reported in the region since last April, was seen at St. Annes Lagoon on 5/12/83 by Barry Armstrong.

Compiled by PAUL SAGAR

Time for Moulting Recording

Many species of birds moult in the autumn following breeding, so now is the time for members to learn how they might contribute to the new Moulting Recording Scheme. Instruction on recording moult and the necessary record forms are now available from your Regional Representative or from the scheme organiser: Dr Ben Bell, Zoology Department, Victoria University, Private Bag, Wellington. Both live and dead birds (e.g. beach patrol or museum collections) can provide information on moult, and recorders should obtain information on all birds examined — not just those in active moult.

BEN D. BELL

International meeting on Animal Behaviour

Several NZ ornithologists attended the 18th International Ethological Conference held at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, from 29 August to 6 September 1983. They were amongst 450 delegates from 29 nations who met to discuss a wide range of topics in the general field of animal behaviour. This is the first such conference to be held in the Southern Hemisphere and the Australian organisers are to be congratulated on its successful organisation. The pleasant University campus at St. Lucia provided a fine setting, including such ornithological delights as a pair of Tawny Frogmouths nesting just outside one of the accommodation blocks; A further introduction to Australian birds and birdwatchers was provided by local members of the Queensland Ornithological Society who organised field trips for conference delegates in the Brisbane region; further opportunities came with mid-conference excursions to Mount Tamborine and Currumbin Bird Sanctuary, and to Tangalooma Island Resort, while those who could afford had opportunities also to go on more extensive tours of the Queensland outback, reef and rainforests.

Behavioural ecology was a major theme at the conference and included many contributions on birds, amongst them those of Auckland University's John Craig on honeyeater foraging and communal breeding in rails, and Massey University's Clare Veltman on foraging and communal breeding in White-backed Magpies. The conference abstracts, available at \$A8.50, cover 307 contributions, 85 of which deal with aspects of bird behaviour.

Over recent years Australia, to its credit, has hosted successful international conferences on ethology, ornithology

has brought overseas delegates to NZ. and bird preservation, and each time this We have just had a successful RAOU meeting in Auckland and the Australian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour plans a meeting in NZ in 1986. These two meetings will help put NZ, as it were, on the Australian map, but the time has come for NZ itself to seriously consider offering to host an international meeting, such as the 1990 International Ornithological Congress. Indeed, the President of the next International Ornithological Congress (to be held in Ottawa in 1986), Professor Klaus Immelmann, has written to say he is looking forward to seeing as many colleagues from NZ as possible during the Congress in Ottawa, and to visiting an International Congress in NZ in the near future.

BEN BELL

Rare waders

Brian Chudleigh reports what is almost certainly the second Ringed Plover ever recorded in NZ, at Access Bay, Firth of Thames, on 9/11/83. It is an immature bird and has been photographed. Since this report it has been seen by several other members, including Anthea Goodwin, Steven Davies, Beth Brown and Don Stracy.

New Zealand's first ever recorded Wilson's Phalarope was observed at the Manawatu Estuary on 25/9/83 by Jim & Maureen Moore and Mike Tarburton. The bird was seen subsequently by Lindsay Davies and Bob & Sybil Creswell. A second Wilson's Phalarope report comes from Lake Ellesmere, where Jason Hopkinson, Geoffrey Woodley and Paul Sagar saw the bird feeding with Curlew Sandpipers on 19/11/83. Subsequent sightings of this bird were made by John Fennell, Graeme Taylor and Paul Sagar (22/11/83), and Kathleen Harrison and George Glover (26/11/83).

Detailed reports of all these sightings have been submitted to the Rare Birds Committee.

PAUL SAGAR

January 1983 wader count

During January 1983 wader counts were conducted in several regions to test the feasibility of conducting a National Wader Count. Participants were asked to concentrate on counting the four main migratory species — Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Turnstone and Golden Plover — and to note other species whenever possible. The results of this exercise were so encouraging

that it was decided to attempt wader counts over a greater area during November 1983 and June 1984 (see *OSNZ news* 28).

A total of 132,691 waders of 27 kinds were counted. As expected, Bar-tailed Godwits were the most abundant migratory wader, followed by Knot, Turnstone, Golden Plover and Red-necked Stint. Kaipara Harbour was the most important area for both Bar-tailed Godwits and Knots, followed closely by Manukau Harbour and then Farewell Spit. Turnstones favoured Kaipara Harbour and Farewell Spit, while Golden Plovers were more evenly spread in areas such as Houhora Harbour, Kaipara Harbour and Manukau Harbour. Of the less numerous species, Red-necked Stints and Curlew Sandpipers favoured Lake Ellesmere, with Sharp-tailed Sandpipers concentrating at the Waimango Swamp, Lake Wairarapa and in the Bay of Plenty.

Totals for the migratory species were:

Golden Plover	300
Grey Plover	12
Large Sand Dotterel	1
Mongolian Dotterel	1
Far Eastern Curlew	20
Asiatic Whimbrel	26
American Whimbrel	11
Bar-tailed Godwit	60,897
Hudsonian Godwit	1
Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit	2
Greenshank	1
Tattler species	4
Turnstone	4,261
Knot	47,928
Pectoral Sandpiper	10
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	200
Curlew Sandpiper	84
Red-necked Stint	270
Sanderling	6
Terek Sandpiper	6
<i>Total</i>	114,041

The areas covered during this survey were: Parengarenga Harbour, Houhora Harbour, Rangaunu Harbour, Waimango Swamp, Hokianga Harbour, Whangarei Harbour, Kaipara Harbour, Manukau Harbour, Firth of Thames, Bay of Plenty, Manawatu Estuary, Lake Wairarapa, Farewell Spit, Wairau Estuary, Kaikoura Peninsula, Avon-Heathcote Estuary, Lake Ellesmere.

Many thanks are due to all the members who participated in these counts and particularly Mark Bellingham, Alison Davies, Graeme Taylor, Paddy Latham, Jenny Hawkins, Brian Bell, Beth Brown, Pauline Jenkins and Barry Armstrong.

PAUL SAGAR

Provisional Atlas of Bird Distribution

The Society still holds some copies of its Provisional Atlas of Bird Distribution and Council has decided to offer these for sale at the much reduced price of \$5.00 per copy.

Although the Provisional Atlas, published in 1978, will be superseded in 1984 by the new atlas, the older publication will still contain a certain amount of information, mainly of historical interest, that will not be repeated in the new one.

Orders for copies of the Provisional Atlas at the reduced price should be sent to: 'Ornithological Society Atlas,' c/- P.O. Box 12397, Wellington North.

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Special General Meeting, 6 September 1983

This meeting was held at the Auckland Museum on 6/9/83, with the President, Treasurer, two Council members and about 70 members in attendance. The President welcomed those present and advised that the meeting had been called to consider raising the annual subscription of the Society.

The Treasurer moved 'that subscription rates be raised from 1984, to \$20.00 for ordinary members, with pro rata increases.' This was seconded by the President (Mrs B. Brown), and Mr R. B. Sibson spoke briefly in favour of the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. There was no further business.

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The albatross that never was

After wild weather and strong winds I was not surprised to have a phone call from a farmer on the edge of Manukau Harbour, who said that he had a large black and white bird, with a big bill coloured pink and yellow, and very large feet. He told me he believed it was an albatross. After hasty calls to arrange for proper care for the bird, I went out in the appalling weather to view the creature, and there he was — black and white, big flat feet, colourful bill — a fine young Muscovy drake dabbling happily in a large rain puddle on the back lawn of the farmer's house!

BETH BROWN