

No.88 **September 1998**

Note: Deadline for the December issue will be 10th November.

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for the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

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

OSNZ News

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Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc.)

DIAMOND JUBILEE MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

September Notornis in December

As announced in the June OSNZ News, Gabor Lovei has secured a position overseas and has resigned as Editor of *Notornis*. Paul Sagar is acting Editor until Council appoints a replacement. The short notice involved in the change of editors has resulted in a delay in processing of manuscripts, so there is no *Notornis* available to be mailed out with this issue of OSNZ News. Consequently there will be a double issue of *Notornis* mailed out in December.

Processing of manuscripts is back on schedule, and the double issue of *Notornis* in December will ensure that publication of *Notornis* is also back on track. All new submissions, and correspondence associated with editorial matters, should be addressed to:

The Editor *Notornis*
OSNZ
P.O. Box 12397
Wellington

These awards will be made to individuals who have demonstrated meritorious service in the furtherance of the objects of the Society. Those objects are: *To encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use particularly within the New Zealand region; To foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds generally; To promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations; To produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest; To effect cooperation and exchange of information with other organisations having similar aims and objects; To assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information from which sound management decisions can be derived; To maintain a library of ornithological literature for the use of members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds; To promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds particularly in the New Zealand region; To carry out any other activity which is capable of being conveniently carried out in connection with the above objects, or which directly or indirectly advances those objects or any of them.*

The award is not confined to members or past members and may be awarded to suitable non-members both in New Zealand and overseas.

An individual can be eligible for more than one award, but each must be for different services according to the objects of the Society. No individual can receive an award for a particular service more than once.

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Society, there will be no limit on the number of awards which can be made in 1999. Thereafter a maximum of five awards can be made annually.

Nominations must be signed by two financial members of the Society and be accompanied by a typed citation of **not more than 100 words** on one side of an A4 sheet setting out the achievements of the person nominated.

All nominations should be sent to the

Awards Secretary
P.O. Box 12397
Wellington

by 31 December 1998.

C.J.R. Robertson
President

Review of Publications - 1997

Introduction

In September 1996 the OSNZ Council decided to review to Society's publications. Members were asked to comment on all aspects of any publications the Society produces or which members believed the Society should produce. A wide variety of submissions was received from about 250 people. Three questionnaires were circulated to target sectors - the non-professional membership, university staff and students and past *Notornis* authors. In addition many other member and non-member ornithologists sent in submissions. The large number of submissions and the positive comments in most submissions showed that the ornithological community, and not just those in New Zealand, placed great value on the periodicals and other OSNZ publications. Most submissions expressed strong support for both *Notornis* and *OSNZ News*, both of which were generally considered to meet the needs of the New Zealand ornithological community.

The Review panel was the President (Chair), the current editors of *Notornis* and *OSNZ News* (Gabor Lovei and Tony Crocker), Derek Onley, Murray Williams, Kerry-Jayne Wilson and Bev Woolley. The following report summarises recommendations approved by the Council and RRs meeting jointly at the AGM in 1998.

Aim of Society Publications

To foster the study, knowledge and enjoyment of birds in Australasia, Oceania and Antarctica, with special reference to the New Zealand region. The material published shall be a combination of new knowledge, scientific results and practical advice, promotion of bird study, guides for birdwatching, OSNZ and ornithological news and discussion. Publications should be of high quality, cost effective and interesting to a cross-section of members and the public.

Occasional Publications

1) Each publication shall be assessed on merit. Publication may be solely by the OSNZ, jointly with another body or publisher, or the Society may assist an author or publisher with the

development of a product by involving members, or Society schemes, in the collection of information, or by endorsing a product published by someone other than the Society.

2) Principal publications for support - Checklist, atlas, field guide, monographs/contract reports, birdwatching locality guide, theme issues of *Notornis*.

3) In most cases cost of publication would need to be recovered by its sale.

4) It will not always be appropriate for occasional publications to be edited by Society editors or produced by the Society's publishers. Contract reports are likely to require special editorial and/or production teams. They may require the appointment or allocation of specific editorial or production functions within the OSNZ, especially in the case of contract reports undertaken and published for or by the Society.

5) If the Society name is to appear on the product, whether as the publisher, contractor, sponsor or endorser, then there must be a process to ensure that the Council, or a designated officer or committee by written delegation from the Council, undertakes a quality and standards review, for written approval and endorsement before publication commences.

Educational/Promotional Pamphlets

There is considerable scope and need for development of educational material on birds. This could take many forms. Three of those suggested were books on particular topics, regular inserts in *OSNZ News* (able to be built into a loose-leaf compendium for members - possibly later book production) and educational sector packages aimed at primary, secondary and university level students.

Council has established a team to develop and promote a continuing educational programme for members and the wider public. David Crockett, Lloyd Esler and Kerry-Jayne Wilson will coordinate this task.

Internet information and WWW site

Council is to determine what information should appear on a Society website and that suitably interested and able member(s) be asked to create a site following the Council guidelines.

Periodicals

Any such publication is to be made available to OSNZ members as part of their membership fee.

1) Regional Newsletters

Regions will be left to decide if they wish to have regional newsletters but these are to be free to all OSNZ members within their relevant regions.

Such newsletters must be provided to all members within the region, the President, the relevant Vice-President, Secretary, *OSNZ News* editor and neighbouring RRs.

Newsletters where possible are to use the standard quarterly delivery mailings of the Society periodicals arranged through the Membership Secretary - deadlines for labels and inserts to the printer being 15th March, June, September and December.

Newsletters should be short (1-2 sides A4) and contain material of regional interest, such as notices of trips, meetings, programme changes, local advertising, local social events.

2) National Magazine (*OSNZ News*)

Aim and scope - *OSNZ News* (or any subsequent name) will be the official magazine of the OSNZ, and no longer a supplement to *Notornis*.

It will:

- contain notices and records of the activities of the Society
- contain information and news on birdwatching activities and bird study
- contain news about members
- be a forum for discussion on topics related to birds
- contain educational material
- provide a vehicle for advertising, product reviews and sales both for and by members

Content - news, events, questions and answers, letters to editor, illustrations (people, places, activity, birds, habitat, mystery corner), site guides, Society information and activities, bird watching spots, identification, editorials, field trip plans, itineraries and reports, casual observations, equipment, techniques and methods, reports and surveys, literature reviews, 'portraits' of people, junior corner, WWW bird sites corner, advertisements relating to Society activities, Society national notices, sales corner, classified advertisements, quizzes, awards, obituaries, national and local events calendars, Regional Roundup (with ID logo for each region), editorial and presidential 'desks', *Rarebits*, relevant news items from local and international media, birding news, identification problems, liaison columns with other interest groups including Birds Australia, reviews of non-scientific literature and magazines.

Size and timing - 4 issues per year. Copy deadlines 10 February, April, August and November. Printed A3 folded to A4 page size, unstapled, with 16+ pages B/W per issue and an initial target of 60+ pages per annum (folded for mailing to

A5). Provision for removable educational inserts as centrefold at same A4 size. Look towards progress to spot colour and/or magazine type changes within two years, if finances allow. Sponsorship may make full colour sections or other format changes possible.

Name - a competition is to be held to name the Magazine.

3) Journal (*Notornis*)

Aim and scope - *Notornis* is the official journal of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc., a body which has been a major contributor to ornithological study and research in New Zealand. Published since 1939 (including *NZ Bird Notes* 1939-50), the journal publishes original papers and short notes on all aspects of field ornithology, including distribution, status, censusing, migration, population, habitat and breeding ecology. These can include the results of OSNZ surveys, invited review papers and literature reviews. The journal concentrates on the birds of Australasia, Oceania and Antarctica, with special reference to the New Zealand region. *Notornis* caters for the professional and amateur alike and aims at the middle groups, avoiding both the frankly popular and the strictly esoteric.

Content - letters to editor, illustrations, photographs, taxonomy and identifications, Rare Birds Committee reports, editorials, avian biology, behaviour studies, scientific papers on field ornithology (including distribution, status, censusing, migration, population, habitat and breeding ecology), equipment, techniques and methods, reports and surveys, Classified Summarised Notes, ornithological books and scientific literature reviews, invited reviews of topics, awards, obituaries, abstracts from international conference and scientific day lectures, directory information for the OSNZ, instructions to authors, specialist and reciprocal advertising.

Size and Timing - 4 issues per year, printed according to technical (layout and design) specifications approved by Council from time to time, but presently A5, card cover in two colours, stapled, with 64 pages B/W per issue and initial target 260+ pages per annum. Provision for special additional issues/supplements as required, with four colour cover. Look to progress to spot colour in conjunction with it being included in *OSNZ News* (if printed at same time) within two years, if finances allow (possible sponsorship). Full colour sections option for specially purchased item or sponsorship.

Council will investigate further any need to change the style, shape or layout of *Notornis*. In particular it will address the need to:

- assess whether the present style is the most effective for scientific standards of presentation

- match to conform with changing international standards of presentation

- assess whether a double column format will improve the style

- gain acceptance for any significant change in size from membership

Page charges - there will be variable page charges for publishing in *Notornis* according to the following guidelines which may be altered from time to time by Council:

- where sole or senior author is a non-OSNZ member, the full rate shall be NZ\$30 pp.

- where sole or senior author is an OSNZ member with institutional support/affiliation, then the rate shall be 66% of the full rate.

- where sole or senior author is an OSNZ member without institutional support/affiliation there will be no page charges.

C.J.R. ROBERTSON

President

OSNZ Juniors Course - 2-10 January 1999

Plans are well underway for a juniors course to be held at the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Centre on the Firth of Thames from 2-10 January 1999. Intending participants should indicate their intention to attend by 31 October 1998 and make travel bookings as soon as possible.

Accommodation is at the Miranda Naturalists' Trust Centre, which can sleep up to 20 juniors in four comfortable bunkrooms (mattresses and pillows provided), with separate showers and toilet facilities. Two self-contained flats each sleep two adults. There is a large dining and lounge area, a school room and library, with a computer available for report writing. A small shop sells Miranda publicity material, but there is no general store within walking distance.

The week will be fully catered for by members of the Trust. Interested participants should forward any special dietary requirements as soon as possible.

Intending participants are urged to make travel bookings as soon as possible. Participants travelling by air can be met at Auckland or Hamilton airports. Transport to local venues will be by private car or minibus.

Accommodation is being offered at the rates for members of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust - ie \$10.00 per night. Final costs have yet to be determined, but the course will be subsidised by OSNZ.

Suggested daytime programme activities:

- Cannon netting with Adrian Riegen

- summer wader census and identification with Dick Veitch

- gull and tern chick banding with Tony Habraken

- passerine mist netting with Stephen Davies

- beach patrol at Waikato Heads with South Auckland members

- visit to Hunua Ranges to look for Kokako with John Charteris

- boat trip on the Firth of Thames to survey seabirds, shag and gannet colonies with Auckland members

- visit to Opoutere to see New Zealand Dotterel nesting sites with Bev Woolley

- visit to Auckland Museum to look at extinct birds with Brian Gill (wet day activity)

Suggested evening programme:

- note taking and writing up, and how to photograph, with Dick Veitch

- migration with Keith Woodley

- moult, wader identification and banding with Stephen Davies

- night mist netting of waders with Tony Habraken and Adrian Riegen

- what's in the slide library with Paul Cuming

- visit to Miranda Hot Pools

For a registration and further information, write, phone or email before 31 October to:

OSNZ Juniors Course

C/o Bev Woolley

8 Beverley Crescent

Hillcrest

Hamilton 2001

Ph. (07) 856 9340

Email: bwoolley@xtra.co.nz

Gull and Tern survey

The information from the 1997/98 survey that I have received to date, along with that from the previous two seasons, is in the accompanying table. The ?s indicate that I don't know whether the Black-billed Gull site was counted (NC)

Black-billed Gull

Numbers of nests:	<u>1995/96</u>	<u>1996/97</u>	<u>1997/98</u>
Northland	0	0	0
Auckland			
Rat Island	3	18	0
Shell Island	9	0	0
Papakanui Spit	0	0	12
South Auckland			
Kidds	26	0	
Miranda	80	130	
Mataitai, Wairoa R.	?	10	
	106	140	
Waikato	0	0	0
Taranaki	0	0	0
Volcanic Plateau			
Sulphur Point, Rotorua	166	c.95	127+
Tongariro Delta	NC	18	0
	166	c.113	127+
Gisborne-Wairoa			
Portland Island	17	c.246	
Bay of Plenty			
Ohiwa Harbour	0	c.30	
Hawkes Bay			
Napier Wharf	c.20	0	?
Waitangi Est.	0	0	c.250
Porangahau Est.	0	0	yes
	c.20	0	c.250
Wanganui	0	0	0
Manawatu			
Manawatu/Mangahou Rs	c.10	NC	NC
Wairarapa			
Waingawa R.	NC	NC	NC
Wellington	0	0	0
Nelson			
Buller/Howard Rs	c.75	0	?
Upper Matakitaiki R	c.10	?	?
Motueka R	?	70	?
	c.85	70	?
Marlborough			
Upper Buller R	82	?	0
Wairau Bridge	c.200	?	0
Ure R Mouth	5	?	0
Sugarloaf Point, Kaikoura	0	yes	yes
Kahutara R mouth	?	flooded	?
	c.287	?	yes
West Coast			
Dolomite Point	0	20	0
Canterbury			
Conway R	c.1000	649	0
Waiau R	973 (3)	1624 (2)	
Hurunui R	278	3+	
Ashley R	383	257 (2)	
Waimakiriri R	?	91	

Peacock Springs	0	78	
Rakaia R	4	732 (2)	
Ashburton R	c.3865 (3)	7686 (4)	4637+
Orari R	c.1200	?	0
Opihi R	c.3824 (2)	1063 (3)	432
Opuha Dam	?	1409	
Ahuriri R	195 (2)	?	
Tekapo R	c.25	?	
Cass R	c.10	?	
Tasman R	c.10	?	
	c.11767	c.13592	c.5069
Otago			
Clutha R	0	0	200
Waitaki R	c.952 (2)	NC	711
Matukituki R	?	296 (2)	NC
	c.952	296	911
Southland			
Aparima R	c.12030 (10)	c.7785 (3)	2500
Oreti R	c.16737 (5)	c.9091 (5-6?)	6691
Waiau R	c.446	c.4635 (3)	NC
Upukerora R	c.178	NC	NC
Mararoa R	c.178	NC	c.1000
Mataura R	NC	c.11963	8830
Eyre Creek	NC	NC	2009
Whitestone R	NC	NC	c.1000
	c.29569	c.33474	c.22030
TOTALS	c.43000	c.48000	c. 28500

White-fronted Tern

Numbers of nests: 1995/96 1996/97 1997/98

Northland

Great King Island	50+	NC	50+
South West Island	NC	NC	1
Moturoa Island	50	100	0
Guano Rock	0	12	15
Cape Karikari	0	0	5
Walker Is	133	523	876
Cone Rock	0	8	0
Mahinepua Peninsula	1	0	0
Nukutaunga Is stack	0	6	4
Kikipaku Bay stack	0	0	14
Black Rocks	33	172	338
Tapeka Point	57	9	0
Okahu Is stack	0	0	1
Motutara Is	47	0	0
Opunga Cove	0	23	0
Te Hue Point	5	0	0
Elliot's Bay	17	0	0
Hokianga Harbour	3	0	1
Whangarei Harbour	50		
Frenchman's Rock	6	2	
Knight Point		88	56
Port Whangarei	2	4	
Mangawhai Estuary	3	18	32
Bream Tail Stack	NC	50	67

Middle Stack (Chickens)	0	4	0
Te Kura Rocks	0	150	
	c.449	1177	1733+
Auckland			
Goat Is	0	0	20
Cape Barrier	0	0	27
Opakau Is	16	22	47
Half Moon Bay marina	NC	9	20
Papakanui Spit	300	900	800
Rat Is	58	190	0
Big Sand Is	0	0	380
Shell Is	16	0	0
Mercer Bay	NC	30	0
Paratahi Is	40	35	0
Lot's Wife Stack	0	0	2
Mangawhai Spit	3	18	32
Mokohinau Is	0	0	1
Crusoe Rocks	0	0	176
Rocky Islet	0	11	11
Motutara Rocks	0	0	6
Muriwai	70	68	184
David Rocks	0	226	82
Motuhoropapa	0	42	0
Okahu Bay wavebreak	94	152	84
Scully's Reef	0	76	0
Te Kawau Bay	0	0	57
Rakino Is	0	19	19
Tawharanui RP	NC	206	0
Tiritiri Matangi Is	0	150	0
Koi Is	NC	15	21
Nani Is	NC	135	0
Gannet Rock	4	0	71
	c.601	2304	2021
South Auckland			
Kidds	92	0	
Miranda	71	295	
Alderman Islands	25	?	
Sand Is	0	c.225	
	188+	c.520	
Coromandel			
Tararua	?	30	
Ruamahunga	?	1	
Korapuki Is	?	35	
Hikanui	?	75	
	?	142	
Waikato			
Woody Head	34+	39+	0
Taharoa	10+	c.150	0
Albatross Point	NC	83	413
	44+	c.272	413
Taranaki			
Port Taranaki	57	0	0
Pararaki Islet	0	c.40	16

Other Sugarloaf Islets	NC	53	113
Tongaporutu R stacks	0	c.20	12
Patea R stack	?	?	56
	57	c.113	197
Volcanic Plateau	0	0	0
Gisborne-Wairoa			
Long Point	c.25	?	
Marau Point	c.35	c.55	
Portland Is	c.750	c.275 (2)	
Wairoa R estuary	?	93	
	c.810	c.423	
Bay of Plenty			
Sulphur Point	89	94	
Waiaua Estuary	0	c.300	
Maketu Spit	0	2	
Whale Is	NC	c.100	
Ohiwa	0	c.100	
	89	c.596	
Hawkes Bay			
Napier Wharf	c.15	c.6	?
Ngaruroro R	1	?	?
Porangahau Estuary	c.50	0	c.200
Waitangi Estuary	0	c.600	c.400
Cape Kidnappers	?	0	c.10
	c.66	c.606	c.610
Wanganui	0	0	0
Manawatu	0	0	0
Wairarapa			
Castle Point	c.75	c.100	
Onoke Spit near Tora	0 ?	183 yes	
	c.75	c.283	
Wellington			
Ward Is	36	30	NC
Kapiti Is	17	65	97
Mana Is	NC	95	yes
	53	190	97+
Nelson			
Stephens Is	?	?	14
Bells Island	185	0	c.250
White Rocks	38	21	?
Bird Is	65	83	129
Chetwode Islands	97	60	18
Middle Trio	0	0	17
South Trio	34	20	0
D'Urville Is plus	5	22	36
Nelson Boulder Bank	0	c.400	c.300
Cable Bay	?	c.70	0
Motueka Sandspit	0	c.200	?
Jag Rocks	0	c.50	11
Croisilles Harbour	0	29	6
Archway Is	?	98	100

Pepin Is	?	?	c.50
	424	c.955	c.931
Marlborough			
Coast Road, Kaikoura	2+	0	0
First Tunnel, Kaikoura	c.33	0	0
Barney's Rock, Kaikoura	132	1	0
Ure R mouth	155	0	0
Otumatu Rock	0	3	0
Ohau Point, Kaikoura	0	154+	0
Paratitahi Tunnel, Kaikoura	0	6	0
Goose Bay, Kaikoura	0	1	0
Irongate Stream, Kaikoura	0	6	0
Sugarloaf Is, Kaikoura	0	1	218
Kaikoura Peninsula	0	86+	c.156
	c.322	c.258	c.374
West Coast			
Punakaiki	30+	20	20+
Oparara Estuary	?	c.200	c.250
	30+	220+	c.270
Canterbury			
Rakaia R mouth	13	?	
Ashley R	192	137?	
Hurunui R mouth	?	25+	
Ashburton R	?	0	29
	205	162+	29
Otago.			
Waitaki R	c.968	?	4178
Long Beach	120	32	NC
Doctor's Point	?	120	NC
Lawyer's Head	0	0	75
Katiki Point	0	0	120
	c.1088	152	4373
Southland			
Jacob's R estuary	c.50	0	0
Joey's Island	168	0	0
New R estuary	20	100	0
Waiiau Bar	?	100	c.250
Cosy Nook	?	c.100	NC
Bird Is, Waituna	?	c.100	NC
Big Solander Is	NC	c.25	NC
Tiwai Spit	NC	NC	c.300
	c.238	c.425	c.450
TOTALS	c.4800	c.8800	c.11,500

or no birds were seen nesting (0). If any member has information to correct or add to the table please would you send it in. PC means possible colony.

Black-billed Gull: although I await results from South Auckland, Gisborne-Wairoa, Bay of Plenty and some Canterbury sites, it is likely that the total for the 1997/98 season will be well down on the previous two. This is mainly because the number of pairs found nesting in Southland, the major stronghold of the species, was considerably lower than previously.

White-fronted Tern: I await results from South Auckland, Coromandel, Gisborne-Wairoa, Bay of Plenty, Wairarapa and some Canterbury sites. Even so, considerably greater numbers of nesting terns were counted in 1997/98 than during the previous two seasons, especially in Northland and Otago. It is a credit to Northland, Auckland and Nelson regions that they have been able to search their regions far and wide for colonies each season. Now each has excellent information about the number of pairs nesting which they can compare with in future years.

I'd like to thank all those people that took part in the surveys, especially those that organised the surveys, and later collated the results and sent them in. It was a difficult task given the capricious nesting behaviour of both species, the impacts that storms and floods had on the colonies, and the difficulty of getting to many sites, such as those on offshore islands and along braided riverbeds. No doubt some regions now have members with considerable expertise in carrying out such surveys, and knowledge of these two fascinating species.

I'm aware that detailed studies of nesting Black-billed Gulls resulted from surveys in two regions - best wishes with those studies. Don't forget that money is likely to be available from the Projects Assistance Fund to enable future surveys for colonies of these two species when you are ready to repeat the effort!

RALPH POWLESLAND
Gull/Tern Survey Convenor

Auckland Harbour Terns

Many years ago the Auckland Harbour Board erected a wood pile wavescreen off Hobson's and Okahu Bays in Auckland Harbour, in an attempt to provide some protection for the boats moored in those bays. The screen, which is about 1,350 metres long, quickly became a roosting site, then a nesting site, for White-fronted Terns, Red-billed Gulls and the odd Black-backed Gull. Over the years, the condition of the wavescreen has deteriorated, and the heads of the piles

and the horizontal woodwork have rotted, causing depressions in which the terns lay their eggs. The Red-billed Gulls make their nests on the horizontal woodwork, which is covered in part with weeds.

Over the past four breeding seasons, OSNZ Auckland has conducted nest surveys of terns and gulls. During the 1994/95 season, colonies were present on the screen but no details were collected. Unusual methods of approach were necessary.

The 1995/96 survey was carried out by Wayne and Nelda Taylor, who used their 5 metre Canadian canoe, powered by a 2 hp outboard motor. It was necessary to choose a calm day - not as easy as you might think - and high water. As the screen was still above their heads, they used an ingenious improvisation consisting of a swivelling camping mirror attached to a leaf rake, which was pushed up and adjusted to see into the nests. The terns did not seem to mind the rake if it was moved gently. What with holding the rake, recording, photographing and manoeuvring the canoe, it took three hours, but a successful count of 94 nests was made on 6 December.

Wayne and Nelda were unable to conduct the next surveys, so Lauren Alston and I used my 9 metre keel yacht for the 96/97 and 97/98 surveys. This involved Lauren being hoisted up the mast in a boatswain's chair and secured, so that she could rest her feet on the cross-trees, which gave her a height of 8 metres. I would do the hoisting, manoeuvre the boat and record the sightings as she called them down.

This was unsuccessful, as I could not hear a word she said over the gulls' screaming at us. Notebook and pencil were hoisted in a bucket for her to juggle with, as well as binoculars and camera. She had a lovely time, especially when the wash of the ferries caused the boat to roll. The surveys took about one and a half hours each.

When using the yacht it is necessary to stem the tide in order to go slowly enough and manoeuvre adequately. A pass can only be made along the north side of the screen, owing to bracing piles on the south side. Tidal height is not as important, as the observer is always sufficiently high. It is also necessary to have the wind blowing off the screen, rather than onto it. We were lucky to have the time and the right conditions on 28 November 1996, when 152 White-fronted Tern and 235 Red-billed Gull nests were counted, and on 5 December 1997 when 84 White-fronted Tern, 259 Red-billed Gull and one Black-backed Gull nests were counted.

It is not certain how much longer the colonies will be allowed to exist, as the structure is becoming more unsound and will eventually have to be removed. In the meantime, the birds continue to ignore the danger notices posted by the

harbour authorities. Almost human, really!

TED KITCHING

AGM Minutes

The following are the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Wellington on 30 May 1998 beginning at 8.30 pm.

1. Present: Christopher Robertson (President) and 78 members.

2. Apologies: Peter Bull, Bruce Stuart-Menteth, Keith Woodley, Peter Gaze, Lorna Simpkin, John Brierley, Gabor Lovei, Alan & Connie Wright, Gerry Clarke, Tony Habraken, Betty Seddon, Ian Reid, Ian Saville, Elizabeth, Michael and David Bell, Shane Cotter, Sybil Cresswell.

3. Departed Friends: A period of silence was observed for the deaths of Jack Cowie, Rosalie Giblin, Prof. Charles Sibley, Prof. Brian Marples, Prof. Bill Philipson and Hallum Secker.

4. Confirmation of Minutes: As the minutes of the 1997 AGM had been circulated, it was proposed that they be taken as read and adopted.

(T. Crocker/J. Rowe)

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. President's Report: The President's annual report had been circulated, so the President gave an update on matters arising from the Council/RRs meetings.

Retiring Councillors and RRs - the thanks of the Society were given to three retiring Councillors (Stella Rowe, Hugh Robertson and Raewyn Empson) and their replacements (Bev Woolley, David Medway and Christine Reed (coopted as Secretary for one year)) were welcomed. RRs who had retired at the end of 1997 or who were about to retire (Bev Woolley, Janet Snell, and Enfys Graham) were also thanked and their replacements welcomed.

Publications review - the results of the review will be published in *OSNZ News* but key decisions are:

- occasional publications such as the Atlas and Checklist will continue;

- regional newsletters, if produced, will be free to all members of that region;

- *OSNZ News* will no longer be a supplement to *Notornis* but will become the Society's national magazine and will include educational inserts on different topics. There will be a competition to name the new magazine;

- *Notornis* will continue, following a clear mandate from over 90% of submissions that the Journal was essential to the Society;

- the Editors have new job descriptions;

- the Society is looking for someone with experience in developing a web page on the Internet to publicise the activities of the Society.

Members who made submissions for the Publications Review and the Review team were thanked for their contributions. David Crockett, Lloyd Esler and Kerry-Jayne Wilson were thanked for developing ideas for the educational insert series for *OSNZ News* and Kerry-Jayne will be responsible for coordinating their preparation.

Rare Birds Committee - a review of the committee system and operation is to be undertaken in the next three months.

Scientific Day - this is continuing to evolve into an important and interesting day, and in future abstracts from talks will be published in *Notornis*.

Wader Issue - steady progress is being made with this and it will probably be published as a special issue of *Notornis* in March 1999.

Regional Boundaries - the new constitution required clear regional boundaries in the event of an election for a Regional Representative. While boundaries are intended only as administrative divisions, liaison with the RR is encouraged if visits to other regions are to be undertaken, particularly to ensure that local studies are not inadvertently upset. Council and RRs were disappointed that two regions were not able to reach agreement on their boundary and that Council was required to define it. This decision has been accepted by the RRs concerned.

Diamond Jubilee - the 60th anniversary of the Society is next year and the AGM will be held in Christchurch.

Awards - there were no awards this year. Council and RRs decided that there was a significant gap in the award system between the Junior Award, the Falla Award and Fellow, and agreed that from next year there would be a "Meritorious Service Award" for furtherance of the objectives of the Society (see the Constitution). Nominees must be nominated and seconded by two members of the Society, but nominees do not need to be members. All nominations must be accompanied by a citation of not more than 100 words and 80% acceptance by a postal ballot of Council and RRs will be required for the award to be made.

The Award next year will be called the Diamond Jubilee Meritorious Service Award and there will be no limit to the number of awards available. Thereafter there will be an upper limit of five awards per annum, and the award will no longer be called the Diamond Jubilee Award.

It was moved that the President's report be accepted.

(D. Crockett/G. Pulham)

6. Treasurer's Report: The Financial Report had been circulated and there were no items raised for discussion. It was moved that the Financial Report be accepted.

(N. Rothwell/G. Schischka)

7. General Business:

United Nations Environment Programme - Brian Bell reported that Don Merton had been recently appointed to the Global Roll of Honour and the President will send him a letter of congratulations.

Conference organisation - B. Woolley proposed a vote of thanks to the Wellington organisers of the weekend, which was supported with acclamation.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 9.05 pm.

C.J.R. ROBERTSON

President

R.A. EMPSON

Secretary

A Miscellany

Fantails - During mid May 1998 when staying at Cedarwood Motel, Bulwer in the outer Pelorus Sound beyond Maud Island, about 150 Fantails were observed feeding on the ground close to the head of grazing sheep. Each sheep had two or three attendant Fantails competing for insects disturbed by the animals. Except for two birds, all were pied.

A few days later while walking through the Maud Island sheep paddocks, several Fantails snapped up insects disturbed by our feet. These birds were like the Bulwer birds, continually on the ground.

Kereru - Graeme Atkins, a delightful young Maori DoC staff member nest-minding Flossie the Kakapo's two fledglings on Maud Island, told me what a joy it was for him to see Kereru totally trusting and able to be approached to within two metres. He told me that in his home region north of Gisborne on the East Coast Kereru were hunted remorselessly and were now very rare and very wary of humans. I told Graeme we had good populations of Kereru on Banks Peninsula, just as tame as the Maud Island native pigeons, and we even had a small number of quite approachable birds within Christchurch city.

I recalled for Graeme my sighting in November 1968 of c.200 Kereru grazing on the clover growing in a cattle paddock 15 kms north of the Franz Josef Glacier hotel in South Westland. I added that this phenomenon still occurred, albeit in

smaller numbers, because in November 1994 I watched 23 Kereru through a 22x telescope grazing on clover on the ground in a cow paddock near Lake Matheson, Fox Glacier. The freshly grown rye grass was ignored, as the Kereru were only plucking the white clover leaves.

Falcon/Kea interaction - In November 1997, while inside the Hutton's Shearwater research hut situated at 1,300 metres a.s.l., the hunting chatter of a falcon was heard, interspersed with an unusual Kea call. On rushing outside the building, a falcon was seen to be making repeated, determined attacks on a lone Kea flying about 40 metres above the valley. At each pass made by the falcon, the Kea would attempt a barrel roll and defend with its claws. Four attacks were made, each knocking the Kea off course, but no feathers seemed to be lost. The Kea finally made the shelter of alpine scrub on the far side of the valley. This was a determined falcon attack and I wouldn't be at all surprised if young, inexperienced Kea are sometimes preyed upon by falcons.

King Shags - 17 King Shag nests were occupied on Duffers Reef on 15 May 1998, with birds sitting tightly, very likely on eggs or small chicks. No food was brought to the nests, so the birds were most likely on eggs.

Bellbirds - Two Bellbirds were sighted in Fendalton, Christchurch, on Anzac Day 1998, feeding on nectar in a large red flowering gum in Woodford Terrace. They have been seen and heard regularly in the same tree for the past eight weeks. While Bellbirds are frequent visitors the hill suburbs of Christchurch, especially in winter, this is the first time I have heard of this species in the north west area of the city.

Albino Pheasant - While returning from Mt Hutt ski field on the Bealey Road at the Waireka Ford near Greendale, my attention was drawn to a harrier apparently attacking a white domestic fowl. On driving quite close to the birds, it became quite obvious that the large white bird was not a fowl but a totally white pheasant, except for the red skin around the eyes. By the rich dark brown plumage I judged the harrier to be a young adult.

The white pheasant walked warily beneath broom scrub while the harrier flapped and struggled through the vegetation about a metre above it. We watched the episode for almost 15 minutes before a stalemate resulted - the pheasant motionless on the ground with the harrier perched in the broom a metre above. The only comment I received from the Fish and Game Council when I described the incident was "it is safe for a year, as the one day shooting season has just passed!"

NZ Falcon - During a brisk walk from Orton Bradley Farm Park on Lyttelton Harbour, a New Zealand Falcon flew past within ten metres in pursuit of the New Zealand Pipit which it captured. I ran to

the site of the capture, very close to the summit of Mt Herbert (920 metres a.s.l.) and watched the falcon pluck the pipit. The falcon's very dark plumage suggested it may have been a young bird. It is the first falcon I have seen in an area I have tramped extensively over the past 60 years.

Grebe ground nest

For the past three years a pair of Australasian Crested Grebes has nested, albeit unsuccessfully, at Moke Lake, near Queenstown.

On 3 February 1997, the second year, the birds commenced the construction of a substantial floating nest made from weed and raupo. Unfortunately, before the end of the month, the nest and the eggs it contained were swamped by a southerly storm.

The grebes returned to Moke Lake and were seen at the outlet on 9 November 1997. No attempt to breed was made until mid December, when I noticed a grebe leaving the water at the inflow end of the lake to sit on the soft ground close to the water's edge. Closer inspection revealed that it was a ground nest which contained one egg.

Sadly by the following afternoon a strong north west wind had pushed the water up and the nest was partially awash. The egg was no longer there. No further attempt was made to nest and the grebes had left the lake by mid February 1998.

GEORGE CHANCE

Large meal for a Pipit

On a sunny day in March, I was on the summit of Mt Cargill, Dunedin, watching a New Zealand Pipit. It was bashing a long dark object on the concrete at the base of a television translator.

The object was broken into two pieces, one of which was swallowed. By then I had my binoculars focussed on the bird and its prey. It was then swallowing the second helping and I was amazed to see that it was the head and upperparts of a skink or gecko. The reptile appeared to have a line of yellow marks down the side, but it was swallowed too quickly for me to see it in more detail.

AUDREY EAGLE

Another Banded Beach Wreck

A beach patrol is always interesting, if not always fruitful. But, as Mike Graham's article in the last *OSNZ News* showed, rewards, when they come, are very satisfying.

On 9 January this year, while out at Ruapuke Beach, 20 kms south of Raglan on Waikato's west coast, Stella and John Rowe and I picked up a decidedly second hand Sooty Shearwater. A quick shake of the body produced a glint of metal, and a yelp from myself. A *band!*

Feverishly I removed it, and it spent the rest of the day burning a hole in my pocket. The bird had only been banded one year, fifteen days previously, yet 1,750 kms away on the Snares Islands by a University of Otago team. It was perhaps travelling back there from the north Pacific Ocean, and was a great repayment after 14 years beach patrolling.

Also picked up that same day was a life ring from a boat called *Elixir II*. I contacted Kawhia Marine Radio, who referred me on to the local police, with amazing results - who should the boat owners be but the Whangarei-based in-laws of my good workmate Fiona! How about that for a double-banger beach patrol!

PAUL CUMING

Obituaries

Jack A. Cowie (1918-1997)

Most will remember Jack as a quiet, unassuming man, who just liked to go about his bird work because he enjoyed it. As Jack was a relatively late starter in the bird field, few knew of his background or interests. He was born in Alexandra and grew up in Otago. He had an inventive mind and constructed a variety of gadgets while a youth. Later he put his skill to constructing a variety of bird traps to help with his banding projects.

Jack spent most of the war on the aircraft carrier *HMS Illustrious*. After the war the outdoors called him and he worked for several years on the Cobb hydro dam (Golden Bay), enjoying the fishing, tramping and birds of the area. It was during these years that ornithology became one of his most serious interests. He became a staunch member of the Marlborough region of OSNZ.

There he got involved in banding and was a regular member of any banding group working in the area. He became the mainstay of the Kaikoura Red-billed Gull banding project. He was for a time Regional Representative for Marlborough, a scattered region with few members, but he maintained contact with them despite having moved to Kaikoura with the catchment board. At Kaikoura he became Dr Jim Mills' right hand man on the Red-billed Gull study and his contribution to this research was significant.

On retiring he moved to Waiiau in North Canterbury, but continued to make a regular annual contribution to the Red-billed Gull study. He developed his own

projects on Black-billed Gull and Black-fronted Terns on the upper Waiiau River. He was a regular attender of Canterbury region meetings and this continued until his declining health forced him to give up, shortly before his death in November.

Jack never married but will be remembered by a large number of friends, fellow birders and the Red-billed Gulls at Kaikoura.

BRIAN BELL

Hallam L. Secker (1923-1998)

Hallam was an old time ornithologist who preferred to study birds on his own. As a result he is not so well known as some of our more sociable birdwatchers. Above all he was a persistent, methodical observer and recorder.

Like many of his age group he served overseas in World War II. One wonders whether he spent more time fighting the Germans or observing the birds wherever he was deployed throughout Egypt and Italy - I think the latter. His major contributions came when he returned to New Zealand and settled back into civilian life.

Hallam was a member of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, being a regular contributor to *Notornis* during the 1950s. However he had a longer and deeper association with the RAOU. This stemmed from his interest in biogeography and the significance of the Australasian region. He served for many years as the NZ branch secretary until the RAOU was reorganised. He was also a member of the Australasian Seabird Group and the Bird Study Association of Australia.

His major contribution was meticulous recording and his persistence with what many might call rather humdrum studies. However it is his records that show the changes in Wellington Harbour of the numbers of albatrosses, giant petrels, gannets and shags, all counted regularly from the train window on his way to work.

He also studied the birds most available to him and his notes record the changes in bird numbers around his home in Upper Hutt and later in the lower Wairarapa. He was the first to recognise seasonal movements in kingfishers and the effects of wasps on passerines through competition for food. His records, over 40 notebooks, will be an invaluable reference for fellow ornithologists, especially those studying the changes in the bird fauna of the southern North Island.

Hallam was shy and retiring but a very philosophical person. He will be missed by his small circle of birding friends. His use of every opportunity to record observations of even the

commonest species will remain an example to us. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Alma.

BRIAN BELL

Calendar of Events

31 July - deadline for nominations for Regional Representative to the Secretary

31 August - CSN - deadline for material to CSN coordinators
Updated job descriptions to Secretary

15 September- Projects Assistance Fund - deadline for applications to the Field Investigations Officer

9 October- Council meeting

10 November- *OSNZ News* - deadline for material

31 January - Interim annual reports (RRs, scheme convenors, to Secretary)

10 February - *OSNZ News* - deadline for material

28 February - Notices of Motion and Council nominations - deadline for submissions to Secretary

15 April - Projects Assistance Fund - deadline for applications to the Field Investigations Officer

30 April - Convenors, RRs, Council annual reports due

10 May - *OSNZ News* - deadline for material

Queen's Birthday Weekend - OSNZ AGM weekend

30 June - deadline for nominations for Awards to the Secretary

Blue Penguin Symposium

Following the successful Scientific Symposium on the Blue Penguin of 1997, the first biennial event will be offered in Oamaru in 1999.

This will be a one day meeting at the Brydone Hotel, Oamaru, on Friday 18 July 1999. A modest registration fee will be charged, which will cover morning and afternoon tea and a buffet lunch.

The preliminary programme will be from the following subjects offered by guest speakers, who are expected to include: Professor R.E. Fordyce on penguin palaeontology, Professor Lloyd Davis on comparative foraging between

populations, Dr Chris Lalas on ecologically good and bad years from stomach washing studies, and Dr Chris Challies on predation experience and demography.

There will also be reports from local work on breeding and site fidelity, demography in Oamaru and studies from on-going autopsy work.

In order to have some basis for planning, non-committal expressions of interests, with possible numbers, are invited to the Convenor.

A.G. HOCKEN

"East Riding:

Whiterocks Road

R.D. 6, Oamaru

Tel/fax (03) 434 8188

Email - agh@es.co.nz

Takahe Symposium

The Australian and New Zealand Ecological Societies' joint annual conference will include a Symposium to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the rediscovery of the Takahe.

The venue is the Castle Street lecture theatres, University of Otago, Dunedin, on 24 November 1998, from 2 - 5.20 pm. The aim of the symposium is to provide a forum for presenting an update on the research and management of Takahe in Fiordland and offshore islands. The last symposium was in 1978 and since then there have been many major developments.

The programme will include a video on Takahe, a review of fifty years' conservation and research, origins and prehistory, trends, dynamics and problems for Takahe in Fiordland, captive rearing as a management tool, island Takahe and problems of establishment, breaking ground in Takahe recovery and a discussion session. After the programme there will be a wine and cheese social at the Otago Museum, during which a range of posters will be on display covering different aspects of research and management associated with the Takahe project.

BILL LEE/IAN JAMIESON

Organisers

Landcare Research Dunedin/Otago University

Email - Bill Lee -

LeeW@landcare.cri.nz

Books Received

The following volumes have recently been received and are available for loan from the OSNZ Library (address inside covers of *Notornis*).

Nolan, V. and Ketterson, E.D., 1996 *Current Ornithology* Vol.13. Plenum Press, New York. 359 pp. ISBN 0 306 45473 4. US\$89.50.

Chapter headings: Social cognition - are primates smarter than birds?; Predicting cognitive capacity from natural history: examples from four species of corvids; Assessing body condition in birds; Avian chemical defence; Past and current attempts to evaluate the effects of birds as predators of insect pests in temperate agriculture; An evolutionary approach to offspring desertion in birds.

Nolan, V. and Ketterson, E.D., 1997 *Current Ornithology* Vol.14. Plenum Press, New York. 303 pp. ISBN 0 306 45479 3. US\$89.50.

Chapter headings: Physiological, ecological and evolutionary bases for avoidance of chemical irritants by birds; Temporal flexibility in avian reproduction: patterns and mechanisms; Sexual selection and the evolution of song repertoires; Social dominance in birds: early findings and new horizons; Energy management in passerine birds during the non-breeding season; Motor correlates of vocal diversity in songbirds.

Erritzoe, Johannes and Erritzoe, Helga Boulet. 1998. *Pittas of the world: A monograph on the Pitta family*. Lutterworth Press, Cambridge. 206 pp. ISBN 0 7188 2961 1 GBP30.00.

There are 30 pitta species, most of which live in South-east Asia, though two are found in Africa and at least three occur in Australia. This monograph contains 32 colour plates accompanied by extensive descriptions of each species, along with distribution, movements, habitat, behaviour, voice, food, breeding behaviour, moult and conservation status. There is a complete list of all scientific synonyms, a list of all museum holdings of skins, skeletons, eggs and fluid specimens, along with a list of all islands where pittas have been found. The book also describes the unique moulting pattern of pittas - immature birds moulting into adult plumage are often found with bald heads and necks.

Lefranc, N and Worfold, T. 1997. *Srikes: a guide to the strikes of the world*. Pica Press, Sussex. 192 pp. ISBN 1 873403 47 X. GBP25.00.

Contains an overview of the genera *Lanius* and *Eurocephalus*, with sections on morphology, plumage and moult, origins, distribution, migration and wintering areas, habitat, social organisation and behaviour, feeding and foraging behaviour, breeding and population dynamics. There are 16 handsome colour plates, followed by a detailed description of each species, including measurements and all other aspects of its biology.

Juniper, T. and Parr, M. 1998. *Parrots: a guide to the parrots of the world*. Pica Press, Sussex. 584 pp. ISBN 1 873403 40 2. GBP35.00.

In the same series as the shrike volume, this book probably has more relevance to readers in this part of the world. There are introductory chapters on origins and evolutionary relationships, classification, natural history, conservation status and captive breeding. 88 colour plates by five illustrators show each of the 350 parrot species. These are followed by detailed descriptions for each species.

KEITH WOODLEY

World Bird Dictionary

Nomina: Global Bird Dictionary is a CD-Rom of the scientific and common names of all the species of bird listed in the most widely used global taxonomies of the last 50 years. With over 30,000 scientific names and 27,000 common names, *Nomina* is a complete reference to avian systematics. There is also a wealth of reference information in the form of notes on publications, classification anomalies, faunal regions, subspecies, lineage, common names and more based on recent literature.

Bringing together 14 of the world's major avian taxonomies, names (in English, French and German) can be browsed, searched for or cross-referenced. Notes warn of homonymy and variations in usage, and flags indicate changes to generic allocation, spelling variations, changes to species limits and various other options.

The CD-Rom and manual (ISBN 0 643 06031 6) are available from Landcare Research's bookselling/publishing operation, as agents for CSIRO books. New Zealanders purchasing the CD-Rom are able to take advantage of the Australian dollar price (AU\$150.00) at the New Zealand dollar equivalent + GST (NZ\$150.00 plus GST = \$168.75).

Details of this and other Manaaki Whenua Press publications are available on www.landcare.cri.nz/nwpress, and these details or orders are available through:

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Email - mwpress@landcare.cri.nz

 Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Rarebits

Effects of RCD - Landcare Research and DoC recently began a joint research programme looking at how reductions in rabbit numbers affect predation rates in the Mackenzie Basin braided riverbeds.

Work has focussed on reasonably abundant bird species, allowing greater statistical precision with less threat to the birds. This will provide more detailed understanding of the ecological processes that affect rare species, though not species-specific prescriptions.

Andrew Crossland and Scott Butcher monitored the fate of 262 Banded Dotterels nests last breeding season, with six independent sites 3-10 kms long. Richard Heyward, Grant Norbury and Andrea Byrom (Landcare Research, Alexandra) measured the size of predator populations by marking and recapturing. Richard McNamara and Phil Stenton (DoC Twizel) measured rabbit abundance.

Rabbits began declining in early September, about the same time as the dotterels began nesting. Our early impression from the data collected is that rabbit declines were associated with increases in predation of dotterel nests. This concurs with work carried out 20 years ago in the same area by Ray Pierce, and by Mark Sanders. This year predation rates are as high as those reported in years following 1080 rabbit control.

Ferrets are important riverbed predators. Andrea Byrom has found that most ferrets she has caught along riverbeds confine their movements to the riverbed, with a minority also using adjacent pastures.

Blue Duck - Stratford and Whanganui Area Office staff have assisted Murray Williams and Jason Godfrey with the capture of Blue Ducks from Egmont National Park and Manganui-a-te-ao River. The results are for inclusion in their study of the energetics of Blue Ducks. The hope is that a relationship can be determined between Blue Duck energy expenditure and habitat quality.

The Blue Duck Recovery Group organised a meeting in Palmerston North of all Blue Duck captive breeders, funded by Ducks Unlimited. A range of issues relating to Blue Duck husbandry was discussed, and a jointly funded project to review the captive population was supported unanimously. This will include facilities management, husbandry techniques and relationships, with a view to enhancing the ability of captive birds to produce juveniles for future release programmes.

Mohua - a great season on Mt Stokes (Nelson/Marlborough) meant a huge production of 30 chicks. This is more than double last year's effort. Breeding started a month earlier than last season and two weeks earlier than ever recorded on Mt Stokes. It was also a big year for Long-tailed Cuckoos, with one Mohua nest being landed with two cuckoo chicks to foster.

Stoat numbers were low on the mountain. Only 11 were trapped, compared to 19 last season and 46 the year before - a probable combination of poor food availability (the mouse

trapping index caught no mice) and over five years intensive trapping. It is interesting to note however that ship rats were caught for the first time this year, probably making the most of low stoat numbers.

We will probably attempt an island transfer in spring 1999, all going well. This will be from Mt Stokes to Nukuwaiata (Inner Chetwode Island) in the outer Sounds. Kiore and Weka were eradicated from this island in 1994 and we believe that Mohua could do well there. This island could then become the base population for further sites, like Lake Rotoiti Mainland Island.

Maud Island - sand and glad news from Maud Island. Amongst all the euphoria of hatching Kakapo, another Takahe has passed away, this time apparently from goitre. The previous deaths resulted when a brooding female became entangled in bidibidi. When she was discovered, her chick was found dead beneath her.

The good news is that Flossie and Richard Henry produced three healthy chicks - one female and two males. Richard Henry is the last Fiordland Kakapo, so it is fantastic that he passed on his genes before he got too old to perform. The smallest chick recently began to fall behind in weight, so he has been taken to Burwood Bush to be captive reared and will return to the island just before fledging. The others are being fed on a diet of pine needles, grass seed and supplementary food.

Ken the Kook Kakapo from Kodfish arrived at the beginning of April and needs constant attention. He has had a recurring wing injury for over a year now.

Brown Kiwi - the breeding season at Okarito resulted in 11 chicks being transferred, with eight eggs or chicks lost at various stages, including a chick which dropped its transmitter and wasn't seen again. Transmitter changes then became the main agenda item.

Six more juveniles were released over summer, at a new site chosen in an attempt to reduce juvenile deaths we had been experiencing through disputes with the neighbours at the previous release site. The six birds were still in good condition after four months in the wild.

Three of our monitored "pairs" are actually trios. Either two males or females have been found to be associated with a pair. Recently it was discovered that one of these extra females was sheltering with a neighbouring male and his usual mate was living in the outskirts. We will be monitoring them again to see if they resolve their differences.

A new programme has been initiated this year, where 400-800 gram captive chicks are sent to Motuara Island in the Marlborough Sounds. All lost between 40 and 100 grams but recovered this loss within c.2 weeks, and some are now over 1 kg. They will remain here until ready to be returned to Okarito forest.

It has been interesting to note the social behaviour of the birds. All have been released in pairs with their clutchmates. These pairs generally split up on the first night, but over subsequent nights they and other birds have got together and regularly share burrows. On one occasion we found six chicks huddled together in the same roost site. This behaviour has never been seen in released North Island Brown Kiwi chicks, which are usually solitary in their roosting habits.

Weka - Weka monitoring in the Greymouth area has come up with some high and varied call rates. One site in Reefton has had 134 calls recorded in 60 minutes. For the same period and location the call rate has been as low as 15. Weka monitoring in the Hokitika area has been completed, with high call rates at pakihi and young plantation forestry sites, and moderate call rates at pasture and indigenous forest sites.



Birds Australia

Birds Australia Column

It is exciting enough when a new bird species is added to the Australian list. It is even more extraordinary when *two* new species are added on one month. In March 1998, the Birds Australia Rarities Committee unanimously confirmed Laysan Albatross and Blue Rock Thrush as additions to the official list of birds recorded in Australia, its territories and territorial waters.

The Blue Rock Thrush appeared on a headland at the northern end of a nudist beach near the resort town of Noosa in south-east Queensland. It attracted an enormous amount of publicity among not only birdwatchers but also the general public. The bird seen at Noosa may have been induced to migrate further southwards than usual because of the extensive forest fires in Indonesia in the latter part of 1997.

The case of the Laysan Albatross goes back to the mid 1980s, and a mess of misidentifications on Norfolk Island. The bird was actually first found in October 1985, apparently documented as a Shy Albatross, banded as a Black-browed Albatross and subsequently released. A further sighting, with photographs, occurred at the same place in August 1986, though it is not known if it was the same bird as the band is not visible in the photographs. The Norfolk Island record is only the third record for the Southern Hemisphere. This brings the Australian list up to what must be exactly 800 species.

The workshop to discuss the forthcoming second Atlas of Australian Birds project took place in Melbourne

over the weekend of 18-19 April 1998. It was attended by about 70 invited participants representing bird clubs from all over Australia, as well as people from Environment Australia and state government conservation agencies, with a sprinkling of experts in the fields of statistics, survey methodology and computer databases.

The conceptual skeleton of how the new atlas project would be run emerged quite clearly from both the plenary presentations and discussions, and from the reports of the small sub-groups which made recommendations on key issues.

As well as the General Atlas there will be an intensive sampling atlas, for which willing atlassers will be asked to visit selected sites several times at different seasons, in order to monitor the effects of revegetation programmes and other land use changes, and a wetlands monitoring programme, with a focus on existing and potential Ramsar sites, using a methodology compatible with existing wetland and waterbird data series.

Geoff Barrett, the Project Coordinator, then worked very hard to flesh out the skeleton of the project (although the odd bone was still dislocated) with the necessary organs and muscles so that it rose from its slab on 31 July. There was a major article in the June *Wingspan*, and to date more than 800 people have expressed interest in joining what is Australia's biggest community conservation project.

The Australasian Seabird Group has recently acquired a new Editor for the *Australasian Seabird Group Newsletter*. The AGSN has been without an editor for some time and issues are overdue. David James' plan is to produce the next one in October, then back to the regular semi-annual publication in April and October.

He is also compiling an email directory of Australasian seabird enthusiasts in order to keep people up to date with happenings. You do not have to be an ASG member to be on the email directory - contact David on dave-james@beyond.net.au if you wish to be on the list.

A programme of beach patrolling has been running since 1992, with summaries for 1992 published and 1993/94 about to be. The aim is long term - for example, in New Zealand the beach patrol scheme has been running since 1940.

The 1998 Members' Day was held in conjunction with the Birds Australia AGM and had been organised at the last minute. The theme was Regional and Special Interest Groups.

First to arrive was Chris Sandbrink's 4WD, packed with screens, projectors, sound systems, displays and other paraphernalia. Doris Graham arrived next, with boxes of goodies, trays of food and a small group of dedicated volunteers to feed the armies of members. Donald Coventry started proceedings, Camilla

Myers gave a sneak preview of *HANZAB* Volume 4, Bill Fenton talked about membership and publicity, and a replacement projector, after the first blew a bulb, enabled wonderful slides by David Baker-Gabb to be shown.

Next was an update on the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo project in eastern Victoria, and the Atlas project. After this, the convenors of each Special Interest Group went through their activities, including the Australasian Wader Studies Group, The Australasian Raptor Association, the Australasian Seabird Group and the most newly formed group, the Parrot Association.

After lunch six different speakers went around the nation, including the newest regional group in Tasmania.

At the AGM, new Council Treasurer Robert Coles and the new auditors were introduced. New President Dr Graham Harrington was elected unopposed, and Normal Wettenhall read a citation for the nomination of Dr Clive Minton to be elected as a Fellow of Birds Australia. His wife Pat proudly accepted on his behalf, as Clive was busy catching waders in Delaware Bay, North America. The Serventy Medal was presented to Dr Richard Zann for his outstanding contribution to ornithology, particularly the study of Zebra Finches. Citations will be published in *Emu*.

Congratulations also to Alan Leishman on his John Hobbs medal, and to Graham Pizzey on Honorary Life Membership of Birds Australia after fifty years membership, including service on Council.

The AWSG's north-west Australia wader expedition is currently in the field, covering the whole spring arrival period of migratory waders. It is intended to mark Red-necked Stints, Curlew Sandpipers and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers with picric acid, a bright yellow dye on the breast and wings. The dye is harmless to the birds, will last until the feathers are moulted, and should be visible for at least 2-4 months. Please report all sightings to Clive Minton at 165 Dalgetty Road, Beaumaris, Vic 3193 or on mintons@ozemail.com.au.

A summary from *Initial Assessment of the Impact of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease on Australian Birds of Prey - 1996-98* reveals some apparent detrimental effects on some of Australia's larger Falconiformes. Brown Falcon populations have been severely affected, with declines of up to 50%. Little Eagles have also declined, and there is some evidence of decline in Brown Goshawk populations. Rabbit is now a significant component in the diets of 11 of the 24 Falconiformes species found in Australia.

From Ian Temby come several reports which have been received of Wedge-tailed Eagles (for which evidence of effects of rabbit declines are hard to gauge) taking lambs or goat kids, but what about horses? Miniature horses are growing in

popularity, but are rather expensive. A miniature horse breeder in central Victoria was horrified to see a 2 kg foal, which she had already sold for more than \$2000, seized and carried away by a Wedge-tailed Eagle. The foal was very much alive and healthy when taken. Its half-eaten carcass was found elsewhere on the property later in the day.

Courtesy of *Galab*, the in-house newsletter of Birds Australia.

Holiday Birding

When camped at Kids Bush, Lake Hawea, in February 1994 we noticed dozens of cicada wings on the ground covered with dew shining in the sun, but were mystified as to their origin. Later that day, having dinner in our campervan, I noticed a sparrow flutter heavily to the ground with something in its bill. It proceeded to peck and devour the object. Through our binoculars we watched it and found it was eating a cicada, which took some time, leaving only the wings. Later we saw the same feeding behaviour with another sparrow in exactly the same way, catching the cicada in mid air. From the number of wings the birds had been feeding on cicadas for some time.

Watching fourteen spoonbills asleep on a high tide roost at Foxton in a very strong wind, I noticed a Black-backed Gull land and slowly edge towards a bird on the outskirts of the flock, then reach out to get hold of the wing and give a tug. The spoonbill ruffled its feathers and settled down again, so the gull repeated the act. This time it got a really good hold and yanked the spoonbill right off its feet. When it recovered its balance it rushed the Black-back into the air; the gull then landed at the rear of the flock. Walking slowly forward until directly behind the last bird in the flock, it reached out and gave it a sharp peck. The spoonbill then ran forward into the flock, so the gull then moved to the next spoonbill and, reaching out, gave it a sharp peck. That was the last straw - spreading its wings and opening its bill, it rushed at the gull, which took to the air and sloped off.

Camped at Makarora in March 1994 we heard New Zealand Falcons calling, and watched two birds drive a third over the river towards the Young Valley. As the birds circled, diving and zooming, they were joined by a third and then the trio flew to a tall dead pine behind the motor camp. The ranger told me they had been present for the whole breeding season, and he had a dead young bird which had flown into a window in the camp. Flying into the Wilkin Valley next day we saw another falcon over the north branch flying up valley. Returning down valley several days later we came upon another falcon sitting in a dead beech tree on the flats. As we watched it stooped down to the river bed and returned to

its perch with either a skink or a gecko, which it rapidly ate. It then made a second pass but returned empty-handed. We were able to approach within 25 metres before the bird flew away down valley.

We searched up the north branch of the Wilkin for Rock Wrens and in the Crucible Valley in Siberia; also on the Sealy Range in Mt Cook National Park, but in spite of being told by rangers of sightings of Rock Wrens we were unable to locate any.

JOHN ROWE

Green Island Nature Reserve

An assistant bander's observations.

Green Island, to quote Neville Peat, is "a green pyramid, white-wreathed with surf - a seabird city". Neville Peat is not wrong: the island is home to Stewart Island Shags, Little Shags, Black-backed Gulls, Blue Penguins, Yellow-eyed Penguins and, of course, Royal Spoonbills. The opportunity to visit this island (a nature reserve, for which a DoC permit is required) is one that should not be missed.

The "fun" part of the banding exercise begins with a breakfast-jolting, posterior-soaking experience, supplied by the thrill-seeking Brighton Surf Life Saving Club in one of their inflatable zodiacs. The boat ride is a bumpy but very stimulating way to start the day and a good place to look out for the wave-skimming birds. The journey to the island takes approximately 20 minutes.

On arrival at the island you will have to scramble or jump onto rocks as there is no beach for landing on. This is not as difficult as it sounds, although a good pair of non-slip footwear would be appropriate. From the landing spot you will walk around the seals and penguins to get to the "tearoom". This is a good opportunity to dry off a bit and put on overalls or the like, for the main purpose of the trip is yet to come.

The main exercise of banding Royal Spoonbill chicks involves a walk over rocks to the eastern or seaward side of the island. The nests are in taupata shrubs and are about two metres above a reasonably steep and slippery mud face. It is easy to forget how dirty and wet you are once you start handling these ugly duckings of the wading bird world. The bandable chicks are the size of a scrawny chicken and the only thing that gives them away as a spoonbill, at this stage, is their oddly shaped bill. Although endearing in their young state, they have a long way to go before they become as graceful as their parents.

The banding only takes about an hour so as not to disturb the colony too much. This leaves some time to observe the colony from a distance, and to return

to the "tearoom" for a well-earned cuppa. Back at the tearoom you will have some time to reflect on your experiences, or perhaps to psych yourself up in preparation for the homeward journey in the zodiac.

The opportunity to visit this unique treasure island is one that should not be missed.

PHIL GARSIDE

Regional Roundup

Northland

At last, the long awaited information has come through to tell us that the band attached to the skeleton of an albatross found on a beach patrol on 11 October 1997, 31.8 kms south of Glinks Gully on the west coast, is from a Wandering Albatross. The bird was banded on 10 November 1982 at one year of age by the British Antarctic Survey party at Bird Island, South Georgia.

We found two more Wandering Albatrosses, one juvenile, on the west coast patrol in June, and a fairly decayed White Tern in July. Large numbers of diving petrels have been found on both coasts during the last two months, and Blue Penguin numbers are higher than normal.

Rachel McClellan gave an interesting talk on her study of Flesh-footed Shearwaters on Kawera Island, illustrated with slides, at our May meeting. The June meeting was a discussion evening, and in July Andrea Booth showed beautiful slides and talked about her trip to the Bounty Islands to study the Fulmar Prion in particular, but also some of the other unique species there. These islands are solid granite rocks rising steeply out of the ocean with no vegetation at all and no fresh water, so this proved to be quite a challenging situation.

July 4th found us at Waitiki Landing in the Far North ready to do our annual wader survey. However torrential rain overnight meant that some of us were the waders. We managed to cover all roosts except Kaipohue Island. To reach it we would have had to take off our clothes, hold our gear above our heads and wade through swift muddy water at least chest deep - there are some things that I won't do for birds!

The weather also prevented us from crossing to Motukawanui Island in the Cavillis group to do our annual tree planting. We still stayed at Lonsdale Park as planned, and had a shared mid-winter Christmas dinner, complete with the mulled wine which was to have been a reward for all our labour. We will try again on 15 August - 5,000 trees await us....

The kiwifruit have ripened about a month earlier than last year so we are once again mist netting Silvereyes on suitable mornings at Wren Greechan's property at Kiripaka, under the direction of Ray Pierce. So far we have mainly unbanded birds, with recaptures from each of the previous five years. A Fernbird was a surprise capture, and two courting Fantails, one without a tail, were so engrossed they flew into the net. Love is blind, it seems, even in the bird world.

(Lorna Simpkin)

South Auckland

At our June meeting we were treated to an interesting presentation by Sandra Morris on her work as an illustrator of children's books. It was great to hear Sandra's ideas for future books and to be able to view her artwork, but then the audience was asked to try their hand at illustrating, with very mixed results!

Simon Fordham gave an update on the work and bird releases on Tiritiri Matangi Island, complemented by excellent slides of some, if not all, of the birds that can be seen on that jewel of an island.

Cabbage Tree Island, home to 1,500 or so Gould's Petrels, was the subject of our August meeting. Hugh Clifford spent ten days on this island volunteering for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and he shared his experiences with us in a very entertaining talk.

Large numbers of diving petrels have been picked up on our beaches lately, with 100 in June, 34 in July and still a few are being found. With such a large number of birds, a few extra beach patrols have been carried out during these months. Rob Wheeler recalled that not since 1975 has there been such a significant number of diving petrels washed up in our area. There was a good selection of other species, including two White-headed Petrels and our first Kereru!! - an usual find for a beach patrol.

In mid July a few of our members joined Bay of Plenty branch on a trip out to White Island. Apart from the thrill of walking around a live volcano, we were very keen to see seabirds en route. We weren't disappointed, with Black-browed Mollymawks, Wandering Albatrosses and Fairy Prions among the highlights of an enjoyable day.

(Pam Agnew)

Waikato

At our May meeting Keith Owen shared his recent experiences in the Chatham Islands with us. The history and the past and present ornithology of this archipelago are fascinating. It is sometimes hard to remember that it is part of New Zealand and that we can just hop on a plane and get there very easily - but how many of us every will?

In June at our evening meeting we heard from Mairi Jay and Dale Lethbridge, members of the "Tui 2000" project. This

aims to provide better bird habitat in Hamilton and it was enlightening to hear about the huge amount of planting which has been organised by a very small group of dedicated volunteers. Hamilton is an unusual city in that it is fairly flat, but at the same time is dissected by many deep gullies which drain to the Waikato River. They mostly have steep sides and formerly swampy bottoms, and in many parts are unloved and uncared for. They do however provide a great opportunity for restoration with native vegetation to provide corridors through the city for native birds.

Our winter harbours census of Aotea, Kawhia and Raglan was delayed for a week by unsuitable weather, but then successfully carried out. On all three harbours most of the work is done from small boats, so wind is an important limiting factor. The main notable feature was the presence of 65 Royal Spoonbills at Kawhia. This is the highest number ever, and considerably higher than the previous highest (47 in 1996). There were nine Black-hybrid Stilts at Kawhia, but not many band combinations could be recorded, so a further trip was made in early August specifically for that purpose.

In July our evening meeting was entertained and informed by John Rowe's account of recent birding in Tasmania. Some of our members joined the July boat trip to White Island and Volkner Rocks which was organised by the Bay of Plenty region. Sea conditions for landing at White Island were expected to be marginal, so before deciding to leave Whakatane, the skipper asked for a vote on who wanted to risk going. Birders are hardy people, so of course the vote was yes. No doubt Bay of Plenty will report more fully on this interesting trip.

Beach patrolling has been fairly routine, but it was unusual to find two live birds - a Salvin's Prion and a Kerguelen Petrel - on one patrol at Waikorea in June. A dead Kereru at Taharoa in June was also unusual.

Our monthly lakes census at Hamilton and Forest Lakes has been showing the very usual seasonal trends in duck numbers, declining from the peak in May to less than a third of that number in August. Coot numbers at Hamilton Lake were much higher in August than in the previous two months, and at Forest Lake a brood of Black Swans hatched at the beginning of August and a Pied Stilt was nesting.

Banding adults in the Grey-faced Petrel project resumed in late July, and many interesting recaptures have been made. A number of birds which were banded as chicks have been recaptured for the first time, at ages ranging from 3+ to 4+ years. There have also been further recaptures of colony-hopping birds which have been caught at more than one location. The recapture which gave us the greatest thrill was the bird we banded at Motuotau Island in May

1995, and which was subsequently caught at sea off the NSW coast at Wollongong in October 1997. We recaptured it at Motuotau Island in July 1998, and it was proudly sporting an Australian band on its other leg. A good example of COR (Closer Ornithological Relations) at work between our two countries.

(Hugh Clifford)

Bay of Plenty

About ten members visited the Matata Lagoons and surrounding regions on 24 May. Two Black-fronted Dotterels were still at the lagoons, with a White Heron, shovelers, stilts, Mallards and others. Ross Carmichael made the comment that never seen as many waterbirds in such a small area. The restoration work done by DoC and Tasman does appear to be effective.

At the Rangitaiki River mouth we saw 11 Black-fronted Terns. These were the first seen here this year, and the highest number present for quite a few years.

The winter wader census field trips were well attended, as usual. Many thanks to all members and friends who helped with this project.

In July the boat trip to White Island and the Volkner Rocks had an excellent turnout, with 28 people, all OSNZ members or friends of members. They travelled from all parts of the North Island - Tauranga, Cambridge, Hamilton, Gisborne, Auckland and Wellington, plus an albatross which had been cared for by Bill Sloan for the previous two weeks. This was a very successful outing considering the weather of the previous week, and the doubt, prior to boarding, about landing conditions on White Island.

Birds seen were Wandering Albatross, Shy and Black-browed Mollymawk, Flesh-footed and Fluttering Shearwater, Common Diving Petrel, Fairy Prion, Grey-faced Petrel, Blue Penguin, Black-backed Gull, Australasian Gannet, White-fronted and Black-fronted Tern.

Recent interesting sightings from the region include a Wandering Albatross, a white phase Southern Giant Petrel (with scattered flecks of brown) and a Salvin's Mollymawk, all found exhausted in the Waiotahi Estuary in early July. Bill Sloan has been taking care of these until they are ready to fly again. 25 Cattle Egrets were seen by John and Margaret Brierley near Greig Road and Owaiti Lagoons on 29 July and 2 August.

There is a region on Mt Edgecumbe - Putuaki - which has ancient podocarp trees growing in an original native bush forest, and which are probably more than 500 years old. I first heard about this reserve from an old Kawerau identity, who had been to it but wasn't too sure how to get there. Then the Tarawera Forest manager talked about it and how impressive it was, but he never did tell

me how to get there. There is a reference to the area in the publication *The Story of Tarawera Forest*. I have spent a lot of time on Mt Edgcombe and thought I knew most of the places on the mountain - so where could this place be?

It was Wally Kennedy, a tour operator, who eventually told me how to find the way in. I think however that unless you go with someone who knows the way in you would be unlikely to find it. I wrote to Doc and Tasman Forestry, concerned that there are logging operations fairly close, but DoC assured me that, along with others, the area was set aside at the time of forming the Tarawera Forest Agreement with the Maori people.

The birds I have seen include NZ Robins, Tomtits, Whiteheads, Grey Warblers, Fantails, NZ Pigeons, Tui and Bellbirds. Robins appear to be in good numbers, responding readily to a taped recording.

(John Brierley)

Gisborne/Wairoa

The 1998 winter wader count gave some unusual results due to dry conditions. There were no waders at all at Wairoa, and it seems that every Pied Stilt in the district was at Whakaki Lagoon. Absent were the usual flocks of Banded Dotterels and Spur-winged Plovers. The usual wet paddock at the end of Muriwai Road, which is the winter high tide roost, was dry, and birds hard to find. Only the Wrybills were on the usual sandspit which they prefer.

Bird numbers continued to grow at a rapidly shrinking Whakaki Lagoon until the drought broke. On 6 June Pied Stilt numbers reached 2,318, Grey Teal c.2,250, Shoveler c.2,300, Paradise Shelduck c.1,030, Caspian Tern 31 and Little Black Shag 246. However there were fewer Black Swans and Canada Geese. Royal Spoonbills had built up to 28 by mid July.

Over the years I have found that the easiest place to see North Island Tomtits is the parking and picnic area at the Wharerata Summit on SH2. They live in the Wharerata Scenic Reserve below the parking area, and will usually flit around the tables, as well as finding food in the surrounding mown lawn area. Two males were present on 21 June.

(Geoff Foreman)

Hawkes Bay

Our census in June provided some interesting sightings, including 27 NZ Dabchicks at Westshore Lagoon, 44 Spotted Shags at East Clive, two White Herons, 34 Royal Spoonbills, seven Red-necked Stints, and a Little Egret and Gull-billed Tern at East Clive and Ahuriri respectively. Wayne and Margaret Twydale report 92 Spotted Shags and a bittern at East Clive on 20 June, while Black-fronted Terns appear to be in lower numbers this year - the highest being

27 seen by Barbara Taylor and Kath Todd on 28 July. Stormy weather is the best time to look for terns, when presumably they can't fish at sea. Not the best time for a field trip though!

Barbara Taylor reported a dead Tui with colour bands in a Havelock North garden on 13 July. She noted that it had apparently choked, with plant material still in its throat. The Banding Office records show that it was banded at Mohi Bush as an adult male on 23 November 1988.

I also received notice of a Hawkes Bay SIPO, banded on the Ngaruroro River in 1994, which has been sighted at Whangarei. This is the first northern record of one of our birds. Past sightings have included Foxton Beach and Farewell Spit.

(Wayne Twydale)

Taranaki

The May field trip was into the Waitaanga Forest from the Waitaanga South Road. 20 species were seen, robins and fantails being the most common. A Morepork and kiwi were heard by Barry Hartley who camped overnight at the end of the south road.

At the June meeting Barry and the RR David Medway gave their report on the AGM. General observations reported at the meeting included reports of Song Thrushes being very vocal in many different areas. Up to 60 Banded Dotterels have returned to the Waiongana River mouth. A Spotless Crake was killed by a family cat at Okato. The formal part of the meeting was followed by an excellent illustrated talk by Barry Hartley about his recent Antarctic trip. The July meeting was our AGM.

The monthly trip in east Egmont National Park was to the Potaema Bog, followed by a short walk on a loop track from the Stratford Mt House. All common forest birds were seen and it was pleasing to see so many NZ Pigeons feeding. Fruit was still present on seven native tree and shrub species.

A member took part in a DoC goat cull in the Makino State Forest and reported that the most common bird heard and seen was the NZ Robin. Over a two week period 600 goats were killed.

Interesting sightings from the Waiongana River mouth include a NZ Dabchick, seven Pied Stilts, a Reef Heron, 60+ Spur-winged Plovers and 75+ Banded Dotterels. Another sighting of note in July was a Common Sandpiper at Hawera.

To conclude the July meeting David Medway gave a summary of the beach patrol scheme and of the "incomparable joys of transporting noisome piles of rotting specimens home to enthusiastic family welcomes". He then exhorted members to join in this pastime and to go patrolling, as the branch has been most remiss in the last decade in not accomplishing much in this regard. The members' response was guarded.

At our August meeting reports indicated that most resident winter waders are still present, although some (eg. Pied Stilts) have started to disperse. A first for the Inglewood district is a flock of five Eastern Rosellas, frequently seen on a farm property. Of wrecks found on a beach patrol at Cape Egmont, 13 were diving petrels. We were able to share Ron Lambert's enthusiasm for India when he showed his slides and spoke about his recent trip.

The August field trip will be to the Moki Forest. It will be interesting to note if the robin numbers are as high as those recorded recently in the Makino and Waitaanga Forests.

(Rosemary Messenger)

Wanganui

Although the Wanganui branch is small and we have not reported our activities in *OSNZ News* very often recently, we do meet regularly (every 4th Tuesday of the month) and we run monthly field trips the Sunday before the meetings.

At our May meeting, Tom Teasdale, our RR, showed two videos from his extensive collection, a whimsical British one on the design of bird feeding tables and another on pelicans. In July, Colin and Robyn Ogle spoke on their April 1998 trip, with five other OSNZ members, to Sulawesi in Indonesia. Their talk was illustrated with slides and overhead projector maps and diagrams.

Ormond Torr has led a series of trips this year to our local dune lakes. At Lake Westmere on 19 April we saw five NZ Scaup, seven Grey Teal, 22 or more Paradise Shelducks and 14 coots. We returned to Lake Westmere and also Virginia Lake on 21 June to make a total count of coots. At the former lake there were 10 coots and 87 at the latter. In June there was also a NZ Dabchick at Lake Westmere. Apart from Lake Westmere, our Wanganui lakes generally have either dabchicks or coots, but not both.

On a trip to Lake Kaitoke on 23 August we again saw many of the waterbird species seen regularly in this region. These included four dabchicks, about 25 Little Black Shags indulging in "mob-fishing", and NZ Shoveler, Grey Teal, NZ Scaup, Black Swan, Paradise Shelduck, and many Mallard, Pukeko and Welcome Swallows.

For at least the third year in a row a NZ Falcon has been taking domestic doves or pigeons from gardens in Wanganui. On 21 June, a falcon was seen to take a fantail pigeon at the Acacia Motels on Anzac Parade and to eat its head on the lawn. This was the third pigeon taken by a falcon at the motels in two weeks.

Ormond Torr reports that right through the winter there have been ten Royal Spoonbills around the lower tidal reaches of the Whanganui River, which is at least 3-5 more regulars than in previous years.

(Colin Ogle)

Manawatu

At the meeting in June the Manawatu region OSNZ rose from its ashes and, after a gap of far too long, we now have a Regional Representative - Brian Tyler of Levin was elected and has been accepted as RR. It is hoped that meetings and field trips will now be held on a much more regular basis.

Unusual bird sightings have been rather few over the period May to August, but there was a massive influx of ducks to the Manawatu Estuary, coincident with the duck shooting season. At least 500 Australasian Shovelers and 350 Grey Teal were present, and I was lucky enough to find an eclipse plumage drake Chestnut Teal on 1 and 7 June. Also on the estuary were up to four NZ Scaup, the first records there for many years. Two Red-necked Stints have stuck it out for the winter.

On 5 August Roger Wasley saw two parakeets (presumed to be Red-crowned) in the Porangahau Valley. On the fringes of the region - though officially in Wanganui - there has been a small flock of up to 25 Cattle Egrets at the Wangachu River, and an amazing number of up to 73 NZ Dabchicks on a very small pond at the Marton sewage works, both through June and July.

Finally a Yellow-eyed Penguin was picked up by DoC at Scotts Ferry in late April. It was unfortunately dead, but was thought to have come ashore alive.

(Ian Saville)

Wairarapa

Highlights of the past three months was a trip to Te Papa's natural history section, a brilliant talk by David Cornick on his trip through Scotland and Iceland, and an interesting evening meeting identifying birds using slides, tape recordings, eggs and silhouettes.

Bird damage in orchards and vineyards has prompted a survey and project by our region. Starlings are the main culprits. So far several major roosts have been located. One roost, a eucalypt coppice, is surrounded by orchards. Bird numbers in this roost have been estimated between 30,000 to 200,000. Survey forms sent out to a large number of orchardists, vintners and cropping farmers resulted in a quick and heavy response. This shows the concern and feeling of these groups.

We intend to continue this project for up to 12 months. All members involved have been allocated an orchard or vineyard to study and map. These properties will be monitored closely.

On 21 June we repeated a field trip of last winter - a harrier count between Masterton and Greytown to Martinborough. The weather on both days was fine and calm. The two routes repeated indicated a small increase in harriers despite the rabbits. Possum numbers, after a two year 1080 poisoning

campaign in the area, are also down, and so were harrier road kills.

Interest continues to be high among our dedicated group.

(Miles King)

Wellington

We have had two evening meetings with very high quality speakers. In July Alan Tennyson spoke about bird extinction on Pitt Island, which was once an outstanding bird island but is now almost completely farmed. About 10,000 subfossil bones have been collected, representing 50 species. A quarter of these are Fairy Prions which are no longer present on Pitt Island. The wealth of bird life which has been lost is quite amazing, and there is not room in this report to pass on all the information Alan gave to us. Wellington people - come to our meetings!

August brought Steve Lawrence, this time with a change in direction from falcons to Kakapo, and research being done at Wallaceville Animal Research Centre on hormones - to be more precise, on phytohormones which are produced by plants and act on animal reproduction. The aim is to try to find some type of hormone which will induce ovulation in the birds and increase their breeding frequency. This research is in the early stages, and Steve gave us a very clear account of what it is all about. A most interesting evening.

The three years of quarterly counts in the Karori Sanctuary have been completed. Colin Miskelly summarised the findings - an even number of birds present over the three years for each count. Silvereyes totalled 48% of all birds counted. When the predator-proof fence has been erected and the pests removed, these counts will be repeated.

Our new project is the Wellington Harbour survey which started in July. This is the third time this has been done. Coastal birds are counted along the shores of the harbour every month for two years. This first happened in 1975-77, then in 1986-88 - see *Notornis* 39:263-289 (1992).

(Ros Batcheler)

Nelson

Not a lot of organised activity over the winter months. The winter census was well attended, with several new members involved on Farewell Spit. Early July saw a flurry of activity on the beach patrol front, with quite a wreck of diving petrels in particular - a lot by Nelson standards at least.

I had hoped to report on our trip from Kaikoura, hiring a fishing vessel to get out amongst the seabirds, but a persistent easterly has forced a postponement of this one.

Some members have made it to Queen's Gardens in central Nelson to see a beautiful male Mandarin Duck which is a recent arrival. He's holding his own well against the randy Mallards and may decide to settle in.

(Peter Gaze)

Canterbury

The past three months had been pretty quiet on the bird front, but the scene brightened with a Whimbrel seen regularly at the Ashley Estuary, along with two Black Stilts. A Little Black Shag is staying around the Avon-Heathcote Estuary - Canterbury sees very few of these birds.

In July a White-winged Black Tern in full breeding plumage in the company of an immature bird was regularly seen at Coopers Lagoon, a regular site for the species. Colin Hill is sure that he saw three Intermediate Egrets on his farm at Lake Ellesmere on August 13. The next day a Little Egret was seen at the lake. On 15 August there was a large influx of Wrybills to the lake, with a total of 340. Three colour banded birds (from the Mackenzie Basin) were among them.

The real highlight however, in early September, was a Stilt Sandpiper, seen by Colin Hill at Lake Ellesmere and confirmed by seven other members in the following days before it disappeared. It is an adult with vestiges of breeding plumage. Stilt Sandpipers, a North American breeding species which normally winters in the United States and central South America, have been seen on 3-4 occasions in Australia but this is a first New Zealand record.

We were treated at our June meeting to the latest update on the national Kakapo management programme by Paul Jansen. We had the privilege of seeing the first photographs of the chicks on Maud Island. It is pleasing to see that the hard work of the Kakapo team is starting to pay off. In July Tony Crocker, our intrepid traveller, showed us slides of his trip to Argentina, the Antarctic Peninsula and the Falkland Islands.

The August meeting heard from Andrew Grant about Canterbury's mainland island. One of two in the South Island, it covers 5,000 hectares and is situated on the south bank of the Hurunui River. It has a healthy population of Yellowheads, Great Spotted Kiwi, Kaka and NZ Falcons. Robins, parakeets (including the now only known major population of Orange-fronted Parakeets) and Brown Creepers are also present. Predator control includes keeping at bay possums and stoats which come down the valley in winter to escape the cold. There are very few wasps and no rabbits.

The June field trip was our usual winter wader count, and July the annual winter census of the Ashburton Lakes which, due to the mild winter, were not frozen. The August field trip was cancelled.

Pukeko, Banded Dotterels and Spur-winged Plovers are nesting and producing chicks, and the riverbed birds are back on their territories, so spring must be here.

(Sheila Petch)

Otago

Banding of Silvereyes at the three banding stations has been in full swing - there are lots of birds around willing to be caught. Last year's total of 1,402 birds has been exceeded. Retraps are lower than last year, but we are catching a few. Some interesting movements have been recorded.

An article in the *Weekender* had a good response: over 80 people rang in with more than 25 observers filling in a sight recovery sheet, including some with a lot of birds on their bird tables without bands. It is just as important to record the lack of banded birds as their presence.

Ken Mason, leader of Dunedin Teen Conservation, part of Dunedin Forest & Bird, is working on the possibility of transferring Riflemen to Quarantine Island. Later in the year, when more information becomes available, we might be asked to assist in a banding programme.

There have been few ornithological snippets handed in. Kingfishers, scarce in the south, appear to be on the increase again - not in large numbers, but six at Aramoana and five at Papanui are a good start. For the first time in years of having a bird table, we had a Tui this winter.

The winter wader count took place in mild, sunny and not too windy conditions. Numbers were similar to last winter, except that Banded Dotterels were at Aramoana, lifting the total to 126+.

(Peter Schweigman)

Southland

Not much happened here over the winter. Our first attempt at a winter wader census was thwarted by the weather and resulted in only eight Variable Oystercatchers, one Turnstone and 28 NZ Dotterels. If only that ratio of NZ Dotterels to other waders could be maintained! A later survey on 8 August showed about 350 godwits in Awarua Bay, and our two tattlers have over-wintered.

On Sunday 21 August five of us investigated Waituna Lagoon. It is several years since this has been counted as it always seems to be blocked at the wrong time. This floods the feeding areas, making them unsuitable for waders. We recorded 47 Turnstones, nine Variable Oystercatchers, 20 Red Knots, 75 Banded Dotterels, 44 Pied Stilts, two SIPO, two White-faced Herons and a White Heron. On nearby paddocks were 228 SIPO, ten stilts and 56 godwits.

The middle of August has brought the usual strandings of juvenile Buller's Mollymawks on farmland throughout Southland. I have an Ostrich decaying in a wool pack on my lawn. It will end up as a mounted skeleton. Being the largest bird in the world, everything is downhill after you have skeletonised an Ostrich. A superbly preserved *Aptornis* skull was excavated from a midden site at Waikawa Harbour. This confirms the Adzebill as a food item for Maori.

The terns borrowed from the museum for our last meeting were prematurely deaccessioned, when their box was left too close to the museum's rubbish disposal system. I need a Sooty Tern and an Antarctic Tern urgently - I can manage the others!

The recent Science Fair had four entries investigating food preferences of garden birds. One of these was judged third best in the fair.

The recent request to identify a bird - about Blackbird size, grey with purple legs and a black nape and takes bread out of the hand - was made easier by a promised photograph. It was a good description of a Turtle Dove, but then you would have guessed that straightaway.

(Lloyd Esler)

Chatham Islands

Due to the islands' location, often my report from the Chathams has included new records for the islands, or exciting observations. However over the past few years it has not always been native birds which have attracted my attention and aroused great interest.

One such observation which turned my head whilst driving down the south coast road was a lone Tufted Guinea-fowl. I stopped the car (the bird was found well away from any houses) and watched the bird a while as it fed, and have since seen it on many occasions. I followed up my observation by talking to landowners and discovered that this bird is the survivor of seven birds released several years ago. Apparently most of the others had been run over by cars, and as far as I know none bred successfully.

When talking to locals about the guinea-fowl I was told about a relatively large population of Wild Turkeys which used to live in the Te One area. It seems that the population was truly feral, with pairs successfully raising young. However the population died out for some reason some time ago.

Another bird introduced to the Chathams recently is the Ring-necked Pheasant. Two cock birds escaped (or were released) from a Waitangi property. From here the birds travelled up thorough Te One to Te Matarae where they were last seen. The local gun club has long been interested in releasing pheasants to the island to hunt. Te

Matarae is the only place on the Chathams where I have seen California Quail. Quail are present on both Chatham and Pitt in low numbers.

As far as I have been able to determine, the presence of Tufted Guinea-fowl, Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey on the Chathams has not been previously recorded. Even though turkeys have died out, and unless further introductions into the island occur guinea-fowl and pheasants will not establish, it is still interesting to record the species which were introduced to the island.

(Mike Bell)

What's On



Northland/Far North

10 October - evening meeting. Advisory Services, Alexander Street, Whangarei. Ph. Lorna Simpkin (09) 437 2076.

October - boat trip to Hen and Chickens. Ph. Margaret Dowdell (09) 435 3040.

12 November - evening meeting. Ph. Lorna Simpkin.

22 November - Whangarei Harbour census. Ph. Richard Parrish (09) 436 1988.

22 November - Kaipara Harbour census. Ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

28-29 November - Rangaunu and Far North wader census. Ph. Richard Parrish (09) 436 1988.

5 December - Christmas event. Ph. Lorna Simpkin.

Monthly beach patrols of Dargaville beaches (Prue Cozens (09) 437 0127), 90 Mile Beach and Karikari (Isobela Godbert (09) 407 8058, John Dawn (09) 407 8653) and the east coast (Jean Hawken (09) 438 1985, Lorna Simpkin (09) 437 2076).



Auckland

6 October - evening meeting, Kohia Teachers' Centre, 272 Jervois road, Herne Bay. Song of the Sea. Ph. Gwenda Pulham (09) 480 5535.

24 October - Mangawhai Caspian Tern colony and BBQ. Ph. Gwenda Pulham.

3 November - evening meeting, Bounty Islands.

7 November - summer census Mangawhai. Ph. Mary & Allan McKenzie (09) 423 7016.

8 November - summer census Firth of Thames. Ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284.

21 November - Manukau summer census.
Ph. Connie Schischka (09) 827 3728.

22 November - Kaipara Harbour census.
Ph. Adrian Riegen (09) 814 9741.

1 December - evening meeting, Making
Wildlife Pay.

19 January - summer evening picnic at
Cornwall Park. Ph. Chris Thompson (09)
478 9781.

Muriwai Beach patrol - Sundays following
meeting. Ph. Mike Graham (09) 817 5517.



South Auckland



Waikato

11 October - field trip, Miranda Shorebird
Centre. Ph. Bev Woolley (07) 856 9340.

11 October - Hamilton and Forest Lakes
census.

21 October - evening meeting,
rehabilitation and breeding of harriers,
falcons and owls. DoC conference room,
London St, Hamilton. Ph. Hugh Clifford
(07) 855 3751.

8 November - Hamilton and Forest Lakes
census.

18 November - evening meeting,
ornithological results of Captain Cook's
second voyage to NZ.

9 December - evening meeting, Christmas
pot luck dinner.

Bay of Plenty

18 October - visit to Tasman Pulp and
Paper effluent ponds. Ph. John Brierley
(07) 323 7458.

8 November - summer wader census,
Kaituna Cut area and Ohiwa Harbour
area. Ph. Paddy Latham (07) 542 0406.

22 November - summer wader census,
Tauranga Harbour area. Ph. Paddy Latham
(07) 542 0406.

5 December - Christmas barbecue. Ph.
Paddy Latham (07) 542 0406.

Gisborne/Wairoa

Taranaki

Manawatu

Wanganui

25 October - Turakina Beach. Ph. Tom
Teasdale (06) 343 9992

27 October - evening meeting, Ph. Tom
Teasdale

22 November - Christies Lake to see
Spotless Crakes. Ph. Colin Ogle (06) 345
8593

24 November - evening meeting, ph Tom
Teasdale.

Hawkes Bay

18 October - Blowhard bush and
Lawrence Hut. Ph. Christine McRae (06)
879 9136.

14 November - Ahuriri and Waitangi/East
Clive census. Ph. Christine McRae.

15 November - Porangahau census. Ph.
Christine McRae.

13 December - Christmas meeting and
barbecue. Ph. Christine McRae.

Wairarapa

26 September - Rimutaka Summit - birds
and botany. Ph. Colin Scadden (06) 378
6423.

15 October - evening meeting, St Luke's
church, Greytown. Brian Bell on island
resotoration. Ph. Miles King (06) 377
5252.

18 October - an orchard walk. Ph. Miles
King.

11 November - evening meeting, Red
Cross Rooms, Masterton. Tom Caithness
on airports and orchards. Ph. Miles King.

21 November - Jim Campbell's waterfowl
haven. Ph. Miles King.

5 December - pot luck tea. Ph. Miles King.

Wellington

Beach patrols - Jean Luke (04) 293 5601.

Harbour survey, 2nd Sunday of the month,
1-3 pm. Ph. Ros Batcheler (04) 479 4095.

5 October - evening meeting, DoC
Science Centre, first floor, 58 Tory Street.
Blue Penguins on Maiti/Somes.

2 November - evening meeting, Chatham
Islands. Ph. Ros Batcheler.

22 November - Manawatu Estuary. Ph.
Ros Batcheler.

7 December - evening meeting,
members' night. Ph. Ros Batcheler.

Nelson

Marlborough

Canterbury

West Coast

Otago

Evening meetings - 3rd Wednesday of
even months, Otago Art Society building,
8 pm. Ph. Peter Schweigman (03) 455
2790.

21 October - evening meeting, Takahe.

15 November - summer wader count.
Ph. Ken Gager (03) 487 6670.

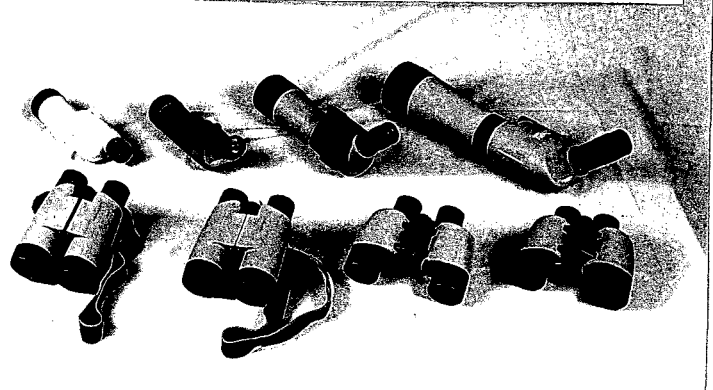
Southland

Evening meetings, Southland Museum,
second Wednesday of even months. Ph.
Lloyd Esler (03) 213 0404.

Beach patrols - usually Saturday
afternoons. Ph. Lloyd Esler.

10/11 October, 12/13 December - Yellow-
eyed Penguin count, Curio Bay. Ph. Lloyd
Esler.

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