

Southern *Bird*

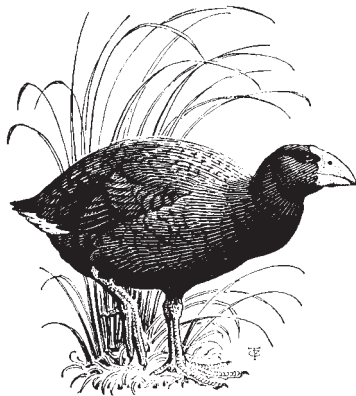
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The Magazine of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand

A year with South
American Birds

Garden Birds
Survey Results





Southern Bird

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QUOTATION

*Squawking they rise from reeds into the sun,
Climbing like furies, running on blood and bone,
With wings like garden-shears clipping the misty air,
Four mallard, hard-winged, with necks like rods
Fly in perfect formation over the marsh...*

Mallard by Rex Warner (1905-1986)

CONTENTS

Garden Bird Survey Results 2010	3
Award to Don Merton	4
Notice of Motions and Council Nominations	6
Gourmet Diet of Pukeko Chicks at Hamilton Lake	7
A year with South American Birds	8
Beach Patrol Scheme 2009 Preliminary Report	10

COVER PHOTOS

Front cover: Curlew Sandpiper in breeding plumage

Back cover: Black-backed Gull on the nest

Both photos by Paul Gibson

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We welcome advertising enquiries. Free classified ads are available to members at the editor's discretion.

Articles for inclusion in *Southern Bird* are welcome in any form, though electronic is preferred. Material should be related to birds, birdwatchers, or ornithologists in the New Zealand and Pacific region, and can include news on birds, members, activities and bird study, literature/product reviews, letters to the editor, birdwatching sites, and identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp. Copy deadlines are 10th February, May and August, and 1st November. The views expressed by the contributors to this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc.

AGM AND CONFERENCES

OSNZ AGM AND CONFERENCE 2011

This will be held in Lower Hutt during Queen's Birthday weekend 2011. All events and meals will take place at the The Dowse Art Museum, 45 Laings Road, Lower Hutt, unless stated otherwise.

3rd June (Friday)

4-6pm Registration (Angus Inn Hotel, Waterloo Road, Lower Hutt)

4th June (Saturday)

8-9am Registration
9am-5pm Scientific day
Followed by informal dinner
8.30pm AGM

5th June (Sunday)

8-9am Registration
9am-5pm Scientific day
Followed by conference dinner

6th June (Monday)

Field trips followed by informal dinner at Angus Inn Hotel

AOC 2011 CAIRNS

The Australasian Ornithological Conference will be held at the Cairns Campus of James Cook University in Tropical North Queensland from 28th September to 1st October 2011 and will comprise three days of oral presentations. Abstracts for contributed papers should be prepared using a set template, and must be submitted by 1st July 2011.

Early bird full registration paid by 1st July costs A\$350 otherwise full registration paid by 9th September costs \$450. Discounted rates are available for students. James Cook University's preferred payment method is by Visa or MasterCard.

Visit www.birdsaustralia.com.au/whats-on/australasian-ornithological-conference.html for more details or contact Dr Brad Congdon, Organising Committee Chairman on +61 7 4042 1086 or email aoc@jcu.edu.au.



Birds Australia
CONSERVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE



Publisher

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NEW FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY

Council recently received a nomination from the Bay of Plenty Region to elect Don Merton as a Fellow of the Society. This matter has now been considered by Council and following a unanimous decision it was decided to appoint Don as a Fellow to take immediate effect.

I visited Don at his home in Tauranga on 12th February accompanied by Councillor Keith Owen and Regional Representative Eila Lawton to present Don with his certificate.

A full citation for Don's work is included within this copy of the *Southern Bird* but the key point I made during the presentation was that the projects that he was involved with that captured the public imagination in a way that no previous conservation activity had within New Zealand. This had not only greatly enhanced the image of the work of the Wildlife Service and the Department of Conservation but had also increased awareness of ornithology, both in New Zealand and around the world.

Don was appreciative of the honour that had been bestowed on him and gave thanks to the many people who had assisted him throughout the years. He stressed that the work that he had undertaken was always as part of a team and he acknowledged the work of the other members.

Council and members of the Society wish him well as he battles his present illness.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

There have been two changes to regional representatives following the retirement of two long-serving members.

In The Wairarapa Peggy Duncan has replaced Barbara Lovatt, who has been in office for several years. The Wairarapa is a relatively small branch but is still active and that is largely thanks to the efforts of Barbara. In Southland Lloyd Esler is being replaced by Neil Robertson. Lloyd has served several terms as representative, with this latest spell a relatively short one, but filling the important role until a new representative could be found.

We welcome these two new regional representatives and we hope that they enjoy their time in that very important task.

The balance of the regional representatives were reappointed to continue their vital work in organising the regional activities.

AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

It should be noted that the next AOC is to be held in Cairns at the end of September and early October this year. More specific details relating to this event are contained in this issue of *Southern Bird* and also on the Society's website. I would urge as many members as possible to attend and learn from the range of interesting papers presented by researchers from both countries.

The Society Council has submitted a bid to the AOC Organising Committee to host the 2013 conference in Auckland. This bid was prepared from material supplied by Mel Galbraith who will be the convenor of the organising committee if the OSNZ bid is successful.

WEBSITE UPGRADE

Bruce McKinlay on behalf of the Council and Pieter Demmers have been working to upgrade the website. At this stage the basic website is scheduled to go online on 1st March with the *Notornis* and membership sections to follow reasonably shortly afterwards.

Over the next month or so there could be delays in making alterations to the website so I ask for your tolerance while this occurs. There is no doubt that the longer term benefits of having the new design under full OSNZ control will outweigh any short term inconvenience.

I would also ask for your tolerance if there are glitches or errors as it is inevitable with a rebuild, such as that which is occurring. If you could make a list of any items you notice and forward those directly to Bruce McKinlay at the contact details in the cover.

The Society is grateful to the sponsorship from T Gear Charitable Trust that has made this possible.

eBIRD

Bruce McKinlay has also been monitoring the use of the eBird website and has reported that in 2010 there were 3,742 check lists covering 232 species submitted. This is a marked increase on previous years but it is still a long way short of the potential. I would request that people take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with the programme and then make your entries to build this database.

There has been some debate recently about population monitoring and eBird is one of the tools that can be used to provide long term monitoring of even common species but only as long as the data is inputted in the first place.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE SOCIETY

At the annual meeting that will be held in early June there is intended to be some discussion on the strategic plan for the future of the Society. I would therefore request that members examine the previous strategic plan to which Council is working and think about where you would like the Society to be in five years time.

There has also been debate about subscriptions and provision of services and that all forms part of the same debate. It would therefore be useful if people could attend the annual meeting with their thoughts clarified as to what services they require the Society to provide and how those services can be funded.

It is easy to request additional services and demand that this be at a lower cost but these conflicting ideals are much harder to deliver. However that does not mean that we should not examine options and that is what I would like to happen at the annual meeting.

It goes without saying therefore that I would encourage you all to complete the registration forms at an early time to enable Ian Armitage and his team to continue planning for what will be a very memorable meeting.

DAVID LAWRIE, President

GARDEN BIRD SURVEY RESULTS 2010

Silvereye was the species counted in greatest numbers in New Zealand gardens in 2010. For the previous two years it had been in second place behind the House Sparrow. More than 4,000 people took part in the survey, about twice as many as in previous years.

The total number of all birds of all species counted was 187,858 from 4,193 gardens (which represents an average of nearly 45 birds per garden). The total number of Silvereyes counted was 55,543 (an average of 13.2 per garden). House Sparrows were second (52,779 counted), Starlings third (11,837), and Blackbirds fourth (11,156). These species have been the top four in all four years of the survey. As in previous years, the only other native species apart from Silvereye to make the top 10 were Tui and Fantail.

Top 10 garden birds in 2010
(Average number per garden)

Species	Number
Silvereye	13.2
House Sparrow	12.6
Starling	2.8
Blackbird	2.7
Chaffinch	1.2
Greenfinch	1.2
Tui	1.2
Fantail	1.0
Goldfinch	1.0
Song Thrush	0.8

The average number of birds counted varied between regions. For example, Silvereye was the species counted in greatest numbers in Canterbury, Otago, and Southland but House Sparrow was the species counted in greatest numbers in all other regions.

The national average counts of each species were influenced by the number of survey returns received from different regions of the country. They were also influenced by the number of returns from urban compared with rural gardens, and from gardens in which birds were fed or not fed supplementary food such as bread, bird seed, and sugar-water.

A full report on the 2010 survey, discussing the influence of these various factors, is available on the Garden Bird Survey website: www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/

GARDEN BIRD SURVEY 2011

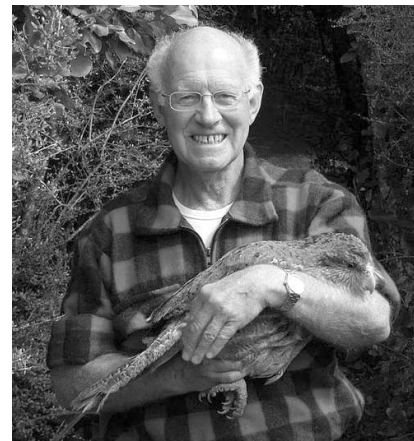


The 2011 Garden Bird Survey is coming up soon, and members are again being asked for help. The survey involves spending one hour sometime between 25th June and 3rd July recording the highest number of each bird species you see at once during the hour. Survey organiser, Eric Spurr, says you can even do the survey from the luxury of your kitchen or living room, by looking out the window at your garden. You don't have to watch your whole garden. It can be great fun and you might be surprised by what you find. Over the years, the data collected will provide us with a picture of how both native and introduced birds are faring in our gardens. Survey instructions, a bird identification poster, and survey form will be available closer to the date of the survey from the garden bird survey website: www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird/

AWARD TO **DON MERTON** AS FELLOW OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INCORPORATED

This award is given in recognition of Don's lifetime contributions to ornithology in New Zealand, and internationally, and to the work of the Society, including:

- He was an active Councillor for the Society for six years, from 1971 to 1977.
- Pioneered capture and translocation techniques in the rescue and recovery of endangered birds. In the early 1960s Don led some of the first successful translocations for conservation purposes involving New Zealand birds.
- Rescued the North Island Saddleback, confined in the 1960s to a single island (Taranga/Hen Island), by establishing a second population.
- Averted extinction of the South Island Saddleback by transferring birds, when in the early 1960s Ship Rats invaded its final refuge, Big South Cape Island off Stewart Island. Techniques pioneered then are now an everyday part of threatened species management within New Zealand and beyond.
- Pioneered 'close order management' as a means of averting extinction, sustaining populations in the wild and facilitating recovery of critically endangered species. 'Close order management' involves intensive management of free-living animals at the individual rather than population level. The concept and techniques were developed and applied with outstanding success during the rescue and recovery of the Black Robin in the Chatham Islands which Don led in the 1980s.
- Don devised a rescue strategy, leading to the successful rescue and recovery of the Black Robin when in the late 1970s its numbers fell to just five individuals, including only one effective breeding pair. The Black Robin now numbers about 180 individuals on two islands. Refined and adapted over the years, close order management techniques pioneered then are now an integral part of threatened species recovery programmes internationally.
- Helped pioneer island biodiversity conservation and restoration techniques including, in the early 1960s, eradicating Norway Rats from four small islands in the Noises Group, Hauraki Gulf with assistance from Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society volunteers. This was the first time that rats had been deliberately eradicated from a New Zealand island, and opened the way for ecological restoration of these and many other islands, both within New Zealand and internationally.
- Led the New Zealand Wildlife Service field teams that re-discovered the Kakapo (in Fiordland) in 1974, and females of this species (on Stewart Island) in 1980. Females had not been seen since the early 1900s and it was feared they may have been extinct and thus the species 'functionally extinct'.
- Discovered and documented the significance of the nocturnal booming display of the male Kakapo, an unusual form of courtship display known as 'lekking'; and for his role in the rescue and recovery programme for the Kakapo averting imminent extinction in the early 1980s.
- Determined that the newly re-discovered Kakapo population of southern Stewart Island was in steep decline due to predation by feral cats (53% mortality per annum of marked adults), following which he alerted the New Zealand Wildlife Service, drafted submissions, and obtained agreement from Government to relocate the last natural population.
- Planned and led the capture and relocation of all remaining Kakapo (61) to Little Barrier, Maud and Codfish Islands. This bold action proved spectacularly successful - the steep decline in Kakapo numbers was halted and adult mortality since (about 30 years) has averaged a remarkably low 1.3% per annum.
- Led a recovery project and devised techniques necessary to capture, hold, transport and establish a second population of the endangered and highly localised Noisy Scrub-bird of Western Australia. This population is now by far the larger of the two.
- During the 1980s helped devise and implement a recovery strategy for the critically-endangered Mauritius Parakeet. Only around eight birds including three females were known to exist at that time. There are now about 300 in the wild.
- Devised and led the successful eradication of rabbits from Round Island, Mauritius during the 1980s. Round Island supported a wide range of endemic threatened animal and plant species that was seriously threatened by the rabbits.
- While on secondment for two years to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service as its first Conservator on Christmas Island (Indian Ocean), he was instrumental in the designating of a national park to facilitate the survival of Abbott's Booby (an endangered gannet) and to protect a unique tropical island ecosystem.
- Played a key role in the rescue and recovery of the critically-endangered Seychelles Magpie Robin and other animals endemic to the Seychelles Islands. In 1990-1992, in collaboration with ICBP/BirdLife International he designed and implemented an effective recovery strategy and range of management techniques for the Magpie Robin, the last 20 individuals of which were confined to 219 ha Fregate Island.
- In 1995 when Norway Rats reached Fregate Island, (threatening the Magpie Robin and other vulnerable endemic species), he alerted the island's owner, and local and international conservation agencies that without intervention ecological collapse and extinctions were inevitable. He worked with stake-holders and convinced them that eradication was both essential and



practicable. In 2000 he led a successful rodent (Norway Rat and House Mouse) eradication programme, thus averting extinctions and facilitating ecological recovery.

- Has authored or co-authored about 150 publications, including books, peer-reviewed scientific papers, popular articles and technical reports, including being the author or co-author of over 20 papers in *Notornis*.

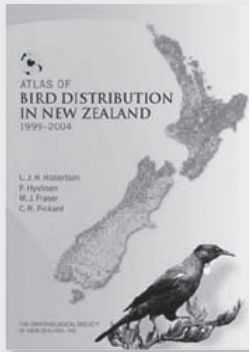
FOOLHARDY FANTAILS IN MARLBOROUGH?

Rob and Anneke Schuckard (*Southern Bird*, December 2009) described unusual group behaviour of New Zealand Fantails seen on roads in the Marlborough Sounds during the early evening of 25th August 2009. In this report I describe fantails also behaving unusually in the Marlborough Sounds. This event occurred at about 8.15am as I was driving to work along a 4 km stretch of the Queen Charlotte Drive from Governors Bay towards Picton in the Marlborough Sounds. It was in mid-June 2009, but I didn't make note of the date at the time. I came upon groups of two to four Fantails on the white line in the middle of the road. The birds showed no interest in moving until the car, moving at about 40 km/h, was nearly on top of them. This was repeated with several other groups along the road, there being about 20 birds in total. I have used this route daily for the last eight years and have not observed similar behaviour here or elsewhere.

The Schuckard account occurred about 30 km away, in the evening and about two months later. The Fantails showed similar reluctance to move from the oncoming vehicle; in their case the birds were joined by other Fantails coming from the surrounding bush. It appears that Fantails were gathering on roadways of the Marlborough Sounds during the winter of 2009 and the Schuckard's observation was not an isolated case. However, an explanation for these behaviours is not forthcoming.

DIANNE JOHN





JOINING THE **ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

If you are reading this but are not a member of the Ornithological Society you would be very welcome to join us. Our membership consists of the whole spectrum of people interested in New Zealand/South Pacific birds from beginners with just an interest through keen birdwatchers and amateur ornithologists to professional ornithologists, so you should find others of a similar level to you, or find resources that are of interest to you.

For our very reasonable subscription fee of \$70 (students pay just \$35.00 and overseas/corporate rates etc are also available) you will receive a quarterly issue of this magazine *Southern Bird*, which is the Society's main mouthpiece to members, has articles of bird/ornithological interest and both national and local news; a quarterly issue of *Notornis*, the Society's scientific journal; an annual issue of *The State of New Zealand's Birds*, reporting on the status of a group of species or those species using a

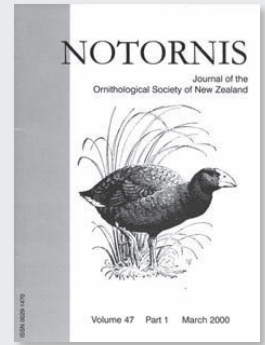
particular habitat type; and from time to time either free or discounted major Society publications – for example a copy of the latest *Atlas of Bird Distribution* is currently provided free to new members while stocks last. This atlas gives a thorough overview of the distribution of every bird on mainland New Zealand and some offshore islands in its 533 pages.

In addition to reading material and, with time, a useful collection of reference books, members have access to meetings, both indoor and in the field, on a national and regional basis providing opportunities to gain knowledge on birds/ornithology and learning practical skills whilst networking with knowledgeable people. Our extensive library of books and journals is open for members to borrow and view items. Members are also encouraged to provide data to the Society's schemes, and supply sightings to the annual New Zealand Bird Report and the eBird online reporting tool. These data provide information on which research may be conducted, often with conclusions relevant to decision-making processes on the conservation of birds.

With Christmas fast approaching why not give a friend or family member a gift subscription?

For further details and/or a membership form you should take one of three actions:

- Visit the Society's website www.osnz.org.nz
- Contact the Society's membership secretary, Yvonne McLaughlan, by writing to P.O. Box 54, Sefton, North Canterbury 7445 or email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com
- Contact your nearest regional representative, contact details for which can be found on the back page of this magazine.



FROM THE PROJECT AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE...

Most of our regions engage speakers to talk at the monthly meetings about their work or travels. Some speakers come from the universities or the Department of Conservation to talk about their research or its application. Others are ordinary members doing something or been somewhere interesting. In most cases, the talks are prepared using PowerPoint or some other presentation software. Once prepared, these talks could be given elsewhere, if the speaker was willing and able to travel, and those of us who organise these events know this. How can we make this happen?

Carol Davies, a member of the Project and Activities Committee, is compiling details of speakers and those presentations that they would be prepared to give elsewhere, along with information about when and how far they would be prepared to travel. What we would like is for individuals who have prepared talks, and would be willing to give them again, to contact Carol (carolanndavies@yahoo.com) and provide information along the following lines: name; address and contact details; any preconditions regarding travel (e.g. limitations on time of year or distance; whether travel costs need to be reimbursed or not); title of talk(s); brief, 1-3 sentence synopsis of each talk (e.g. 'More than a million Arctic geese winter in the Netherlands. How do we reconcile the need to conserve the different species with ensuring that they do minimal damage to winter crops and pastures?'). Carol plans to draw up a list of speakers and talks

that can then be put on the OSNZ website, so that others know about them. Regional Representatives could help by recommending and encouraging potential contributors to come forward. If you have any queries or need further information, please contact Carol.

The Wader Counting Course, held at Miranda in late November 2010, was by all accounts a success. Thirteen people attended the course (two others had to withdraw at the last moment). The organisers are currently evaluating the course to see what changes need to be made, if any. We hope to run similar courses in future, both at Miranda and elsewhere, if there is sufficient interest. If you want to take part in such a course, please register your interest with Eila Lawton (elawton@actrix.co.nz). Eila represented the OSNZ in organising the initial course at Miranda.

In January, Mike Bell and others in Marlborough managed to run another successful banding course during their annual passerine banding weekend at Jack Taylor's farm, Dog Hill, near Ward, despite having to cancel the last day because of high wind. In addition to those people who normally take part, six others came from elsewhere to hone their skills and learn new ones. Ninety birds were caught on the first day, including Brown Creeper, Shining Cuckoo and Tomtit, all uncommon species at Ward. Marlborough OSNZ have been banding birds here each summer or autumn since January

2005, during which time they have banded over 7,000 birds, some of which have been recaptured subsequently. The banding has two aims: to provide training and to study the ecology of the various species there by undertaking a long-term study of their population dynamics. Although most people camp out for the duration, on a self-serve basis, accommodation is also available nearby in Ward. If you are interested in taking part in future (the event is usually run towards the end of January each year), register your interest with Mike (skua44@yahoo.co.nz). He can provide a more detailed information sheet of how the event is organised and what you need to bring with you.

At the time of writing this, the duck-banding programme being carried out by Auckland-Waikato Fish & Game, to which a number of OSNZ members are contributing as volunteers, is still underway. So far, fewer members have taken part than initially planned, no doubt because of other commitments during the holiday season. Unfortunately, the banding is confined to this period of the year to take advantage of the birds being flightless during their annual wing feather moult, making them easier to catch. We will be evaluating this year's programme in an effort to see how best we can encourage more members to take part in future. Watch this space.

PETER FROST

Convenor: Project and Activities Committee

NOTICE OF MOTIONS AND COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

Three motions have been received for consideration at the 2011 AGM, see below.

Three Council vacancies were advertised and nominations have been received for two of these: David Melville and Peter Gaze (secretary) have been nominated for another three year term. This will leave one vacancy on Council to which someone may be co-opted.

PETER GAZE, Secretary

CHANGE TO THE TIMING OF THE AGM

Proposed by Lloyd Esler, seconded by Neil Robertson.

Proposal

Move that Rule 16.1 of the constitution be amended from "The Annual General Meeting of the society shall be held not later than 30 June each year," to "The Annual General Meeting of the society shall be held not later than 31 October each year."

Rationale

The AGM is the one opportunity in the year for all members to meet. Birding opportunities are valued by attendees. These can be in the form of fieldtrips, visiting hotspots on the way to and from the AGM or just getting out and about in the evening and early morning. Because AGMs are held at Queens Birthday Weekend and not earlier or later:

- 1) There are fewer daylight hours
- 2) There are no migrant birds to find and fewer birds generally
- 3) There is more likelihood of the weather disrupting fieldtrips and travel to and from the AGM.

An AGM at Easter or Labour Weekend would have

- 1) More daylight for birding activities and outdoor activities generally
- 2) A greater range of birds
- 3) Warmer weather

The constitution requires (Rule 16.1) "The Annual General Meeting of the society shall be held not later than 30th June each year." By amending this to "not later than 30 October" Labour Weekend is included. If there is support for the amendment the next step may be to alter the financial year so that there is not too great a delay between the end of the financial year and the AGM. Can I repeat a question I asked in 2000: "In ten years time do you still want to be having an AGM in winter?" A simple amendment now means that future AGMs can be held at a more appropriate time of the year.

CHANGE TO THE MEMBERSHIP YEAR

Proposed by Roger Sharp, seconded by Yvonne Mackenzie.

Proposal

Now that OSNZ is moving to on line membership joining and renewals, I would like to propose some changes to the renewal year. Change membership renewal to occur on the anniversary of the start date of the member.

Renewal by credit card must be done on line only (This will currently only affect 20 members who don't have an email address (i.e. no internet access)).

Rationale

With OSNZ now having nearly 1,200 members it is becoming very difficult to process that many renewals in the three or so months after the renewal notices are sent out.

The current number of members who don't receive a renewal notice (Life, Fellow and Exchange) is 219 (19%). This means that there are 938 renewals to deal with each year plus new members.

The current breakdown of the membership of the 938 members is;

Registered with emails	887 (79%)
Pay by credit card	217 (23%)
Pay by credit card but don't have an email	20 (See point 2 above)
Pay by cheque	501 (53%)
Pay by direct credit or A/P	226 (24%)

From this breakdown we can see that there are nearly 80 renewals per week. By spreading renewals across the whole year, there would only be about 80 renewals per month.

However, with online renewals this figure could be reduced by perhaps up to 386/year (those who pay by credit card, AP or direct credit who have an email (i.e. online access)). This would then leave 552 renewals to be processed manually per year or 40-50 per month. As time goes on, this manual figure should decrease as more and more members become used to using the internet to do renewals.

This renewal method would also allow a better spread of income for OSNZ throughout the year and even perhaps income forecasting based on future renewal dates if required.

It is hoped that this could be implemented on 1st August 2011 and the table below outlines the adjustments to subscription payments for the first year as people are adjusted to their joining anniversary month.

There will be a discount for those paying August to December 2011 and an increase for those paying February to July 2012. The amount will be their normal fee adjusted by the number of months either before or after December 2011 rounded down to the nearest whole dollar. For those renewing before the end of 2011 there will be a discount because they have already paid up to the end of 2011. For those renewing after January 2012 there will be an additional charge because they have only paid up to the end of 2011 and they will have been getting 2012 'free'.

Renewal Month	Adjustment	Payment in 2011	Payment in 2012
August 2011	Discount of 5/12	\$70 - \$30 = \$40	\$70
September 2011	Discount of 4/12	\$70 - \$24 = \$46	\$70
October 2011	Discount of 3/12	\$70 - \$18 = \$52	\$70
November 2011	Discount of 2/12	\$70 - \$12 = \$58	\$70
December 2011	Discount of 1/12	\$70 - \$6 = \$64	\$70
January 2012	No adjustment	No Payment	\$70
February 2012	Increase of 1/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$6 = \$76
March 2012	Increase of 2/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$12 = \$82
April 2012	Increase of 3/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$18 = \$88
May 2012	Increase of 4/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$24 = \$94
June 2012	Increase of 5/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$30 = \$100
July 2012	Increase of 6/12	No Payment	\$70 + \$36 = \$106

The renewal will be sent out at the beginning of the month prior to the due month and the member would have until the end of the renewal month to pay, i.e. 2 months. If payment is not made, a reminder will be sent and if still not paid after that third month, they will stop receiving journals.

For members who joined OSNZ before 2002 there is no recorded join month or year. It is proposed that these members be assigned a renewal month based on their last renewal payment month.

THAT A BINDING REFERENDUM OF MEMBERS BE HELD REGARDING THE PUBLISHING OF NOTORNIS

Proposed by Simon Fordham, seconded by Sarah Withers.

Proposal

- That *Notornis*, the scientific journal of OSNZ, cease as a mandatory printed publication and that the annual subscription be reduced by the amount of the savings realised, effective 1st January 2012.
 - That *Notornis* continue to be published in an electronic (PDF) form and made available through the OSNZ website.
 - That abstracts of *Notornis* papers be included as part of *Southern Bird*.
- This referendum is to be included with the September 2011 edition of *Southern Bird*.

Rationale

OSNZ is an organisation with a number of ornithological aims. Whilst many of these aims are scientific in nature, the Society exists also to 'foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds generally'.

Unfortunately, for many, the subscription is cost prohibitive. The subscription is currently \$70 for an ordinary member. The increase in 2011 has already led to the resignation of a number of members.

Information from the Society's Treasurer in 2010 showed that it costs the Society approximately \$25 per member to print *Notornis*.

OSNZ needs to generate wider appeal amongst birdwatchers at all levels. Although much effort is being put into encouraging new members, it is reasonable to expect that a substantial reduction in the subscription would complement these efforts and consequently lead to an increase in membership. As with any organisation, there is strength in the number of members it can boast.

NOTICE OF **MOTIONS AND COUNCIL NOMINATIONS CONT.**

If OSNZ does not widen its appeal, there is always a risk of a 'splinter' organisation being formed, perhaps not unlike BOCA (Bird Observers Club of Australia).

Whilst there are many members who read *Notornis* from cover to cover, there are also many who do not have any interest in this publication at all. In between, there are those who will read articles of specific interest and others who may refer to papers as required.

By submitting this Notice of Motion, there is no intention to disregard the value of OSNZ having a publication like *Notornis*. Many other reputable journals are no longer available in print, e.g. *New Zealand Medical Journal*. However, if there is still demand for a printed version, then this could be investigated on a cost recovery basis, unsubsidised by the general membership.

It is hoped that the resulting reduction in subscription will make membership affordable for those who are retired, thereby negating any need for a separate 'Senior Membership' category.

By going to referendum, rather than having a decision on the future of *Notornis* made at the AGM, it ensures that any decision is made by the entire membership, rather than just those attending the meeting in Wellington.

GOURMET DIET OF PUKEKO CHICKS AT HAMILTON LAKE

During May 2010 we were intrigued to see some Pukeko feeding their chicks on Sweet Chestnuts *Castanea sativa*. We first noticed the family of five downy chicks being fed by adults in the shallows between a band of Raupo and the lake edge. On looking more closely we could see a considerable heap of broken spiny chestnut husks from which the adults were extracting the edible nut.

The Sweet Chestnut trees grow about 75 m from the lake edge and to get to them the birds have to cross a road. We watched one Pukeko returning from the chestnut grove carrying in its beak a whole chestnut, which it deposited with the rest in the shallow water before breaking it open with its powerful bill.

On 19th May when we checked the family one of the adults was feeding the chicks portions of a small fish.

According to the *Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand* (Heather and Robertson 1996) the "Diet [of Pukeko] is a wide variety of swamp and pasture vegetation; also animals, mainly small insects and spiders, but also frogs, small birds and eggs."

STELLA and JOHN ROWE

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Marius Adrion (Canterbury); Mike Arnold (Wellington); Jenny Atkins (Far North); Dan Baker (Auckland); Dave Barnard (Hawkes Bay); Jeremy Beck (Otago); Kate Beer (Auckland); Francie Beggs (Otago); Chris Bell (Wairarapa); Pete Bennet (Canterbury); Marie Brown (Waikato); Ray and Ann Buckmaster (Waikato); Anita Campbell (Auckland); Gillian Candler (Wellington); Mark Carey (Australia); Murray Christie (Southland); John Clark (Bay of Plenty); Phillip Cochrane (Canterbury); Kimberley Collins (Waikato); Fiona Craig (Far North); John Craig (Northland); Claire Cunneen (Auckland); Yvonne Curtis (Canterbury); Jeanette Cutten (Wanganui); Marcia Dale (Otago); Erin Daldry (Wellington); Nicky Denning (Manawatu); Lous Donovan (Bay of Plenty); Rob Evans (Canterbury); Sarah Fisher (Otago); Nick Fisentzidis (Wellington); Meg Flux (Wellington); Martin N Foggo (Volcanic Plateau); Eben Fourie (Wellington); Rosanne Furniss (Nelson); Don Gannon (Bay of Plenty); Oliver Gansell (Waikato); Elizabeth Gibson (Wellington); Lindsey Gray (Australia); Tony Green (Taranaki); Frances Eden Hall (Auckland); Peter Harrison (U.S.A.); Kevin Hayes (Northland); R and Wendy Herriott (Canterbury); J Higham (Otago); Caroline Hilderink (Manawatu); Mark Jacobs (Wellington); Sarah Jamieson (Manawatu); Ronald A Javitch (Canada); Simon Johnson (Canterbury); Maree Johnstone (Otago); David Lloyd Jones (Gisborne/Wairoa); Isobel King (Auckland); M A Kinghan and family (Far North); Garrick Klomp (Volcanic Plateau); Mr Colin Lunt (Auckland); Jeroen Lurling (Nelson); Douglas Madgwick (South Auckland); Sally Mannering (Manawatu); Anthony Marsh (Auckland); Brian Marshall (Auckland); Abbie Mason (Waikato); Sara Maylan (Wellington); Roger McGarry (Auckland); Barbara McGillivray (Bay of Plenty); Jack McLaughlan (Auckland); Craig Donald Millar (Auckland); Judy Miller (Bay of Plenty); Christopher Minson (Wellington); Ron Moorhouse (Nelson); Helen Morgan (Wairarapa); Kyle Morrison (Manawatu); Rosemary Musters (Nelson); Anne Nelson (Wellington); Andrew Nikkel (Otago); Micheal North (Nelson); Mara Nydegger (Wairarapa); Vincent O'Donnell (Nelson); John Ogden (Auckland); Kate Parr (Waikato); Peter Ian Pay (Nelson); Shirley Porter (Bay of Plenty); Barbara Prince (Otago); Sharon Race (Auckland); Thomas Rambaut (Australia); Cathy Reid (Bay of Plenty); Yvan Richard (Wellington); Emma Richardson (Otago); Judith Robinson (Wanganui); Heather Rogers (Auckland); Toby and Sarah Ross (Manawatu); Kathryn Row (Waikato); Tim Rowe (Nelson); Shirley Scadden (Gisborne/Wairoa); Heidrun Schinke (Auckland); Raoul Schwing (Canterbury); Simon Sheppard (Otago); Paul Sinclair (West Coast); Trina Smith (Auckland); Brian Steed (Bay of Plenty); Unitec Institute of Technology (Auckland); Colin and Gail Wafer (Canterbury); George Ward (Otago); Hilton Ward (Northland); Zhea Warden (Auckland); Alicia Warren (Auckland); James Wickham (Bay of Plenty); Carole Wilding (Auckland); Stuart Williamson (Auckland); Jo Wilson (Nelson); Vicki Wogan (Wellington); Graeme Young (Volcanic Plateau).

We also thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society:

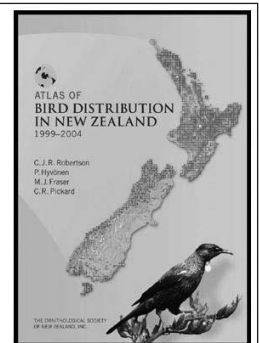
Maurice Alley; Jacinda Amey; Johnson Anthony; Richard Arlidge; Jane Ashby; Graham Barwell; Harry Battam; Francie Beggs; Mike Bell; Pip Boleyn; Chris Bycroft; Bill Campbell; Mr R S Carmichael; Bill Cash; Hugh Clifford; Jim Cox; Claire Cunneen; James Cunningham; Peter Dann; Tui Deroy; Jared Diamond; Ian Flux; John Flux; Chris Foreman; Geoff Foreman; Murray Gavin; Florence Gaud; Peter Gaze; Helge Grastveit; Peter Griffiths; Otto Grueb; Jill Hamel; Mark Hanger; Jillian Hanna; Neil Hayes; J Higham; Richard Holdaway; Janet Houston; Peter Howden; John Innes; Ian Jamieson; Cliff Jenks; Martyn Kennedy; Gerry Kessels; David Latham; Paddy Latham; Chris Lloyd; Mr J. W. Lock; Roger Louis; Jean Luke; Mary McEwen; Les McPherson; Micheal Meyer; Frank Minehan; Philip Moors; Alan Morris; Harro Mueller; Philip Munns; Gordon Nicholson; Colin O'Donnell; Vincent O'Donnell; Dan O'Halloran; Suzanne Orchard; Mehdi Ouni; Keith Owen; Dianne Parker; Lance Pickett; Moira Pryde; C. John Ralph; Lyn Reid; Elizabeth Revell; Diana Robertson; Mr V M Rutherford; Paul Sagar; Betty Seddon; Roy Slack; Shona Smith; Heather Smithers; Joy Soper; John Staniland; Zuni Steer; Peter Turner; Spencer Unthank; Carlo Violani; Kerry Walsh; George Watola; Mr W. A. Watters; Tony Wilson.

FREE ATLAS FOR NEW MEMBERS!!!

The Society is extending the presentation of a free copy of the *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004* to each new member joining OSNZ while stocks last. In addition, all new members will receive a copy of the index to *Notornis, Fifty years of bird study in New Zealand 1939-1989*. Pass the word to people who maybe haven't got around to joining the Society yet that now is a very good time to do so. Not only do they obtain membership of the premier society for those with an interest in birds and ornithology in New Zealand and the South Pacific but they will also receive these two essential books on New Zealand ornithology. The atlas is an impressive and weighty book that which will be a delight for anyone with even a small interest in New Zealand's birds.

For details of how to join the OSNZ:

- Visit the Society's website www.osnz.org.nz and download a membership form.
- Contact the Society's Membership Secretary at P.O. Box 54, Sefton 7445, or email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com
- Contact your local regional representative – contact details are on the inside back cover of this issue of *Southern Bird*.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Subscriptions were due on 1st January. Those members with email should have received a membership renewal form via that medium. Those members who do not have email (or those where the Membership Secretary has not been informed of an email address) should have received a renewal form as an insert with the September issue of *Southern Bird*. The Society depends greatly on your subscription to continue the furtherance of its objectives in encouraging and supporting the study and enjoyment of birds in the New Zealand region.

If you have misplaced your renewal form, a blank version is now available online at www.osnz.org.nz/join.htm, or otherwise please contact the Membership Secretary at P.O. Box 54, Sefton 7445, or email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com



a year with south american birds



Two of the handraised Blue-throated Macaw chicks after being returned to their nest

After having spent a year in South America as an exchange student it had always been my dream to return to the continent and devote some of my time to its varied birdlife. In the winter of 2007 my partner, Brent Barrett, and I set off to South America for a year. Our aim was to combine exploration with ornithology.



Photos by Brent Barrett

Background: Male Green-crowned Brilliant hummingbird



Enthusiastic Colombians watching a Mountain Grackle nest

Ecuadorian cloud forest hummingbirds

Our first involvement with a bird project was with Conservacion Ecuador, a NGO bird group based in Guayaquil on the Pacific coast of Ecuador. We worked in one of the last remnants of Ecuadorian lowland coastal cloud forest, where we monitored hummingbirds. We were the first hummingbird observers to venture there in the wet season. Every day the cloud forest lived up to its name; mist hung off the branches and below the high canopy there was a constant stream of drips.

Our time spent there was very rewarding. Each day we sat watching feeders and observed the interspecific feeding behaviours of the different species present. 40 different species of hummingbird had been recorded within the reserve where we were working, of which 12 were regular visitors to the feeders. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of our time spent there was the lack of the most common species of hummingbird present during December/January. As no-one had previously conducted such observations mid-year we were able to report that the Violet-bellied Hummingbird, the most common and aggressive species observed in the dry season, was almost entirely absent during our observations. Only once did we see a single male approach the feeders.

Not only were the hummingbirds spectacular but the forest was full of a variety of birds, ranging from large guans, toucans, parrots and trogons to brilliantly coloured tanager species, wood-quails, a variety of cuckoos and large raptors, including the spectacular King Vulture. A safety requirement was that we had to be accompanied by a local from the nearby village,

Mauricio. His knowledge and observation skills enabled us to see several species which we otherwise would not have noticed. Though he spoke almost no English he knew the English names of nearly all the forest's birds after having spent several seasons assisting an American ornithologist with her studies: quite an achievement.

Bolivian Blue-throated Macaws

From the coolness of the cloud forest we landed in the hot Bolivian Llanos, on the north eastern side of that country. The plains are exceedingly dry for six months of the year until the rains arrive in November and transform the dusty landscape into one of lush greenery and standing water.

Small islands of palm and fig trees are dotted across the vast flatness and within these small forested areas a variety of macaws nest in tree cavities. The Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*) is exceedingly rare. Only 250 individuals are estimated to remain in the wild and all of these within the province of Beni. Blue-throated Macaws are thought never to have been common, but they are now greatly reduced due to habitat loss, competition for nesting holes and illegal capture for the captive parrot market. The World Parrot Trust has been funding a project to help protect these birds for several years now and Brent and I spent three months volunteering during the breeding season.

All wild Blue-throated Macaws are found on private land within huge cattle ranches. A handful of known pairs are spread out over several hundred square kilometres on different farms. Our time was spent sitting in hides observing nesting pairs, supposedly ready to scare away any predators (ranging

from toucans to large boas). Once the chicks hatched we weighed them every three days to make sure that they were gaining weight.

We were based in a basic and isolated campsite under palm trees, with no communication and limited water supplies. Whilst we were there all three eggs in the nearby nest hatched. However, the two youngest chicks continually lost weight as their elder sibling grew heavier. We withheld from interfering for as long as possible but eventually made the decision to supplementary feed the chicks in the campsite. This was very nerve wracking, but all of the chicks gained weight and within two weeks we were able to put them back into their nests. All of the chicks which we had hand-raised fledged successfully. Perhaps most importantly is that two of them were females, the only two females to fledge from nine eggs!

Our South American companions had not wanted us to interfere; they believed that it was natural to let the chicks die. This is probably true. However once populations are reduced to such low numbers active management becomes essential. As we applied skills learnt from work in New Zealand it really sank in just how effective the sort of conservation management used here is.

The diversity of fauna in the Beni is incredible: giant anteaters; two species of armadillo, capybaras; howler monkeys; and vampire bats were regularly seen around the campsite. The birdlife is equally diverse. The larger Red-and-green and Blue-and-yellow Macaws were common (they outcompete the Blue-throated Macaws for nest cavities), as were the small Golden-collared and Chestnut-fronted Macaws. Five other smaller parrot species were present. Groups of rheas

with recently hatched chicks were seen and Hoatzins living in noisy family groups amongst the tangled vegetation along the waterways.

Once the rains started entire fields turned into shallow lakes and countless numbers of various species of egrets, herons, ibises, ducks, cormorants, storks, Limpkins and screamers turned up to feed. The tall grasslands were home to several finch and flycatcher species, including the threatened Cock-tailed Tyrant, and raptor species were everywhere. We recorded 19 species consisting of various vultures, kites, hawks, caracaras, falcons, kestrels and very excitingly, a nesting Crowned Eagle.

At present the native wildlife of the Bolivian savannah is still abundant. However I wonder for how much longer this will continue to be the case. Threatened species such as the Jaguar are still heavily hunted. Parrots and other brightly coloured birds are taken from their nests, destined to lives in captivity, and yearly burning to increase pasture is destroying the tall grasslands whilst livestock damage within the forested areas is rampant. However, I would still recommend the Bolivian Llanos as a top birdwatching destination as the diversity is extremely high. Several of the species found there are those commonly associated with the jungle, but in the small forested islands of the Llanos they are much easier to observe.

Argentinean Burrowing Parrots

The Burrowing Parrot (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*) colony situated by the Northern border of Patagonia on the Atlantic coast of Argentina is renowned for being the largest parrot colony in the world. The colony has 35,000 breeding pairs whose nesting burrows are dug into cliffs above the beach. We went there to help Dr Juan Masello, who, with financial help from the Max Plank Institute for Ornithology, has been studying nesting success in the colony since completing his PhD on the species several years ago.

Our work was centred on a small area of the colony where most of the nesting pairs are banded. The nests are only accessible by abseiling and the burrows are up to three metres deep, an insurance against the cliff face collapsing. Unfortunately it was a poor breeding season with several burrows empty and a few even containing dead adult females.

As well as monitoring chicks we carried out a census, which involved standing on an exposed sand dune for 19 hours straight on three consecutive Sundays counting all parrots which flew past. This was quite an exhausting task, withstanding the Patagonian winds, sandstorms and bright sun. However the early morning and late evening made it all



Powerlines laden with Burrowing Parrots

worthwhile with a constant stream of parrots flying past to and from their feeding grounds.

In addition to the parrots the large cliffs had several other interesting bird species: Darwin's and Elegant-crested Tinamous nested in the grasslands above; a resident family of Peregrine Falcons hunted recently-fledged parrot chicks; Chimango Caracaras and a Black-chested Buzzard-eagle occasionally soared past at eye level; and Burrowing Owls were fairly common.

Seabirds were less diverse than I had expected, consisting mostly of Kelp (Southern Black-backed) Gulls (the same species as we have here), American Oystercatchers and an Arctic Skua. However the lagoon at the mouth of the Rio Negro was starting to fill up with summer waders: Hudsonian Godwits, White-rumped Sandpipers, South American Stilts, and both Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs.

Colombian Mountain Grackles

Colombia has among the highest bird diversity of any country in the world, with an astounding 1,828 species recorded, making it a birdwatcher's paradise. Having lived in the Colombian highlands for a year in 1999 it became a special place for me. The chance to return and do some work with OCOTEA, a completely Colombian-run conservation organisation, was an opportunity not to be missed.

We were driven up to over 3,000 m in the central range of the Andes to help start habitat-use observations on the endangered Mountain Grackle (*Macroagelaius subalaris*). We were living with a local farming family in the highest house in the valley, a truly spectacular spot. Over 1,000 m below us in the arid and hot Maipo Canyon the recently rediscovered (by the leader of OCOTEA) Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird lives amongst date and papaya plantations. Across the valley we looked up to the snowy peaks of La Sierra de Nevada de Cocuy, 5,500 m high, famous for its reintroduced population of Andean Condors and Spectacled Bears. We were living in a steep grassy valley surrounded by remnants of native oak (*Quercus humboldtii*) forest, the home of the Mountain Grackle.

Mountain Grackles are very interesting birds. Though seemingly drab with their predominantly black plumage (dark orange only showing when they lift their wings), they have intriguing social behaviour. We found five nests and watched with interest how the birds were in small groups and all members helped raise the young. We spent a few days staying with Don Luis, a self-appointed wildlife ranger. He told us how Mountain Grackles used to be seen on his property in groups of 200 or more. We were excited when we found a group of more than 10. Though this species is currently classed as endangered, local Colombian ornithologists believe it could still be numerous further within the mountainous forest, a currently unexplored area on the border between two provinces.

On average three new bird species are discovered annually in Colombia. The fauna is still in the age of discovery, further delayed until recently due to remote areas often being the haunts of guerrilla groups. However, whether or not there are large numbers of Mountain Grackles living further within the forest, their population has suffered in recent years from habitat degradation.

Some other more colourful species we commonly saw were the rare Rusty-faced Parrot, brightly coloured Green Jays, the impressive Sword-billed Hummingbird (with a beak specially adapted to obtain nectar from the native passion fruit and *Datura* flowers), the tiny White-bellied Woodstar hummingbird, Yellow-rumped Caciques, Crimson-mantled Woodpeckers and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers.

Birdwatching tourism is increasing in Colombia. One of my host fathers had converted his farm into a biological reserve. In addition to it being the study site for nearly every ecological project from the local university, it is also the destination for birdwatching tours due to the locally endemic Black Inca Sylph hummingbird that frequents the garden. I am glad that Colombia is opening up to ornithologists, but I hope that in the future bird watching trips will have more involvement with Colombians, and potentially help more of the local population appreciate how special their bird fauna is.

FRANCESCA CUNNINGHAME

Colombian Andes, home of the Mountain Grackles





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Kimberley Discovery Tour

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The Kimberley region in the north-west of Western Australia is one of the most remote and unspoiled wilderness areas in the world. It's unique geology, ancient limestone reef and rich Aboriginal culture has fascinated visitors for years. It is home to some of Australia's most beautiful and rare birdlife, diverse and interesting flora, and exciting and unique fauna.

Western Explorer Tour

14 Day Camping Tour - Departs 12th August 2011

This walking tour is a magnificent outback experience! Explore the Kennedy Ranges, Mt Augustus & Karijini National Park on foot. This 14 day camping, walking and wildlife tour coincides with the northern and mid west wildflower season and with a reasonable winter rain there should be some colourful displays. The gorges that work their way into the Kennedy Ranges, the aboriginal art, Cattle Pool, the view from the lookout on Mt Augustus and the spectacular gorges and mountains of Karijini provide an unforgettable experience.

Lorna Glen to Canning Stock Route

11 Day Camping Tour - Departs 14th August 2011

Join us as we explore Lorna Glen Station North East of Wiluna, Western Australia. Bilbies and Brush-tailed Possums have been successfully reintroduced to the area as part of the Department of Conservation and Environment's Range Land Restoration program. The area also supports more than 480 species of vascular plant, 220 vertebrate species, 14 small mammal species and 70 species of reptile.

Holland Track & Greater Western Woodlands Recce

15 Day Camping Tour - Departs 31st August 2011

Join us and experience the features of the world's largest temperate woodland, including the Holland Track and the historic woodlines (where timber cutters operated from 1899 to 1964). The Great Western Woodland (GWW) covers an area the size of England, and is home to 3,000 flowering plant species, rare mammals, frogs, reptiles and birds.

South West Birds & Botany

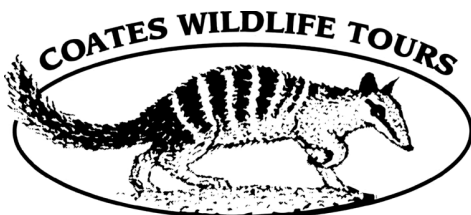
15 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 16th October 2011

The South West offers breathtaking beauty and diversity. The region is renowned for its spectacular wildflowers - an extraordinarily colourful scene during the spring months with an abundance of birdlife.

Costa Rica Wildlife Safari

15 Day Accommodated Tour - Departs 20th November 2011

This tour to the Central America will certainly be a trip of a lifetime. Join us to experience one of the most exciting wildlife expeditions we have ever offered. On this spectacular tour of the most environmentally friendly country in the world, you can expect to see a diverse array of bird life, plants, mammals and reptiles. It's on the must-do list for all nature lovers!



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Far North

We finally achieved a wader count during the second week in December, producing reasonable numbers of the key species but, as usual, rather poor species diversity. The contrast between the very flighty birds on Kokota Sandspit and those on Kowhai Beach, which could be approached to a few metres, was as marked as ever. We spotted seven flagged birds including two flagged Lesser Knots. One Common and a few Little Terns were seen in Rangaunu Harbour that weekend.

Holiday time in early January gave us a chance to do a mid-week pelagic trip from Whangaroa. Nine of us had a great day, starting with two Cape Barren Geese which crossed over from Stephenson Island to the mainland, passing close over the boat. We later discovered through the local DoC office that about a dozen of the species have been on the island for some years but their origin is unknown. Others have been recorded north of Auckland and near Cape Reinga in the last year or so. The pelagic also produced about 80 Black-winged Petrels, three White-naped Petrels, about 10 Grey-faced Petrels and about 30 Cook's Petrels. A Wandering Albatross flew past and there were some spectacular gatherings of commoner species around the berley.

A second pelagic from Opua was as enjoyable but less productive in that the very calm sea failed to attract much to berley. However four Arctic Skuas and a Pomarine Skua, together with a few Black and Cook's Petrels, Little Shearwater plus a selection of common species made for a reasonable day's birding.

Beach patrols in the latter part of last year had some successes including a Hutton's Shearwater found on 90 Mile Beach, which had been banded in the Kaikoura Ranges in October 1997.

Dr CJ Ralph lectured to the group at our only recent indoor meeting in late December on the subject of bird observatories. This began with an update on those which CJ had set up in Costa Rica but discussion continued on the question whether, and if so where, they could be considered of benefit and value in New Zealand.

Being a long way from everywhere in Kerikeri, potential speakers at meetings have to travel some distance and we would welcome those who are prepared to come. In the meantime our next meeting in late February will be given by my wife Carol and me on 'North Peru Revisited, 2010'. This will be an account of the Peru part of our nine weeks in South America last year, covering our exploration and bird lists, the new birding lodge at Gocta Falls and even a request to judge a school fancy dress competition where the pupils were all dressed as birds!

DETLEF DAVIES

Northland

Carol and Detlef Davies gave a presentation at November's meeting. They had recently returned from a trip to Ecuador where they were guests of the owner of a new jungle accommodation lodge. The lodge owner had requested their assistance and expertise to prepare pamphlets to promote his lodge to birdwatchers and others by making them aware of the immense variety of birds, butterflies and frogs etc. A major concern for the owner is the destruction of habitat by both mining and logging operations, leading to projects set up to provide alternative income for the local people.

Detlef's power-point presentation covered five weeks in Peru and three weeks in Ecuador and gave us a glimpse of Tiger Heron, Pygmy Owl, hummingbirds, Rufous Spine-tail and Andean Cock of the Rock. Many species of frogs there are as yet unidentified. Members also admired and purchased some of the desk-top calendars prepared by Carol using their photographs of the local and exotic wildlife and birds.

December's meeting was an enjoyable pot-luck dinner followed by a DVD compiled by a recent newcomer to our group, Trevor Storr, whose bird photography during a visit to the island of Skomer was a pleasant surprise. Trevor's visit to the island was extended when the weather cut up rough and he was not able to leave as planned. Skomer is off the coast of Wales and the rugged cliff faces are home to an interesting range of sea-birds. Your presentation was much appreciated Trevor, especially the bonus clip of the motorcycles!

Interesting happenings continue to be observed through suburban windows. In Tikipunga, Whangarei at 11am on 29th December, a Grey Warbler was seen feeding a well grown Shining Cuckoo juvenile in a nearby shrubby tree line, the juvenile following the warbler very closely and begging for food. Eight days later, on 6th January, the cuckoo was again following the warbler in the same area. The street looks out to the south-east over the Hatea River which runs through a bush-clad valley.

New Zealand Pigeons were seen flying past the lounge windows of a waterfront home at Pahi on the Kaipara Harbour in a continuous

Regional Roundup



stream during the course of a period of three to four hours on the evening of 1st January. Some were flying low, missing the deck railing by centimetres, some zooming in between trees, buildings or caravans, and some flying higher to get to one of their favourite foods. During spring, summer and autumn the very old and very large Moreton Bay Fig tree on the Pahi Domain has a massive crop of small figs which the pigeons find irresistible. They were flying to and from a patch of native bush which was ¼ to ½ km away from the house, to the tree on the other side of the house. During the late afternoon and evening 26 were counted in a half hour period, all flying in the same direction. Their flight path to return to the bush was above and further west, and could be seen from the back of the house. This activity continued until dark. It was seen again the next morning. This was written on 3rd January and this pigeon's behaviour continues, so a visit to the native bush area is on the agenda in the near future and again next spring.

In January beach patrols from Marsden Point to Waipu River (Bream Bay) yielded 49 Little Penguins, 21 Fluttering Shearwaters and five Grey-faced Petrels along with lesser numbers of six other seabirds. When volunteers were checking on Fairy Terns at Waipu Spit on 18th December, 44 Little Penguins were seen cast up on the beach.

A small group of volunteers have again been busy helping DoC Wardens with Fairy Tern monitoring over the nesting period at Waipu Refuge. Unfortunately, this season has again been very disappointing. Towards the end of November, two eggs and two chicks were predated, most probably by cats. Some people are still taking dogs and horses into the Refuge area despite all the signage at entry points and being spoken to by wardens and volunteers. While three kittens, five rats and one mouse have been caught, Waipu Spit is a large area and there are other cats both feral and domestic to be dispatched.

Fernbirds were heard and seen on the road margins of a reedy mangrove area near the camp at Kelly's Bay (40 km from Dargaville on the Pouto Peninsula) on 4th February. In the late afternoon at low tide, an Australasian Harrier was observed feeding on a large fish-head near the tide line. It was approached by Red-billed Gulls and Black-backed Gulls, but raised its wings each time and scared them away.

CLAIRE BURTT, JANET SNELL and PAULINE SMITH

Auckland

The now traditional quiz night wound up our 2010 programme in December with Michael Taylor testing a combination of ornithological and general knowledge with his array of questions. This year's phrase for generating bird names was 'OUR BRAND NEW CHECKLIST', with the winning team for that task reaching 48 names. Do try this challenge yourself, using the letters only once for any one name - but give yourself a 10-minute time limit to simulate quiz conditions!

We always start the birding for each year with a picnic at local recreational spot, after which a species list is collated during a walk around the area. This year, most people chose to stay home, as the picnic coincided with one of the cyclones that have swept in from warmer waters. The three of us that did brave the inclement weather were pleasantly surprised by a very localised lull in rain and enjoyed our harbour-side walk! Much as we might object to the effects of such tropical weather patterns they have brought with them vagrants; a Brown Booby to Auckland's west coast and a frigatebird to the Waitemata Harbour. One wonders how many other yet-to-be-spotted vagrants are here!

The first meeting of the year in February is always a potpourri of members' contributions and discussions focussing on local issues and events. This year we covered impact of a proposed marina development at Sandspit (near Warkworth), Fairy Tern breeding successes, and concerns over apparent low breeding success for Auckland west coast Australasian Gannets. All of these topics highlighted the value of local long-term records for species and the role that members play in the monitoring of our birds.

MEL GALBRAITH



Waikato

We finished 2010 in fine fashion with a Christmas potluck barbecue at the Hoverd's house, which is on the slope of Mount Kakepuku. As many will know, Janice and Laurie have been raising New Zealand Falcon chicks for a number of years, so it was not a hard decision to accept their kind offer of hosting the barbecue at their house. We were all promised a trip up to the 'hack box' to have a look at the latest edition. However, after the first member went up for a look (this person shall remain nameless), the chick decided to take cover and hide, meaning that the rest of us missed out on seeing him! All was not lost though as the dinner and company were superb and a great time was had by all, and it was a great way to end the year for our region.

Regular meetings resumed for 2011 in February, and our first speaker for the year was Craig Purvis, who works the DoC Area Office in Hamilton. Craig was lucky enough to have a trip down to the Snares Islands and gave a great talk and slide show on the birds and other wildlife of that region. In the coming months we will be looking forward to talks by Kokako PhD candidates from the University of Waikato, Sandra Valderrama and David Bradley. Sandra and David have given us talks in the past, but it is great to have them back so that they can let us know how the rest of their studies have turned out. In March we look forward having a camping trip, also lead by Sandra and David, to Rotoehu to (hopefully) spot a few Kokako in the bush around that area.

Monthly lake counts in the region continue to be conducted. Mallards were definitely the order of the day during the February count on Hamilton Lake; 1,091 of them were recorded by Barry Friend, as well as a plethora of Australian Coots and Pukeko. In contrast, February on Cambridge Lake was a sombre affair for Hugh Clifford as he only counted 268 Mallards and 18 Coots; that was it! Hugh reported that the water was more discoloured than usual and had a surface grim, so that may have been keeping them away. Out on Horseshoe Lake only moderate numbers of birds were counted. Water fowl are never very abundant on that lake, and in February 161 Mallards were counted. However, 36 Canada Geese and six Black Shags were seen, which are record numbers for the area.

DAI MORGAN

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

The Bay of Plenty and Volcanic Plateau regions have had a few ornithological attractions over the summer, including an American Golden Plover and Sanderling at Maketu, and a smattering of other interesting sightings, just to keep the twitchers in the twitchers twitching! A Brown Teal made a foray into the Wairoa River, Bethlehem, in early December. Another dark duck, a New Zealand Scaup, was reportedly breeding at the Carmichael Reserve wetlands, Tauranga, in January. A Blue Duck was seen at Opuiaki, behind McLaren Falls, near Tauranga, along with Long-tailed Bats and Cuckoos, and some late Shining Cuckoos, in February.

Several members helped with the five-yearly waterfowl survey of the Rotorua Lakes. Lots of New Zealand Dabchicks were counted; over 300 on Lake Rotoiti, for instance. New Zealand Dotterels banded on Matakana have been seen at Maketu recently. In January Rosemary Tully picked up a Gannet from the Whakatane vets which was dropped in by someone finding it at Port Ohope. It was banded with a metal band, number M71935. Unfortunately someone had placed an elastic band around the bill. As gannets/shags/darters and pelicans have no external nostrils the bird was dead; it was unable to breathe. Eighteen Caspian Terns successfully nested on Tern Island, Ohiva Harbour, reports Meg Collins. Meg also counted several White-fronted Tern nests, as well as Black-billed Gull and Red-billed Gull nests.

The first meeting of the year was in February, when I gave a brief overview of the bird groups on Mauao/Mount Maunganui. I then gathered the troops to walk around Mauao as far as we could go the following Saturday, as there are major avalanches on the western and south-western flanks of the mountain. These huge avalanches are blocking off access to all but one track up to the summit. Many a truckload of soil has been washed off the

hill, taking with it roosting shag trees and what amounts to be approximately a dozen petrel burrows. We are still to get access to the site to investigate the full extent of the burrow loss.

PAUL CUMING

Taranaki

I start this round up with a correction and an apology to Marie Mitchell, who won the first Shining Cuckoo of the year competition by a handsome margin. She reported it to Barry Hartley who somehow forgot to pass her report on to the assembled members. Got lost amongst all his other notes was Barry's excuse, so well done Marie. She also brought along a dead Shining Cuckoo, which had, as so often happens, flown into a window. The bird was then passed onto a local vet who donates dead birds to a local weaving group who use the feathers, so all was not lost.

Kay Rodbard gave us a talk about her annual excursions to England. She and Heather Ward (who lives in England) commute back and forth from each hemisphere to escape the respective winters, not that there is much difference between an English summer and a New Zealand winter. She started by saying there wasn't much to tell and they really didn't do a lot and then went on to detail their meanderings around that green and pleasant land, from looking for European Nightjars on heathland south west of London, then Thursley Common in Surrey to Bowling Green Marsh, off to Titchwell Marsh, Norfolk for Ringed Plover, Red Knots, Grey Plover and Pied Oystercatcher and Abbey Farm for Common Snipe and Little Owl. She told of how in some areas the sea walls that once held out the sea have been let go and the sea is now reclaiming low-lying land and providing habitat for many wading birds like Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Ringed Plover and Little Egrets, but sadly many common birds are in decline due to habitat loss. It was quite fascinating. I apologise if I have got any information wrong, as they covered what seemed to me to be a great deal of countryside and coast. What really had us intrigued was her photos of an estate they visited that had a fountain that combined burning gas and a water jet. This had us puzzling as to how it was achieved.

Five members enjoyed a ramble around Lake Rotomanu and Umutekai on the eastern outskirts of New Plymouth. Twenty-four species including Shining Cuckoo were seen. Three Kaka were seen at Oakura on several occasions and a pair of Royal Spoonbills was seen on Ngamotu Beach, central New Plymouth.

Barry Hartley's beach patrols have been more successful with several species of prions and shearwaters picked up from South Taranaki beaches. Nothing unusual was found although the Little Shearwater is uncommon here. David Medway is patrolling a new area to the east of New Plymouth, access being made easier by the extension of the coastal walkway, and he has picked up a few birds but nothing extraordinary as yet. He brought a couple of his finds along to the December meeting for us to identify. Both were only parts of birds, but enough to make identification possible. One was the wing of a Flesh-footed Shearwater and the other, not a sea bird, caused some discussion but was agreed to be a Pukeko. The possibility of it being a juvenile Takahe was discussed, but abandoned.

Amongst members reports the Messengers watched a pair of New Zealand Pigeons at their birdbath. The male with chest and neck feathers puffed up sidled amorously toward the female. Bill and Rosemary being modest country folk averted their eyes at this point so we will never know the outcome. Three Kaka seen in Pukekura Park were probably the ones seen earlier in Oakura.

While carrying out his regular surveys of South Taranaki beaches Barry Hartley picked up a beach-wrecked Australasian Gannet that had been banded at Muriwai on December 7th 1986, making it almost twenty five years old. The New Zealand Dotterels there had Barry thoroughly confused with their nesting antics, and at one stage there were more nests than pairs of birds. Unfortunately they were all lost due to predation or weather events, so no juveniles were produced this year. The resident Variable Oystercatcher at Waiongana had better luck after several failed years and managed to fledge one chick.

December is the annual bring a plate for supper, and at the meeting's conclusion members circled the table like a flock of ravenous gannets over a school of pilchard. The December field trip was to the Meeting of the Waters and Lake Mangamahoe south of New Plymouth; a gentle stroll along the riverside and through a patch of native bush where three Shining Cuckoos were seen chasing each other and calling loudly. The day concluded with a visit to an ex-member's bush remnant which he is busy replanting. Far more botany than birding took place.



There was no indoor meeting in January but the annual Waiongana Beach, Birds and Barbecue was held under cloudy skies. Most of those who trekked to the beach saw species number 87 on my bird list: a Greater Sand Plover that had spent a couple of weeks here with the local Banded Dotterels. A great time was had by all and the barbecue just keeps getting better each year.

February's meeting was a chance to catch up with what others had been up to. David Medway was hanging out in Pukekura Park as usual and watched a pair of New Zealand Pigeons successfully fledge a chick not far above the heads of thousands of visitors and the Little Shag colony was actively nesting. Also, horror of horrors, the Canada Goose pair finally fledged a chick after two to three years of trying. David also saw three Shining Cuckoos at Pukeiti behaving in the same manner as previously reported. A live adult Fiordland Crested Penguin which turned up on a mid-city beach was rescued by DoC and put on a southbound boat for more familiar waters. This is not the first record for this species in Taranaki.

Barry Hartley and Kris Grabow provided the first record of a Banded Rail in the lower Awakino River and Barry photographed an immature White-winged Black Tern amongst a flock of White-fronted Terns in South Taranaki. As usual for this time of the year small flocks of South Island Pied Oystercatchers were heading up the coast past Waiongana. Any that tried to land were chased off by the resident Variable Oystercatchers. At sea off Waiongana one windy morning thousands of Australasian Gannets were in the bay along with hundreds of White-fronted Terns, some being harassed by up to four skuas. Sooty Shearwaters were also whipping past.

Carol Keight had been home to England over Christmas and returned with a report on the effects that domestic cats have on wild life. It is estimated that British cats kill 275 million individual animals every year, and our cats are probably no different although fewer in number.

February's expedition was to Bob and Karen Schumacher's Purangi property in eastern Taranaki. They started with 71 ha, which is fenced and heavily trapped. Gradually the trapped area is expanding by drawing local farmers into the plan. A charitable trust called the East Taranaki Environment Trust was formed, with the first phase of trapping being 3,000 ha. This has now increased to 13,000 ha and approximately 1,400 traps, meaning the purchase of 112 dozen eggs per month from a local poultry farm. There is an estimated 350 pairs of North Island Brown Kiwi in the area. They are also involved with other trapping projects around Egmont National Park. After talking to Bob about all the projects they are involved in I felt quite exhausted and needed a sit down.

PETER FRYER

Wanganui

Summer is a quiet time here, at least as far as organised regional activities go. The last meeting of the year was held in November, a relaxed affair watching a DVD on how some bird species have adapted to certain extreme conditions and others have adjusted to completely new environments created by humans. No meetings were held in December or January, to accommodate the holiday season when many members have other commitments. Nevertheless, judging from the flow of emails and attached photographs, the photographers were active, making use of the better weather and seasonal opportunities provided by nesting birds. Ormond Torr and Paul Gibson spent time photographing Black-backed Gulls at a large nearby colony. Because the gulls are conspicuous and common we tend to take them for granted, but they are photogenic and, in their own way, quite engaging. Some fine photographs were the results (see back cover). An added extra was a record on the way to the gull colony of three Turnstones relaxing on the beach. These are uncommon birds here.

A joint field trip in early December with members of the Wanganui Museum Botanical Group to the cliffs along the coast west of Patea was relatively unproductive, principally because of the strong onshore wind that blew all day. The highlight was a White-fronted Tern carrying food towards a small inshore stack where presumably it had a chick or chicks. This is the first evidence of breeding on this stretch of coast.

Black-backed Gulls were also breeding, but the pairs were scattered along the cliff tops rather than aggregated in a definable colony. One pair of large downy chicks had positioned themselves precariously at the edge of a 30 m cliff, threatening to launch themselves into the abyss. Fortunately, the strong wind and unstable nature of the cliff kept everyone at a distance. The only other notable sighting was of a pair of Rock Pigeons on the cliffs, for once inhabiting something like their natural habitat rather than the urban buildings and bridges on which so many now live.

Counts of waders and waterbirds on the Whanganui Estuary continue. The numbers of Bar-tailed Godwit returning to the estuary for the summer was initially lower than in previous years but increased from January onwards. Among the returnees were two individually marked males, originally banded on the Manawatu estuary in late October 2008, but which subsequently spent the 2008/09 and 2009/10 summers on the Whanganui Estuary. As in previous years these birds arrived first at the Manawatu Estuary, spent a few weeks there, and then flew across to spend the rest of the summer on the Whanganui Riviera, clearly a more fashionable resort with fewer tourists. They were preceded briefly by an immature godwit that had been marked with an engraved leg flag in June 2010 at Corner Inlet, Victoria, Australia. It did not stay long, however, but moved on, no doubt looking for the crowds elsewhere.

From late December onwards, South Island Pied Oystercatchers began moving through the estuary, heading northwards from their South Island breeding grounds. As in previous years, the birds seemed to follow the coastline, arriving at the estuary from the southeast, resting and feeding for a while, then departing in a north-westerly direction towards Mt Taranaki. What we don't know is whether, when the birds get closer to Taranaki, they fly across the bulge, east of the mountain, or whether they continue to follow the coast all the way around. The latter route is about 65 km longer than flying direct between, say, the Manawapou River on the south coast and Urenui in the north. On the coastal route the birds have the benefit of being able to stop periodically to rest and feed, despite the longer distance. As the Atlas shows no records of South Island Pied Oystercatcher from inland Taranaki, these benefits may outweigh the approximate 80% increase in the cost of travelling this leg of their trip north. Birds returning in late winter and spring may do so more directly, however, as the number of birds recorded passing through our region then is much lower.

Monthly meetings resume in February, when Paul Gibson will give an illustrated talk on the birds of southern Queensland, based on a visit made some months before this year's floods and cyclone. The impact of such large-scale disturbances on the birds there can only be imagined at this stage. If something like that happened here, would we have the data on bird populations to allow us to measure its effects?

PETER FROST

Hawkes Bay

In November we completed the supposed summer count in conditions that were more like winter. Thanks to good support from local members we were able to cover all areas. The Grey-tailed Tattler was present at the Ahuriri Estuary and was still around in early February. Those who tackled the mud at Porangahau were rewarded with some interesting sightings including three New Zealand Dotterels, nine Turnstones, seven Red-necked Stints and nine Wrybills. It was disappointing that there were no Caspian Terns breeding in the area this year as it is usually a reliable spot for them, and the only known site in our region.

Helen and Huib visited Blowhard Bush in December to carry out the five minute bird count project we are doing there.

Our 2011 birding year hasn't got underway yet. Our planned January BBQ and planning meeting had to be postponed due to wet weather. Helen has given notice that she intends to step down as our RR at this meeting, so hopefully someone will be prepared to take on this role. We have been very grateful for Helen's leadership over the past several years, and appreciate that she has stayed on longer than she originally intended.

MARGARET TWYDLE



Wellington

Zealandia, formerly known as the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, has been a pioneer in the use of specialised fencing to provide a predator free sanctuary on mainland New Zealand. Raewyn Empson, the Conservation Manager, presented the final talk for 2010 on the three K's, namely Kiwi, Kaka and Kakariki. Little spotted Kiwi were one of the first birds introduced into the sanctuary. A recent survey demonstrated a healthy population of kiwi with numbers exceeding 100, or two and half times the number of introduced birds. Kaka have thrived in the sanctuary and regularly venture outside the fence, exploring the city and its environs. Supplementary feeding of Kaka continues, in part to ensure the birds are attracted back to the sanctuary, which is critical to ensure successful breeding. The last of the K's is the Kakariki, the Red-crowned Parakeet. In July last year birds from Kapiti Island were translocated to the sanctuary and have subsequently successfully bred. Other notable events at Zealandia include a pair of New Zealand Falcons, which have again bred. Unfortunately the Falcons feast not only on Blackbirds but also endemic birds such as the occasional Bellbird. Establishing a self-sustaining population of Bellbirds has been a major challenge. There has been successful breeding but poor retention of females and an imbalance in the sex ratio.

Three local members presented short reports at the February meeting. Reg Cotter and Mike Rumble, in conjunction with Graham Taylor from DoC have been surveying the Little Penguins on Mātū/Somes Island. This study is a continuation of investigations that date back many years to Fred Kinsky's studies. The island continues to support a good population of penguins and in 2010 there were over 250 active nests. Many of the birds now use the nest boxes, which are scattered round the island. Duncan Wright gave a talk on his trip to the Chatham Islands. He also demonstrated the potential of the new generation of smart phones as an aid to birding. The phone can not only be used for recording bird observations but also as a field guide. The third of the speakers was Edward Abraham who summarised his investigations into the effect of recreational fishing on the inadvertent catching of sea birds. A limited survey of recreational fishers revealed a small but significant by-catch of seabirds. However, when the total effort of recreational fishing in New Zealand is taken into account, this by-catch assumes a worrying loss of birds. Edward's investigations revealed the need for further studies as well as a programme to educate recreational fishers on how to avoid catching sea birds.

GEOFF DE LISLE

Nelson

December's meeting was a barbecue courtesy of David and Vicky Melville at their Dovedale home. It was well attended by members and partners and at the end of the evening Rob Schuckard and Willie Cook showed some interesting pictures from field trips throughout the year.

The November five minute bird counts at Flora Stream were completed in good weather. This was the sixth year with a total of 16 visits. Only two days have been missed due to poor weather/observer numbers in this time. Pauline Samways in conjunction with Robin Toy have done some data analysis which shows a large variability of occurrence/conspicuousness within species noted in the five minute counts. It is not surprising with this variability that no species has shown trends in abundance. The counts commenced four years after trapping had started. The main value of the survey is that it has established a base line against which bird numbers can be compared in future.

Banding of Caspian Tern chicks took place on the 13th December on Bells Island shellbank. Willie Cook once again mustered a team with age and youth well balanced.

44 large chicks were banded for the first time using alpha numeric bands as opposed to colour ones. Ten days later a further 16 birds were ready to band, which made this one of the best seasons for the study.

In December a combined team of Marlborough and Nelson members went up the Matakītiki River near Muchison to a colony of Black-billed Gulls and were able to band about 200 chicks.

A tour operator on Farewell Spit reported a Terek Sandpiper (supported by photo) on the ocean beach of the spit. Chris Petyt in a recent trip to the base of Farewell Spit noted good numbers of Arctic waders at roost in particular Lesser Knots. The latter species also dominated in a recent count on Bells Island with about 900 present compared to 500 Bar-tailed Godwits.

On Parapara Peak Chris recorded three Yellow-crowned Parakeets, three Robins and three or more Kea in the first week of February.

David and Julie Melville along with Willie Cook have had a good season banding Variable Oystercatcher chicks along the section of coast from the Motueka Sandspit to Bells Island, with a total of 25 birds. The exception to this was the poor breeding of the birds on Rabbit Island. Normally there are six pairs here, but this year only one pair reared two chicks. Storm conditions played a role in this.

In early February a Dutch ornithologist Mennobart van Eerden was invited by the Friends of Nelson Haven to review the ecology of King Shags in relation to aquaculture development in the Marlborough Sounds. Rob Schuckard and David Melville were also involved in this work. Before returning to the Netherlands Mennobart gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Friends of Nelson Haven and Nelson OSNZ. Mennobart is the chair of the Wetlands International-IUCN species specialist group on cormorants. The title was 'Cormorants in the Netherlands and Europe: the Triptych between Bird, Fish and Man'. He described the expansion of Great Cormorants in Europe following the end of persecution. Now Great Cormorants are considered a nuisance and debates on their control are under way at the European level.

The speaker at our February meeting was Robin Toy with a PowerPoint presentation on 'Hihi Monitoring on Hauturu'. Robin had spent two months as a volunteer on a DoC programme on this very rugged island (Little Barrier Island), one of the oldest off-shore island sanctuaries. Stitchbirds on this island are the only self-sustaining population and it provides a base for the recovery of this species through the re-introduction to other safe islands.

Til Mellis reports that six Nelson members joined the Marlborough region for their annual passerine banding weekend, but unfortunately high winds spoil any catching activity. Better luck another year.

DON COOPER

Southland

Neil Robertson from Te Anau has graciously agreed to take over as Southland Regional Rep from Lloyd Esler. Many thanks to Lloyd who has been our rep now for a number of years, and was on his second stint in the position. We welcome Neil and will give him all the support he needs for the future.

Members have decided to survey the Mokomoko Inlet near Omaui four times a year after Lloyd Esler visited this area and advised there were good numbers of godwits and other species feeding in the inlet at low tide. We completed the first official survey in January and numbers included South Island Pied Oystercatcher 365+, Bar-tailed Godwit 165, White-faced Heron 10 and Pied Stilt 25.

In conjunction with the Southland Natural History Field Club a few OSNZ members visited a number of locations around the Catlins area including Surat Bay and Cannibal Bay. The highlight was counting 50+ Royal Spoonbills nesting at False Island (Surat Bay) on the side of a cliff. On a visit about five years ago we counted only five nesting birds so this is a huge increase. Due to the limited vegetation at this colony there is probably little chance of any more increase in numbers.

Bird sightings: Neil Robertson received a photograph from Helen Blake of a Broad-billed Prion flying along the shore of Lake Manapouri on December 10th. At the New River Estuary in Invercargill, I saw what I am sure was a White-winged Black Tern and I also spotted a New Zealand Falcon flying over Clyde in Central Otago. At Orepuki near Riverton, Margaret McFarlane and Rob Raill picked up a dead giant petrel wearing an Australian band. We think it was probably banded on Macquarie Island but will know for sure when the band details are sent back. On Christmas Day Lloyd Esler saw an Arctic Skua flying along Oreti Beach, Invercargill. He also checked out the Caspian Tern colony at the shellbanks on the New River Estuary and reported 19 chicks that were not far from being able to fly.

PHIL RHODES



Far North

Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 0470. Ph (09) 407 3874.
Email detlefdavies@yahoo.com

Northland

David Crockett, 21 McMillan Avenue, Kamo, Whangarei 0112.
Ph (09) 435 0954
Evening meetings, second Thursday of the month, phone David Crockett. West coast beach patrols Prue Cozens (09) 437 7760. East coast beach patrols Pauline Smith (09) 437 6470. Whangarei Harbour wader count Tony Beauchamp (09) 436 2661. North Kaipara wader count David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

Auckland

Mel Galbraith, 62 Holyoake Place, Birkenhead, Auckland. Ph (09) 480 1958. Email melgar62@slingshot.co.nz
Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at 7.45pm at Natural Science Building 23, Unitec, Point Chevalier.

South Auckland

Simon Fordham, P.O. Box 64 042, Botany, Manukau 2163.
Ph (09) 274 1828. Email simonf@clear.net.nz
Evening meetings are held at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms, 5 Chapel Street, Papakura, on the second Tuesday of each month (Feb-Nov) at 7.45 pm. Beach patrols ph. Wendy Goad (09) 292 7838. Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

Waikato

Dai Morgan, 20a Walsh Street, Forest Lake, Hamilton 3200. Phone (07) 848 2522.
Email magpiemorgan@gmail.com
Evening meetings, every third Wednesday 7.30pm, DoC Area Office, 5 Northway Street (off Te Rapa Road), Hamilton.
Beach Patrols and Cambridge Lake census, Hugh Clifford ph (07) 855 3751. Hamilton Lake Census, Barry Friend ph (07) 843 6729. Forest Lake Census, Brian Challinor ph (07) 855 2561. Kakepuku Bird Counts and West Coast Harbour Censuses, Laurie Hoverd ph (07) 871 8071. Bird Sightings, Dai Morgan

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Eila Lawton, 449 Lund Road, RD2 Katikati 3178. Ph (07) 549 3646 Email osnzbo@gmail.com
Evening meetings – second Wednesdays of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct and Dec, 7pm.

Gisborne/Wairoa

Steve Sawyer, 369 Wharerata Road, RD1 Gisborne 4071.
Ph (06) 867 2888, mobile 027 209 6049. Email ecoworksnz@xtra.co.nz

Hawkes Bay

Helen Andrews, 254 Mangatahi Rd, RD1, Hastings 4171.
Ph (06) 874 9426.
Email helenandrews@xtra.co.nz
Indoor meetings are held on an irregular basis, but field trips are organised regularly. Please contact Helen Andrews for details.

Taranaki

Barry Hartley, 12a Ronald Street, New Plymouth. Ph (06) 757 8644.
Email Barry_Hartley@clear.net.nz
Evening meetings – first Thursday of each month (except January) at 7.30pm, Community House, Liardet Street, New Plymouth. Field trip following Sunday.

Wanganui

Peter Frost, 87 Ikitara Road, Wanganui East, Wanganui 4500.
Ph: 06 343 1648. Email: birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz. Evening meetings – last Monday of every month except December, 7.30pm (unless the day is a public holiday), St Joseph's Hall, 1 Campbell Street. For more details contact Peter Frost.

Manawatu

Ian Saville, 24 Puketiro Avenue, Feilding 4702. Ph (06) 323 1441.
Email sav@wrybill-tours.com
Evening meetings – second Wednesday of Feb, May, Aug and Nov, Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8pm. Beach patrols – first Wednesday of each month and also at other irregular times.

Wairarapa

Peggy Duncan, 228 Wood Street, RD1 Greytown 5794.
Email peggyduncan@paradise.net.nz
Evening meetings held on the second Thursday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30 pm, venue alternating between Masterton and Greytown. Field trips are the following weekend. Contact Barbara Lovatt for further details.

Wellington

Ian Armitage, 50 Ranui Terrace, Tawa, Wellington 5028.
Ph (04) 232 7470. Email ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz
Evening meetings - first Monday of the month, Head Office of DoC, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington, meet 7.30 pm for a 7:45 pm start, ph. Ian Armitage (04) 232 7470.
East Harbour Regional Park bird survey, Reg Cotter (04) 568 6960.
Beach patrols, Sharon Alderson (04) 298 3707. Mana Island Robins and Sooty Shearwaters, Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929. Mist-netting and passerine banding, Peter Reese (04) 387 7387.

Nelson

Stuart Wood, 24 Olympus Way, Richmond 7020. Ph (03) 544 3932.
Email stuartwood38@yahoo.co.nz
Evening meetings – usually first Monday of the month, 7.15 pm Solander/Aurora Fisheries Board Room. The Solander/Aurora building is on the right hand side of Cross Street, just beyond Dickson's Boat Repair and more or less opposite the 'red shed' - the Tasman Bay Cruising Club, Nelson. Phone Stuart Wood (03) 544 3932 or Don Cooper (03) 544 8109.

Marlborough

Mike Bell, 42 Vickerman Street, Grovetown, Blenheim 7202.
Phone (03) 577 9818 or 021 734 602. Email skua44@yahoo.co.nz. Lake Grassmere count – third Sunday of month. Ph Brian Bell (03) 570 2230. Passerine banding, each weekend during February and March, at Jack Taylor's farm, Ward, contact Mike Bell Ph (03) 577 9818.

Canterbury/West Coast

Jan Walker, 305 Kennedys Bush Road, Halswell, Christchurch 8205.
Ph (03) 322 7187. Email shesagreen@gmail.com
Evening meetings last Monday of the month (Feb-Nov), Mahaanui Area DoC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road (off Blenheim Road), Sockburn, Christchurch. Monthly field trips – dates vary, contact Jan Walker.

Otago

Mary Thompson, 197 Balmacewen Road, Balmacewen, Dunedin.
Ph (03) 464 0787. Email maryt@actrix.co.nz.
Evening meetings monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 8.00pm in Benham Seminar Room, Zoology Department, 340 Great King Street. Contact Mary Thompson.

Southland

Neil Robertson, PO Box 65, Te Anau, Southland 9640.
Ph (03) 249 9595/021 1526 275. Email neilgrobertson@yahoo.co.uk
Evening meetings (in conjunction with Field Club) held second Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm. Please phone Lloyd Esler on (03) 213 0404 for venue and further information, field trip usually on Saturday following. Beach Patrols on a casual basis, phone Phil Rhodes (03) 217 7699 or Lloyd Esler.

