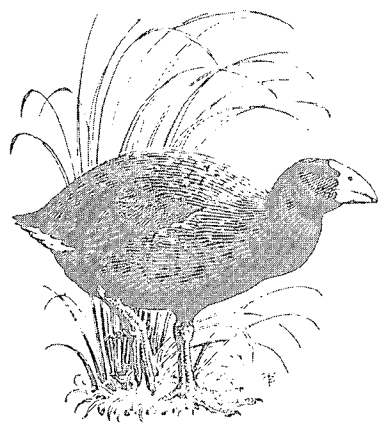




Southern Bird

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Quotation

*'If one cannot catch a bird of paradise,
better take a wet hen.'*

Nikita Krushechev, Time
6 January 1958

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Cover Photos

Front Cover

Little Spotted Kiwi have flourished since being introduced onto Red Mercury Island, where this one was photographed. The photograph was one which appeared at the AGM photography competition in Napier in June.

Photo Stella Rowe

Back Cover

A small fish is moistened before being fed to the chick just visible on the other parent's back. Australasian Crested Grebe, Lake Hayes, November 1998

Photo George Chance

Publisher

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We welcome advertising enquiries.



Royal Spoonbill census

The national census of Royal Spoonbills for 2000 was planned for the weekend of 17/18 June 2000. Unfortunately not all regions adhered to these dates. Because of obvious date disparities, there is a distinct possibility that some (though probably not many) birds may have been counted twice. One region, known for spoonbills in the area all year round, didn't manage to do a count.

A date has to be set, and this one, allocated to mid June, was similar to the previous censuses prior to 1996. It is important to stick to one or two consecutive days, since spoonbills can move quite rapidly from one area to another. I am fully aware however that these dates are not always convenient to everybody.

Having said that, I am confident that the end figure is pretty accurate, even with the odd bird counted twice, and a few not counted at all. They can move rapidly out of a favourite district, like the example of the Wairarapa, where none were seen on

census day, but 45 birds were counted in May. Napier had about 50 birds a week prior to the AGM, over 60 were counted on the Tuesday after the AGM weekend, but only 35 had remained to be counted on census day. These drops in numbers in one region means that other regions should have an increase, like Wanganui and Wellington.

Both regions had a nil count in 1996, but this time 11 and 10 respectively. And how about the Manawatu region, with a total of only 15 in 1996 and 68 this time.

As predicted the highest concentrations were seen at the tips of both islands, with all other regions up in numbers except the Wairarapa.

This total compared with the June 1996 figure of 659 gives an increase in 4 years of about 45%, which clearly shows that the Royal Spoonbill is still expanding in New Zealand. Many thanks to all counters and to those who sent the figures in.

PETER SCHWEIGMAN

The results:

Far North	175
Northland	77
Auckland/Sth Auckland	139
Waikato	95
Bay of Plenty	35
Gisborne	41
Taranaki	2
Manawatu	68
Wanganui	11
Hawke's Bay	35
Wellington	10
Nelson	208
Canterbury	59
Otago	1
Total	956



61ST AGM Minutes *Saturday 3 June 2000, 8.00pm, The Dome, Napier*

Apologies: John Brierley, Alan and Connie Wright, John Warham, Enfy's Graham, Russell Thomas, Hugh Clifford, David Lawrie, Tony Habraken, Tenick Dennison, Elizabeth and Mike Bell, Peter Bull, Shirley Nieuwland.

Moved apologies be accepted
Kerry-Jayne Wilson/Tony Crocker
Carried

The President acknowledged with regret the passing in the last year of Fred Kinsky, Gerry Clark, Peg Fleming, Ronald Lockley. A minute's silence was observed for these past members of the Society.

The minutes from the last meeting were taken as read and moved that they be accepted
Bev Woolley/JW
Carried

There were no matters arising.

President's report: The President thanked all present RRs and those retiring for their service to the Society and welcomed (with thanks in advance) new RRs. David Crockett is confirmed as North Island Vice President, with Graeme Taylor and Hazel Harty re-elected to Council. David Medway has been elected as the new President. Applauded.

There are now two vacancies on council. Council has resolved to co-opt Lloyd Esler and Peter Schweigman for the next 12 months.

Moved that ballot papers for President be destroyed
Rosemary Heather /Mark Nee.
Carried

It was resolved by Council that a donation from member R.J.O. Meadows would be allocated to the atlas scheme and that it would be designated the "R.J.O. Meadows fund". The President welcomed donations from other members to the atlas fund and these would be gratefully appreciated. Council and RRs had been discussing the next 60 years and a subcommittee will now take input from all elected officers of the Society and prepare a paper on this topic for council.

There is a new format for publications, with the inclusion of colour pages in *Southern Bird* which has been underwritten from general funds. But, Council are now seeking donations from regions and members to continue with some colour in this publication, this year. There has been positive feedback about the new publication format. *Southern Bird* relies on consistent member input and the President thanked members for their input to date.

Two Society websites went on line on 1 June. The President thanked Brent Stephenson for his time and effort on behalf of the Society, and Chelmer Ltd who are sponsoring the site in the interim. Members are encouraged to use the site and provide any suggestions for its improvement.

A successful field course was recently

held at Farewell Spit and another is planned for Southland in 2001 and Wanganui/Central Plateau in 2002.

For the next few years, AGMs of the Society will be conducted in areas where we have few members so that atlas trips can assist these regions. In 2001 it will be held in the Central Plateau (Rotorua), 2002 will probably be Hokitika, 2003 will be Central Otago, and 2004 in Taranaki. All these regions may need assistance from surrounding regions.

A successful National Twitchathon was organised by the Canterbury RR. A winning 86 species were listed in one day. The President challenged each region to get a team in the field in future events and that we should also encourage teams from Forest and Bird and other organisations. The twitchathon contributes to international bird conservation in that it generates sponsor funding.

Our beach patrol convenor Graeme Taylor has retired and the position has been accepted by Laurie Howell.

Applauded.

The North Island Classified Summarised notes co-ordinator is now Richard Parrish.

The Rare Birds Convenor David Medway was congratulated for getting records up to date.

With the Society library combined with that of Auckland Museum, the librarian Kathy Barrow has been taking out the older books for auction. Funds are to go toward buying further field guides for members to use in other locations.

A revised field guide is to be released shortly. Sales of the hand-guide have also been steady. Council (on behalf of members) expressed considerable thanks to Rosemary Heather on behalf of Barrie, and to Hugh Robertson for their significant and generous financial contributions to the Society through royalties from these guides.

Applauded.

Treasurer's report:

Previously circulated and taken as read.

Moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted
Mark Nee/John Rowe
Carried

Notices of motion:

President read 1st motion as previously advertised in the agenda for the AGM. This motion would increase the age for eligibility as a life member from 30 to 40 years.

That the Constitution be amended by deleting from Clause 5.2.3 the figure '30' and substituting therefore the figure '40'.

Moved ~ David Medway/Chris Robertson
Carried

The President read the 2nd motion as advertised in the agenda for the AGM. This motion would reduce the percentage

of the subscription to be paid by a family member from 50% to 25%.

That the Constitution be amended by deleting from Clause 5.2.4 the percentage '50%' and substituting therefore the percentage '25%'
Moved ~ David Medway/Chris Robertson
Carried

The President read the 3rd motion as advertised in the agenda for the AGM. This motion would set membership fees from 1 January 2001.

That the Annual Subscription rate for all classes of membership paying subscriptions be increased as follows:

Ordinary member \$50 (*overseas* US\$45 including postage);

Full-time Student member \$25;

Life Member (40 years and over) \$1000 (*overseas* US\$900);

Family Member (*living in a household with an Ordinary Member, Life Member or Fellow*) \$12.50;

Group (Institution) member \$100 (*overseas* US\$85 including postage);

Corporate Member \$250

And that the increased rates shall apply from 1 January 2001.

Moved Chris Robertson/Mark Nee
Carried

Awards

The President's award for a name for the new format magazine was given from a long list suggested by members. The winner was Tony Crocker for *Southern Bird*.

The President also gave an award for the first team to lodge a list with more than 50 spp. from the twitchathon. The winners were Peter and Julie Fryer.

The Junior award has been given to Troy Makan, a first year student at Massey University. A book token and book plate were given to Brent Stephenson to pass to Troy with congratulations from the Society.

A Meritorious Service Award has been granted to Ron Scarlett. It was accepted on his behalf by Nick Allen.

The student paper competition was won by Paul Scofield of Otago University

General business

A question was asked concerning the number of corporate members in the Society. We currently have one - Air New Zealand.

Tony Crocker thanked the out-going President for his sponsorship of the first colour page for *Southern Bird*. He also thanked the local committee for organising the meeting, particularly J and C McRae, M Twyde and B Stephenson.

David Medway thanked Chris Robertson for his significant contributions to the Society.

Applauded

Meeting closed 9.01 pm

CHRISTINE REED
Hon Secretary



Fishing Shags

Brian Harding and Rosemary Heather had completed their section of the OSNZ Wellington harbour survey on 1 April, in rain and southerly winds. The section runs from the railway station to the overseas terminal.

There is always a small group of Spotted Shags on the end of the breakwater at the entrance to the marina. However on this day three were fishing just off the small beach adjacent to Te Papa. We stopped on the boardwalk about three metres away and watched for about half an hour.

One bird was only about a metre away from the shore, in about 60 cms of water and being harassed by Red-billed Gulls while it fished among shoals of small silver fish. On the surface it used its feet, paddling like a duck. However when it dived after the shoals, it used both feet together in a pumping action, like twin screws on a ship. Immediately it was as if it was jet-propelled, the speed increased so much. While we watched it caught small fish on each alternate dive.

ROSEMARY HEATHER

The following is an extract from *Dive New Zealand* Dec 1999/ Jan 2000 issue. Article 'The riches of the Poor Knights', by Ross and Diane Armstrong.

* * * * *

".....Dave and I were exploring a kelp covered area when a movement out of the corner of my eye attracted my attention. Turning around I glanced a Pied Shag swimming downward with regular kicks of its feet. It disappeared below the rock face and a quick look at my computer confirmed I was at 11 metres.

"We swam over to the edge expecting to see the shag but there was no sign of it. Later back on board *Arrow*, David Allen said he saw the shag swim past him at 21 metres still heading down!"

Ruapehu Kiwi

Ngati Rangi, tangata whenua of southern Ruapehu, and the Department of Conservation have been working together over the past few years to develop a proposed mainland island reserve in Rangataua Forest known as "Karioi Rahui", on the southern slopes of Mt Ruapehu.

One of the objectives of the Rahui is to re-establish a viable self-sustaining population of North Island Brown Kiwi within this area. Kiwi are presently at higher altitudes (1300 m. ASL) and are sparsely distributed around the southern and western slopes of the mountain. It is thought that this high altitude existence is due to pressure from mustelid predation at lower levels, forcing kiwi to live in the tussock/montane snow line zone.

The Karioi Rahui has been the focus of intensive predator control and monitoring efforts in recent years, and mustelid, rodent and possum numbers are at very low levels. Three kiwi chicks raised by Rainbow Springs in Rotorua were released into the Rahui on 2 May, after a special inaugural ceremony held at Lake Rotokura, east of Ohakune. These three chicks originated from eggs taken from Waimarino Forest, west of Raetihi, on 30 September 1999. A further two eggs were taken from Waimarino on 1 February 2000, and these two chicks will also be released into the Rahui in late June.

I have been involved in a research project in Waimarino Forest since 1996, which aims to investigate the use kiwi make of exotic plantation forests, and to provide data to forest managers Winstone Pulp International Ltd, in order to manage kiwi populations during harvest operations.

In April 1999 four kiwi were caught and fitted with radio transmitters. They have been intensively followed over the past 12 months and territories have been mapped using GPS units. Roost and nest locations have been identified, and feeding preferences have been studied by timing

the amount of feeding occurring in each of the three main habitat types occurring in the forest (pine, podocarp/broadleaf and manuka scrub/grassland).

Territory sizes range from 30 ha to 80 ha per pair. 42% of feeding was recorded in pine habitat. 80% of day roosts were located in podocarp/broadleaf forest in those territories containing this habitat type. All nests have been in native habitat in territories containing podocarp/broadleaf forest, though some territories are exclusively confined to pine habitat.

Nests are located and monitored. After 60 days of occupation the eggs are removed and flown to Rainbow Springs, where they are incubated and chicks reared until they reach a release weight of 1200 gms. At this weight and size they are able to cope with mustelid predation attempts, and releases in Tongariro Forest have shown that chick survival is currently better than 75%.

This radio telemetry based project created an opportunity for the Department of Conservation to assist with the research, and adds another dimension to the "Operation Nest Egg" scheme. Waimarino Forest is leased to Winstone Pulp by Whanganui River iwi groups, and after negotiations with DoC, iwi, WPI and Ngati Rangi it was agreed that 50% of chicks raised from eggs from Waimarino Forest will be released into the Karioi Rahui, the remained being returned to Waimarino.

Over the next five years it is hoped to raise 60 chicks, which will greatly enhance the establishment of a viable population in the Karioi Rahui, while maintaining recruitment in Waimarino Forest at the same time. The inaugural release on 2 May was a milestone locally for kiwi conservation, the Rahui establishment and for tangata whenua who were delighted to be working together with DoC, business, private individuals, with a common vision shared by all.

KERRY OATES

Direct Debiting

Our Treasurer Mark Nee and I have been working on the issue of direct debiting subscriptions and donations into the OSNZ account. For members who wish to make automatic bank payments for their subscriptions/donations etc., please contact your bank and use the codes below when direct debiting (refer your sub notice). These codes are essential to let us know where the monies are to go. Also could you please ask the bank to add your name to the transaction so we know you have paid!

Bank of New Zealand, Albert St Auckland branch, a/c no. 0290 0164 715 - 00

Subscriptions
General donations
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MON2001OSNZ

Note that all donations are tax deductible.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary.



Egg Thief

When my pair of Orpington chooks kept leaving eggshells in their enclosure, I thought that one of them was eating eggs. I penned the rooster up and the hen laid eggs and left them whole. The rooster was obviously the culprit. Every day I took an egg out of this three-sided, roofed animal shelter (c. 1 metre deep, 1.5 m long and 1 m high) with the long side open, into which I had put a little hay. The egg was clearly visible most days as she did not cover it up.

After about a week of no problems, I started finding eggshells again in her "nest". As the rooster was still penned up I thought that she had taken to eating her own eggs. Sometimes the egg was there, however, and sometimes not. I decided that it must be rats or a stoat rather than the hen.

My two red shaver hens are kept next to the Orpingtons in a larger enclosure. They usually laid their eggs in a proper dark chook-house, but at about this time they decided to pay eggs outside, under a half metre high clump of sedge growing alongside their house. After about a week of collecting their eggs from under the sedge I found eggshells in their nest too, though I did think it unusual that rats or stoats would come in the daytime.

Then one day I looked out the window and saw a harrier fly up from the red shavers' enclosure. It was a very white looking bird and flew off from near the chook house and away to the south. The chooks were "complaining". I immediately went out to check the nest and found half an eggshell, the white still in it, the yolk gone, and some bits of shell.

In all the twenty years of raising turkeys and having chooks around we have never had a harrier even look at the birds, so far as we know.

ERIKA WOODGER

In Search of Rock Wrens

Three days of tramping up the Cobb Valley in the Kahurangi National Park recently, was a grand experience and adventure. I went with Yorkshireman Chris Petyt who now lives in Golden Bay, near Farewell Spit. Chris works for the Ministry of Fisheries, and has a job as an observer on fishing boats to make sure that they don't break the rules on catch size, and whale and bird protection. It sounds like a fascinating job, though it does mean that he spends up to four months at sea on some trips.

We drove to the far end of Cobb Reservoir and walked from there, arriving at Chaffey's Hut after about an hour and half. We then carried on from there to the head of the Cobb River, past Cobb Hut to stay at Fenella Hut. This took about four and half hours. Fenella Hut is in a beautiful setting, nestled between Waingaro Peak and Xenicus Peak (Xenicus means Rock Wren, so that sounded promising).

Bird life on the track and around the hut varied, with Redpolls being the most plentiful. Other interesting birds included Yellow-crowned Parakeet, Riflemen, Weka, Tomtit, NZ Robin, Tui, Brown Creeper, Bellbird, Fantail, Grey Warbler, Silvereye, Welcome Swallow, Dunnock and Chaffinch.

The next day we set off with day packs to look for the elusive, shy Rock Wrens. We travelled up the valley to Lake Cobb, climbing all the time, to Round Lake at 1300 metres. The bushline is at about 1100 meters.

From Round Lake, we continued upwards to the main ridge and along to the saddle just below the summit of Mt Cobb at 1700 metres. From here we dropped down from the saddle to a rocky area above Lake Henderson, to look for wrens, rare birds which only live at this altitude in these remote regions. It had taken us about three hours to get to this point.

Almost immediately Chris heard wrens calling (though I couldn't hear a thing as their call is very high pitched), and we saw one and then another. There were two adults and two young in this area. All four birds became quite curious and fearless of us, and they hopped around where we were sitting while we took photographs, bobbing vigorously up and down, and occasionally taking short flights. One young bird perched no more than a metre away and eyed me up and down curiously, but by this stage I'd run out film in my camera. I did get a few reasonably good shots before this however.

Chris decided that he would carry on and do a survey of the area above Lake Henderson, but I chose to stay and wait for him. Chris only saw one more wren and heard another. I saw a New Zealand Falcon while I was waiting and had my picnic lunch. When Chris returned we retraced our steps down the valley and back to the Fenella Hut, after a thoroughly satisfying and enjoyable day in the mountains. A place of peace and beauty, a place rarely visited by other people.

The new birds we saw during the day included Kaka, Kea, Grey Duck, Paradise Shelduck, NZ Pipit, Blackbird, and of course the falcon and the Rock Wrens. The next day we walked back out together, said our farewells and went our separate ways.

There was a sad note to this adventure - up there amongst the rocks we saw a stoat lurking! Upon returning to where I was staying, I rang Peter Gaze from DoC in Nelson, to tell him how the trip went, and about the stoat I'd seen near the Rock Wrens. Peter pointed out that it was probably living off mice, which live at this altitude. He also pointed out that any attempts to trap the stoat would be futile since another would turn up once one was removed, and the exercise would be too costly to sustain on a continuous basis. I am not really happy about this situation, and I believe these beautiful birds are worth protection from stoats and other predators.

JOHN BRIERLEY

Tui Mating Behaviour

This past season we have seen and heard Tui more frequently than in the past few years. As in previous seasons they appear to nest on the south side of Speedy Stream, near the lower part of Hill Road, Lower Hutt, about 500 metres from our home. From there they make foraging flights to our side of Speedy Stream and elsewhere to feed on flax heads and among flowering eucalypts and other shrubs and trees.

On 9 December 1999 my wife and I witnessed unusual behaviour of two Tui perched on a branch of a blue Atlas cedar in our garden. We had never seen this activity previously, despite having noted Tui very frequently in our garden over the years.

The two appeared to be excited, while facing each other with their heads only a few centimetres apart. At first we thought one bird was feeding the other, which appeared to be slightly smaller. Both birds had fully developed white throat feathers, so that presumably the smaller bird was female.

During the two minutes the birds remained on the branch they made continual bobbing movements and brought their bills close together without, however, touching, as far as we could judge. The smaller bird also fluffed out its feathers so as to appear as large as the other. At the same time the two uttered a continuous series of chuckles, interspersed with clear bell-like notes and less definite lower-pitched ones. They kept up their movements and calls without ceasing until they finally flew off and we lost sight of them.

BILL WATTERS



SHOC, Brisbane 2000

This year the 2nd Annual Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress (SHOC), was held in Brisbane in June/July of 2000. I cunningly decided, therefore, that tropical Queensland would be an ideal destination for a mid-winter escape. Leaving New Zealand shortly after the exciting and stimulating AGM and Conference in Napier, I headed for Brisbane, travelling the length and breadth of the Sunshine State, from 500 kms inland from Brisbane to the tip of Cape York.

The conference was well attended with both professional and keen amateur ornithologists from Australia, New Zealand, Southern Africa and South America. It was held at Griffith University in Brisbane, which turned out to be a pretty good venue. I presented a poster on the research I'm currently doing on the gannets at Cape Kidnappers, and that seemed to be well received.

As usual there were a number of keynote speakers, from a wide variety of backgrounds and countries. Perhaps one of the more controversial and thought-provoking was Dr Alan Kemp from the Transvaal Museum in Pretoria. He talked about the sustainability of avian populations, from a human perspective, and ways in which birds could be utilised to benefit conservation. He presented the findings of a pilot study involving the utilisation of the redundant second-hatched chicks of hornbills, eagles and owls in South Africa.

As these second-hatched chicks are generally killed by their older siblings, they were removed from the nest and hand

reared. Hornbills were then released into areas where they had disappeared from and formed the basis of an increasing tourist attraction in the area, whilst the eagles and owls had potential for use in falconry. The proposal that other species, such as gamebirds and big-game animals could be 'sold' to hunters, the money then being utilised to conserve the areas that the animals are 'harvested' from was, I thought, an exciting and interesting idea for funding conservation in poorer countries. Some people were obviously aghast at the thought, but isn't the protection of natural areas and the assemblages of animals that inhabit them more important than individual animals?

There were some excellent seabird talks, which I was especially interested in, and not all was doom and gloom. Several talks showed that although seabird bycatch is still occurring in some industries, the seabird bycatch in the Patagonian Toothfish longline fishery in sub-Antarctic and South American waters had decreased with effective mitigation procedures, such as setting lines at night and closure of some fishing grounds at certain times of the year. However, it was revealed that there is a large illegal fishery of this species operating, and that these are probably the worst offenders with regards to seabird bycatch. Furthermore, another study found that out of 12 Patagonian Toothfish trawl cruises in Australian waters, serious injuries and fatal incidents with seabirds were very rarely observed, even though seabirds often came in contact with the fishing gear. These were both heartening talks!

There was a huge range of talks and poster presentations, and there were usually several sessions running concurrently. It was an enormous undertaking for the people involved in organising and running the event, but I'm sure all attendees enjoyed themselves immensely and got a lot out of the event. Unfortunately, however, there are no plans yet for another SHOC, despite the fact that many people expressed that they would attend if there was. It really comes down to another country other than Australia to take the initiative. South Africa is an obvious contender, as is New Zealand, so let's hope that something is organised – it may need some of us to become a little proactive, and try our hand at it Kiwi style!!

The pre- and post conference trip was pretty hectic but very exciting, and I think we travelled about 10,000 km in the seven weeks I was there. We saw a lot of countryside and really came to realise how diverse the Australian landscape is. One minute you're in dense tropical rainforest, the next in the middle of tropical savannah woodland. The diversity of birds is equally extraordinary, and in the time I was there I managed to see 362 species, missing on a few species I had expected to see – there is always next time!! And remember the Australian wildlife doesn't stop at birds, the marsupials, snakes, insects, frogs and lizards also make for an unforgettable wildlife experience. My Australian bird list now stands at 402 species, making my life-long New Zealand list of 156 look pale by comparison. However, it is always good to get home.....

BRENT STEPHENSON

Predator Pooh

One fine Saturday morning in early March I decided not to go and join the hundreds of thousands cheering Team New Zealand for their victory parade

down Auckland's Queen Street. Instead I went for a quiet look around Shoal Bay, which is a few kilometres due north of Queen Street across the Waitemata Harbour.

There I saw the usual collection of birds - a hundred or so SIPOs and a handful of Variable Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwits, Caspian Terns, Pied Stilts and NZ Dotterels. After a half-hour or so it was time to move on.

As I was leaving all the birds suddenly took off with a great commotion. I stopped and looked to see them all begin to mob a large harrier that was coming in across the harbour from the south. This harrier seemed particularly large and nonchalant, so I took out my binoculars for a closer look.

The harrier was not a harrier. It was none other than Pooh Bear himself. Obviously some small child's Pooh Bear balloon had escaped and blown across the harbour. Most of the birds soon tired of this sport, but the Caspians were particularly dedicated and continued to teach Pooh a lesson until they had well and truly run him out of town.

DAVID PYE

New Members Donations

A very warm welcome is extended to the new members listed below: Paul Kennedy, Daniel Godfrey, Denise Fastier, Valerie Campbell, Donald Cooper, Cynthia McConville, Roger Louis, Anna Carr, Adi Anderson, Kerry Borkin, Derek Christie and Gary Bramley.

Donations given to the society are from Colin Hill, Dr. PL Munns, Rae Nicholls, Rob & Anneke Schuckard, Valerie Campbell.

A big thank-you to all who have made donations.

HAZEL HARTY
Membership Secretary.

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MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

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

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

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

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

*All nominations should be sent to the
Awards Secretary
P.O. Box 12397
Wellington
by 31 December 2000.*

DAVID MEDWAY
President

Two New Conferences

Ecology of Insular Biotas

An international conference to be held at Victoria University of Wellington, in Wellington, New Zealand, from 12 to 16 February 2001.

The conference will focus on ecological patterns and processes of particular importance to isolated biotas, including true islands, natural habitat islands (eg ponds) and artificial habitat islands (eg reserves). Examples of suitable topics for papers include: dispersal and gene flow within and among isolated populations; ecology of small populations; ecological consequences of disharmonic floras and faunas; the relevance of island biogeography principles in conservation; islands as model ecosystems; comparative ecology of true islands vs. habitat islands. A major goal of the conference is to bring together researchers from disparate disciplines to seek general ecological patterns common to isolated biotas of all types.

Registration, including a volume of abstracts, all morning and afternoon teas on campus, all lunches and a wine and cheese on the Monday evening: NZ\$400. A discount is available for early registration and there is special consideration for full-time students. Two half-day field trips are offered at extra cost. A Conference Dinner is offered at extra cost. No accommodation is being arranged but a list of accommodation is available.

More information and how to register - go to the website <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/sbs/conferences/> for further information and a printable registration form.

Or ask the Conference Manager Dick Veitch, 48 Manse Road, Papakura, New Zealand, phone & fax 64-9-298-5775, mobile 64-9-25-200-5490. Email dveitch@kiwilink.co.nz for further information and a registration form.

Eradication of Island Invasives: Practical Actions and Results Achieved

An international conference of the Invasive Species Specialist Group of IUCN to be held at the University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, from 19 to 23 February 2001.

Papers presented and discussion sessions will focus on the subject of: Eradication of invasive species from islands; methods used and the results achieved. The term "eradicating" may include work to remove invasive species where complete eradication is some, or many, years away but the methods used to date are achieving positive results or providing a significant learning experience. The term "island" may include true islands, natural habitat islands (eg ponds), remnant and artificial habitat islands (eg reserves), or new invasions of natural ecosystems where eradication was deemed feasible. Preference will be given to papers which provide detail of the techniques used or of the ecosystem response to the work. Significant learning experiences may include methods which failed.

Registration, including a volume of abstracts, a copy of the proceedings, all morning and afternoon teas on campus, all lunches and a wine and cheese on the Monday evening: NZ\$270. A discount is available for early registration and there is special consideration for full-time students. A full day field trip is offered at extra cost. A Conference Dinner is offered at extra cost. A list of accommodation is available.

More information and how to register - go to the website <http://www.issg.org> for further information. Or ask the Conference Manager Dick Veitch, 48 Manse Road, Papakura, New Zealand, phone & fax 64-9-298-5775, mobile 64-9-25-200-5490. Email dveitch@kiwilink.co.nz for further information and a registration form.

Prickles and Feathers

As a veterinary surgeon, I occasionally have to care for wild fauna. Recently I was presented with a hedgehog that had a plastic garden net caught around its neck. The problem was, of course, that whenever I attempted to free it of its unwanted necktie, it curled up into a ball of impenetrable prickles. The dilemma was solved by anaesthetising the uncooperative victim; the necklace was then easily removed and the critter duly returned to its erstwhile occupation of eating garden pests.

Another case involved a New Zealand Pigeon totally inebriated on an overdose

of fermented karaka berries, this one staying at the clinic drying out centre for some days until it could pass an aeronautical competence test.

Last month a Fantail and two pigeons were treated and had overnight stays for concussive injuries. The former flew into a car, and the latter two house windows. One of the pigeons succumbed but the other survived. So too, to my amazement, did the Fantail, after being kept overnight in a tissue-lined box sitting on an electric blanket.

Cases like these don't exactly contribute to clinic income, but certainly provide challenge, interest, variety and a huge degree of satisfaction when a successful outcome is achieved.

DR WESLEY BELL

Otago Grebes

On 14 November 1999 a pair of Australasian Crested Grebes was seen for the first time on Lake Johnson. This is a small lake on a neck of land between Frankton on Lake Wakatipu and the lower reaches of the Shotover River. A search for a nest yielded no result, but later reports revealed that they had successfully raised four juveniles.

The family group was observed on 11 April 2000, and when Dave York visited the area a week later not only did he find the family group but an additional two pairs, making a total of ten grebes.

In February of this year a grebe was photographed by Adam Horan at Kawarau Falls near the outlet of Lake Wakatipu. Another interesting report was made in the same month by Stuart Sutherland of Mossburn, who saw a pair of grebes near the outlet of North Mavora Lake.

For the fourth successive year a pair of grebes returned to Moke Lake. I watched them on 15 October as they displayed and presented weed. To my surprise and disappointment,



four days later they had departed and did not reappear during the summer.

At Lake Hayes all early nests were lost due to a sudden increase in lake level caused by a flood in November. The first chick did not appear until the end of January. At that time there were an estimated 12-15 pairs, and they successfully raised 14 young. This includes a pair with two juveniles which produced a second brood, and another pair raised four juveniles.

At Lake Dunstan the resident pair located in the vicinity of Bendigo Wildlife Reserve was joined in October by an additional six pairs grouped outside the buoyed area. Two nests were built on the lake weed *Lagarosiphon major* about 100 metres from the Bendigo boat ramp. The first nest was swamped by the lake being artificially raised and the second by the November flood. No further attempts to nest were made and the six pairs departed from the lake.

This information came from Aaron Horrell, field officer of the Clutha Fisheries Trust, and Donald Pannett who in February took me on a tour of inspection of the reserve. Sand banks at the head of the lake appeared suitable breeding grounds for stilts and Banded Dotterels. One of the two islands was cleared by voluntary labour and colonised by about 35 pairs of Black-fronted Terns. While some birds were sitting, the chicks we saw confirmed their breeding success.

GEORGE CHANCE

Atlassing trip – Stewart Is.

Southern Stewart Island (Port Pegasus, Lords River, Port Adventure) and the fiords of Fiordland have some of the most inaccessible 10km x 10km squares to complete on the new atlas scheme.

To assist in the survey, Rodney Russ of Christchurch is proposing to take his 54ft yacht *Huia* south to Stewart Island and Fiordland in March and April 2001 to survey as many squares as possible.

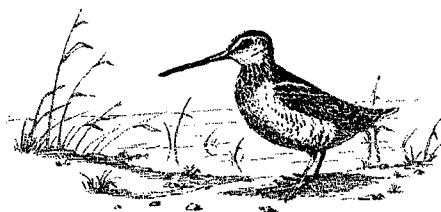
Rodney is no stranger to these areas. In 1976 while working for NZ Wildlife Service he and a companion discovered Kakapo on Stewart Island. He also participated in numerous expeditions to Fiordland during his time with the Wildlife Service. More recently he established Heritage Expeditions which operates the Polar Research Vessel *Akademik Shokalskiy* with voyages to Fiordland, Stewart Island, the Sub Antarctic Islands and Antarctica.

The *Huia* is no stranger to these waters either. It was built in Invercargill in the 1940s and has cruised these waters many times. It is a classic wooden, ketch rigged motor sailer. The recently completed refurbishment has made it an extremely comfortable cruising vessel.

These are private expeditions but Rodney is looking for volunteers to assist with the surveys and help cover the costs.

Rodney can be contacted

C/- Box 6282,
Christchurch.
Tel (03) 338 9944 (work),
Tel (03) 312 7076 (home)
Email: hertexp@atglobal.net



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Wandering Albatross, Bird Island. Photo: Betty Seddon.

Wandering Wanderer

On 22 November 1999, when on a pelagic trip off Stewart Island, I saw a Wandering Albatross with a large black band on its leg. Our boat was stopped near a reef off the Breaksea Islands on the south east coast of Stewart Island. As the bird was swimming near the boat, I was able to read the band number with binoculars - 447.

After a great deal of research by the banding offices, both here and in Australia, it was found that this bird was a female Wandering Albatross banded as a chick on 14 November 1982 by the British Antarctic Survey team on Bird Island, South Georgia. The bird had returned to Bird Island as a non-breeder in 1987 and was seen each year after that until 1991, again as a non-breeder. Since then there had been no recorded sightings of it.

This was an exciting record for me, not the least as I was fortunate to visit South Georgia in February 2000.

BETTY SEDDON

University Student Theses

The following student theses were current in mid year 2000 at New Zealand universities:

Otago University, Department of Zoology (03) 479-1100

Contacts: Dr Lloyd S. Davis, Dr Henrik Moller, Dr Ian Jamieson

Nicola Vallance

Moult in Adélie Penguin chicks.

Study Area: Ardley Island, Antarctica

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2000

Alvin Setiawan

Brood reduction in crested penguins.

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2003

Melanie Massaro

Brood reduction in crested penguins. Lacking brood reduction mechanisms versus obligate brood reduction: a comparison between Yellow-eyed Penguins and crested penguins.

Study Area: Otago

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2003

Thomas Mattern

Foraging behaviour of Little Penguins at Oamaru and Motuara Island

Study Area: Oamaru and Motuara Islands

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2000

Mihoko Numata

A comparison of life history traits of Little Penguins at Motuara Island and Oamaru in relation to foraging constraints.

Study Area: Oamaru and Motuara Islands

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 1999

Richard Cuthbert

The breeding ecology and conservation of Hutton's Shearwater.

Study Area: Kaikoura Mountains

Supervisor: Dr. Lloyd Davis

Angela Bell

The impact of Australian Magpies on New Zealand native birds.

Study Area: Hamilton

Supervisor: Dr Peter Webb (substituted by Dr. Lloyd Davis)

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2000

Ross Sinclair

Ecology and Conservation of megapodes in Papua New Guinea

Study Area: PNG

Supervisor: Dr Ian Jamieson

Josh Kemp

Nesting success and survivorship in Kea

Study Area: Nelson Lakes

Supervisor: Dr Ian Jamieson

Simon McDonald

Avian malaria in Yellow-eyed Penguins

Supervisor: D. A. Wharton

Date thesis submitted or expected to be submitted: 2001

Glen Newton

Impact of human disturbance on the breeding success of the Australasian Crested Grebe.

Study Area: Lakes Pearson and Heron, Canterbury.

Supervisor: Harald Steen

Date thesis submitted: March 2001.

Theses associated with the Titi Islands Study.

Supervisor Dr Henrik Moller

Hunter, C.M.

The influence of parental quality and harvest on the population dynamics of Sooty Shearwater colonies.

PhD thesis 1996 - present.

Kitson, J.

Ecological science and matauranga maori working together for the sustainable use of titi (Sooty Shearwaters).

PhD thesis, 1997 - present.

Jones, C.J.

Predator control for the restoration and management of colonies of Sooty Shearwaters on mainland New Zealand.

PhD thesis, 1998 - present.

Scofield, R. P.

Survival and density dependence in Sooty Shearwaters.

PhD thesis 1998 - present.

Uhlmann, S.

A Review of fishery bycatch of Sooty Shearwaters. MSc. 2000 - present.

Soehle, I.

Effects of satellite telemetry of Sooty Shearwater on their foraging and colony attendance behaviour MSc. 2000 - present.

RECENTLY COMPLETED THESES:

Ratz, H. 1997. *Ecology, identification and control of introduced mammalian predators of Yellow-eyed Penguins.*

PhD thesis, University of Otago.

Bettany, S. M. 1998. *Towards more effective predator control to restore mainland Sooty Shearwater colonies: targeting where, when and which species to control.* University of Otago Wildlife Management Report No. 93. 35 pp.

Lyver, P.O'B. 1999. *Predation and harvest impacts on Sooty Shearwaters in New Zealand.* PhD thesis, University of Otago.

Beggs, J.R. 1999. *The ecological impact and control of introduced social wasps (Vespula spp.) in Nothofagus forest.* PhD thesis, University of Otago.

Soehle, I. 2000. *Telemetry reduces colony attendance by Sooty Shearwater.* University of Otago Wildlife Management Report No. 124, 25 pp.

Canterbury University, Department of Zoology (03) 366 7001

Contact staff member: Dr James Briskie

Craig Barnett

Food limitation and the evolution of the dawn chorus in Silvereyes.

Study site: Kaikoura

Rachel Johnson

The Kea: a New Zealand problem or problem solver?

Study area: Mt Hutt ski field.

Lincoln University, Ecology and Entomology Group, (03) 325-2811

Contact staff members: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson (ext 8379), Dr Adrian Patterson (ext 8953), Dr Graham Hickling (ext 8378)

PHD THESES

Jonathan Banks

A morphological and molecular study of the co-evolution between penguins and their chewing lice.

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Frances Schmechel

Habitat requirements and breeding biology of the Chatham Island Oystercatcher.

Study area: Chatham Islands

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Stefan Thomsen.

Ecology of the Skylark.

Study area: Canterbury Plains.

Supervisor: Prof. Steve Wratten.

MASTERS THESES

Valerie Davis

Role of chemical cues in bird feeding preferences in vineyards.

Study area: Canterbury

Supervisor: Dr Graham Hickling.

Peter McClelland

Ecology and breeding of Campbell Island Teal on Codfish Island.

Codfish Island, Stewart Island.

Supervisor: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson.

Dai Morgan

Breeding productivity of South Island Pied Oystercatcher on river terrace and farmland habitats. Study area: Mid Canterbury

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Rhonda Pearce

Factors influencing the reduction in distribution of native New Zealand bird species.

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Wendy Sullivan

Differences in burrow site preferences between Chatham Petrel and Broad-billed Prion: investigating techniques to reduce the effects of burrow competition.

Study area: Rangitira (South-East) Island, Chatham Islands.

Supervisor: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson.

Tina Troup

Foraging strategies and heart rates of incubating Southern Royal Albatross, Campbell Island. Implications for nesting and foraging energetics.

Study area: Campbell Island

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Nicolette Was

Burrow occupancy and related behaviour of Broad-billed Prion on Rangitira Island, Chatham Islands. (Completed 1999).

Supervisor: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson.

Clare Washington

Pukeko road deaths at Otukaikino Reserve, Christchurch.

Supervisor: Dr Adrian Patterson.

Nigel Watkins

Ecological correlates of bird damage in a Canterbury vineyard. (completed 1999)

Supervisor: Dr Graham Hickling.

Pauline Wilson

Does predator control benefit White-flipped

Penguins?

Study area: Banks Peninsula

Supervisor: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson.

BSc HONS

Yuki Fukuda

Evaluation of two visual bird deterrents in Canterbury vineyards.

Supervisor: Dr Kerry-Jane Wilson

Victoria University, School of Biological Sciences (04) 463-5570

Contact staff member: Dr Ben D. Bell

The research efforts of the School of Biological Sciences are in two broad groupings: ecology & biodiversity and cell & molecular biology. Each of these covers wide-ranging research which may involve a variety of collaborations both within the school and with scientists in outside, and frequently overseas, organisations. The School of Music has interests in composition and avian songs. Many projects encompass ornithological issues. Research and teaching in Ecology and Biodiversity falls into two broad categories: 1. Biodiversity and Systematics; 2. Terrestrial and Marine Ecology. Amongst staff and students more closely involved with bird research are the following:

STAFF

Dr John Andrews

* *History of discovery of New Zealand birds*

Dr Ben Bell

* *Manager, Bioacoustics Research Laboratory*

* *Shaping of song dialects in introduced New Zealand passerines*

* *Habitat selection, song and mate choice in European and Pacific island warblers*

* *Human impact on New Zealand avifauna*

* *Management techniques for critically endangered birds*

Dr Geoff Chambers

* *Molecular systematics of New Zealand birds*

Prof. Charles Daugherty, manager, Ecology & Biodiversity group

* *Molecular systematics of New Zealand birds*

Dr Don Drake

* *Seed and fruit dispersal by New Zealand and Pacific Island birds*

Dr Liz MacAvoy, research scholar.

* *Avian molecular systematics*

Dr Kim McKonkey

* *Post-Doctoral research on fruit-dispersal by bats and birds in Tonga*

Dr Christa Mulder

* *Impact of colonial seabirds on island ecosystems*

Dr Bob Brockie, Honorary Research Associate

* *Birds of New Zealand towns and gardens*

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Leigh Bull (PhD)

* *Variation in sizes of seabirds in relation to sex and geographic range, with particular reference to Procellariidae*



Kristian Jones (MSc)

- * *Analysis of North Island Robin and North Island Tōmūt vocalisations from Pureora Forest Park, Central North Island*

Hayley Meehan (MSc)

- * *Dispersal of fruits by forest birds in Tonga*

Stephanie Rowe (MSc)

- * *Vocal repertoire variation in Kokako and Saddleback populations translocated to Kapiti Island*

Alan Saunders (MSc)

- * *Ecological restoration at selected sites on the New Zealand mainland: a review*

Caroline Shorter (MSc)

- * *A study of Black-backed Gulls at Wellington Airport: direct observations and analysis of bird strike data*

Andrew Styche (PhD)

- * *Distribution, behaviour and ecology of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in New Zealand*

Boon Wee-ming (PhD)

- * *Molecular systematics of Cyanoramphus parakeets*

Ben Wiles (MConSc)

- * *Breeding and distribution of North Island Robin on Mana Island*

Massey University, Institutes of Natural Resources; Molecular Biosciences, Veterinary Animal and Biomedical Sciences

Contact staff member: Dr Murray Potter
(m.potter@massey.ac.nz)

MASTERS THESES**Dominic Adams**

Corticosterone (stress hormone) response to handling in captive and wild kiwi.

Wendy Dimond

Cost of translocations to the source population.

Anna Grant

Behavioural differences between captive-reared kiwi before and after release into the wild.

Myfanwy Hill

Reproduction and survival of Keriū in Whirinaki.

Emma Hawke

Faecal steroids and reproduction in the Kakapo.

Guy Hessel

Structure and function of the ovary of the quail.

Paul Horton

Assessment of the effects of an aerial 1080 drop on rodents, mustelids and kiwi chick survival.

Cindy Jenkins

Determining the olfactory ability of kiwi.

Lisa MacKenzie

Impact of wind farms on birds and bats.

Liz Raeburn

Translocation of robins.

Don Ravine

Farming impacts on kiwi survival.

Liz Saafi

Ecology and conservation of the Red Shining Parrot in Tonga.

Amy Trass

Fruit dispersal and forest regeneration.

Sara Treadgold

Behavioural ecology of Fairy Terns.

Mark Welsh

Seasonal patterns of stress responses in the Blackbird.

Matthew Wong

Territory and breeding in the Australasian Harrier.

PhD THESIS RESEARCH**Ellen Bennett**

Hormonal stimulation of breeding in the quail.

Wei-Hang Chua

Photoperiodism, stress, and reproduction in the quail.

Sharon Henare

Hormonal stimulation of breeding in the quail.

Matthew Low

The evolution of rape in Hihi.

Hilary Miller

A study of the major histocompatibility complex in the endangered Chatham Island Black Robin.

Peter Ritchie

Ancient DNA and studies of living Adélie Penguins from Antarctica.

Brent Stephenson

Investigating population changes of the Australasian Gannet in New Zealand.

University of Waikato, School of Biological Sciences

Contact staff member: Dr Joseph R. Waas
(07) 856 2889 <j.waas@waikato.ac.nz>

Tim D. Day

The effects of colour and odour on bait acceptance by birds and mammalian pests in New Zealand.

Supervisors: Joseph R. Waas/Lindsay Matthews) (07) 838 5560

Masamine Miyazaki

Acoustic communication and mate choice in Blue Penguins

Supervisor: Joseph R. Waas 07 856 2889 (ext, 8123).

Ashleigh Bright

Does bill colour reveal male health or quality in Blackbirds?

Supervisor: Joseph R. Waas
07 856 2889 (ext, 8123)

Sarah Winter

Partner and parent recognition in Blue Penguins

Supervisor: Joseph R. Waas
07 856 2889 (ext, 8123)

Auckland University, School of Biological Sciences, School of Marine and Environmental Sciences
(09) 373-7999

Contact staff member: Sandra Anderson
<sh.anderson@auckland.ac.nz>

Rosemary Barraclough

Effects of ecosystem restoration in Te Urewera (PhD)

Study area: Te Urewera

Supervisor: Dr Michael N. Clout

Contact: rk.barraclough@auckland.ac.nz

Darryl Jeffries,

Impacts of hedgehogs on shorebirds. (PhD)

Study area: Auckland / Northland

Supervisor: Michael N. Clout

Contact: d.jeffries@auckland.ac.nz

Darryl Jeffries

Comparison between Fairy Terns and White-fronted Terns (completed 1999)

Study area: Papakanui spit, South Kaipara

Supervisor: Dr Dianne Brunton

contact: d.jeffries@auckland.ac.nz

Paul Barnett

The impact of ecotourism on gannet breeding behaviour

Study area: Muriwai, Waitakeres

Supervisor: Dr Dianne Brunton

Contact: p.barnett@auckland.ac.nz

Emma Marks

Vocal behaviour of penguins: parent chick recognition in captive and wild populations

Study area: Kelly Tarltons; Antarctica

Supervisor: Dr Dianne Brunton

Contact: e.marks@auckland.ac.nz

Lisa Xiao Ling

The function of song in female Bellbirds

Study area: Tiritiri Matangi Island

Supervisor: Dr Dianne Brunton

Contact: xl.li@auckland.ac.nz

Duncan Emerson

Kokako song development

Study area: Hauturu, Hunuas, Tiritiri Matangi Island

Supervisor: Dr Dianne Brunton

Contact: d.emerson@auckland.ac.nz

Astrid Dijkgraaf

Phenology of large-fruited native trees dispersed by Keriū, and impacts of introduced mammals.

Study area: Puhoi, Wenderholm, Clevedon

Supervisor: Michael N. Clout

Contact: astrid@mad.scientist.com

Sarah Gibbs

Behavioural vulnerability of juvenile Brown Kiwi.

Study area: Trounson, Northland

Supervisor: Dr Michael N. Clout

Contact: s.gibbs@auckland.ac.nz

Stephanie May

Threats to NZ pigeons (Keriū) in the urban environment

Study area: Auckland, North Shore

Supervisor: Dr Mere Roberts

Contact: s.may@auckland.ac.nz

Heidi Stevens

Ecology and movements of native birds between forest fragments of the Auckland region

Study area: Auckland

Supervisor: Dr Michael N. Clout

Contact: h.stevens@auckland.ac.nz

Sheryl MacKenzie

Use of shorebird populations for monitoring the effects of human disturbance on the environment

Study area: Auckland

Student contact: (09) 3737 599 x5280

Compiled by EUAN YOUNG

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Far North

Yes we are still here in the wet, windy and winterless north. The recent spate of rough weather has not dampened our enthusiasm. Since my last regional round-up we have had two evening meetings. In April Laurie and Alison Howell entertained us with their travels and birding in Asia and South America, and in August Ian Wilson showed us his beautiful collection of slides taken on Easter Island and in the Galápagos. Both these presentations provided a bird's-eye view into other cultures and avifauna, and I hope that one day I am lucky enough to experience this (and take such good slides!).

The Far North wader census was carried out in June. Thank you to members of the Northland region who helped out. The weather was a bit rough but people donned their raincoats and went out anyway.

Beach patrols continue to be carried out twice a month (90 Mile Beach and east coast) by a regular, dedicated group of people. We thought the rough weather might yield a greater number or variety of species but this has not appeared to be the case. However, one unusual bird was found - watch this space. The Rare Birds Committee has also accepted the finding of a Leach's Storm Petrel washed ashore in October 1998 on 90 Mile Beach.

Several members took part in the Royal Spoonbill census in the middle of June. 175 birds were seen on the day. However 25 were recorded on the Nilsson dam on the following day (a site that was not checked during the census weekend). Laurie and Alison have been monitoring the spoonbills for a couple of years now and the maximum number counted was 175 at Unahi in May this year.

The mapping square scheme has been embraced by members and several squares are now under the microscope. It's amazing what appears when you look hard enough, and which species are not present all through the year (when you could have sworn they were!). I am covering the Kerikeri square and I have a King Parrot and a NZ Falcon recorded on my datasheet. I think the King Parrot was an escapee from someone's aviary, and the NZ Falcon was found dead on a farmer's porch close to Puketi Forest. Another surprise for me has been the absence of Chaffinches in my square over the summer months.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the new members to the Far North Region. We look forward to seeing you at meetings or on field trips.

(Leigh Honnor)

Auckland

The focus of Auckland's June meeting was Tiritiri Matangi Island. Jason Taylor of DoC presented an overview of the current status of the bird population, with particular reference to breeding success of which the news is generally good. The value of OSNZ surveys has been marked by a certificate from the Supporters of Tiri during that group's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Similar, long-term activity is to proceed on Motutapu (a larger island, contiguous with Rangitoto) during its reafforestation. Here the plan is for birders to make counts at predetermined sites, as and when visits take place, rather than to use a series of regular inspections which has been the case at Tiri.

A useful discussions of these surveys, fronted by Mike Graham, occupied our July meeting, after Tony Habraken's intended talk has been postponed due to work pressures. In addition David Pye took the opportunity to go over details of the mapping scheme. The scheme continues to make fair progress, most of the region's squares having been covered this season. A special expedition was mounted to cover the Kaipara Peninsula, including the dune lakes and South Head from where we had the unusual sight of an orca temporarily stranded among the sand bars.

Dabchicks were confirmed, though now missing from some formerly inhabited lakes, and NZ Pipits (and peafowl) were duly recorded in the day's tally, along with Eastern Rosellas. This species is receiving our special attention in order to support a DoC study assessing possible nest site competition with the native kakariki.

Outside winter's regular pattern of counts and beach patrols, an extra visitor to the region was a Red-tailed Tropicbird. However this was an assisted passage, the bird arriving in emaciated condition aboard a fishing boat, to be subsequently cared for by Pam Howlett.

Our August meeting was something a little different - "Wild Mongolia - a garden of Eden?" presented with superb slides by Gordon Ell. This talk gave a fascinating perspective on a recent Asian tour led by Ruud Kleinpaste whose group included OSNZ members Kathy Barrow, Gillian Eller and Elizabeth Bowie - all now safely returned to these shores.

(Michael Taylor)

South Auckland

Early in July the RR for this region travelled to Perth to convene a meeting of the Western Australia branch of the South Auckland region of the society. This consists of Pam and Des

Agnew who now reside there, and resulted in several frantic days searching for elusive honeyeaters in the dryer regions of Western Australia. They are both well and send their regards to their many friends in the society.

While the RR was away the July meeting continued in his absence. This consisted of an illustrated talk by Hugh Clifford on his trip to the bottom of South America, the Antarctic Peninsula and then onto the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. From all accounts it was a very interesting meeting with a reasonably large crowd.

In August one of our members, Simon Fordham, showed us some interesting slides on the Solomon Islands and Fiji. Simon has the distinction of the last three countries he has visited namely Fiji, Zimbabwe and the Solomon Islands have all descended into chaos after his departure. We wonder if there is any connection.

Birding in this area is relatively quiet at the present time with the Arctic waders being absent. On a recent visit to the South Manukau Harbour however Tony Habraken reports that it appears that there may be some early arrivals. This raises interesting questions about whether these birds have completed their full trip or whether they only got part way and then came back.

Beach patrolling in this region has been very quiet in recent times, although there is the word around that things may be improving for the patrollers if not the birds.

(David Lawrie)

Waikato

As usual we've had interesting topics at recent meetings. In May one of our members Shinichi Nakagawa gave us a progress report on his study "Physiological and behavioural measurements of sibling recognition of Blue Penguin chicks by auditory cues". This will probably get the prize for the longest title on our programme this year, but will be remembered for its other qualities as well. It was interesting to hear the challenges of setting up this "hi-tech" study into the private lives of the penguins.

In June we dispensed with birds, in order to hear DoC archaeologist, Neville Ritchie, tell us about the conservation of historic explorers' huts in Antarctica. The heroic age of Antarctic exploration holds a fascination for most of us, and this was brought to life by seeing and hearing about the dwellings the explorers inhabited for long periods. Then in July it was back to birds again, with Quannah Hudson speaking on "Genetic variability in isolated populations of Kokako". With this species confined to populations which have no way of exchanging genetic

material, genetic variability can be quite low. This is especially likely to be the case in populations which are being restored from a very small number of survivors. The answer seems to be for some human intervention to transfer birds between populations.

Our monthly lake censuses at three lakes have been showing the usual seasonal fluctuations in species numbers. A point of interest at the moment at Rotoroa (Hamilton Lake) is a proposal to create a walkway right around the lake. Most of the lake shore is already accessible, but one section is not, because of private properties coming to the lake edge. The city council proposes to make access through or alongside this area, to complete access right around the lake. This is naturally causing distress to the affected property owners, but it would please a lot of other citizens and facilitate our census work there, so we await the outcome with interest.

The June census of our three west coast harbours, Raglan, Aotea and Kawhia proceeded as planned, with the weather being kind to us on this occasion. A follow-up visit to Kawhia to try and read Black/hybrid Stilt bands was subject to several postponements due to weather, until the stilts said they could wait no longer and left for their southern destination. The national Royal Spoonbill census was carried out as part of our harbour survey, and revealed 95 birds at Kawhia Harbour. This is more than 40% higher than the previous highest figure. Winter census day numbers for each year since our first sighting at Kawhia in 1989 are 2, 3, 4, 0 (with 5 seen just before and after census day), 17, 31, 32, 47, 40, 65, 55 (66 counted three days before census day) and 95.

The August banding of adults in the Grey-faced Petrel project is currently taking place. This long-running OSNZ Waikato project will unfortunately not continue past the end of the 2000/01 year in January, as a replacement has not been found for the current leader of the project who plans to step down then.

Beach patrols have continued to be unrewarding, with very few casualties to be found. Prions have started appearing in larger numbers, so perhaps we might start seeing some of the other species we expect at this time of year. A racing pigeon found in May was a young bird hatched in August/September 1999 at Stokes Valley. It was in a race from Taupo to Wellington in March 2000 when it went absent without leave, and finished up as a corpse on Ruapuke Beach.

Atlasing has been proceeding, with 97 of our 183 squares having been visited once or more during the summer and/or autumn quarters. Hopefully there will be a considerable increase in this number when the sheets for the winter quarter are submitted. Atlasing can be very repetitive, but it's not all dull and boring, and who knows what you'll see next?

One sighting has caused a flutter in the dove-cote for us, or really more than a flutter, because the excitement was more

at the level you expect to see when a stoat gets into the henhouse. Martin Day and Betty Seddon were diligently progressing their way around some of the Waikato peat lakes. At Lake Ngaroto they could hardly believe their eyes when they realised that small bird busily feeding under the willows was a Marsh Crake. Whoops, a Marsh Crake?

We don't have those here, as reference to the previous (1985) Atlas of Bird Distribution will show. If we Waikato people wanted to see a Marsh Crake we would go to some distant part of the country where they are known to reside. But not any more. A steady procession of incredulous members has been to say hello to the crakes, which are conveniently viewed from a public boardwalk. A little patience may be needed before a sighting is achieved, but who can begrudge that, when the site is only about 30 metres from where you can park your car? So welcome to the Waikato, home of the Ranfurly Shield, and Marsh Crake capital of the world! (Day and Seddon plan to report more fully on the Marsh Crake situation elsewhere later).

Autumn/winter has brought the usual reports of Kaka at various places around the Waikato, often from people who have never seen them at their place before and are quite excited about it, for example "I had a mob of Keas in my macrocarpas yesterday".

An immature Light-mantled Sooty Albatross was a more unusual visitor, being found on a farm near Te Awamutu in May. It was released at the coast after a couple of days being fed and cared for. Another off-course seabird was a Black Petrel found at Kinleith, but which died the following day. An occasional member of this species is found in the Central North Island.

(Hugh Clifford)

Beaches this season have been patrolled with reasonable regularity. The most northern beach patrolled was Waikorea. Several patrols resulted in the finding of a Grey-headed Mollymawk and a Shy Mollymawk in March, amongst more common birds such as prions and petrels.

South of Waikorea is Raglan, with its main beach, Ngarunui, providing the majority of the finds. Prions, petrels and a first for the patrol scheme in the Waikato, a House Sparrow! The patrol in August fetched up 20 birds, a good number for only 2.5km.

Ruapuke lies roughly 20 kms south of Raglan. A second Grey-headed Mollymawk was found here in June, while a White-headed Petrel and Mottled Petrel provided highlights in July and March respectively.

Heading south, Kawhia ocean beach provides not only a good walk, but also a good soak in the hot springs on the beach if timed right. In July, a Keruru was found dead on the beach. Only one other has

been found in the last decade on a Waikato beach.

Taharoa, in Taranaki's region, but handier to the Waikato, is a broad sweep of ironsand ideally suited to catching beach-washed birds. This is proved by the following records. In March, an Antarctic Fulmar; in April, a Mottled Petrel. The beach consistently provides around 20 birds each patrol.

(Paul Cumming)

Hawke's Bay

On 5 June Ian Saville was returning home to the Manawatu from the AGM, and stopped at Lake Poukawa. He happened to be in the right place at the right time and spotted a Gull-billed Tern flying over the lake, and watched it disappear out of sight over the hills towards the Tuki Tuki River. Keep your eyes peeled for a strange looking tern, as it may well stay in the region and could frequent any of estuary or wetland areas.

A photo of an albatross given to Brent by a friend, turned out to be a Southern Royal Albatross, probably a female breeder. This bird was photographed behind the friend's boat just off Napier at Pania Reef on 14 January 2000.

Terry Smith was at Boundary Stream on the 4-5 May, as a DoC volunteer, and late in the afternoon of the 5th saw two Kaka on the Bell Rock track. Apparently this is the first sighting here for about 2-3 years.

During the census (17 June) 32 NZ Dabchicks were counted on the Westshore ponds in Napier. This is one of the highest numbers recorded here. The White Heron was seen at Waitangi as were 11 Cattle Egrets, and the Little Egret at East Clive on the day of the census. Of interest was a bittern seen right at the top end of the channel on the same day. A single Whimbrel and two Red-necked Stints were seen at Porangahau during the census there (18 June).

A tattler was seen by John Cheyne from DoC, between the bridges at Ahuriri Estuary in early July. This could well be the same Grey-tailed (Siberian) Tattler seen over the summer by several people.

There were three Black-fronted Terns at Waitangi on 31 July, and this had dropped to only one present on 11 August, and none on 18 August. On all of these occasions there was a small flock of around 50 White-fronted Terns present, with some birds carrying fish and obviously getting ready for the coming breeding season. Hopefully they will nest again at Waitangi. A flock of around 800 White-fronted Terns was seen on the weekend of 12/13 August.

Two colour-banded SIPOs were seen on a vineyard at Mangatahi and were reported to Jim & Christine who plan to

investigate this to find out if they are birds that were banded on the Ngaruroro River a number of years ago.

(Brent Stephenson)

Wellington

A species which sells for \$500 per bird, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, was the main study at the July meeting. From his research in the Turakina Valley, Andrew Styche gave a factual and practical account of this bird, which must be unique in having a commercial value to the farmers whose cereal crops it feeds on (in flocks of up to 310 in winter). There appears to be little competition with native birds, and, except for some defoliation of rimu and others, cockatoos are not a major force in changing the habitat – the habitat having already been made suitable for them by others!

In August Lee Bull reported on her three week cruise of the subantarctic islands, with Southern Heritage Expeditions, courtesy of an Enderby Trust scholarship. The *Akademik Shokalskiy* visited Enderby, Auckland, Campbell, Bounty and Chatham Islands, and the geologically unique Macquarie Island. Lee's lasting impression? The numbers and diversity of birds (40 seabird species, 80 landbirds, 11 species of albatross), the high level of endemism, the contrasting mix of parakeets and penguins – and the smell!

"Changes in conspicuousness" of species on Kapiti Island, half way through the three years of quarterly counts, were reported in July. Bellbird, NZ Robin and Red-crowned Parakeet are doing well, Saddleback numbers are starting to increase, and Tui and Tomtits are decreasing, though no one species is down at every count. Members who have not been involved in this regular counting have an opportunity to see for themselves, in a field trip to the island that is planned for 9 September.

Our energetic committee is identifying local birdwatching sites and collecting and developing resources in order to guide visitors to the Wellington region. Eventually perhaps a booklet like those published by Nelson, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay.

This project relates conveniently to two others – an effort to promote ornithology in schools and the national mapping scheme. To encourage participation in the latter, field trips are being arranged monthly to less accessible areas.

An opportunity to capture wildlife at the Wellington Zoo has attracted good numbers of members on recent winter Saturdays. Mist net training where the sparrows/Silvereyes/Starlings etc feed is the name of the game. This is all upskilling, for eventual participation in our proposed scheme to translocate Fernbirds from the Manawatu to Mana Island.

(Rod Orange)

Nelson

The winter census at Farewell Spit included a count of 155 Royal Spoonbills, possibly a record for the area. The total count for the coast from Farewell Spit to Nelson was 233. Graham Elliott led a few of the team on a successful search for Banded Rail footprints at an inlet of the Waimea Estuary.

Willie Cook saw 75 Wrybills at the Bell Is. shellbank in early August. This is a record sighting for this area and the birds were probably on their way to southern breeding grounds. Rob and Anneke Schuckard hosted a weekend on their coastal farm for a group keen to learn from Rob the art of cannon net firing. This was successfully accomplished and another firing is being planned in order to band SIPO.

(Gillian Pollock)

Canterbury

A boost in the numbers of Red-necked Stints sighted on Lake Ellesmere on August 11 had lake bird watcher Colin Hill wondering whether the waders were back early. Twenty-seven stints overwintered at the lake, but when he and John Dowding saw the group in early August they counted 46. "Are the rest new arrivals? If so this is very early," said Colin. Three days later he saw a Glossy Ibis and 27 Royal Spoonbills near the LII River at Yarrs Bay.

The stints are not the only sign that it has been an odd winter in Canterbury, with few southerly storms and few frosts. The worst storm of the winter arrived after Colin's count of the stints, and ruined plans for an OSNZ field trip to Okuku and the Lees Valley by taking out the road. On 22 July Canterbury birders gathered at Mount Somers for the annual winter count of the birds on the high country Ashburton Lakes. This is usually an affair of ice and snow, but not this year, with a brilliantly fine day, no ice on the lakes, and no snow underfoot.

Peter Howden has collated the figures for the Ashburton Lakes count, and they show 23 Southern Crested Grebes, 2572 Scaup, 583 Black Swans, 564 Canada Geese, and 305 Australasian Coots. There were no bitterns, Pukeko, or Black-billed Gulls.

The other winter count was on Ellesmere and other wetlands in mid-June, which showed the South Island Pied Oystercatcher, Pied Stilt, and Banded Dotterel numbers were up. There were 1646 Banded Dotterels compared with 595 last year, according to Regional Rep Nick Allen.

There was only one beach patrol during the winter, a very thin affair along Brighton Beach which yielded very little

remains with the beach showing signs of having been swept by either a very high tide or some city council beach grooming.

Local birders have been asked to check out a report of a possible Barn Owl in the area where the Avon River reaches the Estuary. A Barn Owl was reported not far away in Burwood more than ten years ago, and there is speculation that it could be the same bird.

The evening meetings have heard talks from David Murphy on the feeding habits and predation of Bellbirds at Craigieburn, and from Chris Challies on the fate of the White-flipped Penguins he has been studying for years. Predation is proving the undoing of the penguin colonies around Banks Peninsula but the birds continue to breed on Motunau Island. Chris has a proposal for a penguin parade at Boulder Bay, but has run into problems with the bach owners in the area, and with the local bodies. David's talk on the Bellbirds included the first known film of a stoat raiding a bush bird's nest in New Zealand.

(David Clarkson)

PLEASE NOTE

Deadline

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DECEMBER

Issue

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NOVEMBER

WHAT'S ON

Far North



- 18 & 19 November - Far North Wader census at Houhora, Rangaunu and Parengarenga Harbours.
- 5 December - evening meeting at 7pm, DoC office Kaitaia. Shorebird protection.
- 90 mile beach patrol. Last Sunday in each month. Ph Isobella Godbert 09 407 8058.
- East Coast beach patrol, Sunday in the middle of the month. Ph Laurie Howell 09 408 2084

Auckland



- 3 October - evening meeting, Kohia Teachers' Centre, College of Education. Geoff Moon, forest birds. Ph. David Pye (09) 410 2879
- 7 October - Muriwai beach patrol. Ph. John Simmons (09) 828 8642
- 22 October - Tawharanui survey, Ph. Tim Lovegrove (09) 480 6587
- 5 November Muriwai beach patrol.
- 7 November - evening meeting, waders in China.
- 17-19 November - Tiritiri Matangi survey. Ph. Mike & Sharon Graham (09) 817 5537.
- 18 November - Mangawhai census. Ph. Mary & Allan McKenzie (09) 423 7016.
- 25 November - Kaipara census. Ph. Adrian Riegen (09) 814 9741.
- 26 November - Manukau census. Ph. Connie Schischka (09) 827 3728.
- 5 December - evening meeting, Birds of Christmas.
- 9 December - Muriwai beach patrol.



South Auckland

- 10 October - evening meeting, Papakura Croquet Rooms, Chapel Street. South East Island, Chathams. Ph. David Lawrie (09) 238 8407
- 22 October - spring migration day, Miranda Shorebird Centre.
- 14 November - evening meeting, feeding in penguins.
- 19 November - Firth of Thames census. Ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5283.
- 26 November - Manukau census. Ph. Tony Habraken.
- 9 December - BBQ at Alison and Stuart Chambers', ph. (09) 232 0188.
- Monthly beach patrols, (21 October, 18 November, 16 December) Kariotahi and Sunset Beaches. Ph. Rob Wheeler (09) 299 7069.

Waikato



- Evening meetings, third Wednesday of the month (except January), DoC Conference Room, London Street, Hamilton. Ph. Hugh Clifford (07) 855 3751.
- Lakes censuses 8 October, 15 October, 12 November, 19 November, 10 December, 17 December.
- 18 October - evening meeting, Norfolk and Lord Howe Is.
- 25 October - evening meeting (at Methodist Centre, 67 London St) Dr Robert Gill, shorebird specialist from Alaska. Ph. Hugh Clifford.
- 11 November - Raglan, Aotea and Kawhia summer census. Ph. Hugh Clifford.
- 15 November - evening meeting, Chatham parakeets.
- 6 December - pot luck dinner.

Bay of Plenty

- 22 October - Ohiwa Harbour. Ph. John Brierley (07) 323 7458.
- 5 November - Kaituna - Maketu census. Ph. Paddy Latham (07) 542 0406.
- 18 November - Tauranga Harbour census. Ph. Paddy Latham.

Hawke's Bay

- 10 October - evening meeting, (venue yet to be decided). Ph Brent Stephenson (06) 873 4111.
- 22 October - Blowhard Bush and environs from Fernhill School at 9:00am Ph. Brent Stephenson.
- 7 November - evening meeting (venue to be decided)
- 18 November - Shine's Falls and Boundary Stream., from Westshore Tavern carpark at 9:00am.
- 10 December - afternoon meeting and BBQ, Brent and Megan's, 1110 Allenby Street, Hastings, 3:00pm onwards. Bring a plate, and your own meat.

Taranaki

- Evening meetings - dates for 2000 3 October, 7 November, 5 December. Ph. David Medway (06) 758 0370.

Wanganui

- Evening meetings, fourth Tuesday of the month, Davis Lecture Theatre, Whanganui Regional Museum (Watt St). Ph Tim Holmes (06) 343 6808

Manawatu

- Evening meetings - held every three months at the Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8 pm.

Beach Patrols - 1st Wednesday of each month and on other beaches at irregular times. Ph Brian Tyler (06) 368 1489 for meeting times and places.

Wairarapa

- 11 October - evening meeting, 7.30 pm, Barbara and Des Lovatt's, 4 Clara Anne Grove, Greytown.
- 14 October - field trip to the Hidden Lakes. Ph. Ailsa Harrison 06 377 3904
- 8 November - evening meeting, 7.30pm, Janet & Tenick Dennison's, 129 Renall Street, Masterton.
- 12 November - field trip to Cape Palliser light house. Ph. Brian Boeson 06 304 9074
- 9 December - pot luck tea, Miles and Janet King's, Oliver Road, Masterton at 6pm.

Wellington

- Beach Patrols Jean Luke (04) 293 5601
- Evening Meetings first Monday of the month at 7.45pm, DoC offices, 4th floor, Wellington Central Library
- 2 October - evening meeting, harbour surveys at Rarotongan Kakaerori.
- 6 November - evening meeting, members' night.
- 4 December - evening meeting.

Nelson

Monthly meetings on the first Monday of each month. Venues vary. Ph. David Melville (03) 543 3628

Canterbury

- Evening meetings are held at the Spreydon Bowling Club rooms, Domain Terrace, starting at 7.30pm.
- 7 October - Ashley River count. Contact Tony Crocker (03) 313-4995.
- 30 October - Evening meeting: Tony Crocker on the birdlife of Northwest Australia.
- 4 - 5 November - Field trip to South Canterbury. Contact Lynne Sheldon-Sayer, (03) 366-5682.
- 25 November - Ashley River count. Contact Tony Crocker (03) 313-4995.
- 27 November - Evening meeting: Talk by Steve Wratten, Professor of Ecology at Lincoln University.
- Beach patrols, phone Sheila Petch 348-1889, or Bev Alexander on (03) 313-7009.

Otago

- 25 October - meeting 8pm speaker Stuart Mitchell on Black Swans. Ph. Louise Foord (03) 467 5041
- 19 November - summer wader count. Ph. Ken Gager (03) 487 6670

