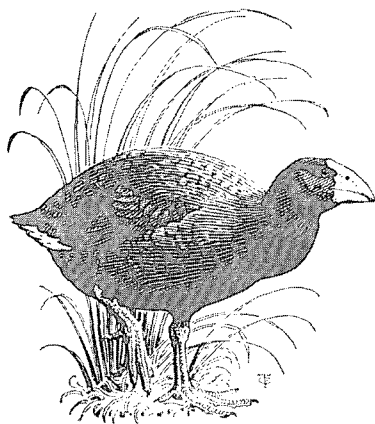


# Southern Bird

No. 6 June 2001 • ISSN 1175-1916







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## Quotation

*A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain  
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main...  
In truth, I rather take it thou hast got  
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot...*

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

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## Cover Photos

### Front Cover

These outstanding photographs by Auckland Robin Bush (plus those on p.3) are of New Zealand Dabchicks breeding at Western Springs. Compare with the Australian Little Grebe on p. 9.

## Publisher

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We welcome advertising enquiries.

## Editorial

The tradition of mixed bags weather-wise for AGMs and Conference continued this Queen's Birthday weekend in Rotorua – this time with stunning clear days after heavy frosts. Over a hundred people attended the Scientific Day, which featured an excellent line-up of speakers and which followed a day of solid atlassing covering some 60 Volcanic Plateau squares.

I had had a chance to visit some former haunts of my youth in the central North Island. Near Te Kuiti, the old family home was within earshot of three species which were not present in the 70s – Welcome Swallow, Spur-winged Plover and Eastern Rosella. I was more than pleasantly surprised by other things in the North Island however – Whiteheads in the central North Island appeared to be everywhere, and Pureora, which I had not visited for many years, was vibrant with birdsong. I had great views of falcons and a glimpse of a Kokako. It also seems that North Island New Zealand Scaup and Paradise Shelducks are doing as well as their South Island counterparts.

This issue contains items about inner city dotterels and dabchicks. The Scientific Day presentations included an update on the work of Graeme Taylor and others on the establishment of new petrel colonies. Following from the success of work on species such as Fluttering Shearwaters, Grey-faced Petrels and Common Diving Petrels, and new initiatives including Pycroft's Petrels, the stage is being set for work on critically endangered species such as Chatham Petrels and Taiko.

I was particularly struck by a local community initiative. The Mangaokewa Scenic Reserve near Te Kuiti is a small but spectacular limestone and forest landscape. It used to contain hardly a bird, the forest understorey having been completely eaten out by goats. Now, thanks to the enthusiasm of a local community-based group which has worked to restore the reserve by removing pests, the birds are coming back. New Zealand Robins have recently been released there after an absence of many years.

The Society's current atlas scheme will record many of the changes of the last 25 years. Much of the other work of members of the Society will assist in many ways with documenting systematically what is happening with our birds. We are accustomed to hearing many bad news stories about our avifauna – it's great to know that some are doing well and, with our assistance, still others can be helped to prosper.

TONY CROCKER

## Congratulations...

to Society members honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours list:

John Warham, Fellow of the Society, becomes a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to ornithology. Audrey Eagle has been made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to botanical art.

## The Petrels update

Errata and corrigenda for *The Petrels: their Ecology and Breeding Systems* (1990) are available from my home page at [www.zool.canterbury.ac.nz/jw.htm](http://www.zool.canterbury.ac.nz/jw.htm) or, printed for "tipping in", from me at Dr John Warham, Zoology Department, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch.



## Inner City Dabchicks

Western Springs is a central Auckland city park where good numbers of waterbirds breed – geese, Black Swans, Mallards, Grey Ducks, Australian Coots and Pukeko are plentiful. There are mixed colonies of Pied and Little Shags and occasional Little Black Shag nests. Paradise Shelducks and Grey Teal can be seen at the springs but are not known to breed there. Likewise Royal Spoonbills which briefly stop over on their movements around the country.

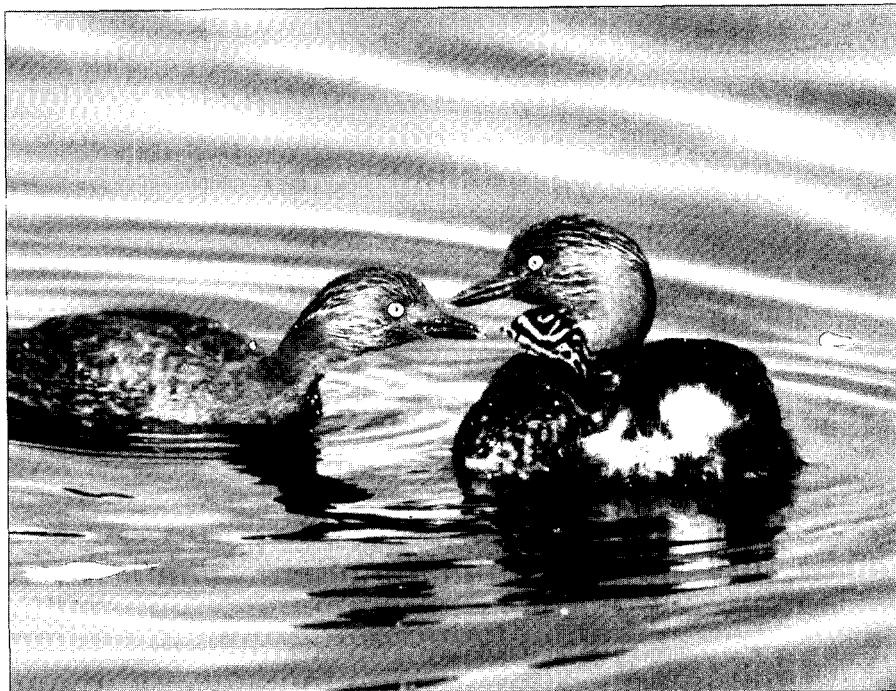
In July 2000, Julia Kasprzak, who monitors the resident Pukeko at the park, alerted John Simmons to the presence of a New Zealand Dabchick on the lake. A visit in late July by John and myself confirmed the presence of an immature bird. Since there have only been very occasional sightings of dabchicks at Western Springs in the past we pondered as to whether the appearance of this bird was due to normal juvenile dispersal or if its presence signalled investigation of new breeding areas by the species.

By early August a pair of adult dabchicks was also present on the lake. They were in pristine breeding plumage and engaging in weed offering courtship behaviour. On 1 September there were two pairs as well as the immature bird and one of the pairs was observed copulating repeatedly. About a third of the perimeter of the lake is heavily vegetated and there are islands and backwaters with thick vegetation overhanging the water, so suitable nesting habitat was available.

By mid September the behaviour of an adult bird indicated the presence of a nest, confirmed by Robin Bush who also recorded changeovers by the adults every 75 minutes. This first nest hatched very early in October, but the chicks disappeared within days, with the parents back in courtship mode by mid October.

By the end of October they were building another nest. Throughout we noted that the dabchicks were continually hounded and harassed by Pukeko and Australian Coots. Nonetheless three more hatchings occurred over summer, the most recent at Easter. All clutches hatched three chicks, one of which is now an independent juvenile and three more not totally independent of their parents.

Tiny oval translucent aquatic arthropods were the commonest prey items sourced by parent birds and fed to



*Photos: Robin Bush*

chicks. We believe the attempts of these two pairs to be the first recorded successful breeding of this species at Western Springs.

With the re-establishment of breeding pairs of dabchicks on Straka's Refuge (Waiwera) in the past two years and the sighting of a solo bird on Lake Pupuke

(Takapuna) in early 2000, and now pairs on an inner city lake, one has to wonder if the Muriwai Dune Lakes population of dabchicks is expanding or is it being usurped from this stronghold, perhaps by Australasian Grebes?

GWENDA PULHAM

## Courting Terns

Picture this – three people on a beach patrol are having their lunch, and admiring the courtship flights of two Caspian Terns. Then the terns land on the beach, and one has a fish that he wishes to impress his intended mate with. It is very impressive too, as the fish appears to be far too large to be swallowed by a Caspian Tern. The fish is flapping wildly on the beach and evidently very upset at the fate that appears to await it.

Is it going to be eaten by a Caspian Tern? No, it is going to be eaten by a beach patroller instead. One beach patroller has leapt up and sprinted down the beach to grasp the yellow-eyed mullet triumphantly. He returns to his pack and produces a sheath knife (funny the stuff that people carry in their packs). Soon the fish has been filleted and the fillets packed away for tea that night.

You know how in Asia they use trained cormorants to catch fish? Well, we have a Caspian Tern doing it for us, but we're not going to tell you which beach it's on. And you're probably wanting to ask "Did the beach patroller who accepted the fish marry the tern which presented it?" Sadly no, not yet anyway.

HUGH CLIFFORD

## Atlas day in Rotorua

**W**ith instructions to drive with lights on, safely and carefully; and especially if seeing trucks with flashing orange lights to get off the road quickly (one flashing light = 80 tonnes, two = 100 tonnes), some 20 teams were programmed to cover 60 squares for the day. A fine, frosty morning with pockets of fog – which unfortunately for some made pine forest look even more barren – led to a fine cool afternoon with little wind.

A few statistics for the Saturday – some 80 intrepid observers were driven some 4,500 kilometres and surveyed squares equivalent to 1.5% of the land mass of New Zealand. They completed 141 atlas sheets in an area mainly to the south of Rotorua, bounded in the north from Mamaku to Edgecumbe and south to Taupo and Minginui. All likely habitats were included in the day's travels which produced a total of 71 species. On Monday more carloads covered a further 24 squares, bring the total of record sheets submitted to 204.

Among the less commonly seen birds were Australian Little Grebe, Spotless and Marsh Crakes, Carolina Wood Duck, Mandarin Duck, Australasian Bittern, Fernbird, NZ Falcon, Kaka, Kokako (heard only), Morepork and Rifleman. The President's team recorded the largest biomass of birds in one spot, with a tally of 75 Ostriches.

The best square tally of the day was for Ted W – the flying Polish team from Auckland with 51 species. These also included rarities for the day of Spotless Crake and bittern. The Woolley team won the award for hearing if not seeing a Kokako. The awards for most unusual bird were divided between the Seddon team with a Carolina Wood Duck, while the newly available Kris Fielding Award (presented by the Manawatu region) was for a Marsh Crake seen by the Cuming team.

Nobody managed to have a close encounter with a logging truck, and most teams were reluctant to admit that they were lost at any stage of the day (except in the fog of course). Those with advanced GPS technology on board only had to worry about whether there was actually still a road around the next corner.

All the teams were randomly selected for the day's outings and only knew where they were going when given their briefing information and maps prior to departure. All showed considerable initiative, map reading skills and exceptional ability to have a good time. The awards of chocolate fish and minties on their return was a small gesture of achievement for a day well done. Many thanks to Keith Owen and DoC for making available copy facilities for maps at short notice, and to Fletcher Forests for agreeing to permit the teams for their excursions into the forest areas.

Watch out the South Island West Coast, which will be explored next AGM!

CHRIS ROBERTSON  
Coordinator for the day

## Black-fronted Tern Info

The Black-fronted Tern population is thought to be in decline, and recent research into breeding success over the past three summers by Massey University student Rachel Keedwell, demonstrates that reproductive success is low. Rachel would like to collate all existing and historical data on Black-fronted Terns to gain a more accurate picture of population trends and to provide evidence that more effort needs to be put into the research and management of Black-fronted Tern populations. You can help with this project in two ways:

- provide data on any regular counts you have made of Black-fronted Tern populations. If you have regularly counted the size of flocks of terns found at the same location each winter for a number of years, these data could provide useful information on changes to the population size.

- report sightings of colour-banded terns. Over the past three years, more than 200 chicks and 60 adults have been banded, but as yet there have been few band sightings to provide information on survival, overwintering locations and movements of those birds banded in the Mackenzie Basin. Banded birds have one band on each tarsus and have either of the following combinations: one metal and one colour band; or one colour band on each leg with the metal hidden on the tibia. Note that for the metal and colour combination, the colour may be a split band, ie there will be two colours on the same band.

All contributions of population counts or other observations are most appreciated. If you want to contact Rachel with information, or if you have any questions, e-mail her at [rachel.keedwell@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rachel.keedwell@xtra.co.nz) or contact her by post at: Ecology Group, Massey University, Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North.

## Twenty years of moult recording

- a report on the NZ Mould Recording Scheme with a summary of records received

**M**oulting is a major and recurring part of the life-cycle of all birds and the systematic study of moult can be a fascinating and rewarding way of observing changes in bird plumage. It is twenty years since the Mould Recording Scheme was launched by OSNZ in New Zealand and I thank those observers who have sent in contributions over the years. As I noted when the scheme was first launched in 1981 (*OSNZ News* 19), the moulting patterns of many New Zealand birds are not well known. We still need many more records - all of us have opportunities to usefully contribute to the scheme, whether we are banders, beach patrollers, conservation officers, museum workers or ornithologists in general.

This report covers records received up to 1 June 2001 and these are summarised in Table 1. Over the past twenty years the Mould Recording Scheme accumulated 2001 records for 117 bird species - an average of 100 records a year. About half of these (971) refer to birds in active moult, the rest (1030) to non-moulting birds - such non-moulting records are also important as they can help to delimit the age and season of moulting.

Just over half (51.5%) of records came from live birds, the rest from dead birds, mostly museum specimens. House Sparrow (376) and Silvereye (218) topped the records list, followed by Fairy Prion (87), Kaka (86), Bar-tailed Godwit (81), Pacific Golden Plover (67), Banded Dotterel (65), Lesser Knot (58) and Redpoll (57). The top species in the subset of birds in active moult were again House Sparrow (297) and Silvereye (145), then Australasian Gannet (34), Australasian Harrier (33), Banded Dotterel (23), Grey Warbler (23), Chaffinch (23), Pacific Golden Plover (20) and Greenfinch (20).

The moult scheme records are now substantial and are a resource potentially available to those with interests in particular species or species groups. With Kim McConkey I have already analysed patterns in the two best-represented species - House Sparrow and Silvereye - but moult patterns in other species await examination.

While many have supported to the scheme over the years, I am particularly grateful to the following for making larger contributions: Michael Bell, David Bell, Clinton Care, Raewyn Empson, Brian Gill, Peter Gaze, Rod Guest, Alan Jones, David Melville, Kirsty Moran, Derek Onley, Hugh Robertson, Paul Sagar and Michael Taylor.

The *Mould Card* is used for recording data on birds in *active moult*, while for birds *not* in moult the *Non-mould Summary Form* is used. Non-moulting birds include



Species	In moult	Not In moult	Alive	Dead	Total
Black-browed mollymawk	2	35	0	37	37
White-capped mollymawk	5	26	0	31	31
Flesh-footed shearwater	0	2	0	2	2
Short-tailed shearwater	0	1	0	1	1
Fluttering shearwater	4	0	0	4	4
Hutton's shearwater	1	0	0	1	1
Common diving petrel	2	1	1	2	3
Black petrel	0	2	0	2	2
Kerguelen petrel	1	3	1	3	4
Cape pigeon	0	2	0	2	2
Fairy prion	0	87	0	87	87
Salvin's prion	1	0	0	1	1
Broad-billed prion	1	1	2	0	2
Blue petrel	0	3	0	3	3
Cook's petrel	0	2	0	2	2
Grey-faced petrel	0	1	0	1	1
Chatham Island taiko	0	3	3	0	3
White-headed petrel	4	0	0	4	4
Grey-backed storm petrel	0	10	10	0	10
White-faced storm petrel	3	2	5	0	5
Blue penguin	0	2	0	2	2
Australasian gannet	34	0	5	29	34
Pied shag	0	1	0	1	1
Spotted shag	1	1	0	2	2
White-faced heron	3	0	0	3	3
Australasian bittern	0	1	0	1	1
Royal spoonbill	2	0	0	2	2
Grey duck	1	0	1	0	1
Brown teal	4	11	13	2	15
Australasian harrier	33	10	1	42	43
NZ falcon	8	8	0	16	16
Brown quail	1	0	0	1	1
Ring-necked pheasant	2	1	1	2	3
Banded rail	0	1	0	1	1
Weka	1	1	1	1	2
Pukeko	0	1	0	1	1
Pied oystercatcher	1	0	0	1	1
Variable oystercatcher	2	0	2	0	2
Pied stilt	7	27	0	34	34
Black stilt	5	4	0	9	9
Oriental pratincole	0	2	0	2	2
NZ dotterel	4	13	1	16	17
Banded dotterel	23	42	0	65	65
Shore plover	8	23	0	31	31
Wrybill	8	33	0	41	41
Pacific golden plover	20	47	0	67	67
Spur-winged plover	1	14	0	15	15
Turmstone	11	18	0	29	29
Lesser knot	9	49	0	58	58
Sanderling	2	0	0	2	2
Curlew sandpiper	2	4	0	6	6
Sharp-tailed sandpiper	5	5	0	10	10
Pectoral sandpiper	4	12	0	16	16
Red-necked stint	2	12	0	14	14
Eastern curlew	2	1	0	3	3
Whimbrel	1	3	0	4	4
Little whimbrel	3	2	0	5	5
Bristle-thighed curlew	0	3	0	3	3
Bar-tailed godwit	9	72	0	81	81

Species	In moult	Not In moult	Alive	Dead	Total
<i>continued -</i>					
Black-tailed godwit	0	1	0	1	1
Hudsonian godwit	0	3	0	3	3
Wandering tattler	2	8	0	10	10
Siberian tattler	1	0	1	0	1
Grey phalarope	0	1	0	1	1
Arctic skua	2	0	0	2	2
Long-tailed skua	3	0	0	3	3
Southern black-backed gull	7	3	2	8	10
Red-billed gull	4	1	0	5	5
Black-billed gull	2	1	0	3	3
White-winged black tern	2	0	0	2	2
Black-fronted tern	3	1	0	4	4
Caspian tern	2	0	0	2	2
White-fronted tern	5	0	0	5	5
Sooty tern	1	0	0	1	1
Fairy tern	1	0	0	1	1
Little tern	1	0	0	1	1
White-capped noddy	1	0	0	1	1
White tern	2	0	0	2	2
NZ pigeon (kereru)	11	1	0	12	12
Spotted dove	4	0	2	2	4
North Island kaka	12	74	74	12	86
Eastern rosella	1	1	0	2	2
Red-crowned parakeet	1	0	0	1	1
Yellow-crowned parakeet	1	1	0	2	2
Oriental cuckoo	1	1	0	2	2
Pallid cuckoo	0	1	0	1	1
Shining cuckoo	0	8	0	8	8
Long-tailed cuckoo	0	5	0	5	5
Morepork	1	5	1	5	6
NZ kingfisher	9	6	6	9	15
Welcome swallow	0	1	0	1	1
NZ pipit	0	1	0	1	1
Hedge sparrow (Dunnock)	17	6	22	1	23
Blackbird	18	16	28	6	34
Song thrush	10	11	14	7	21
Fernbird	1	0	0	1	1
Whitehead	2	0	2	0	2
Brown creeper	1	0	1	0	1
Grey warbler	23	3	25	1	26
Fantail	12	7	18	1	19
Tomtit	14	3	17	0	17
Robin	10	19	29	0	29
Silvereye	145	73	210	8	218
Stitchbird	5	7	12	0	12
Bellbird	10	6	15	1	16
Tui	1	4	1	4	5
Yellowhammer	1	1	1	1	2
Cirl bunting	3	2	5	0	5
Chaffinch	23	5	27	1	28
Greenfinch	20	6	26	0	26
Goldfinch	5	9	10	4	14
Redpoll	16	41	57	0	57
House sparrow	297	79	374	2	376
Starling	3	1	3	1	4
Common myna	8	0	0	8	8
Saddleback	1	0	0	1	1
Australian magpie	2	2	0	4	4
TOTALS	971	1030	1030	971	2001

both those in old plumage (worn and faded) and those in new plumage (fresh without wear) and the state of plumage ('old' or 'new') needs to be stated on the card or record form. Some non-moulting birds retain both old and new feathers - for these record 'both'. To provide the fullest documentation of moult, I ask contributors to try and complete all

sections of the *Moult Card* (for moulting birds) and all sections of the *Non-moult Summary Form* (for non-moulting birds).

Write to me if you need supplies of Moult Cards and Non-Moult Summary Forms, or contact your Regional Representative. Remember that you can record useful moult information on birds at any time of year - and potentially from every

bird you handle (live or dead)! We need more data on many New Zealand species so please contribute to the scheme if you can! Let's improve on that average of 100 records a year!!

Good moult recording!

BEN BELL  
Moult Scheme Convenor



# CSN - a reminder

The deadline for material to be in the hands of the island collators is 31 August. Anything received later will be held over until next year. In the first instance, members should sent their material to the appropriate Regional Recorder, who is responsible for collating the region's contribution. In order to have time to complete this task, Regional Recorders need to receive members' contributions by 31 July. The CSN year runs from 1 July to 30 June, so now is the time to extract all those observations from your notebooks. To assist with the process, below is a list of the Regional Recorders to whom the appropriate observations should be sent.

## Far North

Laurie Howell  
38 Okahu Rd, Kaitaia;  
ph (09) 408 2084

## Northland

Pauline Smith  
11/31 Ford Ave, Kamo,  
Whangarei; ph (09) 435 3060

## Auckland

-Landbirds & Waterfowl - Mel  
Galbraith, ph (09) 4801958 (a/  
hours) melgar@ihug.co.nz 62  
Holyoake Place, Birkenhead,  
Auckland

-Waders, Herons, Spoonbill &  
Egrets - Adrian Riegen, ph (09)  
814 9741 riegen@xtra.co.nz  
231 Forest Hill Rd, R.D.1,  
Henderson, Auckland

-Seabirds, Gulls, Terns & Shags -  
Laureen Alston, ph (09) 537  
9393, laureen.a@xtra.co.nz  
23A Takutai Ave, Bucklands  
Beach, Auckland

## South Auckland

Stuart Chambers  
Clarks Beach Road, RD4,  
Pukekohe; ph (09) 232 0188  
As\_chambers@xtra.co.nz

## Waikato

David Riddell  
122 Woodlands Rd, Gordonton,  
RD1, Hamilton; ph (07) 824  
3043  
Number8@ihug.co.nz

## Bay of Plenty

Paddy Latham  
72 Simpson Rd, Papamoa, Bay  
of Plenty; ph (07) 542 0406

## Volcanic Plateau

Patrick Buxton  
Sweetslade, RD2 Taupo;  
ph (07) 387 1396

## Gisborne/Wairoa

Geoff Foreman  
6 Rimu Drive, Wairoa;  
ph (06) 838 8370

## Taranaki

Rosemary Messenger  
Upland Rd, No2 RD, New  
Plymouth; ph (06) 756 7496

## Manawatu

Ian Saville  
23 Duke St, Feilding 5600;  
ph/fax (06) 323 1441

## Wanganui

Tom Teasdale  
33 Paterson St, Aramoho,  
Wanganui; ph (06) 343 9992

## Hawkes Bay

Margaret Twyde  
124 Nelson Cres, Napier;  
ph (06) 835 6563

## Wairarapa

Colin Scadden  
15 Madden St, Masterton;  
ph (06) 378 6423

## Wellington

Bill Lock  
118 Ridgeway, Mornington,  
Wellington; ph (04) 389 8535

## Nelson

Gail Quayle  
6 Tresillian Ave, Atawhai,  
Nelson; ph (03) 545 0456

## Marlborough

Bill Cash  
67 Lakings Rd, Blenheim;  
ph (03) 578 6594

## Canterbury/West Coast

Colin Hill  
Fenland House, Wolfes Road,  
Greenpark, R.D.4,  
Christchurch, ph (03) 325 5891  
cherryhill@xtra.co.nz

## Otago

Jim Wilson  
P.O. Box 6145, Dunedin; ph/fax  
(03) 476 3235

J-J-Wilson@actrix.co.nz

## Southland

Phil Rhodes  
75 Stuart St, Invercargill;  
ph (03) 217 2757

## Assistance to attend 23rd IOC

*International Ornithological  
Congress - Beijing, China, 11-17  
August 2002*

The NZ Ornithological Congress Trust Board is offering travel assistance fellowships valued at NZ\$1200 each for up to two persons to attend and participate in the 23rd IOC to be held in Beijing, China, from 11 to 17 August 2002. Registration papers for the Congress can be obtained from the 23rd IOC website [www.ioc.org.cn](http://www.ioc.org.cn).

Preference will be given to (a) NZ amateur or professional ornithologists who are members of the OSNZ or the Royal Society of NZ, or (b) post-graduate students from a New Zealand university who are undertaking a topic relevant to the study of birds. Successful applicants will be required to forward to the Board by 30 November 2002 a report of their attendance at the Congress suitable for publication in *Southern Bird*.

Applicants for these fellowships should forward their ornithological CV, reasons for attending the Congress with supporting letters from two referees not being Board members to:- **NZOCTB Travel Fellowship, P O Box 12397, Wellington. Applications close on 30 September 2001** and decisions of the Board will be advised in November 2001. The Board reserves the right to make no awards.

C.J.R. ROBERTSON  
*Business Manager, NZOCTB*

## Opportunistic Mallards

At the end of July 1999 on a small pond at Rotomanu lake in New Plymouth I noticed pair of Mallards following feeding scaup. They would follow a particular scaup around until it dived then when it surfaced harassed it until it dropped whatever it had brought to the surface (mostly weed), then picked up the prize for themselves. This went on for at least half an hour when I left them to it.

Next day I returned and found the same thing and in May 2000 the same behaviour with what could have been the same Mallards.

In April 2001 at Lake Mangamahoe, New Plymouth I watched several young Australian Coot learning to find their own food and saw one being followed by a Mallard which repeatedly chased the coot as it surfaced, which promptly dropped its bit of weed leaving it to be picked up by the Mallard.

BARRY HARTLEY



# UK Top Twitchers

Can the king of Britain's twitchers be knocked from his perch? Feathers are flying in the birdwatching world after a challenge from a young rival.

The dispute, described by amused observers as a "duel with binocular cases at 10 paces", concerns who has seen the most bird species in Britain and Ireland in a year. The issue is one that serious ornithologists view as meaningless.

But for thousands of hardcore twitchers - whose passion borders on an obsessive-compulsive disorder, involving electronic pager messages and frantic long-distance journeys - life revolves around trying to see as many different types of bird as possible, everywhere. And although no prizes are won, the man with the biggest list (it's almost exclusively a male pursuit) is liable to be elevated to near god-like status by his peers.

In one corner of the hide stands the title holder, Lee Evans, aged 40, from Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, Britain's self-styled "top twitcher" since the mid-1980s. Mr Evans operates the UK400 Club, a sort of Premier League of twitchers; to qualify for membership one must have seen at least 400 different species of bird in the British Isles. He claims to hold the UK annual record for bird species, with the 383 he saw in 1996.

In the other corner crouches the challenger, Adrian Webb, aged 28, from Grays, near Tilbury, Essex, who also claims to have seen 383 different types of wild bird in Britain and Ireland in 12 months. Mr Webb notched up his total in the course of last year, when he travelled about 80,000 miles - a record that he claims is much more solidly based than Mr Evans's.

A slanging match has ensued, loud enough put up a flock of geese or drive a grasshopper warbler out of a bramble patch. Mr Evans has accused his challenger of trying to narrow the gap between them by adding species to his list that he either didn't see or that should not be included because they were not genuinely wild birds.

Mr Webb has countered by claiming Mr Evans was not entirely straightforward over some of his own

sightings. Mr Evans has hit back by banning entry to his UK400 Club to Mr Webb's supporters. He also published a vituperative editorial on his website, but had to withdraw it after a flurry of writs.

Is this really what we expect of the Fellowship of the Anorak?

The war of words erupted after Mr Webb published a seven-page account of his year-2000 exploits in the current edition of *Birding World* magazine. Mr Evans immediately challenged this.

Seeming to anticipate what was to follow, Mr Webb wrote: "Unfortunately, disputes and controversy are never very far away from year-listing, but I wish to take this opportunity to unconditionally refute any charges of dishonesty. Those who know me will testify to my integrity and commitment to include only sightings which I am totally convinced are genuine."

By Mr Evans's reckoning, however, even at best Mr Webb's species total should be no higher than 377 or 378. He specifically challenges the sightings of ivory gull, ferruginous duck, goshawk, Lady Amherst's pheasant, Baird's sandpiper and black kite, and adds that "doubt could be raised over several other birds on his list ... As far as I am concerned, his claims to have beaten my best-ever list are rubbish."

Mr Webb responds: "I stand fully behind my claim. Lee is not doing himself any favours by his attitude - if anything, some of the species on his own best-ever list are questionable." He admits telling Mr Evans he had not been to see the ivory gull, but claims that this was a tactical untruth: "I didn't want him to know too early in the year that I planned to seriously challenge his record."

The two men are already serious personal competitors. After he got to Holme Nature Reserve, Norfolk, to see a rare desert wheatear ahead of his rival on 3 November, Mr Webb wrote in the sand: "Evans eat your heart out: desert wheatear, 377."

Last year Mr Webb gave up his job in his family's greengrocery business to spend all his time, and £12,000, pursuing birds. This is a man who thought little of driving with 50 litres of diesel in his boot during the fuel

crisis to ensure he kept mobile, and once made a 691-mile overnight lone trip from Aberdeen to Penzance. What made him do that? "It was a sure way to see a lot of wonderful birds," he said.

Mr Webb is most proud of seeing Europe's first blue-winged warbler, an American species, on Clear Island off Co Cork in October. A month later he suffered his worst experience, when the boat he had hired to carry him from Skye to South Uist to see Britain's first long-tailed shrike broke down and began drifting towards rocks; a lifeboat later came to the rescue.

Stressing that he had witnesses to virtually all his sightings and had taken photographs of most of the rarities, Mr Webb said he planned to submit his efforts to *The Guinness Book of Records*.

Mr Evans commented: "Both Adrian and I must both be regarded as wallies, especially by people not concerned with birding. That does not bother me - I enjoy what I do and what people think is like water off a duck's back. But as a lot of people have long regarded my lifestyle as odd, it in some ways seems strange that Adrian should want to emulate it and to take questionable steps to go one better."

Ironically, the totals claimed by both men are, in the eyes of the 143-year-old British Ornithologists' Union, inflated. It is the BOU, one of the world's oldest and most venerable organisations dedicated to bird study, that rules what species should and should not be on the British wild bird list. The BOU all-time total of British species is 573, but this does not include several claimed by both Mr Evans and Mr Webb.

If their claims had been based on the BOU's own yardstick, Mr Webb's total for 2000 would be reduced to 372, and Mr Evans's 1996 record would be whittled back to a slightly higher 376. This is partly down to some birds having a number of racial forms, which the twitching movement has unilaterally declared as separate species. But don't start them off again, or you'll never hear the end of it.

MICHAEL MCCARTHY courtesy of *The Independent* newspaper





## North Shore City Dotterels

The year 2000 produced some interesting New Zealand Dotterel observations from North Shore City. Shoal and Ngataranga Bays on the Waitemata Harbour are the usual places to see NZ Dotterels in the city but recently they have also been appearing in Albany.

The head office of The Warehouse Ltd is situated on the shores of Shoal Bay. The grass fields there and on the adjacent Takapuna motorway interchange are not classic NZ Dotterel habitat, but several pairs have been nesting there for the past few years.

The 2000 breeding season began with a nest hatching at The Warehouse on 2 September. This is a very early hatching date, one of the earliest on record. Unfortunately this early nest did not have a happy ending as the chicks disappeared at around four weeks old. On a happier note another pair at the same site did manage to fledge two chicks in early December. These chicks had to survive the "normal" hazards of gulls, hedgehogs, cats, dogs and people, as well as those extra "city" hazards of mowing contractors, motorway maintenance crews, underground cabling contractors and radio-controlled model aircraft.



The dictionary definition of dotterel implies a shortage of brainpower, but so far they have managed not to get too close to the rotor blades of radio-controlled model helicopters. In January a light aircraft made an emergency landing on the mudflats of Ngataranga Bay. As it was coming in to land, perhaps the dotterel pair nesting there were wishing they were over the other side of the bay where the aircraft are only small scale models.

No doubt dotterels are like us and are not happy to see an underground cabling contractor digging up their front lawn. At least from the birds' point of view the contractors did leave behind a nice piece of bare earth with lots of worms and insects to feed upon. From the dotterel watchers point of view it was easy to spot the birds silhouetted against all that orange high-visibility fencing around the cabling trenches.



These photographs show dotterel breeding areas near the Auckland northern motorway. Photos: David Pye.

About a kilometre away from The Warehouse site, another pair of dotterels nested in the grass on the Onewa Rd motorway cloverleaf. This nest was only five or so metres away from the motorway tarseal. Unfortunately an incident with a mower ended this particular nest. I suspect a truck crashing off the motorway ended an earlier nesting attempt.

Far to the north of these Shoal and Ngataranga Bay sites is North Harbour Stadium in Albany. The stadium is usually associated with the North Harbour rugby team, the All Blacks and other such events. Now it looks like we must also think of it as a dotterel location. To the east of the stadium, the coast of the Hauraki Gulf is some 4 km away. To the south-west, the upper Waitemata Harbour is 6 km away, although the tidal Lucas Creek does come considerably closer. Despite being so far inland a small flock of NZ Dotterels has been attracted to the fields and earthworks of the new commercial subdivisions next to the stadium and the Albany Mega Centre retail zone. At least one pair of dotterels hatched chicks there in late November, although they probably did not survive to fledging.

Overall North Shore City may not have the country's largest dotterel population, but it certainly has an interesting one that always keeps us dotterel watchers guessing.

DAVID PYE

## Rare Birds Committee - 6 monthly report

### Removal of White-winged Black Tern from reportable species list

The White-winged Black Tern has been observed so frequently on mainland New Zealand in recent times that the Committee has decided to remove it from the interim list of species to be reported. Therefore, there is no longer any need to send reports in respect of this species to the Committee. Observers, if they so wish, can check their sightings of White-winged Black Terns with their Regional Representative or Regional Recorder.

### Scientific names

In order to avoid the confusion about identity which can sometimes arise with the use of vernacular names only, all reports forwarded for consideration by the Committee in future should also give the scientific name of the species to which the report refers.

### 2001 reports

The following reports have been received by the Committee since preparation of the report in *Notornis* 48: 61-62 which dealt with acceptances by the Committee to the end of 2000.

The following sightings have been accepted by the Committee:

**UBR 1/01** - Report from Tony Crocker of single **White-winged Black Tern** seen at Ashley Estuary, Canterbury on 29 December 2000.

**UBR 2/01** - Report from Brent Stephenson of single **White-winged Black Tern** seen by himself, Kathleen Todd and Barbara Taylor at Westshore Lagoons, Napier on 7 & 10 January 2001.

**UBR 4/01** - Report and photographs from Chris Petyt of single **Red-necked Phalarope** seen by himself, Patsy Garrett and Sam Miles at Swan Lake, Farewell Spit on 26 & 29 November 2000.

**UBR 5/01** - Report from Rob Schuckard of suspected **Black Falcon** seen near French Pass, Marlborough on 8 April 1998. This sighting has been accepted as possibly being of a Black Falcon.

**UBR 6/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **Siberian Tattler** seen at Manawatu Estuary on numerous dates between October 1997 and April 2000.

**UBR 7/01** - Report from Jim Moore of **Glossy Ibises** seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 15 February 1998 (3 birds) and 3 October 1998 (2 birds).

**UBR 8/01** - Report from Jim Moore of **Chestnut-breasted Shelducks** seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 28 & 29 March 1998 (1 female) and 25 April 1998 (3 females).

**UBR 9/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **Little Egret** seen at Manawatu Estuary and at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on many dates between June 1999 and October 2000.



**UBR 10/01** - Report and photographs from Jim Moore of single **Japanese Snipe** seen by himself and M. Moore and photographed by Alex Scott at Manawatu Estuary on various dates between 16 September 2000 and 7 January 2001.

**UBR 10A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Japanese Snipe** seen at Manawatu Estuary on various dates between 15 October 2000 and 11 February 2001. This is the same bird to which **UBR 10/01** relates.

**UBR 11/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen by himself and others at Foxton Beach sewage works on 28 & 29 October 2000.

**UBR 11A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen at Foxton Beach sewage works on 29 October 2000. This is the same bird to which **UBR 11/01** relates.

**UBR 12/01** - Report from Jim Moore of single **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Foxton No. 1 Lake (Lake Omanu) on 9 December 2000 and 6 January 2001, and at Manawatu Estuary on 7 January 2001.

**UBR 12A/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Foxton No.1 Lake (Lake Omanu) and Manawatu Estuary on 17 December 2000 and 4 & 7 January 2001. These sightings, and those reported in **UBR 12/01**, may all relate to the same bird.

**UBR 13/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Crested Tern** seen by himself and David Medway on Pararaki, Sugar Loaf Islands, New Plymouth on 26 October 1996.

**UBR 14/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Pomarine Skua** seen by himself and Bryan Williams offshore from New Plymouth on 24 March 1998.

**UBR 15/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Crested Tern** seen on Waikaranga, Sugar Loaf Islands, New Plymouth on 25 September 1997. This may have been the same bird reported in **UBR 13/01**.

**UBR 16/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of one of the **White-winged Black Terns** seen by himself, Peter Fryer and David Medway at former Bell Block oxidation ponds, near New Plymouth between 7 November 1998 and 18 April 1999. This is one of the **White-winged Black Terns** to which **UBR 52/00** relates.

**UBR 17/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Little Egret** seen at Mokau River estuary on 6 August 1995.

**UBR 18/01** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of single **Little Egret** seen at Mokau River estuary between 7 June 1998 and 5 November 1998.

**UBR 19/01** - Report from Mike Bell of single **Black-tailed Godwit** seen by himself and Dave Bell at Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Island on 17 December 2000.

**UBR 20/01** - Report from Mike Bell of **Oriental Dotterel** seen by himself and Susan Bettany at Te Whanga Lagoon, Chatham Island on 12 November 2000.



Above - Australasian Little Grebe in breeding plumage, photographed near New Plymouth. The lower photograph is a Wandering Tattler taken in French Polynesia. Refer to UBRs 11/01 and 23/01. Photos: David Medway



**UBR 21/01** - Report from Chris Robertson of nesting "**Yellow-nosed (Indian) Albatross**" at The Pyramid, Chatham Islands between November 1998 and December 2000.

**UBR 22/01** - Report from Ian Saville of 2 **White-winged Black Terns** seen by himself and Nigel Mann at Manawatu Estuary on 17 December 2000.

**UBR 23/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Wandering Tattler** seen at Armers Beach, Kaikoura on 27 & 28 December 2000.

**UBR 24/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 2 **Marsh Sandpipers** seen at Waimango Swamp stream mouth, Karikari Peninsula, Northland on 23 January 1998.

**UBR 25/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Little Egret** seen at Archway Island, Princes Islands, Three Kings Islands on 20 April 1999.

**UBR 26/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Little Egret** seen at Te Hapua, Parengarenga Harbour on 22 November 1997.

**UBR 27/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Fork-tailed Swift** seen by himself, Peter Anderson and Fred Brook at South West Island, Three Kings Islands on 26 November 1997.

**UBR 28/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 2 **Siberian Tattlers** seen at Parengarenga Harbour on 24 January 1998.

**UBR 29/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Grey Ternlets** seen at North East Island, Three Kings Islands between 14 & 20 April 1999.

**UBR 30/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Grey Ternlets** seen at Stella Rock, Princes Islands, Three Kings Islands on 14 February 2001.

**UBR 31/01** - Reports from Peter Schweigman of single **Oriental Cuckoo** seen by Christine & Robert Brown and Alan Wright at Portobello Road, Dunedin on 17, 19, 24 & 25 March 2001.

**UBR 32/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Glossy Ibis** seen at Lake Ellesmere on 21 October 2000.



**UBR 33/01** - Report from Nick Allen of up to 3 **White-winged Black Terns** seen at Cooper's Lagoon, Canterbury on 21 October 2000, 19 January 2001 and 24 February 2001.

**UBR 34/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Pomarine Skua** seen at Southshore Spit, Christchurch on 26 December 1999.

**UBR 35/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Pomarine Skua** seen by himself, Sheila Petch and Peter Howden offshore at Cooper's Lagoon, Canterbury on 12 March 2000.

**UBR 37/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Australasian Little Grebe** seen near Tinwald, Canterbury on 23 December 2000.

**UBR 38/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Cape Barren Goose** seen by himself, Sheila Petch and Jan Walker at Lake Ellesmere on 9 December 2000.

**UBR 40/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 7 **Grey Ternlets** seen by himself and Noel Henry at Sugarloaf Rock, Poor Knights Islands on 8 February 1998.

**UBR 41/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of up to 2 **Siberian Tattlers** seen by himself and Katrina Hansen at Mangawhai Harbour on a number of occasions between 15 September 1999 and 15 January 2000.

**UBR 42/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of 4 **Sanderlings** seen at Tāpora Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 4 April 1999.

**UBR 43/01** - Report from Richard Parrish of **Siberian Tattlers** seen by himself, Karen Searle and Katrina Hansen at Tāpora Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 11 August 1998 and 4 & 6 May 1999.

**UBR 44/01** - Report from Nick Allen of single **Red-legged Partridge** seen near Kyle, Canterbury on 22 March 2001.

The following sighting has **not been accepted** by the Committee:

**UBR 3/01** - Report from Brent Stephenson of suspected **Sooty Albatross** seen off Napier on 19 November 2000.

The following reports were **still under consideration** by the Committee at the time of writing:

**UBR 36/01** - Report from Nick Allen of suspected **Red-necked Phalarope** seen by himself, Ron Nilsson, Shannon Lloyd and Bev Alexander at Kaitorete Spit, Lake Ellesmere on 16 December 2000

**UBR 39/01** - Report from David Roberts of suspected **frigatebird** seen at Mangere, Chatham Islands on 27 January 2001.

**UBR 45/01** - Report from Stuart Nicholson of suspected **Baird's Sandpiper** seen at Awarua Bay, Southland on 8 January 2001.

DAVID MEDWAY  
Convenor

## Nest Record Scheme

- report for the three years to 30 April 2000

Over the three years, 21 members and friends contributed 755 cards covering 44 species, bringing the grand total to 24,877 cards in the scheme. The annual totals of cards received were 261, 370 and 124 for the years ending 1999 to 2000 respectively. This represents a general decline in support for the scheme, which has been slowly dropping off since its hey-day in the early 1970s, except for a small resurgence in the early 1980s. This decline can mainly be attributed to the changing interests or commitments of individual major contributors. There are still 144 species covered by the scheme, barring recent taxonomic changes in kiwi and albatrosses.

Over the three years a total of 137 Colonial Cards were received covering: Gannet 1, Pied Shag 1, Black-backed Gull 2, Red-billed Gull 38, Black-billed Gull 1, Caspian Tern 64, and White-fronted Tern 30.

This report would have been much thinner had it not been for the excellent contributions from DoC staff in Northland. Katrina Hansen (221 cards), Leigh Honnor (109) and Jeannie Preddey (64) filed records from the Fairy Tern/ NZ Dotterel/ Variable Oystercatcher protection programme run by Richard Parrish (64), and Patrick Miller contributed 93 cards from a research project done as part of the Kiwi Recovery Programme. Other noteworthy contributions came from Don Hadden (82 cards), Bruce Mackereth (39), Bev Woolley (39) and Brent Stephenson (16).

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS IN 1998 TO 2000:

Peter Anderson, Andrea Booth, Rogan Colbourne, Tony Crocker, Bev Elliott, Mike and Sharon Graham, Don Hadden,

Katrina Hansen, Leigh Honnor, Julia Kasprzyak, Bruce Mackereth, Patrick Miller, Richard Parrish, Ralph Powlesland, Jeannie Preddey, David Pye, Hugh Robertson, Colin Scadden, Brent Stephenson, and Bev Woolley.

LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED IN 1998 TO 2000:

Brown Kiwi 95, Crested Grebe 7, Common Diving Petrel 3, Australasian Gannet 1, Pied Shag 4, Reef Heron 1, Canada Goose 1, Mallard 1, Coot 2, Harrier 1, Pied Oystercatcher 1, Variable Oystercatcher 234, NZ Dotterel 151, Banded Dotterel 3, Spur-winged Plover 5, Black-backed Gull 4, Red-billed Gull 38, Black-billed Gull 1, Caspian Tern 64, White-fronted Tern 31, Fairy Tern 12, NZ Pigeon 1, Morepork 11, Kingfisher 1, Skylark 2, Welcome Swallow 2, Rock Wren 1, Dunnock 2, Blackbird 24, Song Thrush 12, Fembird 1, Grey Warbler 1, Fantail 3, NZ Robin 1, Tomtit 1, Silvereye 2, Chaffinch 7, Greenfinch 1, Goldfinch 1, Redpoll 6, Yellowhammer 2, House Sparrow 6, Starling 6, and Saddleback 1.

Due to work and family commitments, I have not been able to devote as much time to managing the scheme as I would have liked. Russell Thomas has kindly agreed to take over as the scheme convenor, and I hope that OSNZ members will deluge him with completed cards! It is important to record details of all nests found, whether they succeed or fail. - it is only the accumulation of data over many years that will provide the necessary samples for researchers to identify trends and patterns in the future.

HUGH ROBERTSON  
Past Nest Record Scheme Convenor

*New Convenor of the Nest Record Scheme, Russell Thomas, may be contacted at Rangitane Road, RD1 Kerikeri 0470. Email [rusnles@paradise.net.nz](mailto:rusnles@paradise.net.nz)*

## National Twitchathon 2001

**G**et your teams organised for the third national Twitchathon, to be held in October.

Pick any nice spring day in October, and set yourself the target of seeing as many bird species in a day as possible and find somewhere to display the trophy - the *Porphyrio mantelli* Mantelpiece Monstrosity.

From the feedback I have had from the previous two years that this totally non-serious competition has taken place, weather-permitting an enjoyable time is had by all. Why not challenge your local Forest and Bird group, or use the event to show school kids the wide range of birds that can be seen in your area?

Once again we hope to tie the event in with BirdLife International, who sponsor bird conservation projects, especially in third world areas. Please contact your regional representative for copies of entry forms and the few rules of the competition. Otherwise forms and information on this (and the second) Twitchathon may be downloaded from the OSNZ website at [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz), or obtained from myself at 65 Allin Drive, Waikuku, North Canterbury 8254, Tel (03) 312 7183.

NICK ALLEN





# Oamaru Penguin Symposium 2001

The third biennial Oamaru Penguin Symposium was held on 21 and 22 June 2001. It was attended by 70 participants from New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Japan and the United States. 23 papers were presented by speakers from New Zealand and Australian universities, Phillip Island, the Department of Conservation, as well as independent biologists. For the first time papers were presented on species other than the Blue Penguin in the New Zealand region.

The meeting was designed to provide some "theme sessions" across the two days. The opening period considered the control of the events of the penguin's year, running through preparation for and control of egg laying, breeding, then the annual moult which brings breeding each season to a close.

A paper described the visit of an expedition to the Snares Islands in October 2000 to census the indigenous Snares Crested Penguin. The interest of this presentation was considerably enhanced by the presence of Dr John Warham in the audience, whose study of the birds in the late 1960s provided a baseline for the present study.

It was pleasing that Peter Dann, who provided initial advice and encouragement in the establishment of the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony in 1992, was at the meeting with three Phillip Island colleagues. His own paper led a session upon Blue Penguin breeding. The data indicated that no more than 20% of fledged Australian birds contribute to the next generation. Nakagawa from

University of Waikato provided the perhaps gratifying suggestion that the discernment of variation in Blue Penguin calls is one area in which computers do not outperform human faculties.

John Darby, well known in the Yellow-eyed Penguin field, closed the first day with some depressing figures of losses to gill nets and, even more chilling, the avoidance of disclosure that is apparent within the industry.

The second day opened with a session devoted to the discussion of taxonomy, and recognition of varieties of Blue Penguin; this predictably led to a "spirited and wide ranging" discussion.

The morning was completed with a report from the Phillip Island team on the effects of a massive die-off of Australian pilchards, known to be dominant in Blue Penguin diet there and believed to be an essential prey. It emerged that the birds were more versatile in their choice, which was not limited by species but by size. A paper from Otago confirmed that the local prey preference is sprats, which replace pilchards south of Banks Peninsula. A final comparison was drawn by a paper comparing food foraging tactics and thus breeding success of Oamaru birds with those in the Marlborough Sounds - and it is clear that the latter are the poor relations.

A workshop session considered the current use of flipper bands as markers for the penguins, possible problems and discussed alternative markers.

The closing session of the meeting was devoted to the reciprocal relationship of

penguins and tourism in Oamaru. A visitor study provided by Otago's Centre for Tourism indicated that people came to Oamaru specifically to see the Blue Penguins. Dave Houston presented the last two papers, indicating firstly that the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony was responsible for a \$3.5m annual input into the local economy and secondly that the impact of tourism upon the Blue Penguins, far from being harmful, coincided with up to 30% per annum increases in the monitored population over the last nine years.

The success of the meeting was due in no small part to the staff of the Quality Hotel Brydone. Sponsorship by the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony, the Totara Hotels Charitable Trust and businesses of the Oamaru community is gratefully acknowledged. We look forward to reconvening in 2003.

A.G. HOCKEN  
Convenor.

## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

### Northland

The year started with the monthly beach patrols on the Dargaville and east coast beaches. We have a group of 17 who regularly help out with these patrols. Over the past six months the largest number of a single species recorded on the west coast patrols was of Short-tailed Shearwaters, whereas the corresponding species on the east coast was Flesh-footed Shearwaters.

The wader census on the Whangarei Harbour gave a total of 3,823 Bar-tailed Godwits. Five sites monitored for the New Zealand Dotterel counts were down this year with the exception of Mangawhai. This may have been due to a very high tide in the region. 214 were counted from the five sites.

A new wetland has been officially opened 20 minutes north of Whangarei. Called "The Borrow Cut", it is a joint programme between the Fish and Game Council and the Whangarei District Council.

At our March meeting Gerry Brackenbury, deputy chairperson for Friends of Matakoho/Limestone Island, spoke to us about the continuing programme for the island. He introduced the idea of a team of OSNZ members monitoring birds on the island on a two

## Webmaster position

**Wanted - one computer geek to take over volunteer position as Webmaster for the Ornithological Society's website.**

**The job currently entails several hours per week updating and expanding the website, including development of the Society's second website which will cover more of the birding/informal side of the Society's activities.**

**The applicant would need to have his/her own computer with some form of website development software. A colour scanner would be extremely useful and access to email and the internet essential. If interested please contact Brent Stephenson at [b.m.stephenson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:b.m.stephenson@massey.ac.nz)**

to three monthly basis. The island lies in the upper Whangarei Harbour, and is around 40 hectares. Limestone Is is known as Matakōhe by the original Maori inhabitants of the Te Parāwhau hapu. It now belongs to the Whangarei District Council and is administered by a committee known as the Friends of Limestone/Matakōhe Island.

This last breeding season saw four NZ Dotterels banded and at least 10 Variable Oystercatchers fledged. One of the latter is a pure albino, which has now moved up the harbour and is happily feeding and roosting there. The island is being turned from a buffalo grass paddock into a potentially top conservation success story.

One of our members, Audrey Williams, has the honorary job of convenor for oiled birds in our region. During the March meeting she had a surprise for us - she unwrapped an oiled bird for us to try and identify, quite a challenge for such a sodden and oiled mass. Although this was just a practice run, it goes to show how difficult it could be in the event of a real oil spill in our region. Let's hope it doesn't eventuate.

(Janet Snell)

## Auckland

There are three varied and well supported meetings to report. In March we were thoroughly briefed on DoC's campaign to control the spread of Rainbow Lorikeets. These aliens have been the subject of illegal releases on Auckland's North Shore, backed by a promotional web site, and a determined if belated attempt is now being made to return the birds to captivity, feral flocks of up to 50 having been seen. Lorikeets are a permitted species as cage birds, which complicates the situation.

In April David Lawrie gave an entertaining account in his characteristic style of tern banding operations in Victoria where five species, Fairy, Little, Crested, Caspian and Common Terns, are accessible for study.

For May, our speaker was Brian Gill of Auckland Museum whose subject was New Zealand's extinct birds. Taking the long view, Brian illustrated the history of extinction through the fossil record, from which about ten species are recognised, chiefly penguins and pelican ancestors, to the sub-fossil period, where 11 moa and 24 other birds are known from midden and such sites, and finally to the years of colonisation during which a further ten species have been lost. Extinction is a natural process which man has accelerated but now endeavours to redress.

Our monthly meetings gather local sightings and include reports of field activities. The autumn census of NZ Dotterels this year tallied 473 birds at ten coastal and island sites. New Zealand Fairy Tern surveys, conducted in conjunction with the dotterel census and subsequently, accounted for 25 colour-

banded individuals and four unbanded birds, making a minimum current population of 29 birds.

On Anzac Day we joined forces with members of the South Kaipara Landcare Group in surveying the chain of dune lakes beyond Parakai. Water conditions have improved recently to the benefit of the grebe population, with Australian (make that Australasian!) Little Grebes now rivalling the NZ Dabchicks - 41 (including 15 juveniles) compared to 83 dabchicks (including 7 juveniles). The grebe total was double the 1999 number. A small group of four or five Cattle Egrets was noted in passing.

Three days later we were off on an early start into the Hunua Ranges to assist Tim Lovegrove and the Regional Parks team with a bush bird survey. Our five-minute counts scored particularly Fantail, Grey Warbler, Pied Tit, Silvereye and Tui with few introduced passerines. Robins may soon be introduced to the area. We were most impressed by the good condition of the forest and were treated to a display by one of the several pairs of Kokako which are benefiting from the recovery programme now in progress.

(Michael Taylor)

## South Auckland

The 2001 year has started relatively quietly for the South Auckland region although we have had some interesting speakers at our early meetings. The February meeting was the Annual General Meeting when the regional representative's report was presented along with the financial statements. Following this annual meeting David Lawrie showed slides of his trip to Perth where he spent several days birding with Pam and Des Agnew, former members of the region.

At the March meeting Darryl Jeffries described to us some of his work relating to the disturbance and breeding behaviour of White-fronted and Fairy Terns at Papakanui Spit in the Kaipara Harbour. As with most studies it threw up as many questions as it provided answers but gave some insight into the possible reasons why the White-fronted Tern is so successful and the Fairy Tern is struggling.

In April Ashley Bright described her studies into the possible use of UV vision and bill colour in the establishment of the pecking order of male Blackbirds. The outcome of the study indicated that UV vision was not a factor but there was clearly dominance established by the colour of the bill. This gave our members an insight into a common bird that we always see but very rarely look at.

The guest speaker at the May meeting was Nigel Adams who described his study into the water utilisation regime of Ostriches in the desert conditions of north-west South Africa. This talk was

preceded by illustrations of the other types of animals that have adapted to this very harsh environment. Unfortunately Nigel did not have time to finish his talk which was to also describe the similar water utilisation regime of smaller birds. This is something that we will look forward to later in the year.

The members of the region have been busy recently assisting with the New Zealand Dotterel census early in April and the Wrybill census on 26 May. On 24 February we hosted the Waikato region on their annual trip to the Karaka shellbanks although there were only four visitors this time. However there was a good selection of birds with four Little Terns, 11 Curlew Sandpipers, 30 Red-necked Stints, 30 Pacific Golden Plovers, one Far Eastern Curlew, one Great Knot, 5,000 Red Knots and 1,000 Bar-tailed Godwits along with 500 Wrybills. This was fairly representative of the waders present this year, although there have been several Whimbrels present at times.

At Miranda there have been two Black-tailed Godwits present along with up to four Marsh Sandpipers and a range of smaller sandpipers.

Another observation that is currently being followed up is the possibility of a Black Kite which has been seen on three occasions near Mercer. This follows an earlier report from the Waikato region of possible sightings on the southern side of the Whangamarino wetland, which is only several kilometres from the present sighting. It would appear from the descriptions given to me that there is enough information to lodge a rare bird report and the necessary arrangements are being made at the present time.

Beach patrolling generally over the first part of the year has been quiet but the team had some good rewards for their efforts on the last trip so things appear to be picking up at least for the patrollers if not the birds.

(David Lawrie)

## Waikato

Our local AGM in March attracted a good turnout, with Don Horne speaking about his recently published *Fungi in New Zealand*. Don's slides are superb, and to have a story behind how and why they were published was fascinating.

March's field trip was a trip down memory lane for some, when we visited old haunts at Hauturu, Waikato's last Kokako site. Until the birds were removed in the early 1990s, this was a guaranteed spot for Kokako, but the forest had since declined rapidly in condition as a result of possum browsing. Visiting for the purpose of atlas squaring, we were pleasantly surprised at the new growth on the trees and general condition of the bush. A Bellbird seen for the first time here, plus Tomtits and Whiteheads also provided evidence of





overall better condition. Three Spotless Crakes in the Hauturu Cliffs swamp and 28 Royal Spoonbills in the harbour nearby at Kawhia finished off a valuable atlas trip.

Lake Waahi in April provided plenty of waterfowl. After a day's postponement due to extreme weather, the 7 am start the next day proved fruitful, with good numbers of Black Swan, Paradise Shelduck and Canada Goose. Rarities were two Australasian Bitterns, proving this lake still is valuable habitat for them, and five Caspian Terns.

Mt Kakepuku five minute bird counts continue for the fifth year, with two NZ Robins seen and heard this time. Of the 30 transferred robins which were put on the mountain in June 1999, 26 have been seen since, a credit to the management of the area by the Kakepuku Management Committee.

April's meeting was a fascinating insight on one of the little-known Northern Cook Islands, Suvarrow. Rhys Jones of AgResearch, Hamilton, spent time doing census work amongst the hordes of boobies and noddies. We were privileged to have in the audience Stella Neale-Kenyon, daughter of Tom Neale, author of the sole book on Suvarrow. He spent several years on the island, publishing *An Island to Oneself*. Stella is looking at updating the book.

Several people took part in the March field trip to Rangitoto Station, a high country retreat in the mountains southeast of Otorohanga. Aside from the superb scenery, birds which were seen (by some people for the first time), were Whitehead, Tomtit, and NZ Falcon. As the place continues to be planted, the scenery is gradually changing from the open paddocks of the old station to native shrubland. Kokako are being managed in the nearby forest.

In May I gave a talk from a volunteer's angle on the Red Mercury Island Pycroft's Petrel project, a Lincoln University initiative. The fieldwork is being carried out by Benoit Gangloff, a Lincoln student, and is paving the way towards the better understanding of the fledging characteristics of the species. This will in turn precede management decisions on the rarer small petrel species such as the Chatham Petrel. The transfer of 30 chicks to Cuvier Island was successful, and all 30 survived the arduous three hour journey in rough seas to their new home – unlike some of the sickly transfer team!

(Paul Cuming)

## Taranaki

Long-tailed Cuckoos were reported in the New Plymouth area during February. A field trip to the Omaru hut in the Matemateonga Walkway produced only 11 species, though a lone Blue Duck was seen. The March trip did rather better, with 23 species in the Makino Forest, including robins and a NZ Falcon.

Coots have apparently been breeding successfully at Lake Mangamahoe. We hope that the New Zealand Dotterels nesting at Pungareere Stream were also successful. Obvious predator tracks in the area led to a DoC officer placing traps – a large cat was caught. Also at Pungareere was a flock of 300+ White-fronted Terns containing an odd bird, confirmed as a juvenile Black-fronted Tern, an unusual visitor.

Hawera oxidation ponds continue to be an excellent place for birds also. Recent sightings include 90+ Pied Stilts, four NZ Dabchicks, an immature Royal Spoonbill and a Grey-tailed Tattler.

(Rosemary Messenger)

## Wairarapa

At our February meeting, with 15 of our members present, we had a very interesting book review by Tenick Dennison on "City Nature". It's amazing how little we know of the common birds we see around us every day in our towns or cities. Then we were lucky enough to have a visitor from the Caribbean Sea. Marlis Schmidt, 'the bird woman of Bonaire', looks after flamingo chicks which are blown out to sea by the ever-present wind and rescued by fishermen who then bring them back to her. The chicks come from a colony of 15,000 flamingoes which breed on the salt pans there. Once they're old enough to walk the wind just blows them farther and farther away from the colony. After a bit of R&R and TLC they are able to be returned to the colony and join the crèche of youngsters where they stay until old enough to fly. In one year alone she helped return more than a dozen of these chicks to the wild.

Our March meeting was held in Greytown and once again a good muster of 16 members was present. Jenny Doring gave a short talk on pipits, then a friend of hers showed us some eggs from the Falkland Islands where she grew up. The eggs were mostly from wader nests.

Our local DoC Biodiversity Manager, Aalbert Rebergen, gave a talk on the trials and tribulations of the birds on the Mackenzie Basin braided rivers. The slides showed the problems the Black Stilts and Banded Dotterels have with willow, lupin, predators and weather, not to mention the rivers themselves.

A video depicted the tenacity of a little female Banded Dotterel trying to brood her newly hatched chicks, after a cat caught her mate in midair and then came back for the chicks. One chick had been taken out of the nest and played with by the cat. Overnight Mum divided her attention between both chicks, brooding the one in the nest then the other outside. Next morning she and the chick which had survived the cat attack left the area. It's a miracle any birds manage to survive at all!

Six members turned out for the March field trip to the Kaiwhata River area for the atlas scheme. Palaeontologist Trevor Worthy, who has just joined our branch, pointed out middens on the way. So they had a very interesting and enjoyable day even though they had to become mountaineers to get down to the beach where they had lunch.

At the April meeting we had a young Mt Bruce summer contractor, Briony Senior, show us some slides and talk about her work on Maud and Codfish islands with Kakapo. We learned the part Richard Henry had played in its survival too. Briony mentioned that the Kakapo used to be called the owl parrot because of its owl-like facial disks, which a member pointed out would help its hearing as it does with owls. When we were told that the males seem to prefer to boom from a high point and the females have to go to them we could understand why. A very informative talk which was enjoyed by all.

The April field trip to Ruakokopatuna covered still more of the atlas squares. Seven people braved the mist to go to this far-flung part of the Wairarapa. They enjoyed looking up old friends who took them down to see their ponds which had a male NZ Scaup and female Carolina Duck which had produced two offspring. There were mates of their own kind in the pond but obviously they had preferred a change this season. Any ideas what these hybrids should be called? Lots of pipits were around too.

Six fit members went up the hill and lunched under a tree while listening to the Bellbirds. We don't have too many of these beautiful songsters around here so they were well appreciated. A falcon was sighted on the way back.

Bird sightings for January – March 2001 include a bittern and three Royal Spoonbills at Lake Pounui, Long-tailed Cuckoos at Fensham Bush, Mt Bruce, Greytown and Walls Whare. There were eight Kaka at Mt Holdsworth, 50 Black-billed Gulls on Ruamahunga at Te Whiti, two Black-fronted Dotterels at Henley Lake, plus two pairs on Kaiwhata River, four NZ Falcons at Putangirua Pinnacles, and one at Masterton and Greytown. Two skuas harassing were White-fronted Terns at Palliser Bay, a NZ Dabchick and a pair at Carterton. Also two Black Fantails (with one and two white tail feathers) at Mt Bruce, plus NZ Scaup (lots), NZ Kingfisher, Canada Goose and Coot at Henley Lake.

(Betty Watts)

## Wellington

Mention "The Robin's Return" to some senior members and they may think of a sentimental Edwardian piano piece and childhood hours spent practising, not always with a light heart.

It was a different tune in mid May, however, when the New Zealand Robin,

long absent from North Island forests south of the Volcanic Plateau, returned indeed to Wellington's Karori Sanctuary. There were gasps of delight from hundreds of citizens who had crammed onto a muddy trail, as 38 birds released themselves from their boxes, and dashed through the flashing cameras to explore their new environment. Some of us could cherish the special appreciation of having been in the team that had captured the robins the previous day on Kapiti Island.

Birds generally are returning to the Wellington region, as habitat improves to support them, through the efforts of an increasingly interested population. For instance two Kaka have been observed regularly in the foothills behind Eastbourne, where local residents have established a "mainland island" with some technical guidance from OSNZ. Falcons are seen there also, with tomtits and kakariki. The greater visibility of some species of course could be due to increased awareness and observation skills on the part of the public.

Residents on the Chatham Islands have been viewing videos in order to enlist their support in the campaign to improve the lot of their indigenous oystercatcher. At our March meeting Peter Moore showed us film clips taken at nest sites, which was really a mixture of entertainment and pathos, for instance a nesting bird sitting tight through harassment by a gang of nosy sheep. Possums have learned to eat eggs and in a 14 km stretch of coastline an average of 50 feral cats are trapped each season. The good news is that last year in the managed area 25 chicks fledged. Outside this area none survived.

On Mana Island in March a combined OSNZ/DoC party, while banding 12 fledglings, noted a decline in numbers of NZ Robins (from 70 to fewer than 50), perhaps a consequence of the severe drought last summer. They also processed 36 young Sooty Shearwaters.

At the April meeting, Jo Cooper, a British palaeontologist working at Te Papa, spoke on "birds, bones and bottlenecks" and her study of life at Gibraltar 130,000 to 10,000 years ago, as evident from cave sites formerly occupied by Neanderthals and the Great Auk.

Though not the size of the Great Auk, the Chatham Island Taiko's predicament close to extinction has focused a great deal of effort to develop reliable procedures for transferring seabirds. At the May meeting Graeme Taylor outlined this programme. It had commenced with the (unsuccessful) transfer of Grey-faced Petrel eggs from Tiritiri Matangi to Mt Bruce, and then, as a successful diet was concocted, relocation of fledgling Pycroft's Petrels from Red Mercury Island (where they were hassled by Broad-billed Prions) to Cuvier Island. Last year 30 chicks were moved successfully, Graeme reported, and so next year 90 to 100 will be transferred.

Next year also this technique will be applied to the Chathams, where Chatham Petrels will be transferred to a secure area

on the main island which is located in the flight path of the rare Taiko. It is hoped that the latter, lured by calls to comfortable burrows, will join this "rehab" settlement. It all sounds simple in outline, perhaps, but the technical challenges to be met were very well explained by our speaker.

(Rod Orange)

## Nelson

Following on from our practice cannon netting last year Rob Schuckard has arranged a series for the following months at suitable coastal spots. So far SIPO, VOC and Bar-tailed Godwits have been banded, measured and weighed.

The five year project to band gannet chicks has finished and Rob is negotiating now for monitoring visits to continue. We were interested to learn that a gannet colour-banded as a juvenile at Farewell Spit has been seen at Cape Kidnappers and another gannet similarly banded has been seen in Western Australia.

Golden Bay members Chris Petyt and Richard Stocker have made several trips into the Cobb Valley area of Kahurangi National Park over the summer to band Rock Wrens and to assess the effect of stoats on this population. The Department of Conservation assisted by supplying and flying in stoat traps so that these could be set while Chris and Richard were there. Hopefully this project will continue.

Willie Cook spent a few weeks in the Chatham Islands noting population dynamics and helping to monitor Forbes Parakeets and Black Robins. Following this he accompanied Kerry Barton to the Balleney Islands and Cape Bird to observe Adélie penguins and birds in general. Kerry will be giving a public illustrated talk on the trip.

Back home Willie saw a Terek Sandpiper and a Grey-tailed Tattler in the Waimea Inlet, both unusual sightings in this area. Henk Heinekamp, while relaxing in Golden Bay, saw an adult Brown Booby flying and feeding with a group of about 50 gannets which normally feed elsewhere in the bay.

The Nelson/ Tasman coastal areas are being subdivided and developed at a faster rate than ever before with consequent pressure on wild life habitat. Representatives of Nelson OSNZ have become part of a working group which includes both local Councils, DoC, environmental groups, Fish & Game and a commercial boating operator, looking at coastal planning issues. Rob Schuckard gave an excellent presentation at the DoC NGO forum in November summarising our wader counts over the last 20-40 years. This highlighted the international importance of our local sandspits and inlets for shore birds.

We contributed photos and data for a publicity poster at Farewell Spit visitors' centre and this has formed the basis of a colourful and well illustrated, floor to ceiling display in the restaurant area.

(Gillian Pollock)

## Canterbury

Dr Richard Holdaway led a large group of OSNZ members, families, and friends in to Pyramid Valley on 12 May to see where rich bird fossil sites have been found in North Canterbury. Remains of at least 46 bird species as well as bats and tuatara have been found in the area so far, with about three-quarters of the 1.5 ha swamp excavated.

The species include Giant Moa, Slender Moa, Heavy-footed Moa, South Island Extinct Goose, Laughing Owl, Adzebill, Eyle's Harrier, Piopio, and Haast's Eagle — *Harpagornis*. The group was told that only two species present at the time of the visit — Paradise Shelduck and NZ Pipit — would also have been present at the time the swamp deposits were laid down. The day's birding included a clamber down a limestone sink hole only big enough for four people at a time. The hole contained moa remains dating back up to 38,000 years.

The autumn season in Canterbury has been marked by a series of beach patrols which have included the possible finding of the remains of a Collared Petrel (currently in Wellington for identification) and the finding of 182 Sooty Shearwaters washed ashore in mid-May on the Brighton beaches and just south of the Lake Ellesmere opening.

Evening talks have included sessions on the ecology of seabirds by OSNZ South Island Vice-President Kerry-Jayne Wilson, former regional rep Sheila Petch about her birding travels in Britain and the United States, and Heather North and colleagues talking about a two-year Bellbird study on the peninsula and plains around Christchurch.

This study, Bellbirds in a fragmented landscape on the mid-Canterbury plains, may give pointers to the habitats the birds need to re-establish themselves over a wider area, and possibly to begin breeding again on the plains rather than only venturing there to feed during the winter months.

Among recent sightings reported in the region have been 67 Southern Crested Grebes on Lake Forsyth and another on Cooper's Lagoon, a Marsh Crake at Ellesmere, 35 Wrybills at Ellesmere during the national census on May 26, and 11 Red-necked Stints apparently wintering over. There was a report of a Cape Barren Goose making an ill-fated visit to the Lake Ellesmere area, coinciding with the start of the duck-shooting season.

(David Clarkson & Jan Walker)





According to the *Otago Daily Times* the Little Shag population in the Otago Harbour is declining. This statement was made after observing the birds from one part of the Portobello Road. The story doesn't tell you if these shags had gone to the other side at Port Chalmers for a better food supply, warmer conditions or other reason. To have proof of it, a count was made of the shags in the total harbour by a few members on 1 April. Although not conclusive, the numbers were down on both the 1979 and 1989 surveys.

In an attempt to include the Catlins in the atlas scheme, eight members spent two or three days roaming coastal South Otago, including the Clutha district, in March. Compared with the October 1970 study weekend, in aid of the previous atlas, this weekend had a few more species. No penguins were seen, no significant number of seabird species was seen, but duck species were up.

Jill Hamel, in her report of the 1970 survey, stated "There was a notable paucity of waterfowl. Species notably missing were Stewart Island Shags, Reef Herons, Bitterns, Grey Teal, Shoveler and Paradise Duck." The last three were present this time, but it's wishful thinking to expect to see Reef Herons and bitterns. What was no surprise was the increase in Spur-winged Plovers and now, 30 years later, the presence of Royal Spoonbills, Welcome Swallows and the Australian Magpie.

The comparison between the two exercises 30 years apart is otherwise difficult. The previous one was in October, this one in March. The earlier survey requested presence and number, this one presence or absence only, and the 1970 survey was carried out by 27 people while this one by only eight.

Caren Shrubshal reported a juvenile Fiordland Crested Penguin during February at Smail's Beach, staying about two hours. At the end of March Peter Schweigman reported an Oriental Cuckoo near Glenfalloch, first spotted by Robert Brown.

(Louise Foord and Peter Schweigman)

## PLEASE NOTE

**Deadline for  
the  
September Issue  
will be  
10 AUGUST**



## Waikato

Evening meetings, third Wednesday of the month (except January), DoC Conference Room, London Street, Hamilton. Ph. Paul Cuming (07) 829 8215.

Lake Census – Rotorua/Hamilton – ph Barry Friend (07) 8436729. On every month

Rotokaeo/Forest – ph Brian Challinor (07) 8552561. On every month

Te Ko Utu/Cambridge – ph Paul Cuming. On every month

Beach patrols – Waikato west coast beaches – ph Hugh Clifford (07) 855 3751

5 Minute bird counts, Kakepuku – ph Paul Cuming

## Taranaki

Evening meetings - held at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday of the month except January. Ph. Barry Hartley (06) 757 8644. Field trips on first conducive weekend thereafter.

## 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.

## Wellington

Beach patrols – ph Jean Luke (04) 293 5601.

Evening meetings – first Monday of the month, DoC offices, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Wellington City Library, 7.45 pm

Atlassing training sessions, various Wellington localities, 1-3.00 pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month. Ph. Stuart Nicholson (04) 934 5940.

## Nelson

Evening meetings - usually 1st Monday of the month, 7.15pm, upstairs in Cafe Affaire, Trafalgar St, Nelson. Ph. David (03) 543 3628 or Rob (03) 576 5371.

## Canterbury

Evening meetings are held at the Spreydon Bowling Clubrooms, Domain Terrace, starting at 7.30pm.

23 June – Winter wader count, Lake Ellesmere. Ph. Colin Hill (03) 325 5891, email cherryhill@xtra.co.nz).

25 June – evening meeting – birds of Campbell Island.

21 July – Ashburton Lakes census Ph. Ron Nilsson (03) 338 8936 or Don Geddes (03) 308 6489.

30 July – evening meeting - BirdLife International and Important Bird Areas.

19 August – Ashburton River Mouth. Ph. Jill West (03) 337 1151, email jill.west@xtra.co.nz

27 August – evening meeting - restoration of Quail Island

23 September – Lake Selfe and nearby lakes. Ph. Marj Davis (03) 385 2193

24 September – evening meeting – travels in the UK

20-22 October (Labour Weekend) - Canterbury members will join Nelson members in Blenheim for birding and censusing. Ph. Sheila Petch (03) 348 1889.

Beach patrols are usually held on the first Saturday of the month. Ph. Sheila Petch (03) 348 1889.

## Otago

27 June - evening meeting, Otago Art Society building, 8.00 pm. South East Island. Ph. Louise Foord (03) 467 5041.

22 August – evening meeting, titi and beach patrols.

24 October – evening meeting, travels in search of petrels.

11 November – summer wader count. Ph. Ken Gager (03) 487 6670.





