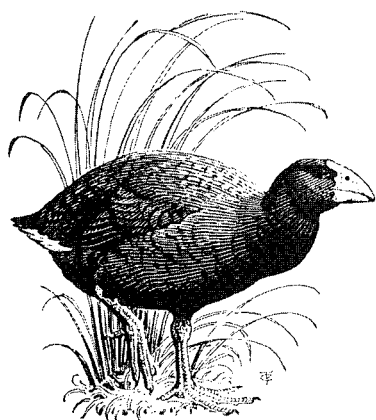


# Southern Bird

No. 10 June 2002. • ISSN 1175-1916







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## Quotation

Once birds were gods to men  
Magical, strange and wise.  
Now men are devils to them  
On earth, on sea, on skies.

JOEL PETERS

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## Cover Photos

Featured on our front cover this issue is a Takahe, one of the birds fairly easily seen by visitors to Tiritiri Matangi Island. It was photographed by Nigel Milius. Nigel also took the back cover photo of a Variable Oystercatcher and its two chicks. He and fellow oystercatcher-warden and real-life partner Wendy Hare's story appears on the back cover.

## Publisher

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We welcome Advertising enquiries.

## Robert Falla Memorial Award

*At the Annual General Meeting in Hokitika on 1 June 2002, it was my pleasure on behalf of all members of the Society to present the 2002 Robert Falla Memorial Award to Christopher John Rutherford Robertson. The following is the citation which was read at the meeting in support of the award.*

The Falla Award is presented to New Zealand ornithologists who have made a significant contribution to both the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (OSNZ) and to New Zealand ornithology. Chris Robertson has achieved that high standard. His contribution to OSNZ extends over a 40 year period.

Chris began his interest in ornithology with the study of gannets at Cape Kidnappers. His father, the Rev. Fred Robertson, had assisted Dr Kazio Wodzicki with the monitoring of the Hawke's Bay colony, and Chris followed in his father's footsteps with this project and is still involved with the species to this day. His first paper in *Notornis* was published in 1964, covering observations made at Cape Kidnappers in the period 1959 to 1963. In 1969, 1980 and 2000 he repeated the national gannet census first organised with OSNZ members under the guidance of Sir Charles Fleming and Dr Wodzicki.

Chris played a significant role in the first New Zealand Bird Distribution Atlas, which mapped New Zealand birds during the period 1969-1979. His early experience with computers, data processing (a rare skill in those days) and publishing enabled him to supervise all the data processing and techniques for tabulating data and producing the maps. He was also instrumental in the design, layout and printing of the interim and final atlas publications in 1985.

Chris was involved in the early stages of the larger task of mapping the distribution of New Zealand seabirds in association with members of the Australasian Seabird Group. In the early 1980s Chris was the Consulting Editor for the *Readers Digest Complete Book of New Zealand Birds* and his links with New Zealand ornithologists enabled him to solicit contributions that provided a wealth of new information about New Zealand birds. Chris also co-authored several books on New Zealand birds designed to introduce the lay person to these subjects. His contact with New Zealand bird artists enabled him to produce some of the first OSNZ Christmas cards with topics painted especially for their use.

Chris had a major role in the 20<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress (IOC) held in Christchurch in 1990 and the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) conference held at Hamilton at the same time. Chris was a member of the New Zealand organising committee and was the convenor of the business management subcommittee at the IOC ("the powerhouse of making it all happen" to quote Brian Bell). He also served on the excursions, editorial, grant review, IOC-ICBP liaison and publications subcommittees. The great success of these 1990 conferences was due in no small part to Chris's organisational skills and his dogged nature.

In the 1980s Chris organised an OSNZ membership survey at the request of then president Brian Bell. This provided a chance for members to help set the direction of their organisation. In 1995, Chris was elected as president of OSNZ and served for five years until he retired in May 2000. During his term as president he oversaw reviews of the OSNZ constitution and publications, the latter leading to a new format for *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*. He also was a strong supporter of existing OSNZ schemes especially involving amateur members and supported the initiation of the new bird distribution mapping



scheme. Since retiring as president, he has played a key role in convening the bird mapping scheme and once again is managing the data storage and processing.

This list of accomplishments alone is enough to justify a Falla Award. However, in his career and personal life, Chris has undertaken a range of ground-breaking work on seabirds, a group of birds that Robert Falla himself loved to work on. Chris started his ornithological career with the Dominion Museum (now Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand). He took over the administration of the New Zealand bird banding scheme from Fred Kinsky in 1964 and was transferred with the scheme to the New Zealand Wildlife Service in 1967. Chris was the banding officer until 1982. During his tenure he changed over most bands to stainless steel, an example followed by many other national banding schemes. Chris also introduced computer-based data management to the banding scheme.

During this period, Chris was not confined to the office. His interest in large seabirds enabled him to participate in a range of expeditions to far-flung and inhospitable places. He published accounts of birds of the Balleny Islands in 1980 and he worked on albatrosses at Campbell Island in 1975 and again in 1985. During the first Campbell Island trip he was in the party that rediscovered the "extinct" Campbell Island teal with Rodney Russ on Dent Island. He was involved in the major expedition to the Auckland Islands in 1972 and on several trips during the 1980s and 90s, and wrote the definitive account of the birds of the Bounty Islands after his visit with Gerry van Tets in 1978. Chris has also visited the Snares, Antipodes and Kermadec Islands.

Chris has had a long involvement with albatrosses on the Chatham Islands and has spent more time than anybody on the remote and demanding smaller islands such as The Pyramid, Forty-Fours and Sisters. Work there included satellite telemetry projects and aspects of population biology. Currently, he is involved in work with WWF on the Chatham albatross at The Pyramid, which includes organising a census of the breeding population. Chris has had a more than thirty year involvement with the management of the Taiaroa Head Nature Reserve and albatross colony since the early stages of his job with the NZ Wildlife Service. He helped set up the current structure that enables the birds to breed safely while still being enjoyed by thousands of people as a primary international tourist attraction.

Chris has also published accounts on the biology and population dynamics of the northern royal albatross and has carried out a number of satellite-tracking and data-logging experiments in association with David Nicholls. His interest in albatrosses has extended to taxonomy, and, as a result of both his field time and many visits to overseas museums, was one of the authors for a suggested taxonomic revision framework of the group, along with his colleague Gary Nunn.

Other roles Chris has carried out include authorship of a paper with Brian Bell on the conservation status of New Zealand seabirds; he has organised surveys of riverbed nesting birds in the McKenzie Basin and Waitaki Valley; managed science contracts in the Department of Conservation; started the *Conservation Advisory Science Notes* series which helped to get a lot of science and advice out of notebooks and into the public domain; and today manages a contract to autopsy and report on seabirds killed by New Zealand commercial fisheries.

Chris has had the long-standing support of his family (his wife Gillian, and his son and daughter). He has survived a few close calls on offshore islands and a run in with the dreaded flesh-eating bacteria (necrotising fasciitis)

that nearly resulted in a leg being amputated to save his life. In retirement he is enjoying the opportunity to prepare for publication many topics previously prevented by the time demands of a working and administrative life.

**DAVID MEDWAY**  
President

## Council co-options and appointments

### *Council members*

As I predicted in my Annual Report for 2001, Councillors at their meeting in Hokitika on 31 May 2002 had no hesitation in co-opting Ros Batcheler back into their ranks. David Lawrie was also co-opted to Council. In accordance with our Constitution, both Ros and David are co-opted for a one-year term until the 2003 Annual General Meeting, but they remain eligible for election to a further three-year term on Council thereafter. We are grateful to Ros and David, and to the other Councillors who were recently elected - namely Mark Nee, David Melville and David Pye - for their willingness to assist with the work of Council.

### **Secretary**

Elizabeth (Biz) Bell was also co-opted to Council as Secretary in replacement of Christine Reed who retired from that position as at the 2002 Annual General Meeting. Like Ros Batcheler and David Lawrie, Biz is co-opted for a one-year term until the 2003 Annual General Meeting, but remains eligible for election to a further three-year term on Council thereafter. We are grateful to Biz for agreeing to take on this important position. Members present at the Annual General Meeting at Hokitika on 1 June 2002 expressed the Society's appreciation to Christine for her four years of secretarial service to the Society.

### *Notornis* editors

Councillors were very pleased to learn that Richard Holdaway is prepared to continue as Editor of *Notornis* provided that he receives some much-needed editorial support. Accordingly, they confirmed Richard as (now) Managing Editor of *Notornis*, and appointed Paul Sagar and Nigel Adams as Assistant Editors. Members present at the Annual General Meeting expressed the Society's gratitude to Richard for his continuing excellent services in relation to our journal, and to Paul and Nigel for their willingness to assist him in that regard.

### **Rare Birds Committee**

The current term of members of the Rare Birds Committee expires on 30 June 2002. Council has re-appointed all present members, with the exception of Peter Schweigman who did not seek re-appointment, for a further three-year term commencing on 1 July 2002. Paul Scofield has also been appointed to the Committee for the ensuing term. We are grateful to Peter for his services on the Committee over a number of years.

**DAVID MEDWAY**  
President

## Meritorious Service Awards

Well-deserved Meritorious Service Awards were presented at the Annual General Meeting in Hokitika on 1 June 2002 to members **Kathy Barrow**, **Tony Crocker**, **Tim Lovegrove** and **Paul Sagar** as a recognition of their meritorious service in the furtherance of the objects of the Society. Their individual citations in support of the award read as follows:

### Kathy Barrow

Kathy Barrow is the Society's honorary librarian and has served in this role since 1987. Kathy reports for duty approximately once a week at the Auckland Museum library where the Society's collection is housed. During this time she has worked steadily to, amongst other things, manage the serial exchanges, circulate current issues of journals to members, and provide photocopies of articles, even during the recent year when the museum library was shut down for refurbishment. Thanks to the efforts of Kathy and helpers in boxing the unbound parts, the ever-increasing serial collection is now much better housed than before.

### Tony Crocker

Tony Crocker has been editor of the Society's magazine since 1993, expertly steering it through its transformation from *OSNZ News* to *Southern Bird*, with the introduction of colour illustrations. Tony was also responsible for the co-ordination of the soul-searching exercise looking at how the Society was performing after 60 years of existence, and planning for the next 60 years. This exercise is still on-going, and has so far led to the formation of a Scientific Committee, which will lead to the important formalisation of collection and dissemination of data about birds in New Zealand, and enhancement of the Society's professional image.

### Tim Lovegrove

Tim Lovegrove is a good example of a professional scientist who enjoys his interest in birds and has furthered the objects of the Society. He was on the Council of the Society between 1992 and 1995. His major contribution to the Society is as compiler of the index for *Notornis*, a task which he has undertaken for 32 years. This is a major time commitment, and is one of the less glamorous roles within the Society but one from which we all benefit.

### Paul Sagar

Paul Sagar has made a direct contribution to the Society in one way or another for the past 23 years. He served as a Councillor for 14 years from 1981-94, and as Canterbury RR for 6 years from 1979-84. Paul was editor of *OSNZ News* for 16 years (1978-93), responsible for the production of issues 7 to 70. He was also editor of *Notornis* for 1 1/2 volumes from 1998-99, and a member of the Editorial Board of the journal for 6 years (1994-97 and 2000-01). Not content with simply being editor of *Notornis*, he has published over 20 papers in that journal.

DAVID MEDWAY  
President

## National Twitchathon 2002



If you haven't tried a Twitchathon yet, you should set aside a day in October and give it a go. This has to be the best fun birding of the year – and now your chance to add something to local, national and international conservation efforts at the same time.

The fourth National Twitchathon is scheduled for any 24 hour period (of your choice) in October. The rules are very simple – all you have to do is identify as many bird species as you can find in the nominated period, there are no limits to how far you can go.

The event has a serious side, in that a conservation donation is made for every species seen, worldwide, in conjunction with Birdlife International. For that reason I would like everyone who sees endemic species (except for the really obvious ones) during October, to submit an entry – even if the day total is not terribly high. It would be great to register all of our endemic birds.

**Sponsorship.** For the first time, teams are encouraged to invite sponsorship for the number of species seen from friends and relatives (or anyone else!) with money raised to be donated to any worthwhile cause that you like. Maybe direct to OSNZ or to a local conservation group (Miranda? Manawatu Estuary Trust? Etc.). I shall be sending sample sponsorship forms to all RRs, or you can get one direct from me.

**Prizes.** The Magnificent Mantelpiece Monstrosity will still go to the overall winners, but I again hope to wrangle a few *real* prizes to encourage more of you into the competition. I expect that there will be a prize to the team that gets the biggest score without the aid of a boat (previous winners have each time done the Oceanwings pelagic trip from Kaikoura), one for the highest scoring team limited to 20 kms from a nominated start point and a prize for the best team including more than 50% school-age children (so all you school teachers out there, get your kids into it).

The rules are as follows:

1. A team must be two or more people – non-OSNZers welcome.
2. two or more members of the team must agree the identification (by sight or sound) of each species.
3. Only live, wild birds will count.
4. There is (still) no rule 4.
5. Any period of 24 hours in the month of October is allowed.
6. Team members must stay in direct voice contact through the event.

It's as simple as that. If you want to be eligible for the "No boats", "Kids included" or "Less than 20 km" prizes, annotate your entry to that effect. All entries, just a list of species claimed, to me by email, fax, phone or post (details below).

After three years of the organiser's team being victorious (Nick Allen twice and myself and Brent Stephenson last year) it would be neat if someone else could come up with a winning total, but in this case it really isn't the winning that counts.

SAV SAVILLE  
23 Duke Street  
Feilding  
(06) 323 1441  
binzsav@clear.net.nz

**! PLEASE NOTE !**  
**DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER**  
**ISSUE WILL BE 10th AUGUST**



## Rare Birds Committee – 6 MONTHLY REPORT

The following sightings have been **accepted** by the Committee since preparation of the report in *Southern Bird* 8: 4-5. Several other reports are currently under consideration.

**UBR 70/01** - Report from Peter Fryer of single **White-eyed Duck** seen at New Plymouth on 31 October 2001.

**UBR 73/01** - Report from Gillian Vaughan of single **Large Sand Dotterel** seen by herself and Gwenda Pulham at Papakanui Spit on 2 November 2001.

**UBR 74/01** - Report from Gillian Vaughan of single **Sanderling** seen at Papakanui Spit on 2 November 2001.

**UBR 75/01** - Report from Tony Crocker of single **New Zealand Dabchick** seen by himself and others at Taylor Dam, near Blenheim on 21 October 2001.

**UBR 76/01** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Black Kite** seen at various Auckland localities on 5 & 8 November 2001.

**UBR 77/01** - Report and photographs from Ted Wnorowski of single **Intermediate Egret** seen at Whangapoua Harbour, Coromandel Peninsula on 11 July 2001.

**UBR 78/01** - Report from Dave Fraser (via Brent Stephenson) of single **Common Sandpiper** seen by himself and Margaret Fraser at Mahanga Beach, Mahia Peninsula on 17 November 2001.

**UBR 79/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Fiordland Crested Penguin** seen at Kaikoura on 28 January 2001.

**UBR 80/01** - Report from Ian Saville of at least 2 **Fairy Martins** seen with Welcome Swallows by Eckhard Graf between Te Pahi and Cape Reinga on or about 28 August 2001.

**UBR 81/01** - Report from Ian Saville of single **Wandering Tattler** seen by himself and Brent Stephenson at Kaikoura on 27 October 2001.

**UBR 82/01** - Report from Peter Fryer of single **Spine-tailed Swift** seen at the Waiongana River mouth, near New Plymouth, on 9 December 2001. This sighting is described in *Southern Bird* No. 9 (March 2002).

**UBR 83/01** - Report and photographs from Brian Chudleigh of single **Ruff** seen by himself and others at Miranda on 20 November 2001. Accounts and photographs of this bird by Brian Chudleigh appeared in *Miranda Naturalists' Trust News* No. 44 (February 2002) and in *Southern Bird* No. 9 (March 2002).

**UBR 83A/01** - Report and photographs from Angus Wilson (via Keith Woodley) of single **Ruff** seen at Miranda on 18 & 19 November 2001. This was undoubtedly the same individual as the Ruff reported in **UBR 83/01**.

**UBR 1/02** - Report and photographs from Nigel Milius and Wendy Hare (via David Lawrie) of single **Little Egret** seen at Opoutere on 8 & 9 July 2001.

**UBR 2/02** - Report from David Lawrie of single **Broad-billed Sandpiper** seen by himself, Gwenda Pulham, Tony Habraken, Jan Butcher, Wim Houtman & Ray Clough at Kidds Shellbanks, South Manukau Harbour on 18 November 2001 and 1 January 2002, with records of earlier sightings of the species by himself - usually with others - at the same locality in 1992, 1993, 1998, 1999 & 2000, and at Miranda on 4 March 1995.

**UBR 3/02** - Report from Robin Gardner-Gee (via David Pye) of single **Spine-tailed Swift** seen by himself & Maud Cahill at Tiritiri Matangi Island on 4 November 2001.

**UBR 4/02** - Report from Robin Gardner-Gee (via David

Pye) of 2 **Australasian Little Grebes** seen by himself, Kate Paulin and Susan & Chris Gee at Puponga Farm Park, Golden Bay on 2 January 2002.

**UBR 5/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of single **Siberian (Grey-tailed) Tattler** seen by herself and Ted Wnorowski at Papakanui Spit on 18 February 2001, with records of other sightings of the species by - variously - herself, Gavin Grant, Mike Twyman, Ted Wnorowski, Simon Chamberlin, Bruce Connelly, David Lawrie, Jan Butcher, Wim Houtman, Ray Clough, Darryl Jeffries & Tony Habraken at Big Sand Island, Taporā on 7 April 2001 & 20 October 2001, at Mangawhai on 3 November 2001, and at Karaka, South Manukau Harbour on 1 January 2002.

**UBR 6/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of single **Grey Plover** seen by herself, Ted Wnorowski & Darryl Jeffries at Big Sand Island, Taporā on 11 March 2001.

**UBR 7/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of **Black-tailed Godwit** seen by herself, Ted Wnorowski, Darryl Jeffries & Bruce Connelly at Mangawhai on 3 November 2001(2), and by herself & Ted Wnorowski at Mangere Sewage Ponds on 18 January 2001(1).

**UBR 8/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of austral-bred juvenile **Little Terns** (2) seen by herself & Simon Chamberlin at Tauhoa River on 27 April 2001.

**UBR 9/02** - Report from Barry Hartley of banded **Black Stilt** seen at Mokau River estuary on 8 January 2002.

**UBR 10/02** - Report from Nick Allen of 2 **Little Whimbrels** seen at Lake Ellesmere on 30 November 2001.

**UBR 12/02** - Report and photographs from Barry Stevens of single **Oriental Cuckoo** seen by himself and members of his family at Kakanui, North Otago on 27 December 2001. An article about this bird appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of 2 January 2002.

**UBR 13/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of single **Sanderling** seen by herself, Gavin Grant, Mike Twyman, Gordon Gorbey & Simon Chamberlin at Big Sand Island, Taporā on 6 October 2001.

**UBR 14/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of single **Mongolian Dotterel** seen by herself, Gavin Grant, Mike Twyman, Simon Chamberlin, Ted Wnorowski & Darryl Jeffries at Big Sand Island, Taporā on 20 October 2001, with reference to other sightings of the species at the same place by herself, Simon Chamberlin, Gavin Grant & Mike Twyman on 2, 15 & 16 December 2001.

**UBR 15/02** - Report from Stuart Jenkins (via Laurie Howell) of single **Red-tailed Tropicbird** seen at Tapotupotu, Cape Reinga on 30 December 2001.

**UBR 16/02** - Report from Martin Snowball (via Bill Lock) of family group of 5 **Brown Teal** seen at Waikanae Estuary on 18 February & 15 July 2001.

**UBR 16A/02** - Report and photograph from Barry Hartley of group of 15 **Brown Teal** seen by himself and Bill & Rosemary Messenger at Waimeha Lagoon, Waikanae on 18 March 2001.

**UBR 16B/02** - Report from Stuart Nicholson (via Bill Lock) of 4 **Brown Teal** seen at Waikanae Estuary on 6 February 2000.

**UBR 17/02** - Report from Christine McRae & Jim Hamilton of single **Gull-billed Tern** seen at Miranda on 26 January 2002.

**UBR 18/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Large Sand Dotterel** seen at Ruakaka on 27 January 2002.

**UBR 19/02** - Report from Robert Clearwater (via Alan Wright) of 2 **Dollarbirds** seen at Okia Flat, Otago Peninsula between 20 November and 10 December 2001. An article about these birds appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of 17 December, 2001.

**UBR 21/02** - Report from Colleen McKerrow of 6 **Gull-**

**billed Terns** seen by herself, Brian Jones, and Alan & Linda Underhill at Big Sand Island, Tapora on 17 November 2001.

**UBR 22/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of single **Common Sandpiper** seen by herself & Ted Wnorowski at Mangere Sewage Ponds on 18 November 2001.

**UBR 23/02** - Report from Gwenda Pulham of 5 **Gull-billed Terns** seen by herself & Simon Chamberlin at Big Sand Island, Tapora on 2 December 2001.

**UBR 24/02** - Report and photographs from Peter Reese of single **Arctic Tern** seen at Lake Ellesmere outlet on 10 February 2002.

**UBR 25/02** - Report from Tim Blackburn of single **Oriental Pratincole** seen by himself, Steve Wratten & Karl Evans at Lake Ellesmere on 4 February 2002.

**UBR 26/02** - Report from Adrian Riegen of **Siberian (Grey-tailed) Tattler** banded by himself, Stephen Davies & Tony Habraken at Miranda on 17 February 2002.

**UBR 33/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Mongolian Dotterel** seen at Hukatere Beach (90 Mile Beach) on 10 March 2002.

**UBR 34/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Brown Booby** seen at Taupiri Bay, south of Cape Brett on 17 February 2002.

**UBR 35/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Pomarine Skua** seen at Reotahi Bay, Whangarei Harbour on 15 February 2002.

**UBR 36/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Red-tailed Tropicbird** seen at Cape Reinga on 8 March 2001.

**UBR 37/02** - Report from Ted Wnorowski of single **Greenshank** seen at Awapoko River lagoon, Karikari Peninsula on 12 March 2002.

**UBR 45/02** - Report from Richard Parrish of single **Grey Ternlet** seen at Rosemary Rock, Three Kings Island on 20 March 2002.

**DAVID MEDWAY**  
Convenor  
20 May 2002

## AGM Hokitika

We would like to thank all those people, who offered help with the AGM one way or another. It was a big job with two years in the planning. We're also extremely grateful for the work done by Jack Davidson – our local contact - for his behind-the-scenes help, his local knowledge of both the area and people, and his company over the weekend. Thanks also to Kay (his wife) for relaying messages, coffee etc.

One of the reasons for holding the AGM in Hokitika was to do atlassing squares, and to help the membership of six people on the West Coast to cover a large amount of country. After the successful weekend the membership has now been boosted to 9 members and the town has benefited to the tune of \$10,000 +, with 80 + people at both the Saturday & Sunday dinners held at the Southland Hotel. Accommodation for everyone was spread around the Heritage Motel, Railway Motel and the Mountain Jade Backpackers.

**TOM & HAZEL HARTY**

## 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 send 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 Road, Kaitia 0500, 09-4082084, [okahu@xtra.co.nz](mailto:okahu@xtra.co.nz)

**Northland** - Pauline Smith, 11/31 Ford Ave, Kamo, Whangarei, 09-435 3060.

**Auckland Landbirds and waterfowl** - Mel Galbreath, 62 Holyoake Place, Birkenhead, Auckland, 09-480 1958, [melgar@ihug.co.nz](mailto:melgar@ihug.co.nz).

*Waders, herons, spoonbills and egrets* - Adrian Riegen, 231 Forest Hill Road, RD1 Henderson, Auckland, 09-814 9741, [riegens@xtra.co.nz](mailto:riegens@xtra.co.nz).

*Seabirds, gulls, terns and shags* - Laureen Alston, 23a Takutai Ave, Bucklands Beach, Auckland, 09-537 9393, [laureen.a@xtra.co.nz](mailto:laureen.a@xtra.co.nz).

**South Auckland** - David Lawrie, 52 Mill Road, RD2, Pukekohe, Auckland., [lawrie@ps.gen.nz](mailto:lawrie@ps.gen.nz).

**Waikato** - Paul Cuming, Private Bag MBE 381, Hamilton, 07-8298215, [Paul.Cuming@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:Paul.Cuming@hcc.govt.nz).

**Gisborne/Wairoa** - Geoff Foreman, 6 Rimu Drive, Wairoa, 06-838 8370.

**Taranaki** - Rosemary Messenger, Upland Road, RD2, New Plymouth 4601, 06-756 7496.

**Manawatu** - Sav Saville, 23 Duke Street, Feilding, 06-323 1441, [binzsav@clear.net.nz](mailto:binzsav@clear.net.nz).

**Wanganui** - Tom Teasdale, 33 Paterson St, Aramoho, Wanganui 5001, 06-343 9992, [teasdale.family@clear.net.nz](mailto:teasdale.family@clear.net.nz).

**Hawke's Bay** - Margaret Twydale, 124 Nelson Crescent, Napier, 06-835 6563, [waynemarg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:waynemarg@xtra.co.nz).

**Wairarapa** - Colin Scadden, 15 Madden Place, Masterton, 06-3786423, [cescad@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cescad@xtra.co.nz).

**Wellington** - Bill Lock, PO Box 12169, Wellington, 04-389 8535, [bill.lock@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:bill.lock@natlib.govt.nz).

**Nelson** - Gail Quayle, 6 Tresillian Ave, Atawhai, Nelson, 03-545 0456.

**Canterbury** - Colin Hill, Fenland House, Wolfes Road, Greenpark, RD4, Christchurch, 03-325 5891, [cherryhill@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cherryhill@xtra.co.nz).

**Otago** - Jim Wilson, P.O. Box 6145, Dunedin. 03-476 3235, [j.j.wilson@actrix.co.nz](mailto:j.j.wilson@actrix.co.nz).

**Southland** - Phil Rhodes, 75 Stuart St, Hawthorndale, Invercargill, 03-2172757, [p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz](mailto:p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz)



# BEACH PATROL SCHEME

2000:

## Preliminary Report

This report concerns the results from 584 cards received to 27 March 2002. In 2000, 3642 km were travelled. Dead seabirds found in 2000 totalled 10,210. Of the coastal sections (districts on the cards) where greater than 100 km were covered in 2000, Southland had the highest rate of recovery at 8.9 birds per km, Sooty Shearwaters making up half the total recovered in one wreck. The second highest recovery rate was for Northland West at 3.2 birds per km.

*Significant wrecks occurred for the following species:*

- Sooty Shearwaters, Masons Bay, Southland, February 1,282.
- Short-tailed Shearwaters, Auckland West, Canterbury North, Northland East and West, Otago, Southland, Taranaki, and Wellington West, October 630, November 873, and December 176, total 1,679. The start of this wreck coincided with very significant wrecks of Short-tailed Shearwaters in Australia.
- Blue Penguins, Northland East and West, July 84, August 504, September 544, October 33, total 1,165.

*Unusual species were recovered as:*

- Long-tailed Skua 1
- Black Petrel 2
- Brown Skua 2
- Yellow-eyed Penguin 1 (banded)
- Hutton's Shearwater 57

The following are provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2000.

| Section of Coast |    | No of<br>Cards | No of<br>Birds | Km<br>covered |
|------------------|----|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Auckland East    | AE | 18             | 94             | 49            |
| Auckland West    | AW | 72             | 986            | 540           |
| Bay of Plenty    | BP | 10             | 30             | 8             |
| Canterbury North | CN | 29             | 242            | 108           |
| Canterbury South | CS | 1              | 51             | 15            |
| East Coast NI    | EC | 27             | 57             | 70            |
| North Coast SI   | NC | 24             | 153            | 59            |

| Section of Coast |    | No of<br>Cards | No of<br>Birds | Km<br>covered |
|------------------|----|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Northland East   | NE | 97             | 1395           | 759           |
| Northland West   | NW | 28             | 3594           | 1114          |
| Outlying Islands | OI | -              | -              | -             |
| Otago            | OT | 19             | 26             | 24            |
| Southland        | SD | 63             | 2375           | 255           |
| Taranaki         | TA | 82             | 689            | 283           |
| Wairarapa        | WA | 4              | 16             | 20            |
| Westland         | WD | 8              | 13             | 13            |
| Wellington South | WS | 29             | 145            | 84            |
| Wellington West  | WW | 73             | 344            | 113           |
| Totals           |    | 584            | 10210          | 3514          |

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 2000 was due, to a large extent, to the dedicated 160 plus people who took part in the patrols. Mary Powlesland and Graeme Taylor provided support for the preparation of the preliminary report. Unfortunately it has had to be prepared without the use of the beach patrol software, something which should be remedied for the 2001 Report.

**LAURIE HOWELL**  
Convenor

## New Members and Donations

New members are warmly welcomed for the 2002 year:

Phil Skipworth, Barry Armstrong, Dr G Bennett-Wilkinson, Judy Bugo, Robert Beattie, Richard Hadfield, Claire Cartwright, Michael McIvor, Charles Huffett, Bruce Spittle, Trevor Trought, Helen Chambers, Alan Collins, Eve McGinn-Oxner, Karen Baird, Chris Gaskin.

Overseas: Jim Beattie (UK)

As usual donations are gratefully accepted and we thank the following people:

Judy Bugo, Mr & Mrs D. H. Booth. Overseas donations: Greg Nye (Aust) and Dr. Allen Keast (Canada).

**HAZEL HARTY**  
Membership Secretary

## OBITUARY—Malcolm Foord

It was with sadness that we learnt of the recent sudden death of Malcolm Foord. Malcolm was an active member of the Society for a number of years, amazingly active considering the wide interest he had in all sorts of fields. Malcolm still managed to involve himself in all aspects of the Society, be they indoor meetings, field trips, and, for the last two years, he had taken on the mammoth task of coordinating the atlas scheme for the Otago region.

But Malcolm will best be remembered by the society for his expert knowledge of the Blue Mountains of Otago and the birds that inhabit the area, especially the Mohua. A number of us had the privilege to accompany Malcolm to the area from time to time.

I remember my first visit to the Blue Mountains with Malcolm. I had told him I had never seen a Mohua before. Without comment he went only two metres into the beech forest at Garden Gully and presented me with my first ever Mohua a couple of metres away at eye level. Needless to say I have seen plenty more in the Blue Mountains, all thanks to Malcolm, his knowledge of the behaviour of the birds, and his incredible gift for map-reading with just an altitude meter and a compass.

Those field trips with Malcolm were to me very special. We all know our birds to some extent, but Malcolm could always make a trip more interesting by pointing out the odd spider or rare beetle, a new plant. Malcolm will leave a void within the Ornithological Society in Otago. It is very sad he is not with us any more, but we will treasure the many memories. I offer on behalf of the Ornithological Society my sincere condolences to his wife Louise and family.

**PETER SCHEIGMAN**





# Lake Ellesmere

- paradise for more than shelducks

Colin Hill writes about the lake alongside which he is privileged to live. As a result he is often the first person to locate rare visitors, scanning from the convenience of a quad bike along the many miles of suitable shoreline, before alerting other local birders to the presence of something unusual. This article is a roundup of what Lake Ellesmere has to offer.

Lake Ellesmere, a name that is very familiar to most New Zealand birdwatchers, is a paradise for birders but can be frustrating for new visitors. The many kilometres of shoreline vary enormously – most are used by the large numbers of Ellesmere waterfowl, but only some parts are good shorebird habitat. The lake is not like most good wader spots, where you go to the high tide roost and wait for the birds to come to you. This simply doesn't happen at Lake Ellesmere! You have to go and find the birds.

Where the birds might be today depends on the wind and the height of the lake. The lake's height varies depending on whether or not it is open to the sea, and winds make a substantial difference to exposed areas of wet mud and can flood otherwise suitable areas. Added to this, the lake edge is many kilometres long, which means that there are many places for the birds to feed and hide.

However, once you know where and when to go, Lake Ellesmere can be very rewarding. On any given day you will see many species of birds, and it would be an unusual day when you could not spot Wrybills, which so many overseas visitors are keen to see. Added to this, in recent years Lake Ellesmere has attracted a number of rare birds and first sightings for the lake, if not for New Zealand.

## Rare Bird Sightings

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries birdwatchers had only battered binoculars and a shotgun to find and identify the birds. Nowadays with modern vehicles, binoculars and telescopes it has become easier to see the birds and cover the lake edge more frequently. Perhaps this is why new birds are still being recorded on the lake, despite modification and shrinkage of the original habitat. In the past 16 years seven new species have been recorded on Lake Ellesmere. These are: Painted Snipe 1986, Little Stint 1993, Long-toed Stint 1997, Stilt Sandpiper 1998, (all first sightings for New Zealand as well as Lake Ellesmere), Great Knot 1994, Intermediate Egret 1998, and Oriental Pratincole 2002.

The 2000-2001 season was a particularly good one for sighting rare species, with birds such as Mongolian Dotterel, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Marsh Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Long-toed Stint and Terek Sandpiper.

After seeing all these rare species we thought this last season would be more mundane. However once again we saw a Mongolian Dotterel, a Red-necked Phalarope, two Little Whimbrels, an Oriental Pratincole and a Black-



All photos (Oriental Pratincole top, Red-necked Phalarope middle, Pectoral Sandpipers bottom) by Colin Hill.

tailed Godwit. We also saw 12 Pectoral Sandpipers, a record number for New Zealand.

The Oriental Pratincole, first seen by a visitor from England on 4 February 2002, stayed here till 23 May, the day the annual Farewell to the Waders field trip was held.

## Farewell to the Waders 2002

Members of OSNZ Canterbury who came on this field trip saw this most obliging bird, which flew up and down the line of birders, so that they were able to see it very well in bright, calm conditions. Clearly seen were its diagnostic long black wings with vivid chestnut colour underneath, white rump and black forked tail. It resembled a large swallow with a languorous wing beat. At the same event and in the same area there were also 30 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, eight Pectoral Sandpipers, nine Curlew Sandpipers and 74 Red-necked Stints.

Nearby on the Yarrs wildlife management area, members saw 12 Pacific Golden Plovers showing breeding plumage, 16 Bar-tailed Godwits and two juvenile black-plumaged Variable Oystercatchers - or





could they be Sooty Oystercatchers? Some of the features they exhibited occasioned considerable debate. This was a very successful field trip on a lovely sunny day.

#### Return of the Red-necked Phalarope?

Last year's summer wader count was held on 16 December. During the count a Red-necked Phalarope was sighted, at the tip of Kaitorete Spit, which separates the lake from the sea. This was very exciting, as a Red-necked Phalarope had not been seen on the lake since 1929. Alas it only stayed for one day.

The following season, on 18 January 2002, a visitor from Europe saw a Red-necked Phalarope. Perhaps it was the same bird returning. It stayed until 7 March. As is typical of

phalaropes, the bird was very approachable, often to a matter of a couple of metres. We were able to see it in its winter plumage, slowly turning to partial breeding plumage which showed its red neck.

#### What waders will come this season?

After two such exciting seasons we are all looking forward to seeing what will turn up this season! Will we see and record another first, will we see our rare species again or will we be content with welcoming back our old friends? Whatever happens, whatever birds arrive, we will welcome them and we know that we will be sure to have another good season on Lake Ellesmere.

COLIN HILL

## EGMONT BLACK PETRELS

Many years ago, I recorded in *Notornis* 9 (1960) that a burrow containing a downy young petrel, later identified (by Sir Robert Falla) as a Black Petrel (*Procellaria parkinsoni*) from a colour photograph taken at the time, had been found in February 1958 in the Kaitake Ranges which are part of Egmont National Park. Since then I have found two newspaper accounts of what were almost certainly other Black Petrels nesting within Egmont National Park at different times during the first half of the 20th century.

It seems appropriate to place those accounts on record in an ornithological publication because unless important historical records like them are mentioned in publications where they can be found readily, or through which they can be traced, they are very likely with the passage of time to be lost forever. Searching through old newspapers for ornithological records or indeed anything else for that matter - and access to most collections of old newspapers is itself usually neither easy nor practicable - can be an extremely time-consuming, frustrating, and often quite unproductive task.

The first account I have found is in a letter from W.W.Smith of New Plymouth which appeared in the *Otago Witness* of 17 May 1911 as follows -

"It may interest you to know that six weeks ago a young man named Bloxam brought a young black petrel to me which he had found, with the aid of his dog, under a decayed log on a slope of Mount Egmont. There were three nestlings together, all clothed in long bluish fluff. Unfortunately his dog had killed two of them before he could prevent it. The surviving one seemed to thrive under my care for a week, and then it died. It was in excellent condition, and has been stuffed and mounted by Mr M.I. Jones, the local taxidermist. You had a note five months ago on the occasional nesting of the black petrel on mountains. Up to the present time I have not been able to inquire from the older Maoris of the district if those birds were previously known to breed in any numbers annually on Mount Egmont."



There is no reason to doubt that Smith's "black petrel" was *Procellaria parkinsoni*. Young Black Petrels fledge from mid-April to July (*The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*). W.W.Smith, whose significant contributions to New Zealand ornithology should be more widely known and appreciated than they are, was described by Thomson in *The naturalisation of animals and plants in New Zealand*

(1922) as "one of the most careful and observant naturalists in New Zealand".

The second account I have found appeared in the *Taranaki Herald* of 23 January 1936 under the heading "Dog's Mountain Adventure" as follows -

"A small Sealyham dog, walking with her owners around at Kaupokonui Gorge at Dawson Falls, Mt Egmont, on Sunday, suddenly disappeared into a tunnel some feet from the track and soon reappeared dragging an absolutely "all black" seagull about as large as an ordinary fowl, which once in the open soon made his escape. The bird, which was later identified as a black petrel, was nesting in a tunnel about three feet long at the 3000 ft. altitude level. One large white egg is in the nest which is on the top of a high cliff."

Again, there is no reason to doubt that this "black petrel" was also *Procellaria parkinsoni*. Black Petrels lay in November-January, and eggs hatch in January-February (*The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*).

The colour photograph of the nestling Black Petrel taken by Don Whitfield in the Kaitake Ranges of Egmont National Park in 1958 has never been published. It is the only known photograph of a Black Petrel nestling *in situ* anywhere on the main islands of New Zealand. The Black Petrel may never again be captured on film in such a situation. The unique 1958 photograph is therefore published here because of its considerable historic and scientific value.

DAVID MEDWAY



# Atlas Update

The AGM in Hokitika provided a welcome opportunity to present an update of the Atlas progress to members and to spend the field day exploring the environs of the West Coast. A number of members had also taken the opportunity to make extended trips to the South Island and the results of their explorations will become evident when sheets come in over the coming months.

A good flow of completed sheets from autumn are now starting to arrive at the atlas office, with close to 1,000 sheets having been received since the end of the season, bringing the total on the shelves to just on 12,000 sheets since the commencement of the scheme. The number of observers also continues to increase, with the number of registered individuals or teams approaching 650. There is an interesting mix of people, some of whom have covered vast areas, while others continue to demonstrate that there are interesting patterns to be found by looking at a small area on a regular basis.

At the AGM I reported on 10,489 sheets processed to the end of the stage one data entry. This is principally the data at the top of the sheet, giving observer, location, effort and number of species seen for the sheet. At that time 75% of the country's squares had returned at least one record sheet and the average number of species per sheet continues to be 19.

However, the aim of the project is to cover the country seasonally and there is still some way to go to ensure a good coverage for each season. (Summer 3,466 sheets, 1,657 squares, 53% coverage; autumn 2,116, 1,161, 37%; winter 2,468, 1,186, 38%; spring 2,434, 1,307, 42%). Naturally the coverage in summer is the highest, as there has been an extra summer done compared with the other seasons.

We are still receiving material which was recorded in 1999/2000 right at the start of the scheme, which is good, but it helps people to plan if material is sent in as soon as it is completed and gaps are filled in. If you have sent material to RRs or other recorders, and have not had a registration number from the atlas office, it means that the material has not been received by the atlas office as yet. The office is now in a position to be able to send a listing of squares completed and received so far for individual operators. This can enable you to check against your own records. Please use this facility sparingly.

The atlas office also wishes to acknowledge the considerable effort being provided by Derek Batcheler who has been undertaking the stage one data entry. Stuart Nicholson is the chief chaser-up of errors on your sheets - especially those which have managed to locate their observations far from land. He has offered a voluntary service to assist people with their locations, especially for remote places where maps may be hard to obtain. He can be contacted at [nicholson@paradise.net.nz](mailto:nicholson@paradise.net.nz) - but remember that this is a voluntary service. A grid map of the country from which you can check your grid location and reference number will be found online at the website. Pasi Hyvonen continues to use the database to produce interesting summaries and maps, as well as doing further checks for errors.

Some simple questions tell us that 71 species have been recorded on one sheet, and 87 so far have more than 50 species. At the other end there are very few sheets where there are zero species recorded, even though a significant search was made of the habitat. This absence of a bird record is equally important. Some 56% of the sheets returned have been part sheets, while 60% of sheets record the time spent as less than three hours for the sheet.

You will be able to see from the March 2002 *Southern Bird* that there are some significant parts of the country which

have yet to have any serious atlasing. With only two more 'atlasing' AGMs to come it is obvious that they will not be able to fill all gaps. Increasingly you should be looking for ways to assist those areas which have few members with the task of covering their patch. There is already a scheme being organised to have an atlas week in the area of the East Cape in the coming summer. This seems a great opportunity to have some good birding in a new area with an opportunity to enjoy the company of other ornithologists.

Interestingly, the top 15 observers or teams have returned 43% of the records to date. Nick Allen leads the sheets score with 591 sheets, while Stella and John Rowe in their "mapping campervan" lead the squares tally on 290. I must emphasise that this was what had been received for this analysis, as I know the Rowe team have crossed the Strait and have been delving into the far reaches of the South Island.

I was able to show members at the AGM the coverage of the top five observers, and Stuart Nicholson at that stage showed the widest range of coverage, with squares from North Cape to the Bluff - he needs to go to Stewart Island now! Ted Wnorowski is just behind the Rowses and Stuart Nicholson, and he seems to be endeavouring to do the whole of Northland single-handed (at least in one season), rather like Barry Hartley has done with Taranaki and Nick Allen with Canterbury.

As indicated earlier, the average number of birds per sheet is 19, but Ted Wnorowski leads the field in the top 15 observers with an average of 36 species per sheet for all his records returned so far. Clearly a dedicated observer fossicking about in all the different habitats to cover the bird fauna.

During June, Brent Stephenson will have loaded the Atlas Scheme material onto the Society's second website [www.bird.org.nz](http://www.bird.org.nz), where you will be able to see regular updates of the coverage maps as well as instructions for participating in the atlas scheme. The seasonal and total coverage maps presented at the AGM will be found there. The next update of maps will occur about September, when the map makers and compilers involved have returned from overseas.

Unfortunately, because of the change of atlas day to Sunday to avoid the Mountain Thunder bike races in Hokitika, the best weather was when everyone was inside at the scientific day. However, on a crisp and occasionally damp day, 20 teams containing a total of 62 observers explored 55 squares and returned 122 record sheets. The total number of species seen was 64, with the best sheet containing 38 species (N. Allen team). Three teams managed to search a total of 11 habitats during the day (L. Foord, P. Cuming and S. Nicholson).

After an enjoyable dinner in the evening, a selection of moving prizes was presented, and most teams managed to win something over and above their prizes for getting back in one piece. No one admitted to getting lost this year. The Bell team got the best try-on prize for endeavouring to increase their tally with a decoy duck. The Schuckard team received the prize for largest and smallest bird recorded for the day (Emu and Rifleman). The Scadden team (with eight observers) scored the best piece of bird behaviour for the day with a Falcon chasing a Harrier.

There were a number of relative rarities for the day - Southern Crested Grebe, Fernbird, Variable Oystercatcher, Morepork, but the Memorial prize for the best unusual bird of the day was for a Black Fantail by the Batcheler team. Teams had to record what they thought was their two most unusual birds seen during the day. Subsequent tallying showed that only one team saw Pied Stilt which was singularly absent from most of the area. Perhaps they had



been moved on by the great number of Pukeko and Spur-winged Plovers which seemed to be on most pieces of damp farmland. In all a total of just under 5,000 kms were travelled by the teams and once again the day seemed to be enjoyed by all concerned. Our grateful thanks for their participation.

The most offended observer related the story of having moved away from his car to view birds in a field and overheard two brightly dressed and crash-hatted cyclists (presumably tourists) remarking as they passed - "must be a fellow from the city observing his first cows"! What bigger insult to an ornithologist could be imagined?

Don't forget that just because it is winter, the birds are probably still about and some may even be more visible at this time of the year. Check the website to see where you need to go when you want to do something different. Remember that if there are fewer than five sheets for any square it has not yet received enough coverage. Also if the maximum number of species per sheet is less than 15 then the area usually needs to have some additional work.

Any questions, requests for instructions or extra observation forms, should be addressed to the ATLAS CONVENOR, P O BOX 12397, WELLINGTON.

C.J.R. ROBERTSON

## Rare or unusual bird reports in CSN

In *Southern Bird* No. 8 (December 2001) I reported that Council had decided that no records of species on the list of reportable rare or unusual birds that is current on 30 June in each year are to be included in any form in Classified Summarised Notes unless those records have been accepted by the Rare Birds Committee, and that this was to apply from the CSN year starting on 1 July 2001. The intention of this requirement is, as stated, to ensure that CSN records published in *Notornis* are reliable. The North Island CSN for the year ended 30 June 2001, and those of the South Island for the year ended 30 June 2000, should be published in the June 2002 issue of *Notornis*. When those CSN were being finally checked for publication, it was noticed that a significant number of records included therein - particularly in the North Island CSN - related to apparent sightings of reportable rare or unusual birds in respect of which reports have not been sent to the Rare Birds Committee for consideration, and probably never will be.

After due consideration, the Editor of *Notornis* and I decided - in order that the CSN published in *Notornis* are as reliable as possible - to exclude all reports which related to apparent sightings of reportable rare or unusual birds which have not been submitted to the Rare Birds Committee for consideration. Our decision in this regard was ratified by Council at its meeting in Hokitika on 31 May 2002. The same provision will apply to all CSN published in *Notornis* in future.

DAVID MEDWAY  
PRESIDENT



## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

### Northland

Good news for an endangered species! It has been the best ever breeding season for the Fairy Tern, and eight chicks have fledged. Six regular volunteers help DoC staff to monitor and protect our most endangered species. One female Fairy Tern, a ten year old bird, has nested unsuccessfully at Waipu for the past five years, but has finally fledged not one but two chicks for the first time this season.

March has been a busy time for the Northland region with Whangarei and north Kaipara wader counts, Pouto lakes count, New Zealand dotterel wader count and west and east coast beach patrols.

Notable sightings in our area include 116 Royal Spoonbills in the ponds of Port Road, Whangarei, in June last year, eight giant petrels feeding on a stranded Bryde's whale in September, a NZ Dotterel chick with a closed cockle shell on a toe, and over 800 South Island Pied Oystercatchers on the roof of a shed near Port Whangarei.

In April, five minute bird counts were carried out on Limestone Island in the Whangarei Harbour, in order to identify birds on the island and to give practice at recognising calls.

The July to December west coast beach patrols produced small numbers of five albatross species - Wandering (1) Salvin's (1), Grey-headed (1), Buller's (3) and, surprisingly, Light-mantled Sooty (3). Prions also featured prominently, with Fairy (37), Thin-billed (18) and prion spp (16). The west coast patrols added another Light-mantled Sooty and also a White-capped Mollymawk.

The Whangarei Harbour wader count in March was conducted in awful weather, making an accurate count very difficult. However we managed c.4400 godwits and c.900 knots at the Ruakaka Estuary, just to the south of the entrance to Whangarei Harbour. On the same day at Onerahi airport were Pacific Golden Plovers, Banded Dotterels, SIPO, NZ Dotterels and knots taking shelter from the very high tide and strong winds.

The Pouto lakes count was held on a fine day and the usual birds were seen. One interesting sight was a flock of c.400 of the normally secretive New Zealand Scaup in a big tight group in a sheltered corner of one of the largest lakes. One of our members had an unpleasant encounter with an electric fence, suffering a nasty burn. In her words, "When you see a flame about an inch long, you know you've met an electric fence".

(JANET SNELL)

### Auckland

The speaker at our March meeting was David Wright, who recently completed a thesis study of the Eastern Rosella. These parrots are common throughout Northland and Auckland (from releases or escapes since 1920) and are continuing to expand southwards towards a Wellington-based population which originated in the 1960s. Their spread may be detrimental to kakariki and may become an issue in the management of 'mainland islands', although the populations on Tiritiri Matangi Island of some 300 Red-crowned Parakeets and fewer than 10 rosellas appear to co-exist without detriment to the native species. David's research has encompassed nesting and patterns of behaviour, including feeding and interaction with other birds - the rosella tends to come off worse during conflicts with Tui, Myna and even Kingfisher.

In April Kevin Parker described his current research on Fernbirds, which aims to extend knowledge of their ecology, in part to enable future translocations to be made with the best chance of success. The study area at Omaha, north of Auckland, has about 18 territories. During the previous season ten nests were found; fledging occurred from six, three were predated and one was abandoned without obvious cause. Besides rats and cats on the loose, mice are also a significant threat to these small birds. Thus we were glad to know that Fernbirds are already being moved (from a population in the path of northern motorway extensions) to the Tiritiri Matangi sanctuary.

At the May meeting Geoff Arnold spoke about New Zealand natural history illustration. This started with Cook's voyages in the 1700s. Birds were captured and the skins taken back to England, where artists then attempted to reconstruct them, which explains why early pictures of kiwi looked more like penguins with long thin beaks.

Recent field notes have included reports of Cattle Egrets at Parakai but only in small numbers, a Royal Spoonbill at Tahuna Torea, a Black Stilt banded yellow above white on the leg we were able to see (located 13 April at Ambury Park, Mangere, with Wellington visitor Rod Orange), up to 22 NZ Dabchicks on the Manukau Harbour observed by Ray Clough and Kathy Barrow on 17 April, an albino Welcome Swallow carefully observed over a period of weeks at Kaipara South Head by members of the Waller family, and a pair of Arctic Skuas in courtship flight seen in Rangitoto Channel by Robin Child in mid April.

The monthly beach patrol at Muriwai had only a small number of birds, but reports indicate there have been wrecks of shearwaters since the recent bad weather.

Our regular South Kaipara Lakes survey was conducted on 25 April in cooperation with the Landcare group under the leadership of Judy Bendall.

(MICHAEL TAYLOR & CHRIS THOMPSON)

## South Auckland

The annual round of winter censuses on the Manukau Harbour and Firth of Thames has just been completed. These have confirmed our long held suspicion that our organiser Tony Habraken is the cause of the wet and windy weather we always suffer. We always believed that he deliberately picked the wet and windy weekends, but now we have proof that it is his actual presence that is the problem.

We arranged for Tony's wife to take him on a holiday to Cairns in Australia over the period of the Manukau census. For any South Islanders reading this they should realise that June in the North Island was characterised by rain and wind on virtually every day. As it turned out the only fine day in the whole month was the day of the Manukau census which was calm and sunny.

Two weeks later Tony had returned and the Firth of Thames census was held in wet and showery conditions with cold rain. Despite the weather distractions, reasonably good totals were obtained for each of these major estuarine areas, with no real rarities being reported.

A major sighting through this period has been the sighting of the Black Kite by the RR. Some profile photographs were obtained and these have been submitted to the Rare Birds Committee for confirmation. If the record is accepted then this will be the culmination of sightings over the past 27 months by a number of people in widely scattered areas between Auckland and Hamilton.

Meetings have continued at Papakura on a monthly basis, with 15-25 people being present. The March meeting saw the President of the Society give us a rundown on the

Society schemes and projects and we hope that this will create some more interest.

The speaker at the April meeting was Nick Keenleyside giving us a photographic essay of his life on the Falkland Islands. He stimulated some interest in advising us that one of the islands included in this photos was for sale, and some wondered about trying to organise a syndicate for its purchase!

Instead of holding a May meeting, we travelled to the Auckland museum where Dr Brian Gill showed us behind the scenes in the bird collection. This was a real eye-opener to see the care and dedication that Brian and his team are achieving in the development of this major collection.

Tim Lovegrove, our intended speaker for the June meeting, decided that a week on Tiritiri Matangi Island catching Saddlebacks for release in the Karori Sanctuary in Wellington was a better use of his time. However he organised a very worthwhile replacement in Dave Pattison who described his research into the dispersal of North Island Robins in large and small bush remnants.

We have developed an interesting programme for the balance of this year and we look forward to any visitors that may be in our area at the time of our meetings.

(DAVID LAWRIE)

## Waikato

March meant time to catch up with the paperwork, with our local AGM notable for the retirement of two long-standing officers - Nick Dunkley, our treasurer, and David Riddell, our regional recorder. OSNZ Waikato extends its gratitude to both of you. With the group not about to let an opportunity pass, David then gave a talk on a Yellowhead project that he undertook near the Borland Lodge, Southland. This involved temporarily moving his family for six months plus intensive predator control work.

April's field trip was the annual visit to Lake Waahi, west of Huntly. This gives new members an up-close introduction to a number of species of birds, via a DoC-supplied boat. This season there were over 30 species of birds seen, with Australasian Bittern being the highlight. Caspian Terns turn up here, via the Waikato River, and they kept their contract on the day.

April's speaker was DoC's Alan Saunders, the national Mainland Islands Technical Coordinator. The talk the knowledgeable Alan gave focussed on the different mainland islands, with a whirlwind tour of each site. The 1080 issue was clearly spelt out, and linked well with a television documentary in which Alan was featured shortly after.

Another Kakepuku five minute bird count was carried out in early May, much delayed because of weather, and featured good views of Tui and Kereru feeding behaviour. With food abundant and birds highly active, large-leaved coprosmas, kotukutuku, mahoe and rewarewa were the dishes of the day.

May's meeting attracted many attendants with Tim Day's excellent presentation, using state-of-the-art PowerPoint technology. Tim is an animal behaviour scientist in the Nutrition and Behaviour Group at AgResearch Ruakura. Over the last three years he's been working on the issue of stopping native birds from eating pest control baits, including working with NZ Robins on Tiritiri Matangi Island. He is also involved with pest excluder fences, with a presentation of a video arousing much comment, with its design and function.

May's field trip was to Lake Moananui, Tokoroa, and Pureora Forest. The lake provided great views and good identification sessions followed, especially of NZ Dabchick





chicks and juvenile Black-backed Gulls. Pureora provided a welcome increase in the bird numbers post-1080, and a delightful encounter with tame Tomtits.

The National AGM in Hokitika provided entertainment for five of our members, with the most notable changes affecting the Waikato region's land area. We are now administering both Bay of Plenty and Volcanic Plateau's former areas, making our region the largest in the North Island. Waikato welcomes these new members, and hopes to combine some activities within those regions soon.

June's members' evening meeting was a combined effort, with ex-RRs Betty Seddon and Bev Woolley taking over in the RR's absence. Ian Reid's Queensland video, Hugh Clifford's Grey-faced Petrel project update, Ralph and Mary Skinner's Waingaro property's 30 years of pest management and planting, and Bruce Postill's slide presentation of Maud Island rounded out a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

June's field trips were the Kawhia/Aotea and Raglan Harbour censuses. Kawhia provided a challenge, with one boat and a dicky tide. That said, Royal Spoonbills and a Black Stilt were seen. Raglan had one further spoonbill, three NZ Dotterels, 11 Bar-tailed Godwits and a whopping 119 Pied Stilts. Thanks to Bev Woolley and Hugh Clifford for organising these censuses.

Our beaches (and inland areas, for that matter) have started surrendering large numbers of pelagic birds since the winter westerly gales started. Prions, White-headed Petrels and shearwaters have all been affected. Refugees from the coast have been found wandering far inland, with a Salvin's Prion in Hamilton City, freshly run over, and a Fairy Prion, among many others handed in live to DoC Tauranga, at Walton, near Matamata. Matangi, south of Hamilton, also had a Fairy Prion alive, and another at Te Aroha. Two banded gannets were picked up on the same day on the same beach, at Waikorea, north of Raglan. Despite the smell, Hugh Clifford diligently passed them on to DoC to be sent to Te Papa. Results: one 22 year-old, the other 18, both from Muriwai.

A Brown Skua has been seen lately in Raglan, while Welcome Swallows have been seen dive-bombing dabchicks at Lake Parangi, and Banded Rails at Opoutere in April. An aggressive little blighter is the swallow!

Local bird sightings have included Tui and Kereru within the Hamilton city limits – still a rarity these days despite planting efforts. Falcons have been seen chasing pipits in the Kaimanawas, in February this year, whilst brightly plumaged Banded Dotterels have been seen at the Tukino track, Mt Ruapehu, in February. There were two Banded Rails seen on Aotea Harbour recently.

Small town lakes in Cambridge and Hamilton have had Grey Teal, Shovelers and Grey Ducks, due to the shooting season. Bay of Plenty Grey-faced Petrels have been revisited this year, led by Hugh Clifford. Highlights of the season have been large numbers of birds being caught, (average 56/night), a low percentage of recaptures (49% vs. 70% in recent past), and continuing first-time recaptures of Whale Island birds.

(PAUL CUMING)

## Taranaki

Local members atlassed areas east of Whangamomona in mid February, with four members camping overnight on DoC land recording kiwi and Moreporks. The total was 28 species for the trip, which included NZ Falcon and Rifleman. The March meeting was held in Egmont National Park despite heavy rain – the only notable feature was the drips.

Tui provided further interest of late – one was seen to chase a myna out of a flowering kowhai, another observed

catching a bee on a *Cordyline* flower spike, and some time ago one was observed on the ground eating worms, alongside a Blackbird! Tui are among the species seen enjoying the fruit of strawberry trees, along with NZ Pigeons, House Sparrows, Silvereyes, Blackbirds, Mynas and Starlings.

Recent sightings of interest include 15+ Tui apparently feeding on ripe totara fruit in Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, in February. Newly fledged Little Shags were also in evidence, over 50 juveniles having been raised in a breeding season lasting from July to March. The same month Mokau turned up a Black Stilt, NZ Falcon, Asiatic Whimbrel and NZ Dotterels with three chicks.

(ROSEMARY MESSENGER)

## Hawke's Bay

Former RR Brent Stephenson has moved back to Palmerston North to complete his university studies, and we wish him well. Many thanks also go to him for his work as RR for the past two years. I have taken over the reins and attended the OSNZ Conference and AGM in Hokitika over Queen's Birthday Weekend, travelling by rental vehicle with Brent, Ian Saville (Manawatu RR) and David Lawrie (South Auckland RR).

The RRs' meeting held on the Friday afternoon was valuable for me meeting the other RRs and becoming aware of OSNZ activities which were further discussed at the Scientific Day and AGM on Saturday and atlassing trips on Sunday. The Scientific Day, well organised by Kerry-Jayne Wilson, related mainly to research and management programmes of South Island birds: Okarito Brown Kiwi, Haast Kiwi, Westland Petrel, Fiordland Crested Penguins, South Island Kokako, South Island Robins, waders and wader migration in eastern Asia.

My brief South Island visit was personally rewarding by the sighting of the following species not necessarily seen in the North Island - NZ Falcon, Southern Crested Grebe, South Island Robin, Yellow-breasted Tit, Brown Creeper, Weka and Black Fantail. On our return journey we stopped at Kaikoura for a three hour pelagic trip and saw Wandering Albatrosses, Buller's, White-capped and Black-browed Mollymawks; Northern Giant, Westland, Black and Southern Cape Petrels, Hutton's and Sooty Shearwaters, and Fairy Prions. A bonus during the return were a number of dolphins and the sighting of a sperm whale. A trip well worth taking if you are in the Kaikoura area.

Barbara Taylor saw a Pied Shag in March at the mouth of the Maraetotara River. She also saw two NZ Falcons at Te Awanga in April. The Black-fronted Terns are back – Barbara saw nine at the Tukituki River mouth, and others have been seen at Waitangi.

So far no Cattle Egrets have been seen in the Ferry Road, Clive area which they normally frequent. Wayne and Margaret Twydlie report the following: 65 Royal Spoonbills in the Southern Marsh of the Ahuriri Estuary on 21 April (they seem to favour the Southern Marsh area this year and have been seen there regularly), a Reef Heron on new road construction above Embankment Bridge on 21 April, a White Heron near the Southern Marsh on 5 May, a Little Egret in the channel near the Clive outfall on 18 May, and 20 NZ Dabchicks in the Northern Pond on 19 May. Murray has had a more recent sighting of the Little Egret on 19 June at the Bell Street channel, Clive. Another report from Murray is of three Black-fronted Dotterels in roadside puddles about a kilometre from the bridge on the Napier/Hastings Expressway – seen in the same puddles on most days during the week 17 to 21 June.

(MURRAY JEFFRIES, WAYNE TWYDLIE)

## Wellington

In November 1997 a team looking at Jacquemart Island for Campbell Island Teal inadvertently discovered the only surviving Campbell Island Snipe, nine or ten birds of an estimated population of fewer than 20 pairs. This event gave great impetus to planning the recovery of snipe on our offshore islands in general, explained Colin Miskelly at our March meeting.

It was proposed first of all to trial captive breeding of the Chatham Island subspecies, in order to develop techniques that could be applied to the critically endangered Campbell Islands remnant. Taking Chatham Islands snipe to Mt Bruce however required the gaining of consent from the locals, ensuring there were enough snipe on Rangatira to be "harvested", and demonstrating that snipe could be kept in captivity.

The earlier failure of attempts to keep snipe in captivity had led to better management of wildlife health and disease, and a more ready supply of cultured mealworms and earthworms. As a result a trial holding of ten birds for 12 days on Rangatira in April-May 2001 was successful.

Funding is the next requirement, for a transfer to Mt Bruce, with survivors and offspring to be released in a predator-fenced area on Pitt Island. If captive-breeding were successful, Colin concluded, the techniques could be tested on Auckland Is Snipe, before risking removing any Campbell Is birds from Jacquemart Is.

Many members continue to take the opportunity provided by Peter Reese at the Wellington Zoo for training in the use of mist nets and banding. Since July 2000 the team has handled more than 1000 birds, predominantly Silvereyes, House Sparrows, Greenfinches and Starlings, but altogether 13 species. Recaptures run at around 20%.

As well as field practice we are accumulating data that in time could be useful, and monitoring bird behaviour. For instance, not one Greenfinch has been caught since last September, when a total of 120 had been banded and 32 recaptures made. Also recently a large flock was observed feeding at the former site of Athletic Park not far from the zoo. Perhaps "our" birds have gone there.

Involuntary translocation, not of Greenfinches but of more treasured native species, is what feeds the enthusiasm of the busy supporters of the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary (including many of our members). Recent reports relate to the introduction of Whiteheads. Breeding results from the first transfer last season were that nine pairs produced 35 offspring, from, in most cases, two clutches each. A further 30 birds have been transferred recently. They are reported as showing an inclination to associate with last year's breeders and unbanded juveniles and so, while the task for volunteers of locating and identifying them in the canopy seems challenging, we can hope that many will stay to consolidate a permanent population of this species, which I suspect is not well known to city dwellers.

The North Is Robin, also currently re-establishing itself at Karori, did not have a good breeding season on Mana Is, judging from the region's banding trip in March. On the other hand, Pied Shags at Makara extended their breeding season beyond the usual spring and autumn and into summer, apparently to good effect.

So there are swings and roundabouts, but don't we all cheer the patient Kakapo!

(ROD ORANGE)

## Canterbury

The new Canterbury OSNZ regional project to survey the Banks Peninsula bush reserves on a presence/absence basis started in May, with a small and hardy group of souls

braving the rain and mist at Ahuriri and Omaha Bushes. Surprisingly the range of native species present was much as expected, despite the inclement conditions. Hopefully the weather will be a little more kind in August when the reserves in the Port Levy area will be targeted.

June's wader count encountered a fairly full Lake Ellesmere with a smaller than expected number of Pied Stilts. A feature of the count was the ice surrounding the lake. Ki-Wainono was similarly well endowed with the wet stuff, and less endowed with wading birds. The stilts and dotterels expected had likely found wet paddocks more to their liking, not realising the importance of being censused.

April's indoor meeting was informed of the plans by Christchurch City Council to enhance the margins of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary, creating more habitat for birds, as well as for birdwatchers, walkers and cyclists. The project has since been put very much on the back burner, following the decision of the Environment Court that an upgraded estuary sewage outfall, to which the proposed improvements were linked, will not now go ahead, with an ocean outfall in its stead. The enhancement is still planned to go ahead, but at a much slower pace, and no doubt at the whim of local politicians.

Geoff Harrow's talk on the Hutton's Shearwater colonies high in the Seaward Kaikouras featured stunning slides which demonstrated the sheer ruggedness of the terrain where the birds still breed, and the dogged determination of those pioneers to slog the eight hours into the main colony area. The trip in is now done by helicopter in a mere eight minutes. The history of the discovery to science of the colony was a fascinating story, and featured a number of past Canterbury OSNZ members, including one or two present at the meeting.

Continuing the theme of difficult-to-access areas, in June Jim Jolly gave a fascinating presentation on the birdlife, scenery, and lifestyle of the human inhabitants of the Pitcairn Islands. Jim was an ornithological member of a team of scientists visiting as part of the Peter Scott Commemorative Expedition there. The expedition discovered a new species of petrel among the three other species known to be present, and estimated population sizes of such great birds as tropicbirds, frigatebirds, and boobies. Calls, often very eerie, of the birds illustrated were provided by Les McPherson from recordings, some of which were provided by the expedition.

Unusual birds are scarce at the moment in the region, with the departure of the migratory waders. There is a smattering of Cattle Egrets in such places as Ridge Road, near Motukarara and the Waikuku area. An Eastern Curlew has been present on the Ashley Estuary, and the regular wintering Black Stilt is at Ki-Wainono.

The most noteworthy bird to turn up recently has done so on the other side of the Alps. A White-necked Heron has found the grassgrubs in a paddock just south of Hokitika very much to its liking, and will constitute the fourth record for New Zealand if and when the Rare Birds Committee accepts it. It is a great pity that its appearance did not coincide with the recent AGM there.

(NICK ALLEN)

## Otago

Late March saw the region involved in an atlas exercise in the Maniatoto in warm sunny weather, with golden tussock glowing vividly against a blue sky. The dust put up on most side roads appeared mainly behind the cars, and a can of Speights or cups of coffee at the end of the day washed it away nicely.





A few days beforehand, a concerned message came from Alexandra that all the birds had disappeared. With this in mind we descended on Naseby, doing a few squares along the way. We didn't do badly at all, with 36 species over 41 squares. Of these, 32 had no previous autumn information, 25 had House Sparrows, 32 had Harriers (and far more hares than rabbits) and 34 had Magpies.

One team came across a Little Owl, another counted 45 Rooks in one paddock near Sutton, and the Welcome Swallow is now breeding near Dansey's Pass. If you want to find Grey Warblers in the Maniatoto, look for willows, singles or in stands.

We also came across a dozen or so Hedge Sparrows behaving like Brown Creepers, flocking through the exotic forest at Naseby, but they gave themselves away by occasionally dropping to the ground for a feed.

By the time of the AGM Louise Foord and Lesley Gowans drove across Otago in the middle of winter – a couple of days earlier the roads out of Dunedin had been closed. Hokitika didn't have any weather problems, and on atlasing day, capably organised again by Chris Robertson, groups spread out from Westport to Ross.

Our group was rewarded for Lesley's spotting of a Fernbird on the edge of the Paparoa Ranges with a packet of sweets. Coffee at Blackball came accompanied with blackballs. Despite lush growth though we didn't come across as many birds as we'd have liked.

(PETER SCHWEIGMAN/LOUISE FOORD)

## Southland

The recent AGM in Hokitika gave me a chance to catch up with old acquaintances and to put some more names to faces. The weather was excellent and stayed that way for most of the weekend. Our atlas group failed to find any White Herons or NZ Falcons, but we still had a lot of fun and managed to get some respectable bird counts on most squares. The scenery was amazing – snow-capped mountains and bush-covered hills, and a visit to Lake Kaniere was a highlight of the trip.

The speakers for the Scientific Day were very interesting and left us with plenty of food for thought. Thanks to Tom and Hazel Harty and everybody else involved in organising a great weekend.

At home the biggest news of late has been the sighting of a Black Stilt at Wendonside near Riversdale, and a coot, which unfortunately succumbed during the duck-shooting season. Both birds are rare visitors to Southland. We had a hybrid stilt nesting near Tuatapere last year, but it has been many years since a Black Stilt made an appearance.

The huge wreck of juvenile Sooty Shearwaters in May kept members busy, with large totals from most areas of Oreti Beach. Birds were very small and in an emaciated condition. In fact when an adult was found it was thought to be that of a different species. Lloyd Esler took a party to Masons Bay on Stewart Is for the annual beach patrol and counted over 1500 birds washed up. Diving petrels were the only other species which seemed to be affected by the stormy weather, although numbers were far lower than the Sooty Shearwater counts.

A group of six NZ Dotterels were spotted on the Tiwai bridge sandspit, none of which were banded. An interesting sight was of c35 Little Shags loafing on an electrical pylon on the bridge.

While recent field trips have been well supported, it is hoped that an excursion to Waituna Lagoon in July with Wynston Copper will be well attended.

(PHIL RHODES)

## What's On



### Auckland

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at 7.45 pm in the Kohia Teachers' Centre in the grounds of Auckland College of Education, 74 Epsom Ave, Mt Eden.

### South Auckland

Evening meetings are held at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms, 5 Chapel Street, Papakura, on the second Tuesday of each month (February – November) at 7.45 pm

Beach patrols ph. Rob Wheeler (09) 299 7069

Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

### Waikato

Beach patrols ph Hugh Clifford (07) 855 3751

Hamilton Lake Census ph Barry Friend (07) 843 6729

Forest Lake Census ph Brian Challinor (07) 855 2561

Cambridge Lake Census ph Hugh or Paul

Bird sightings ph Paul Cuming (07) 829 8215

Field trips (monthly) ph Paul Cuming

Evening meetings, every third Wednesday, 7.30pm DoC

London Street, Hamilton City, ph Paul Cuming

Atlas Sheets, Stella Rowe ph (07) 843 5199

### Taranaki

Evening meetings - held at 7.30 pm 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).

### Manawatu

Evening meetings - held 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of February, May, August and November, at the Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8 pm.

Beach patrols - 1st Wednesday of each month and on other beaches at irregular times.

### Wellington

Evening meetings – first Monday of the month, DoC offices, Wellington City Library, ph Stuart Nicholson (04) 934 5940.

Matiu / Somes Island surveys ph. Rod Orange (04) 473 1912

Beach patrols ph. Jean Luke (04) 904 1704

### 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 last Monday of the month, Spreydon Bowling Club, Domain Terrace, Christchurch. Monthly field trips – dates vary. Contact Nick Allen (03) 312 7183, [nick.allen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nick.allen@xtra.co.nz).

### Otago

Evening meetings Otago Art Society building, cnr Albany & Great King Streets. Ph. Louise Foord (03) 467 5041.

### Southland

Evening meetings (in conjunction with the Field Club) held every second Thursday at 7.30 pm, Otatara Community Centre, Dunns Rd, Otatara. Field trips usually following Saturday, and beach patrols most weekends. Ph. Phil Rhodes (03) 217 2757 or Lloyd Esler (03) 213 0404.



*This Opoutere pair of Variable Oystercatchers' nest was at risk from the sea and was twice moved successfully. The chicks hatched on 24 December 2001. Their parents were initially very aggressive towards me from about 50 m away. However when the summer deluge of holiday folk arrived on Dec 26, the VOCs immediately adjusted their response, only defending when an unwitting beach-goer was about to step on their small chicks blending perfectly with a bit of beach debris. This family did a great PR job - no-one told me "I can't see any chicks on the beach", a common cry when challenged about dogs, breaching nest-protecting fences, or taking vehicles on the beach. This relaxed approach allowed virtually undisturbed feeding and no wasted energy running from people. This was the only pair of VOCs (from a population of around 33 pairs) to raise two chicks at Opoutere this season.*