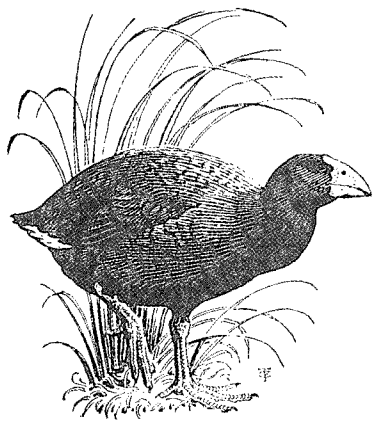


Southern Bird

No. 11 September 2002. • ISSN 1175-1916





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Quotation

"Lying under an acacia tree with the sound of dawn around me, I realized more clearly the facts that man should never overlook: that the construction of an airplane, for instance, is simple when compared [with] a bird; that airplanes depend on an advanced civilization, and that where civilization is most advanced, few birds exist. I realized that if I had to choose, I would rather have birds than airplanes"

CHARLES LINDBERGH,
shortly before his death, in 1974.

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Cover Photo's

Front - shags/cormorants are largely variations on a black-and-white theme. This Spotted Shag, photographed in August this year near the Grey River mouth, and resplendent in full breeding plumage, proves perhaps the world's most striking exception.

Back - spring White-faced Herons also sport breeding plumes. This one takes care of them on the Wellington south coast in August last year.

Both photographs by Peter Reese

Publisher

Published on behalf of the members of the
Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc),
P.O. Box 12397 Wellington, New Zealand.

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Berrying Gulls

During a stay at Pakawau, Golden Bay in late February/early March we observed about ten Red-billed Gulls involved in odd behaviour. They, together with two immature Black-backed Gulls, were feeding in a beachside Coprosma tree. To achieve this they were precariously perching/balancing on the branches and plucking the berries. A few were less successful with this method and instead "hovered" over a berry cluster, plucking perhaps one berry before lifting off, flying around and back to the same spot, where they might hover again, or try to perch. Even the more successful "perching" gulls often lost their balance whilst plucking a berry.

The two Black-backed Gulls were noticeably less skilled. We observed a few unsuccessful perching attempts. In the main they tried to hover. This behaviour was noted at the same tree over the course of two days.

WAYNE TWYDLE

Canterbury Native Hen

Lake Hood is a recently-created water recreation area east of Tinwald (near Ashburton) in an area otherwise bereft of large areas of standing water. Perhaps this was the draw for the Black-tailed Native Hen found there by Peter Howden, and Noeline and Henery Sinclair on 9th August.

The bird was found whilst the three were atlassing in the area on a cold and windy winter afternoon. When first seen the bird was running for cover – in a very distinctive manner. The head was stretched straight out, and the black tail was held up along its body.

Before being flushed the bird had been feeding in newly-sown grass, and ran through some shallow water to come to a stand in the shade in front of a flax bush.

Peter's first thoughts were that the bird might have been a Spotless Crake, a species he was not familiar with. However, on checking notes made in the field with a field guide at home, they did not fit this species, but fitted exactly the much rarer Black-tailed Native Hen – an Australian species with three previous New Zealand records.

The bird has remained around the same flax-surrounded small pool adjacent to the main water body up to the time of writing. Peter's initial description of the bird was: greenish beak, yellow-orange eye, dun underparts, dark greenish back and sides, orange legs, and a black tail that stood up along the body. On examining footprints left by the bird in the mud where it ran the toes were found to be approximately two inches long. The feet were not webbed.

Others saw the red area at the base of the lower mandible, and the white flank spots. The latter two features were less than obvious, explaining why they were not picked up initially. To me the most obvious field marks were the constantly flicked black tail that contrasted with the slightly paler body, the pale green-yellow beak, the bright orange-red legs, and the yellow iris.

This bird may have been another refugee of the drought currently affecting Australia. The White-necked Heron found near Hokitika a few weeks previously was probably also on this side of the Tasman Sea for the same reason.

NICK ALLEN



Scientific Committee - Annual Report

The need for a Scientific Committee was recognised at the October 2000 Council meeting and Kerry-Jayne Wilson was asked to form an interim committee, which met in Christchurch on 11 February 2001. This interim committee consisted of Richard Holdaway (Notornis editor), Ralph Powlesland, Hugh Robertson, Paul Sagar, Kerry-Jayne Wilson with Tony Crocker (ex officio as convener of the Way Forward Team). The Scientific Committee was officially inaugurated at the June 2001 Council meeting retaining the same membership except that David Medway (ex officio as President) replaced Tony Crocker.

Since the 2001 AGM the Scientific Committee has met once on 12 October 2001. This was a split meeting with the Christchurch-based members meeting in the morning and with Kerry-Jayne meeting with Hugh Robertson in Wellington that afternoon. Other business has been conducted via email.

The Scientific Committee has identified the following priorities for action in the immediate future:

- To raise the profile of research in OSNZ. This can be achieved by promoting Scientific Days and encouraging some leading ornithological researchers to speak at these. To provide forums where professional ornithologists can meet.
- To compile and archive the data accumulated over the last 60 years by the various local and national schemes. To convert this to an electronic format so that it is available for use by members or (at a price) by researchers or other users.
- To establish closer links with Birds Australia, in particular their Research Committee.
- To re-establish a Checklist Committee with the aim of publishing a revised checklist by 2005.

To date the following progress has been made on each of these matters:

- The 2002 Scientific Day has attracted an interesting line-up of high profile researchers, students, DoC fieldworkers and amateur ornithologists.
- OSNZ will host the 2005 Australasian Ornithological Conference.
- Karl Evans, a post-doctoral fellow at Lincoln University, has agreed to enter all nest record cards for introduced species and some of the native species cards into the same electronic database used for the British Nest Records Scheme. This is being done at no cost to the Society in return for his use of the data in a comparison of reproductive parameters of selected species in New Zealand and Britain. Once completed copies of the electronic database will be held at two or more locations.
- Efforts to locate all Society data from national and regional schemes have been initiated. A request has been made that members holding Society data inform Kerry-Jayne Wilson about what records are in their possession. The information supplied in response to this request is shown in Appendix 1.
- Kerry-Jayne attended the First Australian (sic) Ornithological Conference in Bathurst, NSW in December 2001. She met with the BA president, chair of their Research Committee and certain other

BA staff and officials. Lines of communication between OSNZ and BA have been established.

Kerry-Jayne is a member of the standing committee that will oversee future Australasian Ornithological Conferences.

- The Checklist Committee has been reactivated. The following have been appointed to that committee, Brian Gill (convener), Alan Tennyson, Trevor Worthy, Ricardo Palma, Geoff Chambers and Brian Bell.

KERRY-JAYNE WILSON

Chairperson, OSNZ Scientific Committee.

Appendix 1. OSNZ data held by members.

In response to the request published in Southern Bird in December 2001, the following people informed me that the data listed below are in their possession.

Peter Schweigman, Dunedin

Brown creeper survey data, early 1980s, see OSNZ News Nos 28 and 38.

Kaikorai Estuary survey data, 1989-91, see Notornis 40; 273-284.

Kingfisher survey, Otago, Southland, 1989/90.

Manuherikia River Survey November 1991.

Unpublished DoC report, raw data.

Mohua survey, Waikaiti Forest September 1995, original data.

National Royal Spoonbill Census, 1991-1996 and 2000.

All original data archived.

Okia Bird Survey, 1991/92. Unpublished report for the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. Original data archived.

Otago Harbour survey, 1977/78 and 1988/89, monthly counts, raw data archived.

Otago Wader Census, summer and winter, 1984 – 2001. Original data archived.

Waitaki River Survey, 1995 and 1997, black-billed gull and tern census. 2000 survey of all birds on lower stretch. Original data.

Michael Taylor, Auckland

Various Auckland Regional material originally held by Sylvia Reed, RR (1969-1982) added to by Michael Taylor. Includes duplicates of wader census, beach patrol etc the originals of which were submitted to National Schemes.

Little Shag colony data, data from national survey of little shag plumages.

50th Anniversary (1989) conference material.

Sylvia Reed's field notebooks.

Material on waders and terns and waterbirds has been passed onto Adrian Riegen and Gwenda Pulham respectively.

Regional newsletters, complete set.

Chris Challies, Christchurch, informed me that between 1963 and 1970, when CSN were not published, Sandy Edgar ran a Recording Scheme where miscellaneous unpublished ornithological information was archived. Notornis vol 19 (Supplement) apparently makes reference to this scheme.

Nest Record Scheme

Report for the two years to 30th April 2002

I am reporting on all the nest record cards that I have received during my first year as scheme convenor. I am very pleased that in addition to the 262 cards received that relate to the year ending 30/4/01, I have already received 184 cards for year ending 30/4/02. I am grateful for the prompt forwarding of these cards to me to enable their inclusion in the current loading of card data into a computer database. A total of 80 Colonial Cards are included in the above-mentioned figures.

Again, the greatest numbers of cards have been completed by DoC staff in Northland: Katrina Hansen (181 cards), Trudy Murdock (124) and Richard Parrish (46). David Pye contributed 42 cards recording breeding of N.Z. Dotterel, Variable Oystercatcher, Spur-winged Plover, Caspian Tern and Black-backed Gull. Wendy Hare and Nigel Milius contributed 26 cards, primarily Variable Oystercatcher at Opoutere. I would like also to mention my next door neighbour, Arnold Lenton, who I coerced into the monitoring of the almost daily progress of a pair of Song Thrushes nesting outside his kitchen window. He recorded dates for the laying and hatching of 17 eggs in 5 clutches over a 6 month period June/November. Two broods were failures and 10 chicks fledged with the others. In addition, with the same meticulous care, he recorded details of one other pair of Song Thrushes and two clutches of a pair of Blackbirds.

List of contributors in 2000 and 2001

Toby Barach, Ken Bond (et al), Willie Cook, D. Cooper, Don Hadden, Katrina Hansen, Wendy Hare, Darryl Jeffries, Arnold Lenton, Nigel Milius, Trudy Murdock, Richard Parrish, Ralph Powlesland, Gwen Pulham, David Pye, Peter Schweigman, Jan Walker, Audrey Williams and D. Wills.

List of species recorded in 2001 and 2002

Royal Spoonbill 3, California Quail 1, Variable Oystercatcher 190, Spur-winged Plover 9, Pied Stilt 6, NZ Dotterel 123, Black-backed Gull 5, Red-billed Gull 16, Caspian Tern 43, White-fronted Tern 16, Fairy Tern 19, Dunnock 1, Blackbird 3, Song Thrush 7, Fantail 1, Tomtit 1, Yellowhammer 1, and Cirl Bunting 1.

Last year Hugh Robertson hoped that OSNZ members would deluge me with completed cards. That has not yet been the case, although 446 cards received in my first 12 months is a good effort. However, I am looking forward to a big increase in the number of species being recorded. I am sure that the monitoring has been taking place - please then send me in the cards!

RUSSELL THOMAS

Nest Record Scheme Convenor.

Marlborough Sounds Special Issue

Things are progressing well with the planned special Notornis issue devoted to birds of the Marlborough Sounds, and work is proceeding apace on the various promised manuscripts.

I would now like to bring together all incidental records from individual islands. The records should be as full as practical but should at least give species, number recorded if possible, the island of course and the

date of the record. I have visited most of the islands, but my records are somewhat dated, so it would be good to have more recent ones.

There is a great deal of data on some islands but not very much for others. We also have some historical information on some, so if you have background on the islands this would also be useful as this often reflects what has survived or re-colonised. If you feel confident in giving a brief description of the island vegetation cover this would be good too. There have been some major changes during the time I have known the islands.

Some will have heard I am moving to Marlborough shortly. Because of the disruption through shifting there may be a little delay in dealing with replies etc. so please bear with me for a few weeks. I am hoping this won't delay the overall project and I look forward to hearing from those of you with information in the next few weeks.

BRIAN BELL, Co-ordinator

P.O. Box 14-492, Wellington

E-mail: wml@clear.net.nz

South-west Fiordland

Since 1999 Alan Munn and Murray Willans (DoC Te Anau) have run a trapping programme to eliminate stoats and rodents on Chalky Island, the Passage Islands, Great Island (Chalky Inlet) and Anchor Island (Dusky Sound). The plan is for introductions of Kakapo, kiwi and South Island Saddlebacks when the islands are predator-free.

On 12-19 February 2002 I was fortunate to join a DoC party working on predator control on these islands in south-west Fiordland. The weather was mainly fine and mild. Bellbirds, Tomtits and Grey Warblers are common and widespread, with NZ Pigeons, Chaffinches and Fantails in moderate numbers.

From my observations, Western Weka are present on the two Passage Islands. NZ Falcons frequented the coastal forest on Chalky Island, the Passage Islands and Anchor Island. Black-backed Gulls, Red-billed Gulls and Variable Oystercatchers are common shore birds but Reef Herons are scarce - Anchor Island (2), Chalky Island (1) and Great Island (2).

The South Island Saddlebacks previously released on Big Passage Island in July 2001 had bred. We saw seven adults, three fledglings and a jackbird in a search of the south-eastern coastal forest, and Scott Hooson found a fresh nest. No stoats or rats have been trapped on Chalky Island for two years now, and on this trip nothing was trapped on Anchor Island.

Fiordland Crested Penguins moulted ashore in caves on Chalky Island, where Sooty Shearwater colonies were in use. Other Sooty Shearwater colonies are on Big Passage Island and one of the Seal Islands. On a rainy night on 18 February, we watched Mottled Petrels in a spotlight beam as they called and returned to their tiny breeding islet in Isthmus Sound.

In the nine hour cruise from Puysegur Point to Bluff we saw Sooty Shearwaters in thousands, Brown Skuas, Buller's, Salvin's and White-capped Mollmawks, Australasian Gannets and prions (including four Broad-billed). Many thanks to Bob (MV Renown), Alan, Murray and Scott. And best of luck with the "green birds"!

KIM MORRISON



Beach Patrol Scheme 2001

Preliminary Report

This report concerns the results from 496 cards received to 31 July 2002. In 2001, 3359 km were travelled, some 283 km less than 2000. Dead seabirds found in 2001 totalled 4037, being 6137 fewer than 2000. Of the coastal sections (districts on the cards) where greater than 100 km were covered in 2001, Southland again had the highest recovery rate at 2.54 birds per km (8.9 in 2000). The second highest recovery rate was Northland East at 1.22 birds per km.

Significant events that occurred were:

- There were no seabird returns on 55 cards, demonstrating the perseverance of many patrollers, and the good year the seabirds have had.
- The largest wreck was of Blue Penguins on the Northland East and Northland West coasts, in May and June of 577 birds.
- The second largest wreck was of Sooty Shearwaters from Wellington West along the east coast of the South Island to Southland, in May and June, of 500 birds.
- A banded Sooty Shearwater at 9.5 years old was found in Taranaki in November.
- Australasian Gannets suffered in October and November on Northland East and West, when 39 died.
- In Mason Bay, Stewart Island, in September, 31 juvenile Buller's Mollymawks were recovered.
- A banded Fiordland Crested Penguin was found in Taranaki in January.

The following are provisional totals for each section of coast patrolled in 2001.

Section of Coast	No. of Cards	No. of Birds	Km covered
Auckland East AE	21	84	41
Auckland West AW	55	301	450
Bay of Plenty BP	30	93	56
Canterbury North CN	28	237	262
Canterbury South CS	8	258	43
East Coast NI EC	34	80	97
North Coast SI NC	5	14	39
Northland East NE	98	842	692
Northland West NW	27	1089	1032
Outlying Islands OI	4	3	6
Otago OT	17	213	19
Southland SD	52	445	176
Taranaki TA	69	189	345
Wairarapa WA	3	9	10
Westland WD	1	1	1
Wellington South WS	31	154	66
Wellington West WW	13	25	24
Totals	496	4037	3359

In 2000, 584 cards were returned.

The success of the Beach Patrol Scheme in 2001 was due, to a large extent, to the dedicated 135 people (named) who took part in the patrols. I know of one group from Kerikeri who have, since 1987, travelled a 220 km round trip twice a month to carry out patrols in the Far North. No doubt there are others like them. It would be nice to acknowledge them at some stage.

LAURIE HOWELL
Convener

Robins near Dunedin

For a number of years Otago members have been involved in a South Island Robin banding programme and bird survey of Flagstaff, near Dunedin. The area is an exotic forest of mainly *Pinus radiata*, overlooking the Taieri Plain.

Those involved in the programme know that the majority of the robins prefer the Douglas fir stands within the forest over the predominant pines or larches and eucalypts. They do turn up in native vegetation, being present in the Silverstream catchment, but there is hardly any native vegetation in the Flagstaff area.

In 1995 a first attempt was made to band robins. Members involved may remember that the first pair flew into a mist nest that had been set up to catch Silvereyes. It took two years to start a banding programme properly, and from the first year onward the Douglas fir stand along Longridge Road was used to try to band the six pairs there and their offspring. In the ensuing two years 30 birds were banded, with another 20 in other Douglas fir remnants.

Unfortunately at that point approximately 35 hectares of mature Douglas fir had been harvested, and with it went the robins. Most of the banded population disappeared and the programme was abandoned. However City Forests, being aware of the problem, became interested, and a concerted effort was made to find the total population. A number of birds have been located in or in the vicinity of mature Douglas fir stands and a small stand of manuka/kanuka and broadleaf natives. The total autumn population has been assessed at around 30 birds, of which 15 have been banded this autumn.

The good news is that City Forests is working on a long-term plan in the form of planting areas in Douglas fir. Hopefully, by the time that the trees can be considered mature enough to hold a population of South Island Robins the birds will still be around.

PETER SCHWEIGMAN

Falcons Scavenging?

The status of falcons in New Zealand is being questioned, with anecdotal reports of numbers either increasing or decreasing. This interest extends to ways in which the species may have adapted to changes in its environment.

I am particularly interested in the extent to which some birds may be feeding from carrion. There are few written accounts of this behaviour, but in recent years I have heard reports of falcons feeding on dead possums. In some areas these reports are fairly regular. Depending on the ability of a bird to feed safely on road-killed animals, this change in behaviour may provide a substantial advantage over those individuals that persist in chasing Skylarks.

I am interested in any observations of falcons feeding on carrion. Negative records can also be useful - particularly where you might have both falcons and plentiful road kills but have never seen falcons on a carcass.

PETER GAZE
Department of Conservation, Private Bag 5, Nelson
pgaze@doc.govt.nz



Ornithology post-grads 2002

The University of Auckland

School of Geography and Environmental Science.

Contact: Dr Mick Clout <m.clout@auckland.ac.nz>

Heidi Stevens. Birds in forest fragments. PhD

Stephanie May. Foraging ecology of kereru. PhD.

Rosemary Barraclough. Ecosystem benefits of a 'mainland island'. PhD.

David Pattemore. Translocation and dispersal of NZ robins. MSc.

Melissa Farrimond. Post fledging behaviour of kakapo. MSc

All of these students are in the new School of Geography & Environmental Science (the result of the merger of SEMS and Geography).

School of Biological Sciences

Contact: Dr Dianne Brunton

<d.brunton@auckland.ac.nz>

Paul Barnett. Ecotourism impacts on gannets. PhD.

Jill Bolland. Oystercatcher foraging strategies at Miranda. PhD.

Emma Marks. Penguin vocal behaviour. PhD.

Johan Andersson. The role of vocalisations in hihi social interactions. MSc.

Julia Chen. Blue penguin behavioural ecology. MSc.

Pauline Culling. Foraging behaviour of blue penguins during the breeding season. MSc.

Duncan Emerson. A remote monitoring method for kokako based on song. MSc

Kevin Parker. Population dynamics and breeding success of fernbird. MSc.

Roseanna Thorogood. Interspecific competition in the endemic NZ honeyeater guild: temporal and spatial patterns. MSc.

The University of Waikato

Contact. Dr Joseph R. Waas, Department of Biological Sciences <j.waas@waikato.ac.nz>

Molles, L. The function of duets and dialects in kokako. NSF Post-doctoral Fellow.

Miyazaki, M. Acoustic communication and mate choice in blue penguins. PhD.

Day, T.D. Manipulating pest control baits to reduce poisoning of non-target birds and invertebrates. PhD.

Morgan, D. The effects of magpie on native and introduced bird species. PhD.

Collinson, M. Observational learning in kea. MSc.

Nakagawa, S. Kin recognition in birds. Honours Student.

Bright, A. Research Assistant. The effects on human activities on the behaviour and ecology of New Zealand dabchick.

Massey University

Institute of Natural Resources

Contact: Dr Murray Potter <m.potter@massey.ac.nz>

Wei-Hang Chua. Endocrinology of stress in quail. PhD.

Sharon Henare. Hormonal stimulation of breeding in quail. PhD.

Matthew Low. The evolution of rape in hihi. PhD.

Lindan Neeson. Behaviour and stress in quail. PhD.

Yvan Richard. Role of metapopulation factors in the decline of robins. PhD

Brent Stephenson. Investigating population changes of the Australasian gannet in NZ. PhD.

Rebecca Boulton. Role of habitat factors in the decline of robins. MSc.

Mark Fraser. Physical characteristics of populations of white-chinned petrels. MSc.

Anna Grant. Behaviour of captive-reared kiwi before and after release into the wild. MSc.

Myfanwy Hill. Ranges and food of kereru in Whirinaki. MSc.

Kate McInnes. Use of supplementary food to stimulate breeding in kakapo. MSc.

Sue Moore. Reintroduction strategies for brown teal. MSc.

Niccy Pindur. Nutrient requirements for maintenance in kiwi. MSc.

In addition, two students, Sara Belcher & Rebecca Lewis, are being supervised by Dr Doug Armstrong.

Victoria University of Wellington

School of Biological Sciences.

Contact: Dr Ben Bell <ben.bell@vuw.ac.nz>

Mathew Chan. Development of microsatellite DNA markers for the study of hybridisation between Forbes? Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus forbesi*) and Red-crowned Parakeet (*C. novaezelandiae chathamensis*) in the Chatham Islands. PhD.

James Sainsbury. Kaka: the microevolution of a species complex. PhD.

Leigh Bull. Variation in sizes of seabirds in relation to sex and geographic range, with particular reference to Procellariidae. PhD.

Delia Small. The survival and productivity of the NI robin translocated from Kapiti Island to Karori Wildlife Sanctuary (a mainland island). MSc.

Hayley Meehan. Pacific pigeons and rainforest trees: their interdependence in shrinking forest remnants in Tonga. MSc.

Stephanie Rowe. Vocal repertoire variation in kokako and saddleback populations translocated to Kapiti Island. MSc.

University of Canterbury

Department of Zoology.

Contact: Dr Jim Briskie

<j.briskie@zoology.canterbury.ac.nz>



Ornithology post-grads 2002

Kathryn Atkinson. The adaptive significance of plumage polymorphism in a New Zealand bird. PhD.
Myles Mackintosh. Hatching failure in South Island robins: a consequence of inbreeding depression or food limitation? MSc.

Lincoln University.

Ecology and Entomology Group.
Contact: Kerry-Jayne Wilson <wilsonk@lincoln.ac.nz>

Catriona Cameron. The ecology of yellowhammers on Canterbury farmland. Post-doctoral student.
Karl Evans. A comparison of breeding parameters of introduced birds in Britain and New Zealand. Post-doctoral student.
Jonathan Banks. A morphological and molecular study of coevolution between penguins and their chewing lice. PhD.
Stefan Thomsen. Ecology of skylarks on farmland on the Canterbury Plains. PhD.
Pauline Williamson. An assessment of the effectiveness of predator control at two white-flipped penguins colonies on Banks Peninsula. MSc.
Benoit Gangloff. Feeding frequency, meal size and chick growth of Pycroft's petrel on Red Mercury Island. MSc.
Tina Troup. Foraging strategies and heart rates of incubating southern royal albatross, Campbell Island: Implications for nesting and foraging energetics. MSc.
Peter McClelland. Ecology and breeding of Campbell Island teal on Codfish Island. MSc.
Jennie Lyall. Foods and foraging behaviour of kereru, in the Lyttelton Harbour basin, Banks Peninsula. MSc.
Julie Walsh. Home range and habitat use of kakapo on Maud Island. MSc.
Lynne Sheldon-Sayer. Plant communities on Maud Island and the use of these by kakapo. MSc.
Rhonda Pearce. Factors influencing the reduction in distribution of native New Zealand bird species. MSc.
Cynthia Roberts. The relationship between vegetation and seabirds on Rangitira Island, Chatham Islands. MSc.
Shelly Morgan. The impact of feral cats on bird populations at Travis Swamp, Christchurch. MSc.

University of Otago

Department of Zoology
Contact: Dr Lloyd Davis <adelie@stonebow.otago.ac.nz>

Melanie Massaro. Brood reduction and investment: a comparison between yellow-eyed penguins and crested penguins. PhD.
Alvin Setiawan. Reproduction of yellow-eyed penguins. PhD.
Mihoko Numata. Liver enzyme activity in paradise shelducks and black-backed gulls as a measure of environmental pollution. PhD.
J. Kitson. Ecological science and matauranga maori working together for the sustainable use of titi (sooty shearwaters). PhD.

Jamie Leiendecker. Breeding site habitat characteristics of the New Zealand falcon. MSc.
Frans Laas. Effects of lead shot on New Zealand waterfowl. MSc.
Rachel Paterson. Processes of wetland restoration (including avian abundance and diversity changes). MSc.
Scott Hooson. Reproductive variation in translocated populations of SI saddlebacks. MSc.
Glen Greaves. Translocation of SI saddlebacks to a mainland-island site. MSc.
Maureen McClung. Impacts of unregulated visitor access on yellow-eyed penguin chick quality. PGDipSci.
Nisha Chalam. Metabolic cost of hatching to fledging in little penguins. BSc(Hons).
Stacey Hill. Physiological effect of temperature and moult status on little penguin chicks. BSc(Hons).

Compiled by E. C. YOUNG, 12 August, 2002.

Meritorious Service Awards

Call for Nominations

These awards will be made available to individuals who have demonstrated meritorious service in furtherance of the objects of the Society, as outlined in the Constitution. The award is not confined to members or past members and may be awarded to suitable non-members both in New Zealand and overseas.

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

Nominations for Meritorious Service Awards to be conferred in 2003 must be signed by two members of the Society and be accompanied by a typed citation of **not more than 100 words** on one side of an A4 sheet setting out the achievements of the person nominated.

All nominations should be sent by 31 December 2002 to:
The Awards Secretary, OSNZ
P.O. Box 12397, Wellington

NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

After many years sterling service in one of the key roles for OSNZ, Hazel Harty (ably assisted by husband Tom) has decided to relinquish the position of Membership Secretary for the Society.

The new Membership Secretary is Roger Sharp, and his contact details follow:

PO Box 12-1039, Henderson, Auckland
Home phone/fax: 09 836 9931, work: 09 625 3345
Email: Roger_Sharp@xtra.co.nz



West Coast White-necked Heron



White-necked Heron
near Hokitika.

Photo: Nick Allen

This bird, present for almost a month from 23 June to 18 July 2002, must count as one of the most obliging rare birds seen in New Zealand in recent times. It has been accepted as the fourth record of the species for the country. Drought in part of the species usual range in Australia has caused increased numbers to be noted in coastal districts of that country, and that may well be the reason for this bird's occurrence in Westland.

Jack Davidson was driving home from work along SH6 when he noticed what initially struck him as a Cattle Egret caught up in a black plastic bag in a paddock approximately three kilometres south of Hokitika. Closer inspection quickly dispelled the presence of a bin-liner, but instead a rare heron.

The bird stayed in the same cattle paddock for the rest of its stay, feasting on grass grubs, only occasionally wandering to adjacent paddocks. Being so obvious only tens of metres away from a main highway, and being so sedentary, it was visited by a number of birders and locals, and received coverage in the West Coast Times.

Details of the bird's arrival was posted to the birding-nz email group within two days of its discovery, after John Lyall of the Department of Conservation emailed details and a digital photograph. After its departure, unsubstantiated reports were received from areas in less

accessible locations. It has to be regretted that the bird was not present at the beginning of June, as such a handsome bird would have almost certainly received much attention from those members of the OSNZ attending the AGM and conference just five minutes drive away.

The bird was a large heron, about half as large again in the body as Black-backed Gulls also present. The head and hindneck were mostly white, with some areas of pale beige feather tips. The lores were dark blue-grey, and the eye-ring blackish grey. The foreneck was white with two or three rows of black spots running down it, the spots being most dense on the upper neck.

The lower neck feathers were lax, fanning out over the dark grey upper belly feathers, and blowing around in the breeze. The back was a uniform dark slaty green-blue with an oily appearance. This uniformity was broken by two small patches of dark purple-brown at the base of the neck and on the outer parts of the long and lax scapulars. The feathers of the folded wing were a uniform dark blue-grey, apart from two small white patches at the bend of the wing and a thin white line underneath them (in flight these appeared like 'headlights').

The tip of the long, dagger-like bill was gunmetal in colour, with the upper mandible becoming a paler dark blue-grey toward the base. The lower mandible was similar in colouration, though with a pale yellowish white area under its base. The iris was a pale yellowish-white. The legs were dark grey.

NICK ALLEN & JACK DAVIDSON

Birds Australia 2003 Members' Day

*Threats to, and conservation of Australasian birds,
Saturday 31 May 2003, Hobart, Tasmania*

Birds Tasmania, a regional group of Birds Australia, will be hosting the 2003 Birds Australia Members' Day. Two keynote speakers combined with oral and poster presentations on a broad range of topics will address the theme "Threats to, and conservation of, Australasian birds"

Oral and poster presentations will examine the spectrum of threats to Australasian birds, and the practical efforts to conserve them. One aim of the presentations will be to maximise the information exchange among attendees, with presentations describing with successful efforts and strategies of particular relevance.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- conservation issues for a taxonomic group
- broad-spectrum issues

Offers for oral and poster presentations should be directed by email to:

Eric Woehler at eric.woehler@aad.gov.au or eric_woo@iprimus.com.au. Please provide a brief title or subject area and an indication of whether you are offering a poster or oral presentation. Organisers of the Members' Day are particularly keen to receive offers for presentations by higher degree students, and from New Zealand members. Discussions are presently underway to obtain travel assistance for student participants.

Dr Eric J WOEHLE

Chair, Birds Tasmania

GPO Box 68 Hobart TASMANIA 7001, AUSTRALIA

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Prion Wreck, July 2002

On the afternoon of Wednesday 3 July, a concerned member of the South Kaipara Landcare group rang reporting large numbers of birds being washed ashore at Muriwai Beach. Some of them were struggling in the surf. From the description it seemed that the majority of them could be prions.

It was decided to make contact with as many people as possible to assist in the usual monthly beach patrol on Muriwai on the following Saturday. I also sent emails to David Lawrie in South Auckland and Laurie Howell in Northland, reporting a possible large prion wreck on the west coast.

By Saturday, with Gwenda Pulham making numerous phone calls, there were sufficient people and, most importantly, 4WD vehicles available. Patrollers, armed with plenty of bags, were split up to cover the usual legs of the beach, whilst Sue and Clyde Glasson drove their ute up and down the beach collecting the full bags. With more than the normal number of patrollers we were able to cover an estimated 40+ kilometres.

Everyone was off the beach by 1.45 pm. After a short rest for lunch and hot drinks, the task to identify and count the birds began. Gordon McKenzie performed a great job of digging a hole big enough to bury all the birds single-handedly – his assessment of the size was spot-on. With the large numbers of birds to inspect, the time was passing quickly and we were chasing the daylight. We were also aware that we were in a public car park!

It became apparent that there were some discrepancies in the identification of Salvin's and Antarctic Prions. The count for the day ended up at:

Salvin's and Antarctic Prions	1854
Slender-billed Prion	284
Fairy Prion	20
Broad-billed Prion	11
Prion sp.	64
Common Diving Petrel	14
Buller's Mollymawk	3
White-capped (Shy) Molly	1
Hutton's Shearwater	3
Fluttering Shearwater	1
Southern Giant Petrel (juv)	1
Mollymawk sp. (juv)	1
Blue Penguin	1
Australasian Gannet	2
Total	2260

All but 27 birds were therefore prions.

As it was more than probable that more birds were being washed up after the Saturday patrol, it was decided to try and get another team together. Again Gwenda made some telephone calls, and on the Thursday there were enough people to cover a 20 km stretch of beach, some of which had been covered the previous Saturday. DoC came to assist, and they provided two 4WD vehicles, one with trailer. On the beach we met with Claire Exley and family, also out collecting birds, so we added them to the total for the count, which took place the following day at the



Gordon McKenzie prepares a hole for the Prion casualties on Muriwai Beach.

Auckland Regional Council depot at Muriwai Regional Park. The count was:

Fairy Prion	45
Slender-billed Prion	45
Antarctic Prion	514
Salvin's Prion	17
Broad-billed Prion	3
Prion sp.	24
Fluttering Shearwater	2
Common Diving Petrel	6
Pied Shag	2
Australasian Gannet	1
Mallard	1
Total	660

All but 12 were prions. The ARC staff at the Muriwai Regional Park reported that they had had numerous birds brought live to them by concerned members of the public, and had also been told of many more being taken to local vets.

Laurie Howell posted the following report on birding-nz of the total number of prions recovered from all regions along the west coast of the North Island:

90 Mile Beach	2016
Northland	3540
Muriwai	2881
Bethells	c.200
Karekare	116
South Auckland	1502
Waikato	1897
Taranaki	2364
Wellington West	240
Total	14,756

More beach patrol cards are expected which will revise the numbers upwards. The prion wreck of 1974 was 13,482.

JOHN SIMMONS

AGM minutes 2002

Minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand held at the Southland Hotel, 111 Revell Street, Hokitika on Saturday 1st June 2002 at 8 pm.

The President welcomed the 80 members present.

Apologies: Rosemary Heather, Geoff Foreman, Raewyn Hughes, Reg Cotter, Anne Cotter, Betty Seddon, Bev and Bryan Woolley, Gwenda Pulham, Zoe Clifford, Gillian Eller, Jan Walker, Peter Schweigman, Mike and David Bell, Tenick Dennison, Russell Thomas, Paul Sagar, Tony Crocker.

Moved that apologies be accepted

Alan Wright / Ruth Crockett

Carried

Deaths of members: Noel Doughty, Kingsley Brown, Kathleen Brash, and Malcolm Foord have passed away since the last AGM. A period of silence was observed in their memory.

Previous minutes: *Moved that the minutes of the 62nd AGM held at Rotorua on 2 June 2001 as published in September 2001 Southern Bird be accepted*

Bruce Postill/Mark Nee

Carried

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

President's report: *Moved that the President's report as published with March 2002 Southern Bird be accepted.*

David Medway/Biz Bell

Carried

There were no matters arising from that report.

The meeting expressed the Society's thanks to Christine Reed for her contribution as Secretary over the past four years.

David Medway/Colin Scadden Carried and applauded

The President reported that David Pye and David Melville have been elected to Council for a three-year term. The President thanked Mark Nee for agreeing to be re-elected as treasurer. Ros Batcheler and David Lawrie have been co-opted to Council for a one-year term. Biz Bell has been co-opted as Secretary for a one-year term. Richard Holdaway has agreed to remain as editor of Notornis, with Paul Sager and Nigel Adams appointed as assistant editors.

The meeting expressed the Society's thanks to Richard Holdaway for his continuing contribution as editor of Notornis.

David Medway/Kerry-Jayne Wilson Carried and applauded

The Rare Birds Committee has been re-appointed for a term of 3 years from 1/7/02. Peter Schweigman is retiring from the committee and Paul Scofield has been appointed.

Treasurer's report: *Moved that the Treasurer's report as published with March 2002 Southern Bird be accepted.*

Mark Nee/Brian Bell

Carried

Chris Robertson asked how long it would be before a subscription review was needed. Mark Nee responded that this will possibly be needed next year. There were currently about 855 members, of which 100 were overseas.

CJR also asked whether the auditor was capable of delivering on time. MN responded that he was.

Moved that John Mallinson Limited be re-appointed as auditor.

Mark Nee/Richard Holdaway

Carried

Presentation of awards:

Meritorious Service Awards for 2002 were presented to Kathy Barrow, Tony Crocker, Tim Lovegrove, and Paul Sagar. David Pye and Nick Allen accepted the awards on behalf of the nominees.

Applauded

The Falla Memorial Award for 2002 was presented to Chris Robertson for his significant contributions to the Society. The President read a citation containing a comprehensive list of achievements by Chris over many years.

Applauded

CJR thanked Council, Society members and his family for support, and assured all members that each and every one can make an important contribution to the Society.

General Business:

1. The President thanked Tom and Hazel Harty for organising the annual meeting and for helping ensure that the weekend was a success. Thanks were expressed also to local member Jack Davidson for his valued assistance.

Applauded

2. The President advised that the 2003 Annual General Meeting will be held in Wanganui.

3. The President mentioned that only one person had submitted entries for the photographic competition to be run in conjunction with the AGM. He requested that more entries be forwarded if the competition is run again next year. The President thanked Stella Morton and David Pye for organising the intended competition.

4. The President advised that last year's Twitchathon was again successful, with Ian Saville both organising the event and being leader of the team which won the competition.

The President called for any **other matters of general business.**

1. Richard Holdaway moved that the Society recognise the contribution of Colin O'Donnell to 14 years of South Island Classified Summarised Notes collation.

Richard Holdaway/Chris Robertson Carried

2. Richard Holdaway also moved that the Society fund the cost of colour plates for members wanting to publish them in Notornis, but not able to afford to.

Richard Holdaway/Ros Batcheler Carried

3. Kerry-Jayne Wilson updated the meeting on the Scientific Committee. OSNZ will host the 3rd Australasian Ornithological Conference in 2005 to be held in the South Island, possibly Blenheim or Dunedin. The Society's nest record cards are being put into an electronic format. Kerry-Jayne asked members to notify her of any Society records they have and where they are. The Checklist Committee has been



- re-established to produce a Checklist by 2005. The President thanked Kerry-Jayne for her report.
4. Colin Scadden queried a matter of procedure, which was clarified.
 5. The President moved a vote of thanks to Kerry-Jayne Wilson for an excellent scientific day. Applauded.
 6. David Melville informed members of the proposed benthic invertebrate survey of the intertidal flats of Farewell Spit. He advised that he would welcome the assistance of any members who wish to participate in the survey.

There being no further business the President thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.25 pm.

Reviews

Crowe, Andrew. *Which New Zealand Bird?* Illustrated by Dave Gunson. Penguin, Auckland, 2001. ISBN 0 14 100635 8. 96pp. Soft cover \$34.95.

Following in the tradition of Andrew Crowe's successful *Which?* series (*Which Native Tree?* *Which Insect?* etc) comes this companion guide to the identification of 96 native and introduced birds likely to be seen in New Zealand by a visitor or newcomer to ornithology. But its inviting layout and fascinating nuggets of avian information in the text may well appeal to more experienced birders who will almost certainly find most useful the three page section on some commonly found eggs, all photographed life-size.

Simple illustrated keys are the basis of identification. The reader chooses from one of six colour-coded habitats: was the bird seen in forest, a sanctuary, up a mountain, in the countryside or in a garden, in a freshwater habitat or on the seashore? What size was it? Birds in each habitat are arranged from smallest to largest. One or more picture keys follow which show where it might be found within that habitat. Then the appropriate page is located to confirm identification. As though this were not enough, at the end of the book supplementary keys based on size, colour, physical characteristics and a simplified guide to the main New Zealand families and orders.

Dave Gunson's pleasing illustrations accurately represent most species, though this reviewer would query the drawing of New Zealand Dotterel. The head lacks a high front which makes it look too small for the body. Moreover, while the eye is indicated as being large, it needs to be bigger and more prominent to give the correct jizz.

Each bird is illustrated in colour with a nicely understated monochromatic background which clearly indicates habitat: a leafy branch, a garden bird feeder, sedges, a cliff, or perhaps a power line.

The main distinguishing features are indicated: plumage, bill size, call, characteristic habits, comparison with other similar birds. There is also a small distribution map. Boxes indicate whether a species is native/endemic or introduced, common or rare, as well as weight and length. The concise general text refers to breeding, food, and longevity, as well as containing fascinating snippets of information. About Silvereye for instance, we learn "a small flock was recently spotted from a ship 600 km east of New Zealand – destination

unknown". While there is much detail, good design and layout ensure each page appears clean and uncluttered.

For the student of Maori there is a comprehensive list of 762 alternative bird names used by different tribal groups. Specific names often distinguish between male and female, or juvenile of a species. Bellbirds score highly here, with 32 recorded names, including komakohuariki, meaning a dominant male.

It may be due to the scanning or printing that some colours do not always do justice to the drawings. For example the yellow of the Little Shag bill or the eye patch of the Myna is not bright enough, although that of the Spur-winged Plover wattles is accurate. A minor criticism is that the most commonly heard call of Spotless Crake, a sharp pit-pit, is omitted in favour of the purrr call which in my experience is given less frequently. It would be useful to include head sketches of non-breeding White-fronted and Caspian Terns as these birds are more often seen in non-breeding plumage rather than breeding plumage.

These quibbles aside I have no hesitation in recommending this guide. It is light, a handy size and should stand up to use in the field. At a time when OSNZ is recording birds throughout the country for the second New Zealand bird atlas, this easy-to-use format will encourage newer members to gain confidence in their bird identification skills.

STELLA ROWE

Lee, W-S.; Koo, T-H; Park, J.Y.; Taniguchi, T. 2000. *A field guide to the birds of Korea*. LG Evergreen Foundation, Seoul, Korea. ISBN 89-951415-0-6 06490 and 89-951415-1-4. 330 pp. Soft cover. Price not given.

Korea has, until now, lacked a field guide. Gore and Won's (1971) bilingual guide, long out of print, provided a valuable summary of the status of birds in South Korea, updating Austin's (1948) detailed checklist and incorporating many new field sightings. The illustrations however were of limited value for field identification. Many of the species found in Korea have been included in recent guides to other areas in the region, but this is the first field guide to the birds of the peninsula available in English.

This guide illustrates in colour all 450 species that had been recorded from the Korean peninsula up to August 2000. A distribution map and brief text are set out opposite the plates making for easy reference, but necessarily limiting the amount of material given.

The distribution maps cover a large area of east Asia - depending on the species they range from western Alaska to the Lena River, and Singapore to Irian Jaya, and include both breeding and non-breeding ranges. As a result of the very small scale of the maps, details of distribution in Korea are impossible to determine. Whilst recognising that details of distribution of most species in North Korea are likely to be sketchy, nonetheless the book would have benefited greatly from larger scale maps covering just the Korean peninsula and immediately adjacent areas.

Locality details are given for some vagrants and rare species, but there is no gazetteer and the one map of the Korean peninsula on the end paper only shows selected 'birdwatching spots', so reference will need to be made to a detailed Korean atlas. Thus, of the four former breeding sites of the threatened, endemic Tristram's Woodpecker *Dryocopus javensis richardsi*, only two are



included on the endpaper map, and the other two I could not find in the Britannica Atlas.

The work of the illustrator Takashi Taniguchi will be familiar to those who have seen his plates in other identification guides (e.g. Sonobe 1982, Sonobe and Usui 1993) and a number of the illustrations are taken directly from his former publications. For most species they are adequate for field identification, but a number of warblers in particular will be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish – the text also being of limited help since confusion species are not adequately discussed. Thus the description of Radde's Warbler apparently compares this species with the similar Dusky Warbler, and the text for Styan's Grasshopper Warbler also apparently compares it with Middendorff's, but in neither case is this actually stated. These problems apparently arose as a result of heavy-handed editing of the original texts.

The status of each species is given as an abbreviated code at the head of each species account, but for some species additional information is given under 'Status' at the end of the species account. This can result in confusion, since on cursory inspection it appears that status is only given for a limited number of species. It would have been helpful to have the status codes in bold text.

Romanised versions of the Korean names are given for each species, which may be helpful for visiting birders, although they may take some practise to pronounce them correctly – Lanceolated Warbler is *Jwibalgwigaegaebi*.

Korean ornithology has developed by leaps and bounds in recent decades, with increasingly active

universities and environmental NGOs. South Korea also has become a destination for foreign birding tours. This guide will do much to foster bird study in Korea by both nationals and overseas visitors.

DAVID MELVILLE

Also received:

Konig, C. Weick, F. and Becking, JH.
Owls: A Guide to the Owls of the World.

1999, Pica Press. ISBN 1 873403 74 7. 462 pp.

This volume follows a by-now familiar layout for this series, with colour plates accompanied by brief descriptions of adult, juvenile, morphs and races. The rear section contains a more detailed entry for each species, with sections on identification, vocalisations, distribution, movements, habitat, description, measurements, habits, food, breeding, status and conservation. A chapter on molecular evolution and systematics of the owls is a particularly interesting excursion into the complex realm of genetics.

Cheke, Robert A.; Mann, Clive F.; & Allen, Richard.
2001. Sunbirds. A Guide to the Sunbirds, Flowerpeckers, Spiderhunters and Sugarbirds of the World. Christopher Helm, London ISBN 1 873403 80 1. 384 pp. Hard cover.

The latest in the Helm Identification Guide series covers this primarily Afro-Asian group. Every species is illustrated in colour. The detailed text covers description, distribution and biology.

KEITH WOODLEY

Auckland

Our June meeting heard a fascinating account of captive breeding at Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre and Auckland Zoo from Glen Holland. His recent experience covers a remarkable range of species, including Stitchbird, Kokako, Shore Plover, NZ Dotterel, Kaka, Grey-faced Petrel (as a 'model' for the endangered Taiko) and the Campbell Island Teal.

Such birds present very different challenges in the matter of handling, diet, risk of disease, their ability to adapt when captive, and so on. Kokako and Shore Plover are relatively easy to breed, while Stitchbirds are a very difficult species. A great deal of dedicated work is involved, and the help of a visitor from Adelaide Zoo had been much appreciated.

In July we had one speaker but two topics. Darryl Jefferies first described his work on Fairy Terns which nest in isolation in comparison with the colonial behaviour of White-fronted Terns at coastal sites, where both species are at risk from predation and human activity. Understanding the birds' response to disturbance is basic knowledge for conservation measures.

Darryl then outlined his PhD project on the behaviour of the common hedgehog, which is little understood in the New Zealand context, despite the fact that these critters (kindly in juvenile literature but not so in the real world) are very widespread and now ten times more numerous here than in the UK! They are serious predators on the eggs of ground-nesting birds, and these wicked ways (from a conservationist's perspective) will be scrutinised by means of radio-tracking and the study of individually-marked animals.

Rosalie Stamp is the Technical Support Officer for DoC in Auckland. At our August meeting she told us about her experience as a volunteer for two weeks on the Kakapo recovery programme on Codfish Island – tiring but very worthwhile. She then gave a short talk on New Zealand's rarest endemic honeyeater, the Stitchbird. The last confirmed mainland sighting of these birds was in 1883. Populations are now confined to offshore islands, and require intensive management. Little Barrier Island is the only unmanaged population. There is still the hope that one day they will return to the mainland.

The patrol of Muriwai beach yielded 159 bodies from 30 km in June.



REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Northland

At our February meeting, one of our members, Tony Beauchamp, led a discussion on bird counting in the Whangarei Harbour. There is often a lot of bird movement up and down the harbour at high tide. Because the counts are so spread out it was decided that, in order to get a better count, we should be on site three hours before high tide and count every half hour.

This was duly carried out by members involved, but the weather was so awful that not many birds were counted at some sites. The same method was used on the Whangarei Harbour count in June, with good results. At the April meeting Tony suggested that members visit the oxidation ponds at the end of Port Road in Whangarei, as most of the wader species you can see in the north were present at about that time.

An unusual sighting on the upper Kaipara Harbour was 27 New Zealand Dotterels in a sheltered estuary near Batley. This was during a strong and blustery easterly blow in April. Also on the upper Kaipara, at Pahi, were five White Herons in June, and at Tanoa, near Batley, were nine Fairy Terns on the same day. Five Royal Spoonbills were seen here on 2 August.

At our July meeting, Lynelle Greer, who has done a study on South Island Robins, spoke about these little birds and showed us some interesting slides. Also in July were west coast beach patrols organised to cope with the number of prions being washed up in the 55-60 km between Maunganui Bluff north of Dargaville to Tikinui to the south of Dargaville. To date about 3700 prions have been collected and identified by members at identification workshops, led by David Crockett and held as usual at Lorna Simpkin's place.

On the east coast, patrols during the past six months had greatest numbers of birds in February, with Australasian Gannets topping the species totals. Prions of course were found in greatest numbers on the west.

(JANET SNELL)



July then produced a huge wreck from which 2,400 birds were retrieved, with prions the dominant species. The toll included birds which came ashore in a failing condition, and as usual Auckland's Bird Rescue centres were over stretched in caring for some of these.

On a more positive note, there has been a successful transfer of Fernbirds to Tiritiri Matangi Island, whose healthy population of Saddlebacks has provided 39 birds for Wellington's Karori Sanctuary.

(MICHAEL TAYLOR & CHRIS THOMPSON)

South Auckland

Further to my comments in the previous Southern Bird relating to Tony Habraken picking the wet and windy weather for our census days, Clinton Care, a member from Thames, believes he knows the reasons. It is Clinton's theory that Tony picks these wet days because the birds stand more closely together and do not move or fly very much making the counting much easier. Clinton believes that we should be thankful that Tony is so considerate.

It would appear that some of the migrants are returning early this year. Tony Habraken visited the southern shores of the Manukau Harbour on 7 September and found a number of knots that he believed had just recently arrived back. He also found two golden plovers with the remains of breeding plumage and several stints and Curlew Sandpipers that had not been present through the winter. However the real evidence for early return was a juvenile Turnstone which is approximately a month earlier than we normally see them arrive. The first Shining Cuckoo in this area was seen on 21 August by Wim Houtman, also a couple of weeks early.

On 21 and 22 September Tony Habraken and a team travelled north to the Paerengarenga Harbour to try to intercept incoming migrant birds. It is hoped that they can catch some and obtain landing weights of new arrivals.

The evening meetings have continued with reasonable attendances. At our July meeting Adrian Riegen updated us on his latest trip to the shoreline of China to continue the search for the stopping over point for Red Knots during their north ward migration. Another extensive chunk of the China Sea coastline was searched, uncovering large numbers of waders but still no concentrations of Red Knots. He believes he now needs to travel back again next year and continue the search.

In August Tim Lovegrove updated us on the bird conservation projects in the Auckland Regional Council parks and the exciting future plans for the creation of mainland islands and reintroductions. It is really pleasing to see Regional Government becoming involved in the types of conservation activities and enhancement work that are being undertaken. We look forward to the continued success of these projects.

The September meeting saw a record crowd which arrived to hear and watch the presentation of Keith Woodley and Simon and Morag Fordham on the activities of the group of eight who travelled to Costa Rica earlier this year. The crowd was not disappointed in the quality of Simon's slides or the interesting commentary from Keith.

I would take this opportunity to remind readers of the Firth of Thames census on Sunday 10 November and the Manukau Harbour census on 24 November. This would be a good opportunity to visit some of the roost sites on these large estuarine areas. Be warned however about the likely weather and be sure to bring raincoats!!

(DAVID LAWRIE)

Waikato

Our Cattle Egrets have been seen wafting around their respective farms again, with 120 in the main flock at Rangiriri, on 30 July, while on 3 August 20 were seen at Ngaroto.

At July's meeting, John Innes of Landcare Research demonstrated early statistics on their major project involving a Waikato-wide survey of Tui, Bellbird and Kereru. Some graphs were the result of our work on Karioi and Kakepuku, so it was good to see the extrapolations. Kakepuku five minute bird counts have not been finding many robins of late, and the last count was no different, and only one Tomtit to add to our Petroica tally. Many Tui, and rosellas were active, to keep up our aural skills.

Of concern are the few sightings of banded robins on distant Mount Pirongia, with a group being dispatched to flush out the said travellers. This has proven that robins fly quite long distances (between 10-15 kilometres), through intensive pastoral lands, and thus may have very keen sight.

Our atlas square work has paid off in the winter, with only about 10 squares not visited this season. We have had a little outside assistance with travellers through the region - thank you all. Our latest field trip had us returning to the permit-only forests of Carter Holt Harvey near

Kinleith, and to very poor condition bush in the midst of them. Pukerimu Reserve had the best variety of birds, with Robin, Tomtit, Whitehead and more common species, but no larger species such as Tui, Kereru or Kaka/kakariki. This pattern was repeated at the Redwoods Reserve (almost no birds), and the Tikitiki Reserve (Bellbird heard). The following day, forests south of Kinleith were surveyed, with no further species added.

Our bird sightings are heavily slanted toward large parrots this season, with Kaka present at Whatawhata, Morrinsville, Kiwitahi and Scotsman's Valley (the last two sites being near Morrinsville). The farmer at Whatawhata also alluded to the regular occurrence of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, although I could not pin him down to exact dates. "Ah, when my last cow calved", or, "when I last shod the horse", are not particularly exacting! His wife pitched in with "Yes, it was the time when I burnt that flan".

My boarder has seen a NZ Falcon in Whatawhata, so it pays to take long walks in the morning in the rural Waikato to see these birds. NZ Dabchicks are breeding at Lake Waahi, near Huntly, according to a farmer adjacent to the water. This backs up our sighting of dabchicks for the first time on the lake in April.

Our August evening meeting was a valuable local project on magpies and their reported attacks on other birds. Dai Morgan presented extremely interesting statistical insights into the bad behaviour and general overall nastiness of this much-maligned bird. His review of the published literature and garnered encounters provided a disturbing picture as to why these birds attack other birds. Information is still being gathered in this project, so all encounters are still welcome in regard to this bird. We would also like to welcome Dai to the rank of Regional Recorder for the Waikato region.

(PAUL CUMING)

Work in this project is being carried out this year at only one of the two study sites (Mt Maunganui = Mauao) and at a reduced level there. However some good results are being obtained from continued banding/recapturing of adult birds at Mauao. One of the main aspects of interest now is the return of young birds to the colony.

So far this year we have recaptured for the first time as adults 17 birds which were banded as chicks at Mauao. The years in which they were banded, and the number of chicks (in brackets) is: 1995/96 (1), 1996/97 (6), 1997/98 (6), 1998/99 (3), 1999/2000 (1).

As we are not working at the other study site (Motuotau Island) this year, it has been a bonus to recapture as adults at Mauao four birds which were banded as chicks at the island. These were banded in 1996/97 (1), 1997/98 (2), 1998/99 (1). Another aspect of interest is the movement of birds between our two study sites and other colonies. At Mauao this year we have caught three birds which were banded at Whale Island (Motuhora), and one of our Mauao birds has been caught at East Island (Whanga o Kena), off East Cape.

The number of seabirds reported dead on specific beaches can vary greatly from year to year. Early in July there was a very large and widespread wreck of prions on the west coast of the North Island. Between 1 and 16 July we found about 1800 dead birds during 47 km of patrolling our Waikato beaches.

Most of these birds were prions. Among the prions, the majority were Antarctic or Salvin's. These two species are difficult to distinguish from one another. We hadn't realised how difficult, until we were faced with hundreds to deal with at a time. Despite much effort at identification we had to eventually lump hundreds of them together as "Antarctic/Salvin's". Our identification problems were referred to seabird experts, and we obviously still have plenty to learn.

(HUGH CLIFFORD)

Taranaki

At our May meeting we heard from a Taranaki Kiwi Trust member, who spoke on the research undertaken to date in order to update information on kiwi distribution and population in the region. In June members gave reports on their experiences at the AGM and conference on the west coast, while in July a DoC officer spoke about the proposed 1080 drop in Egmont National Park. A survey will be held prior to the drop and another post-drop. Some members have volunteered their services.

Royal Spoonbills have been seen at Mokau and Tongaporutu in early winter. Hawera Oxidation Ponds had Grey Teal, Grey Ducks and many Welcome Swallows, along with 40+ NZ Dabchicks. Fernbirds and Spotless Crakes had been heard at Lake Rotokare, and a Long-tailed Cuckoo in a New Plymouth garden, plus a Kaka seen regularly in Pukekura Park.

By June Cattle Egrets had returned to the region and were reported from various sites. Petrel and shearwater species were seen flying around the Sugar Loaf Islands, while diving petrels, gannets and prions were seen feeding offshore from Waiongana. 54 Antarctic Prions recovered in June signalled the start of a major prion wreck.

(ROSEMARY MESSENGER)

Wanganui

The Wanganui branch met at the end of August to plan the year's activities. Tom Teasdale was re-elected regional representative and Bill Greenwood was delegated to write bird notes for Southern Bird.

Virginia Lake's Little Shag colony has now been established for several years, with about eight or nine pairs regularly nesting. Our solitary Mute Swan died (the victim of a fishing hook) but two

immatures have arrived - hopefully a pair. The solitary Muscovy Duck was sitting on a nest containing one egg at the end of March but the nest was in the open only a few metres from the path and did not survive. The duck also vanished shortly after. Again replacements arrived. In May four more Muscovy Ducks were on the Lake, one with an orangey-red band on its right leg.

The Turakina River has changed its course and now flows into the sea several kilometres to the west. What was a long muddy estuary is now a freshwater wetland. Wrybills and White-fronted Terns, once common, are now seldom seen. On the other hand waterfowl are much more numerous. A flock of over 25 Canada Geese can be regularly seen and up to a dozen dabchicks. A spoonbill flock appears to be a year-round feature, with ten being seen on one visit.

Spoonbills are also to be seen regularly on the Wanganui River close to downtown; up to twelve have been seen at one time. The Cattle Egrets are back at Whangaehu with seven being seen. Sightings by Colin and Robyn Ogle include a Morepork sitting on their driveway in suburban Wanganui on the evening of 4 July, Rooks flying over SH1 at Rata on 10 April and 18 dabchicks at Julian's Pond south east of Opunake on 24 April. Bill Greenwood saw a pair of Brown Teal at Puke Puke Lagoon on 5 February and a Black-fronted Tern at Turakina Beach on 25 March.

(BILL GREENWOOD)

Wellington

The Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is always good news, it seems. Observers are often taken aback at the pace of development. And so we are fortunate to have a recent report from Raewyn Empson outlining the various transfers of species there.

Seven species have been introduced so far. The earliest, Weka, are restricted to the northern end of the sanctuary, and are monitored only through their calls. Little Spotted Kiwi, released in batches of 20 in 2000 and 2001, have produced as many as 26 chicks, and are doing so well that even in the drought a female weighed in at more than she had on Kapiti Island.

Transfers of most other species have also been from Kapiti and also in two batches. Last year's North Island Robins produced 55 fledglings, before being joined by 36 more immigrants. Transmitters fitted to some of the 27 Bellbirds indicated that, though unseen, the birds ranged freely, including in and out of the sanctuary. Whether any bred is not known. This year's additional 30 have no transmitters, but do come to feeders which have been designed to exclude Tui. Raewyn hopes now to bring in more birds, from a different source, the Akatarawas.

Whiteheads, not previously transferred on the mainland, were introduced, as were the Bellbirds, by way of aviaries, where feeding problems could be addressed. As reported in an earlier number of Southern Bird, these are thriving, and have been joined by 30 more this year.

The first Tomtits were two males, a by-catch of a robin expedition, to which have been added seven males and a female. Never having been held in captivity before, this species provides some challenges. Currently more are being sought from the Akatarawas.

The challenge with Saddlebacks was how to catch them. On Tiritiri Matangi Island, mistnets, hand-nets and dawn stake-outs at roost boxes were all tried and the methods compared. An estimated 100 juveniles die on Tiri each year because of overcrowding. The 39 birds transferred recently have settled quickly into pair bonds. All 12 fitted with transmitters, at least, have remained in the sanctuary.

Apart from catching and, in some species, feeding the wild birds, an important technical task has been that of sexing them. Raewyn described various methods involving comparing wing measurements and tail length, showing where there is a need for further research.

Needless to say, there is plenty of scope for volunteers to assist with the transfer, feeding and monitoring. The next species? Could be Kaka or kakariki.

Unusual sightings reported by members recently include an unbanded Bellbird near Mt Kaukau, Johnsonville, 24 Kereru roosting at Otari Botanic Garden, a flock of 32 Sulphur-crested Cockatoos at Lindale, a King Shag near Seatoun and, at sea near Kapiti, a White-headed Petrel and several Salvin's Prions.

Some of the last-named may have been counted later, amongst the huge wreck of Salvin's/Antarctic Prions that occurred on west coast North Island beaches. In July roughly 250 birds were collected on a 26 km stretch of the Kapiti coast, 80% of them these prions. The handful of other species include the notable strangers Southern Skua and Yellow-eyed Penguin.

Counting the living promises to require more time, that is in addition to atlas activity. Wellington members are involved in the quarterly survey of Matiu/Somes Island, the monthly count at Pauatahanui Inlet and, probably from October, a quarterly check on numbers at Karori Sanctuary.

The work of one of our most distinguished ornithologists was celebrated at our latest meeting, when Mary McEwen treated us to material from the biography she is writing of her father Sir Charles Fleming, and in particular his work relating to the Chatham Islands. Sharing with us from his letters to his wife Peg (whom we knew until only recently as a member of our branch), and excerpts from his diaries, she revealed to us an adventurous and self-confessed romantic, who climbed cliffs with some of our older members, and inspired a national interest in and concern for our birds.

(ROD ORANGE)

Nelson

The winter census took place in wind and pouring rain and some species' numbers were down, possibly due to the difficulty of seeing birds in these conditions. The group on Farewell Spit found a Wandering Albatross wreck. The occasional fantail has been sighted in some Nelson areas so we are hopeful of seeing more in the coming months.

Amongst the many prion wrecks found on the beaches in July, Willie Cook found a Salvin's Prion. A dead bittern was found on Rabbit Island. It may have been passing through but observations will be made to see if bitterns still inhabit this area.

At Labour weekend, 26 to 28 October, Rob Schuckard will hold a passerine banding workshop at his property in the Sounds. There may be a few places for OSNZ members from outside the Nelson area.

(GILLIAN POLLOCK)

Canterbury

Winters in the Canterbury Region are traditionally quiet for rare birds, with a certain contingent of the local birders looking forward to the return of the migratory waders in spring. This winter has broken with tradition. First was a White-necked Heron - the fourth New Zealand record - near Hokitika and mentioned in June's roundup. This has been followed by another fourth record - that of Black-tailed Native-hen. One of this species has seemingly set up residence in a small clump of flax at the newly opened Lake Hood water recreation complex east of Ashburton.

The annual pilgrimage to the Ashburton Lakes to census the waterbirds took place in July in conjunction with Ashburton Forest and Bird. The weather had been relatively mild before the count, meaning less ice than usual, and the weather on the day was rather windy, making scope use less than easy at times. The participants enjoyed the day nonetheless, with a couple of falcons seen, and 24 crested grebes, and 2468 scaup counted along with a range of other species.

August brought the second installation of the Banks Peninsula bush reserves survey concentrating on the Port Levy area. The birds were found to be a good range of common species, with Tomtits present in one reserve near the summit overlooking the area. Talking to local residents highlighted the presence of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos on the island in the harbour, which breed there annually in small numbers.

In September a small group went into the Hawdon Valley. This area is being trapped for introduced predators in an effort to protect populations of Yellowheads and Orange-fronted parakeets. Neither of the latter species were found (a few parakeets not identifiable to species were seen), but good numbers of SI Robins, Tomtits, Yellow-crowned Parakeets, and the commoner bush birds were seen well in pleasant weather.

Ron Nilsson stood in for the booked speaker at short notice in July,



reviewing but a small amount of the work he did, and the places he visited whilst working for the Wildlife Service, in his usual entertaining style. The last few slides brought things up to date with a whole flock of Kakapo using a beaming Ron as a perch. More of this latter event will be revealed in Ron's talk in November.

Paul Scofield gave a very professional powerpoint presentation on his recent visit to the southern Kermadec Islands in August. With the removal of grazing animals he found the vegetation very different to an earlier visit, where much of the land was like a bowling green and easy to traverse. Now the vegetation is over head height in many places, and nesting masked boobies are restricted to cliff-tops where the wind stunts its growth.

Red-tailed tropicbirds were among the other species seen, but being winter the petrels were for the most part absent – in one way a good thing as damage to burrows was less of a concern. One advantage of the jungle-like growth was a sheltered campsite – a group of unfortunate geologists dropped off at a nearby volcanic island had their tents blown away and spent a cosy if rather uncomfortable time in a hut about the same size as a garden shed.

(NICK ALLEN)

Otago

Five Rainbow Lorikeets managed to escape from an aviary near Dunedin in July. The escape, reported the following day in the Otago Daily Times, resulted in one bird being recaptured and three others sighted. DoC and the birds' owners are keen to see them back – the former in order to avoid another possible exotic species establishing.

Alan and Connie Wright reported many dead magpies on the road between Dunroon and Mt Cook in late June. "Around Twizel they were so weak they would take food from the hand" they reported. The previous week there were two dumps of snow, followed by a hoar frost and temperatures well below zero. Few other birds were seen.

The House sparrows at Glentanner have learnt to enter the café either by waiting for someone entering or exiting, or by flying up to the automatic sensors, thus activating the doors.

Cattle Egrets have come back for the winter, and Royal Spoonbills seem to be overwintering, with two at Hawkesbury Lagoon in July and another three at Karitane. Four were at Hawkesbury in August. The Otago Museum natural history desk sent us a report of a Chestnut-breasted Shelduck, a casualty of the duck-shooting season on the Taieri River.

Hawkesbury Lagoon also produced two Little Black Shags, roosting with Little Shags and a Black Shag on 17 July. This is a first report for Otago, and has been submitted to the Rare Birds Committee. The other highlight was a Franklin's Gull, seen by Dave York adjacent to Tomahawk Lagoon on 2 July. The sighting was confirmed later that day by Derek Onley and Peter Schweigman. And, since this is a first New Zealand record, another report went to the Rare Birds Committee.

Southland

After the recent large wreck of prions in the North Island, we checked Oreti Beach for signs of similar activity but found beach patrols to be relatively uneventful.

To add to the recent Black Stilt and coot sightings, an Australian Wood Duck was shot at Mandeville near Gore. Unfortunately the bird was disposed of before we could get access to it. It was handed into the local Fish and Game Council office.

We have again been lucky at our meetings to have had excellent speakers, with Wynston Cooper talking about two of his favourite places – Waituna Lagoon and of course Awarua Bay, winter home to about 55 New Zealand Dotterels which Wynston has studied for a number of years. This latest total is the highest yet for the winter flock. Obviously the cat trapping at their breeding grounds on Stewart Island is paying dividends.

Centrepiece of the Waituna wetlands is the 1500 ha Waituna Lagoon which is home to many bird species. The wetlands are characterised by many tarns, saltmarsh, red tussock, bog pine and manuka. A unique feature is its subalpine cushion bog of which less than two hectares remains.

The Otatara parakeets have not been seen for a while, and we hope they have survived the winter. Lloyd Esler is hoping to run a birding weekend at Borland Lodge in the first week of October. The lodge is close to Lake Monowai, and is surrounded by bush and mountains with good numbers of birds and very aggressive sandflies!

(PHIL RHODES)

What's on



Northland

Evening meetings, 2nd Thursday of the month, ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

West coast beach patrols ph. Prue cozens (09) 437 7760.

East coast beach patrols ph. Pauline Smith (09) 435 3060.

Whangarei Harbour wader count ph. Tony Beauchamp (09) 436 2661.

North Kaipara wader count ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

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 Cumming (07) 829 8215

Field trips (monthly) ph Paul Cumming

Evening meetings, every third Wednesday, 7.30 pm DoC London Street, Hamilton City, ph Paul Cumming

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 2nd 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.

Pauatahanui Inlet surveys ph. Allan Munro (04) 566 4834.

Beach patrols ph. Jean Luke (04) 904 1704.

Nelson

Evening meetings - usually 1st Monday of the month, 7.15 pm, 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@extra.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.



