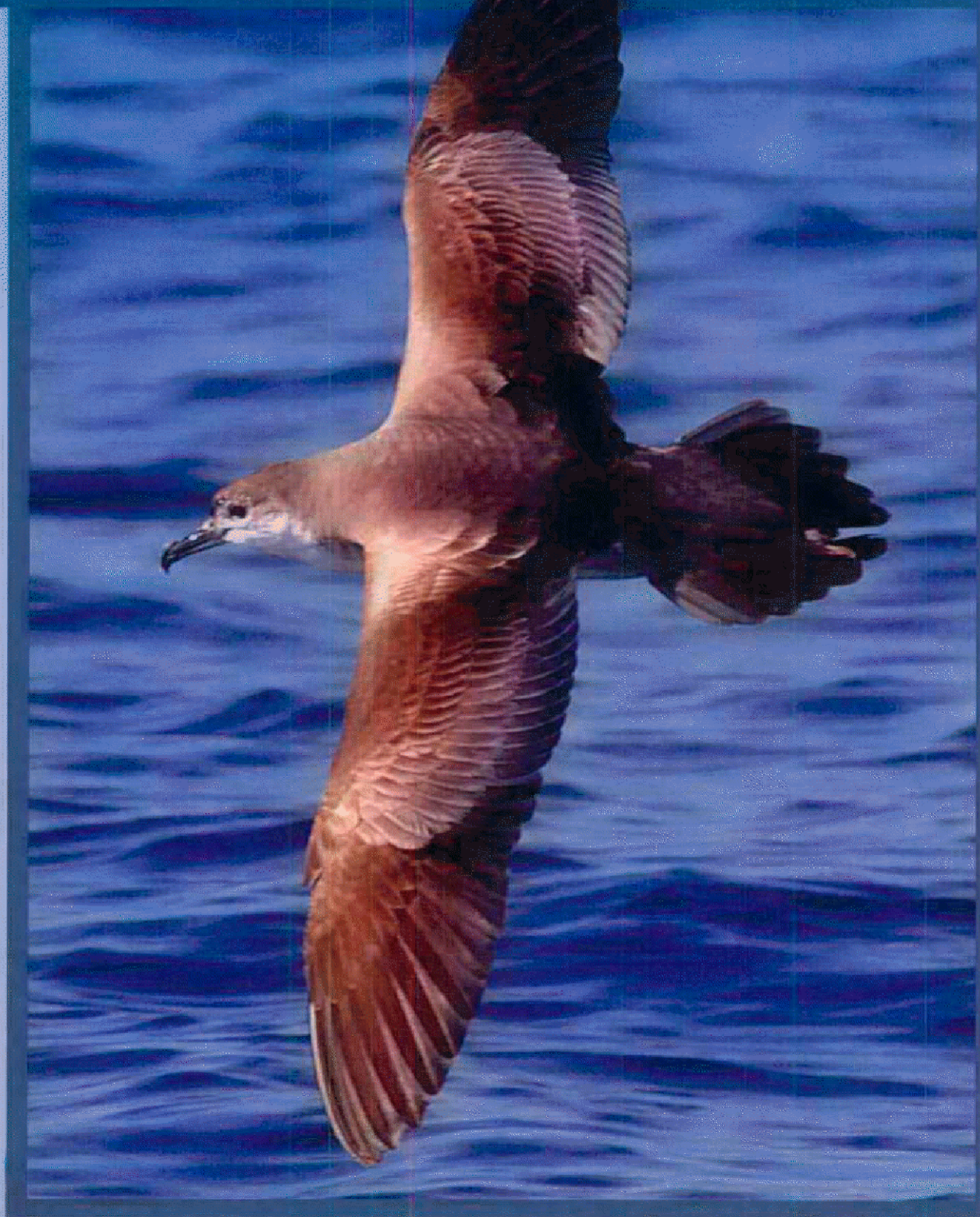
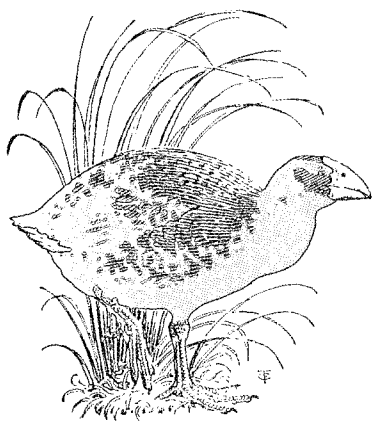




Southern Bird

No. 14 June 2003. • ISSN 1175-1916





Southern Bird

No. 14 June 2003. • ISSN 1175-1916

Quotation

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
and like a thunderbolt he falls.*

The Eagle - Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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Cover Photos

Both photos taken by Brent Stephenson. For more of his excellent digital work visit his website www.eco-vista.com

Front cover – Buller's Shearwater. Taken 23 February off Tolaga Bay. Buller's have to be one of the most beautiful shearwaters, with their prominent 'M' patterned upper-parts and crisp white under parts. The day off Tolaga was crystal clear, slight swell, and really great light, and we had good numbers of these birds circling the boat.

Back cover – Flesh-footed Shearwater. Taken 25 January 2003 off the Mercury Islands, Coromandel. Flesh-footed Shearwaters, especially, visit the backs of boats, making it very easy to get excellent views of them. The sea was quite rough and the boat was moving around a lot, but birds were coming in towards the back of the boat as we motored in towards the islands.

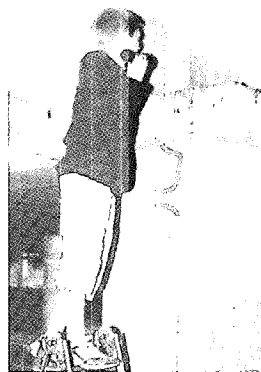
Pigeon Patrol

When Ralph Powlesland said he wanted to study the Feral Pigeons which live in the James Smith car-parking building in Wellington, we thought well – ornithologists have studied falcon breeding on Notre Dame, Paris, so why not pigeons in a Wellington car park?

Every weekend there we are, armed with long ladder, torches, binoculars, and banding, measuring and weighing gear. The birds nest on a concrete ledge that runs along the inside of the outer walls on the upper floors of the building.

We look at 43 identified sites and check for new signs of nesting. New eggs are weighed and measured, the estimated date of hatching is recorded, and the squabs are monitored and banded when big enough. Ralph's latest trick is catching adults with a net. Some adults have now been banded, and we've started looking at their moult. With the birds in the hand we can see the beautiful plumage – iridescence and shades of grey to black not found in any artist's palette.

Parking motorists seem unperturbed by these antics, probably thinking we are just another bunch of strange people who inhabit car-parking buildings. So, Wellingtonians, and visitors – look for banded pigeons as you roam the city and take the time to look closely and enjoy their beauty.



James doing nest check

Photo: Ralph Powlesland

Articles for inclusion in *Southern Bird* are welcome in any form, though electronic is preferred. Material should be related to birds, birdwatchers, or ornithologists in the New Zealand and Pacific region, and can include news on birds, members, activities and bird study, literature/product reviews, letters to the editor, birdwatching sites, identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp, and preferably as slides or uncompressed computer files.



Day old Rock pigeon chicks

Photo: Ralph Powlesland

ROS BATCHELER

Publisher

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



ANNUAL REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT

ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR 2002-2003

It is my pleasure to present this report on behalf of Council to the 64th Annual General Meeting of the Society to be held in Wanganui on 1st June 2003. Several important matters occurred during the past year. Some of them are mentioned here.

Council

Council met formally on two occasions in 2002, the first being in Hokitika on 31st May 2002 in conjunction with the 2002 AGM, and the second being in Wellington on 1st – 3rd November 2002.

Notice was given in *Southern Bird* in December 2002 that, under the provisions of the Constitution, the eight Council positions mentioned there would become vacant in 2003, and nominations were called for. Graeme Taylor and Hazel Harty did not wish to stand for re-election to Council. Six nominations were received by the due date of 28th February 2003. Those nominations were for David Medway (President), David Crockett (North Island Vice-President), Elizabeth Bell (Secretary), Kerry-Jayne Wilson (Council), Ros Batcheler (Council), and David Lawrie (Council). Therefore David Medway, David Crockett, Elizabeth Bell, Kerry-Jayne Wilson, Ros Batcheler and David Lawrie will be automatically re-elected or elected to Council in the positions mentioned for a three-year term from the 2003 Annual General Meeting.

The Society is grateful to Graeme Taylor (a member of Council since 1997) and Hazel Harty (a member of Council since 1992) for the contributions they made during their terms as Councillors. Graeme continues to contribute as a Convenor (with Chris Robertson) of the Atlas Scheme. In recent years, Hazel (with husband Tom) has attended to essential aspects of the organization required for our Annual General Meetings and associated activities. The Society continues to be grateful to them for their efforts in helping to ensure that those occasions are enjoyable and profitable.

Membership Secretary

Hazel Harty, who was appointed as Membership Secretary in 1986, resigned from that position in 2002. The Society is grateful to Hazel for efficiently attending to the many facets of this most-important office over the sixteen-year period she held the position. Council has since appointed Roger Sharp to replace Hazel as Membership Secretary. Roger has been very pro-active since taking on the role. He has already instigated a number of beneficial initiatives, and other potential improvements that he has suggested are presently under consideration by Council.

Notornis editor

Notornis, whose readership includes people all over the world, continues to be one of the major contributions by the Society and its membership, both professional and amateur, to knowledge of the birds of Australasia, Oceania and Antarctica, with particular emphasis on the birds of the New Zealand region. Our international reputation as an ornithological society is judged in large measure by the standard of presentation and content of our official journal.

The Society has been particularly fortunate to have had the services of Dr. Richard Holdaway as editor of *Notornis* since 1999. I have accepted that it was only a matter of time before a person of Richard's scientific calibre would find, because of increasing professional commitments, that it was impossible for him to continue to devote the necessary voluntary hours and attention to the production of the Society's journal. Richard resigned last year because of increasing professional commitments, but withdrew that resignation when Paul Sagar and Nigel Adams agreed to be appointed as assistant editors of *Notornis* and thereby help ease Richard's editorial burden. But Richard's professional commitments have continued to increase, and he has been forced to resign again, this time with definite effect from 30th June 2003.

Richard's first issue of *Notornis* as editor was Volume 46 (4) of December 1999. With the very next issue, Volume 47 (1) of March 2000, Richard introduced a very welcome new-style *Notornis* with a larger page size and a new format, thus bringing our journal into line with other similar journals in those respects. Other desirable improvements have continued since then, including colour plates for the first time in Volume 48 (1) of March 2001.

The number of manuscripts submitted to *Notornis* for consideration has increased during Richard's tenure as editor. This is undoubtedly due in large part to the improved stature, both as to style and content, which our journal has achieved under his editorship. Richard ensured that as editor he had the assistance of an Editorial Board and reviewers who between them had a wide variety of ornithological knowledge, and who in various ways helped share some of the editorial workload. Nevertheless, Richard has always taken the time to directly apply his considerable knowledge and expertise to the improvement of many of the papers which have been published in *Notornis*, as is readily evidenced by the number of times that his assistance is gratefully acknowledged by their authors.

Richard's contributions during his tenure as editor of *Notornis* have been significant and lasting, and have undoubtedly assisted materially in increasing the international standing of our journal. Those contributions are much appreciated by Council, and all members of the Society are grateful to Richard for them. While Councilors regret that Richard will no longer be editor of *Notornis*, they are pleased that his expertise will continue to be directly available to the Society as a member in his own right of the Scientific Committee, which he has been an ex officio member of until now by virtue of his position as editor of *Notornis*.

Members will be pleased to learn that Council has already appointed Dr Murray Williams as the new editor of *Notornis* from 1st July 2003. Murray, who will be well known to many, brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the position. The Society is fortunate to have secured a person of Murray's calibre as editor of *Notornis*. He will be a worthy successor to Richard.

Southern Bird editor

In mid-2002 Tony Crocker indicated to Council that he would like to relinquish editorship of *Southern Bird* as soon as a suitable successor had been found. Since then, Nick Allen has agreed to take over that editorial role from Tony, and his appointment to the position has been confirmed by Council. Tony's editorship of *Southern Bird* has ended with No. 13 of March 2003. Nick will take over the editorship with No. 14 of June 2003.

Tony became editor of *OSNZ News*, our quarterly newsletter, which was published as a supplement to *Notornis*, with No. 71 of June 1994. *OSNZ News* ended 22 issues later with No. 93 of December 1999. It was replaced by *Southern Bird*, no longer a supplement to *Notornis* but a quarterly magazine in its own right, which commenced with No. 1 of March 2000 compiled under Tony's continuing editorship. *OSNZ News* had never contained any illustrations in colour, but the first issue of *Southern Bird* contained colour illustrations, which were generously sponsored by Chris Robertson. Tony made editorial reference to this, and indicated that the inclusion of colour was a not inconsiderable expense and could not be sustained on the current finances of the Society. It is pleasing to record that it has been possible, despite Tony's fears which were well-founded at the time, to include colour in every issue of *Southern Bird* since then. In particular, colour illustrations have adorned its front and back covers thus greatly enhancing the appearance of our magazine.

Altogether, Tony has edited 36 issues of our quarterly *OSNZ News* and *Southern Bird* over a period of 9 years. This has entailed a considerable voluntary contribution in time and effort, not only

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT

ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR 2002-2003

in soliciting articles and other material for many issues of the newsletter and magazine, but also in seeing those publications through the press. For a good part of his time as editor, Tony was also a member of Council where he contributed usefully to other facets of the Society's affairs. Tony's significant contributions to the objects of the Society as editor of *OSNZ News* and later *Southern Bird* over many years are much appreciated by Council, and all members of the Society are grateful to him for them.

Appearance of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*

It is unfortunate that there have been undue delays in the appearance of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird* in recent times. Ways of overcoming the problem will be discussed by Councillors with the new editors of those publications at the next Council meeting to be held in Wanganui on 30 May 2003.

Farewell Spit benthic survey

The Society has been monitoring wader numbers at Farewell Spit since the 1960s. A recent review of these data, together with data from other sites in Golden Bay and Tasman Bay, has revealed a long-term population decline in Lesser Knots in the region, whereas numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits have remained more or less unchanged. Numbers of South Island Pied Oystercatchers at Farewell Spit have increased, in line with the national population, but populations elsewhere in Golden Bay and in Tasman Bay have declined.

The reduction in Lesser Knots is of particular concern in view of their limited distribution in New Zealand and the importance of Farewell Spit to this species. Some 7% of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway population occurs at Farewell Spit. The decline in the Lesser Knot population at Farewell Spit is not reflected in populations elsewhere in New Zealand, or indeed in the Flyway as a whole. Whatever has driven the Farewell Spit population decline appears to be operating at a local level. It is possible that changing feeding conditions have reduced the attractiveness of Farewell Spit to Lesser Knots. However, there is very little available information on benthic invertebrate distribution and/or abundance in Golden Bay.

In January 2003, the Society entered into a contract with the Ministry of Fisheries, the overall objective of which is to provide baseline information on the distribution and abundance of intertidal macro-benthic organisms at Farewell Spit Nature Reserve, with particular reference to prey species for shorebirds. The specific objectives of the survey are: 1. To undertake a quantitative survey of intertidal macro-benthic organisms at Farewell Spit Nature Reserve and adjacent flats. 2. To undertake an initial field survey of *Zostera* distribution at Farewell Spit Nature Reserve and adjacent intertidal flats. 3. To undertake a preliminary survey of sediment characteristics of the intertidal flats at Farewell Spit Nature Reserve and adjacent flats.

Initial field sampling and sorting was completed at Farewell Spit over 10 days in March 2003 by David Melville and Rob Schuckard - overall managers of the survey - and Phil Battley, together with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology students and volunteers from the Society. The project is due to be completed with the presentation of a final report to the Ministry of Fisheries by the end of 2004.

List of the birds of New Zealand

The purpose of the Terrestrial and Freshwater Biodiversity Information System (TFBIS) Programme of the Department of Conservation is to support the conservation of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity by increasing awareness of and access to data and information about indigenous biodiversity and how to conserve it.

Pursuant to this Programme, in April 2003 the Society entered into a contract with the Director-General of Conservation to develop an Internet accessible list of recognized names for bird species in New Zealand derived from the Society's 1990 *Checklist of the birds of New Zealand*, including the decisions of our Rare Birds Committee and the categories of the Department's 2002 *New Zealand Threat Classification System*. The proposed list, which is being compiled on behalf of the Society by Chris Robertson and myself, is to be provided and maintained on our website. Copyright in the list will be owned by the Society. The list may be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission, but where it is to be published or issued to others as part of a business venture, permission to use it must be sought from the Society. It is acknowledged that the current deliberations of our *Checklist* Committee will probably result in a list that is significantly different to the one the Society is presently contracted to provide the Department of Conservation on the basis of our 1990 *Checklist*.

Miranda Naturalists' Trust

Our excellent relationship with the Miranda Naturalists' Trust has continued throughout the past year. The *OSNZ Column* concerning our Society and its activities has appeared regularly in *Miranda Naturalists' Trust News*. Since my last annual report in March 2002, the following have been the subject of articles in that column: the Beach Patrol Scheme (April 2002), the Nest Record Scheme (August 2002), the Moulting Recording Scheme (November 2002), some interesting bird sightings accepted by the Rare Birds Committee in 2002 (February 2003), and the *Checklist* of the birds of New Zealand (April 2003).

Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society

I reported in *Southern Bird* in December 2002 that the Memorandum of Understanding between our Society and the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society has now been signed. The full text of the Memorandum, which covers the provision and use of information between the two Societies, was published in that issue. It is to be hoped that the Memorandum will be the basis for a long-term and closer working relationship between our two Societies for the benefit of New Zealand's birds and their habitats.

Appreciation

In addition to those persons I have already mentioned, Council thanks all other members who have contributed in many and varied ways to the management and well-being of our Society during the past year, including Regional Representatives and Regional Recorders, contributors to *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, members of the *Notornis* Editorial Board and reviewers, authors of and contributors to regional newsletters, convenors and organizers of the Beach Patrol Scheme, Nest Records Scheme, Moulting Scheme, Atlas Scheme and Twitchathon, members of the Rare Birds Committee, the Scientific Committee, and the Checklist Committee, compilers of Classified Summarised Notes, our librarians and webmaster, those members who have made generous donations of various sorts to the Society, and many other members particularly at a regional level. As I have said before, it would not be possible to run our voluntary Society without the goodwill and willing assistance of all those people, and the continuing support of the general membership itself.

DAVID G. MEDWAY

President

14th May 2003



FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR 2002

JOHN MALLINSON LIMITED
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

AVIEMORE COURT, 26 AVIEMORE DRIVE, HIGHLAND PARK, AUCKLAND

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INCORPORATED)

Audit Report to the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Incorporated).

The company has audited the financial report on the attached pages. The financial report provides information about the past financial performance of the society and its financial position as at 31 December 2002.

Council responsibilities

The constitution of the society states that the administration and management of the society shall be vested in the Council. The Council is responsible for the preparation of an annual report and audited statement of accounts for the year to 31 December 2002.

Auditor's responsibilities

It is the company's responsibility to express an independent opinion on the financial report presented by the Council and report the opinion to you.

Basis of opinion

An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. It also includes assessing:

The significant estimates and judgements made by the Council in the preparation of the financial report, and

Whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the society's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in New Zealand. The audit was planned and performed so as to obtain all the information and explanations which were considered necessary to give reasonable assurance that the financial report is free from material misstatements, whether caused by fraud or error. In forming the opinion the overall adequacy of the presentation of the information in the financial statements was also evaluated.

Qualified opinion

In common with other organisations of a similar nature, control over income and cash expenditure, prior to it being recorded, is limited and there are no practical audit procedures to determine the effect of this limited control.

A physical stock count of inventory was not completed at year-end and there were no practicable alternative auditing procedures that could be applied to confirm quantities. Accordingly the existence of society materials stock valued at \$4,758 and the book value of library and assets of \$47,614 in the balance sheet were unable to be verified.

Subject to the matters noted in all the above paragraphs, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the society as at 31 December 2002 and the results of its activities for the year ended on that date.

The audit report was completed on 23 April 2003 and the qualified opinion is expressed at that date.

FOR THE AUDITOR

JOHN MALLINSON LIMITED,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS AUCKLAND

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC) BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2002

	Note	2002	2001
Accumulated Funds		(63,341)	(45,424)
Life Membership Reserve		15,918	17,080
Plant Purchase, Replacement and Maintenance		15,863	12,401
Members Funds		(31,560)	(15,943)
Sir Robert Falla Memorial Award		3,805	3,787
AT Edgar Junior Memorial Award		3,613	3,471
Project Assistance Fund		97,333	92,169
Meadows Distribution Atlas Fund		12,449	14,633
Restricted Funds Liabilities		117,200	114,060
Total Members Funds and Liabilities		85,640	98,117
Bank		13,243	1,293
Accounts Receivable	3	6,457	5,184
Advances		1,161	961
Society Materials Stock	4	4,758	5,055
Goods and Services Tax Due		1,690	2,764
Investments Solicitors Nominee Company		39,000	58,000
Investments BNZ		5,000	5,000
Library and Assets		47,614	50,203
Sub Total		118,923	128,460
Less Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	5	15,633	3,686
Subscription in Advance		17,650	26,657
Sub Total		33,283	30,343
Net Total of Assets		85,640	98,117

M.P. Nee
Treasurer

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

	Note	2002	2001
1. ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Income			
Annual Subscriptions			
New Zealand		28,425	29,944
Annual Subscriptions			
Overseas		10,807	7,464
Donations		1,449	1,012
Sales		297	227
Notornis and News Refunds	6	4,978	5,303
Southern Bird Donation		0	1,331
Annual Meeting		1,400	0
Sale Information		0	1,200
Interest		149	168
Library		161	0
Sub-Total		47,666	46,649
Transfers from			
Life Membership Reserve			
Annual Contribution		1,708	1,624
Plant Purchase & Replacement Reserve		0	0



**INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002**

	2002	2001
Computer Purchase	0	4,638
Regional Petrol Assistance Grant	1,897	2,396
Sibson Heather Memorial	0	8,374
Adjustment Grant	0	5,000
Sub-Total	3,605	22,032
Total Membership Income	51,271	68,681
Less Expenditure		
Printing and Distributing Notornis	26,862	22,307
Printing and Distributing OSNZ News	10,124	10,055
Packing and Posting Above	5,502	7,283
Registration and Reports - AGM	1,248	2,440
Extra Meeting Costs	1,995	2,162
Printing and Stationery	689	1,904
General Expenses	1,562	842
Travel Expenses	5,571	6,193
Postage and Tolls	1,281	609
Audit	1,730	1,180
Regional Representatives Allowances	1,897	2,396
Regional Petrol Grant	1,897	2,396
Insurances	794	704
Library Expenses	0	162
Rare Birds Committee & Check List	458	238
Sub-Total	61,610	60,871
Transfer to:-		
(A) Plant Purchase and Replacement Reserve		
Annual Contribution	3,789	4,660
Write Off Computer and Telescopes		1,873
(B) Library and Asset		
Account Depreciation	3,789	4,660
Sub-Total	7,578	11,193
Total Membership Expenditure	69,188	72,064
Surplus/(Deficit) Income	(17,917)	(3,377)
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2002	(45,424)	(42,047)
Accumulated Funds as at 31 December 2002	(63,341)	(45,424)
2. LIFE MEMBERSHIP RESERVE		
Income		
Subscription	0	1,778
Interest	546	686
Income	546	2,464
Less Expenditure		
Transfer to Accumulated Funds		
Annual Contribution	1,708	1,624
Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,162)	840
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2002	17,080	16,240
Balance as at 31 December 2002	15,918	17,080

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002**

	Note	2002	2001
3. PLANT PURCHASE REPLACEMENT AND MAINTENANCE RESERVE			
Sale Plant		258	0
Donations		0	950
Annual Charge		3,789	4,660
Total Income		4,047	5,610
Repairs		585	0
Transfer to Accumulated Funds		0	1,310
Computer Equipment		0	4,638
Total Expenditure		585	5,948
Surplus/(Deficit)		3,462	(338)
Plus balance as at 1 January 2002		12,401	12,739
Balance as at 31 December 2002		15,863	12,401
4. LIBRARY AND ASSETS ACCOUNT	9		
Income			
Library Exchanges		1,200	2,430
Transfers from Accumulated Funds		0	
New Computers			4,638
		1,200	7,068
Less			
Transfer to Accumulated Funds			4,660
Annual Depreciation		3,789	1,873
Surplus/(Deficit)		2,589	535
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2002		50,203	49,668
Balance as at 31 December 2002		47,614	50,203
5. SIR ROBERT FALLA MEMORIAL AWARD FUND			
Income			
Interest		118	153
Expenditure/Award		100	0
Surplus/(Deficit)		18	153
Plus Fund Balance as at 1 January 2002		3,787	3,634
Balance as at 31 December 2002		3,805	3,787
6. AT EDGAR JUNIOR AWARD FUND			
Income			
Donations		30	65
Interest		112	138
Income		142	203
Less Expenditure Award		0	0
Surplus/(Deficit)		142	203
Plus Fund Balance as at 1 January 2002		3,471	3,268
Balance as at 31 December 2002		3,613	3,471



INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002			
	Note	2002	2001
7. PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUNDS			
Income			
Royalties Penguin Field Guide		4,353	5,044
Interest		2,953	3,970
Projects Reversed		1,486	1,486
		<hr/>	
Total Receipts		8,792	10,500
Expenditure			
Projects; Grants Made	7A	500	0
Projects; Grants Approved	7B	1,230	1,486
Transfer to Accumulated Fund			
Regional Petrol Grant	7A	1,897	2,396
Sibson Heather Memorial			8,374
		<hr/>	
Total Expenditure		3,627	12,256
		<hr/>	
Surplus/(Deficit)		5,165	(1,756)
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2002		92,169	93,925
		<hr/>	
Balance as at 31 December 2002		97,334	92,169

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002			
	Note	2002	2001
8. MEADOWS DISTRIBUTION ATLAS FUND			
Donations		390	1,786
Interest		470	713
Income		860	2,499
Less Expenditure/ Plans and Maps		1,294	1,894
Data Entry		1,750	2,832
		3,044	4,726
Surplus/Deficit		(2,184)	(2,227)
Balance at 1 January 2002		14,633	16,860
Balance at 31 December 2002		12,449	14,633

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

1 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

GENERAL ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

The general accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of earnings under the historical cost method of accounting have been adopted by the society.

PARTICULAR ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Particular Accounting Policies which materially affect the measurement of the excess of income over expenditure and financial position have been applied as follows:-

a. Subscription Income

Subscriptions in arrears have not been included in income. Subscriptions in advance have been excluded from income.

b. Royalty Income

Royalties received from the sales of "Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand" (Falla, Sibson, Turbott Sales of the guide book appear to have virtually ceased. "The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand" (Heather and Robinson) are credited to the Projects Assistance Fund.

c. Interest Earned

Interest earned by investments of funds has been credited to respective funds at a rate of 4.4%. This rate is calculated by apportioning the total interest received over Restricted and Accumulated Funds.

d. Depreciation

Depreciation is charged at an annual rate of 15% diminishing value. The library is not depreciated but retained at cost price.

e. Goods and Service Tax

Income and expenditure are stated exclusive of goods and services tax.

2 RESERVES

a. Life Membership

The life membership reserve consists of life membership subscriptions and interest less annual transfer of 10% of balance to accumulated funds.

b. Plant Purchase

The Plant purchase, replacement and maintenance Reserve was set up in 1992 to ensure provision for replacement and maintenance of plant. Currently this account is funded at 15% of depreciated cost.

3 ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

	2002	2001
Royalties - Collins	0	400
Royalties - Penguin	2,000	1,600
Bank Interest	2,501	1,969
Notornis	1,956	925
Sales	0	290
	<hr/>	
	6,457	5,184





Photos: Chris Gaskin

After leaving the Kings Road near Tavua on Viti Levu's north coast the road becomes typically Fijian: an off-country mix of cobbles and dirt. We pass cane fields, the Indian farmers' tin and concrete houses, the occasional shrine and shop. Small flocks of Red Avadavat, White-rumped Swiftlets, Fijian Wood Swallows, and Spotted Doves, bulbuls and mynas of course. A Pacific Harrier (yes *Circus approximans*) drifts across the scene.

The road twists, turns, gradually leading us towards the great mountain escarpment of Nadarivatu. Once past Waikumbukumbu village (very Fijian) and across the river, the climb begins, with switchbacks and concrete stretches for the really steep sections. About half way up we stop. In the trees and scrub either side of a cascade we hear then see Vanikoro Broadbill, the very yellow Fiji White-eye, the familiar Grey-backed White-eye, and red and green Fiji Parrotfinches amongst the tall grasses. Overhead the endemic *Metrosideros* is still in flower – more orange than our rata. The views on the way up and from the top are spectacular with Tavua Bay and the dry coastal lands laid out below. Reef, sea and the Yasawa Islands are in the distance.

Once over the crest of the escarpment, Nadarivatu and the landscape of big open valleys with intervening high forest-clad ridges and peaks open up. This is the headwaters of the Sigatoka River. The river drains to the south and Viti Levu's resort-laden Coral Coast. Tourists seem a long way away.

There is a forestry and government hill station at Nadarivatu with plantations of Caribbean (Fijian) pines, *Eucalyptus* and mahogany, along with unlogged reserves

and cut-over indigenous forest. During the twentieth century it was a place where expats – government officials, landowners, and business people – came to escape the heat and humidity of the coastal areas. There's a marked temperature difference. The Emperor Gold Mining Company at Vatukola near Tavua built two houses for their staff. Everyone calls the place the Gold Mine's "Mountain House". It is our base for four days as we explore the area.

Our birding is along road edges beside forest blocks and in open country, two unlogged nature reserves (permission required), forest tracts on the slopes of Fiji's highest peak Mt Victoria (Tomanivi) and from the road to Monasavu Dam in the centre of the island. In contrast to other places we've been to in Fiji the birdlife here has an in-your-face (and ears!) quality. Birds we've found difficult elsewhere were easily seen (e.g. Fijian Bush Warblers, Scarlet Robins). The ringing calls of Giant Forest Honeyeaters (ambulance birds!) and Wattled Honeyeaters, the loud huntaway-like barks of Barking Pigeons, the yaps of Golden Doves, the caws and rasping calls of large Yellow-breasted Musk Parrots, and the many calls of smaller birds. These qualities make us realise what we've lost from New Zealand's forests.

In the Mountain House grounds we see flocks of parrot finches on the ground; Orange-breasted Myzomela (honeyeater), Barking Pigeon and Fiji White-eyes in the lan-tana growing thickly around the edges; Collared Lories flicking through

the pines; we also pick up a Barn Owl in the car lights one night. Overhead we see (and hear) Fiji Goshawk (chicken fancier) and Pacific Harrier.

We continue to debate the kingfisher here in Fiji. Listed by Watling and others as the White-collared Kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*) some (not all) look and sound remarkably like the Sacred Kingfisher (*H. sancta*). The birds we see here fit the collared mould, very white-blue with a different call from the sacred. But we have seen birds on islands and along the coast that are very richly coloured with a sharper call.

We find Fiji Bush-warbler common in thickets alongside the dirt tracks above the Mountain House, close to the Nadarivatu Nature Reserve, and patience results in excellent close-up views of these secretive birds. We get good views of male and female Golden Doves in trees. Both White-throated and Barking Pigeons readily sit in trees or on wires alongside the road, as do the Scarlet Robins. Koke, or Yellow-breasted Musk Parrots, are also frequently seen sitting in large trees in groups or in the pines ripping through pinecones.

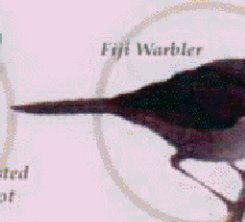
The nature reserve itself has some excellent examples of the Fijian kauri – *Dakua Makadre* – and other rainforest giants. Inside these forests are various species of orchids, ferns, and a rich array of plants, some closely related to species in NZ forests. On nearby Mt Lomalagi – there's a good benched track – we also



Collared Lory



Yellow-breasted Musk Parrot



Fiji Warbler

Birding in

Fiji

The Central Highlands of Viti Levu

pick up Fiji Shrikebill as well as more good views of the big parrots.

One day is spent on trails near Navai village, about 6 kms past Nadarivatu. We take two Navai guides, Elik and Pena. Our trail (the main track up to Mt Victoria or Tomanivi) starts off through village houses and gardens with cutover forest on the ridges. There is a side trail leading to some caves that the villagers plan to use for overnight stays for backpackers. Villagers during hurricanes once used the caves as retreats.

The wide trails are very good for observing Golden and Many-coloured Fruit-doves. The birds were very active and plentiful possibly due to our early start. Fiji White-eyes, Polynesian Trillers, Wattled Honeyeaters and Fiji Warblers are all common along here. Likewise, Koke (Yellow-breasted Musk Parrot) could be heard squawking in large trees while Kula (Collared Lory) frequently flashed by. We also heard Friendly Ground-dove, though didn't see it.

Once we leave the main trail birds are more difficult to observe because of the thick secondary forest. We stop regularly to allow birds to come to us, and see small groups of Fiji Bush-warblers chasing each other through the foliage, Streaked Fantail, Golden Whistler, and Island Thrush. Also fleeting views of the Giant Forest Honeyeater and hear (then see) several Fan-tailed Cuckoos with their distinctive plaintive descending call.

At one stage we see a mongoose chasing a rat up a tree. First we notice the commotion from the birds, see the rat on the outer branches of the tree and then realise there is a mongoose climbing the tree as well. The rat is desperately trying to escape the mongoose!

After Nadarivatu we continue through to Suva, via the Monasavu Dam and skirt the impressive Nadrau Plateau. The road cuts through spectacular country – deep valleys, rugged peaks, great escarpments, and dense jungle with villages perched on steep slopes overlooking rivers. The road is rough and it takes a full day to reach Suva before dark, allowing time to stop en route for birding and to take in the scenery.

On this trip we seek waders at several locations (north coast and around Suva) with Pacific Golden Plovers in breeding plumage, Bar-tailed Godwits (two with metal bands on the tibia, possibly banded in Alaska), Wandering Tattler, Turnstones and both phases of Reef Heron.

Seabird viewing from the coast of Viti Levu is restricted mainly to Crested Terns and the occasional frigatebird. However, to our surprise, when we are staying at the gold mine's beach house (just west of Rakiraki) we are treated to Wedge-tailed Shearwaters doing midnight circuits over the house, flying low. Our ground search of the headland gives no clue to where exactly they are roosting/nesting, possibly a nearby island. We find a downy pale-grey body feather amongst rocks under trees, which may indicate they're closer to hand. A mainland colony would be a first for the area. Seabirds

(e.g. frigatebirds, boobies, noddies, terns, tropicbirds, shearwaters and petrels) complete the Fiji birding experience but generally require boat trips to outer islands to see them.

The purpose of our visit to Nadarivatu is to look at the feasibility of transforming the EGM Mountain House into nature lodge-style accommodation. While such a development is a little way off, we anticipate making a number of exploratory expeditions to survey some of the area, using the Mountain House as a base. We would welcome members of OSNZ help in this regard – to use your experience and skills to help search for some of Fiji's rare and endangered species, in particular Pink-billed Parrotfinch, Long-legged Warbler and Red-throated Lorikeet.

Logging activity in Fiji is likely to increase as mahogany plantations reach maturity, and loggers look to new areas for plantations. Many areas, particularly in the Central Highlands of Viti Levu, will come under increasing threat. There is the need to find out what is in these areas, knowledge that may in the long run help save some valuable forest blocks from the chop. We are maintaining contact with non-governmental organisations and individuals active in Fiji, and also government agencies to ensure a complementary and supporting role for research on Fiji's birds.

If you are interested in staying at the Mountain House (cost Fiji \$100 /day/night) please contact us at P.O. Box 88, Orewa, or phone (09) 422 2115, or email info@kiwi-wildlife.co.nz

CHRIS GASKIN and KAREN BAIRD



Golden Dove



Pink-billed Parrot Finch

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

4 STOCKS OF SALES ITEMS	2002	2001
2002		
Cost of Sales		
167	1,097	1,264
Greeting Cards	130	504
Index		700
Atlases		379
Checklists		460
Car Stickers		504
Flying Starts		506
Posters		321
Hawkes Bay Booklet		287
	297	4,758
		5,055

Valuation

1. Notornis - In the past it was policy to print extra copies of the quarterly journal to be held for eventual sale to libraries, institutions and new members.
To account for this situation more accurately, the stock has been revalued annually.
2. All other items are valued at estimated current values after council decided to cut all stocks from May 1997 and liquidate input stocks on hand. Following a further write off in 2000 to the balance to a fairer level is now at a nominal level.

5 ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	2002	2001
Projects Assistance Grants Unpaid	1,230	1,486
Audit Fee Accrued	1,300	1,250
Printing Annual General Meeting	450	950
December Notornis	6,979	0
December Southern Bird	2,540	0
Postage& Envelopes	3,134	0
	15,633	3,686

6 NOTORNIS & OSNZ NEWS REFUND	2002	2001
Notornis		
Library Exchanges	1,200	2,430
Papers in Notornis	3,778	2,873
	4,978	5,303

7A PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND GRANTS MADE

97.02 Royal Spoonbill Banding	500	0
02.01 Nelson Display	500	0
Transfer to Accumulated Funds		
Regional Petrol Grants	1,897	2,396
Total Granted	2,897	2,396

7B PROJECTS APPROVED

Various		
97.02 Royal Spoonbill Banding		256
98.01 Southland's Black Billed Gull Banding	480	480
98.02 R. Keedwell's Study	350	350
99.01 Hawkes Bay Stopwatches	400	400
	1,230	1,486

8 CASHFLOW STATEMENT

A cash flow statement has not been prepared. The provisions for differential reporting under Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, specifically Exposure Draft No 62 "Framework for Differential Reporting" allows entities of the size of The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc. to be exempt from the completion of a Statement of Cash flow.

9 LIBRARY, ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

Item	Year Purchased	Cost Price	Book Val.	Dep. To 2001	Dep 2002	Total Dep	Book Value to 31/12/02
Library		25,000	25,000	1,200 *1		26,200	
Computers	1992	12,385	1,615	10,770	242	11,012	1,373
Computers	1994	10,033	3,567	6,466	537	7,003	3,030
Computers	1997	7,736	3,372	4,364	513	4,877	2,859
Computers	1998	3,122	1,292	1,830	193	2,023	1,099
Computers	1999	5,251	3,560	1,691	534	2,225	3,026
Computers	2001	4,638	4,520	118	678	796	3,842
Display	1989	1,311	250	1,061	39	1,100	211
Display	1990	1,000	212	788	32	820	180
Scales	1991	2,700	615	2,085	92	2,177	523
Callipers	1992	1,350	354	996	54	1,050	300
Telescopes	1991	7,265	1,748	5,517	262	5,779	1,486
Tripods	1991	2,426	432	1,994	64	2,058	368
Boxes	1992	410	108	302	16	318	92
Nest Records	1995	7,000	2,796	4,204	419	4,623	2,377
Glasses *2	1995	1,467	620	847	93	940	527
Fax	1996	355	142	213	21	234	121
		93,449	50,203	43,246	3,789	47,035	47,614

*1 Library Exchanges

*2 Heather Memorial Glasses



TREASURERS REPORT

FOR 2002

The year has been a busy one, and while the accounts show over-expenditure in the accumulated fund account and a reduced balance sheet total of assets, several measures are in hand to substantially improve our overall performance.

In respect of the statement of balances, overall there is a reduction of \$12,477 (\$98,117 less \$85,640). This is made up of reduced investments of \$19,000 (\$58,000 less \$39,000) and an improved closing bank balance of \$11,950 (\$13,243 less \$1,293) plus library and assets reduced by \$2,589 (\$50,203 less \$47,614). Other minor changes such as less GST due, and higher accounts payable due make up the balance.

The position is not quite as bad as the \$12,477 decrease indicates, as subscriptions due and received to March 2002 totalled \$5,467, and to March 2003, \$19,089 – an increase of \$13,622.

The deficit in the accumulated fund of \$17,917 (income \$51,271 less expenditure of \$69,188) is due to a decrease in transfers of \$18,427 (\$22,032 less \$3,605).

Notornis printing costs rose by \$4,555 (\$26,862 less \$22,307). This increase was caused by a marked increase in number of pages and colour, thus adding to the quality of *Notornis*. These costs were offset by page charges. The Editor has arranged for packing of envelopes to be undertaken by local members, and this, together with increased page charges should reduce these costs by \$6-7,000 in the future.

All this leaves an estimated \$11,000 (\$17,917 less \$7,000) to be met and I suggest:

1. Suspend the Regional Representatives allowance of \$1,897 for two years and double the amount paid to regions for petrol costs currently met from the project assistance fund, and;
2. Suspend, also for two years, the transfer to the plant purchase account of \$3,789 as the balance on hand of \$15,863 is sufficient.

This would leave an amount of \$5,300 to be raised from a subscription increase. Based on the current subscription income of \$39,232, (subs from New Zealand \$28,425, overseas \$10,807) the increase would be 13.5%. In practice we should round up to 15% to allow for exchange variations and the improved quality of *Notornis*.

Whilst the increase can not apply from next year it should be reviewed again then as our current subscription is very reasonable compared, for example, to Emu where the subscription was A\$230 (online A\$170) for 400 pages in 2002.

Finally, in respect of the other accounts, all are satisfactory. The Meadows atlas account is reducing, so to assist regions reach their more distant squares, the above increase suggested in the regional petrol grants is supported. Chris Robertson has obtained a grant of \$12,000, and any extra funds required can be advanced, or ideally met from fund raising.

I have received extraordinary help from David Medway, Chris Robertson, Richard Holdaway, Hazel and Tom Harty, and our new Membership Secretary Roger Sharp. My thanks also to Paul Cuming, Kathy Barrow, Regional Reps, and all others who have so willingly helped me.

Annual cost of a *Notornis* page for Volume 49, 2002:

Printing costs as per accounts	\$26,862
Plus 50% packing costs of \$5,502	\$2,751
Total costs	\$29,613
Less recoveries	\$4,978
Net costs	\$24,635
Per page cost for a total of 270 pages in Volume 49, and 980 copies	9.3 cents

MARK NEE
Treasurer

National Twitchathon 2003

The fifth OSNZ National Twitchathon will be held during the month of October 2003. Last year's event had some notable features – a new 24-hour record, more teams including school-aged children – but was very poorly supported. If the level of participation does not increase, the event will not be worth running.

The Twitchathon is a fun event. It is not hard. The rules are simple, and in essence require you to see, or hear, as many bird species as you can in any 24-hour period (of your choosing) during October. The main "prize" (a term used with care in this case!) is the Mantelpiece Monstrosity, which will go to the team that records the most species.

I imagine that the team winning the competition will need to put in some considerable effort, but it is simply not necessary to go the whole hog. I encourage OSNZers to get off their backsides and have a go at any form of the competition – how about counting species from just one location, or restricting yourself to 20 km from a start point, or RRs organizing competitions restricted to within their OSNZ Region, or doing it with a non-birding friend and having to convince them of the birds' identities?

One consistent theme in remarks made by participants in the past has been "how much fun it was". Due to the poor turnout last year I feel unable to approach anyone to sponsor real prizes, but remember that it should be possible to raise funds for local, or national, projects by asking for sponsorship per bird recorded.

RULES.

- Teams will consist of two or more individuals.
- A team may not split up beyond earshot, and continue recording.
- More than one member of the team shall agree the identity of each species.
- Wild, live birds count.
- The judging committee's decisions are final.
(That means me!).

Please send me your lists of birds claimed by mid-November, by any means you like.

SAV SAVILLE
23 Duke Street, Feilding
Email binzsav@clear.net.nz, Fax 06 323 1441



Hybridising Teal

On 16th November 2002 Colin Ogle received a phone call from Neil Corballis of 'Marangai', Kaitoke, just south of Wanganui. Neil had seen a strange teal with very young ducklings on one of his farm ponds, and thought that it might be a native brown teal. He'd seen a similar bird in the same area two years previously.

Colin visited the pond with Neil on 20th November and discovered the bird had four ducklings that were still quite small and fluffy. After hiding the ducklings in long grass bordering the pond, a single bird sat out on the water, giving excellent views. Realising the bird was not a brown teal; the closest match appeared to be chestnut teal, from Australia.

Colin then contacted Sav Saville, and together with Brent Stephenson, and Nic Peet of Department of Conservation, headed back to the pond the next day (21st November), again with the assistance of Neil. This time there were two adult birds attending the ducklings. One bird headed over the paddock and sat about 150m away, whilst the other called and paddled around the pond, allowing photos to be taken, before it took flight, returning a few minutes later.

From photographs taken and subsequently posted on the internet (<http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/ecovist/homepage.htm>), the general consensus was that we were dealing with hybrid teal of some description. This was supported by the lack of a breeding plumage (or moulting) male chestnut teal. Other possibilities for hybridisation were suggested following the photos appearing on the website, and included some of the North American ducks, grey duck and brown teal. However, we feel the most likely hybrid combination, due to general colouration and plumage characteristics, is between grey teal and chestnut teal.

The bird that sat out in the paddock had a very strange colouration, being very orangey-brown around the neck and head. It also had a strange 'jizz', being very long-necked and round-headed. Although the bird that stayed on the dam most of the time looked more like a chestnut teal, it was felt that this was also most likely to be a hybrid. This bird had very chestnut cheeks and throat, and there were also patches of chestnut on some of the upper breast feathering, but, as mentioned by some, the feathering on the closed wing appeared too much like a grey teal. It was felt that the chestnut colouration was unlikely to be some sort of staining, as it seemed too restricted and individual patterning on feathers could be distinguished from the photos.

We all returned again on 4th December, hoping to catch the ducklings at a later stage. Neil also thought he might have seen

a bird resembling a male chestnut teal at the dam. Unfortunately this bird wasn't around, but the ducklings had grown, with what appeared to be two broods evident. There was a larger duckling resembling a grey teal, and two almost fully-grown ones, which were more like the chestnut-headed bird we had seen in the paddock on the previous visit. Several photos revealed little more than the first ones taken.

If we are in fact dealing with hybrid birds, it appears we have caught the story too late, and may now be dealing with second generation (or more) crosses. Hybrid birds will always present more questions than answers.

Where have the birds come from in the first place? It was put forward that the apparent sedentary behaviour of the birds (they appear to have bred at the same pond for at least two of the last three summers), suggested a possible captive influence. It is possible that captive chestnut teal have been released or escaped. Or, could they have originated from wild Australian birds?

Whichever is the case, this does put into question many of the chestnut teal records for the Manawatu Estuary. Since 1991, 21 records of chestnut teal (representing at least 18 individuals) have been accepted for New Zealand, 18 of these reports from the Manawatu Estuary (with at least one bird being reported every winter since 1992, except 1997). Most of these birds have appeared to be immature drake-plumaged birds, which could just as well have been hybrids.

Nevertheless, the most recent bird, seen first on 11th May 2002 (photos taken on 18 May 2002 and posted on the web), was almost certainly a full male chestnut teal. Its plumage was between eclipse and breeding plumage, and when seen several weeks later, its plumage appeared to have changed with the head having become glossier. Hybrid birds are supposedly in a perpetual state of 'eclipse' with changes in plumage therefore unlikely.

Following discussion of the above events, reports of chestnut teal at Waiwera (just north of Auckland), at the local effluent ponds and the adjacent wetland were made. It was suspected that several of the birds were possible hybrids, with as many as 20 being seen there regularly. Hopefully someone will keep an eye out, and try and document/photograph these birds!

Thanks to Neil Corballis for making the initial observations, and all those that replied to our requests for information and assistance in this perplexing matter.

BRENT STEPHENSON, COLIN OGLE, and SAV SAVILLE

New Members & Donations *A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:*

Furhana Ahmad, Sharon Alderson, Geoff Arnold, Raynor Asher, Karen Barrett, Neville Bartlett, Amy Bazeley, Chandni Bedhesi, Rose Blois, P A Brochner, Merryll Burr, Helena Butt, Lisa Cleveland, Hester Cooper, Joanne Cooper, Joanne Crack, Mary Davis, Myk Davis, Lance Dew, Claudia Duncan, Marie Ellis, Richard Fenner, Garth Free, Nigel Goldstone, Shelley Heiss-Dunlop, Mark Fraser, Barbara Hughes, Jaap Jasperse, Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, C M King, Eila Lawton, Sheelagh & Gordon Leary, Michael Lee, Catriona Macleod, Christine Mander, Glenys Mather, Charmaine Mead, Moyreen Menzies, Sue Michelsen-Heath, Erna Moss, Penelope Mutu, Kenneth Perfect, Maureen Peskett, Jaromir Pistora, Kirsty Powell, Len Prescott, Elizabeth Revell, Megan Sarty, Eila Shearer, Heather Smithers, Phyllis Spackman, Alison Stanes, Rowley Taylor,

Kenneth D Wedgwood, Jenny Wheeler, Lee Williams, Murray Williams, John Winters, Hilary Wright.

We also thank the following for their generous donations to the society:

Sharon Alderson, David & Louise Booth, Peter Bull, Geoffrey de Lisle, Dr Michael Fitzgerald, Peter Grant, Peter Howden, ND McKerchar, Bruce Mackereth, RJ Meadows, Dr Philip Moors, John Ralph, Ross Silcock, Michael Taylor, Bice Tennyson, Dr K Thomson, Gillian Vaughan, Lois Wagener, Albert Zwartjes.

ROGER SHARP
Membership Secretary



CSN Records due

Members should send in details of their sightings to the regional recorder for their region by 31st July. The regional recorders are responsible for collating the information received and passing this on to the respective island collators by 31st August.

The Classified Summarised Notes year runs from 1st July to 30th June, so now is the time to extract all those observations from your notebooks, scraps of paper, and computers. To assist you with the process, below is a list of regional recorders, to whom the appropriate observations should be sent.

Vagrant, uncommon and threatened species are the focus of CSN. For common species, census counts are useful (especially if the censuses are carried out regularly and any trends or unusual numbers are highlighted). Unusual behaviour, such as calls, displays, diet, and flocking, as well as abnormal mortality are of interest to CSN. Generally speaking distribution records are not of interest unless they are outside the species known range and therefore extend our knowledge, or are from localities seldom visited by ornithologists/birdwatchers.

Usually the following data should not be submitted for CSN: nest records, beach patrol records, and banding records. These sorts of records are best submitted to the respective scheme convenors, or the banding office. There are exceptions to this rule if the sighting was unusual or interesting, and supporting information is sent with the record.

Far North Laurie Howell, 38 Okahu Road, Kaitaia 0500,
(09) 408 2084, okahu@xtra.co.nz

Northland Pauline Smith, 11/31 Ford Avenue, Kamo,
Whangarei, (09) 435 3060

Auckland

Landbirds and waterfowl Mel Galbreath, 62 Holyoake Place,
Birkenhead, Auckland, (09) 480 1958, 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

Seabirds, gulls, terns and shags Laureen Alston, 23a Takutai
Avenue, Bucklands Beach, Auckland, (09) 537 9393,
laureen@xtra.co.nz

South Auckland David Lawrie, 52 Mill Road, RD2 Pukekohe,
Auckland, lawrie@ps.gen.nz

Waikato/BoP/Volcanic Plateau Paul Cuming,
Private Bag MBE381, Hamilton, (07) 829 8215,
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

Wanganui Tom Teasdale, 33 Paterson Street, Aramoho,
Wanganui 5001, (06) 343 9992, teasdale.family@clear.net.nz

Hawke's Bay Margaret Twydale, 124 Nelson Crescent, Napier,
(06) 835 6563, waynemarg@xtra.co.nz

Wairarapa Colin Scadden, 15 Madden Place, Masterton,
(06) 378 6423, cescad@xtra.co.nz

Wellington Bill Lock, P.O. Box 12169, Wellington,
(04) 389 8535, bill.lock@natlib.govt.nz

Nelson Gail Quayle, 6 Tresillian Avenue, Atawhai, Nelson,
(03) 545 0456

Marlborough Brian Bell, 35 Selmes Road, Rapaura, RD3
Blenheim, (03) 570 2230, wmilblenheim@clear.net.nz

Canterbury/West Coast Colin Hill, Fenland House, Wolfes
Road, Greenpark, RD4 Christchurch, (03) 325 5891,
cherryhill@xtra.co.nz

Otago Jim Wilson, P.O. Box 6145, Dunedin, (03) 476 3235,
j.j.wilson@actrix.co.nz

Southland Phil Rhodes, 92 Marama Avenue, RD9 Otatara,
Invercargill, (03) 213 1228, p.rhodes@xtra.co.nz

CSN Convenor, North Island Richard Parrish, 145 Church
Street, Whangarei

CSN Convenor, South Island Gillian Pollack, 24 Jessie Street,
Mapua, Nelson 7155, (03) 540 3354,
gavjane.lambert@clear.net.nz

Pacific Islands Records Convenor James Moore, 32 Brook
Street, Lower Hutt, (04) 569 6692

Ruff at Waiongana

Returning home to Waiongana from an OSNZ outing on Sunday 6th October, my wife Julie told me that she had seen an unusual bird feeding in a muddy flooded paddock about 100 metres from our house. It was with a pair of Pied Stilts, but disturbance by cattle had caused them to fly off towards the beach.

I thought I had better go and investigate in case the bird had returned. It had! The mystery bird was now with a Spur-winged Plover and two Pied Stilts. This made getting close to the bird rather difficult, but I could see that it was definitely something different. I took a detailed description and a few photos, following the bird as it flew to a pool in another paddock.

I was uncertain as to what species the bird was, but remembered reading about a Ruff in the most recent edition of Miranda Naturalists' Trusts News. On checking that, and the Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand, Julie and I agreed that it was probably a Ruff.

I rang Barry Hartley, but by the time Barry arrived the bird had departed.

On the following Sunday morning, I saw that the Ruff had returned to the same paddock, this time with two Lesser Knots and a Bar-tailed Godwit. I rushed home and rang Barry, who came speeding out. However, by the time Barry arrived, the bird had departed once more.

Noting a pattern, I awaited the following Sunday with trembling anticipation, but alas no Ruff.

The first batch of photos were something of a disappointment as I discovered that I had used my new zoom lens on the wrong setting of 170mm instead of 500mm. Nevertheless I submitted an unusual bird report. The convenor of the rare bird committee agreed with the identification, though he had to employ his magnifying glass.

PETER and JULIE FRYER

Rare Birds Committee - 6 monthly report

The following sightings have been accepted by the Committee since preparation of the report in *Southern Bird* 12: 6-7.

UBR 76/02 - Report from Paddy Latham of **Grey Ternlets** (*Procelsterna cerulea*) seen at Volkner Rocks, Bay of Plenty, by himself, K.L.Owen, A. Garrick, W.M.Hutton, J.A.Brierly, B.M.Stephenson, & I. Saville on 10/3/93, 25/1/97, 13/12/97, and 9 & 13/3/02.

UBR 77/02 - Report and photograph from Colin Miskelly of a **Fiordland Crested Penguin** (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) seen by Clayson Howell & Chris Edkins at Kapiti Island on 23/11/02.

UBR 78/02 - Report and photograph from Brent Stephenson of a **Yellow-eyed Penguin** (*Megadyptes antipodes*) seen off Kaikoura on 27/10/01.

UBR 79/02 - Report from David Lawrie of a **Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*) seen by himself, Tony Habraken & Brent Stephenson at Kidds shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 14 & 20/4/02 and 20/5/02.

UBR 81/02 - Report from Karl Evans of a **Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) seen by himself and Scott Butcher at Lake Grassmere on 8/11/02.

UBR 82/02 - report from Gary Melville of a **Chinstrap Penguin** (*Pygoscelis antarctica*) seen by himself, Ian Saville and others at Kaikoura on 29/11/02. An account of this bird by Ian Saville, and photographs of it by David Jackson, appeared on Brent Stephenson's website. This sighting constitutes only the **3rd record** of the species from mainland New Zealand (see *Notornis* 47 (2000): 66).

UBR 83/02 - Report and photographs from Barry Hartley of a freshly dead **Spine-tailed Swift** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) found on the coast near Rahotu on 10/12/02.

UBR 84/02 - Report from Alan Collins (via Nick Allen) of 3 **Cape Barren Geese** (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) seen at Lake Wainono on 21/10/02 & 5/11/02.

UBR 85/02 - Report from Alan Collins (via Nick Allen) of a **Ruff** (*Philomachus pugnax*) seen at Lake Wainono on 30/10/02.

UBR 86/02 - Report from Alan Collins (via Nick Allen) of a **Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*) seen at Lake Wainono on 20/11/02.

UBR 87/02 - Report and photograph from Chris Petyt of a **Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) seen at Swan Lake, Farewell Spit by himself on 10/10/02 and by himself & Peter Field on 28/10/02.

UBR 88/02 - Report from Pat Quin of a **Channel-billed Cuckoo** (*Scythrops novaehollandiae*) seen near Mangawhai Heads on 26/10/02.

UBR 1/03 & UBR 2/03 - Reports from Suzanne Moore and Phil Battley (via Bill Lock) of a **Brown Teal** (*Anas aucklandica chlorotis*) and 2 possible **Brown Teal - Mallard hybrids** seen at Waikanae Estuary & Waimanu Lagoon on 5/2/02, and of a **Brown Teal** (*Anas aucklandica chlorotis*) and 2 possible **Brown Teal - Mallard/Grey Duck hybrids** seen at Waikanae Estuary on 24/11/02.

UBR 3/03 - Report from Rob Schuckard of at least 4 **Spine-tailed Swifts** (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) seen by himself, Henk Heinekamp, Moira Tilling, and Anneke & Esther Schuckard at Farewell Spit on 11 & 12/12/02.

UBR 4/03 - Report and photographs from Brent Stephenson of a **Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*) seen by himself and Ian Saville at Manawatu Estuary on 20/1/03.

UBR 5/03 - Report and photograph from Colin Hill of 2 **Sanderlings** (*Calidris alba*) seen at Embankment Road area, Lake Ellesmere from 3-5/11/02.

UBR 6/03 - Report and photograph from Colin Hill of a **Japanese Snipe** (*Gallinago hardwickii*) seen on his farm adjoining Lake Ellesmere from 16-20/12/02.

UBR 7/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of 11 **Grey Ternlets** (*Procelsterna cerulea*) seen on rocks near Kawau Island on 11/1/03.

UBR 8/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Siberian Tattler** (*Tringa brevipes*) seen at Ihumatao Beach, Manukau Harbour on 24/11/02.

UBR 9/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** (*Limicola falcinellus*) seen at Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant by Ray Clough in early 11/02, and by himself on 21 & 27/11/02 and 13/12/02 and 5/1/03.

UBR 10/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Pectoral Sandpiper** (*Calidris melanotos*) seen at Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant on 24/11/02, 13/12/02, & 19/1/03.

UBR 11/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Common Sandpiper** (*Tringa hypoleucos*) seen at Waikato River mouth on 12/1/03.

UBR 12/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Mongolian Dotterel** (*Charadrius mongolus*) seen by himself & Gwenda Pulham at Papakanui Spit on 8/12/02.

UBR 13/03 - Report from John Simmons of a brown phase **Oriental Cuckoo** (*Cuculus saturatus*) found recently dead by himself and Simon Chamberlin on Muriwai Beach on 14/12/02, now preserved as a spread wing and remaining bones in Auckland Museum under B11049.

UBR 14/03 - Report from Margaret & Wayne Twytle of a **Tattler** (species indeterminate) seen by themselves and others at Ahuriri Estuary on 3 & 19/1/03.

UBR 15/03 - Report and photographs from Barbara Taylor of an **Asiatic Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*) seen at Ohiwa Harbour, Ohope on 28/12/02.

UBR 16/03 - Report from Barbara Taylor of a **Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*) seen at Clive on 29/10/02 & 9/11/02.

UBR 17/03 - Report from Barbara Taylor of a **Shore Plover** (*Thinornis novaeseelandiae*) seen at "Shelly Bay" near Whakatane on 30/12/02.

UBR 18/03 - Report from Nick Allen of a **Siberian Tattler** (*Tringa brevipes*) seen at Kaikoura Peninsula on 30/11/02.



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UBR 19/03 - Report and photograph from Paul Sagar of a **Gentoo Penguin** (*Pygoscelis papua*) seen by himself, Rob Murdoch & Matthew Sagar at Antipodes Island on 18 & 19/12/02.

UBR 20/03 - Report from Paul Sagar of a **Fork-tailed Swift** (*Apus pacificus*) seen by himself, Rob Murdoch & Matthew Sagar at Antipodes Island on 14/12/02. This would seem to be the 1st record of a Fork-tailed Swift at Antipodes Island.

UBR 21/03 - Report from Margaret Twytle (with photograph by Brent Stephenson) of a colour-banded **Shore Plover** (*Thinornis novaeseelandiae*) seen by herself, Wayne Twytle, John Cheyne & Brent Stephenson at Westshore Lagoon, Ahuriri Estuary on 27, 28 & 29/12/02.

UBR 22/03 - Report from Colin Miskelly of an immature **Snares Crested Penguin** (*Eudyptes robustus*) seen and photographed by Alex McKillop at Waitangi, Chatham Islands between 28/1 and 10/2/03.

UBR 23/03 - Report from Murray Jeffries of a **Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*) seen by himself and several others at Porangahau Beach on 16/2/03.

UBR 24/03 - Report and photograph from Colin Miskelly of an **Erect-crested Penguin** (*Eudyptes sclateri*) seen by the principal and pupils of Akitio School at Akitio Beach, northern Wairarapa from 5/2/03 until at least 20/2/03. This bird featured in an illustrated article, which appeared in the *Dominion Post* at that time.

UBR 25/03 - Report from David Lawrie of **Pomarine Skuas** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) seen by himself, Tony Habraken and Ted Hoogendorn at Taramaire-Kaiaua, Firth of Thames on 17/2/00 (1), and by himself at Miranda Spit, Firth of Thames on 7/4/02 (1).

UBR 26/03 - Report from Ian Armitage (via Bill Lock) of a pair of **Chestnut-breasted Shelducks** (*Tadorna tadornoides*) seen beside State Highway No. 1 at Te Horo on 24/12/02.

UBR 28/03 - Report from Peter Schweigman and photograph by Tony Hocken on 5/3/03 of a **White-necked Heron** (*Ardea pacifica*) seen by Tony Hocken and others beside State Highway 1 near Totara Historic Reserve south of Oamaru on 24/1/03. This appears to be the **5th accepted record** of the species in New Zealand.

UBR 29/03 - Report and photographs from Mike Twyman of a **Common Sandpiper** (*Tringa hypoleucos*) seen by himself and Gavin Grant at Whangarei Harbour from 6/12/02 to 6/1/03.

UBR 31/03 & UBR 31A/03 - Reports from Nigel Milius & David Lawrie of a **Wandering Tattler** (*Tringa incana*) seen at Karaka shellbanks, Manukau Harbour by David Lawrie & Gillian Vaughan on 4/1/03 and, what was almost certainly the same bird in breeding plumage, by those observers, Nigel Milius, Wendy Hare, & Adrian Riegen on 2/3/03.

UBR 32/03 - Report from Allan Munro & Janice Woon (via Bill Lock) of a **Cape Barren Goose** (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) seen at Greendale, near Paraparaumu on 6/10/02.

UBR 33/03 - Report from David Lawrie of a **"black-tailed" godwit** (species indeterminate) seen by himself and Gillian Vaughan at the Karaka shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 4/1/03.

UBR 34/03 - Report from David Lawrie of a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** (*Limicola falcinellus*) seen at the Karaka shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 4, 5 & 21/1/03, 8/2/03 & 2/3/03 by (variously) himself, Gillian Vaughan, Adrian Riegen, Brent Stephenson, Ian Saville, Steve Wood, Tony Habraken, Gwenda Pulham, Graham Saunders, Nigel Milius, & Wendy Hare.

UBR 35/03 - Report from David Lawrie of 2 **Marsh Sandpipers** (*Tringa stagnatilis*) seen at the Karaka shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 16/9/00 by himself, Tony Habraken & Ken Bond, and again at the same place by himself and Tony Habraken on 15/10/00.

UBR 36/03 - Report from David Lawrie of a banded juvenile **Fairy Tern** (*Sterna nereis*) seen by himself, Tony Habraken, and others at the Miranda shellbanks, Miranda on 24/3/02. The history of the bird involved in this sighting is discussed by Gwenda Pulham in *Miranda Naturalists' Trust News* No. 45 (2002): 8.

UBR 37/03 - Report from David Lawrie of a **Great Knot** (*Calidris tenuirostris*) seen at the Karaka shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 24/2/01 by himself, Tony Habraken, Bev Woolley, Ian Reid, Stuart Chambers, and John & Stella Rowe.

UBR 38/03 - Report from Chris Robertson of a **White-capped (Shy) Mollymawk** (*Diomedea cauta cauta*) banded at Mewstone Island, southern Tasmania as a pullus on 1/5/1987 (280-011054), found dead just south of Manukau Heads on 30/7/1989. This is the **1st New Zealand record** of this taxon.

UBR 39/03 - Report from Audrey Williams & D. Carter (via Richard Parrish) of a **Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*) seen at Mangawhai Spit on 4, 13 & 24/2/03.

UBR 40/03 - Report from Audrey Williams (via Richard Parrish) of a **Black-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa limosa*) seen at Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 5/3/03.

UBR 41/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of two **Mongolian Dotterels** (*Charadrius mongolus*) seen by himself, Elaine Lagnaz, Bruce Connelly, Gillian Vaughan & others at Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 22/3/03.

UBR 42/03 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Black Kite** (*Milvus migrans*) seen at Whangamarino Wetland Reserve near Mercer on 15/3/03. This was probably the same individual which has been seen a number of times since April 2000 at various South Auckland locations, and reported to the Committee by Ted Wnorowski (UBR 76/01) and by David Lawrie (UBR 50/02) - see *Southern Bird* 12 (2002): 6.

UBR 43/03 - Report from Allan Munro & Janice Woon (via Bill Lock) of a **Cape Barren Goose** (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) seen at Paraparaumu Airport on 20/5/01.

UBR 44/03 - Report from Colin Miskelly, with photograph by Tony Matheson, of a **Fiordland Crested Penguin** (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) seen by the latter at Ocean Beach on the South Wairarapa coast in 2/03.

DAVID MEDWAY
Convenor, Rare Birds Committee
4 May 2003

BOOK REVIEW

TURBOTT, GRAHAM. 2002. *Year Away.*
Department of Conservation, Wellington.
ISBN 0-478-22268-8. 168 pp. Soft Cover, price not given.

Thanks to the instigation of Graeme Taylor, the journal kept by the author during 12 months of wartime coastwatching duties on Auckland Island in 1944 has now been published. I quote from the forward written by Paul Dingwall, 'The present memoir serves firstly as an account of the daily life of a coast-watcher, it is a rare insight into a fascinating period of human contact with these remote island outposts. Secondly, his insightful, first-hand observations of plant and animal life in an open natural world of the Auckland Islands to a general readership are presented in a way that has never been done before.'

The first half of the book provides a lucid description of their ever-widening environment as it was explored and the day-to-day activities that were taking place. Visits were made locally and to the nearby offshore islands to see the various bird and marine animal colonies, out as far as Enderby Island. Later on Graham was seconded to join a three-man team of surveyors and was able to travel with them as they mapped the entire island down to and including Adams Island. A very

brief landing on Disappointment Island was also achieved. This was the first time the island had been fully mapped.

The second half of the book is introduced by a short discourse on the geological formation of the island group and the possible means whereby the various introductions of flora and fauna took place. Then Graham lists and describes from his field notes each species of plant life, land and freshwater bird, waterfowl, seabird, marine mammal and introduced mammal. His journal concludes with a general natural history with references to insects and stoneflies.

The book is well laid out with a good map of the group and the clear text is interspersed with supplementary black-and-white photos. Two appendices give the names of the coastwatching parties from 1941-5 and a list of the scientific names of all the mammals and birds. Throughout the book where references are made to other literature, source identification is provided, and both Graeme Taylor and Paul Dingwall have inserted several pertinent factual updates.

Altogether a fascinating read from cover to cover.

RUSSELL N. THOMAS



REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Northland

Very few birds have been found recently on our regular monthly beach patrols. For the last six months of 2002, on the East Coast beach patrols from Kauri Mountain Beach, north of Whangarei, to Mangawhai, the totals were 20 penguins, 14 Fluttering Shearwaters, 10 Flesh-footed Shearwaters, plus a few other birds – not a great number you must admit!

For the last six months of 2002, the West Coast beach patrols provided 3943 prions, mostly found in June and September. That is not counting the prions that were covered by sand before some of the patrols were done.

On 8th March, Whangarei Harbour was counted for the national wader census. The results were 3030 Bar-tailed Godwits, 1876 Pied Oystercatchers, and 746 Lesser Knots. A Fairy Tern and a Royal Spoonbill were at Waipu.

The 2002-3 Fairy Tern nesting season has not been as successful as the summer of 2001-2, which was the best on record. Some of our members helped Department of Conservation workers with the Fairy Tern protection programme, going down to Waipu and Mangawhai Spit on a regular basis to sight and record movements of these birds. Katrina Hansen from DOC and a valued member of the Northland region of OSNZ said 'Despite the low number of chicks fledged this last season there were still nest attempts to be monitored, and the help of the volunteers was very much appreciated and certainly needed when dealing with all the storms and nest losses'.

At our last meeting we made plans to have some intensive days doing fieldwork towards the alas scheme, with a three day venture into squares to the north of our region, and more day trips to cover squares not so far away.

A couple of months ago, when a large ship carrying 130,000 tonnes of sand was grounded on the west coast near Dargaville, we were alerted to the danger of oil spillage. Our oiled birds convenor Audrey Williams was on full alert, but luckily the danger was averted as the ship was re-floated before a major catastrophe occurred on our doorstep.

Although most of our members have been interested in birds and have been active members for a long time, it is always a thrill for one of them to see something for the first time. On 3rd February one of our members had a clear view of a Grey Warbler feeding a young Shining Cuckoo. The cuckoo was calling incessantly to be fed, drawing the attention of the member to its presence at the top of the tall kanuka tree.

Tony Beauchamp saw a Fernbird on Limestone Island and a Reef Heron in Whangarei Harbour, just off Onerahi. Several people have seen the albino Variable Oystercatcher chick along with its normally coloured parents and sibling.

(JANET SNELL)

Auckland

Our speaker in March was Derek Sutton, a visitor from Vancouver, whose theme was 'Alaska and the Yukon'. He described a trip combining the West Coast ferry with a campervan to explore the wilder terrain before returning to sanctuary on board. Glacier Bay was frozen all year when it was first discovered. It is now largely navigable. It harbours humpback whales and sea otters, and has spectacular ice floes.

We were treated to a galaxy of slides, though with few birds. However, our speaker then showed a cassette of the birds to be seen around Vancouver, with specials like the Snowy Owl to whet our appetites for northern climes.

The topic 'Translocation and dispersal of New Zealand Robins' brought a good attendance to hear Dave Pattemore address our April meeting. We learned that, while the transfers from the Tiritiri Matangi Island sanctuary to Auckland's Wenderholm Regional Park have led to successful breeding, there has been little expansion of this population. How have the young birds dispersed?

Dave's study examined two other newly established robin populations; one in the Hunua Ranges where Kokako are protected by predator control, the other to an isolated reserve in the Waikato. Lessons from a large forest tract, as compared with small stands of bush, may improve the viability of mainland releases of species at risk.

Meanwhile, the efforts – regularly reported to our members – to enhance the Waitakere Ranges through the 'Ark in the Park' project, and by further expansion of the Forest and Bird Matuku Reserve, demonstrate co-operation between OSNZ and groups allied to their concern for healthy habitat.

Approximately forty people came along to the May meeting when Dr. Dianne Brunton spoke about the 'Life History Strategies of New Zealand Honeyeaters', in particular the difference between the sexes.

The recent Beach Patrol at Muriwai yielded just 3 birds. A report of Kookaburra at Snells Beach north of Auckland confirms that the population is spreading. The increase in Spotted Doves in urban areas around Auckland was also noted.

Recent fieldwork has included the annual count of New Zealand Dotterel flocks, the late summer census of Tiritiri Matangi Island, and our usual survey of the South Kaipara Lakes on 25th April for water birds, especially New Zealand Dabchick and Australian Little Grebe.

(MICHAEL TAYLOR AND CHRIS THOMPSON)



South Auckland

Activities in the South Auckland region have continued during the summer period and we are really pleased to welcome several new members. Maria Staples-Page was quickly introduced into the Black-billed Gull banding programme in the Firth of Thames and Jane Hart has recently moved into this area from Taranaki. She has already been enlisted to plug the mapping square gaps on the Hauraki Plains.

The March meeting saw the reappearance of members Pam and Des Agnew who now reside in Western Australia. They gave us an illustrated talk of birds and plants from that area including the arid region. It was good to have perspective on completely different bird species and habitats.

Ian Southey was persuaded at 1am on a Saturday evening of mist netting on the Manukau Harbour to show us some of his slides of his adventures in the bottom of the South Island at the April meeting. Ian had to fill in at short notice because our programmed speaker was busy on Tiritiri Island catching Whiteheads for transfer into the Hunua ranges just south of Auckland. We look forward to progress reports on those birds that were released recently into the management area operated by the Auckland Regional Council.

It has been a very good year for wader rarities on the Manukau Harbour. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the change from recent years, although the conversion of the old oxidation ponds at Mangere may have some influence. The use of the newly-established wader roosts around the newly-created shoreline, in the area where the large oxidation pond bunding has been removed, is spectacular. Access to this area is still restricted but it is intended that sometime in 2004 a walking trail and bird hides will be established to enable much greater scrutiny of this area, which is now becoming an important roosting and feeding area.

Tony Habraken undertook several further mist-netting exercises on the Manukau Harbour following that reported in the March issue of *Southern Bird*. He managed to capture a range of wader species including a Lesser Knot, which was the heaviest bird of that species captured in the Southern Hemisphere. He also captured two Curlew Sandpipers, and these are now sporting white flags, which is something to look out for next summer.

Recent sightings on the southern Manukau Harbour roost include one Broad-billed Sandpiper, one Siberian Tattler, one Wandering Tattler, one Large Sand Dotterel, two Mongolian Dotterels, 52 Pacific Golden Plovers, 29 Red-necked Stints, one Sanderling plus the usual waders, although most of those have now departed.

At Miranda the highlights recently have been one Marsh Sandpiper, two Black-tailed Godwits and one Pacific Golden Plover.

Elsewhere within the region there have been more sightings of Banded Rail in recent years than previously, which would seem to indicate that the species is making a comeback in this area. This is probably a result of the extensive mangrove belts that are now establishing around the shorelines.

Tim Barnard from Rotorua on a recent trip to this area spent three hours in the Black Kite territory and was rewarded for his patience with a sighting of this bird. Maria Staples-Page has been watching a Kaka, which has been seen on the edge of the Hauraki Plains.

(DAVID LAWRIE)

Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

The year's first talk was Michele McKinzie, SITNZ (School for International Training, NZ), speaking on Katiki Point's seabird population. Katiki Point is the peninsula immediately South of Moeraki. Michele has discovered possible storm petrel burrows, a great potential find.

The birds came out in force for the summer at Pureora Bush, with Kokako, Kaka, Kakariki, Kereru, and Kingfishers all bounding around the tall trees – must have been that Special "K" we five ate for breakfast? We highly recommend staying here at the DoC cabins in February. We don't recommend the Bog Inn road, if you value your car's paintwork.

Like vultures descending on an unfortunate ungulate, ten Waikato and Volcanic Plateau members gathered at Rotorua in March and were given the 'Falco' treatment at Wingspan Trust – a guided tour of the facilities. Debbie Stewart, the head of the trust, has an amazingly motivated desire to rehabilitate injured New Zealand Falcons, and Australasian Harriers, and we were delighted with the excellent displays she coaxed out of Diamond, a Falcon who 'did the rounds' perched on our arms. The new rearing unit is just about finished, and will be the only one of its kind in New Zealand.

The local AGM in March was another quick effort, all of us looking forward to Laurie Hoverd's following video on the Hutton's Shearwater program. Shearwaters were dyed red or yellow at their colony in the Seaward Kaikouras to distinguish them at sea – not wholly successfully for the video, but coloured birds were picked up. An interesting fact was that the stoats near the colonies go white for the winter.

Five dusty souls gathered at Kiritere, coastal Waitomo, in March

to map the birds in the area. Bush patches still had Whitehead, Kereru and Tomtit, with nothing much in between. The accommodation at Kiritere was superb, a three-bedroom house with everything you need – just what birdwatchers like! The Waikawau Tunnel to the beach produced a Reef Heron.

The most successful concept to a successful atlas square day is a potluck dinner to finish off with. The end of March saw three carloads of victims (er, observers) heading off south from the Hoverd-hosted venue on the slopes of Kakepuku. Stragglers back at night from the wilds of the southern King Country had various stories to tell, from Whiteheads to Tomtits to Pipits. Our South Auckland member appreciated the day as well, or so he tells me...

Our region's activities 'hit the wall' in April, with the Lake Waahi census cancelled due to a toxic algal bloom – which had hospitalised many souls in Australia – being present on the Huntly lake. The April speaker had pulled out at the last minute, so we had Plan B – a video of the Waikato's last remaining peat lake that can be rehabilitated – Horseshoe Lake near Hamilton's northwest boundary. This lake will possibly be Hamilton's pet project, like Karori and Tiritiri Matangi are to Wellington and Auckland, respectively.

Bird sightings were spread around this season, with a variety of unusual records to report. A New Zealand Dabchick was present at the Te Aroha Wetlands in February, while an Australasian Bittern (our regional mascot) was present at Waikorea Stream, North of Raglan the same month. Keeping up the heron family appearances, White Herons were seen at Maketu in March and Waiotahi in April. Three Royal Spoonbills were seen at Whakatane in April, while 14 were at Maketu in March. A Chestnut-breasted Shelduck was seen by Tim Barnard at Waimangu, Rotorua, in April. Pacific Golden Plovers continue to populate Maketu, with 38 in March, and 62 two days later. A Kaka was spotted at the Waikato University on two separate occasions in May. Nigel Milius and Wendy Hare managed to push the Raglan square further into the 60's with their spotting of a Turnstone this month (May).

A Pycroft's Petrel was handed in to Whakatane Bird Rescue in April. It was released at sea around a week later. To finish off with, some nice Blue Duck sightings by Chris Gaskin and Karen Baird: four pairs on the Manganuiateao River, Raetihi, one with a juvenile, and one adult and one juvenile at the Whakapapa Intake, National Park. Chris had seen a pair with two fledglings at the intake in January this year. Thanks to our other observers: Rosemary Tully, Tim Barnard, Hugh Clifford, Bev Woolley, Liz Grove, and Narena Olliver.

(PAUL CUMING)

Beach Patrols

In the first four months of 2003 we have carried out 18 patrols of our Waikato beaches. The distance searched has been 110km, and we found 176 seabirds. This low tally (1.6 seabirds per km) is no doubt due to the rather benign weather we've had most of the time. It was great weather to be out on the beach though. There was a minor wreck of Fluttering Shearwaters in February, but otherwise the number and variety of dead birds has been anything but notable.

Grey-faced Petrel Project

Banding of adult Grey-faced Petrels during April/May is nearly completed for another year. Among the recaptures lately have been seven birds recaptured for the first time as adults after being banded as chicks at Mauao. Their ages ranged from four to seven years. It's great to see they have survived their first few years of life and have now returned to the colony, no doubt with thoughts of breeding in their minds. Two birds banded at Whale Island as chicks have been caught again at Mauao, following recaptures there in previous years. They are now aged 23 years and 33 years. It's a thrill to hold a bird as old as that. It might look pretty much the same as the other birds, but its level of experience is so much greater. Who knows how many tens of thousands of kilometres it has travelled, how many severe storms it has encountered, how many other colonies it has visited, how many offspring it has produced? If only it could tell us.

(HUGH CLIFFORD)

Taranaki

The February field trip to the Stratford Plateau in Egmont National Park was a cool affair with the birds having more sense than to be out in the rather chilly southerly wind. A retreat to lower levels was more rewarding with good sightings of juvenile Bellbird and Tui as well as other bush birds, including four pairs of Riflemen – local discussion as to how the Rifleman received that name is ongoing. Potaema Swamp gave brief glimpses of Fernbird, but good views of Long-tailed Cuckoo.

At the March meeting, we received a request from a member of South Taranaki Forest and Bird for our assistance in a robin banding programme at Collier's Covenant east of Eltham where we have previously done some bird monitoring for them. It was generally agreed that there was already enough information available about the Robin for Forest and Bird to be able to adequately assess the general size of the population in the covenant.

Members reported that Long-tailed Cuckoos were more numerous this year, with David Medway reporting on a group of five at Pukeiti behaving in a seldom-seen manner. A Long-tailed Cuckoo heard at his New Plymouth home was the first recorded there in 35 years.

Bill and Rosemary Messenger gave a brief description of a recent trip to Tiritiri Matangi Island, where Little Spotted Kiwi were a highlight, and to Miranda where they and others were invited to assist in canon netting and processing of Pied Oystercatchers, Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots.

The March field trip to Mangatōi Station in north Taranaki was a pleasant ramble along old logging tracks beside the Mokau River. Fernbirds and possible Spotless Crakes calling from a large raupo swamp, plus a meeting with a local identity, were highlights of the day.

At the April meeting the main item on the agenda was the official opening/closing of the predator fence at the Rapanui Grey-faced Petrel colony, and the public revelation then that this region apparently would be monitoring the colony despite not having been officially asked by anybody to do so. Discussion ensued as to whether we would or wouldn't, and what form any monitoring would take. It was agreed that we should, and that a proposal would be brought to our next meeting for consideration and approval. An internal review was then held into the running of our meetings and field trips and what, if any, changes members would like. There was unanimous agreement that those organizing both agendas were doing a fine job.

The April outing to Dawson Falls in Egmont National Park started out in rather wet and misty conditions, which soon cleared. As usual, female Tomtits were less conspicuous than their male counterparts. A few fortunate participants were rewarded with a brief but awe-inspiring view of a Falcon in full attack dive - our sympathies to the family of the bird in its sights! Some members noticed the agitated behaviour of Tomtit and Grey Warbler. The reason soon became obvious - a Morepork sitting out in full view in daylight which seemed oblivious to our approach and camera flashes. Also in April, a steady walk into the Matemateonga Ranges saw three of us reach the last unvisited Taranaki atlas square.

From the oddity files come reports of an escaped Budgerigar seen on several occasions in the company of a female House Sparrow, and of a Peahen which has ingratiated itself into a flock of Pukeko on a local farm.

(PETER FRYER)

Wanganui

An immature Black-fronted Tern was seen at Turakina Lagoon at the end of February. It was roosting with a flock of eight White-fronted Terns.

Ian Sutherland reported a flock of about 1,000 White-fronted Terns at the Wanganui River estuary in March. They were there feeding for a couple of weeks in mid-month. Also present were half a dozen skuas stealing their food.

Royal Spoonbills seem to be a permanent fixture on the Wanganui River, with up to eleven seen by Nic Peet roosting on dead trees in the estuary during April. Also large flocks of Banded Dotterel, 50 to 60, have been feeding there.

At the end of April Colin Ogle had a pair of Pied Tits in a silver birch outside his house in Durie Vale, a well-wooded subdivision but quite close to the city centre. Very few have been recorded in Wanganui.

At Virginia Lake a Black Swan was sitting on a nest at the end of March. At the end of April the nest was deserted, but a pair of Black Swans were feeding three chicks on the lake. Four Muscovy Ducks (the pied variety) have appeared on the Lake, two males and two females, but the two white ones have disappeared.

(BILL GREENWOOD)

Wairarapa

Our February field trip took us to Mataikona, and turned out to be a beautiful day spent at the beach. We found 22 species. White-faced Herons were hunting in rock pools, and a Black Shag was sunbathing.

We combined with Forest and Bird in March to visit Jim Campbell's property at Miki Miki. Firstly Jim showed us the traps he used to catch various predators, and then he took us around to have a look at his prized Blue Ducks, which have double clutched this year. Afterwards we saw a pair of Mute Swans with a cygnet cruising gracefully by.

At our March meeting Tenick Dennison made sure that we were aware of the species that might be on Henley Lake when we took our planned groups around. We counted 25 species that could be found there and talked about their individual identification marks, which the non-birders might find it easier to use.

April's field trip took us to Cape Palliser where we saw White-fronted Terns with a Black-fronted amongst them, and out to sea, many Fluttering Shearwaters. On our journey home we wondered if the seal we had seen with part of a net fixed around its neck would survive.

At our May meeting, Ralph Powlesland kindly showed us the Chilean bird slides he took whilst on his trip there. There was a wide variety of birds and landscapes. Most of us were left trying to work out how we could save for a trip there too!

Strong winds marred a good day when about 15 people chose to take advantage of our offer to help them identify the birds on Henley Lake. We split into three groups, then went our separate ways. Black and Little Shags were very evident and successfully fished while we were there. We were able to point out the trouble the shags had after the fish were caught. Two of us had watched a shag trying to swallow a pretty big eel earlier that day. There were good numbers of Canada Geese, which seemed to be responsible for keeping the lake free of weed. It was a pity that the wind dropped just after we finished our talks. We may have to do this more often.

(BETTY WATT)

Wellington

Speakers at our recent meetings have focused on birds in overseas locations. In March Colin Ogle described the status of avian biodiversity on Lord Howe Island. Lord Howe is a volcanic island about half the size of Kapiti, with a population of about 300, a World Heritage site that accepts up to 400 tourists per day. It has strong similarities with New Zealand botanically; lots of ship rats (though no longer cats and pigs); extinctions, and threatened species; and successful recovery programmes such as that for the Lord Howe Woodhen (related to the Weka) and the Providence Petrel. Only five of the original forest species remain, sharing the varied habitat with exotics and Australian birds. The arrival of the Pukeko recently has caused concern. It is altogether a dynamic and interesting situation.

The birds of the Galapagos Islands were introduced to the April meeting by Rod Orange. Volcanic and still active, isolated both from large land masses and from human contact (until recently), and surrounded by ocean currents of contrasting temperatures, this is a place where one can observe penguins (on the Equator!) as well as pelicans, and where albatross breed, yet the water is warm enough for snorkelling with the turtles. It is also a place where birds are unafraid of observers. Several of the members who were present had also enjoyed the Galapagos Islands, and added their observations to the general discussion.

In May Eric Dorfman spoke on work he has done determining the ecology of the Black-necked Stork (formerly the Jabiru) in Australia. The numbers of this species are unknown in India but otherwise Australia has the bulk of the world population. Reduced habitat and adult aggression towards juveniles means juveniles have little chance of establishing themselves. Cane toads may be another factor, not yet determined. As a result of Eric's work the status of this stork will probably change from "near threatened" to "threatened" Landowners, however, have responded enthusiastically to educational promotions.

Unusual sightings around Wellington recently include a White Heron near the Freyberg pool in Oriental Bay, a Banded Rail at Taupo Swamp near Plimmerton, a New Zealand Falcon chasing Kaka at the Karori Sanctuary, Black-fronted Terns and Black-fronted Dotterels at Otaki estuary, and Brown Teal at Waikanae.

Sixteen members attended the weekend field trip to Mana Island in March, and banded 21 young robins and 36 Sooty Shearwaters.

The study of the Rock Pigeons in the James Smith parking building is continuing, with banding of more chicks and adults. The latter are being checked for moult, and all non-breeding adults so far have been found to be in wing moult. One side effect of capturing and banding adults is that they tend not to be roosting at their nest sites the next time they are checked. However, diligent searching has discovered new locations of banded birds. They are also being observed in nearby city parks, where a little feeding can entice them closer to check their bands.

In July 2000, Peter Reese launched a training programme of mist-netting, data gathering and banding of passerines at the zoo. At the end of April participants had banded a total of 1025 birds, with 214 recaptures, handling 14 species ranging from Silvereye (242), House Sparrow (205), Starling (159) and Greenfinch (127) to Grey Warbler (3) and Kingfisher (1). An upturn in House Sparrow numbers has been observed. Recently, a highlight was the capture of five Fantails, including the recapture of a bird banded twelve months ago at a site some distance away (for a fantail). The word has gone out to watch for nine Tui (two of them banded at the zoo). There's a chocolate fish for the first report of a sighting away from their banding sites!

There is ample opportunity for members to use these handling skills, as Karori Wildlife Sanctuary starts up its transfer programme for the year, which will initially target species from the Akatarawas, particularly Tomtits.

(ROD ORANGE)

Canterbury

The last couple of months have been fairly quiet, with very few unusual birds seen. Chestnut-breasted Shelducks have joined moulting Paradise Shelducks at Kaiapoi sewage ponds and Christchurch sewage ponds (found by Andrew Crossland) and Normanby Lake (a female and an immature - thanks to Alan Collins). Andrew Crossland also



found a Glossy Ibis, which seems to have returned to the regular wintering locale of Travis Wetland. Cattle Egrets have been notable by their absence, with so far only one returning to the dairy paddocks near Waikuku by early May.

The waders were farewelled at the Avon-Heathcote Estuary (a Friends of the Estuary/Christchurch City Council event) in early March, with a half-dozen members showing about 150-200 members of the public the mainly coloured-up Bar-tailed Godwits, and oystercatchers. Many of those present were also treated to a flying display by an Arctic Skua – the godwits were obviously skua-savvy and took off en-masse, the oystercatchers were relaxed about the whole thing and stayed put.

A month later OSNZ farewelled the waders at Lake Ellesmere, saying tata for a few months to the now colourful Red-necked Stints, Pacific Golden Plovers, and less than colourful Wrybills before they left the Mainland for foreign lands to the north. The Sanderlings were not present, and were probably sunning themselves on some Australian beach.

The March survey of Akaroa bush reserves was rather less than over-subscribed, with just two members doing a tour of this pretty area. Nonetheless David Clarkson and Les McPherson produced some valuable data towards the Banks Peninsula reserves presence/absence project.

John Dowding gave an overview of how Wrybills are doing at our March meeting, with the future for the species looking rather less than rosy if the depredations of nests and adults by mustelids and other predators is anything to go by. Man has also caused problems in the past by drowning good habitat with raised lake levels for hydro projects. Data is deficient on the populations still present on the lower sections of the larger braided rivers that the species favours. It is hoped that the atlas project may add to knowledge here – Canterbury (and other regions) members please note that so far the larger rivers have barely been surveyed so far for the atlas project, and your help would be very welcome – contact the Canterbury RR if interested.

In an update to a presentation given three years ago, Paul Sagar talked in April on what seems to be a success story for at least one species of albatross. The Buller's Albatross on the Snares seems to be doing very nicely thank you at the moment, possibly due to feeding on fishery discards, with increased populations at most sub-colonies. The species is difficult to count using conventional methods due to its habit of nesting under a cover of small trees and shrubs.

(NICK ALLEN)

Southland

Our remaining unvisited atlas squares are down to around 74 thanks to Lloyd Esler's persistent square bashing during February/March. Thanks also to our Otago comrades who recently polished off around 23 of Southland's squares while filling in their own gaps in the Eastern Southland/West Otago area. We hope to return the favour at some future date. While there were no rarities on the lists it was good to see New Zealand Falcons were found on two sheets. Of course many Southland squares have only had fleeting visits so there is still much information to be gained by more visits.

The annual May trip to Masons Bay, Stewart Island, was held in atrocious weather with large breakers well up to the sand dunes. However, Lloyd's small group still managed to count 200 juvenile Sooty Shearwaters, some still alive, including one banded bird. Other birds picked up were Mottled Petrels, Diving Petrels, Broad-billed Prion, prion sp. and a Fiordland Crested penguin. Also found was a possible White-bellied Storm petrel, which is rare this far south. The skin has been sent to Wellington for identification.

Our April speaker was Jamie Wood who gave a very interesting talk on the wader captures and banding at Broome in Western Australia. Jamie was fortunate to be able to participate last summer, and was amazed at the variety and number of birds captured. These included Swinhoe's Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Little Curlew, Whimbrel, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper and Red-necked Stint. At the campsite a bird bath had been set up and due to drought conditions many birds came in for a drink including Rainbow Bee-eaters, Great Bowerbirds and Crested Pigeon. A strange blue and white bird appeared at the bath one day, which nobody could identify. It turned out to be a Blue-and-white Flycatcher, and was the first live sighting of the bird in Australia, which made the trip for Jamie even more exciting.

Our bird list trip to Lake Mavora didn't turn up anything special, but most of the bush remnants that were checked had good numbers of natives, and we heard plenty of robin song in the larger tracts of beech forest.

Our main focus for the remainder of the atlas period will be to visit the remaining unvisited squares.

(PHIL RHODES)

What's on



Northland

Evening meetings, second 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 7.45pm 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 (Feb-Nov) at 7.45pm. Beach patrols ph. Rob Wheeler (09) 299 7069. Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

Waikato

Evening meetings, every third Wednesday, 7.30pm, DoC, London Street, Hamilton. Ph. Paul Cuming (07) 829 8215. 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 Clifford or Paul Cuming. Bird sightings and field trips (monthly) ph. Paul Cuming. Atlas sheets ph. Stella Rowe (07) 843 5199.

Taranaki

Evening meetings – first Tuesday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30pm, ph. Barry Hartley (06) 757 8644. Field trips on first conducive weekend thereafter.

Wanganui

Evening meetings – fourth Tuesday of the month, Davis Lecture Theatre, Wanganui Regional Museum (Watt St).

Manawatu

Evening meetings – second Wednesday of Feb, May, Aug and Nov, Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8pm. Beach patrols – first Wednesday of each month and also at other irregular times.

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. Mist-netting and passerine banding at The Zoo, various Saturdays, ph. Peter Reese (04) 387 7387. Informal field trips (can include atfassing), ph. Stuart Nicholson (04) 934 5940. Beach patrols, ph. Jean Luke (04) 904 1704.

Nelson

Evening meetings – usually first Monday of the month, 7.15pm upstairs in Café Affair, Trafalgar St, Nelson. Ph. David Melville (03) 543 3628 or Rob Schuckard (03) 576 5371.

Canterbury

Evening meetings last Monday of the month, Spreydon Bowling Club, Domain Terrace, Christchurch. Monthly field trips – dates vary. Ph. Nick Allen (03) 312 7183.

Otago

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

Southland

Evening meetings (in conjunction with Field Club) held second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Please phone numbers below for venue and further information, field trip usually on Saturday following. Monthly Beach Patrols during winter, phone Phil Rhodes (03) 213-1228 or Lloyd Esler (03) 213-0404.

