



Southern *Bird*

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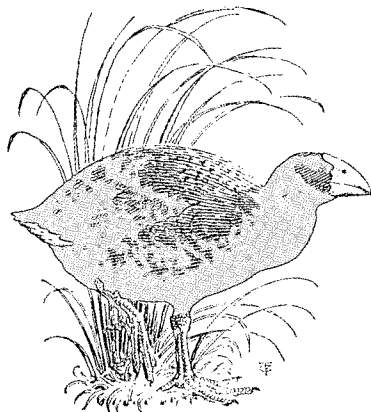
***The Orange-fronted
Parakeet***

***Digital Resurrection
of the New Zealand
Storm Petrel***

***Atlas Encounters of the
Campervan kind***



REGIONAL ROUNDUP • WHAT'S ON • NEW MEMBERS



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Quotation

*In our next lives, we'll remember not to be human.
We'll be a pair of wild geese,
flying high into the sky.
And from that distance, we'll look down
on the world's blinding snows, its oceans, waters,
hills, clouds and red dust, as if we had never fallen.*

N'Guyen-Khac-Hieu

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Cover Photo

Front cover: White Herons often make use of man-made objects around the coast. At Port Takaka this bird used a boat tied up at the wharf as a lookout post, and was fed regularly from the fish factory.

Back cover: Western Weka, near the summit of Mount Stokes, Marlborough.

Both photos by Stella Rowe.

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.

Notes and News from the Scientific Committee

It is a year or so since I reported on the activities of the Scientific Committee. In the intervening period we have been busy.

Unfortunately, due to work pressures and his devotion to other birding activities, Ralph Powlesland has resigned from this committee. It was with great regret we accepted his resignation, as Ralph had been an industrious and dedicated member of our committee. His wisdom, knowledge and his thoughtful approach to the issues under discussion certainly helped the committee to make the progress we have.

We had three excellent nominations for his replacement and I am pleased to announce that Council has appointed Rachel Keedwell to the Scientific Committee. Rachel recently finished her PhD at Massey University, having studied Black-fronted Terns in the Mackenzie Country. She has an impressive publishing record for someone at such an early stage in her ornithological career. Many OSNZ members will know Rachel, as she is a regular contributor at Scientific Days. Council was delighted to have the opportunity to appoint a young person with such good credentials. Welcome aboard Rachel!

One of the priorities for the Committee is to continue with the input of data from the various Society schemes. We made a huge start when Karl Evans entered the nest record data for introduced species into a spreadsheet package. Since then several students have entered data for a few native passerines in return for the use of the data for their projects. The wader count data will be bought up to date in the next few months, as it is required for DoC contracts currently in progress. We would welcome approaches by students, members or other researchers who would be prepared to enter data into an approved spreadsheet or similar programme in return for free use of the data.

We currently have three research contracts underway, all on waders. Two are with the Department of Conservation and the third with the Ministry of Fisheries. A further wader project plus one on coastal birds with a different organisation are being negotiated. These projects all make use of data collected over the years by OSNZ members. They provide useful income to the Society and provide some employment for suitably qualified members.

The Scientific Committee has set in place a process to ensure the quality of reports produced by OSNZ is as good as that produced by other research organisations. This process will also be applied to future OSNZ schemes and projects to help members gather top quality information. This will in no way lessen the enjoyment we get when we go out and count or observe birds. That, after all, is why most of us are members of this Society.

Now we are in the final year of the Atlas Scheme one of the next tasks for the Scientific Committee is to formulate new projects we can then recommend to members and Council. Dr Eric Spurr, a scientist with Landcare Research and a long-time member of OSNZ is interested in setting up a national bird-monitoring project. He will be attending our next meeting and we hope to have some projects to recommend to members at the next AGM.

KERRY-JAYNE WILSON
CHAIRPERSON, SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Publisher

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



ATLAS ENCOUNTERS OF THE CAMPERVAN KIND

On a narrow, winding road with a sharp drop to the Ruatiti Stream far below, we were hugging the cliff face in our Ford Transit campervan when a local ute approached us. As he squeezes past, the driver of the ute stops. Windows are wound down. 'Are you ok?' We assure him that we are indeed all right and not tourists who have mislaid State Highway One. 'Just doing a bird survey' we say. He seems interested, so we explain about the atlas project, and he tells us about the Blue Ducks that are raising three young after nesting in an old culvert on the station. 'Look,' he continues 'why don't you go up to the house and talk to my wife. She'll tell you all about the birds'.

So it is that we shortly find ourselves joining Helen, their three children home for the holidays, and the station hands in the homestead kitchen, where a colossal morning tea is spread out. We came away well fed with a full list for the atlas sheet, some good stories, and a heightened appreciation of this remote corner of the North Island.

We are surprised at how many people stop to ask if we are lost. Once it was a kindly guy driving a laden logging truck and trailer. Perhaps some locals are just checking us out. It is often a good opportunity to ask in return our stock question, 'Have you heard any Moreporks lately?' This is generally the only way to record this species.

Most people know the calls of Morepork, and many are knowledgeable about their local birds. We asked one couple in the Awakino area if we could access a swamp on their land. They are pleased to learn that the swamp contains Spotless Crake, a species new to them. It always pays to travel with a tape recorder handy. In all but the smallest raupo swamps in the central North Island, John usually gets a response to taped calls from Spotless Crake. Unfortunately these wetlands are decreasing in number as more and more farmland is drained.

Taped calls are also useful for locating Fernbird, and we are hopeful of turning up more Marsh Crakes by this means, though the three we have come across so far have been from sightings or unsolicited calls. Atlassing has already shown that there are more Marsh Crakes in the central North Island than we were aware of – at least four sites that were not recorded in the first atlas.

One of the frustrations of atlassing is the number of forestry and farm roads marked on the map, which turn out to have limited or no public access. The reason is explained when, in the Ongarue district, we meet a man who is updating all the Department of Survey and Land Information maps. On his car bonnet he spreads out big aerial photographs on which all roads, public and private, are clear to see. All are recorded on the maps, including those of the AA.

He is able to assist with another dilemma. We had been trying to reach the last square to be atlassed in the Waikato Region by walking old forestry tracks, as there is no road access into the square. We had come close to the magic 6280 northing, and explored some beautiful bird-filled native forest, but all the tracks would veer away. Our new friend now spread out extra-large-scale maps that show that there are indeed no tracks entering the square. Eventually we access it through farmland to the south.

NEW MEMBERS AND DONATIONS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Hilary Aikman (Wellington); Sandra Anderson (Auckland); Cees Bevers (Taranaki); Heather Blackwell (Waikato); Gaylynne Carter (Wanganui); Anita Clarke (Wellington); Dept of Conservation (Volcanic Plateau); Carol Davies (Far North); Detlef Davies (Far North); Myk Davis (Taranaki); Mary Davis (Taranaki); Neil Fitzgerald (Waikato); Kris Grabow (Taranaki); Alison Griffiths (Auckland); Sandra Jackson (Auckland); Chris Lloyd (Australia); Ian McAllan (Australia); Ian McLean (Auckland); Lynette Smith (Far North); Audrey Williams (Northland); Nina Wortman (Wellington).

We also thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society:

Tony Beauchamp; Patrick Buxton; Mr A. R. Carey; Mia Colberts; Michael Criglington; Jack Davidson; Mr G L Don; Michael Fitzgerald; Mike Graham; Prof. J. A. Keast; Mr R. J. Meadows; Kerry Oates; Ross Silcock; Elise Smith; Heather Smithers; Jan Walker; Kerry Walshe; Mr G. W. Wells; Barbara White.



New Zealand Falcon
Hawkswood Range.

by Stella Rowe

There is a public road that we definitely do not recommend for campervans. The Old Motu Coach Road winds down precipitous bush ridges in the Raukumara Range to emerge 70km later at Omarumutu in the Bay of Plenty. Road-watching takes precedence over birdwatching. Holding back overhanging vegetation we manoeuvre around tree-falls, while hoping not to meet any oncoming vehicle on this steep, narrow, twisting old highway. We only vaguely register the calls of Tui, Tomtit, Whitehead, Long-tailed Cuckoo, and the whirr of a New Zealand Pigeon in flight. We recover over a late lunch when we reach Toatoa on the valley floor, and are rewarded by the sound of Weka calling.

Atlassing is not only about encounters with rare birds. More often than not it is the recording of common introduced species – House Sparrow, Myna, Blackbird, Starling, etc – time and time again. Tedious? Not always. Camped by courtesy of the caretaker at Eastwoodhill Arboretum in Hawkes Bay, we are delighted and amused by young Australian Magpies at play in a grassy field. They roll over and over like puppies, hanging on to their opponents by

a leg or a wing. Next morning we are woken by their warbling to blue skies and eucalypt trees. It could be a scene in Australia, but for the New Zealand Pigeon perched in one of the gums.

Some days it is what you don't see rather than what you do. Where have all the Pukeko disappeared to when they were all over the paddocks last time we were there? Why is one square alive with Goldfinches, when the next one seems to have only Yellowhammers?

Sightings of some species require an element of luck – being in the right place at the right time – New Zealand Falcon is one. It is always a thrill to happen on one of these little raptors. We are privileged to have watched a score or more over the first four years of atlassing. Some are hurtling after prey – Pipits in the Kaimanawas and at French Pass, a New Zealand Pigeon in the Rangitoto Range – others are keenly observing the scene from vantage points. One in the Hawkswood Range was most obliging, perching in a small kanuka digesting some insect only four metres away from us. I got out the camera, changed lenses, and took several photos. It flew off when it was ready some twenty minutes later.

For some species such as Cattle Egret, the van becomes a good bird hide. You can also set up the telescope inside, which is useful in gusty weather. Ornithological reference books are all there ready to hand. With almost a year of atlassing to go we are looking forward to more encounters of both the human and bird kind.

STELLA and JOHN ROWE

WANTED URGENTLY

– sightings of colour-banded oystercatchers

Recently, the Ornithological Society was contracted by the Department of Conservation to report on the migration and movements of waders in New Zealand. As part of this contract we are updating the analysis of sightings of Pied Oystercatchers that we have colour-banded as part of our study of birds breeding on farmland in mid-Canterbury.

Previously (*Notornis* 46: 89-99) we analysed the dispersal of birds from their inland breeding area using sightings reported to September 1997. Now we would like to compare the dispersal of birds in more recent years with those of the earlier years to see whether there have been any changes in wintering areas over time.

The more sightings of colour-banded oystercatchers that we receive, the more reliable will be our analysis of movements. Therefore, please send us any sightings as soon as possible, providing details of the colour combination (use notation such as OM-GR to denote Orange over Metal on the left leg, Green over Red on the right leg), date and where the bird was seen. Also, please do not forget to include the your name so that we may acknowledge your contribution.

Sightings should be sent to either: Banding Office, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington, or Paul Sagar, 38A Yardley Street, Christchurch 8004. For the sightings to be included in this new analysis we need to receive your reports by 20 May 2004. We await your sightings with eager anticipation!

PAUL SAGAR and DONALD GEDDES

ATLAS UPDATE

NZ Bird Atlas, coverage 1999-2003

The main map records the distribution of squares surveyed, with the number of sheets returned per square from some 22350 (15740 at 31/12/2002) data sheets returned to the Convenor by 31 December 2003, which have undergone initial processing. More than 1000 sheets have been received since then and are not included here. Though not mapped, we have records giving a good coverage from the Chatham Islands.

At this point we had achieved recording sheet coverage for 92+% of the main islands of the country. However, the total coverage map gives a good indication of areas where the effort has been high – some 18% (11%) of the country has 12+ sheets, while now only 29% (44%) of the country has two sheets or less (including the unsurveyed). A useful challenge for the remainder of the project will be to survey and upgrade all the squares that have only an open circle on the map and turn them into solid dots, along with a major effort to get into the last of the unsurveyed areas. The most popular square (93 (65) sheets) continues to be in Wellington and contains the Karori Sanctuary project. The highest tally for a single sheet has increased to 79 (71), containing records from Mangere.

To date 572 individuals or groups have returned records. The greatest number from one individual is 1593 (1091) from Barry Hartley. Nick Allen at 1509, Tadeusz Wnorowski at 1284 and the Rowses at 1148 are the only other teams over 1000 sheets. However, Tadeusz remains well in the lead for individual species records with 43717 (an average of 34 per sheet). So far 76 individuals/teams have returned fifty or more sheets, comprising 77% of the 431,000+ species records reported at an average of 19 per sheet.

The aim of the completed atlas project is to have at least one record sheet from each square, once in each season, with an extensive record of the habitat used. So far, 2878 squares of the country have one or more records. However, the seasonal maps show that coverage is still quite variable, even though the effort (sheets returned and total species records) is relatively similar per season. The blank seasonal areas provide a challenge for all members to plan ahead in their ornithological travels, and for the more populous regions, who may think they have finished their areas, to assist their neighbours. We are aware of a number of special atlas expeditions that have travelled to some of the more obvious blank spots from past coverage, and the seasonal maps show the effects of some of these.

NUMBER OF SHEETS PER GRID

- 1
- 2-6
- 7-12
- 12+



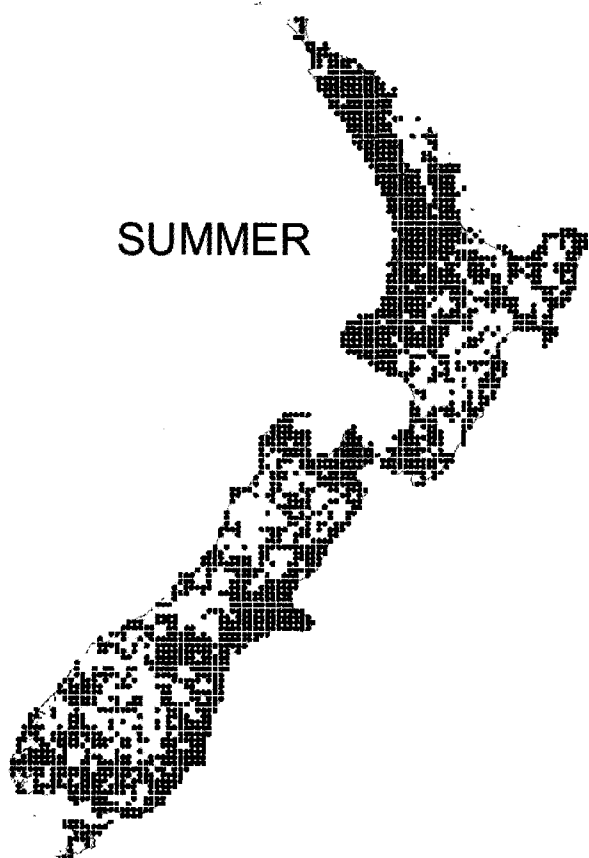
Please ensure that you attend the AGM in 2004 at Oamaru to improve the coverage in parts of the South Island – note the good winter coverage for the Hawkes Bay, Rotorua, Westland and Wanganui districts from the past four AGMs.

We are greatly indebted to Parker Jones, Pasi Hyvonen and Elaine McAlister from Eagle Technology Ltd. Wellington, for producing these latest maps from the base dataset being created by Derek Batcheler. Nicki Sinclair continues to be employed to enter the habitat and species records into the database using the entry software created by Ross Pickard. She is slowly overhauling the arrival of new data sheets with some 15000 datasheets entered by the end of 2003. The TFBIS programme of the Department of Conservation funds her employment for the data entry. Stuart Nicholson continues to assist with problem solving for errant records. The Society gratefully thanks all those who have contributed so far. Please help us ensure that the last eight months of the project are equally successful.

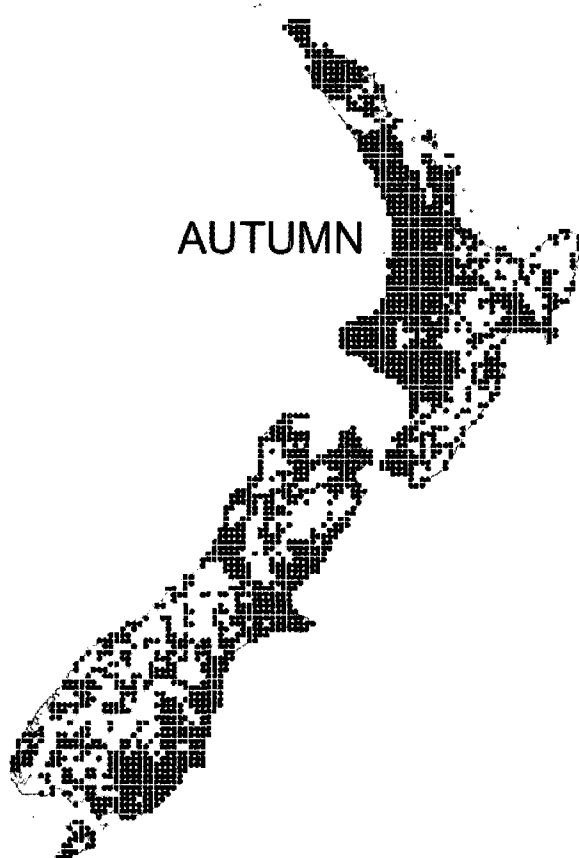
CJR ROBERTSON



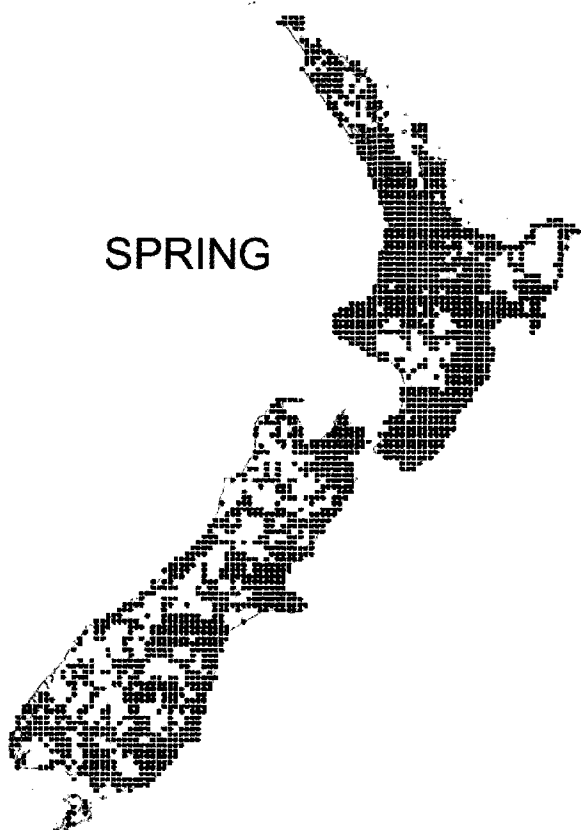
SUMMER



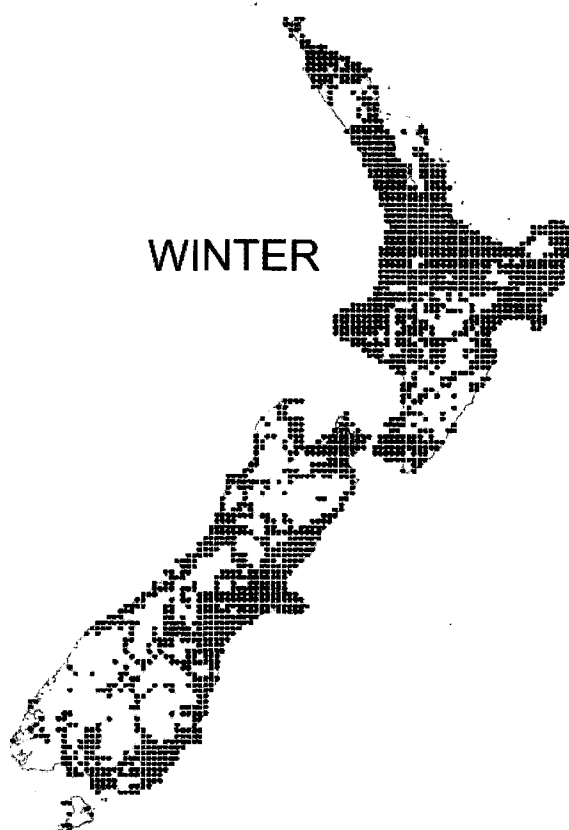
AUTUMN



SPRING



WINTER



Squares for which seasonal records have been received by 31 Dec 2003.

Digital Resurrection of the New Zealand Storm Petrel

In this the modern day and age, what birder honestly would think that they might resurrect from presumed extinction a species of New Zealand bird? Surely, the heroic era of G.B.Orbell and the Takahe rediscovery is gone? In fact, this assumption may be true for land birds, but look to the oceans and the potential, albeit slim, is still there for seabirds. Seabird research continues to find out how much remains unknown.

One New Zealand seabird presumed extinct is the barely known black-and-white New Zealand Storm Petrel. Evidence of this form of storm petrel is restricted to just three skins collected in the 1800s: one preserved at the British Museum of Natural History, Tring, and two at the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. Recent studies of these skins categorise them in the family *Oceanites*, with species status under the provisional scientific name *O. maorianus*. It is interesting to note that storm petrel bones unearthed by workers researching New Zealand's fossil birds also have been ascribed to the family *Oceanites* and are tentatively being ascribed to the New Zealand Storm Petrel. These bones may be further evidence of the species. One thing is for certain though, 150 years or thereabouts is a very long time for a species to be missing.

On 25 January 2003, a Wrybill Birding Tours pelagic trip with 12 participants led by Brent Stephenson and Sav Saville encountered a black-and-white storm petrel near the Mercury Islands, off the Coromandel Peninsula. The bird circled the boat for about one minute. Brent hastily ran off a short series of photographs. Three out of four observers who got onto the bird thought they saw a black belly stripe. The feet projected beyond the tail tip. The only reasonable conclusion on identification at the time was Black-bellied Storm Petrel and it was logged as such.

After the event, Brent's digital images revealed information about the storm petrel not seen in the field. Most surprising was the lack of a black central belly stripe. With the central belly an unmarked white. Furthermore, the undertail coverts were white, not black. There were streaks on the flanks and undertail coverts. The breast band was not clear-cut, but had black-brown 'bleeding' projections onto the white belly. These characteristics are nothing like those of Black-bellied Storm Petrel.

Not surprisingly there was growing debate about the identity of the 25 January storm petrel. Possibilities seemed to be a white-bellied form of Wilson's Storm Petrel, a White-bellied Storm Petrel, or a subspecies or an aberrant form of Black-bellied Storm Petrel. None of these fitted the photographic evidence. At one stage Alan Tennyson introduced the 'crazy idea' that the bird might have been a New Zealand Storm Petrel. This 'crazy idea' slowly became the preferred one, as Brent's images of the live bird were repeatedly compared to Ian's images of the three skins. Eventually, it was decided to widen the debate through the web and raise the flabbergasting possibility in Saville *et al* (2003) that their bird may have been the first known sighting for about 150 years of the presumed extinct New Zealand Storm Petrel.

Initially, opinions amongst Australian and New Zealand seabirders about the validity of the proposed identification ranged the spectrum from dismissive to confident. After months of Internet discussion more seabirders were persuaded toward the confident camp, or at least away from the dismissive camp. Yet, everything hinged on one sighting and a few understandably hurried photographs. Ultimately, nothing would be resolved without a future well-documented sighting incorporating quality photographs. How long might this take? Would there ever be another sighting? The standing of the defiant observers hung on chance. Their painful wait, however, was to be a surprisingly short one.

On 17 November 2003, two visiting seabird enthusiasts from the UK, Bob Flood and Bryan Thomas, chartered a boat from Sandspit, near Warkworth and steamed out to two kilometres north of Little Barrier Island. Their main purpose was to watch close-up and photograph the grey-brown White-faced Storm Petrel. They chummed whilst drifting in a brisk westerly wind, waiting for storm petrels to be drawn in by smell. Storm petrels soon arrived as expected, but surprisingly they were all black-and-white.

At least ten and possibly 20 of these black-and-white storm petrels were seen in a period of an hour and a half. Many of them fed over the oily slick created by the chum, but this formed up-wind and directly into the sunlight. Nevertheless, Bryan shot a series of photographs as the storm petrels approached the boat and Bob took some video footage.

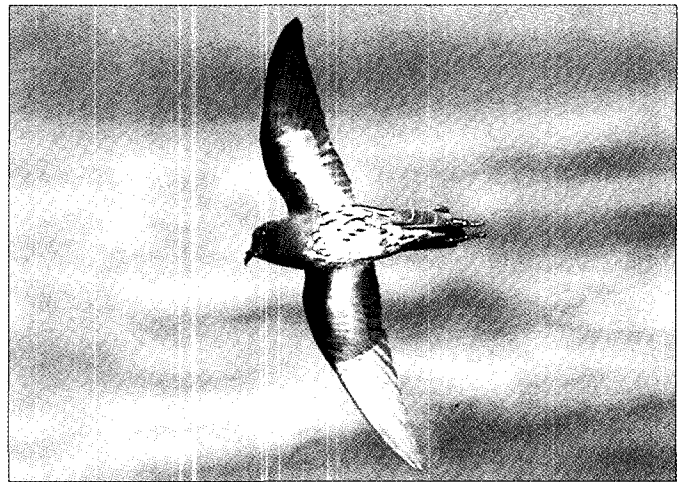


Photo by Bryan Thomas

Dark markings were seen on the belly although they were hard to position, and the feet projected well beyond the tail tip. These and other features excluded identification as White-bellied Storm Petrel. Thus, the birds were assumed to be Black-bellied Storm Petrels. There was no other option according to the field guides. The wings were narrower and more pointed than expected and a clear view of a black belly stripe was not attained, but these apparent and surprising anomalies were put down to lack of observer experience with Black-bellied Storm Petrel.

That evening back at the digs Bryan downloaded his digital images to laptop. He noticed that the dark markings on the bellies of the storm petrels were in fact streaks and called to Bob to take a look. With a series of digital images and a laptop fully equipped with software to explore them, the two soon realised that the storm petrels were not Black-bellied.

Luckily, both had read in passing Saville *et al*'s (2003) article about the putative New Zealand Storm Petrel seen in January 2003 and the skins collected in the 1800s. As far as Bob and Bryan could remember, their storm petrels looked just like the photographs of the live bird and the skins. A web version of the article was consulted next day and vague memories became hardened facts. They found themselves having to believe the unbelievable. There could be no doubt. The New Zealand Storm Petrel is not extinct!

Bob and Bryan immediately emailed Brent, Ian and Sav with the dramatic news. Many more emails were exchanged full of expletives and superlatives best not repeated here. Celebrations ensued as if all five were party to a syndicate lottery win.

A full account including five quality photographs of the 17 November sightings was documented in Flood (2003). This published confirmation swung opinion amongst seabirders across the globe and now there is a near international consensus view that supports our conclusion. BirdLife International has recategorised the New Zealand Storm Petrel from extinct to critically endangered. A major monograph on Albatrosses and Petrels by Dr Michael Brookes (curator at the University of Cambridge) due out this year will now include the New Zealand Storm Petrel as probably a full species, and another such monograph in preparation by Hadoram Shirihai will include it as a full species. We hope that the New Zealand Rare Birds Committee will formally accept our records and that subsequently the Department of Conservation will embrace a project to establish the status of the New Zealand Storm Petrel and to preserve it.

This amazing story is not complete, however, without a final word about the means of our rediscovery. Digital camerawork in the field captured details of our storm petrels that the eye could not make out; or perhaps the mind found impossible to believe. Whichever, there is no doubt that our rediscovery of the New Zealand Storm Petrel is nothing other than a digital resurrection.

References

- Saville, S., Stephenson, B., & Southey, I. 2003. A possible sighting of an 'extinct' bird – the New Zealand Storm-petrel. *Birding World* 16: 173-75.
Flood, R.L. 2003. The New Zealand Storm-petrel is not extinct. *Birding World* 16: 479-482.

BOB FLOOD, SAV SAVILLE, IAN SOUTHEY, BRENT STEPHENSON, and BRYAN THOMAS



REVIEWS

National Wildlife Centre Trust, Rangitaane O Wairarapa Inc., Department of Conservation. (No date). *Pukaha, songs from the forest.* Publisher not mentioned. Catalogue number Pukaha 1. Audio compact disc plus softback booklet 48pp.

This compact disc was produced to celebrate and inspire support for the restoration of the Pukaha/Mount Bruce Forest. All profits from the sale of the CD go to this exciting restoration project. A community partnership between the National Wildlife Centre Trust, Rangitaane O Wairarapa Inc., and the Department of Conservation aims to provide safe habitat for hundreds of free-ranging Kaka, Kokako and North Island Brown Kiwi (and thousands of smaller birds) by carrying out intensive ongoing pest control throughout this 942 ha forest. The first Kaka were successfully reintroduced into the forest in 1996, followed by six Kokako in July and August 2003, with releases of Kiwi and more Kokako planned for the near future.

Four tracks - The Awakening, Playtime, Waiata Manu Huia, and The Night Shift - take the listener on a delightful journey from one dawn to the next. The birdsong tracks are compiled from numerous high quality recordings made by various contributors - Les McPherson, the Department of Conservation Library and the Natural History Unit Archive to name a few. Skilful engineering has melded these into a seamless and credible story of a day in the life of the forest's birds. The third track, a waiata composed and recorded by Rangitaane O Wairarapa, pays homage to the extinct Huia. It begins with a simulation of the Huia's call, as whistled by Henare Hemana in 1954 - hauntingly beautiful and a sobering reminder that extinction is forever.

The accompanying 48-page booklet outlines the background and history of Pukaha and the vision and goals of the restoration project.

Hunt, Janet. 2003. *A Bird in the Hand: Keeping New Zealand Wildlife Safe.* Random House New Zealand. ISBN 1-86941-563-9. Softback, 128pp. \$29.95

Janet Hunt explores some of New Zealand's unique and diverse endangered native wildlife in this book. The chapters are individual stories on the uniqueness of each of the selected endangered species, their rescue and on-going care including 11 familiar birds, tuatara, Hamilton's frog, giant snail, short-tailed bat, worm-insect and weta with horns.

While it is an ideal book for children aged from around seven years upwards it certainly is not overtly a 'childrens book'. This book will have a broad general appeal to a wide range of readers including those who read intensely as well as those with less reading stamina. For simply general interest, readers can dip and dive, browsing for fascination in the text or the comprehensive photographic illustrations. A great little resource book, it will be a particularly useful reference for school libraries, teachers and projects.

Each species has a chapter of its own presented in a magazine-style combination of narrative, fascinating facts and statistics, together with snippets of legend, anecdote and various by the by.

The book size is good for holding while reading or sharing with listeners. The written style is very clear and accessible, drawing the reader in. While not avoiding technical language it explains and reinforces specific or scientific language when it is used.

A section of text outlines each birdsong track with a storyline explaining what the birds are doing. Each species is introduced with a photograph and an associated Maori proverb. Timings indicate an example of when each species can be clearly heard on the CD. In addition to the native birdcalls that you might expect to hear in a North Island forest, rare species such as Kokako, Saddleback, parakeet, Stitchbird and Kakapo also have their say.

This CD is completely different from earlier recordings of New Zealand birdsong (e.g. *New Zealand birds: a sound guide, volumes 1-7* (1989) McPherson Natural History Unit) that typically introduce the listener to a larger range of species but where each bird is heard in isolation. In contrast, *Pukaha* allows you to listen to the interplay of a whole bird community, just as you would in a healthy forest. Most species are represented on several occasions demonstrating a wide range of their calls. While you enjoy the magic of Kokako taking centre stage for the second half of track one (which lasts 20 minutes in total), you can pick out the calls of at least eight other forest birds in the background. While this CD could be viewed as a learning tool for identifying forest birdcalls, it is much more than that. It expresses a spiritual element and cultural perspectives that, combined with its technical excellence, have created a unique and outstanding product.

Pukaha, songs from the forest is highly recommended as a relaxing and inspiring 'virtual reality' sound experience of a New Zealand forest as it should be. It would also make a great gift for a conservation-minded friend. Order your copy from Mount Bruce (www.mtbruce.doc.govt.nz) or phone (06) 3758004 at a cost of \$39.95, which includes postage and packaging within New Zealand or overseas.

CHRISTINE MANDER

Subjects are presented in a clever and creative design, which introduces each species' details in an attractive passport page. A great deal of information is presented, but page layout is never cluttered or overwhelming. A wealth of high-quality photographs fit well with and reinforce the text. The book concludes with an index and a useful 'find out more' section referring to the internet and other reference books, although it does not refer to the OSNZ website or *The Field Guide to the Birds of New Zealand* by Heather & Robertson.

Photographic illustrations involve people in action including Department of Conservation staff, researchers, volunteers and school children. This book will fulfil a very important role encouraging readers in their interest and involvement in wildlife conservation for careers, hobbies and projects.

A book with instant but also enduring appeal. An attractive reader-friendly publication with a strong conservation message that 'this is your environment, and you can make a difference.' A book that offers readers choices of how to become aware and involved if they choose. It demonstrates that when we care about our wildlife we can really make a difference. A creative and useful addition to the literature on New Zealand wildlife conservation. An ideal Christmas gift for children and others with a strong interest in caring for New Zealand's native wildlife. A high quality production at a good price.

STEPHEN SHARP

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Oamaru, Saturday 5 June 2004

Notice is hereby given that the sixty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Saturday 5 June 2004 at the Oamaru Chartered Club, Oamaru commencing at 8pm.**

AGENDA

Apologies.
Confirmation of minutes of 2003 AGM.
Reports of President and Treasurer and financial statements.
Appointment of Auditor.
Annual subscriptions - see notices of motion below.
Constitutional alterations - see notices of motion below.
Presentation of awards.
General business.

Notices of motion

The notices of motion set out in *Southern Bird* 13 (March 2003), that were to have been considered at the 2003 Annual General Meeting, will now be considered at this meeting. No other notices of motion for consideration at the meeting had been received by the closing date of 28 February 2004.

**DAVID MEDWAY
PRESIDENT**



The Orange-fronted

NEW ZEALAND'S RAREST

The endemic Orange-fronted Parakeet or 'karaka kakariki' is currently listed in the highest threat category of the Threat Classification System. Following a dramatic range contraction in the South Island over the last fifty years, Parakeets now exist, all in Canterbury. These populations are restricted to the Hawdon, Poulter and South Hill areas within a 10 km radius in Arthur's Pass National Park and Lake Sumner Forest Park. The number of birds remaining in the wild is in the order of 100-200 individuals.



Hawdon Valley

Photo by: Petrina Duncan, DoC



Chick

Photo by: D. Crouchly, DoC



Hawdon Valley

A taxonomically confusing bird

There has been considerable debate for many years regarding the taxonomy of Orange-fronted Parakeets. Reports published in the 1980s suggested that they were merely a colour morph of the more common Yellow-crowned Parakeet. This was based on evidence that the two types interbred in captivity and the wild. Further experimental cross-breeding showed that head colour in both species was controlled by just one gene, with no intermediate colours produced in the progeny, supporting the colour morph hypothesis. Other researchers argued that the Orange-fronted Parakeet was a separate species based on their distinctive morphology, behaviour and vocalisations. The confusion finally ended in 2000, after three years of genetic, morphological and ecological research undertaken by the Department of Conservation and Victoria University. The findings were clear-cut: Orange-fronted Parakeets were a distinct species, as originally described in 1857, and were actually found to be more similar to the Antipodes Island Parakeet than to any other species. Numbers had seriously declined by 2001, prompting an immediate reconsideration of their threat classification. Orange-fronted Parakeets now have a very high risk of extinction and are New Zealand's rarest forest bird on the mainland.

Ecology of a cryptic species

Orange-fronted Parakeets are proving to be a particularly challenging species to study, in part because of their cryptic nature and also because their numbers are so low. In areas where flocks of 30-40 birds were seen five years ago, an observer today is extremely lucky to encounter more than two birds. Fortunately, some of the research being undertaken is providing answers to ecological questions regarding their diet and breeding biology.

The diet of Orange-fronted Parakeets appears to change seasonally in response to food availability. During spring they feed on invertebrates gleaned from the leaves and bark of beech trees. Beech flowers are also an important part of the spring diet. In summer they eat mostly beech seeds, especially if an abundant seed supply is present. Breeding coincides with the appearance of beech seeds in summer. Courtship and mating behaviours occur from November to February, followed by nest site selection, egg laying and incubation. Of the three nests that have been inspected, the number of eggs ranges from five to eight. The egg incubation phase, performed solely by the female, takes 21-26 days. Chicks remain in the nest until they are 40-50 days old, fed predominantly by the female, although the male assists when chicks are older. If a beech mast (prolific seeding) occurs, the birds may have enough food to extend their breeding season through autumn and winter, thus increasing their annual productivity.

Cause of decline and threats

The primary reason why Orange-fronted Parakeets have declined is thought to be predation by introduced mammals. Stoats and rats are highly capable ground and arboreal hunters, making them the most likely predators. Orange-fronted Parakeets are especially vulnerable because they nest and roost in tree holes accessible to predators. The situation is further complicated by beech mast events, as these can result in huge irruptions of stoat and rat numbers due to increased food availability. Given that the parakeet breeding season is likely to be extended during a beech mast, the threat of nest predation may last for many months.

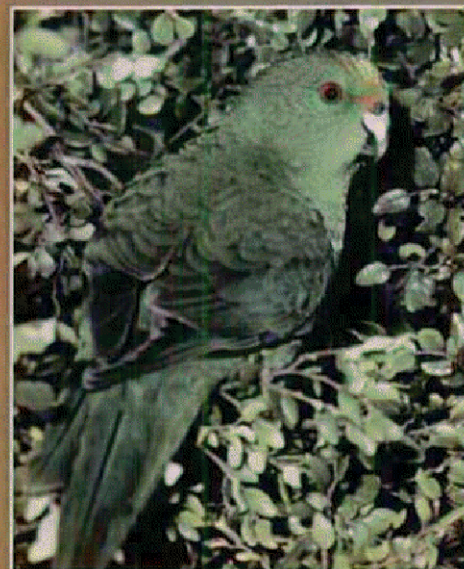
Differences between the parakeet species in their habitat use are thought to have led to a greater decline in Orange-fronted Parakeets and extinction of Red-crowned Parakeets from the mainland. Orange-

Parakeet

MAINLAND FOREST BIRD

*a nationally critical species, under the New Zealand
years only three known populations of Orange-fronted
Branch Hurunui Valleys, fitting within an area of 30km
ese beech-forested areas is uncertain, but is likely to be*

PETRINA DUNCAN and JACK VAN HAL



Orange-fronted Parakeet

Photo by: G. Dennis, DoC



Photo by: Petrina Duncan, DoC



Climbing

Photo by: Jack Van Hal, DoC



Chicks

Photo by: G. Dennis, DoC

fronted Parakeets spend significantly more time in low-growing shrubs and on the ground than Yellow-crowned Parakeets. The lower parts of the forest have been subject to heavy browsing by cattle, deer and possums for many years, changing the forest structure significantly. Therefore, Orange-fronted Parakeets may have lost important parts of their natural foraging areas, including shelter from predators on the ground. Red-crowned Parakeets also spend considerable time on the ground and have disappeared completely from the South Island's forests in the last few decades (suggesting that the ground is not a safe place for parakeets).

Uncharacteristically, two beech masts occurred in consecutive summers from 1999 to 2001 in Canterbury. This prompted a massive rat plague that swept rapidly through the South Branch Hurunui Valley, which had a catastrophic impact on the Orange-fronted Parakeets. The remaining Hurunui population appears to be on the brink of extinction – one more rat plague would ensure the disappearance of this species entirely from the valley.

Steps to prevent extinction

The first step to prevent the demise of Orange-fronted Parakeets is predator control. The Department of Conservation undertakes stoat control in the Hawdon and Hurunui Valleys. A rat contingency plan was recently implemented. Rat monitoring involves trapping throughout the two valleys to detect an increase in rat numbers. If a rat irruption seems likely, trapping effort will increase and toxins may be deployed. Predator control in the Poulter Valley is being assessed. The small Poulter population was only discovered in May 2003 and more information is being gathered about its range and size.

The Minister of Conservation recently announced a new initiative known as Operation Ark to protect native forest birds during predator irruptions. Operation Ark identifies 10 sites in the South Island which are critical for the survival of Orange-fronted Parakeets, Yellowheads/mohua and Blue Ducks/kowhiowhio. These sites will have full contingency plans in place to control rats and stoats when they irrupt next.

Because of the devastating impact the last rat irruption had on the Orange-fronted Parakeet populations, it has been necessary to look at establishing a population on an island free from predators and parakeets. To do this the Department has a plan to trial release a cohort of 20 juvenile birds onto Chalky Island in Fiordland. The 20 juveniles will be sourced from eggs harvested from wild nests, then hatched and raised by captive Red-crowned Parakeets. Five eggs were removed from a nest in the Hurunui Valley during 2003. One egg failed to hatch and four healthy chicks were raised and released into a holding aviary two months after the egg transfer. Sadly two of these chicks died over the following months. All efforts are now focused on finding more nests this summer and raising additional juveniles for a future release. This step should ensure the survival of a safe population of New Zealand's most threatened parakeet.

We would be interested in any sightings of Orange-fronted Parakeet from OUTSIDE the Hawdon and South Branch Hurunui Valleys, provided the observer is at least 90% positive of their identification.

For further information about Orange-fronted Parakeets, or to report sightings contact Petrina Duncan or Jack van Hal at the Department of Conservation, North Canterbury Area Office, Private Bag 5715, Christchurch. Phone 03 371 3706.

THE SECOND AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE.

The second Australasian Ornithological Conference was held at the Australian National University in Canberra, 10-13 December 2003. The first was held in Bathurst, NSW and the third will be held in New Zealand, probably in Blenheim. These conferences are held every second year, and are hosted by both Birds Australia and OSNZ with both societies represented on the organising committees. Paul Scofield and I were the OSNZ members on the Canberra organising committee. In turn Birds Australia will appoint two Australians onto the Blenheim committee. AOCs are scientific meetings and have a very different role to the less formal scientific days held by both OSNZ and Birds Australia, and Birds Australia's annual congress. They provide a regular forum for ornithologists to meet and present the latest research on the birds of our part of the world.

It was a very full programme with plenty for the 220 attendees to do. During the three days on which papers were presented, three plenary lectures (one by Trevor Worthey), 77 other oral presentations and 22 poster papers were on offer. In addition to Trevor Worthey's plenary there were 10 other presentations by New Zealanders. The New Zealand presenters included researchers from three universities (Massey, Victoria and Lincoln) and three museums (Te Papa, Canterbury and Otago). Most other presenters were from Australia although researchers from Britain and Korea gave papers while the audience included delegates from several other countries.

In addition to the presentations there were early morning bird walks on campus and in the nearby botanical gardens, a birding trip to Canberra parks, social functions and between sessions the foyer and lunch venues

were abuzz with bird talk. Birds Australia and CSIRO had interesting displays showing some of their recent and current ornithological studies and some of their latest scientific publications. Few delegates, it seemed, did not find some essential bird books to buy from the extensive range on offer at Andrew Isles bookstall outside the lecture rooms.

The papers spanned a wide range of ornithological interests including biogeography, taxonomy, breeding biology, mating systems, habitats, distributions, landscape ecology and foraging. Most papers had an ecological or conservation focus. I find meetings with the Australians particularly interesting. Although the Australian and New Zealand bird faunas have a lot in common, the habitats and predator guilds in the two countries are very different. We can learn a lot about the ways our birds have adapted to the unique New Zealand environment by comparing the ecology of our birds with those in Australia. The two countries have a lot to learn from one another. For instance, Australian ecologists are streaks ahead of us when it comes to landscape ecology, whereas New Zealanders have taken a more pragmatic approach to solving conservation problems than have the Australians. Ornithology could greatly benefit from greater trans-Tasman flow of people and ideas.

Thanks to the Australians on the organising committee, Penny Olsen, Barry Baker, Nick Nicholls and Denis Saunders, for it was they that did most of the hard work required to make the conference happen.

KERRY-JAYNE WILSON

NOTICE BOARD

Australasian Ornithological Conference

Your attention is drawn to the AOC, which will be held in Blenheim, Marlborough, from 6-9 December 2005. Watch out for the circular calling for expressions of interest in the next issue of *Southern Bird*.

**BRIAN BELL FOR THE
AOC ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

Back numbers

Due to my having to relinquish the role of keeping and supplying them, backnumbers of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, and the Index/Checklist are currently unavailable until further notice. Sales items and the slide library are still available from the following address: Private Bag MBE381, Hamilton, or email birdo@post.com

PAUL CUMING

Falla Memorial Award & A.T. Edgar Junior Award 2005

Nominations are called for the above awards and should be with the Secretary (P.O. Box 12397, Wellington) by 30 June. Nominations should be on the standard forms, which are available from RRs and the Secretary. The Awards Committee will consider all nominations, and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration at its spring meeting. Contact your RR for further information on OSNZ award procedures. They are set out in the RR's Manual.

Nominations for Regional Representatives 2005

Each RR serves for a one-year term, starting 1 January, though incumbents can be re-nominated for an unlimited number of terms.

Nominations for the RR of each region close with the Secretary (P.O. Box 12397, Wellington) on 31 July 2004. The nomination paper for each RR must be signed by two financial members of the Society from that region and must be consented to in writing by the person nominated, who must also be a member of the Society. If the Secretary receives more than one valid nomination a postal ballot will be held among the financial members of the region. If no nomination is received from a region, Council may appoint an RR for the 2005 year.

Wanted Papers on New Zealand bird species

All citations, reprint copies or photocopies of papers on, or relating to, any New Zealand bird species that have been published in a scientific journal or general magazine other than *Notornis*. These papers or citations will be made available to all members, and a list of these publications will be published annually in *Notornis*. Please send to Biz Bell, PO Box 14-492, Wellington, or wmil@clear.net.nz





REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Auckland

The possible rediscovery of the New Zealand Storm Petrel in the Hauraki Gulf has excited the interest of Auckland members, many of whom have been out on pelagic tours to see the birds for themselves. New Zealand Storm Petrels are very distinct from the Gulf's more common White-faced Storm Petrel. New Zealand Storm Petrels are now regularly located north-east of Little Barrier Island and the Mokohinau group of islands. The New Zealand Storm Petrel's size, shape, colour and flight are all distinctly different from the White-faced Storm Petrel. However, proof of these birds as the presumed extinct New Zealand Storm Petrel still depends on live capture and DNA comparison with skins from the 1830s preserved in museums in Paris and London.

Other recent sightings of note in the Auckland area included an albino Variable Oystercatcher at Tāpapa, and a New Zealand Falcon on Auckland's North Shore near Northcote. Kaka were seen at several north Auckland locations between October and January including Mathesons Bay near Leigh, the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, Campbells Bay on the North Shore, and on the north-west coast at Bethells Beach and South Head. Large groups of migratory waders continue to feed at sites around the Kaipara Harbour, the Manakau harbour and the Firth of Thames. Recent sightings include several Eastern Curlews, Large Sand Dotterels, and Mongolian Dotterels.

In the north Kerita swamp on South Head (Kaipara), an Australasian Little Grebe was seen incubating eggs on an isolated floating nest that had no cover from high vegetation and was open to the sky. Also in this wetland area was a family of six Australasian Little Grebes – two adults and four chicks – an unusually prolific pair for this area.

November was a busy time for many members with the spring surveys including wader censuses at Mangawhai, Firth of Thames, Manukau, and South Kaipara. There were also 16 members who overnights on Tiritiri Matangi Island for the spring survey that included both transects and five-minute counts. This survey is an ongoing one, organised by Mike and Sharen Graham, that has completed 17 years of spring and autumn counts – the goal is 20 years.

Barbara Hughes gave the November meeting an informative account of her work on Tomtits in the Auckland region. Barbara had a year off teaching science on a Royal Society Science Teachers Fellowship and chose to study several endemic bird species. A large part of her work has involved organising a transfer of Tomtits from an area of commercial pine forest in the Hunua Ranges to Tiritiri Matangi Island. Now that the birds have been cleared of any avian diseases, the first of these transfers is expected to go ahead in April.

The Christmas party and quiz was enjoyed by members in December, and in January unseasonal cold and wet weather failed to put off a group of hardy members who turned out for the annual picnic, this year at Western Springs Park. A pair of New Zealand Dabchicks and their distinctively marked single chick, was the highlight of a walk around the main lake.

At our February meeting, DoC warden Chris Golding gave an interesting update on the breeding season of Fairy Terns at Papakanui Spit and Pakiri Beach. Chris detailed the management techniques used by DoC to try and enhance the breeding success of the terns. These included moving a nest that was repeatedly threatened by sand dune movement, rescue of eggs to the Auckland Zoo incubator in bad weather, and the use of fake eggs. Following this talk Simon Fordham gave us on the latest news from Tiritiri Matangi Island including a particularly successful breeding season for Stitchbird, Kokako, and Brown Teal. He also made mention of the good numbers of Little Spotted Kiwi, Robins, Fernbirds and Whiteheads thriving on the island. Other interesting sightings there included Welcome Swallow taking parasites from New Zealand Pigeons on the wing, Moreporks raising chicks near the boardwalk, and Tuatara on the ridge track at night. Last April there was a transfer of 60 Whiteheads to the Hunua Ranges from Tiri, and this year a similar transfer of Whiteheads is planned from Tiri to the Waitakere Ranges in September.

SUZI PHILLIPS

South Auckland

Since our previous report we held a successful end-of-year barbecue at Tom and Hazel Harty's property in December. This is always a well-attended event and it was good to see how much progress, or lack of it, Tom had made on his boat since the previous barbecue about six years ago. He did promise, however, that he was going to get the boat finished shortly and work on the gardens and have them finished before our next barbecue at his property.

Following the formal AGM Simon Fordham gave us a quick update on the state of a range of species on Tiritiri Matangi Island, Gwenda Pulham provided a brief summary on the Fairy Tern programme, and

Gillian Vaughan showed us some photos of the New Zealand Storm Petrel, which has been in the news lately.

The speaker for the March meeting is Mick Clout from the University of Auckland speaking about the Kakapo recovery programme, and the April speaker is Sam Ferreira speaking on the changes of bird populations on Little Barrier Island.

There are several gaps later in the year, so if there are visiting ornithologists to the Auckland area on the second Tuesday in the month that would like to share their knowledge and experience with the South Auckland members do not hesitate to contact the RR. Sometimes we feel a little isolated, even though we are relatively close to Auckland City.

On the bird front there have been some really good waders in the Manukau Harbour this year. Ray Clough at the Mangere sewage ponds has seen a number of unusual waders, some of which he has not been able to identify, so if anyone is ever in that area contact Ray and he would be pleased to show you around.

On the South Manukau the more unusual sightings included a Little Whimbrel; at least three Mongolian Dotterels; a Large Sand Dotterel; 14 Little Terns; seven Eastern Curlews; a Terek Sandpiper; two Pectoral Sandpipers; a Wandering Tattler; 32 Pacific Golden Plovers; 31 Red-necked Stints and 13 Curlew Sandpipers. There has also been an intriguing strange little peep that has so far confounded the experts. However, it is now appearing more and more like a Little Stint – we are hoping that it will stay and assume breeding plumage.

In the Firth of Thames there have also been several good birds with at least one if not two Marsh Sandpipers, a Black-tailed Godwit, and at least three of David Melville's Chinese-flagged godwits and a Korean-flagged Lesser Knot. Recently Tony Habraken and Phil Battley found a Brown Teal at Thames. Phil could not wait to rush home to tell his wife Sue who had spent several years studying them and had not seen one in the Firth of Thames. Luckily for Phil the bird was still there the next day when he took her back to check whether it was one of her study birds. It was not, but it was still a good sighting.

On the people front it was good to welcome Pam and Des Agnew back to New Zealand, although they only briefly passed through our region before settling in the Bay of Plenty.

DAVID LAWRIE

Waikato

November's evening meeting saw the first use of the emergency backup procedures used during my tenure, as a speaker experienced rampaging stage-fright with 24 hours to go! We had a most entertaining video of Lord Howe Island courtesy of Betty Seddon, a recent LHI veteran. This was followed by a presentation of slides recently donated to the slide library from Noel Cusa. The slides were excellent, Cusa being the artist behind the Miranda posters.

The biannual harbour censuses were done in November with the weather again a factor. A new mid-tide roost for godwits was discovered at Raglan, with two Royal Spoonbills also being seen there.

November also saw twelve hardy sailors braving the 15-minute expedition out to distant Tiritiri Matangi Island, our mission being to establish whether there was any rumour that the island stocked a vast array of rare New Zealand birds. The fact that there was justified the huge expense and dangerous conditions experienced during the voyage. Amongst the discoveries were Takahe, Kokako and Stitchbirds. Other species were parakeets, Brown Quail, savage shelducks, elusive New Zealand Pigeons and Robins, plus many people's favourite, Whitehead. One of the crew was so taken with the island, that when the rest of the team disembarked at Gulf Harbour, it was found that only eleven survived the return journey. Our 'twelfth man' was eventually picked up at Viaduct Basin...

December's pot luck provided our annual dose of laughter medicine in the form of Frank Bailey, with myself giving the crew a rather laterally-enhanced bird quiz made up of fictional bird species that looked just a little out of the ordinary. Lateral thinkers Ken and Ann thus gained some more Christmas chocolate and a few pounds to tide them over until next time. At the meeting I announced that was moving to Tauranga and finishing with OSNZ Waikato from the March regional AGM. By the time you read this, I hope to have a replacement in-office.

Next up was a fantastic trip to Great Barrier Island, with six of us on a safari over the whole island scooping up every bird seen for the atlas project. We were amazed at the number of Kaka on the island, with every square on the map registering this species. I would say over 100 individuals were seen. We 'helped' the Black Petrel team for one day, managing to get the required scars and photographs. Compared to Grey-faced Petrels, the wounds were favourable! Our Brown Teal counts were quite high, and the records are being sent to DoC on the island. A fantastic trip in all, right down to the unusual sea fog experienced on the way back. A White-faced Storm Petrel was the highlight.

Bird sightings have been thin on the ground with members gathering frequent flier miles as fast as a giant anteater hoovers up ants. Of course this is all happening *outside* our area, so here is a skeleton



roundup. The last of the season's Kaka were seen at Te Aroha, Hamilton East, and Gordonton. See last issue of *Southern Bird* for a possible reason why we are seeing them more regularly. Caspian Terns are providing residents near Anne Street, Hamilton City, with occasional dives and displays, while the birds also have been seen using the Hamilton Lake/Rotorua, and Lakes Whangape, Hakanoa and Whakamaru.

Kim King watched an episode of 'grand theft worm' recently, when she happened upon a rarely observed scene. A Blackbird was removing a worm with the usual stealth, when a Kingfisher plucked it right out of its beak – so fast that the Blackbird had no idea what had happened. She was now watching what is described as a new bird species for Hamilton: *Halcyon earlybirdus*. Tui have been haunting Koromaitua, Grey's Road, Pirongia, River Road and Whatawhata, while Rooks have been seen near Eureka, Morrinsville Road. Stella and John Rowe's Marsh Crake at Strakas Refuge, Waiwera, was confirmed with a recent second report, confirming what we already knew – the Rowes know their crakes. Atlassing this season will hopefully provide those gap-fillers, and with me on one side of the Kaimais, lessen the kilometres travelled by the others – he says hopefully!

I thank all those who have supported me during my RR times. I enjoyed every moment.

PAUL CUMING

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Things have started to move forward in the new joint Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau region with the publication of our first newsletter in January. The aim of the newsletter is to raise the profile of OSNZ in the region and to stimulate interest in birds and birding. The newsletter is called Bay Watch and there is no truth in the rumour that Pamela Anderson will be featuring in the next edition!

February will see a group of intrepid members heading out to the Volkner Rocks (near White Island) to hopefully survey and record Grey Ternlets, weather and swells permitting. The Volkner Rocks are an amazing spectacle in their own right and a focal point for all kinds of marine wildlife.

Back on solid ground, we managed to get excellent coverage across the bay for the wader census in November. Many thanks to everyone who contributed, especially to John Brierley and Margaret Young for co-ordinating and collating.

The Maketu/Little Waihi estuaries have held some interesting birds over the summer. A small flock of eight Sharp-tailed Sandpipers have regularly been moving between the two sites, and Little Waihi enjoyed fleeting visits from a Terek Sandpiper, a Mongolian Dotterel and an Asiatic Whimbrel. Paddy Latham reported the intriguing spectacle of a Shining Cuckoo taking gum emperor moth caterpillars off a eucalypt in his Papamoa garden – obviously a bird with a healthy appetite!

John Conolly, a birder from the UK, managed to get some photographs of one of the strangest birds of the summer – an all-grey Red-billed Gull on the lakefront in Rotorua. Members have recorded at least two of these birds in the area. Why they should be completely grey, with the exception of their red bills and legs, is something of a mystery.

TIM BARNARD

Taranaki

Joined once again by Ralph Powlesland, who may soon become an honorary member of the Taranaki Branch, Barry Hartley reported on the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Taranaki Kiwi Trust and DoC on October 9 2003. The Kiwi Trust will support DoC on predator control mainly in the north-east quadrant of Egmont National Park. Money raised will be put towards buying traps, and setting up and maintaining traplines. There is scope for members to be involved in monitoring.

After some discussion members supported in principle the proposed establishment of a mainland island based around Lake Rotokare Reserve, although there is still much work needing to be done. A wide-ranging discussion ended the evening with Ralph inquiring about the whereabouts of feral Peafowl, and other weighty topics such as "why do you sometimes find birds' eggs in the middle of your lawn?"

The October monthly expedition took us to South Taranaki coastal lakes and sand dunes to complete more atlas squares. Bird-life was sparse on the lakes, but one lone pine tree turned up seven species. The real action was once again at Waiongana with the arrival of a Whimbrel, and later a flock of 11 Royal Spoonbills, seen by Barry Hartley and I.

Beach patrols for November were productive, turning up 129 birds of 11 species. Two Antarctic Fulmars and two Mottled Petrels were of major interest.

There was a near-full turnout for the final meeting of the year when Barry Hartley reported on the meeting David Medway and he had attended concerning the Lake Rotokare proposal. Barry is now a member of the committee involved with the establishment of the mainland island. A written submission was to be presented to the New Plymouth District Council with regard to its Pukekura Park management plan setting out our interest in the flora and avifauna.

At the December indoor meeting Dean Caskey of DoC informed us that a pair of Blue Ducks in Egmont NP are showing signs of breeding behaviour, and that there are plans to release more birds this year. A pair of New Zealand Dotterels at Oaonui in South Taranaki reared one chick to the fully-fledged stage. This is a new location for this species. At the end of the meeting members flocked to the supper room and engaged in a feeding and drinking frenzy.

The December field trip took us on a tour from the coast alongside the Stoney River into the bush at the Blue Rata Reserve and to Corbett Lake, providing us with a variety of birds ranging from Shy Albatross to Shining Cuckoo and Pipit. Two dedicated members then spent the rest of the day observing birds around the Sugar Loaf Islands.

There was no meeting in January, but a three-day expedition by four members into the Waitotara Valley and surrounding area was very successful, with good weather and accommodation. The group was very active and 40 species of bird were recorded including Robin, Spotless Crake and Fernbird – though Whitehead and Rifleman were not found. Two DoC contractors confirmed the presence of North Island Brown Kiwi and Blue Duck in the area. The sighting of a possible immature Arctic Tern seen by myself at Waiongana in late January awaits confirmation from the rare and unusual bird committee.

PETER FRYER

Hawke's Bay

A number of members visited the National Wildlife Centre at Mount Bruce in September. Threatening showers did not dampen their enthusiasm and a range of endangered birds was observed. Highlights of the day were the feeding of both the large eels, and the free-flying Kaka.

In October a group travelled to Boundary Stream Mainland Island to observe bush birds. With the intensive predator control work there the birds are flourishing. North Island Brown Kiwi and North Island Robins have been liberated in the reserve and are doing well, with two kiwi nests reported recently. Birds seen included Tomtit, Whitehead, Shining Cuckoo, Rifleman, New Zealand Pigeon, Pipit, and a Falcon displaying above a cliff face where a pair bred last year. Five pairs of Kokako are held in aviaries at the reserve, and two of these have recently nested. DoC proposes to release some of these birds later this year to hopefully establish a self-sustaining wild population.

The annual wader census at Ahuriri Estuary, Waitangi Estuary and Porangahau Estuary was completed in November. Apart from the normal species we expect at these sites a Sanderling was observed at Porangahau, and a tattler and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were at Ahuriri.

A near-black hybrid stilt (with a white face) was also seen in late 2003 in Bayview Marsh north of the Ahuriri Estuary. Other exciting finds since New Year have been a Lesser Yellowlegs at Wanstead Swamp (east of Waipukurau), two Eastern Curlews at Porangahau, and six Red-necked Stints, eight Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 23 Pacific Golden Plovers, a banded New Zealand Dotterel, and two Marsh Sandpipers near the Ahuriri Estuary.

World Wetlands Day was celebrated on 1 February with an open day at the Ahuriri Estuary. A number of agencies (OSNZ, Fish & Game, DoC, Forest & Bird, Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society, Hawke's Bay Regional Council) erected displays and spoke to the 250 people that attended. OSNZ members provided tuition on bird watching and identification, and hopefully we might gain a new member or two.

JOHN CHEYNE

Wanganui

There have been some interesting developments in the shag colony at Virginia Lake. There were at least 18 nests occupied by the Little Shags in August and September, all successfully producing two chicks. At the local branch meeting in November two members both remarked that three of the nests appeared to be occupied by Little Black Shags. This provoked some discussion, and it was decided to contact Ralph Powlesland for his comments. According to Ralph such 'take-overs' are common amongst shags, which are quite happy to make use of some other shags' nest-building efforts. During the November to January period there were again 18 nests occupied, most being Little Shags rearing a second brood, but at least four were now occupied by Little Black Shags.

At the same November meeting Colin Ogle showed slides and gave a very interesting talk about his participation in an island conservation project in Samoa in 2001 and 2003. With several other New Zealand ecologists, Samoan conservation managers and support staff, he explored the Aleipata Islands, three of which are uninhabited, off the east coast of Upolu. The project aims to remove Polynesian rats from one or more of the islands, but the recent trips were to gather baseline data on fauna and flora that might respond to rat removal. Different members of the group recorded birds, lizards, invertebrates, weeds and flowering and fruiting native trees and shrubs. Among Colin's slides of the islands and their inhabitants were ones of Red-footed and Brown Boobies and their chicks, noddies, frigatebirds, skinks and various land crabs.

There have been several interesting sightings on the Wanganui River in recent months. On 18 November Ian Sutherland saw a Great Knot. Several members went to look for it the next day but there were

no more sightings. On 22 January Ian found a juvenile Wandering Albatross on Castlecliff Beach, it having been blown ashore exhausted following a storm. Another was blown ashore at nearby Waverley. Nic Peet from DoC collected them and took them to Massey University for rest and recuperation before their release at sea.

At least 22 Bar-tailed Godwits have been present on the Wanganui River estuary, together with a solitary Lesser Knot. A sighting of a possible Curlew Sandpiper was reported from Turakina Beach lagoon on 29 January but, again, it had gone by the time another member went to look for it. On the same visit an absence of waterfowl was noticed. Usually there are lots of Black Swans, Mallards, Grey Teal and Australasian Shovelers, but only one solitary Mallard was to be seen.

In Wanganui city Colin Ogle reported a Bellbird feeding on the flowers of a two metre-tall kangaroo paw plant about a metre from his house at the end of January. Then for a few days a pair of Bellbirds perched on silver birch twigs outside his bedroom window and made repeated 'attacks' on the window. They would hit the glass, not too hard, go back to the twig and then repeat the 'attack'. He thinks they must be reacting to their reflections in the window.

BILL GREENWOOD

Manawatu

All the action in the Manawatu Region centred, as usual, on the estuary of the Manawatu River. This summer has already been one of the best ever for the variety and rarity of visiting birds – and it is by no means over yet! All the normal expected species have been present in roughly the numbers that we have seen in previous years: Bar-tailed Godwit – 300-400 with a peak in early December as usual; Lesser Knot – up to 230 birds, with their peak numbers expected towards the end of January; and Pacific Golden Plover – having a poor year with a maximum of only 19 individuals so far.

There have been a few flagged birds among the flocks. A Bar-tailed Godwit with an Auckland flag was present until mid-December, and Lesser Knots have included two Victorian-flagged birds (more or less throughout) and an Auckland one. Best by far, though, was a Lesser Knot flagged in China – it was one of less than a hundred such birds, and only the second one to be seen in New Zealand.

Our Wrybill flock slowly dwindled to zero as the summer began, the last bird sticking it out until 26 November, but it wasn't long before they started to return from the south. The first ones back were three on 22 December, with numbers then increasing rapidly as follows: nine on 27 December; 20 on 8 January; 29 on 12 January; and 41 birds on 19 January, by which date the Banded Dotterels had started to use the estuary in numbers – there were 74 present.

Less common, though still more or less annual, visitors have included a couple of Turnstones, a Little Tern resident since mid-November, about four different Red-necked Stints, one Pectoral Sandpiper and (only) two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers. We have also had visits from birds that are rare here, though not in New Zealand as a whole, e.g. a New Zealand Dotterel (just for a day), a Terek Sandpiper, and up to three Asiatic Whimbrels.

It has however been the real, national, rarities that have marked out this summer as special. This has been very encouraging after last summer, when the only rarity found was a Common Tern. The rarity invasion started early, at the end of October, with a breeding plumaged Sanderling – the first one here since 1995. Hot on the Sanderling's heels was a male Shore Plover on November 1. This individual had absconded from its home on Portland Island and somehow made it right across (or around?) the North Island to the Manawatu. This represents only the second ever record for this species at the estuary, after one at the very beginning of 2000. The arrival of three Great Knots on 11 November, and a fourth one on the 15th, for a stay of nearly a month, is a quite unprecedented occurrence in New Zealand. There have been less than 35 accepted records of Great Knot in New Zealand, and now 13 of them have been seen at the Manawatu.

As if to put an end to the waders' monopoly, an Arctic Tern put in a brief appearance, right in front of heaps of people, at the Welcome to the Birds Day on 26 November, and then a Common Tern stayed for a couple of days in early January. The Common Tern was the fifth individual to grace the Estuary with its presence in the past five years. This is statistically the best place, by far, to find Common Tern and Great Knot in New Zealand.

SAV SAVILLE

Wellington

As the spring and summer weather arrived – along with migrant birds – Wellington members were active with fieldwork on several projects. In late November we met with Manawatu members and the Manawatu Estuary Trust to observe a range of bird species at Foxton, including recently-arrived Northern Hemisphere migrants. Also in late November an enthusiastic group of members worked with DoC to survey bird numbers on Kapiti Island, an annual activity for the Society. In another popular field day in late December, members of the Wellington and Wairarapa Regions met at Onoke Spit, in Palliser Bay to band fledgling chicks of Caspian Terns and Black-backed Gulls. This

work has been running for six years, but still has not revealed where the young Caspian Terns that are banded on Onoke Spit travel to, nor where they breed, as there have been no recaptures at all.

Led by Peter Reese, many members helped with banding studies at Wellington Zoo in mid-November, having fun doing so and eating the barbecue lunch that followed as well. Forty-seven new birds and 15 recaptures were handled, the highlight being a Tui with a brood patch, suggesting that it was nesting nearby. Notable recaptures were a Silvereye (at 1,204 days, the longest recapture of any species at the zoo), a Blackbird (1,155 days) and a Starling (1,050 days).

Several members have again helped with the five minute bird counts in the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary that are being co-ordinated by Colin Miskelly. Colin reports that the main changes in conspicuousness of birds for the species that were recorded before the boundary fence was built several years ago are: Tui +233%; Kingfisher +200%; Eastern Rosella +300%; and House Sparrow -88%. Amongst the recently released indigenous species, Kaka, North Island Robins, Whiteheads and Bellbirds are increasingly conspicuous. Little Shags have started nesting in the sanctuary, so they must be finding the environment to their liking.

In early November Hugh Robertson of DoC spoke to a large audience on the very engaging topic, 'Are Northland Kiwi Doomed?' – a review of research on the Kiwi Recovery Programme supported by DoC, Bank of New Zealand, and Forest and Bird. In an introduction to his lecture Hugh described the distribution and populations of six species of kiwi throughout the country, and the main threats faced by them – mainly loss of habitat, dog and ferret attacks. Populations in 1998 were estimated to be about 78,000 birds and they are declining by about six percent annually on mainland sites.

Hugh explained that there has been a marked decline in kiwi numbers in central Northland, and it is this alarming situation that prompted a study that aims to determine and manage threats to allow kiwi to recover. The study has extended over several years and comprises four treatments, namely poisoning, trapping, and artificial egg incubation ('Operation Nest Egg'), plus a control area (no treatment). Radio tracking of kiwi was an important technique used for field studies. In concluding his lecture Hugh expressed optimism that given sustained and well-funded management, Northland kiwi are not doomed at all. Research has provided the tools for improved protection and management of kiwi, and given the commitment to do so it is expected that populations will recover and be maintained at about present levels.

In December a large audience listened with much interest to Dr George Gibbs of Victoria University of Wellington speak about 'Landmarks in New Zealand's Evolutionary History'. Although difficult to do in the space of an evening Dr Gibbs clearly summarised several significant events that have occurred over the approximately 70 million years (the Tertiary period) since New Zealand became isolated from Gondwana, and up until human occupation. New Zealand inherited a Gondwana heritage of plants and animals that gradually changed in response to unique evolutionary pressures, including periods of warming and cooling and changes in shape and elevation of the land. It led, for example, to the evolution of flightless, terrestrial birds and camouflaged parrots.

Trans-oceanic dispersal of birds occurred over a long period that led to the arrival of Takahe, Pukeko and Kakapo. This process has continued with arrival of parakeets (c.500,000 years ago, from New Caledonia), and it continues today, e.g. Silvereye (1850s), White-faced Heron (1940s) and Welcome Swallow (1950s). The creation of the alpine zone and the Pleistocene cold period were two formative evolutionary events that greatly influenced pre-human New Zealand, especially the evolution of forest and grassland vegetation. The most recent step in our evolutionary history is the human period over the last 1,000 years, when considerable habitat modification has occurred, linked to the arrival of people and predators such as rodents, which have led to the extinction and decline of many bird species. Dr Gibbs' address helped to explain the often asked questions of when and where did our birds come from, and under what conditions have they evolved.

In early February Graeme Taylor gave an entertaining and engaging talk to a large group of members on the progress being achieved with wildlife conservation on the Mercury Islands. Graeme has made many visits to the Mercury Island group and illustrated his talk with photographs of the bird species that he has handled there. Grey-faced Petrels and Little Shearwaters nest in large numbers, largely attributable to effective and consistent predator control. Graeme explained that the islands have been a trial ground for the development of predator control methods that are now being applied on other islands. The breeding success of other petrel and shearwater species is improving following predator control.

At end of our indoor meetings Ralph Powlesland led us through a bird quiz – an interesting, popular and entertaining feature of our meetings, that was first introduced in 2003.

IAN ARMITAGE

Marlborough

We were missing from the December issue of *Southern Bird* but our members continue to be active. The monthly count has continued at Lake Grassmere and some interesting patterns are showing up, i.e. when local species are present or absent, and the monthly fluctuations in numbers. This has proved the most intriguing aspect and those taking part have all agreed that the count should continue to see if the trends continue. Spicing up the observations are a sprinkling of Arctic migrants. These tend to remain for only short stays and are often only present on one or two counts. Some of the more interesting birds were Pectoral, Marsh, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints and Sanderlings.

An October visit to Maud Island had two objectives: to check the artificial burrows at the Fluttering Shearwater colony and to begin an annual count of terrestrial birds for DoC. The shearwaters were checked for eggs (15) and the band numbers of the parents were recorded. The annual count is being undertaken to record any changes in species and numbers as a result of the island management. There were no real surprises and it will be some time before any trends show up. The count will be an annual event in the week before Labour weekend (Monday to Friday).

Three members assisted a contractor with a survey of the birds using the Wairau River in October/November. The usual braided river bird species were seen: Pied Stilt, Pied Oystercatcher, Banded Dotterel, Black-fronted Tern, Black-billed and Black-backed Gulls were all breeding. Waterfowl were scarce, with the exception of Canada Goose, which was nesting in quite good numbers. The most unusual record was a male Tomtit seen in a gorse patch in the middle of the river. A highlight was the sighting of three White-winged Black Terns (one in breeding plumage) just below the Nelson/Marlborough highway bridge across the Wairau.

I have had some interesting observations of a mixed pair of Fantails (1 pied, 1 black) over the last two breeding seasons. The nests were well out of reach for detailed studies. In the first season the nest was high in a weeping willow. This nest was used at least three times, being refurbished between clutches. Only two of the attempts were successful and the progeny were one pied and one black on the first occasion, and two black on the last. The unsuccessful nesting was disrupted by high winds.

This season there were five attempts, with four being in the same nest. This nest was high in a lemonwood hedge. The first clutch produced two pied young, then there were two nests destroyed by weather. The fourth produced one pied and one black. The fifth nest was a new one built in a kohuhu, rather lower than the earlier nest. The birds are still incubating.

The year 2004 began with a trip to Maud Island to band the Fluttering Shearwater chicks. Ten were banded but three had already left prior to our visit. This meant that thirteen chicks fledged from the fifteen eggs laid.

Members got together for a lunch barbecue at Selmes Road. This gave an opportunity to discuss some of the activities that we might undertake later in the year. Atlas work will feature throughout the year as we are now in the final year of fieldwork.

Arrangements are in hand to band the spoonbills at the Wairau Lagoon colony in conjunction with George Wilkinson of Nelson. An inspection of the colony in mid-January showed a second peak of nesting with eight small chicks and six eggs. It was planned to band these on Waitangi Day. The colony was inspected three days before and only two chicks were still surviving. These two (and two more!) were banded on 6 February as planned – keep a watch out for them. Next season the colony will be monitored throughout the year so that we can follow it more closely and band all the chicks produced.

BRIAN BELL (ACTING RR)

Canterbury

This summer has been quieter than usual for unusual birds – probably due to a prolonged drought, which the region is still recovering from. The usually bird-smattered mudflats at Lake Ellesmere have resembled a dry salt pan – not great for wading birds. A few out-of-the-ordinary birds have appeared, plus what is seemingly a new hotspot – Kaiapoi sewage ponds and the Waimakariri River Mouth complex. This extensive area has turned up a Hudsonian Godwit, a Whimbrel, and a Ruff in recent months, all discovered by Andrew Crossland. Alan Collins found what might have been a Long-toed Stint at Ki-Wainono in December, just before he left to live in Australia. Sadly, South Canterbury will probably revert to being grossly under-watched again with his departure.

In November a 'wader workshop' was held at the indoor meeting to attempt to demystify the identification of the little brown jobs often seen on the wader census. This census was held on the following Saturday. Unfortunately with Lake Ellesmere being so low, many peo-

ple didn't get the chance to try out their newly-gained skills. The barbecue following the count at Colin Hill's farm was excellent as usual – especially the homegrown meat.

A February visit to three bush reserves on Banks Peninsula as part of a presence/absence project found the expected common species, though the birds being quiet, maybe due to them moulting, and a loud chorus of cicadas didn't help.

At the members evening in February, Lynette Hartley explained her project at DoC to find and place on a database as many five minute bird counts as she can find. These counts have been done for many decades, so the amount of data out there is amazing. At the same meeting Henry and Phyllis Paltridge, recently returned to New Zealand from many years living in Kenya, showed slides of an amazing range of birds they have left behind. The numbers of bird species in Kenya dwarfs the list of New Zealand birds, and one of the species shown – Ostrich – dwarfs any New Zealand bird, though that wasn't always the case.

NICK ALLEN

Otago

With summer upon us, the Otago group began to believe that it might be possible to visit every remaining atlas square in Otago, where there was access by road. Before Christmas Lesley Gowans and Louise Foord made a round trip of 1000km to Queenstown, Wanaka and home through the Lindis Pass and Oamaru. They visited 19 squares, of which only four had previous summer reports. They looked particularly for grebes and falcons. A number of observers have become very good at finding New Zealand Falcons. They are now reported to be present in 60 squares in Otago.

Alan Baker took the Taieri Gorge train to Pukerangi, and walked in the hills for the day. By the time the train returned later, he had achieved good coverage of a remote square.

Richard and Suzanne Schofield undertook to visit squares in South Otago from their home in Balclutha.

A team of six has just come home from a long weekend, including Waitangi Day, based in Alexandra. Peter Schweigman, Alan and Connie Wright, Audrey Eagle (taking a few days off from the production of her next book), Richard Schofield, and Louise Foord travelled about 2500km and visited 40 squares. Some of the best sightings were: a family of young California Quails crossing the road at Omakau, a Little Owl in the trees at Drybread cemetery, a falcon in Thomsons Gorge above Matakanaui, and young Black-fronted Terns near Lake Onslow.

Every remaining square with a road into it is a long way from home. A great commitment of time as well as finances has been needed from the intrepid few. It is almost the end of summer – we start again soon on the same with autumn.

LOUISE FOORD

Southland

Lake Hauroko and Lake Te Anau were the focus of the region's atlas-ing effort in November and December. Hauroko was very choppy as we ploughed through large white-topped waves – 'almost like being at sea' was one comment. We stopped at a number of likely spots to listen for birds, but quite often the silence was deafening. Only after we had motored up part of the Rooney River and stopped for lunch at a hut at the head of the lake did we see or hear more than a handful of birds. Our boat operator told us he had seen Kaka around the hut several years ago, but not since. Parakeets, which used to be common, were only heard once. A staff member from the tourist operation to the Glow Worm Caves on Lake Te Anau reported that 18 Moreporks sat on the wharf rail at the caves feeding on insects attracted to the navigation light.

We have also had reports of Black-billed Gulls feeding on insects attracted to the streetlights in Gore and Riversdale. Both occurrences happened between 11pm and 1.30am.

Our big news recently has been the well-publicised Arctic Tern, which was banded as a chick in the Gulf of Bothnia in Sweden and turned up dead at Masons Bay, Stewart Island. Reports indicate that it could be a world record for a banded bird. A report of a Blue Duck on the Waiau River between Te Anau and Borland Lodge also caused quite a stir. Although some are skeptical of its identification, it has been reported to DoC. Hopefully this is a genuine sighting, and may be the start of a minor comeback for this fast-declining species.

The wader surveys at Awarua Bay are being carried out with enthusiasm by a small but dedicated few. In January we had the luxury of being able to use an old farmhouse at the head of Awarua Bay as our base for the survey. We had all mod cons, and an excellent view over the scrub and cushion bog and out to the coast. Several Australasian Bitterns added to a very successful weekend. Usually our counts entail wading in freezing cold water, sometimes up our knees and even waist, for an hour or more. I must admit I definitely prefer the farmhouse option.

Our end of year barbecue at Dunsdale was well attended. Despite the sandflies we enjoyed good food and company, and a late evening stroll along the Dunsdale stream.

PHIL RHODES



Birds Australia Congress and Campout

The Birds Australia Congress 2004 will be held on 10–12 September at Highfields (10 km north of Toowoomba, Queensland).

Birds Australia is an independent, not-for-profit research and conservation organisation, formerly known as the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union. Its mission is to conserve native birds and biological diversity through study and management of birds and their habitat, and the education and involvement of the community. Its membership of 7000 includes both professional ornithologists and amateurs of all levels of skill and knowledge. Congress is aimed at this broad membership.

The main theme for 2004 is Birds, Brigalow and Biodiversity. One segment will concern the conservation of woodland birds. There will be reports on current research and observations of bird life and behaviour by professional and amateur ornithologists, reports on the progress of Birds Australia reserves, research and projects, including Important Bird Areas, and a segment on birds in books, photography and history.

Immediately following Congress (13–17 September) will be the annual Campout. This will include small group visits to areas of good birding on private property, a bus trip to inspect on-ground conservation projects and a boat trip on Lake Cressbrook for water birds. It is planned to incorporate some purposeful birding, including Important Bird Area surveys.

Any members of OSNZ who may be visiting Australia in September 2004 would be welcome to join us in our Congress and Campout. For further information see the Birds Australia South Queensland website www.users.bigpond.com/basqld

GRAHAME ROGERS

Secretary of Organising Committee, Congress 2004

Regional Reps & What's on

Far North

Anthea Goodwin (acting RR), Kohumanu Road, Mangonui R D.
Ph (09) 406 1533. Email bushcrank@actrix.co.nz

Northland

Katrina Hansen, 3 Harbour View Road, Onerahi, Whangarei.
Ph (09) 430 2133. Email khansen@doc.govt.nz
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

Suzi Phillips, Private Bag 1, Helensville 1250, Auckland.
Ph (09) 420 5278. Fax (09) 420 4086. Email suzi@dialogue.co.nz
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 Avenue, Mt. Eden.

South Auckland

David Lawrie, 52 Mill Road, R D 2, Pukekohe, Auckland.
Ph (09) 238 8407. Email lawrie@ps.gen.nz
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. Wendy Goad (09) 292 7838. Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Paul Cuming, Private Bag MBE381, Hamilton. Ph 0274 658710.
Email birdo@post.com
Evening meetings, every third Wednesday, 7.30pm, DoC, London Street, Hamilton.
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.

Gisborne/Wairoa

RR's position vacant.

Hawke's Bay

Murray Jeffries, 2a Cobden Road, Napier 4001. Ph (06) 834 3865. Fax (06) 834 3867. Email mjeffries@extra.co.nz
Indoor meetings are held on an irregular basis, but field trips are organised regularly. Please contact Murray Jeffries for details.

Taranaki

Barry Hartley, 12a Ronald Street, New Plymouth. Ph (06) 757 8644. Email Barry_Hartley@clear.net.nz
Evening meetings – first Tuesday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30pm. Field trips on first conducive weekend thereafter.

Wanganui

Tom Teasdale, 33 Paterson Street, Aramoho, Wanganui 5001. Ph (06) 343 9992. Email teasdale.family@clear.net.nz
Evening meetings – fourth Tuesday of the month, Davis Lecture Theatre, Wanganui Regional Museum (Watt Street).

Manawatu

Ian Saville, 23 Duke Street, Feilding. Ph (06) 323 1441. Email binzsav@clear.net.nz
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.

Wairarapa

Miles King, Olivers Road, R D 6 Masterton 5921. Ph (06) 377 5252. Email kingsmeade@contact.net.nz

Wellington

Stuart Nicholson, 15 Bruce Avenue, Brooklyn, Wellington 6002. Ph (04) 934 5940. Email Nicholson@paradise.net.nz
Evening meetings – first Monday of the month, DoC Science and Research Centre, 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 atlasing), ph. Stuart Nicholson (04) 934 5940. Beach patrols, ph. Jean Luke (04) 904 1704.

Nelson

Steve Wood, Hursthouse Street, Lower Moutere, R D 2 Upper Moutere, Nelson 7152. Ph 03 528 6438. Email utopia.landscapes@clear.net.nz
Evening meetings – usually first Monday of the month, 7.15pm upstairs in Café Affair, Trafalgar Street, Nelson. Ph. David Melville (03) 543 3628 or Rob Schuckard (03) 576 5371.

Marlborough

Brian Bell (acting RR), 35 Selmes Road, R D 3 Rapaura, Blenheim. Ph (03) 570 2230. Email wmilblenheim@clear.net.nz
Lake Grassmere count – third Saturday of month. Ph Brian Bell.

Canterbury/West Coast

Nick Allen, 65 Allin Drive, Waikuku, North Canterbury 8254. Ph (03) 312 7183. Email nick_allen@extra.co.nz
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

Louise Foord, P.O. Box 12002, Maori Hill, Dunedin. Ph (03) 467 5041. Fax (03) 467 5071.
Evening meetings Otago Art Society building, cnr Albany & Great King Streets. Ph. Louise Foord.

Southland

Phil Rhodes, 92 Marama Avenue North, R D 9 Otatara, Invercargill. Ph (03) 213 1228. Email p.rhodes@extra.co.nz
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. Beach Patrols on a casual basis, phone Phil Rhodes (03) 213-1228 or Lloyd Esler (03) 213-0404.

