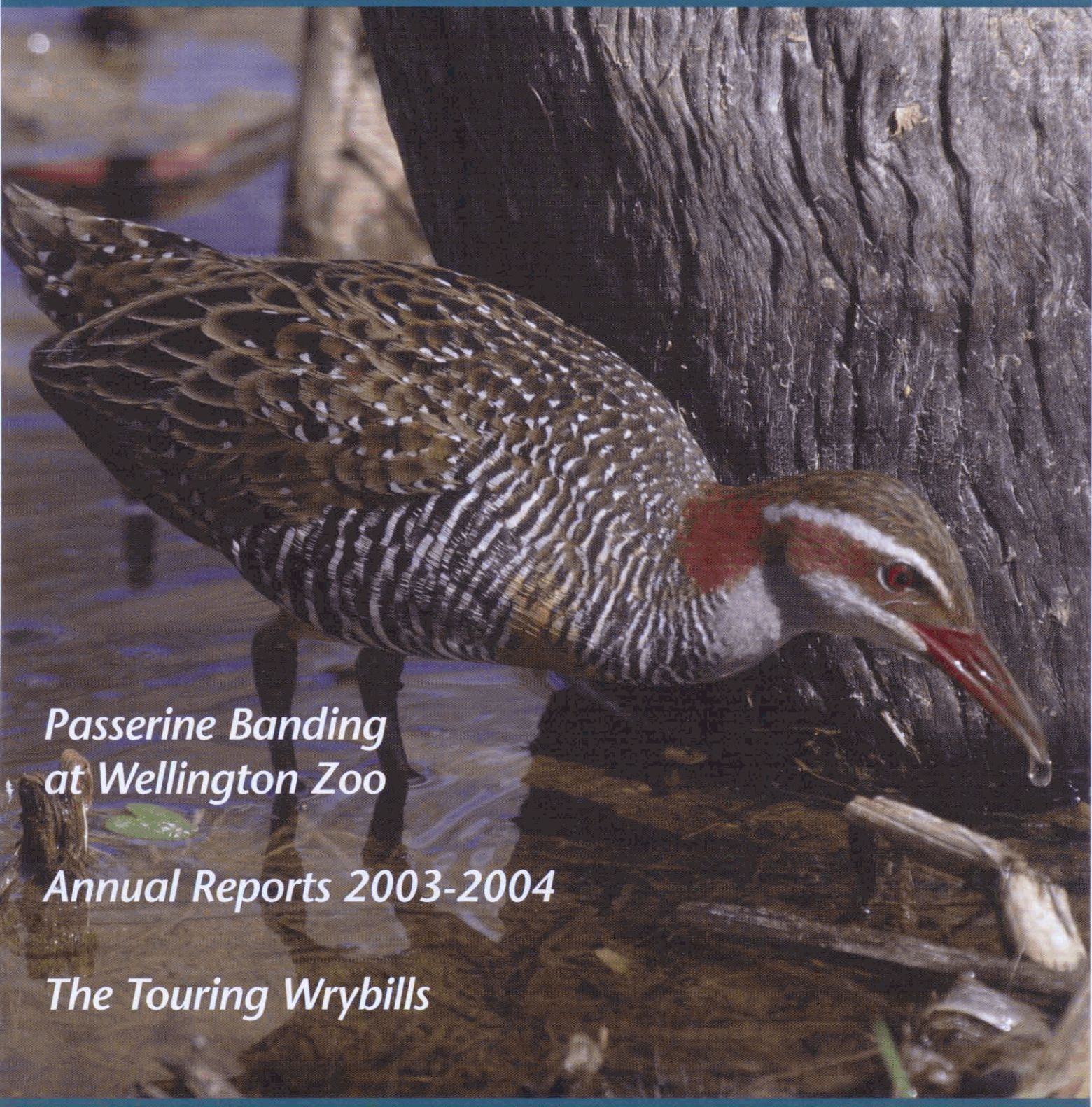
Southern Bird

No. 18 June 2004. • ISSN 1175-1916

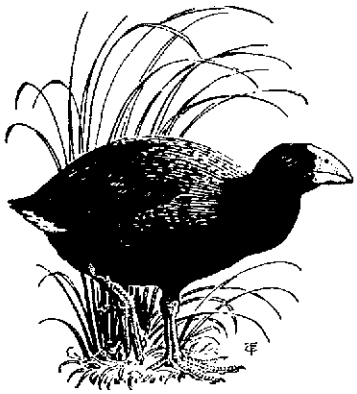


Passerine Banding at Wellington Zoo

Annual Reports 2003-2004

The Touring Wrybills

CHRISTCHURCH WETLANDS • BIRD MITES • RECORD TERN-UP



Southern Bird

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Quotation

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
And the mussel pooled and the heron
Priested shore
The morning beckon
With water praying and call of seagull and rook
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall
Myself to set foot
That second
In the still sleeping town and set forth

Dylan Thomas – Poem in October

Contents

Cover Photo

***Front cover:** Banded Rail*
***Back cover:** Spotless Crake*
Both photos by Don Hadden, taken at Lake Moondarra, near Mt Isa, Queensland. The Spotless Crake was the first for the site and only the second for the Mt Isa area. To get the shot Don had to put up with temperatures up to 48C inside his hide. Don is currently on an extended visit to various parts of Australia after retiring from teaching. People wishing to contact Don can do so via his email address hadden@clear.net.nz

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.

NEW ZEALANDERS AWARDED AUSTRALASIA'S PREMIER PRIZE FOR ORNITHOLOGY.

The D.L. Serventy Medal is awarded by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union to researchers who have made outstanding contributions to Australasian ornithology. It may be awarded annually, but due to the prestige of the medal, in some years no award is made. The D.L. Serventy Medal for 2003 was awarded jointly to Trevor Worthy and Richard Holdaway in recognition of their recently published book *The Lost World of the Moa* (see reviews in *Notornis* 50: 243-246). Whilst the book alone warrants the award, so much of the research upon which it is based was done by Trevor and Richard, either jointly or individually, and it is difficult to separate the book from their original research papers. A glance at the book's reference list provides an insight into the magnitude of the contribution that each has made to the knowledge of New Zealand's prehistoric fauna. Richard was the senior author of 20, and Trevor 68 of the references cited. They have both published other papers, and, as both frequently collaborate with other researchers, there are yet further papers for which either one or the other were junior authors. Trevor and Richard are two of this country's most prolific researchers.

This is not the place to review in detail their contributions to ornithology, but brief reference to two of their main research themes is appropriate. The first of these is the series of seven papers published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* on the prehistoric faunas of Westland, Nelson, Canterbury, Otago and Southland. The first papers were jointly written by Trevor and Richard, the latter papers by Trevor alone. These papers have changed the way we view avian biodiversity in New Zealand. They show the extent of regional variation in bird diversity and relate this both spatially and over time to vegetation type.

Contrary to the present situation where the greatest diversity is in the western rainforests, in the past there were more species of birds in the dryland forests of Canterbury and Otago. Turn back the clock and our premier nature reserve might span South Canterbury and North Otago. The other research theme I want to refer to, this time led by Richard, is the study of New Zealand's extinction cascade. Here systematic dating of the decline of native species and the arrival of introduced predators (including people) has revealed new insights into the roles that introduced predators have had on this unique fauna. While some aspects of the research remain controversial, for instance Richard's research that indicates an early introduction of kiore, the extinction story is now better known for New Zealand than virtually anywhere else on earth. Whilst the research was conducted in New Zealand, it truly is of international significance.

Trevor Worthy and Richard Holdaway are indeed eminently suitable winners of Australasia's premier award for ornithological research. The medals were presented by the Henry Nix, chairman of the RAOU, at the Australasian Ornithological Conference in Canberra. The only previous New Zealander to be awarded the D.L. Serventy medal is Dr John Warham.

KERRY-JAYNE WILSON

Publisher

Published on behalf of the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc),
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ANNUAL REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR 2003-2004

It is my pleasure to present this report on behalf of Council to the 65th Annual General Meeting of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand to be held in Oamaru on 5 June 2004.

Council
Council met formally on two occasions in 2003, the first being in Wanganui on 30 May 2003 in conjunction with the 2003 AGM, and the second being at the Miranda Shorebird Centre on 21-22 November 2003. Council continues to have very full agendas for its formal meetings even although it is able, by virtue of modern electronic methods of communication, to deal with a considerable amount and variety of important business in between them.

Notornis and Southern Bird
Murray Williams and Nick Allen appear to have settled in very quickly and efficiently as the new editors of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird* respectively. Council hopes that members are satisfied with the continuing varied content and high standard of both publications. Both Murray and Nick have made some subtle changes to the publications that have resulted in their improvement, and no doubt that process of improvement will continue.

Contributors to *Notornis* who have access to modern technology will be pleased to see that material proposed for publication in that journal can now be submitted electronically to the editor, and that the whole editorial process through to final proof checking is able to be dealt with in that manner. It is hoped that members will continue to supply the editors with adequate amounts of interesting and informative material for publication.

***Notornis* and *Southern Bird* back issues, and other publications**
Council is grateful to Tom and Hazel Harty, and Paul Cuming, for sorting out the very large number of back issues of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, as well as stocks of other Society publications, that had been in Paul's possession near Hamilton, and for which another home had to be found consequent upon Paul's move to Tauranga and resignation as the Society's back issues officer.

Tom and Hazel transported the publications to their home in south Auckland. The stockpile was further sorted out there and, with Council approval, those considered surplus to likely future requirements were disposed of. Tom and Hazel have generously offered to house the remainder, along with many others already in storage on their property, pending the transfer of all of them to a new home. Roger Sharp, our membership secretary, has assumed the role of back issues officer.

Banding workshop & Banding Liaison Officer
In September 2003, David Melville and I represented the Society at a one-day workshop in Wellington that had been arranged by the Department of Conservation to examine the current structure and functioning of the National Banding Office, which administers the New Zealand National Banding Scheme, and to make recommendations as to any desirable changes.

This was a positive and worthwhile workshop that resulted in a number of recommendations for consideration by the Director-General of Conservation. A few days later, we received a draft of the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the workshop. Our comments on it were requested, and we supplied them promptly. We understand that a final report on the workshop was completed soon afterwards. Regrettably, although eight months have now elapsed since the workshop, we have still not received a copy of that final report, nor do we have any idea of what follow-up action, if any, has taken place.

David Melville is now the Society's banding liaison officer. He replaces Chris Challies who had held that position since 1996. The Society is grateful to Chris for his contribution to the objectives of the Society in that capacity.

Contracts with the Director-General of Conservation
I mentioned in my last Annual Report that the Society had entered into a contract with the Director-General of Conservation to develop an internet-accessible list of recognised names for bird species in New Zealand. That contract was duly completed, and the list is readily accessible on the internet at http://www.bird.org.nz.

The Society entered into two further contracts with the Director-General of Conservation during the past year. The first is, in summary, to monitor changes in population dynamics of wading birds at selected estuaries around New Zealand over the period 1995-2009. This contract is due for completion in October 2009. The second is to review and report upon current knowledge of the links between breeding and wintering sites of indigenous wading bird species and identify information gaps. This contract is due for completion in June 2004.

Council has spent some time at its recent meetings considering the extent to which the Society should undertake contractual obligations of this sort. Council has decided that there should be no hard and fast rules at the present time, and that any projects that might be offered to the Society in future will be judged on their merits, and on the availability at the time of adequate human resources within the Society to complete them.

Members will appreciate that the Society has a limited number of members who have both sufficient experience and adequate time to undertake such projects on its behalf, and that there is a real risk, if too many projects are being undertaken at any one time, that the outcomes could be to nobody's benefit. Council has decided that, in any event, the Society should undertake contractual obligations of this nature only if the scientific credibility of the Society would be enhanced as a result. Ideally, the Society should also benefit financially from those contracts.

The OSNZ world after the Atlas Scheme?
The fieldwork component of the current Atlas Scheme is due to end later this year. Members have been asking if there will be a national scheme of some sort that will replace it on a continuing basis, and to which interested persons can contribute.

Unlike some other countries, New Zealand does not have a national scheme for monitoring bird population trends. It has been suggested that such a scheme should be started here. However, decisions on several very important issues need to be made before that can happen. Included among those issues are: do interested parties need or want a bird population-monitoring scheme in New Zealand? What sort of monitoring scheme should it be? What monetary and human resources are needed to run the scheme, and will they be available? Who will run the scheme, and how, and from where?

The Scientific Committee recently discussed the possibility of the Society being involved in a New Zealand bird population-monitoring scheme. The Committee fully supports such a scheme, and noted that the Society could make a major contribution to it. Eric Spurr, who is promoting a scheme of this sort, plans to convene a workshop of all interested parties to address the issues involved. The Society will be represented there.

Miranda Naturalists' Trust
Our excellent relationship with the Miranda Naturalists' Trust has continued throughout the past year. *The OSNZ Column* concerning our Society and its activities has appeared regularly in *Miranda Naturalists' Trust News*. Since my last Annual Report, the following have been the subject of articles in that column: the Recording Scheme (August 2003), the Bird Distribution Atlas Scheme (November 2003) and the Farewell Spit benthic survey (February 2004).

Appreciation
Council thanks all other members who have contributed in many ways to the management and well-being of our Society during the past year, including regional representatives and regional recorders, our membership secretary, the editors of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, members of the *Notornis* Editorial Board and reviewers, contributors to *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, compilers of and contributors to regional newsletters, convenors and organisers of the Beach Patrol Scheme, Nest Records Scheme, Moult Scheme, Atlas Scheme and Twitchathon, members of the Rare Birds Committee, the Scientific Committee, and the Checklist Committee, compilers of Classified Summarised Notes, our librarians and webmaster, those members who have made generous donations of various sorts to the Society, and many other members particularly at a regional level. Council also thanks Tom and Hazel Harty, Chris Robertson, Graeme Taylor, and many others, including speakers at the Scientific Day, for their various contributions that made our 2003 AGM weekend in Wanganui both enjoyable and productive. As I have said before, it would not be possible to run our voluntary Society without the

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL FOR 2003-2004

goodwill and willing assistance of all these people, and the continuing support of the general membership itself.

The 'New Zealand Storm Petrel'

It is appropriate to conclude this report by making some reference to what was undoubtedly the most widely publicised ornithological event in New Zealand during the past year. A storm petrel that has been seen in some numbers at sea off north-eastern New Zealand on several occasions since early 2003 is considered by many to be the same as the storm petrel that was originally described by Gregory Mathews in 1932 under the scientific name *Pealeornis maoriana*. This storm petrel is not known to have been recorded in life for more than a century. The Rare Birds Committee has received detailed reports, accompanied by many excellent photographic images, which the authors thereof confidently believe establish its continuing existence. We will not know if the confidence of those authors, and that of others who have expressed the same belief, is shared by the Committee until its decision on these reports is available.

DAVID G. MEDWAY, President
8 May 2004

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT for YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

The detailed accounts summarise a very active and successful year enjoyed by the Society. The Balance Statement discloses a substantial recovery of investment assets and a small reduction in the Accumulated Funds Overdraft, which was reduced from $63,300 to $58,000. Ideally this account should be no more than $25,000 overdrawn, but in recent years write-downs of overvalued stocks of journals and cards and similar sale materials, plus increased journal costs and meeting expenses have made dipping into other investment funds necessary.

This year, thanks to prompter payment of subscriptions, increased charges for *Notornis* articles, and a reduction in transfers to regions and the Plant Reserve, there was an overall surplus of $5,337, compared to a deficit of $17,917 in 2002, giving a net turnaround of $23,254.

With the AGM in the South Island this year I hope we can break even. However, we should be taking steps to reduce the overall deficit in the Accumulated Funds Account and a subscription increase of 10% for next year is recommended. This is the first increase since 2000. Both quarterly journals have improved in both quality and size since then, and in my opinion the increase is both necessary and reasonable.

In respect of the remaining accounts, activity has been low and all are adequate except for the Meadow Memorial Atlas and Contracts Accounts. These two show a major development in the Society's activities where Chris Robertson has obtained major funding over next three years for the Atlas scheme and similar studies of OSNZ records. This, as outlined in the President's Report, will stretch our limited membership but will greatly advance our contribution to bird study in New Zealand.

To sum up, our finances have taken a turn for the better but a modest increase in the subscriptions is really necessary. Hopefully, increased membership will come to ensure a quicker recovery of our finances long term. The quality of our publications and of the Atlas and similar projects will ensure that we all continue to make the same level of contribution to New Zealand ornithology.

Once again I have been most ably assisted by the President, editors and Atlas Project manager Chris Robertson. The latter also contributed some $4,600 through the surplus book auction. Hazel and Tom Harty once again contributed greatly with their running of the AGM at Wanganui, and Roger Sharp kept me on my toes with membership returns.

I have left out comparisons of page costs for *Notornis* this year because of changes in recovery charges, and also because, while similar in format over the past two years, valid comparisons cannot be made with earlier years. The publications are, in fact, quite different products.

The year has been busy. I am very pleased to see the tide turn financially and that finance is available to complete the Atlas scheme, and similar projects in the future.

MARK NEE, TREASURER

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INCORPORATED)

JOHN MALLINSON LIMITED
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
AVIEMORE COURT, 26 AVIEMORE DRIVE, HIGHLAND PARK, AUCKLAND

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

The company has audited the financial report on the following pages. The financial report provides information about the past financial performance of the society and its financial position as at 31 December 2003.

Council responsibilities

The constitution of the society states that the administration and management of the society shall be vested in the Council. The Council is responsible for the preparation of an annual report and audited statement of accounts for the year to 31 December 2003.

Auditor's responsibilities

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

Basis of opinion

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

- The significant estimates and judgements made by the Council in the preparation of the financial report, and
- Whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the society's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

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

Qualified opinion

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

A physical stock count of inventory was not completed at year-end and there were no practicable alternative auditing procedures that could be applied to confirm quantities. Accordingly the existence of society materials stock valued at $3,989 and the book value of library and assets of $46,226 in the balance sheet were unable to be verified.

Subject to the matters noted in all the above paragraphs, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the society as at 31 December 2003 and the results of it's activities for the year ended on that date.

The audit report was completed on 30 April 2004 and the qualified opinion is expressed at that date.

For the auditor
John Mallinson Limited, Chartered Accountants, Auckland

THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Note	2003	2002
Accumulated Funds		(58,004)	(63,341)
Life Membership Reserve		14,876	15,918
Plant Purchase, Replacement & Maintenance		15,733	15,863
Library Reserve		3,274	0
Members Funds		(24,121)	(31,560)
Sir Robert Falla Memorial Award		3,938	3,805
A T Edgar Junior Memorial Award		3,817	3,613
Project Assistance Fund		99,609	97,333
Meadows Memorial		26,497	12,449
Contracts Fund		15,000	0
Restricted Funds Liabilities		148,861	117,200
Total Members Funds & Liabilities		**124,740**	**85,640**
Bank		35	13,243
Accounts Receivable	3	8,273	6,457
Advances		1,161	1,161
Society Materials Stock	4	3,989	4,758
Goods & Services Tax Due		0	1,690
Investments Solicitors Nominee Company		29,000	39,000
Investments BNZ		64,375	5,000
Library & Assets		46,226	47,614
Sub Total		**153,059**	**118,923**
Less Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	5	3,130	15,633
Subscription in Advance		24,484	17,650
Goods & Services Tax Due		705	0
Sub Total		**28,319**	**33,283**
Net Total of Assets		**124,740**	**85,640**

M.P Nee, Treasurer

INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Note	2003	2002
1. ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Income			
Annual Subsriptions New Zealand		30,616	28,425
Annual Subscriptions Overseas		11,043	10,807
Donations		3,298	1,449
Sales		769	297
Notornis & Southern Bird Refunds	6	8,440	4,978
Annual Meeting		1,000	1,400
Administration Fees		490	0
Interest		0	149
Library		0	161
Sub Total		55,656	47,666
Transfers From			
Life Membership Reserve			
Annual Contribution		1,592	1,708
Plant Purchase & Replacement Reserve			
Regional Petrol Assistance Grant		0	1,897
		1,592	3,605
Total Mermbership Income		**57,248**	**51,271**
Less Expenditure			
Printing *Notornis*		22,304	26,862
Printing *Southern Bird*		10,320	10,124
Packing & Posting above		6,777	5,502
Registration & Reports - AGM		627	1,248
Council Meeting		456	1,995
Printing & Stationary		1,580	689
General Expenses		1,059	1,562
Travel Expenses		1,731	5,571
Postage & Tolls		1,635	1,281
Audit		1,320	1,730
Regional Representatives Allowances		0	1,897
Regional Petrol Grant		0	1,897
Insurances		825	794
Rare Birds Committee & Check List		126	458
Sub Total		**48,760**	**61,610**
Transfer to:-			
(A) Plant Purchase & Replacement Reserve		0	3,789
(B) Library & asset Account Depreciation		3,151	3,789

INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003 (continued...)

	Note	2003	2002
Sub Total		**3,151**	**7,578**
Total Membership Expenditure		**51,911**	**69,188**
Surplus/ (deficit) Income		5,337	(17,917)
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2003		(63,341)	(45,424)
Accumulated Funds as at 31 December 2003		**(58,004)**	**(63,341)**

2. LIFE MEMBERSHIP RESERVE	2003	2002
Income		
Interest	550	546
Income	550	546
LessExpenditure		
Transfer to Accumulated Funds		
Annual Contribution	1,592	1,708
Surplus/(Deficit)	(1042)	(1,162)
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2003	15,918	17,080
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**14,876**	**15,918**

3. PLANT PURCHASE REPLACEMENT & MAINTENANCE RESERVE		
Income		
Sale Plant	0	258
Annual Charge	0	3,789
Total Income	0	4,047
Repairs	130	585
Total Expenditure	130	585
Surplus(Deficit)	(130)	3462
Plus balance as at 1 January 2003	15,863	12,401
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**15,733**	**15,863**

4. LIBRARY & ASSETS ACCOUNT		
Library Exchanges	1,763	1,200
Less		
Transfer to Accumulated Funds		
Annual Depreciation	3,151	3,789
Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,388)	(2,589)
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2003	47,614	50,203
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**46,226**	**47,614**

5. SIR ROBERT FALLA MEMORIAL AWARD FUND		
Income		
Interest	133	118
Expenditure/Award	0	100
Surplus/(Deficit)	133	18
Plus Fund Balance as at 1 January 2003	3,805	3,787
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**3,938**	**3,805**

6. A T EDGAR JUNIOR AWARD FUND		
Income		
Donations	124	30
Interest	80	112
Income	204	142
Plus Fund Balance as at 1 January 2003	3,613	3,471
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**3,817**	**3,613**

7. PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUNDS			
Income			
Royalties Penguin Field Guide		3,784	4,353
Interest		3,351	2,953
Projects Reversed		1,230	1,486
Legacy		500	
Total Receipts		**8,865**	**8,792**
Expenditure			
Projects; Grants made	7A	1,000	500
Projects; Grants Approved	7B	1,230	1,230
Regional Petrol Grant	7C	4,360	1,897
Total Expenditure		**6,590**	**3,627**
Surplus/(Deficit)		2,275	5,165
Plus Balance as at 1 January 2003		97,334	92,169
Balance as at 31 December 2003		**99,609**	**97,334**

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 31 DECEMBER 2003

	2003	2002
8. MEADOWS DISTRIBUTION ATLAS FUND		
Income		
Donations	846	390
Interest	426	470
Transfers from		
Contracts	43,195	0
Project Assistance	1,000	0
Income	45,467	860
Expenditure		
Atlas Plans/Map	29,844	1,294
Data Entry	1,575	1,750
	31,419	3,044
Surplus/(Deficit)	14,048	(2,184)
Balance as at 1 January 2003	12,449	14,633
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**26,497**	**12,449**
9. LIBRARY AUCTION RESERVE		
Income		
Auction Sales	5,619	
Expenditure		
Auction Cost	1,039	
Library Purchases	1,306	
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**3,274**	
10. CONTRACTS ACCOUNT		
Receipts	58,195	
Transfer to Meadows Atlas Memorial Fund	43,195	
Balance as at 31 December 2003	**15,000**	

NOTE TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

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

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

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

c. Interest Earned
Interest earned by investments of funds has been credited to respec tive funds at a rate of 4.8%. This rate is calculated by apportioning the total interest received over Restricted and Accumulated Funds.

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

e. Goods & Service Tax
Income and expendtiure are stated exclusive of goods and services tax.

2. RESERVES

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

b. Plant Purchase
The plant purchase, replacement and maintenance Reserve was set up in 1992 to ensure provision for replacement and maintenance of plant.

3. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

	2003	2002
Royalties Penguin	1,900	2,000
Bank Interest	2,755	2,501
Notornis	2,620	1,956
AGM refund	1,000	0
	8,275	6,457

4. STOCKS OF SALES ITEMS

	Cost of Sales		
Notornis	379	718	1,097
Greeting Cards	180	324	504
Index	210	490	700
Atlases		379	379
Checklists		460	460
Car Stckers		504	504
Flying Starts		506	506
Posters		321	321
Hawkes Bay Booklet		287	287
		3,989	4,758

Valuation

1. Notornis- In the past it was policy to print extra copies of the quarterly journal to be held for eventual sale to libraries, institutions and new members. To account for this situation more accurately, the stock has been revalued annually.

2. All other items are valued at estimated current values after council decided to cut all stocks from May 1997 and liquidate input stocks on hand. Following a further write off in 2000 to the balance to a *fairer level is now at a nominal level.*

5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

	2003	2002
Projects Assistance Grants Unpaid	1,230	1,230
Audit Fee Accued	1,300	1,300
Printing Annual General Meeting		450
December *Notornis*		6,979
December *Southern Bird*		2,540
Postage & Envelopes		3,134
Journals/pack stuff	600	
	3,130	15,633

6. *NOTORNIS & SOUTHERN BIRD* REFUND

	2003	2002
Notornis		
Library Exchanges	1763	1,200
Papers in *Notornis*	6678	3,778
	8441	4,978

7A. PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND GRANTS MADE

Grants Made		
Transfer to Meadows Atlas Memorial Fund	1,000	1000
Regional Petrol Grants	4,360	1,897
Total Granted	5,360	2,897

7B. PROJECTS APPROVED

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

8. CASHFLOW STATEMENT

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

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003
9. LIBRARY, ASSETS AND DEPRECIATION

ITEM	YEAR PURCH	COST PRICE	BOOK VAL TO 2003	DEP. TO 2002	DEP. 2003	TOTAL DEP	BOOK VAL TO 31.12.03
Library		26,200	26,200	1,763 (*1)			27,963
Computers	1992	12,385	1,373	11,012	206	11,218	1,167
Computers	1994	10,033	3,030	7,003	454	7,457	2,576
Computers	1997	7,736	2,859	4,877	429	5,306	2,430
Computers	1998	3,122	1,099	2,023	102	2,125	997
Computers	1999	5,251	3,026	2,225	454	2,679	2,572
Computers	2001	4,638	3,842	796	576	1,372	3,266
Display	1989	1,311	211	1,100	32	1,132	179
Display	1990	1,000	180	820	27	847	153
Scales	1991	2,700	523	2,177	79	2,256	444
Callipers	1992	1,350	300	1,050	45	1,095	255
Telescopes	1991	7,265	1,486	5,779	223	6,002	1,263
Tripods	1991	2,426	368	2,058	55	2,113	313
Boxes	1992	410	92	318	14	332	78
Nest Records	1995	7,000	2,377	4,623	357	4,980	2,020
Glasses (*2)	1995	1,467	527	940	80	1,020	447
Fax	1996	355	121	234	18	252	108
		96,649	47,614	47,035	3,151	50,186	46,226

(*1 = library exchanges)
(*2 = Heather Memorial Glasses)

2004 NATIONAL TWITCHATHON

This year's OSNZ National Twitchathon will again be held through the month of October. The rules are again pretty simple, and are outlined below. You may choose any 24-hour period in the month of October.

The obvious challenge is to be the first team to beat the 100 species barrier (the birding equivalent to the four minute mile?), but the real object of the exercise is much simpler than that – to have a fun day of birding with some mates. It may be attractive to work within self-imposed restrictions e.g. no boats, no islands, 20km radius, no driving etc. and I shall attempt to separate the categories as best as I can. I urge the inclusion of school-age children as much as possible – some of you are teachers, how about a class project?

Entry is open to all, and if there is sufficient interest there may well be some real prizes to supplement the dubious pleasure of protecting the 'Mantelpiece Monstrosity' for a year.

I shall not hold you to it, but I would appreciate an indication of likely participation from teams, so that I may twist the arms of potential prize donors. After your Twitchathon effort, please let me have a list of claimed species by mail, fax or email as soon as you can. I shall decide what is acceptable and what is not, and remember - the judge's decision is final!

The rules:

- Teams are to consist of at least two members. For a species to count, two or more team members must agree the identification (by sight or sound).
- Wild, live birds count (zoos, museums, corpses, Wood Ducks etc. do not).
- Team members must stay within visual contact of each other for a species to be registered.

SAV SAVILLE
23 Duke St , Feilding, Tel/Fax: 06 323 1441
sav@wrybill-tours.com

THE TOURING WRYBILLS

The Touring Wrybills twitchathon team (Sav Saville and Brent Stephenson) had high hopes of setting a new record for the event. Our planning had a good variety of native and introduced landbirds, two good shorebird sites, and who-knows-how-many seabirds on a pelagic trip out of Tolaga Bay. Unfortunately for us, the appalling weather on the east coast on our chosen weekend led to the pelagic being cancelled – and so the plan was thwarted from before the start. Undeterred, we started the clock at 1225 Sunday, at Ocean Beach, Havelock North, with a quick seawatch, which brought two Black-browed, two White-capped Albatrosses and a Giant Petrel. Not quite the swag of species we might have got off Tolaga, but a couple of bonus species nonetheless.

We left the seawatch after about 30 minutes and headed towards Napier, stopping at various coastal ponds before getting to Westshore Lagoon and Bayview, by which time we had tallied 56 species in three hours. Most common birds had been accounted for, with a few extras like *Wrybill, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Royal Spoonbill*, Spotted Shag, Arctic Skua and Black-fronted Dotterel thrown in.

Continuing on, up past Lake Tutira, we got to Boundary Stream, where we were treated to spectacular views of Robin, Whitehead, Tomtit and Rifleman, and heard at least two Moreporks going nuts in broad daylight, along with Long-tailed Cuckoo.

A chance Fernbird and a few Pipits were seen on the way back to Bayview to try for Marsh Crake (failed!) though a Bittern there was consolation as darkness fell. A Blue Penguin in Napier Port left us on 76 species after eight hours.

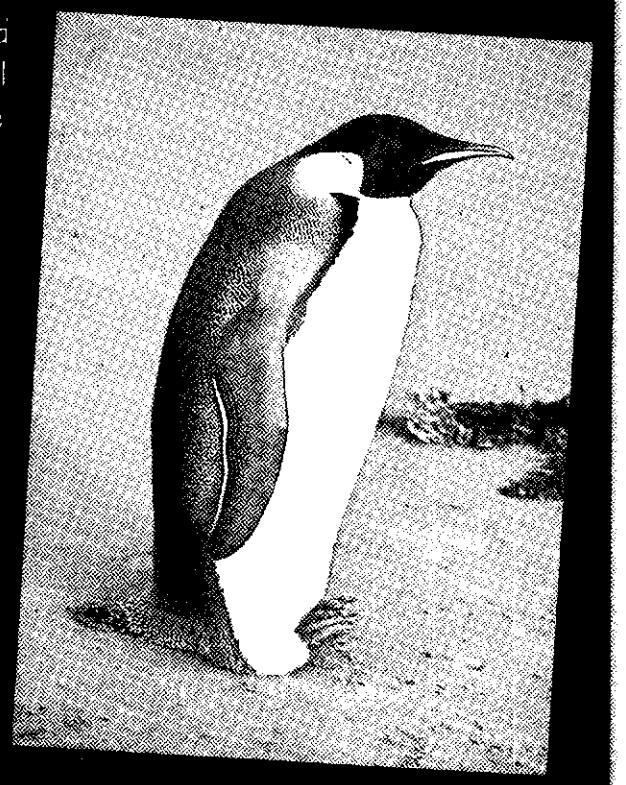
We travelled through the darkness to Feilding for the night, getting an early morning start at Pohangina for Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Eastern Rosella. Lake Omanu was visited for Grey Duck, New Zealand Dabchick and a really nice Spotless Crake. Arriving a couple of hours before high tide at the Manawatu Estuary, we added Turnstone, Pied Oystercatcher, Lesser Knot and a bonus Sanderling. At 1224 we found eight Pacific Golden Plovers to make a total of 86 species. This was not a winning score, but still a record-breaking one – it knocks spots off the previous best for no boats and islands.

An incredible 24 hrs of birding - the only things we could have reasonably added were Marsh Crake and Falcon, and the presumed Flesh-footed Shearwater we saw off Bayview. Despite Brent's protestations I refused to count the 'Red Junglefowl' even if they were a long way from any habitation - but that's another story.

SAV SAVILLE

Beached Emperor

The only Emperor Penguin to reach the New Zealand mainland turned up on Oreti Beach near Invercargill in April 1967. There was speculation at the time about how it could have got there. Aircraft from McMurdo were using the local airport that year so the bird may have been brought up as a passenger but this seems most unlikely. The possibility of the penguin swimming this far north, further and further from its natural range, in water that was getting progressively warmer, also seems improbable. A more likely explanation is that it was kidnapped by the crew of a ship and liberated when it showed signs of suffering in the heat. After a night in protective custody it was released from a fishing boat in Foveaux Strait in the remote hope that it would make its way home safely. Is this the only photograph of an Emperor Penguin on a sandy beach?



LLOYD ESLER

WHAT'S UP AT MIRANDA - MIRANDA & YALU

The end of April saw the Miranda Naturalists' Trust formally establish a sister site relationship with the Environment Protection Bureau of Dandong, which runs the Yalu Jiang National Nature Reserve (YJNNR).

The YJNNR is located near Dandong, in Liaoning, on the shores of the Yellow Sea. It is known to be an important staging site for many migratory shorebirds. Of particular importance for New Zealand, at least 50% of the New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwit population is thought to use the reserve as a stopover on their migration between New Zealand and their Alaskan breeding grounds.

Prior to the signing the third comprehensive survey of the shorebirds in the YJNNR was carried out. Five members of the Trust went to China to take part in the survey and attend the signing. Previous surveys of the shorebirds in the YJNNR had taken place in mid and late May. The objective of this survey was to identify and count the shorebirds using the mudflats early in the migration period.

The reserve is approximately 50 km long, and extends from the border with North Korea back into China. The attraction for most of the migratory shorebirds is the extensive mudflats, which provide rich feeding grounds, enabling shorebirds to build up fat reserves to use both on the flight to the breeding grounds (c 4,500 km), and on arrival in Alaska, when there is often still snow on the ground and food is limited. In addition shorebirds can be found feeding inland in flooded fields, and during the high tide period shorebirds roost inland in drained ponds and unplanted rice paddies.

Extensive mudflats continue on from the YJNNR to the other side of the North Korean border. It is thought that 90% of the New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwit flock can be found in the total area, although this is yet to be proven, as there is no access to the North Korean side.

Over the course of the survey 166,471 shorebirds of 35 species were counted. Seven species were counted in numbers of 'international importance' (defined by the Ramsar Convention as more than one percent of the flyway population). These species were Eurasian and Eastern Curlew, Great Knot, Dunlin, Grey Plover, Eurasian Oystercatcher and Bar-tailed Godwit.

Bar-tailed Godwit was the most common shorebird seen with 66,134 counted. The 1% threshold for this species on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway is 3250, a figure that was exceeded more than 20 times.

It was determined through looking at rump colour that most of the Bar-tailed Godwits seen were of the *baueri* subspecies. Furthermore, the most common colour for flags seen was white, indicating they were flagged in New Zealand. The second most common colour was orange, indicating they had been flagged in Victoria, Australia. With rare exceptions *baueri* is the subspecies that makes up the New Zealand and south-east Australian godwit populations.

Previous surveys, later in the migration period, have shown a higher proportion of the *menzbieri* subspecies of Bar-tailed Godwit, the sub species most common in north-west Australia. The combination of the data indicates that the migration strategies of the subspecies are different and also emphasises the turnover of birds over time. It is estimated that over 300,000 individual shorebirds will use the YJNNR on their northward migration.

The objectives of the sister site relationship between Yalu Jiang and Miranda are to promote shorebird and wetland conservation, share information, and establish joint projects. As part of this a group from Dandong is expected to come to Miranda either later this year or early in 2005.

The establishment of international links is critically important for the conservation of migratory species such as Bar-tailed Godwit. The sister site relationship between Miranda and Yalu Jiang is one of the early steps in this direction in China. Long term there is a real need for governmental involvement. However until then, the Miranda Naturalists' Trust will do all it can to encourage shorebird conservation and research.

GILLIAN VAUGHAN

OSNZ SALES TABLE

Items on sale from the OSNZ are a good way of keeping up with the Society and identifying yourself as an OSNZ member, whether it be a badge or car sticker. Keep those lists ticking over with a Ticklist, and consider a Checklist for the scientific side of birdwatching! Look up all those old *Notornis* articles with a fifty year index (1939-1989), and then check out the Chatham Islands and wander through the waders in the special editions of *Notornis*. Read up about our Society in *A Flying Start*, your essential introduction to the ins and outs of why we are here as birdwatchers!

Checklist - SPECIAL PRICE $5

- Chathams Issue - $10
- Index to *Notornis* 1939-1989 - $10
- *Wader Studies* - $20
- *Birds of Hawke's Bay* - $10
- *A Flying Start* - SPECIAL PRICE $5
- Badges - Notornis design - LIMITED STOCK $5.50
- Stickers - Pied Stilt - specify outside glass/bumper or inside glass only - $3, Notornis - $3
- Ticklist -$1
- Atlas microfiche - those with Atlases but not microfiche may like to consider getting one for completeness sake! $5
- Currently, the *Beach Patrollers' Guide to Stormcast Seabirds* is out of stock, but if enough people want a copy, a reprint will be done.

Send orders to:

Paul Cuming, OSNZ Sales, 2/7 Robins Road, Judea, Tauranga
Tel. (07) 571 5125, fax (07) 571 5126, email birdo@post.com

PAUL CUMING

CSN RECORDS DUE

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

The Classified Summarised Notes year runs from 1 July to 30 June, so now is the time to extract all those observations from your notebooks, scraps of paper, and computers.

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

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

AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

As indicated in the last *Southern Bird*, this conference will be held in Blenheim in 2005. A preliminary programme is as follows:

December 6	Registration and introductory social evening
December 7-10	Scientific programme: plenary sessions, symposia, workshops and general papers.
December 8	Official dinner (evening)
December 10	Field excursion (various sites)

Members attending will be required to book their own accommodation, but the committee will be arranging for a range of motels, hotels etc. to hold accommodation for some time prior to the conference. An accommodation list will be sent to anyone expressing interest.

An expression of interest leaflet will be circulated with the September issue of *Southern Bird*, but should anyone wish for further information prior to this, they can apply to the local Organising Committee (by email *wmilblenheim@clear.net.nz* or by mail to 35 Selmes Road, Rapaura, RD3, Blenheim).

BRIAN BELL

BANDING NOTES

Apologies for missing the ends off these notes in the December 2003 issue of Southern Bird.

COLOUR-FLAGGED WADERS

There is now the chance of finding TWO colour-flag combinations from China on Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots.

Last summer we had a very good series of records of GREEN over ORANGE Bar-tailed Godwits - birds marked at the Yalu Jiang Nature Reserve in north-east China in April 2002. None of these birds appears to have remained in New Zealand over the winter, so hopefully they successfully migrated to Alaska. At least some of these birds should still be alive and be back again this year.

In April 2003 a total of 816 waders was flagged by Yuan Xiao and his team at Chongming Island Nature Reserve, near Shanghai. These have WHITE over BLACK flags. Among these birds are 89 Bar-tailed Godwits and 73 Lesser Knots.

Just outside China, waders have been colour flagged WHITE over ORANGE in Korea. A Lesser Knot with this combination of flags was seen in mid-September at Karaka by Tony Habraken, and the same or another individual was seen at Miranda in mid-October by Phil Battley.

Keep a look out!

DAVID MELVILLE

BANDED TUI IN WELLINGTON

Members of OSNZ Wellington have colour-banded a number of Tui about the city.

If you are visiting any of the areas around Wellington where Tui breed please would you keep an eye out for colour-banded birds. Likely places are the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Wilton Bush, the Botanical Gardens, and no doubt a number of others.

The birds all have a metal band plus either a red or blue band on one leg (most likely on the right). The other leg will have two colour bands. Please report any sightings to either Rod Cossee at the DoC Banding Office, or myself. Details needed are the colour combination including metal band, the date and site seen, and the observer's name and contact details.

PETER REESE
69 HORNSEY ROAD, MELROSE, WELLINGTON. PH: 04 387 7387.
EMAIL: RUTH.PETERR@ACTRIX.CO.NZ

A RECORD TERN UP

On 1 December 2003 I picked up a fresh wrecked bird at the mouth ofDuck Creek, Mason Bay, Stewart Island (46deg 55′ S, 167deg 46′ E). The bird was a small tern with a metal band on its right leg. The inscription was a seven-digit number followed by Riks Museum Stockholm.

Rod Cossee, Manager of the New Zealand Banding Scheme contacted the Riks Museum in Sweden and received the banding details from Dr Thord Fransson, Senior Curator and Head of the Bird Ringing Centre at the Swedish Museum of Natural History.

The bird was an Arctic Tern ringed as a chick at Vitskar, Rogsta in the province of Halsingland on the 27th June 2003 (61deg 49′ N, 17deg 26′ E). Most of the Arctic Terns leave Sweden in early August to migrate south along the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean to the edge of the pack ice in the Antarctic Ocean. The species is a rare but annual visitor to New Zealand.

This is the most distant Swedish recovery to date and is one of the longest distances (orthodromic distance) covered by a banded bird. The distance between the banding and finding place is 17510km, but the most reasonable route taken by the bird covers about 25000km.

The bird has been sent to the National Museum, Te Papa as a scientific specimen.

I would like to thank Rod Cossee, Lloyd Esler and Department of Conservation staff at Invercargill for helping with the identification and transport of the bird to Wellington.

GARY MORGAN

Passerine Banding at the Wellington Zoo

Banding a Tui

Photos by Peter Reese

In mid 2000 Wellington OSNZ members along with the Bird Banding office of DoC decided to set up a banding site at Wellington Zoo. The aim is to gather information on the movement of birds around this part of the country, and to provide an opportunity for interested people to have hands-on experience with birds and especially with mist netting them.

The study has now been running for three and a half years and has become a regular part of the Wellington birding calendar with sessions held every month or so. No record has been kept of the total number of people involved but with up to 30 people attending most sessions the number must be well in excess of 100. Banders have come from a wide range of organisations, with students ranging from primary school through to a considerable number of post-graduate university students. People from DoC, OSNZ, Forest & Bird, Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, Bird Rescue, Zoo staff, and individuals just interested in birds have all gained experience during this time. A wide range of ages has been involved from seven to seventy and beyond.

Most birds have been caught in mist nets set up across flight paths but away from public areas. A limited amount of pre-feeding has encouraged birds onto the correct path. The food made up of beef dripping, birdseed and cheap apples is placed either side of a net site for a few days before a session. As well as mist nets, some trapping has been done using funnel traps. Some birds have also been captured when they have gained entry to bird enclosures, and nestlings are banded when suitable nests are found.

A spin-off from these sessions has been an attempt to capture and colour-band Tui, both within the Zoo and around Wellington city, in order to try and trace where the increasing numbers of Tui that are wintering in the city are coming from. With 24 birds banded this study is starting to gain momentum, and with our experience increasing we will hopefully come up with some answers over the next few years.

As well as banding we have weighed, taken measurements, recorded moult and taken swabs for *Salmonella* testing at Massey University.

A special thanks goes to the Zoo staff for all the assistance they have provided, as well as invaluable information on bird movement and possible net sites. They have also been responsible for many of the recoveries that have been made, which is one of the great advantages of this banding site. We have also received very valuable advice and help from the DoC Banding Office, with Rod Cossee attending most sessions and giving encouragement and advice to banders. We have also received generous funding for the purchase of nets, poles and other equipment from the J S Watson Conservation Trust run by Forest and Bird.

Banding started on 8 July 2000, and up to the end of 2003 we have banded 1713 birds and made 379 recaptures. Additionally, many birds have been caught several times in one day making the total bird handlings well over the 2000 mark.

Highlights of the bird species caught so far are:

Blackbird
163 banded, 61 recaptures of 18 birds with one having been recaptured eight times. The longest is 1255 days and this is our longest recapture. Four birds have been recovered dead, all from within the Zoo (including one from the lion and one from the tiger enclosures).

Dunnock
38 banded, 21 recaptures of 11 birds with the longest at 231 days and a dead bird was recovered at 417 days. Three birds have been found dead, all from within the old Kaka cage where they probably got in but could not get out.

Fantail
32 banded with two recaptures of Zoo birds. The longest was 152 days. This bird had raised two clutches of chicks but unfortunately was found dead two days later as the result of a car accident (I don't think anyone in the car was hurt). Also one bird was recaptured that had been banded on the hill above Lyall Bay about 2.5km from the Zoo 378 days before.

House Sparrow
281 banded, 20 recaptures of 16 birds with the longest at 735 days and one recovered dead at 821 days. 16 recoveries have been made, 10 from within the Zoo (including one caught in a mousetrap and a number of victims of a *Salmonella* outbreak) and four found dead on Manchester Street next to the Zoo (road kills).

Tui
Nine colour banded, no recaptures. But one bird was seen back at the Zoo this last winter, the last time 699 days after banding. This bird was later recovered across the harbour in Eastbourne 779 days after banding.

Extracting birds from a mist net

Weighing

Checking moult of a Yellowhammer

PETER REESE

Encouraging News from Wetland Restoration Projects in Christchurch

Photos by Andrew Crossland

Currently there are three large (by urban New Zealand standards) coastal wetland projects underway or about to start in Christchurch City. Earth-moving equipment has recently finished excavating the 20+ha Charlesworth Wetlands site in the south-west corner of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. A large block of farmland was converted into a series of 'wader scrapes', channels, pools and islands, and this will shortly be connected to the estuary via three large pipes to be constructed under Humphreys Drive, a major arterial road.

A small scrape (circa 2ha) created 10 years ago attracted at least 15 pairs of Pied Stilts, as well as roosting flocks of oystercatchers, herons, waterfowl, gulls, New Zealand Kingfishers, New Zealand Pipits and Arctic waders, including a Lesser Yellowlegs in October 2002. The success of this initial scrape in attracting wetland birds and the rapid natural colonisation by salt-marsh plants such as *Sarcocornia* convinced the Christchurch City Council Parks and Waterways Unit to convert the whole area (originally earmarked as football fields) into a tidal wetland.

The new wetland was completed in September 2003, and within two weeks birds began to nest. The tally for the season included one pair of Spur-winged Plovers, about 40 pairs of Pied Stilts, about 10 pairs of Black-billed Gulls, and two pairs of Red-billed Gulls. The gulls nested on narrow shingle islands designed to attract nesting gulls and terns. This was the first breeding of Black-billed Gulls on a coastal wetland in Christchurch, and an exciting development for the local conservation of this species.

At Bexley adjacent to the mouth of the Avon River, approximately 4km to the north of the Charlesworth Wetland, development of another large tidal wetland will start as soon as resource consents are finalised. Initial work at the site commenced a few years ago when a moat was created to increase tidal inflow into the site and to prevent the unrestricted movement of domestic cats into the saltmeadow areas. Planned further work was halted because ground occupied by a former car-wreckers' yard was found to be contaminated. Contaminated material has now been removed and a series of islands, separated by tidal waterways, and surrounded by a four to six metre-wide moat, have been created.

A third project is the development of a stormwater retention basin and associated tidal wetlands at Ferrymead, adjacent to the tidal reaches of the Heathcote River. Like the Charlesworth and Bexley wetlands, it is expected that a wide range of wetland birds will use this site. The restoration/creation of these sites is expected to generate a recovery in the populations of locally-breeding birds as well as provide additional feeding and roosting habitat for migrant and seasonal visitors.

Wigram East Retention Basin

Charlesworth Reserve

Black-billed Gulls at Charlesworth Wetland

Cleaning up Bexley Wetland

One locally breeding species likely to benefit is the Pied Stilt. In the mid-1980s stilts were sliding toward local extinction in the Christchurch area. A study of breeding in 1988 found that of 208 eggs laid in nests around the Avon-Heathcote Estuary, all but six were lost prior to fledging. Of the six chicks that fledged, only two survived beyond a few months. The high loss rate was due to predation, tidal flooding, nest desertion and destruction of nests by vehicles, people and animals.

From a low point in the mid- to late 1980s conservation measures and habitat creation became a major focus of park and waterway development/enhancement in Christchurch. Now the trend is reversed to the extent that some 26 native bird species are currently on the increase in Christchurch and only one native species (Black-billed Gull) is declining. The populations of all other bird species appear to be stable.

The current surge in tidal habitat restoration/creation follows on from 10 years of freshwater habitat restoration. Pond and waterway enhancement throughout the city has resulted in a major population recovery of native waterfowl. Christchurch urban waterways now support peak numbers of over 40,000 wetland birds, including some 5500-6000 New Zealand Scaup (up from <300 in the late 1980s) with increasing numbers of Paradise Shelduck, Grey Teal, and Australasian Shoveler.

Of the rarer wetland birds, it has been pleasing to note the regular seasonal occurrence of both Australasian Bittern and Glossy Ibis at Travis Wetland, a 130ha freshwater wetland in north-east Christchurch that is well known as the city's flagship wetland heritage park. Also exciting has been the recent sighting of Marsh Crake at Wigram East Retention Basin, a 3.5ha artificial wetland, which comprises a pond area and planted riparian vegetation over an enormous plastic liner that prevents ponded stormwater from filtering down to freshwater aquifers.

Other wetland restoration/creation projects planned or proposed by the Christchurch City Council for the next few years include the inclusion of stormwater swale and retention wetland systems in new subdivisions; further development of tidal wetlands; improved management of bird breeding habitats on the Waimakariri River (in support of Environment Canterbury and DoC); and the proposed establishment of a predator-proof fence around 45ha of restored bush and wetland at the Styx Mill Basin Reserve in the north-west of the city.

ANDREW CROSSLAND

RARE BIRDS COMMITTEE - SIX MONTHLY REPORT

The following sightings have been accepted by the Committee since preparation of the report in Southern Bird 16: 4-5.

UBR 69/03 - Report from Brent Stephenson and Ian Saville of **Soft-plumaged Petrels** (***Pterodroma mollis***) seen by Brent Stephenson off Foxton Beach on 27/5/02 (2), by Ian Saville off Foxton Beach on 28/5/02 (2), and by Brent Stephenson at Palmerston North Showgrounds on 29/5/02 (1).

UBR 70/03 - Report and photographs from Brent Stephenson of a **Common Tern** (***Sterna hirundo***) seen at Waitangi, Ngaruroro/Clive River mouths, Hawkes Bay on 18/8/03.

UBR 71/03 - Report and photographs from Brent Stephenson of a **Chatham Island Mollymawk** (***Diomedea cauta eremita***) seen by himself, Steve Wood, Hadoram Shirihai and Les Battersby off Kaikoura on 3/9/03.

UBR 81/03 - Report and photographs from Gordon Gorbey of a **Little Whimbrel** (***Numenius minutus***) seen by himself and Gwenda Pulham at Kidd's shellbanks, Manukau Harbour on 27/10/03.

UBR 82/03 - Report from Tim Barnard of a **Chestnut-breasted Shelduck** (***Tadorna tadornoides***) seen by himself and Wendy, Ruth and Matthew Barnard at Lake Rotomahana on 19/4/03.

UBR 83/03 - Report from Martin Snowball of two adult and one juvenile **Australasian Little Grebes** (***Tachybaptus novaehollandiae***) seen by himself and K. Snowball at Lake Rotoehu on 28/10/02 (For other reports of Australasian Little Grebes at this locality see UBRs 61/02 & 61A/02 - *Southern Bird 12*: 7).

UBR 84/03 - Report from Richard Parrish of a **Wandering Tattler** (***Tringa incana***) seen at Spirits Bay on 4/11/03.

UBR 85/03 - Report and photographs from Alan Collins of a **Hudsonian Godwit** (***Limosa haemastica***) seen at Lake Wainono on 25 and 26/10/03.

UBR 86/03 - Report and photographs from Alan Collins of a **Black-tailed Godwit** (***Limosa limosa***) seen at Lake Wainono on 30/11/03.

UBR 88/03 - Report from Richard Parrish of two **Siberian Tattlers** (***Tringa brevipes***) seen by himself and Kevin Rideout at Mangawhai Habour on 28/11/03.

UBR 89/03 - Report from Richard Parrish of a **Mongolian Dotterel** (***Charadrius mongolus***) seen by himself and Kevin Rideout at Mangawhai Harbour on 28/11/03.

UBR 90/03 - Report from James Lee of a **Darter** (***Anhinga melanogaster***) seen by himself and Marian Lee-Hesper at Wellington Harbour on 20/12/03. This is only the **third New Zealand record** of the species.

UBR 1/04 & 1A/04 - Reports from Christine McRae and Jim Hamilton and Ian Saville of a **Lesser Yellowlegs** (***Tringa flavipes***) seen at Wanstead Lagoon, near Waipukurau on 2 and 3/1/04.

UBR 2/04 - Report from Christine McRae and Jim Hamilton of a **Sanderling** (***Calidris alba***) seen at Porangahau Estuary on 2/1/04.

UBR 3/04 & 3A/04 - Reports from Jim Moore and Ian Saville, with photographs by Jim Moore and Brent Stephenson, of up to four **Great Knots** (***Calidris tenuirostris***) (3 juveniles and 1 adult) seen by themselves, Roger Slack, Lindsay Davies, Brent Stephenson, Tim Barnard, and many others at the Manawatu estuary on various occasions between 11/11/03 and 14/12/03.

UBR 4/04 - Report from Ian Saville of a **Sanderling** (***Calidris alba***) in breeding plumage seen by himself and Brent Stephenson at the Manawatu estuary on 27/10/03. This may be the first reported sighting of a Sanderling in breeding plumage in New Zealand.

UBR 5/04 - Report from Ian Saville of a colour-banded adult male **Shore Plover** (***Thinornis novaeseelandiae***) seen at the Manawatu estuary on 1/11/03. This bird had been released on Portland Island in Hawke Bay in May 2003, and was last seen there on 2/10/03. This is the second sighting of a colour-banded Shore Plover at the Manawatu estuary. The first sighting was on 3/1/00 (UBRs 7/00 & 25/00) - see *Notornis 48* (2001): 61. The bird involved in that sighting had also been released on Portland Island, and later wandered away from there.

UBR 6/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of nine **Nankeen Night Herons** (***Nycticorax caledonicus***) seen on the Wanganui River on 28/12/03 and 1 and 2/1/04.

UBR 7/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** (***Limicola falcinellus***) seen at Mangere sewage ponds on 6 and 7/1/04.

UBR 8/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Common Sandpiper** (***Tringa hypoleucos***) seen at Raetihi oxidation ponds on 26-28/12/03. This would appear to be the first inland sighting of a Common Sandpiper in New Zealand.

UBR 9/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Marsh Sandpiper** (***Tringa stagnatilis***) seen at Miranda on 16/11 and 4/12/03.

UBR 10/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of **Siberian Tattlers** (***Tringa brevipes***) seen at Manukau Harbour sewage ponds on 23/11/03 (with Ted Kitching) and 5/1/04 (1), and at Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 12/12/03 (1).

UBR 11/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of **Mongolian Dotterels** (***Charadrius mongolus***) seen at Big Sand Island, Kaipara Harbour on 22/11 and 12/12/03 (2), Mangere sewage ponds on 15/12/03 and 5/1/04 (2), and Wanganui (South Heads) on 2/1/04 (1).

UBR 12/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of two **Red-legged Partridges** (***Alectoris rufa***) seen near Taumarunui on 22/12/03.

UBR 13/04 - Report from Ted Wnorowski of a **Nankeen Kestrel** (***Falco cenchroides***) seen at Elsthorpe, south of Hastings, on 28/10/03.

UBR 14/04 - Report and photographs from Graham Don of a **Common Sandpiper** (***Tringa hypoleucos***) seen at Rosedale Wastewater Treatment Plant, North Shore City on 11/11/03.

UBR 16/04 - Report from Richard Guest of a **Spine-tailed Swift** (***Hirundapus caudacutus***) seen by himself and Sam Stuart-Weeks on the open tops in the Kaimanawa Ranges on 29/12/03.

UBR 17/04 - Report and photographs from Margaret and Wayne Twydle of two **Marsh Sandpipers** (***Tringa stagnatilis***) seen by themselves and others at Westshore Lagoon, Ahuriri Estuary on 6 and 7/2/04.

UBR 18/04 - Report from Derek Bettesworth of a **Cirl Bunting** (***Emberiza cirlus***) seen at Waipu Estuary, Northland on 24/1/04.

UBR 19/04 - Report and photographs from Barry Hartley of 40 **Grey Ternlets** (***Procelsterna cerulea albivitta***) seen by himself and others on Maori Rocks, Mokohinau Islands on 8/2/04.

UBR 22/04 - Report, photograph and specimen from Peter Fryer of a **Common Noddy** (***Anous stolidus***) found freshly-dead on the coast at Epiha Road, near Waitara on 17/6/02. There have been very few records of the Common Noddy from mainland New Zealand.

UBR 23/04 - Report and photograph from Peter Fryer of a tern seen by himself and Julie Fryer at the Waiongona River mouth, near New Plymouth, on 23/1/04. This was accepted as a young **Black-fronted Tern** (***Sterna albostriata***), a species that is seldom recorded on the North Island west coast north of Manawatu Estuary.

DAVID MEDWAY - CONVENOR, RARE BIRDS COMMITTEE
8 MAY 2004

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Subject to official acceptance, Detlef Davies is the new Regional Representative for the Far North region. Many thanks to Anthea Goodwin for acting as RR in the interim after Alison Howell's move south to Whangarei.

Detlef's address is Waipapa Lagoon, Landing Road, Kerikeri 0470. Phone (09) 407 3874. Email detlefdavies@yahoo.com

The Waikato region has a new Regional Representative after the departure of Paul Cuming to Tauranga. Roger Day has taken over managing the region's affairs. Contact him at 42A Hillcrest Road, Hamilton. Phone (07) 859 0272. Email rogerjday@xtra.co.nz

The Regional Representative for the new and very active Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau region is Tim Barnard, 5 Larcy Road, Lynmore, Rotorua. Phone (07) 345 3433. Email tim.barnard@xtra.co.nz. Paul Cuming has taken over responsibility of Regional Recorder for this region – as well as continuing his responsibility for OSNZ sales goods. His new contact details are 2/7 Robins Road, Judea, Tauranga. Phone (07) 571 5125, fax (07) 571 5126. Email birdo@post.com

The Northland region's regional recorder is Gerry Brackenbury. His contact details are 53 Kauika Road West, Whangarei. Ph (09) 438 4188. Email brackenbury@xtra.co.nz

As reported in the last issue of *Southern Bird* the OSNZ was seeking a new back issues co-ordinator. Roger Sharp has now taken on this role, in addition to that of membership secretary. Contact Roger for your requirements of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird*, or if your journals get lost in the mail.

I believe Roger is holding one or two issues of the forerunner of *Notornis*, *New Zealand Bird Notes*, from the 1940s, and all issues of *Notornis* to the present day. So if you have any gaps to fill in your collection please contact him at P.O. Box 12-1039, Henderson, Auckland. Phone 09 836 9931, email Roger_Sharp@xtra.co.nz

REVIEWS

Wolfe, Richard. 2003 MOA – *The dramatic story of the discovery of a giant bird.* Penguin Books (NZ), Auckland. ISBN 0 14 301873 6. 249pp. Paperback, ten black-and-white plates.

Many people having either a professional or casual interest in New Zealand's birds will have wondered who identified the extinct birds that we have come to know so well. What evidence was used to do so? When did this happen, and how accurate were the identifications when there were no living birds to study? No species were more interesting in this regard than the moa.

Richard Wolfe sets out to describe in considerable and colourful detail the discovery of evidence of the moa by early European visitors, especially on the east coast of the North Island, Canterbury and Taranaki.

It all started in the mid-nineteenth century when Dr John Rule, a surgeon who visited New Zealand, travelled back to England. Amongst other possessions he carried a bone of a large animal, probably a bird that was unknown to biological science. Rule had an enquiring mind and a persistent nature and was determined to try to understand, and to get others to understand, what species the bone may have been derived from. He suspected it was a large and probably flightless bird. The single femur bone was found in a riverbank in Poverty Bay, and became the basis for considerable curiosity and clever scientific deduction that led to the conclusion that it was from a large bird, possibly extinct, but with no certainty that this was the case.

The story of the discovery of the moa femur and its transportation to London is woven into the history of the early settlement of several parts of New Zealand, especially Poverty Bay, and this is itself a fascinating and colourful aspect of the author's story. Wolfe skillfully blends several aspects of colonial history and Maori legend into the discovery of moa bones, and this provides a fascinating context against which the discovery and description of the moa is considered.

The early missionary scientists – the Revs William Colenso, Richard Taylor and William Williams – all made discoveries and collections of large bones, mainly the femur and tibia, but none had seen the giant birds. Nor it seems had Maori, and indeed Richard Wolfe notes that Maori did not have clear records of the existence of the moa, adding that it was Colenso who made the significant and accurate deduction that the moa was probably extinct because it was all but forgotten in the otherwise extensive oral tradition of the Maori.

Almost all collections of bones made in the 1840s and 1850s made their way to London to be examined by the great comparative anatomist at the time, Professor Richard Owen. Wolfe describes in detail the work of Richard Owen who assigned the generic name *Dinornis* to the giant bird and who said that 'no less than five species have been determined'. Others also made significant contributions to early knowledge, notably Colenso, Mantell, Haast, Diffenbach and Lyell – all well-known names in early days of biological science and exploration in New Zealand. Their work, as well as that of Owen, extended to the description of *Apteryx* (kiwi), *Notornis* (Takahe) and to other species. Wolfe also describes the co-operation, the ambitions, as well as the prejudices amongst the early scientists, often centering on Richard Owen, in regard to the discovery of the moa.

The book is thoroughly researched (almost 500 references) and is an original and worthwhile contribution to historical New Zealand ornithology. Wolfe makes use of material that has not been presented in a popular context before. The book has an easy style and will appeal to readers having an interest in early New Zealand biological science as well as to the specific discovery of the moa. Wolfe assembles the subject in a logical manner in 13 chapters that enables the reader to follow the story easily. The book will be useful addition to any enthusiast's library as well as to municipal and university libraries.

IAN ARMITAGE

Clark, David Anthony. 2003 *Paradise: New Zealand's Natural Soundscape.*
CD produced by UCA Ltd, PO Box 52076 Titahi Bay, Wellington. Sounds of birds, animals, insects and natural occurances such as waterfalls. 70 minutes. Available from above address and email uca@ucamusic.com; website www.tasmantis.com; Ph 04 239 9971 Fax 04 239 9976. Cost: $24.95 plus $4.00 postage.

This CD covers a vast range of natural sounds recorded from all over New Zealand by David Antony Clark, a musician known internationally for his 'development of neo-primal music genre'.

The 70 bird songs are from Les McPherson's extensive collection of recordings. Bird songs are interspersed with sounds of tree weta, geckos, dragonflies, Long-tailed Bats etc. as well as natural phenomena such as a geyser eruption and an avalanche. Sea animals include a Humpback Whale and Bottle-nosed Dolphin. There is a reconstructed sound of a moa.

The tracks are in various sections – Night in the Forest, Wetlands, In the Mountains, Ocean Depths etc. There is no dialogue and the various sounds move seamlessly from one to another.

It is an interesting collection of sounds, either to tune up your recognition of bird calls or for easy background listening.

ROS BATCHELER

Beolens, Bo; Watkins, Michael. 2003 *Whose Bird? Men and women commemorated in the common names of birds.* Christopher Helm, London. ISBN 0-7136-6647-1. Soft cover, photographs, bibliography, appendix of lists of bird names. 400 pages.

Maybe you know all about Salvin after whom the petrel and prions were named but do you know who Lidth's Jay was named after? Or Fea's Petrel? Or Zoë's Imperial Pigeon?

Was Bonaparte's Gull named after Napoleon? Who was Lady Amherst who gave her name to a spectacular but secretive pheasant?

If you want to know, this is the book for you. The 400 pages are crammed with potted biographies of some 1124 people who have given their (or someone else's) name to 2246 birds.

It is a remarkable collection of information about adventurous individuals who frequently risked life and limb to find, describe and achieve immortality by having a bird named after them.

They survived malaria, dysentery, shipwreck, accidental shootings, oncoming trains and hungry cannibals and much, much more. Some died in the pursuit of the elusive specimen. Some were adventurers, some were respected scientists, and some were charlatans. Details of the life and work of individuals are revealed in the biographies, which are often accompanied by a photograph. It's a fascinating book to have on the shelf, either for reference or for the pleasure of dipping into.

ROS BATCHELER

Norfolk Island Birds

A further OSN-style report on Norfolk Island Birds is planned. Please would any member holding unpublished records (not already submitted to the SW Pacific Records Scheme) send them, within the next six weeks, to the convenor at 32 Brook Street, Lower Hutt, or email to mmmoore@xtra.co.nz.

– JIM MOORE

Birds a Plenty

The new annual Bay of Plenty Bird Festival/He Huhua Nga Manu will be held from 6-17 October 2004. An extensive and exciting range of activities and exhibitions are planned. Titled 'Birds a Plenty' a tentative programme for the festival may be viewed at http://www.nzbirds.com/BirdFestival.html

WE WANT YOUR MITES:

A SMALL BIRD PARASITE MAY ANSWER A BIG QUESTION

Many readers of *Southern Bird* will be familiar with dermanyssid mites. They include the ubiquitous red fowl mite (*Dermanyssus gallinae* (fig.1)), which is a pest of poultry and other domestic birds. Anyone who handles wild birds on a regular basis will also have seen some of its lesser-known relatives. They are particularly common on small passerines, which are likely to be the natural hosts of this group. These mites are all blood-feeding parasites. The adults of some species live permanently on their hosts, while those of others (and the juveniles of all of them) are confined to the host's nests and move onto the hosts only to feed, returning to the nest when they are finished.

Other families in the Dermanyssoidea (the group to which the dermanyssids belong) are either free-living or associated with a variety of vertebrates and invertebrates. Many of them are found on birds and some may be mutualists; predators of blood-feeding mites. Others are facultative or obligate ectoparasites such as the northern fowl mite (*Ornithonyssus sylviarum*) and the tropical fowl mite (*Ornithonyssus bursa* (fig.2)), both of which occur in New Zealand. They even include an entire family of endoparasites found only in the respiratory passages of birds. The canary lung mite (*Sternostoma tracheacolum*) belongs to this family.

Here at Lincoln University we are very interested in these mites. In fact they may just be the key to solving a long-standing problem in evolutionary biology – what causes some animals to become parasites and others to become hosts? For an animal to become a parasite two things must happen. It must live in close proximity to the animal it is going to exploit and it must be able to feed on it. Which of these evolutionary innovations comes first?

One hypothesis suggests that parasites and hosts once led a much more peaceful coexistence until an evolutionary change in the shape and structure of the mouthparts of one of the participants allowed it to exploit its unsuspecting neighbour. This is called the association hypothesis since it is the association between the two species that allows parasitism to evolve in response to an evolutionary change in the way one of the species involved obtains its food.

According to the alternative hypothesis the putative parasite leads a much more lonely existence, but is morphologically pre-adapted to feeding on the host. This may be because it has developed piercing mouthparts to exploit some other resource that could just as easily be used to suck blood if there were a ready supply of the stuff nearby. Only later, on encountering a host it does not usually come across, does this pre-adaptation allow it to become a parasite. This is called the feeding hypothesis since a morphological pre-adaptation for feeding allows parasitism to evolve once an association is established.

The trouble is that in most groups of parasites these intermediate stages have been lost, and it is therefore impossible to know how parasitism first arose. Possible exceptions to this are the dermanyssoid mites. They display an astonishing variety of associations with other animals, from centipedes to chimpanzees and bats to bees, that might at first suggest that the association hypothesis is the best account of what's going on. These associations include nidicoly (living in the nest of a host but feeding on other material found there rather than on the host itself), phoresy (the use of a host for transport between habitat patches solely as a means of dispersal rather than a source of food) and paraphagy (feeding on host secretions rather than directly on the host itself), as well as ectoparasitism and endoparasitism. On the other hand there are also free-living dermanyssoids that have piercing mouthparts suggesting a role for the feeding hypothesis. This group represents a unique opportunity to test these two competing hypotheses. Are the parasitic species more closely related to mites with non-parasitic associations with similar hosts, or to free-living mites with piercing mouthparts?

The only way to find out is to reconstruct the evolutionary history of the group. We can do this by sequencing DNA from each species and comparing these sequences with each other. More closely related species will have more similar DNA sequences. This reconstruction of evolutionary history based on features shared between existing species is called phylogenetics and can be depicted in the form a phylogenetic tree. However, to do that, we need specimens of these mites, and that's where you come in.

If you regularly handle birds or their nests and occasionally see mites that you would be able to collect for us then we would be delighted to hear from you. We are particularly interested in mites that live in birds' nests so if you are able to send us nests, preferably of birds that have recently fledged, we would be very pleased to receive them. Just put the nest in a zip lock bag, label it with your name, date, location and bird species and send it to us at the address below. Any bird species will be fine. We, like the mites, aren't especially choosy! We will let you know whether it contained any dermanyssoid mites, and if so which ones. New species of mites are still being discovered, so who knows, you may even end up having one named after you!

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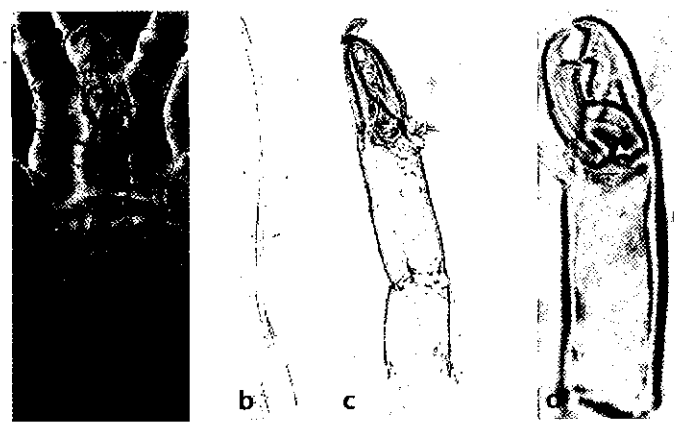

Figure 1: (a) Phase contrast image of the intercoxal region of *Dermanyssus* sp. (Dermanyssidae). The arrow indicates one of the highly modified piercing mouthparts that are an adaptation for blood feeding. These are very long and thin and held within the body when not feeding. (b) Close up of one of these mouthparts that has been dissected out. (c & d) The homologous unmodified biting mouthparts of two free-living mites for comparison: (c) *Antennolaelaps* sp. (Ologamasidae), (d) *Macrocheles merdarius* (Macrochelidae). Note the teeth, which have been lost in parasitic forms, and the relatively short length of the shafts. These pictures are taken at different magnifications but the mouthparts in b-c are of approximately equal width at their bases.

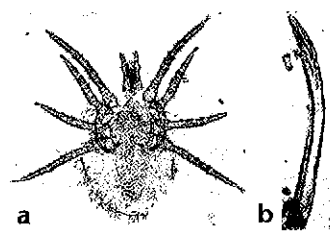

Figure 2: (a) The tropical fowl mite, *Ornithonyssus bursa* (Macronyssidae) (ventral aspect). (b) Close up of one of the piercing mouthparts that has been dissected out and stained with lignin pink. Although not as extreme as those of *Dermanyssus*, these are also modified for blood feeding.

NEW MEMBERS AND DONATIONS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Patrick Aldwell (Canterbury); Neil Andrews (Manawatu); T B Bayliss (Hawkes Bay); Dallas Bishop (Wellington); Kevin Burns (Wellington); Nicola Congdon (Canterbury); John Davy (Auckland); David Dawson (Europe); Maria Fairburn (Canterbury); Leanne Frewin (Canterbury); Emily Friedlander (Wairarapa); Josh Fyfe (Wellington); Steven Hayns (Auckland); Marnie Hunter (Auckland); Elsie Jacobson (Wellington); Hayley Lawrence (Auckland); Peter Los (Europe); Rebecca Lyon (Auckland); Ms S McGaffin (Auckland); Susanna Mathias (Canterbury); Laura Molles (Canterbury); Margaret Molloy (Taranaki); Dawn Palmer (Otago); Mrs J Peel (South Auckland); Michael Pingram (Auckland); Will Rickerby (Nelson); Bruce Shanks (South Auckland); Joanna Sim (Canterbury); Rosalie Snoyink (Canterbury); Linda Spargo (Canterbury); Robert Syrett (Hawkes Bay); Terry Voltz (Marlborough); Mr E Weston (Waikato); Mr DJ Wright (Waikato).

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

Sharon Alderson; Judy Bendall; Jean Creighton; Geoffrey De Lisle; Barbara Dingle; Chris Foreman; Colin Hill; Jim Jolly; N D McKerchar; Colin Miskelly; Dr P. L. Munns; Paul Simmons; Mr W. H. Sloan; Mr J.A. Tasman; Mona Taylor; Trevor Trought; Gillian Vaughan; Mr W. A. Watters; Nancy Tanner

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Northland

We began 2004 monitoring Fairy Tern chicks at Waipu and Mangawhai as volunteers for DoC, along with our monthly beach patrols on both west and east coast beaches. This season the Fairy Tern breeding programme saw chicks fledged from Waipu and Mangawhai – three from each site. Nine members regularly checked the six nests and were pleased to see the six chicks safely away. In contrast there were only two chicks in 2002/3.

Beach patrols have yielded low numbers of specimens on both west and east coast beaches. The most interesting specimen found was a Gould's Petrel, found on the west coast by Laurie Howell during April.

At February's evening meeting David Crockett gave a talk about the history of the New Zealand Storm Petrel. A short planning session of activities for future months followed this.

On Saturday 27 March members took a pelagic boat trip from Tutukaka organised by Richard Parrish. We had a beautiful sunny day and a very enjoyable cruise around the Poor Knights group of islands, with snorkeling by the hardy in one of the crystal clear bays. Unfortunately it was so calm bird numbers were very low, even after chumming, but as we were about to return we had splendid views of 47 or more Grey Ternlets on Sugarloaf. The New Zealand Storm Petrel, alas, was nowhere to be seen.

In early March we carried out the annual census of the Pouto Lakes with no noticeable changes in species numbers. New Zealand Dabchicks are a focus for the study and numbers are remaining static.

Harbour counts for the Kaipara and Whangarei Harbours were also carried out. Fewer spoonbills were counted on Whangarei Harbour due to the loss of one of their roost sites. On the Kaipara Harbour usual numbers of birds were counted.

Tony Beauchamp requested we bring our copies of *Notornis* and *Southern Bird* for the past six months to the April meeting. A lively and informative discussion followed as we looked at each issue, analysing what was of particular interest (or not) to us as members. We also had a look at the progress on atlas squares for our region.

Gerry Brackenbury was the speaker for our May meeting with some beautiful slides and an informative talk on his visit to Maud Island. He outlined the management strategies in place to protect and nurture the species living there.

David Crockett has just returned from Chatham Island with the good news that nine Chatham Island Taiko chicks fledged this season, and the fencing off of the secure breeding area has begun.

The first of the Kaka that visit our area as winter approaches has been heard and seen at Glenbervie. This was a single bird – two or three birds are seen during June and July most years in the Whangarei area.

We have won a contract to weed shellbanks near Limestone Island to make the area suitable for Caspian Terns to nest. We are waiting for suitable weather and tides to enable us to complete the vegetation clearance that Richard Parrish began. That will keep us busy for the next month or so.

LORNA SIMPKIN

Auckland

The birds of Spain and Europe featured in a talk from Auckland member, Bruce Keeley in March. Last year, Bruce and his wife visited Coto Doñana National Park and the Ebro Delta in Spain. In his illustrated talk, 'A Travellers Tale', Bruce shared many of the highlights of birdwatching in these wetland habitats.

Among the birds he saw at Coto Doñana were Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills, and Red-crested Pochard. At the Ebro Delta the birds included Purple Heron, Squacco Heron, Pied Avocet, and Collared Pratincole. The journey also took in a visit to the Pyrenees. Among the many raptors seen in the mountains were Lammergeier, Eurasian Griffon Vulture, and Red Kite.

March was a busy month for Auckland members with two major surveys - the New Zealand Dotterel post-breeding flock count and the Tiritiri Matangi Island survey.

In April, Brent Booker talked about his study on the impacts of rodents on ground invertebrates in the Waitakere Ranges. Brent sampled the population of ground invertebrates using pit traps as a prospective measure of the presence of rats, mice and other alien animals that prey on wetas, beetles, and large spiders etc. He compared several sites in the Waitakere Ranges, including the Cascades and Forest and Bird's Matuku Reserve (where pest control measures are in operation) using footprint tunnels to identify the animals.

His results suggest this insect sampling is a valuable technique. Brent teaches science at McLean's College, and his study was made during tenure of a Royal Society Science Teachers Fellowship. John Dowding was a visitor at the meeting and discussion included the current New Zealand Dotterel conservation work.

Fishing industry efforts to reduce the seabird by-catch was the topic of a talk by snapper advisory officer, Grant Johnson in May. Grant works for the Department of Conservation's Warkworth area office, dealing with more than 100 longline snapper fishers who operate out of Leigh. He detailed the extensive efforts made by fishers to avoid catching seabirds while setting baited hooks. Mitigation techniques included setting only at night, retaining fish offal on board so that birds were not attracted to follow the fishing boats, and setting up 'tory lines' that have noisy streamers to deter birds from lines as they are set.

Other methods used in conjunction with these were weighting lines to get them underwater faster, fish oil to deter birds from landing near the boats, and the use of scare cannons and blue-dyed baits. Grant told the meeting that New Zealand has one of the largest number of seabirds breeding in its waters. This country is leading the world in the use of mitigation techniques to avoid catching seabirds, and is spreading the message to skippers of foreign vessels in countries where our seabirds spend many years of their lives. The Government has recently released a national plan of action for seabirds that will make the fishing industry accountable. A code of practice will enable prosecution of fishers who do not comply with seabird mitigation requirements.

Auckland members took part in two more census counts in May including the annual Wrybill census organised by Adrian Reigen, and the two-day Tawharanui census. The predator-proof fence at Tawharanui was recently completed, so this was an important census

to ascertain wetland, forest and coastal bird numbers in this regional park north of Auckland.

SUZI PHILLIPS

South Auckland

Our April meeting had as guest speaker Sam Ferreira from the Department of Conservation who gave us much to think about in relation to restoration projects, and the changes in diversity and numbers of birds as restoration projects mature. The question that really made us think however was *'restoring the dawn chorus to what?'* His point was that it is necessary to have very clear objectives and outcomes before commencing a restoration project as they determine how the project should be managed. We will now take greater interest in seeing what changes do actually occur as restoration projects advance.

In May Keven Parker gave us a very informative insight into the life of the Fernbird, a species with which we are familiar and yet know very little about. A very poorly-guarded secret that came out during the discussion was the very approachable and easily visible Fernbirds at the Regional Park on the Awhitu Peninsula. There are several Fernbird territories clustered around a boardwalk and the birds are often clearly visible.

Wendy Goad and John Brown and their team have continued with the regular monthly beach patrols with very little returns in recent times. Presumably that is good news for the birds, however.

On the bird front the usual migratory wader numbers built up at the major roosts during March and then gradually decreased as migration occurred. Now that we are getting more used to the timing of migration and what to look for in departing birds we have obtained several recent sightings of birds departing from the local estuaries and it would appear that they consistently leave in small groups of 30-40 birds.

The nocturnal division of the South Auckland Region (i.e. Gillian Vaughan and Tony Habraken) assisted Phil Battley in mist-netting Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots at Miranda just prior to their departure. This individual colour-flagging is to assist Phil's research project. This project has had relatively immediate returns with individually flagged birds from the Firth of Thames being seen in the Kaipara Harbour, China and Korea. We now look forward to the spring migration to watch as these birds return.

There have been recent reports of a Black-tailed Godwit and several Terek Sandpipers at Miranda, while in the Manukau Harbour there are reported to be at least four Large Sand Dotterels including two in very advanced breeding plumage. There is also a range of other over-wintering waders that will add some interest to the winter census in June. The first Cattle Egrets have been reported with two on the south shore of the Manukau Harbour on 26 April and three at Aka Aka on 9 May, which increased to 38 on the 15th.

DAVID LAWRIE

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

We are continuing to move forward in the region. Paul Cuming, a recent signing from the Waikato has agreed to become our new regional recorder, Pam Agnew our new beach patrol co-ordinator and Eila Lawton is to continue her excellent work as our regional network facilitator.

In April, a field trip to the Norske Skog (Tasman) Kawerau Wetland restoration project received excellent attendance with 22 people enjoying a guided tour courtesy of Wildlands Consultants. Various aspects of wetland rehabilitation were demonstrated including weirs, aeration ponds and wetland reclaiming from farmland. Black-fronted Dotterels were a highlight, as were the ubiquitous Spotless Crakes, which as usual were keeping well out of sight despite being only a few feet away. This is a major wetland restoration project being undertaken for the pulp and paper mill near Whakatane. The vision is to restore a network of wetlands and margins, creating a network of habitats for indigenous plants and wildlife. In 2001 the project was recognised under the Ramsar Convention. Many thanks are owed to John Brierley for co-ordinating and hosting this event.

The day following the field trip, Paul Cuming reported another Black-fronted Dotterel from the bridge over the Whakatane River at Taneatua. He also heard Grey-faced Petrels over the Matata Cliffs the same weekend.

Our trip to the Volkner Rocks in February was cancelled due to stormy weather. In April, Tim Barnard joined a group of divers heading out toward White Island. For once this summer, the sea was relatively calm and he was fortunate to find approximately 50 Grey Ternlets roosting on the stacks. It is good to know that they are still there in reasonable numbers.

A number of interesting birds continued to turn up around the coast into late summer. The number of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Little Waihi reached a maximum of ten. They were joined by a Pectoral Sandpiper in late February and early March. A small flock of Asiatic Whimbrels has been loyal to Ohiwa all summer, with an Eastern Curlew putting in an appearance in late March (Malcolm Hutton). Over in the western bay, Brian Chudleigh reported a Little Tern at Tauranga and some local consternation appeared to have been caused by a probable Giant Petrel taking up temporary residence in Tauranga harbour.

In March a Reef Heron was on the Whakatane River. The same month there was 1350 Bar-tailed Godwits, 95 Lesser Knots, 46 Pacific Golden Plovers and 26 New Zealand Dotterels at Maketu. At Ohiwa 3800 Bar-tailed Godwits, and a good sprinkling of Golden Plovers and Arctic Skuas were present. On 25 March 92 New Zealand Dotterels were present, including some from Tern Island.

TIM BARNARD and PAUL CUMING

Hawke's Bay

Ahuriri Estuary and associated wetlands have been worth checking out over the summer. There were up to six Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in early February, mostly around the scrape areas at the southern end of Westshore Lagoon. Margaret and Wayne Twydle saw two Marsh Sandpipers in that area on 6 February. These birds stayed for an extended period, allowing members good views of them, and were still present on 24 April.

The seasonal build up of Royal Spoonbills is again occurring at Ahuriri. There were 21 at the Southern Marsh on 6 February and 58 on 24 April. None were colour-banded. A single Reef Heron has also been around the Embankment Bridge area. It was first seen in mid-April and was still there on 24 April.

A small number of members visited the Manawatu Estuary on 13 March and managed to see a number of species not regularly seen in Hawke's Bay. These included 36 Wrybills, a Terek Sandpiper and a Little Tern. It is always great to see something different when you travel elsewhere.

There has been heavy kahikatea fruiting in some areas this year. Jim Hamilton and Christine McRae observed good numbers of Tui and New Zealand Pigeons feeding on the fruit recently at Elsthorpe Scenic Reserve. Very large numbers of Starlings were also taking advantage of the abundant fruit supply.

Murray Jeffries has been assisting DoC as a volunteer, feeding the captive Kokako at the Boundary Stream Mainland Island project. Two of the five pairs held in large bush aviaries bred this year and Murray was present when the three chicks were released into the reserve. These joined the three pairs of non-breeding birds that had been released earlier. All released birds were fitted with radio transmitters to monitor their movements and survival. It is about 100 years since Kokako roamed freely in this part of Hawke's Bay.

JOHN CHEYNE

Taranaki

Our first meeting of the year, in February, saw the welcome addition of three new members, with plenty of observations and records made by everyone in the two months since the last meeting. The most interesting reports came from non-members. A tourist tramping in the Kaitake Ranges in Egmont National Park reported a possible cuckoo-shrike and a worker on the Maui platform forwarded photos of a frigatebird on and around the rig (located offshore of South Taranaki). After viewing the photos it was confirmed as a Greater Frigatebird.

A banded Variable Oystercatcher seen at Mokau by Barry Hartley was banded on Somes Island in Jan 1982 and may still be breeding. New member Cees Beavers spoke on his work as executive officer of the Taranaki Kiwi Trust and efforts to save the few remaining kiwi in Egmont National Park. Predator trapping has been tied in with the Blue Duck recovery program.

February's field trip saw five of us heading out into Eastern Taranaki in steadily increasing rain to fill in some more atlas squares. The major interest was the brief sighting of three possible juvenile Crimson Rosellas. Further investigation is required.

At the March meeting Barry Hartley reported on his attendance and oral presentation on the Pukekura Park plan, his submission was well received but we await further developments. He also gave a summary of the success, or otherwise, of the Variable Oystercatcher and New Zealand Dotterels breeding along two areas of South Taranaki

coastline. The Variable Oystercatchers had a mixed season, but the New Zealand Dotterels fledged one chick, then probably the same pair nested again and fledged two chicks.

I spoke enthusiastically about my attendance at the Miranda field course – five days of full-on birding and related themes which I heartily recommend to all who have an interest in migratory waders. Three of us headed south to the Manawatu Estuary to join other OSNZ members in a farewell to the birds. Good numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots in breeding plumage were seen, as well as a hyperactive Terek Sandpiper. A stop off at Koitiata lagoon just out of Turakina was a real highlight with Black-fronted Dotterels, 150+ Pied Stilts, Bar-tailed Godwits, Lesser Knots and Wrybills a few of the birds seen.

At the April meeting we were presented with the final copy of the Pukekura Park plan. Among the changes is an opportunity for the Society to assist with bird surveys. During members' reports David Medway told us that whilst out and about in the park he observed a flock of approximately 31 Tui, a New Zealand Pigeon and some Starlings almost strip a totara of its fruit. Barry Hartley told us about a Shepherd's Beaked Whale washed up on a North Taranaki beach, only the 28th recorded specimen. Rosemary and Bill Messenger then gave an account of their recent visit to Lord Howe Island, which despite a number of avian extinctions is still home to a large number of terrestrial and sea birds. Despite visiting between two cyclones, many species of bird were seen and photographed, including Providence Petrel, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Common Noddy, Banded Rail and Lord Howe Woodhen.

Five of us headed up the Hutuwai Valley for a weekend. Those who stayed out late and rose early were privileged to hear Brown Kiwi and Morepork. A total of 40 species were recorded. An evening trip to the nearby Grey-faced Petrel colony was perhaps a little early with only a few birds around. The sighting of a possible immature Arctic Tern at Waiongana was confirmed as an immature Black Fronted Tern – still a first for us. There was no doubt though about the orange-flagged Lesser Knot. Beach patrols turned up few birds, the main interest being a Black-browed Mollymawk in the same location as one previously found.

PETER FRYER

Wanganui

The February storms blew many trees down around Wanganui including the willows at Virginia Lake that have been the nesting site for shags over the past few years. Most of the nests survived and shags are still using the trees as roosts, so hopefully they will continue to nest there. Also during the storms, on 17 February, a dead Fairy Prion was picked up at Raukawa Falls campsite up the Parapara highway. It was taken to the DoC office at Ohakune where it was identified by Kerry Oates and Petra Specht. It had been blown quite a long way inland by the storm.

Surprisingly, the aftermath of the storm resulted in exceptionally low water level in Turakina lagoon. The extensive area left dry was covered with a layer of silt 5-10cm thick and strewn with onions. Waterfowl seemed to have been driven away, there being no Mallards, Grey Teal or Australasian Shovelers to be seen, and only a couple of Black Swans. On the Wanganui River there were still 16 Bar-tailed Godwits and one Lesser Knot.

Three Wrybills were seen at Turakina in February and one on the Wanganui River in March. Exceptionally large numbers of waterfowl were on Westmere Lake at the end of April – over 100 Paradise Shelducks, over 200 Mallards, plus smaller numbers of Australasian Shovelers, New Zealand Scaup and Grey Teal. At Turakina, also in April, a flock of over 100 Welcome Swallows were busily feeding over the lagoon.

On 2 May, Ian and Jocelyn Bell watched a pair of Australasian Harriers circling over a tall pine tree in their Wanganui garden. One dived into the tree and emerged with a small bird in its talons. This is the second time they have observed a harrier take a small bird from the pine. On a personal note, I saw two Grey Ducks on Westmere in March. Often ducks with facial features suggesting Grey Duck are seen amongst flocks of Mallards, but there is usually absence of positive identification. On this occasion though, one reared up in the water, flapped its wings and displayed its distinctive green speculum.

BILL GREENWOOD

Wairarapa

The highlight for the Wairarapa members was the publishing of our local field guide *Birds of the Wairarapa*. This booklet was completed with page by page contribution from local OSNZ members. The format and detail was the result of painstaking hours of research and locating suitable photographs. The driving force and instigators of this useful publication were Tenick Dennison, Colin Scadden, Betty Watt and Brian Boeson. They are to be congratulated for this achievement. For a mere $9.95, this pocket-sized book is available by contacting any Wairarapa OSNZ member. Any regions interested in the layout of this publication should contact Tenick Dennison by email at tenick.cd@xtra.co.nz

Several of our field trips have been cancelled due to the poor weather that affected the lower North Island this summer. While the Wairarapa was not hit as hard as the Manawatu, our river survey of Black-fronted Dotterels was completely washed out. This survey was to repeat one carried out five years ago.

Our monthly meetings have consisted of informative talks by Christine Reed on biosecurity and by Reg Cotter on the Chatham Island Taiko and Chatham Island.

As always, there is a depth of experience and knowledge among our members that make our meetings both interesting and varied.

MILES KING

Wellington

In early March Mike Imber presented a well-illustrated lecture on the status of the Cook's Petrel, based upon his studies over many years on Little Barrier and Codfish Islands. Mike explained that, historically, the Cook's Petrel is known, or is thought to have bred in several hilly and mountain sites in the North and South Islands but breeding occurs now only on Little Barrier and Codfish Islands. Mike said that breeding success on Codfish Island is high (about 80%), in sharp contrast with Little Barrier Island where it is only about 20% due to substantial losses of chicks caused by rat predation. Mike concluded that the Cook's Petrel is now secure on Codfish Island but it is seriously threatened on Little Barrier.

In April Stuart Nicholson spoke about the OSNZ benthic survey of the tidal flats at Farewell Spit, where large numbers of migratory waders feed and roost. A local reduction in the Lesser Knot population was a mystery and a baseline study of their food source was essential to determine causal factors. The study was under contract from Ministry of Fisheries.

In May Emily King summarised some aspects of her field studies being made on the Yellowhead on Nukuwaiata (one of the Chetwode Islands) at the entrance to Pelorous Sound. Emily explained that only five Yellowheads that were transferred to the islands now survive and this was a very small population to monitor, particularly as they are very mobile and tracking on rough country has been difficult. It was the first time they had been studied in a non-beech environment. Specific conclusions made by Emily are: two clutches can be reared in one season; successful breeding between different populations; polyandry was recorded; and a good food source is critical to success.

Peter Reese led three banding sessions since March at the Wellington Zoo that many members enjoyed being involved with. For many members these opportunities provide first-hand experience in handling several of the smaller bird species, as well as making a solid contribution towards knowledge on the ages and movements of the common birds of Wellington suburbs. Recent highlights include the capture of a Kingfisher, Grey Warblers, the recapture of a House Sparrow after 946 days – the longest for this species in Wellington – and Fantails, including a black one.

The two year re-survey of birds in the Pauatahanui Inlet being led by Allan Munro continues each month and will draw to a close in June. Many members have contributed to the survey in all weathers and a large amount of data has been collected so far. Since July 2003 the number of species recorded each month has ranged between 29 and 38.

Monitoring of the occurrence and distribution of bird species being undertaken under contract between the society and the Whitirea Regional Park Board, near Titahi Bay, continues each month. The aim is to contribute good information about birds as a contribution towards better natural resources management of the Whitirea Park.

IAN ARMITAGE and STUART NICHOLSON

Nelson

The results of the benthic survey done at Farewell Spit in 2003 are coming through, though there is still considerable work to be done with them. Samples were taken from 92 stations covering 30,000 square metres. Many benthic species are transitory and each time a

survey is done the results vary slightly.

During the wader census in February two different people saw a Japanese Snipe at Pakawau on consecutive days. A Lesser Knot banded in Shanghai in April 2003 was seen at Farewell Spit.

Don Cooper and Willie Cook have banded a family of three Variable Oystercatcher chicks on Rabbit Island. The fledglings have since been seen a number of times in the area. The parents of the chicks raised a family of two in the 2003 season.

Pauline Samways reports several sightings, in recent months, of three Black Stilts, including two young and one adult, and two hybrid stilts on the Motueka Sandspit. Identifying the young of each type is proving a challenge. Willie Cook is coordinating a group that will cover the shoreline of the Waimea Estuary looking for Banded Rail footprints.

In April a small group accompanied Kim Turner of DoC into the Flora Creek area of Kahurangi National Park to look for Blue Ducks, which have been released there. The release occurred after Friends of Flora, in conjunction with DoC, spent several years putting stoat traplines up the main creek and tributaries. Augmented by 1080 drops, the project has been very successful. All the ducks were fitted with locators and 8-10 have survived the first season. The project has also had a beneficial effect on the numbers of bush birds, which now provide a continuous stream of calls and song throughout the extensive area.

Rob Schuckard is looking at the effects of marine farming in the Marlborough Sounds on shag species. David Melville spent a month at and around Chongming Island in the Yangtze Estuary. With Pete Collins he took training workshops and sighted a good number of migrating flagged waders.

GILLIAN POLLOCK

Marlborough

Our regular monthly visits to Lake Grassmere Salt Works continue to bring surprises. The variation in the numbers of the regular visitors is gradually falling into a pattern but there are still several questions to be answered. Why did waterfowl and Red-billed Gull numbers collapse in April?

Other interesting features are the main waterfowl are Grey Teal and Australasian Shovelers. We had our best count of Banded Dotterels in May and the same count found six Turnstones and a single Red-necked Stint still present, plus four Wrybills. All appeared to be very late getting to their wintering grounds.

February was our best month for Arctic migrants with 51 Turnstones, three Bar-tailed Godwits, and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Our Red-necked Phalarope reappeared and remained until the March count.

We have begun some passerine banding, but to date are only selecting sites and setting up traps etc. We hope to band regularly and run courses to train local members. These will be notified in the local newsletter, but already there is a lot of interest.

An unusual bird at Double Cove in Queen Charlotte Sound was a Nankeen Night Heron. It is interesting to note that one was seen at the same location over ten years ago. Sue and I were sure that we had selected the right place to live when a very friendly White Heron visited us for a week. It not only cleaned out about 75% of the goldfish in our pond, but also came inside and perched on the settee in our lounge. We think this was probably the same bird that was shot and injured in Picton about a week later. The most recent visitor was a New Zealand Falcon (probably a young female).

We are currently having a push to increase the membership. So far we have one new member and several prospective ones. We are looking forward to having several new faces on future field trips.

BRIAN BELL

Canterbury

Canterbury has had another rather quiet season as far as rare and scarce birds go, with the Lake Ellesmere honeypot rather too dry to attract the usual species, let alone anything out of the ordinary. A Black Stilt has spent the autumn at the Ashley Estuary and has been seen by quite a few observers. The same bird has probably wandered to nearby dairy paddocks and a lake in a new subdivision in Rangiora.

March's field meeting was to new wader habitat being created adjacent to the Avon-Heathcote Estuary with the aim of attracting a wider range of species and affording more breeding and roosting sites for the species already present. Andrew Crossland, who works as a ranger for the Christchurch City Council, was the guide for the morning. In his usual entertaining style explained the impressive habitat creation projects and why they were done the way they were. A bonus was the discovery of a Cape Barren Goose in a rough paddock next to the sewage ponds at Bromley – a new species for the estuary environs.

Eric Spurr brought us up to date at the March indoor meeting with the work the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group is doing on the riverbed near Rangiora. The Canterbury region has been helping with twice yearly surveys each of the past few springs.

Eric had brought together much data both from the recent surveys and up to 40 years ago, mapping the decline of Black-billed Gulls and Black-fronted Terns, and the relative stability of Pied Stilts and Banded Dotterels. Wrybills weren't seen on the river in 1963, and may even have increased in number – but even though numbers seem to be up, fewer pairs seem to be breeding now than 20 years ago. Removal of both plant and animal pests is being undertaken along a significant stretch of river, and off-road vehicles are being asked to use a track on the berm rather than in the part of the river used by the birds and other special river fauna and flora.

At the farewell to the waders in April, organiser Colin Hill was pessimistic prior to the day – with the Greenpark Sands area of Lake Ellesmere being too dry to support much life of any kind, let alone wading birds. A little precipitation in the area a few days before must have made the area a bit more attractive and proved Colin wrong, with birds appearing as if from nowhere to be farewelled from Yarrs Bay – the closest bit of the lake to his farm. The highlights for the day were 50 Wrybills, 54 Red-necked Stints and 19 Pacific Golden Plover – the latter moulting into their spectacular breeding plumage.

Paul Sagar gave an interesting overview of seabirds – specifically tubenoses – at the April meeting, sharing his encyclopaedic knowledge, and great collection of slides of the group, working from the largest (the great albatrosses), down to the smallest (the diving petrels). He gave a great plug for the beach patrol scheme – it being a great research tool to study this group of birds.

The day of the field meeting in May was to say the least a little soggy and rather cool. Nevertheless a bunch of Cantabrians ventured forth to survey a few more bush reserves on Banks Peninsula. Riflemen and Brown Creepers were recorded along with commoner species in the Mount Pearce area. This may have been aided by having to manhandle two 4wd vehicles up a rather slippery unmetalled road in a private reserve belonging to OSNZ member Judy Bugo. The main effect was to increase the time spent in the area. The expected Tomtits in the area kept quiet. It was interesting to note that the birdlife in Judy's reserve, adjacent to a DoC scenic reserve was more profuse – probably due to being less exposed and having taller vegetation, including totaras.

A rather mud-splattered group of birders lunched at the pretty Le Bons Bay prior to visiting a bit of bush bisected by the road into the settlement. Here Riflemen were found at lower-than-usual altitude in amazingly scrubby kanuka/scrub/oak/cow paddock, along with the more expected Brown Creepers and common bush species.

NICK ALLEN

Otago

Derek Onley should be commissioned to illustrate a book on the birds of Mexico. At our recent indoor meeting Derek described six months spent in Mexico. He was unable to locate a field guide (until the end of his sojourn) so set out to draw all the birds he saw. The local people didn't seem to take any particular notice of the birds (many were called 'sparrows' or 'crows'), but there were hundreds of species living in the area and migrating between North and South America.

Derek started by drawing the birds in the tree beside the house whilst having morning coffee, then he made further drawings during forays walking around town, or when travelling by bus.

It was a treat to see some of his hundreds of colourful and accurate drawings of the birds he saw. He never saw one bird's middle section, so he made a drawing of its head and its tail!

LOUISE FOORD

Southland

With the imminent closure of the Invercargill City Refuse Site it will be interesting to see what happens to the Black-backed Gull population that feeds there. Large numbers of gulls frequent the tip and adjoining lagoon, but soon this smorgasbord will be unavailable as the refuse is trucked to Kings Bend near Winton to a more enclosed and regulated site. Countless gulls have been shot at the tip over the years,

but this made little difference to the population. With the disappearance of this important food source we should see a significant decline in the size of local gull colonies this year.

Lloyd Esler was recently sent some photographs my email of a strange shelduck hybrid shot during the hunting season. The sender of the email asked if Mallard drakes would mate with Paradise Shelducks, it certainly was a strange coloured bird and like nothing I have seen. It seemed to have a small head but a larger shelduck-sized body. The email also mentioned that the bird flew like a Paradise Shelduck, we are hoping that some part of the bird was saved for further identification. Lloyd has forwarded the photos to Alan Tennyson.

We have also had reports of a Brown Teal on a pond near Lake George (between Riverton and Colac Bay). If the reports are correct it will be a significant find for this endangered species.

PHIL RHODES

Regional Reps & What's on

Far North

Detlef Davies, Waipapa Lagoon, Landing Road, Kerikeri 0470. Ph (09) 407 3874. Email detlefdaviesd@yahoo.com

Northland

Katrina Hansen, 3 Harbour View Road, Onerahi, Whangerei. 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. Whangerei 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

Roger Day, 42A Hillcrest Road, Hamilton. Ph (07) 859 0272. Email rogerjday@xtra.co.nz. 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. Bird sightings and field trips (monthly) ph. Paul Cuming. Atlas sheets ph. Stella Rowe (07) 843 5199.

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Tim Barnard, 5 Larcy Road, Lynmore, Rotorua. Ph (07) 345 3433. Email tim.barnard@xtra.co.nz

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 mcjeffries@xtra.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

Evening meetings - second Thursday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30pm, venue alternating between Masterton and Greytown. Field trip the following weekend. Contact Miles King for further details.

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 atlassing), 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. Steve Wood (03) 528 6438 or Don Cooper (03) 544 8109.

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@xtra.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@xtra.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.