



Southern *Bird*

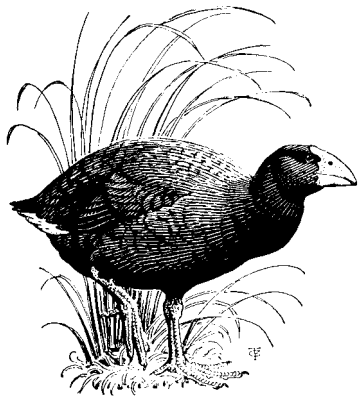
No. 35 September 2008 • ISSN 1175-1916



Garden Bird Survey 2007 Results • North Island Kokako Recovery

Southern Bird

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QUOTATION

What bird so sings, yet so does wail,
'Tis Philomel the Nightingale;
Jug, jug, jug, tereu she cries,
And hating earth, to heaven she flies.
Ha, ha, hark, hark, the Cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the Spring.
Brave prick-song; who is't now we hear!
'Tis the Lark's silver lir-a-lir:
Chirrup, the Sparrow flies away;
For he fell to't ere break of day.
Ha, ha, hark hark; the Cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the Spring.
What Bird So Sings by Thomas Dekker (1572-1632)

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COVER PHOTOS

Front cover: Royal Spoonbills
Back cover: Nankeen Night Heron in flight
Both photos by Roger Wasley

We welcome advertising enquiries. Free classified ads are available to members at the editor's discretion. 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, and identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp. Copy deadlines are 10th February, May and August, and 1st November.

Publisher

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AOC 2009

The fifth biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference will be held at Armidale, New South Wales from 30th November to 4th December 2009 inclusive. The Conference will consist of four days of spoken and written presentations with Wednesday 2nd December given over to local tours. The Conference is presented jointly by Birds Australia and the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

Contact Andrew Ley: aley@northnet.com.au



IOC BRAZIL 2010

The 25th International Ornithological Congress (25th IOC) will take place in Campos do Jordão, Brazil from the 22nd to 28th of August 2010. This is the first time that the IOC is being held in a Latin American country. More than 1,500 participants are expected to come from all over the world and the congress will present an ideal opportunity to meet fellow ornithologists and visit a mega-diverse country. The deadline for submitting proposals for Plenary speakers and Symposia is June 1st. More details can be found at www.i-o-c.org. The Local Committee looks forward to seeing many of our New Zealand colleagues in Campos do Jordão!

PERSONNEL

The Wanganui region has a new Regional Representative: Peter Frost, 87 Ikitara Road, Wanganui East, Wanganui 4500. Phone 06 343 1648, email: birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz. Many thanks to Peter for taking over this recently re-invigorated region.

The Society is very thankful to the previous RR, Tom Teasdale for his past efforts in that role. Tom was crucial in keeping the branch alive and he will remain as treasurer for the region.

A full listing of officers and convenors of the Society appears elsewhere in this issue of *Southern Bird*.

NEW POST CODES

New Zealand Post is now requiring that letters are addressed with correct post codes if bulk mail-outs are to attract the discounts that they are offering.

Please would all New Zealand members ensure that when their next renewal notice is sent to them they check, and add/update if necessary, their postal address post code.

Please note that P.O. boxes and private addresses in the same area will probably have different post codes.

Correct post codes will enable OSNZ to make savings on all its postage, particularly the quarterly *Southern Bird* and *Notornis* mail-outs.

ROGER SHARP
Back Issues Officer



THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND INC 69TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT KAIKOURA ON 31ST MAY 2008

The President, Richard Holdaway, opened the meeting and welcomed about 90 members and friends. The meeting was told of the co-option of Peter Gaze as secretary for the weekend meetings.

APOLOGIES

Carol Davies; Russell Thomas; Alan Wright; Enfys Graham; Frances Schmechel; Tina Troup; Sue Waugh; Heather Saxton; Julia Melville; Peter Howden; Colin Hill; Gwenda Pulham; Ian Reid; Mary Thompson; Dai Morgan; Helen Andrews; Katrina Hansen; Lloyd Esler; Tom Teasdale; David Medway; Yvonne Mackenzie; Barbara White; Hugh and Zoe Clifford; Ingrid Kuipers; Margaret McConachie; Geoff and Raewyn Foreman; Brian and Bev Woolley; Barry Hartley; Claudia Duncan; and David Medway.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion: That the minutes of the 68th AGM, as circulated in Southern Bird, be approved [Stuart Nicholson/CJR Robertson] carried

Matters arising from the previous minutes Nil

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Motion: That the President's report, as previously circulated, be accepted. [Stuart Nicholson/Peter Gaze] carried

TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion: That the Treasurer's report, as previously circulated, be accepted. [Mark Nee/Elizabeth Bell] carried

The Treasurer advised the meeting of the Council decision to increase regional capitation by 50%

ATLAS PUBLICATION AWARDS

The President advised the meeting that the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004 had received two class awards from 'NZ Pride in Print' for the quality of its colour production. The President asked Dr Chris Robertson to accept these awards on behalf of the Society and as a personal acknowledgement of his efforts. Dr Robertson commented that these awards acknowledged New Zealand publishers as good as any offshore.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Council positions held by David Melville, Paul Scofield and Stuart Nicholson had expired, however the three incumbents had been re-elected unopposed. The position of Hon. Secretary held by Claudia Duncan also expired; Peter Gaze being the only nomination. All four Councillors were therefore appointed for the next three year term.

OTHER REPORTS

Bruce McKinlay reported on his work in coordination of wader counts, negotiating a publishing contract for the new Checklist with Te Papa Press and work with journalists to promote the Society's scientific results. David Melville described the work of the Administration and Development Committee in up-dating the manuals for

office holders in the Society. As the Banding Liaison Officer he had worked with the Department of Conservation in drafting a new banding manual with its three tiered system of permitting. Stuart Nicholson had completed an analysis of the Society's membership through time and a survey of current members to better understand their expectations. Both reports will be available through regional representatives and summarised in Southern Bird.

The President referred to the recent meeting of Regional Representatives and the continuing call for field study courses. A Projects and Activities Committee had been formed and the President called on offers of involvement from members who may be able to help.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Motion: That John Khouri be re-appointed as auditor.

[Brian Bell/Chris Robertson] carried

The President thanked the Canterbury organisers for a wonderfully successful annual conference.

The next meeting will be during Queen's Birthday Weekend 2009 at Orewa.

GO TO WWW.EBIRD.COM/NZ

OSNZ is encouraging all members and members of the public to enter their bird data into eBird. This will give us a comprehensive database of bird distribution in New Zealand for the 21st century.

We encourage five minute bird counts and travelling counts, but single observations (and casual observations) of species such as Kaka and Falcon are also encouraged. We hope that all OSNZ data will eventually be available in eBird.

We encourage members to enter backyard bird counts, what they saw while walking the dog, the birds seen on a tramp to a rarely-visited place plus your important single species observations.

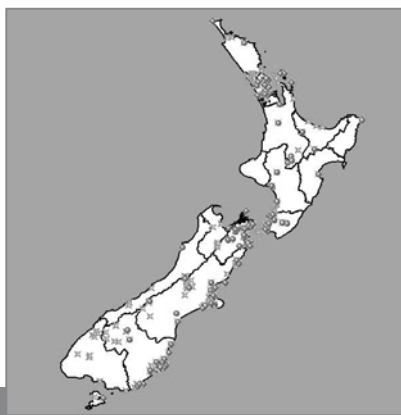
An important part is the mapping facility which gives us the opportunity to geolocate each record exactly - something that has always been problematic with CSN.

Although we have only been going for four months, we already have 300 observers using the system and over 20,000 records entered. We have over 210 species recorded and good

numbers of records for rarer species (i.e. 80 Falcon records, 50 Brown Teal and 360 Kaka).

The great thing about this system is that it keeps lists and analyses your own data whilst giving you maps and seasonal trends for any species in New Zealand, and enables anyone to produce great-looking maps on a national

An example of the distribution data entered for the last 4 months for Blackbird. Anyone can produce a map like this at the put of a button!



Distribution of records for the Auckland district for 2007 and 2008.

or regional basis. Why do we want so much data? Birds are a critical environmental monitor. It is becoming increasingly important for environmental monitoring (both at the regional and national level) to have quickly-available access to data on population trends of birds.

PAUL SCOFIELD
Chair, Scientific Committee,
OSNZ Council

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

The late Betty Watt, Wairarapa, for outstanding contribution to Mt Bruce and Stitchbirds in particular.

Betty Watt started working as a volunteer at the Mt Bruce/Pukaha Wildlife Centre in 1992. She specialised on working with Stitchbirds, and at the time of her death recently was possibly the most knowledgeable layperson on the species. In 1998 she was appointed to the Mt Bruce/Pukaha board as OSNZ representative. She remained on the board for six years until 2004, for part of that time holding office as its secretary.

Betty is a prime example of an OSNZ member, who through her dedication and attainment of knowledge made a real contribution in her chosen field, the Mt Bruce Wildlife Centre, and Stitchbirds in particular. She continues to inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

Brian Boeson, Wairarapa, for significant contributions to Beach Patrol records, Mt Bruce, and the regional site guide *Where to Find Birds in the Wairarapa*.

Brian, with his interest in birds spanning 50 years, has been instrumental in continuing the strong membership of the Wairarapa region of OSNZ. He joined the OSNZ in 1957 in Wellington, and moved to the Wairarapa in 1962.

He was first drawn to an interest in birds whilst walking on the beaches of Waikanae, where he was perplexed by the number of dead seabirds. This led to contact with the late Peter Bull, who Brian describes as his mentor, which began a lifelong fascination with birds, especially seabirds. Beach patrols led to record-keeping. He assisted Peter Bull with the records that had lapsed during World War Two, updating and recording from 1939 through to 1961, when Brian took over the job solely for two years.

Frequently beach patrolling was made more interesting by returning with rare and unusual specimens in the boot of his car. Unfortunately, at that time he owned a Volkswagen with the boot in the front, which made for very aromatic trips. This brings a whole new meaning to the expression 'suffering for ones sport'.

Brian was a member of the Mt Bruce National Wildlife Trust Board for 11 years. He has introduced many people to birdwatching through numerous talks, and was regional representative in the 1960s. He also helped create the regional site guide *Where to Find Birds in the Wairarapa*.

Ros Batcheler, Wellington, for effective contribution to surveys and translocation projects, as well as regional society affairs.

Ros has been a generous, effective and continuous participant in OSNZ affairs since she joined in 1983. She was the Wellington

contributor to the Regional Roundup for OSNZ News from 1991-98, Regional Rep for the Wellington Region from 1998-2001, was an OSNZ Councillor from 2001-5 and Book Reviews Editor also from 2001-5. She contributed to the organisation of two AGMs/conferences in Wellington in 1998 and 2006.

She has been an enthusiastic contributor to 15 bird surveys in Wellington, Manawatu, Marlborough and Nelson; Pauatahanui Inlet; Mana Island; Kapiti Island; Farewell Spit; Karori Wildlife Sanctuary; Matiu/Somes Island; Maud Island; Wilton's Bush; Pencarrow Lakes-Cook Strait coastline; New Zealand Dabchicks (Wellington and Manawatu); the River Mouth survey; the 1998-2000 Wellington Harbour Bird Survey (organiser and participant); and Belmont Regional Park.

Ros has also been an active participant in the implementation of 11 study and bird translocation projects: Black-browed Mollymawk (Campbell Island); Black Petrel (Great Barrier Island); seabird translocation of three species to Mana Island; Sooty Shearwater banding/migration (Mana Island); Blue Penguin (Matiu/Somes Island); Feral Pigeons (Wellington City); Red-crowned Parakeet and North Island Robin translocation and monitoring (Matiu/Somes Island); Pied Tit and Bellbird translocation (Karori Wildlife Sanctuary); Passerine Banding Scheme (Wellington City); Moulting Record Scheme participant; and the Kakerori Recovery Programme (Rarotonga, Cook Islands).

Roger Sharp, Auckland, for his significant role in computerising membership records and filling the Membership Secretary position for seven years.

Roger took over the membership secretary task in September 2001, and held the position for nearly seven years, during which time he fully computerised the membership lists and addresses. He has handed over a system that now makes this task much easier.

During his time Roger also tried several initiatives to increase membership by placing ads in various publications, which was successful to a degree.

The membership secretary is a role that is often taken for granted and is overlooked in the more glamorous tasks of running an organisation. However, keeping track of subscriptions and the financial status of over 1,000 members is an onerous role, which is further often complicated by members changing address without advising the secretary. These tasks Roger completed with a minimum of fuss thus allowing Council to concentrate on policy setting.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Do you know anyone who has selflessly helped the OSNZ? These awards are one opportunity to officially recognise this person, and for the Society to thank him/her.

The person need not be a member, and need not even reside in New Zealand. Posthumous nominations are also welcomed. The person can even receive more than one Meritorious Service Award, though they need to be for different services to the Society.

The award is conferred for service furthering the objects of the OSNZ.

These are:

- To encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use
- To foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds
- To promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations
- To produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest

- To effect cooperation and exchange of information with other like organisations
- To assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information, from which sound management decisions can be derived
- To maintain a library of ornithological literature for the use of members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds
- To promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds
- To carry out any other activity which is capable of being conveniently carried out in connection with the above objects, or which directly or indirectly advances those objects

A maximum of five Meritorious Service Awards can be made every year. Nomination is easy. Simply write a citation of not more than 150 words on one side of an A4 sheet setting out the achievements of the person nominated, and include the signatures of two members of the Society.

The closing date for nominations is 31st December 2008. They should be sent to:

The Awards Secretary, OSNZ, P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040.



OSNZ MEMBERS BIRDING INTERESTS

This survey was circulated following a request from the President (Richard Holdaway). It was designed by the Executive Officer (Ingrid Hutzler) with input from the President and the Chair of the Business and Administration Sub-committee (David Melville).

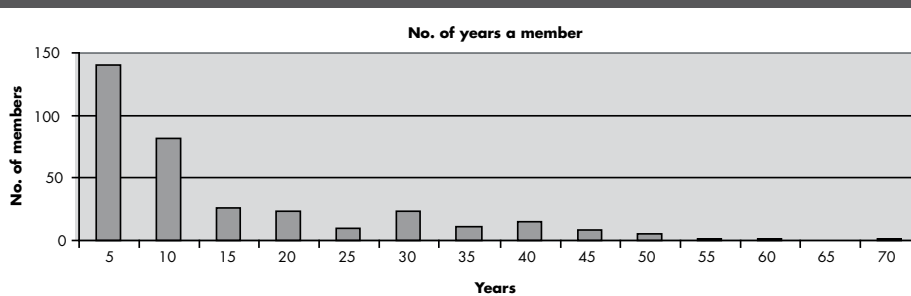
A survey sheet was posted out with the December 2007 issue of Southern Bird. Family memberships were sent only one

form (and for the purposes of analysis family returns were treated as one response). Problems with the mail-out of the Society's publications led to some members missing out on the December issue of Southern Bird (and presumably the survey sheet).

There was no latest return date published but responses received up to mid-May 2008 were collated by Ingrid. A membership survey was sent out in a similar manner

with OSNZ News June 1987. Results of this earlier survey were published in OSNZ News September 1987 and December 1987. 340 responses, from individual or family New Zealand members, were received and collated. This represents a 36% return from the 941 individual or family New Zealand members current at 7th October 2007. This is comparable to a 46% return, from 840 New Zealand members, to the 1987 survey.

NUMBER OF YEARS SINCE JOINING OSNZ



The graph indicates a high response rate from those who have joined in the last 10 years – 182 (52% of respondents). This group makes up 19% of the membership and is probably the group we want to focus on for retaining membership and adding fresh input to the way the society provides for members' needs.

INTEREST IN PARTICULAR TYPES OF BIRD

Interest	No. interested
General	302
Forest birds	80
Waders	69
Seabirds	64
Other	41

The 'Other' included the following interest areas: particular species, particular habitats/geographical regions, and particular subject areas/scientific disciplines.

ACTIVITIES

Respondents indicated interest in wanting to participate in the following activities:

Activity	No. interested
NI field study courses	103
SI field study courses	76
Would like to learn more	64
Local monitoring schemes	169
Others	36

'Others' included the following areas of participation:

- **Species-focussed** e.g. Banding Grey-faced Petrels at Mt Maunganui, dabchick surveys, terns, gulls, waders
- **Specific regional activities** e.g. Muriwai Beach patrol, Nelson estuary, North Manukau census
- **Field activities** e.g. beach patrolling, wader censuses, photography/video, monthly bird counts, banding, plant foods of birds.
- **Study** e.g. enjoyed atlasing and reporting sightings, local field trips with experts/lectures, census, research, studies on aspects of biology ecology and behaviour.
- **Conservation** e.g. Habitat restoration, interest in Pauatahanui Inlet, predator control, conservation projects.

Some respondents interpreted this question as what they were doing rather than what they 'would like to participate in'. For the purposes of this survey, these responses have not been included above.

They were also asked what they would like to learn more about. Replies included the following subject areas:

- **Bird handling skills** e.g. banding, mist netting, handling, moult, candling.
- **Field skills/activities** e.g. identification including calls, monitoring, restoration, photographing, bird watching in forest.
- **Regional** e.g. Stewart Island, birds breeding on SI river beds.
- **Study areas** e.g. behaviour, anatomy, biology, ecology/conservation, evolution and adaptation.
- **Particular species**, or groups of species e.g. seabirds, exotic & native, bitterns, Morepork, grebes.
- **General** e.g. activities of local branch, everything.

INTEREST IN HELPING TO ORGANISE

48 people responded to this statement. Again, some responded by saying what they were already doing (16), rather than "would be interested in helping organise local events, courses, etc.", and these are omitted from the analysis below. Sixteen respondents did not state what they would be interested in organising, so presumably are willing to "organise local events, courses, etc." Specified activities respondents were willing to organise:

- **Regional activities**
- **Field activities** e.g. banding; training/projects; surveys; field days; census; bird trips; monitoring schemes; organising parade to welcome migratory birds; leading the odd field trip
- **Administrative** e.g. helping with AGM; happy to arrange accommodation; format/design mail outs; co-ordinating with experts; being a local committee member; meetings; passing information on to members,
- **General** e.g. possibly able to help depending on time involved

PASSIVE BUT WOULD LIKE TO READ ABOUT LOCAL PROJECTS AND SCHEMES

A tick box for this answer produced a number (50) of comments (entered in the space at the end of the form), explaining why they were passive, although this wasn't requested.

26 indicated time constraints and 17 age/mobility/children etc. Other comments fell in to the following categories:

- Generally positive and encouraging comments. e.g. Enjoys reading the publications; enjoys membership and information on birding; fantastic to be part of this group; wants to learn more skills.
- Intends to, or may, be involved soon e.g. hope to become more active/be active in future.

OPINION OF ATLAS OF BIRD DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ZEALAND 1999-2004

Excellent	208
Useful	99
OK	22
Not useful	4
Don't know, haven't looked at it yet	8
No response recorded	9
Total no. of responses =	350

The numbers speak for themselves!

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING MY MEMBERSHIP

101 respondents made comments under this open-ended response heading.

Some comments were directed at improvements to the Society and how it operates rather than their own specific individual needs as suggested by the heading.

»»» CONTINUED OVER PAGE

TYPICAL COMMENTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- **Newsletters** e.g. would like a (regional) newsletter; list of monitoring activities should be made available in each region - especially for new members.
- **Southern Bird** e.g. column advice for new members; better quality photos; a feature "Your questions answered"; society publications seem to be erratic - this needs to be improved; more content in *Southern Bird* (e.g. bird watching locations, ID tips), profiles of birding people, updates of topical issues e.g. storm petrel search.
- **Notornis** e.g. continue to encourage amateur and professional members to undertake high quality studies and support publication of their results in *Notornis*; publish *Notornis*/*Southern Bird* on time; it seems too technical for my general use and I didn't expect or require a personal copy - I'd rather share/borrow and have the Society save costs; wants an efficient and transparent system for seeing how submitted papers are being processed.
- **Email/www** use e.g. activities should be announced by email, in case monthly meetings are missed; continue excellent flow of emails/info updates from RR; send regional events calendar by email on monthly basis; hopes to be able to participate fully in the Society without having a computer; email alerts if rare birds are in the area.
- **Atlas** e.g. The Atlas letter was disconcerting; Atlas should have only been sent to interested members; enjoyed collecting Atlas records and would be interested in similar activity; has donated her Atlas copy to the local library.
- **Local field events** e.g. 10 yrs of age - would like more info to see if field studies, monitoring etc. is appropriate for his age; encourage new members to participate in activities (tends to be word of mouth); info on how members can participate in upcoming events.

- **National workshops/events** e.g. a permanent field centre in a birding area; biannual field trips as done in the past; field courses are done at Miranda - don't duplicate; study courses/workshops great to meet members from other areas.
- **Training topics** e.g. bird recognition, monitoring and ecology studies; bird study courses through polytechnic or night classes at high school (studies, monitoring etc); more involvement by professional ornithologists would enhance membership experience for non-professionals; would love to have more instructional courses (i.e. for beach patrols, how to identify birds in general, juvenile/adult etc).
- **OSNZ public image/profile/publicity** e.g. continue with preparation and publication of State of NZ Birds; extend garden bird study to be a national bird week (similar to RSPB) - invite people to participate, especially young; keep up communication (use notice boards, libraries, evening talks, day trips, spread word about membership).
- **OSNZ branding** e.g. Use of word 'ornithological' may put people off - suggests use of name 'Birding' at local level (e.g. 'Birding Wanganui') with clear affiliation to OSNZ; resolve issue of marketing name (Birds NZ?) - to be raised again and a vote taken with all members - would help with membership drive in future; change the name - as the majority voted on, maybe a more catching title.
- **Subscriptions** e.g. would be good to renew subscription and see membership status online; direct debits for subs; family membership should be same as individual; Notornis should be optional to save cost/cheaper subs; reduction of subs for older members.
- **Meetings** e.g. can't attend meetings due to remoteness; use funds to sponsor speaker exchanges to ensure that regions get at least four speakers per year.
- **Future/young** members e.g. primary schools scientific days/week - to bring

new/young members to birds; some activities (perhaps twice a year) focusing on children and teenagers to encourage them into formal birding; would be great to see student membership increased in future years - have current student members encourage others to join (by emailing through departments, student events, specific student section at AGM/conference).

- **Web-based recording** e.g. seeing local records and OSNZ data incorporated into National Biodiversity reporting system (align NZBRN, OSNZ and DoC systems) - use of GIS, etc; interesting bird sightings should be posted immediately on Web not held back to regional meetings.
- **Admin issues** e.g. Would like access to long term trend data, more communication from Council to RRs and membership, list on web of all activities where members can help.

COMPARISON WITH RESULTS OF 1987 SURVEY

From what I can deduce from the OSNZ News reports (no sample questionnaire was available to me), the 1987 survey asked eight questions as follows:

age; gender; how did they first become interested in birds; OSNZ region; would you be prepared to enlist at least one new member in the next two years; how do you prefer to watch birds (on own, small group, with family, no preference, large group, no comment); how do you obtain the most satisfaction from being part of OSNZ; how would you describe yourself as a member of OSNZ? (conservationist, birdwatcher, serious bird observer, ornithologist, support OSNZ but know little about birds, student, lister/ticker/twitcher, aviculturalist, no comment).

From the comments made in the analysis, it would seem one of the primary purposes of the 1987 survey was to increase membership. There were no questions, other than region, that were the same in both surveys.

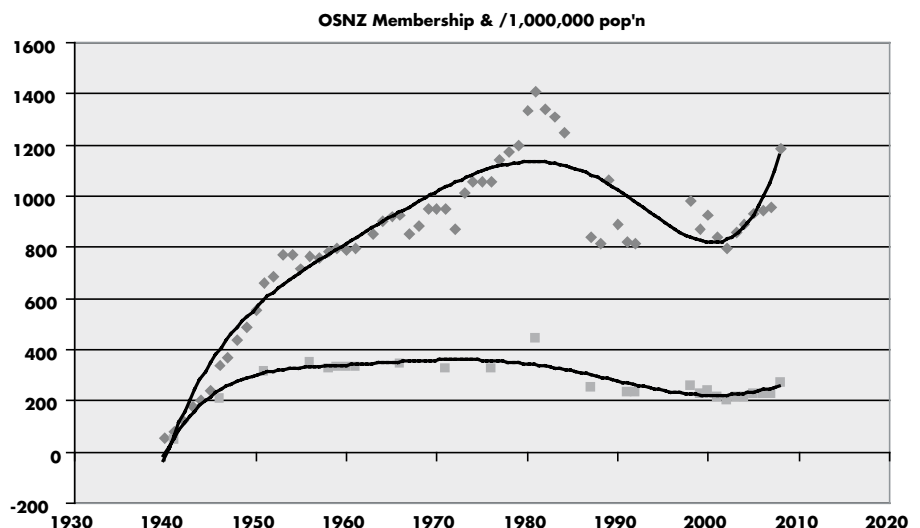
Analysis by STUART NICHOLSON

AN ANALYSIS OF OSNZ MEMBERSHIP FROM AVAILABLE DATA

The President in his report to members for 2006 mentioned that the reducing trend in ordinary membership numbers was a cause for concern. As a result I researched membership number trends over the years, noting anything else that could be useful from the available data.

The first result of this was a graph of membership numbers. Most of the data were obtained from the Annual Reports of the society from *Southern Bird*, OSNZ News, *Notornis*, and *Bird Notes* - all available on the web. These data are plotted as the upper curve.

The lower curve shows membership per one million of the population of New Zealand.



CONCLUDED FROM THE GRAPHS:

- 1940-1949 shows a per capita increase due to the new society forming and word getting around.
- 1950-1981 the linear increase (doubling) in membership seems to be entirely explained by population increase, resulting in a fairly flat per capita curve. While it is possible that increasing awareness of environmental/conservation issues (e.g. Save Lake Manapouri, Native Forest Action Council, etc) contributed to the short term increase in the 1970s, this factor is not significant in the long term trends, per capita.
- 1982-1992 there is a gradual fall off in membership.
- 1998 onwards there is a slight increase perhaps due to an increased concern for the environment, global warming, etc. There was a large one-off increase in membership in 2007 which can be reasonably attributed to the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004 being issued free to members.

An analysis of **Junior/Student Membership** (started in 1953) showed that the percentage of Junior Membership, for the 29 years where data was available, varied from 3% to 9%, with an average of 5%.

The statistics in the **RRs' reports** for 2007 were summated for meeting and field trip attendance. Typical meeting attendance was 31% of the membership, and typical field trip attendance was 12%. Thus not everybody comes to meetings, and not everyone does field work. This was obvious, but the data put a figure on it.

Other data show that about 100 new members join a year (10% of total membership) with a similar number leaving, but typically only after at least two years.

Roger Sharp, when Membership Secretary, provided membership data to Council which were analysed as follows.

Membership by region. This was compared with Statistics NZ figures to see if the regional variations could be attributed to ethnicity.

OSNZ Regions (per Stats NZ)	OSNZ members /100,000 (All ethnicities)	OSNZ members /100,000 (European ethnicity)	No. of members
Northland + Far North	29	39	44
Auckland + South Auckland	14	23	192
Waikato	12	15	46
BoP	11	15	30
Gisborne	11	18	5
Taranaki	20	23	21
Manawatu + Wanganui	16	19	37
Hawke's Bay	17	21	25
Wellington + Wairarapa	31	39	143
Marlborough	43	54	40
Nelson	51	45	22
Canterbury	22	25	116
West Coast	16	17	5
Otago	26	29	52
Southland	17	18	16
Total	19	25	794

The ranking is not altered if the data is sorted by 'all' or 'European' ethnicity. This suggests ethnicity does not explain regional variations.

Roger also provided figures on the 400 new members 2004 to 2007, and these were analysed as follows.

Information from preferred title:

	Dr	Mr	Ms/Mrs	Institute*	Total
Joined 03-06	47	144	104	14	400
Still current (2007)	77% (n=36)	71% (n=102)	68% (n=71)	71% (n=10)	68% (n=273)

There is a high proportion of 'Drs' (i.e. academics) in comparison to the overall New Zealand population, and more males than females joined over this period.

Gender (from names):

Gender	No.	%
Female	196	49
Male	176	44
Institutions	14	3.5
Indeterminate	15	3.8
Total	400	100

There are more female than male members, but more males than females are becoming members.

Source of membership

Source	No.	%/year
Forest & Bird	17	4.3
Region Forms	146	36.5
Rejoin	18	4.5
Tiritiri	28	7.0
Web site	191	47.8
Total	400	100

CONCLUSIONS

There is no need for concern about membership trends for the last four to five years.

Reporting of basic membership statistics in the annual reports is a good thing, and was recommenced in 2005.

Sources of data and other notes:

- President's and Treasurer's Reports in *Southern Bird*, *OSNZ News*, *Notornis* and *New Zealand Bird Notes*
- 'Welcome to new members' and incidental data in the above publications
- Membership survey 1987
- The only source of data available during 1985-2004 is the New Zealand Member Subscriptions Total in the Financial Report. So the number of Member Equivalents was calculated for this period by dividing the Total NZ Subscriptions by the Ordinary member's subscription and multiplying by a factor (1.4) indicated by the 2005 & 2006 data (see 2 below). This leads to an erratic graph in this period.
- Population 1991 to 2006 from www.statistics.govt.nz
- Population 1940 to 1990 from New Zealand Historical Atlas Plates 58 & 93
- Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004 Robertson et al, 2007 (OSNZ).

STUART NICHOLSON
May 2008

KATH TODD

29.5.1918 – 21.3.2008

Kath was a 'one-off'; a conservationist before the word was invented who was interested in anything and everything. She was the Hawkes Bay RR for many years and was also awarded a Meritorious Service Award in 2001 by OSNZ.

At her funeral her niece Jacinta, who gave the eulogy, told the congregation how the nieces and nephews were always discouraged from investigating Kath's freezer – because it often contained dead penguins or shearwaters collected on beach patrols and awaiting identification, etc. Several local OSNZ members present grimaced at this reminder as they recalled trips in Kath's elderly blue Morris Minor with very bad smells emanating from the boot.

Another story that I recall was the time someone mentioned that "they wondered how many Starlings roosted in the trees outside the Hastings Library each evening". So Kath decided to count them. Sorry, I don't recall the total, but it was several thousand.

Kath was 89, and until a few years ago was a keen participant in all outings. Until recently she was co-ordinating beach patrols and participating in wader censuses

We will miss her bright eyes and sharp mind.

HELEN ANDREWS
Hawkes Bay RR

REVIEW

Tennyson, Alan and Martinson, Paul. 2006. *Extinct Birds of New Zealand*. Te Papa Press, Wellington. ISBN: 978-0-909010-21-8. Hardback, 180 pp 280 mm × 230 mm. \$65.

"Moas – Blue and Flew" read the headline of an article in the Evening Post in the early 1960s. The article was the report of a talk given by Dr (later Sir) Robert Falla to the Wellington Archaeological Society. My recollection of the talk is that the colour was inferred from a blue iridescence seen on moa feathers found in a cave in Otago. The "Flew" was deduced from the skeletal remains of moa. It is now more than 40 years since Falla's talk, and during this time a lot more has been learnt about New Zealand's extinct avifauna – where the birds lived, what they looked like, and a lot more besides – and from this compendium of information is drawn the subject matter of *Extinct Birds of New Zealand*.

The book gives an account of all 58 species of birds that have become extinct since humans first arrived in New Zealand about 750 years ago. For anyone who wants to know what those birds may have, or in some cases, did look like then this is the book to read. Each extinct species is illustrated by a print of a colour painting. The facing page describes the bird, its habits, range, and a wealth of other factual and inferred information.

In addition to the prints of the birds, there are clear black-and-white line drawings of maps showing New Zealand and its nearby islands, and the whereabouts of the places mentioned in the text. One coloured figure shows the geological timeline and fossil record of birds, which is extremely sparse for most of the period since New Zealand separated from Gondwana. Another illustrates the date of arrival of predators in New Zealand, and the rapid rate of extinctions that followed – initially the larger fauna, which made a good meal for Polynesian hunters, and later, after European arrival, the smaller species that were mostly hit by introduced predators such as rats, stoats, weasels, ferrets, cats and dogs. The text is supported by a brief glossary – possibly too brief for many readers – 15 pages of notes and references organised by page number, an extensive bibliography, and an index.

The idea for a book about New Zealand's extinct birds came initially from Sandy Bartle, Te Papa's Curator of Birds. The book itself, however, is the result of meticulous scholarship on the part of Alan Tennyson, Curator of Fossil Vertebrates at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in combination with the detailed and impressive artwork of internationally known artist and painter Paul Martinson. Many of the birds became extinct before European settlement, and consequently there are no historical accounts of what they looked like, or what habitat they occupied. It has been a long and clearly fascinating journey for the authors through fossil and sub-fossil remains, employing old techniques and new, such as DNA analysis, to glean the data to reconstruct the missing evidence.

The species accounts are preceded by an Introduction, which opens with a discussion of the consequences of extinction – biodiversity loss – and the role of humans in its cause. There are some interesting facts and figures here: the current global rate of extinction, for example, is about 100 times the rate it was before humans emerged from the African continent. The present loss of biodiversity is the largest mass extinction for 65 million years, when the dinosaurs met their demise. New Zealand is simply the latest example of a world-wide trend. Humans are bad news, especially when it comes to flightless, large, meaty, and presumably tasty birds. And not just humans directly – their accompanying predators all took their toll of the birdlife.

New Zealand's flightless birds evolved on a land mass that separated from Gondwana about 80 million years ago. The outcome was a unique and distinctive fauna that evolved in isolation, in the absence of predatory mammals, where the greatest predators were themselves birds, a giant eagle and an owl. Like herbivorous animals elsewhere, the New Zealand examples grew large. They tended to be long-lived and slow-breeding – characteristics, which helped them survive in New Zealand's pre-human environment but proved to be a disastrous impediment to survival when faced by humans and their mammalian predators. The outcome was a loss of some 51 per cent of the species in the North Island and 47 per cent in the South Island, and slightly lower percentages from Norfolk and the Chatham Islands.

The Introduction is concise, informative, and thought-provoking. Tennyson draws a distinction between ratites, which he considers came to New Zealand before it separated from Gondwana, and many modern flightless land birds, which are thought to have flown here. This inference about ratite arrival is interesting in light of the ideas expressed in a recent book on the geological history of New Zealand by Hamish Campbell and Gerard Hutching (*In Search of Ancient New Zealand*, Penguin and GNS Science, 2007), who suggest that New Zealand was under water about 20 million years ago. Is 20 million years enough time for ratites to have flown here, lost the power of flight, and evolved into the many species of giant flightless moa encountered by Maori?

Tennyson brings the story up to the present, documenting the ongoing threat to the surviving species, not just from traditional causes, but from new threats arising outside New Zealand. He draws attention to the ever-present need for vigilant border control. Hand in hand with protection from new threats goes the protection of the surviving endangered birdlife through predator eradication or control. He also draws attention to the need for a healthy biodiversity, which is a prerequisite for a healthy planet, home to our own species, and quite possibly a prerequisite for our own survival. More than 6,000 alien species are now established in New Zealand, including 34 mammal and 34 bird species (but we should also remember that some of these are essential if we want to maintain our current population at a reasonable standard of living – we are committed to an ecology transplanted from Europe, at least for the foreseeable future).

There is a concise review of what New Zealand is doing to protect our endangered species, which at times seems an overwhelming battle. New Zealand is a world leader in conservation and the author highlights some of our achievements in this area, especially predator control and intervention for species recovery. It is clear that to maintain our own biodiversity, and meet our conservation responsibilities in the world, are not trivial matters. The inference I draw from his account is that if our achievements are not to be wasted, we are committing our descendants to caring for our endangered species, not for decades, not for centuries, but for millennia.

I was disappointed not to find any mention of Falla's iridescent blue-feathered moa, but perhaps Falla was speculating. The possibility that moa flew to New Zealand, however, I find satisfying. This is a well worthwhile book to read, and is a valuable reference for anyone interested in New Zealand's past birdlife. The paintings are superb, and I would hope that Te Papa will offer standalone copies of the prints suitable for framing and hanging.

BRUCE McFADGEN

STUDYING BIRDS

Like other members I enjoyed the reprinting of Peter Bull's 1980 article 'What to study and how to go about it' (*Southern Bird* No. 32, December 2007). The topic of how to design bird studies was raised again at the joint Regional Representative/Council meeting at the AGM in Kaikoura.

Two books that I find useful are:

CJ Bibby, ND Burgess, DA Hill & SH Mustoe. 2000. *Bird Census Techniques*. Academic Press, London.

ML Morrison, WM Block, MD Strickland, WL Kendall, 2001. *Wildlife Study Design*. Springer, New York.

Both books take a step-by-step approach to study design and implementation. *Bird Census Techniques* has a wide discussion on differing techniques and some positive and negative attributes of each. Like Peter Bull's original article both books emphasise the essential requirement to think clearly about what you want from your bird study. For a sophisticated study neither book eliminates the necessity to talk to other workers in the field and review the relevant published literature. The books will assist you in thinking through study objectives and design.

BRUCE MCKINLAY



NEW ZEALAND GARDEN BIRD SURVEY JULY 2007

INTRODUCTION

The first nationwide garden bird survey in New Zealand took place between the 14th and 22nd July 2007. Participants spent one hour watching birds in their home gardens, local parks, or school grounds, recording the highest number of individuals of each species seen at once. A total of 2,064 valid survey forms were returned. Of these, 1,954 were from home gardens, 78 from parks, and 32 from school grounds (including kindergartens and early childhood centres).

BIRDS RECORDED

Silvereyes were recorded in the greatest numbers in home gardens (average 10.2 per garden) (Fig. 1). House Sparrows (average 9.4 per garden) were a close second, Starlings (3.1 per garden) a distant third, and Blackbirds (2.7 per garden) the fourth most commonly recorded. Blackbirds were actually the most widely distributed species, being present in 90% of home gardens, followed by House Sparrows in 86%, Silvereyes 81%, Starlings 61%, Song Thrushes 52%, and other species less than 50% of home gardens (Fig. 2).

Results from parks and school grounds were generally similar to those from home gardens, but there were more of some species such as ducks, gulls, Feral Pigeons, Blackbirds, and Song Thrushes, and fewer of other species such as Silvereyes and Dunnocks.

In total, 89 species of birds were detected. This number is surprisingly large. However, home gardens ranged from truly urban to rural and seaside. Some people living in the country considered the surrounding farm paddocks as part of their garden and recorded species such as Feral Goose, Wild Turkey, Pheasant, Brown Quail, and Tufted Guineafowl. Others considered the surrounding bush as part of their garden and recorded species such as Falcon, Red-crowned Parakeet, Rifleman, Robin, Tomtit, Whitehead, and Saddleback. Some people living on the coast

overlooking the sea considered the sea as part of their garden and recorded species such as White-faced Storm Petrel, Cape Pigeon, Gannet, White-fronted Tern, Black-fronted Tern, Caspian Tern, Black-billed Gull, Wrybill, and various shags and herons.

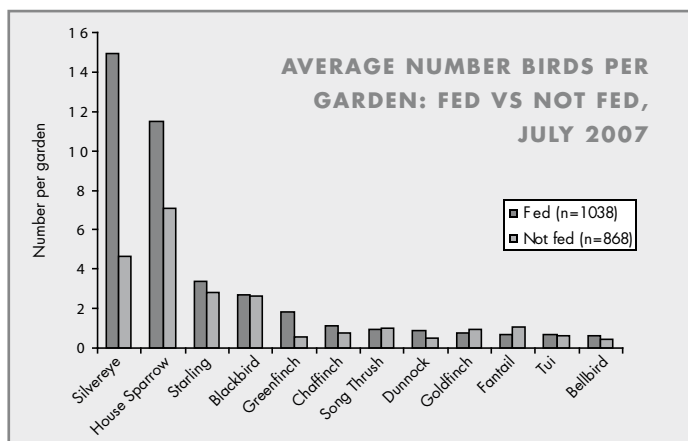
Only 20 species of birds were recorded in more than 10% of the surveys. On average, there were 7.6 species per home garden, 8.9 species per park, and 6.5 species per school ground. One participant recorded 24 species and two participants none during their one hour of observation.

BIRDS IN GARDENS WHERE THEY WERE FED

68% of participants fed birds in their home gardens. This does not mean that 68% of households in New Zealand feed birds because people who feed birds are probably more likely to have participated in the survey than those who don't feed birds.

Bread, fat, seeds, and fruit each comprised 20–24% of the food fed to birds, and sugar-water 11%. Other foods included food scraps, porridge, mashed potato, and cooked rice.

In general, more birds were recorded in gardens where supplementary food was provided than where it was not (Fig. 3). For example, there were 14.9 Silvereyes per garden where birds were fed compared with 4.7 per garden where they were not fed. Similarly, there were 11.5 House Sparrows per garden where birds were fed compared with 7.1 per garden where they were not fed.

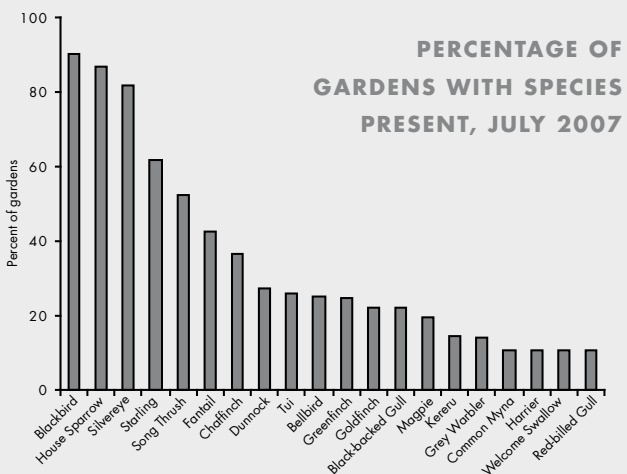
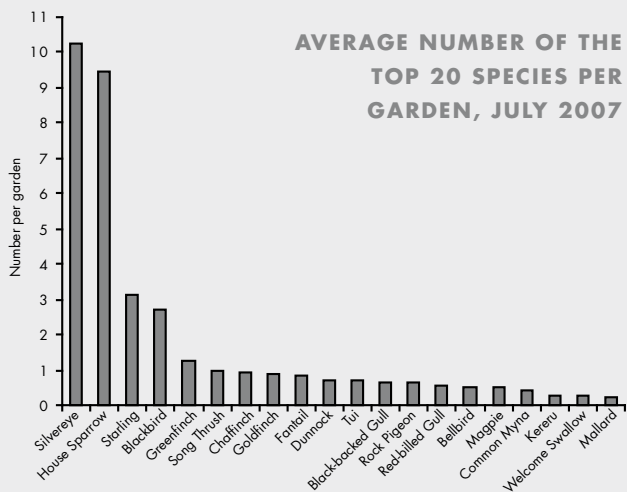


COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Participants ranged in age from four-year-olds (with their parents or grandparents) to a 98-year-old, and they lived in locations ranging from the Far North to Stewart Island. Many said how much they enjoyed doing the survey, and provided extra comments (up to 10 pages!) about the birds normally present in their gardens but not present during the one hour of the survey. A common comment was, "I didn't see as many birds as I normally do." Poor weather during the survey week was probably largely to blame for this. Other comments included, "I enjoyed doing the survey", "We love our birds", "Birds add another dimension to our garden", and "Birds make life happier". This last comment was made by the 98-year-old.

From their comments, most people seemed to know their birds really well. However, a few people said they could not distinguish between the different finches, and between House Sparrows and Hedge Sparrows (Dunnocks). Also, it is likely that some people did not know how to identify Grey Warblers. Thus, the presence of some species may have been under-estimated. It is likely that people's ability to identify birds will improve over time, and this will need to be factored in to future analyses of trends.

The survey gave people an opportunity to learn about the birds present in their garden. One participant commented, "Sort of knew what birds were around but surprised to find some." A schoolteacher wrote, "The survey was a very useful exercise because the children learnt how to identify birds before they went outside to do the survey our school garden." Later she added,



Kokako

RECOVERY GROUP:

A report on the 2008
annual meeting in Rotorua

The Kokako Recovery Group (KRG) consists of DOC representatives from involved areas, volunteer group representatives, Auckland and Hamilton Zoo (who have Kokako for both educational and captive breeding purposes) and other interested and involved parties such as Landcare Research, and District and Regional Councils.

The KRG meets once a year to review progress, exchange ideas and experiences, and update the actions aimed at achieving the goal of restoring the national population to around 1,000 pairs by the year 2020.

In general terms the plan is to achieve this firstly by boosting numbers in remnant populations through intensive pest control, and on the back of that to harvest a number of birds for re-establishing populations in suitable areas where they used to exist.

The objective of having a 1,000 pairs was written in a 1999 ten year recovery plan that will be revised next year. With the progress made to date and many lessons learned, it will be a very different document to the original, and happily the bar can realistically be moved several notches higher. This statement is based on the

undisputable fact that as a conservation exercise the work with Kokako has been a spectacular success:

At June 2008 there were 747 recorded pairs – over 100 more than the 2007 estimate. With the recorded singles the total bird population was conservatively estimated at 1,654 birds.

Detailed population surveys are done by DOC teams every four years, and this year many areas were covered by that census regime. Our “patch” is the Mangatutu forest in the northern Pureora area near Te Kuiti. In 1996 we had just 10 pairs. In 2004 the DOC census established we had 46 territorial pairs. This year 66 pairs were recorded in spite of a number having being captured for translocation to places such as Mt Bruce where they are now successfully breeding.

The Mangatutu results are reasonably typical of mainstream managed populations, so clearly the goal of having 1,000 pairs nationally will be achieved well before the objective date of 2020.

The table that follows gives the latest detailed information on the Kokako population going from North to South:

There is no single reason for this success; as usual it is due to a combination of factors:

HUMAN RESOLVE AND ENDEAVOUR

Without question this is the main contributing factor. As a long-time birder I never cease to be amazed at how a difficult, low-profile bird such as the Kokako manages to capture the imagination of so many of the public who would have no more than a passing knowledge of New Zealand birdlife. Its iconic status has undoubtedly increased due to all sorts of exposure, and no better than the live close encounters on places like Tiritiri Matangi and in the big free-flight aviaries at Auckland and Hamilton Zoo. The Kokako now symbolises what many New Zealanders want of what remains of our unique natural environment.

So, while the government continues to cut DoC budgets, the public have responded by forming volunteer groups and raising money to do what a government department should be doing but can't because they don't have the resources.

In the context of DoC budget cuts, the remarkable reaction from both central and local government to this volunteer group phenomenon is that they have supported the movement with obvious and commendable enthusiasm. There are many examples, but none better than the many millions put into places such as Karori and Maungatautari. Perhaps the politicians have more faith in the public than in one of their own departments.

Whatever the answer, all volunteer groups that I know of work closely with their local DoC staff, and it is the collective energy, enthusiasm and expertise in such relationships that produces the results.

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

A well-known business cliché is that companies don't plan to fail, but they often do because they failed to plan. The same applies here. The formation of the KRG and the decision to include volunteer groups was an inspired move by DoC. The 1999-2009 Recovery Plan is a very professional presentation. It is reviewed every year and amended in the light of new wisdom or changing circumstances.

Location	Pairs	Singles	Total Birds	Last Survey Date
Puketi	0	1	1	2008
Mauimua: Hen & Chickens Islands	1	1	3	2008
Mataraua	5	2	12	2008
Waima	27	0	54	2008
Hauturu: Little Barrier Island	100	0	200	2008
Tiritiri Matangi	5	4	14	2008
Hunua	13	1	27	2008
Opunaki	15	19	49	2007
Kaharoa	62	7	131	2008
Rotoehu	31	2	64	2007
Mokihaha	22	4	48	2008
Manawahe	22	5	49	2007
Te Urewera	55	32	142	2008
Otamatuna	112	0	224	2008
Mangatutu	66	7	139	2008
Waipapa	106	18	230	2007
Mapara	70	10	150	2006
Boundary Stream	6	17	29	2008
Pukaha – Mt Bruce area	9	27	45	2007
Kapiti Island	18	0	36	2008
Otanewainuku	0	3	3	2008
Auckland Zoo	1	0	2	2008
Hamilton Zoo	1	0	2	2008
Mt Bruce Captive Breeding Programme	0	1	1	2008
Totals :	747	160	1654	

IMPROVING PEST CONTROL TECHNIQUES

New toxins and application techniques are evolving, and efforts are being made to reduce their level of application in the environment, while at the same time maintaining a high degree of pest control. Results from many areas show that 1080 in bait stations is undoubtedly king, but regulations regarding its use will be a problem for many groups. After many years of struggling to find the right bait in the Mangatutu, we at last are achieving better results with Pindone.

There is a wealth of expertise on the subject of baits and bait stations for controlling rats and possums but it was held within DoC circles. The 2008 KRG meeting resolved to make that information easily accessible to everyone by making it available on the DoC web site.

TECHNOLOGY

New techniques such as 'Sound Anchoring' have evolved and now play an important part in Kokako translocations. This involves broadcasting Kokako calls in the dialect of their origin in the area of their release, firstly to try and achieve some concentration of the birds and encourage new pairing, and secondly to encourage the released birds to remain within the protected area.

'Black Boxes' with an iPod, speakers, power supplies and timing devices are located in trees around the release area and have been known to fool ornithologists as well as the birds in question!

TRANSLOCATIONS

Each year a number of Kokako are caught from selected areas according to their genetic stock for translocation to new locations or to boost stock in

under-populated areas. A number of rules have evolved for such exercises, the main ones being the quality of the pest control and monitoring in the area, and its geographical size and botanical diversity. Kokako need big areas, so for example the 3,000 ha within the pest-proof fence at Maungatautari is ideal for a translocation.

Usually 10 pairs are introduced to a new area, with a top-up of a similar number the following year. In the interest of healthy genetics, pairs come from two separate source populations.

'Genetic infusion' was a new consideration this year, involving the injection of just one or two new birds into translocated populations to boost the genetic stock. This is a periodic requirement for smaller populations – perhaps every five years.

The KRG resolved to harvest 74 birds in 2008/09 and a further 80 birds in 2009/10 from the larger populations of Mapara, Waipapa, Mangatutu, Kaharoa and Otamatuna.

In 2008/09 the 74 birds will go to Puketi, Tiritiri Matangi, Maungatautari, Whirinaki, and Secretary Island to re-introduce the birds to the South Island.

In the following year birds will go to Waitakere - Ark in the Park, Moehau and to Otanewainuku in Bay of Plenty.

Looking further ahead, DoC Auckland are being encouraged to look at Great Barrier Island as a possible 'mega-sanctuary' for the future. It has a lot going for it, and already locals and iwi have expressed a wish to see Kokako back there – it's an exciting prospect.

MIKE GRAHAM



Above: North Island Kokako by Simon Fordham
Background Image: Mangatutu by Mike Graham

Petrel Real Estate

Ben Richards took gold prize in this year's Bay of Plenty Regional Science Fair with a project entitled 'Petrel Real Estate'. Ben, younger brother of OSNZ Bay of Plenty junior member Marcus, had been helping, along with most of his family, in the colonies of Grey-faced Petrels on Mauao/Mt Maunganui.

The experiment entailed erecting toothpicks in front of both artificial and natural burrows on Mauao to measure burrow use. If the toothpicks were down, then the burrow was deemed to have been visited. The idea came from tertiary study carried out on Pycroft's Petrels on Red Mercury Island.

Ben (pictured), was stoked to have won a gold prize, and was pleased when the region awarded him some petrol vouchers in recognition of his efforts.

Most of the fieldwork was carried out at the same time as the usual night-time petrel field work, and there was always a supervisor on site to assist. Ben's spectacularly successful war-whoop calls seem to hit the spot with many dozens of petrels, which swoop down to be captured, or recaptured.

PAUL CUMING



Photo taken by Paul Cuming

"Great news – while doing PE one afternoon we heard the sound of a Tui singing. We stopped to listen and sure enough there it was fluttering, as they do, high up in the clear blue sky above our heads! This is the very first time we have spotted a Tui in our school grounds. We feel very excited about it." Another teacher wrote, "We are very much into environmental education and your survey has been of great benefit to the children, as their ability to identify different bird types has improved. We have also graphed the results as part of maths. The children are now looking forward to seeing the 2007 results on your website so we can compare the results with our graphs."

DISCUSSION

The results from this year's survey were surprisingly similar to last year's, despite the very small sample size last year. Only two native species (Silveryeye and Fantail) featured in the top 10 birds this year. The Tui was 11th, Bellbird 15th, New Zealand Pigeon 18th, and Grey Warbler 21st. Eight of the top 10 birds in New Zealand gardens in 2007 were introduced species, and five of these also featured among the top 10 birds in UK gardens in 2007

(see <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/>).

The value of the garden bird survey as an indicator of garden bird population trends will become apparent only after a number of years. In the meantime, it provides enjoyment and educational opportunities for participants. The next survey is planned for 12th to 20th July 2008 (see <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/biocons/gardenbird>).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am particularly grateful to the 2,000+ people who took the time to participate in the survey. The Ornithological Society of New Zealand and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society promoted the survey to their members. The Royal Society of New Zealand provided funding for survey forms, and K. Tranter, a Royal Society Teacher Fellow from Aranui High School, promoted the survey to science teachers. Various other people (too numerous to name) also helped promote the survey or entered the survey data onto the computer.

ERIC B. SPURR

spurre@landcareresearch.co.nz

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Edward Abraham (Wellington); Morten Erik Allentoft (Canterbury); Jane Andrews (Auckland); Denis Asher (Wellington); Jonathan Baskett (Auckland); Grant Bawden (Canterbury); Conori Bell Bhuiyan (Marlborough); Della Bennet (Canterbury); Robin Booth (Far North); Verna Brevig (Far North); Jenny Brown (Canterbury); Joe Brown (Canterbury); Catherine Bryant (Auckland); Jill Burdett (Wellington); David Cant (Bay of Plenty); Karen Cant (Bay of Plenty); Sam Clark (Bay of Plenty); Stuart Cockburn (Wellington); Paul Colgrave (South Auckland); Isobel Cook (Auckland); Jesse Conklin (Manawatu); Taneal Cope (Auckland); James Cunningham (U.S.A.); Carol Devney (Australia); Arthur Dixon (Canterbury); Henry Dixon (Nelson); Sarah Dwyer (Canterbury); Mike Dye (Auckland); Ecoworks (NZ) Ltd (Gisborne/Wairoa); Annette Evans (Auckland); Nyree Fea (Wellington); Paul Fisher (Nelson); Florence Gaud (Otago); Paul Gibson (Wanganui); Isaac Gilmour (Bay of Plenty); Shanyyn Gunn (Wellington); Barbara Hammonds (Taranaki); Miss JL Hanna (Canterbury); Tim Harker (Auckland); Richard Hart (Bay of Plenty); Mr R M Harwood (Nelson); Helen Henderson (Canterbury); Garry Hill (Bay of Plenty); Josephine Hill (Northland); Nathan Hills (Taranaki); Glen Holland (Wairarapa); David Holt (Wellington); Amaya Holton (Auckland); Alison Howes (Australia); Ineke Hyink (Bay of Plenty); Toni Iaseto (Otago); Matt Jones (Southland); Patrick Kavanagh (Wellington); Dave Kelly (Canterbury); Harriet Kemp (Bay of Plenty); Peter Langlands (Canterbury); Stephen Legg (Manawatu); Caryl Lockhart (Manawatu); Kate McAlpine (Wellington); Rebekah McCutcheon (Wellington); Sharon McGavin (Wellington); Ellery McNaughton (Auckland); Shane McPherson (Bay of Plenty); Bernard Michaux (Auckland); Osamu Miyatake (Japan); Malene Moehl (Canterbury); Stacey Moore (Bay of Plenty); Les Moran (Wellington); Kate Morgan (Marlborough); Alan Morris (Auckland); Eunice Mowles (Wellington); Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington); Richard Odgers (Southland); Luis Ortiz-Catedral (Auckland); Oliver Overdyck (Waikato); Philip Palmer (Wellington); Bruce Parry (South Auckland); Brittany Peck (Auckland); Kara Pranker (Taranaki); Paula Jean Pridham (Nelson); Ms J Rackie (Auckland); Marcus Richards (Bay of Plenty); Anne Rimmer (Auckland); Rosemary Rippon (Wanganui); Adriana Rogowski (Far North); Kieran Rowe (Canterbury); Dale Rush (Auckland); Martin J Russell (Auckland); Chris Sasse (Auckland); Emil L Schmieg (Wairarapa); Audrey Setiawan (Auckland); Vivienne Shaw (Southland); Mark Simmonds (Wellington); Bill Smith (Waikato); Stage Fright Music Company (Nelson); Mark Stevenson (Manawatu); James Suttie (Otago); Sandra Suttie (Otago); Jane Tait

(Wellington); Bindi Thomas (Wellington); University of Waikato (Waikato); Kevin Vaughan (Auckland); Matthew Walker (Canterbury); Ray Wiblin (Far North); Mel Willmott (Canterbury); Jenny Youl (Australia); Juzah Zammit-Ross (Canterbury); Rangi Zimmerman (Nelson).

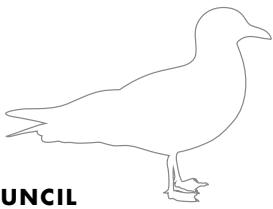
We also thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society:

Dorothy Alloo; Richard Arlidge; Jane Ashby; Denis Asher; Harry Battam; Tony Beauchamp; Elizabeth Bell; Keith Bell; Judy Bendall; Matu Booth; Steve Braunias; Kenneth Buchanan; Patrick Buxton; Murray Bycroft; Bill Campbell; Kirsten Campbell; Anthony Carey; C Carter; Ngarie Chamlet; Mrs N H Clark; Hugh Clifford; William A. Cook; John P Croxall; Jack Davidson; Geoff Deason; Geoffrey De Lisle; Maj De Poorter; Mr G L Don; Barry J Donovan; Audrey Eagle; Andy Falshaw; Michael Fitzgerald; Chris Foreman; Bob Frame; Lala Frazer; Barry Friend; Allan Gatland; Murray Gavin; Wendy Goad; Anthea Goodwin; Ron Goudswaard; Mike Graham; Sharen Graham; Richard Hadfield; Jill Hamel; Geoff Harrow; Neil Hayes Q.S.M., F.R.S.A.; Shelley Heiss Dunlop; Terry Higginson; Maureen Holdaway; Peter Howden; Charles C Hufflett; Barbara Hughes-Cleland; Halema Jamieson; Ian Jamieson; Sian Kendall; Ted Kirk; Derek Lamb; Paddy Latham; Rob Lawrence; Sheelagh Leary; Nick Ledgard; Chris Lloyd; Roger Louis; Tim Lovegrove; Marion A Macbeth; Mr R.S. Macdonald; Mary McEwen; Bruce MacKereth; Bruce McKinlay; Peggy Mallalieu; Roger J Meadows; Rosemary Messenger; Lyle Millar; Frank Minehan; Geoff Moon O.B.E.; Philip Moors; Harro H. Mueller; Dr P. L. Munns; Mark Nee; Gordon I. Nicholson; Stuart Nicholson; Lloyd Nielsen; Mrs G Norman; Kirsten Olsen; Caroline Parker; Kevin Parker; Mr L J Paul; Peter F Penny; Marianne Power; Lance Pickett; Kara Pranker; David Pye; John Ralph; Lyn Reid; Mr L. S. Rickard; Lorna Russell; Mr V M Rutherford; Paul Sagar; Frances Schmechel; Rob Schuckard; Ann Sherlock; Ross Silcock; Roger Slack; Shona Smith; Heather Smithers; Martin Snowball; Joy M Soper; Anita Spencer; Barry Stevens; John Stewart-Smith; Mr D M Stracy; Sue Stubenvoll; Graeme Taylor; Michael J. Taylor; Penny Taylor; Rowley Taylor; Kenneth D.B. Thomson; Beth Tredray; Mr E. G. Turbott; Peter Turner; Spencer Unthank; Gillian Vaughan; Carlo Violani; Jan Walker; Kerry Walshe; Elaine Ward; Mr W. A. Waters; Ian Williams; Tony Wilson; Mr DJ Wright.

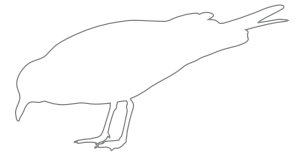
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Subscriptions are due on 1st January. Those members with email will receive a membership renewal form via that medium. Those members who do not have email (or those where the Membership Secretary has not been informed of an email address) will receive a renewal form as an insert with this issue of Southern Bird and Notornis. Please endeavour to pay close to the due date – the Society depends greatly on your subscription to continue the furtherance of its objectives in encouraging and supporting the study and enjoyment of birds in the New Zealand region.





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Far North

Several members again took part in the Kiwi monitoring schemes organised by the Kiwi Foundation, the Puketi Forest Trust and the Department of Conservation. A combination of moon and weather conditions meant it was felt that monitoring may have been better a little earlier this year but on the whole results were pleasing. The 3,000 hectare community pest-controlled area, initiated by the Northland Regional Council and supported by local landowners and the Kiwi Foundation on the Purerua Peninsula near Kerikeri, was again the most productive. Up to 90 Kiwi calls an hour were heard at one new site and another site had an increase of 100% on last season's figures. The numbers in Puketi Forest were similar to last year.

Winter in the Far North has been extremely wet and we were lucky to be able to do the wader census before it became even wetter! The count on Kokota Spit, Parengarenga Harbour really felt like an expedition – very windy with heavy showers, but the local DoC boatman took us over to the usual landing at the north end without incident and we set off over the dunes, crouching down as squalls went through, to protect telescope and binoculars! Instead of the usual open pan area with small ponds we found large lakes to navigate around. We soon found a flock of Bar-tailed Godwits, a few Lesser Knots and New Zealand Dotterels and then two Whimbrels.

We then set off skirting the lakes and dunes towards our pickup point on the western shore, hunting for the Wrybill flock we were hoping to see. What was not expected was the quicksand. It would have been amusing for a bystander to see the stop-start forays into invisible wet patches where we sank by turns up to our knees, and the retreats scouting for firmer sand. No sign of the Wrybills until we stepped out onto the western beach where there were more than 50 dotted over the growing area of sandflat.

Beach Patrols have been limited by the weather, but we did find an Australasian Gannet which had been banded on White Island in 1995.

The New Zealand Dotterel 'socialising flocks' are now dispersing and pairs in breeding plumage are beginning to claim their territories. Many of last year's breeding areas have been damaged by the recent storms, which we hope will not happen again.

LAUREEN ALSTON

Auckland

We have continued to have successful winter meetings despite the inclement conditions that members have had to venture out in! In June, Dr Nigel Adams presented an overview of his research on the foraging patterns of Cape Gannets from two colonies near Cape Town, South Africa. The research provided a fascinating insight into the movements of the birds, and illustrated the value of remote sensing technology to advance our knowledge of the ecology of species. We continued a seabird theme in July with Stefanie Ismar reporting on visits to the Kermadec Islands as part of her postgraduate studies. The rapid recovery of the seabird populations following the eradication of rats is most heartening, especially their recolonisation of Raoul Island from the much smaller Meyer Islands 2 km offshore.

In August, Dr John Perrott presented an insight into the biology of the Laughing Kookaburra, and outlined the initial phases of a long-term research project looking at the ecology of the species in New Zealand. The Kookaburra has not dispersed far beyond lower Northland since its release on Kawau Island in the late 1800s by Sir George Grey. Exploring the environmental constraints that contribute to the species' restricted distribution will be the subject of the project, and with John's talk posing

more questions than answers. We anticipate his return in due course to fill in the gaps of knowledge.

The wet winter may have dampened the environment, but not the enthusiasm of the stalwarts who brave all weathers for bird watching, this year rewarded by what appears to be record numbers of Royal Spoonbills throughout the region.

MEL GALBRAITH

South Auckland

Evening meetings have continued in Papakura with good attendances, even through the wet wild winter months. At the June meeting one of our members, Simon Fordham, showed us slides of his journey into Borneo covering a wide range of nature, including some birds. The other pictures covered plants, insects, animals, people and places.

In July we were privileged to see a display of stunning bird photographs from a very active American birdwatcher. The only real problem was that one of his intentions in New Zealand was to swoop on one of our more active members and take her back to America. On that mission he was successful and Geraldine King, unfortunately, will be leaving us at the end of the year, but at least we now have a base for ornithological trips into heartland America and I am sure some of our members will take advantage of that opportunity.

We are looking forward to the programme of speakers for the balance of the year and the programme on the website will indicate those to you. Any visitors are always welcome.

Activities on the field front have been somewhat curtailed over the winter with the wild weather and continuous rain dampening the enthusiasm of even some of our more senior members. However, the beach patrollers have been having some good returns with quite large hauls. An interesting largely grey Fairy Prion provided the stimulus for renewed enthusiasm. The experts have advised that this is a subantarctic subspecies not often seen in New Zealand.

Roll on September when the waders start returning and we look forward to catching up with some of our old friends, godwits and knots banded in previous years.

DAVID LAWRIE

Waikato

The Waikato region has been spoilt recently with excellent speakers talking about their research at monthly meetings. In April, Laurence Barea from DoC talked about his PhD research on the ecology of Painted Honeyeaters in Australia. Waikato members, Laurie and Janice Hoverd spoke in May on their re-introduction project which has seen New Zealand Falcons put back on the slopes of Kakepuku in the Waikato. In June, Avi Holzapfel talked about his relatively new role as the leader of the Kiwi Recovery Group, the issues that the Group faces, and the Group's vision for the future. Finally, July saw Bruce Postill from DoC give a recap on his recent trip back to Korea and China on a wader monitoring project. Needless to say, our speakers have covered a broad range of international, national and local topics, and we thank them for giving up their time to talk to us.

As mentioned in previous regional roundups from the Waikato, Tui are once again commonly seen in Hamilton City. This may not be big news for members that live in some other large cities around the county with resident populations of Tui; however, in Hamilton where the species has been scarce in recent years, this is great news. The number of reports that have come in from our members of this species in the City are too numerous to mention, but they have been spotted in all corners of Hamilton. As many of you may know, the first recorded Tui nesting in Hamilton for over 100 years (which was successful) occurred last breeding season, which indicates that we now have a resident pair. Most of the Tui that visit the City do so over the winter months to exploit exotic nectar sources. These Tui then fly back to surrounding native bush in spring to breed. Hopefully with the apparent increase in birds visiting at the moment, one or two more will decide to stay on to set up house. On top of this, a New Zealand Pigeon was seen daily in April by Ron Crosby feeding in a Miro tree in the suburb of Chartwell.



In other bird sightings, a Kaka was seen at Maungakawa Reserve by Neil Fitzgerald (8/5) and six were seen flying north past Tahuna by Andrew Styche (15/7). Pam Bovill saw an Australasian Bittern in a wetland area near the Waimai Stream (21/6) and Hugh Clifford reported the first singing Song Thrush for the year in Chartwell on 12th May. Finally, in June the Kawhia/Aotea Harbour census took place where large numbers of waders such as Pied Oystercatchers (>3,300), Pied Stilts (>570), Banded Dotterels (>500) and Royal Spoonbills (>430) were recorded.

DAI MORGAN

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

May saw a Whimbrel residing in the Waikaraka Estuary, about 10km north of Tauranga, much to the delight of Sally Greenaway. This is the estuary at which regular marsh bird surveys are currently held. Large-scale mangrove removal has occurred, and the sandy bed is hardening up, allowing such birds as godwits, dotterels and oystercatchers to frequent the harbour. Our next marsh bird count there is in late August.

Julian Fitter has been back on the briny, with a recent Motiti trip revealing a probable Broad-billed Prion and Campbell Albatross. Keith Owen of Rotorua and many Tauranga, Katikati and Te Puke residents are enjoying the numerous Tui frequenting the cherry (*Prunus* spp) trees that are flowering at the moment. Pye's Pa Crematorium has provided best views in town; up to 90 have been seen at a time here in the past.

The winter shorebird census was hampered by bad weather, but there were a few highlights: two Black Stilts at Matahui Point, Katikati, 30 Royal Spoonbills at Maketu, and good numbers of Banded Dotterels at Omokoroa. Other dotterel news is that in May New Zealand Dotterels were seen back on the tailings dam in Waihi. In the past they have been recorded breeding there. Our regional recorder has logged into eBird so any bird sightings from the area will be recorded on that medium.

Ben Richards achieved a gold prize for his Grey-faced Petrel Science Fair Project (details elsewhere in this issue). Ben and his family often help with the field work on Mauao/Mt Maunganui. This work will be starting up again in early August, when the birds have laid or are laying an egg in burrows in the colonies. Increased pest control on other parts of the hill, additional to the colony pest control, are already achieving heavy bait take. Hopefully that will see a flow-on effect in the colonies. I'll keep you informed.

Our last meeting was a presentation at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic on current research being undertaken to prevent seabird by-catch by local inventors. One particular device is an underwater tool to get the fishing lines underwater quickly and paying out smoothly. Unfortunately for her, our fisheries observer member Janet was on a job at the time of the talk. Our next talk in August will feature Laurie and Jan Hoverd, who will fill us in on the Falcons they are returning to Kakepuku Mountain, near Te Awamutu, Waikato. This will be preceded by a beach patrol, hopefully to see the results of two recent huge storm systems on our beaches. The nine metre waves would not have helped make this easier; maybe we could begin the 'beach' patrol a few blocks in from the sea? In October, Julian Fitter will talk on the birds on and around Tristan da Cunha, a South Atlantic seabird island.

PAUL CUMING

Taranaki

Most members have been out and about despite the winter weather. A long dry autumn was followed by a wet and windy winter even by Taranaki standards. At the June meeting Barry Hartley brought us up-to-date with the happenings at Lake Rotokare. A night time Kiwi-listening survey is underway with members invited to join. Two out of the twelve proposed bird surveys had been completed, with the Taranaki region taking ownership of the results and holding all records within its files. As no speaker was lined up a general discussion on a variety of topics was held, including the present state of Notornis and the implications that non-publication has for the Society's reputation.

A couple of non-members submitted a report and photos of a Nankeen Kestrel seen on their farm at Manaia, South Taranaki;

we considered submitting an unusual bird report but decided against this.

Bill Messenger reported seeing a Morepork being buzzed by a Fantail. David Medway startled us all with the revelation that he may not be hearing Riflemen as well as he used to, but his other faculties are still as sharp as ever. There were eight New Zealand Dabchicks on the Inglewood oxidation ponds, a regular spot for this species.

For the June field trip three brave (or foolhardy) members clambered aboard Barry Hartley's new mode of transport and careered around the North Taranaki countryside, visiting river estuaries and other places of interest. Thirty-six species of bird were seen, the highlight being numerous Tui and three Bellbirds feeding on Banksia flowers at Urenui.

July's guest speaker Kara Pranker, the Rotokare Project Manager, outlined the programmed pest eradication. Much research has been done and advice taken from experts throughout New Zealand as to the best means of eradicating all mammalian predators. The biggest problem is that cars and boats etc will still be allowed entry once the scheme has been completed. The next step is a caretaker's residence, caretaker and setting up of a visitor education centre, along with a programme of reintroduction of the flora and fauna that once inhabited the area.

During members' reports Marie Mitchell gave a brief rundown on some of the birds seen during a recent trip to Mongolia, Kara Pranker told of seeing a Harrier taking road kill from a street in the centre of Eltham, a small town in South Taranaki. At home our resident Morepork was interrupted in its plans to have Song Thrush for breakfast when Julie arrived on the scene; a lucky escape for the thrush.

A field trip around South Taranaki beaches and bush turned up few birds as befitting the weather, though four Giant Petrels were seen close inshore, a revelation to those unaccustomed to these large seabirds.

David Medway gave an interesting insight to the forthcoming Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand at the August meeting. A long and complex procedure was involved in the production of this highly scientific book. Like the Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand all the work was done by volunteers, but unlike the Atlas it won't come for free. Although a must for most keen birders, a lot of the information will be beyond this person's understanding.

With a marginal improvement in the weather and spring just around the corner, members noted an increase in bird activity. Ron Lambert now has a bantam living in a Pohutukawa tree on his property. Rosemary Messenger observed a Blackbird eating petals from Japonica flowers, and fifteen Cattle Egrets were reported from South Taranaki (but not seen by any of the members present). No reports of any in North Taranaki have been received again this winter. Six Royal Spoonbills and nineteen Variable Oystercatchers were over-wintering at Mokau, and just south of there five

Caspian Terns were seen at the Mohakatino River.

On a fine frosty August Sunday morning a small group of us headed around some local lakes and reserves. Perhaps due to the recent weather birds weren't easy to

find, but the company was excellent so the lack of birds did not distract from an enjoyable outing.

PETER FRYER

Hawkes Bay

In July a small group met at the Waitangi Wetland, a 10 minute drive from Napier, for a walk around the pond that the Hawkes Bay Regional Council has been replanting and rehabilitating. Good numbers of Australasian Shoveler were seen as well as the resident Australasian Bittern. Across the railway line at the Waitangi Estuary a group of 30 overwintering Black-fronted Terns was also seen.



In August a group in four wheel drive vehicles had a day out with Tamsin Ward-Smith, the Manager of the Cape Kidnappers and Ocean Beach Wildlife Preserve. We had an in-depth look at the making of the salt-resistant predator-proof fence which cuts across the 2,200 ha peninsula and walked to a sea cliff area to see plants and shearwater nesting boxes, installed partly with volunteer labour. After a drive over the headland with spectacular views of Hawkes Bay we ended the day beside a small dam viewing six members of a recently-released group of Brown Teal.

HELEN ANDREWS

Wanganui

Late autumn and winter are quiet times in Wanganui, periodically enlivened by the passage of waterbirds and waders from the South Island to wintering areas further north. Peak numbers on the Whanganui River estuary in May were 24 Royal Spoonbills, 70 Pied Stilts and 33 Caspian Terns, but numbers dropped to less than half of these in the following two months. In late May, a flock of 89 Banded Dotterels passed through ahead of a southerly front that swept the South Island, our only record so far this year. Small numbers of both Banded and Black-fronted Dotterels winter at Koitiata Lagoon, at the mouth of the Turakina River, east of Wanganui. At least 46 Banded and 12 Black-fronted Dotterels were counted there in mid-June, similar numbers to last year. This seems to be a regular wintering site for both species, although we do not know where the birds come from. Some may be local, as both species breed nearby.

Apart from Royal Spoonbills, Pied Stilts, Caspian Terns, Red-billed and Black-backed Gulls, and the occasional Bar-tailed Godwit, all of which winter on the Wanganui estuary, we have had periodic visits from Wrybills, Black-billed Gulls, and Black-fronted Terns, the latter clearly sheltering from the southern gale that was blowing at the time. Two 5 km beach walks by Peter Frost, at the tail end of these gales, produced three Fairy Prions, two Fluttering Shearwaters, and a Black Swan.

In early July, bush birds started to become more active. New Zealand Pigeons began visiting suburban gardens in Wanganui to feed on fruit. Unfortunately, their preference for Tree Privet *Ligustrum lucidum* (and probably other alien *Ligustrum* species) is probably helping to spread this aggressive invader. Colin Ogle reported Song Thrushes singing in early May; Blackbirds joined in a few weeks later. Tui have become more vocal over the past month, with small groups interacting noisily wherever there are flowering eucalypts. Bellbirds are also prominent in the more densely-vegetated gardens. In his garden, Ian Bell records them being more common than Tui this year.

New Zealand Falcons have made their usual winter visits to Wanganui. One was seen in April in the suburb of Aramoho by Tom Teasdale. Dawne Morton, of the Bird Rescue Centre in Turakina, reported that a member of the public had seen a Falcon eating a finch in Wanganui East in early June. Possibly the same bird was seen on three successive days a couple of weeks later elsewhere in Wanganui (reported by Chris Devine, DoC). Also in early June, Dawne was brought a New Zealand Pigeon that had hit a window while trying to escape from a Falcon in the Turakina Valley. The Falcon was chased off by a group of Australian Magpies; the Pigeon is recovering.

Dawne has had a busy time. In early July, she retrieved a Brown Skua with an injured wing from the Wanganui Golf Club. The bird was attended to by veterinary surgeons at Massey University and is recovering well. Paul Gibson, who went to photograph it, commented on how relatively unaggressive it was, contrary to expectations. It appears to be a young bird. The species has not previously been recorded from this part of the south coast, although the Bird Atlas shows records from Himatangi Beach and the Manawatu estuary, and two records further north, at Raglan

and off the Coromandel Peninsula. There are also a few records from the north coast of the South Island.

Dawne was also called to rescue a New Zealand Dabchick that was found wandering around one of the streets in central Wanganui. It had rained heavily over the preceding days, so perhaps the bird had mistaken a street puddle for a pool and, having landed, found it difficult to take off again. When trying to take off, dabchicks remind me of people with motorised hang-gliders: frantic running horizontally; precious little lift. From photographs taken by Paul Gibson, the bird seemed to be an adult. Incidentally, Paul has been producing greeting cards as a fundraiser for Dawne Morton's Bird Rescue (P.O. Box 981, Wanganui), using photographs from his impressive collection of NZ birds. If you would like some, write to Dawne. The Rescue Centre needs your support.

In mid July, Jim Campbell (DoC) reported that one of the builders at Whakahoro, in the Whanganui National Park, saw a Kingfisher chase down and catch a Fantail, which it then bashed repeatedly on a post before swallowing it, something that took about 15 minutes. Jim also circulated pictures of a colour-banded Kaka, taken by Prue Hooper at Waverley in early August. We wait to see where the bird was banded. Paul Gibson photographed one at Maxwell in 2006, and the Atlas shows one record nearby, at or close to Bushy Park, so individuals do wander.

A small group of us went on a field trip to the Manawatu estuary in mid-June and were rewarded with sightings of Cattle Egret just outside Foxton Beach, and Royal Spoonbills, Wrybills, Pied Stilts, a few Bar-tailed Godwits, all three species of gull, and Caspian and White-fronted Terns at the estuary. We missed a White Heron, which Duncan Watson from Wellington photographed upstream of the boat club in the afternoon. Unfortunately, we were distracted by the sound and fury of Round Two of the NZ Jetblacks Winter Enduro Series jetski races (at least, that is our excuse), although the birds seemed generally to take it in their stride. Paul Gibson undertook the only other field trip, single-handedly because no one else could join him, to look for the Nankeen Night-herons near the junction of the Kauarapaoa Stream and the Wanganui River. He saw two birds (four were seen here last year), and managed to get a superb photograph of one of them. He also tracked down the small group of Cattle Egrets that winter on a farm near Whangaehu. This year there are eight birds, up from five last year, although they arrived two months later than previously.

The monthly evening talks continue to attract a small but loyal audience. In May, Peter Frost talked about the conservation and management of migratory geese in Europe, drawing on his experiences with these birds in the Netherlands during the past two winters. In June, Ormond Torr showed us a selection of his superb photographs of birds taken over the years on the Whanganui River estuary. Ormond specialises in photographing birds in flight, so we got to see many species from a quite different perspective. At the July meeting, which doubled as the Branch's AGM, Sue Frost described how differences in the foraging behaviour of two closely-related, partly sympatric African flycatchers are shaped by the structure and productivity of their habitats.

Paul Gibson circulates a weekly e-mail containing a selection of pictures of birds that he has photographed the previous week. These and other e-mails about Branch activities go out regularly to over 30 people, only 13 of which are OSNZ members. One of our tasks is to try to increase both numbers, though we need to know why those who are not members choose to remain so. At the AGM, Peter Frost assumed the mantle of Regional Representative, giving Tom Teasdale a well-earned break after many years. Tom has served us well, keeping the Branch alive during difficult times when membership was small and interest dispersed. Many thanks, Tom, for a job well done.

PETER FROST

Wairarapa

In June, our Region presented a static OSNZ display in the Greytown Town Centre as part of the Greater Wellington Regional Authority's 'Greening of Greytown', which followed World Environment Day. As part of this month-long event, we had a field trip to observe bush birds locally in the remnant of native

bush off Kuratawhiti Street in Greytown and the Tate Reserve near Papawai Marae.

At our June meeting, those members who had attended the AGM and Conference in Kaikoura presented their impression and highlights. Two of our members received Meritorious Service Awards, Brian Boeson, and (posthumously) Betty Watt. Former recipients in our Region have been Colin Scadden and Tenick Dennison. Over the years, the dedication and knowledge of these four people have greatly enhanced the Wairarapa Region.

For the July meeting, Narena Olliver gave an informative presentation on Pukeko. This prompted some excellent discussion. The Pukeko, with other swamphens, has a long history, being mentioned in the writings of Pliny the Elder. Swamphens are found in a number of areas around the world, but our own Pukeko is thought to have arrived here from Australia less than 1,000 years ago. They are both herbivorous and carnivorous, a dietary habit that often brings them into disrepute with humans.

Pukeko breeding is in communal groups. A stable group, usually of kin, holds a permanent territory, and is polygamous. There are two to seven breeding males and one or two breeding females. They are assisted by one to seven non-breeding birds that are offspring from previous matings. Unstable groups are usually comprised of non-kin, and are promiscuous, with much aggression. They include many male members, and are largely unsuccessful at breeding. Within a stable group mate-sharing is total and multiple paternity prevails. Dominant females lay in a common nest, and all group members care for the young. Habitat saturation and a shortage of prime breeding territories appear to be responsible for this breeding strategy.

The August meeting will be the annual Big Bird Quiz, with quizmaster Chris Day, the Educational Officer at Mt Bruce/Pukaha Wildlife Centre. The cup, itself is the size of an egg-cup, but its kudos is huge. The Greytown and Masterton factions ruffle their respective feathers in a show of genuine knowledge, some bravado, and a final preening of feathers.

BARBARA LOVATT

Wellington

Colin Miskelly commenced July's talk by describing snipe (*Coenocorypha* spp) as being the most characteristic birds of the New Zealand biogeographical region. At least four taxa became extinct following the introduction of predatory mammals, the most recent extinction being in 1964. Three further snipe taxa suffered large mammal-induced range reductions, with Campbell Island Snipe and Chatham Island Snipe both disappearing from nearly 100% of their ranges. Although the Auckland Island Snipe was lost from 83% of its range, it persisted in large numbers on Adams Island and on two smaller islands.

Colin described a series of studies that compared the genetic diversity of snipe on the tiny Jacquemart Island (Campbell Island), on Rangatira Island (Chatham Islands), and on Ewing and Adams Islands (Auckland Islands). Using blood and feather samples obtained from six snipe populations, Colin illustrated the results of DNA studies that enable several fascinating conclusions to be drawn, including the view that predation by introduced mammals combined with habitat disturbance by farm stock (on Rangatira Island) led to an almost total loss of measurable genetic variation in Chatham Island and Campbell Island Snipes. Auckland Island Snipe confined to Ewing Island lost much of their genetic variation compared to the much larger population on Adams Island. Colin concluded that the measurable loss of genetic variation within the Auckland Island Snipe provides a model for identifying the likely cause of the depauperate genomes of both Chatham Island and Campbell Island Snipes, both of which passed through extreme population bottlenecks. The almost complete lack of genetic diversity in five of the six snipe populations has management implications in the face of potential environmental changes such as global warming and the introduction of avian pathogens.

On the face of it, you might expect a talk on "the history of naming New Zealand's birds", given by an entomologist, to be

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fairly dry and uninteresting. However, a large gathering at our August meeting heard a very entertaining and informative talk by Dr Ricardo Palma of Te Papa. As an expert in the international rules on nomenclature, Dr Palma is working on the nomenclature in the new OSNZ checklist of NZ birds. He has researched the naming, re-naming and in many cases multiple re-re-re-naming of all the species reported from New Zealand.

The changes in number of species in lists are shown in the table.

list maker	date	no of species
GR Gray	1843 (the first such list)	84
GR Gray	1862	173
Buller	1882	176
Hamilton	1909	286
Marples	1946	203
OSNZ	1953	254
OSNZ	1970	282
OSNZ	1990	379
OSNZ	2009 or 2010?	468

The large jump in species number between Buller and Hamilton is due to the latter author including a number of synonyms as species, which then dropped out of Marples's list. Changes in the area defined as 'New Zealand' have seen Norfolk Island and its species included, removed, and re-included; similarly Macquarie Island has come and gone and is currently 'in'. The more recent increase in species numbers is due in part to the use of molecular biology (DNA) and the inclusion in the checklist of a number of extinct species named from fossil and sub-fossil remains.

Ricardo has identified a series of periods in the nomenclature of New Zealand's birds which reflect the changes in the country and its inhabitants, and tie in with the publication of the lists noted in the table. Thus the 'European' period, 1758-1862, saw European explorers and ornithologists naming our species and still accounts for 65% of today's valid names. This was followed by a 'colonial' period, up to 1906, where local workers, such as Buller, were the main influence. Next was an 'Australasian' phase, where little work was carried out in New Zealand, most of the work being done in Australia, with Mathews being especially prolific. This author's work, with many renamings from single specimens, is now particularly problematic for Dr Palma. The 'New Zealand Modern' era from 1931 to 1990 features names such as Falla and Fleming, and the 'NZ Molecular' period, which Ricardo said also includes the 'NZ extinct' period, brings us up to date.

Answering questions, Ricardo discussed how new names are given to species, and revealed that major sponsors and funders of work can sometimes have species named after them. This isn't new; it also happened in Victorian times, with major collectors such as Rothschild and Veitch having many species named after them. Working with lice, Ricardo has to be careful who he names species for. A colleague once suggested he named a species of louse after the Portuguese president, who was, the colleague said, "a lousy president".

ANDY FALSHAW

Canterbury

There wasn't a Canterbury update in the June edition of Southern Bird as we were all busy putting the Kaikoura Conference together. When Queen's Birthday weekend came, it all seemed to fall into place ok with those attending enjoying themselves hugely and learning lots, seeing great seabirds especially, but also feisty little bush birds, while the wintry weather held off until the last day. Phew! The unofficial all-day boat trip had a bit of a scoop, logging the first sighting of a White-headed Petrel by an Oceanwings boat off Kaikoura. Paul Scofield put a packed day of scientific talks

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together and is now the unappreciative minder of a cardboard box containing the Mantelpiece Monstrosity. Unfortunately this highly artistic trophy didn't reach Canterbury in time to get awarded at Kaikoura, so was donated posthumously, as it were, to a team member who did a lot for the event. On an even more congratulatory note Paul and Derek Onley were awarded fifth in a close vote for the award of British Birds/British Trust for Ornithology Best Bird Book of the Year for 2007. Their field guide to the Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the world was rated higher than any other field guide. Derek's original plates for the book were on sale at the conference and were popular items of longing and purchase.

Talks at evening meetings have ranged widely. Anita Spencer of the DoC biosecurity team updated us on the situation of White-flipped Penguins on Banks Peninsula. They are spreading out from protected sites and more predator control will be necessary if they are to establish further colonies. Local people are interested in providing this and the future seems reasonable for this form of Blue Penguin. Anita also talked about pest control around Australasian Crested Grebe nests, which is often the only way a pair of birds can get chicks off the nest. Rosalie Snoyink also talked about her close observations of this species in lakes of inland Canterbury and the possibility of a follow-up survey to update and compare with the South Island-wide one done five years ago was discussed.

Paul Scofield gave a repeat of his talk given at the Art Gallery during a series which accompanied the large Bill Hammond exhibition last year. This covered early bird collectors in New Zealand and their backgrounds, methods and legacies.

David Melville's presentation on Bird Flu, titled 'Fright, Hype and Little Understanding' was most riveting. It showed how much more information is needed in order to get a grip on a disease such as this. Many thanks to David for coming from Nelson to talk to us. Other meetings have been about the Garden Bird Survey and members' birding interests.

Field meetings haven't been as well patronised as last year's were. Either petrol costs or other commitments or both are the suspects. We propose to use branch funds more to cover travel costs, otherwise no fieldwork will get done and the situation our birds are in will become an unknown rumour, or report, to be read about rather than one experienced at first hand. A tramp up Mt Herbert, the highest point on Banks peninsula, was an enjoyable March trip, but we failed to access the huge DoC reserve on the south side, though a Tomtit, Bellbirds and flocks of Pipits were highlights. In April we were impressed with Russell Langdon's Riverbank Wildlife Centre at the side of the Ashburton River in South Canterbury and hope to visit again and plant trees to aid the re-establishment of the original vegetation and wetland landscape. The long-term aim is to have wetland and waterbirds freely roaming in ponds and rough swampy areas, with bush birds in scrub and higher vegetation.

The regular Winter Wader Counts were eventually done after fog, storm and high lake levels had postponed the day about four times. Six counters did the whole lake in the finish and came up with more migratory waders than is usual. The Ashburton Lakes count in July produced 40 Australasian Crested Grebes and a fine view for some of a Falcon by a road. For once there was little ice and Pied Oystercatchers were setting up home for the spring.

A number of Colin Hill's bird photos taken in the Lake Ellesmere area have been assembled on a poster and appeared on display at the Kaikoura Conference. Laminated copies of this poster are available to members to purchase or to borrow for publicity purposes such as public meetings, fairs, stalls etc. At Nick Allen's suggestion we also had a calico bag and a pen made of recycled paper manufactured in large quantities for the conference so each delegate could have one. Both these items have the Society's logo, Takahe print, or web address on them and are available for purchase by regions to on-sell to members. Please contact me if you are interested.

JAN WALKER

Southland

The winter wader count in Southland was well-supported this year with all our major count sites covered. Highlights were two Siberian Tattlers, one Mongolian Dotterel, five Red-necked Stints, one White Heron, and our resident Wrybill seen once again at Awarua Bay. Thanks to David Melville and Jessie Conklin for their assistance and giving up their weekend for a winter visit to Southland.

Our big news for June was the report of a Nankeen Kestrel near Winton at Forest Hill Crossing Road. Several members managed to get a good look at the bird as it perched in some gum trees on a farm. It stayed around for a week or so then disappeared, probably heading north for some warmer weather. The property owner mentioned it had been harassed by some Black-backed Gulls, but the Australian Magpies, of which there seems to be a large population in the area, didn't seem to be too bothered.

There was also another report of a Kestrel on the outskirts of Invercargill but we think this was the same bird as that seen near Winton. The last kestrel reported from Southland was in 1985, when one stayed in the Tiwai area for several months.

In other news Lloyd Esler has received reports of Sooty Shearwaters reportedly breeding on Bluff Hill, Omaui Bush and also Kings Bush at Woodlands. Lloyd also spotted a pair of Red-crowned Parakeets at Bluff Hill during a bird count. It would be nice if these birds stayed and bred. Locals in Bluff are hoping to get a volunteer pest management project together targeting the native bush area on Bluff Hill.

PHIL RHODES



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Regional Reps and What's On



Far North

Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 0470. Ph (09) 407 3874. Email detlefdavies@yahoo.com

Northland

Katrina Hansen, 3 Harbour View Road, Onerahi, Whangarei. Ph (09) 436 2129. Email katrina.hansen@xtra.co.nz
Evening meetings, second Thursday of the month, ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954. West coast beach patrols ph. Prue Cozens (09) 437 7760. East coast beach patrols ph. Pauline Smith (09) 435 3060. Whangarei Harbour wader count ph. Tony Beauchamp (09) 436 2661. North Kaipara wader count ph. David Crockett (09) 435 0954.

Auckland

Mel Galbraith, 62 Holyoake Place, Birkenhead, Auckland. Ph (09) 480 1958. Email melgar@ihug.co.nz
Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month (except January) at 7.45pm at Natural Science Building 23, Unitec, Point Chevalier.

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 7.45 pm. Beach patrols ph. Wendy Goad (09) 292 7838. Manukau and Firth of Thames censuses ph. Tony Habraken (09) 238 5284

Waikato

Dai Morgan, 78 Grey Street, Cambridge. Ph (07) 823 1990. Email d.k.morgan@massey.ac.nz
Evening meetings, every third Wednesday 7.30pm, DoC Area Office, 5 Northway Street (off Te Rapa Road), Hamilton.
Beach Patrols and Cambridge Lake census, Hugh Clifford ph (07) 855 3751. Hamilton Lake Census, Barry Friend ph (07) 843 6729. Forest Lake Census, Brian Challinor ph (07) 855 2561. Kakepuku Bird Counts and West Coast Harbour Censuses, Laurie Hoverd ph (07) 871 8071. Bird Sightings, Dai Morgan

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Eila Lawton, 449 Lund Road, RD2 Katikati 3178. Ph (07) 549 3646. Email elawton@actrix.co.nz
Evening meetings – second Wednesdays of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct and Dec, 7pm.

Gisborne/Wairoa

RR's position vacant.

Hawke's Bay

Helen Andrews, 254 Mangatahi Rd, RD1, Hastings 4171. Ph (06) 874 9426. Email helenandrews@xtra.co.nz
Indoor meetings are held on an irregular basis, but field trips are organised regularly. Please contact Helen Andrews 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) 7.30 pm. Field trips on first conducive weekend thereafter.

Wanganui

Peter Frost, 87 Ikitara Road, Wanganui East, Wanganui 4500. Ph: 06 343 1648. Email: birds.wanganui@xtra.co.nz. Evening meetings – last Monday of every month except December, 7.30pm (unless the day is a public holiday), St Joseph's Hall, 1 Campbell Street. For more details contact Peter Frost.

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

Barbara Lovatt, 4 Clara Anne Grove, Greytown. Ph (06) 304 9948. Email barbara.lovatt@slingshot.co.nz
Evening meetings held on the second Thursday of the month (exc Jan) 7.30 pm, venue alternating between Masterton and Greytown. Field trips are the following weekend. Contact Barbara Lovatt for further details.

Wellington

Ian Armitage, 50 Ranui Terrace, Tawa, Wellington. Ph (04) 232 7470. Email ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz
Evening meetings - first Monday of the month, Head Office of DoC, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington, meet 7.30 pm for a 7:45 pm start, ph. Ian Armitage (04) 232 7470.
East Harbour Regional Park bird survey, Reg Cotter (04) 568 6960. Fluttering Shearwater chick transfers, Colin Miskelly (04) 479 1662. Beach patrols, Sharon Alderson (04) 298 3707. Mana Island robins & sooty shearwaters, Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929. Mist-netting and passerine banding, Peter Reese (04) 387 7387. Rock pigeon nesting project, Ralph Powlesland (04) 386 3323.

Nelson

Stuart Wood, 24 Olympus Way, Richmond. Ph (03) 544 3932. Email stuartwood38@yahoo.co.nz
Evening meetings – usually first Monday of the month, 7.15 pm Solander/Aurora Fisheries Board Room. The Solander/Aurora building is on the right hand side of Cross Street, just beyond Dickson's Boat Repair and more or less opposite the 'red shed' - the Tasman Bay Cruising Club, Nelson. Phone Stuart Wood (03) 544 3932 or Don Cooper (03) 544 8109.

Marlborough

Mike Bell, 42 Vickerman Street, Grovetown 7321. Phone (03) 577 9818 or 021 734 602. Email mike.bell@marlborough.govt.nz
Lake Grassmere count – third Sunday of month. Ph Brian Bell (03) 570 2230. Passerine banding, each weekend during February and March, at Jack Taylor's farm, Ward, contact Mike Bell Ph (03) 577 9818.

Canterbury/West Coast

Jan Walker, 305 Kennedys Bush Road, Halswell, Christchurch 8205. Ph (03) 322 7187. Email shesagreen@gmail.com
Evening meetings last Monday of the month, Spreydon Bowling Club, Domain Terrace, Christchurch. Monthly field trips – dates vary, contact Jan Walker.

Otago

Mary Thompson, 197 Balmacewen Road, Balmacewen, Dunedin. Ph (03) 464 0787. Email mary.thompson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
Evening meetings monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 8.00pm in Benham Seminar Room, Zoology Department, 340 Great King Street. Contact Mary Thompson.

Southland

Lloyd Esler, 15 Mahuri Road, Otatara, RD9 Invercargill 9521. Ph (03) 213 0404. Email esler@southnet.co.nz
Evening meetings (in conjunction with Field Club) held second Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm. Please phone Lloyd Esler for venue and further information, field trip usually on Saturday following. Beach Patrols on a casual basis, phone Phil Rhodes (03) 214 4936 or Lloyd Esler.

