



Southern *Bird*

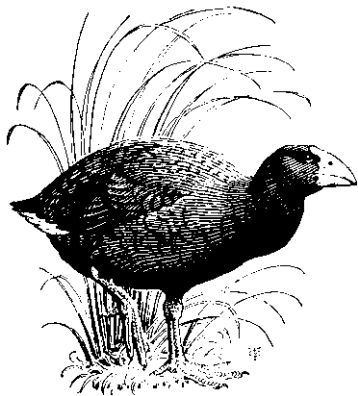
No. 36 December 2008 • ISSN 1175-1916

Fluttering Shearwater
translocation success

2008 AGM

Stick nose reactions
of Kingfishers to Aerial Raptors





Southern Bird

No. 36 December 2008. • ISSN 1175-1916

QUOTATION

*The Pen-guin sits up-on the shore
And loves the lit-tle fish to bore;
He has one en-er-vat-ing joke
That would a very Saint provoke:
"The Pen-guin's might-i-er than the sword-fish";
He tells this dai-ly to the bored fish,
Un-til they are so weak, they float
With-out re-sis-tance down his throat.*

Oliver Herford (1863-1935)

CONTENTS

Bird Sound Archives	4
Tui Trouble	7
Fluttering Shearwater translocation success	8
AGM 2008	12
Regional Roundup	10
Regional Reps and What's on	15

COVER PHOTOS

Front cover: Silvereye
Back cover: Morepork

Both photos by Trevor Johnston
(copyright held by the photographer)

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.

A STATEMENT FROM **RICHARD HOLDAWAY**

At the conclusion of the OSNZ Council meeting held in Christchurch on 18th October, and with considerable regret, I tendered my resignation as President of OSNZ. Council accepted my resignation and requested that I continue as an *ex officio* member of Council until the next AGM. My decision to resign was based on the level of commitments in my professional life that are much greater now than when I accepted the position of President in 2006. I am now responsible for three major research programmes. The probability of frequent overseas absences with respect to those programmes, the arrival of our first grandchild earlier this year and the wish to enjoy more family life than has been possible recently, means I will not be able to contribute to OSNZ at the level I see as necessary from the President. I would have preferred to have completed the term; circumstances have ruled otherwise.

David Lawrie, as Vice President, has become Acting President until the AGM. I am sure that he and Council will continue to move OSNZ forward. Thank you all for your assistance over the past couple of years.

RICHARD HOLDAWAY

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

25TH 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

Simon Fordham will take over from David Lawrie in the New Year as Regional Representative for South Auckland. Many thanks to Simon for taking on this role and to David for all the hard work in being RR for a very significant 12 years. Simon's contact details can be found on the penultimate page of this issue of *Southern Bird*.

Merry Christmas and Happy 2009

From Ingrid Hutzler, your Executive Officer.

P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040. Email osnzeo@slingshot.co.nz

Publisher

Published on behalf of the members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand (Inc), P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040, New Zealand.

Email: osnzeo@slingshot.co.nz • Website: www.osnz.org.nz

Edited by Nick Allen, 11 Seagrave Place, Ilam, Christchurch 8041 • Tel (03) 358 5994 • Email nick_allen@xtra.co.nz

ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As most of you will be aware, Richard Holdaway tendered his resignation as President of the Society at the Council meeting in October. Council accepted the resignation but resolved that he continue as an *ex officio* member of the Council until the next Annual General Meeting.

Richard's decision to resign was based on the strain that the Society's function had placed on him and his family. At the time that Richard accepted the role of President of the Society he also had the responsibility of editor, but subsequently became responsible for three major research programmes. The accumulation of all of those responsibilities was affecting his health and also his ability to provide outcomes to the high standards which he strives for in all his pursuits.

In accepting the resignation Council noted that Richard wished to achieve the hand-over of the editorship of *Notornis* at the earliest opportunity, which would require the publishing of the outstanding December 2007 issue and then having the subsequent issues under the editorship of Jim Briskie following at regular intervals soon thereafter. The intention is to have all of these outstanding issues posted before March 2009 when the publishing schedule should be up to date, and should be able to be maintained into the future.

Council would like to thank Richard for his efforts as President. Although he became rather bogged down at the end, due to unforeseen circumstances, much was achieved during his term. Many of the initiatives he implemented will have long term benefits, and I know the Society will be better for them.

Other key decisions made at the October Council meeting were that we proceed with the publishing of the revised checklist utilising the services of Te Papa Press as publishers. The checklist committee has completed their work on this mammoth task and the material is now being handed over to the publishers; it is hoped that the checklist will be published by the middle of 2009. Council decided that this would not be published directly by the Society and hence would not be a Society publication available free to members. However, the contract negotiated with Te Papa Press makes allowance for a generous discount available to members as a pre-publication offer. Details on that will become available next year.

Council also reviewed progress with achieving the strategic plan which was adopted three years ago. It is clear that Council has achieved many of the objectives that were established in that document but there is one major area that has not yet been addressed. This relates to the provision of support to regions to run field

courses and other training sessions, but this is intended to be addressed by the establishment of a Project and Activities Committee. This proposal was first mooted by Richard Holdaway and Council hopes that he can still play a role in implementing this once the editorship issues are fully transferred.

Terms of reference have been developed by Council for the committee and these are now available. Council considers it essential that this committee be appointed as soon as possible as the recent survey of members indicated that there were many people willing to assist in running these programmes but they require guidance. This committee is the ideal opportunity for people with ideas on the types of programmes that the Society should be organising to become involved. It is not anticipated that the committee itself would necessarily run all the programmes, but would provide support for regions or groups of regions to run activities. I would therefore urge any members with an interest in this type of activity to volunteer their services, as it is essential for the Society's future that we keep members well informed and active.

I would also like to take this opportunity to advise members that longstanding treasurer Mark Nee has had a major operation and is currently recuperating at home. He is still fulfilling his duties, and would like me to remind Regional Representatives that their annual accounts are still due early in January! He has previously indicated his desire to retire from his position, so if there are any accountants in our membership who would like to take on this role, please contact the Secretary as soon as possible. This will then allow Mark to really retire!

Council was also advised that due to a change in his family commitments Ian Saville could not fulfil the role of editor of the *NZ Bird Report*. Council is currently looking at other potential editors, to ensure that production of the 2007 issue can continue as quickly as possible.

Chris Robertson is currently clearing out his storage sheds and came across several thousand Society greeting cards. The Council is looking at options on how to utilise these, so if there are any ideas let us know by contacting our Executive Officer.

Council is also moving on plans to update the website, with a view to eventually having the capability of paying subscriptions on line. This is still in its early stages and will require us to totally revamp the way the sites are hosted and set up. If any members have thoughts on how the site could be improved, or things to add, contact the Executive Officer as soon as possible.

DAVID LAWRIE

GREY WARBLER HANGING BY A TONGUE

On approaching a Grey Warbler's nest I had been observing from building to occupation, I became aware of agitated, distressed birds, and was almost 'met' by the adults along the track. A newly-fledged bird was twisting and turning outside the nest entrance suspended by its tongue, which was caught on a twig of bush lawyer growing around the nest site. With great difficulty, I managed to support the struggling bird whilst cutting the twig off the vine. I was then able to carefully and slowly remove the offending barbed twig. The bird's tongue was so swollen that its beak could scarcely close. I bathed the injured tongue in nearby water, then perched the bird beside the nest. As I was leaving, the parents were less agitated and offering it food

PAM TURNER

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice of any motion to be considered by the 2009 Annual General Meeting must reach the Secretary before **28th February 2009** and be in writing and signed by a mover and seconder who shall be financial members of the Society.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2009 Annual General Meeting will be held in Orewa Rotary House on **Saturday 30th May 2009** at 8.30pm.
Peter Gaze, Secretary
P.O. Box 834, Nelson

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS For President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Council

The three year terms of the President, Vice-President and Treasurer all expire at the next AGM. In addition there is still a vacant position for a Councillor. Nominations are called for these four positions. Note that Council members at the end of their three-year terms are eligible to stand again for any position.

Nominations will close with the Secretary on **28th February 2009**. Nomination papers must be signed by two financial members of the Society and be consented to in writing by the person nominated who must also be a financial member of the Society. Would nominators please include a brief *curriculum vitae* of the nominated person if that person is not already a member of Council.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

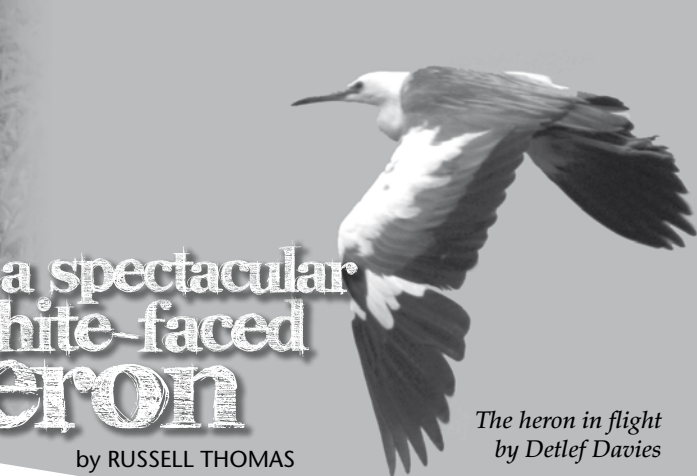
Subscriptions are due on 1st January. A renewal form should either have been emailed to you or included with the previous issue of *Southern Bird*. Please endeavour to pay close to the due date – the Society depends greatly on your subscription to continue the furtherance of its objects in encouraging and supporting the study and enjoyment of birds in the New Zealand region. If you have not received a renewal form, please contact the Membership Secretary, Yvonne Mackenzie, P.O. Box 29-532, Fendalton, Christchurch 8540. Phone (03) 351 3660, email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com



The heron 'on guard'
by Carol Davies



The heron searching for
food by Tim Barnard



The heron in flight
by Detlef Davies

Sighting of a spectacular albinistic white-faced heron

by RUSSELL THOMAS

On the 20th October 2007 Ray Pierce had a distant sighting of a possible White-necked Heron (*Ardea pacifica*) in a field about one kilometre south of Pakaraka on SH1, Northland. Ray did not have binoculars with him but the long white neck and grey back were quite conspicuous. He reported this to the Regional Rep Detlef Davies who went there with his wife Carol and me for a closer inspection on the following morning. The weather was fine and sunny and the unusual heron was sighted quite close by in the presence of a White-faced Heron (*Ardea novaehollandiae*).

Very good views of the white-necked bird were achieved through a telescope and many photos taken. Superficially it had the main characteristics of a Pacific Heron, a totally white neck and underbelly plus a grey back. However, this bird was obviously very unusual, as the lesser wing coverts were all white and quite spectacular when in flight.

Other features soon became apparent that did not conform to a Pacific Heron identity. Namely, this bird had yellow legs, the grey feathering on the back was very pale grey and not the 'sooty black with a greenish sheen' as described in Simpson and Day's *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* and the bird was

no larger in any respect than the White-Faced Heron accompanying it. Tim Barnard inspected the bird later in the day and he and some other ornithologists who saw it or photos of it over the next few days, all rejected the White-faced Heron identity and theorised on it being albinistic. Reference to support this theory can be found in a short note by Barry Heather (*Notornis* 30 (1983) page 341) regarding four sightings of other albinistic White-faced Herons.

In conclusion, Ray Pierce, Detlef Davies and I all concurred that the bird was an albinistic White-faced Heron.

BIRD SOUND ARCHIVES

At last the project to transfer the recordings held in the McPherson Natural History Sound Archive to compact disc has been completed after nearly three years of intermittent work. The project itself arose out of the need to preserve audio recordings held here on older now outdated technology such as open reel magnetic tape and also cassette tapes. Both of these media have limited shelf lives depending on their storage conditions (temperature, humidity, etc). Even the type of backing material, such as cellulose, poly vinyl chloride, or even paper has a bearing on the longevity of magnetic tapes, as does the type of oxides used in the manufacture of such tapes. The manufacturing process itself also has an effect, depending on whether the oxide was glued to the backing media (as per the earlier tapes) or whether it was impregnated into the backing (as is generally done with more modern tapes).

At the end of the duplicating effort 750 reels of tape were transferred onto around 180 compact discs. Old cassette tapes (which were done first because of known deterioration) took up roughly 300 CDs, whilst material on other media, such as vinyl and shellac, took another three hundred or so CDs.

Each sound bite was treated as a separate track and has a typed sleeve note to indicate the species and how long the clip runs for. Most field tapes have a verbal announcement stating the time, date, and locality of the recording, the species involved, and who made the field recording. Behavioural data was also included if known.

One thing that surprised me during the transfer operation was the number of recordings that I had written off as being unusable due to background noise, etc, which improved markedly during the conversion from old analogue to new digital methods. A number of clips of species that are classified as rare were salvaged this way. When I processed some of the Pacific Island recordings further surprises were in store. During the editing process I noticed that a few clips that could not be edited properly under the old system could all be sorted out by following the switching noises made by the recordist in the field as their machine was turned on or off. The different wave patterns on screen also helped, particularly when editing was more complex due to overlapping calls etc.

Feeding the audio to the computer for conversion to digital and transfer to CD was not always plain sailing. There were a number of electronic mishaps and failures along the way. One that comes to mind was a fire in the main power supply of the amplifier. It was cheaper to replace the amp with a different make and model rather than rewind the failed transformer in the end. The big studio reel-to-reel recorder failed just as that part of the archive was being transferred to the computer, so a borrowed machine was used to complete the job in the end. The computer audio system also failed, shorting the mains supply and necessitating a visit from the housing complex electrician to restore electricity to my unit. Then more recently a monitor failed when a relay inside switched off. I am now

using an older monitor that was given to me by an OSNZ member which is actually better than the one purchased with the computer designed for this project four years ago.

Any new recordings that come to hand on tape are now dubbed to the computer as soon as practicable and edited to CD usually at the same session. The big effort now for the archive is to increase the holding of species and collections from Pacific Islands, particularly Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, and also the islands of both the Indian and Atlantic Oceans before any more birds found there become extinct. Recent acquisitions include material from the Juan Fernandez archipelago, the Chatham Islands, the Solomons (including the Bismarcks), Fiji, and Vanuatu to name just a few. New material from Norfolk Island has also been offered.

Whilst the transfer project was going on considerable amounts of published recordings, mostly on CD or CD-ROMs, and now on DVD-ROMs, were added to the archive as well. Notable publications include several CD sets from South America, particularly the Amazonian area of Columbia, a CD on Mongolia, another on Angola, one on Greenland and several on India, and a private one from Bangladesh. A DVD-ROM on South East Asian birds is now available with some thirty hours of viewing on it, and I have just received 10-12 hours of audio recordings on an only recently available Russian/Siberian collection.

LES MCPHERSON

FIRST RECORD FOR NEW ZEALAND

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*
10/07 31/12/2006 East of Pitt Island Chris Gaskin

RARE SPECIES ACCEPTED (IN ALPHABETIC ORDER BY COMMON NAME)

Reports of the following rare species were accepted by the Rare Birds Committee during the current reporting period.

Arctic Tern *Sterna hirundo*
47/06 24/09/2006 Whatipu Beach Mike Graham
(submitted as Common Tern)

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*
29/06 7/11/2002 Portland Island Geoff Foreman

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*
55/06 12/11/2006 North end, Kapiti Island Peter Reese

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
5/06 19/03/2006 Mangawhai Spit Katrina Hansen

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*
36/06 11/04/2006 Muriwai gannet colony John Wilson

Chestnut-breasted Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*
03/07 13/01/2007 Hoopers Inlet, Otago Peninsula Bjarne Jensen
04/07 18/01/2007 Kaikorai Estuary Peter Schweigman
11/07 22/12/2006 Hoopers Inlet Otago Ben Miller

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*
25/06 13/10/2003 Coatsville, N of Auckland Ted Wnorowski

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
41/06 29/05/2006 Clifton Beach, Whitford Bruce Keeley

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia*
48/06 20/11/05 Ngaruroro River, Hawkes Bay Colin Miskelly
52/06 & 50/06 7 & 13/11/06 Waiautau Wetlands, Auckland Alan Emmerson & Suzi Phillips

King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*
38/06 10/05/2006 Star Keys, Chatham Is Kevin Hodge

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*
14/07 17/05/2007 South end of 9 Mile Beach, Buller Matt Charteris

Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*
43/06 19/07/2006 Kaitaia Airport Kevin Mathews

New Zealand Storm Petrel *Oceanites maorianus*
56/06 4/11/2005 Hauraki Gulf Brent Stephenson *et al.*
(see Scofield 2007)

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*
54/06 7/11/2006 Karori, Wellington Jo Castile-Roberts

Plumed Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna eytoni*
06/07 23/02/2007 Woodville Ian Armitage

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
05/07 7/01/2007 Lake Grassmere Bev Elliott

Royal Penguin *Eudyptes schlegeli*
37/06 5/03/2006 Rangitira (South-East) Island, Chatham Is Denise Fastier

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
05/08 1/11/2007 Nelson Haven Peter Field

Tree Martin *Petrochelidon nigricans*
21/06 27/11/2004 Mangatete Stream, Lake Ohakuri Ted Wnorowski
28/06 25/12/1999 Torrent Bay Township John Campbell
(submitted as Fairy Martin)

SPECIES OR SUBSPECIES OUTSIDE THEIR USUAL RANGE:

Auckland Island Banded Dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus exilis*
17/07 16/1/2006 & 23/12/2006 Campbell Island Peter Moore

Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*
18/07 29/09/2007 Rangiahua, Northland

Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica*
57/06 22/11/2006 10 miles S of Stewart Island Richard Schofield

Canada x Feral Goose hybrid *Branta x Anser sp.*
27/06 30/05/2004 Christchurch Sewage Ponds Nick Allen

Cape Barren Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae*
16/07 24/07/2007 Hokitika Sewage Works David & Trish McKenzie

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
26/06 1/04/2006 Lower Opawa River Will Parsons
19/07 30/03/2007 Unahi Wharf, near Kaitaia Tim Barnard

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
20/07 30/03/2007 Unahi Wharf, near Kaitaia Tim Barnard

Little Black Shag *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
46/06 20/09/2006 Washdyke Lagoon, near Timaru Paul Sagar

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
24/06 4/04/2006 Mangere Ponds Ted Wnorowski
49/06 30/09/2006 Papakowhai Amanda Salt
07/07 21/02/2007 Waikanae Estuary Ian Armitage

New Zealand Dabchick *Poliiocephalus rufopectus*
32/06 30/03/2006 Puramahoi, Golden Bay Chris Petyt

Red-crowned Parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaehollandiae*
09/07 20/05/2007 Kiwi Saddle Hut Kahurangi NP Glenn McGovern

Siberian Tattler *Tringa brevipes*
33/06 19/03/2006 Mangawhai Spit Katrina Hansen

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*
45/06 4/01/2006 Erebus Cove, Auckland Islands Deborah Shapiro

ACCEPTED RECORDS OF SPECIES WHOSE STATUS AS NATURAL VAGRANTS IS QUESTIONABLE

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*
02/07 2/11/2006 West Huntly Sandy Bolton

Lovebird sp *Agapornis*
23/06 1/12/01-28/2/02 Muriwai Regional Park Erika Kuschel
(probable escapee)

Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* (breeding)
18/06 15/10/2003 Coatesville, N of Auckland Ted Wnorowski
(probable deliberate release)

Carolina Wood duck *Aix sponsa* (breeding)
19/06 15/10/2003 Coatesville, N of Auckland Ted Wnorowski
(probable deliberate release)

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*
20/06 3/03/2000 9/6/2001 Lower Huia Dam, Whatipu Ted Wnorowski

RECORDS SUBMITTED AS UNKNOWN FOR WHICH IDENTIFICATION COULD BE GIVEN:

Aberrant female blackbird *Turdus merula*
01/07 April 1998 to 2008 Waiuku

RECORDS FOR WHICH NO DEFINITIVE SPECIES IDENTIFICATION COULD BE GIVEN:

An unidentified raptor
03/08 14/11/2007 Between Twizel & Queenstown on State Highway 8

Martin *Petrochelidon sp.*
51/06 27/10/2006 Tiritiri Matangi Island

Tattler *Tringa sp.*
02/08 11 & 14/1/2008 Sugar Loaf Pt, Kaikoura

UNIDENTIFIED IMMATURE PHEASANT SPECIES
40/06 10/11/2003 Cambridge, Waikato

THE FOLLOWING SIGHTINGS HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED OR COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED USING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*
34/06 18/03/2006 Skull Creek, Whangarei Harbour

Black Falcon *Falco subniger*
06/08 25/4/2005, Mac's Road Nelson
28/04/2006 & 28/5/2006

Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus sp.*
07/08 3-9/2/2008 Manchester St Christchurch

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*
42/06 30/11/2005 Waingana Stream Mouth (identified as Lesser Knot)

Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus*
15/07 1/03/2007 Mount Anglem, Stewart Island

Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*
17/06 16/10/2000 Man o'war Bay, Waiheke Island

North Island Piopio *Turnagra tanagra*
53/06 August 1980 Upper Oamaru Valley, Kaimanawa Ranges

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
08/08 9/02/2008 Farewell Spit

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
6/06 5/5/1995 - 10/10/2000 near Matakana

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*
31/06 26/04/1997 Kaikoura Peninsula
39/06 9/05/2006 Southshore Spit, Christchurch

South Island Kokako *Callaeas cinerea*
12/07 27/11/2005 & 8/3/2008 Mount Xenicus, Kahurangi NP

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
01/08 3/11/2007 Lake Grassmere

Stout-legged Wren *Pachyplichas yaldwyni*
13/07 1998 & 1999 Karamea Main Road

Vanuatu Petrel *Pterodroma occulta*
44/06 19/03/2006 Kermadec Islands

Variable x South Island Pied Oystercatcher hybrid *Haematopus sp.*
30/06 1/10/2002 Molesworth, Awatere River

White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica*
22/06 6/12/2002 Mangarakau wetlands

Two records have been returned to the submitters asking for more information before a ruling is made.

ERRATA TO PREVIOUS REPORT

In Scofield 2006 it was mentioned that the following record had not been accepted:

A record of unidentified boobies *Sula sp.*
14/06 3/01/1993 Upper Whangarei Harbour

We wish to correct this to:

A record of unidentified boobies or gannets (Sulidae)
14/06 3/01/1993 Upper Whangarei Harbour

Literature Cited

SCOFIELD, R.P. 2006. Rare Birds Committee report for the year to 31st July 2006. *Southern Bird* 27: 8-9.
SCOFIELD, R.P. 2007. Ruling on four records of *Pealeornis maoriana*. *Southern Bird* 30: 14.

OBITUARY

Lorna Simpkin

Lorna Simpkin, a Northland OSNZ member for over 20 years and a former RR, passed away in February 2008 after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Lorna is very sadly missed by her many friends and the over 100 OSNZ members and Chatham Island Taiko Expedition participants that knew her.

Lorna had a great love of the outdoors and was actively involved in all OSNZ activities including beach patrols, wader counts, lake bird counts and Atlas schemes. These activities took her, and her companions, to many distant corners of Northland. Among Lorna's favourite ornithological excursions were overnight trips to Little Barrier and Tiritiri Matangi Islands. These trips were meticulously planned and safely executed by Lorna and were thoroughly enjoyed by all participants. Lorna's grandchildren were also enthusiastic about taking the opportunity to join the visits to Tiritiri to enjoy the many species of native birds.

Lorna was the Northland Regional Representative for several years. In 1997 she organised the Society's Queen's Birthday Weekend Annual General Meeting. This was a major undertaking involving 110 members from 20 regions. The three-day programme included meetings, a Scientific Day and field trips to the East Coast Beaches, Pouto Peninsula and the Far North. Lorna organised this national event so skilfully that her plan has been a model for this annual event for the last ten years.

Participation in Taiko Expeditions in the Chatham Islands was a favourite pursuit for Lorna. Rising at daybreak Lorna would take her camera and wander the many tracks recording sunrises, cloud formations, the many species of birds and the unique indigenous vegetation. Photography was one of the many skills she developed whilst exploring the natural world.

Lorna exploited 24 hours of every day. At night, after donning appropriate wet weather gear, Lorna trudged to the 'lights' to monitor the elusive Taiko and other nocturnal seabirds. She participated in all aspects of the Taiko programme based at Taiko Camp. Who could forget the delicious bread and fruit loaves Lorna baked over the open fire?

Lorna has made a substantial contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the birds of Northland and those of several off-shore islands. Lorna's legacy will be part of all our ornithological activities for many seasons to come. She was a remarkable, compassionate and devoted mother and grandmother and a much loved and loyal friend.

DAVID CROCKETT

bird people

Congratulations to Council member Paul Scofield on the birth of his daughter, Matilda, on 10th November.

The editor of this magazine would like to announce that he and Hyeza got married on 23rd August, and also apologise for his honeymoon slowing down the production of the previous issue of *Southern Bird*.

Gillian Pollock received an Old Blue award from Forest and Bird at their annual conference this past winter. Special mention was made of Gillian's work on coastal issues including involvement in the setting up of a group to help protect the Ashburton River Mouth. Congratulations Gillian!

DEAD BIRDS ON THE BEACH?

The OSNZ **Beach Patrol Scheme**, which started in 1951, involves recording dead birds on New Zealand's beaches. The aim is to provide information and improve our understanding on distribution, abundance, seasonal/annual movements and migration of birds. Although designed initially to record information on sea birds, the scheme has now been extended to capture information on all birds found dead on beaches.

Following several requests, a beach patrol recording form is now available online and accessible through our website <http://osnz.org.nz/studies.htm>. You can download the form either as a Word file and return it by email, or as a pdf file, which you can fax or post.

Alternatively you can continue filling in cards, obtainable from the Beach Patrol Organiser or through your RR. Please refer to our website for detailed instructions on how to fill in the forms/cards. The new beach patrol data sheet also has detailed instructions printed at the bottom of it.

For any queries please contact the Beach Patrol Convenor, Lloyd Esler, at esler@southnet.co.nz (or 15 Mahuri Road, Otatara RD9, Invercargill 9879) or your Regional Representative.



Please fill in cards whenever possible!

Ingrid Hutzler (Executive Officer), OSNZEO@slingshot.co.nz

COMMENSAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR BY A BLACK-FRONTED TERN



On 7th December 2006, I was monitoring shorebirds in the Ashley River, North Canterbury. About 7 km upstream from Rangiora, I noticed a Black-fronted Tern hovering over a shallow braid. As I got closer, I noticed that it was hovering directly over a Pied Oystercatcher that was foraging in shallow water. The tern would remain over the oystercatcher (see photo) for 5-10 seconds at a time, then fly in a small circle and repeat the hovering. It did this non-stop for nearly 10 minutes, during which time the oystercatcher worked its way slowly upstream and the tern followed it, always hovering a few metres directly above it. Occasionally, the tern would swoop down to water level then resume the circle-and-hover routine.

The tern was not dive-bombing the oystercatcher, as it might have if it had a nest nearby, and it paid no attention to me as I searched the area for a nest. The oystercatcher completely ignored the tern throughout. It looked very much as though the tern was foraging, and waiting to swoop on prey dislodged by the oystercatcher as it walked and probed among the gravel and silt. I have not seen Black-fronted Terns 'using' another animal to flush prey like this before, and it reminded me of the way Robins and Fantails will follow a person through the bush, feeding on invertebrates disturbed by their passing.

JOHN DOWDING

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Mark Ayre (Otago), Tony Barnes (Taranaki), Hinewai Bell (Marlborough), Paul Bell (Marlborough), Megan Blok (Otago), Robyn Blyth (Canterbury), Steven Branca (Northland), Krishna Buckman (Bay of Plenty), David Butler (Nelson), Stephen Cave (Hawkes Bay), Stephen Chambers (Canterbury), Christchurch City Council (Canterbury), Guinevere Coleman (Canterbury), Ilse Corkery (Wellington), Claudia Green (Wairarapa), Rob Guest (England), Glenys Hansen (Wairarapa), Betty Harris (Canterbury), Robert Hay (Auckland), Doug Hueston (Canterbury), Jenny Ladley (Canterbury), Chris Lamens (Far North), Maria Lamens (Far North), Karen Lomax (Marlborough), Richard Odgers (Southland), Graham Parker (Canterbury), Hilary Ramage (Waikato), Robin Robilliard (Nelson), Val Ryan (Northland), Ray Sheldrake (Gisborne/Wairoa), Simon Stockdale (Nelson), Richard R Veit (USA), Vince Waanders (Wellington), Niall Washington Jones (Otago), Mersades Wilson (Marlborough), Rebecca Wilson (West Coast), Summer Wilson (Marlborough), Toni Wilson (Marlborough), David Wright (Northland).

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

Frank Antram, David Baker-Gabb, Harry Battam, Asa Berggren, Hugh Clifford, Joanne Cooper, Owen Evans O.A.M., Ian Farrell, Barry Friend, Peter Gaze, Ailsa Harrison, Mark Hauber, James F Hunter, Ian Jamieson, Christopher Jardine, Martyn Kennedy, Rob Lawrence, Wayne Linklater, Ian McAllan, Bruce McKinlay, Ian McLean, Luke Martin, Clare Miller, Edward O. Minot, Colin Miskelly, Gregory Moorcroft, Philip Moors, Les Moran, Alan Morris, Dr P. L. Munns, Ben Paris, Chris Petyt, Bruce Postill, Michael Punter, Allan Rackham, C. John Ralph, Murray V. Smith, Bindi Thomas, Peter Turner, Tony Wilson.



BIRD NEWS

This feature contains unchecked reports. Some sightings require confirmation by the OSNZ Rare Birds Committee

North Island Brown Kiwi have been confirmed as still present in the Kaimai-Mamaku Range in the Opuiaki Forest near Tauranga after a 10-year gap in records. A **Great Shearwater** was reported offshore near the Otago Peninsula on 13/10. If accepted this will constitute the second record for New Zealand. In what may be a first **Little Black Shags** have been confirmed breeding in the South Island with one pair in a colony of other shag species at the Bromley Sewage Oxidation Ponds, Christchurch. The regular **Glossy Ibises** spent the winter at the Wairau Lagoons/Blenheim Sewage Ponds and Travis Wetland, Christchurch again this year.

A **Large Sand Dotterel** was at the regular site of the South Manukau Harbour in late September. During an October survey of the river **Wrybills** were found breeding on the Waiau River in North Canterbury, marking a shift north at least knowledge-wise in their breeding range, which previously ended at the Ashley River. A **Sanderling** was at the regular site of Awarua Bay near Invercargill on 19/10. Two **Black-tailed Godwits** were on the Avon-Heathcote Estuary (Christchurch) wader roost on 29/9. Further south in Awarua Bay a **Hudsonian Godwit** was present

on 19/10. The South Manukau harboured a breeding-plumaged **Wandering Tattler** on 28/9.

An **Arctic Tern** was amongst a flock of its White-fronted cousins at Point Kean at the end of Kaikoura Peninsula on 3-4/10. Four **Red-crowned Parakeets** were noted at the out-of-the-ordinary site of a school in Epsom, inner-suburban Auckland in mid-November. **Rimatara Lorikeets** re-introduced to Atiu Island in the Cook Islands in April 2007 have bred with the first record of a juvenile being made on 21/2. Common Mynas appear to be having a detrimental effect on the species and may need to be controlled.

In what will be a first for New Zealand, if accepted, an **Australian Magpie Lark** was seen near the mouth of Gorge River in deepest and remotest South Westland in April. Another Aussie passerine, a **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** was reported from Kamo, near Whangarei in June. In a first for the species eight **North Island Kokako** were translocated to the South Island, specifically Secretary Island in Doubtful Sound, Fiordland, in October. The birds originated from Mapara in the King Country.

Sources: *What's Up* DoC email newsletter, *Birding-NZ* email group, *BirdLife News Alert*, *Otago OSNZ regional newsletter*.

tui trouble

A logging truck travelling at speed along Taupo Road inadvertently hit a Tui head-on. "Curtains," thought the driver. Arriving at his destination some one hundred kilometres further on, he was distressed to find the bird, embedded in the radiator grill, still alive! Two caring men took half an hour to extract the Tui. They rushed it thirty kilometres to me, by which time it was severely hypothermic and semi-conscious, battered but not apparently broken. With warmth and force feeding it responded after several days and progressed on to full recovery. Prior to release, two months later, this fine, young, fit bird was even singing. The only thing likely to have restricted its successful re-integration into the wild was obesity due to overeating! It just had to be recorded in my notes as 'Big Mack'.

PAM TURNER

SPRING IS IN THE AIR!

Birds are busy nesting – and we need your help finding nests and recording their contents! We are after records of **all species, native or introduced, rare or common!**

The **Nest Record Scheme** has been run by the OSNZ since 1950. Its main aim is to provide information on the breeding biology of birds in New Zealand for future study and research. Nest observations have been used in many books and papers. For example, a study of Welcome Swallows found that birds were breeding earlier than formerly – this being compatible with a response to global climate change (Evans et al., 2003). Our nest records have also been valuable for a study comparing introduced species between New Zealand and Great Britain (Evans et al., 2005). More cards, however, are needed to fill gaps in our knowledge.



Pukeko nest, photo by Don Cooper

How to record data: make your observation, fill in a card/form and return it to the Nest Record Scheme Convenor. A downloadable and printable form is now accessible through our website <http://osnz.org.nz/studies.htm>. Alternatively, you can obtain printed cards from the Nest Record Organiser or through the RR's. Please refer to our website for detailed instructions on how to fill these in. The most important (although mostly neglected) part is that you submit your data, so we can ensure its availability for future scientific study!

For any queries please contact the Nest Record Organiser, Roger Sharp roger.sharp@xtra.co.nz (5 Archer Rayner Place, Greenhithe, North Shore City 0632) or your Regional Representative.

Happy nest hunting and recording!

INGRID HUTZLER

Executive Officer

OSNZEO@slingshot.co.nz

References:

Evans et al. 2003. Changes in the breeding biology of the Welcome Swallow in New Zealand since colonisation. *Emu* 103: 215-220.

Evans et al. 2005. Investigating geographic variation in clutch size using a natural experiment. *Functional Ecology* 19: 616-624.

OSNZ SALES TABLE

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

Atlas of Bird Distribution in NZ 1999-2004 \$98

(within NZ only - overseas purchasers should enquire below for a quote)

Atlas of Bird Distribution in N.Z. (1985) \$14

Chatham Islands Ornithology \$19

Fifty Years of Bird Study in New Zealand (Index to Notornis 1939-1989) \$14

Wader Studies in New Zealand \$24

Birds of Hawke's Bay \$10

A Flying Start \$14

Stickers - Pied Stilt (specify outside glass/bumper or inside glass only) \$3

Notornis \$3

Ticklist \$1

Checklist (1990 edition) \$9

Send orders to:

Paul Cuming, OSNZ Sales, 2/7 Robins Road, Judea, Tauranga

Tel. (07) 571 5125, fax (07) 571 5126,

email birdo@post.co.nz

magpie training cat

David Fisher's note regarding a Blackbird attacking a rat (*Southern Bird* 26 (June 2006), p12) recalled my memory of a young Australian Magpie 'training' a cat a number of years ago. I remembered our ginger tabby 'Ollie' never chased a bird during his long life. Ollie was a kitten when my son brought an injured Magpie home to live with us until it healed and learned to fly. When Ollie ventured outside the Magpie would grab hold of a bunch of fur, quite gently, and just hold on.

It must have persuaded Ollie that birds were dangerous things not to be approached. So if you would like to own a cat, get a kitten and borrow a Magpie at the same time!

ANNE TURNBULL

Fluttering Shearwater translocation success



MIKE BELL

Young Fluttering Shearwater being fed via catheter tube. Photo by Biz Bell.



A returned chick incubating an egg in an artificial burrow on Maud Island. Photo by Mike Bell.

The raucous call could hardly be heard over the howling wind, but the glimpse of a small brown and white seabird crashing to the ground heralded a glimmer of hope for threatened seabirds worldwide.

On a wet and windy spring night on Maud Island in 1996 a Fluttering Shearwater returned to land for the first time since fledging five years earlier. What made this bird remarkable was that it hatched on Long Island over 50 km away, had been transferred to Maud as a chick five years ago, and fed daily until fledging. This bird was the first petrel chick to be transferred, artificially housed and fed until fledging which had returned to its adopted home, hopefully to breed.

In response to the need to develop a method of translocating endangered seabirds, of which New Zealand has its fair share, members of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand trialled a translocation method with Fluttering Shearwaters. In August 1996, with the capture of the first returned transferred chick, years of work had paid off. Translocating a seabird species looked possible. The Fluttering Shearwater is an endemic medium-sized shearwater, commonly seen feeding close to shore. Up to 100,000 pairs breed on islands from the Three Kings south to the Marlborough Sounds. The young disperse to southeast Australian waters after fledging, returning to their natal colony to breed when mature.

Previously, each January from 1991-96 Fluttering Shearwater chicks were collected from a large breeding colony on Long Island and were transferred to Maud. In a manoeuvre run with military precision, birds were removed from burrows, placed in cardboard pet transport boxes, taken by boat up Queen Charlotte Sound to Picton, driven to Havelock, followed by a further one-hour trip by boat down Pelorus Sound to Maud. On arrival birds were fed but

left in the boxes overnight in the woolshed. The following morning they were carried out to the colony, where each was banded and fed before being placed in an artificial burrow.

For the following month, teams of OSNZ members remained on Maud to feed the chicks twice daily on a blended mixture of salmon smolt, muttonbird and vegetable oil until fledging. The mixture was heated to body temperature and fed to birds using catheter tubes attached to a large syringe. Although this sounds stressful for the birds, within a few days the birds tended to swallow the tube themselves at feeding time. Each day the chick's weight and amount of down was recorded to track their progress. Each night a solar-powered audio system played recorded Fluttering Shearwater calls to replicate the usually noisy activity of a typical petrel colony.

Throughout the transfer, 334 Fluttering Shearwater chicks were transferred to Maud, of which 273 (81.7%) fledged successfully. The chicks stayed on Maud for an average of 14 nights (range 0-36 nights) before fledging with an average weight of 364 g (range 205-495 g). Four shearwaters transferred to Maud were recovered dead in South Australia and Victoria after fledging, showing that the transferred chicks followed the normal dispersal of fledglings.

In order for the transfer to be a complete success, this first returning chick needed to find a partner and breed. So since 1996, OSNZ members have made regular trips to the island to check. Later in the season three more returning birds were found and one immigrant. These birds formed two breeding pairs which were found incubating single eggs, one of which went on to fledge a chick in February 1997. The cycle was complete: transferred chicks had returned and bred successfully.

Up to 2006 a total of 32 transferred chicks had returned to Maud, of which 30 have attempted to breed. In addition eight unbanded birds have also been caught at the colony, these immigrants breeding with returned transferred chicks. The breeding population steadily increased from two pairs in 1996/97 to 16 pairs in 2004/05 with over 60 chicks being successfully fledged, although as yet no banded parent-reared chicks have returned.

Analysis of fledging data has shown that the chicks that returned had a significantly higher mean fledging weight than those that did not return and also spent significantly longer on Maud. Basically, fatter chicks with a longer time to orientate to Maud had higher chances of survival to return to breed on Maud.

The successful establishment of a colony of Fluttering Shearwaters has shown for the first time that the transfer of chicks is a viable

method of establishing new petrel colonies. It has demonstrated that petrel chicks moved before they become orientated to their natal site, artificially housed, and fed until fledging, will return to breed at the transfer site. In addition, this transfer has shown that the recruitment rate can be affected by fledgling weight and duration of time spent at the new colony prior to fledging. In order to increase recruitment rate, and therefore success of petrel transfers, managers should aim for heavier-than-average fledging weights, even if this requires additional feeding, and should take chicks of a young enough age to enable them to spend sufficient time at the new colony site to become properly oriented.

The methods developed by OSNZ in this trial colony establishment have already been used to some degree in transfers of other species, including Common Diving Petrel, Fairy Prion and the endangered Chatham Petrel. Furthermore, these methods could be developed to provide supplementary food to endangered seabird chicks to improve recruitment rates aiding population increase. This work has created new potential in the conservation of threatened seabirds, and in restoring ravaged ecosystems.

I wish to thank all the OSNZ members who participated in this pioneering project. Without their contribution this success would not have been achievable. This article is a summary of a detailed paper on this topic in the March 2005 issue of Notornis (vol 52, pp 11-15). Please refer to this for more details.



From left: South Bay from Peninsula Track. by Bruce McKinlay

Delegates enjoying a gated interpretation panel on Kaikoura Peninsula by Bruce McKinlay

Delegates on the coast south of Kaikoura, by Nick Allen

Quote of the weekend:
"Bird people, completely crazy but the salt of the earth" with thanks to Mark Nee for keeping it all in perspective.

Stick nose reactions of Kingfishers to Aerial Raptors

COLIN OGLE and ORMOND TORR

On the 4th May 2008 Ormond Torr was photographing a Sacred Kingfisher from a hide at the Whanganui River estuary when the bird suddenly adopted a very upright posture with bill pointed skyward. As he had a restricted view from the hide he assumed that the kingfisher's attention had been taken by a passing Australasian Harrier, a species that frequently patrols the area. For some seconds the bird maintained this posture but gradually rotated its head and body through perhaps 40 degrees.

The Kingfisher's plumage appeared quite tightly compressed and the impression gained was that the bird was presenting the smallest possible visual 'target' to the object of its attention. This behaviour is not described for Sacred Kingfisher in any of the popular or formal reference books to New Zealand birds that we have collectively.

Under 'agonistic posture on perch', Higgins (*Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 4: Parrots to Dollarbird* Oxford University Press 1999) cited an Australian unpublished Ph.D thesis on Sacred Kingfishers by Curl (Monash University, Melbourne 1998), as follows: 'plumage sleeked, body upright, head craned toward threat, and folded wings brought forward, exposing rump, and held stiffly and vertically with wingtips pointing down and carpal joints near neck of bird'. Ormond's photo shows many of these features, except that the rump is not exposed and nor are the folded wings 'brought forward'.

When Ormond circulated his Kingfisher photograph to Wanganui members of OSNZ, Colin Ogle was struck by the similarity of the behaviour he had observed to that of a group of three other kingfishers that he had seen in Australia. His photos of three Laughing Kookaburras were taken at a café in rain forest at Mt Glorious, D'Aguiar Range, Brisbane, Queensland on 10th April 2006. One, taken at 15.51 shows three Kookaburras waiting quietly for a handout from café customers,

the other was taken at 15.53 as all three suddenly turned and faced out towards the forest with their heads inclined upwards. They did not make any vocalisations. Unfortunately, only two of them were caught in the photograph of this pose. When Colin and his wife, Robyn, looked up, there was a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring overhead, so high that it was just recognisable by its silhouette. We watched the kookaburras and eagle until the latter passed out of view, at which point the kookaburras turned their attention back to the café's customers. Although it is difficult to recall how long the kookaburras' attention was held by the eagle, it was probably between 10 and 20 seconds.

Such behaviour of Laughing Kookaburras to aerial predators was reported by Higgins (*Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 4: Parrots to Dollarbird* Oxford University Press 1999), citing Frauca (*Avicult. Mag.* 75 (1969) pp.176-8) who called it a 'stick pose' in which the bird stays still, with head and bill pointing straight up to the sky. This was repeated for Laughing Kookaburra by Heather (Kookaburra, p. 262: in *Reader's Digest complete book of New Zealand birds*. Reader's Digest, Reed Methuen, Sydney 1985), seemingly from Australian information. The stick pose has been reported also for Blue-winged Kookaburra in Australia (Higgins 1999).

On the basis of three different kingfisher species exhibiting a stick pose as a response to aerial predators it is tempting to suggest it might be a general characteristic of kingfishers. However, it is not reported for other Australian kingfishers by Higgins (*Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds. Volume 4: Parrots to Dollarbird* Oxford University Press 1999).

Our thanks to Peter Frost of Wanganui for his comments on a draft of this note and to Dr Ralph Powlesland for his encouragement.



Sacred Kingfisher exhibiting stick pose, by Ormond Torr



Qld - Mt Glorious. Laughing Kookaburras exhibiting stick pose and relaxed, by Colin Ogle

AGM 2008 PEOPLE AND BIRDS AT KAIKOURA

THE 2008 AGM HAS BEEN AND GONE AND I OFFER THE FOLLOWING SNAPSHOT OF THE WEEKEND... BRUCE MCKINLAY

Saturday was a full day of presentations from within and beyond the Society on a wide range of bird topics. These ranged from the highly technical multi-variant environmental analysis of data by Mike Thompson and colleagues from NIWA through to the simpler but just as effective survey of shags in the Marlborough Sounds conducted by Mike Bell. Paul Scofield rounded off the day by formally launching the long awaited eBird project. All in all a very satisfying day, followed by drinks, food and discussion long into the evening.

Sunday was field trip day, and by early in the morning conference delegates were scattered onto a variety of boats heading to the horizon looking for pelagic species of all sorts or onto a bus heading for Robin sightings at Kowhai Bush and open country birds around the peninsula. I joined this latter field trip and had a very relaxing day compiling a number of bird lists

for contribution to eBird. The highlight of the day for me was a Cirl Bunting on the end of Kaikoura Peninsula.

For those who were determined to see seabirds there were a number of options on the table. In addition to the half-day trips on the conference registration there was a full-day option which was being muttered about in selected circles. Those fortunate to be offshore for the full day saw a White-headed Petrel, Antarctic Fulmar and Grey-faced Petrels, in addition to a long list of the more regularly seen albatrosses and shearwaters. The numbers and diversity seen led to long conversations that night over a beer and around the conference dinner table.

The formal conference dinner was followed by the presentation of the Feilding Memorial Trophy led by David Lawrie who covered most people and most activities fairly fully. Congratulations to Gary Melville of Oceanwings

who has the honour for one year of explaining what the trophy is to visitors to the Oceanwings office. The AGM was next, where the Society's year was pushed into second place by a loud rugby final. The evening concluded with a stunning audiovisual display of what Kaikoura has to offer, courtesy of Dennis Buurman, and an interim presentation by Richard Holdaway on recent research he is conducting into mechanisms of bird migration.

By Monday the clouds were lowering and further trips to see more exotic pelagics were placed on hold. Discussions at the motel booking desk were about where to head next and the best chances to see the Black Kite at Renwick, or the Black-fronted Dotterels in North Canterbury. By the middle of the morning the conference was dispersed to the four winds doing what ornithologists should be doing.



Far North

We have had quite an active spring with Arctic waders returning early, reports of Shining Cuckoos from August and a couple of successful field meetings. Thanks are due to Matt Calder from DoC in Dargaville for helping us get well into Waima Forest for a nights camping in Kokako territory. In spite of a less than ideal weather forecast it only rained overnight and several Kokako were singing at dawn, also giving brief views for some of us. Tony Beauchamp from DoC in Whangarei, having given us a talk earlier in the year on Weka, went on to tell us about frogs which prompted the suggestion of a visit to a frog site. This materialised on 1st November when he took 12 of us to a forest near Waipu to show us his speciality, Hochstetter's Frogs. One frog had been captured earlier and was shown to us with a briefing on its life history. Finding more was expected to be difficult but Tony found two more in five minutes. The trip was combined with a visit to the estuary and dunes at Waipu where we enjoyed a good range of species including three Fairy Terns, some very tame New Zealand Dotterels, eight Turnstones and about 100 Bar-tailed Godwits.

There were reports that a White-winged Black Tern was still present at Awanui Wharf, but a recent visit was unsuccessful, as was an attempt to see a Nankeen Kestrel reported from near Pukenui, further north.

Our two venues for indoor meetings continue but the timing of these remains spasmodic because holding meetings at members' homes depends on availability of the hosts. We met at Bill Campbell's house in Coopers Beach in October and Kevin Matthews gave a presentation on Barn Owls with reference to the birds which are still present in Kaitaia. The injured bird, which is a female, has had to have its damaged wing removed. It is on view at Wingspan bird of prey centre in Rotorua. This part of the meeting was followed by a short additional show by me on some highlights from the Buenos Aires area of Argentina.

Our next wader count is to take place over the weekend 15th and 16th November, covering Parengarenga Harbour on Saturday and Rangaunu Harbour on Sunday. Now that Far North membership is getting near to 50, we hope that events like this will attract new and less experienced members who will soon understand why long distance migrants are exciting. Members visiting Rangaunu Harbour within the last week have found between 3-4,000 Bar-tailed Godwits with a smaller proportion of Lesser Knots, over 100 Turnstones and five Eastern Little Terns.

Liaison with local conservation groups continues and we have offered our help with bird counts in the Bay of Islands for the Guardians of the Bay and in Puketi Forest for the Puketi Forest Trust; again we hope our increased membership will assist.

DETLEF DAVIES

Northland

The formation of the New Zealand Fairy Tern Trust in June was the subject of a presentation by Audrey Williams. The trust has been established to assist with the protection and management of the threatened New Zealand Fairy Tern and its habitat, especially breeding habitat at Waipu, Mangawhai, Pakiri and Papakanui. Started by the community at Mangawhai, which is their main breeding site, the Trust is gaining members quickly as word goes around.

With only nine or ten breeding pairs, five of which nest regularly at Mangawhai, and possibly only 40 birds alive, more needs to be done to help them survive. A number of Northland OSNZ members have joined the Trust and others come from many parts of NZ. The Trust welcomes any new members. Contact P.O. Box 1912, Whangarei 0140. Audrey is keeping the region regularly updated with progress and activities of the Trust. A dedicated group of New Zealand Fairy Tern volunteers is again heading out to the beaches this summer to help keep an eye on the Fairy Terns.

Taneal Cope, one of Northland's new members, gave a very interesting presentation in June on her Masters thesis and field work on Bellbirds on Tiritiri Matangi Island. Taneal studied a range of issues with the Bellbirds there, including territoriality, breeding systems and breeding success.

In July the two rangers from Matakoho/Limestone Island in Whangarei Harbour, Peter and Cathy Mitchell gave the members an update on the latest happenings with the fauna present on the island

and the restoration programme. The winter planting programme is winding up for this year. Regular kiwi monitoring is continuing, particularly of a pair that may be getting ready to nest. Predator control is continuing, which will benefit ground-nesting shorebirds (New Zealand Dotterels and Variable Oystercatchers) and other birds nesting in the area such as Fernbirds and Banded Rails. The rangers are also monitoring the Grey-faced Petrel burrows from the last 3-4 years of translocations from Hen/Taranga Island, but the activity around the burrows appears to be from kiwi. The rangers are also spotlighting at night and have taped petrel calls playing. See the Friends of Matakoho/Limestone Island website www.limestoneisland.org.nz.

The last two meetings have been slide shows of overseas birding trips. Graeme Smith, a school-teacher from Mangawhai, kindly came up and showed us his great photos of birds seen in North America. The photos, taken by his wife, were beautifully produced and members enjoyed listening to his experiences. Detlef Davies gave a wonderful slide show of his recent trip to northern Peru.

The usual beach patrols on the East and West coast beaches have continued over winter, and our patrollers are looking forward to some dryer weather. Recent beach patrols on the east coast have found a number of wrecked Australasian Gannets and Blue Penguins. Some looked very emaciated.

David Crockett and Derek Betteridge were busy earlier in the year translocating birds in the Chatham Islands. 47 Chatham Petrels from South East Island were moved to the Sweetwater enclosure on the main island and 13 Chatham Island Taiko were also moved to burrows there. These were the first translocations of a three-year programme.

AUDREY WILLIAMS and KATRINA HANSEN

Auckland

Speakers at recent meetings have had a terrestrial focus, starting with a look at the plight of the Kea by Tamsin Orr-Walker (Kea Conservation Trust) in September. Tamsin outlined the Trust's concerns and ongoing research. Results to date suggest that apparent population levels may be very deceptive; of particular concern is the high level of lead poisoning in Kea in some areas resulting from their notorious inquisitive behaviour. Despite being an iconic alpine species, it appears that the Kea still suffers from bad press and misconceptions.

Another icon, the Kiwi, was the focus of our meeting in October. The meeting was based on a DVD produced by the Bank of New Zealand Kiwi Recovery Trust. This DVD consists of a number of short programmes covering a range of kiwi management and conservation actions, and stimulated some interesting discussions amongst members. We would certainly recommend the DVD as a resource for any region.

In November, Mark Seabrook-Davidson (Massey University) presented the results of his research into the genetics of the Brown Quail on Tiritiri Matangi Island, assumed to be the Australian Brown Quail (*Coturnix ypsilophorous*). There had been speculation that the Tiritiri Matangi quail may in fact be a remnant population of the extinct New Zealand Quail or Koreke (*C. novaezelandiae*), based largely on the fact that there were no records of quail having been released on the island. Mark outlined the process by which he obtained genetic material from a number of quail species including a tiny fragment of New Zealand Quail from a museum specimen. He was able to isolate DNA and compare how closely related the various species of quail were. His results show that the species found on Tiritiri Matangi is indeed the Australian Brown Quail and that the New Zealand Quail was much more closely related to the Stubble Quail (*C. pectoralis*) of Australia.

MEL GALBRAITH

South Auckland

This report will be my last as Regional Representative of this region because from 1st January 2009 Simon Fordham will be assuming the RR role. By my calculations I have been Regional Representative since 1996 and I am only the fourth Representative from this region. Three of these Representatives have gone on to become presidents of the Society, which is an achievement that not many regions in New Zealand can boast.

I have enjoyed my time as RR, as we have a good lively bunch in South Auckland and with virtually all of the members who attend meetings sharing the job, the role of the Regional Representative has been not a large task.

However, that is enough nostalgia and I shall allow Simon to introduce himself in the next issue of this newsletter. For those of you who are supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Island, you will know that Simon has had a long involvement in that organisation, serving several terms as Chairman.



In the meantime evening meetings have continued almost as set out in our programme. In August one of our members, Gillian Vaughan, gave us an overview of her trip to China and South Korea as part of the Miranda Naturalists' Trust team undertaking shorebird counts and training the local reserve staff in bird catching and handling techniques. There was a slight glitch in their bird handling training as they only caught one bird during the two-week period; however, reading between the lines, it seems that they had a good time anyway, although the saying of 'what happens on tour stays on tour', was mentioned several times.

The speaker at the September meeting was also a local member, Dick Veitch, a retired wildlife service officer and wood-turner extraordinaire. Dick gave us an update from his recent trip to Raoul Island, comparing the current situation with what he knew during his previous visits when he was undertaking the mammalian eradication programmes. There are clearly major beneficial changes happening to the bird populations and we look forward to further updates.

The October speaker, Mark Seabrook-Davidson, created some controversy with his research into the origins of the Brown Quail on Tiritiri Matangi Island. Literature searches had shown that there is no record of Brown Quail being liberated onto the island and it was postulated that the birds existing there may have been remnants of a New Zealand Quail population. Early findings of the research had indicated that there was a close resemblance to the DNA from the extinct New Zealand Quail, but upon further analysis it was discovered that the relationship with the Australian Brown Quail was much closer and that is clearly the origin of this population.

The final meeting of the year was held on Tuesday 11th November, when the speaker was delayed in Wellington and was unable to attend. We watched a DVD that the RR had available in case of such an event.

This year we are having our Christmas barbecue on the Coromandel Peninsula on 6th December in the hope that we can meet some of our far-flung members who do not often get the opportunity to attend meetings or activities.

Field work has mainly been concentrated on the returning migrants with great excitement as we have welcomed back familiar banded and flagged friends from previous years. The NZ Wader Study Group, during a recent catch at Miranda, caught three of the satellite transmitter birds which had completed a round trip. While the birds may not have been delighted to have been captured for a second time they were probably grateful to have the aerial snipped and thus shortened, causing less drag.

The number of juvenile Godwits has steadily increased in both the Firth of Thames and the Manukau Harbour, but there have as yet been no rare migrants on either estuary. However there is one stint-sized bird in the Manukau Harbour that is causing some interest at the present and we are hoping that this can be further examined over the coming months.

The November round of wader census has also begun. While the weather forecast for the Firth of Thames census on the 2nd November was for typical rain and wind, for which we all came prepared, it turned out to be a nice warm day. Well done Tony, that makes up for one of the previous wet ones, but there are still a few to make up!

DAVID LAWRIE

Waikato

Bruce Postill from DoC Waikato gave the region a very insightful talk in July on his second trip to China on wader counting duties. As most will already know, the Asian region is a very important stop over point for migratory birds such as the Bar-tailed Godwit. These birds currently face an enormous threat as China and its surrounding countries start more intensive development to support increasing population and industrial growth. Unfortunately, migratory birds are not fairing too well as a result, but with increased awareness of the problems hopefully this trend will not become irreversible.

In August Amanda Hague, also of DoC Waikato, gave a very interesting talk on her work with native frogs. Hearing about what makes our species of frogs so unique and different from other members of the frog family was very informative and a definite change from the usual bird related topics! To continue the trend of having Waikato DoC speakers, Matt Brady gave a talk on the Department's current work at the Whangamarino Wetland. Whangamarino is one of the jewels in Waikato's crown and is home to many marvellous birds, including New Zealand's largest resident population of the Australasian Bittern. In October, the Minister of Conservation, Hon. Steve Chadwick,

took time out of her busy schedule to talk the group about Labour's achievements over the last couple of years and share her vision for the future.

Bird sightings have also been quite varied. There were 12 Royal Spoonbills in the Kinohaku arm of Kawhia Harbour on 25th September (seen by Stella and John Rowe, and Hugh Clifford) and 15 pairs at Okete Bay on 8th October, where apparently only one pair is normally seen (via Dai Morgan).

A cock Pheasant was observed strolling along Mayfair Avenue, Chartwell on 2nd October by Hugh Clifford. It was last seen walking along the driveway of a house on a back section where it would have been surrounded on all sides by fences and other houses, so its exit route would have been either to walk back onto the street, or take to the air. Pheasants are present in the big gully of which Donny Park is part, so this bird probably came from there. In October male pheasants are quite often seen from the road in the countryside, so maybe they go on walkabout looking for more hens.

John Fitzgerald had an unusual Morepork sighting on 21st September, with a bird calling at about 10am at Russleigh Drive, Dinsdale from a rather open conifer tree. It was then observed with binoculars and seen to be preening before it flew. There was no evidence of it being mobbed by birds of other species, which is rather surprising considering that it was calling during daylight and was not well concealed. Hugh Clifford was less pleased at the Morepork calling outside his house in Chartwell at 4am on 3rd October.

Annette Taylor saw a Spotted Dove on power lines near the corner of Horsham Downs and Borman Roads in the north-eastern outskirts of Hamilton on 13th August. Neil Fitzgerald saw one in a gully near there on 24th November 2006. Continuing Columbiformes news two New Zealand Pigeons were in a deciduous exotic tree in Claude St, Fairfield on 16th July, and one was seen flying near Claudelands Bush on 28th October by Annette Taylor.

A flock of at least eight Kaka was seen regularly by Geoff and Raewynn Foreman in Morrinsville throughout the winter, with the last sighting of them being on 4th September. Barry Friend found a freshly dead Caspian Tern at Hamilton Lake on 10th August. Tui reports, thanks to Bev Woolley, comprise one on 16th August and two on 17th August, chasing each other through a *Plagianthus* (lowland ribbonwood) tree, and feeding briefly in camellia and bottlebrush in Silverdale. Residents further down the street are seeing them regularly in a tall gum, a Japanese Cherry, and other trees along the gully.

Geoff and Raewynn Foreman reported a North Island Robin on the North-South Track in the Kaimai Range, midway between the Wairere Falls and Te Tuhi Track on 22nd April. They also reported the first song of Song Thrush was on the morning of the 5th May at their home in Morrinsville.

DAI MORGAN and DAVID RIDDELL

Taranaki

Ron Lambert was the guest speaker at our September meeting, his topic being a recent trip to Nepal and Mt Everest national park, visiting places such as Khari Khola, Lukla and Namche Bazaar at 11,300 ft asl, areas where Sir Edmund Hillary spent a lot of time. Ron took some wonderful photos and managed to see Nepal's national bird, the Monal Pheasant, as well as other interesting flora and fauna.

Kris Grabow gave us an update on the Taranaki Kiwi Trust efforts so far this year; six eggs have been uplifted from nests at Aotuhia. Also reported were a pair of Blue Duck seen on the Whangamomona river near the bridge to somewhere at Aotuhia. In late August a pair of Kaka was seen at Okato and 14 New Zealand Pigeons at Lake Mangamahoe, a Bittern was observed flying across a road at Mohakatino in North Taranaki and there were six Royal Spoonbills at Mokau. Carol Keight had ten Tui in a Tui Tree (*Prunus campanulata*) at her home and in early September was visited by a Kaka which chewed up some dead Puriri branches while the local Mynas formed a welcoming committee. Also at the meeting Shay Dean from Taranaki Regional Council told us of the discussions she is having with DoC and others regarding predator control at various localities under the key Native Ecosystems Programme. It is heartening to see these groups working together.



The field trip in September along the Rerekapa track had only a small turnout due to people having prior engagements. Birds were not conspicuous but 14 species including Tui and Bellbird were seen (but no Whitehead).

Barry Hartley won the 'First Shining Cuckoo' award with a bird heard at Lake Rotokare on September 15th. With a slight improvement in the weather and September being spring members and birds became more active. The Messengers counted seven Tui in the Kowhais next to their house. David Medway counted 25 at Lake Mangamahoe and a New Zealand Pigeon still wearing the jesses from Ralph Powlesland's study. The Little Shag colony at Pukekura Park is now nesting in four trees instead of one, and the birds have youngsters. A slightly oiled White-headed Petrel that was found well inland but alive was cleaned up and released.

Lake Rotomanu was the first destination for October's outing. This lake is on the eastern side of New Plymouth and close to the sea. 32 species were seen including 25 Scaup in a small pond close by. From there we travelled inland to Umutakai, a small remnant swamp forest and small lake. 25 bird species and three species of moth were recorded on a fine spring afternoon.

Fernbirds at Lake Rotokare were the topic of discussion at November's meeting. Kara Pranker and Barry Hartley have completed two surveys of the lake by kayak, one before and one after a poison drop. 22 calls were recorded on the first visit and 26 on the second, but more surveys are needed and more kayakers to help out. The discussion highlighted just how little we know about these cryptic little birds. Hopefully we will learn a lot more as time goes on.

Beach patrols have turned up little of note over the last three months; a few Fluttering Shearwaters, Cape Pigeons and two Shy Albatrosses. A smattering of migratory waders has turned up around the coast; the usual six Pacific Golden Plovers around the South Taranaki coast, five of the same species at Waiongana and the occasional Bar-tailed Godwit and Turnstone. Meanwhile at Waiongana the windy weather was good for albatross watching with dozens of probable Shy Mollymawks coming into the bay, two to within 100 metres of the shore. We have also had a spate of Royal Spoonbills passing through. A flock of 12 at Waiongana, then later the same day seven seen at Oakura, west of New Plymouth, and the biggest flock of 20 seen from the New Plymouth coastal walkway about a week later. Shining Cuckoos were being heard all around and the more prestigious 'First Long-tail Cuckoo' award was won by Julie and myself with a bird seen and photographed at Dawsons Falls in Egmont National Park.

A fine sunny November Sunday saw four of us walking an old logging track beside the Mohakatino River about 85 km north of New Plymouth. Birds were scarce, but as it was a new area for most of us there were plenty of other things to study and a pleasant day was had by all.

PETER FRYER

Wanganui

Spring has arrived, along with the usual crop of westerly gales. Most of the species that breed on the South Island but which winter on the Whanganui River Estuary (Royal Spoonbill, Pied Stilt, Red-billed Gull, and Caspian Tern) have left, to be replaced by a few Bar-tailed Godwits and Lesser Knots from the Northern Hemisphere. Other South Island breeding species, most notably Wrybills, Black-billed Gulls, and Pied Oystercatchers, drifted through in late winter, but only in small numbers.

Peter Frost, who has been surveying the birds on the estuary for the past two-and-a-half years, produced reports for both Horizons Regional Council and the Whanganui Conservancy, Department of Conservation. These focused on the seasonal occurrence and fluctuations in numbers of the different species, and how these might be affected by various developments being proposed for the estuary, including the construction of flood defence walls (Horizons) and possible dredging of the lower estuary, which concerns the Department of Conservation.

Ormond Torr and Paul Gibson have been active photographing many of the species on the estuary and elsewhere: Spotted Shags, some in full breeding plumage; Australian Little Grebe (photographed by Paul at Pukepuka Lagoon, Horowhenua); Nankeen Night Heron;

Variable Oystercatcher; Wrybill; squabbling Mynas, and many others. The Spotted Shags stopped over at the mouth of the estuary for some weeks in August, no doubt on their way to their breeding grounds elsewhere. Paul, Ormond and others regularly circulate a selection of their photographs through our mailing list, which is much appreciated.

Paul Gibson, Colin Ogle, and Peter Frost continue to monitor the Nankeen Night Heron roost near Wanganui on the Whanganui River. Up to the beginning of October, between nine and 13 birds were recorded leaving the roost after sunset, but numbers have dropped somewhat since then, perhaps indicating that the birds are beginning to breed. We continue to monitor the site and surrounding areas. It would be appreciated if people wanting to see the birds contact either Paul Gibson or Peter Frost first, so that we can advise them of the protocols involved. The birds are quite nervous and it would be a pity if they abandoned this roost because of disturbance.

A fieldtrip in late August to Koitiata Lagoon at the mouth of the Turakina River, produced one hybrid Black x Pied Stilt, Banded and Black-fronted Dotterels (18 and 6 minimum respectively), Wrybills (6), Bar-tailed Godwits (19), probably overwintering birds, judging from their plumage and general condition, four Black-billed Gulls, and varying numbers of other more common species. The character of the lagoon has changed dramatically since our visit in mid-June. Storms and high river levels in July resulted in the destruction of the dunes separating the lagoon from the sea. As a result, the lagoon now drains freely out into the river at its mouth, and a lot of woody debris has been washed into the lagoon. What impact all this will have on the birds is not yet known. We then continued on to the Nankeen Night Heron roost site on the Whanganui River, about 20 km upstream from Wanganui, where we were joined by a number of other members. Nine night-herons were counted leaving the roost 25-30 minutes after sunset, by which time it was almost dark. One bird, disturbed earlier by our arrival, was photographed.

In mid-September, four members joined a Manawatu Forest & Bird field trip to Moana Roa, near the mouth of the Rangitikei River. The main aim of the trip was to see Banded Dotterels. At least 36 birds were counted, mostly in pairs and apparently still setting up territories in the pebble slacks between the dunes. One nest was found (without looking for it), but there was no evidence that others were nesting. One Wrybill and nine Royal Spoonbills were seen in the estuary, but little else out of the ordinary.

At least one Kaka seems to have taken up residence in Wanganui, having been seen a couple of times at Virginia Lake and elsewhere around the city. One bird, possibly the same individual, was also seen at Maxwell. Shining Cuckoos arrived in the last week of September, and a number of members contributed information to the national survey of arrival times and places being carried out this year on eBird.

At the August evening meeting, Robyn and Colin Ogle talked about urban birds and their habitats on the Gold Coast, Queensland, where many native Australian species have adjusted to the urban environments there, helped by extensive landscaping, tree planting, and the construction of ponds and wetlands, especially in newly developed suburbs.

In September, Terry O'Connor, Education Officer at Bushy Park, described the efforts being made to restore the dawn chorus of native species in the 80 ha of lowland rainforest at Bushy Park, outside Wanganui. A predator-proof fence has been erected around the reserve and non-native predators and other invasive alien species have been or are being eradicated. North Island Robin and Saddleback have been re-introduced and are breeding successfully. The reserve is also being used as a crèche for young hand-reared kiwi, so that they can learn to live independently and grow big enough to defend themselves in the wild. In October, Paul Gibson gave a richly illustrated talk of his recent visit to Stewart Island and the neighbouring mainland.

As part of our contribution to the Whanganui Summer Programme, we are organising another excursion to the Manawatu estuary on 10th January 2009. If you are going to be in the region then and would like to join us, please contact me. Bookings are being taken through the Whanganui Riverboat Centre.

PETER FROST

Hawke's Bay

Over the past couple of months the focus of the region has been on a new project at Blowhard Bush, a 63 ha reserve in the Kaweka Ranges owned by the Hastings Branch of Forest and Bird. They approached



our group for assistance in documenting the birds present and monitoring numbers on a long term basis. Their group has worked hard to maintain a good system of tracks and has set up extensive predator control. A group of OSNZ members joined with them on 28th September to visit the reserve and decide on, and mark, locations for five minute bird counts. Ten stations were set up, and on 2nd November six of us undertook the first count. Highlights were hearing both Shining and Long-tailed Cuckoos.

Eight Cattle Egrets were seen at Awatoto on 11th October and the regular Little Egret was reported around the Muddy creek area throughout August until mid-September. At the Ahuriri Estuary the first of the returning Bar-tailed Godwits were noted on 4th October along with 14 Pacific Golden Plovers.

MARGARET TWYDLE

Wairarapa

Masterton were the winners in the fifth annual Big Bird Cup Quiz held in August. The Quizmaster was once again Chris Day, Education Officer at Pukaha/Mt. Bruce Wildlife Centre. Also in August, the region offered OSNZ prizes for bird-related topics in the Wairarapa section of the Primary and Secondary Schools' Science and Technology Fair. Prizes were to be awarded on merit, rather than of right. There was one such winner, Claudia Green, a Year 6 pupil from Carterton School. Her presentation entitled 'Do You Want Birds in Your Garden?' was methodical, neat and eye-catching. Its statement of purpose, hypothesis, materials, procedure, results, conclusion and discussion were all well-described. The backdrop to the display was a painting of the pupil's own back garden and surrounding trees. Photographs of the birds and a sample tray of foods offered were visual and tactile components of the display.

In September Glen Holland hosted a South African meal and presentation illustrating the birding safari he had led to Namibia. Glen is well-known to Wairarapa members, since he arrived from South Africa some years ago. The month's field trip was to Denise and Dougal Mackenzie's Western Lake property and the adjacent Pouanui wetlands. The Mackenzies have done considerable tree planting on their hillside property with a resultant increase in birdlife.

At the October meeting one of our members, Jenny Doring, gave her impressions of a recent South African birding Safari with Glen Holland. A further birding-safari evening of recollections at another participant's home completed the armchair-travel experience for members.

Field trips in October and November involved reconnaissance of the Ruamahanga River as part of a survey of possible Black-Billed Gull nesting sites. This survey was in response to a DoC request for our assistance. At the November indoor meeting, Tenick Dennison presented 'The Folklore of Birds'. This was a well-researched and out of the ordinary topic, presented by one of our most knowledgeable and experienced members. The year ended with the usual pot-luck dinner at the home of the RR.

BARBARA LOVATT



Wairarapa Science Fair winner, Claudia Green

Wellington

In September Peter Moore gave us an update on DoC's work with Southern Royal Albatrosses on Campbell Island. Campbell is home to several species of albatross besides Southern Royals – Antipodean and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, and Black-browed, Campbell and Grey-headed Mollmawks.

The initial focus of this work was to find and examine birds banded by weather station staff in the 1960s. As previously reported in Southern Bird many of these birds have suffered injuries due to poorly-fitted bands. Injured birds were to be treated, and bands removed from birds nesting outside study areas. The work also tested new bands, and the use of transponders as alternative ways to track the birds.

The workers walked the whole island looking for nests. Previous surveys from vantage points missed many of the nests, so some earlier estimates of numbers may have been low. Each nest on the island was visited twice, with a week between visits, to try and see both adults. From about 2,000 nests in 1960 numbers have risen to about 8,000 nests today. The population seems to have levelled off in recent years.

Gaps in bands as small as 3 mm can cause injuries to birds, e.g. wartiness. Larger gaps lead to galls and ultimately in the worst cases to loss of use of the leg. In one extreme case, a skeleton showed bone

growth around a band. The birds can recover after removal of the faulty bands. Of the birds recovered from the 1960s banding programme around 2% have major injuries, 10% have bands with 3-11 mm gaps, and 9% have minor injuries. The oldest recovery so far is of a 42-year-old bird. 1% of birds banded in the 1960s have been seen again in the last four years; for subsequent decades the percentages of birds recovered are 1970s: 7%; 1980s: 27%; and 1990s: 34%.

Some chicks are being recovered as breeding adults away from their natal sites, depending on the site. 64% of birds from the Col area have returned to nest in the same area, 24% nearby and 12% have dispersed over the island. For the Mowbray site, a peninsula, 90% have returned, 7% are nesting nearby and only 3% have dispersed.

New bands being trialled are 1.25 mm thick as opposed to the old 1 mm thick bands. These old bands perform well on the Wandering Albatross but the heavier Royals tend to crash land and this could be why the bands have caused problems on Royals and not other species. Transponders have been put into over 350 birds. Males are easier to band than females, so it is the females who get the transponders. These can only be read by closely passing a gadget over the birds.

In reply to a question from the audience Peter said that post rat-eradication the huts on Campbell now have Piptits, not rats, as guests.

Clio Reid from the Victoria University of Wellington stepped in as a replacement speaker in October and gave a fascinating, entertaining and ultimately disturbing talk about Kea behaviour and exposure to lead. Clio's work investigates whether there is any relationship between behaviour, social standing and situation, and lead exposure in wild Kea. Kea are renowned as being 'neophilic', i.e. attracted to new things. They make good study subjects as they are intelligent and accessible for study. Currently the population status of Kea is unknown – population estimates range between 1,000 and 25,000 birds.

Clio studied birds from two sites. The Mount Cook site is urbanised, so the birds are exposed to a range of buildings, foods etc, whereas the Mount Aspiring site is remote from humans.

Lead has a range of uses, from the foil wrapping on wine bottles, wheel balance weights, and in roofing as flashing and lead-headed nails. Lead is known to taste sweet and roof flashing is soft, chewy and visible making it attractive to Kea. Young Kea investigate their surroundings by chewing anything they encounter, much as young children do, and this includes lead items. Symptoms of lead poisoning include strange behaviour and failed reproduction.

Studying Kea has its problems. Adults chew off colour bands, so only young birds can be banded and studied. Birds were caught for banding in a number of ways, including an extra large butterfly net, and blood samples taken for lead analysis. Clio introduced a series of dog toys, and observed how individual birds responded depending on their age, sex, social status in the group, and whether they found the toy alone or in a group.

Clio developed a 'personality score' for each bird, based on how it interacted with the toys – how long before it touched the toy, how many different things it did with the toy, and how long it played for. More dominant birds in groups were quicker to interact, and interacted more, than less dominant birds. Birds given the same toy got bored after three times and interacted less. Birds with higher personality scores had higher lead levels in their blood. This suggests that Kea treat lead as a novel object, and the more curious birds get exposed to more lead. Blood lead levels for 44 of the 45 Mt Cook birds were high, even for nestlings, whereas those in Mt Aspiring had low levels.

Previous studies of Kea behaviour were all carried out in areas where the birds are exposed to lead. When reading accounts of Kea behaviour Clio sees patterns consistent with lead poisoning, meaning that a lot of our knowledge of these birds may be based on sick birds behaving unusually.

Julian Fitter of the Friends of Galápagos Support Organisation in New Zealand showed us some of the challenges facing the Galápagos Islands and some of the work being carried out to improve and preserve the islands. Introduced mammals, in particular donkeys and goats, are major pests, along with introduced plants. The islands also face increasing population pressure as migrants from mainland Ecuador flock to the islands.

ANDY FALSHAW



Nelson

As part of Conservation Week (7th to 14th September) a welcome to the returning godwits was held on the Motueka waterfront. Pauline and David Samways with other local OSNZ members set up a bird viewing morning for the people of Motueka to 'Meet the Locals'. Telescopes were set up on the old Motueka wharf and focused on the birds feeding in the Motueka estuary.

After an introductory talk about the epic flight of godwit E7, and the other species of birds likely to be seen in the estuary around 60 people, including many families, enjoyed looking through telescopes and binoculars to get a close up views of nearly a dozen different species of birds. It was very successful and we plan to repeat it next year.

Chris Petyt from Golden Bay, on a day visit to his trap-lines in the Cobb Valley in early October, reported Shining Cuckoo and Tomtits singing, four Kaka flying over, and Brown Creepers and Robins present. A family of Blue Duck were present on the upper reaches of the Cobb River and have been afforded some protection with Stoat traps placed in their vicinity.

Alec Milne along with friends in a search for the South Island Kokako have placed a 'tent hide' housing an acoustic anchor on the bush line of Mount Xenicus in hope that calls may be recorded.

Banded Rails have been seen at regular intervals on the edge of the Waimea estuary and are hopefully well into a successful breeding season.

In early October Peter Gaze of DoC invited OSNZ members to carry out a survey of bird life on Adele Island. This small island is situated in the Abel Tasman National Park close to Marahau. The objective was to compare species present/absent with surveys made in 1979 and 1984. Clear skies and calm weather made conditions ideal for two groups of two and three persons to traverse the island along trap line tracks, one clockwise and the other anti-clockwise.

Six native forest species were recorded this year compared with eight in 1979, and six in 1984. Most common were Bellbirds and Silvereyes. Coastal species/seabirds numbered ten in 2008, compared to five in both 1984 and 1979. Introduced species totalled seven in 2008, and included California Quail, Skylark, Welcome Swallow and Goldfinch not present in the previous surveys. Tomtit, only recorded in the 1984 survey, was never present in high numbers and could easily have died out.

Graham Wright gave a short but informative power point presentation in November of a recent visit to Zambia and South Africa highlighting some very interesting birds. Outstanding were the masses of brightly-coloured Southern Carmine Bee-eaters at their nesting holes in a river bank. Larger birds included heron species and raptors. Interspersed were some beautiful images of the 'big cats' and Elephant families with very young calves.

The November programme of five-minute bird counts commenced on the Flora Track, Kahurangi National Park, on the first weekend of the month. Pauline Samways is once again co-ordinating the three visits per month for the fourth year. Snow was still present on the ground following a cold spell a few days earlier, and this was probably responsible for the lack of bird calls normally heard. Nonetheless we saw a pair of Blue Ducks after hearing them call. They were hunkered down on a mossy bank close to the Flora Stream and were still there a few hours later on our return. These are the first seen on the section of the stream we monitor since their re-introduction in March 2004.

Also present was a Long-tailed Cuckoo, which was being hassled by a pair of Bellbirds, directly above us at close quarters. This was a real bonus considering the lack of calls at most stations. Distant calls from Kea and Yellow-crowned Parakeet were heard, and Riflemen were unusually seen more often than heard. Lacking on the count were Silvereyes.

During a short rest at the Flora Hut on completion of the count we had one final surprise; a family of Weka (two adults and four chicks) were feeding right up to the hut door. No one could recall the last time we had witnessed this, a sure sign that the trapping programme is paying dividends.

Recently Rob Schuckard gave an address to the Nelson Science Society titled 'New Zealand Marathon Migrants – Some Insight into Their Annual Journeys'. The presentation covered the annual flight of

our three commonest long distance migrants – Lesser Knot, Turnstone, and Bar-tailed Godwit. It highlighted how they are able to make these flights and what is required to maintain the intrinsic values of their international ecosystem linkages.

DON COOPER

Otago

Indoor meetings continue to be well attended. We were privileged to view the New Zealand premiere of Sandy Crichton's film, 'Karearea: The Pine Falcon', which was a wonderful film and a moving tribute to the late George Chance. Franny Cunningham amazed us with the challenges that she faced while being involved in a number of bird conservation projects in South America, especially her work with the Blue-throated Macaw (only 250 left in the wild). Derek Onley continued the theme with an account of the birds of Paraguay and their diminishing habitat.

One year of the seasonal count of Hawksbury Lagoon has been completed with several firsts for the site, including a Black-fronted Dotterel, Falcon and Scaup. We have done the next spring count, noting breeding Black Swan, Mallard, Grey Teal, Red-billed Gull and Pied stilt. We have also surveyed the birds in the new Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust Reserve at Long Point, The Catlins.

A small group enjoyed a Labour Weekend field trip to Glenorchy. The beech forest on the track to Lake Sylvan was full of the songs and calls of Robin, Yellowhead and Yellow-crowned Parakeet. There was the excitement of seeing a Falcon take prey from a nest, pluck it and fly off with it though the trees. The braided riverbed of the Dart gave us Black-fronted Terns, a Black-billed Gull colony, South Island Pied Oystercatchers with chicks, Banded Dotterels (one with an orange flag from Victoria) and two Wrybills.

A pelagic trip out from Taiaroa Heads under brilliant sun in October gave those with sea legs the experience of encountering a good number of species including Southern Royal Albatross, and White-capped, Buller's and Salvin's Mollymawks, 400+ Fairy Prions, and thousands of Sooty Shearwaters. A Great Shearwater was also seen within five nautical miles of the Otago coast; this is only the second record for New Zealand and the first for the mainland. Bitterns have been seen and heard at Sinclair Wetlands, from where there have not been reports for very many years. A Cirl Bunting was seen and photographed by an overseas visitor near Aramoana. This is a first from this area. Another rarity to our area was an immature Pied Shag at Kaikorai Lagoon in October. The first Shining Cuckoo was heard on 20th September, which is a little earlier than usual. The Bar-tailed Godwits were also returning by 20th September.

Planning is progressing well for the George Chance Census of Great Crested Grebes in Central Otago next February. This will update the 2004 count. Anecdotal reports indicate that there has been a dramatic increase in numbers, for example, 75 on Lake Hayes in 2004 versus 144 seen in 2008.

MARY THOMPSON

Southland

Royal Spoonbills are possibly attempting to nest on Tikore Island in Bluff Harbour. While scoping the Colyers Island area in October I noticed four or five birds up in some vegetation looking as if they were nesting. There were also another two feeding down below on the shore line. To confirm this nesting it will be necessary to hire a boat and get a closer look. The island is administered by the Invercargill City Council and is a major breeding area for Black-backed Gulls.

Another 17 Spoonbills were reported at the Omaui Island colony on September 20th. The other nearest colonies are at Pig Island off Riverton, a small colony on False Islet in Surat Bay in the Catlins and another possibly in amongst thick vegetation at Awarua Bay.

In other news an Eastern Curlew was reported from Fortrose Estuary on August 2nd. Paul Jacques reported two Northern Royal Albatrosses at the entrance to Bluff Harbour and a Brown Skua. Ian Southey spotted a Hudsonian Godwit amongst Bar-tailed Godwits at the head of Awarua Bay on October 19th.

Beach Patrols have yielded little in recent months. A walk from Riverton to Invercargill's Oreti beach did not turn up anything exciting, although Lloyd Esler did find the remains of a Light Mantled Sooty Albatross on August 28th.

We will conduct our November wader census on November 8th and hope the weather improves on the snow, rain and hail we are experiencing at the moment.

PHIL RHODES

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

Simon Fordham, P.O. Box 64 042, Botany Town Centre, Manukau 1730.
Ph (09) 274 1828. Email simonf@clear.net.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, 24 Puketiro Avenue, Feilding 4702. Ph (06) 323 1441.
Email sav@wrybill-tours.com
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 5028.
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 7020. 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, Blenheim 7202. 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 (Feb-Nov), 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 9879.
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.



Strange Harvest of the Sea

*Your dyed-in-the-wool ornithologist is a creature of curious culture,
Who may rejoice in a Skylark's song; yet acts like a drooling vulture
When day after day fierce storms have cast on Auckland's bleak west coast,
From the hosts of far-based ocean-birds, the weak, the tired and the lost.*

*So out go the keen beachcombers; for they are a hardy breed,
To seek 'mid flotsam and jetsam, all tangled with cordage and weed
Pathetic bundles of feathers, once masters of every wave,
Shearwaters, petrels, prions, now trapped on a leeshore grave.*

*Then comes the sorting of trophies, tipped out from plastic bags.
Here is a nice fresh specimen; but many are bones and rags.
What a rich sample today's is! Fifteen species at least.
Mollymawks; even a stormy; and a nelly to spice up the feast.*

*Now from some lips fall Latin names. How learned do they sound!
"Look at the bill of this albatross; melanophrys I'll be bound."
"Do I detect halobaena?" says a rather superior type,
As he counters the pong of penguins with a very malodorous pipe.*

*And so we come to the prions. No doubts about this vittata.
But we ponder over a medium bill, "How's salvini for a starter?"
"Lamellae hardly visible. Shape points to desolata."
Never again will its eyes behold the ice of its Alma Mater.*

*Now someone cries exultantly, "Just look what I can see,
Mixed up with the sand and sodden flesh and general debris,
This skeletonic molly has a leg which bears a band!
Wonder where this comes from? In time we'll understand.*

*Salvaged specimens may find a niche in a known Collection.
Measured, labelled and numbered, a reward for their perfection.
Mere bones or skulls or feathers gain a fame which will endure
When odd or puzzling features are described in the literature.*

*What was the point of this exercise? Could it be judged worthwhile!
Apart from the fun of being there and trudging many a mile?
Something new has perhaps been learnt of Nature's bounty and waste;
For some a new aspect of studying birds. Everyman to his taste!*

The Late R B (Dick) Sibson

Winter 1989