



Southern *Bird*

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The George Chance
Memorial Census of
Australasian Crested
Grebes in Central Otago

Young Nick's Head
- a Seabird Paradise

Shag Ballast Stones

Southern Bird

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QUOTATION

*...Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.*

Sunday Morning by Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

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COVER PHOTOS

Front cover: *New Zealand Pigeon pulling out of a display dive, by Ormond Torr.*

Back cover: *Australasian Gannets at the potential new colony on Young Nick's Head, by Steve Sawyer – see the article on page 8 of this issue*

We welcome advertising enquiries. Free classified ads are available to members at the editor's discretion. Articles for inclusion in Southern Bird are welcome in any form, though electronic is preferred. Material should be related to birds, birdwatchers, or ornithologists in the New Zealand and Pacific region, and can include news on birds, members, activities and bird study, literature/product reviews, letters to the editor, birdwatching sites, and identification. Illustrations are especially welcome, though they must be sharp. Copy deadlines are 10th February, May and August, and 1st November.

Publisher

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Motions and Nominations for the 2009 AGM

No motions for the AGM were received by the closing date of 28th February 2009. Sufficient nominations, however, were received by that date to fill the vacancies of President, Vice President, Treasurer and one Council position. This being the case there will be no election this year.

Nominations received were:

President - David Lawrie

Vice President - Bruce McKinlay

Treasurer - Paul Garner-Richards

Council vacancy - Keith Owen

Bruce is vacating his Council position to take on the Vice Presidency. This leaves a vacancy on Council. Nominations for that vacancy will be called for at the end of year, though Council is free to co-opt in the meantime.

PETER GAZE, Secretary

QSM Awarded to Lloyd Esler

Members of the Southland Region of the OSNZ would like to congratulate our Regional Representative Lloyd Esler on his receipt of a Queen's Service Medal in the recent New Years Honours list.

Lloyd is involved in numerous community activities such as the Southland Natural History Field club; The Explorers Club; Southland Astronomy Society and the Otatara Landcare Group and helps out and gives talks for many other organisations and school groups.

Lloyd is (and has also been in previous years) Regional Representative for the Southland Region of OSNZ and is currently also Beach Patrol Convener.

He has also been the recipient of a citizen's community award from the Invercargill City Council and an environmental award.

PHIL RHODES

Correction

In the December 2008 issue of *Southern Bird* problems at a late proof stage led to Colin Ogle and Ormond Torr's note on the stick pose of New Zealand Kingfishers being referred to as 'stick nose' on both the front cover and the heading on page 9. This is incorrect and should have read 'stick pose'. Apologies to Colin and Ormond, and to all members/readers for any confusion caused.

Geoff Moon

Geoff Moon OBE, renowned bird photographer and author died on 13th March at the age of 93. Our deepest sympathies go to his wife Lynette and the rest of his family.

WANTED: Papers on New Zealand bird species

All citations, reprint copies or photocopies of papers on, or relating to, any New Zealand bird species that have been published in a scientific journal or general magazine other than *Notornis*. These papers or citations will be made available to all members, and a list of these publications will be published annually in *Notornis*.

Please send to the Secretary, Peter Gaze, PO Box 834, Nelson 7040 or gaze@slingshot.co.nz

ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Annual General Meeting Weekend

I have been advised that planning by the Auckland Region for the Annual General Meeting weekend is well advanced. Enrolment forms were circulated some time ago and I would urge people to enrol as early as possible to assist the organisers and ensure that you get accommodation close to the venue.

An interesting programme has been arranged, with field excursions that will interest all members, but particularly those from other parts of New Zealand.

New Zealand Bird Report

As previously advised the Society intends to publish a New Zealand bird report to cover sightings for the calendar year 2007. While it was originally hoped that this could be published long before now, it has been delayed for a number of reasons.

Derek Onley has agreed to be the editor of this first issue. David Melville and Bruce McKinley are providing assistance in ensuring that the necessary records are available for Derek to include.

It is clear that this first issue will be relatively small because of the paucity of data that is available. Despite frequent reminders it would appear that several regions have not collected records over the 2007 year but Council's instruction to Derek is to proceed with whatever information he has available. Council is extracting as many records as it can from Birding-NZ and also eBird. However it would assist greatly if regional recorders could collect and compile as many of the sightings as possible from each region to minimise the work on the editor and his assistants.

It would be appreciated if regional recorders, once they have completed the data for the 2007 year, could commence collating the information for the 2008 issue, which Council intends to publish if at all possible before the end of this current year.

Wader Counts

The five year contract that the Society has with the Department of Conservation to collect and compile wader count data from 2005 to 2009 is now nearing the final stages. All of the information that has been gathered is being prepared for the final report to be provided to the Department by the end of June 2009.

I would take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who assisted in the gathering of the relevant count data. The vast majority of census work was done without requesting the available petrol subsidy and the Society is grateful for those donations.

The Society itself will now be reviewing the way the census data is collected and the timing of wader counts, as it is likely that the current three annual counts are unsustainable for our voluntary membership. It is, however, recognised that there are substantial changes in wading bird populations and without ongoing monitoring any rapid change could pass undetected. There is therefore clearly a need for ongoing census work.

eBird Recording Scheme

I understand that an increasing number of people are now entering their data into the electronic eBird recording scheme. There are also a large number of people that have not yet commenced entering records and I would

urge you to start as soon as possible. It is clear that there are many records that the Society has never received and this recording system is one way that the data can be collected and utilised, particularly if there are changing trends in populations of even relatively common birds. It is only by analysing data that these can be noticed and then explained.

I must confess that I have not yet entered many records but that is no excuse for the rest of the membership!

Instruction Manual Updates

I would draw the attention of new Regional Representatives to the existence of a manual, covering all of the Society's activities, that was developed many years ago by Bev Woolley. Council is currently in the process of updating this manual, and will ultimately have it available in an electronic format that will be readily available. It would appear that there are a number of Regional Representatives who either have not been handed a copy of the manual or are unaware of its existence. If there are any representatives in that situation I would suggest that you contact Ingrid who will make a copy available.

I would particularly thank David Melville for his work in undertaking this update as it has largely involved the retyping of the whole document.

Regional Representatives

Ingrid notified several changes of Regional Representative in the last edition of *Southern Bird*, and I welcome those new representatives to this important role within the Society.

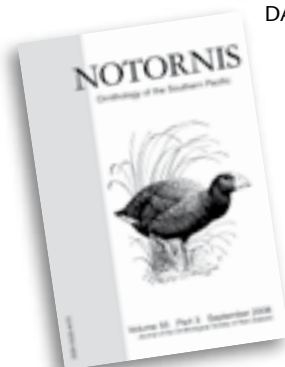
I can also advise that the Council recently appointed (at his request) Steve Sawyer as Regional Representative for the Gisborne/Wairoa Region, a post which has been vacant for a number of years. We welcome Steve and hope that he is able to provide the stimulus to the members from that region.

Notornis

Jim Briskey has now taken over the role of editor of *Notornis*, and the first of his issues should have been in members' mailboxes just before Christmas. I have been advised that the June 2008 and September 2008 issues will be posted in March and the next two issues, which will be December 2008 and March 2009, will be posted in May. This will then bring the schedule back up to date.

Jim currently has enough articles for the current run of issues but will always be looking for further articles and I would urge members to provide them to him. There was some debate last year about the content of *Notornis*. The only way for members to influence what gets published is to provide articles on topics that they would like to see within the journal.

DAVID LAWRIE



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!

Black-fronted Terns and Fish

There is growing interest in the importance of fish (or lack thereof) in the diet of Black-fronted Terns on their breeding grounds. If anyone has any observations of terns feeding on fish and/or photos I should be very grateful if you would send me details including, if possible: date; time of day; place; number of birds; fish caught/eaten/used in courtship feeding or display/fed to chicks. If anyone has photos of Blackfronted Terns holding/carrying fish we may be able to identify the prey. Many thanks.

DAVID MELVILLE

Dovedale, R.D. 2 Wakefield, Nelson 7096



A Black-fronted Tern carrying a smelt – either *Retropinna retropinna* or *Stokelia anisodon*.
Photo by Ian McHenry

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

REGIONAL RECORDERS

Each region of New Zealand has at least one regional recorder, whose job (amongst other tasks) is to gather bird sightings and counts, store and assess these and pass relevant ones on to the editor of the New Zealand Bird Report for publication. They will also, with Regional Reps, assess Unusual Bird Reports sent to them before they are sent on to the Unusual/Rare Birds Committee. Where there is no regional recorder records should be sent to the Regional Rep for that part of the country. **Please send in your sightings on a regular basis, your regional recorder is waiting for them!**

Alternatively sightings can be placed on eBird (www.ebird.com.nz) from where they may be available for use by the Society as above.

Far North

Lauren Alston, 48A Riverview Road, Kerikeri 0230. Ph (09) 407 8747, Email lm.alston@actrix.co.nz.

Northland

Tony Beauchamp, 17 Bellbird Avenue, Whangarei 0110. Ph 027 420 3333 Email tbeauchamp@doc.govt.nz

Auckland

Landbirds, waterfowl, rails: Suzi Philips, Private Bag 1, Helensville 0840. Ph 021 271 2527 Email aucklandosnz@gmail.com
Waders, herons, spoonbills, egrets: Adrian Riegen, 231 Forest Hill Road, Waiatarua, Auckland 0612. Ph (09) 814 9741, email riegena@xtra.co.nz
Seabirds, gulls, terns, shags: John Simmons, 4 Bamford Place, Avondale, Auckland 1026. Ph (09) 828 8642, email johnsimmons@clear.net.nz

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Vacant

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Southland

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SHAG BALLAST STONES

The patterns of stones below were left on the beach at Bold Head, Ross which is about 30 km south of Hokitika on the West Coast of the South Island. The stones were accompanied by footprints, which given their asymmetrical shape and size (note the clear print halfway up on the left of the photo) almost certainly belonged to Spotted Shags, some of which were roosting in close proximity. Shags of several species (certainly Pied, Black, Little and Spotted) often swallow small stones as ballast, for use in the same way as a human diver uses a lead weight belt; to control buoyancy. The stones are stored in the gizzard and are often regurgitated at roost before the birds fly off to feed again. They may only be used when the bird is feeding in shallow water and seem to be less necessary on deeper dives.

Many thanks to Alexis Ensor for the 'text book' photo of the stones, and the nearby roosting Spotted Shags, and to Kathy Gilbert and various employees of DoC for the information required for this note. The Editor.



Spotted Shags by Alexis Ensor



Ballast stones and shag footprints on the beach, by Alexis Ensor

WE NEED YOUR HOUSE SPARROWS!

I am a researcher at Otago University starting a long term project investigating House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) populations and the genetics of disease resistance.

My research group and I are looking for field sites at which we can reliably catch substantial numbers (100+) of House Sparrows. We need field sites near Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland where we can catch birds using mist nets and ground traps twice a year for a few days, starting this June/July. The birds will be released banded and unharmed, after taking a few measurements and a small blood sample. If you regularly see House Sparrows feeding in a particular place, roosting in a certain spot, know of any potential sites, or indeed band sparrows yourself (near the four main centres - Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland), then we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please contact me via email; shinichi.nakagawa@otago.ac.nz, or telephone (03) 479 5046

Also please see my website for information about this project and my other work: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/zoology/staff/academic/nakagawa.html>.

DR SHINICHI NAKAGAWA

NEW ZEALAND FALCON DISTRIBUTION SURVEY

Members are reminded that the national New Zealand Falcon Distribution Survey is still underway, recording observations (seen or heard) of Falcons from around the country.

The survey runs until 31st May 2009 – three years exactly from the launch at the Ornithological Society's Wellington AGM, and as things would have it it will 'close off' at the AGM in Auckland.

To avoid any double-ups or clashing with the Society's eBird reporting facility it is suggested that members should enter their observations on eBird at www.ebird.co.nz or alternatively on the observation form available online at www.ranz.org.nz. This form is also available for those not on the internet/email from the co-ordinator on (06) 757 2570.

Please also be aware that due to unforeseen circumstances and some technical issues those online reports submitted between 1st December 2008 and 28th January 2009 did not make it to the designated destination. It is therefore requested that members who submitted reports between these dates should please re-submit their sightings.

Thank you.

DAVE BELL

Co-ordinator, New Zealand Falcon Distribution Survey

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); Bruce Kirkman (Canterbury); Jenny Ladley (Canterbury); Chris Lamens (Far North); Maria Lamens (Far North); Karen Lomax (Marlborough); Graham Parker (Canterbury); Hilary Ramage (Waikato); Robin Robilliard (Nelson); Val Ryan (Northland); Ray Sheldrake (Gisborne/Wairoa); Simon Stockdale (Nelson); Richard R Veit (New York, U.S.A.); 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; Luke Martin; Ian McLean; Bruce McKinlay; 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.



Sighting of a spectacular albinistic white-faced heron

This note appeared in the December 2008 issue of *Southern Bird*, but confusion over names crept in

and it is repeated here in full to put right any errors. The editor.

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 White-necked 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 White-necked 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-necked 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.

RUSSELL THOMAS

BRING BACK THE BUTTERFLIES!



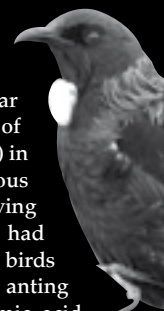
The Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust is holding a conference on 11th and 12th April in Tauranga, with a number of interesting keynote speakers and other presentations. Included in these is Dr Barrie Frost, Professor Emeritus with Queens University in Ontario and an expert on how insects and birds process sights and sounds and use this in navigation and migration; Dr George Gibbs is a Senior Research Associate at Victoria University and has pursued a career researching Lepidoptera, weta and the evolutionary background of New Zealand's fauna and fauna; and Dr Robert Hoare is Lepidoptera specialist for the New Zealand Arthropod Collection at Landcare Research in Tamaki.

For more information visit the Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust website at www.monarch.org.nz

This conference is not an activity of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand.

PROBABLE ANTING BY BELLBIRDS AND TUI

I was first informed of the strange behaviour of some Bellbirds and Tui at a rural property near Tadmor (some 10 km east of Kahurangi National Park) in July 2005. For the previous five years the person living there, Joan Hancock, had regularly observed these birds acting as if they were anting (using ants and the formic acid they produce in defence as a natural pesticide). The birds would perch on the trunk of a mature Black Beech, peck at some unidentified objects on the trunk and then vigorously move their bill under each wing.



From February to September 2006 Joan kept a casual diary of these observations which showed Tui to be the most frequent visitor, being seen every month. Two birds were regularly seen on the tree and, in September, four to five birds were seen on three different days. One of these was observed to make 79 pecks at the trunk in between the underwing activity. In comparison, Bellbirds were seen less often and on one occasion an individual was driven off by a Tui. Starlings also engaged in this activity and a Chaffinch was observed doing so on one occasion. There was no noticeable honeydew on the trunk that might have attracted these birds.

It is likely that these observations were some form of anting. There are accounts in *Notornis* of Starlings, Mynas, Chaffinches, parakeets and Robins anting. This is the first record of Tui and Bellbirds behaving in this manner and is unusual in that the activity has occurred on the same tree for at least six years.

PETER GAZE



The George Chance Memorial Census of Australasian Crested Grebes in Central Otago

This February the Otago region of OSNZ organised a census of Australasian Crested Grebes in Central

Otago in memory of George Chance. George was renowned for his bird photography and Australasian Crested Grebes were one of his special subjects when they first arrived and bred at Lake Hayes in the mid-1990s (Chance, 2000 *Notornis* 47: 59-62). His careful observations and photographic recording of their nesting behaviour are part of his legacy to us all. Anyone who has spent time watching these birds performing courtship displays, or carrying chicks on their backs, cannot help but be captivated by these splendid birds.

PLANNING

The Australasian Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus australis*) is classified as 'vulnerable' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and 'nationally critical' in New Zealand. The count for Otago in the national census of the species in 2004 was 117, and the total adult population in New Zealand was only 340-350 individuals (Jensen & Snoyink, 2005 *Notornis* 53: 35-42). There have been many anecdotal reports of numbers increasing on the Central Otago lakes and George Chance, shortly before his death in 2008, suggested another census of the Australasian Crested Grebes to get a new accurate count to confirm this increase.

His suggestion was enthusiastically adopted by the Otago region and a date set for the 21st and 22nd February 2009, as it was George who had recommended late February as the best time to see all the adults and young together. Planning started in early 2008 and contact was made with various people and organisations to cover the Central Otago lakes by shore and boat. Although the original intention was to focus on the Central Otago lakes, the Canterbury and Southland regions of OSNZ also joined in by deciding to survey their lakes at the same time. This has given additional information about the changing pattern of bird distribution over a wider area.



The head of Lake Dunstan from a viewpoint at Bendigo Nature Reserve from which over 50 Crested Grebes were seen. Photo by Mary Thompson.

As it turned out the weekend of the census coincided with a huge tropical low, which descended on New Zealand and parked itself over the South Island for several days. Nevertheless, despite the nasty weather and a forecast promising rain and gusty Nor'westers, the Otago team assembled in Cromwell on the Friday night. The decision was made as a consequence of the weather to cancel the use of all motorboats, but rain and wind didn't stop the car-based crews going ahead with the census and we started on Saturday on time.

Lake Dunstan was covered by two teams, one on each side of the lake, with roadside access possible to most of the shoreline. Lake Hayes, known for its high population of grebes in Central Otago, was tackled by two very experienced canoeists. Walking teams provided backup. Without water transport Mt Nicholas Lagoon was not covered, and Lakes Hawea, Wanaka and Wakatipu only partially. One intrepid team walked to Lake Dispute and reported there was no dispute about the lack of grebes there.

FINDINGS

The most exciting finding was that the number of Australasian Crested Grebes on Otago lakes has nearly doubled in the five years since the last count, from 117 to 219 birds. This is likely



Lala Frazer and Lesley Gowans engrossed in Crested Grebe watching. Photo by Mary Thompson

to be an under-estimate due to the inclement weather, the partial coverage of some lakes and the non-coverage of Mt Nicholas Lagoon. The overall total number from the combined Otago, Canterbury and Fiordland counts shows a 60% increase, which is gratifying given the 'nationally critical' status of the species.

The greatest success story was for Lake Dunstan, a newly-formed hydro lake (1993-94), where there were over five times more birds, with an increase from just 16 in 2004 to 90 this year. Breeding pairs and juveniles were seen around the whole lake, and for the first time seven adults and five juveniles were recorded on the lake arm between the Clyde Dam and Cromwell township, an area where they have never been seen before. The greatest concentration of Australasian Crested Grebes was at the head of the lake where the Clutha River enters through a braided wetland and much willow cover. The high ratio of juveniles to adults suggests that the species is breeding very successfully on Lake Dunstan.

Lake Hayes has maintained its high numbers (81), including many breeding pairs, but did not show any great change from 2004 numbers (75), which may indicate that the population on this small lake is now nearing a maximum. The ratio of juveniles to adults also indicated that their breeding here is successful.

Breeding pairs at Queenstown have been present for several years, and were seen again on the census, both in the bay where the TSS Earnslaw plies its trade and also in Frankton Arm. There is concern about jet boats and water-sports here as two dead birds were reported this season after jet skiers appeared to chase them.



Some of the Otago team; Sue Galloway, Janet York, Alan Baker, Mary Thompson, Dave York, Susan Schweigman, Lesley Gowans, Lala Frazer. Others involved: Peter Schweigman, Louise Foord, Neil Clayton, Karen Reiner, Dawn Palmer, Florence Gaud and Jocelyn McLean. Photo by Peter Schweigman.

The George Chance Memorial Census of Australasian Crested Grebes, 21st and 22nd February 2009.

Lake	Adults	Juvenile	Total	2004 Total ⁴
OTAGO				
Butchers Dam	0	0	0	1
Hawea ¹	3	0	3	0
Wanaka ¹	12	6	18	4
Wakatipu (Frankton/Queenstown) ¹	5	4	9	4
Wakatipu (Kingston) ¹	2	0	2	nc
Mt Nicholas Lagoon	nc	nc	nc	11
Dunstan	52	38	90	16
Dispute	0	0	0	0
Moke	3	2	5	0
Kirkpatrick	0	0	0	0
Johnson	9	2	11	6
Hayes ²	66	15	81	75
OTAGO TOTALS	152	67	219	117
WAITAKI				
Benmore	46	6	52	22
Aviemore	12	12	24	5
Waitaki ³	7	2	9	0
WAITAKI TOTALS	65	20	85	27

1 partially covered

2 30 'adults' not unambiguously assigned adult/juvenile status

3 5 'adults' not unambiguously assigned adult/juvenile status

4 data are from Jensen & Snoyink 2005

nc not covered

Another success story was the trebling of numbers on the Waitaki hydro lakes from 27 in 2004 to 85, with a doubling of the numbers on Lake Benmore, the first sightings of breeding pairs on Lake Aviemore and the first report of birds on Lake Waitaki. The number of juveniles was four times the 2004 figure.

The Fiordland lakes were not covered in detail so this count is most likely an underestimation. There was a report of two pairs on Lake Monowai in December, 2008, a first sighting for this lake. In addition, a pair and one juvenile at Shallow Bay, two adults on the Waiau River at Manapouri and a single bird at Lake Mavora have been seen this summer, which were not seen on census day.

Australasian Crested Grebe numbers in the Canterbury region have shown a small increase of 32%. There appears to have been some changes in distribution; the Lake Heron population has decreased and those on Lakes Alexandrina and Forsyth have increased. The number on Lake Alexandrina (102), which is traditionally a stronghold of Australasian Crested Grebes, was well up on the 2004 figures (13), but the extremely low count in 2004 may have been an anomaly. The presence of a good number of birds on Lake Forsyth near the coast in summer is interesting, as previously this lake has only had an over-wintering population.

In summary, the census went very well, despite the bad weather and lack of boat access to the remoter regions of the main lakes. All effort was made to cover most lakes and all those involved were tremendously heartened to see so many birds. We have been able to prove that there has been a doubling in numbers of Australasian Crested Grebes in Otago and the number of juveniles indicates that it was a very good breeding

season, with juveniles present on all Otago lakes where grebes were present. It appears that over their current range in Otago and Canterbury the population of Australasian Crested Grebes is increasing. The easy accessibility of Lakes Dunstan and Hayes means that many more people will be able to experience the pleasure of watching these beautiful birds and this should raise public support for the need to preserve suitable habitats. Hydro lakes appear to have contributed to a range expansion of Australasian Crested Grebes. It is important to identify what features make them favourable habitats for breeding and to develop strategies to manage the lakes when recreational use increases.

Comparison of counts for the major groups of lakes made in 2004 and 2009.

Group of lakes	2004 total	2009 total
Otago	117	219
Waitaki	27	85
Pearson	39	29
Coleridge	26	23
Forsyth	0	41
Ashburton	116	46
Mackenzie	19	125
Fiordland	18	2
TOTALS	362	570

Data for 2004 are from Jensen & Snoyink 2005.

Compiled by MARY THOMPSON (Regional Representative, Otago) and PETER SCHWEIGMAN (Otago), 7th March 2009. A full report with all the data can be obtained from Mary Thompson.

AUSTRALIAN LITTLE GREBE INTERACTING WITH DECOY

The recent visit of an Australasian Little Grebe to Pukepuke Lagoon is only the second record for the Manawatu region according to the Regional Recorder Sav Saville. It was in full breeding plumage and a beautiful bird to behold. The most interesting feature of the bird, however, was its fixation with a Mallard decoy that had been left from the previous duck shooting season. The grebe spent days keeping close to the decoy, placing underwater debris and vegetation on it, moving around it with its body held horizontal and displaying other unusual behaviour. I was keen on photographing this normally hard to approach bird but found that after it dived on our approach, it always surfaced again alongside the decoy. As a result some great photos were obtained.

The bird was discovered by Andrew Thomas, an MSc candidate from Massey University. Andrew's keen eye noted the difference in plumage from the New Zealand Dabchick, present in reasonable numbers in the region, despite it being located in a small dark pond adjacent to the main lagoon. Andrew's friend, James Crowe, also from Massey, kindly took me to the lagoon and showed me the best place to view the bird.

Pukepuke lagoon is a wildlife reserve administered by DoC and entry is by permit only. These can be easily obtained from their Palmerston North office where a key for a hide on the site is also available.

PAUL GIBSON



Photo by Paul Gibson

HINGED PIPIT

As we approached a gate at the back of our farm we could see a New Zealand Pipit frantically flapping. Its toe was firmly caught in the join of wire-netting on the gate. The only way to release it was to amputate the severed toe. There was no bleeding, and it flew away immediately. This gate is only visited about twice a year, so the chance of finding the bird alive was indeed a miracle.

PAM TURNER



YOUNG NICK'S HEAD - A SEABIRD PARADISE

Words and Photos by STEVE SAWYER

Nick's Head Station was purchased by John and Amy Griffin during 2002. The Station is 1,500 hectares in area and the aim is to manage a profitable farming operation whilst at the same time restoring and protecting the biodiversity of the area. John and Amy are both passionate conservationists and have invested a large amount to restore many threatened or lost ecological values on the Gisborne coastline.

Steve Sawyer from Ecoworks NZ, a private conservation company based in Gisborne, has been working with the Griffins since early 2003. One of the major projects at Young Nick's Head has been the total restoration of this iconic New Zealand peninsula. The aim is to restore this landmark with species which were thought to be present at the time of the first human arrival at Te Kuri a Paoa, later named Young Nick's Head by Cook in 1769, effectively trying to turn the clock back 800 years.

During late 2004, a 550-metre-long predator-proof fence was constructed across the peninsula enclosing a total area of 35 hectares. Over 42,000 Ngaio, Taupata, Karamu and other coastal tree species were planted in grazed pasture during the winter of 2004 and 2005. Full pest eradication commenced during winter in 2005 and the introduction of species such as weta and reptiles began.

The enclosure forms a small part of a major restoration programme throughout the Griffin's properties that has seen over 500,000 native trees planted to form wildlife corridors which link expansive wetlands, salt marshes, mature Karaka-Kohekohe forest, Kahikatea-Matai swampland and planted dune ecosystems extending along

10 km of the coast at the southern end of Poverty Bay. Over 20 protected sites now exist and all are stock fenced and trapped for pests.

The 35 hectare enclosure has developed extremely rapidly since 2004. We now have a 3-4-metre-high dense Ngaio canopy, tree and cave weta populations, over 75 species of terrestrial invertebrate, Common and Green Tree Geckos, Copper Skinks and a range of pelagic seabirds making a return to this unique landmark. This is quite incredible when you consider the site was grazed by Aberdeen Angus cattle up until May 2004.

On November 15th 2005, Ecoworks NZ installed an outdoor sound system on the headland of Nick's Head Peninsula. The solar-powered system was built by Stuart Cockburn and his team at DoC and plays the calls of six pelagic seabird species: Grey-faced Petrel, Fluttering Shearwater, Common Diving Petrel, Black-winged Petrel, Sooty Shearwater and White-faced Storm Petrel. The recordings were purchased from Les McPherson in Canterbury. A solar switch triggers the recordings to start each night at 6pm and they play through until sunrise. The system has been very reliable and has played every night since its installation.

At the same time we began installing artificial petrel burrows. We now have 45 large *Pterodroma* burrows using sloping 2.5 metre lengths of novacoil set into large plywood nest chambers buried with 300 mm of soil and stones above each to reduce heat stress on birds and a polythene layer over the roof to prevent flooding.

During May 2006 the first Grey-faced Petrels were seen visiting the site and landing



Cole (my eight-year-old son) and Grey-faced Petrel

in grassland near the speakers. Only four or five birds were visiting initially, with six of the burrows were being regularly visited and nest material being carried into the burrow chambers. During November and December 2007 Fluttering Shearwaters were also heard flying past the speakers and calling, and one bird was observed with a burrow-scope during the day in burrow 11. Exciting stuff! In December 2007 we burrow-scoped all burrows again, recording no sign of chicks but finding one cold egg in burrow 1. A great sign, and an indication that juvenile birds may have been attempting to establish at the site.

During May 2008 regular night visits showed much larger numbers of birds visiting the headland. We estimated 30-40 grey faced petrels visiting on a dark night; a real treat for US and



Cole and a close encounter with two Grey-faced Petrels



Gannet decoys and live birds

New Zealand visitors who have 'war-whooped' birds and had between six and ten Grey-faced Petrels sitting on and beside them at one time.

During late November 2008, three years after start-up, we performed another burrow scoping and recorded two large, down-covered Grey-faced Petrel chicks in burrows 4 and 10. Both of these birds have now fledged. These were the first Grey-faced Petrel chicks recorded on Nick's Head Peninsula since the early 1930s. Local Ngai Tamanuhiri have historically climbed to the headland and harvested this species, however the birds had completely disappeared by 1931 (pers com M Pohatu).

As you can imagine we are very excited about this world first. We did not translocate any chicks. We have been lucky that we have a prominent headland on the East Coast to attempt this project and have relied solely on pest exclusion and an audio attraction system combined with extensive artificial burrows in place. The speaker system purchase, installation and helicopter cost was in the vicinity of \$7,500. Another \$3,000 in wages to install and transport burrow equipment is a relatively cheap way to establish a petrel colony

compared with the cost of chick translocation.

During September 2008 the Ecoworks NZ team installed a second sound system on the peninsula. This time we set up continuous daytime recordings of a raucous Australasian Gannet colony. We started with rank grassland which we cut and sprayed with glyphosate and then installed 18 gannet decoys, both free standing and on seaweed nest mounds. The decoys were made by Mad River Decoys in the USA. We also splashed white acrylic paint on the ground in an effort to replicate guano. Within 10 minutes of starting the recording the first Gannet swooped overhead to investigate the site. We doubt that the paint did much but it all added to the effect!

By mid-October we had on average 30-45 Gannets on the ground at any one time. Every decoy had a 'partner' and several individuals were seen attempting to copulate with the fibreglass decoys! Others have been seen carrying seaweed onto the site and building nest platforms. During early December the Ecoworks NZ team recorded over 200 Gannets on site extending 100 metres either side of the decoys.

We have not recorded any nesting yet as it is still early days, and the courting birds are likely to be immature. It will be fascinating to see what occurs during the winter months. With the activity we have seen this summer we believe we will see nesting attempts next season, as we have seen many pairs courting and preening.

The headland is also home to a large Black Shag colony. Pied Shags are also becoming regular visitors and we plan to entice White-faced and Caspian Terns once the Gannets have established. Further down the coast we have a third sound system playing Blue Penguin and storm petrel calls. Penguins are slowly becoming more regular visitors to this site.

We believe we can turn this 35 hectare iconic headland into a multi species seabird paradise much like the New Zealand archipelago was many years ago. If you would like more information about these projects please feel free contact Steve Sawyer at Ecoworks NZ on (06) 867 2888 or check out the Ecoworks NZ website at www.ecoworks.co.nz.



Potential new Gannet colony

OSNZ GREETING CARDS FOR SALE!

The cards are New Zealand made and feature Fantail, Tui, Pied Stilt and Antipodes Island Parakeet, painted by Mrs Janet Marshall. The price is: \$3 for 10 cards with envelopes, or for 20 cards without envelopes (size: approximately 130 x 100 mm)

Please contact your Regional Representative for more details.



GLACIER PUKEKO

On 12th January 2008 whilst with a team researching glacier dynamics I encountered the unexpected sight of a dead Pukeko on Fox Glacier. We were about 400 m above sea level some 450 m from the snout of the glacier and on a section of the glacier not visited by tourist parties.

The first sign of the bird was some feathers I found a little way off from the body. The remains were quite desiccated but it would have been difficult to say how long it had been there. The remains were free of the ice, but I was not sure whether the bird had died where it lay or had been carried down in the glacier from higher altitude. No obvious wounds were apparent, but time and desiccation may have removed any. There were Kea in the area but we did not see them interact with the body. I guess it had been there long enough for them to satisfy their curiosity.

WENDY GOAD



Pauling, Craig & Stevens, Heidi. *E kuku te kereru: oral histories and recent research into the Banks Peninsula kereru* (Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae). 2007. Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, Christchurch. ISBN 1-877392-99-3, 62 pp, 150 x 210 mm, soft cover, \$19.95.

The Kaupapa Kereru project, which began in 2000, is an iwi-led, community-based, multi-agency project that was set up to increase the numbers and range of the Kereru (New Zealand Pigeon) on Banks Peninsula. The focus of the project has been two fold: raising community awareness of Kereru, and researching Kereru ecology as a basis for improving habitat and management. In 2003, the Kaupapa Kereru committee decided that it should record the memories of some current and former Banks Peninsula residents with regard to Kereru. The main aim was to carry out a series of interviews that would provide an understanding of the community's feelings towards Kereru, and provide information about former Kereru ecology and numbers in the district. As a result 14 people, most being long-time residents of the Peninsula, were interviewed.

This book contains information from the interviews divided into six chapters under the

headings of Kereru history and ecology, numbers, habits, predation and competition, restoring the Kereru population, and other Kereru tales. In addition, five chapters provide summaries of research carried out on Banks Peninsula Kereru, including one containing the results from the first bi-annual Banks Peninsula Kereru Community count day. Lastly there is a chapter containing an image of and biographical notes on each of the interviewees.

This book will do much to increase public awareness of the status and ecology of Kereru on Banks Peninsula. It is well produced, being of good quality paper and printing. The chapters are mainly two to four pages in length, and the text is written in an easy-to-read style such that people of a wide range of ages and natural history interests should enjoy reading them. There are several excellent colour images of Kereru and some of related topics. Likewise, the five chapters describing the main results from research projects are all well illustrated with tables, coloured figures and images, providing added interest to readers and assisting with the understanding of the text.

For people knowledgeable about Kereru ecology, and the national Kereru population's

past decline and recent resurgence in areas where pest mammal control has been underway for a few years, the content of this book will probably provide little new information. Given that one of the aims of the Kaupapa Kereru project is to increase the numbers of Kereru and that this book is bound to end up in many Banks Peninsula homes, it is notable that the book doesn't contain a chapter briefly describing management actions (fencing stock out of native forest patches, important plant food species of Banks Peninsula Kereru for inclusion in re-vegetation projects, and reducing possum, rat, stoat and feral cat populations to low densities in Kereru areas, etc) that could be undertaken to promote Kereru conservation on Banks Peninsula. However, for those interested in the history of Kereru on Banks Peninsula, and their ecology as determined from recent research summaries (feeding and foods, habitat use in rural/urban remnant forest, impacts of predation, Kereru survey of Banks Peninsula), there will be much of interest. This is a useful addition to the book shelf of anyone interested in this iconic New Zealand species.

RALPH POWLESLAND

BIRD NEWS

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

The first **Hutton's Shearwaters** translocated from high up in the Seaward Kaikoura Range to Kaikoura Peninsula have returned to their translocated site, earlier than expected. It is hoped that breeding will follow soon in a future breeding season. Shearwater calls are being broadcast from the new site to attract birds.

In the first major release on the South Island, **Brown Teal** are being re-introduced to the Arthur River in Fiordland, part of the Operation Ark site for the protection of Blue Duck.

Black Stilts have had a relatively poor breeding season (along with other braided riverbed birds) probably due to unsettled weather at critical times when nesting. Productive pairs in the wild producing eggs for the captive rearing programme were down from 20 in 2007/8 to just 10 in 2008/9. Despite this the total number of eggs produced (146) was only slightly down on 2007/8 (173) due to a small increase in the number of captive-laid eggs.

A male **Kakapo** was rediscovered on Codfish Island in early February after not being seen for 21 years. The hope is that Rangī will have slightly different genetics from the other male Kakapo so that the gene pool can be increased. His rediscovery brought the total Kakapo population to 91 birds. The population didn't stay long at this level, as breeding was well underway on Codfish Island with 27 of the 38 breeding age females there having mated by late February. By the 11th March there were 14 chicks, pushing the population of the species to 105. It is a number of decades since the population of the species was in three figures.

Six **Kaka** were released into the Orokonui Ecosanctuary (Otago) in early November, with some seen in the following months in the suburbs of Dunedin.

Stitchbirds were translocated to Maungatautari (Waikato) from Tiritiri Matangi Island in early March. 59 birds were released in the southern enclosure of this very extensive predator-proof-fenced mainland island.

Short reports

An Oceanwings tour out of Kaikoura turned up a **Chatham Island Mollymawk** on 17/2. Opononi in the Hokianga Harbour had an unidentified **frigatebird** on 12/2. Later in the month on 27/2 participants on a wader census were lucky enough to see a **Great Frigatebird** circling over Farewell Spit near the lighthouse. On the same day a female **Lesser Frigatebird** was photographed in the Hauraki Gulf. The Wairau Lagoons (Marlborough) **Glossy Ibis** probably stayed throughout the summer and autumn, being seen well on flood-irrigated paddocks at one stage. The other long-term Glossy Ibis, at Travis Wetland (Christchurch), was seen on 27/2, probably just having returned for another winter. A **Straw-necked Ibis** was found in an irrigated paddock between Wanaka and Tarras (Otago) on 24/2, staying up to the time of writing in mid-March. This will constitute the first record for New Zealand if accepted. Up to four **Chestnut-breasted Shelducks**, possibly the remains of the last influx two years ago, were at Greenpark Sands, Lake Ellesmere (Canterbury) in late January and February. Another was seen at the new Marie Neverman Wetland Reserve at Tupare (South Kaipara) on 14/3. A female **Australian Wood Duck** was in a temporarily drained Christchurch sewage pond at Bromley on 12/2. A **Brown Teal** graced the Manukau Harbour at Island Road on 7/1. The long-staying Renwick (Marlborough) **Black Kite** was still present in January. A further **Nankeen Kestrel** has been seen in the Kaitaia area, with one on the Southern Aupouri Peninsula on 3/1 (or maybe a

long-staying bird from last year). A **Shore Plover** graced the Ahuriri Estuary (Napier) on 6/1, with another in the less likely habitat of a ploughed field behind Wakapatu Beach (Southland) on 26/2; on the 4/3 it was in more typical habitat on the beach. The Ahuriri Estuary (Napier) held a **Sanderling** over the weekend of 3&4/1. A **Black-tailed Godwit** was at the Manawatu Estuary on 29/12, with another on the Kaipara Harbour on 2/2. The high tide roost at Takani (Auckland) held a **Hudsonian Godwit** on 7/2. The long-staying **Siberian Tattler** was at the Ahuriri Estuary (Napier) probably throughout the period of this report, with others more briefly at the Ashley Estuary (North Canterbury) in January and also at the Kaipara Harbour on 2/2. What was probably a **Wandering Tattler** was at the end of Kaikoura Peninsula on 26/2. The Kaipara Harbour produced a **Marsh Sandpiper** on 2/2. Two **Terek Sandpipers** were on Big Sand Island in the Kaipara Harbour on 14/1. Papakanui (South Kaipara Harbour) had a **White-winged Black Tern** on 8/2. Another was seen at the other end of the county on the New River Estuary (Southland) on 21/2. A first year **Common Tern** was roosting with White-fronted Terns at the Manawatu Estuary on 1/2 and another was doing the same but at Papakanui (South Kaipara Harbour) on 8/2. In a howling Nor'wester a female **Common Koel** was reported from Cape Campbell (Marlborough) on 10/3. The two long-staying **Barn Owls** were still present near Kaitaia in January. The summit of Mount Hobson (Great Barrier Island) was circled by a **Spine-tailed Swift** on 22/1 with another over a different Hauraki Gulf island, Tiritiri Matangi Island on 6/2. A **Kookaburra** was well out of its normal range at Lake Waiholā (Otago) on 4/2. **Riflemen** have been translocated to Tiritiri Matangi Island, with 31 moved from Little Barrier Island in mid-to late February.

Sources: DoC media releases; @DoC Canterbury e-newsletter; Kakapo Recovery Programme website www.kakaporecovery.org.nz; Geoff Harrow; Forest & Bird eNews; Bev Elliott; OSNZ Otago newsletter.



Far North

Since the last roundup, there have been two wader count weekends, one in mid-November and one in mid-February. While the Regional Rep and the Promotions Officer were otherwise engaged on Codfish Island, Lauren Alston, Anthea Goodwin and Kevin Matthews organised the spring count with eight people taking part. The February count included both the above November absentees and a total of 9 counters.

As both counts are being mentioned in the same roundup we can report on some trends. Increases between November and February include Pied Oystercatcher (60 to 946), New Zealand Dotterel (15 to 21), Wrybill (7 to 40), Pacific Golden Plover (0 to 63), Banded Dotterel (5 to 244) and Whimbrel (0 to 41). Decreases include Variable Oystercatcher (112 to 55), Turnstone (462 to 122), Lesser Knot (1,517 to 720) and Bar-tailed Godwit (6,710 to 5,793). However, it should be noted that the figures cover a very wide area from Rangaunu to Parengarenga, coverage was not consistent in all areas, and birds on Kokota Sandspit are always extremely wary and mobile making them very difficult to count. Separating Lesser Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits in tight flocks involved much guesswork. There were very few of the less common species, just one Eastern Curlew in November and one Curlew Sandpiper in February. Wouldn't it be good if a shorebird centre could be set up close to Paua? The area needs much more attention and observer coverage.

We have had two indoor meetings in recent months, firstly in Kerikeri in December when Carol and I gave a presentation on our recent voluntary birding 'work' in north Peru. In January we again met at Bill Campbell's home in Cable Bay when Evan Ward and Lynda McGrory-Ward produced some great images and video clips of the wilderness and wildlife of Raoul Island in the Kermadecs, where they have spent several months in the course of their work with DoC. They are based at the Kaitaia office.

Sadly the nest of the only pair of Kokako in Puketi Forest was predated (possibly by a Harrier) but the female was unharmed. We hear that after the nest predation she left the nest area, but is now gradually making her way back so there is hope for another attempt. Tomtits seem to be increasing and can regularly be seen around the Manginangina Boardwalk. Investigations are taking place into the possible re-introduction of Robins into the forest.

Recent reports of unusual species include the long-staying Barn Owls near Kaitaia, a possible Nankeen Kestrel near Awanui in January and a frigatebird species over the Hokianga Estuary in February. It would have been nice to have substantiated the last two. Bitterns have been seen in several places, and White-faced Storm Petrels, Buller's and Flesh-footed Shearwaters seem to have been more regular in the Bay of Islands recently (or perhaps more observers were around?)

DETLEF DAVIES

Northland

Last year concluded with a lovely dinner out for a smorgasbord meal, which was much enjoyed by all. For the first meeting this year we had an update on the New Zealand Fairy Tern by Audrey Williams and on the Chatham Island Taiko by David Crockett.

A group of Northland OSNZ members helped monitor the Fairy Terns at Waipu, but unfortunately due to predator problems no chicks fledged from this site. Three Fairy Tern chicks fledged at Mangawhai and two at Pakiri. The New Zealand Fairy Tern Trust is working towards a memorandum of understanding with DoC and is also waiting to hear about a funding application for a new boat from the Lotteries Commission.

Thirteen Chatham Island Taiko chicks fledged during the last breeding season and the Taiko Trust is helping out with a translocation of 80 Chatham Island Petrels to the fenced enclosure in the Freshwater area of main Chatham.

The Kaipara Harbour wader survey was carried out at the end of January and the Whangarei Harbour wader survey was carried out in mid-February. The usual numbers of birds were seen on the harbours. Beach patrols continued over summer on parts of the east and west coast beaches.

KATRINA HANSEN

Bay of Plenty and Volcanic Plateau

The Bay of Plenty region continues to attract a large number of human visitors over the summer, and with temperatures in or near the 30s over the early February period, these visitors sprawl over and around our bird spots. On stormy days, however, we delight in seeing the beach bare of people, and the gulls, terns and oystercatchers back on 'their' patch.

Chris Smuts-Kennedy addressed a good crowd at our February evening meeting. He was updating us on the current scene at Maungatautari, New Zealand's largest pest-proof-fenced area, near Cambridge. Chris outlined the history of the project, and gave us a run-down on what was there, what is now extinct, and what could be put back. The list covered not just birds, but amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. It was daunting to note how much maintenance the fence required, and the constant monitoring needed to prevent re-invasion.

A few members enjoyed a day in the Kaharoa bush, again in February. Whilst some of us had 10 year olds with 'sore knees' after a few hundred yards, I'm sure others which we failed to catch up with saw oodles of Kokako and other uncommon bush birds! However we did hear a New Zealand Pigeon coo, so I am chuffed at what we did find.

Recent sightings included a Waitangi Day coup, with ex-Canterbury man Don Hadden seeing a juvenile Black-fronted Tern at Little Waihi. This is the first instance the birds have travelled this far north in the Bay of Plenty for a number of years. Other Little Waihi records this summer have included Tim Barnard's 536 Bar-tailed Godwits in January. Other January highlights were Julian Fitter's Brown Skua and Black Petrel between Motiti and Motunau Islands, and roving Waikato member David Riddell's Volcanic Plateau sightings of Fernbirds, Whiteheads and Rifleman: all good fodder for the travelling birder.

Another Black Petrel was injured by a boat prop off the Mt Maunganui coast, reflecting the huge numbers of boats that exit Tauranga Harbour over the summer. Julian's seabird records are our only ones, and in February he saw an Arctic Skua and three or four Flesh-footed Shearwaters off Motiti Island.

Urban Godwits were to the fore on our recent high tidal events with at least 2,500 at Ferguson Park, Matua. Elaine Ward was the lucky finder on the day. Another urban rarity was a Spotless Crake seen by Norah Peachman in February, lining up for a go at the Omokoroa Golf Course. Given golfing terms often reflect birds - 'eagle', 'birdie' and 'albatross' - I wonder what a 'crake' would be in terms of your golf score? A hole in one plus the tee back in the bag?

Grey-faced Petrels have enjoyed their best season on Mauao, if you can assume certain things during last season. Extra pest control from the Forest & Bird teams working on the bush above the main colonies seem to have made the difference this season, with 49 chicks banded. 48 are known to have survived past fledging stage, with the lightest chick banded (by far), being found dead on Mount Main Beach a few days after banding. How it managed to fledge is an unknown. What is known is the species is a tough fighter, but not when it comes to rats at egg and chick times. This is the best chick tally ever in the 19 year history of the project. The glossy Forest & Bird Magazine featured two of our 'star' field assistants, Marcus and Ben Richards, much to our collective pride, on the magazine's rangatahi page, which profiles young Forest & Bird members and their work with our wildlife. Marcus is our sole junior OSNZ member - well done!

PAUL CUMING

Taranaki

Dean Caskey from DoC provided a progress report at the final meeting of 2008 regarding the re-introduction of Blue Ducks into Egmont National Park. The birds appear to be settling in well with two ducklings in 2005 and other birds pairing up and attempting to breed; very positive news. Extensive predator control throughout the area has been a great help. Dean also reports that thirty-eight traps have been installed at Pungaereere Stream where New Zealand Dotterels are attempting to breed. So far two Stoats, two Weasels and one Hedgehog have been caught. At Sandy Bay, another breeding site further down the coast, a local trapper caught a pregnant Ferret carrying nine embryos. In a first record for this beach the tracks of three Blue Penguins were recorded coming and going from the sand dunes.

Closer to home Carol Keight told us that the Kaka living around her neighbourhood was last seen at the end of October. Wayne Peters who



farms not far from Lake Mangamahoe was visited by a banded Tui, probably one from Ralph Powlesland's former Tui and Pigeon survey. David Medway is still prowling around Pukekura/Brooklands Park and reports that a pair of Paradise Shelducks at the Brooklands Bowl lake constitutes the first long-term residents of the species there. Mallards have had a good breeding season there with one female accompanied by seventeen downy ducklings. In contrast the resident Canada Geese have had an unsuccessful breeding season for the second year running. The Little Shag colony had a very good season with many fledglings seen and the colony expanding. David also found a downy-headed juvenile Morepork on the ground in the park.

At Waiongana three Cattle Egrets in full breeding plumage were seen one evening in late November, a rather unusual record as none had been reported from North Taranaki all winter. Active offshore were White-fronted Terns with skuas also in attendance.

As usual at the close of formalities at the December meeting members engaged in a feeding frenzy of Christmas mince pies and other goodies whilst engaging in polite social conversation between mouthfuls.

The December outing to Bushy Park (around two hours drive south of New Plymouth) was a real cracker with eight members in attendance. We unintentionally split into two groups, and it was interesting to note the difference in observations, with one group reporting a Falcon and the other a Grey Warbler feeding a fat, demanding Shining Cuckoo fledgling. There was an outpouring of sympathy for the little warbler. Bushy Park is fully predator-fenced and fifteen native species (including Saddleback) and twelve introduced species were seen, the oddity being a Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo in a nearby gum tree. This park shows the potential for Lake Rotokare given time.

There was, as usual, no indoor meeting in January, as members scattered far and wide taking advantage of the summer weather. Sixteen of us reunited at Waiongana for the now traditional Birding and Barbecue. It was a lovely summer day and evening with plenty of food and conversation; another magical time at Waiongana.

Early January saw the northern migration of Pied Oystercatchers with a local camper telling me of seeing some flocks of 200-300 birds. Ten Wrybills resting on the beach flew up and joined another fourteen on their way, the most Wrybills I have ever seen here. There were also a few flocks of Pied Stilts passing through.

At February's meeting there was a lot to catch up on. Bill and Rosemary Messenger had had a Peacock around their home, and had also heard a cock Pheasant and a Morepork. David Medway had two juvenile Moreporks at his home, three Tui fledged from nests in his trees, and he was visited also by two adult and one juvenile Eastern Rosella eating cones from a Tanekaha. Four Shining Cuckoos were seen together at Pukeiti, and at dusk in central New Plymouth a Morepork trying to evade four Tui crashed into a window. Fortunately the bird recovered. Seven Royal Spoonbills were recorded on the Mokau River.

Bill and Rosemary gave us a talk on their eight-day visit to Lord Howe Island. This beautiful island, woefully abused by humans, still has a wonderful array of bird species. Thankfully the local population is working to repair the damage, and 75% of the island is now fully protected. The Messengers came away with a comprehensive bird list including Flesh-footed Shearwater, Masked Booby, Lord Howe Island Golden Whistler, and Pacific Golden Plover to name a few. This was their second visit to this tropical paradise.

February's field trip to the Rerekapa Track, by way of contrast, was rather quiet. Open country birds were hard to find, and few bush birds were encountered until we crossed the saddle. Then, as on previous trips, bird life increased with Robins seen and Long-tailed Cuckoos heard. On the walk out not a bird was seen until we reached the vehicle.

Beach patrols during December and January turned up little of note apart from a Shy Albatross and a Buller's Shearwater. Banded Dotterels are steadily increasing at Waiongana, and in late February numbered seventy-two birds, including a banded individual back for its fifth year. One afternoon in February there were 132 Pied Stilts on the beach, but only ten the next morning.

PETER FRYER

Hawkes Bay

The region's activities got underway for 2009 on February 1st with a short meeting, followed by a get-together and barbecue meal at Christine and Jim Hamilton's home at Kereru. There was a good attendance of members, along with some family and friends. The main focus was planning field outings and meetings for the year. First on the agenda was the February wader census. We were fortunate to have good weather conditions for both the Porangahau and Ahuriri/Waitangi counts. We always hope for New Zealand Dotterels at Porangahau, so getting 13 in our count was great.

Other sightings include a Little Egret in breeding plumage seen by Ian and Norma Smith at Waitangi in late January. At Ahuriri the water level in the lagoon has been very low. These conditions seemed to suit the less common small waders. Four Pectoral Sandpipers, three Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and two Red-necked Stints were seen regularly from mid-January, and are still present at the time of writing at the end of February. The Grey-tailed Tattler is also still around, and up to 17 Pacific Golden Plovers have been reported. Brent Stephenson spotted a Shore Plover on 5th January on one of his flying visits home.

On a visit to Lake Opouahi on 6th February several Fernbirds were seen and heard by Wayne and Margaret Twydale. This area has a predator-proof fence around it as it is used as a Kiwi crèche. Fernbirds are obviously thriving in these conditions as well.

MARGARET TWYDALE

Wanganui

Summer has been quiet as far as group activities are concerned. A field trip to Christie's Lake in mid November confirmed the presence there of Spotless Crake. None were seen but at least three birds responded to broadcasts of their call. Fernbird was also noted, along with a range of more common species.

Fernbird hit the headlines again in the New Year, when Ormond Torr found and photographed a solitary bird at Gordon Park, a small scenic reserve 3 km east of Wanganui. The reserve is a 12 ha remnant of lowland Kahikatea-dominated swamp forest with another 2 ha of shrubby grassland on the fringes. A local group of volunteers has been working with DoC to restore the forest, starting with a programme to eradicate invasive plants. How the Fernbird got to the reserve is a mystery, as the nearest known other pairs are 10-12 km away. A number of streams wind their way through the surrounding agricultural landscapes, most with tall grass- and shrub-covered banks. Presumably the bird moved along these landscape 'corridors' before arriving at the reserve. The bird was both extremely vocal and highly responsive to imitated calls, often approaching to within a few metres. As a result, the photographic fraternity had a succession of field-days, with everyone coming away well pleased with their results. Unfortunately, all good things come to an end; the bird hasn't been seen or heard again since mid-January.

Another excursion was held in early January, to the Manawatu estuary. The trip formed part of the Wanganui Summer Programme and provided an opportunity for members of the general public to come along to hear about and see some of the species present there close up. An overcast day that turned rainy later was brightened by the sight of 103 Wrybills, over 100 Lesser Knots and Bar-tailed Godwits, 30 Banded Dotterels, and six or more Black-billed Gulls, including one pair still feeding three juveniles with prominent brown edges to their back feathers and scapulars. Joan Leckie kindly came along to describe the reasoning behind this estuary being declared one of New Zealand's six wetlands of international importance as an example of multiple use and integrated management. The dull afternoon (weather-wise only) was enlivened by an impromptu talk by Jill Rapson (Massey University) on the dynamics of the dune system, interspersed with humorous asides aimed at those who got too diverted looking at Skylarks and Goldfinches.

Monitoring of the waders on the Wanganui Estuary has continued, with small numbers of Pied Oystercatchers and Wrybills being recorded on passage as they migrated north from their breeding grounds in the South Island. Four male Bar-tailed Godwits caught and marked with flags bearing unique alphabetic codes at the Manawatu estuary in late October spent the summer on the Wanganui estuary, moving there a few days after being marked. A female Bar-tailed Godwit with a distinctive white flag (placed on the wrong tibia in Auckland prior to 2005) was recorded on the estuary for the third successive year. Apart from that, little else out of the ordinary has been seen. A few Lesser Knots were recorded in early summer moving through, but none stayed over as some have done in previous years.



Elsewhere along the coast, Ormond Torr recorded at least 24 Royal Spoonbills on the Whangaehu Estuary (more than have been recorded recently on the Whanganui estuary), while Phil and Rosalind Thompson photographed a probable Pied x Black Stilt hybrid at Koitiata Lagoon, Turakina. This follows a record of another hybrid there in August 2008. The Nankeen Night Herons have abandoned their roost in forest along the Kauarapaoa Road, at least for the time being. One bird was heard leaving the species' previous, less-accessible roost near the mouth of the Kauarapaoa Stream on the Whanganui River in mid-February. In late February Peter Frost received information from Jerusalem of possible fledglings near where the species had been reliably reported a number of times last year.

We seem to be seeing the spread of a number of introduced and feral species in the region. Mynas in Wanganui appear to have increased over the past couple of years. Keith Beutrais and Phil Thompson both reported recent sightings of Eastern Rosellas, in Wanganui and near Fordell respectively, with Phil also reporting second-hand a sighting of this species from Waitahinga, on Rangitatau East Road. This species has not been recorded close to Wanganui before and may be spreading. There have been other records from the district in the past year. Ormond Torr found a flock of nine Canada Geese at Lake Pauri in November and then saw some more (or the same birds) on the Whangaehu Estuary in December. Peter Frost recorded Barbary Doves at two localities in January and February. The birds may be escapees, though their plumage and behaviour doesn't suggest so. Some visit the aviaries at Virginia Lake, feeding on handouts and spill-overs. California Quail seems to have become a suburban bird in Wanganui, with recent records from Bill Greenwood and Ian Bell adding to others in recent years. It is not clear if this reflects the increasingly shrubby nature of Wanganui gardens, or the species' adaptability, or both. With the exception of the quail and the Mynas, none of these species have been recorded in or close to Wanganui before.

Our group contains some long distance wanderers, including Paul Gibson, who spent early December in the sub-Antarctic, photographing the birds on the Campbell and Auckland Island groups for a revised edition of his book *New Zealand Birds—a Diverse Selection*. He returned with many stunning pictures and some unusual records, including a vagrant Red-necked Stint. Somewhat closer to home, but outside our area, Colin Ogle recorded Spotless Crake on Broadlands Farm in the Pohangina Valley in late February. After hearing a bird give a 'whit' call, he told the group he was with that he suspected Spotless Crake. He then impressed everyone by described how the species also has a loud 'chrrrrr' call, at which point a separate bird obliged by giving it.

Paul and Colin gave richly illustrated talks on birds and habitats to big audiences at the Wanganui Summer Programme. Our November and February meetings were managed as 'show and tell' events. In mid-February, Keith Springer, ex-Wanganui but now working for the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, talked to a few members about the plan to eradicate rabbits, rats and mice from Macquarie Island, following the earlier successful removal of feral cats. Rabbit numbers have been increasing after the initial knockdown that followed the introduction of the myxoma virus in the 1970s, and is estimated now to be over 100,000. The programme, which will cost about A\$25 million over five years, involves using aerial drops of brodifacoum followed by systematic elimination of any survivors using a combination of specially trained dogs, mostly from New Zealand, and their handler-hunters. Seeing pictures of the massive destruction caused by rabbits to the vegetation on this biosphere reserve, and the corresponding threats to many of the birds, makes a compelling case for such a costly and complex operation.

PETER FROST

Wairarapa

The annual opportunity for individuals of the public to visit Maud Island was taken up by a number of members from the Wairarapa region. Access was courtesy of DoC and Gary Orchard of Pelorus Tours. Departing from Havelock at 9 am on a calm, hot sunny day, our launch began its full-day return trip on Pelorus Sound. With an onboard commentary passengers enjoyed the numerous bays, and learned something of the history of the sound.

The launch moved in for a close-up view of a Spotted Shag colony on a rocky beach with overhanging native bush. There were plenty of juveniles, and the birds seemed unruffled by close human proximity. Also during the trip, there was a sighting of a King Shag.

A highlight was a visit to a Gannet colony at Waimaru. It was just offshore on a rocky outcrop estimated to be about 40 x 10 m.

The colony was described in *Notornis* 2004, Vol 51, and established in the mid-1970s. In the late 1980s it had extended to the adjacent mainland on a steep hillside. It is thought that the prevailing wind in this bay was conducive to the needs of Gannet flight take-off. The boat glided close in and those onboard were able to closely observe birds landing, taking off and feeding the numerous juveniles. The colony on the adjacent hillside was fairly high up and appeared rather patchy and scruffy. This was probably because the nests areas were in open areas interspersed between low-growing shrubs.

Departing the Gannet colony, the group consumed packed lunches en route to Maud Island for a 1 pm landing. The DoC Rangers and their two delightful young children were on the jetty to greet the party and begin the guided tour.

With the enticement of food pellets, a Takahe provided a photo opportunity but was all too soon lured down a gully by its partner's call. Other Takahe pairs, nesting further up the hillside, began calling, declaring their territorial boundaries. Takahe are breeding successfully on Maud Island, and they traverse the island seeking out territories.

The Rangers had collected some Maud Island fauna which was handed around in containers. Some were able to be removed and handled, including a Marlborough Sounds Giant Weta. Also in the collection were a skink, gecko, weevil, and of course the Maud Island Frog.

Maud Island was farmed in the past, and the native bush cleared apart from a remnant stand behind the original farm house. This bush had been preserved because it contained a fresh-water spring providing the source of the domestic water supply.

The farm children had always known that croak-less frogs were present, but it was only when a scientist learned of their attributes that it was realised they were a native frog. They were named the Maud Island Frog because they were endemic to that island. Nowadays they have also been translocated to other islands in the Sounds.

On a guided walk to a Second World War gun emplacement, regenerating bush provided some welcome shade, and was home to numerous Tui and Fantails. Oystercatchers could be heard on the shoreline below.

This was a venture into the world of biodiversity rather than strictly a birding trip, but for most birders biodiversity is the totality that surely enables a full appreciation of birds.

The region's AGM was held in February. All standing office-holders were re-elected but concern was expressed that, of 34 members, the pool of those willing and able to hold office was rapidly diminishing. The AGM was followed by an informal sharing of recent birding experiences and observations.

February's field trip was to Canada Flats on Parkers Road, Carterton. It was noted from the visitor's book that some members had visited Canada Flats in June 2005 and it was remembered to have been very cold! It was fairly cool this time too after a southerly had swept through, but well worth the visit.

Howard Egan is a remarkable conservationist and over 20 years has transformed his 47 acres from scrubby farmland into areas of bush (regenerating after wiring off from stock) and two splendid lagoons in the wetland areas he has created. These lagoons were bulldozed out and Howard planted literally hundreds of trees and shrubs, mostly native, with some exotics. As he says "if you want birds to come, you must plant for shelter and feeding".

The view of the larger lagoon, which entails a short climb above his house, is spectacular. The lagoons are fed in part, by run-off from the hills, springs and access to races running through his property. Despite misgivings from other sections of the community, Howard is passionate about Canada Geese, saying poor management has resulted in them being declared a pest. The lagoons are visited by the geese in the breeding season and also by other water birds such as White-faced Heron, Pied Stilt and Mallard.

On our walk in the bush area we saw a family of Fantails and heard Grey Warbler, but according to Howard, at least 34 species of birds have been noted on his property. Three recently rescued Pheasants were happily scratching in front of his veranda, completing a thoroughly inspiring expedition for our members.

BARBARA LOVATT



Nelson

David and Vicki Melville were generous hosts of a Christmas barbecue party at their Dovedale property in December. The inclement weather didn't dampen the spirits of the twenty people present.

Banding of Caspian Tern chicks on the Bells Island shellbank colony in early December was described by Willie Cook as the best on record with a total of 62 birds banded. Thanks go to Stuart Wood, who mustered a team of keen teenagers to help with the capture and rapid data collection; a pleasing feature of this annual exercise.

Steve Wood has had Cirl Buntings nesting on his property, and also reported sightings from Ngatimoti, Lower Moutere and out as far as Kaiteriteri this year.

The Motueka Sandspit has had a bad spell reports Pauline Samways. A large colony of White-fronted Terns, on the spit for its fourth consecutive year, was washed out by high tides and a couple of storms, resulting in the birds abandoning the site for the season. Nesting close by were 40 Black-billed Gulls which suffered a similar fate. They were last seen on the 14th January when two adults and four chicks were trying to escape a rapidly incoming tide. Variable Oystercatchers have also experienced a poor breeding season on the spit with only a single fledged chick confirmed. Banded Dotterels, on the other hand, fared better, with many juveniles seen. On the February shorebird census 2,850 Bar-tailed Godwits were recorded roosting on the spit; the greatest number since 1994 when over 3,000 were recorded.

A poor breeding season for Variable Oystercatchers has also been evident at their Waimea Estuary/Rabbit Island sites. High tides were mainly responsible for this but some of the earlier chicks also disappeared. Only two broods, each of two chicks, have been given alpha numeric flags this year on Rabbit Island. A 'nursery' of immature Variable Oystercatchers bearing these flags can be seen near the central section of the beach, the part the public have most contact with. Hence they have created some interest.

Pomarine and Arctic Skuas were sighted in Nelson Haven by Peter Field and Peter Gaze on different dates. A single Whimbrel has been observed in the Bar-tailed Godwit flocks in the Haven by Peter Field over mid- to late summer.

From Golden Bay Helen Kingston has provided some detailed observations of Banded Rails in Ligar Bay. In early December 2008 a pair was seen mating. Later in January two adults and two young were seen near their nesting site. At the end of January two adults and two chicks were seen at a different site, and she suspects there may have been two pairs nesting.

Alec Milne is still following up Kokako reports. A new sighting in the headwaters of the Stanley River is proving more responsive than the Mt Xenicus Kokako.

Bush birds have had a good breeding season in the region. Blue Ducks have produced ducklings on the Takaka River, and a family of the species seen on the Cobb River near Trilobite Hut makes the trapping work organised by Chris Petyt feel worthwhile. The Rock Wren population in the area is currently being assessed by the Stocker family.

Late January and early February has seen a 'spike' in Gannet mortality, with beach wrecks on Rabbit Island, usually a rare occurrence. A total of six birds were found. Two were victims of fishing lines and lead sinkers, others looked poorly nourished. Along with the Gannets were four juvenile Blue Penguins. Again undernourishment proved to be the cause, a common cause of mortality at this time of the year.

A late February wader count on Farewell Spit proved to be a 'red letter day' for Rob Schuckard when he saw a male Greater Frigatebird.

DON COOPER

Otago

The birding year got off to an exciting start with two further attempts at cannon-netting Bar-tailed Godwits being made at Warrington Spit. A decent-sized team enjoyed the drama, but were largely thwarted by exceptionally high tides. However, nine more godwits were banded as well as some Pied Oystercatchers. Many banded godwits are still being sighted in Otago estuaries.

The George Chance Memorial Census of Great Crested Grebes, which had involved very many hours of planning over many months,

finally happened on the 21st and 22nd February, with 17 members taking part. Inclement weather caused by a low pressure system parked over the South Island did not daunt the team and an almost complete coverage of Otago lakes was made, resulting in the exciting finding that numbers in the region had doubled since 2004.

There was a record large turnout for the first indoor meeting of the year, when Lisa Hegg talked to us about her study of Yellowheads. She delighted us with beautiful photographs and recordings of the various songs, chatter and buzz calls of the birds. She described her research using DNA from modern birds and 100-year-old museum specimens to study the genetic diversity and structure of surviving Yellowhead populations. Yellowheads are on the IUCN endangered list and Lisa's findings will inform translocation strategies, the suggestion being that 60 birds should be used in re-introductions. A film crew from Great Southern Television, which is filming a series called Birdland for TV1, was at the meeting and we hope that some of Lisa's talk is included.

A few intriguing reports came in over the summer: an Australasian Little Grebe in a flooded gravel pit near Timaru; a pair of Marsh Crakes in Raupo at Lake Waihola and a Kookaburra, also seen at Waihola (this should be the first confirmed record for Otago). Six South Island Kaka were released into the Orokonui Ecosanctuary in early November.

MARY THOMPSON

Southland

In January Rob Schuckard and David Melville had their best wader catch in Southland with 33 Bar-tailed Godwits, four Lesser Knots, four Pied Oystercatchers and a lone Wrybill caught using cannon nets at the head of Awarua Bay. The Pied Oystercatchers and Wrybill were released without being banded as it was getting late in the afternoon and we had all the Godwits to process and release.

As the birds were entering the catching area a light plane flew low over the bay and the decision was made to fire, otherwise the whole flock would have taken off. Thankfully a good number were safely caught. Luckily the weather was also fine and we had a large number of helpers. Southland now has a respectable number of banded birds to keep an eye on in the coming months.

During an earlier attempt at wader catching at Awarua Bay, three Wrybills were caught in the nets. Three is an unusually large number of this species for Southland. We have had singletons reported during wader counts for the past few years but three birds together has never been reported before. What the significance of this is we are unsure but it is nice to have these birds in our patch.

On January 25th Paul Jacques reported a pale phase Arctic Skua harrying a White-fronted Tern at Fortrose, and at the same location on January 30th he spotted a Cattle Egret in breeding plumage.

Brent Stephenson visited Wakapatu Beach near Riverton (also in January) and reported seeing a Shore Plover, an 'escapee' from the translocated population on Centre Island. The bird's band combinations matched one of three birds that turned up on the same beach in September 2006, photographed by Lloyd Esler and me. We are still waiting to hear what the status is regarding the translocated population of the species on Centre Island.

On February 15th approximately 16 members of OSNZ, the Southland Natural History Field Club and the Junior Explorers Club finally got to visit Tikore Island in Bluff Harbour. We were ferried across in small groups to the island, which must hold the largest Southern Black-backed Gull colony in Southland. There were still some large gull chicks running around, with a number of dead birds also present, including chicks and older juveniles. There was little else in the way of birdlife, but we did notice a good rabbit population. The island is riddled with their burrows.

Our main reason for being on the island was to confirm that Royal Spoonbills are now breeding there. They had been spotted through a telescope in November roosting in some of the taller vegetation on the island and it was presumed this was a sign they were establishing a new breeding colony. When we reached the northern tip of the island we could see a small islet just off shore. As we approached 15-20 Spoonbills rose up from the other side of this islet and someone mentioned that a photographer from the local Camera Club had taken photos of these birds on the nest a few months ago. This confirms that Southland now has another Royal Spoonbill colony to add to those already established.

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) 437 6470.
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

Steve Sawyer, C/-Ecoworks NZ
369 Wharerata Road, RD1, Gisborne
Ph (06) 867 2888 (w), (06) 867 5889 (h) or 027 209 6049
Email ecoworksNZ@xtra.co.nz

Hawkes 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.
Ph (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), Mahaanui
Area DoC Office, 31 Nga Mahi Road (off Blenheim Road), Sockburn,
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.

