



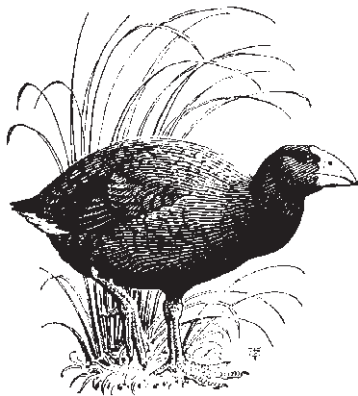
Southern *Bird*

No. 39 September 2009 • ISSN 1175-1916

Projects & Activities
Committee set up

Queen's Birthday
at Orewa





Southern Bird

No. 39 September 2009 • ISSN 1175-1916

QUOTATION

*Let the little birds sing;
Let the little lambs play;
Spring is here; and so 'tis spring; —
But not in the old way!*

*I recall a place
Where a plum-tree grew;
There you lifted up your face,
And blossoms covered you.*

*If the little birds sing,
And the little lambs play,
Spring is here; and so 'tis spring —
But not in the old way!*

Let the Little Birds Sing
by Edna St. Vincent Millay 1892-1950

CONTENTS

Spotted Shag behaviour and request	3
Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting	5
Multi-Tasking Multi-Prize winner	5
Moult Scheme Report 2008	6
Queen's Birthday at Orewa	8
Fairy Tern Calendar Review	10

COVER PHOTOS

Cover Photos

Front cover: South Island Robin on Long Island, Marlborough Sounds

Back cover: North Island Kaka at Mount Bruce

Both photos by Steve Corin

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. The views expressed by the contributors to this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

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

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

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

- To encourage, organise and promote the study of birds and their habitat use
- To foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds
- To promote the recording and wide circulation of the results of bird studies and observations
- To produce a journal and any other publication containing matters of ornithological interest
- To effect cooperation and exchange of information with other like organisations
- To assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information, from which sound management decisions can be derived
- To maintain a library of ornithological literature for the use of members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds
- To promote the archiving of observations, studies and records of birds
- To carry out any other activity which is capable of being conveniently carried out in connection with the above objects, or which directly or indirectly advances those objects

A maximum of five Meritorious Service Awards can be made every year. Nomination is easy. Simply write a citation of **not more than 150 words** on one side of an A4 sheet setting out the achievements of the person nominated, and include the signatures of two members of the Society. The closing date for nominations is 31st December 2009. They should be sent to:

The Executive Officer, OSNZ, P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040.

BORROWING OSNZ BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

Did you know that over 300 books and about 110 periodicals owned by OSNZ are held at the Auckland Museum Library? We encourage you to have a look at this valuable material! Lists of OSNZ books and periodicals can now be downloaded from our website www.osnz.org.nz. In addition, the Auckland Museum Library has an exceptionally strong collection of books on birds. Although not all are catalogued online, you will get a fair idea of the resource through the Museum's Library catalogue www.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/librarycatalogue/AdvancedSearch.aspx. You will also find a link to this catalogue on our website.

How to access bird books

Many of the books are available for borrowing through the inter-library loan scheme. Simply take the details of the books you want to your local public library (a charge may apply). If you are in Auckland, you are very welcome to visit and use the Library during opening hours (visit their website: www.aucklandmuseum.com/107/library-resources).

Alternatively, you can ask Kathy, the OSNZ Librarian, to photocopy selected pages from a book (email kathy.barrow@xtra.co.nz, or phone 09 309 0443 ext 662).

Enquiries other than for loans can be made to library@aucklandmuseum.com

How to access periodicals and articles

You can request copies of articles or parts of journals by contacting Kathy (email kathy.barrow@xtra.co.nz or phone 09 309 0443 ext 662). Alternatively, if you wish to receive journals regularly, you can ask Kathy to add your name to a circulation list (a charge may apply). So make use of those books and periodicals and get in touch with the library!

Happy reading.

INGRID HUTZLER (your Executive Officer)

Publisher

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

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

Edited by Nick Allen, 11 Seagrave Place, Ilam, Christchurch 8041. Phone (03) 358 5994, fax (03) 358 5997, Email nick_allen@xtra.co.nz

ISSN 1175-1916 (Print) ISSN 1176-2802 (Online)

JOINING THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

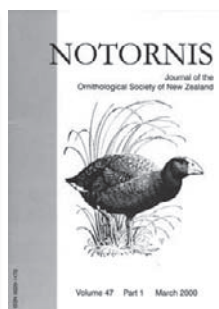
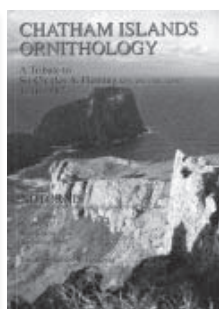
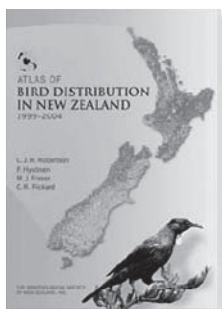
If you are reading this but are not a member of the Ornithological Society you would be very welcome to join us. Our membership consists of the whole spectrum of people interested in New Zealand/South Pacific birds from beginners with just an interest through keen birdwatchers and amateur ornithologists to professional ornithologists, so you should find others of a similar level to you, or find resources that are of interest to you.

For our very reasonable subscription fee of \$57.50 (students pay just \$30.00 and overseas/corporate rates etc also available) you will receive a quarterly issue of this magazine *Southern Bird*, which is the Society's main mouthpiece to members, has articles of bird/ornithological interest and both national and local news; a quarterly issue of *Notornis*, the Society's scientific journal; an annual issue of *The State of New Zealand's Birds*, reporting on the status of a group of species or those species using a particular habitat type; and from time to time either free or discounted major Society publications – for example a copy of the latest *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand* is currently provided free to new members while stocks last. This atlas gives a thorough overview of the distribution of every bird on mainland New Zealand and some offshore islands in its 533 pages.

In addition to reading material and, with time, a useful collection of reference books, members have access to meetings, both indoor and in the field, on a national and regional basis providing opportunities to gain knowledge on birds/ornithology and learning practical skills whilst networking with knowledgeable people. Our extensive library of books and journals is open for members to borrow and view items in it. Members are also encouraged to provide data to the Society's schemes, and sightings to the annual New Zealand Bird Report and the eBird online reporting tool. These data provide information on which research may be conducted, often with conclusions relevant to decision-making processes on the conservation of birds.

For further details and/or a membership form you should take one of three actions:

- Visit the Society's website www.osnz.org.nz
- Contact the Society's membership secretary, Yvonne Mackenzie, by writing to P.O. Box 29-532 Fendalton, Christchurch 8540, or phone 03 351 3660 or email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com
- Contact your nearest regional representative, contact details for which can be found on the back page of this magazine.



HUTTON'S SHEARWATER COLONY NEWS



The main wild colony of Hutton's Shearwater in the upper Kowhai River catchment has had a walk-in pig trap fitted on the only access route into it. Pigs are a major risk to the colony, and have probably led to the demise of other colonies nearby. The trap was constructed in March 2009, and to date has caught nothing, which in a way is good news.

The second wild colony at Shearwater Stream is to hopefully benefit from the establishment of an intensive stoat-

trapping programme, whereby 115 traps throughout the colony were checked at three-weekly intervals over the 2008-9 breeding season. Eight stoats were trapped. Breeding success was measured in both colonies using burrow-scopes and was found to be variable in 2008-9. At least three more years of trapping and measuring breeding success will be needed to determine the level of impact stoats are having in the mountain colonies.

Meanwhile at the new colony on the Kaikoura Peninsula preparations are in the final stages prior to erection of the predator-proof fence in the very near future. Fund-raising continues, aided by the making available of signed prints of a painting of Hutton's Shearwaters with a backdrop of the Seaward Kaikoura Range by renowned alpine artist Austen Deans. Fifty numbered prints, approximately 55 x 35 cm, are for sale at \$250 each, with all proceeds going to the Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust to be used for predator-proof fencing, research and monitoring.

The trust's website has recently gone live. Visit www.huttonsshearwater.org.nz.

SPOTTED SHAG BEHAVIOUR AND REQUEST

Since February 2009 a small group of Golden Bay volunteers have been studying the Spotted Shags (*Stictocarbo punctatus*) which visit Tata Beach every day. The breeding colony of spotted shags on the two Tata Islands, about 1 km offshore, has been known about for many years, as has the birds' habit of visiting and standing on the beach from first light until about half an hour after sunrise. We have observed them there for five successive mornings each month, as an outgoing tide is required for us to do this. The number of birds present has been counted and notes made on the behaviour of individual shags from arrival to departure. After all the shags have left, the piles of stones they have regurgitated are counted. Some piles have been taken for weighing and further observations.

We intend to go on with these observations until winter 2010, and have already found more questions than answers. The average count for the six months is 1,500 shags, with a minimum of 35 (on a stormy morning) and a maximum of over 5,000 (on 28th June 2009). On average, we get 50% regurgitated piles of stones compared to shag numbers.

Many of the shags we have observed pick up stones, either by diving underwater close to the beach, or from the beach itself, then regurgitate their stones later. So we wonder if ballast is indeed the reason for the stones.

We would like to know if other observers have seen Spotted Shags congregating and behaving in this way, or with different timings and behaviours.

Contact Helen Kingston: email helen.derry@xtra.co.nz



Stones regurgitated by Spotted Shags at Tata Beach showing variation in size and colour (the large ones are greenish-blue, the smaller ones paler and greyer).



Part of a large flock of Spotted Shags on Tata Beach on 28th June 2009. 5139 birds were counted that day.

Photos by John Barraclough

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND

Since my previous report a very successful Annual General Meeting weekend has been held. I understand there were approximately 130 registrants, which is probably the largest gathering in the Society's history.

The weekend ran smoothly and that was due to the organisation of Mel Galbraith and his team. While the weather was a bit on the wet and wild side for the field trips it did not detract from the opportunity to meet and talk with the other participants.

At the Annual General Meeting a presentation was made to the retiring treasurer Mark Nee, who had been in that position for the past 18 years. A small presentation was made to Mark and his wife, Agnes. Mark's real contribution to the Society will be recorded by history as one where the accounts of the Society were put onto a firm basis and we thank him for that legacy.

At the annual meeting we confirmed the election of Keith Owen to Council and we are sure that Keith's organisational ability will be of immense value to the Society in the future. We also confirmed the appointment of Paul Garner-Richards as Treasurer and we look forward to his contribution in this important role.

COUNCIL COOPTION

Recently Peter Frost from Wanganui has accepted a co-opted position onto Council for the next 12 months. Peter's *curriculum vitae* are included within this publication and as can be seen he is a relatively recent member of the Society. However, he brings a wealth of experience in birding activities and educational services which will strengthen the ability of Council to achieve strategic plan objectives.

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

As advised at the Annual General Meeting, Peter Gaze accepted the responsibility to initiate discussions and develop a committee to run this activity. This work is based on the terms of reference developed by Richard Holdaway but the activity had never proceeded due to a lack of leadership.

Following initial discussions by Peter Gaze a small committee has now been established and Peter Frost has been appointed as its convenor. The other confirmed members of the committee are Eila Lawton from Katikati, Carol Davies from Kerikeri and Mike Bell from Blenheim. Peter Gaze is also remaining as a member of the committee.

Some of the principles that have been established by this committee are set out in this issue of *Southern Bird* and these will guide the activities of the committee in the near future. If any members have other ideas or suggestions I am sure that Peter will be very receptive along with any offers of further assistance.

PUBLICATION UPDATE

The posting to members of delayed journals has not proceeded as quickly as indicated in my previous report, or as announced at the Annual General Meeting. However, the current schedule should have all publications up to date by the end of this calendar year.

A post-out in the first week in September contained the December 2008 copy of *Notornis*, along with the June 2009 *Southern Bird* and *The State of New Zealand's Birds 2008*. A further post-out in October will contain copies of the March and June 2009 *Notornis*, along with the September *Southern Bird*. The December post-out will then include the September and December 2009 issues of *Notornis*, along with the December *Southern Bird*.

It is also intended that towards the end of 2009 the *New Zealand Bird Report* for 2007 will be circulated. The reason for the delay in this report have been previously mentioned but future publications will be easier as regional recorders become more familiar with the type of records that are intended for publication.

GREY-FACED PETREL PROJECT

During a holiday in the Bay of Plenty near the end of August I took the opportunity to join Paul Cuming while he and his team gathered further information for their Grey-faced Petrel Project. This is a long-running project that was initiated by Hugh Clifford from Hamilton, and Paul has continued the study. A small group under Paul's leadership scoured the forested areas of Mount Maunganui in the evening capturing petrels above ground as they arrived from the sea. What was particularly pleasing to me was the involvement of the Richards family and the demonstration of the skills that they have learnt. This family group consisted of father David, Marcus (16), Becky (15) and Ben (12). Both Marcus and Ben have utilised this project for school science projects with great success. Ben's latest project has also recently been awarded a Department of Conservation prize, and further details are in this issue of *Southern Bird*.

This shows the values of having ongoing regional projects which can form the basis of student projects and hence enhance an interest in birds into a meaningful experience. It also shows the value of having field projects that can capture the interest of young people, the future of our organisation.

By the way 30 petrels were caught on the night I was present, all of them previously banded. There were some older birds caught, and I await with interest the outcome of Paul's investigation into the records.

OCTOBER COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of Council is scheduled for the middle of October, and while there are plenty of issues for Council to consider, if members have any issues that they wish considered they should be made known to the secretary at your earliest opportunity. Council only meets formally twice a year, but much discussion takes place via email at other times in an effort to undertake Society business in a timely manner.

DAVID LAWRIE

BIRD PEOPLE

Congratulations to Jim McKinlay of Omaha Beach on his recent receipt of an Old Blue award from Forest and Bird. The award was made for his and his late wife Laura's work in saving and protecting the New Zealand Dotterels nesting on the beach and sand spit, where about 40 now breed and 80 over-winter. Predator-trapping was a daily job for the McKinlays and other volunteers they found to help for almost seven years, until taken over by a community group four years ago. First feral cats were the main target then the main villain, which was found to be hedgehogs. Fencing of the breeding area to prevent accidental trampling by people was also initiated.

Congratulations also to Far North member, Derry Godbert, who has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to yachting in the Queen's Birthday honours. Derry and his wife Isabella are stalwart OSNZ members who began doing beach patrols in the early 1980s and still regularly walk the Ninety Mile and Karikari Beaches.

Sadly three members of the Society have passed away. Mia Colberts was one of the instigators of the Farewell to the Godwits event in Christchurch about ten years ago. Today the event regularly attracts over 500 members of the public who see the birds and learn about wader ecology and conservation. Mia lived near the Avon-Heathcote Estuary and was also heavily involved in the Bexley Wetland reserve. The Far North has lost active member Barry Stephens. A former Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy and accomplished artist Barry was a regular at indoor meetings and helped with a number of wader counts. Bill van Gorkom formerly regularly attended Taranaki meetings, being passionate about all things native New Zealand and an expert mimic of bird calls.

FALLA MEMORIAL AWARD & A.T. EDGAR JUNIOR AWARD 2010

Nominations are called for the above awards and should be with the Executive Officer (P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040) by 31st December 2009. Nominations should be on the standard forms, which are available from RRs, the Executive Officer Ingrid Hutzler at osnzeo@slingshot.co.nz or the Society's website www.osnz.org.nz/geninfo.htm.

The Awards Committee will consider all nominations, and its recommendations will be forwarded to Council for consideration at its spring meeting.

Further information on OSNZ award procedures is available from your RR or the Society's website.

Please note the changed submission date for the above awards.



MINUTES OF THE 70TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

HELD AT OREWA ON 30TH MAY 2009

The Acting President, David Lawrie, opened the meeting and welcomed approximately 90 members and friends.

APOLOGIES:

Richard Holdaway, Paul Scofield, Keith Owen, Barry Hartley, Lloyd Esler, Dai Morgan, Katrina Hansen, Roger Sharp, Yvonne Mackenzie, Jenny Doring, Phil Battley, Rob Schuckard, Kerry-Jayne Wilson, Tony Beauchamp, Christopher Robertson, Rosemary Heather, Gillian Allen, Bev Alexander, Bill Cash, Biz Bell, Adrian Riegan, Raewyn Empson, Colin Scadden, David and Ruth Crockett, Brian Boeson and Miles King.

Recent deaths: The Acting President mentioned the deaths during the past year of Dr Kenneth Thompson, Ian Carberry and Geoff Moon OBE and asked members to stand in silence for a moment of respect.

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Motion: *That the minutes of the 69th AGM, as circulated in Southern Bird, be approved*

[Mark Nee/Bruce McKinlay] carried.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer, Mark Nee, presented the annual accounts to the meeting and spoke of his 18 enjoyable years in this role. During that time there had been only two increases in subscription and he advised the meeting that it was now time to re-assess this situation. The acting President proposed a vote of thanks to Mark and his wife Agnes for their long and responsible service to the society. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Agnes, symbolic of the society's gratitude to them both.

It was noted that due to ill health the current accounts had not been fully completed.

Motion: *That the statement of accounts be completed, audited and presented to the next AGM for approval by the membership.* [Simon Fordham/Lauren Alston] carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

The report from David Lawrie had previously been circulated. The opportunity was taken to launch *The State of New Zealand's Birds 2008* which focused on the conservation of birds on the mainland and that this would be posted to all members in the next month. Special mention was made of the work of Kerry-Jayne Wilson in producing yet another edition of this useful annual publication. Annual reports had been received from all scheme convenors and David noted that a renewed effort was needed with both the Nest Record Scheme and the Moulting Recording Scheme. The work of the Rare Birds Committee is being reviewed to better manage the increasing workload that it attracts. Council was still attempting to establish a Projects and Activities Committee to oversee the society's field courses.

The report prompted discussion from the floor on a range of society activities.

Motion: *That the President's report be accepted.* [David Lawrie/Mel Galbraith] carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The positions of President, Vice President and Treasurer had expired and one nomination had been received for each. David Lawrie, Bruce McKinlay and Paul Garner-Richards were duly appointed to these three positions respectively. Keith Owen was appointed to a position on Council, being the only nominee for the vacant position. It was noted that the appointment of Bruce McKinley as Vice President left a vacant position to which someone may be co-opted by Council.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS:

Awards were presented to Sheila Petch and Ron Nilsson (in absentia) for their services to the Society, particularly in Canterbury.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

The President proposed a vote of thanks to Mel Galbraith and his team from Auckland who had organised the AGM weekend and the successful running of all events.

MULTI-TASKING

MULTI-PRIZE WINNER

Twelve year-old Ben Richards stepped up from last year's award-winning Grey-faced Petrel Science Fair project to again impress the judges at this year's event held in Rotorua. The Bay of Plenty regional competition was fierce, but Ben's mettle on the day during judge's questions, and the superb physical layout of his project boards garnered multiple prizes: the Department of Conservation Conservation Sciences Award (\$100); 3rd place for an intermediate student in the overall Science Fair; and two silver cups. Ben felt that last year he wasn't quite finished with the subject, and since he had already worked on Mauao/Mount Maunganui for some time, and it was close to where he lived, it was an easy choice to revisit the Grey-faced Petrel as a project. Last year it was to test whether Grey-faced Petrels preferred natural to artificial burrows; this time it was to test whether or not a petrel's weight changed throughout the lifespan of the bird.

Inspiration for choosing the petrels again came from his family. Ben looked up to his older brother Marcus, who is also a key Grey-faced Petrel team member. "I was following in his footsteps", said Ben. He also had his father Dave to consult, who provided advice on the layout and design of the project. Sister Becky also helped gather data during the time of the project, and all members of the family contributed in some way.

Ben said "I talked with Hugh Clifford and Paul Cuming to get some of the information, as the project looked at many years of weights". The outcome was not 100% clear due to the vagaries of the data and the longevity of the birds themselves (many birds live into, and maybe beyond, their thirties), but there was a slight trend toward the birds gaining weight as they grew older. In a remarkable feat of multi-tasking, Ben managed to do this intensely detailed Science Fair project despite also attending music lessons, band practice, rugby training, dog training and youth groups.

Ben faced some stiff competition in the DoC Award. "There was an entry on the Papamoa sand dunes which was good", he said, and he was thinking he would not get it. However, he was pleasantly surprised to walk away with the prize money on the day. His rapport with the judges was also noted, and he said, "They seemed happy with my run-through on the project".

On behalf of the Grey-faced Petrel team I would like to say it has been a real pleasure to have the Richards family as team members these past few seasons. Both Marcus and Ben are seasoned veterans now who can belt out the war whoop calls. Ben is our primary caller on the team, as his voice has the right pitch and tone, it seems, and when he whoops it up, can bring the birds in like moths to a flame. We will have to bottle his voice for future seasons!

PAUL CUMING



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

MOULT SCHEME REPORT 2008

The New Zealand moult scheme: an opportunity for further study

The physiologically demanding process of moult keeps the plumage of birds in good condition and is an important aspect of the avian life-cycle. The first step in understanding patterns of moult is to obtain basic information on the seasonality, extent and duration of moult in a given bird species. While these days we know much about the general patterns of moult in various groups of birds, there is still a need for detailed information on individual species. In New Zealand, for instance, we can ask questions about the moulting pattern of endemic passerine birds. We know these species may have characteristic patterns of breeding, given our relatively mild climatic regime. But how does their pattern of moult compare with passerines elsewhere? Again, we have introduced species from the Northern Hemisphere now established in New Zealand. Clearly their moult seasons will be out-of-sync with the Northern Hemisphere as they adjust to our Southern Hemisphere seasons, but are there more subtle changes in the length and pattern of their moult?

When the Moulting Recording Scheme was first launched (*OSNZ News* 19), the moulting patterns of many New Zealand birds were not well known. Now we have a total of 3,167 moult records for 130 species (Table 1). This adds a further 461 records since the full moult records were last summarised in 2005 (*Southern Bird* 24, pp. 14-16). Half of them are for birds in active moult, the rest are for non-moulting birds. Most of the records (63%) are from live birds. While we have now accumulated 3,167 records of moult information, many come from introduced species (Table 1). We still need many more records, especially for New Zealand endemic species, and there are frequent opportunities to contribute to the scheme, e.g. banders, beach patrollers, conservation officers, museum workers or ornithologists in general. Two species stand well ahead of others in the data set: the House Sparrow with 554 records and the Silvereye with 481 records. Next in order are Greenfinch (99), Chaffinch (94), Kaka (88), Fairy Prion (87) and Bar-tailed Godwit (85). Table 1 presents a summary of records received up to 15th April 2009, listed alphabetically.

Table 1. Summary of moult records received to date

Species	In moult	Not in moult	Alive	Dead	Total
Bellbird	13	6	19	0	19
Bittern, Australasian	0	1	0	1	1
Blackbird	32	33	54	11	65
Bunting, Cirl	3	2	5	0	5
Chaffinch	42	52	92	2	94
Creeper, Brown	1	0	1	0	1
Cuckoo, Long-tailed	0	7	2	5	7
Cuckoo, Oriental	1	1	0	2	2
Cuckoo, Pallid	0	1	0	1	1
Cuckoo, Shining	0	8	0	8	8
Curlew, Bristle-thighed	0	3	0	3	3
Curlew, Eastern	2	1	0	3	3
Dotterel, Banded	23	43	0	66	66
Dotterel, New Zealand	5	13	1	17	18
Dove, Spotted	3	0	0	3	3
Duck, Grey	2	0	2	0	2
Duncock	20	18	36	2	38
Falcon, New Zealand	8	8	0	16	16
Fantail	26	33	56	3	59
Fernbird	1	0	0	1	1
Gannet, Australasian	37	1	6	32	38
Godwit, Bar-tailed	13	72	1	84	85
Godwit, Black-tailed	0	1	0	1	1
Godwit, Hudsonian	0	3	0	3	3
Goldfinch	21	14	24	11	35
Greenfinch	64	35	96	3	99
Gull, Black-backed	17	3	2	18	20
Gull, Black-billed	4	1	2	3	5
Gull, Red-billed	47	1	37	11	48
Harrier, Australasian	39	10	1	48	49
Heron, Great White	0	1	1	0	1
Heron, White-faced	3	1	1	3	4
Kaka	13	75	76	12	88
Kea	1	0	0	1	1
Kingfisher, New Zealand	12	8	10	10	20
Knot, Lesser	9	49	1	57	58
Magpie, Australian	48	6	44	10	54
Mallard	15	13	27	1	28
Mollymawk, Black-browed	2	36	0	38	38
Mollymawk, Shy	5	26	0	31	31
Morepork	1	11	3	9	12
Myna, Common	17	0	2	15	17
Noddy, White-capped	1	0	0	1	1
Owl, Little	1	0	0	1	1
Oystercatcher, Pied	4	0	0	4	4
Oystercatcher, Variable	2	0	2	0	2
Parakeet, Red-crowned	5	2	6	1	7
Parakeet, Yellow-crowned	1	1	0	2	2
Penguin, Blue	4	2	2	4	6
Petrel, Black	0	2	0	2	2
Petrel, Blue	0	4	0	4	4

Species	In moult	Not in moult	Alive	Dead	Total
Petrel, Common Diving	3	5	0	8	8
Petrel, Cook's	0	2	0	2	2
Petrel, Grey-backed Storm	0	10	10	0	10
Petrel, Grey-faced	1	1	0	2	2
Petrel, Kerguelen	1	3	0	4	4
Petrel, Westland Black	0	1	0	1	1
Petrel, White-faced Storm	2	3	0	5	5
Petrel, White-headed	4	0	0	4	4
Phalarope, Grey	0	1	0	1	1
Pheasant	4	3	4	3	7
Pigeon, Cape (Cape Petrel)	0	2	0	2	2
Pigeon, Chatham Island	1	0	0	1	1
Pigeon, Feral (Rock Dove)	47	12	53	6	59
Pigeon, New Zealand (Kereru)	36	5	9	32	41
Pipit, New Zealand	0	1	0	1	1
Plover, Pacific Golden	20	47	0	67	67
Plover, Shore	8	23	0	31	31
Plover, Spur-winged	1	14	0	15	15
Pratincole, Oriental	0	2	0	2	2
Prion, Antarctic	1	0	0	1	1
Prion, Broad-billed	1	1	2	0	2
Prion, Fairy	0	87	0	87	87
Prion, Lesser Broad-billed	1	0	0	1	1
Prion, Salvin's	1	0	0	1	1
Pukeko	0	3	1	2	3
Quail, Brown	1	1	0	2	2
Rail, Banded	0	5	4	1	5
Redpoll	16	43	59	0	59
Robin	20	30	48	2	50
Rosella, Eastern	1	1	0	2	2
Saddleback (Tieke)	2	1	1	2	3
Sanderling	2	0	0	2	2
Sandpiper, Curlew	2	4	0	6	6
Sandpiper, Pectoral	4	12	0	16	16
Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed	1	9	0	10	10
Shag, Little	0	1	1	0	1
Shag, Pied	1	1	0	2	2
Shag, Spotted	6	1	0	7	7
Shearwater, Flesh-footed	0	2	0	2	2
Shearwater, Fluttering	11	0	0	11	11
Shearwater, Hutton's	2	1	1	2	3
Shearwater, Short-tailed	0	1	0	1	1
Silvereye	240	241	468	13	481
Skua, Arctic	2	0	0	2	2
Skua, Brown	1	0	0	1	1
Skua, Long-tailed	2	0	0	2	2
Sparrow, House	380	174	550	4	554
Spoonbill, Royal	2	0	0	2	2
Starling	19	17	29	7	36
Stilt, Black	5	4	0	9	9
Stilt, Pied	7	27	0	34	34

The following observers have made contributions to the scheme since the last report (*Southern Bird* 28, p.10): Ros Batcheler (136), the Central Passerine Banding Group (94), Monica Awasthy (37), Ralph Powlesland (2), Raewyn Empson (3) and Matt Robertson (1).

A reminder that the *N.Z. Moults Card* is used for recording data on birds in *active moult*, while for birds *not* in moult the *Summary Form for Birds Not in Moults* is used. Non-moulting birds include both those in old plumage (worn and faded) and those in new plumage (fresh without wear) and the state of plumage ('old' or 'new') needs to be stated on the card or record form. Write to me if you need supplies of the *N.Z. Moults Card* and the *Summary Form for Birds Not in Moults*, or contact your Regional Representative. Remember that you can record useful moult information on birds *at any time of year - and potentially from every bird you handle (live or dead)*! We need more data on many New Zealand species so please contribute records if you can! In the meantime, I shall be reviewing alternative or supplementary ways of entering moult data into our scheme, given the new opportunities that computing technology now provides. I thank all those observers who have sent in moult records, and especially moulters in Wellington who have made such a marked contribution over recent years. If you have moult records ready to send in, then I look forward to receiving them soon.

Ben Bell - May 2009

Species	In moult	Not in moult	Alive	Dead	Total
Stint, Red-necked	2	12	0	14	14
Stitchbird (hihi)	24	7	31	0	31
Swallow, Welcome	1	1	0	2	2
Taiko, Chatham Island	0	3	3	0	3
Tattler, Siberian	1	0	1	0	1
Tattler, Wandering	2	8	0	10	10
Teal, Brown (Pateke)	9	28	2	35	37
Teal, Campbell Island	2	11	13	0	13
Teal, Grey	0	1	1	0	1
Tern, Black-fronted	3	1	0	4	4
Tern, Caspian	2	0	0	2	2
Tern, Fairy	1	0	0	1	1
Tern, Little	2	0	0	2	2
Tern, White	2	0	0	2	2
Tern, White-fronted	10	6	0	16	16
Tern, White-winged Black	2	0	0	2	2
Thrush, Song	12	14	18	8	26
Tit, Black	4	2	6	0	6
Tomtit	10	1	11	0	11
Tui	8	18	21	5	26
Turnstone	11	18	0	29	29
Warbler, Grey	26	3	28	1	29
Weka	2	1	3	0	3
Whimbrel	1	3	0	4	4
Whimbrel, Little	3	2	0	5	5
Whitehead	4	0	4	0	4
Wrybill	9	34	1	42	43
Yellowhammer	2	1	2	1	3
TOTALS	1582	1585	1997	1170	3167

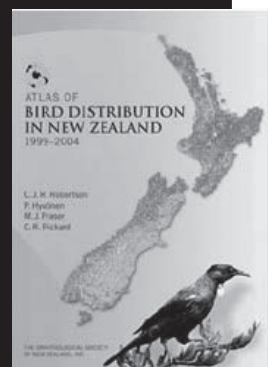
FREE ATLAS FOR NEW MEMBERS!!!

The Society is extending the presentation of a free copy of the *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004* to each new member joining OSNZ while stocks last. In addition, all new members will receive a copy of the index to *Notornis, Fifty years of bird study in New Zealand 1939-1989*. Pass the word to people who maybe haven't got around to joining the Society yet that now is a very good time to do so. Not only do they obtain membership of the premier society for those with an interest in birds and ornithology in New Zealand and the South Pacific but they will also receive these two essential books on New Zealand ornithology. The atlas is an impressive and weighty book that which will be a delight for anyone with even a small interest in New Zealand's birds.

For details of how to join the OSNZ:

- Visit the Society's website www.osnz.org.nz and download a membership form.
- Contact the Society's membership secretary, Yvonne Mackenzie at P.O. Box 29-532, Fendalton, Christchurch 8540, New Zealand. Email yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com

Contact your local regional representative – contact details are on the inside back cover of this issue of *Southern Bird*.



NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Simon Beale (Otago); Rachael Cousins (Manawatu); Dianne Fraser (Auckland); Liz Griffiths (Canterbury); Emma Knight (Auckland); Jack Lawton (Bay of Plenty); Andrew McCulloch (Gisborne/Wairoa); Timothy Martin (Auckland); Micheal Danesh Meyer (Auckland); Shinichi Nakagawa (Otago); Dean Nelson (Canterbury); Dianne Parker (Canterbury); Joyce Raffone (Taranaki); Nicolas Rawlence (Australia); Edwardo Santos (Otago); Susan Shannon (Canterbury); Bevin Shaw (Taranaki); Rachel Anderson Smith (Wellington); Maria Stocker Farrell (Canterbury); David Taylor (Manawatu); Sandra Valderrama (Waikato); Astrid van Meeuwen Dijkstra (Wellington); Laura Young (Canterbury).

We also thank the following members for their generous donations to the Society: Bill Campbell and Glenys Mather

NEW COUNCIL MEMBER – PETER FROST

Peter Frost is an ecologist living in Wanganui but working intermittently overseas, mostly at the Center for International Forestry Research in Indonesia. He was born in England but grew up in Africa, where he lived and worked for almost 60 years, mainly in Zambia, Swaziland, South Africa and Zimbabwe, before coming to New Zealand in 2006. In southern Africa he worked at the FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology at the University of Cape Town (1971-1979); the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the University of the Witwatersrand (1979-1986); and the University of Zimbabwe (1987-2006),

where he was successively, lecturer, associate professor and finally research associate at the Institute of Environmental Studies within the University.

He has diverse interests and experience, stretching from ornithology, his original field of research, through the dynamics of savanna ecosystems, changes in tropical land use and land cover, and associated changes in fire regimes, to issues of sustainable development in the tropics. He has written or co-authored 99 full-length scientific papers and book chapters in various fields; 46 shorter scientific notes, scientific reports, popular articles and book reviews; and over 40 consultancy and



technical reports. When in Wanganui, he monitors seasonal and other changes in the wader and waterbird populations on the Whanganui River Estuary, among other things.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY AT OREWA



Above: photos by Nick Allen
The Bell clan (Brian and Mike plus Paul Garner Richards) and Canterbury RR Jan Walker at the wharf dam on Tiri intently trying to turn an elusive Spotless Crake into a spotted one.

The editor's daughter chasing rare birds – in this case Greg the naughty Takahe in the visitor centre Tiri.

Members eat their lunches under the beady gaze of Greg the Takahe, Tiri

About 130 members, a record number, gathered over the Queen's Birthday holiday at Orewa for two and a half days of ornithologising, birds, conversing and meeting friends old and new.

The scientific day held indoors in, as usual, beautiful weather was held at Centrestage, a venue which was ideal for the viewing of presentations, complete with sound system, tiered seating and the electronic wizardry used these days. A number of overviews of work underway in the greater Auckland area brought us up-to-date with populations of birds nearby, and what is being done to protect and enhance them, such as population estimates for Fairy Tern, projects in the regional parks and on Tiritiri Matangi. All appetite-whetters for the next day's field trips. A number of presentations marked stages in national projects, such as the end of the Falcon distribution survey, the new checklist, and an update on wader studies. Behaviour presentations included an animated imitation by one speaker, Tony Beauchamp, of Peafowl courting moves. The day finished with a beautifully illustrated talk by Keith Woodley of his expedition to the Yukon Delta to find our breeding Bar-tailed Godwits

Saturday's meal and AGM at the out-of-town Rotary House went off without a hitch and in relatively quick time, including the presentation of flowers to Agnes Nee for husband Mark's many years of service as Treasurer, which included putting and then keeping the Society in an even/positive financial state. Hopefully Agnes shared the flowers with Mark.

Despite electrical storms the previous evening Sunday dawned fine, and stayed that way for most of the day. Thus participants split mostly into two camps with trips out by bus to predator-proof-fenced Tawharanui Regional Park and by boat to Tiritiri Matangi Island.

Tawharanui is protected by a 2.5 km predator-proof fence across the end of the peninsula. Participants on the trip were treated to sightings of re-introduced Brown Teal, New Zealand Robin and Whitehead, and serenaded by the numerous Tui, Bellbirds and Fantails. New Zealand Dotterels had recently returned and some were seen up close on the

Above photos by Chris Thompson

from left: Inside Centrestage on the Scientific Day; In the bush, Tawharanui; The cheese-maker section of OSNZ waiting for the cheese to mature, Tawharanui; Steve Braunias with the Mantelpiece Monstrosity, temporarily lost for words.

beaches of this picturesque part of the New Zealand coastline.

Tiritiri Matangi was, as usual, full of birds and members were entertained and enthralled by close encounters with such species as Stitchbird, Kokako, Saddleback, Whitehead and Robin, plus protecting their lunches from Greg the Takahe as he strutted in and around the impressive visitor centre near the lighthouse. Searches for the elusive Spotless Crake at the dam near the jetty were unfortunately fruitless going on the expressions of those intensely grilling the site from the trackside bank. No doubt it came out and did a jig around the pool wearing false spectacles and moustache straight after they left on the boat. Riflemen were found in one part of an old forest remnant to the delight of two of the guides.

Sunday night's meal, again at the Rotary House, was added to with laughter and merriment from author Steve Braunias with his personal insights on the world of ornithology, some of it based on or directed to members present. For this Steve was awarded the Mantelpiece Monstrosity, complete with backpack and ready to spot some birds, to find a corner of his abode large enough to accommodate it, display it or possibly hide it. Tony Beauchamp was awarded the Fielding Shield for the entertaining Peafowl wooing in his Scientific Day presentation.

On Monday gales put a stop to a second planned excursion to Tiri, and members split into numerous factions searching out birds in the area's many good birdwatching locations, such as Tawharanui, Shakespeare and Wenderholme Regional Parks, Strakas Refuge, and the Kaipara and Manukau Harbours.

Thus ended another successful Conference and AGM. Many thanks to Mel Galbraith and his team for putting together an enjoyable and trouble-free weekend.

PROJECT AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

After a couple of years' incubation, the OSNZ's Project and Activities Committee has eventually hatched. The members of the new committee are Carol Davies, Eila Lawton, Mike Bell, Peter Gaze, David Lawrie (ex-officio), and Peter Frost (convenor). Additional members will be sought as and when needed. Many thanks to those members of the Society who put forward numerous useful ideas during the hatching period. All of these have been noted and will be acted on in time, where possible.

From the outset, the Committee intends to work closely with Regional Representatives to foster and support the wider knowledge and enjoyment of birds among OSNZ members and beyond. Our ultimate goal is to increase both research output and quality. Worldwide, studies by amateur ornithologists (in the sense only that they are not paid to do the work) have contributed substantially to our knowledge of the natural history of birds. As a result, birds are better known biologically than almost any other animal group and have often provided the material and inspiration for more general biological principles and theories. New Zealand is no exception in this regard, with a long history of amateur-led research. That tradition continues today, and is one that we are keen to reinforce and expand. To that end, we would like to help members develop and carry out their own studies, or contribute to those of others, and to publish the results. Of course, in some cases, this initially means helping people to develop basic skills in identifying, surveying, catching, handling, and banding birds, among other things. Some people may well choose to stop at that level, content simply to enjoy finding and watching birds; others may want to go further. We hope that we can serve the interests of both groups, and others besides.

How do we propose to function? The 2007/08 survey of members' interests and expectations showed that, in addition to improving their basic skills by taking part in field courses or other learning opportunities, people wanted to be more involved in local monitoring schemes, single species studies, regional activities, and conservation projects. The OSNZ is currently compiling a list of projects being undertaken by members of the Society. We plan to work with the project leaders to identify potential openings for others to become involved in an organised way. In some cases, there may be opportunities for training, and we will attempt to develop these. Field courses will be mounted where there is sufficient demand, and where they can be run cost-effectively. Organisations such as the Miranda Shorebird Trust already offer a number of such courses, many with inputs from OSNZ members. We encourage members to use these opportunities in the first instance. For example, the Shorebird Centre will be hosting a wader identification course over the weekend 24-25th October 2009, and a more general field course during the week 13-19th January 2010, one that includes an introduction to bird banding. Details are available at www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz/events.html.

Of course, there are subjects in which the OSNZ is best placed to develop courses, including bird catching, banding and doing moult studies, and we will do so where possible. For example, Mike Bell is planning a short field course in Marlborough in January 2010, focusing on bird banding and moult. The details are currently being worked out, but if you are interested in attending, contact Mike (skua44@yahoo.co.nz) for further information. Based on what we learn from that exercise, similar short courses could be organised elsewhere if there are local experts willing to take the lead with our help. A more comprehensive field course in Marlborough in early 2011 is being considered.

Training received during field courses needs to be reinforced by trainees having early opportunities to use their newly-acquired skills. We are keen to work with individuals and groups wanting to develop their own research projects, and intend building this element into the field courses. This includes asking clear researchable questions; working out the best methods for studying these, given the resources at hand; and preparing proposals for getting extra resources where necessary. Information in the recently published *Atlas of Bird Distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004* is one source of inspiration. Some of the questions are relatively simple, such as whether the ranges of certain species in some areas are continuing to expand (e.g. Royal Spoonbill, Grey Teal, New Zealand Scaup, Australian Coot, Eastern Rosella, Spotted Dove), or contract (e.g. Californian Quail, Tomtit, New Zealand Robin, Redpoll, Myna). Studying these changes could involve members in two or more regions collaborating to map and monitor the distribution of selected species along the margins of their current distribution. What might be driving these changes, and what the consequences might be for other species, are slightly more complex questions to answer, but still possible to do with forethought, careful planning, and systematic fieldwork. For example, with the ongoing intensification of agriculture, particularly the shift in many areas to dairy farming, we might predict declines in those species that depend on rough pasture and weed seeds. Does this account for the apparent decline in Californian Quail in Waikato and the King Country, and Redpoll in the same area and in Northland? At what point does the fragmentation of the forest habitats of Tomtit and New Zealand Robin cause local populations of these species to decline? What will be the impacts of climate change? Will species such as Rock Wren be squeezed further up the Southern Alps, trapped between advancing predator populations below and diminishing habitat above? Can we design studies to answer such questions? Our task, together with the Scientific Committee of the Society, is to help members develop and undertake appropriate enquiries into these and other questions, and to equip them with the necessary skills to do so. There are clearly many things to be done, and much expectation by members to see progress on these. Rather



Wrybill



Setting up a cannon net

photos by Ingrid Hutzler.

than try to do everything at once, we want to take a more measured approach, identifying priorities – areas of most immediate need and opportunity – and endeavouring to build momentum by implementing these successfully. We cannot do this alone, and so will be working closely with Regional Representatives and Recorders, leaders and participants of ongoing projects, and those with particular expertise, to put together compelling and productive initiatives that will promote everyone's enjoyment and knowledge of birds. We look forward to working with you on that.

PETER FROST

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Subscriptions are due on 1st January.

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

REVIEW

Pridham, P and Zimmerman, R (compilers). *New Zealand Fairy Tern Calendar 2010*. 2009. Published privately. Colour illustrations, page size 212 x 298 mm, wall-mounted.

Created by two Fairy Tern workers, a stated aim of this calendar is to educate as many people as possible about this critically endangered species. It achieves this educational aim easily and goes beyond it, also providing something pleasant and/or interesting to look at each month, and then to treasure after the year is past.

The story of the species' year is told, almost month by month, with accounts of what the birds will be doing that month written by acknowledged expert on the species Gwenda Pulham. When nothing much (presumably) happens that month, e.g. in winter, the text gives information about groups monitoring and protecting the species, the recent breeding at Pakiri, and an interesting story of one tern's apparent OE (overseas experience). The text is lively, entertaining and almost jargon-free, so easily accessible to non-scientists or bird-nuts. Historical notes are often included putting today's status and habits of the species into context, and how bits of the species' ecology were pieced together over many years of patient study by many people working on or interested in it.

Each month has a separate photograph of the species, often exhibiting behaviour relevant to the text below it, or of the species in action. One illustration is a photograph of a brightly-coloured mural painted on a toilet block at Waipu Cove – one of the species' breeding sites. One photo is of a 'nest' – well the egg can be seen anyway, and there is a

hint of a slight depression in the sand. An excellent photo by the late Brian Chudleigh of a family with young chicks, is printed twice, once within the body of the calendar and also on the cover. All the photographers donated their work free of charge.

This calendar deserves to grace the wall of anyone interested in birds in New Zealand, and must surely be the first devoted to just one species of New Zealand bird. When 2011 comes round many copies, I am sure, will be safely stowed away for reference for many years to come, it being such a useful, accessible and visually appealing resource on this critically endangered species. The calendars sell for \$13, plus \$2 postage within New Zealand. All funds, minus printing costs, and bank fees will be donated to the New Zealand Fairy Tern Charitable Trust, working to help the species survive and prosper in New Zealand, another valuable reason for purchasing a copy.

Copies should be ordered from Paulla-Jean Pridham (phone 0274 991 818) or Rangi Zimmerman (phone 0276 129 974), email pirangi@vodafone.net.nz.

NICK ALLEN



New Zealand Fairy Tern Calendar 2010

Some prominent New Zealand photographers have donated their work to this unique calendar which follows the yearly cycle of New Zealand fairy terns. The accompanying text explains the basic ecology of the species, with anecdotes included.

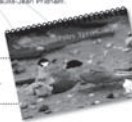
Created and designed by Rangi Zimmerman and Paulla-Jean Pridham.

Text by Gwenda Pulham.

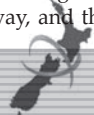
Cost \$13 each plus \$2 postage and packaging.

To order: arnold.pridham@vodafone.net.nz

ALL PROCEEDS TO
NZ FAIRY TERN CHARITABLE TRUST



Regional Roundup



Far North

After a bumper season of birding in the late summer, the cold weather seems to have kept members at home (or perhaps abroad?). One species showing high numbers recently is unfortunately the Common Myna which has reached plague proportions in nearby Kerikeri orchards.

The weather finally allowed us to get to our usual harbours for the winter wader count in July and numbers were quite low with Bar-tailed Godwits not reaching 1,000 this time. We hope this means that more birds than usual have left to breed. On the other hand, Royal Spoonbills at Awanui wharf reached an amazing 475 in early August.

North Island Weka, which were re-introduced to the Russell area a few years ago, have grown in population to an estimated 2,000 birds, with the birds being heard quite close to town. Many birds were heard during July, but they are much shyer than their southern counterparts and seldom seen. There have been sightings of four Cape Barren Geese (of unknown origin) near Cape Reinga, three Spotless Crakes together on Purerua Peninsula and a juvenile Northern Giant Petrel alive on Ninety Mile Beach.

On 14th June 30 New Zealand Robins were translocated from Mangatutu near Otorohanga (Waikato) to Puketi Forest where we hear that 15 birds are still being seen in or near the release area. Predator control will, of course, be an ongoing process and the birds will be closely monitored over the next few months.

Carol Davies is a member of the new Projects and Activities Committee, which is producing good and practical ideas, and we are looking forward to what there will be in store.

DETLEF DAVIES

Northland

Although we didn't have a meeting in April due to the meeting date falling right on Easter, we have had two visiting speakers and two meetings led by our own members since then. In May, Sioux Plowman gave an interesting talk on a pelagic trip to the Three Kings that she was on in April. The 30 lovely photos of the various seabird and other species seen were a challenge for members to try and identify.

In July, Detlef Davies gave an entertaining slide show on his and Carol's trip to Codfish Island helping with the Kakapo nest-minding. David Crockett gave an update on the RR's meeting at the AGM at our June meeting and Tony Beauchamp lead a discussion on the establishment of a Scenic Reserve along Bream Bay at the August meeting. Tony was also presented with the Chris Fielding award for his very animated demonstration of how male Peacocks call and display to the females, including wing flapping and tail twitching from his scientific day talk at Orewa. Northland members enjoyed the repeat performance.

Auckland

The ground-rush of the ensuing months leading up to Queen's Birthday Weekend culminated in, by all accounts, a successful weekend enjoyed by all. The record turn out for the Scientific Day was rewarded with a stimulating range of presentations, and the weather was (mostly) fine for the field trips. Laughter was the order of the night at our conference dinner, largely thanks to the personal insights of the world of ornithology offered by our guest speaker, Steve Braunias – though I must add that David Lawrie was in good form too! It was great being part of such mirth. I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the organising team that made the weekend flow so smoothly, and extend my thanks to all who passed on their appreciation following the event.

Meetings so far this year have enjoyed a range of topics encompassing ecology, anatomy and physiology, biosecurity and ecological restoration. Art Polkanov (Department of Conservation) raised a number of serious concerns about the potential for pest birds to establish in Auckland from species held by aviculturalists. One of the high-risk species is the Ring-necked Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*). This species has already reached pest status in parts of Europe, including London. Megan Young (Natural Sciences, Unitec) presented the results of her 2008 study on ingested plastics in a range of seabird species and types of plastics retrieved from samples of the Hauraki Gulf. This is a global issue affecting seabirds, and is especially a threat to those species that inhabit waters that receive flotsam from cities.

Susan Cunningham (Massey University) kept members spellbound with her research findings about the sensory features of kiwi beaks. Susan presented both the methodology used to explore the relative importance of the touch and smell senses, and her preliminary results showed the battery of receptor organs on the beak, and compared kiwi to wading birds. Presentations about the feeding habits of Morepork (Kirsty Denny, Massey University) and Tomtit (Joanne Peace, Massey University) represent comprehensive field observations and measurements contributing to the further ecological knowledge for these species. The behavioural insights generated from these two research projects helped to explain observations often taken for granted for the more common species.

Early this year, a small population of North Island rifleman were translocated from Little Barrier Island to Tiritiri Matangi Island. Simon Fordham, co-ordinator of the transfer, presented a detailed account of the transfer, covering the rationale, planning and logistics of the event. The population will be closely monitored over the next few years, and we await reports on its progress. The translocation represents a further step in restoring the ecological integrity of Tiritiri Matangi Island.

MEL GALBRAITH

Waikato

Various Waikato members have been busy counting birds all over the place and reporting some interesting finds. In May, seven members



gathered to visit the Howarth Wetland, Te Aroha on a fine, calm autumn morning. Waterfowl gather there for sanctuary during the shooting season and were well represented on our visit, dominated by a large number of Mallards with a wide range of plumage variations. No pure Grey Ducks could be detected with any certainty. Other waterfowl included Grey Teal, Canada Geese and Black Swans, all breeding birds, along with visiting Australasian Shoveler and Paradise Shelduck. The Little and Little Black Shags had finished breeding, but a few birds were still around, along with some Black Shags and plenty of Pukeko. We followed the path around the wetland, checking out patches of open water hoping to see something special. Leaving the path and heading through undergrowth for the large central pool, an Australasian Bittern was spotted briefly before it melted back into cover. Two more Bittern sightings were made, both of a bird in flight, so it may have been the same bird. Only one New Zealand Dabchick was spotted, which is unusual here for this time of the year, though more would be expected in the next month or so. We did discover the hoped for, but unexpected, highlight: feeding on an area of wet mud at the northern end of the wetland were two Black-fronted Dotterels. This is the first record for the site and one of the very few records of the species in the Waikato.

In June the Raglan Harbour census took place, and very good numbers of Canada Geese (501), Pied Oystercatchers (621) and Pied Stilts (480) recorded. Interestingly, over a hundred Australasian Shovelers, which have never previously been recorded during this census, were also counted. Also in June censuses were conducted on the Kawhia and Aotea Harbours in cold and breezy conditions. While no Shovelers were seen, impressive numbers of wading birds were recorded; for example, nearly 5,000 Pied Oystercatchers, 500 Bar-tailed Godwits and 650 Banded Dotterels.

In July, a field trip was undertaken to see what has been happening at out at Maungatautari. Chris Smuts-Kennedy kindly showed a large group of us around the southern cell, which now boasts large populations of Kaka and Stitchbird. Conveniently, several sugar water feeders have been placed close to the walking tracks, so we were able to get great views of the birds, which are now all gaining their splendid breeding plumages. As luck would have it, we passed the Kaka aviaries just on feeding time, but to our surprise the wild Kaka seemed reluctant to visit their feeders. The reason for this became clear when a New Zealand Falcon was spotted perching not more than 15-20 m away! We were also treated to a visit to the Tautari enclosure, which is home to two Takahe. These birds were very accommodating, and wandered around in very close proximity, giving us ample opportunity to get some good photographs. Afterwards, some of the group stayed on and had dinner at the Out in the Styx restaurant.

A good and varied selection of speakers has featured at our monthly meetings. In May, Waikato University PhD student, Sandra Valderama, talked about her previous research saving the endangered Nicefori Wren in Columbia. In June, we changed tack slightly as Lucy Bridgman talked about her PhD research on the interactions between mice and ship rats in forest fragments. Finally, in July, Graham Saunders, a lecturer from the University of Waikato, gave us a talk on Irish birds, and differences in avifauna between England and Ireland.

DAI MORGAN and GEOFF FOREMAN

Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

Ben Richards, a key member of the Grey-faced Petrel Team, continues to be very successful in the Regional Science Fair Competition, with third place overall in Bay of Plenty Regional's at Rotorua in August. Ben also picked up the DoC Cup for his project on whether Grey-faced Petrel weights change with age. Hearty congratulations to Ben from the Grey-faced Petrel Team! This OSNZ project is in the 20th year, with this year's field work about to finish up. OSNZ President David Lawrie paid a welcome visit on a rather damp night, and the weather saw fit to hold off for the duration of the nights work.

In May we returned to Motuotau/Rabbit Island for a 10-year check on the colony there. Being only 800 m offshore, it is a unique spot where wave action and pest control have combined to ensure this island remains pest free. 120 birds were handled and a reasonable number of these birds were wearing bands, illustrating the longevity of the species. Also displaying good longevity were two Common Diving Petrels, which were banded as adults over two years ago. One lesson learnt from night work on the island was to pick and choose your time to head back in the dark, as rocks aren't always very visible at 1am in the morning from a kayak! A supplemental to the lesson is that if you pack your kayak well in advance make sure you can lift it off the car...

Currently we have had more youngsters helping on the project than at any other stage during the lifespan of the project. Hopefully this spins off in the future as they grow up with a healthy respect for the birds on the mountain and on the island.

Recent bird sightings in Tauranga have centred on the newly opened-up wetlands of the Gordon Carmichael Reserve. This reserve lies within the city boundaries, and has healthy regular populations of Australasian Shoveler, Grey Teal, Scaup, Grey Duck and Paradise Shelduck. Recent specialties included Fernbird, Banded Rail, a lone Royal Spoonbill (which made the local newspaper in July) and a Black-fronted Dotterel in August. Whilst it is hard to track down the dotterel, which is equal in size to nearby grazing Skylarks, the Spoonbill stands out like the proverbial sore thumb! A loop walk can take an hour around the reserve if there are plenty of

birds to see, or you can take five minutes to glimpse over 30 species on your way to town in the mornings.

Sightings from around the Volcanic Plateau region continue to reveal some interesting records. From Raetihi comes welcome news of the continuing presence of the Blue Ducks at Ruatiti Domain, with five seen including a colour-banded bird in August (Ian Johnson and Bill Abbott). New Zealand Scaup are in the 200-500 region at all times at Hamurana Springs, Lake Rotorua, according to Shane McPherson. A regular White Heron has been seen at the Ohau Channel, between Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti, reports Tim Barnard.

Back out by the coast, a White Heron was seen in July by Sally Greenaway at Waikaraka Estuary, Te Puna. Maketu has had an interesting swath of birds, with two Wrybills being seen amongst the dozen New Zealand Dotterels in August by Julian Fitter, and Tim Barnard romping in with 56 Spoonbills and a Little Tern in July.

Blue Penguin deaths are regularly occurring on the coast, with Ohope, Opotiki, Omanu and the Matata Straights being areas reported. Tui have been seen in huge numbers, about 60 on Mauao/Mt Maunganui in August, and the Pye's Pa Crematorium Taiwanese Cherry trees are out, so head there for your Tui fix! Long-time OSNZ member Norah Peachman continues to feed sightings of birds from her patch, the Omokoroa Golf Course. The latest being 40 Grey Teal in May. Reef Herons are making their presence known and welcome, with a bird in the Tauranga CBD, making its way under the city side wharf. Another has been seen near the Maketu Harbour entrance.

Detlef and Carol Davies duetted in an evening meeting to be envious of in August, detailing their recent stint on Whenua Hou/Codfish Island assisting with the Kakapo monitoring programme. Their incredible photographs were supplemented with the tales of errant Kakapo stealing the food of their neighbours, of getting lost in the wilderness of the island's interior, and of the abundant birdlife that surrounds the hut. An added bonus was the presence of Don Merton, an intrinsic part of Kakapo management in New Zealand since the recovery programme was initiated in the 1970s. Don provided an addendum of the project up until the current year, with the population being over 100 birds this season and counting. The evening meeting was in the truest sense of the phrase standing room only.

Beach patrols lately have been mixed, with the easterly storms not providing much in the way of wrecks. Julian Fitter did the Maketu area in August, gathering up the usual suspects: Common Diving Petrels, Blue Penguins and assorted ungulates. A recent patrol by me after a huge easterly gale along the same beach resulted in zip, and another 'nul points' scored along Papamoa Beach on the same day. You really do need to pick and choose your times here in the Bay.

Marilyn Court is instigating a Royal Spoonbill project, and would like any Bay of Plenty or Volcanic Plateau sightings of the species. Remember to CC them to the Regional Recorder, who is...me!

Hearty congratulations to local author and member Julian Fitter, who along with co-authors Tui de Roy and Mark Jones, was nominated finalist for a Montana Book Award recently for their book *Albatross: Their World, Their Ways*. It is an honour to have Julian now in our midst.

PAUL CUMING

Taranaki

A pair of Cattle Egrets at Waiongana on June 1st constituted the first winter record of this species in North Taranaki for the last four to five years. Other members' reports were, as befitting the time of year, rather sparse although Barry Hartley didn't let the weather deter him. He was out and about watching albatrosses and Sooty and Fluttering Shearwaters off the South Taranaki coast, and counting 274 Canada Geese at Lake Mangamahoe. He then headed north to spot three Pied Shags at Mokau, an uncommon visitor to Taranaki. Kara Prankerd spent some late nights out in the back blocks listening for Kiwi with some success.

Kris Grabow from the Taranaki Kiwi Trust gave us an update on the activities of the trust and Operation Nest Egg. Over four seasons 41 sub-adult Brown Kiwi have been released. Three have been returned to Aotuhia in Eastern Taranaki, from where the eggs are being gathered, four have gone to Maungatautari, and eight are in waiting at Bushy Park. The intent is to track more males to add to the gene pool. Kris is also heavily involved in the community Kiwi Protection Project where the Kiwi Trust is helping with trapping on private land by providing a plan and traps. There are six projects running, with a dozen more waiting to start when funding becomes available. This is a very worthwhile project as valuable contacts have been made, with farmers and hunters putting their dogs through aversion training.

The field trip was the official May outing around Pukekura Park with those who attended having an enjoyable ramble.

The July meeting started on a sombre note with Barry Hartley commenting on the passing of Bill van Gorkom, recalling his passion



and dedication to all things connected with native New Zealand and his continual interest in adding to his vast knowledge. Although Bill had retired from attending meetings sometime ago he still maintained contact and no-one has yet offered to take up where he left off with his imitation of bird calls.

Elections were held at record speed with all incumbents being returned to their positions; this despite the Regional Recorder and the Treasurer not even being in attendance. So much for democracy!

July's members' reports demonstrated that those who were out and about managed to spot quite a few interesting birds, particularly two juvenile Spotted Shags at Opunake Bay, a very rare visitor to Taranaki. They were seen by Barry Hartley, who also saw 67 Banded Dotterels at Sandy Bay, an unusually high number, and three Black-fronted Terns a bit further up the coast. David Medway was, as usual, prowling around Pukekura/Brooklands Park checking out the Tui as they checked out the state of the *Prunus campanulata* flowers. He managed to drag himself away for long enough to verify the report of a New Zealand Dabchick on a pond close to New Plymouth.

Wintry weather caused the postponement of the July field trip to August, with three members enjoying a leisurely cruise around various locations in North Taranaki starting with the Waitara river estuary and ending at the Mokau River. One Royal Spoonbill was on the usual roost on the Waitara River, 62 Black Swans were on a nearby lake, and at Urenui a New Zealand Pigeon was seen display-diving. The Mokau River was, as expected, the highlight with five Royal Spoonbills at roost, an almost Black Stilt and 16 Pied Oystercatchers seen along with many other interesting birds.

At the indoor August meeting a brief discussion was held as to the whereabouts of the 2007 *New Zealand Bird Report*. Hopefully rumours of its extinction are greatly exaggerated. The twelve-month bird survey at Lake Rotokare has been completed.

The Rapanui Grey-faced Petrel colony has received a write up in the QEII trust magazine. Several of our members are involved with the colony trust and Barry Hartley and I spent a spectacular but rather cold evening there recently. There was more sign of nesting this year than last, and birds were heard calling, with one seen on the ground.

The sudden unavailability of August's speaker had David Medway filling the breach at a late stage. He spoke about the recent history of Kaka in Taranaki, and Pukekura/Brooklands Park in particular. He had recently seen one in the park feeding on the flowers of *Camellia japonica*. The first report of Kaka in the park was three in 1985, and from 2002-8 David has seen up to three at any one time. They feed at a variety of fruit and flowers, but especially Kowhai nectar. Kaka have been seen at Barrett Domain close to the park, and at Pukeiti on four occasions since 2002.

In August Bill Messenger had three Tui around his home and also watched a pair of Pukeko engaging in a brawl that resulted in them rolling down hill claws locked together. Tui and Morepork have been active and vocal around the city, and as usual with spring approaching Ian Dudding had a New Zealand Pigeon eating the petals of his magnolia. Barry Hartley saw four adult Spotted Shags on the old wharf piles at Opunake. At Waiongana albatrosses and giant petrels were seen offshore, one Cattle Egret stayed to hang around with the local White-faced Herons, and a single well-marked Wrybill was amongst a small flock of Banded Dotterels.

PETER FRYER

Wanganui

The last three months have seen inputs from increasing numbers of people. Lynne Douglas led the way with regular sightings, confirmed by photographs, of six different colour-banded Red-billed Gulls (Peter Frost later added a seventh). All of these were banded at Kaikoura, we believe, as part of a long-term study of this species by Dr Jim Mills and colleagues. One bird, banded originally on 25th November 1980 as E-121375 (later re-banded as E-167625), with the colour-band combination MY-YGK was recorded on three occasions, the last being on 25th July, 28 years and 242 days after it was first banded. This is not the oldest Red-billed Gull recorded (that is a bird which lived for about 32 years), but it is near the top. We wait for news about the others. These marked birds may have come in initially with a large flock of 800-1,000 Red-billed Gulls that took shelter in the estuary during southerly storms in late May.

Winter storms also brought in other seabirds. In addition to the White-chinned Petrel reported in the last issue of *Southern Bird*, Dawne Morton and her volunteers at Bird Rescue Manawatu-Wanganui picked up two Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses found inland on farms in neighbouring Manawatu, one between Bunnythorpe and Feilding (27th May), and another from the Mt Stewart-Halcombe Road, east of Bulls (2nd June). These were followed by an injured White-headed Petrel at the mouth of the Whanganui River in mid-June, and a juvenile Royal Albatross from a dairy farm near Sanson in early August. As if rescuing and rehabilitating injured and stranded birds was not enough, Dawne gave a talk about

her work to Birding Wanganui in late July, to which she brought along a preserved specimen of a Blue Petrel that had been stranded but later died. Details of just where the bird was found are still being sought.

These recoveries, together with reports from local fishermen of albatrosses around small fishing craft offshore prompted Paul Gibson to organize a cruise out of Wanganui on a local fishing vessel, *M.V. Vagabond*, skippered by Brian Smith (Fluffy Duck Charters). Eleven enthusiasts, including Brent Stephenson and Sav Saville, went to sea on one of the calmest and sunniest days of the winter. Despite the light winds we recorded large numbers of Fairy Prions (over 10,000 estimated) and Fluttering Shearwaters (about 1000), mostly feeding over schools of Kahawai, as well as White-capped Albatrosses (20 or more adults, including 11 at one time), Cape Petrels (about 30), Northern Giant Petrels (at least two), and a few Common Diving Petrels. Other species seen included Blue Penguin (1), Black-backed and Red-billed Gull, and White-fronted Tern. Although the diversity was low – the calm weather perhaps being a factor – there is interest in doing this again.

Back on land, or at least on the mud of the Whanganui Estuary, Lynne Douglas, Paul Gibson, Ian Sutherland, and Peter Frost recorded what appeared to be separate flocks of between 32 and 88 Banded Dotterels on six different occasions. Where these birds came from, or went to, is a mystery. Small numbers of Pied Oystercatchers were also noted passing through, presumably on their way back to their breeding grounds in the South Island. Spotted Shags appeared at the end of May, with up to 11 birds present at the river mouth through to early August. In mid June, Peter Frost flushed an immature Reef Heron from the only bit of rocky shore on the estuary, but it was not seen by anyone else. This species has only been seen a few times previously (and photographed once), in February, June, and July 1989, and March 1991, on each occasion by Ormond Torr.

At the beginning of the second week in June, Peter Frost joined eight OSNZ members from the Wairarapa and Manawatu, led by Barbara Lovatt, on a visit to Jerusalem on the Whanganui River. There they worked over a couple of days with children from the Whanganui Awa School during the school's Week of Education Outside the Classroom (see the Wairarapa Branch report for details). The trip came about following a report by one of the children that he had found a Nankeen Night Heron chick that had been caught by a cat. The visit was used as an opportunity to increase the children's knowledge and awareness of this species, which has cultural significance to the Whanganui iwi. The highlight of the trip came towards the end of the first day, when an adult Nankeen Night Heron appeared in a tree overlooking the marae from where the children were heading home; talk about omens! Later that evening, Barbara and Des Lovatt heard about five birds flying overhead, calling in the dark. Sister Sue Cosgrove from Jerusalem, who has seen this species a number of times there, reported seeing a bird at nearby Ranana a few weeks later. Further downstream, the small colony at Kauarapaoa (Kemp's Pole) seems to be fairly stable, with eight birds being recorded leaving the roost after sunset on two occasions.

Tui, along with Silvereye and Bellbird, have been prominent with large numbers (20+) seen feeding on nectar from the flowers of Kowhai, *Eucalyptus*, *Kniphofia*, *Grevillea*, *Prunus*, *Camellia*, and others. Ian and Jocelyn Bell also recorded Tui feeding on insects on the ground in their garden. In early August, Colin Ogle photographed Tui feeding in a *Eucalyptus newbeyi*, one of only two trees known in New Zealand (the other is in Christchurch). These aggregations gave local photographers ample opportunity to expand their portfolios. Nectivory and pollination also provided the theme for Ian Bell's talk to Birding Wanganui at the end of June – "Desert or Diversity: Plants and Pollination by Birds, Insects, and other Animals" – a talk that emphasised the incredible variety of such interactions.

Reports of yet more Eastern Rosellas, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, and other species of local interest continue to come in. More information and further details will appear in the branch's quarterly newsletter, the first of which appeared in June and is available on the OSNZ website.

PETER FROST

Hawkes Bay

June's activities were based around getting the wader census in all areas completed. The highlight from all areas counted would have to be the nine New Zealand Dotterels at Porangahau.

At July's meeting Brent Stephenson introduced us to the luxury world of expedition cruising. He retraced his adventures of 2008 which took him from the Antarctic to the Arctic with many exotic locations along the way. These included Madagascar, Africa and Iceland to name just a few of the countries he visited. His talk was illustrated with superb photographs of the landscape, the birds and the mammals he encountered. I don't think anyone will forget the amazing Polar Bear shots. The meeting concluded with a sale of books. Many of these had been donated to the branch years ago and were sitting in storage so it was decided to offer them to interested members. Most were snapped up, with the proceeds going to branch funds.

The field trip in August was cancelled due to wet weather. It was hoped we would see some of the Black-fronted Terns that have been about recently. After a few winters where numbers have been quite low, this year has been better with 28 seen at Waitangi on 19 May, and around 50 on 22 July. A single White Heron has been seen over winter and up to 40 Royal Spoonbills at Ahuriri, with the odd one or two popping up at Clive from time to time.

MARGARET TWYDLE

Wairarapa

Bruce Vander Lee, Biodiversity Officer for the Wairarapa Conservancy presented an illustrated perspective in May of the range of responsibilities covered by DoC including 140 covenanted properties in the Wairarapa. The Wairarapa Conservancy is part of the wider Wellington Conservancy, which also includes the Chatham Islands.

Henley Lake in Masterton was the destination of May's field meeting. On a blustery but sunny afternoon, seven members assembled at the lake. Tenick Dennison and Colin Scadden assigned a species for each person to record. The group walked the lake circuit, and then visited the wetland area. The plantings and waterways continue to be a work in progress, and an enhancement that is truly impressive. Tenick served a welcome cuppa in the newly opened Henley Mens' Shed, adjacent to the lake, where the Henley Trust has its meeting room and kitchen. The bird count highlights were two Black-fronted Dotterels, three Mute Swans, about 200 Canada Geese, 682 Mallards (this total may be one or two out), 84 New Zealand Scaup and 15 Coot.

In lieu of the monthly meeting and field trip in June, our region organised an expedition to the middle reaches of the Whanganui River. The expedition was in response to a request from Whanganui Awa School, at Ranana, for a two-day birding experience, as part of their Education Outside the Classroom. The school's 24 pupils ranged from new entrants to year eight. The sole-charge Principal is the daughter of Wairarapa RR Barbara Lovatt, and thus this RR was her first point of contact with OSNZ. The eight Wairarapa members were joined by two from Manawatu, and Peter Frost, Wanganui RR.

OSNZers were welcomed onto the marae at Jerusalem, which was the venue for the next two days of a reciprocal learning experience. The local iwi, school staff and pupils and OSNZers shared their respective birding knowledge, and OSNZers were privileged to sight, close up, a Nankeen Night Heron. This impressive species is a local kaitiaki (guardian) the colony being associated with a local 19th Century warrior. The pupils were buddied up with OSNZers and birding included writing up and illustrating their observations. 'Telescope' became a buzz word, and there were queues for the four scopes. OSNZers individually and collectively donated bird books and associated natural history books for the school's library. An on-going bond between pupils and OSNZers continues, with letters, cards and emails. To foster the pupils' observations of birds in their area, a return visit is envisaged for next summer. This could possibly be a more intensive extra-curricular short course, for those pupils with a special interest in birds.

Members visited Te Papa's collection of bird specimens and nests in July. Gillian Stone, the collection manager, put out an impressive collection of birds nests: Tomtit, Kokako and wrens, among others. However, Te Papa's collection did not contain many nests, as few people were studying them. Extensive cabinets of stuffed birds were also viewed. Members concluded that such resources were a great asset, and very accessible.

In August the annual Big Bird Cup will be contested between north and south Wairarapa. It is now in its 6th year, and although only the size of an egg-cup, winning it is huge in kudos.

BARBARA LOVATT

Wellington

Ian Armitage gave an illustrated talk in July on his experience from multiple trips to China as a consultant forester. He described the economic transformation of China over the last 30 to 40 years and the accompanying detrimental effects on the environment, including the loss of large areas of forest. In recent years there has been a growing realisation in China of the importance of a healthy environment and the need to impose regulations to achieve environmental sustainability. Ian included in his talk many illustrations of birds which demonstrated the rich diversity of avian fauna in China.

A very well attended meeting in August heard Alan Tennyson from Te Papa give a fascinating talk entitled 'Fossil bonanza in Otago's Miocene opens a window on New Zealand's past birdlife'. Since 2001 Alan has been part of an annual summer expedition to St Bathans, Central Otago to investigate fossils from the Miocene, 16 to 19 million years before present. In this period temperatures were 7°C warmer than they are today. Interestingly, this work is funded from Australia, however all fossil remains are returned to New Zealand after first being studied across the Tasman. Very large numbers of bone fragments have been recovered from deposits at the edge of a very large former lake which has been estimated as being more extensive than Lake Taupo. From the examination of thousands of fossil fragments Alan and the team of scientists have identified 31 bird taxa from a wide range of different species, including ducks, geese, a relative of the flamingo, diving petrels, raptors, pigeons, rails, parrots, owl-nightjars, wrens and swiftlets. His talk was partly illustrated using paintings by Paul Martinson, who is a co-author with Alan of the recently published book, *Extinct birds of New Zealand*. In addition to birds fossil remains have included land snails, frogs, Tuatara, lizards, bats and the 'St Bathans waddling mouse'.

GEOFF DE LISLE

Regional Roundup



Nelson

A keen local natural history photographer sent me a photo of a "small critter, size of a Thrush and no tail, darting around the reed bed" (his description), and even better a fine picture of a Marsh Crake. The creek flowing into the Waimea Estuary, where the photograph was taken, has a resident Australasian Bittern which was the attraction for the photographer. Following further observations by local members a Spotless Crake was also seen. Within a week of these sightings six Cattle Egrets were seen in an adjacent paddock, but the real surprise was the arrival of a Glossy Ibis. Peter Field had noted a group of Starlings mobbing a large dark bird flying overhead. The bird landed in a paddock close to the creek, where a positive identification was made. It stayed around for two days, during which time some photos were obtained.

In late May, Peter Field observed about 70 White-capped Mollmawks following a couple of fishing boats off the Nelson Haven. In late June Chris Petyt went to see the remains of a Blue Whale on the coast just south of Westhaven Inlet, North West Nelson. Apart from gulls birds attracted to it were 25 giant petrels and 31 Cape Pigeons in a small bay only 10-20 metres offshore. Chris also commented on predator-trapping along the Asbestos Cottage trap-line (Takaka Valley) where two boxes had been knocked over so Kaka could get at the eggs through the mesh! A Kaka was identified at the scene of the crime, not a Kea as might be expected.

The main day of the winter wader count on Farewell Spit had ideal weather conditions clear skies and no wind. A rare event indeed! Mike Ogle, DoC Golden Bay was our driver for the weekend. On an early morning walk Mike saw a Morepork in low scrub between the beach and the lighthouse. The following day a strong, bitterly cold south-east wind made things unpleasant for those counting at the base of the Spit. Notable was the almost total absence of Turnstones with only one recorded. In contrast the largest ever number of Banded Dotterel was recorded (1,921). Rob Schuckard noted a significant increase in Pied Oystercatcher numbers for Golden Bay, with a sudden jump to 8,000 compared to past counts which varied between 1,000 and 2,000.

Willie Cook is currently carrying out a banding programme on Tui in the Nelson-Stoke-Richmond urban areas close to the Barnicoat foothills. The project is a joint OSNZ/DoC collaboration and the aims are to monitor the movements taking place between three catching stations:

1. Richmond, Primrose Place, (an urban garden about 450 sq m) where 55 birds have been banded MxY.
2. Stoke, Marsden Valley, where 13 birds have been banded MxW.
3. Nelson, Brook Waimarama Sanctuary, where no birds have been caught yet but when they are they will be banded MxG.

Out of the 55 birds banded at Richmond only one bird has been recaptured. Ten sightings have been made of these yellow banded birds in a 0.5 km radius. Underpinning this exercise has been the trapping of predators over a five-year period in the Richmond foothills by a group of local residents keen to see native bird numbers increase. Over 300 rats and numerous stoats and weasels have been removed during this period, which has undoubtedly been beneficial. Predator trapping in the Marsden Valley started more recently and the mist-netting site is not as well endowed with feeding stations as the Richmond garden. The Brook Sanctuary has no feeding stations to make mist-netting a practical option at the moment.

August's meeting drew a record attendance, including a number of Golden Bay members, thanks to guest speaker Graeme Elliot of Nelson, well known for his research with Albatrosses on sub-Antarctic islands. Graeme spoke about the Gibson and Antipodean Albatross populations and their respective breeding colonies. The major site for the Gibson's Albatross is on Adams Island in the Auckland group and the Antipodean Albatross breeds on the Antipodes Islands with a very small number on Campbell Island. Graeme's involvement, along with other researchers, goes back to the early 1990s, but recent high tech developments in radio/satellite navigation monitoring techniques have revealed some remarkable records of movements by these respective species. Gibson's Albatrosses travel west into the Tasman Sea and around southern Australia, while Antipodean Albatrosses go east into the Pacific and off the shore of South America. Intense concentrations of plotted birds highlight specific feeding zones, matching precisely the areas which fishermen cover.

Humorous anecdotal accounts about birds and fellow field staff gave an interesting insight into the primitive conditions endured in the early days on these sub-Antarctic Islands. Graeme's vivid illustrations showed not only the magnificent birds, but the harsh weather conditions that they worked under. Dedication to the work undertaken was clearly evident and we were treated to an excellent presentation.

Pauline Samways, having witnessed a large colony White-fronted Terns being washed off the end of Motueka Sandspit last summer decided, with the aid of two other members, to improve the nesting area for the coming



season. Marram grass has been slashed back to give a wider area for nesting. In September a spray will be applied to the grass with assistance of students from the Abel Tasman Education Trust. Stoat and rat traps have been placed in the area to help protect not only the terns but other nesting birds such as Banded Dotterel and Variable Oystercatcher.

Pauline is assisting with the planning of a programme to support activities for school children during Conservation Week, taking place at the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary, Nelson. Local OSNZ members will have a station where children will take part in some listening activities before learning to identify some of the local bush birds by sound and sight.

A venue has been booked for the 2010 AGM in Nelson and regular meetings are taking place to put a complete programme out by the end of the year.

DON COOPER

Canterbury

Winter weather set in very early, and it was to a nasty cold, wet southerly that 30 immigrant Tui from Maud Island were released at Hinewai Reserve, Banks Peninsula, in April. Tui had died out in Canterbury away from the ranges during the 1990s, and the Banks Peninsula Conservation

Trust and other local groups decided not to wait for them to re-colonise naturally but to try a re-introduction in the best forest available. Some carry transmitters and all have colour bands. Now in September, at least three of them seem to have decided the Akaroa side of the hill is better and have been seen there several times. We hope to find some of the happy band on our next field trip.

In June we managed the winter wader count on the advertised day for once and had a dismal time not finding waders because of the high level of Lake Ellesmere. Many birds were no doubt in flooded paddocks, but who knew where? Lake Ellesmere doesn't open naturally to the sea so can't get lower until a cut is made by dragline and bulldozers. This is not the case at Ashley and Avon-Heathcote Estuaries, so we had an odd result with nearly 91% of waders at other places than the Lake.

July's annual Ashburton Lakes waterbird count took place in stunningly fine weather, with far less snow and ice than expected. There were fewer Australasian Crested Grebes than in previous years, probably as a record number of 248 were counted at Lakes Forsyth and Ellesmere on the Friday before. Maybe the hard high country conditions in most areas had pushed them into lower-lying places. They were seen at Lake Hood, the Avon-Heathcote Estuary and Coopers Lagoon too. Bev Alexander also found one at Lake Elterwater in Marlborough, where they have not been seen for years.

Our most recent trip was one of our regular Banks Peninsula Reserves presence and absence surveys, combined with some practice five minute bird counts. We went to Okuti valley near Little River and had a good listen in the Manaia Native Bird Habitat (Birdlands that was) and the next-door Okuti Scenic reserve. Visibility was very limited, with thick fog early in the day, but it cleared later. Bellbirds, New Zealand Pigeons, Song Thrushes and Silvereyes were most in evidence, and a Brown Creeper was heard and seen.

Some very interesting and provocative indoor meetings have been held over the winter. Colin O'Donnell, a DoC scientist, talked about predator control of endangered species in the Eglinton Valley in Fiordland and showed pictures of fluffy nestlings which we could all coo over, knowing they went on to fledge successfully. Kerry-Jane Wilson from Lincoln University, who is about to retire to North Buller, spoke on 'Seabird Colonies of New Zealand: what we know and what we don't'. Basically it seemed that what we know is that we don't know an awful lot. She put in a plug for a website where records of seabird colonies can be entered, from whenever, wherever, in New Zealand waters. Please email robyn_blyth@hotmail.com or Susan Waugh at susan@closeburn.org

Our largest attendance of about 36 was in June when a potluck soup and nibbles social was followed by presentations of Meritorious Service Awards to Sheila Petch and Ron Nilsson. Ron then gave a great presentation on Codfish Island, about the way it looked when he first saw it, why it was chosen as a safe island for endangered species and what needed doing before birds could be transferred there. It was a different story to that usually given about the new species brought there. Ron covered all those there already, like South Georgian Diving Petrel and updated their status to today. But he couldn't resist some cuddly Kakapo pictures too.

The July meeting was given a new twist by a talk by DoC ranger, Craig Alexander, who outlined the work of a modern ranger. It seemed actual biodiversity work is only a tiny part of their duties after all the visitor facility work, repairs and fencing required. In August the meeting was an introduction to the long and detailed processes used by DoC staff to manage pesticides operations safely and effectively. Michelle Crowell, of the DoC technical staff kindly came along for this one.

Right now in early September the first migratory waders have arrived at Kaitorete Spit, Lake Ellesmere and we've been sent the new catching

programme for Bar-tailed Godwits for later in the year. These are both items that would have excited Mia Colberts, who sadly died recently after a short illness. Mia helped initiate the Farewell to the Godwits event in Christchurch, now in its 11th year and regularly attracting crowds of over 500 people; a great initiative by a very determined lady.

JAN WALKER

Otago

Indoor meetings continue to extend our knowledge about bird study. We are privileged to have speakers who are specialists in their field. Bruce Robertson explained how genetics and DNA analysis is used to determine sex, paternity and inform management of Kakapo. Apparently only a few of the male Kakapo are mating to produce all the offspring so there is concern over potential loss of genetic variation in the population. Shinichi Nakagawa told stories of his encounters with birds, first in Japan, then as a student in New Zealand when he had the chance to visit Antarctica to help with the Adelie Penguins. He told the grim story of the 2001/2002 season when only 10% of penguin chicks fledged. He did his PhD on sparrows on Lundy Island and now plans to study genetic variation of sparrows in New Zealand. Bruce McKinlay had us riveted with his account of the breeding patterns, success and management of nests and chicks of the wild population of Southern Royal Albatrosses on Taiaroa Head; seemingly simple procedures such as misting the nests to keep them cool and moist and spraying flies are very helpful. Graduate students, Guinny Coleman and Sarah Meadows, explained their research on using birds as indicators of biodiversity on farmland and kiwifruit orchards. Some lively debate about using five minute counts and distance sampling as estimates of numbers ensued.

We have several on-going monitoring projects. The seasonal count of Hawksbury Lagoon is into its third year. We are carrying out a monthly survey of Ross Creek. This is a well-used reserve in the city and is frequented by walkers, runners, dog-walkers, duck feeders and us, birdwatchers. Natural populations of Tui, Bellbirds, Brown Creeper, New Zealand Pigeon, Riflemen and very small numbers of Tomtit are present. A total of 20 species can be easily seen in a visit. We are also starting the major undertaking of counting all the birds in the Otago Harbour monthly for one year. It is felt important to gather this information as changes to harbour use are planned; cockle harvesting and shipping channel widening. Comparisons will also be possible with previous counts undertaken in 1970 and 1989.

The Ford Falcon Car Club decided to donate the proceeds from their annual Henry Ford car rally to a project to study their namesake, the New Zealand Falcon. This was much appreciated and resulted in publicity in the local paper. A Falcon study group headed by Steve Lawrence has been formed to learn more about the status of New Zealand Falcon in the exotic forests around the greater Dunedin area. The initial aim is to survey for nesting pairs using sound-recordings, a method successfully trialled by Massey University. The funds have been used to purchase an amplifier and speakers for this.

Unusual sightings include a Pale-headed Rosella, a huge flock of over 200 New Zealand Pigeons and 30 Australasian Harriers flying as a group. Only a few sightings of Cattle Egrets have been made this winter. We are watching out for banded Tui and Bellbirds, which were banded by a Dunedin member to determine dispersal.

MARY THOMPSON

Southland

Wynston Cooper reports that a Mottled Petrel he banded as an adult in 1986 had been re-caught at its breeding site on Lake Hauroko in March this year. This makes this bird at least 26 or 27 years old.

Southland-banded waders have again been in the spotlight with a Turnstone banded on 4th November 2006 at Awarua Bay being sighted in Taiwan on the 25th and 27th April and again on 5th May. Rob Schuckard commented that from this same batch of nine Turnstones we now have two reported during autumn from north-west Australia and New South Wales and one on northward migration from Taiwan; an outstanding result for this species.

Other bird sightings include New Zealand Falcons from Manapouri; Cattle Egrets from Wallacetown and Stewart Island; 80 New Zealand Dotterels from Mason Bay, Stewart Island on May 4th; and Australasian Bitterns from Invercargill and Te Anau.

A report was received of a strange black-and-white heron feeding with White-faced Herons at the sea scouts wharf on the Invercargill Estuary. Unfortunately the sighting had been two weeks before we were alerted, and after an extensive search we were unable to locate the bird. Our thoughts were White-necked Heron.

We have had a number of interesting field trips in combination with the Southland Natural History Field Club to places such as Te Wae Wae Bay near Tuatapere and recently to Waikawa Harbour and Curio Bay (Catlins). Nothing much was found in the way of birdlife but we did find a dead Leopard Seal which had a couple of huge shark bites taken out of it and a recently-dead Hector's Dolphin which had choked on a oversized fish it had tried to swallow.

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 melgar62@slingshot.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, 369 Wharerata Road, RD1 Gisborne 4071. Ph (06) 867 2888, mobile 027 209 6049. Email ecoworks@xtra.co.nz

Hawke's Bay

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

Taranaki

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

Wanganui

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

Manawatu

Ian Saville, 24 Puketiro Avenue, Feilding 4702. Ph (06) 323 1441. Email sav@wrybill-tours.com
Evening meetings – second Wednesday of Feb, May, Aug and Nov, Lido Centre, Park Street, Palmerston North, 8pm. Beach patrols – first Wednesday of each month and also at other irregular times.

Wairarapa

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

Wellington

Ian Armitage, 50 Ranui Terrace, Tawa, Wellington 5028. Ph (04) 232 7470. Email ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz

Evening meetings – first Monday of the month, Head Office of DoC, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington, meet 7.30 pm for a 7.45 pm start, ph. Ian Armitage (04) 232 7470.

East Harbour Regional Park bird survey, Reg Cotter (04) 568 6960. Fluttering Shearwater chick transfers, Colin Miskelly (04) 479 1662. Beach patrols, Sharon Alderson (04) 298 3707. Mana Island Robins and Sooty Shearwaters, Geoff de Lisle (04) 527 0929. Mist-netting and passerine banding, Peter Reese (04) 387 7387. Rock Pigeon nesting project, Ralph Powlesland (04) 386 3323.

Nelson

Stuart Wood, 24 Olympus Way, Richmond 7020. Ph (03) 544 3932. Email stuartwood38@yahoo.co.nz

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

Marlborough

Mike Bell, 42 Vickerman Street, Grovetown, Blenheim 7202. Phone (03) 577 9818 or 021 734 602. Email mike.bell@marlborough.govt.nz

Lake Grassmere count – third Sunday of month. Ph Brian Bell (03) 570 2230. Passerine banding, each weekend during February and March, at Jack Taylor's farm, Ward, contact Mike Bell Ph (03) 577 9818.

Canterbury/West Coast

Jan Walker, 305 Kennedys Bush Road, Halswell, Christchurch 8205. Ph (03) 322 7187. Email shesagreen@gmail.com

Evening meetings last Monday of the month (Feb-Nov), 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.

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!



