

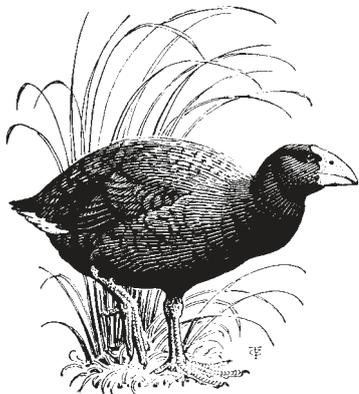


# Southern *Bird*

No. 41 March 2010 • ISSN 1175-1916

National Wader Censuses  
Pateke in Recovery Mode





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No. 41 March 2010 • ISSN 1175-1916

## QUOTATION

*Good-bye, good-bye to Summer!  
For Summer's nearly done;  
The garden smiling faintly,  
Cool breezes in the sun;  
Our Thrushes now are silent,  
Our Swallows flown away, —  
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,  
With ruddy breast-knot gay.  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin dear!  
Robin singing sweetly  
In the falling of the year.*

Robin Redbreast by William Allingham (1828-1889)

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## COVER PHOTOS

### Cover Photos

Front cover: Rifleman on Tiritiri Matangi Island by Simon Fordham.

Back cover: Black Shag taking to the air by Peter Grant  
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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.

## JOINING THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

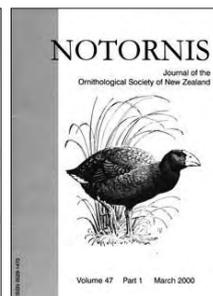
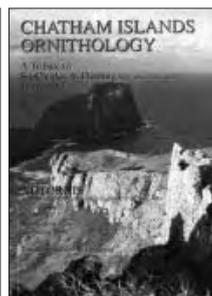
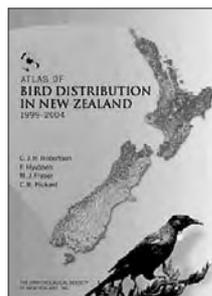
If you are reading this but are not a member of the Ornithological Society you would be very welcome to join us. Our membership consists of the whole spectrum of people interested in New Zealand/South Pacific birds from beginners with just an interest through keen birdwatchers and amateur ornithologists 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 are 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. Members are also encouraged to provide data to the Society's schemes, and supply 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](http://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](mailto:yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com)
- Contact your nearest regional representative, contact details for which can be found on the back page of this magazine.



## WANTED PAPERS ON NEW ZEALAND BIRD SPECIES

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

Please send to the Secretary, Peter Gaze, P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040 or [gaze@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:gaze@slingshot.co.nz)

## Publisher

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Nelson Region has planning for the 2010 annual meeting and conference well under control. The setting, with all of the activities and most of the accommodation on one site, will allow good opportunities for interaction with other members. There will be a full range of field trips and opportunities for members to explore the wider Nelson area during the weekend. I urge members to register at the earliest opportunity to ease the workload on the organisers and avoid last minute rushes.

## COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

This annual meeting will see the retirement from Council of Phil Battley and Paul Scofield. Both of these Council members have young families and are finding that the work of the Society is reducing their opportunities for sharing family time. Paul, in particular, has been a key member of Society activities with his long service on Council, and also chairmanship of both the scientific committee and the rare birds committee. His expertise will be hard to replace, but he has agreed to continue to assist wherever possible.

At the time of writing this report I am not aware of all the nominations that have been received but early indications are that there are some excellent candidates putting their names forward.

## CHECKLIST PUBLICATION

The checklist has now been printed and will be formally launched on the evening following the scientific day at the Annual General Meeting weekend. It is clear from the early drafts that I have seen that this will provide a key resource relating to bird study in New Zealand, clearly setting out the status of avian families in New Zealand at the present time.

The checklist is a high-standard volume that is a reflection of the huge time commitment that Dr Brian Gill and the checklist committee have put into this project over the last 10 years.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

In a notice of motion to be presented at the Annual General Meeting, Council is recommending an increase in subscriptions for the 2011 financial year. This was initially flagged by outgoing treasurer Mark Nee at the annual meeting in 2009. The financial situation of the Society has also been affected by a reduction in income from interest on investments, although the number of paid-up members is holding well. Council regrets the requirement to increase subscription costs during these economic times, but to retain momentum it is necessary to maintain our financial resources.

Over recent months the Society has initiated a system to reduce the time lag between members paying subscriptions by direct credit and a response from the Society. Previous delays were caused by our dealing through the bank statement system and the Society's reporting stream. This has now been bypassed to give Yvonne McKenzie information at an earlier time, which should reduce those acknowledgement delays.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yvonne for her work in maintaining

the membership database and in processing subscriptions. This is all work that is taken for granted but occupies some considerable periods of Yvonne's time.

## PUBLICATION UPDATE

This copy of *Southern Bird* should be received along with the final delayed copies of *Notornis*, bringing the publication schedule up to date. Council regrets the delays in publication, and wishes to acknowledge the hard work of Jim Briskie, who has now effectively published two and a half years' worth of issues of *Notornis* in an 18-month period.

I look forward to meeting members at the Annual General Meeting weekend and hope that we can have constructive discussions finding a way forward collectively for the Society while at the same time enjoying our study of birds.

DAVID LAWRIE President

## THE OSNZ'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In September 2007 Council appointed the Society's first paid employee. The decision to have a part-time Executive Officer was made with the intention of facilitating communication between Council and membership, ensuring the smooth operation of the Society's schemes and contracts, and to enhance the membership experience.

Ingrid Hutzler has been in this role now for two and a half years and Council asked if I would summarise what has been achieved so that those members who may not be closely involved with the running of our Society can at least appreciate what is going on in the background. It may be helpful to look at this under two categories:

### Society business:

- Good communication between Council, regional representatives (RRs), conveners of our various schemes and other office holders. This included ongoing networking, following up discussions, producing various summaries and reports and circulating them as necessary. Those of us in such positions will attest that they no longer feel they are working in isolation and can do their work better as a result.
- Ensuring that financial reports, annual reports and nominations for Society awards were all obtained on time.
- Management of various contracts that the Society was involved with.
- A register of all office holders and award recipients was updated and circulated
- The manual that describes the responsibilities of all office holders, RRs and scheme conveners etc was updated and issued. A register of all Society assets is almost completed.
- Support has been provided for scheme conveners and editors to help them do their work.
- Procedures have been established to help maintain and access the Society's archives and library at the Auckland Museum

### Membership and activities:

- Membership information was extracted from the database and reports produced and circulated as necessary
- A range of membership issues have been resolved including an on-line banking system for more efficient processing of membership applications.
- A membership survey was conducted.
- An inventory of past and current local projects has been compiled that will help RRs plan for the future.
- The Society's profile has been raised by publishing and distributing brochures, posters, extra copies of *Southern Bird* etc. Ingrid has arranged for the website to be kept up-to-date with a lot of useful information for members and the general public.

Over and above these defined tasks Ingrid remains accessible for members and the public, resolving a huge volume of enquiries and providing that cheerful, helpful face for the Society. With improved systems now in place we hope that attention can focus more directly on promoting the ornithological work of our members.

PETER GAZE Secretary



OSNZ Executive Officer Ingrid Hutzler

## MOTIONS AND NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2010 AGM

One motion has been received for consideration at the 2010 AGM

*That the subscription for ordinary membership be increased to \$70 and other memberships be increased proportionately, or consistent with the constitution where relevant, and rounded up to the nearest \$5. Proposed by Paul Scofield and seconded by Stuart Nicholson.*

Three Council vacancies have been advertised and as only three nominations have been received by 28 February it can be assumed that these nominees – Peter Frost, Murray Williams and Colin Miskelly – will be appointed to Council for a three-year term.

PETER GAZE Secretary



# SNIFE IN SOUTHLAND – THE PREQUEL

Papers Past is an on-line searchable archive of early New Zealand newspapers

(<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast>). Its value to natural history (and many other disciplines) will continue to grow as more titles and issues are added.

Recently I chanced upon a familiar title while undertaking an unrelated search. In 1985 I co-authored a short note for *Notornis* entitled "Snipe in Southland", describing sight records of at least two Japanese Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) at Colac Bay. W.C. Macknight used the same title in a letter to the Otago Witness editor in 1903:

"It will interest many of your readers to hear that on October 18, near the mouth of the Waiau, in Southland, I saw a true snipe – one of the best birds in the world for sport as well as for the table.

I have shot many snipe, both at Home and in Australia. In the present case I had a good view of the bird both flying and on the ground, so I could make no mistake as to what manner of bird it was.

I have heard no instance of a snipe having been seen in New Zealand. Buller, in his "Birds of New Zealand," mentions only a small Chatham Island snipe. The birds known to New Zealand sportsmen as snipe are godwits. The common Australian Snipe [*G. hardwickii*] and that of Europe are similar, but the former is migratory. About this time of year they arrive in Australia and Tasmania from Eastern Asia, where they breed. The bird I saw must have been blown out of its course in this migration."

This prompted Jules Tapper to write "It may be of interest to [Macknight] and to others to know that a snipe was seen and reported to me about 12 months ago by a young Englishman, who had only been in the colony a few months, and who has had some experience shooting over snipe in Cornwall. I informed him no such bird was ever known to be in the colony, but he was convinced and positive it was a specimen of the bird named." Tapper gave his address as Clifden Station, Waiau, Southland, and so it is possible that

the two sightings were at the same location, about a year apart (1902 & 1903).

Neither Macknight nor Tapper were aware that the bird now known as Japanese Snipe had been recorded in New Zealand, from a specimen shot at Arch Hill, Auckland in 1898 (Cheeseman 1899). The next record of *G. hardwickii* in New Zealand was one shot at Castlecliff, Whanganui, in 1914 (Oliver 1955).

## References

Cheeseman, T.F. 1899. Notice of the occurrence of the Australian snipe (*Gallinago australis*) in New Zealand. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 31: 105-106.

Macknight, W.C. 1903. Snipe in Southland. *Otago Witness* 28 Oct 1903: 55.

Miskelly, C.M.; Cooper, W.J.; Morrison, K.; Morrison, J.V. 1985. Snipe in Southland. *Notornis* 32: 327-328.

Oliver, W.R.B. 1955. New Zealand birds. 2nd edn. Wellington, Reed.

Tapper, J.H. 1903. Snipe in Southland. *Otago Witness* 11 Nov 1903: 55.

COLIN MISKELLY

## DONATIONS

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

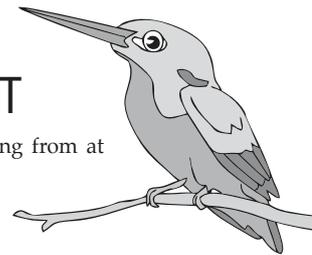
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## KINGFISHER CARRYING ROAD KILL TO THE NEST

We are well used to them sitting out on prominent perches watching for food in the grasslands, but the observation made in misty/humid weather with squally showers between 12 noon and 1 pm on 30th January 2010 opposite the Ball's Clearing Scenic Reserve was new to us. A New Zealand Kingfisher was collecting and carrying road kill rabbit to its nestlings some 500 m away. It made at least six trips before I ceased observations. I skinned more of the rabbit and removed it to nearer the side of the road away from direct traffic hazards. Only one bird was visiting, and it did not seem to notice my intervention. A second bird was

simultaneously calling from at the nest site.

Puketitiri is a farming district some 80 km north-west of Napier, 700m above sea level, rising to the Kaweka Ranges to the west at 1,900m. The climate is harsh with snow and frosts during the long winters. In autumn, New Zealand Kingfishers leave for the warmer lowlands, particularly the Ahuriri Estuary, returning to the high country again in September/October to nest.



PAM TURNER

## A MYSTERY BIRD

This mystery started when Peter Gaze (DoC, Nelson) received two separate recoveries of dead birds found at the Mapua end of Rabbit Island. One involved yellow and green colour bands removed from a dead 'shag'. Peter questioned the finder as the bands were of the size typically attached to Caspian Terns, and were neatly glued. No metal band was seen. The other item handed in a day later was a transmitter and harness taken from a decayed carcass with no clues as to its identity.

David Melville was alerted in case it was one of the male Bar-tailed Godwits fitted with a harness-mounted transmitter last year. The details from the transmitter and harness were to prove it was a Blue Duck thanks to information from Gavin Udy (DoC Motueka) and members of the team involved in the Blue Duck Recovery Programme in Kahurangi National Park.

The bird had been named Homer, and had hatched from an egg harvested from the Rolling River on the 5th November 2005. It was one of 11 Operation Nest Egg birds released in March 2006, on Nuggety Creek (a tributary of the Rolling River), and was last seen on 1st July 2007 on Lees Creek in the Wairau River catchment in Marlborough.

How the bird ended up on the western end of Rabbit Island is open to conjecture. It may have died en route returning to a new home site in one of the headwater catchments draining into the Waimea Estuary, Tasman Bay. The fact that two different people days apart discovered the bands and transmitter as separate items from the same decayed carcass is amazing.

DON COOPER



## REMINDER

### OSNZ CONFERENCE AND AGM 2010 IN TAHUNANUI (NELSON) 4TH - 7TH JUNE

Registration forms and details were sent out with the December issue of *Southern Bird*, but are also available on the OSNZ website, [www.osnz.org.nz](http://www.osnz.org.nz).

Tahunanui and Nelson can be very busy during Queen's Birthday weekend, so we recommend you arrange your accommodation now. If you register before 31st March you will save having to pay a \$25 late registration fee. THE EARLIER YOU BOOK - THE CHEAPER!

All events and meals will take place in the Conference Centre at Tahuna Beach Holiday Park, 70 Beach Road, Tahunanui.

#### 4th June 2010 (Friday)

3pm-6pm Registration

#### 5th June 2010 (Saturday)

7.30am-9am Registration

9am-5pm Scientific day

5.30pm Happy hour

6.30pm Informal dinner  
(numbers limited)

8.30pm AGM

#### 6th June 2010 (Sunday)

8am-9am Field trips

6.30pm Conference dinner

#### 7th June 2010 (Monday)

Car-sharing local trips

## NOMINATIONS FOR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES 2011

Each RR serves for a one-year term, starting 1st January, though incumbents can be re-nominated for an unlimited number of terms.

Nominations for the RR of each region close with the Secretary (P.O. Box 834, Nelson 7040) on 31st July 2010.

The nomination paper for each RR must be signed by two financial members of the Society from that region and must be consented to in writing by the person nominated, who must also be a member of the Society.

If the Secretary receives more than one valid nomination a postal ballot will be held among the financial members of the region. If no nomination is received from a region, Council may appoint an RR for the 2011 year.

## CHECKLIST LAUNCH

The launching of the *Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand, 4th Edition* will occur as part of the Society's AGM at Nelson this June.

The Checklist Committee, convened by Dr Brian Gill, have produced a robust credible checklist which the Society is proud to be jointly publishing with Te Papa Press.

A formal launch is being planned for the Checklist at the AGM and members are invited to attend the launch, participate in the full range of activities for the weekend and initiate the debate on the outcome of the Checklist Committee's work.

Members attending the Nelson conference/AGM can **save the \$10 postage and packing fee** by picking up their copy at the AGM, but copies **must be pre-ordered prior to the conference**.



## SPECIAL OFFER TO OSNZ MEMBERS

*Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand: in association with the Ornithological Society of New Zealand*

**Convenor:** Dr Brian Gill

RRP incl. GST: \$100.00

**Publication date:** June 2010

This substantially revised and expanded edition of the *Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand* is the official list of all the birds in the New Zealand region, including Norfolk and Macquarie Islands, and the Ross Dependency, Antarctica.

Published in association with the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, this comprehensive guide was compiled by the society's Checklist Committee. It provides details of the nomenclature, taxonomy, classification, status and distribution (current, historical and fossil) of every living and extinct species of New Zealand bird and, for the first time, includes complete synonymies. More than fifty species have been added, along with thorough bibliographic references, a list of Maori bird names, a full index and updated maps.

### Special price offer, 20% discount on the \$100 RRP

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| RRP less 20% | \$80.00         |
| P & P        | \$10.00         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$ _____</b> |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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I intend to collect my copy at the OSNZ conference/AGM in Nelson (tick here)   
and pay only \$80 (saving on postage and packing)

Credit card: VISA  MasterCard  Amex  Diners

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Cheques should be made out to **Te Papa Press**

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Email: [tepapapress@tepapa.govt.nz](mailto:tepapapress@tepapa.govt.nz)

# FROM THE PROJECT AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

In the survey of OSNZ members' interests carried out in 2007/08, a number of people indicated that they would be willing to help with the functioning of the OSNZ. Over the past few months, I have been contacting these members on behalf of the Project and Activities Committee, to find out if they are still interested in contributing and in what ways. Although not everyone has yet been contacted and, of those that have, not every one has responded, the replies received show that there are already many activities in which interested members can participate.

In Southland, Peter McClelland has set up a programme of banding Paradise Shelducks that moult on a local pond. The activity involves rounding up the flightless moulting birds on the water using boats and canoes, and driving them slowly into holding pens. From there they are extracted individually, their sex, age and condition recorded, then banded, and released. Being relatively large and easy to handle, this species is ideal for giving people an opportunity to learn how to handle and process a bird. Trainees are also taught to do the paper work. Peter has the requisite banding permit, and the approval of Southland Fish and Game and the local landowner. The course is open to all, but it is targeted primarily at OSNZ members, DoC staff, and students and staff involved in the environmental management courses at the Southland Institute of Technology. Because shelducks moult in summer, after breeding, the course is run in mid-January. The next course is tentatively scheduled for January 2011. Please contact Peter (peterm@kol.co.nz) if you are interested in participating. Peter is also considering running one-day mist-netting and banding courses around Invercargill, subject to finding a suitable locality. If these courses are run, the numbers of trainees is likely to be limited to four to six per experienced bander, so if there are other people with experience in banding passerines, please contact Peter and register your interest. The same applies to anyone who is keen to learn how to catch, process and band smaller birds.

Further north, in Canterbury, discussions are underway on organising a course on census methods, identification problems, and the ecology of braided rivers. If there is sufficient interest, that course would likely also be held in January 2011. This may not be the best time to census birds in the field but may be more suitable for participants, including those with expert knowledge to contribute. Among other possibilities is a winter/early spring course on identifying petrels and albatrosses. If you are interested in attending such courses, either as a trainee or as a trainer, please contact Nick Allen (nick\_allen@xtra.co.nz). Nick also suggested that someone could compile a CD of the calls of similar sounding species, together with a commentary pointing out the differences. (The CD could be extended to cover species that are usually heard but seldom seen, such as the various crakes and

rails.) If anyone is prepared to do this, please let Nick or myself (pghfrost@xtra.co.nz) know. At least initially, all that this would involve would be compiling the recordings, with the permission of the copyright holder, and adding the commentaries. The CDs could be burned on demand when required for identification courses. Selling the CDs would require more negotiation with those holding the copyrights.

In the north of the South Island, Mike Bell recently held a short course on banding bush birds and doing moult studies (see the December 2009 issue of *Southern Bird*). A report on this course will appear in a later edition of *Southern Bird*, but anyone interested in taking part in future courses can contact Mike (skua44@yahoo.co.nz).

Across Cook's Strait, the OSNZ's Wellington region have a range of activities under way. What it needs are members who are willing to commit time and energy to taking part. One substantial project underway at present is a survey of the birds of Wellington Harbour. This is the fourth in a series of surveys carried out during the past 40 years using the same methods. Although it is due to end in December 2010, when the data will be written up for submission to *Notornis*, it is not too late to contribute. If you are interested, contact Ian Armitage (ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz). Field work at the Pencarrow Lakes is complete and will be written up when time allows. As Ian noted, many of us like making observations but few have the temperament and skills to sit down and analyse thoroughly the information we have collected over many years. In some cases, unfortunately, this is the stage when fundamental flaws in research design and method become apparent, ones that diminish the value of the work done. To address this weakness, the Project and Activities Committee intends working with the Wellington Region and others to put together one or more courses on study design, research methods, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This should complement another need: a course on writing scientific papers. People interested in taking part or contributing to these courses should contact me (pghfrost@xtra.co.nz) so that we can gauge the level of interest.

Still within the Wellington Region, Peter Reese and the Central Passerine Banding Group (CPBG) have been conducting regular banding sessions at various sites in Wellington, particularly the zoo. Many OSNZ members, DoC staff, university staff and students, and people involved in bird rescue have been successfully trained to catch, handle, process, and band birds. Apart from training, the aim is to understand movements, moult, and survival of various species in a metropolitan area. Although the recent introduction of a charge for bands is creating some uncertainty about the long-term future, this remains an ideal opportunity for novices to acquire the skills needed eventually to get their own banding permit. Interested people should contact Peter Reese (ruth.peterr@actrix.co.nz).

Further up the coast, in southern Hawkes Bay, birds on the Porangahau Estuary are

being surveyed regularly. This requires people who are relatively fit and don't mind walking through mud for hours at a time. Obviously, the more people involved, the easier it is to do. Bernie Kelly has taken to doing the census from a kayak, which helps get around the more remote parts of the region. If you would like to take part, contact Bernie (bernardpaula@ihug.co.nz) and he will put you in contact with the organiser on the day. If waterbirds are not your forte, how about getting involved in five-minute bird counts for Forest and Bird at Blowhard Bush. Again, contact Bernie for more details.

A range of opportunities also exist in the Bay of Plenty and the Volcanic Plateau. Keith Owen is willing to help organise a census of Black-billed, Red-billed, and Black-backed Gulls at Sulphur Bay, Lake Rotorua. The first two species are on the list of threatened species, and a census would help establish the direction and magnitude of change in their populations locally since the last census five years ago. The census, which would be done some time in the period October-December, would only take a couple of days. Other censuses that need doing are those of Banded Dotterel, New Zealand Falcon, and Black-backed Gull on Mount Tarawera. The first two species have not been censused for over a decade, whereas the large Black-backed Gull colony there has probably never been censused. Anyone wanting to take part would need to be relatively fit, as it involves walking over scoria for a couple of days. There are also plans to census the New Zealand Dotterel breeding population in the Bay of Plenty in 2011. These censuses have been done every seven years since 1989, and each new census gives us valuable insights to the long-term dynamics of this population. With the planned national census of Caspian Tern on the horizon, opportunities exist to help survey the birds breeding at Tauranga Harbour, Ohiwa Harbour, and Lake Rotorua. Keith has many other projects and ideas, so if you want to be involved, please contact him (kowen@doc.govt.nz). Appropriate guidance on methods would be given in all cases.

Tony Beauchamp in turn has identified a number of options in northern Auckland and Northland. These include ongoing surveys of small lakes and ponds in the vicinity of Whangarei, where OSNZ members are each allocated a lake to survey; surveys of Peafowl on Kawau Island (and Tony suggests scope for a boarder national survey, if anyone wants to take up the challenge of organising this); and monitoring Weka, preferably of birds established at Kawakawa Bay but also possibly on Kawau Island, although this is reasonably well covered by the local community and some others. Tony mentioned two other possible projects, both of which need developing. One is a survey of roadkills, but would need some discussion with people who are already doing this locally, to agree on sampling design and comparable description of roadside habitats and structures that might influence the risk of becoming a casualty (that probably applies as much to people as to birds). Appropriately designed, such a project could be done nationally. The second project

that needs to be developed is a survey of the habitat preferences of the New Zealand Pipit in rural areas, particularly the environmental factors determining absence, presence and abundance. Such a study would need careful planning because of the techniques to be used in disaggregating the key factors. Tony would be willing to help design and advise on such studies, but much of the organisation beyond that would be left to the members involved. If you are interested in discussing these opportunities or taking part in ones that are ongoing, please contact Tony (tbeauchamp@doc.govt.nz).

Also in and around Auckland, Michael Taylor has identified a number of projects and activities in which OSNZ members can become involved. Among ongoing OSNZ projects in the region are regular wader counts in Kaipara Harbour, Manukau Harbour, and the Tamaki Estuary, and monitoring of New Zealand Dabchicks and other waterbirds on the South Kaipara Lakes. Birds are also being surveyed in the Auckland Regional Parks; Michael coordinates the Shakespeare Park surveys. These are being supplemented by five-minute bird count surveys in a number of the regional parks. Please contact Michael (taylor.mjk@xtra.co.nz) for more information. He will be able to put you contact with the co-ordinators of these initiatives.

So far, most of the detailed responses have come from people working in regions where there is a reasonably large OSNZ membership. In contrast, Detlef Davies in the Far North highlights the difficulty of organising and sustaining activities in situations where membership is small and scattered. Much of the responsibility for organising events falls on the shoulders of a few people. No doubt the same applies in other regions where there are few members. This is where members with organisational skills can help, by spreading the load and giving those who are already involved the opportunity to take on new roles. In the case of Far North, if you are interested in helping, please contact Detlef (detlefdavies@yahoo.com).

Detlef also mentioned organising pelagic cruises to observe seabirds. A number of other groups have started doing the same thing, to add to those who are already organising such cruises on a commercial or semi-commercial basis. Can the sightings being made on these

cruises be systematised and used to greater effect? We may soon need data on just where seabirds concentrate offshore and when. Apart from establishing the patterns, we also need to know what changes are occurring. For example, does the increasing frequency of sightings of New Zealand Storm-petrels reflect success in eradicating rats and mice on one or other of the islands in or adjacent to the Hauraki Gulf? If so, what other seabirds might be benefiting? As the eradication programme expands, what other positive changes might we see? Conversely, what could be some of the emerging negative trends? How will different species respond to global climate change, not just locally but further afield (e.g. in the northern Pacific)? Will current efforts to reduce at-sea mortality from the long-line and trawl fisheries be effective? What about the impact of long-term reductions in fish stocks?

With increasing interest in the further development of New Zealand's offshore oil and gas deposits, which seabird populations would be at risk of pollution if there were any leaks similar to that of the West Atlas drilling rig off north-western Australia? Will the current opposition to land-based windfarms eventually drive energy companies to look to establish offshore windfarms, as in northern Europe. Which seabird species might be at risk from such developments? In short, are we sufficiently well prepared to provide the data needed to address these questions? Probably not, but we could be. It is an issue to which I'll return in the next report.

Finally, you may want to note the following short field courses being offered by the Miranda Shorebird Centre: conservation management of New Zealand Dotterel (7th to 9th September 2010); bird photography (25th and 26th September 2010); and wader identification (23rd and 24th October 2010). For more information on course content, arrangements, and costs, please contact Keith Woodley at Miranda (info@miranda-shorebird.org.nz).

I am most grateful to Nick Allen, Ian Armitage, Tony Beauchamp, Clinton Care, Detlef Davies, Bernie Kelly, Peter McClelland, Keith Owen, and Michael Taylor, all of whom took time to answer my queries.

PETER FROST

Convenor: Project and Activities Committee

## 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.

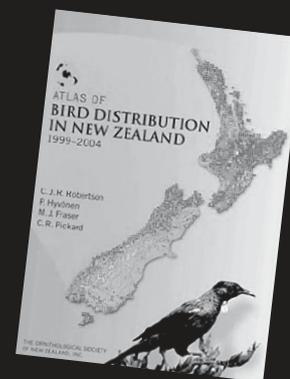
For details of how to join the OSNZ:

Visit the Society's website [www.osnz.org.nz](http://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](mailto:yvonnemackenzie@hotmail.com)

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



## BIRD PEOPLE

Congratulations to Nick Ledgard, who was awarded the Queen's Service Order in the New Year's Honours.



## 25th IOC Brazil 2010



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

# SUMMARY OF NATIONAL WADER CENSUSES JUNE 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2009

RESULTS OF NATIONAL WADER CENSUSES UNDERTAKEN BY OSNZ IN  
JUNE - JULY 2008, NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2008 AND JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2009

TABLE 1: REGIONS AND SITES COUNTED JUNE 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2009

| Region              | June-July 2008 | Nov-Dec 2008 | Jan-Feb 2009 |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Parengarenga        | V              | V            | V            |
| Rangaunu            | V              | V            | V            |
| Houhora H           | V              | V            | V            |
| Whangarei           | V              | V            | V            |
| North Kaipara       | V              | V            | V            |
| South Kaipara       | V              | V            | V            |
| Mangawhai           | V              | V            | V            |
| Auckland East Coast | V              | V            | V            |
| Waitemata           | V              | V            | V            |
| Manukau             | V              | V            | V            |
| FoT                 | V              | V            | V            |
| Coromandel          | V              | V            | V            |
| Bay of Plenty       | V              | V            | V            |
| Gisborne/Wairoa     | -              | -            | -            |
| Hawkes Bay          | V              | V            | V            |
| Porangahau          | V              | V            | V            |
| Aotea               | V              | V            | V            |
| Kawhia              | V              | V            | V            |
| Raglan              | V              | V            | V            |
| Manawatu            | -              | V            | V            |
| Lake Wairarapa      | -              | -            | -            |
| Tasman Bay          | V              | V            | V            |
| Golden Bay          | V              | V            | V            |
| Farewell Spit       | V              | V            | V            |
| Kaikoura/           | V              | V            | V            |
| Marlborough         |                |              |              |
| Canterbury          | V              | V            | V            |
| Lake Ellesmere      | V              | V            | V            |
| West Coast          | V              | V            | V            |
| Otago               | V              | V            | -            |
| Southland           | V              | V            | V            |

There was good coverage at most sites on all three counts. Numbers of **Bar-tailed Godwits** were of great interest: 11,335 (13.8%) more birds were recorded in February 2009 compared to November 2008. The Bay of Plenty showed the biggest disparity between November and February godwits with the latter recording almost 12,000 more birds. Also the Nelson Region held 18,116 in November and 20,385 godwits in February. However, the three main harbours in the Auckland region, Kaipara, Manukau and Firth of Thames held 36,474 in November and 29,659 in February.

**Red Knot** numbers were higher in November: The Auckland region held 24,072 in November and 21,128 in February. The Nelson region held 12,863 in November and 11,062 in February.

Table 1 shows sites or regions covered on all three counts. Table 2 presents national totals by species.

These results have been incorporated in the overall assessment of wader censuses undertaken between November 2003 and February 2009, and a full report of this is currently being prepared.

This report was compiled by Adrian Riegen with help from Rob Schuckard, and many counters and coordinators around the country.

V = counts entered  
- = no count exists

TABLE 2: NATIONAL TOTALS

|                        | June-July 2008 | Nov-Dec 2008 | Jan-Feb 2009 |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| All Shorebirds         | 130,112        | 151,918      | 270,369      |
| Arctic Migrants        | 17,005         | 125,658      | 137,299      |
| Endemic Shorebirds     | 113,107        | 26,260       | 133,070      |
| Pied Oystercatcher     | 83,352         | 17,286       | 107,071      |
| Variable Oystercatcher | 2,950          | 2,014        | 2,100        |
| Oystercatcher Hybrid   | 14             | 17           | 17           |
| Pied Stilt             | 17,318         | 4,798        | 16,813       |
| Black Stilt/Hybrids    | 15             | 2            | 21           |
| New Zealand Dotterel   | 484            | 297          | 800          |
| Banded Dotterel        | 6,830          | 668          | 5,398        |
| Black-fronted Dotterel | 92             | 10           | 6            |
| Large Sand Dotterel    | 1              | 2            | 2            |
| Mongolian Dotterel     |                | 1            | 1            |
| Wrybill                | 6,238          | 596          | 5,481        |
| Pacific Golden Plover  | 2              | 265          | 335          |
| Spur-winged Plover     | 2,052          | 1,168        | 844          |
| Turnstone              | 438            | 2,312        | 2,201        |
| Lesser Knot            | 1,751          | 40,222       | 35,577       |
| Great Knot             |                |              | 1            |
| Sanderling             |                | 1            | 2            |
| Curlew Sandpiper       | 3              | 9            | 11           |
| Sharp-tailed Sandpiper | 1              | 14           | 10           |
| Pectoral Sandpiper     |                |              | 11           |
| Red-necked Stint       | 12             | 125          | 81           |
| Eastern Curlew         | 1              | 10           | 11           |
| Whimbrel               | 6              | 31           | 76           |
| Bar-tailed Godwit      | 8,551          | 82,069       | 93,404       |
| Black-tailed Godwit    |                |              | 1            |
| Wandering Tattler      |                | 1            |              |
| Siberian Tattler       | 1              |              | 1            |
| Marsh Sandpiper        |                |              | 1            |
| Terek Sandpiper        |                |              | 2            |

# BIRDING PORANGAHAU

Approaching the bridge that crosses the river I can see the westerly picking up in the treetops.

I load the kayak up with my gear and head down river towards the mouth and expansive estuary. As I hit the coast I'm buffeted by that old westerly. It's not extreme, but nuisance value all the same. The high tide allows me to get as far up the estuary as possible.

From there I hook a towline on the kayak and drag it towards a log that offers shelter for the tent. I'm just in time; the tide is retreating fast.

After a break for lunch I head off on foot, getting down to the business of counting birds. And there are birds a-plenty, as I come across a good 70 Bar-tailed Godwits. The wind is unrelenting and buffets the scope to the point that I have to retract the legs to the lowest setting and get shelter where I can.

The usual suspects start appearing out on the mudflats: Wrybill, Banded Dotterel, Pied Stilt. Not unexpectedly, two New Zealand Dotterels at close range lift my spirits.

Wading through mud, I get to the turnaround point and hoof it back to the campsite. On the way I deviate into a wetland area in the hope of seeing evidence of Spotless Crake or Australasian Bittern, but to no avail.

The parked kayak looms out of the heat haze and I take a break before the afternoon session begins. Setting off in a northerly direction the first obstruction is a rather deep-looking channel. With limited options it's straight on in and hopefully the mud won't consume me. Reaching the other side

miles, so I have had to bring it all with me. The sun beats down.

Satisfied with the work that has been done I head back to camp and get the tent up, hoping for a good pre-dinner lie down. That unrelenting wind calls for some extra protection in the form of shipping pallets that just happen to be within dragging distance, so a wall is lashed together. Finally I can rest.

The night passes and the wind continues. At some point in the early morning, it turns to the south and rain starts to pound. The tent is flattening against me so I decide to reset the pallets to offer shelter from the southerly. This seems to work.

I can't move until the tide comes in. The waterline looks far away. After breakfast, the rain eases, so I pack up and get going. The voice recorder on the cellphone works a treat for the final count as I paddle back into a head wind. I'm able to

get a good look at a large colony of Caspian and White-fronted Terns, and get a more accurate count than on previous trips. The kayak has proved its worth on this trip and I look forward to getting back down the estuary.

BERNIE KELLY



The kayak and camp site on the Porangahau Estuary. Photo by Bernie Kelly.

I'm immediately aware of movement out on the tidal flat and can see more New Zealand Dotterels, which are an added bonus, along with a Turnstone and more Godwits. I set up the scope. Managing to scan a lot of terrain I take the time to get the numbers down.

Onwards as the muddy estuary gives way to sandy desert there is no drinking water for

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# PATEKE IN RECOVERY MODE

NEIL HAYES QSM,  
Brown Teal Conservation Trust

All photos courtesy Brown Teal  
Conservation Trust

## INTRODUCTION

The endemic Brown Teal *Anas chlorotis* or Pateke has been under threat of premature extinction (*influenced by humans*) since Europeans started arriving in New Zealand in the 1800's, initially accompanied by rats, cats and dogs, and eventually by ferrets, stoats, weasels and hedgehogs. Wetland destruction and the destruction of native bush were also rampant from those early days of colonisation and impacted heavily on Pateke survival, as did duck shooting. It is also becoming widely acknowledged that the ever expanding Australasian Harrier population is also adversely influencing the survival of Pateke ducklings and adults, along with the Pukeko, which kills ducklings of all species seemingly just for the sake of it!

Fossil research completed in 2002 determined that Pateke were present in New Zealand at least 10,000 years ago, and that they were widespread in large numbers throughout the country and inhabited most types of wetland habitat: lakes, rivers, lagoons, ponds, creeks, forest streams, swamps, estuaries, etc. This research confirmed what Peter Scott (founder of the UK's Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust) said in 1960, that he believed "brown teal were an ancient and primitive form of duck".

## PATEKE

Pateke evolved in an almost predator free environment and the Brown Teal Conservation Trust believes that the species evolved from the very beginning of life in New Zealand, which is why Pateke have a number of unique characteristics which are not commonly found in other species of waterfowl, such as:

- Nocturnal behaviour
- Murderous nature of an established pair (In 1960 when Peter Scott received three brown teal at WWT Slimbridge he said that he hoped New Zealander's were not of a similar nature!)
- Long-term parental attention provided to their progeny by both parents
- Great climbing ability
- Incredible vulnerability to predation
- Incredible vulnerability to being shot during the duck season – in spite of total protection from hunting from 1921 onwards
- Specialised bill, with very prominent lamellae

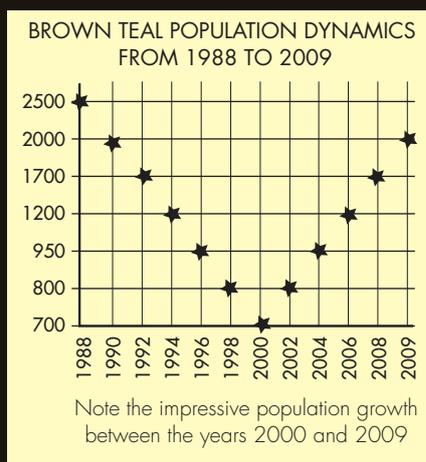
## THE RACE TOWARDS EXTINCTION

Whilst the destruction of wetlands and excessive hunting played a significant role in the early decline of brown teal the species'

vulnerability to the unrelenting spread of introduced predators was undoubtedly the main reason for the spectacular decline of this New Zealand icon from a population of millions in the mid-1800's to just c750 in 1999!

By 1999 the population decline of Pateke appeared to show that the species was staring down the barrel of extinction, but thanks to the power of a television news item, featuring two long-term Pateke supporters, the Department of Conservation carried out a major audit of the recovery programme, into which 39 people with some experience with Pateke had input.

The above audit, published in 2000, set down clearly defined recommendations of what needed to be done to save Pateke from extinction, and since then there has been a remarkable turnaround from a population of c750 in 1999 to a population of c1,900 by mid-2009.



## RECOVERY MODE

This remarkable recovery has been achieved in three areas of the North Island mainland: at Mimiwhangata Farm Park in Northland; at the adjacent Whananaki area (both sites are on the east coast just north of Whangarei); and on the Coromandel Peninsula. In each area major predator control programmes using a variety of trapping techniques were instituted in association with enhancement, creation, protection and management of Pateke habitat.

By mid-2009 the Mimiwhangata/Whananaki populations of Pateke had risen

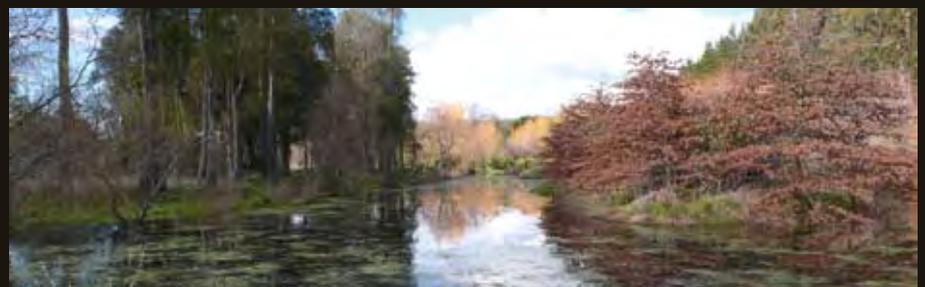


**The Brown Teal Conservation Trust believes that such population growth represents the world's most successful re-establishment of an endangered species of waterfowl that has ever previously been seen**

from c100 in 1999 to over 500, but the most spectacular re-establishment has taken place at the top of the Coromandel Peninsula, where from c20 Pateke in 1999 the population had rocketed up to over 700 by mid-2009.

It is believed that with the expansion and increasing intrusion of predators to most parts of the country Pateke retreated during the early 1920's from lakes, forest swamps and from many other kinds of wetlands to estuarine habitat in Northland, on the Coromandel Peninsula and on Great Barrier Island, where few predators existed. In all three areas Pateke survived for many years in good numbers, until predators (mainly rats, cats and mustelids) eventually invaded Northland and the Coromandel Peninsula. On Great Barrier Island the population of rats, feral cats and feral dogs also grew alarmingly, as did Pukeko numbers.

Whilst Pateke habitat in these three areas remained relatively unmodified, the population growth of introduced predators initially caused a steady decline in Pateke numbers from the mid-1800's towards the mid-1940s. But from the mid-1940's onwards the exponential growth in predator numbers generated the alarming decline of Pateke towards oblivion. So much so that by 1999 a straight-line graph showed that Pateke would be extinct on the New Zealand mainland by 2004 and totally extinct by 2015, including the population on Great Barrier Island.



Once thought to be a secure population, Pateke were also in serious decline on Great Barrier Island and number there plummeted from c1200 in 1987 to less than 500 by 1999. Since the 2000 Audit and the implementation of major predator control programmes at critically important sites on Great Barrier the population had stabilised by mid-2009, but is not yet in recovery mode. This situation is of real concern as there are no mustelids or hedgehogs on Great Barrier, and virtually no duck hunting! This is quite similar to the historic scenario on Chatham and Stewart Islands, which also had no mustelids, but where Pateke became extinct. However, both islands had high numbers of feral cats, rats and duck shooting.

It is suspected that habitat deterioration and lack of food are the reasons for the lack of recovery on Great Barrier Island, and a research programme aimed at determining habitat usage and habitat preferences for Pateke on the island will commence in 2010 using the latest microchip and GPS technology. The Brown Teal Conservation Trust believes, however, that this should not preclude the enhancement of Pateke habitat, particularly in areas such as Okiwi Station on Great Barrier Island, which once supported c750 Pateke.

## THE COROMANDEL PENINSULA

Somewhat less than a century ago the Coromandel Peninsula was a Pateke stronghold with the area around Port Charles supporting hundreds of Pateke, but by 2000 only c20 Pateke were surviving. It was perceived by the Pateke Recovery Group that potential existed there for a Pateke re-establishment programme.

The re-establishment programme for the species on the peninsula benefited from the highly successful Kiwi Protection Programme that was in operation in the Moehau Range, immediately adjacent to the Pateke release site at Port Charles. The extensive predator control programme in the Moehau Ranges had been in operation since 2000 and by 2009 there were several hundred Kiwi in the ranges. On top of this success the extensive predator control programme for Pateke at Port Charles and its environs resulted in a high level of survival of both released and wild teal, to the extent that there are now c700 on the peninsula.

From c20 to c700 is an incredible success story and clearly confirms the philosophy long held by some enthusiasts that **you provide brown teal with a quality predator free environment and they will survive and breed successfully for many years.** With this in mind it has been well-proven that in a quality captive environment Pateke have been recorded as surviving to 24 years of age! In the wild one Pateke released at the Mimiwhangata Farm Park was known to have been still surviving eight years later, 80 km north of its release site.

The captive breeding programme for Pateke, launched by Ducks Unlimited (NZ) in 1976, is recognised as being the world's most successful captive breeding programme for endangered waterfowl, with close to 3,000 birds reared between 1976 and 2009. At the height of the captive breeding programme Ducks Unlimited had 39 members with c100 Pateke in captivity, spread from Northland

to Southland, and c150 Pateke were being reared annually.

The release of captive-reared Pateke at Port Charles started in 2002 and ended after five releases in 2007, after the total release of just over 250 birds. The rate of survival of released birds, their adaptability and their breeding success, coupled with a massive predator control programme and superb support from the Port Charles community is an outstanding example of what can be achieved in a very short space of time. So much so that Brown Teal are now being observed in an increasing number in many areas of the peninsula. Historically peninsulas have proven to be more readily defensible against predators, so the long-term control of predators on the Coromandel could conceivably give rise to over 2,000 Pateke there.

Besides a well organised and intensive predator control regime on the Coromandel the support of the farming community and local residents around Port Charles has been an intrinsically important part of the success, with a number of land owners creating quality Pateke habitat and the local community carrying out much of the predator control work. In addition major financial contributions from Banrock Station Wines of Adelaide, Isaac Wildlife Trust, Wetland Care/Ducks Unlimited (NZ), the Department of Conservation, and, critically important to the whole programme, the Pateke captive breeders all helped ensure the success of the Coromandel re-establishment programme. Much of the success of the Pateke Recovery Programme since 1999 has been achieved through:

- The release of captive-reared teal into relatively unmodified habitat
- Having wild Pateke in the area
- Establishment of major predator control programmes
- Enhancement, creation and management of suitable habitat
- Supplementary feeding
- The absence of duck shooting
- Having outstanding community support
- Having a dedicated management team



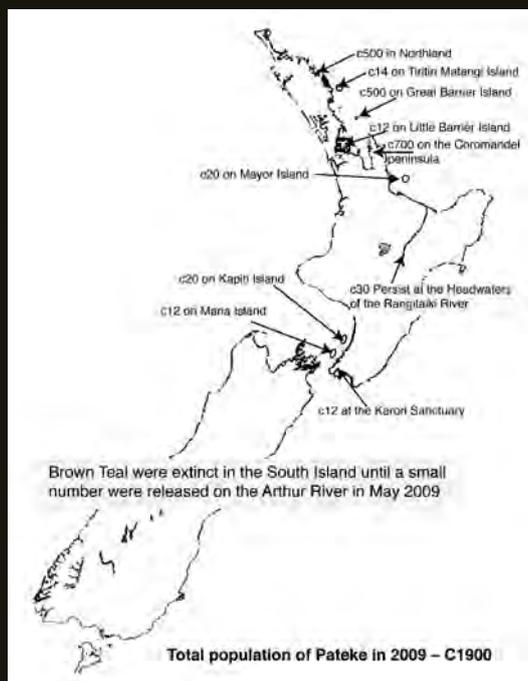
- Having a dedicated group of captive breeders to supply the birds needed
- Having the appropriate financial backing

## THE NEXT DECADE

Provided the following occur the Brown Teal Conservation Trust expects that by the end of this decade (2010-2020) Pateke numbers in the wild will number between 3-5,000 birds:

- The current momentum of the recovery programme is ongoing.
- Recovery efforts in respect of predator control, the enhancement, creation and protection of Pateke habitat continue.
- There is sound consultative management.
- There is an (all-important) advocacy programme.
- Efforts are mainly concentrated in Northland, Great Barrier Island and on the Coromandel Peninsula.

## DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION STATISTICS OF PATEKE IN THE WILD IN 2009



# SURVEY OF NEW ZEALAND FALCON IN EXOTIC FORESTS

A survey of six exotic forests near Dunedin was undertaken by OSNZ members and others to locate breeding pairs of Falcons during spring/summer of 2009/2010.

Aims of the survey were:

- To map territories so forest managers could avoid disturbing breeding pairs
- Determine the importance of exotic forest to the Falcon population near Dunedin
- Locate nest sites to obtain data on location, fledgling success, pellets and prey remains
- Trial the use of playing recordings of defensive 'kek' calls to locate Falcons



Immature New Zealand Falcon in the Waitahuna Forest, by Steve Lawrence

## Broadcast vocalisation surveying

Students from the Natural Resource Management Group with Dr John Holland and Dr Ed Minot at Massey University had tested various sound systems in North Island exotic forests, in particular Kaingaroa Forest, and kindly provided sound equipment specifications and digital sound recordings of Bush Falcon.

Briefly, an MP3 player was wired to an 800W car amplifier permanently wired into a four wheel drive vehicle and 75W RMS unidirectional speakers plugged into the amplifier as required. Calls were broadcast from cleared areas, usually skid sites on ridges, into valleys approximately 500 m to 1 km apart in suitable habitat. Large areas of densely planted forest aged four years or over with no open areas were avoided as these have been shown by Seaton (2007) to be unsuitable for the New Zealand Falcon.

On days with strong wind and rain surveying was not performed, to avoid exposing eggs or young chicks to chilling if the incubating bird left the nest to respond to the broadcast.

## Forests

Forests surveyed differed from Kaingaroa Forest, which supports a large population of Falcons (Seaton 2007), in that large areas of the forests we studied were clear-felled at once so that the entire forest may only consist of three age structures. In contrast the Kaingaroa Forest consists of a mosaic of different age blocks, each of approximately 350 ha, usually bordering some mature forest.

## Responses

Vocalisations were played as three 20-second bursts at 80% volume at 30-second to one-minute intervals at each site. If a Falcon was seen or heard during playing of the vocalisations the player was stopped.

A variety of responses by Falcons to the playing of calls were noted:

- 'Kekking', flying to within 100 m of vehicle, then perching
- 'Kekking' and flying past or overhead
- 'Kekking', flying towards vehicle, then attacking Australasian Harrier
- 'Kekking' out of sight
- Silently flying past
- 'Whining' call out of sight
- Perching in sight without calling

The above responses were by single or pairs of birds, and in addition juveniles either whined or ignored the broadcast while perched in sight.

Twice very faint 'kekking' was heard after broadcast finished. Teng (2009) recorded a human audible range of 1 km with identical equipment.

Locations of previous records of pairs or defensive behaviour by other observers often produced responses from Falcons, suggesting breeding territories were maintained over periods of years, at least in some cases.



The author setting up the sound system used for the study, by Peter Schweigman

## Prey

It was noted that passerines were most common in or near patches of scrub, pine forest/farmland edge and mature pine/clear-fell edges. Falcons were also more likely to be found in this habitat.

## Survey results

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Akatore Forest    | 4 pairs |
| Kaitangata Forest | nil     |
| Tokoiti Forest    | nil     |
| Waipori Forest    | 2 pairs |
| Waitahuna Forest  | 3 pairs |
| Mt Allan Forest   | 2 pairs |



Nest site in the Waitahuna Forest, by Steve Lawrence

## The Future

Due to time and weather constraints it was not possible to search for nest sites. However, one active site was discovered which had also been observed 10 years previously. In future years nest sites associated with the territories located during this survey could be searched for, and data obtained from them, including fledgling success rate and prey species. Although not all objectives were achieved, the use of broadcast vocalisation surveying enabled large areas of forest to be searched in a relatively short time frame.

## Acknowledgements

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In particular, I thank Peter Schweigman for valuable advice, organising access, keys and unlocking tricky gates.

Survey assistance was provided by Lesley Gowan, Ian Douglass, Derek Onley, Dave Bell, Sin Phu and Yvette Lawrence

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STEVE LAWRENCE



Peter Schweigman and part of the Waitahuna Forest, by Steve Lawrence

# INTO THE HEART OF ROSELLA TERRITORY

High on the New England Tablelands bird enthusiasts and researchers alike gathered under the cool refuge of the eucalypt woodland, binoculars fixed on a pair of Cicadabirds alternately visiting their nest. Notebooks and bird guides at the ready, the concentration of these birds in Armidale could only be the result of one thing; the 2009 Australasian Ornithology Conference (AOC). I had the pleasure of being among them, thanks to the support of the OSNZ by way of the AOC student travel scholarship. The conference was a great success, with a large number of speakers, a diverse array of bird related topics, and an encouraging student contingency. The decline of woodland birds in Australia was a major focus this year. Sadly many of Australia's woodland bird species are under increasing pressure from anthropogenic changes to the land and climate change. While a good deal of research is being done on identifying factors underlying these declines, it seems ubiquitous management options remain elusive because of the variation seen between regions, between habitats, and between species.

I gained a great deal from the conference, first and foremost in the connections made with other researchers and the ideas stimulated

by healthy academic discussion. The feedback on my own research, into the impacts of the Eastern Rosella (*Platyercus eximius*) in New Zealand, was immeasurably helpful. It was also interesting to hear about systems in which the key threats and drivers of decline are in many ways different to those in New Zealand ecosystems, and to see those reflected in different approaches to conservation management. I cannot help mentioning that it was also brilliant to observe the Eastern Rosella in its native range, where one can be fully appreciative of their presence. All in all it was a fantastic and stimulating week, with a number of new 'ticks' for many. I am looking forward to the next AOC in Queensland in 2011.

JOSIE GALBRAITH

[Note: Josie was awarded the prize for Best Student Poster at the AOC, and came home with a subscription to *Emu*, and copies of *Albatrosses* by Tui de Roy and *Boom and Bust* by Libby Robin, Robert Heinsohn and Leo Joseph. This is a great follow-up to Susie Cunningham from Massey University taking out the best Student Presentation at the Perth AOC in 2007.]

## WHITE HERONS EATING BIRDS

I have witnessed several instances of White Herons catching and eating small birds. The first was in the winter of 2000 when we first moved to Okarito. I watched with binoculars as a White Heron stalked stealthily around the base of a large flax bush down on the flat below our house. I wondered what it was up to as it had its neck coiled back like a snake ready to strike. At times it stood stock still. Then I saw a sideways swaying of its head and neck before it struck out at a Silvereye on the flax bush. It crushed the bird in its beak before swallowing it.

Once while paddling on the lagoon I watched a White Heron stalking the shallows. Along came a mother duck with

a scattering of very small ducklings which were swimming all over the place catching insects. One duckling swam too close to the White Heron and it struck.

Every winter we feed the Silvereyes on the deck of our house. A White Heron soon learned to stand like a statue beside the feeding dish and pluck Silvereyes out of the air if they got close enough. The deck rail happened to be in the flight path of Silvereyes, and it would position itself so that it could catch them as they passed. It seems to me that Silvereyes may be a supplementary food source in winter when the small fish population might be less.

ANDRIS APSE

## PIPIT ATTEMPTING TO EAT A GECKO

New Zealand Pipits feed mainly on invertebrates, with seeds making up a small proportion of their diet (Heather & Robertson 2005). There are two records of the New Zealand Pipit feeding on lizards (*Notornis* 48: 98; Wilkinson & Wilkinson 1952), neither of which indicates whether the lizards involved were skinks or geckos.

Here we report an observation of a Pipit attempting to eat a gecko. We were on Stephens Island, Marlborough Sounds, during 15th to 25th April 2009. The island has a diverse (four species of skinks and three species of geckos) and abundant lizard fauna. A few Pipits were present, probably less than 10. The main habitats where Pipits were seen were along roads, tracks, a trolley line, rocky outcrops, rank pasture and a beach. On sunny days skinks were frequently seen, and lizards were often heard moving under cover in these habitats as we approached, so geckos may have been active too.

While walking along a road on 24th April we came across a Pipit trying to dismember a small gecko. We used 10x40 binoculars to observe the bird from a distance of about 10m. The gecko was dead, its tail missing, and it had a snout-vent length of about 40mm. The Pipit was repeatedly swinging the gecko from side to side and bashing it on the ground in its attempt to break it up, in the same manner as a kingfisher dealing with prey. Occasionally it tried, without success, to swallow the gecko whole. After a few minutes it flew off to a nearby large rock and continued its efforts to break up the gecko. We didn't stay to see the final outcome.

Given the colouration and form of the lizard (grey-black with no obvious patterning), we were confident it was a Common Gecko (*Hoplodactylus maculatus*). While this species was not seen in the open by day, they are very common on the island and are also known to bask at the entrances to daytime retreats. Whether the Pipit captured the gecko alive or scavenged it is not known.

RALPH POWLESLAND and LES MORAN



## BIRD ELECTROCUTIONS, REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

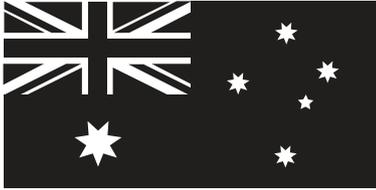
Electrocution is a major cause of mortality for birds in many places around the world, yet no studies have been conducted to determine the impact of this danger on birds in New Zealand. As part of a study on the dangers of electrocution to New Zealand birds, I would like to request reports of incidents where birds have been electrocuted. As some of you may know, the Falcon Conservation Programme in Marlborough has found that New Zealand falcons are prone to being electrocuted in vineyards. The evidence in this case seems to be compelling, but sample sizes are small, and because the falcon population in the vineyards is manipulated, it is hard to relate these electrocutions to potential impacts on falcons (and other birds) around the country. Therefore, I am keen to collect

information on how widespread the problem may be for birds throughout New Zealand. If you find a dead bird under a power pole, or have witnessed a bird being electrocuted, please contribute to the study by sending in a report. If possible, please include as much of the following as you can:

- information about the electrocuted individual (species and age if known)
- what evidence there was of electrocution (e.g. burnt feet, feathers, beak)
- where the bird was found (part of country and general habitat features)
- what type of pole the bird was found under or nearest to (wood, concrete or metal)
- did the pole have a transformer on it? If so, how many wires were on the transformer?

- how close was the nearest tree?
- what year and season did the electrocution occur in?

If possible, photographs of the dead bird and the pole(s) it was found under would be very helpful. This information will be used as part of a PhD thesis at the University of Canterbury and will likely be published in both scientific literature and popular media. Contact Sara Kross: email SaraMaeKross@gmail.com, or mail to: Sara Kross, School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Thank you.



# AUSSIE BIRDS – THE FEATHERED KIND

I have an embarrassing admission to make. Until I attended last year's Australasian Ornithological Conference (AOC), my knowledge of Australian birds was fairly miniscule. I knew they had the Kookaburra, the Emu and of course a whole bunch of cockatoos and other miscellaneous parrots, but the extent of my knowledge stopped about there. To me, Australia has always been a country full of snakes, spiders, kangaroos and those bizarre monotremes the echidna and the platypus. I was ignorant of the amazing diversity of birds to be found on that large island continent. However, this was reversed following my attendance, thanks to an OSNZ student travel scholarship, at the AOC in Armidale, NSW last year.

The opening plenary presented by Jeremy Greenwood, past Director of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), gave an insight into the value of volunteers to the BTO. The number of birds banded by the BTO over the decades was impressive, not to mention the data collected through their long-term banding programmes. It made me wonder about all the information we have within the OSNZ, gathered primarily by volunteers, and the analysis that is being, and could be done. Plenty of PhDs worth, I'm sure!



*Australian 'birdos' in their native habitat*

The week progressed through several themes; conservation, ecology and management, and seabirds to name a few. A number of talks stood out during the week. Adrian Davis from the University of Sydney discussed the issue Sydney faces with an influx of endemic parrots which are establishing in the city. Likely causes are the regular fires in New South Wales forcing the parrots to seek refuge in the city. The abundance of food from planted trees may also be drawing them in from out of town. John Martin, from the University of Wollongong, discussed a similar issue facing Sydney, that of the establishment and population increase of Australasian White Ibis within the city precinct. While I personally would have no problem with an ibis nesting in my back yard, their pungent



*Spot the Tawny Frogmouth!*

odour and foul nesting areas are apparently undesired by many Sydney residents.

His research has investigated the seasonal and inter-annual population dynamics of 600 ibises marked with bands, wing-tags and radio transmitters. Despite ibises having been managed as a nuisance species for the last 20 years, John suggested that the Sydney population is actually an important source for those natural populations on the outskirts of town where numbers are declining.

One talk that had me particularly intrigued was presented by Stuart Rae of the Australian National University in Canberra, whose current research is looking at the densities of Tawny Frogmouths in different woodland habitats. For those of you not familiar with this species, it is a widespread, nocturnal, Australian endemic, notorious for its difficulty to survey due to its impressive camouflage ability. This bird is virtually invisible during daylight looking just like the branch of a eucalypt. Stuart's research has revealed that higher densities of these birds are found in more complex woodland habitat, which doesn't bode well for areas where forestry and other pressures are simplifying the available vegetation.

The week's talks were bisected by an excursion into the New England Tablelands. Two buses full of 'birdos' bearing binoculars, bird guides and other assorted paraphernalia headed off for a full day of bird watching. What astounded me more than the birds I saw that day was the incredible views in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Like New Zealand, Australia tends to put its marginal, non-arable land into reserves. This national park consisted of a number of amazing deep gorges and 'waterfalls', not to mention some pretty interesting wildlife.

The final day presented topics close to my heart; a symposium on the status and conservation of Australasian seabirds. Given New Zealand's track record at seabird translocations, one talk of particular

interest was that of Daniela Binder, who for her honours research identified the best time to collect Providence Petrel chicks for translocation. She discovered that wing length was the best determinant of age, a simple method to select chicks with the lowest chance of being already imprinted on their natal colony. In one season, Daniela's work collected all the information required for the translocation of Providence Petrels from Lord Howe to Norfolk Island. I was impressed.

Overall there was a select group of talks I found stimulating and interesting. Yet of primary benefit was meeting other bird nerds like me and discussing my research into the sustainable harvest of Sooty Shearwaters with others. A big thanks to Kerry-Jayne Wilson for her contribution to AOC on behalf of OSNZ and for showing me the ropes in Australian birding. While I did notice the conference as a whole lacked the spark of high end research, possibly a result of the lower than usual turnout, AOC was good fun and I recommend it to anyone who wishes to get a grasp of Australasian birds and the research being undertaken in the region.

AMELIA GEARY



*Sacred Ibises in Sydney Botanic Gardens*



## Far North

The last three months have seen our region suffer a serious drought which continues up to the time of writing. However, attempts to take advantage of this by trying to access forests which are sometimes too waterlogged met with surprise. Two of us went to Waima Forest overnight, only two hours from home, and had continuous light rain. Even in these conditions two Kokako sang briefly.

We have not officially had a February wader count, but an attempt to reach Kokota Sandspit by kayak also met with unseasonal obstruction when wind and choppy seas kept us back. After having had difficulty finding the roosting wader flock in November we did at least see from very long range that Bar-tailed Godwits and Knot were present in huge numbers, estimating between 3 and 5,000 birds.

There was a juvenile Black-fronted Tern with the White-fronted Terns on the beach at Spirits Bay recently. This site is actually farther north than Cape Reinga so a considerable journey for an endemic species.

As some readers will know, we have made some inroads to arranging pelagic trips from our region. After attempts in November and December were postponed through rough weather, the first trip set out from Whangaroa Harbour on 17th January with nine participants and skipper Brian Candy on board. It was a great success. Highlights included a White-necked Petrel, a Brown Skua, at least one Black-winged Petrel, four species of albatross (many lingering close to the boat Kaikoura-style), numerous White-faced Storm Petrels and a distant white-rumped species. We hope to repeat this trip at regular intervals.

Our most recent indoor meeting was in December when our regular summer visitor from California, Dr C J Ralph, gave a talk on bird monitoring and migration at a bird centre in Tortuguero National Park in Costa Rica.

News from local conservation groups report progress. 'Project Island Song', launched by the Guardians of the Bay in order to restock some of the Bay of Islands islands with native birds, have surveyed the now predator-free islands in the centre of the bay with promising results.

In Puketi Forest, after last year's release of Robins, there has been some breeding success. Several chicks have been seen being fed recently, and some unbanded birds are feeding for themselves. Birds are also being located some distance from the release site. However, predators continue to thrive too and their control will be an ongoing costly problem.

DETLEF DAVIES

## Auckland

The Auckland region closed 2009 with the annual (and now traditional) quiz lead by quizmaster extraordinaire, Michael Taylor. This is the most vociferous meeting of the year, with teams all vying for points by fair means and not-so-fair! One of the questions involved generating bird names from the phrase "Protecting all our birds" (where letters can only be used once for each name). Try this for yourself - can you beat our winning team's tally of 28 names?

We launched 2010 with a regional picnic in Waiatarua Reserve, a 20 ha wetland and storm water management area encompassed by urban Ellerslie in the heart of the city. We were fortunate to have a pleasant evening to share our summer birding experiences, followed by a walk around the wetland during which 28 species of birds were recorded. One highlight was watching a juvenile Shining Cuckoo being fed by its diminutive Grey Warbler 'parents'.

Our formal meetings for the year started in February with an evening of 'ornithological potpourri'. This included a number of brief presentations and reports reflecting members' travels and observations. Also in the February, the region was represented at a celebration of World Wetland Day held at the Marie Neverman Reserve in association with the New Zealand Native Forests Restoration Trust, and hosted by South Kaipara Landcare. Members provided ornithological knowledge and identification skills, introducing many to the wonders of bird watching. Telescopes provide such a wonderful window into the world of birds.

One local species worth a particular mention at this time of the year is the New Zealand Fairy Tern. The breeding population within the Auckland region has had a particularly successful season, with six pairs fledging nine chicks. We acknowledge the work of the Department of Conservation's seasonal wardens and their project managers for the on-going management of this species.

MEL GALBRAITH

## Waikato

It has been fairly quiet over the summer period in the Waikato as the 'official' activities ended in December and do not start up again until February. We finished the year with the annual Christmas dinner. This time we held a pot luck barbecue at the Hoverd's house at Kakepuku. Jan and Laurie have been raising New Zealand Falcon chicks for a number of years and we were all thrilled to see them being fed and flying around, apparently unconcerned

with a small army of birders watching their every move through spotting scopes! Falcon sightings in the Waikato are comparatively rare and to be able to get so close to these amazing birds is a real privilege.

Even though official activities are put on hold over the summer, the regular monthly lake counts still continue. On Hamilton Lake in January, Barry Friend reported good numbers of Australian Coot (209), Pukeko (99) and Mallards (969), while over on Cambridge Lake Hugh Clifford also reported good numbers of Mallards (345), 19 Coot, two Little Black Shags and a solitary Little Shag, amongst other birds. Forest Lake always has fewer birds than it compared to the other lakes, and January was no exception with Brian Challinor reporting only 40-odd Mallards, three adult and three juvenile Coot, three Little Shags and a smattering of White-faced Herons and Pukeko.

In addition to these counts, the Waikato Region of OSNZ has also started counting birds on Horseshoe Lake. Horseshoe is a 3 ha lake on the edge of Hamilton City and is currently the focus of much ecological restoration by the University of Waikato, Wintec, Hamilton City Council and Tui 2000. There is a lot of potential in this area, and although some of the surrounding area will be turned into a residential development, 66 ha have been set aside for a reserve and is in the process of being replanted with native vegetation. It appeared that nobody was looking at changes in bird abundance, so we thought that the OSNZ could help out. Hopefully as the area improves in quality, the abundance and diversity of birds will also respond positively. We have conducted two counts already and in excess of 150 Mallards appear to be resident. A Grey Teal was spotted on one occasion and two Grey Ducks were also seen, fairly uncommon in these parts. Furthermore, the lake is only a stone's throw from Hamilton Zoo, which boasts (in the opinion of Waikato OSNZ members) the best free-flight aviary in New Zealand, so we are hoping that a few interesting escapees will turn up from time to time.

Not many bird sightings have been sent through over the summer. However, there have been a couple of sightings of Tui within Hamilton in the last month or so. Visitations by Tui were numerous over the last winter period, as they come into the city to exploit largely exotic nectar and fruit sources, but they eventually return to the bush to breed. Sightings over the summer months are particularly encouraging as it may indicate that the birds are resident in areas closer to (or hopefully in) the City itself. We will have our fingers crossed that this is the case.

DAI MORGAN

## Bay of Plenty/Volcanic Plateau

The region was jolted back into a quality birdwatching experience in February as our evening meeting programme got underway for 2010. Junior member Marcus Richards relived his 12-day trip on the Southern Heritage tour boat *Spirit of Enderby*. A scholarship allowed Marcus and Asher Cook from Hamilton the experience of a lifetime, with dad Dave along as wingman. The boat visited The Snares, Auckland, Macquarie and Campbell Islands, and the talk was illustrated with an eloquence seldom seen from someone as young as sixteen. Many photos and great video footage were obtained and shared with obvious passion, including spot-on identification of hard-to-identify seabirds.

A smattering of sightings have winged themselves this way over the summer, with shorebirds constituting most of the unusual ones. Murray Smith uncovered a Turnstone in December lurking with Pacific Golden Plovers at Te Maunga, the wader roost next door to the Bay Park Stadium, and within scoping distance of his back yard! January heralded good numbers of Pacific Golden Plovers too, with 33 seen by Tim Barnard at Little Waihi, and a further 13 at Maketu. However they were absent from Ohiwa, he said, and casually slipped in a great Bar-tailed Godwit record of 2,180 with three orange flags. Little Terns have been back haunting the Western Bay of Plenty, with Tim seeing two at Maketu in January, and one being seen by me at Ohope later the same month.

Kerry Oates has been keeping the Volcanic Plateau sightings coming in, with an unusual Reef Heron sighting at Rotorua, far from any marine locality. This bird was initially sighted at Hamurana Golf Course. Kerry didn't mention whether the sighting affected his golf game, but did mention the bird flew off in the direction of Sulphur Point. Good multi-tasking Kerry!

Julian Fitter has been keeping the seabird sightings up with an Antipodean Wandering Albatross about 15 nm north of Mount Maunganui in late January.

The Grey-faced Petrel Project wound up its 20th year with a second best ever chick tally of 39. It would have been 40 if one chick hadn't decided to fly into a tree upon fledging... Only last year with 49 beat that figure. It does seem to indicate that the good pest control work that Forest & Bird Tauranga has been putting in is paying off. Unfortunately there has been some mortality either from Mauao or Motuotau (an offshore island also called Rabbit Island), with four chicks being attracted to the lights of Mount Maunganui township with fatal results.

Also on Mauao/Mount Maunganui we have been keeping a vigilant look



at a very accessible Blue Penguin nest. This is the same nest as featured in last issue of *Southern Bird*, when I photographed Ben Richards looking into the burrow, which just happens to have two entrances. Two chicks hatched, although only one survived through to fledging in early February.

The Harbour Censuses of Tauranga, Ohiwa, Maketu and Little Waihi occurred on the weekend of the 21st and 22nd November. Highlights on Tauranga Harbour were 25 Turnstone at Bowentown, an Eastern Curlew at Tahunamau Island, along with nearly 3,500 Bar-tailed Godwits and 120 Caspian Terns. Maketu/Little Waihi star birds were 24 New Zealand Dotterels, 22 Pacific Golden Plovers, 23 Black-billed Gulls and three Royal Spoonbills. Ohiwa boasted 10 Pacific Golden Plovers, 3,800 Godwits, 148 Black-billed Gulls, and 6 Fernbirds tucking in on the coat-tails of an interesting weekend. All in all, 22 people helped out with the counts - thank you to all!

Finally, there is mixed news from the hospital. Marcus's assignment to monitor the 'hospital dotterel family' has produced good news and bad news. On the open reclaimed ground two chicks were hatched, with one surviving to the flying stage - a remarkable achievement given the area is frequented by large dogs taking their owners for a run.

PAUL CUMING

## Taranaki

Simon Collins was guest speaker at our November meeting. His topic was the eight years he spent working with Yellow-eyed Penguins and tourists at Penguin Place, a privately-owned venture on the Otago peninsula. He gave an enthusiastic and detailed report on the lives of these engaging birds. Yellow-eyed Penguins are the third tallest penguin on the planet with a life span of 20 to 25 years although one has been recorded at 32 years. They face a myriad of problems including avian diphtheria and predation from an increasing New Zealand Sealion population. In addition uncontrolled tourism at some colonies is deleterious to the species. There is one report of Yellow-eyed Penguin in Taranaki; a beach wreck at Sandy Bay in 2002.

A smattering of migratory waders had been seen around the Taranaki coast, five Bar-tailed Godwits and a Pacific Golden Plover at Mokau, and a Turnstone and three Bar-tailed Godwits on the south coast; not a lot but enough to keep the shorebird enthusiasts keen. There was also a report of a well-grown young Brown Kiwi seen crossing the road on Mt Messenger, narrowly avoiding becoming road-kill.

At December's meeting Emily King from DOC gave a brief report on the Blue Duck nesting success in Egmont National Park. Two nests had four eggs lifted from each and hatched to be released in ten weeks' time. David Medway said that Shining Cuckoos had not been heard around his home as much as in other years, but other members had been hearing them around the province. I was unable to attend the meeting but shudder at the thought of the feeding frenzy that ensued at the end of year supper.

Seventeen Brown Kiwi eggs have been lifted from around Aotuhia in eastern Taranaki and hatched at Kiwi Encounter in Rotorua. Some will be returned, with others headed for the Maungatautari mainland island. Barry Hartley gave a summary of the 2009-10 Variable Oystercatcher season around the coast. Some birds were into nesting in early November. The long staying Cattle Egret at Waiongana was last seen on December 20th and a pair of New Zealand Dotterels that had been hanging around for some time took me completely by surprise and nested close by the already nesting Variable Oystercatchers. Unfortunately the first nest was abandoned and the other predated.

January's field trip was the annual 'Birding and BBQ' at Waiongana with 28 species of birds recorded and a wide variety of delicious food expertly barbecued. The only downside was certain people's opinion of what is considered entertainment on television; the less said the better. The meeting in February was a chance to catch up on what had been seen and heard over summer, the most interesting report coming from Myk Davis. He was standing on the banks of the Waiwhakaiho River watching a Feral Pigeon fluttering at the waters edge. A member of the public went to rescue the possibly injured bird when a large eel rose to the surface and dragged the bird under never to be seen again. There was an unconfirmed report of three Sooty Terns seen with, but apart from, a flock of White-fronted Terns on New Plymouth's back beach.

Mynas came in for some bad-mouthing with reports of their aggression toward other birds nesting close to them, and with the suggestion they are responsible for ejecting House Sparrows chicks from their nests. David Medway leapt to their defence as ever saying the family group in his neighbour showed impeccable manners and told us of seeing a loose flock of 34 in a local car-park. A discussion ensued as to what a flock of Mynas are called. A *Calcutta* was put forward but dismissed.

Beach patrols have been productive, with a minor wreck of Blue Penguins along the coast. No positive reason for the deaths has been discovered. In

addition a variety of shearwaters and prions have been picked up. David Medway brought along a bird he had picked up on one patrol. Despite it being a headless skeleton with only a tail and some wing feathers he was still able to positively identify it, pointing out the clues that led to his conclusion. The less expert amongst us concurred with his diagnosis that the bird was an Antarctic Fulmer.

The northward migration of Pied Oystercatchers this year was rather confusing with very few birds seen. A flock of 25 was the largest, compared to last year when flocks of 2-300 were seen. February's outing was to South Waitaanga, a favourite area. The only down side of this site is the hour-long walk across open farm land to access it, where birds were few and far between in the paddocks and on the bush fringe. Maybe this was due to the time of day, or because of the mammalian footprints seen on the muddy farm tracks. The usual bush birds were seen with Robin, as always, something special.

PETER FRYER

## Hawkes Bay

November activities were focused on the wader census and our Blowhard Bush monitoring project. With small numbers available on census day we struggled to get all areas covered, but we did manage it thanks to Bernie Kelly putting in a great solo effort down at Porangahau. He tackled the area in his kayak, camping out overnight in less-than-ideal conditions.

Our 2010 activities started with an AGM in January which we held outdoors at the Southern Marsh area adjacent to the Ahuriri Estuary. Proceedings started with a short walk along the embankment and eventually the 14 Royal Spoonbills, which had been well hidden amongst the reeds, came out and did a very elegant fly-past for us. They provided very pleasant surroundings, on a hot Hawke's Bay afternoon, in which to conduct the business end of things. Helen Andrews had last year signalled her intention to step down as regional rep, however with no-one willing to take on the job she very generously agreed to continue for this year. This was much appreciated by the members present and Helen was thanked for all her work on our behalf.

In February four members armed with their telescopes assisted with an outing of the local Kiwi Conservation Club. The children had cycled along the coastal cycle-way and stopped off at the wetland area at Waitangi where the OSNZ members were waiting to help identify the birds of the area. Once again Royal Spoonbills were the stars, with five birds present. Three of them had neck plumes which turned into rather trendy punk hairstyles as they faced into the stiff breeze.

Ahuriri has hosted some interesting waders over summer. Pacific Golden Plovers can usually be found there with 16 being the maximum number present. A single Grey-tailed Tattler was spotted on a number of occasions. In addition a Turnstone, two Red-necked Stints, three Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and a Pectoral Sandpiper were recorded during December and January.

Not strictly a Hawke's Bay sighting, but an interesting find was made by Bernie whilst he was in the depths of Fiordland walking the Hump Ridge Track. He came across a banded dead gannet on the coast which was found to be one of 'our' birds from the Cape Kidnappers colony.

MARGARET TWYDLE

## Wanganui

Much of the activity over the last few months has been focused on the comings and goings of birds on the Whanganui Estuary. Small numbers of Pied Oystercatchers began drifting through from mid-December onwards, culminating on 24th January 2010 when Lynne Douglas, Ormond Torr, Bill Greenwood and Peter Frost, individually, recorded 191 birds in seven flocks, some in the estuary or on the beach nearby, others flying along the coast from southeast to northwest. Smaller numbers have been recorded since then, either stopping over briefly on the estuary or flying through, following the same northwest course (which, incidentally, is directly towards Mt Taranaki, a useful landmark). In addition to the Oystercatchers, we have also had numbers of Wrybills, Royal Spoonbills and Pied Stilts on passage, with some individuals of the last two species staying on, as they do each autumn and winter.

More enigmatic has been scattered observations of Banded Dotterels. Colin Ogle and family reported 35-40 Banded Dotterels on the South Beach car-park during the New Year weekend. Many of these birds were in breeding plumage. Paula Dennison reported a couple of birds nearby at the airport, and Lynne Douglas photographed a juvenile on the estuary. Peter Frost counted 27 birds on Kotiata Lagoon, at the mouth of the Turakina River, a site from which similar numbers of dotterel are regularly recorded. We are not sure if some or all of these birds are migrants from the South Island, or seasonal aggregations of birds that breed in the dunes systems along this coast or inland on the Volcanic Plateau. Colour-banding different populations of these birds would be a rewarding project for someone with time and patience.

Not all the focus has been on New Zealand internal migrants. The numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits recorded this year have been higher than in recent years. Paul Gibson counted 39 birds on the Whanganui Estuary in mid-November, although numbers have dropped to below 30 since then. Among the birds



that have been present throughout the summer have been three males with engraved white tibial flags, AJB, AJC, and AJD. The same birds spent last summer on the estuary as well, although they were banded originally at Foxton Beach in late October 2008, about six weeks before being recorded on our estuary for the first time. In similar fashion this season, the birds arrived first at Foxton Beach before moving on to Whanganui where they have been recorded regularly throughout the summer. Even more interestingly one bird, AJC, had been recorded in Australia in mid-October 2009, presumably stopping over briefly on his way back to New Zealand. In addition to the 39 godwits, Paul Gibson also photographed a Lesser Knot in juvenile plumage. As Phil Battley noted "We don't see a whole lot of knots in this plumage, yet by autumn there are plenty of first years around. Band records show that lots go to Australia first then come to New Zealand, and I think they filter in unnoticed through the summer." The striking thing about this bird, apart from the dark subterminal bands on the unmoulted scapulars and wing coverts, was the yellowish colour to the legs, a feature of juvenile Lesser Knots that is not widely recognised.

Another wader that caused some discussion was a Curlew Sandpiper in full breeding plumage, which was present from 9th to 13th January. There was a lot of debate about whether this was a bird that had moulted early into its breeding plumage, or had not yet moulted out of this plumage from the previous breeding season. Unfortunately, overcast days and the bird's wariness meant that none of us got particularly good photographs of it, but the consensus was that it was a bird that had not yet moulted, for whatever reason. Finally in regards to the estuary, the fears of some people that construction of a flood-protection stopbank alongside the waders' main high-tide roost would disturb them have not been realised. The birds continue to use the roost and appear utterly unaffected by the sight and sound of heavy machinery less than 50 m away.

Away from the estuary, much less has been noted. Lynne Douglas has been observing and photographing two families of Australian Magpies. Both birds of one pair have crippled legs but this does not seem to affect their parental skills, as they succeeded in fledging at least one chick. The second pair also produced a couple of fledglings at the second attempt. On one occasion Lynne noted one of the fledglings being fed by an immature bird from the previous year's brood. Hughes *et al.* in a paper in the journal *Emu* in 1996, note that this is a common feature among the Magpies that they studied in Australia. Is this a common feature in New Zealand? Even more surprisingly, Paul Gibson photographed a Starling feeding Goldfinch chicks in a nest at which the adult Goldfinches were also active. The most likely explanation is that the Starling had recently lost its own brood but was stimulated by the sound of the Goldfinch chicks to continue its parental behaviour, despite the differences in nest and nesting site.

Paul also witnessed a huge fight between a Mute Swan and a Black Swan, which the Black Swan apparently lost, perhaps fatally so. The fight took place just before dark, with both birds circling and swimming in parallel with each other for about 10 minutes before the actual fight erupted. This lasted about three minutes and ended with the Mute Swan holding the Black Swan's head and neck underwater. Because of the fading light and the birds drifting out of site, Paul could not tell if the Black Swan survived.

Dawne Morton also reported a number of life-and-death struggles. In mid-December she was handed a very weak immature giant petrel (not sure which species) which had been picked up on Turakina Beach. The bird died the next day. Then in mid-January a Fiordland Crested Penguin of uncertain age was attacked by dogs on Kai Iwi Beach. The bird was rescued and taken to the police, where it died. Dawne sent the bird to Massey University for a post mortem, and is waiting for the report. Life is tough out there.

PETER FROST

## Wairarapa

Peter Frost presented at the November indoor meeting on the Nankeen Night Heron, and herons generally, both in New Zealand and other parts of the world. Peter was a very significant member of our expedition to Whanganui Awa primary school, on the middle reaches of the Whanganui River, in June 2009. Peter's visit to the Wairarapa was also an opportunity for our members to meet Peter in his new capacity as a member of OSNZ Council, and the Convenor of the Projects and Activities Committee. In discussion with Peter, members decided to plan a special local project, namely to monitor the birdlife in Greytown Memorial Park and at Henley Lake in Masterton on a weekly basis for a year. Peter has since given us on-going suggestions as to how best to implement these projects for maximum gain from the data.

In November, we attended a combined gathering of Forest & Bird, OSNZ, DoC and others, in a celebration of our New Zealand wild rivers on the banks of the Atiwhakatu River. This river flows into the Waingawa River and then the Ruamahanga River, and can be rated 'wild' in its upper reaches. At Henley Lake, Tenick Dennison continued his ongoing association with and birder tutoring of the pupils of Lakeview School. Tenick noted, "Ever since the Henley Trust 2003 came into existence it has been one of our dreams that the lake and wetlands should be used as an outdoor classroom for the study of natural history. We are truly delighted that this is now happening". The end-of-year dinner was held at Glenys Hansen's charming home, 'Tidsfordriv'.

17 members enjoyed her gracious hospitality and her extensive wetlands and garden.

In the region's 2010 newsletters, a new feature will be profiles of some of our long-standing members. What makes a birder? It is hoped that members will enjoy these individual stories, and we thank those who will share their story with us. A benefactor has very kindly offered his professional services, free of charge, to interview the members, and record their stories. Previously, the newsletter editor had recorded profiles of life-member, Helen Cook, and also of Betty Watt, some time prior to the latter's death. Tenick Dennison and Colin Scadden have been profiled thus far in 2010. Long before ordinary members join the Society their birding interest begins, perhaps as child, teenager or young adult. They are influenced by their personal experience of birds and their own natural curiosity. Important factors, too, are the adults who nurture the child's interest in birds. Although OSNZ may lack young members, a significant role for OSNZers is to encourage and nurture the young, and this is a tenet that the Wairarapa Region values.

BARBARA LOVATT

## Wellington

Ecological risk assessment for seabirds in New Zealand and Pacific fisheries was the subject of consultant ornithologist Susan Waugh's talk at November's meeting. The challenge she described was the development of rational policies that take into account commercial fishing and the need to protect seabird populations. These policies have to be developed with data which is frequently of variable quality. The new policies she is developing are focused on minimising the by-catch, employing effective mitigation procedures and better monitoring of all fisheries.

Geoff Chambers from Victoria University presented a review of his 25 years of work applying DNA techniques to New Zealand birds at the December meeting. These techniques have provided great insight into the evolution of ancient Gondwanan birds. The best known of these are the ratites including the moa, but Geoff has also worked on the modern dispersants, many of which have come from Australia. Of particular interest to Geoff has been the investigation of parakeets from the New Zealand mainland and offshore islands. His studies have been central in defining species as well as identifying cases of hybridisation. Such findings are important in the establishment of sound conservation plans.

February's meeting was devoted to contributions from local members. Amelia Geary gave a report on the latest Miranda Course which she and the three other Wellington OSNZ attendees highly recommended. This week-long course was presented by a series of experts and covered a diverse range of topics from identification of waders to the ecology of wader habitat, as well as participation in cannon netting. Reg Cotter and Ros Batcheler presented a summary of a study of Blue penguins on Mātū/Somes Island in Wellington Harbour. A major objective of this study is to determine whether or not banding has any effects on penguins by comparing banded birds with those with transponders. The final talk of the meeting was given by Peter Reese who summarised two years of observations of dead birds on the roads near Mt Albert, in Wellington. During this period, Peter found 330 road-killed birds from 12 species. Interestingly 52 of the birds, representing eight species, were banded and came from the population of 20,000 birds within 2 km of Mt Albert that he and his colleagues have banded over the last eight years. Peter's studies show that Fantails, Grey Warblers and Song Thrushes are more likely to be killed on the road than Blackbirds, Starlings and Chaffinch.

GEOFF DE LISLE

## Nelson

A few Nelson members accepted an invitation from the Marlborough region to join them at St Arnaud for a long weekend in October to carry out a survey of Fernbirds and Black-fronted Terns. Whilst the Fernbird survey in the Black Valley swamp proved negative, the Black-fronted Tern survey later that day on the Howard and Upper Buller rivers revealed adult and some immature birds flying high above the beech-lined river banks feeding on insects. However there was no sign of any colonies. To complete the day Peter and Clare Gaze hosted a most enjoyable barbecue at their Big Bush bach. The following day the Upper Wairau and Rainbow Rivers were surveyed by three teams. Mike Bell recorded a small colony of Black-fronted Terns in the Upper Rainbow. On the section of the Wairau River from Hell's Gate to the Rainbow Homestead no colonies were found despite many adult birds seen feeding on the river.

The annual Flora Track Five-minute Bird Count took place twice in November. Due to unforeseen circumstances a third visit was not possible. On the first visit Kaka, Kea, Falcon and Yellow-crowned Parakeet were seen. On the second visit Bellbirds proved the most dominant species once



again, and one was spotted on a nest high in a forked beech tree. Rifleman were frequently seen and heard, but Robin and Yellow-crowned Parakeet were only heard.

The shellbank Caspian Tern colony had another successful year with 60 chicks banded. The breeding season for the Variable Oystercatcher has been particularly good in and around the Waimea Inlet, with 19 chicks banded in the area from Kina to Bells Island. In one case a pair of chicks displayed a huge growth disparity, the alpha bird being 200 g heavier than its sibling. We also now have some adult Variable Oystercatchers banded, making family groups easily identifiable.

A resident in the Aniseed Valley near Richmond recently reported one evening seeing about 40 Australasian Harriers spiralling in a thermal above a farm. Sheep in a paddock below were spooked by the sight.

Sightings from Golden Bay, in particular the Cobb Valley and surrounds, have been very significant. Not only was a Great Spotted Kiwi heard calling near the DoC hostel, but it was seen on the lawn by the kitchen! Another was calling from a short distance away, and the observers established this was a female. Chris Petyt and the Milne and Stocker families reported four pairs of Rock Wrens in the Henderson Basin, with two pairs busily feeding six chicks in December.

Good numbers of Robins, Rifleman, Yellow-crowned Parakeets and Brown Creepers were reported in January from near Lake Sylvester. In February, Rock Wrens were seen by Lake Clara, elsewhere on Lead Hills and at the Needle near Adelaide Tarn. A pair of Blue Ducks was at Seventeen Mile Creek near the Brown Hut in the Aorere Valley. Tim Rowe, a Farewell Spit bus driver reported seeing a frigatebird at Pakawau on 7th January flying towards Seaford and on towards Farewell Spit. He was unable to view it for sufficient time to make identification to the species level possible.

In early December Helen Kingston noted two adult Banded Rails with two downy chicks in Ligar Bay Inlet. Helen's records showed a Banded Rail with chicks a month earlier in 2008. The Nelson Haven wetlands have seen many Pied Stilt chicks reared this spring and summer. Peter Field reported 29 in mid-November. In late December over 20 had reached adult size. Offshore he saw three Campbell Island Mollymawks, about 20 White-capped Mollymawks, plus about 20 dark petrels (size-wise he felt they were possibly Westland Petrels).

In January Peter Gaze received photos of a Banded Dotterel sitting/standing in hot weather on the painted apron markings at Nelson Airport. This was strange behaviour for the time of the year. In winter months warmth would be expected to be an attractant.

Numerous band sightings have been made of the Arctic wader species throughout the district since their arrival in spring. Bar-tailed Godwit Y3, still sporting its aerial, was seen at Taupata Point on 1st February, not far from where it was banded almost three years ago to the day.

DON COOPER

## Canterbury

Before Christmas, the partiest party of the bird calendar for OSNZ Canterbury was held at Colin and Cherry Hill's Fenland House farm at Lake Ellesmere. Something like 18 people rose to the occasion and the waders early in December. Five teams went around sections of the lake before lunch and two later on, to mop up the left-overs. Nothing exceptional was seen except three Australasian Bitterns and a small colony of nesting Caspian Terns, neither of which were waders, unfortunately. This event continues to be one of Canterbury's finest, rivalling the Show, Cup Week and an All-Black Test, put together.

The recent February wader count had a lot more waders of a greater variety of species showing up, though the counting was hampered by a violent front from the south bringing gale-force winds and an incoming lake. It's amazing how far and fast a shallow lake can travel with a long fetch and a high wind.

In September we failed to find any Tui when we went to Hinewai Reserve near Akaroa, but the birds are reported to be doing well, a few nests had been found, and two fledglings seen at the last report. Thirty more birds from Maud Island are due to join the first lot this March. A bird was seen at Diamond Harbour on the opposite side of Banks Peninsula by Maria Stoker. This may not be a re-introduced individual, however, as no bands were seen.

In October, our mystery outing ended up fairly near home at the Ashley Estuary and the advertised picnic became tea and cakes in a local café as the weather was not great.

November's trip was the Ashley Riverbed Bird Survey, the only one done this year. Once again there was too much water for the October count. Some extra Wrybills were located in a new area for them. The Ashley counts are co-ordinated by the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group, but a lot of our members are involved as well. Their Chairman and OSNZ member, Nick Ledgard, received a richly deserved Queen's Service Order in the New Year's Honours

this year. The Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group also won the Canterbury/Aoraki Conservation Award for 2009.

Some excellent evening meetings were held at the end of last year. Sara Kross, studying Falcons in Marlborough vineyards, had a fascinating video record of the birds to show their lives in detail. She asked for small-bird experts to help her identify the prey items shown in the film, not that there was much left to see. Richard Holdaway gave two talks, one on moa and their habitat in North Canterbury, revealed by the Pyramid Valley excavation and the other on how shearwaters and other migratory seabirds find their way back to their natal burrow sites. Both were exceptional in their detail and interest and we look forward to reading them slowly when in print.

The Projects and Activities committee has been asking for ideas for training sessions etc that each branch might organize. Nick Allen feels that Canterbury could best do something about riverbed birds and their conservation, given our expertise in this area. More will be happening later about this: expect next summer to be full of learner bird-counters and maybe banders. The BR-aid group is also about to be launched as a society to which people can affiliate. It will enable the dissemination of news and data about birds in braided riverbeds in a timely fashion.

JAN WALKER

## Southland

In mid-October I experienced for the first time a pair of Yellowhammers flying in to my suburban garden in Invercargill. They flew in with several Greenfinches which were attracted in by a mixed flock of finches feeding on some discarded apples. They didn't hang around and were gone again in a matter of seconds.

Beach patrols in Southland during October and November yielded large numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters, part of a large wreck that happened around the country. We also noticed more Antarctic Fulmars than usual, no doubt due to the very strong and persistent westerly winds that battered Southland for many weeks. A rare casualty of this weather was an Arctic Tern that was picked up by Ian Southey on November 12th from Oreti Beach. Live Arctic Terns were also spotted off Stewart Island, the New River Estuary Invercargill and from Wakapatu Beach near Riverton.

Weka seem to be making a comeback at Milford Sound with adults and chicks being seen around the bus-park and café. Predator control seems to be having an effect.

On November 26th a report was received from Lloyd Esler of a Black-fronted Dotterel on the Waiau River at the Clifton Bridge area near Tuatapere and on December 23rd Paul Jacques also spotted one on the Waiau River just below Tuatapere. The only recent sighting of Black-fronted Dotterel in Southland has been from the Aparima River near Otautau. This may be a case of them not being noticed before. Also in December DoC workers doing a river bird survey on the Oreti River near Mossburn reported seeing a strange tern-like bird. They were shown a field guide and picked out the Oriental Pratincole as the bird they had seen, unfortunately no-one was available to head out to Mossburn to confirm the sighting.

Lloyd Esler reported a flock of about 500 Buller's Mollymawks at the Solander Islands "wheeling like hawks riding a thermal while spiralling upwards". Lloyd was on the *Clipper Odyssey* as a nature guide and also reported two Arctic Skuas from Milford Sound.

After several years on the back-burner the Invercargill City Council has managed to secure some funding for a bird hide at the Tip Lagoon at the Invercargill Estuary. Wynston Cooper, Lloyd Esler and I checked out the lagoon for the best position and found an ideal spot with plenty of shelter and good views of birds both at low and high tides. While we discussed construction ideas a Caspian Tern could be seen hawking the lagoon right in front of us. A contractor that has been working on the Roger Sutton Boardwalk reported seeing some quite large trout in the lagoon herding up Yellow-eyed Mullet and smelt before making quick dashes into the middle of them before returning to round them up again.

Thanks to Dave Bell from the Raptor Association, who included us on his speaking tour. Everyone enjoyed Dave's presentation and the amazing photos that were shown. Many attendees had their own Falcon stories to tell and have given Dave some more information from Southland for his survey.

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

David Crockett, 21 McMillan Avenue, Kamo, Whangarei 0112.  
Ph (09) 435 0954  
Evening meetings, second Thursday of the month, phone David Crockett. West coast beach patrols Prue Cozens (09) 437 7760. East coast beach patrols Pauline Smith (09) 437 6470. Whangarei Harbour wader count Tony Beauchamp (09) 436 2661. North Kaipara wader count 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, 20a Walsh Street, Forest Lake, Hamilton 3200.  
Phone (07) 848 2522.  
Email magpiemorgan@gmail.com  
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 ecoworksyz@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. 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.

## 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 skua44@yahoo.co.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.

