

*Newsletter of the Northland Region of the  
Ornithological Society of New Zealand - trading as Birds New Zealand*

## **February 2022 Amokura 133**

(Published in February, July and October of each year)

**MEETINGS** of the Northland Branch of Birds New Zealand are held each month on the second Thursday, for the period FEBRUARY to DECEMBER. TIME: 7-30p.m.

**VENUE:** Founders Room, Alzheimer's Society, 148 Corks Road, Tikipunga, Whangarei.

**COST:** A donation of \$3-00 per person per meeting is requested toward the cost of  
Hall hire, supper and the production and distribution of "Amokura".

Or you can pay an Annual fee of \$30.00 to the Northland Branch bank account **12-3099-0614160-00**.  
Payment Due after the AGM

**Be sure to include your Surname and the word Sub in the details.**

**ALL WELCOME**

### **PROGRAMME TO July 2022**

#### **FEBRUARY**

- 10** MEETING – 7-30p.m. Guest Speaker –
- 15** EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)
- 19** Ngunguru Shorebird Count – 10:15am – At the Ngunguru School carpark , Te Maika Road

#### **MARCH**

- 10** MEETING – 7-30p.m. Guest Speaker –
- 15** EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

#### **APRIL**

- 14** MEETING – 7-30p.m. Guest Speaker –
- 19** EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

#### **MAY**

- 12** MEETING – 7-30p.m. Guest Speaker –
- 17** EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

#### **JUNE**

- 9** MEETING – 7-30p.m. Guest Speaker –
- 14** EAST COAST BEACH PATROL (Meet at the Kensington Carpark 12:30pm)

**REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**  
**SECRETARY**  
**TREASURER**  
**REGIONAL RECORDER**  
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Click here for [previous issues of Amokura](#)

**Health and Safety** – It is a request from the Birds New Zealand Council that:

- Any incidents that result in harm need to be notified to President and EO immediately, so they can be acted on.
- Don't hesitate to call 111 in incidents, even if they appear minor.
- Safety briefings need to be held on all field trips.

**OCTOBER** – No meeting due to Covid restrictions

**NOVEMBER**- Emma Williams was our guest speaker at the November meeting via Zoom. We had a very interesting presentation and discussion on the movement of Australasian Bittern. Studies undertaken in the Bay of Plenty, Whangamarino, Waikato and Canterbury have shown that they often move very long distances. Even as much as 300 kilometres.

**DECEMBER** – The Christmas function. Thank you Bev Chitty for hosting us at your place for our Christmas get together and pot luck meal.

## **Stories - Adventures – Yarns – Sightings**

**Again *The Petrel Station* features with the following reports and photographs from Scott Brooks and Stephen Collins.**

Had a great day out at the 'Petrel Station' yesterday (2nd October 2021) on the latest Tutukaka Pelagic Seabird trip. With near-zero winds forecast for most the day I was expecting a fairly quiet day out on the water, but we'd hardly left Tutukaka harbour when we were sitting in a constant stream of a couple of thousand Fluttering Shearwaters flying north. And as we made our way out to the Poor Knights Islands we encountered staggering amounts of seabirds rafting up sitting on the water or actively feeding, with well over 20,000 seabirds in the area. These were mostly Fairy Prions and Buller's Shearwaters and was a magnificent marvel to witness, especially at times when we were totally surrounded by thousands of seabirds as the feeding groups moved around following the schools of fish and krill. We then headed out deep where it was very calm, but we still got a good variety of seabirds. They weren't overly active until the winds pick up near the end and they started putting on a great show swirling all around until we left late afternoon. Another awesome day out.

During the trip we saw 22 different seabird species, and over 23,000 seabirds in total!

Cheers

Scott Brooks

Tutukaka 'Petrel Station' Pelagic organiser

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Here's the full trip results:

1 x Salvin's Mollymawk  
1 x Buller's Mollymawk  
2 x White-capped Mollymawk  
1 x Mollymawk sp.  
1 x Northern Giant Petrel  
10 x Cook's Petrel  
4 x Grey-faced Petrel  
12,000+ x Fairy Prion  
8,000+ x Buller's Shearwater  
8 x Flesh footed Shearwater  
10 x Sooty Shearwater  
1 x Short-tailed Shearwater  
2,000+ x Fluttering Shearwater  
40 x Little Shearwater  
6 x New Zealand Storm Petrel  
5 x White-faced Strom Petrel

300 x Common Diving Petrel  
20 x Little Blue Penguin  
550 x Gannet  
6 x White-fronted Tern  
500 x Red-billed Gull  
16 x Black-backed Gull  
61 x Pied Shag

**Scott Brooks** reports yet another cracker day out at the 'Petrel Station' yesterday (30th October 2021) on the latest Tutukaka pelagic trip.

The highlights of the trip were:

- 5 species of albatross including a Chatham Albatross and 2 Campbell Albatross
- a Long-tailed Skua (a new species for the 'Petrel Station')
- 3 Mottled Petrels
- circa 50 NZ Storm Petrels off the back of the boat at once!!

During the trip we saw 27 different seabird species, and saw over 8,000 seabirds in total. Another awesome day out.

Cheers

Scott Brooks

Tutukaka 'Petrel Station' Pelagic organiser

**Scott Brooks** – The scarce New Zealand Storm Petrels were out in force today (October 25<sup>th</sup>) on the latest Tutukaka 'Petrel Station' pelagic trip. We saw approx. 45 of them during the trip and at one stage we had a staggering 35 of them off the back of the boat (the highest count we've had to date). This photo shows around 20 of these delightful seabirds and a few White-faced Storm Petrels as well.





More Scott Brooks Photos from his Pelagic trips.

### Bullers Mollymawk



Feeding frenzy boil-up of mostly Buller's Shearwaters.





**Steve Collins (Photos and comment)**

Yet another great trip out to “The Petrel Station” 50km offshore out the back of the Poor Knights islands.  
Salvin’s Mollymawk Below

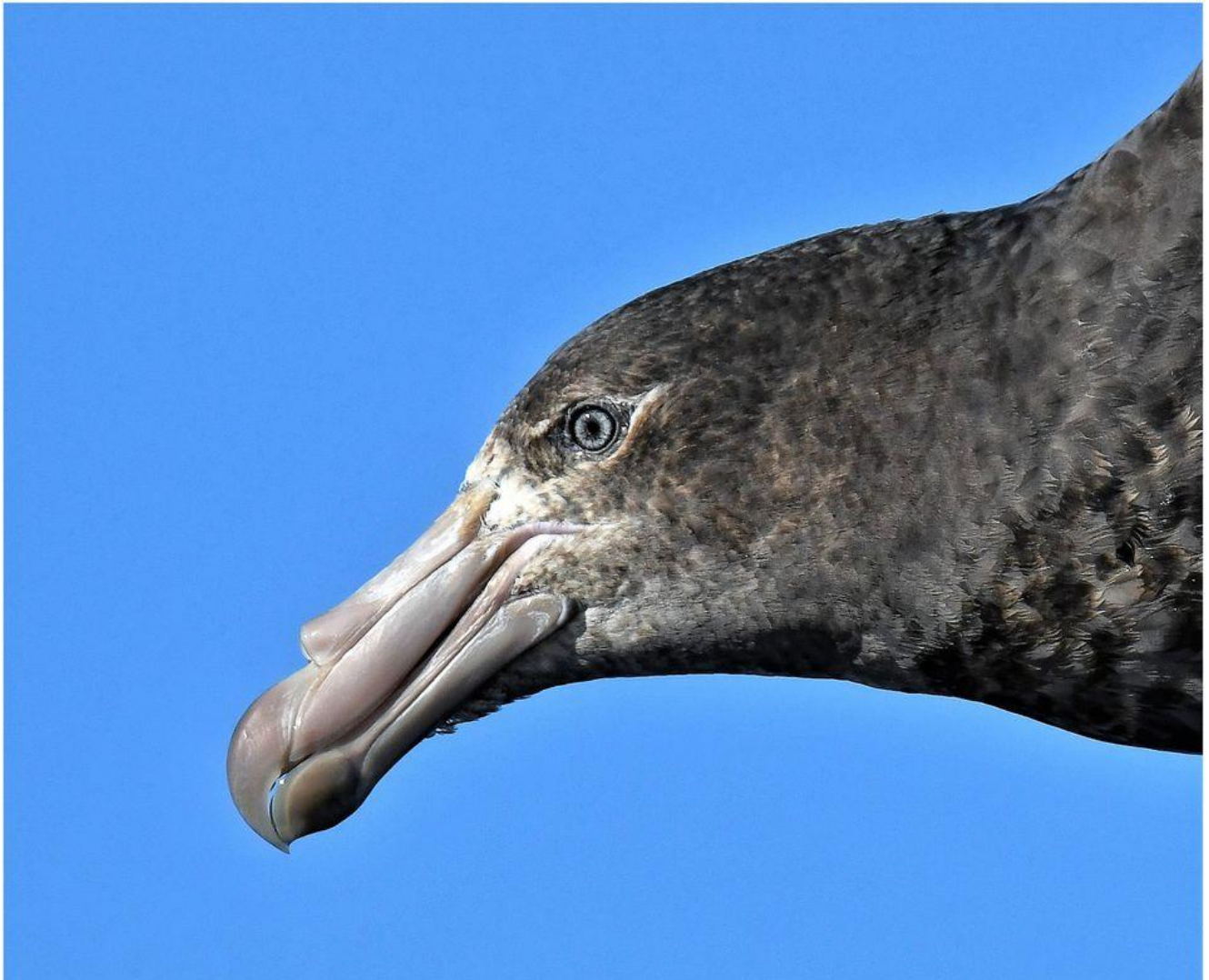






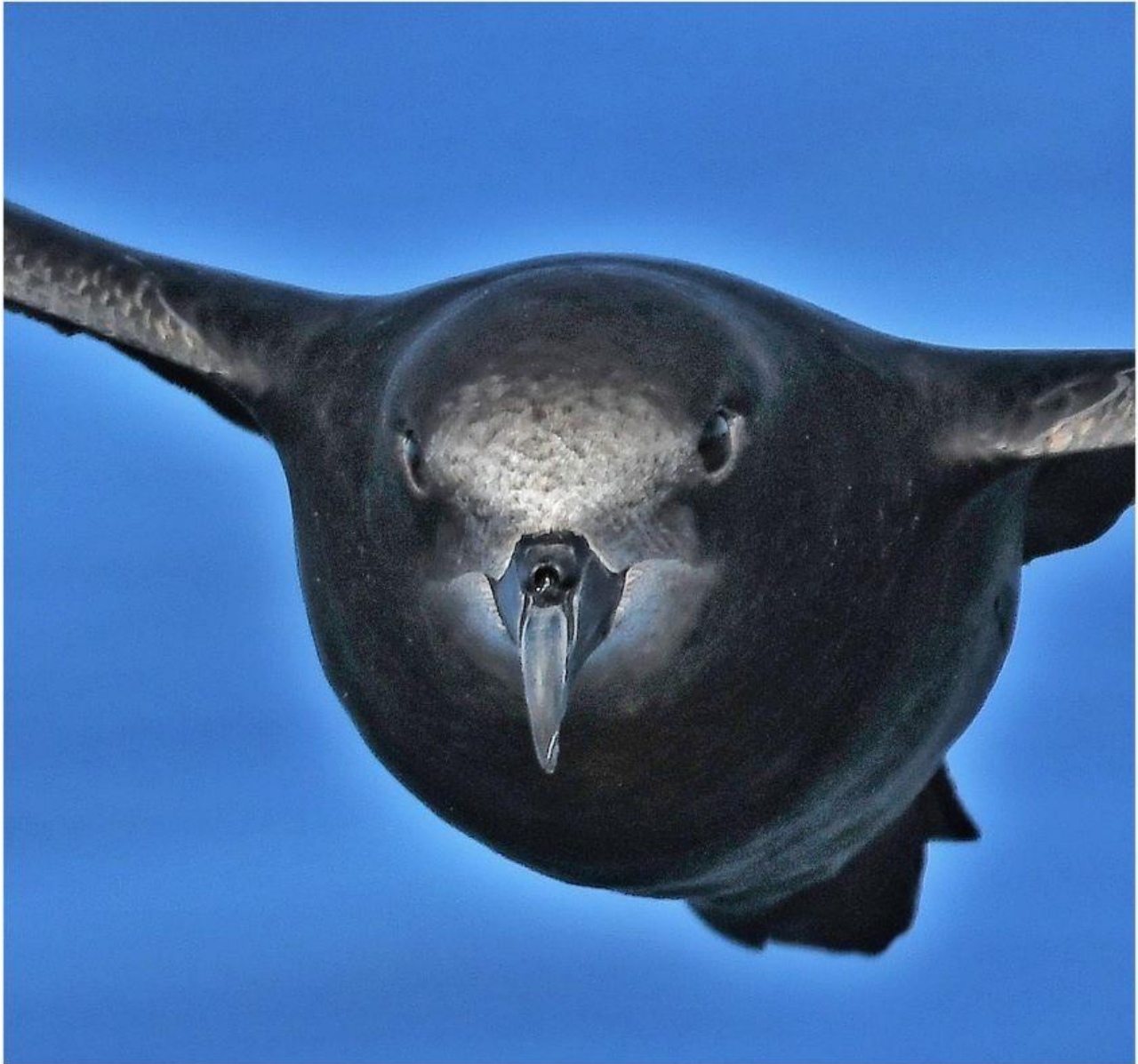


The prehistoric looking Pāngurunguru (Northern Giant Petrel) even it's Te Reo name sounds prehistoric. Apparently nguru means nose flute. This bird flew close enough for a head shot.

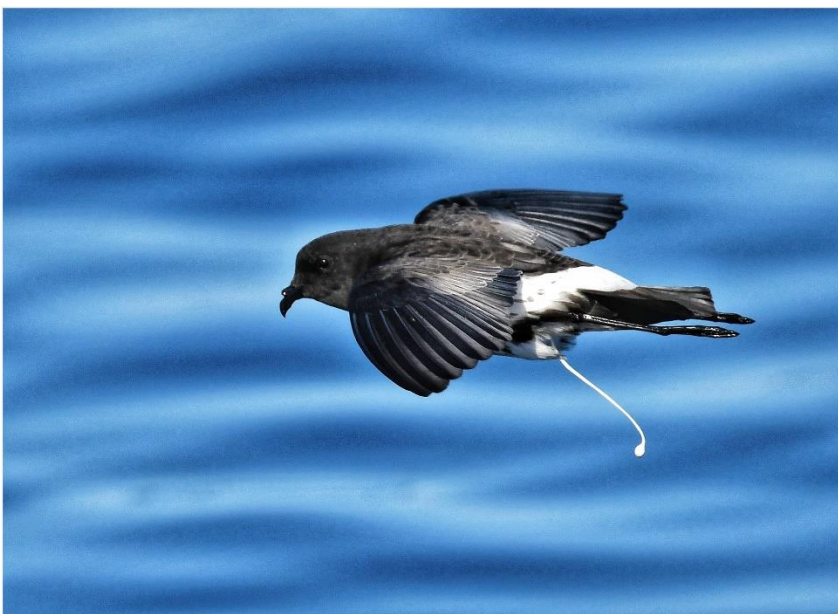




Grey Faced Petrel "On a collision course!"



"A Parting Shot" From the once thought to be extinct NZ Storm Petrel.





(Hilton Ward) Years ago I wrote this little poem. It goes well with Steve's photos.

### **Dancing Dolly**

Suspended on threads unseen  
Butterfly wings gracefully flutter  
While tiny feet dance the sea  
In search of food and tasty matter.  
Flitting here, there, as on a stage,  
Always at the water dancing.  
You pirouette and lift a wing  
Then bow and swoop, so gentle.  
We often watch your endless feeding  
From the wave tops littlest petrel.  
You share the ocean with Albatross and Molly  
But you are my favourite, my Dancing Dolly.

Who hasn't watched in wonder at this darling little, bravest of birds? In older times sailors gave Storm Petrels the name of Dancing Dolly.





### **Taurawhata Grey Faced Petrels – Hilton Ward**

On August 19th I counted 28 active burrows. I count active burrows during May while mating, August after egg laying and, during late December prior to fledging. Over the past few years since counting there has been a steady increase in numbers returning during August. The increase is most likely to be juveniles returning as a result of the increased predator control by the Tawapou Conservation Trust on their QE11 land.

Throughout the season burrows were monitored with two trail cameras. In late December I determined that 15 Oi chicks would fledge after checking the burrows. Similar to other years as the juveniles that fledged after predator control was started in earnest around the colony area just prior to 2017 are not yet old enough to breed. We are looking forward to the future. Already there are more burrows.

### **Australasian Gannet – Taurawhata Startup Colony – Hilton Ward**

The lone, probably male, Australasian Gannet visitor to the startup colony has given up on his decoy mate for this season but before its departure Stephen Collins managed to get this shot. I expect it to return for next season as it has done for the past three.



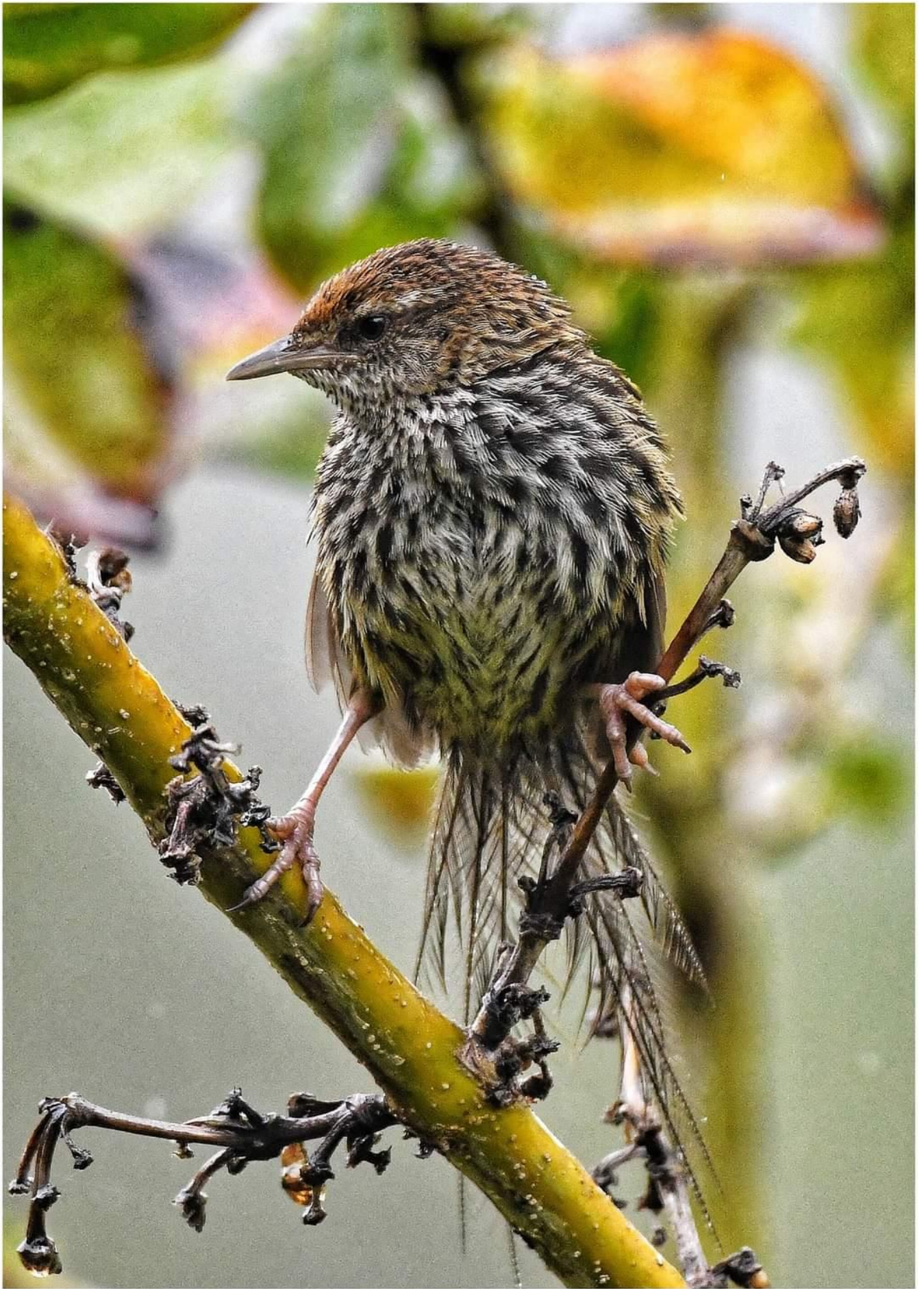


**Old Mill Lane Wetland – By Hilton Ward**

It's Mātātā (Fernbird) city at our wetland in Old Mill Ln, Ngunguru. Come and walk the boardwalk between 6 and 7am (Change of light) where you will hear the Mātātā dawn chorus where they are chirping all over the wetland. You will be amazed how many different calls they have as well as how many Mātātā are there. At that time their calling is the dominant bird call in our little valley. You may also hear Spotless Crake and Banded Rail waking up.

Mātātā photo by Steve Collins









Caspian Tern family (Steve Collins Photo)



Godwits on the move.



Wimbrel (Steve Collins Photo)



Godwits & Wimbrel





OSNZ REGION	Northland			Ngunguru			
YEAR	2021				Hilton Ward		
MONTH	June	Tide Height, Time, Weather					
CENSUS DATE	6-Nov-21	2.8	9:30 AM				
	TIDE TIME >	09:18 Marsden Point					
	LOCAL SITES >	Sandspit - NW	Sandspit - NE	Ngunguru Shore	Te Maika Spit	Papaka Rd	Tongatu Road
	SITE TOTALS >	62	82	68	24	21	5
SPECIES v TOTALS							
Australasian Harrier	1				1		
Australasian Pipit	2	1	1				
Banded Dotterel	1		1				
Bar-tailed Godwit	30		30				
Caspian Tern	4	3				1	
Chaffinch	2			1		1	
Common Myna	2					2	
Eurasian Blackbird	13			6		7	
European Goldfinch	1	1					
European Greenfinch	6	4		2			
European Starling	4			2	2		
New Zealand Fernbird	1	1					
Grey Warbler	4	2		1	1		
House Sparrow	31			20	6	5	
Mallard	1				1		
New Zealand Dotterel	20	9	9		2		
Pacific Golden Plover	2	2					
Pied Shag	1				1		
Ring necked Pheasant	2	2					
Royal Spoonbill	5						5
Sacred Kingfisher	5			3		2	
Silver Gull	24	4		15	5		
Skylark	12	8	4				
South Black Backed Gull	18	6	12				
Spur-winged Plover	5		5				
Tui	5			3	2		
Variable Oystercatcher	46	15	16	12		3	
Welcome swallow	11	3	3	3	2		
Whimbrel	1		1				
White-faced Heron	1				1		
White-fronted Tern	1	1					
262							