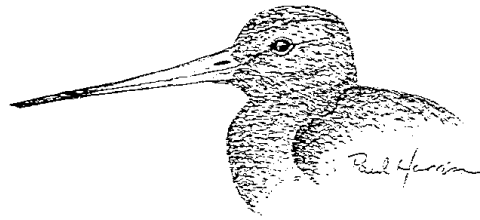


# KUAKA

Newsletter of  
South Auckland Branch  
Birds New Zealand  
Te Kahui Matai Manu o Aotearoa

February 2022

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Tena koutou whanau, here is our newsletter for February 2022

Seven members braved the heat and omicron to meet at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms. We had a pleasant meeting outside in the fresh air – forget the heat and omicron; think mosquitos!!!

If you were unable to join us here is a synopsis of what you missed (apart from the mosquitos):

- ✚ It was our branch **AGM**. The accounts were read and accepted. We made a small profit thanks to selling some books that were donated to us for that purpose.
- ✚ Ian thanked all those involved in the organisation and running of last years BIRDSNZ Conference in Thames. Well done team
- ✚ Ian stood down from the position of RR and Sue was elected to replace him. Congratulations Sue and thanks to Ian for all his work over the past eight years. Treasurer (David), Atlas Co-ordinator (Sue) and Beach Patrol Co-ordinator (Wendy) remain the same. The position of Regional Recorder has passed to Wendy (I just have to figure out what is involved!).
- ✚ Some discussion about how to spend some of our funds. Buy some mist-nets perhaps; or subsidise a boat trip(s) to check out some of the islands off the eastern Coromandel (the treasurer informed us that there are insufficient funds for a branch birding tour to Fiji!)
- ✚ General discussion about possible field trips for the coming year. Suggestions included: Top of the Coromandel in winter for atlasing; Go looking for crakes in suitable habitat in our region; outing to the Waikato Delta to check on the work being undertaken since our last visit a few years ago.

**SPEAKER** there was no speaker this month meeting as it was the AGM.

## SIGHTINGS

- ✚ An oriental dotterel has been reported at Miranda
- ✚ Two large sand dotterel have been seen at Kidd's along with 16 Whimbrel
- ✚ Banded dotterel appear to be having a good breeding year, including a success at Port Waikato
- ✚ A Caspian Tern chick at the Port wasn't as lucky
- ✚ Tony H spotted a knot banded in Japan (one of 12 banded there)

The first sighting of a Black Tern in New Zealand has made the news. A new species for New Zealand, this Black Tern seen at Waikanae is likely a visitor from the... See more



\*\*\*Ian has suggested that we all keep an eye out for unusual birds this summer/autumn. With the warm sea and air temps we are experiencing, and the predominantly easterly winds, we could see more vagrants when out and about.\*\*\* Let the Regional Recorder know what you see please.

Another species to look out for is the koekoea.

A summer migrant, the adults will be commencing their migration north this month and into March. The juveniles, with their brown-coloured underparts, will commence their migration April/May.

Long tailed cuckoo are vaguely raptor-like in flight. Both adults and juv's may call at night during their migration, go online to [NZBirdsonline.org](http://NZBirdsonline.org) to listen to their calls.



**BEACH PATROL** Our last beach patrol was in November; the next one is scheduled for late February – weather conditions permitting (i.e., not too hot!).

## PROGRAMME FOR 2022

**Monthly Meetings:** held on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Papakura Croquet Club, 1 Chapel Street Papakura. Meetings start at 7:30. Visitor's welcome. \$3.00 donation to cover costs please.

We are currently investigating the practicalities of running a zoom meeting alongside our face-to-face meetings. The main challenge is that there is no internet connection at the croquet club. More details will be provided at a later date.

|                 |                         |  |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>March 8</b>  | Brian Gill              | Counts of water-birds at Western Springs   |
| <b>April 12</b> | Ariel-Micaiah Heswall   | Sensory threats to seabirds. Exploring threats through their sensory perspective |
| <b>May 10</b>   | Mick Clout              | Kereru - a keystone species  |
| <b>TBA</b>      | Field Trip – Slipper Is | more details closer to the date  |
| <b>June 14</b>  | Alex Flavell-Johnson    | Tara Iti Ecological Sanctuary  |
| <b>June 19</b>  | Winter Wader Census     | Manukau Hbr - more details closer to the date                                    |
| <b>July 3</b>   | Winter Wader Census     | Firth of Thames - more details closer to the date                                |

## DOTT's



Tuturiwhatu and Pohowera demonstrating nicely the difference in size of these two species.

NZ dotterel is 26-28cm with a weight of 129-168gm.

By contrast banded dotterel is 18-21cm and 60-80gm.

Photo courtesy of Karameawild.org

## The PARRY WHITE FACED HERONS

You will recall these photos from the December newsletter when we mentioned the three chicks at the Parry property in Aka Aka.



Bruce told us that the three chicks successfully fledged and finally left the area mid-January.

The parents have returned to the nest since, but an egg and a chick have been blown out in the wind.

More activity in the last couple of days suggests another attempt – the fourth attempt this season

**CATTLE EGRETS** Cattle egrets were first noted in OZ in 1948; the first NZ record was 1963 (NZbirdsonline).

Conventional birding wisdom has it that the egrets are seasonal visitors to NZ, returning to OZ in Oct/Nov for the start of the breeding season.



This photo was taken early January and Sue reports that the majority of the birds in the flock were in breeding plumage. According to NZBirdsonline there has never been a confirmed report of them breeding in NZ – perhaps that could be about to change.

Maybe with our hot temperatures these ones decided to stay over; in OZ the breeding season stretches from October to March. Keep on the lookout people, if not this year maybe 2023! Cattle egrets breed in colonies, often with other waterbird species. They build a platform nest in wetland areas, usually as high up as possible.



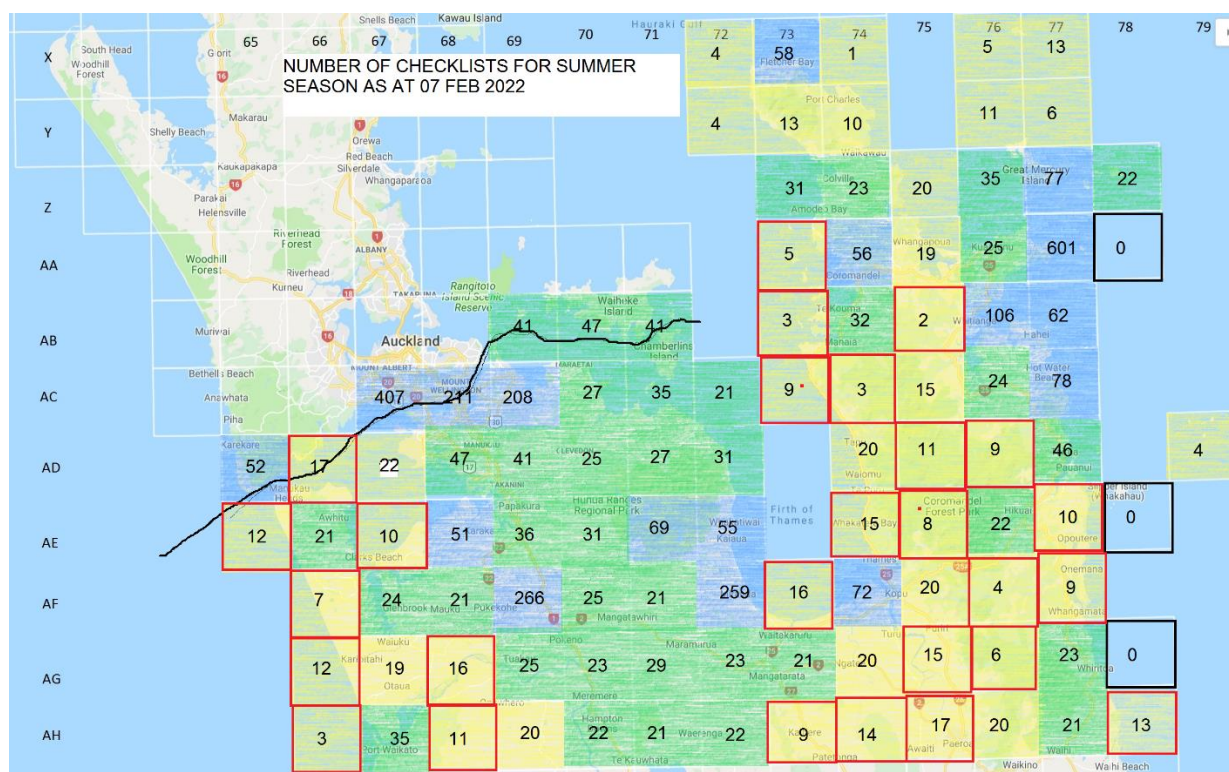
## THOSE CRAZY AMERICANS AND THEIR CONSPIRACY THEORIES!

Read carefully!



**ATLAS REPORT FEBRUARY 2022** We are into the last month of summer, and the atlas map below shows our progress. Please note:

- the figures include summer 2019 to 2022 checklists
- The yellow squares have had between 1 and 20 checklists submitted, the green squares have had 21 to 50 and the blue squares have had 51 or more



The removal of the Auckland border in December has allowed us to venture to the southern squares in our region and boost the checklist numbers in several of these. There has also been some good effort by visitors to the Coromandel over summer, but we are certainly missing Wendy and Nigel's presence.

The yellow squares need more checklists – the ones with a red border are fairly close to Auckland, or more accessible for those living in or visiting Hauraki and Coromandel districts. There are 3 squares on the east coast of Coromandel that have still had no summer counts, but we are hoping to have a field trip to Slipper Island in May. Details to be advised later.

For the atlasers among us or those who hear birds on these hot and sticky nights, check out the February challenge – submit nocturnal checklists, which are ***checklists starting earlier than 40 minutes before sunrise, or later than 20 minutes after sunset.*** [February Atlas Challenge - New Zealand Bird Atlas \(ebird.org\)](https://ebird.org/FebruaryAtlasChallenge)

For those of you who do not load your checklists into EBird, if you do advise a sighting of an interesting or unusual bird, or do a count of all the birds you can identify at a particular location, please send me the following details: Exact location of sighting, Date, Time, Species, Number of birds seen or heard

Let's hope the weather cools down a bit soon! Sue



Watching a kereru nest is like watching paint dry .....

The parents sit extremely 'tight' on the nest, and chick is seldom seen. Mum sits for 15-16 hours through the night, and well into the following day – she takes no break. Late mid-morning Dad takes over for the remaining 8 or 9 hours – at least while the chick is still young. Within an hour or two of Dad arriving he feeds the chick for a brief period – just one feed per day. Presumably Mum also feeds the chick at night, or in the early hours of the morning. The chick gets a surprisingly large feed, and it must be highly nutritious – its called pigeon milk; a secretion from the parents crop. It seems to have the consistency of porridge, and on an 'all sleep and not exercise diet' the chick is 'putting on the beef' ..... (Rod Morris Productions 2/2/2022 post to Facebook)



**FACEBOOK** Some of the past month’s posts are shown below. Go to the Facebook page, @birdsnzsa, to find the links to follow for any particular posting that interests you.

If you have some good photos, information, or links that you think would be suitable for our site send Wendy or David an email with the photo or link.

We now have 333 followers of our page. People from varied backgrounds, by no means all are birders, and several do not live in New Zealand.



**Great BIG Nature**  
5 February at 05:09 · 🌐

The magic of iridescence...  
Two photos of the same bird. A slight turn of the head changes the angle of illumination.  
Crowned Woodnymph (emerald-bellied) Humming... See more



LIVESCIENCE.COM

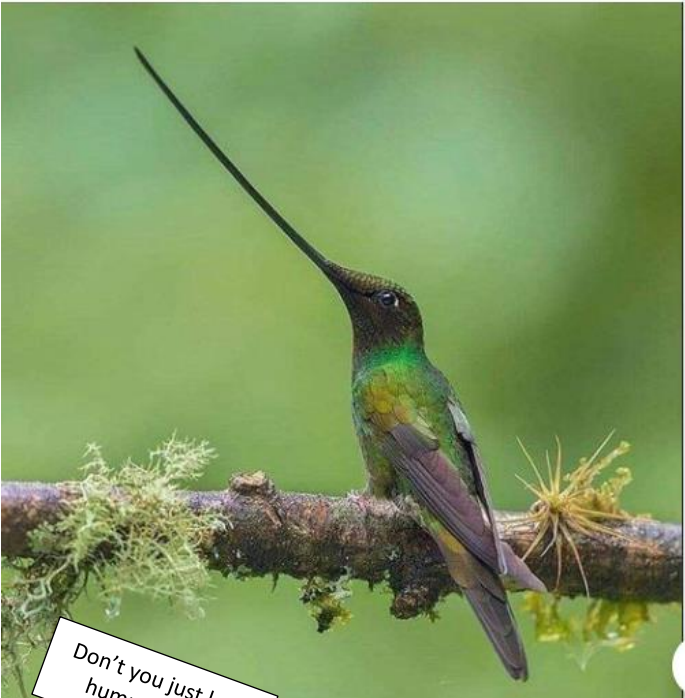
**Same-sex penguins hatch their first chick at New York zoo**  
Same-sex penguin pairs aren't unusual.



**Avian Conservation & Education Network**  
28 January at 19:53 · 🌐

Sword-billed hummingbird (*Ensifera ensifera*)

The sword-billed hummingbird (*Ensifera ensifera*) is a neotropical species of hummingbird from the Andean regions o... See more





Avian Conservation & Education Network

18 January at 18:42 · 🌐

Goodmorning world

Tufted Coquette (*Lophornis ornatus*) in Guyana by Mukesh Ramdass.



Pam Ford ▶ Birds Auckland

8 January · 🌐

A kokako caught in flight on Tiritiri Matangi, 5 Jan 2022. #magic



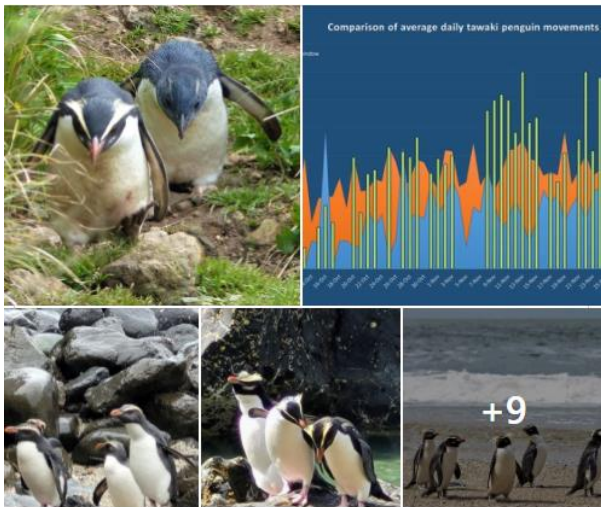
Department of Conservation 🌐

21 January at 18:02 · 🌐

A rare young bittern has caused a stir in Waikato this week, snapped striking a pose in a Cambridge couple's urban backyard.

Australasian bittern/matuku are an ... See more

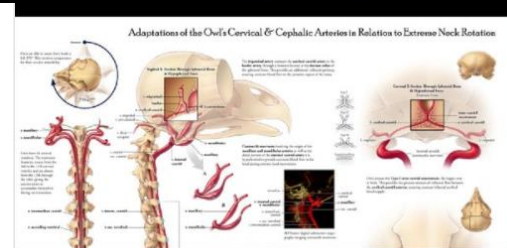




### Wilderness Lodges of New Zealand

6 January · 🌐

2021 was a record Tawaki/Fiordland Crested Penguin Breeding Year on the Lake Moeraki coastline, South Westland NZ. This is great news in a world where so much bi... [See more](#)



### Avian Conservation & Education Network

5 January · 🌐

Owls 270° head twist

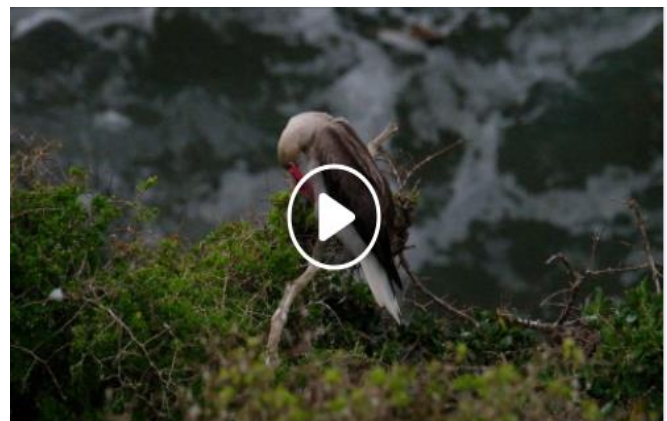
Owls can rotate their heads and necks as much as 270°. Owls have 14 neck vertebrae compared to seven in humans, which makes their necks mo... [See more](#)



### Hayden Pickford ► Birds Auckland

28 December 2021 · 🌐

Brown booby at Muriwai this morning



### Carol Bates ► Birds Auckland

28 December 2021 · 🌐

red footed booby developing a fanclub at Muriwai this evening





Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare Group

29 December 2021 · 🌐

It's hasn't been a bad season for ngutupare (wrybill) nesting efforts, with 13 pairs or more on the river, though not all joy either. In one area it's likely w... [See more](#)



Department of Conservation ✓

21 December 2021 · 🌐

The latest bird threat classification report has been released and the main gist of it is that there's more wins than losses for our species.

One of the many po... [See more](#)

# Anatidaephobia

The fear that somewhere, somehow,  
a duck is watching you



**Happy birding!**