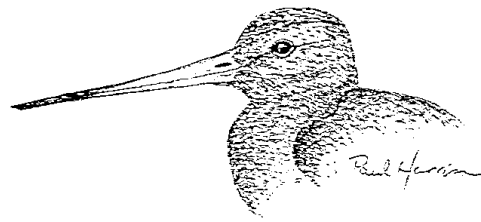


KUAKA

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

Mar 2022

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Greetings Kuaka readers, here is our newsletter for March 2022

Thirteen members joined us for this week's meeting, via Zoom. If you were unable to join us here is a synopsis of what you missed:

- ✚ Further discussion on field trips over the coming months. Boat trip to Slipper Is, boat trip out of Coromandel township, boat trip on the Waikato Delta, group trips to specific habitats looking for the likes of matuku/bittern puweto/spotless crane and kotoreke/marsh crane.
- ✚ Gwen organised an Auckland-wide tutriwhatu/dotterel count last weekend. Over 200 individuals were reported but this fell short of the 300+ recorded several years ago.
- ✚ 15 tutriwhatu chicks fledged at Oputuere this season. Onemana and Matarangi had no success

SPEAKER

The topic for Dr Brian Gills' talk was "Counts of water-birds at Western Springs Lake". Brian obviously lives near to the lake and in 2012 decided to make a project out of counting the waterbirds present. He could find no previous quantitative studies on-line and, in fact, very few NZ studies of waterbird abundance on freshwater lakes anywhere within NZ, so the project beckoned.

Western Springs Lake is 5ha in extent and up to a maximum of 3m deep. It is polluted by the sheer volume of birds present together with runoff from the surrounding area. This pollution is mitigated to some extent by the volume of water (9ML/day in the winter) of water entering the lake from the springs.

By the 1970's the lake was choked with water weeds, so in 1996 1000 grass carp were released; they cleaned up the weed within two years, when most of the carp were removed. Some grass carp remain, along with tuna (both short and long fin species), banded kokopu, Inanga, mosquitofish, tench, perch, goldfish, and koi carp.

Brian undertook his counts, (2 per month) over two years (2012/2014), counting morning and afternoon in fine weather. All waterbirds present were counted irrespective of age.

The results show: Mallard (207 on average), karoro/black backed gull (148 on average) and feral geese (113 on average) made up a total of 63% of all waterbirds present. Other species included black swan, tarapunga/red-billed gull, Eurasian coot, three species of shag, papango/scaup, Royal spoonbills, and pukeko. Count totals ranged from 500 – 1100 individuals depending on the season; the average count was 742.

Papango/scaup were first recorded on the lake in 1978 and remained present in low numbers until the late 1990's. the resident population is 24 birds and they do breed at the lake.

Eurasian coot were first recorded in Auckland in the 1970's and two pair bred at the lake in 1983. They remain present in low numbers.

Royal spoonbill were first recorded at the lake in 1999. They are seasonal residents, arriving in winter and staying through spring. Up to 19 birds were counted. Although building of platforms was observed in 2000 and 2014 there has been no breeding at the Lake to date.

Three shag species breed on the islands in the lake and numbers are boosted in spring/summer.

NZ Dabchick/weweia were rare at the lake until 2000 when two pairs bred. They were then absent for several years, reappearing only recently.

Brian undertook to compare his data with another NZ lake and settled on Lake Henley in Masterton. Although, at 11ha, it is twice as big as Western Springs, the mean number of waterbirds counted was 40birds/ha compared with 61/ha in Auckland. Brian puts the difference down to water quality; without the constant refresh of clean spring water Henley Lake is polluted by its large numbers of Canada geese.

Researching the somewhat sparse data on waterbird densities on lakes, Brian was able to establish: 27-28 birds/ha on the Avon-Heathcote Estuary (Canterbury); 34/ha on Lake Eyre (non-urban) (after rain) in South Australia; 8 birds/ha on Florida Lakes (non-urban), 0.7/ha on Swedish lakes (non-urban). By international standards, water-bird density at Henley Lake of 40 birds/ha is High; **61 birds/ha at Western Springs is Very High**. Recent counts taken by Brian suggest bird numbers remain high at Western Springs (despite culling of the feral geese!).

Brian summed up by saying we shouldn't scoff at urban lakes; with sufficient freshwater they can support high densities of birds including breeding populations.

SIGHTINGS

- ✚ Matuku/reef heron seen by Sue at Pauanui
- ✚ A western sandpiper was sighted at Whitford and some discussion ensued as to whether it is the same individual spotted in other parts of the greater Auckland region.
- ✚ David reported that kuaka/godwit and hauhou/knot numbers are down at Kidds (godwit - 190 compared with 4000 over summer) and a check at Seagrove didn't find them there either – are the birds leaving for the Arctic?
- ✚ Fourteen little-terns were counted at Seagrove
- ✚ Tony H counted 6000 knot at Clarks Bay on Tuesday night
- ✚ A brown quail was reported by Tony H at Mauku – the first such report in our region for 30 years.
- ✚ Ian has identified a new pair of kokako in the Hunuas



Tutriwhatu /NZ Dotterel,
tutuwhatu/banded dotterel and
western sandpiper.

Photo:
Marie-Louise Ward

***Ian suggests that we continue to 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

Keep on the lookout for the koekoea. Some individuals have been reported from Northland.

A summer migrant, the adults have commenced their migration north. The juveniles, with their brown-coloured underparts, will commence their migration April/May.

Long tailed cuckoo are described as being vaguely raptor-like in flight. Both adults and juv's may call at night during their migration, go online to NZBirdsonline.org to listen to their calls.



BEACH PATROL We decided not to do a beach patrol in February – still too hot. Hopefully we will have more luck this month. We have pencilled in March 24 for the next patrol.

PROGRAMME FOR 2022

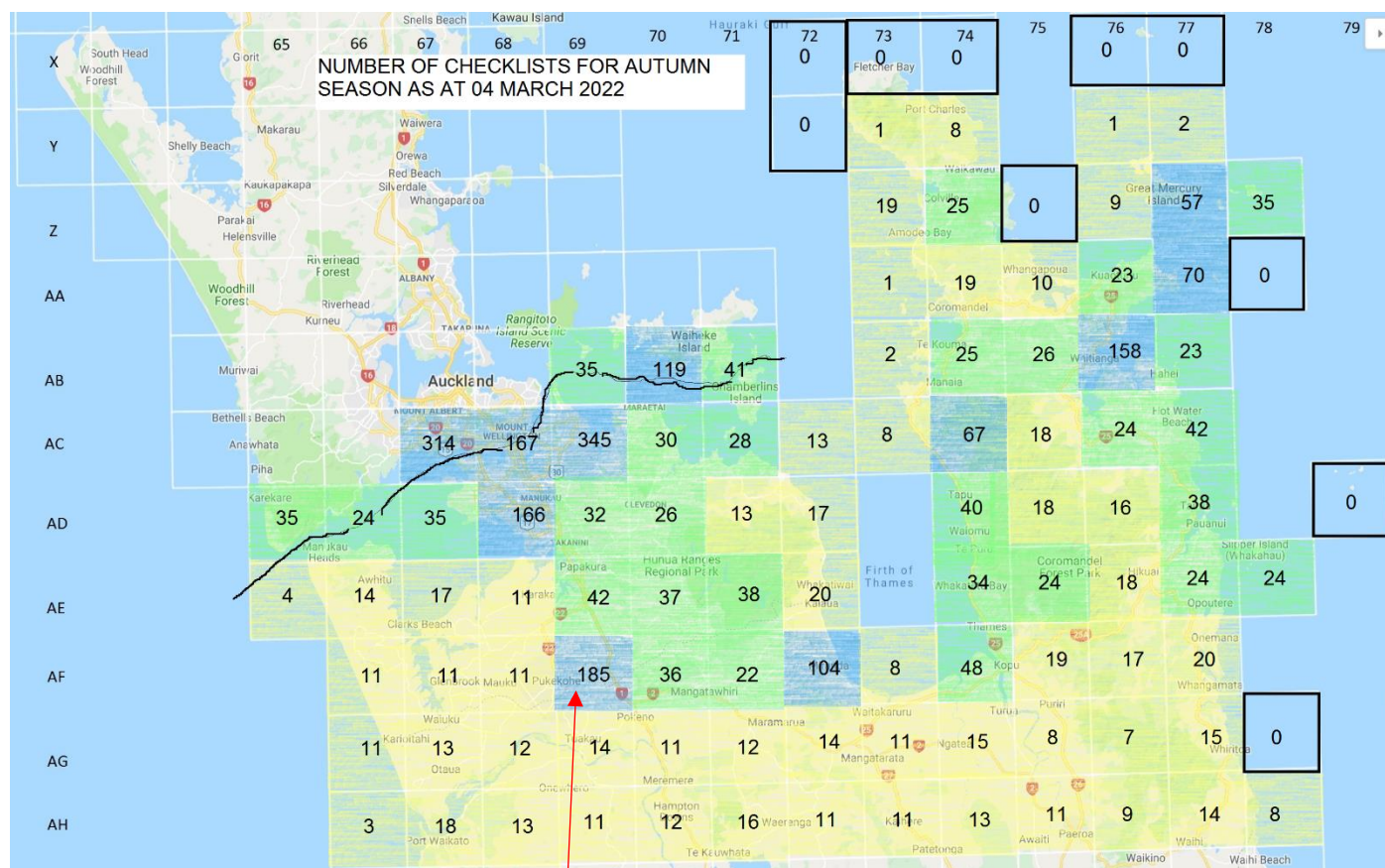
Monthly Meetings: held on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Papakura Croquet Club, 1 Chapel Street Papakura. Meetings start at 7:30. Visitor's welcome. \$3.00 donation to cover costs please.

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.

April 12	Ariel-Micaiah Heswall	Sensory threats to seabirds. Exploring threats through their sensory perspective
May 10	Mick Clout	Kereru - a keystone species
TBA	Field Trip – Slipper Is	more details closer to the date
June 14	Alex Flavell-Johnson	Tara Iti Ecological Sanctuary
June 19	Winter Wader Census	Manukau Harbour - details closer to the date
July 3	Winter Wader Census	Firth of Thames - details closer to the date

ATLAS REPORT MARCH 2022

Summer is officially over and I am pleased to say that our region saw a pretty good effort in many squares, so thanks to all those who contributed. We have now moved into autumn (although we are still getting some hot days), and the atlas map shows our progress.



Please note:

- the figures include autumn 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

As always, the yellow squares need more checklists – most of these are at the bottom of our region, or over on the Coromandel Peninsula. But there are also a few squares on Awhitu Peninsula, Clarks Beach, Karaka, Waiuku and Glenbrook, if you are looking to take a shorter drive somewhere. NB: A full A4 copy of the map is attached at the end of this newsletter. For those who like to stay closer to home, counting birds in your garden or neighbourhood during the day is also valuable – just ask David!

Nocturnal checklists are also important. These are ***checklists starting earlier than 40 minutes before sunrise, or later than 20 minutes after sunset***. With daylight saving finishing on Sunday 3rd April, we will be able to count earlier in the evening.

Some of you are quite comfortable with using the EBird website or app to load your checklists, but for those of you who prefer to use a pen and paper or notebook, jot down the following details and send them through to me:
Exact location of sighting, Date, Time, Species, Number of birds seen.

We are hoping to organise a few field trips between now and the end of May: stay at Slipper Island; boat trip around some of the islands west of Coromandel Town/Te Kouma; survey of the area around the Waikato River between Otawa and Tuakau, mainly by car but also some access by boat. Details to be advised.

Hopefully we can meet again in person next month. Sue

A website that might be of interest:

A new database called **AVONET** contains measurements of more than 90,000 individual birds, allowing researchers to test theories and aid conservation. Body measurements for all 11,000 bird species has been released in an open-access database

A bit of local History from the year 2000



Endangered dotterel fails to breed in park

By SARAH ALLEY

Ranger Mags Ramsey would love to hear the sound of baby dotterels, but the endangered birds failed to breed in her area this season.

Duder Regional Park, between Clevedon and Maraetia, was home to four pairs of New Zealand dotterels this summer, which is quite a lot from a world population of 1400, says Ms Ramsey.

But efforts to protect the nesting birds were unsuccessful this year, and they have now fled the nest to join post-breeding flocks for the winter at Mataraiti Pt near the Clevedon oyster farm.

Ms Ramsey says it's hard to know exactly why no chicks were born this year, but she suspects it has more to do with eggs not surviving rather than the pairs not mating.

The wet summer has not helped breeding, but Ms Ramsey says predators have been the main problem.

Hedgehogs and seagulls are particularly hungry for the dotterels' eggs and, although she sets traps for hedgehogs, rats and stoats, little can be done about the gulls.

Ms Ramsey checks the predator traps every couple of days but would like local people to become involved.

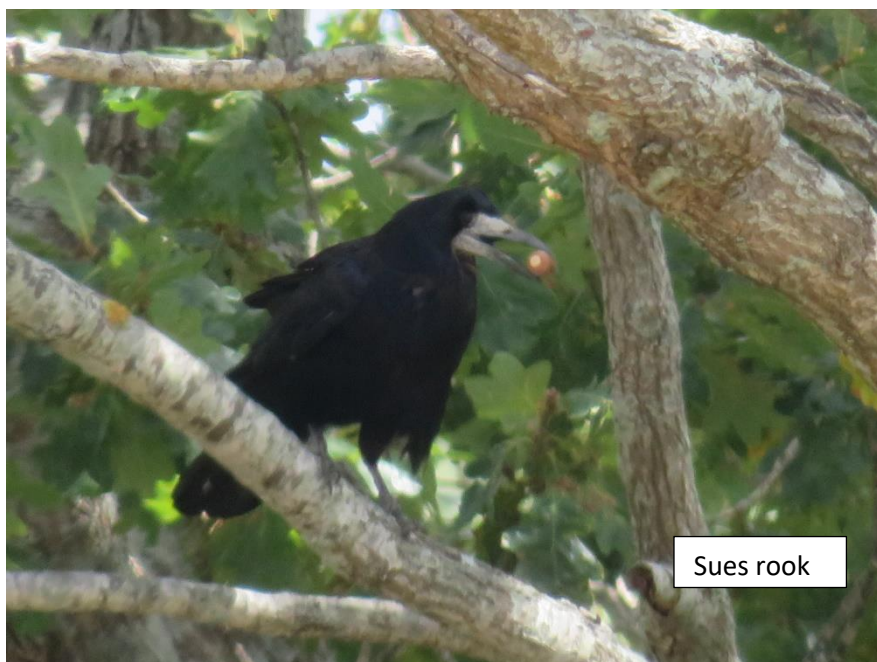
She says some eggs were even abandoned by the dotterels this year but she does not know why.

The nests are also vulnerable to rats, dogs and humans.

Park rangers ask that visitors to Duder Park do not walk on the white shelly beach where the dotterels nest, but Ms Ramsey says they can't stop people from venturing down to the pretty salt marsh where tussock grass borders the sea.

She is also concerned about people subdividing land behind the beach as this will bring more rats and dogs to the area.

Ms Ramsey hopes they will get some young dotterels next season, as last season they got three.



Sues rook

Continueing the story of 'Lucky' from last month



Rod Morris Productions 12 February at 11:20 · 🌐

Solitary confinement... at around 3 weeks of age now, 'Lucky' continues sleeping alone on the nest during daylight hours. Boredom is slightly relieved for 'Lucky' on cold, rainy days (we sometimes get these in... [More](#)





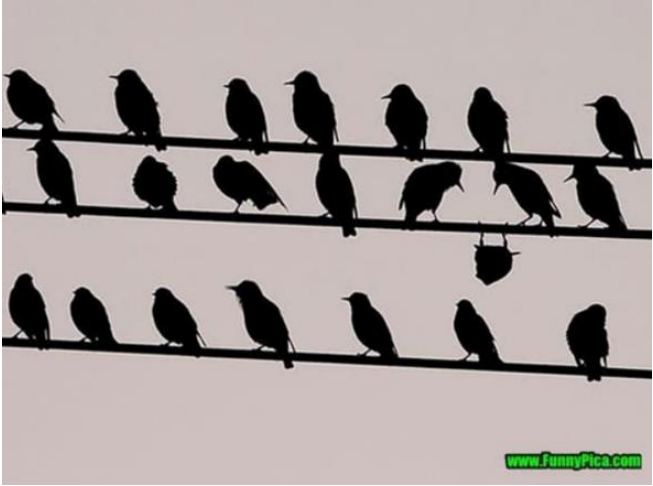

Rod Morris Productions 18 February at 13:07 · 🌐

Early bird... the kereru Dad's visits are only made in the half-light of dawn, posing real challenges to see clearly now...

At a month old 'Lucky' has become well feathered, with a 'three inch' tail and well... [More](#)

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.

 <p>New Zealand shore plover 28 February at 16:43 · 🌐</p> <p>Exciting news from South East (Rangatira) Island! It's been a bumper season with 41 juveniles found on Rangatira, more than double the number of their best breed... See more</p>	 <p>Bad Food with Good Intentions Auckland Zoo In the final days of 2018 Auckland Zoo's veterinary department rec...</p>
 <p>There is always someone who is a bit different!</p>	 <p>New Zealand shore plover 28 February at 16:43 · 🌐</p> <p>Exciting news from South East (Rangatira) Island! It's been a bumper season with 41 juveniles found on Rangatira, more than double the number of their best breeding season dating back to 2014. The Chatham... More</p>



NZPI.NZ

NZ Penguin Initiative - Home

We are NZ's leading penguin conservation...

[LEARN MORE](#)



Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust 26 February at 18:37 · 🌐

Our SPONSOR-A-CHICK program is back this year! 🐣

Support The Hutton's Shearwater Charitable Trust in looking after our precious Titi chicks. Your contribution of \$250 per chick will enable us to:

💎 Provide... [More](#)



THECONVERSATION.COM

Altruism in birds? Magpies have outwitted scientists by helping each other remove tracking devices



NZHERALD.CO.NZ

Tropical weather events bring never seen bird to Whangārei





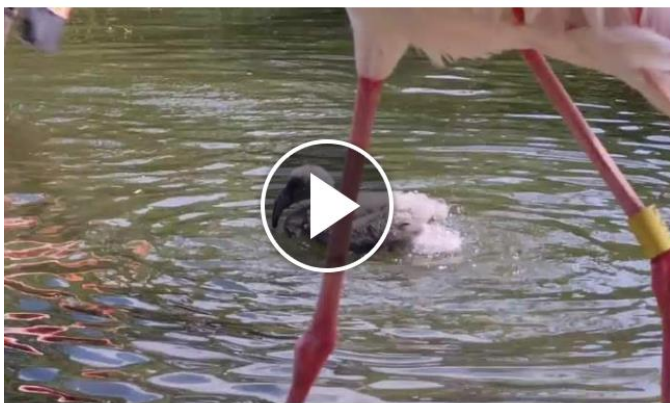
**The Petrel Station : Tutukaka Pelagic Seabird
Trips - NZ** 15 February at 00:15 · 🌐

BRIDLED TERN : FIRST LIVE NZ RECORD!
On Sunday my friend David Howes and I did a land-based beach mission to the very top of Northland, New Zealand to coincide with the tail winds of Cyclone Dovi bashing in.... [More](#)



LIVESCENCE.COM

Same-sex penguins hatch their first chick at New York zoo



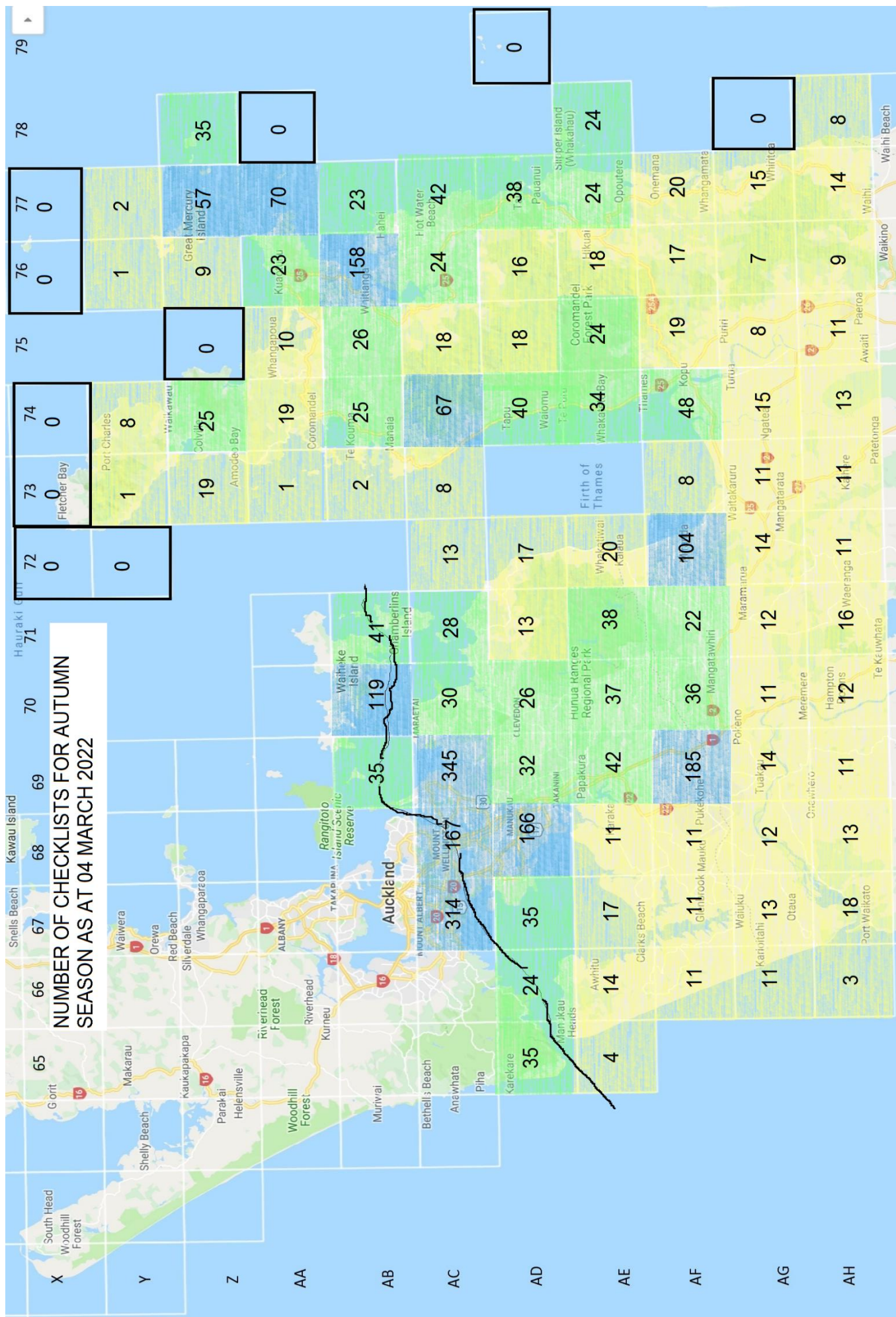
Auckland Zoo ✓ posted a video to the playlist **#Keepercam videos**. 10 January at 13:21 · 🌐

An update on our six-week-old flamingo chick!
Bird keeper Rebecca captured this footage of the chick receiving crop milk from its dad Richard and starting to venture into the water for the first time.



STUFF.CO.NZ

West Coast mineral sand mine rejected partly over fears for Westland petrel colony



New Zealand Falcon Survey

Newsletter Nineteen

20 February 2022

Hi

Welcome to this our 19th Newsletter as we near completion of sixteen years of the NZ Falcon Survey. Your contribution has been much appreciated and provided valuable data on the distribution and presence of the NZ falcon.

The survey continues to grow from strength to strength with a total of 21,354 records received to 31 January 2022. In addition, a total of 39 records for the Auckland Islands have been recorded. It has been decided not to include the detailed breakdown of the survey data (by region, year and breeding category) as undertaken in previous Newsletters. These details for the end of 15 years of surveying (as at [31 May 2021](#)) are shown in the recently published book New Zealand Falcon.

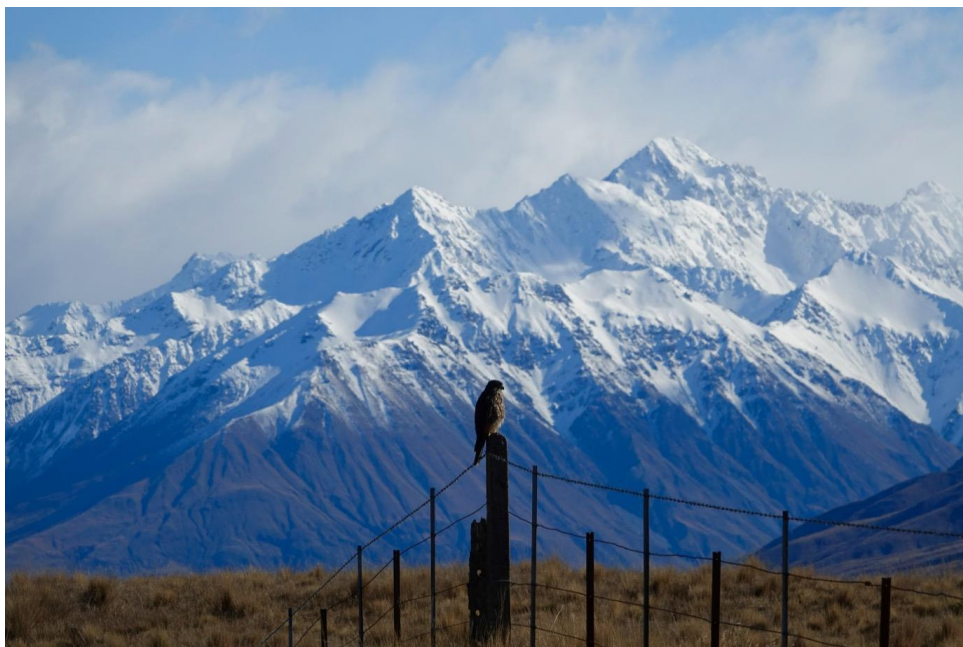
Some Recent Survey Highlights

Hawke's Bay Records – recently received 91 new records from Pan Pac Forestry Products from Hawke's Bay for from March 2019 to December 2021, that included a number of confirmed nesting records for exotic pine plantations. These were of particular value as there was a previous survey undertaken in 2004-05 that found a number of nesting pairs in Pan Pac forests in Hawke's Bay. Thanks to Ava M for providing this new data and also the staff and contractors for reporting their NZ falcon encounters.

Lake Clearwater Reports and Photos – somewhat uniquely two reports together with outstanding photos were received for near Lake Clearwater, Ashburton Lakes. The first by Sandy Sandblom for on Mt Guy for [3 July 2021](#) and then the second by Donna Shaw for by the Hakatere Potts Road on [1 August 2021](#).



Adult NZ falcon on Mt Guy photo by Sandy Sandblom



Juvenile NZ falcon by the Hakatere Potts Road photo by Donna Shaw

Annual Calendar of Records – 2021 was easily the best calendar year for NZ falcon records received at 1,712 encounters recorded.

Taranaki Breeding Record – only the fourth confirmed breeding record for Taranaki was received from Sean G for when two juveniles were seen being drawn off the nest site by adults for aerial food passes on [12 January 2022](#) near Makahu in eastern Taranaki.

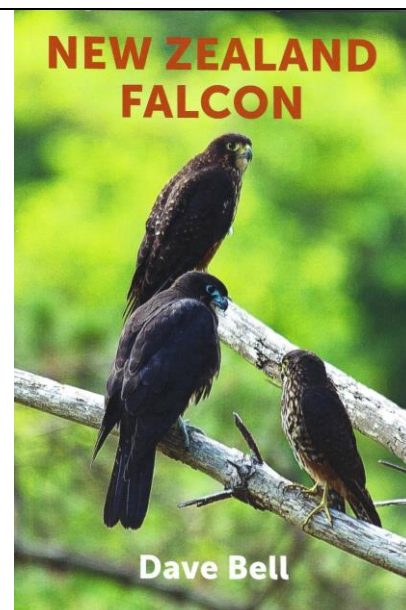
Just Published

The book details most of what we know about our endemic NZ falcon, summarises the results of 15 years of the NZ Falcon Survey and has a number of Special Features that include Falcons of York Bay, Juvenile NZ Falcons and NZ Falcons on Offshore and Sub-Antarctic Islands.

It is well illustrated with over 90 outstanding photos, all taken by correspondents to the survey. Softcover, with over 150 pages, the book has been totally self-funded, with no profit being made by the author.

The RRP will be \$30.00 but a special price of only \$25.00 (listed at \$19 plus \$6 at checkout for postage within New Zealand) has been arranged for a very limited time.

For those overseas or who don't have email/internet, who would like a copy please get in touch and we will get something organised.



This special offer is limited to one copy of the book per order and is only available up to and including [Thursday 24 March 2022](#). You can purchase a copy of the book by:

- Going to the publisher's online bookshop at: <https://www.copyright.co.nz/shop/>
- Select the Science, Technology & Nature category
- Selected the NZ Falcon book and then complete purchase by adding the book to cart and checking out.

More nesting NZ falcon in Wellington

After a number of 'close encounters' were reported of a defensive pair of NZ falcons at Beacon Hill Reserve in Seatoun Wellington, the city council erected warning signs but not before there was an additional report in of an actual strike on a walker in the area. Results of the breeding are unknown at present.

Catch and release of juvenile NZ falcon

One of the more unique occurrences that a juvenile NZ falcon has been known to get itself involved with was reported in the Otago Daily Times for March 2021: <https://www.odt.co.nz/regions/central-otago/catch-and-release>

Juvenile NZ falcons on YouTube

Ike Ulrich-Morrison recently captured some great video footage of two juvenile NZ falcon hanging out together at Lake Rotoma in the Bay of Plenty. Ike has posted her video on YouTube and can be viewed here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rci9oij14Bk>

Many Thanks

Again, many thanks to you for taking the time and energy to participate in the NZ Falcon Survey, though some might not be aware they have! The information collected is adding greatly to our knowledge of the NZ falcon and providing an invaluable resource and record of their presence and distribution around New Zealand.

Dave Bell

Coordinator

NZ Falcon Survey

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