

TŌREA PANGO



NELSON BRANCH BIRDS NZ. NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2 MAY/JUNE 2022

LOCAL NEWS

Summary of last meetings

April 4th

8 members turned out to the April the 4th meeting held in the Richmond Library.

- For those who missed it at the last meeting. Paul G led another excellent tour to view the emergency exit.
- Several apologies were sent in.
- Peter Gaze gave an extremely interesting talk on conservation on Puangiangi Island. See '*Puangiangi. Conservation outcomes on private land*' below
- Rebecca Bowater has been photographing not only fungi in Kahurangi but also whio and showed some great photos of these lovely blue duck. See '*Whio at Gridiron*' below.
- Paul G talked about the top marks we have received for the accountability report on the fernbird project submitted to the Nelson city council.
- We are hosting the NZOS conference in 2024. Paul G is looking for people to form an organizing committee.
- Brief general discussion around the ethics of using callback.
- Tributes were paid by members to the late Kerry Jane Wilson.

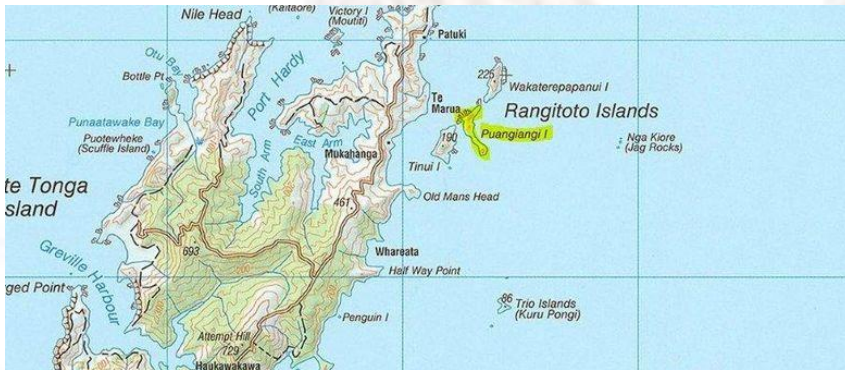
May 2nd

Thanks to Paul G for sending in the report of this meeting. Sadly, I was unable to attend as I was swanning off trying to find the endemic birds on Kadavu and Taveuni (Fiji Islands). Anyone thinking of going there they are not easy. Anyway;

- Apologies: Gail Quayle, Annette Cunningham, Paul Bennett, Gillian Pollock, Belinda Heaphy, Don Cooper, Rob Schuckard
- Health and Safety – Library Exits – Safety in the field.
- Michelle Bradshaw on using the Falcon bird banding website to submit sightings of dead or living birds with a band (excluding racing pigeons and gamebirds and ducks)
- Paul Fisher Fernbird update and using the phone app to record fernbird sightings.
- Robin Toy on the NZ Atlas Project, a conversation about why more BirdsNZ members in Nelson Region don't do Ebird checklists.
- Members sightings and reports
- Rob Schuckard, Osprey at the Nelson Wetland Ponds,
- National Conference, no time
- Newsletter, no time
- David Melville – Health and safety, photos of his leg injury while canon netting

Puangiangi. Conservation outcomes on private land.

As indicated above, at the April 4th meeting, Peter Gaze gave an excellent talk on this very successful conservation project with which he has had involvement for some years. In the current world it was refreshing to hear a story of optimism. It started with research by Professor Nicky Nelson of Auckland University on incubation temperature determination of gender in Tuatara. A 'byproduct' was that by the late 90's there were some 300 young tuatara with nowhere to go! Funding was secured to purchase Puangiangi from its former owner who had lived on the island for 46 years, and the work began.



If you had no idea where Puangiangi is, this should help.



Well, if I was a gannet, I really don't think I could resist these sexy looking models placed on the island in an attempt to entice actual gannets to start breeding here. So far this has unfortunately not been successful. Speakers have also been used to play fluttering shearwater calls for a similar purpose.

Peter's talk highlighted the steps taken to reduce further damage to the island, remove pest species including pines, tagasaste, rodents, stoats and sheep, and reintroduce not only the tuatara but also Duvaucel's gecko (My autocorrect insists it's called Duracell's gecko!) striped gecko, robin, yellow-crowned kakariki and takahe.



Arrows show tagasaste (tree lucerne) that had been introduced to, and spread throughout the island and illustrates the difficulty of removing it from these rocky, steep cliffs.



Puangiangi (arrowed) looking back towards Durville.



Giant weta are now thriving on the predator free island

Interestingly, in addition to the reintroductions, the island has been naturally repopulated with sooty shearwater and fernbird. Native plant species, mostly spread by birds, have also re-established and Peter showed photos of the change from pasture to regenerating bush that has taken place in just a few years. For those interested in further reading around this great conservation story, the links below are really worth exploring.

<https://faunarecovery.org.nz/>

<https://faunarecovery.org.nz/2022/04/06/human-history-part-3-ross-webber/>

RARE SIGHTINGS

Local sightings

- A whimbrel was still on Motueka sandspit in April
- NZ grebe (dabchick) have been reported on the Wakapuaka settling ponds. Paul G was able to get a photo.



Paul Fisher writes 'Scott and I did a 3 hour count this morning and had two dabchicks on wetland two. One was very pale and initially not 100% confident on ID. However, lighting improved when we had a look on the way out at 1100am. and both look to be dabchick, one possibly an immature. Worth checking out if in the area'

- An OSPREY has been sighted also at Wakapuaka (see below)

Other sightings of national interest

Not so exciting as a couple of months ago but still-

- A chestnut teal seen in Marlborough
- A Snares crested penguin at the Catlins.

Whio at Gridiron

Rebecca Bowater was rewarded for carting her heavy camera gear the 7km in (and of course 7km out) from Flora to the Gridiron hut. The original intention was to photograph mushrooms for a forthcoming publication. I'm sure though, that everyone at the April 4th meeting was very happy that she was distracted by this beautiful pair of blue duck and able to get some great shots which she shared with us.



Beautiful pair of whio feeding at the waterfall below Gridiron hut.



NATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL NEWS

West Coast Atlas Expedition June 2022

It may be a tad late for you to register but still it's interesting to note that it's happening. –

“The Atlas team will be running a Toi Toi wines funded Atlas expedition to the West Coast after this year's NZ Bird Conference! We'll be driving over to Hokitika after the conference on Monday 6th June 2022, and finishing up on the Friday (10th). The aim is to increase Atlas effort, day and night, across sections of the West Coast, so it'll be long days of birding! This is a fantastic opportunity to join the team and contribute valuable bird observations to an under-surveyed area of Aotearoa New Zealand. To find out more please view our flyer online. Registration will close on 1st May at midnight. We hope you can join us. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch. The Atlas Team”

Great Backyard Bird Count

Ever thought our wonderful interest was just a minority thing? Take a look at these stats from Cornell on the 2022 Great Backyard Bird Count!

‘We've been crunching numbers from the 2022 Great Backyard Bird Count. It was another year filled with accomplishment and surprises. Thank you again for the time you took to share the birds from your corners of the world.

GBBC 2022 in a Snapshot:

- **7,099** species of birds identified
- **192** participating countries
- **359,479** eBird checklists
- **298,208** Merlin Bird IDs
- **141,990** photos added to Macaulay Library
- **384,641** estimated global participants’

Follow the link for more information: [2022 Great Backyard Bird Count](#).

Book Review

Peter Gaze still somehow finds time to read and has shared his thoughts on Richard Dawkins' Flights of Fancy. ----

Richard Dawkins, Flights of Fancy – defying gravity by design and evolution. 2021

The Selfish Gene by Dawkins was a favourite of mine for how well it expressed big concepts in the simplest of terms. It is the same with this book, so much information and yet so readable. Perhaps this is a trait of writers who really know their subject. This book is serious non-fiction, exploring all facets of flight yet is also whimsical and written in such a conversational way. The stunning illustrations by Jana Lenzova capture this essence.

For example, he has a chapter on unpowered flight which describes how this is done by lemurs, squirrels, colugos, phalangers, fish - and birds. Within this Dawkins ponders whether a hang-glider pilot might feel

much the same pressures and strains as a pterosaur did and confesses 'that for no good reason' he would be more comfortable jumping from a plane with a parachute than launching from a cliff top.

With all its beauty this book could be classed as one for the coffee table but it may be the only such one where you read every word with absolute joy.

Available from Volume in Nelson for \$43

Osprey at Wakapuaka?

An Osprey was recently sighted flying over the Wakapuaka sewage treatment plant and caused some understandable excitement. Sadly, we have received this email from Tony Flewellen, team leader at the plant. -And it wasn't even dated April 1st.

"OK everybody... glad to have provided some excitement! The Osprey (well identified Paul Fisher) is indeed a deterrent for gulls that sit atop our Trickling Filter. One of the things that happens every year is that every surface at the Plant has to be cleaned and de-salted. Our Trickling Filter has a retro-fitted roof that is particularly awkward to clean and even more-so when it is covered in up to 25mm of guano. Yes, we still have gulls resting on the roof of the office building (I was hoping that Ollie was going to deter them from gathering there also). The gulls were actually somewhat bemused by Ollie's arrival. The first time he flew, six red-billed gulls came and flew around him for about 5 minutes and then went back to the pond. The osprey seems to be an elegant solution to an expensive problem and is having no unintended effects.

It would have been nice to have been able to source a facsimile of a native raptor but none was available. Perhaps there's a business opportunity there! Happy to answer any questions."

10/10 and a gold star sticker for the Fernbird Project!

Projects receiving council funding are required to submit accountability reports to the council (Nelson Nature) This is the response to the latest report submitted on the Fernbird Project:

"Hi David

Thank you for sending in your Accountability Report, I loved seeing the beautiful birds that you are monitoring. I can't say that I've seen one before. Scott has said that it was one of the best Accountability Reports that he's seen and that there was some great data in it. He is happy with the report, which I will merge with the invoices/receipts that were previously provided. Nothing further is required, please accept this email to confirm that all is completed for your August 2021 grant.

Have a great day. Nga mihi nui. Jane Moran. Administrator for the Nelson Nature Team"

-Here are some highlights from the report:

- Surveys for breeding territories were undertaken in August 2021, which focused on the core scrub areas within the Wakapuaka Flats, predominantly within the SNA.
- Follow up sighting surveys were undertaken in November 2021, which included areas not previously surveyed within the recreation area, DOC raupo swamp, treatment plant, Boulder Bank and stream corridor.
- 21 territories have been mapped in the core study area (~1 pair/ha). This density is relatively low across the site, with higher densities occurring where suitable *Plagianthus* scrub exists. Pressures from predation (from mammals and raptors), extensive weeds limiting breeding habitat and disturbance from the public, dogs and shooting in the reserve may also contribute to the extant distribution and abundance of birds.

- Survey methods included;
 - Walk through territory surveys to map birds/territories and density/ha
 - Recce to locate Fernbird territories and suitable mist net sites
 - Record Fernbird calls for play back during mist-net sessions and surveys
- 19 banding visits have been undertaken since August 2021 with 40 Fernbirds banded to date.
- In addition, 10 adult birds banded four months ago have been retrapped, exhibiting post breeding moult.
- Breeding has been confirmed with 7 juvenile/fledgling birds banded between January and March, with two individuals retrapped and exhibiting post juvenile moult.
- The age-related extent and sequence of feather moult for Fernbird has yet to be described in scientific literature. Understanding and describing the difference in feather moult between juvenile and adult birds is important and required to determine the population structure and mortality rates for juvenile and adult birds.
- The project is planned to span five years with the aim to colour band a high proportion of the adult and juvenile birds at the Wakapuaka Flats to study their distribution, productivity and survival with the introduction of predator trapping.



Adult Fernbird CP17555
with colour bands Photo
credit; Nelson OSNZ

News from the Brook

As someone who has made the expensive day-long trip to Blumine island to see orange fronted kakariki, only to be rewarded with an approximately 0.01 sec glimpse of two receding tails, the following extract taken directly from the recent Brook (Waimārama) Sanctuary newsletter is exciting news:

“We are very pleased to see that one of our kākārīki karaka, Floyd, who arrived with the first cohort of birds, made the most of the Valentine’s Day! He was spotted courting a young female in the upper reaches of the Sanctuary. There LOVE IS IN THE AIR! The Sanctuary welcomed a third tranche of kākārīki karaka (orange-fronted parakeet) in February, followed by a fourth tranche of birds this week. In total, 84 birds have now been translocated into the Sanctuary from the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust in Christchurch. The Department of Conservation has confirmed a fifth translocation of kākārīki karaka is planned for April which should take their number in the Sanctuary to ~100 birds, making the Sanctuary population of this endangered species one of the largest in the country. As well as the conservation and ecological significance, the translocation of the manu (birds) is culturally significant as kākārīki karaka are a taonga species and the birds are being transferred outside of the Ngāi Tahu takiwa. Both sending iwi (Ngāi Tahu) and receiving Te Taihū iwi will act as custodians for the birds indefinitely. The first three

translocations were great successes, and we are expecting the same for the last two translocations. At least eight nesting sites have so far been confirmed.” (Courtesy Brook / Waimārama Sanctuary)



Orange-fronted parakeet.
Adult. Hawdon Valley, Arthur's
Pass, September 2017. Image ©
Ben Weatherley by Ben Weatherley
Courtesy New Zealand Birds Online

Science snippets and links to bird science reads and watches

- Researchers have found birds in the Chicago area are nesting on average 25 days earlier compared to 1900. Climate Change? <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1365-2656.13683>
- The Australian Night Parrot has been sighted again and the 4th ever photo taken by indigenous rangers. Only 30 people have seen a night parrot this century! <https://cosmosmagazine.com/nature/the-night-parrot-rangers/>
- Orange bellied parrot update. This bird is a favourite of mine, not that I've seen it. I did spend a week in Tasmania waiting for the weather to be good enough to get down to Melaleuca where the recovery program is centred. But it just kept on raining. Anyway, it's a bit of a success story and like Puangiangi a cause for a smidge of optimism. <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/orange-bellied-parrot-recovery/latest-news-obp>

New Pacific region Species discovered!



New Caledonian Storm Petrel

(Photo courtesy of © Hadoram Shirihihi
(Tubenoses Project))

The New Caledonian storm petrel has been sighted since 2008 but only just described in the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club (11 March 2022) by a team including CNRS and INRAE scientists from the Chizé Centre for Biological Studies (CNRS / La Rochelle University). Previously it was only known from 'forgotten' museum specimens. Some of the specimens held in museums were actually our very own 'rediscovered' NZ storm petrel with which it appears to have been initially confused. Through study of the birds' morphology and genetics, as well as of museum archives and birds at sea, the petrels seen south of Nouméa and in the Coral Sea have now been positively identified as members of a 'new' species—the New Caledonian storm petrel (*Fregetta lineata*)—along with two of the five mysterious old museum specimens (one collected from the Marquesas Islands in 1922; the other from Samoa in 1839) and a third, more recent specimen collected in 1973, on an island off Brisbane, Australia. The authors of the study provide proof that *F. lineata* breeds somewhere in New Caledonia: a photograph taken in September 2014 showing a chick from the island still partially covered in down. Based on the number of individuals sighted at sea, the total population may be in the order of 100 to 1,000 pairs, and now critically endangered. Thus, it is urgent that the breeding grounds of *F. lineata* be found, to immediately take action for its protection.

-Credit and full article <https://www.cnrs.fr/en/new-caledonian-storm-petrel-new-species-bird-already-endangered>

Wellington Cable Car Bird Strike Prevention Project

Having cleaned our windows for the first time in about a decade, I'm all too aware of just how tragic it feels to pick up a shining cuckoo or white eye that has died as a result of glass strike. So, this project seemed very relevant. Wellington Cable Car is a high-profile attraction in the Capital City of New Zealand. Not only is the cable car used daily by local Wellingtonians, but it is also a significant visitor attraction. The Cable Car summit terminal building is located between two significant bird habitats – Wellington Botanic Garden to the north and Zealandia Ecosanctuary to the south. The stunning glass terminal building is unfortunately right in the flight path of birds and the Cable Car team report regular bird deaths including kererū, kakariki, korimako, ruru, as well as other bird species.

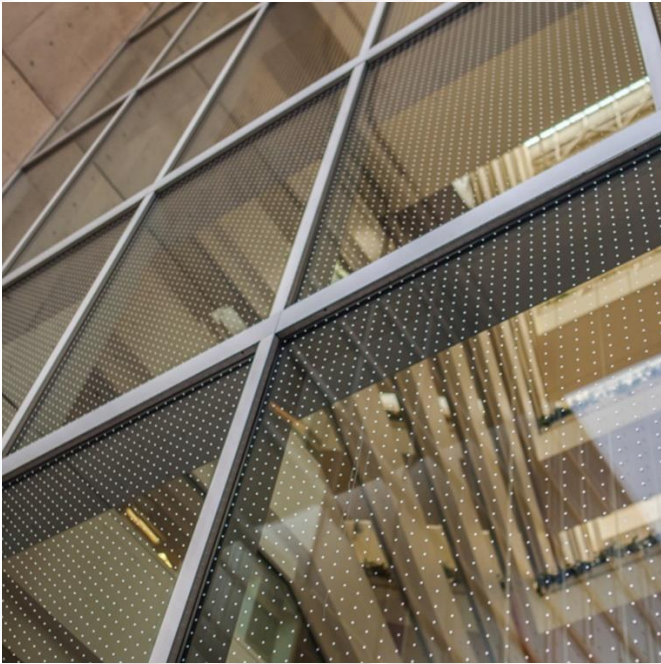


Kereru killed by
glass strike on the
cable car building.

Birds dying and getting injured by flying into windows happens regularly in New Zealand, both in homes and commercial buildings. These are distressing experiences for all, and yet window strike seems to be accepted as unavoidable. Windows are essentially invisible to birds, and collisions occur as birds try to fly through reflections of open space and plants. Worldwide the annual number of birds killed by collisions is estimated to be in the billions. Urban Wildlife Trust and Wellington Cable Car decided to make a difference to this animal welfare and conservation issue and to be the first building in New Zealand to officially install window markers designed to prevent window strike.

Experiments for effective window strike prevention showed that exterior window applications, such as densely applied stripes or dots, are required. There are no local products available but [Feather Friendly® Window Markers](#) are proven effective overseas and they have reached out as partners on this project.

In addition to the conservation benefits of reducing injury and death of birds, installation of Window Markers reduces the distress caused to staff, visitors and commuters witnessing any bird window strike at the Cable Car building. It also empowers New Zealanders to take their own action to mitigate window strike and protect precious native birds from this avoidable human-created harm.



View of Wellington cable car building after installation of [Feather Friendly® Window Markers](#)

Courtesy (Stuff, [Feather Friendly® Window Markers](#) Wellington urban wildlife trust)

Mild Rant

You've probably noticed that roundabouts in the Nelson /Tasman area are being planted with exotic (and invasive) palms. Yes Richmond -its all good - but why not some bird friendly natives instead?? Anyone feel an email to a council coming on??

Member's Photos

From Paul G; shoveler and scaup, fantail, fernbird – all taken at the settling ponds.



From Rebecca Bowater; A couple of shots of a very smart looking tomtit.



Newsletter Items

Well, my inbox hasn't exactly been swamped! Many thanks though to those who have sent items in. Much appreciated. Remember you don't have to write a long article or be at the cutting edge of ornithological research. All items gladly accepted. With winter coming on what about telling us your thoughts on bird tables? To feed or not to feed? Are they just making life easy for predators? Do they encourage dependency or are they preventing large scale death in poor weather? What does your feed station look like? What do you feed? What turns up? Photos? Items to me;

Paul Bennett thebraveryofbeingoutofrange@gmail.com or you can txt 021454520 or messenger.