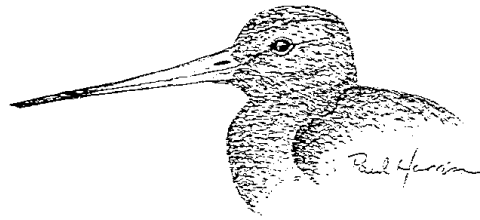


KUAKA

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

June 2022

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Hello to our Kuaka readers, here is the June edition: something to read on wet winter nights.

This month's meeting at the Papakura Croquet Clubrooms went off well; whilst some of our regulars were absent, we had others join us for the evening, ensuring a good audience for the speaker. Thank you, Gwen, for a rather yummy supper.

If you were unable to join us at the meeting, here is a synopsis of what you missed (in addition to the supper!).

SIGHTINGS:

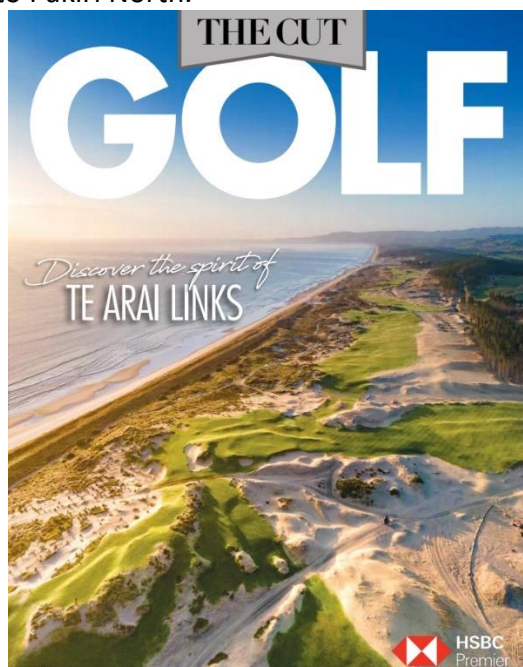
- ✚ Tony H counted 10 banded dotteral/tuturiwhatu at Port Waikato. The satellite transmitter fitted to one manu has stopped sending signals and the bird is yet to be sighted
- ✚ A flock of around 30 cockatoos was spotted in the south west of our rohe
- ✚ Starlings are claiming their nesting boxes for the coming season despite it being three months away
- ✚ Six black swan cygnets are present at Karaka Harbourside. They are about two weeks old
- ✚ Ducklings are beginning to be handed in at Bird Care
- ✚ A group of wild turkey chicks were seen in the past few days

DISCUSSION

- ✚ There was discussion about locating the harder to find species with our rohe, such as bittern/matuku, fernbird/koroatito and marsh crake/kotoreke.
The subject of pipit/pihoihoi came up. Whilst we know we can find them on the west coast beaches at any time of year, are they present at other locations in our rohe, either seasonally or year-round? Ian pointed out that pihoihoi love rough pasture and may be put off by the manicured dairy paddocks and monoculture crops such as corn or potatoes that proliferate in our rohe.
- ✚ With 229 pairs the Hunua Ranges have been confirmed as holding the third largest population of kokako in NZ (after Hauturu-a-Toi and Pureora). In 2000 there were 19 individuals, in 1978 there were only 4 recorded despite extensive searching by our then stalwart member Ross McKenzie.
- ✚ There was also discussion on the prevalence of kaka on the Awhitu Peninsula; up to six birds at a time. They have also been reported from Whiriwhiri (near Waiuku). No breeding on the Peninsula has been recorded but as Ian commented, "if you do the pest control anything can happen".
Interestingly Manaaki Whenua researcher Neil Fitzgerald recently released some data from his GPS tracking project involving kaka – refer to the separate article below.
- ✚ A nationwide census of little blue penguins/korora is to be undertaken and in preparation for same we need to identify whereabouts in our rohe they can be found. We have no record of live korora on the west coast (only dead or dying). The Coromandel is the most likely region for live korora and Noel is going to ask around up there.

SPEAKER

Alex Flavell-Johnson is Te Arai Links' full-time conservation manager, an environmental scientist working alongside DOC and Auckland Council. Te Arai Links is a top-of-the-range golf course, on a 650ha block, near Mangawhai. In 2020 the golf club partnered with local land owners and The Shorebirds Trust to establish the property as an ecological sanctuary. The long-term vision for the Te Arai Sanctuary is to improve the coastal biodiversity of the area and restore native vegetation for endangered species. Extensive predator control operations and habitat enhancement efforts (including exploration of wetland expansion) have been initiated. The ultimate plan is to establish a predator-free buffer zone from the Mangawhai Wildlife Reserve to Pakiri North.



Establishment of the golf course and resort required the removal of extensive pine plantings (undertaken in the 20th C to stabilise the sand dunes) and has allowed replanting in natives appropriate to the sandy, exposed environment such as spinifex and pingao. The remnant wetlands have been enhanced and the coastal foredunes replanted with natives. Lots of work remains, especially in removal of exotic weed species.

Extensive pest control (both plant and animal) is being undertaken. Hedgehogs, cats, possums, rabbits, rats, mice, the occasional pig, and mustelids (primarily weasels). Interestingly mice numbers fluctuate throughout the year, peaking in May each year. To date some 4500 pest animals have been removed.

In addition to NZ dotterals/tuturiwhatu and fairy terns/tara iti, other endangered species include shore skinks, geckos, black mudfish and katipo spiders.

Banded rail/moho pereru, fernbird/koroatito and matuku are regularly seen in the wetlands on the property.

Around 10 pairs of tuturiwhatu breed on the golf course and the Club has a Management Plan to minimise disturbance of the nests and chicks. The goal is to increase the breeding success. Fledging success has varied across the years with the main issue being predation of eggs and chicks – probably by hedgehogs. The plan includes installing surveillance cameras on the nests to establish exactly what the problem is.

Massey University has engaged in a Research Partnership looking at the long-term biodiversity and ecosystem recovery from the Mangawhai Wildlife Reserve down the coast to Te Arai North Regional Park.





A GPS tracking study of Kākā was published in April 2022:

Kākā have central North Island strongholds in the Pureora Forest and on offshore islands. In this study: "One bird fitted with a GPS tracker completed a 1,000 km round trip encompassing various points around Waikato, Coromandel and islands in the Hauraki Gulf – a travel distance and behaviour never encountered before in study of Kākā."

In the joint project involving DOC and Manaaki Whenua/Landcare Research, GPS and VHF transmitters were fitted to 25 birds near Hamilton and Morrinsville, with flight movements tracked through 2020 and 2021.

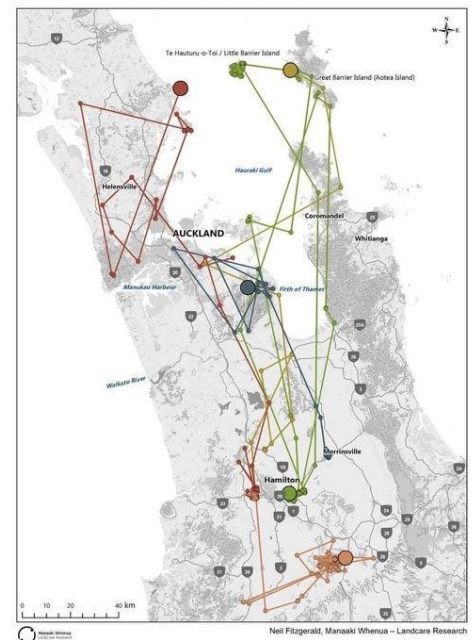
"For many years we've known about kākā visiting some towns and rural parts of the Waikato over winter – places that don't look like typical kākā habitat, and a long way from known breeding areas. We wanted to find out where these birds were coming from and to try to start to understand why. By identifying important sites and threats we hope to help make their conservation as effective as possible."

"These GPS tags allow us to see where they go, anywhere in New Zealand, and with accuracy that often allows us to identify which tree they were in,".

"Through winter and early spring, the monitored North Island birds typically stayed within a few kilometres of where they were tagged – as expected. From late spring, 10 moved at least 100 km away, and another six between 35 km and 55 km away."

DOC Science Advisor Terry Greene says the GPS data is "another piece in the puzzle in the study and protection of these birds". There have been reports of kākā appearing in urban environments like Hamilton and Auckland, and it was assumed the birds were from nearby forested areas and island sites. However, the new data from the GPS tracking suggests it's possible roving kākā embark on a sort of avian OE, "zooming around having a look at the place".

In the first year several tagged birds went to Hauraki Gulf islands including Kawau, Aotea and Hauturu, while in the second year, birds stayed more around the Waikato.



Of particular interest was one bird fitted with a GPS which completed a 1000 km round trip encompassing various points around Waikato, Coromandel and islands in the Hauraki Gulf – a travel distance and behaviour never encountered before in study of kākā.

Kākā are "hugely mobile in the landscape" – as shown by the new research and GPS monitoring – and that has implications for ongoing protection of the species. How do we ensure they're protected as they travel around, and their populations expand? The new information from the GPS study has given us some great new insights into the species, and a lot to think about, too.

BEACH PATROL

Anna has been finding a few birds on her regular beach walks recently: 6 diving petrels, 2 little blue penguins/korora, a juv' giant petrel (probably a Southern/pangurunguru) and a juv' light mantled sooty albatross/toroa pango.

Sue also found a korora. Auckland and Northland have also been finding them and I am guessing you have all read about the large number found up north last month. The northern manu were all youngsters and under nourished. The deaths were put down to lack of food due to the warm coastal waters we have experienced this year. We are guessing the individuals Anna and Sue found died in similar circumstances.



Light mantled sooty albatross/ toroa



Giant petrel (Nellie)/pangurunguru

We are planning a beach patrol for next week (Thursday), contact Wendy if you are interested in joining the team.

FIELD TRIPS

Slipper Island off the coast of Pauanui has had no winter counts done so far, but 6 people have expressed an interest in doing a field trip there. We hope to do this on a weekend in August **so if you would like to join us, please let Sue know.**



Keith Woodley was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours list as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to shorebird conservation.

A well-deserved nod to his decades of involvement writing, educating and tirelessly championing for shorebirds and their habitats here and across the world.

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.

June 19	Winter Wader Census	Manukau Harbour
June 23	Beach Patrol	Karioitahi
July 12	Daria Erastova	Sugar feeding, infection, and body condition of the manu
July 3	Winter Wader Census	Firth of Thames
Aug 9	Adrian Riegan Gwen Pulham	Banding and breeding of Ak's west coast dotterel Behavioural differences between coastal & urban dotterel
Sept 13	Keith Woodley	History of Pukorokoro Miranda Naturalists Trust and the connection to BirdsNZ South Auckland

There is a revised, 2022, edition of the **Checklist of the Birds of New Zealand** available on-line, as a pdf, from www.birdsnz.org.nz.

It is 336 pages long and includes the Māori names for the manu which is good to see.

The BirdsNZ website also gives a detailed explanation of how the list was compiled.

The list covers 427 species on the main islands, Chathams, Kermadecs, and the sub-Antarctic islands.

If you would like a printed version of the Checklist, please contact Gillian who will arrange for them to be printed and bound. Gillian will also let you know how much this will cost which will depend on how many are ordered.

Table 1. Number of taxa represented in the main list (excluding any appendices) of this, and previous, New Zealand checklists.

CHECKLIST	SPECIES	SPECIES OR SUBSPECIES	SCOPE
1953	254	333	NZ and Macquarie Island; birds extant in historical times
1970	282	363	As for 1953 plus Ross Dependency
1990	379	448	As for 1970 plus all extinct species, including fossil species
2010	435	491	As for 1970 plus Norfolk Island and post-Pleistocene extinct species
2022	427	484	NZ only, including post-Pleistocene extinct species

AVIAN AGRESSION

Two examples of intimidation and aggression seen recently. The first was seen at Pahurehure; a heron not happy with his neighbour.



The second was recorded at Virginia Park, Whanganui. The white swans spent 30 mins chasing their cousin, getting close enough to nip it. The black swan seemed unable to fly and would only run across the water for a short distance while the aggressors relentlessly swam after it. They finally seemed to get bored, and the black swan was able to move away.

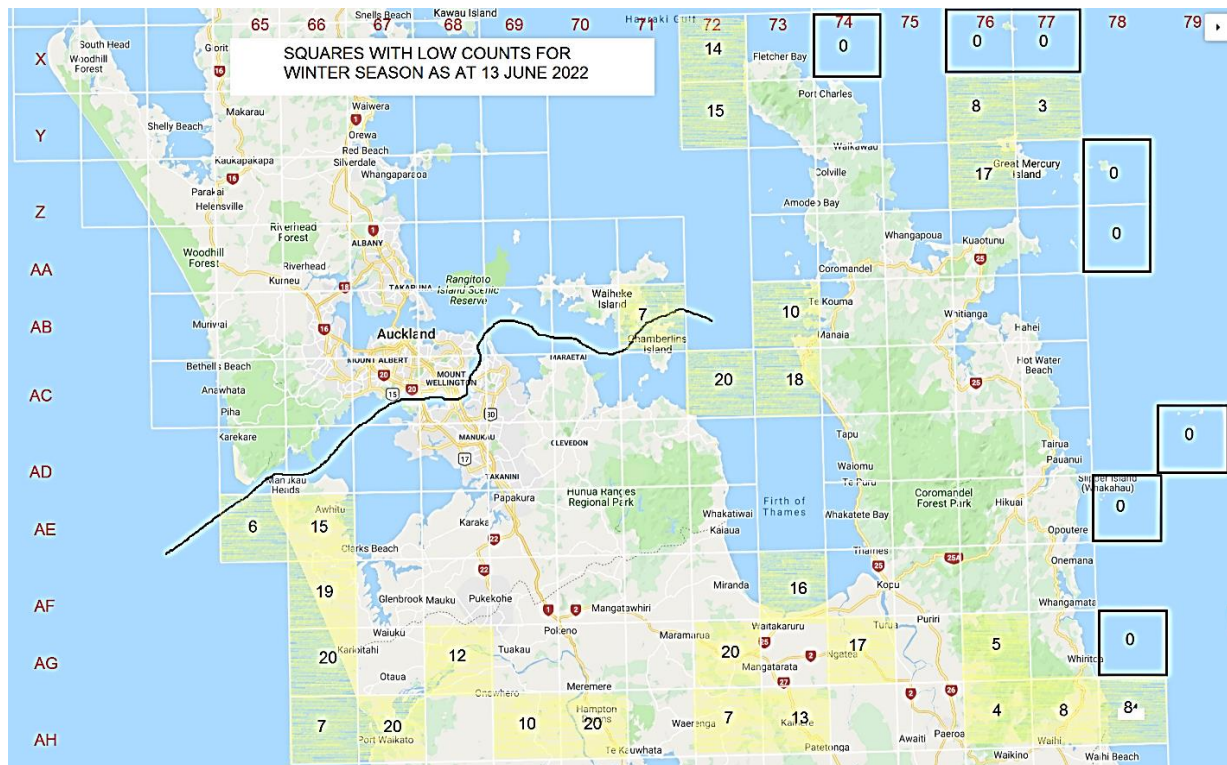


ATLAS REPORT June 2022

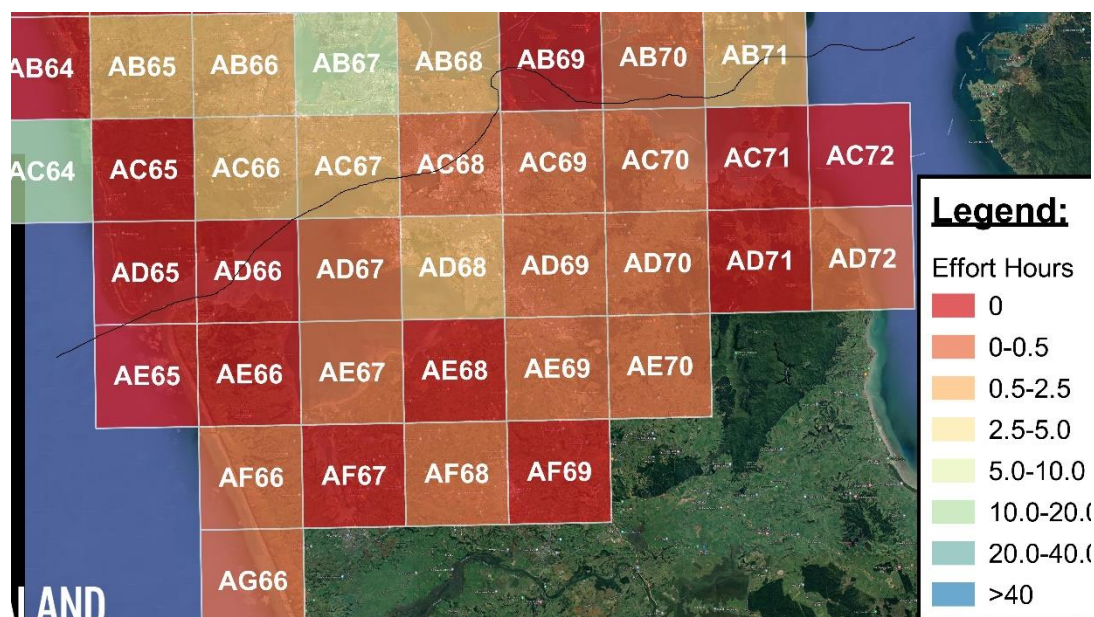
The first month of winter and the fourth year of the atlas project has begun. This month the atlas map highlights only those squares which need more attention.

Please note:

- the figures include winter 2019 to 2022 checklists
- The yellow squares have had between 1 and 20 checklists submitted



I have also attached maps of the winter nocturnal counts for our region. Note that there are 2 maps, one for the northern (Auckland) section and one for the southern (Waikato) section. The red squares have had no winter counts done so far, and the orange shades have had less than 5 hours of night counts.





As you can see, there are a lot of squares with no night counts! Wendy will be sending out a request to you and to Predator Free Franklin members to join in a short-term ruru project.

I would also like to encourage everyone to look and listen out for birds anytime over winter. It may be a bit colder at night, but you don't have to wait up so long before it gets dark. Between now and the end of August, listen out for at least 5 minutes any time between 5.45pm and 6.45am and record all of the birds that you see or hear, e.g. morepork, spur wing plovers, pukeko and anything else that might happen to fly over. Even if you see and hear nothing, it is still important to record this.

Jot down the following details and send them through to me so I can load into the atlas: Exact location of sighting, Date, Time, Species, Number of birds seen

Many squares in our region have had a lot of daytime counts done over the last 3 years, but there are still gaps in the species recorded. I am currently analysing the data for each square to see which species have been seen so far, and then work out what else we might need to go looking for, e.g. cryptic species like fernbirds and crane. I will be hoping for your help and advice to identify likely locations and habitats where we can look for these birds over the next few months.

When the atlas project finishes, there are plans for an online EBook, and possibly some printed copies. The Atlas team would like suggestions for content and format, so if you have any ideas, please send them through to Sue..

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.



HEIHEI 4 May at 08:00 · 🌐

Have you checked out Bird's Eye View? These crack up birds will have your tamariki in stitches! 😂

Bird's Eye View is #StreamingNow on HEIHEI | TVNZ OnDemand



The Flacks Photography added a new photo to the album 2022 ~ "Falling in love with your subject". 16 May at 00:11 · 🌐

A pair of doting Purple-crested Turacos photographed at a conservancy near Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.



LIVESCENCE.COM

Meet the robot keeping an eye on emperor penguins in Antarctica



Rotoroa Island NZ 19 May at 17:12 · 🌐





STUFF.CO.NZ

New research hopes to unlock species-specific poison to target pests



Kākāpō Recovery 23 May at 15:22 · 🌐

Excitingly, nearly all parent-reared kākāpō chicks across the three breeding islands have fledged the nest now; the last two chicks to go are at Zephyr's nest and are expected to take their first steps out into... [More](#)



Birds New Zealand 27 May at 16:26 · 🌐

NZ Falcon/Karearea with rat prey.

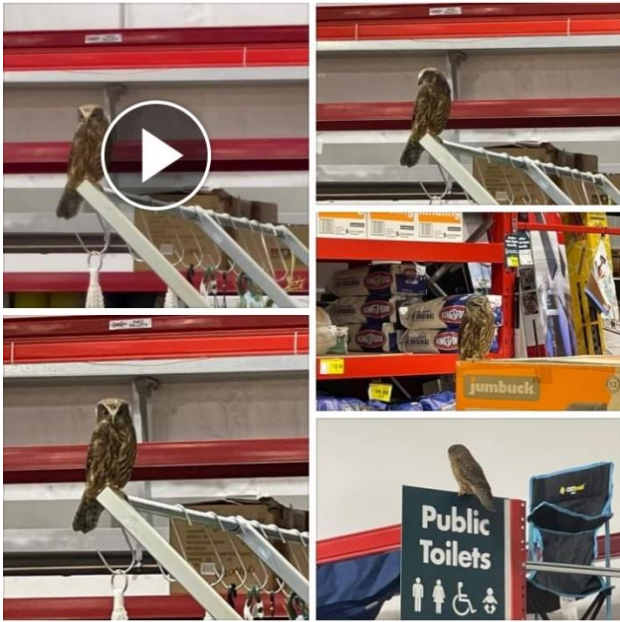
Photo by Dave Lindop.



محمد الجيوري ► **AMAZING WORLD OF BIRDS**
3 June at 11:45 · 🌐

National bird for a reason! 🇮🇳 🇮🇳

Indian Bird
Hyderabad , Telangana
May 2022



Simon Runting ▶ **Birds Auckland** 20 May at 19:21 · 🌐

I like to pride myself on the fact that I can find a ruru in the bush but finding one in Bunnings Westgate in Auckland was a step up even for me. I asked the nearest shop assistant if he knew they had a... [More](#)



Karamea Wild 4 June at 00:37 · Facebook for Android · 🌐

So thrilled to see BC again today, it has been a month since the last sighting... nice to know he is still in the district....

Glossy Ibis
Plegadis falcinellus



Great BIG Nature 17 hrs · 🌐

The bird with the butterfly wings. The Sunbittern bird!

📶 🔋 89% 08:38

After this, the owl landed on Brooke's head, startling her.



Thanks for reading
Wendy and Sue