



THE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (Inc)

Wellington OSNZ—Birds New Zealand

September 2022

www.birdsnz.org.nz and www.notornis.org.nz

Greetings

Spring is here with increasing daylight, warmer temperatures (marginally) and hopefully fewer covid cases. On the avian front, the shining cuckoos are returning from their winter holidays and the first little penguin and banded dotterel chicks have hatched. In August, Harry Boorman gave an entertaining talk on his Big Year in 2021. My preliminary investigations on Big Years and Competitive Birding provided some fascinating insights on the gender differences in various areas of ornithology. Competitive Birding is predominantly a male activity while other ornithological activities have a greater female participation. We live in changing times and Birds New Zealand has the challenge to cater for a diverse range of interests.

Geoff de Lisle

Wellington Birds New Zealand Monthly Meetings

We are continuing our hybrid meeting setup, thus, you can join the meeting on **Monday 3rd of October from 7.30pm** in two ways:

1. In person at the Te Papa Collections Building, 169 Tory Street.
2. Online via the Zoom Meeting via the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83448810783?pwd=bUdVL25iclFYejc4d1dzTThYQnhpZz09>.

The meeting will start at 7.45pm. While Johannes will not be present due to fieldwork commitments, he has arranged for Geoff de Lisle to look after you at Te Papa and he has arranged a Zoom host to ensure a smooth hybrid meeting.

Daria Erastova, who won best speaker on the BirdsNZ conference in Christchurch, will be speaking to us via Zoom and her talk is titled: "**Effects of urban sugar water feeding on native New Zealand birds**". Daria looked at householders' sugar water feeding practices and how they affect native birds. Her study revealed that the type of feeder used, season, and sugar concentration were key factors impacting bird behaviour and health. Daria has produced safe bird feeding guidelines for households. I am sure this talk will be of great interest to you all.

4th July, Lara Shepherd, Te Papa. Genetic research sheds light on weka taxonomy and translocations". Lara has generated new ancient DNA data from weka to examine some of the taxonomic confusion within this species. Lara also investigates some of the past translocations of weka, our most translocated bird species, because their source populations were often not recorded. The talk was an update on a previously published study.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/mec.14323>

1st August, Harry Boorman. The 2021 Big Year. Harry Boorman, an avid birdwatcher from Auckland gave an entertaining talk on his Big Year in 2021. The Big Year being the number of bird species seen in New Zealand

during the calendar year following the rules on the Wrybill Website (see below). During this lockdown-troubled year, he still managed to travel the whole country in pursuit of birds, recording a staggering 245 species. This was a very creditable total as there were major interruptions to his birding from covid lockdowns. Prior to 2021 the record for a Big Year in New Zealand was held by Brent Stephenson who recorded 220 birds in 2014. Harry documented his Big Year on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/boormansbigyearNZ/>. In addition, he is writing a book on his Big Year which he plans to publish in 2023. The New Zealand Big Year record is currently held by David Howes who recorded 250 species in 2021.

5th September, Johannes Fischer, Department of Conversation. Structured decision-making to guide values-based conservation of the critically endangered Kuaka/Whenua Hou Diving Petrel.

“Structured decision making is an approach for careful and organized analysis of natural resource management decisions. Based in decision theory and risk analysis, SDM encompasses a simple set of concepts and helpful steps, rather than a rigidly-prescribed approach for problem solving.”

*“Hidden values can create conflict. Therefore, transparency through explicit statements of underlying values can improve implementation of conservation management. This is particularly true for seabird conservation because seabirds utilise different ecosystems, increasing the number of values and uncertainty, further complicating management decisions. Through a structured decision-making process, we enabled values-based 11 conservation of Kuaka/Whenua Hou Diving Petrels (*Pelecanoides whenuahouensis*), which persist in low numbers (~210 adults) at a single colony on Whenua Hou/Codfish Island and are at risk from a several threats (e.g., storm-induced erosion, interspecific competition, and vessel-based light pollution). We formed a working group consisting of Kāi Tahu, government, and industry representatives. Together, we identified seven fundamental objectives (values) and eleven management alternatives, ranging from Status Quo to translocations and vessel curfews. By combining expert panels, Shiny-app-based elicitations, and projections using integrated population models (IPMs), we then predicted future outcomes, including associated uncertainty across objectives for all alternatives. This approach allowed the working group to navigate the decision landscape, avoid conflict, make well-informed trade-offs, and identify the best potential management option for Kuaka. A values-based approach allowed for transparent and inclusive decision-making for conservation management of Kuaka and has the potential to improve the recovery of many other threatened seabirds worldwide.”* Abstract Birds New Zealand Conference, 2022.

Regional Representative: **Johannes Fischer** birds.wellington@birdsNZ.org.nz
Regional Recorder: Peter Hodge peter.hodge@gmail.com
Pauatahanui Survey: Ian Armitage ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz

International Comment

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/14/cats-kill-birds-wildlife-keep-indoors>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220831-should-you-feed-garden-birds>

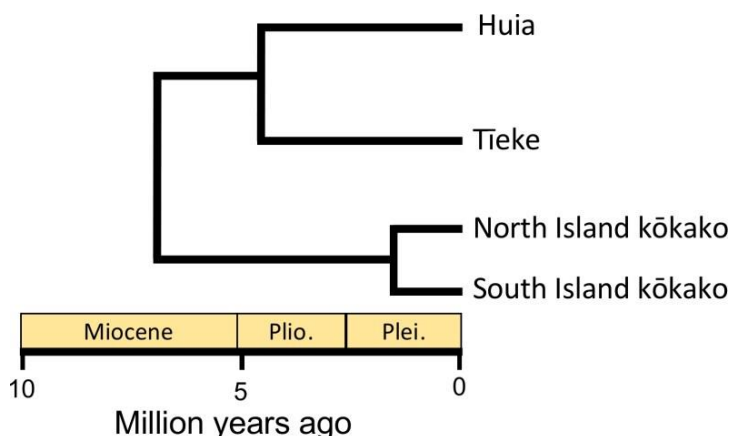


Te Papa Blogs

When did the huia's bill evolve?

Lara Shepherd On: 25 Jul 2022

Huia are one of Aotearoa's most well-known birds, despite going extinct over 100 years ago. Early European scientists were fascinated by the radically different bills of the male and female huia, a feature called sexual dimorphism. More recently scientists recognised the New Zealand wattlebird family, which includes huia, as one of three families



A new study by Massey University's Gillian Gibb and Te Papa's Lara Shepherd used DNA sequences to determine when the New Zealand wattlebird family and the extraordinary sexual dimorphism in huia evolved. Science Researcher Lara Shepherd discusses the findings.

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2022/07/25/when-did-the-huias-bill-evolve/>

Recent evolution of extreme sexual dimorphism in the huia (*Heteralocha acutirostris*; Callaeidae)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1055790322001889?dgcid=author>

Which petrel is this? A tale of polar explorers and a little seabird's name

Alan Tennyson On: 7 Sep 2022

This month, Curator Vertebrates Alan Tennyson and the Department of Conservation's Johannes Fischer, published a scientific paper that clarified the identity of a common subantarctic seabird. Alan explains why this was necessary and what a surprising and incredible history this research revealed.

The arcane art of taxonomy lies at the heart of natural history because it allows the world's biodiversity to be documented in a globally consistent way. Taxonomy is the branch of science concerned with the classification of organisms. Every scientifically named organism was initially described in a publication.

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2022/09/07/which-petrel-is-this-a-tale-of-polar-explorers-and-a-little-seabirds-name/> Tennyson, A.J.D.; Bond, A.L.; Cooper, J.H.; Fischer, J.H. 2022. Lectotypification of the Subantarctic Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix exsul* Salvin, 1896 (Procellariiformes: Procellariidae). *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 142(3): 302-309

A new bird for New Zealand – Matsudaira's storm petrel

Colin Miskelly On: 8 Sep 2022

There are a handful of bird species that are included on the New Zealand list based on a single specimen found storm-wrecked somewhere on New Zealand's long coastline. Curator Vertebrates Colin Miskelly describes the discovery of the latest addition to this list.

A lucky find. Susan Anderson has lived at Muriwai, on Auckland’s wild west coast, for the past 35 years. On 27 May 2022, while walking along Maukatia Bay (just south of Muriwai), Susan found the corpse of an unusual bird. She recognised it as a petrel from the shape of its beak, but it was much smaller than any species she knew.

<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2022/09/08/a-new-bird-for-new-zealand-matsudairas-storm-petrel/>
<https://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/matsudairas-storm-petrel>

Total squares	105		
Total Checklists	36,774	Average checklists / square	350.2
Atlasers	355		
Species observed	144		

*Includes the Wairarapa and Wellington regions.

For news on the New Zealand Atlas project visit their facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/NZBirdAtlas/>

Stuart Nicholson, July eBirder of the Month

By Team eBird August 15, 2022

“Please join us in congratulating [Stuart Nicholson](#) of Wellington, New Zealand – winner of the July 2022 [eBird Challenge](#), sponsored by Carl Zeiss Sports Optics. Stuart’s name was drawn randomly from the 6,870 eBirders who submitted at least one eligible checklist for every day in July. Stuart will receive a new [ZEISS Conquest HD 8x42 binocular](#) for his eBirding efforts.”



Birders Totals

The following are extracts taken from the Wrybill Birding Tours NZ, website <https://wrybill-tours.com/birders-totals/>.

While this website relates to competitive birding there is an emphasis on the birding activities are a “fun way of challenging” each other, they are inclusive and the need for honesty in recording observations.

*This page has been set up as a bit of a **fun way of ‘challenging’ each other**. Many birders keep a list of species they see, and this page is designed along the lines of the list run by [Tony Palliser](#) in Australia and the various listings including the SA 700 Club run by [Zest for Birds](#) in South Africa. Anyone can submit a list total by emailing [Brent Stephenson](#). Even if you feel you have a small list, submit it anyway.*

*The initiation of a 200 Club has occurred, with those birders who have supplied a list of 200 species for New Zealand being included. A list of 200 species in New Zealand is a great target for birders to aim at, and takes a fair bit of time to achieve. With the recent increase in people submitting lists, we now have a staggering total for New Zealand of **300 species**, set by Steve Wood. Birders in the ‘200 Club’ are shown in bold in the list below and have an * beside their name.*

With the advent of books such as ‘The Big Year’ by Mark Obmascik, year listing has become a more popular birding phenomenon. So we have started a set of ‘Year listing’ tables as well. Hopefully this will gain momentum amongst both NZ and overseas birders, although there seems to be less interest in this.

Revised list now available as of Dec 2021

Photo, members of the 200 club birding on the Chatham Islands, 2021. Left to right, Mike Bell (204), David Howes (262), & currently holder of the NZ Big Year, (250), Matt Jones (224) and Fraser Gurney (260).



Rules (abridged)

1. The Checklist to be used in this exercise is [“The ‘Official’ New Zealand Birders checklist”](#). The list can be downloaded as a PDF version [here](#).
2. The geographical boundary for the New Zealand Birders’ totals list is defined as mainland New Zealand, offshore islands (all sub-antarctics and Chathams, not including Macquarie Island or Norfolk Island), its territories or anywhere within the 200 NM limit. A separate New Zealand Birders’ ‘Mainland’ totals list has a slightly different geographical boundary, designed for those who have not ventured beyond the main islands.
3. All species counted should be seen alive and in the wild (island populations are countable including all species on Tiritiri Matangi, Kapiti Island, Ulva Island, etc.). However, birds kept in cages in wild locations, or being ‘road-showed’ such as Sirocco the Kakapo, cannot be counted.
4. Rehabilitated birds are countable, during release at or near the site from which they were recovered.
5. Beachcast birds, as long as they are still alive, are countable.
6. Birds must be seen, hearing calls or song of a species does not count.
7. Submissions should be honest, accurate and dated. Any entries for species not currently on the [“The ‘Official’ New Zealand Birders checklist”](#) (ie. first records) must be verified by the Rare/Unusual Birds Committee of Birds New Zealand (formerly Ornithological Society of New Zealand). Visit their website and the [Rare Bird Sightings](#) webpage.
8. Entries should not be made without the permission from the owner.

New Zealand Birders' totals list

Based on NZ's political boundaries and outlined in "The 'Official' New Zealand Birders checklist"

Name	Total	Date Submitted	Last birds seen
* Steve Wood	300	23 February 2022	Northern pintail, black tern, Western sandpiper
* Sav Saville	295	15 May 2022	Northern pintail, black tern, Western sandpiper
* Brent Stephenson	293	2 February 2022	Pallid cuckoo, great frigatebird, red-footed booby
* Igor Debski	287	15 April 2021	Great frigatebird, South Polar skua, Kermadec storm-petrel
* Colin Miskelly	280	29 April 2014	Buff-breasted sand, Crested tern
* Phil Hammond	280	22 February 2022	Collared petrel, black tern, Western sandpiper
* Brian Bell	263	24 February 2005	
* Dave Howes	262	25 February 2022	Western sandpiper, Oriental plover, ruff
* David Lawrie	260	7 October 2019	
* Fraser Gurney	260	13 July 2022	Royal penguin, Southern brown kiwi, chestnut teal

The Big Year

"*The Big Year* is a 2011 American [comedy film](#) starring [Jack Black](#), [Owen Wilson](#) and [Steve Martin](#). *The Big Year* was directed by [David Frankel](#) and written by [Howard Franklin](#). It was based on the 2004 nonfiction book *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession* by Mark Obmascik. The book followed three men on a quest for a [Big Year](#) - a competition among [birders](#) to see who can see and identify the greatest number of species of birds in North America (north of Mexico) in a calendar year. The actual men were Sandy Komito, Al Levantin, and Greg Miller, who were chasing Komito's prior record. The film uses the same premise with fictional characters." *Wikipedia*.



Big Year for Women

Competitive birding, such as participating in Big Years has principally been the pursuit of men with a much lower involvement by women. However, recently there have been some notable female Big Year participants with Tiffany Kersten establishing in 2021 a record of 726 species for the lower 48 US states.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/meet-bird-guide-and-blogger-mission-keep-women-birders-safe>

<https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/new-bird-watching-record/> . Internationally listers have been principally male but there are some notable exceptions.

Phoebe Snetsinger (née Burnett; June 9, 1931 – November 23, 1999) was an American [birder](#) famous for having seen and documented birds of 8,398 different species,^[1] at the time, more than anyone else in history and the first person to see more than 8,000.^[2] Her memoir, *Birding on Borrowed Time*, explores this achievement. She travelled the world multiple times to find birds in their habitats. She was described as having had an excellent memory and a strong competitive spirit. *Wikipedia*.

In 2011 Caren Cooper and Jennifer Smith published a study entitled “Gender Patterns in Bird-related Recreation in the USA and UK”. They classified bird activities as supportive, collaborative, competitive, or authoritative. The data they accessed was from memberships of organisations from the UK and the USA. Their results showed that the more competitive the avian pursuit the more males and fewer females participated. *“Supportive” activities involved slightly more women than men, and “participatory” activities had up to 70 percent women. Activities with open-ended checklists or lots of travel involved 57–83 percent men. Competitive birding was even more skewed, with 80–99 percent of the participants male. And positions of authority, such as members of regional records committees, had a 72–93 percent male makeup.*” The definitions of the various avian activities they used in their study are listed in the text box below.

“We found that young birders bucked the trend, with equal numbers of boys and girls in all categories. Perhaps the patterns we discovered in adults reflect greater differences between genders in the past. ”

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/men-and-women-approach-bird-watching-differently/#> Caren Cooper

<https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/art4/>

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN? Our study categorized bird-related recreation on a spectrum of competitiveness, and then checked where men and women tend to fall along it:

Supportive: Non-competitive. Membership in bird organizations such as the Cornell Lab and British Trust for Ornithology

Participatory: Activities with little competition, such as citizen-science projects

Competitive: Sharing or ranking lists; entering a birding contest

Authoritative: Leading trips, compiling Christmas counts, serving on records committees
Our results showed slightly more women than men tended to do activities toward the top of the list. More men than women participated in roles toward the bottom of this list.

Don't fit? Break the stereotype! Our findings in no way suggest that all men are competitive listers and all women are casual bird watchers—or that one end of the spectrum is better than the other. The most famous lister of all is a woman, and plenty of up-and-coming young birders are female.

The role and participation of women in birding activities and birding organisations internationally is an ongoing discussion. The following is a recent from the Audubon Society is a recent example.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/when-women-run-bird-world>

Banded Red-billed Gulls

5th August, 2022. Colour banded gull observed in a flock of 59 near Island Bay. Multiple photographs revealed the band number E-203670. Top right. <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/checklist/S116351332> Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle.

The Banding Office reported that E-203670 was banded in 2009 at Kaikoura. The colour band combination had not been lodged with the Banding Office. The bander was Dr Jim Mills who added colour bands on recaptured birds.

This bird was at least 12 years old. Heather & Robertson (2015) reported the oldest recorded bird lived at least 28 years old.

15th August, 2022. A colour banded red-billed gull observed in a flock of 37 by the duck pond at Avalon Park. The band number of this bird was E-203418. Picture, bottom right (Dallas Bishop) <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/checklist/S116955245>

Acknowledgement, Sandy Taylor from the Banding Office.

Jim Mills

1963 BSc University of Canterbury, New Zealand
1967 MSc (First Class Honours) University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

1971 PhD University of Canterbury, New Zealand

THE POPULATION ECOLOGY OF RED-BILLED GULLS (*LARUS NOVAEHOLLANDIAE SCOPULINUS*) OF KNOWN AGE, University of Canterbury, 1970.

1971–1985 Scientist, N.Z. Wildlife Service, Wellington

1985–1987 Assistant Director of Research (Endangered Species), New Zealand Wildlife Service, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, N.Z

1987–1993 Scientist, Science & Research Directorate, Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand <http://jamesmills.com/field-research>

Red-billed gull study

The red-billed gulls breeding at Kaikoura Peninsula, New Zealand are an ideal subject for population and genetic studies because there is little emigration of breeding adults and virtually all of the offspring of breeding age return to the environs of Kaikoura during the breeding season. The population is the third largest in New Zealand. Annually 2315-9212 pairs nested on the three kilometre headland of the peninsula. Banding of nestlings has continued annually since the 1958 breeding season and to date 71,000 chicks have been banded resulting in a large proportion of the population being of known age. The birds have lived up to 31 years of age. Research on the population began in 1964. In all, seven generations have been studied and a total of 5000 individuals have been individually colour-marked. Currently it is one of the largest avian data-bases in



the world. In the data-base there are records of over 45,600 individuals, 182,000 recoveries consisting of dead recoveries, recaptures or resightings of banded individuals and 25,000 records of breeding attempts by known-aged colour-marked adults. Between 1992 and 2004, blood samples were taken from 1,650 family groups.

Between 1983 and 1993 the total population at Kaikoura remained relatively stable at approximately 16,000-19,000 individuals, but after 1993 the population declined and by 2003 numbers had decreased by 51% from that in 1983.

<http://jamesamills.com/publications/>

James A. Mills; John W. Yarrall; Deborah A. Mills (2020). First record of a New Zealand banded red-billed gull (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) recovered from mainland Australia. *Notornis*, **67**: 479-480. [Click here for PDF of article.](#)

James A. Mills; John W. Yarrall; Janet M. Bradford-Grieve; Mike Morrissey; Deborah A. Mills (2018) Major changes in the red-billed gull (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*) population at Kaikoura Peninsula, New Zealand; causes and consequences: a review. *Notornis*, **65**, 64-26. [Click here for PDF of article.](#)

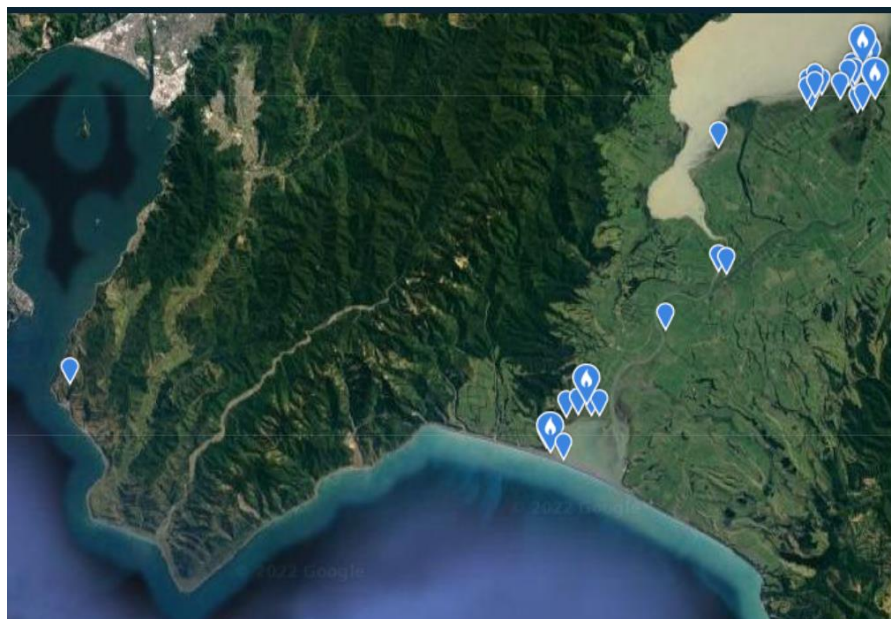
Australasian bittern | Matuku-hūrepo, Lake Kohangapiripiri (Parangahau / Pencarrow Lakes)

22nd March, 2022.

Kari Beavan reported a bittern, “*hiding in the aquatic plants on the very edge of the lake. Took flight as I walked towards the lake edge which is how I saw it.*”

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S113410477>

The map shows the location of bittern reported in eBird. The marker on the left is the recent sighting on Lake Kohangapiripiri and the multiple observations from the Wairarapa. There is a report from Parrish, 1984 of a bittern at the Parangahau / Pencarrow Lakes.



Parrish, G.R. 1984: Wildlife and wildlife sites of the Wellington region. New Zealand Wildlife Service, Dept. Internal Affairs, Faunal Survey Unit Report No. 38.

Greater Wellington Facebook

[ropsSentdaYM7ty egs6A4ciudcai0tlu rht49u48593te:gg668uha71](https://www.facebook.com/gwfb/photos/10159444444444444)

“A very special bird has been sighted by a member of the public at Te Onepoto estuary in Whitireia Park, the first recording of the species here in several decades. The bird was an Australasian Bittern, a species nationally threatened in NZ due to the loss of the wetland habitat it requires. It’s great news that one has been sighted here. The Whitireia Restoration Group undertakes pest control throughout the park with a focus on areas of wetland to provide a safe haven for resident and visiting birds such as this bittern. We would love to hear of any other sightings, so please let us know if you see a bittern at Te Onepoto or any other area of the Porirua Harbour on 0800 496 734. The sighting is a reminder that dogs should be kept under control in the area to protect native birds that forage in the estuary.” 14th August

PAP Banded dotterel is back from New Caledonia!

PAP (flag letter), banded dotterel arrived back in Eastbourne in early August, having spent his third winter in New Caledonia. PAP and his partner PEY are currently sitting on a nest with three eggs on Eastbourne beach. The banded dotterel 2022/23 breeding season is well underway with nests at Lake Kohangapiripiri (Pencarrow), Baring Head as well as Eastbourne.

The first banded dotterel chicks hatched at lake Kohangapiripiri on 15 September (monitoring camera) from the nest of PEJ and PEX.

Photo: PAL (male) on nest 3 at Lake Kohangapiripiri



Mana Island Takahe

There has been a steady increase in the takahe population over the last few years and numbers have recently broken the 400 level and 500 is well in sight. The increase is a result of a co-ordinated recovery programme that involves the mainland populations, and those in fenced sanctuaries and on predator-free islands, such as Mana Island. Importantly, translocations of birds are ensuring strong genetics.

In August, 9 takahe left Mana Island to the Burwood Takahē Centre and Wairakei Sanctuary. Four of the transferred birds were chicks from last spring, 2 were sub-adults from the 20/21 breeding season as well as three adults. A further adult, Hori was transferred later in August. Three adults have been brought onto Mana to make a total of 7 pairs on the island.



The breeding season started in September.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2022-media-releases/nine-takahe-set-sail-for-genetic-diversity/>

<https://blog.doc.govt.nz/2021/11/20/takahe-the-challenging-road-to-recovery/>

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2016/takahe-sets-out-for-home/>

Pauatahanui Inlet Bird Survey

Ian Armitage, ian.armitage@xtra.co.nz

Wellington members of Birds New Zealand have counted birds in Pauatahanui Inlet, the north-eastern arm of Porirua Harbour, since 1982. The fifth series of counts for this long-term survey commenced last April. A reliable record of change in the occurrence, numbers and seasonal distribution of birds over a period of 40 years will have accumulated once this current survey phase is complete. With the enthusiastic support of nearly 20

members counts are made on the first Sunday of each month and will finish in March 2024; so, we are now one-quarter of the way through this survey period. If you are interested to help with counts please join in; It's easy to do, only takes an hour or so on a Sunday and usually you won't get your feet wet! Please contact myself or Johannes Fischer (RR).

What have we learned so far? 35 wetland, estuarine and oceanic bird species have been recorded in the inlet, also 22 land birds. More species are now being recorded than in 1982 caused by natural arrival, and by one recent introduction (fernbird). Pied shag, royal spoonbill, and Canada goose are now well-established and were not present 40 years ago. Some species are now more numerous than they were 30 to 40 years ago, for example, spur-winged plover and little black shag. It appears that the total number of birds in Pauatahanui Inlet may be decreasing; on-going surveys will determine whether this worrying trend continues. A selection of comparisons for the winter months in 2022 are shown below.

Number of birds	July	August	September
2022	1,307	545	756
2012	724	598	660
2002	755	817	615
1992	1,555	1,154	1,078
1982	2,082	1,555	1,464

Number of species	July	August	September
2022	42	38	42
2012	34	37	37
2002	37	41	38
1992	31	28	32
1982	30	32	25

Pied shag	July	August	September
2022	34	0	19
2012	4	11	32
2002	2	0	0
1992	0	0	0
1982	0	0	0

White-faced heron	July	August	September
2022	19	1	3
2012	15	12	23
2002	12	8	5
1992	8	23	3
1982	19	16	8



Presentations of results and trends from earlier surveys were made at two Birds New Zealand conferences (Hamilton, 2005; Palmerston North, 2014). Summaries of count information have been made available on three occasions to the Greater Wellington Regional Council and to Porirua City Council for regional and city planning purposes.

Wreck of Fluttering Shearwaters

Lloyd Esler, Birds New Zealand Beach Patrol Co-ordinator reported on 24th of July reported in BirdingNZ.net “a fairly sizeable Fluttering shearwater wreck over the past few weeks - West Coast, Wellington coast and up to Hawkes Bay.” Preliminary results from beach patrol reports from Gillian Candler (Pukerua Bay to Plimmerton), Shane Cotter (Makara Beach) and Hugh Robertson (Kapiti Coast) indicate that this is looking like being the biggest wreck of fluttering shearwaters in central North Island ever recorded during the history of the Birds New Zealand (OSNZ) beach patrol scheme. A full report of this event will be compiled when all the beach patrol records for this period have been received. The initial indications are that this wreck appears to be restricted principally to central New Zealand and not a nation-wide event. Major wrecks of fluttering shearwaters occurred in New Zealand in 1985 (New Zealand, 2319, Wellington 108) and 1998 (New Zealand 2286, Wellington 108).

Reference, Powlesland RG & Pickard CR (1989 SEABIRDS FOUND DEAD ON NEW ZEALAND BEACHES IN 1988, AND A REVIEW OF Puffinus SPECIES RECOVERIES, 1943 TO 1988. Notornis

https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Notornis_39_1_27.pdf

Acknowledgements. Thanks to Gillian Candler, Shane Cotter, Hugh Robertson, Ian Armitage, Lloyd Esler and Colin Miskelly.



Repeat bird survey of Matiu / Somes Island

From March 2002 through to December 2005, the Wellington Branch of the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, now Birds NZ, carried out a quarterly bird survey on Matiu / Somes Island. This involved travelling to the motu on the Saturday, and in the afternoon 2 teams of 2 people walking around the tracks in opposite directions counting all birds seen and heard. Once the counts had been completed, the teams would circumnavigate the island by DOC boat counting the birds on the rock stacks and cliffs that couldn't be seen during the land survey. After spending the night on the island, in the morning repeating the counts on land that had been undertaken the previous evening. 38 species of birds were identified, with these mostly being the usual urban and shore bird species.

Now 20 years later, it is useful to repeat this survey using the same methods to see what changes in birdlife have occurred over this period of time, increases or decreases in numbers within a species or are there new species present now. Members of the Taranaki Whānui are welcome to join us on these counts. DOC is supporting this work by assisting with travel costs, providing accommodation and the boat with a skipper for the circumnavigation of the motu.

I am seeking expressions of interest from members who wish to take part in this repeat series of surveys on Matiu / Somes Island. It would require a commitment to be on the motu on Saturday and Sunday and staying overnight. Accommodation will be in one of the houses there. As the previous survey took place on the second weekend of the month in March, June, September and December, we will be looking to copy that schedule beginning on 11/12 March 2023. Team members would need to bring their own food, sleeping bags, suitable clothing and binoculars. Count sheets and instructions will be supplied to each team.

If you are interested in either being a regular survey team member or a one off team member, please provide me with your name and contact details and I'll be in touch.

Nga mihi

Shane Cotter, Heather.shane@xtra.co.nz, 021 190 8654

Birds Snippets

Korokoro yellow-crowned parakeet

Oscar Thomas » Fri Jul 01, 2022

A little beyond the city limits, but it was lovely to see a pair of tomtits, 2+ whiteheads, a male bellbird and 1-2 yellow-crowned kākārīki on the Korokoro Dam loop in Wellington, plus the usual suspects and good numbers of tūi and pīwakawaka. An easy 90min walk in beautiful bush.

BirdingNZ.net

Note: Yellow-crowned parakeet are rare on mainland Wellington but well established and abundant on Mana Island. Colin Miskelly recorded yellow-crowned parakeet in Korokoro in January 29th this year <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/checklist/S101617255>

Nga Manu, Waikanae shining cuckoo

Jean Fleming, Monday Sept 5, 2022

Nga Manu Reserve Road, Waikanae.

One of the first Wellington-region records for this shining cuckoo this season. A high number of kereru (20) were also recorded.

Australasian Harrier (1), Eastern Rosella (4), Tui (6), Welcome Swallow (4)

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S118127667>

Morepork & kereru Mana Island

Dallas Bishop & Geoff de Lisle, 4th Sept, 2022. Morepork heard on a couple of nights from one of the DOC houses. They appear to be occasional visitors to the island. Our last morepork



observation prior to these was on the 19th of August, 2021.

A single kereru was observed in September on multiple occasions near House 3 (picture). They have yet to become permanent residents and they have not yet bred on the island.

Petone Wharf white fronted terns

Michael Szabo, Fri Sept 8th, 2022. I saw c100 WFTs on Petone wharf yesterday. It has been closed off to the public with a big metal barrier and it looks like the terns are taking it over - I saw one pair mating and several others flying around in pairs, males chasing females with a fish in its bill - so maybe they'll start breeding there this year.



Little black shags, Matiu / Somes Island

Michael Szabo, 15th Sept. On the ferry to Matiu/Somes Island I noticed a group of what looked to be 26 Little Black Shags in a tree at the south-east end.

Re: Shining cuckoos - 2022-23

GrahamB » Sun Sep 25, 2022 8:35 am

Shining cuckoo in our garden, Waikanae, yesterday. Quite late.

Other notes: Bittern flying over old highway just south of Waikanae on Thursday.

Another mysterious large raptor (not harrier) seen from kitchen window looking down the valley towards Reikorangi on Wednesday. BirdingNZ.net