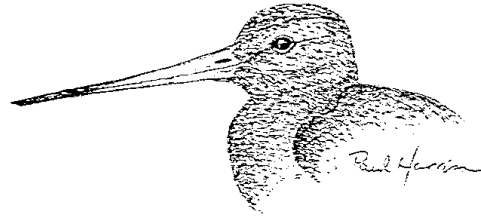


KUAKA

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

Regional Representative: Sue Frostick
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Facebook @birdsnzsa



December 2022



Greetings everyone, no meeting this month so this newsletter highlights the sightings that have been reported since the last newsletter, the Atlas report, and our Facebook posts for the past month

We won't produce a newsletter in January but you can look forward to its return in February. Have a great Christmas and New Year and we look forward to catching up in a couple of months.

MONTHLY MEETING

We had our annual Christmas BBQ last Saturday – thanks to the Parry's for hosting this event. We were very lucky with the weather (there was a heavy shower while we were having lunch under the shelter on the deck). After lunch we went off in the 4WD's on the track along the flood-bank beside the Waikato River wetlands. Parked the vehicles and walked out on the raised walkway that Stu Muir and his team are building. We last visited six years ago and it was interesting to see what work has been done since then. Ian heard a matuku but no other unusual manu were heard or seen.



SIGHTINGS

✚ Five whimbrel were spotted at Karioitahi Beach recently.



✚ 52 spur winged plovers have been recorded from a recently ploughed paddock in karaka

✚ The Orua Bay dotterel are having a second nesting attempt (see photo). Nine nests (dotterel and oystercatcher) were washed away during high tide/storm events last month. Most pairs will try again; Coastcare are hoping the Christmas crowds will respect the taped off areas, and keep their dogs on the leash.



✚ An abandoned dotterel nest with two eggs was found at Waiata Shores. There is still a pair nearby

✚ A dotterel chick hatched recently at St Kentigern's

✚ The last dotterel chick at Opaheke was found dead. Possibly attacked by another bird

✚ A bittern was spotted flying out of a drain at Kaihere

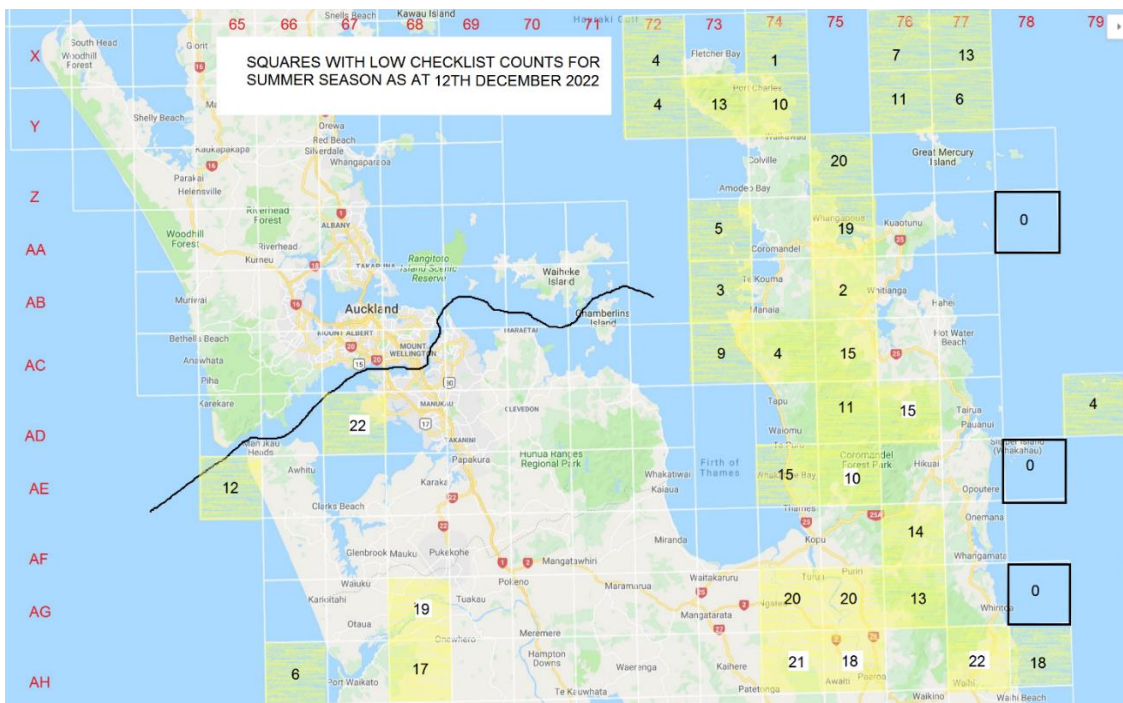
We welcome contributions to our newsletters and Facebook page. **If you have sightings, birding spots that might interest others, bird table news, events, photos, conservation, pest control, behaviours that you have observed, and the like, do let us know.**

Australian Crested Grebe feeding young at Pegasus Lake, Canterbury

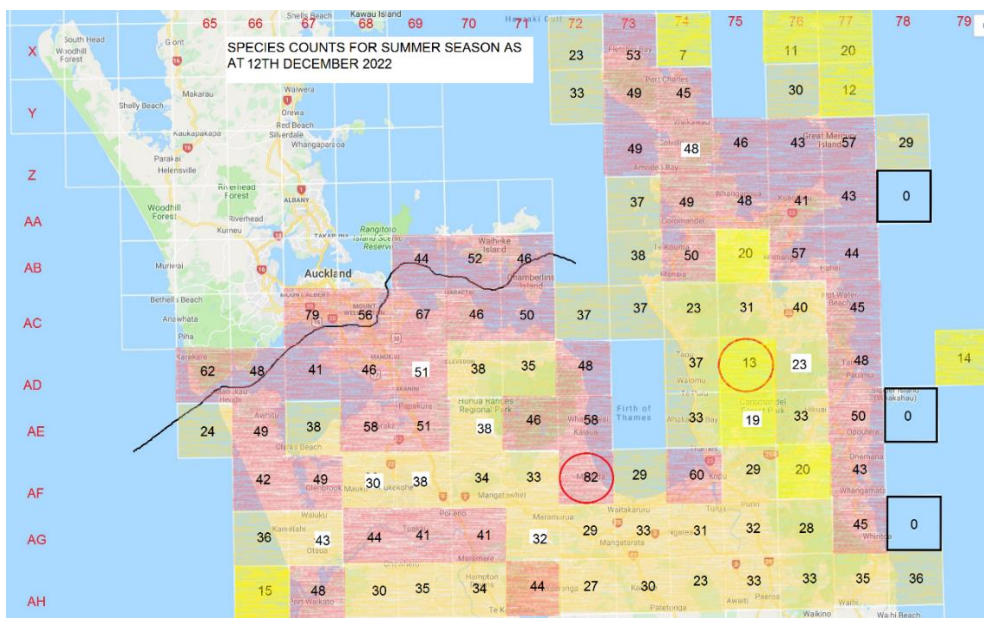


ATLAS REPORT DECEMBER 2022

We are just over a week into the summer season, so hopefully the weather will become more settled soon. I have attached updated maps but as you can see, only a few squares have had some atlasing effort so far this month. The first map shows squares with low checklist counts.



The second map shows the number of **species** for each square for the summer season (total for last 3 summers). Please note: The yellow squares have had 1-20 species recorded; The orange squares have had 21-40 species recorded; The red squares have had 41 or more species recorded.



Hopefully the influx of visitors to the Coromandel region over the holiday period will see numbers of checklists and species increase there. If you are travelling anywhere in our region over the summer, please consider doing some atlasing in one or more of the squares that have low checklist or species numbers. Otherwise, continue to look out for target species, and do some night counts too.

If you didn't get a target list from me, let me know. If you find something interesting, try to take at least five minutes and record all of the other species that you recognise. Enter the details into the atlas or send me the following details:

Exact location of sighting, Date, Start Time, duration of count, Species, Number of birds seen

I hope you all enjoy a wonderful Christmas and New Year, and look forward to seeing you at our first meeting/AGM in February. Sue.



Zealandia Ecosanctuary

Nov 28 · 🌐

This rō/stick insect has found itself in a sticky situation!

📷 @scottsphotosnz



Update from the Dotteral minders at Seagrove

Just an update on our situation now that the high storm tides have mostly gone through. Sadly, we've lost all four nests last week due to brutal storm tides & harrier predation. The first to go was a nest predated by a harrier before I could get the netting over it.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBagpY0ywJY>

Ironically, this was a nest that survived the tides on sandbags as it was north facing. The harriers are pretty good at finding the eggs before they start incubating and I now believe they took their previous nest with one egg in it.



Out on the harbour shell banks we have had huge storm tides that exceeded our expectations by a good 30cm or more due to the high winds not releasing the water from the Manukau between tides. This nest would have required a LOT more sandbags, but I was doing it alone and it was just too much to get through given the frequent rain (not wanting to get them off the nest in rain) and only being able to access at lower tides. It survived the first tide, but the next was too much without being able to access for repairs. What a champion mumma on the nest!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qaz6liukqqE>

Another nest 50m away did not get raised as it was deemed to be on high enough ground (based on previous tides) and also not having the manpower to raise it. I just put sandbags in front. The second tide also wiped this nest out 29 days into incubation ☹️

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1osAPMH-Ew>

I'm not sure the chicks would have survived as they may have literally been blown or washed away as there were many high tides last week. And another nest which was on high ground (after they lost eggs several weeks earlier – they do learn!) was also lost, but this time mumma abandoned the nest after we raised it. The eggs would have got wet the tide before, so hard to say how viable it is. The parents were quite timid and I had to get about 200m away before she would get back on the nest after putting netting over. However, raising the nest was evidently too much. We were not able to tell if she got back on until the next day due to lack of visibility. She didn't even go near the nest according to camera footage. Cold eggs. 😞

This nest was one we were able to save from the tide with some serious reinforcements, but that was of no use. The netting on the abandoned nest got a good testing though – and it passed. The gulls were not able to get the eggs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KB3UX4DmXwM>

The shell banks have yet again (also in August) been decimated in places, so it's getting more difficult for them to find high nesting spots that aren't already taken by SBBGs. On a positive note, the SBBGs lost many of their nests. VOCs had two of three nests survive. I helped one with a sandbag and big log.



I haven't seen our only chick for the season in a few weeks, so it may have been predated by harrier or SBBG. Not 100% sure how much time they spent close to the mainland. I'll keep an eye out.

Fingers crossed they try to lay again as soon as these pesky high tides go away and then I'll see what we can do. If aerial predation is a problem, then perhaps this area is just not viable for them. I believe (until proven wrong) the SBBGs, terns, etc keep the harriers away from the shell banks in the harbour, but then the SBBGs are a big threat out there. Closer to the mainland and they enter harrier territory. They don't get an easy run.

Cheers
Cam

MY FELLOW BIRDS & BIRD-LOVERS,
WELCOME TO THE FIRST
WORLD BIRD MIGRATION AWARDS!



WE'VE HAD SOME STIFF
COMPETITION THIS YEAR! OUR
NOMINEES INCLUDE SOME
OF THE HIGHEST FLYING GEESE,
AND WADERS THAT MOVE
ACROSS CONTINENTS!



TO PRESENT THE AWARD, MAY
I CALL UPON MY FRIEND AND
MIGRATION LEGEND:
ARCTIC TERN!



AND THE AWARD GOES
TO... OH BOY...



BAR-TAILED GODWIT!
FOR A RECORD-SHATTERING
NON-STOP 11000 KM
FROM ALASKA
TO NEW ZEALAND!



OH MY GODWIT!



I'D LIKE TO THANK MY WINGS,
MY FLOCK, AND ALL THE SHRIMP
& INVERTEBRATES THAT
FUELLED MY JOURNEY!



AND MY FRIENDS AT THE
BIRDLIFE PARTNERSHIP,
THANK YOU FOR WORKING
TO MAKE THE EAST ASIAN-
AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY A
SAFER PASSAGE FOR ALL
OF US!



LET'S RAISE THE 'BAR'
HIGHER AND HIGHER!



WATERFOWL BANDING EVENTS JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

John Dyer, Fish & Game New Zealand, organises waterfowl banding events each January and February in the Auckland Waikato region. These are focused on banding bait-trapped Mallard (and 'Grey Duck', but probably only Grallards now), ahead of the annual duck-hunting season.

Returns of bands from hunters, along with where and when the birds were harvested, provides information on the age of harvested birds and their movements. This allows F&G to monitor population trends and determine season lengths and bag limits.

These banding events provide an opportunity for anyone who wants to gain further banding experience and get credit for it, if they are looking for certification. John is a Level 3 certified bander and can supervise and sign the training logs of Level 2 banders, as well as provide on-the-spot training and advice for Level 1 banders. This is an opportunity for fledgling banders to gain experience.

It's always a great day out and usually all done by early afternoon or sooner, depending on the number of birds caught. We never know exactly how many birds we have until the cages are closed in the morning of the banding day – also, how many helpers turn up.

Please RSVP to John, letting him know which site/s and which day/s you can attend. Cancellations are rare, even when the weather looks bad, it often picks up just when we need it to.
email JDyer@fishandgame.org.nz or phone 0210 243 0015.

INVITATION

Auckland Waikato Fish & Game Council Mallard/Grey Duck Banding Schedule 2023:

Sometimes a banding weekend may be delayed or even shifted if bird numbers have yet to build. **Please RSVP** your intentions to be sure you're in the loop so we can update you.

- Start: 8:00am on weekdays and Saturdays. 8:30am on Sundays.
- Kids very welcome if supervised. In fact, lots of little jobs for them to do and a posted certificate afterwards, (their name & mailing address required).
- Ducks have blunt bills so kids will come to no harm. In fact, it can be quite an experience for them handling live birds.
- DoC Banding Office log-books signed off to confirm attendance.
- For maps to any of these sites, just email John Dyer.
- An RSVP will assist our planning.
- Usually, we go ahead whatever the weather. But if it is called off for some reason, we can't tell you if we're not expecting you.
- Bring sunscreen, a raincoat, water, snacks and hat. Long-pants suggested, (ducks have somewhat scratchy feet).
- Hand-wash will be available.
- Choose a site/s and date/s that best suits you.
- The usual Covid precautions apply. If you are feeling unwell or have recently tested positive, please stay at home this time. We hope to see you when you are feeling much better next time.

Parakai: Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 January 2022. Farm belonging to Wendy Young, 33 South Head Road, Parakai. Meet outside house. If late, we are in the paddock opposite where you can also park. Late and/or lost: ring John Dyer 0210 243 0015.

Paeroa, Hauraki Plains. Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 January 2022. 1244 Hauraki Road, Netherpton RD1. Paeroa. 3671. Drive past cowshed straight down race until you see vehicles in the paddocks. Late and/or lost: ring David Klee 021 300 183.

Glen Murray, (west of Te Kauwhata/Rangiriri across 1-lane Waikato River bridge). Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 January 2021. Farm belonging to Mr Colin Sherrard, 912 Glen Murray Road, Rangiriri. Assemble at the top of the farm track first. If late, we are down the main farm track, up and over the hill, where you can also park. Late and/or lost: ring David Klee 021 300 183.

Aka Aka Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 January 2021. Sands' family farm. 648 Aka Aka Road, Franklin. We are 360m down the track, look for entry sign by 1st shed on right and park in paddock adjoining. Late and/or lost: ring John Dyer 0210 243 0015.

Wellsford Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February 2021. Ron's Pond. Borrows Road, (off Whangaripo Valley Road, off Matheson Rd on the top of SH1, Wellsford). Along Borrows Road we are the 2nd track on the right, (with 37 and a blue arrow on a sign on the post. Follow the arrow). Meet & park at cowshed. If late, walk down the track by turning hard left, past the cowshed double-gates. We are under 400m along this track. Please leave gate shut if you found it that way and please don't block gate access for large farm machinery. Late and/or lost: ring John Dyer 0210 243 0015.

Te Awamutu Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February 2021: Two sites in Paterangi, west of Te Awamutu: First site: Meet at Ellis Finch property, 972 Paterangi Road, Te Awamutu. Dairy number "73654" by entry gate: Assemble in yard first. Afterwards, meet at Peter Shaw property, 1311 Paterangi Road, Te Awamutu, (opposite Paterangi School): Late and/or lost: ring David Klee 021 300 183.

We hope you have a great day 😊



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Banded mallards discovered 2000km from home on island nation

Bay of Plenty Times
By Alison Smith

When it comes to trips, mallard ducks like to keep it local. So when a mallard duck couple from the Hauraki Plains took matters into their own wings and flew 2000km to the idyllic New Caledonian island of Lifou, researchers suspect they must've been desperate for a tropical vacay.

"It's extraordinarily unusual," said Auckland-Waikato Fish & Game Wildlife Manager John Dyer. "Only a handful make it that far and to have two turn up on one tiny island? Maybe they just wanted a tropical holiday."

The majority of banded New Zealand mallards never move more than 25km from their home and historical Fish and Game data suggests only 0.0001 per cent mallards make these heroic sorts of journeys. "It is the first time two banded mallards have turned up together."

The two mallards, one drake and one hen, had been recently banded by Auckland and Waikato Fish and Game staff and hunter-volunteers from Paeroa and the Hauraki Plains. Part of the organisation's annual species monitoring programme, 4000 mallard and grey ducks are banded in the Auckland-Waikato region each year. Hunters can help to keep the season sustainable and more is learned about the ducks that were introduced from Britain and the USA between 80 and 160 years ago.

The public can contribute by reporting numbers on the bands worn by any birds they come across.

The far-flung birds - one of which appeared exhausted - came to the attention of a vet on Lifou Island who contacted the Department of Conservation Banding Office in Wellington, which notified Fish & Game. The ducks were among 880 mallard and grey ducks banded in Pipiroa less than two weeks before.

Their relationship status was unclear. "We banded them on separate days," said Dyer, "but that's not to say they hadn't been together and left together." Mallard ducks don't mate for life, they select their peer bond each year and reform it, joining for Spring to lay their nests, Dyer explained. "Once incubated, the male hangs out with all the boys and the female is left to raise the kids. "Actually, in urban situations the male will hang around sometimes, possibly because it's better for getting free food."

Dyer said the information gleaned from reportings of the numbered bands was valuable, and a big surprise to hear from someone in New Caledonia.

Lifou is an island 81km long and 24km wide in the Loyalty group, and home to around 10,000 people.



FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE:

If you don't follow our page here are some of the posts that may be of interest.

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



On 23rd October a Chatham Is Albatross was sighted offshore of Tutukaka - see photo. This is an unusual visitor to the Auckland region so it is a shame a dead specimen was found on Opotuere Beach, on 12 November.



Orokonui Ecosanctuary
Nov 17 · 🌍
Ruru update 🐣🐣
The two little owlets found in one of our kākā nest boxes are growing fas... See more



Kea Conservation Trust
2d · 🌍
Exciting news again this season for Nelson lakes, where they are monitoring five healthy kea chicks! ... See more





Zealandia Ecosanctuary

Dec 1 · 🌐



Hihi hop in the right direction →

The hihi season is off to a **cautiously** good start this year. We currently have 20 chicks across 7 nests, and we have received news of the first fledglings! In recent years the early nests were plagued with hatching an... See more

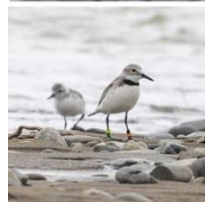


Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare Group

Dec 3 · 🌐

Gorgeous pictures of wrybill (ngutupare) chicks. No need to say more.

The parents were banded on the... See more



The problem with having a woodpecker friend!
Connect with Nature!



Eric Scott

I was beginning to think you weren't at home!



Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust

Dec 3 · 🌐

The team had a lovely surprise when we visited Whakarewarewa Forest the other day following reports of defensi... See more





Taiwan Blue Magpie

Photo:
@dannkhoo_photo

Have a great Christmas everyone and we will do it all again next year.

Wendy and Sue

