



BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

In Kaitiaki Māori: Te Kaitiaki Māori o Aotearoa

MARLBOROUGH

February 2023

- Wild Waitkawa
- Atlas Progress
- Tarapirohe/black-fronted terns
- Pakahā/fleeting shearwaters
- Birding Highlights
- Upcoming Events



WILD WAIKAWA



Nige, Pat, Dan and Dan of Wild Waikawa



Row of Nige's many interesting nurseries

Three Marlborough BirdsNZ members (Sam, Dan and Pat) met for our December outing which was to Boon's Valley, located 10 minutes from Pictou. Boon's Valley is the site of a restoration project on private property dubbed 'Wild Waikawa'. Nige and Mish, the owners and kaitiaki of the land have a 400-year vision of restoring the land back to some of its former glory. The property runs from just over 100m above sea level all the way up to Mount McCormick and Pipiti at nearly 1000m above sea level.

Nige spearheads a massive predator trapping and ungulate control programme while Mish works tirelessly doing weeding and on eco-sourcing seeds and seedling to grow (and eventually plant out) in one of many nurseries on the property. She is also busy showing various groups around, educating people and running nature meditation and yoga sessions!

We joined Nige and Mish for the day helping to check traps, pull out wilding pines and of course doing bird counts along the way. The day was overcast but still plenty of belbied, tomtit, brown creeper heard throughout. Quite a few rifleman were encountered once we reached 600m elevation which was nice to see. At one point, Nige asked what a long-tailed cuckoo sounded like and immediately after we imitated the call of a long-tailed cuckoo we heard one!

Nige and Mish are amazing people who are so dedicated to restoring the land and are an inspiration to those around them. They always welcome others who want to experience the land so we hope to run another Birds NZ field trip there in the future.

Pat Crowe (Marlborough BirdsNZ RR)



NEW ZEALAND BIRD ATLAS

MARLBOROUGH

Autumn is upon us, and it's the penultimate Autumn season for the Atlas project. Summary stats are provided below, the most important thing to note this season is spreading effort to under-surveyed areas such as the Awatere Valley and Richmond Ranges.

Use the maps included in the newsletter to help you target those undersurveyed areas, or indeed use the Atlas Effort Map on the portal.

We hope to run some organized Atlasing trips to help target these areas and really ramp up the effort hours there.

We'd love to share your Atlasing stories in future newsletters, so please do get in touch if you have an Atlasing story to tell!



85.29% [116/136] Grid Squares with data



4,701 Checklists



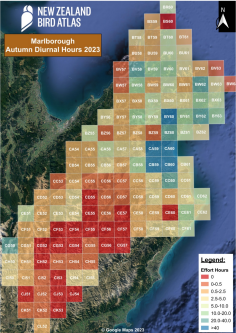
1,145 Effort Hours



119 Species detected



Marlborough
Autumn Diurnal Hours 2023



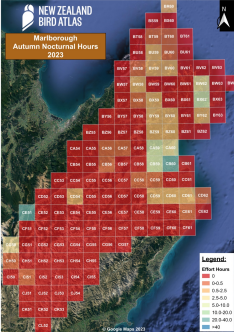
Legend:

Effort Hours

- 0
- 0-0.5
- 0.5-2.5
- 2.5-5.0
- 5.0-10.0
- 10.0-20.0
- 20.0-40.0
- ≥40



Marlborough
Autumn Nocturnal Hours
2023



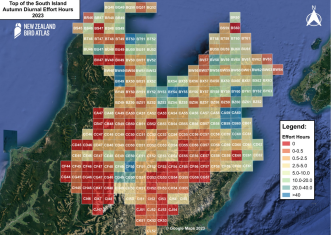
Legend:

Effort Hours

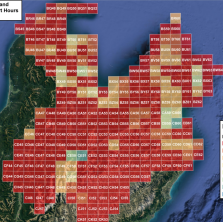
- 0
- 0-0.5
- 0.5-2.5
- 2.5-5.0
- 5.0-15.0
- 15.0-30.0
- 30.0-40.0
- >40

Top of the South Island
Autumn Diurnal Effort Hours
2023

NEW ZEALAND
BIRD ATLAS



Top of the South Island
Autumn Nocturnal Effort Hours
2020



TARAPIROHE/BLACK-FRONTED TERNS



Midway through December, a group of eager birders headed into the Malesworth to band tarapirohe/black-fronted tern chicks along the Clarence/Waikou Toa River for three days. The group was made up of several Marlborough BirdsNZ members including staff from Wildlife Management International (WMI), The Department of Conservation (DOC), and a few other volunteers.

Black-fronted terns nesting along the Clarence River have been monitored for the last 10 years by WMI under DOC management, with aims to identify population dynamics, gain an understanding of what is causing the population to decline, and implement mitigations to help boost this Nationally Endangered endemic species' numbers back up. In order to help improve our understanding of this species, WMI has carried out adult and chick banding throughout their time monitoring this population.



Marlborough BirdNZ Researcher Roger and Fran, holding a young tern chick about 10 to 15%

The banding team would cross to the downstream end of a colony and work their way up the island, spotting and catching any chicks before they made a dash to the "safety of the water". Once we got our eye in for spotting these camouflaged chicks nestled into rocks, a streamlined banding process was formed with various helpers-catching, holding, metal banding, and releasing chicks away from the water's edge.



Paul, wearing the red waders, is getting up a tern chick about 10 to 15%

The many hands were appreciated when we identified the movement of around 16 chicks making their way to the water's edge at the end of the island, about 20 metres away. A couple of dedicated team members (including our Marlborough BirdNZ RR) got right into the water and waded across to rescue the extra chicks that had gone swimming.



Paul holding a young tern chick about 10 to 15%

All of this was carried out under the constant chaos of protective black-fronted tern parents. At our first, most successful colony, a total of 57 chicks were banded with a further 8 spotted that were too small to band. Across the six colonies visited over three days, 89 chicks were banded.

On top of this, 12 adults were successfully caught and banded using drop traps, and a new technique of catching sweeping adults in a hand net which was trialled and perfected by Pat.

Caught adult birds were given a metal band along with a yellow flag with a black, two-digit combination, making them easy to spot and resight during winter dispersal and future breeding seasons. All adults banded on the Clarence/Walou Too and Acheron River are banded in yellow bands or flags, whereas black-fronted terns nesting and banded on other rivers are given different coloured bands to easily distinguish populations.



Patricia capturing banding of a young black-fronted tern, 12 May 2011

To help us gain as much data from these banded birds, please don't hesitate to send WMIL any band resightings at info@wmil.co.nz which we can then upload to our records and the Falcon database.

Colour combinations are as follows:

Red flags = Walou River

Purple flags = Hurumui River

White bands/flags = Walou River

Yellow bands/flags = Clarence/Walou Too and Acheron Rivers



Black-fronted tern chick, 12 May 2011

Baylee Connor-McGlean

PAKAHĀ/FLUTTERING SHEARWATERS

On Thursday 19th January, a team of Marlborough Birds New Zealand Members and Wildlife Management International staff, consisting of Keegan Miskimin, 82 Bell, Pat Crowe (the leader), and Don Burgin (the skipper) headed out to Kōkoroahua/Long Island for the day. Kōkoroahua/Long Island is an aptly named long and thin island full to the brim of wildlife. From protected kina and pōua in the coves and reefs of the marine reserve, right to the tops of the island where kārearea soar overhead, it is a truly special spot. One species that have a well-established whare on the island is the pakahā, or fluttering shearwater. These birds have been translocated to other islands around the Marlborough Sounds and Wellington since they were first translocated to Te Pōkaiwhāiaud Island in 1991. Monitoring of the colony on Te Pōkai has been running annually and is facilitated by the Marlborough Birds New Zealand branch, which encourages youth members to come out and experience these wonderful species.



The view from the pakahā/fluttering shearwater colony on Kōkoroahua/Long Island © Ben Bell

A newly established translocation project is currently underway, and our goal for this trip was to help band the chicks that would potentially be translocated with Health Post Nature Trust to Māhariki Eco-Sanctuary, a predator exclusion fenced sanctuary located on Forewell Spit in Golden Bay. This is second-year of this translocation that form part of a 5-year effort to restore the pakahā back to the Tasman region. It is a project that members of Marlborough Birds New Zealand, and Wildlife Management International (WMI) have been closely following, aiding Health Post Nature Trust whenever we can.



Ben and Keegan undertaking chick banding © Pat Crowe



Pat with a newly banded chick © Ben Bell

After our quarantine at Picton, we headed out from Waiokawa marina and stopped by Oturoaiahu/Blumine as there is a known King Sheep colony there. We counted 50 king sheeps, including eight banded ones, which have since been passed on to Mike Bell for his monitoring work.

Then it was on to Long Island. It was a truly picturesque day out on the water and we were welcomed by Heath Post Marine Trust who had kindly pre-marked off the official burrows that had chicks in them.

We split off into two banding teams to try and cover as much ground as possible. Weights and wing lengths were also taken and we found that a lot of the birds were either quite light, had short wings, or both. We knew there was a potential for a delay in the breeding season; birds recorded on Motu/Somes and Mana Island were showing delayed laying and hatching compared to previous seasons. For comparison, last year translocation happened on the 15-14th January.

In total we found 45 chicks from the official study boxes and 18 from natural burrows, 5 of the official boxes had no egg present when we checked them from our October trip. The island was full of wildlife as usual, with lots of Heke and bellbird calling amongst the tauwata and harakeke around us while we worked.



The teams working on the island. © Dan Barrett



A young pōkaha chick, after being banded. © Paul Turner

We found a few squatters in a few burrows we were checking; one tuatara, and two adult sooty shearwaters. There is a known colony of Titi present here on the island, and it is believed to overlap slightly with the fulmar shearwaters as the Titi breeding season starts much later than the pōkaha.

Usually we see or hear the kōreoro pair patrolling over us, but it was not meant to be. Dan however did spot a real heron flying round the cove, much to everyone's delight. Banding and handling of the birds was carried out under the appropriate wildlife permits. We also took an eBird trip report if you wanted to check out all the species we found.

<http://ebird.org/data/tipreport/10235>

Keegan Makimiri

Note: The translocation was successful with over 50 pōkaha/fulmar shearwaters translocated to their new home at Farewell Spit. Thank you to Raul, Karen, Diane, Dan and Cathie who helped with transferring the birds from Picton Marina to Picton Airport.

Pat Clowe

BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

A wee summary of the birding highlights from the past two months - feel free to send in your highlights to Pat or Don to feature!



Bill Cash regularly reports on the local birdlife, and has been monitoring the pipitwhero/rookfishing cuckoo at Taylor Dam, photographing some beautiful birds up there.



Watching the lōtuku repara/parakeet spoonbill foraging at Beacon Road reserve was a real highlight for Don, particularly knowing they continue to successfully breed at the nearby Marau Lagoons each year.

Photo courtesy of Bill Cash at Beacon Road reserve © Pat Sharp



Pat got some great views of a (Eurasian) Whimbrel at Cape Campbell beach in January. Their NZ Birds Online account states, "Whimbrels are large shorebirds which migrate to New Zealand from Arctic breeding grounds in small numbers. Most records are during the summer but a few birds occasionally overwinter" (Melville 2002). This is only the third Atlas record for the species in Marlborough, and two of those are from Pat so well done Sir!

Photo courtesy of Lisa Gordon from © Pat Sharp

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for the following:

● **27 April 2023**

"Bird Life of the 44's"

Mike Bell will be giving a talk on the birdlife of the 44's, including Bullers Mollymawk, Royal Albatross and Giant Petrels.

7pm @ DOC Renwick Office, 22 Gee Street, Renwick.

● **26 March 2023**

East Coast Atlasing to Clarence Rivermouth

● **21 May 23**

Kaikoura Seabird Pelagic

Please register your interest for this trip with Pat so he can gauge numbers. \$120 per person, plus fuel costs.

