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Otago Region Newsletter 2/2023

February 2023

Face masks are now an individual choice.
However, if you feel unwell, please stay home out of
consideration for others.



Ornithological Snippets

A **New Zealand Pigeon** at Naseby on 15 February is one of very few records in the general area. As mentioned elsewhere a **Spotless Crane** was resighted at Fleming wetland on 18 January, and **Marsh Crakes** continue to be reported from Tomahawk Lagoon and Lake Hayes. One was also seen at Otematata (Otago side of the Waitaki) on 9 February. 2 **New Zealand Dotterel** were claimed at Aramoana 21 January, and 6 **Banded Dotterel** were at Greenland Reservoir in mid January.

A **Brown Skua** was seen at Roaring Bay on 21 January, and a **White-winged Black Tern** at Aramoana on the following day. Several moulting penguins have been noted, with a **Fiordland Crested-Penguin** at Blackhead Beach, with **Erect-crested Penguins** there and also at Oamaru. A **Little Black Shag** was at Tarras on 26 January, and a **White Heron** at Naseby on 16 February. There was a report on Instagram of a **Kaka** at Mosgiel in early February, and finally, a **Tomtit** at Barnego near Balclutha on 14 February was unexpected.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com Richard Schofield

eBird News

We are now halfway through the penultimate summer season of the Atlas, and there are still plenty of choices of where to go to add meaningful data to the project. Looking at the Atlas Effort Map there are numerous squares with no summer coverage at all, and looking more closely at the Species Observed map, there are many (especially inland) squares with fewer species than would be expected. Please bear this in mind if you are heading away over the remainder of the summer.

Please ensure you are using the correct portal the quickest way to check is to go to "My eBird", then "Manage My Checklists". You should get a screen like the first screenshot, and if you click on "Show all details" you will be able to see which portal was used (second screenshot). You can change this if necessary by selecting the checklist(s) and then "Checklist tools" > "Change portal".

Contact **Richard 027 281 8701** or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Oamaru Penguin Symposium 2023



The Oamaru Penguin Symposium will be happening on Wednesday and Thursday 3/4 May 2023.

Aside from it happening on a Wednesday & Thursday, all other details are the same as previous years.

It will be held at the Oamaru Opera House, in the Inkbox Theatrette and will cost \$145 per person to attend for the two days, which includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea both days.

Attendance for one day only will be \$80. There will be a two-course dinner on the Wednesday night with details to be confirmed early next year. Participants can also enjoy a trip to visit the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony.

For those who have not attended previously, the Symposium is a biennial meeting involving two days of scientific presentations and is attended by researchers, volunteers, field workers, students and rehabilitators from all types of organisations.

The Symposium began in the late 1990's as the "Blue Penguin Scientific Symposium", grew to include other New Zealand penguin species and then include species from outside of New Zealand. In recent years, the meeting has been opened further to include presentations on all aspects of seabird biology and conservation.

If you would like to present at the meeting, please email me early in 2023 to aid planning.

Dr Philippa Agnew

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www.penguins.co.nz

Update

It is now possible to register and pay online via our website:

<https://www.oamarupenguinsymposium.com/>

Philippa research@penguins.co.nz

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

Summer in Central Otago

Sue and I spent three days ebiking on top of the south end of the Old Man Range, in and around the Kopuwai conservation area. We surveyed the extensive and botanically wonderful scenic upland bogs. Great to see the wetlands of Campbell Creek in good condition now that they have been reserved for forty years. Even the traces of gold mining races are being obscured.

I was surprised to see a pair of spur-winged plover there, a wader I associate with developed pastures. There were plenty of pipits but they seem to be confined to the roads and tracks. They were seen dust bathing a couple of times.

We are hoping to get back in Spring to map where the dotterel breed. It was a great contrast to our three days in the northern part of the Kopuwai ranges, when there were no birds at all on the tops in early June after a dusting of snow.



Campbell Creek wetlands

A quick late afternoon whizz along the new cycle way up the southern part of Lake Roxburgh revealed quail. Seven coveys. All with a few chicks. Was surprised to see very small chicks flying, way less than half the size of their parents. There were only a few in each covey so they appear to have a precarious entry to the world.



No falcon were seen or heard during three days in the district. But a large falcon cake roost was seen on a distant bluff in Coal Creek on the way up Mt Hope Rd. I hope other atlassers are aware of these features and recording them. Some are stores of important paleo environment deposits. We did see a free range chook farm and wondered whether the new egg and chicken raising regime means greater conflict between the owners and falcon.

At home In the garden the kereru are back taking the ripening karaka fruit. We have had to cage the broccoli plants to curb the kereru (and rats).

Last month Dr Margaret Stanley (raised and trained in Dunedin) was on the radio talking about the problem of exotic birds escaping captivity and establishing new feral colonies. In Auckland keeping Indian ring-necks, Monk parakeets and Rainbow Lorikeet is prohibited.

She said this ban can and should be implemented nation wide. I see in the Atlas news that recording these birds is catered for.

<https://ebird.org/atlasnz/news/more-exotic-species-updates>

Graeme Loh

Observations from the Polaris

Kim Curry and Will Rayment continue to be generous in having birdwatchers aboard Polaris voyages that undertake water chemistry and whale surveys.

Several tuna long liners were fishing on the horizon again this Summer.

The Marine Heatwave is upon us with sea temperatures of 16 degrees well offshore, way above a normal that in summer might get to 11 degrees. It's hard to link the bird lists to temperatures. However several people have noted the very low numbers of Cape pigeons here and Oscar says in Foveaux Strait.



Convincing examples of the 'southern' plumage. Two different birds. Both went and sat next to birds with the usual plumage.

Did not get above six Cape petrels at a time at a time. Sooty shearwaters only in low numbers. Fish work ups at the harbour entrance mainly attended by gulls and terns. Unusual sighting: by Will of a grey coloured heron heading East north east when we were already 36 k. off shore.

Unfortunately we were not able to determine the species. Next stop Chathams?

Graeme Loh

NZ Birds Conference, New Plymouth King's Birthday Weekend, 3-5 June 2023

This is the premier event for the communication of new research findings about birds in New Zealand, and for providing opportunities for discussion, networking and field trips for professional and amateur ornithologists, students and others who are interested in birds and their habitats. Three guided field trips are planned: Lake Rotokare, Lake Mangamahoe and Pukekura Park. This is an area that we in the south are not so familiar with so please consider registering for this conference. Early Bird deadline is 31 March.

Programme 2023

Monthly Indoor Meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday at 7.30pm in the Valley Project Community Rooms, 262 North Road, NEV. Just past the primary school, with a parking area in front. Look for the NZ Falcon Mural.

We will try to zoom the talks live for those unable to attend. We welcome our members from Central Otago area and others who can't get to Dunedin, and members not so comfortable with attending meetings at this time. You can join the meetings by Zoom link.

The Zoom link for all meetings is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88009761837?pwd=RGY3WjVxcnRobm11YjZlXENMR2pMdz09>

February, Tuesday 28	Richard Schofield Beyond Fiordland
March, Tuesday 28	Derek Onley Experiences from a lifetime of ornithology
April, Sunday 16	Tomahawk Lagoon Bird Watching, 10 am to noon.
This is our contribution to the Wild Dunedin Festival. Members of the public are invited to view birds close-up using spotting scopes, with Birds NZ members to help with identification and information about the birds. Please reserve this morning so you can come and help.	
April, Tuesday 25	Rachel Hufton Bird counts of the Makarora/Aspiring area
May, Tuesday 23	Pascale Lubbe - PhD research Words on Birds: Effects of Ice Age climate change
June, 3-6	NZ Bird Conference at New Plymouth. Register now.
June, Tuesday 27	Manaia Pearmain-Fenton - MSc research; Silver Linings: Following Silver Stream and Orokonui Kākāruai/ South Island robin breeding behaviours over a single season
July, Tuesday 25	Kurien Koshy Yohannan - wildlife photography Painting with Light
August, Tuesday 22	Francesca Cunninghame - two Forest and Bird projects Restoring seabird colonies on Otago Peninsula Landscape-scale conservation in the Tautuku area

Regular Field trips are held, usually on first Saturdays or Sundays. Check for details within the newsletters. We carpool for these trips and share expenses.

Suggestions for speakers for September and October, and locations for field trips and atlassing trips, and offers to help lead trips would really be appreciated, please contact Mary birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz

Contributions for inclusion in the next newsletter should reach the editor by **20 March.**

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Disclaimer

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