

KUAKA



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

MARCH 2023

Tena koutou whanau, here is what you have been waiting for to land in your inbox – sorry it's a bit late this month.

Amongst other things, we have Sue's ebird Atlas Report, details of the upcoming events, a report on sightings around our rohe, and of course, we finish with our selection of the month's posts to our Facebook page. Enjoy the read.

SPEAKER

Keith Woodley gave an entertaining talk on the history of the Pukorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre, recounted in his recently published book "In Search of Champions". Regular birdwatching activity in the area began in the 1940s, and the number of visitors increased over the years.

A dedicated group of Birds NZ members, including Dick Sibson, Ross McKenzie, Beth Brown, Sylvia Reed and Ronald Lockley formed the foundation of the trust in 1975. They wanted a base from which to observe the birds, and to encourage visitors, but it took until 1990 for the Shorebird Centre to open. The favoured site was at the former lime works, close to the birds on the shell banks, but there were objections to having overnight accommodation there. In the end, a site was found further up the road and the centre was built, alongside man-made Widgery Lake.

Birds NZ South Auckland members such as David Lawrie, Gillian Vaughan and Stuart Chambers have also had a long history with the trust, and PMNT council members also used to hold meetings at the Papakura Croquet Club, our South Auckland 'home' since the 1970s.

The trust is heavily involved in wader studies, and projects in recent years have included tracking of Godwits and Pacific Golden Plovers, as well as developing relationships with and conducting bird surveys in China and North Korea, as part of the East Asian Australasian Flyway partnership.

SIGHTINGS

- A shore plover/tuturuatu with transmitter and bands WR-OR was seen at Whitford on 4th and 5th of March. It had been released on Motutapu on 28th February
- Large post-breeding flocks of NZ dotterel/tuturiwhatu and banded dottere/tuturiwhatu were counted at Coromandel Harbour, Colville, Pauanui and Matarangi last week
- Also, at Matarangi were about 700 bar-tailed godwit/ kuaka, many fattened up and in breeding plumage, ready to depart for Alaska. Among the flock was 4RBBY, who was banded and had a transmitter attached as a juvenile at Foxton Beach on 13 November 2019. She moved to Matarangi in 2020, made her first trip to Alaska in 2021 but arrived too late to breed, and only travelled to Papua New Guinea last year. She left Matarangi on 14 March and is currently passing through the Solomon Sea

- A reef heron/ matuku moana was seen at Wilsons Bay on the Coromandel on 7th March and another at Pauanui on 11th
- A kaka was seen flying over bush at dusk just north of Coromandel Town on 8th March

DISCUSSION

We had some discussion about flocks of godwits/kuaka flying between the Waitemata Harbour, Whitford and the Tamaki Estuary. It is especially common at this time of the year as the birds take advantage of the difference in the tides to feed at both locations, and fatten up for their migration north. Noel Knight commented that local Maori used to stand on high points in the Howick area with long poles, knocking the birds out of the sky, then cooking and preserving them in their own fat

PROGRAMME FOR 2023

Monthly Meetings: held on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Papakura Croquet Club, 1 Chapel Street Papakura. Meetings start at 7:30. Visitors welcome. \$3.00 donation to cover costs please

Mar 25-26	NZ Dotterel Count	West Coast
Apr 11	Jeremy Painting	African Birds and Wildlife Adventures
May 9	Simon Lamb	Presence of plastic pollution on seabird islands: identifying hotspots for flesh-footed shearwater
Jun 3-5	NZ Bird Conference, New Plymouth	
June 11	Winter Wader Census	Firth of Thames, high tide 13.19
June 13	Shaun Lee	Bird decoys
June 18	Winter Wader census	Manukau Harbour, high tide 10.34

NZ DOTTEREL/ TUTURIWHATU COUNT

March is traditionally the month for post-breeding flock counts of NZ Dotterel. East Coast counts were undertaken on 11/12 March. West Coast counts will be done on the weekend 25/26 March and days either side. Most of the known sites around Auckland are counted by the same people each year, but if you happen to see large dotterel flocks on the beach or at inland sites on any day in March, please count and send to Sue suefro@xtra.co.nz

We are going to try and reinstate dotterel counts on the Coromandel this year, so if you can help, please contact Sue.

ARE YOU BASED OUTSIDE OF THE PAPAKURA/FRANKLIN DISTRICTS?

We would love to have a correspondent(s) based within the greater BirdsNZ South Auckland region (e.g. Coromandel Peninsula) who can keep us up to date with what's going on in your local area.

Contact our editor, Wendy G, if you are able to help.

MEMBER INPUT

We trust everyone had an enjoyable summer with a chance to get out and bird in different parts of the country /world. Would love to share your experiences /photos etc. in forthcoming newsletters - so don't be shy; send them in for the next issue of Kuaka or for our Facebook page.

ATLAS REPORT March 2023

The autumn season has started well with atlas activity in many of the squares closer to Auckland and in parts of the Coromandel. Due to the recent storms and subsequent damage to roads, there has been limited activity at the northern tip of the peninsula and also those squares crossed by the Tapu-Coroglen Rd, SH25A and parts of SH25. More effort is needed in the western and southern parts of our region, where there is a sea of yellow on the attached map!

Please note:

- The yellow squares have had 1-30 checklists, so need the most attention
- The green squares have had 31-50 checklists
- The blue squares have had 51 or more checklists

Keep looking 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 an interesting bird, try to take at least 5 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





NZ Bird Conference & AGM 2023

New Plymouth

3 - 5 June

(King's Birthday Weekend)

Join us for a weekend of fascinating lectures and presentations focusing on the study and enjoyment of birds!

Take part in exciting field trips and share the great company of other members!

Online registration at www.birdsnz.org.nz
For enquiries contact conference@birdsnz.org.nz
or phone 0272714150



MANUKAU SUMMER CENSUS 2022

On a wet damp miserable Saturday back in November a dedicated group of 37 birders spread out around the harbour and counted all the manu they saw – which was somewhat limited by the weather. This is a summary of what was seen 23,206 manu in total.

Pied Oystercatcher 2,168	Variable Oystercatcher 190
Pied Stilt 331	Black Stilt/Hybrid 1
Pacific Golden Plover 51	Spur-winged Plover 171
New Zealand Dotterel 41	Wrybill 8
Far Eastern Curlew 1	Whimbrel 5
Bar-tailed Godwit 11,587	Red Knot 3,950
Ruddy Turnstone 277	Red-necked Stint 7
Black Shag 14	Pied Shag 96
Little Black Shag 12	Little Shag 5
White-faced Heron 256	Royal Spoonbill 123
Black-billed Gull 235	Red-billed Gull 262
Black-backed Gull 176	
Caspian Tern 36	Little Tern 4
White-fronted Tern 29	
Black Swan 2,279	Feral Goose 2
Canada Goose 18	
Paradise Shelduck 152	
Mallard 490	Grey Duck 13
Brown Teal 1	Australasian Shoveler 19
New Zealand Scaup 23	
Pukeko 175	Banded Rail 2

WINTER WADER CENSUS:

This year's winter census is in June:

- **Firth of Thames: 11 June high tide @ 13.19.**
- **Manukau Harbour: 18 June high tide @ 10.34**

If you have never been involved with a wader census here is your opportunity. Give Tony Habraken a call on 09 2385284, and he will tell you what is involved. You won't be sent out on your own on the day, but will accompany an experienced census taker, so no need to worry about your wader ID skills – in fact this is your chance to enhance them.



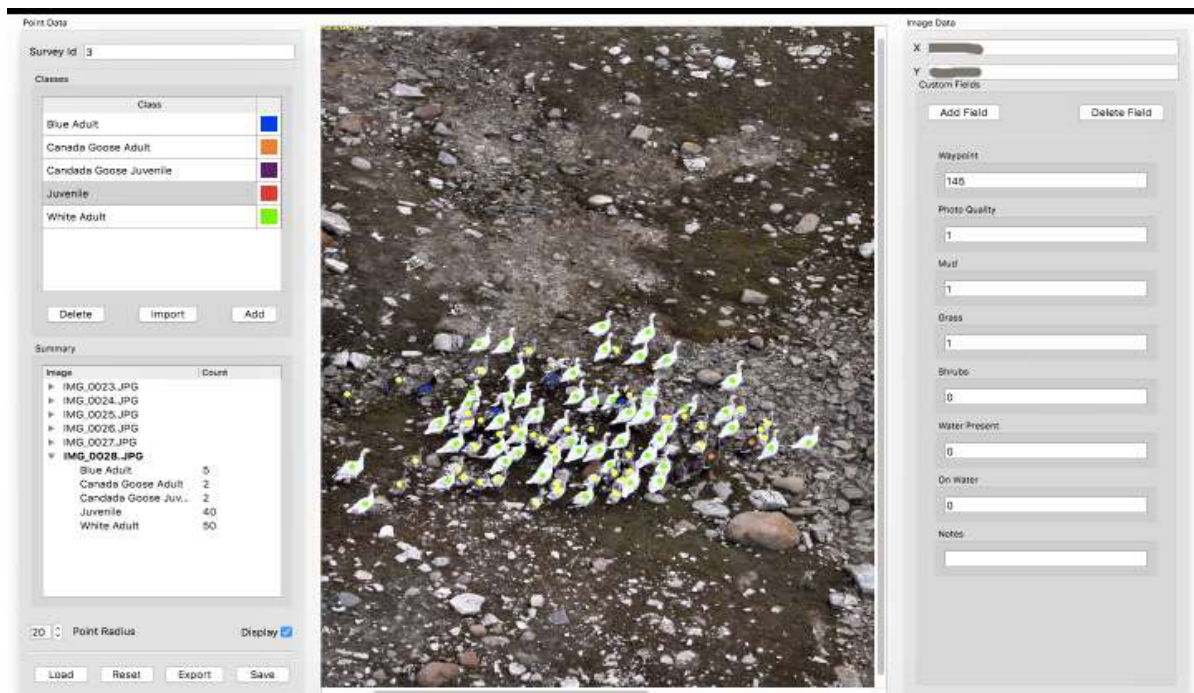
JOHN COTMAN

John and Rosemary Cotman were stalwarts of Weka Watch Kawakawa Bay until 2019 when the project was wound up due to declining numbers of weka in the area. The Cotmans continued with their predator control and the photo is of John with one of the traps.

John passed away recently.

DOTDOTGOOSE

Do you take photos of flocks of manu to count later or maybe you use a drone to take the photos. If so, perhaps DotDotGoose is for you.



DotDotGoose is a free, open-source tool created by the American Museum of Natural History to assist with manually counting objects in images. The app was purpose-built and makes it easy to create and edit classes of objects to be counted and you can pan and zoom to accurately place points to identify individual objects. Information about objects can be stored in custom fields and this meta data can be exported for use in spreadsheets. David Melville has had a go with it using photos taken by a drone. David commented (with a couple of reservations) that it makes for very easy counting.

Perhaps you can include it in your bird census tools.

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www.osnz.org.nz

Facebook @birdsnsza

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.



 **Sir David Attenborough Fans**
Feb 22 · 🌐

The Royal Albatross is the largest flying bird in the world today! Click the link to learn more about this incredible species.
<http://bit.ly/3IKnsEX>



 **Sciences & Astronomy**
Mar 2 · 🌐

The photo of the century. Nature defeats technology...



 **The Fabulous Weird Trotters**
Feb 28 · 🌐

The size of a toucan's beak compared to its skull.



 **Avantgardens**
Mar 10 · 🌐

Persistent photographee looking for a photographer.
Will pose for peanuts...
Photo: **Visit Sevastopol**





Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust

Mar 5 · 🌐

Pest control is a real team effort!

Yesterday during the display, kārearea NZ falcon Ribbon snagged herself a weasel!

Noel was very pleased with her, and Ribbon was very pleased with herself.

... See more



Amazing World

Feb 25 · 🌐

What a beautiful photo. Mother Nature is amazing.

Allen's hummingbird and a hone... See more



David Attenborough Fans

5d · 🌐

A lonely Stork Dad was left alone with four Baby Storks after Mum Stork died. Fortunately, he accepted the hel... See more



The Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust

Mar 1 · 🌐

The juvenile tūturuatū / shore plover that were translocated recently to Motutapu Island and into their temporarily holding aviary there, have just had the doors opened and are now fully released onto the island. There was some early trepidation, but the youngsters soon braved the outdoors and started to meet th... See more



