



# BIRDS

NEW ZEALAND

*Te Kāhui Mātai Manu o Aotearoa*

## MARLBOROUGH

June 2023

- + REGIONAL TALK SERIES
- + LAKE JASPER
- + GLOBAL MAY BIG DAY
- + TARANAKI CONFERENCE
- + ATLAS UPDATE
- + AND MORE



# REGIONAL TALK SERIES

On 27 April we had our first evening meeting where someone presents on an interesting bird-related topic. Mike Bell had the honour of kicking off the regional talk series, that Pat has been working hard on lining up here in Marlborough. Members were invited to an evening listening to Mike talk about his work on the remote Fourty-Fours, an isolated island east of the Chatham Islands. Mike is fortunate enough to visit the islands multiple times per year to carry out research on the birds that call the islands home. Mike has been monitoring the northern royal albatross, Buller's mollymawk and Northern giant petrel breeding colonies here for a number of years. It was fascinating to hear not only about the birdlife and how they're faring, but also the impressive level of logistical planning that goes into getting on and off these remote islands safely and the experience of camping amongst an albatross colony. Because the islands are so difficult to access, they utilise trail cameras to provide some insight into the bird's biology during the periods that researchers are not present on the island. He also bands a large number of birds, recaptures banded birds and fits GPS and GLS devices to birds to see where they forage and migrate to.





*Pāngurunguru/northern giant petrel © Dan Burgin*

The talk was a massive success with 24 people squeezing into the Renwick DOC offices meeting room to hear about Mike's excursions to the remote archipelago. Thanks again to Mike, as well as Pat for organising the event. We look forward to hearing more about Mike's incredible work out there in the future.

Because Mike's presentation was so popular, we have decided to carry out evening sessions through the winter as a way to make the most of the long nights. Next up will be Ralph Powlesland speaking about the various and interesting observations he has made of birdlife at his property at Manaroa over the past 12 years. Pat is lining up future speakers for these events, so if you have any suggestions, including yourself, please get in touch!

# LAKE JASPER



© Pat Crowe

Our April outing was to Lake Jasper in the Awaterre Valley, just west of Taylor Pass Road. Lake Jasper sits right on the Awaterre fault and formed because of a bend in the fault. It is entirely on private land, but we were fortunate that Bill Cash was able to tee up access for us to walk around the lake to count birds on 16 April. No counts had been carried out for Lake Jasper during the current Atlas, so it was exciting to be able to explore some new territory so close to Blenheim. Eight people joined for the morning and had a very leisurely stroll around the lake, stopping in dozens of places to watch and count all the birds.

Probably the greatest highlight was seeing seven weweia/dabchick on the lake. This consisted of two pairs, one of which has three juvenile birds associating with them, evidencing that they are likely to have bred successfully on the lake during the previous spring/summer. Dabchick seem to be spreading further south in New Zealand, having now been detected in 15 grid squares in the South Island in the current Atlas (9 of which are in Marlborough) compared to only three grid squares in the previous Atlas. Likewise, pūteketeke/crested grebes seem to be spreading further north with 6 grid squares in Marlborough having crested grebes recorded (cf. 0 in the last Atlas). Nelson/Tasman also have two places with crested grebes recorded in this Atlas – Lake Matiri and Wakapuaka Settling Ponds.

There was also a significant number of waterfowl on the lake including nearly 800 pūtangitangi/paradise shelducks and 400 rakiraki/mallards. This didn't come as a great surprise being only a few weeks before opening weekend for duck shooting season and the landowner informing us that they get a large influx of waterfowl around this time of year. It was encouraging to hear that they never shoot ducks on the lake so the waterfowl can use the lake as a safe refuge during shooting season!

A significant portion of the lake margin is covered in raupō, so while we did not detect any cryptic species like kotoreke/marsh crake or pūweto/spotless crake, there is plenty of suitable habitat for those species to be present on the lake. We will aim to do another trip to the lake in late spring/summer to complete counts for those seasons and see what other species we can pick up.

Thanks again to Bill Cash for sorting out access for the trip and to the Westenra family for kindly allowing access.





The **Cornell** Lab

# GLOBAL **BIG** DAY

13 MAY 2023

A group of keen Marlborough Birds New Zealand members lined up a jam-packed day of birding for eBird's Global Big Day on the 13 May. Pat had kindly organised an extended pelagic through Albatross Encounter Kaikoura, with the hope of seeing and documenting numerous seabird species. The group's goal was to try and beat the recent total species in a day record of 73 species, set by Bradley Shields in Tasman. We targeted key habitats such as wetland, coastal, native bush, farmland as well as the open ocean to try document as many species as possible. The group put in a fantastic effort documenting 72 species for the entire day, just shy of the target. However, Keegan Miskimmin, did manage to reach the target right at the end of the day when he returned home so congrats! We had some awesome sightings, notably the short-tailed shearwater, and ruru/morepork. Species we thought we would be guaranteed to get were pohowera/banded dotterel, California quail, miromiro/tomtit, tītītipounamu/rifleman, tui, kereru, kotoreke/marsh crake and more, but we weren't lucky enough this time! It was immensely fun to be out with everyone and working towards a fun goal for the day, whilst also gathering valuable information for the New Zealand Bird Atlas in the process.

Trip Report is available at: <https://ebird.org/atlasnz/tripreport/124495>



The group gathered an impressive number of checklists for the day as well as species, within Canterbury and Marlborough contributing to the birding efforts across the country as shown in the table opposite.

Region	Species	Checklists
Auckland	70	67
Bay of Plenty	54	30
Canterbury	83	239
Chatham Islands	3	1
Gisborne	0	0
Hawke's Bay	26	4
Manawatu-Wanganui	58	75
Marlborough	60	105
Nelson	19	6
Northland	64	81
Otago	66	71
Southland	60	23
Taranaki	68	68
Tasman	12	2
Waikato	56	26
Wellington	73	98
West Coast	31	5



We're already looking forward to the next Global Big Day on 14 October 2023, where we'll be aiming to run a similar birding challenge. You can explore the New Zealand and Global Big Day stats via the link below:

<https://ebird.org/globalbigday>

# CONFERENCE

Several Marlborough Birds New Zealand members attended the fantastic Birds New Zealand conference in Taranaki in June. The vast array of topics was both inspiring and humbling, hearing about the immense amount of incredible work being done by many across the country to understand more about birds in Aotearoa. Marlborough members presented some key information on the following topics; Dan Burgin gave a plenary talk to provide an update on the Atlas and the final year to complement the Atlas stall and workshop manned by Sam Ray and Keegan Miskimmin. Sara Larcombe presented on work she is undertaking with Biz Bell for sea and shorebirds in Taranaki through the Wild for Taranaki project. Finally, Keegan Miskimmin presented on the work he has led at WMIL monitoring tarapirohe/black-fronted terns along the Hurunui river in Canterbury. Pat Crowe represented Marlborough at the BirdsNZ Council and Regional Representatives meetings, and will no doubt share more of those exciting updates over the coming months.

Thanks to all of the organizing committee for an awesome conference, and we look forward to next years in Nelson!







© Michael Szabo

Biz Bell (Marlborough Birds NZ member, RAC Secretary, Managing Director of WMIL, black petrel queen and all-round legend) receiving the incredible honour of a Robert Falla award from Birds New Zealand President Bruce McKinlay. A huge congratulations again to Biz, a well-deserved credit to all your amazing work!



© Dan Burgin

Marlborough members Keegan Miskimmin and Sam Ray enjoying some awesome seabird watching from the InterIslander ferry deck on the return journey back to Blenheim. It was great to undertake some Atlasing on the drive to and from Taranaki to help bump up effort in many of the grid squares along the way.



# NEW ZEALAND BIRD ATLAS

THE FINAL YEAR



# ATLAS UPDATE



This winter marks the start of the Atlas project's final year of data collection. We hope you're keen to join us in finishing this project strong by uploading as many bird observations to the Atlas eBird portal across the country as possible! Marlborough is still in need of plenty Atlasing and birding across the region, as the two maps below reveal. Importantly day and night observations are vital to help us work towards the key aim for every participant of the project, to try detect all of the possible species within each grid square across the country and seasons.

Key summary stats as of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 are given below, showing how impressive a dataset the Atlas eBird holds already, and how it is already nationally significant. Whilst we always encourage Marlborough Atlasing, please do consider targeting under-surveyed areas when travelling to neighbouring regions to assist with their efforts, and the collective goal of the project.

## Summary Statistics:

 **1,430**

Atlasers

 **299**

Species detected

**3,093**



Number of grid squares with data

**>344,000**



Checklists since the project began

**>112,000**



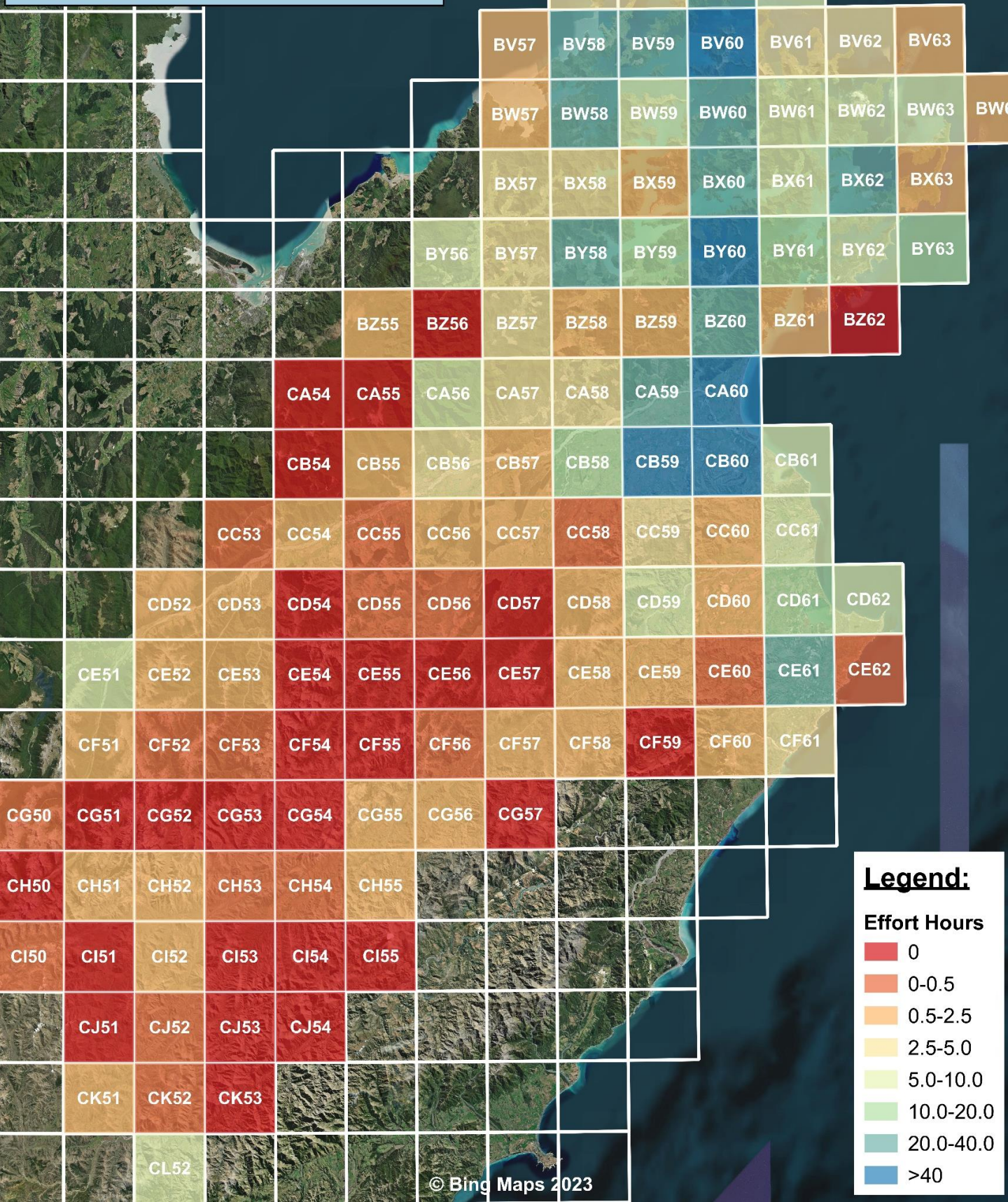
Effort Hours



# NEW ZEALAND BIRD ATLAS



## Marlborough Winter Diurnal Hours 2023



**Legend:**

**Effort Hours**

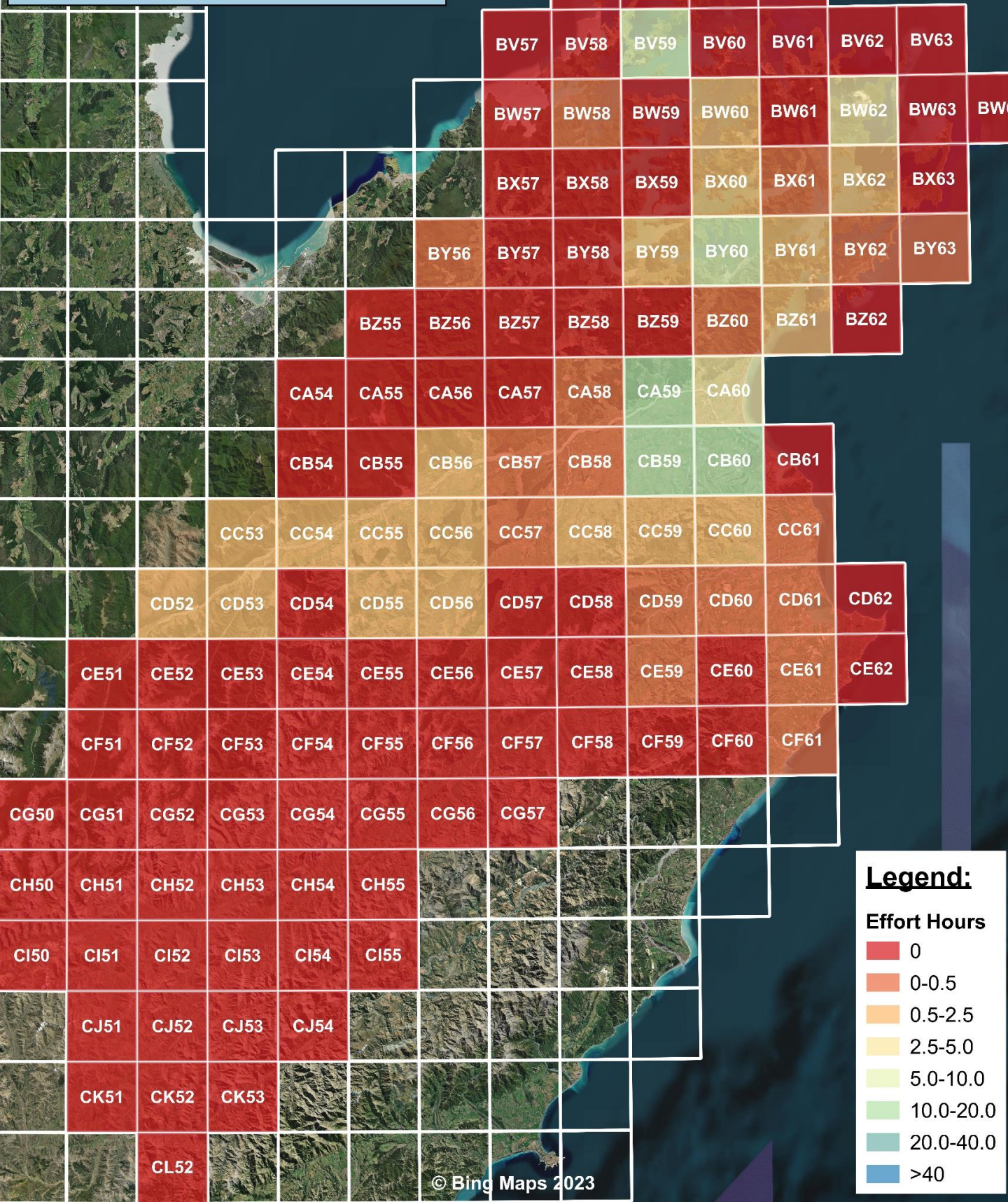
- 0
- 0-0.5
- 0.5-2.5
- 2.5-5.0
- 5.0-10.0
- 10.0-20.0
- 20.0-40.0
- >40



# NEW ZEALAND BIRD ATLAS



## Marlborough Winter Nocturnal 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

# NEXT NATIONAL SCHEME



*Kōtuku ngutupapa/royal spoonbill* © Dan Burgin

At the annual RRs meeting at the conference over King's Birthday Weekend, Mary Thompson from Otago proposed the idea of carrying out another survey of Royal Spoonbills as the next big nationwide Birds NZ project. Birds NZ has been following the increase in population and breeding of Royal Spoonbill in NZ since the late 70s. The last census was in 2012. We have the opportunity to document this accurately for this new arrival. It was agreed at the RR meeting that Birds NZ regions should collectively do another census and colony and nest count in 2024.

So in preparation, it will be worth recording the presence spoonbills wherever you go birding (ideally in the form of an eBird Atlas checklist!) and noting if there is any evidence of them breeding at those locations. This will help us when it comes time to conduct the actual census in late 2024.

A white-fronted tern survey was also proposed and we may look to do this in the following year.

# YOUNG BIRDERS CAMP

Young birders camps are starting again. The Otago Branch is hosting a camp at Makarora 8 – 13 January 2024. Sounds like a fantastic camp so please see below for more information!

## Makarora Field Camp for Young Birders (13 - 18 years) 8 – 13 January 2024

Led by Aspiring Biodiversity Trust with Birds New Zealand,  
based at Makarora near the head of Lake Wanaka.



See ngutuparore/wrybill, tarapirohe/black-fronted tern, tarapuka/black-billed gull, pohowera/banded dotterel breeding on the braided river. The nearby beech/podocarp forest provides habitat for pīpipi, mohua, kākā, ruru. Remnant populations of pīwauwau/rock wren, kea and whio in the alpine areas.

Take part in mist-netting, bird banding, 5 minute bird counts, predator control, river-bird survey, acoustic survey for bats, and more.

Learn about geo-physiography, biodiversity monitoring and threat management from practising experts.

**Include this unique birding experience in your summer holidays!**

Cost \$450 per person (possible bursaries). Accommodation in cabins and all meals catered.

To register your interest and obtain further details,

Email: [info@aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz](mailto:info@aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz)

**Please pass this news about the camp to any young birders you know.**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 25 June (Sunday):

**Winter Wader Count @ Lake Grassmere.**

*Meet 9am at 112 Redwood Street, Blenheim for carpooling OR 9.30am at Grassmere Saltworks.*

## 23 July (Sunday):

**Birding/Atlasing @ Awatere and Blind Rivermouths.**



## 27 July (Thursday):

**Regional Talk Series**

*“Bird Life at Manaroa 2010-2022.”* Ralph Powlesland.

*Join us to hear Ralph speak about his birding observations at his Manaroa property in the Pelorus Sound over the past 12 years.*

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



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## 13 August (Sunday):

**Marlborough branch AGM.**

*10.30am @ Renwick DOC Office. 22 Gee Street, Renwick.*

All members welcome - Tea, coffee, scones and biscuits provided! Please send any agenda items you want to raise through to Pat.



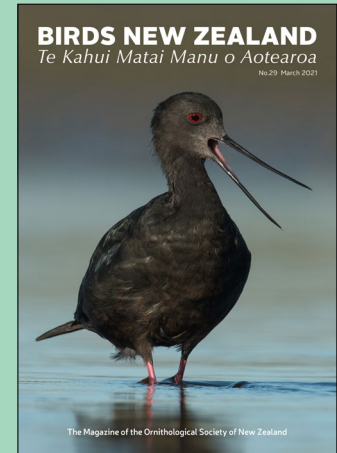
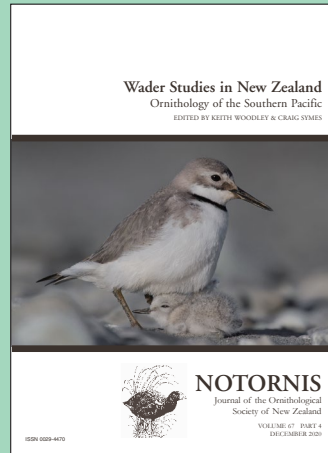
## November 6-12:

**Braided River Bird Survey of Wairau River.**

*DOC and MDC are looking to carry out a survey of the entire Wairau River to assess river nesting bird numbers and are looking for volunteers to assist with counts. Likely to be carried out over 2-3 days during the week November 6 -12 depending on weather. Need to be capable of walking 5-10km of riverbed in a day.*

*Please register your interest with Pat if you are keen to help out for some or all of the survey.*

# JOIN US NOW



You can join Birds New Zealand online right now for just \$1.50 a week.  
Our subscription rate is \$80 a year, and for students it's just \$40 a year:

[www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/)

Members receive our quarterly colour magazine *Birds New Zealand* and our quarterly journal *Notornis*, occasional special editions and discounts on some bird books, plus a free Birds New Zealand branded lens cloth.

To join, just fill out the online membership form here:

[www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/membership-form-nz/#join](http://www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/membership-form-nz/#join)

