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## *Otago Region Newsletter 7/2023*

### *July 2023*



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/birdsotago/>

### **Ornithological Snippets**

27 **Indian Peafowl** were seen on 16 July near Omakau.

**SI Pied Oystercatchers** continue their spread to the breeding grounds, with several observers commenting from around the region on their early arrival. In a similar vein a single **Black-billed Gull** was at Falls Dam on 10 July. A **Black-backed Gull** with a deformed (hooked) bill was reported from Tomahawk Lagoon on 9 July. An **Antarctic Fulmar** was seen off Taiaroa Head on 2 July, with another offshore on 15 July.

Finally there have been good numbers of **Blackbirds** around, with the peak count being 103 near Raes Junction on 7 July.

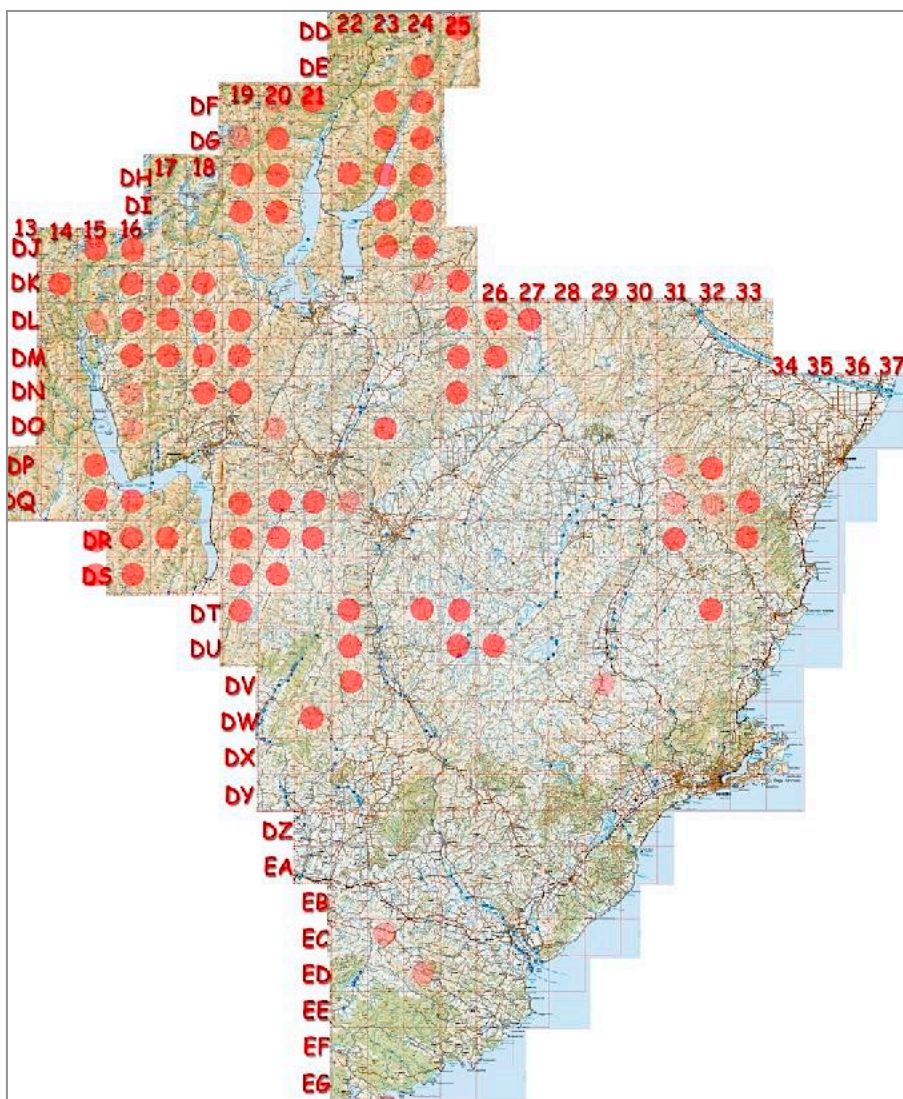
Please send any interesting reports to [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com) **Richard Schofield**

## eBird News

We are about to enter the final month of winter fieldwork for the Atlas. Most of the remaining gaps are in the north and west, but there is still scope for making a telling contribution closer to Dunedin. DV29 (Shannon), DV31 (Ross Stream) and DW28 (Clarks Stream) have all had minimal coverage; and DZ31 (S of Brighton) is mainly sea, but must have more than 11 species present.

To round off winter coverage, there will be a field trip on **Saturday 5 August**, probably to the Morrissions area. Please contact me to confirm interest.

The latest update to the eBird app now lets you access all of your previously submitted eBird checklists—including checklists submitted from other devices and the eBird website, as well as checklists that are shared with you. You can filter checklists based on location and date, and you can also view trip reports. For further details go to <https://ebird.org/news/view-and-edit-more-checklists-in-ebird-mobile>



## **BirdsNZ Otago Branch News**

### **Wader Count**

Volunteers wanted for wader count on **Saturday July 29**. High tide (1.84M) is at 12.38pm. All members are most welcome to participate.

Please contact Maree Johnstone email: [mareej@kinect.co.nz](mailto:mareej@kinect.co.nz), phone 027 6609446 to be assigned to a team.

### **Outside Orokonui: Robin Monitoring**

Birds NZ members have been monitoring robins|kakaruaui on land adjacent to Orokonui Ecosanctuary since 2017, to assess whether a self-sustaining population is successfully establishing outside the predator fence. We try to map all robin territories, band robins, and monitor the breeding success of as many pairs as possible.

We meet every second Saturday morning between mid-August and December, and there are usually carpooling options from Dunedin. No previous experience is needed and, although the ability to walk off track is useful, it is not essential. If you are interested in helping with the project this year, or if you have any other questions about the project, please email or phone me ([gpickerell@outlook.com](mailto:gpickerell@outlook.com); 021 1635122). Provisionally Saturday 19 August will be our start day, with the Sunday 20th as the bad-weather alternative.

**George Pickerell**

### **Banded tui and bellbird**

**Please check tui and bellbird at your feeders for coloured bands.**

Mary spotted a tui with bands on 5 July at 12.15pm with combination left: pale blue/metal; right: white/yellow.

Murray Efford reports that he banded this bird as adult in April 2013, seen in Ethel St and Balmacewen Rd in 2014 & 2015 & 2017, by Alan at Ross Creek in 2016, but never where first banded in Helensburgh, or in Brockville where many tui sightings are made. So this tui is 10 years old.

Send any sightings to Murray at [murray.efford@otago.ac.nz](mailto:murray.efford@otago.ac.nz)



## Makarora Field Camp for Young Birders (13 - 18 years)

**8 – 13 January 2024**

Based at Makarora near the head of Lake Wanaka

Led by Aspiring Biodiversity Trust with Birds New Zealand

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

If you might be available to help with any aspect of the camp, even for one or two days please contact Rachel [info@aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz](mailto:info@aspiringbiodiversity.co.nz)

Accommodation in en suite cabins is provided for helpers.

Rachel is particularly looking for someone for the important role of camp/mum/dad/or supervisor/ after hours, etc. That person would help keep the students on track (if needed), join in with various activities of interest or stay back at camp. They would also ensure a no alcohol/or other substances policy during the event.



## **AAPES/Birds NZ and Town Belt Bird Count**

**AAPES/Birds NZ 5-minute bird count workshop and Town Belt Bird Count  
Sunday 30 July 10am to 12 noon followed by pizza lunch at Woodhaugh Garden.**

This is the second event with AAPES university students following a successful time last year despite the weather. Our aim is to introduce the 5MBC methodology, Merlin and eBird apps, and the Town Belt Bird Count Trail ([birdcount.nz](http://birdcount.nz) website). We need volunteers from Birds NZ to help as we will divide into groups to walk sections of the Town Belt and do 5MBCs at the Bird Count Posts, and practise our bird identification skills.

We will meet at 10am at Prospect Park (just above Woodhaugh and off Lachlan Ave). It would be helpful if some members are happy to use their car to transport teams to various sections of the Town Belt and down to Woodhaugh afterwards for lunch.

Please let Bruce know if you can help. [president@birdsNZ.org.nz](mailto:president@birdsNZ.org.nz) cell; 021 389 1477

## **Trip to Mt. Watkin/Hikaroroa - Saturday 17 June**

It was a delight to join this trip to Mt Watkin/Hikaroroa, a 616m-high peak formed by an ancient volcanic vent approximately 40km north of Dunedin.



The group of 12 met at Woodhaugh Gardens and organised carpooling before heading north. After turning off SH1 before Waikouaiti we followed a winding but scenic gravel road to reach a ridge near the Mt Watkin peak. Here we were treated to superb panoramic views across to Karitane and the coast as well as the inland backcountry.



The 600ha reserve encompasses the slopes and gullies to the southwest of the peak, right down to the north branch of the Waikouaiti river. It is DCC land, managed by local iwi, and access requires permission. On arrival we were met by Aidan, a trapper with the Mammalian Corrections Unit and our expert guide to the site.



We split into three groups. The group I joined, led by Aidan, descended into a sheltered river gully and worked our way down rocky kowhai and regenerating broadleaf forest. Nearer the river we made our way through remnant old-growth podocarp forest with large totara and matai trees and beautiful hanging mosses.

Following trapping routes, we saw and heard many brown creeper, bellbirds, tomtits, fantails, silvereyes, as well as a few kereru.

Continuing our round trip, we climbed up the other side of the gully, again venturing through drier kowhai forest and then into kanuka forest, where many rifleman were heard but rarely seen.



The other two groups focussed on the upper slopes, which are predominantly kanuka forest, where they saw or heard species such as bellbird, rifleman, and several tomtits. They also checked out a neighbouring farm track (with permission) that took them into Atlas square DU32 which had not received any visits so far during a winter season. They saw skylarks and finches including a flock of mixed redpoll, goldfinch, chaffinch and other unidentifiable passerines on the open pasture.

In the afternoon my group met the other groups up in the lower part of the kanuka forest and together followed an old farm track up to a grassy ridge, and then continued along the ridge back to the northwestern ridge and carpark.



Mt Watkin/Hikaroroa in the distance

This little-known reserve covers a rare, large tract of north Otago native forest with considerable biodiversity and a great deal of further conservation potential. Our thanks to Aidan for his expertise and guiding!

A number of the group stopped in at Hawksbury Lagoon on the return journey to Dunedin hoping to see the little egret. A large number of birds were observed as the light faded to the mid-winter sunset. These included black swan, australasian shoveller, royal spoonbill, a kotuku - and happily, the little egret.

Special thanks to Maureen Howard for organising a thoroughly enjoyable trip!

**Tim Hyland**

According to eBird's Trip Report (thanks Richard), 19 bird species were seen or heard by us on Hikaroroa. Of these, the most common were native or endemic (50 bellbird/korimako, 34 brown creeper/pīpī, 24 fantail/pīwakawaka, 23 tomtit/kōmiromiro, 17 silvereye/tauhou and 10 grey warbler/riroriro).

**Maureen Howard**

**Potton & Burton Publishing** have a new Special Offer of 10% online discount with free delivery in NZ to *all* Birds New Zealand members that lasts until 31st August 2023 using the code: **NZBIRD23**

The code can be used at the online shopping cart on their website:

<https://www.pottonandburton.co.nz/>

The Special Offer applies to the following six book titles:

Takahe: Bird of Dreams - Alison Ballance

Kakapo - Alison Ballance

New Zealand Bird Paintings - Ray Ching

New Zealand Seabirds - Kerry-Jayne Wilson

Moa - Quinn Berentson

Nicolas Dillon - Drawn to the wild



## **Another trip to Chatham Islands, 3-9 October, with Lloyd Esler**

“Hi folks, I’m off to Chatham Island in October for the 15<sup>th</sup> time. A few places in the 12-person trip for people interested in bush, birds, beaches and the local history... I have booked a Chatham Island trip 3-9 October. No flight times yet but flying out of Christchurch and returning to Wellington. Good opportunity to experience the fauna, flora, history, geology and geography. Estimated cost is about \$2,500

Cheers

Lloyd

03 2130404 email [lloydesler@outlook.com](mailto:lloydesler@outlook.com)

**Bird list:** Endemic species and subspecies plus emu. We’ll see all of these

Buff weka

Chatham shag

Pitt Island shag

Chatham fantail subspecies

Chatham pipit subspecies

Chatham tui subspecies

Chatham RC Parakeet subspecies

Chatham warbler

Chatham oystercatcher

Parea

Note: check out March 2023 Otago Newsletter for Kath Danaher’s report of last year’s trip. Will Perry also went on this trip and some other Birds NZ folk I met up with at Conference; very good reviews. **Mary**



## 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.

### A new Zoom link for meetings

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83476387704?pwd=Vy9Fd2VEZk4zSnF6Z05pVnljZjBhdz0>

### The meeting passcode is: 523492

July, Tuesday 25	Kurien Koshy Yohannan - wildlife photography Painting with Light
July, Saturday 29	Winter Wader count. High tide (1.84M) is at 12.38pm. To join a counting group please contact Maree <a href="mailto:mareej@kinect.co.nz">mareej@kinect.co.nz</a> or txt 0276609446
July, Sunday 30	Town Belt 5MBC with AAPES university students. Meet at Prospect Park 10am.
August, Saturday 5	Field trip probably to the Morrisons area. Please contact Richard 027 281 8701 or <a href="mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com">cluthaphotos@gmail.com</a>
August, Tuesday 22	Francesca Cunninghame - two Forest and Bird projects Restoring seabird colonies on Otago Peninsula Landscape-scale conservation in the Tautuku area <b>This meeting will include the AGM.</b>
September, Sunday 10	Guided Bird watching walks, Dunedin Botanic Garden
September, Tuesday 26	Amy Adams Management of a critically endangered population of Fairy Terns in Victoria
October, Tuesday 24	Hamish Spencer      Birding in Colombia
November, Tuesday 28	Abby Smith will compère the annual Quiz Night

**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.

Sunday 29 October (or 5 Nov) 5MBC training day for members of the public; Town Belt Bird Count Trail; in conjunction with City Sanctuary and DCC.

Suggestions for 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](mailto:birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz)

Contributions for inclusion in the next newsletter should reach the editor by **15 August**  
[sodlin@gmail.com](mailto:sodlin@gmail.com)

### Disclaimer

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