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Otago Region Newsletter 8/2023

August 2023



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

Ornithological Snippets

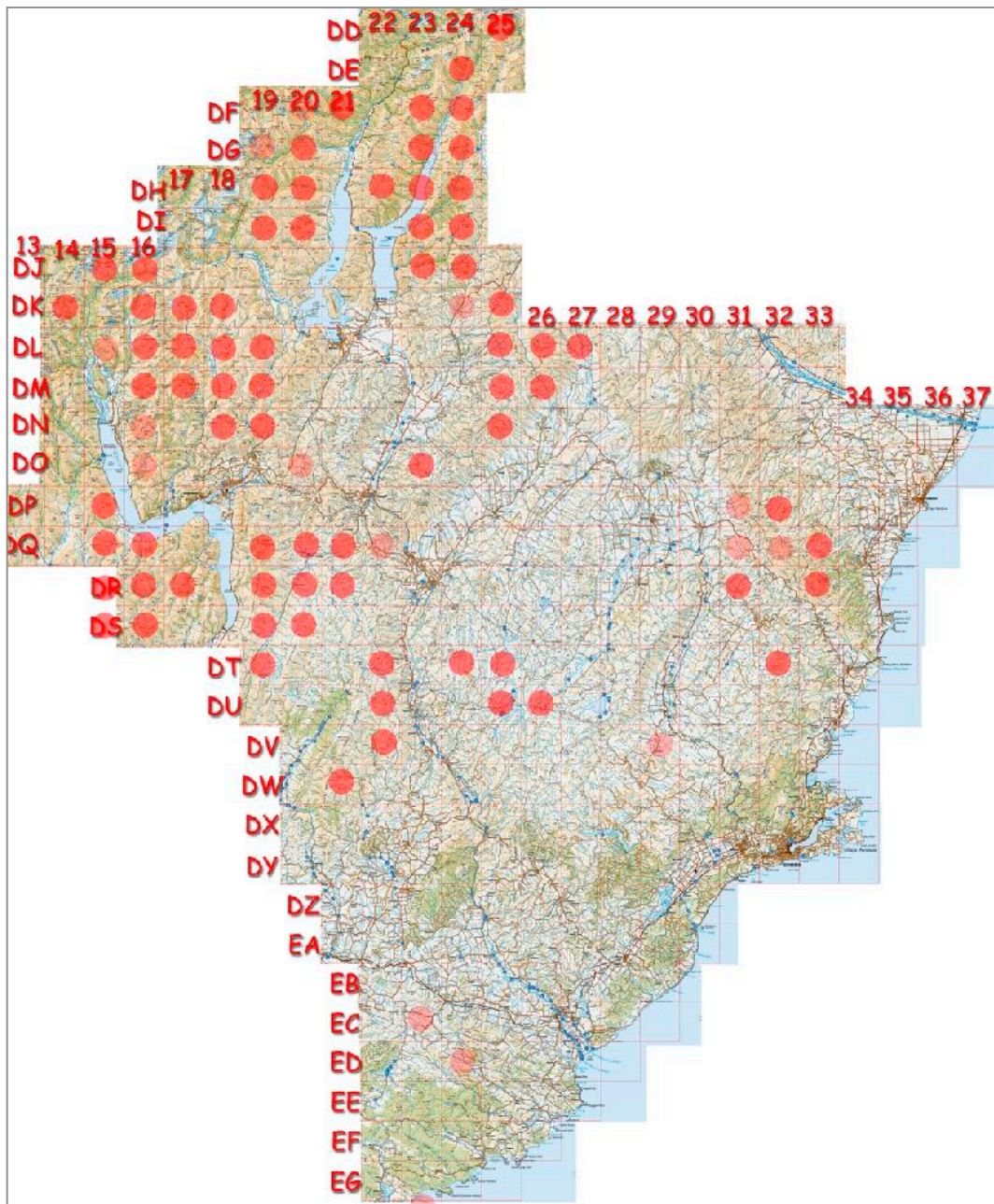
Over the last month single **Great Crested Grebes** have been reported from Katiki Reservoir, Karitane and Kaikorai Lagoon. A **Spotless Crake** was detected at Fleming wetland (Tautuku) on 23 July. A **Red-necked Stint** was with the **Banded Dotterel** at Cabbage Point (Catlins) on 29 July. 3000 **Southern Black-backed Gulls** were counted at Green Island landfill on 30 June. 3 **Black-fronted Terns** at Bendigo on 7th August were early, while 8 were at Beaumont on 30 July. Finally there were just 2 sightings of **White Heron**, at Hawkesbury and Kaikorai Lagoons.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

The final winter season of the Atlas finishes on 31 August, so we have one last chance to fill in some of the remaining gaps. The majority of squares without coverage are in remote areas, and effectively inaccessible at this time of year. However there are still squares with sparse coverage – these include DV29, DV31 & DW28 in the Clarks Junction area; and squares in the Lindis Valley, among others. Check out the Atlas effort map (filter for “Winter”, and by “Species observed”), or see the map of priority squares in this newsletter. Fingers crossed for good weather for the remaining few days of the month.



BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

AAPES University ecology group and Birds NZ Town Belt Bird Count

A perfect day for discovering birds in Town Belt. Seven Birds NZ members met with a group of 14 university students to practise 5-minute bird counts and doing some counts along the Town Belt at the count stations, followed by pizza lunch. Photos by Claire Hagglund.



Otago Winter Wader Count 29 July 2023

	Karitane	Blueskin Bay	Aramoana	Harbour west	Harbour east	Papanui Inlet	Hoopers Inlet	Catlins	Pleasant River	Total 2023	Total 2022	Total 2021
South Is Pied Oystercatcher	3	85	65	203	9	57	39	118	15	594	1070	932
Variable Oystercatcher	22	32	6	16	16	33	29	9	4	167	111	147
Pied Stilt	38	36	2			16	78	3	8	181	183	244
Banded Dotterel		28	95					6		129	180	150
Spur-winged Plover	4	3	3	1		10	15		8	44	162	10
Bar-tailed Godwit	17	1	42				176	7	23	266	299	341

Many thanks to all who volunteered. There was a very good turnout of counters despite the count taking place a month later than usual and on a Saturday. Unlike the day originally nominated the weather was perfect for counting, but as the tide was low (1.84M) and together with an atmospheric high birds were often widespread or out of sight.

However there were still highlights:

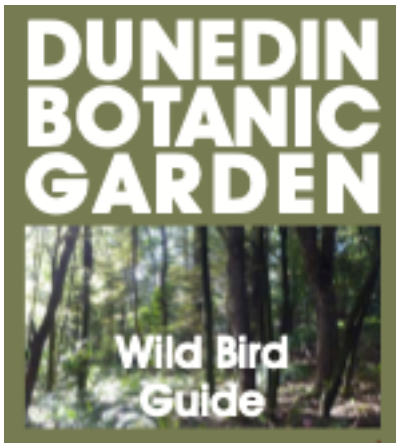
- Richard reported a red-necked stint in the Catlins.
- Oscar and Ela reported a banded dotterel with leg band YY-BW and transmitter and a godwit wearing a white flag 'YSE' also with a transmitter from Aramoana.
- Petrina counting from Portobello to Pilots Beach sighted a distant tree in which she counted 20 roosting pied shags.

Overall total numbers of birds compared well with last year's winter count (approx. 4200 birds) noting that another site (Pleasant Rvr estuary) with a total of 170 birds has been added.

The number of godwits counted was 266 (cf. 299 in 2022) and little shags were prolific around the Harbour at 385 (cf.250).

SIPO numbers were halved at approx. 600 (cf.1070) and only 44 spur winged plovers were counted compared with 160 last winter. However it is late winter and it can be assumed that many SIPOs have already headed inland for breeding.

Maree Johnstone



Birdwatching Walk in the Dunedin Botanic Garden

10am Sunday 10 September

Thanks to all of you who have shared your expertise for these outings in the past. We need you again please to take small groups of members of the public to observe and identify birds in the Botanic Garden.

The event runs from 10am to 11.30am but the guides need to be at the Information Centre at 9.45am please.

New Birds NZ members who would like to volunteer are very welcome, or come along and learn from the experts.

Birds Otago and Dunedin Botanic Garden shared the event on their Facebook pages. So if you follow either of them you can share it on your pages.

Please let me know if you are available to guide. There will be shortbread.

Thanks in advance

Suzanne Middleton

smiddleton7@yahoo.co.nz

0226018579



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/>



Annual Report of Otago Birds NZ activities, 2022-2023

Review of membership and activities over the past year.

Our total membership is now 145, including 26 student members, with 35 new members this year.

A Birds Otago Facebook page has been launched and now has 216 members, moderated by Oscar Thomas.



Birds Otago

Indoor Meetings have been well-attended with between 20 and 34 in person and 4 to 18 by zoom, with stunning speakers.

Archives

We have completed archiving data from all the significant projects that the Otago Branch has undertaken. These are stored on birds.otago Google Drive, at the Hocken, and bird records entered on eBird. Some of this data should be analysed for publication in Notornis. Data is available for students to use.

Public events

Wanaka Atlas/eBird workshop held for Southern Lakes Sanctuary in August 2022 – Richard and Mary

Garden Bird ID workshop for Open VUE held by Mary with help from others.

Botanic Garden Guided Birdwatching Walk, Sept 2022
Tomahawk Lagoon Birdwatching; Wild Dunedin Festival, April 2023

Thanks to all those members who helped to make these events a success.



Atlassing trips

At least 7 atlassing trips were organised by Richard; highlights being the Toko Mouth trip ,which resulted in NZ Geographic Magazine article, Pleasant River estuary with Hudsonian godwit, and Adventure atlassing during a weekend camp at Naseby. We are in the final year of the Atlas project so please try to get some surveys done in out-of-the-way places.



What on-going projects do we have?

Robins: Georgina Pickerell

Wader Counts: Maree Johnstone

Atlas: Richard Schofield

Wild Dunedin Festival (annual): *needs a coordinator*

Guided Birdwatching at Botanic Garden (annual): Suzanne Middleton

Town Belt Bird Count and 5MBC workshops with AAPES university students, Sept 2022 and July, 2023: Bruce McKinlay. We have a 5 year agreement with DCC to maintain posts and run public events.



What new projects have we embarked on?

Bittern and Crake Surveys of Otago Wetlands (a 5 year project in conjunction with ORC); coordinated by Mary and organising team of Scott, Zohara, Bruce, Franny and Dawn. A very successful workshop to introduce the methodologies of acoustic bittern surveys and call playback for crakes was held at the Sinclair Wetlands last Sept with 20 members attending. The pilot studies at Sinclair Wetlands and Lake Tuakitoto last season picked up bittern booms, and a spotless crake was seen and heard at Tautuku by the survey teams led by Franny. This will be our main project for the next few years and there are surveys for any member who is keen to take part. At this stage it is fully funded through an agreement with ORC.



Rifleman Nest Boxes in Ross Creek

Organised by Oscar in association with City Sanctuary.

Satellite-transmitter-tagged Juvenile Godwits from Warrington (with help of Nick Beckwith).

Resightings of banded godwits, banded dotterel and SIPO (Nick and everybody)



How are our finances looking?

Should we set aside some of our funds for Student conference grants?

Otago Branch still has access to some Atlas funding for weekend camps to complete Atlas squares. Any ideas for locations and dates?

Who will help keep our branch running in the coming year?

The following jobs will continue to be done by current volunteers

Regional Recorder/Atlas coordinator: Richard Schofield

Treasurer: Sue Odlin

Newsletter editor/compiler: Sue Odlin

Newsletter distribution: Hamish Spencer; Susan Schweigman

Regional Round-up for Birds NZ: Franny Cunninghame

Nominations

Regional Representative:

Indoor meetings/speaker Organiser: Oscar Thomas

Dunedin Field Trip and Events Coordinator(s):

Advisory Group: Bruce, Sue Odlin, Oscar, Nick, Georgina, Richard, more nominations welcome.



OTAGO BRANCH ACCOUNTS

Accounting Period	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023	
Opening Balance		\$6,787.30
Closing Balance		\$17,804.45
INCOME		
Particulars	Amount	
Interest	\$204.93	
Regional Allowance 2023	\$350.00	
Donation	\$10.00	
Wetland Bird Survey		
Otago Regional Council	\$14,782.60	
TOTAL	\$15,347.53	
EXPENDITURE		
Particulars		Amount
Bank charge		\$0.38
Gifts for speakers		\$103.91
Robin project - mealworms		\$43.00
Town Belt / AAPES - Pizza		\$58.99
Room Hire to Nov 2023		\$320.00
Student Travel Award		\$200.00
Refreshments		\$31.10
Wetland Bird Survey		
Accommodation/Room hire		\$703.00
Food		\$491.82
Materials - Stakes/storage		\$120.00
Transport		\$2,258.18
TOTAL		\$4,330.38

Wetland Bird Survey

Further accounts have been paid since the 30 June.

The balance in this account is **\$6,946.71**

Robin Project

The balance in this account is **\$2,119.58**

The balance, not tagged, in the working account is **\$3,817.56**

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

“Hi folks, I’m off to Chatham Island in October for the 15th 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

Lloyd 03 2130404 email lloydesler@outlook.com

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

Buff weka	Chatham fantail subspecies	Pitt Island shag
Chatham oystercatcher	Chatham pipit subspecies	Chatham warbler
Chatham tui subspecies	Chatham RC Parakeet subspecies	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**



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 pīpipi, 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

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

August, Tuesday 22	Francesca Cunninghame Two Forest and Bird projects Restoring seabird colonies on Otago Peninsula Landscape-scale conservation in the Tautuku area This meeting will include the AGM
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
October, Sunday 29	Town Belt Bird Count; 5MBC training day for members of the public in conjunction with City Sanctuary. Meeting in Cobden Street outside Olveston at 10 am. Help from members would be appreciated. Contact Bruce 0273891477 president@birdsnz.org.nz
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.

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

Contributions for inclusion in the next newsletter should reach the editor by **19 September**
sodlin@gmail.com

Disclaimer

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