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## *Otago Region Newsletter 1/2024*

### *January 2024*



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

### **Ornithological Snippets**

A **Mute Swan** was seen at Lake Waihola 5 & 13 December. **Marsh Crake** was reported from Sinclair Wetlands on 3 dates in December, and from Glenorchy Lagoon on 4 & 5 January, while a **Spotless Crake** was at Tautuku Estuary on 26 November. A **Hudsonian Godwit** was at Warrington Spit between 22 November & 20 December, a **Red Knot** at 1 Aramoana 13, then up to 3 at Warrington Spit 14-20 December, and 2 **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** photographed at Molyneux Bay 6 December.

A **Pomarine Skua** was claimed from Butchers Dam, Alexandra on 20 January, while a juvenile **Silver Gull (Red-billed)** was reported at Queenstown Gardens on 21 December. A **Little Tern** was seen briefly at Cabbage Point on 17 December, and an **Antarctic Tern** at Aramoana Mole 7-10 December. An **Adelie Penguin** found at St Clair beach on 16 January

was taken into care. There were numerous **Buller's Shearwater** sightings during the period, mainly offshore, but a couple close to land, and 25 off Taiaroa Head on 20 January

There has been an influx of **Little Black Shag** with up to 7 at Water of Leith; 5 at Kaikorai Estuary on 13 January; 1 at Warrington spit 22 November; 1 near Queenstown 29 December; and sightings at Diamond lake near Wanaka; others have been seen in Southland and on the sub Antarctic islands (Auckland, Snares, Stewart Is).

An **Australasian Bittern** was heard at Sinclair Wetlands on 30 November, **Reef Heron** seen at Nugget Point on 26, and several sightings at Taiaroa Head through December. A **White Heron** at Glenorchy Lagoon has been seen intermittently throughout; also sightings at Wanaka and Otago Harbour. A **Royal Spoonbill** was at Glenorchy Lagoon from at least 29 December to 11 January. A juvenile **Kea** at the Clutha Mouth on 13 January was an unexpected catch for two fishermen.

**Red-crowned Parakeet** was seen at Government Track, Waipori, on 30 November, **Fernbird** was reported from Bendigo and there were up to 4 at Glenorchy Lagoon, and a **Common Myna** was seen near The Oval in Dunedin on 8 December.

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

**Richard Schofield**

## eBird News



I am still hoping to arrange an Atlassing trip in North Otago over the weekend of 3/4 February. This may include squares on the Waitaki area on the Otago/Canterbury border. Please let me know asap if you are interested, and I will see if I can arrange some accommodation if needed. Otherwise, accessible squares that still need coverage include DS29 and DT29, on SH87 north of Middlemarch, EE@# in The Catlins, or check out the Atlas Effort Map

**Richard 027 281 8701** or [cluthaphotos@gmail.com](mailto:cluthaphotos@gmail.com)

## BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

### Otago Wader Count Summer Report 26 November 2023

	Karitane	Blueskin Bay	Aramoana	Harbour west	Harbour east	Papanui Inlet	Hoopers Inlet	Catlins	Pleasant River	<b>Total 2023</b>	Total 2022	Total 2021
South Is Pied Oystercatcher	35	110	76	112	6	12	21	56	5	<b>433</b>	544	657
Variable Oystercatcher	9	13	18	26	34	24	11	2	4	<b>141</b>	76	54
Pied Stilt	26	2	6		4	21	28		2	<b>89</b>	98	266
Banded Dotterel								11		<b>11</b>	4	17
Spur-winged Plover	14	2	16	2		37	9	26	6	<b>112</b>	24	162
Bar-tailed Godwit	177	910	34				602	510	182	<b>2415</b>	2217	1904

Many thanks to all who participated in this count especially those who stepped in for regulars who were unavailable.

Of interest:

- 4 banded godwits were seen at Warrington
- Godwit numbers similar to year 2022 considering Pleasant River Estuary has been added There was a godwit 'high' of 2435 in November 2019
- Variable oystercatcher count high at 141. In 2017 there was a similar count of 137.

**Maree Johnstone**

### Papanui Inlet wader count

I was part of the coastal wader-count team that undertook to count the birds in the Papanui Inlet.

There were not a huge number of waders to be seen, as when we arrived the tide was still very low, and the birds were a long way away. It was necessary to use the scope for the majority of recordings. Then the tide appeared to come in very quickly. Scope-sightings were made at various points starting at Okia Flat and driving along Papanui Inlet Road along Cape Saunders Road to the Wright Lookout on Cape Saunders



Andrew and Jon at Papanui Inlet



Andrew using scope at Okia Flat



Andrew with scope looking over inlet outlet and Victory Beach

**Ann Trewern**

## **Pūteketeke / Southern Crested Grebe**

Can you help? There is a full population census of grebes taking place on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024, following on from similar surveys in 2004 and 2014. If you'd like to help with grebe counts, please contact: Petrina Duncan for Lake Wānaka and Hāwea, Dawn Palmer for the Wakatipu basin, and Rosalie Snoyink for other areas such as Canterbury lakes.

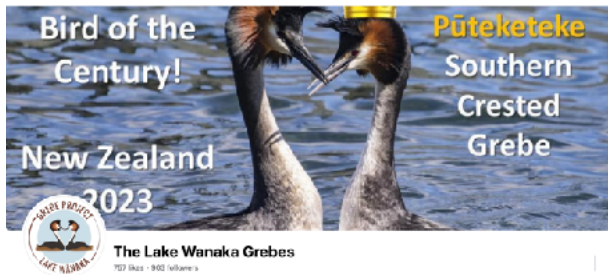
Petrina: [petrina.duncan@southernlakessanctuary.org.nz](mailto:petrina.duncan@southernlakessanctuary.org.nz)

Dawn: [dawn.palmer@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dawn.palmer@xtra.co.nz)

Rosalie: [rsnoyink@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rsnoyink@xtra.co.nz)

Keep an eye on our Facebook page, [The Lake Wanaka Grebes](#), for updates and other stories about our project.

**Petrina Duncan**



## Crested grebe conservation - NZ

The national crested grebe survey is taking place on Saturday January 27th and there are still some sites that don't have anyone to count them. The survey is being organised by Rosalie Snoyink and Leslie Jensen from Forest and Bird. BirdsNZ is being asked to help fill the gaps.

The areas in need of counting are:

### Canterbury

1. Coopers Lagoon
2. Harts Creek/Timberyard Pt/Johnstons Bay areas
3. Selwyn rivermouth
4. Lake Tennyson north of Hanmer
5. Lakes Sheppard, Mary and Mason in the Lake Sumner Conservation area
6. St Anne's Lagoon up near Cheviot
7. Lake Letitia and Minchin up near Arthurs Pass

### The West Coast

1. Lake Poera
2. Lake Brunner
3. Lake Kaniere
4. Lake Mahinapuha
5. Lake Mapourika

Please get in touch with Rosalie directly if you can help  
[rsnoyink@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rsnoyink@xtra.co.nz)

Ngā mihi nui, **Anita Spencer**  
Canterbury and West Coast  
Regional Representative



Crested grebes: pair at Kaikorai Estuary Sept 23

Chris L alas

## Seen any royal spoonbills lately?



Nests on Green Island

I am coordinating a nationwide survey of royal spoonbill colonies next summer.

The Otago Region will need to play its part.

Our region has been an important breeding area for royal spoonbills and presumably still is. At the last survey in 2014 there were colonies at the following places: Wainono lagoon, Maukiekie Island, Taiaroa Head, Green Island, Taieri Island, Nugget Point, False Islet, and Rainbow Isle. Has anyone got any information about other possible colonies around the Otago coast? (or elsewhere).

We will need to re-survey these places next season, so before then we need to work out the logistics of doing this. We need to figure out what boat and airplane transport we may need by our February meeting in order to apply for funds.



Some colonies can be viewed from vantage points on land such as Nugget Point. But how are we going to tackle Green Island and Taieri Island? Does anyone have contacts with aeroclub members with a light plane that might be willing to help with flyover of the Otago coast for taking aerial photos. Would it be possible to take a zodiac across to the islands-but how visible are nests for under the canopy?

Any ideas and offers of help would be greatly appreciated; please contact **Mary Thompson** 02102980504 [nzmaryt@gmail.com](mailto:nzmaryt@gmail.com)

Lianne Adams ~ Royal Spoonbill



## NZ BIRD CONFERENCE & BIRDS NZ AGM

Nelson, 1 to 3 JUNE 2024

The Trafalgar Centre, Nelson



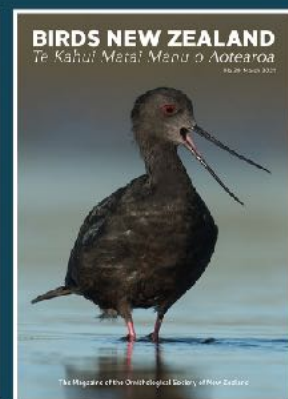
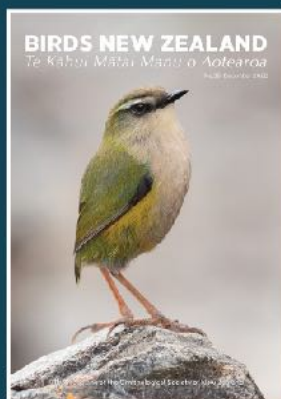
The scientific days will be held on **1 and 2 June 2024**.  
For all conference details and online registration please visit  
[birdsNZ.org.nz/nz-bird-conference/](https://birdsNZ.org.nz/nz-bird-conference/)

Abstract submissions close **31 March 2024**, but it would help the Conference team if you could provide your abstract as soon as possible

Instructions for abstract submissions are available at  
[birdsNZ.org.nz/nz-bird-conference/call-for-abstracts-and-instructions-2024/](https://birdsNZ.org.nz/nz-bird-conference/call-for-abstracts-and-instructions-2024/)

For queries please contact [conference@birdsNZ.org.nz](mailto:conference@birdsNZ.org.nz)

Craig McKenzie



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## Programme 2023

Birds NZ Otago meetings will return to the **Benham Seminar Room, Department of Zoology, 340 Great King Street, Dunedin**

## Programme 2024

January	Saturday 27	National Pūteketeke/Crested Grebe Census (contact details in notice)
February	Tuesday 27	Katie Gray Black-fronted tern and banded dotterel tracking
March	Tuesday 26	Vanessa Barry Buller's albatross genetics
April	Tuesday 23	Quinn Berentson The legendary moa <b>Barclay Theatre, Otago Museum</b>
May	Tuesday 28	Bradley Shields Landscape scale predator control for birds

**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 Dawn [birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz](mailto:birds.otago@birdsnz.org.nz)

Contributions for the next newsletter should reach the editor by **20 February** [sodlin@gmail.com](mailto:sodlin@gmail.com)

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