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Otago Region Newsletter 2/2024

February 2024



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

Ornithological Snippets

Moulting penguins have been found on local beaches as follows: an Adelie Penguin at St Clair Beach 16 January; Fiordland Crested-Penguin at Surat Bay on 8 February; a Southern Rockhopper Penguin at Long Beach from 30 January to 13 February, and another at Allans Beach 2 to 3 February; and a Snares Crested-Penguin at Hooper's Inlet on 29 January.

In addition to previously reported birds, there were **Little Black Shags** at Kingston on 16 February, and 3 at Waikouaiti the following day. A **Reef Heron** was at Nugget Point on 15 February, and another was at the Leith Mouth on 26 January, where 7 **Royal Spoonbill** were also present. A **White Heron** continues to be seen at Glenorchy.

Please send any interesting reports to cluthaphotos@gmail.com

Richard Schofield

eBird News

Some of you will have attended the workshops presented by Ian Davies and Tom Auer from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. One of the issues arising from these was the use of Merlin, and the fact that there is a lack of recordings of many species, preventing them from being used on Merlin Sound ID. It was pointed out that recordings do not need to be top quality; in fact, those that are less than perfect are more useful for training the technology to recognise species. Specialised equipment is not necessary, and all you really need is a mobile phone, and a recording app (RecForge is recommended, but there are others), and an editing programme (I use Ocenaudio). If you would like to know priority species, please let me know.

Finally, a quick reminder that we're into the last few days of summer (at least as far as the Atlas is concerned!), and there are still a handful of squares with no coverage, and others that would be happy to be topped up.

Richard 027 281 8701 or cluthaphotos@gmail.com

BirdsNZ Otago Branch News

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

A reminder for members, the ground floor doors to the Zoology building **will be locked at 7.30**. Please ensure you arrive in time to enter the double doors, at the rear of the car parking area.

Tune into Nature



Our Birds NZ member, Karthic has been producing podcasts that showcase some of our bird projects around Dunedin. The latest episode is called 'Cryptic Birds and how to find them' and is about our project to survey for bitterns and crakes so is very timely.

Previous episodes include our robin project, Graeme's fairy prions and the rifleman project on the Peninsula.

Check out Karthic's website <https://www.karthicss.com/podcast> or use the link below to listen.

<https://www.karthicss.com/podcast/episode/2f96c606/cryptic-birds-and-how-to-find-them>

To listen to the podcast episode about Bitterns, click on a link below

Apple Podcasts - <https://apple.co/3wvKggY>

Spotify - <https://spoti.fi/3uzSSTr>

OAR FM - <https://oar.org.nz/tune-in-to-nature/>

Website - <https://www.karthicss.com/podcast>



Monitoring Bitterns in the Catlins

Karthic

Cryptic Crakes need a Champion

Our Otago branch of Birds NZ has taken on the challenge of surveying Otago wetlands for marsh and spotless crakes over the next 4 years. We are looking for some volunteers to organise field trips to likely raupo swamps to look and listen for crakes during April, May and June using a call-playback method. We have sound files of crake calls which we would play at sampling sites and listen for crake calls in response and look for crakes emerging from cover to investigate the calls.



Our Tomahawk marsh crake

Nick Beckwith

The survey involves systematic sampling from about every 100-200 m around margins of swampy areas or along accessible tracks. Some likely areas to do some training field trips are the new board walk at Waihola, Titri track, and Sinclair wetlands (especially for spotless crane; we know marsh crane live and breed there). Richard has played calls at even small patches of roadside reedy damp areas and seen a marsh crane pop out to have a look at him.

We have sound files prepared by DOC to use for call-playback. If you would like to get a copy to download to your phone to use whenever you are at a likely swampy area then just let Mary know and she can send you the google drive link. The files are about 50-100 Mb. nzmaryt@gmail.com

If you are keen to go on crane field trips also let Mary know, and particularly if you could volunteer to lead a field trip.



George, her volunteers and the kakarua

<https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/resilient/kakarua-population-growth-promising>

Mislaid property

This Velbon silver camera tripod ended up with the Birds NZ telescope gear after the summer wader count.

Please claim it from Mary nzmaryt@gmail.com



Call for Applications

All close on 30 March, except Fledgling Fund, which closes on 28 February:

- David Medway Scholarship (DMS): birdsNZ.org.nz/news/david-medway-scholarship/
- Marj Davis Scholarship (MDS): birdsNZ.org.nz/news/marj-davis-scholarship/
- Pacific Is Bird Conservation and Research Fund (PIBCRF): birdsNZ.org.nz/news/pacific-is-bird-conservation-and-research-fund/
- Project Assistance Fund (PAF): birdsNZ.org.nz/funding/paf/
- Fledgling Fund: birdsNZ.org.nz/news/fledgling-fund-grant/

The Ninth Wild Dunedin Festival is Coming in April

The Wild Dunedin team are thrilled to announce that our popular Festival is on again in the school holidays 19 - 28 April.

This year our Festival is focusing on huarere/weather. What makes Dunedin's weather special? How can I plan my vegetable garden and orchard for the changing weather? Why are clouds important for Orokonui Ecosanctuary? These and many other questions will be answered for you along with the opportunity to visit many home and community open gardens, workshops on composting and permaculture, deals on wildlife tourism trips, and much more.

Because it's in the school holidays, the Festival is a great opportunity for friends and family to visit Dunedin for 10 days of fascinating events celebrating Ōtepoti as the wildlife capital of Aotearoa.

Old favourites such as Suzy Cato's event for children with the Wildlife Hospital, Wildlife ER, sessions on bees, yoga, plogging, diving in a kelp forest, deals on indoor bouldering, bird watching and sessions on bird photography – there's something for everyone at this year's Festival.

A highlight of the 2023 Festival, the hugely popular Art Play in Nature at Chingford Park is on again, bigger and better. Artists Janet de Wagt, Pamela Brown and Kerry Mackay will work with all ages to create a giant tapestry/collage on the Bridal Lawn using nature's materials such as autumn leaves, twigs and cones. Conservation groups, musicians, displays, and food and coffee will make for a wonderful day celebrating nature.

Libraries, Tūhura Otago Museum and Toitū are all hosting many events, there will be fine dining at three restaurants, boat trips, a session on making gin, and opportunities to help yellow-eyed penguins. Bookings are open for a Wild Night Masquerade at Larnach Castle with transport provided from town, in support of yellow-eyed penguins.

To book for the Wild Night go to www.wilddunedin.nz.

The programme will be launched on 15 March, printed and online, and bookings for all other events can be made then. We'll be handing out programmes and doing free face painting at the South Dunedin Street Festival on Saturday 16 March. Programmes will be available at all public libraries and mobile libraries.

To keep up to date and see the programme when it's live, become a Friend of Wild Dunedin on the website. Follow us on Facebook NZ Festival of Nature.



Makarora Field Camp 8-13 January 2024

The Amazing 2024 Makarora Field Camp was delivered by Aspiring Biodiversity Trust in association with Birds New Zealand. The residential event was oversubscribed with 14 places filled by the end of September. Attendees spanned from all over New Zealand, extending from Northland to Gore in Southland, ages ranged from 13 years to 17 years old. Including Birds NZ Young birders or young individuals with an interest in birds/nature to those that were keen to pursue careers within the environmental sector.



The educational five-day field camp was held in the Makarora Valley, at the head of lake Wānaka with a focus on birds and the local ecosystem/ geophysiography. Attendees left with an understanding of the value of the Makarora Valley as an important site for indigenous biodiversity from ridge to river.

Field activities included 5 minute bird counts, mist netting/bird banding, braided river bird monitoring and river crossing techniques, invasive predator control for introduced mammals and avian predators (Southern black-backed gull). Monitoring techniques for whoio, invasive predators, bat and moth surveys coupled with informative presentations.

Feedback following the event was super positive and included requests for another event and a two-week session!! The moth species count combined for Makarora is now 100+! Including some rare micromoth records, also a rare bee fly and an interesting spider!





Keen future bird banders – look out Banding office!

NB: Mist netting/bird banding undertaken as per appropriate permit and by NZNBBS Certified operators



Thanks to the Aspiring Biodiversity Trust Team; Rachel Hufton, Anthony Coote, Nicky Davis and Taylor Coon (ABT Volunteer from Montana), Paul Cuming (BirdsNZ Regional Rep), Richard Schofield (BirdsNZ Otago/EBird Verifier), Graeme Loh (BirdsNZ Otago), Sara Dean (Parent), Simon Binzeggar (Parent) for their keen involvement and help during a fantastic week of birding and biodiversity emergence. Plus, Carey Knox with his infectious moth work! Also, generous sponsors and the local landowners who helped enable this worthwhile event.

Testimonials

It was absolutely amazing. So many expertise in so many different fields, saw morepork and brown creeper for the first time previously only heard. And my first encounter with wrybill, I

learned soooo much! It was also incredible to connect with people who have a similar passion for birds.

Audrey – Queenstown

Very fun, definitely enjoyed it learnt heaps about NZ birdlife and ecological importance of the Makarora region, also met some amazing new people, very grateful for the experience.

Ethan – Auckland

This was a great experience and really awesome to reconnect with nature with likeminded people. I learnt a lot of new calls which is something I had never done, also learning about moths, skinks, and geckos which was completely new to me. Jake – Whanganui

I learnt so much from this week about the nature and wildlife in this area, the huge amount of work that the ABT puts into the conservation project and how the whole ecosystem matters. It really is an experience which I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Lucy – Auckland

A lovely opportunity to experience the things I love with people who are different to me but enjoy the same things. It was very inspiring and provided insight into things I could pursue in the future. Guthrie – Dunedin

I enjoyed it because it gave me insight of what happens around a conservation site. I learnt a lot more than I thought I would and absolutely loved it! Jai - Gore

I wanted to say a massive thank you to Rachel, Nikky and Anthony for organising an amazing camp. I know it requires a huge amount of time, energy, money and effort but please know it was truly appreciated and will be a formative experience for them all. It was so well organised and the mentors who attended were amazing. Sara Dean (parent) - Auckland

Rachel Hufton

HELP US TO HELP THEM



HOIHO
(Image: Alan Seargent)

KORORĀ
(Image: Colin Hobbs)

TAWAKI
(Image: Doug Green)

You can join Birds New Zealand right now for just \$1.50 a week.
It costs \$80 a year, and for students it's just \$40 a year:
www.birdsnz.org.nz/membership/join-now/

JOIN US NOW



BIRDS
NEW ZEALAND
He Aha Māta Rauhi o Ngākau

Programme 2023

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

Programme 2024

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
			Barclay Theatre, Otago Museum
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

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



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/

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/

For queries please contact conference@birdsnz.org.nz

Craig McKenzie

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